

Spring Newsletter 2015

NEW PRODUCTS

Meet
the
Makers



Astoria
co-op
grocery

est. 1974



ASTORIA CO-OP GROCERY CREW

Matthew Stanley, General Manager
Jennifer Rigley, Deli
Geena Barker, Cashier & Deli
Maren Ludwig, Cashier
Sarah Jaroszewski, Wellness Buyer
Brandon Massey, Deli & Cheesemonger
Kelly Huckestein, Produce Manager
Sam Seulean, Deli Manager
Charissa St. Clair, Bookkeeper
Michelle Bisek, Deli & Grocery
Danny Rasmussen, Produce
Andrea Larson Perez, Cashier
Colin Smith, Deli
Claire Keenan, Deli & Grocery
Lulu Quinn, Produce
Ryan Eccles, Meat & Fish Buyer
Tyrel Trainor, Cashier & Produce
Lenny McGrath, Cashier & Grocery
Michael Schultz, Cashier
Joe Wrobel, Cashier & Deli
Tammy Heintz, Produce
Zetty Nemlowill, Marketing Director

ASTORIA CO-OP GROCERY BOARD

To contact our board: board@astoria.coop

Allie Evans, President
Norma Hernandez, Vice President
Hilary Herman, Treasurer
Beth LaFleur, Secretary
Sam Seulean, Staff Seat
Libby Lawrence
Brad Hill
Angela Sidlo



OPEN 8-8 DAILY

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www.astoria.coop

All shoppers welcome. Just \$25 to start your ownership and receive special sales, discount days, case discounts and more.

Got a newsletter idea?
Contact zetty@astoria.coop.

Special thanks to Co-op Owner *Pam Chestnut* for proofreading this newsletter.

DELI ARTICLE

BY *Sam Seulean* DELI MANAGER

Chicken salad, gluten free pasta salad, potato salads... Look for more food that pairs well with barbecue and picnic-ready favorites in the Co-op deli this spring. It has been almost a year since we doubled the size of our grab-and-go deli. We now have more options available and are more likely to have the things you love in stock.

We're adding new recipes and every day you'll find new items in the store. For example, we recently created an Umami kale salad to keep up with the popularity of kale salads in general. We also make more sandwiches (my favorite) on local Blue Scorchers

Bread and also wraps (Caprese, Thai Peanut, and Buffalo Seitan). The deli has lengthened worker's shifts and added shifts to keep up with growth. This equates to more food going out quickly, which means our offerings are fresher than ever.

We have been looking at other co-op delis trying to find fresh new options. There are many fun things happening, mostly involving big stores, such as pizza and made-to-order sandwiches and rotisserie chicken. One thing I found surprising is the demand for fresh salads at our store is vastly higher than any other store I've seen. We offer more kinds



of salads every day, even compared to larger delis. On a given day we have a minimum of six salad options.

Another big thing that separates our deli from a lot of other grocery stores is that we don't get our food from a different distributor. Everything we make includes the same high quality ingredients you'll find on the store's shelves, and most is organic. All of our food is hand-made in the store; we don't order pre-mixed foods, or bases.

At the Co-op we're trying to help people live healthier, happier lives. We try to break down the misconception that healthy food tastes gross or that junk food is the only food that tastes good. My personal hope is that our deli food is high quality, delicious food that is convenient. We can help by making food for you, we do that, but we

also like to make sure you have the option of making it for yourself. We're happy to share recipes and we are working to add "most asked for deli recipes" to our web site www.astoria.coop.

One of the issues we're running into is a lack of space. We are making larger amounts of food in the same small space and with the same equipment we did years ago. For example, imagine going from 12 sandwiches a day to closer to 50 or 60. At some point my goal is to have a larger facility to offer hot food, a salad bar, and more variety: things customers have been asking for.

