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Visiting Czech student preparing for Orinda Czech celebration

By Sora O'Doherty



Tabor Meetings 2018. From left: 2017-18 Visiting Student Marek Vybiral, Former Visiting Student and Tabor President of the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Committee, Michal Vasek, Orinda Vice-Chair of the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Committee, Slavka Ruzicka, Orinda Union School District Board Trustee Cara Hoxie, Orinda Vice Mayor Inga Miller, 2016 Host Mother Eileen Fitz-Faulkner, Orinda Mayor Amy Worth, and 2016-17 Visiting Student Adam Kraus. Photo provided

for 2-3 hours. Ruzicková finds Girl Scouts to be a little bit old fashioned and says her group prefers to do things a bit differently, pursuing some programs about current affairs and global issues.

Ruzicková arrived in Orinda on Aug. 10, and will return to the Czech Republic in January. She is staying with a host family who has a sophomore student at Miramonte and another student at Orinda Intermediate School. When she returns home, Ruzicková would like to change her school. She'd rather go to a high school in Prague. She is thinking of pursuing a career in teaching, or perhaps journalism, and may seek to study political science in college. The main difference between education in the Czech Republic and here is that in the Czech Republic, where there are many universities, third level education is completely free. Students usually enter university knowing what they want to major in. The level of difficulty in getting in to university depends on a student's preferred major. Acceptance is not based on high school grades, but upon an exam plus a personal interview. The biggest university is in Prague, and most of Ruzicková's siblings have gone there.

Ruzicková has taken BART into San Francisco several times, and found the city to be diverse, with varied neighborhoods. The ocean appeals to her, but she misses her close friends at home, with whom she can talk about personal matters.

Marie Ruzicková is enjoying her time at Miramonte High School as a visiting student from Orinda sister city Tabor, even though she is homesick. Actually, Ruzicková isn't exactly from Tabor, but a really small village about 20 kilometers from Tabor, where she goes to school. Her mother, an assistant at a school for autistic boys, brings her to Tabor each day by car and train where she attends a French high school. Her father makes puppets, and, as a hobby with a friend, performs puppet theater.

In addition to attending school, she is also helping children learn Czech dancing for the local celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Czech Republic, which will be hosted on Oct. 21 in the Founders Auditorium of the Orinda Community Center by the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Committee. In addition to Czech dancing, there will be Czech food, beer and wine. Doors will open at 10:45 a.m., and from 3 to 4 p.m. there will be a screening in English of the documentary film, "Accidental Army."

At Miramonte, Ruzicková says that she is one of the few students who is free to enjoy many electives, so her course work includes U.S. History, English, French, Art, Drama, Photography, and Public Speaking. "High school in the Czech Republic is not so competitive as here," Ruzicková said. "I really see how people want to have all A's and take advanced placement classes."

Ruzicková has been in Girl Scouts for 11 years, and now leads a small group of Scouts who meet every week



Marie Ruzicková, 2018-19 Visiting Czech Student Photo Sora O'Doherty

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[back](#)

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