

Published September 20th, 2017

## Meet visiting Czech student Marek Vybiral

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo provided

At age 17, Marek Vybiral is Orinda's 17th visiting student from Tabor in the Czech Republic, and like his predecessors, he's having a blast. Brought to Orinda by the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation, and staying with Orinda Union School District board member Cara Hoxie and her family, Vybiral arrived about two weeks before high school started at Miramonte.

"Orinda is awesome," he enthused, "the weather is great and the people are kind and helpful." They are curious about him, too, when they learn he is visiting from Europe, and offer to help him.

Vybiral, who is a schoolmate of the last visiting student, Adam Kraus, says that school here is easier, but he thinks that American education is better. At home he takes 14 subjects in school, while at Miramonte he takes only six: sports medicine, Spanish 3, French 4, English 4,

economics and psychology, which he finds to be the hardest, with its many technical terms. At home there is more emphasis on memorization, but here he likes the combination of memorization and debate or discussion of the issues.

In the Czech Republic, Vybiral is an avid athlete who swims, skis, hikes, and cycles. At Miramonte he'd like to try cross country running, and his host family plans to take him skiing this winter.

Not homesick yet, Vybiral has spoken with his family several times and sends frequent text messages. His little brother, David, 6, keeps asking for him. He also has a sister, 20, who is at Prague University, where Vybiral would also like to do his undergraduate studies. But he'd also like to do graduate work somewhere else in Europe, somewhere English speaking. He thinks he'd like to study law and international relations and speculates that it is possible that would lead him into the world of politics, where he'd like to see improvements made in the Czech Republic. For example, he was disappointed in the turnout at the last election.

Vybiral has been invited to Orinda's St. Wenceslas 2017 Czech Festival and is looking forward to it. Of course, like any 17 year old, Vybiral is interested in food. At home his mother, who is a contract manager in a heating plant, cooks international dishes and traditional Czech cuisine like svickova na smetane (beef sirloin in sour cream sauce) and vepro-knedlo-zelo (pork roast with bread dumplings and sauerkraut.) But here he is enjoying cheeseburgers and Philly cheese steaks.

Reach the reporter at: [sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sora@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA