



JANTJE KRAMER, a former exchange student who attended school in Heidelberg, Germany. He checked out a field of hops (below left) that in Oberlin, is shown with Corey Fortin (above) when he visited in the Czech Republic.

Oberlin native plans to join assistance program in Nairobi

By **MARY LOU OLSON**
ml.olson@nwkansas.com

Corey Fortin, a 2001 graduate of Decatur Community High School, will be heading for Nairobi, Kenya, in September, to join the U.S. government's assistance program for the African nation.

Corey, son of Jerry and Jolene Fortin of Oberlin, said that he has always enjoyed traveling and took his first trip abroad the summer before his freshman year in college.

"After that, I had caught the travel bug and haven't stopped yet," he said. "Since then I have studied agricultural development in Belgium and the Czech Republic."

He graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in international agribusiness and animal science in 2006, then earned a master's degree in agricultural economics and international policy from the University of Ar-

kansas in 2008.

"After completing my degree and several months of job searching, I landed my dream job," he said. "Last November, I took a job with the U.S. Agency for International Development as an agricultural development officer. It is the primary aid agency for the U.S. government, and helps to further America's foreign policy, as well as improving the lives of citizens in the developing world. Among other things, it helps those struggling abroad to increase their social and economic resources, recover from disaster and establish freedom and democracy abroad."

His responsibilities will include developing and implementing aid programs with agriculture, business and international partners (universities and private companies), contractors and the Kenyan people.

"A recent example of an agricultural project which was completed

in Kenya in conjunction with Land O' Lakes," he said, "helped equip farmers with small-scale pasteurizers for the milk on their dairies."

"Traditionally, they use wood fires to pasteurize their milk, so this process helped reduce production costs for farmers, improved the taste and quality of the milk and allowed farmers to export their milk to neighboring Uganda."

"One initiative which I will be working closely with in Kenya is called 'Feed the Future.' This strategy will address the root causes of hunger and poverty and ensure that people in the developing countries have a reliable source of food and resources to access it."

Mr. Fortin said he trained at the agency's headquarters in Washington from November to February and has since been studying Swahili. Although the vast majority of Kenyans speak both English and

