

VUNA VIEWS *(March 2005)*

News from the Vegetarian Union of North America
Promoting a strong, effective, cooperative vegetarian movement throughout North America



VUNA, PO Box 9710, Washington DC 20016 *** vuna@ivu.org *** www.ivu.org/vuna

Welcome Back!!!! After a lapse during our reformation of policy & purpose, VUNA VIEWS is happy to welcome back former and new VUNA/IVU members, & invites suggestions & ideas on how to better accomplish our mission. **Note:** if you are receiving this via regular mail, please provide a current email address. Also welcome are innovative & capable newsletter candidates who might like to apply their skills as VV NEWSLETTER Editor;-) -- Gerry Coffey, Editor: vuna@ivu.org

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WHY VUNA?

The Vegetarian Union of North America (VUNA) was formed in Toronto in 1987 by the member organizations of the International Vegetarian Union located in North America to better represent the Vegetarian movement in this region of the world. In order to help avoid duplication by other vegetarian organizations and better concentrate in areas represented in North America, VUNA recently re-assessed its purpose and elected to come under the umbrella of the International Vegetarian Union (IVU). IVU is a non-profit organization with membership open to any other vegetarian related non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to promote vegetarianism and is governed exclusively by vegetarians. VUNA is a regional liaison of IVU representing a network of vegetarian groups throughout the U.S. and Canada. Through the International Vegetarian Union, VUNA liaises with the worldwide vegetarian movement. VUNA's membership is free to all IVU members and individual supporters in North America.

VUNA'S MISSION: To promote a strong, effective, cooperative vegetarian movement throughout North America.

VUNA'S GOALS :

- To support the formation and development of organizations promoting vegetarianism in North America.
- To promote cooperation and represent all diverse segments of the vegetarian community.
- To promote effective and responsible communication and presentation of issues related to vegetarianism on local, regional and international levels.
- To develop and support vegetarian lifestyles of individuals, families and communities.

In the past, VUNA has helped to promote Regional Conferences in Toronto, Ontario (1987), Arcata, California (1989), Denver, Colorado (1991), Portland, Oregon (1993), San Diego, California (1995), and Washington, DC (1997). It has also helped to further the formation of local groups by publication and distribution of the Guide for Local Groups, which was first printed in 1988, and updated several times.

In the future, VUNA plans to provide support to prospective, new, and existing vegetarian organizations and to represent vegetarianism when and where appropriate in the Media and at conferences and events, particularly in North America.

The VUNA Council is made up of members from the USA and Canada who volunteer their time and expertise to promote the positive impact Vegetarianism has on life to include: Ethical, Economic, and Environmental, as well as Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual.

The Current VUNA Council

- President: Peter McQueen - pmcqueen@sympatico.ca
- Vice-President: Kevin Pickard - kpickard@simplyc.com
- Secretary: Saurabh Dalal, email: deputy@ivu.org
- Treasurer: Kishor Pokharna: kishor@gdiamonds.com
- Assistant Treasurer: Madge Darneille
- Dilip Barman – barman@jhu.edu
- Dennis Bayomi – dbayomi@mts.net
- Gerry Coffey: IVU Regional Secretary for North America; Public Relations Officer VUNA/IVU - vuna@ivu.org
- Ruth E. Heidrich - ruthheidrich@juno.com
- Kay Sheehan – drkms@aol.com
- Paul Turner – paul@ffl.org

VUNA Elections - Candidates Wanted: VUNA is revitalizing with a long overdue election of a new VUNA Council and we want YOU to get involved! All IVU member organizations in North America (U.S.A. and Canada) are entitled to vote and to nominate individuals to stand for election. Individual IVU supporters residing in North America are also eligible because when individuals and vegetarian organizations in Canada and the U.S. join IVU they are given a free membership in VUNA. IVU/VUNA member organizations will vote according to the formula established in the VUNA by-laws. Our Nominating Committee is composed of Dennis Bayomi of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (retiring VUNA Councilor) and Keith Akers of Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. (founder of VUNA and former VUNA Secretary/IVU Regional Secretary for North America). They will be looking for "a few good persons" to commit 2 years of service to VUNA to help us promote a strong, effective, cooperative vegetarian movement throughout North America. We welcome suggestions for potential candidates from different regions of the United States and Canada. OR stand for election yourself!

