

Le Frigo Vert: Electronic Newsletter, February 2007

This once-monthly digest consists of a compendium of Frigo collective news, social justice events, calls to action, healthy recipes, and articles related to Le Frigo Vert's social justice and anti-oppression mandate.

The purpose is to better inform and interact with Frigo Vert members. It is an attempt to better explain changes we make to the organization and to directly link Frigo members with local grassroots struggles. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please email: shelly@lefrigovert.ca

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1. Le Frigo Vert Updates/Events

ATTENTION: LE FRIGO VERT SHOPPERS!

The store will be closed for reading week, from February 19th – 23rd. We will re-open Monday February 26th with regular hours, Monday – Friday, 11am – 7pm. Thank you and enjoy your studies/holiday.

Media: Le Frigo Vert in The Link: Concordia University Independent Newspaper

Where your fee levies are going - Le Frigo Vert

By Compiled by Daman van der Linde

Issue 22 February 13, 2007

1) How much funding does your group receive from the fee levy?

Le Frigo Vert receives 25 cents per credit from all undergrad students. This means that a full-time student might pay about \$7.50 per year to be a member of the LFV co-op (half of the \$15-\$20 per year that others pay to be members).

2) How long has your group existed (in any form)?

Le Frigo Vert is 15 years old this year! LFV started as the Eat Your Peel Buying Group in 1992 and by 1995 was incorporated as a not-for-profit store located on Mackay across from the Hall building. It has grown from a small group of students who wanted to know more and have greater access to healthy, organic, nutritious

food on campus into a comprehensive community space for doing groceries, have a cup of coffee with a friend, studying, eating, reading about nutrition or upcoming events around Montreal, finding recipes, volunteering and much more.

3) What services do and to roughly how many students?

The store alone serves between 200 and 400 people per day—over the course of the year this is a lot of people! In addition, many more students are connected to LFV each year through workshops, honorariums, volunteering, open house events, and by accessing our non-commercial (meaning you don't have to buy anything) lounge/study space in behind the store for heating up their lunches, hanging out, studying, using the computer, holding meetings, and more.

4) How many volunteers and employees are part of your group?

LFV has eight paid collective members (three full-time and five part-time) who are responsible for everything to do with the organization. This includes keeping the store regularly stocked with over 600 products, book-keeping, volunteer coordination, paying bills, long-term financial planning and fundraising, liaising with outside groups (i.e. the landlord, the university, other student groups, the CSU, the bank, etc.), cash and stocking shifts, workshop development, advertising, and of course, mopping the floor! In addition, the organization depends on the work of roughly 30 volunteers doing a variety of work from working in the store, to research, to sitting on the board of directors and more.

5) What is your system of governance and accountability (ie. a collective, a board of directors, etc)?

LFV is a workers' collective and a not-for-profit organization. A workers' collective means that it is the workers who are responsible for the day-to-day operations—there are no bosses, everyone is responsible. As a not-for-profit store, we are legally bound by Quebec and Canadian laws governing such organizations. This means we have a Board of Directors (which must be made up of at least 51 per cent students and 100 per cent members of the organization), we pay taxes (including for employment, property and GST/PST), we produce annual financial reports for both our membership and the government, in addition to being responsible for many other regulations governing such organizations. The board is elected each year at our annual general assembly, where the annual financial report is also submitted.

And finally, our budget and other financial information must be made available at any time to our membership.

6) What would be the consequence of losing your fee levy?

The consequences are pretty huge. As a business, we regularly sign binding legal contracts including a corporate lease, funding agreements with the bank, the government and other funders, employment contracts, etc. With or without the fee levy we are responsible for fulfilling these agreements. What is more, in order to reach our goals of long-term sustainability, increased activities, etc., we rely on outside funders. If granting and/or loaning bodies see that funding cannot be guaranteed beyond a three-year period at most, depending on when the application is made, it is much more likely these grants or loans will be denied. This situation would in fact severely jeopardize our long-term financial stability and accountability. Ultimately, LFV would have to drastically cut the number of products in the store due to lack of funds, workers would be laid off permanently and the organization might actually go bankrupt.

