

## **Hoquiam Farmers Market News - Nostalgic Edition**

### **Local News**

Posted by: Anonymous

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Have you ever discovered a place that touched that "home" place in your heart? I have been fortunate enough to find two such places, and thank goodness one of them is right here in Hoquiam. The other one is in Scotland, so it remains an elusive memory. The Hoquiam Farmers Market is my home away from home. I'm happy there. Vibrant, connected, belonging. I'll stop by, just for a minute. Hours later I finally leave, reluctantly. I realize that for me, this is bliss. I can't explain why, can't even begin to quantify the magic formula that makes this place work for me. All I can do is be thankful and relish the joy.

My mother was a Kansas girl, a most unlikely candidate for finding her bliss in Hoquiam. She arrived here in 1945 with a new masters degree in Social Work, ready to explore a new country. I still break out in uncontrollable laughter when I think about her as she unpacked her things in her new office. The rest of the staff were in the midst of planning the weekend activities. April was sunny and warm that year, and the time had come for home improvement projects. Volunteers were being rounded up to help "shake a roof". Can you imagine what she thought?!? What sort of a place was this where people got together to perch on ladders, wrap their arms around the roof of the house, and give it a good shake? Some weird ritual? She soon learned the unique language of our countryside. Another source of giggles was the sight of a "crummy". If you, too, are from Kansas, you might not know that this was the term for a crew bus that transported day workers out to a logging site. Every so often when our family had an extra load of passengers, she would count heads and invite everyone to climb aboard the crummy.

New experiences and information came her way at lightening speed, and my mother was a woman who researched things that puzzled her. I can't even imagine what she could have done with Google at her fingertips! Back then, it was the Encyclopedia Britannica, renowned source of all possible knowledge. When that failed, she assaulted the troves of learning at the Library. Thanks to my dear mother, I have the oddest assortment of trivia stored away in my brain. Some obscure tidbit will pop out at the most unexpected time. A line of poetry, a factoid about a plant, a bit of Victorian gossip- never get me in a game of Trivial Pursuit!

My mother, always looking for something interesting to do, learned that the Olympians Hiking Club were planning a hike to Mount Eleanor that weekend. Sounded better than shaking that darned roof! So she got up in the wee hours of the morning, and rendezvoused with the group. My father was on that hike. Can you hear the music playing? Not only did they meet that day, but my God-father was also hiking with them, and he had a brand new camera. How many people have photos of their parents flirting on the day that they met? These precious photos are amongst my most treasured possessions. My parents married in September. Quick work, Dad. He took his new bride to his cabin, about 9 miles up the east Hoquiam Road. His cabin had a name- Red Dog Gulch. Yes, he had a red

dog. They bought themselves a book, something like 'How to live on Practically Nothing'. I think that we're drawing closer here to knowing why I feel so much at home at the Farmers Market!

Building something out of nothing is a skill that isn't for the faint of heart. I have great memories of my mother deciding that 'today is the perfect day to make soap'. She would pull out the big galvanized tin washtub, and warn us to stand back out of splashing distance. The recipe that she had for soap making involved the use of Lye, a powerful and corrosive substance. Not something that is used much now, except maybe to clear a clogged drain. The aroma of Lye is an instant memory stimulant for me- I picture the stone patio and my mother in a pretty house-dress and apron, stirring this concoction with a clean, long stick. Believe me, this was soap that got you clean! We have soapmakers at the Farmers Market, but they use gentler recipes for their soap. Sara and Jenny make lovely soaps, delicately scented with aromatic herbs. Not the kind of soap that requires a washboard and a pump handle water faucet.

As I walk around the Market and admire the craft booths, every single one reminds me of my mother and her commitment to living a life that made do with what she had available. The quilts that take scraps of leftover material and become a thing of both beauty and utility. The knitted slippers ( my favorite and most anticipated Christmas gift every year!) Lap-robies and afghans, jewelry made by hand, bread made from unbleached flour and zero preservatives, dolls lovingly sewn, toys for the family dog, paintings and photographs that reflect our beautiful area, plants grown from seed- all these things created by people I know. People who share my mothers values. I think I know now why the Market is my home away from home.

Barbara Bennett Parsons, contented manager of the Hoquiam Farmers Market.

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