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1994, Spring-Summer

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19

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If you're looking for some delicious and healthy food in Seattle, try the Black Cat Cafe on Roosevelt Way. This relatively new vegetarian cafe collective has become a popular hangout on the strength of its relaxed and homey atmosphere, reasonable prices and commitment to the local community.

Popular menu items include: Biscuits & Gravy, Chilaquiles, Home Fries with Veggies, Tofu Scramble, Black Bean (or Garbonzo Bean) Burritos, Salads and Soups. With a total of six collective members along with ten to twelve volunteers sharing the work, the kitchen is always bustling with activity. But it wasn't long ago that the building was abandoned and boarded up, before opening on the final day of August last year.

Black Cat collective member David Carlson remembers that, "This place had been Morningtown since 1968, and on and off it had been a collective... We signed a five year lease to open it... (and) we started construction and renovation, which was all just by volunteers." The cafe was financed by "Everybody putting in \$1,000 in equity at the start, and we got a couple great no-interest loans from people...And Left Bank, of course, gave us a loan for an espresso machine and donated the cash register for us."

He adds that “This is really a Left Bank baby. It couldn’t have happened without them. And we go to them for advice all the time, just by virtue of their being the only collective left in Seattle...They’re very open and approachable...”

Another collective member, Pitter Nordal, comments that he wanted to start a collectively-run bar, but knew three of the people in the Black Cat collective when he returned from a trip to Mexico. So he started volunteering, just like he had volunteered for years at Left Bank. “It sort of feels like I haven’t gone out and got a job, and I’m sort of cheating. Because even though there are things to worry about...and you work really hard and you get really tired, it’s not the same as working doing something really stupid where you don’t have any say over how you do it. It just...doesn’t feel like a job.” And, he says that at Black Cat “We can do things like the coffeehouses. It’s really great to be able to do things that have something to do with the community, and making more than just a place to work.”

Black Cat Cafe: Vegetarian Collective Kitchen, 4110 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105

(206) 547-3887 Hours: Tues.-Sat. 10 AM to 10 PM Sun. 10 AM to 7 PM