

2009

October

# V Alaska S Vegetarian Society

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

by Delisa Renideo

While the battle over health insurance options rages, we have carefully kept our collective eyes averted from the elephant in the room. And what is this elephant? It is the fact that the American health crisis is of our own making and we could turn this crisis around by changing our diets and lifestyles. Instead of acknowledging this elephant, we have tacitly agreed instead to discuss and argue over the most fair way to pay for medical treatments for what are largely preventable diseases.

As tragic as it is for people to be unable to obtain medical care, as tragic as it is for people to go bankrupt trying to pay for unbelievably expensive medical treatments, it is even more tragic that with or without medical care, Americans are suffering from chronic, debilitating, painful, and often disfiguring diseases at an alarming rate. Most tragic of all, however, is the fact that we continue

***Catching a disease in it's early stages is not prevention.***

to unwittingly plant the seeds of these diseases in our children in our homes, in our schools, and yes, even in our hospitals by feeding them high fat, salty, sugary, processed foods

***Rarely does the word "prevention" refer to lifestyle choices that truly prevent disease.***



and animal products high in calories and low in nutrients. This diet leads to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, multiple sclerosis, and Alzheimer's Disease, just to name some of them. Until we address the root causes of these conditions, all the drugs and surgery in the world will not return us to health.

I hear the word "prevention" bandied around quite often in our current health care debate. But rarely does it refer to lifestyle choices that truly prevent disease. Instead, we hear about mammograms, Pap smears, colonoscopies, and PSA screening. These are all medical tests that detect illness. If you can detect it, see ***The Elephant...***, continued on page 8

# Healthy Humans, Healthy World

by Peggy Robinson

In our growing ecological awareness, many people are changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs, driving fuel efficient automobiles, recycling, composting and generally trying to reduce their carbon footprint. Many businesses marketing “green” and/or organic have become popular and profitable. While these choices are helpful, the greatest effect on the health of the planet and the health of our bodies will come through our dietary choices. Today global warming and health care are at the top of our national concerns. Global warming, erosion of top soil, loss of biodiversity, and acidification of our oceans (the destruction of our planet) and disease (the destruction of our bodies) all have the same root cause: the food we are serving ourselves and our children.

The World Health Organization tells us that 60% of the world populations are malnourished. Yet the grains consumed by the 9 billion U.S. livestock could feed 840 million people following a plant-based diet. Ecologist David Pimentel PhD, from Cornell University, tells us:

- Fossil fuel used to produce animal protein is 11 times greater than that used to obtain the same amount of plant-based protein.
- 1 kg of animal protein required 100 times more water to produce than 1 kg of plant protein.
- Our food has traveled at least 1,500 miles before it is consumed (about 4 calories of en-

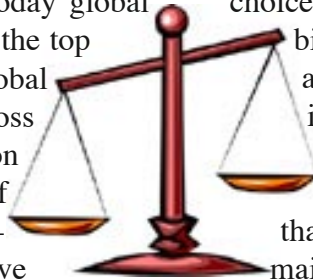
ergy to transport for every 1 calorie we get from the food).

As we pause to contemplate if our meal is energy efficient, we realize our food production is draining the energy and resources of this country and our planet.

As unsustainable as food production is in this country, an even greater problem exists in food consumption. Our current health care crisis is a reflection of our food choices. American are not sick and debilitated because they do not have access to a physician or the latest in pharmaceuticals. We are sick because we continue to choose processed junk and animal foods that are inexpensive to purchase mainly due to agricultural subsidies.

If Americans realized the real cost of their food without the subsidies, they would naturally reduce their dependence on junk food and animal products. This reduction would occur similar to the way millions of Americans stopped smoking due to the cost of a pack of cigarettes. It is no wonder our bodies malfunction on a steady diet of highly processed foods void of nutrients. By choosing high nutrient-density fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes closest to their most natural form, many Americans will realize their dream of a well-nourished body full of energy, stamina and mental clarity.

**We have the power to choose our future.**



# My Vegan Story

by *Kandis Gilman*

I'm Kandis, a student of natural health at Clayton College, single parent, trained herb specialist and have been eating a whole foods diet for over 8 years. My

son and I both had respiratory issues as a result of consuming dairy and cut it out of our diet about 3 years ago and have had wonderful results in our respiratory health. Almost 2 years ago I discovered the 'raw foods diet' online and for a month ate a diet consisting of only fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds and I felt incredible. About 2 months after that my sister called me and had me watch "Meet your Meat" on YouTube. That video left



**This way of life sparks people's interest and it makes a powerful ripple.**

me crying and mortified, I have never purchased any animal products since I watched that video, it had the biggest impact on me over anything else. I then began attending the Alaska Vegetarian Society potlucks and learning the health effects of consuming animal products, things I had never even heard of, things that made perfect sense.