PROGRESS THE CO-OP WAY

BY *Matt Stanley* GENERAL MANAGER



I love my job! 2014 was marked with some great successes in the store. We achieved many of our goals and learned a lot from our challenges. Here's a shot at an overview of our 2014 accomplishments.

Store Improvements

We expanded upon two departments in the store in 2014. Your owner equity helped pay for the addition of a fresh meat department and an expanded deli selection. The response to these additions has been overwhelmingly positive. Deli sales have grown over 40%.

Meat sales over 200%! Thank you for support-

WE BROKE THE \$2.5 MILLION MARK IN GROSS SALES IN 2014

ing these new departments! Their addition to the store has helped off-set increased competitive pressure from local supermarkets.

Financial Sustainability

We also began the year with concerns about financial sustainability. In order to set our store up for expansion, we needed to be able to demonstrate our ability to operate our business with a net savings, both for potential lenders and our co-op peers who will assist us with a growth project. And we are not talking about raking in huge profits. Our goal in 2014 was to achieve a 1% net savings. That's right. For every dollar you spend at the Co-op, one penny is left over to re-invest in the store. We did indeed achieve this net savings goal. At the same time we were able to improve our pricing across the store, continue to pay staff a living wage (all staff who have worked at the Co-op for over a year make at least \$12 per hour plus benefits to those who qualify). We also invested in rebranding and department expansions. We are budgeting for similar net savings during 2015. Oh, and by the way, we also broke the \$2.5 million mark in gross sales during the 2014 year!

Planning Work

Outside of our operational work we invested much time and energy in beginning to

plan our Co-op's five year future. After a well-attended Annual Meeting (at which we shared our new brand and our visioning process for 2014), we began work on aligning our owners, staff, and board of directors around the idea of expansion. To create a unified vision we set up focus groups, a meet-and-greet with the Board of Directors (that's where I'm at in the photo), a shopper survey, an all staff meeting, and two board retreats. Our Board also set up a Strategic Planning Committee that met outside of Board meetings to keep the planning process in motion.

Annual Meeting

All this planning work will culminate in the unveiling of a finalized and Co-op Board-approved Five Year Strategic Plan. We look forward to sharing the document with you at this year's Annual Meeting of Owners on May 3rd. The broad goals that it contains will serve as our compass as we make decisions that pertain to our Co-op's development. It is the responsibility of the staff to interpret and implement these broad objectives set forth in the Strategic Plan. We'll work hard to bring them to life and improve the Co-op for our community in the coming years. And as we do, we will keep listening and learning from your suggestions along the way. This is, after all, your Co-op! Every success is our success together.

FOR EVERY DOLLAR YOU SPEND AT THE CO-OP, ONE PENNY IS LEFT OVER TO RE-INVEST IN THE STORE.

OWNER SPOTLIGHT

DR. JENNIFER FILE

Q: What do you do for work and fun?

A: I'm a pediatrician at Columbia Memorial Hospital. For fun, I love to travel, especially to foreign destinations, learning about the different cultures. One of the best parts of traveling is trying the local cuisines.

Q: What is your favorite thing about the Co-op? Do you have any "go-to" products?

A: I appreciate being able to get quality, local, organic food. When I'm rushed for time, the deli department is a life saver with delicious homemade soups and sandwiches.

Q: How do you stay healthy and what are a few examples of foods that you eat that you're especially proud of?

A: I try to eat as many fresh fruits and vegeta-



bles as possible, especially for snacks. I think avoidance of certain foods is what I'm most proud of. I try to steer clear of chips (a weakness for me) and crackers. I also try to keep sweets at a minimum.

Q: Do you like to cook and, if so, what is your favorite type of food to cook?

A: I enjoy cooking, but I don't always have the time I would like to devote more time to it. My specialty is a mixed salad with a homemade balsamic vinaigrette.

Q: What is your favorite spring-time food?

A: Berries, peas, asparagus, beets, chard, all of it!

Q: Being that you're a pediatrician, any words of wisdom to offer on getting kids to eat healthy?

