

Czech cagers experience a touch of Americana

(Continued from Page 8A)

dinner of veal parmesan a la Farmer Jack's.

ONE OF FRIDAY'S activities was a tour of the Observer and Eclectic plant where the group saw that land the latest technological advances in computerized newspaper publishing.

The team, none of whom spoke any English, then went on to the Silverdome where they met the Pistons.

"They were absolutely amazed at the Silverdome," Curtis said.

Saturday the team played against the Henry Ford Community College team, beating them 81-67.

"They said they didn't play very well because there were still tired from the trip over here," Curtis reported.

But apparently they got their second wind, Curtis smiled, because they asked to go to an American disco that night. His two sons, Mike and Rob, carried most of the team in Center Village in Canton where the 1980s musical group are featured.

"THEY HAD A great time, especially since two of the Dittles, Steve King and Kim Stewart, are from Livonia. They made a big fuss over them, announcing to the audience who they were and encouraging the young ladies

there to come over and meet them," Curtis said. "And they wound up by bringing home a bunch of friends they met there."

Sunday saw the whole team taking in the Red's sights in downtown Detroit, including a trip to the Plaza's Donut restaurant. That was followed by a shopping tour at Fairlane Town Center where nearly all of them bought ski jackets, blue jeans and cowboy hats.

"Because of the size of the group, we split up at Fairlane and told them all to meet back at a specially designated spot in the parking lot at a certain time. Amazingly, they were all back on time," Curtis said.

ONE OF THE side trips requested by the group was a visit to Greenfield Village.

"It's almost a must," Curtis explained. "Greenfield Village is quite well known in Czechoslovakia, probably because other people who have been here have gone there. The team was quite impressed with the fact that we can trace how things actually began. They think Henry Ford was a wonderful man to do what he has done there."

And of course, no trip would be complete without a stop at both Mac-

Donald's and Knott's.

"They were wild about the Big Macs and french fries," said Mrs. Curtis.

All in all, Curtis figures he drove about 500 miles from the time he picked them up Friday morning until Monday morning when he dropped them off at the cultural center. From there they went to Windsor where they are playing basketball every day. The schedule then calls for more games in

Hamilton, Ontario and finally Toronto. And then it'll be time to head back home.

"They were very polite gentlemen the whole time," said Mrs. Curtis. "They even insisted on observing an old world custom they follow at home and that's removing their shoes at the front door. That translates as putting your best foot forward—in any language."



Jan Plesnik, a journalism student in his homeland, tries his hand at the keyboard of an Observer & Eclectic copy editing terminal while copy editor Tom Panzenhagen and members of the touring Czechoslovakian basketball team look on. The 25-year-old, 6-7 Plesnik wrote "Srdecne pozdravuje," which, according to an interpreter, means "Greetings from the heart." (Staff photo by Bill Bresler)

Make holidays fire safe

The National Fire Protection Association offers this checklist for a fire safe holiday season.

● Children's safety:
— Don't leave children alone or you invite accidents at Christmas time.
— Plug-in electric toys should be labeled for fire safety by a testing agency.

— Don't buy highly combustible toys or ones that use flammable liquids.

● Your Tree:
— Don't buy a tree with shedding needles.

— Cut off 1 inch from the trunk. Keep the tree in water in a non-tip stand, away from exits and sources of heat.

— Plastic trees should have a fire-retardant label. ● Lighting Safety:

— Lighting sets must be labeled by a safety-testing agency. Replace worn sets.

— Don't overload outlets. Protect wires from injury.

— Don't hang lights on a metallic tree.

— Outdoors, use special outdoor lighting.

— Unplug the lighting before you go to bed or leave the house.

● Christmas Parties and Smoking:

— Use flame-retardant or non-combustible decorations and costumes.

— Don't smoke near the tree or decorations.

— Have large ashtrays and store matches above the reach of children.

— Check for cigarette butts in upholstered furniture before you go to bed.

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