



WHIT BLOCK PARTY

On the first Saturday of each August, Eugeneans gather to celebrate the spirit of the Whiteaker, Eugene's funkier neighborhood. The Whiteaker Neighborhood itself is a whirl of activity; as one of Eugene's few mixed-use areas, it melds microbreweries, restaurants, artist communities, young folks, old folks and family life. Block Party exemplifies the beauty — be it messy or harmonious — of all that verve.

With blocks of free music, craft vendors, food, spoken word and comedy stages, street performers and a volunteer cleanup the next morning, Block Party squeezes the essence of the Whiteaker scene into its streets like an anarchist into tight leather pants, and somehow there's still more Whiteaker. And the neighborhood doesn't turn into a pumpkin when the event ends — stick around for some fabulous after parties.

Bring your fun-loving self on down to the Whiteaker from 1 to 10 pm Saturday for one hell of a free show. — Shannon Finnell

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STEP INTO THE FOOD COURT

Block Party creates food cart city in the 3rd & Van Buren parking lot BY SHANNON FINNELL

Block Party might be a blast for Eugeneans, but it's even more exciting for the Whiteaker's small local businesses. "This is our best sales day of the year!" a checker at Red Barn Natural Grocery said at midnight last year, the store still abuzz after its usual closing time.

Veteran Block Party food vendors agree. "It's our single biggest one-day event all year," says David Clark, owner of Cousin Jack's Pasty Company. "We sell a little over 1,000 pies in one day." This year Cousin Jack's will serve its regular pasties — pesto lamb, steak and ale, potato leek and wild mushroom, among others — from a new setup; Cousin Jack's will join 14 other food carts in the large parking lot at 3rd and Van Buren. Clark says the diversity of characters and "random wildness" are his favorite aspects of Block Party. "It's just a lot happening in a very small area," he says. "There are so many artistic people all gathered in one neighborhood."

The Raw Love cart will use Block Party to return from a maternity-induced hiatus, and owner Ferale Hubbard says the all-vegan, never cooked menu has some new items, and she has some new tricks up her sleeve. Raw Love serves smoothies, desserts and dishes like raw falafel, but its signature items are its raw pizza and tiramisu. Hubbard calls Block Party Raw Love's favorite event. "Honestly, I think



RAW LOVE'S
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it's because the people there really love us," she admits. "The last few years we sold out of almost everything and people were coming up and begging us to stay open until one in the morning." A spontaneous drum circle even formed in front of the cart, with drummers singing songs about the food.

It will be the Sandwich League's first time vending and attending Block Party. "There's a good intent with the party, to support the Whiteaker and build it up and be a part

of it," says owner Dawn Sellars. Sandwich League features roasted pork and roasted beef sandwiches using local meats and making everything from scratch. Sellars says she's especially proud of their cheese sauce. "It's really nice and creamy and flavorful and we incorporate Ninkasi's beers into it," she says. Right now they're using Radiant Ale.

To ward off thirst during Block Party, sip on local beer — Ninkasi, Oakshire and Hop Valley are either inside celebration's borders or within walking distance — or find Kore Kombucha, Kombucha Mama or J-Tea in the food court.

Coconut Bliss and Red Wagon Creamery will serve up cold confections in the food court, too. Stuart Phillips of Red Wagon says he and master ice cream chef Emily Phillips love Block Party because it shows the vibrancy of the Whit, and it packs in more partying per square foot than any event in Eugene. This year Red Wagon is bringing standbys Smoked Salt Caramel and Frozen Goat, plus Pucker Up Blueberry (lemon sour cream with blueberry jam swirl) and Peachy Keen (roasted local peaches and buttermilk ice cream).

The other fine food carts at Block Party will be The Onion Dome, Garbanzo Grill, Family Dogs Foods, Viva Vegetarian Grill, Sammitch, Sporks A La Cart and Red Five Hotdog Company. Be sure to gobble up your favorites first, as vendors have in the past been eaten dry before the event's 10 pm closing.

Jason Vanderhaar, who helps coordinate Block Party, says organizers are emphasizing food carts that served locally sourced ingredients — because Block Party is all about the community. He says the quality of the 15 food carts that are participating is what he's excited about. "We don't have all of the best of Eugene, but we have a lot of them," he says. ■