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Shannon Column: Kermit's Lament

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For those readers currently on the fence, let me assure you that when it comes to adopting a system for ordering your life, the more you learn about enviro-worship, the better Christianity looks.

For one, being a Baptist requires much less bookkeeping and investigation on the practitioner's part, particularly when it comes to food.

A report this weekend from newspaper competition in D.C. reveals that in at least one D.C. restaurant the "green cuisine" was not living up to it's billing.

The fact there is such a food genre as "green cuisine," and that customers actually care about it, will no doubt come as a shock to residents of Prince William County.

We either don't have enough time on our hands, suffer from a feeling deficit or lack sufficient sensitivity to be neurotic regarding our nourishment. But evidently in the rarified atmosphere of our nation's capitol, elite nannytarians have quite the checklist to go through before choosing their restaurant.

I've had the misfortune to eat at a couple of these "cutting edge" establishments and I thought the only requirement for satisfied customers was an affinity for vertical food presentation. Waiters arrive toting trashcan lid-sized plates where your overpriced entrée is stacked higher than a Katrina debris pile.

It's like eating Pik-Up Stiks. One never knows when removing a carrot will destabilize the entire structure causing it to collapse into your lap.

I prefer my meals horizontal and my restaurant checklist begins with price and ends with taste, which I suppose makes me a climate criminal.

Still, who would have thought that being a "green" diner required you to wear green eyeshade and interview your food? For a true "greenie" the pre-meal menu checklist requires the food be:

1. Family farmed
2. But not corporate farmed
3. Local
4. Organic (this means no pesticides, usually indicated by the small holes in the produce where the bugs sampled your food first)
5. Free-range or at least not confined in a critter condo
6. Dispatched by lethal injection
7. And "sustainable"

It's less complicated finding a date on eHarmony.

One bone of contention at the D.C. restaurant was the provenance of the fish. It seems the salmon came from a corporate seafood farm where the fish are forced to float in large clouds of benzene, like on Jupiter.

Environmentally aware eco-diners demand fish either arrive still wet from the Potomac (God help you) or be hand-raised in a Druid's bathtub.

So essentially you have a situation where the elites have no problem eating in an establishment where the kitchen staff and busboys are undocumented, but they want a birth certificate with their fish.

One Canadian "digital cartographer" visiting D.C. for a "biodiesel conference," presumably to learn how to fill both your stomach and your auto at Krispy Kreme, felt "misled" when a spoil-sport reporter called her to blow the whistle on the fish. (Another first: when's the last time a Washington Post reporter was concerned about the national origin of a story subject?)

Meanwhile, I'm wondering where exactly in the D.C. area did this "cartographer" think the salmon were running?

And don't get me started on the vegetables. Most of these yuppie poseurs have never grown so much as a bell pepper, but they want the tubers on their plate to come from the same Zip Code as the restaurant.

If the Obamas can make do with a truck garden, why can't the rest of us?

I'm not sure what it is about traveling that so upsets your average eggplant, but "sustainable" dining won't allow it. I envision maps with area farms marked and circled by red travel radii for radishes, like the old nuclear blast damage maps we worried about during the Cold War.

I'm wondering what these part-time Gregor Mendels are going to do when they discover that local, friendly fresh family farmed food means no tomatoes in the winter and no mangos ever.

My idea of "sustainable" food is a rack of ribs and a side of coleslaw from Dixie Bones. I have those tender ribs for lunch—slowly roasted over smoldering carcinogens—and it sustains me for the remainder of the day. The only way to improve this meal would be to wrap each rib in bacon.

On the other hand, arugula, tofu and other fru-fru "green" menu items are basically unsustainable. You choke down a meal of this moral-posturing cuisine and you'll be hungry and fretful in less than an hour.

Kermit-the-Frog was right: it's tough being "green."

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