

## NEWS

## Marcel Belanger, Gardener

By Bruce Grant

"I like to see things grow; it all started when I was eight years old. We lived in Saint-Ulric-de-Matane on the Gaspé Coast and we had a big kitchen garden. Mostly we grew roots, - carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes, - like that, and we put them in our cold cellar for the winter. When I was eight, my parents gave me a corner of the garden and told me to take care of it. If you don't grow, you don't eat."

My meeting with Marcel is at the Brewer Park Community Garden where I'm doing a small construction project and Marcel is tending his gardens for some hours every day. So, I see him regularly and I see a story that should be shared. Marcel is also the President of the garden's Association.

"We have private plots here for families and plots for donations. We donate to the Centretown Emergency Food Centre and to the May Court Hospice on Cameron Avenue, carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes and tomatoes. Last year we gave away 132 kilos."

"I started out as an accountant, but that only lasted six months. Too boring: credit, debit, blah blah blah, sitting at a desk all day; I went to

the Printing Bureau and I worked there for 35 years. Inky fingers at first, management jobs later on. For twelve years I had a catering business too. It's not just gardening; I like to cook and serve and I like to eat too!"

Asked about the hat, Marcel switches into Spanish as he tells me about his travels in Cuba, Mexico and Spain. An adventurous traveller, he has figured out, as I have, that you don't have to be fluent in every language; with your first two or three hundred words you can go anywhere and meet the people straight on. He likes to go.

Marcel is eighty years old, married to an anglophone for fifty years. "I'm here in the garden for three or four hours every day. If I spent all that time sitting at home, I don't think I would be married fifty years!"

"How is that they say, a busy mind is a sane mind. I don't know if I'm sane, but I'm busy."

Marcel Belanger, accountant, printer, caterer, gardener, world traveller.

*Bruce Grant, retired Engineer, Layabout, is a resident of Old Ottawa South*



"How is that they say, a busy mind is a sane mind. I don't know if I'm sane, but I'm busy." Marcel Belanger, accountant, printer, caterer, gardener, world traveller.

PHOTO BY BRUCE GRANT

**Brewer Park Community Garden (BPCG) is seeking help to file our taxes for 2014/15**

BPCG is a non-profit corporation (T2). Any assistance would be much appreciated.

Contact us at:  
brewergarden@gmail.com

# Retired? Semi-Retired? Would You Like To Try Singing? This Is For You!

## Join Voca Sol, Ottawa's Daytime Choir in Old Ottawa South! with Choir Mistress Extraordinaire Lee Hayes!

Music and community can improve your health, and extend your life. Singing is one of the best stress reducers, and this choir is **FUN!** Be creative within the safety of numbers, and with the guidance of a well-rounded and experienced teacher. Lots of camaraderie and laughs! No musical training necessary; Voca Sol is taught by ear.

### About Voca Sol And Where:

Voca Sol is a daytime choir of about 35+ people. We meet every **Thursday from 1:30-3:00 pm** at the **Wesleyan church**, corner of Sunnyside and Grosvenor. The repertoire is a mix of **Folk, Jazz, and Gospel**, with a few surprises thrown in!

**You can join anytime.** It's pretty casual, and we have a social aspect as well. There's no need to be able to read music, but scores are available.

Because a lot of our members are seniors, the attendance is a bit more relaxed than most choirs. We learn new songs all the time, so it's easy to jump in. It usually takes about 2-3 months to catch up with the songs in circulation, and I provide mp3s to help you learn at home.

Just show up on any Thursday to check us out. The only 'audition' is just to see what your range is, or if you are tone-deaf (rare occurrence). If you like what you see and hear, then join us!

### About Lee:

Lee Hayes is an award-winning songwriter, and CFMA nominee. You may remember her from her Malaika and Cantarra days; two all-female vocal groups from the Ottawa region. Lee is a Master harmony arranger and Ottawa's premiere vocal instructor.

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Lee Hayes