



**Thank You**  
for your invaluable support

So many individuals, food outlets and organizations gave their invaluable effort, time and resources to light the path towards vegetarianism. Space may not have allowed us to list everyone, but all the same, we extend our most heartfelt thanks to you.



7 Sensations  
ACRES  
Adventist Community Services  
Ananda Marga Yoga Society  
Anglo-Chinese Junior College  
Awareness Place Well-Being Centre  
Balakrishnan Matchap  
Betty Khoo  
Bishan Community Library  
Bright Hill Temple  
Cat Welfare Society (CWS)  
Central Library of the National Library Board  
Chong Hua Tong Tou Teck Hwee movement  
DeliVege  
Dr. Rajendra Kumar Pachauri  
Earthlink NTU  
East West Learning Enterprises  
Eco Walk the Talk website  
Environmental Challenge Organisation Singapore  
Geylang East Community Library  
Green Kampung website  
Green Room Cafe  
HSBC  
IMC Pan Asia Alliance Pte Ltd  
I-S Magazine  
Indochine Waterfront Restaurant  
Indonesia Vegetarian Society  
International Union for the Conservation of Nature  
Juggi Ramakrishnan  
Kampung Senang Charity and Education Foundation  
Kelvin Kho Lam Soon  
Kenosis Living Spring  
Koh Chin Mong  
Lee Foundation  
Lee Sui-Lynn, Michelle  
Lila Evrard  
LivinGreens  
Lo Ka Chung Charitable Foundation Ltd (Hong Kong)  
Loving Hut Restaurants  
Ministry of Environment and Water Resources  
Mr and Mrs Chng Hock Hai  
National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre  
National Youth Assembly  
Nature Society (Singapore)  
Nazli Anwari  
New Green Pasture Cafe  
NUS PEACE  
NUS SAVE (Students Against Violation of Earth)  
NutriHub  
Original Sin  
Ping Yi Secondary School  
Queensway Secondary School

Vegetarian Society (Singapore)  
3 Pemimpin Drive, #07-02, Lip Hing Bldg,  
Singapore 576147  
(address for correspondence only)  
[www.vegetarian-society.org](http://www.vegetarian-society.org)  
[info@vegetarian-society.org](mailto:info@vegetarian-society.org)

Raffles Institution  
Ren Ci Hospital  
Salivation Cafe  
Saravanaa Bhavan  
Singapore Kite Association  
Singapore Tourism Board  
SMU People for Animal Welfare (PAW)  
SPCA  
Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple  
T. Colin Campbell Foundation  
Taste of Natural  
The Green Room Cafe  
Toa Payoh Community Library  
UBS Bank's Vegetarian Society  
Singapore Adventurous and  
Nature Lovers Meetup Group  
Singapore Vegetarian Meetup  
Temasek Junior College  
Theosophical Society  
Tzu Chi Foundation  
Vegfund.org  
VegeVibe Magazine  
WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature)

ROS Registration No.: ROS/RCB 0123/1999  
Charity Registration No.: 1851  
UEN: S99SS0065J





A Change,

a Global Imperative

and a Question

As we enter the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more and more people are becoming aware of the reality that our global resource consumption patterns are unsustainable. It is increasingly clear that our diets are a major contributing factor we can all do something about every day, three times a day. It is also increasingly clear how animal product consumption worsens our health and adds to the already pressing consequences of rising health costs.

The question is not "*can* we change", because the consequences of not changing are too dire. The question is more "*how* we need to change".

Top-down approaches are becoming less effective, as governments and other major authorities face key constraints. Changes from individuals are best.

As responsible individuals, what can and must we do?

While we at VSS do the best in our capacity, which you can see in the following pages, we seek your views *and partnership* to move forward with practical solutions.

George Jacobs, Ph.D.

President, Vegetarian Society (Singapore)

**VSS 10th AGM 28 Mar 09**

Place: The Giving Place, 6 Eu Tong Sen Street, #04-88 The Central, S(059817)

Time: 2:30pm-4.00pm

Number of members present: 36 Number of observers/non-members: 2

**PRESIDENT'S WELCOME**

1.1 Dr. George Jacobs, VSS President, took the chair and welcomed everyone present and thanked them for coming to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual VSS AGM.

1.2 In his welcome address, Dr. Jacobs urged everyone to invest - to invest what time, talent, ideas and funds they can in the urgent task of encouraging people to change their diets towards wiser, kinder choices.

**TO RECEIVE & ADOPT MINUTES OF THE 9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

2.1 The chairperson asked that everyone look through the minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> VSS AGM.

2.2 Mr. Loh Yeow Nguan proposed the minutes be accepted. Ms. Violet Lee seconded. All agreed. The 9th AGM minutes were adopted.

**TO RECEIVE & ADOPT THE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

3.1 The chairperson invited questions and comments on the VSS 2008 Annual Report.

3.2 Ms. Nita Doshi proposed that the Annual Report be accepted. Mr. Clarence Tan seconded. The Annual Report was adopted unanimously.

**TO RECEIVE & ADOPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2008**

4.1 The chairperson invited queries and comments on the VSS 2008 Financial Report.

4.2 Mr. Joe Goh raised a question on advertising income. Mr. Clarence Tan gave an explanation of the VSS website, and Mr. Allein Moore offered his advertising expertise to work on it.

4.3 Ms. Nita Doshi highlighted the large donation amount. Dr. Jacobs explained that VSS was faced with earlier constraints of a lower spending budget by the Constitution, which has since been amended so as to significantly raise the spending limit. Mr. Loh further explained a second reason was a halt to a plan to make a video for sale. The funds raised for the video project would be redirected to future projects with donors' permission already obtained.

4.4 Ms. Amelia Wong proposed that the Financial Report be adopted. Mr. Clarence Tan seconded. There being no objections, the Financial Report was duly adopted.

**TO ELECT OFFICE BEARERS**

5.1 The chairperson nominated a slate for election as VSS office bearers. Those people and their respective offices were:

President:	Dr. George Jacobs
Vice President:	Mr. Clarence Tan
Honorary Treasurer:	Ms. Amelia Wong
Assistant Treasurer:	Mr. Navaneethan Neminathan
Honorary Secretary:	Ms. Pauline Menezes
Assistant Secretary:	Ms. Lim Fang Qi
Social Officer:	Ms. Chua Kah Kheng
Publicity Officer:	Mr. Loh Yeow Nguan
Ordinary Member:	Mr. Lau Wen Jin
Ordinary Member:	Mr. Amarinder Singh Saran

5.2 No other nominations were made.

5.3 Ms. Carolyn Garrett proposed that the slate for election be elected. Mr. Neil Madhvani seconded. There being no objections, the slate for election were unanimously welcomed to the VSS Exco.

**TO ELECT TWO HONORARY AUDITORS FOR THE YEAR 2009**

6.1 Two Honorary Auditors were required by the Constitution.

6.2 Mr Navaneethan Neminathan proposed Mr. Neil Madhvani and Mr. Allein Moore. Ms. Amelia Wong seconded.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 The chairperson informed the attendees that no notice had been received by the Secretary within the prescribed time.

7.2 VSS Publicity Officer, Mr. Loh Yeow Nguan gave the proposals for the new year, with plans for many more exhibitions to reach out to bring about more awareness and to educate, whilst still writing in to the media and the relevant government departments, with communicating with the Health Ministry as a priority. Mr. Loh also updated all on the progress of the vegetarian canteen food project. VSS is putting substantial effort into ensuring that Raffles Institution becomes a model to pave the way for other schools to follow suit in the near future. A lot of exciting and viable ideas were exchanged with suggestions ranging from a story line, to burger names, to celebrity and organisational endorsements.

7.3 VSS Vice President, Mr. Clarence Tan, announced that the VSS/STB Vegetarian Food Guide was near completion and passed around a draft copy for all to view. Some useful feedback was gathered from the lively discussion that ensued.

7.4 VSS President, Dr. Jacobs acknowledged two extraordinary people who contributed immensely to VSS in the past. The late Mr. Ng Chin Siong was a tireless volunteer at VSS exhibitions and the late Mr. Shakib Gunn who was a former VSS Exco member and ardent supporter even after serving his term with the Exco.

7.5 Dr. Jacobs invited Ms. Violet Lee, a former Exco member and Mr. Allein Moore, VSS's first President, to offer remarks on VSS's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Both gave poignant glimpses into VSS' early days and inspiration for the future, appealing to all to continue working with VSS whenever they can to support the cause. Mr. Moore was impressed by what had been achieved and felt VSS had reached heights he could not have dreamed of. Mr. Moore ended his speech by highlighting the importance of membership and that the need for organisations such as VSS has never been more critical than it is now. He also reminded all of the Earth Hour event taking place that night.

