

PERSONAL ENDEAVOR

Internship Journal of Marc Padmore

Spring 2014



PREAMBLE

"Spring 2014"

By Marc D. Padmore

After four years of College, and heaven knows how many of school before that, I'm pretty sure that we all know what is required to succeed, be it in our classes or out. It not rocket science... unless that's what you're studying here. That said, even if we know what's expected of us, somehow, some of us still manage to drop the ball, sometime in a dramatic fashion with fireworks and more carnage than a summer blockbuster.

Unfortunately, I fall neatly into the category of fireballers . This term has been a fine mess all around. I think this is what we call a comedy of errors... except it it's not funny.

For example, a week before printing, I lost the 32 GB flash drive with all of my work on it. I had it backed up, of course but, in a twist even M. Night Shyamalan couldn't manage, I lost the back up drive as well. 10 years ago, if

"I think this is what we call a comedy of errors... except its not funny."

you lost all of your work, that was your fault. You failed. You lost your job. Same thing 20 years ago, probably 200 years ago as well.

But it was *understandable*, in the least. Not today.

With all of the options for online storage, it's arguably inexcusable to lose track of your work. Some-

how though, I did. Most of my journals are not the original entries. I had to recount for several weeks in one. And that's not even considering the design; I lost that too. And the stylesheet from my internship. And yes, this is a nightmare.

What I'm saying is this, cover your tracks, and cover the tracks that cover your tracks. Had I made these precautions, I would be enjoying my last days of College, instead of panicking for dear life. Whoever reads this, please keep this in mind.

Preparation is Key, always.

M

PERSONAL ENDEAVORS

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Written by Marc Padmore
Designed by M Padmore

also written by
our wonderful
volunteers:

M.D. Padmore esq.
Marc D.P.
Padmore

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College Intern Marc D.P. struggles to recall his experiences leading up to obtaining an internship... half way through an already hectic term.

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College Intern Padmore tries to reconstruct his experience at the WPC, and give an accurate interpretation of "watching the paint dry." From mailing, to a brief stint of Graphic design, he covers it all in expert literary style.

PAGE19: Afterword

A short closing statement.

THE WPC

"The what? ...Never heard of ya."

M.D. Padmore, esq.

The Women's Press Collective - herein shortened to the WPC - is a volunteer based organization dedicated to the empowerment of low wage workers via print media. They provide benefit programs to their sponsors, in which they teach them how to use the tools to create their own publications. One of their defining edicts is their outward disdain for mass media consolidation, which put the flow of information into the hands of a few wealthy individuals.

They seem to be fairly winsome folks, dedicated to their cause.

"But... so what?" You might ask.

Good question, actually; I'm not quite sure what to make of the group. For one, they utilize a company format they call "Systemic Organization," which means that everything is broken down into a set of roles with instruction. so that anyone can fulfill any role with a little bit of prepping. As a graphic designer, I find this idea dangerous, as it devalues workers. Certainly, if you told me that I could be replaced with no problem whatsoever, I'd have trouble growing an attachment to an organization. Well, time will tell.

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**the
DESERT
of
HOPELESSNESS
and
NO DIRECTION**

THE PRICE OF PROCRASTINATION

WEEK 01

“Never bank on anything you don’t have absolute control over. ”

At the end of the Fall 2013 term, I sent an email to a Professor about obtaining an internship. Unfortunately, I sent it too little too late, and as the term begins, I have no internship to show for it. What compelled me into believing that I could put all my eggs in one basket is beyond me, but whatever it was couldn’t be good for my health. A word to the wise: **no internships exist after the term begins. Heed that. You must get them a season in advance, at least.**

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

CONTEXT:

Professor Mason gave a “fun” test to take! Let’s see the results!

Why, exactly, did we take these tests?

O: 41% or 0.675

C: 06% or 0.306

E: 03% or 0.156

A: 03% or 0.333

N: 90% or 0.812

Unadventurous, disorganize, callous, introverted and high-strung. Couple this with a 83.33% score on the procrastination test - the exact score Prof. Mason said we should not have - and it’s clear that I have an extremely rough road ahead of me. If there is a workplace that actually utilizes this sort of test in their hiring scheme, its disheartening to think that I’ll have to lie to get my foot in the door. It reminds me of the way that most people I knew said they had to lie on their resume, or make up a fake reference to get their first job.

