

Take Charge of Your Health

by *Delisa Renideo*

Are you feeling vulnerable these days? The global economy seems to be collapsing, many are losing their jobs, health care costs continue to rise while good medical insurance coverage is harder to get, and good health seems to be increasingly elusive. More and more people are becoming obese, the incidence of diabetes is rising, and heart disease and cancer continue to take a devastating toll on individuals and families. If we lose our jobs, we'll also lose our insurance, and then we'll be living in fear that our health problems may also cause our financial ruin. Feeling helpless to do anything about the situation may be the worst part of it all.

In the midst of all this doom and gloom, I want to offer a huge ray of hope.

Even though we may not be able to change the economy, we CAN change the likelihood that we will suffer from the most common health problems in America. These problems are not caused by bad luck, or even primarily by bad genes. The most

significant contributor to all these problems is something that is totally within our own power to control: the food we eat.

The National Cancer Institute estimates that between 1/3 and 2/3 of cancers are caused by our diets. This is far more than that caused by tobacco. We all know

that if we smoke, we need to quit, but we don't often hear much about how important it is to change our diet.

The Standard American Diet (the SAD diet) is based upon fat-laden animal products and processed foods. The closest many children get to a vegetable is French fries. The saturated fat in the SAD diet clogs our arteries, impairs our immune system, interferes with our bodies' utilization of insulin, and leads to over-

weight. The SAD diet is also extremely low in fiber, or naturally occurring plant roughage. This not only causes sluggish elimination, but also contributes to a build-up of toxins in our bodies.

See ***Take Charge***, continued on page 4



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The Adventures of a Vegan "Newbie"

By Pam Horton

In early October, my daughter, Summer, announced that I was to enroll both of us in The Cancer Project's cooking class taught by Delisa Renideo in Wasilla. My daughter had taken the class before and was anxious to repeat her enjoyable experience and to have me learn more about what might be a better way to handle my type 2 diabetes. While we drove around on various errands she began reading me excerpts from the Reversing Diabetes book she had purchased and frankly, just to shut her up, I called and enrolled. "I'll go," I said, "but I'm not going to like the food." My grandfather was a butcher and I was raised in a family where we ate lots of meat with potatoes and corn, peas, or beans. That was it except for an occasional jello salad with canned fruit. I did want to learn how to cook a few more vegetables so it was worth a try.

What I discovered was not at all what I expected. First of all, the students were an eclectic group, some with a variety of health problems and many others who just heard what a wonderful class this was. Some were there at the suggestion of their

doctor while the majority planned to report to their doctor how well things were going. I was never disappointed. It was a treat to



have Delisa present a short video with health information when class opened and then for her to spend the rest of the two hours actually preparing delicious dishes with no meat or dairy products. I would always mumble to my daughter, "I'm not going to like this one," and then when I dished up my plate I found it was all tasty and good. It took two weeks for my taste buds to change from wanting hamburgers and French fries to craving fresh

vegetables and fruits. I couldn't get enough of them. I found myself glancing into other shopping carts and thinking, "How can they eat that?"



It was hard to believe what a difference the vegan diet made on my type 2 diabetes. After eight weeks of eating a vegan diet, my A1C glucose test went from 8.5 down to 6.7 which is a huge step towards the 6.5 that the doctor keeps asking for. I was able to drop three of my medications and cut down 18 units of insulin. And even on less medication, I was keeping my blood sugars under 120, 99% See ***Vegan "Newbie,"*** continued on page 9

Nutrition Nuggets – Lessons That Last

by Neal Barnard, M.D.

Recently, while traveling in the Midwest to give a series of lectures, I stopped for lunch at a Mexican restaurant. A heavy-set man walked in. The hostess knew him and warmly asked how he was doing. “Well, I’m above the grass!” he said. He was to have his fifth chemotherapy treatment the next day. It’s a precautionary step, he said, in case any of the cancer cells have spread. She seated him at a table, and a few minutes later a friend joined him. He once again said, “Well, I’m above the grass!” and went through the same details.

I found myself thinking about how common and devastating cancer is. About the hopes we have for medical treatment, and about how few people realize that the foods we eat play a role in our risk.

The server arrived to take their order. And the man said, “I’ll have the shredded beef burrito with extra shredded beef.” He repeated it: “Extra shredded beef.” The poor man had probably been told that he needed extra protein to fight cancer, and had no idea how foods can influence cancer survival.

