

#### Article #4- Lifestyles

This week I will fill you in on some of the life styles I am experiencing here in Stuttgart, like the fashions, hairstyles, and food. Some of these are similar, while others are quite different.

Typical fashion in German is not drastically different than American fashion but they have their own uniqueness. Skinny jeans with Converse shoes are definitely the hot fashion. If not Converse shoes, then leather boots. Girls typically wear a tank top, or something similar, with a cardigan or light sweater over it. Another popular choice is to wear black or navy hose with a cotton knit top, short dress, or skirt.

Scarves are HUGE!! Almost everyday 90% of the girls have a scarf on to accessorize their outfit. Color tends to be pretty bland though; Nothing sparkly, flashy, or bright. Big earrings are a good accessory to an outfit, but only wearing neutrals or light colors. And patterns are also non-existent. If there are any patterns its only stripes or something very subtle.

So what about the guys? They typically wear jeans - not necessarily skinny jeans - with a t-shirt, button-up, or polo and a zip-up jacket over. I also haven't run across any groups of people dressed gothic. Most high school students dress either preppy or nerdy. There aren't many in between.

Because it is not very sunny or warm here in this time of year, a cardigan, sweater, or jacket are most definitely needed. Especially because the classrooms do not have central air, so a window or two is almost always open in classrooms.

As for hairstyles, with the boys there is no real distinct hair style. Many are long and swept across their forehead. Some are just short or even buzzed. But for the girls, they typically leave it long and curly. A lot of girls here have a nice natural curl or wave to their hair. But for those who don't, they just leave it go. They normally part their hair to the side and let it sweep across their forehead. And I have yet to meet someone with highlighted or dyed hair - they just stay with their natural hair color.

Food over here is pretty good! I've only run across a couple of foods that I don't care for, but that's to be expected. The food isn't drastically different than American food. Some essentials they are miss though include: peanut butter, ranch dressing, 1000 island dressing, sliced bread, and macaroni and cheese.

They asked me what my favorite food was, and when I replied Macaroni and Cheese they all just starred at me blankly. I tried explaining it but they didn't understand the concept! They eat a lot of

different kinds of bread and they do not buy them in the loaves like we have ours. And....they do not have white bread; it is mainly wheat bread and has wheat grains and seeds in it.

Breakfast is normally a piece of toast with marmalade. Lunch is normally what we would have for dinner, like spaghetti or some big hot dish. Dinner is something light and cold: cereal, toast, or sometimes leftovers. We eat breakfast together before school, lunch may be with others or on your own, depending on everyone's schedule and usually not eaten until 1 or 2 pm. Then dinner is around 8 or 9:00 pm and most everyone is home by then to eat together.

It has been interesting to compare and contrast the living styles here with those at home. I am getting used to their lifestyles here, but my heart will always belong to Antwerp!

Article #3 9-22-09

More News from Germany!

Our first day of school, Monday, September 14, brought about lots of excitement! The school system is very different here. You are assigned to a class section, for instance mine is "11b," and the people in that section are the people in all of your classes...much like elementary. But the scheduling is much like college. For example, Monday I have classes until 5:30 but on Wednesday I only go until 11:30.

The classes I am taking include: Physics, Chemistry, Math, Biology, English, German, Religion, Politics, Sports, Art, and Geography. We get a half hour break after second period and then an hour lunch break. The atmosphere is much like college, not only because of the time schedule, but because it is very open. As long as you're at your next class on time, you're free to do whatever. Open lunch and, if you have a free period in the middle, open break. We are allowed to moderately eat and drink in class.

There are about 30 kids in "11b" so I'm already getting to know everyone pretty well. I am introduced and known as "The New American Girl." I love it! They love asking me lots of questions about America. They are very fascinated with the prom, school sports, and most of all....school busses. A group of about nine girls gathered around me today and eagerly listened as I showed them pictures and talked about our school bus system. They all want to ride one! It's very different for them because they all get around via a metro system.

They don't call it the metro, however, they call it public transportation, but it's much like our metro or subway, although the majority of it runs above ground as opposed to underground. Kids get to school either by walking or the metro. No one drives to school or gets dropped off by parents.

Speaking of driving there are five main types of cars. Stuttgart is home to the Porsche and the Mercedes Benz, therefore, making them a popular choice. There are also many BMWs, Nissans, and Lamborghinis. As you may already know, all of the cars, vans, and SUVs are much smaller here. Most likely because there two way streets I would consider the same width as a typical alley. In other words, very narrow! And because of the narrowness, many parking spaces are either half on the street half on the sidewalk, or completely on the sidewalk. Also, their side rear view mirrors all fold in due to the narrow streets and small parking spaces.

Several people have asked me about homesickness. For the first couple of days, I will say, it was rough. But the busier and more rested I get...the easier it becomes. Because of the six hour time

difference, it is difficult to catch my friends online so we can chat, but I have talked to them a couple times and I am able to talk to my mom almost everyday which is nice. It's very odd though, because I will be getting home from school around 2:00 and my friends are just going to school! Facebook is GREAT!! It is an excellent way to stay in touch with my family and friends. So keep watching Facebook for my postings and keep reading my articles in The West Bend Newspaper. Germany is great, but as always, my hearts belongs to Antwerp!

Article #2: 9-18-09

Hello Ohio! I hope you read my first column talking about my trip to Germany this year! If not, make sure you read the Sept. 9th issue so you can stay up to date!! I've been here about a week but it feels much longer because so much has taken place!

