

'It's fun to try American way of life,' Mikko

BY JOAN KINGSBURY

This summer John and Jackie Sheehan, Overbrook Road, Dallas are hosting a 16 year old Finnish boy, Mikko Nikulainen. Mikko is in the United States under the American Field Service Home Stay Program which is the first of its kind in this country. Under the Home Stay Program, Mikko studied with 21 other AFS students for three weeks at Adelphi University, New York City, perfecting his English before embarking on his stay with the Sheehans. The ninety hours of English study will be carried over to his school records in Finland.

Mikko arrived at the Sheehan home on June 21. He will leave for his home in Helsinki Aug. 15. Mikko says that the purpose of his stay is "learning the American way of life" observing the American lifestyle.

When asked why he applied for this program, Mikko said "I really like to have new experiences, it is just for fun, just to try the American way of life. So far Mikko has found the Sheehan home to be much like his own. Mikko lives in Helsinki with his father Pentti, the ADB deputy of manager systems in the Bank of Helsinki, his mother, Riitta, and his 11-year-old sister, Kati.

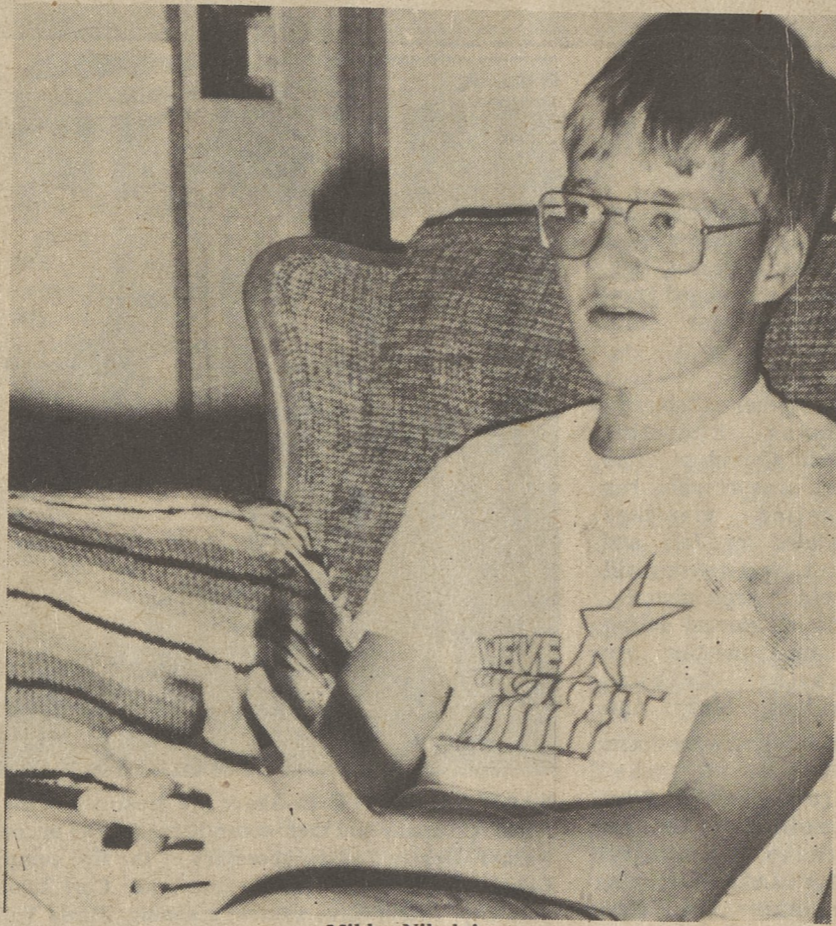
According to Mikko, teens in Finland have interests similar to American teenagers. Mikko's hobbies include playing the piano, violin and guitar, bicycling, photography and airplanes. About three times a week Mikko rides his bicycle to the Helsinki airport, a distance of about nine miles from his home to photograph the airplanes there. During the winter everyone in Finland skis because Mikko says "there is nothing but snow". Mikko learned to ski when he was three years old and enjoys both downhill and

cross-country skiing.

The school system is very different in Finland from those in the United States. All schools are either state-owned or state-supported. Mikko goes to a state-supported school, which concentrates on an even higher education level than the regular public schools. A student is required to attend school for nine years, then he can continue for three more years before entering the university. Mikko said that at the university, which is very expensive, each person works at his own pace and tries to finish as soon as he can. Mikko plans to study physics at the university.

