

Killer bread maker shows how not to go a-rye

By Patrick Quinn
The Clackamas Print

The story of the man behind the greatest bread ever made is darker and seedier than any slice of rye could ever hope to be.

On Tuesday, May 8, local bread guru Dave Dahl (usually just called "Dave" by associates), founder and namesake of Dave's Killer Bread, spoke to a crowd of adoring bread fans in Gregory Forum. His was a true story about drug addiction, prison sentences, finding oneself, small business management and how to change the world, one loaf of bread at a time.

The mustached man playing guitar on the bread bag isn't shy about his checkered past. His locally adored product comes complete with a shockingly true description of himself as a "four-time loser" who was "in the wrong game" for many, many years. Dahl has lived in and out of prison for the better part of his life. His story is presented with stark reality on the back of a bread bag for all the world to see, albeit in brief.

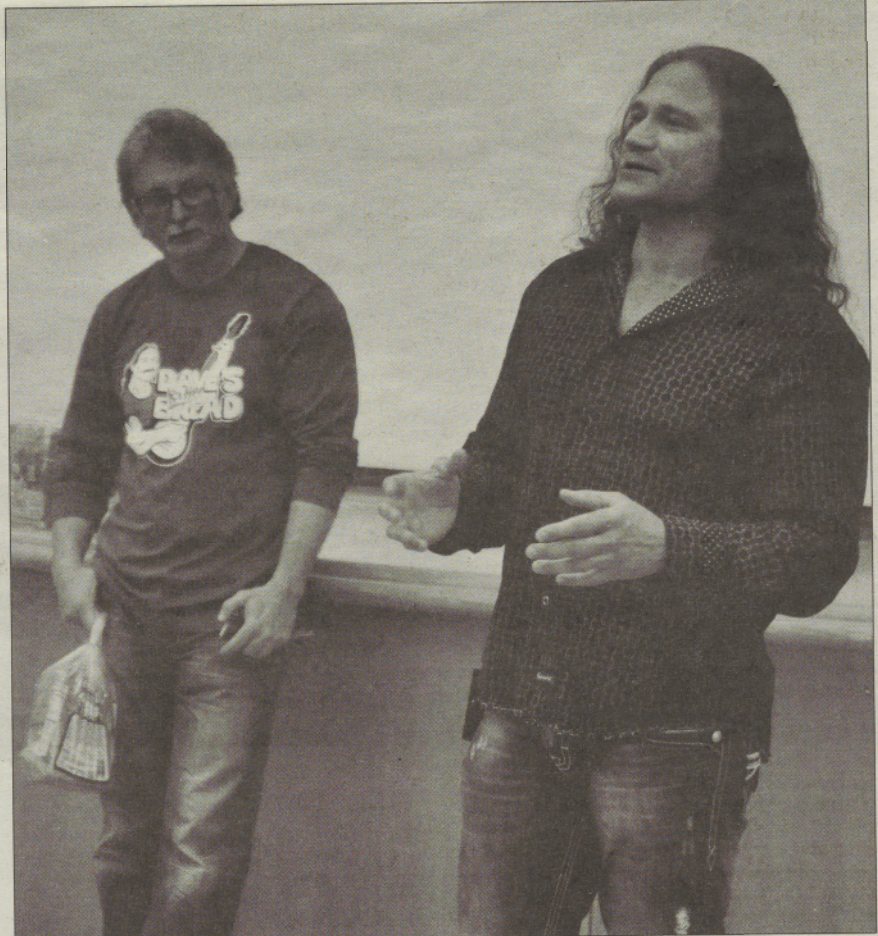
A video presented at the event in Gregory Forum, along with the missive on the company website (Dahl's Story, available in video, PDF and plain text formats), delves further into the life of Dahl before the days of Killer Bread and reads like the memoirs of a Hell's Angel, with a happier ending. It's the tale of a freewheeling career criminal without remorse or the ability to learn from his mistakes, who experiences humility and reform.

Dahl was born into a family of bakers in Portland. In spite of his self-admitted, colorful and dark past, baked goods would be a part of his destiny. It would require traveling a long, painful road of self-discovery before this man could finally return to his roots. His was an adolescence marked by depression, alienation, and experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

Interests in guitar and physical fitness were his sole "saving graces" during this time. These alone would prove to be inadequate tools in beating back the thoughts of suicide that plagued Dahl in his teenage years. Instead of things getting better after high school, as it does for some troubled teenagers, being alive would only become more difficult for him.

The middle chunk of Dahl's life was a litany of excessive drug use, violent encounters with law enforcement and incarceration. Ending up on parole, he was constantly in pursuit of the former and avoiding the latter. The story in his own words provides a grueling level of detail and insight into the life of a real-life drug fiend. It tells of a deeply troubled man who shoots speed in the basement of the family bakery, commits grand theft auto and practices armed robberies.

