

Watching Potatoes Grow

PART 1 OF A 3 PART SERIES: From Seed to Kale

We sent investigative reporter Emma Margraf into the field (literally, into the field) this year to explore the process of 'Farming' in our own community. What follows is the first of three parts as we delve into the mysteries of the Potato.

Potatoes: Chapter 1

By Emma Margraf

Potatoes, says Jennifer Belknap, are like a treasure hunt -- especially for kids. When I came to her with our idea for a story about the life cycle of a crop, starting with the planting of the seed in the spring, checking up on it's progress in the summer, and following up in the fall with a look at a dish that features the crop at Our Table in Olympia. Our Table is a regular customer for Rising River Farm, which Belknap runs. It's a local farm to table partnership, and potatoes are a versatile, powerful staple that keeps them both going. There are tons of varieties that go into hundreds of different recipes. All year long, everyone loves potatoes.



So many potatoes, so little time.

Potato photos by Joe Hyer

Potatoes are a regenerative crop. You make potatoes from old potatoes. Rising River starts planting potatoes in late April and May by adding organic fertilizer to the soil on a wintered-over crop. They can't quite predict the day, they just look for a time when the soil looks dry and in good condition. One person gets on their 1940's era Super-A Tractor, and three to four people drop one-inch chunks of potatoes in the dug out soil. Then the potatoes are covered with soil by the person driving the Super-A Tractor, and the soil is tilled. The farm crew usually does this three to four times.

There are many varieties of potatoes, but Belknap mentioned one to me that has an interesting local history: the Ozette. One of their CSA members brought them a five-pound bag of Ozettes, which they used to grow. Their



Ozette potatoes

member told them that the Ozettes were originally brought to the Olympic Peninsula by the Spaniards, whose time there didn't work out because the weather was too hard on their ships. Local tribes in the Peninsula needed a carbohydrate and took up growing this particular variety of fingerling from there, becoming its stewards. For generations Ozettes could only be found on tribal lands.

One of the wonderful things about potatoes is that they are an easy crop to grow. You can use potatoes you have, as long as they are organic and they are sprouting. Non-organic potatoes are often sprayed with chemicals that include a sprout inhibitor. Gardening enthusiasts should also beware that potatoes are prone to disease, something you can avoid by buying potato sprouts at one of the co-ops or at Eastside Farm and Garden. So plant at your own risk, but Belknap says if you have a problem with your potatoes you'll know. It's easy to spot.

The folks at Our Table are regular customers of Rising River, and frequent potato buyers. They reinvent their menu each season, so we won't be able to predict what form the potatoes will take in the fall. Rising River likes Our Table so much that they asked them, very late in the season, to cater their crew appreciation dinner. They told Our Table what vegetables and herbs they had available on the farm for the dinner, and what ensued was an incredibly creative seven-course meal that Belknap describes as simply amazing. She could not have predicted how creative and delicious it would be- what a perfect farm



At Ramblin Jacks potatoes come as salad, as garlic mashed, or as fresh cut fries.

to table expression of their appreciation to their crew.

Potatoes. They are breakfast, they are lunch, and they are dinner. They are one of the most versatile crops that exist. There is a niche potato dish that can please almost anyone. We hope you will follow us through the story of their planting at Rising River through the next two issues as we watch them grow, get harvested, and get set onto Our Table.

In the Summer Issue, our saga continues with the trials, tribulations, triumphs and tragedies of being a potato, growing on an unsuspecting farm in South Thurston County. Will the potato make it to the Table (There's a Haiku in that somewhere)? Will it survive its epic journey? Find out in our Summer issue of Living Local - due on newsstands circa July 1, 2017.

THE ANNUAL FOOD ISSUE:

- MORE INSIDE
- Year-Long Tribute to Happy Hours
 - What to eat, Cyclist
 - Farmers Markets Abound
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LIVING LOCAL

Living Local is a quarterly publication of Sustainable South Sound designed to educate, inspire and promote Localism throughout the region. Living Local is published by the Buy Local South Sound Program.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Photo Credit: Dinea DePhoto

Rachel Friedman,
Sustainable South
Sound Board President

Welcome to spring to all our Sustainable South Sound members, Localists, friends and new readers! The year has once again swung around to my favorite time. Despite continuing to play in the snow (and it has been epic for Western Washington), I recently trimmed my apple trees and have been scouring seed and nursery catalogs for native, heritage or Arc of Taste plants for my garden. The Ark of Taste is an international catalogue of endangered heritage foods which is maintained by the global Slow Food movement. I recently joined the Slow Food of Greater Olympia <https://www.facebook.com/goslowfood/> and am enjoying incorporating what I am learning into my gardening and eating. I hope that this issue will help to inspire you with stories of gardening, eating, drinking and producing some of the bounty of local food and beverages that can be found in our region.

I am excited to give you a sneak peak into some new and expanding opportunities from Sustainable South Sound. As we involve our organization in more projects in the community, we want to keep you apprised of all that is going on so that you can get involved as well. We will be providing our Localist and business members with closer communications about what happening in the local food system through an expanded calendar and more digital content on our website and in a new e-newsletter. In addition, we are developing a "members" only section on our website which will have exclusive content and more opportunities to link Localists and business members. In addition, we are in the early stages of scheming about a local chefs cook-off challenge and fundraiser. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for all that is new by continuing to read our Living Local newspaper, following us on Facebook (Buy Local South Sound), and becoming a Localist so that you can receive our e-newsletters and this paper which will be sent directly to you every quarter.

As always, please feel free to contact me. Happy Spring!

Rachel Friedman Board President
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LIVING LOCAL CONTRIBUTORS



Joe Hyer - Publisher/Editor



Joe has a degree in Creative Writing from Pacific University, and has written for diverse publications throughout the area for more than twenty years.

Eric Belgau - Co-Publisher



In addition to being a freelance writer and screenwriter, Eric is also a commercial agent for Nicholson and Associates locally.

Emma Margraf



Emma works in communications for the State of Washington, and is pursuing an MFA in creative writing with Antioch University.

Zachary Bowen



In addition to managing the Buy Local Office and coordinating outreach efforts, Zac also finds time to work with the visitor and convention bureau as one of Thurston County's Brand Ambassadors.

Rachel Friedman - President



Rachel serves as President of Sustainable South Sound, among her many volunteer activities, and also owns Motion In Balance Studio in Downtown Olympia.

Chris Hawkins - Treasurer



In addition to being the longest serving board member at Sustainable South Sound, Chris is also a passionate cycling commuter, and you can see him all over the community, almost always on his bike.

Trent Kelly



A local writer, and frequent Happy Hour attendee, Trent covers stories that we've never thought to write sometimes.

Have a LOCAL story idea?

email Joe & Eric at
sustainss@gmail.com

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Local OPINION



Editor: Joe Hyer

The Power of Words

**OUCH —
that hurts!**

This is not the original opinion piece written for this issue. It isn't even the second piece. I scrapped a biting editorial about red tape and the new county leadership. I scrapped a scathingly incendiary piece directed at the Olympia City Council, suggesting impolitely they need to respect their elders, in regards to Anne Buck's fun and floral wall. You see, I never send an opinion piece to the design phase the day I write it. Words are incredibly powerful, and those of us that use them in print need to be ever mindful of that. To that end, a re-read the next day is essential for me in opinion or editorial writing. My first piece was poking at things without giving them a chance. My second, though artful prose, was just plain mean.

Sometimes, however, the very visceral nature of an experience is what makes it worth telling, and all the editing in the world serves only to remove the visceral nature itself. So my third opinion piece, The Power of Words, was written and sent directly to press...

"I Overreacted," were my first words to Rob Beckwell when he and two other officers arrived on Olympia Avenue in response to my call to 911, which began as a trespass, and quickly became a verbal assault, and then a potential hate crime.

I'd arrived at my office downtown, and heard two men on the East end



Editorial Illustration by CBPhillipsen

of the building in the rock gym parking lot. Shouting obscenities and slurs and such- at the Hand's on Children's Museum. I rounded the corner and asked them to stop, and to leave the property. They mentioned their rights, and I explained they could say what they wanted on the sidewalk, but they needed to leave my property and not return that day.

