

Chef: Applied for bussing job initially but was hired as a baker

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peninsula in search of opportunities to grow her career. Four years ago she took on the role of chef at Nanci and Jimella's Cafe in Klipsan Beach. The restaurant, which featured many of the same dishes served at The Ark years before, closed for good on Saturday. Witherbee-Allsup said she is undecided as of yet what her next move will be.

"I'd probably do this forever, whether I made any money or not, but you have to be practical," she said recently.

The closing date of the restaurant was only a week after her wedding to local firefighter paramedic David Allsup.

"It's just the way things have come together," she said. "So right now is a pretty intense time in my life. There's a lot going on."

Q: When did cooking become something you were interested in?

A: I think from the beginning. My family owned cafés in Seattle when I was growing up, so it's always been a part of my life. My mom's parents were sort of gourmets. They did a lot of higher level cooking at home, and they both really had a lot of passion for cooking. And from the time I was a young child, I remember family events were going out to really

nice restaurants with the whole family.

Q: Why do you think cooking became your thing?

A: I think it was just a happy accident. I had a friend whose older sister worked at The Ark, and I lived right down the street. And she said they were hiring and they'll hire you if you wanna work and try hard. And I thought 'why not?'

Q: What kind of a job was it?

A: Bussing was the job that I interviewed for, but I was so fascinated by what they were doing and I expressed interest in working in the bakery. And Nanci said let's give it a shot. It took a few years of baking, and knowing that I had a talent and ability and enjoyed doing it before I realized I wanted to branch out into cooking.

Q: What is a recipe you 'invented' that you are proud of?

A: Oh my goodness, that's a hard one. When I started the job at Nanci and Jimella's it was really my goal to develop salmon recipes. Jimella was really passionate about salmon above all other local seafood. So I have a group of recipes. What I'd really like to do over the next couple years is compile those together and write a book. I don't think I could tell you there was one that goes above all others. But I'd say salmon



Katie Witherbee-Allsup was the chef at Nanci and Jimella's Cafe and is passionate about cooking and food.

has definitely been my focus over the last several years.

Q: Do you have a favorite or go-to ingredient that you like to work with?

A: Salmon is definitely up there. I like to do a lot of ethnic-inspired food. It's fun for me to come up with recipes that use our local ingredients and use my knowledge in ethnic-based cooking to help people relate to it.

Q: Does that come from cooking pan-Asian in Portland for a few years?

A: That was the beginning

of it, for sure.

Q: Are there any unusual or humorous stories that have come out of the kitchen?

A: There's a lot of them. There's so many, I don't know. Most of them are pretty inappropriate. It's an adventure every day. There's a real balance of the sacred and the profane every day. Even last night, with the news of the restaurant closing, business is gonna come in a lot stronger. And we got hit so hard all in like a one-hour period. You go through

so many tides of emotion just

in that small period of time. Because it goes from feeling super confident and great, to holy sh*t we're sinking fast. And it just goes that fast. Our relationships and our humor reflects that, I think. We have endless miles of material.

Q: You have a few food-related tattoos. When did your love of food and cooking expand to body art? And do you feel the artistic connective tissue between the two made them come together?

A: The subject matter is obviously really important to me. I've been being tattooed for so many years. That's the name of the game when you're an artist. And when you have tattoos, you wear your heart on your sleeve, literally.

Q: Are they all food-related?

A: No, just the two on my arms (a butter knife on her left arm with the script "For the love of bread and butter," and a small oyster on her right forearm). Before my career cooking, I was an artist. I draw, pencil and ink. But my main medium is charcoal. I love to do huge pieces. When I was a kid I had a few opportunities to do giant pieces — usually on someone's living room wall.

Q: Do you draw your own tattoos?

A: I have and I've drawn them for other people.

Q: Have you figured out what you'd like to do next?

A: I've put a lot of thought into it. I have just millions of ideas. I don't have anything set in stone right now. I'd like to be able to take some time to do some collaborating. What I'd really love to do is start my own business making products for wholesale for other businesses. I've been working a lot on charcuterie (the preparation of meat products like sausage) the last couple of years. Jimella and I had a lot of ideas, and one of them was doing packaged food, using local ingredients, to create products that are shelf-stable for retail sale.

Q: If you were only allowed to cook one recipe the rest of your life, what would it be?

