

Film focuses on growing food and empowering communities

'Graining Ground' documentary to be screened Oct. 9

ASTORIA — Industrial agriculture. Genetically engineered food. Local communities that feel powerless to affect change. "Gaining Ground," a new feature-length documentary film by Elaine Velazquez and Barbara Bernstein, takes on these issues and challenges with its intimate view of rural and urban farmers.

The film will be screened at 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 9 at the Columbian Theater, located at 1114 Marine Drive. The screening will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the filmmakers and people featured in the film.

"Gaining Ground" tells personal stories of farmers making extraordinary changes in their farming practices to feed their local communities sustainably grown produce and grains. The documentary interweaves the experiences of Urban Tilth's farmer-activists in inner city Richmond, California's inner city food desert creating a community garden; small family Sun Gold Farm in rural Oregon converting from commodity dairy to chemical-free produce; and large Stalford Seed Farms in the Willamette Valley transitioning from growing grass seed to organic grains.

As the film explores these paradigm shifts, it personalizes class, gender, race and environmental justice issues by rooting them within narratives of compelling individuals.

As these stories unfold, the film explores the devastating effects of the 2012 Chevron Richmond refinery fire on Urban Tilth in inner city Richmond and the im-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A fourth generation farmer, Vicki Hertel and her husband struggled to make ends meet on their small commodity dairy farm, Sun Gold Farm. When stricter water quality regulations forced them to sell their cows, they discovered their niche growing and marketing produce to the Portland area.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Willow Coberly and her husband, Harry Stalford, own Stalford Seed Farms, the largest grass seed farm in the Willamette Valley. As they started converting from grass seed to organic grains, they face the challenge of rebuilding local food storage and processing infrastructure that was dismantled decades ago while they also work to stave off the threat of GMO crops.

pact of the 2013 discovery of GMO wheat in Eastern Oregon on Stalford Seed Farms in the Willamette Valley.

While the movie is sober about the obstacles to creating change, at the same time it points the way toward hope. "Gaining Ground" instills in viewers the potential to create change on a personal, local and global scale.

Filmmakers Velazquez and Bernstein have been creating film and radio documentaries for over 35 years. Their award-winning

has been broadcast on public television and radio, screened at international film festivals and distributed through broad grassroots networks.

"Gaining Ground" has been selected to be featured in the 2016 Chicago International Social Change Film Festival. View the trailer at gaininggroundmovie.org

The film's local screening is sponsored by North Coast Food Web, Astoria Co-op Grocery, CREATE, Coast Community Radio and CCA Regional Food Bank.

Enjoy soup and swing on Sunday

KALA to host music and dinner for 21 and older

ASTORIA — KALA will welcome the quartet Swingcats of Astoria on Sunday, Oct. 9 for Soup & Swing.

The evening offers an "all-you-can-eat" soup buffet — which includes bread, salad and two choices of soup — and the infectious sounds of retro swingers.

Swingcats of Astoria is a revival of the original Swingcats from a few years ago. The group plays swing and jazz from the 1930s and 1940s, such as the tunes "Minnie the Moocher," "Jump Jive" and "Choo Choo Chaboogie." The group also presents classical jazz tunes and a bit of the blues from different eras: gypsy jazz of Django Reinhardt, jazz and bebop of the '50s, and jazz of the 1960s and '70s as well as original compositions.

Richard Thomasian performs on lead vocals and guitar. Thomasian began playing guitar at age 13. He has been



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Swingcats of Astoria is, from left, Ted Brainard, Richard Thomasian, Dave Ambrose and Larry Aldred.

performing on the West Coast for 42 years.

Ted Brainard lends his guitar playing to the group. Brainard has enjoyed a career as a performer and teacher.

Though Dave Ambrose started playing violin 20 years, he fell in love with a stand-up bass in 2000, and performs on bass in the Swingcats. He's an original member of Swingcats and also plays in world music quartet Acustica.

Lawrence Aldred rounds out the group with percussion. Aldred's playing started with

rhythm and blues in Manchester, England. Coming to America in 1962, Aldred played around Northern California for about 30 years before retiring and moving to Astoria 10 years ago.

At this concert, also look for musical guests.

Doors open at 6 p.m. for soup and full bar, with music following, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. There is a \$10 cover. The event is open to ages 21 and older only. KALA is located at 1017 Marine Drive. For more information, call 503-338-4878.

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