

# Greetings from our craziest corner

**I**t's mine, all mine. My very own crossing guard site. It arrived Jan. 14, gift-wrapped in new-fallen snow and tied with ribbons of smiles.

The location is Glad Park Avenue and Millard Street, within a five-minute walking distance from our house. Three minutes by bicycle.

At age 78, who could ask for anything more?

While the town insists on paying for this 'service', I'd gladly do it for free. I love the job that much and have from the start, even as a part-timer.

In all honesty, I did obtain considerable experience while holding down a security post at Newmarket's Upper Canada Mall.

There, however, I dealt mainly with traffic. Here, children are a top priority. There's a difference, a big difference.

*While the town insists on paying for this 'service', I'd gladly do it for free.*

While the call from Lori Boyd of the public works department came as a surprise, I knew something was in the wind when Mayor Wayne Emmerson said a fifth cross-over had been approved by council and a guard would be needed as soon as signs were up and pavement markings complete.

I was also aware Councilor Suzanne Hilton had been working diligently behind the scenes, responding to residents' requests.

Operations manager Denis Chartrand added to my excitement, suggesting everything would be ready "within a few weeks".

But ready for who? He didn't say, leaving the crucial call to the department's executive secretary.

And would you believe? It came in the form of a question.

"We'll be needing a crossing guard at Glad Park and Millard some time in the new year. Would you be interested?" she asked.

Interested? If I could have extended a wrap-around hug with my telephone cord, I would have. But the line was three blocks short.

"Am I?" I spluttered. "Just tell me when".

"When the snow goes and the pavement's marked," she said, "some time in the new year."

A few days later she called again and agreed everything was a go. One excited Stouffville senior was on the job, 15 minutes early.

On an interim basis, I've honed my skills at every crossing site in town including Stouffer Street and Main



## Roaming Around with Jim Thomas

and Ninth Line and Elm, both training centres.

There, under the watchful eyes of Sharon Norton and Elwood Pattenden, I immersed myself in a four-day crash course.

Now I'm on my own. As with anything new, I had reservations. Such as, how will children react to someone strange? How will the parents react to someone old?

At the same time, well-meaning friends did nothing to calm my fears.

"You'll freeze to death," some said. "You'll get killed," warned others.

Regardless, I didn't allow the nay sayers to deter my enthusiasm.

And I'm glad, for I love every minute.

The students, about 40, twice daily, are wonderful. Monday through Friday, their smiles light up my life.

While initially hesitant to welcome a strange face under a strange toque, they're slowly warming up to the fact my only mission is to ensure their safety. Hopefully, I'll win them over.

Parents, some pushing baby carriages or holding wee ones in tow, were welcoming from the start, even to the point of expressing thanks in sincere and sensitive tones.

And motorists, yes those oft-maligned motorists, have been terrific too, displaying a patience I wouldn't have thought possible.

*I wake up every morning with renewed vim, vigour and vitality*

And politeness. Most offer waves.

"Welcome to Stouffville's craziest corner," said one woman Friday. "We've waited a long time for this."

"The pleasure's all mine," I replied. And it is.

I wake up every morning with renewed vim, vigour and vitality, remembering how, someone once said, life begins at 40.

For me, it's 78.

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

# OUR POT ROASTS

We'll be tying up lots of these beauties for this week. This is 'homegrown' Ontario beef from the Fergus area, and boneless blade roasts in particular. We section them a bit before rolling them, to remove any large wedges of fat. The cooking is in your court, but you're not defenseless — we'll have copies of Doreen's tried and true pot roast recipe for you.

Reg. \$4.99 lb.

**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**

# VEGETARIAN VEGETABLE SOUP

We're featuring this soup for this particular week for its thinning qualities, given the probability of you not being able to resist at our bakery counter. It's not too often that something

this good for you also tastes as good as this does. **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Reg \$5.99

# FRESH SALMON SALAD

This week in our Deli we'll be whomping up great quantities of our doted-upon fresh salmon salad. It's made with gently-poached Atlantic Salmon, fresh lemon juice, celery and onions, and pure mayonnaise .. Heaven on a fork!

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**

# MIDNIGHT MAGIC

You may not know that, after-hours, when yours truly is peacefully snoring away, two kitchen magicians are toiling away in the Village Grocer kitchen, perfecting their own personal culinary creations. It is Mary K. who fills our cold counter every day with her beautiful and delectable single-size salads, each type the result of much recipe research and imaginative fine-tuning. And Stan the man it is who rolls all our yummy wraps — AND he whips up the most amazing tartar sauce to be found this side of the Atlantic. It's different; it's better! (Must be the red onion) — Pick some up with your trout.

**3.49 CONTAINER**

# JUST A TINY HEADS UP

The Hospital Gala will be officially launched at our store on February 6th. The theme will be Italian in nature and there will be some **SPECIAL** food to nibble on, including CHRISTINE CUSHING'S new PASTA SAUCE, and more than likely she'll be here in person. Watch for Gala notices in the Economist.

# RAINBOW TROUT FILLETS

Let's hope that we do better with the supply of these than we did with the Butterfish last week ... our apologies for that. The Rainbow will be available au naturel or with our mustard, lemon and dill seasoning. **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Reg. \$9.95 lb.

# 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**

# HANKERING FOR SPRING?

To my mind, nothing says 'Spring' more beautifully than the simple tulip ... and then there are the not-so-simple 'parrot' and 'double' varieties, too. Give your spirits — and your home — a real pick-me-up, with a bunch (or 2 or 3) of perfectly beautiful Spring tulips!

# SPICY TEXAN SAUSAGES

These sausages are actually not so much hot as full of flavour. They're great dinner sausages roasted or, if your BBQ is still going, even a notch better grilled on a bun.

Made with pork.

Reg. \$3.99 lb.

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**

# WHAT'S BAKING? THIS WEEK ...

The theme this week is lime, with a bit of coconut thrown in for good measure.

We'll be making ...

**COCONUT-LIME CHEESECAKES** — these are made in Graham crumb and toasted coconut crusts filled with our cheesecake mixture swirled with fresh lime curd. They are then glazed and finally garnished with toasted coconut.

We'll be making two sizes. .... \$14.95 & \$22.95

**COCONUT MACAROONS** — these are chewy, moist macaroon cookies which are 1/2 dipped in chocolate.

We'll have the smaller drops in containers ..... \$7.95 Ea.

and we'll have large cookies, also 1/2 dipped for ..... \$1.99 Ea.

**COCONUT-LIME CUPCAKES** — fluffy white coconut cupcakes iced with our white icing which is jacked-up with a bit of lime zest

Reg. .... \$2.49 Ea.

**LIME CURD TARTS** — made with our flaky pastry shells filled with tart lime curd and garnished with plenty of whipped cream and a sprinkling of toasted coconut. Reg. .... \$1.99 Ea.

All these items will be featured at ..... While supplies last!

**25% OFF THIS WEEK**



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