

## *ink spots:* opinions, news, and reviews from an inkjet

**IMPORTANT:** Please note our updated e-mail addresses in the upper left-hand corner of page 4.

*"We who love the God who gave us the precious gift of language have an obligation to help each other tell complex truths and resist the lure of lies. This means to demand definitions, specific language, and clarifications; to learn methods of non-violent communication, use them, and teach them; where we have identified lies, to turn off the TV, stop the subscription, and discredit them; and to take these obligations quite personally".....Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, author of "Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies," in Christianity Today, Sept 2009.*

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### Practicing a few key strategies for maintaining your memory

Those of you who heard Russell Blaylock MD, the neurosurgeon who spoke for us during our summer seminar at St Olaf in 2002, may remember that one of his topics was maintaining a healthy brain. [Incidentally, we are disposing of obsolete technology so be in touch if you want any cassette/or video tapes of Dr Blaylock or other speakers we hosted.]

Dr Blaylock said that memory can be damaged by blows to the head; e.g., boxers, by neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, by injuries such as strokes, and by injudicious diet.

**What causes the brain to age.** "Most of us have heard of antioxidants and that they are good for [us.] Antioxidants are substances that neutralize free radicals.

"Free radicals are highly reactive submicroscopic particles that bounce around inside a cell like red-hot BBs, burning everything they touch. Each cell is filled with delicate factories that perform all sorts of vital functions such as generating energy, making enzymes and other proteins, and storing information, as with DNA.

"Free radicals chip away at these cell factories the way water dripping on a stone wears the stone away. In the beginning, the damage is so minute that little is

harmful, but over time the cell's function becomes impaired...

"God also created a system to repair much of the damage, but our diets and constant exposure to environmental toxins severely impair this repair system. As a result, diseases are appearing much earlier, more often, and to a much more severe degree. This is true...for diseases affecting the brain, [as well as] diabetes, autoimmune disorders, many cancers, arthritis, heart disease, and strokes.

"All of these diseases share the same event: massive production of free radicals over a long period of time and depletion of the body's antioxidant defenses.

"Numerous studies have found that those with neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease have chronic nutrient deficiencies long before the disease presents itself."

Here are some highlights from his June 2004 newsletter, "Save your Brain."

**Vaccination connection.** Immunologist Dr Hugh Fudenberg conducted studies showing that those who receive the flu vaccine yearly for three to five years increase their risk of Alzheimer's tenfold. He attributes this to the mercury in the flu vaccines. Mercury, even in low concentrations,

poisons many critical enzymes. Dr Blaylock submitted a paper that was published in the Journal of the American Nutraceutical Association, demonstrating that "when vaccines are given close together and in significant numbers, the brain's immune system is over-stimulated, resulting in destruction of the very brain cells we see destroyed in Alzheimer's."

**Nutrient deficiency connection.** "We know that as we age, the immune system becomes impaired, primarily because of poor nutrition. In fact, several studies have shown that age-related immune system problems can be corrected with nutrients such as selenium, vitamins E and C, carotenoids, [and] vitamin D3."

A subscription to *The Blaylock Wellness Report* can be ordered by sending an e-mail to [wellnessreport@newsmax.com](mailto:wellnessreport@newsmax.com) Of course, I cannot review in one page his 12-page issue. But here are some items to consider.

**Some contributing factors.** "Aluminum has been a suspect in Alzheimer's dementia for a long time....Experimental studies show that aluminum can produce the same changes in the brain that we see in Alzheimer's. Sources of aluminum include cookware, medications, baking powder,

vaccinations, teas, and public drinking water. "Fluoride, when combined with even small amounts of aluminum, produces dramatic destruction of the same brain cells that are destroyed in Alzheimer's....In fact, as little as 0.5 ppm fluoride added to aluminum in water was found to produce extensive brain cell loss in the hippocampus, the memory part of the brain. Most water systems add 1-1.5 ppm fluoride, and all add aluminum.

"The amino acid glutamate, found in monosodium glutamate, also increases aluminum absorption."

