



Dolores Crosier, supervisor of Food Services for Rochester Schools, carefully weighs pineapple chunks for the "Can Cutting."



Large pans full of fruit are sampled and evaluated by Oakland County food-service directors, who bid on the food as a group.

Taste buds still rule in school kitchens

Story: KATHY PARRISH
Photos: DAVID FRANK

After tasting six different batches of pear halves — on top of applesauce, peaches, fruit cocktail and pineapple — it's hard to tell mushy from firm.

Not for Vera Jehnsen, whose taste buds have been honed by 17 years of "Can Cutting."

"Oh my goodness, those are bad. At any price those are terrible," says Jehnsen, the director of Food Services for Oakland County's intermediate school district.

"They're mushy and off-size. The only good thing about them is the liquid."

With a grimace, Miss Jehnsen defers to her fellow food service directors who vote not to buy large pear halves after all for Oakland County school lunches. At 15 cents each, the fruit is too expensive for meals averaging 85 cents, total.

Letting out their aprons, they move on to carrots, peas, beets, corn and other student "favorites."

"No company is exempt from the wrath of this group," says Miss Jehnsen, so unhappy with this year's samples that she plans another sampling in February.

"Unfortunately in food service we depend on nature. This is a very bad

year for fruit."

EACH YEAR food-service directors from all over the county gather at the Oakland Schools offices in Pontiac to choose the food they will serve in school lunches. Seventy-five-thousand meals are prepared daily in county districts, which spend about \$12 million yearly on food.

"We're interested in both quality and price," said Miss Jehnsen, who coordinates the food bid while districts make their own delivery arrangements.

"If it were strictly price we wouldn't have a Can Cutting."

"Although all 26 districts can place orders through Oakland Schools, some

prefer to buy their own food. Others participate one year but not the next — depending on their needs.

"They have to be willing to go along with the group decision," said Meg O'Connor, nutrition-education consultant for Oakland Schools. "If they are set on a particular label, they don't order on bid."

During the day-long "Can Cutting," food-service directors empty large cans of food, taste several samples and evaluate them. Labeled only by letter, the samples are judged on color, flavor, texture, consistency, absence of defects and clearness of liquid.

It's a serious process, with thought given to what dishes the foods will be

used in and how students will react to the items.

"THEY EAT with their eyes," kidded one food-service director. "That's our problem."

For the first time this year, students were invited to the "Can Cutting." Although they didn't get a vote, students from Southfield, Lake Orion and Oxford sampled the food and voiced their choices.

"They're the ones who are going to eat it," said Miss Jehnsen, agreeing with the students on one selection.

But the kids didn't always win out. On diced pears, their choice was vetoed by the more-experienced adults.

"Usually kids prefer the sweet fruit. That's what the ladies tell me," said Miss Jehnsen. "But it won't hold up, appearance-wise, on the counter."

While some of the choices come easy, others require extra thought. "This is a big item, with a lot of money involved," said Miss Jehnsen, reviewing popular fruit cocktail.

Throughout the discussion — which got heated at times — Miss Jehnsen demanded reasons for rejecting items.

"We have a responsibility to the vendors who supply us," said the former Detroit Public Schools employee.

"I HAVE to answer why the product (Continued on Page 4A)

INSIDE ANGLES

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY

PUFF, PUFF, PUFF Now quit that.

Smoking's bad for your health and the American Cancer Society is issuing a challenge to the estimated 54 million Americans who indulge in the nicotine habit. The society's daring all those puffers to quit on Nov. 20, the day of the fourth annual Great American Smokeout. Detroit-area residents are invited to join in a smokeout rally from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. that day in Hart Plaza, downtown. The WRIF Morning Crew will help emcee the rally along with the Classy Chassis, the Attic Theatre Mime Troupe, Detroit Blues Band, the Comedy Castle and the National Academy of Smoking. If you plan to take the pledge to quit smoking during the smokeout call the American Cancer Society at 557-5336. Please note that Nov. 20 is only a practice day but the American Cancer Society is hoping you'll like not smoking so much you'll keep quitting. And for all of the non-quitters in the area, Angles sends its annual salute: cough, cough, gag, cough, "do you have a light?"

