

Felver spends summer in Japan

By Kathryn Gurfinkel

The Goodland Star-News
Six weeks in Japan has given Goodland's Alicia Felver a new perspective on a different culture.

Felver, 16, went into her summer vacation armed with cultural ideals given to her by a Japanese foreign exchange student her family hosted years ago.

"When I was younger, we hosted a girl from Japan," she said. "She got me interested in the culture."

Felver boarded an airplane on June 22 for her first solo flight and flew to Los Angeles, where she met a group from American Field Service, the organization that arranged the exchange program.

Twelve hours after she got on a plane in California, she stepped off into a whole new world, Osaka, Japan.

She said her group stayed the first night in a youth hostel that was decked out in traditional Japanese style. She said that following Japanese custom, they had to remove their shoes at the door and wear different slippers for different rooms.

The students slept on futons, traditional Japanese mattresses, on a tatami floor, a floor covering made of rice straw covered by woven rush.

Through most of her stay, Felver said, she lived with a host family, the Kamos. She had a 13-year-old host brother Yoki and a 10-year-old host sister Iomi. Communication with the family worked out most of the time, but some things were lost in translation.

"My host mom spoke English pretty well," she said, "but there were lots of misunderstandings."

Most of her time in Japan was spent attending a month-long language course to learn Japanese. She learned key words like hello, good morning and good-bye from a brightly colored booklet entitled "First Steps in Japanese." Although she claims she didn't learn much Japanese, her mother, Elaine, said she randomly slips foreign words into conversation.



Alicia Felver said setting off fireworks is a regular pastime in the summers in Japan. During her six-week stay, she said they went to several street festivals where they played games, watched performances and set off fireworks.

Photos provided by Alicia Felver

To get to school, Felver rode 45 minutes every day on a commuter train in the large, unfamiliar city.

"It seemed like any big city," she said, "except it was in Japanese."

One major difference was in the food she ate, starting with the traditional Japanese lunches she took to school. Instead of peanut butter and jelly, she ate rice and meat with vegetables in a sauce, a cold wet combination she didn't much like.

Although she doesn't like fish, she said she did try sushi once, but it was sushi made with cooked steak.

"It was pretty good," she said.

Felver said she tried traditional Japanese noodles, Korean food and even Indian curry. She said she didn't try the tacos, though, because in Japan taco means octopus.

Felver boasts about her proficiency with chop sticks.

"I can pick up a single grain of sticky rice with chop sticks," she said. "There were no forks."

Even the weather offered her a different experience. She said it was



During her stay in Japan, 16-year-old Alicia Felver made good friends with Sora, her host family's dog. Felver can add the dog's name, the Japanese word for sky, to the list of words she learned in the language course she took in Japan.

very hot and humid, with the winds shifting one day as a typhoon moved through Osaka.

"It was basically just wind and rain," she said of the hurricane-strength storm.

Since she visited during the summer, Felver attended a couple of street festivals and helped light fireworks.

Although she is interested in Japanese animee, animated television shows, and Manga, animee comic books, she said she especially likes the traditional parts of Japan.

"I'm more interested in the history and the culture," she said.

She visited Todaiji, a huge temple in Nara, a nearby traditional city, where she saw Japan's largest Buddha statue. For the festivals, she said many people dressed up in traditional clothing and she brought home a Yukata, or a summer kimono made of cotton.

For fun, Felver spent a lot of time roaming the city with some of her American classmates. Lydia, one of the friends she made, is from near Kansas City and the two plan to keep in touch.

She also visited Universal Studios Japan, an aquarium, a karaoke hall, an amusement park and a Japanese version of summer camp.

Japan was the fifth foreign country Felver has visited, and she has been to almost all of the 50 states with her family.

She said her mother, the German teacher for Goodland school, travels to Europe regularly with students and Jon, her father, the school psychologist, loves to travel.

"He's always looking for a place to go," said Elaine.

Next summer, Felver plans to continue traveling with a trip to Ireland, England, Wales and France with her mother.

Overall, she said her experience in Japan was positive and she had a good time.

"It was really cool," she said. "I got to see a new culture. I got to see another part of the world."

Group supports students

Japan, China and Colombia are just a few of the countries that have shared their cultures with Goodland through help from the American Field Service, a national group that arranges trips and matches up host families for foreign exchange students.

Elaine Felver, a member of the group's Goodland chapter, said students from Colombia and China have recently arrived in town.

In Goodland, the group helps to support students who come to town through fund raisers. Felver said they pay for graduation fees, senior photos, school lunches and they offer a monthly stipend to foreign students.

The group also supports students from Goodland who travel to foreign countries. Felver said her daughter Alicia got a scholarship to use on a recent six week trip to Japan.

Felver said Alicia went through extensive paperwork and screening to be accepted for the program.

She said host families here also have to go through screening before they can take on a student.

