

# Spring Break in Iceland: Lessons Abound From the Glacier

By Lisa duBusc Miller

I spent my 47th birthday feeling insignificant in Iceland. As we walked on glaciers, stood inside rift valleys created by continental tectonic plate shifts and watched geysers blow three stories high, we were reminded that the Earth is still very much in charge.

Eyjafjallajökull volcano caused a two-week halt to air traffic in 2010 when it erupted. If an eruption were to occur like the one in 1875, air traffic and satellite communications would come to a halt for over a year, according to our guide. Iceland's unpredictability, both below and above ground clearly matters.

Our trip was inspired by our son, a junior at King School in Stamford, Conn., who was accepted to attend the Global Student Leaders Summit on the Science of Sustainable Energy in Iceland over his spring break.

While our son worked feverishly at the summit, debating the best long-term sustainable energy solutions for the planet, we gave our two teenage girls virtually the same itinerary, but without the Icelandic Presidential-presiding and the standing-room-only debates at the Hilton.

We started the trip off by easing jetlag in the Blue Lagoon, where we floated in the naturally fed 102-degree milky blue water and marveled at its geological magnificence. The high silica and salt content made

our skin silky smooth and our attitudes improved, so much so that we sprung around like hidden elves (huldufolk) among the spongy and moist moss-covered lava rocks.

The next day was March 20, my birthday, and it was a 17-hour day spent with Karri, our Icelandic guide from IcelandGoTours, a sweetheart and a lifelong mountain climber. He took us by fat-tired Landcruiser along the entire southern coast, where we oohed and aahed at every turn. We made it as far as Glacier Lagoon (Jökulsárlón). The raw beauty and high winds of this glacier-fed lake full of seals and icebergs literally blew us away.

This was an extremely aggressive day but certainly a memorable one. Karri brought us to Svinafellsjökull glacier. While we were admiring it, he said to check out his Facebook page to see the dramatic change in the glacier since Christmas. I was shocked. After spending the afternoon with my new glacier and friend, this felt personal. I felt more protective than when I'd just heard of "glacier receding" in the past.

Karri had tried for two consecutive long nights to help us find the Northern Lights. Bless his heart. We left without having seen them. But those long hours of staring into the dark skies with hope and wonder put us in our place and connected us in powerful ways to the earth and to our kids.

Our final day, we went out on a total

high: ascending by Nordourflug helicopter allowing an aerial view of Iceland's largest waterfall, then touching gently down on Lanjokull Glacier. We wandered around it feeling somewhere between astronauts and angels.

We arrived back in Reykjavik to ascend the hallmark tower of Hallgrímskirkja church. Gazing out at all the colorful houses and sunny snow-capped peaks, it felt like we were inside a fairy tale or a snow globe. Either way, we did not want to leave it, in spite of the omnipresent sulfur smells and fickle wet weather.

When we did leave, I realized how full of clean water, fresh fish and pure air we'd become. But just to be safe, I brought a can back with me, appropriately entitled "Fresh Icelandic air." If only it was that easy to carry Iceland's ingenuity and sensibility back home to New York. But the trip had proved to be an awakening, as Iceland created such geological and climate awareness in us all.

I boarded the plane with a few final thoughts on this primal, almost prehistoric, nation that's come a long way from its Viking past to its feminist present. With free healthcare, free education, almost no crime, high life expectancy, low barriers to entry, a high literacy rate and very low taxes, Iceland has ample appeal. Add on to that, a robust outdoor lifestyle, adorable Icelandic horses to ride, whales to watch, mountains to climb, plus the serenity and health



Sitting by a glacier in Iceland.

benefits of year-round outdoor bathing, and it certainly makes a lot of sense to live here.

And someday, I just might. But for now, I'm vowing to return, if only to chase down those elusive Northern Lights.

*Lisa duBusc Miller lived in London, Thailand and Vietnam before working on Wall Street for several years, where she was a published sovereign credit analyst. She has traveled the world and has written about her adventures for various publications. Miller lives in Rye with her family, which includes three teenagers and two dogs.*

## Longtime Burns Supporter to Hold Benefit Concert at Theater

By Neal Rentz

Jazz guitarist and singer-songwriter John Pizzarelli has had many encores over the past eight years at the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville.

Pizzarelli performed at the inaugural Jazz Sessions series in 2008, and has appeared numerous times since while being a dedicated supporter of the theater.

"He has been such a presence here at the Burns," said Director of Development Judy Exton.

Pizzarelli will help the film center celebrate its 15th anniversary on Thursday, June 16, when he performs in the concert "Encore: The Best of John Pizzarelli," which will benefit the Burns' film, education and outreach programs. That will be followed by an anniversary party in the Jane Peck Gallery with Pizzarelli.

Pizzarelli, who is also a band leader and songwriter, has recorded with music superstars James Taylor, Rosemary Clooney, George Shearing and others. He recorded "Midnight McCartney," an album of solo cover songs from the former Beatle, at the film center's Media Arts Lab.

Pizzarelli has performed on several occasions at the Burns, but that is only part of the New York City resident's roles, Exton said. He is a musician in residence and has often worked with students at the lab.



LYNDA SHENKMAN CURTIS PHOTO

The fundraising performance "Encore: The Best of John Pizzarelli" will be held on June 16 at the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville.

"He's helped to bring other jazz musicians here," Exton said. "He wants to help us whenever he can."

Tickets are \$100 for Jacob Burns members and \$125 for non-members, all of which is tax deductible, except for \$20.

For more information visit, [www.burnsfilmcenter.org](http://www.burnsfilmcenter.org) or e-mail [mtepe@burnsfilmcenter.org](mailto:mtepe@burnsfilmcenter.org).

### THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz  
By Edward Goralski

**A Whitman Sampler.** American poet and essayist Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, on Long Island. Whitman's best known work "Leaves of Gras" is a classic of American poetry. His free verse poems celebrated all of life including subjects that were considered taboo at the time. See if you'll be celebrating after you do this week's quiz based on a sample of words from the poems of Whitman.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>tarry (v.)</b>      | A) to make ragged           | B) delay              | C) stain          |
| 2. <b>souse (v.)</b>      | A) to obtain                | B) talk back          | C) drench         |
| 3. <b>limpid (adj.)</b>   | A) agile                    | B) weary              | C) clear          |
| 4. <b>audacity (adj.)</b> | A) willing to take risks    | B) marked by grandeur | C) giving hope    |
| 5. <b>abase (v.)</b>      | A) to put an end to         | B) lower in esteem    | C) make shorter   |
| 6. <b>yawp (n.)</b>       | A) an urgent longing        | B) a sudden pull      | C) loud speech    |
| 7. <b>apropos (adj.)</b>  | A) fitting and to the point | B) lacking wings      | C) nearly correct |
| 8. <b>esculent (adj.)</b> | A) free flowing             | B) edible             | C) glowing        |

- ANSWERS:**
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| 1. B. To delay or be tardy in acting or doing  | 5. B. To lower in rank, office, prestige, or esteem              |
| 2. C. To plunge in liquid; to drench; saturate | 6. C. Loud, rough speech; a raucous noise                        |
| 3. C. Clear or transparent                     | 7. A. Fitting and to the point; appropriate; pertinent; relevant |
| 4. A. Willing to take bold risks               | 8. B. Edible   |