

# Next Time, Academics

*by Ann Bogle*

Culinary topics. My beautiful message got lost when the screen jumped. I'll retype it from memory, but it will be a rewrite. Food 48 hours in jail in 2003 (barbed-wire medium security in Plymouth, Minnesota) for one beer over the legal limit (high beam out one-quarter mile), one topic, women in jail, other topic, why women are in jail, other topic, food in Illinois, where I stopped overnight, on the way back from Savannah by car, another topic, and beer, last topic. Here was the gist: I should have ordered the chicken at the truck stop diner, since I already knew going by the soup that the food at the truck stop was as bad as the food in jail, the worst food I've ever tasted despite the chicken and biscuits on that M.L.K., Jr. holiday, my check-in day. The spareribs of what mammal, first human? that I ordered in Illinois after a fifteen-hour drive were boiled and looked hoary. The diner did not sell beer, but there was a flesh shack down the road and the advertised largest cross in the world; in fact, there are flesh shacks, adult superstores, ADULT on a road sign, throughout Illinois and even in Wisconsin, where at least the citizenry (employees at the food-and-gas store) are politically well-versed and did not see their taxes go to highway religion. I suggested after we passed the flesh shack that we turn around and that I go in and say to the sex workers that the Russians are fetching \$3.5 K per hour in Manhattan and it's private, unlike there at that road-side shack. Plus, the clients, if they are inclined, and they like a gal, whatever her age, may pick up the \$1.75 K-per-hour tax tab. How about that? I wouldn't know what a corn-fed might fetch without a European accent or mob ties, but maybe it would be better than pole dancing by the Illinois freeway. My travel companion, though he smiled wryly at my speech, did not wish to co-liberate sex workers that late at night. Who delivers Peroni in Minneapolis on Sunday? Imagine WOMAN on a road sign.

