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**NUMBER 76** 

**SPRING/SUMMER 2021** 



# HONORING AND REMEMBERING LINDA DESTEFANO

We write to share the sad news that on June 10, 2020, Linda DeStefano died in a tragic accident in Syracuse, New York. Linda was a co-founder and guiding light of Alliance for Great Economy. We send our love and our condolences to Linda's family and to all her friends and comrades far and wide whose lives Linda changed.

As we mourn Linda and struggle to cope with this sudden loss, we know that we are not alone. Linda was involved in so many organizations, so much advocacy, so much social change work. She is and will be dearly missed as we go on to build the world she helped us envision.

Our organizing, education, and advocacy work for a nuclear-free and carbon-free world would not be possible without Linda's 10 years of contributions as a co-founder and Steering Committee member of AGREE. She pushed us, shaped us, assisted us, and supported us. She connected us to many other organizations in her network and helped mobilize people to our cause. She cared about the details, and held us accountable at every turn. Her mark on AGREE is indelible, and her work will live on through those of us who were recruited by her, mentored by her, and guided by her.

To honor and remember Linda, we will hold her convictions and lessons in our hearts. Linda's environmentalism and empathy were expansive. She fought for the rights of all living things – from the people

#### INSIDE.....

- Richard's Poem: "Sunshine, Our Cat"
- Article dedicated to Linda DeStefano and Regan Russell: Provided by Joe Connelly from Vegnews
- Baby Come Back!
- Vegan Soul Food Restaurant Opens
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- And MORE!



March 6, 2017: submitting testimony at the NYS Assembly hearing on New York's Zero Emission Credits (nuclear bailout) in Albany, NY (L to R: Linda DeStefano, Manna Jo Greene, Andra Leimanis, Margrit Diehl, Diane Swords)

on this planet suffering under corporate pollution, to the animals abused for human benefit, to the butterflies mutated by radiation at Fukushima. She reminded us each of our responsibility to conserve energy, transform our diets, and reduce our impact in this world, just as she helped build our organization to take on entire industries and systems of harm.

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People for Animal Rights (PAR) is a local grassroots organization dedicated to work for fundamental, nonviolent change to eliminate or reduce the oppression of non-human animals by humans. PAR also works to protect the earth, which sustains us all.

#### What does it mean to be a member?

According to our by-laws, a person is a member of People for Animal Rights when s/he agrees to our purposes as defined in the by-laws (as stated above) and has general agreement with **PAR**'s goals as stated in our membership brochure, which is summarized in the insert to this newsletter. The second requirement for membership is that the person be up-to-date on dues. See the enclosed insert for more membership information.

Questions/Comments? Write or call us:

# **People for Animal Rights**

PO Box 3333 Syracuse, NY 13220 (315) 708-4520 (8a.m.-10:00p.m.) people4animalrightscny@gmail.com

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People for Animal Rights of CNY

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# HONORING AND REMEMBERING continued

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February 21, 2019: Senator Rachels May's public hearing on the Climate and Community Protection Act at SUNY ESF's Gateway Center, Syracuse NY. (L to R: Linda DeStefano, Yvonne Chu, Lindsay Speer)

As one of our Steering Committee members put it, "Linda redefined the world steadfast."

May we all be as faithful and outspoken in our work as she, and may her life's work continue to blossom in the hands of all who knew her.

> In caring and solidarity, The Staff, Board, and Steering Committee of Alliance for a Green Economy ■

Some of our fondest photo memories of Linda:



August 1, 2016: Linda DeStefano, center, solemnly witnessing and opposing the Public Service Commission approval of Zero Emission Credits (nuclear bailout) in Albany, NY.



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July 22, 2016: Press Conference asking for details proposed Zero Emission Credit (nuclear bailout) part of NY's Clean Energy Standard in Albany NY. (L to R: Jessica Azulay, Linda DeStefano. Manna Jo Greene, Blair Goodman, Richard Weiskopf)

# **BABY COME BACK!**

by Rob English

If I could tell the government how to spend my taxes, I would ask that every dollar be used to find and return the children that the US Border Patrol agents took from their mothers since 2017 and lost them.

