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## NNB News : 2013 : 06 : 16 : Veganism is on the Rise

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## VEGANISM IS ON THE RISE

By *Patrick Kiernan*

While sipping her soy latte, Abbie Rae points to her freezer door. A magnet that reads "God Bless John Wayne" holds a sticker she received from a recent online order from Compassion Clothing, a company that promotes animal rights and vegan living. In bold type the sticker reads: "Compassion Clothing — It's Okay To Give A F—."

On this Saturday morning, Abbie Rae flips through her record collection, deciding which album would suffice as the soundtrack to her brunch. Lifting the plastic cover to her record player, she slowly places Beirut's "Flying Cub Cup" on the platter and guides the needle to the wax.

Shuffling to the kitchen, she bends down to her miniature daschund, Cooper, and kissed his head while tickling the golden wrinkles of his neck.

From her refrigerator, Abbie Rae unloads onions, tomatoes, kale, mushrooms and tofu. The white gelatinous tofu pops into a plastic press and drained of the water. Within minutes, the tofu is sliced into cubes and then mashed. Tossed into a pan with other veggies, the tofu sizzles and pops as Abbie Rae hums to the music echoing from her living room. Tofu scramble is her favorite brunch food and it remains a symbol of her devotion to animal rights and living as a vegan.

Veganism is a natural extension of vegetarianism. Essentially, it is the abstinence of consuming animal products that include dairy and eggs as well as furs, leather, wool and products tested on animals. What began originally as a practice of Eastern religions, veganism has now become a lifestyle in America and throughout the world.

Yet is this new fascinations with an ancient diet a fad or could it be a political statement? Such a question arises when considering a vegan lifestyle, but ultimately it must come down to individual needs and desires.

"I took it one day at a time, telling myself 'Today I'm not eating meat', and the next day the same and the same the following day and here I am. That was about six years ago," Abbie Rae said.

Abbie Rae credits her years of cruelty free living to the blog "The Post Punk Kitchen". The PPK offers vegan recipes, a forum for users to exchange tips for shopping for proteins and vitamins and clothing and ideal vegan restaurants in many cities. The blog has sprouted several cookbooks such as "Vegan Pie In The Sky" by Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero.

The vegan diet has become popular in recent years with the availability of meatless foods on restaurant menus and on grocery store shelves. Brads such as Gardein, Tofurky and Field Roast offer a variety of proteins that satiate the primal hunger for meat.

The emerging trend in vegan cuisine has also extended into restaurant ventures locally like Midtown's Taco Bus or Leafy Greens Cafe.

According to a Harris Interactive Study, if the vegan trend continues, 80 percent of Americans will be vegan by the year 2021.

With her brunch guests gone, Abbie Rae hangs her pots and pans and sits on the couch with a vegan

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Above her head is a framed card with a picture of tofu on a plate that reads: "Tofu — The Other White Meat".

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