SENIORS are invited to participate in a forum conducted during the next meeting of the Advisory Board of the Farmington Commission on Aging at 7 p.m., Nov. 19 in the Farmington branch library on Liberty and State. The commission is interested in hearing about the needs and concerns of older adults. The meeting is open to the public (young and old.)

SEMTA, the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, will sponsor an open house and community forum on its proposed Downtown People Mover System from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Nov. 18 in the Woodward Room of the Book Cadillac Hotel, Michigan Avenue and Washington Boulevard, Detroit. The main presentation is scheduled from 12:15-12:45 p.m. Staff members will discuss the design and construction of the proposed system as submitted by firms interested in supplying the system. For additional information call 256-8727.

A TWO-DAY conference on "Bilingual and Multicultural Education: Implications in Deaf Education" will be conducted from 7-9 p.m., Dec. 5 and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Dec. 6 at Madonna College in Livonia. The conference examines the history, terminology and implications of the multicultural movement on the deaf. Participants should register one hour before the conference in the Science Lecture Hall on campus. Conference fee is \$5 per person or \$50 per person with college credit included. Participants should plan to attend both days. For further information call the

Department of Sign Language Studies at 591-5128 or 591-5000. The TTY telephone number is 591-1203.

HO HO HO It's SEMTACLAUS and the TRAIINDEER. No, they're not a seasonal rock group. It's the cute name SEMTA gives its train service to the J.L. Hudson Thanksgiving Day Parade. Tickets for the TRAIINDEER service between Pontiac and Detroit and SEMTACLAUS bus service from 14 suburban locations are on sale now. TRAIINDEER fare is \$3.75 (round trip) and the bus fare is \$2 (round trip). Children younger than 6 who don't occupy a seat ride free of charge. Bus and train tickets are available at SEMTA General Office, First National Building, 660 Woodward, 12th Floor, Detroit. Checks or money orders can be sent to that address for tickets. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Train tickets can be purchased in person at the SEMTA Renaissance Center train station, the Royal Oak Greyhound Terminal, 202 Sherman, Royal Oak or at Hudson's store in Pontiac and Oakland malls. Phone orders can be made by calling 256-8700. Master Charge and VISA accepted for orders of more than \$10 in worth. Mail and phone orders won't be accepted after Nov. 20. Train One leaves Pontiac at 7:30 a.m.; Bloomfield Hills, 7:45 a.m.; Birmingham, 7:55 a.m.; and Royal Oak-11 Mile at 8:10 a.m. Train arrives at the RenCen at 8:45 a.m. and leaves Detroit at 11:30 a.m. arriving at noon in Royal Oak, at 12:15 p.m. in Birmingham, 12:25 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills and at 12:35 p.m. in Pontiac.

Train Two leaves Pontiac at 8 a.m., Bloomfield Hills at 8:15, Birmingham at 8:25 and Royal Oak-11 Mile at 8:40. It arrives at the RenCen at 9:15 and leaves Detroit at noon arriving at 12:30 p.m. in Royal Oak, 12:45 p.m. in Birmingham, 12:55 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills and at 1:05 p.m. in Pontiac.

Passengers must leave Detroit on the train on which they arrived. Shuttle buses are available from the train to the parade site for 35 cents a person. There is no return bus service to the RenCen.

Bus service to the parade leaves that morning from 14 suburban parking lots and will leave Detroit 15 minutes after Santa has made his appearance. A bus leaves Twelve Oaks Mall at 8 a.m. that day. Tickets are available at the Hudson's ticket office. Another bus leaves from Ford Field SEMTA bus stop on Farmington Road between Schoolcraft and Lyndon at 8:15 a.m. Tickets for that bus available on the fourth floor of Livonia City Hall.

By the way, Thanksgiving and the parade are on Nov. 27. (gobble gobble)



CAROL HORN CAPTURES THE LOOK OF REAL FUR... and from out of the wild comes an un-real adventure into bold, spirited fake fur designs from her new Captivity Collection. She's tamed the best of sporting and city-chic styles. Like this lavishly

collared 3/4 length acrylic coat that looks like natural-tone badger with large, rounded shoulders and sleeves of coyote. What a wonderful way to warm a woman's winter. Misses' 6 to 14, \$160. In our Woodward Shops Coat collection.

THE
WOODWARD
SHOPS
HUDSON'S