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PHOTO BY XANA MCCREA

Nutritional Feast

South students carry the burden of healthy choices ■ By Xana McCrea

We know you want us to choose whole

wheat over refined white bread. We know you'd like us to eat those carrots and drink that Genesis instead of those chips and that Coke. We really do know you know what's best. If truth were told, all of your wheat grass loving and *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* endorsement energy would be better spent chastising our school administration — because nutritional yeast isn't served in public schools. Nor is there an awful lot in the way of vegetables; the sadness of the lunch line is augmented with the solitary misery of floppy iceberg lettuce. And the last positive food change at South Eugene High School was relocating Pepsi's titanic retailing ass to the Safeway 100 yards north. In the words of an administrator,

"At least the students would have to walk." So, like many problems society is facing and giving up on, this conundrum of fitness has been unwittingly taken into the hands of the youth. God, we just have to do everything. So here are some of our recent trends.

One: The Great Nalgene

For one or two years now, these rotund bottles have hung pregnant from the straining fingers of a growing number of students. They're heavy as hell when filled to the 500-ml mark, but no one doing the holding is going to say so. Brand matters much less these days; we've branched out into cooler, less spillable, more chic and more practical sizes and shapes. And despite trend status,

Nalgene don't actually signify social standing. All those lovely translucent bottles are simply gurgling, "Get hydrated and get over it!"

Two: Perennial Prepackaged Provisions

In the mid to late '90s, the infamous, total crap Kudos bar fell out of a hot air balloon destined for an extreme snowboarding/spelunking trip in the Cascades, and we teens realized we needed something more hardy to fuel our rad lives. Thus, Clif and other excursion-oriented bars became the standard for a while, venturing to the top of snowy Mount Hood and surviving trips down the hypothermic white waters of the Rogue. These days, a new breed of health/energy bars has begun to invade: raw food bars. Lärabar MÄYA bars are 90 percent raw chocolate-fruit-nut-etc. concoctions, laced with mint, coffee or orange. They may sound truffle-esque, but these bars have a new-and-different appeal and hard-to-place tang that one can probably attribute to that whole "raw" feature.

Three: A Café for All Kinds

You know it. I know it. South Students *so* know it. "It" is Café Yumm and it is, as we would say, "the shit." This eatery of legend is a place where all cliques can come together in jazzy, beany goodness. Jocks eat at Café Yumm. Nerds eat at Café Yumm. Blondes, brunettes, chartreuse- and hot-pink-heads eat there. Sociopaths eat there, and so does everyone else. The food is full of fresh vegetables and complete proteins, but it doesn't really taste like it. Plus, the Yumm sauce is an addictive additive from which any food can benefit. Added bonus: The tangy, garlicky, succulent sauce contains, yes, nutritional yeast. We did it for you, parents. Now if we'd just do your taxes ...

So what really *is* keeping teens fit, or, you know, breathing? Health trends, that's what. And maybe the threat of starvation. But really, we high schoolers are doing for ourselves what food-oriented legislation ought. We're drinking gallons (well, *liters*) of water. We're eating interesting, wholesome, great-tasting food. We're not trying to be healthy, however. Don't get that in your head. That would be lame. ■

Lunch on the Run

Charter school students bond with Burrito Boy

Students at the Network Charter

School, which has locations downtown, in Whiteaker, at Alton Baker Park and at the Eugene Glass School, go from class to class during lunch, and they have to try to forage food along the way. Some get burritos from Burrito Boy, others get food from The Kiva and some brave the school lunches. When asked what they normally eat for lunch, a majority said that they usually eat a bean and cheese burrito from Burrito Boy because "It's cheap and close by."

Neah Kratzer, a freshman and the event coordinator on the student council, says that she usually eats the school lunch or a burrito from Burrito Boy because "That's what I can get." Another student says that she will usually get either the school lunch, a bagel from Bagel Sphere, a burrito or a slice of pizza from Pizza Pipeline because she "doesn't want to spend a lot of money."

Only one student and one teacher said that they eat foods that were nutritious, like a whole wheat roll, an orange, avocado and dried figs. When asked why they eat good foods, the student replied that the foods were "nutritious, delicious and can be mixed up a lot." The teacher said that he liked eating "whole foods" because he wanted to "live longer and healthier."

Most of the students rush through lunch, not noticing that some of the foods that they eat may be bad for them because they want to get something to fill their empty stomachs and get to class. Maybe it's because, as the student who eats burritos and pizza says, "There's nothing else to eat."

— Aretta Boggs

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