

A forum to encourage independent thinking

# The THINK Club

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## What's Wrong with This Picture?



## Special Food Issue

Is the World Running Out of Food?

Anatomy of Chicken Nuggets

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Food Quiz

Book Review: SuperCrunchers by Ian Ayres

## Letters

I enjoyed all the articles on our state of the economy (The Think Club – Winter 2009).... I especially loved the cover, 'Incompetent' – that says it all!

**Tracey Murphy  
Saginaw, MI**

I plan to read 'The Trillion Dollar Meltdown' (The Think Club Book of the Year). Humor (Surviving Retirement) was funny and pungent as usual.

**Steve Elliott  
Indianapolis, IN**

The Movie "Slumdog Millionaire" has won the Oscar. I am very happy for India and hope that, as a result, something good happens to the slum children -- that would be wonderful. But the movie itself, in my view, was made as a "shocker" for the western audience -- and it did shock, look at the result: it won the Oscar. But what amazes me is the fact that nobody is talking about how the screen writer has practically butchered the book ("Q & A" by Vikas Swarup) on which it was based. The talented writer himself should be furious about how his book was changed into something completely different (saving only the premise of the quiz show). Has the fame gone to his head and he is not objecting? Just think: they portrayed the main character as a Muslim in the movie (thus creating a completely different turn), while in the book the protagonist is an ORPHAN whose mother left him as a baby in a basket on the steps of a church, and thus he was given a name Ram Mohammad Thomas -- showing that his religion was UNKNOWN. It could be any. And then that demeaning scene with jumping in a toilet to be able to see a famous actor, all inventions of the screen writer designed to shock the audience. I've seen

movies made from books before, but not so atrociously rearranged...

**Irene Rudra  
Corpus Christi, TX**

## *THINKING WILDLY*

Avoid fruits and nuts. You are what you eat.

Once, during prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water.

–W. C. fields

Can it be a mistake that *STRESSED* is *DESSERTS* spelled backwards?

Give a man food, and he can eat for a day.  
Give a man a job, and he can only eat for 30 minutes on break

When I go to a restaurant, I always ask for a chicken and an egg, to see which comes first.

Butter vs. Margarine? I trust cows over scientists

Computers are useless. They can only give you answers.

– Pablo Picasso

Quantum mechanic Seth Lloyd says the universe is one giant, hackable computer. Let's hope it's not running Windows.

– Kevin Kelly

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## What's Wrong with this Picture?

By Musafir



“What’s wrong with this picture?” This can be construed as a mere statement implying that there is nothing wrong with this picture or am asking a tag question? It all depends on how you perceive me. I am not saying anything because I have not made up my mind yet. I am still waiting for consequences to be had and history to unfold.

In the picture above, Mr. Obama, the President of the United States of America is standing in the second row almost in the corner near to the Prime Minister of India (in turban). He is not in the first row, next to the host, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Never before have I seen a group photo of world dignitaries where the President of America happened to stand in the second row in a corner with the leaders of the developing countries. Does that signal a decline in America’s status? Is America no longer superior to the rest of the world? I don’t know nor am I making any statement.



While paying a visit to the queen, Mr. Obama made a two-handed handshake with her and Mrs. Obama put her arms around the queen. These gestures irritated the British as they considered those to be against the proper protocol. The queen of Great Britain is considered above everyone else by her loyal subordinates. Did the Obamas make a

statement to the world that the British royalty was not superior to anyone else? I do not know nor am I making any statement.

While attending G-20 summit, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak said Friday that he believed that North Korea would fire the rocket Saturday if weather conditions permitted. Mr. Obama first said that if that happens, North Korea won’t be left unpunished. Finally the U.S. officials said they won’t attempt to shoot down the missile, anyway. The White House has otherwise remained circumspect on how specifically it would respond to the launch. Does that mean that America does not have the superiority anymore to shoot down North Korea’s missile or to guarantee protection to Japan and other allies? I do not know nor am I making any statement.



While Mr. Obama was talking cooperation with the Chinese leader at the G-20 summit, the news leaked that China had created a kill-weapon to destroy American carriers deployed in the Pacific. The financing of the weapon system was developed with the help of trillions of dollars that the Americans are borrowing from China. Does that mean that we have lost or edge to China? I do not know nor am I making any statement.

Mr. Obama while in Strasbourg, France almost apologized to the Europeans for America’s past arrogance. The Europeans, especially France and Germany did not pay any heed to Obama’s apology as they shied away from a greater participation in Afghanistan or commitment to a global stimulus plan proposed by Mr. Obama. In my memory, the Europeans have never apologized to America



## Dining Etiquette

By Janice Taylor

(Excerpts from Janice Taylor's Book 'From Our Lady of Weight Loss')

1. **Sit Down.** Not so fast ... after your host/hostess sits. Follow her lead.

2. **The Napkin.** Now that you are seated, you should – within seconds – open the napkin and place it on your lap. Do not tuck it into your shirt, or if you've got a tie on, do not

take your tie and throw it over your shoulder. (Did I really have to tell you that?) Do not try to snap it open, either. Never leave your napkin on the table. If you need to leave the table, fold your napkin and place it on your seat.

3. **The Holy Bread Basket.** Take a knife and cut a piece from the loaf. Take some butter and put it on your plate, not on the bread. Tear a bite-size piece of bread from the bread that you just cut and put on your plate. Butter it from your newly formed butter pile. Eat it. Repeat if you like. One piece at a time.

4. **The Utensils.** Use them from the outside in. Each utensil corresponds with a course, so if you skip the first course, skip the first utensil. Never ever let a used utensil hit the table.

5. **The Water Glass.** It's always to your right. The dinner roll is to your left. (Hint: They're in alphabetical order. Roll / Water. Get it?)

6. **The Soup.** Do not put the entire spoon in your mouth. Load it - rather, fill your spoon about 75% with soup, bring it to your mouth, and sip it from the side.

7. **The Meat (chicken or fish).** Start from one end or the other, never in the middle, and cut one piece at a time. Have you ever seen anyone cut all their meat, potato and vegetables - put the knife down and chow down? Very gauche.