If you eat processed foods, you are consuming large amounts of excitotoxins. [Ask me for copies of the two newsletters that I wrote in 2002 on excitotoxins and the disguised names of MSG.]

**Reducing your risk.** Eat a Mediterranean diet. It's higher in lowfat protein, [e.g., fish and grassfed beef]; it emphasizes vegetables and extra virgin olive oil. Seafood can be high in mercury, so use wisdom. Eggs from chickens fed flaxseed oil are best. Drink fluoride-free filtered water, don't use fluoride toothpaste, and avoid mercury-containing amalgam fillings. Avoid vaccines. Take antioxidant supplements. Fast one day a week. Exercise.

Sound familiar? +++

## Beyond bumper stickers: what are the parameters of *just food*?

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*"Best-selling locavore writers have accomplished the seemingly impossible task of getting Americans to ponder where their food comes from, an achievement that must be celebrated. ...Many consumers now turn up their noses at tomatoes that are not heirloom, cows that do not eat native grasses...Locavores and their ceaseless emphasis on fresh, local, sustainable food, are to be thanked for fueling an upsurge in ecological awareness about food and the more hopeful facets of its production.*

*"But for all the deserved accolades, the locavore approach to reforming our broken food system has serious limits—limits that our exuberant acceptance of eating local has obscured. ....Eating local is not...a viable answer to sustainable food production on a global level."*

James McWilliams,  
*Just Food*, 2009

We don't have any bumper stickers. We do have a MN license plate saying "BE WELL."

In our efforts to promote wellness since 1992, we have championed many causes. I purchased the book, *Just Food*, by James McWilliams, at a Northfield bookstore; we believe in shopping locally, whenever possible.

When I arrived home with the book, however, I read the subtitle: *Where locavores get it wrong and how we can eat responsibly*. As a result, while reading this book, I have had to be willing to let this author challenge many of my deeply-held convictions about the kinds of food we want to eat and where we purchase them.

You already know that we shop at a co-op named *Just Food*; it has that name because one of its stated goals is to provide food that has been sustainably-grown and priced to give a *just* return to the grower. Not every item we buy is locally-grown, but during particular months when the store promotes a local emphasis, we try to increase the number of locally-grown foods we choose.

I always hope that the reviews I write will prompt someone to find the book. Here are chapter titles to pique your interest: *Food miles or friendly miles? beyond the "farm to fork" paradigm of production; Organic panic: discovering agriculture's golden mean; Frankenfood: a case for genetically modified crops; Meat—the new caviar: saying "no," or at least "not as much," to eating land-based animals; The blue revolution: ecological aquaculture and the future of floating protein; Merging ecology and economy: perverse subsidies, rational incentives, and the path to fair trade; Conclusion: the golden mean*.

Miss Gould, my twelfth grade English teacher, taught me that Francis Bacon [1561-1626] said, "Some books are to be tasted, others

to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." This one requires chewing.

Suppose we look at the Food Miles chapter, which begins with a quote from Melanie Depuis: "Who gets to define the 'local'?" McWilliams opens the chapter with "No single concept unites the locavore movement more powerfully than food miles—the distance our food travels before we eat it. It's an elegantly simple measure of environmental consciousness, has the benefit of being easy to understand, and requires only one basic change in behavior: reduce food miles. Doing so is considered critical to...relocalizing the food supply, shrinking the supply chain, minimizing fossil fuels used to deliver our food, and supporting local farms....How could anyone possibly object to the intuitively sensible argument that it's always a good idea to buy local food?"

But, says McWilliams, "The concept of food miles, appealing as it may be, is flawed on many levels." He uses the analogy of a person who eats only fries, burgers, and processed foods; drinks enough beer "to float a battleship"; and exercises only when he walks to the fridge to get more ice cream. After a visit to his doctor, he realizes it's time to get in shape, so he declares, with enthusiasm, that he will leave the half-and-half out of his coffee.

