

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

We have been exceedingly fortunate this summer as far as the weather is concerned on Saturdays at the Farmers' Market. We have had sunny days, for the most part, with very little rain.

My understanding of the forecast for September is for the continuation of warm and pleasant days. Combined with families returning to town from the cottage and the beginning of school we should have families coming out to the market in large numbers for the vast assortment of produce our farmers have available now.

The next vendor I want to introduce is someone who almost needs no introduction to most Aurorans.

He is Bob McRoberts, who has been an occasional vendor over the past three years, selling his book entitled "Postcards of Olde Aurora?". The book contains 122 images of Aurora, mostly from 1900 to 1930 as captured on postcards of the day.

It is organized into such topics as streets, churches, schools, buildings, houses, parks, travel-by-rail and novelty cards. Since the book was finished in time for Aurora's 150 year celebrations in 2013, the subtitle is A Sesquicentennial Project. Copies are available via postcardsofolveaurora@bell.net.

Bob's earliest memory of collecting cards dates back to grade three when he would stop at a variety store on Wellington Street to buy a package of baseball or hockey cards on his way home from school for lunch.

A neighbor used to give him stacks of Red Rose Tea cards as well. That was in 1960. Since then, he has collected many different things. It wasn't until 2005 that he thought to combine his long-standing card collecting interest with that of Aurora's history, through the collection of postcards of Aurora. Given the scarcity of these cards, he wishes that he had started earlier. In addition to the postcards, Bob also collects and sells non-sports cards.

Here is some of Bob's family background:

His grandparents, John and Iva Knowles, moved to Aurora to a house on Catherine Avenue in 1923. His dad was the new principal of Aurora High School in its brand new building on Wells Street. He held that position until his retirement 35 years later.

In those days, school administrators were also classroom teachers. Bob's grandfather taught mathematics. It seems to Bob that teachers often come from families of teachers. To wit, his father, Mac, was an elementary school principal, his mother, Nora, and her sister, Ruth, were both teachers, and his brother, Joe, and Bob himself are both math teachers.

Bob's son, Kyle, is a grade four teacher, his daughter, Marnie is an athletic therapist for the Canadian Wheelchair Rugby Team that won a gold medal at the recent ParaPan Games. His wife of 39 years, Kim, manages LifeSpring Physiotherapy.

The last 22 of his 33 years of teaching were spent as the Head of Mathematics at Dr. Williams Secondary School in Aurora.

His grandfather and Bob both retired from the same school. Among the many other things that Bob does, he is a Board member for both the Aurora Historical Society and the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, a member of the town's Heritage Advisory Committee, and a former Deputy Mayor of Aurora.

This year marks his 50th year as member of the Aurora United Church choir. He does some supply teaching, some tutoring, and sings a few solos. His days go quickly, he says, so life must be good. The Farmers' Market has been delighted to have Bob join us again as a vendor on several occasions.

Our next Special Event is our Apples and Honey Fest on September 5. In addition to the usual entertainment on the bandshell and fun activities for the children, we will be honouring two very special individuals in the history of the Aurora Farmers' Market: Nigel Kean who began the market in 2002 in the Temperance Street parking lot and Stephen Granger who shepherded us from about a dozen vendors to about 40 vendors at the Town Park.

Everyone who loves and attends the market owes a debt of gratitude to these two men and are encouraged to attend the ceremony awarding honorary lifetime memberships to both of them at 11 a.m.

See you at the Market!