Dahl's participation in Portland's methamphetamine explosion of the 1990s, included claims of police brutality, concealed weapons and pounds of drugs. A long sentence in a federal prison, antidepressants and plenty of brutally-honest introspection were in order before Dahl



Dave's Killer Bread founder Dave Dahl, right, shares his trials and successes in Gregory Forum on May 8. To his left is Ladd Justesen, executive assistant of the Milwaukie company.

could return to his roots as a crafter of artisan bread.

Despite having memoir material worth publishing many times over, Dahl doesn't use his remarkable life story as some cheap ploy to sell bread. By all accounts this is a man reformed and reborn, a man who walks every bit of his talk, and it shows in his business practices and his public appearances. In person, he does in fact resemble his likeness on the bags of bread, save for the mustache (gone). His stature and musculature would make him a terrifying sight were he armed with a .380 semi-automatic and amphetamine psychosis, but he speaks

with an earnestness and serenity of mind one would expect from a Buddhist monk.

Dahl seems to be completely and totally confident in his personal transformation and the potential for others like him to transform as well. Roughly a third of those under his employ are ex-felons like himself, which means his management position, as he admitted during the question-and-answer period, comes with "some additional difficulties" (subdued laughter from audience). Still, he surrounds himself with the reformed and the reborn, and the company has received numerous awards for its practice of giving the

incarcerated another shot at a healthy life by making healthy food.

Dahl further expressed his generosity by hurling complimentary loaves of bread like whole-wheat footballs toward those members of the audience brave enough to ask a question. Despite the arduous and agonizing route he took to get where he is today, Dahl has no regrets about his past. In fact, he probably wouldn't be making any of his most killer of baked goods if he hadn't endured a life of prolonged hardship and suffering. It even says so on the back of the bag.

Wildman: Bigfoot may just be another mossy tree trunk



By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

Bigfoot has been discovered. There, I hooked you. Many people claim to have seen the elusive beast, but other than seeing lookalikes in films such as "Harry and the Hendersons," a true Sasquatch has never been located, even with fanatics and some scien-

tists looking for one full-time.

Let's go through a scenario: you're driving your car down the Molalla corridor not paying too much attention to the road ahead; I understand, you want to change the song on your iPod to "Union Hall" by Foreign Born. What can I say? I get it. So you're playing around with that stupid little scroll-wheel when you look up and see something on the side of the road in the woods. What could it have been? It was big, you know that for sure. Could it have been a bear or perhaps a mossy tree? No, it was something so incredible that no one will believe you: it was a Sasquatch, it had to have been. Or that's what you want to believe.

Having something to believe in is a part of human nature, but why Bigfoot? I mean sure, cryptozoology has its merits.

It's fun, and mythical beasts are cool. I've played Pokémon before, but that doesn't mean that Charizards are real.

Sasquatch, also called a Bigfoot, is a large hairy biped that supposedly lives in wooded areas, with most of the thousands of claimed sightings being in the Pacific Northwest (the creature is known as the yeti or abominable snowman in the Himalayas). Though most scientists consider Bigfoot to be more of a myth or hoax, many believe in the notion that the animal is real, and that it may be the direct link between humans and apes. There is even a television show on Animal Planet called "Finding Bigfoot." Even with Animal Planet and its team of crackpot scientists or whatever those howling folks consider themselves to be, there is still no proof of whether a

Sasquatch actually exists — I'm sure you can guess how the show goes.

Some of the ideas behind Sasquatch are interesting, such as the fact that North America is the only continent to have no apes whatsoever, which makes one ponder the idea. Many of Earth's animals have yet to be discovered, but you would think that an animal that size wouldn't have many predators, in which case you would think their numbers would abound. Maybe this Sasquatch is just a family of really hairy people. That would explain the low numbers. I know a guy who could take the mantle of yeti if he wanted to.

For me, I don't believe that I am descended from an ape, although there may be a direct link between me and Mr. Yeti, especially if he is a hairy man or some guy in an ape suit,

hell, maybe he's my uncle! Preferably, when I hear about people seeing Bigfoot or doing ridiculous Bigfoot howls, it makes me chuckle. At the same time it gives me hope that one day, Chewbacca will pop out of the woods, and then I'll discover that Star Wars is real, at which point in time, I will fly off in the Millennium Falcon. That would be cool, and is probably just as likely as actual proof of Bigfoot being discovered.

Whether or not you believe in Bigfoot, it doesn't really matter. If you do, howl at the moon and search for him until your heart's content, if you don't believe in the hairy guy, crack open a cold one and get a good laugh at "Finding Bigfoot," on Sundays at 10 p.m. on Animal Planet.