



*Organic*  
**Connections**

JULY-AUG 2010

The magazine of Peter Gillham's Natural Vitality

**Marion Nestle**

**How the Food Industry Hijacked Nutrition**

**David Helvarg**

**Saving Our Oceans**

**Chef Suzanne Goin**

**Market-to-Table Sunday Suppers**

# OUR KIDS deserve the best

## KIDS NATURAL CALM® MULTI

- 24 organic fruits & veggies**  
 Includes our own premium blend of organic superfruits (pomegranate, açai, goji, noni) as well as vegetables, fruits and sprouts.
- Omega-3 DHA & EPA**  
*Kids Natural Calm Multi* incorporates premium-quality, sustainably fished omega-3, so there's no need for a separate omega-3 supplement.
- Natural Calm** has been the best-selling magnesium supplement for over four years. It won the Vity Award from *Vitamin Retailer* magazine, and Better Nutrition's Best of Supplements Award for the second year running. Children need magnesium every day. It helps give them calm energy, and helps them to sleep well and feel better in many ways.
- Comprehensive multi.** *Kids Natural Calm Multi* includes super-soluble, bioavailable calcium, vitamins, ConcenTrace® minerals, and amino acids. We've also added DMAE to support improved focus.
- Organics.** Along with our organic fruits and veggies, our kid-tested orange splash flavor is all organic and sweetened with organic stevia and organic agave.



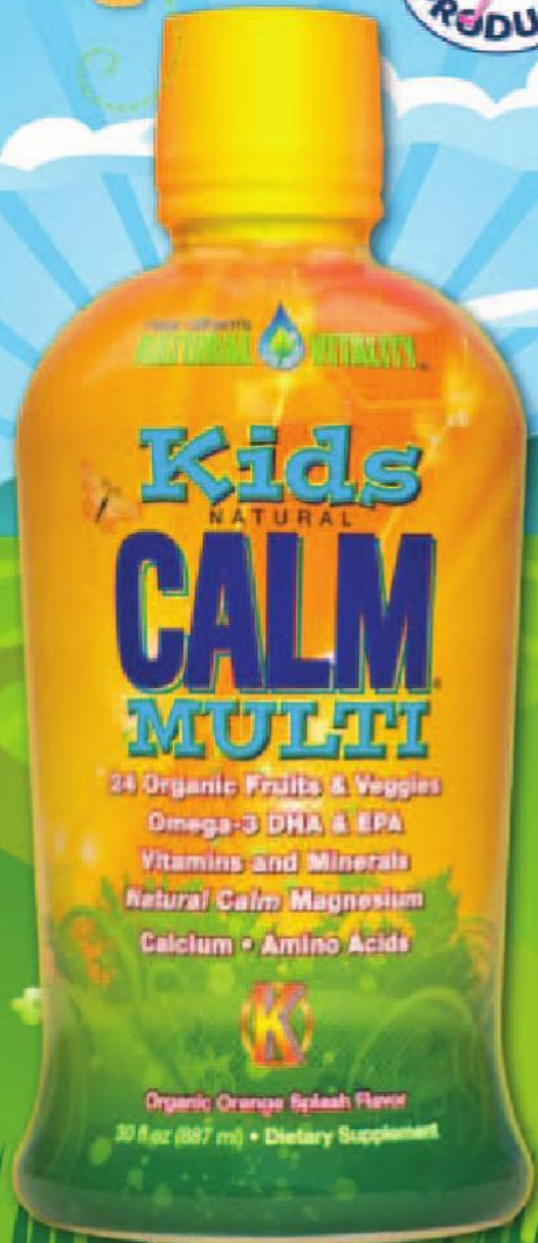
*A new level of health!*

For more product information, visit [www.petergillham.com](http://www.petergillham.com).

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

# Organic

24 organic fruits & veggies  
 organic flavor  
 organic stevia / organic agave



GLUTEN FREE

NON-GMO

Made with NATURAL CALM

ORGANIC FLAVOR

ORGANIC STEVIA & AGAVE

FAST ABSORPTION

# The capacity to redesign our lives

invite you to consider that, with the exception of severe weather and natural disasters, the troubles in our world are man-made. But most of us are good people and very few of us actually set out to do *bad* things—in fact, quite the opposite. So how do we, as the most intelligent inhabitants of this planet, end up moving from one potential disaster to another as chronicled in the subject we call history?

Why do good intentions go bad? In a word: *expediency*. The dictionary defines *expedient* as “convenient and practical, although possibly improper or immoral.”

A person had the goal of making a better society and entered politics to reform the system. Somewhere along the line, the purpose shifted due to the practicalities of getting re-elected; and in order to obtain the requisite number of votes, polling firms were hired and speeches were written to tell people what they wanted to hear, with little thought or intention as to how promises would be kept.

Another wanted to alleviate human suffering and got a sales job at a pharmaceutical company. Reality set in when quotas were given to maintain the quarterly profits demanded by the board and shareholders. In order to make those targets (and keep one’s job), products were represented as safer and more effective than they were, and new markets were opened based on potential revenues rather than need or whether these medicines would help or harm.

I’m sure you can think up numerous examples of how otherwise worthy endeavors, such as farming, manufacturing, waste removal or even providing free lunches to school children, can—and have—become perverted and harmful due to solutions most often tied to economic expediency.

I submit that our individual and collective efforts should be contributing in some way toward a planet on which we all—repeat *all*—can lead healthy and happy existences. If we continue to exploit our seas, air, soil and natural resources for expedient profit, we will destroy our fragile living planet as well as ourselves in the process.

The hopeful news in all this is that expediency is a *choice*. There are a great many people whose personal integrity has compelled them to speak out and help us to re-examine our lives and our culture *before* we reach the point of no return. They deserve to be listened to and taken seriously. Our saving grace as a species is that we have the *capacity to redesign* our lives and our systems to sustainably serve ourselves, each other and our mutually inhabited home planet.

