

# Pass the haggis and toast Robbie

**H**aggis. It's a love-hate relationship.

Most Scots love it, or say they do. Most Welsh, English and Irish hate it, or say they do.

As for Canadians, in true Canuck fashion, we prefer to say nothing for fear of hurting the feelings of relatives from the land of the heather.

For someone like myself, half Scot and half Welsh, I should take it or leave it.

Strangely enough, I enjoy it as much as any Highlander who ever have skirled a pipe or tossed a caber. Truth is, I can consume a ton (well, maybe a pound) of the stuff with no ill effects.

With the birth date of Robbie Burns, Scotland's national poet, fast approaching, (Jan. 25), haggis will be a popular item on many tables.

So it was on Saturday, the 13th annual Burns Supper, hosted by Stouffville's St. James Presbyterian Church and held, for a first time, at Parkview Village.

The event was sold out, with 160 people attending. To satisfy the desires of so-called haggis lovers, 19 pounds of the product was required with nary a nibble left over.

Still, some were content to pass it by, ignoring the fact the taste is not unlike that of dressing from a Christmas turkey.

Instead of delicious innards from a fowl, they foolishly refer to haggis as grossly foul innards, giving the delicacy, in my opinion, an unjust rapport. However, you be the judge.

My computer dictionary describes the haggis make-up as follows: "Haggis is a traditional Scottish dish. Although there are many recipes, it is normally made from the heart, liver and lungs of a sheep, minced with onions, oatmeal, suet, spices and salt. It's usually boiled in a sheep's stomach for an hour."

If that descriptive should make you feel a little queasy, please read on:

"Most modern commercial haggis is prepared in a casing rather than an actual stomach."

That may help.

In the United States and, presumably, Canada, food safety laws forbid the sale of animal lungs for human consumption.

However, true to a persistent spirit, Scot descendants have been known to engage in haggis smuggling to obtain the real thing.

But why the conjecture? If one wants an honest answer, then ask an honest Scot. This I did and here was his reply:

"A haggis is a small three-legged Scottish Highland creature that has legs on one side shorter than on the other. This makes him or her well adapted to run around hills at a steady altitude without



**Roaming Around**

with Jim Thomas

ascending or descending. However, a haggis can be easily captured by running around the hill in the opposite direction."

The haggis, as obtained by Stouffville's Jim Paterson for Saturday's dine-out, was purchased from a store called But 'n Ben in Scarborough.

It's made on location. Churches, (at least Scottish churches), are accorded a special rate - \$5 per pound.

"There's good and bad haggis," Jim admits. Saturday's specialty was richly seasoned with spice, the best Scottish money could buy. Following its return to Stouffville, it was cooked by Doris Campbell.

Rob Storie of Scarborough piped the 19-pound morsel into the auditorium. He later addressed the haggis with a Gaelic vernacular I cannot repeat.

Paul Gardiner valiantly held the dish, dangerously close to the cutting edge of Mr. Storie's menacing knife.

Other than a trace of frayed nerves, no injuries resulted.

Scotch whiskey was replaced by Adam's ale.

While Jan. 25 will see haggis prepared and served at several Whitchurch-Stouffville locations, there may be private residents possessing sufficient culinary skills to produce their own. If so, the following recipe could help: One sheep's stomach; one sheep's heart; one sheep's liver, half-pound of fresh suet; a three-quarter cup of oatmeal; three onions, finely chopped; one teaspoon of salt; one teaspoon of freshly ground pepper; half teaspoon of cayenne; half teaspoon of nutmeg; three-quarter cup of stock.

On second thought, perhaps a preparation so unique should be left to the pros. The Lion of Stouffville is hosting a Robbie Burns nights Jan. 25.

A similar event is planned Jan. 27 at Sleepy Hollow Golf and Country Club, hosted by Ann Milne's School of Dance. Help yourself to the haggis; try and ignore the ingredients.

