

HEPPNER



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Thomas Voegeding adapts to Ione life

By Anne Morter

When Thomas Voegeding returns to his native Germany in July, pickups and Wranglers will be just two of the new things he can tell his friends about. But after spending the better part of a year living in Ione and attending Ione High School, those two oddities will be just the tip of the iceberg.

Thomas, age 16, hails from Idstein, Germany, a city of about 20,000. Frankfurt, at nearly a million in population, is only 40 miles away. Thomas is the youngest of three children. His 26 year old sister is a flight attendant and his 23 year old brother is studying at a university. His mother, Anne, (pronounced Anna) who plans to visit in May, makes and sells quilts. His father lives in Lima, Peru, where he is the director of South American operations for a large chemical company.

Thomas doesn't remember any startling revelation that drove him to be an exchange student but he says that he heard from friends it was a great opportunity. In the fall of 1992, he decided to sign up for the program but it was the fall of 1993 before he was assigned a host family in the U.S. And even then, he was practically getting on the plane before he learned his destination and some bare facts about his host family. He said he knew very little about Oregon. "I heard it's a pretty landscape and that its between California and Washington," he said. He was braced for a small town but admitted that he was still shocked at first (and he must have been wondering about the pretty landscape). Says Thomas of his new surroundings, "I missed the big city stuff a little (at first), but it's all right."

Acting as host family for Thomas is the Jim Swanson family of Ione. Jim, Monica, Luke and Adrienne. The Swansons were just getting over Ione's Cycle Oregon adventure, of which Jim was a co-chair, when they made the final decision to host a student. Thomas found his hosts in a semi-exhausted state when he arrived just four days after Cycle Oregon, but the match seems to be a good one. "He is so easy going," commented host father, Jim Swanson. "He has made it

possible for us to go on with our normal hectic lives," he adds. Jim says Thomas and the Swanson kids hit it off immediately, making the home life easy. "He's just one of those flexible kids," comments Jim. Monica Swanson, Thomas' host mother, agrees that Thomas has been an easy keeper. She notes that he is willing to try anything and also has been



Photo by Joyce Hughes

Thomas Voegeding, the number one ranked tennis player in Ione practices his serves.

helpful around the house. "We get along well," she says. The Swansons are becoming quite experienced in the host family business. Before Thomas, they hosted a Japanese boy two summers ago and they have already signed up to host a French boy from the Reunion Islands next year. (In case you're having trouble finding the Reunion Islands, they are east of the large island of Madagascar, which is off the east coast of Africa).

Thomas is a member of Ione's senior class but when he returns to Germany, he has three more years of schooling before he will be ready to go on to the university. Attending Ione has been a considerable downside for him—his school at home has 1,300 students in grades 7-13. After completing 13 grades, the boys in Germany must do a one year stint in the military. After Thomas puts his time in there, he plans to study at the university in the "propaganda" field (communications) with the eventual goal of making commercials.

Thomas says he has enjoyed his school year so far and he has participated in many events, including football, basketball and tennis. When both basketball teams made the trip to the state tournament, Thomas donned the Cardinal outfit to lead the crowd in cheering. He asked for the job because he didn't think the former Cardinal had been dancing nearly enough. The stifling gym in Baker City made the job a challenge but Thomas said it was still enjoyable. "It was hot, but it was fun," he said. He now looks forward to the senior trip to the beach and to the prom, an

event they don't have in Germany.

On the culinary front, Thomas has found some new foods to enjoy but he is missing the German bread. Our type of fluffy balloon bread is no substitute for heavy and hearty Germany bread, he says. And he wouldn't mind some Camembert cheese to go with it. But he is not shy about trying new things and has discovered the wonders of red licorice and microwave popcorn, and he even likes oysters. "Thomas tries everything," commented Jim.

Thomas has enjoyed a good number of activities during the year, including trips to Mt. Bachelor, Seattle and Corvallis for an OSU football game with the Swansons and a trip to southern California with a group of exchange students from around the country. He says that 80 kids made the trip and 50 were Germans. "I could speak German again. At first it was tough," he said. The exchange students visited Sea World, Disneyland, Universal Studios and other points of LA, San Diego and San Francisco.

Thomas made the trip through ASSE, originally founded by the Swedish government as the American Scandinavian Student Exchange to provide student exchanges between the U.S. and Scandinavia. ASSE has since expanded in size and scope to cover many other countries. ASSE is always looking for host families. Interested people should contact the regional ASSE office at 1-800-733-2773 or call local representative Cathy Halvorsen 422-7107.

School board considers 4-day week

The Morrow County School Board will meet Monday, April 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the district office in Lexington.

The board will consider adopting a four-day school week for students in the district as a money saving measure. District Superintendent Chuck Starr submitted a proposal to the budget committee April 11 outlining budget cuts to cope with funding reductions caused by Ballot Measure 5.

Changing to a four-day week is estimated to pare at least \$125 thousand from the annual budget. Starr said that the number of instructional hours in a four-day student week would not be reduced greatly. He also said that the

longer days may be more advantageous instructionally, in that it would allow for block scheduling, and integration of subject matters. He also said that the four-day week has also been shown to cut absenteeism in both students and teachers. The number of instructional hours lost because of athletics would also decrease.

According to district figures, \$1,272,781 in cuts are recommended to balance the 1994-95 general fund and around \$1,400,250 additional cuts are recommended to balance the 1995-96 general fund.

