



# Wooden Spoons

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

## This year (once again) we're turning the world rightside up

*And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one might flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.*

From *Black Elk Speaks; being the life story of a holy man of the Oglala Sioux* by Nicholas Black Elk and John G. Neihardt (editor).

When people form a community and begin to pool their knowledge to grapple with their problems, they are both setting their own agenda and—more importantly—experiencing themselves as political actors in the fullest sense.

Patrick Kerans and John Kearney. *Turning the World Right-Side Up; Science, Community and Democracy.* (Fernwood Publishing, 2006.)

As summer turns into fall and the inevitability of winter return once again, Mary Jane's Cooking School staff and volunteers look toward the coming year with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. Excitement, because our community includes more and more people who are genuinely excited about learning to live in greater health and harmony with one another and with the natural environment.

But we know apprehension, as well, because the path to that health is cluttered and often blocked by forces that have, as Patrick Kerans and John Kearney say, usurped democracy and decision-making power from individuals in community, in favour of the "rule of experts and the domination of scientific reductionism". And it's time to take action setting things right!

Kerans and Kearney metaphorically see these forces as a cancer invading the body politic when the natural defenses of the immune system are weakened. The social breakdown that results arises from a view of society as a battleground of people whose



interests are diametrically opposed, rather than being mutually dependent in the way that the aboriginal teacher Black Elk understood his world. This 'reductionist quest' has spawned a culture of insatiable greed where exploitation reigns and the natural world is a consumable resource, "grist for the human economic mill with no

intrinsic meaning or value of its own." Here the payroll entices corporate 'experts', those scientists and economists, in particular who would attend the gods of profit and who have "the truth [while] the rest of us are merely stumbling in the dark."

Enter Mary Jane's Cooking School staff and volunteers, together with a growing body of like-minded supporters who would, like Jesus in the Book of Matthew, chose to upset the tables of business and, in so doing, begin to 'turn the world rightside up'.

It has not been an easy road to follow, due no doubt in large part because we are in fact something of trail blazers for people in this part of Canada.

Since its beginning, Mary Jane's Cooking School has been dedicated to following a holistic vision of health in the home and harmony in the community. Our chief tools in this project have been our commitment to the use of whole foods, grown and gathered, as much as possible in the local region. Free of artificial pesticides and 'cosmetic' additives, these delights of the table create a banquet of the senses to meet the health and nutritional needs of the human body, mind, emotions

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and, yes, spirit as well

In support of a healthful natural environment within the home itself, Mary Jane's Cooking School also promotes cleaners based on natural ingredients such as vinegar and baking soda for home cleaning. Furthermore, we eschew the use of paper products in place of glass or pottery; and follow purchasing policies that honour the rights of community-based small business to have a reasonable profit from the services and goods they offer

for sale.

All of this is done in the name of building the kind of healthy community that Kerans and Kearney envision, restoring democracy and turning our world 'right side up' again.

We're glad that you've chosen to join us in this revolutionary and restorative path to health. In a world of faux foods and corporate greed there is no time to waste.

Laura L. Steiman, President

## Drop-in cooking classes at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

A drop-in nutrition and cooking class program "Healthy Foods for Better Health" with a diabetes prevention focus was initiated at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre located at 743 Ellice Ave. Friday mornings in June.

A good response was had with getting people together to participate one way or another in the preparation of foods that were both nutritious and culturally acceptable. The bean salad dishes were surprisingly well received and several women

wanted more information on the cooking of legumes. (Who said no one likes legumes?). Teamwork and a spirit of cooperation prevail at this organization and many adept helpers participated in putting on meals, which were shared amongst themselves and often with the drop-in guests.

Chili, homemade tacos with fillings, spaghetti and meatballs, with homemade sauce and pizza with homemade sauce and whole-wheat crusts were a hit. In accordance with tradition and as a sign of re-

spect, Elders were always served first. Nutrition education took a very informal style in this setting.

We will resume the final part of the program in September, ending with a nutrition bingo and a traditional style feast. The program is sponsored by the Assiniboine Credit Union Community Project Fund.

## Artbeat Cooking

Most of the focus on mental health has neglected to study the impact of our modern day diet on the incidence of mental illness and very little research has included nutrition as a major part of the treatment plan.

