

EATING IN AND DINING OUT

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The twilight of my career as a medical doctor arrived some time ago, but fortunately because of a reduced schedule I am able to maintain the parts of my career which I find extremely enjoyable. I continue to see professionally a number of patients whose difficult hematologic problems have been brought under control and/or cured. I spend a good deal of time teaching medical students, residents and fellows at the bedside and during microscope sessions. Although I am quite pleased with my career in medicine, playing at different times roles as researcher, teacher, administrator, I speculate that there might be another career "waiting for me" in the business world that I should explore. Perhaps a new adventure to pursue even at my advancing age. I have always been interested in the preparation of food for the table. Perhaps this interest could expand. Could I become a "master chef" and/or open and operate a restaurant? Before discarding the idea of a new career, I thought I could review several of my personal experiences preparing food as well as several dining experiences at restaurants and cafeterias around the country, and even a couple abroad. Having done the review I will make a decision. Should I try to pursue a new career?

From early childhood I remember having an interest in preparing foods for the table. From time to time my mother and father would entertain a small group frequently serving sauerbraten, homemade noodles, and a homemade angel food cake. I remember helping my mother roll out the noodle dough as flat as it would go, letting the noodle material dry some, and then slicing the flat noodle dough into noodles of approximately one-half inch in diameter. These were then permitted to dry on towels and served later after cooking with the sauerbraten and gravy. I remember helping brown the flour in a cast iron skillet, the first step in preparing the brown gravy for the sauerbraten, crushed ginger snaps were added later. I watched my mother take the 18 egg whites left over from the noodles and whip them till they peaked and ultimately bake a magnificent angel food cake. My father, as I recollect, was in charge of the sauerbraten, a chunk of top sirloin usually weighing several pounds and marinated for a day or two with mixed spices before being baked. The combination of the home baked sauerbraten, the marvelous gravy and homemade noodles accompanied with a fresh green salad was, in my opinion, about as good as it gets from the eating point of view. The angel food cake just topped it all.

Other early food experiences included participating in the canning of a wide variety of vegetables during the summer time, as well as preparation of a wide variety of jellies. By the end of the summer we had filled the shelves in a small room in the basement of our home with Mason jars filled with whole tomatoes, tomato juice, tomato pickles, sour pickles, dill pickles and on and on. The favorite jelly in our basement was blackberry jelly, I think because we picked the berries and they were free! We also had many many bottles of homemade ginger ale and root beer which, incidentally, were superb. Occasionally during the middle of the night, it seemed, would hear a loud "pop" in the basement and on further exploration found that one of the bottles had exploded.

In the early 30s my father did manage to make good number of bottles of homebrew. I was not involved in this procedure, except for "capping" some of the quart bottles with our "hand capper". I can remember him and his guests sitting in the kitchen of our home, homebrew in hand, holding the glasses up and admiring the clarity of the beer. It looked like smoky river water to me but I did not want to say anything.

Two additional childhood memories: Vegetable soup with an accompanying chunk of beef leg meat and a marrow bone was one of the staple meals of our family served at least once a week. Commonly the meat was served with a sauce, served warm and prepared with butter, breadcrumbs, and ground horseradish brought from Findlay Market bought from a retailer named Joe Meyer. Proper consistency of the sauce was achieved by diluting the above ingredients with the liquid part of the soup. This was, and still is, one of my favorite condiments. Finally, accompanying the vegetable soup and the leg meat and the horseradish sauce often were potato pancakes. As a child I was given the privilege of grating the potatoes for the potato pancakes using a small rectangular grater which did get the job done, usually at the expense of one or two knuckles on my left hand. After the grating was completed some of the liquid from the ground potatoes was decanted after brief settling. An egg or two was added, a little bit of flour, salt, pepper and sometimes an onion. Dollops of this mixture were placed in a hot black cast iron skillet bubbling with grease and fried until they were brown. I have always preferred to eat my potato pancakes with just a little salt and pepper. Others prefer to put some sort of sweet sauce on them, especially maple syrup.

Another of my favorite soups is potato leek soup. I learned from a TV chef that potato leek soup, when served warm, is simply potato leek soup, but when served cold it is called vichyssoise. One year more than two decades ago I raised a row of leeks in a large garden that I shared with Al Tuchfarber. Having raised the leeks I needed then to find out how to use them.