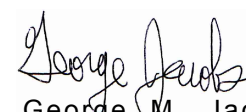
7.6 The chair thanked everyone for their presence, time and participation. The Chairperson then declared the AGM closed at 4pm. The President invited all to savour the catered food served and for the Vice President to lead the birthday celebration with a cake sharing in celebration of 10 meaningful years.

Recorded By



Pauline Menezes  
Honorary Secretary

Vetted & Confirmed By



George M. Jacobs  
President

2009 was our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year  
and we pulled out all the stops to make it our best year ever.  
Our 2009 Annual Report chronicles many of the events of the year  
organised into 7 categories:

1. *Highlight Events*
2. *Events for Schools/Universities/Youth*
3. *Outdoor Events*
4. *Events for the General Public;*
5. *Connecting with Like-Minded Organisations*
6. *Classes and Social Events*
7. *In the Media*

# Highlight Events



## **From 6 January, Healthier Food Programme at RI**

Being one of Singapore's premier schools, Raffles Institution was an ideal choice for our outreach. Whatever we have achieved at this school can have far-reaching effects. With the support of the school administration, we saw enhanced efforts in 2009, including:

- 6 Jan, a weightlifting demonstration by vegetarian strongman, Ang Hwee, and a healthy smoothie making demonstration
- 21 Jan, a sharing with the Sec 3 cohort on the urgency of meat reduction which led to 3 teams of students doing a year long Service Learning project with us.
- 13 April, VSS teamed with RI students and a RI canteen stall operator to launch a veg burger. Posters were put up and assembly announcements were made to raise awareness on the need for meat reduction.

The programme was featured in both the Chinese and English press. In 2010, we will be working with the students in the fifth and sixth years at RI on projects to raise more awareness and make the food in their canteen healthier and greener. We also hope to undertake similar efforts at more schools.



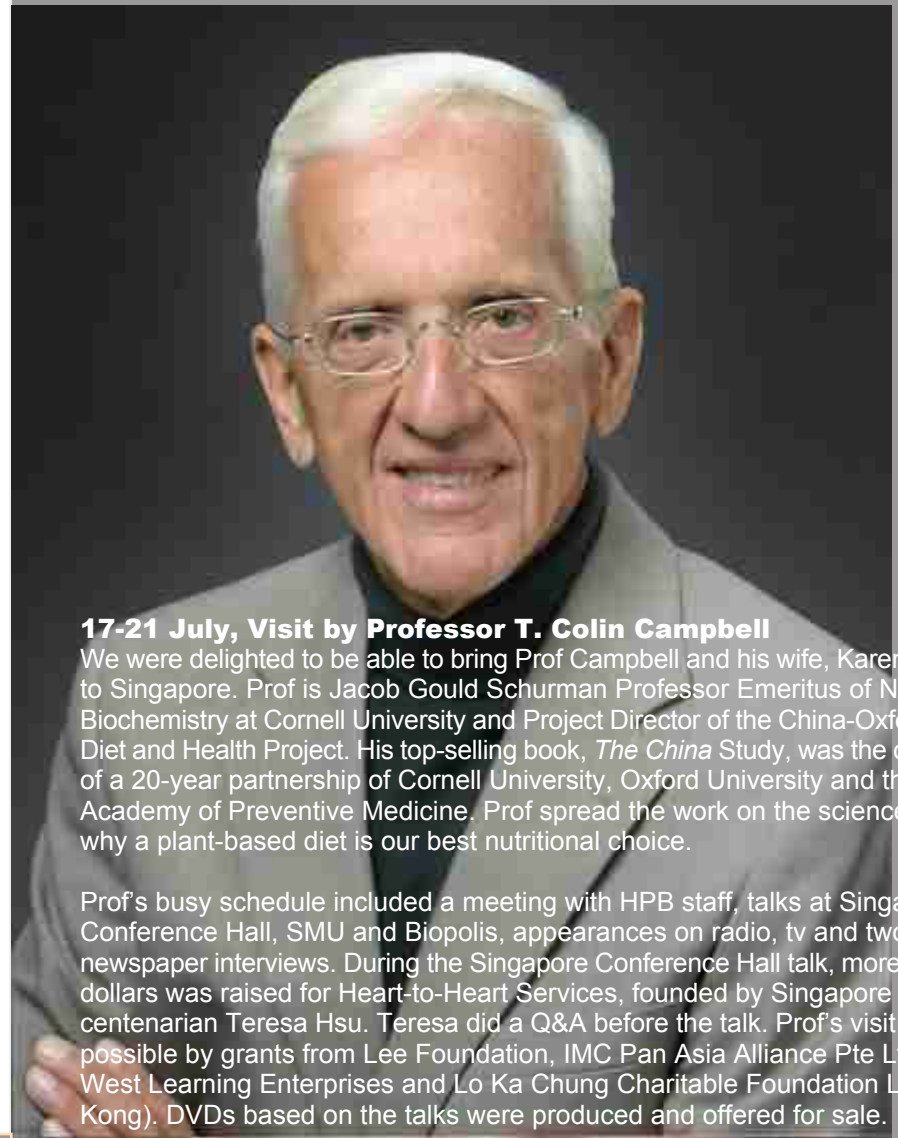
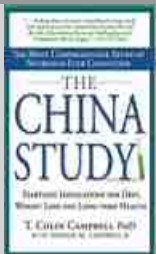


# singapore vegetarian food guide

## 30 May, Launch of the Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide

The Botanic Gardens was the venue for the launch of a new VSS publication, the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*. Produced with support from the Singapore Tourism Board, the guide features more than 80 veg restaurants. Gracing the launch were media personality and environmental activist, Nadya Hutagalung, and her husband, former Olympic swimmer, Desmond Koh, both vegetarians.

The guide was quite a hit, thanks in part to coverage in *The Sunday Times* of 7 June. It is now on sale at bookstores and other outlets around the island. We plan an update in 2010.



## 17-21 July, Visit by Professor T. Colin Campbell

We were delighted to be able to bring Prof Campbell and his wife, Karen Campbell to Singapore. Prof is Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell University and Project Director of the China-Oxford-Cornell Diet and Health Project. His top-selling book, *The China Study*, was the culmination of a 20-year partnership of Cornell University, Oxford University and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. Prof spread the work on the science behind why a plant-based diet is our best nutritional choice.

Prof's busy schedule included a meeting with HPB staff, talks at Singapore Conference Hall, SMU and Biopolis, appearances on radio, tv and two featured newspaper interviews. During the Singapore Conference Hall talk, more than \$600 dollars was raised for Heart-to-Heart Services, founded by Singapore vegetarian centenarian Teresa Hsu. Teresa did a Q&A before the talk. Prof's visit was made possible by grants from Lee Foundation, IMC Pan Asia Alliance Pte Ltd – East West Learning Enterprises and Lo Ka Chung Charitable Foundation Ltd (Hong Kong). DVDs based on the talks were produced and offered for sale.

## Upgrade of VSS's Internet Presence

For many years, we've had our website and electronic newsletters, but in 2009, improvements took a quantitative leap. First, the website received a major makeover, upgrading its look and functionality. One of the website's most popular pages is the Food Outlets page – now featuring more than 500 outlets. We continued the never-ending task of updating that. The newsletter, too, was spruced up with enhanced graphics and hyperlinking of the articles. Thirty-six issues were produced, not to mention numerous email blasts. Another upgrade made our online forum easier to use, and we joined the trend towards new media with our very own Facebook page, which already has hundreds of subscribers. The icing on this internet cake was a new logo for VSS.



## 24 October, International Day of Climate Action

Perhaps 2009's most significant change in terms of vegetarianism internationally was that the link between meat production and global warming reached the consciousness of the public and of many governments. The environmental movement recognized meat as a green issue, and VSS did its best to show its green colours. We were one of the main organisers of the International Day of Climate Action events in Singapore: . According to the international website, there were more than 5000 events in more than 170 countries, making it possibly the most widespread concerted action for change in the history of the world:

The highlight event here in Singapore was aerial photography at Hong Lim Park, followed by exhibitions at SMU.







# Events for Schools Universities Youth

*Youth are the future. They are often the ones most willing to look at the status quo, to ask how to change things for the better and then to enact those changes. Thus, VSS pays special attention to reaching out to them. Furthermore, our Exco includes three members in their 20s.*

## **29-30 Jan, Environmental Awareness at NTU**

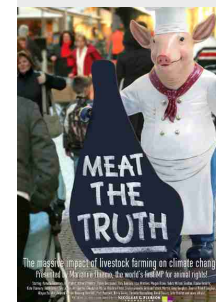
Earthlink NTU, the environmental club at the Nanyang Technological University seeks to create a greener campus by sharing with the NTU population the reasons and ways to reduce the usage of resources and lead a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle. VSS shared on ifighting climate change with diet change. Earthlink was in agreement to push for a greener diet.