A: Keep offering them their veggies and eat them yourself! Studies show if kids are consistently given fruits and vegetables, they will eventually eat them, even if it takes weeks to months after the first introduction. Start a home garden; kids are more apt to eat them if they've grown them. Roast vegetables in a little olive oil and salt to bring out the natural sweetness of the veggies; plus it retains a lot of their texture.

EASY WAYS TO ADD MORE PRODUCE TO YOUR LIFE

PRODUCE REPORT BY *Kelly Huckestein* ASTORIA CO-OP GROCERY PRODUCE MANAGER



"how" that can often stump us. Just add some veggies to your main dish! Making baked macaroni and cheese? Add some chopped broccoli or kale. You don't even have to precook it. The steam and heat from that delicious cheesy sauce will cook your veggies to perfection. You can even add some tuna or smoked salmon for protein. This approach can apply to just about any casserole. Making enchiladas? Add some fresh spinach as you roll up the tortillas. Chicken and rice casserole? Add some asparagus. Throw some broccoli or kale in your spaghetti sauce. Lasagna can always be improved by adding more veggies: portabello mushrooms, eggplant, zucchini, bell peppers (for lasagna, these additions do work best if the veggies are sliced and pre-roasted in the oven till tender).

My personal favorite way to add more veggies to my meals is in tacos. My tacos consist of homemade tortillas (from the delicious Three Sisters masa the Co-op now carries), or pre-made if I'm not in the tortilla makin' mood. Then comes the protein. Meat or beans, depending on how I'm feeling, sometimes both. Then comes the veggie: asparagus, baby broccolini, zucchini cut in strips, bell peppers or mushrooms. I roast them in a 400 degree oven with some sliced onions, salt and some chili powder until they are slightly tender and starting to crisp at the edges. If I don't have the time to roast a veggie, I just add some chopped cabbage. All this gets piled on the

taco along with my special taco sauce: mayonnaise with a little lime juice and adobo sauce (or ground chipotle). These might not sound like your usual taco, but they are delicious, and a great way to get some vegetables into your taco night.



This approach applies to more than just dinner. Breakfast is the perfect place for vegetables. Add almost any vegetable to a frittata. Put some tomatoes and mushrooms in that ham and egg hash brown casserole. And I didn't mean to poo-poo vegetable side dishes. This is still a great way to get produce on the table. It's the best way to really appreciate the flavor of any vegetable. Sautéed kale is my go-to for a side dish for my Saturday eggs and roasted potato breakfast. But if you want to get even more produce into your meals, you can always add some to your main dish. And keep the side dish too!

BEANS FOR BAGS

"Beans for Bags" is a popular donation program we've seen at several food co-ops and we're going to give it a try starting this spring. The aim is to encourage conservation of disposable bags by offering customers a dried bean in exchange for bringing in their own shopping bag; one bean is given for each bag used. The bean represents 5¢, and customers may choose which one of three community organizations they would like to support with their bean.

Shoppers will simply place their bean(s) in the slot(s) of their choice in jars located in the store. At the end of each quarter the beans will be counted and each of the organizations will receive a check proportionate to the number of beans they received in their jar.

Community organizations will be able to apply to become recipients of funds and they will be selected by the Co-op Board quarterly.

As we unroll this exciting new program, expect to see information around the store (such as the sign on the right), and lots of communication via our web site, owner email and Facebook. We will update you with how the program is going in a follow-up newsletter article, and hopefully we can all share in the success by turning reusable shopping bags into money for worthy causes, diverting landfill waste, and conserving trees.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE FOOD AT A TIME

BY *Allie Evans* CO-OP BOARD PRESIDENT

Have any of you ever had that conversation where someone asks you why you are a Co-op owner and what's really in it for you? I know for many of us, myself included, it is hard to convey all the intangible benefits of cooperative ownership. We know we love it and we know that it is a unique and viable business structure, yet it is hard to find succinct words describing why we choose to collectively own our Co-op grocery store.