In the belief that good nutrition is a fundamental component in mental, emotional and physical health and ultimately to successful adjustment to living in the community, six nutrition and cooking classes were

held with participants enrolled in a program for artists recovering from mental illness at Artbeat Studio. The classes sponsored by Artbeat Studio Inc. were offered at the site of Mary Jane's Cooking School during May and June.

There are many barriers faced by people recovering from mental illness and one of them is being able to have a balanced diet on a limited income or even have the motivation to prepare food for themselves.

During the program the class made a variety of nutritious dishes that expressed their creativity and satisfied the palette in both taste and texture. The discussions highlighted a number of topics of interest and served to motivate participants to make a conscious effort to prepare their own meals on a regular basis. It was a pleasure working with a very discerning, creative and sensitive group of people who after all, were truly artists.

## At Home in Canada: A program for Refugees

Once again we are pleased to be able to offer nutrition and cooking classes for refugees. Becoming familiar with Canadian foods and wholesome ways of preparing them is an important part of the settlement process of adapting to Canadian life and feeling at home in Canada. The fine cooking skills of immigrants and refugees need to be encouraged in the Canadian context and celebrated for their

true value. Hopefully new Canadians will be prepared to adopt wholesome Canadian foods while remaining faithful to their own healthful traditions of food preparation. This summer and fall, cooking classes were offered to women, mostly from Rwanda, who spoke French and African dialects but very little English. The women were mothers with babies and large families of six to eight chil-

dren. Keeping this in mind, ample food was prepared to take home. With the help of Board member Eveline Caners and Sr. Idalena Ferreira, both French-speaking women who served as interpreters, the language barriers were surmounted. The cooking proceeded with aplomb. A final Completion Celebration is set for October. Thank you to KAIROS for funding this project.

# Preserving the harvest

Through the summer we have watched everything grow lush and beautiful and now with autumn in tow we continue to harvest the abundance from field and garden. How awesome is Nature in all it provides! We graciously receive and share this blessing with those who have less.

It all started with the strawberries in June, which are tucked away in the freezer. Then came the beans, peas and the corn, which never seemed to end. Now we have an overabundance of zucchini, the tomatoes, peppers, and onions are ready for salsa-making, the cucumbers are calling out to be pickled, the apples are falling off the trees and need to be picked, and later will come the squash, the carrots and the potatoes which will be stored away in the root cellar.

What does a person do with it all? We can give some away to those who have none or to a dear soul who will preserve them in some way and in turn give us a jar of this or that.

It's also a great time to get some friends together to make salsa on a Saturday – one can peel the onions while the other prepares the tomatoes or have a pie-making day with the apples - freeze them and bake them later on for a wonderful treat. It hardly seems like work when 2 or more get together to do it.

For those who preserve their harvest, there are several traditional methods that are used, all of which are tried and work very well.

A fast method of preserving both fruits and vegetables is

**Freezing.** A freezer is a good investment for food economy as well as preserving nutrients in food. All fruits can be cut up and frozen as is or with a little sugar added while some vegetables will need blanching [a quick dip in boiling water] first. Plastic freezer bags are convenient and work well. Keeping a freezer well organized helps in retrieving what you want quickly and prevents wastage.

**Fermenting** is a traditional technique that naturally preserves and enhances the nutrients in food. In the natural fermenting of pickles or sauerkraut, for example, no vinegar or heating is required, only sea salt and perhaps some spices, then left to ferment at room temperature for a few days before being refrigerated. The flavour is incomparable!

A favourite condiment in our family is salsa, prepared by the fermenting process. Following is a recipe for making Cold-Water Dill Pickles [fermented] – for a gallon size jar. It can be halved for a 2-quart-sized jar and halved again for a quart-sized jar. Once you taste these, you will be making them in gallon-size!

Start with very clean jars and lids. Wash small to medium-sized cucumbers well and prick though each one once with a fork. Wash a large bunch of dill and layer in the jar along with the cucumbers and 12 cloves of garlic, sliced once.

