

VEGETARIAN CENTER PROGRAMS

All events are at 150 Fifth Avenue (at 20th Street), suite 510. Participants may bring dinner with them. After 7 p.m., you may have to be buzzed in. The code number is 5108. Information: (212) 414-9100.

Fortnightly videos

- Jan. 5: **The Animal Film**
PETA's behind-the-scenes look at every kind of animal abuse—very graphic.
- Jan. 19: **Doc Hollywood** Michael J. Fox falls for a vegetarian...and adopts a pig.
- Feb. 2: **Vegan health videos**
- Feb. 16: **Diet for a New America**
Vegetarian author John Robbins's video lecture

Alternating Wednesdays. Feature presentation begins at 6:45 p.m. Reservations are recommended. Suggested donation: \$5.

Big Apple Vegetarians' issues-discussion club

Jan. 12 & Feb. 9: **Topics in the news of concern to vegetarians**

Is it enough to widen the battery cage? Should the government fund the meat-inspection service? You pick the topic. Freewheeling discussion begins at 6:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5.

Lecture series

Jan. 13 & Feb. 10: **Government Giveaways to the Meat Industry: A Primer** Pamela Rice

An introduction to the dozens of tax breaks, loopholes and subsidies the government offers the meat industry. Talk begins at 6:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5.

Workshop

Jan. 11 & Feb. 8: **Getting Started With Your Vegetarian Diet**

What do you eat now that you've decided to go vegetarian? Workshops begin at 7. Information: (212) 229-1506.

A little Econ 101 for vegetarians

BY PAMELA RICE

A recent visitor to the vegetarian center said to me, "I don't care what meat eaters do. I'm just happy to stay out of their way." It was just the kind of comment that sets a veg-evangelist like myself off on a rant, and that's exactly what it did.

My first retort was almost instinctual. "It doesn't bother you that farmers this year stand to receive a record \$22 billion* in direct federal payments and emergency aid? And that the definition of a farmer in the United States is someone who more than likely has something to do with animal agriculture?" I explained: "You see, you can't just count the farmers who produce livestock; you have to add in all the farmers who produce feed grains. In fact, 70 percent of all grain produced in the United States becomes feed for animals."

At this point I felt a bit of perspiration under my collar, but persevered. "And it doesn't bother you that what amounts to a luxury item—meat—is produced by farmers who could never turn a profit if they had to bear the slings and arrows of capitalism? Indeed, in 2002, New Deal era farm subsidies are scheduled to be phased out completely, and already an uproar is being heard in the hinterlands." I hammered home the point: "Of course, what business wouldn't like the government to pay a good chunk of its expenses and protect it from unexpected losses to boot?" At this point smoke might as well have been coming out of my ears.

"The meat industry," I said, "is like a giant tumor on our body politic. But instead of doing everything in its power to eradicate the scourge, the

"Congress Opens Cash Spigot to Aid Farmers," Reuters, October 13, 1999



U.S. government nourishes the disease, fostering further growth. With the mammoth giveaways that have gone on for

over half a century, gluts, which have been the

perennial outcome, have kept prices for meat absurdly low and markets entrenched. In the meantime, a consumer meat habit has long been established, and dozens of supporting industries have become intertwined in gridlock. Oh, and getting rid of surpluses via exports or charitable distribution points has become an endless headache for the government.

"All of this, and I haven't even mentioned the ills of environmental destruction, animal cruelty and lousy human health that have come with a widespread meat culture—

The meat industry is like a giant tumor on our body politic.

nor the hot topic of the ever increasing concentration in the industry. Regarding the latter, most vegetarians would agree that the corporate giants are much worse than the small family farmer, and theoretically, it's the subsidies that have allowed small animal-agriculture operations to hang on a little longer than they would have otherwise. But really, why should we root for any of them?"

No, I don't think that your garden-variety vegetarian fully understands how \$22 billion in subsidies—and this doesn't take into account all the hidden breaks that farmers enjoy—plays out throughout the economy. But with a bit of Econ 101, VivaVeggie style, we may be able to see a little better why animal products and by-products are so pervasive at supermarkets and restaurants and all that much harder to avoid—that is, if avoiding meat is something that is important to you....

Maimonides Project: Vegan view of hunger relief

Why do some charities feed meat and other dubious foods to the poor?

STANLEY M. SAPON, Ph.D.

In 1990, my wife's experiences with a community food cupboard focused her attention on the problem of people going hungry in our community. She confessed she had never dreamed the problem was so widespread and so close to home. We were both familiar with issues of famine and hunger abroad, but this was, for us, a revelation that sparked a determination to do something about hunger at a grassroots level in our own community. As leaders of our local vegetarian society, we designed and implemented a local hunger relief/educational outreach program. Seven years of experience involved us in serious study of the philosophical issues and practical challenges of hunger relief.

The need for a response of conscience to hunger is more than urgent—it is growing more compelling every day, as the economic distance between those with adequate resources and those at the lowest levels of incomes becomes wider and wider. From a recent USDA report: "Nationwide, 9.7 percent of American households—or about 10 million individuals—go without food because they cannot afford it.... In all states, hunger is just a few dollars away for too many families."

There are different kinds of tragedy—human misery—caused by inadequate or improper nutrition. One kind is a result of famine—a devastating lack of food in an area where, following on natural disaster or political upheaval, there is simply no food to be had, and no money can bring forth food that is nowhere to be found. This is the challenge of *crisis hunger relief*.

Then there is hunger that is the result of poverty—an abundance of food in the shops, the supermarket shelves loaded with food, but people going hungry for the lack of money to buy the food. This is the ongoing challenge of *chronic hunger relief*.