This being said, for \$7.50 a year, undergrad students at Concordia guarantee their own access to cheap, healthy, nutritious groceries and the recipes to cook it (for those of us who have never had quinoa before!), and a great community space for meeting, having a coffee with a friend, doing homework, getting information about

alternative health care, volunteering, and so much more!

Editorial: An open letter to the Concordia Student Union

By Link Editorial Board

Issue 21 February 6, 2007

It is our understanding that your government is considering implementing a new financial policy that will expire student fee levies after three years, and require them to be renewed every third year following. This motion is being put forward without any consultation between the CSU and affected organizations. None of our groups have been consulted and, at this point, we have to rely on second-hand information to present our concerns.

At a time when we are collectively threatened by enormous tuition hikes, this new financial policy could mean the end of many of our services which students, under greater financial constraints, will need more than ever. Crucial student services such as subsidized and free access to equipment, meeting spaces, events, hot meals, affordable healthy groceries, student news groups and educational cinema are at risk!

Many of our groups have existed for decades, were created by and for students, and now represent community at Concordia. An estimated 20,000 students and faculty use our services, and over 1,000 students volunteer each year within our organizations, thereby taking initiative, gaining valuable work experience, and developing a sense of connection to the school. Moreover, our organizations promote a diverse, active campus life, which attracts potential students to the university and figures prominently in the school's marketing campaigns. Calling the funding of these groups into question gravely threatens our institutional memory and histories at Concordia, and could very well herald the disappearance of what makes Concordia unique.

Requiring student levy groups to renew our funding every three years jeopardizes that funding every three years, thereby threatening long-term sustainability and, in some cases, the very existence of our organizations. Some of our groups are functioning businesses or non-profit incorporations with long-term leases and responsibilities to the government of Quebec and Canada; in order to operate, we need three-year budgets for our business plans. This proposed policy will also create job insecurity that our employees cannot afford: the majority of our employees are students, many of them have dependants, and nearly all of us are already living under the poverty line, not to mention the hundreds of students we support each year in their initiatives through honorariums, giving workshops, writing articles and other tasks and valuable participation.

In addition to these concerns, we foresee that this policy would further burden our already overtaxed organizations by forcing us, every three years, to spend valuable time, money, volunteer energy, and other resources on re-election campaigns to secure our funding. This time would be better spent strengthening our organizations, increasing membership, expanding our core activities, and supporting student life in the myriad of ways that we do.

From what we understand, the motivation in introducing this policy is to ensure accountability on the part of fee levy recipients. There are many ways to assure accountability that would strengthen and support these organizations. Our organizations already have strong internal systems of accountability, including annual general meetings, annual financial reports and activities reports, and the positions on our boards of directors are occupied mostly by students, some faculty and members of our community at large. Any student who doesn't wish to support our groups' work can, of course, opt out. These are all systems of accountability that support long-term planning, increase institutional memory, provide documents that would support other groups attempting to organize or incorporate and generally increase Concordia's knowledge base. It seems to us that further development of the existing system, by requiring levy organizations to produce key documents

(which, as mentioned above, most already do), have annual general meetings and provide for their centralized accessibility to all students, would not only more effectively address the CSU's desire to increase fee levy organizations' accountability, but would strengthen these organizations and create yet another way for students to find out about and get involved in them.

We, the undersigned stakeholder groups, have three requests:

1. That the Custodial Committee of the CSU send us a letter by Feb. 4, 2007, assuring us that this proposal will not be on the agenda for the Feb. 14, 2007 Council Meeting;
2. That the Custodial Committee provide for the stakeholders a copy of the proposal and all the documents that go with it, by Feb. 24, 2007; and
3. That there be a meeting by March 5, 2007, with the Custodial Committee and all affected stakeholder groups (all those groups whose funding exists through a Concordia student fee levy), in which we are consulted about the content of this proposal, with the understanding that the proposal will be amended based on the suggestions made in this consultation.

