

Green Up Your Life

by Delisa Renideo

This time of year is so exciting to me! My eyes eagerly scan the hillsides for that first hint of green prior to the explosion of green soon to follow. I also begin gazing at my garden plots, still covered with last fall's leaves and winter debris, visualizing the profusion of green growth that will eventually find its way to our dinner table. A few blades of green grass are poking through our still brownish lawn, promising to expand to a carpet of green where we'll play ball with the dogs and eat at our picnic table whenever the weather is nice.

Green means something else these days, as well. By eating a plant-based diet, we are choosing a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Eating plants directly, rather than processing them through an animal and then eating the animal, requires only about 5% of the land area, and also about 5% of the water.



Eating a plant-based diet also limits pollution dramatically because farmed animals produce 130 times



more manure than humans in the U.S. This ends up in our rivers and ground water, as well as affecting air quality. In addition, animal agriculture uses more energy than all forms of transportation combined. So eating a plant-based diet is definitely the "green" thing to do.

Green is a color to maximize in our kitchens, as well. Green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, kale, collards, and lettuce are packed with nutrients. Eat them in salads, steam them lightly, add them to soups, or include a handful in your smoothies. Even though we need to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans, "green leafies" are at the top of the nutrient density charts. Let's eat our greens!

Eating a whole foods, plant-based diet will save you some green, too. Most of us discover that we spend less at the check-out counter after switching from the Standard American Diet (SAD) of highly processed foods and animal products. See ***Green Up Your Life***, cont'd on pg. 6

Eating a whole foods, plant-based diet will save you some green, too.



The 35th annual Vegetarian Summerfest conference is set for July 8 - 12, 2009 at the Conference Center on the University of Pittsburgh campus at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A few Alaska Vegetarian Society members are making plans to attend. Wouldn't you like to join them?

The five-day conference includes sessions on health and nutrition, lifestyle issues, cooking, recipes, exercise and fitness, animal rights, compassionate living, Earth stewardship, and even more!

Hundreds of attendees, from beginner vegetarians to seasoned vegans will be there. Participants include individuals of all ages - middle aged professionals, families with children, college students and senior citizens. And there will be areas of interest and social gatherings for everyone - singles, couples and families.

All meals are included in the registration cost of the conference (as well as on-campus housing). Prepared under the direction of International Gold Medal Winning chef Ken Bergeron, all the food is vegan. There will be a wide range of culinary choices including raw foods and salad bars,

and the prepared dishes include many organic ingredients.

The conference features experts in the fields of health, nutrition, animal rights, the environment, exercise and related lifestyle areas, plus talented chefs. The following speakers are just a few of those already confirmed, and many more are expected to be added.

Maribeth Abrams	Amie Hamlin
Phil Allamong	Megan Kelly
Jonathan Balcombe	Dan Ladermann
John Bolus	Amy Lanou
Patti Breitman	Vance Lehmkuhl
Harold Brown	Howard Lyman
Fran Costigan	Heather Mills
Brenda Davis	Isa Chandra Moskowitz
Hans Diehl	Terry Hope Romero
Kathy Freston	Kerrie Saunders
Michael Greger	Rae Sikora
Paulette Chandler	Jo Stepaniak

For prices and registration applications, more information on speakers and conference activities, and a questions/answers section about this exciting event, go online to www.vegetariansummerfest.org.

HOW I BECAME VEGAN

by Nancy Guiley

My mother is a nutritionist. I grew up eating wholesome food made “from scratch” -- never do I remember my mother making a meal out of a box. For years I believed that I was eating in a healthy way. However, reading Susan Powter’s book, *Stop the Insanity*, years ago, convinced me that vegetarian eating was healthier (it was definitely lower in fat!), so I removed meat from my plate. What was missing for me, though, was the ability to cook a variety of vegetarian meals; as a result, out of boredom, I gradually slipped back into eating poultry and fish -- although I never returned to consuming red meat.

