

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

I hope that you all enjoyed a wonderful summer and are ready to return to work and school now that the long Labour Day weekend is over. Of course, the summer technically isn't over until later this month and, for now, the hot, sticky weather remains.

This coming Saturday, September 8, will be very busy at the Farmers' Market as the Town will be hosting the third annual Multicultural Festival in Town Park, beginning at 11 am. Many of our vendors will be staying in place for the afternoon. As well, Natalie Allan will be running another Yoga class from 9.30-10.30 a.m. Let me introduce her.

Natalie Allan is new to Aurora, having moved here to marry her husband, David. They can often be seen in and around Town Park exercising their three large dogs, two huskies and a great dane. Natalie is American, having grown up moving all over the country-from Texas, to California to Indiana and, finally, to Kansas City, Kansas.

She graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in Sculpture and Art History before moving to San Diego to join the corporate world. However, it turned out that the corporate life was not what she was looking for, so she left California to pursue her true passion for the arts. What she intended to be a one-year sabbatical, turned into a whirlwind of art, love and yoga. During this time, she met her wonderful husband, completed her 200 hour YTT certification and moved to her new home in Aurora.

Now that Natalie has set roots in the Aurora community, she feels honoured to teach and share the practice of yoga, combining two things that she loves. She says that she found yoga at a time in her life when anxiety overshadowed her happiness.

What began as a Thursday night class at her university gym where she wobbled and fell has become her place of balance and peace. It helped to calm her chattering mind, brought attention and focus to her breathing and became a tether to a better version of herself.

Now, over a decade later, she feels fortunate to be able to share the gifts that yoga has brought her with her new community through her classes. Natalie will be back one more time, on October 6, at the Farmers' Market.

Also coming to the Market this coming Saturday will be the Newmarket-Aurora chapter of Amnesty International. Amnesty, founded in 1961, is a global movement of more than seven million people in over 150 countries who campaign to end abuses of human rights. Independent of any government, religion or political ideology, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides the bedrock for its principles and campaigns.

Amnesty helps prisoners of conscience and those who have been persecuted because of race, gender, religion or beliefs. After intense research to verify the human rights abuses, Amnesty will publish reports, advise the media and ask their members to write appeal letters which cannot be ignored by governments. There are clear guidelines as to how to word the letters to be respectful and effective. Often, these letters result in the arrest of torturers, laws being changed and innocent, persecuted people going free.

For over 1/3 of political prisoners, there is a tangible improvement in their situation as a direct result of Amnesty involvement. After their release, many say that Amnesty support and letters gave them hope and the strength to carry on.

If you feel passionately about human rights, as I do, why not join Amnesty's local group which meets most months at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora. The group discusses current human rights issues, writes letters to support urgent action campaigns and plan annual community events. Visit their booth on Saturday for more information.

Next time I will tell you about our annual 'Soup Fest' on Sept.29 in celebration of 'Culture Days'.

See you at the Market!