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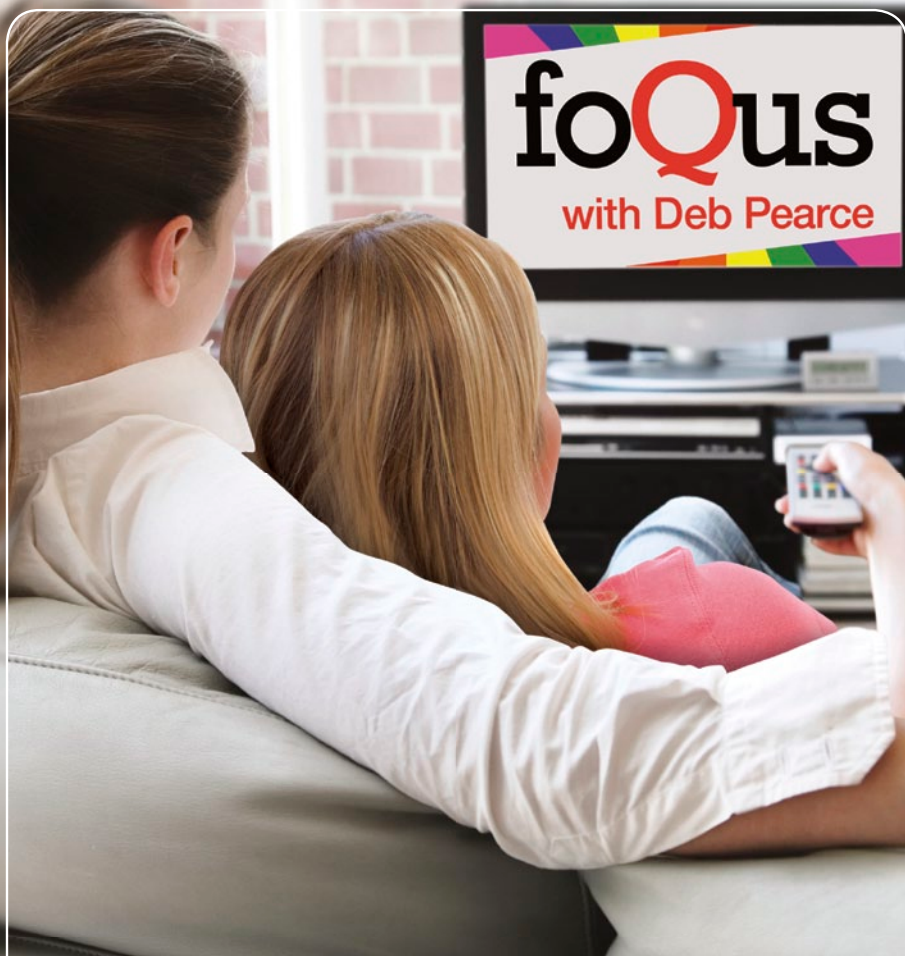


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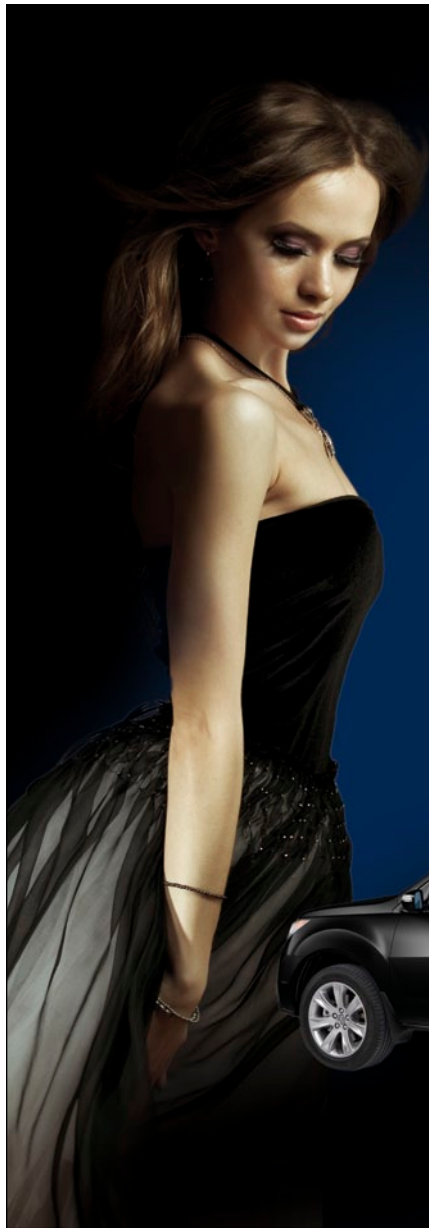
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From the Publisher

Publisher



I think it's safe to say that many of you, like me, have a complex relationship with food. Food is one of the greatest joys in life: it lifts spirits, adds spice, and brings people together like nothing else. At the same time, the subject of food can be difficult. So much of the food that many of us enjoy is bad for our bodies, as I am sure you know. I often feel guilty about indulging my less holistic cravings, especially since I spend a lot of time reading labels and combing over web pages so that I know exactly what I am eating. Therefore I am painfully aware of how much of it is awful. There is so much to consider when you're thinking of your diet: carbs, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals, and each has its own recommended daily dose. Then there is the question of what extraneous benefits food can bring you. Will red wine help me sleep? Will green tea relax me? Will chocolate make me feel like I am in love? All of this makes it hard to achieve a balance, especially with a busy schedule and a world full of distractions.

However, if you don't keep an eye on your intake, you can expose yourself to increased risk of heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, diabetes and the list goes on. Not to mention the effect your diet has on your sense of wellbeing, and not just for those who are concerned about weight loss/gain. Many studies support the idea that certain kinds of food have an effect on mood, and that deficiencies of essential components can greatly exacerbate depression or anxiety. So we must soldier on, reading labels, taking vitamin supplements and hoping for the best.

Recently there is a third party that I have brought into my relationship with food—the environment. How do we weigh environmental considerations against nutrition, cost effectiveness and convenience? The information I find

on sustainability is deeply concerning, and it makes me wonder about our future as a race.

Perhaps this question of maintaining our food sources lends credence to that controversial Mayan prophecy. The Mayans themselves were thought to be very dependent on the cultivation of corn. Some speculate that this was the source of their demise, that they were wiped out by a long drought or experienced ecological collapse due to their intensive, slash-and-burn farming system (burning forest to create fields and then harvesting more than once a year may have led to soil depletion). If this doesn't sound familiar to you, I recommend taking a look at the 2007 documentary *King Corn*, which examines the social, economic, and environmental ramifications of the high production of corn in North America. Corn seems to go into everything now, from cattle feed to fast food (as high-fructose corn syrup).

That is not to say there isn't hope for us. Currently, there is a movement all across Canada promoting the buying of locally grown food and the establishment of a nation-wide, locally sustainable food system. More than 100,000 people across the country are eating Certified Local Sustainable food, according to Local Food Plus. Buying local is actually a really good way to start improving your diet, as it means cutting out a lot of the unhealthy preservatives that are found in foods shipped across long distances. This is not only a triumph for health and sustainability, but also has a positive effect on gas emissions and local economy. On that note I will introduce 2012 *summerplay!*: "Nourishing the Body", which I hope will enlighten you and help set us all on a path to a healthier, more sustainable future.

Antoine Elhashem

summerplay!

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Free • Summer 2012**

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2012 Pt. 2: Nourishing the Body

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Malnutrition is the leading cause of death in the world—it kills more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

You don't have to look very far to discover that our Earth is in crisis. In our last issue we learned how our environment is being pushed repeatedly to the breaking point and yet still manages to endure, recovering from one manmade disaster after another. One way we are stressing our planet out is with the demand for global sustenance. Every year the world's population increases exponentially even as our ability to provide the very basics of food and water shrinks. We in the Western world have yet to feel the sting of hunger on a grand scale, but it would take very little to derail the intricate web of our food distribution. For such a fertile country like Canada, it's shocking how much of our food is imported from elsewhere.

At the rate we consume, did you know the average city will run out of food for its populace in less than a week, if transportation was interrupted? What then? What of how our food is grown and handled, the chemicals and preservatives that are added, or how the very genetics of it have been tampered with? We've all heard the horror stories, seen pictures of the pink goo that is processed chicken, or how inhumanely animals are treated. And yet, it's such a massive problem, how do we affect change? How do we see our world with new eyes, when the path we're stuck on is a rut clearly going nowhere good?

Did you know that by committing to buying locally and getting to know your community farmers, you can gain an intimate understanding of how your food is produced, even have an active hand in controlling what you put on

your plate and thus into your body? Did you also know that if every rooftop in our urban jungle became green we could potentially grow 10% of the fruits and vegetables we need to survive? Right here in the city, on our own rooftops, no transportation needed. Think of the energy and greenhouse gas emissions we could save alone! Melissa delves into these issues in "Sustaining Agriculture" on page 12.

Did you know that by reducing the amount of meat in our diets and adding more of the very fruits and vegetables we could grow in our own backyards, can also help Mother Earth regain her equilibrium? Karen educates us on the benefits of going Vegetarian, even if it's part time, in "Fortifying with Foliage" on page 19.

And what of this giant, miraculous blue and green ball of life hurtling through space? We don't call her Mother Earth because it sounds pretty in a hippy sort of way. The energy of this planet nurtures us as we in turn should nurture her. But that balance is so out of kilter now, it's no wonder we've all gone a little crazy. We need to slow down and start giving back to her so that we can all live in harmony once more. In "From the Heart" on page 62, Shelley reminds us of the intimate relationship we have with our planet and how we can reconnect, once again strengthening those vital ties.

But first, take a break from your hectic day, and sit down with Kelly and let her brew up some relaxation for you in "Time for Tea" on page 25. The world's problems are not going to be solved over night, but with all of us working together, we'll get there.

Jeff Harrison

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Sustainable Agriculture

By Melissa Benner

When I was growing up, our family farm was the furthest thing from sustainable. We ran a 600-acre tobacco operation that relied heavily on pesticides, a central marketing board and a government that overlooked the ill effects of our cash crops.

I remember when my grandfather decided to cut down the hundred year old windbreak in our back fields. Although the trees shaded the tobacco, they also provided essential habitat and prevented erosion. My grandpa, even though he loved the farm, was more concerned with profitability at the time and chopped it all down.

I also recall long walks beside the ravines on our property. Etched out by a stream that emptied into Lake Ontario, it was where three generations of my family dumped their junk. As kids, my sister and I used to play on those half-buried trash heaps, but when I got older, I began to question our destructive habits. Although we were closer to the land than city people, we weren't necessarily taking better care of it.

These early realizations shaped my environmentalism, but aren't what convinced me to become an advocate for sustainable agriculture. Instead, my career choice was driven by a deep alliance to the land and seasonal work, which stayed with me even after years of living in the city.

Through this long-lasting alliance, my various job contracts, and countless conversations with farmers over the years, I have developed a nuanced sense of what farming sustainably means. I'd like to share what I've learned along the way.



Soil

An essential time for farmers is the spring thaw, when a new growing season begins, and the ground becomes workable again. For those who grow cash crops, livestock, or who have orchards and bees, soil is the basis for careful planning and future prospects.

Yet many farmers pump their soil full of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, a practice that has been with us since the 1950s. Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, otherwise known as DDT, was the first chemical pesticide to come into widespread use after WW2. Spraying crops with DDT, and when that became illegal, pesticides like RoundUp, gradually became the 'conventional' way to farm.

Not surprisingly, there has been plenty of criticism about the effects of agricultural chemicals, beginning with Rachel Carson's seminal 1962 book *Silent Spring*, to current research that connects pesticides to issues as wide-ranging as cancer, oceanic dead zones and declines in the bee population.

In response to this public concern, some farmers have adopted low-spray methods. Others abstain from pesticides altogether and go organic, opting to take the mandatory five years to become certified. In 2009, there were over 700 certified organic farms in Ontario and 14 in transition, all supported by an organic food industry that grows in sales by 15-20% each year.

A few years ago, I visited Murray Sharp, a farmer from Lambton County who had transitioned from conventional agriculture to organic. After a long chat at his kitchen table, we went on a tour of the land. As we walked into the middle of a field of soybeans, Sharp leaned down and grabbed a handful of earth. "This used to be clay," he explained, as

the nutritious black loam crumbled in his hands, fertile from compost and organic soil amendments.

What he said next stuck with me: "The soil is the key component of the whole organic or ecologic endeavour. It is the life of the soil that produces the food that we eat. If you do not feed the soil, or feed the inhabitants of the soil, you are not going to succeed."

I have heard this mantra expressed by every farmer who has sustainability in mind. From Orchard Hill Farm in St. Thomas that raises animals for their closed-loop compost system; to a grass-fed cattle farm in Beaver Valley that practices crop rotation; to Greenfield Organics outside of Hamilton, where one dig of a shovel brings up piles of earth worms, fertilizing and creating oxygen.

The importance of soil also explains the fight for farm land beyond city limits. Besides the Kelowna valley in BC, South-Western Ontario has the most arable farmland in Canada. We're also paving it over it at an alarming rate: from 1951 to 2001, the Central Ontario region lost 49% of its farmland to the expansion of the Greater Toronto Area. Efforts such as the Ontario Greenbelt attempt to mitigate this trend, but urban sprawl is a real concern for the future of farming in our region.

