

Eat your heart out, Christopher Katt.

Does the title of this talk mean I will discuss the Aztecs who apparently used human hearts and bodies as a source of protein? Surely the lecture topic does not mean that Christopher Katt, our own marvelous Christopher Katt, has failed and that this meal is perceived as less than a divine banquet. In fact could anything be superior to this meal, to this company, to being alive here this particular night? Of course there could be, and that's what I want you to think about. Where would you like to eat, who would you want to join?

Imagine for yourself the meal you yourself would most like to have participated in and with whom you would want to share it. I ask you to eliminate the obvious personal choices in memories, for myself I'll not include as a meal to revisit the Thanksgiving my mother, a marvelous cook, served hot dogs. For you, don't pick the meal on the night that you proposed, or a family reunion of yesterday that you'd like to revisit. Let's pick historical or literary meals, and assume for just tonight that we can understand whatever language was spoken, and that we are true participant-observers at the event. Almost anything we read offers possibilities. I read a book on Churchill last week, a prodigious eater and how would you like being a witness at Yalta with a cunning Stalin, an ill Roosevelt, and with Churchill the gourmand?

As another example, for a religious person, the Last Supper is an obvious choice for a meal, but many of us prefer more than just bread and wine. If I was a guest at the wedding at Canaan, I assume I would be served the first and less desirable wine. If we ate in the days of the Old Testament, I doubt that manna would satisfy our appetites even if the miraculous sap filled our bellies. Also from the Old Testament it would be fun to see Sarai, not yet named Sarah, eavesdropping at the door of the tent. (SLIDE 1) The angels who had been served her cakes and meat, state that she is not barren, and will conceive, although she is 90 and her husband is 100. If not the food, certainly her expression would have been remarkable to see. If we think of the calendar and our recent Thanksgiving, we might choose to join the pilgrims as the transiently friendly Indians bring deer and wild turkeys. For the upcoming Christmas season we could hardly do

better than a Dickens meal. Indeed there are dozens of meals in Dickens and a few in Shakespeare that would be great fun to attend.

What, on the other hand, if we chose historical meals in Ohio? Harman Blennerhassett (SLIDE 2) was proprietor of the Enchanted Isle in the Ohio River, (SLIDE 3) and on one balmy May evening in 1805 he entertained the at-times so charming Aaron Burr (SLIDE 4) who was smitten by the youthful wife, a woman who was both wife and cousin, of Harman. This meal could have been fun to join, as Burr angled for a magnificent conspiracy to split the United States. Washington Irving was a reporter at the later trial of Burr in Virginia, a trial held in what Irving called "the land of hoe cake and bacon, mint juleps and apple toddy" and Irving stated that all the ladies in Richmond (but not their husbands) would rejoice to see Colonel Burr at liberty. Here he is later near 80, a rascal for sure. (SLIDE 5) The lawyers in our midst would enjoy watching Justice John Marshall and Burr drink and play at cards the night before Marshall was to be the judge of Burr's treason. If we wanted something in Ohio, something even closer to hand, we could watch the colleagues of Lucas Sullivant and Lyne Starling, the founders of Franklinton, offer food and repeated drinks to the unwitting legislators who were supposed to vote with Colonel Kilbourne to put the Ohio capital in Worthington, Ohio. The still loyal, but stone drunk, Kilbourne legislators never got out of the tavern to make the vote, and the capital ended up on the hilltop across the river from Franklinton.

There are three or four historical events that I would choose to join, the first was in 325 B.C. in Susa in the Middle East as Alexander took steps toward an integration of Persians and Macedonians. (SLIDES OF ALEXANDER) By this time Alexander had lost many of his Macedonian "companions," and was beginning to rely on Persian warriors including 30,000 Iranian youths he had sent to Macedonia for military training. About the same time Alexander began to wear Persian dress and adopted some of the protocols of Persian court life. One climax of the effort to link Persia and Macedonia was the marriages at Susa. Already married to the beautiful Roxanne, here is her bridal bed per the painter LeBrun. (SLIDE) After Alexander's death Roxanne proved her displeasure with the blood of some of the participants. Alexander, in Susa, married two daughters of his previous antagonists. Almost 100 high Macedonian officers were to take

