

MUSIC FOR MY FRIENDS

Some of my fellow gardeners will have heard me, seen me around, with a squeeze box, a concertina. I played for my friends - the plants whose growth was triggered by seeds or seedlings which we brought to our community gardens.

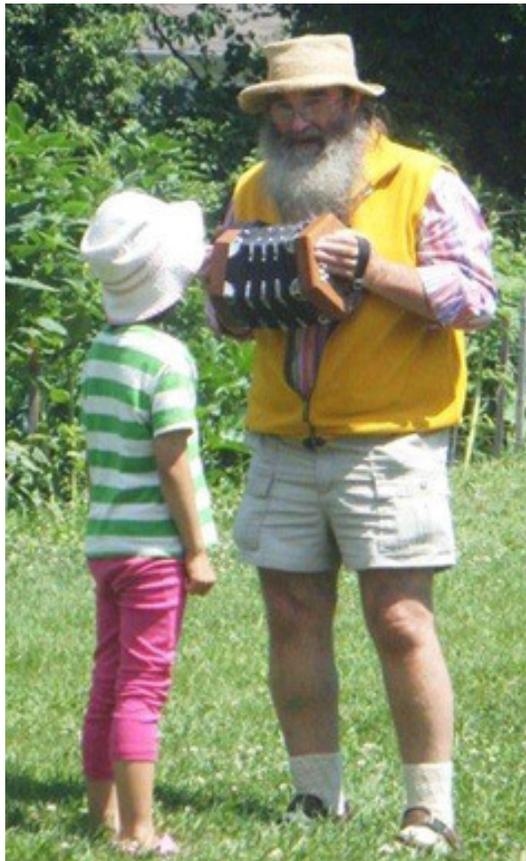
These plants, all plants, they are friends of mine. What would our world be without them. Their green presence, and those colourful flowers - and then their edible parts. And on them there are the little animals, which we often classify as bugs. But they are all part of the interdependencies of nature.

Nature is my God. If everything were left to its own devices - if we humans would forget about wanting to manage everything around us, would just live in harmony with all the creatures and plants, and the landscape, would respect everything around us, how much more harmonious would our lives be.

I am convinced that plants, as well as all the little and bigger critters, have souls and sensitivities. Yes, even rocks (not just the ones in my head!) They probably enjoy the melodious sounds of music as much as we do. In fact, I understand that some people have studied the influence of musical sounds on plants - and have confirmed that plants which are exposed to music grow taller and are healthier.

But, naturally, I also enjoy the music of my squeeze box. And I am convinced my fellow gardeners do, as well. Many of us are from other countries, were born and raised there. We were exposed to rich folklore. Many of the melodies which I play are from other countries, but not all. I don't play hard rock - it doesn't sound good to my ears. And I am assuming that whatever I like to listen to, my friends will also like. How else could they be my friends?!

Often my musical interludes are rather short. But I shall try to improve on that. May be there are other gardeners who can play some music. Maybe some string instrument. Or someone could sing. I am sure the plants and critters would really turn heads - and I certainly would.



For those of you who like music and hiking: Starting in the late summer I am volunteering to lead hikes, mostly on the Oak Ridges Moraine. I expect to bring along the squeeze box. My plan is to sing while we are walking - unless we are in the middle of some ecologically rich environment, or in difficult terrain. We could learn a new song on every hike, with lyrics being handed out. Hopefully we can take advantage of our rich ethnic backgrounds, and learn songs from all corners of the world. Wouldn't that be something!

Where I grew up we often carried songbooks on our hikes - and we regularly 'schmettered' (sang out loudly) our favourite folk songs. Those songs, and many more which I have learnt since then, English, American, and French ones, are still in my head. My only problem: I don't have a singer's voice. But I am sure other hikers have those voices!

Happy gardening- and hiking - and singing!

Klaus Wehrenberg

Klaus Wehrenberg can be spotted from time to time strolling up and down the paths playing his concertina at the Newmarket Community Garden. Markham community gardeners may recall him when he played his instrument at the Markham Open House event last summer. For those of you who like music and hiking, Klaus will be leading musical hikes throughout York Region later this summer. Anyone interested in learning more about his hikes, please give him a call at 905-841-1026.

Catherine Cook

Food for health – Food for all

Our new vision **Food for health – Food for all** reflects York Region Food Network’s focus on capacity building and system responses to food security. The focus of our work is based on two premises: Good food is a basic building block for good health, and the main cause of food insecurity in York Region is lack of income.

The public is constantly bombarded with advertisements about time saving prepared foods, restaurants that use popular culture to market food, and food that has been processed to match diet trends and fads. Our programs offer simple, healthy alternatives. In our community gardens you can grow your own food – what better way to know what you’re eating and where your food has come from?

Our new Good Food Box program allows people to purchase fresh produce on a monthly basis, year round, and projects like our Cultural

Guides to Fresh Food link consumers to farmers. We strive to offer programs and information to support access to affordable, acceptable and accessible food available through a socially just system.

York Region Food Network was started in 1986 to raise awareness of hunger because people did not know that it existed in our affluent community. Food banks have now been a presence for decades.

Unfortunately the recent recession has highlighted the growing vulnerability that exists in our neighbourhoods, and the need to move beyond the emergency responses to hunger. How long are we willing to tolerate the systemic biases that keep people living in poverty?