I no longer have a garden but I continue to make potato leek soup. Usually I will buy the leeks at either Kroger's or Keller's where a small bunch of large leeks is ample for a significant volume of soup. One needs to look carefully in the several layers of the leeks and wash out accumulated dirt. Thin slices of the individual leeks are made until one approaches the green part of the plant. Two large leeks are enough to flavor a soup. Several red potatoes peeled and diced are also part of the soup. I sometimes put a medium sweet onion in with the leeks and the potatoes. I believe this adds a little bit of additional flavor. Finally these ingredients are put into three or four quarts of broth, usually chicken broth - the canned variety is, I believe, better than the homemade variety. These are cooked until the vegetables are extremely soft and then finally pureed. I have learned from personal experience that adding the milk and/or cream to the soup adds very little flavor, but certainly may add a lot of dangerous calories. We usually eat this above soup cold without milk or cream.

Twenty-five years ago while home recovering from my first bypass operation, I learned how to make yeast bread. As fortune would have it, or perhaps misfortune, I had purchased for my wife a Cuisinart mixer a month before my bypass experience. I still make homemade bread once or twice a year but my favorites are dinner rolls which, as the listener might suspect, contains some butter. Occasionally I flavor the dough with

cinnamon, cracked nuts and so forth. In the past I have made crepes with Suzette sauce (mostly butter). This exercise is now verboten!

One last comment about home cooking. My father took great pride in preparing pickled herring each holiday season. Kegs of herring in the 30s and 40s cost about \$1.25 or maybe \$1.50 and each contained approximately 20 herring, some male some female. The cost now nears \$3.00 a pound. As he continued this practice late into the 50s he complained more and more about the cost of the herring but nonetheless he continued to pickle the herring and dole out small containers of the pickled herring to "chosen friends". I watched him do it on numerous occasions and on one occasion invited Bill Schubert and John Partin over to watch since both were addicted to pickled herring, especially my father's. The pickling process went something like this: The herring were removed from the keg and desalted for a couple of days, changing the water covering the herring at least twice during a 24 hour period. Following desalting the heads of the herring were chopped off as well as the tails. The herring were gutted and the eggs and milt from the herring set aside. The herring were then skinned, deboned and finally chopped into individual chunks each about two inches long. A crock used only for the purpose of pickling the herring was cleaned and then the herring were put in the crock in layers as follows: A layer of herring followed by a layer of the ova or milt followed by chopped apples, onions, lemon slices and pickling spices, and then this procedure was repeated until the herring were all in the crock. Finally, the entire batch was covered with a cider vinegar and placed in the downstairs refrigerator for about two weeks until repackaged into smaller glass jars for distribution as holiday presents. Bill Schubert and John Partin had to revisit our house a week or two after the original herring experience to taste the herring and to wash the herring down with an adult beverage or two. Bill Schubert still talks about that particular night.

That is enough about my own cooking experiences. Maybe if I open a restaurant I will use some of this minimal expertise in menus to be developed, but let's move on and think about simple restaurants that an old geezer like myself could manage.

One weekend several years, perhaps as many as 20 years ago, we were visiting in New Orleans where I was attending a meeting of the American Society of Hematology. We were staying at a downtown hotel near the meeting site. On the morning of the first scientific sessions I got up early and got ready for the day. Jeannine chose to sleep in. I wandered down through the lobby of our hotel and out into one of the main streets looking for an open restaurant. This was Saturday morning about 7:00 am and I was really surprised that there was almost no activity in the part of downtown New Orleans where I was walking. Finally out in the distance I saw what appeared to be a red sign and as I got closer the sign read "Mother's". I saw no activity around the building and I thought, well, maybe it is a restaurant but it does not look like it is open. The address, incidentally, is 401 Playdross Street in downtown New Orleans. It is very near the New Orleans Super Dome. When I came up to the building with the sign it was clear that there was activity inside the building and as I entered I was surprised by the noise and smoke of a crowded cafeteria. I was surprised after I had grabbed a tray that I had to stand in line for a short time waiting to get served. When it became my turn to be served I looked up and a short, stocky woman was staring at me. She finally asked, "Are you working today?" "Yes, Mam, I am. I will be at a medical meeting all day." Without a word and