Persian or Median brides from the noblest families in Iran, and there are a few surviving fragments that describe the wedding feast. A palace was erected with a pavilion 800 yards in circumference, columns that were 30 feet high, and gilded and silvered and spangled with precious stones. The columns held up sumptuous drapes and linen sheets of purple and scarlet embroidered with gold. One hundred bedrooms were supplied nearby and in each of them the bed was decorated with wedding finery and rested on silver legs, although Alexander's had legs of gold. The wedding celebration continued for five successive days with entertainers that were both foreign and Greek, conjurers from India, musicians who sounded flute, lute, and lyre as well as several days of recitations, plays, and dances. The military trumpets sounded to announce the opening of the ceremony and the reported 9,000 guests sat at various banquet tables. A second trumpet informed the assembled throng that the king was offering libation to the gods and then all drank to Alexander's health, each using gold cups which he presented to them as mementos of the occasion. A third blast of the trumpets announced the entrance of the brides, entering with their faces partially veiled. As the king gave one of his brides a kiss, each of the bridegrooms followed suit and the music and diplomatic presentations continued throughout the five days. The subject allies had sent gold crowns with a value of over 15,000 talents, a talent being worth more than \$40,000, and perhaps as much gold as had ever been assembled at any one place was present on that occasion. In an effort to pacify his troops, although it's obvious that Hellenic culture was predominant and no Macedonian women were married to Persian men, Alexander compiled a list of all the troops who were married to Asiatic wives or concubines, gave all of them wedding presents, and announced that he had erased all the debts of the soldiers. The music, dance, food and wine seemed unlimited to all who described it later. I'm not sure about the food, baklava perhaps, but a Greek proverb that was quoted at the time says, "What Zeus created, Bacchus completes."

For big-time party #2, let's leave Alexander and go way ahead, to the 17th of August 1661, when the French Finance Minister and Attorney General Fouquet invited 6,000 to meet young Louis XIV. (SLIDE) At that time the young Louis XIV was in his early 20's, surrounded by 19 year old friends, and had fallen in love with the hunting

lodge at Versailles and also with Louise de la Valliere. (SLIDE) The little hunting lodge was eventually to become the hub of the universe at Versailles. Fouquet had at times propped up the finances of France, had sought to placate Queen Anne who had been brusquely turned aside for Louis XIV, but had made the mistake of attempting to seduce Louise who was quick to inform the young king. Undoubtedly Fouquet had also shifted funds into his own account, and his enemies were whispering in the King's ears as Queen Anne stated, "the king likes to be rich and does not care for those who are richer than he." The apparently intelligent Fouquet had humiliated the king, had underestimated his cunning, and had treated him as if he were a fool. However, Fouquet was still the Procurator General of the Parlement and to arrest Fouquet in Paris would be risky. The king felt it would be pleasing to arrest Fouquet in the country in the midst of his ill-gotten wealth, and so Louis XIV hinted that he would like to see Fouquet's new Chateau de Vaux. As the court left Fontainebleau, Queen Anne is quoted as saying: "Ah, my son, this action will hardly do you honor, that poor man has ruined himself to entertain you and you intend to have him arrested and made prisoner in his own house." The king smiled graciously at Fouquet as he entered into the castle gates of Van-de-Vi^uconte. Suddenly on all sides a thousand fountains began to play and tall stems of water rose up into the golden evening sky. Cascades rippled and marine monsters spat. The dazzled courtiers within the castle saw pictures by Charles Le Brun, rare marbles, gilded paneling, inlaid parquet floors, and refined taste in a sumptuous setting. The elaborate supper had been prepared by Vatel, the century's most famous chef, and was served on 36 dozen gold plates and 500 dozen silver plates. Moliere had been commissioned to write a new play for the party and in the gardens Moliere's charming mistress offered a prologue, then Moliere himself appeared in town clothes and apologized that he was all alone. Suddenly a sea nymph appeared to order the statues to walk, and the trees to speak, and the outdoor stage became filled with dance and a pastorale. After the performance of the play, the Chateaux was lit by lanterns placed along the cornices, and fireworks were let off from the amphitheater in the form of names and the fleur-de-lis. A boat shaped like a whale glided up the canal releasing even more fireworks and as a final extravaganza when Louis XIV made his way back to the house, thousands of rockets went off so that he walked

under a vault of fire. The music of 24 violins continued and finally Louis and his court thanked their host and hostess and said goodbye. Within 3 weeks Fouquet had been arrested by D'Artagnan, the young and trusted Musketeer, and Louis proceeded to move the craftsmen including Notre (SLIDE) for the gardens, Vautour who designed the castle mansard of roof design, LeBrun for the painting, all for employment to build Versailles. (SLIDE) Even the sun symbol was captured and Fouquet spent the rest of his life in jail.

Now leave the elegance of France, join the new world. You might visit with the Mountain Men, the best of whom probably was Joseph Walker who discovered Yosemite for the whites. (SLIDE) On the night of November 12th and 13th of 1833, the Lenoid meteor shower produced 200,000 shooting stars. (SLIDE) November 17th of this year it visited us again for the last time in any of our lifetimes and none of us will see it. The night that Walker and his men saw the meteors, terror assailed the camp until Walker explained what the spectacle meant. The men were camping that night for the first time in the Great Sequoias and they could hear the roaring sound of the falls at Yosemite, which they were soon to discover. The hunters had just killed two large deer and a black bear and sat around the fire with full bellies and the sound of distant thunder which they hoped was the surf of the Pacific. It was memorable, and Walker chose for his tombstone, "Born in Tennessee, camped at Yosemite November 13, 1833."

