

# Medford Food op

945 S Riverside Ave Medford, OR 97501  
www.medfordfood.coop (541)779-2667  
info@medfordfood.coop Daily 8am to 8pm



# fresh press

Summer 2016 Issue  
Quarterly Newsletter

*MFC Vendor Profile:*

## Rogue Creamery

by Halle Riddlebarger - Marketing Manager

Located just up the road in Central Point, Rogue Creamery is known for their creamy blues, creative cheddars, and original TouVelle cheeses. If you are a cheese lover, you might already be familiar with their delicious selection of cheeses (and if you are not, we highly recommend you seek them out on your next visit to the co-op). Find out below how Rogue Creamery got started, where they're headed, and how they contribute to our local food system and local economy.



**MFC:** *How long has Rogue Creamery been contributing to the local food system in the Rogue Valley? And how did the company get started?*

**RC:** Rogue Creamery started in 1933, or 83 years ago. It was during the Depression of the 1930's that this small creamery opened in Southern Oregon. Thomas Vella, a Sicilian immigrant, was already operating the successful Vella Cheese Creamery in Sonoma, California. He traveled to Southern Oregon and purchased a defunct cheese plant in Central Point. The Rogue River Valley was a vastly different region when Tom Vella arrived from Sonoma. Small, diversified farms dotted the landscape as well as sprawling pear orchards. Seasonal employment in the logging industry and at lumber mills employed many, but there were few jobs available to tide a family over through an unusually long winter. The new business promised to create year-round jobs and was a welcome addition to the area. Vella immediately started growing the business and employing as many people as possible. He was mindful that the faster he expanded, the more he could help small farms in the Rogue River Valley to survive during these dire times. The farmers were with him from the start, supplying ample milk to the cheese factory.

**MFC:** *Rogue Creamery is known for award-winning, artisan cheeses all over the world. How is the company adapting to new trends in the food industry?*

**RC:** Four years ago, we purchased a 75 acre dairy in nearby Grants Pass, and just this year our dairy was certified organic. So now we are able to make cheese for the first time in our 80 plus year history from our own USDA Certified Organic milk. We have learned that our customers are interested in a great deal of variety and are craving unusual, bold, and often spicy flavors. In the last decade, we have expanded our assortment of organic blue cheeses from 4 offerings to 10 in order to satisfy every palate. In addition, during the same period of time, we have increased our handmade organic cheddar cheese line to include beer cheddars (partnering with Rogue Ales and recently Sierra Nevada), herb cheddars (Rosemary and Lavender), spicy cheddars (Jalapeño and Chipotle) and more.

**MFC:** *What is the most difficult part of the cheese making process?*

**RC:** All of our cheese is made by hand using the same artisan methods that have been used here since 1933. Our cheesemakers must complete a unique 7 step certification process to become an official "Cheesemaker"; this rigorous process can take up to 5 years or more to complete. Not many ever rise to this level of certification.



Lead Cheesemaker Jason Garcia has worked for Rogue Creamery for 11 years and completed the 7 step certification.

# Celebrate Rogue Valley Grown: Rogue Valley Food System Network at the Jackson County Fair

The Rogue Valley Food System Network (RVFSN) is a group of individuals, organizations, and businesses who have joined together to strengthen our local food system through a collaborative community of leadership to develop and advocate for a healthy and sustainable food system in Josephine and Jackson Counties.

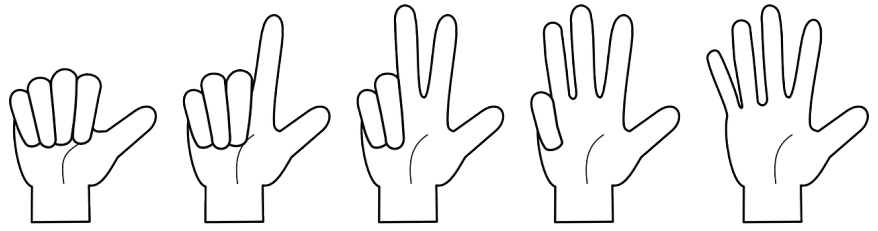


The RVFSN is led by a 15-member Council that meets monthly. Meetings are open to the public. Participants in the RVFSN include: ACCESS, OSU Extension Small Farms Program, Rogue Valley Farm to School, THRIVE, Rogue Farm Corps, 1000 Friends of Oregon, AllCare, Rogue Natural Foods, Medford Food Co-op, and more.