The expletives directed at the Museum were then directed at me. I tried to remain calm, and reinforce that they needed to leave the property or I would call the police and

trespass them. One came closer, and threatened to beat me up. I pulled out my phone, they backed up, and then it happened. The words.

"Fucking Faggot!" I stopped thinking and began shouting back...

"That's bigoted hate speech, man, not in Olympia..."

"You-"

I tried to calm myself. "Dude, I am gay, what you're saying is highly offensive." I hoped reason might somehow intervene, or at least compassion. Nope.

"Then it's your fault, you fucking faggot!"

Tourist Season in Olympia!

Historically, the first quarter of any calendar year is horrid for the retail sector. This is ever more true today, as folks struggle to pay off holiday bills, and cut spending.

Advertising revenues suffer, and the whole economy is sluggish, and especially aptly fitting word in the Northwest.

Many in Olympia complain about the State Capitol being here – parking, traffic, protests, taxes- there are challenges. But all too often we forget to count our blessings, and in Olympia we can proudly declare we aren't SLUGS! With 147 legislators,

their staff, agency staff, lobbyists and countless busses of activists coming and going, it's a boom for local restaurants, and by extension retail and many other sectors. Hotels are full, and people are spending money in Olympia while local economies around the country are as slimy and slow as slugs.

Newly opened restaurants like the Chelsea Farms Oyster Bar at the 222 Market (I had the most delectable fish sandwich there) and the Governor's Cellar at the Governor Hotel (the only Lobster Roll in Olympia!) really benefit from proximity to the

capital, and the clientele they vie for.

Even the activists coming to protest and rally often spend money. That star on the State map is a burden and a responsibility at times, but it's also a huge opportunity, if we leverage it correctly.

So hats off and a hearty thanks to our legislators, staff, state employees, lobbyists, activists and so many more who come to our town each year and leave us a little more sustainable, economically.



Photo by Joe Hyer

Our biggest tourist attraction



Activist, protesters and lobbying groups arrive daily by the bus load.

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Letter to the Editor

Mail to: Joe Hyer [sustainss@gmail.com]
From: Andra - Lacey
Subject: Re: the 5th R

Hi Joe,
Way behind the times - I'm just now reading the summer issue of Living Local (blush).

Two comments, First, a big thank you for doing this paper!
Second - in the article about Threadcycling, the final paragraph adds a fourth R - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and also Refuse... I'd like to add a fifth one: Repair.

I grew up in the 40s & 50s - when it was just a given that most thing that got broken could be repaired. Between them, my parents could fix most things, and for the few they couldn't, there were repair shops for just about everything a few minutes' drive away.

Seems like there are more and more things being sold nowadays that either can't be repaired, or cost more to repair than to buy new.

IMO, demanding repairable products is a key element in reducing trash. A side note on this - if electronics were more easily up-grade-able (is that a word?) there would be a lot fewer of them contaminating landfills. It'll never happen unless we-the-people start demanding it.

At the local level, I'd like to see a series of articles on "How to Fix It" - and maybe a bit of research into "How to Avoid Buying Something That Can't Be Fixed."

Cheers,
Andra Weddington - Lacey

Editor's Note:

Andra, great point about the ability to repair a product. I recently had to replace an item I really would rather have repaired, but that's just not an option any more. I think we'll run a story theme soon on 'Durable Goods', which is about how long things last, as well as the ability to repair if something goes wrong.

JUST ONE HAPPY HOUR?

NAY, IT'S A YEAR-LONG Celebration Of...

South Sound's Best Happy Hours

Photo by Joe Hyer

By Joe Hyer

I once saw a sign in the French Quarter of New Orleans- Happy Hour Specials, 24 Hours A Day. Um, how special is that? Like any great idea that has little to no intellectual property rights, the term has now strayed far from its origins. Anyone know the origin of Happy Hour, by the way?

The Wikipedia defines it as – *Happy hour is a marketing term for a period of time in which a venue (such as a restaurant, bar, bowling alley, stadium, or state or county fair) offers discounts on alcoholic drinks, such as beer, wine, and cocktails. Free Hors d'oeuvres, appetizers and discounted menu items are often served during Happy hour.*

The origins of the term are a bit murky. The first known use of the phrase comes, of course, from Shakespeare, Henry V, Act II, Scene

I, when Henry says, "Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour that may give furtherance to our expedition..." But that was really meant more for any period of pleasant times, not just when drinks are cheap and wings plentiful.



Happy Hour at Ramblin' Jacks. What? All day Sunday? For reals?

Photo by Joe Hyer

The best explanation for 'Happy Hour' as a period of entertainment or frivolity comes from the US Navy, when in 1913 they began having 'Happy Hour Social' on the USS Arkansas. By the end of World War One – the term Happy Hour had spread throughout the US navy.

Hosting a 'Happy Hour' before dinnertime (the traditional time) has its roots in prohibition. Fine restaurants no longer served alcohol, so folks would host cocktail hours at home, or go to speakeasys before going out for a formal dinner. Hence, drinking before dinner- all because drinking is outlawed. How ironic.

Now, the Random House Dictionary of American Slang (and yes, I did not make that up, it really exists) claims the birth of Happy Hour to be 1959, when The Saturday Evening Post used the term in an article on military life to describe an organized party for drinks in the afternoon.

Prohibition ended long ago, but the wacky laws about Happy Hour were just getting started. Here's a few of the most interesting:

In Massachusetts, there's been a statewide BAN on happy hours since 1984. I gotta say, 1983 musta been a heck of a year!

Utah followed suit in 2011, and a handful of other states have done the same in the interim.

In Pennsylvania, Happy could ONLY last for two hours, by law. Praise the lord, the State Government spread that to FOUR hours in 2011. They'll still allow you to call it Happy Hour, in singular, even if it's four hours. Where are the grammar and common sense police?

After a 26 year ban on Happy Hours – Kansas allowed them again starting in 2012. Of note- they are now in their fifth year of allowing them, and from what I understand, the sky in Kansas has not actually fallen. Nor have locusts plagued the land.

Even the foreigners are getting in on this – Alberta Canada, as of 2008 all Happy Hours MUST end by 8:00 pm, and no pricing below the minimum prices set by the government. What, I thought they had freedom in Canada, eh?

Now, here's a good one- In the Netherlands, a major lobby group of hoteliers had agreed to STOP all happy hours voluntarily to discourage binge drinking by youth, but only if the government agreed not to RAISE the drinking age. Well, in 2013, they raised the drinking age anyway.

Why all the wacky laws? To prevent binge drinking and DUI, of course. It's funny, hangovers were

my deterrent to binge drinking. The first time I experienced the concept of Happy Hour was in college in Washington DC. Mr. Henry's at Washington Circle had a pitcher of beer and either a cheeseburger and fries, or a hummus plate, for just six bucks. I was stunned. Then I looked around the City. Free food was the norm at Happy Hour. As a college student, happy hour is how we ate for weeks!

It's interesting, down in Mexico, there's Happy Hour, but not much free food. I think it is because the food is already inexpensive. Instead, it's buy one, get one free. Unless it's the shoulder season, and it's buy two, get one free. Or the truly dead season, and you can actually see 3-4 and get one free. Of course, some places double their prices, then do a special – lame.



Art and science are the perfect fusion in mixing drinks - South Sound is full of amazing cocktail artists

Photo Courtesy of Ricardo's

South Sound, we've found, is full of fun and interesting Happy Hour options. Some have drink specials, some have food specials, some are just really cool places to hang and drink. Eric Belgau, my new co-publisher, and I have set a goal to create

- continued on page 5

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Photo Courtesy of Ramblin Jacks



Photo by Zac Bowen



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Photo Courtesy of Ricardo's



Photo by Joe Hyer

Good friends. Good food. Good drinks. Good times.

Happy Hours Continue... from page 4

A Comprehensive Guide To Local Happy Hours for South Sound this year, using both the print edition, and our website, www.sustainablesouthsound.org. We intend to try out any and all Happy Hours, and rate them in key categories, then rank them, and perhaps even compile a 'best of' on the website, maybe even trophies and awards!

