

Tofu or turkey?

Thanksgiving causes some students to look the other way

by Libe Goad
THE BATTALION

Paul and Linda McCartney face the same question that vegetarians do when they head home over Thanksgiving break — What do you eat for Thanksgiving dinner when you don't eat meat?

The McCartneys offer their meatless suggestions through Linda's two vegetarian cookbooks and as cartoon vegetarian advocates on *The Simpsons*.

Students answer the same question to overcoming traditional Thanksgiving meat-eating, some facing acceptance and others the pressure to conform.

Jason Graeber, a senior journalism major and a former vegetarian, said he found that avoiding meat on Thanksgiving made for an uncomfortable situation.

"It was a ridiculous thing for some of my cousins," Graeber said, "and my parents were kind of embarrassed for me."

Despite the commentary on his diet, Graeber tried to avoid making a scene over his meatless convictions.

"You be as quiet as you can so you wouldn't draw attention to the fact that you're not eating meat," he said. "Plus, it's Thanksgiving in the butt to explain to everyone why you are not eating meat."

Graeber stuck to his vegetable diet that year, feasting on bean and mushroom casserole, dressing with broth and cranberry sauce. He said his family did not notice what he put on his plate and, in the end, it was Thanksgiving as usual.

"We still sat down to watch the football game," he said.

Others face similar pressures during holiday meals and push aside their vegetarian ways to forgo family questioning.

Karen Grazziadio, a Blinn College nursing student, lets down her guard during the meal and succumbs to family expectations.

"There are pressures, so I'll eat a little piece of meat to keep everyone happy," Grazziadio said.

Vegetarian Thanksgiving meals have a definite place in American culture. The multiculturalism of the country guarantees that Thanksgiving is celebrated with different foods, including meatless ones.

In grade school, children learn the traditional Thanksgiving meal centers around large roasted turkeys and ham accompanied by mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy and cranberry sauce. That's tradition.

Some Italian families substitute ravioli for the "traditional" Thanksgiving fare.

Rajani Nair, a senior civil engineering major, comes from one such family and has happily eaten a non-flesh Thanksgiving meal since she was a little girl.

"Since I'm Indian, it's easy to have vegetarian meals," she said. "So we just eat Indian food for Thanksgiving."

Rice and beans, mashed potatoes and other vegetables make up the bulk of Nair's typical Thanksgiving meal. She said that she faces no pressure from her family to eat meat, since all of them are vegetarians.

Nair said she imagines that other ethnicities face problems finding substitutes for the traditional Thanksgiving meal.

"Non-Indians really have to search to find foods to eat," she said.

Stephanie Yarbrough, a senior civil engineering major who became a vegetarian in 1988, had an easier time than she expected.

After Yarbrough switched to eating meatless meals and cutting down on dairy products, she went home expecting many questions. She told her mom about her diet change, and her mom decided to stop eating meat soon after.

For Yarbrough, staying true to the vegetable lifestyle during the holidays takes little effort.

Yarbrough said she and her mom stick to eating vegetables and a German entree made from dumplings and sauce.

"Everything but the turkey," she said. She also faces little pressure to eat meat at other people's homes.

She said they often make an extra vegetarian entree.

But some families don't accommodate others' vegetarian diets.

"I've had other friends that when they go home and they've been a vegetarian, their parents tried to convert them back to eating meat," she said.

Thanksgiving without turkey does not have to be less enjoyable, and the alternative does not have to be tofu.

Vegetarian magazines offer help.

Natural Health, a nationally circulated magazine, plans out a vegetarian buffet for the holiday. *Vegetarian Gourmet* features an article on cooking a six-course vegetarian meal.

And from the cover of *Vegetarian Times*, the McCartneys' smiling faces ensure that they will hold vegetarian's hands through a meatless holiday season.



For every winner, there's a loser (me)

Wanna know what I got in my Christmas stocking last year?

Lottery tickets.

I suppose it was a nice sentiment, but it was a fairly worthless gift since I won a whopping \$1 off the 10 tickets my parents so proudly gave me. Since my parents think the lottery is the single greatest thing to ever happen to Texas, the tickets being the only thing in my stocking did not surprise me.

I'm not a big fan of the lottery. I rarely buy tickets. What can I say, I'm a poor college student. And when I do blow my last dollar on a scratch and win, I inevitably uncover no matches at all.



