

## A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

As the holidays approach, we naturally turn our thoughts to food. In fact, most of us think of food at least three times a day. Food is essential to the growth and nurture of all animals, including us. But, do we really think about what we eat? Do we choose wisely?

Most of us are aware that a high fat diet (one that includes too much red meat) is not healthy. In fact, it leads to heart disease, stroke, and various forms of cancer. The 42-year-old son of our neighbor recently had bypass surgery. He was instructed to switch to a vegetarian diet in order to keep his arteries clear and give himself a chance to raise his small children. We do not usually face such an ultimatum. But, then again, perhaps we do.

Consider the following quote from G. Tyler Miller in his book *Living in the Environment*: "Suppose everyone in the world ate a typical American diet consisting of food produced by industrialized agriculture. If the world's known oil reserves were used only for producing this food, these reserves would be depleted in only 13 years." Then, consider that almost half of the grain produced in the U.S. and one-third of the world's fish catch are fed to livestock. And then, realize that it requires 10-15 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef. Are you beginning to see that personal health may not be the only issue here?

Let's revisit mother's advice

## Eating your veggies is good for you, the planet

about eating our vegetables. First, it is very important to understand that eating meat puts us higher on the food chain, and that 10 times more solar energy is lost by the time it reaches our stomachs than if we were consuming plants. This is a biological fact that cannot be changed. It also means that meat contains more pesticides than the plants onto which they were sprayed: pesticides are generally fat-soluble and accumulate in the animal tissue. Therefore, we get more pesticides in our diet by eating meat than by eating fruit and vegetables from the supermarket.

As Frances Moore Lappe points out in her book *Diet for a Small Planet*, it is possible to get enough protein from grains, nuts, and other plant materials. Even if we do not avoid meat altogether, reduction will contribute to the health of our world as well as ourselves. And it really is not that difficult, especially if you do it gradually. It's sort of like switching from whole to skim milk—first you go to 2% and then you mix 2% and skim and finally you are content without all that butterfat.

One of the beauties of thinking about what we eat is that we really can influence the world around us. There are several approaches to this. First, we need to demand local production - preferably organic. Local food does not need to be shipped long distances and therefore is generally fresher and more tasty as well as more conserving of energy. In the summertime, we can support our local farmers' market or grow our own garden. I just had a snack of bread and raspberry jelly - the jelly came from our own briars so I am confident that they had never been sprayed with pesticides, and besides, it tastes much better than store-bought. This time of year it is quite senseless to buy apples

from Washington state when there are local orchards with a wide variety of types of apples for sale. Buy enough to make sauce to freeze for your winter needs.

The second approach to food choice follows logically from the first: select foods that are "in season." That means planning meals around the foods that are available at a certain time of year. Pumpkin, squash, potatoes and carrots are best in the fall. In the winter, dried beans, onions and rice can be augmented by whatever was frozen or dried last summer. Springtime brings greens and berries. And, of course, summertime eating is no problem at all. Mushrooms are grown in abandoned coal mines all year round.

If foods must be trucked in, you can ensure that things are freshly picked and that less energy is used by pre-ordering. The Agway store orders various citrus fruits throughout the winter season. Several non-profit organizations also raise money this way. Bulk orders not only provide you with fresher fruit but also gives farmers a larger cut of price (farmers generally get only 10 to 25% of our food dollars!) and guarantee that trucks are fully loaded.

When we begin to consider what we are putting into our mouths, we begin to see ourselves as part of an ecosystem. Alice Waters, a chef in San Francisco, puts it this way: "Actions have consequences, and people acting responsibly can make a difference. I believe that how you eat, and how you choose your food, is an act that combines the political - your place in the world of other people - with the most intensely personal - the way you use your mind and your senses, together, for the gratification of your soul. It can change the way we treat each other, and it can change the world."

## Aben named Children's Assn. fundraising chairman

Becky Aben, Harveys Lake, has been appointed the 1995 Fund Raising Chairman at Wyoming Valley Children's Association, which provides diagnostic and therapeutic services to disabled children.

Aben, and assistant chairman Barbara Chappel, and Dotty Martin will oversee all aspects of the 1995 Fund Drive: the annual appeal, Sweet Treat candy project and the "Do It For The Kids" Walk-A-Thon.

The drive will officially begin in

January and will continue throughout May.

A native of Kingston, Aben graduated from Kingston High School and Wilkes College where she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in art education with a minor in psychology.

She is currently involved in her husband's business, Unigraphic Color Corporation.

Aben joined the Children's Association Board of Directors in 1993 and served as assistant fund raising chairman.



BECKY ABEN

## Library news

### Citrus sale winds up a big success

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The third annual fresh citrus sale sponsored by the 'Friends of the Library' came to a close on November 14 with orders being placed for 208 boxes of oranges and 176 boxes of grapefruit or a total boxes sold of 384. The fruit is scheduled to arrive at the library in time for pickup on December 4 from 12 to 4 p.m. and December 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 5 to 7 p.m.

The citrus sale is one more way our 'Friends' support the Back Mountain Memorial Library. Special thanks go to Lisa Bjelich, Deborah Burke and Beth Rosenthal for the paperwork, involving the individual orders from customers and placing the order with the cCitrus company in Florida. The fruit this year promises to be the best quality!

The 1995 Entertainment Book is available at the library for \$30 and the Dine-A-Mate book is also available for \$25. These are also

'Friends' projects.

New books at the library: "Murder at Monticello" by Rita Mae Brown is a recent Book Club purchase. It is the third witty and wise mystery featuring small-town postmistress Mary Minor Haristeen and her crime-solving tiger cat, Mrs. Murphy. One of the most popular citizens of Albemarle County is dead—and has been for nearly 170 years; however, the good people of the village take pride in every aspect of Thomas Jefferson's life.

"Wings" by Danielle Steel is the story of a young woman who fights the odds and becomes a world-renowned aviator. From a house on the edge of her family's dusty farmland airstrip near Chicago, the child Cassie O'Malley would sneak in to the night to look at the planes sitting shimmering in the moonlight. Her father wanted his son to be a pilot, not his reckless red-haired daughter. But it was Cassie who had the gift.

"Aunt Dimity and the Duke" by Nancy Atherton is a story of Emma Porter who is forty, fat and frumpy—and a passionate amateur gardener. When her long-time lover dumps her for a younger woman, Emma escapes the cloying sympathy of family and friends by setting out on a summer-long driving tour of England's glorious gardens. She meets the Pym sisters, who derail her tour by sending her to savor the little-known private gardens of Penford Hall.

"Brother Cadfael's Penance" by Ellis Peters is the 20th chronical of Brother Cadfael, of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Peter and Saint Paul at Shrewsbury. A November filled with golden sunshine seemed a gentle ending to this year of the Lord, 1145. Yet, for Brother Cadfael, this sweet autumn would bring a bitter harvest: a sudden, wrenching break with his life at the abbey, an urgent search for a hostage of war and a hunt for a murderer.

**SKI TIP #5**  
by Sean O'Shea

Q. Are those lightweight jackets really warm?  
A. Yes, with the fabrics and insulations available today it is no longer necessary to bundle up heavily. The key to maintaining comfort is to wear long underwear with good wicking properties, avoid cotton or wool long johns.

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