The Requirements: At a minimum, nominees must be vegetarian (according to VUNA's definition) and individual members of IVU/VUNA residing in either Canada or the United States of America. Candidates from member organizations are welcome to submit their candidacies for council consideration as the more diversity in background, culture and expertise available the better able VUNA will be to accomplish its goals. We welcome candidates who have experience in organizing vegetarian events and who have more than a local interest in promoting the vegetarian movement in North America. Any other skills and experience brought to the VUNA Council would be a bonus. Council meetings are conducted by teleconference and occasionally at vegetarian conferences when enough councilors are present. Access to e-mail is important as many discussions take place via a Council e-mail list.

How to Nominate Individuals:

Contact the VUNA Nominating Committee in one of two ways - **by e-mail or mail with postmark by 1 April 2005** to: dbayomi@mts.net or snail-mail: Winnipeg Vegetarian Association, Attn: Dennis Bayomi, Box 2721; Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3C 4B3. Dennis will then confer with Keith Akers. Get involved in the ongoing revitalization of VUNA! Help us find people ready to take on key roles in developing the vegetarian movement in North America or step forward yourself! We want to hear from YOU! --Peter McQueen, President, Vegetarian Union of North America



BENEFITS OF IVU/VUNA MEMBERSHIP:

- Voting Privileges - all member societies have one or more votes in IVU and VUNA affairs.
- Grants - may be available for new and/or existing vegetarian organizations meeting the prescribed criteria
- Free ivu.org website and/or email address
- Display your Banner - on the IVU website (businesses and non-profit agencies only).
- All North American members and Supporters receive VUNA VIEWS: VUNA's official newsletter
- All Members and Supporters receive IVU News – the official IVU magazine.
- Members, Supporters and Internet Partners are eligible for unlimited website links from IVU Webzine and any other relevant pages. For information or suggestions for VUNA VIEWS, about current or proposed projects, or to join, contact us: VUNA, P.O. Box 9710, Washington, DC 20016, USA; vuna@ivu.org; 202-362-VEGY, option 3; www.ivu.org/vuna

Councilor Profiles

Councilor Dilip Barman, North Carolina, USA: Dilip has been an active vegetarian for over a decade, leads the Triangle Vegetarian Society, and has been featured in print and broadcast media on issues ranging from vegan Thanksgiving to raising vegetarian children. He currently teaches and gives demos of ethnic vegan cooking in Carrboro, NC. Professionally, Dilip, a Senior Software Engineer, focuses on making technology more user friendly. His other interests include teaching everything from film studies to cooking and computer science, growing and showing organic roses, music and bicycling. Dilip enjoys public speaking on all of the above as well as peace and non-violence. Community involvement includes local and international organizations such as Servas, a world peace organization that seeks to build understanding through friendship. He has also produced a flyer on environmental justice depicting relationships between vegetarianism and world peace and justice. Dilip invites you to his web page at www.dilip.info.

Councilor Dennis Bayomi, Manitoba, Canada: Dennis is the founder and past president of the Winnipeg Vegetarian Association (Winnipeg Canada), and has been a VUNA councilor since 1998. He works as a research/data analyst at a medical school on a longitudinal study of cardiovascular disease and is also studying part-time towards a Master's degree in Community Health Sciences. Although he'll be stepping down as councilor this term, Dennis has very much enjoyed being part of VUNA Council and encourages other vegetarian group leaders to consider becoming active with VUNA.

