

# Exchange student compares life here with Germany

By ANGELA TYLER  
The New Tanner

Last August, Alex Henninger, a Rotary Club exchange student, arrived in Canada from Germany. Now, eight months later, he is finding life in Acton a little different from his home in Heidelberg, Germany.

Currently attending Acton District High School in Grade 12, the 17-year-old is enjoying his stay in a small town. He finds Acton smaller than his home, however he enjoys the fact that everyone seems to know everybody. "People are nice here," said Henninger as he sat in the school's cafeteria to a lunch of french fries, as any other typical Acton high school student would.

The tri-lingual Henninger is taking general and advance level courses this year, including math, biology, physics and French. Unfortunately the courses he is taking will not be applied to his schooling in Germany.

He observed the education curriculum is a little easier than what he would be studying in Germany. For example, Henninger stated, "some of his Grade 12 studies would be offered earlier in Germany." Although he finds the Ontario education system more relaxed, he also believes it is helpful for students to learn in this type of



ALEX HENNINGER

system. He has found it interesting that some teachers prefer students to call them by their first names. Another change in his schooling has been a longer school day. In Heidelberg, school starts at 7:55 a.m. and ends at 1:05 p.m., but the school year is longer, ending in July.

When not at school, he enjoys skateboarding and playing his saxophone, which he brought with him from Germany. He has also enjoyed trips to Wasaga Beach and Toronto with a keen interest in seeing the Niagara area before he returns home.

When asked about his thoughts on Acton Henninger commented, "The new arena is good. They've started having events there which helps." He continues, "The Acton Fall Fair was pretty good too. It was the biggest event."

He did have a large concern about the lack of facilities locally for Acton youth, including skateboarding facilities. "You can't skateboard anywhere. You aren't allowed to skateboard at the school and if you skateboard on the road, the police told us they will give out tickets," Henninger explained.

Another concern with moving from a large city to a smaller one was the availability of public transportation. "It's difficult to go out of town with bus transportation," he noted, "they aren't at convenient times."

When Rotary Club member Jake Kuiken was asked about Alex Henninger, he proclaimed, "He's a super kid!" Kuiken noted that Henninger has attended Rotary Club functions and will be helping with the upcoming Gala Dinner and Auction, as well as with the road clean-up program. Kuiken continued, "He's a real pleasure to have around; he's talented and humorous."

Henninger will be staying in Acton until July. He has lived with families in Acton and Eden Mills and is currently living again in Acton, now, with the Beaton family.

The Acton Rotary Club has participated in this program for the last 3 years. Currently, Acton resident Jenn Elliott is in Australia with the exchange program.

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