

spotlight on members

Spotlight on Members gives us the opportunity to hear about what our members are up to today, as well as how they found their way to the NHA Health Program. If you're interested in sharing your own story, we'd love to hear from you (please email essays of no more than 500 words, and one or two photos, to info@healthscience.org).

Elisa de Matas Coconut Creek, FL



My journey to healthy living started when I was around 20 years old, when my brother and I visited a bookstore and he stumbled upon Herbert Shelton's book, *The Hygienic System*. This book provided me with information that made so much sense, and I was hooked. I started to make small changes in the food I ate right away. I got married soon after this and felt pressured to give up my healthy lifestyle due to my spouse wanting no part of it.

Throughout my married life and up until my mid-forties or so (I am now 58) I struggled with my weight. We ate a conventional diet of meat, dairy, sugary drinks, and salted food. I had to put aside my efforts to change to a healthy lifestyle because my husband didn't want to eat this way. Over the years things started happening to

my body that I knew were not good. I was always tired, had severe allergy symptoms, got colds often, and developed large brown patches on my face and neck. I also lived with joint pain in my elbows and knees, and started having ear problems.

I knew that it was the food that was causing this. I had to make a change because living a life in pain and sickness was not an option for me. I love dancing, and couldn't bear to think that someday I might not be able to because of my poor health. At this stage of my life, I knew there would be no second chances. I had to do something soon.

I eventually divorced and then had the opportunity to return to healthy eating and living. The journey was difficult because I went about it the hard way: slowly changing the foods I ate. I did not have the opportunity to fast, so my health journey took several years.

Today, more than 10 years later, two-thirds of what I eat is raw fruits and vegetables, buying organic as much as I can, and I have to say that all of the above problems that I experienced no longer exist. I feel strong, energetic and full of life. I have fruit for breakfast, a small green leafy salad with other raw vegetables for lunch, and a cooked meal at night that consists mainly of vegetables. I eat fish occasionally, but I eat no other meat and I avoid dairy. I haven't even had a cold in several years now.

I did eventually get a chance to fast at TrueNorth, for seven days several years ago. I thought I was sick after developing blisters on my arms and

legs, and didn't know what it was from. But it turned out to be an allergic reaction to the oils from roasting raw cashews on an open fire. I wish I could have fasted longer. But even after just a weeklong fast, I lost some weight, my skin was radiant, and I had such a wonderful sense of well-being.

I discovered the NHA a few years ago after my brother, Charles de Matas, got me a subscription to *Health Science* magazine. I just signed my daughter up for a subscription, as she is also very interested in this lifestyle.

I feel so passionate about this way of life; I just wish I could tell the world about it. I look forward to living my best life ever and also look for opportunities where this passion can serve to help others achieve superior health.



Philip Ross Wellington St. Brighton, Victoria, Australia

My interest in health started in my school days, however, it lacked disciplined direction. I was introduced to the work of Dr. Herbert Shelton in 1969, when I was 19, and two years later I met Dr. Alec Burton. Everything



now fell into place for me, both from a scientific and a common-sense perspective. I read all of the available literature

on Natural Hygiene as well as listened to audio cassettes of Dr. Shelton's and Dr. Burton's many lectures.

During the early 1980s I undertook a number of fasts under Dr. Burton, lasting between 14 and 21 days. One of my stays at Dr. Burton's Arcadia Health Centre, near Sydney, coincided with a visit by Dr. John McDougall, who generously shared his medical insights and the many errors he encountered in standard medical practice. The following year at Arcadia I was fortunate to meet Dr. Alan Goldhamer, who was interning in fasting supervision with the Burtons. His intelligence and enthusiasm for the principles of hygiene were, even then, palpable and impressive. He was



Philip Ross in 1988



Bruce Standish and Philip Ross, at right.


clearly destined to open his own health center, which of course evolved into TrueNorth Health Center in Santa Rosa, California.

Though not having specific health problems, my own health continued to benefit from regular fasts and sticking with the principles of Natural Hygiene, and my learning became more focused over the years.

Another significant encouraging influence (from the early 1970s) was my friendship with Bruce Standish, greengrocer and fellow hygienist. Bruce still operates his business in Elwood (a suburb of Melbourne, Australia), specializing in organically grown produce, as well as the sale of literature and DVDs on health issues. I have four rescued dogs, and like me, Bruce is also an animal advocate, being a keen supporter of Animal Liberation Victoria. Bruce also holds regular meetings in a large room above his shop, featuring health topics with the help of visiting speakers and DVD presentations.