*Ken Whitman*

PUBLISHER

*Organic Connections*™ is published by Peter Gillham’s Natural Vitality

2530 N. Ontario Street, Burbank, CA 91504-2512

Editorial Office 818.333.2171 • [www.petergillham.com](http://www.petergillham.com)

For a free e-subscription, visit [www.organicconnectmag.com](http://www.organicconnectmag.com)

Product sales and information 800.446.7462

© 2010 Peter Gillham’s Natural Vitality. All rights reserved.

## In this issue



### or•gan•ic |ôr gan'ik|

denoting a relation between elements of something such that they fit together harmoniously as necessary parts of a whole: *the organic unity of the integral work of art* • characterized by continuous or natural development: *companies expand as much by acquisition as by organic growth.*

#### 4 Marion Nestle

Professor, author, and government advisor Marion Nestle talks about the politics of food and the state of our food system. She reveals how food corporations put profits ahead of nutrition while fostering public confusion about diet and health as part of their marketing strategy to sell us more and more food.



#### 7 David Helvarg

David Helvarg, renowned author, journalist, and president of the Blue Frontier Campaign, shares his considerable insight into just how precious our oceans actually are—and what each and every one of us can do to save them.



#### 11 Chef Suzanne Goin

Locally grown, sustainable ingredients are obviously healthier. But as Chef Suzanne Goin will tell you, it really pays off in their fantastic taste. The noted author and L.A.-based master chef sat down with *Organic Connections* to discuss the how and why behind her famous Sunday Suppers at Lucques.



Free subscription to *Organic Connections* weekly web-only features—[www.organicconnectmag.com](http://www.organicconnectmag.com)

## Marion Nestle

### How the Food Industry Hijacked Nutrition

Is dietary advice motivated by a real concern for public health or by driving profits for food companies?

American families are bombarded with nutritional information on a daily basis—and it can be very confusing. Food conglomerates hire PR agencies and lobbyists to help influence government dietary regulations and to promote aspects of their products that give them “health appeal.” At the same time, a vast number of these foods and food-like substances are contributing to an out-of-control obesity epidemic and highest-ever cases of diabetes, while our government continues to subsidize crops that are part and parcel of these foodstuff offenders, making them cheap and affordable.

The net result: two out of three people today are overweight or obese, and the life expectancy of our children is actually shorter than that of their parents.

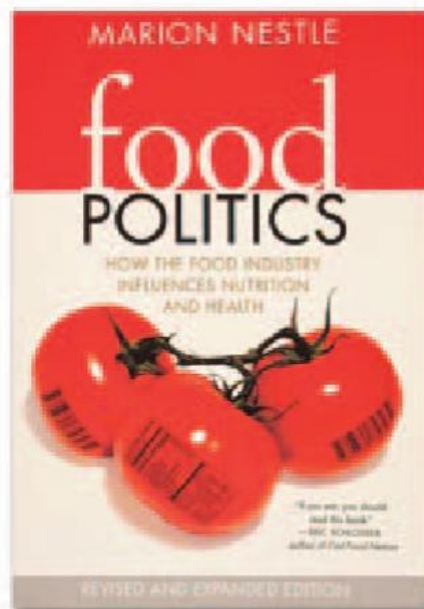
While misleading and ill-motivated dietary information continues to hit the news daily, there are fortunately voices of reason becoming more resonant and even beginning to affect government decisions. For many years, one of these voices has been that of Marion Nestle.

Nestle is Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health\*—as well as Professor of Sociology—at New York University. She has served as a nutrition policy advisor to the Department of Health and Human Services and as a member of nutrition and science advisory committees to the US Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration. She is the author of several best-selling and highly respected books, among them *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition*

and *Health; Safe Food: The Politics of Food Safety*; and *What to Eat*, and has additionally published two titles focusing on pet food: *Pet Food Politics* and *Feed Your Pet Right*.

She was also liberally quoted in the film documentary *Food Fight*, detailing how our modern food system came to be the way it is.

Part of the problem Nestle sees is that, for far too long, the food industry has mostly been focused on profit over nutrition. “Just look at the market in general,” Nestle told *Organic Connections*. “All you have to do is observe the way the food industry behaves and see that sales take precedence over anything else. That’s the way Wall Street works. If you look at newspaper accounts of quarterly reports, it’s clear that growth every 90 days is critically important for any corporation. For food corporations it’s particularly difficult because there’s so much food available—twice as much as anybody needs, or as the country needs as a whole.”



An all-too-typical example of how profit is such a prime motivation can be seen in figures Nestle cites in her book *Food Politics* in relation to food marketing to children. “Soft drink companies unapologetically name 8- to

12-year-olds as marketing targets,” she says. “McDonald’s produces commercials, advertisements, and a Web site specifically aimed at children 8–13. In January 2000 Quaker Oats began a \$15-million, 5-month campaign devoted entirely to promoting sales of its heavily sugared Cap’n Crunch cereal to children.”

Does all this advertising work? Apparently it does—both on children and their parents. In her 2006 book *What to Eat*, Nestle observes, “Unbelievable as it may seem, one-third of all vegetables consumed in the United States come from just three sources: french fries, potato chips and iceberg lettuce.”

#### Four Factors in Food Marketing

Nestle points out that the food industry’s marketing imperatives principally concern four factors: taste, cost, convenience and public confusion. For the taste factor, the general trend is for sweet, fatty and salty, as these flavors sell the most. For cost, the emphasis is on keeping costs low both for consumers and—especially—for the manufacturers. Convenience, of course, is a principal driving factor due to modern lifestyles.

But the most interesting of these four is *public confusion*. “People obtain information about diet and health from the media—newspapers, magazines, television, radio and, more recently, the Internet,” Nestle explained. “Media outlets require *news*, and reporters are partial to breakthroughs, simple take-home lessons, and controversies. Virtually every food and beverage company is represented by a trade or public-relations firm whose job it is to promote a positive image of that item among consumers, professionals and the media.”