Then we took a look at our current members who have Happy Hours, and added all the places we wanted to try, and the one's we should try ... And we could drink every day for the next year and still not hit them all, and that's already way too much drinking. So Localists, and Localists to be ---- we need your help. Yes, in order to create a comprehensive 'Guide to Local South Sound Happy

Hours' (or GLSSH for short), we need field reporters. We need people willing to take one for the Localist Team, and not only go have happy hour, but also then go online and add your scores and reviews to our blog. We may even feature your review in the next issue of Living Local.

We do have just a few simple guidelines. First, be nice. Second, be fair. Third – REGISTER that you will be participating at www.sustainablesouthsound.org Fourth – get some friends, find a local happy hour, and enjoy. Fifth, upload or email in your review and comments. Sixth – repeat.

Looking for a Happy Hour to review? Email us for a list of one's we are waiting to visit. We will be scoring each Happy

Hopefully figuring out the happy hour tab is easy.

Hour in five (5) categories – Ambiance/Atmosphere, Food, Drink, Service, and Value. Look for our first reviews in the SUMMER issue of Living Local.

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 Your input helps create a comprehensive guide to local happy hours of South Sound.

Name of establishment:

AMBIANCE & ATMOSPHERE -
Notes:
 Comfortable seating?
 Pleasant atmosphere?
 Clean?
 Fun theme?
 Cold and Drafty?
 Whatcha say?
SCORE:

FOOD & SNACKS -
Notes:
 Variety?
 Quality?
 Originality?
 Presentation?
 Make ya wanna return?
SCORE:

DRINKS & LIBATION -
Notes:
 Variety?
 Quality?
 Potency?
 Originality?
 Presentation?
 Encourages too many drinks? (Not a good thing.)
SCORE:

STAFFING & SERVICE -
Notes:
 Friendly and welcoming?
 Or if not, it's part of the charm?
 Adequate staffing?
 Prompt enough service?
SCORE:

VALUE - Value can mean inexpensive. It also means worthwhile, a wise investment, a good return. Localists value fair deals, and businesses value our loyal patronage. **Notes:**
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Local Food Cycling

By Chris Hawkins

Have you thought about making your commute... or errands, or other travel... solar-powered? OK, so I don't really mean tricking out your ride with an electric engine and solar panels to gather the sun's rays and use them directly. Even though it's a step or two removed, using active transportation (bicycling, walking, etc.) means food is your fuel, and much of the carbohydrate energy we consume as food comes from chlorophyllous plants – aka, the original solar power plants. The more you ride, the more calories you burn (bonus: getting that daily dose of healthy exercise) and the more of that good stuff you get to eat. Some might say it's a virtuous cycle. So, where to begin...

Recipes for Successful Pedaling

To get started in active transportation, ease your way into it by trying it out one-way to a destination and having a friend or family meet you for a pick up or ride home together. Or throw your bicycle on the front of an



Photo courtesy of Intercity Transit

Intercity Transit bus for one direction of your travel. Having the support and camaraderie of other folks who've done it can be very helpful. For some friendly competition and lots of great support and incentives, you could enter (free of charge!) the Bicycle Commuter Challenge (BCC), which is now in its 30th year and starts May 1st. The Challenge runs for the whole month of May (sign up starting April 1, and join the Earth Day Ride on April 22). The latest BCC news can be found at thurstonbcc.blogspot.com.

A 30-minute bicycle ride, which could move you 4 to 8 miles down the path or road at an easy-to-moderate pace, and get you across town or out of it, would consume approximately 250 calories worth of energy. It's always good to have a full 12oz. water bottle along to keep yourself from becoming dehydrated, but for this duration of activity,



Photo by Zac Bowen



Photo courtesy of Intercity Transit

Just another day in Olympia.

it's a level of energy use for which you wouldn't need to immediately replace the calories burned. At a next meal, this 30-minute activity (the recommended daily minimum for adults) could be replenished by one bowl of cereal with milk, or a serving of pasta with cheese.

If you were out on a longer ride, say more than 90-minutes, you may need to carry some food with you to maintain your energy. High carb items like snack bars (which often supply 250 calories) or a couple of pieces of fruit or fruit leather are easily packable (light and contained).

Route, Route, Route for Vegetables

Further, a longer cycle could allow you to plan out a loop or other route that takes you to food destinations – grocery stores like the Olympia Food Co-op or the Bayview or Ralph's Thriftway stores. You can hit the bulk section in these stores to pack a snack, and there's plenty of good local food that's ready to eat. Or perhaps a lunch stop at a restaurant will fit into your ride's route.

Traveling by active transportation not only means you're building an appetite, you're more likely to stumble on something interesting in your local area. The Thurston Bountiful Byway (www.bountifulbyway.com) highlights several local eating options, such as farmers markets and a tour opportunity to visit the local farms and craft producers who help make our region such a great place. These can be good places to refuel en route – whether it is with a bunch of carrots or apples, a baked good, or some other refreshment. Thurston County's regional trails (see <http://www.trpc.org/179/Thurston-County-Bicycle-Map>), run through about 14 miles of the Bountiful Byway in the heart of south county between Tenino and Yelm. Anytime you add a transportation purpose to what's otherwise just a recreational ride on your bike (besides the fact that instead of driving to the gym you are getting your workout while you move yourself around town!), it becomes a day and miles that count toward prizes in the BCC!

Conclusion...
The more you cycle (or walk or ride the bus), the more you'll choose locally and the more you'll need and appreciate that delicious locally grown food. So, make the sustainable choice – go local. As Michael Pollan would say, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants" to which we might add: get around, as you need, mostly by active transport. More

information on the Bicycle Commuter Challenge and other Intercity Transit services for active transportation can be found at: www.intercitytransit.com/bike.



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Photos by Joe Hyer

Bulk up for exercise with bulk foods.

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Burial Grounds Coffee

**NOT
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By Zac Bowen

Located across from Olympia, Washington's iconic Capitol Theatre on Fifth Avenue is one of the best coffee shops in the region with its quirky, eclectic, grunge flair unique to Downtown Oly. Burial Grounds Coffee will haunt your dreams with its specialized hot and cold Espresos and Tea's. Their one-of-a-kind atmosphere alone will pull you in and keep you coming back. The unique menu will always offer something new and interesting to surprise you. The heart of the people who work at Burial Grounds shines through clearly in the openness and accepting environment they've created in the heart of Downtown.

Burial Grounds Coffee is not your typical coffee shop. From the occult works of local art for sale down to the skull skillfully drawn in the foam of your coffee, standard fair is not this cafe's shtick. When you first visit it can be hard not to lose yourself in the come-as-you-are atmosphere. Your average cafe can seem almost clinical, bland, and designed for the mindless masses, but here you get a little bit extra; the walls and counters are covered in opinion and personality adding to the charming atmosphere. The interior is just

as much a treat for the eye as it is for the taste buds. While you wait for your order, your attention can't help but dance from behind the front counter all the way to the back of the library. The art on the walls changes on a monthly basis, featuring local artists with styles ranging from the macabre to the downright adorable, both for display and purchase.

Behind the counter, however, is where some of the best art in town is created. The care that is put into each and every detail of your drink leaves nothing to be desired. Specials like "Brenda's Brains" or "Rasputin Rising" make it easy to find yourself lost either in the menu, or in a fit of giggles. Burial Grounds carries the widest variety of flavors in town so it's easy to add your own personal flair to any drink. Every season is ushered in by the resurrection of their seasonal specials of inspired tea and coffee blends, like my personal favorite, a prominent Peach start, accented with Amaretto, and White chocolate; the aptly named "Bowser's Delight".

Burial Grounds provides the widest selection of dairy substitutions including hemp and rice milks, options that are not found at many other local shops. In order

to really round out your order, you can't miss out on their wide variety of bagels, cookies, cakes and pastries. There is something for all tastes, including several gluten-free and vegan options. As refreshing deviation from the common coffee foam art, Burial Grounds has ditched the standard foam leaf in lieu of bringing your cup to life, or rather to death, with its iconic skull design. Switching up the standard coffee shop convention, this beloved local haunt welcomes weary wanderers well into the evening. Locking it's doors at midnight, it's the only coffee shop in town happy to keep you awake through the witching hours.

