

The Walt Kelly cartoon character Pogo once uttered the now-famous line. "We have met the enemy, and they is us!"

In the quickly heating debate over obesity in America, nowhere was the inescapable truth of Pogo's statement more evident for me than during my recent vacation in Pittsburgh.

The scene was on The Boardwalk, the collection of eateries found at a water park called Sandcastle. It was a great place for people-watching, especially if you wanted to view out-of-shape adults in ill-advised swimwear.

It was also the first place I actually had encountered the fried Twinkie. I had heard and read about the fat-laden, cream-filled sponge cake, but I never had seen one. There it was, on the menu at one of the snack stands, alongside the funnel cakes and—believe it or not—fried Oreos.

I just had to taste the fried Twinkie—for research only, of course—and so while my children took one more slide down the Tornado water ride, I got on line to place my order, two Twinkies for \$2.50.

For the uninitiated, making a fried Twinkie is simple. You take a chilled Twinkie—you have to chill it so the cream filling doesn't liquefy in the fryer—dip it in funnel cake batter and then quickly deep-fry it. The chilling-and-frying method gives you a hot-cold combination when you bite into it.

"Do you get many orders for these?" I asked the blonde teenager behind the counter while I waited for my made-to-order treat.

"Yeah, we get some," the girl answered. "But more people order the Oreos."

"Do you like them?" I asked.

"Nope," she said. "I think they're nasty. I just eat the funnel cakes."

As I waited, I noticed the heavy-set couple directly to my right, who were waiting for their order, the Funnel Cake Supreme. Sandcastle, which operates its own foodservice, makes that colossally caloric confection by taking its already artery-clogging fried dough and topping it with a thick ribbon of vanilla or chocolate soft-serve ice cream. Then, to gild the lily, your server pours a generous helping of syrupy strawberries on the ice cream.

For \$4 the dessert is a real bargain in that it easily could feed four people. But the couple had ordered one apiece. I stared, slack-jawed, as they walked away to the seating area. I was so mesmerized by the sight that I didn't immediately hear my order being called.

As my family gathered around the table to taste our dessert, I mentally recalled all the stories I'd been reading over the past few months about lawsuits being filed against fast-food chains and about activists railing against soda and chips being sold to our nation's school-children.

In all truthfulness I think that the "food police" have a very valid point: Most Americans, given several nutritional paths, will choose the