8. **Sit Up Straight.** Do not let your elbows touch the table.

9. **Pass the Salt (and the Pepper).** When someone asks for the salt, pass the two together. And don't salt your food until you've tasted it first. It's an insult to the cook.

10. **Masticate Your Food.** Do not chew with your mouth open. Do not talk with food in your mouth. Masticate

and swallow first.

11. **You're A Mess.** Did you spill something? Drop your napkin on the floor? Burp? Don't make a big deal over it. Stay calm. Quietly apologize. In other words, confess and move on.

12. **Finger Food.** If you're not sure whether you should eat something with your fingers, opt for a utensil, but here's a short list.

Artichokes

Asparagus (only if it's without sauce)

Bacon (only if it's crisp)

Sandwiches (duh)

Cookies (duh)

Small fruits or berries with stems

Burgers, Dogs, Corn on the Cob (obviously)

Caviar

Pickles

13. **The Spectacular Ending.** Place your knife and fork on the plate so that they are parallel to each other and on a diagonal - pointing toward the eleven o'clock position. Do not place them in the "X" position. The "X" indicates that you are resting between bites.

When everyone has finished their meal, you may place your napkin on the table, next to your plate, loosely - not tied in a funny knot or twisted.

Got it? Great!

Spread the word (NOT the icing).

## My Friend Leany

By Musafir

Today, I got the news of my friend, Leany's sad demise. By the way, 'Leany' is an ethnic name. It has nothing to do with my friend's physical appearance. Ironically, Leany only ate to live, but instead of living, he died. My only sorrow is that Leany could not fulfill his lifelong dream of forming a 'Gastronomic Anonymous' group – a fellowship of men and women to help others relinquish good food in favor of fads and other crap. Life, perhaps, was too short for Leany to rid humanity of good eating and drinking."

If good food were sex, Leany preached celibacy by forcing others to abstain. Whenever I think of Leany, I visualize a cucumber in thick glasses. This should come as nobody's surprise that Leany's favorite drink was homemade cucumber juice. The morning meal in Leany household was actually a mourning meal – seaweeds, soybeans and, of course, cucumber juice. Lunch consisted of crispy lettuce wraps. Dinner time at Leany's looked like a raw-food café with disgusting servings of sea-vegetable harvested off the coast of Japan, loaded with vitamins and minerals and Yerba tea, high in antioxidants with carrot flax crackers for extra taste and nutrition. Leany was left to himself walking a righteous but lonely path for the rest of his life.

Bland, dull, crude, disgusting, flat, gross, raunchy, tacky and tasteless foods were Leany's obsession. His conversation was always limited to diet, less sugar, fewer carbohydrates, anti-carcinogenic and reduced daily caloric intake. His favorite book was *Beyond the 120-Year Diet – How to Double Your Vital Years*. Though I always disliked Leany's food

habits, I will always relish our differences. While I always enjoyed good things to eat, Leany worried about bad things to eat. While I ate with all five senses, Leany senselessly swallow seeds, herbs and other inedibles all his life. Contrary to Leany's idea of a balanced diet, I still believe that a diet is balanced when you have cookies in each hand. My idea is that if you eat something and nobody sees you eat, it has no calories. Unfortunately, Leany always hated me for that.



To Leany's credit, I must say that he was a very flexible person. He listened to every guru-of-the-month and always acted on their advice. For example, some months his slogan would be: "Eat no carbohydrates." Then it would simply change to "Eat no fat." Some months it would be 'South Beach Diet' and then change to 'Scarsdale.' Once upon a time,

Leany only consumed molasses and apple vinegar chewing each mouthful of food 50 times a day. He adopted Dr. Robert Atkins' low-carb, high-protein diet in 1972 then replaced that with Herman Tarnower's high protein, low calorie diet in 1979. He adopted Nathan Pritikin's formula in 1981 and replaced that with Judy Mazel's "Beverly Hills Diet" in 1985. In recent years Leany has been living on cabbage soup, grapefruit and apple vinegar. Leany kept on jumping from one fad diet to another in a scramble to lose weight and gain health. In the end he lost it all and died. If we are what we eat then Leany was dull, bitter and unseasoned. I will always remember my friend, Leany.

## A Critique of Atheism

By Robert Bickmeyer

"There are no atheists in foxholes" was widely spoken during World War II – and no one denied it.

Recently, an atheist was writing negatively about Christianity and aligned himself with Jews. How wrong can you be? If there is a fence separating the believers from the Godless, Jews are on the same side of the fence as Christians and Muslims. Judaism, Christianity and Islam honor one God. But, it is my hope to tear down all fences.

I have no fear of death because of my deep faith in God and in the hereafter. Atheists, however, must dread death because, to them, it is the absolute end. I invite them, no, I implore them, to join me in this belief to ease their fears when they age or when a fatal illness falls upon them. If I am wrong and Heaven does not exist, they have lost nothing by believing; however, if there is Heaven, there is the possibility the Pearly Gates will be open to them because they believed. Believing is a no loss situation.

When Clarence Darrow, the famous lawyer who believed in and defended the cause of evolution to be taught in our schools was near death he called in three clergymen and confessed that he was wrong. He asked them to intercede in his behalf with his Maker.

Most atheists consider themselves intellectually superior to the common man who believes in God and whose children believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. I say this because the atheists I have met or whose writings I have read appear to have above average intelligence. This supposed intellectual superiority is outweighed by the multitude of believers in God that include Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Francis Bacon, Albert Einstein, every American president, our current American Congress and 95 percent of Americans. Conversely, leading atheists were Josef Stalin and subsequent heads of the communist Soviet Union, Adolph Hitler, who, besides killing six million Jews, hated Christianity, calling it a religion for weaklings, and Roger Baldwin, one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union. Let us not forget those communist/atheist countries where all religion is banned, and in fact, people were murdered and persecuted for practicing religion.

A recent newspaper article from Beijing, China reported "Christianity – repressed, marginalized and, in many cases, illegal in China for more than half a century – is sweeping the country, overflowing churches and posing a sensitive challenge to the officially atheist Communist Party."

The anti-God crowd often cries that religions start all wars. Not so! At least not in this country. We've had the

American Revolution, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Persian Gulf War and Iraq War - none of which were religious wars.

