



my first holiday in Washington D.C.

Welcome to the new and improved Exposure! I've been hard at work all through January jazzing up my monthly newsletter to include the most requested features: more photos, larger photos, more links, and different writing in addition to my updates. I've improved the style, overrun the print margins since most are reading this online, and added tons of features. What features, you ask?

Lets begin with this first page, where the old square photo of the month has been replaced with a larger resolution version. I have also included this issue at a glance [right] to help you sort through the double-sized issue. That's right, every issue of Expsoure will now be a nice round four pages instead of the traditional two.

While some of my readers are family and friends, I've an increasing number of fellow travellers interested in reading about my happenings, so I've added the "places" section that

showcases some places I've been. This month's section highlights my thoughts on the world's largest fish market, Tsukiji. The full story can be found online on my website, www.unlikelysquiggle.com/blog

The other request I often get is a compendium of the places I am on the web, so the final page of Exposure is now dedicated to the highlights from my online activity, a sort of social network roundup where you can find the books I'm reading and music I'm listening to as well as the food I'm making, the places I'm going, the things I'm saying, the videos I'm uploading, and a longer opinion piece on something I've been thinking about this month. This month it's the new social aspect of gmail, Google Buzz. Let me know your thoughts on the subject too, my contact information is on the last page at the bottom. You can also get a full list of ways to contact me and places online to find me at my site. As always, I hope this issue finds you warm and well.

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in this issue

in review



I had a wonderful set of holidays spent at home for a much needed period of rest and relaxation. There was some merrymaking of course, and we were lucky enough to have a white Christmas in Virginia.

I also attended a Thievery Corporation concert at the famed 9:30 club. It was an awesome show made extra special since they're from here, and for someone who's been a longtime Thievery Corp fan, about time I saw them live. If you like world beats and don't mind lounge music, you should definitely give them a listen. The Mirror Conspiracy is my favourite of their albums.

I did end up watching the Saints win the Superbowl (Reggie Bush was my favourite player back when he played for the USC Trojans), but much more exciting has been Manchester United's rise to the top of the English Premiere League tables. It was no looking good at the start of the season and I've been pleasantly surprised to find my team back on top, having beaten out Chelsea AND Arsenal.

current news



It's been a snowy couple of days lately in DC, with about two feet of fresh powder appearing overnight affectionately dubbed "snowpocalypse" and "oversnow" by the media. Still, I survived the blizzard conditions and managed to stay warm and dry. I have enjoyed having four seasons this year and don't mind the winter that much. I do miss the sunshine of Southern California though and look forward to springtime, when I can walk round the city again.

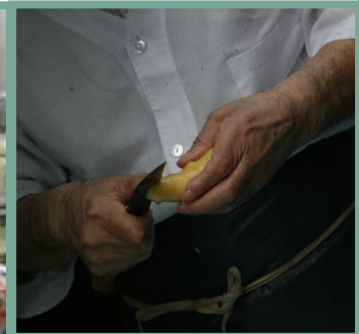
So with all this time holed up in my apartment I've been doing a bunch of paperwork and work online as well, including putting the finishing touches on this newsletter redesign. I've also re-designed my website to a better integrated layout and, now that I'm a coding veteran have begun more web design work on the side. It's kept me busy for sure and certainly made me feel accomplished. Don't worry, there's plenty more to do and I've got a whole notebook filled plans for improvement. I must say, winter is a good season for creativity!

coming up



Coming up I'll hopefully be doing some more travelling. After a hectic November I took some time to stay put, but now that I've regrouped I'm ready to go out and see the world again. I've been invited to Japan this summer to do some pretty cool stuff and I've a mind to go, so July will be an epic month for me as I return to my favourite place on earth: Tokyo. Before I head off on another Japanese adventure I might be taking a ski trip up to Maryland for a long weekend escape and sometime after all the mountains close I'll be doing some overnight camping in the region, most likely Great Falls and back to the ever beautiful Shanandoah mountains.

I've also the great fortune of a few friends and family members coming to visit me in DC so I'll have my hands delightfully full with showing off my favourite coffeeshops, restaurants, and places to wander in the area. Who knows, I may even discover some new favourites to add to my list during new explorations of my own city.



places: Tsukiji Fish Market

We all remember our first trip to Tsukiji (pronounced “ski-gee”) fish market. In Tokyo it’s a right of passage, a tourist destination, and a local icon simultaneously. Where else can you buy a 85kg tuna for millions of yen? Where else do you have to chew your still-wriggling octopus tentacle before you swallow to ensure it doesn’t strangle you on the way down? And where else do you have to wear wellingtons year round?

