

Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - Festival Edition

Local News

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Nothing in this world makes me prouder than when someone praises the Hoquiam Farmers Market. I stand a little bit taller, the shoulders square up, and pure happiness floods throughout my being. Lucky for me, this happens pretty regularly now, but this mornings latest was especially pleasing. Strangers in town stopped by as I was carefully (and artistically!) arranging our produce displays. They needed directions, a specialty of the house, and then reappeared an hour later. After scrutinizing our lavish assortment of mouth watering produce, they announced that it should be featured on a calendar. Shucks, what can I say? We have Fresh Local Cranberries (\$2.50 lb), Fresh Foraged Chanterelle Mushrooms (now \$8.00 lb) and boxes and boxes of crisp Apples (\$1.89 lb) Peaches, Pears, Pumpkins and so much more. We are committed to providing the highest quality organic produce at the lowest possible price. We want that you should ‘Live Long, and Prosper’.

I knew from a very early age that there were two distinct classifications of personality; those who attend closely to details, and those who do not. I was the child who carefully arranged her belongings. Because Mother Nature has a wicked sense of humor, I shared a bedroom with a sister who was not inclined toward tidiness. I also have a tendency toward list making and planning, and am all too smug about being prepared. This time of year is so packed with festivals that some expert planning is required to make the most of them. Time for me to share ‘the list’ for this upcoming weekend; 1. Schafer Meadows Fiber Arts Festival. Begins at noon on Friday and continues until 4pm Sunday. The festival takes place at the Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall in Elma and it is Free admission. I can’t rave enough about his event! There are free classes every day; spinning, weaving, felting, even fly-tying. The hall will be packed with homespun yarns and stunning creations by expert knitters, weavers, felters, jewelry artists, and spinners. I try to keep Christmas shopping in mind, but always end up indulging in something for myself too. 2. Cranberry Harvest Festival in Grayland. Starts Saturday morning, continues all day Sunday. Be sure to sign up for a Bog Tour! All of those nagging questions you ever had about cranberries will be answered. Back at the Grayland Community Hall vendors will be selling all manner of lovely products. Nancy Lachel from the Hoquiam Farmers Market will be there and is hard at work creating Cranberry jams, jellies, candy, cookies, bars, granola, biscotti, pies, breads, and muffins. My most envied task at the market is Tastetester. I take this responsibility seriously, insisting upon rigorous multiple testings. It’s a tough job. 3. Taste of Home Cooking School at the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino on Saturday evening only. Show starts at 6:30 and cost is \$10.00 for general admission, \$20.00 for premium seating. Believe me, the cost of admission is quickly made up with all of the free gifts, coupons, and magazines that you receive. It’s a golden opportunity to watch master chefs create recipes. You’ll go home prepared to amaze your friends and family with your newly acquired expertise. See what I mean about the need for proper planning? Back at the market, we’re deluged with the best of the best local harvest foods. The recent rains provided exactly the right conditions for the Chanterelle Mushrooms to pop up, and some of us are still picking green beans out of the garden. Pumpkins, you ask? Pumpkins are stacked everywhere! Fresh Cranberries came in Monday morning, and

we have Greensleeves and Chehalis Apples, thanks to my favorite orchardist, Dennis Reams. These apples taste the way you remember apples tasting- crisp and packed with flavor. They make superb pies and sauce and are a joy to pack in a lunch box. Cranberries and Apples are excellent when paired together in pies, crisps, and muffins- even meat dishes. Ocean Spray is especially generous in providing free recipes at fairs and festivals, plus I've discovered that their website is packed with mouth watering recipes. Today I'm trying their recipe for Cranberry Bacon Brunch Scones with Cranberry-Pecan Cream Cheese. I'm pretty sure that they're going to be over the top scrumptious! Look for copies of the recipe next week at the market. Barbara Bennett Parsons, in training for a week of taste testing. Manager of the Hoquiam Farmers Market at 1958 Riverside.