

Meal plants ideas for better health

By **Kathleen Moore**
CORRESPONDENT

SHERBORN — Attendees at the Boston Vegetarian Society's potluck event on Saturday learned that there's more to a meat-free lifestyle than tofu turkey and pleather shoes.

"If you want to prevent animal cruelty, vegetarianism can make a big difference. Eating meat and eggs produces the greatest amount of animal cruelty and the greatest amount of animal suffering," said Evelyn Kimber, president of the organization that hosted its annual potluck event at Sherborn's Peace Abbey. "Compassion toward animals, whether farm animals or pets, continues

the circle of compassion toward all living things."

Guest speaker Marc Johnson, who heads up the New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary in Hope Valley, R.I., echoed Kimber's sentiments.

"There are 20 [million] to 60 million parrots caged as pets in the United States," said Johnson, who also runs a parrot adoption organization out of his home in Rockland. "Parrots have a higher intelligence than most primates, but they are put in cages and forgotten or abandoned . . . If you really love these birds, save your \$2,000 and go visit them in their natural habitat. It's much more

VEGETARIANS. page 6



Nancy Zare brought a fresh salad from her home garden at last weekend's Boston Vegetarian Society's potluck meal at the Peace Abbey. Guests to the event also heard from guest speaker Marc Johnson, who heads up the New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary in Hope Valley, R.I.

VEGETARIANS, from page 1
humane."

Johnson pointed out that the average parrot lives between 70 and 80 years, making it next to impossible for it to live out its life with even a well-intentioned human family. As a result, countless exotic birds are abandoned or even killed by owners each year because they underestimated the responsibility. Johnson said he gets between 20 and 30 requests for parrot adoptions each week.

"Some people want to give me the bird and keep the cages," he added. "They want to sell the cages to make some money."

Johnson made his remarks after a crowd of more than 100 people feasted on dozens of meat-free dishes, all of them made and donated by members of the Boston Vegetarian Society.

Kimber acknowledged that some of the luncheon's attendees were more curious than committed to vegetarianism. Their ambivalence is not a problem, she said.

The Boston Vegetarian Society is committed to introducing vegetarianism and veganism to all who show an interest. Once they have the facts, Kimber said, most people will not look at their daily food consumption the same way.

"My own change to vegetarianism came gradually," she said. "I had always loved animals when I was young, but I didn't immediately make the connection between the animals I loved and the ones that I killed to eat."

After a friend introduced Kimber to vegetarian cuisine, she began to make that connection every time she ate meat. Within a few years, she couldn't ignore the

challenge that was embedded in her brain. Since ingesting her last bite of flesh in 1984, Kimber said her gustatory options have opened up tremendously.

"There are only about four or five animals you can kill to eat," she said. "But, when it comes to vegetables, legumes and grains, the options are unlimited. I've never felt limited."

Kimber said there are a number of ways to explore an animal-free diet without languishing on rice cakes and sprouts. For instance, she suggests taking one or two meals each week and replacing the animal foods with plant-based foods. Beef chili can become three-bean chili. Pasta with meat sauce can become pasta with tomato sauce, spiked with thick, juicy vegetables. Ice cream can become sorbet.