By the time you read this, your Co-op Board of Directors will have approved a final version of our Strategic Plan. This document is our road map for where we are aiming in the next five years and how we'll get there. We are excited to unveil the finished Strategic Plan to you at our Annual Meeting this May 3rd. We'll also have a poster-size version hanging in the store as a constant reminder of the direction our store is headed and why.



I find that the Strategic Plan helps me answer those questions about the intangible benefits of Co-op ownership. The document clearly shows me that each dollar I spend at the Co-op has a clearly communicated connection to our store's future, and, in turn, our community's future. My Co-op dollar helps build community in Astoria through growing the space to allow more room to share and

gather and learn. My Co-op dollar contributes to a thriving local economy by keeping the money local, by creating more local jobs and by expanding local food access. My Co-op dollar perpetuates individual and community health by being a trusted source of quality food. My Co-op dollar generates inspiration to make health easy and fun, to make our people healthier and happier. My Co-op dollar helps co-ops thrive in a world full of corporations. It supports the idea of people coming together collectively to provide for themselves and their community's economy.

As your Co-op's Board president, I want to thank the hundreds of members who contributed to this planning process, and I hope you find the final document as inspiring as I do. Because truly, it is more than just a document. It tells our story to the world of how a group of people coming together with a good cause can change the world one food at a time.

CO-OP ANNUAL MEETING WITH A VIEW

ALL OWNERS ARE INVITED



Every year the Co-op has its Annual Meeting so the General Manager and Board can bring our consumer-owners up to speed with the store's significant happenings, and each year the meeting is different. The setting this year is the picturesque Red Building on the Astoria Waterfront. We will have lots of good food for dinner including locally-made tamales with all organic ingredients (meat, veggie, and vegan). As Allie mentioned above, the Co-op Board will unveil the final draft of our strategic plan. And current Co-op owners can vote for two Board positions (see candidates on the right).

This is a fun, family-friendly event that puts you in touch with the grocery store you own. There is no single event that is more important for Co-op owners to attend than our Annual Meeting.

When: Sunday May 3 at 6 p.m. (lasting about 2 hours)
Co-op closing early at 5 p.m. so staff can attend

Where: Red Building Loft, 20 Basin Street in Astoria

ASTORIA CO-OP BOARD CANDIDATES

VOTE AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING MAY 3

Libby Lawrence

Current Board Member Running for Re-election



Q: Where are you from and how did you find yourself on the North Oregon coast?

A: I have lived in Astoria for 6 years. I did not move here on purpose, but have grown to love this place deeply.

Q: How do you spend your days, including career and/or family, plus hobbies/recreation?

A: I spend most of my time raising two young boys, and I also work for Astoria Parks and Rec., leading fitness classes. Free time finds me hiking, surfing or reading.

Q: What has your experience on the Astoria Co-op Board of Directors been like and why have you decided to run for re-election?

A: I have learned so much in two years on the Co-op Board. We have big goals for the next several years, and it is exciting to be a part of the process.

Q: What aspects of the Co-op do you think are going well currently?

A: The board and staff leadership have been incredibly thoughtful about our vision for the future. The Co-op has so many smart people who care and are invested in the future of our store. It is a calm, clean and joyful place to shop and run into friends.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish during your term, if re-elected?

A: I hope to be a rational, positive and thoughtful voice on the board for another term.

Norma Hernandez

Current Board Member Running for Re-election



Q: Where are you from and how did you find yourself on the North Oregon coast?

A: I was born in Puerto Rico and spent 20 years in the northeast before coming to the Oregon coast. I vacationed here and fell in love with community and the beauty.

Q: How do you spend your days, including career and/or family, plus hobbies/recreation?

A: I work for Clatsop County Public Health and the Healthy Families and WIC programs. I am President of the Astoria Parks and Recreation Board of Directors and on the Board of North Coast Food Web. I host a monthly Latin music program on KMUN and volunteer for other organizations including the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association.