In addition to the four-day school week, the following pro-

gram changes have been proposed: a pay-to-play sports program for 1994-95; complete elimination of sports and extra-curricular activities, elementary music, elementary art, elementary physical education, home economics and field trips for 1995-96. In addition to Heppner Middle School and High School staff reductions because of a proposed seventh through 12th grade school in Heppner, Starr is recommending a wage freeze for teachers and classified employees for the 1995-96 school year. Currently, salaries and benefits account for 76.9 percent of the 1994-95 Morrow County School District budget expenditures.

Heppner city has good and bad news

The Heppner city council heard a mixed report from city manager Gary Marks at the meeting held Monday, April 11. Marks told the council that property taxes dedicated to water system debt would be lower next year but water rates would be higher.

The council passed a resolution increasing city water rates, effective with the July 1994 billing period. The city's basic rate will be increased by \$2.75 a month from \$9 to \$11.75.

Recognizing that sewer rates had been increased three years ago as part of the Wastewater Improvement Project Marks stressed to the council that "although people receive a single bill, there is a difference between water rates and sewer rates. Water rates are used to pay for operation of the water system, while sewer rates are used in the sewer fund to pay for the sewer system."

Marks said that water rates were last increased nine years ago and since that time water system expenses had increased on average by a "modest two percent a year" even though inflation for water systems nationwide had averaged five to six percent a year. "It would be difficult to find another public or private utility that can say they haven't increased rates in nine years and show the kind of slow growth we've shown," Marks said. "However, even with slow growth, time has a way of eventually catching up with you."

Marks also reported that due to the payoff of the city's 1974 water bond, the water rate increases would be offset for many residents by lower property tax bills. "The owner of a \$50,000 home who uses an average amount of water each month will see virtually no change in their

overall support of the city system," Marks said.

A report was also made that the recent refinancing of the city's 1982 water bond has resulted in a long-term savings of \$158,000 to city property taxpayers.

Following are Heppner's new water rates compared to other area cities, basic rate and average monthly use, 7,200 gallons: Condon, \$16, \$19.15; Stanfield \$13, \$13; Fossil \$12.50, \$15.10; Echo \$12.50 \$15.02; Heppner \$11.75, \$13.80.

In other business, Marks reported that the city sewer project continues to progress on schedule. He also reported that engineers were nearing completion of plans and specifications for the street repair and resurfacing project. Marks said he expects to ask the council to award a bid for the street project at the May council meeting.

Chamber to discuss tourism at meeting

A public meeting on tourism will be held in conjunction with the regular chamber luncheon on Tuesday, April 19, from noon to 1 p.m. at the Elks, in Heppner. The purpose of the program is to discuss the costs, benefits and potential of tourism development in south Morrow County. The meeting will be facilitated by Mike Wetter of Michael Wetter & Associates, an economic development consulting firm.

The preliminary results of an assessment of the tourism poten-

tial of south Morrow County will be presented. The assessment describes the kinds of tourism that appear to have the most potential for the area and what the impacts might be. The project is sponsored by the Heppner Coordinating Council and funded by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce and Heppner Economic Development Corporation through the Tourism Division of Oregon Economic Development

Department and Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (RDI).

There will be opportunities for comments, questions and input about whether there is support for tourism development in south Morrow County. The input will assist the sponsoring organizations in determining how they can best meet the development needs of this area.

All interested persons are invited to attend the luncheon.

Coordinating Council to meet

The Heppner Coordinating Council will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, April 19 at 7:30 a.m. at the GEODC office. The purpose of the meeting will be to continue work on updating the Heppner Strategic Plan.

The council has agreed on seven overall goals for the plan: create opportunities for business development resulting in full time living wage jobs; retain existing employment; identify and develop infrastructure necessary to attract new employment and residents; increase and improve housing; increase and improve lodging accommodations; develop and maintain accurate community information; enhance community appearance.

The next step in the plan update process is the determination of the strategies and specification plans designed to implement the community strategic plan.

The next regular meeting of the Heppner Coordinating Council will be on April 26 at 7:30 a.m. in the GEODC office. The agenda will include discussion of Heppner city projects, the Heppner Fact Book and the antique farm implement museum project.

Mini-College June 13-16 at OSU

"Mini-College is a little bit of heaven," says Carol Michael Bennett, Morrow County Extension agent. No cooking, just eating. No cleaning, just laughing. Learning with no pop quizzes. Enjoying lush lawns you don't have to mow.

Mini-College will be held on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis June 13-16. The theme "Celebrating Families" recognizes the 1994 International Year of the Family.

Classes range from stir fry, massage techniques, families in China, writing within the family and Oregon wildflowers to savings and investments. A class for photographers, "Point to Shoot" will be taught by Michael Bennett. Participants will learn how to "take good photos and store them wisely." There will be

campus walking tours of the buildings honoring women and OSU trees.

One of the three general sessions will feature Kid Konnection, a 4-H circus. Another general session will feature Mary Sorber as pioneer "Rebecca". She will recount her family's early years in Oregon. Last year, "Rebecca" shared stories of

traveling the Oregon Trail, her clothes turning to dirty tatters, her shoes wearing out and her pregnancy.

Evening hands-on handicraft classes, the banquet, sing-a-longs and a fund raiser silent auction of gifts round out the mini-college experience. Look for mini-college brochures in the Morrow County Extension office or call 676-9642 or 1-800-342-3664 for a registration brochure.

VA office closed

Veterans Service Officer, Rita Hedman will be attending a conference in Wilsonville April 19-22. The Heppner office will be closed Thursday, April 21.

Market Report

Compliments of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tuesday, April 12, 1994	
Soft White	
April	\$3.57/\$3.59
May	\$3.61/\$3.63
June	\$3.63/\$3.62
July	\$3.59/\$3.56
Aug.-Sept.	\$3.52
Barley	
April-June	\$98
July-Sept.	\$97

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