"The locavore emphasis on food miles is a lot like this person's emphasis on half-and-half. We're currently captives of an industrialized food system burdened with a catalogue of debilitating problems...[but] we've collectively chosen to isolate and develop an entire localist ideology around a bit player in the larger drama—the distance our food travels from farm to fork. By supporting local culinary agricultural initiatives, locavores challenge corporate consolidation, global-

ization, and in some cases capitalism in general." Instead of thinking about **feeding the world a sustainable diet**, our self-centered slogans glorify "the taste of place," and "coming home to eat." McWilliams asserts that there's a more complex story to tell about food and the distance it travels. The focus of his book is to encourage his readers to rethink "entrenched but simplistic dichotomies—in this case the idea that distance is bad, proximity is good—in order to help pave the way to the golden mean." Miss Gould also taught us that Horace, [65-8 BCE], wrote, "Whoever cultivates the golden mean avoids both the poverty of a hovel and the envy of a palace." In his *Maxim 1072*, Publius Syrus [circa 42 BCE] wrote: "He that holds fast the golden mean/And lives contentedly between/The little and the great/Feels not the wants that pinch the poor/Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door."

James E. McWilliams is an associate professor of history at Texas State University at San Marcos and a recent fellow in the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale. There are 25 pages of endnotes after his final Golden Mean chapter. He concludes that aiming to eat ethically and locally are mutually exclusive: "A bumper sticker mantra—eat local, buy organic, support fair trade, and damn Frankenfoods—without fully examining the effect of universalizing these impassioned imperatives" really means we have not considered that the "virtue we currently feel as a result of our green culinary decisions is, I fear, a false virtue."

The book is not without hope. Perhaps no author I have previously reviewed on this page tells the whole story. I want to support *just food* and to continue to aim toward "the golden mean." None of us can solve the problem of world hunger. We can care. +++

## Another viewpoint: Think about your food; eat local

Today's *Compost: Fertilizer for the mind*, the February/March publication of the Just Food co-op, takes an opposing view about eating local. In the interest of "complex truth," [see quote page 1] here are notes from two articles.

**Melanie Reid**, co-op owner and general manager, describes her meeting with three turkey producers and one turkey processor to discuss the true costs of raising turkeys for the 2010 Thanksgiving market. Other grocery stores in Northfield will be selling their turkeys at thirty-nine cents a pound. Her growers, who supply turkeys for those who order them from Just Food, offer turkeys that are different from the average bird. Melanie writes, "I left the meeting understanding why, come November, we will be retailing heritage-breed turkeys for over five dollars per pound. I also left feeling grave concern about a food system that can produce a turkey that retails for 39 cents a pound. How can this be, when a turkey chick...costs between four dollars and seven dollars and fifty cents, depending on the breed, and an average turkey eats about 12 dollars worth of feed in its lifetime. While I may never be able to answer that question, **I can do my part to help all of you understand the equation that our farmer and processor partners are working with.** I will introduce you to [them] so that you can develop a relationship with your food...and be an active participant in changing our food system one meal at a time.....I invite you to consider committing to purchase a turkey by pre-ordering it in March, [so that] you can help determine how many chicks [they need] to purchase. In so doing, **you honor them with your trust and your commitment to creating a better food system.**

"It's conversations like this one that I have just shared with you that distinguish us from other grocery stores. These true partnerships are why we exist. [Please] understand that the dollars you spend here make these conversations possible—without your support and encouragement, we would not be able to do this work on your behalf, so thank you."

Although we did not prepare for the *Winter Eat Local Challenge* in the following way, I think you will appreciate the ideas shared by **Mary Ellen Frame**, whose table I frequent in the farmers market during that season:

"When the subject of eating locally grown food comes up, people often start by focusing on what produce is not grown in MN in the winter, such as lettuce and tomatoes, or isn't grown here at all, such as bananas or oranges. I'd like to shift the emphasis to all the rich variety of foods...grown in MN...that can continue to feed us deliciously all year round.....Grains, dried legumes, [dairy products, eggs and meat] are grown in this area [and] they're readily available all year round. However, having plenty of vegetables and fruit that is locally grown does take planning ahead.....**Our grandparents and great-grandparents knew about that...**

"Now is the time to think about preparing to eat local next winter. If you have a garden, you can plant extra of those vegetables that are good winter keepers...peas, radishes, and greens that...may produce through late fall. If you belong to a CSA, ask if they would consider offering a storage share.....In mid-November it was a thrill to pick up that bounty [from my CSA] and tuck it away for the coming...months. They also gave us directions how to store various

vegetables. What can be stored and how?"

