

# Who's the turkey?

**Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary gets a leg up on the holiday**

**O**nearly Thanksgiving dinner in Woodstock this year would have been memorable by any standards. The hors d'oeuvres consisted of black-eyed pea cakes with chipotle aioli, stuffed mushrooms with heart of palm, wild truffle tart with white truffle oil, tree nut cheese and tapenade on crisp baguette slices, mini meatballs with mustard caper sauce. The main course included slices of a roast in mushroom gravy with stuffing, grilled yams, herbed and roasted seasonal vegetables, winter kale salad, wild rice salad, cranberry sauce, sweet potato biscuits and herbed foccacia. Dessert was pumpkin spice cheesecake and chocolate peanut butter mouse layer cake encased in Belgian chocolate. It was accompanied by red and white wines.

What set this holiday dinner apart was not just that more than 260 people of all ages — and from throughout the Northeast — gathered under a tent to share it. The vegan meal at the not-for-profit 23-acre Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary (WFAS) off Route 212 in Willow included no meat or animal products of any kind. There were turkeys, but they wandered the farm freely, stopping to have their warm multi-colored, brain-like heads petted by the guests.

For the third year in a row, the sanctuary's main fundraiser sold out almost as soon as the \$80 tickets had gone on sale online in early fall and many, if not most, of the all-volunteer kitchen staff had purchased tickets as well even though they worked the dinner.

"This fills a need for a lot of people to have a compassionate holiday event," WFAS co-founder and director Jenny Brown told the audience, many of whom had also bid on a variety of vegan goods and services as part of a silent auction and raffle. The proceeds were further bolstered by the fact that all of the food was donated by local and regional restaurants and vegan businesses: Blossom and Corio restaurants in New York City, Karma Road Café in New Paltz, Joshua's, Garden Café, The Red Onion, Blue Mountain Bistro, *Little Vegan Monsters Cookbook* (Little Vegan Monsters LLC) authors Lourdes E. Canas-Jovel and Anthony W. Acock, and Bread Alone Bakery. The award-winning Vegan Treats Bakery in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, supplied the desserts, and Hurley resident Gretchen Primack, a noted gourmand, cooked up the vegan meatballs and assembled the baguettes.

Not surprisingly, the speakers urged the guests who were not already vegan to adopt a vegan lifestyle. Filmmaker Kris Carr, the director and subject of the award-winning documentary *Crazy Sexy Cancer* and co-author with musician Cheryl Crow of the best-selling book *Crazy Sexy Cancer Tips* (Globe Pequot Press), related her experience with cancer. Diagnosed with stage-four liver cancer and told she needed a triple organ transplant, Carr said she opted instead for a total lifestyle change and claimed to now be cancer-free.

"I changed what I ate, drank and the way I lived," said Carr. "Cancer does not like all those leafy vegan things we eat. Cancer loves Burger King...Only five to seven percent of all cancers are genetic. That means lifestyle choices are important...Today we're infusing our food with poisonous garbage not meant for human consumption. Gardens are being replaced by test tubes,



Rory Freedman, co-author of the New York Times best-seller, *Skinny Bitch*.

and the American public has become one big science experiment."

Rory Freedman, co-author of *The New York Times* best-seller *Skinny Bitch* (Running Press), recounted how she became a vegan after reading a magazine article on slaughterhouses while still in college. The article included photos of a cow and calf being taken to market. The cow had become so agitated when she was separated from her calf that she butted her head against a wall with such intensity she broke her neck and was left to die in the mud as the animal auction continued around her.

"Because we like the taste of meat, cheese and eggs, we think we are entitled to subject animals to this kind of treatment," said Freedman, whose no-nonsense, often foul-mouthed book has two million copies in print and has been translated into 20 languages. Freedman urged the audience to bring "some kick-ass" vegan dishes to their traditional Thanksgiving dinners and share the recipes with other guests. She also encouraged the audience to go to [www.goveg.com](http://www.goveg.com) for information and help on making the switch to veganism.

