

Miscellany 18: Removing SSNs from Driver’s Licenses; Plans for Nuclear Energy; The Olduvai Theory; Medical Insurance Drives US Health Care High; Where Has All the Flavor gone? Carrageenan, Guar Gum and Xanthan Gum

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Miscellany: Commentary on Recent Events and Reading

Removing Social Security Numbers from Driver’s Licenses – About Time!

For the past four decades, I have been waging what seemed to be a one-person war against use of the Social Security Number. When the Social Security Number was proposed as an identifier in the 1930s (as part of the Social Security Act of 1935), there was a strong public outcry against introduction of this identifier. People claimed that the number would become a universal identifier. The government claimed that this would never be allowed to happen.

What a lie! By the 1960s, almost everyone was asking for a person’s Security Number as a means of identification. Many states had adopted the Social Security Number as the driver’s license number. In 1974, the Privacy Act of 1974 was passed, that required that no state that was not already using the Social Security Number as a driver’s license number could do so in the future. This was a step in the right direction.

About the only entities I was required by law to release my Social Security Number to were my employer (for withholding of income tax) and banks. And, for a long time, that was all that I did. This caused me considerable hardship. For example, if you apply for a mortgage loan, the lender insists on your Social Security Number, so that he can easily run a credit check through the major credit agencies. When I purchased a home in Sierra Vista in 1986, I was turned down by several mortgage lenders before I found a lender who was willing to accept an application without my Social Security Number on it. This would probably be impossible today.

The Privacy Act of 1974 allowed any government agency to ask for your Social Security Number to assist identification. When I applied for a security clearance in 1982, I was told that I would not be granted the clearance unless I released my Social Security Number. Without the clearance, I could not have a job (I had worked in defense analysis much of my adult life)! The Biblical prophecy that “in the last days” people would be identified by a number, and would be required to have a number to receive food, had been realized!

By 1986, I was so harassed, and being denied so much, because of my refusal to release my SSN, that I decided to write a book about the assault on privacy. Soon after beginning the book, I realized that the worst aspect of our society with respect to invasion of privacy was in fact the income tax, and so I decided that the book should be about the income tax, rather than about privacy. It took me a year of spare time (nights and weekends) to write the book (427 pages long, at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/VAT.htm> , if you wish to take a look at it).

Then, a few years ago, things began to change. The prudence of the warnings that I had been issuing for years has finally been acknowledged by the government. Identity theft was becoming a serious problem, and the most vulnerable aspect of a person’s identity was his Social Security Number. A few weeks ago, I was gratified to see (Spartanburg Herald-Journal, February 7, 2006) that the government has now passed a law that no state may use the SSN for the state driver’s license. Too little, too late, but it is still a step in the right direction.

Sports Salaries: Has Our Society Gone Bonkers?

A couple of months ago, there was a piece on the television that head football coach Steve Spurrier of the University of South Carolina had refused his salary offer of 1.5 million dollars per year, asking that 300 thousand of that amount be given to his assistant coaches, who, the sportscaster speculated, earned only a paltry 200-300 thousand dollars per year,

Many professors at the University make less than 100 thousand dollars per year. The American Statistical Association just released its annual survey of salaries in academia (*AmStat News*, February 2006). According to the survey, the average salary of assistant professors of biostatistics in the US is \$83,000 per year, and the average salary of full professors is \$151,000 per year.

What has our society come to, when its entertainers and coaches of entertainers make far more than its professors? It is reminiscent of the last days of the Roman Empire, when the gladiators were awarded large salaries for entertaining the public. Give them their spectacles, and perhaps they will be distracted from realizing that you have robbed them of their quality of life – their good incomes, their natural environment, their uncrowded country, their cultural integrity, and their national security.

What Would Human Beings Do with Access to Massive Energy Supplies?

We now have the answer to the question: What would human beings do with access to massive energy supplies? US citizens have had access to massive energy supplies for several decades now, and we now know the answer. They will engage in hedonistic pleasure, no matter what the cost to the environment, to other species, or to future generations of human beings and other species. They will not use it to try to build a better world. They will do what they have always done – procreate to the limit

of natural resources, until they begin to starve or have to kill other human beings for space and food.

