



Agneta Wenninger

Swedish teen looks at US customs

Sex, TV violence, big cars and capitalism

"When I first came to this country, it seemed to me very much like Sweden. But it's only the same on the surface. As the days go by, I see more how different it is."

The words are those of Agneta Wenninger, an exchange student at Donegal High School. She has been living with the John Henry Brubaker family near Mount Joy since August 15th.

The differences now dawning on Agneta were invisible at first because they are psychological. Americans have a very different attitude from Swedes, she finds; everything in the U.S. is "a very big deal," according to Agneta.

Teenage pregnancies are very rare in Sweden, much less common than here, according to Agneta. She attributes this to American attitudes: "Sex is a big deal here. It is not in Sweden." The same goes for underage drinking. There is no legal drinking age in Sweden, although one must be 21 to buy a bottle of liquor.

Agneta, who is 18 years old, feels that teenagers at Donegal High also make a "big deal" of dating. She told us that local girls were "amazed" when she said that, in Sweden, a girl need not stay with her boyfriend at a party.

Agneta comes from a nation generally considered to be among the most liberal in the world, and she grew up in the big city of Stockholm. Her society is less restrictive than ours, she feels.

"Here, you're not trusted in school. You're just a 'kid,' and the teacher is way up there," she says. "There are more rules here, especially in school."

Agneta feels that Swedish teenagers grow up faster than their American

counterparts, because they are forced into decisions and adult responsibilities earlier. She thinks the American way might be better in this case.

While Sweden is famous for uncensored sexual films, the restrictions there are much like those here. She told us that a Swede must be 15 to see a movie with "advanced sex," and 18 to watch "very advanced sex."

Swedes' movies and TV are free of "very cruel violence" such as closeups of bullets hitting people, according to Agneta. Run of the mill violence is not only tolerated, but enjoyed by all. Most Swedes speak English fairly well because they are fond of American shows like "Police Woman" and "Kojak."

While some local people may complain about the limited TV reception here, Swedes have it worse. The entire country (about the size of California) has just 3 radio channels, and 2 TV channels. All are run by the government, which owns outright the sort of industries that are only regulated here —utilities, railroads, hospitals, and the like.

The socialization in Sweden is due to 44 years in office by the Social Democrats, the socialist party. They were kicked out by Swedish voters only two years ago, because, as Agneta puts it, they were getting too "red." The new party in power is pushing conservation instead of socialization, and oppose nuclear power.

The effects of the socialists' reign remains in high taxes and extensive welfare rights. "We have no poor people in my country," Agneta told us, and went on to say that Bjorn Borg, the Swedish tennis pro, left his native country to escape the

taxes. "You must have very good lawyers to be rich in Sweden," Agneta notes.

Like so many other foreigners, Agneta thinks American cars are huge. There are fewer cars in Sweden, and the public transportation is excellent.

Agneta finds other areas in which our society differs from hers. Most Swedes don't believe in God, she says, and don't get married; they just set up house together. Women in Sweden have more equal job opportunities, and children are mostly raised in day care centers and nursery schools, rather than staying at home until 1st grade.

Despite the contrasts, Agneta likes America. Her one real complaint is that the food is too fattening.

Note: Agneta came here under the Youth for Understanding Program, which places hundreds of American and European teenagers each year. Any parents or teens who are interested in this program should contact area representative Mrs. Ann Messersmith at 898-8203.

Mount Joy council agenda

The proposed agenda of the Mount Joy Borough Council meeting for Monday the 14th, at 7:30 in the Borough office building, is as follows:

1. Discuss the proposed budget for 1978;
2. Consider the appointment of a tax collector to replace Steve Leatherman;
3. Receive a report on the Donegal Springs Road curbing survey.

Play written by student at DHS



A short play entitled "Life of Honor," written by DHS junior Sharon Cox, will be part of a free Veteran's Day performance of drama and patriotic music at the high school on Nov. 11. Photo shows Floyd Runkle (foreground), Bonnie Wolgemuth and Wayne Mylin is a scene from the play. The show starts at 7:30 PM. There will be no admission charge.

Lucy Zuch wins home of month award



Mrs. Robert Spangler gave Lucy Zuch the House of the Month award. Story on page 3