

Mackinac Island School Gives Deadline to Parents Who Owe Hot Lunch Money

By Ryan Schlehuber

Parents who have an outstanding lunch bill for their children at Mackinac Island Public School are required to settle it up before August 1, 2009, according to a new policy passed by the board of education.

The board, at its meeting Thursday, November 13, passed the new policy to meet a requirement from its auditor, Rehman Robson. During its annual audit of the school's finances at the board's October meeting, the auditor suggested putting a policy in place, especially considering the school is owed an estimated \$3,300 in outstanding debt by parents.

Some of the debt includes children who have moved and left the school district, secretary Barb Fisher told *The St. Ignace News* Friday, November 14.

If parents do not have their debt from the previous year cleared by next August, hot lunches will be suspended to their children until it is paid, according to the new policy.

Students whose parents do not clear their debt before August 1 will be offered a sandwich, such as peanut butter and jelly, a fruit, and milk.

The state requires schools to provide some kind of lunch to students, whether paid or unpaid, said Mrs. Fisher.

The school will also begin sending a reminder letter to parents once an account balance reaches \$75, which equals approximately 50 lunches.

A hot lunch at Mackinac Island

Public School costs \$1.25 for elementary students and \$1.50 for high school students.

The board voted 6-1 to switch law firms, from Thrun Law of East Lansing, which has been the school's legal counsel for more than 20 years, to Brookover, Carr, & Schaberg (BC&S), also of East Lansing.

There was no bidding process, according to School Superintendent Roger Schrock, because "it just came across the threshold and it was something the board looks at periodically," he said during a telephone interview with *The St. Ignace News* Friday, November 14. The firm was "highly recommended" by Island businessman and lobbyist Dennis Cawthorne, and Dr. Schrock said the contract is a "test run."

The contract begins Monday, December 1, and continues until July 1, 2009.

Voting against hiring a new law firm was Trustee Leanne Brodeur, who serves on the board Negotiations Committee, which discussed the issue. The committee also includes trustee Jason St. Onge and board president Ben Mosley.

The new firm offers a few things Thrun did not, one being service without a retainer fee, Mr. St. Onge told *The St. Ignace News* Friday, November 14. Thrun charged a \$1,100 annual retainer.

"Retainer fees are becoming more passé now," Mr. St. Onge contended, "and I'm not comfortable paying over \$1,000 for some-

one to answer the phone, especially in these trying economic times."

He said the board likes the fact that senior law firm partner George Brookover is president of East Lansing's board of education, which they believe means he can better relate to school issues.

"This law firm can also handle more cases without us having to hire another law firm," said Mr. St. Onge, who pointed out that the school had to hire another law firm

in 2002 to arbitrate a dispute with its architect over the school's new gymnasium because Thrun did not have legal expertise in that area.

Mrs. Brodeur said she voted against switching law firms because she believes Thrun is more than qualified to take on legal issues that are school-related.

"Thrun is one of the biggest firms that specializes in schools, and we've been with them for many, many years," she said in a

telephone interview with *The St. Ignace News* Monday, November 17. "I felt we had a loyalty to them."

The board agreed to join Kent Intermediate School District's Michigan Retirement Investment Consortium, which will monitor annuities and retirement benefits for school staff. It will pay a one-time entry fee of \$500.

The board's regular meeting on December 11 has been rescheduled

for December 18 at the request of Dr. Schrock, who will be off island at that time.

School board meetings begin at 6 p.m. in the school's library.

The school will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from Wednesday, November 26, through Monday, December 1.

For Christmas and New Year's, school will be closed from Friday, December 19, until Monday, January 5, 2009.

Thanksgiving Brings Memories of 'Mom's Kind' of Pumpkin Pie

A New Recipe Is No Match for a Family Favorite

By Mollie Cox Bryan

The Christian Science Monitor

While trying out a new pumpkin pie recipe for a cookbook I was writing, I was suddenly struck by a feeling of betrayal. For the recipe I was using was not my mother's masterfully prepared pie that I always loved and anticipated at Thanksgiving. Even though she encouraged culinary exploration of a sort, certain recipes were deemed unchangeable in her kitchen. Pumpkin pie is one of them. Yet, here I was making a "spicy" pumpkin pie with brown sugar, molasses, and half-and-half, ingredients she would not recognize as part of the recipe pantheon. The spicy pumpkin pie gave me pause. What is it about my mother's pumpkin pie that I hold so dear?