City

Despite these border-struggles, cities do not just equate the end of farming. In fact, growing food on city land is very much a part of the history of Toronto, as evidenced by historical photos of Victory Gardens on Fleet Street in the 1940s and even the forty-year old allotment in High Park.

Throughout the last decade, interest in urban gardening has flourished, and there are now over 100 community gardens around the city, with close to 4,500 individual plots. The key differences between allotment and community gardens are that the latter are often free, collectively managed by residents and located in the heart of bustling neighbourhoods. You can see them when you walk through the city—green, patchwork plots where residents grow fresh food.

Innovative non-profits, such as FoodShare (www.foodshare.net) and The Stop Community Food Centre (www.thestop.org), also use the community garden model to supply food for their programs, teach healthy cooking skills and demonstrate organic gardening techniques.

Recently, community gardening has expanded into commercial ventures. In 2007, I began to follow the development of Match Box Garden (www.matchboxgarden.ca), one of the first urban agriculture businesses in Toronto. In an interview at the time, Hannah Lewis, owner and operator, talked about the early stages of her work. "I was located across from Trinity Bellwoods Park, selling seedlings, seed, and produce. There was no advertising, just sandwich board signs. And I wasn't certified organic yet, but people could come to my various plots and watch me growing the food."



Left, above: Fleet Street Victory Gardens, 1940. Previous page: Benner Farm old tobacco kilns.

Five years later, Matchbox Gardens has grown into a four-acre market garden selling heirloom and organic varieties at farmers' markets across the city. It has also provided a model for other recent start-ups, including Young Urban Farmers, Fresh City Farms and City Seed Farms.

Erica Lemieux, the 26-year old owner of City Seed Farms (cityseedfarms.com), grows food in West End backyards every summer. Her delicious, organic leafy greens and veggies are sold at the Sorauren and Junction farmers' markets and to local restaurants. To top it off, these veggies are transported in the most environmentally friendly and urbane way: by bicycle!

Lemieux knows first-hand why farming in the city makes sustainable sense for new farmers: "Urban farming overcomes a couple of barriers, particularly, the cost of land and access to markets. I exchange a weekly basket of produce for the entire growing season, for use of people's backyard spaces."

She also sees it as a way to ensure a new generation of farmers are getting into agriculture, explaining that since the average age of farmers in Ontario is 57, young people are crucial for sustaining agriculture. "There is more opportunity than ever for young people to take back control of their food system," Erica says. "It will take hard physical work, commitment, and passion, but the capacity to grow food in Toronto is far, far larger than the current level."

In fact, a 2010 study by McRae about scaling up urban agriculture in the city revealed that Toronto currently has the land and rooftop potential to grow 10% of the city's fresh vegetables. This in-house food production could provide local produce grown close to home, as well as help ease concerns about Toronto's food security. Currently, if transport hubs were put on hold, the city's food supply would last only three days.

As Lewis predicted in 2007: "In the long term, bigger picture, as oil prices rise, urban agriculture will become more and more essential."

Sustain

After touring over the Ontario countryside and Toronto's urban agriculture scene, it's time to return to my family farm. For, just as urban agriculturalists are finding innovative ways to farm sustainably, so are rural producers. My family's transition from growing tobacco to an organic herb business is a perfect example of this.

In 2002, my parents found themselves at a crossroads. When my grandfather passed away that year, so did an older way of farming. Tobacco was on the public health radar and government legislation was making it increasingly hard for small tobacco producers to stay in business. It was time for a change.

So my parents took the leap and bought a potted herb business they discovered for sale online. In return for their investment, they got machinery, an extensive customer list and a really big learning curve. Benner Farms Inc. became Heritage Line Herbs.

Over the last ten years, our farm has become environmentally sustainable in ways I never would have dreamed of as a kid. An Ontario Environmental Farm Plan sign hangs from the porch rafters of our on-farm store. We sell fair trade and local on our shelves. My dad uses natural pest management in our greenhouses, and combats aphids with wasps. We transitioned our fields to organic. For conventional farmers born and raised in tobacco country, this was a big transformation.

Besides adopting green practices, we've also diversified our markets, which is another hallmark of sustainable agriculture. A common criticism of conventional farming is mono-cropping, which involves growing only one commodity year after year, often for export markets. Instead, sustainable agriculture follows more of an ecological model, with diversified growing techniques and multiple markets.

In our situation, what began as a seasonal, wholesale

potted herb business has since expanded into a retail store, a tea room, cooking workshops and a line of value-added herb blends. This expansion has created multiple market streams and the ability to sell our products year-round.

By hard work and willpower, my parents have created a vibrant business. Yet, through our transition, an important lesson has been driven home: sustainable agriculture must also sustain farmers.

My parents are nearly sixty years old and put in seven long days of work each week. Although this is common for small businesses, what makes farming different is that the physical work is very demanding on the body. It's also time sensitive: your work schedule is dictated by weather, and when it's time to plant or harvest, there's no time for rest. Even the young farmers I know in the city struggle with how intensive farming is during the growing season.

As well, despite my parent's inventiveness, our farm has a large debt load. We are not alone in this. The National Farmers' Union, one of Canada's more progressive producer associations, has published extensive research on the family farm income crisis. They explain that farm net incomes, when balanced against debt, are in the negative \$10-20,000 range, and that farmers are increasingly reliant on off-farm jobs, farm support payments, and loans to stay afloat.

Considering these factors, it's easy to see why most definitions of sustainable agriculture combine ecological considerations with economic viability and quality of life. Balancing these variables can be quite difficult, and this is where we can step in to help.

One way for consumers to support sustainable farming is to

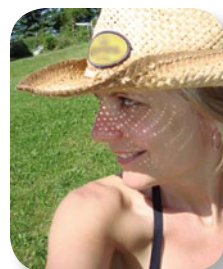
'vote with their dollar' and buy local. Talking with my mom, I know this keeps her morale up. I've seen her exhaustion and money worries eased by a customer loving our tea room, someone ordering 'Debbie's Dream Tea' from Korea, or a local chef who wants to partner with us.

However, as the sustainable agriculture movement grows, individual actions need to be paired with wider social and political support. This is already happening to some extent: political platforms are including food as a hot-button issue and food policy councils are being established in cities across Canada. Organizations such as Sustain Ontario are uniting groups under a common cause, and food issues are no longer just relegated to the farm newspapers.

This momentum needs to be stepped up by public advocacy that further connects rural and urban areas. Personally, I want to see those who grow our food—organic producers, urban farmers, my parents—strongly supported by those who want to eat fresh and local. Through our reciprocal efforts, sustainable agriculture can be sustained into the future.

Melissa Benner is a writer, educator, and food and farming activist living in Toronto. You can read some of her farmer profiles in various issues of

Edible Toronto and Soiled and Seeded magazines.



Stepping up: ways to pitch in

Grow a seedling. Try it in a backyard or community garden, or in a container on your balcony. Once you see that seedling burst out of the soil and water it every day, you will truly understand how great it feels to grow your food with care. Urban Harvest (www.uharvest.ca) is one place where you can buy organic seeds. You can also learn more about community gardening through the Toronto Community Garden Network (tcgn.org).

Make your list, check it twice. If you can't always afford organic or buy local, make it an option some of the time. Freeze berries and can peaches when they are in season. Visit your neighbourhood farmers' market (tfmn.ca) and choose grocery stores that offer local options. Or sign up for a food basket straight from a farmer, Community Shared Agriculture (csafarms.ca), or have an organic food box delivered to your door. Food Share also has a Good Food Box program that is a great option. (www.blogto.com/eat_drink/2011/05/the_top_10_organic_food_delivery_options_in_toronto/)

Visit a farm. Go on a local farm tour, or even consider working on a farm through WWOOF (www.wwof.ca) or CRAFT (www.craftontario.ca). Once you do the physical work, it's easier to feel more connected to your food and understand why

you may pay more for food that is grown lovingly. If you don't have time to get out of the city, consider harvesting with Not Far From the Tree (www.notfarfromthetree.org), an urban fruit-gleaning organization.

Connect in the city. Many great chefs, restaurants, and institutions are aiming to support local and sustainable agriculture. Attend events like Toronto Underground Market (yumtum.ca). Go on a food tour at the Brickworks (ebw.evergreen.ca) or St. Lawrence Market (www.stlawrencemarket.com), which recently was ranked the best food market in the world by National Geographic. These events and organizations embody the hip urban edge of sustainable food and agriculture.

Learn, advocate, take action. Like I said, part of what will sustain agriculture is not just purchasing power, but political action. Keep informed. Consider enrolling in Ryerson's Food Security program or St. Lawrence Colleges' Sustainable Local Food certificate. Learn about the People's Food Policy Project (foodsecurecanada.org/the-peoples-food-policy-project). Research and get involved with your local food and farming organizations. Follow your political party's food and agriculture platforms, so you can vote for change at election time.

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FORTIFY WITH *foliage*

By Karen Fulcher



BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT PLANT-BASED EATING

We make an average of 200 decisions about eating every day, according to the book *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*, by Brian Wansink. Eating is intrinsically tied to our history, our feelings of nurturing (or not), our culture, our lifestyles, beliefs and habits. Each and every time you consciously make a food decision, you weigh it against long held habits and beliefs.

But the choices aren't necessarily personal. The act of sharing food, someone cooking it and someone eating it, makes it meaningful to both. Many people were raised to be thankful for the wealth of food in the form of meat: if you didn't eat meat, you were poor.

When you choose to cut meat out of your diet, you are often questioned (by others and yourself) about

why you are going against a tradition of nurturing ingrained in the way your parents raised you. So you research, you dig into your belief system and you find ways to answer the questions.

There are fundamentalists on both sides of the coin (meat-eaters and vegans). Kasha Visutskie, a lapsed vegetarian who would like to return to her former eating habits, points out, "I think there's polarizing done by either side, seeing the other as limited in their worldview. That one-or-the-other mentality is exclusionary to people who may not wish to define themselves so rigidly by what they eat."

Visutskie compares choosing to become vegetarian to the coming out process. She tells me, "You know, someone says, 'mom, dad, I'm a vegetarian' and the parents become concerned by what that means, the possible dangers and challenges of 'the lifestyle.' Hopefully [like coming out] it isn't so foreign and scary anymore. And, of course, we have all these labels so we can explain our identities to others."

Many who start making changes to their diets may also expand those choices to clothing or products. It really depends on the reasons why one refrains from eating meat. And as Visutskie says, "Others always want to point out my hypocrisies. And I admit it, I'm not perfect. But people are fallible."

Kasha Visutskie, a lapsed vegetarian who would like to return to her former eating habits



“Vegetarians need about twice as much iron as non-vegetarians. This is because we don’t absorb the iron from plant foods as well as the iron in meat sources.”



Honey Bloomberg

As far as the labels go, if you eat eggs and dairy products, you are considered a lacto-ovo vegetarian. If you exclusively eat a plant-based diet, you are considered vegan. Some vegans expand that to exclude insects or things made from insects, like honey. A pescetarian is a new term that describes someone who eats fish as a part of their diet. And finally, an omnivore eats meat and plants.

There are a number of myths about the dangers of following a vegan or vegetarian diet. The first question most vegetarians get is “how do you get enough protein?”

I asked Honey Bloomberg, a registered dietitian about this. She tells me that there are a number of vegetarian sources of protein. She suggests you “include milk products, legumes (beans, lentils, peas), soy, tofu, nuts, seeds, eggs and whole grains such as quinoa and buckwheat. Eat some of these protein sources at every meal and you’ll get the protein you need.”

Most people (in non-impovertised countries) get much more protein than they actually need. In fact, the question of how much protein is misdirected. Protein provides us with the essential amino acids we need and a varied western diet whether vegan or omnivore gives us plenty. Even broccoli has protein!

Okay, but what about iron? Well, Bloomberg tells

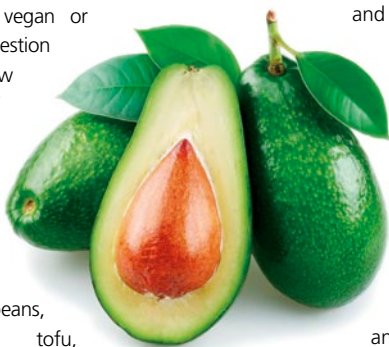
me, “Vegetarians need about twice as much iron as non-vegetarians. This is because we don’t absorb the iron from plant foods as well as the iron in meat sources.” She suggests that eating the following foods to get enough iron: legumes; fortified pasta and cereals (when iron is added to these foods); prunes, raisins and apricots; quinoa; blackstrap molasses and dark green vegetables.

This is the only health concern that could cause vegans problems: if you suffer from anemia, my doctor told me, there isn’t enough spinach in the world to increase your iron levels quicker than meat sources.

How about the B12 question? Bloomberg tells me, “Vitamin B12 is only found in animal foods. If you’re a lacto-ovo vegetarian, you’ll get B12 from dairy and eggs. If you’re vegan, you can get

B12 from fortified beverages like soy or almond, fortified meat alternatives like veggie burgers (but you’ll have to check the label) or a product called ‘nutritional yeast.’ Some vegans do need to take B12 supplements (but speak to your doctor before going this route). Other important nutrients to consider are omega-3 fats, zinc, and calcium and vitamin D if you’re vegan.”