Sincerely,

CUTV, QPIRG Concordia, Le Frigo Vert, The People's Potato, The Link, CUTV, CJLO, CSBC, Cinema Politica, 2110: The Concordia Centre for Gender Advocacy, The Concordian, L'Organe, Art Matters

2. Food Politics

Vegetarian Is the New Prius

By Kathy Freston, HuffingtonPost.com

February 16, 2007

<http://www.alternet.org/story/47668/>

President Herbert Hoover promised "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." With warnings about global warming reaching feverish levels, many are having second thoughts about all those cars. It seems they should instead be worrying about the chickens.

Last month, the United Nations published a report on livestock and the environment with a stunning conclusion: "The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." It turns out that raising animals for food is a primary cause of land degradation, air pollution, water shortage, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and not least of all, global warming.

That's right, global warming. You've probably heard the story: Emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide are changing our climate, and scientists warn of more extreme weather, coastal flooding, spreading disease, and mass extinctions. It seems that when you step outside and wonder what happened to winter, you might want to think about what you had for dinner last night. The U.N. report says almost a fifth of global warming emissions come from livestock (i.e., those chickens Hoover was talking about, plus pigs, cattle, and others) -- that's more emissions than from all of the world's transportation combined.

For a decade now, the image of Leonardo DiCaprio cruising in his hybrid Toyota Prius has defined the gold standard for environmentalism. These gas-sipping vehicles became a veritable symbol of the consumers' power

to strike a blow against global warming. Just think: a car that could cut your vehicle emissions in half -- in a country responsible for 25% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions. Federal fuel economy standards languished in Congress, and average vehicle mileage dropped to its lowest level in decades, but the Prius showed people that another way is possible. Toyota could not import the cars fast enough to meet demand.

Last year researchers at the University of Chicago took the Prius down a peg when they turned their attention to another gas guzzling consumer purchase. They noted that feeding animals for meat, dairy, and egg production requires growing some ten times as much crops as we'd need if we just ate pasta primavera, faux chicken nuggets, and other plant foods. On top of that, we have to transport the animals to slaughterhouses, slaughter them, refrigerate their carcasses, and distribute their flesh all across the country. Producing a calorie of meat protein means burning more than ten times as much fossil fuels -- and spewing more than ten times as much heat-trapping carbon dioxide -- as does a calorie of plant protein. The researchers found that, when it's all added up, the average American does more to reduce global warming emissions by going vegetarian than by switching to a Prius.

According to the UN report, it gets even worse when we include the vast quantities of land needed to give us our steak and pork chops. Animal agriculture takes up an incredible 70% of all agricultural land, and 30% of the total land surface of the planet. As a result, farmed animals are probably the biggest cause of slashing and burning the world's forests. Today, 70% of former Amazon rainforest is used for pastureland, and feed crops cover much of the remainder. These forests serve as "sinks," absorbing carbon dioxide from the air, and burning these forests releases all the stored carbon dioxide, quantities that exceed by far the fossil fuel emission of animal agriculture.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the real kicker comes when looking at gases besides carbon dioxide -- gases like methane and nitrous oxide, enormously effective greenhouse gases with 23 and 296 times the warming power of carbon dioxide, respectively. If carbon dioxide is responsible for about one-half of human-related greenhouse gas warming since the industrial revolution, methane and nitrous oxide are responsible for another one-third. These super-strong gases come primarily from farmed animals' digestive processes, and from their manure. In fact, while animal agriculture accounts for 9% of our carbon dioxide emissions, it emits 37% of our methane, and a whopping 65% of our nitrous oxide.

