

A Trip to the Broadway Village Friday Farmer's Market

by Gail Cordy

Have you been to the Friday Farmers' Market at Broadway Village? If not, I'm hoping that this article will get you there to purchase some of the wonderful products available. This is your chance to **shop local** and **support small food and product producers**.

I spent a morning at the market talking to vendors (there are lots) and learning about and in some cases, tasting, their wares. What an amazing variety!!! Everything from bakery goods, seafood, goat cheese, and range-fed beef to jewelry, quilts, and hair bows for babies. But it was in chatting with the vendors that I learned about their fascinating backgrounds and products. Here are a few of the stories. (I hope to spotlight individual vendors with more in-depth stories in future newsletters.)

Organic Produce

Walter Tinnin of Desert Wind Farm is one of three organic fruit and vegetable purveyors at the market. From his quarter-acre farm in the St. David area, he sells peppers, chilies, tomatoes, eggplant, okra, a variety of squash and melons, and apples and pears from a friend's farm. All were freshly picked and reasonably priced. Walter, a long-time gardener, said farming is "a lotta work" but he likes selling at farmers' markets and like the Broadway Village location.

Alfonso Garcia of "Garcia's Nopales" has been raising nopales and sugar cane in southwest Tucson most of his life. Now 81, with the help of his daughter, he touts the healthy qualities of nopales (cactus pads). Sure, we all have them in our yards, but how many of us think about using them for salsas or other dishes? Alfonso's daughter said nopales are the "best kept secret for antioxidants and minerals." The Garcia's will provide you with nopales ready for cooking and recipes and nutrient information. Plus they are really nice folks! I can't wait to try their sugar cane later in the year.

Meats and Seafood

Jim McManus of Double Check Ranch, Amado, is a wealth of information and can educate you about the differences between his grass-fed natural beef and corn-fed, mass produced beef. Did you know that grass-fed, free range cows produce beef that is leaner, tastier, has 1/2 the saturated fat of corn-fed beef, and provides Omega 3 and 6 comparable to salmon? And no hormones or antibiotics are used. Jim says "You are what you eat...the quality of our food is most important." Jim also has eggs and free-range chickens for sale at the market.

BBVN neighbor, John Lopez (Manchester St.), was selling beautiful big shrimp that he'd caught the day before in Mexico. As a long-time Tucsonan, he "loves Broadway Village and the market." It was his first time selling at the market.

John wasn't the only seafood vendor, **Max McCarty**, has been in the seafood business for 35 years and now runs **Buckaroo Brand Wild Alaskan Salmon**. He goes to Alaska and joins in the "catches" and offers fish from small fishing operations. His salmon are "blast frozen" so that ice crystals don't have time to form and poke into the flesh. He says "that makes a difference in the taste." He also offers frozen scallops, clams, cod, halibut, red snapper, and smoked fish. Plus he has some wonderful photos of his fishing expeditions!

Cheese

Oh boy...don't miss out on the goat cheese from John Foote of Foote's Hold Dairy. Try the yummy samples of goat cheese with organic fruits that he serves.

Speciality Items

Looking for a special treat for your doggie? **Lisa Derfus of Dogberry Hill** left her corporate job to follow her dream of making a business selling organic dog biscuits. She sells a variety of flavors and uses only the highest quality ingredients. Her cheese biscuits are a canine favorite, and she will introduce her "turkey gobblers" near Thanksgiving. She tests her recipes on her own dogs and offers free samples to customers' pets. She said " Farmers' markets are dog friendly, and we encourage you to bring your dog to the market."

I love tea and I found "tea heaven" at **Ausperitea, owned by Joe and Mika Hess**. They carry more than 80 different teas from lands as far away as Japan, Africa , South America, and India. Joe lived in China and Taiwan and was drawn to tea and the ceremony surrounding it. As a stranger in a strange land, sharing tea became a way of developing friendships. Once a school teacher, Joe said a school project actually made him realize that there was a business opportunity in tea. He and Mika test all of the teas. They carry only the very best teas. Joe said "We do everything by hand from bagging the teas to making the labels. I wouldn't want to change that."

Solar flashlights with a 20-year life are the business of **Henry Granillo, Jr. of sunbrightlights**. From key chain lights to flashlights, booklights, and phone chargers, all of his lights are bright LEDs that are recharged by the sun. The lights can't be overcharged, and the batteries that are charged by the sun have a 7-year life expectancy! The mini-flashlight is a best seller and a great stocking stuffer at \$20. There is even a flood light for outdoor uses. I'm thinking Christmas presents...

If we each spent \$20 at the market when possible (I'm going to try to do so weekly), the vendors will continue to come to the market. The summer business has been slow but most of the vendors I spoke with are in it for the long-term recognizing that the hot summer and economic turmoil is affecting shopper turnout.