



Food, obesity discussed in Book Club's fall read

By **KATHY SUNG**
Staff writer

Americans ate out 10 times more often in 2004 than they did in 1974. The Ohlone Book Club has decided to explore this fact and more about food with their choice of Michael Pollan's "Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals" as their fall read.

Anticipating the completion of the "green" Newark campus next year, Librarian K. G. Greenstein said the book will help "generate discussion about the environment and our place as humans in it."

The Book Club is still deciding on the discussion date, but it will be held on a Friday afternoon either in late November or early December. Book Club discussions are usually informal, lasting from 1 and a half

to 2 hours. People pull up chairs in a circle and debate, share and discuss what they thought about the book.

Ohlone students can buy copies of the book in the Ohlone College Library at the Information Desk. The price of the book is \$13 in cash only.

The Book Club is trying to persuade Professor Jeff Watanabe, a biology professor at Ohlone, to lead the discussion.

According to Greenstein, "Omnivore's Dilemma" was a "life changing experience" for Watanabe. "I have started composting my leftovers, am attempting to eat lower on the food chain (more veggies & grains) and have signed up for community supported agriculture (CSA), a program that delivers fresh food every week directly from local organic farms," said Watanabe.

After reading this book, readers will be more knowledgeable about where their food comes from and learn how to eat healthier in one of the world's most obese nations.

Last fall the Book Club discussed Eric Schlosser's "Fast Food Nation," and "Thinking In Pictures: My Life With Autism," by Temple Grandin in Spring.

"Omnivore's Dilemma" brings up many facts, including the fact that most Americans in the 20th Century never come in contact with where their food comes from. Our population is now used to beef in a package and vegetables lined up for us in the grocery. It is an obvious fact, said Pollan, that we no longer hunt, gather and prepare our own food.

Pollan deals with some major issues, including the questions

"Where does our food come from?" and "What is in our food?" This is a book that explores the fast food industry and explains its detriment to America's food system. This is not a book for people who want to remain ignorant to the ways industrial food may be harmful to humans.

Pollan, a journalist, writes with an elegance and conviction that is usually impossible to obtain when writing when talking about Chicken McNuggets, said Greenstein.

"Omnivore's Dilemma" is a book that explores three different meals, breaking down the patterns of human behavior from agriculture. Pollan starts off his first chapter writing about corn. After reading "Omnivore's Dilemma," people will learn that out of "some 45,000 items in the average American

supermarket... more than a quarter of them contain corn." Corn even appears in everyday soft drinks in the form of corn syrup. The book is filled with interesting facts about the American market, bringing to life a whole new outlook about the things we fill our stomachs with and the value of investigating what we eat.

For more information concerning "Omnivore's Dilemma," visit Michael Pollan's website at www.michaelpollan.com/omnivore.php. His website includes more background information behind the author and the book. It also includes an excerpt from the introduction and the first chapter of the book.

For more information about the upcoming book discussion, visit www.ohlone.edu/org/bookclub, or contact Greenstein.

Astronaut speaks on travels in space

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"The hardest thing about a mission is getting all the crew members to agree on a patch," Voss quipped.

During a phone call last week, Voss said "being part of a mission that was so universally valuable was really exciting." She said even though the crew was always busy, the mission itself was boring. "Boring missions are good," said Voss, "because you can really focus and concentrate."

Voss explained that in order to capture images at the correct angle, Kregel and Gorie had to do a maneuver every 45 minutes for all 11 days of the mission, which Voss described as "kinda boring, but pretty high anxiety... [The pilot] was so happy to get a flawless set of maneuvers done."

After the video, Voss answered questions from the audience. One student asked what advice Voss

would give to a student trying to get into the NASA program. Voss said, "The best way to [get into NASA] is also best way to do anything in life and that is to be passionate about what you like." She also said that trying different paths that may never hold your interest is a good thing. Voss explained that her educational path turned in many different directions, but was glad she got the experience she did. "The path that I followed led me to the place that I fit," Voss said.

One student asked about Voss's marital status, wondering if being an astronaut got in the way of that part of her life. Voss, who has been married twice, once before becoming an astronaut and one afterward, is now single. Voss was surprisingly open about her personal life, and explained that relationships are difficult no matter what your profession and are very much about communication. She understands

that the question of your relationships versus your profession is an important one, especially for women.

The audience asked many other questions; everything from the problem of space junk to private space flights to a potential Mars visit, which Voss thinks will be possible inside of 30 years. Voss said her favorite experience in space was a personal one. She is a huge science fiction fan and said she was once able to read an Isaac Asimov novel by "Earth Light," the light that reflected into the shuttle from the Earth.

While in orbit, the Endeavor also hosted EarthKAM, which allowed students in more than 75 middle schools around the world to select photo targets via the internet and receive images from the shuttle. Voss said they set up a 35 mm digital camera on the shuttle "and because we were mapping, we were

pointed at the Earth the whole time." The schools back on Earth would organize their own student-operated mission control centers whose grade school members would have to make sure the commands got up to the shuttle through the real mission control in Houston.

"It's really a great motivator," said Voss.

Voss is now the science director for the Kepler Space Observatory, an unmanned satellite NASA is currently developing. According to the NASA overview of the Kepler Mission, the space observatory is a NASA Discovery mission and will use a 0.95-meter Schmidt telescope to search 100,000 stars over four years with the hopes of finding Earth-like planets outside of our solar system.

According to a July 16, 2007 article on www.space.com, the mission has had financial upsets and been delayed several times. In January

2006 the mission was delayed for eight months due to budgetary issues and then again for four months in March 2006, again for financial reasons.

Earlier this year the mission was almost canceled, but it was saved when the Kelper team decided to reduce the scheduled four-year mission by six months. They also had to scale back on testing, and made some changes regarding management to fit within budget. As of two weeks ago, however, Voss and the other members of the Kepler team were doing major hardware testing on the focal plain array, the main imaging instrument used by the space observatory. The Kepler Space Observatory is scheduled to launch in 2009.

After the presentation, Voss spoke on the nature of talks. "Every time I speak, no matter where I am or how often I do it, someone always asks a new question."

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