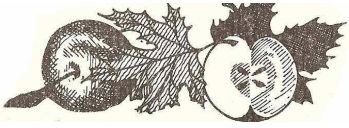


ink spots: *opinions, news, and reviews from an inkjet*



“Food is not neutral. Either it heals us, or it makes us sick.” *Todd Churchill, owner of Thousand Hills Cattle Company, producer of grass-bed beef, during a panel discussion featuring local farmers at the annual meeting of Just Food Co-op, 22 October, 2008.*

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Has food been redefined? Can our bodies afford the current deceptions?

Texturizers. We rarely eat chips of any kind but I picked up three tortilla chips at a potluck lunch recently. Brie Cadman's front page story, "From Lab to Lunch: Chemicals They Call Food," in *EarthSave*, August 2008, apparently had the same kind of surprise I did. Not only were the chips saltier than I expected, something strange had happened between the corncob and the package. "A tortilla chip seems so simple (corn, oil, salt) but the intersection of synthetic chemistry and food manufacturing has taken us far away from simple and much closer to complex. Instead of nacho cheese, we eat synthesized substances meant to approximate the flavor or texture of cheese, no milk products involved." Do we need chemicals to make a chip crunch? Better yet, for crunch, how about a local, in season, apple?

Flavors. I just read an article in the October 2008 *Nutrition Action Health Letter* that a new study tracking 47,000 men for 18 years showed that the risk of diverticulitis was 30% lower for those who ate popcorn twice a week than for those who ate it less than once a month. There was no link with corn, peanuts, or tree nuts to diverticulitis or bleeding. Since we don't have a microwave, I am imagining the kind of popcorn in a big kettle that we used to move back and forth over a gas burner on the kitchen stove. Cadman, however,

has learned that a person who ate four bags of microwaved popcorn a day has developed "popcorn lung," a serious, irreversible condition known as *bronchiolitis obliterans*. Sometimes seen in workers in microwave popcorn packaging plants, the disease is apparently caused by diacetyl, the chemical that gives microwave popcorn its buttery flavor without any use of butter. "Lawsuits and negative publicity scared some manufacturers into removing the compound from their packaged kernels. However, diacetyl abounds in packaged foods with fake butter flavor, often under the guise of 'natural and artificial flavoring.' As for popcorn, pop your own...."

Benzene. We don't consider soft drinks food, but those who do might want to be aware that Cadman learned that in 2007 Coca-Cola and Pepsi agreed to settle lawsuits against them after benzene was detected in their products at four times the maximum level set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Benzene is a colorless volatile flammable toxic liquid used as a solvent. Two chemicals found in soda, sodium benzoate [a preservative] and ascorbic acid can react to form benzene, especially in the presence of heat or light. "Both companies agreed to reformulate; however, thousands of soft drinks containing benzoate are still on the market."

Foaming. If you have wondered what silicone breast implants, caulks, adhesives, and McDonald's fish filets have in common, here's the scoop: a widely used silicone-based polymer called polydimethylsiloxane, [PDMS], an antifoaming agent. "Why is the fish foaming? As it turns out, foam, produced when vats of liquid are mixed or agitated, is a big problem for large scale food manufacturers. Lots of foam means frying vats can't be filled to capacity...hence the need for silicone oils like PDMS. The FDA allows up to ten parts per million of antifoaming agents. They are found in many processed foods. Their use increases acrylamide, a naturally occurring and possibly carcinogenic chemical that is formed during frying."

Preservatives. The only way to survive in this culture is to read labels. If you don't recognize words or initials, put the item back. Butylated hydroxyanisole, e.g., is an antioxidant that prevents fats and oils from spoiling. BHA is added to packaged foods, baked goods, cereals, and meats as a preservative. The National Toxicology Program says that BHA is "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen based on sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals." Cadman says "avoid packaged foods that have a shelf-life lasting longer than the average tenure on the Supreme Court."

