



# The High School View

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## Photography brings cultures closer

By Naomi Pallas

For the first time in the history of the regional high school, our students are sharing their day-to-day lives with students from around the world. Using photography, writing, audio, video, and other types of media, from midnight to midnight on Tuesday November 10, students from more than 30 countries documented their lives at school, home, and anywhere else they ventured on that day for the One Day in the Life project.

High school photography teacher Chris Baer has involved photography classes in the One Day project. One Day is a part of the iEARN organization, the world's largest non-profit global network that allows teachers and students to collaborate on projects using technology.

Mr. Baer discovered iEARN six years ago when his wife, Janice Baer, had the idea of writing a government grant for students and teachers about how to do autobiographical documentary photography in a classroom. "I added the idea of doing an international photography exchange," said Mr. Baer.

He and his wife won and carried out the grant in 2004. The photography classes did an e-mail exchange with a school in Russia for the past few years.

Last summer, Mr. Baer was awarded a ten-day training and conference at the Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. The trip was sponsored by iEARN and the US Department of State. Mr. Baer gave a lecture on the project at the university. "About 50 teachers attended. That really made the program snowball," Mr. Baer said.

"When I was in Morocco [last summer], I attended Mr. Baer's presentation, which was amazing. I found it to be the perfect project to let students become creative in photography and writing," said Yemeni teacher Thekra Alsabahi, whose class at the Alquds school has been exchanging pictures with the regional high school since September and has also participated in One Day in the Life last week.

"We may not be able to go shoot some snaps in Yemen very easily, but it's easy to ask our Yemeni penpals to do so on our behalf," said Mr. Baer.



IEARN PHOTO

Students of the Alquds school in Yemen line up outside in the morning for their Muslim prayer songs.

The exchange project has also been a way to break down barriers with less familiar cultures, which is a valuable opportunity for students. "There is a lot of stereotyping of Muslims in this country," said Mr. Baer. "I wanted to help educate our students and battle some of the destructive stereotypes by giving our students a chance to befriend some students their own age from Muslim countries."

"I like exchanging my photographs with Yemen," said regional high school junior Nicole Pachico. "I'm learning a lot about the country just by looking at what they send us."

To practice for the main project last Tuesday, the students have taken pictures of activities such as "morning routine" and "mealtime" throughout the semester. They also prepared with the help of photojournalist Susan Copen Oken, whose work has appeared in Life Magazine and Sports Illustrated, as well as the 1986 best-selling photo book, "A Day in the Life of America." Mrs. Oken critiqued and discussed each student's work individually during class time.

"[Through the project] I have learned about some of the culture in other countries," said junior Lief Iverson. "I've seen some of the food

other people eat and the styles of houses they live in."

The students are currently working on editing and uploading pictures of their days on November 10. Over 300 photos have been uploaded to the iEARN website (<http://iEARN.org>) since the day of the project. Mr. Baer will also exhibit some work on a website he began (<http://onedayinthelife.org>) and is trying to arrange a show at the Featherstone Art Gallery of the One Day results next spring. He also plans to make the project a once-a-semester event, and repeat it in April 2010, with the aid of iEARN, Pakistan, and Yemen team members, as well as his teaching colleagues in Bangladesh and Morocco.

News of the project has appeared in the Pakistani English-language paper The Nation, an Omani paper, and the Dutch newspaper Seven Days (along with several photos from the regional high school), and will possibly be featured in the US government International Education Week in Washington D.C. this week.

"[I wanted] to give the students an audience for their autobiographical work," said Mr. Baer. "Our boring lives become much more interesting when viewed through the eyes of a student of another culture."

## Peace and war visit school

By Eric Fletcher

The study of peace and war, while important, is never easy. Last week, high school students had the opportunity to learn from Vineyard service members about global issues, benefits, and hardships of military service in a gathering organized by history teacher Elaine Weintraub.

Students were greeted and lectured by three Vineyard veterans: Jim Bishop, who served as a Marine in the Vietnam War from 1968-1970; Richard Monaco, who joined the United States Army in 1981 and participated in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom; and Tom Rancich, who spent his time in the military as a deep sea diver for the Navy.

The veterans answered questions and told stories about their military experiences.

Mr. Bishop told the students that he joined the Marine Corps in 1968, even though he had originally planned to join the Air Force. One student asked what Mr. Bishop's life would be like had he

joined the Air Force. Mr. Bishop said, "I would most likely work a nine to five job as a technician and never would have gotten to go to Vietnam. Going to Vietnam gave me a different outlook on life, and not going would have made me a completely different person."

Mr. Monaco joined the U.S Army for one sole purpose: he wanted to make a difference. He participated in Operation Desert Storm and helped liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein. Mr. Monaco said, "I was in awe. It just felt so rewarding [to liberate Kuwait]." Mr. Monaco also participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom in both the transportation unit, sending petroleum and ammunition up Iraqi highways for 14 months, in 2005 and to help rebuild Baghdad in 2006.

Mr. Rancich fought in two wars, the war on drugs, and the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan while in the Navy. He originally started as a deep-sea diver and bomb disarmer, and while in Afghanistan he was appointed to

take command of his troops. When asked about which place in the world he enjoyed the most, Mr. Rancich explained that South America (mainly Bolivia) was his favorite place that he visited. He said, "Everyone in every country is just trying to get by. However, it's the lunatics that ruin it for everyone and give the country a bad reputation."

One of the first questions asked was how Mr. Bishop, Mr. Monaco, and Mr. Rancich felt about Hollywood's take on war movies. Mr. Monaco said, "[The films] hit home, but it's still fake. Documentaries tend to be more realistic and incite a deeper reaction."

The three veterans answered a variety of questions, from how many medals and ribbons they received, to whether they felt the United States government was giving the military the tools necessary to succeed. All three men said no to that question.

When asked if they regret their decision to join the military all three said they have no regrets. In fact, they are proud of what they accomplished.

## Football homecoming starts new tradition this weekend



PHOTO BY TAYLOR SMITH

Varsity football coach Donald Herman readies his team for the homecoming game against Brighton High School which will take place this Saturday with JV at 10 a.m and Varsity at 1 p.m. The homecoming dance will be held at the Edgartown Yacht Club from 7-11 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

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