Wikipedia Bans Congress

Earlier this month, the Wikipedia online encyclopedia banned access from computers having IP addresses originating in the US Congress. It appears that members of Congress, or their staff, are “rewriting history” – modifying Wikipedia articles to make them look better.

It is relevant to recall the introduction to George Orwell’s *1984*:

Outside, even through the shut window pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything except the posters that were plastered everywhere.

The year is 1984; the scene is London, largest population center of Airstrip One.

Airstrip One is part of the vast political entity Oceania, which is eternally at war with one of two other vast entities, Eurasia and Eastasia. At any moment, depending upon current alignments, all existing records show either that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia, or that it has always been at war with Eastasia and allied with Eurasia. Winston Smith knows this, because his work at the Ministry of Truth involves the constant "correction" of such records. 'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'

In a grim city and a terrifying country, where Big Brother is always Watching You and the Thought Police can practically read your

mind, Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. He knows the Party's official image of the world is a fluid fiction. He knows the Party controls the people by feeding them lies and narrowing their imaginations through a process of bewilderment and brutalization that alienates each individual from his fellows and deprives him of every liberating human pursuit from reasoned inquiry to sexual passion. Drawn into a forbidden love affair, Winston finds the courage to join a secret revolutionary organization called The Brotherhood, dedicated to the destruction of the Party. Together with his beloved Julia, he hazards his life in a deadly match against the powers that be.

[End of Orwell quote.]

American Government Priorities Do Not Include the American Middle Class

On January 31, 2006, President Bush delivered his annual State of the Union address. The following day, Lou Dobbs Tonight commented on the content. Bush never mentioned illegal immigrants or Hurricane Katrina. He spent a bare 41 seconds on border security. He spent 2.5 minutes on health care.

Our porous borders and mass immigration policies have destroyed national security, as well as good paying jobs for many people. Outsourcing of jobs and massive international free trade have destroyed many other good-paying jobs. By means of mass immigration and massive international free trade, Bush and his predecessors have destroyed the quality of life for the American middle class, have destroyed American culture, and have severely damaged the natural environment (with the addition of 100 million more people to the country). He could have and should have said more about these important things.

Big Plans for Nuclear Energy

On February 1, Bush announced new plans to reprocess nuclear waste, to help address America's energy crisis. While nuclear energy may replace the burning of petroleum for generation of electricity, it is in general a poor substitute for petroleum. The cost of storing nuclear waste for tens of thousands of years is never included in government calculations. Moreover, it is highly toxic, and when refined into plutonium it can be used to make nuclear bombs. When is our government going to admit that the coming peaking of global production of oil is a serious problem, and that human population is going to suffer a tremendous die-off as it occurs?

What's in a Word? Semantics Is Important!

On television recently, and more than once, I have heard President Bush declare that we will fight for "victory" in Iraq. But he never defines what he means by victory. Is it similar to Vietnam, when one day we will simply leave? Is it when the insurgents and the US reduces the country to rubble? Is it when the American plutocrats have generated two trillion dollars in economic activity from the war? He should define his terms.

On the January 11, 2006 edition of Lou Dobbs Tonight, commentator Bill Schneider reported that Americans are dissatisfied that the Iraqi people have no recognized leader. This statement is very misleading. There is no "Iraqi people." There are three major ethnic groups – the Shiites, the Sunnies, and the Kurds, and a number of other minor groups. A "people" is a group of human beings with common language, race, religion, culture, customs and heritage. There is no leader of "Iraqi people" because there is no "Iraqi people."

There was once an American people, but no longer.

The Olduvai Theory

You should take time to read the article, “The Peak of World Oil Production, and the Road to the Olduvai Gorge,” by Dr. Richard C. Duncan, at <http://www.dieoff.com/page224.htm> . Of the many interesting facts presented in that article, it is interesting to note that the global per capita energy production peaked in 1979. This fact explains why the quality of life is dropping for all people, worldwide. Here is the abstract from his article:

The Olduvai theory has been called unthinkable, preposterous, absurd, dangerous, self-fulfilling, and self-defeating. I offer it, however, as an inductive theory based on world energy and population data and on what I've seen during the past 30 years in some 50 nations on all continents except Antarctica. It is also based on my experience in electrical engineering and energy management systems, my hobbies of anthropology and archaeology, and a lifetime of reading in various fields.

