

Historical Notes

Fruits, veggies focus of monthly society meeting

Vegetables, fruit and flowers were the focus of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society meeting held at Parkview Village last Wednesday.

Sheila Hulford brought a display of her unusual seeds and showed slides of some crop varieties that our ancestors would have been familiar with. Sheila is an enthusiastic member of the Heritage Seed Program, as well as having interests in genealogy, calligraphy, history and art.

The Heritage Seed Program was started several years ago in an attempt to search out and preserve heirloom plant varieties in danger of disappearing. Members practice proper techniques to keep varieties pure, gather and store the seed and make it available to other members at no cost. The program has become a living gene bank dedicated to preserving horticultural heritage. "The fruit and vegetables of our ancestors'

farms and gardens were more flavorful than the ones we eat today," said Sheila. "Many thousands of varieties are no longer commercially grown."

Modern agriculture has developed crops to withstand pests, disease, challenging conditions such as drought, the altering climate, pollution, acid rain and the rigors of long distance shipping. Consequently, the number of different varieties produced has diminished. "At the turn of the century, 8,000 varieties of apples were being grown in the US," said Hulford. "By the 1980s, that total had dropped to 1,000, a loss of 7,000 varieties that will never be regained."

The Heritage Seed Program has over 350 varieties of fruit growing in its nursery orchard on Salt Spring Island, BC. A network of heritage orchards exists in North America, growing apples with names such as Maiden's Bush and Cox's Orange Pippin. "Diversity in

horticulture enriches our lives," she said. "Smaller scale gardeners can make a contribution by growing traditional crops and sharing seed and cuttings with friends and neighbors." Historic sites such as Upper Canada Village at Morrisburg have vegetable and flower gardens growing the traditional plants in their original settings. Heritage flowers grown there include 4 o'clocks, heliotrope, catchfly, hollyhocks and the dainty love-lies-bleeding, a relative of amaranth.

"Spread the word about seed saving and our diverse horticultural heritage will survive for future generations to enjoy," smiles Sheila Hulford. If you would like to learn more about the techniques for preserving seeds or would like to grow some heritage varieties, write to the Heritage Seed Program, RR3, Uxbridge, Ontario, L9P 1R3 or contact a member of the WSHS.

- Fenella Smith

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Accredited by the Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Ontario, MNS diligently abides by the Code of Professional Ethics set by the institute. In addition, they are members of the Markham Board of

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Mounir is an MBA and has more than 14 years of management consulting experience, ten of which were with a Deloitte & Touche Management Consultants. He was involved in and managed several consulting projects in a number of private and public organizations.

The long-time Unionville resident is actively involved in local municipal activities, and works

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Mounir Sahyoun of MNS Holdings Inc., Certified Management Consultants, in his office. A picture hanging on his office wall reflects his core belief that, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference."

occasionally as a volunteer at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

MNS also owns and operated Ice-Nook Family Skating Centres, the first indoor synthetic ice skating rink in Canada, located in the Bramalea City Centre shopping mall in Brampton. Mounir plans to franchise the concept and establish an Ice-Nook location in Markham.

For more information on how MNS can be of assistance to your planned or existing business, please contact Mounir Sahyoun, MBA, CMC at 905-940-2877 or fax him at 905-940-0998.

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