In more recent years I have made annual visits to TrueNorth and undertaken supervised fasts ranging from 10 to 22 days. Whenever my partner, Judith, and I meet people with chronic health problems who are receptive to removing causes, we invariably recommend a visit to TrueNorth. Several people have taken the long trip to California on our suggestion, and have realized excellent results.

I can generally discern those who are willing to take on the challenge of

being educated in removing lifestyle causes, particularly dietary, and freeing themselves from the shackles of hopeless medical treatments and procedures. For those individuals who show little interest in a plant-based diet, I generally say nothing and hope to pass on the health message through example. I am constantly reminded that we are the fortunate ones who have the valuable knowledge of this way of life. 



Oleta Thomas
Casper, WY

I have been an NHA member for many years now. I am 86 years old and finally slowing down a bit. Victoria Bidwell, TC Fry, Dr. Cinque, and many others persuaded me to change from a meat-based diet to a plant-based diet. It all paid off in remarkable health results, and later I wrote a book entitled, *Diet for Peaceful Eating—How to Stop the War against Your Body*.

I was a good example of health through healthy eating after cysts and tumors receded from my body, and migraine headaches that I suffered for 25 years cleared up and were no more. Over the years, I attended several NHA conventions in Florida, New York, and Washington, often with Dr. Esser. I also helped Victoria Bidwell with her natural weight control book, and was a

therapeutic massage therapist for over 30 years.

I became involved in the National Senior Games (or “senior Olympics”) for 10 years and won 54 first and second place medals in track and field. What fun! For the last four years, the Center for New Life is has become my main interest here in Casper, Wyoming, with folks coming from all over the country who desire to be assisted in lifestyle and dietary changes for

more productive lives.

Now I am active with senior citizen exercise and drama activities, as well as a song group (Meadowlarks) that sing great songs at assisted living homes. My partner (97) died about a year ago, so I am holding down the fort with my own home. I have a few health challenges, such as vertigo (I do eat too much cooked food), even though vegan, so I have to cleanse often. I am eternally grateful that I made the

switch when I was 50 years old to a plant-based diet.



If you'd like to read past Spotlights, visit the NHA website at: healthscience.org/health-science-magazine/member-spotlights



Q&A

Eating in Restaurants

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I'll order it on the side just to be safe. And if your only option at that time is a green salad with no dressing, remember that it's just one meal, and that you'll be back home soon enough to eat food made the way you love it.

Question:

Sometimes I go out to eat with coworkers on the spur of the moment, and feel stuck and embarrassed about what to order. I usually cave in and order something I wouldn't normally eat. Any advice?

Answer:

If you find yourself sitting in a restaurant that isn't very health-minded, scan the menu for something that might work for you. If you don't see anything, ask your server if they can make you something simple, such as a baked potato topped with steamed vegetables. Most restaurants have basics like these in their kitchen. Another bonus of ordering this way (besides good health) is that it's often cheaper than the items on the menu.

You don't have to feel embarrassed or timid when ordering. When we kindly and confidently ask questions and make requests, we let the restaurant know that this way of eating is important and growing. Your reasonable questions are also a point of education for the server and restaurant, and sometimes even for the people you're dining with.


Question:

It seems like half the time I order food in a restaurant, the healthy way I like it, it comes to me with ingredients on it or in it that I

didn't order. How can I be clearer about this?

Answer:

None of us wants to be seen as the picky, annoying restaurant customer, but we also want to stay true to our dietary goals and values. Toward this, cheerfully check in with the server before you order. You might say, “I eat only plant foods, so please let me know if I order anything that has meat or dairy in it.” In addition, some people associate the term “dairy” only with cow's milk, so you might want to be very clear with your server that cheese, butter, and sour cream are also dairy foods you avoid. Similarly, some people don't put fish in the “meat” category, so you may want to ask about any fish or fish sauce as well.

You can even put it in writing. Some healthy-minded restaurant patrons carry small cards in their wallets that list the ingredients and foods they do and do not to eat, and give one to the server to pass on to the chef. And if your meal does come with something in it or on it that you didn't order, politely send it back. And if the chef does a great job with your meal, tell the server to let them know how much you enjoyed it. This kind acknowledgement will positively pave the way for the next plant-based eater who comes into that restaurant with an order similar to yours. 



Cathy Fisher is the creator of StraightUpFood.com, a website offering free recipes and information on eating a whole-food, plant-based diet free of salt, oil and sugar. She is also a cooking instructor, teaching classes to patients at TrueNorth Health Center and the McDougall Program, both located in Santa Rosa, CA. Cathy began eating a plant-based diet in 1999.