

You can't go home again

Never go back. That's my advice to those who maintain a keen desire to rekindle their childhood dreams. I know, for, more than 50 years, it's been my personal passion to re-visit, one last time, the house where I was born.

For reasons, difficult to explain, I've had this relentless urge to re-live memories of my growing up years. But to satisfy this uncontrollable impulse, I needed more than dry-runs past my birthplace, something I've done hundreds of times. I wanted to actually enter my boyhood hospice and momentarily re-live the way it once was.

Unfortunately, the century-old abode, on Markham's Ninth Line, five miles south of Stouffville, has always been locked tighter than an Alcatraz cell. Persistent knocks on four entrance doors have prompted no responses. It seemed no one had lived on site for at least a decade.

Not easily discouraged, I decided last week to again put my good intentions to the test. With positive results. The well-worn welcome mat was plainly visible so I boldly walked in.

First I stood in the kitchen. From this sparsely furnished vantage point I could visualize my mother rolling out dough on the old bake board, readying tea biscuits for deposit in a standard Findlay oven. Behind me was a table and chairs, breakfast accommodation for dad, granddad, two brothers and sister. My mother would eat when the others finished. The blessing, or "grace" as we called it, was always said, a family tradition we retain.

To the rear stood an imaginary kitchen cupboard containing all "regular" dishes we'd ever need. They were all used during threshing and silo-filling bees when the influx of neighbourhood help numbered as many as 25.

But more important than all the chinaware was a small ornamental cup on an upper cupboard shelf. It contained egg money, weekly receipts from my mother's small flock of chickens. Small change was deposited. And I swear it had no bottom for, whenever a need arose, Mom would discover sufficient funds to cover the cost.

To my left I caught a glimpse of a collapsible card table. When company would arrive, no evening was complete without a game of euchre. Oh how Daddy loved euchre. He was good at it, too, so good he could win a round with nothing more than an ace and four spots.

Under the kitchen stove, rolled up in a black and white ball, I could see Matilda, the only barn cat ever allowed in the house. Truth was, we couldn't keep her out. For she had the dexterity to stand erect and open the door with skilful front paws.

Sundays, a group of us would gather around the piano in the dining room and sing hymns popular back then but unfortunately seldom sung today. The piano's long gone but a chandelier still dangles from the ceiling.

For but a moment I stood on the front verandah facing the road. Traffic back then included maybe four cars an hour plus an occasional horse and buggy. It was here on hot summer nights my brother and I would often sleep, that is until the remainder of a hobo's apparel was discovered under a nearby tree. This prompted a quick end to our open-air camp-outs.

My final stop included four upstairs bedrooms. Under the heat of a slate shingle roof we'd boil. Above an unheated room below, we'd freeze. Bare feet on a frigid floor encouraged employment of quick dress procedures. Even chamber pots, made available for emergency use, were often coated with ice.

Re-living 30 truly difficult yet truthfully wondrous years within a span of 15 minutes is admittedly more than any aching heart should be forced to endure.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.



Jim Thomas

WEST COAST STORY

A couple of weeks ago we did an East Coast ad. It was especially fun for me as I lived there for a number of years ... and it was all fun. This week we're going to the West Coast. I have had the good fortune to travel extensively and my first trip to the west coast was when I thumbed my way west at 16; and that was an education in itself! To this day, I remember the friendliness of the Prairie folk, the expanse of sky, the monstrous and beautiful mountains, and that endless ocean. I, and later my family, have been back many times, whether for golf or just food and adventure, and we'll share some of that food experience this week. Enjoy the trip!

WILD CAUGHT FRESH SOCKEYE SALMON

We'll have a load of this salmon coming on Thursday and it will be available in steaks, or smoked! Prices won't be crazy and it will be a treat for any displaced West Coasters and a change of pace for all you regulars who routinely enjoy our East Coast fare. Also, for those of you who think otherwise, we'll have some fresh Halibut Fillets too!

