

## MARKET MUSINGS

**By Jan Freedman**

We have just experienced another lovely day at the Farmers' Market where we were lucky that the rain held off until after the Market closed.

It didn't seem to be quite as busy as the previous few weeks, but there was a steady stream of shoppers.

Once again the farmers' tables were piled high with local Ontario produce. Along with the huge variety of leafy greens available, there was broccoli and cauliflower and very early corn from the Simcoe area. For some growers, the strawberries are finished, but others have everbearing varieties that will continue to produce for some time.

There were lots of beautiful raspberries and also some delicious wild blueberries. In terms of the stone fruit, I noticed Brooks Farm had some early yellow plums and other varieties should be appearing soon. There isn't much Ontario produce that isn't now available, except the squashes, apples and the stone fruit like peaches, plums and apricots.

So, be sure to include a trip to the Market on Saturday mornings so you can select from this bounty for your family meals.

The next vendor I'd like to introduce is Marnie Parkin (and husband Gord) from Aurora. They own The Bear's Den, which is the home of warm socks and more created on an antique circular knitting machine. The business came into being when they were living in Oakville and came upon the machine in the late 1980's.

That first machine was a 1924 Canadian Autoknitter manufactured in Toronto. They now have a new reproduced Erlbacher Gearhart Knitting Machine, the first in Canada, manufactured in 2011 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

The business grew from making long tubes of knit fabric in the beginning. They travelled to Rochester, NY to meet someone they found on the internet to learn the intricacies of the machine. They attended conferences across the United States to learn more techniques and skills.

They went from not knowing anyone else in Ontario who had one of these machines to organizing an annual convention in September with attendees from across Canada and the United States. The family all received hand cranked socks and when they moved to Aurora, they decided to widen their circle to include the Farmers' Market.

They joined us initially at the Indoor Market and have now become a part of the Outdoor Market, too. They also do lectures and demos for guilds, historical societies and other interested groups.

Their socks are made from high quality yarns of alpaca, merino, superwash wool, etc. They also have wool-free yarn such as bamboo and cotton for those who cannot wear wool. They offer socks of various styles and designs.

A pair of lace patterned socks may take up to 35 hours to complete and an eye for detail and patience is required.

Their inventory has grown from socks to include mitts, scarves and hats with more items being added from time to time.

Marnie and Gord's motto is "the Bear's Den is keeping your feet warm and cozy". They have enjoyed being part of the Market and have met many new friends there. They invite you to come by their booth to see the wonderful machine and ask any questions.

They would like to thank their customers for their continued support. The Bear's Den will next be at the Market on August 9 to be followed by visits on August 23, September 13 and October 11, our final day this year.

The next Special Event at the Farmers' Market takes place on August 2, when we celebrate Seniors' Day. The Aurora Seniors' Association will have 11 entertainers alternately singing, dancing or telling stories and jokes at the band shell from 10 to 11.30 a.m. From 12 noon to 1 p.m., Robert Davis will sing for us and there will be a display and demonstration of wood carving by the Woodcarvers of Ontario. They will have a totem pole and there will be bark carving as well. We will also have crafts for children, a scavenger hunt and a raffle draw for a Market bag. The draw will take place at 12 noon.

This year the Seniors won't be selling any items, but will be inviting people to sit down for a game of chess. There will be a lot of activity and it should be a great day.

See you at the Market!