Councilor & VUNA/IVU PR Officer, Gerry Coffey, Alabama, USA: was a Yoga instructor, reporter and editor in SE Asia before becoming a Health Educator at a major U.S. hospital. Disillusionment with conventional medicine was a result of doctor-prescribed Estrogen that caused a life-threatening ovarian cyst. Extensive research and re-education enabled Gerry to recover health without drugs or surgery by adopting a vegan, raw food diet. Gerry and her husband, Ray, write about and teach HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES, through lectures, food demos, consultations and retreats. Gerry's degree and work in Radio, TV & Journalism helped develop the "Get Balanced, Get Healthy" videos for the Hallelujah Diet. She made national headlines recently (Article below) when arrested and convicted for taking part in Pure Foods National Supermarket Campaign. "If we want a better world we must be brave enough to change it," says Gerry. "HEALTH IS WEALTH." Info: www.all-creatures.org/cb/

Councilor/Secretary Saurabh Dalal, Maryland, USA: Saurabh's life passions include the promotion of veganism (and Ahimsa = non-violence) while constantly striving to find harmony, health, and balance for people, the animals of the world, and the planet. He feels vegetarianism offers the world a most compelling solution to many problems and enjoys being involved in education, outreach, and greater advocacy efforts. Saurabh is President of the Vegetarian Society of DC (www.vsd.org) and Deputy Chair of the International Council of the International Vegetarian Union (www.ivu.org). As a dedicated follower of Jainism, Saurabh is active in the Jain community and works to increase the application of Ahimsa in everyday life. Saurabh was raised vegetarian and became vegan in 1991. He holds graduate degrees in Physics and Electrical Engineering, takes part in several professional and technical societies, and pays his bills by working in the telecom industry. Other interests include music, sports, trivia, and travel.

Councilor Madge Darneille, Maryland, USA: Born in England, Madge Darneille was the object of much family concern when at the age of 5 she said she would no longer eat meat. Her resistance won out, however, and as she learned about the connection between food and violence to animals, she became a vegan and enlisted in the vegetarian movement. After work and, later marriage, brought her to the USA, Madge became involved in the vegetarian community and was one of the founders and board members during the first 10 years of NAVS (North American Vegetarian Society). She was also a founding member of VUNA, and was President of the Vegetarian Society of D.C. intermittently for 22 years while concurrently serving as the Assistant Treasurer of the IVU. For her many years of tireless, albeit enjoyable and dedicated service, Madge became the recipient of IVU's highest award for service to the vegetarian movement: The Mankar Trophy. And as the message of Vegetarianism continues to grow, Madge says she is delighted and excited to see so many young people now wanting to live the compassionate way of life.

Councilor Ruth Heidrich, Ph.D. (Alias, Iron Lady), Hawaii, USA: Dr. Ruth Heidrich has been vegan since 1982 and an Ironman Triathlete for nearly as long. Advanced breast cancer prompted the diet change and a commitment to daily, vigorous exercise. VUNA'S "Resident" world-class athlete has completed 6 Ironman Triathlons, 67 marathons, and has won more than 900 trophies in runs, swims, cycling races, biathlons, triathlons, and ultra-marathons. She has also set 3 fitness records at the famed Cooper Clinic in Dallas, TX, AND in 1999 Living Fit Magazine proclaimed her one of "The Ten Fittest Women of North America." A graduate of UCLA, Ruth earned Bachelor's and Master's in Psychology and a Ph.D. in Health Management. She is a member of the National Speakers Association and is the Health & Fitness Advisor and frequent contributor to VegNews. A VUNA Councilor since 1995, Ruth is also a founding member and past president of the Vegetarian Society of Hawaii, one of the largest vegetarian societies in North America. When not running, Ruth has authored "A Race For Life", the "Race For Life Cookbook", the "Race For Life Video", and co-hosts "Nutrition & You", a radio show broadcast in Hawaii. For info, check out: www.RuthHeidrich.com

Councilor Peter McQueen, Ontario, Canada: has served on the VUNA Council since its founding in 1987 and as president since 1989. Peter is also president of the VUNA/IVU member group Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA), founded in 1945, the 2nd oldest vegetarian group in North America. TVA hosted the World Vegetarian Congress in 2000. Peter joined the TVA Board of Directors in 1983 and, except for one year, has remained on the Board ever since. Peter became a vegetarian as a teenager in 1975—initially for ethical and environmental reasons—and turned vegan around 1990. Both processes involved thoughtful reflection and a long transition, admits Peter. Peter's other interests include canoeing, nature study, cross-country skiing, camping, hiking, snowshoeing, organic gardening, traveling, and listening to baroque music. Peter "puts tofu on the table" by teaching in the Toronto public school system.

