

## Exchange student adapts to lone life



Exchange student Thierry Delbart points to the place where he came from Reunion Island.

Which is more isolated, lone or Reunion Island? It all depends on where you're coming from—and one of lone's exchange students this year Thierry Delbart (pronounced Terry Delbar) comes from Reunion Island, about as far from lone as one could possibly get, more than 10,000 miles away.

Reunion Island, a French state, much like Hawaii is to the U.S., is located in the Indian Ocean around 500 miles east of Madagascar. Madagascar is off the coast of Mozambique in Africa. On his way to his host family's home in lone, Thierry flew first to France which is around 13 hours from Reunion and then to Dallas, Seattle and finally to Pasco.

Thierry was born in Versailles, France, and didn't move to Reunion Island until four years ago. When his father and mother divorced, his father decided he wanted to travel and Reunion Island provides a wonderful opportunity for that. Reunion is a tropical volcanic island around 40 miles in diameter, about half the size of Morrow County, with the cities located around the circumference. The island, with beautiful turquoise water, has terrific surfing and hosts surfing championships. Thierry says the population of Reunion is European, Asian and African, with many cultures and many religions. The landscape of the island is also diverse, with desert and forests in addition to the coastal areas. The biggest city on the island is Saint Denis, with a population of around 200,000. The island's volcano, 2,500 meters high, is active, but Thierry says

that because of the volcano's structure, the ash always blows out to sea and not over the populated areas. Major exports are vanilla bean and sugar cane. The island was once the center of slave trade between Africa and Asia.

Thierry lives in the town of LeTampon, which means 'stamp' in French. The name originated from the slave trade on the island. According to Thierry, slaves were imported to work in the sugar cane on the island and had to have their hands stamped to get out of town to work. The town has a population of 40,000 and his school has around 2,500 students in only three grades.

Thierry has adapted well to life in lone. His host father, Jim Swanson, says that Thierry arrived during fair week and jumped into farm life head first, washing hogs at the fair grounds, meeting new people, seeing his first rodeo and playing football for the first time. Thierry says he enjoyed football and Jim adds that he could see him getting better and better in each successive game. Thierry says that at his school, students pick one sport for the whole school year rather than a different sport for each season. When he lived in France he played soccer and at LeTampon he played basketball. He now is having a good season playing basketball for the lone Cardinals. Host mom Monica adds that "no", the family didn't pick him for his height, which is 6'3". "All we knew is that he liked computers and basketball," she laughs. Thierry says he really likes lone and didn't get homesick, but at first missed the activities that

larger cities offer. At LeTampon, he and his friends could go to night clubs on the weekends. "Here we can't really go out Saturday night," he remarked. He believes that 16 years is the drinking age at home, but adds, that it's "not a big deal" like it is in the U.S.

Thierry gets some good natured teasing in about American food, which, he says consists of a lot of sandwiches. In France and Reunion Island, people spend more time cooking, with a lot of sauces, and more rice and fish. Spaghetti, which was what his host mother planned for dinner the evening of his interview, would be considered more of a snack back home.

Thierry's family on the island consists of his father, Christian, two brothers, Vincent, 15, and Damien, 12, and a new step-sister, Marjorie, who will soon be one year old. His mother, Laurence, lives in the south of France on the French Riviera. Thierry travels back to France once or twice a year during school vacations, which are a month in January and February and a month in August. Both of his parents are middle school math teachers. His host family also includes Adrienne, 12, and Luke, 15.

Besides French, Thierry speaks German and very fluent English. He had taken seven years of English in school, three hours a week up until last year when he took two. He also spent a month in Sydney, Australia, which helped him polish his skills. Thierry also excels in his studies and is taking a personal correspondence course in math and science, which amounts to the first year in college. He has already graduated and will enter college when he returns, with plans of becoming a mathematics or computer engineer. Graduation includes lengthy (four hour) tests in each subject matter. Young people are required to go into the military for a year, but Thierry says he doesn't plan to go until after college. A year of public service is acceptable instead of the military, but not encouraged, he says.

Since his arrival in the U.S., Thierry has visited Seattle, Portland, Pendleton, Hermiston, Roseburg, Eugene and Corvallis. He was able to see two Blazer games and one Seahawks game. He plans to visit Tampa Bay, Florida, before his return home, which will probably be the beginning of June. Thierry says that his father hopes to come to his graduation at lone High School.

For more information on student exchange programs, contact Cathy Halvorsen, ASSE area coordinator in lone.

HEPPNER



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## Principals field questions concerning junior high move to high school

"We may have to do it, but we're not going to like it" was the general attitude of parents, teachers and community members who attended a meeting on the new 7-12 configuration to be implemented this fall at Heppner High School.

Heppner Elementary-Middle School principal Bill Karwacki and Heppner High principal Steve Dickenson fielded questions and complaints at a meeting at the middle school Thursday, Jan. 26, which drew around 125 people.

The general consensus was that the audience did not want to see Heppner Middle School seventh and eighth graders moved up to the high school next fall and did not want teachers, classes or programs cut. In order to accommodate budget shortfalls of at least \$1 million, created by the passage of ballot Measure 5 and the state school funding plan, the district has decided to cut six teaching positions and move the junior high students up to the high school. The decision will result in larger classrooms and fewer programs and electives.