Solved! Well not so fast. Bloomberg warns, “Choosing to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet can be a healthy lifestyle choice to make, but it takes some planning! A well-planned vegetarian diet can provide all the nutrients one needs for good health. But it is possible to be vegetarian and be making mostly unhealthy, nutritionally empty choices. Consider that french fries, pop, candy, chips, pizza and baked goods are all vegetarian.”



She suggests, "If you're thinking of going vegetarian, this may be your opportunity to experiment with new plant-based foods and new dishes. You may spend more time preparing foods or learning new cooking techniques, but vegetarian diets can be a little easier on the wallet!"

So now we know that choosing this path is perfectly healthy if we follow the advice of doctors and dieticians, why the heck would anyone want to give up that delicious meat? Well, (other than the people that actually don't like the taste) there are four main reasons why.

The first is religion and culture. There are a number of religions in the world that require followers to abstain from meat. Seventh-Day Adventists follow a vegan diet and boast 50% less risk of heart disease, certain types of cancers, strokes, and diabetes than the general population. Hindus and Buddhists believe the vegetarian diet purifies the body and spirit and Muslims often choose vegetarian diet when there is limited availability of meat from slaughter that has followed religious requirements.

The second reason is health. Perhaps you've discovered some digestion issues, skin, weight or allergy problems. Often the clean eating of a vegetarian or vegan diet can clear them up. PinkPlayMags' own Tina Kelly has been vegan for 10 years. She tells me, "We were trying to figure out what it was that we were eating that wasn't making us feel good. So we started by removing things from our diet. I was lactose intolerant and I never knew it. And I found that 60-70% of Mediterranean people are lactose intolerant. We kind of laughed, but now understood what was happening when we drank that big glass of milk before school and felt nauseated. It was a real eye-opener."

Coming from a Greek background, Kelly had much to give up. Think roasted, marinated meats, cheese set aflame, yogurt... I asked her what challenges she faced. She chuckles and tells me, "I had to explain to my almost 80-year-old mother that we were not eating



meat and boy oh boy that didn't go over too well! She told me within six months my blood was going to turn to water and I was going to die!"

Her family approached their health problems and food choices with curiosity and adventure. "We started with little goals—let's eliminate this from our diet for a while and see how that goes. And suddenly we were in this whole other zone. And before we knew it, we could make a meal without meat and not die from it!"

"We didn't wake up one day and say we are putting a halt on eating animal products, it was more fooling around. We said, let's try this or let's try not eating meat for a week and see if we can do it. And suddenly, there we were, vegan. It wasn't yuck we don't like meat. I mean, coming from a Greek background, there's the souvlaki, that kind of food." But Kelly applied her culinary skills. "I have a cooking background and found ways to make a vegan version of souvlaki and tzatziki and people can't believe it's so good!"

The third reason is, for Faith McGregor, about animal rights and cruelty in farming and food production practices. She explains, "I read a book—an ugly, horrific, horrendous story of a walk through a slaughterhouse. After that, it was a documentary about how they treat chickens in Georgia and I cried. I said, 'that's it, I'm done.' That was twelve years ago."

McGregor adds, "People disassociate from their food. If you don't see the process, people don't want to know. I've challenged people and they tell me 'I don't want to know.'"

"The [meat] industry just seems so mechanical and inhumane. There's no thought to how the animal is feeling. I think people think cow comes in, cow dies, and now I'm eating this hamburger. They don't think about the mistakes [in the slaughtering process] along the way, not to mention the workers. The workers are

**Dorianne Emmerton
feels she can help
save the rainforest by
not eating meat.**





Sarka Kalusova

I stopped having cravings because I started seeing the grease and gristle... and the suffering.

alongside the animals trying not to hurt themselves, being treated by the organization the same way it treats the animals. Plus, they tend to be migrant workers who are low paid and the employer can find twenty more of them if they don't [tolerate the working conditions]."

Sarka Kalusova shares this perspective. She tells me dropping meat wasn't difficult for her after she'd seen a film that forever altered how she saw meat. "I stopped having cravings because I started seeing the grease and gristle... and the suffering. I started making clear connections between an animal's life and its flesh. It no longer tasted good to me." For Kalusova, "a soul is a soul whether human or animal." She adds, "Not to mention the cruel conditions; when I realized that animals are always shipped to slaughterhouses and not killed on the farm that they lived on (free range or not) because of laws, well, there's no way to kill an animal for human consumption that is humane. The consciousness of other species is the same as ours."

But Jane Arbour, an omnivore, tells me, "I feel more of kinship with humans as opposed to animals and while I don't believe in unnecessary cruelty towards animals or factory-farming, I try to get the majority of my meat from ethically farmed sources. I'm not a pacifist and I don't believe that passive resistance is always a good option or strategy, so for me at the end of the day, we are animals and we can be violent animals. It is ethically and morally just to eat animals. We've evolved to be omnivores." She laughs and adds, "That makes me sound so bad!" and clarifies, "I think there's a difference between non-violence and animal cruelty and I think it's important for our health and ethically important to treat the animals we eat as well as we can."

The forth reason why many choose a plant-based diet is for ecological reasons. There are a number of studies,

such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization report that ranks livestock production as creating 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions—more than any other sector including transport.

Dorianne Emmerton tells me that her choice to be a pescatarian or in her words, a "hypocritical vegetarian—I eat raw fish" was her relationship and participation in the death of an animal conflated with ecological issues. Emmerton elaborates, "I was 12 or 13 when I made the choice. I was reading *A Diet for a Planet* and I learned it takes ten times the land to feed a meat-eater. I thought, 'I feel conflicted about eating meat. If I don't eat meat, I'm gonna save all this rainforest, so that's what I'm gonna do!' I was a lot more idealistic then though."

"To this day I don't think killing animals is wrong, I just think the way we mass produce animals for consumption is pretty wrong. I try to extend [my environmental consciousness] to my other food habits



Curious about how vegans make their meals interesting?



Jane Arbour gets the majority of her meat from ethically farmed sources.

as well. In the summer, I try to get all of my food produce at local farmers markets. It's more environmentally friendly."

But you can eat meat and be socially conscious and have less impact on the environment according to Arbour. "It's a stronger statement to vote with your dollars, to buy from ethical meat farmers instead of just not buying anything. For me, because of my anemia, there just isn't any high source of iron in anything but meat. But even so, I tend to only buy meat for special occasions."

McGregor agrees, but for purchasing non-meat produce. "I think that it's up to the individual to make better buying decisions and the only way to do that is to buy according to the seasons. And get to know your farmers. Buy from someone who manages the land well." She adds, "Ask whether your food is organic or not, are the farmers tending to the land in a way that is responsible and ethical? Are they misusing migrant workers? Who are they selling the food to? What pesticides are they using? [Our food system] is complicated."

Whether any of these reasons resonate with you, eating more plant-based meals is not only good for you, but it's good for the environment. Bloomberg suggests using EatRight Ontario, a government-funded nutrition telehealth line and website. You can connect with a registered dietitian either by phone or email and get advice and resources for free. Bloomberg adds, "For readers considering switching to a veggie eating plan, my colleagues can help them get started. We even have a vegetarian menu plan on www.eatrightontario.ca."

To increase the number of plant-based meals in your routine, you might need to get more experimental with your cooking. Try out new recipes. Challenge yourself and invite friends to join you in your quest. Or if you eat out a lot, check out www.veg.ca for their restaurant directory, many of which offer cooking classes, too!

Karen Fulcher, freelance writer for PinkPlayMags, has been crunching on carrots for over twenty years now and has never looked back!



Here's a sampling of food items that you may never have heard of before!

Agar-agar: vegan alternative to the animal product, gelatin.

Agave syrup: vegan alternative to honey (sourced from bees)

Braggs Liquid: soy sauce alternative with no gluten or fermentation and certified non-GMO soybeans

Chlorella: (spirulina) green algae considered a super-food with protein, iron, zinc, and a number of vitamins including Bs.

Nutritional Yeast: a deactivated yeast high in vitamin Bs and a complete protein; often used for cheesy flavouring

Quinoa: complete protein (like oats), no gluten and high in vitamins including iron

Seitan: gluten flour and broth that create a chewy textured faux-meat

Tempeh: made from fermented soybeans; it has higher nutritional value because the soybean is not processed as much as tofu

Tofu: made from curdled and pressed milk from the soybean

Xylitol: made from trees and berries, a vegan alternative to sugar (processed with bone char)

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Time for Tea

by Kelly Wilk



For the sake of the senses

I was brought up in a "coffee house." I loved sneaking into the kitchen after holiday dinners, pouring the grinds and boiling water into the Bodum, releasing the heavenly scent. However I remain a coffee maker, not a coffee drinker. My wife maintains I make the perfect cup of coffee, but I find the bitter taste at odds with the aroma. Tea, however, is an entirely different story!

The allure of loose-leaf tea is also in the act of brewing. Engaging in my personal tea rituals is what I derive the most pleasure from. My favorite vehicle for tea is a multicoloured teapot and mug with an Aboriginal design from Australia. Then it starts with the nose. Plunging into a package of tea I am overwhelmed by a storm of scent. Scent triggers memory and can create intense emotional response. Certain scents can improve our mood and therefore our entire outlook.

Loose-leaf tea also has the perk of being visually appealing. There is something so comforting and esthetically pleasing about a container of dried leaves, bits of fruit, nuts, spices, or flower petals. I love watching the buoyant curls of coloured water circling the steaming depths. Then picking sugar, honey or agave, milk or lemon is such a gentle minutia of activity it is instantaneously soothing.

Combining sitting down to drink the tea with a book or journal and a little classical music, my ritual is complete. For me it is about self-care and creativity, giving myself permission to honour my own needs. The power of ritual is often underestimated until we realize the significance it holds in our life. It is not surprising that people the world over practice tea rituals embedded with a deeply symbolic, historical or traditional aspect.

For the sake of tradition

Sitting down with Shabnam Weber, owner of The Tea Emporium (www.theteaemporium.com) in Toronto, we discuss the ritual of taking time for tea. Every family has a different way of making tea. "Tea connects us with the past. Never argue with someone about the way to make the best pot of tea," she says, "because you are arguing with their mother!" And as we all know, that gets you nowhere fast!

"Tea all comes from the same plant," Weber tells me. From the *Camellia sinensis* plant, "it is how they are processed that changes them."

Tea that does not contain this plant she considers herbal. The tea plant was first grown in China and was introduced to the world by them, first to Japan where it inspired the culture of tea-houses. These cultures also have the longest practiced tea rituals.

Before the marriage of a Chinese or Japanese couple *The Tea Ceremony* is performed by the bride who "serves her new family tea as a sign of respect," Weber says. In China the traditional tea used is oolong, a mixture of black and green. It is mixed in a "yixing pot" made of clay, encouraging the flavours to accumulate. In Japan they use a particular green tea for this ritual, matcha tea, made with whole crushed leaves rendering a bright green powder, instead of an infusion.

At David's Tea (www.davidstea.com) in the Annex, Justine McGrath, assistant manager, demonstrated this ritual. Taking a small amount of matcha she put it in an egg shaped bowl and made a "puddle" of nearly boiling water over top. With a bamboo whisk she held her arm straight and moved her wrist side to side. "The smaller the bubbles you make the more luck you have!" she smiled. David's Tea sells a ceremonial matcha from the Aichi prefecture, Japan's highest quality source since 1200 AD.

In Britain and the Commonwealth the practice of *Afternoon Tea* is practically a national treasure. Commonly it is mislabeled as *High Tea*, which is actually just "a working mans lunch served on a high table," Weber explains. *Afternoon tea* is the ritual including little sandwiches, fruit, dotted cream (which is to die for) and the tiered plates.



For the sake of variety

Certain types of tea are associated with different parts of the globe even though it all came from China with only two exceptions. The basic types of preparation of the *Camellia sinensis* plant are black, green, white, pu'erh and oolong. Maté, and rooibos are also herbal beverages generally called tea, made with other plants. After combing the user friendly David's Tea website I visited McGrath to taste the tea.

Green Tea In China it is wilted, hand rolled and pan-fried, but the Japanese began to steam green tea following the withering process. I love green tea at Japanese restaurants but at home it is always bitter. Now I know what the problem was. Green and white teas are the most delicate and you should never use boiling water or over steep them. Nearly boiling or 80 degrees and a max of 3 minutes worked wonderfully!

White Tea is the most expensive variety and was once reserved for nobility. It contains the highest level of antioxidants (more than green) and the least amount of caffeine or processing. Instead of being rolled like green or black, the buds are picked and dried. "White is the new green," McGrath says in a blithe tone. White tea also has more of the essential vitamins and minerals than green tea.

Black Tea on the other hand requires full oxidation to prepare it. Therefore it is much stronger and sweeter than green or white tea and is often given to the sick to provide energy and alertness. It is also the most popular in the Western world i.e. Chai, Earl Grey, Orange Pekoe and Breakfast tea. The Chinese began making black tea because they discovered it stored longer.

