

## TRAVEL

## Ashley Clark's year to remember

Martha MacIntyre

Reporter

Cemmenti is an exchange program that focuses on the themes of migration, cultural identity and transmigration. It also offers a student the wonderful experience to go overseas.

This year for Ashley Clark is different because she finds herself studying half way around the world as part of the Cemmenti program.

Clark was in disbelief when she found out she was accepted to the program.

"Obviously I was super excited! It was a fairly thorough application process, so I had no idea what my chances were going to be."

Although she was originally supposed to study in Greece, she could not be more happy learning, exploring and studying in Malta. She is also living with fellow UPEI student Brent Slater, which has really cut down costs of living and has helped them to escape living in a residence.

For Ashley, her time in Malta is going by so quickly.

"I'm really enjoying it here so far. I've been here for 2 months so far. I'm still getting used to some of the differences, but I feel like I am starting to settle in."

Malta is a little island in the Mediterranean in between Italy and Africa. Malta is one twentieth the size of P.E.I., with 4 times the population, and everything gravitates towards the coast. Everything is mostly condensed into one area.

Malta is a really Catholic culture. Every town has about five churches. The houses usually have names instead of numbers, and are often named after biblical figures. All buses in Malta also have religious slogans, crucifixes and pictures of Jesus and Mary prominently displayed on them. Easter is more important than Christmas. They have huge, crazy festivals, passion plays and re-enactments to celebrate.

Clark said she was amazed at the amount of PDA in Malta.

"Kids live with their parents here until they are married. They don't really get their transitional period when they are living alone," Clark said. "The streets are flooded with teenagers making out all over the place, because they have nowhere to go. Seriously, people are straddling each other and dry-humping all over the place, especially in Valletta, the capital city."

Clark recalled one time when she ate lunch in the presence of a couple who weren't shy about their love.

"I ate lunch at a bench at school directly across from a couple who made out the entire time. I will never complain about PDA again!"

People from Malta are also not used to



MacBeth and the 3 witches (Me, Jessica, Josef, Daniel)

Clark photo

cold weather.

"It's a dead give away your from a foreign country if you can handle the weather. They think winter weather is 10 degrees Celsius! I am running around in t-shirts, taking the bus with people in winter jackets! I guess they knew I wasn't from here," she said

The Maltese people are also very eager to show off their homes.

"I have been to the fortified cities and a few other places so far. Every time anyone from here finds out I am from away they spout out places I just have to go."

The women are insanely stylish, however the men are really aggressive.

"In P.E.I., obvious things like ignoring someone would give them the hint you are not interested... but here, unless you say "Listen Pal, leave me alone I have a boyfriend!" they will not leave you alone. I think they figure if you are single they can wear you down eventually."

Incase your wondering girls, Guys are HOT in Malta!

"Maltese men are dark complected and some of them have really pretty blue eyes. There are also a lot of Italian, Arab, and African men, most of them are gorgeous."

Clark said she was lucky to have connections in Malta before she came.

"Sarah Tabone and Karl Cassar were at UPEI last year as part of the program

and we became friends. They were both really helpful in getting me set up in this new country and helping me make many new friends."

She has already made so many memories in Malta in the two months that she has been there.

However, the funniest thing she has done was being involved in the Carnival in Gozo.

"The whole week before lent they have a carnival here full of parades, floats, and many, many parties. I dressed up like Macbeth (It kind of felt like hal-

loween) and with a bunch of my friends we walked the streets of Nadur for the night. There were bands and DJ's set up everywhere, with people dancing, shouting, throwing things and grabbing at each other everywhere! It was an awesome time," Clark recalled.

Clark will be back in Canada in mid-July (After doing some travelling through Scotland, England and Wales!).

Anyone interested in getting involved in the Cemmenti exchange program can talk to Lisa Chilton who, is the main coordinator for UPEI.



A Fortified City

Clark photo