A: I've had the question, "what if you could only eat one food the rest of your life," and that can be as simple or complicated as you want it to be. I kinda cheat and say sandwich, because how many types and preparations are there? You could live happily on that. I cook at home for my family. One of things I make on a very regular basis that makes everyone happy is a simple whole roasted chicken. And there are so many various ways you can do that. To me, that is just a perfect meal and everyone is always happy with it.

Labor: Another factor in shortage is red-hot economy in Pacific Northwest

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said from the co-op's offices in Chelan, Washington.

"Three weeks before cherry season last year, we had 241 new applications beyond our regular staff. This year we have 40," he said. "We're probably 400 short right now and we will start packing on the 10th or 12th of June."

Tough choices

Some 840 miles to the south, Scott Brown, production manager of Morada Produce in Linden, California, says the largest cherry crop in years has labor stretched so thin that companies are making tough choices, based on quality and volume, of which orchards to pick and which to pass over.

In Idaho, grower Duane Grant, of Rupert, used to get two applications for every seasonal job opening on his large, diversified farm. Now he gets so few applications he's joined a growing number of farmers who turn to foreign guest-workers.

In Oregon, the demand for farmworkers is outpacing the workforce, Kevin Cham-

bers, owner of Koosah Farm in Amity, told a recent immigration summit.

"What we have is a relatively fixed pool of laborers, and a growing need," he said. "We're planting more acres of grapes, hazelnuts — there is greater demand for labor."

Fewer border crossings

Across the Pacific Northwest and California, finding enough labor for tree fruit, berries, hops — any labor-intensive crop — is heavy on the minds of growers, packers, shippers and marketers. It's magnified, several said, because fewer people are apparently illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexican border to do farm work and by media hype of the Trump administration's deportation of illegal immigrants, which heightens fear among some workers.

Rose Richeson, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman in Seattle, said the biggest difference in the ICE arrest policy under the Trump administration is that no category of individuals in violation of immigration laws is excluded from possi-

ble enforcement action. In the past, some were not a priority, she said.

Immigrants who enter the country illegally and who are convicted criminals or a security risk are the priority targets for arrest, and the number of them arrested has risen substantially, she said. Other undocumented immigrants, while not a target, may also be arrested, though in the past that was less likely, Richeson said.

She said the rumors surrounding ICE's activities are inaccurate.

"Reports of ICE checkpoints and sweeps are false, dangerous and irresponsible," she said. "Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support."

Another big factor in the labor shortage is the red-hot economy in places such as Idaho, where the unemployment rate is 3.3 percent.

Oregon also has a tight labor market, with a 3.7 percent preliminary unemployment rate for April, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. California has a 4.8 percent unemployment rate and Washington state's is 4.6 percent.

Recruiting continues

Brenda Thomas is president of Orchard View Farms in The Dalles. With about 2,400 acres, Orchard View is the largest cherry grower in Oregon. The company is doing OK so far, recruiting online with many workers planning to return after making good money there last year, she said.

"We don't want anything happening between now and harvest with any fake news," Thomas said, adding that it creates fear.

There's a different feel, a fear of the unknown by employee and employer, she said, from perceptions about

deportation when "they won't look at your immigration (status) unless they pull you over for another crime."

There is a shortage, she said, because there are no extra people anymore looking for work.

Orchard View Farms does well without H-2A, she said, because it provides housing for workers, pays well on piece rates averaging \$20 per hour, has a good work environment and a long season.

"We want to be the preferred

choice for work," Thomas said.

The company peaks at about 1,100 workers for picking and packing, she said.

"Over 80 percent of our workers come from communities in California where their kids go to school. They come up and work and count on our cherry harvest to fill their gap in California harvests," she said.

Reporters Tim Hearden, John O'Connell and Eric Mortenson contributed to this story.

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On-call services application form is on County's website at co.clatsop.or.us, or the Public Works office at 1100 Olney Ave, Astoria, OR 97103, (503) 325-8631.
Quotes are due by 4:00 p.m. on June 13, 2017 at the address above. The County may reject for good cause any or all quotes upon a finding of the County that it is in the public interest to do so.
Published: May 29th, 30th, 31st, Just 1st, and 2nd, 2017

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AB6329
Notice of Budget Committee Meeting
A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Union Health District, Clatsop County, state of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, will be held at Providence Seaside Hospital 725 S Wahanna Rd, Seaside OR. The meeting will take place on June 7th at 12:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee
A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after May 24, 2017 at 610 18th St, Astoria OR, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
Published: May 30th and June 2nd, 2017

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