



KATIE BECKMAN

Thai Time

News and mini-reviews of the local food scene.

Mekala's

1769 Franklin Blvd. 342-4872

I hadn't been to Mekala's since they moved to their Franklin Boulevard location, but a balmy summer evening makes Thai food most appropriate. Hand painted umbrel-luminaries in every hue suspended above our heads drizzle an ambient glow, making even the most sunburned or pasty-faced person look their most alluring.

The hot night inspired snacking: the vegetarian spring rolls with a slightly spicy plum sauce, pad Thai with generous amounts of chicken and the deceptively spicy massaman with rice were highly palatable and not unreasonably priced. While these dishes are fairly traditional Thai, and were not fabulously presented, the taste and quality were definitely a cut above Eugene's standard. The liquid refreshment ranged from Rogue's Dead Guy Ale (my preference) to insanely imaginative mixed drinks. All will quench even the most Thai-tormented tongue. It seems as though Mekala's, with their spacious seating and attentive servers, has made a home away from 5th Street Public Market and will continue to be a Eugene institution.

Restaurant: 11 am-10 pm M-Sa, noon-9 pm Su. Lounge: 5-11 pm M-Th, 4 pm-midnight F & Sa, 4-9 pm Su. \$\$ — Erin Lusk

Banana Blowout

There's bad news going 'round these days for the humble banana. You may have heard the dire predictions: extinction of the popular commercial variety of the fruit. Robert Alison, a Canadian biologist, has written the latest chapter, via the news site www.commondreams.org. It's not an optimistic picture he paints: the banana is a fruit without seeds or pollen, identically cloned by grafting and basically without any resistance to most diseases. Which has been fine for the past fifty years when it was introduced after the last variety succumbed to disease. However, now a stubborn fungus has decimated 50 to 70 percent of banana yields, and reduced the trees producing life span from 30 years to about two years.

Of course, even if this variety of banana is doomed, another variety may be found. But finding this variety will take more time with bananas than with a fertile crop like tomatoes or corn: It takes about three years to get fruit out of a new mutation of bananas. Genetic manipulation could be the answer with the development of fungus-resistant genes. Or we may have to resort to artificial flavoring for those nut muffins and cream pies, and supplements for the potassium.



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We can survive in a world without bananas, survive and even thrive, but it really isn't just about bananas. Each time we buy a conveniently seedless watermelon, or a cheap fresh ear of GMO corn, we are narrowing the options for genetic diversity. — Marina Taylor

Leftovers:

The Pavilion, the latest commercial development on Coburg Road, is well under construction, and should be ready for move-in by mid September. The businesses should be up and running by the end of the year. It will house, at this point, a Baja Fresh Mexican food restaurant, another Ben & Jerry's scoop spot, owned by Gary Bertelsen (who runs the one by campus), Early Rise Coffee and Tea Co., a phone shop and a bank. The breakdown sounds a lot like Oakway Center, interestingly enough, and maybe it will work as well.

Apology to Beverly, owner and producer of the delicious Upper Crust pies at the Saturday Market, who was misnamed in the 7/17 morsels column. — Marina Taylor **EW**

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