Many of you have already emailed me and asked how my flight was...and my response: well...it's a loooong 7 1/2 hour flight! There were six other Rotary Exchange Students from all over the US that were on the same flight and will be staying in the Stuttgart area. On the plane we had individual TV screens so we could do a number of things including: watch new and old movies, play games, listen to music, and track our flight. It helped the time past a little faster. Our flight pattern was a huge arch upwards. We went up over Newfoundland, Canada, across "the pond", and then down over Ireland and England to land in Amsterdam.

On the flight they provided supper, which consisted of a small salad, a piece of cheese, two crackers, rice, and teriyaki chicken. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be....but it was definitely pre-prepared, re-warmed food! Somewhat like a TV dinner. They also provided a breakfast consisting of an egg in a biscuit, orange juice, and a banana. I tried to sleep during the flight, but I was too excited and uncomfortable to get any shut eye.

When we arrived at the Amsterdam airport, we had to go through security and then find our next gate. Neither of those tasks proved to be too difficult. Therefore, we had plenty of time to rest before our small commuter flight to Stuttgart. This plane was a very small plane that we boarded by walking on the tarmac. My flight to Stuttgart was a little over an hour long and we were all glad to arrive at our final destination: Germany!

Now it was finally time for us to find our luggage and our host families. All seven of us anxiously waited for our baggage to come around the wheel. Some found both of their bags right away and some found only one right away. Two of us stood at the carousel for nearly a half an hour waiting for our luggage to come around. Thankfully, both of my suitcases appeared undamaged as did the other six students. I found my host family right away. Also there to greet me at the airport was my Rotary counselor and my second host mom and sister. [I will switch families in December or January.]

Once I got home, the challenge was to stay awake until an acceptable time to fall asleep, according to their time zone! Germany is six hours ahead of Ohio, so I lost a fourth of a day during my traveling time. But that night I got a full, hard eleven hours of peaceful sleep! I woke up and started unpacking!

Thursday we took the public transport to go register me with the local authorities, set up my banking account in Germany, and do some sightseeing around the city. It's a rather large city, much bigger than Fort Wayne, but it doesn't feel that big. It feels like one big hometown. It's beautiful though! We went up into the TV tower (a land mark of the area) and we could see the whole city and surrounding area! WOW! Stuttgart is in a bowl; every side of the city is surrounded by large hills and forest. Did I say?.....SO beautiful!!

On Saturday we took a small trip into the Black Forest (Schwalz Wald). We went to an old monastery in a small little town on a hill side and looked around as my host parents explained the history and many facts about the area. We then drove a little ways more to an outdoor museum of traditional houses from the Black Forest from different time periods. I would say it's very comparable to Sauder's Village. There were some ladies sitting around in traditional clothing weaving hats, purses, shoes with straw. And they were also making real stuffed scarecrows.

When you think of the Black Forest, a couple things typically come to mind: coo-coo clocks, deep, dark valleys, and, of course, hills. All of these are very true. However, no one in all of Germany, and possibly Europe, owns a coo-coo clock! Yes, they are made in the Black Forest, but it's too stereotypical for anyone to have one around here. They are all exported. The Black Forest is very beautiful and I am hoping to go back and take more pictures when all the trees have changed colors.

Germany is becoming home bit by bit every day, but, of course, it will still take some more adjustment. And as I said previously - my heart will always be in Antwerp!

Article #1: 9-14-09

Hello! For all of you who don't know me, my name is Hayley Feichter and I will be a sophomore in high school this year. Instead of attending Antwerp High School, I am taking a once in a lifetime trip to Germany as an Outbound Rotary International Youth Exchange Student. In simpler terms, I will be living and attending school in Stuttgart, Germany for the next eleven months.

Stuttgart is a rather large city of about 550,000 located in southwest Germany near the Black Forest. The weather in Stuttgart is very similar to Ohio. I departed on September 8<sup>th</sup> and will be back in the US at the beginning of August, 2010. Over the course of the next eleven months, I will be staying with three different host families. If you do the math, I will be with each family about 3 ½ months. My first host family has 4 kids: 3 girls and 1 boy ranging from the ages 13 -19. The oldest is attending college and the 15-year old is an exchange student to the United States, now living in Beverly Hills, California, this school year. My older brother and younger sister will be helping me get used to my new school and routines.

In Stuttgart, I will be attending Koenigin Olga Gymnasium where they have a program set up just for exchange students. Because I don't know much German, for the first 2-3 months I will be taking all my classes in English while after school, I will be taking a special German class to help me learn the German language. After I have some German under my belt, I will integrate back into the regular classes.

Right about now is when people normally ask the question "are you packed?" The answer is no. I never will be fully packed! The airlines only allow you to check two suitcases (each under 50 lbs.), one carry-on, and one personal bag. Coming from a girl's perspective....that's not enough! But yes, I will be able to go shopping over there and buy whatever is necessary. It is getting everything home that might be a real trick!

The past two weeks my emotions are like being on a roller coaster. I am so excited to be going to Germany, yet so sad to say goodbye to my friends here. Email and Facebook will be my life line home, but don't expect news on a daily basis. I'll be very busy trying to learn the language, customs, and routines in my new home, as well as making new friends and travelling about to see the sites. I am planning on sending updates to the West Bend News on a regular basis. Look for my news articles and know that my heart will always belong in Antwerp.