Nestle also describes how dietary research tends to focus on a single nutrient at a time. Research on a single nutrient is more likely to gain media interest and thus to garner headlines. The problem is that single nutrients don’t function in isolation in the body. But this approach allows a pizza company to promote the calcium in the cheese topping

on its fast-food pizza as helping to build strong bones.

“Food companies, research groups and their lobbyists can take advantage of the results of single-nutrient research to claim that products containing the ‘beneficial nutrient’ promote health,” Nestle said. “If people are confused about nutrition, they will be more likely to accept such claims at face value.”

As Nestle shows, lobbying government agencies is a big part of bringing these claims into the mainstream. She illustrates that food lobbying has grown dramatically in the last half-century. In the 1950s, only 25 groups of food producers dominated agricultural lobbying. By the mid-1980s there were 84 such groups. By the late 1990s there were hundreds—if not thousands—of businesses, associations and individuals attempting to influence federal decisions related to every conceivable aspect of food and beverage production, manufacture, sales, service and trade.

Nestle says that in addition to lobbyists, food companies co-opt nutrition professionals as spokespeople to establish an image of their products as nutritious—and information from them is also considered “newsworthy” by the media. Intentional public confusion appears on product packaging too—and Nestle cited an example: “I’ve just picked up a box of General Mills’ Total cereal, and in big print on the front it says, ‘Blueberry Pomegranate.’ So it’s ‘Total Blueberry Pomegranate cereal—100% nutrition.’ Anybody looking at that will think that not only is it going to meet all his or her nutritional needs but it’s got blueberry and pomegranate, which by this time are known to be *quote* ‘superfoods’ *unquote*. The thing is, there is no blueberry or pomegranate in the cereal—none, zero.

“If you’re a food company, your job is to make people want to buy your product. There’s nothing wrong with that; that’s the way business works. It’s just that when they do things that I consider misleading, I think they cross an ethical line, or in some cases a legal line.”

### Turning the Tide

In addition to nutrition confusion, another problem is the fact that a large percentage of consumers have spent their entire lives living with the existing food system. “If we want to do something about child obesity, we have to reverse a lot of the changes that led to it in the first place,” Nestle advised. “Society has changed an enormous amount in the



last 30 years since the early 1980s, when obesity wasn’t such a problem. And those changes will be extremely difficult to reverse, in part because people have grown up living with this system and don’t know any other system. Just like they can’t remember when it was okay for kids to walk to school, they can’t remember when foods weren’t pushed on television to the extent that they are now. Just like they can’t remember when it was okay for kids to play outside by themselves after school, they can’t remember when there

wasn’t food in the schools all day long—and when there weren’t soda machines in schools. They can’t remember when kids weren’t being marketed to all the time.

“Those represent huge societal changes. People can’t remember when food wasn’t available absolutely everywhere. The example I like using is bookstores: When did it become okay to eat in bookstores—or libraries, for that matter?

“These are changes in society that occurred as a result of food industry pressures to sell



**Unbelievable as it may seem, one-third of all vegetables consumed in the United States come from just three sources: french fries, potato chips and iceberg lettuce.**

more food to more people in more places.”

Unfortunately, true information about the state of our food system rarely reaches the major media. Once in a great while, however, someone like Jamie Oliver will manage to make it there. “I was dubious about Jamie Oliver, but I have been converted to a total fan,” Nestle said. “I think what he is doing is absolutely amazing. Yes, it’s reality television, and, yes, it’s all about him. But I like the way he’s just in there getting his hands dirty up to his elbows, dealing with people on things that nobody wants to talk about and telling the truth as he sees it, no matter how uncomfortable it is. And, yes, it’s exploitive; but he’s getting a huge audience and people are talking about it, and I think that’s good.

“I also like the way he has exposed some of the systemic as well as personal aspects of obesity. He’s not totally focused on the personal; he’s also demonstrating, in a way that I think is a big eye-opener for a lot of people, how the Department of Agriculture’s rules, for example, make it so difficult to serve healthier food in schools.”

It’s clear that something substantial must be done. The government finally passed a new school-lunch program—but when broken down on a per-meal basis, it doesn’t help much. “I was disappointed that the increase in reimbursement is 6 cents per meal,” Nestle remarked. “That doesn’t really address the problem in any way whatsoever.”

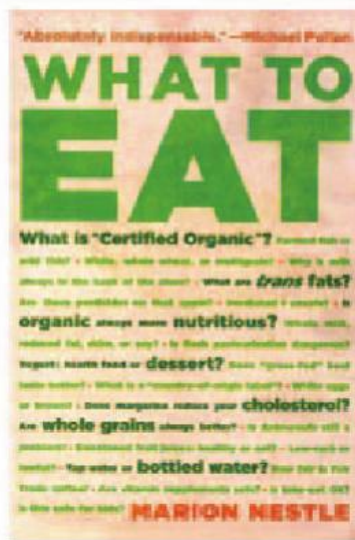
#### Government Adds to the Problem

It would seem that organizations such as the USDA should have a mandate to improve

the health of the country. But there appears to be a built-in conflict of interest.

“The Department of Agriculture is full of contradictions,” said Nestle. “First, while it subsidizes corn and soybeans, it is also responsible for dietary advice to the public that tells people to eat more fruits and vegetables. But fruits and vegetables aren’t subsidized.

“The subsidies for corn and soybeans mean that corn sweeteners and corn oil and soy oil are cheaper than they would be if the true cost



of producing those foods were factored in. That has encouraged processed-food makers to use a lot of soy oil and high-fructose corn syrup, because they’re cheap.”

#### Going Back to the Beginning

In looking over this entire situation, it might seem difficult to find a place to start in

reversing this out-of-control system. Nestle has some strong advice in this regard, however—in a similar way to other pioneers such as Alice Waters and Chef Ann Cooper.

“The school food issue is a very important one and a very good place to start, because people can go into a school and make a difference. It’s not that hard to do. I mean, I would pick an easier school than Jamie Oliver did—he picked one that is as difficult as any could be. But there are plenty of schools in which changes are being made, and they are very impressive changes.

