



Mid-Hudson Vegetarian Society, Inc.

47 South Street, Rhinebeck, New York 12572 USA - 845-876-2626
Vegetarian - Vegan - Animal Rights - Health - Nutrition - Environment

The mission of the Mid-Hudson Vegetarian Society, Inc. is to promote the vegetarian ethic in the Mid-Hudson (New York) region, educate the community and aid anyone in the pursuit of a totally vegetarian (vegan) cruelty-free and healthful lifestyle.

Newsletters - Spring 2005 Issue



President's Message

Thanks to all of you who attended and supported our recent events. February began with Maribeth Abrams teaching the cooking class, "What's For Breakfast - What's For Lunch." In March she taught a class with the theme "Ethnic Dishes." Check our website for recipes. Both Classes were well attended and received rave reviews from participants. Many nonmembers attended.

In February, Drs. Carol Kessler and Barry Mark hosted the second annual winter gala at their home. This year was also a surprise goodbye party for Joan Zacharias and Tom Lyons who are relocating to Florida. Tom is already there but Joan has not yet moved, so we are enjoying her company and talents for a while longer.

In honor of Joan and Tom's new locale, the theme of the evening was a "beach party," and many of us wore winter versions of festive summer dress. The tables were decorated with pails, shovels, and other touches of summer as snowflakes drifted by the windows.

As a tribute to the actual season, we served chili. Joan and Tom were surprised and enjoyed the evening, festooned for Florida weather in Hawaiian shirt, colorful scarf, shell, and bead motif handbag.

March brought the Great American Meat-Out, which was held as usual, at the Unitarian Congregation of the Catskills. Our scheduled featured speaker was Sarajane Blum of Gourmet Cruelty. However, she became ill and was unable to attend. We showed the video "Delicacy of Despair" and spoke about the way ducks and geese are force fed to produce the so-called delicacy foie gras. Jim Van Alstine, Mid-Hudson Vegetarian Society vice president, has prepared kits for restaurants requesting that they consider not serving foie gras. A bill is now in the agricultural committee of both the New York Assembly and Senate to ban the force-feeding of birds. If you are interested in writing letters and visiting restaurants, please call the office. Learn more at www.gourmetcruelty.org.

On April 2, our annual meeting was held at the Milan Town Hall with varied activities. Maribeth Abrams taught a dessert class.

We did a role-playing exercise on restaurant activism. Connie Young taught a session on effective letter writing, culminating in letters written to Assemblyman Sheldon Silver and Senator Joe Bruno about the proposed foie gras ban.

Frank and Mary Hoffman showed us the video that they are making for the Christian Vegetarian Association. It is almost finished, and they appreciated our comments and suggestions. When the video is ready, we will let you know how to order copies. Our next event was the Lasagna Dinner that we served at the United Methodist Church in Red Hook on May 7. The church invited MHVS do this, and we enjoyed offering a delicious vegan meal.

The "Down Size Me" program that I presented with Ozie Williams of the Dutchess County Health Department held its final session on March 31. The 16 participants were enthusiastic about the health information, cooking demonstrations, and group exercises, all part of the nine-week program. Everyone reported that they are now eating better, using more vegetables and whole grains, less processed food, and fewer animal products. Some have decided to give up meat, dairy or both. We emphasized making permanent changes and developing a long-term eating and exercise plan.

Each week I brought vegan foods to show some of the many options. One participant, Kosem Gupta, volunteered to bring an Indian Vegetarian meal, which was enjoyed by all. At the final session the participants brought vegan dishes for a pot luck. The dishes were as varied and delicious as those our members provide for our MHVS events.

Three guest speakers rounded out the program, John Hoey, M.D. of Rhinebeck introduced participants to the findings in T. Colin Campbell's new book "The China Study" which is the result of decades-long research in conjunction with Cornell University.

Colin Campbell extols the benefits of a vegetarian diet with research to back it up.

Theresa Hoey, an exercise physiologist, spoke about the benefits of regular exercise, both aerobic and weight training. Her presentation reinforced what Ozie stressed by providing each participant with a pedometer. Our own Reagan Leonard led a yoga and meditation session, which participants found most helpful. MHVS member Jane Winne enthusiastically embraced the program.

The two of us will do a workshop about the program at Vegetarian Summerfest, which many MHVS members will be attending. Registration is still open. The dates are June 29 through July 3 at the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown Campus

Summerfest includes five days of presentations on health, animal welfare, environmental issues, and outstanding cooking demonstrations – plus delicious vegan meals. This is a chance to network with people from around the country, and hear and meet such super stars as Howard Lyman, Brenda Davis, Michael Greger and Milton Mills. Several MHVS members will be doing workshops. For more Summerfest information, call Rae Schlecht at 845•338•8223 or check out www.vegetariansummerfest.org.

On Saturday June 18, Catskill Animal Sanctuary will hold their big "Summer Shindig" with tours, fabulous food and special guest speaker, Erik Marcus author of "Meat Market". MHVS will have a display, offer books, educational materials and, of course, some food to show what it is all about. Please plan to come and offer to volunteer. On Sunday we will have a "Meet the Meat Market man" brunch to both relax after the big event and to get to know Erik better.

Remember to check our website www.mhvs.org for updates and the most current information.

Roberta Schiff, President

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We look forward to hearing from you



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