

A Canadian we all can be proud of

With Whitchurch-Stouffville's growing population, families, some of whom we'll never know, have taken up residence here.

Whether driving rural roads or subdivision streets, you've probably wondered what extraordinary people live behind neatly paved drives and glowing porch lights.

I have. For, recognized or not, most have achievements to share, talents to display and stories to tell.

To discover what lies beyond the quiet demeanor of an absolute stranger, all it sometimes takes is a gracious greeting, a sociable smile or an outstretched hand.

I discovered this just last week. While searching for a house in Stouffville's east end, I spotted the small beam of a flashlight near a residential entrance. I stopped, thinking this might possibly be the house for which I was looking.

"I'm Jim Thomas," I said. "I'm searching for number so-and-so, but, because it's dark, the address is difficult to see."

"I'm Oleg Borkowitchenko," the gentleman replied. "This is the right place. Come in."

I would soon discover Mr. Borkowitchenko, 87, although a modest man, is an important part of Canadian history.

Back in 1981, while a machinist with Toronto's Anderson Metal Co., he helped create what is known as the Canadarm, a 16.9-metre-long robotic attachment that was part of the space shuttle Columbia and still remains in service with subsequent crafts, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour.

This venture all came about when Canada was asked by NASA to build a shuttle remote manipulator system.

"At the time, I didn't know the reason for making it," Oleg said. "It was a secret."

He described the work as "a precision job".

"But forget me," he said, "I was only the little guy."

This 'little guy' was born in Yugoslavia. When the Germans occupied his country during the Second World War, he, along with his father,



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

mother and sister were deported to Poland.

With Germany's defeat, Oleg moved to Belgium where he worked in a coal mine. Then, in 1953, he, accompanied by his sister and brother-in-law came to Canada where Oleg re-established his skill as a lathe operator.

Starting out with a 500-pound piece of metal, Oleg perfected the Canadarm over a three-year period, ending up with a finished product weighing only 40 pounds.

On earth, it isn't able to support its own weight. However, in space, it can lift 586,000 pounds. The arm, as Oleg explains it, is just that - a metallic wrist, elbow and shoulder. There was no room for error.

"I prayed it would be perfect and it was," he said.

The Canadarm performs many roles, says Oleg. Its versatility allows astronauts to complete various maintenance duties along the space station's exterior. It can also move crew members around when they perform their space walks. To complete certain inspections, a camera is sometimes attached to the arm's wrist.

"The Canadian contribution to the international space station is a small piece with respect to the big structure," astronaut Julie Payette has said, "but an essential one."

"I saw it go up," says Oleg. "The whole world saw it. I was pleased to be a part of it. But forget me, it's Canada's contribution to the NASA project. Every Canadian should be proud."

All Canadians are proud - of Canadarm and Oleg Borkowitchenko.

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

CHILEAN SEA BASS

It's been quite a while since we've had this in the store, and the reasons for that go back a ways to the time when this was thought to be an endangered species. Upon research, Chilean Sea Bass is not a species at all, but a catch-all phrase to describe any of a number of fish, most of which are not from the bass family at all. The actual name of the fish that you would know as Chilean Sea Bass is, are you ready, 'Patagonian Toothfish'. It seems that the publicists and marketers got hold of the issue and dressed up this lowly fish a bit, then sent it off to market, with some success, to be sure. This is a fish that is best grilled or broiled once you've got it all seasoned-up. I think that the publicists were folk of little faith. Once you taste this, it doesn't matter what it's called; it's now called delicious.

\$17.95 LB THIS WEEK

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

We'll start with the amazing Pesto Couscous that we make. It's made with fresh basil, dried cranberries, diced sweet peppers, sweet onions, raisins and almonds. I had this (or something very similar) served to me in the Peller Estates Dining Room in Niagara-on-the-Lake and we loved it. There it's an appetizer, here it's a salad. One thing that I would do is serve it at room temperature if you want full flavour.

1/2 PRICE THIS WEEK

Regular \$1.59/100g and..... We'll be making some Roasted Duck Breasts with an Orange Grand Marnier Sauce. I'm thinking that this isn't for the kids, but I laugh because the last time we were in the dining room at the Frontenac in Quebec City, my young son ordered 'Canard à l'Orange' as his meal....so who knows for sure. We'll have these completely done; you'll just need to warm them.

