

AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE MISS TENN KY TEAM NEWS

BRINGING FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, AND SOUTHERN KENTUCKY

THE NEXT BEST THING TO HOME AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas. This is a time of year that I have always loved. In years past by the second or third of December I would already be in somewhat of a Christmas spirit. The Christmas tree would be up in my living room and a fire would be going in the fireplace, and on those chilly evenings I loved to sit there listening to the old Christmas standards, sung by Bing Crosby and the like, that have always been an important part of my holiday. Then there are more ambiguous things that have always been Christmas to me—like the smell of pine, Santa Claus in the mall, and advent wreathes. I have already mentioned the New Orleans side to my Christmases, with the magical Christmas in the Oaks and my mother's entire family gathered, which always was fun.

But for many reasons this Christmas is different. It is the first one I am spending away from home, for starters. In the AFS program you have to stay in your host country unless you are traveling with your Host family or school. Only in extreme circumstances are you allowed to return. I also had to do all my Christmas shopping for my family back home in November. It takes nearly a month to send packages to the US from Denmark, so I had to get all my presents for my family long in advance.

Here in Denmark, Christmas is heralded by the days shortening to only seven hours of sunlight, the sky being overcast almost all of the time, bitter cold, and houses becoming a refuge of warmth. Candles are a very important part of the Danish culture. During winter, candles are lit in windows and on tables lending a cheery atmosphere to dwellings during the long Scandinavian night. All throughout December, Danish families cook. They make all manner of sweets and food, because Christmas is a time in Denmark to see friends and family, and to have "Juleforkosts" or Christmas lunches.

They are called this even if they happen to occur at night. These are times when friends get together and have some of the amazing Danish foods I have gotten to know. There are, of course, pastries and smorgas-

bord, along with a baked treat known as "belskriver," which is bread and apple mixed. There is a drink called glogg (pronounced like gluk), which is a warm red wine with spices and nuts, and is a veritable staple of the Danish Christmas.



Kennon Hulett writes regularly for the Hattiesburg American during her AFS year abroad.

Starting with December first, there are Christmas calendars. There are candles that count from one to twenty-four on the side; you burn them every night in December until Christmas. There are also "calendars" of sorts on TV, which are TV shows that have a different installment every night in December leading up to Christmas. The most famous of these is one about a character called Pyrus.

Pyrus is a nisse or elf, who lives in the walls of the archives in Copenhagen. He has become so well known that he has become more or less a cultural icon for Christmas time in Denmark. His calendar in December is for kids but as it turns out nearly everyone watches it. I enjoy it, because it's level of Danish is equal to the level of compre-

hension I am at right now so I can understand it and it really is quite funny.

The "nisse" are in fact a very important part of the Danish Christmas. The Danish word for Christmas is "Jul" (pronounced like Yule), and Santa Claus doesn't have a name in the Danish language; he is just called "Julemand" or Christmas man and he is supposed to live on Greenland, which is a Danish commonwealth. The nisse, though, are extremely important to the tradition. They were supposed to live in mills and factories at times other than Christmas, and in centuries past it was thought that if you didn't keep the nisse happy, then they would interfere with the work and cause problems. These days they are just a neat part of the culture. I asked my host mother why they were such a part of the tradition of Denmark and she said "Well, Santa Claus is only for December twenty-fifth, the nisse are for the entire year."

Now thinking about it, I really enjoy the Danish Christmas, though houses are not decked out in lights like they are at home—decoration is more understated and subtle. Grena, though, the town where I go to school, is decorated in white Christmas lights, with a large Christmas tree in the center of town. Storefronts are all decorated in their own way, with garlands and lights, and when I'm walking through the shopping streets, when the sun has set, and the nippy Danish evening has come, the entire town takes on a wonderland-like appearance.

And later, when I'm walking from the bus stop to my house in Lyngby and I am able to see inside the houses and Danish families are all gathered around the table having dinner together it makes me very content. I may not be at home for Christmas this year, but if I had to choose a second place to be during the holidays, I think it would be Denmark.

This is the 18th Installment from Kennon Hulett from Hattiesburg, MS. You can read them all at <http://afs.nashville.com/kennon.htm>

WWII AFS DRIVER SPEAKS AT SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE

The AFS National Conference for Support and Hosting Coordinators was held this year in January in San Antonio, Texas. "It was a great conference allowing us to learn new information and to strengthen skills that we already have," wrote Elmer. Jenny Myers and Elmer Woods attended the San Antonio AFS conference for training.

Elmer writes: On the Support Side, I learned that all the same problems we have with our hosted student from abroad, (i.e. I don't like school, or my country said that I don't have to study, my country said I can have a new family, or I don't like my family and want a new one, and so on and so on) these same problems occur with Americans Abroad students that we send to them. We also discussed behavior management plans and so forth. It was a relief to know that others were having pretty much the same issues that we were having. We brainstormed about things that we thought might make our jobs easier, how to train and keep the liaisons interested, and how important their job really is. We also received training on using the online documentation.