Karwacki and Dickenson told the group that the changes were going to occur and admonished the audience to stop debating the issue and concentrate on facilitating the changes.

Concerns of the assembly included:

- retention of teachers based on seniority and possible elimination of "good" teachers who haven't been in the district as long. Dickenson squelched a discussion that attempted to determine which teachers would be cut, saying that seniority is a contractual agreement between the Oregon Education Association and the Morrow County School Board.

- the proper education of students, especially students with special needs, when classrooms will become more crowded.

- spending money for special facilities for seventh and eighth graders when the purpose of the consolidation is to save money. "How much money do we have to spend to save money," asked John Kilkenny, who opposes the move and asked the district to wait until the funding picture was more certain. "It offends me when someone tells me it's too late," said Kilkenny. Dickenson

countered that the special considerations, such as an outdoor basketball court and separate lunch periods, were only suggested because parents indicated that they wanted them. Dickenson also emotionally challenged a suggestion by Kilkenny that the administration didn't care, saying, "I do care, damn it, I didn't choose to do this."

-why are Heppner programs being cut, when north end schools and lone Schools are not seeing cuts? Karwacki noted that the Heppner schools were experiencing a dwindling enrollment, while the north end schools were "growing by leaps and bounds." He said that the positions cut here will

go to the north end because they have more students. lone and Heppner qualify for the small school adjustment, which is awarded to schools of less than 200 students that are more than 10 miles from another school.

Karwacki, Dickenson and teacher-coach Greg Grant asked that community frustrations not be taken out on the ballot. They reiterated that passage of the bond issue, which will fund classroom construction and renovation, and the proposed co-curricular district will alleviate, not compound, the funding problems.

The bond issue will be on the March 16 mail-in ballot.

## School bond issue addressed

By Chuck Starr, Morrow County Schools Superintendent

What's the story on this bond issue?

On March 28, the Morrow County School District is requesting voter authorization to contract a general obligation bonded indebtedness in an amount not to exceed, \$13,290,000. This total amount represents a cut of \$2,295,000 from the bond issue defeated September 20, 1994. If approved, these bonds will be paid from taxes on property in the district over a period of 15 years.

Approval of these bonds will enable the district to accomplish some extremely important projects for the students of our schools. These projects include the following: build new classrooms, 45 classrooms will be built; accomplish important maintenance, repair, and remodeling projects in existing facilities; provide students and staff updated technology communications systems in all schools; meet federal and state requirements for disabled access

and asbestos removal.

Under Measure 5, the combined tax rate for school operations will go down another \$2.50 per \$1000 of assessed value in 1995-96. The projection of increase in tax rate for payment on these bonds, outside the Measure 5 cap, is \$1.96 per \$1000 in 1995-96. This means that the combination of the Measure 5 decrease and the bond levy increase will still result in a net decrease in tax rates for schools in 1995-96 of \$.54 per \$1000. The tax rate required to pay off the bonds should decrease during the 15 year payback period as new assessed value is added to the county, e.g. Coyote Springs Congeneration Plant.

The Morrow County School District is experiencing a reduction in resources to operate our schools during a period of time when the need for new classrooms, new technology equipment, and expensive maintenance, remodeling, and repair projects is critical. All of the voters of this county must make sure they vote March 28.

Keep those questions coming.

## CFSA public meeting Feb. 8

The Morrow County Consolidated Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS) will hold a public information meeting on new programs and changes that have occurred in current programs administered by the CFSA. The meeting will be held at the St. Patrick Catholic

Church parish hall on Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 9 a.m.

Among the topics that will be covered are Federal Crop Insurance and the catastrophic coverage, disaster programs, payment limitation update and the 1995 Wheat and Feed Grain program.

## Bank of EO opens branch in Condon

The Bank of Eastern Oregon is planning to open a branch office in Condon, it was announced Tuesday.

Bank officers were in Condon looking for office space for a

planned May 1 opening date.

John Moffit, branch manager in Arlington, will reportedly manage the new expansion for the bank.

## MCGG plans appreciation breakfast

The Morrow County Grain Growers will hold their annual Customer Appreciation Day Saturday, February 11.

The day will start with the usual free pancake breakfast at 8 a.m. with displays and activities lasting until 12 noon.

In addition, there will be fac-

tory representatives on hand, local displays, and product displays.

As usual there will be lots of door prizes, and carnations given away to the first 300 ladies. Everyone is invited to attend.

## Meeting slated on school bond

Anyone who is concerned about the school district budget shortfall, teacher layoffs, contracting transportation services, loss of athletics and other school programs for children is encouraged to attend an informational meeting on Thursday, Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. in the Hepp-

ner High School cafeteria. Those attending will learn about how the Morrow County school bond issue will impact these and other issues. "Please be involved and aware. Please vote with all the facts at hand," said a school district spokesperson.

## Customer Appreciation Day

Friday, Feb. 10 - Chemical Clinic

Sat. Feb. 11 - Free breakfast • Trade Show, 8 a.m.-noon

Door prizes • Knife Sharpening

Morrow County Grain Growers

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