

Basketball court vigil for young burn victim

I first met John Chaput at Strawberry Festival 2002. The occasion was opening ceremonies. With pad and pencil in hand; I was hoping a lot and praying a little that someone would say something pertinent to fill my yawning column space in the newspaper.

A holiday weekend was fast approaching and an early deadline was ominously looming, making it necessary to grab what I could. Which, to that point, wasn't much.

Then a young man, 16 at the time, stepped on stage. His presence resulted in spontaneous cheers and resounding applause from a close-knit group of teenagers standing nearby.

"What gives?" I said to myself. "Who is this kid?" I was soon to learn from Ruth LeBlanc of the Stouffville Business Improvement Area this "kid" was, in fact, the BIA's choice for youth of the year.

I pressed closer to the podium and weighed on every word. "John's light has shone for me," Ms LeBlanc said. "His efforts went above and beyond the call of duty."

That was then. This is now. John Chaput lies motionless in the burn unit of McMaster Hospital, Hamilton, the result of a tragic accident Aug. 17 in Stouffville.

What happened on this near fateful night remains unclear, but that doesn't matter. What's more important is the intense desire by a cross-section of our community to have John survive his ordeal and return to normal health and strength.

To help accomplish this, a candlelight prayer vigil, headed by Rev. Tim Soukup of Stouffville Missionary Church, was held Thursday evening at the town basketball court, a place John often frequented. More than 50 young people attended, many of whom had never seen the inside of a sanctuary.

"It was like nothing I'd ever seen before," Ms LeBlanc said. "Something wonderful, something unbelievable happened that evening. God was there."

Calls began pouring in the day following the accident, Ms LeBlanc said. "John's friends were appealing for something to be done, that a prayer service be organized," she said. Ms LeBlanc quickly agreed.

Using cell phones, word soon spread. One told another, then another and another.

"It was a network of love," Ms LeBlanc said. "I've never seen anything like it in all my life, truly amazing." Seeing all those kids, standing in a circle, their heads bowed, you could have heard a pin drop, she said.

Carley McLean, a student attending Stouffville Secondary, sang the very beautiful Angel.

A signed card, plus notes of hope, have already been sent to McMaster Hospital.

"I believe in the power of prayer," Ms LeBlanc said. "I believe in miracles."

Pastor Tim said he was at work in his office when the call from Ms LeBlanc came through.

"I felt honoured to be asked," he said. "It was a privilege to attend." He said he knew only a few of the young people present.

"This is what community's all about," he stated. John suffered second and third degree burns to various parts of his body, including his face. He was taken first to Markham Stouffville Hospital by his mother where a tube was inserted in his throat. He was then air-lifted to Hamilton.

Ms LeBlanc said physicians at McMaster were loud in their praise of emergency procedures performed at Markham Stouffville. "He's young and he's a fighter. With God's help, he'll pull through," she added.

Ms LeBlanc said she came to know John when, as a student in Grade 9, he volunteered to assist the BIA and accumulate 40 community service hours.

"I stopped counting after 100 hours," she said. "He went far beyond what was required."

Even more recently, he dropped in to enquire if he could help, Ms LeBlanc said.

"We bonded," she said, "like family." He had planned, Ms LeBlanc said, to return to SDSS next month and obtain two additional credits.

"We have a lot of great kids here in Stouffville. John's but one," she said. "Often, we're too quick to criticize."

"What I saw Thursday night, I'll never forget," she concluded.

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



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

OUR OLD-FASHIONED CABBAGE ROLLS

Cabbage Rolls are a hot item in our store. I imagine it's because they're so time-consuming to make that few people make them at home. Whatever the reason, they don't last long in our freezer — especially when they're one of this week's features! So come early and get them while they last.

Container of 4
Reg. \$10.95

25% OFF THIS WEEK

KLONDIKE ROSE POTATOES

Often I am asked, "What do you like best about the business?" My answer is invariably the esthetic aspect of what we do. There is beauty in nature — flowers, farm produce, displays of peppers, lettuces — almost any of nature's creations have beauty — and some man-made ones, too. Beautifully labeled products, displays of prepared food, tastefully garnished — the meat counter when it's overflowing. I get excited to see all that. When I saw these potatoes, I needed to buy them all, they looked so gorgeous. The colour — the freshly dug appearance — I could see them sitting before me with butter, maybe a bit of dill — very delicious! Klondike Rose are actually red-skinned Yukon potatoes — golden inside. We've got lots, and they're beautiful!

From U.S.A.

99¢ LB.

THOMPSON SEEDLESS GRAPES

We found a good lot of these grapes for this week. You'll love them!

From California

1.99 LB.

BIG DADDY CASHEWS!

This is a large sized snack — this week, for a smaller than usual price. If you love Cashews, this is your chance.

From California

6.95 LB.

RAINCOAST CRISPS!

We've received the second load of these now. They seem to be too good tasting to be good for you — but I know that they are!

From California

2.99 LB.

ORANGE NAVEL ORANGES

During this period of the year our oranges come from the southern hemisphere — in this case, South Africa. These are nice and juicy, a good large size and fairly sweet.

From South Africa.

99¢ LB.

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUTSIDE?