The theory is defined by the ratio of world energy production (use) and world population. The details are worked out. The theory is easy. It states that the life expectancy of Industrial Civilization is less than or equal to 100 years: 1930-2030.

World energy production per capita from 1945 to 1973 grew at a breakneck speed of 3.45 %/year. Next from 1973 to the all-time peak in 1979, it slowed to a sluggish 0.64 %/year. Then suddenly – and for the first time in history – energy production per capita took a long-term decline of 0.33 %/year from 1979 to 1999. The Olduvai theory explains the 1979 peak and the subsequent decline. More to the point, it says that energy production per capita will fall to its 1930 value by 2030, thus giving Industrial Civilization a lifetime of less than or equal to 100 years.

Should this occur, any number of factors could be cited as the 'causes' of collapse. I believe, however, that the collapse will be strongly correlated with an 'epidemic' of permanent blackouts of

high-voltage electric power networks — worldwide. Briefly explained: "When the electricity goes out, you are back in the Dark Age. And the Stone Age is just around the corner."

The Olduvai theory, of course, may be proved wrong. But, as of now, it cannot be rejected by the historic world energy production and population data.

[End of Duncan excerpt.]

A Chocolate New Orleans?

A couple of weeks ago, Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans announced that New Orleans would be rebuilt as a "chocolate city."

There was some flurry over this overtly racist remark (Nagin is black), but it quickly died down. Nagin apologized, and the issue is ended. Blacks can make racist remarks with impunity. They can have a "Congressional Black Caucus." If a white had made a remark that New Orleans would be rebuilt as a "white" city, he would be ruined. If a Congressman attempted to start a Congressional White Caucus, to defend against the barrage of attacks against white culture, he would be castigated. Under the present US system of political correctness, only whites can be racists.

Medical Insurance Has Driven the Cost of US Health Care to Absurd Levels

When my wife had our first child, in 1960, the physician's fee was \$125, and the cost of the hospital room (Spartanburg General Hospital) was comparable to that of a good hotel. Most people could afford to pay for routine medical bills. Now, routine medical care is so costly in the US that a modest medical insurance plan, under which the holder will pay a hefty deductible and 80% of the

cost, will typically cost \$12,000 per year. But the average income in the US is about \$35,000 per year for whites and about \$20,000 per year for blacks. Middle class Americans can no longer afford health care, unless it is paid for by their employer. This has been caused largely by the US system of medical insurance, which has driven costs sky high. Medical care often includes ridiculously expensive tests, such as MRI exams. Even routine procedures cost absurd amounts of money.

Why Do Razor Blades Not Last Longer?

When I was starting to shave, almost everyone used Gillette “Blue Blades” in a Gillette safety razor. Some people used Schick razor blades. At some point in time – I think that it was the 1960s, razor blades began to change. There were stainless steel razor blades and platinum-coated razor blades. These blades cost a little more, but you could get many more shaves from them – about 15-20 shaves, instead of 4-5.

But then a funny thing happened. Through the years, tremendous advances have been made in materials science, but the number of shaves per blade has never increased any more. And the cost has increased from pennies per blade to dollars per blade (you don't purchase single blades anymore, but disposable razors or disposable cartridges. On some cartridges, there are multiple blades, and they are very sharp. But they are very thin – so thin that they wear out as fast as the old stainless steel or platinum double-edged blades (which were much thicker).

Why is it that razor blades do not last any longer than they did before, but cost many times what they did before? Is this capitalism at work? Is this economic efficiency? Is this competition at work? What am I missing here?

Oil Changes

For many years, the auto and oil industries stated that you should change your car oil about every 3,000 – 5,000 miles. But last month, it was announced that you could now safely change your oil every 10,000 miles.

When I was young, in 1963 or 1964, I bought a new 1964 Chevrolet station wagon. That same year, a friend of mine, Floyd Guess, purchased a new 1964 Ford Thunderbird. Both cars cost about \$3,000, as I recall. Floyd had previously worked for Phillips Petroleum (now ConocoPhillips), and had talked with the automotive engineers there. He told me that now that in-line paper oil filters were installed on all cars, there was never any need to change the oil – just add a little if the level dropped, and change the filter when it got dirty. He explained that the filters removed all abrasive materials.