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

# WHAT'S FOR DINNER!

Our frozen entree feature of the week will be our stuffed chicken breasts. We make these with our air-chilled chicken breasts (boneless) and use our sage & onion stuffing. They are then seasoned and slow-roasted — and finally, drizzled with a dijon mustard cream sauce. They're amazingly good, as you could imagine.

Reg. \$17.95  
Serves 2-3

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**

# FRESH BLUEBERRIES

I'm sure there are drawbacks to having a country the shape of Chile, but one of the benefits is having a progressive growing season as the climate shifts over the long, north-south stretch of land. What this means in this case is a long window of availability for these berries which is far beyond ours. That's why we'll have these now and for quite a while at the peak of their quality.

From Chile

**1.99** 1/2 PINT

# KOUR HAM KOLBASSA

Our venerable Kolbassa is on sale this week. It's as lean as it gets, it's full of flavour, including lots of garlic, and it's portable, which means you can take it with you wherever you go, to snack on — but it's good to share, given the garlic!

Reg. \$1.69/100g

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**

# GRAPES RED & GREEN

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

These are really good grapes. The price?

Not too bad either.....

**2.99** LB THIS WEEK

# TOMATO BASIL SOUP

We make this soup using, you guessed it, fresh tomatoes and fresh basil, the base being chicken stock. In fact, I invite you to read the full ingredient list — all good stuff! One further point: this can be served either hot or chilled, as your mood dictates.

Reg. \$5.99  
Serves 3-4

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**

# WHAT'S COOKING! AT THE DELI

In our Ready-To-Go counter we'll be making, in addition to our usual fare, a grilled vegetable lasagna using bell peppers, portabello mushrooms, asparagus, zucchini, eggplant and crumbled goat cheese with a roasted garlic tomato sauce. Also, we've prepared a slow-cooked pork dish with paprika, caraway, marjoram, lemon zest and white wine. This will be available with a rice pilaf.

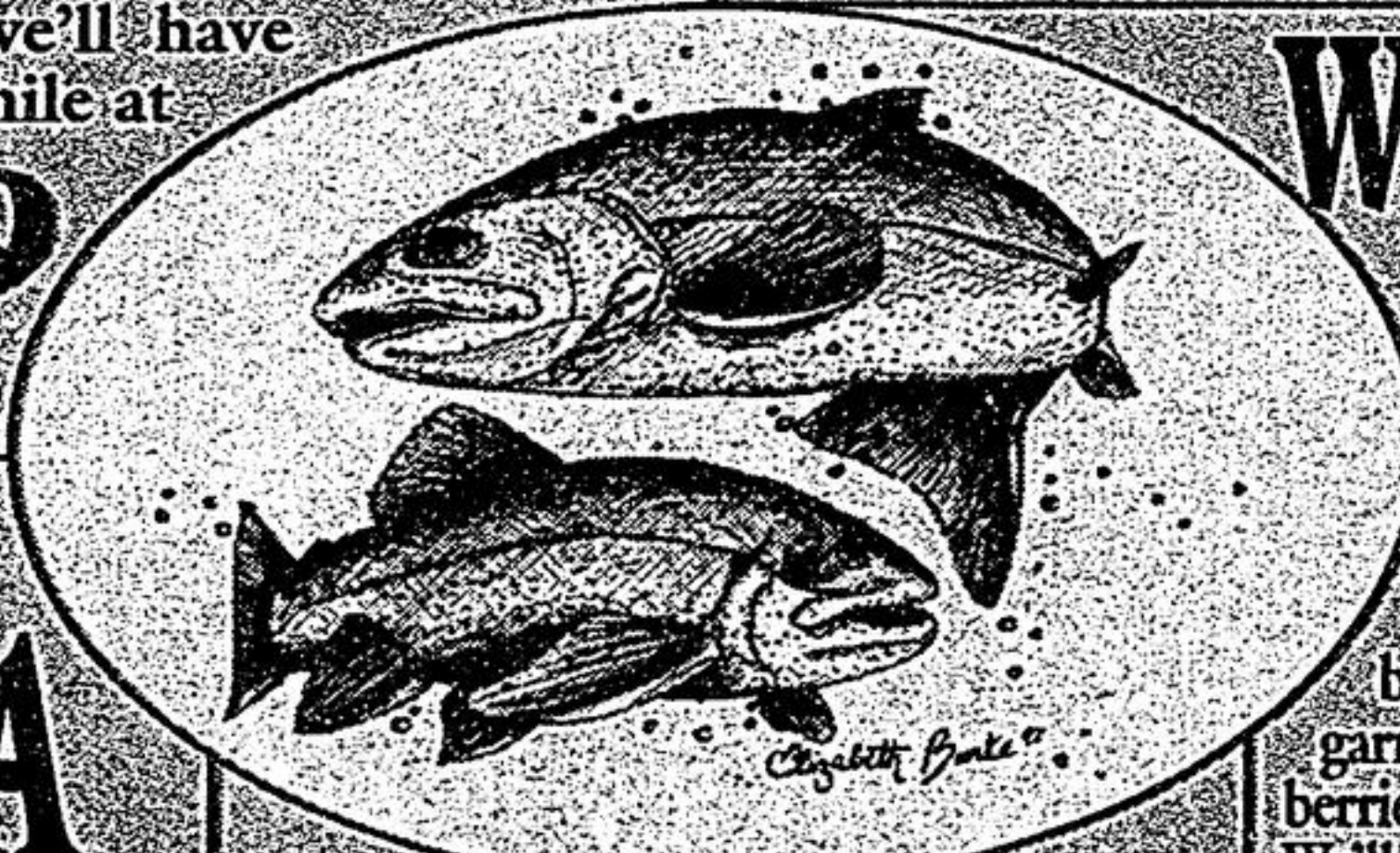
— and, my fave, a smoked chicken orzo salad!