It is also really disheartening that I was just told that I was considered completely useless/undesirable for proper working society. It also makes me wonder, seriously, what someone

with a positive review looks like. Putting some thought to it, I don’t think I have a frame of reference for it. Should I look at my professors? They seem to range from lax to reserved, with little or no in-between - only people who have been in the business for a while have a right to that. I suppose Professor ##### seems like a good business-type, but his conversations seem so unnatural/rehearsed/hollow to me that it’s uncomfortable to be around him. I don’t think I could be like that, and if I could, I don’t think I want to. (Is that okay to say?)

It’s a harsh world.

Tests aside, no one has gotten in touch with me yet, so I think I’ll refine my resume and give it another go.

Afterthought: As a creative, don’t I need a portfolio or an online presence or something!? I wish I took the portfolio class before all of this...

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RUNNY EGGS...

WEEK 03

Still, no bites.

So, obviously, my resume is garbage. Makes sense, I suppose - I've never really held a position before...

Well, that's not entirely true, actually.

I held a work study course once in high school, but due to lack of professionalism, I was fired in a week. No one has time for some stupid kid.

Not something I'd put on a resume.

I also had this god-awful experience trying to do a comic for one of my cousin's friends. It taught me many things. For one, never work without a clear contract. What began as 16 color pages for 500 dollars, became 64 color pages... and counting, all at the same 500. I was also told that there would be a lot more work coming in if this did well. I would find

out later from illustration professors and one graphic designer that these conditions should never be worked under, and that until everything was clear on their end, I shouldn't have even considered it. Fortunately, I dropped that project.

Live and learn.

Also, not something I would put on a resume.

I have to wonder if my next gig is going to be a horror show. My brain is turning to runny eggs thinking about it... except not delicious.

GROSS DOMESTIC CONSPIRACY

CONTEXT:

We were given an interesting read on the nature of the U.S. economy! It's called Gross Domestic Freebie! What does it mean?

So, at this point, I've learned that I'm neurotic, have been fired twice, and my resume has nothing worthwhile on it.

I don't think you can put family members down as references, either. All my friends moved out of state, too, and not exactly reliable.

I don't want to have to lie. I'm no good at it, and if I was I don't like it.

But that's beside the point.

This document, "Gross Domestic Freebie" by James Surowiecki of "the New Yorker" told me that there is currently no accurate way to determine the strength of the economy, as the current formula for calculating GDP - the Gross Domestic Profit of the country, can not accurately measure digital goods.

Disruptive Technology at its best, or worst? I'm leaning towards the latter.

A lot of decisions - and by decisions I mean cuts - are being made on the

grounds of mounting debt and the financial insecurity of the country. But when I consider the social media boom, which as far as I know started and thrives in America, I have to bat an eye at this.

Facebook alone could drive the economy of 10 small countries (don't ask me to do the math on that...)

Is it possible that cuts and tax increases are being played with by politicians because they are aware of how much they can play with this grey zone? It's not really helping anybody, though.

Well, it's all groundless speculation. My conspiracy theory ends here. You can go now.

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"A SLOPPY START."

About halfway through the term, Prof. Mason got me in touch with the Women's Press Collective, a volunteer-supported non-profit organization dedicated to producing honest news media for the working class. They got their start as an advocate group for women working in the back-breaking and low-wage farming industry, and true to their roots, those affairs have a special place in the organizations heart. My work here is supervised by Ms. Courtney Francis, one of the full time operatives.

The first thing I'll say is that the people there seem to be good, amiable folks, rife with altruistic zeal and optimism that I myself have not known since I was a small child. The second thing I'll say is that I'm not sure about this place.

The atmosphere here feels really lax (as one would probably expect from a set of volunteers), and while that may be a blessing for someone like myself, who has no prior work experience, I'm troubled by the thought that this isn't an "authentic work experience." I'll have to ask around to see what kind of experience other people have had at their sites.

Regardless, on Tuesday, March 11th, I started my work with the WPC, helping them with their mailing. They refuse to use computer based mailing lists – the reason given was that it protects the integrity of the list, so that it isn't stolen or otherwise misused, as well as makes their list immune to data loss.