## **23-27 Febuary, Animal Rights Campaign at ACJC**

An inspired group of students from Anglo-Chinese Junior College took on a school project to speak out on the suffering of farmed animals. It was also their aim to try change people's perception of vegetarian food. The team approached VSS for more information and vegetarian food promotion. Besides the meetings and veg food sampling at restaurants, our exhibition was in their library for two weeks. We were moved by the students' sincerity and initiative, as they were not getting CCA points for their project.

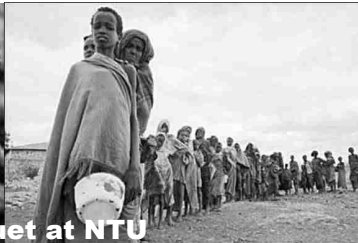
## **15 March, Film screening and food fair at the NUS University Cultural Centre**

A VSS representative spoke this event, organized by SAVE (Students Against Violation of Earth), as part of the NUS Arts Festival. SAVE is working with VSS to attempt to change the food on offer at NUS. Free, delicious vegan food was served at this event, attended by more than 100 people. The featured film was *Meat the Truth*, produced in the Netherlands and narrated by a Dutch MP from the Party for the Animals. The film asks the question, 'Why is meat left out of so much of the discussion on climate change?' The important role that meat and dairy production play in the emission of greenhouse gases is amply demonstrated in the film.



### 21 March, Animal Day at SMU

VSS had a booth where we gave out educational materials to fellow animal lovers. Other organisations which took part in SMU Animal Day included ACRES, SPCA, Noah's Ark Cares, NTU Animal Lovers' Society, Supreme Master TV and House Rabbit Society. The event saw animal lovers bring their pets to take part in the Best Groomed and Best Dressed competitions. We were there to encourage kindness to animals who are not as fortunate as our pets.



### 24 March, Hunger Banquet at NTU

Students at NTU organised an event to call attention to the problem of World Hunger. Diversion of food resources to meat production wastes resources that could feed the 100s of millions of people without enough to eat. VSS called attention to this via an exhibition and a talk. In particular, our hunger sculpture graphically portrays the human suffering to which meat production contributes

### 9 June, Community Leaders Forum at RJC

This Community Leaders Forum gave students from different schools a more detailed understanding of various animal issues, so that they may implement meaningful projects thereafter. ACRES, SPCA and VSS all spoke for the animals from our different perspectives. VSS's insightful video clips explained the true nature of factory farms and how eating animals can lead to health problems for humans and is a major contributor to climate change. VSS urged the audience to consider meat reduction projects for their schools.



### 3-9 April, Health Fair at TJC [Temasek Junior College]

The exhibition with video screening we did the year before was well received by the students and generated a buzz on the different perspectives of vegetarianism. We were invited to share the information again for their health fair. The library and a video room arranged for us were excellent venues. In our continued push for meat reduction, we encouraged the school to have a vegetarian stall in the canteen.

### 20-27 May, Vegetarian Elective at TJC

MOE's slogan, TLLM (Teach Less Learn More) was the approach we used during our participation in the school's vegetarian elective in order to get students talking and thinking about their meat consumption.. For many years, we have had warm and encouraging collaborations with TJC on this annual programme.

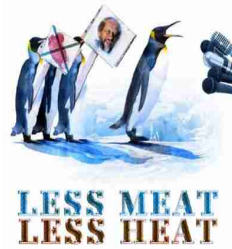
- 20 May, the TLLM lesson on "Can one survive without meat?" explored the various health and ethical aspects of a meat-based diet.
- 22 May, a talk and raw food demo by a dietician was highly informative, The simple to make dish was tasty and appreciated.
- 27 May, we shared on "Global Warming and how vegetarianism can help". Facts and figures made clear how meat consumption exacerbates global warming, and we questioned students on what we can do about it.





### 12 June, Talk for Inaugural National Youth Assembly

A VSS Exco member presented the link between meat consumption and global warming to a group of youths taking part in the inaugural National Youth Assembly orientation programme. Organised by ECO Singapore, the National Youth Assembly is a series of legislative sessions during which youths propose, debate and ultimately submit bills to the respective Ministries of the Singapore Government. One member of the audience commented that the VSS talk was "provocative and new", while another commented that he had never known of the huge impact of diet on the environment.



### 17 August, Smoothie workshop at Ping Yi Secondary School

Our team of conducted this workshop for 40 teachers. First, VSS explained the benefits of smoothies from the health and environmental perspectives. Then, we demonstrated two smoothie recipes: one recipe is mainly fruits, while the other emphasizes nuts, such as almond and cashews. The teachers enjoyed sampling the two recipes. Finally, the real fun began with teachers in groups of four creating their own smoothies and sharing them with colleagues. As always, the workshop was a big hit with participants, who were eager for VSS materials, including our SEEDS VCD, our How To Be a Healthy Vegetarian flyer and a handout with smoothie recipes.

### 29 August, Climate Crisis Symposium at NUS

VSS exhibited at this event organized by NUS SAVE (Students Against Violation of Earth). Approximately 200 people attended the full-day event. It was clear that meat is now on the minds of everyone grappling with the coming catastrophe represented by Global Warming, and even people who are non-vegetarian acknowledge the role of meat and talked about meat reduction. For example, one of the panelists was Howard Shaw, head of the Singapore Environment Council (SEC). He endorsed meat reduction and even suggested that SEC might do a Vegetarian Week.

### 7 September, NUS Green Carnival

VSS was an invited guest at the opening of this event at the NUS Central Forum, organized by NUS SAVE (Students Against Violation of the Earth). The NUS President, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, along with Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, spoke. From the week of the Green Carnival forward, NUS will celebrate Meatout Thursdays. In his speech at the Carnival opening, President Tan said that he too is trying to go vegetarian every Thursday.

### 14 – 23 Oct, NUS PEACE exhibition at NUS Central Library

NUS PEACE (People Ending Animal Cruelty & Exploitation) is a student group dedicated to promoting animal welfare. When they organised an exhibition in front of NUS Central Library, it was no surprise that VSS was invited to take part. We have held many exhibitions over the years at NUS, and every year we can see a gradual increase in acceptance of vegetarianism and meat reduction.



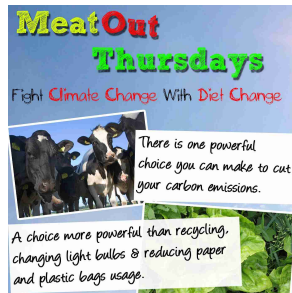


**17 November, Assembly of Youth for the Environment at Labrador Park**

In addition to our usual exhibition, VSS also did a quiz and debuted a new Global Warming flyer to more than 300 students who attended. The link between meat and environmental damage was discussed not just by VSS but also in the main information pack given to all participants. Every participant received one veggie burger that were featured in our programme at RI earlier in the year. One highlight was meeting a Sec 1 student who, at age 7, all by herself, chose to go veg and is still veg.

**SAVE-VSS Meatless Day Flyer**

VSS in cooperation with SAVE, the NUS green group, produced a brightly coloured and illustrated two-sided flyer to encourage people at NUS and elsewhere to go meatless at least once a week. We printed 10,000 copies of the flyer and uploaded it to our website. 2009 was also the year that an official weekly meatless day was also launched in cities in Belgium and Brazil.



**25 December, "HAPPITeen Camp II" at Camp Christine**

We distributed VSS educational pamphlets, SEEDs CD and gave a talk on vegetarianism to the about 85 happy campers. The 4-day vegetarian camp led by veteran social worker and former professional weight-lifter, Ang Hwee, was for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian children between the ages of 10-15. Children that age are bombarded by adverts for fast food meat restaurants and face peer pressure to eat meat. Thus, we need to help them see alternatives.



# Outdoor Events

*Eating less or no meat is part of living a healthy lifestyle. Another part of being healthy involves enjoying some exercise in the great outdoors. Thus, VSS seeks to organise outdoor events.*



### 1 March, Hike on Southern Ridges Trail

The Southern Ridges Trail is a unique and fairly new trail. Plus, it starts close to an MRT station. Thus, it has become a favourite hiking destination of VSS members. Unfortunately, our hike there on 1 Mar had to be cancelled due to a heavy and continuous downpour. Undeterred, the members who had gathered for the hike decided to enjoy each other's company over some tasty vegetarian food and to plan to do the hike another day.