Our mailboxes and our television screens overflow these days with appeals to contribute money so that one organization or another can undertake the task of gathering "food" and distributing it to the hungry. When the need is globally described as "food," it presumes that generic food—*any* and *all* kinds of food—represents a solution to the problem of hunger. All food is *not* equal. The

precise identification of *which* food we are talking about is far from a trivial concern. There is more at issue than just the *number* of calories consumed per day—2,000 calories a day from greasy and sugar-laden foods such as potato chips, cookies and cola drinks leads to overweight, disease-prone people whose harmful diets further disable them in their efforts to improve their lives.

The spectrum of the ways proposed to "Help the Hungry" is wide, and ranges from the inspired work of Veg-Fam, Food for Life, Food Not Bombs, Project Plenty and World Hunger Year all the way down to the irrational and absolutely wicked schemes of the

Heifer Project, which solicits money to buy rabbits, chickens and cows for poverty-ridden people overseas and in this country, to breed, exploit, slaughter and sell as a way out of poverty, and Hunters for Hunger, who seek to show their benevolence by killing deer and Canada geese, and giving venison and lead-contaminated goose flesh to the aged poor.

Personal involvement with, and control over, one's charity dollars is a crucial issue. What are your dollars buying? What impact will they have on the future of the recipient? The lack of money for food is only *one* cause of hunger.

Lack of information or *misinformation* about feeding one's family is another. When one's principal sources of information about nutritional needs are the advertisements of the meat and dairy industries, the shortage of money is aggravated by reliance on foods that cost a lot but provide poor nutritional value for the dollar. A well-known and thriving hunger relief agency points with pride to its package of "surplus food for the needy" that includes "one pound of bacon, one pound of bratwurst, one pound of turkey franks, five pounds of chicken drumsticks, a whole roasted chicken, a bag of frozen cheese ravioli, one pound of ground turkey..." All with the advice of its nutritionist, who "helps ensure the packages' contents are healthy and that all types of nutritious foods are included." [*sic!*]

Crisis intervention saves lives *today*. What happens when today's emergency food supplies are used up? There are people whose budget is exhausted two or three days before the next bit of income is due to arrive. Emergency relief will keep the family going until the next payday. If a week's income will only cover the family food needs for five or six days, we have a regular, predictable, shortfall. Can this family learn

continued on page 12

All food is not equal. Two thousand calories a day from greasy and sugar-laden foods leads to overweight, disease-prone people.





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JOIN VivaVeggie

To become a member of the VivaVeggie Society for one year, send \$15 to the above address.

Membership entitles you to a membership card, five issues of *The VivaVine*, a copy of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian" and VivaVeggie's "Vegetarian Guide to New York City."

"101" Fans: Web site wanderers

A textbook case

"101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian" should be put into textbook form and made mandatory reading for grade school students. Everyone should have access to the information presented in this report. It's truly an excellent source. I'm trying to organize a vegetarian group at my college and am very concerned about the situation. Thank you for an extremely convincing piece.

Mary

Via E-mail

Pushed over the edge

I just stumbled upon your Web site while shopping for water purifiers. My family and I have been vegetari-

ans for many years. It was reading info like yours that pushed us over the edge. I'm ordering some copies of the "101 Reasons" to spread the word. Great site!

Reverend Mike Mills

Church With No Walls
 Prunedale, California

Touched by a leaflet

I came across your list while looking for a way to keep my land zoned agricultural. I was looking under the key word "cow." I read all of your "101 Reasons." I thought about being a vegetarian in the past, but was never a "true veggie." After reading your list, I am going to try and become one. I just wanted to let you know you touched one more person! Thanks.

"Videocrew"

Via E-mail

Sonnet

*If animals had faces that expressed
 Not only instinct but deep intuition,
 Would we still eat them up,
 while feeling blessed
 That conquering the earth was our
 commission?
 If they had voices we could
 understand,
 Would we be swayed at all?
 We love our dogs
 But kill them by the millions
 in this land,
 And we don't even eat them
 (we're not hogs).
 If animals had feelings like our own
 And not just the appearance of
 sensations,
 Would we be troubled that they
 bleed and groan
 Or let them die, like folks in distant
 nations?
 They do have faces, voices,
 feelings too—
 A little too profound for me and you.*

Glen Boisseau Becker

Brentwood, New York

The VivaVine welcomes your letters. Send them to:

VivaVeggie Society

P.O. Box 294

Prince Street Station

New York, NY 10012

Or E-mail them to:

vivavegie@triroc.com



Volunteer April Salazar is shown here at the vegetarian center keeping impeccable tabs on the VivaVeggie database.

We have a new Web address!

<http://www.vivavegie.org>

Workshop for Newbies: VVS helps folks go veg



Alex Press, center, leads his monthly workshop at the vegetarian center: "Getting Started With Your Vegetarian Diet" (see page 2 for more information).

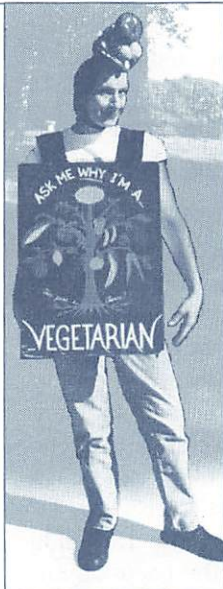


Bobbie Flowers, left, gallantly escorted Penelo Pea Pod, VivaVegie's grande dame of vegetableland, as she walked the gauntlet of the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade last year. Over a thousand leaflets were distributed to the throngs of onlookers.

So, what is the VivaVegie Society?

The VivaVegie Society takes vegetarian advocacy to the streets. VivaVegie advocates approach Mr. and Ms. Pedestrian to get the facts out about their healthful, ethical and environmentally conscious vegetarian diet.

Advocates assemble where there is plenty of pedestrian traffic. They come equipped with brightly colored sandwich boards (shown at right on Alex Fisher, coordinator of the New York City social group VegOut) and plenty of fact-filled literature. The mission? To distribute, for donations, the flyer "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian," written by Pamela Rice and inspired by John Robins's book *Diet for a New America*.



