My Trip to Puerto Rico
A Diary of Events

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CONFIDENTIAL
San Juan, Puerto Rico 20 Feb 2005

I got up real late this morning, around 9:00. Then I had breakfast in the courtyard with the parrots. There are six parrots here at the Gallery Inn. The friendliest parrot was called Campeche, after a Puerto Rican painter.

Did you know that the Gallery Inn used to be quarters for Spanish Army officers? Our room is called Cisterna, which means cistern. The room below us (and we’re in the basement, so it’s low down) is called Pozo, which means well.

The cemetery

The first thing we did was to visit the cemetery. There was a sign in the cemetery that said not to put flowers in water, only dry flowers, on the graves. I think that we picked a good order to do things, because the cemetery is right next to the fort (El Morro), which we visited next.

There is a dry moat at the fort which I explored quite a bit.

This is me in the dry moat.
There is a stone carving over the main entrance to El Morro. To me it looks like a lion with wings wearing a crown.

When we got in, I took a tour map and acted as the tour guide for my family. I led them to the sites and read the captions for those sites. There were 23 sites on the map. I really enjoyed reading the map of the fort.

One of the sites was a gunner's loophole. These allowed sentries to look at the ground directly underneath them.

There are many levels of the fort, and one of the main ways of moving artillery between them is the Artillery Staircase. There is a large ramp in the center of the staircase so that the cannons don't have to be hauled up and down the stairs. There are resting platforms placed at regular intervals on the stairs, so that the soldiers can rest for a second when moving the heavy artillery.

Then we visited El Parque del los Palomas (the park of the pigeons), where I fed them special pigeon feed (ground up dry corn).
San Juan, Puerto Rico Monday 21 Feb 2005

At breakfast, we met the biology professor, José, who had invited my Dad to come to Puerto Rico. He told us about some good beaches.

I went to El Castillo de San Cristóbal. It was fun, but I wish I'd gone to the beach also. San Cristóbal has a lot of tunnels, which I really hated. We saw drawings of ships on the wall of the dungeon. I was amazed that they were so well preserved, and I wonder what the artist used for the red. I wish I could have visited the cisterns under the main plaza, but they were locked up.

I ate lunch at Café Berlin, which consisted mainly of toast and jam, a few grapes, and the white of a hard-boiled egg. After lunch we visited the statue of Cristóbal Colón.

Later we visited Casa Blanca, Ponce de Leon’s house. After that, I had a blueberry snow cone or a piragua de blueberry. I ate it in the Parque de las Palomas.

This is an ornately decorated cannon from Castillo San Cristóbal.

This is the statue of Cristóbal Colón.
San Juan, Puerto Rico Tuesday 22 Feb 2005

I woke up about 8:30 and had breakfast with the parrots as usual (I had orange juice, four small slices of bread, a few grapes, and some mango). I did a page of homework after breakfast, then I went with my mom to the Children’s Museum.

It wasn’t that fun, because the top floor was closed, and there wasn’t that much on the other two floors. My favorite exhibit there was one on the human body—mostly the senses, the lungs, and the heart.

Then we went to lunch at Amadeus. I had pasta with cheese, bread, and a mango frappé.

After I did my homework of the letter to Seymour, I was leaving the hotel, when I met Dad, who was just coming in. He would have been much later, but he caught a ride with two graduate students (Nilsa and Luzed). Then Dad, Mom, and me walked down to the cruise ship. It was enormous—eleven stories tall, and I’m not counting what’s below the water. After that, we went to the Marine Arsenal Museum, and in the graphic arts display there was one “tent sculpture,” which my Dad took quite a few photos of.

A picture of me in the tent sculpture.

After that we had dinner with José, one of the professors of the Biology Department, who is one of my Dad’s friends. We had asopao (=chicken and rice) for dinner, which I didn’t like that much. Before and after the dinner, I played with Catarina, José’s almost-two-year-old daughter.

The cruise ship, as seen from the side.
San Juan, Puerto Rico Wednesday 23 Feb 2005

After breakfast (mango, bread, and orange juice, again), Nilsa and Luzed picked us up and drove us to Science Park, which isn’t in San Juan, but it’s pretty near San Juan. Here’s a list of things we did there, in order as close as I can remember:

- NASA rockets;
- train museum;
- playground;
- transportation museum;
- telephone museum;
- fake aquarium;
- little zoo with peacocks (there was an albino peacock); and
- a fake life-size hacienda town.

Then we had lunch at Burbujas. I had arroz con habichuelas and tierrita for dessert. After Burbujas, we went to a botanical garden, which really wasn’t that fun. After the botanical garden, my Dad had to go do a talk of his. While Dad did his talk, I did some more homework. When he had finished, we went to Tantra and I ate Indian flatbread.
San Juan, Puerto Rico Thursday 24 Feb 2005

I woke up late today. For breakfast, I had bread, mango, and orange juice again. Nilsa, Luzed, and my Dad came to pick us up, and they took us to lunch at El Buen Meson, and I had a hamburger on pan criollo, a piña colada, some French fries with ketchup, and garlic bread rinds.

Then we drove back to Arecibo. It was a long climb up the stairs to the visitors’ center. However there were some fun signs about the planets along the stairs. Jupiter was the last one on the stairs.

I played with a few of the exhibits in the visitors’ center, but I didn’t have much time before my parents dragged me off to watch a video called “A Day in the Life of Arecibo.” It was pretty good. The video was shown in the auditorium. The exit from the auditorium lead onto the viewing deck. The dish was very big. Did you know that the dish at Arecibo is the largest radio telescope/radar in the world?

Another fun fact about Arecibo is that to change the place the telescope is focussing on, they move the antenna instead of the dish. After I’d finished looking at the dish, I wanted to go play with the exhibits in the visitors’ center. I looked at most of them.

Me hiding behind a fog machine.