### 20 April, This Time We Made It – Southern Ridges Trail

About 20 people joined the VSS hike on the Southern Ridges Trail. Participants were full of praise for the creative job that NParks has done in creating the trail. The weather was very cooperative with cool breezes and lovely views from Mt Faber. Participants were a friendly bunch who kindly waited for fellow hikers who wanted a bit slower pace. We ended the hike with a walk around Hort Park and then went to Vegetarian Villas restaurant for a much anticipated meal.

### 24 May, Back to Southern Ridges Trail

We returned to the Southern Ridges Trail, but this time instead of walking out to a restaurant afterwards, we enjoyed our dinner at beautiful Hort Park, by having food delivered by Loving Hut Restaurant. This event was held in coordination with our friends at UBS Bank's Vegetarian Society.



### 8 March, Let's Go Fly a Kite - A Tribute to Shakib Gunn

Sadly, in February, long-time VSS activist Shakib Gunn passed away. Two of Shakib's great loves were kite flying and vegetarianism. This event brought them together at Pasir Ris Park, with Wing Lee, President of Singapore Kite Association, which Shakib helped to found, gracing the event. After the kite flying was – you guessed it – a vegetarian picnic lunch.



### 12 July, Changi Area Bike Ride

VSS teamed with the Singapore Adventurous and Nature Lovers Meetup Group to organize a 3-hour bicycle ride around the Changi area. This was a bit more strenuous than the typical event that VSS organises, but all the 20+ participants were up to the task. Diet is just one part of good health; exercise is another part. Thus, VSS encourages vegetarians and meat reducers to exercise regularly. Over lunch, after the bicycling, talk was about joining VSS and attending the VSS-organized talk by Professor T. Colin Campbell the following weekend.

### 2 November, Palau Ubin Cycling

Having conquered the East Coast Park bike paths, VSS's intrepid bikers joined our friends from the Singapore Adventurous Meetup Group for a bike trip to Palau Ubin. Cycling past Ubin's rustic scenery harkened back to a style of life long gone on mainland Singapore. We felt as though we were time travelers, as we enjoyed exercising in the fresh air with newfound friends, followed by a much appreciated

### 17 – 18 Oct, Tanjong Sutera retreat

Imagine a cliff-top ocean-facing nature resort with panoramic views of sky and sea meeting seamlessly. Imagine an idyllic Eden of undulating gardens, coconut trees, lily and fish ponds. That's what we enjoyed when VSS organised at trip to Tanjong Sutera, just 1.5 hours from JB.







# Talks exhibitions videos workshops demos for the general public

*Public education is VSS's main endeavour. Fortunately, we receive many invitations, and we also organise some of our own events. Via these events, we connect with people searching for answers and to present a new perspective to those unaware of the dangers of meat consumption.*



## **15 Jan – 13 Feb, VSS Exhibition at Geylang East Library**

One of the best educational activities that VSS does is our library exhibition, which has been held at many libraries around the island. The exhibition features videos, sculptures, free flyers and VCDs, and sign-up and feedback sheets, in addition to a range of colourful display panels. Geylang East Community Library was the site of the exhibition this time. As usual, thousands of library patrons took the opportunity to view our exhibition and to reflect on its meaning for their own lives.

## **20 February, Smoothie Workshop at Bishan Public Library**

VSS took our Smoothie Workshop on the road to Bishan Public Library, where the workshop served as one part of a two-day course for teachers about developing and using cooperative games. The teachers were divided into teams, and they cooperated in their teams to design and make smoothies. Then, the teams cooperated with each other as they walked around the room tasting the other teams' concoctions. The teachers had fun, at the same time that they learned about nutrition and picked up some ideas to use at home to provide their families with drinks that are power-packed with natural goodness.



## **28 Mar, VSS AGM**

We proudly held our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary AGM at The Giving Place, the HQ of the National Volunteer and Philanthropic Centre. The event – open to the public – began with a slideshow reviewing our first ten years. Those present agreed that VSS had done a great deal, more than many veg societies in other countries. However, much, much more needs to be done, as meat consumption continues to rise. Thus, the rest of the meeting was dedicated to discussing plans for 2009 and to encouraging more people to participate.



### 31 March, Reading Aloud to Educate Children

A VSS member did a workshop on Reading Aloud to Children at Awareness Place Well-Being Centre. Approximately 30 parents and teachers attended. In addition to explaining why to read aloud to children of all ages, the workshop leader also explained and demonstrated how to read aloud in ways that use books as tools to launch conversations with children. Last, but not least, participants thought about how they could use children's book as to dialogue with and teach children about wiser, kinder ways, including vegetarianism, in which we humans can interact with our fellow animals.



### 11-12 April, Ecogreen event at Toa Payoh SAFRA

As more people and organisations come to appreciate the environmental benefits of eating less or no meat, VSS receives more invitations to participate in green events, and we are happy for opportunities to educate fellow environmentalists about the role of meat in environmental destruction. This event was one such opportunity



### 9-10 May, Vesak at Kong Meng San (Bright Hill) Temple

Although VSS is a strictly non-religious organisation, we welcome opportunities to work with religious organisations to explain secular reasons for eating less or no meat. In that spirit, for several years, we have exhibited at the Vesak Day events at Bright Hill Temple. In 2009, in addition to our powerful exhibition materials, we also did a bilingual talk. Additionally, VSS collaborated on a film marathon of movies which highlight the many advantages of eating less or no meat.



### 16 May, 'Let's Do Our Part'

A VSS representative spoke as part of this event at the Horticultural Park. Our talk was entitled, 'Change Your Diet, Change the World'. Indeed, every time we sit down to eat, we can do our part for a better world by choosing a plant-based meal as often as possible. Furthermore, our positive food choices set an example for others and create economic demand for foods that heal our bodies, the environment and the lives of our fellow animals.

### 28 May, Green Room CafÉ at Bishan

Green Room CafÉ, a vegetarian eatery located in Bishan Park II, launched a new set of menu items by giving its customers a chance to taste and comment. What's great about veg food is that while it pleases our palates and nourishes our bodies, it also feeds our souls by providing us a chance to choose food which matches our values. That is why Green Room invited VSS to give a talk about how we also help the environment when we choose to enjoy veg food.

### 5-7 June, Re-Live Event at Bugis Junction

VSS took up a booth at this event organized by ECO Singapore and the NTU and Singapore Poly green clubs. The concept of Re-Live is that we all need to change the way we live so that we live in a manner more friendly to the environment and more friendly to the other beings with whom we share the planet. Inspired by the fact that our booth was right next to McDonald's, the VSS team reached out to the shoppers in an enthusiastic and friendly way, explaining why we all benefit by moving towards a plant-based diet.

### 8 July, Lunchtime Talk for HSBC

Titled 'Achieving Long-Term Health for Ourselves and the Planet', our talk focussed on the benefits of consuming little or no meat. The speaker shared his own positive experiences with the approximately 30 people in the audience. During Q&A, the common misconception that animal protein is necessary was given an airing. The presenter explained that many studies show plant-based protein to be much more beneficial to long-term health.





### 17-26 July, Singapore Meatout Week 2009

For the past few years, VSS has organized a Singapore Meatout Week, a time when people try to go without meat for a day or more. This year, Meatout Week was 17-26 July, an extra long week, to make it extra easy to find a day to go meatless. Headlining Meatout Week 2009 were talks by Professor T. Colin Campbell. One familiar feature of Singapore Meatout Week were special discounts from veg eateries.

### 28 July, 'Food, Inc.' Premier

A VSS representative was a discussion panellist following the Singapore premier of the film 'Food, Inc.' at VivoCity. The documentary is a highly critical look at the food industry, and a large segment of the film is devoted to the meat industry. The cinema was completely sold out and after the film almost everyone stayed for the discussion. A young man in the audience recounted that people thought he was radical because he stopped eating McDonalds and drinking Coke. He looks forward to the day when such changes in food consumption habits are seen as normal.

### 9 August, Vegetarian Day at BukitMerah

VSS was invited to display our secular exhibition materials at the annual veg day at Bukit Merah by the Chong Hua Tong Tou Teck Hwee movement. This was a day to showcase and encourage vegetarian food ... and celebrate National Day too. More than 50 local dishes were on offer – all free. Our videos, projected on a large screen, attracted large crowds at this busy event.

### 6 September, Yoga Fair at Fort Canning Centre

VSS had a booth at the Yoga Fair organized by the Ananda Marga Yoga Society, with whom we have worked previously. VSS also did a talk in the main hall on reasons to eat less or no meat and reasons why people still eat meat. Approximately 30 people attended the talk, including two from the previous day's Singapore Vegetarian Meetup and two SMU students who were doing a paper on vegetarianism in their Sociology of Food class. The VSS speaker explained that going vegetarian is not complicated and pointed out VSS' 'How to be a healthy vegetarian' flyer.



