

# Stabbing haggis and frostbite

As I perused my calendar, I realized yesterday was January 25, Robbie Burns Day, a special day for every red-blooded Scot.

Yup, it's that day we make a haggis (by tossing a plethora of ingredients into a sheep's stomach, then boiling it until it's edible) then someone recites some poetry by Scotland's favourite son—Robert Burns— before stabbing the haggis to death.

Every time I think of Robbie Burns, I'm taken back about 20 years, when my mother decided to host a family Robbie Burns supper.

Over the years, I'd photographed several Burns' suppers, and was quite familiar with all the traditions— the address to the Haggis, and all those ceremonial things that make the dinner what it is.

And in a moment of weakness, I agreed to recite the address to the Haggis for my mother.

I got right into it— even borrowed a kilt for the celebration, unknown to the rest of my family.

It was a crisp, cold January day (and that's significant) as I scurried across the yard to Mom and Dad's place. Wow, when that cold wind gusted up under my kilt, I truly think I went cross-eyed.

It's been said January 25 is usually THE coldest day of the year. I think it's only perceived as the coldest one— simply cuz it's Robbie Burns Day, and the kilts come out.

Predictably, all my family asked what was worn under my kilt. I was ready, replying with, "Nothing's worn, it's all in good repair."

In retrospect, I could have replied 'frostbite'.

Mom had gone to great lengths to create a haggis and I had to admit, when it emerged steaming from the oven, it looked and smelled pretty genuine.

I'd bought a recording of Scottish pipe music, and Mom and I marched into the dining room to the squeal of pipes, the haggis on a silver tray.

My kids and nephews wondered if I'd lost my mind as I started reciting Burns' poem (virtually impossible to read, let alone memorize). I read:

*Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,*

## Ted Brown



*Great Chieftan o' the Puddin-race!  
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,  
Painch, tripe, or thairm:  
Weel are ye wordy of a grace  
As lang 's my arm.*

It wasn't easy enunciating the words, and to be honest, I wasn't even sure what I was saying.

But I carried on, and the kids humoured Mom and I, waiting patiently for their beef dinner. I got to the part where I was to plunge the knife into the haggis and at a fever pitch, I proclaimed:

*"Trenching your gushing entrails bright  
Like onie ditch;  
And then, O what a glorious sight,  
Warm-reekin, rich!"*

I had one small problem.

Seems the 'membrane' Mom used to hold the haggis together was waaay too tough. The local butcher was out of sheeps' stomachs that week.

I hacked through it in true barbaric highland fashion, (Rob Roy would have been proud of me) completing the cultural experience as the kids tasted haggis, for the first— and likely last— time.

I learned a lot that day. I could say there was a certain magic celebrating the age-old Scottish custom— (too bad my background is Irish).

I could say the kids were richer by experiencing haggis first-hand. (They might disagree.)

And I certainly pleased my mother (no doubt).

But they weren't my greatest revelations.

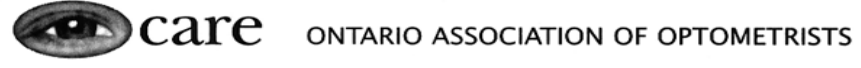
Nope, my greatest discovery was learning the value of wearing long pants in the dead of winter.

*(Ted Brown can be reached at  
tbrown@independentfreepress.com)*

You're not older, you're wiser.

## NOW PROVE IT

*After 40, it gets harder to see up close.  
It's a natural condition called presbyopia. Regular visits to  
the eye doctor can keep things in focus.*



### HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL #RFP07-01

CHILD CARE OPERATOR FOR OPERATING  
A NON-PROFIT CHILD CARE CENTRE UNDER  
BEST START FUNDING  
ORCHARD II ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
SUTTON DRIVE, BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

Proposals clearly marked as to the contents  
will be received by the Board until  
2:00 p.m. local time on  
Friday, February 16th, 2007

Request for proposal documents are available  
on the Board website [www.hcdsb.org](http://www.hcdsb.org)

For any information about the Request for Proposal  
please contact

Frank Crouchman, Manager, Purchasing Services  
(905) 632-6300, ext. 136  
[crouchmanf@hcdsb.org](mailto:crouchmanf@hcdsb.org)



**Lou Piovesan**  
Director of Education

**F. Crouchman**  
Manager, Purchasing Services

### HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD JUNIOR / SENIOR KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2007

Advanced Registration for those children who will be attending Junior Kindergarten or Senior Kindergarten in Halton Catholic Schools in Burlington, Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills (Georgetown/Acton) will be held at all schools on:

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2007**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2007**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
*and*  
**1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

#### AGE OF ADMISSION AND REQUIREMENTS

Junior Kindergarten	Senior Kindergarten
Children are required to be 4 years of age on or before December 31, 2007.	Children are required to be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2007.

- Roman or Eastern Rite Catholic Baptismal Certificate is required.
- Proof of age is required.
- Before registration is finalized, a child will have completed the prescribed program of immunization for diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps and rubella. Parent(s) must provide evidence of immunization record.
- For further information or alternate registration date, please contact the principal of your nearest Catholic School.

Please Note: Children currently registered in their Catholic school's Junior Kindergarten program are not required to register for the Senior Kindergarten program. Placement in the Senior Kindergarten program will be processed by the school unless otherwise notified by the parent(s)/guardian(s).



**Al Bailey**  
Chair of the Board

**Lou Piovesan**  
Director of Education

### HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2007

Registration for those families who wish to enrol their child in the French Immersion Program in the Catholic Elementary Schools in Burlington, Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills will be held at all designated schools as listed below on:

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2007**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2007**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
*and*  
**1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

#### REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

- student must be entering grade 5 in September, 2007 in a Halton Catholic School;
- in person only - parent, guardian or other adult with a letter indicating they are acting on the parent's behalf;
- registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis and is to take place at the French Immersion school designated for your attendance area;
- enrolment for the French Immersion Program is limited;
- transportation is not provided
- click on the following link to access the list of feeder schools and dates for Parent Information Sessions in your respective area: <http://www.hcdsb.org/frenchimmersion/>

#### DESIGNATED FRENCH IMMERSION SCHOOLS:

Area	Schools
Burlington	St. Gabriel Catholic Elementary School
Georgetown/Acton	Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School
Milton	Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School
North Oakville	St. Matthew, St. Bernadette & St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary Schools
South Oakville	St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School



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