

With your help, we can improve voter turnout

You've just woken up and are staring in dismay with bleary eyes at the trickle of brown water coming from the faucet.

As you futilely twist it on and off, you glance at your local newspaper lying on the counter beside your still empty coffee cup. Your eyes widen as you read the headline proclaiming the mayor is bringing an NHL-size arena to your neighbourhood, funded in part by your tax dollars.

Now desperate for a cup of coffee, you throw on your coat and head for your car, stopping in your tracks as you step on the porch, looking at the unplowed road. Your cell-phone rings, interrupting your growing annoyance.

Your teenage daughter's voice wails the second you answer: "The bus isn't coming, I've been waiting for hours — you have to drive me to school! I have a test in 30 minutes!"

You barely make it off your street, your SUV sliding past cars abandoned in the deep snow and dodging stacks of uncollected garbage and recycling bins.

As you finally emerge onto the main road, you notice a newly installed large sign that has you slamming on the brakes: Two 28-storey residential towers are planned for the street directly bordering your back yard.



Debora Kelly

This is the world of your municipal government, where regional and local levels manage a vast array of local services that daily and directly impact your life, including: policing and firefighting; transportation, transit and road construction and maintenance; planning and development; public utilities, including sewage systems, water treatment and electric utilities; social and welfare services, such as public health and social assistance; and parks, recreation and culture.

As well, local government wields a hefty power through taxation of property and real estate taxes, as well as permits and licences.

And while voter turnout is dismal overall, municipal elections consistently lure just more than one third of York's eligible voters off the couch compared to 58.4 per cent in the last federal election, for instance.

In York Region's 2010 election, voter turnout ranged from a low of 28.8 per cent in Richmond Hill to a high of 49.9 per cent in King Township.

Turnout was 38.5 per cent in Aurora, 37.5 in East Gwillimbury, 32.6 per cent in Newmarket, 35 per cent in Georgina, 45 in Whitchurch-Stouffville, 35.5 per cent in Markham and 40.5 per cent in Vaughan.

While some municipalities have attempted to boost voter participation, with everything from Internet voting and increased advanced polls to citizen task forces, the results have been minimal. Young voters remain particularly elusive. We'd like to try to take on voter apathy by increasing your knowledge of the impact local government has on your lives. We've set a lofty goal of increasing voter turnout to at least 50 per cent in the next municipal election in October 2014.

Our Community Links group is partnering with us in the Big 5-0 civic engagement project.

Along with our reporters, our Links members will actively participate in initiatives such as council report cards.

We need a diversity of citizens, including new voters, first-time voters, young and old, those passionate about local politics and those who are uninterested or have never voted. Please contact your editor, Jim Mason (jmason@yrmg.com), about joining Community Links and watch for upcoming Big 5-0 projects in our newspapers and on yorkregion.com

Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group

CHEESE

Our cheese sale is a bit different this week. We'll feature our complete selection of Blues, even our Roquefort and Bresse Bleu. The deal is that we'll give you a box of the Carr's Assorted Crackers (200g) FREE when you pick a Blue. Samples as usual!

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Firstly, I must say that the appearance of waffles on the early-week menu was a thrill for me, and we'll try to make that a Saturday and Sunday morning treat — I'll keep you posted.

A special feature for this week is our Nitrate-Free Turkey Breast Sandwiches at the café. There will be two versions to choose from. The first is chipotle mayo, roasted peppers, jalapeno havarti and mixed greens. The second is with avocado, tomatoes and mixed greens. These will be \$7.99 each and if you are familiar with our sandwiches, these are more than a mouthful! Soup of the day is \$1.00 extra.

Our Sunday Lunch will be Shepherd's Pie, made with prime rib; a Pasta Plate yet to be determined; and thirdly, we will do our Chicken Pot Pie with puff pastry. Soup will be French Onion.

Lastly, to the foursome who came for lunch last Sunday at 2:50pm and didn't get one — it's on me this week, but come just a bit earlier.

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE DELI

Let's start with soup and it will be French Onion, all simmered down and seasoned just right. Serves 3-4. Reg. \$7.95.

Featured at 25% off.

NEXT, we'll do Orzo Salad. These are those little rice-shaped bits of pasta with sweet red peppers, green sweet peas, corn, basil, parmesan, chipotle, green onions, mayo and smoked chicken — a complicated recipe but simply delicious. Reg. \$1.99/100g.

1/3 off this week.

NEXT, we'll have the flourless version of Prime Rib Stew. This comes with the veggies and it's hearty fare. Sold in our 4x5 foils. Reg. \$7.95 ea.

25% off this week.

AND of course we'll be doing a pasta course too. This week it's Gnocchi, with our chicken in a parmesan cheese sauce. Reg. \$7.95/500g pack.

25% off this week.

