



Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc.

# Wooden Spoons

Volume III, Issue 1

Fall/Winter 2005

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*

## THE MUSICAL MEANING OF HOME

*Let us take care of the children  
For they have a long way to go  
Let us take care of the elders  
For they have come a long way*

*African Prayer*

The search was on and time was short. Only a few minutes to go before we had to come up with the answer. Tension mounted as Mary Jane, Holly and I looked to find the perfect 'home' for our needs that day.

That "home", we were sure, was hidden in the files of music available to us as volunteer broadcasters at the University of Winnipeg radio station, CKUW, where we have been producing our weekly half-hour program, "Wooden Spoons" for the past two and a half years or so. With information on "nutrition and health concerns", including environmentally friendly homemaking, the program airs Monday and Friday, sharing the same name and aim as this newsletter. We began producing the program as a promotional and educational tool for fulfilling the mandate of Mary Jane's Cooking School while making valuable connections and offering encouragement to other like-minded community-based groups and activities.

Since the inception of the program we've weathered technical difficulties, pronunciation challenges, locked studio and university entrance doors, and the occasional late or 'no show' guests. For the most part we've been successful in meeting those challenges, and we've even accumulated a growing audience as we meet folks in the neighbourhood who comment, with praise and the occasional bit of constructive criticism about the show. But never before had we been faced with such deadline pressure to find the right musical selection for the program. The clock continued to tick: less than two minutes to go. Holly especially stepped up her efforts, but would she succeed?

'Home': that was the theme of the program this week. Recalling our summer vacations we were going to be talking about the experience and the concept of 'going home', spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It would be all about revisiting the people and places that had helped to make a lifetime of memories for each of us. To

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## THE MUSICAL MEANING OF HOME

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approach such a subject opened an avalanche of feelings for us as it does for everyone who dares to venture into a concept as vast as it is varied, with good and sometimes bittersweet feelings evoked as the path leads more deeply into the past.

This time, however, we were focusing on the happy memories, or at least trying to do so. But what song would we play, what CD or tape was hidden in the CKUW music files just waiting to give artistic expression to our sometimes fanciful, sometimes pedestrian meanderings home? The computer seemed to offer last minute solace. All we'd have to do would be to type in the word 'home' and we'd have the perfect song. The word was typed; we awaited the answer. What would it be? Seconds ticked on.

Alas, the route to that "home" was nowhere as easy to chart here as we may have imagined; no, it was many and varied, like a giant tree with branches that forked in a multitude of directions, each appealing in its own way but none the way we were seeking. With titles that ranged from jazz to hip hop, rock and roll to country to heavy metal and everything in between, the song files at CKUW acknowledged something we already knew: that 'home', like 'love' is a concept, while universal, that means something slightly different and special to everyone.

More than that, as we searched for just the right song we all realized more than ever before how important the idea of home is to the creative spirit that dwells in each human being. Home is, as the poet Robert Frost described it, "the place where when you have to go there they have to take you in". Thomas Moore more recently summarized its importance in saying something to the effect that making a home is "probably the most important thing a person ever does". Fine. But were we going to make our deadline?

The solution came suddenly and just in time. By searching within our hearts instead of our heads we found the answer in a song that expresses what one of the most important things about home is probably for people everywhere. "The nearness of you" was its title. The song said to us that whatever we do and wherever we make a 'home' it's that sense of belonging that is the most important quality of a real home. There we're able to express our spirit, our needs for solitude and companionship, for sharing and silence, with the human beings in our own lives: or families, and with those in our community. But from there 'home' in a spiritual sense goes farther; extending to all races and religions, all colours and creeds in the entire world. Just as importantly 'home' also includes the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds making up that larger home known as the Earth.

What a beautiful melody we share. All my relations.

