

Meet the Exchange Students

Vernonia High School and the Vernonia community are hosting nineteen foreign exchange students this school year. Each year *Vernonia's Voice* takes some time to meet these students and introduce them to our readers. This is the third installment in this series.

Alexandre Thuet is from a small town west of Paris, France. Alex is a senior and is spending this year living with the Adams Family. Alex is playing saxophone in the school band. He also played football this fall and plans to play basketball and baseball. Alex says he has previously traveled around Europe to Spain, England, Portugal, Italy, and Poland. He has visited the United States four times in the past, traveling to New York and Washington, D.C. twice and also made a road trip up and down the east coast last year. He says his favorite subject this year is Spanish. Alex said he became an exchange student to learn to speak English fluently. He also said he loves the United States and he wanted the chance to live in America for a year, not just visit as a tourist. Alex says he likes Vernonia because it is small, almost exactly the same size as his hometown in France. He says he likes that everyone knows each other here.

Johanna Lange is a junior from Germany, near Frankfurt. She is living with the Easlon family. Johanna ran cross country and is also a cheerleader. She will play basketball this winter and run track in the spring. Johanna says she has visited Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, Croatia

and Greece. This is her first visit to the United States. Johanna came to the U.S. because she wanted to learn English and wanted to know more about how



Left to right: Katerina Brejchova, Johanna Lange, Tonia Giordano, Emil Hardenberg and Alexandre Thuet.

Americans live. She says she has always wanted the chance to visit the United States. Johanna, who comes from a small town of 6,000, says she likes that Vernonia is so small. "You know almost everyone." She says she also likes that the school is so small. "You know every other student. It's like a huge family." Johanna says her favorite classes at VHS are art and U.S. history.

Emil Hardenberg is a senior from Copenhagen, Denmark. He is living this year with Dick and Judy Gwin. Emil ran cross country this year and will play basketball and maybe baseball in the spring. He says his favorite subject is geometry. Emil has traveled extensively in Europe in the past, visiting Italy,

Croatia, Austria, Germany, Sweden, and Norway. He has also previously traveled in the United States visiting California, Nevada, and Arizona. Emil says he

wanted to be an exchange student so he could play basketball in the United States and to learn to speak fluent English. Emil says he thinks Vernonia is very small but also very nice. He likes the people here.

Mariantonia Giordano is a senior from Naples, Italy. Tonia is living with Teri and James Willard and her exchange sister Hannah Fleck. Tonia tried cross country and is now trying out for cheerleading. She says her favorite subjects are pre-calculus, chemistry, art and especially leadership. She also says she likes her U.S. History class with Mr. Brown, although she thinks U.S. History is boring but Mr. Brown is great. Tonia also became an exchange

student because she wanted to learn to speak English and to learn more about this country and its culture. She says she would love to come back and live here when she gets older. Tonia, who comes from a big city, says it's been hard making the adjustment to living in such a small town. She says she wishes there were more things for teenagers to do here. "In our free time, we don't know what to do-we can go to Black Bear or Hawkins Park and then there is nothing else to do." She says she does enjoy the small town atmosphere of Vernonia. "It's like one big family-everyone knows each other. The people here are really nice." Tonia has visited Spain, Tunisia, and Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. This is her first time in the United States.

Katerina Brejchova is from Prague in the Czech Republic. A senior, she is living with the Sullivan family. Katerina says her favorite subjects are pre-calculus and U.S. history. Katerina played on the JV volleyball team, will play basketball and run track. Katerina has also traveled throughout Europe, visiting Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Croatia and Greece. She has also visited Tunisia. This is also her first time in the United States. Katerina says it has always been a dream of hers to live in the U.S. and she hopes to come back to live again later in her life. Katerina says she really likes Vernonia because it is a small town. "It's easier to get to know the people." She says the people are really nice and she really enjoys her new family.



The Melding of Aeris

The Sahls of the Sea Barrows meld spiral horns to their skulls, reptilian scale to their chests. Women adorn their bodies with feathers and tails, serpent skin as elegant as black lace. Then they bear children – creatures like Aeris, a man who longs to be human. Too late, he learns there is only one source for human skin.

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FAX: 1-866-297-1402
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