In theory, this makes sense, but you know, small organizations like this one, one's that are in dire need of funds... aren't those what computers help the most!? Ahem... Also, I would really like to know who would steal that mailing list, and what exactly they would do with it. Someone please enlighten me, I'm completely baffled on this (I can't very well ask that, though, can I?). Even the argument of data-proofing goes out the window when you remember that they could print out a copy of their information periodically (EDIT: Perhaps that would be expensive?). A more plausible reason for not using them is the general age of the volunteers: older folks – many of them might not be accustomed to using computers, and tech training takes time, so using an archaic mailing base allows them to make full use of whatever volunteers they get.

Despite working from 10 to 5, I forgot my time sheet on day one, and thus I lost 7 hours of work... yeah, let that one sink in...

And thus ends Week 01, Day 1 – I've yet to start design work.

WEEK 07
Part A

**"the
DESERT
of
HOPELESSNESS
and
NO DIRECTION"**

END.

WEEK 07 **"NIFELHEIM"**
Part B
(and irony)

"And thus forth I dub thee
~~Nifelheim~~, a frozen hell incomparable
to the paltry punishments of man's
tortured mind! Here shall you toil in
battered health, made ruinous by the
cold. Enjoy your illness."

Ahem...

So yeah, today was cold.

Deathly cold.

Coldest day all year, I think.

The kind of cold unfit for life.

And it was on this day that we discovered that the heating unit was broken. Rather than stopping operations, we all wore our coats and continued the mailing, including myself, who worked directly beneath the heating vent... which was streamlining cold air instead – obviously I'd catch a cold after this. Given that this is an organization that focuses on worker's rights, it was impossible to ignore the irony of the situation. (In fact, aren't these illegal working conditions?)

They're nice people, but me, I'm not.

I can't just let that go in good conscience.

But I do anyway – I need this to graduate.

And it hurts a lot.

In another way, I guess you could say that now I understand with my own body the importance of worker's rights.

To add, right after I was done with the frigid mailing, I was sent to take a walk in said cold, about 14 blocks, to deliver some of their publications to one of their patrons. Supposedly, this saves on postage. I have to wonder if that postage was more or less than the 2.25 they told me I could spend taking the bus to get there (for arguments sake, I'm not going to check – it'll make me unhappy to know either way). I didn't actually have the money to take the bus, so I had to walk it. In one way, it let me learn the area better. In another way, it ensured my sickness.

After my return, I continued with the frigid mailing.

No, I don't appreciate the irony, it was downright cold.

(Later, I would leave with a cup of hot water to keep me warm – it froze in seconds)

And thus ends Week 01, Day 2
– I've still yet to start design work.
...And I've got a head cold.

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Welcome
to the
Women's Press
Collective!

...

(...or the mail room, at least.)

"It continues..."

WEEK 07
Part C

It's cold today, too...."

We continued mailing today. I can feel how short handed the group is with how long the mailing is taking. That or it's a methodical flaw – we have to sit through a 30-minute preamble on the way the system works before we can get started on the work, even if the people in question have done it a thousand times. It's not only cumbersome, it's disheartening. But that's how they do things; "I've no right to complain, right?"

Today I worked with Afreen, a design student from City Tech whom I've never met somehow. That seems to be rather common in this major. Anyway, we continued with mailing tasks, and sort of did some design work... if punching some data into

a premade booklet and shifting around some of the sponsor pages (for some reason, we don't call them ads) counts, at least. We also continued to freeze, since the heating guy didn't come in until late in the day (and did absolutely nothing about the problem).

At WPC, there is a policy to divide work amongst several people, to be certain that every part is done in a timely fashion. But when I took on the vigil alone later in the day, I got as much work as the group did done in less than half the time. It's nauseating to think about, so I'm going to try not to think about it.

And thus ends Week 01, Day 3
– Does this even count as design? I still haven't drawn a single line, though.

A LONG WALK

"It's called cascading... or pandering, depending on what end you're on."

Today I came in and sorted out some of the donations the group received. They came from another non-profit group that just went defunct. I don't remember the name, however. Then I sorted through the newspapers (the expensive New York Times only) that were saved to make reference clippings. They trashed everything that wasn't front page news or part of the business section. The arts section was so interesting though. We had lunch, and then afterwards, instead of moving to mailing, I went cascading with Ms. Francis, which was a mixed bag.

