

Finn had busy year, traveling, playing sports

By Sharon Corcoran
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She's had a busy year — traveling from Finland to Goodland, going to Boston, Albuquerque, Mount Rushmore and the Grand Canyon and celebrating Christmas four times.

Leeanoora Kekalainen, 17, foreign exchange student from Finland, also learned the perfect hobby this year to keep track of all those memories: scrap booking.

Kekalainen, daughter of Ari, a communications service director at a university, and Leenamari, a child psychologist, came to Goodland from Kuopio, Finland, a city of 100,000 people. She has a brother, Pauli, 19 1/2, and a sister, Annileena, nearly 16.

She arrived in Kansas in the middle of August and has been busy attending Goodland High School and traveling with host family Mark and Jackie Buller and their daughter Kylie, a junior, and son Stephen, an eighth grader.

Kekalainen comes from an area where the temperature normally ranges between — 30 degrees Fahrenheit to the mid 80s. She experienced the 90s when she first arrived and is hoping to avoid experiencing the 100s before going home in three weeks.

She said Kuopio is about 62 degrees north longitude, about the same as Fairbanks, Ala. The country is very different from Kansas, having a lot of water and many forests. There are over 200,000 lakes in Finland Kekalainen said, and it is only twice as big as Kansas.

She said the area of South Dakota around Mount Rushmore reminded her of Finland because of the trees, but she also appreciates the Kansas landscape.

"I have learned to like how open it is," Kekalainen said; "you can see sunrise and sunset — they're really beautiful."

Kekalainen has enjoyed the people and experiences here too.

"I like it here," she said; "it gets easy to make friends at school."

Her favorite experiences in the United States were the schools and playing softball and tennis; she had never played sports before but soaked in the experience.

"I learned I can do it if I try," she said. "I decided life here is an experience; I'll try everything I can."

The only expectation she had before she came here turned out to be right.

"I had heard that in smaller towns, everyone says, 'Hi' and knows everyone at school," Kekalainen said. "It's true."

And she got to travel to many of the places she had heard about at home.

"A lot of places I heard about in Finland — Boston, the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore — I got to go see for myself," she said. "That was cool."

Kekalainen got to travel a lot this year, which she has really enjoyed.

"I have been to 14 states so far," she said, "and on the way back, I get to go to one more."

She went to the Boston area over spring break as part of the Goodland High School AFS Club's short-term

exchange, and she traveled with the Bulls.

"My host family took me a lot of places," Kekalainen said — "the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, and St. Louis."

Albuquerque, N.M., was her favorite place because she saw a friend from Finland there.

"She's an exchange student in Albuquerque this year," Kekalainen said. "We have been friends for 11 years."

Other than that, Kekalainen's favorite spot was the Grand Canyon.

Her favorite time with her host family was Christmas. She enjoyed going around to different families for four Christmases. She said they celebrated in Goodland and went to three homes in Nebraska, a grandma, a grandpa and her host mom's sister's house.

The holiday is celebrated a little different here than in Finland, Kekalainen said; at home, it's usually celebrated on Christmas Eve with a big dinner and then opening gifts. Here everyone opens gifts on Christmas morning and then has a big lunch, she said.

Kekalainen said she enjoys learning languages. She has studied English for nine years and lived in England when she was six years old. She speaks her native Finnish and had to study Swedish (also an official language in Finland) and English. Most students choose another, she said, adding she studied French and Spanish.

"This year I tried German," she said. "English is my most fluent, but I know the basics of the others. Af-



Goodland High School foreign exchange student Leeanoora Kekalainen worked on one of her newest hobbies scrapbooking on Tuesday afternoon at her host family Mark and Jacque Buller's home.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

ter your third language, it gets easier."

In Finland, she liked spending time with her friends and reading — her favorite book is "Little Women" — and she gained some hobbies in Goodland.

"Now I have scrap booking and softball," she said.

Her host mom got her into scrap booking, and Kekalainen is making good use of the hobby creating memory books of her trips. When she returns to Finland, Kekalainen

has two more years of high school.

She's unsure of what her future holds but says she plans to go to college and has thought a long time about becoming a doctor.

Action team needs to buy 20 more flags for Main

Plans by the Community Beautification Action Team to have American flags line Main Street for patriotic holidays is more than halfway to the goal, but they need about 20 more to have the street covered.