For dinner that evening, I was on the road and pressed for time, so I picked

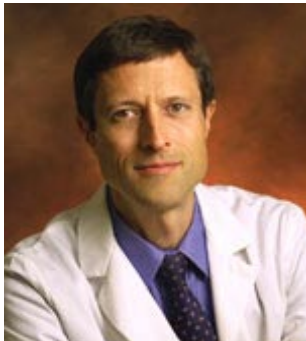
up a submarine sandwich. The server was surprised that I wanted only veggies—and no meat or cheese. “I couldn’t live without meat,” he said. So I gently pointed out that there are many advantages to getting away from meat. Given that he had more than a few extra pounds, I thought the idea might have some appeal.

“I’ve been eating a lot of turkey,” he said, “And I’ve actually lost 60 pounds.” I was impressed, until he added, “Of course, I also had a gastric bypass.”

Throughout my upbringing, I ate very much as these men ate. Meat was front and center on the plate, and a meatless meal was hard to imagine. What I have found surprising, though, is that most people continue to eat that way today. Despite the wealth of research studies linking a meaty diet to heart disease, cancer, obesity, and diabetes—not to mention grotesque cruelty to animals, water pollution, and global climate change—most people remain undeterred.

The problem is early learning. By the time children reach their 10th birthdays, most have developed the eating habits they will carry through the rest of their lives. See ***Lessons that Last***, continued on page 11

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Take Charge, continued from the front page:

The solution is to build our diets around the foods that are naturally low in fat and high in fiber: plants. If we build our diets around the “new four food groups:” vegetables, fruits, grains, and legumes, we will begin seeing and feeling positive changes in our health almost immediately. The fiber fills us up so we feel full, and yet the calorie content is low because the fat content is low. We begin to lose weight, our immune system gets a boost because of all the antioxidants and Phytochemicals found in plants, and we utilize insulin better, which can prevent and even reverse diabetes. Our cholesterol drops and our previously clogged arteries actually begin to open up again. The meals are colorful, flavorful, and varied. And to top it off, our grocery bills usually actually drop!

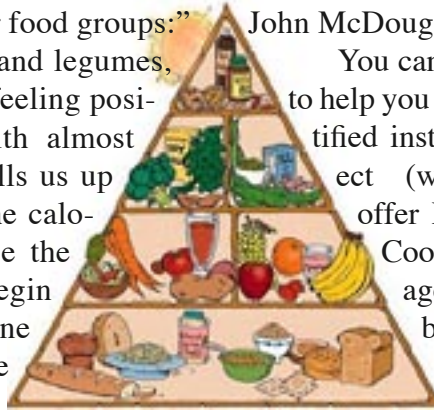
There are many good books that can help you learn how and why to change from the SAD diet to a plant-based diet of minimally processed foods. One that I highly recommend is *The China Study*,

by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D. Other great books include those written by Dr. Neal Barnard, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, and Dr. John McDougall.

You can also take a series of classes to help you change your diet. I am a certified instructor for The Cancer Project (www.cancerproject.org) and offer Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes in both Anchorage and the Valley. New series begin the last week of February. You can contact me at 907-373-1526 for more information or to register.

The best insurance plan in the world can't make us healthy, but if we give our bodies the nutrition, exercise and rest they need, we have amazing recuperative abilities. We don't need to live in fear. We can take charge of our own health by eating an optimal diet and getting healthy exercise. Positive changes are in the air, so let's also make positive changes in our lives!

(To find out more about the vegan food pyramid above, see: www.fitnessand-freebies.com/fitness/veganfpg.html)



Vegan Food Pyramid



Want to Introduce Friends or Family to Veganism?

Give them a copy of the Alaska Vegetarian Society newsletter, email them the link to the AlaskaVeg.org website, bring them to an AVS potluck dinner, give them a gift from the AVS book table, or take them to a series of The Cancer Project classes. What a great way to show your love!



Bird Telepathy

by Rae Sikora

Most people think of certain animals as valuable, worthwhile, feeling and intelligent and deny this in other animals. While intelligence is not a measure of worth, it is used as a measure by much of society.

