

Boyhood dream alive on rails

For Don Reesor of Whitchurch-Stouffville, it's a boyhood dream come true.

The 73-year-old former Marmill Feeds owner/operator vividly recalls watching from his bedroom window as freight and passenger trains rumbled in and out of the nearby Markham station.

But never did he expect to see himself seated at the controls of a 500-ton juggernaut travelling the line between Stouffville and Uxbridge.

But truth is stranger than fiction. Mr. Reesor is one of four qualified locomotive engineers with the York-Durham Heritage Railway. He's looking forward to his third season.

"As a boy, I always enjoyed playing with trains," he remembers, "I'd wind them up and away they'd go; they were favourite Christmas gifts."

Later, as mill manager, Mr. Reesor watched as many as five steam units, both freight and passenger, huffed and puffed their way through Markham daily, some stopping to deposit grain cars on adjacent sidings. The steam was later replaced by diesel power.

Dorothy Reesor remembers keeping suppers warm for her husband, thinking he was working overtime at the mill, only to learn he was awaiting the arrival of the GO train from Toronto.

"It always was and still is my favourite hobby," he admits.

When the heritage train became a reality, the Reesors had already moved to Whitchurch-Stouffville. It was only natural Mr. Reesor would want to associate himself with this long anticipated project.

He would soon be asked by the board to take charge of locomotive maintenance, three engines in total, with two standbys for spares. This only fuelled an interest in taking these duties a step further. Two years ago last September, he commanded the controls. He's been a regular ever since.

But it wasn't automatic. Because the public is involved, the entire operation comes under the supervision of Transport Canada and its standards are high, Mr. Reesor explains. It was his good fortune to learn from Bruce Kearney, a Canadian National locomotive engineer with 42 years experience.

"He knew everything there was to know," Mr. Reesor says. "I trained with the best."

Mr. Kearney also tutored others to follow.

Taking regular turns with Mr. Reesor are Ken Harding, Rob Pare and Brad Lawrence with Dennis Gabout of Mississauga, an accountant



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

on the staff of Markham Stouffville Hospital, waiting in the wings. The crew includes two in the cab, a conductor and trainperson. All are volunteers.

A co-engineer, or second eye, is required to ensure all level-crossing signals are operating and no obstructions are on the track.

"We have an on-going battle with beaver," Mr. Reesor says. In a marshy area south of Uxbridge, they continually block up a stream and flood the rail bed. One time, they felled a tree, forcing the train to stop.

"I guess they were trying to get even," he joked.

To take care of such emergencies, a saw and an axe are always kept handy.

The crew also keeps a close look-out for deer and Canada geese. Because the train's speed seldom exceeds 25 km/h, collisions of this kind are avoidable, Mr. Reesor says. It's human error he fears — motorists not paying attention or trying to beat the train to a crossing.

GO Transit, Mr. Reesor says, has been wonderful. So also have Mayors Sue Sherban of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Gerri-Lynn O'Connor of Uxbridge.

This year's first train run is in June and the season concludes the weekend following Thanks-giving. A round trip from Stouffville to Uxbridge takes about two hours and costs \$17.

The train may also be booked for corporate functions, weddings and private parties. The Reesors are cognizant of this. Two years ago, they were surprise guests at an on-board 70th birthday party hosted by family and friends.

While Mr. Reesor is happy at the controls of No. 3612, he'd dearly love a return to the steam era, the locomotive he remembers as a boy. He admits, however, these units are scarce and very costly, as much as \$400,000.

Boiler certification's also very strict, he notes, "and rightly so".

"But some day, I hope we can obtain one," he adds.

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

BUY A HAM FROM US!

— YOU'LL BE HAPPY —

We've made hams in our business for the last 18 years — we just weren't ready the first year. When I think back to those times I laugh a bit at what we went through to do it. Our cooking facilities consisted of a domestic range that we bought at Pascal's (long gone now, both the range and Pascal's). We absolutely wore out that stove roasting two hams at a time, day and night. In the ensuing years we added ovens — and added more to the point that we can now cook about 65 hams at a time — and that doesn't include smoking.

I laugh as well when I think of the quantity of ham that we've sold over the years — by now in excess of a million pounds — not of raw product but the finished product. What have we learned over the years?

The short answer is that you don't change a thing, the recipe, the technique, the cure, the seasoning — none of that has changed. Our customers evidently appreciate that because if you took a poll of our customers, let's say for the occasion of Easter — you'd be amazed at how far they come for our ham. If you've never had a hand-made ham, you'll be amazed at the different texture, the tenderness and the flavour — that made ham the popular item it is today. — And if hand-made is what you're used to, we're it.

Maple-Sugar Ham Whole or Half	5 ⁹⁵ lb.
Boneless Black-Forest Ham Whole or Half	5 ⁹⁵ lb.
Traditional Bone-In Smoked Eater Ham	2 ⁵⁹ lb.

