



"Wow"

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50 HOUR SLAM

photos by Kinetic Energy Productions

The pressure. The stress. The time crunch. The entertainment!

by Blythe Thimsen

Pull back the curtains of time and picture it: You're back in school; you look up at the clock and realized you only have five minutes until class is over, but you still have three paragraphs left to write for your essay – on the final!

Your heart pounds and you start to shake as the thoughts and ideas tumble out of your mind so fast your pencil wielding hand can hardly keep up. Your hand cramps and spasms from gripping the pencil while writing so fast, leaving a graphite streak on the page. There's no time to erase, but you have to clear the last few precious lines of space, so you flip the pencil, aggressively scrub out the dark mark, rotate the pencil back and resume the power writing. You look up.

Three minutes left.

Finding an inner power source, you kick it into overdrive and the pencil in your hand's death grip flies across the page with speed and angst that results in a barely legible script. Did you get everything in, you wonder as you scan your last paragraph. You're almost there. One minute.

What is the word you are looking for in the last sentence? Your

mind blanks and you panic. You foot taps against the floor like a woodpecker on a tree.

Tick, tick, tick. The seconds are slipping away.

Ah ha! The words for your final sentence come to you and you scrawl out the last words, as the teacher calls out: "Time! Pencils down."

You slump in your chair and breathe a gulp of air as your heart pounds in your chest and you push your paper toward the edge of the desk to be collected. You made it – barely, but you made it.

If you're looking for a surefire way to relive that same stress and heart-pounding panic induced by a timed final, the 50 Hour Slam is your best option. You'll be tortured, you'll be stressed, but in the end, you'll love it!

The 50 Hour Slam is a film competition and festival open to all filmmakers in the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene area. The festival encourages new and emerging independent artists as well as the more established filmmakers of the region.

Filmmakers are given 50 hours to complete a three-to-six minute movie, from the writing and development process all the way to the final editing stage. It is 50 hours of no-sleep, no-rest, just nonstop

THANK YOU!

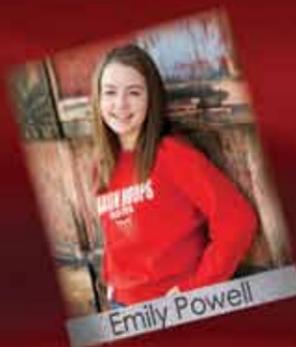
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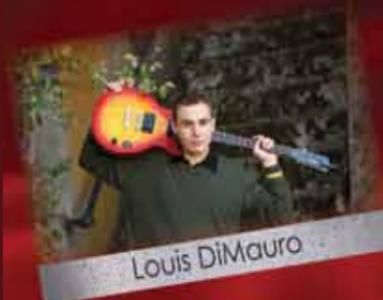
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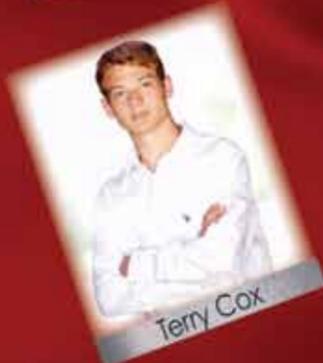
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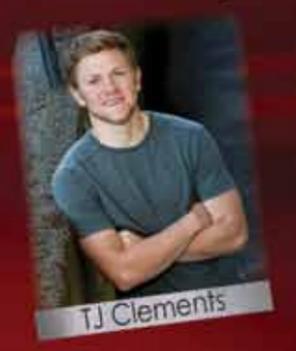
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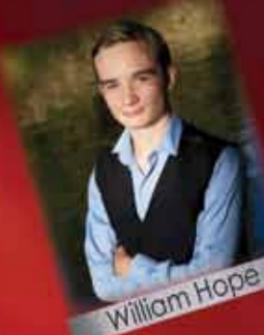
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filmmaking, with filmmakers using every last second to write, direct, shoot and edit the films.

This year's 50 hours of filming took place in late March, and the big reveal of films will be on May 2, 2015 at The Bing Crosby Theater.

The official kick off for the Slam was on Friday March 27, 2015. Doors at the KSPS studio on Spokane's South Hill opened at 6:30 p.m. and closed exactly one hour later, at 7:30, sealing in the filmmaking teams so they could get a review of the official rules and fill out an official entry form.

Skeptical that some may get an early start on their films, doing a little pre-writing and filming? Organizers have made that difficult, by adding secret criteria that need to be incorporated into the films. One year those items included the Spokane River and a historic building within the city. This year, they have to include a business in Spokane that has been operating for more than 100 years, as part of the script, location or storyline. Once the secret criteria were revealed to them, the magic began!

Then, just like when taking a timed test, the filmmakers were facing the pressure of the clock ticking and precious minutes flying by as they scrambled to create a "from scratch film."

The competitors were encouraged to experiment and push their talents to create a unique and entertaining piece for their entry.

For those who were closer to "beginner" rather than "seasoned" on the filmmaker spectrum, a lack of equipment was not enough to keep them away. Wanting the Slam to be open to anyone who is interested in participating, 50 Hour Slam organizers partnered with the Spokane Public Library to provide camera equipment.

According to the Library, "Back in early 2011, the Library collaborated with TinCan on a Federal Stimulus Grant which provided high definition video equipment among other things. Each camera bag includes an HD video camera, shotgun microphone, Pixela software and corresponding cables. Also available are wireless microphones, tripods and boom poles for the shotgun microphones."

Card carrying members of the Library can check out the equipment anytime throughout the year, and Slam participants were able to take advantage of the equipment, during the competition, in order to level the playing field for all filmmakers, and allow everyone who wanted to make a film the chance to do so.

A panel of seven independent judges from throughout the community judges the films, and the top 15 movies will be screened for an audience at the Bing Crosby Theater on Saturday May 2, 2015. Lest you think this is a typical night at the movies, guess again. There will be live bands playing, as well as beer, wine, food and prizes. "We want the public to come to the screening," says Juan Mas, one of the founding organizers of the event, now in its fifth year. "It's a celebration of Spokane's artists."

As part of celebrating the artists, audience members at the May 2 screening will be able to participate in an audience favorite vote, and the films will later be available online to vote for viral favorite. Last year, KSPS premiered the films on their television station, taking them from the big screen to the small screen, and exposing them to a broader audience.

As the event has grown in participation - both from filmmakers and those who attend screenings - it was necessary to find a location that could hold the event. Until last year, it had been held at the Magic Lantern Theater, but the event soon outgrew the space. In 2014, there were 36 films that were completed within the 50 hours.

"We bit the bullet last year and made the move to The Bing," says Mas. "Jerry and Mike were fantastic," he says, of Jerry Dicker, owner of The Bing, and Michael Smith, the manager. They brought in over 400 people for the event. Maybe this year, you'll be there too. 

For more information, visit www.50hourslam.com

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