

Confessions of a decorated carrier

Newspaper carrier jobs aren't meant for men. At least not for men approaching three score years and twenty.



Roaming Around

It's kids' work, boys and girls aged 10 to 16. It's an opportunity for them to appreciate the value of a dollar, enjoy a little spending money and maybe open a bank account.

Dozens do it. You see them every Thursday and Saturday, Sun-Tribune bags slung over sagging shoulders; bundles hauled in four-wheeled carts and wagons.

Give these pint-sized entrepreneurs credit. Their task isn't easy, particularly during the Christmas season when a Thursday paper can include up to 30 advertising inserts.

While fun at first, enthusiasm usually wanes once students hit their teens. By then, it's no longer a cool thing to do. So a kid brother or sister takes on the task.

So it was at our house, except daughter Mary-Lynn had no younger siblings on which to shed her chore. So who accepted this twice-weekly responsibility? You guessed it - dear old dad.

That was 18 years ago. Initially, it was only two routes and 80 papers. Now, it's four routes and 190. If the walking's good, it takes five hours. If not, the tour of duty can continue till dark.

"Why do you do it?" people ask when I stumble into Tim Hortons, steam pouring from under my tuque and feet feeling like chunks of ice.

"Need the exercise," I reply while consuming a hot chocolate and three jelly-filled donuts.

In all honesty, there's more to this labour of love than wanting to shed a few pounds. A lot more.

First, I like the people I meet, children as well as adults. All are friendly. Some like to stop and talk.

Secondly, I look on the job as a service. Folks enjoy receiving their local paper, particularly when it's delivered to their doors. If they're happy, so am I.

But the work does have its drawbacks. As mentioned, the weather can be brutal. This winter's been one of the worst.

Dogs, too, can pose a problem. Regardless of

size, I take no chances, particularly when trespassing on rottweiler turf.

In 18 years, I can recall only three complaints. One woman gave me a dressing down for walking across her lawn. This is a no-no, especially in the spring. A man became upset when I stepped on his cat's tail. I failed to see the feline until too late. Last, but not least, I unthinkingly opened a front door and a budgie flew out. Fortunately (for me), the owner retrieved the flighty bird in a back yard tree.

Admittedly, I couldn't maintain four routes without help from son Barry. His assistance is appreciated Thursdays when I'm performing crossing-guard duties.

My reason for telling you this relates to a phone call received last week from Carolyn Norman, circulation supervisor for the Sun-Tribune and its sister paper, the Markham Economist & Sun.

"You've been chosen 'Carrier of the Month,'" she said cheerfully. "The choice is based on length of service; good verifications and, best of all, customer satisfaction. Congratulations."

"Thanks so much," I replied. "So when can I expect delivery of my new Corvette?"

"Sorry," she responded, "but you'll be treated to dinner at Stouffville's Boston Pizza. You'll also receive a framed plaque and a laminated copy of the announcement to be published in Saturday's paper."

I thanked her again. And I thank you, my customers, for your support.

However, if sometime in the future, you should discover a Sun-Tribune lodged in your eavestrough, please call my home and not the office. I'd hate to ruin a good record.

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

— OUR — CORNED BEEF

I'm thinking that this is a good time for Corned Beef and Cabbage, which would be one of my fave meals. Long ago I used to work downtown (believe it or not, I had an office job) not far from 'The Senator' restaurant, which though a bit dated at the time, served an amazing Corned Beef and Cabbage, this when 'nouvelle cuisine' was all the rage. I made whatever excuse I could to eat there...and when they saw me coming in, they just brought the plate automatically. The beauty part here is that we make the Corned Beef in the old-fashioned way, pretty much the same way my dad taught me, also a long time ago. About a year ago we reduced the salt level a bit, the result being that the meat takes a little longer to cure, but more fully absorb the spices. What we're doing this week is a feature price on the Corned Beef...and we'll get you a FREE Cabbage to go with it...and...Doreen's recipe to make, you guessed it, Corned Beef and Cabbage.

