

Condiment Pandemic

Government officials from the office of "Behavioral Health and Coffee Pot Funding" have issued a warning to the nation and are seeking increased revenue for the study of our growing dependence on condiments. (That and they are running low on Styrofoam cups.)

To be true. The other day as I dined out for breakfast, I was fairly dwarfed by the mountain of condiments that stood ready at my table. They ranged from the mundane (ketchup), to the exciting (malt vinegar- great on cabbage and for polishing chrome). Among others, there was the usual salt and pepper shakers which you know have been visited by the mouths of little children and people with gangrene and not to mention are sometimes rigged.

According to the documents, it is just such condiments that are dangerous. And I, for one, could not agree more. Take ketchup. I was recently made the fool after a gentle tapping, then a more vigorous jiggling, followed by an all out pounding of a bottle to exert ketchup on my potatoes- which then belched swiftly on my toast. But I had fared better than the breakfasting couple next to me. The woman was painfully stricken after dumping Tobasco in her coffee- "Wow! My elbows are itchy!" "Honey, these spoons are sharp!" It was an easy mistake and one that could be duplicated by millions. (To her credit, she never had to get a warm up.) If not for her delightful shoes she would have been completely miserable.

What we're looking at here is a global condiment pandemic. On a recent trip to the coffee capital of the world (Smith, Ohio) I was assaulted with a sort of conundrum at a coffee stand- what the hell language is that menu board in? All I wanted was a cup of black coffee but could not find it listed amongst all the available condiments and add-ons. The kindly folks attending the counter were more than generous in assisting me, and twenty minutes and nineteen orders later I had my coffee. It tasted really good- like ginseng, chocolate, guava, Grey Poupon, speed, and whipped cream with rare June bug shavings. I had only requested sugar, but at nearly 46 ounces- what a value! (Except the take-out cup rendered soggy by about the 23 ounce level.) So there you have it. Smith, Ohio is doomed.

It's getting hard for me to sleep at night knowing that I live in a nation threatened by condiments and unfettered wireless access.

Is ketchup just for French fries or is it OK for steak too? Does it belong on the table at breakfast *and* lunch or is it just dinner? Or is just dinner and supper? Or is it supper with company and breakfast only if you have potatoes? Is it presumptive to assume that ketchup could one day pave the way for advances in open heart surgery? Did I just sit on a ketchup packet?

These are tough questions all. For now, I think I'll lie down.