

Celebrate 10 years of Blue Scorcher

Worker-owned cooperative puts on community contra dance at Netel Grange

ASTORIA — The workers at Blue Scorcher Bakery & Cafe are throwing a party to celebrate 10 years of business.

The public is invited to come dance with them at Netel Grange on Saturday, Nov. 19. The hall opens at 4 p.m. with fresh-baked treats and non-alcoholic drinks for sale, and the dancing starts at 5 p.m.

No experience is necessary — veteran caller Dave Ambrose will give instructions before the first dance to get everyone in step. Be sure to come at 5 p.m. if you're new to contra or folk dancing.

Live and lively string band dance music will be provided by John Fenton, Dan Sutherland, Larry Moore and Randy Weiss.

Cost is \$5 to \$10 per person on a sliding scale. Children under 12 are free with adult admission. All ages are welcome, and there will be a play corner for small children.



PHOTO BY JOSHUA BESSE
Blue Scorcher Bakery & Cafe, celebrating 10 years of operation in downtown Astoria, bakes homemade bread and pastries, like this cream cheese Danish and mini cardamom almond roll.

About Blue Scorcher

Blue Scorcher Bakery & Cafe is a worker-owned cooperative located at 1493 Duane St. in the Fort George building in downtown Astoria.

"We signed our lease with then-owner Robert Stricklin in June 2005, providing the leverage for him to get funding with John Berdes at Shorebank," recalls co-owner Joe Garrison. "Back then the building was unoccupied, and many of the windows were broken out. We had to duck under police 'Do Not Cross' tape to walk the building with Robert."

Blue Scorcher employs 30 to 35 workers, 15 (and still rising) of whom are owners, half of which are women, and many of whom



FILE PHOTO

Blue Scorcher Bakery & Cafe is located at 1493 Duane St. in the Fort George Building in downtown Astoria.

got their training locally. For example, Deer Island native Brandon Sears came to Astoria to attend the Tongue Point Jobs Corps Center's culinary program, interned with Blue Scorcher, and is now an owner, elected by his Scorchers peers as lead of the

kitchen department.

"As with the Community Store (now Astoria Coop Grocery) before us, it's remarkable for a rural community the size of Astoria, with the surrounding communities, to support businesses like ours — one of the many

indicators of the uncommonly fierce community spirit here," Garrison says.

"We're carriers of a torch that was lit in Astoria by Michael and Emily Henderson at Home Spirit Bakery Cafe: handmade organic baked goods, back when it was commonly considered impossible to successfully use such ingredients commercially."

Blue Scorcher uses organic, often stoneground flours to bake pastries such as scones, chocolate croissants, cardamom almond rolls and oatcakes as well as several kinds of bread, including traditional French breads, naturally leavened hearth loaves, yeast-risen pan breads and enriched specialty loaves. The cafe serves a seasonal menu of breakfast and lunch plates featuring produce and eggs from local farmers. Blue Scorcher's mission is three-fold: create seasonal

and sustainable foods, be a worker-owned cooperative, and foster strong community.

About the venue

Historic Netel Grange has been a central part of the Lower Columbia farming and country dance scene for decades. Located about 7 miles south of downtown Astoria alongside river, forest and working farms, the hall has been well-maintained and in regular use since it was built. During the birthday cake-cutting ceremony, dancers will get a chance to honor some of the people who kept the local farm, country dance, and grange traditions alive: musicians, callers and farmers.

Netel Grange is located at 90525 Logan Road. Ride sharing will be available. Call Blue Scorcher Bakery Cafe for details at 503-338-7473 or visit www.bluescorcher.coop

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