

The voice of healthy living



Creating a Market for Local Artisans

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Front Lines is a quarterly publication of Food Front Cooperative Grocery.

Food Front is a consumer cooperative building a vibrant community and a healthier world by selling wholesome food and empowering people.

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The opinions expressed inside are the writers' own. They do not necessarily reflect Food Front's policies and practices.

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General Manager's Report

Food Front Looks to the Future

By Holly Jarvis, General Manager

I find the beginning of the New Year to be energizing, despite the dark and rainy days. There are so many new experiences to look forward to; one of them being planning for the retail operation of the Co-op, as planning and budgeting are two of my favorite tasks! Events and promotions in both stores, collaboration with community events and organizations, and physical changes to improve the stores are elements of the planning process. Management and staff are focused on returning the Co-op to profitability while providing high levels of services and maintaining our commitments with our partners.

The Board of Directors will be initiating a strategic planning process in 2011. It has been several years since the Board has done in-depth planning for the long-term future of the Co-op. Strategizing is essential to ensure that the Co-op will be prepared to make decisions about risks and opportunities we may face in the coming years. Without the planning work done several years ago by the Board, we wouldn't have been able to take advantage of the unexpected opportunity to open a store in Hillsdale.

An important part of strategic planning is gathering information. We will be engaging with owners, customers, and our partners to understand their needs and desires. Researching the marketplace to include economics, grocery trends, and the competitive landscape will provide essential information. We have already conducted a market survey of the NW neighborhood and will follow with a survey of the Hillsdale neighborhood.

A broad survey of customers was conducted last year and will be followed by a survey focusing on customer service in early 2011. All the information collected by the Board will be blended with Food Front's values to produce a plan to guide future decisions and priorities.

It has been a couple of years since Con-Way announced plans to redevelop much of their property in the NW neighborhood. Housing is key to Con-Way's vision and a grocery store was seen as the anchor for the development—bringing an essential service and focal point to the area. With the meltdown of the economy, planning for the development slowed down but did not stop. At any time, developers may come forward with plans to begin work on the project. Food Front needs to be ready with an educated response to the following: Should we and/or can we be the anchor grocery store? If New Seasons becomes the anchor store, how will Food Front maintain sales levels adequate to support our expenses? Can we increase our space in NW? In Hillsdale, how do we build sales fast enough to become profitable?

What if another neighborhood shows strong support for Food Front opening a third store? Would it make sense for Food Front to expand our services into a new area outside of the grocery world? Solid, steady growth is necessary for us to expand our support for all of our local vendors and community partners, and gaining more people to engage in community ownership of their grocery store. This is an exciting, and perhaps even scary time. Stay tuned. We'll keep in touch and let you know what we discover.

What's Happening at Food Front this Fall

► Care for Our Community

Food Front receives Business for Culture & the Arts Award

We were honored in November to receive an award by the Business for Culture & the Arts 2010 *Breakfast of Champions*. Tom Mattox accepted the *Hero for the Arts* award for Food Front's support of the non-profit *Circus Project*. The Circus Project enables homeless and at-risk youth to develop their physical and emotional integrity, by providing intensive skill training in circus and performing arts.

Bring a Bag, Save a Tree, Plant a Tree

Starting in January, you will notice a change in the "Bean Bag Program" at the NW store. The program encourages our shoppers to bring in their own bag instead of using a new one—Food Front donates five cents for every bag saved. The entire year's proceeds will go to restore our neighborhood treasure, Forest Park. The funds will be donated to Forest Park Conservancy to plant new trees and for other restoration work. Food Front already supports FPC with monthly donations of food for trail workers and a yearly register fundraiser. The intention behind the program this year is to make a larger impact with a single initiative. Also, the tracking of the five cents will be done directly at the register. At press time, a recipient for the Hillsdale program was not secured. The register fundraiser program will continue as before.

► Owner Appreciation Days

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 21st, 22nd, & 23rd Both stores. All day.

The next Owner Appreciation Days are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. Owner discounts will be applied as you check out at the register. Larger purchases mean more savings. The discounts are:

\$1-49.99	5% of your total
\$50-99.99.....	7% of your total
\$100 or more.....	10% of your total

We'll also have free samples, fun, and some surprises.

► Market Sundays at Hillsdale

Each Market Sunday, come to Food Front Hillsdale for free samples, demos, and special treats. Stop in before or after your trip to the Market!