The message was hardly one of doom and gloom, however. As Americans prepare to consume more than 40 million turkeys this Thanksgiving (and



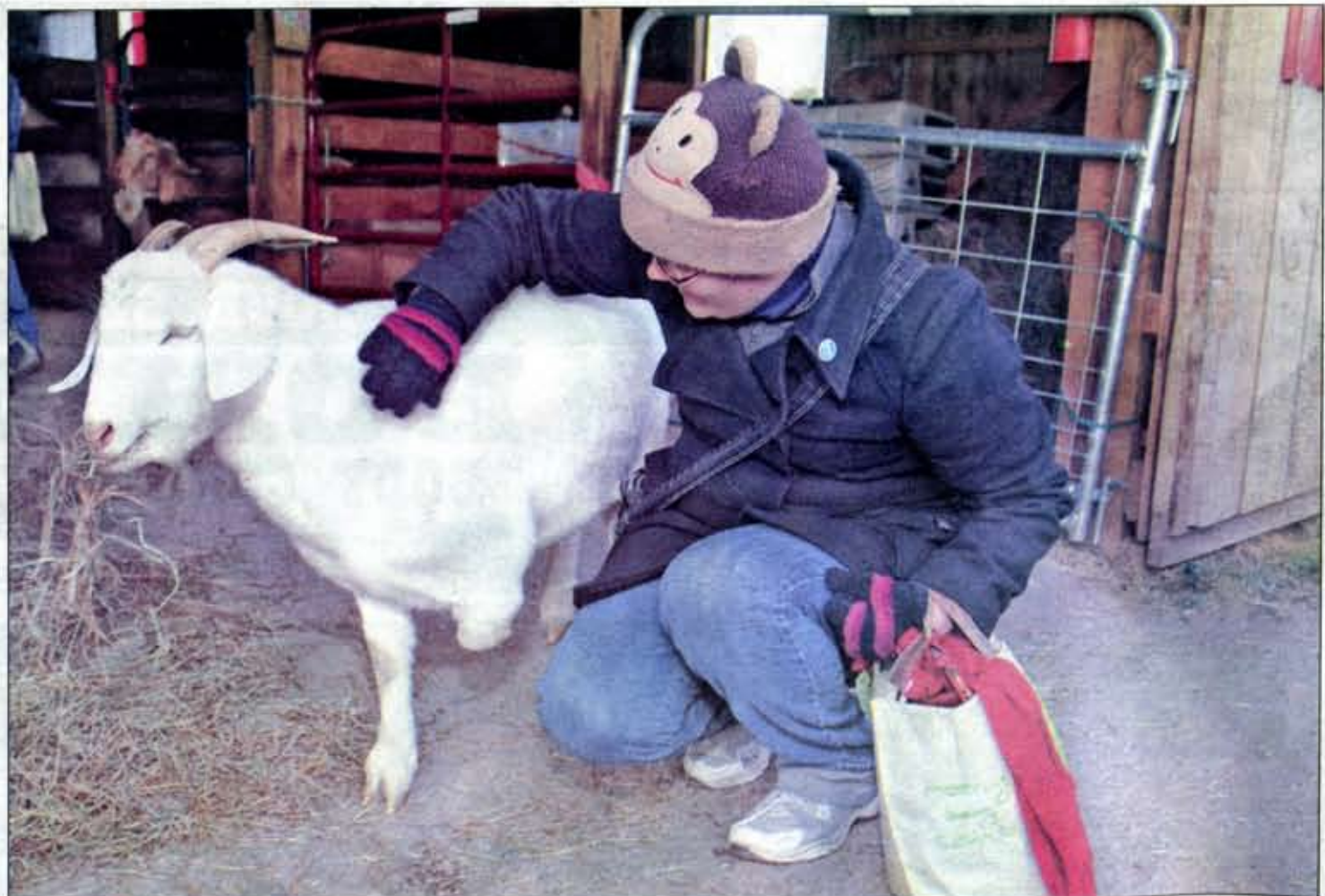
Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary volunteer Susan Rotb, founder of Pet Watch serves up vegan pumpkin spice cheesecake.

over 20 million more at Christmas), according to sources for the turkey industry, Griffin and Sphinx, two three-week-old de-beaked and de-toed poults, who arrived last week from a Farm Sanctuary in western New York, were cuddled and admired in the new \$180,000 medical building that opened at the property several weeks ago. Days away from becoming bacon and chops, Andy the pig rolled in the mud and loudly called for his dinner after having recently been rescued by a New Jersey Park Department employee who felt badly that the animal had outlived his value at a "living historical farm." Felix, a three-legged lamb had been headed to slaughter when a kind-hearted Bronx resident saw him being unloaded into one of the city's many live-kill markets. Having read an article in *The New York Times* about Albie, the three-legged, prosthetic-wearing goat at WFAS and Brown, who is also an amputee, the woman brought Felix to the local farm.

Said Brown: "We believe each and every animal here is an ambassador for their cause." ++

For more information on the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary, which is open to the public 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends, April to October, go to [www.woodstockfas.org](http://www.woodstockfas.org) or call 679-5955.

Andrea Barrist Stern



Albie, the subject of features in the New York Times as well as the local media after being nursed back to health at the local sanctuary following his escape from a live kill market in the New York Metropolitan area, is used to being the center of attention, especially when he wears his custom made artificial leg.