

# **ELMS PICNIC GONE BAD!**

The picnic started at 6:00 pm on Tuesday evening at Rocky Neck Park. The administration and faculty of East Lyme Middle School organized the picnic as a relaxing event before the faculty meeting that would be held after dinner. Many people brought family members and a pot luck dish for the table.

Mrs. Haling and Ms. Wendelin arrived at 5:30 to set up. Mr. Anderson was next to arrive to set up the grill. He brought his grill from home and had to take a few minutes to clean it off because it had not been used since last summer.

Mr. Mathieu arrived next from the supermarket where he had picked up the hamburgers. After the charcoal was lit and aluminum foil was placed over the grills, Mr. Anderson began to cook.

At 5:55, Mrs. Haling realized there was only one serving spoon. She left to get some more spoons, returning about 30 minutes later. The other teachers waited for a while, but finally decided to start eating about 6:15.

When all of the food arrived there was a full menu that included baked beans, chicken, ham, green bean casserole, cherry pie, pudding, potato salad, macaroni salad, corn, and hamburgers. Drinks included soda, water, coffee and tea.

Mr. Mathieu was first through the line. He tried the green bean casserole, ham and a hamburger.

Mrs. Berchielli was next. She ate potato salad, ham, and a hamburger.

The third person through the line was Mr. Bitgood. He ate some green bean casserole, potato salad and an hamburger.

Mrs. Danis was next in line. She sampled the potato salad, a hamburger, and the cherry pie.

Mrs. Haling returned at this time with more serving spoons. Mrs. Stroebel came at the same time. She was a little late because she had to be sure that her chicken was done.

Mrs. Bond went through the line next. She ate some green bean casserole, some chicken, a hamburger, and pudding.

Next was Mr. Landry, who ate the baked beans, some green bean casserole, macaroni salad, and corn.

The line became a little unorganized at this point and it is not clear who went through next. Mrs. Haling and Ms. Wendelin were two of the last people through since they helped to serve. Mrs. Haling ate some green bean casserole, potato salad, a hamburger, and pudding.

Others in attendance included Mr. Dewell, Ms. Emch, Mr. Allen, and Mrs. Bagley. A lot of the guests said they could not remember exactly what they ate, but Mr. Dewell, Mr. Allen, Mrs. Nastri, and Mrs. Stroebe all had hamburgers, baked beans, and macaroni salad.

Ms. Emch and Mrs. Bagley had ham, baked beans, corn, and some pudding for dessert.

Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Beaudette, Dr. Galasso, Mrs. Anusewicz, and Mrs. Quagan have not yet been interviewed. Some other staff members arrived just in time for the faculty meeting, which started at 7:45. These included Mrs. Tukey, Mrs. Frost, and Mrs. Woitovich.

Some of the faculty and staff walked around while they ate, but most sat in one of the gazebos. The faculty meeting was held in the main gazebo, which was a relief for some of the faculty because it seemed to be one of the few places free of geese droppings.

Even during the meeting, some of the kids chased geese with their water guns. Teachers and friends were also occasional targets. When they ran out of water they quickly refilled them from the nearby river.

Just about everyone at the picnic, except those who only came for the meeting, ended up wet. Since it was a hot day, the only time anyone seemed to mind the soaking was when one of the kids missed their intended target and almost put out the grill. After this incident, which happened about 6:10, the kids stayed away from the main gazebo, where the food was located, and turned their attention to the geese and the teachers walking around.

East Lyme officials were alarmed by the sicknesses and deaths that seemed to be associated with the event. They have promised a full investigation. Even the wastewater treatment plant just a few hundred yards up the river will have to submit a report on their procedures for water treatment. This is the first time anything like this has happened at the park and officials want to be sure that it does not happen again.

Park managers said that most of the symptoms, such as dehydration, stomach cramps, nausea, and vomiting, seem to indicate some type of food poisoning. However, at this point they cannot be certain.

**You are part of a team of epidemiologists that have been called in to get to the bottom of this mystery.**

**You will need to identify the cause of the disease and prevent any further outbreaks. Time is of the essence.**

**The first thing you will want to do is review the evidence. Then meet with your team members and outline the information you have been given. East Lyme officials have promised complete cooperation in this matter.**

**Good luck!**

## **ELMS PICNIC GONE BAD! Information Cards**

### **Mrs. Kelly**

Brought plates and cups to the picnic  
Had chicken, potato salad, pudding, green bean casserole  
Became sick Tuesday evening  
Symptoms included nausea, vomiting and dizziness

### **Mrs. Beaudette**

Recovering  
Became ill Tuesday night and was rushed to the hospital by her husband  
Her son enjoyed his water gun, spraying teachers with river water  
She loved the burgers made by Mr. Anderson  
She also tried some green bean casserole, chicken, and pudding  
Her son did not become ill

### **Dr. Galasso**

Recovering  
Had a great time except when she stepped in geese droppings, which seemed to be everywhere  
She did not mind being soaked  
She tried a little bit of everything to eat

### **Mrs. Anusewicz**

Arrived late, just in time to grab a burger and some green bean casserole  
Most of the utensils and food were already put away  
Became ill Wednesday morning and had to leave work around 8:30  
Suffered from nausea, dizziness, and was so disoriented that she could not drive herself home

### **Ms. Wendelin**

Helped to set up for the picnic  
Had a hamburger, baked beans, pudding, and corn  
Spent her time sitting in one of the gazebos and watching the kids chase the geese  
She is lactose intolerant  
She became ill just a couple of hours after the picnic, suffering from severe stomach pains  
She went to bed and felt fine in the morning.