Councilor Kevin Pickard, Ontario, Canada: IVU 1996 –2004; IVU Deputy Chairperson 1999-2000, 2002-2004; IVU Chairperson 2000 – 2002. A vegetarian/vegan over 19 years, Kevin original aversion to meat soon encompassed ethics, environment, health (his and others) and peace. He has never looked back and never felt better. On the Bd. of Directors for the Toronto Vegetarian Association (www.veg.ca) and president for 7 years during which time TVA hosted the WVC 2000, Kevin also served as VUNA V.P., and is finishing his 8th year as an IVU Councilor. Kevin works as a computer consultant to put veggies on the table but considers his "real job" to be promoting vegetarianism. Kevin has always fought for the future of *all* inhabitants of this planet, but the births of daughters (Sara, 1998 and Hayley, 2000) further committed him: "After Sara was born I promised her I would do everything within my power to leave this world in better shape than I found it. I made that same promise to Hayley. I fully intend to keep my promise."

Councilor Kay Sheehan, MSW, LCSW, Ed.D., Colorado, USA: A vegetarian/vegan 20 + years (originally for ethical reasons), a VUNA councilor since 1994, Kay has lectured at World Vegetarian Congresses and European Vegan Festivals, and consults for vegetarian publications in Britain and Europe. Affectionately known as the "resident shrink" for the British and European vegan societies, Kay is a practicing psychotherapist in Denver, Colorado. Her specialties include: applied psychophysiology and biofeedback therapy, including neurofeedback training, which recognizes the mind as the seat of all control and the mind/body as one process. Kay's 2nd specialty reflects her doctoral dissertation, the only psychotherapeutic method of power struggle resolution in the international literature. It relies heavily on Gandhi's Satyagraha, based on the principles of Ahimsa (non-violence). Since oneness with nature, non-violence, and whole mind/body health include a vegetarian/vegan diet, Kay practices this herself and promotes it in her professional practice, lectures and workshops. Kay loves animals and nature and supports all aspects of animal welfare. She likes to travel, bicycle, ski, hike, dance, and, most of all, be with her dog, cat and horses.

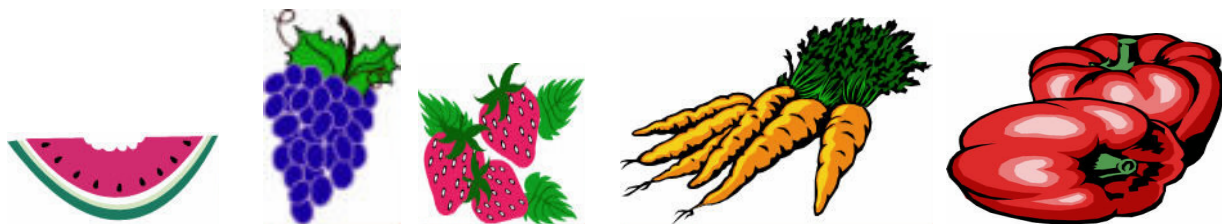
Councilor Paul Turner, Maryland, USA: IVU Councilor 1999-2004, IVU Magazine Editor 1999-2002, and Joint PR Officer 2002-2004. A vegetarian for 20 years, Paul directs Food for Life Global, an international vegetarian food relief organization. He has spoken about FFL and vegetarianism in over 50 countries where he trains volunteers and establishes new FFL operations. Since 1995, Paul has given FFL presentations at World Vegetarian Congresses in the US, Thailand, Canada, Czech Republic, Scotland and Moscow. He authored a 180-page manual on vegetarian food relief program management and manages the charities web site at www.ffl.org. Paul is a graphic designer and web developer for the World Bank in Washington D.C. Paul lives in Maryland, with his wife Rupal, a feng shui consultant, and daughter, Kishori.

