

Confessions of a nighthawk

A nighthawk, as described in my computer dictionary, is a bird common during summer throughout the United States and Canada.

Its winters are spent in the Bahamas and South America. Its name, the descriptive continues, is misleading since it seldom flies at night. Instead, it prefers searching for food during daylight hours.

I tell you this because, during my 56 years of labour, I've often been referred to as a nighthawk, meaning, of course, I prefer working after dark.

While this lifestyle does, in fact, differ greatly from my feathered friend, I honestly admit to coming from a long line of nighthawks.

During pre-teen years, my parents, also night hawks, allowed me to stay up past those hours when most children my age were under the covers.

Why? Because of my ability to convince them Foster Hewitt and NHL broadcasts were more important to my mental and physical well-being than 10 hours of counting sheep.

The same practice held true during my arduous journey through secondary school.

Attempts at solving the Pythagorean theorem or translating lessons from Latin into English would often take me into early-morning hours, long after most brain matter had turned to mush.

While exercising journalistic endeavours at The Tribune, little changed. I found I could accomplish more keeping company with the office mouse than when others, including customers, were walking in and out.

Following retirement from this term of duty, a security role at Newmarket's Upper Canada Mall saw me travelling home well past the stroke of twelve, still bright-eyed and bushy tailed.

The real test came five years ago when I spotted a newspaper ad that read: "Wanted, concierge for seniors' residence, 16th Avenue, Markham, Fridays and Saturdays, 12 midnight to 8 a.m."

My application was accepted. AMICA, as it's called, is a beautiful place, a half-mile from where I grew up and only 10 minutes from where I live now.

I enjoyed it there. The management, the staff, the residents and the surroundings.

However, all good things would seemingly come to an end when, in 2005, I underwent heart bypass surgery.

Although the manager agreed to keep the position open until my return, I felt this unfair.

I agreed to retire, at the same time, letting her know I'd be available should emer-



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

gencies arise. This arrangement has worked out well, for me and, hopefully, for them.

However, people keep asking: How can you stay awake during those hours? How can you deliver newspapers the following Saturday? How can you attend church the following Sunday? And so on.

The answers are simple. I'm a nighthawk.

Admittedly, working a graveyard shift can prove tedious. If the minutes control you, the hours pass slowly. If you control the minutes, the hours pass quickly. I prefer the latter.

So what's to do? First and foremost, I make sure the building's secure. This means all main floor doors are locked, only to be opened for daily newspaper deliveries or residents who, for whatever reason, choose to return after curfew.

Then, of course, there are the usual ambulance calls for residents taken ill or fire alarm signals for those burning toast.

Regardless, I must always stay close to the phones including a portable unit. I have everywhere I go. Emergencies often arise at inopportune times.

Because of this, there's zero tolerance when it comes to sleep. Management appreciates the fact a wide-awake employee is vital to a safe and sound environment. To ensure this, it has included accessories to bridge the gap between dark and dawn.

These little luxuries include a computer. On it, I can call up everything from last night's hockey scores to next week's weather.

Also available is a wide-screen, 70-channel TV. Since viewing audiences are slim at 3 a.m., everything from *Frankenstein* to *The Lone Ranger* are played, some in black and white.

Despite the fact I'm now relegated to the role of a part-time part-timer, I thoroughly enjoy this impeccable place.

It gives me an opportunity to work through a shift only a nighthawk could love.

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

MAC AND CHEESE

When Cathy asks, as she always does, "what do you want for dinner?", I invariably reply "Mac and Cheese — or anything else", hoping against hope that more often than not, I'll actually get Doreen's Mac and Cheese. It's the 'curl up in my easy chair' type of meal that is the fitting end to a long and full day.

Comfort food at its finest.
Reg. \$10.95
Serves 3 to 4 (or 1 Evan)

25% OFF THIS WEEK

CORNED BEEF

In keeping with our Irish theme, we'll be making copious amounts of our corned beef for this week. To make this we use brisket points that have been well-trimmed, cured and seasoned in the old-time way. They're ready to cook. If your wish is to make corned beef and cabbage, we'll not only have the recipe available, we'll give you the cabbage as well!

Reg. \$5.99 lb.

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!

OVERRIPE QUARTS

2.99 QUART

GUINNESS G-SAUSAGES

These sausages have a stout flavor that goes with just about anything — including a little more Guinness to wash them down!

Reg. \$3.99 lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK



GUINNESS DRAUGHT

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI!

We'll be cooking Irish Stew this week. Although there are many versions of this, the best that we have found includes lamb, sweet onions, potatoes and leeks.

We'll also be making some Irish Soda Bread. It's like a dense scone, perfect for dipping into your Irish Stew.

And lastly, we'll be making some back ribs which have been cooked in Guinness. These can be had with either of two neat BBQ sauces, one which is pineapple paprika and the other apple-vanilla.

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

PHONE ISSUES

We've had some phone issues of late. If you've had trouble getting us on the phone, we sincerely apologize. The good news is — all's well now!

HOT CROSS BUNS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

- but it is green and really very good. Reg. \$3.99 Ea.
- GREEN CUPCAKES** - fully loaded with all the trimmings. \$2.49 Ea.
- BAILEY'S CHEESECAKES** - these begin with a shortbread crust, then Bailey's flavoured cheesecake with some dark chocolate and finally Bailey's whipped cream. *Mmmm...*
- Two sizes \$14.95 and \$22.95
- SHAMROCK COOKIES** - we'll be making them in two formats — the very large ones that you need to hold with two hands are \$2.99 Ea.
- while the containers of 24's are \$14.99 Ea.
- ST. PATRICK'S CAKES** - this is our vanilla cake made with green frosting topped with a shamrock and green crystal sugar. \$14.95 and \$22.95
- Also, two sizes
- LIME CURD TARTS** - we make these with chocolate whipped cream.

— and, all these items will be featured this week at.....

25% OFF WHILE THEY LAST

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY MARCH 18TH

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

www.thevillagegrocer.com

