

Trustees concerned allotted school funds not sufficient

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field trips and materials per student per year was \$20. The range of fees was between \$15 and \$46 per student.

The funds will go to the schools and will be at the discretion of the principals to allocate.

Trustees discussed the student policy at length before giving their approval Wednesday night.

A common concern expressed by several trustees was that the money allotted to the schools would not be enough.

Joudrie assured trustees that dialogue would occur between staff and principals, particularly at the high school level where course material fees were commonplace, throughout the first year.

The amount allotted to schools could be altered for the 2011-12 budget, with contingency funds in the wing for the first year in case of a shortfall.

Joudrie also said that because most high schools fell below \$35 per student for course material fees, the funding could create an opportunity to enhance programming.

The student fee policy also contains a list of items that elementary and high school levels can and can't charge for.

For example, elementary schools can't charge for items such as musical instruments, music reeds, art sketchpads and kindergarten supplies. While a portion of the proposed budget is to be used to cover part

of the cost of in-school field trips, field trips and guest speakers, any cost overruns will be charged to students.

Meanwhile, high schools are allowed to charge for items like physical education uniforms, in-school field trips, field trips and guest speakers. Students will also have to pay if they wish to upgrade a material for a course. Two examples provided at an earlier meeting were if a student wishes to sew an outfit made of silk, as opposed to the provided cotton, in a fashion design course, or if a woodworking student wants to make a project out of maple versus the provided spruce.

There will be no textbook fees, but schools will be allowed to charge a fee if textbooks are not returned.

While schools will no longer be able to charge a registration, administration or program fee, programs that are already accompanied by an additional cost, such as Visa students, continuing education, International Baccalaureate and Specialist High Skills Majors, will remain that way.

Some trustees expressed displeasure that in-school field trips would still be charged for. Ward 4 Oakville trustee Kathryn Bateman-Olmstead argued that parents shouldn't have to pay for their children to sit in their own classroom to hear a guest speaker.

However, her argument wasn't persuasive enough to result in any changes to the policy before its subsequent approval.