DID YOU KNOW: *the IVU website (www.ivu.org) averaged 35,000 hits per day or 1.1 million in November 2004.*

VUNA Advocates Vegetarianism to US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services

In August and September 2004, VUNA took two significant steps in advocating vegetarian (vegan) diets to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). As part of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion's Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment effort, public comments were taken on how best to educate the public on healthy diets and lifestyles. Public and written comments were also taken at a combined forum of USDA and DHHS for revisions to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. VUNA Secretary Saurabh Dalal, also in cooperation with the the International Vegetarian Union (www.ivu.org) and the Vegetarian Society of DC (www.vsd.org), provided oral testimony to the Reassessment Teams at two public meetings for stakeholders in Washington DC; written comments were also submitted. The Reassessment Teams were reminded that vegetarian foods offer powerful advantages with so many studies having proven the remarkable health benefits of a vegetarian diet. Several important examples were cited showing plant-based foods meeting full nutrient requirements and also being superior to animal-based foods. Ecological and ethical benefits were also mentioned, to emphasize that we must do our utmost to make the lives of our citizens far better and also recognize and improve on the way we impact the world. The Teams were urged to move toward a well-planned, wholesome, vegetarian diet that consists of no animal products as the right type of guidance to establishing healthy eating habits through the daily selection of foods. (See www.ivu.org/vuna for the text of the presentations.)

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FIRST AID FOR STARTING VEGETARIAN GROUPS

*One of VUNA's goals is to provide assistance to new vegetarian groups to help them navigate the lonely waters in areas where a plant-based-diet is as alien as a trip to the moon. Below is an excerpt of the **Guide for Local Vegetarian Groups: How to Start, Maintain, and Expand Your Local Vegetarian Group***

There are many vegetarian groups at the present time, and there is a need for coordinated efforts among both large and small groups to further vegetarianism generally, and to further the spread and increase the strength of local vegetarian groups. That is the purpose of this guide. Our goal in VUNA is not merely to spread the vegetarian word, but to help you and others to spread the vegetarian word as well. No one group, in North America, has sufficient resources at the present time (1995) to go into an area and organize a local group on more than an occasional basis. That is one of the reasons why the vegetarian movement in North America has not developed as a single large group which then established local branches. Rather, vegetarians in many areas have established independent local vegetarian groups using their own resources -- sometimes with assistance from one or more of the larger groups, but largely using local talent.

To establish a local group, there must be local support there already, and the bulk of the effort and the organizing must come from the local area itself. The primary ways in which VUNA and VUNA members can help is through:

1. Providing information, such as this guide
2. Providing contacts with people who live in the area who are interested in various vegetarian activities, and
3. Providing limited logistical support (i.e., organizing an initial event, a conference, or providing a speaker).

Another important aspect of local organizing is strengthening existing groups. Local vegetarian groups need a certain level of support to maintain their basic activities. As a movement, we want to identify and find ways to support struggling groups, as well as help medium-size groups become larger. Our goal is to establish viable and expanding vegetarian groups in every metropolitan area of North America. By doing this we will be able to present our case to the public in North America and throughout the world.

(The next issue of VUNA VIEWS will address: The Basics of Organizing A Local Vegetarian Group. For the complete text of the Guide, go to: <http://ivu.org/vuna/guide/>)

In keeping with VUNA's goal to provide information to support reasons for becoming vegetarian, we will present articles by those knowledgeable on the subject, including VUNA Councilors. NOTE: Opinions expressed in VUNA VIEWS articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Vegetarian Union of North America.

Osteoporosis & Other Life Threatening Diseases

By Ruth Heidrich, PhD, Health & Fitness Advisor for VegNews

The admonitions surround us! Take more Calcium! Drink more milk! Take Turns! Physicians and dietitians have repeatedly increased the recommended daily calcium intake yet the incidence of osteoporosis increases. The countries with the highest hip fracture rates have the highest dairy intake. Conversely, countries with the lowest hip fractures are non-dairy consuming.

Among the many factors involved in bone density, the major ones are excessive protein intake and lack of effective exercise. The typical carnivore's diet provides excessive protein (amino acids) which then has to be neutralized by calcium taken from the bones. Couple that with a sedentary lifestyle and it's the perfect recipe for osteoporosis. Bone is much

like muscle. It gets as strong (dense) as the demands placed on it, demands in the form of stress range in a continuum from zero gravity in outer space, to bed-rest, to sitting, standing, walking, running, and jumping. Bone loss occurs during zero gravity, bed-rest and sitting. Walking maintains bone, but ONLY running and jumping have been shown to increase bone density. I use my own case history as evidence since my bone density has steadily increased from ages 49 to 64. The obvious solution is a vegan diet and effective exercise. Striking exercise is best, i.e., running, because every time the foot strikes with the impact of one's compounded weight, it involves repeated transfer of energy through the bones and joints and stimulates more bone challenge and growth.