\$5.99 EACH THIS WEEK

DELI TURKEY BREASTS

We make two styles of Deli Turkey. The first is Oven-Roasted with Herbs, and the other is Smoked. Both are made with the free-range turkeys that we handle at the holidays. Apart from starting with more delicious Turkey, we don't 'Tumble' these during the making of them, a process which 'moisture enhances' the product (ie: adds water) and at the same time enables all the various bits to stick together. What you get is nothing like the texture of turkey, and nowhere as delicious as the old-fashioned method gives you. We're all about old-fashioned, made in the more time-consuming way, and you'll love the result. How much extra does it cost? None at all, in fact. Reg \$2.99/100g

ONION SOUP

You may be forgiven for thinking that this soup is all about onions, but a glance at the ingredient panel will tell you otherwise. What you'll find there is 'beef stock, chicken stock, beer (Guinness), red wine, olive oil, butter, brandy, port, garlic, flour and spices'.....what we have here is soup with the sort of thinking that it takes to make minestrone. All of these ingredients live in happy harmony, with the result being a delicious soup. Serves 3-4, Regular \$6.99

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

The frozen entrée feature this week will be our Shepherd's Pie, which to me, is comfort food at its finest. We use our medium ground chuck, lot's of sauteed Spanish onions and lots of freshly peeled Idaho or PEI potatoes. All the work's been done; all you need to do is warm it. Serves 3-4 Reg. \$11.95

25 % OFF THIS WEEK

ROASTING CHICKEN

We're going to feature our really large Air-Chilled Chickens. To start with, these chickens run loose in really large barns...but by definition these are not free-range because they have no access to the outdoors, not that you'd want it this time of the year anyway. They eat as much or as little as they want...usually a lot.....of corn and grain. The air-chilled part refers to the de-feathering process, and after. Rather than using really hot water to remove the feathers and with them, the outside layers of skin, cooler water is used, which leaves the skin...and unfortunately the odd feather with the bird....a bit of a trade-off really....and then they are left to chill-down in circulating air rather than an ice-bath. A lot of the flavour of poultry comes from the skin, partially explaining why the anemic white chickens you see are generally flavourless....and wet from the ice-pack. Ours are dry and flavourful....and our guys usually get all the feathers before you do! These chickens average about 5lb in size, give or take, and will feed 6 people easily, and-usually more. Reg. \$3.29 lb

SAGE & ONION SAUSAGES

We've made these since we started in our little store in Markham so many years ago. Our thinking at the time was to make a sausage that tastes like our very popular stuffed pork loin, which uses my mother-in-law's old-time bread stuffing. That's the way we make this.....and it tastes just as good, for sure. If you have a problem with garlic, this would be a good choice because it's made without it. Reg. \$3.99lb

HAAS AVOCADOS

We used to promote our Avocados a lot in the past, even if sometimes we lost money on them. The type we sell is the premium grade, and if I can't get these, I usually don't get any. We normally sell size '12', which means that there is space for only 12 in a standard-sized box, making them the largest available of Haas type Avocados. These to me are the best eating type, and when ripe, have that beautiful buttery texture. Generally, the avocados on display will be fairly firm, and if you need to ripen them a bit quicker, place a couple in a brown bag for a couple of days until they turn darker and have some give to the touch. Once ripened, you can store them in your fridge for several days. Why we haven't featured these for a while is that the pricing just hasn't made it possible, but all that is changed this week. One of my hockey buddies is the importer of these, and he arranged a feature for us. Size 12's

WHAT'S BAKING!

It's a Crème Brûlée week in the bakery. It's quite a production at our place, as they are all made from scratch. If you can, just picture the spectacle of washing hundreds and hundreds of ramekins, separating by hand all the many hundreds of eggs, and arranging all the 'bain maries' of ramekins to steam so that they have just the right amount of 'jiggle'. The second part of the episode is the flaming of them, something that appeals to all the incendiary types at the counter. This involves a trip to Rona for quite a few propane refills, and to Shoppers' for some Lanacaine. I used to judge (and still do) restaurants by their renditions of this venerable dish, but alas, the pickings have been slim and uninspired of late. This wouldn't be true of our bakery though, which is awash with eggs, cream and excitement! We'll be making.....

Vanilla Bean...using real vanilla beans, which happen to leave a little bit of dark bean speckles at the bottom, in case you were wondering what that was. Grand Marnier..... with freshly-zested oranges and Grand Marnier Liqueur. White Chocolate Raspberry.....with white chocolate chunks and fresh whole (Driscoll) raspberries. Anise... Star Anise is steeped in the cream, with micro-bits of black licorice at the bottom. Lemon Strawberry....both lemon curd and strawberry puree are swirled into the cream. Chunky Monkey....with Banana Liqueur, banana slices and dark chocolate chunks. B-52....the girls seemed to know a lot about the brand. It's with Baileys, Grand Marnier and Kahlua. Chocolate....with Dutch cocoa and dark chocolate Pumpkin....with a dollop of pumpkin and all the spices in the custard. Chai....with real Vanilla Beans and steeped Chai Tea.

.....our regular price on all Crème Brûlée is \$3.99 each, which includes a 50¢ deposit on the return of the ramekin. We will feature them this week at While supplies, and bakery staff, last.

25 % OFF THIS WEEK



Hours:
Mon. 10:00-7:00 - Tues.-Thurs. 9:00-7:00 - Fri. 9:00-7:00
Sat. 9:00-6:00 - Sun. 10:00-5:00
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