

MARKET MUSINGS

By **Jan Freedman**

This past Saturday at the Farmers' Market felt like a true fall day with grey skies, cool temperatures and showers threatening to break out at any moment.

While we had a slow start, the faithful Aurora Farmers' Market shoppers were steady throughout the day. There is so much produce to choose from at this time of year and I noticed several people taking bags of food to their cars and returning for a second round of shopping.

There are now several varieties of apples and pears available as well as everbearing strawberries, wild blueberries, plums, grapes, melons, watermelons, peaches and even a few raspberries.

We have new potatoes, beets, beans, tomatoes, carrots, eggplant, zucchini, onions, corn and a whole host of healthy leafy greens. As I have stated before, there is not much that isn't available from the farmers currently. This would be a good time to place your orders for Thanksgiving.

The next new vendor I'd like to introduce is ChaiMei Tey, the owner of Sewing Bear, a home-based handmade fabric craft business in Aurora. The products are stuffed animals, hair accessories, purses, bags and home decorations. Combinations of sewing, patchwork, quilting, knitting and embroidery make the products unique. Names or phrases can be added to make the products more personalized. Each piece is affordable and is well-made with quality fabrics to ensure it will last.

ChaiMei is originally from Malaysia in South East Asia. She used to live in Tokyo where she learned Japanese and obtained her degree in Electrical Engineering.

She worked as an electrical engineer in a leading Japanese research and development centre in Malaysia for more than 10 years, relocated to Singapore for two years and then came to Toronto with her family.

She is now proud to be a Canadian and happy to be at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair where she has turned her hobby into a small business.

She began her fabric crafting in Tokyo, inspired by a fabric crafts' magazine, Cotton Time. The magazine contained not only great ideas, but also stories accompanying each one, instructions and introductions to each designer.

Since that time, ChaiMei has created fabric items large and small. She developed her skills while crafting various fabric gifts for her family and friends. She keeps improving herself through research into ongoing trends and market demands. She is always searching for new ideas by reading craft magazines, attending craft shows and doing online research. Most of the ideas for her crafts are from Japanese craft ideas.

One of her favourite aspects of being at the Farmers' Market is the opportunity to share information and ideas with other artisans. She enjoys meeting the people who visit her booth and like her products. She always welcomes any ideas or comments about her crafts. Drop by her booth in the park or check out her website at www.facebook.com/pages/Sewing-Bear/626580454140378.

Our next Special Event at the Market is a very special one on September 26, when the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair celebrates Culture Days by hosting a Soup Fest.

Starting at 9 a.m., our six chefs will take turns preparing a soup for sampling which will be created using ingredients from the Market. We are very fortunate this year to be able to use a stainless steel mobile kitchen which is visiting us through a grant to the Markham Fair.

The chefs will each have 20-30 minutes to prepare a soup which the public may sample before the next chef takes over the mobile kitchen for his/her shift.

Each chef will start on the half hour until the last one goes at 11:30 a.m. That chef will be creating a Burmese soup to tie into our community's One Book One Aurora project in which Aurorans have been encouraged to read Karen Connelly's ?Burmese Lessons?. This event, when the Market focuses on the culinary arts, is always very popular so please be sure to include a stop at the Farmers' Market in your plans for Saturday, September 26, perhaps on your way to other Culture Days activities in town. The usual entertainment and children's crafts will take place

See you at the Market!