

# Code Warriress

She's cracking the D.C. area's biggest secret

**"THE DA VINCI CODE" IS FICTION,** but there's nothing phony about Kryptos, a sculpture at CIA headquarters featuring an encrypted message. The first three sections of the four-part puzzle (designed by sculptor James Sanborn with the help of cryptologist Ed Scheidt) were deciphered within a decade of its 1990 installation, but the last remains unsolved — at least until the members of Elonka Dunin's Web group ([elonka.com/kryptos](http://elonka.com/kryptos)) figure it out. They've gotten extra attention since Dan Brown slipped two Kryptos references into the jacket art of "Da Vinci," and it seems the sculpture may appear in his follow-up book. For the real scoop, read Dunin's new "The Mammoth Book of Secret Codes and Cryptograms." Express' Vicky Hallett interrogated her for secret intel.

**How did you first get into Kryptos?** After Sept. 11, I went to visit my cousin in D.C. I said let's go visit Kryptos at the CIA. It is not easy to find the CIA — it's not on Mapquest. This was before Google Earth, but I sort of knew what the building looked like from Tom Clancy movies, so I downloaded aerial photos and found the building. We drove up and these guys with guns asked us reasonable questions like who we were and why we were there. I said to see Kryptos. They were polite but firm that I could go in for official business only.

**So you had to get official.**

I wondered if I could use my cryptographic skills to help the war on terrorism. I heard Al Qaeda may have planned the attacks using steganography — hiding messages inside pictures. So I created a 70-slide PowerPoint and my example was a picture of Kryptos. I got invited to my local FBI office, and universities and conventions, and I always said, "Here's Kryptos. Boy,



SUZY GORMAN

For more on code-cracking Elonka, and to see Kryptos, check [readexpress.com](http://readexpress.com).

I'd really love to see it." At the end of one talk, a guy leans over to me and says, "I work at Langley. I think I can get you in."

**And he did?**

I got a couple of hours to see the sculpture. I had CIA handlers there the whole time, so I couldn't take pictures, but I made some rubbings. When I got back, I figured I should post them online. And people started writing to me. Some people say things like, "If you take this letter and that letter, it spells my address." But some people were bona fide cryptographers. At one point after I'd been compiling information on him, Sanborn called me up and we've become good friends. He's on speed dial.

**How do you think the fourth part will be solved?**

Ed [Scheidt] told us that the first three parts we did without recovering the keys first and that we had access to the patterns of the English language, but that's obscured in part four. We don't know what he means. Usually, you see which letters are the most common and use that to find patterns, so maybe that's what we can't do for the fourth.

**Why is it such a stumper?**

The main thing is that it's so short. It's only 97 characters and you need more text to work with than just a few lines of code. If you line them up in rows of seven, you get double letters. That may have something to do with it.

**Do you think there's a hidden prize?**

Probably not. There will be a lot of media attention. And Sanborn's indicated there may be a further puzzle.

**Are there other clues in D.C.?**

Maybe at Zola, the restaurant at the Spy Museum. Sanborn designed the decor. Next to the hostess stand, there are sheet protectors with documents. One of these is a source document for the Cyrillic Projector, another of Sanborn's pieces. Whenever I'm in town, I go there and take as many pictures as I can before the waiters get mad.

**How much time do you dedicate to solving Kryptos?**

I spend a few hours a month. For some members, this is their main hobby. We also have people who are "Da Vinci Code" fans who say, "Maybe the answer is in the Louvre."

## > The Manolo

ANSWERS FROM THE SHOELOGGER

**My new boyfriend has invited me to spend Memorial Day weekend with his family at their summer house near Bar Harbor, Maine. I want to make a good impression, so no flip-flops.** —BROOKE

Manolo says, ahhh, the Day of Memorializing, it is the traditional beginning of those lazy, crazy, hazy ... daisy ... mazy ... days-y days of summer, or so the song almost goes.

And these days of summer, they also bring the occasional invitation to the summer house to meet the parents, Biff and Muffy Boddington, of the Bar Harbor Boddingtons, who will indeed not be impressed by the flip-flopping of the latest girl that the Biff the Third has dragged back to the "cottage" for early afternoon cocktails

and repressed, Cheever-esque family dramas.

It is especially good for the Brooke to remember that the coast of Maine, it is not the Myrtle Beach, and that the thong sandals that would have been appropriate whilst playing the round of dinosaur-themed mini-golf are not the shoes that will be suitable for the rocky, WASPy coast of the Maine.



This is why the Manolo he would recommend to the Brooke the Geox D Euro Loafer (\$99, [zappos.com](http://zappos.com)) in the light-green suede. The Geox it is the stylish and practical shoe with the grippy bottom perfect for those afternoons, when the Boddingtons take you and their antique sailboat onto the water for the gin-fueled voyage into the rocks.

## About the Cover

Express Top Model Jeannie wears Lilly Pulitzer shorts (\$118, Tickled Pink, see page 6 for store info), a cat's eye necklace and Vineyard Vines polo (Sherman Pickey, 1647 Wisconsin Ave. NW; 202-333-4212) and Coach cork wedges (\$158, Bloomingdale's). Styling by Laurretta McCoy. Photo by Michelle Repiso.

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