without asking she filled my large plate to overflowing with scrambled eggs, grits, bacon, sausage and a couple of huge biscuits accompanied by honey, jelly, and obviously, a lot of butter. Along with all of this were a large glass of orange juice and a cup of coffee, all of which looked like it was probably enough for about three people. I moved through the line quite rapidly and the woman who had filled my plate was taking the money and I thought "My, God, this is going to cost more than I wanted to spend for breakfast", and she looked at me again and she said, "That will be \$2.50." Needless to say it appeared to me to be a bargain. Unfortunately for my body's lipids and probably for my weight I downed nearly every bite of the breakfast, but did make it to the meeting on time with a belly full of good food. On subsequent visits to New Orleans, we lunched in Mother's where the "house specialty" was a huge sandwich of beef or ham (Po' Boys), again quite inexpensive, and very, very, very tasty. Would this be the restaurant that I had in mind? Breakfast and lunch, nothing fancy, low cost - Hum - I am not sure.

Fifteen or so years ago we drove to Charlottesville, Virginia with our youngest son who was to begin his college education at the University of Virginia. On our way home we stopped at the Homestead Inn in Homestead, Virginia staying for two days enjoying the atmosphere of the Old South and spectacular dining. The history of the Homestead Inn extends back to 1864 and it has been expanded on a number of occasions. Currently the entire acreage of the Homestead estate is more than 15,000 acres with the main building being a 100-year-old frame hotel building. In our first evening the Homestead we had a satisfying dinner in a nearly empty huge dining room where we and perhaps a dozen or more guests were entertained by an eight-piece orchestra. It was an "off season". We arrived in the dining room for breakfast at a respectable hour, perhaps around 8:00 or 8:30 am, and had the choice of having a served breakfast or serving ourselves at an elaborate buffet. We chose to have the served breakfast. My wife and I and the couple who was accompanying us were seated at a lovely looking table with linens, china, silver, crystal and flowers in the center. Water was poured. Orange juice was poured. A waiter in a white shirt with a bow tie, short white jacket and black pants, stood near our table saying not a word. After waiting what I thought was long enough I asked, "Is there a menu? We don't know what you have for breakfast." The waiter responded with a simple, "What would you like?" That simple statement opened up a door and our requests for a very complicated, elaborate, extraordinarily high calorie breakfast were received by the waiter without, incidentally, a pad. We had, among other things, eggs, sausage, bacon, grits, biscuits, French toast, and kippers. I may have had a small beef filet also. I inquired if there was any fresh fruit, or maybe the waiter mentioned that they had some lovely red raspberries, would anyone care for some, and I thought "Yes, I would love to have some red raspberries. Not very many, just a few", and he assured me that there would be just a few red raspberries with some cream. The breakfast arrived in due course and the "few" raspberries were a huge bowl of red raspberries floating in delightful heavy cream. I am sure that our breakfast dining took at least an hour followed by two or three hours of vigorous exercise outside. We did manage to play Bocce Ball and croquet on groomed lawns. The groomed lawn with croquet was my only experience on a turf like that. We, of course, let the women win!

We lunched sometime later in the Sam Snead Tavern where again we had a hamburger whose excellent flavor I still remember. Would I want to run a place like the Homestead? Well, first off I could not afford the 15,000 acres in the mountains of

Virginia. I believe that that would be too complicated and whole lot like work to run a place like that, but we will see.