Add preferably mineral water [spring or well water] to cover the cucumbers but leave at least an inch from the top – it may be worth picking up a gallon of this water just for making the pickles. Alternatively, filtered water will do.

Add 5 tablespoons of coarse Celtic sea salt or pickling salt to the jar and put the lid on tightly. Allow to sit at room temperature

for 8-10 days before refrigerating.

The process for making salsa the fermented way is similar. Start with clean jars and lids. Wash vegetables well then chop all of the salsa ingredients to your liking - tomatoes, onions, peppers, garlic, etc. and mix with oregano, parsley, lemon juice and 2 tablespoons of sea salt for each quart of salsa. Pack into jars so that the juice comes to the top and add more filtered water if necessary to cover the vegetables leaving at least 1 inch from the top of the jar.

Cover tightly and leave at room temperature for 3-4 days before refrigerating. This salsa will be full of healthful enzymes and nutrients and delicious too.

Traditionally, before the advent of freezers, **canning** and **dehydrating** were two other methods used for preserving foods, including meats. High temperatures used in canning however, destroy vitamins and enzymes therefore should play a limited role in cooking. Fresh or frozen are almost always the better choice. Tomatoes, our most popular garden vegetable, are high in a carotenoid called lycopene that seems to be of great value in protecting us from cancer and other health

benefits. Fortunately this nutrient is not destroyed in the canning process - and what a convenience it is to have canned vine-ripened tomatoes on hand!

The canning of tomatoes as well as other fruits requires processing in a water bath, hence a 'canner' is necessary. A home canning guide [available in stores where canning supplies are sold] is essential in providing all of the information necessary to achieve success in the canning endeavour. Following the proper steps is very important in avoiding any risks of spoilage.

**Drying** is a method of food preservation that is simple, safe, and easy to learn. Drying removes the moisture from the food so bacteria, yeasts and molds can't grow but retains nutrients and enzymes. Dehydrating foods such as soaked nuts, fruits and vegetables and other foods is a great process for making nutritious snack foods. Certain foods can be dried in the sun, in an oven, or in a food dehydrator by using the right combination of warmth, low humidity, and air currents.

It is important that the food be completely dry or molds can form in the food.

Herbs lend themselves well to natural dehydration. Pick them before they flower, tie in a bunch, and hang to dry in a warm ventilated place until crispy dry. Then remove the leaves and store in sealed containers to use later in cooking or in teas. Placing them in a paper bag will prevent dust from accumulating on them.

Good instructions for the drying and storage of foods are available at -[[www.netwoods.com/cooking/drying.html](http://www.netwoods.com/cooking/drying.html)] and books in your library.

The above is a brief overview of some methods of food preservation that I have tried and found success with. You may want to try one just for the fun of it. It is certainly a rewarding effort when we succeed.

Eveline Caners,  
Board Member, Mary  
Jane's Cooking School, Inc.



# A Caterpillar tale

Our small garden has some rue plants, which being hardy perennials, come up every year. Rue, I was told is related to the parsley family, which is favoured by the caterpillars of the Tiger Swallowtail butterfly. Decidedly, the Tiger Swallow Tail is my favourite butterfly bringing back childhood memories of these beautiful creatures fluttering about the carrigana shrubs and lilacs in spring bloom. Our rue plant hosted a crop of striped caterpillars, which in several respects resembled the caterpillar of the Monarch butterfly. They were growing and flourishing when suddenly, something awful happened and they developed black spots and withered away. My daughter, an entomologist, pronounced that they had been stricken by parasites.



As a result of this loss she purchased a milkweed plant with two Monarch butterfly caterpillars, one very small one and the other a little older and bigger. They were very colorful with their stripes of bright yellow, white and black with prominent black antennae. They were voracious eaters. The plant was put outside among the other plants. Then, to my daughter's dismay, she noted that there was a black spot on the larger caterpillar. It had been bitten by something, maybe a wasp. "It could become dehydrated through loss of body fluid, and quickly die" she feared. Quick action was taken. She brought the plant into the porch where the heat was scorching hot. The caterpillars seemed to flourish in the heat and the milkweed gave no sign of wilting. Apparently no serious damage had been done.

