



KATÉ LEBLANC/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Dallas Casey, 11, (in red) makes a face after tasting seaweed pudding made by Thierry Chopin, a professor of marine biology at UNBSJ.

# Seaweed pudding? Yuck

**Education** Students at camp learn lowly algae has its place in marine biology

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SAINT JOHN – Seaweed extract is a common ingredient in many foods and household products, but you would never have guessed looking into the grimacing faces of a handful of middle school students.

The students were eating from a tray of freshly brewed “seaweed pudding” during their first morning of this week’s summer science and sports camps at UNBSJ.

Thierry Chopin, a professor of marine

biology at the university, cooked up the concoction, along with a lesson on aquaculture for the campers.

Seaweed pudding is traditionally known as blancmange. The century-old dish is commonly served in the Brittany province of France, Chopin said.

“It’s interesting. When I told them at the beginning, I told them, ‘Oh, you will eat seaweed pudding,’ and the first reaction was, ‘Ew, yucky.’ They ate it, they are eating it. So from being, ‘ew, yucky’ stuff, now they say, ‘Oh well,’” Chopin said, adding that the seaweed pudding was lacking in vanilla.

Dallas Casey, 11, bravely stepped up as one of the first to try the pudding. He was less than satisfied with the result, but admitted that, if asked or dared, he’d eat it again.

“It felt really weird actually,” he said. “It didn’t really have a taste, that’s why I don’t really like it. I like things with taste.”

The pudding is milk-based and is solidified by the extract released from the Irish moss, a variation of red algae, that it is boiled with. Chopin added that it is better when flavoured with rum or Bailey’s Irish Cream.

“It did not have particular taste today. It was sweet because I put sugar in. It was OK, but I could have put a little more vanilla,” the professor said.

Despite some of the grimacing faces and unfinished cups of pudding, almost all of the campers tried a sample. The room was filled with chatter, laughter and an occasional exclamation of ‘gross.’

“I think it was fun,” Chopin said.

In addition, it was an opportunity to show the students “that seaweeds are important because generally, in marine biology, people talk about fish and lobsters and dolphins and whales, all these things and generally people forget to talk about seaweed,” he said.

## Thierry Chopin’s Secret Seaweed Pudding Recipe

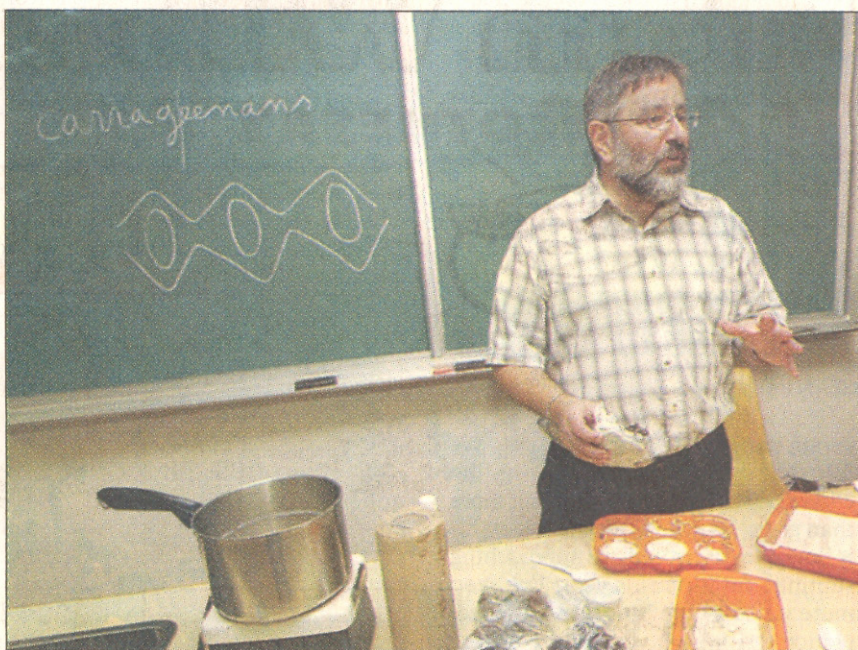
### Ingredients

Milk  
A handful of dried, clean Irish moss  
Vanilla  
Sugar  
Cheesecloth  
Optional: Rum, Irish Cream Liqueur

### Preparation

Bring milk to a boil in a pot. Add Irish moss and continue to boil. Strain the mixture through cheesecloth, taking care to remove all of the milk from the seaweed. Add vanilla, sugar and optional ingredients to taste. Stir. Pour into a mould and chill. Remove and enjoy when the solution has hardened to the consistency of pudding.

**Note:** Chopin did not use exact measurements while preparing the dish.



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Thierry Chopin of UNBSJ explains how to make seaweed pudding at a science day camp.