I want to be an example of health, so naturally, clogging my arteries, acidifying my body, and leaching calcium out of my bones at the expense of precious life, land,

and moral value had no place in my life. I realized that I had a choice and that I do make a difference. I realized that choosing a plant-based diet was a path to higher consciousness.

I continued to eat a diet high in raw foods and for the past 3 months I have been eating a raw vegan diet of fruit, vegetables, sprouts, seeds, nuts and cultured foods. I feel fantastic, healthy and empowered.

My choice of veganism gives me the power to stand in my choices proudly. I have lost some weight and people definitely notice a glow and a look of wellness in me that I never had before. I suffered from severe asthma for over 10 years and

no longer carry an inhaler; I used to have extreme highs and lows in mood (which I think was caused by dairy and refined sugars) which I no longer experience. I live in a balance that the S.A.D. could never give me. I believe food is our medicine and the key to good physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health. I am proud to be a part of change. This way of life sparks people's interest and it makes a powerful ripple. Knowledge of truth is what leads me down this path, and truth is hard to ignore.



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

• ***Anchorage*** •  
**BP Building**

900 E. Benson Blvd.  
 Conference Room A

**Jan. 7-Feb. 25, 2010**

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

• ***Wasilla*** •  
**Dayspring**

**Enrichment Center**

1/2 mile, Edlund Road

**Jan. 6-Feb. 24, 2010**

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

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

**Pre-registration  
 is required!**

**To register  
 contact Delisa at  
 907-373-1526 or  
 delisa@yestolife.info**

## ***Healthy Holiday Cooking Classes***



Most of us have been expanding our culinary repertoire of healthy foods to eat on a daily basis: soups, salads, casseroles, and even desserts. But when Thanksgiving and Christmas come around we may find ourselves in a quandary. How can we take part in the traditions we have grown to enjoy and still maintain our commitment to conscious eating and good health?

Delisa Renideo will help you bring tradition and healthy living together in the upcoming two-class series offered in both Anchorage and the Valley. The Healthy Holiday Cooking Class will show you how to make a complete holiday meal with a centerpiece “Holiday Roast” with stuffing, yams, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry relish, fruit salad, and pumpkin pie. This feast will fit the healthy criteria of being 100 percent plant-based, low in fat, high in fiber, and exceptionally delicious!

Whether you’ll be cooking at home over the holidays or taking food to someone else’s house, this class will prepare you to enjoy the food without compromising your health or your values.

- **Anchorage:** Providence Cancer Center, Wednesdays, November 11 and 18, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
- **Wasilla:** Dayspring Enrichment Center, Thursdays, November 12 and 19, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**Registration fee:** \$40 for two classes.

Pre-registration required.

**Call Delisa at 907-373-1526.**



**Vegetarian Awareness Activities you can do alone or with a group during the month of October:**

- Wear informative vegetarian message T-shirts throughout the month.
- Display World Vegetarian Day / Vegetarian Awareness Month posters at libraries, supermarkets, health food stores, & other appropriate public areas.
- Invite friends and family home for a vegan celebration meal.
- Ask libraries (public, college, high school, etc) to set up a display of their vegetarian titles.
- Encourage restaurants, and health food stores to publicize their vegetarian options.
- Host a screening of vegetarian and related documentaries or films for friends and family members.
- Write a letter to the editor announcing these occasions and tell how vegetarianism has benefited you.
- Ask bookstores to set up a display of vegetarian cookbooks and to offer special discounts for them.
- Leaflet at fairs, malls, or at other public events

**Alaska**  
**V** *Vegetarian* **S** *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.



**Vegetarian Awareness Month**

North American Vegetarian Society  
[www.navs.org](http://www.navs.org)

**October 2nd World Farm Animals Day**

[www.wfad.org](http://www.wfad.org)

- Animals raised for food account for 98% of all animal abuse and killing in the world.
- More than 55 billion land animals are killed for food each year - that's 150 million/day
- From birth, they are caged & crowded, deprived & drugged, man-handled & mutilated.

