

Comfort foods mean different things to different people

By Amanda Cheung

Food and people have a very special relationship. Most of us in our lifetime have had food cravings and we all have our own comfort food. We all have something we like to fall back on that satisfies an inexpressible yearning.

It could be subconsciously, or it could be routine.

Ruth and Thor Nodtvedt have a very rigid diet routine. For the last 12 years, they've stuck to mostly the same food at every meal.

Breakfast would be Cheerios, half a banana each, a cup of juice and coffee. "For lunch, we have more or less the same everyday," says Thor.

They have a spinach salad with fruit and vegetables, substituting different vegetables from time to time.

Supper would be meat and potatoes, switching between fish or chicken. Every evening, they would have their nightly snack of one banana each, a handful of nuts, dates and one piece of 70 per cent chocolate as a treat.

They also have sandwiches every Friday.

"It's been 30 years I guess and we still do it," says Ruth. "We look forward to Friday nights especially right now because I go to exercises Monday and Friday and [Thor] goes to rehab Tuesday and Thursday and I volunteer on Wednesday, so by Friday, we're so tired, it's nice to have sandwiches just to fall back on."

For Ashley Kelly, her comfort food is any kind of pasta.

"It's very filling, it's easy to make and it's probably one of the first things I learned to make," says Kelly. "My mom taught me and it's one of those things I still can cook."

When Kelly was young, pasta was almost always her birthday dinner of

choice.

"We had a big family so I got to pick what I wanted for my birthday dinner and that's usually what I picked."

In a study published by the journal *Psychology and Behaviour*, research showed that three regions of the brain: the hippocampus, caudate and insula, are lit up during cravings.

"The hippocampus is important for memory, which helps reinforce the reward-seeking behavior that causes us to crave. The caudate also plays a role in these reward mechanisms, and it helps us form habits, including food-related ones. The insula contributes to the emotional connection between food and cravings."

After a hard day of work, Kelly says having pasta "makes (her) feel better and ends (her) day on a high note."

Research has also shown that eating carbohydrates releases the chemical serotonin. Serotonin enhances calmness, improves mood and lessens depression.

For Jenna Boyle, when she's stressed and in the middle of exams, her comfort foods would be a chicken burger and milk chocolate.

"Probably because it's not healthy at all," jokes Boyle.

Chicken burgers also related to a childhood memory for Boyle.

"Growing up, we had a lot of barbecues at my grandparents. As a kid, I hated hamburgers, so they always made me chicken."

Although there hasn't been significant research done on what makes a specific food a comfort food for individuals, scientists have hypothesized that sensory cues have a Pavlovian conditioning effect on individuals.

Whether it's routine, a memory, smell or imagery, different cues affect different people and trigger different cravings.