Osteoporosis, however, is just one of the major life-threatening diseases that can be addressed through diet and exercise. Other examples include heart disease, cancer, stroke, iatrogenic disorders, diabetes, arthritis, depression, obesity, and premature aging - each of these conditions has a proven fitness and nutritional component. Hearts grow stronger with regular aerobic exercise. It's been shown that runners have increased heart stroke volume as well as greater elasticity in their arteries. Runners also have thicker knee cartilage and lower risk of arthritis. Regular exercise boosts the immune system to the point where female runners have approximately a 35% lower risk of breast cancer. The increased elasticity of the arteries also lowers the risk of stroke. The fourth leading cause of death, iatrogenic (or medically-caused) diseases, can be prevented by running as fast as you can -- away from hospitals! (Smile.)

Type 2 diabetes is occurring in younger populations, and is said to be due to, at least in part, to lack of exercise. The mechanism is thought to be that the blood sugar rises when muscles aren't being called upon to use it. Exercise also increases the receptor's sensitivity to insulin.

Arthritic joints "freeze" when not put through their entire range of motion on a daily basis; adhesions start forming in 24 hours. Osteoporosis can be prevented since bones increase density when greater stress is put on them - not by pushing calcium. A good run is almost always a better antidote for depression than Prozac - and no side effects. Since obesity represents stored energy, an obvious solution is to exercise and is far more effective, in the long run (pun intended) than cutting calories. It is obvious then that fitness plays a major role in the prevention and reversal of these major health conditions. More info: www.RuthHeidrich.com

JUST RELEASED: **Senior Fitness: The Diet and Exercise Program for Maximum**

Health and Longevity: At 70, Ruth Heidrich has the bone mass density of a woman in her early thirties and a resting heart rate of 44. Not only that, she has survived breast cancer for over twenty years and recovered from several accidents that have broken limbs and stopped her (temporarily) doing from what she loves best—keeping fit and being positive. In **Senior Fitness**, the “other” Dr. Ruth demonstrates the senior years don't have to be filled with aches and pains. She shows how to dramatically reduce the risk of prostate cancer, varicose veins, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Alzheimer's, and a host of other ailments and diseases that can affect older people. Full of detailed medical information, **Senior Fitness** shows you how you can eat healthfully, stay fit, and maintain a positive and go-getting attitude to life, maintaining and even increasing physical and sexual fitness well into your latter decades. Part compendium of vital information for your vital signs and part-inspiring handbook for taking control of your health and well being, **Senior Fitness** is the perfect companion for those seeking to make life after 50 full of life and dynamism.

Note: Dr. **Heidrich** received her Ph.D. in Health Management in 1993 and is the author of *A Race For Life* and *The Race For Life Cook/Rawbook*. She is a certified fitness trainer and holds three world fitness records for her age group at the renowned Cooper Clinic in Dallas, Texas. She still competes in marathons and triathlons, having won more than 900 trophies and medals since her diagnosis of breast cancer in 1982 at the age of 47. She has won eight gold medals in the Senior Olympics in Hawaii, Arizona, and Nevada. <http://www.RuthHeidrich.com>

REFLECTIONS ON THE



- - For a vegetarian world. For people. For animals. For the planet. -

Marly Winckler and world-renown songstress Dionne Warwick have a lot in common. They both "Get by with a little help from my friends." Marly spent two years of her life and called in all her friends' favors in order to pick up the pieces and make the 36th World Vegetarian Congress-- the first time in South America--a smashing success! Held at the beautiful Costão de Santinho Resort on the Isle of Florianópolis – Brazil, the facilities, overlooking the sea, were spectacular. The varied beauty of Brazil's landscapes is matched only by its people. No effort was spared to make attendees feel welcome. The diversity of interests regarding animal, human or environmental welfare, were open for discussion and debate on how the advance of vegetarianism can benefit all of them.