One of the best parts of the conference was the Guest Speaker, Mr. Kunkel, who was an AFS Ambulance Driver in WWII. He gave insight into what AFS was before it became an exchange program. He showed pictures of his adventure and made everyone realize how good our lives are because of these brave people. He showed pictures of his different regiments that he worked with (French, English, Americans, and several other countries). He showed the devastation that the war caused and how it made the people and victims of WWII suffer, pictures of the concentration Camps and such. I don't think that there was a dry eye in the room. —Elmer

Jenny reports: On the Hosting side of the conference, there was a lot of emphasis on placing students on time. Also, the idea of community placement of students is changing. The idea is now that we should sell families on the program and the mission first, then find an appropriate student for them. With community placements, we emphasize finding a home for a particular student, falling back on the "puppy dog"

technique rather than focusing on the mission of AFS.

Student biographies are now online! It's great! We can email mini biographies to anyone interested, and download applications. We can now reserve a student for a few days or a week when we think a family is interested in that student, and the reserve status shows up online, letting other area teams know the student is being considered! There are a lot of neat features!!! There were lots of informative panels, discussions and presentations at the San Antonio conference. —Jenny

WELCOME OUR NEW ORIENTATION COORDINATOR

Hal Walker of Clarksville, TN has been involved in AFS for approx. 20 years. He has filled every position at the local chapter (both in California and in Florida). Hal & his wife Kay worked as counselors at the Pre-Departure Orientations, Miami, Florida. Hal also was the AFS Area Representative for SW Florida for a few years. They just returned from Miami, Florida where they worked again at the Pre-Departure Orientation for the AFS Students, from all over the USA, who were going to South America for the Year & Semester Program. Hal has not been too involved with AFS since moving to Tennessee 8 years ago, but has volunteered to be the Miss Tenny Area Orientation Coordinator, with the help of all other AFS volunteers in our area.

THANK YOU

British American Business Association of Tennessee for the largest donation our area has ever received. Returnee **Jerry Watterworth** and **John Butler** at the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce made this gift possible.

We Wrapped it up at **Borders Books** this holiday thanks to **Meredith Richardson, Sarah Myers, Dana Lockhart, Tracy Pon, Brent & Linda Grubb, Alberto Betancourt, Pong Taechalertpaisarn, Paul Wettzel, Javier Echevria, Louise Abramovici, Gift Tangcharoen, Claire Chan, Barbara Wills, Jenny & Raymond Myers** and **Kristine from Taiwan.**

Thanks **Janine Ray** for leading the Interviewing Workshop held in January.

Mid Year orientation leaders: **Mary Truka, Tammy Adkins, Elmer Woods, Sue Deriemer, Sue Courey Becky Heywood** and **Barbara Wills.**

VOLUNTEERS LEARN INTERVIEWING SKILLS:

Janine Ray, 4 time hosting parent and 2 time sending parent, and past hosting coordinator led volunteers in an interviewing skills workshop. Participants learned team training strategies, reviewed available resources and practiced interviewing each other. Valuable discussions on how to make successful placements took place. The Area Team hopes to have more training workshops in the future. Look for information. Thanks to all who made the effort to participate!

———— MARK THESE DATES: ————

Check the website for the latest AFS News you can use! <http://afs.nashville.com>

- **March 10**
AFS Volunteers work phones for Public TV.
- **April 1** Area Team Meeting 2 PM.
- **April 4 – 8**
AFS Weekend at Hunters Lane HS
- **April 19 – 22**
AFS Weekend in Mt. Juliet
Saturday Tye Dye Party
- **April 29** Area Team Meeting 2 PM.

- **May 20** Area Team Meeting 2 PM.
- **August 8, 9, 10**
New AFS students arrive.

Mandatory Dates:

- **June 2, 2001:**
Departure Orientation for hosted students, host families, Americans Abroad and their families.
- **July 6, 2001**
Hosted students leave on Bus Trip.
- **July 10, 2001**
Return Departure from New York.

CONGRATULATIONS:

Volunteer **Dr. Barbara Wills** received the Tennessee Counseling Association Secondary Counselor of the Year. Dr. Wills was nominated and awarded this by her professional peers in the Tennessee Counseling Association. Congratulations Barbara! Barbara was a presenter at this conference featuring the AFS Global Educators Program and her experience in Thailand.

Paul Wettzel, Most Valuable member of the Hillsboro cross-country Team.

Yusuke Ishimura for his debut performance at Café Express on December 2, 00 and his encore performances on December 23rd and February 3rd.

Michella Oliveira is still making straight A's in school. She is also being nationally nominated as a National science merit award winner through the United States achievement academy. Her chemistry teacher Ms. Monique Macartney @ Antioch high entered her as a candidate. Michella has the highest grade in the class.

Congratulations **Barbara Wills** Outstanding Local Volunteer 2000.

Gustav Olsson for placing 3rd in the woman-less beauty pageant.

HELP OUR NEW HOSTING COORDINATOR

Jenny Myers is not new to AFS but she is new as hosting coordinator. The hosting coordinator works diligently with volunteers to find homes for AFS students.