American Field Service, Felver said, is one of the most well known agencies for exchange students.

The Goodland chapter meets monthly, she said, and they had a meeting as a welcome back for Alicia and a welcome to Goodland for the two new exchange students.

Alicia said she felt comfortable going overseas with the group because of their reputation and service. "It's a lot of support," she said.

Maine drug trafficker leads Colorado, Kansas officials on manhunt

By Kathryn Gurfinkel

The Goodland Star-News

A man wanted for cocaine trafficking in Maine led police on a manhunt — and got away — through eastern Colorado near the Kansas border Saturday.

The suspect, 25-year-old Jason Belmar of Corinna, Maine, is wanted for aggravated cocaine trafficking, said a report from the Colorado State Patrol.

He reportedly has escaped from authorities in the past and may have been involved in home invasions and kidnappings.

He is described as white, 6 feet tall, and 210 pounds with short blonde hair.

Belmar was spotted by Trooper Duane Laverenz of the Colorado State Patrol when the I-70 west-

bound 1994 Saturn he was riding in was stopped for speeding about six miles west of Kanorado, said Sgt. Lance Wheat of the Colorado State Patrol.

When Trooper Laverenz and Cpl. Kirk Preston, who was called in for backup, attempted to arrest Belmar, he ran into a corn field north of the I-70 frontage road just west of the bean plant.

Officers from throughout the area, including the Burlington Police, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Kit Carson County Sheriff's Department and a tracking dog and two dog handlers from the Kansas Police Department in Colby and a bloodhound from the State Department of Transportation in Limon, Colo. were brought in to search the field.

Wheat said 15 officers were involved in the manhunt.

Two deputies from the Sherman County Sheriff's Department also were set up on the state line to patrol.

The hunt continued as Larry Feldhousen and John Stewart, pilots from Burlington, Colo., searched for Belmar by air.

The search was called off about 6:30 p.m. due to decreased daylight and rain.

The man next appeared roughly an hour later, when he knocked on the door of Dennis Coryell, about six miles west of the border and one mile north of I-70.

Coryell said he recognized Belmar and called 911, which spurred a second chase near the Coryell farm.

The report quotes Coryell as saying Belmar looked "pretty miserable, muddy and cold."

The officers never found the suspect, but St. Francis police chief Troy Gardner said Sunday morning they recovered a 1991 Ford flatbed

pickup that had been stolen from Rick Trahern a mile and a half north of the original search area.

Gardner said the truck was found abandoned west of town on US 36.

Sunday morning another vehicle, a 1993 Ford Escort wagon, containing a .22-caliber rifle and a hand gun along with some ammunition, was reported stolen from in front of the Good Samaritan Village in St. Francis.

"Whoever stole the vehicle from the parking lot here does have possession of the weapons," Gardner said.

Since one vehicle was left and another stolen during the same time frame, Garner said they have loosely linked the crimes.

"Circumstantially," he said, "we do believe that they are related."

The owners of the stolen vehicle, Chris and Deb Cisneros, of Bird City, told the police that it was low on fuel and they didn't expect the thief to get very far.

Wheat said Belmar may still be in

the area or he could have been given a ride by an unsuspecting motorist. He warned that Belmar is desperate and should be treated as dangerous.

Online news sources report Belmar has a history of fleeing police.

Five years ago he was facing burglary charges in Newport District Court when he jumped out of a window to escape police.

He originally fled Corinna on Aug. 19 when police discovered 8 pounds of cocaine buried in the yard of his grandmother's home.

Wheat warned against attempting to stop him and suggested reporting anything suspicious to emergency dispatch by calling 911.

Wheat said the woman driving the Saturn when it was stopped on I-70, Michelle Carmack, 27, from Palm Bay, Fla., was arrested for speeding and no drivers license.

She was held in the Kit Carson County Jail on \$25,000 bond and she is facing criminal charges in Maine.

Tuesday, Carmack waved extradition to Maine and Thursday two officers from Maine were in Kit Carson County to pick her up.

Wheat said although they didn't catch Belmar, he was happy with the way the departments responded.

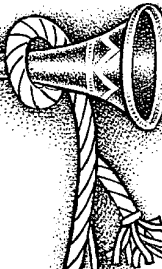
"I'm very pleased with the way things went," he said. "We used all the resources we could, but you can't catch all of them."

corrections

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should be fair and factual.

We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.



Reception for Pat Sawyer

"Pat Sawyer" is Retiring from the City of Goodland Police Department after 25 years. We are having a reception for "Pat" and you are all invited. Let us all wish her well.

City Hall
204 West 11th Street
in the Commission Room
Tuesday, September 14, 2004
2 to 4 p.m.

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Sunday, September 12, 2004
Cole Real Estate is offering 3 homes for you to view and buy. Here's the tour schedule:



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