Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - Canner's Edition

Local News

Posted by:

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You want to can Tomatoes? Green Beans? Peaches? We’ve got ‘em!!!!The amount of produce that arrived at the Hoquiam Farmers Market this week is positively staggering. Literally, as I’m the one who puts all the goodies out on the tables. I’m thinking that maybe I should enter a weight lifting competition, one which is judged according to size/weight class. I know I can’t compete with the new female Aberdeen Firefighter, but for my size, I can toss a mean case of potatoes.So- fresh sweet corn, zucchini and squash of all kinds, bean, and more beans, broccoli, carrots, Chanterelles, cilantro, cucumbers, dill, multitudinous types of garlic, ginger, kale (the new SuperFood), lettuce, romaine, potatoes, yams, onions, apples, pears, peaches, plums, nectarines- and More!And yes, we have twice as many of the sumptuous Hermiston seedless yellow Watermelons as last week! Boy, those went out the door in record time! Now that I’ve got you hooked on them, I’ll try to maintain the supply!We bid a fond adieu yesterday to the final Spooner’s Berries of 2012. And what a season it was! For you types who plan ahead, give your freezer a contented pat. You’re set with the best berries for the winter. Thank you Sue Spooner!

Sometime’s it is very, very hard to embrace change. It comes as a shock this year that Labor Day has snuck up on us and is now only days away. Even though the official transition from Summer to Fall doesn’t come until September 22nd, we all know that our summer is fading and sometimes comes to an abrupt end on Labor Day. I am not ready. I still have summer dresses in the closet which haven’t been worn yet this year. I feel like a brat complaining- so much of the country has sizzled for months and we have been blessed by the cool breezes of a temperate climate. So, I’ll focus instead on all the great things that happen thanks to the change of seasons!Labor Day can mean parties, picnics, family reunions- or, it can be celebrated in true Coastal style by the imaginative folks at Pacific Beach. Where else can you find a Kelpers Festival and Shake Rat Rendezvous? I ask you! The kiddies parade is at noon on Saturday and the adult parade is Sunday at noon, with constant entertaining activities all weekend long. One year we watched as teddy bears were launched on little balloons, and if you have always wanted to watch a skilled Shake Rat in action, the competition is fierce on Sunday! Kelp isn’t nearly as exciting, it just lies there on the sand.Hoquiam’s Loggers Playday is always held the weekend after Labor Day, and this year you have a chance to be a part of the action without having to enter the falling or bucking contests. I have always wanted to experience a Flash Mob. The videos on YouTube intrigue me, the seemingly random gradual gathering of a group which then burst into song or dance, startling and thrilling the unsuspecting audience. All I can say is, if you want to participate, call Luis at the Lighthouse Ballet Academy, #310-883-3105. No special skills are required, and you’ll finally have your long awaited chance to be ‘discovered’.The squirrels have been busy getting their supply of cones ready for winter, and so have I. If only we could develop a taste for Fir cones, putting up food for the cold months would be a cinch. Luckily for us, we are surrounded by bounty, much of it free for the harvesting. Joe and I are natural born foragers. The apple trees on our own property are now 100 years old and our pet deer consider any fruit on them to be their rightful dinner. We’re so whipped by our deer that we go off and find our apples

elsewhere. How embarrassing is that? We have favorite pear, plum, and apple trees that still thrive in deserted homestead farms. I call them our Free Range fruit trees.Back when our ancestors decided to leave home and venture to the far, far west, they would pack the wagon with the necessities which our wilderness could not provide- fruit trees were at the top of the list. No self respecting homesteader would contemplate the future of a hard life in the deep woods without bringing good tree stock along. Apples weren’t an occasional lunch snack back then, they were a necessary nutritional staple food. Our hardy settlers didn’t pack a single variety- they had multiple trees which bore fruit beginning in mid-summer all the way into winter.The first tree to bear was the Yellow Transparent Apple, highly prized for the tart flavor which makes the very best applesauce and pies. Picked slightly unripe, you can’t beat this apple for bringing the best flavors to an apple pie. Unless you are talking about the classic Gravenstein Apple. A firmer apple, it helps to saute these apples in butter before putting them into the crust. Which is why this is also a great apple to can for your winter apple pie supply. Other apples were grown for their juice, giving the family a great excuse to partner with their neighbors and build an Apple Cider Press. My father was the proud owner of a press and it was the honored guest of many cider press parties. I first learned square dancing in Oiva Knute’s barn at their annual September party. The old cider press saw one too many party, so now I satisfy my apple cider cravings with Lattin’s Cider.Lattin’s presses their cider on Monday, so I was right there to scoop up a fresh batch. It’s now sitting proudly on our cooler shelves, just to the left of Anthony’s Sausages. With apples and apple cider to look forward to, now I can face Labor Day with complete happiness!Barbara Bennett Parsons, manager of the Grays Harbor Farmers Market in Hoquiam 538-9747Deidra’s Deli 538-5580