

On my first day of work at the Whaling Museum, Brian informed me that I'd be doing a presentation on my last day. And throughout the summer, I've been thinking about just how to encapsulate three months of working at this truly incredible institution. I've crawled on my hands and knees under and around displays in every gallery in this museum. I've taken a power drill to multiple cases. I've covered myself in tape, climbed in and out of trucks, and carried the Museum's heaviest objects back and forth from the Bourne Building to the fo'c'sle. But I've also spent hours poring over books, scribbling down notes, and trying to produce eloquent object labels that appeal to a broad audience. I've delicately carried glass objects through storage and I've taken a mallet to the panorama table. Just today, I spent several wonderful hours sprinting back and forth from the Conservation Lab to the Bourne Building with buckets and mops in tow. It's hard to coherently and concisely communicate what I've been doing over the past three months. But I'm going to try.

I can't deny the qualitative aspects of my time at the New Bedford Whaling Museum this summer. It has been a process of learning and discovering, of grunt work and elbow grease, of reading and writing and sharing. Over the last few days, I've been thinking back to my first few days at the Museum, which feel like forever ago and like yesterday. On my first day, I met the Curatorial Department for the first time, got the keys and badge I need to survive, had my first foray into ReDiscovery, ate my first lunch in the park, and walked through the galleries for the first time. The excitement, the nerves, the moments when I felt unsure, the moments when I found my stride. Everything happens quickly here – exhibits are installed at breakneck speeds, exhibit elements are repaired with haste, research is furiously completed, objects fly in and out of storage, summers pass by in an instant. I've done research for entire exhibitions, served pivotal roles in auctions, and answered visitors' questions – everything from "Where is the bathroom?" to "Can you tell me more about lava glass?" The independence I've felt here is unmatched by anything except the collaborative spirit of the curatorial department. We've spent lunches going over plans and discussing our individual projects. We've laughed together over shared mishaps and worked together to face shared challenges. We've crawled under the panorama table together and hung paintings together, and we've discussed everything from the New York World's Fair to sailing to duckpin bowling to jazz music. I've learned more than I ever thought I would about whaling, Old Dartmouth history, and 19th century art glass this summer. But most of all, I've learned about myself as a future museum professional and about the good that can come from smart, passionate people working together for a common goal. For me, that's what museum work is all about.

But another side of me wants to quantify my experience this summer. I can't exactly measure happiness in decibels or dedication in Kelvin. So, since my first day at the Whaling Museum, I've been recording everything I do, from sticking labels back on walls to attending curatorial meetings. Here are my decidedly quantitative results.

From June 10 to August 21, I spent 54 days at the Whaling Museum.

I had lunch in the park 49 times, mostly eating elaborate salads.

I've done 34 walk-throughs of the galleries, which means I've rearranged the books on the table in the Wattles Gallery 34 times, punched in at the Energy & Enterprise time clock 34 times, and smelled the Eastern White Pine in Harboring Hope 34 times.

I've fixed the iPod in the telescope on the upper level of the Bourne Building 12 times, and fixed the Xico screen 16 times.

I plastered 24 labels on the big shelving unit in the conservation lab, creating an epic organizational system for our exhibit fabrication materials.

My epic organizational system for our exhibit fabrication materials lasted for 3 days.

I created 141 labels during the Shapiro Gallery research, design, and installation process – 40 of those labels are now on display.

I wrote, edited, or re-printed 97 labels, which are currently hanging in 11 exhibition spaces.

I worked on 8 object labels and 2 text panels for a mini-exhibition on 10,837 ½ square feet of panorama.

I spent 9 days writing and editing 283 captions for 14 chapters of the *Treasures of the Whaling Museum* book.

Ten minutes ago, we finished putting 9 buckets in the Bourne Building.

I produced 6 pages of demographic graphs and charts based on 124,781 entries in the Museum's Crew List database.

I helped move the traveling exhibit panels in and out of Wood Building Storage 6 times.

I pored through 6 panorama conservation binders, chuckling at witty notes from the late 90s suggesting that Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel was sub-par in comparison to the much larger and more quickly-produced *Grand Panorama of a Whaling Voyage 'Round the World*.

I rushed to remove objects from the corner of the Link during torrential downpours 2 times.

Over 5 days helping pack the Library, I singlehandedly used over 3,000 feet of bubble wrap.

This rather concise presentation consists of 1,149 words.

I crawled underneath the panorama table and hoisted the painting with nothing but brute force, teamwork, and my legs 2 times.

I got 1 strike in duckpin bowling and lost miserably 2 times.

Ten weeks into my summer internship, I'm not ready to leave.

Nine weeks ago, I was still finding my stride.

Eight days ago, I bought a new cord for the telescope in the Bourne Building, my arch-nemesis.

Seven minutes ago, I walked through the galleries of the museum for what feels like the thousandth time.

Six hours is all it takes to put one 19th century dress on one mannequin, and

Five entire newspapers is all it takes to make a fake crinoline to puff out the skirt of said dress.

Four seconds standing on the *Lagoda* for the first time is all it took for me to know I would love it here.

Three kids walked into the Shapiro Gallery on Wednesday when I was cleaning, and one of them exclaimed, "It looks like Snow White!"

Two years from now, I hope I still remember how I walked into work every day with a smile on my face, ready for the challenges ahead and excited about working with a team of amazing people.

I traveled in 1 elevator with 1 taxidermied penguin, touched 1 first edition of *Moby-Dick*, lifted 1 Azorean whaleboat, walked the deck of 1 Portuguese ship, had 1 incredible summer.

But the number of times I've been energized, curious, challenged, excited, and inspired to pursue museum work for the rest of my life? Countless.