

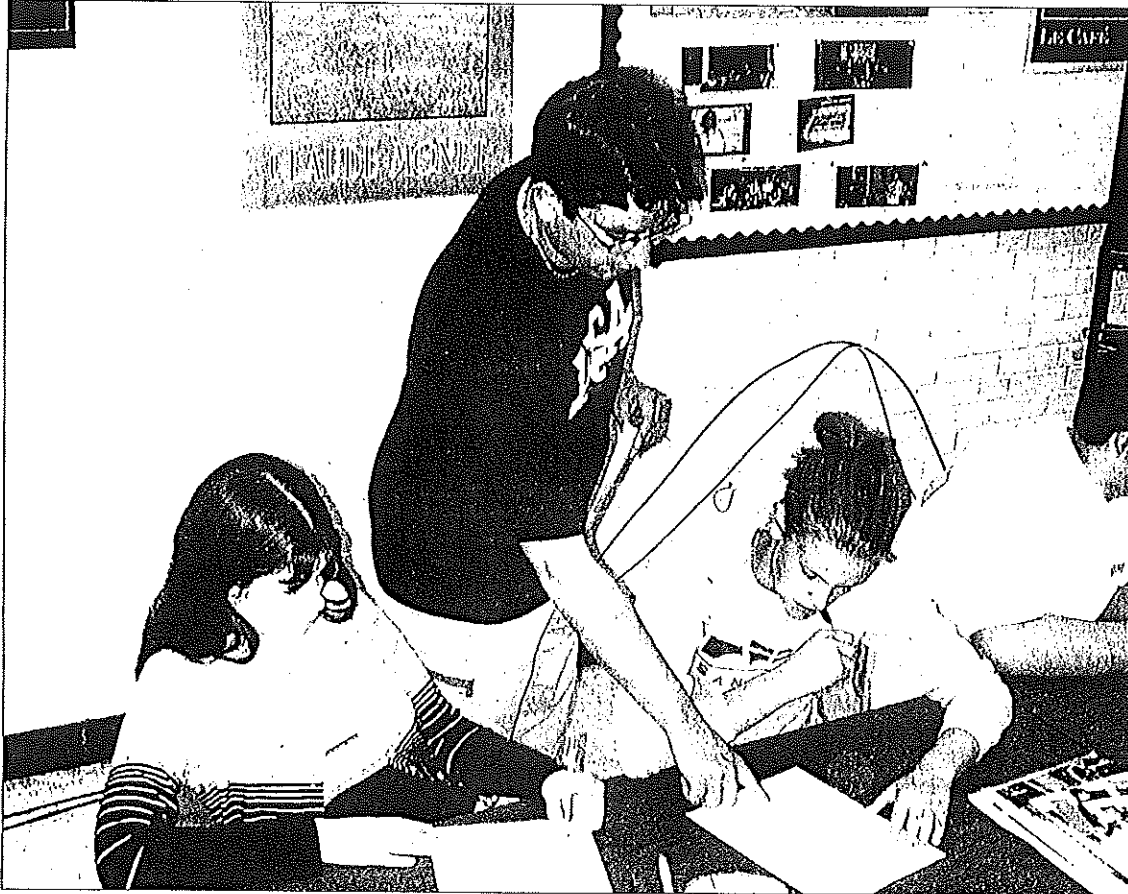
# Spotlight on

## Huntingdon County

Page A4 ■ Altoona Mirror

May 12, 2001

### TALKING THE TALK



Mirror photo by Kevin Olt

Sebastian Wolff, a German exchange student from Juniata College, explains the finer points of his native language to Erika Monihen and Jenna Cooley, first-year students at Juniata Valley High School.

## LANGUAGE IN MOTION

Juniata program introduces native speakers to high school students

By KEVIN OLT  
Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA — Kirk Reynolds knows a little more about French food now than he did a week ago. He knows what time people in Paris eat lunch and dinner and how they use bread to mop all the leftover sauces from their plates at the end of each meal.

"I was wondering, what if you don't like the sauce?" he said.

He learned it all as part of Language in Motion, a new program that brings language scholars and native speakers to high school classrooms in the area.

At Juniata Valley High School, six sophomores filed into a classroom early Monday morning to learn about fruits, vegetables, lunch and dinner under the Eiffel Tower. At the head of the class were two students from Juniata College, French majors who elected to help teach classes as part of their studies.

Language in Motion began at Juniata, the result of a \$5,000 grant from the Cooperative Grants Program of the Association of International Educators. It follows on the heels of Juniata's Science in Motion program,

which brings biology, physics and chemistry students into high school classrooms to teach what they've learned.

Deb Roney, the program's director, visits at least two schools per week with her students, who teach French, German, Spanish and Russian. She runs the show, but it's the Juniata students who talk the talk. That's fine with her — and it's fine with high schoolers.

"Since they're younger, the kids believe it a lot better than they do from their regular teachers," she said.

It worked Tuesday morning, Reynolds said after looking at vegetables and learning the words French use to describe them: pomme de terre for potato, chou-fleur for cauliflower, haricots verts for green beans.

"Usually we're right out of the book," he said. "We have visuals here." Language in Motion classes are a little bit lighter than normal, a little bit looser, he said.

At the front of the class, Juniata senior Ann Margrave spent the previous 45 minutes sliding from English to French and back again, offering specifics just how seriously the French take their meals.

"No civilized person can sit down and eat a

meal in 15 minutes," she said, referring to the practice of grabbing a quick lunch during the workday. On the other side of the Atlantic, it's not uncommon to take two hours for lunch even if it means missing out on work back at the office, she said.

Margrave spent a year in France, immersing herself in the language and culture. Another student teacher Sebastian Wolff comes straight from Germany and brings with him all the experience that comes with spending 13 years in a German school system.

Having such experienced speakers in classrooms is part of what makes Language in Motion such a valuable tool to teachers, Roney said. It's valuable to the high school students, but it's also valuable to the native speakers who are learning about American culture for the first time.

It means that language isn't just something coming from a textbook.

"We can talk about the use of language in multiple contexts," she said.

Mirror Staff Writer Kevin Olt can be reached at 946-7457 or kolt@altoonamirror.com.