Q: What has your experience on the Astoria Co-op Board of Directors been like and why have you decided to run for re-election?

A: I have learned so much by being part of this group. I believe in the work we do and its importance to the health and quality of life in our community.

Q: What aspects of the Co-op do you think are going well currently?

A: I am proud of the work we've done on a strategic plan, the ongoing improvements to the store and the resulting shopping experience.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish during your term, if re-elected?

A: I will continue to be a contributing part of this wonderful team as we work with member/owners to shepherd the Co-op safely and appropriately into the future. The Co-op will continue to be a work in progress as all good things are. That process requires attention to detail, dedication and a passion for the work.

GOING GLUTEN FREE

BY *Beth La Fleur* ASTORIA CO-OP GROCERY BOARD MEMBER



Last June, after doing some research, my family decided to reduce and/or eliminate the amount of gluten we were eating on a daily basis. This was going to be on a trial basis for 3 weeks, to see if we noticed any discernible differences in our emotional

and physical health and well-being. Once we committed to the idea, the next step was to commit our refrigerator and pantry to the reality. This was a more daunting task to me than the actual diet. Unsure where to start, I called our Board president, Allie Evans, Naturopath and GF wealth of knowledge, in a state of borderline panic. I hadn't realized how dependent I'd become on one plant, wheat, amongst all of the food choices around us. I considered myself pretty well-rounded when it came trying out new foods on my family, but without wheat, what would I, could I, possibly do? Pancakes! Waffles! BLT's! Sauces and seasonings for meat dishes! No gravy? Lasagne! Pizza! Burritos! Our "lazy red-sauce and pasta" nights! How could one ingredient be so ubiquitous? How would we survive without these family favorites? I thought we were doomed to eating vegetables and unseasoned meats for the next 3 weeks.

This deletion of a hidden ingredient forced us to take another look at our meal planning. The quick and easy "fix" was to sign up for a gluten-free store tour at the Co-op. I've shopped the store hundreds of times over the past 15 years, but never with a purpose of avoiding gluten-containing products. With Allie's help, I was able to find substitute ingredients and come up with meal plans that

required only slightly more creative thinking than our "normal" meal plans. Additionally, by prioritizing, I was able to do this transition to GF ingredients gradually, without breaking the bank.

First to switch out was the all-purpose flour and pancake mix flour. Our Co-op has two wonderful and very versatile GF all-purpose and pancake mix flours in the bulk aisle. By shopping for flours in the bulk section, I am able to purchase only what I need at the time. We have successfully made perfectly thickened gravies and roux with the GF flour and my family loves the GF pancake mix. It makes excellent waffles. As an aside, when I make the waffles, I make extra and reheat by popping them in the toaster on a light setting. Cover them with butter, sliced bananas and syrup and it's an instant hot breakfast!

As a family, we have eliminated gluten-containing pasta and drastically reduced even the amount of GF pasta that we eat and instead find other "mediums", such as polenta and mashed potatoes/cauliflower. The Co-op carries polenta that is in a tube format and is shelf-stable for quite a while. I often slice it into 1" rounds and sautee in olive oil and top that with a red sauce loaded with veggies and/or ground beef.

The Co-op also carries spring roll wrappers which are made with rice. I use them to wrap up chicken salad, tuna salad, shredded carrot slaw, and just about anything else that can traditionally go between slices of bread. They are incredibly easy to use: Just fill a large bowl with hot water, and gently slide the dry spring roll under the water. In seconds, it will become soft. Carefully take it out and set it on a cutting board, place your filling in the middle of the circle, and wrap it up like a burrito. These rolls make great cold lunches.

What do you do with that giant bag of "regular" flour? Make these muffins and give them to your friends and neighbors! What do you do with the boxes of pasta you already have? Donate them to the next food drive or to your area food pantry! Switch out bottled

sauces, like soy and teriyaki sauces, for the GF version only when your recipe calls for one. This is less shocking to the pocketbook than doing it all at once.