Regular \$5.99 lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— OUR BEEF — BOURGIGNONNE

In our big kitchen, we've been making copious amounts of our beautiful Beef Bourguignonne. To me, this is big-time comfort food...something that we all need nowadays. It's great with mashed or scalloped potatoes, even egg noodles or spaetzle....

all you need to do is thaw and warm it, all the work's been done. Serves 3-4. Reg. \$17.95

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— GUINNESS — SAUSAGES

If there's one week to serve these, this is it! These are made with coarse-ground pork, some apple, a few nice mellow spices, and a good amount of the beer that made the land of St Patrick famous. The weather is a bit changeable yet, so grilling might not be an option, but if it is, that's when these are at their best.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

IRISH STEW WITH GUINNESS

This is changed-up with more than just the inclusion of Guinness. We'll be using beef cubes simmered with root veggies, served up in a brown Guinness gravy. Serves 1 4x5 foil pkg. **\$ 5.99 THIS WEEK**

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUTSIDE!

Greg, our flower guy, will be hard at work in our indoor planting shed making beauty indoor mixed bulb gardens. Hydrangeas are also starting to arrive, and shamrocks too! Coming Thursday will be a shipment of indoor/outdoor containers which you or we can plant for the first-of-the-season colour.

BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER SALAD

We'll be making very large bowls of this amazing salad every day (maybe even twice a day) at the deli this week. Remember that veggies are good for you. Reg. \$1.49/100g

1/2 PRICE THIS WEEK

NICE BUNS!

This would be HOT CROSS BUNS, of course. We get these going about this time of the year because they make spring worth living...in a gastronomic sense. They're plump...as buns should be, full of fruit and ready for a bit of butter. You can get individuals or 6 packs at our Bakery, until at least Easter and probably beyond.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

IF WE'VE GONE FISHING!

We've arranged a feature on Pacific Snapper this week. This is a fish with a delicate, sweet, nutty flavour; it's lean with a medium-firm texture. At this time of the year, they can either come from our West coast or from the American one. We'll have recipes to help out... **\$ 8.95 LB THIS WEEK**

POTATO-LEEK SOUP

This is one of the soups that we make in our store kitchen and hence, it's fresh rather than frozen. It's displayed in the little cabinet across from the milk, along with any of our other 'soups of the day'. I had this for dinner last night along with a few slices of the Bavarian Light Rye that we sell...and I can report that everything was amazing, except for the hockey game that I was watching. It's nice and filling and really full of flavour. Serves 2 hockey fans or 4 normal folk. Reg. \$7.99

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— SAUSAGE ROLLS — GUINNESS

We've made our sausage rolls with a twist for St. Pat's! Instead of the more mild-mannered English Breakfast Sausage as the 'meat-of-the-matter', we've used our Guinness Sausages made in the smaller size. The result is a sausage roll with a bit more of a gregarious character, very fitting for the occasion. These will also be available on feature up to and including next Tuesday. Package of 10. Reg. \$6.99.....

25% OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S BAKING! — THIS WEEK —

We'll be doing our St Patrick's Day baking for this weekend because we like to be ahead of the curve of life.....and, the publication dates of the Economist don't coincide with the real date of the event. St. Patrick's Day takes on new significance this year because 'THE EMERALD ISLE' happens to be the hospital Gala theme this year and the launch is on St. Patrick's Day in our store. Anyway, we'll be baking.....

BAILEY'S CHEESECAKE.....these have a shortbread crust, lots of real Bailey's in the cheesecake part and a crown of Bailey's-spiked whipped cream.....which is real as well! We make two sizes of this..... \$14.95 and \$22.95

ST. PADDIES CUPCAKES.....this is either a double-chocolate cupcake (with chocolate baked in) or vanilla with vanilla icing, all decked out in the 'green theme'. \$2.49 each

BAILEY'S JELLY ROLLS.....these are made with fluffy white cake, painted with a layer of chocolate ganache, then filled with Bailey's whipped cream. Reg.....\$15.95 each

ST. PATRICK'S CAKE.....this is a white Bailey's cake with a hint of coffee, then filled with Bailey's cream and topped with a caramel-Bailey's icing. One size. Reg..... \$17.95 each

SHAMROCK MERINGUES.....these are large green Shamrock-shaped meringues drizzled with chocolate. These are flourless, should it matter. Reg.....\$2.49 each

LIME CURD TARTS.....these are homemade lime curd in hand-shaped tart shells topped with green whipped cream. Reg.....\$2.49 each

IRISH CREAM PUFFS.....these are made with our rich and delicious puff pastry filled with Bailey's custard, then drizzled with chocolate and caramel. Reg.....\$2.99 each

.....all these items will be featured this week, up to and including next Tuesday, at

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