

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

Looking out of my living room window, I see that the grass is covered in a thin layer of snow.

That has me somewhat worried as the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair opens our outdoor season in just over four weeks.

Let's all hope that the weather becomes decidedly more spring-like before then.

You may have noticed that there was a new maple syrup vendor at the previous Indoor Market on March 12.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin come to us from Maxwell, Ontario. They were both born and raised in Waterloo County. Mr. Martin grew up on a farm where his parents raised cattle and swine as well as crops to feed the animals. They also helped other family members in the production of maple syrup.

Mr. Martin, whose first language is Pennsylvania Dutch, attended a local school where he completed Grade 8. After that, he was needed to help with a myriad of jobs on the family farm.

When the time came for Mr. Martin to think about acquiring a farm of his own, land in Waterloo County had become too dear. In 1999, his father found suitable land in Maxwell, where other family members have also settled. In 2006, Mr. Martin took over and the farm was transferred to his name.

From the age of 14, Mr. Martin has had a strong interest in logging, woodcutting and building. He continues to help a cousin, who is a building contractor, on a part time basis. He has built two new barns for his sows and cattle and, in 2014, built an addition on to his house.

Mr. Martin and his wife raise cattle and swine on their farm. They have a herd of 80 cattle and 150 sows. They also grow crops to feed their animals.

In addition, they have 20 acres of sugar bush and sell 10 bush cord of firewood every year. They also produce high quality Ontario maple syrup from their sugar bush.

The Martins sell their maple syrup at various venues in the area and always welcome customers to the farm in Maxwell. They will be attending the final Indoor Market of the season at the Armouries on Saturday, April 9, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. They are considering coming to the Outdoor Market during the spring. Please visit their table to talk to them about their maple syrup and baking.

As for the vendors, you can expect to see at this final Indoor Market on April 9, I'm tempted to say, 'all the usual suspects', but here is a list:

The farmers will include the Abbott Family Farm, 19th Avenue Farm, Oakridges Finest (with this year's maple syrup), Pioneer Brand Honey and Kind Organics and Mr. & Mrs. Martin from Maxwell.

Among the food vendors will be Cosmo's Smoked Meats, Catharina's Kitchen, Green River Coffee, Nicole's Cakes, Nutmeg Bake Shop, Sasha's Sweets, John Abraham's Projet Christina Marie and Guilt Free Goodness with gluten free items.

The talented artisans will include Anne Waters and her unusual jewelry, the Bear's Den with knitted socks and fingerless mittens, Eva Nagy and her fabric creations, Victoria's Green Leaf Designs (jewelry), Kibo Natural Body care products, Nancy Wood and her fabric and knitted and crocheted items and Lucy's Limitless Jewels. We look forward to seeing our friends and customers there.

See you at the Indoor Market!