Frame took an April 1 inventory of the following foods, grown within 100 miles of Northfield, most of them near here, which she had kept from the previous fall:

Fridge: cabbage, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips, celeriac, apples.

Cellar: potatoes, sweet potatoes, garlic, black walnuts, hickory nuts, hazel nuts.

Freezer: meat, corn, raspberries, strawberries, pesto.

Canned: tomatoes, tomato juice, applesauce, maple syrup, honey, jam, jelly.

Dried: herbs, nettles, pears.

"It can be fun to learn the skills of canning, freezing, and drying various foods. Home-frozen corn and home-canned tomatoes are far superior to the 'fresh' equivalents shipped in from hundreds of miles away.....A friend recently told me she is growing spinach in tubs of soil in her house."

Here are some storing timetables. Short term in the fridge, [2 weeks to a month]: radishes, leeks, kale, celery, spinach, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, bok choy, and other Asian greens. Long term [months] in the fridge: cabbage, root vegetables such as carrots, beets, turnips, rutabagas, and celeriac. Apples, if they are sealed off from carrots, will keep all winter long. Apples give off ethylene gas, which will make carrots bitter. In a root cellar, apples will also hasten the sprouting of potatoes. Consider improvising a root cellar. [Both my grandmothers had root cellars. We could take lessons from that generation.] A good reference book is *Root Cellaring* by Mike and Nancy Bubel.

"Just as many of us have begun to **delight in the wonderful taste and other benefits of local food in the growing season,**" says Mary Ellen Frame, who is about my age, "we can derive the satisfaction of storing some of those foods for winter, and eating well on local food year round. Knowing you have a well-stocked pantry is a great comfort."

One comment that McWilliams would have is that it is elitist. Those who live in/near rural areas can afford to decide that "food from afar feeds the fat cats" and those of us who can afford to support local farmers envision the choices we make to be [our] "personal response to globalization."

This is a tough call for us. Dick and I care about the poor in countries that huge US corporations have exploited to get cheaper food for already rich and fat North Americans. McWilliams says, "To be fair, many [locavores] are well-intentioned activists hoping that their critique of global capitalism will inspire a just, equitable, and environmentally-sound food system.....[But] it is generally only the elite few who have time and money to buy produce from a...sustainable farm. Therefore instead of fostering a community free of competition and greed, local food could just as easily foster and perpetuate a community's stark, sometimes bitter differences." His viewpoint is clearly not my own. Life is too short not to be thankful for good food locally available. We try to do what we can to leave a lighter environmental footprint. My job is to inspire each of us to search out what is both safe and possible for our families, wherever we live. **Let's weigh our options and do our best.** +++

# Let's Be Well, Inc

Another year and time for some changes: In an effort to eliminate some expenses, we have abandoned our under-used tollfree number. You will no longer find it listed below, on our cards, or on our website [www.letsbewellinc.com](http://www.letsbewellinc.com)

**IMPORTANT.** We intend to abandon our previous servers soon, so please change your address book to include the following: You can reach us at 1-507-645-7202, or via e-mail at [carolcover@letsbewellinc.com](mailto:carolcover@letsbewellinc.com) or [dclover@letsbewellinc.com](mailto:dclover@letsbewellinc.com)

If you have a spam blocker, you'll want to identify us as "not spam", if you want to receive our newsletters by e-mail. +++