Dyes. "FDA Urged to Ban 8 Food Dyes" is the headline of another article in the same issue. Controlled studies for more than three decades have shown that artificial color in food has been linked to hyperactivity in children. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, whose newsletter I mentioned earlier, notes that the British government has successfully pressured American food manufacturers to remove dyes from foods. In England McDonald's sundaes use real strawberries, in the US red dye #40. Yoplait red raspberry yogurt contains red 40 in the US; beet juice concentrate in England. Colors the Center seeks to ban are yellow 5, red 40, blue 1, green 3, orange B, red 3, and yellow 6. The Center's director Michael F. Jacobson, says "the purpose of the chemical is often to mask the absence of real food, to increase the appeal of a low nutrition product to children, or both." **Food either heals us or makes us sick**, see above. Churchill, a local entrepreneur in the best sense of that word, personally inspects every farm and cow more than once before they are allowed to qualify for his 100% grass-fed beef certification. He does not recommend microwaving, and his meatballs with Minnesota wild rice are gluten-, hormone-, and antibiotic-free. We put four in our spaghetti. Thanks, Todd. +++

Fitzgerald's *The Hundred-year Lie* revisited: the drug and medical industries

"Nature's gift to us is our immune system, a highly specialized frontline defense against ...disease that is naturally occurring from birth..."

"Hippocrates, considered to be the father of Western Medicine,... knew [this] intuitively as evidenced by his statement, 'The natural healing force within each of us is the greatest force in getting well.'

"Our culture treats medical emergencies and the symptoms of illness...relatively well in the short term, thanks to remarkable technological advances in medical science. We are mostly failures, however, when it comes to the prevention of illness...and in understanding the importance of using diet to enhance the strength of our immune systems."

The Hundred-Year Lie, Randall Fitzgerald, 2006.

Last quarter I began reviewing Randall Fitzgerald's *The Hundred Year Lie*. I barely skimmed the surface. Given what I am reading in other sources, I need to review Chapter 5, *Sorcerer's Apprentices: the Drug and Medical Industries*.

Here are some "myths we cherish" from that chapter.

The Government Insures that Drugs are Safe. Fitzgerald quotes several authors to disprove this myth. "There's a comforting shared myth that by the time the FDA approves a new drug, the product has been studied exhaustively...and that all its actions in the body, both good and bad, are well defined," writes Jerry Avorn in his book *Powerful Medicines*. "In fact none of these assumptions is quite correct. The FDA does not study any drugs prior to approval, relying on the company that makes the product to generate the information." Marcia Angell, former editor in chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, writes in *The Truth About Drug Companies*, "Is there some way companies can rig clinical trials to make their drugs look better than they are? Unfortunately the answer is yes. Trials can be rigged in a dozen ways and it happens all the time."

If you read *Consumer Reports*, you know that the human cost of this fox-in-the-henhouse policy is staggering. In January 2006, the magazine examined 140 common prescription drugs and found adverse side effects like stroke, heart attack, and kidney failure that were "undetected or underestimated when the FDA approved them for use." Blame goes both to the manufacturers who "have withheld publication of studies that found serious risks" and to the FDA, which "lacks the

power to compel companies to complete studies after drug approval, force doctors to report adverse reactions, or dictate new warning labels." In 1969, Herbert Lay, an FDA commissioner said, "The thing that bugs me is that people think the FDA is protecting them. It isn't." Nearly 40 years later, this is still true.

One Dose Fits All. An emergency room physician once gave me a broad-spectrum antibiotic that cost \$90 in the hospital pharmacy. One tablet made me violently ill. My own physician, whom Dick called to report the side effects, said, "Some doctors use bazookas when a stun gun would do the job." Fitzgerald says that pharmaceutical companies seem to believe that synthetic drugs work the same way for everyone. "This encourages physicians to prescribe higher drug doses than are necessary, [ignoring]...individual variations in how we absorb and metabolize...any synthetic chemical." Jay Cohen, reporting in his book *Over Dose*, said that when a patient develops a side effect, "rather than simply reducing the dose...doctors do what they know best—write another prescription. Very few physicians...deviate from the drug companies' recommendations. They don't individualize."

Fluoridated Water is Healthy for Us. "About 66% of public municipal water systems in the US serving 170 million people had been fluoridated by the dawn of the 21st century, yet most of the countries in Western Europe...continue to reject adding fluoride to their drinking water. Did they know something we refuse to accept?"

