



The High School View

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Volcano slows but does not stop exchange

By Kira Shipway

The volcanic eruption in Iceland on April 15 left 17 regional high school students

and 4 chaperones temporarily stranded in Ireland, before the group was allowed to continue on to England to meet up with their exchange partners.

Once in Ireland, teachers quickly organized a trip to Dublin center and a tour of the coast, attempting to make the most of the natural disaster.

History teacher and trip chaperone Corrine Kurtz said, "We were stuck in Ireland, so I thought

we may as well enjoy it."

Many students took a liking to the surprising change of events. "I was frustrated and annoyed in the beginning because I was so sleep deprived," said sophomore Ambika Datta. "But once I got a little rest, I was able really to enjoy Ireland, and by the end I didn't want to leave. It was splendid being able to see two countries in one trip."

Math teacher Catherine DeGrandpre said, "Dublin was a blast. Improvising was a little stressful at first but other than that it was great to be able to see Ireland."

This was the third year students participated in the England Ex-

change with students from Shelly College. Last October the England students spent a week on Martha's Vineyard, where they stayed at their exchange partner's homes and took bus tours of the Island.

During April break, students traveled to Shelly to experience the history and culture of England. "From a teacher's perspective the trip was fantastic. The host teachers in England put together a really well-balanced trip that combined education and fun," Ms. Kurtz said. "It was certainly a learning experience for everyone involved."

On this recent trip, Martha's Vineyard and British students became closer friends. By the end of the trip no one wanted to leave. "The trip was amazing," said Shelly College student Olivia Esme-Paris Parker. "The exchange couldn't have gone any better. I got along really well with my partner, Nina [Levin]."

Junior Nina Levin, who also went on the exchange last year said, "It was the best trip I've ever been on."

Despite the setback in Ireland, students and teachers alike had a successful time abroad. "It was definitely the most interesting trip yet," Ms. Kurtz said. "You know, a volcano in Iceland, that doesn't happen every day."



PHOTO BY KIRA SHIPWAY

Regional high junior Nina Levin (second from left) stands outside of a telephone booth in London with students from Britain.

Open mic opens voices

By Emily Goldthwait and Caitlyn Clark

"Today at about 12 in the afternoon, I ventured out to the Thrift Shop. With \$60 in my back pocket, I went in ready to spend," read regional high school senior Maggie Howard at a recent Writer's Open Mic Night at Bunch of Grapes Bookstore.

"I was very comfortable with reading because I felt like I was in a community that accepts events like this," Maggie said. "I felt like everyone was experimenting so it was a nice setting to read in, and I plan to attend every Tuesday night reading. I think that everyone who is into writing should either read or listen because it's not formal enough to be scary, it's actually pretty informal and anyone who wants to build up confidence can benefit from reading."

On Tuesday nights from 7:15 to 8:30, Writer's Open Mic allows people to share their work. Those who are interested should arrive at 7 p.m. to place their names on the list.

The new organizers of Open Mic are Charter School juniors Jess Dupon and Hannah VanDerlaske. Previous organizers were Island authors Kate Feiffer and Nicole Galland who originally planned a three-week session.

"It was experimental and they had no idea how many people would attend. But since the first week, the

sign-up sheet has been completely full each night," said Hannah. "The first time I read I was in complete writer's block and didn't know what to do next. But then afterwards, people gave me feedback, told me what they liked, and all of a sudden, I could write again."

Open Mic Night is designed for any age from high school to adult. Anyone from students, former teachers, grandmothers, and Island authors can be seen and heard reading every Tuesday. "We have published authors and first-time readers alike," said Jess. "We've had transcripts of psychic trances, biographies, poetry, blogs, short autobiographical pieces, short stories, essays, racy love stories, love letters, novels, and so many more that have been read."

Open Mic will continue throughout the remainder of the school year and the upcoming summer season. "You're supported by this group of people that want to listen to your work and are excited to hear what you have to say," said Jess. "It's one of the only chances I have to read in front of people."

Said Hannah, "During the weeks that I've read I've gotten lots of compliments, advice, and have had conversations with people who were genuinely interested in my work. I hope that lots of people start coming, and also continue to come. If you need any incentive, we have food."

High school helps to birth Amazing Baby

By Julia Sadowski

Regional high graduate Will Roan, lead singer for the band Amazing Baby, recently celebrated the release of the band's debut album, Rewild.