Lectures, presentations and food demonstrations --led by world-renown speakers, with simultaneous translations where appropriate—were timely and informative. They were punctuated with food choices that were magnificent in taste and presentation. Each bountiful buffet was a culinary delight. Other thoughtful activities arranged for our indulgence included yoga at sunrise, dancing, cruelty-free fashion shows (viewed by over a thousand people), hikes up the hillside overlooking the ocean, bus trips around the island, and always-- the wondrous seascapes.

The balmy weather wasn't always quite so, but rain or shine, F.A.R.M. President, Alex Hershaft, took his morning dip. We less hardy ones settled for walking on the beach, running or yoga. The lazy ones slept in but usually timed it so they didn't miss a fabulous breakfast.

Because the conference was set in such a beautiful resort area, it was difficult to believe the post-conference tours could be more exciting, but trips to Iguazu Falls ("Big Waters") and Rio were truly awesome. The late American First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, summed it up succinctly after witnessing this wonder of nature: "Poor Niagra," she said. Indeed, whoever decided on the Seven Wonders of the World must not have seen Iguazu. Words and pictures cannot begin to do it justice.

On our arrival in Rio, one of Marly's friends reported Marly had just called: "Take good care of my children," she was advised. We "children," can attest to a job well done!

Our hotel in Rio was on the famous Copacabana Beach! Using that as a home base, we took in the sights by day and the nightlife in the evening. A friend of Marly's arranged for us to see an exclusive "Carnival" (Mardi Gras) rehearsal. Hundreds of people doing the "Samba" is quite an experience. Eighty year-old George Pelton, from Denver, Colorado, said he didn't know women could gyrate in so many places at one time. George put everyone to shame the next night at one of Rio's popular nightspots. He was the "Fred Astaire" of the evening and danced with just about every woman from the bus;-)

Speaking of which, even the bus trips were lively: VUNA Councilor Dilip Barman kept us in stitches with his corny "Vegan" jokes. (Maybe he'll share them in a future VUNA VIEWS). Newly elected IVU Deputy Chair, Saurabh Dalal, took on the role of a dutiful shepherd, keeping count of his "sheep" at every bus stop. That was not easy considering he and several others, including VUNA's resident "Shrink," Kay Sheehan, watched the dawn come up a few times.

And though Brazil and its people are an ocean away, the memories will sustain us forever, thanks to Marly and a "...little help from her friends." If you ever come our way, there's a "Welcome Mat" out in Alabama." --Gerry Coffey

International Vegetarian Union Elects New Council

At the 36th World Vegetarian Congress in Florianopolis, Brasil, the International Vegetarian Union established a new International Council (IC). Members of the IC of IVU are volunteers who serve from one world congress to the next, approximately two-year terms. The full IC (including any elected officer positions or regional responsibilities) consists of the following:

- Gerry Coffey (USA; Regional Coord., N. America)
- Saurabh Dalal (USA; Deputy Chair)
- John Davis (United Kingdom; IVU Webmaster)
- Tina Fox (United Kingdom; Chair)
- Robert Fraser (Australia; Regional Coord., Australasia)
- P.K. Jain (Botswana; Regional Coord., Africa)
- Mitsuru Kakimoto (Japan)
- Lwera Alexander Kasibante (Uganda)
- Francisco Martin (Spain)

- D.M. Popat (India)
- David Pye (United Kingdom; Treasurer)
- David Roman (Spain)
- Jashu Shah (India; Regional Coord., Asia)
- Hildegund Scholvien (Germany; Regional Coord., Europe)
- Stephen Walsh (United Kingdom; Secretary)
- Marly Winckler (Brasil; Regional Coord., Latin America)

Two members of the VUNA Council are also on the IVU IC: Gerry Coffey and Saurabh Dalal. (More info: www.ivu.org/congress/2004) Future World Vegetarian Congresses are planned for Goa, India, in September 2006 and Dresden, Germany in July 2008 (IVU's 100th anniversary!).



