

# Beware online Drive Test pitfalls

**T**aking a provincial driving test is nerve-wracking enough. How about arriving for a booked appointment, only to be told you have no such appointment?

One way we gauge our government's effectiveness is by how we interact or use government services when we need them.

My son experienced a frustrating miscommunication and cash grab when we turned up at the provincial Drive Test location in Aurora last week.

As with most federal and provincial services these days, the Drive Test website told us the "best way" to make an appointment to complete his G licence was by making an online appointment.

We did that several weeks ago and found it a frustrating, confusing challenge.

As my son works, he wanted to schedule the appointment in Aurora for a day off.

So we clicked "request specific date" when looking for an appointment time slot. We found a Thursday in May that suited his schedule, clicked all the appropriate boxes and then were directed to make payment online immediately.

It took several tries to figure out if his VISA number had to be input with spaces, without spaces, with hyphens between the number segments or without hyphens.

By the time we figured out what the website wanted, it closed down because of "inactivity" and we had to start booking the appointment all over again.

Finally, we were successful and we printed out the appointment booking time. We noticed the advisory that if we didn't cancel within 48 hours, but failed to show up for our appointment, we'd lose the booking fee of \$75.

We weren't planning to miss it and heading north up Hwy. 404 from Richmond Hill with time to spare.

My son stood in line for his turn at the wicket, then was asked for his licence and if he had an appointment.

"Yes," he responded, showing the lady the printed form.

We were both shocked when she said: "You missed an appointment April 30 — you don't have an appointment today".

Noticing our stunned expressions, she told him he must make a new online booking and offered a piece of advice: "You should use Netscape Explorer when you go online — it works best."

My son was frustrated and disappointed, both about the waste of time and the loss of his \$75, plus the knowledge he'd have to spend another \$75 to book a new date.

Together, we were determined to get it right this time.

The first challenge is that every computer in our house is a Mac and apparently they don't use Netscape Explorer.

That obviously was one contributing factor to having so much trouble making the initial appointment.

Is there some published advisory online we missed that taxpayers should use a certain web program? Even if there is, aren't a small percentage of Ontarians, like us, using Mac products?

Luckily, my son has a PC to play video games, so he downloaded Netscape Explorer and we went back on the Drive Test website. We noticed when we clicked the search for specific date button and tried a date that worked for his schedule, when it was not available, the system defaulted immediately to the next available date button.

At that point, we saw how our mistake happened and made sure the date the website chose for us worked for his schedule.

After all this technical hassle, I sure hope he passes his driving test.



Marney Beck

## — WHAT'S HAPPENING — OUTSIDE?

With the fortnight of up and down weather we've had it will certainly take us a couple of days to recover our usual top-notch condition, but by today we should be able to put on a good show once again.

New arrivals include a whole lot more 4" individual pots for containers and beds, with a good balance between sun and shade plants. Another lot of hanging arrangements is in, with a few of the large and splendid shade ones that we have had over the years. We have just received some garden hydrangeas for those who think perennial, some annual blue salvia — very nice — and some diptodena in the small size as well as 4 giants that could be the centrepiece of any patio. We have many patio planters in various sizes, including some stand-up ones that look pretty imposing. Our supply of mandevillas is good and lavender abounds! All is now good on the flower front.

## — DANISH — FROKOST (LUNCH)

Not this week but the next week will be Danish week at our store. This is in honour of our cafe queen Grethe, who has abided with our store for many, many years. This note is to forewarn you that on Saturday, June 8th, Grethe has arranged a traditional Danish lunch (Frokost) that we will serve upstairs in our cooking studio. Cost is \$24.95 and please trust me, this, like everything else she does, will be amazing. Call Mabel at 905-940-0655 to reserve your spot. **\$24.95 per person plus tax.**

## FRESH LOCAL ASPARAGUS

With the warmer weather this has come nicely into season. A suggestion would be to season it with sea-salt, pepper, olive-oil and balsamic glaze, and grill it on your 'cue, just enough to wilt it, but not cooked through. Serve it with a drizzle of glaze, perhaps the new variety that we have in from British Columbia. **\$2.99 lb.**

## THE PRIME SPOT

This Festival weekend, some of our staff, me included, as well as a boat-load of volunteers, will be working the Prime Rib tent in front of Crosby Arena. This is a Hockey With Heart Charity event and what you'll get is a Prime Rib Sandwich, sliced right in front of you and a drink for a great price! **\$5.99 each**

The beef was very generously donated by three of our suppliers, namely, Corsetti Meat Packers • J.J. Derma Meats • St. Helens Meat Packers. All of the proceeds from this booth are donated to our Hockey With Heart group which helps out local groups and individuals in need, as well as Christmas Food Initiatives with the Food Bank and others. Great community cause. See you there, rain or shine!