Burial Grounds is unapologetically outspoken and proudly progressive, here you can see a uniquely distilled convergence of the socially-conscious spirit and alternative culture that you can only find

in Olympia. While this shop's raw punk feel may make you apprehensive about your first visit, you'll find nothing but friendly faces. Not shy about showering discounts including downtown employees, students, and military all year.

The unabashed all-inclusive atmosphere among the collection of eclectic and quirky décor makes you feel strangely soothed not only by the amazing flavors of your beverage, but by the hospitality towards all walks of life, a sentiment shared by all of their regular customers. A handwritten sign by the front counter encourages you to anonymously buy the next patrons drink a simple gesture that could make someone's whole day. Burial Grounds Coffee was recently recognized by readers of NWMilitary.com as 2017's best cup of coffee, and it's easy to see why.

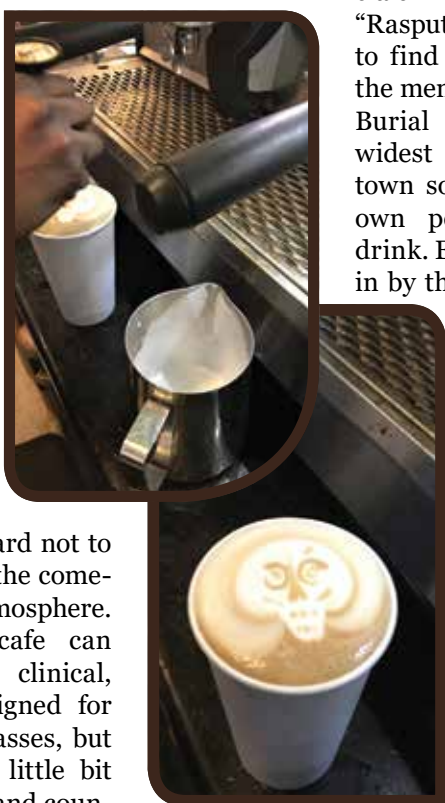
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Farmers Markets in the South Sound

By Eric Belgau

We in the South Sound live in the midst of a bounty. Our farms – which, themselves, range from the traditional to the eclectic – are remarkably productive, delivering both a surprising volume of produce and tremendous variety. Years of effort on the part of Evergreen's organic farming program, our several farmers' markets, and numerous food-system-related nonprofits have produced a uniquely entrepreneurial farming community. And that – along with significant support from county and municipal governments – has made "farm fresh" a reality here in a way that is unheard of in most of the country.

Shopping at a farmers market is about much more than just buying groceries. It's about forging connections with local producers, which connects our needs to theirs and tightens the fabric of our community. It's about sharing a local space with local people – that intentional congregation of folks that reminds us we're not alone in the world, or even in our small corner of the world. And it's about the economics of Local. Buying at a farmers market keeps our investment local quite literally: our dollars go back into the soil of the South Sound to produce next year's bounty. And here, shopping at a farmers market is incredibly easy because there are so many of them.

Here's a snapshot of the various Farmer's Markets around the South Sound.



Fresh clams and cherries make people smile.

WEST OLYMPIA

The West Olympia Farmers Market, located in the West Central Park on the corner of Harrison and Division streets, is a hyper-local, small-scale farmers market built for and of the community that it serves. The vast majority of vendors live and operate in Thurston County, and most are local to West Olympia. Still, the market, which operates on Tuesdays from 4-7pm from Mid-May to Mid-October, boasts a significant variety of options, from fresh eggs and poultry to bread and pastries, and from plant starts to crafts. Buy Local Member Sassy Seafoods is a member at this market.

The West Olympia Farmers Market focuses on providing opportunities to new and beginning businesspeople, so some vendors only sell to the public through the market. It's also small – both in terms of footprint and foot traffic – so it's a great place to meet up-and-coming farmers, food-producers, and craftspeople.

SHELTON

The Shelton Farmers Market, located between Franklin and Cedar Streets on 3rd Street in downtown Shelton, supports farmers and artisans throughout Mason County and has become a popular destination on summer Saturday mornings. In addition to providing a path to market for local farmers, the market boasts beeswax creations, soap, crafts and treasures for homeschoolers, one-of-a-kind fabrics, and many more locally crafted creations.

Open from 9 am to 2 pm every Saturday from May through October, the market is always a hub of activity, rain or shine. Opening day is May 6th this year, and on June 17th, Kids' Day is a great way to get the summer vacation off to a celebratory start.

TUMWATER

The Tumwater Farmers Market will be a bit more visible this year, thanks to the City of



Calliopi Famstand at the Olympia Farmers Market

Tumwater's decision to move the location to the street frontage along Capitol Boulevard (Old Highway 99) just south of Israel Road. The greater visibility will hopefully bring even more shoppers to the already popular market, which begins its 12th year of operation this summer. Open from 10 to 2 every Wednesday from May 3rd through October, the market provides a forum for a wide variety of farmers, food processors, and artisans.

Perhaps because of its proximity to a fire station, the Tumwater Market has historically provided one of the best Wednesday lunches in the county, with options from South Bay BBQ, Blu Nynja Dogs, Nana Kathy's Baked Goods, Covabrelli Coffee, and Rawk Star Creations. There are also multiple vendors who specialize in cut flowers – and that's in addition to the many local farmers who bring their meats and produce to the market.

TENINO

The Tenino Farmers Market is located in downtown Tenino, on Sussex Avenue and Olympia Street, and operates every Saturday from 10-3 from May 6th to September 30th. As Tenino works to style itself as a destination for residents of the more populous areas of the South Sound, the Farmers Market provides an excellent opportunity for local farmers, food producers, artisans, and entrepreneurs to add to the fun. And they do, with one of the more event-heavy farmers markets in the region. And a pie competition that shouldn't be missed.

Artisans are more prevalent at the Tenino market than at others in our region, so this is one to be sure to visit to find what all the local creators are doing. From handmade crafts to locally produced candles and soap, everything is on display here. And the Tenino Mini Golf Club – a great organization if ever there was one, hosting a free community birthday party once a month – is set up every market day, with several holes of mini golf.



Standing in line for Stewart Meats

YELM

Operating on the Yelm Highway Frontage at Nisqually Springs Farm, the Yelm Farmers Market is the only one in Washington State to be located

on a working farm. The product of the same community group that created the Yelm Co-Operative store, the Farmers' Market opened on Memorial Day 2012 and has been going strong every since. With nearly 30 vendors, it is the largest non-permanent farmers market in the region, and it always boasts a festive atmosphere.

The Yelm Farmers Market has always benefited from great leadership, and this year a new market manager, Sarah Curtis, will bring a fresh perspective that combines her Evergreen education and several years of experience at the Puyallup Farmers Market. Getting started this year on May 28th, the market will be open from 10 to 3 every Sunday through October 29th.



Fossilwear Tie Dyes adds to the uniqueness of Olympia Farmers Market.

LEWIS COUNTY

If you're out and about on the weekends, Lewis County also boasts several farmers markets. The Community Farmers Market is open from June 12th to October 23rd every Tuesday from 11 am to 4 pm on Boistfort Street in Chehalis; and from July 21st to September 29th, every Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm in Centralia.

The Lewis County Farmers Market (also known as the Centralia Farmers Market) operates every Friday from 10 am to 3:30 at the corner of Pearl and Maple in Chehalis, from May through September and, weather permitting, into October. And many small towns in Lewis County, such as Mossyrock and Winlock, often have farmers markets on the weekends.

OLYMPIA

As the largest and longest-running market in the South Sound region, the Olympia Farmers Market is the lynchpin of the market community. Entering its 42nd season in 2017, the Olympia market is open year-round, boasts a wide variety of farm, artisan food, and craft vendors, and provides entertainment nearly every weekend throughout the year. With fresh produce literally spilling out the sides of the rustic Farmers Market building, seven restaurants serving a variety of delicious foods, and a location right on the waterfront in Downtown Olympia, the Farmers Market is as much adventure as food bounty.