9am-noon: Free Toast & Coffee featuring Dave's Killer Bread

Enjoy a free slice of toast featuring: Dave's Killer Bread, along with local fruit spreads, butters, and coffee.

Noon-3pm Food theme demos

Meet some of our local vendors for free samples.

► Saturday Afternoons at NW

Saturdays, 12noon-3pm

Meet local food artisans and growers and learn about issues such as gluten-free foods, fair-trade, and non-GMOs.

► Neighborhood Cleanups

Hillsdale: Every First Saturday, 9-10am

Northwest: Every Second Saturday, 9-10am

We gather in front of Food Front and pick up trash in the immediate neighborhood. Afterwards, we sit outside and have free coffee and treats.

► Food Front Movie Series

Join us at our free movie series. Refreshments provided.

NW Library, 23rd and Thurman

Jan. 12th, 6pm: *What's On Your Plate?*

Feb. 9th, 6pm: *The Dark Side of Chocolate*

Mar. 9th, 6pm: *Blue Gold: World Water Wars*

Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd.

January 25th, 6pm: *Ingredients*

Staying in Touch with us

We love to hear your thoughts and comments about Food Front. You can reach us at:

Northwest

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fax: 503-227-5140

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Hello, Good-bye

By Tom Mattox, Outgoing Community Outreach and Marketing Director



Tom Mattox

The time has come for me to move on from my role as Community Outreach and Marketing Director, after almost five years. It has been a profound privilege to work at Food Front. The best part for me, has been working with our staff and our community and all the dedication, passion, and creativity that we collectively have here.

I am so proud of the work we've done together. Food Front has put down some deep roots in both our communities in the past five years and these roots will continue to nourish us in the coming years. I remain a very enthusiastic Food Front owner and shopper and expect to see Food Front continue to flourish. And I hope to stay in touch with the many amazing people I've met and worked with!

We are also exceedingly fortunate to have Jessica Miller take the reins. Jessica says, "My passion for food, love for Portland and its people mixed with my professional experience in marketing and advertising sum up why I am so thrilled to be the Marketing & Outreach Director for Food Front. Joining a wonderful and capable team is the icing on the cake!"



Jessica Miller

I'd like to end with a personal "thank you" to all our owners. Ownership is the foundation of everything we do here at Food Front. It's rare in our modern economy that we can own a business that serves us every day. We make this amazing business possible!

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Board Report: The Quest for Owner Linkage

By Russ Nelson, Food Front Board Member

Perhaps you have heard the term “member linkage”, or “owner linkage” as I prefer. Even if you have heard it, do you understand what it means? Owner linkage can take on many different forms and it is abstract enough that it can be difficult to define. Linkage is the symbiotic relationship between the Board of Directors and the owners of the Cooperative. This relationship informs the Board of the owners’ hopes, concern, and vision for the Cooperative’s future.

There are many benefits of owner Linkage. Most importantly, we seek to have a clear understanding of owners’ concerns and priorities. Owner linkage also works in the other direction to promote understanding of the Board to the Owners. Healthy owner linkage can also ensure democratic participation of the owners in the Cooperative, facilitate transparency regarding the Board’s activities, create opportunities for education, and build community relationships.

What do owners really want? This is what the Board of Directors endeavors to understand about you, the owner. Other than our responsibility for fiduciary oversight, owner linkage is one of our top priorities. The Board needs to understand what our owners collectively want to more effectively chart Food Front’s long-term course.

As a Board, we want a perpetual feedback loop, where both the Board and the owners are actively engaged. As a Director it is my role to seek clear understanding of the needs and dreams of the owners. For example. Do the owners place a high priority on our Cooperative being “carbon neutral”? Likewise, it is the role of the Owner to speak up about their deeper investments in the Cooperative, those beyond the financial. For example, if wearing my owner hat, and I have an interest in social responsibility, I can make the Board aware of this interest.

Owner linkage can be achieved in many ways, such as: tabling at the stores and at community events, surveys, focus groups, forums, the Annual Meeting, Board reports in *Front Lines*, the bulletin board in the stores, Food Front’s website, Board Election materials and the Annual Report.

A fresh opportunity exists with our newly formed Resource Council, where owners can explore service on committees and consider the possibility of being a Board Member. As always, the best owner linkage occurs in face-to-face interactions, such as attending a Board meeting. We meet on the fourth Monday of the month. Details on upcoming meetings are listed on the back cover of *Front Lines*. I hope to see you there.