The strange thing that occurred was that the auto industry and the oil industry never publicly acknowledged this fact.

What is going on here? Why has the change interval moved from 5,000 miles to 10,000 miles? Should it be lengthened even further?

Did Dr. Arthur Agatston (South Beach Diet) Sell Out?

A key element of the South Beach Diet is reducing the consumption of refined carbohydrates. My wife recently started this diet. A few days ago I saw a box of “South Beach Diet” breakfast cereal on the table. It looked the same as regular prepared cereal – it was mainly flakes and “puffed” grains. On the cover it proclaimed “whole grains.” But the grains were not “whole grains” at all. They were soaked and flattened and puffed

and dried. They were, in fact, refined carbohydrates, essentially the same as in all of the other prepared, dried, boxed cereals.

Where Has All the Flavor Gone? Carrageenan, Guar Gum and Xanthan Gum

On the 60 Minutes television program a few years ago, Andy Rooney did a segment in which he lamented that milk no longer tasted good. Although his observation was correct, he was blasted by the milk industry.

Because of the way that we process food, many things do not taste good anymore. This includes yogurt and ice cream, which are now often adulterated with the gelling agent pectin or with gooey thickeners such as carrageenan, guar gum and xanthan gum. These thickening agents are added in such great quantities that many “ice creams” will not melt – if you place a serving in a bowl in a warm room, it will retain its shape!

Carrageenan is harmful. Fortunately for me, I react badly to it, so I now look for it on all labels, and avoid foods which I am pretty sure will contain it. If I drink a milkshake purchased from almost any “ice cream” store, I have a “lead stomach” for an hour or more. Here is some information about carrageenan, from website <http://www.notmilk.com/carageenan.html> :

Stomach Aches Caused by Carrageenan

Some folks can eat just about anything. Some people might have no problem producing a tall glass of homemade soymilk, then converting it to chocolate milk by adding the following ingredients: Three teaspoons of sugar. One teaspoon of chocolate powder. Two tablespoons of Vaseline petroleum jelly. The Vaseline might produce gastric distress, and the soymilk drinkers would erroneously conclude that they are "allergic" to

soy. Some people do not experience gastric discomfort caused by the Vaseline-like food additive, carrageenan. Many people do.

Carrageenan is a commonly used food additive that is extracted from red seaweed by using powerful alkali solvents. These solvents would remove the tissues and skin from your hands as readily as would any acid.

Carrageenan is a thickening agent. It's the vegetarian equivalent of casein, the same protein that is isolated from milk and used to thicken foods. Casein is also used to produce paints, and is the glue used to hold a label to a bottle of beer.

Carrageenan is the magic ingredient used to de-ice frozen airplanes sitting on tarmacs during winter storms.

IS CARRAGEENAN REALLY NATURAL?

Carrageenan is about as wholesome as monosodium glutamate (MSG), which is extracted from rice, and can equally be considered natural. Aspartame (NutraPoison) is also natural, as it is extracted from decayed plant matter that has been underground for millions of years (oil). So too are many other substances such as carrageenan that can also be classified by FDA and USDA as wholesome and natural food additives.

Just because something comes from a natural source does not mean that it is safe. The small black dots in the eyes of potatoes contain substances that are instantly fatal if eaten. Got poison? You will if you eat the black dots on the "eyes" of potatoes.

Carrageenan is a gel. It coats the insides of a stomach, like gooey honey or massage oil. Digestive problems often ensue. Quite often, soy eaters or soymilk drinkers react negatively to carrageenan, and blame their discomforting stomachaches on the soy.

High weight molecular carrageenans are considered to be safe, and were given GRAS status (safe for human consumption) by the FDA. Low weight carrageenans are considered to be dangerous. Even SILK admits this.

In order to get more information about carrageenan from a scientist, I spoke with one of America carrageenan experts, Joanne Tobacman, M.D. Dr. Tobacman teaches clinical internal medicine at the University of Iowa College of Medicine. I explained to Dr. Tobacman that I rejected animal studies (we discussed valid concerns about animal research, and why they never produce reliable results for humans). I requested evidence of human trials that might show carrageenan to be a danger for human consumption.