**Mr. Landry**

Organized a game of volleyball set up by the gazebo  
The players were a favorite target of the water guns  
Mrs. Kelly stepped on a goose going after the ball  
Mr. Landry became ill Tuesday evening.  
He was treated and released from the hospital Wednesday morning.

**Mrs. Quagan**

Sampled a little bit of everything  
Became ill Tuesday night and went to the hospital Wednesday morning  
Complained of stomach cramps and nausea  
Doctors quickly began an IV drip to help replenish lost fluids  
Briefly went into a coma, then slowly recovered

**Mr. Anderson**

Took control of the grill...Mr. Mathieu soon showed up with the hamburger meat at  
started making the burgers  
Had some potato salad, green bean casserole, a hamburger, and pudding  
Became ill, suffering from numbness, disorientation, nausea and vomiting  
Was treated and released after several days in the hospital

**Mrs. Haling**

Arrived early with her son and helped set up for the picnic  
After many of the staff arrived she realized that there was only one serving spoon and  
went home to get more  
Returned about 30 minutes later with spoons (after several faculty members had gone  
through the line) to find her son chasing geese with the water guns.  
Both Mrs. Haling and her son became ill.

**Mrs. Danis**

Complained of stomach cramps early Tuesday night  
Her condition continued to worsen until she finally had to be taken to the hospital  
She was given massive doses of antibiotics  
Her condition became worse and her symptoms began to include vomiting and  
disorientation  
She soon found that she could not remember much about the picnic  
After some time her condition improved

## **EAST LYME MIDDLE SCHOOL PICNIC MENU**

**BAKED BEANS:** Simply purchased two large cans of baked beans and heated them on a stove top to boiling.

**PUDDING:** Mixed four packets of chocolate pudding with four cups of milk. Heated it and then put it in the refrigerator until the afternoon of the picnic.

**CHICKEN:** Baked chicken legs for one hour.

**HAM:** Baked ham for 2 hours and 30 minutes until the thermometer read 150 degrees for 20 minutes.

**GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE:** Cracker crust covered with two cans of cream of mushroom soup and two jars of green beans. Topped with two cans of small onions. Baked for 15-20 minutes until warm.

**POTATO SALAD:** One jar of salad dressing, assorted diced vegetables, two tablespoons of sugar, ½ cup of mustard, 6 cups of diced and cooked potatoes.

**MACARONI SALAD:** One box elbow macaroni, 3 tablespoons of mustard, one jar of salad dressing, various diced vegetables.

**TUNA CASSEROLE:** Cracker crust, 3 cans of tuna, one can cream of mushroom soup, one can cream of chicken soup. Mixed and topped with parmesan cheese topping.

**HAMBURGERS:** Bought at the supermarket just before the picnic. Receipt showed the time was 12:25.

**CORN:** 2 large cans of corn heated to simmering.

**CHERRY PIE:** Mountain top cherry pie, baked 40 minutes, pre-made

# **PATHOLOGY REPORT**

## **VICTIM...Mrs. Bond:**

Admitted to hospital suffering from abdominal pain and vomiting  
Began diagnostic tests but patient's condition deteriorated  
Death due to respiratory and heart failure  
Time of death: 3:30 am, Wednesday morning

## **VICTIM...Mr. Bitgood:**

Paramedic response to home  
Pronounced dead on arrival  
Attempts to revive failed  
Time of death: 11:30 pm Tuesday night

## **VICTIM...Mr. Mathieu**

Admitted to hospital suffering from abdominal pain, headache, and  
paralysis of extremities  
Lapsed into shock  
Pulmonary failure followed  
Time of death: 2:30 am, Wednesday morning

## **VICTIM...Mrs. Berchielli**

Admitted to hospital suffering paralysis  
Unable to communicate to hospital staff  
Died of heart and respiratory failure  
Time of death: 1:20 am, Wednesday, morning

## **NEW INFORMATION**

- #1:** We have since learned that, luckily, there was only one burger on the grill when it was sprayed with water. Mr. Anderson decided to throw it away because he had to lift up the grill and add more charcoal. Many times he would walk away from the grill to talk to someone and return to some very well done burgers. No one seemed to mind, that's the way they wanted them.
- #2:** We have also learned that the wastewater treatment plant performed several tests on the water coming from their plant. The effluent (water being pumped out) was virtually free of any bacteria. The plant was doing a good job. They also did tests on the water around the park and found no notable bacterial contamination.