Scientists have defined intelligence as including many different abilities, including:

- Memory
- Anticipating the future
- Making and Using Tools
- Learning (from others, from past experiences, by trial and error, and by instinct)
- Reasoning and problem solving
- Understanding concepts and categories
- Making and using tools
- Emotion, especially emotions seen as “higher,” such as altruism, an aesthetic sense, and a sense of fairness or justice.
- Playing
- Appreciating aesthetics
- Engaging in deceptive behavior
- Abstract thinking
- Spatial cognition
- Altruism
- Responding flexibly to changing circumstances
- Communicate with language
- Understanding what others are thinking

Humans are slowly coming to understand that all species have these abilities,

from the tiniest fish to the largest mammal.

My partner and I were walking in the woods a few weeks ago and a small zebra finch kept landing within a few inches of our faces on branches. We tried putting our finger out for him to land on, but he refused



to land there. He kept chirping loudly and followed us for the entire walk.

Zebra finches are beautiful red/orange beaked birds

with golden yellow feet and legs. They are native to Australia, not the USA. This little fellow had been someone’s captive bird.

I say captive bird rather than pet bird, because, given the choice, all birds would choose a life where they can use their wings, form relationships with others of their choosing and live in their natural habitat. We have grown accustomed to birds in small cages and fish in small glass boxes. But, if you have ever seen fish in their lake, ocean or river world or watched birds living free in their natural habitat, you know that there is no comparison.

At the end of our walk, I rushed home and got some thistle seed, hoping to feed our new little friend and get him to a *See **Bird Telepathy**, continued on page 6*



Bird Telepathy, continued from page 5:

warm place. When I returned to the woods, he was gone. I left a platter of seed, hoping he would return for it.

I researched Zebra Finches and discovered that they need much warmer temperatures than the frigid temps that were predicted here for that night. I went to look for him again, but did not find him. That night I thought about how disorienting it must be for this little bird. None of his own kind around, accustomed to humans feeding him and now finding himself out in the freezing rain and snow.

The intelligence of birds has been proven around the world in field studies and laboratories. They are smart and adaptable and care deeply for each other. Birds with the necessary vocal capabilities have been taught our language (we humans have yet to understand the language of most other species). The birds who have learned our language use words in sentence structures and in contexts that they were not originally taught. They have a sense of humor and the same broad spectrum of emotions that we humans have.

Many studies find that birds also possess telepathy. The N’kisi Project studied Aimee Morgana and her language-using parrot N’kisi. In the study, N’kisi would

often describe what Aimee was thinking about, reading, or looking at in situations where there were no possible ordinary clues (they were on separate floors of a building). In “double blind” tests, Aimee was videotaped as she looked at images in envelopes that she had no previous knowledge of. In a series of timed two-minute sessions, Aimee was videotaped as she looked at these images, while another synchronized camera filmed N’kisi in his cage. N’kisi’s responses were relevant to what Aimee was looking at in the photos. For example,

in one image of a car, the driver’s head was sticking out of the car window. Just as Aimee noticed this unusual detail, N’kisi said “Uh-oh, careful, you put your head out.”

How different would our world be if we could understand the languages of the many species around us? Imagine a world where their desires are heard and understood by us. Could we imprison them, hurt or kill them, eat them or treat them as mere feeling-less things if they spoke to us in our own language?

Perhaps we could even respect the life of the little Zebra Finch enjoying his own life in Australia, and he wouldn’t be out in the cold right now, alone, and just trying to survive.

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Animal Quotes

Can one regard a fellow creature as a property item, an investment, a piece of meat, an “it,” without degenerating into cruelty towards that creature?

--Karen Davis, author of *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs*

A reduction in beef and other meat consumption is the most potent single act you can take to halt the destruction of our environment and preserve our natural resources.

Our choices do matter. What’s healthiest for each of us personally is also healthiest for the life support system of our precious, but wounded planet.”

--John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America*

The Everyone’s A Winner Table!

Most of us have tools, gadgets, pots and pans, small appliances, etc. in our kitchens that we no longer use, but they are still perfectly good. With the New Year, you may have resolved to simplify your life and get rid of some of your clutter. You could just take it all to the thrift store, or. . . . you could bring it to an Alaska Vegetarian Society potluck and contribute it to our Everyone’s A Winner Table!

So far, we have 2 winners: the person who feels good about cleaning out their cupboards and drawers and the person who finds just what they were looking for. But we’re not done ---- we have more winners!

The proceeds of the sale will go to the Alaska Vegetarian Society, helping us do more to make this a healthier and more compassionate world.

So our organization wins, and each person who is helped in choosing and sustaining a healthy plant-based diet wins, and the animals win, and the planet wins as our

plant-based diets make a much gentler impact on the earth.

