

Mr. Mom sends greetings from kitchen trenches

How often have you heard these expressions? "I'm just a stay-at-home mom." "My only career is my kids."



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

In this day and age, when the work place is just as much a woman's world, a stigma is often attached to the caregiver who chooses to shun the urban rat-race and concentrate on raising children.

This task is considered by some as menial, tedious, even boring.

While I can't argue the child-raising part, I've learned first-hand the even lesser responsibility of keeping house is far more challenging than filing papers and punching keyboards.

It's an endurance test that's taken me 47 years to accept.

I'm now ready to give in, even give up.

The harsh reality of being a Mr. Mom or, at this stage in my life, a Mr. grandmom, occurred Oct. 17 following Jean's self-imposed admission to the Toronto infirmary of Women's College Hospital.

While her decision came as no surprise, the liabilities related to me living alone, set in, even hours before she left.

Concise orders, neatly written, spelled out those things I should and shouldn't do in the house, mainly the kitchen.

Requirements follow:

Don't boil the kettle, put water in it first. Turn off sink tap before watching TV. After feeding the cat, put milk in refrigerator. If cat brings up, be sure and clean up. Wash hands before washing dishes. Don't pull the drain plug after dishes are washed. Don't heat the house by turning on the oven. Don't water the artificial flowers. After going to the bathroom, be sure and flush. Don't squeeze the toothpaste from the top of the tube. Don't use my deodorant, buy some for yourself. Don't wash shirts or pants. Don't go near the washer or dryer. Don't iron shirts or press pants. Don't ignore the telephone by removing the receiver. If a telemarketer calls, be polite. Don't cover front-yard flowers with my pantyhose. Tape all episodes of *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

The list goes on. Pre-occupied with activities in my own little world, I wasn't fully aware of the major role played by the distaff side in our household.

I know now. And I'll be a better husband for it.

Meal preparation, for example, is something I've taken for granted. Be it 8 a.m., noon or 5 p.m., the food was always ready and always on time. On my own, it's Shredded Wheat, Shredded Wheat and... wait for it... more Shredded Wheat.

Admittedly, after a week, this type of diet becomes a

little boring.

Doing dishes is another tedious chore. Why didn't someone tell me four squirts of Sunlight can send suds as high as the ceiling?

What husband makes his own bed? This one doesn't, or didn't. Now I do. What should have taken two minutes, took me 10. I must have circled the boudoir 12 times putting two blankets and four pillows in place, for one sleeper!

Grocery shopping. The folks at Sobey's, recognizing a greenhorn, were very helpful.

"Something you can't find?" they asked.

"Thanks, I'll be OK." I answered, not realizing the store would soon close at 10.

I purchased eight items, all large size, only to discover, on returning home, all were too big to store in the fridge, cupboard and freezer.

Vacuuming looks so simple. Until you try it, and try it and try it. Every time I opened a door, a volley of leaves floated in. Finally, out of desperation, I used a broom.

Jean has a paper route. But it's not convenient to handle when confined to a hospital. So I added it to the three I already have.

Unfortunately, I had to travel the distance twice because I forgot to read her drop-off instructions.

Saturdays are recycling days, another wifey responsibility. Little did I know the depot on a Saturday is Stouffville's version of Grand Central Station.

With volunteers Dorothy Wagg and Ann Grundy in charge, I was directed up two tiers of stairs where I deposited six bags of papers. Another first.

These little idiosyncrasies aside, with the help of friends and neighbours, I'm doing quite well.

But a paternal word of advice. Don't ever describe the feminine side of a parental team as just a housewife.

Not until you've walked in her shoes. I speak from nine days' experience.

My feet hurt.

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

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 of us make them at home. Whatever the reason, they don't last long in our freezer — especially when they're on sale. So come early and get them while they last!

Reg. \$10.95
Pkg. of 4

25% OFF THIS WEEK

OUR MARINATED FLANK STEAKS

These have been one of those mainstay items in our meat counter over the years. They've been so popular because (a) they're so quick to prepare (b) they store well so you don't have to use them immediately (c) they're really delicious — they have that essential flavour of beef and (d) they're relatively inexpensive — you can't serve steak this good as reasonably as this.

Now, although we sell the vast majority of these marinated, plain ones are available as well.

— We may limit quantities —

Reg. \$9.95/lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI!

