

World Vegetarian Day



World Vegetarian Day (October 1) and Vegetarian Awareness Month are great occasions to have some fun and bring attention to the benefits of vegetarian living to family, friends, co-workers and even to your community.

In 2004, NAVS inaugurated the World Vegetarian Day/Vegetarian Awareness Month Contest, to add a little more excitement to this upbeat celebration. Two prizes were awarded in our third annual contest in 2006.

Longtime NAVS member and supporter James Skirha, from the Chicago area, won in the category of the most outstanding individual effort. The winner in the category for most notable outreach implemented by a group, store or institution was the Society of PEACE from Texas.

Each winner is entitled to free registration, accommodation and meals at the Vegetarian Summerfest (travel not included), NAVS' annual educational conference, a fun-filled event, in a vacation-like setting.

James Skirha (Berwyn, IL)

It would fair to say that James was a ubiquitous presence in the Chicago area when it came to making sure that the public knew about Vegetarian Awareness Month. This one-man campaigner started by studying NAVS' outreach booklet and then began carrying out its suggestions. He called universities and colleges (16 or more), public libraries, bookstores and health food stores, and then personally delivered posters and other literature to each. He also posted or left materials at religious institutions and metaphysical centers and followed up with a workshop

at a church and lecture at another. The end of October was just the beginning of James' activities. In the months following, he tabled at numerous campuses and events, lectured, and was responsible for lots of public displays.

James' entry was submitted by his sister, Rose Ann Skirha, who assisted his efforts. He told NAVS that he wasn't trying to win the contest. Generously, James donated his prize to be a scholarship for someone who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend.

Society of PEACE (People for the Earth, Animals, Compassion & Enlightenment – Houston, TX)

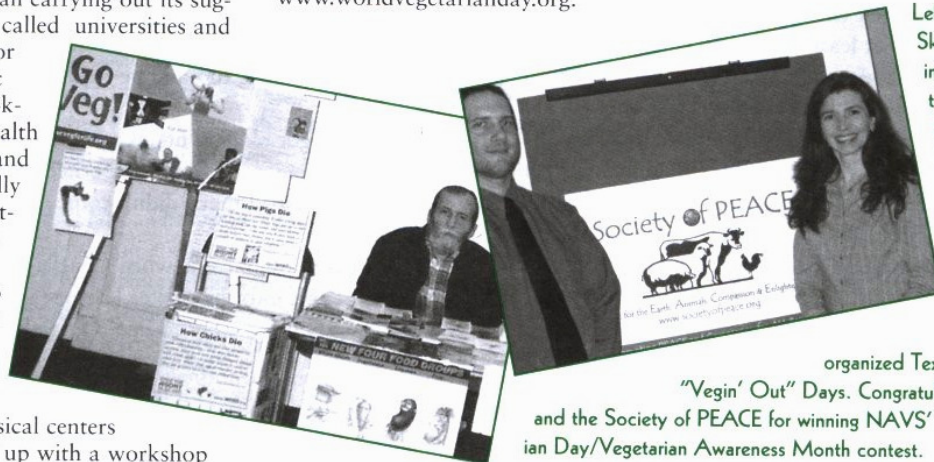
The Society created and organized the first-ever Texas "Veggin'-out" Days where Texans were encouraged to "dine-out" at their local vegetarian restaurants in support of both World Vegetarian Day (Oct. 1) and World Farm Animals Day – Gandhi's Birthday (Oct. 2). The organization received overwhelming support for this statewide campaign from 12 Texas vegetarian societies and animal advocacy groups, including the Lone Star Vegetarian Network.

They coordinated a mass e-mail and flier campaign to promote this throughout Texas. It was also promoted on Go Vegan Radio's September 25 and October 2 shows. Organizers plan to do this campaign every year and hope to eventually have the mayors and governor sign a proclamation declaring Texas "Veggin'-out" official.

In honor of Vegetarian Awareness Month, the Society hosted a special vegan dinner and presentation at Houston's Field of Greens Restaurant. Filled to maximum capacity (including with non-vegetarians) Shirley Wilkes-Johnson, the featured speaker presented a talk on "Little Known History of Vegetarianism," which was filmed by Houston Media Source (an independent TV channel) and was aired locally.

Society of PEACE's entry was submitted by Kristen Lee Ohanyan the group's president and founder. The group's mission is to promote peace and compassion for *all* beings through education, outreach and advocacy. To learn more, visit: www.societyofpeace.org.