Open Saturday and Sunday in November and December and Saturday only from January through March, the Farmers Market kicks off its farm season on April 1st. From April through October, the market is open Thursday through Sunday, from 10 am to 3 pm, and is an Olympia institution. This year, a special lineup of entertainment and festivities runs throughout April, with an exciting crop of new vendors being unveiled on April 6th.



Sampling delicious Johnson Berry jams at the Olympia Farmers Market.



A great place to source plants for your garden and vegetables for your plate.



Eclectic & fun vendors can be found at farmers markets.



Photos on this page courtesy of the Olympia Farmers Market

Learn about your purchases straight from the farmer.

Improving Access for the Whole Community

By Eric Belgau

Farmer's Markets provide an important means for getting farm fresh food to the marketplace, and they provide an important opportunity for local farmers to find a market for their produce. But because most farms that utilize the farmer's market model operate on a smaller scale, farmers market prices put this high quality, local food out of reach for many consumers. That's something our local farmer's markets recognize.

Both the Olympia and Yelm Farmer's Markets accept Washington State EBT cards, which can be used to purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, and baked goods at the market. Patrons using an EBT card need only to stop at the market office to swipe their card, and the market will provide tokens that can be used on approved purchases. The Olympia Farmers Market also accepts WIC checks and Senior Checks, which are funded by the USDA's Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Last year, the Tumwater Farmers Market instituted the Market Match program, which makes it easier for customers on limited incomes to purchase fresh produce and other eligible items at the market. Customers who receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits at the market receive a dollar-for-dollar match – up to \$10 – to spend on eligible food items at the market. Last year, the market was able to help 115 families and individuals through the Market Match program and hopes to significantly expand funding for the program in 2017.

Because this is an area of focus for farmers markets in our area and across Washington State, anyone on a limited income should find out what other benefits may be available at local farmers markets. Through the hard work and advocacy of farmers market boards and others in our community, access to the most nutritious food will hopefully only continue to expand.



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Member Profile:



Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor

Everyone Deserves a Slice



Pizza, Homeless Backpacks, and Much More

By Emma Margraf

In this issue we'd planned to do a profile of Gregory Wilson and Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor, a local family run institution that's been in Lacey since 1972.

Dirty Dave's is a go-to for family gatherings, kid's birthday parties, and all sorts of other shindigs. They have rooms you can reserve for big groups, games for kids to play, and a solid menu of pasta, grinders, and pizza that is full of crowd pleasers. Long time fans of the restaurant appreciate the creative menu (cashews on pizza!) and the laid back atmosphere. Dirty Dave's is a place where people of all ages can be themselves. It's named for the founder Dave Wilson, who passed away in 2013. Wilson was considered to be a congenial pillar of the community. The Dirty Dave's website describes him as a man with a strong sense of humor and a particular skill at gambling. The restaurant is now run by Dave's son, Greg.

Greg isn't one for profiles. He shies away from the limelight. When I talked to him about my assignment to write about him and about his business, he asked if he could donate the profile space to the local non-profit called Homeless Backpacks. He and his wife are very involved in Homeless Backpack's work, and he would rather the attention go to them. I asked my publisher, who said forge ahead as Greg directed. So he sent me to his wife Kelly, who told me a little bit about their work...

Kelly is a founding board member of Homeless Backpacks. The organization was created out of a conversation with a group of friends who wanted to make a difference in the local homeless community. These were all mothers, grandmothers, and aunts who especially wanted to be able to support homeless youth. They wanted to help, so

they asked around to find out where the gaps were in services to homeless youth. They found out that homeless students receive free breakfast and lunch during the school week and often had little or no access to food on the weekends, so they decided to start a program that would send them home on Friday afternoons with backpacks full of food that they could eat over the weekend. There it was. The way they could make a difference.

Homeless Backpacks serves South Sound middle and high school students who have no permanent address. They may be living in shelters with their families, or staying with different friends every night. They may be runaways. They may be hard to spot because of their efforts to blend in with the rest of their community. It's the mission of Homeless Backpacks to help them make a successful transition to adult life. The organization supports seven

school districts: North Thurston, Olympia, Yelm, Tumwater, Rochester, Tenino, and Rainier. They also serve elementary schools in Yelm, Rainier, Rochester, and Tenino. Their vision is that hunger never gets in the way of an education.

Kelly says that her work with Homeless Backpacks feeds her, rather than drains her. It's an all-volunteer organization with no paid employees. Kelly feels like all of those volunteers are some of the kindest, brilliant, and generous people on the planet. For her, working with the other volunteers at Homeless Backpacks never stops being fun.

Greg and Kelly both believe that business thrives in a healthy, vibrant community. They know that getting involved in local organizations and causes helps keep the community strong – and that is a win for everyone.

At a minimum, the Homeless Backpack program ensures that school counselors see some of our community's most vulnerable children each week when they come to pick up their backpacks. The counselors can then check in on the well being of the children, and offer services that help the kids stay safe and healthy and able to focus on their schoolwork.

To find out more about Homeless Backpacks, visit their website:

<http://homelessbackpacks.org/> or find them on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HomelessBackpacks/>

Donations and volunteers are welcome anytime.

Dirty Dave's is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner at their Martin Way location. More information and their contact information can be found on their website: <http://www.dirtydavespizza.com>.

Check out the COUPON on the back page, and when you use it, thank the staff at Dirty Dave's for supporting Buy Local AND for their strong support of Homeless Backpacks.

No one likes hunger, and this story gives you two great ways to solve it.

Dirty Dave's

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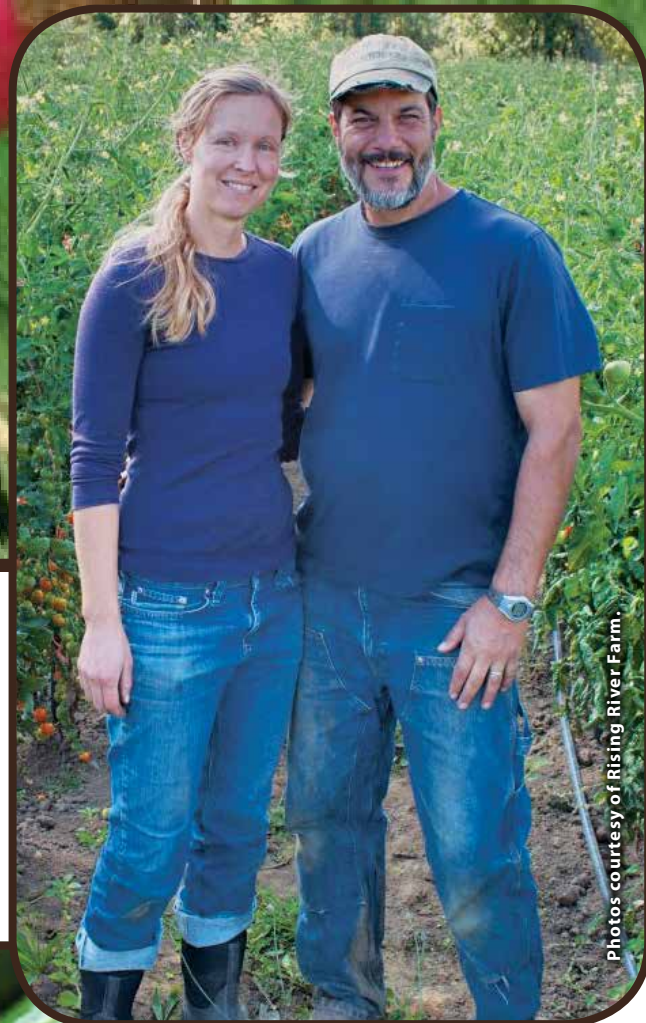


Photo courtesy of Dirty Dave's

Providing essentials for homeless youth, volunteers fill back packs to help.

Member Profile:

Rising River Farm



Photos courtesy of Rising River Farm.

Photos courtesy of Rising River Farm.

Meet your local farmers:

Emma Margraf

Farming is hard. Farming is year round long days. Local, small organic farms bring some of the best tasting food there is to our tables, and in the South Sound we are lucky enough to really be able to get to know the people who do this for us.