Another option would be to have a gourmet type restaurant that operated only one or two nights per week. This was the case with Shambarger's restaurant in Redkey, Indiana. Thomas and Mary Myrtle Shambarger started the restaurant some time during the Great Depression of the 1930s. They featured breakfast, lunch and dinner and had a special which was their "5 cent hamburger". Their son John spent a year or longer in France studying the intricacies of French cooking after his tour of duty during World War II. He returned to Redkey and sometime during the 1950s changed the operation of the restaurant from a three times a day, good country food six days a week to a more restricted time schedule as well as a more restricted dining schedule. He discontinued the lunch and breakfast business concentrating on dinners. In 1962 John and his wife became the primary proprietors of the restaurant. He became known as the "Mad Chef of Redkey" having added entertainment of his own making to an increasing splendid evening of dining in the restaurant. Beginning in 1972 and for several years afterwards they earned the "Travel Holiday Award" for one of the great dining experiences in the United States. I should note that the restaurant was housed in an old country building. The tables, chairs, linens and utensils, although they were always clean were clearly unmatched. Gradually he reduced the numbers of evening dinners from five or six nights to one night per week. We were told that this was because of failing health although there was no evidence of that on the night we dined. He prepared most of the food from a "stage" in the middle of the restaurant where he sang and told stories. I think he even danced while preparing the food. Starting time for dinner was 7:00 pm and if you were not there at 7:00 pm you missed out because he locked the door. The dining began with a salad, either a Caesar Salad or a Caesaroid salad [no anchovies]. If seconds were desired the diner went to the area of preparation to be served as Seconds were not served to the tables. The second course was soup. I believe the night we were there it was a magnificent potato leek soup. The third course was a delicately sauteed white fish, possibly Dover Sole. I should add that there was no alcohol in the restaurant. If, between courses, you felt the need to take a walk or for that matter get a drink, there was a nearby bar that would provide the necessary adult beverages. After soup and before the major entree, a palate clearing sorbet was served. The entree the night we were there was a rib roast of beef which he deboned on his "stage". There were several choices of beef, of course, medium, medium rare, and I believe even a rare. The pieces served were at least 3/4 of an inch thick, and seconds were available if anybody had any room left. Several in the gathering of approximately 100 diners chose a second round of the beef entree, for whom Mr. Shambarger showed no mercy -- the second slices were as big as the first. Following a short delay the host constructed magnificent strawberry shortcake with layers of cake, strawberries and whipped cream and built it to a height of 12-14 inches amidst the Ohhs and Ahhs of we, the patrons. Individual slices made with a broad flat knife were transferred to the plates without much damage to the individual slices. There followed the usual tea and *coffee* as an absolutely wonderful evening of dining came to an end. The total time spent was from 7:00 pm to approximately 1:30 am. Needless to say we stayed in a tiny little motel in or nearby Redkey, Indiana. This tiny little farming community lies some 1520 miles north of Indianapolis. I should note that a Nickel-Plate railroad trunk line ran diagonally through the town with its tracks within a few feet of the

back of the Shambarger Restaurant. During the course of the evening at least once, possibly twice, the train went by and John warned us that this wasn't an earthquake, just a nearby train. The cost of this elaborate dining experience was, some 25 years ago, \$48.50 per meal plus tax. My estimate for such a meal today would be in the neighborhood of \$150 per person. Mr. Shambarger retired from the restaurant in 1979. It was continued by one of his daughters for another decade and finally closed sometime in the late 80s.

Let's keep going, however, I still have not made a decision!

Sometime during mid summer approximately 15 years ago we decided we should visit Maine, mostly because we had never been there before. A hunt through an AAA travel book suggested that some place in or near Kennebunkport, Maine would be nice, quiet and restful. We chose the Colony Hotel, an old, old resort hotel of frame construction with the usual large porches crowded with rocking chairs occupied by the elder clientele. We arrived in Kennebunkport the day that George Bush was nominated by the Republican Convention as candidate for the presidency of the United States. This complication aside, it was the only hotel we have ever stayed in that guests were able to order a lobster dish at every meal. There were lobster omelets in the morning if you cared for one. At lunch there was lobster bisque and lobster salad, and dinner, of course, had several choices of baked or broiled lobster. We stayed for several days playing tennis, hiking in the neighborhood, and occasionally sitting on the porch and rocking. At night we played bingo with an intense crowd of octogenarians. On one single brief occasion I dipped a foot in the ocean. I think that foot is the one that still bothers me because the water was VERY cold!

We need to move on because I still have not made a decision about becoming a restaurateur. Perhaps a "deli" would be a good choice for me.

Jeannine and I were walking back to our hotel from Carnegie Hall where we had just listened to a magnificent concert given by our symphony orchestra. Even though the hour for us was reasonably late, the aromas emanating from the multiple delis along our way demanded that we explore at least one. We chose the Carnegie Deli, obviously nearby Carnegie Hall. Some of the tables had a view of the sidewalk and people walking past. We entered and found a table by a window. In an instant a waiter was at our table pouring water and leaving a menu. Very shortly he returned. We ordered one pastrami on rye and one corned beef on rye. We inquired about the soup menu and he told me flat out "I don't think you will be able to find room for soup and one of our sandwiches!" In another brief moment the sandwiches arrived, and not to my surprise having viewed the sandwiches were we able to complete barely half a sandwich each. These \$7.50 marvels are among the best I have ever eaten. I believe I dressed mine with sauerkraut, pickle and horseradish. Jeannine took hers 'straight'. We, of course, took a doggie bag but found no time or inclination to complete the deli repast. As I recollect the deli was open 18 hours per day, maybe even longer. Those hours for an old man would be killers. I think I have scratched "delis" off my potential list.