Laura Steiman, President

### RADIO PROGRAM

*We invite you to tune into to our radio program at CKUW, Community Radio – 95.9 FM, every Monday at 2 pm and Friday at 10:30 am. Along with nutritional information and recipe ideas, Wooden Spoons brings you a variety of perspectives from guests in the community.*

### AT HOME IN CANADA

Once again, Mary Jane's Cooking School was able to offer the program "At Home In Canada" sponsored by KAIROS Anti- Poverty Fund to assist refugees and immigrants in their adjustment to Canada. Participants came from Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Congo, Eritrea, Morocco, Korea, Thailand, Armenia, and the Ukraine. During the recruitment, we were inundated with requests to join the class,

**AT HOME IN CANADA**

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especially from women who wanted to learn how to cook nutritious food for their children and also how to shop wisely, especially on a low income. I was heartened by this interest in the desire to provide nutritious food and to learn about nutrition. Unfortunately, our grant did not allow for an ongoing or lengthy program and it was heartbreaking to say the least to select a few from so many names. We ended up having two sets of classes, one late Wednesday afternoons and one early Friday afternoons. The classes began in May and ended in July. On August 10, we had a Completion Ceremony with a feast to honour the students and to share their accomplishments with Board of Directors, friends, volunteers and professionals working with refugees. Certificates were presented. Elder Art Shofley offered a traditional welcoming prayer and song of blessing to the group, paying homage to the four colours of black, white, red and yellow, representing all peoples who share the earth and who belong to the earth.

The challenges of refugees are great. In the area of food, they are inundated with strange and unfamiliar foods and have to shop in Canadian style stores (as opposed to open markets where produce can be handled and tasted before purchasing) where much on the shelves has little nutritional value. Not knowing about unit pricing, (price per pound, or 100 grams etc.) made it difficult to identify good value. Being unfamiliar with much of our food makes it very difficult to shop or even substitute our foods for traditional foods, which are often not available. Refugee men have been identified as a group that could benefit from the program, especially those who may not have the support of women (sisters or mothers) in food preparation. The response from the men has increased as well. It appears that food preparation is becoming more acceptable to men and there is less hesitancy to participate. However the pressure on men to find employment is very great and they are pulled into mandatory employment programs.

The lifeskill of nutritional home cooking cannot be overstated. Knowledge of a country's food is fundamental to a positive and healthy adjustment. The informality of a hand's on cooking program is conducive to learning the language as well. We are very grateful to KAIROS for making our program possible. There is a clear need for an ongoing classes that address the particular needs and interests of newcomers to Canada especially those who come from war affected countries.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the Completion Ceremony. Thank you to all the students who participated in the program. You graced us with your friendship and many gifts of warmth, humour, resourcefulness and support for one another.

Submitted by Mary Jane Eason, Community Nutritionist and Program Coordinator

### **NOURISHING TRADITIONS AND WISE FOOD CHOICES**

Over the years I've searched for answers for what is needed to nourish our bodies for health. Our natural state is one of balance, wholeness and vitality. When it comes to nutrition, you would probably agree that there exists conflicting information on what is healthy and what is not. On what premise does the average person base his/her daily food choices? The convenience and glitz of modern day products can certainly add to the confusion. How do we separate myth from truth in today's dietary debate? Is fat bad for us? What about dairy products? Is vegetarianism really healthier? Are low-fat, high-carbohydrate or high-protein diets ideal? Is cholesterol really the villain? Are soy products really a health food? Where do we look to find the truth to make wise choices?

## NOURISHING TRADITIONS...

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Some books that have come on the market in recent years recommend a return to a traditional whole foods diet, one based on foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed and prepared in traditional ways that provide the best nutrition possible. With this I totally agree.

One book which has caught my attention is called “Nourishing Traditions” by authors Sally Fallon, MA, with Mary Enig, Ph.D. You may at first be skeptical but read on and the picture starts to come into focus. It leaves room for individual needs and places the emphasis on how to prepare our food to maximize digestibility, assimilation, nutritional value, and taste. With this purpose in mind she shows us how to culture dairy products, ferment vegetables and fruits, sprout grains, nuts, and seeds, make stocks and much more. She emphasizes the importance of minerals, both macro and micro, in our diet and that essential trace minerals are needed only in minute amounts but their absence results in many disease conditions. Without minerals she says vitamins have little or no effect. She states that mineral deficiencies are caused by poor quality of food—that soil deficiencies in commercial farming practices, food processing, storage and distribution contribute to a loss of minerals. The proper way to take in minerals, she says, is through nutrient-dense foods and beverages; through mineral-rich water and broths in which all of the macro minerals are available in ready-to-use ionized form; through the use of unrefined sea salt; and by adding small amounts of clay as a supplement to water or food. She says that buying fresh, organic foods whenever possible is the better choice.

