

# French IFYE appraises America

By SALLY BAIR  
Feature Writer

Therese Guyot is a petite dynamo of goodwill. Her accent is lilting and her blue eyes twinkle as she speaks. Her enthusiasm is immediately evident.

Therese hails from Brittany in northwestern France, and is living in Lancaster for two weeks as a participant in the International Four-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) program.

She is staying with Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Greider, Conestoga R2, and is enjoying the peaceful quiet of rural Lancaster County after some hectic traveling prior to her arrival here.

Her understanding of English is good and she communicates her feelings with ease, with only occasional lapses into French as she searches her mind for the right translation. There is also infrequent thumbing through a well-used French-English dictionary which helps her choose just the right word.

Therese hails from a 15 hectare dairy farm in France where her parents milk about 15 black and white cows. They raise wheat, barley, sugar beets, cabbage and maize, but only enough for the cattle and themselves. She has a brother, 25, who lives at home and a sister, 23, who lives in Paris. Therese is trained to work with the mentally retarded and shares an apartment with a friend near the boarding center where she works.

Therese said she became an IFYE because she wanted to travel.

"I had worked for five years, and when you work with the retarded, it is very difficult; so I wanted a break," she explains. She met a friend who had been an IFYE and she attended a French national IFYE meeting. It was then that she decided to try to become one.

To get started she wrote to the national IFYE president, and even though the age limit is 25 and she is 26, they accepted her. But there was not enough money to pay her way. Since she had been working for five years, she had saved for the purpose of travel and had the necessary funds - about 3600 French francs.

Therese arrived in this country on June 26 and spent the first half of her visit in Montana, which she said was in great contrast to her home in France. She lived on a ranch near the Rocky Mountains and near Yellowstone Park. She said, "It was very new - the landscape and the people were so different." She also found the people in Montana "more friendly" than in Pennsylvania, but quickly added with emphasis that her host families here were "really warm." People in Montana also seem "laugh and smile more."

I really liked their mentality. They are very proud of living in Montana, and its bigness," she relates.

Nevertheless, she said she felt "a little alone" when she first arrived there because she was far from a large town and did not see many people.

Before coming East, Therese had eight days of free time in which she traveled in a camper with one of her Montana families to Seattle, where they stayed with relatives.

Then, she went alone to San Francisco. She said, "Before I left France I wanted to see San Francisco." In her opinion, the city is "too big, but it is very interesting and very special. There are so many different nationalities there. I do not like high buildings because I am a country girl. But it was a great vacation. My free time was very nice and very busy."

In Pennsylvania, Therese first lived with an urban family in Williamsport. She enjoyed them and is planning to spend part of her free time at the end of the program with them.

But she is especially enjoying her visit with the Greiders now, because the pace has slowed down and she is having

H  
O  
M  
E  
S  
T  
E  
A  
D



Therese takes advantage of the solitude of the Greider home near Conestoga and writes in her journal.

N  
O  
T  
E  
S

a chance to catch up on her letter writing. She keeps a daily travel journal of her adventures.

While in Lancaster she is planning to visit an Amish family in Honeybrook where her French IFYE friend stayed. She is looking forward to the visit, and said she finds the Amish a most interesting group.

"They are so in contrast to what one expects to find in the United States. This country is very modern, yet they do not want these things," she commented. "I do not understand how they can keep their traditions and religion. It is difficult for me to understand, but it is very beautiful and nice for them that they can be how they want and keep their way of life," she continued.

When asked about differences between French and Americans, she got out her dictionary which had been used once by her IFYE girlfriend and mentor, and searched out the word prejudice.

She said, "The people of France have many prejudices about the American people; they think Americans have much money, and drive big cars and live a very fast life."

Therese characterizes Americans as

"humane." She said she has met families who are different and want to find other things in life than material wealth.

The American people, she said, "are very friendly, very generous and very open." She continued, "You like to know other people. It is very important that you are tolerant and respect others and try to accept them. The people here come from all different countries and different cultures, yet everyone can live how he wants."

She was very surprised to find so many different religions. And that people live their religions. To explain herself she commented, "You accept different thinking and are very tolerant. I am a Catholic, but only because my parents are Catholic."

Therese is also impressed with the forests in Pennsylvania.

She said, "The forests are very clean. You do so much to protect the environment. You try to respect the natural, and people here are concerned." She added that there are rivers in France so polluted that the fish are gone, and was impressed that even though a problem exists in this country, at least people are working on it.



Joan (left) and Krista listen attentively as Therese reads from a child's book.

One thing she was definite about is that American people "eat too much." Furthermore, she said, "Everyone in America thinks that French people all drink. Some drink and some don't."

She said she missed fresh vegetables and fruits during her Montana visit, but has eaten some very good food, especially in Pennsylvania.

She said she has also seen a lot of waste in food. With great expression she announced, "I never saw such big women as in this country." She was quick to add, "I have also seen many beautiful, slim women, but many heavy ones. I think they don't have anything to do but watch TV and eat."

Therese added, "We do not eat a big breakfast; usually only bread - toast, coffee, milk or tea. Lunch is the most important meal during the day. There is an entree with meat and vegetables and dessert. We eat supper much later than here - usually between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. In my home my parents eat 8:00."

Therese spent two years learning to work with the mentally retarded, and she has plans to visit an Intermediate Unit 13 class here. In Williamsport she saw a special education class and said, "I find your system good. Here the retarded can go with normal children and have special classes in the same building. We don't have classes in the same school; almost all of them are in boarding centers."

While Therese formerly belonged to a Catholic Young Farmers Club, she said there is no exact equivalent of 4-H clubs in France. She is impressed with 4-H here, noting that it teaches responsibility. She added that she had seen 4-H dress revues as nice as Paris shows.

The IFYE program is sponsored by the National 4-H Club Foundation. Two youths from France came to the United States this year, and Therese mentioned a fact that is not well known to many here. Whereas IFYE's from this country can travel to nearly 40 countries, IFYE's in other countries come only here. Therese said she thinks it would have been interesting to travel to South America, the Orient, or India. But, "I am very happy to be here," she admitted.

Therese feels that IFYE is a good program. She is glad to be an IFYE.

"For me, being an IFYE has been a good experience," she says. "I've always wanted to travel. To me, the best way to know a country is to live with families, to understand people, to communicate with people to learn something." Here she added, "I have learned a different way of life." She plans to share what she's learned through slides when she returns.

Therese has traveled throughout Europe, but she said, "I never met the people - tourists just don't meet people."

Although she is not anxious to return to France so soon, her IFYE program experience is finished on October 21. From Lancaster she goes to Palmyra in Lebanon County and then she has 10 more days free time. Part of that time will be used to visit Janice Yaple, a Pennsylvania IFYE to France who lives near Altoona. With Janice she hopes to travel to the Niagara Falls.

Mrs. Greider, who is a 4-H leader for the Penn Manor 4-H club, said, "It has been delightful having Therese visit. She is not an IFYE; she is a daughter."

There are six Greider children: Cindy, 21, and Karen, 19, both living away from home; Kenny, 14; Missy, 10; Joan, 7½; and Krista, 5. Therese is very popular when she reads to the young ones from children's books. And a "Welcome Therese" sign in the front window expresses their pleasure in playing host to her.

Summing up her life over the past few months, Therese said, "Yes, I am different now. I think I have changed." As an ambassador of peace and understanding, her warm smile and keen interest changed other lives as well.