Sponsored by:



In Defense of Animals  
[www.idausa.org](http://www.idausa.org)



Farm Animal Rights Movement  
[www.farmusa.org](http://www.farmusa.org)

## Nutrition Nuggets

### **Ground breaking PCRM Study Shows the Dramatic Impact of a Low-Fat Vegan Diet** *by Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)*

More than 20 million Americans have diabetes, a condition that greatly increases the risk of heart problems and other complications. A new study has shown that a low-fat vegan diet treats type 2 diabetes more effectively than a standard diabetes diet and may be more effective than single-agent therapy with oral diabetes drugs. The randomized controlled trial was conducted by doctors and dietitians with PCRM, George Washington University, and the University of Toronto, with funding from the National Institutes of Health and the Diabetes Action Research and Education Foundation.

The study involved 99 individuals in the greater Washington, D.C., area with type 2 diabetes. Half the group was randomly assigned to follow a low-fat vegan diet, with no limits on calories, carbohydrate, or portion sizes. The other study participants were asked to follow a diet based on the American Diabetes Association's (ADA's) guidelines, which involves calorie counting and portion control, but allows most foods, including meats and dairy products, in limited amounts. Participants in both groups followed the diet for 22 weeks and received dietary support in the form of cooking demonstrations, tips on following the diet they were on, and group meetings.

**“I hope this study will rekindle interest in using diet changes first, rather than prescription drugs.”**

While participants in both groups improved, the vegan group experienced significantly greater reductions in A1c (a measure of blood sugar levels over a prolonged period), weight, body mass index, waist circumference, and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.

Specifically, excluding the participants who changed or reduced their medication, A1c fell 1.23 points in the vegan group, compared with 0.38 points in the ADA group. Those in the vegan group dropped an average of 6.5 kg (14.3 pounds) each, while those on the ADA diet lost about 3.1 kg (6.8 pounds). Among those who did not change lipid-lowering medications, LDL cholesterol dropped 21.2 percent in the group following the vegan diet, and 10.7 percent in the ADA group.

“The diet appears remarkably effective, and all the side effects are good ones—especially weight loss and lower cholesterol,” said lead researcher Neal D. Barnard, M.D., PCRM president and adjunct associate professor of medicine at George Washington University. “I hope this study will rekindle interest in using diet changes first, rather than prescription drugs.”

(Study conducted in 2006. Article from [www.pcrm.org](http://www.pcrm.org).)

## BOOK REVIEW

### The End of Overeating

by David Kessler, MD, reviewed by Jeff Arndt

David Kessler, the Food and Drug Commissioner under the Clinton and Bush administrations, has written a fascinating book that looks at how and why so many Americans have succumbed to what he calls “conditioned hyper-eating,” and how those afflicted can extricate themselves from this health-eroding syndrome.

Though he does not write from the vegan perspective, Kessler helps us understand how the food and advertising industries combine to addict people to unhealthy eating. He sheds light on how difficult it is to avoid unhealthy foods and alter eating habits. But he does offer a clear set of steps that motivated individuals can follow to help them move away from conditioned hyper-eating and towards healthier eating.

When fat, sugar, and salt are combined, they interact with the opioid circuits in the brain. The result is a near immediate burst of pleasure. We want to repeat that experience, and we can, simply by eating more of the food that triggered the pleasure. The more we eat the kind of food that triggers that pleasure

**Kessler offers a clear set of steps that motivated individuals can follow to help them move away from conditioned hyper-eating and towards healthier eating.**

response, the more deeply ingrained this pattern of eating becomes. The body’s self-regulating mechanisms gradually short-circuit and are replaced by reward driven eating. Because the “food” is unnaturally calorically dense and designed to be eaten quickly and effortlessly, the ability of the body to create satiety signals to get you to stop eating are overridden.

The food industry knows all this and designs “foods” to get and keep you there.” The advertising industry is in collusion in the sense that they disseminate the cues to hyper-eat, which are often visual, but sometimes olfactory (ever walked by a Cinnabons? That fragrance is no accident). The next time you are driving around town, see if you can go more than a minute without encountering some kind of cue to consume a product with fat, sugar and salt. The grocery store offers a continuous stream of cues. Television cues us at every commercial break.

How do we extricate ourselves from this cycle of hyper-eating? We have to rewire our neural circuitry back to what it once was. Kessler lays out a series of steps that revolve around changing our thoughts, see *Book Review*, continued on page 10



## ***The Elephant in the Room***, continued from the front page:

it's already too late to prevent it. Catching a disease in it's early stages is not prevention. True prevention is based upon making life-style choices to promote health, including a healthy plant-based diet of whole foods which are naturally low in fat and high in fiber, regular physical activity, avoidance of tobacco and other drugs, and a positive mental outlook.

