

Bible ban in schools irks region's Gideons

Another nail in the Christian coffin. The York Region District School Board, through its latest edict, has closed the door to the distribution of all religious information in its classrooms.

The announcement revises a statute approved in 1995, further tightening the noose.

The proclamation is particularly disturbing to The Gideons, principal distributors of New Testaments at elementary and secondary schools since 1946.

Murray Bennett, vice-president of The Gideons Markham-Stouffville camp, said no testaments were circulated without parental approval and only to public school



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

students in Grade 5. They agreed, he said, to provide this service only during lunch hour and recess. Principals, he noted were agreeable to this. Under the revised policy, "the board has closed the door pretty tight."

"The policy hasn't really changed," Mr. Bennett said, "it's just being enforced."

Similar restrictions hold true in Peel Region and Toronto, he explained.

A different set of rules applies to Catholic schools, Mr. Bennett stated. "For the most part, they're wide open, with the decision resting on the shoulders of individual principals."

"It's a joy to work with them," he said, "and the mannerisms of the children certainly show." The same goes for the Stouffville Christian School and Montessori schools, he added.

Ron Gee, Markham-Stouffville Gideon camp president, said The Gideons was specifically mentioned in the board memo.

The organization, he said, began in the United States in 1899 and came to Canada 12 years later. Its association with schools, however, began here first. It is now in 179 countries around the world, recording more than one billion hand-outs in 81 languages.

Canadians, unfortunately, don't complain too much. Everything associated with Christianity is on a downward spiral.

The Canadian home office is Guelph. Ron James, also of the local Gideons, said while the ban on distribution came from the board last fall, many principals either ignored it or weren't aware of it.

He said he had been in touch with Whitchurch-Stouffville trustee Lorelea Carruthers about the revised memo and learned she favoured its re-enforcement.

Mr. James claims it's another sign of an moral breakdown in society, "one added to another," he said.

Distribution of New Testaments outside school property is difficult, Mr. James explained, because so many students travel by bus.

"It's been a very vital part of our ministry," he said. He recalled how many children treasured the testaments as their very own, some teachers, too. He suggested only through an outcry from the community could the board's policy be changed.

"Canadians, unfortunately, don't do that too much," he said.

"Everything associated with Christianity is on a downward spiral," Mr. Gee said.

Parents I talked to agreed. One father is considering transferring his children to a Catholic school.

Lucia Cascioli, public affairs officer with the York Region public board, sees it differently.

EVERYONE TREATED EQUALLY

"We want everyone treated equally," she said. The revised race relations policy statement does not single out The Gideons, Ms Cascioli said.

Whatever the decision, it's obvious the door's been slammed shut on religious education in public schools.

And it shows.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.

ROASTING CHICKENS

I think that we've only promoted these twice before — for no particular reason really, because they make the most amazing old-fashioned meal. All the chickens we handle come from a farm (King Capon) in Sharon, Ontario. They're more yellow in colour, they're air-chilled (it's better) and they've got a noticeable flavour and texture difference. We used to call them free-range until we got our knuckles rapped because they don't go outside or have access to the outside year-round (judging by our recent weather, why would they?).

We're proud of these — and judging by our poultry bills, our customers really like them, too! For this week, I got Doreen to write out her tried and true roast chicken with gravy recipe, which will be available to go with the chickens.

Reg. \$2.99/lb.
4 - 5 lb. Ave. Size

25% OFF
THIS WEEK

GRAPES RED & GREEN

The same lesson as the blueberries applies. You'd be surprised at how many sizes and qualities — and prices — there are to choose from at the food terminal. Our approach has always been to pick the best quality that we can, and then ask the price. Others start the other way around — some start in the middle!

These are really good grapes. The price? Not too bad, eh!

1.99
lb.

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK?

It's blueberry week in the bakery, too, but with a bit of difference. Whenever we bake with blueberries, we use wild blues from Northern Ontario (and Quebec) and we freeze them in great quantities in order to have them year round. When we decorate, we use the best fresh ones that we can buy. Lots to choose from this week!

BLUEBERRY UPSIDE-DOWN CAKES — this is a different version of my mom's old-fashioned pineapple upside-down cake. It's a moist, light white cake with a hint of lemon, and wild blueberries in the caramelized brown-sugar butter topping.

Two sizes... \$12.95 and \$17.95

WHAT'S FOR DINNER!

This week, from the frozen entrée section we'll have something new. They're stuffed, boneless, chicken breasts (air-chilled) in a Dijon Cream Sauce. What's the stuffing? It's our venerable sage and onion stuffing.

We'll have two sizes, \$7.95 & \$15.95

25% OFF
THIS WEEK

VEGETARIAN VEGETABLE SOUP

We make this using a whole bunch of fresh vegetables, season it on the mild side and let the flavour simmer through — and as a bonus it's virtually fat free, as well.

Reg. \$5.49
Serves 3 - 4

25% OFF
THIS WEEK

FRESH BLUEBERRIES

I'm sure there are drawbacks to having a country shaped like Chile, but one of the big bonuses is having the progressive growing seasons as the climate shifts over the long, north-south stretch of land. What that means in this case is a window of availability for these berries which is far beyond ours. That's why we still have them in plentiful supply with lots of flavour and at a great price.

From Chile. Half Pints

1.99
ea.

OUR SMOKED DUCKS

When we prepare these, we do a few things that make them especially good. One, is that we use Brome Lake Ducks which are generally a lower-fat duck; two, we trim them well; three, we cure them in a lower salt cure; and four, we slow smoke them until they're cooked, over oak. Our batch this week are definitely on the large size, so while you can get a whole one at \$14.95, we'll split them in half for \$7.95. You'll find that these are great in a warm pasta, a salad or just cut and sliced off the bone. There is a limited supply, so get them early.

BLUEBERRY CUSTARD CAKES — made with wild blues, apples and cinnamon in a butter cake with custard baked in.

Also two sizes... \$13.95 and \$18.95

BLUEBERRY WHITE CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKES — this is made with wild blues and white chocolate swirled into our cheesecake mixture. It's topped with, you guessed it, more blueberries and white chocolate shavings. \$12.95 and \$20.95

BLUEBERRY SCONES — these are made with the wild ones... \$1.29

BLUEBERRY MUFFINS — we started making muffins last week, at the suggestion of one of our customers. It seems that everyone's kids like muffins in their lunch bag — and blueberry is one of the most popular... 99¢

WILD BLUEBERRY PIES — these can be had in a number of ways. You can get them ready to bake from our freezer either with pastry top or crumble, and you can fill your house with that aroma extraordinary of pies baking.

— or — you can buy one already baked at the pastry counter. Either way they're really good.

9" size... \$10.95

BLUEBERRY LOAF — this is our lemon loaf mixture baked fairly full of wild blues... \$4.50

As in most weeks, you'll find all these delicious blueberry items on sale at

1/3 OFF
THIS WEEK

OUR CRANBERRY PORT JELLY

I'm sure that you've noticed a number of our new products on display in the store. A new one this week (actually a new format) is our Cranberry Port Jelly in the 250 ml size. It's great with roast pork or fowl — and even smoked duck!

4.99
ea.



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY MARCH 7TH

Hours:
Mon. 11:00-7:00 — Tues. - Thurs. 9:00-7:00 — Fri. 9:00-8:00
Sat. 9:00-6:00 — Sun. 10:00-5:00

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