# CUMBERLAND SAUSAGES!

These are a unique sausage from England. We use medium-ground fresh pork, a bit of lemon and orange zest, some cranberry and a touch of Port.

It's a great dinner sausage.  
Reg. \$3.99/lb.

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**



# WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK!

We've got the blues happenin' this week, both in the produce area and in the bakery — the difference being that we garnish our bakery items with fresh Chilean berries but we bake with wild Ontario blues. We'll be making.....

**Deep Dish Pies** — with a combo of Spy Apples and wild blues. They're big and full — not for the faint of heart.

Two sizes ..... **6" & 14"**  
**Blueberry-Lemon Loaves** — the breakfast of choice at my house for my 5 year old early riser and me. Reg. .... **4.99**

**Apple-Blueberry Crisps** — these are displayed in the freezer adjacent to the fourth cash desk. The beauty thing about these is that they go in your oven when your dinner comes out.

Two good things happen — your home smells amazing and appetizing, and you have a delicious warm dessert.

Not too bad. Reg. .... **10.95** ea.  
**Apple-Blueberry Pitas** — these are adult sized turnovers. Done in our puff pastry.

Not too bad either. Reg. .... **3.99** ea.  
**Wild Blueberry Scones** — this is our light and fluffy scone, made with a hint of lemon. Reg. .... **1.99** ea.

**Blueberry-Lemon Cheesecakes** We make a shortbread crust, fill them with our cheesecake mixture, swirl in lemon curd and wild blues and apply a beautiful lemon glaze.

Two sizes ..... **14" & 22"**  
**Blueberry Mousse** — We make these in our ramekins. It's an amazing mousse using fresh blues, dotted with whole blues and garnished with sugared almonds.

Reg. .... **3.99** ea.  
**Blueberry Cream Pie** — this is made with yogourt, wild blues and egg white. It's the low-cal dessert of the week (we're going to do something like this every week).

One size for all ..... **18.95** ea.

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

## STORE HOURS

This is just a little reminder that we open at **11:00 a.m. on Mondays.**

This is to allow us to fully dismantle and clean our display cases without inconveniencing our customers.

Thanks!



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