There are many. According to immigrant aid society HIAS, "In the summer of 2018, between 3,000 and 4,000 children were forcibly taken from their parents as a result of the Trump Administration's "zero tolerance" policy against those seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. Years later, hundreds of families still remain separated. and some parents may never see their children again. Even families who have been reunited suffer from ongoing legal issues, as well as the psychological distress caused by the ordeal. And although the policy of zero tolerance is no longer in effect and rates have decreased, these separations do still occur due to the U.S.' widespread use of detention."

NBC News reported recently that more than 650 children separated from their families in 2018 have not yet been located as of November 2020, and of them more than 100 are under age five.

It remains to be seen how newly inaugurated President Biden will address the issues of border security and immigration, but in the meantime I hope the pace of reuniting families can be accelerated. The children must not only be found and reunited with their families at U.S. Government expense but also they must be afforded the psychological treatments they will need to repair the damage done to their human development by the careless and cruel policy that caused it.

In June of 2018, Congressman Luis Gutierrez, told crowds in Washington D.C. with reference to family separation, "I cannot think of an act that is more cruel and more inhumane than to rip the child from the arms of the mother."

U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp told Snopes.com, "The more we learn about childhood trauma, the clearer it becomes that the negative consequences of trauma can reverberate for a lifetime. There's nothing more traumatic for a child than being separated from their parents, so we have to approach this challenge in a compassionate and humanitarian way."

The family separation policy has made victims not just of the children, of course, but also of their entire families, especially their mothers. Imagine the complex range of emotions troubling the heart of immigrant mothers such as the woman who, according to the Texas Civil Rights Project, was told by border patrol agents that they were taking her daughter for a bath, only to never return the

Was there ever a mother who didn't anguish at being separated from her baby?

Even intelligent animal species have strong maternal instincts. One of the most compelling images I've seen is one of a frantic cow running in vain after a pickup truck that was speeding away with her baby. (Cows don't produce milk unless they have recently given birth, so providing cows' milk for human consumption requires that newborn calves be taken from the mothers within hours. The mother cows suffer greatly with this policy, and as people realize this many turn to plant-based milk and plant-based cheese. From the Gospel of Matthew as I recall it, The King of Heaven said, "Truly, whatever you did for the least of these, you did it also for me").

By this date, the children taken from their families at the border should already be reunited with them, because back in June 2018 Federal Judge Dana Sabraw ordered the government to reunite the children with their families within thirty days, and he ordered that children under five be reunited within fourteen days.

Nearly three years have passed since Judge Sabraw gave that order, yet hundreds of families and their children are still waiting for reunion and healing.

As I write my tax check to the US Treasury this Spring I'll be thinking of those families and watching for good things from the new administration in Washington.

# **AMAZON SMILE**

In addition to your regular dues and donations to PAR there is an effortless way to do more. When you shop Amazon Smile you can designate PAR as the recipient of a percentage of your purchase. Thank you! ■

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# **PEOPLE FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS:**

Use the white insert in this newsletter to sign up.

#### TWO DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN JOIN:



send a check or join online at: peopleforanimalrightsofcny.org

# If you are already a member,

please see back page for an explanation of how you know when your yearly dues are due. Thanks!

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#### **GEORGE FLOYDISM**

by Joseph Connelly, Founder, VegNews Magazine • June 24, 2020



#### **All Life Matters**

I did not know George Floyd. Neither did you. Yet in the 31 days since a Minneapolis knee forced his final breath, his face arguably became the most recognized on the planet. Few people, in life or death, have had such a profound effect on the world in the span of a single month. And yet, as I stated in my previous article, "You Say You Want a Revolution," what we have witnessed since May 25th is not about George Floyd.