In school Mikko learns four languages, Finnish and Swedish, the two official languages of Finland, German and English. He also studies history, chemistry, biology and spends many hours studying mathematics. Religion is a required subject, the two state religions being Lutheran and Orthodox. If a student is not a church member, a course on World Religions is available for study.

Mikko has really been enjoying American television, especially the movies. In Finland there are only two television stations, one state owned, one commercial. There are three radio channels, all operated by the state. The radio stations



Mikko Nikulainen

broadcast a lot of news. Classical music is broadcast for a longer period of time than rock

and roll, which accounts for only 2-3 hours of air time. Camping is another

activity Mikko enjoys. Finland, the land of 60,000 lakes, has many beautiful lake side camping

facilities to accommodate its 4 1/2 million inhabitants. Mikko says that it is also a popular vacation spot for Europeans, especially from West Germany.

The Sheehans are planning to take Mikko, with their children Heather, 16 and John 13 on a camping trip to Nova Scotia, through the Maritime Province. They will also visit Ohio when Jackie returns for a class reunion. While there they will visit the Wright Patterson Air Museum. The Sheehans hope to take Mikko to a Phillies game, on a visit to the Franklin Museum in Philadelphia, and on a visit to the Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.

John, executive director of the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, and Jackie, popular story lady at the Back Mountain Memorial Library, are no strangers to hosting visiting students. They have hosted Up With People students, young people from a Danish gymnastic group and AFS Bus Stop

students the past two years. Both believe that they might like to host a student for an entire year. As Jackie explains, "We love the opportunity to meet and get to know people from all over the world".

One trait of Mikko's that impresses Jackie is that following every meal he always says "thank

you". Jackie has found this to be true of all her foreign visitors. Mikko noted that Finnish people appear to be more formal than Americans. When asked what he likes best about the United States, the answer was, "The people here are more outgoing than in Finland". Mikko finds Americans to be a friendly people.

Chief Miers attends breath device class

Dallas Township Police Chief Carl Miers attended the State Police Northeast Training Center last week for instruction on administering the breath testing device which Back Mountain Departments are in the process of buying. Miers was the first local officer to attend the 40-hour program. He said the Township will send two more members of the police force for training in August, and two more in September. At this point each full time

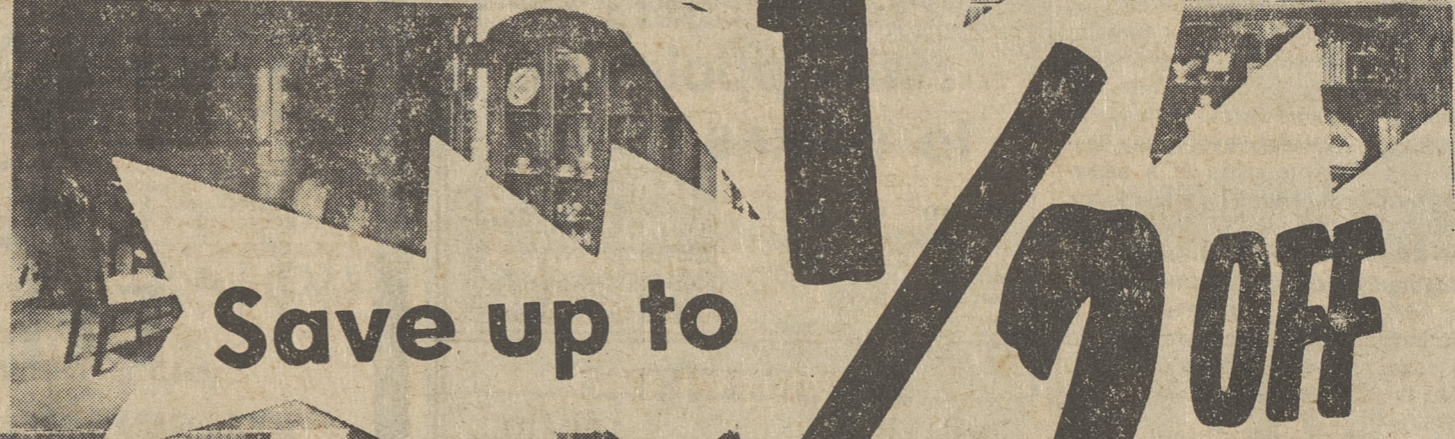
officer in Dallas Township will be qualified to use the breathalyzer.

Miers explained the schooling is paid for by the Federal government. The Township guarantees the officer his salary for the week.

Miers and Officer Clark Van Orden have also completed a two day course on the vehicle code update. He said all township police will take this course by the end of August.

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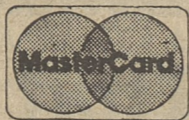
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