

# Life in the slow lane at our swimmin' hole

For one whose only association with swimming was doing the dog-paddle in the Little Rouge River amidst dozens of floating cow-flaps, Friday's experience was something I'll not soon forget.

I went for my first dip in Whitchurch-Stouffville's magnificent indoor pool at the Lebovic Leisure Centre

So why wait so long, you ask? After all, the facility's been there since August, 2001.

Several reasons. No. 1, I'm not a water-lover. No. 2, I'm easily embarrassed. No. 3, I wasn't sure my heart could stand the shock and No. 4, I'm not an expert swimmer.

Little did I know that, in one impulsive decision, I'd overcome all these uncertainties. Well, almost all.

First I took to the slow lane like a tired tadpole. Second, I discerned no discomfort cavorting around the change-room in my birthday suit and third, I experienced no signs of chest pains during my entire one-hour stay.

Admittedly, a Mark Tewksbury I'm not, as lifeguards Charissa Smit, Corinna Cormaggi and Jason Lock undoubtedly observed.

Other than the dog paddle and a distorted side-stroke, I merely strolled back and forth like a beginning bather, both feet firmly based on the bottom.

Regardless, all went well. I loved every minute.

While it may come as a surprise to young folks, my generation never enjoyed the luxuries of heated pools. Certainly not the indoor kind.

Truth is, we never had a bathtub till I was way past my teens. Instead, we relied on the ole swimmin' hole as a place to shed our week's dirt and grime.

And these Saturday night refreshers only occurred during summer months. The rest of the year, a screened wash-tub in the middle of the kitchen floor was an unacceptable substitute.

But this is today. Our town is blessed with a facility of which we should be proud.

And we are. Last year, 3,133 people were registered for swim lessons, totalling 63,804 visits.

In addition, there were 21,034 drop-ins, including attendees at the fitness centre. Adding everything up, 121,478 visits were recorded at the fitness/pool facility.

Amazing!

When I arrived Friday, at precisely 6:10 a.m., the centre was just emerging from a deep sleep. I was received at the front desk by Barb Armstrong, the town's fitness supervisor.

Acknowledging my tentative approach, she gave me a friendly welcome and a guided tour that concluded at the entrance to the change room.



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

The change-area is large, airy and, like the entire complex, exceptionally clean.

There are benches, hangers, showers, hair dryers and keyed lockers that actually work. A short corridor leads directly to the pool deck.

Before attempting a big-toe test of the 28.3 C water, I stood for a moment to admire the absolute beauty of the place.

Everything about it spells warmth; the colours, the temperatures and the friendliness of staff.

Through panoramic windows, I could see snow-covered roofs of neighbouring homes while a voice from an on-deck radio announced — 12C and a wind-chill of -21C. And here I was, enjoying all the benefits of a Honolulu or a Miami.

The swim schedule is such that, Monday through Sunday, there are categories to meet every age, every skill and every requirement. Fees, too, are reasonable, ranging from one visit to one year.

The atmosphere, while welcoming, has strictly enforced rules and regulations. A list of do's and don'ts are plainly posted.

More than 60 part-time lifeguards are available, many of them students. A slide, available during leisure swims, is guard protected. There are no diving boards.

Micole Ongman, program/aquatic supervisor, speaks in glowing terms of the pool/fitness centre.

"We're fortunate to have this wonderful state-of-the-art facility in our town," she said.

"Our community has embraced everything it has to offer."

Many, she says, attend regularly, either on their own or with families.

"Since opening day, enthusiasm has continued to grow as number of users continue to increase," she said.

Strange as it may seem, this eye-opening experience, made the paying of our first tax installment, the very same morning, so much easier.

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

# WHAT'S FOR DINNER! OUR CHICKEN BURGERS

There are a few choices this week, all beginning with our great chicken, not that that makes all the difference, but it goes a long way. We use soft-scald air-chilled chicken, and boneless breasts in this case. We poach them, slice them and serve them up in one of three amazing made-from-the-beginning sauces, much like you'd do at home if you had the time. The flavours available are ... lemon, orange and those amazing porcini mushrooms. The portion size allows a regular serving for three or an abundant serving for two.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

Reg. \$17.95

For this weekend we'll be making lots of our chicken burgers. These are a hit at our house. Not only do they not shrink to hockey puck size and consistency, they are nicely seasoned as well. — AND — we'll be making a selection of our chicken sausages as well. The varieties available will be sage and onion, french herbs and honey garlic. These will be available on Friday and Saturday.

