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Science & Society

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In Brief |h 1 : *Under the Big Apple*

In one Brooklyn subway station, someone on the platform would spit on the motorman's windshield every day as the train rolled in. Then there is the passenger who dances for change, with a 30-pound mannequin as his partner. Welcome to *Subwayland: Adventures in the World Beneath New York*, a collection of *New York Times* columnist Randy Kennedy's weekly profiles of the city's under-happenings. As the Big Apple celebrates its subway's 100th anniversary this year, Kennedy's sketches offer a glimpse of mass transit at its biggest--more than 600 miles of track and 468 stations--and strangest. Subway fanatics are outed: One built a mock-up of a motorman's car at the foot of his bed ("When I show it to people, right away they know that I'm not married"). Advice abounds. Author Paul Theroux offers a survival strategy for the subway novice: "You have to look as if you're the one with the meat cleaver." - *Justin Ewers*

In Brief |h 1 : *Fat Chance For Meat*

Sick of fish oil and flaxseed? Someday, people may get heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids from the meat, milk, and eggs of genetically enhanced farm animals.

Most animals, including humans, can't make their own omega-3s, building blocks of fat that seem to protect against heart attacks. They are available only in cold-water fish like salmon or certain plants. Farmers can try to up omega-3 levels in meat and eggs by feeding animals fishmeal, but that's expensive. So **Jing Kang** and his colleagues at Harvard Medical School altered mice by giving them a worm gene that converts more common fats into omega-3s.

Sure enough, these mice could generate their own omega-3s from a diet poor in this nutrient, the team reports in *Nature*, suggesting the approach could also work in livestock to make heart-healthy steaks and chops. But hey, if mice and cows can acquire their own omega-3 tool kit, why can't humans? "It's possible," says Kang, laughing at the notion. "But that would depend on the progress of gene therapy in the future." -*Nell Boyce*

In Brief |h 1 : *Trouble In The Womb*

Preeclampsia, a serious complication of pregnancy heralded by swelling and high blood pressure, is a nightmare that comes true for 200,000 American women a year.