

Barrier broken for exchange student Alex

Alejandro Guereca will soon be returning to his home in Mexico, but not without first accomplishing the learning of the English language and adjusting to a totally new life style.

Alex came to Acton in October on a student exchange program. He could speak no English at all, and had never been to Canada before. He had nine months ahead of him in which time he was expected to learn the language, complete his grade 13, and live with strangers as a member of their family.

In a story published in the Free Press last October, a translator was necessary to conduct the interview. However, Alex was able to answer his own questions for this interview.

Life was boring at first for Alex, he explained because he had few people to communicate with. This communication gap altered his personality at first. Alex explained that he is generally talkative and friendly, but because of the language barrier, he was forced to sit quietly and was not able to get into any conversations around him.

By Christmas however he was able to understand some English, and a few months later he could speak it. Gradually he became the person he always was, joined the basketball team and enjoyed tennis, badminton and soccer.

The original concept of the program was to have Alex move from home to home, every month or so. However, the plan was changed slightly as he only made one move. Alex started out at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Jones and family on Tidey Ave. Almost two months later he moved in with Mr. and Mrs. John Shadbolt and family, also on Tidey, where he has remained.

For a while, admits Alex, he was a little bit homesick. However, his English teacher and friend Keith Black said "Alex had wonderful self control of his home sicknesses. Alex himself says it was worth being away from his family this long just to experience living in a different culture and learning a new language. He also feels it was worth it because he has forced himself to grow up and mature.

At Christmas, when most people are with their families, Alex was with friends. Actually, he says, being away from home on the special day turned out well,

as he celebrated two Christmases.

Alex explained that in Mexico, Christmas is celebrated on December 24. This year, he spent that date at the home of Ariel Leal, a good friend and his interpreter, of Acton. By the time he left the Leal home it was December 25, and he celebrated his first Canadian Christmas with the Shadbolts.

In his time in Canada, Alex has spent some time with his brother, who lived in Boston for a while before moving back to Mexico. The brother came to Acton to visit.

Other friends from Japan, Venezuela and Mexico have also visited with him, and the group went to Niagara Falls. In March, Alex went to Montreal for a few days, but other than that, he did not travel that much in Ontario. He hopes to go to Ottawa before he leaves on June 30.

In spite of compliments from his English teacher, Mr.

Black, Alex is very disappointed in his English. He explains that he had hoped to be able to speak the language better than he does, and said his grammar was his downfall. Mr. Black however feels Alex speaks English very well, considering the short time he has had to learn it in.

Alex explained that one method he used to learn the language, other than total immersion, was to watch programs on television he had seen at home dubbed in Spanish. He said he knew the story outline from back home, and was able to learn from the English versions here.

A person whose mother tongue is English, says Alex, who goes to Mexico hoping to learn the language, would find it more difficult to learn than English. He explained that in Mexico, a lot of the people can speak English, and there wouldn't be the total immersion effect Alex

had in Acton.

In his time away from home, Alex only telephoned home once, on Mother's Day. The eighteen-year-old expressed regret at missing his brother's wedding on June 11, but could not get a flight which would get him there before the ceremony anyway, without missing too much school.

Alex expressed deep appreciation to the Jones and the Shadbolts for opening their homes to him, on a strictly volunteer basis. He has been made to feel part of their families, which in itself helped a great deal in his initial adjustment to a foreign country.

When he gets home, Alex will be making plans to attend university in the fall. However, because of his experience, he knows now that he can handle anything which comes along, without having to seek help from his parents.



Tammy Thomson

Ryerson graduate

Steven Dills graduated from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in convocation exercises Friday. He was awarded a Bachelor of Applied Arts degree in Journalism and is now employed by the Canadian Community Newspapers Association which represents weekly newspapers across Canada. Steven is the son of Shirley and Jim Dills of Milton.

Attending graduation as well as his parents were grandparents Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Elliott, Bower Ave., Acton and uncle Frank Browning of Toronto.

Ottawa graduate

Tamra Lynn Thomson (Tammy) received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology on Sunday from the University of Ottawa.

Tammy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mervin Thomson, R.R.1, Moffatt, and has been accepted into law school in Ottawa for the fall semester. She attended Brookville public school and Acton high school.

Attending Sunday's convocation exercises were her grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Willard Britton, R.R.4, Acton, and Mr. and Mrs. C. Thomson, R.R.1, Conn, her brother Wayne, her cousin Clifford Britton, aunt and uncle Cal and Betty McIntyre, aunt and uncle Ed and Barb Wilson, cousins Mr. and Mrs. Dave McIntyre and her parents.



Steven Dills

I.C.G. again calls for independent study

Members of Interested Citizens' Group, their lawyer Dick Howitt and MPP Julian Reed presented a brief to the Minister of Energy, James Taylor, on Monday again calling for an independent study of the Bruce to Milton hydro corridor proposed by Ontario Hydro.

The Minister listened to them and the situation was discussed but there were no other visible result from the meeting. The ICG felt the recent decision by the Supreme Court of Ontario which acknowledged the Solandt Commission did not study the north-south route could influence the Minister's decision on the matter.

In a prepared release, Reed stated: "It is inconceivable to me" that if the Government is acting in good faith that it should refuse the study which could be completed in six months when the alternative will be even longer delays through unhappy citizens opposing the corridor at expropriation and by-law hearings. "Of course" Reed said, "if a majority Conservative government results from the June 9th election, watch how quickly the Cabinet will pass an order-in-

council pushing the corridor through despite the efforts of the interested Citizens Group and the provisions of the local zoning by-law. It is quite significant my Conservative opponent Mr. Gray has remained silent on the issue."

Mr. Gray has said Hydro must go somewhere and he would fight to ensure landowners get adequate compensation.

Co-ordinator named for services

The Board of Directors of Youth Services Network, Halton Region announced the appointment of Peter Gillespie as Co-ordinator, effective May 30.

Born in Guelph, where he received his early education, Mr. Gillespie is a graduate of Trent University

(psychology), and Sir Sandford Fleming College of Applied Arts and Technology (education resources). He has had a long association with camping and was employed by the Peterborough Family YMCA as Director of Camp Kawartha for the past two seasons. Prior to his return to university, Mr. Gillespie was a counselling assistant at Sir Sandford Fleming

College, Peterborough. He is a member of the Big Brothers Association, the Ontario Camping Association and the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. While at university, he

was active in student government and was the recipient of the college award for contribution to cultural activities. A former Ontario gymnastic champion, Mr. Gillespie enjoys skiing, sailing and music.

FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

The Halton Board of Education

is conducting a survey to determine community interest in a program of Intermediate Division French Immersion. Information and survey forms can be obtained from any Halton elementary school. Questionnaires must be returned by June 20, 1977.



THE SHADBOLT FAMILY was the second family to open their home to Alex Guereca, a student from Mexico, for his eight month stay in Acton. Alex is leaving at the end of this month to return home. Front row, Lynda and Judy Shadbolt. Back row, Marie Shadbolt, Alex, and John Shadbolt. Punky the poodle is also shown.

Juggle staff

Halton Region's Administration Committee continued its hard line on hiring new staff members for the region Wednesday, but agreed that the treasury department could hire a stock clerk.

That is to be done if and when a vacancy in some other position in the region comes up. If Chief Administration officer Ernie Reid chooses to fill the position of the stock clerk, he won't be allowed to replace the person who quits or leaves the employ of the region.

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