Fast forward to April 2004. While power walking and listening to NPR on my headphones one evening, I heard about Rays of Hope’s vegan dinner to be held the following Saturday. I made my reservation, and since my 15 year old daughter, Keeley, was in the car with me that night, she and I went to the dinner together. The feast was delicious and beautifully served, with china, cloth napkins, and flower centerpieces. The dinner was fol-

lowed by an interactive informational game designed to highlight the many benefits and reasons to be vegan. And imagine my delight when I was able to register for a vegan cooking class the next week! The missing piece of my vegan “puzzle” was about to be completed.



By the conclusion of the dinner, I had decided to make the vegan choice immediately; and Keeley said upon getting in the car, “Well, I’m never eating meat again!”

By the conclusion of the dinner, I had decided to make the vegan choice immediately; however, I did not know whether or not Keeley was of the same mind. That question was answered immediately and joyfully when she said upon getting in the car, “Well, I’m never eating meat again!”

Since that time, we have discovered more and more delicious recipes, met fantastic people who have become some of our closest friends, and we have not regretted for a moment our momentous “overnight” decision to eat all plant-based food. Although there are many “doorways” to the vegan world -- some enter because of health or weight management, some because of a love of all animals, and others because of a

See ***How I Became Vegan***, cont’d on pg. 5

Body Mass

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Nutrition Nuggets – A Really BIG Problem

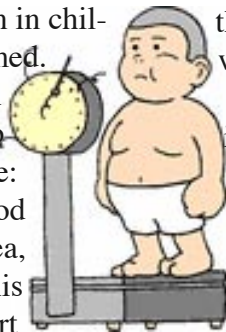
by Delisa Renideo

We're all seeing it, and some of us are feeling it. Obesity is on the rise at a rate that places it into the category of an epidemic. Between 1980 and 2000, obesity doubled. As it becomes increasingly common in children, we have begun to get alarmed.

The health hazards associated with excess weight are now beginning to affect younger and younger people: diabetes, heart disease, elevated blood pressure and cholesterol, sleep apnea, cancer, and bone problems. All this in addition to the general discomfort and inconvenience of carrying extra weight. And to top it off, the medical costs relating to obesity have reached \$100 billion a year. We have a BIG problem!

The good news is that each of us can make lifestyle choices that will prevent obesity or reverse it if we are already affected. A 100% plant-based diet, (a vegan diet) of minimally processed whole plant foods without added oils provides all the nutrients

we need in abundance without excess calories. A vegan diet is naturally high in fiber and low in fat, which is the perfect combination for a healthful, satisfying eating plan that will help us all maintain a healthy weight for life.



On page 4 at left, we're including a chart of the Body Mass Index (BMI) which is the standard way of determining whether one is overweight or not. Just find your height in inches on the left and your weight in pounds across the top. Where the 2 lines intersect will be your BMI. This chart works for both men and women.

Short term efforts to lose weight never pay off. We each need to make the commitment to choose a healthy diet FOR LIFE. And I mean that both ways!

Add some regular exercise to this way of eating and enjoy the good health, high energy, and improved appearance we all desire.

HOW I BECAME VEGAN, *continued from page 3*

concern for the earth -- once the vegan lifestyle has been embraced, all of these reasons serve to deepen one's vegan commitment. Thanks to those at Rays of Hope for that life-changing dinner and for our new lives since then.

Next month Keeley will share her experience of becoming vegan. Needless to say, even though we became vegan the same night, our experiences were a bit different! Stay tuned!



Green Up Your Life, *continued from the front page*

In addition to the direct savings, just think about how costly it is to get sick. Even one day in the hospital averages \$2000, according to Wikipedia. And that's not counting tests, treatments, surgery, and medications. Choosing optimal nutrition greatly reduces our chances of getting heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. I, for one, would much rather spend my money on delicious, healthy food than on medical bills!

If you haven't tried your hand at gardening yet, (or even if you have.), I really encourage you to find a place to plant some veggies. We are so blessed in Alaska to have loooooong hours of daylight that make our gardens grow so fast you can just about see them growing! You can start with something small and manageable if you are new to gardening. Raised beds work well in small areas, and even



ate a healthy, organic garden.

