



Jan. 28, 2023

Vol. 39, No. 4

## Jona Kuentler, German Exchange Student



Jona Kuentler, German Exchange student in Treynor, spoke today about his experiences in America. He is the son of Jan-Erik and Beate Kuentler and lives along with his brother, Simon, 13, in a town of 5000, south of Frankfurt. Jona's dad lived with Mick and Judy Gutttau 30 years ago and now Jona is living with the Josh and Shelly Gutttau family. Today Mick

asked Jona questions and also added some insight.

Jona's maternal grandparents live on the first two floors of a house and his parents built two floors on top with a staircase entrance that connects all floors. The house is located on the edge of his community next to fields and cooperative farm buildings. Mick estimates land owners have 30-50 acres so sharing farming equipment is necessary.

Jona's father is an attorney working as a compliance officer in ING Bank in Frankfurt. His mom works in facility management in a company that makes blind rivets.

In Germany Jona has 150 in his grade. Jona is 17 and was placed in the Senior Class in Treynor and will receive an honorary diploma, but will still have three years of high school in Germany to complete before university. In Treynor he really liked taking psychology, strength training (but prefers running and doing push-ups the most), and found government was exciting, and liked history. He started learning English in Germany at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and will have studied Spanish for 5 years.

Military or community service is no longer required in Germany. Now that he is 17, he will be able to learn to drive with an adult in Germany and then drive alone at age 18. The cost of training amounts to about \$2000 in Germany.

Jona loves sports. In Germany he played soccer when younger and really loves handball now, which he said is very physical. Here he has played football and basketball, and is really looking forward to playing soccer this spring. Sports in Germany are club teams and are not as competitive and practices aren't mandatory and maybe meet 2-3 times a week. Sports consumes a lot of his time here including some weekends so there is not as much free time as in Germany.

Jona says he wishes he could play football again because it was so much fun. He was called the "Germinator" by Coach Chapman and Coach Steve Chambers' jokes made him laugh.

Pizza, burgers, and fast food are favorites both here and in Germany. With parents' permission Germans can drink at age 14. He doesn't drink, but there are lots of parties in Germany where he meets at someone's house and they have fun.

Youth For Understanding has pretty strict rules for exchange students in America: He can't drive nor drink. When offered a root beer float here, he first rejected it thinking it was beer. But he didn't like it anyway!

On a perfect day, Jona says he would not eat breakfast, do something with friends in town, have a nice lunch, watch sports or have friends over at night and watch sports. They watch a lot of American TV shows and American movies are most popular. To recharge, he usually likes to be alone and relax and watch sports.

In America, he says people are really nice, you can talk to everyone, are welcoming and you feel like you are part of the family. He said it would be weird to speak to strangers on the street in Germany.

Jona's dad encouraged him since he was ten to be an exchange student. He feels he has become more confident than before from this experience. Flying alone was challenging. He says he is more open now.

Jona's family will visit here for three weeks in April and over Easter. He hopes to do some things with them when not in school and they will get to see some soccer games.

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**February 4 speaker will be:**

**Scott Strohmeier, IWCC Football Coach**

**“How to win a National Championship”**

**8-9 AM Sat. Treynor Community Building**

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***Famous Quote:***

***“Do not ask the Lord to guide your footsteps if you are not willing to move your feet.”***

***Another Amish Proverb***

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**Meeting Minutes**

Jordan Campbell called the meeting to order. Present were 20 members. Guests were Preston Jones, Jona Kuenstler, and Shelly Guttau.

Jordan shared that on this day in 1986 the Challenger exploded 73 seconds after launch with seven being killed. Christa McAuliffe was a teacher who died. Kirk Vorthmann stated that they were at Houston International airport at the time and every TV had a big crowd. There was debris on the runway and all airplanes had to get down. They sat on the tarmac for over an hour. Jeff Jorgensen stated he was in Florida for the first launch and was very impressed.