Originally they called it red tea but it was renamed as black tea by westerners. Black tea is wilted or withered by blown air, and rolled by machine or hand, then further oxidized in a warm, humid environment. It is then sorted according to size of leaf (loose being the highest grade) according to the standards set by the Earl of Orange!

Oolong Tea (oo-long) is a combination of black and green tea called the "black tea dragon," that has been grown on a mountaintop since the Ming Dynasty. It is prepared via a labour intensive process of bruising, partial drying and hand rolling. These days it is rolled by machines that mimic hand rolling to meet demand; oolong is also wound tightly so that it expands when infused.

Pu'erh Tea, (pr-eh) is picked on mountains at 2,000 meters, and it is unlike other teas made with the *Camellia sinensis* plant. Instead of being drunk right after infusion, pu'erh is aged like wine in cellars. It is piled in burlap sacks sometimes years before it is processed and sells for thousands at auctions. This variety was actually known as "black tea" in China because of the dark colour, which comes from the aging process. In China it has been called The King of Tea as it was offered in tribute to the Emperor, and the secret to making is still closely guarded. Two types are traditionally made, one being "shoo" or cooked pu'erh or "shen" being green pu'erh.

Red Tea or Rooibos Tea (roy-boss) hails from South Africa. In Afrikaans it translates to "red bush" though it can be green or red. It is a caffeine free tea that helps you keep hydrated! It is made from the *Aspalathus linearis* shrub, which grows in the North Western Cape region. When the green leaves are left to oxidize in the sun it takes on this red colour.

Maté Tea (ma-tay) is another exception to teas made from *Camellia sinensis*. It is a native to South America from a species of holly called Yerba Maté that grows mainly in Argentina and has as much energy as coffee. Maté tea is the liquid left from infusing the leaves. First the holly is blanched in a dryer or over a wood fire and left to dry for 8 to 24hrs. Next it is encased in cedar or cement containers and aged anywhere from 2 to 12 months. Then it is broken up and infused for consumption.

My sister came back from Buenos Aires with a hollowed out gourd and a stick fashioned into a straw. When she told me I was supposed to drink maté from it I thought she was a little crazy. Now I understand this "cup" is called a "bombilla." One is shared around a table of family and friends to celebrate. McGrath informed me of The El Almacen Yerba Maté Café at 1078 Queen St. W where you can have this traditional drink. Think I'll take my sister!

Herbal Tea is fresh or dried petals, leaves, roots or seeds providing natural flavours that you infuse in water.



For the sake of health

Ingesting tea introduces the therapeutic properties of plant extracts into our bodies for the same reason essential oils are applied directly to the skin, bath water, compresses or inhaled. Bergamot for example is an Italian citrus fruit used in Earl Grey. I use Bergamot essential oil to assist people with depression or just the blues. It is the number one oil for Aromatherapists in the case of mood disorders and clients on anti-depressants. When it comes to using plants as healing applications the possibilities are endless.

"The answer to what is the healthiest tea for you," says Weber "is what is your favorite? It's like exercise," she elaborates and I'm suddenly on her page. New health behaviors *must* be realistic and enjoyable otherwise they will be very difficult to maintain. Therefore if you want to begin a tea regiment, it is like finding an alternative therapy, you must try all the different types to discover what you enjoy.

To facilitate people's personal discovery of tea, Weber hosts one-hour tastings at her Eglinton location, so people can get an idea of what they like to start a daily regime. The Tea Emporium is also certified with the Tea Association of Canada and she designed the "Tea Sommelier Course," which runs in colleges across Canada. They are offered at George Brown through continuing education.

In an interview for *Canadian Living*, Weber covers the impressive list of vitamins and minerals in tea that may contribute to a healthier you. The antioxidants present in tea come in a large variety each protecting particular cells against

disease, most importantly by discouraging free radicals that may lead to cancer. They also boost the immune system, prevent cellular damage in the heart and skin,

encourage healing in these tissues, prevent bad breath, slow the aging process, increase intestinal health, burn fat and may even help protect brain cells against Alzheimer's disease.

The other beneficial vitamins and minerals found in tea include Vitamin H for immune function; fluoride, calcium, magnesium and Vitamin D for bones and teeth; amino acids to build body tissues, combat viruses and bacteria and provide anti-inflammatory effects on blood vessels; Vitamin E for anti aging properties; and lastly Tannins that support intestinal and stomach health.

The systems of Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine have been based on the principle of using the natural properties of herbs and whole foods, "to cool or warm the body" says Weber. They are systems of belief that have existed for thousands of years like Aromatherapy and other modalities, which people have relied on for the sake of their health and well-being. There has been a return to a more natural way of healing and tea is a part of that movement.

Whatever your reasons for drinking tea, this amazing beverage has made an incredible impression on the world. It is a way to celebrate, to express ourselves, to care for our bodies and minds and discover joy on a daily basis over one small cup. With so many opportunities to enjoy new and old favorites, the only thing left to do is turn on the kettle.

Kelly is a freelance writer, Reiki Master and Reflexologist working and living in Toronto (www.feetmatter.ca). She has also contributed to LoveinToronto.com reviewing Queer Community events, businesses and Pride-Flagged restaurants (www.loveintoronto.com/tag/Kelly-Wilk/). She is also on her way to becoming a tea-a-holic. If there was one beverage she could drink at the end of the world it would be Cream of Earl Grey, a hearty fragrant cup of tea that clearly says, put up your feet now you've piled up the sandbags.





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Boarding the Stress Express

by Bryen Dunn

Like many people, I often forget to take time for myself, to reflect, recharge and rejuvenate. We all tend to get busy in our daily routines, many of which cause undue stress on our bodies, both mentally and physically. I've started forcing myself to drink more water, eat lighter and healthier, sit up straight when working at the computer, and making sure I fit in some time for a bit of exercise. All quite simple and easy to implement in one's own space.

However, there's much more to health and nutrition that can only be achieved with some focused planning and determination. While some hit the treadmill and sauna at the local gym, others seek out refuge through a holistic practitioner, naturopath, reflexologist and therapeutic massages. Understanding the mechanisms of your body and nourishing both inside and out are essential to leading a healthy lifestyle.

One way to achieve these goals is to book some time away from your regular regime and put yourself in pamper mode. I jumped at the opportunity to do a weekend getaway at Ste. Anne's Family of Spas, just over an hour east of Toronto. The original Ste. Anne's is located on over 500 acres of rolling hills near Grafton, Ontario in Northumberland County. A second smaller boutique style property, Dorset Manor Spa, is in the quaint town of Port Hope, Ontario, and offers much of the same facilities and services.

As a novice to the spa experience, there were a few things that attracted me to Ste. Anne's. The proximity to the city makes it an easy escape, yet the remoteness of the location gives the feeling of having ventured out farther beyond. As well, the treatments and services offered were beyond my expectations, with everything from esthetics and massages, to wellness and hydrotherapy. The clincher for me, though, was the option to book their Stress Express package, the only destination spa in Canada that offers both train and shuttle service, or door-to-door limo transportation.

Arriving at the Cobourg train station, a smiling staff member was there to greet myself and my partner on the platform, before whisking us off to Ste. Anne's 20 minutes away. My stress was already starting to dissipate, when our driver asked if we had picked up some wine already. Having done my research in advance, I was packing a bottle of red. However, for those that may not have known, the one-stop shop in Grafton is a grocery, LCBO, and Beer Store all wrapped into one convenient location. It's highly recommended to make this stop, as although the properties are not licensed they do allow guests to bring their own beverages, and it will truly add to your evening dining experience.

From here, our driver offered the bumpier scenic route,

or the more direct main roadway to the property. I decided to put the limo to a test and chose the gravel road that provided panoramic views of the hilltop manor as we approached. After a brief orientation of the property, we checked in and were allowed access to the day spa facilities until our room was ready. This included the outdoor grotto area with hot tub and cold plunge area, steam rooms, indoor and outdoor (seasonal) pools, wellness facility with access to select wellness classes, and three on-property walking trails.

As the sun was beginning to peak through the overhead clouds, I took the opportunity to check out some of the outdoor trails, one of which lead to the horse stables. They even offer an evening guided stable visit where guests can help rally up the stallions in preparation for the nighttime siesta. It was now time for lunch, which as with all meals during your stay, is included in the package price. The dining room windows faced south toward Lake Ontario, overlooking the outdoor terrace and swimming pool. Once seated, I noticed a significant number of other guests who were dining in their robes, which by the way, is highly encouraged.

The menu is prepared by onsite Certified Chef de Cuisine, Christopher Ennew, who has been with the property for nearly 10 years. Ennew leads a team of chefs who create culinary well-balanced masterpieces using only the freshest ingredients available. The menu options include vegetarian and gluten free, as well as a selection of organic meats, healthy pasta dishes and freshly made breads. Chef Christopher most definitely considers the healing powers of food for the body and soul, complementing the overall onsite spa experience. Highly recommended are the daily soups prepared with locally grown herbs, the Panini sandwiches, or any of the signature salad dishes.





Rooms are either located in the main building or offsite in one of the spa cottages, which can accommodate up to six individuals, making it perfect for friends and family gatherings. We were given the "Blue Room," which came with a Jacuzzi tub, working fireplace, and a four poster antique bed. There's no telephone or television in any of the onsite rooms, again encouraging guests to unplug and connect with themselves rather than others. I was really starting to feel this was "me" time. After soaking in the hot tub and spending time in the eucalyptus steam room, it was time for our Afternoon Tea!

The assortment of teas offered is beyond belief. I'm not much of a tea toddler, but the aromatic scents of these freshly perked creations were irresistible. The Sweet Green and Coconut Breeze concoctions were simply delicious and went down smoothly with our assortment of cheeses, fruits, and baked sweets. I was feeling pampered in paradise and each and every staff member I encountered must be given some recognition for being part of this. Although I was a guest there, it did feel like we were all one big happy family as well.

Dinner was just as delectable, with a variety of heartier selections to satisfy the palette. The Cajun chicken pasta was mouth watering with just enough spice, which was complemented beautifully with our bottle of Shiraz. Desserts ranged from the healthy to the decadent. Overall the onsite dining is as much of the spa experience as the treatments themselves, which we'd be experiencing the next morning. After a quick match of scrabble in the games room, it was off to la-la land sufficiently satisfied.

Most people chose between one of the two properties for the duration of their stay, however I was curious to see what the Dorset Manor property looked like. So after a breakfast of assorted cereals and pastries and a scrumptious made-to-order Eggs Florentine, we bid our adieus and caught our ride over to Port Hope. Pulling into the circular drive we arrived in front of the pillared Victorian mansion,

perched high atop a hill overlooking Lake Ontario. The grand entrance opened up to a reception area, and immediately I noticed a difference in the atmosphere. This nine room property is exclusive to overnight guests, while the larger more expansive Ste. Anne's allows day spa patrons as well.

Most guest rooms feature antique furnishings and private balconies, and between meals and spa treatments guests can relax in the seasonal outdoor pool, lounge in the sauna and hot tubs and explore the historic town of Port Hope. The meals and spa services are identical at both properties, and with over 35 different options to choose from, deciding on what I wanted done to my body was more difficult than choosing items from the dining menu. Finally it was time for the pièce-de-résistance: the treatments!

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After perusing my options, I settled on the Synchronized Tuning, which to me read like a drop down menu of items I could decide on after discussions with my practitioner. This is exactly what it was. We chatted about the different options I had based on my wants and needs, and I chose a hot stone massage, combination seaweed and mud body wrap and some reflexology on my feet. I was a spa virgin to every one of these, but I just laid back and took what was coming to me. The volcanic stones are heated to a temperature hot enough to relax the muscles, and additional ones are added as the others cool down. The stones were used to enhance the massage technique, gently rubbed all over the back of my body from shoulders to legs. As I had no visual perception of what was happening, it created a fully sensory experience each time a new heated stone was applied.

The full body wrap was deemed a detoxifier, and we all know this is a necessity in today's life. I was covered waist down in mud and waist up in seaweed, then wrapped in a heated cover for about ten minutes. During this time I received a neck and shoulder massage, and had the pressure points on my feet explored. By this point in time I was fully relaxed, and somewhat incapacitated. I could feel the different sensations between the mud and seaweed as time progressed. The seaweed had a bit of a coarser texture, and felt a bit warmer than the cooler sensation of the mud. Simultaneously, my practitioner was applying pressure to the different zones and reflex areas of my toes and soles to gather readings on the overall condition of my body and mind. I was in a serene state of tuning in to my body, while tuning out from life's stress.

When finished, my warm shower was running so that I could rinse away the toxins and stress once and for all. The Aveda line of body products throughout both properties are a nice added touch and Ste. Anne's just recently introduced their own line of soaps, lotions, cleansers, and scrubs called Skin Nourishment.

Sadly, after a quick lunch in the airy dining room, it was time to catch the shuttle back to the Stress Express, for the return journey home. Sitting on the train staring out the window was definitely much better than having to deal with traffic on the roads. As their website states, "The Ste. Anne's philosophy focuses on creating an atmosphere to help rebuild your strength, recapture your energy, and reflect on what's truly important in your life. A stay at a Ste. Anne's Spa is an investment in yourself and your future well-being." I wholeheartedly agree!

