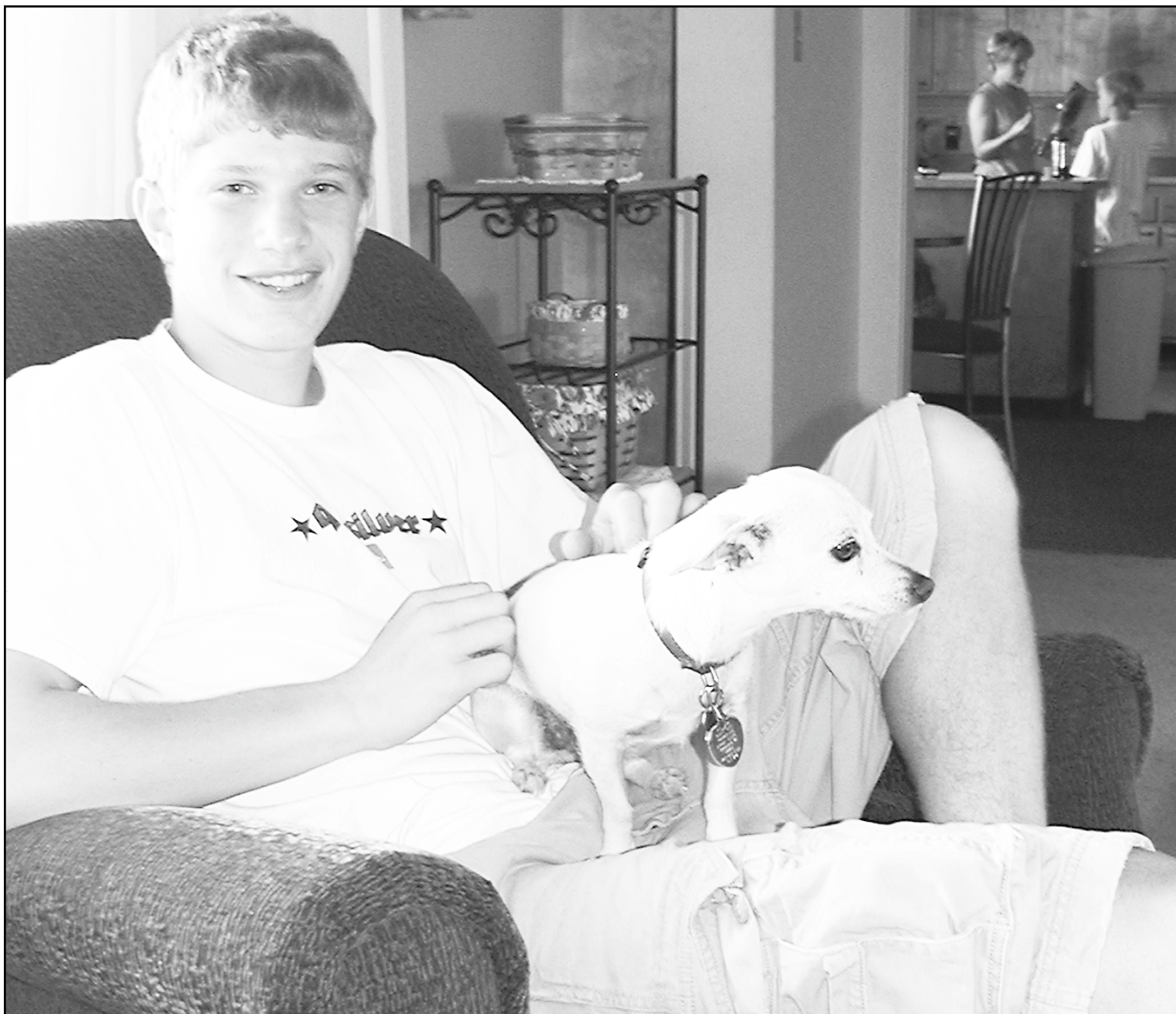




Lise Hangaard Vinge (above, middle) bonded with her host sisters Christy (left) and Alicia Studer. Wanja Runkel (right) spent some time with host family Jeff and Tanya Gray's dog at their home.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News



# Foreign exchange students head home

By Sharon Corcoran

*The Goodland Star-News*

No matter where you go in the world, teenagers like to “hang out,” “drag Main” and go to the movies. At least that’s what Lise Hangaard Vinge of Denmark and Wanja Runkel of Germany say.

Both said the biggest change in moving to Goodland was the size of the town — Vinge comes from the second biggest city in Denmark, with a population of 200,000, and Runkel comes from a city of 160,000 in the former West Germany. Everyone in Goodland knowing each other and waving to each other came as a surprise.

Both said they had a good year here. Vinge listed several favorite experiences, but Runkel said it was such an “awesome” year he couldn’t even begin to mention what he liked most. He did mention some favorite activities, though.

Going to the Midwest Country Stampede in Manhattan, taking a bus to Houston, trips to Denver and Manhattan and AFS trips to Boston and Topeka were highlights for her, Vinge said. And she enjoyed going to Haviland to visit a friend from

Denmark who also is in Kansas.

“We went to prom in Denmark,” she said.

Runkel said he enjoyed cross country and track, activities he started here, and AFS events. (AFS, formerly American Field Service, sponsors exchanges and activities for foreign students.) As an exchange student, Runkel said, you meet a lot of people, have a lot of experiences and learn a lot about yourself.

“I didn’t have any favorite experiences,” he said. “Overall, everything was awesome.”

In Germany, he said, he spent time hanging out with friends, going to movies, doing what teenagers do.

Young people are young people, Vinge said; there’s not much difference, except here they can drive. They have to wait until they’re 18 in Denmark.