CHEESE PLEASE

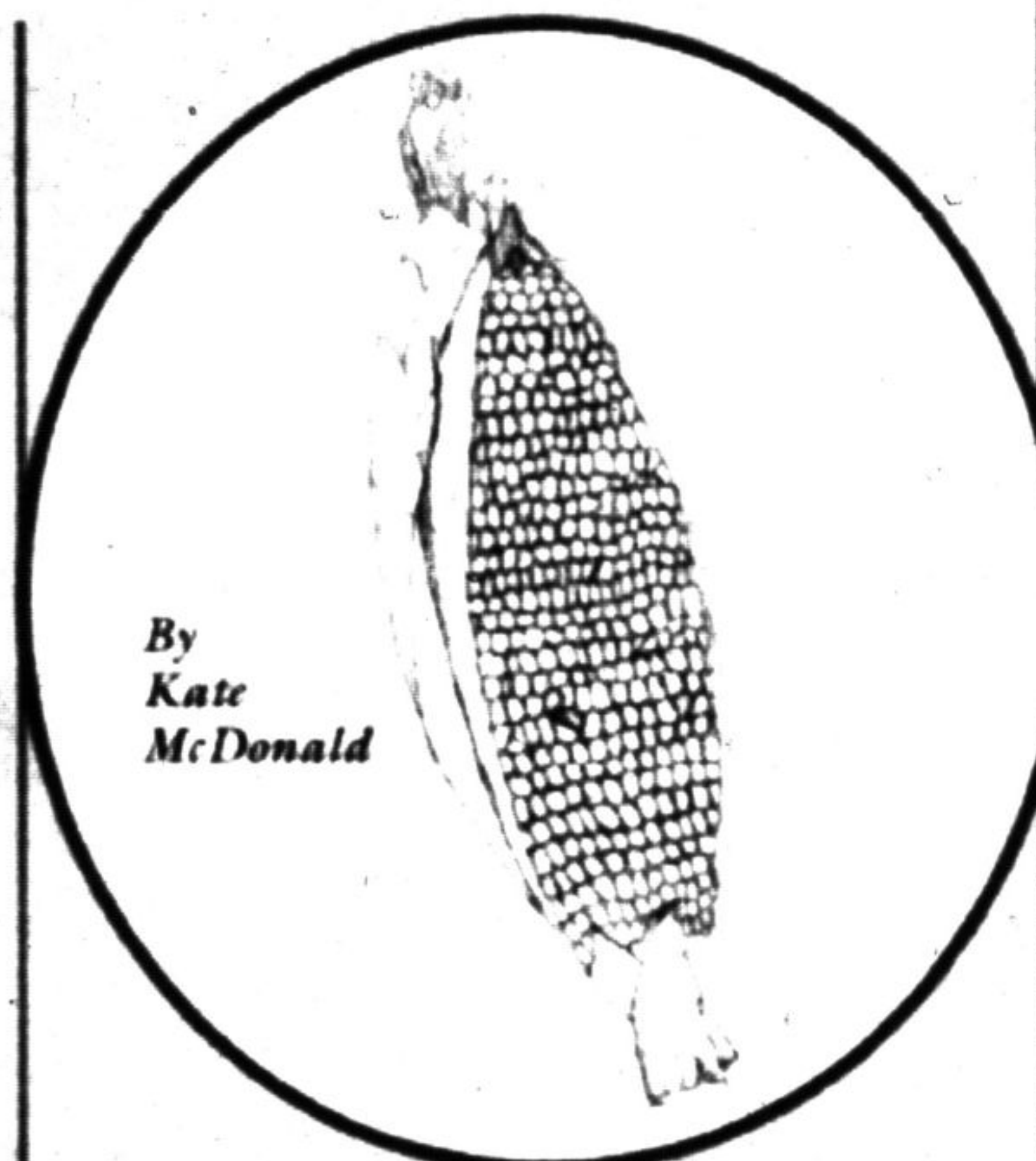
Apparently sheep and people are not the only Salt Spring inhabitants because this amazing Goat Cheese hales from there, so there must be a few goats too! There are four flavours; Pepper, Garlic, Chili and Basil. It seems to me that this was a product that David Wood (of former Food Shoppe fame) brought to us, and it's very good. Reg. \$13.99 each. **\$9.95** each. Featured this week at ...

