

MARKET MUSINGS

By **Jan Freedman**

And now it's August.

We have just experienced one of the busiest days this season at the Farmers' Market. Fortunately, the rain held off and we had a warm but not humid day for our annual Seniors' Day.

The seniors were set up under a canopy inviting people to play chess with an expert and they also provided us with great entertainment from 10 ? 11.30 a.m.

Thank you to Charles Sequeira, the President of the Aurora Seniors' Association, for emceeing the entertainment and to all the talented performers who volunteered to sing and dance for our enjoyment.

The Farmers' tables are now groaning under the weight of all the produce now available. Local corn is now readily available, as well as cauliflower, broccoli and red cabbage.

The first of the field tomatoes are arriving as well. As for fruit, we have both raspberries and strawberries, and now the red and black currants, red gooseberries, wild blueberries, cherries and yellow plums are ready. Andy, of 19th Avenue Farm, had beautiful apricots on Saturday and there will be more available next week. It is an abundant time at the Farmers' Market.

Now, I'd like you to meet Johnmark of Cracklin Kettle Corn. He grew up in Uxbridge and attended Uxbridge Secondary School. He was a clarinet player and a participant in the school music programme. He loved being in the band and the thrill of mastering the technical difficulties of the pieces they were required to play.

He appreciated being part of a group of kids who were working together to achieve a goal. That experience taught him principles that he uses today.

He grew up in a divided family: he and his mom and his step-dad and his three boys. As a teen, he had little mentoring, and since he lived in a rural area far from town, he had few friends to socialize with. He spent a lot of time with his grandparents on Lake Simcoe in the summers.

He attended Pickering College for his final year of high school and loved living on campus. He was exposed to students from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

There was a dichotomy however. Johnmark felt that he was different from the others because he lived by his own principles and ethics and was teased because of that. However, those principles received high praise from his teachers. He found a creative way to drum up support and acceptance from the students. He created a cantina in his dorm room and acquired supplies that he sold to students at better prices than those offered by the vending machines.

An entrepreneur was born.

He continued this for some time until he was caught by the Dean. Apparently the Dean was amazed that the booming little enterprise was operating right under his nose.

By the time he was 28, Johnmark had bought his first house and became a landlord. He then began his career of self-employment. He was smitten by the idea of building something from scratch out of nothing. He loved the idea of pooling resources to form a business, a product or a brand in a fun environment while making money. He is attracted to the idea of creating an idea that helps people have a better day while making money at the same time.

Johnmark's creativity continues today with many ideas, inventions and plans. One of those resulted in the creation of his business at the Aurora Farmers' Market called Cracklin Kettle Corn Inc.

Kettle corn is simply corn oil, sugar and popcorn brewed in a large kettle over high heat. After it is popped, it is lightly salted. The combination of salty and sweet has been very popular. His brother-in law, Steven, helps him at the booth.

He used to work for the government as an economist but the work was dull and repetitive. Now Steven and Johnmark have a great routine and enjoy working together at the Market. They are located near the end of the row on Wells Street on the west side. Drop by to say hello and ask for a sample.

The next special event at the Market takes place on August 16th and is our new Family Day. We will have about 20 tables for a Mom-to Mom sale between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. There will be a children's entertainer, Markus Music, from 11 ? 12 noon as well as a face painter and balloon animals. We will also have kids' crafts, a scavenger hunt and our usual draw for a Market bag full of donations from our Market vendors. The draw for the Market bag will take place at noon.

This is a new event for us and we are very excited to be able to focus on families on this day so please plan to attend with your children and grandchildren to participate in this exciting new endeavour.

See you at the Market!