

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

Now that the autumn is here, you expect the weather to be somewhat cooler and wetter, but you don't expect the widely varying weather we saw this past week.

From temperatures in the mid 30's mid-week to the freezing temperatures some of the farmers had to deal with at the end of the week, it was bizarre. One of our farmers told me that they were out in the middle of the night Friday smudging their tender crops-lighting bales of straw on fire to keep the freezing mist from settling on the crop.

It was another reminder of just how much successful farming is at the whim of Mother Nature.

After being soaked two weeks ago at the Market on our Apples and Honey Festival day, we were all delighted to have pleasant, sunny weather this past weekend. Some of us were so happy to see the sun that we didn't put up our tents.

The nice weather brought out the crowds and it was, by all accounts, a great Market day. However, I feel badly for the eight or so ?en plein air? artists who bravely put up with the ghastly conditions to paint outdoors in the Market neighbourhood the previous week.

One of the artists was the same intrepid artist who was the only one who stayed last year in equally wet and miserable conditions. It was exciting to see the paintings come to life as you watched and sincere Market thanks to all the talented and brave artists who stayed to paint that day. Thank you also to the wonderful Wild Walker Band.

Now I'd like to introduce you to a husband and wife team who are at the Market together for the first time. Caroline and Brian of Sassy Chameleon began selling premium teas and homemade sauces in the local community just this year and have received an overwhelmingly positive response.

They first sold gourmet foods at special events in 1992 and also published a short Christmas cookbook that same year.

Both are originally from Markham but have lived in Aurora since 1999 with their two children, Mary and Brendan. Caroline's entrepreneurial spirit and Brian's love of food, tea and developing new flavours led them to sell their creations at the Aurora Farmers' Market and special events in the region.

Brian has been working in the electrical industry for over 25 years in the design and manufacturing of electrical equipment and in the development of electrical codes and standards. Caroline is an Art Instructor for the York Region Separate School Board and the Varley Art Gallery.

She also runs Caroline's Art Lab, leading engaging art programmes for children through weekend classes, summer camp and special holiday classes. This actually marks the second time that Caroline has been a part of our Market?she sold her delightful handcrafted jewellery here a few years ago.

This is their recipe for Irish Soda bread:

2 cups of flour

1tsp. salt

1/2tsp. baking soda

1 1/2 tablespoons

baking powder

1 cup of buttermilk

2 tablespoons of butter

Extra flour

Sift all the dry ingredients into a bowl. Combine the buttermilk and butter together in a separate bowl. Gradually add the dry ingredients and start blending with the buttermilk and butter.

Dust a board with flour.

Roll the batter onto the board and knead. Make sure the batter is coated with the flour so it doesn't stick to the board. Knead for one minute. Grease a loaf pan and lightly dust with flour. Score the top of the loaf with a knife.

Bake at 350F for 45 minutes. Wrap in a tea towel and set the loaf aside until it cools.

September is a very busy time at the Market. Our next Special Event is this weekend, September 21 with our Pumpkin Festival.

We're asking our vendors to have as many pumpkin themed products as possible so you can expect the gourds themselves, as well as pumpkin pies, cookies, tarts loaves and soups.

There will be a pumpkin carving contest and there will be pumpkin themed crafts for the children. New this year, as part of the York Region's Farm Fresh programme, we are part of a Pumpkin Pie Trail along with several farms and farmers' markets in the region. There will be entertainment at the bandshell, including a solo guitarist. At the same time, there will be a multi-cultural day at the Magna/State Farm location where they will have old recipes, crafts and other pioneer-themed materials.

The following week, September 28, is our Culinary Arts day at the Market as part of the Federal Culture Days celebration. That's when our Market chefs will be preparing dishes from ingredients sourced at the Market for the public to sample.

This year, in honour of Aurora's sesquicentennial, the theme is 'the foods of yesteryear?'. I don't want to spoil the surprise so I'll whet your appetites by telling you that there will be a delicious soup and Crepes Suzette among the dishes being prepared. We're hoping to have recipes of the dishes available for the public.

This event was a great success last year so plan to come to sample the chefs' tasty creations this year.

See you at the Market!