

Opinion

Students, take heed: Shop using the Royko Plan

An old friend stopped by recently and went to the refrigerator to get himself a beer.

He took the beer but stood looking inside the refrigerator for several seconds. Then he opened the freezer section and looked at that for a while.

And he began opening kitchen cabinets and looking inside. Finally he shook his head and said:

"Are you moving or something?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

He looked in a couple of more cabinets, then said: "You don't have any food in this place. I mean, absolutely nothing."

I nodded. He was right. There wasn't a thing to eat in the entire kitchen. Not a morsel. Not a crust of stale bread. Not one can of tomato soup or a spoonful of peanut butter to be scraped out of the bottom of a jar. Nothing.

He shook his head. "You don't even have a can of stewed tomatoes or things like that. Everybody's got an old can of something or other in his kitchen, but you don't have a single thing. Don't you ever eat?"



Mike Royko

Of course I eat. I eat to much.

"Ah, then you eat all your meals in restaurants."

No, only lunch. And dinner out maybe once a week. The rest of my meals I have at home.

"But there's nothing here to eat. I don't understand."

Most people don't. So I explained the Royko System of Food Shopping for the Single Man.

It works on a very simple principle: I buy groceries once in a while. And in large quantities, too. But then I don't buy another thing until everything is gone.

My friend happened to come along the day after I had eaten the last food in the kitchen — a can of tuna and a frozen waffle.

"What is the advantage of your system?" he asked.

There are several advantages, and they go this way:

First, you don't have to go shopping very often. At most, I make one shopping trip a month. I've gone as long as two months between trips.

Second, you don't accumulate things that begin piling up in most kitchens — those extra cans of stewed tomatoes and soup gathering dust in a cabinet; the smoked Korean oysters; the packages of frozen chicken in the back of the

freezer; the half-filled jars of Welch's grape jelly, side by side in the refrigerator door.

Under my system, you cannot accumulate cans of stewed tomatoes because you have to eat them before you can shop again.

"You must have some peculiar meals," he said.

There have been a few unusual meals, yes. One evening, I found that the last edible items in the kitchen were three eggs, a half-stick of margarine, an onion and some flour.

I could have taken the easy way out and had three fried eggs. But I was more creative than that.

It seemed to me that if I mixed a cup of flour with an egg, some margarine and water and chopped onion, I would have a form of dough. So I did.

I spread the dough on a pan and put it in the oven, hoping it would become some kind of bread.

As it turned out, my creation became something that resembled onion pancakes. Then I fried the other two eggs and put them on top of the sort-of-pancakes.

"It sounds awful," my friend said.

Well, Julia Child wouldn't recommend it for a dinner party, but it did get me through the night.

The advantages to this system are obvious. It's economical, because you

never buy anything you don't eventually eat. And it forces you to be innovative. I remember the night I had nothing left but two pouches of frozen creamed spinach, three small potatoes, and a frozen chicken leg. I made a stew. I don't remember how it turned out, but it was surely high in some kind of vitamin.

"But what about your children?" my friend asked. "Isn't this rough on them?"

Actually, my sons were partly responsible for my approach to food shopping.

I discovered a law of eating, which I call Royko's Law. It goes this way: Young people will always eat anything that is convenient, then wait until you buy some more convenient foods, and they will eat them, too.

In other words, if I went out every week and bought five pounds of chicken pieces, five packages of spaghetti, five jars of Ragu sauce and 10 frozen pizzas, they would eat the 10 frozen pizzas and leave the rest. And the next week, they would do the same. Eventually I would have stacks of chicken pieces, bales of spaghetti and cases of Ragu sauce, and they'd still be eating the frozen pizza.

So under my system, when the frozen pizzas are gone, they either eat what is left or they don't eat.

"That's kind of sadistic, isn't it?" my friend asked.

Yes, but then, what else are young people good for? I am particularly fond

of the memory of the evening my youngest son came home and found in front of the TV set with a bowl of lap.

"What are you having for supper, he asked, looking hungry.

"Raisin Bran," I said. "There's some left in the kitchen."

He looked in my bowl and said there's no milk. It's just dry Bran."

"It's not bad," I said, scooping it into my mouth with my fingers. "But some does tend to fall on your shirt."

My friend shook his head and said "Your sons must be getting skinny."

