



A VEGETARIAN DIET
What is it, and Why?

If you are not a vegetarian or a member of RAVS, this column is for you. Here are some of the basics.

What is a vegetarian? A *vegetarian*, traditionally, is someone who eats no flesh foods: no meat, poultry or fish. A *vegan* is a vegetarian who goes further and eats no animal products: no eggs or dairy products.

Why do people choose to eat this way? Every vegetarian has a story to tell, but basically the reasons to avoid animal foods are these: for your health, for the animals, and for the planet. Every day there are new findings that a plant-based diet is best for health. The standard American diet (SAD), which revolves around meat and animal products, results in poor health for people, suffering for animals, waste of resources, and devastation for the environment. But changing your diet can be hard and people who want to change often need help.

If you want to move in the right direction, the Vegetarian Society (RAVS) can help you. We are here to provide information and support. Be sure to ask for our pamphlet, *Going Vegetarian in the Rochester, NY Area*. You do not need to be a vegetarian to give us a call, to attend our meetings, or even to join our group. Nor do you need to be a member to attend our meetings; guests are always welcome. You only need to follow our "vegan rule" for the dinner meetings (see box on p. 2 for full explanation), and there is a \$3 guest fee for non-members. If you want to participate, give us a call at (585) 234-8750, or come to a meeting. You will find us helpful and welcoming. ❖

BELLYING UP TO ENVIRONMENTALISM
by James E. McWilliams 11/16/09

I gave a talk in South Texas recently on the environmental virtues of a vegetarian diet. As you might imagine, the reception was chilly. In fact, the only applause came during the Q&A period when a member of the audience said that my lecture made him want to go out and eat even more meat. "Plus," he added, "what I eat is my business—it's personal."

I've been writing about food and agriculture for more than a decade. Until that evening, however, I'd never actively thought about this most basic culinary question: Is eating personal? We know more than we've ever known about the innards of the global food system. We understand that food can both nourish and kill. We know that its production can both destroy and enhance our environment. We know that farming touches every aspect of our lives—the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil we need. So it's hard to avoid concluding that eating cannot be personal. What I eat influences you. What you eat influences me. Our diets are deeply, intimately and necessarily political.

This realization changes everything for those who avoid meat. As a vegetarian I've always felt the perverse need to apologize for my dietary choice. It inconveniences people. It smacks of self-righteousness. It makes us pariahs at dinner parties. But the more I learn about the negative impact of meat production, the more I feel that it's the consumers of meat who should be making apologies. Here's why: The livestock industry as a result of its reliance on corn and soy-based feed accounts for over half the synthetic fertilizer used in the United States, contributing more than any other sector to marine dead zones. It consumes 70 percent of the water in the American West—water so heavily subsidized that if irrigation supports were removed, ground beef would cost \$35 a pound. Livestock accounts for at least 21 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions globally—more than all forms of transportation combined. Domestic animals—most of them healthy—consume about 70 percent of all the antibiotics produced. Undigested antibiotics leach

from manure into freshwater systems and impair the sex organs of fish. It takes a gallon of gasoline to produce a pound of conventional beef. If all the grain fed to animals went to people, you could feed China and India. That's just a start.

Meat that's raised according to "alternative" standards (about 1 percent of meat in the United States) might be a better choice but not nearly as much so as its privileged consumers would have us believe. "Free-range chickens" theoretically have access to the outdoors. But many "free-range" chickens never see the light of day because they cannot make it through the crowded shed to the aperture leading to a patch of cement. "Grass-fed" beef produces four times the methane—a greenhouse gas 21 times as powerful as carbon dioxide—of grain-fed cows, and many grass-fed cows are raised on heavily fertilized and irrigated grass. Pastured pigs are still typically mutilated, fed commercial feed and prevented from rooting—their most basic instinct besides sex.

Issues of animal welfare are equally implicated in all forms of meat production. Domestic animals suffer immensely, feel pain and may even be cognizant of the fate that awaits them. In an egg factory, male chicks (economically worthless) are summarily run through a grinder [alive]. Pigs are castrated without anesthesia, crated, tail-docked and nose-ringed. Milk cows are repeatedly impregnated through artificial insemination, confined to milking stalls and milked to yield 15 times the amount of milk they would produce under normal conditions. When calves are removed from their mothers at birth, the mothers mourn their loss with heart-rending moans.

Then comes the slaughterhouse, an operation that's left with millions of pounds of carcasses—deadstock—that are incinerated or dumped in landfills. (Rendering plants have taken a nose dive since mad cow disease.)

Now, if someone told you that a particular corporation was trashing the air, water and soil; causing more global warming than the transportation industry; consuming massive amounts of fossil fuel; unleashing the

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ROCHESTER AREA VEGETARIAN SOCIETY

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Cooking Instruction:	Wendy Gilmore

The **Rochester Area Vegetarian Society** is a non-profit, tax-exempt, non-sectarian, all-volunteer educational organization dedicated to promoting the joy, compassion and life enhancing possibilities of a vegetarian lifestyle. We are an educational resource for those interested in any aspect of vegetarianism. We provide support to our members through social events that include monthly gatherings with a shared meal and programs on topics important to our members. Membership in RAVS is open to all vegetarians, as well as to those who, while not vegetarian, wish to support the goals of the group.