It's a little hard to take in when thinking of a small chick hatching from her fragile egg. How can an animal, so seemingly insignificant against the vastness of the earth, give off so much greenhouse gas as to change the global climate? The answer is in their sheer numbers. The United States alone slaughters more than 10 billion land animals every year, all to sustain a meat-ravenous culture that can barely conceive of a time not long ago when "a chicken in every pot" was considered a luxury. Land animals raised for food make up a staggering 20% of the entire land animal biomass of the earth. We are eating our planet to death. What we're seeing is just the beginning, too. Meat consumption has increased five-fold in the past fifty years, and is expected to double again in the next fifty.

It sounds like a lot of bad news, but in fact it's quite the opposite. It means we have a powerful new weapon to use in addressing the most serious environmental crisis ever to face humanity. The Prius was an important step forward, but how often are people in the market for a new car? Now that we know a greener diet is even more effective than a greener car, we can make a difference at every single meal, simply by leaving the animals off of our plates. Who would have thought: what's good for our health is also good for the health of the planet!

Going veg provides more bang for your buck than driving a Prius. Plus, that bang comes a lot faster. The Prius cuts emissions of carbon dioxide, which spreads its warming effect slowly over a century. A big chunk of the problem with farmed animals, on the other hand, is methane, a gas which cycles out of the atmosphere in just a decade. That means less meat consumption quickly translates into a cooler planet.

Not just a cooler planet, also a cleaner one. Animal agriculture accounts for most of the water consumed in this country, emits two-thirds of the world's acid-rain-causing ammonia, and it the world's largest source of water pollution -- killing entire river and marine ecosystems, destroying coral reefs, and of course, making people sick. Try to imagine the prodigious volumes of manure churned out by modern American farms: 5 million tons a day, more than a hundred times that of the human population, and far more than our land can possibly absorb. The acres and acres of cesspools stretching over much of our countryside, polluting the air and contaminating our water, make the Exxon Valdez oil spill look minor in comparison. All of which we can fix surprisingly easily, just by putting down our chicken wings and reaching for a veggie burger.

Doing so has never been easier. Recent years have seen an explosion of environmentally-friendly vegetarian foods. Even chains like Ruby Tuesday, Johnny Rockets, and Burger King offer delicious veggie burgers and supermarket refrigerators are lined with heart-healthy creamy soymilk and tasty veggie deli slices. Vegetarian foods have become staples at environmental gatherings, and garnered celebrity advocates like Bill Maher, Alec Baldwin, Paul McCartney, and of course Leonardo DiCaprio. Just as the Prius showed us that we each have in our hands the power to make a difference against a problem that endangers the future of humanity, going vegetarian gives us a new way to dramatically reduce our dangerous emissions that is even more effective, easier to do, more accessible to everyone and certainly goes better with french fries.

Ever-rising temperatures, melting ice caps, spreading tropical diseases, stronger hurricanes ... So, what are you do doing for dinner tonight? Check out www.VegCooking.com for great ideas, free recipes, meal plans, and more! Check out the environmental section of www.GoVeg.com for a lot more information about the harmful effect of meat-eating on the environment.

Kathy Freston is a self-help author and personal growth and spirituality counselor.

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View this story online at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/47668/>

3. Featured Anti-Oppression Issue

Muslim Women Visit Town that Passed Code of 'Norms'

NJ, FEB 12 - A delegation of Muslim women, bearing gifts, paid a visit Sunday to the Quebec town that passed a controversial code aimed at potential Muslim immigrants.

Herouxville lies 165 kilometers northeast of Montreal, the capital of French speaking Canadian state of Quebec.

Nine French-speaking Muslim women from Montreal visited the Quebec town of Herouxville yesterday to help explain Islam and counter the town's controversial 'reasonable accommodation' resolution.

Last month, its council members passed an unusual declaration, which says a person's face should not be covered, except at Halloween, and that children should sing Christmas songs in December.

It warns would-be immigrants that women can vote, drive and dance if they choose, that it is forbidden to stone women in public and carry out female circumcisions.

It also says adults can drink alcohol and children cannot bring weapons, religiously symbolic or not, to school despite a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that has already upheld that right for Sikh Canadians.