Jim McGinn founded Rising River Farm in 1994 with a few of his friends. Jim got into farming in 1992 when he got a job at Independence Valley Farm in Rochester. He didn't know anything about farming at the time – he was looking for summer work. But he stayed for several years, before founding Rising River. Jennifer got her start at First Straw Farm in New Haven, Vermont before she founded Sauk Mountain Farm with two other women on three acres in Rockport, Washington. She joined Jim at Rising River Farm in 1997.

Belknap says the farm to table movement that has grown so popular has allowed their farm to grow steadily over the years. They started with three acres and have grown to about twenty, and she feels like the love and commitment to fresh organic food is here to stay. Rising River does a significant amount of business putting food on local tables. They supply vegetables to restaurants that include Our Table, The Mark, Old School Pizzeria, Curry In A Hurry, Green Heart Smoothies, and the Eastside Co-op deli. Olykraut also buys our pickling cukes, dill, carrots, and jalapenos for their products and the Olympia School District buys their carrots in the fall. Their vegetables are also stocked at Olympia Food Co-ops and Farm Fresh Market.

Belknap says that this is a job that she can feel proud of. She is helping to build a healthier and more resilient community. She is forced to work outside all of the time and that's a good thing because she can observe the gradual change of the season. She says that sure, it rains a lot but that the weather is actually fairly mild – not too cold to be outside in the winter and not so hot in the summer that you swelter in the fields. She is rewarded for being outside with the scenic views of the South Sound and with fun conversations with the farm's crew. There is a wide variety of tasks all season long: greenhouse work, field preparations, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, irrigation, trellising, washing/packing, fulfilling their CSA, making deliveries, and selling their products at farmers markets all keep her and the farm staff busy. Plus, she eats a lot of amazing food, and only wishes that she had more time to can and freeze for winter use.

Rising River Farm's bestselling vegetables are carrots and pickling cucumbers. Not only do they sell carrots to schools, farmers markets and through their CSA, they are also the main supplier of for both Olympia Food Co-ops from July to December. They hear over and over again that their carrots are the best.

Working at local farmers markets is a



Photos courtesy of Rising River Farm.

(center) Jennifer Belknap & Jim McGinn Co-Farmers amidst their vegetables (top) Carrots, beets & radishes (bottom) Pickling cucumbers

task that is one of Belknap's favorite parts of being a farmer. She loves how engaged South Sound residents are with their food. She says they are excited, grateful and dedicated about the produce and plants they buy. Whether she is helping them pick out starts for their garden or talking about all of the wonderful ways to cook chard, she likes having the connection to the customers that appreciate all the hard work that happens on the farm.

Pickling cucumbers have become a little bit of a specialty for Rising River Farm. They have a shorter season but people love them and the farm can never grow enough. The farm is very picky about the size and quality of their cucumbers and they have developed a solid reputation for them over the years. They have some customers who come back year after year and Belknap knows many by name. The customers tell her about pickle making parties they are hosting or teaching their grandkids how to pickle. She especially loves it when they bring her jars of their favorite recipes.

Rising River grows over forty different vegetables and culinary herbs (with over one hundred different varieties among them). You can find them selling their veggies, herbs, and flower starts at the Olympia Farmers Market, Steilacoom Farmers Market, and the Olympia Food Co-ops from April to June or you can go to their website to sign up to get regular deliveries via their CSA.

Belknap says they couldn't do this work alone. They are grateful for their fabulous crew who work hard, take pride in their work, and really care about the farm and farming in general.

Find Rising River on their website, and on Facebook and Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/rising.river.farm/>

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LIFE ON THE HALF SHELL:



Photos by Joe Hyer

Photo sourced from NOAA



South Puget Sound tide flats support a thriving industry.

The Sustainability of South Sound Shellfish

By Eric Belgau

While traveling or living out of the area, a native of our region will likely have one of two experiences. The first is that oh, so wonderful moment when you open up the menu at a restaurant several thousand miles away and see a local option. Kumamoto Oysters, Shelton WA. Hamma Hamma Oysters, Hood Canal. And so on. The second is trying to explain a) why “geoduck” is pronounced the way it is, and b) what one looks like. Love them or hate them, shellfish are part of the food system and part of the culture around here.

They're also part of the economy, generating an estimated \$270 million in annual revenue and directly supporting 3,200 jobs in our region. Wild shellfish have been harvested from the Salish Sea, the Puget Sound, the Hood Canal, and the bays of the Pacific Coast for as long as people have walked these shores, and even shellfish farming has a long and storied history here. The first farms date back to the mid-1800s.

Shellfish farming has not always been environmentally responsible – a fact that, for many, contributes to an enduring negative impression of the industry. Overharvesting of the famous Olympia Oyster, for example, nearly caused its extinction during the 1920s – a catastrophe that almost wiped out the industry.

In addition, heavy concentrations of shellfish can, themselves, overconsume phytoplankton, leaving too little food for other species that share the ecosystem. And the netting used by shellfish farmers to keep predators away can interfere with shorebird populations and have other unintended environmental consequences. As a result, hyper-industrial shellfish farming, especially on a massive scale, can be detrimental to the environment – especially to other creatures sharing the same aquatic space.

But the health of a shellfish bed is directly tied to the health of the ecosystem in which it is farmed, and so the environmental harms that shellfish farming can cause have brought karmic retribution to the farmers, quickly instructing shellfish producers, regulators, and the industry as a whole in the importance of sustainable methodology.

Today's shellfish farmers, armed with a vastly increased understanding of the aquatic ecosystem, are as responsive to what is happening beneath the surface of the Puget Sound as their oysters, clams, and mussels are. As a result, locally produced shellfish – even shellfish from a commercially managed bed – is one of the most environmentally and economically sustainable foods in our stores and restaurants. And although any industry has an effect on the ecosystem that surrounds it, the commercial shellfish industry is contributing to the overall environmental health of our region in surprising ways.



Tiny juvenile geoduck.

Photo by Joe Hyer

causes some effect on the surrounding ecosystem. But “sustainability” doesn't mean that we don't change the world; it means that we're careful in the changes we make to ensure that the results don't send us off a cliff.

If the world's appetite for oysters – and local producers' eagerness to cash in on that demand – inspired us to turn entire sea floor of the Puget Sound and the Hood Canal into oyster beds, we would destroy the surrounding ecosystem, and the oysters in the bargain. To have sustainable production, we must ensure that a harmony exists between the farms and aquatic vibrancy that surrounds them.

Truly sustainable production doesn't happen by accident.

Today, Washington State is the leading US producer of farmed bivalves. The market value of the South Sound's shellfish aquaculture businesses is over \$50 million – more than half the value of all the shellfish businesses in the state. That economic presence – and the revenue that goes along with it – enables South Sound shellfish producers to protect their bottom line while also focusing on what makes a shellfish farm truly sustainable.

As a result, our region is not only exporting delicious seafood; we're also exporting expertise and production models that can improve outcomes in other shellfish farming regions.

Not Just Industry

The development of sustainable farming methods can happen here in no small part because numerous academic, nonprofit, and governmental organizations exist to help the industry.

Sustainable Farming Methods

Any time a large population of a single species of any organism grows in a localized area, it

At the state level, the Departments of Health, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Fish & Game all dedicate resources to shellfish production and



Geoduck farming on Harstine Island.

Photos from Wikipedia Commons

stewardship. The Pacific Shellfish Institute curates, defines, and teaches best practices. The Washington Sea Grant, federally funded and administered through the University of Washington, studies the shellfish industry from a variety of angles – economic, environmental, cultural, social, etc. And numerous other organizations, from NOAA to environmental activists to the Coast Guard, play a role in informing the industry.

This surplus of resources supports an ongoing effort within the industry to improve its quality of production and its symbiosis with the broader environment that surrounds it. It also helps the industry to understand how to use the implicit benefits of shellfish populations to mitigate the

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effects of other human activity.