DUES: Individual Membership, \$20 per year; Joint Membership, \$35 per year; Student/Fixed Income Membership, \$10. Membership includes receipt of the *Vegetarian Advocate* and free attendance at our monthly dinner meetings. A membership application can be found at the back of this issue.

Contacting RAVS:

- P.O. Box 20185, Rochester, NY 14602
- E-mail: drveggie@aol.com
- Website: www.rochesterveg.org
- 24 hour voicemail and events calendar:

(585) 234-8750

**RAVS RULES FOR SHARE-A-DISH MEALS**

All dishes must be completely **vegan**. They may *not* contain any *meat, poultry, fish eggs, dairy products or honey*. This rule guarantees that everyone can eat everything (allergies and preferences aside).

Please watch out for *gelatin* (a meat by-product) and *hidden milk products*, such as *whhey* in cookies, crackers, bread and margarine and *casein* or *caseinate* in "non-dairy" soy cheese, coffee creamer and whipped topping. Also be alert for *eggs* in baked goods, mayonnaise and salad dressings, and *honey* in breads, pastries and preserves.

Please prepare a 4x6 card with your name, the name of the dish and a list of all ingredients. Write the recipe on the back of the card and indicate where the recipe came from or if it was original. Prepare enough to serve a crowd. Please bring your own table setting as well as a serving utensil. If you don't feel like cooking, you may bring fruit, cider, tortilla chips and salsa, green salad, fruit salad, etc. Non-members must pay a \$3 guest fee, which is applied to your membership if you join that day.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO RAVS

You don't need to be a vegetarian, or a member of RAVS, to attend one of our events. All we ask is that you bring vegan food to our dinner meetings. You don't need to inform us beforehand that you will be attending. The box above, and the calendar and directions on the back page of the newsletter, tell you what you need to know in order to attend. Call 234-8750 if you have further questions.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Membership in RAVS entitles you to receive the *Vegetarian Advocate* (published four times a year) and any other mailings, usually notices of upcoming events. It also entitles you to free admission to monthly events (except restaurant meals); others pay a \$3 guest fee. Members can borrow audio and video tapes for a \$10 deposit; members and non-members as well can purchase books and other materials at a discount at meetings.

An important benefit of membership is **half-priced** membership in two national vegetarian organizations. Below we give information, including membership costs **before** the discount is taken. Simply state in a letter that you are a member of RAVS, which is an affiliate.

North American Vegetarian Society

P.O. Box 72
Dolgeville, NY 13329
Tel: (518) 568-7970
Fax: (518) 568-7979

E-mail: navs@telenet.net

Website: www.navs-online.org

Individual membership (annual): \$22

Family membership: \$28

Publication: *Vegetarian Voice*

Vegetarian Resource Group

P.O. Box 1463
Baltimore, MD 21203
Tel: (410) 366-VEGE
Fax: (410) 366-8804
E-mail: vrg@vrg.org
Website: www.vrg.org
Membership (annual): \$20
Publication: *Vegetarian Journal*
(quarterly)

These are both excellent groups, and both have mail-order bookshops which are included in the publication they will send you when you join.

Another not-so-tangible benefit of your membership is to others, namely, the people we reach through our community education efforts, which are funded by your dues. Pamphlets we distribute at an outreach table at a health or environmental fair cost money. That's why your membership and renewal are important even if we never see you at a meeting — though of course, we hope we do. ❖

BOOK ORDERS FROM RAVS

A number of vegetarian books and cookbooks are available from RAVS at 10% off list price. Books can be purchased at every RAVS meeting. We also have T-shirts and tote bags for sale, and members can borrow videos for a \$10 deposit.

Anyone interested in buying or ordering books between meetings may call **Leena Isac**, RAVS librarian, at 249-0171.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!!

Like any volunteer group, we can always use your help. If you can assist with the newsletter, outreach, publicity, dinners, programs, guest speakers or anything else imaginable, please call **234-8750**. ❖

VEGETARIAN SOCIETY UPDATE

by Carol H. Barnett

As of this writing, winter holds sway but the sun has turned around and the days are getting longer. RAVS moves on apace, with high energy and high attendance at meetings.

Our November meeting featured **Rae Sikora** of Plant Peace Daily, speaking on "Falling in Love with the Planet." We had almost 70 people at this meeting, all of them spellbound by Rae's engaging presentation and her infectious compassion. We did not get enough of Rae, and we will be having her speak again in May! Our December meeting, a winter solstice celebration with music and singing, had the biggest turnout ever for this event, again more than sixty people. In January, **Michael Rudnick** spoke on the reasons to adopt a whole-plant vegan diet, to a large and very receptive audience.

We look forward to excellent programs in the spring, including a panel discussion of organic farmers in February, more vegan lore from Mike Rudnick in March, and a restaurant fundraiser in April. See the calendar on the back page for full details.

RAVS continues its outreach to the Rochester community. In November, **Wendy Gilmore** gave a Thanksgiving-themed cooking class to about 15 people at Pittsford Community Library. In December, RAVS had its usual table at the MetroJustice Alternative Fair. Thank you to **Shelley Adams, Carol Barnett, Bud Burdick, David Daunce, Wendy Gilmore, Kim Gorall, Nancy Hollowell, Ken McBride, Usha Shah, and Bob Zimmermann** for staffing the event. Thanks also to **Bud Burdick** for designing and producing the vegan T-shirts we sold at the event; and to **David Cherlin, Ellie Cherin, Katherine DaCosta, Carol Manuel, and Maggie Odhner** for the homemade vegan baked goods and snacks that they donated for sale. The following week, **Carol Barnett** staffed a similar fair held by the Unitarian Church for its members.