Although the list has no legal weight, it clearly targets religious minorities, said May Haider, one of the nine women who made the journey to the community of 1,300 on Sunday afternoon, according to The Canadian Press.

“We’re disappointed by this ‘code of life,’” Haider said.

“It’s apparent there is a misconception and a wrong view of Muslim women, so we want to open a dialogue to let them know us and, of course, we want to know them.”

The town has already toned down the declaration, handing out another version Sunday that removed references to stoning women to death or burning them with acid.

The council said in a statement that the media misinterpreted some aspects of the documents.

But much of the code remained the same and the council repeated a call for changes to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to avoid “unreasonable accommodation” of minorities.

Under threat of being dragged before the Quebec Human Right, Andre Drouin, the town councilor behind the list of norms, said residents were eager to prove they are not racists.

Herouxville, Quebec, town councilor Andre Drouin chats with Dr Najat Boughaba yesterday. Boughaba came with nine other Muslims to the town to discuss Drouin’s recently adopted rules for would-be immigrants.

But Drouin was unrepentant about the list and said it will stay put. “No major change,” he told reporters.

He said the council has received thousands of e-mails from all over the world.

“We’re not alone in this,” Drouin said. “The e-mails we’ve received... they all say the same thing: ‘We’re behind you.’”

The debate over accommodation of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities continues to rage in French-speaking Quebec and Premier Jean Charest has named a special commission to study the issue.

The Canadian Islamic Congress is considering a human rights complaint against the Herouxville council.

Haider, a member of the congress, said no decision has been made. “We’re going to see what is the reaction from officials in Herouxville and then we’ll see,” she said.

About 50 residents came out to meet the women Sunday, sipping coffee as they waited.

Louise Trudel spoke at length with one of the visitors. She said it was nice but accomplished nothing.

“We didn’t even speak about the ‘code de vie,’” she said. “At a certain point it (accommodation of minorities) must stop.”

At the small community hall where 150 townspeople and outsiders gathered to meet the Muslim women, one man in his 60s -- a Montrealer, not a local -- grabbed the microphone, reported The Ottawa Citizen.

“I want to know,” he asked the Muslim women angrily “how do you have the audacity to come here with your veils on?”

After a tussle, the man handed the microphone back to Ms. Najat Boughaba, the group leader, who answered: “It’s not audacity. It’s a piece of clothing.”

No One Is Illegal-Montreal

Statement on the racist Quebec debate about “reasonable accommodation”

February 5, 2007

As racialized and migrant women, we are outraged by the slanderous, xenophobic and racist propaganda that is being expressed in the debate about “reasonable accommodation”.

We assert our ability, as subjects not objects, to exercise our own capacity to self-determine our lives; we reject the repeatedly paternalistic, and fundamentally misogynist, discourse about the State that will supposedly save us from our own cultures.

We assert that such a discourse is both racist and sexist. It is racist, because it perpetuates the idea that our cultures are fundamentally backwards and cruel, in contrast with white Western culture, which is seen as the ultimate achievement of civilization. It is sexist because it derives from ideas that render women childlike, or viewed as simple victims incapable of struggling for their own wellbeing.

This idea of “civilization” is intrinsically linked to the colonial mentality that led to the genocide of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. It is a genocide that persists when, by way of example, the disappearance of more than five-hundred indigenous women in Canada continues to be treated with contempt and indifference.

We reject the mass media’s simplistic and reductive conception of women’s “rights”. While we actively assert our “right” to freedom, safety and dignity as articulated in the traditional paradigm of “human rights”, we also assert our “right” to the expression of our cultural and religious identities.

We celebrate the diversity and dynamism of our cultures and our identities - including our different sexual orientations as queer, lesbian, trans, straight, or other forms of self-identification -- and refuse the simplistic caricatures that reduce our multiple communities to homogeneous and uncontested representations of a monolithic tradition.

