

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Grocery scene is chaotic

I think I've finally figured out why all grocery carts have kiddie seats.

I've seen frantic couponers load up the seats with shoeboxes full of money-saving coupons. I've also noticed purses bigger than bowling ball bags crammed into the tight spot. With a 6- and 4-year-old in tow, the seat serves as a sign of relief for the grocery clerk who once watched my son topple 60 toilet paper packages when I asked my son to grab a yellow package while inadvertently turning my back to get a box of Cherrios.

A trip to the grocery store was recently turned into a chaotic attempt to stock the pantry when I noticed I was talking to myself trying to rationalize why I was buying one product over the other.

Trying to read labels while telling my 4-year-old that we don't buy sugar-coated Gummy Bear cereal and making sure my 6-year-old doesn't totally rearrange the barrette display proved more difficult than I thought. As an educated, nutritionally aware consumer, I set off down the Yellow Brick Aisle in search of the Wizard of Food.

"I'M CONFUSED, O great Wizard. If I buy this product, will I get cancer? If I buy this other product, will I live forever?" I guess it's time I went back to Kansas or someplace I can shop for food without being besieged by kill-and-cure campaigns.

Home economists and nutritionists say all it takes is common sense and enough time to make sound decisions based on reliable information. Common sense is to problem. We all can claim plenty of that. Time is something else again, especially when I've got two whining children shouting at the top of their lungs that they never get anything good. And if that doesn't get you, the elongated, whimpering, "puhllleeeee" straight from the bottom of their little hearts must make fellow shoppers sure of the fact that my children are undernourished and never get what they want.

To this day, I stroll past the apple counter and still think about the Alar scare earlier this year. In contrast, however, I think nothing about opening up the dirty dishwasher and rinsing out a glass with a dried-milk-encrusted bottom. In all fairness to the apple growers, it was us in the media who contributed to the near panic which literally pulled apple products from school lunch programs and supermarket shelves.

The bottom line is that I guess I'm thankful to be a consumer who really does care what his family eats. I'm renewing my subscription to Consumer Reports and will continue my label-reading madness, searching out foods with more healthful benefits, and continuing to say, "No" to foods with hydrogenated palm oils and other high-fat-content items.

Instead of saying "No" to the kids when they grab Super Teddy-O's or canned pasta that supposedly contains enough salt to melt the ice on your sidewalk, I'm going to start asking them to make more healthy decisions. Let's skip the juice with only 10 percent real juice and instead get honest-to-goodness 100 percent juice. Let's curb our intake of processed Tater Tots and make more homemade real potato products. Let's make real macaroni and cheese.

So, dear Wizard of Food, grant me the temper to control two kids in the supermarket. Grant me continued good eyesight to continue reading labels and, most importantly, grant me the courage to continue saying "No" to food products that include unhealthy food additives.

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Dolores Shomeck takes pasties out of the oven in the kitchen of Weldon's Pasties in Livonia. The shop's owner, Weldon (Nick) Hendrickson, originally is from the Upper Peninsula, where pasties brought over by Cornish miners were adopted by Finns.

Pasties: a handy meal

By Arlone Funko
special writer

A PIPING HOT pasty is the perfect meal to share the winter chills.

That Upper Peninsula standby — a warm, savory meat pie that can be eaten out of hand — is a stronghold in the western suburbs. A rich, meat-and-potatoes aroma fills the air of such small, carryout pasty shops such as Weldon's Pasties and the Pasty Kitchen in Livonia. Jean's Pasty Shop of Redford boasts it has been in business for 30 years.

Ackroyd's Scottish Bakehouse, with locations in Redford and Birmingham, also sells several varieties of the popular meat pie. Albie's Pasty & Sub Shops in Livonia, Garden City and Westland, ships its four kinds of pasties anywhere in the United States by UPS.

"I think the interesting thing about a pasty is it's a meal in itself," said Weldon "Nick" Hendrickson, owner of Weldon's Pasties. Hendrickson, a Farmington resident, hails from the Calumet area of the Upper Peninsula. His shops are in Livonia, Sterling Heights and Keego Harbor.

The pasty (pronounced pass-tee) came to Michigan with Cornish miners who left their native Great Britain to work in Upper Peninsula copper mines mere than a century ago.

ACCORDING TO custom, miners wrapped fresh-baked pasties in a towel and brought them to work. When lunchtime came, the still-warm pasties were eaten out of hand by the miners. The pasty was quickly adopted by the Finns who lived in the area.

Traditionally, a pasty is made up of small pieces of diced round steak, potatoes, carrots, onions and rutabaga. The ingredients are placed onto a crust which is folded over, trimmed and the edges crimped.

After baking, the pasty, which resembles a turnover, may be eaten warm or hot, either plain or with butter, calsup or beef gravy.