Let's keep celebrating the vegetarian diet, spreading the word about its virtues, and providing a good example of healthy and compassionate living.

RAVS MEETING ETIQUETTE At our meetings, we like to have plenty of food. To that end, please bring a dish that is enough to serve a crowd (about 8 regular servings). Also, please take a modest amount of food and no more than you can finish, as you go through the line. Thank you! **ALSO**, to satisfy those people who enjoy or only eat oil-free dishes, there will be a special section of "Ornish-style" dishes with no added oil.

WHY RAVS EVENTS ARE VEGAN

Although our name is "vegetarian," the rule is "vegan" at our events, and people sometimes ask why. We do not ask that people "be" vegan, or even vegetarian, to join our group or to attend meetings. We only ask that they bring a vegan dish to share, and eat vegan at the meeting. We do this because a sizable number of our members *are* vegan, and we want them to be assured that they will not find animal products in any of the dishes. We also do this for an educational purpose: we want attendees, especially guests (who are always welcome) and new members, to see and taste the tremendous abundance and variety of vegan food, so that they can be motivated, confident, and knowledgeable about moving their diet in this direction.

RAVS SEDER The 17th annual RAVS vegan seder will be held on the 2nd night of Passover, Tuesday, March 30; see back page for time and place. **RULES FOR SEDER** Bring a dish that is vegan and also conforms to Passover tradition. No wheat is allowed (e.g. no pasta, bread or cookies) except matzoh products such as farfel and matzoh meal—but no egg matzoh. Other grains such as rice are also excluded. Beans, potatoes, vegetables and fruits are fine.

RAVS FUNDRAISER If you wish to donate a service or gently pre-owned item for the Silent Auction, contact **Wendy Gilmore** at wsgrla@rit.edu. We will also have items from **Wizard of Clay** and other donors. Proceeds from the April restaurant fundraiser will benefit Veg Mondays (vegmondays.com), a new initiative to encourage people to eat all-vegetarian one day a week.

HEARTBEATS4LIFE is an organization that promotes a very-low fat vegan or near vegan diet, along with other lifestyle changes, to prevent and reverse heart disease. The group has monthly meetings at the Cooperative Extension at 249 Highland Ave., with a share-a-dish followed by a program. Upcoming meetings for this quarter will be on 3/8, 4/12 (restaurant meal), and 5/10. Visit heartbeats4life.org or call 234-7076 for details on programs.

DEPARTMENT OF SHAMELESS PLUGS Rush-Henrietta HS, 1799 Lehigh Station Rd, will present "West Side Story" on Thurs.-Sat., March 18-20, at 7:00 PM; there is a free dress rehearsal on Wed. at 6:00 PM. Nate Barnett, the son of your coordinators, will be playing the role of Tony! Tickets available at ShowTix4U.com after 2/18. (As your coordinators will be empty-nesters next year, this should be the last instance of shameless plugging.)

ALL-VEGAN ICE CREAM SHOP in NYC: Lula's Sweet Apothecary is located at 516 E. 6th St, East Store (between Avenues A and B), New York, NY 10009, (646) 912-4549, www.lulasweet.com

VEGAN ON A BUDGET Visit www.veganbreak.com, created by recent college graduate Michelle Taylor, for a series of two-minute "bite-sized" videos filled with useful tips on getting the most and best vegan food for your dollar. You can watch Taylor make a whole-grain hummus sandwich for \$1.31, or explain her simple rules of thumb for saving money on fruits and vegetables.

MAKING PROGRESS Change.org, the progressive website, has a menu tab for "Animal Welfare & Rights." For this info, thanks to Animal Rights Advocates of Upstate NY, arauny.org.

HOW MANY VEGETARIANS? According to a Harris poll commissioned by Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG), about 3% of U.S. adults are vegetarian, and about one-third of those, or 1%, are vegan. If those numbers seem discouragingly small, VRG points out that many non-vegetarians still eat vegetarian some of the time and are interested in the new vegetarian specialty products. Other reasons for hope: a disproportionate number of young people are vegetarian, with 12% of females 18-34 saying they "never eat meat" (remember that women tend to make food choices for their families); and, vegans, who are "often the activists who do promotion," make up a high percentage of vegetarians.

VEGAN TRAVEL BOOKS Interested in an annually updated travel guide to England, Scotland and Wales (\$5.95), as well as a line of vegan cookbooks including the international "A Vegan Taste of" series (\$11.95 ea.)? Contact Independent Publishers at ipgbook.com or (800) 888-4741. Some of the travel info can be found at the site vegetarianvisitor.co.uk, including links to many of the accommodations listed. ❖

HAIKU

morning rain . . .
the long black line
of winter ducks

chattering sparrow . . .
a speck of snow drops
from the low branch

tumbling across
the snow-covered roof
a dry leaf

by Bruce Ross

HOW FAR SHOULD YOUR VEGETARIANISM GO?

by Bud Burdick

Bud Burdick is a member of RAVS and a student at SUNY Brockport

The journey into a vegetarian lifestyle can go further than you might think. Dietary restrictions are just the beginning, often developing into overall lifestyle changes affecting what products you purchase and what you consider entertainment. You need to ask: "How far should my vegetarianism go?"

