

One year exchange program

German student misses cafes, outdoors

By MONIQUE TOBIN
Herald Special

"There is too much plastic oil here," a West German exchange student staying in Georgetown said.

Volker Barth, 17, comes from Bad Salzungen, a small town in West Germany, and is currently attending Georgetown District High School through an exchange program run by the American Scandinavian School Exchange (ASSE).

The plastic food that Volker refers to consists of Big Mac's, Whoppers, chocolate shakes, and the Colonel. In his country, he said, the streets are not lined with many fast-food outlets that seem to consume Canadian streets.

COMMERCIAL
"It's very commercial here," Volker said. He misses the outside tables of the European cafes, and to him, it seems that we spend too much of our time indoors.

But, he says, he is enjoying his visit to Canada, and is learning a lot from the whole experience.

The difference between his country and ours are many, he said, but he added, "...people everywhere are about the same."

Since arriving in Canada (Georgetown) last August, Volker has had the chance to familiarize himself with the town, and most of the high school students.

"I was the outsider at first," he said, "...so in order to get a friendly response from people, I had to be friendly first." Volker made the point of introducing himself to all of his classmates, asking for their names as well, to make it easier for himself to be 'accepted' and 'let-in' by the community.

Volker happens to be staying with



Volker Barth is a German exchange student who has been staying in Georgetown for almost a year now and has found many differences between the two countries. (Herald photo)

a German family, on an Eighth Line farm, and has three 'host-sisters' and two 'host-brothers'. "It's a great place," he says with a smile.

He has stayed in rural areas just outside of Georgetown since he arrived, and his view of Georgetown is an interesting one. "To me, Georgetown is a bunch of houses slapped together with no centre," Volker said, adding "...it is every young town and new houses seem to keep popping up wherever you go."

The 'strips' of plazas are ugly, he says, and he does not like the separation of the downtown from the rest of the community.

In Germany, he said, the downtown is the 'centre' of the town, and there is always something to do there. "Georgetown is a very quiet place," he added, "...and with the population that it has, there should be more for people to do."

"But, I'm not trying to insult the community," he said.

DIFFERENCE
Another large difference between the two communities that Volker has observed is the different school systems which we have in Ontario. But Volker has had no trouble at all adjusting to the system.

"I like the school system better here. It's more fair towards everybody," he said.

The school system in Germany, he said, is made up of three levels of separated schools. The levels, he described, were like low, medium and advanced levels of intelligence, called Main School, Real School, and Grammar School. It is not a fair system, he said, because at the age of 10, students have to take a test that will decide which school level they will attend.

In Germany, Volker's school days go from 8 in the morning to 1 in the afternoon, classes are 45 minutes long, and each student has ten com-

pulsory subjects per semester.

"In Germany, we don't have a choice of courses, like you do here," he said. "And the German schools don't encourage sports. I like the way sports are a big part of the school, and the way the teams here are encouraged to play."

Coming to Canada is certainly not Volker's first trip to another country. He has travelled through most parts of Europe, and just recently had the opportunity to visit parts of British Columbia.

TRIPS
Volker said that he had some friends in Toronto who planned the trip, and he decided to go, too. He wanted to see as much of the country as he could, while he is here, he said. Volker and his friends left mid-April and drove through "...boring Manitoba..." and boring Saskatchewan, Alberta. He described the area as "...a beautiful place with high mountains, clear rivers, fresh air - it reminded me of northern Italy."

Other places Volker enjoyed tremendously were the Okanagan Valley, Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and in Ontario, Volker has seen Niagara Falls, and with the school's Outer's Club, Volker has travelled through northern Ontario.

"The Outer's Club is the best thing in school!" Volker said with another grin.

And, after all his travels and his year in Canada, away from home, Volker says he does not feel homesick. Back in Germany, he has one brother and two sisters whom he says he is very close to.

Toilet explosion

The volume of visitors to the Terra Cotta Conservation Area throughout the day has increased substantially.

The existing washroom facilities in the Conservation building no longer adequately meet the needs of the Area visitors therefore the Credit Valley Conservation authority investigated required renovations. Renovations involve the separation of the showers from the washrooms which will allow for additional toilets, the installation of a durable floor and improvements to the mechanical systems. The estimated cost of these changes is \$60,000.00.

The construction firm, Maurice Breen Ltd. was awarded the contract and renovations will begin immediately.

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The program is open to all municipal non-profit, private non-profit and non-profit co-operative organizations.

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Increased access to affordable housing.

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agencies to create affordable housing for households in need of housing assistance - be they families, senior citizens, physically, developmentally and psychiatrically handicapped persons, or those in need of on-going support care. To a limited extent, the program may be used to develop projects for low income singles.

The percentage distribution of rent geared-to-income units and market rent units depends on the needs of the housing agency and the local community.

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For more information and application packages, contact your nearest Ontario Housing Corporation Regional Office as soon as possible.

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In order to be considered for the 1987 allocations, all completed applications must be received by July 15, 1986 at any of the OHC Regional Offices listed below.

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OHC Regional Housing Programs Offices

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