

ANNUAL REPORT

2012

President's Address

On behalf of the VSS Exco, I would like to thank everyone for attending today's AGM and for your past and future participation in VSS activities. I would especially like to thank Mr Gangasudhan for preparing this Annual Report and for editing the VSS eNewsletter.

2012 was yet another year in which the arguments for vegetarianism grew stronger, with new evidence arising of the benefits to health of plant based diets, of the environmental destruction caused by the production of animal based foods, and of the intelligence and emotions of the billions of fellow animals who yearn for the natural lives they will enjoy as VSS and like minded people and organisations enjoy greater success.

As you can see by comparing the 2012 Annual Report with Annual Reports from previous years, VSS's activity level has declined. Fortunately, a new leadership team has stepped forward, led by Mr Clarence Tan and Mr Navaneethan Neminathan. Both Clarence and Nava have many years of experience promoting vegetarianism. Their creative ideas and steadfast vision will serve our mission well. I ask you to support them.



I have been honoured to serve as VSS president since 2003. I am very proud to have done so, and I will continue to promote vegetarianism via VSS and other means. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we strive to make our planet a better place for all, thank you.

George M Jacobs (PhD), President Vegetarian Society (Singapore)

CONTENTS

Minutes of 13th AGM	02	
Education Initiatives		06
Public Outreach		08
Letters to the Press		16
Financial Report	26	

Vegetarian Society (Singapore)
3 Pemimpin Drive, #07-02, Lip Hing Building,
Singapore 576147 (correspondence only)
www.vegetarian-society.org | info@vegetarian-society.org

Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday, 13 March 2012

Time: 3.30pm to 6.30pm

Venue: Kampung Senang Holistic Lifestyle Centre,

Blk 106 Aljunied Crescent #01-205,

Singapore 380106

Number of members present: 26 Number of observers/non-members: 10

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

1.1 Dr. George Jacobs, VSS President, took the chair, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the 13th Annual VSS AGM.

TO RECEIVE & ADOPT MINUTES OF THE 12th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 2.1 Dr. Jacobs asked everyone to look through the minutes of the 12th VSS AGM.
- 2.2 Ms. Violet Lee Yong Hoe moved that the minutes be accepted, and Mr. Alvin Lee Thiam Siew seconded. The minutes of the 12th AGM were received and adopted unanimously.

TO RECEIVE & ADOPT THE 2011 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 3.1 Dr. Jacobs invited everyone to go through the 2011 Annual Report and welcomed any questions, comments, suggestions and disagreements. The report had taken a soft copy format emailed to members. Hard copies were handed out to attendees.
- 3.2 Dr. Jacobs opened the floor for members to accept and adopt the Annual Report.
- 3.3 Mr. Arumugam Sivakumar proposed that the Annual Report be accepted and Ms. Nita Doshi seconded. The Annual Report was adopted unanimously with none opposing and no abstentions.

TO RECEIVE & ADOPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2011

- 4.1 Dr. Jacobs invited gueries and comments on the VSS 2011 Financial Report.
- 4.2 Mr. Yoon Peng Soon enquired about what made up the professional fees, and Mr. Navaneethan Neminathan, VSS Treasurer, clarified that professional fees included fees for the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Esselstyn, who gave a series of talks and met with the Minister of Health and his team of cardiologists.

- 4.3 With no further questions on the finances, Dr. Jacobs invited members to receive and adopt the financial report.
- 4.4 Mr. Edmond Chua proposed that the Financial Report be adopted. Mr. Arumugam Sivakumar seconded. The Financial Report was adopted unanimously with no opposition.