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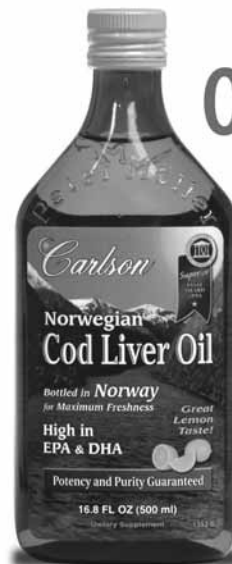
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Local Product Spotlight: River Wave Foods

By **Cristin Kearns Couzens**

After twenty-nine years as a flight attendant Rebecca Kawanami was ready for something new, but opening a food business didn't top her list. Actually, it wasn't even on her list. She had been encouraging her friend from Thailand, who made a delicious sauce for friends, to start selling it. When her friend wasn't interested, Rebecca discovered she was so passionate about the product, she wanted to explore the opportunity for herself. This was the birth of River Wave Foods.

One of her first steps was to enroll in the "Getting Your Recipe to Market" class at Portland Community College. Part of the curriculum involved bringing in local grocers to help students make connections with retailers. It was at this event that Rebecca first met



Tom Mattox from Food Front and another opportunity was presented to her. "Tom is a wonderful liaison to the community for Food Front," she said. "He goes to all these events, talks to people, and really follows through. He's sincere, supportive, and always helpful." Food Front was the first retail store to stock River Wave Foods' products in 2008.

In formulating her cooking sauces and tapenade, she realized, "So many sauces just recreate what's already on the shelves," She focused on recipes with simple, fresh ingredients made unique by how they meld together. She wanted her gourmet sauces to help home cooks expand their repertoire. With her Berryaki Sauce, a mix of Marionberries and teriyaki, she tells people, "not to use it as a marinade. Just brush the salmon at the end of grilling, and add a tablespoon for dipping for a great salmon dish."

The staff at Food Front has been so welcoming to Rebecca during product demos, that she considers them co-workers. "It feels like family. They are truly interested in my success, even giving feedback and ideas to increase sales."

"Portland is such a great place to start a food business," Rebecca said. Now, in multiple stores in the Portland area, she looks to the future when she might be able to distribute her product more broadly, including the two new salad dressings that are in the works. And she couldn't have done it without the "steady legs" that her experience at Food Front has given her. Look for River Wave Foods sauces in four different flavors: Berryaki Sauce, Argentinean Chimichurri Sauce, Tapanui Tapenade, and My Thai Gourmet Sauce. For more information, visit www.riverwavefoods.com.

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Non-GMOs and Food Front

By Valerie Kasinskas, Community Outreach Assistant Manager

The American agricultural landscape has changed immensely over the last 25 years. Gone are the days of vibrant, multi-generational, family-run farms, where plant diversity, saving your seeds and preserving heirloom varieties were a thing of the norm. Today, one can drive by huge fields of one crop—grown year after year—and see signs that read “Round-up Ready.” These signs display a plant’s gene patent number, because these plants are now “property” of big agricultural giants like Monsanto—the same people who brought us products like rBST (bovine growth hormone), DDT, and Agent Orange. Monsanto has sued farmers who “infringe on their patents” by growing crops that contain their patented genes, even if the farmer unknowingly grows seeds that have blown on their fields from neighboring farms (google: *Monsanto vs Schmeiser* for an example).

GMOs (or “genetically modified organisms”) are organisms that have been created through the gene-splicing techniques of biotechnology. They are sometimes called “GE” or “genetically engineered.” This relatively new science allows DNA from one species to be injected into another species in a laboratory, creating combinations of plant, animal, bacteria, and viral genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods.

According to the USDA, in 2009, 93% of soy, 93% of cotton, and 86% of corn grown in the U.S. were GMO. It is estimated that over 90% of canola grown is GMO, and there are also commercially produced GM varieties of sugar beets, squash and Hawaiian Papaya. As a result, it is estimated that GMOs are now present in more

than 80% of packaged products in the average U.S. or Canadian grocery store.