The weather wasn't too bad, so I didn't mind the walk. In fact, I welcomed it. The problem was that I was made to read a longwinded document – their sales pitch, basically – while I was walking. Through an active parking lot, across several streets, on busy sidewalks, without my eyes watching the road... Why didn't she hand me this to read during lunch? I almost got ran over by trucks twice, and barely missed a speeding cyclist, who really shouldn't have been on the sidewalk to begin with. I voiced my opposition to this task, which even small children know is foolish, which didn't go over very well. See what happens when you use your voice?

So, we went store to store, and delivered magazines by hand again, presumably to save postage, and also to help raise money by asking for more pledges. If someone gets a certain amount of space in you magazine determined by the money they donate, that's an advertisement no matter how you toss the dice. Anyway, we went out looking to connect with our patrons. The only one we were able to connect with in the middle of his lunch. He listened patiently, only to tell us that he'd already heard all of it before; I felt terrible for interrupting the man's lunch to ask for money that he didn't have to give, with something he heard many, many times before. But that's the way the business works. If there was a less disruptive way to do this, I would seriously like to know about it.

A major plus was that walking to Atlantic made me aware of the distance between the WPC and the college! I don't get out much, so I couldn't gauge the distance until I walked up Atlantic myself and saw a signpost of the area. This means that I'll be able to attend my internship more often, at less of a cost.

At the end, I was told that I would finally get the (rough) copy for the call-to-action poster I was supposed to make the illustrations for. Yay?

And thus ends Week 02, Day 4 – Tomorrow, maybe this will start to feel real...

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(...or the mail room, at least.)

Mismatches and **Rough Copy** WEEK 08 Part B

"So, this is only a rough draft. Which means for me that, whatever I draw, it might get thrown out if it doesn't match the final draft. Sigh... c'est la vie."

Today, I finally got to put my pen to work, on the promotional graphic. Truthfully, I understand that they want a call to action, but I'm still not sure exactly what they want that to be. I know, it's my job to figure that out, but I'm no mind reader. After a few drafts sifting through ideas, Ms. Francis selected the most boring looking thing on the page. It's a coalition of different working people coming together, holding up the/a newspaper. I don't think that's particularly edgy or striking, but she said that's what they wanted. So what can I do?

As for the work site itself, my hat fell on the floor, and when I picked it up it was dust-colored. They should add Swiffer Sweeper to their shopping list, but since I can't afford one for them myself, I'll keep that comment to myself. Also, I have a tendency to not eat/skip meals entirely while I'm drawing – I got scolded for it, just like I do at home. So I guess that's a really bad habit to have.

And thus ends Week 02, Day 5 – I've only just started.

“STALINIST CULT”

Umm... wow?

One of the major issues I have with philosophy is the fact that it's usually bullsomething-or-other that gets taken far too seriously in serious political debates (which is of course, more bull), despite being a male-able subject that changes person to person. But that's what this entry is about.

In my arduous quest to find out more about the WPC via the internet, I came across a document that spole about the WPC appearing at some street fair, which according to the article, they are always in attendance to.

It started off fairly clean, giving the typical spiel that you could hear from Courtney on Lisa as many times as you need to: WPC - Organize - Workers.

But then they through out this really, umm, interesting little tidbit:

“Stalinist Cult.”

Umm... what?

...
.....
.....
.....
...

Seriously? This requires some further investigation. Apparently, they're affiliated with this NAFTA-something group, that's notorious for jockeying for worker's rights, and then not practicing what they preach. They're also alleged to be absurdly secretive about their workings. This sounds...

I'll just keep it in mind.
...And hold off on drawing anything...

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Public Education

WEEK 11

And the highlight of today?

Me and another NYCTT volunteer got royally dissed for not remembering a detail of InDesign! That wasn't fun. That considered, I just realized that I didn't really get an in-depth lecture on anything in the Adobe Suite but the barebones of Flash. Everything in Illustrator I know I picked up in high school. Everything in Photoshop I picked up on my own. Unfortunately, no one uses PS here. What, pray tell, would one use InDesign for outside of class? I'm not trying to consider a personal project that would actually use it... though such a thing might not exist.

Anyway, today two people worked on one document that ultimately only needed one person to work on. Neat.