### 11-12 September, Holistic Wellness Symposium at Quality Hotel

A VSS representative spoke twice at this event organized by Kampung Senang. As a sign of the growing understanding of the life-saving reasons for eating less or no meat, by the time our speaker's turn arrived, the day's other speakers had already touched on the main points he was going to discuss: the health, ethical and environmental reasons to move towards veg. On the second day of the event, the VSS representative was a panellist discussing how symposium participants could implement the ideas presented.



### 24 September, Talk at Awareness Place in Bras Basah Centre

A VSS representative did a talk entitled, 'The Beauty of Plant Based Diets' for 32 people. Before the talk began, the moderator asked how many in the audience were already vegetarian, and only about five people raised their hands. The moderator did not raise his hand, but he did say that he tries to be meatless at least once or twice a week. After the talk, he said that he will try to go meatless even more often.



### 26-27 September, Tzu Chi Foundation's Mid-Autumn Festival Charity Fair

VSS set up our exhibition and distributed flyers and CDs to highlight the role of meat reduction in environmental protection. Our exhibition was next to others regarding recycling, global warming and overseas humanitarian work. The wide variety of vegetarian dishes on offer at the fair emphatically demonstrated that vegetarian food is not only good for human health and the health of the planet, it also tastes great.





### 3 October, Library Talk: 'The Cat, The Dog and Her Pet Chicken'

VSS launched a series of four library talks with an illuminating address by Veronyka Lau of Cat Welfare Society (CWS). The talk at Bishan Library, dealt with humans' views and actions towards our fellow animals. Veron discussed the disconnect between the affection we bestow upon cats, dogs and other pets and, on the other hand, the way we treat the animals whom we eat. The talk helped VSS find out about CWS' valuable work and build on what we have in common.



### 31 October, Library Talk: 'Anti-Aging through Anti-Oxidant Foods'

Toa Payoh Public Library, Multi-Purpose Room, was the venue for the second VSS library talk. The speaker, Dr Sanjay Doshi, of Mediline Wei Min Clinic, explored the role of vegetarian diets in slowing the aging process. The talk was so popular that about 20 extra chairs had to be added. Dr Sanjay generously stayed beyond the allotted time to entertain the many questions on the audience's minds.



### 10 November, Philosophy Talk at NUS

A visiting Philosophy professor at NUS was doing a talk, 'Is it wrong to eat animals?'. VSS heard about it, and a VSS Exco member attended. The professor's talk and the discussion that followed seemed to disregard the realities of modern factory farming methods and animal rights as factors which should be considered in the issue. The general view was more that eating animals is not wrong. Fortunately, the VSS member was there to push the point that we cannot ignore the horrendous suffering we put animals through in modern factory farms when this issue is discussed and that the picture conveyed by the professor of farm animals frolicking happily in open pastures is something that exists more in our imagination than in reality.

### 13 November, Countdown to Copenhagen Concert

VSS participated in this concert at Indochine Waterfront ahead of the UN's Copenhagen conference on global warming. We distributed the global warming flyer, developed in conjunction with NUS SAVE. Also, four of us dressed as cows and chickens. This attracted a lot of attention from the concert goers, as well as from the MC, Nadya Hutagalung, who mentioned VSS and talked about the meat-global warming connection.



### 21 November, Library Talk: 'Making a Difference for Animals' at Central Library

VSS held the third of its series of four 2009 talks at libraries. This talk was given by Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES (Animal Concerns, Research and Education Society). Louis is a well-informed, passionate and inspiring speaker who recounted the experiences that led him to dedicate his life to helping our fellow animals.

### 28 November, 'Meat Production and Land Use' at Central Library

The last of VSS's series of four library talks featured Dr Harvey Neo of the NUS Geography Department. Some striking information shared included the fact that the weight of the typical slaughtered chickens has increased over the years, while their lifespan has decreased to 37 days. The average pig lives only about 9 months, while the average cow raised for beef lives only about a year. Professor Neo related his inerasable experience visiting a slaughterhouse. Most shocking were not the sights, but the smells and sounds of death. About half the audience went for dinner afterwards at Kwan Im Restaurant.

### 29 November, Exhibition at Veg Food Fair at Sengkang Temple

This fair featured many vegetarian food stalls and was open to the public. The organisers, Chong Hua Tong Tou Teck Hwee movement, are strong advocates of vegetarianism. They invited VSS to share our secular views through our posters and screenings of our videos.



### 5 December, Botanic Gardens Christmas Tree

As the final event of its 150th anniversary celebration, the Singapore Botanic Gardens held a Xmas Tree Light-up featuring more than 150 Xmas trees, each decorated by a different organization. VSS was invited to decorate a tree. For our tree, we laminated the 'Love Us, Not Eat Us' stickers, along with quotes from famous vegetarians and facts about the hazards of consumption. To add a bit more colour to our tree, we also hung plastic fruits and vegetables. The trees were on display at the Gardens through most of December.





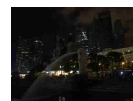
# Connecting with Like-Minded Organisations

*VSS was born in 1999. The ten years since then has seen a rapid increase in the number of civil society organisations, all run by people dedicated, like those of us at VSS, to making Singapore and the rest of the world a better place for all. Thus, it is only natural that VSS would want to link with these organisations whenever possible. For instance, our newsletter ran announcements from many other organisations, not to mention restaurants and others. Here are some of the actions VSS took in 2009 to build ties.*



## **28 February, Getting to Know You Picnic**

Nature Society (Singapore) sponsored a picnic for green group leaders at the home of their Honorary Secretary. Three VSS Exco members had the pleasure of attending. The event gave green group leaders the chance to get to know each other in a casual setting in hopes of laying a foundation for future collaboration.



## **28 March, WWF's Earth Hour**

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) is another of the many environmental organisations that are now helping to spread awareness that cutting meat consumption helps the environment. Their Earth Hour event focused the world's attention on addressing the dangers of climate change. VSS members went down to Esplanade Park to bring the message that meat production is a key source of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

## **8 April, Exploratory Meeting for Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development**

A VSS representative was among more than 20 people from a wide range of organizations that attended a meeting on whether to set up such a centre in coordination with the United Nations University. The meeting was initiated by ECO (Environmental Challenge Organisation). The VSS representative highlighted the fact that many people are still not aware of the fact that reducing or eliminating their consumption of animal-based foods offers a simple, yet potentially powerful, way that they can contribute on a daily basis to more sustainable resource use.



## **18 April, Shark Fin Event at Speaker's Corner**

Approximately 50 people, including VSS representatives, attended the first animal welfare event at Speakers Corner. Organised by ACRES, the event spread the message about the destructive effects of eating shark fin. The highlight of the event involved a stack of boxes about 11 metres high, with the boxes decorated with stickers of sharks. A couple dressed as bride and groom caused the stack to collapse, the message being that if we have shark fin soup at our wedding dinners, etc. the ocean eco-systems will collapse.





### 16 May, Animal Welfare Symposium

The annual Animal Welfare Symposium provides a forum for animal concerns organisations to reach out to the public, especially youth. In addition to our usual flyers and exhibition materials, VSS also provided veggie burgers for participants to try. Some people think that people will only support vegetarianism if they see the immediate benefit to themselves and their families. This symposium suggests that altruism does exist.



### 5 Jun, Green Generation Concert at the Botanic Gardens

Dr Jane Goodall, a living legend for her ground-breaking work with chimpanzees in Africa, is also one of the planet's most famous vegetarians and a tireless activist for the environment and our fellow animals. Whenever she comes to Singapore, VSS tries to publicise and support her activities. For this concert, we had a booth and distributed our materials.



### 4 July, VSS Talk at Theosophical Society

A VSS representative did a talk and video showing at the Theosophical Society Lodge. The Theosophical Society supports vegetarianism. Quoting from their website, iMeditation and vegetarianism bring about tremendous benefits even to those who are not necessarily on a spiritual quest'.



### 26 July, Ren Ci Vegetarian Food Fiesta

VSS was given permission to distribute flyers and VCDs at this event at Ren Ci Ren Ci Hospital. VSS had previously participated in this event when it was held at Suntec. Many of the people at the Vegetarian Food Fiesta are vegetarian twice a month. Our challenge is to convince them to make veg a more regular part of their lives. The Fiesta included not just food but also a health talk by Ren Ci dietician, Jenny Ng, who described which local plant foods we can turn to for each of the various nutrients we need.

