

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

During the last several weeks, one could be forgiven for questioning whether or not it was truly spring.

The buds on the shrubs and trees have been visible for only a short while and the flowers have just begun to poke their colourful heads above the ground. However, a sure sign that spring has indeed sprung is the return of the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair to our regular spot along Wells Street and in the Town Park.

We open on Saturday, May 4, and run from then until the last Saturday in October from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. We have a number of very special events planned for our Grand Opening, including an exciting Monarch butterfly release at 10 a.m. and a great lineup of young and highly talented musicians to entertain everyone. It promises to be a day to be remembered.

Here are some interesting facts about the Monarch butterfly: These beautiful black, orange and white butterflies are especially noted for their annual migrations over long distances. In North America, they make huge southward migrations starting in August until the first frost.

Then, in the spring, they migrate north again. They are the only butterfly that migrates both north and south as the birds regularly do, but no individual butterfly makes the entire trip.

Monarch butterflies go through four stages during one life cycle. These four stages are the egg, the larvae (caterpillar), the pupa (chrysalis), and the adult butterfly. Four generations go through these stages in one year until it is time to start over again with stage and generation one.

In March and April, the eggs are laid on milkweed plants. They hatch into baby caterpillars, called larvae. After about four days they hatch and eat milkweed to grow. Then, after two weeks the caterpillar will be full grown and will attach itself to a leaf or stem using silk and transform into a chrysalis to begin the process of metamorphosis. This takes about ten days. From the outside, it will appear as if not much is happening but in reality, it is a time of rapid change.

We hope that many of you will be there on opening day to witness the spectacle of a few dozen monarch butterflies being released into the environs of Aurora to make their way in the world.

This year at the Farmers' Market, most of your favourite vendors will be returning, along with some very exciting newcomers.

This year, new to our market there will be Catharina's Kitchen with scrumptious baking; a lady with organic and natural teas, rubs, sauces and condiments; someone who makes holders for books and tablets; an artist who paints animals, landscapes and barns; and, finally someone with freshly cut flowers as well as numerous herbs.

Also, our much loved Scottish baker is returning for the eight special event days of this season.

In addition, we will have someone who makes handmade wooden pot racks, someone who makes assorted bags, pouches and portfolios, as well as someone who creates bottle carriers, reversible totes, aprons, pillows and hot and cold therapy packs. In addition, for your gastronomic enjoyment, we are adding a new BBQ and ethnic food vendor who will be bringing short ribs, chicken tandoori samosas, BBQ corn and potato and other masalas.

My mouth is already watering!

As always, there is something for everyone at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair. Be sure to come and check us out.

This year at the Farmers' Market, we are happy to introduce our new Market Manager. Her name is Kiersten Vizzacchero and she

was born and raised in Aurora. While at G.W. Williams High School, Kiersten studied several styles of dance and competed in dance as well. Upon graduation, she attended the University of Guelph and graduated with a degree in International Development and Geography.

While at Guelph, she became a critical thinker and involved in fighting for social justice issues and environmental protection. While in her third year of University, Kiersten went on an exchange to the Netherlands where she fell in love with the people and the culture.

Upon graduating from university, Kiersten spent an exciting year as an intern on an organic farm in Guelph. During her time working on the farm, tending to the chickens, the apple orchards devastated by the early thaw then frost, and looking after the crops, she realised that she was developing a passion for farming that she had not realised she felt.

It was at this point that she discovered that she wanted to pursue a career in agriculture and farming, something which will endear her to our farmers at the Market. Kiersten had a supervisory role with the other students while working on the organic farm in Guelph which gives her valuable experience in working with the variety of vendors at the Market.

She is absolutely delightful and her related experience and passion for working with farmers and farm products will make her an excellent Market Manager and we hope that you will join us in giving her an enormous welcome to the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair.

Here is a list of the ?special events? that the Market is hosting this year. Through sponsorships and other means, we are able to have the use of the band shell for each of these.

- ? May 4th?Grand Opening
- ? June 22?Strawberry festival
- ? July 6?Kerry's place/ Art in the Park
- ? August 3?Seniors' Day
- ? August 24?Apples and honey Festival and ?En Plein Air? Day
- ? Sept. 28?Culinary Day(Culture Day)
- ? Oct. 26?Pumpkin Festival/Market Closing

I will tell you more about plans for each of our ?Special Events? as they approach. In the meantime, see you at the Market!