The vegetarian center needs your support.
SEE P. 15

DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

Obtain VivaVegie's "Vegetarian Guide to New York City" free! Simply send an SASE to our post-office box, indicating your interest in the vegetarian guide. See page 4 for the address.

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Meat, Dairy, Fish: The primary sources of dioxin

Report: Dioxin enters diet through meat and dairy

Americans' exposure to the super-toxic industrial byproduct dioxin comes largely from the foods they eat, particularly high-fat foods such as meat, fish and dairy products, according to the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, whose executive director, Lois Gibbs, helped reveal the toxic waste at Love Canal in upstate New York 20 years ago.

The group's recent report, titled "America's Choice: Children's Health or Corporate Profit," explains that dioxin accumulates in the fatty tissue of animals who are fed crops grown on contaminated soil. Nursing mothers, in turn, transfer even greater concentrations of dioxin to their infants. Aside from increasing the risk of cancer, elevated dioxin exposure can contribute to disrupted sexual development, birth defects, immune-system damage, IQ deficits and behavioral disorders. However, the report notes, "Vegetarians, who consume less meat and dairy products, have below-average body burden levels of dioxin."

Judge thwarts U.S. meat safety effort

A December ruling by a federal judge kept open a Dallas meat-processing plant despite efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to close it.

Samples from the plant, which produces ground beef and had been a key supplier to the school lunch program, were alleged to exceed government limits on salmonella.

The plant's owner, Supreme Beef, had argued that the USDA has no authority to set limits on salmonella, since the sometimes deadly pathogen "is destroyed during normal cooking," adding that the plant's meat was within those limits anyway. The judge's ruling allows the plant to continue operating until a trial occurs next year.

"Supreme Beef's products are continuing to receive the USDA's seal of approval, notwithstanding USDA's belief that they should not be entering commerce at all," the Justice Department said in a court filing quoted by the Associated Press.

USDA: "E. coli is more common than we thought"

The dangerous *E. coli* O157:H7 bug appears to affect up to half the cattle slaughtered for food, according to a USDA white paper made public in November. Previous estimates had placed the rate at 1 to 3 percent. The new estimate, based on a more sensitive test in use since September, was disputed by a spokesman for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, who said the test indicates exposure to the bacteria, not actual infection.

FDA cites superbug spread by chicken

A report from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December calculated that in 1998 up to 5,000 Americans may have contracted an antibiotic-resistant strain of the pathogen campylobacter from contact with raw or undercooked chicken. The Associated Press noted that several years ago, Minnesota researchers had linked the use of powerful fluoroquinolone antibiotics by the poultry industry to fluoroquinolone-resistant campylobacter in supermarket chicken.

Hog farms pay steep fines

Premium Standard Farms, a pork producer, agreed in August to pay \$25 million to settle a suit filed by the state of Missouri, *The New York Times* reported. According to the *Times*, the payment constituted the largest environmental settlement with a hog operation in the country. The company had been accused of several manure spills.

In September a federal appeals court upheld a 1997 fine of \$12.6 million against Smithfield Food, a Virginia pork producer, the Meating Place Web site reported. The Environmental Protection Agency, which had sued the company, accused it of polluting the Pagan River and attempting to cover up its actions.

Seven Tyson poultry workers die on the job

The deaths of seven Tyson company poultry workers over five months in 1999 drew a protest outside a processing plant in Berlin, Maryland, in October, the *Baltimore Sun* reported. "We want to make clear that this is a runaway company in a runaway industry," said Reverend Jim Lewis, the Episcopal priest who heads the Delaware-based Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance, a coalition of activists. The group called for a nationwide investigation of working conditions at Tyson facilities.

VEGETARIAN VIEW HITS THE MAINSTREAM

Time essay predicts end of meat industry by year 2100

The following, from "Will We Still Eat Meat?" by Ed Ayres, appeared in *Time* magazine's November 8 "Beyond 2000" issue, devoted to predictions for the 21st century. Ayres is editorial director of the Worldwatch Institute.

"Much as we have awakened to the full economic and social costs of cigarettes, we will find we can no longer subsidize or ignore the costs of mass-producing cattle, poultry, pigs, sheep and fish to feed our growing population. These costs include hugely inefficient use of freshwater and land, heavy pollution from livestock feces, rising rates of heart disease and other degenerative illnesses, and spreading destruction of the forests on which much of our planet's life depends.... The era of mass-produced animal flesh, and its unsustainable costs to human and environmental health, should be over before the next century is out."

Child Abuse: Kids lured to dangerous meat diet

Burger King draws kids with Pokemon toys

A promotional offer of toys and trading cards tied to the release of the kids' film *Pokemon* "created a stampede at some Burger King restaurants" in November, according to the Associated Press. A spokesman for the company said the 56-day campaign was one of the largest in the history of the fast-food industry. Children got a Pokemon toy when they ordered a Kids Meal or Big Kids Meal.

Beef board targets youth

In December the Beef Promotion Operating Committee allocated \$128,400 for "the Beef Ambassador program," which the Meating Place Web site described as "using youth spokespersons to deliver positive messages about beef to youth and consumer audiences." The committee also approved \$120,000 for "a crisis-management fund to defend the industry from attacks from anti-meat activists."

Heart association says disease starts young

A study of transplanted hearts from teens found that "one in six...had significant blockages, or plaque, in at least one coronary artery," according to a November press release from the American Heart Association. A study published in the journal *Circulation* had found that "five of 32 donors under age 20...showed signs of atherosclerosis." (Twenty-six of 36 heart donors between 41 and 50 years of age had heart disease.) According to the lead researcher, "Aggressive...prevention should begin in childhood, when it's easier to establish healthy habits and correct harmful ones."

Red meat linked to non-Hodgkin's cancer

Women who ate beef, pork or lamb as a main dish daily were more than twice as likely to develop non-

Hodgkin's lymphoma as those who ate the red-meat dishes less than once a week, researchers found in an analysis of data collected from the Harvard Nurses' Health Study. Their findings were published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in November. The risk was also found to increase with consumption of trans unsaturated fats, the type found in hardened vegetable oils.