It isn’t just the world’s largest, busiest, and most prestigious fish market, Tsukiji is a Japanese landmark. It’s the most readily accessible glimpse into the intense world of the Japanese work ethic, filled with zooming carts, white-gloved traffic managers, and more men smoking, talking, carting six cardboard boxes, throwing fish, shouting, spearing yellowfin whole, and trying to get you to buy a gross of their tomatoes. It’s a shoppers paradise, and it all happens before 4am.

Tsukiji isn’t just known for its impressive variety of seafood, or for the rapidity with which business transpires, though both are awe-inspiring in their own right. In my opinion, Tsukiji stands as a reflection of so much blatant Nippon-ism: the tireless working man’s vigour, the fisherman’s pride, the massive oceanic bounty readily bought for consumption from seaweeds to roes, well-oiled maneuvers that keep a large-scale machine running without hiccup, and of course, the sheer masses and palpably formidable presence of the Japanese. Seeing how much and how many different types of fish the Japanese eat is like seeing a microcosm of how big the country is, how many people it must support, and where it excels in the world arena. The tuna bidding wars are a sight to behold, and remind me of just how cutthroat the culinary world can be, as I watched several tourists being removed for touching a tuna too many.

Tsukiji market — and I mean all of the market, from the political fish trades inside to the garden-variety produce outside to the passerby merely glancing off the outer stratosphere of planet Tsukiji without even knowing how deep the rabbit hole goes — it’s a display of mastery, nothing more. The precision of fish sales, the exacting nature in which boxes make their way through the fireman’s drill off of the farmer’s truck, all of it is a demonstration with such everyday luster that if you aren’t paying attention, you might be convinced it’s nothing special. But it is something special. It’s this little hub of activity that turns pre-dawn glow into a boiler fire and ushers in a new day amid elbowing and elbow grease.

Read more online at www.unlikelysqluggle.com

opinion: Google Buzz

Only two months in and 2010 has been a rather big month for technology, whether it was the long-awaited announcement of Apple's iPad or the official word on Square's release. Perhaps most unexpected was Google Buzz, a sort of online compendium that lets you link up multiple social networks and update your status. To those in the know it may sound like a twitter duplicate, but that may be precisely why Buzz ends up being a success.

If you're a gmail user you've probably already noticed the new icon sitting below your inbox button, and for a tech giant with its fingers in as many cookie jars as Google's, using pre-existing platforms to roll out your product to thousands of users overnight is a pretty brilliant idea, if you ask me. My favourite Buzz feature is the auto-follow. Sure not everyone I email with is someone I want to follow (or even less likely, someone I want to follow

me), but not having to seek out those whose opinions I value definitely gave Buzz an edge.

My problems with Buzz are major, namely that it's now become one more thing to check. If Buzz was just the public profiles without the inbox integration that feels strangely similar to an RSS reader, then I think I could really get behind it. Maybe it will catch on, but right now my problem with Buzz is the same problem I have with the rest of social networking. I'm all over the internet (witness this very page as evidence) but the people I care about and interact with in real life rarely take part in these online communities at all, let alone the same ones I'm on. Buzz is just another social network that may exist for my current contacts, but will probably only be used by the same community that's already behind social media, people I like but don't know in real life.

It's the same reason I'm on Gowalla instead of Foursquare. Social media is the hot new feature to roll out, but I contend that if your product can't stand on its own without the use of social media, your product pretty much sucks. Twitter works not because so many people read it, but because so many people don't. You can update your status without having to befriend anyone, you can have last.fm track your music without having to find musical neighbours you're compatible with, and you can post videos without having to comment on anyone else's in order for it to be watched. As a great an innovation for social media Buzz is, it strikes me as worthless until your network kicks in and starts buzzing.

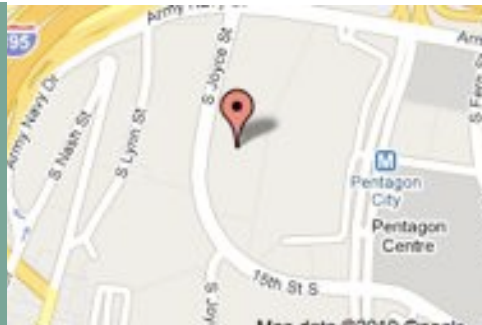
try out Buzz for yourself [here](#)
or follow [my Buzz](#)

latest anthem



"Bluff Spirit" by Kirinji (via [last.fm](#))

new spot



Siné Irish bar and grille with 1/2 priced burgers (via [gowalla](#))

random quip

Making friends with your neighbours is a good idea; when the apocalypse comes you'll have good conversation until you eat Mrs Nextdoor's dog

regarding the snow-pocalypse (via [twitter](#))

snapshot



the checkout line in Harris Teeter the day before the snow hit (via [yfrog](#))

foodstuffs



cornbread stuffing and other goodies for Christmas (via [flickr](#))

good read



Jan Wong (via [goodreads](#))