

# Professor Barnhardt's Journal

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## GUILTY PLEASURES

by Adam Finley, Claire Zulkey, Joe Lavin, A.J. Daulerio, Bob Sassone, and Will Leitch.

### Joe Lavin

Sleep. That's my guilty pleasure. Oh, to have something exciting like, say, rampant partying or sex addiction or rampant sex addiction at parties. But, no, I have the most boring guilty pleasure imaginable. I sleep too much.

Of course, I'm not talking about your normal variety of sleep. I'm talking about the 12-hour dead-to-the-world power-doze. I can sleep until two or three in the afternoon, and if you tell me you can do that too, I'll sleep until five just to piss you off. If not for the rest of the world's terrible insistence on noise in the afternoon, I don't know if I'd ever get up on the weekends.

Put it this way: I work a four-day week, primarily so that I can sleep in one extra day. Oh, sure, I claim that Wednesday is my "writing day." But it's also the day I sleep until noon. It's the day I specifically turn the ringer off on my phone so that no telemarketers can possibly wake me. I like to rationalize all this by pointing out that I regularly stay up until two or three in the morning. I'm a night person. That's why I sleep late, I tell people, although we both know the truth. I'm just a lazy sleeper.

But am I really lazy? Why is sleep instantly equated with laziness? I prefer to think of my sleeping habit as the dogged pursuit of a skilled hobby. There are so many who have trouble sleeping. Why mock me just because I happen to do it well? Besides, there's nothing like waking up when you want to and not a moment earlier. Try it sometime. For your next vacation day, make no plans at all. Disconnect the phone. Don't set your alarm clock. Even tip the clock to the side so that you won't see the time and feel compelled to rise early out of guilt. And once you do wake up and are ready to attack the day, just stay there for another half-hour. Go ahead and do it. I think you'll thank me. If you don't mind me saying so, you've been awfully cranky lately. You could use some extra sleep.

*Joe Lavin writes a weekly humor column at [joelavin.com](http://joelavin.com). He is also the author of *But I Digress*, a collection of humor columns*

*available from his web site and from the top shelf of his closet behind some old sweaters that ought to be discarded. While awake, he has written for many publications including The Boston Globe, The Boston Phoenix, Salon, and McSweeney's Internet Tendency.*

### **Claire Zulkey**

Kraft macaroni and cheese. Ramen noodles. Anything by Hostess. Gas station flavored coffee. Kraft macaroni and cheese.

Among my many guilty pleasures, any type of processed, cheap or otherwise crappy food item is one of the most persistent.

It's Prince and the Pauper syndrome, only with food. My mother is a gourmet cook who has fed me my entire life, and I've taken it completely for granted. Some moms make canned beans; mine sautes thin green beans in browned butter. Some children eat mashed potatoes out of a box; mine mashes them herself, adds buttermilk and tosses in a bit of parmesan cheese. Some fruit salads consist of cling peaches sitting in their own aluminum-tasting syrup; mine comes with shredded fresh mint leaves.

If you want a meal, you come to the Zulkey house. However, if you want a snack, you go someplace else. Unless your idea of satiating the munchies consists of oranges, rice cakes or perhaps frozen chicken breasts, my house is a black hole of snacks. Sometimes they come in, but they mysteriously disappear. Anything that resembles a snack is immediately devoured or thrown away to avoid temptation.

Once, my boyfriend, staying on a visit, declared that he would go downstairs to the kitchen in search of a cookie. I laughed. "If you find any, please be sure to let me know."

My parents tried to steer me clear of bad food from an early start; they had anticipated a utopian life free of refined sugar and fat until my aunt and uncle snuck me chocolate while Mom and Dad were away on vacation. This odd balance of food, of constant well-balanced meals but nonexistent mindless snacks can send any body (well, specifically, any girl) into a downward spiral of food hell. When I was younger, I'd beg to stay at friends' houses known for their Lucky Charms, Ho Hos and drippy quesadillas.

I'd get creative at home, sticking glasses of orange juice in the freezer to simulate popsicles, even going so far as to taste baking chocolate (note: it does not taste like regular chocolate.) We used to get Quaker Chewy granola bars in bulk; my mom stopped after my brother and I shoveled them in, craving their precious chocolate chips.

I just wanted a little bad food; was that so bad?

College was practically sensory overload. Where else are you allowed, practically encouraged to eat pizza at 3 a.m., to eat Nutella with a spoon, to consume portions of toppings-heavy frozen yogurt the size of your head?

I'm a bit older, now, and more appreciative of the finer foods in life. Sometimes I even cook healthy, well-balanced, even complicated meals for myself.

But if no one is looking, I still succumb to the junk food. As a treat. As culinary slumming A Chee-to here. An Oreo there. Hot dogs at baseball games. And there's always that blue box, ready for me to transform it into a steaming bowl of rubbery orange delight. As long as I can explain it as junk food deprivation as a child, then it's all right.

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### **A.J. Daulerio**

When I was 15, I ate so much liverwurst one summer that I ended up with gout. My doctor was stunned. He told me it was very rare for a person my age to get gout. He asked me about my diet, if I'd been eating a lot of shellfish or salty meats. My mother told him how much liverwurst I was eating --which was up to a pound per day--and he made a face like he'd just drank a bowl of snot. I had to cut down on my liverwurst intake or I'd have a tough time walking, much less play football which is where I'd suspected my sore toe joints had come from.

This was not an easy task. I think I was addicted to the stuff. The second night I caved and ate the rest of the roll that was in the kitchen. As Dr. Gold had predicted, the next day my big toes swelled the size of plums and I had to go into see him again to get a Cortisone shot. I was so embarrassed I told him I had dropped a large dictionary on my toe. He told me that he'd heard the dictionary-dropped-on-the-toe excuse enough times in his career, which I found odd. So, I didn't eat liverwurst again for a year, fearing I'd end up with a walker before passing my driver's exam.

The next summer I worked at my brother-in-law's deli in South Philadelphia. Every week he was throwing away large amounts of liverwurst because it wasn't selling. I couldn't let that happen. Eventually, I was eating four liverwurst sandwiches almost everyday. My joints swelled up again and I had to miss some time at work. So (again) I stopped eating liverwurst. I had to for other reasons as well. My brother-in-law was going to start docking my