Other than that, we worked on mailing. Who would steal the digital list? For what dastardly purposes would they steal it? I don't know. And honestly, at this point, I don't want to know. I'll just accept that his is part of "Systemic Organizing," which I will never truly understand.



But yeah, this is actually a serious recurring problem I've been seeing amongst City Tech students: we neither walk the walk or talk the talk as well as our competition at Pratt or SVA. Apparently, they've got smaller class sizes, better equipment, superior income, and a focused curriculum. It's almost a matter of fact that we can not compete with these people, unless we were great before we ever got here (which is exceedingly rare).

I may seem a bit flippant at times, but the education, and the undeniable divide between haves and have-nots (richer kids, richer schools, etc) is something I've always been passionate about. It has always bothered me.

That said, I wonder if there is anything I can do about it?

Art History class supports that all of the great artists were well-to-do, after all. (At least in my memory)
Maybe that's just the nature of the world?

unforgivable insults

Today, I got to see why the Socialist failed: Semantics.
power struggles

Today, me Afreen, and a bang-up fellow named Bryce were tasked with running inventory over the electronics. Long story short, the supervisor (whom shall remain nameless this time around) got into an argument with the current task director (Bryce) over the way inventory would be kept. Long story short, Bryce had a better idea, one that would prevent us from having to do this again one month down the line. In a tension filled debate, he was aggressive vetoed without any concrete reason being given. I'm convinced at this point that the supervisor simply didn't understand, or didn't like that the idea wasn't theirs.

So, we got to work. Everything went swimmingly, and the inventory was taken with clear cut precision and detail. The problem came when the supervisor returned. They were not pleased, to say the least, blatantly disgusted that apparently things didn't go exactly as demanded. However, there was no denying that the result was vastly superior. Everything was described in great detail, as opposed to saying "we have five power cables", we have "2 USB connection cables, a firewire cable, and 2 Multistrips." It gives us a better idea of what we're working with.

Said supervisor, defeated on one front, decided to pick at something decidedly petty:

Bryce informally called the computers we could not run diagnostics on "Mystery Meat." In return, we got a 30-minute long "lecture"/ego-trip about *that alone*, on the basis that if some hypothetical person walked in, we would seem unprofessional and hippie-like impression, even though the term was only applied to shorten what was a rather wordy explanation that was repeated 10 times ("Computers that have not yet been verified or confirmed working"), which the supervisor was slurring.

I could get over this, if A, I didn't know that this was over some ridiculous unspoken administrative grudge, and B, I wasn't likened to a drunk by association.

I hate drunks. Profoundly.
I hate liquor. Profoundly.

And as I've mentioned before, I'm not so nice a person as to honestly just let things go. I was already iffy about this person, but this tears it. Maybe they should take their own advice, and consider how their words would sound to a hypothetical visitor, or maybe the volunteers that keep their gears turning.

I'm still here because of the hours.
And nothing else; this is bogus.

EDIT: Yeah, I realize I'm being petty here. But looking back, it's still upsetting.

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(...or the mail room, at least.)

Don't Rush...

WEEK 13

Today, the mailing reached 40-fold, a personal record for me.
Sigh.

Some days, you should just go home.
This was one of those days.

Yes, I know that no work place would ever accept that sort of capriciousness, but think it would be better for productivity if people who were, say, dog tired because of all-nighters simply got out of the way. Today, I helped the senior supervisor Lisa with editing the guide for patrons, which won't be displayed anywhere in here because the WPC is rather oddly secretive. It was some color correction work, and some proofreading. Because of how slow the day was, I practically begged to do the mailing. Some progress is better than no progress, and I needed the hours. Unfortunately, that wasn't stimulating enough to keep me awake. I tried gliding around inside of my chair, as means of getting around at one point, and ended up breaking a monitor. In truth, with some head and a metal wire, I could fix that no problem, but I think I owe them a new monitor.

Sigh...

So here I am again, watching the paint dry.
I need the hours, but I could barely walk in a straight line today, so I planned on checking out at 5. For some reason, because the WPC is short on phone callers, I was asked to stay around to understand the process.

I was totally dozing off amidst that.
Fortunately, no one was too offended; I mentioned earlier that I was out of it, and intended on heading home early for the day. I left a 6:05, still lethargic. I'm glad I made it home in one piece.

Seriously.