Polls consistently show that a significant majority of North Americans would like to be able to tell if the food they’re purchasing contains GMOs (a 2008 CBS News Poll found that 87% of consumers wanted GMOs labeled). And, according to a recent CBS/New York Times poll, 53% of consumers said they would not buy food that has been genetically modified. How do we change a system that has already become so large and extensive? It is as simple as voting with your dollar and becoming more informed about where your food comes from. The more people seek out certified non-GMO products—the more the market will listen. The organic industry has grown tremendously in the last 10 years—the reason? Consumer demand.

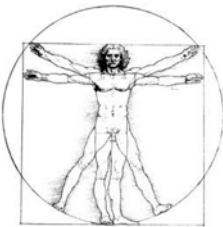
What does Food Front have to offer for non-GMO options? Here are a few brands that are dedicated pioneers to non-GMO food: Strauss Dairy was the first certified non-GMO dairy in the US, Bob’s Red Mill (a beloved worker owned, local company), and few more local brands that we love—Oregon’s Wild Harvest, Turtle Island (Tofurky), Nancy’s and Stahlbush Farms.

One of Food Front’s missions is to empower people, and in this aspect we want to educate and empower people to make healthy choices for themselves and the planet. Food Front supports the Non-GMO Project, a non-profit organization devoted to giving consumers informed choices about non-GMO products. For more info go to www.nongmoproject.org.

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For Steven Smith, it's Tea Time Again

By Wendy Gordon

Food Front and Steven Smith Teamaker, an artisan tea company, operate within a few blocks of one another. Food Front sells several of Smith's remarkable tea blends. But their roots are deeper and more intertwined than that. Both Steven Smith teas and Food Front can trace their beginnings to the fertile period of innovation that was the late sixties and early seventies. Smith was also at the forefront of the nascent natural foods movement before turning his attentions solely to tea.

Smith doesn't recall any unusual attraction to tea in his youth, other than fond memories of his grandmother's black tea and the occasional cup of herbal tea in high school. A Vietnam vet, he returned to his hometown of Portland and found work at a friend's new natural food store, Sunshine Natural Foods, on the South Park Blocks, near PSU. This was Portland's very first natural foods store: before Natures and before Food Front. Sunshine expanded to become a distribution company for organic produce, nut butters, grains, and fruit juices. But there weren't enough businesses to keep the company afloat, so Smith and his partner dissolved it, keeping the most profitable part of the business: botanicals, spices, and herbal teas. By 1976 they'd morphed into the Universal Tea Company, and were selling imported Indian black teas as well as exporting Oregon-grown botanicals overseas. Universal pioneered the marketing of Oregon and Washington peppermint and spearmint, processing the herbs in the Pearl District warehouse where the restaurant Oba is now. "The whole neighborhood smelled like peppermint," Smith recalls.

Universal morphed into Stash Tea. Stash sold teas and spices to the restaurants that gave birth to Portland's superb restaurant scene, places like Genoa and

L'Auberge. As well as selling to stores, Stash marketed directly to the consumer via mail order, even offering wooden handmade tea boxes for \$5.

But Smith grew frustrated. During his tenure at Stash, the company was restricted by cost requirements for materials. In its "mainstream specialty" niche, tea leaves were actually the least expensive part of the equation, dwarfed by costs of importation, bagging, packaging and other ancillary expenses. To compete

with other brands, most companies ironically economized on the raw materials that were the basis of it all. In 1993 Smith sold Stash to a Japanese tea company. It remains headquartered in Tigard and is one of the largest specialty tea companies in the US.

Smith suspected that tea was not as price sensitive as retailers assumed. He thought consumers would pay more for a premium product. Tazo Teas was his next creation. Starting in his kitchen, he experimented with tea blends, bags, and leaf size. The

phenomenal success of Tazo proved him right. In 1999 he sold Tazo to Starbucks.

He continued to work for the company until 2006, when he moved to France with his wife and young son "to experience a different culture". But retirement did not agree with him and he soon found himself restless. "I missed being able to create things," he says. "I prefer self-directed projects." He was inspired by the small artisan producers he met in France, people who crafted their own cheeses, jams, chocolates, wines, baked goods, and sausages. The people who made the product were present at the market, selling it. The idea of traceability, of allowing people to have a real sense of where the things they bought came from, appealed to Smith. After a brief period consulting with an Indian tea company, Smith and his family returned to Portland. He brought back some "creative friends" from Tazo and started what is now Steven Smith Teamakers.