For example, a study conducted by Herrera Environmental Consultants in Oakland Bay near Shelton estimated that shellfish harvesting removed 11.7 megatons of nitrogen from the aquatic environment per year. Just like a nitrogen-based fertilizer stimulates our garden plants to grow, nitrogen in bodies of water stimulates the growth of aquatic plants, such as algae. Excess nitrogen causes algae to overproduce, leading to a variety of problems, so the removal of nitrogen from Oakland Bay through shellfish harvesting actually saved the City of Shelton an estimated \$77,000 in water quality improvement costs.

This is proof that when scientists, policymakers, activists, and members of industry work closely together to define better practices and explore new opportunities, great things can happen. Just think: the next time you sink your teeth into some delicious shellfish meat, you can say, “Hey, I’m just doing my part to clean the water!”

You can add to that statement with some data from the Washington Shellfish Initiative. One oyster contains half a gram of nitrogen, so a weekly harvest of 200 oysters can compensate for the nitrogen added to the water by a homeowner with waterfront property on a septic system. (Fun additional fact, it is my experience that your friends who have waterfront property on septic systems do not find this to be a sufficient reason for them to pay for your oyster consumption.)

Shellfish as Food

Speaking of eating, let’s end where we began – the treat of consuming what our local shellfish beds provide. It should be nearly unthinkable for a South Sound resident to consume shellfish that isn’t local. Certainly not shellfish produced outside of Washington. Our waters, both wild and farmed, are far too productive; and besides, the sustainability of any food diminishes dramatically the further it has to travel to reach the mouth that eats it. Luckily, there are plenty of options for finding local seafood in our local area.

Do-It-Yourself

Of course, the best way to experience local shellfish is to go out and get them yourself. In Thurston County, public shellfish harvesting is allowed at Burfoot County Park, Frye Cove, the Nisqually Refuge, Priest Point, Tolmie State Park, and Woodward Bay. Mason County provides numerous options for shellfish harvesting, including several highly productive areas, such as Oakland Bay and



Clam digging on the coast.

around the Hoodsport Hatchery.

A license is required for shellfish harvesting, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife exercises significant discretion in both the opening and closing of harvest areas and catch allowances. So after acquiring a license, it’s important to watch communications from the department (www.wdfw.wa.gov) to make sure that you remain in

compliance with the regulations that help to keep shellfish harvesting sustainable.

Grocers

If you don’t fancy spending the day at the beach, hunting or digging for shellfish, try a local grocer.

Local offerings are always in plentiful supply at the Storman’s Thriftways, part of the company’s ongoing effort to promote the producers of our local food system. Both the Bayview store at 516 4th Avenue West and the Ralph’s store at 1908 4th Avenue East boast strong meat departments, with a helpful staff that can help to navigate to the right shellfish choice for your palate and budget, as well as providing cooking tips and recipes. (If you want to step up your game, check out Xihn’s Seafood Feast, a cooking class offered by Bayview School of Cooking on April 10th.)

The Olympia Seafood Company (411 Columbia Street in downtown Olympia) offers fresh local shellfish in season and Washington-origin canned shellfish year-round. A secret stash of oysters and clams is almost always available in an uber-friendly nook at Bay Mercantile (5025 Mud Bay Road NW). And several small grocers around town offer local shellfish when they are most available. If you have a neighborhood corner shop you prefer, just ask. Odds are they have a local option at least part of the time.

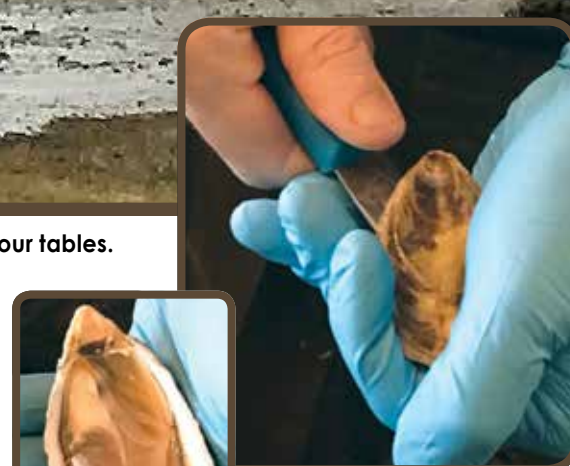
Restaurants

And if you don’t want to cook yourself – but do want fresh local shellfish on your plate – you have plenty of options. If we were to list every local restaurant that offers local shellfish we would run out of room, and our fingers would be sore. A small (but by no means exhaustive) list includes:

Chelsea Farms Oyster Bar at the 222 Market – 222 Olympia Ave, Downtown Olympia – oysters on the half shell and fresh seafood that’s just divine. Mush of their art adorns this page

Tugboat Annie’s – 2100 West Bay Drive. (360) 943-1850. A Po’ Boy might not be the classic way to eat local oysters, but the Oyster Po’ Boy here is truly epic.

Our Table – 406 4th Ave E. (360) 932-6030. Now in its second year, the chefs are establishing themselves as culinary leaders, with a menu that changes daily. Call ahead to see what’s cooking.



Photos by Joe Hyer

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Photos by Joe Hyer

...and that is how it's done. Yum!

By Trent Kelly

I was in the Latin Club in high school, back in the days when live teachers still taught dead languages. All the language clubs at school were having a potluck and everyone was supposed to bring a themed dish from the country whose language you were struggling to learn. An easy chore for the Spanish or the French gang, but not so much for the Latin geeks. I ended up picking a dish that seemed as ancient and Mediterranean as Latin itself: a Greek spinach pie called Spanakopita. It turned out that making this savory pastry involves layering many sheets of paper thin phyllo dough by hand, definitely not a wise choice for a rookie cook's first time in the kitchen. But it is something Kenny Trobman effortlessly tosses together on a daily basis. Kenny is owner of the Gyro Spot, an eatery located on Fourth Avenue where the thoroughfare that courses through the heart of Olympia's downtown is most rich with dining options.

The Gyro Spot is a bright and sunny establishment, painted in the iconic blue and white tones of the Mediterranean and the menu features the same ingredients of that ancient cultural region: lamb, yogurt, chickpeas, lemon, mint, honey and the like. Kenny's core values in food service are immediately apparent from his menu: quick, inexpensive and satisfying meals served in a casual setting but without skimping on quality. His dishes are authentic, prepared by hand on location and locally sourced. "I don't use any big food distributors and stick with the little guys", says Kenny. He relies on a family run regional distributor based in Seattle for much of his Mediterranean ingredients. The menu sports not only gyros but all the delicious Middle Eastern inspired favorites Americans have come to enjoy including falafel, tabbouleh, and baba ganoush as well as some surprises (saffron infused yogurt with honey and pistachio!). The only thing he doesn't make any more by hand himself is the baklava and dolmas, only because these are not only labor intensive but very popular and he couldn't keep up with the demand.



Kenny was a born entrepreneur. He told me that when he was a kid his first venture had him washing half the cars in the neighborhood. Still today he can't control his instincts for opportunity: "I'm always thinking of interesting business concepts" he says with a

another during some of the leanest times his generation will ever know has been trying. At the height of the Great Recession, when he lost his first venture downtown, The Clubside Cafe, he told me that he "did not view it as a failure", just an economic reality when folks had less money for dining out. He didn't miss



a beat though. Soon after closing the Clubside he was hawking gyro's out of a food truck and this was long before it became the fashion in Portland and Seattle. Back then Kenny told me you had to move the truck a little every 90 days or the city permit wasn't valid. He worked with the city council and now the regulation is kinder to these mobile vendors. Kenny is not one to just throw his hands up and make excuses. Instead, he rolls up his sleeves and figures a way around what's in the way of him staying in business.

I asked him what he would say to those who wanted to visit his place but didn't make a habit of venturing downtown. Kenny confided that he has worked downtown for years and never feared for his safety. He pointed out that "one of the beautiful things about being downtown is that it's full of mom and pop establishments. You don't see all the national chain establishments and instead you get independent specialty retail - a little something for everyone - a lot of diversity with a big colorful mix".

When I asked what advice he would have for others who want to follow in his footsteps and try their hand at being a small business owner, Kenny took a while before he answered: "The key is if you have a dream you have to go for it, but just know that it's going to be extremely demanding and you've got to be willing to not give up because you have tremendous hurdles to overcome to be successful. Go for it and never give up." He added, "I'm just always dreaming."