For the second year in a row, the RVFSN has been invited to host an installation at the Jackson County Fair. If you're not sure what the food system is or how your food finds its way to your fork, join us from July 20th - 24th at the Expo and learn a little about the journey your food takes to get to your table.

The RVFSN installation, to be located in the Mace Building, will highlight our region's food system to include connecting healthy food choices to personal health, preserving our rich farmland for food production, as well as sharing ways for everyone to engage in local agriculture and to get involved to make a difference in our community food system.

# Join Us for Our Five-Year Anniversary Celebration in October



Your co-op turns five this year and you're invited to the party! Join us on October 8th from 2-5 pm here at the co-op. We'll be celebrating behind the store with music from the eclectic alternative folk rock band Forbidden Gecko Love, samples from some of our favorite vendors, and a variety of family-friendly activities.

Help us plan for the event and RSVP for a chance to win! RSVP beginning Saturday, September 24th by letting your cashier know you would like to attend the anniversary celebration. Your cashier will give you a raffle ticket to be entered in a random drawing at the event on October 8th. One lucky winner will win a Patagonia Aysen Pack embroidered with the Co+op, Stronger Together logo and filled with a selection of co-op groceries and goodies. Only raffle tickets with completed contact information will be eligible. One raffle ticket per person. Multiple entries will be disqualified.



*From the Board:*

## 2016 Annual Meeting Summary



Our co-op's annual membership meeting was held at Pheasant Fields Farm on May 22nd. Despite cool and stormy weather, a hearty group of owners was present for the picnic and annual meeting. Three incumbent directors were elected to additional terms. General Manager, Anne Carter, presented highlights from the previous year at the co-op. A more detailed Annual Report was sent to all our owners via email a few weeks ago. If you missed the email, visit the link below to see the report:

<http://medfordfood.coop/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/2015-Annual-Report.pdf>

## Board Officer Elections

The Board elected officers at the June meeting. Jim Sims was elected President, Kellie Hill Vice President, Debi Boen Secretary, and Kristi Schoenbachler Treasurer. Stop by the co-op on Thursday, August 4th between 4:00 and 6:00 pm to meet the directors, share ideas, or to simply say thanks for their service!

# Staff Spotlight: Get to know the staff!

## Darren Chan



### How long have you been cooperating (at Medford Food Co-op or another co-op)?

I actually assisted with the painting and in preparing the Medford Food Co-op for the initial opening in 2011. In April of 2012, I left for California after being recalled as a Teamster Forklift Operator on layoff status since 2008, only to be laid off again just four months later. Thankfully, the Medford Food Co-op was gracious enough to hire me and I have been here ever since.

### What do you do at the Co-op?

My official position is the Meat Department Lead, or Meathead. My job involves ordering, preparing, stocking, and merchandising the fresh and packaged meat products. A few of my other

duties include but are not limited to: Grocery Department ordering, stocking, and merchandising; Bulk Cheese & Packaged Cheese ordering, processing, and merchandising; Cooler, Dairy, & Packaged Deli ordering and merchandising; closing & maintenance support including sweeping and mopping of the sales floor, back room, and restrooms; opening PIC (Person In Charge); Front End support including back-up cashier; and occasional closing PIC. I worked in the Produce Department during my first year with the co-op.

### What brought you to the Co-op?

A singular powered gasoline fueled PZEV vehicle, although the thought to either trade it for an AT-PZEV, PHEV, TZEV, or ZEV vehicle, ride my bicycle, take public transit, or just simply walk the 4.5 miles to work has been weighing in on me.

### What do you like best about your job?

The people, especially working with my daughter Sarah. She's currently a part-time cashier here at the co-op until she leaves for college.

### Tell us your Co-op favorites:

Guayaki Grapefruit Ginger Sparkling Yerba Mate. I don't know if I could function at work without it. And it only has 45 calories per container!

### How has working at the Co-op affected your life?

Having worked at a conventional grocery store for 28 years, the co-op has made me aware of the benefits of local, organically grown food and the ethical treatment of workers in the world of food production. I am also just now gaining understanding into the significance of the carbon emissions produced by my four children, my wife, and myself determined by the choice of our lifestyle and its effect on the earth's climate.

### Tell us something we don't know! (Tell us something about yourself others might not know):

Without the ability of ask the reader questions, it is difficult for me to determine what you don't know. Concerning myself, if I told you what you don't know about me then others may find out what I've been keeping from them.