TO ELECT TWO HONORARY AUDITORS FOR THE YEAR 2012

5.1. Dr. Jacobs explained the roles of the Honorary Auditors and thanked Mr. Chandra Shekar and Mr. Low Chip Khoon, the Honorary Auditors for 2011, for their work. He then invited members present to stand as the coming year's auditors. Mr. Arumugam Sivakumar and Mr. Yoon Peng Soon volunteered. They were elected unanimously, with no opposition and no abstentions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 The Chairperson invited ideas from the audience on what VSS can do in 2012.
- 6.2 Mr. Low Zheng Yong suggested that VSS explore participating in "Buy Nothing Day".
- 6.3 Mr. Low Chip Khoon suggested that VSS organise public movie screenings of educational films such as "Forks Over Knives", and "Food, Inc.".
- 8.5 Mr. Clarence Tan shared VSS's plan to advertise at the platforms of the Mass Rapid Transit System. This project is still at the planning stage, and is likely to materialise in 2013.
- 8.6 Ms. Violet Lee Yong Hoe suggested that VSS advertise at hawker centres.
- 8.7 Dr Jacobs explained that Veggie Thursday is one of VSS's three priorities for 2012, the other two being the MRT advertisements and the VSS publications. He encouraged everyone to attend the World Water Day dinner that Veggie Thursday was planning for 22 March, 2012.
- 8.8 Dr. Jacobs thanked everyone for their presence and participation. Dr. Jacobs then declared the AGM closed at 5:24pm. The President invited all to stay for a healthy dinner prepared by Kampung Senang.

Recorded By

Lau Wen Jin Ordinary Member Vetted & Confirmed By

George M Jacob President



For the year in review, the VSS continued to build on its strong ties with educators and academic institutions to impart knowledge and share information with today's youth - who are tomorrow's leaders.

Through talks, food demonstrations and other engagement activities and projects, the Health and Environmental Arguments were presented alongside some elements of the Kindness Argument.

As illustrated by the invitations that continue to be received by the Society, these outreach initiatives undertaken in 2012 continue to be well received.



Save the Day! Don't throw it away! Recycle

06-08 February Nanyang Technological University

The VSS was invited back to participate in the *Earth Awareness Campaign* exhibition at NTU, organised by the *Earthlink* student group. Vegetarianism was a key theme for the exhibition, which included the nutrition flyer, *Love Us, Not Eat Us* sticker, *Meatless in Singapore* brochure, an array of colourful, informative posters, the starving child statue, and an assortment of impactful videos.

28 February Zhonghua Primary School

The VSS was invited to address the eager students of Zhonghua Primary School during an assembly talk where the issues of kindness and compassion were raised.



09 May Republic Polytechnic

Into its fifth installment, the VSS delivered its annual talk at RP to a fully-packed lecture theatrewith students even sitting on the stairs, explaining the many benefits of eating less or no meat, and countering the various reasons for continuing to eat a diet high in animal-based foods.

06 September Singapore Management University

The VSS was invited to participate in a forum organised by the SMU student green group, SMU Verts.

16 September Overseas Talk

The VSS was invited to present on the issues of vegetarianism and the environment at a school in Bintan.



26 September Raffles Institution

The VSS was among the guests at a research fair at Raffles Institution, where student groups - including groups mentored by VSS - presented on their projects.

24 October James Cook University

The VSS was invited to conduct a cooking demo at James Cook University to promote its cookbook.





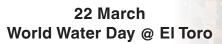


03 March Annual General Meeting

Meeting familar faces and exchanging plenty of fresh ideas, the occasion was once again a meanigful and enriching experience.

14 April Jane Goodall Event @ Botanic Gardens

The VSS was in attendance at the public screening of 'Jane's Journey' - a documentary about Jane Goodall and distributed literature on meat reduction and climate change.



The VSS helped to organise an event in celebration of World Water Day at El Toro restaurant in cooperation with PUB.



08 May Morrissey Concert

VSS volunteers had the privilege to spread the salient message of reducing meat consumption while getting to see Morrissey perform live.



The VSS was invited to take up a booth at Jurong Point alongside a few members of the veg business community to raise awareness of Earth Day.

29 June Jason Mraz Concert

VSS volunteers had the privilege to spread the salient message of reducing meat consumption while getting to see Jason Mraz perform live.



