

A visit with two foreign exchange students

Uta Roepcke of Germany and Liliana Accorsi of Brazil came to the Back Mountain last August as exchange students. They will remain here until July of this year but both girls are already making plans to return to the United States in the future. They also plan to visit one another in their home countries.

Seniors at Dallas Senior High School, their visit to this area was made possible by the local chapter of the American Field Service. The two girls are pioneers of the first AFS chapter in the Back Mountain.

Uta lives with her family in Schleswig-Holstein in Northern Germany near the border of Denmark.

"Our home is in a rural area near the capital city of Keil," said Uta. "We do not have the mountains you have here but our climate is like this so I'm used to snow."

Not Liliana, however. She lives south of Brazil in the suburban area of Londrina in the state of Parana. The weather there is warm. This year is the first Liliana has ever seen snow. Last week is the first she learned how to make and throw a snowball. It was Uta who taught her.

Both girls came to the United States by plane and met with thousands of other exchange students from all areas of the world at C.W. Post College, Long Island, N.Y. Uta and Liliana did not know one another until they came to the Back Mountain. Since then they have become close friends.

Uta learned about the exchange program from her English teacher. She applied to the AFS Chapter in Keil and in June, 1981, Uta learned she was accepted and would leave Aug. 13 for the United States.

"I was excited about coming but I was sad to

leave my parents and 12-year old brother."

Uta explained that Germany's school system is different than here. Students attend school for 13 years. The system is divided into four years elementary, then students decide on a nine, 10 or 13 year school.

The school Uta attends is a 13 year experimental one. Students can leave after the 10th year but while at school work at their own pace. Uta completed the 10th year before she came to America but when she returns she will continue for three years. She will receive no credit for her year in America.

Uta said the schedules are similar although she studied both German and English. They do not have extracurricular sports programs such as American schools but they have sailing and lots of clubs.

"When I came to this area I was impressed by the huge mountains and the large cars. I was surprised that the legal drinking age is 21. In Germany it is 18."

"I believe that could be why the young people have alcohol problems. They are not allowed to have it, so they get it illegally. We have no drug problems in our schools—there could be some in the large cities but not around us."

There are no school buses in Germany. Each student provides his or her transportation. Uta goes by train, then walks a far distance.

"Our food is different," said Uta. "At home we eat more bread. Our big meal is at noon. We have only a light supper, usually bread, sausage and cheese. We don't make sandwiches like you do here—we never use two slices of bread for a sandwich, just one and we eat it with a fork."

Uta plays the guitar and the piano. Her favorite is

folk music and she enjoys the high school chorus.

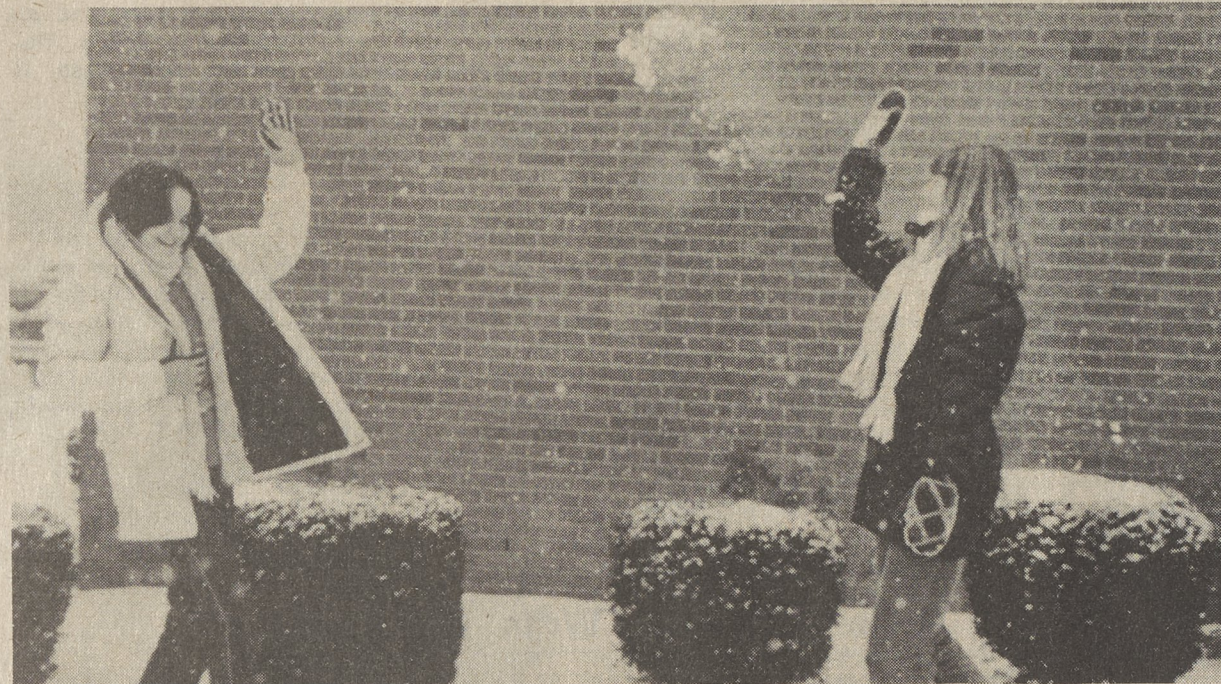
Until last weekend Uta was living with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wadas and their daughter, Wendy, in Shavertown. Now she is living with Mr. and Mrs. George Pyle of Dallas.

