

Menus don't have to be elaborate but they do require planning

How do you design a menu? Today's menus are descendants of the elaborate menus served in the 19th century. Then, there would be 12 or more courses for a formal meal. This is an example of the meal sequence:

- Cold hors d'oeuvres (small, savory appetizers)
- Soup (clear soup or broth)
- Hot hors d'oeuvres (small, hot appetizer)
- Fish (any seafood item)
- Main course (a large cut of meat, usually beef, lamb or venison with elaborate vegetable garnish)
- Hot entrée (individual portions of meat or poultry)
- Cold entrée (cold meats, poultry, fish, pate)

What's cookin'

Lori and Gerry Kentner



- Sorbet (a light ice or sherbet to refresh before the next course)
- Roast (usually roasted poultry served with a salad)
- Vegetable (usually a specially prepared vegetable such as artichokes or asparagus)
- Sweet (what we call 'dessert'—cakes, puddings, tarts, etc.)
- Dessert (fruit and cheese sometimes with small cookies)

How would you like to wash the dishes from that meal? Today, in order to design a menu, you must consider many things. What is in season? How much money do you want to spend? How much work are you willing to do? Is the meal to be formal or casual and so on.

The first item to select is the main entrée. Choose something that you like, something you are comfortable preparing and something you can afford. If you are a nervous cook, then never try new recipes for guests—the whole idea is to enjoy yourself, not be stressed! Once you have selected the pivotal menu item, select the accompanying dishes—potatoes, rice, polenta, pasta, vegetables, etc.

Consider what the whole plate of food will look like when your guests see it. Do you have different textures (not all heavy,

dense foods), different colours, is it pleasing to the eye? Have you created a meal with consideration of the current food guide? In other words—you probably don't want to serve lasagna with a pasta salad, rolls and pie for dessert. Way too much in the carbohydrate department!

If you don't want a lot of last minute preparation, choose casserole type items that are prepared in advance, then simply re-heat or barbecue foods where most of the meal is cold, and you only have to cook the meat at the last minute.

Be creative—try something new! Make something easy; you don't have to make a really elaborate meal in order for it to be a success! If you relax and enjoy yourself, chances are your guests will be relaxed and will have a great time too.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Pumpkin Harvest Cheesecake

Ingredients (base)

- 3/4 cup graham wafers
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 3 tbsp melted butter

Ingredients (filling)

- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin purée
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 3 (250 g.) packages cream cheese

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp cornstarch

Ingredients (topping)

- 2 oz semi-sweet chocolate (optional)