FDA: Soy lowers heart risk

Manufacturers of foods containing soy can make health claims on their packages, the Food and Drug Administration ruled in October. Products containing 6.25 grams of soy protein per serving will be allowed to carry labels saying they can reduce the risk of heart disease. Consumption of 25 grams of soy protein a day has been found to significantly lower blood cholesterol.

Meat consumption rises

America's meat consumption was expected to reach a record level of 219.5 pounds in 1999, according to the USDA's Economic Research Service, as reported on the Meating Place Web site in September. In 2000 some slippage was expected, with beef declining to 63.7 pounds, the lowest level since 1960, and pork

consumption also falling, to 51.5 pounds. Total red meat consumption could be 116.9 pounds, the lowest level since 1935. However, poultry consumption continues to rise and could reach nearly 100 pounds per person, including 82.1 pounds of chicken and 17.8 pounds of turkey. (These figures do not include fish.)

Number of animals killed for food hits new high

The total number of farm animals killed by the U.S. food industry was expected to reach nearly 9.74 billion in 1999, a 3.1 percent increase over 1998, according to the vegetarian group FARM, which derived its numbers from USDA statistics, hatchery reports and interviews with agricultural experts.

The total was estimated to include more than a billion "non-slaughter" deaths, from causes such as disease and injury. By far the greatest number of deaths was among birds, roughly 9.5 billion of the total, versus 161.2 million mammals (and an unknown number of marine animals). Citing Food and Agriculture Organization statistics, FARM put the worldwide total of farm animals slaughtered in 1998 at 43.2 billion.

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Handouts: Animal ag wins tax dollars, wants more

After deluge, NC pork group eyes gov't piggybank

In the aftermath of September's Hurricane Floyd, which flooded North Carolina's hog-producing region and drowned several million pigs, turkeys and chickens, the state's pork industry requested \$1 billion in government aid for itself and other agribusinesses to help rebuild.

The state pork council's draft legislation, which it sent to the U.S. Congress, would also exempt the industry from the federal Clean Water Act for up to a year. However, according to an ABC News report in November, state regulators "are opposed and are furious" that the council went to Congress. The state supports paying the hog operations to move out of the flood plain, instead of rebuilding there.

According to ABC, a thousand hog-waste storage pools, "filled to the brim," are in danger of collapsing and "sending millions of gallons of hog waste into state waters" on top

of the millions already spilled. At least three giant cesspools actually did collapse during the flood. North Carolina officials, worried about other such disasters, have allowed hog farms to spray waste onto fields and into forests throughout the winter. "In places, the light-brown waste streams 40 feet into the air and can be seen pooling on top of many sodden fields," ABC noted.

Henpecked by egg sellers, USDA opens wallet

In October, the USDA announced it would purchase up to \$10 million of chicken meat "to alleviate economic pressures currently experienced by egg producers and bring supplies more in balance with market demand by reducing the laying flock." Nearly all egg-laying hens are killed when their egg production drops off.

Lobstermen claw for aid

After a season in which half their catch died from a parasite, lobster-

men who fish in Long Island Sound pleaded for government assistance, the *Boston Globe* reported in November. U.S. representative Christopher Shays responded that "the government routinely provides money to farmers in times of trouble, but said he would have to check to see what aid is available to lobstermen," according to the *Globe*.

USDA official brownnoses manure magnates

The USDA spends \$7 million each year for research on handling manure from livestock, according to deputy secretary Rich Rominger, who alluded to the expenditure at the "Animal Residuals Management Conference" in November.

In a speech that emphasized "collaboration" with animal agriculture, Rominger said, "We expect that 95 percent of the nation's AFOs [animal feeding operations] will voluntarily develop their own comprehensive nutrient management plans by the year 2009. The key word is *voluntarily*. That means they'll need help in the form of education, technical and financial assistance.... We can't regulate our way to sound conservation.... We're not in the business of telling people what to do."

Docs sue over meat, dairy links on U.S. diet board

The pro-vegetarian Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine filed a suit in December against the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, alleging conflicts of interest on a panel charged with devising dietary guidelines for Americans. The suit notes that at least six people on the 11-member panel "have had or currently have significant ties to the meat, dairy, or egg industries," according to a press release.

Vegetarian News and Economic Justice for Vegetarians are compiled by Alex Press with research by Alan Rice.

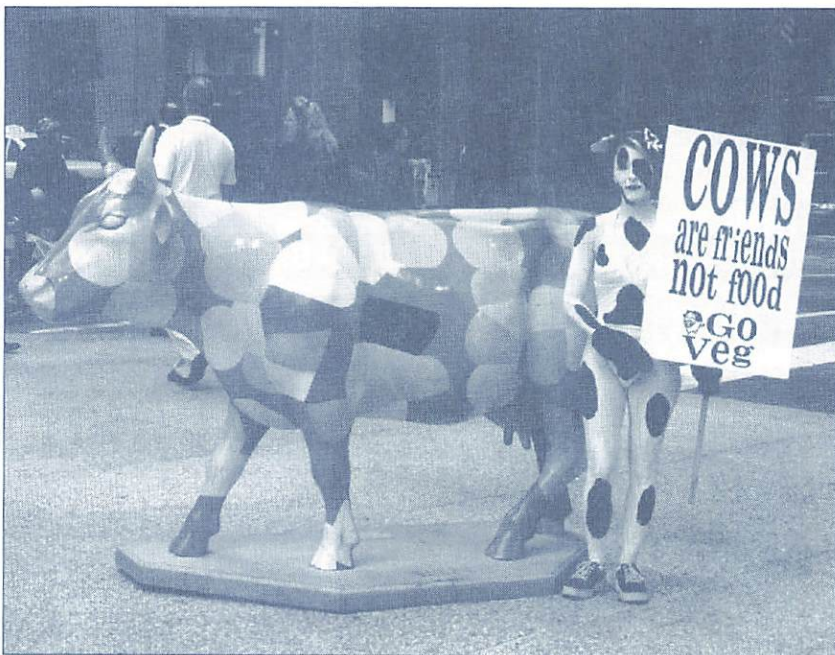


photo by Debbie Leahy

In what turned out to be a successful tourist draw this past year, Chicago commissioned artists to decorate over 300 fiberglass cows displayed throughout the city. Julie Digangi, of Addison, Illinois, along with Illinois Animal Action, decided to make a little hay out of the art show. Julie caught the attention of passersby with her bovine chic and IAA distributed veggie burgers donated by Boca Burger. VivaVeggie learned of the event from a photograph in the Chicago Tribune.

