

# YESTERDAY

## YESTERDAY ... 10 years ago — March 10, 2006

(As reported in the Bangor Daily News)

BANGOR — Students from John Bapst Memorial High School were enjoying coffee and pastries at a local restaurant one recent afternoon as they practiced one of their favorite Swedish customs.

Just back from their 10-day visit to Sweden, the teenagers vowed to get together each Monday to have a “fika” and to socialize, relax and eat.

“It’s a really Swedish thing to do,” said senior Ray Solinger of Eddington, one of 15 Bapst students who lived in Umea, Sweden, last month as part of an exchange program.

A week after returning home, the students said they missed the multicultural, cosmopolitan city of about 110,000 in northern Sweden, and their host families with whom they quickly bonded.

“Nobody wanted to leave. There were lots and lots of tears,” said teacher Mark Tasker, chairman of the social studies department, who accompanied the students along with science teacher Theresa Thornton.

Bapst teens attended classes at Umea’s 2,000-student high school, went skiing - some of them for the first time - and had a blast sliding down steep hills on plastic, foam-covered mats called skrana that “really fly.” They toured the Swedish countryside and visited a reindeer pasture. And they picnicked by a lake, sitting on reindeer skins in the sun as they devoured grilled hot dogs.

The youngsters paid their own way, less than \$900 apiece for the adventure.

Swedish students stay physically active, the Bapst teens said. Since schools in Sweden don’t have sports teams, young people join clubs in town where they engage in skiing, hockey, badminton and handball. They work out at gyms, or training centers as they are called.

There are no school buses, so they either take public transportation or walk or bike to school on a system of trails that is kept snow-free for year-round use. Dragoon School, the high school in Umea, has

no parking lot, but is surrounded by a plethora of bike racks.

Tasker called Dragoon School a “great model for training people to go to college.” There’s no detention for coming into class late or even for skipping school entirely.

“The onus is on the kids,” said Tasker. “If they’re not there, they don’t get credit. You’re telling 17- and 18- year-olds, ‘Whether you show up or don’t, it’s your responsibility to know the work.’”

Swedish students “follow rules because they want to, not because they’re afraid of being punished,” said Dylan Connole, a senior from Dixmont.

Students in Sweden get paid a minimal stipend to go to high school as an incentive for not dropping out, according to the teens. “It’s a way to get them to think of school as a business model,” Tasker said. “You show up for work every day and you show up for school every day.”

The Swedish students all spoke English and the international classes attended by the student hosts were conducted in English. Still, by the end of their visit, Maine teens said they had been able to pick up a number of Swedish terms.

The school atmosphere was much more relaxed, said Kelly Willard, a senior from Glenburn. Teachers are called by their first names and they “wear jeans and look just like the students.”

Swedish students are considered adults at age 18 when many of them take apartments in the city even if they’re still in high school. “The biggest difference is that’s the age they can learn to drive,” said Tasker. A driver’s education course is “incredibly expensive,” so it’s not unusual to meet a 19- or 20-year-old who just got their license, he added.

The food in Sweden is delicious, students agreed. Knackebrod, a crisp bread, is served with everything. So is caviar out of a tube, which Swedes love on eggs and in sandwiches.

## 25 years ago — March 10, 1991

More than 700 students from Penobscot, Hancock and Washington counties put on

## PICTURE FROM THE PAST



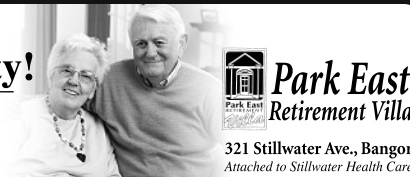
BANGOR DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO BY XXX

**STEPHEN KING** throws out the first pitch before the opening game of the Little League Baseball All-Star State Tournament at the Knights of Columbus Field in Old Town in 1989. King, a perennial best-selling author, is an assistant coach and scorer for District 3 champ Bangor West.

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their thinking caps Saturday in East Corinth and brainstormed to solve problems presented by the regional Odyssey of the Mind Tournament.

Thirteen of the 80 teams from several schools were creative enough to advance to the state championship, which will take place April 6 in Rockland.

Odyssey of the Mind is a problem-solving tournament that began during the 1970s in New Jersey, said Marcia Diamond, regional co-director. Schools in Maine began competing during the early 1980s.

“It’s a program that really fosters creativity,” said Diamond, who teaches language arts at Central Middle School. Odyssey is a program about “making do with what you

have and brainstorming,” she added.

The tournament offers students who are not involved in sports an opportunity to compete against other students, Diamond said. “They like the focus on the problem solving.”

The tournament comprises solving long-term and spontaneous problems. Judges award points for a team’s performance in each category. Points also are awarded for the style with which a team solves a long-term problem.

Long-term problems are given to the teams months before they compete. Students do not know the spontaneous problems until they are asked to solve them, though they can prepare with practice problems.

Problems can be verbal or

non-verbal, Diamond said. Teams choose months before the competition which kind they prefer to tackle. Verbals include theatrical presentations while non-verbals include mechanics.

Students in grades three to 12 competed Saturday. Teams were divided according to their grades.

BANGOR — Saturday was autograph day at Bangor International Airport.

Many of the 227 soldiers in the Army’s 1st Special Operations Wing, assigned to posts in Florida, arrived during the morning at Bangor and signed T-shirts and newspapers for the hundreds of people who had come to welcome them home.

Jim LaPan, 10, of Bangor

toted the weekend edition of the Bangor Daily News. He wanted to get as many soldiers’ signatures as he could. “So I can remember the people who fought in the war for our freedom,” Jim said.

Staff Sgt. Robert Nuckles of Orlando, Fla., gladly signed Jim’s newspaper. While signing his name, Nuckles said gratitude like Jim’s brought tears to his eyes. When Nuckles sees his family, the tears will shine, the soldier predicted.

Nuckles is a member of a search and rescue team stationed near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He worked with infrared systems in an MH-53 helicopter. Nuckles recalled Saturday a race his crew had with the Iraqis to pick up an F-14 pilot who had gone down in Iraq.

The MH-53 and an Iraqi van were closing in on the pilot. It looked like the van would get there first, Nuckles said. Suddenly, two American A-10 tank killers swooped in and demolished the van. The helicopter landed and rescued the pilot.

Meanwhile, Sandra Drennen of Milford was asking any soldier in sight to sign a T-shirt -- after she hugged him or her and said, “God bless you.”

## 50 years ago — March 10, 1966

The recent Maine Products Show Afloat aboard the Maine Maritime Academy’s training vessel broke all existing records for visitors in both foreign and domestic ports, a state official said Tuesday.

H.G. Hawes, chief of foreign trade development for the Maine Department of Agriculture added: This was the most successful trip in the 11 year history of the program from the viewpoint of visitors, business leads developed, cooperation from Maine businessmen, and amount of international publicity.”

He said a record-breaking 7,000 visitors streamed aboard the ship in Valparaiso, Chile, in two afternoons, and another 1,000 had to be turned away.

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