

Weekend guest stayed 17 years

Indy's gone. Our cat, a family pet for 17 years, slept away peacefully April 5. He was 18.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Orphaned while a kitten, Indy, (so-called after Harrison Ford's movie trademark Indiana Jones), wandered into the Stouffville Veterinary Clinic where our youngest, Mary-Lynn, had a part-time summer job before entering university.

The date was March 11, 1993.

While sympathetic, Dr. Gary Gall let everyone know the stray wasn't welcome - at least not permanently welcome. This prompted an emergency call.

"Please, may I bring him home? Just for the weekend, please, please, please," our daughter pleaded.

"Hang on," I replied, a husband's usual response to a household emergency, "you'll have to ask your mother."

To my surprise, wife Jean, not an avid cat-lover, sympathetically agreed. But on one condition - only for the weekend.

That was 887 weeks ago. He's been an important part of the family circle ever since.

However, the initial introduction was something less than amorous. For, in all honesty, this feline intruder was, without doubt, the scruffiest looking animal I'd ever seen. Not only was he thin and filthy, but his unkempt coat was matted with burs. He looked awful.

"Are you expecting this thing to have the run of the house?" I protested.

"Don't worry," Mary-Lynn said, "I'll clean him up."

And she did. Hours of washing, combing and brushing had him looking like the top cat his prodigal mother probably meant him to be.

We fell in love, an infatuation that continued till his dying day.

Over the past 50 years, we've had several pets. These included three dogs, two ducks, a rabbit and a canary. All became close companions. However, none could quite compare with Indy. He was the kindest, quietest, cuddliest creature one could ever want.

What endeared him

to me most was his keen desire to co-exist with all my back yard friends. A goldfinch could sit on his nose or a squirrel could nip at his tail, but he wouldn't budge. However, should an unmindful mouse cross his path, that was a different story.

Seldom, to our knowledge, did he stray from sight. His room was his house. Our home was his castle. He'd simply meow if he wished to go out. He'd open the door and let himself in.

Watching TV was a favourite pastime, especially commercials where a cat was front and centre. For him, I suspect, it was much like looking in a mirror.

When Jean took to playing the piano, he'd lie beneath the bench and purr the tune.

Or so it seemed.

Whether raking leaves, cutting grass or weeding flowers, he'd be there.

He was part of everything we did.

Weeks prior to his passing, we noticed changes. A loss of appetite, loss of weight and loss of energy gave notice his days were numbered. Clinic vets Drs. Westermann and Thomson did their best. All suggestions of 'putting him down' were ignored, decisions we daily appreciate. He died as quietly as he lived.

So now he rests beneath the shade of a back yard maple, leaving memories of a pet that can never be replaced.

A simple "you're the cat's meow" dish serves as a headstone plus an epitaph that reads:

*If cats have a heaven,
There's one thing we know*

Our Indy has a wonderful home.

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

SMOKED HAM ~HOCKS~

As you know by now, we have copious amounts of these beauties around the holidays, because for every ham, there is a hock. They are meatier than usual and will be perfect for pea soup, or you could just boil these up as my dad used to and serve them with French's mustard and scalloped potatoes. **\$1.49 LB THIS WEEK**
Slow-smoked over oak. We may limit quantities!

LAKE ERIE PERCH

These are considered by many to be one of the best-eating freshwater fish. The flesh is delicately sweet, flaky and lean, with a very pleasant and mild flavour. The fillets are rather small, so grilling isn't really an option here....pan-frying or poaching does the trick... and don't overcook them. For many years, Cathy's family owned a cottage at Turkey Point on Lake Erie, not far from Port Dover, and a rite of passage every summer was the Perch Fish-Fry at the Eric Beach Hotel. If you want to get Doreen excited, start talking about this, but be sure that you have lots of time. Anyway, **\$12.95 LB THIS WEEK** we've got Freshwater Perch this week, arriving Friday morning.



PRIME RIB SANDWICHES

At our deli counter this week, we'll be featuring our Prime Rib Sandwiches. Think of these as our version of a quarter-pounder, but it gets better. Sure, it is a quarter pound of slow-roasted Prime Rib, but we've got the best of the best happenen' this week, as they are 'Canada Prime' grade, right at the top of the quality chain, so to speak. You get these on the bun of your choice (if you are early enough), horseradish either hot or mild, and some gravy poured on top. All for..... **\$3.99 THIS WEEK**
Available from 11:30 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It's a great sandwich!

