

2010

April

V *Alaska* **S** *Vegetarian Society*

Our Miraculous, Self-Healing Bodies

by Delisa Renideo

Think back over your life. There were times you got cut, burned, bruised, maybe even broke a bone. Maybe you were in a car accident or had surgery. But look at yourself now. All these cuts and bruises healed up, leaving little more than an occasional scar. Isn't that amazing?

Now think about the times you've had an amazing thing happened. You healed!

We are designed to heal. If we weren't, we would be a real mess!

Have you ever really thought about the fact that we each have an amazing, miraculous, self-healing body? We are designed to heal. If we weren't, we would be a real mess! Contrast this with your car. Every bump and scrape stays there unless a body-shop artist fixes it. If the windshield gets cracked, it stays cracked. If the alternator or starter gets sick and quit, it stays sick and has to be replaced.

We often take our amazing bodies for granted, not giving them credit for the miraculous feat of continuously fighting off viruses and bacteria, building and replacing cells on a regular basis, and keeping our biochemical and electrical systems balanced and functioning. All our bodies want from us is proper fuel, appropriate exercise, and adequate rest. And we so often fail

to do our part. Then, we are apt to blame our bodies! It's not their fault! They're doing an amazing job with what we give them to work with!

Thousands of studies, plus our personal experience, have taught us that eating a whole-foods, plant-based diet provides the best fuel for our bodies to perform at their best. What is especially impressive is that when we have neglected or abused our bodies for years, they begin to heal themselves quickly once we begin to eat for health. People with diabetes are often able to reverse this disease and get off their medications. People with advanced heart disease find their arteries opening up again. Excess weight melts away. Digestion and elimination improve dramatically. Our energy levels increase, our skin clears up. We feel and look younger! Even our bones get stronger again. And if we had cancer, we can help prevent its recurrence.

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If we had the option of buying a self-healing car, wouldn't we take extra good care of it? Maybe we should do the same with our marvelous, self-healing bodies.

Recipe of the Month: **Fruit Spring Rolls** *A favorite from the kitchen of Sharon Shively*

Fruit Spring Rolls:

- 1-1/2 cups cooked Pad Thai noodles, cooled and drained
- 1/4 cup agave nectar
- 1/4 packed cup fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 6 (8-inch) rice paper rounds (also called "spring roll skins")
- 6 medium strawberries, stemmed
- 1 mango, halved, peeled, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 6 tablespoons sliced almonds, toasted (see note below)



- Put the noodles in a medium bowl and add the nectar and the mint. Using 2 forks, toss ingredients together until noodles are coated.
- Lay a damp kitchen or paper towel on a work surface.
- Soak a rice paper round in warm water for 20 to 30 seconds until softened.
- Put the rice paper on the damp towel or glass cutting board. Add 1/4 cup of the noodle mixture in the center of the rice paper and form into a 3 by 2-inch rectangle.
- Using a paring knife, slice a strawberry into lengthwise slices and arrange on top of noodles.
- Sprinkle 1 tablespoon almonds over strawberries.
- Arrange 2 or 3 mango slices on top.
- Roll the rice paper around the filling and seal the ends with a little water. Repeat for each roll.

- Wrap the finished spring rolls in damp paper towels and store in the refrigerator.

Note: To toast the almonds, arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 350 degree F oven until lightly toasted, about 6 to 8 minutes. Cool completely before using.

Dipping sauce:

- 1/4 cup packed fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup agave nectar
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (2 or 3 large limes)
- In a small bowl, combine the mint, nectar and lime juice. Pour into a serving bowl.
- Arrange the spring rolls on a platter and serve with the dipping sauce.

For a lower calorie variation:

Substitute seasoned rice vinegar for the agave nectar in the rolls and reduce the amount of sliced almonds.

Who to Call



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

Finally Released from My Food Prison

by Joy Santos

Food was my friend. Food was my enemy. It was like being in prison -- waking up thinking about what I would eat that day, worrying about if I would overeat, obsessing over my weight as I stood on the scale twice a day, carrying my little calorie book with me everywhere, and writing down everything I had eaten that day before going to bed. How I felt about myself each day was determined by the numbers on the scale. I woke up one morning and said to myself, "This madness has to stop!"

I had struggled with food addiction my entire life. I had tried every imaginable diet, had attended the 12-step program, Overeater's Anonymous, and still saw myself heading precariously down the path which claimed my mother's life at 67. She died of Type 2 diabetes, an entirely preventable disease.

I want to live! I have two amazing granddaughters who are only 8 and 12 years old. I want to go to their weddings! I don't want to follow in the footsteps of my parents. But at 62, I am only five years away from the age at which my mother died.

When a friend told me about the

[Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes](#) offered in Anchorage, I was ready. We began attending the classes together in January, 2010. Something just clicked for me. By the second week, I jumped in with both feet.

I experienced immediate results. Not only did I enjoy the food and start to have more energy, but I could eat as much as I wanted of these healthy foods and the scale showed my weight going down!

