

IT'S THE AGE OF CONFUSION OR THE CONFUSION OF AGE

03/27/01

If I had to choose one word to best describe my state of mind it would be confused. Confused you say: about what? You name it and I am confused about it, befuddled, bewildered, or dazed. I do not know what to think or believe about what is fact, fancy or untruth about several of our every day subjects or concerns.

This was not always the case or at least I was not as aware or sure of it as I am today. I credit today's news media for both creating and making me aware of the condition. On a daily basis they present conflicting evidence on every conceivable subject, past and present.

Food is the only truth indispensable component of the vast array of things I am confused about. I submit as evidence some observations tendered in one of an endless stream of health periodicals arriving at our household daily addressed to the "Kitchen Physician". I quote from the Wellness Letter dispensed by the University of California, Berkeley.

Nuts were thought to be too fatty, caloric and salty until the most recent studies showed they can help prevent heart disease. They are rich in unsaturated fats, monounsaturated fats, vitamin E, fiber, folic acid and other B vitamins.

Margarine until recently was touted to be better for you than butter. We now learn margarine, because the oil is hydrogenated, contains trans fats (whatever they are) which are as bad for your heart as the saturated fat in butter.

Salt was presumed to be bad for increasing your chances of getting high blood pressure. We now learn it may not lead to high blood pressure unless you are sodium-sensitive. Since its impossible to know whose sodium sensitive, you still should limit your salt intake.

Corn, once not considered as nutritious as whole wheat is also a whole grain. Yellow corn is rich in carotenoids such as lutein and zeaxanthin, which may help keep your eyes healthy.

Coffee and caffeine were once considered bad for our health but is now considered not to be harmful for healthy people. A more recent bulletin than the above warns one to only drink coffee brewed through paper filters. They not only filter out the grounds but cholesterol causing agents as well. Avoid percolator or french press coffee, as they do not.

The list is endless and the results of studies are endlessly contradictory and hard to fathom or understand.

Politics if anything is harder to explain. Who truly knows whether a tax cut is needed or wanted by the American taxpayers. Who knows how much it should be? I surely do not know but one things is for

certain and that is it will be put to much better use and spent more wisely by the taxpayers than the politicians.

My confusion runs rampant when I even try to make sense out of the complexities of the financial situation. Investors appear to have lost billions over the past year. Where did it go? Who has it? Did they get it honestly or legally? If you consider the proliferation of ads touting the efficiency of all the various brokerage houses you would have to be an idiot not to realize there is a lot of money to be made quickly and easily out there. Who ultimately makes the greater portion of it? Even after listening to the many pundits explain its complexities it still comes through as clear as mud to me. I am further confused by how seemingly absorbed many people are with untalented and aberrant individuals that dominate the entertainment field. What is the fascination? Why do people bless them with their money and adoration? Ditto for many politicians as well.

Perhaps its easier for me to understand when I have to admit to myself that I am perplexed as well by things I once considered my domain. Fishing is the best example that comes to my mind. It's a field that still holds great interest for me but one I can no longer hope to master. I simply do not have the time, energy or money to do so.

The older I get the more confused I become.