Dale led the Pledge of Allegiance and Dale Willenborg gave the opening prayer.

Jokes were shared by Bill Vorthmann and Jordan Campbell.

**50/50** was won by Jona Kuenstler. The **Attendance Award** was won by Judy Guttau.

**Birthdays/Anniversaries:** Jordan Campbell's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated. He said he shares the same birthday as Doug Dillivan.

Celebrities Allen Alda turned 86 on this day. Elijah Wood turned 41 on this day, and was born in Cedar Rapids.

**Bragging Rights: (\$ are used for youth activities)**

- Kirk Vorthmann stated he has completed restoring his John Deere 4630.
- Judy Guttau and Linda Danker bragged that Dane and Jona played JV Basketball last night

and also played some in the varsity game. Dane had a good rebound and scored. This Monday at 6 PM the 12 groups moving on to the state speech contest will perform at the Performing Arts Center at the Treynor High School.

- Gary Guttau shared that he heard Martin Luther King speak at ISU in 1957. Someone noted he used 103 words in one sentence. This was 11 years before he was murdered.
- Gary Funkhouser stated his wife had a story published in the most recent Our Iowa magazine. It is about the Spanish family they sponsored. She has had emails and calls from readers around the U.S. Gary also provided some back issues of Our Iowa for members to take.
- John Klein noted that the Our Iowa magazine had done an article in the past about the Burma Shave signs in Treynor.

**Auction Items:** Gary Funkhouser provided one of two 2023 Our Iowa Calendars which his wife received for the story she wrote for the publication. Judy Guttau bought it for \$10.

**Business:**

- Can Kennel sorting will be held at 2:15 PM Wednesday to help the Music Boosters. At this time there aren't many cans in the kennel.
- An Optimist Board Meeting will be held today after the meeting.

**Community:**

The meeting was closed with reciting of the Optimist Creed.

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**HUMOR**

**Why do seagulls fly over the sea?**



**Because if they flew over the bay, they'd be bagels 🥯🥯**

## BOARD MEETING

Jordan Campbell presided today with Dale Willenborg, Ken Graham, Gary Gutttau, and Judy Gutttau present.

- Volunteer Recognition Event: It was a great success in 2022. Dale stated he thinks opening it up to the public to attend could inform potential members about various organizations. It was decided to have this every other year.
- Oratory/Essay Contests: Dale will learn more from Gary Funkhouser. Gary G offered to help.
- Ken Graham announced he is stepping down from his "opening up" duties in October or earlier if a plan is determined. He has done this since Richard Vorthmann last did it. Thank you so much, Ken, for your service.
- Jordan will research pens for speakers.
- Dale has info about Optimist shirts and this will be brought up at a meeting to determine interest.
- The board completed filling out the 2023 schedule for organizations who will get the can kennel and for those who will assist with putting up and taking down flags. This will be posted on the Optimist web site.
- The Treynor Optimists will have the period of July 6-August 2 with sortings being done on Jul. 19 and Aug. 2.

## Calendar

### Events

Feb 1 Can Kennel Sorting Time 2:15 PM

### Birthdays

Feb 13 Gary Funkhouser

### Anniversaries

### Programs:

Feb John Klein  
Mar Dee Gutttau (first two weeks)  
Linda Danker (last two weeks)  
Apr Keith Denton

### Speakers

Feb 4 Scott Strohmeier, Iowa Western Community College football coach – "How to win a national Jr. College Football Championship in 2022"

Feb 11 Julie Danker – President of the Treynor Music Boosters – Spring 2023 schedule, including Nashville trip in March.

Feb 18 Optimist Field Trip – 8 AM meet in Auditorium at IWCC Arts Center for Backstage Tour. If you want to carpool, meet at the Treynor Community Building at 7:30 AM.

Feb 25 Travis Castle – Building and use plans for "The T" recreation area in 2023 and beyond.

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