

Celebrate Whatcom County's Independents

8th Annual Independents Week, July 2-8

Celebrate your independence this year by choosing locally owned independent businesses. This festive week will celebrate local and independently owned businesses in this area. Be on the lookout for local businesses with signs or posters in their windows and a special insert in the Weekly and Herald that will feature a comprehensive list of participating businesses for the week.

"Independent businesses in Whatcom County have been the key players in building a strong, sustainable economy; protecting the environment; supporting local non-profits; and providing good workplaces," Chuck Robinson, Village Books owner said. "When you support independent businesses, you support a more livable Whatcom County."

"We're asking people to make an extra effort this week to support our locals and the uniqueness of our community this week by shopping with locally owned, independent



Photo by Joanne Piny

businesses," Sustainable Connections Think Local First Manager Michelle Grandy said. "When you shop at locally owned, independent businesses, more of your money circulates within our community instead of being sent out of town."

So choose your independents first this summer and keep our community strong.

For more information, see www.sustainableconnections.org.

Family Farmers Amplify Legal Complaint Against Monsanto's GMOs

New threats by Monsanto have led to the filing of an amended complaint by the Public Patent Foundation (PUBPAT) in its suit on behalf of family farmers, seed businesses, and organic agricultural organizations challenging Monsanto's patents on genetically modified seed.

Because genetically-modified plant pollen can be spread through the wind or by insects, farmers are vulnerable to having their crops contaminated by transgenic seed and then subsequently being sued by Monsanto for "patent infringement."

PUBPAT asked Monsanto to give farmers legally binding assurance that they would refrain from this years-long practice. "In response Monsanto chose to instead reiterate the same implicit threat to organic agriculture that it has made in the past," explained PUBPAT Executive Director Daniel B. Ravicher.

The biotechnology giant hired former solicitor general Seth P. Waxman, a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of WilmerHale, who completely rejected PUBPAT's simple request. Waxman instead confirmed that Monsanto may indeed make claims of patent infringement against organic farmers whose fields become contaminated by Monsanto's genetically modified seed. (Copies of both the letter written by PUBPAT to Monsanto and the response letter by Waxman can be found at www.pubpat.org/assets/files/seed/OSGATA-v-Monsanto-Complaint.pdf).

"Monsanto has run roughshod over organic and conventional farmers who have chosen to be sensitive to consumers' concerns, and marketplace demand, by shunning genetic engineering in their seed purchases and the crops they produce," said Mark A. Kastel, Codirector of The Cornucopia Institute, a co-plaintiff in the suit with more than 4,000 members, most of whom are organic farmers. "Because of Monsanto's massive investments in federal political campaigns, and in lobbying, it's important that an independent judiciary protects citizen-farmers from intimidation."

In addition to supplementing the complaint with Monsanto's most recent actions, PUBPAT announced that a new group of 23 organizations, seed companies, and farms or individual farmers have joined the original plaintiffs in the suit. This brings the total number of co-plaintiffs to 83, comprising 36 organizations, 14 seed companies, and 33 farms and farmers.

For more information, see www.cornucopia.org.

feedback they decided to start manufacturing gluten-free mixes that others could prepare and enjoy in their own homes. Their mixes are gluten, soy, dairy, nut, and corn free (with the exception of their pizza dough, which contains corn) and are produced in a dedicated facility. They also use many organic ingredients, which are still few and far between in many gluten-free products and one more reason I support this family-owned company!

Gorge Delights, 396 Evergreen Drive, North Bonneville, WA 98639, www.gorgedelights.com

JustFruit bars are made with 100 percent Northwest-grown fruit and provide two fruit servings per bar. They are made without added sugar and are naturally gluten, nut, and dairy free. The Willis and Goes families created Just Fruit Bars as a way to create a value-added product using the fruit from their family farms in the Hood River Valley. These are another easy snack item that I can't get enough of.

Alternative Grains, Inc., PO Box 263, Coupeville, WA, 98239, www.alternativegrains.com

Alternative Grains, Inc. is another gluten-free producer that started out of a personal need in 2005. It was still hard to find quality gluten-free products on the market at that point, and they started producing artisanal breads for retail. You can find varieties of their muffins in the freezer at the Cordata Co-op. I met them last year at the Bellingham Gluten Intolerance Group Info Fair, and it is hard to miss their enthusiasm for creating delicious gluten-free products.