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Tracey Tumey, a sophomore at A&M, holds her soon-to-be winning lottery ticket.

AMY UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



Maybe I'm just bitter because I haven't won, but this whole Texas Lottery thing has gotten out of control. I have reasons that extend beyond my bitterness. For starters, I find myself having dreams about killing Scratchman — especially since that new commercial came out where he blows himself up like a balloon. What I wouldn't give to be near him with a needle at the end of those 30 seconds. I'm rather sad that my tax dollars have that freak on salary.

I'm also tired of always being really low on gas on Saturday nights when the jackpot is an estimated \$50 million. You can't fight your way to the counter as the clock slowly approaches 10 p.m.

And I'm a little bit worried about my friends and relatives that have devised twisted rituals in the name of winning the lottery. My mother, in typical natural fashion, uses all of our birthdays as her lucky numbers that will someday bring her millions. One of my friends uses the numbers from a fortune cookie she received. I'm not sure, but I guess it was a really good fortune cookie. Anyway, I've learned better

than to watch the television at 10 p.m. when my parents are around. They've warned me that the penalty for making them miss the lottery numbers is death.

I was an adamant supporter of the lottery when it was up for the vote in Texas. A little gambling never hurt anyone, or so I thought. I still support the lottery, but it has developed a strange subculture that vaguely resembles bingo junkies, and that scares me.

The lottery phenomenon reminds me of the movie *One Crazy Summer*. If you haven't seen it, you should.

The story involves an insane uncle that locks himself in his bedroom every summer and stays awake night and day, strung out on coffee and cigarettes, listening to the radio for his chance to win a \$1 million giveaway. Needless to say, by the end of the summer, this guy is in the bell jar. I can't help but wonder if the lottery hasn't produced a similar creature, hidden somewhere in the backwoods of Texas.

For those who have played the lottery and won, I heartily congratulate you. The system has worked for you.

But for those who find themselves mortgaging their homes with the philosophy that when they win the lottery, they will be able to pay it off tenfold, my unsolicited advice is this — seek help. The lottery is fun to play and is sometimes — about one time in a million — quite profitable. The rest of the time, it serves only to drive people crazy.

WEEKEND PREVIEW

Tonight



22 Brides

22 Brides, a rock band from New York City, is performing at the Dixie Theatre. The band was started in 1991 by two sisters, Carrie and Libby Johnson. The band has toured throughout the East Coast, attracting a large following. The band released a self-titled album last year. One of the album's tracks, "King For A Day," tells a story from the viewpoint of a serial killer, including the things he says to women before he murders them. **Sinister Sirens**, a rock band from Houston, is opening.

Singer / Songwriter Night, an open mike night, is at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Friday

Firecreek, a country and western band, is performing at the Texas Hall of Fame.

Red Eye, a bluegrass band from Austin, is performing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Two Paces West, a classic rock band, is

performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

Saturday

Mike Cancellare, an acoustic performer, is playing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

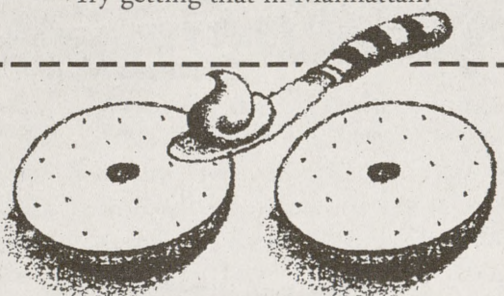
Peeping Tom, a rock and alternative band, is performing at The Tap.

All day long, Bruegger's bakes fresh, hot, authentic, New York-style bagels.

(No, it doesn't mean they'll be thrown at you.)

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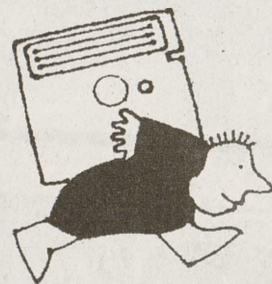
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AGS, THE STERLING C. EVANS LIBRARY NEEDS YOUR HELP

In order to restore an orderly, inviting environment for serious study and reflection, spot checks for food and drink will be scheduled at the Evans Library beginning November 27. Entry to the library with food and drink will not be permitted. This policy is also in effect during extended hours beginning December 3 and will be rigorously enforced.