My mother was always the pie baker. Even when she had help, she insisted on making the pie filling. Mom leaned against the counter, turned the mixer on, and I'd watch that frothy deep orange mixture swirling around in the white Pyrex mixing bowl decorated with olive green daisies. She always ended up smeared in pumpkin. We'd all be engrossed in our own tasks - peeling potatoes and chestnuts - when all of a sudden, she'd squeal, which would prompt my Aunt Mart to burst into giggles over the splatters of pumpkin everywhere and Mom's lack of eye-hand coordination. Was it because of her refusal to wear eyeglasses or her weariness? After all, she worked as a maid at a hotel all day long and then came home to bake her holiday meals.

Aunt Mart, Mom's oldest and dearest friend, sat at the table with the rolling pin, making the dough or patting it into the deep pie dish. Half-finished glasses of Coke and Fresca were scattered around the counters. Once, their nighttime pie baking went on too late and they dozed off, listening to Herb Alpert on the stereo, each curled up in a quilt on their own ends of the couch. They woke up to burning pumpkin pies at 2 a.m. Another time, Mom's lack of coordination gave way in the early morning hours and she dropped several pies all over the floor.

Watching the thick, smooth,

orange filling in the pie shell go into the oven was fascinating to me. I anticipated the changing of the liquid filling into the solid custard and longed for the first warm piece. Warm pumpkin baking scents filled our mobile home. I still think of it as one of the most all-time comforting smells. Mom sacrificed one pie every year to her helpers. We cut into it with abandonment - we wanted it warm and sloppy, with Cool Whip melting over it, often on Thanksgiving morning.

For years, Mom made several types of pies at Thanksgiving to appease different members of our family: mincemeat for my grandmother, apple for my grandmother, custard for my father, and maybe two pumpkin pies. When the passing years took away my grandmothers and my parents divorced, my mother stopped making any pie but pumpkin, her favorite.

Since then, Thanksgiving and pie only meant one kind: pumpkin, which was a freeing experience for Mom. Each year, she made about six or eight pies, which her dinner guests ate happily, for they are not just good, but extraordinary.

The pies are two inches thick and when you bite into a piece, the flavor grabs you. The thickness greatly enhances the flavor - there is simply more pumpkin to enjoy with each bite. It's certainly not just the recipe that makes the flavor unique; Mom uses the Libby's recipe that thousands of women use every year. There are a couple of changes, besides the thickness - she prefers the canned pumpkin, not the pumpkin pie filling, and she uses pumpkin pie spice, not separate spices.

"That's already in the spice mix," she says.

Some people are adamant about their recipes. I like to think of myself as someone who is open to new ways of approaching food, the opposite of Mom and my mother-in-law, who are both set in their food ways. For example, when I mentioned the recipe I was trying out to my mom, she said, "That's not pumpkin pie."

When I occasionally talk about my mother's thick pumpkin pie with my mother-in-law, she says, "I prefer mine thin," leaving no doubt.

Mom's Thick Pumpkin Pie

This is the traditional holiday pumpkin pie, a classic recipe that has been on the label of Libby's canned pumpkin since 1950. It's an easy pie to prepare: Just mix, pour, and bake. My mother uses 2-inch-deep pie pans and doubles this recipe, filling the pie shells quite high. She says that the doubled recipe yields a pie and a half. Also, she does not use the spices called for here. She uses pumpkin pie spice and "some" cinnamon, calculating how much pumpkin pie spice she needs by adding up all the other spices called for, more or less.

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
- 1 unbaked 9-inch deep-dish pie shell
- Whipped cream (optional)
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Mix sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger, and cloves in a small bowl. Beat eggs in a large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture. Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell.

Bake 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Then serve or refrigerate. Top with whipped cream before serving, if desired.

Mrs. Rowe's Spicy Pumpkin Pie

This deep-orange, almost-brown pie gives off a heavenly scent as it bakes. It offers a warmer, richer twist to the traditional pumpkin pie recipe. It's more spicy than sweet. This recipe will be in "Mrs. Rowe's Little Book of Southern Pies" (Ten Speed Press, 2009).

- 1 (1-pound, 13-ounce) can pumpkin
- 1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 tablespoons dark molasses
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves
- 4 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 cups half-and-half, scalded
- 2 (10-inch) pie shells (with high-fluted edges)
- 8 ounces heavy cream, whipped

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix pumpkin, sugar, molasses, salt, spices, and eggs in a bowl. Gradually stir in the half-and-half. Pour into pie shells. Bake 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees, and continue to bake 30 to 40 minutes or until the center of filling looks firm. Cool and top with whipped cream. Makes two pies.

My mother, however, is against thinness on all matters, most particularly anything to do with baking.

"When I want a piece of pie, I want a piece of pie," she states emphatically.

No matter how far I think I've come, I will always return to the recipe that really satisfies me, even

though I am the wayward daughter, the one who makes my mother throw up her hands, and my father shake his head. Yet, how wayward can I be if all it takes is a new pumpkin pie recipe to make me feel a twinge of betrayal?