Method

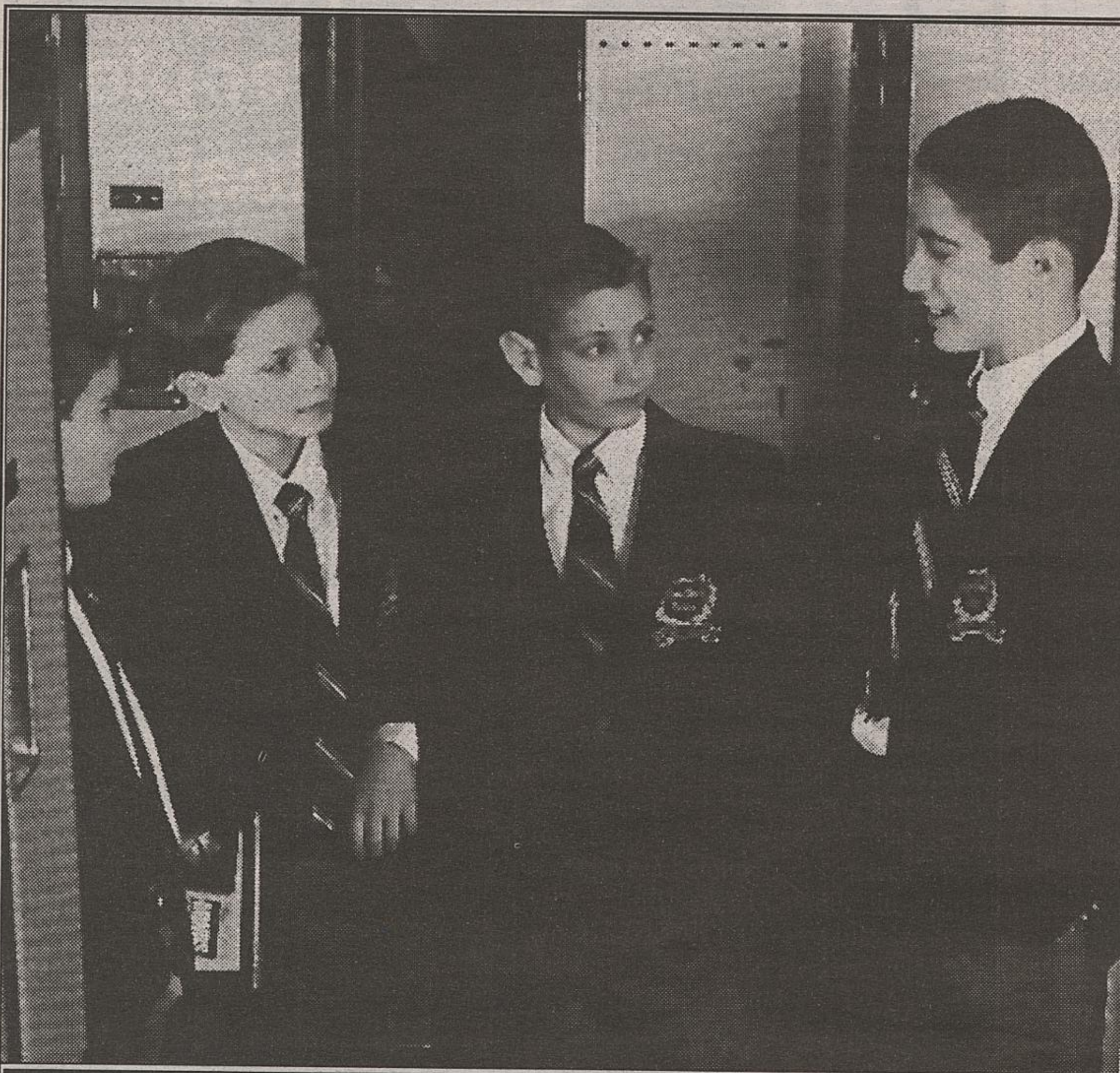
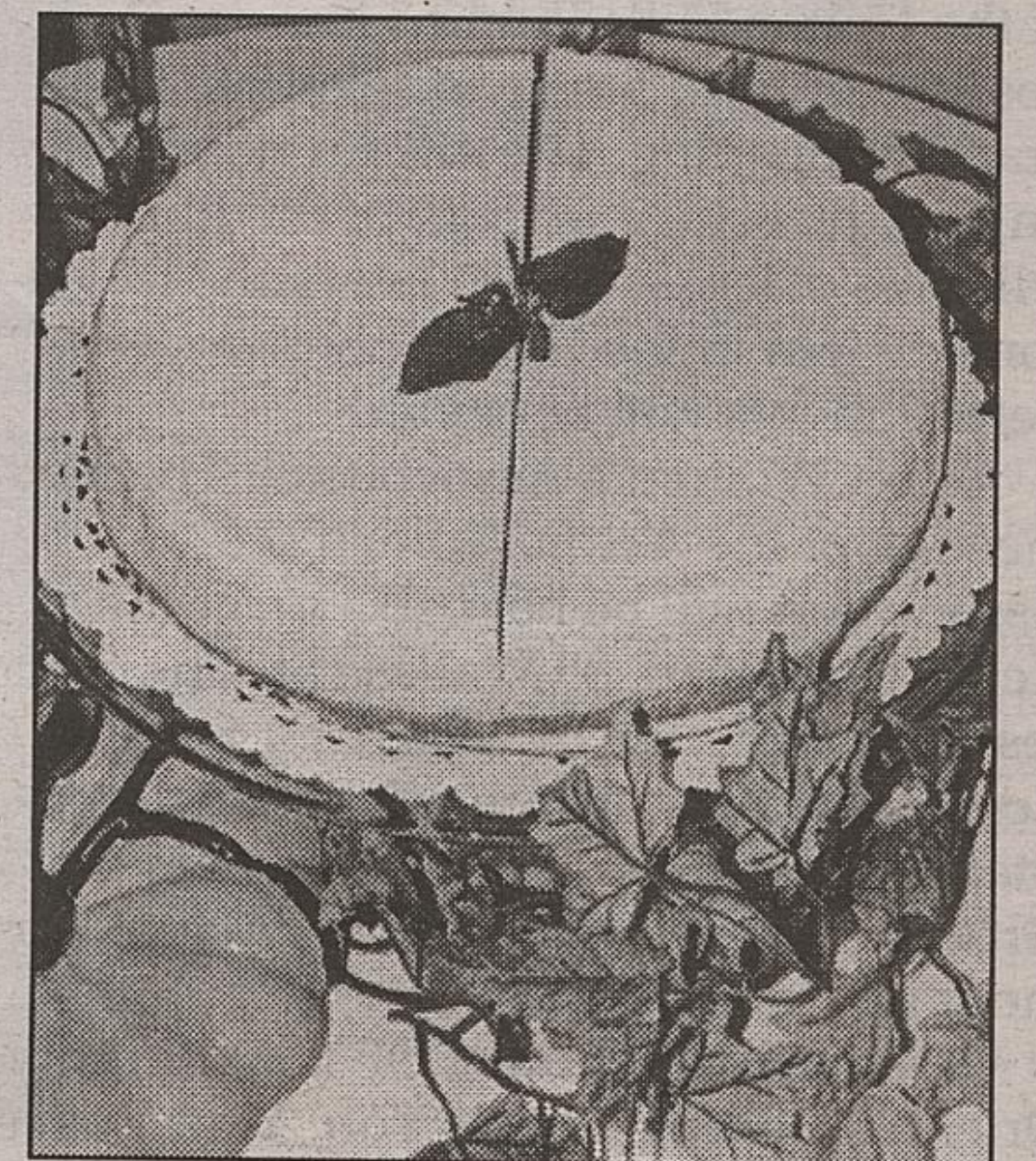
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. Spray 9-inch springform pan with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Combine ingredients for base and press into the pan. Bake the crust for approximately 10 minutes

