

Calgaros Find Selves in Bizarro World

A mild-mannered Madison family has been abducted by aliens and plopped into an alternate reality – at least, that's how it appears when they sit down to dinner every night.

For in Bizarro World, great slabs of meat and poultry are a regular part of family meals. Furthermore, the adults and children sit down together and eat the same foods from a shared platter.

This is a far cry from just a few weeks ago, when the Calgaro parents had practiced vegetarianism for more than a decade and dined on meat substitutes and obscure foods that were often frowned upon by their children.

Bizarro World inhabitants pay attention to their blood type when deciding what to eat. The entire Calgaro family is type O, which means meat is especially good for them.

The Calgaro children rejoice at their good fortune of landing in Bi-



Above: *What is this strange substance taking up shelf space in the Calgaro freezer? MEAT! Must be Bizarro World.*

zarro World, as they no longer have to depend on school lunch as their main source of animal protein.

In addition, milk has been eliminated in Bizarro World, as have most cheeses and many popular grains such as wheat, oats and corn.

Fortunately, chocolate is still available. The female head of household was especially alarmed to discover that her favorite beverage (i.e. coffee) had been replaced with a concoction of hot water, lemon juice, maple syrup and cayenne pepper. Moreover, she was expected to drink six cups a day of the stuff.

Bizarro World isn't just about food, however. It's a way of life.

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Kitchen Table Becomes Workplace

The kitchen table at the Calgaros' serves many purposes. It's a place for dining and for doing homework. And, for Aine (who? see sidebar), it's also her office.

Aine quit her job in June to pursue her own business, Pink Mandala Web Designs. A month later, the prospect of having some regular income lured her into becoming a virtual assistant for SolutionBox, an online company offering support for life coaches.

In August, a former employer approached Aine about contracting to assist with putting together its annual convention.

And in the fall, she joined with four of her friends (and esteemed colleagues) to form SOULutions Team (online at SOULutionsTeam.com).

Aine spends much of her day at the computer or on the phone, talking to people all over the world. Occasionally she does random tasks for her virtual boss, an Australian living in New York who sometimes needs help finding the closest Home Depot.

Celtic Fairy Queen Appears in Family

The Calgaro household went through another transformation in 2006, when Dianne became Aine – pronounced “AWN-yuh,” not “Ain.”)

“I could have saved some trouble and just spelled it Anya, but I wanted to keep the letters in my original name and honor my Irish heritage. Plus, it slows down the telemarketers.”

“We’ve always known she was a little weird,” said Peter and Rachel Calgaro. “We still call her mom.”

After her court appearance on St. Patrick’s Day to legalize her name, Aine stood in line at the DMV and the Social Security office.

“My parents forget my new name sometimes, but they have special privileges,” Aine explained. “At least I kept Dianne as my middle name.”

Area Kids Sick of Being Brought to School by Mom in Pajamas

One benefit of a work-at-home parent is having them drop you off and pick you up right in front of the school every day. No long walks, no bus.

But the downside?

“It’s a little embarrassing that my mother wears pajamas in the car,” reported Rachel Calgaro. Her friend, Brooke Ferrell, who rides to school with the Calgaros, nodded vigorously.

“You guys are pretty lucky,” said Rachel’s brother, Peter. “At least she always remembers to wear her glasses

when she’s driving you.” Peter attends Toki Middle School, which starts about a half hour earlier than Memorial High School.

Fortunately, by the time school lets out in the afternoon, the students’ mother usually has showered and changed into somewhat more presentable clothing.

Rachel and Brooke, whose birthdays are two days apart, plan to take driver’s education this spring. They look forward to a parent-free drive next year.

Speed Metal Musician is Fan of Theater, Musicals

Bass guitarist and drummer Rachel Calgaro has developed a deep and abiding love of theater performances, particularly musicals.

Despite showing an early preference for loud rock music featuring screaming vocalists, Rachel has developed a keen interest in drama – an interest bordering on the obsessive.

She eagerly awaits every dramatic performance by her school's theater department, and snatches up tickets for every possible performance. The tickets and playbills are added to her ever-growing collection of theater memorabilia.

Rachel's interest has not gone unnoticed, as she was invited to join the stage crew for this year's musical, *Camelot*. As a set decorator, she will be using power tools and paint – and listening closely to the actors practicing their roles. "Especially the ones who are hot," she explains.



Above: Rachel proudly shows off just a few samples from her extended collection of old theater tickets and playbills. Although she has never participated in choir or been on stage, she can often be heard humming show tunes.

Boy Quietly in the Midst of Stunning Transformation

A surge of hormones has been identified as the cause of a startling transformation taking place in the Calgaro household.

Peter Calgaro suddenly grew several inches in 2006, surpassing his mother in height soon after his 12th birthday.

By the time he began 7th grade, he had sprouted facial hair. The latest development is a certain cracking of the voice that has begun taking place occasionally. If his parents ever dreamed of molding him into a boy soprano, they're too late.

In addition, Peter has embraced the kind of music long enjoyed by his older sister. He uses some of the colorful language employed by her as well.

Although he still wears braces, expert opinion is that he might have them off as soon as spring 2007. Perhaps he'll have had a haircut by then as well.

"Another change is that he doesn't seem to hate school anymore," noticed his mother, Aine. "I guess adolescents must like school more than younger kids do."

Basement Used for Creative Endeavors

Musician and graphic designer Pete Calgaro spends a great deal of time in the basement.

Fortunately, he's not part of a secret operative – he's just creating more music and graphic designs.

Although Pete works full-time as art director for NBC-15, directs the SpiritSong choir at St. Maria Goretti Church and serves as music director for Unity of Madison, he still has a need to work on his own projects.

The Calgaro basement is home to several computers and a small recording studio. Singers and song writers have been known to drop by to rehearse a tune or two. Pete worked on several special projects in addition to creating yet another CD in his collection (*Flow*, which will be available at PeteCalgaro.com).

The basement also contains a Reiki

Companion Animal Update

Hopefully not growing any-more: Buddy, the biggest guinea pig we've ever seen.

RIP: Hermoine, who lived to a hearty age (for a guinea pig) of around seven years old. She stayed healthy to the end and went quickly to the other side.

Much friendlier: Beezie (Beelzebub) the long-haired hamster, who really doesn't mind being picked up anymore.

Not getting enough walkies: Foxxi the Corgi dog, who is very good company during long work days at home.

Warned, then massacred:

Those wayward houseflies (all named Bastchie) who entered the house in droves due to an undetected opening in the screen door. More than 50 flies met their demise at the hands of a sufficiently annoyed Peter.

table and Rachel's bedroom, which formerly was the master bedroom. After Aine's feng shui certification training in January, the Calgaros decided to switch bedrooms – and spent a stress- and sweat-filled day moving all the furniture and touching up paint as they reclaimed the original ground-level master bedroom. Peter was moved to Rachel's former room and Rachel to the basement lair.

Although everyone was initially excited about the move, there were tears and complaints when the three rooms were actually emptied and the project was too far gone to turn back. A good night's sleep fixed everything.



***Above:** Peter demonstrates what all adolescents do best - sleeping.*

Viewing Habits Change

Many Calgaros learned to love TV this year. They were enthralled with "American Idol" and "So You Think You Can Dance" enough to buy tickets for the show tours. (They met most of the dancers from SYTYCD.)

Sadly, their more-than-30-year-old television bit the dust this fall, necessitating the immediate purchase of a flat screen TV so Aine and the kids wouldn't miss that night's episode of "House."