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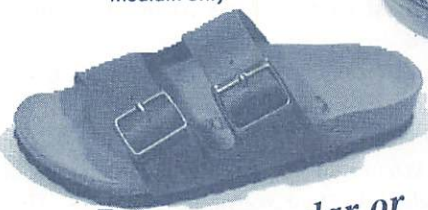
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Mens U.S. Size						7-7-1/2	8-8-1/2	9-9-1/2	10-10-1/2	11-11-1/2	12-12-1/2	13-13-1/2
European Size	26	27	27	29	30	31	32	33	34			
Kids' U.S. Size	8-8-1/2	9-9-1/2	10-10-1/2	11-11-1/2	12-12-1/2	1-1-1/2	2-2-1/2	3-3-1/2	(see adult)			

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FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

Pork-rind sales up as 300,000 people die every year of obesity

Big Apple Vegetarians, a group based in New York City, recently hosted what it called a "battle of the diets." The program featured presenters touting several styles of vegetarian or largely vegetarian eating—including raw foods, macrobiotic and ayurvedic. The event could not have been more in tune with the times. Talk of diets is as big as ever.

And rightly so. Obesity is at epidemic levels, directly causing the deaths of 300,000 people in the United States every year—despite a \$33 billion-a-year weight-loss industry. The number of Americans considered obese has surged from one out of eight in 1991 to one out of four today. Those considered merely overweight now account for over half of the U.S. population. And a whopping one out of five children already has a weight problem.

Unfortunately, most victims of the battle of the bulge are not looking to any of the vegetarian diets. In fact, many are dusting off copies of Dr. Robert Atkins's books (which date back to 1972)—the Atkins diet is just one of several high-protein, low- or no-carbohydrate eating plans that are in vogue. Adding to the insanity, some dietitians are reevaluating their warnings about fat. They now say, go for it! And people are taking the hype to heart. Just ask Bill Connor of Evans Food Products. He produces pork rinds—pig skins, cured, smoked and fried in their own fat—in his Chicago plant. According to an October story in *USA Today*, sales are booming.

Meanwhile, few people want to listen to the unsexy advice that routinely emanates from the likes of more mainstream health experts, such as the National Cancer Institute, which prods people to exercise, eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and keep saturated fats to a minimum—advice that might be put more simply: Go vegetarian, and move your bod more.

No, in order to stay trim, many people are turning to absurd and desperate measures, in some cases preferring to take drugs that promise to counteract the effects of their eating habits but that might prompt sudden incontinence (according to a nationally televised commercial for one). Others may prefer to take a drug that mimics the effects of undereating, a lifestyle that studies have shown promotes longevity. Still others may choose to have their stomachs stapled.

Ultimately, the key may be fiber—one thing vegetarians are less likely than others to lack. At least one researcher, who works at Children's Hospital in Boston, believes that "measuring how much dietary fiber a person eats may be better than counting fat grams for predicting weight gain, insulin levels and other cardiovascular disease risk factors," according to an October story on the CNN Web site. Americans get only 10 grams of fiber a day on average, half the recommended amount. The story paraphrased researcher Dr. David Ludwig: "Fiber...not only fills you up, but has beneficial effects on blood sugar."

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STILL MORE ON HEALTH

Phytochemicals ward off cancer

How many hits might there be to a page on the MSNBC Web site in one day? Perhaps a number greater than the entire yearly circulation of *The VivaVine!* This is a consoling thought in the case of a page posted there last October. "Plant-based diet key to warding off cancer" was the headline. According to the story, which reported on the annual meeting of the American Institute for Cancer Research, phytochemicals—found in fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes—are quite the hot topic these days. Presenter after presenter at the conference offered evidence of the health benefits of these substances, although to date, no one knows precisely why phytochemicals are so effective in protecting health.

Chinese on traditional diet considerably more heart-healthy, despite smoking

The standard Western diet can cause heart disease, and we just got more proof...as if we needed it. According to a team of Chinese researchers using measurements made with ultrasound, the traditional Chinese diet is less likely to cause arteries to clog up, according to a November Reuters story. The researchers compared the diets and lifestyles of residents of Pan Yu, a town 100 miles from Hong Kong noted for one of the lowest rates of heart disease in the world, with those of Westernized Chinese living in Hong Kong, San Francisco and Sydney, Australia. Although Pan Yu villagers were found to smoke more than their Westernized counterparts, they eat eat more stir-fried or steamed vegetables and tofu, less than half the meat and almost no dairy. Their consumption of green tea is also believed to be a factor in their heart health.

Fruit and vegetable eaters breathe easier

Chalk up yet another health benefit of fruits and vegetables. Dutch and American researchers recently found that eating lots of them improves lung function and breathing, according to an October Reuters story. Beta carotene, a precursor to vitamin A found in red and yellow fruits and vegetables, is responsible for better lung function, and vitamin C in fruits is responsible for better breathing, the researchers reported.

Senility, high blood pressure linked

High blood pressure has been linked to lower cognitive abilities, according to a National Institute on Aging study featured in *The Washington Post* in November. According to the *Post* story:

[Men] who had high blood pressure for at least 15 years starting in middle age had 50 percent more cognitive decline than [those] with normal blood pressure. Men who had high blood pressure for at least 25 years and were in their sixties and seventies underwent a doubling in cognitive decline.

