



Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc.

Wooden Spoons

Volume II, Issue 1

Fall, 2004

Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc. provides education in nutritional home cooking and home-making in harmony with individual, community and cultural traditions, with respect and care for the environment. *Mission Statement*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” I Timothy 6: 18-19

THAT WHICH IS LIFE INDEED

As the summer days slide into autumn and the tomatoes in our garden dare to blaze in crimson glory thanks to Indira's planning and care, we look to the coming months with something that combines anticipation and a little nostalgia. The approach of autumn always does that to me, just as it did when I was a schoolchild. There are new friends to meet, new classes to take, new lessons to learn, only some of which occur in the classroom. All of these prospects bring a measure of excitement to a season that will inevitably lead to the challenges of another Manitoba winter as nature takes a rest from growth until next spring.

At Mary Jane's Cooking School these nostalgic feelings of late summer quickly give way to preparations for sharing our message of health in the home and harmony with the environment once again. To that end, class schedules have been designed and sent out, books obtained as reference materials, the school cleaned from top to bottom, and the garden prepared for harvest. Both

former students and new friends are calling to ask, “What's cooking?” in our plans for the coming season. It's an exciting time indeed.

This fall we're especially excited about our upcoming season of Wooden Spoons on CKUW, 95.9 FM. We've brought together a lineup of interviews that look at health in the community from a variety of perspectives, including food and nutrition, alternative medicine, home and school, health and beauty, mental health and issues related to aging. Each program will bring knowledgeable guests together with the program hosts in a half-hour of lively questions and answers mixed with insightful commentary.

We speak of Mary Jane's Cooking School as a community place because more and more people and groups from the community are coming to us with ideas that include sharing space, raising awareness, developing programs and responding to challenges of injustice and harm to the environment. These groups and individuals come because they have learned about our commitment to

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the well being of people and to our world. Whether their need is for instruction in nutrition, support in finding accommodation and employment, or encouragement just to keep going, our visitors know that Mary Jane's Cooking School will welcome them with the kind of hospitality known in generations past but too sadly absent in a world of constant hurry today.

When they come to our threshold, our visitors enter a sacred space; a place where the love of peace and of kindness, of health and of harmony reigns. Drop in and join us; you'll be glad you did. And enjoy the fall, as we move ahead into another season once again.

Laura Steiman

NATURE AS SACRED SPACE

In August 2004 my husband and I spent a week in the country home of my parents, who are both deceased. The house built by my grandfather, was the home of two generations and serves as a retreat to a third generation. Located rather remotely, it is surrounded by two fields on either side that are enclosed by an ancient forest that stretches around to the back. To the west lies what we always referred to as the "stone ridge", a meadow strewn with bedrock and dotted with low shrubbery and wild foliage that greets the encroaching poplars that also form a band around it. Goldenrods, daisies, bluebells, wild sage, asters, hyssop, broom grass and other plants too numerous to identify all tenaciously rooted in the shallow soil atop the rocks form a colorful canopy.

I call the forest at the back of the farm house ancient because it escaped the ravages of clearing the land both by my grandfather and his

offspring, and by my father who depended upon it for his winter wood, our only source of warmth in extremely cold winters. My father never did clear-cut. He knew how to harvest his wood in a way that left no damage. And so remains this forest of black poplar, interspersed with cranberry bushes, spruce and some oak, on low ground that forms a slough, home to deer, rabbits, partridges and other wildlife. The tall poplars, make their own special sound in the wind, the sound of thousands of round leaves quivering to form a prominent background rustling. In the evening the return of the nocturnal whippoorwill, a rare bird in our times, can be heard from the forest bed.

The deer bed down in the tall grass and in early evening and at dawn are sometimes spotted crossing the yard, grazing or heading toward the cover of forest. Deer are extremely timid and keenly alert to noise and presence, a mark of all creatures in the wild

It is very difficult to see wildlife, but be assured they see and are watching you. The birds cascade in the air, actively flying and singing. Hummingbirds seem to appear from nowhere, as they glean, along with the bees, the last nectar from maturing flowers.

Our week on the farm brought me back into what some would call isolation. I could not help reminisce about my deceased grandparents and my own parents and how they lived on this land. Before the era of electricity, theirs was a generation of pioneers forced to eke out a living through toil and physical labour. Their passing marked the end of an era. My own mother's presence is felt in this house with its airy sweetness amid the hardships of pioneer life. Two knarled maple trees, some eighty years old, stand like guardians to the house, planted as saplings by my mother and Aunt Mary in their girlhood days. And yes, the mice were still around, busying themselves between the walls, as if they belonged there in the old wood.

Nature as Sacred Space...

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On the stone ridge, sheep once grazed. Many were culled by the coyotes whose howling still pierces the night. As a child I spent time on this stone ridge. My grandfather used to walk across the ridge to our neighbours, his son and family, often taking me with him. Sitting on the rocks I now found myself reminiscing but also contemplating. This is nature's way. This land is nature's expression and spirit. This is the mystery of God. One is also faced with nothingness, the Zen meditator's emptiness, the void, the timelessness of nature, eternity. One's importance suddenly is annihilated in this presence; the ego has no comfortable place here. All alone, what if one encounters a bear? That thought is a great equalizer. The silence of nature, that is what we fear. We fear the insignificance, the truth of nature's way. Nature is a teacher some would say. But for me, living in the city as I do, I fear for the preservation of nature and this fear is uppermost in my mind. This fear is justified because of our own species, which has abandoned nature, and has estranged itself from its fold.