### 13 September, Supporting Vegetarianism in Africa

A VSS member made a contribution on behalf of VSS to support the organising of the 2nd West Africa Vegetarian Congress in Accra, Ghana, 29 Oct-1 Nov. Yes, vegetarianism has roots on all the world's populated continents. Who knows, maybe there are also some vegetarians among the humans working in Antarctica.



### 18 October, Deepavali Celebration at Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple

Four hundred vegetarian dishes! That was what was on offer at this event. A VSS representative was among the special guests announced to the audience and invited to take part in a ceremony as part of the occasion. The immense variety of vegetarian dishes on display attests to the ingenuity embodied in vegetarian cookery. Afterwards, one of the event's main organizers asked the VSS rep to call him to discuss future cooperation.



### 29 October, Green Drinks at Post Museum on Rowell Road

A VSS representative served on a panel at this monthly gathering of people interested in growing the green movement. The first speaker, a green entrepreneur, spoke about aligning our actions and our values. The VSS speaker followed up by stating that studies show that most people value the protection of non-humans animals and the protection of the environment; thus, eating less or no meat provides us with the opportunity to put our values into action three times or more a day. The third speaker – all three speakers are vegetarians – talked about organic farming in Singapore.



### 6-9 November, Asia Vegetarian Congress at Batam

Vegetarian activists from 15 countries, including Mongolia, gathered for this event in which an estimated 1200 people took part. VSS's participation included planning for the Congress, doing talks, presenting our smoothie workshop, setting up our exhibition materials, distributing our flyers and chairing sessions. People from several countries asked about getting soft copies of our exhibition materials and whether we could do our smoothie workshop for them.



### 10 November, Dinner with Visiting Vegetarian Leaders at Salvation Cafe

As vegetarian leaders from various organizations were passing through Singapore after the Asia Vegetarian Congress, we decided to host a dinner for them. To open up the dinner to more people, we combined it with a get together of the Singapore Vegetarian Meetup. The guests were Hiren Kara of PETA India, John Davis of International Vegetarian Union and Shankar Narayan of the India Vegan Society.







**11 November, 'Nature Is Changing: Copenhagen and Beyond'**

VSS helped promote and coordinate this panel discussion titled by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) experts. The venue was the auditorium of the LKY School of Public Policy. More than 150 people attended. During Q&A time, two people, including a VSS Exco member, raised the issue of meat reduction as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The panellists who replied all supported the idea, although none came out in favour of vegetarianism. VSS also distributed our global warming flyer.

**12-15 November, China Xiamen International Vegetarian and Organic Food Fair**

A VSS representative was an invited speaker at this event, at no cost to VSS. Other speakers included the Manager of the International Vegetarian Union and the COO of the Indonesia Vegetarian Society. The VSS speaker gave advice to business people on how to cater for customers who are vegetarians and meat reducers. VSS exchanged literature and experiences with vegetarian activists in China. We hope to conduct more exchanges in the future.

**14 November. Kampong Senang Eco-Harmony Dinner and Talk**

VSS was represented at Kampong Senang's 10 anniversary event attended by more than 200 guests. As we share much in common with Kampong Senang.. Both organisations promote vegetarianism and, over the years, have often collaborated on projects and will continue to do so in the years ahead.



**5 December, ACRES Fundraising Event at The Loof**

Another local organisation we often work with is ACRES (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society). Although ACRES' main purpose is to stop the trafficking and other abuse of wild animals, they also promote a plant-based diet. When a group of NIE students approached us for help with fundraising for ACRES, we gladly supplied VSS educational materials for distribution, as well as used goods for sale.



**Throughout the year, Participation in Singapore Vegetarian Meetup Events -**

Singapore Vegetarian MeetUp is an internet-based social organisation that brings veg and non-veg together to enjoy each other's company at veg eateries and other venues. Singapore Veg Meetup has about 600 members and does lots of events. In fact, it had developed into the highest rated meetup group in Singapore



**13 December, Ubin Green House Planning Meeting**

VSS took part in a gathering at Ubin House on Palau Ubin, organised by our friends at Nature Society (Singapore). NSS has been hard at work preparing the place for use in promoting green ideas, and they are generously allowing other green groups to also use the facility, which we will be doing in 2010.



**December, VSS Materials on Display at Dubai Fair**

After a representative of the Middle East Vegetarian Society saw our exhibition panels at the Asia Vegetarian Congress in Batam in November, she asked for copies to use as part of their upcoming exhibition at the Middle East Natural and Organic Products Expo 2009. We gladly complied. As the panels were sent via soft copy, there was no expense to VSS.





# Classes and Social Events

*For most of VSS's existence, most of our events involved taking part in events organised by larger, better resourced organisations. 2009 saw some change, as we took on the difficult, complicated task of organising more events on our own, as can be seen in the highlights and other sections of this Annual Report. The current section describes some of the classes and social events we organised.*



## **1 March, Shakib Gunn's Memorial Service**

Most social events are happy affairs, and despite our sadness at Shakib's all-to-early passing, the VSS members who gathered to celebrate his life couldn't help but smile on remembering his joyous and generous attitude towards life. VSS founding president, Allein Moore, delivered a moving set of remarks on behalf of VSS.

## **9 August, National Day Party**

Over 30 VSS members joined in their brightest reds and whites for a meaningful and unforgettable celebration on National Day at a generous member's beautiful residence in Tanjong Rhu. The programme included Laughter Yoga by jolly yogi, Bala, and lush harmonies from popular classical favourites performed by SMUSIC string quartet. After feasting on a delectable spread of yummy local delights specially prepared by Yuan Xiang, all took a stroll to nearby Marina for a resplendent view of the fireworks!



## **29 August, Members Meet Members Gathering**

In 2009, VSS saw a major membership surge, from hovering around 120-140 for many years to 300 in 2009. With so many new members, we saw a need to reach out to them. Thus was born the idea of MMM (Members Meet Members) events. Highlights of the first such evening included: a presentation on past, present and future VSS activities; a wide variety of tasty veg food; brief introductions by all; and a couple of ice-breaker games. VSS members need not be full-time vegetarians, and this was reflected in the diets of many of the new members, who are still experimenting with their food choices.







**26 September, 'Anyone Can Cook Vegetarian' Bilingual Cooking Class**

In 2009, VSS started a series of cooking classes to make it easier for people to eat less or no meat. The teachers for our first session were the bilingual Mr & Mrs Chng, who run a veg stall for Spore Technologies' staff. Of late, VSS members know them for the great veg food they have provided for VSS functions. Among the veg dishes taught and tasted were Chicken Rice, Salad and Herbal Soup.



**7 November, 'Anyone Can Cook Vegetarian'**

This instalment of our series of cooking classes featured guest chef Nazli Anwari. Nazli shared her knowledge of the healing power of herbs and how to combine herbs and other ingredients to create unique and tantalizing veg dishes. Among the dishes created and sampled were Mediterranean Digestive, Rujak and Gotu Kola Salad. Based on people's response, we definitely want to invite Nazli to do another class.



**12 December, 'Anyone Can Cook Vegetarian'**

Our final cooking class of 2009 was taught by the multi-talented Lila Evrard, whose talents include martial arts, dance and song. Lila focused on healthy yet delicious desserts, just the thing for the festive season and upcoming Valentines Day. Participants quickly surrendered to Lila's sweet creations and her short demonstration of Tahitian dance.







# In the Media

Interviews and forum page letters

*The media offer many ways to send our message to the public. Thus, we are constantly on the look out for opportunities, and in 2009, we succeeded in bringing our message to tv, radio and newspapers. Also, so-called 'new media', such as blogs, websites and online fora, offer more opportunities to be 'noisy vegetarians'.*

VSS Interviewed by I-S Magazine

VSS was interviewed for a special Green issue of I-S magazine due out on Friday, 17 April. Here's an excerpt from the VSS representative's responses.

*Most people think that being green is about recycling or taking the MRT instead of a car, and those are important and I do them myself, but most people are unaware or inactive about the huge role that meat plays in environmental devastation. Why do we have to make all those billions of innocent animals suffer when we can be healthier and greener without meat or at least by reducing our meat consumption?*



19 August

VSS was invited by Christine Hah, one of the producers at Bloomberg News, to be interviewed on Asia Confidential, which is broadcast internationally. The 10 min live interview touched on the connection between meat consumption and global warming, adequate nutrition, and how to be meat-free when travelling. Christine later revealed that i(they) had lots of responses actually, so obviously it touched a chord with (Bloomberg's) viewers.↑



20 December

VSS Executive Director for Education and Outreach, was quoted in the Lifestyle section of the *Sunday Times* on raw food.