The Co-op has made this transition to a gluten-free pantry and refrigerator as easy as it can be. Between a knowledgeable staff and great product selection, I have heard very few complaints from my family and I believe, unless they are planning a kitchen mutiny behind my back, that they enjoy the different recipes. There are times when we miss the taste of artisan breads and taco salads with a flour tortilla, but those times are fewer and farther between these days. I have found that by not being reliant on one ingredient, wheat, it has caused us to eat a little more creatively and try new foods and fill up on the other tasty items on our plates rather than breads and pastas. The three week trial period has extended to ten months and counting. I for one feel better in many ways that we no longer are reliant on and have our meals revolve around wheat.

My kids love mashed potatoes and we often use them as the "base" for stews and a side to any protein. Use mashed cauliflower too! Leftovers can be made into potato cakes.

Mashed Potatoes and Cauliflower

Ingredients:

Potatoes (any kind, about 6 medium sized)
Cauliflower

Directions: Rinse and quarter the potatoes. While boiling the potatoes, toss in one-half of a cut-up cauliflower for 5-10 minutes. Drain most of the water from the potatoes and cauliflower and mix with your favorite amount of butter, milk and/or cream cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. It's a winner!

To satisfy my kids' need for the occasional carbohydrate-based cravings, and even faster on-the-go breakfast, I use the super easy muffin recipe on the following page.

GOING GLUTEN FREE CONTINUED...

Easy Gluten Free Muffins

INGREDIENTS:

1-1/4 cups Pamela's Baking & Pancake Mix (or bulk pancake GF flour at the Co-op)

1/4 c. melted butter, oil or coconut oil

1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup sugar

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

3/4 to 1 cup fruit-bananas, peaches, berries, chocolate chips, etc. (If using raisins or dried fruit, add an additional 1/4 cup water)

Optional: 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients together and spoon 2/3 full into greased muffin pan (or use paper muffin cups). Bake in preheated 350° oven for approximately 22 minutes. Note this yields 6-10 muffins.



Source: www.pamelasproducts.com

MODERN FARMING PIONEERS

LOCAL ORGANIC CRANBERRY FARMERS AT OUR APRIL LECTURE



Photo by Giles Clement

The farmers of Washington State's first and only certified organic cranberry farm will be the speakers at Astoria Co-op Grocery's monthly lecture, Beers to Your Health, at Fort George Brewery. Jared Oakes & Jessika Tantisook of Starvation Alley Farms will tell their story of transitioning their bogs to organic and helping others do the same.

Starvation Alley encompasses a total of 10 acres in Seaview and Long Beach. The couple took over the farm where Oakes grew up in 2010. They wanted to farm cranberries organically, but were told by farmers and other experts that it wasn't possible. They explored that assumption and eventually gained organic certification for their farm.

"It is hard, especially in the beginning, because we didn't have any support. If you want to learn to grow organic apples you could probably find enough stuff on line, call universities, or get advice from professionals. That wasn't available for cranberries. As new farmers transitioning to organic we lost a lot of production for the first two years, hence the value-added products," Tantisook said.

Starvation Alley created a brand of juice that attracted the attention of the emerging craft cocktail industry. The farmers sell their product to 70 accounts, mostly bars in Portland and Seattle. They sell their juice and cranberries at farmers markets and locally at Astoria Co-op. The juice consists of raw, unsweetened and undiluted cranberries. It is not heated or pasteurized which Tantisook says enhances the health benefits and taste.

Starvation Alley Farms has a goal of spreading sustainable farming and educating consumers about the food system and the importance of supporting local farmers. They are working with two other cranberry growers on the Long Beach Peninsula to transition to organic certification. There are currently only about 300 acres of organic cranberry farms in the U.S. out of 39,000 total acres of producing cranberry bogs.