29-30 September Launch of VSS Recipe Book

The VSS officially launched 'The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook' in collaboration with Healthfriend at the World Heart Day event organised by the Singapore Heart Foundation at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza.



13 October Cookbook Event @ Doodle Restaurant

The VSS organised a launch event for 'The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook' in collaboration with Doodle restaurant that included healthy food, speeches and screening of a documentary.



01 October World Vegetarian Day @ Eight Treasures

The VSS was once again invited to give a presentation on reducing meat consumption at the annual event at Eight Treasures restaurant to commemorate World Vegetarian Day.



20 October VSS Talk @ The Veg School

The VSS was invited to give a presentation about its work to students attending a class at The Veg School held at Hort Park.

06 October Cookbook Signing @ Select Books

The authors of the 'The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook' were present at Select Books to autograph copies for readers.





22 October Appearance on KISS Radio

The VSS appeared on KISS radio station to promote The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook'.

10 November **Heart Health Talk**

The VSS gave a presentation on Heart Health at Toa Payoh Public Library.



17 November Cookbook Signing @ Kinokuniya

The authors of the 'The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook' were present at Kinokuniya Ngee Ann City to autograph copies for readers.



Hotel 29 November Talk for Seniors

The VSS gave a talk to seniors at Best Western Hotel on Carpenter Street on the various reasons to eat more plant food.

02 December **Hong Lim Park**

VSS volunteers participated in a memorial organised by ACRES for the dolphin called Wen-Wen, who died in captivity at Resorts World Sentosa.



08 December Veg Meetup @ Doodle!

The VSS was invited to promote 'The Heart Smart Oil Free Cookbook' at the Singapore Vegetarian Meetup dinner at Doodle! restaurant.



23-25 November **Southeast Asia Veg Congress**

The VSS was represented at the Southeast Asia Vegetarian Congress in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and a talk was presented (note: VSS representatives are in no way subsidised by VSS).

23 December **Christmas Dinner @ Loving Hut Suntec City**

The VSS helped to organise a vegan Christmas Dinner gathering at Loving Hut restaurant at Suntec City where Mediacorp TV did interviews in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil, which appeared in various news programmes showcasing the vegetarian diet during festive occasions.

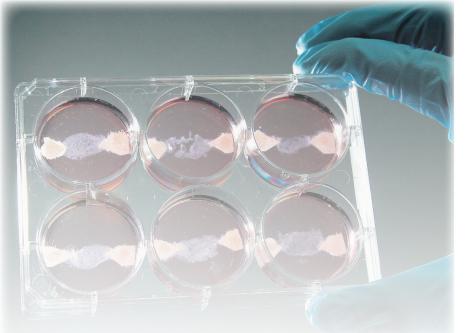


14 ~ VSS AR2012

Being Heard

Correspondingly, several letters were submitted to the major news outlets in Singapore and some of these appeared in both the print and online mediums.

In the year of review, the profile of the VSS continued to gain prominence in the mainstream media and enabled the Society to further its awareness goals. Media representatives continued to seek the opinion of the VSS on a multitude of issues and trends and our voice was heard through several articles that appeared in the press.



Stem Cell Meat May End Suffering (letter submitted to the press in February)

I refer to the article, "Stem cell' meat burger, anyone?" Straits Times (Feb 21, 2012).

I stopped eating meat more than thirty years ago, and I have no desire to begin consuming it again, regardless of whether that meat is produced from stem cells or from living animals. However, I wish stem cell meat success and would encourage its consumption by those who wish to eat meat.

The most important advantage of stem cell meat would be an end to the killing of animals. For example, just for consumption in Singapore, more than 100,000 chickens must be killed daily, and the worldwide total goes beyond 40 billion chickens each year. These poor creatures typically live only about six weeks, and in crowded, unnatural conditions.

Given we humans' ability to make wonderful scientific advances, such as stem cell meat, let's hope that the day quickly arrives when we can feed ourselves without causing suffering for the other animals with whom we should share the planet.

