

Thursday, July 4, 2002

Cherry pie is a delicious way to celebrate July 4

Whether it's July 4 or Memorial Day or Thanksgiving, come holiday time my thoughts always seem to run back to my parents. Both my mother and my father died about a decade ago, and I still miss them.

They both contributed to our long family tradition of eating cherry pie on July 4. My mother was a good cook, and she felt the red cherry filling was suitably patriotic for the holiday. My father loved cherry pie, in large part because his family was one of the first to plant cherries near Traverse City.

There are two pictures in our family photo album, both taken around the turn of the century. One shows my great grandmother Celestia Power, dressed in a long cotton dress, sitting on the front porch of the old family farm in Elk Rapids. The other shows my great grandfather Eugene Power, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and Panama hat, looking proudly at a row of newly planted cherry trees.

Family legend has it that he was one of the first farmers to plant Montmorency cherries (called "sour" to distinguish them from the dark red eating cherries, "sweets") in northern Michigan. They became the dominant crop in the region and on the sandy, well-drained soil and the moderating influence of Lake Michigan, Michigan produces something like 70 percent of the nation's tart cherries, and most of the land that hasn't been raped by the developers is still in cherry orchards.

My father used to tell me endlessly that his first job was out on the family farm, picking cherries for 10 cents a lug. His father, Glenn, who started out as a surveyor, helped great-grandfather Eugene lay out the cherry trees in long, straight lines.

Together with my cousin Tom, a circuit judge in Traverse City, I visited the old farm a couple of years ago. The house is gone, of course, but there were just a few very, very old cherry trees still standing to remind us of our family heritage.

It wasn't easy to be a pioneering farmer way back then. You couldn't be sure the trees, once planted, would thrive or bear well. And, as the cherry farmers learned this spring, there was always the risk of a late frost killing the flowers and ruining the fruit set. But the farmers of those days were a tough and determined lot. Honoring their hard work seems apt at this time of the year. And even though the crop is small this year, if you look hard you'll still find just a few tart cherries, enough for a fine, patriotic cherry pie on July 4.

Here's our family recipe:

Montmorency Cherry Pie

For the crust:
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus additional for rolling

1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup lard
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
2 tablespoons ice water
1 teaspoon white vinegar
2 eggs

For the filling:
4 cups pitted tart cherries
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon mace
3 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces.
2 tablespoons Kirsch liquor (optional)

For the crust: Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a mixing bowl. Add the lard, butter and shortening and mix with your fingers or a pastry cutter until the mixture forms coarse crumbs. Whisk together the ice water, vinegar and one of the eggs. Add to the flour mixture and mix with the fork until just combined; do not overwork the dough. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

For the filling: In a large bowl combine the cherries, sugars, tapioca, almond extract, mace and kirsch, if desired. Let stand for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Roll out half of the dough on a lightly floured surface. Line a 9-inch pie shell with the dough and trim the edges. Pour the filling in the pie shell and dot with the butter. Roll out the remaining dough and cover the pie or, if you're ambitious, make it into a lattice top. Whisk the remaining egg with 2 teaspoons of water and brush the egg wash on the top.

Bake for 10 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue baking for 30 or 40 minutes longer, or until the juices are bubbling up in the center of the pie. (You may want to put a baking sheet under the pie pan to catch the juices.) Cool briefly and eat warm.

My father preferred vanilla ice cream with his pie. I'm more of a purist. Either way, it's a delicious way to celebrate Michigan cherries and July 4th.

Phil Power is the Chairman of the Board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2206 or at ppower@homecomm.net.



Hugh Gallagher

Court decision on Pledge creates mischief, pandering

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Sometimes the bold courage of our legislators is awe inspiring.

State Sen. (and congressional hopeful) Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, introduced a resolution in defense of the Pledge of Allegiance. It was a declaration so clear and penetrating it was "unanimously cosponsored and adopted by the Michigan Senate."

And should McCotter take his act to Washington, he'll find right at home. Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle led his fellow senators to a 99-0 vote in support of the beleaguered Pledge.

Of course they were responding to the dastardly decision last week of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals banning recitation of the pledge in public schools. By a 2-1 vote, the court ruled that the phrase "under God" violates the First Amendment prohibition against the establishment of religion.

"The Pledge of Allegiance is not an oath to any god, person or power," McCotter says in a press release. "It is a pledge to preserve and protect the principles of liberty and justice guaranteed by the Bill of Rights."