To contribute an item for our Everyone’s A Winner Table:

- Be sure it is in working order.
- Be sure it is clean.
- Price the item yourself prior to bringing it.
- Include the instruction book, if you have one.
- **If the item does not sell, you need to take it back home with you.** You can either bring it to the next potluck or donate it elsewhere, but don’t leave it for someone else to take care of.

We will be limiting items to those used for food preparation and serving. They can be small, e.g. spatulas and measuring cups, or more expensive items like kitchen appliances.

Purchases can be made with cash, checks, or credit cards.

Welcome To Our New Family Members!

The Alaska Vegetarian Society joyfully announces our adoption of two rescued turkeys and one rescued chicken, now residing at Farm Sanctuary in California.



You are welcome to visit them there on your next trip to California. In our next newsletter, we'll have pictures of them and the story of their rescue.

The Alaska Vegetarian Society has a vegan Thanksgiving dinner and celebration each year, and this year we took up a collection to adopt a turkey. It costs \$180 per year to provide care for one turkey. We received such a generous offering, we had enough to adopt two turkeys with enough left over to adopt a chicken, as well!

Watch for pictures in our next newsletter. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and we'll plan to make this one of our Thanksgiving traditions.



www.farmsanctuary.org

V Alaska Vegetarian Society

Mission Statement:

To create a compassionate and sustainable world by inspiring and supporting reverence for all life and the adoption of a plant-based diet.

Who to Call



- Elaine Albertson: AVS Newsletter Editor.....746-4668
- Peggy Robinson: Treasurer & Membership.....373-1901
- Toni Truesdell: Advertising Coordinator.....745-4404
- Delisa Renideo: Rays of Hope Director.....373-1526
- Charlie Renideo: Bookstore and Website.....373-1526

AdoptAFriend.net

Did you know there's a website where you can:

- Look for companion animals from several local rescue groups.
- Find links to Valley animal shelters.
- List info about an animal you can no longer keep.
- Save a life and give a home to a furry friend in need.
- Volunteer to be a foster home for homeless animals.
- Post info about animals you have lost or found.
- Donate food, bedding, toys, kennels, leashes, & money.



Vegetarians Needed!

From: Lynsey Kluever Romo
 At: lynseykromo@mail.utexas.edu
 Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 10:07 AM
 Subject: Vegetarians needed for online survey

Hi there,

I am a Ph.D student at The University of Texas at Austin, studying how vegetarians talk about being a vegetarian. Little research exists on this topic, and, as you are a vegetarian, I am very much hoping to get your insight and the insight of any vegetarians you know (e.g., friends, members, customers, volunteers, family, etc.).

When you get a chance, will you please go to:

http://texascommunication.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_bvyubavkEj7c73e&SVID=Prod

and participate in this short survey? If you would forward this information to your friends, post the link on your website or blog, or include it in the next issue of your newsletter, that would be amazing!!

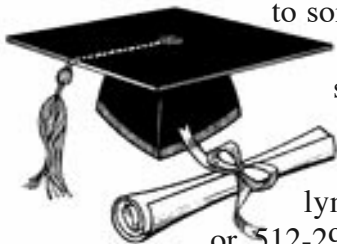
I am trying to capture the experiences of as many vegetarians across the country as possible by early February 2009. At least 250 vegetarians are needed for this study. For the purposes of this study, a vegetarian refers

to someone who doesn't eat meat, but eats dairy and/or eggs, someone who is vegan, and someone who is pescatarian.

Please contact me at lynseykromo@mail.utexas.edu or 512-299-6231 with any questions,

for additional information, or to receive a copy of the survey results.

Thank you.



Vegan "Newbie," continued from page 2:

I would always mumble, "I'm not going to like this," and then I found it was all tasty and good.

of the time. This had been impossible for me, no matter what I tried, before I started eating vegan. After starting the class, I would snack throughout the day and eat much larger meals than before but still kept the blood sugars within control. I was literally stuffed but my blood sugars were right where they should be. I was unable to exercise during this 8 week period due to a medical problem but I still lost 8 pounds, 2.5 inches, and my BMI went down 2.10%.

I am so glad my daughter pushed me into taking the Cancer Project cooking classes which resulted in an entire new lifestyle for me. It was the best Christmas gift she could give me.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: CORN CAKES

a favorite from the kitchen of Elaine Albertson



These tasty griddle cakes are wonderful topped with beans or steamed veggies. Your imagination is the limit. Enjoy!

