

Life in a Northern Town

Click [HERE](#) for my video.

Mode	a narrative in the form of a digital story
Media	created in WeVideo and stored in Google Drive
Audience	The members of the SI and the leadership team. I haven't decided yet if this would be something I'd share with my students or colleagues.
Purpose	to tell a story of what I've learned from living in Cadillac for the past 23 years.
Situation	I was challenged this summer to come up with a story. I work too much and my personal life has suffered. That's where a writer gets good stuff for stories - from real life! Thus, I could not think of anything compelling. In a week, I take a cross-country road trip with my sister and my nieces and nephews. That would make a great digital story! Ah, the timing....

Script:

Twenty-three years ago, I got a job offer from Cadillac Schools. At the time, I knew one person in Cadillac and had never been there except for the interview. I delayed a long time before accepting in the hopes that something in my geographic comfort zone would become available. But finally, I accepted the position.

"I'll call this life experience," I thought. "I'll live there for two years until I earn tenure and then I'll move to a real city."

And so it happened that I moved from Ann Arbor - the most liberal city in the State - to Cadillac - a city adjacent to the most conservative city in the State.

The things I didn't know about northern Michigan when I moved here could have filled a book.

I didn't know that the high school I was joining had once had the rock band KISS helicopter into the stadium for a concert.

I didn't know what a huge deal this was.

I didn't know that there was an opening day of deer season
nor that it was called Deer Day
nor that it would be a school holiday.

I also didn't know that after the return to school after deer day, a teacher shouldn't ask a student, "Did you catch a deer?"

I didn't know that a buck pole existed or that it might lead on the evening news.

I didn't know such a thing as a bait vending machine existed. And I had never heard of two tracking or woods parties.

I didn't know 30 below was a real thing on a thermometer.

Before I moved to Cadillac, I didn't really understand the despair of generational poverty.

I didn't understand that students might rely on school for meals every day.

I thought I understood loss, but I didn't know that three years after my move I would lose my first student.

I didn't know a teacher might be asked to give a eulogy at a student's funeral.

I didn't know Melissa would be the first in a too-long list of students and former students I have lost.

But I also didn't know about resilience.

I didn't know that despite poverty and loss and heartbreak, people - students especially - can heal and find love and save themselves.

I didn't know how powerful wide open spaces and natural beauty and simple things can be to the life well-lived.

I didn't know the kindness and concern of a small town.

I didn't know what it truly meant to be part of community.

I didn't know that friends become family.

I didn't know when I first came here that I'd stay past those two years I had initially intended.

But I've learned more than I have ever taught in Cadillac over these 23 years.

I didn't know that this would become home.

Sources for music and images in my digital story. Anything not listed here was a photograph of my own.

Music: The Karaoke Channel. "Life in a Northern Town (In the Style of the Dream Academy) [Karaoke Version]." The Karaoke Channel - 80's Male Pop, Vol. 18. Downloaded on iTunes: July 12, 2015.

Images:

Snow sculpture: <http://nasfcadillac.com/events/snow-sculpture-contest/>

Most liberal cities/Most conservative cities:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/most-liberal-and-conservative-towns-in-each-state-2014-6>

Book: https://pixabay.com/p-520610/?no_redirect

Kiss Loves You

<http://images6.fanpop.com/image/photos/37600000/KISS-Cadillac-Michigan-October-10-1975-kiss-37642387-1600-900.jpg>

Opening day: <http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/51qMxmYz0GL. SY355 .jpg>

Facepalm: <http://www.feelsengine.com/index.php/Facepalm/Facepalm-Girl>

Buck pole: <http://www.9and10news.com/category/246026/virtual-buck-pole>

Buck pole 2: http://wwtv.images.worldnow.com/images/20112114_BG1.jpg

Two tracking: http://i.ytimg.com/vi/wNcuTZm_uLw/maxresdefault.jpg

Feed america truck:

<http://www.cadillacnews.com/ww2/photos2/photos/2012/09/12/51610.jpg>

Free lunch:

http://www.cadillacnews.com/news_story/?story_id=1810748&issue=20130713&year=2013#prettyPhoto

Spaghetti dinner:

<http://www.boysvilletexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ssssppppaaaaa-370x270.png>

Relay for life: <http://www.cadillacnews.com/ww2/photos2/photos/2014/06/20/70480.jpg>