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Gifts Gathered Locally Will Be Sent to Children Around World



More than 110 small boxes containing candy, school supplies, socks, T-shirts, and other items are ready to be sent to needy children around the world. Local organizer Maureen Brady finishes necessary record keeping of the packages that are stacked near the entrance of The Emporium store in St. Ignace Friday, November 21. This year, St. Ignace residents, and those from Cedarville, Hessel, Rudyard, Pickford, and area churches donated the items. The small packages have a big impact on the children who receive the gifts, said Mrs. Brady, who has led local efforts for the last eight years. The gift-filled shoe boxes will be distributed through Operation Christmas Child, which began in 1993 and is a project of the Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse.

Santa's Letters Accepted at City Hall

A special mailbox will be placed on the first floor in St. Ignace City Hall from Monday, December 1, to Thursday, December 11, for children to write to Santa Claus to tell him what they would like for Christmas.

City employees are doing their

part to help Santa through the busy holiday by collecting mail for him. Each child who sends Santa a letter can expect a reply from the jolly fellow himself. Santa asks children to put a return address on the envelope so he can mail a letter back.

Tree Lighting Planned at Cedarville

Cedar Cove Assisted Living Community in Cedarville will host a holiday tree lighting ceremony Sunday, December 7, at 7 p.m. at its Mary L. Street facility. Participants can donate \$5 to dedicate a light in memory or in honor of friends and family. The event is open to the public. Admission is free.

A living nativity scene and Christmas carolers will be part of the ceremony. As in the past, Les Cheneaux Community Schools students will make decorations for the tree. After the tree is lit, guests will be invited inside to warm up with hot drinks and cookies.

The event is sponsored by Cedar Cove and the Les Cheneaux Community Foundation, with the help of local volunteers and organizations.

Memorial light donations can be made any time before the ceremony, or during the event. To ensure the name of a loved one is printed in the event programs, send or drop off donations to Cedar Cove by Tuesday, December 2. Donations can be made at Cedar Cove or mailed to, Cedar Cove Assisted Living, 266 Mary L. Street, P.O. Box 580, Cedarville, Michigan 49719.

Debris Cleaned Up at Moran Twp. Site

Debris left in front of an abandoned house on US-2 near KOA Campgrounds west of St. Ignace has now been hauled away, reported Jim Durm, Moran Township supervisor. He and other township council members heard complaints about the mess at their November

meeting, and Mr. Durm said he would contact the owner by mail to request having the mess cleaned up. The plan was reported in *The St. Ignace News* November 13. Before he could do so, the debris was hauled away, and the township has dropped the matter.

Tree Celebrates 'Christmas at Les Cheneaux,' Auction Begins Friday

One of 17 Unique Trees Featured at Fundraiser

By Jonathan Eppley

Margie DeNoyer and Jane Kologe have been close friends for almost 20 years. They go to church together, belong to a sewing group together, and both own a share and work in Cedarville's Wooden Door Antiques, Arts and Collectibles shop.

Two years ago, the pair attended the Les Cheneaux Historical Museum's Christmas Open House and Tree Auction and thought it would be fun to design and create a tree for auction the following year.

Last year, they entered their tree, "The Christmas Spider," a white tree decorated with handmade glass bead spiders inspired by the German folk tale of the same name, which tells the history of tinsel and garland as a holiday decoration. The tree brought in \$225 at auction.

This year they hope to raise just as much money for the museum in the silent auction with their tree titled, "Christmas in the Les Cheneaux Islands." It will be one of many trees displayed at the museum this holiday season. They have worked sporadically throughout the year making miniature replicas of Les Cheneaux area buildings and businesses, using paper, glue, paint, and other art supplies, to hang on the four-foot-tall tree.

"We went around through the seasons and took picture of the buildings" to get the look of each



building right, Ms. Kologe said.

The two women said it was a fun experience designing and creating Christmas trees both years, and as a result, have several ideas to choose

from for their tree for next year.

"We're both really creative and crafty," Ms. DeNoyer said.

The open house and silent auction begins Friday, November 28, at

10 a.m. and continues on weekends until Sunday, December 14. Open house and auction times are Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Winning bidders will be announced after the auction closes at 3 p.m. December 14.

Seventeen trees, each with a unique design theme, will be auctioned this year at the Historical Museum on Meridian Street in Cedarville. Admission to the museum, open house, and tree auction is free.

Each tree auctioned will be decorated in a holiday theme, many with handmade ornaments that can be removed and re-used for home and Christmas tree decorating.

This is the fifth year trees will be auctioned to raise money for museum operations and Historical Association activities. More than \$6,000 has been raised at auction in the first four years of the event.