Tiffani McMinn, Sherman

County economic development director, and a member of the beautification action team said Wednesday they have received enough money to purchase 25 American Flags, but the goal is to have 40 flags to fill Main Street.

The flags would be attached to the light poles. McMinn said each of the 45 flags needed would cost \$40 for a total of \$1,800. So far they have received \$1,000 and need about \$800 more to order the flags. She said the plan had been to have

them up by Memorial Day, but it has taken longer than expected to raise the money. She said to have them for July 4 the flags will have to be ordered by Wednesday, June 20.

Anyone interested in buying a flag to help fill Main Street is asked

to make a check payable to the Sherman County Foundation and put on the memo line Community Beautification. By going through the foundation, the donations are tax deductible.

Mail donations to the Sherman County Economic Development office at Box 614, Goodland, Kan. 67735 or drop them off at the economic development office at 104 E. 10th.

Jars out to collect for fireworks

More jars are out around town to collect donations to put on the Fourth of July "Freedom Fest" fireworks show being organized by Sherman County's homeowned carnival group.

The Shine On Sherman County Resource Development Action Team is helping with the collection jars for the fireworks said Donna Price, director of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a member of the action team.

Jars are out at Kabredlo's, Presto, Howard Johnson's Harvester Restaurant, the Goodland Steakhouse

Diner, the Butterfly Café, Rasure's Do-It Center, the Sherman Theater, Cowboy Loop, Hank's Café, Pizza Hut, Gambino's, Crazy R's, Goodland Grind and Gallery, Bubba's Meat Block and The Goodland Star-News

Brad Schields, president of the Sherman County Community Services, the carnival group, which in charge of the July 4 celebration, said last Thursday the group has money from last year and donations from community organizations, but still needs about \$1,000 to cover the cost of this year's blowout. In all, he said, they need to raise about \$4,000

this month.

"We have about \$6,000 in the fund," Schields said. "That is about \$1,000 short to pay for this year's show, and we would like to raise an additional \$3,000 to put us in good shape for next year."

Last year, Schields said, the carnival group decided to take the lead in organizing the annual fireworks display and celebration. He said plans for entertainment this year are in good shape.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors.

We believe that news should be fair and factual.

We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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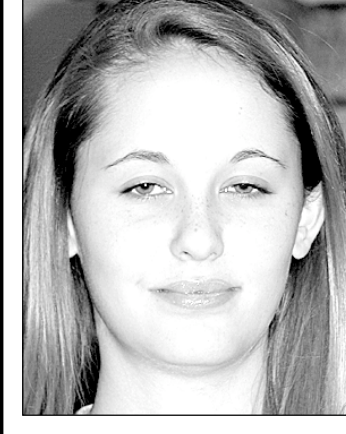
The Goodland Family Health Center will be closed Saturday mornings from June 9 to August 31. Normal hours start again on September 1.

REMEMBER!!! Our Emergency Department will always be available to you if you need urgent medical care!

GOODLAND FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

106 Willow Street, Goodland Kan.

student of the week



Name: Lauren Abernathy
Parents: Paul & Gina Abernathy
Grade: 11
Age: 17

We've nominated this student because: of Lauren's outstanding classroom and DECA club participation. Lauren is DECA's secretary and treasurer for this school year. Lauren's participation at the Kansas State DECA's Career Development Conference was outstanding. Lauren is a two time competitor at DECA's International DECA Career Development Conference.
Student Comment: My favorite aspect of school life is see-

ing all my friends. I really enjoy my English, History and Marketing classes. After graduation, I will always remember the teachers who helped me become more interested in school and all the crazy memories and jokes made with my friends.

Activities involved in at school: DECA and band.

My choice of movies, books, and games: My favorite movies include The Holiday, Love Actually and Remember the Titans. I can listen to all types of music and my favorite books are The Count of Monte Cristo and My Heartbeat.

After I leave Goodland High School I intend to: Attend Cloud County Community College and/or Northwestern Oklahoma State University, with the intent to obtain a degree in Mass Communication.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: putting my degree to use in a large city, while hopefully being very successful and making a lot of money.

Favorite Quote: Don't Look Behind You. Something might be gaining on you.
— Satchel Paige

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