When visiting London a few years ago for our first and only time we decided to have "tea" at a famous London hotel. We chose the Brown's Hotel located at Albermarle and Dover Street. Recently a computer search revealed the following information regarding the Brown's. Rather grubby five story townhouse. Large windows and

unsightly protruding drain pipes. Small ornate arched entrance. Built in 1837. The interior is quite elegant and old fashioned. There is fine intimate restaurant with wooden columns and impressive molded ceiling. We made a reservation for tea and arrived a few minutes early. We were immediately ushered in and seated at a table with a window. The most memorable part of the restaurant was the paneled and carved woodwork and the "formal waiters" with white jackets, dark pants and white gloves. The cuisine as many of you no doubt know from experience, is limited to small canapes, mostly those with cream cheese and cucumber, as well as scones. The beverage was, of course, tea and somewhere down the line during this visit a glass or two of champagne.

I will keep the Brown's Hotel on my list until I make a decision. Dining simple and elegant.

On one of our trips to New Orleans we discovered another restaurant "Upperline". This restaurant is located a block or so off the St. Charles

Avenue streetcar line as it nears its termination. The restaurant itself it housed in an 1877 townhouse in two or three rooms including a well-stocked bar. The walls of the restaurant are packed with paintings, drawings, and photographs of all kinds, mostly originals. Each table was decorated tastefully with a bunch of simple flowers. Even now I remember the flavor of the duck gumbo and the grilled Gulf fish. For dessert the honey pecan bread pudding was superb. It seemed a shame not to find room for one pecan pie or Crème Brulee with crushed pralines. A note in a magazine called Southern Living - Travel South states "If you can eat at only one restaurant in New Orleans make it the Upperline".

This restaurant remains on my list of possibilities.

When traveling with our symphony orchestra several years ago, the hotel where we were staying in Taiwan, the Lai Lai Sheraton sponsored a Thanksgiving banquet for the American visitors. I remember that there was a small bowl of cranberry sauce, a slightly larger bowl of smooshed potatoes and pieces of sliced turkey or what was said to be turkey. The remainder of the food display which occupied several large tables, consisted of a huge variety seafood cooked and uncooked, as well as a vessel of Bird's Nest Soup. I tasted a good number of the raw delicacies, as well as the Bird's Nest Soup. My wife stuck mostly with shrimp and smooshed potatoes. I could not do a similar eatery - too complicated, too many perishable foods and too many hired hands!

About five years ago we planned a brief trip to visit our son studying for his Ph.D. at Berkeley. This son, Joseph, was the topic of my first paper presented to our Literary Club entitled "Teach for America". I should note that he has received his Ph.D. and now rather proudly says "At least we now have one real doctor in the family". (I've left him out of my will!) He also arranged for us to dine at the Chez Panisse, a multi-star, California-style gourmet restaurant located in Berkeley. First a little background information. The Chez Panisse is really divided into two parts: a restaurant downstairs which seats 50 people with two seatings per night. There is a cafe on the second floor which can seat 85 people. Generally the cafe is more informal with an ala carte menu. In the restaurant itself there was only a one-priced, fixed menu per evening, and this menu changes Monday through Saturday. So in planning your dining experience at the Chez Panisse you need to call ahead, find out what is being served on a particular night, and make your arrangements for the night when the food sounds most appealing. Dinners