Fitzgerald describes what I have previously said in these pages and in Let's Be Well

classes: We have fluoride in our water because the aluminum and the fertilizer industries needed to get rid of "a toxic waste called silicofluoride that contained lead, cadmium, arsenic, and other toxins. Instead of these industries having to pay for disposal of this waste (today at an estimated cost of \$8,000 a truckload), fluoridation enabled them both to make money by selling the waste for use in public water supplies. Using public water as a vehicle to deliver a drug—and one that is among the most toxic substances on the planet, used as an active ingredient in many pesticides—was an idea that concerned some physicians and scientists at the time....A 1944 editorial in *The Journal of the American Dental Association* warned that water fluoridation's prospects for harming human health "far outweigh those for good."

Periodically someone with "impeccable scientific credentials" would sound an alarm. In 1975, e.g., the chief chemist emeritus of the National Cancer Institute, Dean Burke, said that fluoride in water "causes more human cancer, and causes it faster, than any other chemical." Even the argument that put it into our drinking water in the first place—that it prevents tooth decay—has been challenged. In the July 2000 issue of *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, John D.B. Featherstone of the University of California, concluded that ingesting fluoride from tap water does little to prevent tooth decay.

Dick and I have an in-house joke: we have to live here the rest of our lives, because we have machines that distill, alkalize, and remove fluoride and chlorine from our water. The way to deal with these myths is to do what we personally can to stay well. +++

The drug dilemma: how proactive a medical consumer are you?

Many of us would prefer not to take medications.

We own a couple of thick books that alert us to the side effects of drugs, [*Consumer Reports Consumer Drug Reference* and *The PDR Pocket Guide to Prescription Drugs*, based on the *Physician's Desk Reference*]. Though we rarely use them, I have found them an excellent adjunct to the printout that comes from our pharmacist.

Periodically *Consumer Reports OnHealth* provides helpful articles like the one in their July 2008 issue: "What to watch for with popular medicines." I trust *Consumer Reports* because they are independent and non-profit, so when an article begins, "Even widely recommended drugs with long established safety records can sometimes pose dangers," I know that's an issue I won't recycle.

You may want to ask me for a copy of "A user's guide to top-prescribed drugs," if you take SSRIs, such as Prozac, Paxil, or Zoloft [or their generics]; metaform such as Fortamet, Glucophage, [or their generics] for type 2 diabetes; thiazide diuretics such as chlorthalidone, hydrochlorothiazide indapamide [or their generics] for high blood pressure; statins such as Lipitor, Mevacor, Pravachol, Zocor [or their generics] for high cholesterol; or bisphosphonates such as Fosamax, Boniva, Actonel, Reclast, [or their generics]. Or check to see if your library carries *Consumer Reports OnHealth*. This issue has a table that lists safety information about drugs often recommended for these five common health disorders; has suggestions for reducing side effects; lists ways to make the drug more effective; tells you to call your physician if you experience certain serious side effects; encourages you to have your doctor monitor you in certain situations; and tells you what to do if your disorder is not controlled with the drug.

There is reason for caution. "A commonly prescribed class of antidepressants can lead to confusion, muscle spasms, and even seizures if any of the drugs are combined with a popular herbal product or migraine medicine...[and] one of the safest diabetes drugs can cause life-threatening side effects when you have CT scans that involve injecting a certain contrast dye."

If you have kidney or liver disease, you may face serious dangers, because both organs help the body eliminate drugs. Combinations of medications and dietary supplements can interact with each other. Older people are especially vulnerable because many of them take five or more meds to deal with a variety of health disorders. The article suggests using the chart I described above for initiating a conversation with your physician when you begin a new medication, or to discuss side effects you are finding intolerable.

Do drugs really help, or are there other options? The news media have been covering stories that raise concerns about the safety and effectiveness of certain drugs. A February 2008 study in *PLoS Medicine*, an online journal, suggested that Prozac and other selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitors [SSRIs] may be no more effective than placebos for all but the most severely de-

pressed people, "a conclusion reached after combining the results of 35 studies on SSRIs." The article encourages users of antidepressants who don't respond to an SSRI within 8-12 weeks to ask your doctor about trying another drug, or consider talk therapy and self-help such as exercise in addition to, or possibly instead of, medication.