To answer this question, it helps to ask why you decided to become vegetarian in the first place. Reasons range from animal rights to environmentalism, to health concerns, and even human rights. You may take these reasons so much to heart that you avoid all activities that involve the exploitation of animals. This includes abstaining from the use of skins as clothing, the use of personal products made from or tested on animals, and the use of animals in entertainment industries.

Even sorting out vegetarian food choices is not simple. A "vegetarian" may be defined as someone who makes a lifestyle decision to abstain from the use of animal products, or as someone who eats primarily vegetable matter and may indulge in eggs, milk, or fish. You need to look at the results of these choices to figure out your role in the vegetarian cosmos.

Dietary choices may prove to be a major pitfall of becoming vegetarian if fried foods, processed foods, and sweets are continually consumed. Many fail as vegetarians for this reason, as their diets revolve around these nutritionally deficient foods. These people may convince themselves that vegetarianism is not right for them, leading others to believe that vegetarianism is not a safe lifestyle decision. Various stereotypes abound about weak and frail vegetarians who are protein deficient and sickly. It is our jobs as educated vegetarians to dispel these myths.

A vegetarian is an explorer and an experimenter. To become successful, you should try new types and combinations of foods, and limit your consumption of fried foods, sweets, and starchy, vitamin-deficient dishes. Larger quantities of whole and fresh foods are required for balanced diets. Many vegetarians attempt to eat locally grown, organic foods when possible. True vegetarians, or vegans, stay away from eggs, milk, fish, and other products that come from animals.

Those who continue to eat fish support the pollution and over-fishing of our seas. Semi, ovo, and lacto-vegetarians, or any combination thereof, support the factory farming industries through their purchases. The environment suffers greatly from excessive pesticide, hormone, and antibiotic use

within these industries. And the animals themselves suffer greatly.

Factory farms are a major hub of animal suffering; from battery cages and gestation crates that restrict movement and confine animals, to the abuse experienced from interacting with humans during transport, to the last few moments of life in the slaughterhouse. Unnatural, cramped, enclosed settings represent the daily life of many of these farm animals. Farm animals will often suffer through unnaturally large growth patterns created through selective breeding and the use of hormones. This leads to physical ailments including joint pain that may lead to the inability to stand or walk. The constant impregnation of cows for milk products, and the incredible number of eggs produced by chickens, have dire effects on the health and well-being of the animals. Take into consideration the suffering faced by animals as you make food choices.

As a vegetarian, one must consider non-food products as well. Many products are tested on animals, and true vegetarians, or vegans, avoid these products. These test animals are put into extremely unnatural situations and forced into experiments that one can only imagine.

Animal experiments lead to results that are often not relatable to human beings due to the differences between the species. The data accumulated allow medications to be passed off as safe for sale, even though they are sometimes later recalled due to the negative side effects experienced by humans. The FDA requires many drugs to be tested on animals, so it may be hard to avoid medications that have gone through animal testing procedures.

One way to prevent the need for many medications is to start treating the cause of the problem as opposed to the symptoms. Prevention is the key word here. This includes living actively while eating a healthy, well balanced diet. Lots of fruits and vegetables, as well as moderate amounts of exercise will decrease an individual's likelihood of needing many medications.

Cosmetics, cleaners, and many other household items are tested on animals as well. The animals used in testing are often the animals that share our houses with us or are the closest relatives of humans within the animal kingdom.. One should also take into consideration how little these test animals differ from companion animals, each with a distinct personality, capable of feeling pain and terror, confusion and loneliness. The products resulting from these tests should be avoided. Products not tested on animals are labeled as such, and are readily available at most shopping centers.

The fur industry continues to be a major inflictor of pain and suffering on animals. Fur from animals and the skins of cows are used for many purposes in society today including clothing, purses, and furniture. The animals on fur farms are placed in situations similar to those faced by animals on factory farms (caged with little, if any, room to move around). Much like the animals on factory farms, these animals are considered production units, with the final product in mind. The health and well-being of the animals is of little concern.

Circuses and carnivals exploit wild animals that have not been domesticated. These animals are generally beaten into compliance. The cruelties that they face cause them to develop psychological problems often resulting in acts of aggression toward other animals or even their "caregivers." Circuses use these animals as a means to make money and represent horrible habitats for these beautiful creatures meant for savannahs, grasslands, and forests.

Human rights are highly intertwined with animal rights. Many vegans argue that it takes about 11 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef. Other people ask how this affects humans, but the 10 extra pounds of grain could easily be used to feed hungry people worldwide. This could include the homeless and the poor within our own country. You should also take into consideration the factory farm workers that spend eight hours a day killing. These workers are taught to quickly become desensitized to the needs of the animals and will often act out against them physically. Tanneries that produce leather and suede products expose workers (often in underdeveloped countries lacking environmental and health restrictions) to dangerous chemicals. These chemicals are handled day in and day out, exposing workers and the environment to incredible amounts of hazardous materials.