I noted that even small towns like Fisher Branch, has on its grocery shelves a great many so called food items of dubious quality and products that damage the environment. In our last issue of Wooden Spoons, the article addressed that very topic. Even people of the country, I am sad to say have fallen under the corporate influence of fast food, and convenience food that appeals to taste but is nutritionally impoverished. Moreover the packaging of these products directly and indirectly destroy the environment. They require natural resources, they produce garbage that contaminates the natural world and put our health and that of other creatures in jeopardy. Indeed our choices and especially our food choices have deep implications. An awareness of that is

necessary to soften or eliminate any negative impact.

But back to the stone ridge, I found myself saying a prayer, if you can call it that. To that spirit of nature and Creator I asked that may this land never be desecrated by humans that it would remain a wild land, nature's home for its many creatures, a habitat for wildlife. Should any people in future generations live here, may they live gently on this land so as not to destroy its character and its wealth. As I sat there a sudden noise was heard, a rustling of the leaves, and swaying grass. Out of nowhere, this sound increased all around me and the wind picked up and intensified the rushing sound. Suddenly, the noise of swooshing and sighing and rustling spread throughout the circle of trees surrounding the stone ridge. I became aware of a large circle. In front of me the broom grass swayed back and forth and a flurry of insects flew up in a dance with the grasses. The sky with its puffy nimbus cumulous clouds showed no evidence of storm. I remained there for quite some time until this unexpected wind song died down. I knew that communication had taken place. Nature had responded to my prayer. No, this was not my imagination. Nature is living and intelligent and I was graced on that stone ridge with a rare opportunity to recognize nature's way of communicating its affirmation and Joy.

Submitted by Mary Jane Eason, Community Nutritionist and Program Coordinator

AT HOME IN CANADA

Through a grant from the Anti-Poverty Fund KAIROS Canada, MJCS was able to offer a nutrition and food preparation program for refugees. The program (May 1 to July 31) ended with a feast and closing ceremony shared with friends and guests. Of the eight participants, six were from the Sudan, one from Nigeria and one from Angola. It was a rewarding experience for all of us.

DIABETES AND THE MEDICINE WHEEL

The Medicine Wheel is an Aboriginal teaching tool for a balanced life. It is holistic in that it represents all aspects of life captured in four quadrants: mental, emotional, physical and spiritual, which should be in balance. The Medicine Wheel is an excellent tool for teaching about diabetes. It is all about balance. Diabetes is a disease that expresses itself as an imbalance in the metabolism of blood sugar. The imbalance arises from an unbalanced diet based on processed and overly refined foods. The foods of nature, are whole foods with a balance of nutrients we require for health. When we depart from this manner of eating, imbalances occur which could manifest in a variety of ways, including diabetes.

The prevention of diabetes lies in healthy foods, based on whole grains, vegetables and fruit, legumes or meat, poultry and fish.

Milk and dairy products are promoted by nutritionists to ensure good bone density but they were not part of Aboriginal and other traditional diets. It must be remembered that osteoporosis, a disease characterized by loss of bone density was not a disease afflicting traditional people but does affect people today. Diabetes is promoted by today's impoverished fast food diet. It affects the mental and emotional aspects of one's life. Spiritually, diabetes is a teacher reminding us that food is sacred and a gift from the Creator. Diabetes affects the individual, the family and the community.

CARROT ZUCCHINI PATTIES

This recipe takes advantage of autumn's harvest of vegetables. These patties can complement or serve as a main dish. With a dipping sauce and a salad you have a simple supper.

2 tablespoons finely chopped onion	1 tablespoon finely chopped dill
1 tablespoon melted butter	1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
1 egg slightly beaten	1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups grated zucchini with peels on	1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 large carrot	1 tablespoon cornmeal
1/2 red pepper finely chopped	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper	oil for frying

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl.. Heat oil over medium heat. Drop rounded tablespoons into frying pan and cook one side until browned. Turn over and cook other side until patties are tender and browned. Serve with dipping sauce.

Note: try 1 cup grated pumpkin or squash in place of the carrot

DIPPING SAUCE

1/2 cup plain yogurt
 1/2 cup good quality mayonnaise
 1 tbsp horseradish or to taste
 Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and refrigerate to develop flavour.

AUTUMN SCHEDULE

YES, YOU CAN, CAN

Tuesday afternoons 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
September 7, 14, 21 & 28

BASIC COOKING

Thursday afternoons 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
September 9, 16, 23 & 30

COOKING LIKE THE BUDDHA

Tuesday afternoons 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
October 5, 12, 19 & 26
or
Thursday evenings 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
October 7, 14, 21 & 28

COOKING WITH DIABETES IN MIND

Tuesday afternoons 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
November 2, 9, 16 & 23
or
Thursday evenings 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
November 4, 11, 18 & 25

XMAS BAKEDOWN

Friday and Saturday afternoons
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
December 3 & 4

COST: \$30.00 per class or \$100.00 for 4 classes, CANNING CLASSES \$120.00 for 4 classes. Includes all supplies. Participants take home their food.

TO REGISTER: Call Mary Jane's Cooking School, (252 Arlington Street) at **775-2522**

I want to support the work of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.

With donations of \$10.00 or more you become a member of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc. Your contribution will promote nurturing today for a healthier tomorrow.

<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Bronze Spoon
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Silver Spoon
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Gold Spoon
<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____

Cheque or money order enclosed payable to Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.
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