Dr. Tobacman shared studies with me that demonstrate that digestive enzymes and bacterial action convert high weight carrageenans to dangerous low molecular weight carrageenans and poligeenans in the human gut. These carrageenans have been linked to various human cancers and digestive disorders. Again, I remind you that Tobacman's evidence and conclusions are based upon human tissue samples, not animal studies.

I will cite additional information from four studies:

- 1) Filament Disassembly and Loss of Mammary Myoepithelial Cells after Exposure to Carrageenan, Joanne Tobacman, Cancer Research, 57, 2823-2826, July 15, 1997
- 2) Carrageenan-Induced Inclusions in Mammary Mycoepithelial Cells, Joanne Tobacman, MD, and Katherine Walters, BS, Cancer Detection and Prevention, 25(6): 520-526 (2001)
- 3) Consumption of Carrageenan and Other Water-soluble Polymers Used as Food Additives and Incidence of Mammary Carcinoma, J. K. Tobacman, R. B. Wallace, M. B. Zimmerman, Medical Hypothesis (2001), 56(5), 589-598
- 4) Structural Studies on Carrageenan Derived Oligisaccharides, Guangli Yu, Huashi Guan, Alexandra Ioanviciu, Sulthan Sikkander, Charuwan Thanawiroon, Joanne Tobacman, Toshihiko Toida, Robert Linhardt, Carbohydrate Research, 337 (2002), 433-440

In her 1997 publication (1), Tobacman studied the effect of carrageenan on the growth of cultured human mammary epithelial

cells over a two week period. She found that extremely low doses of carrageenan disrupted the internal cellular architecture of healthy breast tissue, leading her to conclude:

"The widely used food additive, carrageenan has marked effects on the growth and characteristics of human mammary myoepithelial cells in tissue cultures at concentrations much less than those frequently used in food products to improve solubility."

Tobacman continued her work by exposing low concentrations of carrageenan for short intervals to human breast tissue (2), and observed pathological alterations in cellular membranes and intracellular tissues. Tobacman wrote:

"These changes included prominence of membrane-associated vesicles that coalesced to form unusual petal-like arrays...and development of stacked rigid-appearing inclusions in the lysosomes that arose from the membranes of the petal-like arrays and from smaller, dense spherical bodies that formed clumps."

In reporting a historical perspective, Tobacman revealed that carrageenan has been found to destroy other human cells in tissue cultures, including epithelial intestinal cells and prostate cells. She concludes:

"The association between exposure to low concentrations of carrageenan in tissue culture and destruction of mammary myoepithelial cells may be relevant to the occurrence of invasive mammary malignancy in vivo and provides another approach to investigation of mammary carcinoma."

Tobacman's third paper (3) explored the increased incidence of mammary carcinoma to the increased consumption of stabilizers and additives such as guar gum, pectin, xanthan, and carrageenan. While no relationship between the either above named additives and cancer was observed, carrageenan showed a strong positive.

Although high molecular weight carrageenans are considered to be safe, Tobacman demonstrates that low molecular weight carrageenans are carcinogenic. She writes:

"Acid hydrolysis (digestion) leads to shortening of the carrageenan polymer to the degraded form, poligeenan. It is not unreasonable to speculate that normal gastric acid...may act upon ingested carrageenan and convert some of which is ingested to the lower molecular weight poligeenan during the actual process of digestion. Also, some intestinal bacteria possess the enzyme carrageenase that degrades carrageenan."

Tobacman's 2002 publication (4) proves her earlier hypothesis. She writes:

"Mild-acid hydrolytic depolymerization of carrageenan affords poligeenan, a mixture of lower molecular weight polysaccharides and oligosaccharide products."

Tobacman is currently preparing and characterizing low molecular weight poligeenans (carcinogenic) that have been extracted from human digestion modalities. Her yet-to-be published data suggest that carrageenans are dangerous for human consumption.

My advice: Read labels. If there is carrageenan in a product, select an alternative.

This morning, I checked my local supermarket (ShopRite, Emerson, NJ) to see which soymilk manufacturers added carrageenan to their formulas.