The Perils of Hidden Water in Food

(letter submitted to the press in March)

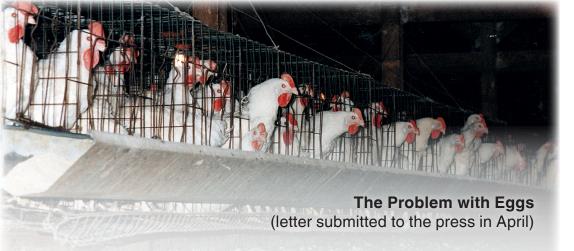
March 22 is World Water Day. This year, the UN's theme for the Day is Water and Food Security, and a key point is 'the hidden water in food'.

Hidden water in food refers to the fact that it takes a large amount of water to produce food. Indeed, according to the UN, while we drink about two litres of water a day, about 2000 litres are needed to produce the food we eat in one day. Indeed, most of the water we use each day is embedded in the food we eat (http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/downloads/WWD2012_BROCHURE_EN.pdf).

Fortunately, we can reduce the amount of hidden water in our food by reducing our consumption of animal based foods. In a recent paper, researchers Mesfin M. Mekonnen and Arjen Y. Hoekstra of the University of Twente, Netherlands conclude, "It is more water-efficient to obtain calories, protein and fat through crop products than animal products" (http://www.waterfootprint.org/Reports/Mekonnen-Hoekstra-2012-WaterFootprintFarmAnimalProducts.pdf).

Why do animal foods have larger water footprints than plant foods? Two main reasons are:

- 1. Animals need to eat a lot of feed to produce meat, eggs, cheese, etc. The Dutch researchers state, "Most of the water use along the supply chain of animal products takes place in the growing of feed. ... The unfavourable feed conversion efficiency for animal products is largely responsible for the relatively large water footprint of animal products compared to the crop products".
- 2. Animals produce manure and other waste that pollutes water, rendering it undrinkable, without major treatment. For instance, researchers at Ohio State University (USA) estimate that for chickens, "the weight of fresh manure output is about 115 percent of the total dry feed intake" (http://ohioline.osu.edu/b804/804_3.html).



I refer to 'An egg a day keeps the doctor away?", Straits Times, April 1, 2012. The article includes a photo of caged chickens. This photo suggests another reason, in addition to possible heart problems, for avoiding eggs.

These days, the eggs in our markets increasingly come from CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations), also known as factory farms. Economic efficiency rules the day in these facilities. Thus, the caged hens on factory farms are treated as mere egg machines, despite scientific evidence that hens are, like humans, thinking beings who feel emotions and crave social ties.

Factory farms can contain tens of thousands of hens, confined in windowless sheds. There, the hens endure confinement in cages in which the space allotted to each hen is less than the size of an A4 piece of paper. Hens' natural behaviours, such as spreading their wings and building nests for their children become impossible. Because such crowded conditions breed disease, the hens are fed food laced with antibiotics.

To increase production, the egg industry uses forced molting, which involves starving hens for more than a week in order to trigger another cycle of egg laying. Then, after about two years, when hens' egg production permanently declines, they are sent for slaughter.

Why cause all this suffering for our fellow animals when modern research provides evidence that we can obtain all the nutrition we need from a plant based diet? Indeed, the Health Promotion Board's (HPB) website states, "The good news is that there is evidence that a well-balanced and healthy vegetarian diet is associated with a lower Body Mass Index (BMI), lower blood cholesterol levels and reduced risk of death from heart disease".

Kindness, Not Health, is the Stronger Reason

(letter submitted to the press in August)

I refer to "Baby boomers, beware of going vegetarian" (ST, August 18). Marta Zaraska cites the increasing popularity of vegetarian diets in response to links between meat diets and such health problems as high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

Zaraska then cautions that baby boomers need to plan their diets carefully if they choose to move away from meat. As a baby boomer (60 years old) who has been vegetarian for 30+ years and vegan for most of the last 10 years, I agree that vegetarians do need to pay attention to nutrients such as protein, calcium and B12.

