

Hoquiam Farmers Market News - Now Grays Harbor Public Market News

Local News

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There is a daffodil blooming in my garden! If I were writing this in late March rather than late February, the exclamation point would not be warranted. But think of it- the east coast is still dealing with huge piles of snow which won't melt away for months to come, but here in Hoquiam- I have a daffodil blooming. I feel like the character in The Little Prince. He had a rose, the only rose on the planet. He cherished the rose, lavishing it with praise and admiration. Much as I am now, in awe of this phenomena of nature.

Soon more daffodils will appear and the joy I have in my single, precious daffodil will be magnified. Like a mother with many children, my heart will expand to include each and every precious blossom.

Because I cannot bear to cut even a single daffodil from my own garden, tomorrow I will make a pilgrimage to the Satsop Bulb Farm. I am not emotionally attached to the daffodils at the bulb farm. Someone else has already snapped their stems and clustered them into bouquets, and I will gleefully and greedily gather an armful of yellow beauties to bring home. Even when the rains return, I will have sunshine in each room.

The Grays Harbor Public Market, fondly known as the Hoquiam Farmers Market will have cut daffodils available beginning this Wednesday. I promise that I will not keep every flower at home- there will be lots left to bring to the market! We will sell them for the same incredibly low price as the bulb farm, a mere \$1.50 for 10 flowers. You couldn't pay me enough to induce me to cut the lone daffodil blooming in my garden!

Do you know about the 'Quinault Daffodil'? Otherwise known as Skunk Cabbage? You may be asking yourself why it is called Skunk Cabbage, since the name is hardly complimentary. Get a little closer, sniff the air (cautiously) and you'll soon realize how accurate the name is. But we Pacific Northwesterners are not fickle folk who appreciate only the sweet smelling flowers of summer. No sir, any plant that has the audacity to be the first one out of the ground in the dead of winter gets our respect. My mother used to become so excited when she spotted the first yellow bud emerging from the swampy muck! That signal of hope, the sure sign that winter was on the run- suddenly joy was in the air.

Nancy Lachel, master baker at the Farmers Market, has spoiled me. As Market Manager my main job perk is that of official Taster of Treats. Every time a new recipe is baked, first bite is mine. She brought out a new chocolate pecan bar last week that left me speechless.

This week I am in training. The Big Day arrives on Saturday. I guess it is because of my exalted position at the market that I was chosen to act as a judge at the 3rd annual Chocolate on the Beach Festival. Everyone has highlights in life that remain frozen in time as dazzling memories to brighten later, less sparkling days- this promises to be one of those days! I have studied the categories, trying

to anticipate the goodies that will appear. I figure that pacing myself is going to be very, very important. One of my fellow judges will be the honorable JP Patches. I'm not sure just what qualifications as taster he brings to the table, but this promises to be a really fun experience. Pacific Beach Elementary School is headquarters for the Saturday and Sunday event, and there is a long list of special goings-on at <http://www.chocolateonthebeachfestival.com/events.htm>

Maybe the abundance of chocolate this weekend will encourage someone to open a Chocolate Store in Hoquiam? I selfishly say Hoquiam, because it's closer for me, but Aberdeen could use a Chocolate emporium also. When times are hard, people will still buy chocolate! I could go into raptures about the many healthy attributes, and I understand that a calm euphoria is also credited to eating chocolate. I read an article recently about a couple who dearly wished to live on a remote island off the coast of Maine. Problem was, they still needed to earn a living. They are now successful entrepreneurs, selling chocolate to connoisseurs far and wide. Think about it- as businesses go, this is a sure thing. I would dearly love to have a truffle maker join the farmers market co-op. Call me!

As Spring sneaks its way into town, the tables at the Farmers Market slowly begin to fill with plants. We have already begun tempting gardeners with big, healthy rhubarb plants and several varieties of berries. Some hearty herbs are ready to go into the soil, and plain brown boxes from seed companies keep arriving. We are trying to convince an heirloom seed grower in Raymond to join us and hope to have his product soon. Meanwhile, Levee Feed and Pet Supply has just opened across the Hoquiam river in the old Safeway building, and they have shiny new shovels and rakes to make the tilling of the soil as pleasant as possible.

Life is as hectic as we allow it to become. Sometimes it's good to take a purposeful break from all the busy-ness that threatens to engulf our days. Next time you're driving thru town, pull into our place along the river.

Meander thru our vendor stalls, settle into an easy chair and chat with us for a while. We may not have a cracker barrel, but we do have friendly faces, free advice, and the true wish to be a bright spot in your day.