

STUDENTS

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Pablo will stay with the Phillips family - Dad Roy, who sells lobster for Ice Brand Seafood; Diane, a noon aide at Kenbrook Elementary who also works at Hearts and Roses, a flower shop in Farmington Hills; daughter Kelli, 13, a Dunckel eighth-grader and Kyle, 16, who attends North Farmington High School.

Marselles has a population of about 1 million. "It's a city 26 centuries old," Savy said. "You can't beat that."

Savy has previously visited Indiana and Wisconsin. This was Dibs' first trip to America. "Your country is so vast geographically and so powerful on all levels," Savy said. "It's a good opportunity to go someplace which is not San Francisco, not New York City, but real America."

Savy is staying with Dunckel teacher Sandy Chamberlin; Dibs, with Dunckel teacher Mary Green.

Savy teaches English to high school and college students. Dibs wants to be an international lawyer.

Dibs called America huge. "People are very kind here," she said. "We were welcomed warmly."

This was Dibs' first encounter with "suburbia," a place where people drive everywhere, contrasted with the Marselles population who walk everywhere.

The French students won't spend much time in classes. "The idea is for our kids to have an American



PHOTOS BY BILL EPSTEIN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pablo Leger takes a few notes. He's surrounded by books that help his hosts communicate with him, like The Pocket Idiot's Guide To French.

experience," Savy said.

The boys said fruit and vegetables don't taste the same as at home, Savy said.

"They have less taste," Savy explained. "They look nicer. We have open-air markets all year round. Our coldest temperatures



Hosts Jackie Duchene, Kelli Phillips and French students Etienne Fenetler and Pablo Leger look at photographs from the night of their arrival.

would be in the 30s."

Lunch in France is typically between noon and 2 p.m. and is "a real meal," Savy said. "We won't have dinner until 7 or 8 p.m. People eat earlier here and they think that people eat very fast."

Pablo liked his first lunch in the Dunckel cafeteria - chicken, french fries and Twix candy bars. Etienne liked his packed lunch with ham sandwich.

There are more television channels here compared to the six national channels in France, Pablo said. TV commercials are longer and have more references to telephone numbers

and store hours, he said.

Etienne is staying with the Duseau family.

Dad Mark is a salesman and Mom Kathy is a homemaker. Their daughter, Jackie, attends Dunckel. Other children are Dan, 18, Kim, 16, and Robert, 8.

Students will be kept busy and are included in family activities.

"We like our kids to be doing things," Savy said. "One went to a family wedding last weekend. One went to a birthday party."

Trips were planned to the YMCA, Farmington/Farmington Hills

police and fire stations, the Henry Ford and Chrysler Museums, Zoo Zone, a Pistons game, bowling, the Detroit Science Center, WJR, and the state Capitol.

Students aren't the only ones who have learned from the exchange. The adults asked questions about low age milestones like driving at 16 and being able to drink alcoholic beverages legally at age 21 as viewed in France.

"What about voting?" Savy asked. "You don't celebrate that?"

stuck@bnet.com.net | (248) 477-5450

BUILDINGS

FROM PAGE A1

his feelings at a Feb. 10 meeting. He drives by the intersection every day and still can't believe his eyes.

The two-story buildings are a result of a court ruling the city agreed to after the land owner, J. Robert Langan, sued the city in 2001.

His proposal to put buildings

on the tiny properties was turned down by the Zoning Board of Appeals for not having proper set-backs from the roads. Langan appealed the ruling in Circuit Court, which is the only avenue of appeal for landowners unhappy with a zoning board ruling.

Kowalski of West Bloomfield, which borders the development, said the buildings don't mix with the landscape, especially since on the southwest corner behind the one

building, there is a single story office complex.

He said it appears the buildings are being built in the roads' rights-of-way.

"For (the city) to do that is a slap in the face," he said. "I thought they were building some utility building at first."

Dale Countegnan, director of planning and community development for Farmington Hills, said the city wanted to buy the land from Langan years ago to leave the land as right-of-way.

"For what they were asking, it was too high. It was not reasonable," Countegnan said.

The area is proposed to have a round-about intersection through a future county road project expansion and will need the land to do it, Countegnan said.

He said if federal funds come through for the project, the city would not have to bear the brunt of the total costs to acquire the land.

Councilwoman Vicki Burnett

urged residents to voice their displeasure during court cases where judges make rulings in cases against the city.

In court, judges view land ownership as supreme, she said.

The city agreed to Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert's consent order in July 2001.

Barnett also said the city offered to buy the land that was zoned office, but most felt it was too small to build on.

"Our job here is very complicated," she added. "I hope citizens see what judges do to our local communities."

Langan could not be reached for comment.

Neuman said he mostly blames Langan for the buildings, but added he wished the city had put up a fight to block the development.

"At some point the council has to take a stand," he said.

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