REALITY CHECK

And so, I'm finally working on some real design work! ...Sort of.

Part of the WPC's benefits program, we provide assistance in publication design to donors who wish to create their own print materials. I'm working with someone named VJ to create a teen magazine. They're kinda old, and they seem kind of stuck in the 80s, so it'll be interesting to see how this takes form.

We didn't really get anything done today; she wanted really bad for us to get on the computer and start working it out, but she left everything about her magazine home. I'm beginning to wonder if she wants us to do all the work, while she rides off into the sunset.

It doesn't work that way.

The WPC will proofread, but writing her articles is up to her. The benefits program does not include free photography or illustration either. She also seems to want to use this old graffiti logo she had, but for some reason she can not find the original file. (Edit: I'm convinced that she lost it). It's really daunting. Regardless, I got to make the donuts...

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Something to think about...

WEEK 15

Today I worked on that Magazine again...

They say that when you sigh, your happiness leaves you. So, I think I'll try not to do that for a bit. Anyway, today I also worked on that magazine. I think the writer is completely out of touch with her demographic, so it's a bit painful working with her – she's doomed to fail. And from the sounds of it, if (read: when) her mag craps out, she's going to blame it on the WPC... or me. Not pleasant to think about, I must say. But I can't say that. I know I can't say that.

I can't say anything, because I realize at this point that this is a service industry.

Certainly we design things for people, but more than that we guide them through a process they may not understand. In this case, she doesn't understand at all... and trying to get her to understand seems like a laborious task. She wants the magazine designed around the articles and the photos. She barely has anything that could pass for a legitimate article, and she has no photos. At this point, I'm designing around things that don't exist. It's daunting. She's still not willing to bring in any of her files. She also never upgraded her flash drive, like I suggested. I hope she doesn't think she can create a high energy magazine in this day and age without understanding computers. I sincerely hope she learns somehow, since I don't seem to be getting through to her.

In other news, a member, Bryce, asked me what I'd be doing after my internship was up, like if I'd stay with the WPC. Honestly I don't know, but what I do know is that I need money, which the WPC can't accommodate for.

Regardless, time will tell.

YOUTH PRESS COLLECTIVE

First, the good news.

I had fun today. There were only about 4 of us present, all fairly young (which was an interesting change), and the atmosphere was totally different. Everyone was easier to talk to than it was before as well, and I think I know why:

Everyone there hadn't been there long, except for Ms. Francis. Because of that, the group wasn't coming from a centralized mindset. Whenever you're the new guy and you're entering into a place that has its own manner of "group think," it's hard to adapt to. Like this, everyone was on equal footing.

Now for the bad news.

I just found out today that the WPC doesn't do referrals or endorsements. That said, what does that mean for me, who needs work experience and referrals?

Well, it means I'm... insert your choice of word here. That word should be bad, and mean "in a lot of trouble." So, the WPC doesn't pay you AND acts like they don't know you? This is bothersome. Mind you, I'm not saying that someone should volunteer for benefits... but I am saying that it would help.

Regardless, it's a good day.

Afterword

"I'm done here."

That's my single sentence
conclusion.

My next would be an
ambivalent

"Thanks... I guess."

It was an interesting experience, WPC.

But this is where we part ways. I must say a major part of my decision came from the fact that I can not get a referral from here. That is a major setback, especially considering that it cost money to get there, and I don't have a job outside of it. Ideals are "nice," but without the means to fulfill them, that's all they are.

So, I had some good times, and some bad times, though mostly lukewarm times. I learned that I make a terrible cup of Joe. I learned that heating is precious. I learned that Roxanne is an incredible cook. I'll take this time to reflect a bit more on all of these things, as a whole instead of piecemeal.

In short, it was mentally tiring. The amount of days spent "watching the paint dry" were mind rotting. This certainly isn't the place to accumulate hours in a 9-to-5 sort of way. It would've been a lot better if I heard about this earlier on, so I could spread my time out more. Some days I had to wonder if I was there as a novelty, since there was nothing to really do on some days.

What I will say, is that I think the internship system needs to be structured differently. The WPC, for example, isn't a bad spot I think for students with 3 or 4 terms under their belt. On weekends, they provide training for people interested in design. Students could learn well by helping to teach others. It's not my place to say, though.

Anyway, thanks everyone.

M