Sally Fallon also makes a case for the importance of including enzyme-rich foods to our diet as they are essential to digestibility and availability. The enzymes in raw food, she says, particularly raw and fermented food, help start the process of digestion and reduce the body’s need to produce digestive enzymes. This frees up much more of

the body’s energy. A rare or medium-rare steak is far easier to digest than a well-cooked one. However, when consuming cooked meat and other cooked food, Sally Fallon recommends including some fermented vegetables or condiments, such as sauerkraut or naturally-fermented pickles with the meal to help with digestion. Similarly, cooked meats that have first been well aged or marinated are pre-digested and therefore easier to digest. Cultured dairy products such as yogurt, and cultured soybean products such as unheated miso or tempeh are enzyme-rich foods. Grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes are rich in enzymes but also contain enzyme inhibitors. Sprouting, soaking in warm acidic water, sour leavening, culturing and fermenting—all processes used in traditional societies—break down these enzyme inhibitors, thus making nutrients more readily available. She names some plant foods noted for high enzyme content. These include extra virgin olive oil and other unrefined oils, raw honey, grapes, figs and many tropical fruits including avocados, dates, bananas, pineapple, kiwi, and mangos. While we should include a variety of raw foods in our diets, she warns, some foods are best eaten cooked—certain meats and, in general, grains, legumes, and certain types of vegetables. Since I’ve embarked on the adventure, in my kitchen you would usually see nuts or beans soaking, seeds sprouting, vegetables or beverages fermenting, or a stock pot simmering on the stove.

Awareness and a decision for change—it all starts there! A good place to begin is by cleaning out the cupboards of all processed and low-nutrient foods and replacing them with natural, fresh, nutrient-dense whole foods. You may even embark on the adventure of soaking, sprouting, fermenting, or making bone broths—who knows how far it will take you! You could get hooked as I did.

Submitted by Eveline Caners,  
Board Member for Mary Jane’s Cooking School



## FALL & WINTER '05 AND SPRING/SUMMER '06 CLASS SCHEDULE

### **September**

#### **BASIC COOKING**

Tuesday afternoons 1 – 3:30 p.m.

September 6, 13, 20 & 27

or

Thursday evenings 6 – 8:30 p.m.

September 8, 15, 22 & 29

### **October**

#### **COOKING LIKE THE BUDDHA**

Tuesday afternoons 1 – 3:30 p.m.

October 4, 11, 18 & 25

or

Thursday evenings 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

October 6, 13, 20 & 27

### **November**

#### **COOKING WITH DIABETES IN MIND**

Tuesday afternoons 1\_ 3:30 p.m.

November 15, 22, 29 & Wednesday

November 23

or

Thursday evenings 6- 8:30 p.m.

November 10, 17, 24 & December 1

### **December**

#### **XMAS BAKEDOWN**

Saturday afternoon 1-5:00 p.m.

December 3

Friday & Saturday afternoons 1- 5:00 p.m.

December 9 & 10

#### **GLUTEN-FREE COOKING**

Tuesday afternoons 1- 3:30 p.m.

December 6 & 7

### **January**

#### **SUPER SOUPS & STEWS**

Tuesday afternoons 1- 3:30 p.m.

January 10, 17, 24 & 31

or

Thursday evenings 6-8:30 p.m.

January 5, 12, 19 & 26

### **February**

#### **VEGETARIAN COOKING**

Tuesday afternoons 1-3:30 p.m.

February 7, 14, 21 & 28

or

Thursday evenings 6- 8:30 p.m.

February 2, 9, 16 & 23

### **April**

#### **THE ASIAN TABLE**

Tuesday afternoons 1- 3:30 p.m.

April 4, 11, 18 & 25

or

Thursday evenings

April 6, 20, 27 & May 4

### **May**

#### **ALL-RISE BREADMAKING**

#### **WORKSHOPS**

Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

May 6 & 13

#### **FLATBREAD WORKSHOPS**

Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons 1- 3:30 p.m.

May 23 & 24

### **June**

#### **COOKING WITH HERBS**

Tuesday afternoons 1- 3:30 p.m.

June 6, 13, 20 & 27

or

Thursday evenings 6-8:30 p.m.

June 8, 15, 22 & 29

### **July**

#### **PIE IN JULY**

Tuesday afternoons 1-3:30 p.m.

July 4 & 11

or

Thursday evenings 6- 8:30 p.m.

July 6 & 13

**To Register:** Call Mary Jane's Cooking School @ 775-2522, 252 Arlington St. Winnipeg, MB R3G 1Y8