

Bonjour, Hertford:

# French student visits with local family

By KATHY M. NEWBERN

While local citizens may feel Perquimans County is, in some ways, representative of the American way of life, for a first-time visitor to America, it has become representative of the nation.

Ariane Sabatier, a resident of Normandy, France, has since July 14 been collecting some impressions of the United States via Perquimans County.

Ariane, a 17-year old student, is spending some time visiting with her American friend, Buck Winslow, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Edward Winslow of Gaston Dr., Hertford.

The two became friends through correspondence as pen pals. The pen pal project was a requirement in Buck's French class at Chowan Academy. For Ariane, she was interested and also became involved in the pen pal service. Both laughingly recall that they were seeking to correspond with a member of the same sex, but things seem to have worked out.

Retracing how they got in touch, Buck explained that he first sent a letter to

Ariane's home and got no response. He later found out that she did not receive that letter, instead, the first item she received from him was a Christmas card with a brief message. Despite this initial cross-up, both soon began lengthy letters back and forth with both using some English and some French. Ariane smiles and accuses Buck of using more English in his letters.

However, Ariane has not been at too much of a disadvantage since she has been studying the English language seven years. And, since arriving in

Hertford, she has had much experience in putting that learning to practice. She explains that she has had relatively few problems in communicating although some American colloquialisms still cause confusion.

Three years ago, Ariane began planning a visit to the United States. And the visit with the Winslows has been in the making for the past year. She worked during summers to save her money and was able to make the trip she had planned on. Symbolically, she arrived here on Bastille Day.

Comparing Americans to the French, she used the word hospitable and added "more than French people I'm sure." She said American boys are taller and bigger and wear different hair styles. She explained that she is not used to seeing men with their hair parted in the middle. Comparing the girls, she laughed and said they wash their hair more and use more make-up. In France, she explained that girls usually don't wear make-up until they are about 18 years old.

And, commenting on styles, she said, "In France, we don't have shirts with flowers on them." After some help from family members, it was determined that Ariane meant that certain prints are representative of Americans. When shown a print jacket, she said, "Only Americans or the English would wear that." She again laughed and said such would be a give-away for an American in France.

While some styles and attitudes may differ among French and American young people, it appears that jeans are a universal language. Ariane said she is planning to stock up on Levi's since they are much more expensive in France.

Prices on other items are about the same she said except for gasoline which costs \$2 per gallon. Comparing cars, she said, "I prefer our small European cars. In France, gas is three times more expensive than here." No doubt, in France, that estimated mileage becomes a definite factor.

A comparison was also made of American and French television. She explained that some programs show in both countries, but added that there is more programming in America. In France, programs don't begin until the afternoon. She said, "I believe our TV's more educational." She explained that programs might include concerts and debates, particularly political in nature. She said she likes American comedies and has found "The Jeffersons" to be a favorite. However, she added, "The problem is these commercials." Americans, too, might appreciate that sentiment.

With the traditional excellence of French cuisine, one might wonder what Ariane thinks of American food. So far there have been no real negative responses and one definite yes. She likes ice cream, especially butter almond. The mention of it makes

her eyes light up. Concerning the American hot dog and hamburger, she said she liked both but found them filling. And she was not very impressed with the American congealed salad.

At the time of her interview, Ariane was teaching the Winslows how to make crepes. She explained that the French use a lot of wine in their cooking "and here they don't." When she put rum in her crepes, she raised some eyebrows. However, the taste soon quelled any qualms.

Since both Buck and Ariane are students, a natural area of comparison is education. Ariane said, "In France, at school, sports is not as important as in America." She explained that baseball, softball, and football are not played in France, instead, soccer is the game.

However, the lack of emphasis in France on sports can be easily attributed to the amount of emphasis placed on studies. Ariane explained that an additional four to five hours is spent after school on studies. She explained that she feels French high schools are much stricter, but American universities are considered to be better. She said, "Our director wants the best results

and she gets them."

Ariane has just completed her baccalaureate, and although only 17, holds the current status of a college sophomore. She will soon be enrolling at the University of Caen, where she will study chemistry. She hopes to someday work in a laboratory but one "without blood."

The sit-ins of the 60's initiated by American students demanding changes in education is not a new idea to Ariane. She explained that student strikes are a common occurrence in France. She said, "As we often change an educational administrator, he does a new law and we are not pleased, so we do strikes." She added that often teachers are in support of the students' attitudes and join in. Some areas causing student strikes include the condition of buildings and the curriculum requirements.

Ariane will be leaving Sept. 11.

Concerning her hosts, she said, "Here, I've found a second family."

And, for local citizens who have met Ariane, they too may say they've added a foreign friend.

Bienvenue a Perquimans County, Ariane! Nous esperons que vous vous amusez ici.



A SECOND FAMILY — Ariane Sabatier of Normandy, France, poses with her American pen pal, Buck Winslow, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Edward Winslow. Ariane has described her new found friends in Hertford as a second family and recently discussed French and American comparisons in an interview above.



OUTSIDE FUN — Bike riding with Linda, Suzanne, and Denny Winslow has proven fun for Ariane who has tried several activities while visiting in America. She admitted that water skiing on the Perquimans River was attempted with little success. A recent humorous incident was when she described sighting a "big rat" to her American friends. It turned out to be a Perquimans County possum that she had spotted.



MAKING CREPES — Ariane finds teaching pen pal Buck how to make crepes an enjoyable experience. Although, his style may not be as smooth, the taste was as good. She admitted that the addition of rum in the recipe, a French practice, made the difference. (Staff photos by Kathy M. Newbern)

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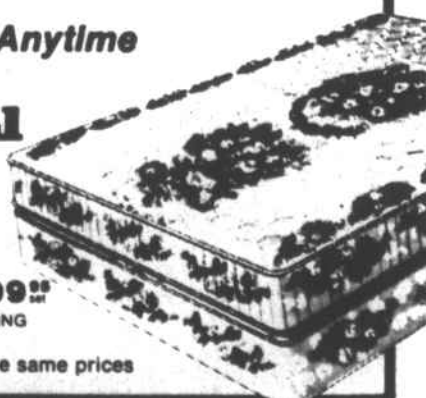
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