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities. He's willing to take on any assignments of interest, attend parties with free booze, listen to rants, and travel the world in search of the great unknown. He's eager to discover the new, remember the past, and look into the future.





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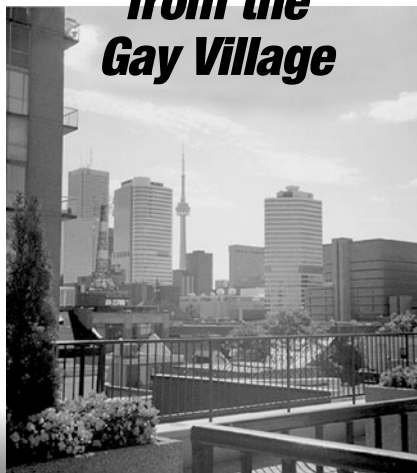
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Our Opinions and we



Body V

by Melissa Benner

Body vs. Mind—some say it's all mind over matter and that how you feel emotionally and think mentally, has a strong affect on your health; it's all about positive thought. Others believe the opposite, that what you eat and how you take care of your body directly influences the realms of your mind and heart. You are what you eat vs. you are what you think.

T.T. Bloomquist: Recently, I've been reading late 19th century psychologist, William James (brother of Henry). In his lectures he speaks of the Mind-Cure movement, which was a Victorian *The Secret* of its day: think it and it will be yours. Before you look to see if I'm wearing a mood ring, though, please understand I'm as sceptical as a cat when it comes to the idea of curing illness through thought; but there is something there. Studies show that cortisol, a stress hormone, is released into the body of a depressed mind. That hormone should only be there for short periods, for fight or flight situations. If it stays long enough, it damages the immune system and illness occurs.

We are as responsible for what we put in our minds as we are for what we put in our bodies. Ten years ago, I may have been rendered temporarily lethargic by Toonie Tuesdays at KFC, but it's more likely the constant playing of Nine Inch Nails was the culprit in dragging my body into the gutter.

Melissa Benner: Curing illness through thought, hey? Well, have you ever had an ingrown toenail?

There I was, in the prime of my twenties, travelling in some of the most gorgeous countryside I'd ever seen, all tanned and limber with my days stretched before me. Yet each step was agony, and my pretty painted toes were a mockery of pain. I will never forget how all the fibres of my being were concentrated on that most-inglorious and inflamed part of my body: an ingrown monstrosity that stripped away all enjoyment of place and day... despite how much I rolled my eyes at the irony and tried to breathe through it.

No mind-cure or mood ring or mildly reassuring rationale could have removed that pain!

TTB: Pain is one of the worst distractions, even worse than the noise from a construction site: brain-pounding klaxons beat away what can be so beautiful around us. Even if, zooming along in your erotimobile, you had the top down with the wind in your hair, the pain would still stop you from living fully, would keep your body from functioning fully. All that cortisol!

Of course, you could have ingested some chemical analgesic to subdue the pain, but you could have also gone for a kind of "neural top down control" of those pain signals. Neural top down control of the body is why

on... e have one!

S. Mind

and T.T. Bloomquist



placebos are sometimes effective. Essentially it's faith as documented by science. It wouldn't cure your ingrown toenail, sad to say. The brain is not magic, just mysterious.

MB: Well, klaxons, erotimobiles, and 'neural top down control' all sound pretty magical to me, T.T. Instead, I like to get to the heart of the matter. I'm a two feet on the ground kind of person. A what-you-see is-what-you-get kind of gal.

See how those metaphors are centred on the body? It's how I experience the world. As much as I'd like to believe we can train our brains to control our circumstances, the stubborn realist in me sets in. Although we've all read about mystics being able to overcome their physical pains, I've never met anyone who doesn't notice when they have a backache or a broken leg.

We can try to stay positive, yes, but rather than focusing on mind-tricks, we can make use of modern medicine and common sense. Advil works wonders. So do leafy greens.

A number of articles I've read on depression, anxiety, stress, or heartbreak suggest basic remedies of 1) good diet 2) exercise 3) soothing physical pleasures (like massage, bubble baths, sex), plus lots of sleep and water. Essentially, this shows how taking care of the body can heal the mind.

TTB: Definitely, yes, taking care of our bodies supports the health of our bodies, especially our organs. And the brain is our most important organ: it is where our sense of self resides. Emotions and cognition are affected by nutrition, hormones and chemicals (or lack of them). It is right to keep your feet on the ground regarding the physical aspects of health. I'll eat those greens, but I will waffle on the Advil.

I've been called a cloud-boy so often and so aptly, I accept the moniker. I'm only looking down-to-earth most of the time. But that doesn't mean I don't appreciate your good sense, and so a compromise is in order. Treat your body well, yes, but train your mind to look after your body.

The mind will not rid the body of immediate damage, like hangnails or muscle strain. It can, however, regulate the hormones triggered by such crises. Pain management clinics teach patients to do just that. The less stress, the less compromised the body. What a yummy mystery the brain is! The mind is a wonderful thing to taste.

Melissa Benner is a writer, educator, and community organizer living in Toronto, who is ruled by her belly.

T.T. Bloomquist acquired his melancholic optimism in the snow plains of Manitoba. He lives in Toronto where he writes, among other things.

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HOT ARTIST:

JAMES FOWLER & THE 10X10 PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

by Jeff Harrison

Last year during Pride, “a little art show that could”—the 10X10 Photography Project—became the kind of instant success that had people lined up down the street waiting to get into a small sweatbox gallery space at 277.5 Augusta avenue, in Kensington Market. The brainiac behind it, James Fowler, used two simple ideas to make a big splash: the desire to celebrate fellow queers, who were making an often unsung contribution to the arts, and the simple formula of exponentials.

“Pride was coming up,” says Fowler, “so I thought, why don’t I do something with photography for it? I guess the impetus for the project was threefold: First, I found that the larger institutions in the city, while they would take the pink dollar, they weren’t actually doing any programming to represent queer images, or queers artists, or queer history and I thought that was really sad.”

The second impetus behind 10X10 was spurred on by Fowler recently turning 40. “I’d been to the parties at Pride and had fun at them, but I wanted to do something else,” he recalls. “I wanted to create a space where

people who are queer in the arts could go. There are so many people who are queer who make *amazing* things happen. I thought, why not honour these people? These are our unsung heroes and nobody knows who they are. Like Mathieu Maslard, who works for the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, who pushes paper around and goes to all these meetings and decides who gets money across Ontario. Francisco Alvarez is another person who works really hard on things like what's coming for World Pride 2014 and doing the programming at places like ICC at the ROM. I would love to curate something at the ROM! So I wanted to find that common ground—the nexus of the queer community and the art community. Who are these people? Let's put our lens there and celebrate them."

The final initiative for 10X10 was Fowler's desire to give something back. "I was in touch with The People Project," he says "which is an arts initiative for queer and trans youth in Toronto. I thought, why not turn my idea into a fundraising event as well? And so, every year we sell books [featuring the portraits] for \$40 and the proceeds from that go towards The People Project. Specifically what they do is teach youth early grant writing skills. So instead of throwing them out to the Toronto Arts Council, we do something internal, give them funding twice a year, so that they can learn how to do



grant writing and then we have a panel of people who decide what projects to back. I find this can be really validating for young artists."

As the three contributing factors gathered momentum, Fowler saw how huge this event could become. "When I started this I thought let's just do some portraits and let's celebrate some queer people," he says. "After thinking about it for a week though, I decided why do one person's photography of 10 people? Why not do 10 people's photography of 10 people and have 100 portraits? Let's make this a big thing! What I learned from that was the power of exponentials. So, you have 10 photographers and they are photographing 10 people each—that's 110 people involved. If those people each invite 10 people to the show—that's over 1,000 people—and instantly you have a successful party!"

"Last year was just word of mouth and extending it to people I knew. It was really nice to have people close to my life over the years involved," he says, humbly. "I really appreciated that. This year we put out a call for submissions and ended up with some really talented photographers that I might have not been otherwise able to reach, and that was thanks to Kim Fullerton at Akimbo. I'm also very grateful to the Gladstone, for hosting."

Success does not come

without its challenges, and like most artists who want to see their project become spectacular, money can be a big obstacle. "Every project needs funding. Last year I got a bit of money from the White House Studio Project.

Not being someone who has a background in grant writing or fundraising, I've been very lucky to have people come forward to help. My partner Rick has been amazing. Joey Bruni, a very talented designer, did the book last year and will be doing it again this year. Tania Anderson has come on board to take care of the installation. Sonja Scharf and Kelly Kyle from Akasha Art Projects are helping us with the framing and Circuit Gallery is helping us with the printing."

Diversity is vital for Fowler. "We have someone who is young and 21 who does fashion photography, we have someone in their 50s, someone who's done the Prime Minister's portrait and we have amateur artists who have a really good eye. I never wanted 10X10 to have gatekeepers who kept out people who are emerging—what about these young promising queer artists? The same goes for the subjects." Among the photographers exhibiting this year will be JJ Levine from Montréal who is trans, newcomer Adamo de Pax, former PPM "Hot Artist" Sonja Scharf, celebrated



photographers Sue Lloyd, John Monteith, Guntar Kravis and triple-threat creative impresario R. Kelly Clipperton.

Anyone can become a part of the 10X10 Photography Project. The only stipulations Fowler put in place are:

you must be queer, your main medium must be photography and you must be Canadian. "I think part of the success of the show is that it's really inclusive and it's really accessible," he states. "My biggest surprise has been how incredibly positive the feedback has been and I love how it put smiles on people's faces. Celebrating people by saying: 'Look at you—you're doing an awesome job!' That makes me feel good."

The 2012 10X10 exhibition runs from June 28 to July 15 at the Gladstone Hotel (1214 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor), with the opening reception and book launch Thursday June 28th, 7-11pm. This year there's a whole slew of programming around the event, so be sure to visit 10x10photographyproject.com/the-event for all the details.

Jeff Harrison is editor-in-chief of PinkPlayMags.

Photo credits: Pg. 39, background: Adamo de Pax; Page 40, background: Alex Nursall; top: R. Kelly Clipperton; middle: Alex Nursall; bottom: Sue Lloyd; Page 41, background: Allyson Scott; top: JJ Levine; middle: Guntar Kravis; bottom: Sonja Scharf.



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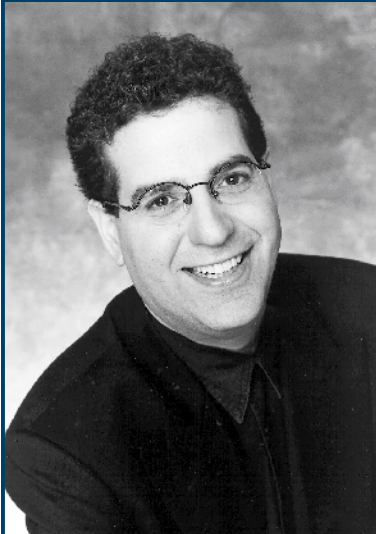
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HYPER-CULTURE

by Jaime Woo

My childhood summers were relatively simple, each day following a sacred routine. Each morning was a competition to see who could wake first—and no matter how tired my cousins and I were the night before, we'd still spring up seconds after hearing a rustle from another bed—before racing to the television.

We favoured the single-player role-playing games, so the first one with their hands on the controller would get to play videogames. The rest of us contentedly huddled around to cheerlead and take in the epic storylines. We'd play until the afternoon cartoons would come on, where we'd take a break to live in the world of Spielberg or Batman, before getting back to the Super Nintendo.



I reference these fond memories when people criticize gamers for not getting out enough. Frankly, it just seemed more fun indoors, and, more importantly, in our imaginations. I may not have been the sporty kid on the block, but I had a robust creativity. Not that the two are even oppositional: instead there are different incentives that attract people, and society isn't great at parsing them out.

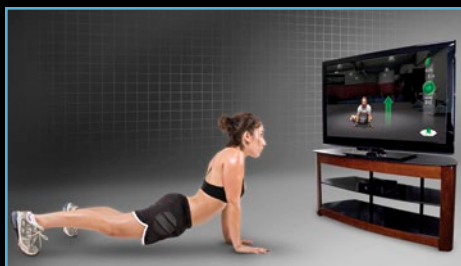
For example, I took up cycling a few years back. I love the freedom of zipping around the city and the money I keep in my pocket from not needing a car or transit. The best part, however, is how after a solid hour ride you can pretty much eat guilt-free: your body desperately needs calories. If anyone had laid out eating more of what I love as an incentive to exercise I would have pulled myself to the top of that rope without hesitation.

Gadget makers are taking notice that the smartphone is often the centre of our lives. In an interesting turn, the advantage of a smartphone at first was that it replaced a lot of other gadgets—watches, cameras, music players—but people are realizing that no one wants to keep pulling out the device every time they need to use it. Now, a series of interactive devices are being made that coordinate with the powerful computing power of the smartphones, but are simpler and more elegant to use.

Case in point: the Pebble e-paper watch that connects with Android and Apple smartphones. A so-called smartwatch, the Pebble uses Bluetooth to control the music on your smartphone and has an accelerometer so it can measure speed and distance for runners and cyclists. Excitement over the Pebble is so high that it became the highest-funded project on Kickstarter, with nearly \$7M of pledges. If you didn't pledge, you'll still be able to buy the watch off the company's website (www.getinpulse.com).

