

Snow vs. ice cream

Addicts get their licks against winter's wrath

By LYNN ORR

With footlong icicles dripping from the eaves, does anyone really get the urge for a frigid ice cream cone?

Apparently so, say John and Emily Ulyrch, who own Baskin-Robbins Store No. 861, located at Middlebelt and Eleven Mile in Farmington Hills.

Mothers pick up milk and sodas to soothe the sore throats of their home-bound small fry. True blue ice cream addicts risk purple lips to indulge their habits.

And with 42 flavors currently in stock out of 400 flavors on the list, the indulging can get choosy.

Although more than one-third of their annual business place during June, July, and August, the winter months hold their own, says Mrs. Ulyrch.

"Ice cream really is popular the year round," she says. An ice cream addict herself, she confesses to eating the stuff nearly every day.

She puts in between 50-60 hours a week at the store, while husband John works another job during the day.

The ice cream business can net

about \$20,000 a year, if you own the store. If you're buying the franchise, like the Ulyrchs, it takes a while to bring all those profits home.

TRANSPLANTED CALIFORNIANS, the Ulyrchs bought their franchise about a year ago.

"We were both looking for jobs, and a neighbor of ours out west had owned a business, so we decided to try it," she explains.

A new Baskin-Robbins franchise can cost between \$50,000-60,000, but the owner is pretty much on his or her own when it comes to managing the shop, she explains.

A district manager checks in about once a month to make sure they're selling Baskin-Robbins ice cream, hot fudge, and paper materials (sold through a distributor). The Ulyrchs set their own prices based on suggested tabs from the California head office.

However, headquarters insists that ice cream is the sole merchandise.

"You can't have any other products, not even coffee or a coke machine," Mrs. Ulyrch says. "I've often thought

about sitting down and writing a letter to the head office."

"They don't know how it is here, when everything is based in California and temperatures never get below 50 degrees."

Although the holidays bring in some trade, January and February are the lean months, she admits.

Mrs. Ulyrch is able to lower the overhead by employing about five teenagers through the winter until March when she'll hire about seven more.

Her children, Teresa, 15, and Michael, 14, help out in the store as well, and they earn a wage like the other employees—usually about \$1.40 an hour.

Because Mrs. Ulyrch employs teenagers under 18, she doesn't have to worry about paying a minimum wage, now \$2.60 an hour. But she finds that the best age for employee is about 14.

"When they can drive, they start looking around for a better job," she says. She also finds the 14-15 age bracket very conscientious.

CATERING parties, hot fudge sundae sales, and special desserts are some ways the Ulyrchs are attempting to pick up the winter trade.

Mrs. Ulyrch is responsible for those ice cream and cake logs and unusual molded treats—an ice cream turkey shaped to look like a Thanksgiving platter was a big success during the holidays.

She attended a training program for three weeks after they bought the franchise and she's added some creative touches of her own.

The more creative you are, the better off you are," she says.

The party cakes hold 25-30 per cent of the business. But the traditional ice cream cone is still the most popular item purchased in the store. Yogurt is available for the diet-conscious.

The Ulyrchs introduced a 10 per cent discount for senior citizens and are happy to adhere to the Baskin-Robbins policy of free taste tests for all customers.

But they're still learning and experimenting as they learn more about the business.

A \$1,000 loss last summer was "a real learning experience," Mrs. Ulyrch admits. The freezer was left open one night and 80 gallon tubs of ice cream crystallized.

"It was still good to eat, but you couldn't sell it," she explains. She telephoned various area churches to make some well-received donations, and her employees all took home their favorite flavors as a bonus.



This little sweetheart has a frosted ice cream skirt, which Mrs. Ulyrch builds over a cake base.

One of Baskin-Robbins latest taste treats is a recipe for Turtle Pie, submitted by a Rockford, Ill., franchise owner. Those with a creative bent can try and duplicate the dessert at home with the following recipe, or pick up Mrs. Ulyrch's whipped cream topped version for \$1.35.

Turtle Pie

Ingredients:

One nine-inch graham cracker pie shell

12 ozs. chocolate ice cream

Hot fudge

Butterscotch

Pecans, approximately 15 halves

12 ozs. vanilla ice cream

Spread chocolate ice cream into frozen pie shell. Smooth and freeze. Spread approximately three ounces of hot fudge on chocolate ice cream. Freeze.

Spread approximately three ounces butterscotch over hot fudge. Sprinkle broken pecans on top of butterscotch, approximately five halves. Freeze.

Spread vanilla ice cream over chocolate ice cream and topping layer. Spread evenly, mounding slightly in center. Freeze until very hard.

Top with hot fudge, butterscotch, and pecan halves as pictured.



Mrs. Ulyrch tops her rendition of turtle pie with whipped cream and lots of butterscotch.



Baskin-Robbins "Moo-Moo" punch is the only non-ice cream beverage Mrs. Ulyrch is allowed to serve in her store, so those looking for a hot cup of coffee

have to search elsewhere. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Cubs whittle away time before Pinewood Derby

When a shapeless block of wood combines with a father's concern and careful guidance, the results are easily discernible.

Especially if the son is an entrant in the Cub Scout's Pinewood Derby.

Each member of Cub Scout den four, of pack 318, from Kinsdalewood Elementary School, Farmington Hills, was given a block of wood, four wheels and a list of specifications for his entry. Fathers were encouraged to help sons prepare for the Feb. 11 contest.

After almost three weeks of careful work, the cubs are awaiting their chance to show off their newly acquired craftsmanship. Fathers will get a chance to see their boys learn some new lessons, which have a tenuous link with the immediate need for a pinewood car.

"It was a good experience for him," said Paul Talagrand, of his son, Jeff, 9.

"It let him learn how to use certain tools and to set goals and objectives outside of school. It helped him to begin to learn self-discipline," Talagrand said.

JEFF'S car, Black Lightning, will be found next to Mike Plonka's blue and white entry.

"My dad helped me paint it," Mike, 8, said. His car has white jagged edging which reminds him of the shark in "Jaws."

Another car named after a fictional character is Joe Little's Green Hornet. Joe, 9, gave the car its name because it is painted one shade of green.

"I didn't read the comic book. It's a green car so I called it the Green Hornet," explained Joe.

Putting together the Green Hornet took Joe and his father about 1½ days.

Besides fun and games, the scouts were faced with tailoring their cars to weight regulations. Each entry must come within a five-ounce weight limit. Some scouts put lead weights into their cars to keep them up to regulation.

Each of the seven dens in the pack will compete against each other with winners from each pack taking home a trophy. Scouts who finished first in a match will receive a ribbon to mark their efforts.



Joe Little, 9, prepares for the end of the race as the Pinewood Derby cars roar to the finish in a practice run. Fellow Cub Scouts (clockwise) Daniel Milten, 8; Ricky Karcher, 8; Jeff Talagrand 8 and Mike Plonka, 8, watch the action. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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