**The Great Berkshire Scavenger Hunt 2020**

It was just another average day I suppose, as average as things can be with the circumstances what they are. When social distance is the law of the land and everybody is afraid to be around anybody else what is one to do? And it was for this reason I was in a zoom meeting instead of out at lunch someplace with my mentor David that afternoon. Zoom is the new platform to be on these days. It allows for voice and video chat via an internet connection and their Zoom application. Anyhow…

…I’m not exactly sure what we were discussing when suddenly he cuts in with, “not sure If this is something that you’re interested in but Claudia from OLLI asked if you were available or were looking to do any work”. He told me She had taken information from a community bulletin board asking for a student or community member’s help with some summer projects. She had a name and an email address that she sent to my mentor and he in turn forwarded that message to me, where I would very anxiously send out a reply email, responding to their call for assistance.

You may be thinking why anxiously? Well, as a student I was trained how to work from a book doing certain exercises, and this now, was not from no book. There was no warmup or exercises to get you ready. In my mind, it was the equivalent of jumping into the deep end after reading about swimming and maybe doing a few floating exercises in your bathtub. So yeah, I was a little nervous.

This email happened to be the first in what would end up being a decent amount of correspondence between myself and not just one or two other people but quite literally a whole team of people that it forced me to rethink how I was receiving emails and everything. I had to get super organized and really keep things in order now.

I did not even know a single thing about scavenger hunting before this so when the emails started coming in and the pieces started to move, I really was not sure what direction I was going to go. I did not even look up if there was a scavenger hunt app or software already, which not to my surprise there is quite a few things already out there that could have been used. They are pricey and I feel it is much less personal then how we ended up working things out. But it’s good to know they exist, if for nothing else than to steal some ideas form when I build my system up.

The information I was giving so far was that there was going to be teams and they were going to be going all around the Berkshires looking for places that the clues point to and they would take a picture of the clues location with a team member in the picture and then send in the picture to the email that was set up for the Hunt. They wanted from me a way to organize and tally up the points for each team and to use the pictures from the hunt as slides for the end of day awards ceremony. What was the best platform to use or how should this be done? So I wasn’t working from a ton of requirements here, really this was very open ended and left a lot of freedom for me to explore possibilities.

My thinking was, If I was getting emails in with a picture and I then had to assign points, each location possibly being a different point value as well, what to I need? I need a way to have it so the judge has to do as little as possible, I don’t want the judge to have to enter manually the points as that could lead to many errors. So I needed to have a system that let you have teams and items and these items had point values that needed to be assigned to them so when a team got the item or clue the judge could look at the tally sheet and see team X, item # Y {check}. Check boxes, yes, exactly what I need and then I can use some formulas to appropriately assign the points as the judges are checking them off this way the judges never have to worry about a thing but finding the team and the item. I could put the teams and the scores at the top two rows and the items down column A and then freeze them in place which would be convenient when trying to locate the proper item checkbox.

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