According to the story, one keeps blood pressure down the same way one stays healthy otherwise: by keeping weight down and, no surprise, eating lots of fruits and vegetables.

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Hunger Relief: Group offers vegan food, education

continued from page 3

how to stretch their money to give themselves wholesome food for an entire week?

The Maimonides Project represents a convergence of philosophical, ethical and practical concerns for more effective steps that individuals and small groups can take to ease the suffering of hungry people in their communities—directly and immediately in response to the urgencies of the moment—and to empower people by teaching them how to make the most of their food dollars. We have developed programs that provide support and educational assistance to people whose limited incomes and scanty knowledge of nutrition and food economics have put—and kept—them in jeopardy. Serving as a resource center and clearinghouse, we provide guidance, materials, instruction and support to individuals and groups who want to work to relieve hunger on a local-action level.

Moses Maimonides, the revered 12th-century physician, scholar, philosopher and rabbi, who explored in depth the spiritual, ethical and philosophical dimensions of charity, inspired the project that honors his name. Our project incorporates two of his most powerful precepts:

"The noblest charity is that which eliminates or reduces an individual's dependence on charity." To give food to a starving person today is a good deed that will keep that person alive today. We must strive to empower that person with knowledge, skills and resources that will improve tomorrow's chances.

"The most compassionate and benevolent help is that which is provided quietly, and is deeply respectful of an individual's sense of worth and personal dignity." The most nobly intentioned charity can be degraded if it offers help in ways that expose the recipient to humiliation. If the price of dinner at a soup kitchen is your dignity, it is a very dearly bought meal.

In our fullest concern for all who are suffering, we must take care not to relieve the pain of one living being by inflicting pain on another sentient being. An act of kindness is sadly corrupted if it involves an

We must take care not to relieve the pain of one living being by inflicting pain on another sentient being. An act of kindness is sadly corrupted if it involves an act of cruelty.



act of cruelty. Saving a human by killing an animal is far from a moral achievement.

The sum of these principles is reflected in the distribution of plant-based foods through food pantries, churches, synagogues, mosques and other dignity-respecting agencies. As a concrete example, one of our most widely used programs provides a family with:

- A 35-pound package of wholesome vegan food: oats, rice, pasta, kidney beans, pinto beans, lentils, chickpeas, corn, tomato sauce, tomato puree, vegetable oil, onions, apples, raisins, cinnamon and vanilla extract.
- A booklet, "Vegetarianism...A Diet for Life," with a guide to vegan nutrition, cooking instructions, shopping tips and easy-to-prepare, tasty recipes that utilize all the foods contained in the package.

As we strive to refine our perceptions and raise our consciousness, I would add one more thought. We take care to buy cruelty-free products, and we seek out socially responsible investments. It behooves us, when we show our concern for people in need, to be sensitive to the constraints of compassionately responsible giving.

Dr. Sapon is emeritus professor of psycholinguistics at the University of Rochester. He and his wife, Rhoda Sapon, direct the Maimonides Project. Reach them at maimonides@juno.com, P.O. Box 20584, Rochester, NY 14602, or at (716) 385-0725.

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Diseased domesticated chickens and turkeys are the likely infectors of wild East Coast finches.

New York City is known as the concrete jungle—that's for sure. But wildlife can be seen here—in fact in abundance if one looks closely enough.* In particular, among the peregrine falcons, snowy egrets and diamondback terrapins is a feisty, chirpfully animated bird with a real New York (and vegetarian) story.

At one time, wild house finches were introduced to the New York area from their native West Coast to be sold as pets. However, in 1940 it became illegal to sell wild birds as caged birds. As the story goes, at least one Long Island finchmonger simply released his birds to fend for themselves. As it happened, the birds survived and are now flourishing all along the Eastern Seaboard. Today, any East Coast bird lover equipped with a sunflower-seed-filled feeder on her fire escape or patio is likely to be visited by these delightful birds. But all is not well.

According to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, bird-watchers should be on the lookout for finches infected with a bacterium—*Mycoplasma gallisepticum*—which the finches probably contracted from domesticated turkeys and chickens in Virginia and Maryland during the winter of 1993–94.

Infected finches have eyes that are red, swollen, runny or crusted over, sometimes so puffed up that the birds are rendered blind. Finches do not die from the infection itself but from the predation, starvation and exposure that result from the blindness. Since East Coast house finches come from a limited genetic stock—those released on Long Island—they are less able to withstand the onslaught of the new bacterium.

Infected finches become blind. They then die not from the infection itself but from predation, starvation and exposure.

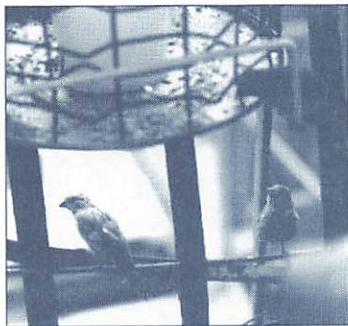


photo by Pamela Rice

New York City finches

Veggie Nubbets

Sacrifices mar opening of Turkish animal hospital

It was a celebratory time for Turkish residents in the western port city of Izmir on what is designated there as World Animal Day. The town was marking the opening of an animal hospital, according to an October Reuters story. Unfortunately, the event was marred by the sacrifice of a ram and a calf to honor a visiting state minister. A second ram was spared from a similar fate when the minister himself intervened. "On a day like this, especially at the opening of an animal hospital, scenes like that were really not appropriate," the minister was quoted as saying.

Mexico bans U.S. meat imports, citing filth

Mexican inspectors found "high bacteria levels, poor supervision, puddles of water...and lack of equipment for workers" at 17 plants owned by some of America's biggest meat processors, including IBP, ConAgra, Excel and Tyson, the Associated Press reported in December. Mexico temporarily banned imports from the facilities, citing "serious concerns for the deficiencies of good hygiene practices and preoperational sanitary procedures." And we Americans worry about *our* food from overseas...

