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Going organic a delicious experience

By Fran Hawk

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My efforts to establish a compost heap have been carried off by the nocturnal sorties of raccoons. My vegetable and fruit plantings have turned into bug buffets. I believe in organic. I just haven't quite mastered the fine art of going organic.

Over the course of decades, I've read countless books, including "Diet for a Small Planet" by Frances Moore Lappe and "The New Laurel's Kitchen: A Handbook for Vegetarian Cookery and Nutrition" by Laurel Robertson. They all made sense, but nothing grabbed my attention like "Skinny Bitch" by Kim Barnouin and Rory Freedman. A friend's daughter sent it to her from California (where else?). My friend read it and became a vegan overnight. I read it and am tempted to make the same choice. If even half the book is correct, meat and milk and everything else I enjoy eating and drinking is poison.

What really whacked me upside the head was the

inherent poisoning of my grandchildren. It may be too late for me, but I certainly don't want to poison them!

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The language in the book is so offensive I had to skim it. I vote for a version that provides the information without the gutter talk. However, it does hammer home the message that we all should be paying attention to our food.

Barbara Kingsolver's book, "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life" is a fascinating documentary of her family's commitment to raise all their own food. They moved to Appalachia, got organized and made their dream happen. I was especially impressed with their success because one child is a teenager (no Cokes or chips!) and one (who raised chickens and kept the family in eggs) is in elementary school (no PopTarts).

When our children were young, I bought wheat in 50-pound sacks, ground it into flour and made our family's bread. Sugar was a banned substance. Even those small steps required a lot of energy and confidence to rise above the naysayers.

Now when I consider becoming a vegan, a vegetarian, and/or committing to organic, I'm thinking that incremental changes are probably the most likely to lead to success, however that "success" is personally defined.

That bread I used to make was time-consuming, heavier than cement, but absolutely delicious. Books can be convincing, but delicious is an even more powerful incentive.

If you want to jump-start your conviction that organic is delicious, gather all your friends and go to the "holistic soul food" restaurant at 80-A Reid St. (between Upper King and Meeting streets) called Alluette's Cafe. Look for the green awning and a warm welcome. Free-range chicken salad, veggie burgers, soups and more. Even the mayonnaise is organic and the breads are entirely too tasty. Alluette's Cafe is living proof that organic is a treat rather than a treatment.

This is my new favorite restaurant. And not just because of the super food. And not just because of the

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friendly proprietors. Alluette's Cafe sells a few well-chosen books, among them the picture books "Little Muddy Waters: A Gullah Folk Tale" by Ronald Daise and "Amadeus: The Leghorn Rooster" (also a Gullah folk tale) by Delores B. Nevils and illustrated by Jonathan Green. One stop for culture and collards!

Reach **Fran Hawk** at franbooks@yahoo.com.

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