# It's About Opportunity.

Since I did not know George Floyd I can only wonder what he would have thought of the global phenomenon I've coined Floydism. After his initial reaction of, "What? Everyone around the globe is demonstrating because of me? They're taking down statues of Robert E. Lee?" I want to believe — I need to believe — that George would pause from his new pulpit and if able to address his congregation he would say something to the effect of, "This revolution is not only about the systemic police brutality of people with darker skin. It's about all social injustice. We need to work together. We must work together."

Because if we don't, it will be Opportunity Lost. And we are running out of time.

I began to write this article immediately after the previous one, but it wasn't happening. You can't say "All Lives Matter" instead of "Black Lives Matter," especially if you happened to be born White and male. Then I thought, how about "All Beings Matter?" Would that be more PC? I will take some heat for even attempting to go here. I'm fine with that. If you are a bit pissed off by what you are reading, ask yourself, "Why?"

Then something happened. A few days ago, I learned of the sudden, unexpected, tragic deaths of two people to whom I was at least tangentially connected. Life is precious. All Life Matters.

Let's begin with the real problem. If it is possible to distill down into one sentence the reason for what has happened in the United States and around the world since May 25th, that sentence might be: Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett have a greater wealth than the



bottom 50 percent of all Americans combined. That sentence is not an error. It is the root of the problem.

Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation – a \$13 billion "social justice" philanthropy – has written, "extreme levels of economic inequity are only one of the many forms of inequality that plague our nation: We also face rampant discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and ability." For good measure, Walker also throws in the "looming... global environmental catastrophe, which will make every one of these disparities more extreme."

With no disrespect to George Floyd, there is no way his murder alone could reasonably explain the demonstrations we have all witnessed around the globe since his death. Use whatever euphemism you like: George was the tipping point; the straw that choked the camel's neck; the spark that ignited the fire. Translation: People are fed up. Governments and the media like to compartmentalize problems and issues as if they are not connected. People know better. All of these issues (and many others) are deeply and inextricably intertwined. They are not single, unrelated problems that can easily be discussed in a political speech or a three-minute cable news segment. People everywhere understand this. There is no other way to explain Floydism.

The thread that connects these myriad problems is the grossly unequal distribution of resources on a finite planet. A deep dive into this issue is not possible in a 1500-word editorial [book deal, anyone?]. For the purposes of these essays, what's most important is for you, the reader, to "check your issue at the door" and understand that, unless you are part of the 1%, we're all in this together.

The greed of the few is suffocating the many. I can't breathe.

From March to May, all we talked about was the Coronavirus. I can't breathe.

Fascism has already or is taking hold in Brazil, China, Russia, Turkey, and the United States. I can't breathe.

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The Amazon is burning. I can't breathe.

I've been sheltering-in-place for three months and my kids are driving me crazy. I can't breathe.

The police just choked/shot/killed another unarmed citizen. I can't breathe.

In no way does the above discount or minimize the horrible reality that "allowed" police (until five weeks ago) to asphyxiate (kill) Black men like Eric Garner and George Floyd. Racism and police brutality are two branches of the larger tree. But if Floydism is to succeed – if we wish to end racism, militarized law enforcement protecting property (and Confederate monuments) over people, the destruction of our planet, massive extinctions, the needless killing of 40 billion abused farmed animals a year that directly lead to worldwide pandemics – it will take all of the branches of that tree to work together. Anything less will fail. This is our moment and our challenge.



You may be familiar with the following words written by author Alice Walker: "The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for whites or women for men."

You may know this oft-quoted phrase, but you may not know its back-story. Walker wrote it in her foreword of a 1988 book, The Dreaded Comparison, by Marjorie Spiegel. The "dreaded comparison" of Spiegel's book is between the treatment of Black Africans during the slave trade and farmed animals in present times. Gordon Parks would later say the book "should be placed in schoolrooms across the universe."