Currently in the Middle, East Muslims battle Jews and in Ireland the Catholic vs. Protestant

battle has simmered down. Except for these idiotic wars you must go back to the Middle Ages for religious wars.

In addition to providing aid to all major world disasters, American Christian charities build and operate:

orphanages

hospitals

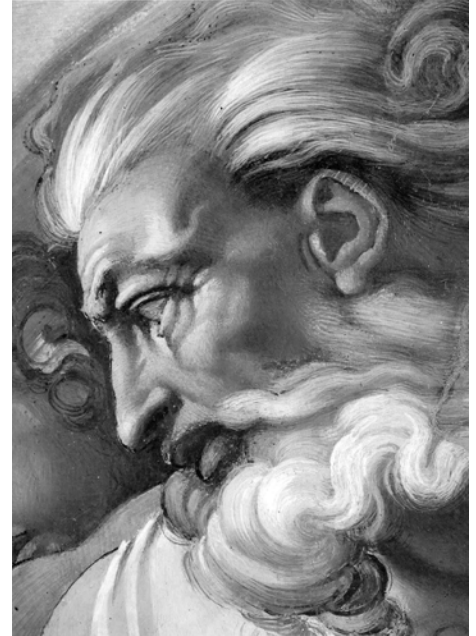
schools

soup kitchens and beds for the homeless

Their charitable works are endless. Meanwhile atheists...I give up...what do they do? I am sure there are many fine atheists who are kind and charitable, but there are too few atheists to organize and form groups such as above.

There are atheists (as well as members of all religions) who lack morality. Deep within they believe in God, but their immoral acts or thoughts dwell on their conscience. By casting God aside, they relieve their conscience and pursue their lifestyle, unencumbered by conscience.

In one study on this subject, men were hooked to a polygraph machine and were asked if they believed in God. According to the lie detector, every man who answered "no" lied. No wonder there are no atheists in foxholes. What a happier, blessed nation this would be if the 95 percent of Americans who believe, were joined by the remaining five percent.

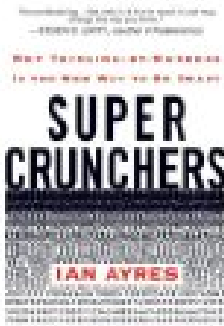


## Book Review

### Super Crunchers

Author: Ian Ayres

First Published by Bantam Books in 2007  
(260pp)



Ian Ayres, a Professor at Yale Law School and a famous economist, enlightens the readers of *Super Crunchers* by presenting the concepts of data

mining, regressions, randomized trials and other statistical theories in a practical way with very interesting case studies.

Though I should not categorize *Super Crunchers* as a text book of statistics, I am compelled to state that Ayres has clarified the statistical terms for me in the least mundane way that I have ever come across after having taken statistics in five semesters during my schooling.

Ayres makes his readers feel that statistics is a tool that anyone can use. He also makes us realize how inundated life has become with data and that “quantitative prediction is reshaping business and government.”

The growth of massive databases has created an opportunity to analyze large collections of real world experience to determine what really works. Its application to medical treatments has already provided fascinating insight into the effectiveness of traditional treatment procedures. In some cases, they are shown to

be ineffective. It also helps lead the way to more effective approaches.

The author shows how this approach can be applied to many varied applications resulting in evidence based solutions. It is a very interesting exposition on the use of regression analysis and random experiments to provide answers to many difficult problems in a wide range of human endeavor. Many real world examples highlight the use of statistical techniques. Ayers thinks it is the way of the future and after reading the *Super Crunchers* I am inclined to agree.

The book is not instructional and does not contain complicated mathematical demonstrations. But, to my surprise, reading *Super Crunchers* does not require an advanced math degree. It also will not provide a step-by-step outline of how to incorporate the benefits of data mining in your company. Even better, it will open one’s mind to new possibilities and thinking about applications one probably had not considered.

When all is said and done, the readers will see the world in a much different light, while no doubt acknowledging that everything around is a randomized test waiting to happen. At the very least the readers will appreciate the seemingly endless amount of interesting tidbits and case studies that are referenced.

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## Anatomy of Chicken Nuggets

By Michael Pollan

### (Excerpts from Michael Pollan's book 'The Omnivore's Dilemma')

The meal at the end of the industrial food chain that begins in an Iowa cornfield is prepared by McDonald's and eaten in a moving car. The myriad streams of commodity corn, after being variously processed and turned into meat, converge in all sorts of different meals people eat at KFC, or Pizza Hut or Applebee's or bought at the supermarket. Industrial meals are all around us, after all; they make up the food chain from which most of us eat most of the time.

Chicken nuggets constitute its own genre of food for American children, many of whom eat nuggets every day. A lot of thought goes into a nugget, that and a lot of corn. Of the thirty-eight ingredients it takes to make a McNugget, thirteen are derived from corn: the corn-fed chicken itself; modified cornstarch; mono- and diglycerides; dextrose; lecithin; chicken broth; yellow corn flour; filler; vegetable shortening; hydrogenated corn oil; and citric acid as a preservative.

McNuggets also contain several synthetic, quasi-edible substances. These chemicals are what make modern processed food possible. Listed first are the sodium aluminum phosphate, mono-calcium phosphate, sodium acid pyrophosphate and calcium lactate. Then there are anti-foaming agents like dimethylpolysiloxane. The most alarming ingredient in a chicken McNugget is tert-butylhydroquinone or TBHQ, an antioxidant derived from petroleum that is sprayed on the nugget to help preserve freshness. TBHQ is a form of butane which can cause nausea, vomiting and ringing in the ears. Five grams of TBHQ can kill a person.

With so many exotic elements, chicken nuggets can do more than taste good to a child. What it has done, of course, is to sell an awful lot of chicken for companies like Tyson,

which invented the nugget. If our children come from lower rungs of America's economic ladder, they are more likely to eat food with cheap calories in a variety of attractive forms like chicken nuggets. In the long run, however, the eater pays a high price for these cheap calories: obesity, Type II diabetes and heart disease.