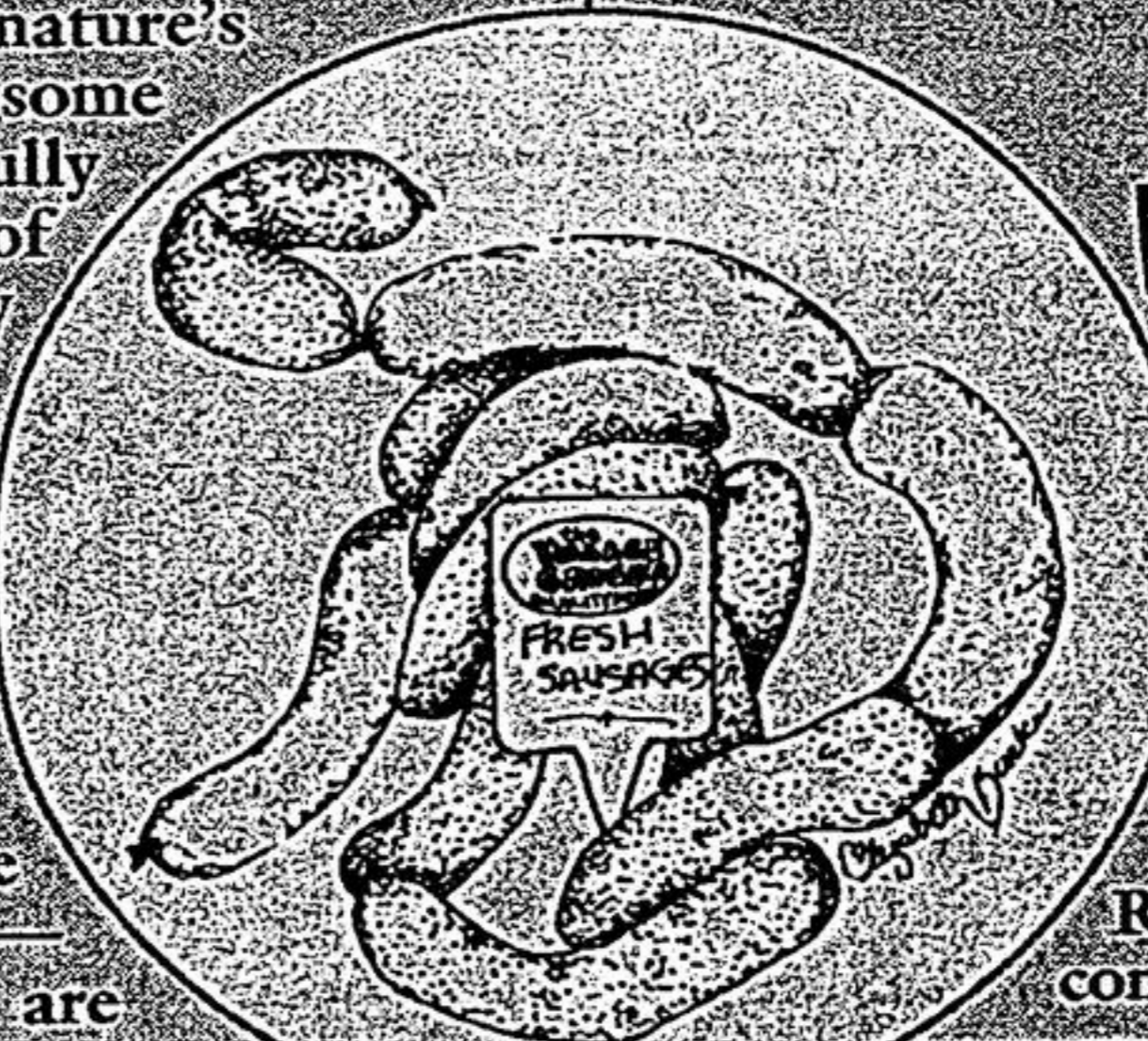
We have an amazing array of Fall mums, grasses, cabbages, kale, mixed planters, and even more mums. The sidewalk is full again — just how I like it!

CHICKEN TORTELLINI SOUP

Our soup feature this week is Chicken Tortellini — it's chicken based with plum tomatoes, cheese Tortellini, some basil and sautéed red onions.

Reg. \$5.49 container

25% OFF THIS WEEK



MARINATED FLANK STEAKS

We ran out of these very early last week, despite our best efforts. If you DIDN'T get them last week, come and see us — we'll make sure you get the same deal as last week. Once again, sorry for the disappointment.

WILD BLUEBERRIES

We ran out of our big baskets of Wild Blueberries as well. If you missed out, come and see us — we'll have more at last week's feature price!

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK!

It's Blueberry week in the bakery, and we'll be making.....

WILD BLUEBERRY PIES, both pastry topped and crumble..... \$10.95 ea.

WILD BLUEBERRY UPSIDE-DOWN CAKES, in two sizes..... \$12.95 and \$17.95

BLUEBERRY SCONES, no intro needed, I'm sure..... \$1.29 ea.

WILD BLUEBERRY CHEESECAKES, also in two sizes..... \$12.95 and \$20.95

— and lastly, BLUEBERRY BRAN MUFFINS — one of our more delicious varieties. 99¢ — all at.....

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

NIAGARA PEACHES

Our peaches have been really great this year — in fact, it's the dessert of choice for my little daughter and I every evening!

3L BASKETS 3.99 ea.

99¢ LB.



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY AUGUST 29TH

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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