

Capturing a life on paper

Often, sons and daughters have good intentions when it comes to recording events involving parents.

But they procrastinate until it's too late.

Markham historian, the late John Lunau, repeatedly told me: "Put it down on paper and do it today. Tomorrow may never come."

It didn't. My mother died in 1987; my dad in 1990.

While I remember bits and pieces of what they said, the personal significance of two lives well lived is lost. For me, there are no tomorrows.

I say this after obtaining *Conversations With My Parents*, by George Reesor of McCowan Road in Stouffville.

It's priceless. Mr. Reesor wrote the book by visiting his parents, Amos and Ada, when they lived at Parkview clusters and later Parkview Home. Following these talks, often about specific events, George would frame pictures in his mind, then put them in story form.

The result? Thirty-seven pages of factual and folksy country tales, certain to intrigue the most obdurate of readers.

Mr. Reesor, the author, was born at Lot 2, Conc. 5 in Scarborough, a property maintained through four generations including grandfather Thomas, father Amos and, now, son Dale. He attended Hillside Public School.

Because his help was needed on the farm, he never advanced past Grade 8. However, 22 years later, he enrolled at Richmond College, graduating in 1978 with a bachelor of arts degree in English and history.

"The first college year was cultural shock," Mr. Reesor recalls, "but I grew to absorb and appreciate everything I learned."

It was Emmerson McDowell, part-time pastor at Steeles Avenue Mennonite Church, who suggested Mr. Reesor publish his parents' memoirs in book form.

From 1988 to his father's passing in 2003, Mr. Reesor visited his parents regularly, sometimes daily.

"Whatever story they'd tell, I'd return home and write it down," he says.

Ada died March 2, 2007. She was 100. Amos was 101.

The book's design, all volunteer, was completed by Del Wall of Ajax, a fellow parishioner at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church. Photos were obtained from family albums.

"I couldn't have done it without him," Mr. Reesor said.

Large size type makes it easy to read.

The stories are, as Mr. Reesor describes them, "glimpses of family and community life in the early part of the 20th century."



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

They tell of:

- Amos and Ada's 1927 wedding at the home of the bride's parents, Elias and Mary Barkey;

- their honeymoon trip to Lancaster, Penn. in a Model T Ford and how they had to back up steep hills so gas would flow into the carburetor;

- Amos' first farm tractor, a 10-18 Case with an auxiliary fuel tank mounted on the side, and;

- a fishing trip when young Amos arrived home at 4 a.m.

"The following day, father was forced to walk behind the roller to keep from falling asleep," Mr. Reesor writes.

Then there was preacher Joe Wismer of Vineland who, on occasions, ministered at Markham. One time, writes Mr. Reesor, in the midst of a message, his false teeth worked loose and flew across the pulpit.

"He caught them in mid-air, clamped them back in his mouth and continued on with his sermon."

Old order Mennonite ladies, writes Mr. Reesor, often dressed so much alike, it was sometimes difficult for husbands to tell their wives apart.

His father related the story of one couple travelling home from church by horse and buggy. Said the woman: "This isn't our horse." Said the man: "You're not my wife."

Markham's George Butterfield was a mechanical genius. No lock could defy his skill.

On one occasion, Mr. Reesor writes, the staff at the Bank of Nova Scotia couldn't open the vault. The manager called on Mr. Butterfield.

In minutes, the problem was solved. However, the bank manager refused to pay the \$10 charge. So Mr. Butterfield slammed the vault door shut and demanded \$100.

These are only a few of the humorous anecdotes contained in this walk down memory lane.

Copies (\$23 each) are available by calling 905-640-2118.

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

PORK BACK RIBS

We'll have our back ribs on sale this week at the meat counter — and hopefully we'll have enough. I say this because we've run out of the meat feature a bit early the last couple of weeks.

What makes our back ribs so good? First, we buy more marbled pork — that streakiness makes them more tender and juicy. Secondly, we don't have that insipid little tail hanging from the one end (you would normally pay full price for it if you shopped elsewhere). Thirdly, our pork is not "seasoned", which means that it's not cut from pork loins which have been injected with water and phosphate to make them juicier (just imagine the thinking behind that) and lastly, our price is very competitive because we cut our own pork.

So think ribs this week — perhaps with our Montgomery Inn Sauce — or any other.

We have lots to choose from!

They'll be good!
Reg. \$8.95/lb

25% 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 April 5th

INDIAN RIVER GRAPEFRUITS

We bought some beauty dark red grapefruits — size 32, which is large. They're full of juice and at their best.

From Florida

2 FOR 1.00

While Supplies Last!

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI!

Among the myriad of dishes we'll be making, there will be a slow-roasted boneless Ontario lamb leg which has been pierced with lemon thyme, rosemary and garlic and then seasoned with New Zealand flaky sea salt. We'll be serving it with creamy polenta which has been seasoned with good olive oil, more fresh herbs and plenty of parmigiano reggiano cheese.