ROAST BEEF

Our slow-roasted Roast Beef will be featured this week. We use inside rounds, trim them lean, shape them a bit so they cook evenly, season them up, and slow-roast them till they're on the rare side. Reg. \$2.99/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

ST. PATRICK'S DINNER

On St. Patrick's Day I and some of my friends will be cooking and serving an authentic Irish Country Lunch at noon and then a dinner at 5:00pm in our Cooking Studio upstairs. There won't be green beer but there will be enough food for all! Tickets are available from Mabel or Donna at 905-940-0655 and they will be \$17.95 & \$24.95 plus tax. No one leaves hungry from the table!

SALMON FILLETS

We buy our Salmon from Jail Island Fish Farm in New Brunswick. Much has been written either pro or against aquaculture, and like most things in life, it's mostly the execution of details that makes the difference. I have been to a number of fish-farming enterprises over the years (some even pre-dating us having a store), and I can tell you that Jail Island is as good as it gets. We buy farmed fish for the freshness. Wild might be a week or two before it arrives at our door, whereas this is two days tops, giving you a lot more leeway in menu-planning. We use these Salmon to make our Teriyaki Fillets, our Orange Ginger, or if you like, just an naturel. If the weather is good, and your BBQ still at hand, that's a good option. But, if not, baking these on your broiling pan works really well, too. What to serve with it? Our mini potatoes are great this week...and of course, a glass of Chardonnay. Reg. \$14.95/lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

ROASTING CHICKENS

We're featuring our really large, air-chilled chickens. To start with, these chickens run loose in large barns ... but by definition these are not free-range because they have no access to the outdoors, not that they'd want it at this time of 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 very 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. 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 elsewhere 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 5lbs in size, give or take. Reg. \$3.49/lb.

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

HADEN MANGOES

Mangoes have come nicely into season now and the better eating variety of the 'top four' are in mid-season form. They come from Mexico and they are size 8 which means that they are pretty big. There will be enough to choose from that you'll be able to find some that are 'ready-to-eat'!

99¢

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK?

Back when I was a young fellow setting out to explore the world, Cupcake Cassidy was a Burlesque phenom who would frequently come to town (Toronto, not Markham) to perform, to great acclaim, and I grew up thinking that's what cupcakes were all about, till now.

Jaana has always been our cupcake Queen and this week it's her moment on the stage of the lux, and she, as well as her large troop, who we keep in the basement, will be putting on an old-time cupcake show!

RED VELVET — our best-selling cupcake. Beautiful, velvety red cake with a ganache injection and cream cheese icing.

COCONUT CREAM PIE — white cake filled with coconut custard, topped with whipped cream and toasted coconut.

BANANA — like our cake special last week; banana cake with coconut cream cheese icing.

CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY — raspberry-studded chocolate cake, ganache injection and raspberry butter cream.

STRAWBERRY — white sponge filled with strawberry mousse topped with strawberry butter cream made with fresh strawberry chunks.

CARROT — like a mini carrot cake complete with cream cheese icing and a little royal icing carrot.

BLACK FOREST — chocolate cake with cherries, topped with whipped cream and chocolate shavings and a Maraschino Cherry on top.

BAILEY'S — Bailey's Irish Cream-flavored butter cake finished with Bailey's whipped cream (and a little Shamrock ... we are getting ready for St. Patrick's Day).

QUEEN ELIZABETH — mini version of our popular pecan/date cake with caramelized coconut topping.

MOCHA — white cake soaked with Brandied coffee syrup finished with mocha butter cream icing

LEMON — lemon cake, lemon curd and lemon butter cream and topped with a piece of our candied lemon peel.

LEMON MERINGUE — white cake soaked with limoncello syrup, lemon curd injection and cooked meringue topping torched golden.

MINI MIXED BERRY CUSTARD CAKE — berries, apples and custard baked in, topped with fresh fruit.

MINI AMARENA CHERRY CUSTARD CAKE — Evan's favorite sweet little black cherries in slightly almond-flavored syrup.

MARGARITA — white cake, lime curd and lime butter cream made with a dash of tequila, Grand Marnier and fresh limes.

BROWNIE — chocolate cake, our new chocolate fudge frosting, ganache drizzle and a mini brownie on top.

FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE — flourless chocolate cake base filled with dark chocolate mousse, topped with a bit of chocolate ganache.

VANILLA CUPCAKE — vanilla cake with vanilla frosting, topped with sprinkles, candies and a sugar cookie.

CHOCOLATE CUPCAKE — chocolate cake with chocolate frosting, candies and a cookie

... AND ... DRUM ROLL PLEASE.....(are you ready for this?)

JELLYROLL CUPCAKE! — Jaana constantly likes to invent new things and think outside of the box (much like myself) and to the chagrin of her staff, they are usually something extremely labor-intensive and "out-there". Hence JELLYROLL CUPCAKE. We make it like our popular jellyroll, but with a bit thinner sponge, roll it with whipped cream and fresh berries and cut to fit into cupcake cups. Top it with a generous amount of whipped cream and fresh berries.

Reg. \$3.49 for most types, a couple are a bit less. And even more scary than this, they will be...

1/2 PRICE THIS WEEK



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY, MAR. 10th

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00-8:00
Sat. 8:00-6:00 - Sun. 9:00-6:00

4476 16th Avenue (Just W. of Kennedy)
(905) 940-0655

