

Students study abroad to improve language

LAUREN LEVINE

co-Editor-in-Chief

Exchange students. We see them in the halls and in classes, but who are the students from WLHS who leave to be exchange students in foreign countries?

One such student is Kirsten Otterlei, senior, who spent the first semester in Bogota, Colombia and has always been interested in studying abroad.

"I really enjoy traveling and wanted a chance to be part of the culture in another country," Otterlei said.

When the opportunity came up for her to spend five months in Colombia, she jumped at the chance to experience a new culture and

to improve her Spanish.

"My host dad spoke broken English and so I got a chance to improve my Spanish while he got to improve his English," Otterlei said.

Even though experiences like these can be expensive and can take months of planning and preparation, most feel that they are well worth the cost.

"The money that would have gotten me a car went to that program," Karen Vance, senior said. Even though her experience was costly, she has no regrets. "It was a life changing experience," Vance said.

Students not only get the chance to be immersed in a different culture and improve

their skills in the language, but they also get used to being on their own and gaining a different perspective on the world.

Vance, who traveled to Paris, France for one month last July went with a summer program through the New York University's Tisch School of the Arts along with 14 other students from around the world. One thing that came as a surprise to her was how sheltered American students

can be.

"You get a completely different perspective on life and how other people see Americans," Vance said, "especially being on your own (in another country) and not sheltered within a family vacation."

There can also be many dangers students face while in another country. In Colombia, an argument broke out in the streets in front of Otterlei's house between a taxi driver

and motorcyclist.

"There was a shooting by my house and a bullet went through a window. My host mom was home at the time but luckily she wasn't hurt," Otterlei said.

Both Vance and Otterlei agree it is worthwhile. "I would definitely do it again," Otterlei said. "My experience was definitely worth more than the cost. I wouldn't have traded a single minute for anything," Vance said.



Kirsten Otterlei, senior, a local and friend, Bonnie Lo, take a break from shopping in San Andres, Colombia. Otterlei spent first semester studying abroad in Bogota, Colombia.

Photo courtesy of Kirsten Otterlei

Student play great success

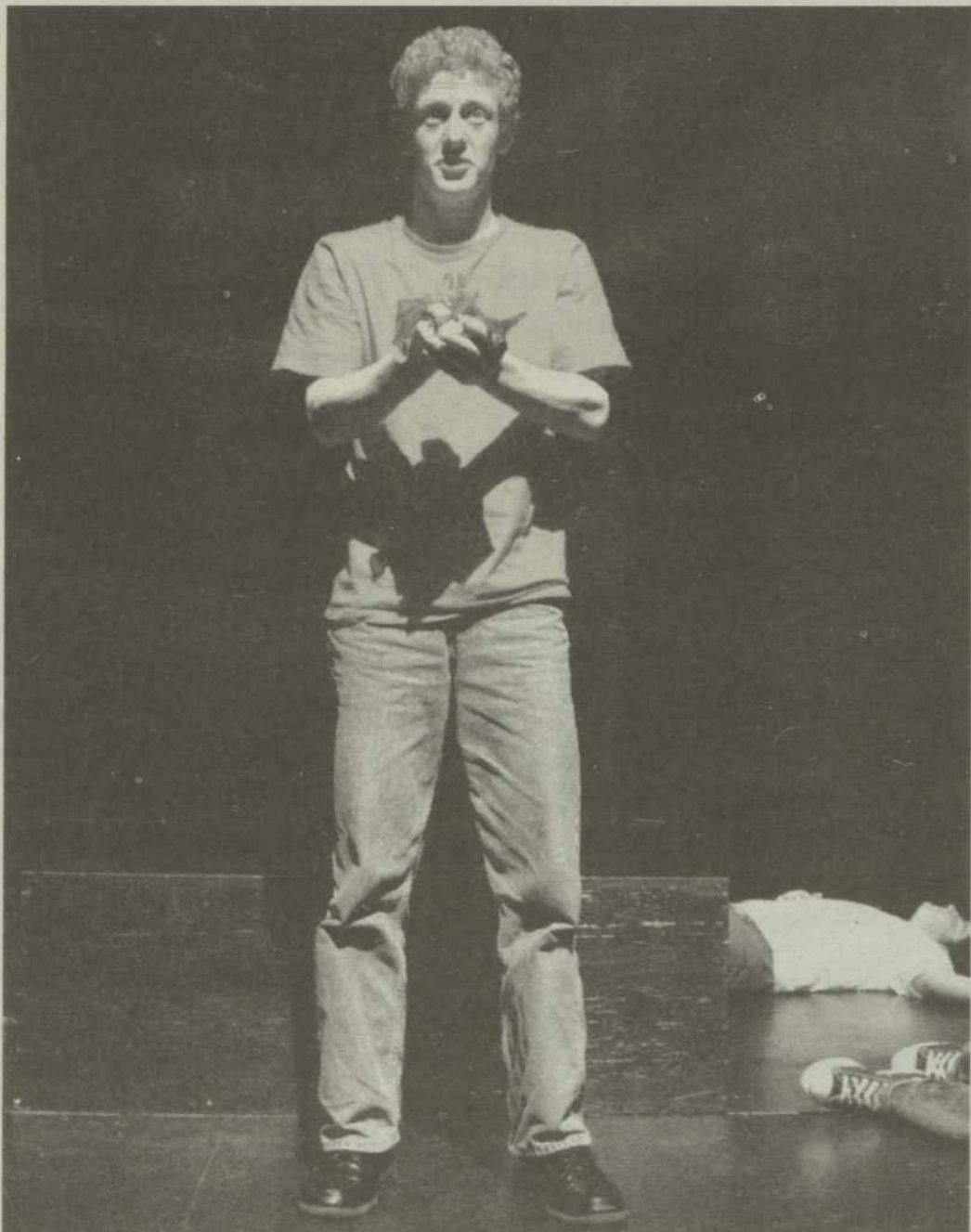
Bang Bang You're Dead

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With the recent Gresham School Shooting, students were struck with the irony.

"I think that it really cemented for me the idea that not only can these shootings happen anywhere, but they can happen any time as well. It proved to me, the cast, and everyone who saw the show that

even though the Springfield shooting happened almost ten years ago, the issue of school violence is still very prevalent today. The shooting at Springwater Trail made me realize the importance of what we were doing through this show, and I felt so strongly the need to get the message out to my peers," McDonald said.



William Farnbach, senior, acts in "Bang, Bang You're Dead," a play about school shootings. There were two evening performances and one special school performance. The actors had a little over four weeks to rehearse. Photo by Cole Fiala



GUYS. HEADS UP.

Prom night is a big night and maybe your friends say it's not such a big night but when you're talking *corsage* it is a very big night for sure and if that doesn't give you the idea how about the word: "tuxedo?" Uh-huh. And if you don't think it's a big deal the fact is she does and if she does that means for sure it is a...

BIIIIIIIIG NIGHT.

So you have to do more than wash the car. Of course you have to vacuum it. Forget the car. A big night means...*Fuel*. No. We are definitely not talking about the car. We are talking about *food*. You are building a memory, here. And it has to be a great one or you'll hear about. You know you'll hear about it. As in...forever.

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