“This is true even of public schools in more difficult places. There are lots of schools in New York City, for example, where people are working on them one by one to try and bring them to the point where they can do a better job.”

But the bottom line is—do *something*. “If you don’t act, nothing will happen,” Nestle said. “Not doing anything is a decision to allow the system to proceed as it has been proceeding. If you want to take action, there are plenty of ways. Individuals have made a big difference in lots of different ways. Some of it is legislative; some of it is on a local level.”

More information:

Read Marion Nestle’s excellent *Food Politics* blog at [www.foodpolitics.com](http://www.foodpolitics.com). Follow Marion on Twitter: @marionnestle.

*Food Politics* is available from the Organic Connections bookstore.

\*Paulette Goddard Professor: an endowed professorship that is part of a major bequest to New York University from the estate of noted film actress Paulette Goddard.

## David Helvarg

### The Critical Mission of Saving Our Oceans

by Bruce Boyers



When I got the assignment to interview David Helvarg, noted author, journalist, and president of the Blue Frontier Campaign, I had no idea of the vault of emotions I was about to open within myself. As the threat to our seas has become more pronounced over the years, it seems that this vault has become quite solidly shut and firmly locked, and shoved back into the farthest, darkest recesses of my mind; and until David started talking, I'd pretty much forgotten about it altogether.

Mid interview with him, I suddenly recalled how as an eight-year-old I had learned to bodysurf in the tumbling waves on the shores of Long Beach, California—and how crushing it was to me when Big Oil came along and erected drilling platforms just offshore, disguising them (badly) as tropical



islands, plastic palms and all. At the same time a breakwater was built, and the waves that I had played in were no more.

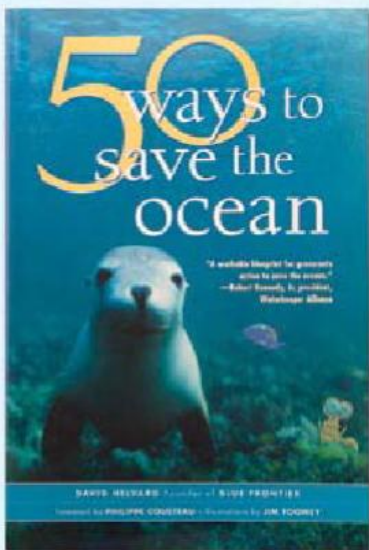
Other memories came rushing forth. When even younger (about age three or four) I had wandered from under my mother's watchful eye and into the hefty surf of Laguna Beach. I got caught up in a wave and was turned end over end, until I was summarily deposited on the shore. I stood up, shook the water from my ears and looked back out to sea. I hadn't been frightened; the ocean had been gentle if strong with its salty, foamy touch. I felt like I had made a giant liquid blue-and-white friend.

Years later I went back to Laguna to show it to my son, but the Laguna that I had known had totally vanished—smothered

and jammed with condos and brand-new luxury homes, the streets choked with the high-end sleek vehicles of the nouveau riche, the once funky beachfront now ablaze with trendy restaurants and expensive hotels. I haven't been back since, preferring my memories of open grassy hills rolling down to the sea where I stepped gingerly through tide pools in search of hermit crabs.

In a similar way, I prefer the memories of playing with my school friends under Santa Monica Pier, leaving completely a present time in which the Santa Monica Bay has become one of the most polluted oceanic spots in the world, where you swim at your own risk.

Yes, all of these memories were firmly locked away—until I began talking to this



## The things that we think of as simply environmental or health oriented, such as organic eating and living and the energy choices we make, have huge impacts on the oceans around us.

remarkable man, who shared many similar memories and much more, and has made it his life's mission to help restore the planet's oceans.

### David Helvarg and the Blue Frontier

Just who is David Helvarg? Well, to begin, he's a man who has without question led a prolifically active existence. In the seventies, you would have found him as a journalist in Northern Ireland when the civil strife known as "the Troubles" was at its height. In the eighties, he was covering the US role in Central American conflicts; he was actually arrested by the Salvadoran army and deported from El Salvador in 1983 while reporting on a massacre of civilians. In the nineties, he was reporting and writing on topics ranging from underwater technology to AIDS education.

As an award-winning journalist, Helvarg has produced more than 40 broadcast documentaries for PBS, the Discovery Channel and others. His print work has appeared in publications including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Popular Science*, *Sierra* and the *Nation*.

If you ask him what has brought him to now fight exclusively for the ocean, you discover the other part of his life—existing the whole while and finally consuming him.

"I've always been engaged with the ocean since I was a kid," Helvarg told *Organic Connections*. "Most of my life was schizophrenic; I was going off to cover wars and epidemics so I could come home to go bodysurfing and diving and hang out with the waves. Because I spent my life around the water I also observed the shifting baseline, how things were not getting better and the rapid changes that were taking place."

Unlike me, however, who did my best to not see such changes, Helvarg took action. In 2000 he wrote a book entitled *Blue Frontier: Saving America's Living Seas*, through which he applied his investigative skills to the waste, fraud and abuse that were undermining the ecological integrity of our living seas. He made a decision to cover the other 71 percent of the planet that he hadn't been covering in his life: the oceans. A deep

personal loss nearly took him back to war reporting, just to escape depression—but then he got a call from famed consumer and environmental activist Ralph Nader, who had read *Blue Frontier*.

"There is a chapter in the book entitled 'The Seaweed Rebellion,' about marine grass-roots activists who have solutions, and how we need to scale them up," Helvarg related. "So Ralph Nader asked me if anybody was organizing the Seaweed Rebellion, and I said no. He offered me office space and some support to start that. I guess I figured we were always going to have wars, but we may not always have coral reefs, marine wildlife and protective



coastal salt marshes. It was something that I had the knowledge base to work on, and so we formed the Blue Frontier Campaign."