Another neat trend is having technology play a role in making exercise feel like less of a chore, a problem to which most people can relate. One of the first fitness apps I bought was 100 Pushups, which as its name lays out, is about doing 100 consecutive pushups. The app builds you up gradually and remembers your progress. Even more important, it sits on my iPod, which I carry around religiously. I'm constantly reminded of it and find I keep up with the pushups more regularly than I would on my own.

Fitocracy is an app that takes the scoring concepts from games and brings them to exercise, encouraging people to level up their fitness. There's also a social aspect to the app so that people can keep track of each other's progress, have some friendly competition, and, of course, support one



another's efforts.

I can't discuss fitness without looking at the videogames that have emerged in the past decade. Thanks to new motion-sensing technology in the Nintendo Wii, PlayStation Move, and Xbox Kinect, games have been able to include more physicality than ever before. This is a huge evolution forward from Dance Dance Revolution, the likeliest progenitor for fitness games in North America, which while entirely playable and likeable, suffered from cheesy, flimsy mats that made the home experience pale to that at the arcade.

My favourite is the Dance Central series, which can be seen as a successor to DDR. Exclusively on the Kinect, the Dance Central series challenges players to perform real dance moves to hit pop songs. And because the Kinect doesn't require a controller—since it senses motion—play sessions feel similar to the dance classes I used to take—especially when I'm sweaty after an intense routine. If you don't have a Kinect, a great alternative is the Just Dance series, available for the PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and Wii.

We've come a long way from the films of the '80s that depicted wars between high school jocks and nerds. The truth is, all of us need to shed our sedentary lives, even if exercise can be dull. The great irony is that videogames may end up making us all more fans of athletics. If you want a sneak peak into the future, look up games that take us into the real world, often called ARGs for augmented reality games. These games layer a story on top of actual geographies, turning the world into a playground. This is a world I like: where I can be creative indoors and out.



At a time when things are so disposable or prone to become obsolete, how do we balance experiencing what's new while being respectful of the planet? Maybe the solution is ensuring we discover the full value of the things we love.



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~ Part two of four ~

WORLD OF THE FIFTH SUN

a short story by Jeff Harrison ~ Illustration by Wade Shaw

The phone rang. Isabel dug her perfectly manicured, scarlet nails hard into the cheeks of Zack's naked ass. He grunted, then moaned as he climaxed. Untangling herself from him, she pushed him away and pulled her skirt back into place.

Zack stood dumbly mute, pants undone, still coming down from his orgasm. Isabel'd had her way with him, like usual, on her desk, but now that more important matters demanded her attention, she expertly finished him off and pushed him towards the door like a lost puppy, as she flicked on her earpiece and took the call on the fourth ring.

When he didn't move, Isabel shot him a piqued look and silently mouthed the words "Get out." He must have looked as wounded as he felt in that moment, because she covered the earpiece mic, blew him a kiss and whispered, "See you tonight."

Zack left Isabel's office still trying to tuck his shirt in, feeling lightheaded and a little amazed at the brazen way she loved to have sex with him in her office, the frosted glass of her door the only thing keeping the entire floor from seeing his indiscretions with their boss.

He'd finished his way overdue feature that morning over breakfast, inspired by his crazy dream the night before. Handing it in to her personally is what had precipitated the encounter. She hadn't even looked at it.

"Dude," Nick, his cubicle mate stage whispered to him from across the divide, "your fly's down."

Zack felt the blood rush to his cheeks even as he zipped up and sat down at his desk. Did the whole staff know he was having sex with their editor, in her office? Then a thought struck him: was he the only one who was? Isabel took what she wanted when she wanted it and it was very unlikely anyone said no to her, as smoking hot as she was. It suddenly put the knowing look he always got from her executive assistant into

clear perspective.

Zack swivelled his chair—he had the perfect view of the frosted glass door to Isabel's office from where he sat. It was just in time to see a broad shouldered UPS delivery guy disappearing through the portal and Isabel sitting atop her desk in her "predatorial" position: body twisted sinuously toward the newcomer, hands clasped on knee, legs crossed at the ankle, the ball of her lower foot planted on the brightly woven area rug in front of her desk. Then the door swung shut leaving him with the memory of the time they'd had sex on that very rug.

Zack shook his head. "I need a coffee," he said to no one in particular.

"Sure thing bro," replied his cubicle mate. "I'll cover for you."

"Thanks." Zack tossed the word over his shoulder as he left. He ducked into the elevator and brooded all the way down, across the street and until he sat down on the small patio with his steaming Americano.

He'd never spoken once to Isabel about exclusivity, but suddenly he felt used; then immediately stupid for getting emotionally involved in what was definitely just sex. It was clear that she didn't think their relationship beyond that. Given the time they spent together though, he must be pretty high on her apparently busy list. That thought gave him no comfort. He chided himself for being the emotionally vulnerable one.

An intermittent hiss, like the prolonged sibilance of a laughing snake seemed to mock his self-examination. The noise was distant, but poignant, and way too appropriate for the moment. Where was it coming from?

Across the street, a little ways down the alley, between a bridal boutique and a lady's designer fashion store, an Amazonian woman with skin the colour of his Americano was quickly throwing up a brightly coloured mural. The hissing sound was coming from the spray paint cans she held, one in each hand, deftly

moving them like an artist's brushes. She was very good and very fast. Even now as she swapped her cans of yellow and green for black and white—defly capping them and slipping them into her black leather shoulder bag, where she retrieved the new ones—he could see her blobs of formless colour immediately taking on shape as she defined them with shadows and highlights. The green banner became a thick-bodied snake, even as the yellow block resolved itself into a giant spotted cat, each animal devouring the tail of the other.

Zack dropped his coffee, cup smashing into saucer and hot liquid splashing across the small marble topped table, over his hands and into his lap. People turned to see what the sudden commotion was, but Zack was blind to their alarm, senseless to the scalding heat across his fingers and legs. She was painting the scene from his dreams.

She looked over at him from across the street and when her eyes met his, the jolt of electricity that arced between them shocked him into motion. He vaulted the low wrought iron fence staking out the cafe tables from the sidewalk, and sprinted across the four lanes of traffic. Lunch hour was busy on Spadina and cars screeched to a honking halt, the blasts of angry horns that chased him to his destination distant to his ears, as every sense was focused on her—this woman who knew his dreams.

By the time he reached her, she'd already turned back to her mural and was quickly finishing up the details. Slashes of brown became tree trunks as lighter green resolved into jungle canopy; red in the remainder of the yellow became a bleeding orange sunset; red again dripped wetly from the snake's scaly hide where the cat's claws raked away the emerald colour; dripped beads from serpentine fangs buried in the sleek feline rump.

Zack stopped as suddenly as he'd started running, strangely nervous of careening over the illusionary edge of the painted cliff where the two creatures fought.

"How...?" he started to ask, but then let his voice trail off as the logical part of his mind kicked in with the realization of how crazy he was about sound, asking

**Zack stopped as suddenly
as he'd started running,
strangely nervous of
careening over the
illusionary edge of the
painted cliff where the two
creatures fought.**

this stranger how she knew about his dream.

The hissing of the twin aerosol cans ceased. "Good. You're not a cop. Racing across the street at me like that I was afraid you were a cop." The lids made a light popping sound as the cans were capped and put away. She turned to regard him with bright green eyes. "You're lucky you made it through traffic without getting killed. Still, you've

caused enough commotion that we should probably be going before a cop does show up. They are never appreciative of spontaneous art in public places."

She headed farther down the alley at a brisk pace. "Public space, such a misnomer," she muttered. "I've never understood why they can only be enjoyed by *some* of the public and under very certain rules. If it's truly public space, should not the public be free to use it as they please? And why are public spaces always so barren and ugly, so concrete and dead?" She glanced over her shoulder at him once and then disappeared around the corner, down another side alley.

There was no question in Zack's mind that he must follow this exotic woman, so he took off after her. Rounding the corner she'd vanished down he was just in time to see her ascending a rusty iron fire escape. He climbed the ladder and trailed her up to the third story and through the open widow, where brightly dyed green on green curtains drifted in the afternoon breeze.

It took his eyes a moment to adjust to the dark cave-like interior of her apartment, but once they did, he saw her sitting on an orange futon, legs crossed in the lotus position, looking at him with those bright green eyes.

"Tell me about the graffiti you just did," he blurted.

She blinked once at him and let out a long sigh before unfolding from her seated position and sashaying over to a small galley kitchen.

"You sound like the establishment condemning public art as an act of vandalism." She sounded disappointed.

Picking up an enamel kettle the same colour as the futon, she filled it at the sink and put it on the stove, igniting the gas burner. As the bright blue flame licked at the orange vessel, she routed through a cedar wood spice cabinet hanging above the range. Exotic smells

wafted his way as she pulled out many coloured cloth bags and small metal tins and glanced at paper labels, finally settling on a glossy black box, a miniature clay amphora and flat bottomed glass tube filled with a brilliant vermilion powder.

"Graffiti is but one modality in a wide range of self-expression called street art." As she spoke, she began to move fluidly around the kitchen. "Street artists challenge the idea of commercial art by situating it in a non-art context, like an alley, under a bridge or on the side of a building." She pulled a garish, multi-coloured teapot and two matching mugs from a cupboard and set them on the counter. "The idea of street art is to pull viewers out of the traditional milieu of the galleries and make it an everyday occurrence to be experienced by everyone, not just the connoisseur and the snob in the staid gallery setting. Why should art only be appreciated by those of privilege, or those with money?"

Here, for the first time, she stopped long enough to give him a level stare. He was hypnotized by those searching green eyes, like she wanted something from him, but what? When Zack didn't answer, she smiled. He loved how her plump lips curved into the expression and how her eyes crinkled around the edges, like she was up to no good.

She continued, "Art has always been meant for the enjoyment of the everyday people. From the dawn of civilization it was always thus. It's a form of storytelling and storytelling has always been the life blood of the people. So why do we keep it locked up now? Because stories are power to the people and the street artists seek to return that power to the common folk."

"So what story are you telling," Zack asked, sitting at the small, rickety wooden table.

"I tell stories of love. Stories of the everyday loves of ordinary people—the ongoing conversation of our city's never-happening dream with Mother Earth."

"Okay," he said after the silence had stretched on for a while. The kettle boiled with a gentle, high whistle. "So tell me about the story you are telling with the piece I saw you just create on that alley wall back there."

A heady bittersweet aroma filled the small kitchen

...his mouth was suddenly dry and ...he was starting to feel ...funny.

nook as boiling water was poured over the mixture of brown herbs, green leaves and red powder she'd portioned out of the containers she'd selected earlier and dropped in the bright teapot. That, along with the matching mugs, were set out on the table between them.

"And what the hell is up with the snake and the cat?" he finally asked, no longer able to contain himself.

Sitting down across from him, she folded her legs back up into the lotus position and filled their mugs with a steaming hot, creamy pale pink beverage that looked and smelled like no tea he'd ever had before.

"Do you not think the fat cats are devouring the natural world to satiate an endless greed for material power?" she asked him back.

"Sure."

"You don't sound very convinced. Yet, every last one of your articles talks exactly about this. Clearly your head listens to your heart, so why do you continue to exist in a state of complete denial?"

Zack had absolutely no answer for that and took a long sip of his tea to buy time for a reply. It was still too hot and he burned his tongue.

"Maybe," she breathed, as her eyes seemed to stare right through him, "you are not in denial, so much as your head and your heart are at war."

He would have asked for clarity on this cryptic statement, but his mouth was suddenly dry and...he was starting to feel...funny. Sweat sprung out on his brow and he found it difficult to swallow. He grabbed his tea and took another gulp. That solved the dry mouth problem, but when he set his mug back down, his hostess' face undulated strangely before him like she was being obscured by mist, or steam.

Putting his palms flat on the table before him he sought to steady himself. "What did you put in that tea?" His voice was a hoarse croak to his ears.

"Answers to your questions, I hope," she replied.

Zack felt himself falling and then everything went black.

Jeff Harrison is Editor-in-Chief of PinkPlayMags

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FRIENDS FOR LIFE

BIKE RALLY

by Cee Sandro



Embarking on what may seem like an impossible task for some,

400 plus cyclists will take on on a six-day, 600 km journey from Toronto to Montréal this July. From July 29 to August 3, 2012, riders of all ages and abilities will be biking to raise funds for the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation (PWA), an organization providing resources to those living with HIV/AIDS.

As the second largest fundraiser benefiting an HIV/AIDS organization in Canada, the Friends for Life Bike Rally is PWA's leading and sustaining event, providing over 50% of PWA's annual funding. This year alone it's expected to raise in excess of \$1 million to benefit PWA.

Now in its 14th year, the Friends for Life Bike Rally presents an opportunity for riders and other supporters to come together for fitness, charity, community and friendship in partnership to make a difference in their community. The annual event began in 1999 with a simple dare. Best friends, Danny Nash and David Linton challenged each other to take their commitment of supporting one of their favorite charities—PWA—to the next level. They created a cycling adventure which had them riding from Toronto to Montréal. In its very first year the Bike Rally had 24 participants and raised \$45,000. Last year it boasted more than 400 participants—300 riders and 100 crew members—and raised over \$1.2 million. Sadly co-founder David Linton passed away last year, on September 27, 2011, at 47 years of age, mere weeks after the bike rally. His vision for it lives on and this year the thriving fundraiser will break an overall mark of \$10 million!