In this respect, we reassert the dynamic nature of the various manifestations of our beliefs or cultural identities, which express themselves within a larger social and political context.

In particular, we observe that the analysis of the oppression of women and gender inequality, as expressed in the mass media, as strictly a phenomenon internal to religions, explicitly ignores the external, universal systems of patriarchy and sexism which all women face, while also definitively homogenizing religion.

We denounce the role of the State and its structures in the marginalization of racialized and migrant women, whether they are religious or not.

The actions of the State and the capitalism contribute to making the status of migrant women more precarious by increasing the barriers to obtaining legal status through various forms of systemic discrimination, and increasing the vulnerability of women by their criminalization.

We also denounce the complicity of the imperialist feminist discourse which, under the cover of supposed solidarity, imposes Eurocentric and assimilationist ideas gender equality. We are critical of the dominant feminist paradigm that privileges the choices of Western women as the sole path towards liberation, despite the

overpowering reality of daily sexism that Western women face.

We are conscious of the way in which this discourse continues to be manipulated and used by pro-war, anti-immigrant proponents. We recognize the historical continuity of the appropriation and manipulation of feminist discourse by colonial and imperialist movements throughout the world.

However, we are not supporters of cultural relativism that tends to justify oppressive and unjust practices in the name of the “difference”. We remain vigilant so that the freedom of religion does not prevent us from fighting actively against oppression.

To show true solidarity, we must listen to the women that we claim to support in their struggle, and we must understand that we occupy different positions of privilege and power.

To do this, we must actively fight against the dehumanization of racialized and faith communities, and against the victimization of women. We must support the women who are on the frontlines of their own struggles for liberation, and subjects, not objects, of their own transformation. We must engage in this process not motivated by pity or charity, but by a true sense of solidarity and respect.

-- No One Is Illegal-Montreal.

--> If you wish to support this statement as a group or individual, please get in touch. If you want to help plan actions against the racism underlying this debate, please get in touch as well!

noi-montreal@resist.ca

<http://nooneisillegal-montreal.blogspot.com>

514-848-7583

4. Recipes

VEGAN PERUVIAN ANTICUCHOS KEBABS (Serves 6)

Photobucket - Video and Image Hosting

Anticuchos -- spicy Peruvian kebabs made with seitan

Traditionally served with chunks of cooked sweet potato and corn on the cob.

Kababs:

about 60/ 1” cubes (2 to 3 lbs). seitan or “wheatmeat” (firm is good)

Marinade:

1 c. red wine vinegar

12 large cloves of garlic, peeled

1 T. pickled jalapeños

1 T. ground cumin

1 tsp. salt

freshly-ground peppe to taste

Sauce:

3/4 c. of the Marinade

1 T. dried red chile pepper flakes

1 T. paprika with a pinch of tumeric (or if you have it, achiote or annatto)
1 T. extra-virgin olive oil or chinese roasted sesame oil, or a mixture
1 tsp. salt

Drain the seitan chunks well and pat them dry. Mix all of the Marinade ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour this over the chunks in a covered container and refrigerate for 8-24 hours, shaking once in a while.

When ready to serve, soak 12 bamboo skewers in water for 15 minutes.

Drain the Marinade off the chunks, reserving 3/4 c. Mix the reserved Marinade with the other sauce ingredients and toss the chunks with the Sauce. Thread the chunks evenly onto the skewers. Grill or broil 3" from the heat until slightly charred on all sides, turning as needed and basting with the Sauce several times. Serve hot.

ENSALADA DE QUINOA

2 c. dry quinoa
4 c. boiling water
1/4 tsp. salt
1/3 c. lime juice
2 pickled jalapenos, chopped
1/3 c. extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 c. Oil Substitute (see below)
2 medium cucumbers, peeled and cut into 1/2" cubes
1 large tomato, cubed
4 green onions, thinly sliced
1/3 c. fresh parsley, minced
1/3 c. fresh basil, minced
Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste
2 heads lettuce, cleaned and shredded

GARNISHES:

Tofu "Feta" (see below)
Black Kalamata olives
Chunks of cooked corn on the cob
Chunks of avocado in lemon juice
Chunks of cooked sweet potato

Rinse the quinoa under cold running water until the water runs clear. Toast the quinoa in a dry pan until slightly golden.

