

## **Childhood Game**

*by Harry Zirkelbach 03-05-2010*

**Of all games played as a child in our house,  
no one there was no loser.  
One provider, two competitors, me and my sister.  
Each winners every time. No enmity.**

**At our house, the day of the week could be determined without a  
calendar by checking Mom's activity.**

**Monday, clothes wash day.  
Tuesday, the ironing.  
Wednesday, baking of breads.  
Thursday, house cleaning, top to bottom (well not the basement)  
Friday, mending clothes.  
Saturday, shopping then the evening weekly bath, mostly involved in  
heating that tub of water that all four would use in sequence, sister,  
son, mom, dad.  
And Sunday, all four dress up for Church in town.**

**And there, midweek, the one game my sister and I loved.**

**In addition to baking the usual 16 loaves of bread, always white,  
Mom stoked the stove to also bake the cake and pie treats  
each of us loved, especially Dad.  
For it was in this aftermath the contest began.**

**With completion of each sweet, Mom would call us,  
"Time to lick the pan".**

**Neither was ever injured in rush to the kitchen, even if we happened  
to be a block away. The first to arrive was given a spoon, and with the  
tip, divided the pan/mixing bowl content. Then the other would get  
to choose either half.**

**We both can still make a precise division of any pan with a spoon.**

**Then slowly we would scoop our half of the sweets still on the inside  
of the pan, slowly savoring every nip, never, ever, violating the  
neutrality of the division. Any hint of lemon, caraway, licorice, vanilla,  
maple, hidden in this nibble, exaggerated the morsel's taste and  
fragrance. This, a highlight of the task.**

**I should emphasize we never hastened to clean the pan, slowly,**

**as this reminder had to last a week,  
but be rehashed verbally between us  
when we shared kitchen chores the next six days.**

**A special highlight of those moments was when Mom whipped a meringue cover to add to cake and pie. While each recipe differed, their appearance was the same, as both cake a pie would be further returned to the oven to provide a brown sheen firmness to the outer skin of meringue.**

**That mix was the most delicious licking of the pan.**

**Cake covering was more beautiful. for it covered everything, the cake appearing to be all meringue. Here, with each slather, Mom would twist her wrist quickly, each time adding a small peak to the covering, presenting the meringue as a white sea, with waves. The re-baking gave the tips a brown tip, never burnt.**

**Each Colorado early winter I become a child again with every first full-cover of snow on the Rockies to our west. Then their meringue cover will often comes down thru tree line, clear into the foothills, and in morning sunlight the peaks adopt those gold hue tips, not unlike Mom's cake.**

**In my special sensory mind I can detect the vanilla, maple, caraway, licorice, lemon, egg white.**

**Thanks Mom, for calling us to lick the pan., creating memories, while teaching justice to your willing children.**



The cook, as a eight year old too