

SENIOR SCAPE: Market Going Strong

By **Sylvia Dickens**

Did you know that the beginnings of the Aurora Farmer's Market has roots going back 112 years? The great news is that it's still going strong. How many of you can say that?

The market, which includes the Artisan Fair, hibernates in winter and has just reopened. From now until the end of summer, you can shop to your heart's content any Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Town Park on Wells Street.

Throughout the season, organizers will present eight special event days that include entertainment, free arts and crafts for the children and a draw for a bag of market goodies.

Seniors' Day this year will be held on August 2 when you can enjoy music by Robert Davis. Be sure to visit and support the local farmers and artisans without whom there would be no farmer's market here.

Besides, the products will be about as fresh as you can get. As mentioned in this column in recent weeks, the longer food takes to get to your plate, the less powerful are the nutrients. Grocery stores don't carry produce this fresh and no doubt you've noticed their produce is frequently well under par.

Farmers markets have been a major feature in urban communities for centuries. It quickly became a social event for the entire community. Equally important, it's an opportunity for farmers to sell their goods without the high costs of shipping to manufacturing and distribution plants. Often, their fresh foods are much tastier than what you get elsewhere at a higher price.

Not long ago, I discovered a bag of Holland Marsh carrots at the store. They were plump, bright orange, and extremely tasty, just the way I remember them.

It had been a very long time since I had such delicious and flavorful carrots. Sadly, I haven't seen them since so it must have been a one-off. If you spot a farmer from the Marsh offering carrots, be sure to grab some fast.

Are you a preserver?

Are you one of the many who enjoys putting up preserves? It's a good way to make those fresh items last well beyond shelf life and provide nutritious food all year round. My father had a small garden where he grew string beans, radishes, carrots and other produce to feed our family of five.

My mother wasn't into canning, but she sure knew how to take advantage of those delicious items, pulled fresh from the garden. It must be great to be able to step into your yard to get produce for your evening meal whenever you need it.

As a kid, I frequently was allowed to pull some rhubarb. My mother provided a saucer of sugar and I sat content on the doorstep enjoying this special treat.

Free time?

If you enjoy harvesting, canning, cooking and anything else to do with food, and if you have some free time on your hands, Yellow Brick House can use your help.

The organization provides emergency and transitional shelter and counseling for women and their children who have experienced domestic abuse. A new program ?Growing Together in Mentorship? is currently being developed to empower victims and rebuild their lives through learning life skills.

The program requires a group of older women to act as mentors. Your role will be to help teach them about gardening, harvesting, preparing, cooking, baking, canning and preserving nutritious foods.

Organizers are also looking for people who are interested in getting involved at a more intensive level to participate in a Working Group. This group will identify topics for each workshop and prepare necessary items and equipment for its implementation.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Marni Herskovits at Yellow Brick House at 905-709-0900.

Pickle Ball Surprise

It's a surprise to me. Did you know that the Centre is now offering outdoor pickle ball? They must have introduced it when I was on hiatus.

Games won't be at the Centre, though, but at Norm Weller Park off McClellan Way in the south end of town. The season started on Monday at 9 a.m. and will continue throughout the summer, weather permitting. Be sure to bring water to keep yourself hydrated. You'll also want to bring a lawn chair and paddles. Contact the reception desk if you are interested in playing.

No Slouches

Our seniors are no slouches. During the Mayor's Anti-litter clean-up recently, volunteer pickle ball members set out in early morning hours and picked up garbage from around the Centre, the Arboretum and Town Hall areas. Thank you, volunteers, for helping to make spring beautiful again.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre, drop by 90 John West Way, visit www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.