

THE HALTON COMPASS

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PHONE: 905-854-3333 FAX: 905-854-4761
CLASSIFIEDS: 905-873-2925 FAX: 905-873-1528
EMAIL: info@haltoncompass.com

Publisher and Editor: Stephen Baker
Office Manager: Audrey Allison
Executive Assistant: Cathy McLeod
Production Manager: Karen Coleman
Designers: Brandon Porter, Nina Gunby
Assignment Editor: Donna Danielli
Columnist: Jeff Lumby
Journalists: Jennifer Enright, Laura Cook, Ann Kornuta, Bren Chisholm
Advertising Manager: Louise Cook
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Humour: Jeffrey Mueller

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EDITORIAL

"Cynical" and "Jaded" are hackneyed words commonly used to describe journalists and editors, and not just those of the yellow persuasion. There is almost a schoolyard bravado amongst journalists in accepting these epithets as badges of honour and as being "cool".

Just so you know, I'm not cool. In fact I'm about as square as you can get. But even I have knocked around enough to be rarely surprised by the flip-flopping of some of those in political office.

In my book the Greenbelt issue was a corpse looking for a decent burial and I admit to being flabbergasted by the announcement this week that the Greenbelt legislation was to be delayed by three months. Little birdies whisper that I was not the only flabbergasted party. If the steamroller that is the Greenbelt movement can be stuttered to a halt, albeit perhaps a temporary one, then anything is possible in this season of goodwill.

Anyone know of a good incantation to make proposed bridges disappear?

Visions of complicated recipes dance through my head

By BREN CHISHOLM

Food, glorious food. This is the time of year where I feel the most pressure to display some semblance of culinary talent but most of it is my imagination and ends up staying there.

Realistically speaking, superb cooking is not required with two children who believe Tater Tots and hot dogs are the height of sophistication. Simple pleasures are, as everyone knows, often the best. My kids have just discovered croutons which they toss on vegetables with wild abandon and if that's what thrills them, who am I to curb their enthusiasm?

I don't even own a whisk but I know what one looks like. I tell myself a fork does the job quite nicely, which may not be necessary true. Copper pots do not hang decorously in my kitchen and the metal ones I do have are permanently stained by past attempts at cooking.

I'll probably do another ham this Christmas because it's easy. Most on the market are pre-cooked and besides nailing some pineapple slices and maraschino cherries with cloves on the outside, little else is required.

I prepare the accompanying side dishes of mashed, sweet potatoes and green beans, which look as if I've fussed because they are contrasting colours. Yet despite the ease in which I put together meals, there's obviously a part of me that wants to break away from the conventional.

I recently got my hands on a snazzy Christmas recipe guide and became instantly convinced I could do a "Frozen Cranberry Soufflé with Spun Sugar Cranberry Wreath". I thought the recipe for "Duck Breast with Crème Fraiche and Roasted Grapes" was as long as "War & Peace", yet I found myself envisioning how elegant it would look on the dining-room table.

Then I came to my senses and realized just how much work was involved and the stunned silence that would follow when my children realized that I've cooked an innocent duck (for some reason, turkey is acceptable table carnage)

and gussied it up with some cooked fruit they'd much prefer cold.

Yes, ham is the family preference, which I'll probably end up doing again this year because there are always ham salad sandwiches and maybe even a casserole to look forward to. As the old saying goes, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", yet I long for epicurean exploration!

I'll admit I practically got giddy when I saw the recipe for "Warm Chocolate Tarts with Pink Peppercorn Ice Cream". Such a wildly unorthodox combination of flavours would give some refinement to our practically dormant taste buds! Chances are I'd even have to run out and get some fancy dessert plates to give them the fanfare they deserve.

Alas, I am plagued by a more realistic image of my children's twisted faces as they realize the ice cream that accompanies the tarts is actually made from peppercorns. I'd patiently explain to them that they're not like the black peppercorns that we normally use and that the pink peppercorns are actually a berry that, once ground, emits only a slightly peppery tang. Forks would nonetheless drop.

My oh-so-supportive husband would be impressed I went to all the fuss and bother of homemade ice cream when "Chapman's" would have been just fine.

Sigh. When it comes right down to it, nothing goes over with a bigger bang than my homemade Rice Krispie Squares - particularly when I go all out with some butterscotch morsels. And if it's a standing ovation I crave, tossing a cup of marshmallows into the batch really knocks them out.

I can safely put this year's holiday recipe guide back with the pile of other magazines full of "too-ridiculous-to-attempt" concoctions because once again, it is ham with the colour-coordinated side dishes...and Rice Krispie Squares for dessert.

But I'll definitely insist on the standing ovation or at least a round of applause at the end, thank you!

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Mayor Krantz, Members of Council and the Staff would like to take this opportunity to wish all Milton residents a holiday blessed with peace, prosperity, health and happiness and best wishes for the upcoming year.