Blueprint for a Poverty-Free Ontario (PFO)

presented by

Social Planning Network of Ontario

June 7, 2010

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Aurora Public Library, Magna Room
15145 Yonge Street, Aurora, ON

Everyone is welcome

We know that lack of healthy food and persistent poverty are major contributors to stresses on our health care system – growing diabetes and obesity rates reflect this. A recent York University study shows that people living in poverty are four times more likely to develop diabetes than the affluent in our society. Our health care system is under stress because we are not willing to address these social determinants of health – things like adequate income, safe and affordable housing, food security and social inclusion - which have a greater impact on health than lifestyle choices like smoking or lack of physical activity. Attention to prevention is a way to relieve some of the pressure on health care costs.

Food impacts our lives every single day. It nourishes us and helps create connections – when we grow food together or sit down and share a meal, we support each other and move towards a healthier community.

*Joan Stonehocker
Executive Director*

Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc. Donates \$5,000 for Gleaning



Pictured from left to right: Geoff Morrow, Director Corporate Planning & Business Development; Agnes Nemeth, Director Human Resources; Joan Stonehocker, YRFN Executive Director; Michael Tremblay, President; Mark Hammar, Director Sales and Anne Armstrong, Administrative Associate.

DO THE MATH YORK REGION – NEXT STEPS

In June 2009, the DO THE MATH WORKING GROUP of York Region was struck and we have worked diligently since that time to convince MPPs of the need for implementation of the \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement (HFS) for all adults on social assistance and for rates that reflect the real costs of living. We have made progress on this front and yet the politicians still need to know that this is an issue for voters.



Advocates Group supporting individuals through the letter writing campaign to MPPs

We were excited to receive funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to allow us to continue our work – to bring individuals and organizations to a place where they could voice their need for the province to put hunger and poverty on the agenda in this election year. Our project **ADVOCACY: AWARENESS TO ACTION** (AAA) is intended to bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Many people are aware of the costs of poverty to everyone in our society, but are not equipped or sure how they can advocate and initiate change. We are producing a video that will inspire individuals and groups to get involved and have a voice on this issue

and most importantly will speak to concrete ways in which they can actually do that.

In cooperation with several agencies and people with lived experience of poverty, we are also developing an Advocacy Plan for the year of 2011 that will enable us to make our voices heard through Media, Letter Writing Campaigns, Social Networking Tools, Individual, group and municipal endorsements of the HFS, Group Presentations and Team Meetings with MPPs across York Region. We are working with one Advocates Group in the north end of the Region preparing individuals to reach out and speak to others about how they can get involved and make a difference, and are planning for another Advocates Group to begin in the south end of the Region in April.

We work closely with the Provincial PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET (PFIB) Campaign which is active in 30 communities across Ontario. You can always visit www.putfoodinthebudget.ca and www.yrfn.ca to learn about current activities and ways to advocate for the \$100 HFS. We have just launched a campaign to educate people about the burden on meal programs and food banks across Ontario that are trying to keep up with the increasing demand for food. Visit the site and find out how you can support the thousands of volunteers in emergency food programs across Ontario, by asking the provincial government to increase its role.

We are excited about the AAA Project and to be addressing income inadequacy – the real cause of hunger and food insecurity. Keep posted on what we're up to by checking out both the websites above and call Yvonne at (905)967-0428 Ext. 205 for more information.

*Yvonne Kelly
Program Coordinator*

www.yrfn.ca

York Region Food Network is excited about our new web site. The site features the same resources we've always had, but is more intuitive and offers a fresh look and feel that is more focused on food security issues and activities in York Region.

Our web site offers information on our programs, local food resources, events and publications. There is also information on poverty and food security and how you can get involved in your community. You can read our latest entries, subscribe to RSS feeds of our website posts (and comment on them if you'd like), join our Facebook page, keep track of our events, and see our Tweets.

We invite you to visit the new www.yrfn.ca today, join our York Region Food Network Facebook group, and follow us on Twitter @YRFoodNetwork.

POOR NO MORE ... there *IS* a way out

We were always told, "If you work hard, things will get better." But many hard-working Canadians have only seen things get worse. Corporate profits soared, but only the rich got richer. The recession took away more jobs and piled up more debt, leaving more people poor or insecure.

Poor No More offers solutions to Canada's working poor. The film takes three Canadians to a world where people do not have to beg, where housing is affordable and university education is free. They ask themselves: if other countries can do this, why don't we?

Join us for a free screening of this movie on one of the following dates:

NATIONAL HUNGER AWARENESS DAY

Tuesday, May 31st, 2011

7:00 pm – movie viewing; 8:30 pm - discussion

Georgina Civic Centre, 26557 Civic Centre Road, Keswick, ON

Please RSVP to kima@yrfn.ca by May 24th

Thursday, June 2nd, 2011

7:00 pm – movie viewing; 8:30 pm – discussion

Richmond Hill Library, 1 Atkinson Street, Richmond Hill, ON

Please RSVP to kima@yrfn.ca by May 26th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, June 9, 2011

6:30 pm – YRFN AGM; 7:00 pm – movie viewing; 8:30 pm – discussion

Crosslands Church, 47 Millard Ave. W., Newmarket, ON

Please RSVP to kima@yrfn.ca by June 2nd

Join York Region Food Network's Fundraising Campaign

I support YRFN's work to improve access to affordable, nutritious food for all people of York Region.

I have enclosed my donation of: \$20 \$50 \$100 Other

Please make cheques payable to York Region Food Network.

YRFN will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations over \$20.

Name: _____

Address: _____

To donate by credit card, visit our website at www.yrfn.ca and click on the link to CanadaHelps.org, a secure website where you can make a tax deductible credit card donation to YRFN.

Your privacy is important to us, and we are committed to protecting and safeguarding your personal information. We do not rent, sell or trademark our mailing list, but rather use it to keep you informed of York Region Food Network's activities, services and programs. Please contact our office to update your information or to be removed from the mailing list.

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