Mislabeled whale meat contains deadly contaminants in Japan

In Japan, minke whales are legally caught under "scientific" permits, which allow the Japanese to eat any resulting meat—a loophole whale preservationists have long denounced.

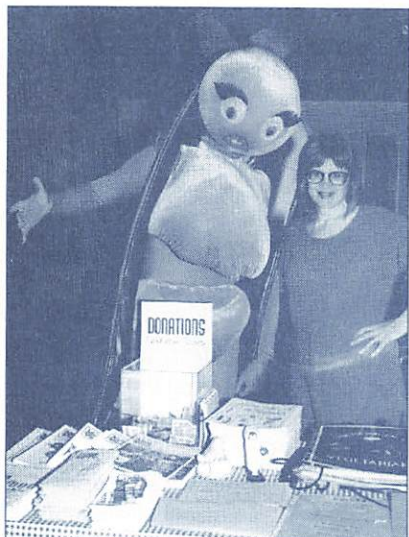
But now it seems Japanese consumers who think they are eating minke whale meat are actually eating porpoises, dolphins and non-minke-whales—all of which contain dangerously high levels of mercury and other contaminants, according to experts interviewed for an October story in the *Los Angeles Times*. Porpoises, dolphins and non-minke whales contain more contaminants because they tend to swim in more polluted waters.

The researchers made their discovery after purchasing 130 samples of product labeled as whale meat in six cities across Japan. Half of the meat was either porpoise, dolphin or an illegally caught species of whale.

"Japanese consumers who eat the mislabeled dolphin or porpoise face a 70 percent chance of ingesting at least one pollutant at a level considered unsafe for human consumption.... One sample of dolphin meat labeled as whale contained 500 times more mercury than Japan's health advisory limit," the *Times* noted.

* A great sourcebook is *Wild New York: A Guide to the Wildlife, Wild Places & Natural Phenomena of New York City*, by Margaret Mittelbach and Michael Crewdson (Three Rivers Press, 1998).

BIG APPLE FUNDRAISER FOR THE VEGGIE CENTER



Penelo Pea Pod made an appearance at the fundraiser to the delight of all. She's seen here with VivaVeggie's Pamela Rice.



Carol Moon: the exuberant veggie Olympian



Newlyweds Brad Wolff and Heidi Cohen won the costume contest. They chose 50 copies of "101 Reasons" as their prize.



The Vegetarian Center of NYC

150 Fifth Avenue (at 20th St.), Suite 510 • (212) 414-9100

- hosts lectures, video screenings, workshops and discussion groups
- offers a referral service for restaurants, stores, vegan products and vegetarian organizations
- houses an archive of books, pamphlets, magazines and catalogued news reports of interest to vegetarians
- functions as a meeting place for groups
- serves as a drop-in space for passersby to pick up a restaurant guide or other vegetarian information
- offers pro-vegetarian T-shirts
- is a place for visitors to speak one-on-one with a real, live vegetarian!

**Office hours are 4 to 7 p.m. on weekdays.
(We advise that you call ahead.)**



Two gypsies (Susan Davis and Lindarose Perosi) pose with a witch (Lorraine DiMango) at the October 29 fundraiser, which yielded nearly \$2000 in support for the veggie center.

Photos by Michelle Fornof

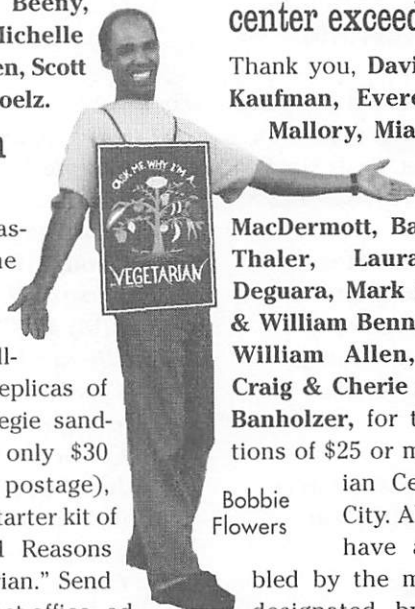
Matching Fund Success: Contributors came through

Volunteer spirit

There are many ways to make a difference if spreading knowledge about the virtues of vegetarianism is your thing. Calling all volunteers! Ring up the veggie center to get involved: (212) 414-9100. Special thanks to the following people who helped the VivaVegie Society since the last issue: **April Salazar, Bobbie Flowers, Tom Thompson, Jean Thaler, Juan Deguara, Diane Beeny, Ron Montano, Michelle Fornof, Jim Whitten, Scott Lustig and Irene Poelz.**

VVS sandwich boards

Take your passion to the streets. It's easy. Now you can obtain brilliant, full-color 11" x 17" replicas of the famous VivaVegie sandwich boards for only \$30 (add \$6.40 for postage), which includes a starter kit of 20 copies of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian." Send orders to the post-office address on page 4.



VivaVegie wish list

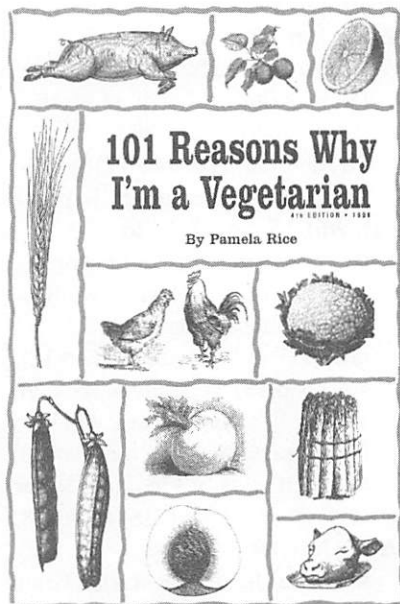
- VivaVegie Web site (partial acceptable) ♦ \$1,000/year
- One year's *VivaVine* distribution (partial acceptable) ♦ \$675
- Publicity and/or marketing assistance
- Pro bono law or accounting assistance

