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Issue: Oct 2016

## ***Message from the President: Wylie Bystedt***

This has been an interesting year in the world of BCAFM. I want to acknowledge the loss of another amazing individual a short time ago. Cat Majors was a former BCAFM board member and president of the Armstrong Farmers' Market. We are fortunate that she was able to touch so many of us with her boundless optimism and joie de vivre. Read on below as we remember Cat, and the many contributions she made to our community.

In July of this year, Elizabeth left the BCAFM to pursue a passion of hers with the Yasodhara Ashram located in the Kootenays. I am so thankful that many of you were able to join us or send messages as we surprised her with a party in mid-July. She was truly taken aback – it was not the coffee date with me that she was expecting! As the first Executive Director of the BCAFM, Elizabeth's impact will be felt for a long time.

We have been fortunate to hire Heather O'Hara as the new Executive Director. I know that everyone will have a great time getting to know her over the coming months. I would like to thank the Board of Directors, in particular Bruce Fatkin, for working so hard with me on finding such an excellent candidate. Heather brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in business and food security and we are very excited to have her on board as we move forward.

I have also been busy (really, just doing what Georgia tells me!) with media promotions. I have done media interviews with Edible Vancouver, Orchard & Vine, Country Life, Wave Radio in Nanaimo and Foodline Radio in Vancouver, in addition to providing quotes for multiple government releases. Last but not least, I've had informal meetings with six MLA's to discuss the role of BC farmers' markets in communities across the province.

In my last newsletter article I started to explore the idea that farmers' markets, with over 135 in the province, are one of the most prevalent agricultural service providers in BC. So for a moment, I want to circle back, and reflect on our collective impact on food service at the provincial level.

### **Farmers' Markets & Food Access: A Look at the Numbers**

Markets are the opportunity for farmers and ranchers to directly sell their products to our consumers; but we aren't the only ones who do that in the province. So how do we stand up in terms of numbers? Where do our 135 member farmers' markets rank us in terms of food delivery to British Columbians? A couple of quick Google searches provide me with the following numbers: the only major grocery retailer in the province that matches the number of BC farmers' markets is the Overwaitea Food Group. Between all five of their grocery chains,

they have 140 stores in the province. Here's how other retailers compare in terms of the number of outlets in BC: Safeway has 64 stores; Walmart 44 stores; Extra Foods 7 stores. When added up, these companies have 255 grocery store outlets in BC. With farmers' markets included, there are a total of 390 major retail grocery outlets in BC (not including smaller grocery stores).

A couple more Google searches, and I find that between the towns (14), villages (42), cities (50), district, island, mountain, regional, and resort municipalities (55) and communities (889) we have 1071 populated locations in BC, that are being served by 390 major retail grocery outlets. These numbers lead me to the conclusion that there are communities within the province that do not have any retail grocery outlets. I know here in the Cariboo, we have communities without stand-alone grocery service. These communities are often served by stores that provide multiple services to the community – such as gas, some form of basic groceries, alcohol, parcel pick up/delivery, etc. In the North, Houston and Fraser Lake are without grocery service as their SuperValu stores closed this year. Thankfully, Houston is a member of the BCAFM and has a great market with a good number of farmers for its size (about four of nine vendors are farmers.)

So where does this lead us? Is it important for us to look at communities with little or no access to fresh food? Does it matter? Is there a role that the BCAFM can play in working with our vendors and markets to provide additional opportunities in new communities? How do we support our vendors and markets as new opportunities arise? As you can see, I have few answers yet, but many questions – which I am hoping will lead to great conversations amongst our communities, and BCAFM members. If these ideas or observations have sparked any questions or comments for you, I would love to hear from you. I can be reached by email at [president@bcfarmersmarket.org](mailto:president@bcfarmersmarket.org).

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## ***Introducing Heather O'Hara, the BCAFM's New Executive Director***

In early August, the BCAFM welcomed a new executive director, Heather O'Hara. Heather brings over 10 years of experience in non-profit and social enterprise leadership to her position as executive director. As an entrepreneur and food lover at heart, Heather believes deeply in farmers' markets and small-scale farmers as a critical force in our regional food system. She has worked with a variety of business, non-profit and charitable organizations, and loves to bring strategic thinking and entrepreneurial resourcefulness to make creative ideas come to life. For eight years, Heather served as executive director of Potluck Café Society, an



award-winning social enterprise that built a successful business, while creating jobs and providing healthy, fresh food for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Heather holds an MBA, a BA in International Relations and Native Studies and a Bachelor of Environmental Design, all from the University of Manitoba. To deepen her knowledge of farming, she is currently enrolled as a part time student in the Kwantlen Polytechnic University Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School program. Heather currently resides on a farm in Ladner where she lives with her horse, Lucas.