1. The following letter was published in the ST online forum on 28 April 2009.

Title: A thing or two flying geese can teach man about cooperation

I REFER to last Saturday's article, 'Goose may vanish from dinner plates'. Yet again, bird flu rears its scary head, along with swine flu. Perhaps the deaths of humans and other animals will give us pause to rethink our food sources.

In the case of geese, rather than eat them, we might want to learn from the way they cooperate with one another. For instance, geese in nature fly in a 'V' formation. In this way, as they flap their wings, they create an uplift for those geese immediately behind them in the formation. As a result, the whole flock has a flying range that is at least 71 per cent further than that if each bird had flown alone.

Another example of cooperation among geese arises when members of the flock leave the formation because they fall ill or are shot by hunters. Should that occur, two other members of the formation accompany their flockmates to provide help and protection.

Of course, the geese we eat never have an opportunity to fly in magnificent formations. Like other animals raised to be food for humans, these geese are confined to crowded, unsanitary buildings. Such conditions promote disease among geese, chickens, pigs and other animals. Perhaps if we humans learn a lesson from geese and cooperate with other animals, such as geese and pigs, we may all enjoy healthier lives.



The following letter by a VSS Exco member appeared in The Straits Times online forum on 3 November 2009:

I REFER to Jeffrey Chan's letter, "Climate Change: What Singaporean can do" (Nov 2). Mr Chan suggests eating less food, and that may be a good idea for some of us. However, more important than how much we eat is what we eat. In particular, we need to reduce our meat consumption.

Last month, Lord Stern, lead author of the UK government's 'Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change', one of the most comprehensive reviews on the economics of climate change, stated, "Meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases. It puts enormous pressure on the world's resources. A vegetarian diet is better."

Lord Stern, former World Bank Chief Economist, likened meat eating to drink driving and forecast that as we learn about the environmental harm done by meat production, meat eating will become less socially acceptable.

The link between meat and global warming involves two overlapping factors. First, eating meat is inefficient because to produce just one kg of meat, we must feed many kgs of plant food to the animals whom we later eat. This means more forests cut to grow feed for these animals rather than food for humans. Yes, we need these forests to take in carbon dioxide.

The second meat-climate change link involves the gases released by the animals whom we eat as part of their digestive processes and from their manure. In particular, the gases methane and nitrous oxide contain much greater climate change power than does carbon dioxide.

Fortunately, in Singapore, we have access to a wide range of meatless foods at restaurants, food centres and markets. Furthermore, many non-vegetarian restaurants and stalls are happy to prepare meatless dishes upon request. Thus, every day, three times a day, we can each do our bit to reverse climate change.

The following letter by a VSS member appeared, in a slightly changed form, in 'my paper' of 21 Oct.

I refer to Kong Soon Wah's expose iBuying a fur coat? Watch this video first! (my paper, 19 Oct). Sadly, such horrible treatment is suffered not only by the fellow animals whom we use for fur but also those whom we use for food.

We are treating chickens, pigs and other non-human animals as if they were mere objects, when, in fact, they are intelligent, feeling fellow beings, as revealed by researchers who have studied them. Imagine, please, how we humans would feel if more intelligent beings from another planet took a liking to human flesh and treated us the way we treat chickens, fish, pigs and others.

This cruelty is graphically documented in videos by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), such as 'Meet Your Meat' - - and others of the growing number of organisations worldwide that are speaking up for defenceless animals. Warning: do not watch these videos just before you are planning to tuck into a meat dish; you may end up losing your appetite. Best to plan for a vegetarian meal after you finish viewing. Not only your stomach, but also your heart and mind, will thank you.



A VSS member had a letter in the 4 March issue of *My Paper*, p. A29.

We refer to the article "China, don't eat wild game" (*my paper*, Mar 3).

The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) is encouraging people in China to refrain from eating wild animals. We applaud DAB's stand and see it as part of a world-wide trend in which humans' are improving our treatment of our fellow animals.

For instance, in Europe, regulations have been enacted to improve the treatment of pigs and ducks. In Singapore, laws protect cats from abuse and prohibit the trafficking of endangered species.

A growing body of research shows that other animals are more like us than we used to think. Other animals use language and tools. They have feelings and intelligence.

Let us humans exercise our own feelings to show empathy for our fellow animals by not eating them. Let us display our own intelligence by developing even more healthy, tasty dishes that we can enjoy without having to kill other animals, be they wild or domesticated.



### Letter Appears in The Sunday Times

A VSS Exco member published the following letter in *The Sunday Times* of 20 Dec.



#### Giving Up Meat Can Have Many Benefits

I refer to Mr Wu Guanglong's letter, "Eat less meat? Leave it to consumers" (Dec 13).

While agreeing that meat production harms the environment, Mr Wu questions the wisdom of a campaign to spur people to eat less meat. Three of the arguments Mr Wu makes are: (1) meat production provides vital income to the people involved in this sphere of economic activity; (2) meat prices might increase if consumption falls; and (3) meat consumption provides enjoyment. I would like to raise counter arguments to these three points.

One, yes, meat production does provide livelihoods for many people, but so does the production of tobacco, yet society promotes voluntary reduction in the consumption of tobacco products. As meat consumption declines, consumption of plant based foods can increase. People currently involved in meat production can be helped to shift to production of more environmentally friendly foods.

Two, as to possible increases in the price of meat, perhaps higher meat prices would be in society's best interest. Society pays a steep price for meat consumption due to the environment damage such production causes, but the costs of this damage are not reflected in the price of meat. Nor does the price of meat include the costs of the health problems arising from humankind's increased meat consumption, such as higher rates of heart disease and diabetes. Thus, just as higher cigarette prices benefit society by encouraging voluntary reduction in smoking, so too might higher meat prices provide a net benefit to society.

Finally, what about the pleasure people derive from tucking into a juicy burger, a tasty chicken breast or a hearty bowl of bah ku teh? For about half my life, I too enjoyed eating meat every day, but I gradually reduced my meat consumption when I realized the consequences, just as many people have given up or cut down on cigarettes because of the harm cigarette smoking causes to themselves and others. Fortunately, after giving up meat, I found so many other greener, healthier foods to savour. Thus, reducing meat was not reducing enjoyment; it was finding that same enjoyment in other foods.

In the same paper, in the first section, there's a letter titled 'Giving up meat can have many benefits', written by a VSS Exco member.



### Letter to the Forum Page on World Hunger

A VSS Exco member sent the following letter to *The Straits Times* forum page.

I refer to 'Save the hungry, give one euro a week' in the Straits Times of 15 November, 2009 and "Gearing up for the end of cheap food" in the Straits Times of 14 November, 2009. As these pieces point out, the situation is indeed urgent with approximately one billion people without enough to eat.

In addition to donating money, as proposed by the World Food Programme, we can also address world hunger by changing our diets, because what we eat strongly impacts the world's food supply. When we eat one kg of meat, we are actually eating many kgs of plant food, the plant food fed to the animals on our plates.

In fact, there is already more than enough food to feed everyone, if some of that food were not diverted to become feed for meat production. Estimates of how many kgs of plant food are required to produce one kg of meat vary widely, but certainly chickens, pigs, etc. are not going to gain one kg of weight for every one kg of plant food they eat.

The point is that we who can afford to eat meat regularly make a choice each time we have a meal. Will I eat food that comes directly from the earth, nurtured by the sun's energy, or will I eat indirectly by eating animals fed plant foods? It's not just a lifestyle decision; it's not just about what tastes best. It's also about freeing resources to feed our fellow humans.



A VSS member sent the following letter to Today newspaper..

I refer to 'Gracious, really? 90 per cent of Singaporeans think so', (March 12) and the reply by Mr Rick Lim Say Kong (March 16).

Perhaps we need an expanded definition of graciousness. Gandhi wrote that a nation's "moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated". These non-human animals are the weakest among us. They cannot speak for themselves; they depend on us to protect them. Is not the strong caring for the weak a key component of graciousness?

Fortunately, Singapore's track record in regard to the treatment of our fellow animals displays many positives and shows promise of further improvement. For example, local organizations such as Acres, Cat Welfare Society, Action for Singapore Dogs, House Rabbit Society, Animal Lovers League and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals demonstrate people's commitment to treating our fellow animals properly.

In terms of legal protection for other animals, laws are in place in Singapore and being enforced to stop the trafficking of wild animals, such as turtles, and the harming of domestic animals, such as cats.

While we still have room for improvement in how we treat domestic and wild animals, our treatment of factory farmed animals, such as chickens and pigs, stands out as the area where our graciousness towards other animals needs the most improvement. Worldwide, humans consume more than 50 billion land animals annually, and in Singapore we consume millions. Whether these helpless creatures are raised and killed here does not matter; our dollars make it happen.

