

Exchange student program is big in small Vernonia High School

Svobodova, Montanus, Pantoja, Wirghova – these are not common names in Vernonia but, with longstanding participation in student exchange programs, local residents have become accustomed to names that are very different from Smith or Jones.

The Vernonia School District policy sets a limit of six exchange students, but this year there are seven. The school board approved an exception to the policy because one student, who was scheduled to go to another community, would have had to stay home when her host family's plans were changed.

During a recent school board meeting, board member Leslie O'Leary and the exchange students reported on the program. O'Leary and her husband, Peter, also host a student this year.

After noting that the seven foreign students are more than 10 percent of the senior class and come from six countries, O'Leary praised the work of Vernonia High School teachers to help students adjust to their new environment. Each of the students talked about a part of their experience on coming to Vernonia.

Sarah Pantoja talked about the strenuous requirements and the application process the students must complete before coming to this country. Sarah is from the Dominican Republic; Jim and Kim Tierney are her host parents.

Antonio Cebola, from Portugal, is staying with hosts Reginald and Cathy Ward. Each student's parents have initially paid \$5,000 to \$8,000 for them to come to this country, Antonio told the board. After their arrival, parents must still provide a monthly stipend of at least \$150, and pay for unexpected expenses including graduation costs, senior trip, sports and student body fees. Expenses are also higher due to the ex-

change rate of the American dollar.

While students may test to remain in their class when they return home, most choose to drop back a year, according to Adelaide Schmitt of France.

the foreign students, whose schools focus entirely on academics. Ivica is from the Slovak Republic and is hosted by Don and Nona Skinner.

Veronika Svobodova of the Czech Republic, who is staying

process, the selection process for the scholarships is far more rigorous, with extensive interviewing and testing. The Bundestag representative who made the final decision to select Peller, interviewed her in both English and German. She is required to maintain contact with him and also with our congressional representative while she is here. The program pays for all of her expenses except pocket money.

The flip side of the exchange program occurs when local students go abroad. Last year,

Vernonia teenager Woody Buxton went to Germany as a Congress-Bundestag Scholarship student. Several other Vernonia students, including Rian Ragsdale, Emily Plews and Damon Knight, have also taken advantage of foreign exchange programs to spend time in other countries.

CARD OF THANKS

Dear Friends,

We would like to thank each one of you for your cards, prayers and words of encouragement during our recent loss. A special thanks to Deanna Gonzales and all the girls from Jazzercise. Lisa Brewer and family, the Traylor-Goodman family and the Jim and Judy King family. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

Thank You All,

Robin Murphy
Patricia Ray Wilhelm & Family

FOUND

P01/16

Found: Barbie Doll, near U. S. Bank. Call 503-429-6271 with description to retrieve.

B01/16

Dog found on Heather Lane. If yours, call and describe. 503-429-5012.

P01/16

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing for public comment on the Vernonia Marketing & Business Analysis, is scheduled before the Vernonia Planning Commission on February 7, 2002 at 6:30 p.m. and before the City Council on February 19, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon. Public testimony is welcome, and written statements will be received before the hearing, if you cannot attend. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours prior to public hearing to Janelle Serafin at 503-429-5291, TTY 1-800-735-2900 or at City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR. The City of Vernonia is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. Publish January 16, 2002



Exchange students at Vernonia High School include l-r, front row, Ivica Wirghova and Bekky Peller, second row, Antonia Montanus and Sarah Pantoja, back row, Veronika Svobodova and Antonio Cebola. Not shown is Adelaide Schmitt, who was on a trip with the VHS Honor Band.

They are not excused from the year of school they miss in order to come to the United States and must continue in high school when they return home. Adelaide's host parents are Skip and Shirley Goodman.

The size of the school is most shocking to the students when they arrive in Vernonia, said Ivica Wirghova. They were also surprised by the range of student activities and the casual atmosphere of classes. School spirit was unknown to

with the O'Learys, continued the discussion of the difference in atmosphere. Many of the exchange students had a hard time adjusting to the casual, friendly environment, Veronika said, but now greatly appreciate having personal contact with teachers who are very helpful and encouraging.

Antonia Montanus talked about the challenge of making friends. The students found it harder than expected to break into long-standing groups of local teenagers. Relations between boys and girls are also very different here. Antonia, from Germany, stays with the host family of Michael and Elin Hayes.

Rebekka Peller of Germany, who is also staying with Don and Nona Skinner, is a Congress-Bundestag Scholarship student. All of the other exchange students qualified through ASSE and, while they had to undergo an application

WEATHER REPORT DECEMBER 2001

DATE	TEMPERATURE		PRECIP. AMT.
	HI	LO	
1	45	36	.64
2	42	32	.40
3	44	32	.49
4	44	31	.69
5	44	31	.45
6	48	30	.33
7	44	30	.01
8	42	32	.11
9	42	31	.13
10	42	34	.27
11	43	37	.20
12	48	41	.29
13	50	35	1.62
14	40	34	.29
15	48	37	.63
16	50	31	1.58
17	42	31	.20
18	41	35	.75
19	42	35	.12
20	40	35	.26
21	39	29	.01
22	43	26	T
23	47	22	--
24	46	22	--
25	42	23	--
26	39	27	T
27	41	35	.27
28	46	33	T
29	40	26	--
30	46	28	.09
31	45	30	.05

Temperature and precipitation amounts are from the official U.S. weather station at the Vernonia water plant. Measurable precipitation in December totalled 9.88 inches.

47J Board seeks qualified applicants

The Board of Directors of the Vernonia School District announced at their January 10 meeting that they are seeking applicants to fill the board position vacated by Jeff Blum. Facing a change in administration with the retirement of Superintendent Larry McClellan, plus an expected reduction in state school funds of up to 10 per-

cent and myriad other issues, the board is actively recruiting qualified applicants. Board member Jim Krahn has announced the opening at several public meetings.

There are also positions open on the Budget committee. Interested persons may write a letter or get an application from the school district office.

Country Kitchen & Pizza

BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER
Soup & Salad Bar • Pies & Pastries
"SOFT SERVE" CONES & SHAKES
Home of the Paul Bunyan Burger

Across from High School

Orders To Go
503-429-6523
DELIVERY AVAILABLE