When making decisions about what you put on your plate or on your back, consider the beings that suffer. Eating meat is not a right, but a privilege of the rich. Whereas the rich eat what they want, the poorest of the poor are often denied the basic right to eat. By using animal products, people inflict suffering on animals, on other human beings, and on the earth. As Albert Schweitzer said, "Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace." To find peace within yourself and show compassion, please consider the lives that are suffering as you make all your decisions about what to consume. Please consider how far your vegetarianism should go. ❖



IN THE NEWS

MEAT PRODUCTION EMITS THE MAJORITY OF GREENHOUSE GASES

On 10/20/09, the highly-respected Worldwatch Institute reported that the environmental impact of the lifecycle and supply chain of animals raised for food has been vastly underestimated and in fact accounts for 51% of human-caused greenhouse gases (GHG). In other words, the problem is even worse than it appeared in the widely-cited 2006 report for the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization, which estimated that 18% of GHG were attributable to meat production, more than all forms of transportation combined. The new report says it takes over 11 times as much fossil fuel to produce a gram of animal protein as to produce plant protein. The authors of the study say that going meatless is the best strategy for reversing climate change, and would have a more rapid effect on GHG than replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. Yvo de Boer, head of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, says: "The best solution would be for us all to become vegetarians."

THE LOCAVORE MYTH An article with that title appeared in Forbes magazine on 8/3/09, written by James E. McWilliams, the author of the essay on page 1 of this newsletter. His subtitle is "Why buying from nearby farmers won't save the planet." McWilliams says that the focus on transportation overlooks other energy-hogging factors in food production, particularly in the production of meat and other animal products. While we do encourage you to buy from local farmers—our February program is devoted to this issue—we also advocate a completely plant-based diet.

"A FISH OIL STORY," an op-ed piece by Paul Greenberg that appeared in the New York Times on 12/15/09, laments that hundreds of millions of pounds of menhaden are used every year to make fish oil. As a result, this small fish is "entering the final losing phases of a century-and-a-half fight for survival." Menhaden keep the ocean clean, and they are an important food source for other fish on the food chain. Greenberg point out that "fish discards" (yuk) could just as well be used for the supplement, and "flax oil also fits the bill and uses no fish at all" (Amen). This is yet another instance of the environmental (and health, and animal suffering) tragedy that ensues when we humans insist that our needs can be satisfied only by using animals. . . . Canadian medical researchers and wildlife scientists (including author Farley Mowat) have teamed up to examine the effects of health

claims with regard to seafood, in a study that appeared in the Canadian Medical Assn. Jnl. The researchers found that, although studies of health benefits from fish and fish oil show mixed results, the notion that fish is necessary to health has gained ground, increasing demand for seafood by consumers in the developed world and placing unsustainable stress on ocean ecosystems. Farley Mowat, co-author of the study, writes: "Our rape and pillage of the environment has to end before it becomes our end. The damage we have already done to life in the oceans is a prime example of our idiocy and a last warning that we had better change our ways." *Island Vegetarian* (Newsletter Veg. Soc. Hawaii), Oct.-Dec. 2009.

EATING ANIMALS The new book of that title by Jonathan Safran Foer is raising awareness of the cruelties inflicted on factory farmed animals (more than 99% of animals raised for food, according to Safran Foer). Foer is a well-known novelist, and he brings passion and knowledge (the book is very well documented) to his subject. The book points towards veganism; its greatest strength is presenting the reality of factory farming to mainstream audiences, and motivating them to act on the knowledge. This book is available from RAVS: list price \$25.99; RAVS price \$22.

PLANTS FEEL PAIN, DON'T THEY? New York Times science writer Natalie Angier wrote an article—in part, in response to Safran Foer's book—entitled "Sorry, Vegans: Brussels Sprouts Like to Live, Too" (12/21/09). Angier argues that, given the complexity of plants and their sensitivity to their environment, veganism has no clear ethical superiority to other ways of eating. The article prompted a flood of comments and letters. Gabe Kirchheimer argues that harvesting plants is not comparable to "the prolonged suffering of highly evolved animals," and that vegans "strive to cause as little suffering and environmental damage as possible, and are especially aware of the wondrous powers of plants." Shebani Rao, the president of Yale College Animal Welfare Alliance, writes that Angier's "belittles" the serious ethical arguments in support of veganism. She says: "vegans are under no false impression that veganism can solve all of the world's suffering, but there is no doubt that cutting animal products from one's diet is a significant step in the right direction."

HAMBURGER HORRORS Contaminated ground beef that was traced to a farm in western New York (Chataqua County) caused an E.coli outbreak that killed two people, sent 16 others to hospitals, and sickened many others. In response, the U. S.

Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) recalled more than ½ million pounds of ground beef. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle 11/3/09 . . . In our previous newsletter, we summarized a 10/4/09 New York Times exposé of methods of producing hamburger meat in the U. S., including the use of ammonia to kill bacteria. A more recent (12/30/09) article in the Times questions whether the ammonia method, disgusting as it is, is even effective at its intended goal of killing pathogens. The USDA was so confident in this method that it exempted the company which pioneered the technique, Beef Products, from routine testing of its hamburger meat. The Times investigators found, however, that testing for the school lunch program found significant E.coli and salmonella pathogens "dozens of times" in Beef Products meat. When confronted with these records, the USDA said it was "not aware" of what its colleagues in the school lunch program were finding. Needless to say, Times readers were horrified. Here is one comment from David Trudeau: "Let's see—you take the really bad scraps that nobody wants, sweep them up off the packing house floor and process them with ammonia, then blend them with other ground meat of unknown origins . . . and then package up the product and sell it as 'premium lean ground beef.'"

