

Vending my way to the farmers' market

Trilliums, Muskoka and Parry Sound rocks and Colorado blue spruce aren't going to make me rich. But they are keeping me busy.

Before I explain, you're invited to the Markham Farmers' Market opening day on Saturday.

Put on your track pants and runners and head to the corner of Robinson and Main Street (Hwy. 48) in Markham village.

It's a wonderful expression of community spirit. Come early. There's nothing like the smell of baked bread at 8 a.m.

The event is a traditional farmers' market. As the world becomes more complex, we need the simple touch. Very often I buy veggies at the Stouffville Country Market, which is open weekends on 10th Line north of Main Street.

I might pay less in the grocery stores, but I prefer to buy direct from farmers. They're nice people.

The Markham Farmers' Market is diversified and fun. On Saturday it offers the York

University Jazz Band and the Michael Cado Trio, while town historian Lorne Smith demonstrates old-fashioned farm implements.

Of course, the market also has Ontario's very best vegetables,

fruits, jams and jellies. There will be no end of garden nursery products, including bedding plants, baskets, trees and garden rocks, too.

Plenty of activities are slated for market days (always Saturdays) throughout the summer: a Martha Stewart day, a hot dog day, a baking contest, tiny talent time, a chili contest and a 4-H day.

While it's the third year for the market, it's first year I've been part of the action.

I am a vendor. My walk into vendorland started when I decided to get rich.

My life has ranged from poor to not-so-poor to sort-of-poor to I don't know what.

This vendor thing started when I realized my bathroom needed fixing. I checked my bank balance. It can't even fund a birdhouse renovation.

I looked at the big picture. "Cash in on your talents," somebody commanded. I answered, "I can garden."

I played Q and A: What do I have that they might want? Answer: Rocks, trilliums and baby trees, providing I can find them.

Over the past decade or so, I've collected rocks from the



Joan Ransberry

Muskoka and Parry Sound area. They are beautiful.

They cover my gardens and the gardens of family and friends. Those rocks matter to me. I risked life and limb to retrieve them from the darkest places.

I wore out at least a car and a half hauling them over side roads and many, many miles of highway. I rock-hunted in thunderstorms, snow squalls and heat waves.

I hunted rocks so much my children wondered if I'd be happier spending my remaining years on a nice rock pile in a nice prison.

Now the trilliums. Last year, I priced Ontario's flower at a number of nurseries. The average cost was \$6 each.

I asked my father how many were in the hardwood bush at our family farm. About six million, he said. If I dug up half and sold them for \$4 each, I'd be able to re-do the bathroom and have \$11,998,000 left.

Two weeks ago, I ventured to the bush, spent five hours and found eight healthy trillium plants. Yes, I could dig up six million, providing I had 593 years of life left.

I returned a few times, spent \$32 in gas and dug for 16 hours. Now I have enough for the market.

It took one sister, a brother-in-law and a neighbour calling all over Ontario trying to find Colorado blue spruce seedlings.

They're like hen's teeth. However, I scored enough to add seedlings to my little booth.

If you've just been born and you're reading this, give your mother a spruce tree for Mother's Day. When you're 17 years old, it'll stand about 20 feet high.

On Saturday, at the crack of dawn, me and my journalism colleague and friend Hannelore Volpe will get up at the crack of dawn, load her pickup truck with rocks, trees and potted trilliums, then head to Markham and turn me into a vendor.

Trust me, when you visit my booth, I will be glad to see you.

OUR TERIYAKI SALMON

We used farmed Atlantic Salmon exclusively at our store — but not just any type. It must be from Jail Island Farm in New Brunswick. It costs more than the Chilean Salmon (or Heritage brand), but it's the very best. Available this week we're featuring our Teriyaki Salmon fillets which are totally boneless — perfect to bar-b-que — but wait, there's more! One of our busy bees from the kitchen, Mary Krawchuk, has been hard at work and come up with a new flavour to thrill you, and it is ... Ginger-Orange! — and for those of you who are less adventurous and want to make your own as well.

Reg. \$12.95 lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

OUR PEAMEAL BACON

We sell a lot of this bacon because (a) we use centre-cuts only — no ends (b) we use a low-salt cure (c) we trim it lean so that there's next to no fat (d) we don't pump it with brine to the extent that it becomes watery (a common practice with peameal) and (e) we don't extend the product (as I see that many others do when you see on the package label "12% protein added"). What that means is that the weight ends up being 12% more than when they started. This is accomplished by using 'tumbling machines' which increase product yield (read: more profit) at the expense of product quality. It's what we don't do that makes our bacon so good! So if peameal is on your menu this week, get your knives out, sharpen them up and come and see us, cause your peameal deal is back!