Add quinoa to 4 c. boiling water in a small saucepan with 1/4 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil, then turn down and cook, covered for 15-20 minutes, or until the water is absorbed. Let stand off the heat for 10 minutes.

Transfer the quinoa to a bowl and chill.

Whisk together the lime juice, the chiles, olive oil, oil replacer and salt to taste and set aside.

Combine the quinoa, cucumbers, tomato, green onions, parsley, and basil and mix gently. Pour the lime dressing over the top and toss again. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

To serve the salad, place a mound of shredded lettuce on 6 or 8 individual plates and garnish with any or all of the suggested garnishes.

Oil Substitute for Salad Dressings

Use this simple mixture in place the oil in salad dressing recipes. Unlike plain juice or water, it will help the dressing stick to the greens. This recipe is easily multiplied.

1 cup water
1 tablespoon low-sodium vegetarian broth powder
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Whisk the broth powder and starch into the cold water in a small saucepan. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened and clear. Use immediately in a salad dressing, or store in a covered jar and refrigerate.

Vegan “Feta”:

12-14 oz. firm regular (NOT silken) tofu, crumbled
2 tsp. agar powder (or 4 T. flakes)
1/4 c. water
1 tsp. sugar
2 T. neutral-tasting cooking oil
1/2 tsp. salt
6 T. fresh lemon juice

Brine:

2 cups water
2 T. salt

Blend the tofu, agar, water, sugar, oil, and salt in a food processor until very smooth. Place the mixture in a heavy-bottomed small saucepan and stir over medium heat until it bubbles for a few minutes and thickens. MICROWAVE OPTION: Place the mixture in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on HI for 3 minutes. Whisk briefly. Microwave 2 minute more.

Whisk the lemon juice into the cooked mixture. (You add this last because the lemon juice interferes with the jelling of the agar if cooked with it.)

Pour it into a flat container, cover and chill until firm. Cut into squares.

Make a brine by boiling the water and salt together for 5 minutes, cool it, and pour it over the chunks of “cheese” in a glass jar or other covered container to cover. The “feta” will keep for several weeks in a covered container in the refrigerator in this brine.

TO STORE FOR LONGER PERIODS:

The “feta” will get saltier the longer it sits in the brine, so taste it now and then to get it to your liking, then drain it and refrigerate the squares in a jar of neutral-tasting oil (NOT olive oil, because it thickens during refrigeration). Make sure all of the cheese is covered in oil, to keep the air out. Screw in the lid. The cheese will keep this way for several weeks.

VEGAN PUMPKIN-PECAN CUPCAKES WITH LEMON “BUTTERCREAM” (18 cupcakes)

DRY MIX:

1 and 1/2 cups sifted white pastry flour
1 and 1/2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour (stir well before measuring)
1 Tbs. baking powder
1 tsp. powdered ginger
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground cloves or allspice

PUMPKIN MIX:

1 cup canned pumpkin
1/2 cup soymilk

SUGAR MIX:

1 cup sugar (pale organic sugar)
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup Earth Balance, softened a bit
1/2 cup soymilk
1 Tbs. egg replacer powder
1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spray muffin cups (18—I use one full [12cup] muffin pan and one half [6 cup]) with oil from a pump sprayer and line with parchment cupcake liners.

Whisk together the Dry Mix ingredients into a medium bowl And stir them together well.

In a measuring pitcher, whisk together the pumpkin and 1/2 c. soymilk; set aside.

In a large bowl, beat together the Sugar Mix ingredients with an electric mixer at high speed for about 2 minutes, scraping the sides of the bowl with a rubber scraper now and then.