Over the last months Heather has been getting up to speed on BCAFM initiatives, and she will continue to reach out to members in the coming months as the market season slows down. In the meantime, feel free to get in touch with questions, or to just to say hello. Heather can be reached at:

Email: [heather.ohara@bcfarmersmarket.org](mailto:heather.ohara@bcfarmersmarket.org)  
Cell phone: 778.968.1969  
Office phone: 604.734.9797

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## **Save the Date: Barney Bentall and The Cariboo Express Kelowna**

### **Join us! Fundraiser In Support of Kelowna Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program**

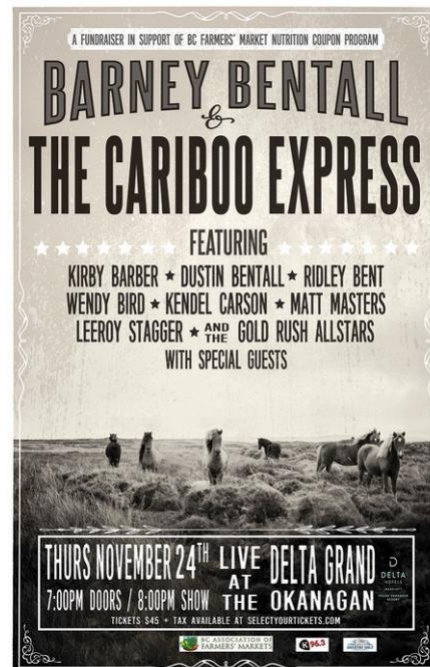
November 24, 2016  
7:00pm doors / 8:00pm show  
Delta Grand Hotel, Kelowna

Tickets: \$45 + service charges  
Live link to purchase  
tickets: [http://www.selectyourtickets.com/event.php?event\\_id=1601](http://www.selectyourtickets.com/event.php?event_id=1601)

Barney Bentall and The Cariboo Express are teaming up with the BCAFM for their debut show in Kelowna! This is a fundraiser event in support of the BCAFM's Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon program and its community partners in Kelowna.

The Cariboo Express is a highly anticipated show like no other; it's a heartwarming, hilarious variety show of astonishing talents in roots, country, and rock 'n roll, with a sense of community at the center of it all.

Line up includes, Barney Bentall, Ridley Bent, Dustin Bentall, Wendy Bird, Kendel Carson, Matt Masters, and the Gold Rush Allstars.



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## Remembering Cat Majors

Late last month we received some very sad news about a treasured member of our farmers' market community in BC. Here at the BCAFm we had the pleasure of working with Cat Majors, and getting to know her as the president of the Armstrong Farmers Market, and as a valued member of the BCAFm board of directors. Cat finished serving a six-year term on the BCAFm board in March 2016, and we were sad to lose her creative and lively presence.



During her tenure, Cat was a member of the BCAFm executive and served as secretary for several years, in addition to participating on various committees, including, Human Resources, Succession Planning, Nominations and Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program.

Outside of her committee work, Cat was an active participant in our annual conference. (And as far as my memory serves), she attended at least the last seven BCAFm Conferences. If you had the pleasure of meeting Cat, you may well know that she was an unabashed champion of farmers' markets. She carried an undeniable warmth and enthusiasm through all her work with farmers' markets, and the term "marketing" simply does not do her advocacy work justice. She played an important role in such unforgettable events as the Armstrong Farmers Market's "Very Berry Cherry Fiesta" and the famous [farmers' market wedding](#) of long-time farm-vendor Joan Jong and Calvin Krause. Cat shared her marketing savvy with us at the 2016 BCAFm Conference in Kelowna this past March, at her workshop "Blow Your Own Horn." If you knew Cat, you may not be surprised to learn that she ended her session by asking all of the attendees to put on party hats and pose for a group photo.

Cat's significant contributions to the Armstrong Farmers Market, were also recognized in 2014, when Armstrong was awarded Farmers' Market of the Year in the medium size category. We also want to pay homage to the outstanding human being that Cat was. In a world that often feels too busy, Cat had a special knack for making space to celebrate beauty, creativity, silliness, and the gifts that each individual brings to their daily work. As a member of the BCAFm board, Cat carved out a special role for herself as the official 'BCAFm appreciator' (for lack of a better term.) Cat often greeted staff and board members at meetings and conferences with lovely thank you cards, flowers, and little jars of delicious honey, to make sure we knew that our efforts and unique contributions were appreciated. Memories like these, of Cat's warmth and thoughtfulness will be cherished, and we are grateful for the time we were able to spend with her. We know that Cat's lust for life will live

on in the buzzing of the bees, and the vibrancy, and community connections that are built each day at the farmers' markets she was such an integral part of.