In the following week, we watched as the drama of life and transformation unfolded. My daughter knew when the elder caterpillar molted. "One must not disturb them when they are about to molt because they glue themselves to a leaf and will be harmed if you try to move them" she said. Eating began in earnest and the caterpillars grew steadily, the older one being much bigger than its baby brother. Sometimes they would remain motionless. "They are digesting" my daughter said. The day came when the older caterpillar suspended itself on the bottom side of the leaf, remaining motionless for hours. During the suspension period a lot was happening because a chrysalis was forming beneath its striped skin. Then Voila! the skin was shed and a beautiful green chrysalis appeared with its identifying band of gold dots at the top and several dots at the bottom.

But all was not completely well. My daughter noticed a crack in the chrysalis shell, again presenting a problem of fluid loss and dehydration, spelling sure death. This crack, she surmised, resulted from its former wound. Again, timely intervention of misting the chrysalis with a water sprayer and, would you believe, giving it a homeopathic remedy for healing averted mishap. "How would you know what remedy to give a butterfly?" I asked incredulously. "Oh it is easy to treat a butterfly, it just needed something to promote healing," she said. My daughter is also a naturopathic doctor.

Everything was going to nature's plan and now that the second caterpillar was in a growth spurt and doing some

serious eating. Hopefully it too would soon transform into a chrysalis because the milkweed was showing signs of stress. The baby caterpillar ate off all the buds that were forming and sheared off many leaves. My daughter's vigilance paid off when she discovered the caterpillar happily chewing the leaf on which the chrysalis was suspended. Just in time, she disengaged the caterpillar that clung tenaciously with all its suction-cup feet to the meager strand of remaining leaf holding the chrysalis. She moved it to another leaf and it seemed to forget the indignity and soon resumed its work of eating. Then she made a false leaf out of newspaper and hung it over the chrysalis to replace the leaf that had been eaten and give it some shade. She taped the leaf to the stem.

I was now telling people we had a nursery. Everyday we would frequently check the caterpillar and chrysalis to see the progress. Right on schedule, the second caterpillar stopped its eating, became lethargic, suspended itself and transformed into the second chrysalis. The first chrysalis was turning darker by the day. We had to be very attentive as the hatching day approached. The emerging butterfly, we speculated, would need protection from our cat that would pounce on it in a minute.

The hatching day had arrived. We could tell by its coloration and could see butterfly spots inside. "Air is inside the chrysalis," my daughter said. "That means it will hatch soon". That day I went to work as usual. When I came home for lunch, my daughter decided to put the chrysalis outside to avoid problems with the cat and problems that the emerging butterfly could encounter by being confined inside a porch. While preparing a quick lunch in the kitchen, a mental message spoke to me. "The butterfly will hatch anytime." I had a few things to quickly finish up before going outside. A short delay and the butterfly already hatched, when suddenly, my husband shouted, "A wasp is killing the butterfly!"

I ran outside to discover a butterfly with floppy wings, unable to fly, with a black wasp on its back. I swished it off and it clung to the tip of the butterfly and I swished it again, knocking it off. The butterfly could not fly; it needed time to dry off its wings as it needed time to pump up its wings with fluid (like filling a balloon) just after emerging from its chrysalis. The wind was very strong pummeling the butterfly, which clung on to the milkweed. I noticed that a piece of wing was missing. I had broken off part of its wing when trying to get the wasp off it.

Instead of returning to work, I decided that I would remain outside with the butterfly during this vulnerable period to keep it free of predators until my daughter got back in half an hour. I sat in the hot sun with the butterfly while it was battered by the wind. Wasps were attempting to assault the butterfly and I had to continually swat them away. It never opened its wings and I wondered why or how long it would take. I know a butterfly needs a period of time in the sun to become energized before flying away, but in the meantime it still opens its wings. Not this one. When my daughter returned to take my place I went back to work.

The last part of this story involved one last intervention.