We are still on the frontier as we eat with earlier pioneers in 1804, this time with Lewis and Clark. (SLIDE) We join them the day they discovered the "petite chin" or little prairie dogs which they called barking squirrels. On September 17th Lewis had also found thick plum trees, and noted as many as 3,000 buffalo nearby, and recorded the remarkable antelope which they could not catch. About that day they met with the Sioux at what is now Pierre, South Dakota. (SLIDE) As they shared food, Lewis and Clark displayed their air-gun, magnifying glass, and other paraphernalia and then gave a medal to Black Buffalo, but unfortunately also offered him whiskey. The food was apparently superb, roots and meat, but it took seven men to get the chief off the little boat. The meal and excitement would have been intense, but sleep was also disturbed by a continuous roar that evening since it was the mating season of the buffalo. However, if I was going to pick Lewis and Clark then indeed I would choose a different time. Let's select the

evening when Lewis, who was treated by Jefferson (SLIDE) almost as if he was a nephew, came back to Monticello and the two of them ate together alone. According to Jefferson's own notes, Jefferson and Lewis spread out maps on the floor in the great room that many of you have seen as you walk into Monticello. Jefferson, on his knees, also inspected the skins (SLIDE) and other objects that had already been sent and for just the two of them they were served by a few of the special house slaves. We don't know exactly what they ate, here is a typical meal (SLIDE). We know that he was fastidious about food and precise about the date of the arrival of various vegetables on his farm. Jefferson tried to grow grapevines and was a connoisseur of wine. He also regularly imported Parmesan cheese, pistachio nuts, and anchovies and he may have offered a meal somewhat similar to that reported later by Senator Cutler who said Jefferson served him, "rice soup, round of beef, turkey, mutton, ham, loin of veal, cutlets of mutton or veal, fried eggs, fried beef, a pot called macaroni which proved to be a rich crust filled with scallions of onions or shallots which tasted very strong and not very agreeable." The Senator also reported an ice cream crust and a flaky dish, a dish somewhat likened to a pudding, all with a great variety of wine. I would hope that Lewis, Jefferson and I that night would have been served by Sally Hemmings, the half-sister of Jefferson's deceased wife. Although it may be that President Kennedy was right when he said to an assemblage of Nobel Prize winners in the White House that more brain-power was in that room at that moment than at any time since Jefferson had dined alone, it is Lewis that I would have wanted to hear. Many of his journals are lost, and he was probably second to Darwin as a naturalist. He was described by Jefferson as melancholy and was either killed or committed suicide a short time later, but that's all in the future for him. That night it would have been thrilling to hear how he described what he had seen. New animals, new birds, new vistas of land and future. We do know that Jefferson served lots of Madeira wine, but for my after-dinner drink I'll take you to one last place, and that's Fraunce's Tavern on Pearl Street in New York. The date is December 4, 1783. Washington by that time had endured a succession of banquets, receptions and official ceremonies, and then he attended a farewell dinner with a few of his officers at the tavern. A barge waited at the waterfront which was only a few steps away and after this last

farewell Washington would resign his commission and return home. Many ranking officers were missing, but Steuben and Knox were there as was General Clinton, the governor of New York. Several participants said the commander entered in the grip of "emotion too strong to be concealed." The tension endured through the brief meal until Washington arose to propose his toast which was recorded as having been, "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." When the wine glasses had been emptied, Washington said, "I can't come to each of you but I would feel obliged if you come and take me by the hand."(SLIDE) General Knox turned to shake hands, Washington was obviously speechless and his eyes filled as he embraced his artillery man. The other officers moved up in turn to embrace the commander and one observer said he had never heard so much weeping, and that there was no other sound to break the solemn silence or to interrupt the tenderness. The general then walked through the group of tearful officers, waved his hand, and emerged into the street. He passed between files of infantry to the dock without speaking, clambered into a waiting barge along with Steuben and Billy Lee and moved off into the river. As the oarsmen pulled in towards the Jersey shore, they could hear the shrilling of the pipes from the British transports in the outer harbor as the last of them made sail following their evacuation of New York. The chance to see that one indispensable man, that future first President of ours, would offset the fact that the meal may have been somewhat limited that night in the tavern.

What I've done is mention several meals or social events that I might like to have witnessed, I suspect you have your own favorites. What does make a good occasion, how can a meal become essentially a divine banquet of the brain as well as for the body? Surely food, company, and setting all matter. I suspect that's why many of us come to Kit Kat, and you did well by us tonight, Christopher Katt. You need not eat your heart out this time; the meal was superb.