

# MUSE & NEWS

SPRING 2005

## FARMERS' MARKETS - the tradition continues

*Farmers' markets have been around for more than 200 years in Ontario . . . and they're showing new popularity.*

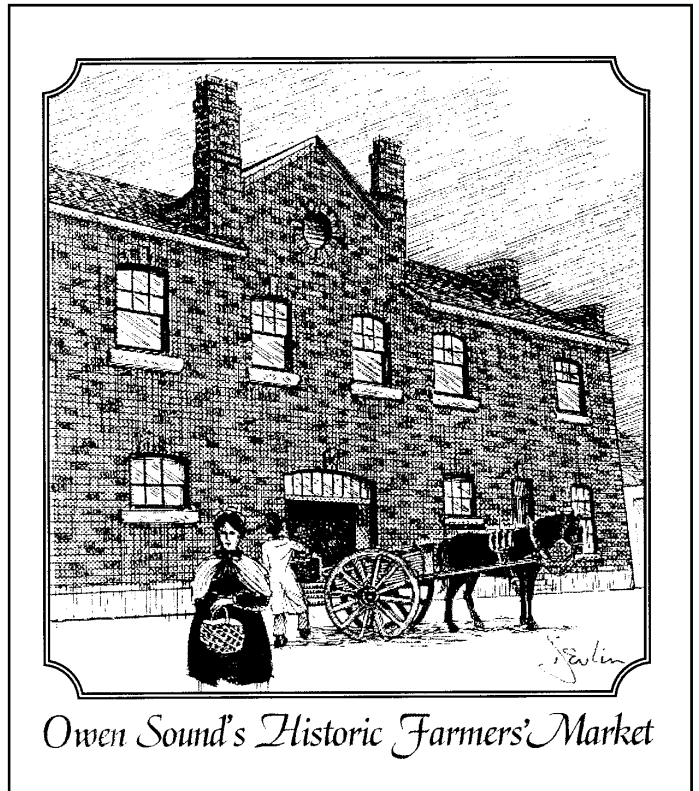
Most consumers are isolated from the primary producer of their food, buying it at supermarkets. But a growing number of consumers are putting a face on their food by purchasing directly from the farmers who produce it, either through farm-gate programs like community share gardens or through farmers' markets.

There are now 120 farmers' markets across Ontario listed with Farmers' Markets Ontario plus others like the sprawling Keady Market, that aren't members. Midwestern Ontario has markets, ranging from large year-round ones in Stratford and Owen Sound, to small markets in smaller towns and villages.

What does it take to make a market successful? "Local, local, local; produce, produce, produce! That's the mantra," says Robert T. Chorney, Executive Director of Farmers' Markets Ontario and tireless promoter of farmers' markets. "We've done market research studies across Ontario and clearly people come to our farmers' markets because of fruits and vegetables and the local farmer. Supply that and you have a winner."

It might surprise farmers to learn just how much consumers care about the link between their food and the local farm. The Region of Waterloo Public Health Department conducted a survey recently and found 87 percent of respondents believed it was either somewhat or very important to buy local food. They also wanted to support local farmers, and 88 percent wanted to preserve local farmland, or felt the food was fresher if they bought locally. Farmers' markets are one easily-accessible way to do that.

While it might be the perception that a typical shopper at a Farmers market would be middle income



*Owen Sound's Historic Farmers' Market*

**The Owen Sound Farmers' Market building was constructed in 1868 as a private waterworks, but the surrounding site has been in continual use as a market for even longer. *Hasti Notes* (shown above) designed by Dave Devlin are on sale at the Owen Sound Farmers' Market.**

or higher, vendors say that customers are from all walks of life including young people and senior citizens.

For farmers, the prime attraction of selling directly to the consumer is capturing the full consumer dollar, but there are other benefits as well. Brenda Voisin, who sells at the vast St. Jacob's Farmers' Market as well as Walkerton says she enjoys meeting the customer face



### OWEN SOUND FARMERS' MARKET

110-114 8th Street East,  
Owen Sound, Ontario

Open Every Saturday morning until 12:30

Tel: (519) 371-3433 for information

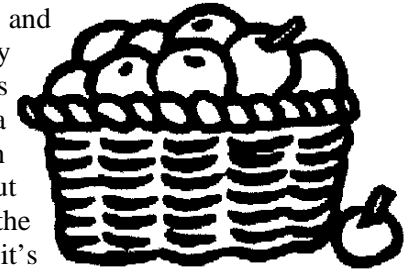
## FARMERS' MARKETS (continued)

to face. Laurie Neubrand also likes meeting her customers and building a bond with her clientele. Customers come to know, for instance, that her market garden can supply fresh asparagus and lettuce early in the season and can extend the season with its greenhouses. Ron Barnett, who started at the Flesherton market seven years ago and who still sells there periodically, says it's enjoyable to see the same customers week after week. "It's a community thing," he says, "The other vendors become like a family over the years."

It's the old-fashioned personal touch that attracts both customers and vendors to farmers' markets. "People come to meet the vendors who nurtured seedlings into plants, picked the fruit, pulled the vegetables, baked mouth-watering bread and other treats, prepared delectable jams, jellies and other preserves and loaded their trucks early in the morning to bring their products to town," explains Chorney on the Farmers' Market Ontario website.

"They come to chat, to learn and to leave with tips about perfect ripeness, food preparation and even a recipe to two. They come to connect with the land, many with their own baskets and bags ready to carry seasonal flavours home to their kitchens."