If gardening isn't a possibility for you, or you have only a small garden, you may want to consider joining a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) where you can buy a subscription to fresh produce that

is available weekly, all summer long. We have 3 CSA's in the Palmer, AK area: Arctic Organics, Spring Creek Farm, and Kenley's Alaskan Vegetables and Flowers. Palmer also has 2 U Pick farms: Arctic Organics and Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm. Another option is to visit the local farmer's markets.

These are available in Wasilla, Palmer, and Anchorage. In any case, be sure to take advantage of the wonderful vegetables that are produced locally this summer. May is a great time to maximize the green in our lives. We've made it through another winter and life is ready to come bursting out all over. Let's live it up!

We are so blessed in Alaska to have loooooong hours of daylight that make our gardens grow so fast.

as planting lettuce and spinach in a pot instead of flowers. (Or even along with your flowers.) I highly recommend reading the book, *Teaming With Microbes*, in order to understand how to work *with* nature to cre-

container gardening can provide some delectable results. It can be as simple

Who to Call

- Elaine Albertson: AVS Newsletter Editor746-4668
- Peggy Robinson: Treasurer and Membership373-1901
- Toni Truesdell: Advertising Coordinator745-4404
- Delisa Renideo: Rays of Hope Director373-1526
- Charlie Renideo: Bookstore and Website373-1526

March AVS Potluck Recap

by Elaine Albertson

Have you missed an AVS potluck recently? I'll bet you wondered what good food, table discussions, demonstration and program information you missed. Our meetings are filled with all kinds of unforgettable experiences, so we've decided to start including a summary of the last get-together in each issue of the newsletter. So now, even if family obligations, a bad cold, rotten weather, or work schedules keep you from attending, you'll find out what you missed by reading about it in this new column.

Phil Eherenman gave an interesting demonstration on sprouting, and shared techniques to produce great-tasting home-grown sprouts, including radish, broccoli and alfalfa.

During dinner, we discussed three questions at each of the tables:

- What experiences have you had that demonstrate that non-human animals have feelings?
- Have you witnessed any interspecies relationships? e.g. cats & dogs, horses, goats, or wild animals?
- What do you see as the positive and negative aspects of humans' relationships with other animals?

After we ate, Peggy Robinson led the whole group discussion.

Toni Truesdell read her beautiful poem, "Sight Restored," in which she shared her personal awakening to the plight of animals.

Special thanks to Kevin Prange for the beautiful tray of sushi. Everyone LOVED it! And to Toni for the lovely table centerpieces.



Earth Day Quotes

"Earth Day observance should encourage everyone to leave adequate natural resources for our children and grandchildren by making needed changes in our driving, shopping, recycling and our diet.

Yes, our diet. Meat and dairy production dumps more animal waste, crop debris, fertilizers, pesticides and other pollutants into our waterways than all other human activities combined."

~ *Preston McCormak, 4/19/09*
Salt Lake City

"The roots of the biodiversity crisis are not 'out there' in the forest or on the savannah, but embedded in the way we live."

~ *World Resources Institute*

"American feed (for livestock) takes so much energy to grow that it might as well be a petroleum byproduct."

~ *The WorldWatch Institute*

"If present trends of meat-eating continue, by 2050 the world's livestock will be consuming as much as 4 billion people do."

~ *Colin Tudge, 2004*

"If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

~ *Anonymous*



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

• **Anchorage** •

Providence Cancer Center

3851 Piper St. Bldg. U2
 Room 281 (Media Center)
 Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30pm
 June 8 - July 27, 2009

• **Palmer** •

Mat-Su Regional

Medical Center (Hospital)

2500 S. Woodworth Loop
 Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30pm
 June 9 - July 28, 2009

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

Pre-registration required!

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

AVS 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, May 22

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

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 10:00am. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526.

Saturday, May 30

AVS potluck dinner, 6:00- 8:30pm at the United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. There will be information, an educational program and opportunities to meet new people. For information and a map, visit: alaskaveg.org/PotluckDinners.html or call 373-1526.

Coming Soon!

AVS is having a garage sale in June. If you can help, have items to donate to the sale, or can offer a location to have it, please call Delisa at 373-1526.

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.

5010 Lakeside Drive
 Wasilla, AK 99654

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www.AlaskaVeg.org