The Campaign has established a nationwide network of grass-roots lobbyists and is campaigning for an American Oceans Act to protect public seas, as well as working to improve ocean policies in the 23 coastal states of the United States. Its other objectives include the creation of books, a TV documentary series, and various educational materials on ocean exploration and stewardship. The first such creation was the 2005–2006 *Ocean and Coastal Conservation Guide*. The Blue Vision Conference in Washington, DC, in July 2004 and Blue Vision Mid-Atlantic Conference at the National Aquarium in Baltimore in April 2005 began a series of seminars to introduce seaweed activists to oceanographers, port officials and other marine stakeholders, which continue to this day.

### 50 Ways to Save the Ocean

To aid the Campaign and to bring awareness to the average citizen, Helvarg in 2006 released a book entitled *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, which illustrates how each person, no matter where he or she lives, is connected to the ocean, and lists out 50 simple methods by which everyone can help save our seas. Recently the Blue Frontier Campaign launched a project called Digital 50 Ways, a project that profiles young people working on marine solutions inspired by the book. It is being done in partnership with Digital Ocean, a virtual meeting ground that connects people and provides them with resources to advance ocean sustainability and protect Earth's marine ecosystems.

"In the introduction to *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, Philippe Cousteau wrote, 'When one tugs at a single thing in nature, one finds it attached to the rest of the world.' The book came about because people lose track of that kind of connection," said Helvarg. "I talk publicly about some of the cascading disasters confronting our oceans—from industrial overfishing to nutrient, plastic and chemical pollution, to the coastal sprawl that's taking away essential habitats, and then on top of that the fossil fuels that have fired up climate change. People come up afterwards and ask, 'What can I do about climate change and the collapse of marine wildlife? I'm one person. I have a family;







I have a job'—or, more typically these days, 'I'm looking for a job.' The answer of course is, 'You are already doing something.' Everything we do every day impacts the seas around us, and so I started putting out the different ways people could solve things as individuals, as citizens. When you do something right for the sea, it tends to be something right for you in terms of your health, your pocketbook, and your spiritual sense of being."

An excellent example is one of the 50 ways that advises eating organic and vegetarian foods. Helvarg points out that, in this instance, he's not even talking about sustainable seafood but our regular land-based food. "Every thread is connected, and with industrial agriculture we put 140 pounds of synthetic fertilizer onto growing an acre of corn in Iowa, Nebraska or Illinois. It's too much. All the surplus petrochemical-based waste follows gravity down the streambeds and rivers and ends up in the Mississippi. The spring flood causes a second crop of algae in the Gulf of Mexico. As the algae decays, it sucks the oxygen out of the water column, resulting in massive dead zones that are spreading around the world from urban and also chemical agricultural runoff.

"So the choice to eat organic is not only healthy for you, it's healthy in terms of the runoff that doesn't go to our coastal waters. And at the same time, if you are buying sustainably and locally, it's foreshortening the travel time that foodstuffs take and the amount of fossil fuels burned in the process. The things that we think of as simply environmental or health oriented, such as organic eating and living and the energy choices we make, have huge impacts on the oceans around us."

Another good tip is very close to home and deals with how we care for our yards.

"A lot of people are still using synthetic fertilizers on their yards, which are going to end up in storm drains and running into the sea," said Helvarg. "It's important for people to take care of yards by going organic, and by doing other things such as having open lattice instead of pavement so that rainwater can go into the ground rather than running off concrete. Rain barrels are another great method of conservation. Doing it right, we can grow food and we can simply walk out the back door and reconnect with the natural world.

"For the rains that fall on your garden, you can thank the ocean. It's this big cycle of water: the evaporation off the ocean generates the clouds that rain down through our mountains, watersheds and gardens; and these rains go straight back into the ocean and out through the coastal salt marshes and eelgrass meadows, across the reefs, into the submarine valleys and down to the abyssal depths. Forty years later they're back at the surface recirculating again."

#### **What the Ocean Could Give Us— If We Let It**

In addition to being a plentiful source of food, the ocean is also largely unexplored for the many other benefits it could provide—benefits that are disappearing right before our eyes.

"The sea is a frontier we've barely tapped into," Helvarg said. "In 1983, Ronald Reagan declared a 200-mile exclusive oceanic economic zone for the US—about six times the size of the Louisiana Purchase—and about one-third of the world's oceans have been fenced off the same way. Yet it remains largely unexplored. With resolution, we've mapped the moon and the other planets in our solar system but only about 5 to 10 percent of the ocean. Last night at an event I met Don Walsh, who, in 1960 with another explorer, went down into the deepest point on earth, the Mariana Trench, seven miles down. We've sent hundreds of people into space, but we only have this one person alive today who's been to the lowest point on our planet.

"So even as we are just on the edge of discovering new phenomena, such as the medicinal benefits of sea whips for pain relief or cancer cures from soft corals, we're in a process of simultaneous destruction. We're putting these habitats at risk by thoughtless actions. Our seas are an area of exploration that has the potential to be a sustainable



source for medicinal uses and for proteins, curing our ills.

“The sea is also a healer of more than the physical. I know just from personal experience what a healing process it is to attend to being part of something larger than yourself. Then, look at the freedom kids have to express

full of plastic. In the northwest Hawaiian Islands turtles eat plastic bags, thinking they are their favorite snack food—jellyfish.

“For plastics, I’d say that step one would be to reduce by half the plastic produced globally, which is some 200 million metric tons a year, 50 percent of which goes for

This is the broad picture. But does it touch each of us in very personal ways as well? Hearing about Helvarg’s new book entitled *Saved by the Sea: A Love Story with Fish* made me realize that my personal connection with the sea, while unique to me, was perhaps not unique in the broad



**We need to restore our coastlines and restore and protect our wetlands—these are nurseries and storm barriers and water filtration systems of our coastal seas; and if we reduce the use of chemical inputs in agriculture, we reduce the coastal dead zones they’re creating.**

their wild nature when you take them to the beach. For others, there is an enormous value to knowing that there’s still wilderness on our ocean planet where a person can get adrenaline rushes and thrills. Yet it also provides such a profound solace in its peace. It is a value that’s immeasurable.”

