

By COLIN SELBO - cselbo@lakecountyjournal.com

Molehill trying to make itself into a mountain

Every band that wants to make a name for itself sees the potential to grow and improve on its abilities.

There are few bands, however, that speak to that potential every time they say their name.

Molehill, a band that originated with Libertyville High School graduate Peter Manhart, got its name out of the idea that it could one day grow from a molehill to a mountain.

"We needed a name in a jiffy," Manhart said. "Maybe it's a way to motivate us."

After going through a series of personnel changes since its inception, Molehill is at a point where it boasts a lineup that includes a slate of talented musicians, Manhart said.

"This is definitely, musically, the best talent that we've had in the group," bass player Trevor Jones said. "Nobody is trying to make a point really [their] ego's sake."

Manhart and Jones have been with the band the longest, and are now joined by Tim Reed on keyboards and Devin Staples on drums.

Getting together a solid group of musicians who are committed to the band has not been an easy task, Manhart said. Musicians need to make money, so doing as many gigs as possible often is the priority. Finding people with a high talent level, accompanied by a serious commitment to the band, has been one of the more trying aspects of the being in the band, Manhart said.

But playing in a band is something Manhart says he has always wanted, even before his days at Libertyville High School.

"I have been playing music since I was about three," he said. "It's something that's always been very important to my life."

Live shows are among the factors bringing Molehill a larger following, Manhart said.

"It's consistently high energy," Manhart said of the band's live performances. "There's always something new. There's always an element of improv."

But future goals for the band will need to be fulfilled away from the stage.

Molehill released its first album, "Rock & Mole," in 2007. The band plans to return to the studio to begin recording its next album this spring.

Making an album that is not just a collection of random singles, but instead forms a cohesive musical creation is the mindset Molehill will take into the studio, Jones said.

"That's a real goal of ours on this next album," he said. "You have to be willing, even after putting in time with a song ... to say it's not going to fit on the album."

Molehill is similar in style to Spoon, the Decemberists and Muse, among others, Manhart said.

Although each member brings a different musical background to the table, he said, at its heart, Molehill is a band that focuses on playing rock and roll.

Molehill is currently touring the East Coast and Midwest, and will play at Micky Finn's Brewery in Libertyville Friday, Jan. 15. For more information, call 847-362-6688.

Want to see them play?

When: 10 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15,

Where: Micky Finn's Brewery, 412 N. Milwaukee Ave., in Libertyville

Contact: Call 847-362-6688 for more information. Visit www.molehillmusic.com for more information about Molehill and to hear music samples.

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