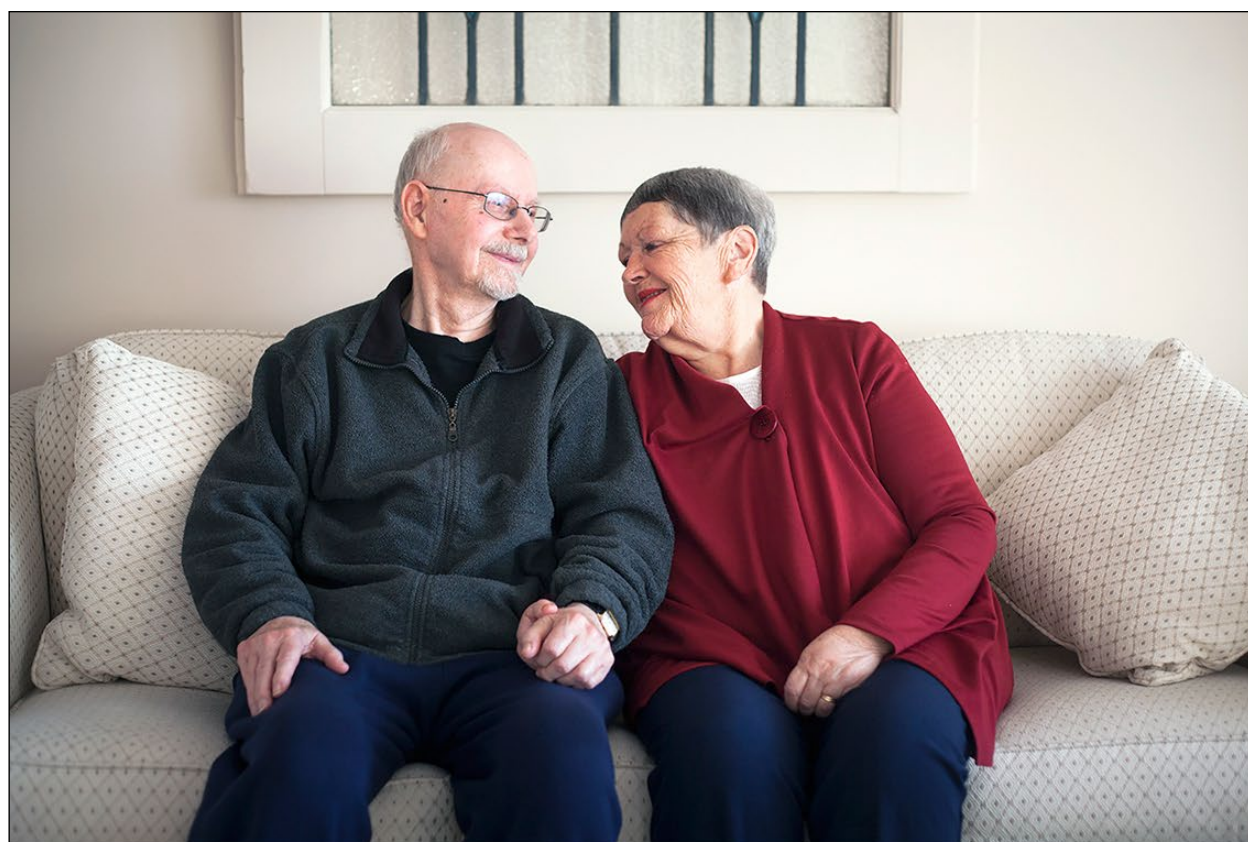


Photo by Amanda Cheung

Thor and Ruth Nodtvedt enjoy a banana each, accompanied with a handful of nuts, dates and one piece of 70 per cent dark chocolate. This has been their snack every night for many years.



Photo by Carla Antonio

Edith and Alfred Cairns enjoy a hot meal in the comfort of their own home in Ameliasburgh, on Tuesday, where they have lived for 62 years. The couple has been enjoying the Meals on Wheels program, organized by the Prince Edward County Community Care for Seniors Association for about eight weeks.

Meals on Wheels provides hot, nutritious food

By Carla Antonio

"To make three nice meals a day, every day, is hard," says Edith Cairns.

Cairns and her husband Alfred are two of the many seniors who are receiving hot meals in the comfort of their own home through the Prince Edward County Community Care Centre for Seniors. The couple has been living at their country home in Ameliasburgh for 62 years.

"It's very important to keep our seniors in their homes as long as we can, that way they keep their independence," says Cyndi Caume, owner and operator of The Mason Jar, a restaurant in Carrying Place that provides meals for the program.

"I'm a personal support worker as well, so I know how important it is to care for seniors. I have parents as well who are elderly and they still live in their own home," she says.

"My parents also get Meals on Wheels, so I don't have to worry about them because at least once a day, I know that

'I just vibrate when I hear that we've got more meals or when I meet a client that we provide meals for. I just love it. I love my seniors.'

Cyndi Caume

they're getting a nice hot meal."

Caume has been involved in the program for seven years and her passion for the cause is profound.

"I love it," she says.

"I just vibrate when I hear that we've got more meals or when I meet a client that we provide meals for. I just love it. I love my seniors."

Aside from the undeniable gratification of receiving a delivered hot meal, the recipients also benefit from the interac-

tion it brings through the volunteers.

"They're always happy to see me and I'm happy to see them," says Barbara Davidson, a volunteer who drives and delivers for the organization.