— Its Best to Order - 905-940-0655 —

CHICKEN CUTLETS

This is one of our more popular meat counter preparations. We begin with our chicken breasts and flatten them so they'll cook quickly, we bread them with egg, crumbs and a French herb seasoning — and voila! — a quick and tasty meal that can be served on a bun or on a plate with your veggies (and frics).

Reg. \$9.95 lb. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

DELI SALADS!

Our feature from the salad counter for this week is our 'Feta Pasta'. We use De Cecco Farfalle (bow ties) with crumbled Feta and a Dill Vinaigrette. It's a delicious salad.

Reg. \$1.49/100g **1/3 OFF THIS WEEK**

EASTER CHOCOLATE

An extensive selection of really good Easter chocolate is available for both kids and grown-ups — yet further proof, should you need it, that a bona-fide chocoholic is at the helm of this store

— AND —

you could win one of two giant chocolate Easter rabbits from Chelsea Chocolates of Barrie. You must be under twelve, fill out your name and number and deposit it at the cash area of our store. Draw will take place on Thursday March 24th.

WHAT'S DINNER? FOR

From our frozen section we'll have our 'Chicken Supreme' on sale for the week. This is made in our Bullock Road facility, as are all our Village Kitchen products. During a visit last week, it was on the lunch menu and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I think the delicate seasoning, the creamy sauce, the very large chunks of chicken breast — all these things make it great. Serve it over rice or broad noodles.

Serves 3 - 4 — Reg. \$17.95

25% OFF THIS WEEK



CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRIES

Although the California weather hasn't been so good for lettuce — It's been great for berries, and this week we've got a load of great ones!

OVERFILLED QUARTS **2⁴⁹ QUART**

CREAM OF CARROT SOUP

This is one of, if not the best-selling soups we make. We start by making our own chicken stock, use local carrots (while they're available) which are nice and sweet, we use cream and it's spiced just right.

Reg. \$5.49 ea. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**
Serves 3 - 4

OUR ITALIAN SAUSAGES

We use fresh pork — not too fat or lean, lots of fennel, a good amount of chili in the hot and it seems like just the right amount of salt, pepper and of course, garlic. They're good roasted or pan fired, (or bar-be-qued, if the snow drifts on your deck are not too high).

Reg. \$3.99 lb. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

... SO WHAT WIL BE BAKING FOR EASTER?

* **WHITE EASTER CAKES** — these are cakes with pastel icings piled high with Easter cookies and eggs. **\$14⁹⁵ and \$20⁹⁵**
two sizes

* **EASTER CROQUEMBOUCHE** — made with profiteroles (cream puffs) filled with four mousses (chocolate, white chocolate, raspberry and lemon) stacked together with caramel, drizzled with chocolate and decorated with sugar cookies and Easter eggs. **\$20⁹⁵**

* **LEMON-STRAWBERRY MOUSSE IN A PISTACHIO-SHORTBREAD CRUST** — made with lemon mousse surrounded by strawberry halves on a shortbread bottom with chopped pistachios — decorated with white-chocolate dipped California strawberries. **\$20⁹⁵ and \$27⁹⁵**

* **WHITE TOBLERONE MOUSSE & ALMOND CRUNCH CAKE** — we make the mousse with white toblerone bars, layer it with white cake and almond meringue and finish it with toasted almonds and, of course, Easter eggs. **\$20⁹⁵ and \$27⁹⁵**

* **JELLY ROLLS** — only three types this week — mixed berry, strawberry and lemon. **\$12⁹⁵ ea.**

* **CHEESECAKES** — four to choose from: lemon, raspberry-white chocolate, amaretto with a buttered-almond topping and chocolate with dark and white chocolate ganache swirled. **\$12⁹⁵ and \$20⁹⁵**

* **CREME BRULEES** — even after last week, we'll be making more! Available flavours will be: fresh vanilla bean, Grand marnier, Grand Marnier with chocolate ganache, lavender (especially for Easter) and lastly, raspberry-white chocolate! **\$3⁹⁹ ea.**

* **MOUSSE CAKES** — there will be black and white (now famous), chocolate, raspberry, white chocolate and lemon. **\$18⁹⁵ and \$27⁹⁵**

* **EASTER CUPCAKES** — these cupcakes runneth over! **\$2⁴⁹ ea.**

* **OUR CHOCOLATE CAKE** — made with moist and rich chocolate cake layered and covered with chocolate ganache, decorated for Easter. **\$13⁹⁵ and \$18⁹⁵**

* **HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF SUGAR AND GINGERBREAD COOKIES** (actually about 2000!) maybe, just maybe, this year we'll have enough!

— Now, I'm sure that you all know what Easter is like at our bakery counter, so please, please, order early to avoid disappointment — and please be patient with us if our usual repertoire is not all available this week — and next. Everything is made and finished the evening before or the morning of — it's all fresh!

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY MARCH 20TH

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

548 Carlton Road, Unionville

940-1770