## — FRESH DRISCOLL'S — RASPBERRIES

After what has seemed like a very long spell of high prices on raspberries, the supply is more abundant and the price has moderated. Get your fill this week folks, and just so you know, this is a California crop. **\$1.99 container**

## — OUR — BRATWURST

These are probably my favourite sausage. I recall that when I was a very young guy I used to work in a German delicatessen (in Markham) and the owner would make these (he didn't trust me quite yet) and it was pretty much religion how they were done. They were good, but no better than ours — probably because we use beer to make them! If you are at the festival this weekend, they can be found at the beer tent at Crosby, expertly grilled by my son and his crew. **Reg. \$4.99/lb. or \$11.00/kg. 25% OFF THIS WEEK**

## — WHAT'S FOR — LUNCH?

After a great deal of animated chat at our meeting, I was assured that this sandwich will be highly popular, and not just with the ladies apparently, but with real men as well. We'll be making EGG SALAD Sandwiches on soft Kaisers, with Organic Greens. Truth is we make this salad daily, crack and peel them and season it just like Doreen taught us, and the Greens are the same as we use in our other sandwich offerings. Further, you can super-size this to include a soup or a salad for an additional 99 cents. **SUNDAY BRUNCH will be.....Cream of Asparagus Soup, either Gnocchi with our Bacon with Onions and Mushrooms in a White Wine sauce, Beef Bourguignon with Mashed Potatoes or A Fresh Chicken over Rice, with either Tea or Coffee with a token dessert. All For \$10.99** Served from 11:00 till 2:00pm

## WHAT'S COOKING — AT THE — DELI

First course will be a local Cream of Asparagus Soup. In it goes sweet onions, carrots, celery, cream, chicken stock and 'spices'. **Reg. \$7.95/container. Featured at 25% off this week.**

Followed by, Chick Pea Salad. To make this we use sweet onions, diced peppers, cucumbers, lemon juice, sugar, cumin and other 'spices'. This is delicious. **Reg. \$1.49/100g. Featured at 1/3 off this week.**

And next, we'll have Gnocchi with some of our beauty bacon, mushrooms, parmesan, sweet onions (again), chicken stock, some white wine and once again 'spices' and cream sauce. We'll pack this in our 4x5 foils and since gnocchi is fairly filling, there should be enough for two moderate appetites. **Reg. \$7.95/container. Featured at 25% off this week.**

And lastly, from our frozen section, we'll have our Chicken Lasagna, which is made with (hopefully!) chicken and some noodles and sauce and veggies and spices and stuff. **Reg. \$16.95/container. Featured at 25% off this week.**

## CHEESE PLEASE

This week we are having a promotion on Appenzeller. This is a Swiss cheese which has a sharp after edge, and the only way I know to deal with that, is a glass of wine! Your choice! We'll have samples (of the cheese, not the wine!) **Reg. \$4.99/100g. 1/3 OFF THIS WEEK**

## — WHAT'S — BAKING THIS WEEK?

Local apricots are in season right now and they are absolutely delicious, and that is what we are using in our baking this week!

**APRICOT CUSTARD FLAN** - These are baked in the deep flan pans with a shortbread crust, filled with liquid vanilla custard and apricot halves and a little bit of cinnamon and ginger. **\$22.95.**

**APRICOT FRANGIPAN SQUARES** - Layer of shortbread topped with almond cream (frangipan) and halved apricots. **\$9.95.**

**APPLE APRICOT DATE MUFFINS** - No refined sugar is added to these muffins; they are naturally sweetened with apricots and dates. **\$1.89/ea.**

**APRICOT AND RASPBERRY JELLYROLLS** - Jellyrolls are our biggest-selling item, and this week we are making them with local diced fresh apricots combined with fresh raspberries and whipped cream. **\$15.95.**

**APRICOT SLIPPERS** - Puff pastry squares filled with custard flavored with a bit of Grand Marnier, topped with an apricot half sprinkled with sugar and spice, and baked to nice golden perfection! **\$3.99 ea.**

Look out for some additional apricot items that our bakery staff might dream up! **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY, JUNE 2<sup>nd</sup>

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

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