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## Notable Quotables

- **Ever wonder why fast food burgers are so cheap?** "Prepackaged ground beef and hamburger patties are an amalgam of various grades of meat from multiple slaughterhouses, contain heavily-treated fatty scraps and trimmings, and sometimes are contaminated with cow feces. Most meat processors do not test each batch of burger for *E.coli* bacteria." *The New York Times*, quoted in *THE WEEK*, 16 Oct 2009.
- **How safe is that chicken?** The January 2010 *Consumer Reports* had a sobering 5-page article by that title. If you cannot find it at your library or at [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org), please ask me for a hard copy.
- **"Next up, antioxidant cigarettes?"** Lotus Vodka, enhanced with vitamins B3, B5, B6, B12, [and] ginseng...might be part of a trend: Value added indulgences. We recently received an e-mail about intentional chocolate, "infused with positive intention by meditating Tibetan monks." *www.ConsumerReports.org* January 2010.
- **Have you seen "A brief history of medicine"?**
  - 2,000 BC—Here, eat this root.
  - 1,000 BC—That root is heathen. Here, say this prayer.
  - 1850 AD—That prayer is superstition. Here, drink this potion.
  - 1940 AD—That potion is snake oil. Here, swallow this pill.
  - 1955 AD—That pill is ineffective. Here, take this antibiotic.
  - 2,000 AD—That antibiotic doesn't work anymore. Here, eat this root.

*The Neurotransmitter*, quoted in Northfield Hospital newsletter, November 2009
- **Are you still growing? Sad to say, many adults are.** "Theaters stock oversized packages of candy...An 8 oz bag of Reese's Pieces, [e.g.]: has 1,160 calories, 35 grams of saturated fat, and 30 teaspoons of sugar to go with the 1,200 calories and 60 grams of sat fat in your popcorn and the 33 teaspoons of sugar in your large drink. Urp!" "BIG: Movie theaters fill buckets...and bellies," *Nutrition Action Health Letter*, December 2009. +++

## Nutrition Action: "Sugar overload: curbing America's sweet tooth"

That is the headline of the cover story in the January/February 2010 *Nutrition Action Health Letter*. To underscore my feature on sugar last quarter, here are the CSPI's ten reasons to reduce sugar intake substantially:

1. **You can't afford empty calories.** Sugar has no nutritional benefit whatsoever.
2. **Sugar-sweetened beverages promote obesity.** Soft drinks are the number one source of added sugars. Sugary liquids make us fatter because they do not curb our appetite for food.
3. **Sugar-sweetened drinks**

**may raise the risk of heart disease.** A big belly is part of metabolic syndrome which raises the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

4. **Fructose raises triglycerides.** When you consume a large dose of glucose, the liver does not pull much in. In contrast, fructose ends up in the liver whether you need the calories or not, and starts converting it to fat, resulting in higher triglycerides.

5. **Sugar-sweetened beverages may promote diabetes.** People who eat foods that raise blood sugar levels have a higher risk of diabetes.

6. **Fructose may boost visceral fat.** Those who drink beverages sweetened with fructose gain more deep abdominal or visceral fat.

7. **Fructose may raise the risk of gout.** Obesity is a major risk factor for painful gout.

8. **Fructose may promote overeating.** Over time, a high fructose diet blocks the leptin signal to the brain. If leptin can't tell you that you are full, you keep eating.

9. **Minimizing added sugars keeps a lid on blood pressure.** There's little place for sugar in a diet that is designed

to lower blood pressure.

10. **Most sugary foods are junk.** Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Krispie Kreme, Snapple, Sara Lee, Little Debbie, or "a Cinnabon the size of a lunchbox"—all are high in sugars and low in nutrients.