At least it was when Francis Bellamy wrote it in 1892. A report on Bellamy on the Web by Dr. John Baer describes Bellamy as a Christian Socialist and cousin of the utopian writer Edward Bellamy, author of *Looking Backward*. Despite his Christian beliefs, Bellamy did not include the phrase "under God" in his original pledge. That was added in 1954 by the Congress at the urging of the Knights of Columbus. It was signed by President Dwight Eisenhower and was understood as a way to tweak our enemies' "godless Communism."

The 9th Court's decision can be viewed in a number of ways. It could be seen as a bit of mischief to stir up the masses. Sen. Trent Lott used the decision as an occasion to rail against "liberal" judges. I understand the two judges come from opposite camps of the political spectrum.

More likely, the decision was meant to force the Supreme Court to clear up an ambiguity. The court has ruled against prayer in school and at school sponsored functions. But in side notes, the court has also allowed that the Pledge, prayers before public meetings (including every session of Congress and the Supreme Court) and the phrase in God We Trust on currency are excluded from the prohibition. Sadly, their reasoning was that a rote recitation of the Pledge had essentially lost its

meaning, especially for young people for whom it was just so much "blah, blah, blah, blah."

The circuit court's decision will force the high court to state explicitly those areas where democracy (the view of the majority) prevails over civil liberties (the protection of the minority) because of long established cultural modes of expression. And they will rule that way and shortly.

The man who brought the suit, on behalf of his poor daughter, claims she has been the target of ridicule. (But probably not until after he filed his suit.) He has a medical degree, and a law degree. But an article in Monday's New York Times essentially presents him as a kook.

So now we can all feel better about hooting at the decision. It was a bad decision. It created a fuss over nothing and blurred the very real issues raised when government and religion become too closely linked (as in the far more damaging and disturbing Supreme Court decision last week on school vouchers). And it brought out the worst in politicians addicted to pandering. McCotter, who usually sides with civil libertarians, takes another tack here. He sees atheists in the woodworks.

"In applying its absurd, extremist interpretation of the First Amendment without an ounce of common sense, this court has perversely taken another step toward establishing atheism as the official national religion," he says in his release. "This must not stand."

Quite a reach.

In fact the decision says the Pledge would be fine without the phrase "under God." That doesn't place the court for or against acknowledging the existence of God. It says the schools are to be neutral on the subject, because this country allows all people the right to believe or not to believe. The phrase in the Pledge clearly refers to the Judeo-Christian understanding of God. As the ruling says, how would Christians feel about saying "under Vishnu" or "under Allah" or "under Zeus" or "under no god."

As a believer in God, it's easy for me to say the Pledge. I believe in God, but I also believe in liberty and justice. In this country, the just thing is to not force others to conform to our beliefs.

This was not the case to raise this issue. This was not the text to test. But that doesn't mean that important issues are not at stake and that the Supreme Court shouldn't weigh carefully what justice means in a multi-cultural society.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the *Observer-News*. He can be reached by phone at (734) 953-2149, by e-mail at hgalagher@oe.homecomm.net or by fax at (734) 593-7279.

FAMOUS Storewide
Clearance Sale

SAVE 40-60%

off original prices when you take an

EXTRA 25% off

already reduced dot clearance merchandise

Hurry in for best selection!

Famous Footwear.
Brand name shoes for less.

For the store nearest you, call 1-800-40-FAMOUS (1-800-403-2668) or shop online @ FamousFootwear.com
Selection may vary by store. Some exclusions may apply. Promotion valid through 7/7/02.

WIN A PAIR of FREE CONCERT TICKETS by EMAIL!

Summer Sundays CONCERT SERIES

MGM GRAND DETROIT CASINO

Sunday, July 14th
Blues Traveler

Sunday, July 21st
Peter Frampton

Sunday, July 28th
Pat Benatar

Sunday, August 4th
The Neville Brothers

Sunday, August 11th
Morris Day & the Time

EVERY SUNDAY AT 8:00 PM UNDER THE TENT!

Call 1-800-40-FAMOUS (1-800-403-2668) or call 734-953-2149
Tickets \$30. Receive a \$10 discount with your MGM Grand Club Card.
Tickets on sale now at MGM Grand Gifts.

JUST SEND AN EMAIL

WITH YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER & "Blues Traveler" to ads@gdnn.com

Or you can enter by snail mail by sending a postcard with your name, address, phone number & "Blues Traveler" to:
Sitzlin Summer Sundays
GDNN, 210 East Third St., Suite 210
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Observer-News

If you bet more than you can afford to lose, you've got a problem. Call 1-800-270-7171 for confidential help.