

Benefits of special vs. supermarket foods debated—naturally

By Cindy Coglianesi

"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are,"—Brillat-Savarin.

Health foods, organic foods and natural foods are those substitutes for the preservative-packed staples on the shelves of the local supermarket. But what is the big difference anyway?

Chad Hoising, co-manager of the Open Harvest Food Cooperation said the difference between natural foods and organic foods is in the growing process. He said natural foods supposedly have no additives such as preservatives and color agents but can still be raised using chemical fertilizers. On the other hand, organic foods are free of any chemical additives.

Irwin Goldenberg, owner of the Golden Carrot health food store in Lincoln described the difference between the type of food on the grocery store shelf and the type of food you might find in his store.

AS AN EXAMPLE he used the process which white bread goes through. As the bread is being processed, he said, many essential vitamins and minerals are removed from the white flour. In addition the bran and wheat germ, which are important to the human digestive system and bowels, are removed.

The reason bran is extracted from the flour is because it becomes rancid after a short period of time, he said. Processors take out the bran, which contains 33 nutrients, so the loaf of bread has a longer shelf-life in the store.

Goldenberg said that a bleaching process destroys "about anything else" left that is nutritious. Bleaching also masks inferior wheat so the product comes out looking uniform.

"Then they add a few vitamins and call that enriched," he said.

Goldenberg said natural whole wheat bread is a better choice than the white bread. He added that honey is a better choice than sugar as there is a small quantity of vitamins and minerals in honey that aid in the digestion.

"SUGAR IS about 100 percent carbohydrates," Goldenberg said.

"It takes 10 milligrams of B1 to digest a bottle of Coke. Eventually you develop deficiencies because the sugar has to rob other stores in the body for it to break

down."

The owner of The Good Earth—John and Lois Valenti—said they have a main objective in establishing their store.

"We want to eliminate anything foreign or synthetic, such as chemicals, sugars, additives and preservatives," John Valenti said. "Our bodies were not designed to break down synthetics but only that which comes from the earth."

"Look at Tang. The astronauts drink it so it's supposed to be good, but look at the ingredients. It is strictly synthetic and chemicals. There is a chemical added for tartness and there is a chemical added to inhibit tartness."

And then there is the other side of the counter. The Director of Dietary at Lincoln General Hospital has a beef against the health food stores.

"THESE PEOPLE are in the business to make a living," Lena Clancy said. "These people can point to tests that have been done but you can make an accounting sheet show anything."

Clancy said the nutritional quality of

health foods and processed foods is probably about the same.

"It disturbs me that health foods are probably just as nutritious as grocery-store foods, but health foods are so expensive. The claims to superiority and the price bother me."

"If we follow the Basic Four—dairy products, meats, cereals and fruits and vegetables—in recommended amounts, then we can get the nutrients that we need to keep us healthy and strong," she said.

She did agree that whole wheat, rye and stone ground breads are more nutritious than white bread. Clancy also suggested avoiding sweetened cereals, chips, cookies and anything high in sodium.

HARRIET KOHN is a food and nutrition extension specialist at UNL. She agrees that many of the foods in health food stores may be expensive but some items are cheaper, such as sesame seeds.

"Basically I think the difference in price between the foods you get in a health food store and a grocery store is not warranted," Kohn said.

"On the other hand there are a lot of items in a health food store that you can not obtain easily in a grocery store. Health food stores also carry some items for special diets so they do serve a legitimate purpose," Kohn said. She also said quality food can be obtained from a grocery store if it is chosen carefully.

She said there are some exaggerated claims about the use of health foods. As an example she used the popular notion that high doses of vitamins are healthy. She said that very high doses of vitamins are not desirable because they can become toxic within the system. This is especially true of vitamins A and D, she said.

Another misconception of health foods is the idea that wheat germ and other foods have magical qualities. Kohn said that if these "magical" foods are eaten in exclusion of other foods, serious nutritional problems may develop.

She also questioned the claims that health foods can cure arthritis, diabetes and cancer because there has been no substantial research in these areas.

'Big 3' burger chains battle for an ever-expanding market

By Shelley Smith

"Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce with the two all-beef patties, special sauce and be sure to make it hot and juicy,"—the battle goes on.

Fast food restaurants have become the greatest fad in nutrition today. And like all fads, fast food is subject to controversy.

The controversy stems from the question of nutrition. Nutrition critics argue that people are obsessed with fast food and don't think about the nutritional value of what they eat.

However, fast food restaurant managers argue that their products are quality-oriented.

Burger King, McDonald's, and Wendy's are the top three hamburger fast food restaurants in Lincoln. Each serves basically the same clientele, and each has exploded in growth.

Tim Kuntz, a co-manager of Wendy's, 930 N. 48th St., said the growth of

Wendy's has "mushroomed" since 1969 when the first Wendy's restaurant was opened.

R. DAVID THOMAS built the first store in Columbus, Ohio, and named it after his 9-year-old daughter. Since then 1,700 other Wendy's have been built across the nation.

Kuntz said there are three stores in Lincoln, and because of the city's growth, a fourth Wendy's may be built.

Burger King and McDonald's share a similar history in that both began in the early 1950s.

Jon Furrer, manager at Burger King, 5221 O St., said Burger King's growth rate hasn't exploded like Wendy's but has been steadily constant in the past 10 years.