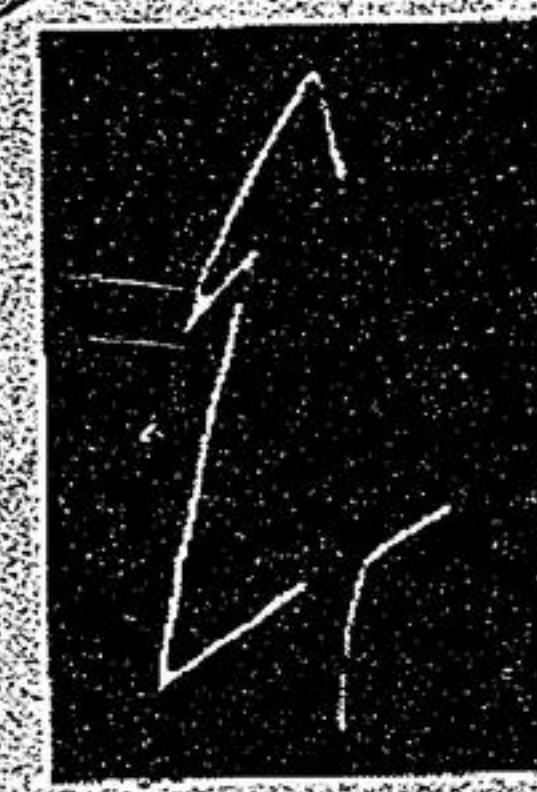
Apart from the vegetable medley which is mentioned elsewhere, there will be two more feature options for dinner.

We'll be making.....

TILAPIA, BAKED WITH A PECAN CRUST Reg. \$14.99/lb

— and —
GNOCCHI, pan fried with shiitake mushrooms, with grain-fed, boneless chicken breasts dressed in a light lemon-thyme chicken broth. Reg. \$12.99/lb

Both of these items will be featured at **25% OFF THIS WEEK**



sprucewood handmade cookie co.

ANDY BOY BROCCOLI

We'll have a feature price this week on this great broccoli. By grabbing one of these as you go by, you'll mitigate any extravaganzas that might occur at the bakery counter. From California. **99¢ EACH**

WHAT'S BAKING! THIS WEEK!

SAGE & ONION SAUSAGES

We'll be featuring our old-fashioned Sage & Onion Sausages. This is an English recipe going back a long way. That they're still with us is a testament to how good they are. They're mild and have no garlic, if that's important to you. These can either be oven roasted, or grilled to perfection.

Reg. \$3.99/lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— FLORIDA — GRAPEFRUITS

After a long-seeming hiatus, Florida citrus is now back for the season. Oranges and grapefruits are available, but grapefruits are the item of the moment. They're now a good large size and they've come into sweetness.

Size 32's or 27's from Florida

99¢ EACH

LOTS OF PUMPKINS!

The truck has arrived with lots of pumpkins — and more coming. We've got some small guys for a buck, the bigger ones are from \$5.00 to \$10.00 each, but alas, no gigantic one this year, hopefully next.

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP!

With the number of people under the weather right now (and this would include most of my family), I feel that I'm doing my civic duty by prescribing our chicken soup. I'm not a doctor, but I know this feels good to the palate and the body going down. Get lots of rest, too!

Reg. \$5.99
Serves 3 to 4

25% OFF THIS WEEK

DIP! EGGPLANT!

I'm indifferent to eggplant with two notable exceptions. The first is my friend Tina's eggplant parmesigiano, Sicilian style, and the other is the eggplant dip that we sell at the deli. It's not like eggplant as you would know it — it's elevated to a higher level in my opinion. I use some toasted manoucher baguette as a dipper, but our store is full of alternatives. What could be better in the evening — hockey, baseball — and my dip.

Reg. \$2.09/100 g

25% OFF THIS WEEK

VEGETABLE MEDLEY 1/3

From our Deli Salad Counter we'll have our Vegetable Medley — it's all good — and it's dressed with an Italian accent.

Reg. \$1.29/100 g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

A NEW RAINCOAST... HUNGRY!

A new flavour of Raincoast Crisp has arrived — spicy sundried tomato. I sat and ate a few and I'll tell you they have a bit of lingering heat — but that's perfect with a nice cool dip, like our eggplant for example.

We'll have a sampling of Sprucewood nibbles this Friday and Saturday. It'll be OK to eat up!

All these items will be priced **25% OFF THIS WEEK**



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY OCTOBER 29TH
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