Clearly the American entrepreneurial spirit is very much alive in our fair city's downtown thanks to the likes of Kenny Trobman.



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wistful smile. He had a bead on a small storefront on Capitol Way for years and when he finally got his chance he pounced, opening the "Gyro Express" at a prime second location. When I asked him what he thought of the economy picking up in terms of downtown development he quickly responded, "I'm ecstatic. It has been more than a decade since any new housing has come to the downtown." He looks forward to more folks creating a real urban village experience that he can be a part of.

Kenny is by all accounts a true survivor. Lasting as a downtown businessman in one form or

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WHAT'S COOKING WITH JOE

Simple By Nature

Photo courtesy of Joe Hyer

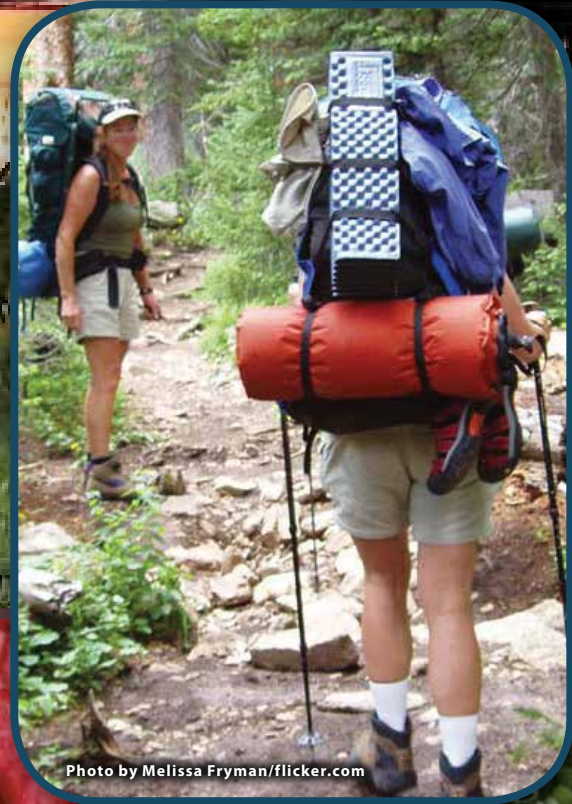
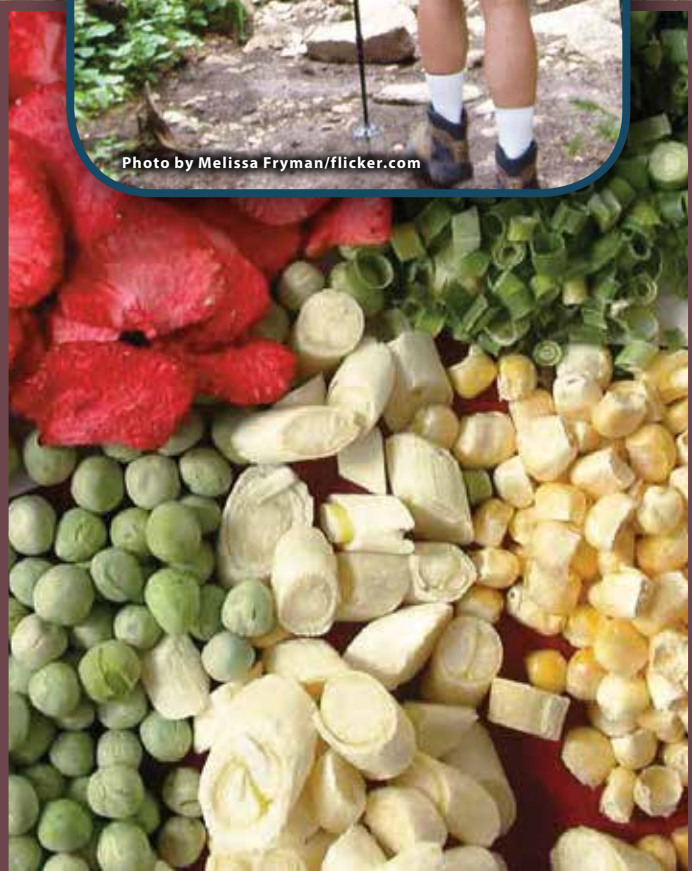


Photo by Melissa Fryman/flicker.com



By Joe Hyer

Is it just me, or does the rainy winter season seem far more wet, rainy and wintry than most years? It also feels like its been a decade since January. So what's cooking with Joe? Thoughts of camping, hiking, and being in the outdoors. So this edition of What's Cooking is dedicated to the wilderness, and what we eat there.

When I was a boy scout many years ago – we made fancy crepes, flaming steak dishes- all kinds of gourmet eats when we went camping. Then, when I began climbing and doing more true backcountry and ultralight hiking – the opposite happens. Food must be light, easy to prepare, little to no cleanup, and if you come home with anything left, you took too much.

I think that trend in backpacking lasted until all of our backs went out from sleeping on the ground so much. It's true- the sleeping mat people are making a killing with an aging America! Nowadays, it's more car-camping or short walks in than backpacking, with day hikes and adventures from a base camp.

To me, what's really interesting is the fusion of my past wilderness cooking styles into today's approach. You see, with car camping weight doesn't matter, so you can bring and cook gourmet meals. Except then you have to clean it all up. And do the dishes. Camping is vacation – and now housework? Not. Also, I don't want to spend a ton of time cooking in a makeshift kitchen when I can be enjoying the outdoors. So my new style is simple, simple, simple.

Breakfast

When I circumnavigated Mount Rainier at age 12 (how precocious!) breakfast was instant oatmeal every other day, with freeze-dried eggs as the alternative. We grew to hate breakfast, and just stuff it in as fuel. Maybe some dried fruit to liven it up- but that steals from your trail snacks.

Now, I have breakfast down pat. Coffee. And since the French Press is work – the instant VIA does me fine. I hate powdered cream – but at the Cash n Carry, you can get the liquid cream that doesn't need refrigeration. Yes, a little trash to pack out, but it's well worth it for real cream. To eat, I've been partial to the Mountain House Breakfast Skillet for many years. While freeze-dried, it tastes like a breakfast skillet, and a good one too!

Last summer, I tested out freeze-dried biscuits and gravy. Holy Mackerel, batman, it was TASTY! Even better, add water, and you can eat right from the

package, which stretches into a bowl. A cup and a fork. And breakfast is done.

Dinner

Again, who wants to clean up when there's a campfire to hang out at? It's true- now that they've been able to control the sodium better – I am hooked on freeze-dried meals. They are well-seasoned, flavorful, filling – and no mess at all. Literally put boiling water in, stir and seal, and 10 minutes later, eat right from the package as a bowl.



images courtesy of Mountain House foods.

There are a few rules regarding backpacking meals, though. First- avoid anything with peas. They don't rehydrate no matter how long you leave it, and become hard crunchy nasties in your meal. Second – if it doesn't sound good, it probably isn't. I like Vindaloo from Curry in a Hurry – but not freeze-dried. Third- careful with rice. Notice I didn't say no rice. Just be careful. It's harder to get your water balance right.

But give me a package of noodles and chicken, a couple of dinner rolls and I am good to go for the evening.

How long does Freeze-Dried food last?

Recently, Oregon Freeze-Dried, the world's largest freeze-dryer and parent company to Mountain House, pulled out some food they had stored 30 years ago, to see if it was still good. Nutritionally, it was fine. It has lost some flavor and taste, but all the testers thought it was quite edible.

Prior to this test, Mountain House had put a two year 'Best By' date on their packages. Those have been eliminated, and the company happily tells you that storing its food for decades is just fine.

In Between

It's not really lunch. When I hike or camp, it's more like a series of snacks. Lunch. High Tea. Happy Hour. Second Breakfast. Get some meat sticks and Jerky from the Farmer's Market (and yes, I like BOTH Johnson's and Stewart's), some smoked cheese and maybe tins of oysters, some fruit perhaps, and you got a meal. Or at least some snacks until you are hungry again.

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