He said the franchise opens about 400 new stores a year. Burger King also has stores in Canada and 11 foreign countries.

McDonald's also is world-wide and boasts of its success with the slogan on

each McDonald's sign: "over 25 billion sold."

ACCORDING TO Berni Patera, manager of McDonald's at 865 N. 27th St., the slogan began in the mid 1950s when Raymond Kroc bought the franchise from the McDonald brothers in San Bernadino, Calif.

She said Kroc was selling multi-mixers to make milk shakes with and became interested in the small walk-up store the McDonald brothers had built.

"Eventually he bought them out and began chain stores in 1955," Patera said.

Kroc at that time calculated that two billion hamburgers placed end to end would circle the earth 3.4 times, and established the slogan.

"He began counting how many hamburgers were sold and publicized it on the bill board," Patera said.

McDonald's also has stores in 13 foreign countries. The total number of McDonald's stores is 6,000.

Burger King was bought by the Pillsbury corporation in 1967 and started opening stores nationally. They now have 2,375 stores world-wide.

Each restaurant chain has a manager-training school where managers are taught the history of the store and its management.

Whopper College is Burger King's training school in Denver, Colo., according to furrer. The national training school, Burger King University, is in Miami, Fla.

McDonald's has Hamburger University in Illinois, and Wendy's has its training center in Columbus, Ohio.

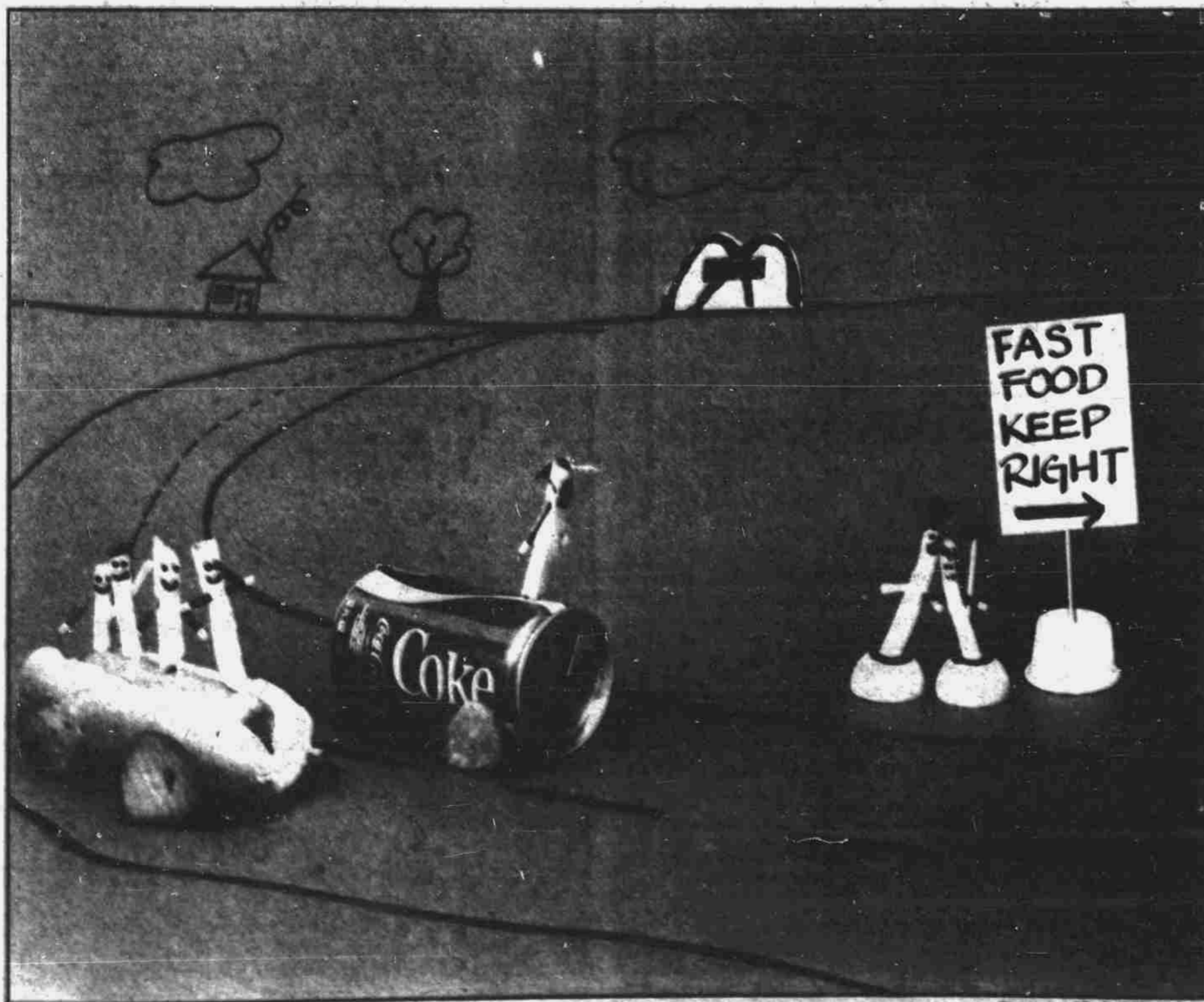


Photo by Mark Ellingsley

Fast food seems to be winning the race for the family food dollar. Projections say food expenditures away from home are to reach \$77 billion in 1980, or 50 percent of the family food budget.