years before entering the university," said Liliana, but our school begins in mid-February and ends in November. We have one week winter vacation in July and our summer vacation is December, January and part of

change students. She was excited about coming to America having heard a lot about it. She was familiar with mountains but central heating was new to Liliana. At home they have only air conditioning. Most of their

We don't dress up to go to school but wear jeans most of the time. Dressing up is for evening."

Uta said in Germany school is a working place and America it is known as "the place for sneakers".



UTA ROEPKE of Germany throws a snowball at Liliana Accorsi in front of Dallas Senior High School. It was

Liliana knew many Americans who came to Brazil through the American Field Service. She learned a great deal about America from an American exchange student. Liliana wanted to come to America and live for awhile so she applied to AFS in July and heard immediately that she was accepted. She left Brazil, Aug. 17, and arrived in Dallas Aug. 20.

Liliana didn't tell her parents that she applied and when she was accepted she was surprised that they consented. Liliana has two younger sisters and a 19-year old brother, who is now traveling in the United States before returning home. He came from Brazil to visit Liliana as a surprise Christmas gift.

Liliana's parents have a large wholesale cattle farm. They raise cattle to sell to large businesses and also sell some milk. "We go to school for 12

February. I completed my senior year and attended the university for six months - February to June. When I return home I will have to complete three and a half years for a degree in business administration.

"If I had come to America when I was a senior in high school, my year here would count. At home students attend high school from 7 a.m. to noon. They don't go in the afternoon but they go on Saturday. There are no study halls—studying is done at home. Students can choose whether they want to go to school morning, afternoon or night but they can't select subjects. There is a routine schedule including gym."

"We do not have football or some of the sports you have here but we have soccer. You've heard of 'Pele'?"

Like Uta, Liliana met with all the other ex-

Liliana's first encounter with the white stuff. "It's cold", she said. (Mark Moran Photo)

homes are built of brick not wood.

Liliana said it is more difficult to get to places here. At home she can walk to most recreation places, which is convenient since legal driving age is 18.

Their social life is different. They have no school dances, homecoming, etc. but go to parties at friends home or at clubs.

Like Uta, the Brazilians have their big meal at noon. In the morning they have very strong coffee and a very light breakfast. They eat a lot of rice, beans, garlic, onions, meat and some vegetables. In the evening they have a light supper of salads or rice—nothing heavy.

"We have no drug problems in our schools," said Liliana. "There are drugs in the large cities but not in our rural area."

When both girls were asked why they wanted to return to America in the future their reasons were similar. Uta said "Not for anything materialistic but for meeting new friends, learning new ideas, hearing different opinions." Liliana said "To meet more people, learn their customs and language; to become involved and build a new life."

Both agreed that their year has taught them that despite different customs, foods and language, people are the same; that prejudices have been dissolved and they know America better.

"It will be harder to leave here than it was to come," said the girls.

The lawyer and the doctor and other professional men have often a touch of civilization. The banker and the merchant seldom.

—Jim Tully.

Annual Art Show opens Jan. 31 at CM

Tobi Grossman, director, announced the 1982 Spring Calendar of the College Misericordia Art Gallery. Opening the spring season will be an exhibit of art works created by the members of the Art Gallery. This annual show opens with a special reception Jan. 31 at 2 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Also included in the schedule of events are several Children's Gallery tours; a Juried Photo Exhibit, sponsored by the Back Mountain Cultural Center; an exhibit of etchings by Barbara Zeller; craft and art workshops and the annual College Misericordia art department student show. In addition, Art Gallery is planning a bus trip to the Barnes Foundation in Phila-

delphia, with the addition of a side trip to Longwood Gardens.

Planned for May is "A Celebration of Friends" an exhibit of photographs of Northeastern Pennsylvania by Mark Cohen commemorating the 300th birthday of the Commonwealth. This special show of the work of a native son will close the Spring season.

The Art Gallery is located on the 4th floor of the Administration Building and is open from Sunday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and closed on legal and school holidays. For more information about any of the classes and programs call the Art Gallery at 675-2181, Ext. 247, or the Continuing Education office at 675-2181 Ext. 331.

Moon Lake accepting reservations

Moon Lake Park is now accepting reservations for the large picnic pavilion and the group camping area.

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Swanson, Wyoming; Susan Shaffer, Kingston; and Kris Ertley, Dallas. They are hold three puppies age 5 to 8 weeks which are currently up for adoption from the shelter. Donations for the shelter should be mailed to P.O. Box, S.P.C.A., Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18703. The shelter is currently opened Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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