



by Ned Hickson

It's that time again when I am faced with the difficult task of sorting through news tips sent in by readers and, after careful consideration, deciding whether to change my mailing address.

Based on what I've received over the last several weeks, it's clear that in the wake of events like the rollercoaster economy and North Korea's increasing threat to become a nuclear power "Capable of rivaling the U.S., or at least parts of New Jersey," there has been one subject on the minds of readers from California to Al-

berta, Canada.

And that subject, as you've probably guessed, is "irregularity."

I have received multiple tips about an important nationwide study sponsored by the Dannon Company, which concluded residents of Orlando, Fla., are — and we're not pointing fingers here — the most constipated Americans in the country. In fairness, some say the study is inconclusive since, in many cases, researchers were chased out of Disney World restrooms by security before the surveys could be completed.

The only thing both sides seem to agree on is that Ex-Lax is kicking itself for not conducting the study first.

According to Dannon, the 50-city survey was

conducted in honor of its new Activia yogurt, which is designed to help with irregularity. I'm no scientist, but I think I can explain how this works. Let's say I'm visiting Orlando. Naturally, I become constipated almost immediately. Following the advice of my hotel maid, an observant woman who has noticed my toilet paper has remained sealed for the last three days, I purchase a tub of Activia yogurt and begin shoveling spoonfuls into my mouth at a rate generally reserved for super-sized meals.

Nearing the completion of my yogurt, I read the side panel on my container and discover I have just consumed a product "specially designed to survive passage through the digestive system, arriving into the large intestine as

a live bacteria culture."

It is in this moment — while poised with a mouthful of fruit flavored, bio-engineered bacterium — I can feel Activia working to eliminate my constipation by effectively scaring the — [fecal matter] — out of me.

Don't get me wrong. I'm no organic health food crusader. Truth be told, I have nightmares about the world's tofu supply becoming self aware. The difference is that tofu's rise to power will come naturally, based on its own merits, and the development of what I suspect will be a large curd army. Should this happen, it will be through the process of "natural selection," and not the result of bio-engineering gone wrong within — and I'm speaking purely in metaphoric

terms — mankind's collective large intestine.

Unlike tofu proliferation, we have a choice when it comes to ingesting stool softening bacteria. One solution:

Climb a glacier.

According to a study conducted by Alaska epidemiologist Joe McLaughlin, one in three climbers who ascend the Kahiltna Glacier are stricken with diarrhea.

Again, like the makers of Ex-Lax, executives at Charmin are kicking themselves.

My point is this: Solving

Orlando's constipation crisis by introducing bio-engineered yogurt, in my opinion, seems a little drastic. Especially when we could take a more "natural" approach by introducing Orlandons to an ice pick and sending them up a glacier. I tried contacting Orlando mayor Buddy Dyer about this.

Unfortunately, all the lines were backed up.

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