A few weeks ago, in the heat of the protests and demonstrations following the murder of George Floyd, a friend pondered, "Am I alone in wondering where these people are when it comes to oppression of animals? Brutality toward animals? All lives matter and it kills me to see activism at this level that leaves out everything non-human."

My initial reaction to her words, which I kept to myself, was, "I don't want to go there." Then I took a shower.

Earlier in the day I had read Shola Richards' brilliant, warm, poignant, yet simultaneously sad essay, "This is My Reality," that blew up around the internet. You probably read it, too. The author offers his "common sense points," the second of which is:

"Responding to Black Lives Matter by saying All Lives Matter is insensitive, tone-deaf and dumb. All lives can't matter until black lives matter."

Elsewhere I saw something similar, another writer stating (I'm paraphrasing), "Saying 'All Lives Matter' is like saying 'All Houses Matter' when only one house on the block is burning."

To both of these well-intentioned people I would say, "Yes and No." Compassion must be color-blind. I'll even argue it must be species-blind. It appears anyone weighing in with an opinion on certain issues nowadays must "preemptively" apologize, with something like, "I'm a privileged White person but..." I'm calling BS.

In May, 700,000 "healthy pigs" were killed by suffocation each week and dumped into landfills due to Coronavirus and a Black couple was tased and dragged from their car by an army of Atlanta police.

In June, 75-year-old Martin Gugino was shoved by Buffalo police to the ground and Rayshard Brooks was shot in the back and killed while running away from more Atlanta police.

On June 19, 65-year-old Regan Russell was run over and killed by a truck outside a Burlington, Ontario, slaughterhouse for the "crimes" of giving water to and bearing witness of pigs who were not going to be dumped in a landfill.

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.

I will not allow anyone to "single issue" me, to suggest I don't have enough empathy and energy to juggle multiple societal black eyes at the same time. I can. You can. We must. At the same time, do not get caught up fighting over whose issue is "bigger" or "more important" or "right." If you do, Floydism will die, and the powers that be – from oppressive governments to aggressive police forces, from run amok capitalists to anti-regulation corporations – will prevail. They will continue to cannibalize the planet, take (steal) more than their share, pit us against each other, and use their military might to protect their accumulation of wealth and power.

All life is precious. All Life Matters.

#### • Dedication to Regan Russell and Linda DeStefano •

The two deaths I became aware of in the last week were Regan Russell, who I did not know, but with whom I shared a worldview regarding animals as well as many mutual friends. Regan was run over by a truck carrying pigs to slaughter during a vigil. The investigation is ongoing. She was 65.

The second was Linda DeStefano. When I saw Martin Gugino get knocked on his back I immediately thought of Linda. I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn that they knew each other. Leaving a friend's funeral, Linda and her husband were hit by a car while crossing the street. Richard survives. Learning of Linda's passing

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# **SUNSHINE, OUR CAT**

by Richard Weiskopf

I sit in my armchair, feet up to take a nap. Close my eyes. Soon I feel his paws and weight resting in my lap. He'll nap with me, keeping me company. Sometimes he scratches but doesn't hurt on purpose.

His life is uncomplicated: eating sleeping, excreting in his litter, which I clean out daily.

#### Other activities:

Chasing after Allegra, his sister, scratching the fine Persian rug in our living room, climbing almost to the ceiling; perching on our refrigerator, sweeping with outstretched paw, the hat from my head.

Sunshine has no concern for getting work done, paying bills catching up on email, reading, staying up to date with the news, keeping appointments.

Is he bored? I don't think so. He communicates well without speaking; lets me know when it's time for him to eat.