Are the latest drugs the best solution for certain health disorders, like high cholesterol? TV ads have been touting Vytorin as superior to older statins. "Its selling point was that it contained two drugs, the statin Simvastatin as well as ezetimibe, an unrelated medication that lowers cholesterol by a different mechanism and is sold as stand-alone drug under the name of Zetia. But a two-year study of 720 volunteers with inherited high cholesterol levels found that Vytorin was no better at slowing the growth of arterial plaque, that clogs the arteries, than a statin alone. Yet the starting dose of Vytorin costs about \$110 a month, compared with \$30 a month for a generic statin." The article's recommendation is that "Zetia should only be used by people who cannot tolerate statins or those who are already on high-dose statin therapy and are not achieving desirable cholesterol levels. There are few if any circumstances where the combination Vytorin makes sense....Our top choices are generic lovastatin, pravastatin, or simvastatin."

Be careful of the drugs for osteoporosis. "The FDA announced in January that the class of bone drugs known as bisphosphonates can cause severe bone, joint, and muscle pain, some years after people start taking them. Then in March a case study reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggested that long-term use of the bisphosphonate alendronate [Fosamax and generic] was linked to fractures of the thigh bone." Even more worrisome, an "April study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that the drug might also increase the risk of atrial fibrillation, a potentially deadly heartbeat abnormality." Felicia Cosman MD, clinical director of the National Osteoporosis Foundation, said, "These drugs stay in the bone a long time and have a continued effect."

Recommendations. Talk with your doctor to see if you need to stay on your meds. For bone strength, take other steps proven to boost bone health: consume calcium-rich foods, get enough vitamin D, including from sunshine, and engage in weight-bearing exercise. Diabetics should not only watch what they eat but also ask their physicians about using methyl B12, since diabetes drugs such as Glucophage have been known to cause B12 deficiency. For high cholesterol and hypertension, redouble your efforts at dietary control, avoiding saturated fats in meat, dairy products, especially ice cream, and processed foods. And be sure to exercise. *The American Journal of Physiology*, August 2008, studied sedentary men and women, 60-75, who participated in endurance exercise for 11 months. After training, their hearts performed as if they were younger, with increased capacity to accommodate the energy demands of exercise. Good advice for us all. +++

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Notable Quotables:

- **Drug company disclosures.** "Beginning in 2009, giant drug makers Eli Lilly and Merck will voluntarily disclose online the names of some of the doctors to whom they pay consulting and speaking fees. Consumer advocates accuse pharmaceutical companies of showering gifts on doctors and medical researchers to influence their support for new drugs and prescriptions. Congress is considering legislation requiring disclosure of payments to physicians of more than \$500." *THE WEEK*, October 10, 2008.
- **Fluoride and the bones.** Studies that have shown that fluoride impairs collagen creation in the bones and elsewhere: • Riggs BL et al. Effect of fluoride treatment on the fracture rate in post menopausal women with osteoporosis. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 1990 Mar 22;322(912): 802-9. • Susheela AK, Mukerjee D.
- **Tap water linked to diabetes.** "Arsenic in the US water supply may be linked to an upswing in cases of type 2 diabetes. The toxin is commonly found in drinking water though usually at levels so miniscule that experts did not think it posed a threat. But a new study at Johns Hopkins University...found that even tiny amounts can have a harmful effect. An analysis of arsenic levels in the urine of 788 people found a nearly fourfold increase in the risk of diabetes with minute arsenic concentrations in their systems, compared with people with even more negligible amounts. Arsenic can enter the water supply when minerals break down naturally, or as an industrial pollutant. Some advocates are now pushing for tougher drinking water standards." Health & Science, *THE WEEK*, September 5, 2008.
- **Safer water bottles.** Using new material: the Camelbak® Tritan™ bottle does not contain Bisphenol-A, [BPA] or phthalates; it is available from www.sahalie.com or 1-800-458-4438, for \$12.95 plus S&H. It doesn't spill. It holds 24 oz, has a fliptop mouthpiece that can be sipped, and is dishwasher-safe. We have two, one blue and one grey, for drinking our AIM PeakEndurance™ at fitness. +++

What do some researchers say about immune-building for winter?