No matter who you are, the federal government's food policies have likely affected your life. The Food Guide Pyramid is a prominent feature on food labels, in grade school cafeterias, and perhaps on your doctor's office wall. The USDA dictates what the nation's 17 million food stamp recipients can eat, which items are approved for WIC and other supplemental feeding programs, and what foods are offered through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. What you may not know is many of the experts who create these guidelines have historically been financial partners with the meat, dairy, and egg producers. PCRM filed a lawsuit to insure future committee members are selected based on professional expertise and free of bias. The lawsuit victory was a major first step toward this goal. Since 1916, federal food guidelines have gone unchallenged. Despite overwhelming scientific evidence meat- and dairy-heavy diets contribute to serious health problems including obesity, diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and cancer, the government continues to assert 4-6 daily servings of animal products—the very foods that encourage such illnesses—are necessary for good health. It is clear to leading nutrition experts and to growing numbers of people the easiest way to stay slim and lower the risk for serious, chronic diseases is by eating a diet rich in plant foods, yet the federal government, which should have a financial interest in supporting preventive medicine, extends little encouragement for such choices. Moreover, African-, Asian-, and Hispanic-Americans, who are predominantly lactose-intolerant, are encouraged to eat dairy products despite that fact.



GRANDMOMS ARRESTED!

The fear of being jailed

reared its ugly head as the trial date for the appeal of our conviction for trespassing drew near. It had been almost a year since my 80-year-old "accomplice," Jean Tune, and I had been arrested outside Kroger Supermarket in Decatur, Alabama, USA. Our crime? We thought it important to take part in Pure Foods National Supermarket Campaign to alert Americans that 2/3rds of the food they buy contains UNTESTED, UNLABELED GMOs:GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

It seems ironic: America prides itself as the "Land-of-the-Free," and as I write, our soldiers are told they are fighting to bring freedom to Iraq. Yet here at home Americans are denied the basic right to know what alien substances are put into the food they eat. By refusing to label untested foods containing GMOs such as human cancer cells (to promote rapid growth) and fish genes in tomatoes, potatoes and other fruits and vegetables (to extend shelf life), without knowledge or consent, Americans are being used as human guinea pigs.

UNTIL PROVEN SAFE for human consumption, 32 countries ban GMOs. In the United States, under pressure from greedy food giants who make large campaign donations, American lawmakers allow GMOs to be used in foods UNLESS THEY ARE PROVEN HARMFUL! To draw attention to this breach of Public trust, we took part in the National Supermarket Campaign and were the only ones in the Nation arrested for doing so. Although told there was little hope, I appealed the conviction even if it meant going to jail. The print and broadcast media blitz that surrounded our conviction brought support as well as antagonism from across the nation. Our pro bono (volunteer) lawyer recommended a Bench Trial (judge only) but I chose a Trial-By-Jury. I wanted my peers to know I was arrested for trying to protect their right to know about the food they buy. Confident we grandmothers were unlikely to flee the country, we were released on our own recognizance. Ten harrowing months later, two days before our Court Date, the Judge called our lawyer and said Kroger and the City of Decatur had dropped all charges against us.

Kroger is negotiating to buy out the Whole Foods Chain that champions GMO-free foods and crops. Adverse publicity could arouse public outcry. By dropping the charges, Kroger effectively muzzled us. Our goal now is to find a lawyer not shy of a world spotlight who will help us bring suit against Kroger and the City of Decatur for violation of our right to Free Speech, Assembly, and Petition. To borrow a line from the song: "With a little help from our friends," we can prove the power is still with the people and stop genetic engineering from contaminating the world's food supply. --**Gerry Coffey, Wife/Mother/Grandmother/Health Educator/Concerned Citizen**

-- "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

For more info see: <http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/030107/trial.shtml>

<http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/030109/kroger.shtml>

<http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/021030/grandarrest.shtml>

<http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/030826/kroger.shtml>

UPDATE 7 FEB 2005: **Canadian Government Unleashed Terminator Bombshell at UN Meeting in Bangkok:** All-out push for commercialization of Sterile Seed Technology: A confidential document revealed the Canadian government plans to overturn an international moratorium on genetic seed sterilization technology (known universally as Terminator). Worse, the Canadian Government has instructed negotiators to "block consensus" on any other option. See: www.etcgroup.org