Tantisook and Oakes will be will the speakers at Beers to Your Health (our monthly food & wellness lecture) at the Fort George Brewery Lovell Showroom (14th and Duane St. in Astoria) on Thursday April 9 at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. The talk is free and open to all ages.

NEW PRODUCTS: MEET THE MAKERS

BY *Zetty Nemlowill* ASTORIA CO-OP GROCERY MARKETING DIRECTOR



I took my family on a spring break road trip that also included stops at several Oregon craft food and drink makers

of which their products are all new at the Co-op. First, was a visit to my mom and Oregon Brineworks in Hood River and then I met Kelly Huckestein (Co-op Produce Manager) who was in Portland and interested in coming along to Dragonfly Chai and tortilla factory of Three Sisters Nixtamal with me. All these products are handcrafted. They're made by people who created something they liked consuming and are now sharing their passion with the masses. These products are all my staff picks (see signs in the store). They represent everything the Co-op is for; supporting good people making healthy food using organic and local ingredients. Now that I know the producers I feel a connection to my food. Isn't that important? I hope you too will feel connected after reading this.

OREGON BRINEWORKS

Brian and Connie Shaw are organic fruit and vegetable farmers in Hood River, Oregon. Their access to abundant produce led them to seek ways to preserve it and they found fermentation to be a healthy and delicious option. Through trial and error they created products they enjoyed and began sharing with friends and family who marveled at the

flavors and health benefits.

They took their passion to a commercial level a few years ago, starting Oregon Brineworks which includes certified organic, raw, and fermented foods. The biggest benefit of their product, Connie says, is farm-direct freshness.

"We ferment cucumbers within 48 hours coming off vine which means a super fresh, very delicious authentic Oregonian/Washingtonian pickle," Connie explained about her



pickles (so popular she sold out of the garlic variety until summer).

Brineworks sources from organic farms in Oregon and Washington farms mostly direct from farmers' hands. For example, the gigantic beets Connie is cleaning in the photo came from Tom Zimmerman, a local farmer the Co-op also sources from. He delivered 1800 pounds of beets from Gray's River, WA to Hood River in his pickup truck. Connie says they fermented 27 thousand pounds of produce between July and December of 2014 and hope to double those numbers this year.

"We feel like we are really contributing to the health of our regional food system by supporting local farmers and then we also get to support the health of the consumer who buys our products because all our products are raw, organic, fermented, probiotic, which we also hope are super healthy and delicious side dishes to your regular meals," Connie Shaw said.

All the natural enzymes and nutrients from the vegetables are intact because the products aren't cooked during fermentation. If you believe in the power of probiotics, these fermented pickles, beets, and kraut are ripe with lactobacillus, a result of fermentation.

"You eat the pickle, drink the brine, and you get a very healthy dose of beneficial bacteria for your digestive system," Connie said.

Connie says the biggest difference in her health since eating fermented foods daily is that she hardly ever gets sick.

DRAGONFLY CHAI

One day, David Fischer, using his intuition and love of chai, concocted something in his kitchen he was so excited about. He ground cardamom, clove, ginger, and black pepper in his coffee grinder, blended the spices with black tea, sweetened it with honey and added a little milk. It was a delicious and before long his friends were giving up coffee for David's Chai Recipe that was floating around Port Townsend, which is where he started the business.

"I basically decided to turn what was kind of a hobby into a business. I started working out of a friend's catering kitchen brewing small batches dropping them off at restaurants and cafes and it just kind of took off," David said. By the way, his first customer was Port Townsend Food Co-op.

David moved to Portland to grow the business and managed to saturate the Portland market in stores and cafes. The quality of the



chai is evident when you taste it: hand-crafted all-organic teas and freshly ground spices, brewed in small batches, bottled in returnable glass.

"The people who make this care about it," David said.

