

Professor Richard Klein
French Department
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

Dear Professor Klein:

For some time I have encountered bits and pieces of your ideas in magazines and in corners of libraries. I saw enough to know that I very much wanted to read your works and just last week checked out *Eat Fat* and *Cigarettes are Sublime* from the Anna Maria, Florida Public Library, fully expecting to hate every word.

It will be no surprise to you that I thoroughly enjoyed both books (and have bought them!). I'm profoundly at odds with you on the meaning and motivations of some movements to promote health. But I agree with a number of your views, such as that some strategies enhance the behaviors they intend to modify and that the medicalization of the overweight issue is much the greater evil.

I am working out a few ideas in response to your response to the anti-hedonists and to what you clearly recognize is a remarkable backlash against health promotion in segments of the population.

I believe there is a "higher argument" for a life and an esthetic free of "excess," (defined perhaps by evolutionary principles), addictions and dependencies, and of commercial blandishments to same. It lies in our own studies of Mediterranean peoples over the last 40 years. I am impressed by the pure pleasure and salubriousness of their traditional lifestyles, including eating and drinking and smoking patterns, in comparison to our modern North American peculiarities. (Aside: If "selling" people on a "Mediterranean Diet" and lifestyle has suspect elements of proselytizing, I would love to see your pen turned on Amway and Scientology and other pervasive and real corruptors of free thought or oppressors of natural pleasures).

At any rate, I would like to argue with you and learn thereby. I get the impression that you spend some time in the vicinity of Sarasota in the summertime. I recently bought a 1930s cottage on the north tip of Anna

Maria Island, and for some years have remodeled a near-wilderness cabin on the Myakka River. Both are within an hour of Sarasota. I would like to propose some food and drink and conversation at one or both of those sites, or elsewhere at your convenience. My wife and I are leaving for Minnesota this week after a wonderful two months in our beach cottage, but we plan to drop in for one-week visits at frequent intervals during the rest of the year before our regular long stay again next winter.

It would be a pleasure to hear from you and to exchange understandings and hedonist satisfactions.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, MD
Mayo Professor of Public Health (Emeritus)
University of Minnesota

P.S. I trust you will forgive a physician the rococco style of the enclosed piece on the low-risk male.