

Happy Spring! We all feel the change in the weather, in spite of the persistence of some cold, rainy days. Plants are blooming and sprouting in forest, field and garden, and fruit trees are exuberantly in blossom.

But for many Lopezians, the lean months are not over. According to Celia Marquis, Director of the Lopez Island Family Resource Center, half the kids at school are on the Free & Reduced lunch program. Last year, LIFRC organized 49 Thanksgiving baskets to feed 283 people, signed up 79 families and individuals for the Basic Food program, and gave 146 LVM food cards to families in need.

**Hunger** exists on our island, but fortunately, the community is there to help our neighbors. Grace Church operates the 24/7, volunteer-run **Lopez Island Community Food Bank**, with a cart for donations of non-perishables at LVM. **Lopez Fresh**, located next to the Children's Center, is equipped with a refrigerator to handle dairy and eggs and produce bins for apples, onions, potatoes, and other fresh produce and is stocked daily with donations from LVM, Blossom, and other volunteers. With a donation shed at the school as well as space at Lopez Fresh, **Grow-A-Row** is a program run by Denise Clark that encourages gardeners to grow an extra row of vegetables for homes and families without a garden. LIFRC and the Food Bank accept **cash donations** to fill the shelves when the need outstrips the food supplies. And four times a year the Locavores invite the community to eat wholesome, local, seasonal dinner together. The cost is by donation and everyone is welcome.

Planning for our Spring meal always gets us scratching our heads. Despite the limited availability of fresh, local produce this time of year, we work creatively with our farmers and home growers to use whatever they have and supplement from our freezers and root cellars with food we preserved at harvest time. Our chef extraordinaire, Jean Perry scavenged enough local beef, potatoes, onion, squash, garlic and parsnips for the Beef & Vegetable Stew. The last of winter's beets and greens along with the Burkemeier's hazelnuts grace tonight's salad. Barn Owl Bakery at Midnight's Farm provided all of the delicious bread for this meal made with Lopez wheat from the 2013 LCLT Grain CSA. And sweet, wrinkled apples left over from Fall's harvest paired with Barbara Thomas' stash of frozen Lopez berries for our Apple Berry Crisp.

Tonight's meal is brought to you by the foresight of farmers and gardeners who made the effort to preserve whatever they grew. Freezing, canning, pickling, and storing crops carefully in root cellars extends the harvest into all four seasons. It allows us to eat the bounty of our gardens in the dead of winter. It was how our ancestors survived until their fields began to produce again. In the upcoming year, Locavores hope to sponsor a series of classes focusing on food preservation....stay tuned!

And **mark your calendars now** for our final Summer meal on **May 29th!**

**Thanks as always to all of our generous and committed volunteers and purveyors!**

Bruce Dunlop, Lopez Island Farm	beef
Horse Drawn Farm	potatoes, onion, purple sprouting broccoli, squash & cabbages
Lopez Harvest	greens, potatoes, parsnips, onions, garlic, herbs, & golden beets
Burkemeiers	hazelnuts
Barn Owl Bakery	Lopez wheat bread made with grain from the LCLT Grain CSA
Marney Reynolds	apples
Oddland (Ronnie & Levi)	apples
Barbara Thomas	frozen blackberries, strawberries, & raspberries
Blossom	extra & forgotten ingredients
Vortex	bulk, wholesale, & extra ingredients
Randy Waugh	Chicaoji

## **LOPEZ BEEF & VEGETABLE STEW (Serves 4)**

1 ½ lbs local, high quality stew meat, cut into roughly equal-sized pieces

Olive oil for sauté

2 Tbs balsamic vinegar or ¼ cup red wine (optional)

Fresh or dried herbs to taste, finely chopped (we used parsley, sage, rosemary, & thyme)

1 large onion, diced

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

3 large potatoes, diced

2 carrots, diced

Parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, squash, or sweet potatoes can also be added, diced

3-4 cups good quality vegetable or beef stock or water

Salt & pepper to taste

1. Brown stew meat in a large pot or Dutch oven using a little olive oil and a bit of salt. Stir in balsamic vinegar or red wine and herbs and set aside.
2. Combine carrots, potatoes, and other vegetables with salt & a little oil and roast until almost tender or skip this step and combine with onions & garlic.
3. Sauté onions in olive oil until softened and add garlic and other vegetables. Cook until almost tender.
4. Add vegetables to meat and herbs, barely cover with stock or water and simmer over low heat until everything is tender and flavors have mingled, 1-3 hours. Add liquid as needed. Season to taste. If you have one, a crockpot set to Low is an easy way to prepare this dish and ensure that it will not boil dry.