Like James and the Society of PEACE, you too can help make a difference in the world each October! You'll be helping people, animals and the Earth. And, you might even become a contest winner. NAVS thanks each of you who have participated in this important educational campaign. Learn more at: www.worldvegetarianday.org.



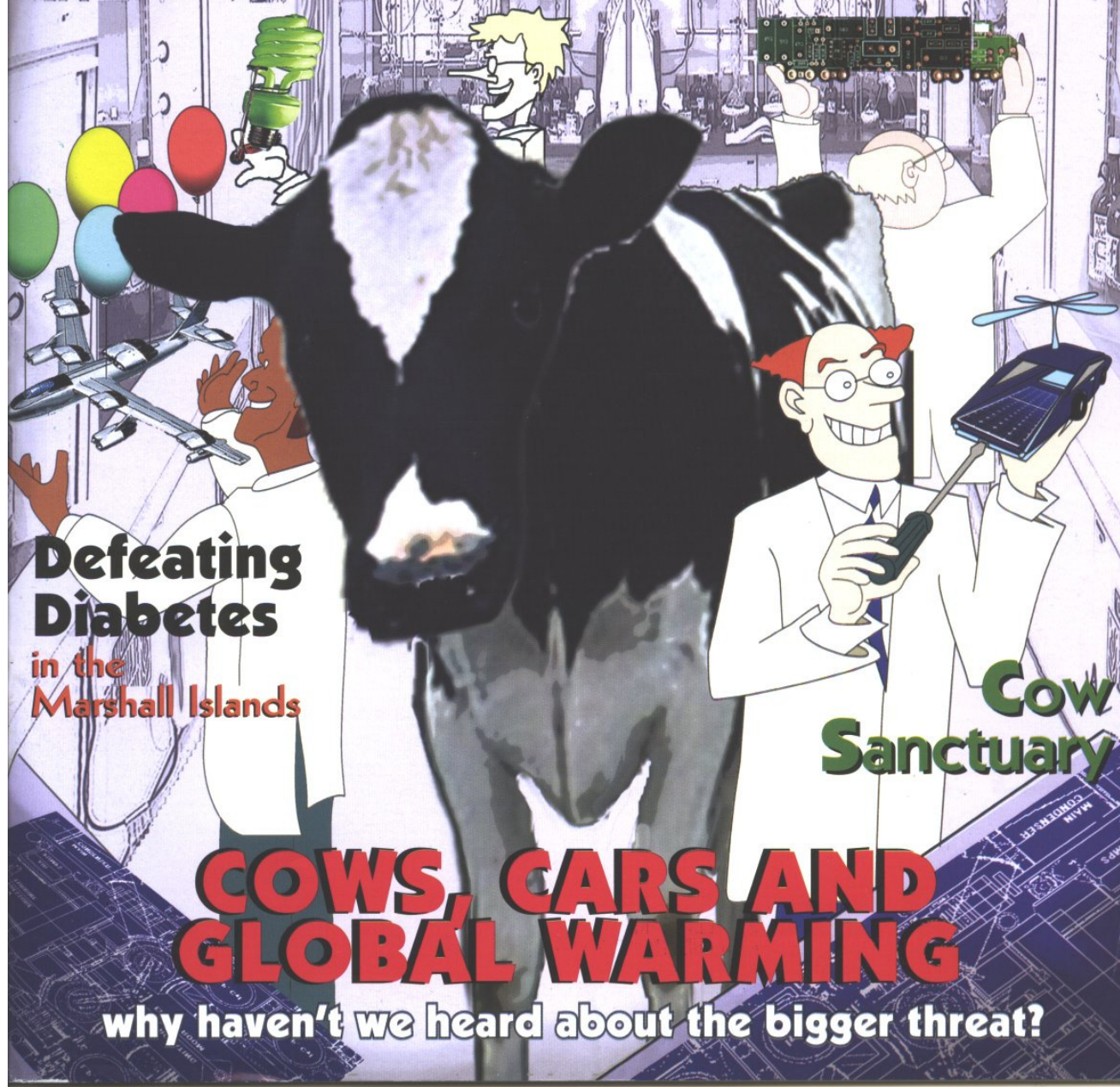
Left: James Skirha hands out information at a table outside the Elmhurst College cafeteria. Right: Tosh Schurz and Kristen Lee Ohanyan from Society of PEACE

organized Texas' first-ever "Veggin' Out" Days. Congratulations to James and the Society of PEACE for winning NAVS' World Vegetarian Day/Vegetarian Awareness Month contest.

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Vegetarian Voice

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