Both the sausages and the burgers will be

25% OFF THIS WEEK

## DRISCOLL RASPBERRIES

Life evolves — and so does the produce business. It wasn't that long ago that you could only get Chilean berries at this time of year. Fall and winter varieties of raspberries are now available almost year round — and to me the Driscoll variety is the best. We pay a bit more to get these, but I think you'll find that they're really good value! — and delicious, too!

From California

1.99 CONTAINER

## CLAM CHOWDER

This older fashioned soup will be available in both styles, New England which is creamed based and Manhattan, which is Tomato based. Both have a following to be sure.

Reg. \$6.95 each

Serves 3 to 4

25% OFF THIS WEEK

## DOUANIER CHEESE FROM QUEBEC!

This is a semi-soft and smooth cheese which has a black line through the centre section. This cheese, which is made in Quebec, is a copy of Morbier cheese, made in France for centuries. The black line is ash, an old-time preservative for the first half of a two-day cheese making process. This tradition lives on into our time — and the flavour of this cheese lingers, not quite as long, but enough to be thoroughly enjoyable. I recommend a young white wine with this.

Reg. 4.49/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

## FLORIDA GRAPEFRUITS

Grapefruits, while they're in season, are a staple at our breakfast table. My oldest son likes his all cut in pieces, ready to go — no hard work please! My little girl (who turns 11 today) likes mom to spoon it out and feed it to her, but my young son (who's 5-3/4) wants to do it himself. He misses a lot of the fruit, but the sense of accomplishment is overwhelming. Me — I get what's left over if I'm lucky.

We've got some amazing ones for this week in an extra-large size (23.5) which will make it a lot easier for Dylan to dig it all out.

Nice and sweet too!

From Florida

99c EACH THIS WEEK

## WHAT'S COOKIN? AT THE DELI!

We'll be making some old-fashioned beef stew with root vegetables and mushrooms. This is made with stock and red wine — and it's prepared and ready to go.

We'll also be making some roasted maple-sugar pork chops. These are made from racks of pork which are cured in the maple sugar style, but less roasted rather than smoked. If you like our maple sugar ham, you'll love these.

4.99 each

## OPHALAENOPSIS ORCHIDS

These orchids are the type which have a very pretty flower which blooms one bud after another down a long reaching stem. The beauty part of these is not just the aesthetics, but the care is easy. You just water them every 8 to 10 days, place them in indirect light, keep them out of draughts (something we've learned) and enjoy them. I have made an arrangement at home with some curly willow branches (in place of the supports that the plants come with) and some kalanchoes, another plant which doesn't like a lot of water. I am on my second planting, the first lasted 3 months. Good value in my books.

## WHAT'S BAKING! THIS WEEK!

It's mango week in our little bakery, and this is what we'll be making ...

MANGO MOUSSE CUPS — These are made in our china ramekins — filled to the brim and then decorated with white chocolate and fresh mango ..... Reg. 3.99

MANGO MOUSSE CAKES — This is a white cake which has been liberally filled with mango mousse. It's decorated with a white chocolate glaze and fresh mango slices — Two sizes ..... Reg. 22.95 and 29.95 ea.

MANGO LEMON MUFFINS — These are our very popular lemon muffins baked up with chunks of ripe mangoes. Reg. 1.59 ea.

MANGO PEACH CAKES — These are our butter custard cakes with mango and peach baked in, topped with more of the same. — Two sizes ..... Reg. 14.95 and 22.95 ea.

PERSONAL SIZE PEACH PIES — These are the oval deep dish cling peach pies, nicely seasoned and enough for a serious dessert. .... Reg. 6.95 ea.

MANGO CREME HEARTS — These are made with a combo of Mango and peach with our custard in a puff — pastry heart. .... Reg. 3.49 ea.

PEACH APPLE COFFEE CAKES — This is Jaana's version of a donut — these are made in bundt forms and glazed. Moist and delicious. .... Reg. 8.95 ea.

All these items will be featured at....

25% OFF THIS WEEK



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Sat. 9:00-6:00 - Sun. 10:00-5:00

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