It is another story for the lower end of the world's economic ladder. People in many parts of the world eat corn directly and not through chicken nuggets. To eat corn directly is to consume all the energy in that corn, but when we feed that corn to a steer or a chicken, 90 percent of its energy is lost – to the bones or feathers or fur. This is why vegetarians advocate eating “low on the food chain.” Every step up the chain reduces the amount of food energy by a factor of ten. Processing food also burns energy. What this means is that the amount of food energy lost in the making of Chicken McNuggets could feed a great many more children.

Sent your comments to:

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## Whose Guidelines Are These?

by Barry Glassner

### (Excerpts from *The Gospel of Food* by Barry Glassner)

The dietary idealists impose their standards on others, in particular, poor and working people. Food reformers, whether liberal or conservative, typically go after the foods served in hunger programs, fast food chains, and low-income homes, not in country clubs, upscale restaurants, and Park Avenue penthouses.

Sometimes reformers merely preach or scold; at other times they literally legislate what poor people can eat, by way of government mandates like the *Department of Agriculture's Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. For most of us, we can choose to ignore how much fat, salt, sugar, cholesterol, fruit, dairy, and grains to include in our diets. But many underprivileged Americans don't have that option. Programs they rely upon for food – school meal programs; government run hospitals; and the women, infants, and children supplemental nutrition programs – are required to comply with the *Dietary Guidelines*.

Such mandates would never become law if policy makers themselves had to adhere to them. Those guidelines come from a group of scientists, Ph.D.'s and M.D.'s from places like John Hopkins, Columbia, and UCLA peppered with phrases like "science-based food guidance," "science clearly shows....." and the "latest science." But in reality, guidelines are committee reports, the result of the interplay of give-and-take, bullying, boredom, and eventually compromise among a group of people who entered the process with differing opinions and agenda.

Many members serving on past guidelines advisory committees have revealed the intense lobbying by powerful sectors of the food and dietary-supplement industries, members of Congress, and assorted advocacy organizations, groups as diverse as the National Dairy Council and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Muddying matters all the more, several members of the guidelines advisory committee often have ties to the dairy, egg, and meat industries. Some of the advocacy groups conceal their ulterior motives. For example, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) carefully avoids revealing that in reality, it is an organization of animal rights activists.

Industry groups don't disguise as well. Healthy people get little benefit from the vitamin and herbal supplements they take in hopes of bettering their diets. Tens of millions of Americans have experienced adverse reactions to nutritional supplements, including seemingly innocuous ones like vitamin A and vitamin E. They have caused serious complications and deaths to their users. So one might wonder why a group called the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) would urge the Dietary Guidelines committee to mention nutritional supplement to the general public.

But the CRN is as much about responsible nutrition as the GreenFacts Foundation funded by chemical companies, is about responsible environmental policy. We ought to remember that supplements are not safer and superior to actual food. In a society where the majority of us are getting sick because of eating too much, too often, there is a possibility of ignoring the fact that conventional foods have all the nutrients that we need.



GreenFacts, formerly the GreenFacts Foundation, is an international non-profit organization founded in 2001 in Brussels, Belgium. It produces short summaries of technical scientific reports for the public. It states that its mission is "to bring complex scientific consensus reports on health and the environment to the reach of non-specialists."

## Food Shortage Is a Myth

By Musafir

We will never willingly run out of food. Shortages are always man made (artificial). John Jeavons' book "How to Grow More Vegetables and Fruits (and Fruits, Nuts, Berries, Grains, and Other Crops) Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine." A typical suburban backyard is large enough to feed at least 15 adults. We are not talking crops only, not poultry. 2006 data indicates there is 1.15 acres of arable land per person, world-wide (i.e. 7.68 billion acres / 6.68 billion people).

In 1950s India through the early 1970s, I have personally witnessed so-called famines. All were caused by hoarding by merchants because of government policies adverse to them. Earlier the great famine of Bengal was artificially created by the British. British authorities, fearing a Japanese invasion of British India by way of Bengal, stockpiled food for British soldiers and prevented access to supplies by the Japanese in case of an invasion. Noted economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen holds the view that there was no overall shortage of rice in Bengal in 1943: availability was actually slightly higher than in 1941, when there was no famine.

The fact remains that while harvests of cereal crops worldwide are setting new records, some people have been going hungry. One problem, most of the U.S. land in production goes to produce animal feed, it could produce much more food directly for human consumption. A starving Haitian's need for bread doesn't pay as well as our desire for steak. In these circumstances, meat for one is "worth more than" grain for ten, and a rational farmer will target the former.

Food shortage is a myth. In 1972, the Club of Rome released *The Limits to Growth*, which said if economic growth were allowed to continue, the world would run out of food and commodities; oil disappearing from the earth by 1992. The fact remains that by 1992 countries like India (previously among have-nots) became food exporters. Another reason for the apparent food shortage is the use of food as a weapon. In Sudan and many African countries, food can only flow with the consent of the men with the guns. Each side directs the flow of foreign aid to solidify popular support in its geographic stronghold. In the early 1980s, American officials looked the other way as much of the food they were providing to Ethiopian refugees in Somalia through charities was channeled to guerrillas fighting the Marxist government in Addis Ababa.

In fact, there is plenty of agricultural productivity to feed everyone, and in principle a considerable amount left over for bio-fuels. Food shortage is not the result of singular causes like low rainfall or too many mouths to feed, it is the result of a long series of social, political and economic processes and policies. The problem is miscast so let us eat and let others eat too.

## The Looming Global Food Crisis

By Bala Prasad

The looming global food crisis has been anticipated by global experts for years. Food shortages and high prices can be blamed on many factors, including climate change, reduced availability of land for agriculture, growing populations in the poorest parts of the world, increased demand from a growing middle class in China and India, rising fuel costs, and the development of biofuels. Wheat, corn and rice prices have more than doubled in the past two years. Rice shortages of have been especially volatile, and some major exporting nations like Indian and Vietnam are putting exporting bans in place.