until golden brown.

4. For the filling, whisk pumpkin, eggs, brown sugar and spices together. Using a mixer beat in cream cheese, sugar and cornstarch.

5. Pour filling onto baked crust. Bake for 50-55 minutes. Run knife around the rim after baking. Cool in the pan.

6. Melt semi-sweet chocolate on the stove and drizzle over finished cheesecake. (This is not necessary, but it can make a nice effect).



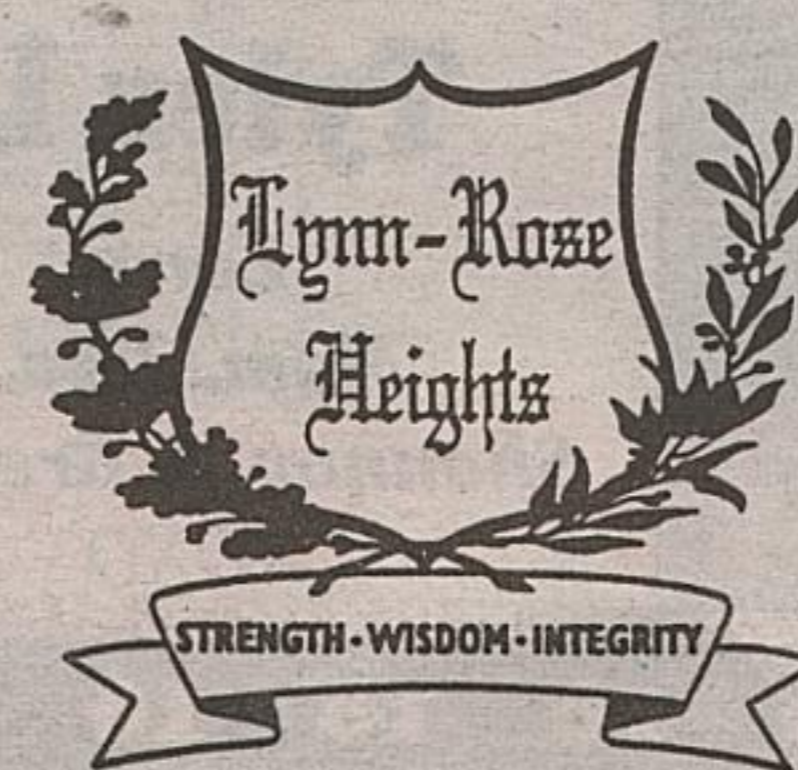
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