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The butterfly could not open its wings, my daughter explained, because they had become glued together, due to the injury it received. I suppose fluid had leaked out of the broken wing and glued one area together. My daughter did butterfly surgery by using a toothpick to gently pry its wings open, but breaking yet another small piece off. In an instant it was gone. My husband said “ At least if you ever see the butterfly, you can identify it by its wings.” As I was writing this article, a few days later, a Monarch butterfly briefly fluttered by my window and was gone

Meanwhile, the other chrysalis is preparing for its final transformation and hatching. Unlike the first caterpillar/chrysalis whose life was fraught with so many struggles and dangers, the second one is the “protected one” whose life was a piece of cake. This natural drama and story gives me pause to think about life. The reader can find whatever meaning he or she wants. Being stewards means being attentive and requires the attentiveness of many people, not just one. There was di-



vine intervention in the butterfly’s enfoldment. Was it only coincidence that the very moments that the butterfly was in danger someone was there? The milkweed itself, a plant that nourished the caterpillars, suffered temporary losses but regained its forces and replenished itself.

There is a saying that it takes a community to raise a child. The butterfly story shows how this has to be. It also shows the power of creation and the force of compassion that can be introduced into the world by attentiveness and caring. Those that are vulnerable need the vigilance and caring of others in order to survive. Vigilance and caring is best done as a cooperative effort. There are those who for whatever reason seem to have lives that are relatively free of harassment, stresses and dangers. They seem to lead charmed lives and then there are those who are born in trauma and experience great difficulties in life. Just like the two caterpillars of the Monarch butterfly.

**Mary Jane Eason**  
Program Coordinator and  
Community Nutritionist

## FALL AND WINTER 06 AND SPRING/SUMMER 07 CLASS SCHEDULE

### September

#### Yes, You Can Can

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 p.m.  
September 12, 19, 26 & October 3

#### Basic Cooking

Thursday evenings 6:00—8:30 pm  
September 8, 15, 22 & 29

### October

#### Cooking like the Buddha

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 pm  
October 10, 17, 24 & 31

#### The Asian Table

Thursday evenings 6:00—8:30 pm  
October 5, 12, 19 & 26

### November

#### Cooking with Diabetes in Mind

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 pm  
November 7, 14, 21 & 28

#### Super Soups and Stews

Thursday evenings 6:00—8:30 pm  
November 9, 16, 23 & 30

### December

#### Xmas Breakdown

Friday and Saturday afternoons  
1:00—5:00pm

December 1 & 2

### April

#### All-Rise Breadmaking Workshops

Saturdays 10:00—5:00 p.m.

April 14 & 21

### May

#### Vegetarian Fare

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 pm  
May 8, 15, 22 & 29

#### Gluten-Free Cooking

Thursday evenings 6:00—8:30 pm  
May 10, 17, 24 & 31

### June

#### Cooking with Herbs

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 pm  
June 5, 12, 19 & 26

### July

#### Pie in July

Tuesday afternoons 1:00—3:30 pm  
July 3, 10, 17 & 24

#### Delightful Desserts

Thursday evenings 6:00—8:30 pm  
July 5, 12, 19 & 26



## RADIO PROGRAM

Tune into **Wooden Spoons**, our radio program on CKUW, Community Radio – 95.9 FM, every Friday from 8 to 9 am. Along with nutritional information and recipe ideas, *Wooden Spoons* brings you a variety of perspectives from guests in the community.

## VEGAN STYLE CHILE 5 servings

(A dish made in our Artbeat Cooking class)

2 tablespoons oil  
1 cup or more chopped onion  
1 green pepper, chopped  
1 red pepper, chopped  
2 (14 oz) cans kidney beans, drained or about 4 cups  
cooked kidney beans  
1 can pinto beans, drained (or about 2 cups cooked)  
1 medium eggplant, peeled and diced  
1 (14 oz) can stewed tomatoes  
1 bay leaf  
1 can tomato soup  
1-tablespoon cider vinegar  
¼ cup brown sugar  
2 tablespoons chili powder  
1 ¼ cup fresh mushrooms, sliced  
1 clove garlic finely chopped  
1-teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper

Heat oil in frying pan. add onion and peppers. Sauté until onion is soft. This may need to be done in two batches. Turn into a large saucepan or Dutch oven.

Add remaining ingredients. Heat, stirring often until mixture starts to boil. Boil slowly, uncovered for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Adjust seasonings to taste.

Note: You can add finely chopped parsley and other herbs such as basil

### *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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