At low speed, beat in the Dry Mix, alternately with the pumpkin mixture, starting and ending with the Dry Mix. (Don't worry if it looks a bit curdled at certain points.) Then beat for 1 minute more.

Spoon the batter into the cupcake liners. Bake until the cupcakes are golden and spring back when gently pressed with your finger, 18-20 minutes. Place the pans on racks to cool for 5 minutes, then run a table knife carefully around the edge of the cupcake liner and gently lift the cupcakes out and onto the rack to cool.

When they are thoroughly cool, ice with the Lemon “Buttercream” and dip the tops into the pecans to coat the tops.

VEGAN LEMON “BUTTERCREAM” FROSTING

1/4 cup vegan margarine
1/4 cup non-hydrogenated shortening
2 Tbs. organic powdered sugar sifted

1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
5 tsp. water
1 1/2 Tbs. grated organic lemon zest
1/2 tsp. vanilla

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the margarine and shortening until smooth. Add 1 c. of the sugar, the lemon juice and water, the lemon zest, and vanilla. Beat until creamy. It may look curdled— don't worry! Add the remaining sugar, a little at a time, as you beat it, until it holds its shape well and you can see "trails" in it from the beaters. Refrigerate, covered, until it's time to ice the cake.

5. Social Justice Calendar of Events:

Tuesday February 20th – 5pm until 5am

TUNE-IN ALL NIGHT LONG to CKUT 90.3 fm FOR THE HOMELESSNESS MARATHON

This 14-hour broadcast will begin at sunset (5pm) and continue through sunrise the next day in front of the Native Friendship Center of Montréal 2001 rue Saint-Laurent. Hot food and drink will be served free on site all night. Listen live broadcast at CKUT 90.3 fm, or <http://www.CKUT.ca/homeless.html>

CALL TOLL-FREE 1.866.763.4136. Why a nationwide homelessness marathon?

Because homeless people should have access to the media where they can freely speak out. Because only the homeless know the reality of living on the streets. Because it is the homeless who are best able to educate people on the issue of homelessness.

Monday, March 5th - 4pm

"Palestine Trilogy" - three short documentary films on the occupation by b.h. yael

Palestine Trilogy consists of three videos - "Deir Yassin Remembered" (28 min), "Even in the Desert" (33 min) & "a hot sandfilled wind" (13 min) – that focus on activist initiatives, addressing the politics of Palestine and Israel through varying approaches.

@ 101 New Chancellor Day Hall, 3644 Peel, Faculty of Law building. Homemade goodies and drinks will be served. For more info, please contact: lisafrances.greenspoon@mail.mcgill.ca

Tuesday March 6th – 6pm

SCPA presents "Suppressing Women's Cycles": The health effects of the pill as a menstrual suppressant.

@ 1590 Dr. Penfield, Room 301. Contact: Munira Ravji: (514) 262-4695

Saturday March 17th – 12:30pm

BUSH OUT OF BAGHDAD! CANADA OUT OF KANDAHAR!

Join the "Block the Empire! Anti-Imperialist Contingent" - Part of a worldwide day of action against the occupation of Iraq.

@ Norman Bethune Park, Guy and de Maisonneuve (metro Guy-Concordia)

A child-friendly march. Bring your kids! We begin marching at 12:30pm (sharp) to join other anti-war marches in Montreal. INFO: bloquezl'empiremontreal@resist.ca or <http://blocktheempire.blogspot.com>

514 848-7583

Tuesday March 20th – 6pm

SCPA presents “Seasonal Citizens: A Growing Trend in Migration”, discussing increasing recruitment of seasonal Canadian agricultural workers.

@ 1590 Dr. Penfield, Room 301. Contact: Lenie Lucci: (514) 979-3969

Tuesday March 27th – 6pm

SCPA presents “Who Owns the Canadian Forest?” discussing the current situation in Grassy Narrows, Northern Ontario.

@1590 Dr. Penfield, Room 301. Contact: Omar Chnouki: (514) 569-0079