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) also advocates planned diets, for vegetarians and everyone else. The ADA's 2009 paper on vegetarian (including vegan) diets states, "Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and for athletes".

Fortunately, planning a healthful plant based diet is easy, quick and inexpensive. With the exception of B12, we can obtain all the necessary nutrients while enjoying a range of delicious, widely available plant foods. For instance, calcium is found in sesame seeds, almonds, bok choy, broccoli, lady's finger, tempeh and tofu. Also, some foods are fortified with nutrients such as calcium and B12, and supplements are widely available.

As to protein, when young, we baby boomers were taught that animal based foods were our only protein source. We now know that protein is also found in many plant foods, including beans, grains, nuts and seeds.

To me, however, the most powerful reason for eating only plant based foods concerns not health but kindness towards our fellow animals. In my lifetime, a major change has taken place in how animal foods reach our tables. We live now in the era of the factory farm, where animals, even fishes, are crowded together in unnatural conditions during their increasingly short lives (chickens live only six weeks). I'm happy to spend a little time planning my diet so that I can avoid participation in this cruel system of food supply and so that I can instead support a kinder way of eating.

20 ~ VSS AR2012 VSS AR2012 ~ **21**

Protect All Animals

(letter submitted to the press in September)

Andy Ho (Let's talk about animal welfare, ST, 14 Sep) reports that electronic consultation is being held through 5 October by the Animal Welfare Legislation Review Committee, chaired by Mr Yeo Guat Kwant, an MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC.

Discussions of animal welfare are often confined to those animals whom we keep as pets. Dr Ho expands the discussion of animal welfare legislation to animals whom



are used to produce food for humans. Vegetarian Society (Singapore) urges that Singapore consider extending legal protections to these animals, as is being done in some other advanced countries.

To satisfy the Singapore market for meat just for one day, more than 100,000 animals are killed. Many of these fellow animals are raised in facilities known as Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in Singapore and elsewhere. At these facilities, the main question asked is: How can we produce the most meat in the least time at the lowest cost? For example, at a CAFO, chickens raised for meat are slaughtered at only six weeks of age, compared to living potentially 2-3 years in nature.

Conditions are barely better for those animals who produce dairy products and eggs. Cows are repeatedly artificially inseminated to raise their milk production, but their calves are taken away from them, because calves compete for the milk. As Dr Ho notes, battery cages are the round-the-clock homes of the hens who produce the 100s of millions of eggs consumed here.

Fortunately, changes are taking place. For instance, European Union countries recognise farmed animals as being capable of feeling pain and suffering. Landmark agreements in Europe have outlawed battery cages for egg-laying hens and sow stalls for pigs. In Singapore, by participating in the current consultations on animal welfare legislation, we all can bring closer the day when similar protections lessen the suffering of the animals responsible for much of the food we eat.

Don't Use 'It' On Animals

(letter submitted to the press in November)

I would like to call attention to a seemingly minor matter in the article, "RWS dolphin dies on flight" Straits Times (Nov 23, 2012, A8). Although the dolphin is named is the article as Wen Wen, and the article identifies Wen Wen as a male, elsewhere in the article, he is referred to as "it", for example, "it received emergency treatment".

I contend that the use of "it" rather than "he" is emblematic of a view that sees non-human animals as objects for humans to use as we see fit. In the case of the dolphins, this means they can be captured from the wild, separated from their

> families, confined against their will and trained to perform what to them are unnatural acts. Other animals, such as chickens, suffer similar or perhaps worse fates at our hands.



However, dolphins and chickens are not unthinking, unfeeling objects. Modern science has established that even birds, not to mention mammals, such as dolphins, possess

intelligence, enjoy social relations, have emotions and suffer pain.