Farmers' markets have a long history in Ontario dating back more than 200 years to 1780 when Kingston became home to the first farmers' market in Ontario. As pioneers settled the rest of the province, the popularity of these markets grew. Goderich's famous "Square" may now be the location of the county courthouse and seat of county government, but it was originally dedicated to a farmers' market when Tiger Dunlop laid out the town in 1827. In the last dozen years or so, it's again become the site for the



Goderich Farmers' Market, a Saturday morning market that attracts both local shoppers and tourists. The number of markets grew until the 1970s when downtown shopping started a serious decline. Then in the 1990s, thanks in part to Chorney's Farmers' Markets Ontario and the OMAFRA, the downward trend began reversing; local business and community partnerships with municipal governments and farmers began promoting farmers' markets, often in an effort to revitalize the downtown areas. For instance, a subcommittee of Blyth Business Association organized a number of activities in the downtown area on Saturday afternoons when the Blyth Festival was holding matinees. One of those activities was a one-day farmers' market experiment that proved so successful it has grown into plans for a regular market on Saturday afternoons. "It was equally as good as Goderich for dollar value," said Barb Storey who sells her produce at the Goderich morning market; at its close she hurries to be at the afternoon market in Blyth. She intends to continue to attend both markets.

Markets have their peaks and valleys, both seasonally and from year to year and even throughout the day. At times when it's slow, Neubrand says you start thinking about all the work you could be getting done at home. But for 200 years, farmers' markets have shown their staying power and now, as more consumers react to the anonymity of the big stores, farmers' markets seem to be finding more favour than at any time in years.

*From the original article  
in The Rural Voice magazine,  
by Keith Roulston*

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# COMING EVENTS

**May 21**  
Birgit's Questions & Answers on Spelt

**June 11**  
Pottery Demonstration

**June 18**  
Kids Father's Day Craft

**July 2**  
Pasta-making Demonstration

**July 23**  
Wood Lathe Demonstration

**August 6**  
Kids Kite-making Day

**August 20**  
Kids Art Splash Day

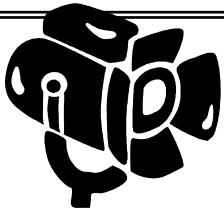
**September 3**  
Wool  
Demonstration

**October 8**  
Market Apple Day,  
Dykstra Orchards

**October 29**  
Kids Pumpkin  
Carving

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## SPOTLIGHT:

# Vince Bowen *Rockrose Pottery*

### *How long have you been making pottery?*

I've been making pottery since 1968, but have been in business since 1978.

### *How did you get started?*

I took a course at the Ontario College of Art and was hooked! I then studied at Sheridan College for three years and was a Ceramic Technician for three years before starting Rockrose Pottery.

### *How long have you been at the Owen Sound Farmers' Market?*

I've been at the market since 1984.

### *What is your specialty?*

Two things really: dinnerware or place settings, and teapots. Both are difficult to complete. Dinnerware is hard to match all the pieces as closely as possible. Making one piece at a time and doing it exactly the same time after time takes a great deal of practice. Most potters refuse to do this as it can result in a lot of rejects.

Teapots look simple but are comprised of several parts that are assembled to make one piece. It must pour without dripping and have a lid that fits well.

The most common complaint I get from customers is that they are tired of buying teapots that drip. Mine do not drip so I get many repeat customers, and through word of mouth - customers looking for a good teapot.

### *Tell me about the colours in your work.*

I try to come up with new colours every year as well as refining the ones I have. This involves some basic chemistry and a lot of accumulated knowledge of ceramics.

My glazes are all fired in an electric kiln (oxidation firing) that gives them a different quality than in a gas-fired kiln.

### *Why do you make pottery?*

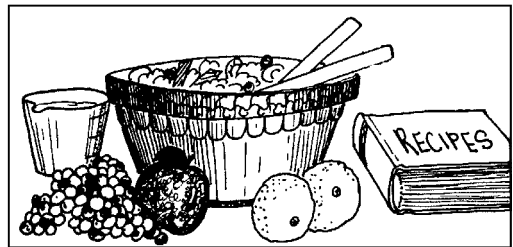
It's what I know best and mostly because I have been totally addicted to the medium since my first encounter. It's never been for the money as most years, I barely make ends meet!

*Vince Bowen, Rockrose Pottery can be reached at E-mail: [rockrose@bmts.com](mailto:rockrose@bmts.com)*



## Owen Sound Farmers' Market BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Beth's Baked Fillets

Preheat oven to 425 degrees, placing oven rack third row up from the bottom. Using oil, margarine or butter, grease the bottom of a granite baking pan.

Place the fish, skin side down on the prepared pan. Using the back of a spoon, spread evenly on the fish, a bit of Miracle Whip Salad Dressing or mayonnaise. Season lightly with either garlic salt or powder, and a bit of salt and pepper. Use a light sprinkle of paprika for added flavour and colour.

Bake thin fillets for 10 minutes; for thicker ones, about 12 to 14 minutes or until fish flakes easily.

### Penny's BBQ Fish Marinade

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup cooking oil
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 1/3 cup Real Lemon

Combine all and shake well in a jar to mix.  
To BBQ - Using fish steaks, full fillets or fish chunks, pour a layer of marinade into a shallow glass or enamel pan. Moisten fish pieces thoroughly on both sides. Season top with salt, lemon pepper, season salt and marinate 1 hour. Turn fish over and season again; leave another hour. Barbecue at medium temperature about 10 minutes or until starting to brown, then turn, baste with extra marinade and cook another 8 to 10 minutes or until flesh of fish flakes easily. Serve while hot.

*(Recipes courtesy Howell's Fish)*



Owen Sound  
Farmers' Market

**FEATURING:**  
Some of the Vendors  
at the Owen Sound Farmers' Market

**Rockrose Pottery**  
Vince Bowen  
Handmade Porcelain  
- dinnerware, teapots  
E-mail [rockrose@bmts.com](mailto:rockrose@bmts.com)



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