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## ***Welcome to Farmers' Market School!***

### **Market Management Certificate Program is back for a 2<sup>nd</sup> season**

Starting October 18, the BCFM is launching the online [Market Management Certificate Program](#) to provide your market with practical strategies, and resources to support best practices in:

- farmers' market management,
- financial sustainability,
- marketing outreach and
- leadership development.

#### **Intended Audience:**

Market managers, coordinators, board members, and key volunteers.

This online learning opportunity will allow you to gain insight and tools in farmers' market management from the comfort of your home, while connecting you with dozens of farmers' market peers throughout BC and beyond.

The program offers a series 10 webinars and 5 group discussions, lead by one of Canada's leading farmers' market experts, [Michelle Wolf](#). Attend the entire webinar series to complete the Market Management Certificate Program, or register for webinars individually to suite your specific learning needs.

**Learn More:**

Explore all the webinar topics, pricing and how to register on our [website](#).

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## ***Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program Funding Extended to 2018***

We are thrilled to share that the BC Ministry of Health announced \$1 million in new funding for our Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program on Saturday, August 6th. This funding will allow us to continue the program through 2018.

Here is a [link to the BC Government's announcement](#) made by Minister of Agriculture, Norm Letnick on behalf of the Minister of Health. We are grateful to the Kelowna Farmers and Crafters Market and The Bridge and Youth Family Services for being a part of the announcement.



To view a video of the announcement, click [here](#).

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## ***Save the Dates: BCAFM Conference + AGM***

### **BC Farmers' Markets Conference 2017: Farmers' Markets For All!**

March 3-5, 2017  
Inn At The Quay, New Westminster  
Early bird tickets coming soon!

Mark your calendars! Situated right along the Fraser River (and a couple minutes walk from the skytrain station) the [2017 Conference](#) venue will provide a perfect setting for great discussions and reflections on



how we can continue to build and nurture an inclusive, diverse, and thriving farmers' market sector.

More details coming soon!

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## ***Thank You and Good Luck Elizabeth***

Earlier this summer we said farewell to former BCAFM executive director, Elizabeth Quinn. Elizabeth worked with the BCAFM since 2008, and helped to both grow the province's farmers' market sector and establish the BCAFM as a key player in BC agriculture. Her legacy includes ensuring the Farmers' Market Nutrition



Coupon Program was rejuvenated after the first iteration ended in 2009, and launching the Strengthening Farmers' Market Program.

Thank you Elizabeth for your leadership, support, and dedication to growing the farmers' market sector in BC! We'll miss you and wish you the best in your future endeavors.

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## ***Gratitude for Farmers***

BC Association of Farmers' Markets

**Make your heart skip a beet.**  
**Love your local farmers.**

**Farmers Appreciation Week**  
September 12-18

[bcfarmersmarket.org](http://bcfarmersmarket.org)

## A Snapshot of Farmers Appreciation Week Across Our Province

The seventh annual [Farmers Appreciation Week](#) took place September 12-18 with over twenty special events celebrating BC farmers at markets across the province!

Over 18 media outlets featured stories on local markets, farmers and the [Ode to a Farmer](#) Poetry Contest. The Contest received 96 farm inspired poetry submissions from all regions of BC, and this year's judging panel announced the lucky winner, Gerald Eggert, who is thrilled to receive \$150 gift certificate to his local Abbotsford Farm and Country Market.

[View](#) the BC Government proclamation that officially declared September 12-18, 2016 as "Farmers Appreciation Week." This is exciting news as it truly shows the provincial government's public recognition of the special occasion. To see the official proclamation, click [here](#).

To read the Ministry of Agriculture's statement on BC Farmers Appreciation Week, click [here](#).

We always love to see how you engage your shoppers and vendors during Farmers Appreciation Week, so thank you for sending your photos along. We've compiled them into a [Facebook photo album](#) and encourage you to take a peek (there are some very creative cakes!) Send along any additional photos you have and we'll add them to the album. Email photos to: [info@bcfarmersmarket.org](mailto:info@bcfarmersmarket.org)



Qualicum Beach Farmers Market's photo booth. Photo by: Time + Tide Photography.