We need to align the words we use with our modern understanding that our fellow animals are sentient beings. Already, Singapore has made significant improvements in the way we treat other animals, such as greater protection of pets and greater penalties for those who engage in the trade of protected species. If, when possible, we use "she" or "he" rather than "it" when referring to other animals, this minor change might help us further improve our treatment of the animals with whom we share the planet.

22 ~ VSS AR2012 VSS AR2012 ~ **23**

Battling Vegetarian Setreotypes

(letter submitted to the press in November)

Singapore is home to 500+ vegetarian outlets, and many non-veg eateries offer a growing variety of veg options. Unfortunately, stereotypes discourage people from enjoying veggie food. Here are two of these stereotypes: (1) only people of certain religions eat veggie food; (2) being vegetarian is an either/or situation.



The first stereotype is that vegetarianism is the sole possession of certain religions. Back in the 1990s, when I would tell people I was a vegetarian, the typical response was, "Oh, are you a Buddhist or a Hindu?" BTW, I'm neither Buddhist nor Hindu, although my non-vegetarian wife is Buddhist.

Three secular reasons for eating veggie are boosting our health, protecting the environment and showing kindness to our fellow animals. Health seems to have been the first secular reason to reach public consciousness. Thus, upon hearing that I was vegetarian, people's question became, "Oh, is it because of religion or for health?" More recently, more people have become aware of the environmental rationale for eating fewer or no animal based foods.

Actually, my main reason for choosing to eat plant foods is kindness. We don't need foods from animals to be healthy; so, why not leave the animals alone? Fortunately, awareness is growing of the suffering endemic in the raising of animals for food. For example, in the past year, three students, one each from SMU, NTU and NUS, have interned with VSS, Vegetarian Society (Singapore). For each, even the intern who was not (and still is not) a vegetarian, the kindness reason was paramount.

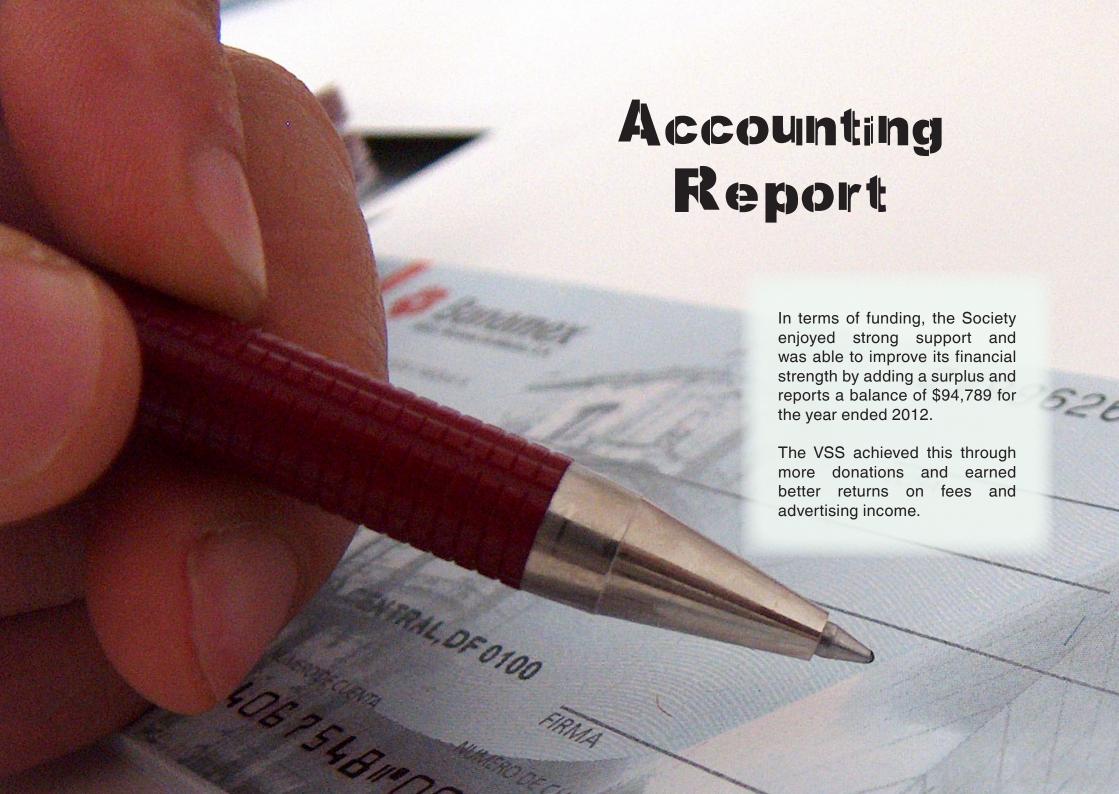
Furthermore, people are linking concern for pets and wild animals with concern for the non human animals whom we eat. For instance, in 2011, SPCA asked VSS to do a talk on factory farming to a gathering of students which they had organised.