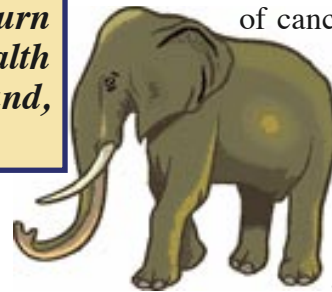
Imagine, for a moment, a community where house fires were extremely common and everyone knew someone who had burned to death in their home. Let's also imagine that it was common practice for people in this community to smoke in bed. Would we recommend that everyone buy more smoke detectors? Would we debate how to pay for the increasing costs of the ever-growing fire department? Would it be too radical to educate the people in the community about the dangers of smoking in bed?

We all know someone who has died of cancer or heart disease, or who suffers the daily struggle with diabetes. And yet, I sometimes hear medical professionals say there is no point asking people to change their diet because they believe they simply won't do it. It is considered "too radical." I'm sure that's true for some people. But

***We just need to provide the information and support needed for people to turn our national health care crisis around, one bite at a time.***

I think we do everyone a great disservice by not providing the best information we have about creating health through optimal nutrition.

As an instructor of the Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes, I've seen hundreds of people radically change their diets from the disease-promoting Standard American Diet (SAD) to a health-promoting diet based upon vegetables, fruits, grains, and legumes. I've seen people get off their blood pressure medications, their cholesterol lowering drugs, and even their diabetes pills and injections. I've seen people lower their PSA levels drastically and reverse the spread



of cancer. I've also seen people's quality of life improve as they lose weight, have more energy, get rid of allergies and arthritis, constipation, and irritable bowel syndrome. And I've seen all these benefits happen while they are thoroughly enjoying the taste and variety of a healthy, whole-foods, plant-based diet. So I don't buy the argument that people won't change. We just need to address the elephant in the room, squarely, and provide the information and support needed for the people in this country to turn our national health care crisis around, one bite at a time.

## HALLOWEEN POTLUCK

This month, our regular potluck falls right on Halloween (Oct. 31). How fun is that!



We'll meet at our usual time, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. In addition to all the great food we always have, you are invited (not required) to come in costume. We suggest coming as a plant or a plant-based food or as an animal. We can't wait to see who shows up!



## *Recipe of the Month*

### Low Fat Chocolate or Mocha Mousse

A favorite from the kitchen of Delisa Renideo

One of the most popular dishes at our monthly potlucks has been the Chocolate Mousse. I decided to experiment to find a version that would be just as tasty but more healthful. (The original contains chocolate chips, which are high in fat and sugar.) Here is the healthy version that contains a truly healthy sweetener and no added fat, but still tastes delicious.

1 box Mori-Nu silken tofu, firm	1/2 cup date pieces or 1/3 cup date sugar
2 Tbsp. cocoa powder (can substitute carob powder)	1 Tbsp. coffee substitute, e.g. Roma or Cafix (optional, to make mocha)
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract	

- Mix all ingredients thoroughly in blender or VitaMix.
- Chill and eat
- This is firm enough to use as a pie filling.

#### Notes:

I used dates as a sweetener because they are a whole food, thus nutritionally superior to other sweeteners.

The dates thicken this mousse much more than other sweeteners would.

If you want to make a different flavor, leave out the cocoa powder and add the flavor you wish, e.g. extra vanilla, banana, or berries



## HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY

Sat., Oct. 24, 6:30 PM

**WHERE:** Nancy's & Kevin's, 100 S. Shanell Circle, Wasilla

**BRING AN HORS D' OEUVRE TO SHARE**

Please RSVP by Oct. 21, **631-4037**

## Book Review: *The End of Overeating*

*continued from page 7:*

behaviors and emotions regarding food.

Simply put, become aware of your thoughts about food (“At lunch I will get a hamburger, fries and a shake” to “I will pack my own healthy lunch”); avoid the cue (by eating at your desk you avoid driving to the fast food joint); engage in a competitive behavior (drive home a different way of avoid the temptation of stopping at the joint), create rules about what you will eat, (instead of “I’ll just eat a few French fries” make the rule “ I don’t eat French fries”); and change your emotional connection to unhealthy foods (“With every French fry I eat I can feel the plaque forming on my arteries”).

The value of this book to those of us on the vegan path is that it gives us insight into the difficulties we experience in making and maintaining positive changes in our eating habits, not only for ourselves, but for those we are trying to bring into the fold. Hypereating is interwoven into our culture and has infiltrated and altered our physiology.