Operating out of an old blacksmith's building at 1626 NW Thurman, Smith sells a small but meticulously sourced and crafted selection of white, green, oolong, black, and herbal teas, as well as a fabulous chai blend. Frequent overseas procuring trips assure that the ingredients are the freshest possible. Tea is mixed and bagged on site, in full view of customers in the cozy, fragrant tea-sipping area. If you're curious, you can look up the origin of each ingredient of your cup of tea on their website.

To look at the tea sachets (don't call them bags!) is to know that they are different. The tea leaves are full and uncrushed, due to a careful screening process. The sachets are large and silky, with a porous texture that allows for more of the bloom of flavor to emerge. With the beautifully colored and textured tea mixtures inside they look pretty enough to be quilted, but they are actually woven from biodegradable cornstarch. The bagging machine produces about 50 bags per minute, as compared to the typical production speed of 2000 bags a minute.

The small nature of the business allows for flexibility and innovation. While a larger company requires an elaborate and extensive testing process, here you can "just make it happen," says Smith. One new product

in the works is a line of bottled ice teas brewed with diced regional apples, pears, and blackberries. The fruit acidifies the filtered water, pasteurizing it without preservatives, and lessened the need for flavor-dulling sugar. The fruit taste in these teas is deep and rich.

Smith was originally reluctant to approach Food Front with his teas because they are not totally organic. "There's not enough choice in the supply chain to restrict to organic," he states. But he soon discovered Food Front respected his emphasis on traceability and sustainability. Food Front sells six flavors: Moo Fung Shui; Fez; Jasmine Silver Tip; Meadow; Peppermint; and Lord Bergamot.

"Our teas are for people who spend a little bit more on the foods they eat and the beverages they drink and want quality," Smith says. While his teas are definitely on the pricier end of the range, tea is still a relatively inexpensive beverage when you compare it to a store-bought soft drink or latte. "If you go through the process of making tea, you should be rewarded," Smith says. "Minus the packaging and marketing, the tea has to taste great or I'm in the wrong business."



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Farm Profile: Gathering Together Farm

Story and Photos by Josh Alsberg, Produce Manager

I am a foodie. Chances are, so are you. It's pretty easy to take for granted how our food ends up on our plate. We are quite fortunate here in the Pacific Northwest to be



blessed with some of the most fertile growing soil on earth, as well as people with the knowledge and desire to work the soil to create delicious fruits and vegetables for us. It takes a special grower to find a way to work the land in a sustainable manner, free of harmful chemicals.

To me, no other farm represents the best of local and sustainable vegetable growing more than Gathering Together Farm in Philomath. Established in 1987, John Eveland and Sally Brewer, the husband and wife team behind the magic, and a few of their friends started the

farm, which has now expanded to almost 50 certified organic acres along Mary's River. These 50 acres are made up of oddly-shaped parcels one to five acres in size, giving the farm a quirky and unique feel.

GTF is active at all levels of the local produce movement. You'll find their stand at a number of the local farmer's markets including the Portland Farmers Market on the Portland State University campus on Saturdays as well as our cherished Hillsdale Farmers Market in the parking lot behind Food Front Hillsdale.

The farm sells over 40 different types of vegetables of over 100 different varieties. It also operates one of the largest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs in the state, with over 300 shareholders who receive a weekly produce box with freshly picked veggies from the farm. GTF sells directly to local restaurants as well as many of the small groceries and co-ops in the Portland area and Willamette Valley. And finally, the farm is an active participant in the Ladybug program, which is the local growers network at Organically Grown Company (OGC), the largest distributor of fresh, organic produce in the Pacific NW. OGC started as a cooperative of local organic vegetable growers (of which GTF is a founding member) and to this day retains one of the largest networks of local farmers throughout the country.

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In September, 36 of us—staff, owners, and customers—boarded the biodiesel EcoShuttle on a soggy morning and made the 90-minute trek to GTF, located about ten miles southwest of Corvallis. John was there to greet our group and usher us into the main barn, where we would enjoy a temporary reprieve from the deluge.

John was eager to show us around, and miraculously as we came upon our first stop at the tomato tunnels, the rain began to ease up. Their Beefsteak tomatoes are one of their premier crops, and it was no wonder. The elaborate setup for tomato growing was quite the sight—tomato plants trained almost ten feet high.