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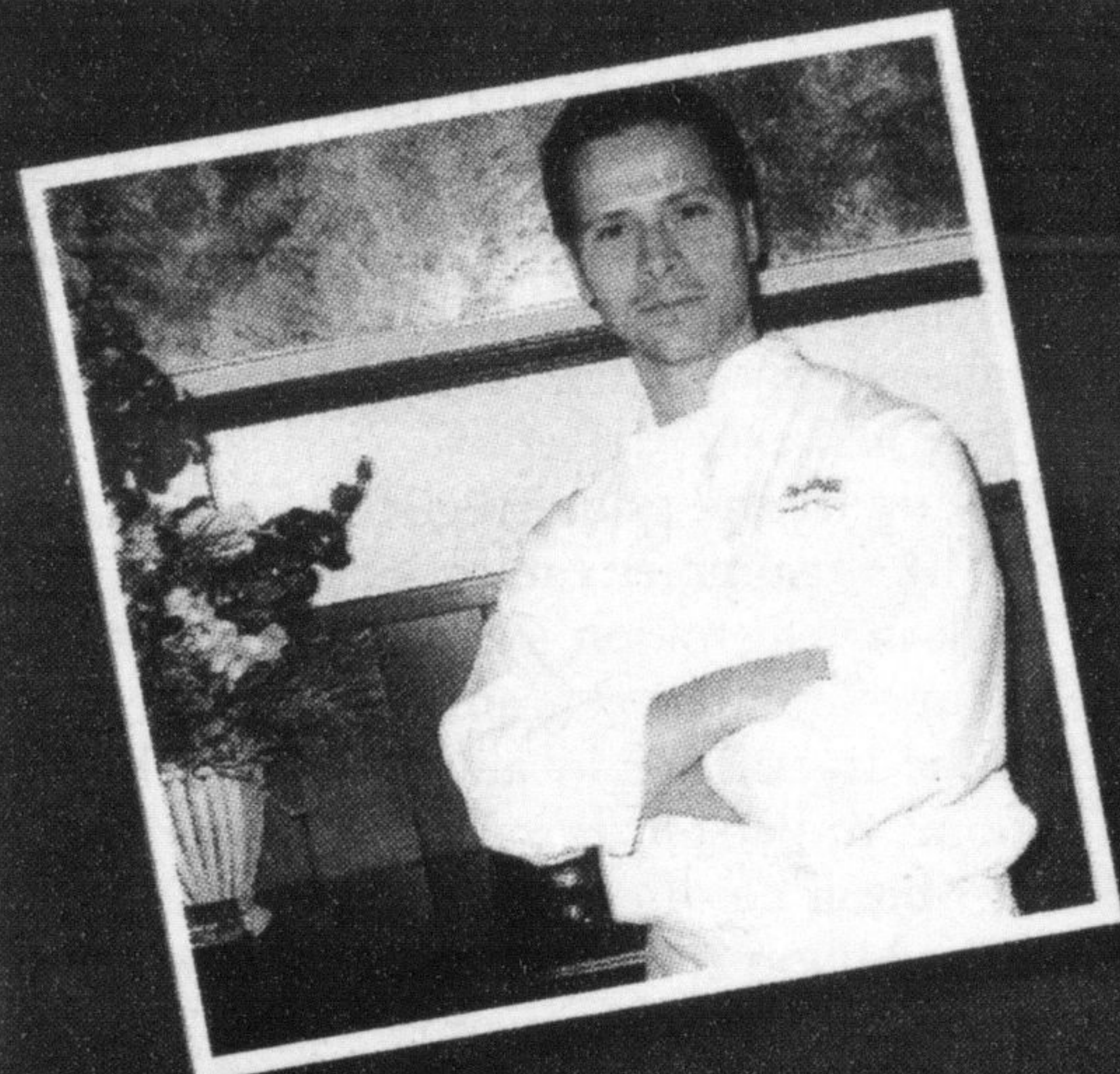
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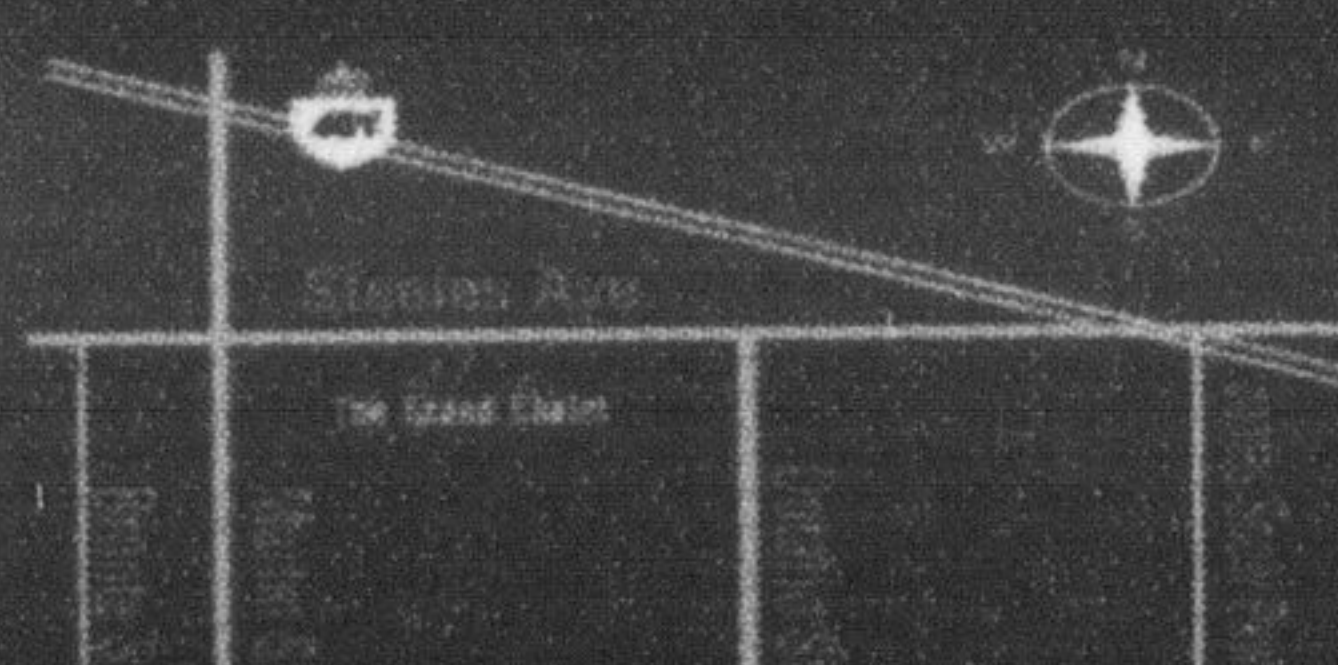
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