#### **Ceasing Harm Is the First Step**

It can be seen from just the few examples cited from *50 Ways to Save the Ocean* that a vast majority of these methods deal with cessation of actions that are currently causing our oceans harm. But even doing that, it still takes many years for the ocean to heal.

“I think when you’re digging a hole, the way to prevent the hole is to stop digging,” Helvarg remarked. “We still have persistent organic pollutants from DDT, and we stopped producing it years back. We’ve seen the reduction of other chemicals that we’ve banned. Now one of the major pollutants is plastic. Plastic is worse than basic petroleum, which will biodegrade over time. Plastic polymers just break down into finer dusts that find their way into the food system. Those polymers attract the other chlorinated compounds and persistent organic pollutants with about a million times the attraction of seawater alone, and then present all kinds of different problems to sea life. Out in the Pacific, albatross are dying because their parents are mistaking plastic items for marine food and feeding them to their young, and they literally starve to death with bellies

single-use items like plastic bags. We do have places like San Francisco that have banned single-use plastic bags, and people are moving increasingly toward looking at alternatives to plastic. I’ve got no problem with it for bathtub liners or prosthetic arms or other uses, but certainly we need to get rid of the plastics that are in the waste stream now.

“We don’t have solutions for all the problems, but for most of them we do. We know if you stop killing fish they tend to grow back. We know advance sewage treatment can take a lot of the bacteria out of the near-shore waters. We need to restore our coastlines and restore and protect our wetlands—these are nurseries and storm barriers and water filtration systems of our coastal seas; and if we reduce the use of chemical inputs in agriculture, we reduce the coastal dead zones they’re creating.”

#### **Is the Broad View the Personal View?**

In the end, if we don’t save the ocean it will no longer be there, despite what has been thought in the past. “We used to think, not that long ago, that the ocean was so vast you could grind up all the cities of Earth and it wouldn’t feel the impact,” Helvarg said. “They used to say that fish are so abundant that their productivity couldn’t be impacted by human intervention. We now realize that none of this is true, that we’re having huge impacts on the other three-quarters of our planet that’s saltwater.”

scope of things. It might be that such a kinship or bond is what everyone has—whether they realize it or not—and that bond, in the end, is what will save things. Helvarg’s connection is what continues to motivate him, and he decided to share it in his new book.

“The book is kind of my memoir of my connections to the ocean since I was a young fry running around in the swamps that linked to Long Island Sound, behind my public school,” Helvarg concluded. “I was brought up in New York and as a kid thought I’d miss the discovery of alien worlds by a generation. I was kind of mad about it. When I was 15 my mom took my sister and me down to Key West, and looking at the aquamarine waters was like coming home to a place I’d never been. Putting on a mask and snorkeling, I found this whole other world with living colorful rocks and hammerhead sharks and turtles and select fish. I was hooked and I have been ever since. I think it explains why I care and continue to fight for the oceans—and why we all need to.”

*For more information on Blue Frontier and their activities, visit [www.bluefront.org](http://www.bluefront.org).*

*You can purchase 50 Ways to Save the Ocean and Saved by the Sea: A Love Story with Fish from the Organic Connections bookstore: [www.organicconnectmag.com/wp/bookstore](http://www.organicconnectmag.com/wp/bookstore).*

# Chef Suzanne Goin

## Market-to-Table Sunday Suppers

by Bruce Boyers

Los Angeles is home to many unique restaurants, some great and lasting, some “places du jour” that will likely disappear in an explosion of paparazzi flashbulbs within six months. Among the first category is one quietly and consistently popular eatery that not only bucks many food fads but has its entire cuisine based on locally and sustainably grown crops, poultry, fish and meat. The chef and co-owner of this restaurant, Suzanne Goin, has now become famous through media coverage of her award-winning cuisine and her own best-selling book *Sunday Suppers at Lucques: Seasonal Recipes from Market to Table*. Through her work, the importance of locally and sustainably grown food is becoming much more widely known and sought after.

If you ever decide to check out the celebrated Sunday Supper at her Lucques restaurant, you’ll find out where it all began and why it’s really about ingredient taste.

Finding Lucques may be a bit difficult—the sign over the door of the single-story building is mostly hidden in crawling ivy. Driving slowly down fashionable Melrose Avenue, it is much easier to find the sign for the restaurant’s valet parking, which in this neighborhood you’re likely to need, as there is little street parking to be found anywhere.

Once you’ve taken care of your vehicle, you’ll then wander into the restaurant and realize that finding it doesn’t seem a problem for the near-capacity crowd of quietly talking, eager patrons previously seated. It’s very comfortable—the interior done up in brick and wood beams with a cozy fireplace; and from the front you can also see an enclosed patio, with white-clothed tables set among live trees. Already you feel quite invited and relaxed.

Let’s hope you’ve made reservations—you’ll be needing those; but we’ll assume that

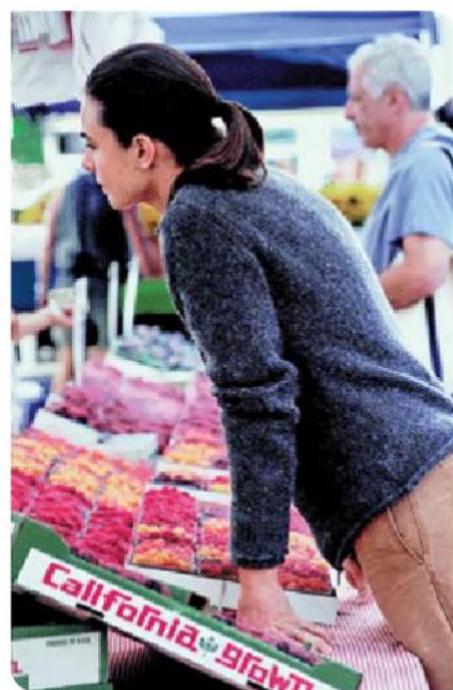
you have, and you’re then shown to your table. Like any other restaurant, you’ll notice that there is a menu laid out for your examination. If you’re not informed, your first surprise will come at this juncture—for this Sunday Supper menu offers little selection. In fact, the only selection is for the main course, and even that is limited to a choice of either a beef or a fish entrée. However, these—plus the appetizer and dessert courses—are strictly at the discretion of the chef.