As the food shortage crisis deepens, the World Bank is issuing even bleaker warnings about rising poverty and hunger in the developing world. Initially, it estimated that 46 million people in developing countries could be pushed into poverty from the food crisis. Now, that level is up another 7 million. Not surprisingly, children and women seem to be hit hardest of all. The World Bank estimates that the current financial downturn may add between 200,000 and 400,000 additional infant deaths per year on average in the 2009 to 2015 period. That means a total of 1.4 million to 2.8 million more infant deaths, if this crisis continues. In light of these numbers, anyone who suggests we are not heading toward a global food crisis is just wrong.

So, what should be done? First, we should look to the dramatic success of Malawi, a famine-prone country in Africa, which three years ago established a special fund to help its farmers get fertilizer and high-yield seeds. Malawi's harvest doubled after just one year. An international fund based on the Malawi model would cost a mere ten dollars per person annually in the rich world, or ten billion dollars in all. Such a fund could be a very effective means to fight hunger.

The U.S. and Europe should also abandon their policies of subsidizing the conversion of food into biofuels. The U.S. government gives farmers a taxpayer-financed subsidy of fifty-one cents per gallon of ethanol to divert corn from the food and feed-grain supply. There is not a single reason for doling out subsidies that put the world's food supply into a gas tank.

We also need to weatherproof the world's crops as soon and as effectively as possible. For a poor farmer, something as simple as a farm pond (which collects rainwater to be used for emergency irrigation in a dry spell) can make the difference between a bountiful crop and a famine.

The current food crisis provides not only a warning but an opportunity. We can combat these problems but we must act rapidly. What is clear is that if things do not change, we are heading toward some very dire situations.

## Food Fables

### Stone Soup



In a time and place long ago, there were hard-times in which people hoarded whatever food they could find, hiding it even from their friends and neighbors. One day a wandering traveller came into a

village and began asking questions as if he planned to stay for the night.

“There’s not a bite to eat in the whole town,” he was told. “Better keep moving on.”

“Oh, I have everything I need,” he said. “In fact, I was thinking of making some stone soup to share with all of you.” He pulled a cauldron from his wagon, filled it with water, and built a fire under it. Then, with great ceremony, he drew an ordinary-looking stone from a velvet bag and dropped it into the water.

By now, hearing the rumor of food, most of the villagers had come to the square or watched from their windows. As the traveller sniffed the “broth” and licked his lips in anticipation, hunger began to overcome their skepticism.

“Ahh,” the soldier said to himself rather loudly, “I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with *cabbage* -- that’s hard to beat.”

Soon a villager approached hesitantly, holding a cabbage he’d retrieved from its hiding place, and added it to the pot. “Capital!” cried the soldier. “You know, I once had stone soup with cabbage and a bit of salt beef as well, and it was fit for a king.”

The village butcher managed to find some salt beef . . . and so it went, through potatoes, onions, carrots, mushrooms, and so on, until there was indeed a delicious meal for all. The villagers offered the soldier a great deal of money for the magic stone, but he refused to sell and traveled on the next day.

*The moral is that by working together, with everyone contributing what they can, a greater good is achieved.*

- *We can all work together, cooperate and end up better off.*
- *If you want to get people to do something, don’t tell them how desperately they are needed. Don’t try to appeal to their sympathy and kindness. Instead,*

*create the impression that you are giving them the opportunity to be part of your success.*

- *(Nail Soup version) Beware of strangers offering nothing in exchange for a little something.*

### Dog and Meat

A dog seized some meat from the butcher shop and ran away with it until he came to a river. When the dog was crossing the river, he saw the reflection of the meat in the water, and it seemed much larger than the meat he was carrying. He dropped his own piece of meat in order to try to snatch at the reflection. When the reflection disappeared, the dog went to grab the meat he had dropped but he was not able to find it anywhere, since a passing raven had immediately grabbed the meat and gobbled it up. The dog lamented his sorry condition and said, ‘Woe is me! I foolishly abandoned what I had, in order to snatch at a phantom, and thus I ended up losing both that phantom and what I had to begin with.’

*This fable is about greedy people who grasp at more than they need.*

### The Fox and the Crow



A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. “That’s for me, as I am a Fox,” said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. “Good-day,

Mistress Crow,” he cried. “How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds.” The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. “That will do,” said he. “That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future.

*The moral of the fable is “Beware of flatterers.”*

## From Pg. 17 Answers to Mental Exercise

### Food Grammar

bovine – beef  
swine – pork  
equine – horse meat  
chelonian – turtle soup  
piscine – fish  
ovine – mutton  
avian – game hen  
homarine – lobster  
cancrine – crab  
ranine – frog legs  
caprine – goat  
apian – honey  
vituline – veal

### One for All

What single word can complete all three?

fast food  
junk food  
comfort food

### Cheese Slicing

Such a slice is actually possible. The slice cuts through the midpoint of six edges of the cube.



### Water and Wine

The same. Regardless of the exact amounts involved in each transfer, the important point is that the total amount of liquid in each glass is the same in the end as it was at the beginning. This ensures that however much wine moved to the water glass, an equivalent amount of water moved to the wine glass.

### No Carbs

Table salt is sodium chloride, NaCl. Water, you could call it di-hydrogen oxide, is H<sub>2</sub>O. Neither of these contains carbon.

### Double by Half

The letter p.

### Taste Test

No one matched exactly three labels because if three match then the fourth one must also match. So all of the rest had no correct matches, 20 people.

### Puzzling Pear

The pear grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the whole

growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.

### Inside Out

Strawberry.

### Mystery Vegetable

Lettuce.

Vitamins are classified as either water-soluble or fat soluble. In humans there are 13 vitamins: 4 fat-soluble (A, D, E and K) and 9 water-soluble (8 B vitamins and vitamin C).

#### Water-soluble

Water-soluble vitamins dissolve easily in water, and in general, are readily excreted from the body, to the degree that urinary output is a strong predictor of vitamin consumption. Because they are not readily stored, consistent daily intake is important. Many types of water-soluble vitamins are synthesized by bacteria.

#### Fat-soluble

Fat-soluble vitamins are absorbed through the intestinal tract with the help of lipids (fats). Because they are more likely to accumulate in the body, they are more likely to lead to hypervitaminosis than are water-soluble vitamins. Fat-soluble vitamin regulation is of particular significance in cystic fibrosis.