With the Island's quiet and sometimes desolate winters often driving high school kids to improvise their own means of entertainment, Will had plenty of time to learn how to amuse himself creatively and hone his musical talent.

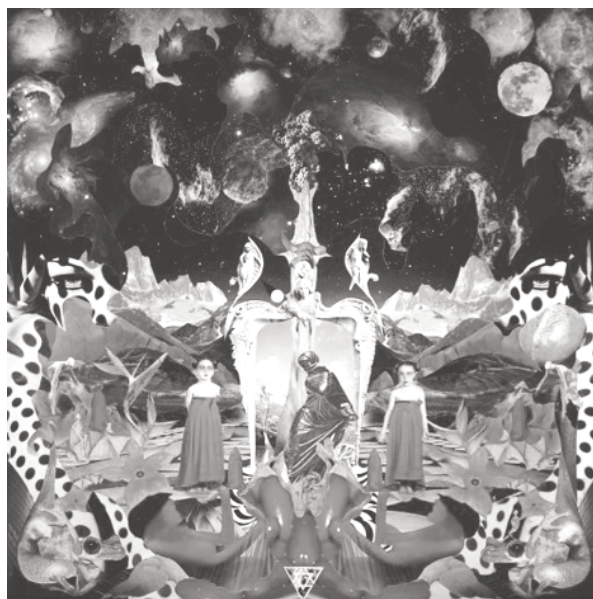
"When I moved to Martha's Vineyard, I had zero friends. Thus, I spent a lot of time to myself listening to music, and teaching myself how to write songs," said Will. "That was really important. Had I been doing the normal thing, like partying with friends, I may not have learned all I needed to. That said, when I eventually did fall in with a group of dudes, they really supported me musically."

Of course, dedication and practice are necessary for success but good guidance, such as that which he received from high

school English teachers David Wilson and Keith Dodge, was also crucial for Will to achieve all that he has in his music career. "Mr. Wilson was great. He is a huge rock and roll fan, and we immediately bonded over Lou Reed. Mr. Dodge was an excellent guy, with really cool music tastes and helped make writing a primary focus of mine," said Will. "Dodge cut me a few really important breaks, and kept on me to work hard. I owe a lot of my youthful optimism to him."

His teachers were not the only ones aware of Will's desire to develop a career in music. "I was at Will's high school jazz band concert and all these girls were cheering for him," said Will's brother Alex. "That's when I knew he was going to pursue music."

There were also community out-



Amazing Baby's 2009 album Rewild cover, designed by Will Roan, is now available at Aboveground Records.

lets available for Will during his high school year on the Island, including Aboveground Records, where he worked.

"I remember he did a thing at the Pops concert which was very ambitious and he played the pi-

ano and sang. He was really going for it," said Michael Barnes, owner of Aboveground Records. "It wasn't the same thing that everyone else has done. He certainly had a very eclectic taste in music, but that was the first time I heard him really playing his own stuff and he kind of went from there."

After graduating from the high school in 2002 and attending Bard College, Will had no money and no job, but he knew he wanted to be involved in music. "I graduated college and moved to New York. I was broke, and worked some pretty miserable jobs, but luckily I didn't pack it in and just focus on jobs and money," Will said. "I made a bunch of friends in the music scene, and would write and record with my main friend Simon O'Connor after work. It was an escape from the harsh reality of post-grad life. I think that's why we tried and worked so hard. We had to 'do' something."

After his hard work and lack of

a steady income, Will's perseverance did pay off. He has toured in America, Europe, and Japan. "My life is crazy now. I've traveled the world, met and performed for my idols, made out with some pretty impressive women. I'm 26, so I've had a bit of time to expand my life."

Still though, Will credits the Vineyard as having provided him with an experience that contributes to who he is now. "In my heart, I never left—just kidding. I moved to MV when I was a junior in high school and I stayed connected through college. Though I really didn't live on MV for very long, I consider it a real defining part of my life."

With Amazing Baby's 2009 debut album Rewild now in stores, Will is looking forward to the band's future as well as keeping the past in mind as a reminder of where he started. Said Will, "I'm currently working on a new Amazing Baby album, which is exciting. I am also recording a solo record, which I'm not sure what I'm going to do with yet. I just keep busy. Right now, my only job is to create art. That's an incredible thing. It's a rare luxury, so I'm trying not to waste any of it."

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