When we hosted Gerald Phillips for a Super Saturday on 4 October, he encouraged us to clip articles that support the efficacy of the AIM products. Here's one from *vegetarian times*, October 2008.

A garlic bulb doesn't need refrigeration to stay fresh. "But when the cloves it contains are sliced, diced, or crushed and exposed to air, a series of oxidative chemical reactions occur, transforming the inert chemical *alliin* into some 200 biologically active compounds, including *allicin*."

Last year David W. Kraus PhD, University of Alabama, showed that "human red blood cells

convert *allicin* and other garlic compounds to hydrogen sulfide...[which] was found to relax blood-vessel cells, helping maintain their flexibility and possibly protecting from hypertension."

"Garlic reduces coronary calcification (which contributes to hardening of the arteries), it reduces cholesterol beyond that of statin drugs (e.g. Lipitor)...and it may lower the risk of gastrointestinal and prostate cancers," says Richard Rivlin MD, Cornell University, who has spent years studying garlic.

Supplements such as aged garlic extract, which had been widely tested for cardiovascular

benefits, have also been shown in research to support garlic's cold-fighting properties. "In a 2001 study of 146 people, those taking aged garlic extract for 12 weeks between November and February were almost 2/3 less likely to catch colds compared with those taking a placebo. The study, published in *Advances in Therapy*, also found that garlic takers who did catch colds recovered faster than those in the placebo group....

"Many of garlic's benefits are the result of multiple biological compounds.... In addition, garlic can efficiently absorb selenium from soil. Selenium, which has anti-cancer efficacy, is essential

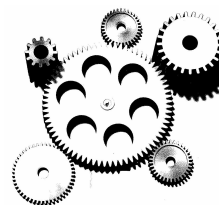
for the body to produce glutathione peroxidase, an enzyme that helps the liver break down toxins. **Garlic contains components that form glutathione, the most powerful antioxidant manufactured by the human body.**"

What are the distinctives of AIM Bear Paw Garlic®? Gerald taught us to look at the benefits on back of the data sheet. If you receive **ink spots** by e-mail, please go to AIM's website: www.barleylife.com to learn how *Allium ursinum* is different from other garlic supplements. AIM doesn't do copy cat products. Active ingredients are in the leaf, not the bulb; besides, AIM's is *wild*. +++

They bottled water—and we bought it

Perrier started selling us mineral water in a little green glass bottle in 1977. A decade later "no self-respecting supermodel could be seen without a liter of Evian in hand," so writes the reviewer of Elizabeth Royte's *Bottlemania* in *THE WEEK*, June 27, 2008. In certain situations bottled water can be a safer, more responsible choice, but Americans, who spend \$11 billion a year on bottled water, are beginning to question the wisdom of it. "Shipping all those bottles burns energy, and consumers are also concerned about how billions of empties discarded each year are affecting our land and public water resources. Recently both Seattle and San Francisco decided to end all municipal purchases of bottled water." The city of Cleveland has proved that its tap water contains less arsenic than a leading bottled brand. Researchers who tested 10 brands of bottled water in nine states found 38 chemicals, including bacteria, caffeine, acetaminophen, fertilizer, solvents, plastic making chemicals, and the radioactive element strontium. At 19,000 times the cost of tap water, consumers should expect better.

The backlash against bottled water is also focused on the cheap, ultra-clear polyethylene terephthalate bottles themselves, and the chemical bisphenol A [BPA] used to make hard plastic. *Consumer Reports*, May 2008, recommends that those who carry water use stainless steel or make sure that their plastic bottles, especially baby bottles, say "BPA-free." A three-month-old baby drinking from a polycarbonate bottle may be exposed to 11 micrograms of per kilogram of body weight daily. Hundreds of studies reviewed by a panel of 38 experts from around the world convened by the National Institutes of Health link increased risk of breast and prostate cancers, reproductive system abnormalities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obesity, and diabetes to exposure to BPA at levels typical in the United States. +++



LET'S TALK ABOUT *BUREAUCRACY*

If you look up *bureaucracy* in the dictionary, you may find the definitions interesting: 1 “a body of non-elected government officials; 2 “government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority; 3 “a system of administration marked by officialdom, red tape, and proliferation.”