PLANT-BASED DIET TO PREVENT CANCER On 11/13/09, the New York Times ran an article about patient non-compliance with drug regimens to prevent cancer (sometimes because of ghastly side effects). In a letter to the editor in response to the article, Krista Haynes, a dietitian with PCRM's Cancer Project, disputes the article's suggestion that nutrition plays a minimal role in preventing cancer: "At least one-third of annual cancer deaths in the United States are due to dietary factors and level of physical activity, according to the American Cancer Society. Health-conscious consumers should try a plant-based diet. It's a simple prescription for cancer prevention, and its 'side effects' include weight loss and lower risk of heart disease and diabetes."

FOOD VS. MOOD A study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry on 11/2/09 showed that a diet heavy in processed and fatty foods increased the risk of depression by 58%. In the same vein, omnivore subjects who cut all meat and fish out of their diets experienced mood improvements, in a study presented at the American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting on 11/9/09.

ANOTHER REASON TO EAT VEGGIES Research published in the Journal of
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Alzheimer's Disease in August 2009 showed that subjects with a high daily intake of fruits and vegetables had both better antioxidant status and higher cognitive performance than healthy subjects with lower daily intake. The *Island Vegetarian*, Jan.-Mar. 2010

READ CAREFULLY Despite disingenuous milk mustache ads, consumption of milk does not prevent bone fractures, as shown by the Harvard University Nurses' Health Study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 1987. A more recent study reported in the *New York Times* on 11/9/09 found that chocolate milk reduces inflammation. A closer reading, however, shows that the cocoa powder, not the milk, has the beneficial effect.

VEGAN BONE DENSITY A study comparing post-menopausal vegan Buddhist nuns with non-vegetarian women found that, though the nuns had lower protein and calcium intakes than their non-veg counterparts, their bone density was identical. The findings are published online at Osteoporosis International.

PRESCRIPTION FOR BONE HEALTH Amy Joy Lanou, Ph.D., author of *Building Bone Vitality*, advocates a low-acid diet to build and preserve bone health. Acidifying (bad for bones) foods include meat and cheese; alkalinizing (good for bones) include most plant foods but especially fruits and vegetables. The ideal diet recommended by Lanou would be a vegan diet low in processed foods, moderate in grains, high in beans, and very high in fruits and vegetables. Jane Brody profiled Lanou's book and her program for bone health in an 11/23/09 article for the *New York Times*.

OH, AND BY THE WAY, Lanou prescribes daily walking as the best exercise to preserve bone health. The *New York Times* concurred on two recent occasions, in the "Well" blog dated 11/11/09, in which bone health researcher Dr. Daniel Barry says that brisk walking is effective at increasing bone density in older women, and in Jane Brody's article on 1/11/10 on the topic of aging without supplements, where she recommends "an aerobic activity like brisk walking—about 30 minutes a day," which, in addition to its physical benefits, increases brain volume and combats depression. As for the effects on mood and emotion, the *Times*'s "Well" blog on 11/18/09, titled "Why Exercise Makes You Less Anxious," promises that you may not feel a "magical reduction in stress" after your first walk or jog, but "the molecular biochemical changes will begin . . . and eventually . . .

they become profound."

VEGETARIAN LONGEVITY On 1/12/10, the *New York Times* reported that on the previous day, the famous strongman Joe Rollino had died at the age of 104, after being struck by a minivan. Only 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighing just 125 pounds, Rollino once raised 635 pounds with one finger and moved 3,200 pounds with his back. He was a role model to many, who prided himself on never using steroids. "Instead, the life-long vegetarian avoided alcohol, ate oatmeal for breakfast every day, swam laps year-round in the ocean . . . and walked five miles each morning." He was on his way back from the morning walk when he was hit. The driver, who stopped to help and had not been speeding, was not charged.

A VEGAN BANQUET AT WINDSOR CASTLE was served to an interfaith Living Planet conference hosted by Prince Charles. The banquet accommodated the dietary requirements of every faith (including Muslims, kosher Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists) and also supported the conference's promotion of sustainable practices. The menu featured roasted pear salad with hazelnuts and steamed celeriac; Portobello mushrooms stuffed with artichoke, red onion, and thyme on a bed of barley; butternut squash risotto; and roasted root vegetables. *Vegetarian Times*, February 2010

YES! Tami M. Best, whose "Power of Nutrition" column regularly appears in the Wednesday "Very Well" section of the *Democrat and Chronicle*, almost always has a good word for herbivores. Her 11/4/09 column is titled "Plant-based diet boosts immunity." Her 12/2/09 column profiles the Ornish program of a very low-fat, near-vegan diet to reverse heart disease (for a local Ornish support group, see page 3). Best's column on 12/30/09, on food addiction, mentions Dr. Neal Barnard and his Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. And in her 1/13/10 column, on healthier shopping practices, Best urges the reader to "plan for at least two meat-free meals each week" and to buy enough fruits and vegetables for each family member to have at least five servings a day.

EVEN DEAR ABBY KNOWS . . . In response to a letter written by a vegetarian tired of being teased and challenged by family members and even restaurant staff, Dear Abby urges "Herbivore" to "take comfort in the fact that a growing number of people are choosing to avoid meat and poultry not only for ethical reasons but also because they prefer to avoid the hormones and antibiotics used in the production of these foods." *D&C*, 1/15/10 ❖

21-DAY VEGAN KICKSTART

Revolutionize Your Diet:

The most powerful 3 weeks of your life!