You look around anew, realizing that all these people have shown up simply and only to find out what Chef Suzanne Goin will be offering on this day. If you happen to inquire, you’ll discover that there are customers who have been doing exactly this for the over ten years that the restaurant has been in operation.

“When we first opened, people weren’t quite sure about having only a chef’s choice for Sunday Suppers,” Suzanne Goin laughingly told *Organic Connections*. “They wondered if we would be serving them leftovers or some such. Then we got a great review, and suddenly people were realizing, ‘Oh, this is a good thing, then!’ We’ve been doing it ever since.”

### The Not-So-Secret Secret

Every chef has a secret—or secrets—to what they do, a particular way of cooking or flavoring or preparing that makes them unique and keeps people coming back. Suzanne certainly has all this—but she’s got something else as well, something she has really made no secret of, and it’s definitely been a key to her success. If you watch patrons eating at Lucques, you’ll notice many looks of surprised and pleasant wonder as they take their first bites, especially



if they’ve never been here before. Although they might be eating something that looks familiar—such as smoked salmon on a bed of soft lettuces—the lettuces have sure never tasted like this, with each individual kind having its own distinct essence and aroma; neither has the smoked salmon. Everything is bursting with flavor like you always imagined it should but it certainly never has. What is the difference?

It’s quite simple, really. Like many great chefs, Suzanne has always followed her taste. While still attending Brown University in Rhode Island, she was cooking for a restaurant called Al Forno in Providence, and it was there she made the initial discovery of the difference that locally and sustainably grown food could make. “I definitely had

my first taste of locally grown food at Al Forno,” she said. “We would drive to Little Compton on the coast to one particular farm stand just for tomatoes. That was pretty unheard of at the time.”

But it wasn't until Suzanne had graduated college and gone to work as a chef for Alice Waters at her legendary Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley that the penny really dropped on the subject. She and the staff would greatly look forward to regular deliveries from local produce farmer Bob Cannard (see *Organic Connections*, January–February 2009), whom Waters had handpicked because of the taste of his fruits and vegetables. It just so happened that in practicing farming, Cannard made sure the soil was completely and naturally nutritious by adding the correct mix of minerals, having found that this would make for very healthy crops and—surprise—fantastic taste.

Suzanne learned her lesson. And in 1998, when she opened her own restaurant, Lucques, in her native Los Angeles, she went in search of ingredient taste of the sort she'd experienced at Chez Panisse. She found it at local farmers' markets and began long-standing relationships with many of the farmers she met there. She discovered that they practiced sustainable farming methods as well.

“Being a chef rather than a farmer or biochemist, for me it's really about the taste,” Suzanne explained. “I sometimes can't tell why a particular crop tastes so good, but I can definitely tell when I taste something special. There is a farmer in Three Rivers, California, named James Birch, and I swear he has magic in his soil (his farm is Flora Bella Farm). There is nothing like his arugula; it's absolutely the best. Or Peter Schaner at Schaner Farms—no one's citrus tastes as good as his. His tangelos are insane!”

It's not just the produce, either—it also includes the meats. On today's Sunday Supper menu you might find something called a grilled Niman Ranch steak. The Niman Ranch is a northern California beef ranch that goes beyond the USDA definition of *natural*, because the proprietors believe that the definition should also include the way that cattle are raised—humanely, with no antibiotics or hormones and fed an all-natural vegetarian diet.

The smoked salmon from an earlier course would have come from a local, sustainable smoked-fish artisan named Michel Blanchet and his company Michel Cordon Bleu.

Even herbs are local and sustainable. Those

Lucques in Los Angeles



roasted beet salad with fried chickpeas,  
Nyons olives and ricotta salata



## yellow tomato gazpacho



provided for the feta salsa verde on the Ni-man Ranch steak came from the Rutiz Family Farm of Arroyo Grande, California.

Nowadays, Suzanne co-owns three other restaurants in addition to Lucques—but

“I really feel like my job is to create dishes with the produce that the farmers are harvesting at any given time,” she remarked. “I love being able to ‘save the day’ by buying up a particular bumper crop and using it

### There is something so magical about knowing the people who are growing your food.

she still keeps personal tabs on the sources of ingredients. “I have the help of quite a few great sous-chefs, but I do direct what we are shopping for,” she said. “I go to the markets and also taste what we get from each farmer to see how things are changing and tasting at any moment. Talking to the farmers is very valuable. I like knowing what is coming up, any special items they might have up their sleeves, and what is especially prolific at any time.”

#### Let the Food Dictate the Menu

This brings us to the next element that makes Suzanne unique: instead of deciding on recipes and scrambling to find ingredients to fit them, she actually lets the in-season available produce dictate her menus.

on a Sunday Supper or for a special. There is something so magical about knowing the people who are growing your food.”

A recent example was a higher-than-usual number of kumquats she received—a case in point that shows how she lets her creativity take hold and expand on a specific item. “One of our producers had a massive amount of kumquats and ended up just giving some extra ones to us,” she related. “They were so perfect—sour yet with a sweetness in the skin—that I wanted to do something to really show them off. We work with them in many different ways, but this time I wanted them as a sort of savory marmalade. I thought about what they would taste good with; I wanted something spicy to counter their sweet-and-sourness. I decided on a spiced

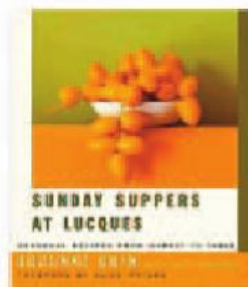
lamb tagine with saffron couscous and green harissa. I candied half of them and blended some uncooked kumquats with orange juice. Then I stirred the two together with a little of the candying syrup; so there was a hint of sweetness, and that great candied texture, but a lot of acid to balance it. From there I built a North African-inspired menu: grilled local swordfish with shaved fennel, green olives and tahini, and a starter of fava-bean purée with garlic toast, crumbled feta, mint and walnuts. But it all started with the kumquats.”