The discovery of vitamins and their sources

Year of discovery	Vitamin	Source
1909	Vitamin A (Retinol)	Cod liver oil
1912	Vitamin B <sub>1</sub> (Thiamine)	Rice bran
1912	Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid)	Lemons
1918	Vitamin D (Calciferol)	Cod liver oil
1920	Vitamin B <sub>2</sub> (Riboflavin)	Eggs
1922	Vitamin E (Tocopherol)	Wheat germ oil, Cosmetic and Liver
1926	Vitamin B <sub>12</sub> (Cyanocobalamin)	Liver
1929	Vitamin K (Phylloquinone)	Alfalfa
1931	Vitamin B <sub>5</sub> (Pantothenic acid)	Liver
1931	Vitamin B <sub>7</sub> (Biotin)	Liver
1934	Vitamin B <sub>6</sub> (Pyridoxine)	Rice bran
1936	Vitamin B <sub>3</sub> (Niacin)	Liver
1941	Vitamin B <sub>9</sub> (Folic acid)	Liver

## Lifestyle

### *Staying Healthy During Financial Crisis*

By Niru Prasad

Despite growing attention in the world media and expanding aid efforts by global organizations, the world hunger crisis continues to worsen as many of our communities struggle with daily hunger and starvation. The basic staples that feed the world, wheat, rice, and corn are becoming more and more expensive. Even so, it is essential that we stay away from cheap foods – although tempting, this may cause your health to deteriorate.

To make matters harder for the consumer, the FDA does not check for non-organic contaminants such as heavy metals, that may be present in produce, fish and dietary supplements. In fact only 1 percent of imported food is even tested at a U.S. port. Moreover, savvy suppliers sometimes re-route products (especially seafood) to an inland port such as Las Vegas, where there are no FDA inspectors. This means that food may cross an ocean several times before it even gets to your dinner table. For example, the United States allows the importation of processed chicken from China – meaning that chickens are bred and killed in Mexico, shipped to China frozen, and then returned for sale in the United States. Yuck!

Here are a few tips on how to stay healthy during this financial crisis:

1. Maintain healthy eating habits. Don't snack on foods you know are bad for you.
2. Organize your schedule so that you do not make frequent trips to the grocery store. If you plan your meals ahead of time, you will not snack spontaneously on unhealthy foods.
3. Buy your produce from the local farmer's market – it is fresher and more cost effective. You can also find community supported and independent grocery stores.
4. Take advantage of store coupons and special sales, even if this means stocking up on items you may need in the future.
5. Grow fruits and vegetables in your yard or in a community garden. Produce does not get any fresher than this, and gardening will help and encourage you to be active.

In conclusion, there are not too many ways we can actively fight our current financial crisis.

The one thing we do have control over is our

eating habits, so be aware of temptation and stay healthy.

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#### What is physical activity?

From: <http://www.health.gov/>

Physical activity is any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy. Some of your daily life activities—doing active chores around the house, yard work, walking the dog—are examples.

To get the **health benefits** of physical activity, include activities that make you breathe harder and make your heart and blood vessels healthier. These **aerobic activities** include things like brisk walking, running, dancing, swimming, and playing basketball. Also include **strengthening activities** to make your muscles stronger, like push-ups and lifting weights.

#### The good news?

People of all types, shapes, sizes, and abilities can benefit from being physically active. If you have a disability, choose activities in this booklet that work for you. Talk with your health care team about the amount and types of activities that are right for your ability or condition.

# Delectables

## Recipes from the Crescent City

### Sue's Honey Island Jambalaya!

Creole Jambalaya originates from the French Quarter of New Orleans, in the original European sector. It was an attempt by the Spanish to make paella in the New World, where saffron was not readily available due to import costs. Tomatoes became the substitute for saffron. As time went on, French influence became strong in New Orleans, and spices from the Caribbean changed this New World paella into a unique dish. In modern Louisiana, the dish has evolved along a variety of different lines. Creole Jambalaya, or red Jambalaya as it is called by Cajuns, is found primarily in and around New Orleans, where it is simply known as "Jambalaya." Creole Jambalaya includes tomatoes, whereas Cajun Jambalaya does not.



### Bread Pudding!

*You must try this easy-to-make, delicious bread pudding! You'll love it!*

#### BREAD PUDDING

- 7 slices of bread (broken in small pieces)
- 1 stick melted butter
- 8 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Mix all ingredients together in large bowl. Pour in glass pan and place pan in water in oven. Cook at 350 degrees for about 1 hour.

#### SAUCE FOR BREAD PUDDING

- 1 box powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon rum flavoring
- 1 1/2 stick melted butter
- Milk (*added to make sauce thin*)

Mix sugar, vanilla, rum and melted butter well. Add milk as needed serve over hot bread pudding.

*This is the most delicious Jambalaya I've ever tasted!  
You'll love it!*

- 2 lbs Italian/green onion sausage (crumbled)--  
Saute in large pan.
- 3 packs frozen chopped seasoning (bellpepper, onion, celery)--  
Brown the above together and skim off any excess grease.
- Season to taste with garlic powder, "Tony Chacherie" or other full-bodied seasoning, and Worcestershire sauce.
- Add 1-2 cans Ro-Tel Tomatoes..
- Add chicken broth or stock to cover (about 3" above seasoning/meat mixture).
- Cover and simmer a few minutes.
- Add 1-3 cups of any meat or shell fish as desired....shrimp, crawfish, turkey, chicken, etc.
- Cover and simmer some more!
- Add 2-4 cups of rice (Uncle Ben's works great!), depending on how large your pot is.
- Cover and cook on "hi" for 15 minutes or so; then turn down and cool, stirring occasionally until tender!
-

## Our Food Obsession

By David Beagan

Food is an integral element of any culture. Historically the production of food has preoccupied the American labor force. In 1790, nine out of ten workers were employed as farmers. People's primary job was getting enough to eat. Just 50 years later, in 1840, it had shifted to merely two out of three workers who were employed to grow food. Another 40 years saw this drop to less than half, and another 30 years after that, in 1910, it was less than a third. At the end of the last century we were witness to this figure dropping to less than three workers out of a hundred.