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) has rolled out a new initiative that may be one of its most effective health-promoting programs ever. On January 1, 2010, PCRM inaugurated the new 21-Day Vegan Kickstart program, giving tens of thousands of people the chance to try out a vegan diet, all at the same time. Hollywood celebrities, star athletes, and one of Oprah's favorite chefs teamed up with PCRM to launch the free online program.

Kickstarters receive daily emails for a step-by-step diet makeover, along with recipes and cooking tips. They also have access to online videos and discussion boards featuring dietitians and celebrity diet counselors. The diet coaches include PCRM president Neal Barnard, MD, Dean Ornish, MD, T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., actress Alicia Silverstone, chef Tal Ronnen, basketball star John Salley, vegan firefighter Rip Esselstyn, best-selling authors Kathy Freston and Rory Freedman, and many other celebrities and nutrition experts.

The Kickstart program offers an interactive support network to help the participants make sustainable, healthful dietary changes. The next 21-Day Vegan Kickstart will begin on **March 1**. Please go the pcrm.org/Kickstart to sign up. ❖

GOURMET GOES VEGAN IN DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER

The Natural Oasis Café 288 Monroe Ave., 325-1831, Mon-Sat 11:30AM-8PM On 1/7/10, the "first bite" column in the Weekend section of the *D&C* was devoted to the Natural Oasis. It is described as a great place to visit if your New Year's resolution is to "become a committed vegetarian," or "to make the move from vegetarian to vegan," and certainly a great place to take vegetarian and vegan friends. The article describes both the lunch menu, which is a buffet of vegan Ethiopian dishes, and the dinner menu, an a la carte offering of gourmet vegan dishes, such as coconut curry soup served in a squash bowl, squash risotto, and cashew cheese.

The same week, the 1/6/10 *City* newspaper carried the headline "Vegan never tasted better: Natural Oasis." James Leach, the *City* reviewer, admits that he was influenced by a letter from RAVS member Joel Freedman urging him to review more restaurants that serve vegan meals. Leach decides to "give my ailing innards a break" and follow Freedman's advice: "I struck gold on the first try." Leach loves the dinner

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menu at Natural Oasis, “an ever-changing array of inexpensive (\$4 a plate), tasty treats created by Chef Nick Bovenzi, formerly sous chef at 2 Vine, the New York Wine and Culinary Center, and, most recently, Good Luck. He says Bovenzi manages “to bring the rich flavor profiles of non-vegan food to a vegan menu.” Says Leach: “I turned my attention to a plate of roasted cauliflower, sweet potato, and leeks finished with cilantro, a spritz of lime and olive oil. The cauliflower was tender and slightly browned on the top without being overcooked, while the potato and the leek had both been well caramelized. The lime added a welcome zip to the dish, highlighting the sweetness of the yams.” To his surprise, Leach likes the cashew cheese, which, while “not really cheesy in any proper sense of the word” is “quite tasty in its own right—well-spiced, nutty, and excellent smeared on everything.” Then, for dessert, Leach goes from disappointment at not being able to try a chocolate dessert to near-ecstasy at trying the ginger and cinnamon applesauce with curry: “this dish alone could make a person believe that he can lead a rich and fulfilled life as a vegan.” Leach closes by saying: “Thanks for the tip, Joel.”

We will be holding our April fundraiser dinner at the Natural Oasis. See page 8 for details on reserving a spot. ❖

(Continued from page 1)

cruellest sort of suffering on innocent and sentient beings; failing to recycle its waste; and clogging our arteries in the process, how would you react? Would you say, “Hey, that’s personal?” Probably not. It’s more likely that you’d frame the matter as a dire political issue in need of a dire political response. Vegetarianism is not only the most powerful political response we can make to industrialized food. It’s a necessary prerequisite to reforming it. To quit eating meat is to dismantle the global food apparatus at its foundation.

Agribusiness has been vilified of late by muckraking journalists, activist filmmakers and sustainable-food advocates. We know that *something* has to be done to save our food from corporate interests. But I won-

der—are we ready to do what must be done? Sure, we’ve been inundated with ideas: eat local, vote with your fork, buy organic, support fair trade, etc. But these proposals all lack something that every successful environmental movement has always placed at its core: genuine sacrifice.

Until we make that leap, until we create a culinary culture in which the meat-eaters must do the apologizing, the current proposals will be nothing more than gestures that turn the fork into an empty symbol rather than a real tool for environmental change.

James E. McWilliams, an associate professor of history at Texas State University at San Marcos and a recent fellow in agrarian studies at Yale University, is most recently the author of “Just Food.” [Thanks to Ellie Cherin for finding this essay.] ❖

Membership Update: **New Members:** Barbara Fish, David Fisher, Paula Fradin, John Jongen, Linda Love, Greg Schueckler, Maureen & Steve Van Buren.
Membership Renewals: Mary Anne Banke, Honey Bloch, Cindy Brone, Kathryn Caldwell, Ellie Cherin (2-year renewal at Sustaining Level), Zilla Courtheoux, David Daunce, Gloria & Steve Foster, Kathryn Goldfeder, Jerry Hanss, Leena Isac & Ted Potter, Dr. Robert Klein (Patron Level), Audrey Kramer & Alex Chervansky, Dee & Darren Mrak, Maggie & Daryl Odhner, Yetta Panitch (Contributing Level), Heather Schooler & Steve Barr (Contributing Level), Burt Spiller. **Newsletter Subscription:** Dvorah & Myron Kolko. Reflects payments up to 2/7/10. If your payment was sent by that date and you are not on the list, please call 234-8750.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ROCHESTER AREA VEGETARIAN SOCIETY:

P.O. BOX 20185, ROCHESTER, NY, 14602-0185
 (585) 234-8750

Membership in the **Rochester Area Vegetarian Society** is open to all vegetarians, as well as to those who support the goals of vegetarianism and the society. RAVS’ by-laws define vegetarianism as the practice of living without the use of flesh, fish or fowl, with the ideal of complete independence from animal products. Members receive the *Vegetarian Advocate*, published three or four times a year, plus periodic notification of events. Members may borrow videos for a \$10 deposit and they are eligible for half-priced membership in the **North American Vegetarian Society** which includes a subscription to the *Vegetarian Voice* and in the **Vegetarian Resource Group** which includes a subscription to the *Vegetarian Journal*.

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____ E-mail: _____

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20/year Individual Membership | Amount enclosed \$_____. | Any amount over basic membership is tax deductible. Please make check payable to Rochester Area Vegetarian Society . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35/year Joint membership, one address | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a vegan lifestyle. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10/year Student/Fixed income | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a vegan diet. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ornish diet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$17/year Joint fixed income | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ovo-lacto vegetarian. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50/year Contributing membership | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not yet a vegetarian but would like to support RAVS. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75/year Sustaining membership | Primary interest in vegetarianism: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100/year Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> I/we am/are willing to volunteer to help RAVS. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$7/year <i>Vegetarian Advocate</i> only | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Rights | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | |



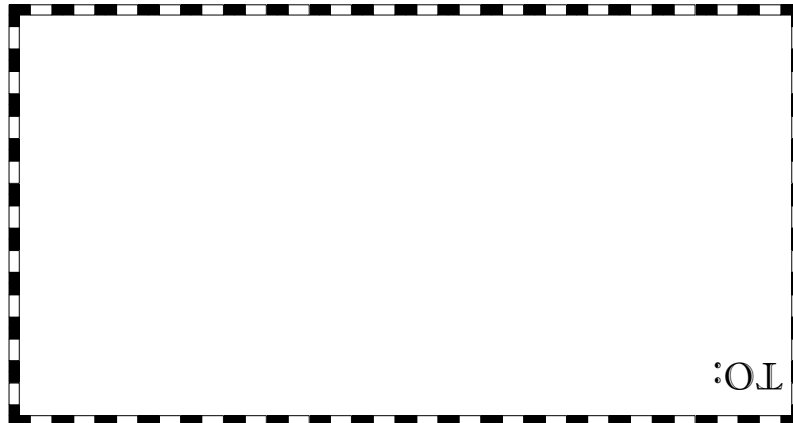
Rochester Area Vegetarian Society upcoming events:

- ⇒ **February 21, 2010*** (3rd Sunday) **Where Do I get My Organic Veggies? A Panel of Organic CSA Farmers and Sustainable Food Advocates**
- ⇒ **March 21, 2010*** (3rd Sunday) **A Whole-Plant Vegan Diet: Special Topics** (including Vitamin D, Calorie Restriction for Longevity, and Cognitive Incline) with **Michael Rudnick**
- ⇒ **March 30, 2010** (Tuesday) **17th Annual RAVS 2nd Night Seder** (shared event with Jewish Humanist Group) Brighton Town Park Lodge. Doors open 5:00 PM; Service 6:00 PM followed by share-a-dish meal. See p. 3 for special rules for this meal. Volunteers needed for set-up and clean-up. Call 234-8750 to reserve.
- ⇒ **April 18, 2010** (Sunday) **Gourmet Vegan Tasting Meal** at **The Natural Oasis**, 288 Monroe Ave. Gather at 5:00 PM; “grazing” begins at 5:30 PM \$22 per person, \$17 students/reduced income. Cost of dinner does not include beverages. No alcohol served but you may BYOB (no corking fee). Please reserve with a check made out to “RAVS,” sent to RAVS. P.O. Box 20185, Rochester, NY 14602-0185 or cash/check handed in at a prior RAVS meeting. Bring money and checkbook to the restaurant for a **Silent Auction!**
- ⇒ **May 16, 2010** (Sunday) **Rae Sikora** at the Society of Friends/Quakers, 84 Scio St. 11 AM Service, 12 Noon Light Brunch, 1 PM, Lecture by Rae Sikora, “**Loving the Planet.**” Not a RAVS event; open to all.
- ⇒ **May 16, 2010*** (3rd Sunday) **Rae Sikora** returns to RAVS! See May newsletter for details on program.

***Indicates a regular meeting.** Unless otherwise indicated, regular meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month at the Brighton Town Park Lodge, 5:30 PM Vegan Share-a-Dish Dinner, 7:00 PM Program.

Directions to Brighton Town Park Lodge: 777 Westfall Rd. between E. Henrietta Rd. (15A) and S. Clinton Rd. From 390, take Exit 16 onto 15A and go north to traffic light. Turn right on Westfall Road. Lodge is on south side on “Haudenosaunee Trail.”

Hear the latest from our events calendar, 24 hours a day! Call 234-8750



ROCHESTER AREA VEGETARIAN SOCIETY
 BOX 20185
 ROCHESTER, NY
 14602