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The anti-popcorn agenda

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NCR Today

On Nov. 19, between NBC's "Today Show" and the *Los Angeles Times*, it seemed like a concerted effort to scare us away from concessional popcorn.

Here's the video link to the segment from "The Today Show": Study: Movie popcorn means major calories and the *LA Times* article by Mary MacVean: Movie popcorn still a nutritional horror, study finds.

I love popcorn! But I do not eat it at theaters anymore. It is too expensive and if you are on a diet, like I am, counter-productive (understatement!). I bring diet food with me to the movies, usually a pre-prepared lunch or a salad. I bring it in a bag and don't make a lot of fuss, but I don't hide it either. There are "no outside food" signs, and once when I was told I couldn't bring in food I asked if they sold Jenny Craig or any diet food. The guy looked at me with "that" look and let me though. I also bring sugar free gum. But even that is expensive!

When my sister and brother-in-law take my nephews to the movies, it costs about \$100.00 for the four of them (now that the boys are older they want their own stuff; they won't eat from mom and dad's very much anymore.) It's something they love to do together. My sister watches what they eat -- but it is a losing battle. Last summer I took the kids to a movie and she gave me money for "snacks". "But no soda!" So what did they get? The frozen ice drinks. When I told my sister afterward, she said, "Those are sugar drinks!" "Hey, you said 'no soda' -- did you think they would drink water?"

Yes, they are into "stay-cations" but still. Like so many, we are socialized into an integrated movie-going experience that costs money and is unhealthy. We expect to be eating while watching. The same for television. Do you ever count the food ads in a one-hour of prime time television? It's been three hours since supper and here comes the pizza commercial.

It's one thing if going to the movies is an infrequent treat; but for those regular movie-goers: beware.

We have some real popcorn connoisseurs in the convent; they make popcorn to die for. But the sisters have learned to make it tasty but much leaner.

Now, the government's health care plan. How can you have a real health plan in our consumer society? Literally, a society that eats and eats and eats junk food from major corporations that only have profit in mind? Will the consumer be penalized for overeating? It seems the trend is going this way. Personal responsibility is the only thing that is going to thwart the profit-mongers. But then, what about those who live in an urban setting without access or education to fresh or healthy food or adequate health care for that matter? School lunch programs seem to be serving the same things as fast food places. What is wrong with this picture?

We cannot have it both ways: health and profit. Well, we could, but imagine the talent, education, investment and political/commercial/personal will it would take to slowly change our national tastes. As a recent episode of "CSI: Miami" (see my blog entry) depicted, we want our food, we want it now, and no one asks any questions. Ah!

Back to the theater: I am not a dietary saint. But even if I were not on a diet, I still wouldn't buy popcorn. I'd rather get a great cup of coffee to savor. If the movie is a good one, the story will be enough (even though the smell of popcorn is slowly driving me crazy.)

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