# **MAPLE LACE COOKIES**

Recipe provided by Eileen Rose

#### **INGREDIENTS**

 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. soft vegan margarine  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt

2 c. rolled oats 1 tsp. baking soda

3/4 c. real maple syrup 1 tsp. real vanilla extract

1 ½ c. whole wheat flour (pastry if you can)

#### **DIRECTIONS**

- 1. Beat margarine till smooth
- 2. Beat in oats, then maple syrup, then vanilla.
- 3. Stir in salt, then baking soda, then flour till smooth.
- 4. Drop a teaspoon on the baking pan that is buttered.
- 5. Bake at 325° for 15 mins. Let cool before removing as cookies are fragile. *Yummy!* ■

#### **SPECIESISM AND KIDS?**

by Diana Kozenyatko

So first off, let's define the word itself. 'Speciesism' is defined as treating a certain species as more valuable or more important than another. For example cats and dogs we love, but cows and pigs we mistreat for our taste buds. Society portrays this idea to kids. We might not say it out-loud, but actions of course speak louder than words.

A distinct memory from a movie always makes me think of speciesism and how parents put it on to their kids. In one scene of a movie a girl is sitting down with her mom and brother and is eating a burger. The little girl then asks, "Mom, what is a burger made from?" The mom then proceeds to say that it comes from a cow and the little girl immediately spits it out and doesn't proceed to eat the burger. The little girl is smarter than her mom. She knows that it's wrong, and in her view, gross to eat animal foods. She had that connection instantly with no hesitation and her mother told her "just eat your damn food".

In a way, we brainwash kids to eat one and love the other. I once had those thoughts too – just like that little girl. I always thought meat was gross to eat. I hated eating meat when my mom put it in soups or dishes. But parents and society teach kids that speciesism is okay. Am I blaming the parents, yes, but maybe the parent once had the same thought as their child when they were a kid.

This is why education is a great tool. Imagine the world we would live in if we taught kids to love everyone and taught them eating animals is wrong and morally unacceptable. It's crazy how society brainwashes kids, and not just society but big corporate companies like the American Heart Association. I mean they're literally promoting beef recipes. How is that okay you might ask? Well, they need business. They need people to get sick. Without people getting sick, there is no business.

As I have been growing up, I have been learning there's a lot of lies that are promoted by the food industry. For example, the egg industry has lied to me. No one writes on egg cartons that to be able to get those eggs, male baby chicks had to be tossed into a grinder to be killed alive. We take advantage of one animal species as fashion, as food, as entertainment. All living beings deserve respect, love, compassion. What did animals do to deserve being tortured alive, being used as entertainment at a zoo or circus? Not to step into a touchy subject of religion, but many Christians love God, love people, love their dog, but yet go hunting. Why do we show compassion to some and not



# VEGAN SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT WITH A MISSION OPENS IN ARMORY SQUARE

By Maddie Rhodes Post Standard • March 06, 2021

A Syracuse entrepreneur with a mission is bringing vegan soul food to the heart of Armory Square.

Rev. Curtis Levy entered the Syracuse food scene in 2016 with a mobile Italian ice cart that was an instant hit on downtown street corners and at area festivals. The Razzle Dazzle Italian ices moved to Destiny USA in September 2018, and expanded to a neighboring storefront the following year with Our Neighborhood Chefs, which offers vegan tacos, paninis and wraps along with desserts from Syracuse-area businesses, including vegan treats Cathy's Cookie Kitchen.

His latest venture - Razzle Dazzle: Our Vegan Corner - opened Friday on Walton Street, in the space formerly occupied by a Subway franchise.

The restaurant helps support Last House on the Block Ministries, a non-profit run by Levy, an ordained minister. The ministry provides housing and services to those dealing with substance abuse problems, mental health issues, domestic violence and other challenges.



The menu at the new location focuses on soul food, with collard greens, candied yams, mac and cheese, corn bread, smoked chicken(less)

wings and vegan barbecue ribs.

Levy explains the trick to vegan soul food: "Most soul food is cooked with meat to get that flavor, so I found another way... The concept of the chicken and the meatless beef is you season it as you season the meat. It's sauteed and marinated overnight. We use seasoning,

flatten the spare ribs, and grill it for the lines to have the effect of an actual rib. We have chicken, drumsticks, wings, fried chicken, and it looks just like it."