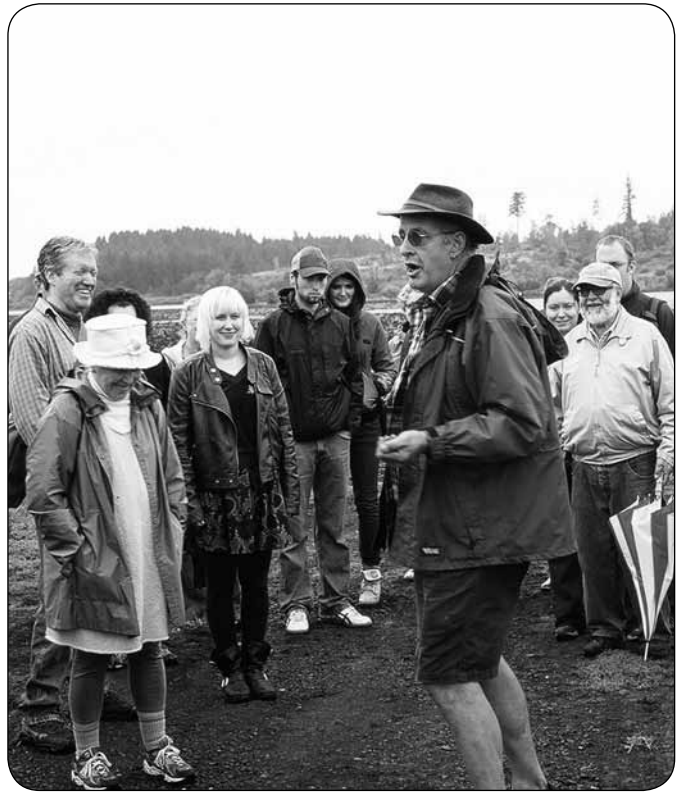
John explained that they have to use organic pesticide very infrequently. They try to encourage a large population of beneficial insects including ladybugs, predatory wasps, and ground beetles that feast on insect eggs. He says, “if you eliminate all the problem insects, the beneficial insects go away too. Then when the problem insects come back, you have no beneficial insects left.”

We loaded up the bus and were off to his extended acreage about a half-mile up the road. We unloaded and John showed off their compost that they use, as well as sell to other farms in the valley. John stuck his fist into the compost and a puff of steam billowed out, saying, “The compost pile can reach well over 140 degrees.”

No farm tour at GTF would be complete without the farm lunch. And we ate like royalty! A lovely grilled chicken breast atop a bed of freshly harvested potatoes and a gravy, with a side of fresh picked greens. And desert, oh desert! Tasty mixed berry pie!





But the surprises didn’t stop there. Co-op shoppers Sean Davis and Risse Hunter were celebrating their one-year anniversary of dating. Since they are both interested in the local food movement and most of their dates and romantic evenings together revolve around the local food and wine scene, they thought this would be an ideal way to spend an afternoon. Unbeknownst to Risse, Sean had even bigger plans for the day. As we were finishing up our meal, Sean got down on one knee and asked for Risse’s hand in marriage. The barn erupted in cheers and clapping. Several of us had no idea what had happened until we got back on the bus as they told the story on the way back to Portland.

And by the way, she said “yes”.



Gathering Together farmer John Eveland talks to Food Front tour members about the recipe for healthy crops: soil, composting, and beneficial insects.

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February and March meetings:
date and place TBA

Call 503-222-5658, ext. 133,
if you would like to attend.
A light dinner is provided.

Store Special Events

Saturdays at Northwest

Every Saturday, Noon-3pm
Meet local food artisans and
growers, and learn about issues such
as Fair Trade and Non-GMOs.

Market Sundays at Hillsdale

Stop in on Hillsdale Market Days
for local food events and special
treats.

Food Front Movie Series

Join us at the movies. Free.
Refreshments provided.

NW Library, 23rd and Thurman

Jan. 12, 6pm: *What's On Your Plate?*

Feb. 9, 6pm: *The Dark Side of Chocolate*

Mar. 9, 6pm: *Blue Gold: World Water Wars*

Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd.

January 25, 6pm: *Ingredients*

Owner Appreciation Days

Free samples and your owner discount.
Three days of fun; **both stores, all day!**

Friday-Sunday
January 21st-23rd

Look for us on
Facebook & Twitter

FoodFront.coop

