



news, not blues

wandering our local streets and stretches of highway just aching for depressing, hard news? apologies, but you won't find it here. this place pops with what's positive in our little nugget of southeastern pennsylvania.

phoebe's phorever!

phood with phlair

by marian wolbers

it's thursday, lunchtime.

your african peanut chicken soup is walking in the door, preceded by anticipation, announced by aroma. it's another delivery by phoebe canakis to the hungry-for-health clientele who adore her business, phoebe's pure foods.

this week's menu featured not only that tawny-toned, white meat and vegetables creation in a peanutty stock, but a soup from a different continent altogether: a spicy mexican black bean soup that's as sassy as a flamenco dancer on a hot summer night. it's unashamedly loaded with what seems like 4,200 ingredients, from tiny diced carrots and peppers and tomato bits to barley nuggets and celery snippets, all of them playing a large supporting cast to the stars—the black beans—with a zing that's gentle but sure.

like so many of canakis' culinary offerings, the soup is low-sodium, all natural; it's not overly spicy-herby, but instead prepared to foster the taste of multiple flavors. it's as though this home cook personally coaxes each ingredient to retain its essential vitality and individuality while joining into the larger party called "soup."

canakis' magic carries across to her fresh wraps and salad choices which are low-calorie, high-fiber, and festive with healthy greens:

- **curried chicken salad** (using local & organic chicken)
- **hummus & feta** with a mix of organic veggies
- **"bright & lemony chicken salad,"** with a canakis-made vinaigrette
- **cranberry & pecan chicken salad** (a light, low-fat creamy salad)
- **albacore tuna salad**

of course, she caters full-scale feasts and bakes pastries, too. her greek goodies are classically elegant and precious, and are available, boxed, at special times in the year. the honey-sweet confections connect with her mediterranean roots on her dad's side of the family. confessing that sugar has a hold on her, canakis doesn't keep it around much at home. she says earnestly, "if

there's any sugar in the house, i'm like a little mouse—i sniff it out."

but she loves soup best of all. her deep brunette eyes shine when she says, "i love making soups. it's comfort food. there's no better way to feel full and not compromise what you're putting in your body." for the record, she also adores macaroni and cheese. (okay, who doesn't?)

canakis gravitates to local farm stands to buy ingredients—the more organic, the better. she aims for whole foods, unprocessed, in season.



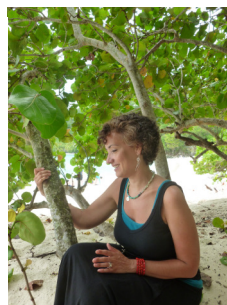
a turnaround

the pure food venture started in an unlikely way: "i got into an accident on the pennsylvania turnpike, on a sunday," she explains, tossing back a stray curl of midnight brown hair. "i was working a job that was an hour-and-a half commute and found myself in my car, turned all the way around and facing the wrong direction. i was okay—but i didn't even know what to do. all i could think was how i'd soon see oncoming traffic, and so i left the car and got to the side of the road."

"then i thought to myself, 'what am i doing?'" more than a scare, this proved an epiphany. "i quit the job. and because i had always wanted to start my own coffee shop, i went to starbucks and started working."

to this home cook, food is something that should come not from a box but from the earth

photo courtesy of canakis herself



eventually, she put other businesses behind her, developing her own, which is still evolving. "i'm not in a hurry to open a storefront," says canakis. "i love talking to people when i'm making deliveries. i love all my customers." she also loves gardening, blogging about food, and talking about "how to eat organic on a budget" (BCTV).

special deliveries

here's a sample of the delectably written, temptation-laden offerings penned by canakis herself through her weekly lunch news update:

barley, roasted broccoli, & acorn squash salad—

organic barley with roasted broccoli & local acorn squash on a bed of organic greens with a shallot, maple syrup, & cider dressing

\$8.50 (\$8.01+tax) meat free

\$11.50 (\$10.84+tax) with local, free-range, organic roasted chicken or tofu

deep in food-thought, thinking of joining the lunch-to-go bunch? log on to www.phoebepurefood.com to sign up for weekly menu updates and to get deliveries, or to order and pick up her notorious nosh at sunshine wellness resources, 511 reading avenue, in west reading. tel: 717.445.8552.

a souper landscape, where a bean would most love to swim & spicy mexican black bean soup, anyone?

photo by marian wolbers



a bit of toy-fun in green-speak by ambre juryea-amole

“one of our mottos is ‘no batteries.’ we want to keep batteries out of landfills. rechargeable batteries are good, but we want to get rid of batteries altogether,” says oley valley resident john stokes, founder of stokes solar green toys & goods. he is stirring toward the future by looking skyward—introducing children to renewable energy through education-savvy, eco-friendly toys.