The newest endeavor from Rev. Curtis Levy is 'Our Vegan Corner,' located on Walton Street in Armory Square.

Levy not only focuses on the flavor but the quality as well. The restaurants rely on organic produce, sourced from local farmer's markets when possible.

Part of Levy's business plan has been educating customers and vendors on plant-based and animal-free cuisine. Although Levy is not 100% vegan, he said he has most noticed the difference in his body and how it feels when he eats vegan. He describes it as more healthy, fresh, and less congested.

Levy said the hardest part about converting is your brain and body balancing the change.

"When you first stop eating meat, your brain doesn't agree with you," Levy said. "Your body will be mad at you. You'll start seeing mirages of chicken running by your bed. It's a struggle, it's like smoking cigarettes. But once you get past that point, your body balances what you're eating."

Meals at 'Our Vegan Corner' end with 16 flavors of Italian ice and gelato or vegan soft serve ice cream. "People are skeptical about veganism until they try it," Levy said. "You can't tell that (the food is) meatless if you know how to cook."

# **GEORGE FLOYDISM** continued

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influenced this article in that Linda was a tireless and multifaceted social justice activist. She co-founded (in 1982) and was the long-time president of People for Animal Rights in Syracuse, NY. She successfully fought to ban fracking in New York State. She was active in women's rights, indigenous issues, environment protection, and too many others to list. She lived the life most activists aspire to, with a small footprint and always looking out for others. I admired Linda and learned much from her over nearly 30 years. She was someone who led by example and will be greatly missed. She was 76.

Both Regan and Linda were long-time vegans. ■

# WHAT YOU CAN DO?

Visit: https://www.change.org/t/veganism-en-gb to sign petitions against animal abuse and torture!

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Why not check your address too? If you've moved, send us your new address and phone(s) so we don't have to spend extra money and time accepting return newsletters with those yellow stickers providing (sometimes) a forwarding address. Then we must collect and re-send the newsletters with those nasty stickers! Thanks very much!



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#### SPECIESISM AND KIDS? continued

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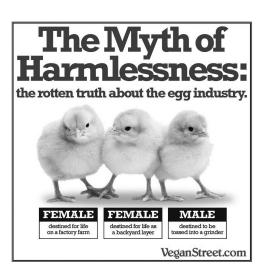
others? Why is it in some religions you aren't allowed to eat pork but are allowed to eat other animal foods? It just doesn't make sense.

So you might ask, how do I stop this and how do I teach? You have to start educating yourself and then educating others. Kids naturally love animals. I mean, at least I did. I called myself an animal lover, but I was eating animals! We need to teach kids the truth. You might ask, "well, why kids? Why teach them?" Well, kids are the future. They are going to be raising future generations and so on. We have to be able to teach kids this topic while they are young. Educate kids early on how to build a healthy vegan diet, and teach them that animals deserve compassion and love. Not just dogs and cats, but all animals.

Imagine the world with no animal farms, no zoos, no leather and fur products. And not to mention climate change. We use so much of our soil and land for soy to feed animals. We would overcome global hunger. We need to teach younger generations that they are the future.

If you're reading this and thinking well what can I do right now to spread the word? Lead with example. Lead with love. Share vegan recipes to non vegan

friends. Share documentaries to watch.
Maybe go out to a vegan friendly restaurant. I know when I switched to a vegan diet and posted recipes onto my social media platforms many



of my friends, who are fellow Gen. Z's, started asking me for good vegan foods to try. Many of my friends started buying more vegan alternatives because of my posts. A little change will go a long way.

I know it's frustrating, but it will take time for the world to go completely vegan. Again, remember education is a great tool.

On a more positive note, the Beyond Meat brand is out-numbering sales of Tyson chicken! ■