After about the third week, I stopped counting calories. What freedom! I was no longer afraid to eat. And to my amazement, my food cravings just disappeared. Not having to put limits on how much I could eat transformed my whole emotional state. My addictive behaviors around food simply evaporated. This is the first time, ever, that I

haven't been fixated on calories and on what I can't have. I knew I needed to change what I was eating in order to be healthy enough to live to see my granddaughters grow up; I didn't expect to be cured of my food addiction as well! This is a miracle to me.

Everything in my life has changed. I can taste and smell my food better, so I enjoy my food more. My blood pressure



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dropped 20 points right away. I have more energy than ever! After working out at the gym for over an hour, I still have energy left. My skin is clearer than it's been for years. I also feel clean inside, like all the toxins are out of my body. I'm now wearing size 10 slacks, which I haven't been able to do since I was 30. And I no longer define myself by what I eat or what I weigh. This is the first time I've had a happy relationship with the food in front of me.

Another huge change for me is that now I actually cook! I used to eat mostly fast food. Now I have a cupboard devoted to spices -- I've never done that before! I bought some measuring spoons, something I didn't need before. I'm finding it easy and fun to prepare delicious plant-

I no longer define myself by what I eat or what I weigh... I'm in charge of my life now.

based meals. The only downside to all this is now that I'm actually cooking, my kitchen is messier than it was before, but who cares. I'm having fun!

My husband is on board with me and has lost 20 pounds. Sometimes he wonders who this woman is that is so busy cooking in his kitchen!

There is one more really surprising change in my life. I've been a nail biter since I was five years old. Now my nails are growing out! With a family history of various addictions, it feels like a miracle that I was able to break that pattern by changing what I eat.

I no longer fear the future. I'm in charge of my life now. I've broken the pattern my parents set and I fully expect to attend my granddaughters' weddings.

Food for Life

Nutrition & Cooking Classes

• Anchorage •

Diabetes Prevention & Reversal

Providence Cancer Center

Room 2285

Mondays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

April 26 - June 7, 2010

Cancer Prevention or Survival

Alaska Family Medicine Residency

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

April 27 - June 8, 2010

• Wasilla •

Cancer Prevention or Survival

Dayspring Enrichment Center

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

April 28 - June 9, 2010

**Each class meets weekly
for 7 weeks.**

Cost: \$90

Pre-registration required!

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

For more information:

delisa@yestolife.info

WHY JOIN AVS?

The Alaska Vegetarian Society is critical to a movement that is dramatically changing people's lives. In the midst of America's health care crisis and obesity epidemic, it's tremendously exciting and empowering to know we can turn it around through making personal changes in our own diet. Not only can we improve our own health; we make it easier for others to follow suit.

Read about Joy Santos, who overcame the prison of food addiction, in this issue of the newsletter, or Regina Montgomery, who is now free of the incapacitating pain of rheumatoid arthritis, in last month's newsletter. These are just two of the hundreds, or even thousands, of Alaskan lives that have been changed, and sometimes actually saved, by a shift to a plant-based diet. People with diabetes have reversed this disease, reducing and sometimes eliminating all medications. Others have helped put their cancer into remission. Many others have reversed their heart disease, lowering their cholesterol and blood pressure and losing excess weight. And everyone experiences more energy and vitality after shifting to a healthy, plant-based diet.

AVS supports these dietary changes in many ways:

- **Monthly potlucks:** These events provide significant support for anyone wanting to change their diet. Meeting monthly with others on the same journey makes us realize

we aren't alone. It also offers us a chance to eat EVERYTHING on the tables without worrying about it containing ingredients we wish to avoid, such as chicken broth in the soup, cheese in the casserole, or bacon in the salad. We get new ideas and new recipes from sampling the dishes brought by others.

It's also a great way to introduce our friends and family to the wide variety of delicious plant-based foods.

We also enjoy a short cooking demonstration and an educational program at each potluck. Nutritional information is always evolving, and we try to provide the latest and best information available. We have books and videos for sale, as well as free hand-outs and a video lending library. To add to the fun, we have drawings for door prizes. We benefit from the enthusiasm and passion of others and go away feeling energized!

- **Monthly Newsletter:** We provide a free colorful, educational, and inspirational newsletter every month, both in paper form as well as on our website. It includes someone's incredibly inspiring personal story, a recipe, nutritional information, a calendar of upcoming events, and a headline article offering a variety of different perspectives on how choosing a plant-based diet fits into a healthy lifestyle and healthy world.

- **Classes:** AVS helps support the [Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes](#) offered in Anchorage and the Valley. We provide

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free newsletters and other hand-outs to class members. We provide the traveling bookstore. We also offer a scholarship fund to help those who cannot pay the full registration fee for classes. And new vegetarians can then receive regular support at our monthly potlucks.

- **Cookbook:** AVS compiled a cookbook entitled *Cooking With Compassion* which is a favorite among many of our members and class attendees. We're in the planning stages of writing another cookbook.

- **Public Documentary Showings:** In our commitment to education, we offer occasional public showings of a variety of documentaries. Past videos include: *Food, Inc.*, *Processed People*, *A Delicate Balance*, and *Peaceable Kingdom*.