1 cup whole wheat pastry flour	1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
1 Tbsp granulated sugar	2 tsp baking powder 1/2 tsp salt
1 1/3 cups non-dairy milk	2 Tbsp ground flax seed
1 Tbsp melted margarine	2 cups whole kernel corn

Combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder and salt. Mix together milk, margarine and flax. Add to dry ingredients, stirring well. Add corn and stir. Lightly coat a griddle or frying pan with a small amount of oil and heat over medium heat. (Omit oil if using non-stick surface.) Spoon batter onto griddle to make 4-inch cakes. Cook until golden brown on each side. To make sure they are cooked through, make a slit in the center and check to make sure they are not doughy inside. Makes about 12 griddle cakes. Top with your favorite topping for breakfast, lunch or supper. Yum!



**Michelangelo's
David is to be
returned to Italy
after a two year
tour of the U.S.**



**His Proud
Sponsors were:**



Lessons That Last, continued from page 3:

Government programs that provide food to schools ensure that children are well acquainted with chicken nuggets, burgers, and cheese pizza. Schools have no requirement to serve even a single meatless meal, and any school that does so gets no help from the federal government.

As a result, one in five children is now overweight, and two-thirds will be overweight as adults. One in three will develop diabetes in his or her life. Cancer will strike nearly half of all males and one-third of all females.

This year, Congress will debate

If children do not learn healthful eating in school, they may never learn it at all.

the Child Nutrition Act, which determines the foods that schools serve. It should insist that schools help children get to know healthful choices, whether they are veggie burgers, beans and rice, veggie chili, or simple fruits and vegetables. And Congress should make these foods available and affordable.

Members of Congress are hearing from lobbyists from the meat, dairy, and junk-food industries. They need to hear from parents, grandparents, teachers, school food service workers, and students themselves. **Members of Congress can be reached at 202-224-3121.** Let me encourage you to call to ask that vegetarian meals be required—and funded—in schools. And visit HealthySchoolLunches.org to sign our congressional petition. If children do not learn healthful eating in school, they may never learn it at all.

***Food for Life******Nutrition & Cooking Classes for Cancer Prevention and Survival***

New series of classes beginning in Anchorage and the Valley

• Anchorage •

Prov. Family Medicine Center

1201 E. 36th Ave.

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Begins February 25

Ak Center for Spiritual Living

929 E. 81st Ave., Suite 105

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Begins April 23

• Palmer •

Mat-Su Regional Medical Center (Hospital)

2500 S. Woodworth Loop

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Begins February 26

Each class meets weekly for 7 weeks. Cost: \$90

Pre-registration required!

To register call Delisa or Charlie at 907-373-1526

Happy Valentine's Day
February 14!

Happy Presidents' Day
February 16!

Vegan:

Pronounced **vee'-gun**.

Referring to a vegan diet:

(n) A person who eats no animal-derived products, including meat, fish, dairy products, and eggs or foods containing those ingredients.

(adj.) Containing no ingredient derived from the animal kingdom.

Referring to a vegan lifestyle:

(n) One who chooses a diet and lifestyle free of consuming, using or wearing animal products, and of supporting businesses that exploit animals.

The Alaska Vegetarian Society is non-profit and under the umbrella of Rays of Hope, a 501(c)(3) organization. To join AVS, contact Peggy Robinson at 373-1901, or send an email to peggy@alaskaveg.org.

Upcoming Events



Friday, February 13

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 10:00am, Palmer Public Library meeting room, 655 S. Colony Way, downtown Palmer. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526 to make arrangements to attend.

Friday, February 20

Deadline for articles and information to be included in the November AVS newsletter. Call Elaine at 746-4668, or email to elaine@alaskaveg.org

Wed. & Thur, Feb. 25 & 26 and Thur, Apr. 23

Cancer Project's new series of 7 classes begins, 6:30 - 8:30pm. Fee \$90. Space is limited. For information, see notice on page 7.

Saturday, February 28

AVS potluck dinner, 6:00- 8:00pm at the United Protetant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. There will be informtion, an educational program and opportunities to meet new people. Call 373-1526 for information and for a map, visit: alaskaveg.org/PotluckDinners.html

Alaska
vegetarian
Society

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907-373-1526
www.AlaskaVeg.org