This remarkable achievement of industrialization and ingenuity also coincided with the transformation of food as an occupation to food as a preoccupation. In extreme cases, this preoccupation has turned deadly. The mental condition anorexia nervosa compels its victims to control their food intake to the edge of starvation, sometimes resulting in death. At the other extreme are people who are super obese. Some of these people weigh in excess of hundreds of pounds over ideal body weight -- some even topping out at over a thousand pounds. The term "morbidly obese" is not just hyperbole, it describes a very real consequence of this lifestyle.

In between these extremes are millions of people who struggle to lose weight. One estimate is that thirty billion dollars each year is spent on the weight loss "industry." The facts are simple, food intake and physical exercise are responsible for an individual's body weight. (Though evidence is mounting that there can be significant variation from individual to individual). But too many people have trouble accepting these simple facts and are looking for some trick, some way to fool the basic biological mechanisms. Hence we have a multi-billion dollar weight loss industry that is there to either trick us into losing weight or to trick us into believing that they can. This denial of reality along with capitulation through acceptance of being "fat and happy" is leading to an epidemic of obesity in America.

This epidemic has huge consequences. Resources are wasted in the production of the extra food. More resources are wasted in dealing with the health consequences of the weight gain. Beyond these economic physical considerations, are the emotional and psychological effects of carrying an excess amount of weight. It might seem ironic that just when Americans are heavier than ever that television, movies, and magazines bombard us with images of bodies that that are hyper-perfect, sometimes a perfection achieved through digital manipulation. Is this causing the American psyche to enter a state of profound inadequacy, a feeling that, "no matter what I do, I'm not

good enough?" Dr. Phil McGraw, host of the like-named television show has stated what I think is a rather profound insight. He says that we should not confuse body image with self image. This might seem an overly pithy, trite saying, but despite its brevity, what he is saying embodies a profound truth. Each of us need to recognize our own value regardless of our physical appearance, whether that appearance embodies an overweight body or a body that is perceived to be inadequate in any way. But to say we need to recognize this is not to state it strongly enough. This recognition of the value of oneself needs to be ingrained into each of us the same way that we know how to speak or walk, it must be something that is part of us and comes automatically. This is something more fundamental than the superficial and sometimes destructive notion that everyone needs to have self esteem.

Of course for many of us, it is an ongoing process of growth, and is not easily acquired where it is lacking. But three things we can do to promote this, treat each person we meet with dignity and respect even returning unkindness with kindness. To extend this courtesy to others is to also extend it to ourselves. The second thing, for those who have kids or have a young person that looks up to them, is to instill in children a sense of self worth and the worth of others. Yelling, criticizing, and ignoring children can destroy a child's sense of worth. Speaking calmly, but firmly, setting boundaries, praising accomplishments even little ones, and interacting with them builds their self worth. This will help insulate them from food issues and will form them into adults who in turn pass the good influences forward. Lastly, all of us need to lead our children, by example, into healthy eating and exercise habits. I know there is a movement out there that wants to push people into correct eating choices -- this will never work, people must freely choose their course.

America's dysfunction with food is a symptom of an underlying sickness in the minds of the American people. Obesity is a consequence of people who use food to deal with loneliness, disappointment or even simple boredom. Perhaps in the coming century, we'll look back at present day eating habits with amusement. Perhaps something like we now look back on the general acceptance of smoking that was prevalent several decades ago. We now look back at the absurdity of someone being able to freely smoke right next to another person, perhaps without even a cursory, "mind if I smoke?" Hopefully then we will look back and say, "You mean back in 2009, people would actually eat themselves into a condition of obesity and sickness back then?"

## What Is the Think Club?

[http://thethinkclub.com/what\\_is\\_think\\_club.htm](http://thethinkclub.com/what_is_think_club.htm)

Think Club is a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings. Think Club Publication has been publishing a quarterly, 'The Think Club Quarterly' since 1995 both in hard copy and as an e-magazine ([www.thethinkclub.com](http://www.thethinkclub.com)). The Think Club Publication also publishes books of aspiring writers for a fixed price of \$1,800 U.S. The Think Club also holds periodic town hall meetings and seminars on the subjects of human interest.

The Think Club was started by Bala Prasad, MD and Mr. Anil Shrivastava, an engineer by profession. Both Bala Prasad and Anil Shrivastava are independent thinkers and they had a childhood dream to be writers. Anil Shrivastava writes under the penname of 'Musafir.' Both Bala Prasad and Anil Shrivastava believe that much of our thinking, unfortunately, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life and that of the world around us depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Independent thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking.

The Think Club also awards the 'Book of the Year' (<http://thethinkclub.com/year-book.html>) This annual award is given to the author whose idea or ideas can contribute to the resolution of contemporary human problems based on his or her original and independent thinking. Here is a list of award recipients:

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2000: **Galileo's Daughter** by Dava Sobel

1999: **Ethics for the Next Millennium** by HH Dalai Lama

♫ ♪ ♫ ♪ ♫ ♪ ♫ ♪ ♫

Cogito cogito ergo cogito sum (I think that I think, therefore I think that I am.)

Ambrose Bierce (1842 - 1914),  
The Devil's Dictionary

I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.

Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918)

Thought is the labor of the intellect, reverie is its pleasure.

Victor Hugo

A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.

Oscar Wilde



## Mental Exercise

### Figure It Out

By David Beagan

#### Food Grammar

Match the adjective on the left to the food on the right that it is associated with.

avian	horse meat
ovine	turtle soup
apian	game hen
swine	frog legs
bovine	mutton
ranine	lobster
piscine	honey
equine	goat
vituline	pork
caprine	beef
cancrine	crab
homarine	veal
chelonian	fish

#### One for All

What single word can complete all three?

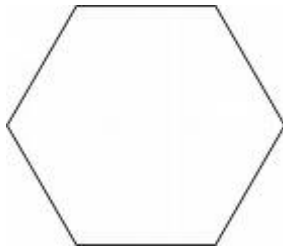
fast ....

junk ....

comfort ....