begin sometime between 6:00 and 6:30 pm and the dining experience continues for about two hours. The restaurant was opened in 1971 and nearly from the beginning was a huge success. The owner and operator of this establishment is Ms. Alice Waters, now 60 years old. She is a graduate of Cal Berkeley with a degree in French Cultural Studies and trained at the Montessori School in London, England before spending a seminal year traveling in France. She has a single child, a daughter, born in 1983. During these past 30 years she has developed a network of farmers and ranchers who supply her with her restaurant's needs, mostly in vegetables, eggs and meat. The cost of an evening's dinner in the restaurant (all inclusive meaning taxes, tip adult beverages and so forth) is approximately \$100 per person. It is worth it. The dinners are either three or four courses. A couple of examples of a typical dinner menu would be as follows: Wednesday: Trio of eggplant, grilled and baked, Northern halibut served with fennel, leeks, basil and warm coriander vinaigrette. Grilled Wolf Farm quail stuffed with chanterelles, breadcrumbs, and herbs with wilted greens and potato chive pancake, walnut ice cream crepe with sautéed apples. That ought to be enough to sate anybody's appetite. Let me tell you a little bit about the restaurant itself. It is obviously relatively small seating only 50 people for dinner. Entering thru the front door one sees an aisle down the middle with tables on both sides. Towards the back of the seating area is another open door and upon further inspection one finds this is the area where the chef and the sous chefs ply their trade. On invitation from the waiter you are encouraged to visit the kitchen using an aisle or a runway on the left-hand side with a low wall separating the workers and the food from the visitors. On pausing to observe the workers, without a moment's hesitation each would offer comments about what they were doing, why they were doing it. On returning to our table our waiter by this time had arrived with a bottle of wine that we had ordered, and the usual ice water. Please note that he addressed himself by his first name and called himself a waiter, nothing fancy. We were not rushed during our dining. Our waiter did ask us to note that the asparagus listed on the menu was prepared a different way than the way it was served, namely grilled. The reason was that the sous chef had tasted the raw asparagus and felt that it was too sweet to alter the flavor with boiling and therefore grilled the asparagus for us. The dessert was crème Brule and of course the usual coffee or tea. As I noted above the proprietress has several dozen suppliers, some of whom have become her favorites. They would supply her with the very best that they had to offer. Vegetables, wherever possible, are "organically grown". She feels, as do the suppliers, that the vegetables grown in this manner have a better flavor and possibly are better for one than vegetables grown with exposure to a variety of poisons to kill bugs. Several of her recipes for salad are quite simple. The first of these, a green salad, is topped with a vinaigrette sauce made with white wine or sherry vinegar, a crushed clove, a pinch of salt, and several tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Also some pepper. A Dandelion salad is much the same way except Dijon mustard and lemon juice in small quantities is added to the dressing. The recipes get a little more complicated when she prepares artichoke mashed potatoes and celery root roumaillade. Her pickled beets are made just the way I make them: the beets were cooked and peeled while still warm, sliced, and then covered with wine or champagne vinegar, salt and pepper, and a little bit of extra virgin olive oil. (I add slices of sweet onion). She notes that they are very fortunate to have two farms near the Chez Panisse producing eggs from small, free ranging flocks. The hens are carefully protected from roaming animals and coyotes, but

foraging on grass and insects, we are told that the yolks of the eggs have an intense orange color which gives her vanilla ice cream and pasta doughs an interesting deep yellow color. Some of her eggs are supplied by the Sky High Ranch near Winter's, California where eggs of all colors may arrive in packages of a dozen. Eggs include brown speckled, beige, and most beautiful of all, small blue-green eggs from Araucana hens. At least one of the egg dishes offered in Alice's restaurant is a scrambled egg panisse which includes the addition of black truffles. Most of the fish that are served in the restaurant come from the nearby California oceans. Some, however, because of limited supply and necessity are flown in from the east coast. Most of the oysters are from the west coast from as far north as British Columbia. Her recipe for oysters on the half shell makes my mouth water: 24 oysters served with a Minuet Sauce which includes champagne, white wine, diced scallops and ground pepper. When beef is on the menu it comes from the Niman Ranch, chosen because of the superior flavor of the meat. A beef sirloin sandwich, as noted in her cookbook, obviously sounds "good enough to eat". The pork used in her restaurant comes from the "Laughing Stock Farm" where here again the flavor of the meat is exceptional. Spring lambs come from the Dalporto Ranch located at the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Sweets of a variety of sorts are all made in the kitchen of the Chez Panisse. Some of Ms. Waters' "old fashioned" cooking reminds me of some of my parents' dishes prepared in the 30s and 40s.

Dining at the Chez Panisse was for us an experience in simple elegance. This, I believe, is doable - but too much for someone nearing 80.