"It's hard for them to make their own meals," says Davidson.

Davidson sees the program as mutually beneficial as it allows her to give back to the community and do good things for other people, which makes her feel good. She believes the recipients thoroughly enjoy the interaction and the wide variety of meals that are brought to their doors.

Edith and Alfred Cairns agree.

"The very first one we had was liver and onions, and I couldn't believe it," says Edith Cairns.

"I thought that's kind of a delicate thing to send out on the first meal, but we enjoyed it and we've had it once since and I loved it. I look forward to that."

For a multi-media look at this story, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=49719>

Musicians come together

By Maggie Naylor

This Wednesday, as well as all other Wednesdays for the past 10 years, a group of people get together and play traditional Irish music.

"It's amazing what talent you can find in a small community like Belleville," says John Spot, a retired orchestra violinist.

The group gathers in what looks to be an old one-room school called the Engineers Hall, pull out various instruments and play for hours.

Orchestra violinist Carroll Leafa says, "It's a lot less stressful, with the orchestra you have to be right on Your timing's got to be perfect and everybody's serious. You have to look professional, where-as here nobody cares if you make a mistake or you're out of tune or something. It's no big deal."

Attendees range from talented musicians to true beginners, but everyone seems to enjoy their time. Spot says many

look forward to the Wednesday session all week. "We started off with like five whistles playing in a big echoey room. Now we have up to 15 or 16 people come," says Wilfred Gaube, the group organizer.

While many of them are well-trained musicians, this is not the place to be overly serious or professional. The hall is filled equally as much with laughter as it is with music.

"There's too many serious things going on in life," says Leafa. "We just have a few laughs, play some music, and talk some."

While the group is doing it job preserving Irish heritage, it's safe to say it has far more benefits to the people involved, many of whom have no actual Irish heritage.

What better music to bond over than the foot-tapping traditional Irish music that has been breaking out jigs for centuries?

For more on the Irish movement evenings, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=49733>

Lights out for collection at Belleville's Glanmore

By Amanda Paulhus

In June 1966, the city of Belleville spent \$5,000 on a 350-piece lighting collection with items that are centuries old.

Sadly, this collection has been off display for approximately 10 years.

Rona Rustige is a curator at the Glanmore National Historic Site of Canada and was present during the decision to take the lighting pieces off display.

"We've come to realize over the years that the strength of our presentation lies in the fact that it's a national historic site. We've gradually restored the whole house back to its original setup. What has happened as a result of that is that no, we don't have space to display. This isn't the only collection that we can't display, but if we stick a display case in the room, it takes away the feeling of realism," Rustige said.

Rustige added Glanmore has tried to incorporate some of the lighting pieces into its permanent set-up but there is only so much they can use due to the time period that Glanmore represents which is the late 1800s.

"It's the history of lighting, so it starts from these little prehistoric oil lamps and goes all the way through to the first light bulb," Rustige said.

The collection, which was dubbed the '10,000 Years of Light' collection, was purchased as part of Belleville's centennial project for the year 1967. The centennial year was the 100th anniversary of Canada's

confederation and museums all across the county were established and taking part in preserving history. This particular project was a joint effort between the City of Belleville and the Hastings County Museum of Agriculture Heritage.

It was originally put together by Dr. William Paul while he worked as a dentist in Tweed, who collected these items over decades. It includes some of the earliest lamps which can be dated back to pre-Christian Egyptian times and other lamps dating back to 600 BCE. Fire-making devices, tinder boxes, candle holders, stone lamps and whale oil lamps are other types of lighting devices included in this vast collection.

Another reason the lighting collection is not displayed is simply because of lack of interest.

Rustige has a laugh when reading old articles from the time the collection was purchased.

"There's a quote that just kills me. It is expected to make Belleville a mecca for historical researchers and tourists for years to come. That did not happen. I've been here 25 years and I've had the Historical Lighting Collection of Canada come on two occasions to look at the lamps. So other than that, there's no interest here."

Rustige said she does hope to someday find a better home than storage for the lighting collection.

"It is a large collection; it should go somewhere it can be used," she said.