#### Cheese Slicing

You are presented with a cube of cheese. Could you slice it in a way that it has a regular hexagon cross section, like this:



#### Water and Wine

You have two glasses, a 12 ounce wine glass containing some wine and a 16 ounce water glass containing some water. One ounce of liquid from the water glass is transferred to the wine glass and then an ounce of liquid (mixture of wine and water) is transferred back to the

water glass. This is repeated twice more. So, is the amount of water in the wine glass, more, less, or the same as the amount of wine in the water glass?

#### No Carbs

The element carbon is the basis of life on earth. Most everything that we consume in our diets contains carbon – with two notable and common exceptions. What are these two?

#### Double by Half

An apple has two of them but a pair just one. What could it be?

#### Taste Test

Suppose a taste test is performed on a hundred people. They must match four labels with the each of four soft drinks. 35 people correctly matched exactly one label to the correct drink with three wrong. 45 people correctly matched all four labels to the correct drink. How many people matched none of the labels correctly?

#### Puzzling Pear

In some liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?

#### Inside Out

What fruit has its seeds on the outside?

#### Mystery Vegetable

It's the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh. What is it?

Answers on Page 12

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*Foreigners cannot enjoy our food, I suppose, any more than we can enjoy theirs. It is not strange; for tastes are made, not born. I might glorify my bill of fare until I was tired; but after all, the Scotchman would shake his head, and say, "Where's your haggis?" and the Fijian would sigh and say, "Where's your missionary?"*

*-- Mark Twain, A Tramp Abroad*

## A History of Food

By Bala Prasad

On July 4, 1776, our founding fathers were not celebrating independence by eating hamburgers and hot dogs. These staples in the American diet only became popular around the turn of the last century. Instead, a soldier's daily ration during the American Revolution included a pint of beans, a pint of milk, a pound of beef (or fish), and a pound of bread. The average soldier also consumed six ounces of butter a day. This amounted to 3000 to 4000 daily calories – more than many obese people consume today. In spite of this enormous daily calorie intake, obesity was not nearly as rampant as it is today. This is because daily life in those days was enormously active – people walked, rode horses, and generally expended a lot of calories in their every day jobs and chores. Today, by contrast, we live in an era of leisure, saturated with TV, video games, and a lot of doing nothing.

Back then, since the main purpose of eating was to get enough calories (as opposed to enjoying a good meal), people predominantly consumed meat, particularly pork, because pigs were cheap to feed and thus could be easily fattened for slaughter. Wild game was also popular because of its availability. Today, we would think nothing of eating lobster or crab – we can generally eat anything whenever we want. Availability is just not a concern for us today.

In the old days, meat would often be cooked together with vegetables in a big stew. The explanation for this popular one-dish meal was simple: people could not afford a lot of cookware, so making stew was a way to cook all the food in one dish. These stews were typically eaten around 1 or 2 in the afternoon, during a break from working in the fields. This was “dinner,” and “supper” was more or less a light, optional meal, eaten later in the evening. Today, of course, our eating habits are dramatically different. Multiple dishes (cooked from multiple pots and pans) are the staple for American families. And afternoon “lunch” is followed by evening “dinner.” I am really not sure what “supper” is anymore and who eats it.

As for vegetables, the common class generally consumed corn. Breakfast for a typical farm family was a porridge made from ground corn, salt, and water boiled over a fire. And the universal bread was cornbread. It is said that the upper classes, like Washington and Jefferson, would splurge on wheat products, if they could afford it. Can you imagine “splurging” on a loaf of bread today? I think not.

Interestingly, even though most farmers were relatively poor, people generally had plenty to eat because of the abundance of land available to them. Produce planted on farmland included beans and squash; root vegetables like potatoes and turnips, and leafy foods like cabbage and collards. Of course, the seasons were always an issue, which is why food preservation was essential for produce and for meats. Cows and pigs were often slaughtered in the fall and stored and eaten over the next 12 months. Pickling meats and vegetables (as well as drying) was another means of preserving food. For example, while corn on the cob may have been eaten all summer, dried ground corn would be used year-round to make cornbread, etc.

So it seems that practicality played a large part in the American diet in the old days. Today, this is not the case. We eat multiple food items at a typical meal, multiple times a day. And since our lives in general are not as active as the farmers and soldiers from the days of old, the result of this gluttonous consumption, is, unfortunately, rampant obesity. So, while we enjoy our meals this summer, let us at least try to stay active. And, let us also appreciate the fact that we don't face the same issues in food selection or food preparation that our forefathers did. And with that, bon appetite!

Sincerely,

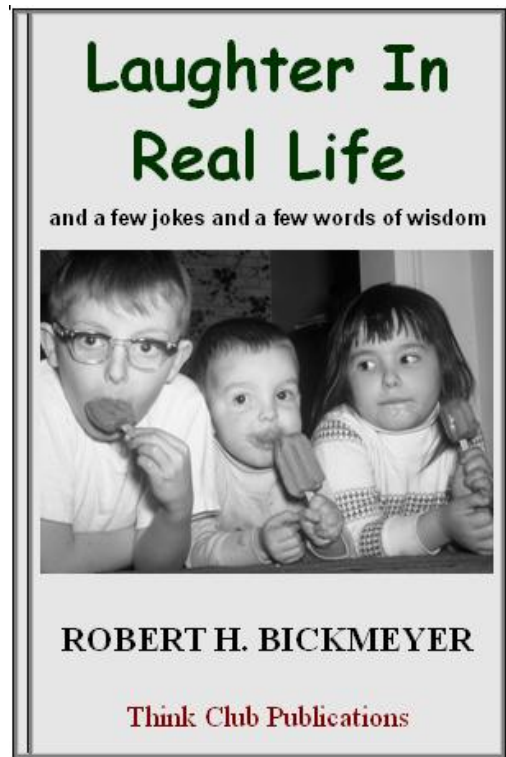
*Bala Prasad*

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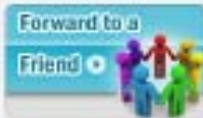
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# Employment and Immigration Impact On Business in the Current Times



April 23, 2009 - 5:30 PM



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Fraud Detection Unit (FDU)

IT industry ability to share information and

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	Best Regards, <b>Tel K. Ganesan</b> President, TIE Detroit	

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