

ried Health Food

by John Haley

During the industrial revolution, society adapted itself to meet the needs of a new and different kind of work force. Large cities were built up to house the multitude of workers it took to support heavy industry. Transportation methods were improved to facilitate the shipping of raw materials and finished products, for the consumption of the factories themselves as well as the people who supported them.

Now well into the technological revolution, I've noticed similar trends. Certain support services have retroed to meet the growing needs of today's technocrat. Yes, I speak of the super sizing of junk food.

Today it seems everyone is trying to foist junk food in ever greater amounts. In today's fast paced environment, everyone is on the run. Stopping for food is now like an Indy pit stop. You pull into Burger Heaven, and in a few minutes are on your way charged up with caffeine, weighted down with soy burger, and more than a few bucks lighter.

Let me go over a few concrete examples. Since a child I have had an ongoing love affair with Coca-Cola™ (my dentist has my picture hung prominently in his yacht). Well, the boys at Coke have come out with a snazzy new twenty ounce. I usually went with the 16oz glass bottle. Not only did it have a four ounce advantage over the aluminum can, but the handy screw top enabled me to stop decorating my car's carpet every time I took a tight turn. Now they have this new plastic behemoth. I approve of the new sexier lines (although they did not consult me) that are reminiscent of the classic glass bottles of yester year; but really, twenty ounces.

Next comes the fast food giants. I appreciated the invention of meal bundle deals that allow me to order my complete dinner with one syllable. That was marketing genius. Now though, they're getting greedy. If you add in a few more syllables and cough up some more money, they will inflate the size of certain items.

Another item is the six pack of pseudo-chocolate covered donuts. These are like little rings of baked heroin, they are so addicting. These are starting to appear under "two for..." signs. Since I have both a thrifty sense of savings, and zero willpower when it comes to tiny chocolate donuts, I usually take them up on their buy in bulk offer. Most times, I am thinking that I will save the spare package for the next morning. Funny thing though, usually when I get to to where I'm going both packages are empty. Very puzzling, especially since I don't car pool.

I'm not a coffee drinker, but I've also noticed a few changes here too. The ageless hot mug of java is being replaced by either tiny cups of high octane espresso or huge fish bowls of "Cafe au

lait.” People better start designing public restrooms with more stalls.

Ok, enough examples. My mouth is starting to water for a mega soy burger, two pounds of fries, washed down with a liter or two of soda and followed by about 18 itty, bitty so small they can't be fattening donuts. On to why this is significant.

I see all these changes as examples of economic adaptability. Where yesteryear's field hand hungered for meat and potatoes to keep him going from dawn until dusk, today's techie is looking for brain food. I'm not talking about something that boosts your I.Q., I mean something that will supply an uninterrupted power source for your system, so you can get as much processing done before your mental screensaver kicks in and you float off to dreamland.

So the active ingredients hungered for today are sugar and caffeine. Starch is also valued for its staying power, and salt also serves as a sort of accelerator. So this technological boom has been a dream come true for the junk food barons.

Is this a bad thing? Most folks say yes, but I do not think they're looking at the complete picture. Studies show that poor eating habits can result in an early grave. One minute you are bending over to get that last french fry that rolled under your desk, and whammo — your heart implodes.

Sure, but technological advances have greatly extended the average life span. So a junk food junky may not live as long as his or her peers, but chances are they will live longer than the average person from a generation or two earlier. These technological advances have only been possible by folks that are themselves fueled by junk food.

So, theoretically, I may be able to extend my life by taking advantage of these great deals on junk food and working longer hours to do my part to push the life expectancy envelope. Yes?