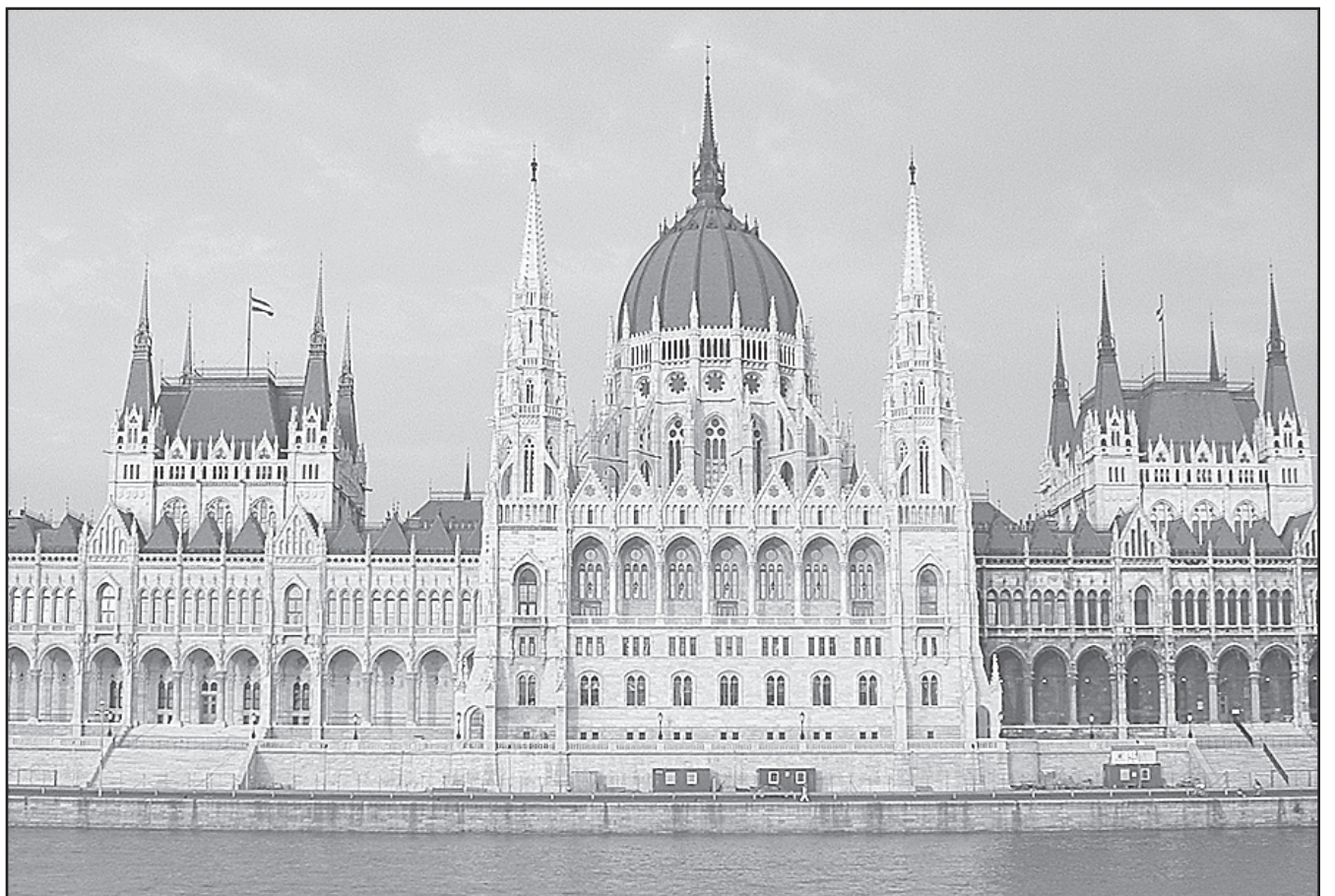
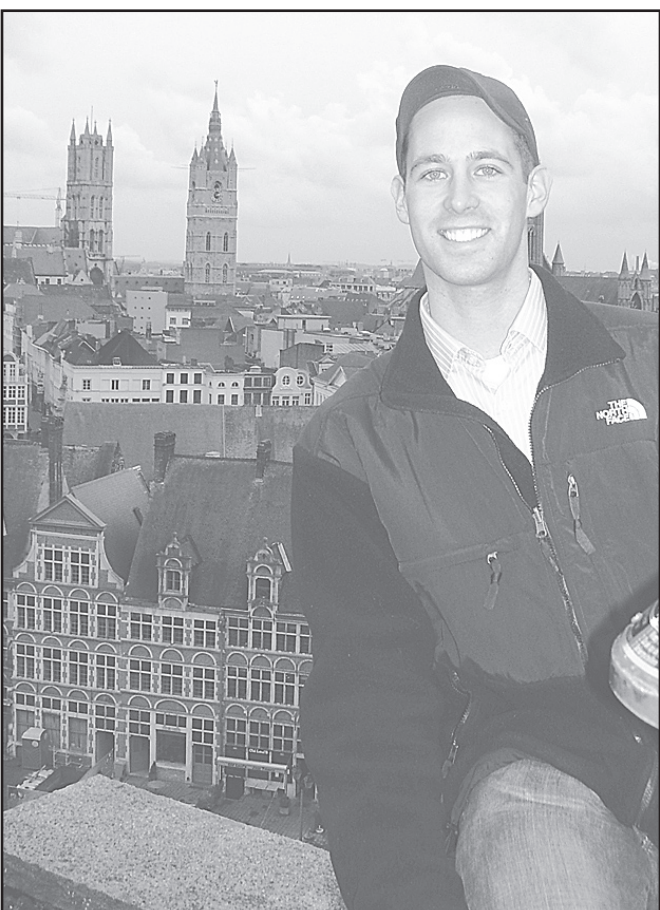
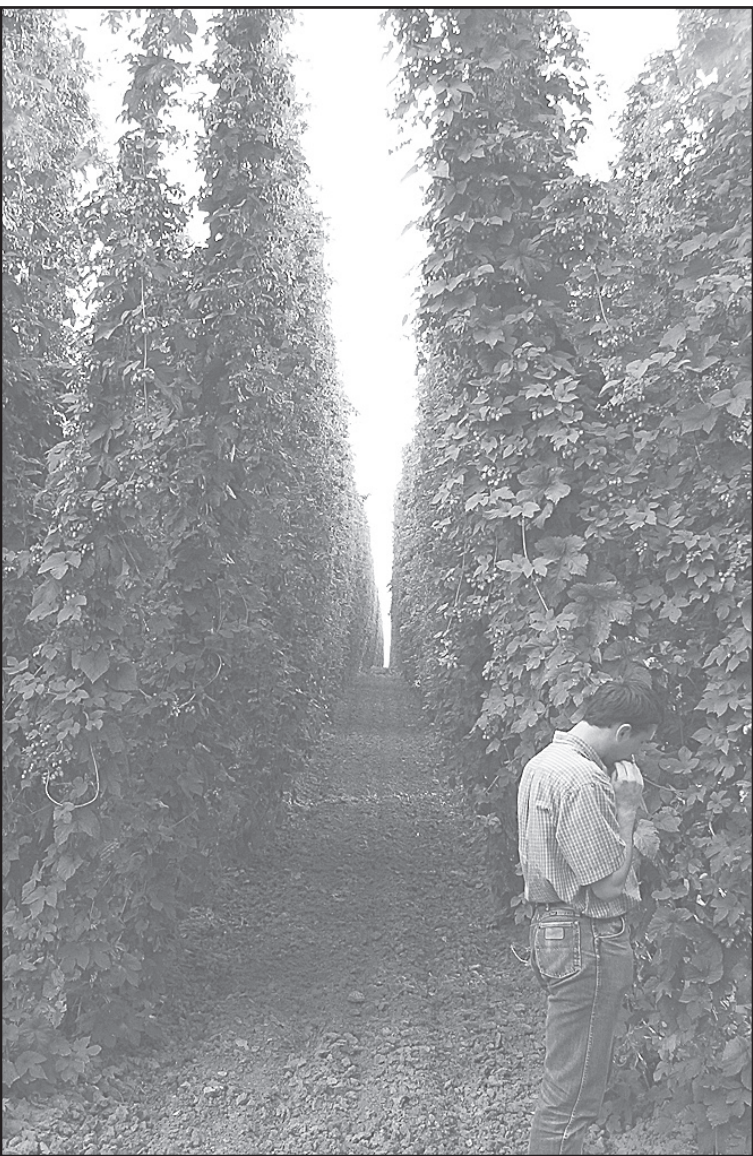
Swahili, he said, every Foreign Service officer is required to learn a foreign language.

"While Swahili is a challenging language," he said, "I have really enjoyed learning it."

"I'm excited about the new possibilities that lie ahead.... Nairobi lies almost exactly on the equator, but because of its high elevation, the temperature ranges from 55 to 85 degrees. This is an ideal climate for agriculture, which I feel is the first rung on the ladder of development."

"Forty percent of the population in Kenya lives on an income of less than \$2 a day, so this demonstrates the challenges that lie ahead. However, Kenya is a progressive, dynamic country and I'm excited to assist in its development."

Corey is a grandson of June Fortin and Ardis Roe of Oberlin.



NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL (above) in Paris, France, was one of the beautiful places visited by Corey Fortin when he traveled abroad. He is shown (left) while studying in Ghent, Belgium.