A NEW..... BURGER

What we're making is a Jalapeño Cheddar Burger. We use 2/3 ground chuck, 1/3 ground pork, some grated Jalapeño Cheddar, some sweet onion, salt, pepper and a touch of garlic. These will be in the 8oz size, so it will fill the bun. For the occasion, we'll have some of the extra-large tomatoes as well, so one slice will cover you. Get your grill tidied up, because at..... **\$1.99 EACH** these will be what you want.

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI.....

We'll be making our Napa Cabbage Salad, which is made with shredded napa cabbage, chow mein noodles, rice wine vinegar and some secret ingredients that I'm not sure of, but I do know that it's very enjoyable and refreshing. It will be our **1/2 PRICE THIS WEEK** salad feature this week.

The next item will be a Black Tiger Shrimp Stir Fry with oyster sauce in the 8 x 5 foils, just enough for a dinner for..... **\$6.99 EACH**

Also, thinking of refreshing, Kulam will be making some wonderful Strawberry Soup (yes!) with mint and blueberries. It is really super....but it won't go with the roast beef sandwich, so I'm thinking it's either a nice lunch on a hot day, (or you could pretend it's really hot), or something to have with your Marble Slab Vanilla Ice Cream. It's available at the deli.

APPLE ALLSPICE SAUSAGES

We make these with our fresh coarse-ground pork, a bit of brown sugar, apple cider, salt, pepper and some allspice. It's a great dinner sausage either grilled or baked. **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Reg. \$3.99 lb

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Our Curry Chicken is the frozen entrée feature this week. We use breasts of air-chilled chicken, poach them, cube them and serve them up in a fairly mild curry. You'll just need to heat it and serve it over rice. Serves 3-4 **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Reg \$15.95 each

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

This week we have on sale Pocketbook plants just **\$4.99 each**. Check our website for further information. Also for those of you who love them, our long lasting and beautiful tropical bouquets, just **\$9.99 a bunch**. We're getting more ceramics and containers on display every day and we've got loads of bright and beautiful plants and cut flowers for all of your spring decorating needs. A large shipment of Rosemary Pots has arrived in two sizes. As well our first shipment of perennial ground covers....Periwinkle, Irish Moss, Creeping & Woolly Thyme, and Hens & Chicks. Come in and see what's new!

CREAM OF CARROT SOUP

This is one of, if not the, very best-selling soups we make. We start by making our own chicken stock, use local carrots (when they're available) which are nice and sweet, some cream, and it's spiced just right. **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Reg. \$6.99 each Serves 3-4

WHAT'S BAKING! THIS WEEK

It's Orange Week in our Bakery. The Florida and California season for oranges is on the wane, but the late varieties are probably the sweetest anyway. We'll be making.....

ORANGE CREAM PIE.....the filling here is 'orange chiffon', ...on the light side, in a graham crust, garnished with whipped cream and an orange slice. Regular **\$14.95** (ps...as I'm writing this I'm remembering that a couple of years ago I brought a recipe back from an Alabama golf trip for Lemon Cream Pie. Watch for it in a couple of weeks.)

ORANGE-RASPBERRY MUFFINS.....this is a little bit of a denser muffin, made with fresh orange juice and zest, studded with fresh whole raspberries.

Regular**\$1.69 each**
CRANBERRY-ORANGE LOAVES.....I like these a lot, especially the contrast of the orange sweetness and the cranberry tartness.....and if you warm the slice a bit to have with your morning coffee, your day will at least start out amazing.....the rest being up to you!
Regular**\$5.99 each**

CHOCOLATE VESUVIUS.....this is a rich moist chocolate bundt cake, marbled with white chocolate, spiked with Grand Marnier and orange zest, and studded with raspberries throughout. The cavity (in volcanic terms, the 'stack') is filled with milk chocolate ganache and fresh raspberries. The whole episode is brushed with even more Grand Marnier and coffee (the former known to provoke Vesuvial behavior) to ensure moistness, and then glazed with even more chocolate. Regular.....**\$17.95 each**

GRAND MARNIER TRUFFLE FLAN.....this is new and flourless....and extremely delicious! Room temperature is a must here. It's got a crunchy crust that's made with a mix of toasted and crushed almonds and coconut. The truffle filling is a velvety-smooth (really) dark-chocolate ganache with a generous helping of Grand Marnier. There will be two sizes, **\$12.95 and \$24.95 each**

.....all these items will be on sale this week at.... **25% OFF THIS WEEK**
While supplies last.

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