The large majority of these animals live short, miserable lives confined from birth in cramped unnatural conditions. For instance, the typical chicken lives but six weeks, seldom seeing the sun, squeezed into a space about the size of an A4 piece of paper.

However, even in the area of meat eating, Singapore shines compared to the majority of the world's countries. With approximately 4.5 million people, we boast about 400 dedicated vegetarian restaurants and stalls, with vegetarian options available at many non-vegetarian eateries.

Furthermore, my unscientific observation is that more people here are eating less meat. Recently, a medical doctor told me that she is eating less meat and dairy because of their effect on global warming, and a professor told me that he eats less meat due to his revulsion over the treatment of factory farmed animals.

Therefore, as to our treatment of our fellow animals, it does seem that Singapore already does relatively well and has the potential to continue as a model for other countries.



### Influenza A H1N1 – Letter to the Forum Page

For more on H1N1 Influenza (the disease formerly known as 'swine flu') see the links further below in this issue of the VSS eNewsletter. Here's a letter that a VSS member sent to TODAY newspaper. It seems that the letter was not published.



I REFER to 'When Meat Really Is Murder' (April 29). This article highlights the harm done by factory farming of pigs and other animals. Factory farming refers to the modern and rapidly spreading practice of raising animals in buildings similar to the factories in which we produce objects such as watches or plastic furniture.

These factory farms reduce the cost of meat by providing the highest output at the lowest cost via machinery, biotechnology, global trade, and economies of scale. However, by confining thousands of animals in one building, factory farms create a breeding ground for pandemic diseases, such as swine flu and avian flu. In a vain attempt to combat such diseases, antibiotics must be used on a large scale. In fact, one expert estimates that livestock production accounts for 50% of U.S. antibiotics use.

Factory farms also damage the environment. For instance, the involuntarily confined animals produce huge amounts of manure and other wastes which foul the air and water. This waste also emits methane and nitrous oxide, two greenhouse gases more potent than carbon dioxide.

But perhaps the most important reason to end factory farming lies not in the danger of pandemics or in the damage to the environment, but in the living hell suffered by our blameless fellow animals trapped on factory farms and deprived of the social and physical characteristics of a natural life. Recent research is documenting that other mammals, such as pigs and cows, and even birds, such as chickens, have the capacity to think and feel. (See, for example, the March, 2008 issue of *National Geographic*.) Indeed, they are not objects to be produced by us in factories.

We can reduce the threat of pandemics and show kindness towards other animals by moving away from factory farming, reducing our consumption of meat, and enjoying more fruits, vegetables and other plant foods.

## Letters to ST Forum about JB Factory Farm

Last week, *The Straits Times* had an article about a factory farm in JB. Two VSS wrote in response. One of their letters was published in the newspaper's online edition. Here it is, followed by the unpublished letter.

1. Why do we espouse kindness to animals and yet eat them anyway? Your caption "Chicken with Cushy Lives" (ST, 9 September 09) embodies such irony.

No amount of air-conditioning, pricey herb-feeds, mood lightings and Mozart can ever compensate for the pain and suffering a chicken, or any animal for that matter, undergoes when being slaughtered. The plight of chickens which are bred in captivity for the sole purpose of being eventually slaughtered, begins from as early as when they are chicks. They have to be de-beaked and have their wings clipped – to prevent them from inflicting injury to their fellow inhabitants. Chickens bred in factory farms – the very type depicted in your pictorial - suffer cramped living conditions and endemic diseases. They are administered powerful cocktails of steroids and antibiotics engineered to accelerate growth to shorten their lives to hasten their harvest. While the antibiotics suppress disease amongst the animals, their use leads to the emergence of newer and more powerful strains of antibiotic resistant bacteria which are more than ever, able to transcend the animal human borders.

Feeds fortified by Cordyceps and cultured lactobacillus underscore the inefficiencies of meat sources of food. A lifetime of fortified fowl feed – being anywhere from 4 to 9 weeks, translates to only a few days worth of human meals without any assurance that such fowl feed fortification passes on greater nutrition down the food chain. If such nutrients can withstand the rigours of slaughter and cooking, just imagine the avian virus and other contaminants that must be surviving the transition equally well!

Expending land, water, nutrients and energy for lighting and music on animals means less of such limited resources are available for man's own benefit. Why not deploy these directly for mankind instead, to optimise them while reducing methane, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and waste by-products which poison water supplies and necessitate expensive treatment plants.

Doing good to animals is great. Isn't it better that we first did them no harm?

2. Here's the unpublished letter:



I refer to "Fed pricey herb, to strains of Mozart" ST (Sep 9). Expensive food and nice music do not compensate chickens for a completely unnatural life in what effectively is a prison, followed by execution despite no crime being committed. We are treating chickens as if they were mere objects, when they are intelligent, feeling fellow beings, as revealed by researchers who have studied them. Imagine please how we would feel if more intelligent beings from another planet took a liking to human flesh and treated us the way we treat chickens. Would healthy food and Mozart make it okay?



## GW Letter in ST Online Forum

VSS published the following letter in *The Straits Times* online forum on 3 Dec. Let's write to the media, including blogs and other new media, to make a lot of noise in hopes of influencing the Sg government and others to put meat reduction front and centre on the agenda of the **Copenhagen Climate Change conference. Here's the VSS letter:**

### Boost health, slow global warming with Eat Green days

I REFER to Tuesday's report, 'Eat less meat for the green cause', a table talk with Dr Rajendra Kumar Pachauri.

Dr Pachauri was instrumental in the establishment of Veggie Thursdays in Ghent, Belgium earlier this year as a way for people to voluntarily cut their global warming impact. Similar days have been started elsewhere, including in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

This week, Dr Pachauri and Sir Paul McCartney are addressing the European Parliament with the 'Less meat = less heat' message, calling on mayors and other policymakers to follow Ghent and Sao Paulo's example.

Here in Singapore, the National University of Singapore (NUS) has taken the lead with Meatless Thursdays, a voluntary campaign endorsed by the university president, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, and led by an NUS environmental organisation, Save (Students Against Violation of the Earth).

Perhaps other educational institutions, organisations, businesses, as well as families and even individuals would like to start such weekly Eat Green days.

Not only would we slow global warming, we may also boost our health by adding more fibre and antioxidants to our diet.





**Financial Report** Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2009

for the period  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2009  
to  
31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2009

<b>Assets</b>		
Property & Equipment		
Equipment	499.00	
Total Property & Equipment		499.00
Current Assets		
Cash On Hand	82,572.28	
Pledges Receivable	1,055.98	
Inventory	1,247.77	
Total Current Assets		84,876.03
Other Assets		
Deposits	70.00	
Total Other Assets		70.00
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>85,445.03</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Payroll Liabilities	4,131.00	
Other Current Liabilities	2,449.25	
Total Current Liabilities		6,580.25
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>6,580.25</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>78,864.78</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Prior Year's Surplus/Deficit	55,282.00	
Current Year Surplus/Deficit	23,582.78	
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>78,864.78</b>

  
Honorary Treasurer  
Amelia Wong


  
Auditor  
Allein Moore

  
Auditor  
Neil Madhvani

**Financial Report** Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 December 2009

for the period  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2009  
to  
31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2009

	\$	%
<b>Income</b>		
Donations in Cash	76,443.47	55.1%
Programme Fees	26,244.74	18.9%
Membership Fees	11,640.00	8.4%
Sales of Work	8,597.73	6.2%
Advertising Income	13,026.00	9.4%
Freight Collected	187.88	0.1%
Miscellaneous Income	2,609.40	1.9%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>138,749.22</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employment Expenses		
Salaries	28,800.00	20.8%
Bonuses	4,000.00	2.9%
CPF Contribution	4,761.00	3.4%
Skills Development Levy	49.50	0.0%
<b>Total Employment Expenses</b>	<b>37,610.50</b>	<b>27.1%</b>
Rental		
Rental of Equipment	347.75	0.3%
Rental of Rooms	10,399.53	7.5%
<b>Total Rental</b>	<b>10,747.28</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
Supplies and Materials	7,847.72	5.7%
Transport	1,269.45	0.9%
Communications	1,112.32	0.8%
Professional Fees	11,757.62	8.5%
Public Education	43,428.67	31.3%
Volunteer Development	99.51	0.1%
Bank Charges	319.93	0.2%
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	447.00	0.3%
Equipment Maintenance	526.44	0.4%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>115,166.44</b>	<b>83.0%</b>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>23,582.78</b>	<b>17.0%</b>

  
Honorary Treasurer  
Amelia Wong

  
Auditor  
Allein Moore

  
Auditor  
Neil Madhvani