Matched contributions for center exceed \$9,000

Thank you, **David Sielaff, Stephen Kaufman, Everett Wilcox, Jason Mallory, Mia MacDonald, Scott Lustig, Rachel Cohen & Chris MacDermott, Barbara Field, Betty Thaler, Laura Bigini, Juan Deguara, Mark B. Berman, Gloria & William Bennett, Paul Sheridan, William Allen, E.B. Botanicals, Craig & Cherie Cline and Norbert Banholzer**, for the latest contributions of \$25 or more to the Vegetarian Center of New York City. All of your donations have already been doubled by the matching-fund grant designated by our anonymous donor in support of the center. To

Bobbie Flowers

date, our anonymous friend has made matching payments of \$9,475. He was prepared to match up to \$10,000. Thank you, everyone throughout the year who responded to the challenge and contributed to make the vegetarian center a place we can all be proud of.



"101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian," our "mighty convincer" by Pamela Rice, is available in single copies and in bulk. An order coupon appears below.

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More powerful than ever, the 1998 edition of "101 Reasons" is sure to wake 'em up.

No carnivorous human has a chance against the "101 Reasons."

YES... please send me _____(copy / copies) of the 1998 edition of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian." The first copy is \$2, postage paid.

- Add'l copies are 50¢ each, postage paid
- 50 copies are \$20
- 100 copies are \$35

Name _____ ☎ (_____) _____

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Now: BECOME A MEMBER of the VivaVegie Society

For a COST of \$15 PER YEAR receive:

- one copy of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian"
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- one copy of the "Vegetarian Guide to New York City"
- one membership card

(Yes, I) / (No, I do not) want to become a card-carrying member of the VivaVegie Society. Herewith, also, is a tax-deductible donation to the VivaVegie Society for \$ _____. Total enclosed.

CALENDAR

See page 2 for a listing of four ongoing activities sponsored by the VivaVegie Society: **Fortnightly videos, Big Apple Vegetarians' discussion club, VivaVegie's lecture series** and **vegetarian workshops.**

Please call to confirm details. Events are in Manhattan unless otherwise noted.

Wed, Jan 12

- Sierra Club NYC Vegetarian Outings dinner, 7 p.m. at Black Eyed Suzie's Cafe, 128 E. 7th Street. Cost: \$20. Info: (718) 805-4260 (Sun-Thurs before 10 p.m.)

Sat, Jan 15-Sat, Feb 26

- Whole Foods Project vegan, organic cooking classes: winter one-dish meals (Jan 15, 22), grains (Feb 5), legumes (Feb 12), soy (Feb 19), vegetables (Feb 26), 11 to 1:30 at the Aurora, 475 W. 57th Street. Cost: Each class \$30; \$20 with copy of *VivaVine*; \$5 for WFP clients. Info: (718) 832-6628.

Wed, Jan 19

- Central Jersey Vegetarian Group lecture on enhancing energy through diet, 7 p.m. in Somerville. Info: (908) 281-6388.

Wed, Jan 19-Fri, Feb 4

- Four-part intro to vegetarianism including lectures, cooking class and dinner-discussion (Pamela Rice speaks on Jan 26 at 7:30; other sessions Jan 19 at 7:30, Jan 29 at 3:30 and Feb 4 at 6:30), at Integral Yoga, 227 W. 13th Street. Cost: \$85. Info: (212) 929-0586.

Sat, Jan 22

- Ayurvedic cooking class, 3:30 to 6:30 at Integral Yoga, 227 W. 13th Street. Cost: \$45. Info: (212) 929-0586.

Sun, Jan 23

- VegOut vegan potluck, 5 p.m., at the Lesbian and Gay Center, One Little West 12th Street. Info: (212) 802-8655.

Thurs, Jan 27

- VVS volunteers' night, 6 p.m. at the veggie center, 150 Fifth Avenue. Info: (212) 414-9100.

Sun, Jan 30

- Whole Foods Project cabaret supper, 6:30 at Rutgers Church, 236 W. 73rd Street. Cost: \$15; WFP clients \$5. Info: (718) 832-6628.

Thurs, Feb 3

- Big Apple Vegetarians dinner in honor of Louis Warter's 100th birthday, 6:30 at Brownie's Café, 74 Trinity Place. Cost: \$20. RSVP: (212) 715-8642.

Wed, Feb 9

- Sierra Club NYC Vegetarian Outings Chinese New Year

party, 6:30 at VP3, 33 Mott Street. Cost: \$20. Info: (See Jan 12.)

Sun, Feb 20

- WFP cabaret. (See Jan 30.)

Sat, Feb 26

- Ayurvedic cooking class at Integral Yoga. (See Jan 22.)

Sun, Feb 27

- VegOut vegan potluck. (See Jan 23.)

Mon, July 10-Sun, July 16

- Thirty-fourth World Vegetarian Congress, in Toronto, Canada. Info: (416) 544-9800.

For more NYC-area vegetarian events and classes, contact:

Big Apple Vegetarians: (212) 715-8642.

Central Jersey Vegetarian Group: (908) 281-6388.

Earthsavve Hudson Valley: (914) 472-7392.

Earthsavve Long Island: (516) 421-3791.

Iron Vegans' Raw Food Connection: (718) 263-7160.

Natural Gourmet School: (212) 645-5170.

Sierra Club NYC Vegetarian Outings Committee: (718) 805-4260 (Mon-Thurs only).

Veggie Singles: (718) 437-0190.

VegOut: (212) 802-8655.

Whole Foods Project: (718) 832-6628



To add an event, receive updates or learn about VivaVegie outreach activities, contact:

apress@nycbiz.com



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New York, NY 10012-0005

NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS: IT'S TIME TO RENEW IF YOUR LABEL READS FEBRUARY 2000 OR EARLIER