- **Vegan Thanksgiving Dinner:** Where else can you enjoy a completely vegan, totally delicious feast on Thanksgiving Day? The program after dinner includes music and a nature video.

- **Free Subscription to VegNews for AVS Members.** This magazine is totally vegan. It includes recipes, articles, travel information, and lots of other helpful information. With all these things already in place, it's probably hard to imagine the effort and expense involved in providing them. It has taken many hours of dedicated work as well as money to get us where we are now, and it continues to take time and money to provide these services as well as expand them.

If you can see the value of being part of an organization that has dramatically

changed so many lives in Alaska, as well as touching countless lives in our collective web of influence, we ask you to join us by becoming a member.

Benefits of membership include receiving 10% off the cost of books and videos in our bookstore as well as a free subscription to [VegNews](#), valued at \$20/year. But more importantly, you receive the satisfaction of knowing you're helping save lives by supporting the ongoing education of individuals, groups, and the public. You're also helping raise awareness of our personal contribution

Benefits of membership include receiving 10% off the cost of books and videos in our bookstore as well as a free subscription to VegNews.

to a healthier, more sustainable, more compassionate world through the adoption of a plant-based diet.

Please consider becoming a monthly donor. This option helps assure we will have enough funds to continue our work though-out the year. All donations are tax deductible.

There are various levels of membership, which are listed on the membership page at www.alaskaveg.org. You can also make your membership donations online.

Together, we are making a difference. Thanks for your support!

Nutrition Nuggets: **Greens! The Superfood for Superpowers!**

by Delisa Renideo

**I'm Popeye the sailor man!
I'm Popeye the sailor man!
I'm strong to the finish,
'Cause I eats me spinach.
I'm Popeye the sailor man.**

As a preschooler, I used to sing along with Popeye while watching him squeeze a whole can of spinach into his mouth on our old black-and-white TV. Immediately, his skinny arm would pop up into a big muscle. Wow! Powerful stuff, that spinach!

Popeye was a real motivator for me at that age. I gladly poured spinach into my own mouth and was convinced I was stronger for it. I would also tie a large towel around my neck like a cape, paint a big red lipstick S on my bare chest, and jump out our first-floor windows. Supergirl! I figured that spinach could only help my superpowers.

I'm a little more restrained now, unfortunately, but still convinced that greens give us superpowers. Of all the foods we eat, greens contain the most nutrients per calorie. In other words, they are the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet. The more of them we eat, both raw and cooked, the more we will achieve nutritional excellence AND lose weight until we achieve our

healthiest weight.

Spinach is only one variety of amazing greens. Lettuce, bok choy, turnip greens, collard greens, beet greens, mustard greens, Swiss chard, and kale all fit into this category.

Kale is my new favorite -- I don't think Popeye knew about kale or he would have been singing, "I'm strong as a whale, 'cause I eats me kale." It's at the top of the charts of nutrient density, and oh, so yummy!



Of all the foods we eat, greens contain the most nutrients per calorie -- they are the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet.

Green leafies are a great source of protein, fiber, calcium, iron, Vitamins K, C, E, and A, among others. They are loaded with phytonutrients like beta-carotene and lutein. Eating all these nutrients in the leafy greens, as opposed to in supplement form, has been shown to promote health in all parts of our bodies. Greens help prevent cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, macular degeneration and cataracts.

Raw greens are delicious in salads, of course, but also try blending them with fruit to make green super-smoothies. Refreshing, nourishing, and delicious! Try eating greens lightly steamed, added to soups and casseroles, in stir-fries, and even on pizza. The more greens you eat, the more you'll develop those superpowers. Go for it!

Upcoming Events



Friday, April 9

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

Wednesday, April 14

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

Saturday, April 24

AVS Earth Day potluck dinner, 6:00- 8:30 p.m. at the United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. See article at right for details. Call 373-1526 for information..

Monday April 26, Tuesday April 27 and Wednesday April 28

New Series of [Food for Life Cooking Classes](#) begin for both Diabetes and Cancer. See page 7 for details.



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 W. Lakeside Drive
Wasilla, AK 99654

907-373-1526
www.AlaskaVeg.org

Special Earth Day Potluck and Program

We will have our yearly celebration of Earth Day on the night of our regular monthly potluck: Saturday, April 24, from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. It will be extra special this year, so mark your calendars so you don't miss it!



A plant-based diet is probably the most significant choice any of us can make to support a healthy planet, conserving water, topsoil, and biodiversity, and reducing our carbon footprint by at least 30%! However we are committed to learning as many other ways to live in harmony with the earth as possible.

To this end, we have invited Saskia Esslinger, from Anchorage, to talk with us about [Permaculture](#). According to Wikipedia: [Permaculture](#) is an approach to designing human settlements and agricultural systems that mimic the relationships found in natural ecologies. Saskia will be showing slides of her own yard and garden to help us as we begin planning our own.

We will have our regular delicious, vegan potluck at 6 p.m. with our program on [Permaculture](#) following dinner. Please join us so we can all learn more!

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.