REFRIGERATED SOYMILKS

The largest selling soymilk in America is SILK. Do I pick on the industry leader? Damned right I do. SILK sets the standard. You deserve to know the truth. Just for the record, when SILK changes their formula they will become my hero. In my opinion, SILK tastes better than any of the commercially available

soymilks. Unfortunately, consumers sacrifice good health for good taste. That is not a fair trade, particularly for our children.

SILK uses carrageenan. SILK plain, SILK chocolate. SunSoy also uses carrageenan. Hershey's real chocolate is not so real. They use it too. So does Nesquik.

THESE COMPANIES DO NOT USE CARRAGEENAN

VitaSoy does not have carrageenan! They use barley flower as a thickener. 8th Continent does not use carrageenan either. Their choice is to use cellulose gel and soy lecithin to create a smoother soymilk.

SHELF STABLE

On the shelf (non-refrigerated), I found Rice Dream. They do not use carrageenan. They use xantham gum. Soy Dream (made by Imagine Foods) does not use it either. Their emulsifier is rice syrup. Eden Soy does not use it. They use barley extract.

Do a little experiment. Drink a quart of SILK. Pay careful attention to your carrageenan-induced tummy ache and intestinal discomfort. Many consumers unfairly blame that on soy. Now you know the truth. Drink a quart of VitaSoy, 8th Continent, Soy Dream, or Eden Soy, and you will not get the carrageenan-blues.

Why do some manufacturers "get it," while others remain clueless?

[End of carrageenan article.]

Fortunately, there are still a few ice cream manufacturers who eschew the use of carrageenan in their formulations. These include Breyers.

There are plenty of other additives that are harmful to human beings. I am allergic to potassium sorbate, which is a

preservative often used in citrus drinks, such as apple juice, wine coolers, or cocktail mixes, such as piña colada or daiquiri mix. This chemical causes me to have severe chest pain, and difficulty breathing. This reaction is not all that uncommon, and can be fatal.

If you check the World Wide Web on the Internet (search phrase “potassium sorbate”), you will find that some people claim that potassium sorbate has been given a bum rap – that it is not at all dangerous. For example, the Lumen Foods website states, “It is hard to imagine a naturally-occurring nutrient that has been more maligned or more mischaracterized than potassium sorbate – the potassium salt of sorbic acid.” (<http://www.soybean.com/ps.htm>). Whatever bad press potassium sorbate has been given is richly deserved. This preservative is very dangerous, and can be fatal.

(It took me quite a while to find out that I was allergic to potassium sorbate. Every once in a while I would have a terrible reaction to a soft drink or mix. I would read the labels of what I had drunk, but there were always so many added chemicals that I could not determine which one was causing my problem. Then, one day, in the early 1980s, a friend offered me a “wine cooler,” which triggered the allergic reaction. To my good fortune, the wine cooler had but a single added ingredient – potassium sorbate. My problem was solved. As chance would have it, my children heard a television report a couple of weeks later, discussing the fact that potassium sorbate preservatives could cause fatal reactions.)

Unfortunately for me, I am allergic to the sulfites that occur, either added or naturally, in wine. If I take a large glass of red wine, I almost always get a headache that starts the next morning and lasts for the rest of the day, the night, and the next day. Fortunately, I can purchase, in some stores, “organic” wines, to which no sulfites have been added. Wines from France, Italy, and

other foreign countries also tend not to have sulfites added. Champagne appears to have lower levels of sulfites.

It is a shame that so many poisons are added to our food. No wonder today's food tastes so bad. No wonder there has been such an increase in colon cancer. We are simply pickling our guts.

Update 23 April 2009. For other articles on harmful food additives, see the section "Australian Wine: No Added Sulfites, No Headaches" of Miscellany 25, posted at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/Miscellany25.htm> and "Harmful Food Additives" at <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/Miscellany35.htm> .

I recently retired to Spartanburg, South Carolina, where I attended high school in the 1950s. At that time, I enjoyed going to "fish camp" restaurants, and eating catfish. The flavor of catfish at that time was very good. One of the first things that I did upon my return to Spartanburg was to go to a "fish camp" restaurant. Was I disappointed! Catfish are no longer "wild," but are raised in fish ponds, as are tilapia (milkfish), carp, shrimp, and salmon. These fish-farm catfish do not have good flavor. They hardly have any flavor at all. They are just white glop. What a shame that we have destroyed so much of our quality of life in the United States.

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