



# Canadian School of Natural Nutrition: Education for the Health of it!

by David Morrison

I don't necessarily mean resolutions, but if you are like me you will look forward to a new year with aims or targets in mind. You know, like getting stuck into a project or challenge, embarking on something new and exciting, or perhaps finally realizing a dream or ambition. Even better, a combination of all of the above that would in some way benefit others would be the dream scenario.

A couple that will be able to relate to this general outlook, right from the first week of 2012, is Dona and Eric Bradley. The Gabriola Island residents proudly open a branch of the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition on January 3. It is the twelfth such school in Canada, yet the first on Vancouver Island. Even then its opening is largely possible because of the campaigning efforts of the persistent Dona, a Registered Holistic Nutritionist who taught her subject in Vancouver for ten years.

"From being on Gabriola and on Vancouver Island I realized how aware people are of holistic health and nutrition" Dona begins, "and I really felt there was a need for a Canadian School of Natural Nutrition on Vancouver Island. I've been petitioning Head Office to allow me to put a school in for four years, but they kept saying, 'No, the Island's too small and there's not enough population.' But I kept bombarding them with statistics for the Island, and demographics like how many naturopaths are here, how many midwives and how many holistic health clinics are here. So, finally, they said yes, and that was a year-and-a-half ago."

"Teaching the Medicine of the Future"™, the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition's raison d'être is pretty straightforward. To quote from the institution's website, CSNN was "founded for the specific purpose of creating a center (sic) for learning with a strong practical and clinical approach to nutrition." It is a philosophy for which the Bradleys are passionate, a philosophy that has been a core value in their daily lives for decades. Hitch that passion to their experience and knowledge, and Eric and Dona are naturals for this role, with a lifetime of related work having led up to it.

"Eric is educated in food sustainability and has been an organic farmer," Dona

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continues, “so we were very much involved in food systems and food sustainability.” (By joyous coincidence, it was when the Bradleys were running their organic farm on Westham Island, at the mouth of the Fraser River near Delta, that they had dealings with the renowned soil scientist and food systems expert, Dr. Arthur Bomke, Vice Chair of the Greater Vancouver Regional District Agricultural Advisory Committee... and a dear friend of my wife and I! Small world!)

“I had a natural foods market in the late seventies, and owned that for twenty-two years,” Dona says, continuing to detail the background illustrating her supreme suitability to run a Canadian School of Natural Nutrition. “Eric came in and was my partner in that later on, and then we owned the organic farm together. So we’ve been involved in that process, in food, for well over twenty years. When I first opened my natural foods market there were no formal education classes or courses about holistic nutrition. So I just took all kinds of seminars and weekend classes to learn as much as I could, then when the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition opened in Vancouver I jumped at the chance and became an RHN. I loved the course and later went on to teach there. For me, to be able to educate people about nourishing food, and how to prevent degenerative diseases through the healing power of whole foods is wonderful!”

It already looks like the Vancouver Island branch of the school is set to be a big success. When we spoke in early December,

Dona told me that the full-time one-year program was almost full, with very few places left. “I’m thrilled,” she gushes, “because we have had such a good response from Vancouver Island about putting in a school here.”

“It’s a private, post-secondary school,” Dona explains. “I meet with each prospective student individually to make sure that they know what the program is, and that they are suitable in terms of being able to turn this into what they want to do with it in life. But students come from all walks of life: we have chefs, we have personal trainers, people who own natural food stores, midwives, chiropractors, registered nurses, physiotherapists, students with masters degrees, or people right out of high school.”

If not amply illustrated thus far, all current or future CSNN students really need to know is that they are in the best possible hands, as Dona Bradley has been following this path as a life choice and career for over forty years now.

“When I was in my twenties I didn’t have the energy I should have had,” she recalls in recollection of how it all began. “My system was sluggish, so I started to read (the famous and controversial American nutritionist) Adelle Davis (1904-1974), and the other real pioneers of holistic nutrition. When I started to apply those things to my life, I couldn’t believe the difference in how I felt, and it just grew from there. I’m in my sixties now and have more energy than I’ve ever had!”

So, that’s the kind of thing we all should have, and I just like to help educate people in how to do that, you know? Luckily it’s really nothing as profound as having been ill; I have never been really ill with a degenerative disease, but had I continued down the path of refined foods I’d been brought up with, I would not be anywhere near as healthy as I am now. As a society the foods we eat are so refined and devoid of nutrition, it’s really how many people get degenerative diseases. So this is a wonderful opportunity for me to educate and empower people to make a difference in their own lives, and in other people’s lives.”

So, a new year is with us and Dona and Eric Bradley, at least, have a new venture that will ultimately benefit their immediate community and, in time, the wider world. I wish them every success. I have a few plans of my own for 2012 but, although I hope one or two of them may make a difference or have a positive impact locally, must admit to them being rather more modest! How about you? What are your plans for the year? Whatever they are, have fun with them and should they ameliorate anything or the life of anyone around you, that’s the dream scenario.

*The Vancouver Island branch of the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition is located at 70 Church Street, Nanaimo. For further information about the school, courses and how to enrol, please visit [www.csnn.ca](http://www.csnn.ca) (main site) or [www.csnn.ca/nanaimo](http://www.csnn.ca/nanaimo) (local site), or contact Dona Bradley by telephone on (250) 741 4805 or email at [nanaimo@csnn.ca](mailto:nanaimo@csnn.ca).*



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