No, that's not so. My system encourages them to make the acquaintance of young ladies who have more substantial qualities than mere prettiness. When they meet girls, they do questions like, "What's your sign?" "Say, do you come here often?" "More likely to say: "Hi, you don't seem to know how to make a good roast and dumplings, do you?"

My friend went back to the refrigerator and said: "I notice there's no age of beer, so you must do some shopping for that."

"As an ancient wise man once said, 'man does not live by Bran alone.'"

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Pity the poor columnist: Grizzard doesn't have Carson's eight writers

It was big news that Johnny Carson returned to "The Tonight Show."



Lewis Grizzard

Know why? Because he had to do the show without benefit of his eight writers, who are on strike.

Eight writers? Johnny Carson has eight writers for the short monologue he does at the beginning of each of his shows.

It only took a few more than that to write the Bible.

But Carson said he couldn't stand being off the show any longer and would come back even if it did, indeed, mean he had to write his own stuff.

I think Johnny Carson is funny, and I've been a fan of his for years, but what's all the fuss about a guy who makes 20 million a year having to write his own material for a change?

Why don't I have eight writers to help me with this thing?

Why don't I have just one writer?

"Gildenham," I could say, "I'm off to the golf course. Finish my Friday column and leave it on my desk before you go home."

Think of all the material newspaper columnists have to come up with all by themselves day after day, week after week and month after month.

I don't know a one of them who makes in a year what Carson pays in alimony each month.

And let's say Carson's eight writers have a bad day. Nobody could think of anything funny for him to say.

No problem. Carson has made a ca-

reer out of telling jokes that aren't very funny. It's his delivery that makes you laugh.

But some poor newspaper columnist sits over a typewriter (or computer screen) half a day at The Daily Planet trying to think of a thousand words that make at least some sense and/or evoke a chuckle.

The column runs the next day and the managing editor doesn't like it, and just like that, the columnist is back on the copy desk.

What I'd like to see Johnny Carson do — or anybody else used to having a stable of writers — is write a newspaper column for a while.

Not every day. Let's just say three or four times a week.

Here's the way that works:

You're sitting there. Alone. There's nobody to turn to. There are no eight writers to help.

You glance through the paper looking for an idea. There's Jimmy Swaggart, but you wrote about him two weeks ago. Reagan? You've worn him out, too.

Deadline is getting closer. You sweat. You put another handful of Maalox tablets in your mouth. You wonder why you didn't go to law school like your parents wanted you to.

I'm a rookie in the column business — 11 years. But many others are still going strong after much longer than that, and they're still responsible for all their material, even what they steal.

A colleague once said, "Writing a newspaper column is like being married to a nymphomaniac. The first two weeks, it's fun."

Give me eight writers and I'd be on a permanent honeymoon.

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BEN SARGENT

Mail Call

Baseless and false

EDITOR:

I am writing in regard to an article titled "Monkeys, Malaysia make summer memorable," written by Wade See, published in the May 5, 1988, issue of *At Ease*. The statement "Moslems hold cattle and oxen sacred, so people don't bother the animals," given in the article is baseless and false. On behalf of all Muslims, I would like to protest the printing of such a false statement in *The Battalion's* weekly magazine.

Regarding the first part of the statement in question, the truth is that Muslims do not hold cattle or oxen sacred; as a matter of fact, we are allowed to eat the meat from these animals. As far as the latter half of the statement is concerned, not bothering the animals has to do with the culture and not with Islam. An observer may find cattle wandering on streets in many eastern countries of the globe, and the situation in Malaysia is not unique.

Nadeem A. Chaudhary
public relations, Islamic Community of Bryan-College Station

A fraud by any other name . . .

EDITOR:

On May 5, I was selling back my old books. I needed to sell back, or get rid of, a bowling instruction book. I took my bowling book, pages clean and all intact, to University Bookstore at Northgate. I took my book there because of the windows of the store, in approximately two-foot letters, it reads: "We buy ALL books."

I thought this meant ALL books, including my \$6 bowling text. WRONG. I was told that if I brought in "a few good books" they could possibly offer me 50¢ to \$2.00. When your store makes a huge — two feet huge — profit of advertising a service, you should follow through on it.

Lisa McClain '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the author's name, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