“coal and oil are only going to last for so long. it’s not like you can make any of that,” adds stokes. he predicts a world where people associate the word ‘oil’ with soybeans and corn rather than fossil fuels. “that’s where we’re going to be heading, using what we can grow. i mean, fossil fuels are exactly that: *old* fuel.”

stokes, an electrician, has an energized glimmer in his eyes when he talks about the inner workings of the toys he offers. though stokes doesn’t manufacture the toys himself, he knows what makes the wheels turn and the gears churn, in all of it. in fact, his knowledge about renewable energy is so vast that he constructed his own built-from-scratch wind turbine to make use of oley’s whipping winter air.



this wind turbine on john stokes’ workshop saves him about 15% on electricity in winter

all photos courtesy of stokes solar

stokes solar is still in its infancy, but it’s off to a good start. stokes gives demonstrations amidst ‘ooohs’ and ‘ahhhs’ at green fairs and markets throughout the year. “it’s fun to see the expressions on people’s faces when i show them what the toys do.”

he also gets to employ his two sons, maxwell, 3, and julian, 1, as test pilots for his toys. “they have a couple toys of their own, and i like to show them the bigger toys too,” says stokes. when his almost-four-month-old daughter, olivia, is older, she will

win the chance to test out the solar-revving vehicles and also two eco-homes, fashioned with pretend solar panels, wind turbines, and plenty of green-g geared amenities.

the sun lights imaginations

most popular are the happily hopping frog and super solar racing car—quite accessible for the eco-novice because they are pocket-sized, and they “don’t cost a hunk of change,” as stokes says.

more advanced toys are in the picture, too. “i try to hit beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels with the toys to keep everyone learning,” says stokes. the next step up from the super solar racing car is the solarspeeder v2.0, which takes a few seconds to gather enough sunlight but then zips off in lightning bolt form.

also among the more advanced offerings is the 6-in-1 solar kit: a dogbot, circling airplane, stationary airplane with spinning propellers, car, sun-run wind turbine, and pool-friendly boat. and because all six toy-building possibilities are powered by the sun, kids are eager to enjoy the great outdoors with them rather than sitting inside with their eyes glued to the teevee.



this dogbot & circling plane are both a part of the 6-in-1 solar kit available through stokes solar



a tiny salt water fuel cell car zooms along with impeccable speed

a car that runs on water

people have talked about the possibility of cars that use water as fuel for quite some time, but stokes is showing everyone that the seeming myth of the water-powered car is becoming a reality. in stokes’ line are two hydrogen fuel cell cars and a third car powered by salt water, with a fuel cell involved. one of the hydrogen fuel cell cars is in a fuel cell car science kit; the other, the h2go fuel cell r/c car, comes fully assembled and has a hydrogen station and even a solar-powered remote control.

changing the way kids—and parents—play

the ultimate goal here is to change the way people think about energy, which stokes already sees in his own children. “my oldest son, if he wants to power up the frog or the solar car—he knows where to put it,” stokes says. “he’s like, ‘all right, let’s find some sun,’ and he’ll put it in the sun. it’s a neat learning curve—to see how the new generation is growing up compared to the old. instead of looking for batteries, they’re looking for sun. it puts a totally different perspective on things.”

in addition, the toys are teaching parents about renewable energy, and parents are learning as much as their kids. “this technology wasn’t there when parents were in school,” says stokes. he notes that adults are aware of the dire need to change our energy consumption, but they don’t really understand it until they experience the alternatives firsthand, seeing these toys come to life.

for now, stokes solar will continue to operate primarily online, but stokes hopes that someday it will grow enough to allow him to open a shop. “i enjoy what i’m doing, knowing that every little bit makes a difference,” says stokes.

to learn more about stokes solar, or to place a quickly-shipping order, visit www.stokessolar.com, search for it on facebook, or find stokes himself at the north wales’ whole foods markets’ green fair (spring and summer), every saturday (except rainy days) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

to see stokes solar in action all the sooner, visit

the independent space gallery & cooperative
19 east main street
kutztown, pa 19530

monday 9 january (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) &
monday 23 january (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.)



frogs that hop in gratitude of sunlight are decidedly more adorable

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