**The Bottom Line:** A typical person consumes roughly 400 calories of sugar a day. *Less than* 100 calories of sugars [6-1/2 tsp] if you are a woman, or 150 calories [9-1/2 tsp] if you are a man, would be better for your heart. Researchers find few differences between fructose and glucose. We need *less* of both. +++

## Knowing the difference between cold and flu symptoms

**Fever.** Rare with a cold. *Fever of 100° for 3-4 days in 80% of flu cases. 102-104° common.*

**Coughing.** A hacking mucus-producing mild-to-moderate cough accompanies a cold. *A dry, non-productive, severe cough is usually present with the flu.*

**Muscle aches.** Slight body aches can be part of a cold. *Severe body aches and pains are common with the flu.*

**Stuffy nose/sneezing/sore throat.** Typically present with a cold but resolve spontaneously within a week. *Not commonly present with the flu.*

**Tiredness/headache.** Fairly mild or uncommon with a cold. *Moderate to severe with the flu in up to 80% of cases; fatigue can linger for weeks.*

**Sudden symptoms.** Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days. *The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours; hits hard with sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.*

**Chest discomfort.** Mild to moderate with a cold. *Often severe with the flu.* Marvin Lipman MD, *Consumer Reports*, February 2010 +++



***“The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it leaves to its children.”***

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Protestant theologian hanged by the Nazis in 1945, quoted in ***US News and World Report***, 19 January 1998.

***“The federal government is now spending \$2 for every dollar it takes in.”*** “Noted,” ***The Week***, 5 February 2010.

## circle of influence

winter 2010

### LET’S TALK ABOUT ***THE POWER OF WORDS***

Some people collect coins, others stamps, still others antiques. We have some of each, but we have saved only those that have meaning from our life together or, in the case of old dishes or books, items from our parents and grandparents. Getting rid of *stuff* is not usually difficult. We readily give, donate, and recycle.

Words, however, are hard to dispose of. I still have thirteen years of Let’s Be Well lessons, and it took me more than thirty years to trash most of my teaching files from the 60s. I rarely looked at them, but it was comforting to know that there was a tall black metal file cabinet in the basement where I could, if I wanted to, find my lessons on the three-paragraph essay and on journalistic style, pleasant notes from former students, or prompt books, pictures, and programs from plays I directed. In the winter of our lives, tender memories are triggered when we rediscover sermon notes in a parent’s handwriting or a pencil-printed letter from a child away at camp.

Scripture abounds in admonitions that we must be careful with our tongues. Solomon recorded common proverbs of his era, and since he had asked God for the gift of wisdom, his writings are probably unequalled for his own wise sayings about how words can be used for good or evil.

Bernie Siegel MD writes about the power of words in “Prescription for Living,” his column in the December 2009 issue of *Twin Cities Naturally*. “As doctors we are not trained to communicate [or to] understand the power of our words as they relate to a patient’s ability and desire to survive. It is also not only doctors but all authority figures in our patients’ lives that affect the outcome of their disease.....Parents, teachers, clergy, and physicians change lives with their words. It is hypnotic for a child or a patient to hear an authority figure’s words.....**wordswordswords** can become **swordswordsword**, and we can kill or cure with either words or swords.

“Up to the age of six a child’s brain wave pattern is similar to that of a hypnotized individual. To quote a woman whose mother only gave her failure messages...and who as an adult has more trouble with her mother’s words than she does with cancer, ‘My mother’s words were *eating away at me* and maybe gave me cancer.’ We need to listen to our patients’ words and treat their experiences.....We should ask how patient[s] would describe their experience[s] and treat them accordingly. The words they use, like *draining, failure, denial, pressure, gift, and wakeup call* are always about what is happening in their [lives]. So we can help them to heal their lives and improve the chances of curing their disease[s].....

“There is only one thing truer than the truth: a story. **Stories change people while statistics give them something to argue about.** [Dr Milton] Erickson would write something on a patient’s chart and then excuse himself and leave the room. Of course, he expected the patient would get up and go look at what he had written, and he wrote, “Doing well.” Give your family mottoes to live by, like...*difficulties are God’s redirections*, so they keep an open mind about the future. Remind your doctor that his or her words can become swords, and like a scalpel, kill or cure.” [Information about Dr Bernie Siegel can be found at [www.berniesiegelmd.com](http://www.berniesiegelmd.com)] So that the legacy your children will find in your files some day is positive, remember that in Prov 18:4, a wise king said, “A person’s words can be life-giving water; words of true wisdom are as a bubbling brook.” +++