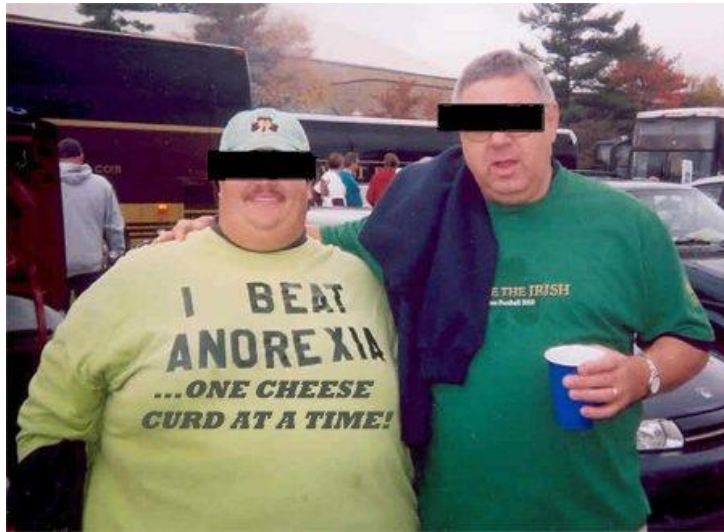


Grief Bratwursts



“In German, the word *kummerspeck* is used to describe the weight you gain from emotional overeating. It literally translates to ‘grief bacon.’”

-Jennette Fulda*Half-Assed*

The dirty ol’ dogs at the Department of Health lurked poolside all summer while the State of Wisconsin was innocently frolicking in a two-piece bikini, and they decided we were fat.

After calculating our trunk junk ratios, it seems that half of all adults and one fourth of our teens are either noncommittally overweight or balls-to-the-wall obese. Their report is an involved PDF file that takes so long to download, the average Wisconsinite can inhale a plate of schweinebraten and be washing it down with a gallon jug of Leinenkugel before reviewing the first chapter. Note to Department of Health: if you want our bountiful citizens to read your boring research, less vertical charts, more pie charts.

In the early 1990s we were the fattest state in the nation (Go Pack!) but someone lost the remote control and had to walk back and forth to turn the TV on because we have slipped in status and remain on par with the rest of America.

According to their suspect analysis, “The excess levels of body fat that characterize overweight and obesity occur due to an energy imbalance in which energy intake exceeds expenditure.” Essentially, they are trying to convince us that sitting in one spot eating enormous amounts of food causes our fine citizens to slowly expand over time. I would need to review their methodologies and biases before accepting this premise.

The study employs a socio-ecological mode to suggest that health behaviors are maintained by five interconnected categories: individual (you and your cheese curds), interpersonal (your friends, family, and their cheese curds), organizations (the Wisconsin Educational Society for Understanding Curds and Kegs, or WESUCK), communities (the

curd-friendly town of Sheboygan), and the greater society (who ask, “What are cheese curds?”)

Perhaps they were trying to break it to us gently. Passive talk of “energy imbalances” and “socio-ecological modes” mute accusations of personal responsibility. The extra hundred pounds bowing our collective sweatpants is due to a confusing scientific scenario whereby we took in more energy than we were able to expel while our five categories were out of balance. It’s like saying that Superior man who had sex with a dead deer in a ditch was reacting to the socio-cultural effects of a slow regional dating scene.

A somewhat shocking revelation in the Department of Health report posits that the more educated, youthful and wealthy you are, the less overweight you tend to be in comparison to the undereducated, mature, economically-deprived citizen. This leads us to conclude that at the very moment some smart, young, rich denizen of Wisconsin is availed of spa treatments in Madison, a dumb, old, broke bastard is in the middle of a sour cream and onion chip full body cleanse in Manitowoc.

The study fails to address the fact that nine months of winter can bring a people to their knees. As the late-October sun begins to set around two in the afternoon, a Badger fan is found genuflecting before an open refrigerator packing Bavarian sausages in each cheek like a frightened squirrel hoarding for winter.

A few naturalists find the cold invigorating. They are wind-chapped wild men cross-country skiing towards ice-fishing shanties or dairymaids flush with rosacea taking polar bear plunges in arctic waters. Everyone else is curled up against space heaters gripped by crushing depression. Exercise is limited to face-cramming jaw-hinge lunges and beer-hoisting elbow-curls.

The medical professionals and researchers who penned the report would like us to know that emotional eating and a sedentary lifestyle not only increases depression, but makes us vulnerable to cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, and type II diabetes (which is different from the sexy type I diabetes Bret Michaels has).

I guess we could drop a few pounds, but don’t rush us. The seasons are turning and the first cold snap will find us yearning for Schwartenmagen and butterhorns rather than self-improvement and wellness. The Department of Health caught us with our shorts wedged up our mammoth crack during the three months when we set the flab free to feel the foreign sting of vitamin D. The cold is back and we have covered our offending flesh with layers of thermal, wool, flannel and fleece. Thanks for the update, now leave us to clutch the radiator in all our beer-battered despair.

TRIED: I tried out the Department of Health diet scam where one subtracts calories expended from the gross caloric intake, but the math got too complicated and the venn diagram ended up looking like my ass.

TRUE: Unisex Carhartt season is back! Masculine humps and lovely lady lumps look fantastic encased in tan canvas and lifted by suspenders. Giant central pockets press moobs into pects as well as creating a kangaroo pouch for Little Debbie snack cakes.

TIRED: The Kanye West function-free sunglasses resembling Venetian blinds are closed for business.

TRENDY: Ballooning braunschweiger boobs are not the manifestation of excessive weight gain during dark winter months, they are bright headlights of hope!