A major implication of the understanding that people of any religion can eat vegetarian is an idea gaining favour worldwide: eating plant based food one day a week. In SG, we call it Veggie Thursday: www.veggiethursday.sg.

Veggie Thursday also addresses a second stereotype about vegetarianism, that vegetarianism is an either/or situation. Indeed, maybe it is better not to think of people as vegetarian or not vegetarian and instead to think of meals as vegetarian or not vegetarian. Indeed, maybe vegetarianism is better seen as a continuum, with people choosing to be anywhere along that continuum, as well as to change where they are, as they make conscious choices about what to eat.

The need to increase our consumption of plant foods has never been greater, as diseases linked to high meat consumption, such as heart disease, Type II diabetes and obesity, are on the rise. We also need to consume more plant foods as a way to slow climate change, and to reduce the growing number of animals eaten for food. This is why we need to overcome stereotypes about adding more veggies to our diet. We need to understand that times have changed and that today's vegetarianism is not our parents' vegetarianism.

24 ~ vss ar2012 vss ar2012 vss ar2012 ~ 25



Financial Report

for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2012

Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 December 2012

			Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2012		
	\$	%			
Income					
Donations in Cash	22,428.30	57.3%	Assets		
Sponsorships	5,000.00	12.8%	Current Assets		
Membership Fees	7,310.00	18.7%		05 024 02	
Sales of Work	3,583.82	9.2%	Cash On Hand	95,021.03	
Advertising Income	786.00	2.0%	Inventory	1,638.61	00.050.04
Total Income	39,108.12	100.0%	Total Current Assets		96,659.64
	<u> </u>		Total Assets		96,659.64
Expenses			Habiliata.		
Employment Expenses			Liabilities		
Salaries	7,200.00	18.4%	Current Liabilities	4.070.63	
CPF Contribution	1,152.00	2.9%	Other Current Liabilities	1,870.62	4.070.62
Skills Development Levy	16.00	0.0%	Total Current Liabilities		1,870.62
Total Employment Expenses	8,368.00	21.4%	Total Liabilities		1,870.62
Rental of Equipment	15.00	0.0%			04 700 00
Rental of Rooms	135.00	0.3%	Net Assets		94,789.02
Supplies and Materials	4,719.63	12.1%			
Transport	278.87	0.7%			
Communications	1,376.58	3.5%			
Professional Fees	8,200.00	21.0%			
Public Education	7,909.92	20.2%			
Bank Charges	536.40	1.4%	Equity		
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	25.67	0.1%	Prior Year's Surplus/Deficit	88,245.97	
Bad Debts	1,000.00	2.6%	Current Year Surplus/Deficit	6,543.05	
Total Expenses	32,565.07	83.3%	Total Equity		94,789.02
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	6,543.05	16.7%			,

Honorary Treasurer Navaneethan Neminathan

Auditor Peng Soon Yoon Auditor Sivakumar Arumugam

Honorary Treasurer Navaneethan Neminathan

Auditor Peng Soon Yoon Auditor Sivakumar Arumugam