#### The Lesson for Us

If you do ever make it to Sunday Supper at Lucques, it's an experience you'll never forget. And if you are not already, you—and anyone else you bring—will become a proponent for life of locally and sustainably grown food.

But if you can't make it all the way to Lucques, do yourself the (great) favor of checking out local, sustainable food available in your area. See what's in season and get some. Obtain a copy of *Sunday Suppers at Lucques: Seasonal Recipes from Market to Table*, pop it open and experience these fantastic ingredients at home. Suzanne is all for it.

“In actuality, enjoying the process of cooking and providing an atmosphere where friends can gather and relax, escape, celebrate and eat translates best to the home cook,” Suzanne said. “Personally I like cooking by myself, especially at home, probably because I'm so used to having lots of people and action around me. I set aside enough time so I'm not rushed (again, not hectic like work), put on some music, possibly have a glass of champagne or wine, and just enjoy the process. It's so fun to have people over to enjoy the fruits of your labor. It's also fun to have a bunch of people in the kitchen, hanging out and cooking.”



*Sunday Suppers at Lucques: Seasonal Recipes from Market to Table* is available from the Organic Connections bookstore.

For more information on Lucques restaurant, visit [www.lucques.com](http://www.lucques.com).

# TOP MULTI

**Organic Life Vitamins® (OLV)**—the liquid that changed the multivitamin category

- **Organic aloe vera**

This functional food contains more than 200 biologically active amino acids, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, enzymes and sterols. Aloe is an integral part of Traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic Medicine. OLV includes biologically active organic ACTiValoe®, giving you 4.5 g of aloe vera in each serving.

- **24 organic veggies and fruits**

Includes organic superfruits noni, açai, goji and pomegranate, along with organic antioxidant veggies, sprouts and fruits.

- **Vitamins and minerals**

In addition to key vitamins, each serving of OLV contains 450 mg of ConcenTrace® full-spectrum trace mineral complex.

- **Multinutrient**

OLV incorporates amino acids, MSM (OptiMSM®), chromium (Chromax® chromium picolinate) and selenium (Selenium SeLECT®).

- **Organic flavors**

OLV is flavored with organic raspberry and cranberry and sweetened with organic stevia and organic agave.



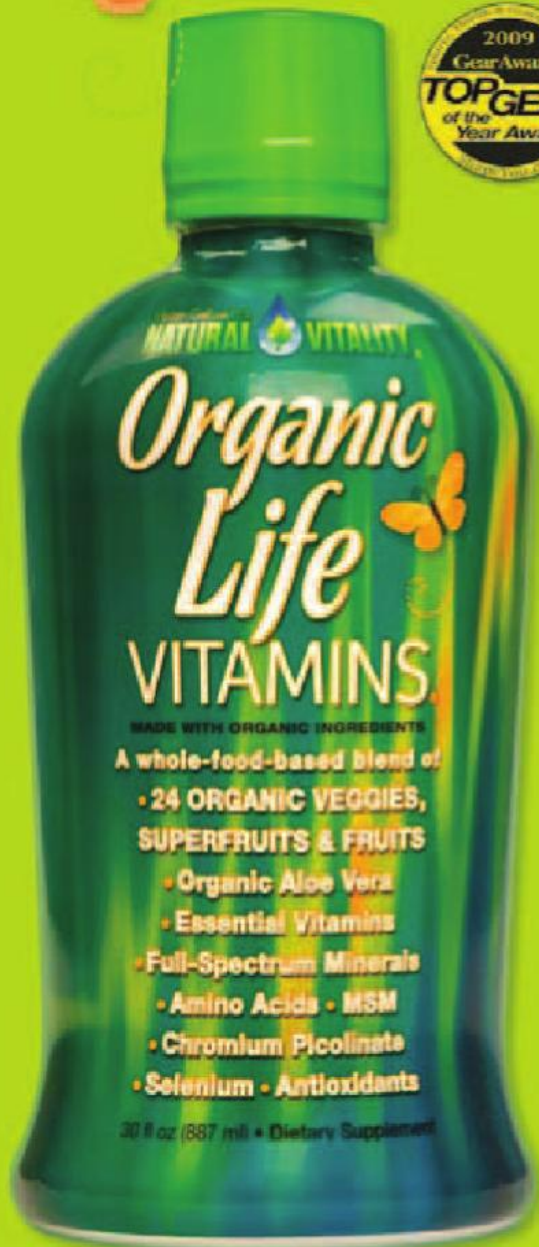
*A new level of health!*

For more product information, visit [www.petergillham.com](http://www.petergillham.com).

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

## Organic

organic aloe vera  
24 organic veggies and fruits  
organic flavors, stevia and agave



GLUTEN FREE

VEGETARIAN

NON-GMO

FUNCTIONAL FOOD

FAST ABSORPTION

ORGANIC FLAVORS

## July SPECIALS

**35% OFF**

**ENERGY28** 15-PACK BOXES

**Natural Calm Plus Calcium**

30-pack boxes

organic raspberry-lemon, original (unflavored)

**20% OFF**

**Natural Calm** organic flavors

8 oz and 16 oz organic sweet lemon

16 oz organic raspberry-lemon

## August SPECIALS

**20% OFF**

**Natural Calm** organic orange

8 oz and 16 oz

**20% OFF**

**Natural Calm** original (unflavored)

16 oz



Visit [www.organicconnectmag.com](http://www.organicconnectmag.com)  
for a free subscription to weekly web-only features

[ Health · Food · Agriculture · Environment · Green Design ]

Peter Gillham's  
**NATURAL VITALITY**

*A new level of health!*  
*A new level of health!*