You can find Dragonfly peppered throughout the Northwest in places where fans seek it, including now at Astoria Co-op Grocery. Fans of Dragonfly have not only requested it, but one Co-op owner offered to distribute it and that's how we got our first cases.

"We've always been creative about getting our product to the coast in places where they want something unique and of quality. There are a lot of people who go back and forth so we have a few customers on the coast but it is usually a very special relationship," David

said.

THREE SISTERS NIXTAMAL

Three Sisters Nixtamal makes organic stone ground masa and tortillas, including yellow, white and blue corn in Portland. We talked to Wendy Downing, one of three business partners, as she bagged and labeled during a busy production day in which the crew was churning out 8,000 tortillas. They are reviving an ancient technique to make a superior tortilla—a method that preserves nutrients and brings out flavors—and they offer fresh masa to empower others to make their own tortillas. Wendy describes the process of making nixtamal:

"Most of the tortillas you're going to see out there use tortilla flour (masa harina or Mase-

ca), but we do the whole process starting with dried corn and making a wet masa from cooking the corn and grinding it. It comes out wet and it goes right into our Tortilladora to make our tortillas so there's a real difference in flavor and texture. That's the truly traditional way of making tortillas that they've been doing for thousands of years and it's kind of become a lost art. It's harder and harder, even in Mexico, to find these types of tortillas. It's much cheaper and easier to open a bag of tortilla flour," Wendy said.

Wendy has a degree in Latin American Studies and is a chef. Her business partners, are Pedro Ferbel-Azcárate, an anthropologist at Portland State with research focusing on indigenous foodways of Latin America, and Adriana Azcárate-Ferbel, a naturopathic doctor.

Adriana's mother would visit bringing snacks (Enchiladas Potosinas) from Mexico. Adriana shared these culinary treasures with her friend, Wendy, and the two agreed that artisanal Mexican food would be popular here.

"We started making tortillas and selling them at People's Food Co-op and farmers markets three years ago and two years ago New Seasons, food co-ops, and other places. It's really taken off," Wendy said.

You can meet Pedro and Adriana at the Co-op on May 16, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. They will be at our store offering samples and showing how to use fresh masa. It's all part of the fun for Co-op owner appreciation week.





Astoria
co-op
grocery

Spring 2015 Newsletter

1355 Exchange Street Suite 1
Astoria, OR 97103
(503) 325-0027 Open Daily 8-8

**RETURN SERVICE
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SPRING 2015 CO-OP CALENDAR

April

April 9: Co-op Lecture "Modern Farming Pioneers" at Fort George Brewery Lovell Showroom with Starvation Alley Farms, 7 p.m.
April 27: 10-10:30 a.m. Gluten Free Store Tour (Sign up in advance at Co-op. Details at www.astoria.coop.)

May

May 3: Co-op Annual Meeting at the Red Building Loft 6 p.m. Store Closing early at 5 p.m.
May 10-16: Owner Appreciation Week (Co-op owners save 10% on a shopping trip.)
May 10: Mother's Day & Local Cranberry Juice Tasting with Starvation Alley Farms 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
May 11: Equal Exchange Coffee & Chocolate Tasting 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
May 12: Dragonfly Chai Tasting & New Deli Products Samples 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
May 13: "Eat and Greet" Tasting with our Board of Directors 4-6 p.m.
May 14: Montinore Wine Tasting 4-6 p.m.
May 14: Co-op Lecture "The Art of Gardening" at Fort George with Becky Graham (our parking lot landscaper) 7 p.m.
May 16: Three Sisters Nixtamal Tortilla Tasting and Fresh Masa Demo 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
May 16: Wine Tasting with Lisa Parks from Galaxy Wine Co. 4-6 p.m.
May 31: Run on the River Half Marathon (We'll be running and sponsoring, providing healthy Co-op snacks. Hope to see you!)

June

June 3: Farm to Fork Dinner & Cooking Demonstration with Chef Marco (Look for details & sign-up info. at www.astoria.coop.)