

Asian Chicken Salad... again... Farrels, and other stories about buildings & food. Or is it just 63 songs about Joe?

Going to Togos next door for my always-the-same lunch, Asian Chicken Salad and a medium drink, is a constant reminder of two things. First, my never-ending battle to keep my weight reasonable and second, that I am comfortable with rituals and routine. This is no surprise to my family; since the beginning of time, I've eaten things on my plate one thing at a time. By that I mean, if, say, it's Thanksgiving and we've got Turkey, peas, carrots, salad and a potato dish, I'll



Observed from Togos, a woman texting from a wheelchair across the street. Was she waiting to be picked up by someone? Downloading the 10 billionth iPhone app? Or just seeing if the outside world was still there?

eat all of one item until it's gone before moving on to the next. This drives them nuts sometimes. So I have a process for eating. Why is that wrong? Keep in mind that, just because you have a ritual or routine, it doesn't mean everything is the same. Whether it's my Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride or getting the same Asian Chicken Salad from Togos, I always look for something new & different. Sometimes that's a challenge, but I think that's a function of a stale mind, not lack of the new & interesting. Today it was the woman viewed from across El Camino, texting from a wheelchair. What's the story?

The other thing my family can't figure out is why I'm done (eating) so quickly, but to me, eating is something you get out of the way so you can move on to the things that need to get done. Yes, it's important to spend time with the family, hear about Kevin's day at school, Becky talking about the new car she wants to get (Honda Civic automatic, why automatic, sticks are so much more fun?), and Karen wonder why all the stuff that needs to get done around the house isn't getting done. The usual "How did your day go dear?" doesn't really apply when 3/4th of the family ends up working together.

But getting back to the Asian Chicken Salad, no, that's not what I would really like to eat. What I'd like would be a Jamoca Almond Fudge Hot Fudge Sundae. Brownie optional. And that option faces me every time I order the Asian Chicken Salad because Togos is also a Baskin Robbins Ice Cream place. I say "place" instead of "parlor" because I haven't seen a true Ice Cream Parlor since the days of that chain that had something called the "Zoo" (Ferrells?), and even then "parlor" seems far more ornate than appropriate for its faux 1900-ish motif.

I love ice cream. It's got to be one of my favorite things. But I can't eat ice cream. I mean, I can eat ice cream, but if I do, I can't stop. I have no "portion control." So I literally don't have it at all, except on very rare occasions, because I've found that not only do I eat too much, but 4 ounces of ice cream adds 8 ounces to the scale. Some kind of new math. Didn't work that way in high school; when I was 16 and worked as a mechanic & salesperson at Freedom Bike Shop, I would eat a Bud's Ice Cream Sundae for lunch. That was something like a 32 ounce styrofoam cup filled with ice cream and hot fudge and probably 7,000 calories. Maybe more. I probably had a hamburger with it too. Oh, and I was 6' and weighed 133 pounds. We (myself and Tom Iverson, who worked with me) rationalized that we could eat as much as we wanted as long as we rode our bikes. Sometime between then and 25 the laws of the universe changed on us, as did our waist lines, and slowly, and almost as if it was some powerful force that could not be stopped, ones weight crept up bit by bit, year by year. For some cruel reason the universe has decided to make us more efficient so we require less food, without in any way reducing our desire for food, especially the tasty stuff that's either fried or sugared or both.

About the time I turned 40 my weight peaked around 188 and I realized that certain indulgences weren't doing me any favors. Most people would simply eat less, but for me, if I'm going to eat, I'm going to make it worth my while and if it's something I like, eat a lot of it. Thus, ice cream had to go. This almost sounds like somebody giving up something for Lent, but IÂ claim no nobleÂ motivations. It's all about my own limitations and a temptation completely denied is far safer than a temptationÂ hopefully

(but not likely)â moderated. I won't start into something that I am not convinced I won't go to excess with. And, for me, it's worked. Ice cream, at this point, is an intellectual concept, not something I crave anymore. My weight now floats between 169 & 174, allowing me to feel OK about a driver's license that lists 173. Blood pressure is down to the point where medication is no longer something to consider, and as long as I do have that salad at lunch, I tend not to eat as much at dinner and feel better about sometimes indulging my weakness for chocolate. Denying ice cream is one thing, but denying myself chocolate would be to deny one of the fundamental reasons we exist... to eat chocolate!

Interesting. I've often wondered how easily one could write 1000 words of no importance whatsoever. Not yet sure about 1000, but according to wordpress,â 950 is easily attainable. Bonus points available to anyone getting the reference to "63 songs about Joe." Nothing for Buildings & Food. That one's too easy.