And speaking of parmesan, we'll have a deal happening on the good parmesan (reggiano) of course, both in the chunk and in freshly grated tubs.

It will be
and coming soon, one of my other faves, Lemon Chicken.

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUTSIDE!

The sidewalk out front is filling up quickly. We have lots and lots of beautiful hydrangea in large, medium and small size, including some white mediums. Once you've nursed these through to Mother's Day, you can plant them outside and you'll find that they're a very faithful — and beautiful — perennial. Also for Easter, we've got some shallow 10" bowls of kalanchoes. They are multi-coloured and will bloom for weeks and weeks. And lastly, we have the market cornered on pussywillows and decorative twigs and branches. Pansies will arrive soon.

the VILLAGE GROCER
QUALITY FOODS

BUY A HAM FROM US! — YOU'LL BE HAPPY —

We've made hams in our business for the last 20 years — we just weren't ready for that 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 poor stove roasting two hams at a time, day and night. In the ensuing years we added ovens — to the point where 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 fully finished product. What have we learned over the years?

The short answer is: don't change a thing! The recipe, the technique, the cure, the seasoning — none of that has changed. Our customers evidently appreciate this, because if you took a poll let's say for the occasion of Easter — you'd be amazed at how far people come for our hams. If you've never had a hand-made ham, you'll be amazed at the texture, the tenderness and the flavour — qualities which made our 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 **6⁵⁰ lb.**
- Boneless Black-Forest Ham — Whole or Half **6⁵⁰ lb.**
- Traditional Bone-In Smoked Easter Ham **2⁹⁹ lb.**

— Its Best to Order ~ 905-940-0655 —

CHIPWAGON DAY

Back when I was a young student at MDHS, the highlight of my week was every Thursday when the Reesor ladies (Mabel and Ruby I think) made steamed hot dogs on steamed buns with fresh cut fries. This was the only subject that I was good at! I wasn't alone in loving these because on that day the line-up was huge. To make the story short, we'll be making homemade fries and steamed dogs on this Saturday from 11:00 till 3:00. An order of fries, a steamed dog and an ice cold coke will be **\$4⁹⁹** all of which goes to the UNIONVILLE SKATING CLUB to help out.

See you Saturday!

OUR NEXT AID WILL BE SATURDAY!

THE HOSPITAL NEWS

As you have been forewarned, Kevin Thistle (of Angus Glen) and I have been appointed yet again co-chairs of the auction committee for the upcoming Hospital Gala.

This note is to let you know that (a) the event is currently sold out and (b) we have put together not 1, not 4, but 6 different Mystery Packages, the themes of which will be: a golf package (of course), a personal Sports Bar package, a trip to Paris with a cooking course at a beauty chateau, a forgiveness package if you've been less than good at home, a nine (holes of golf!) and dine (barbeque) package for you and 35 of your friends, capped off by some after-dinner excitement — this just for starters. Not only this, there will be a chance to win a beauty Toyota which has been very kindly donated by Don Valley North Lexus Toyota. Fair warning, get your bank accounts topped up — we'll need your help to pull this off!

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK!

This is pecan week in the bakery, and we'll be making.....

MAPLE-OATMEAL-PECAN SCONES these are made with maple syrup, praline nuts and oatmeal, finished with a maple glaze. It's more of a dessert than a breakfast treat to be honest **\$1⁴⁹ Ea.**

PRALINES and CREAM CAKES this is a chocolate sweet-dough filled with a white chocolate cream, praline nuts, caramel and dark chocolate, piled high with even more good stuff. We make them in two sizes, **\$10⁹⁵ & \$24⁹⁵ Ea.**

— Please eat responsibly —
PECAN SQUARES this is a chewy square made with a shortbread base and rich pecan filling. This is a room temperature item **\$2⁴⁹ Ea.**

PECAN PIES we make these southern style, in two sizes **\$5⁹⁵ & \$12⁹⁵ Ea.**

CARAMEL-PECAN COOKIES these are so so habit forming, I find that it's the whole pack or nothing **\$7⁴⁹ Ea.**

All these pecan delights will be priced at..... **25% OFF WHILE THEY LAST**

also, in case that flour is a problem for you. We'll be introducing a flour-less chocolate cake this week. Take a bite **\$12⁹⁵ Ea.**

FRESH TILAPIA

We sell these fillets in our fish counter either au naturel or rolled with a stuffing of onions, bell peppers, butter and herbs.

it will be **20% OFF THIS WEEK**
Reg. \$9.95/lb

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Our frozen dinner entree this week is Pot Roast in Gravy. These are made with blade eye roasts, sliced and packed with enough gravy for your mashed potatoes the natural accompaniment, it seems to me. This entree will serve at least 3 and quite likely 4.

Reg. \$14.95/ea. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY APRIL 1ST

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

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