ENGLISH BREAKFAST SAUSAGES

The English influence has been large indeed in the west ever since Captain Vancouver sailed the Endeavor into what is now Vancouver harbour. There are so many English expats out there that you need one of your tweedier sausages to satisfy the palate. This is the one that I recall from my very first visit west (it's a big story and you can ask me if you've got the time!) The serving suggestion for these was roasted with mashed potatoes, green peas (not mushy) and gravy. Reg. \$5.99 lb. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

PIZZA PIZZAZZ

This weekend we are offering a special pizza from the West Coast ... of Italy. We start with a pesto base, add some shaved hot genoa, a few bocconcini medallions, sauteed mushrooms and some beautiful roasted peppers, all jacked-up with a flourish of Balsamic Glaze. All these ingredients play nice together, so we are calling this the "Baccetto!" Reg. \$12.95. **1/3 OFF THIS WEEK**



By
Kate
McDonald

PARKS BLUEBERRIES

The type we'll have this week is Bluecrop and they are plump, juicy, full of flavour and sweet! They will be available in the 1-Litre 'baskets' again. Local is good! **\$4.99** each

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Our lunch feature will be our Sockeye Salmon Salad on multi-grain, with the usual organic mixed greens. The salmon will have a slight, smoky edge, as we'll be smoking Sockeye this week in place of our usual Atlantic Salmon.

Sunday Brunch will be Totem Pole Soup to start, followed by either Salt Spring Island-style Lamb Stew with mashed potatoes; Chicken Breast Oscar (with shrimp and asparagus) in a cream sauce over rice; or Rigatoni with Beef and Broccoli in a rose sauce. Along with either tea or coffee and a token dessert. Served from 11:00am til 2:00pm. **All For \$10.95**

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE DELI

We are going to start with Totem Pole Soup, which has Sockeye Salmon, fresh, sweet corn, sweet onions, carrots, flour and green peas, including white wine and 'spices'. This soup tells the story of what was in your fridge, similar to, in some ways, life. Stories that real totem poles tell. **Featured at \$5.95 ea.**

Next, we'll have an Ocean Shrimp Salad with baby shrimps, onions, peppers, rice and spinach, with a mustard, lemon and rice vinegar dressing. **Featured at \$1.99/100g.**

Further, we'll be doing a Salt Spring Island-style Lamb Stew. I mention this island because it's renowned for its crop of lamb (I think it's the salt-marsh pasture) and lamb is a local artform. We will feature this at **\$7.95/500ml container.**

Next, we'll be making my brother and sister-in-law's fave, West Coast Salmon Pasta. We use farfalle (bowties), sweet onions, fresh asparagus, garlic, white wine, dill and chunky tomatoes. **This will be featured at \$6.95/500g.**

And lastly, we will be making our Herb-Crusted Baked Halibut on Friday and Saturday. It will be available in our Food-To-Go counter.

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK?

KEYLIME PIES • \$14.95

We start with a graham crust, zest and juice a huge amount of fresh limes and use them in the filling alongside egg yolks and condensed milk, decorate with whipped cream and fresh lime slices ... and Voilà ... refreshing summer treat!

LIME CUPCAKES • \$3.49

Chef Kulam loves these ones! White cupcake with a lime curd injection topped with Margarita buttercream, which is made with lime zest and juice, lime curd and a hint of Tequila.

ICED LIME LOAVES • \$5.99

Like our lemon loaf, but made with limes instead of lemons. Iced with rich, lime green butter icing.

MARGARITA CHEESECAKES • \$15.95

Like I always say, we sell a lot of cheesecakes! One of the bakery ladies, Marija, spends most of her time making the shortbread bottoms, filling them, baking then in water-baths, taking them out of the pans after cooling, and finally decorating them. And as soon as she is done, the whole process starts again! This particular cheesecake is made with lime zest and juice, rich lime curd and some Tequila, and a bit of Amaretto and Grand Marnier. Topped with a light lime glaze.

ALL THESE ITEMS while quantities last!

25% OFF THIS WEEK

SPECIALS IN EFFECT FROM THURSDAY TO CLOSING SUNDAY, AUGUST 25th



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