

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

As most of you are gearing up for the holiday season, the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair's indoor season is winding down for this year.

We have only two more indoor markets at the Armoury before we close for 2016. I will tell you more about the next indoor market later.

Now, I'd like to introduce another new vendor to the indoor market, Michael Burgess of Nerpy's Inc. Michael's story began with a humble upbringing in Jamaica. His grandfather on his mom's side came from Hong Kong and migrated to Jamaica for personal freedom and opportunity.

There he met and married Michael's grandmother and they settled in a small rural town called Black River. They ran a small haberdashery.

On Michael's father's side, his grandfather was a farmer in rural Jamaica in the town of Chapleton. Michael spent a lot of time there, learning about produce and what it meant to grow your own food and live off the land. They harvested their crops and took them to nearby May Pen to sell to the market vendors or trade for meat.

Michael was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and spent many weekends going to either Black River or Chapleton to hang out with his grandfathers. These visits provided his informal education about farming, cooking and business.

Shortly after both grandfathers died, Michael's family moved to Canada, settling in Markham. During his high school years, Michael worked for an uncle at his grocery and take-out food store where he continued to learn about food and increased his knowledge about cooking.

He attended high school in Thornhill and then Seneca College in Toronto. He holds a diploma in Accounting and Business Administration with a Management specialization. He is also a Certified Sales Professional with the CPSA Sales Institute.

Michael's sports include soccer and snowboarding. His hobbies range from music to motorcycling, fast cars, diving and looking after his cat. He has travelled to Bermuda, the Caribbean, Mexico and the USA.

Nerpy's Inc. came about as a result of a couple of things: Michael's love of hot peppers and flavourful food and his inability to find both in the majority of hot sauces on the market. While vacationing in Jamaica, he stumbled upon a hot pepper sauce made by a friend. It was so good that Michael brought jars back to Canada, but not nearly enough. So, Michael read up on hot sauce recipes, bought his own peppers and tried to replicate his friend's delicious sauce.

After some trial and error, success and Nerpy's Gold was born. Soon friends were offering to pay for more sauce and suggested bottling it for sale on the road and the business was off and running. Nerpy's specializes in hot pepper sauces, Jerk seasoning and marinades. Do visit them at remaining two indoor markets.

These are the vendors who are expected at the November 26 indoor market, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., include 19th Avenue Farm, Abbott Family Farm, Beaver River Organics, Oakridge's Finest, Pioneer Honey and Grown with Care Farms.

The food vendors include: Catharina's Kitchen, Green River Coffee, Guilt Free Goodness, Jan's Country Pantry, John Abraham, Nerpy's Inc., Nutmeg Bakeshop, Chad Cummings and the Girl Guides with cookies.

The Artisans are: Captain Ted, Cathy's Crawly Composters, Creepy Tours, Eurasia Jewellery Design, Eva Nagy, Green Leaf Designs, Kibo Natural Body Care, Limitless Jewels, The Bear's Den, Wood U, Eco Girl, Jewels for his Crown and Optimist Bill Hack.

See you at the Indoor Market!