### What do you like to do outside of work?

I love to spend time with my four children, ages 7 through 18, and of course with my wife, age... Anyhow, among my greatest activities is creating meals that my children thoroughly enjoy, resulting in expressions of immense gratitude and the receiving of bear-like hugs from them. Yes, all four of them.

### Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I was born and raised in California, in the East Bay Area City of Brentwood, a farming community known for growing beautiful corn. In fact, I have seen organically grown corn from my hometown of Brentwood delivered right here to the co-op from our fresh produce distributors! I relocated from Brentwood, CA to Grants Pass in 2010, and then to Medford in 2013 where I currently reside.

# #NewAtTheCoop



We would love to see all of your amazing, beautiful, and delicious food creations so be sure to tag us #MedfordFoodCoop in all of your relevant social posts! And don't forget to follow us on Instagram @MedfordFoodCoop to find out what's new and fresh at the co-op.

We have ICE! Available in 10 lb bags. Whether you're throwing a party, heading out to the river, or just keeping your groceries alive in the summer heat, keep it cool for just \$1.99.



Not always sure how to incorporate the Fresh Deals sale items into your meal plan?

## fresh deals

Let us help! Your weekly Fresh Scoop email now includes links to recipes for each item on special. Whenever possible, the Fresh Deals items will feature recipes from local food blogger and MFC owner, Lara McCormick. Check out Lara's blog and meal planning services at [www.larakitchenstories.com](http://www.larakitchenstories.com).

*Rogue Creamery Vendor Profile continued from page 1:*

**MFC:** What are your most popular products?

**RC:** Our blue cheeses are our most popular products, particularly our Oregon Blue (the first cave aged blue produced on the West Coast), the Smokey Blue (the world's first smoked blue cheese recognized as such at the SIAL Paris Competition) and the Rogue River Blue (winner of World's Best Blue at the World Cheese Awards in London) to name a few. Over the last several years our handmade cheddars have developed a following for some of our unique tastes such as Chocolate Stout Cheddar and Lavender Cheddar.



**MFC:** What is the Pedal Power program?

**RC:** We have a very successful transportation program at Rogue Creamery called the Nellie Green Pedal Power Program. 25 of our team members have completed the steps to become proud owners of Kona bicycles. The program is very simple. All a team member has to do to qualify is to complete 45 round trips (or 90 one way trips) from their home (wherever it is) to work, and our owners will gift the team member a 15 speed all terrain commuter bike. We have been able to inspire other businesses to adopt bike commute programs as well: such as the local Rogue Credit Union, Vermont Creamery, and Cowgirl Creamery in Petaluma, California, to name a few. There are other ways for our team members to participate in the program as well, such as carpooling and by driving a vehicle that gets at least 50 miles to the gallon.

**MFC:** Tell us something most people don't know about Rogue Creamery.

**RC:** Our cheese was served at Buckingham Palace in London! When our Rogue River Blue Cheese won the prestigious Best Blue Cheese award at the World Cheese Awards, this created a strong demand for our cheese in the European Union countries.

## Important Dates

### **Rogue Valley Food System Network at the Jackson County Fair**

Wednesday, July 20th - Sunday, July 24th

Visit our exhibit Celebrate Rogue Valley Grown: Planting the Seeds of Your Health in the Mace Building at the Expo. Exhibit visitors will receive a \$5 voucher for the Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market.

### **Board of Directors Social**

Thursday, August 4th 4:00-6:00pm

Stop by the co-op to meet the directors, share ideas, or to simply say thank you for their service!

### **Bear Creek Stewardship Day**

Saturday, September 24th

Registration for the event and additional details will be available at [www.bearcreekstewards.org](http://www.bearcreekstewards.org).

### **Eat Local Week & Salsa Festival**

Friday, September 9 - Sunday, September 18th

Visit [www.buylocalrogue.org](http://www.buylocalrogue.org) for more details about the 12th Annual Eat Local Celebration.

### **Five-Year Anniversary Celebration**

Saturday, October 8 2:00-5:00pm

Free admission. Help us celebrate our five-year anniversary with music, family friendly activities, and food samples!

### **Board of Directors Meetings**

Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 225 West Main Street in Medford. Please check our online calendar for any location and/or time changes. If you are an owner planning to attend a meeting and would like a specific topic to be addressed, please email the General Manager: [gm@medfordfood.coop](mailto:gm@medfordfood.coop).