

MARKET MUSINGS

By **Jan Freedman**

While the outdoor season at the Farmers' Market is beginning to wind down, you would never know it from the bustling activity and great crowds at the Market this past weekend.

People began arriving before we were finished setting up at 8 a.m. and were still shopping as we were tearing down at 1 p.m. I imagine that had a lot to do both with the gorgeous, sunny weather and the Thanksgiving weekend meal plans.

Indeed I saw many people carrying all manner of freshly baked pies, jars of homemade turkey gravy, cranberry sauce, baskets of apples, pumpkins of all sizes and shapes, squash of many varieties and loads of beautiful greens including Brussels sprouts on the stalk.

Willowtree Farms' homemade apple cider was also selling well, as was Toscana Bakery's freshly baked loaves. The small artisan bakers were also doing good business. It seemed that everyone was in a great mood and enjoying the amazingly beautiful weather for this time of year. I hope that everyone also enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

The next vendor that I'd like to tell you about is Marianne Di Febo who has created an interesting and useful product simply called ?Billow?.

If you had stopped to talk to Marianne at the Market, she would have told you why her design was quickly becoming popular in homes across Ontario. She would have told you that Billow's design makes reading or using a tablet more comfortable. She offered demonstrations, highlighting how a clever design is the solution to a very simple problem: how can reading be made more comfortable?

You would have learned that Billow is a grassroots endeavour run out of the family home in Schomberg. She would have told you that while Billow started as an idea, it grew to fruition with the support of her husband Frank, their three children and a family friend, Rob Antonel.

Billow is quickly gaining ground in the world of reading accessories. It appeals to all demographics and age groups. Children and students love it as a textbook holder or tablet support. It is a convenient companion on long flights and should be a staple in any office.

Marianne suggests using Billow in the kitchen while cooking or bringing it along to the cottage for those of days lounging on the beach or dock. Every day, people are finding new uses for Billow and its possibilities are growing. Using specially formulated hinges, Billow folds and bends smoothly. The 100% cotton cover is easy to remove and clean. Other small but thoughtful details, like a pocket for your book or tablet, separate Billow from other reading accessories in the market today.

Marianne is motivated to keep building her small business. She has expanded her colour options and designs to offer broader appeal. She is planning to take Billow into hospitals and nursing homes in an effort to promote comfortable reading as truly accessible to everyone.

In a world increasingly saturated with technology, Billow is a refreshing change and a salute to simpler ideas. Now this is truly my kind of entrepreneur! To learn more about how this product might find its way into your home, visit www.mybillow.ca.

Marianne contributed the following recipe.

Eggplant Lasagna

Slice eggplant very thinly and lay on parchment paper lightly salted. Allow eggplant to sweat for 15 minutes

While waiting, make tomato sauce

Grate the mozzarella, add some parmesan (reggiano) to the mozzarella

Rinse eggplant slices thoroughly with water and dry

In a bowl, mix 3 eggs, finely chopped parsley, finely chopped garlic and salt and pepper

Dip dried eggplant slices in egg mixture

In another bowl, have 2 cups of bread crumbs (you can add a tsp. of ground flax seeds too)

Dip eggplant slices in bread crumbs

Lay eggplant slices on a cookie sheet and brown in oven for about 10 minutes. This is healthier than frying in oil.

Take a 9? rectangle pan. Place the eggplant, then tomato sauce then cheese mixture in layers in the pan. Repeat until all eggplant is used. Then bake in the oven at 350F for about 40-45 minutes until the top is golden brown. Serve and enjoy!

There are two weeks left for us at the outdoor Market this season. We are there until October 26th which is our final day and our customer appreciation day.

As is customary, we will have a pumpkin carving contest for the vendors in which the Market-going public is encouraged to vote for the favourite pumpkin. There is a small prize for the winner and bragging rights, of course.

We have confirmed the dates of the Indoor Market at the Aurora Cultural Centre for this year: November 23, January 18, February 22, and March 29, all from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. As a special treat at the November 23 Market, Janine Fernandes will be playing her harp and singing while you shop for all your Christmas supplies and gifts.

This promises to be a very special and wonderful day, not to be missed.

See you at the Market!