

# Americans lured by appeal of Olestra

During my 22 years on this planet, I've consistently avoided behavior and activities that would lead me to having bloody stools.

Sure, there was that one weekend in Key West with Ramon, but that was years ago and I was just a kid.

I guess we all go through that "experimental phase" at one time or another. But those three days of margaritas and massages stand as a rare exception to my aforementioned fecal policy.

That's why I never eat any food products that contain the synthetic fat substitute called Olestra.

In March 1998, Frito-Lay became the first company to nationally market food products containing Olestra.

The fat-free versions of Lay's, Ruffles and Doritos that hit the shelves featured the now familiar "WOW" label.

And that's exactly what thousands of Americans said after see-

ing what Olestra had done to their normal bowel movements.

In accordance with Food and Drug Administration regulations, the "WOW" snacks carried labels that warned consumers of Olestra's distressing side effects.

The labels stated,

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"Olestra may cause abdominal cramping and loose stools. Olestra inhibits the absorption of some vitamins and other nutrients."

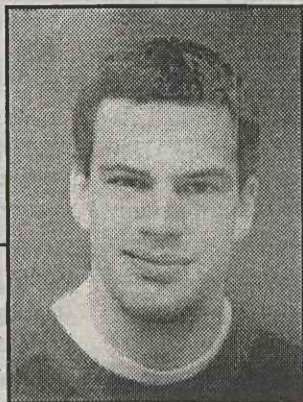
Unfortunately, the "WOW" snacks lived up to their grisly billing.

According to a December 1998 news release issued by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), more than 15,000 consumers have filed Olestra-related complaints.

These complaints charge that

eating Olestra produced adverse reactions ranging from severe abdominal cramps to, you guessed it - bloody stools.

The actual number of people who experienced health problems as a result of Olestra consumption is probably much higher than 15,000.



CPSI surveys indicate that "only a small minority of people who experienced adverse reactions reported their symptoms."

So why am I writing about Olestra now, almost an entire year after it was first nationally marketed?

I'm writing this editorial to tell the American public that once again, you've disappointed me (See "Rosie O'Donnell Nets Highest

Ratings Yet." *Electronic Media* 29 July 1996: 25).

When "WOW" snacks were first introduced, I assumed that their tenure on the shelves of America's grocery stores and gas stations would be brief.

Surely Americans had more sense than to buy products that caused diarrhea and inhibited the absorption of vitamins, effectively converting the digestive tract to a "Slip N' Slide."

Well here we are a year later, and "WOW" chips still line the shelves.

This leads me to the conclusion that Americans are actually buying products that contain Olestra.

Why would consumers deliberately subject themselves to abdominal cramps and, as Grandma always used to say, "The backdoor trots?"

Maybe there are a lot of people out there who aren't affected by Olestra.

Or maybe America's obsession with the unrealistic ideals of ultra-thinness has led consumers to believe that the benefits of eating fat-free foods far outweigh the inconvenience of "loose stools."

What many Americans fail to realize is that keeping track of calories consumed is often more important than counting grams of fat.

If your diet provides your body with more calories than it needs for physical activity and maintenance, your body will store the excess calories as fat.

In other words, even a fat-free diet can produce body fat if an excess of calories is consumed.

So here's my advice. Exercise.

If you exercise, your body will burn additional calories (including fat calories) before storing them as body fat.

And you won't have any reason to eat chips that make your butt explode.

# Residence Life: A contradiction in terms

I'm madder'n Jerry Falwell at a gay rodeo.

During the course of your life, you can expect some very harsh lessons to be taught. The ones you can't learn from mom or dad.

I'm talking about the ones that bite you directly in the ass and you can do nothing but conform to the rules set forth by "da man."

Don't worry, I'm not getting back into the teen angst stage, although it would be nice, the problems then seem so petty now.

Allow me to Buckley this article and throw the notion of PC out the window.

Pure and simple, Residence Life took me up the poop chute and I didn't have the comfort of K.Y. Jelly.

So much has changed since last year. I have been a resident of Virginia Hall for three years now and there's nothing anyone can say or offer that would get me to stay another year. The rules are simply intolerable.

Recently I was written up for having a shotglass that contained a key and a plastic baggie. During health and safety checks, my CDC saw the shotglass, confiscated it, and gave me a notice saying I had to meet with the area director.

This is all normal procedure and if I wasn't 21, I would understand. That simply isn't the case.

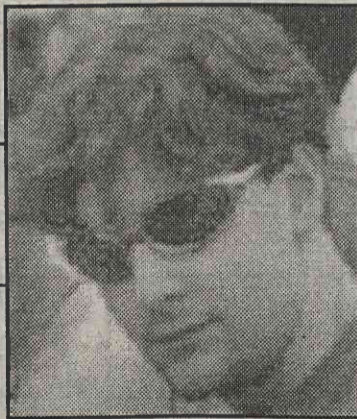
I am 21 and as a 21-year-old I have the constitutional right to have alcohol in my possession.

I mentioned this to my CDC saying she's confiscating a small cup when I could have bottles upon bottles of booze in my freezer.

Her response to that was she knew that and there was nothing illegal about it.

Here it is, kids: shotglasses illegal, liquor and beer legal. Similar to California

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law: killing your parents is illegal, killing your wife is legal. You make the call.

Okay, I had my meeting and the area director gave me my shotglass back. No big deal.

A hallmate gets the same notice that I did, only it was for something worse (Or no worse depending on how you look at it).

She was written up for having Absolut ads on her walls. I'm sure everyone knows the ads. It's hardly promoting alcohol abuse, the ads are considered by many to be modern art.

Last I checked, the ads them-

selves don't contain alcohol, you can't exactly lick an ad and get a buzz. Trust me, I've seen someone try when they were drunk. Isn't it ironic, doncha think?

What's perhaps the most interesting in her situation is that she didn't get in trouble for a poster that depicted a person passed out under a keg with the caption "Blood Alcohol Experiment In Progress."

The reason she wasn't given a notice for that is because she got the poster from Elon's own campus shop.

The same campus shop that sells beer mugs, shotglasses, and other alcohol paraphernalia.

If Elon's excuse for that is those products are intended for off-campus students, they're kidding themselves. Their argument is by no means an excuse. Maybe they should start selling shovels for all that crap they've been handing out to students this year.

I suggest they either revise some of the campus rules or stop selling those products in their shop.

After all this, I was told that I would be kicked out of Virginia if I could not find a roommate for next year.

What happened to squatting a room and taking a random freshman?

That was an option for the past two years that is apparently no longer an option. This has caused more problems in Virginia dorm in general than anything else.

Being blunt, Residence Life needs to get their crap together. They are unorganized and the rules they set forth are walking contradictions.

If Elon were to offer me free a room on campus next year, I'd

turn the other direction and run like I stole something.

There is no way, nothing could be said or done, to keep me on campus another year. Thankfully, I'll be at West End apartments. My advice to everyone else on campus is to move off as soon as you can before things get worse.

I doubt Parker Realty will forbid shotglasses and Absolut ads. Not supporting on-campus housing is the best way you can tell Residence Life you don't like the way things are. For those of you that are happy on campus, continue your happiness. Those who are being taken up the tailpipe, do something for yourself.