Jenny most recently served the area team as our Volunteer/Returnee coordinator. Jenny and her family have hosted 5 times and their daughter Sarah spent last year in Argentina. When not busy as working for the Overton band, being mom to 3 daughters plus host mom, or volunteering for AFS, Jenny works for Steck/Martin Architects. Thank you Jenny for serving AFS in this way!

FIND A HOST FAMILY!

Find a family, or maybe two.
It's something everyone can do.
Neighbors, co-workers, friends...
just ask.
It's really not a difficult task!

Now applications are online to make it easier to find the student that will just fit the family that you have in mind.
—Jenny Myers

OK! I admit my poetry needs a little help...but what I really need help with is finding host families for the students arriving in

August, 2001. We have committed to finding homes for 15 students, but would like to place 20 if possible.

Mini biographies and full applications of each available student will be online. The mini biographies can be emailed to prospective families and the applications emailed to families who are seriously considering a particular student.

When you find a family interested in hosting, please contact me, Becky Heywood, Sharon Bonnett, or Jan Ray. We can send them information about AFS and email them appropriate mini biographies. Thank you!!!!
—Jenny

2001 HOSTING COMMITTEE

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OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER 2000

Barbara Wills was awarded the Outstanding Local AFS Volunteer 2000. She is the first to ever receive this award. Barbara has dedicated herself to perpetuating the AFS mission in middle Tennessee. She is the sponsor for the Hunter's Lane High School AFS club and has planned several mini exchanges. Barbara and her family hosted 10 AFS students. In 1996 Barbara chaperoned a bus trip. Her co chaperon was Gallatin resident and past host dad, Bill Sirls. Barbara served as the AFS representative to the Congress-Bundestag Committee for 12 years. As the public relations coordinator for the area, she is relentless in searching for free or inexpensive ways to advertise for AFS. Thank you for your service Barbara.

ATTENTION HARRIS TEETER SHOPPERS:

You can help AFS raise money by linking your VIC card to AFS. Next time you shop, tell them to link your VIC card to Nashville Neighbors Account 4558. This costs you nothing. Every time you shop after you ask them to link your VIC to AFS, Harris Teeter will donate 1% of your total purchase dollars to AFS. Even if you already link your VIC to another organization or school, you can still add our number. The Harris Teeter 1% donation will be split with up to 5 non-profits linked to each shopper's VIC card.



Link up to our Nashville Neighbors Account number at Harris Teeter!

AFS Miss Tennky

our Nashville Neighbors Account # is:

4558



HELP WANTED

Student/Family Liaisons are always needed. Liaisons are responsible for documented monthly contact with students and families. Contact Elmer Woods at 615-297-4257 or ewoods@dtus.com

Newsletter Editor: The Miss Tenny area team produces 4 newsletters a year. Contact Rob Heywood at 615-383-5458 or rheywood@telalink.net

Returnee Coordinator: The AFS Area Team Returnee Coordinator is responsible for developing an ongoing connection with the organization and providing involvement opportunities for returning AFS students. The Returnee coordinator works with returnees and fellow Area Team coordinators to assess returnee skills and interests and to refer returnees to volunteer needs within the Area Team. Assist in orientations and represent returnee interests on the Area Team. Contact Becky Heywood at 615-383-5458 or AFSAreaChair@nashville.com

Sending Coordinator Apprentice: Our current sending coordinator needs someone to train to be sending coordinator in 2001-2003. Brent plans to pursue other

volunteer positions. The Area Team Sending coordinator is the area volunteer with the principal responsibility for coordinating volunteers, returnees, and schools in recruitment for and implementation of AFS outbound programs. This position also serves as the principal liaison between the area team and the Regional Service Center for procedural and policy issues related to student recruitment and outbound programs. Contact Brent Grubb: 758-3445 or attabeast@aol.com

Host Family Interviewers: We are building an interviewing team willing to interview and complete applications of potential host families. Contact Jenny Myers 385-9644

Bus Start Coordinator: This person notifies hosted students and their families where and when to meet the bus. They also coordinate housing for students arriving the night before if necessary. The coordinator assists the chaperon making certain all the students are on the bus!

Bus Trip Chaperones: The chaperon is the last US orientation leader for hosted students. You travel with students from several areas on their bus trip and lead some

final orientations with them as they prepare to return home.

Bus Stop Community: The community hosts a bus full of students for a couple days as they prepare for departure.

These don't interest you? Other volunteer opportunities include planning a holiday party, providing a ride to a student or arranging for returnees and students to give a presentation for your local club or civic organization.

Npt8

Nashville Public Television

AFS VOLUNTEERS

NEEDED MARCH 10

The AFS community is volunteering for public television on March 10th, 5-10:30pm. We need 18 people to answer phones during one of their fund raising campaigns. To volunteer please contact AFS returnee, Sarah Myers at 385-9644 or sarah.myers@nashville.com. Support public television and volunteer!

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AFS works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences to individuals, families, schools, and communities through a global volunteer partnership.



Miss Tenny Area Team
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