

Kannscht Du Deitch Schwetze?

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"I believe it's a gift — the gift of language. Some people seem to have it, others don't," said Lee Thierwechter of Belleville. "I must have the gift. I grew up speaking the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect and had to learn English in school. I loved studying High German in high school and discovering the likenesses and differences between the two +(Pennsylvania German and High German+)." Thierwechter uses his gift to teach a 10-week class on Pennsylvania German using the one-room country school concept. His upcoming class marks the start of his sixth year teaching the language. The students meet at the Maple Grove Mennonite Church near Belleville and come from all over Central Pennsylvania.

"I've had as many as 44 people including a Catholic priest from Doylestown, teachers from Turbetville and Watsonstown, a leather-clad motorcyclist from Mattawana, and a Mennonite from Aaronsburg. Some remember their grandparents talking in Pennsylvania German but never learned the language. The grandparents and parents used the language when they didn't want the children to know what they were saying!"

The class came about at the suggestion of many people, some undoubtedly interested in and curious about the various sects of Pennsylvania "Dutch" living in the area. "Actually, Pennsylvania Dutch is a misnomer," Thierwechter explains. "People think of Holland, but the dialect originated in Germany. The German name for German is Deutsch. That's where Dutch comes from."

Students learn from a text and workbook compiled and created by Thierwechter. The book includes the German alphabet and other sounds pronounced in phonetic English, Pennsylvania German cognates, nouns, verbs, conversational phrases, stories, songs, poems, scriptural passages, Pennsylvania German proverbs, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and the Lord's Prayer. The class recites the Lord's Prayer in Pennsylvania German at the beginning of each session, a recitation that takes practice.

When reciting Pennsylvania German, A is pronounced awe, B is bay, C is tsay, and so forth. When learning English as a child,



Lee Thierwechter of Belleville takes a few moments to review his textbook *A Pennsylvania German Text-Work Book*, a study guide he wrote for the Pennsylvania German language classes he conducts.

Thierwechter ran home one day to tell his Pennsylvania German-speaking parents that their name is pronounced Thierwechter, not

graduated with a degree in agricultural education. After marrying Neda Kreider of Palmyra, Thierwechter worked at the Milton Hershey School for two years. He then worked for the Eastern States Farmers' Exchange, which later became Agway.

After his mother died in 1981, Thierwechter spoke the dialect little until his transfer to Agway in Belleville where he discovered, to his delight, the Big Valley Amish and Mennonites.

"We would talk in German, but they'd say jokingly, 'You're too German for us!'" What they meant was that Thierwechter's German was more High German, or more standardized, than the local dialect. He said he also came under suspicion for once being Amish and leaving the church, but a local farm wife whose family knew the Thierwechters from Lebanon County, removed that suspicion. Thierwechter's German heritage is rooted in the Lutheran and Reformed Church (UCC), which conducted services in German. Prior to his marriage, his father was Lutheran and his mother was Reformed (UCC).

In the late 1980s, Thierwechter was invited to a gathering of Pennsylvania German enthusiasts at Susquehanna University. Speakers included prominent Pennsylvania German individuals such as C. Richard Beam, Allen Musser, Earl C. Haag, Luke Brinker, Frederick S. Weiser, Ivan Glick, Howard Geisinger, John Hostetler, Larry Neff, and Noah Zimmerman.

This past June, Thierwechter was elected to the board of directors of the Pennsylvania German Society, headquartered in Kutztown. He writes a weekly column in Pennsylvania German for the "County Observer" newspaper and is corroborating on several Pennsylvania German-to-English dictionaries.

Anyone interested in learning "Pennsilfaanish Deitch Mudderschprooch" can attend Thierwechter's class, which begins Friday, September 8, from 7 until 9 at the Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, and will meet for 10 weeks. To register call Lee Thierwechter at (717) 935-2736.

Actually, Pennsylvania Dutch is a misnomer. People think of Holland, but the dialect originated in Germany. The German name for German is Deutsch. That's where Dutch comes from.

Sierwechter as in sear. The German language doesn't recognize the th sound. His name, originally spelled Thurwachter with umlauts or double dots above the u and a, means "gate keepers."

"I was born on a farm near Kimmerlings, Lebanon County, and moved to a 23-acre farm that the Zoar Evangelical Lutheran Church owned when I was three. My parents had the responsibilities of the farm, church, and cemetery. I can still remember Pastor Diehl saying when we walked to the church door on Sunday mornings, 'Here come the gate keepers.' I remember old German hymnals in the back of the church. Because of my upbringing, 'the Pennsilfaanish Deitch Mudderschprooch' became an ingrown part of me."

After high school, Thierwechter attended Lebanon Valley College and then Penn State and

Consuming Thoughts

by
Fay Strickler

Penn State Extension Home
Economist For Berks Co.



Many people are worried about the amount of fat in the foods we serve children. How much is too much? How much is enough? Too much fat may lead to heart disease or some types of cancer. However, some fat is needed for a child's normal growth and development.

Children under the age of two years of age should not be eating low-fat foods. Infants need fat as part of a well-balanced diet to insure proper growth. The body gets energy from fat. It might be harmful to eliminate all fat from a child's diet. Choose foods, which cut down, not eliminate, fat.

Switching to low-fat foods: When feeding children over 2-years-old, it is not necessary to limit all high-fat foods at one time. Children can still eat small amounts of high-fat foods such as ice cream, cookies, potato chips, and French fries. Begin by changing one or two foods, and then slowly change other high fat foods to low-fat ones. Trying to change all foods at once may be difficult for the children and could cause eating problems.

Some changes you can make: choose lean meats, fish, poultry, lower fat cheeses, and dried beans as protein sources. Try combining small amounts of high-fat protein foods like ground beef or cheese with cooked dried beans. Try some of the following ideas:

- Serve small portions of meat.
- Broil, bake, or steam foods, rather than frying them.
- Trim the fat from meat and

take the skin off poultry. Drain cooked ground beef before adding to other ingredients.

Read labels to make low-fat choices:

Choose More Often:

- Lower fat cottage cheese
- Water-packed tuna
- Plain frozen vegetables
- Evaporated skim milk
- Reduced fat mayonnaise
- Part skim mozzarella and Ricotta cheeses

Choose Less Often:

- Whole milk cottage cheese
- Oil-packed tuna
- Vegetables frozen with butter sauce

- Evaporated whole milk
- Plain mayonnaise
- Whole milk cheeses

- Use non-fat or low-fat milk in cooking. Evaporated skim milk is a good substitute for light cream.

- Use yogurt as a substitute for mayonnaise or sour cream.

- Limit the use of butter, cream, whole milk, most cheese, hard margarine, shortening, lard, coconut, palm oil, and foods containing them.

Which milk is best?

- Infants (up to 12 months of age): breast milk or iron fortified infant formula.

- Children (12-24 months of age): whole milk.

- Children (2-years-old and above): milk with reduced fat (two percent or one percent).

- Non-fat milk may be used for children over 3-years-old.

- Please note: before making any changes in your child's diet, please consult with your child's pediatrician.

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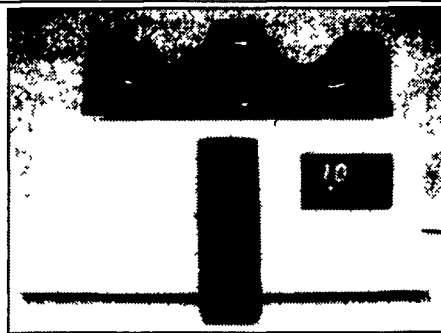
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