

Some food for thought at library

In the 1970s an English bride received a rare wedding present: a handwritten recipe book from Elizabethan times.

The bride, author Hilary Spurling, was fascinated. After spending a lot of time deciphering the near-illegible handwriting and archaic spellings, she started working from it in an attempt to reproduce the old recipes. She eventually published her interpretations of these recipes as 'Elinor Fettiplace's recipe book'.

Whether you're a fan of Harrowsmith or Gourmet, you will love this little gem. It runs chronologically from January to December starting with a description of what foods would be available each month and how to prepare them, followed by Spurling's adaptation. Some of the foods sound surprisingly familiar, others are very different, and some are amazingly sophisticated considering the facilities available at the time.

If you listen to CBC radio you have probably heard Margaret Visser talk about food. In her book, 'Much Depends On Dinner', she traces the history of an ordinary meal. After settling on a simple menu of salad, corn, chicken, rice, and ice cream, she relates the history, evolution, social and political significance of each element in the meal. Her observations on everything from the uses of salt to the processing of chicken fingers for a fast food market are both fascinating and scary.

'In Praise of Slow' by Carl Honore is a comprehensive look at the 'slow food' movement. This movement is an interesting brain-child of an international association that promotes good food and wine, and also defends rational food production and agricultural diversity worldwide.

The Best of De Gustibus' is a collection of articles originally written for the New York Times. The original column is printed first, followed by a look at the response it generated and, usually, a follow-up column. Recipes are interspersed among the articles. I found the recipe for plum cake to be a perfect way to enjoy an under-utilized summer treat. It's fast and easy but I recommend putting the plums on the bottom with a little butter, brown sugar and cinnamon, and making it an upside down cake. You can use far more plums that way and more is better, n'est-ce pas? Serve

Cover
to cover



warm, with ice cream.

Have you ever wondered why some people can eat hot chili peppers and others can't? 'Why Some Like It Hot' is Gary Paul Nabhan's theory on the subject, from a genetic point of view. Nabhan has a doctorate in agriculture and is enthusiastic on the subject of food. Read the chapter where he makes a romantic dinner for his sweetheart, complete with chili pepper ice-cream. While the dinner isn't a success, the book is wonderful.

Reading about food is almost as much fun as eating it, and a lot easier on the waistline, so grab a good book (and a sandwich) and dig in. For other related titles as well as the latest cookbooks by everyone from Nigella Lawson to Emeril visit us at the Milton Public Library and start cooking.

Cover to cover is prepared by staff of the Milton Public Library.

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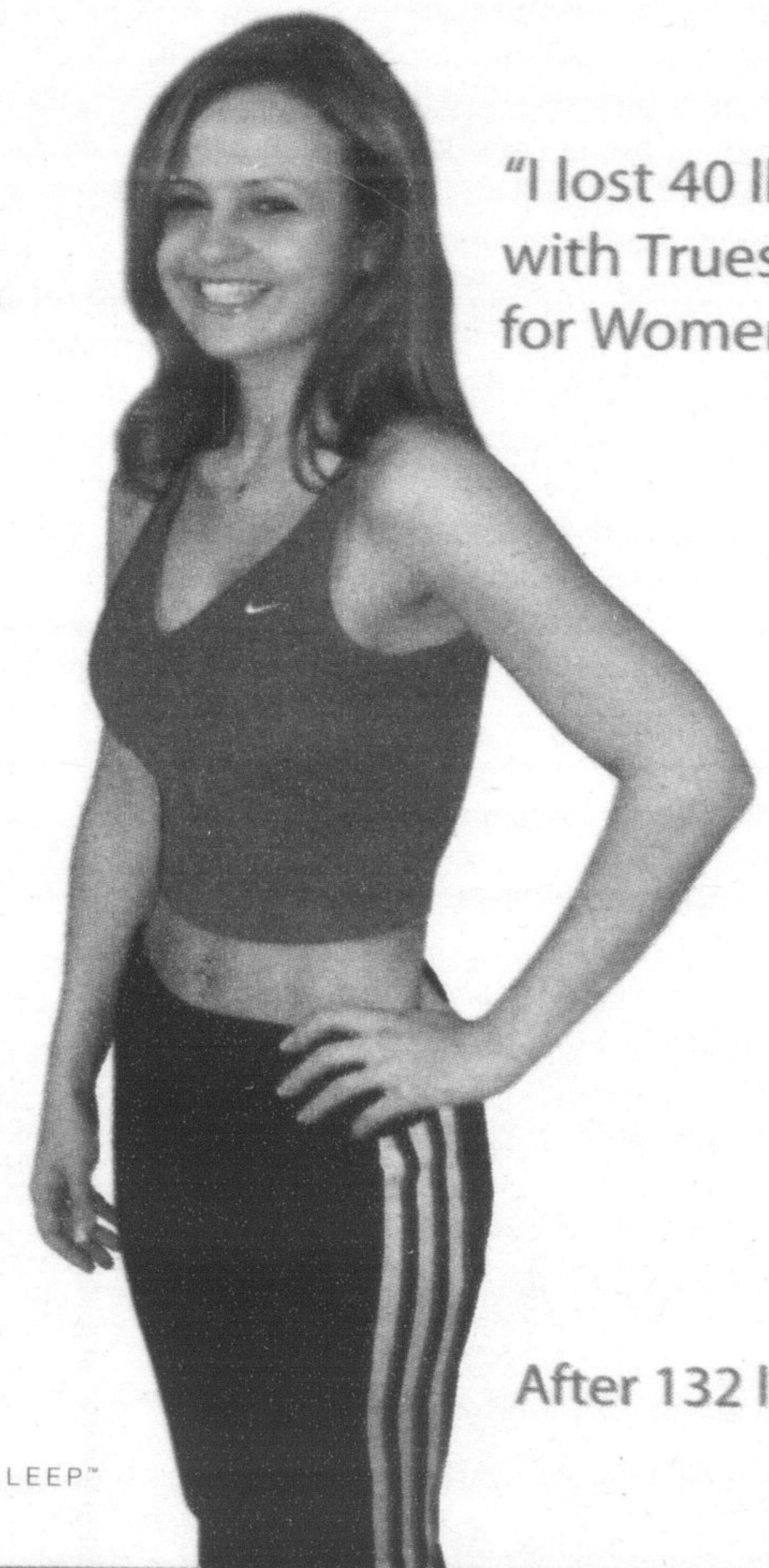
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