Of course, variations abound. Vegetables may be added or omitted, according to taste. Crusts can be made from packaged roll mix or frozen bread dough. As Hendrickson puts it, "Everybody has their own little recipe for pasty, just like stew."

"I started my business nine years ago because I couldn't get a good pasty," said Hendrickson, a former electrical engineer who claims Finnish descent. Weldon's recipe calls for a vegetable-shortening crust, filled with diced pieces of rutabaga, potatoes, carrots, onions, round steak and a little pork.

Some shops omit the rutabaga, a vegetable that many people dislike and which sometimes is difficult to obtain. Jean's Pasty Shop used both shortening and lard to create a crust that is both firm and tender. Ackroyd's uses puff pastry crust.

"OUR PASTIES are Cousin Jack," said Sue Koepfle of Redford, owner of Jean's Pasty Shop. Koepfle grew up on pasties made by her English-born mother.

"Cousin Jack means it is English style," Koepfle explained. "The Finns added carrots and peas."

Several years ago Koepfle's mother bought a shop in Detroit started by an Upper Peninsula man who

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Pasty shops in the 'burbs

A partial list of carryout pasty shops is as follows:

Ackroyd's Scottish Bakehouse
25565 Five Mile Road, Redford, 532-1181
300 Hamilton, Birmingham, 540-3575

Albie's Pasty & Sub Shops
16709 Middlebelt, Livonia, 427-4330
28235 Ford Road, Garden City, 261-9420
6024 N. Wayne, Westland, 722-7827

Jean's Pasty Shop
19373 Beech Daly, Redford, 537-5581

Pasty Kitchen
33254 Seven Mile Road, Livonia, 477-1720

Weldon's Pasties
19161 Merriman, Livonia, 471-1680
2038 Cass Lake Road, Suite 8, Keego Harbor, 683-2670
2155 15 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, 264-8370



JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer
Chef Al Plungis of Ocean Grille with grilled salmon, vegetable side dish, yellow fin tuna mignons and chocolate mousse.

In the swim Ocean Grille great for seafood

There's nothing mysterious about the specialties at Birmingham's Ocean Grille. But there is a surprise. The extensive offerings of seafood dishes are in the mid-price range in a community where fine dining often is synonymous with very high prices.

Reasonable pricing is just part of owner Craig Dilworth's strategy for carving out a niche for himself in the suburban dining arena. Former director of operations for Chuck Muer's restaurants, Dilworth thought the area needed a "deluxe" seafood restaurant. Indeed, he was probably right. We tend to equate seafood with Chuck Muer's establishments, but the chowder, cole slaw and salty bread routine is getting a bit old.

Here, the bread is a mouthwatering French sourdough made on site. The house salads feature cold, fresh greens with a zesty honey mustard vinaigrette dressing. And finally someone has thought to dice the tomatoes and cucumbers before sprinkling them on the salad — no more unappetizing tomato wedges!

Soups also are interesting, from a black bean with a dash of salsa to a bill-bil fresh mussel cream soup or an oyster stew.

THE DINNER MENU features a very good selection of entrees — not exclusively fish and seafood but predominantly so. Special treatments



make fairly standard items extra special — like the ill-burre blanc that added pizzazz to our grilled salmon or the red pepper sauce that made our yellowfin tuna taste out of this world. We weren't as wild about the tarragon sauce that lightly coated our swordfish — but then swordfish isn't one of our favorites.

A shrimp and scallops entree with crispy pea pods was fantastic. The seafood was poached in white wine and then served with a lobster sauce. The scallops were perfectly prepared, succulent and not a tad dry. Two other special entrees are the yellowfin tuna wrapped in zucchini and bacon and the perch fillets pie-

cata in which lake perch is sauteed in with butter, lemon, capers and artichokes.

Non-seafood entrees range from filet mignon to a fresh vegetable pasta and included a veal scallopini prepared with aged white cheddar and wild mushrooms.

The menu changes periodically, retaining the most well-received entrees and adding new ones to keep the interest of regulars. But with 26 entrees on the main menu and six specials the evening we visited, it would take even the most persistent regulars several visits to try everything.

This is also a good spot for dessert and coffee after the theater. The "fabulous finales" are just that — like the chocolate-chocolate raspberry torte or the Grand Marnier soufflé — or whatever the pastry chef prepares.

Details:
Ocean Grille, 280 N. Woodward, Birmingham, 646-7001.

Hours: Lunch: 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Dinner: 5-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 5 p.m. to midnight Friday-Saturday.

Prices: Lunch \$4.50-\$9.95. Dinner \$8.95-\$17.95. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Carte Blanche, American Club.

Value: Very good. Some exciting entrees, some dependable stand-bys.