This is not a diet book. If anything, Kessler’s strategies for a return to healthy eating require a determined mindfulness that many are unlikely to develop or adhere to. But this is where our vegan community can make our contribution. We can be both the bridge and the final destination for those who want to leave behind the purgatory of hypereating and move towards the light of the vegan way.

**Our vegan community can be both the bridge and the final destination for those who want to leave behind the purgatory of hypereating.**

## Thanksgiving Dinner and Celebration

This year marks our 7th annual vegan Thanksgiving Dinner and Celebration! If you have joined us in the past, you know how wonderful the food is and how joyful the celebration. If you haven’t, wouldn’t you like to experience it first-hand?

This will be an “organized potluck” with 3 of us making the Holiday Roasts complete with stuffing, and everyone else bringing the other goodies: mashed potatoes, gravy, yams, salads, vegetables, cranberries, rolls, and desserts.

**Time:** November 26th, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Thanksgiving Day)

**Place:** United Protestant Presbyterian Church in Palmer

**Cost:** \$3 per person if you bring a dish to share, \$8 if you don’t bring a dish

Our celebration will include a beautiful nature video by Charlie Renideo and music. You will be able to participate in adopting a turkey, and see pictures of our previously adopted birds.

We had a full house last year, so reservations are required. Call Delisa & Charlie at 907-373-1526 to reserve your place, and Delisa will talk with you about what dish you’d like to bring.

Are you wondering if there are any vegan events scheduled for October in Anchorage or the Mat-Su Valley? Please go to the Alaska Veg Meetup calendar to see all the events: <http://www.meetup.com/AlaskaVeg/calendar/>.

Super-hero classes are held every Sunday at 5PM at The Crystal Palace in Anchorage. Each week you will learn to make a simple, delicious recipe you'll easily be able to add to your busy lifestyle. New and exciting ideas are including how latent super- such as in- is also a de- meal served

discussed, in- to tap into your hero powers tuition. There licious raw each week! If you are interested, contact Crystal at 907-573-7393.



Raw Food & Beyond classes are held throughout the month. In these classes you will learn how incorporating more raw foods in your diet can dramatically improve your health. Some basic yoga poses and relaxation meditation are also introduced. The cost per class is \$45.00 per person. Contact Stephanie Duboc at 907-715-8488 if you would like to participate.

We are looking for people to host vegan potlucks in their homes. If you have suggestions for future meetups, if you would like to host a potluck, or if you need help coordinating carpool rides, please contact Stephanie Duboc by emailing her at [akgoods@gmail.com](mailto:akgoods@gmail.com) or by calling her at the number above. We encourage carpooling to all our events.

Would you like to share a favorite recipe, or write about how you became a vegan in a future newsletter? Or maybe you'd like to demonstrate how to make a favorite recipe at an AVS potluck. There are many ways for you to be more involved with this great organization--just ask one of those listed in "Who to Call."

# Animal Quotes



"The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men."

~Alice Walker

"Animals are reliable, many full of love, true in their affections, predictable in their actions, grateful and loyal. Difficult standards for people to live up to."

~Alfred A. Montapert

"Any glimpse into the life of an animal quickens our own and makes it so much the larger and better in every way."

~John Muir



"I am in favor of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of a whole human being."

~Abraham Lincoln

## Upcoming Events



### **Friday, October 16**

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526.

### **Friday, October 23**

Deadline for articles and information to be included in the November AVS newsletter. Call Elaine at 746-4668, or e-mail to [elaine@alaskaveg.org](mailto:elaine@alaskaveg.org)

### **Saturday, October 31**

AVS potluck dinner, 6:00- 8:30 p.m. at the United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. There will be information, an educational program and opportunities to meet new people. If you like, this month you can come dressed up as a plant, plant-based food, or an animal! It's Halloween! See the article on page 9

to find out more. Call 373-1526 for info and for a map, visit: [alaskaveg.org/Potluck-Dinners.html](http://alaskaveg.org/Potluck-Dinners.html)

### **Wed., November 11 & 18**

### **Thurs., November 12 & 19**

Healthy Holiday Cooking Classes, 6:30- 8:30 p.m. Fee: \$40 for two classes. See article on page 4 for more info.

### **Thursday, November 26**

### **Thanksgiving Day**

AVS 7th annual Thanksgiving potluck dinner, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Reservations required. See article on page 10 for more information.

### **Saturday, December 26**

AVS Holiday Party and Potluck. Watch for more info in next month's newsletter!



## Who to Call

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



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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](mailto:peggy@alaskaveg.org).