Local Gluten-free Producers

Melissa Elkins, CCN Staff

Living in the great Northwest, those of us that follow a gluten-free lifestyle have it really good. Not only do we have a lot of local restaurants that offer gluten-free menus, including the Co-op's own cafe and bakery, but we are also lucky enough to have some great certified gluten-free producers of pre-packaged foods in Washington state.

Located in Whatcom County

Flax4Life, 1645 Jill's Court, Suite 107, Bellingham, WA 98226, www.flax4life.net.

Flax4Life was started when the Francis family had multiple family members diagnosed with celiac disease. They set out to create a delicious muffin that was not only gluten free, but also nutritious. A flax base was a natural choice because it is so high in omega 3s and naturally gluten-free. Karissa Francis is a gluten-free blogger (www.glutenfreefrugally.com) and it is through her that I found the delicious gluten-free naan recipe available on our blog (www.communityfoodcoop.wordpress.com).

Raw Cha Cha, 314 E Holly St, #206, Bellingham, WA 98225, www.rawchacha.com.

A relatively new company (started by Nama Living Foods founder and raw food chef Marlene Riviere), Raw Cha Cha offers chocolate indulgences produced just a few blocks from the downtown Co-op. They create "candy with consciousness," as their chocolates are made with raw, organic, and fairly traded ingredients. Marlene says "this chocolate is not just a treat but a meal in itself. They are meant to be substantial and satisfying in their ability to curb your appetite and fill nutritional needs, as well as your craving for something chocolaty and delicious." Raw foods contain more digestible enzymes, which mean that your body more easily converts them to energy. They have been busy sampling their products around town this spring and summer, and I encourage you to give their nutritious and delicious chocolates a try.

Jovan's Pure Nutrition, 2252 Odell Road, Blaine, WA 98230, www.jovanspurenutrition.com.

Jovan Johnson was diagnosed with advanced colon cancer on her 31st birthday. During her recovery, she started creating dried crackers with a friend's dehydrator and Jovan's Pure Nutrition was born. Her crackers are naturally gluten-free and contain only vegetables, seeds, and nuts. They are free from other common allergens like corn, dairy, and soy and are great with just about any dip or on their own.

Nature's Path, 2220 Nature's Path Way, Blaine, WA 98230, www.naturespath.com.

Nature's Path is headquartered in Richmond BC (about 45 miles from the Cordata Co-op), but they also have a production facility off of Sweet Road in Blaine where they produce many of the products that are sold nationally, including their boxed cereals. While Nature's Path may not be a small company, they have been family owned and operated since their inception in 1985. They are dedicated to bringing healthy, organic foods to the masses (they are the #1 selling organic cereal in the nation) and treat their staff like family. Nature's Path produces many gluten-free products, including cereal and their popular Enviro Kidz products.

Located in Skagit County

Glutenfreeda Foods, Inc., 200 E Washington Avenue, Burlington, WA 98233, www.glutenfreedafoods.com.

Glutenfreeda was originally established as an e-magazine (www.glutenfreeda.com) to serve as a resource for gluten-free recipes and related information. A few years after creating the e-zine, Yvonne Gifford and her daughter, Jessica Hale, decided to consolidate their efforts and created Glutenfreeda Foods, Inc in 2006 to provide gluten-free foods to those who didn't have time to cook. They continued to publish their monthly e-magazine. You can buy their pizza, wraps, and oatmeal at the Co-op.

Located elsewhere in Washington

Zing Bars, PO Box 15271, Seattle, WA 98115, www.zingbars.com.

Zing bars were created by a team of four registered dietitians so they could offer a healthy snack to their clients. Zing bars are high in protein, contain hormone- and antibiotic-free ingredients, and are soy- and gluten-free and delicious. I will admit that I special order these by the case because I think they are so tasty.

Sevierly Good Gluten Free, PO Box 7952, Tacoma, WA 98417, www.sevierlygoodgf.com.

Maria Sevier and her family created Sevierly Good Gluten Free after Maria was diagnosed with acute gluten intolerance. Over time they created recipes that they used weekly in their home and tested on friends and family. They received so much positive