Vinge played volleyball, was manager for the school basketball team and made a lot of friends. She said she enjoyed hanging out, dragging Main and going on trips, including a trip to the lake with Jim and Darla Mosbarger and John and

Jace and friends.

Both students knew English before coming here, though they didn’t use it much in daily life at home. Vinge said students in Denmark have English in school from fourth grade on but don’t speak it with each other; they speak Danish.

In Denmark, she said, they have the same movies and television shows as here in English, but they have Danish subtitles. She won’t be needing the subtitles now, though, and may have trouble adjusting to speaking Danish again.

“It’s weird,” she said. “I even think in English now and dream in English. It’s strange writing a letter in Danish. I’ll probably need a couple of weeks to get used to talking Danish again.”

Runkel said he studied English six years in Germany, where it is required in schools.

A kid from Chile who was in Hays knew no English before he came here, Vinge said; that would be hard. Being able to understand the language here was one reason she only wanted to come to the United States.

When she signed up with AFS to

be an exchange student, she was supposed to put down three countries, but there was only one she wanted to visit.

“I put down America,” she said. “I knew from the beginning I wanted to come here, nowhere else.”

Coming from a city of 200,000 to a town of 5,000 was a big change for Vinge. Everyone knowing each other and what’s going on was different, she said, and the fact that everyone waves when they see each other.

The people here are nice, Runkel said, way more open.

Wanja (pronounced Vanya) had to get used to his name being mispronounced, and Lise (pronounced Lizure) got used to being called “Lisa” or “Lizard.” She kind of enjoyed the nickname, she said, and said it will be funny to go home and be called by her real name.

She said she is looking forward to seeing her friends and family, but she’s not looking forward to leaving her friends and host family in Goodland.

“When you leave Denmark,” Vinge said, “you have a return

ticket. You know you’ll be back in 10 months.”

She plans to stay in touch with friends here and her host family, Kenny and Kelly Studer and daughters Alicia, 17, and Christy, 13. She is also planning to come back for graduation next year, since many of her Goodland High School friends were juniors this year, and for Christy’s graduation.

Vinge said she hopes her host family will be able to come see her in Denmark.

“I couldn’t have gotten a better family,” Vinge said. “I felt like I fit in the first week. We did stuff as a family, and I belonged.”

Runkel has enjoyed his host family, Jeff and Tanya Gray and sons Bryan, 16, and Jed, 11, their niece Morgan Podojil, visiting from San Antonio, Texas, for a month in the summer, and Tanya’s parents Joyce and Willis Crabtree from Brewster.

Runkel said he isn’t sure he will get a chance to come back. He may stay in Germany after school or move somewhere else in the world.

“There’s definitely a chance for that,” he said. “I would have wanted to even if I didn’t come here.”

His parents are Birghit and Bernhard Runkel. His mother is a teacher and was a foreign exchange student in 1973. It was because of the experiences she related to him, he said, that he wanted to be an exchange student. His father is a retired engineer. He has a half brother, 39, who lives in Brazil, and a half sister, 36, who lives in rural Germany.

Vinge said she enjoyed having sisters here. She has two older brothers in Denmark, Rasmus, 22, and Nikolaj, 19.

Runkel, 18, and Vinge, 16, will both face three years of high school when they get home. In Denmark, there are nine years of school before high school, Vinge said, and then three years of high school.

“I just finished the ninth before coming here,” she said. “This year doesn’t count. When I go back, I’ll start high school.”

“That’s OK. I was born in October and was the youngest in my class.”

Students go to school 13 years in Germany, Runkel said. He started one year later than others, and his year here doesn’t count, so he’ll have three more years when he goes home.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors.

## Some businesses and offices closed on Monday and Tuesday

Some businesses and government offices will be closed on Monday as well as Tuesday the Fourth of July.

The offices of the City of Goodland, Sherman County and State of Kansas will be closed on Monday and Tuesday. U.S. Department of Agriculture offices will be open regular hours on Monday and closed on Tuesday.

The county’s landfill transfer station and the Goodland Public Library will be open regular hours on Monday but will be closed on Tuesday.

So will post offices in Goodland, Edson,

Kanorado and Brewster. There will be no mail delivery on Tuesday.

Lawyers’ offices in town will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, but banks will be open Monday, closed Tuesday.

Good news if you want to cool off: Steever Water Park will be open Monday and Tuesday.

*The Goodland Star-News* will print Tuesday’s paper on Monday as usual but subscribers will not receive their paper in the mail until Wednesday with the post office being closed on Tuesday. Copies will be available in news racks around town.

## Driver falls asleep on I-70

A 76-year-old Oklahoma woman apparently went to sleep while driving on I-70 about 1:35 p.m. on Monday and ended up in a ditch.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that the woman’s car swerved into the passing lane about 5.5 miles west of Goodland, hit a guardrail. The driver overcorrected

and the car went into the north ditch.

Catherine Hoover, Tulsa, was taken by ambulance to Goodland Regional Medical Center and was released.

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## Reduced to \$39,000.00 727 College

If you are looking for clean, comfortable and affordable then this 3 bedroom, 2 bath is the home for you. It has had many recent upgrades which include sheetrock and paint, siding, windows and carport. It is situated on a corner lot close to the Vo-tech and High School. Seller’s pride shows everywhere you look. Let Rose show you this gem of a house.

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## Sherman County Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Saturday, July 8, 2006

7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Mountain time

HHW Facility

1820 Cherry Street

Goodland, Kansas

For more information please contact Kenny Griffith at 821-1024.

No early drop off or no drop offs without personnel present.

There will be no **Used Oil** collected at this time.

For Sherman County Residents Only!