By the piece
Reg. \$4.99 lb.

P.S. If your knife is really dull, bring it too. We'll sharpen it!

SAGE & ONION SAUSAGES

Our weekly sausage feature is our venerable sage & onion sausage. We make them with fresh pork, salt, pepper and sage as well as, you guessed it, sautéed onions. This is one of the few sausages we make without garlic.

Reg. \$3.99 lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' FOR MOTHER'S DAY?

Like many things in life, spontaneity is over-rated; the anticipation of a planned-out event adds excitement more often than not. It would be true in the case of our bakery for next week, but with one difference. If you plan ahead, you'll actually be able to get the cake of your choice, and they are ...



"Happy Mothers Day, Mom. I Love You, Dylan"

RASPBERRY MOUSSE BOMBES, made with raspberry mousse covered with slices of raspberry jelly roll, apricot glazed and decorated with fresh flowers.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, made with velvety white cake, fresh California berries, whipped cream topped with fresh berries.

BLACK & WHITE MOUSSE CAKE, with dark & white chocolate mousses layered with white & dark chocolate cakes, decorated with, as you might guess, white & dark chocolate shavings.

LEMON MOUSSE CAKES, lemon and white chocolate mousse between two layers of white cake with strawberries on the sides.

CHEESECAKES, in a variety of flavours and styles.

OUR GREAT CHOCOLATE OR WHITE CAKES nicely decorated for the occasion with fresh flowers.

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STEM BERRIES, really big and beautiful.

I LOVE YOU MOM, sugar & gingerbread cookies.

KIWI FRUIT

These are large size 23's

3/99¢

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH

You'll be able to get a hot sandwich every day (except Sunday) ... at our hot counter. In every case they'll be 1/4 lb. size, and they are ...

MONDAY - 1/4 LB. SLICED PRIME RIB ON A KAISER — \$3.99

TUESDAY - 1/4 LB. SLICED HOMEMADE CORNED BEEF AND MUSTARD ON CARAWAY RYE OR A KAISER — \$3.99

WEDNESDAY - 1/4 LB. MAPLE SUGAR HAM WITH SWISS CHEESE ON A KAISER — \$3.99

THURSDAY - PRIME RIB AGAIN

FRIDAY - 1/4 LB. STUFFED PORK LOIN ON A KAISER — \$3.99

SATURDAY - 1/4 LB. PEAMEAL ON A KAISER — \$2.99

Sandwiches are available from 11:30 a.m. till 2:00 p.m., except Saturday, when they will be available from 8:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

ROASTED RED PEPPER DIP

Make your cracker happy — buy some of our Roasted Red Pepper Dip. Veggies will be happy too — and once you taste it, you will be as well!!!!

Reg. \$1.99 / 100 g

25% OFF THIS WEEK

CURRIED SQUASH AND APPLE SOUP

This is a great soup! When it's 'under construction' in the kitchen, in the long, slow-simmering phase, it drives me crazy. The exotic flavour of the Curry, Apples and Squash combo is the perfect marriage of seasonings. I think (and all the guys who are working in our chilling cooler, think), that it's the best!

Reg. \$5.49 ea. Serves 3-4

25% OFF THIS WEEK

KATE'S BUCKS!

Has everyone heard of 'Kate's Garden'? This lovely garden store is located in the plaza on the south-west corner of Hwy. #7 and McCowan Rd. — and it's owned and run by ... you guessed it, **KATE!** Since we're friends and customers of one another, we decided to collaborate during this year's garden and plant season. The deal is that every time you buy a plant from us, we'll give you a 'Kate's Buck' worth a dollar off any item you wish from her store. You can save them up till you have a few, go and see Kate and her staff — and shop! One condition applies: Kate explained that since her margins are on the smaller side, the maximum discount per item is 20%. It's a good deal on both sides — you get great plants and you'll find great planters, arbours, trellis work and garden accessories at Kate's place!

HADEN MANGOES

There are 4 main types of mangoes, and Haden's are the best. We've got them this week in a '9' size, which is really large, they've got good colour and they're ready to enjoy. From Mexico!

99¢ ea.



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY MAY 12TH

Hours:
Mon. 11:00-7:00 - Tues. Thurs. 9:00-7:00 - Fri. 9:00-8:00
Sat. 9:00-6:00 - Sun. 10:00-5:00
548 Carlton Road, Unionville
940-1770