The rally truly is dependent on its many participants and volunteers. Training months in advance, cyclists of all levels take part in this rigorous week-long adventure. PWA holds over 26 development clinics to help riders prepare for the ride, covering topics such as nutrition, rider safety and bike maintenance. The Rally relies on its devoted crew members who dedicate themselves to handling the event's imperative tasks, including road safety, set up and tear down of the camp and helping prepare healthy daily meals for the riders. There is also a health and wellness team consisting of nurses, paramedics, massage therapists, yoga instructors and a chiropractor, who help keep riders in top shape throughout the expedition. The Bike Rally has a history of attracting loyal and enthusiastic riders and volunteers who come back year after year. The crew and riders form indelible relationships and many report that they have met life-long friends while participating. In addition, volunteers report learning much more about HIV/AIDS and the PWA organization.

In 1986 four gay men living with the virus began meeting to discuss ways for people living with HIV to stay healthy and live with dignity. These meetings were their way of responding to the frustrating fact that although individuals were living longer and more full lives with HIV and AIDS, the public was still focusing solely on AIDS prevention, with little to no emphasis on support. Eventually forming a coalition with a mandate to provide practical, direct-support services to those living with HIV/AIDS, the members focused on a peer-to-peer model. It was this very coalition that became the basis of the current PWA Foundation. In 1987 the official Ontario Charitable Letters of Patent were granted; in 1988 the first Annual General Meeting was held and the membership elected a nine member Board. It

is now the largest direct support service agency for people living with HIV/AIDS in Canada.

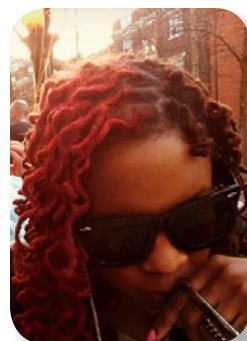
Celebrating 25 years of service, PWA prides itself on its inclusivity, explicitly serving men, transmen, transwomen, women and children living with HIV/AIDS. Annually PWA provides its 2,300 clients with financial support, access to medication, access to food and nutritional advice, as well as alternative and complementary therapies (including massage, acupuncture, social programming and life coaching). What makes PWA stand apart from other organisations is the belief that people living with HIV/AIDS play a crucial role in the governance and operation of the organisation.

PWA prides itself in having the recipients of its support dictate the way that support is provided.

"In some ways it has also become a right of passage for many in the LGBTQ community," says Rally co-chair Tim Ledger. "Although HIV/AIDS is not confined to the LGBTQ community, it was this community that lead in the creation of the first networks of support for all those affected by the virus. The Bike Rally and its community are now an integral part of sustaining that network of support and delivery of services. This foundation is clearly still providing a valuable portion of our social safety net for those marginalized individuals of our city."

The Friends for Life Bike Rally truly is a prime example of individuals getting together to support and care for an entire community. From its humble beginnings with a simple dare between two competitive friends, to involving 400 plus individuals and raising over \$1 million dollars annually to support individuals living with HIV/AIDS in our local community. The Friends for Life Bike Rally maintains that "until there's a cure...there's a ride."

Currently calling Toronto home, Cee Sandro (@xox_cee) rarely sits still. Jet-setting throughout the Caribbean, France, Dubai, India, Mexico, the USA and Canada, Cee documents her experiences through words, photos and her fashion choices. Obsessed with style and pop culture, Cee is a bohemian heart who readily admits her love for the classic rock and roll lifestyle.





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SUMMER THE CITY

by Jesse Trautmann

Summer is here again, thankfully! We can leave the chilly, rainy, cloudy weather behind us and look forward to stress-free days on patios and nourishing our body in the sun on the beach. Speaking of beaches, I'm reminded of a trip to Hanlan's Point at the Toronto Islands (aka the nude beach) a few summers ago. A bunch of friends and I grabbed a box of wine, some blankets, sun block and snacks, and took the ferry across. We had an awesome time and met a rich guy who drove us back to the mainland on his yacht. Yep, you heard me, his yacht! Ahh ... what a great memory. Well, except until we got to the harbour and realized we'd left one of our friends stranded on the island! It was his fault for going off into the bushes to fight with his boyfriend on his cell. Oh well. These are the things summertime brings. Check out my listings for lots more summertime fun!

PRIDE WEEK 2012

June 23 to July 1

www.pridetoronto.com

It's the summer's biggest party! Toronto Pride: Celebrate & Demonstrate promises many parties, cultural events, street fairs, and of course parades! There's really something for everyone, which is such a cliché saying, so I'll expand. Pride offers family events, sober and proud events, and affiliate events ranging from: literary, visual arts, performing arts, all ages, adult only, musical, and comedy events.

AIDS Memorial Candlelight Vigil

June 28

9pm

Cawthra Square Park, 519 Church Street

The AIDS Candlelight Vigil is a community memorial event held annually to honour, remember and celebrate the lives of people who have died of AIDS, and to recognize and honour those affected by and living with HIV/AIDS.



Main Event

June 30

10pm

The Government – Koolhaus

132 Queensway

416-869-0045

\$65

Get ready for an all-nighter!! This party goes until 8am. There's always a huge turnout and you'll absolutely have a great night... and morning! Two hot International DJs are spinning, Chus and Ceballos from Madrid, and Portugal's DJ Paulo. Also, Micky Friedmann and a live performance by Erika Jayne.

Revival

July 1

10pm

The Government – Skybar

132 Queens Quay

416-869-0045

\$70

The music will be awesome as Peter Rauhofer, one of the biggest DJs in the world, is headlining. Also, a spectacular performance by Sofanda Cox will take place, which I consider to be a Pride tradition.

TIP: According to the Prism website all weekend passes are sold out! So if you're planning to go to any of these parties I'd get your tickets right away!

TreeHOUSE Party

519 Church Street

416-355-6798

July 1

1pm

FREE

www.the519.org

This is a great outdoor party located on the green space right beside the 519. Turning out the beats will be the internationally renowned DJ Abel, who was recently nominated for a Grammy for his work with Rihanna. Also on decks will be Mexico City's superstar, DJ Isaac Escalante, who will be making a highly anticipated fourth appearance at this year's TreeHOUSE Party, along with Toronto's favorite DJs Jamal and Jeremy Khamkeo.

TIP: Arrive early to avoid the lineups!

FOOD & DRINK

Since this issue's theme is all about body nourishment I thought I'd check out some of Toronto's healthy eateries that are great to replenish your body and soul this summer.

Fresh

326 Bloor Street West

416-599-4442

www.freshrestaurants.ca

\$15

Fresh makes their food from scratch with no hidden chemicals, sweeteners or preservatives. They don't cook with butter, dairy, eggs, honey or any other hidden animal by-products. The menu includes multi-layered salads like the Mega Life garnished with marinated tofu cubes and alfalfa and sunflower sprouts and the Black Bean Burrito wrap with chipotle avocado.

TIP: Fresh has three locations in the downtown core:

147 Spadina Ave.; 326 Bloor St W.; and 894 Queen St W.

Kensington Natural Bakery and Café

460 Bloor St. W

416-534-1294

\$5

This bakery makes great gluten free products, but they also offer vegan, dairy-free, sugar-free and organic products as well. How does a gluten free organic quinoa goji berry cookie sound? I guess you'll have to go to find out!

TIP: Once you find your favourite treat, experiment with different ingredients. Kensington takes custom orders that you can phone in the day before.

Ruby Watchco

730 Queen Street East

416-465-0100

\$50

www.rubywatchco.ca

Ruby Watchco is run by former Restaurant Makeover star and Four Season head chef Lynn Crawford. The space is a cozy environment and they offer a changing daily *prix fixe* menu with an emphasis on local ingredients. If rosemary marinated veal chops, or 10-year old cheddar from the Ottawa Valley, or Balsamic onion jam sound delicious, then this is the place for you.

TIP: Be sure to check out the website to see what menu makes your mouth water the most and note the day of the week it's being served.





ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Kathy Griffin

Casino Rama

July 20

\$65

Tickets available through www.getoutcanada.com

Spend the evening with Ms. Griffin as she trash talks celebrities and keeps you in stitches. Also, you can try your luck and get your gamble on as her show is located in Casino Rama. Another perk to this event is there's a GET Out! Shuttle bus leaving from the Church-Wellesley village at 6pm sharp.

TIP: if you buy through GET Out! you'll get a complimentary Player's Points card pre-loaded with \$10 to get you started at the slots!

Florence & the Machine

August 2

8pm

\$20 to \$65 available via www.ticketmaster.ca

Molson Amphitheatre

909 Lake Shore Blvd West

416-260-5600

She's been astounding us since her dog days were over and now she'll be in Toronto to shake it out this summer. I love Florence and can't wait to hear her powerful and haunting voice live.

TIP: Check Youtube.com for two awesome bonus tracks from Ceremonials: "Remain Nameless" and "Bedroom Hymns."

Toronto's Festival of Beer

Friday, July 27 – 4:30pm to 11pm

Saturday, July 28 – 1:30pm – 8pm

Sunday, July 29 – 1:30pm – 8pm

\$40 to \$49

Bandshell Park, Exhibition Place

King St West and Dufferin St.

www.beerfestival.ca

Also known as just Beerfest, this is a super fun weekend and an excuse to get drunk in a park. Many of my friends swear by Beerfest and they've even gone in the rain! Beerfest features over 200 brands of brews and ales from around the world.

TIP: This year, everyone attending will receive a new, commemorative Toronto's Festival of Beer glass stein for sampling the many brews available—the perfect souvenir.

Toronto Queer Arts and Culture Festival

August 10 to 18

Various times and locations

FREE

www.artsfestival.queerwest.org

The Toronto Queer Arts and Culture Festival (Formerly Queer West Fest) is very diverse with events ranging from a film festival to spoken word to political unConferences. It doesn't matter how you identify, there's something to inspire, challenge or entertain you. Different events include a smash words poetry jam, queer writing collective, and an alterna-queer music night.

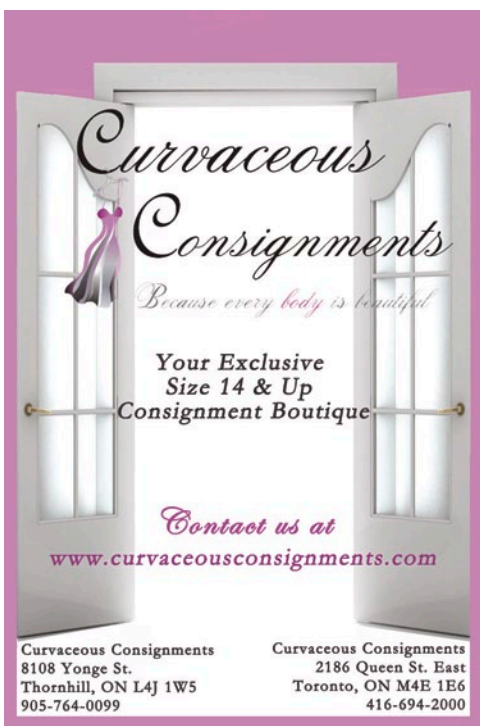
TIP: Be sure to keep checking the website as many events will be confirmed, announced and updated from now until late July.

Jesse Trautmann is a Ryerson Journalism grad and a freelance writer in Toronto.

Jesse dishes on queer dating mayhem and shenanigans in his column, "Date Night FAIL" for mygaytoronto.com and he also pens the hilarious blog, "I Shaved My Ass for This?" at www.ishavedassforthis.blogspot.com

Photos by Karel Matkovic





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From the Heart

The Body Electric

by Shelley A. Harrison

We have a deep connection with the Earth. Our entire vital energy system is nourished by the Earth's energy field. The fruits of her harvests nourish our physical body, but our physical body is also recharged and replenished through direct energetic connection to our lovely planet.

When we broaden the perspective of our wholeness one dimension deeper than our physical body, we arrive at our Auric Field. According to the paradigm I was taught at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and visible in the wonderful colour plates of her book *Hands of Light*, there are 7 layers to our aura, each extending farther out from the boundary of our skin. Each successive layer contains a range of frequencies higher than the ones below it, and each embodies a part of our consciousness.

The layer closest to our body, from about 1" over the skin and then deeply interpenetrating the whole physical body down to each cell, is called the Etheric Body. If you could see it with extrasensory visual perception (which some people can, and all of us can learn to perceive it through the visual or other senses) it appears as fine standing

lines of blue light which form a web that traces out every organ and structure in our physical body. It is like the warp and weft of a finely woven garment. The lines appear to scintillate as photons of light energy and consciousness pulsate down the lines of light. How beautiful!

We entrain energy right up from the ground through the root chakra in the base of the spine, which opens down toward the earth. This is what it means to be “grounded”: our energy is connecting down, and earth’s energy is flowing up to feed our body. When we “ground down” and let this energy flow to connect, our whole energy field begins to pulsate at the same rate as the Schumann waves of the planet, about 8 hertz. This is very healthy and calming. An easy way to benefit from this effect is to lie down on the earth. Well, maybe not so easy in the city. This energy is distributed into this first level of our auric field to charge it.