William Faloon's editorial in the September 2008 issue of *Life Extension* makes a strong statement: “Americans needlessly die while scientific discoveries that could save their lives remain trapped in bureaucratic red tape.” Giving the example of deregulation of long distance phone calling, he proposes the following solution: “Allow *free market innovation* into the health care arena, and the new medical therapies will progress as rapidly as other technologies.” He says that when *Life Extension* was founded in the early 80s, they feared the high cost of having an 800 number, at 50 cents per minute [equivalent to \$1.16 today]. Monthly cost for four hours a day would be \$6,960 in today's dollars. At that time, AT&T was heavily lobbying Congress, describing the “terrible problems that would occur if it lost its monopoly...Fortunately free market theory prevailed and AT&T was forced to relinquish its stranglehold over long distance calling in the US...Anyone who has paid attention to long distance rates over the past 28 years appreciates the enormity of the benefit brought by abolishing AT&T's monopoly...Consumers today save a whopping 84% compared with 1980, even if they only make three hours of long distance calls per month.”

Faloon asks why Americans put up with pharmaceutical monopolies: “The public today tolerates federal and state laws that enable pharmaceutical companies to conduct business as a virtual monopoly. The result is that Americans pay outlandish prices for mediocre drugs that are often laden with side effects. As AT&T did in 1980, drug companies seek to deceive Congress and the public by stating that their high prices are needed in order to discover better technologies. The reality is that after decades of exorbitant drug pricing, one's odds of surviving a serious disease using conventional methods are not substantially improving.” The magazine prints a page of headlines from recent publications, e.g., **The \$34 trillion Problem:** Medicare is poised to wreak havoc on the economy <<http://money.cnn.com/2008/03/03/news/economy/104239768.fortune.index.htm>>; **Eli Lilly Settles Zyprexa® Lawsuit:** \$15 million settlement announced; state of Alaska alleged the drug cost Medicaid program hundreds of millions <<http://www.newsinferno.com/archives/1589>>; **US Reports of Death, Side Effects from Prescription Drugs Triple:** Reports of dangerous side effects and deaths from widely used medicines almost tripled between 1998 and 2005, an analysis of US drug data found <<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,296427,00.html>>; **Drug Errors Hurt One in 15 Hospitalized Kids:** Medicine errors, overdoses, bad reactions harm one in 15...This estimate translates into 7.3% of hospitalized children, or 540,000 kids annually. Patient safety experts say that the problem is most likely bigger than the study suggests <<http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/04/07/children.drug.errors.ap/index.html>>; **Breast Cancer Patients May Face More Heart Risk:** Breast cancer survivors may face increased risk of heart disease. Doctors are debating if it is time largely to abandon a chemotherapy mainstay that is one reason for the problem <http://www.kmov.com/justpostedstories/kmov_health_071008_breastcancerheart.14e95c1d0.html>; **US Lags Behind 41 Nations in Life Span:** For decades the US has been slipping in international ranking of life expectancy <http://boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/08/11/us_life_span_shorter/>

Life Extension Foundation and other health freedom organizations have “battled bureaucratic ineptitude since the early 1980s. Our overriding motivation is that our very lives are at stake if we fail to abolish today's obsolete regulation of our health care. One of our victories was the passage of the Dietary Supplement and Education Act [DESHEA] This legislation enabled consumers to learn about some of the benefits of dietary supplements...It took five years to pass DSHEA, but we eventually rallied so many consumers and industry leaders that Congress passed this landmark legislation.”

Life Extension Foundation is asking everyone who cares about wellness to participate in this effort to persuade Congress to address this monumental bureaucratic problem. Read through the petition on the other side. If you concur, you can make a copy, or as many copies as you like, sign it and mail it to American Association for Health Freedom, 4620 Lee Highway, Suite 210, Arlington VA 22297, or do so online by logging on www.reformFDA.org This website has been set up by the Association for Health Freedom, an independent non-profit organization committed to the total overhaul of the FDA.