As I close, permit me to present a wonderful family scenario. Historic tradition of our family demanded that the senior member host the Thanksgiving and Christmas family parties in rotation, of course: Thanksgiving one year, Christmas party the next year and so forth. As the parents got older and the gatherings got larger because of children accruing to the married couples, the responsibilities for these parties were transferred to children. We held our first Thanksgiving party 50 years ago in the small apartment where we lived on Senator Place. There were six of us present, Jeannine and me, my parents and my father's two maiden sisters. The dinner itself was quite good and certainly typical of the day: turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, and probably peas. The mess I made in the kitchen preparing the turkey and especially the dressing was heroic. Despite a hard working cleanup crew which included my maiden aunts, it seemed to me we tracked crumbs and dressing pieces for weeks afterwards. Later when more children arrived the party hosting was split between Jeannine and me and my sister and her husband. During this past decade, however, there has been an interesting and exciting change of venue. One of my sisters sons, Michael, an internist, and his wife, Laurel, an Ob-Gyn doctor, began practice at the Holzer Clinic in Gallipolis, OH. They found a small farm nearby in Gallia County. The practices themselves became quite busy in a short period of time and with the arrival of their two children Michael and Laurel had the additional responsibilities of child rearing as well as care taking the farm and practicing medicine. They now have Laurel's brother managing the farm. The layout of the farm itself consisted of rolling hills with fields as well as modest sized stands of old growth timber. The grassy fields cried for fertilizer and were filled with what Laurel has called "yellow-topped poverty grass" indicating the lack of nitrogen in the soil. On arrival at their farm they gave up the tobacco base, tore down many deer hunting blinds and fertilized the fields. Within a year the grass in the fields was thick enough that it was

difficult to walk through. They purchased cattle, goats and chickens. Pheasants were kept in an old corn bin. The farmhouse was renovated. Additional buildings were put up to give them additional moving space as well as a huge barn to house the growing numbers of farming equipment. One year about a decade ago, Michael called one day inviting the whole family up for the Thanksgiving weekend. My whole family, by this time, was not only Jeannine and me, and Joe who was still in college, but the married sons, so there were 14 in our group represented. Others in Mike's family were invited. His brother Dan and his wife with two children came. His brother Dave with his wife and two children came, Laurel's mother and her brother and brother's wife came. Friends from around the Gallipolis area and colleagues from the clinic were invited and came to dinner on Thanksgiving Day. I have never had the numbers exactly, but I believe there were at least 50 people there for dinner the night of the first family meeting at "the farm". The dinner table would have been a perfect scene for a Normal Rockwell painting with tables loaded down with a variety of food. There were two turkeys (one wild turkey, one domesticated turkey), two huge bowls of dressing, one prepared by me with chestnuts and one by my sister that she called regular dressing, a huge bowl of cranberry sauce, a huge pot of sweet potatoes as well as white mashed potatoes, ample gravy to cover most of the county, homemade bread and dinner rolls made by my sister and by Laurel, apple cider and milk served as the drink in addition to water. One of my favorite dishes was Kushaw pudding. I am sure I have missed something. We all filled our plates by ourselves but before diving into the food we waited until everyone was served. Then we reached out and held hands in this large group and for a brief moment bowed our heads and expressed thanks for health, food and family. When the hot food was gone then came the cold food. There were at least 10 different kinds of pies, cakes and cookies which were used to fill the unfilled spaces in the stomach which by this time were very small. The cleanup after this dinner was not too difficult since most of us lent a hand: scraps from the plates fed the animals. The dishes were washed. The leftovers were saved in the refrigerator. Following the cleanup most of us found our way to the outside in the farmyard where there was always a brief basketball game. With the help of Mike and Laurel the cows and steers were visited in the fields and treated with ears of corn. In years past several of us took long walks through the farm and through the woods adjacent to the farm fields. While on the walk Laurel and her daughters were able to point out to us edible herbs, mushrooms and so forth. Returning from the enjoyable walk most of the adults took refuge on one of the many couches in the main room and/or even on the floor and using the professional football game shown on the TV as a soporific dozed off for a while to regain our strength. Laurel's mother, a Ph.D. psychologist, lived a block or two away and in her house was an indoor lap pool. All of the children and a couple of the old geezers (including me) spent some time in the pool. Bedtime came early. The following morning Laurel was already up and was baking some yeast rolls for breakfast. Breakfast, as you might guess, was quite hearty with home fresh gathered eggs, bacon from the farm and ham. Another cleanup. Another walk. And now near noon it is time to go back to the big city. Each visiting member of the family thanked Laurel, Michael and Laurel's mother for the extraordinary hospitality and the pleasure that we all have at these country escapades. Their answer routinely has been "We enjoy it more than you do". I think not!

What about another career? I am quite satisfied with the current shape of my career and life. Maybe something else will turn up in the future - but it will have to hurry!