What is happening in the Etheric Body? Within this dimension we feel physical sensations, both pleasurable and painful. Flow along the lines of light correlates with sensation in the physical body. So, for example, when someone caresses your skin lightly, a soft trail of energy or light and consciousness particles will flow along the lines, charging and awakening them. When you receive a massage, which is a deeper touch, a stronger flow of light will be stimulated. If you receive a traumatic impact, the lines might distort; this will show up in the physical body as a bruise or even a contusion. If the impact is sharper, the lines might break, and so might the skin and bones. Numbness in a body part means that there is no energy flowing along the Etheric Body. Etheric repair work is very effective for sewing the lines back up, which helps the body to heal faster. When I do this work as a healer, it looks like I am doing fine sewing with my fingertips over the body.

Those of us with sensitive bodies tend to have Etheric bodies with fine, thin, aqua blue lines. We are quieter and less physically active, and also less physically robust. At the other end of the spectrum, athletes and dancers have a highly developed first level, with more lines which are thicker, more elastic, highly charged and bright blue. Their purposeful movements bring more consciousness into the body. One of the purposes of exercise, aside from making you feel attractive and healthy, is to awaken the consciousness on this level of your being and settle awareness into your body. The more you take care of your body, connect to it, and exercise it, the stronger your Etheric Body becomes. A whole new reason for your workout!

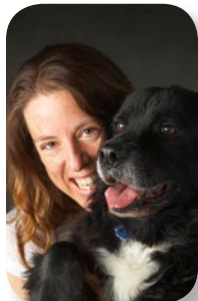
When you are healthy on this level, you enjoy pleasurable

sensations in the form of vitality, physical activity, sex, sleep, touch, and the arousal of your five senses. Because it feels pleasurable, you will seek more of these healthy interactions and thus continue to charge your field. A weak first level appears as thin, broken, tangled, or undercharged lines. They become thinner and weaker over the parts of your body less cared for. Because you feel weak, you may not like to connect with your body as much or experience pleasure through it. It then stays weak from lack of use. It can be hard to break this pattern and get moving to experience the pleasure of vitalizing this part of your being. The problem with pain in our body, which correlates to damage, density or distortion on the first level, is it causes us to withdraw from that area, or even wall it off, which makes things worse. It makes sense to get injuries and pain attended to through any of the many wonderful healing modalities, so we can return to a state of ease.

Delightful ways to recharge the Etheric Body are fresh air, sunshine (but not too much, sunburn frays the lines of energy, causing damage), swimming, especially in the ocean as the salt water clears stagnant energy from our energy field, rest, and good food. Organically grown food has a stronger energy field than other produce, and fresh food also has more *prana* than overcooked meals, or the stuff that sits in the fridge too long. Getting out of the city into a natural environment where there are lots of nature energies is very healing and replenishing. Perhaps you need to make a regular habit of going to the beach for the day with a lovely fresh picnic! If you can’t get away, try soaking in a hot bath of Epsom salts and/or sea salts, and then laying in a sunbeam afterwards. Breathe deeply!

We really are more connected to the earth and our environment than we think. Ignoring this fact just erodes our health. Putting a little energy into the nourishment of our body through healthy habits can only bring more pleasure and aliveness. Have fun this summer charging yourself up!

Shelley A. Harrison is an Energy Healer in Ottawa. She graduated from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing 4-year professional training and has been working in private practice for 10 years. She visits Toronto regularly to see clients and visit her brother, Jeff, the editor of this magazine. You can write Shelley at fromtheheart@pinkplaymags.com or visit her at www.doveheart.ca



Summer Horoscopes

by Micki Lee



Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

June: Don't rush any big decisions.

July: You need to be cautious about who you trust.

August: Excel by applying your passion to whatever you do.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

June: Regrets have a way of softening the hard edges.

July: No one ever said it was going to be easy, but you know it'll be worth it.

August: Prepare a new, shorter list to help direct your work.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

June: New friends can lead you to new avenues.

July: You may feel torn between the two stories you've been told.

August: Be yourself and you'll be accepted and loved by all.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

June: You can count on your friends for their honesty.

July: Don't jump to any conclusions right away.

August: The key now, is to see past the emotions and see the positive reality that exists.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

June: Collect and study the facts.

July: Changes are in order, so you better look to your own interests.

August: Take the plunge and get involved in a joint venture.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

June: The closer you get to someone, the less your differences matter.

July: Set the standards and keep the flow positive.

August: You will be tempted to overspend, so leave money in the bank.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

June: Gatherings may be heated, refuse to take sides in family disagreements.

July: You'll experience a surprising amount of passion.

August: Take a moment to study the situation from all angles.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

June: Hasty actions could be worse for you than not acting at all.

July: The more detail you put into it the better.

August: There's no point in pretending to be objective, but at least you can be fair with your feelings.

Sagittarius (Nov 23 – Dec 21)

June: Don't let your space be invaded. Learn to put your foot down.

July: Family gathering or reunion could be causing some strain.

August: Don't be afraid to make a U-turn.

Capricorn (Dec 24 – Jan 19)

June: Your financial situation will suffer if you try to expand your interests too quickly.

July: Your stubborn nature may cause you to lose a friend that you care about.

August: Try hard to keep your calm, or the silent treatment will be sure to follow.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

June: An acquaintance who you look up to may have a decisive influence on your career.

July: Don't be too eager to let others in on your personal secrets.

August: You find you are constantly frustrated in close friendships.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

June: Be prepared to show your work, you will get support.

July: There are considerable savings to be made on domestic bills if you pay closer attention.

August: Take care of all those chores that have been building up.

Micki Lee is a business woman from Oshawa who uses the stars as a guide for her daily life.

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Looking Back

Devan Nambiar

In the mid '90s when triple combination therapies came out, most people living with HIV/AIDS found they got very quick results, but there were a lot of different side effects to cope with. So there was a focus on how can complementary medicine—which is really a bunch of different modalities—mitigate some of these side-effects.

Unfortunately, because most of these therapies aren't covered by the government, a lot is paid for out of pocket. We get a lot of calls at CATIE (www.catie.ca) asking: 'I want to see so-and-so and he/she said to use this. Is this valid? Is this real? Is it a good use of my money? Does it really do what they say it will do?' And so we realized that we needed to publish a document detailing what works and what doesn't, how it works and what the red flags are to watch out for. That was how "A Practical Guide to Complementary Therapies" was developed (www.catie.ca/en/practical-guides/practical-guide-complementary-therapies).

There are many benefits to pursuing complementary therapies. With there being so many drugs you have to take, your body can become overwhelmed by what's called "pill burden." There are many other stress related issues as well, like societal and institutional homophobia, HIV and AIDS phobia, even within our own communities. Also, in the last few years there have been many legal issues around disclosure and criminalization. We live in a stressful culture—regardless of HIV status—so we need to find ways to keep the stress down. De-stressing directly benefits the immune system.

The important question that comes up for HIV positive persons is: what do you want to do with the rest of your life? It used to be that everyone died in the '80s and early '90s, but now as people are living longer, they are left wondering: what do I do? You don't want to spend your life just popping pills. You need a reason to get out of bed in the morning, besides just taking your medication. Because you are living with a virus that's not going to go away anytime soon, you need to come up with whatever strategy is going to enhance your whole physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and sexual well-being. You need to live your life fully.

So plan a future—whatever you want it to be—and have goals in place, not only for your complementary medicine, but for your life as well. If you can incorporate alternative therapies into your daily life, like meditation, going for a walk, or choosing more nutritious food, then you will live a

healthier, less stressful life, and have fewer side-effects from that pill burden. At the end of the day, it's all about how can you manage and minimize those stresses and keep your immune system healthy.

In CATIE's manual, "Managing Your Health," I've written in chapter five how you can incorporate complementary therapies into your life. When choosing something for yourself, an important question is: can you commit to the change? Take baby steps. Instead of taking a whole slew of multi-vitamins all at once, maybe start off with a basic multi-vitamin; then you could add a B complex; then maybe a week later add some calcium, so you're not dealing with 20 new pills all at once.

I always recommend for people to pick one mind/body and one physical/body modality. Exercise you can do anywhere and you don't have to join a gym if you don't want to. The important thing is to be clear in what you want to achieve. And remember, when you are trying something new, it's a good idea to get your physician involved, especially if you are ingesting anything like micro-nutrients, herbs or homeopathic remedies. Many HIV primary care doctors today are very pro-complementary medicine.

Complementary therapy is not going to give you a quick fix though—it takes time. If you're looking for a quick fix, you're going to be disappointed. There's no magic bullet. Anyone who's started meditation, the first thing they realize is that they have a very busy mind. It takes a few months to find that calm awareness. Take baby steps and don't be too hard on yourself when you go three steps forward, but two back.

When people find the right complementary medicine that works for them, not only do they stick with it, but they find they have much more energy, they're more productive and calm and have a better world outlook.

Devan Nambiar is the Education and Training Coordinator for Rainbow Health Ontario. He is currently completing his studies in MSc. Integrated Health.

CATIE is Canada's source for up-to-date, unbiased information about HIV and hepatitis C, connecting people living with HIV or hepatitis C, at-risk communities, healthcare providers and community organizations with the knowledge, resources and expertise to reduce transmission and improve quality of life.



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PRIDE GUIDE

Friday June 29, 2012

Trans March

Norman Jewison Park

Start time 7:30 pm (March Rally 6 pm)

Pride Toronto carries the torch and tradition of the 2009 first ever Trans March down Church Street!

Friday June 29 to Sunday July 1, 2012

Trans Space 2012

North Stage

June 29th (6-9pm), June 30th and July 1st (both 10am-10pm)

Trans Space will be located at the heart of the festival site. It will provide information, workshops, and support to members of the Trans community, those who are questioning, or simply curious. It will be a safe, inclusive, and normative area and will be open for the entire Pride Weekend.

Performances by Trans and gender variant artists will be happening on the North Stage – just beside Trans Space on Saturday and Sunday. Trans artists will also be performing at many other Pride stages and events.

Saturday June 30 & Sunday July 1, 2012

The Substance Free Alternative

Wellesley Street just West of Church Street

10:00AM - 11:00PM

Festivities include live performances on the stage, holistic services and confidential recovery meetings. The space provides clean and sober fun in a family friendly environment, and a great alternative to the beer gardens! Come on out to the Clean Sober & Proud space, sit on our lawn and be part of this welcoming oasis of calm in the heart of Pride Toronto. If you have any



questions or require more information contact us at sober@pridetoronto.com.

Saturday June 30, 2012

Dirty Disco

TD Wellesley Stage (Wellesley & Yonge Streets)

1:00 pm - 1:00 am

Hosts: Miss Raquel & Don Burns

Featuring local & international acts, including from NYC Larry Tee and Tom Stephan (Superchumbo) from UK / USA. Starting it off @ 1pm is SoundSyster and ending the evening with JELO

Saturday June 30 & Sunday July 1, 2012

Community Cabaret @ Viagra Village Stage

Intersection of Church & Wellesley

1:00 pm - 12:30 am

A full weekend of community programming in the heart of the festival with expanded programming to include more of the good stuff.....Church & Wellesley



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Saturday June 30, 2012

Dyke March

Intersection of Church and Hayden

Time: Start time 2 p.m.

Show your support and attend the Dyke March

Saturday June 30, 2012

Dyke Day: "The Rhythm, The Boogie, The Beat"

Bud Light South Stage

Following the Dyke March

Some of the featured talent are Kelly & The Kellygirls, Bellydancers with Pride, Keshia Chanté and to end the night Corey Hart. Hosted by Deb Pearce and Mike Chalut!

Sunday July 1, 2012

Blockorama 14: Back on the Block

TD Wellesley Stage (Wellesley & Yonge Streets)

11:00 am - 11:00 pm

Marquee talent: Ultra Naté, Quentin Harris, jojo flores

Blackness Yes! Invites you to experience the Best Block Party in Toronto! Blockorama is moving back to the block! Featuring a galaxy of stars who will bring you fierceness and show off their



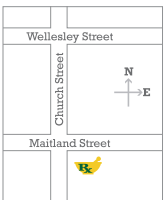
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swagger. Start the day with sharing words and rhythms inspiring resistance and celebration. Dance and raise your hands during an amazing line up of DJs, divas, dancers and performers. Hilarious hosts will keep you entertained and informed throughout the day.

Sunday July 1, 2012

WORLDSTAGE presented in partnership with **PRISM**

Bud Light South Stage

1:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Keeping you entertained with 17 acts of local and international fame

Sunday July 1, 2012

ALTERNA-QUEER

Alexander Parkette

2:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Alterna-Queer offers you an alternative to mainstream. Join us for some remarkably talented entertainment all day long and into the evening. The programming begins with a special Women's Arm Wrestling for Charity event that anyone can sign up to participate in, complete with referees, whistles, and loud rock n roll!

Sunday July 1, 2012

The 2012 Pride Parade

2:00 PM

At the heart of Toronto's Pride Week stand the members of the LGBTTIQ2SA communities. Each year the collective creativity, talents and energy of these communities come together to wow the world. Come join the 32nd annual Pride Parade and celebrate diversity.



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