

Date and Time: 17 July 2007, 3:40 p.m.

Brandon is McKenna and Cara's swim coach, I interviewed him in the kitchen at the OSU Extension Office. He seemed eager to interview about food and arrived almost immediately after I talked to him on the phone. He struck me as the kind of person who would be concerned with health because he is so involved with swim team. Once we started talking, he had a lot to say about health food and the options available in Lakeview.

Allegra Gordon: So what's one of your favorite foods?

Brandon Utley: [laughs] Uh, I guess my favorite foods still macaroni and cheese.

AG: [laughs] The Kraft kind or homemade?

BU: The Kraft kind.

AG: How often do you get to eat it?

BU: Not very often.

AG: What about when you're at school?

BU: Not very often.

AG: Oh yeah?

BU: I'm more of a healthy eater.

AG: OK, so you think, so you obviously think about your health. Do you think that people here in Lakeview in general are concerned with their health? In thinking, in making food choices?

BU: I think some are, but a lot of it, I don't really think that they are cause just at college, you know, I had to change a lot of my eating habits from what they were to being a whole lot more healthy, um, mainly because it was just, there's so much more in Ashland than there was here. So I kind of went to more [pause] you know, vegetables, fruits, grains, and stuff that (I wouldn't normally [inaudible])

AG: (So you had more healthy options in Ashland?)

BU: Yes. There's more healthier options in Ashland than there are in Lakeview. I'm glad that, you know, I got to live there cause then I come back here and I can eat healthier type food.

AG: Right, OK. So what back here in Lakeview did you eat for your evening meal yesterday? Do you remember?

BU: Evening? Um we had spaghetti, and [pause] fruit. We had honeydew melon.

AG: That sounds good.

BU: Homemade of course.

AG: [laughs] Homemade honeydew? From the garden?

BU: Well we just, um, we always make, well I tend to like to make everything from scratch, so our meat sauce was from scratch.

AG: That's good. That's also a good way to be healthier; to make things yourself. Well you talked about how there's not much variety here a little bit, so what, is there anything that you appreciate about the food system here?

BU: [pause] No, not really. I find Lakeview as just to be, because it's so small there's not a lot of option. And, like, a lot of people are, I think more people are becoming more addicted in a way to fast foods because some people are starting to get lazy about cooking, so they feel, "I don't wanna cook, so we're just gonna go out to dinner."

And, I mean, some things are healthy, but most of it's just grease, and that's why most of the population of America is overweight.

AG: So, how does your household get their food when you're here at home?

BU: Um, we tend to be fairly healthy, um, we try not to have too much of one thing, there, like, there'll be times where, when my dad cooks, it's just mainly all carbs or something like that and not a variety. But when, when it's usually my mom or me cooking, we try to have at least a fruit and if not a fruit, a vegetable, But we're still trying to hit those basic food groups. Um [pause] it's hard cause sugar and sweets a little bit, and like, But not so much it's an excessive addiction.

AG: So you buy most of your food, But usually you prepare it yourself? Do you have like a garden or anything? You don't raise cattle or anything like that?

BU: Uh no, we don't raise cattle, But um [pause] we, not this year, But in previous years, we've always had a garden and we've always grown tomatoes and squash and celery and stuff like that. Which is, I appreciated it, But [pause] not this year. My dad's been kinda lazy.

AG: Well after going to Ashland, do you face any challenges, like trying to get the food you want here when you come back?

BU: Not necessarily, cause I can, I still know what to look for, uh, there are some things in Ashland, like there's an organic store that you can go to Ashland and get like organic apple juice and stuff like that, which is a little bit different, and while I was there we got into a big argument over animal cruelty, so I called my parents saying I wanted to be a vegetarian just because, cause, I was really upset about what kind of things had been happening, But...

AG: Are you still a vegetarian?

BU: I never... [laughs]

AG: So does everyone in your family cook? You and both your parents?

BU: Yeah. Um, my sister mainly cooks like, desserts, make mostly, um, But we all, my sister and I also did 4H here, so we've learned how to cook, and, um, um my mom and I have also taken our [pause] a class to get our cooker's license, or food handler's license, so we've got that, and [pause] it was just pretty easy to get.

AG: Where did you take, what kind of test was it?

BU: It was just an online class. A test we got to take as many times as we wanted, and it's fairly easy.

AG: Was it just about preparing foods and those regulations?

BU: Yeah, preparing foods, what you could have, like you had to sterilize it with bleach, and commercial stuff that you have to do in order to be a food handler.

AG: So has anyone in your family been involved in the food industry?

BU: Um, I worked for a, uh, over here at Honkers Espresso, and there you had to wash it and then sanitize it in bleach, everything we used, so I did have the chance to, uh, work there, it was making bagels and stuff, homemade. My mom has also done a few wedding cakes, and my, it's really amazing how much time and effort it takes to do something like that. Cause like, I'll, I can do it, but I don't, I guess I'm not as good. I don't have the steady hand like she does.

AG: So was that for around town?

BU: Yeah. Actually my mom just finished a wedding cake recently, just a couple of weeks ago.

AG: Are there, do you have any stories connected to food and your family? Um, like a favorite meal or something you didn't like, or somehow getting a meal, or...?

BU: Um, I don't know, I just find, I just think it's sad how many people are just [pause] not really focusing on what they should be eating, and just going for grease all the time. I see it in a lot of people.

AG: Do you think in Lakeview as a community or in the United States as a whole, or...?

BU: I see it a lot more here in Lakeview cause it's such a smaller town. And [pause] you know, I can't help But feel bad for 'em, cause I see so many people that are overweight, and they don't exercise, and just not taking care of their bodies, so, they're slowly dying a painful death.

AG: Are you planning on coming back here when you graduate?

BU: I don't think I'm, I've thought about it, But I don't think I really want to just because, there's just not much here? Um, I wouldn't mind living in Ashland, but that's more of a like expensive town. I'm not quite sure yet.

AG: You wouldn't completely say 'I'm not going back to Lakeview'?

BU: I wouldn't completely say I'm not going back to Lakeview, But I'm not going to say that I'm staying either.

AG: OK, fair enough. Well back to food, does your family have any special family recipes?

BU: Well we've had some recipes that have been handed down. We have a cookbook here from just Lake County area and I've had family members put their own recipes in it, and, um, there'd be some recipes that my mom used to fix, But now I fix, so... It kinda changes from person to person. Like she would use spaghetti noodles. I don't, I use, like, the rainbow noodles. So, I mean, it differs from person to person? But, I don't know. I like cooking, so, like last night when I was doing dinner, I really thought about my major and if that's really what I wanted to do because I had a lot of fun just cooking.

AG: Do they have anything like that at Southern Oregon?

BU: No. Unfortunately not. I'd have to transfer somewhere else and I have no idea. I think, doesn't Oregon? I think, Oregon State might have one, I'm not sure.

AG: We have Food Science, but I think that's the closest thing.

BU: Yeah, so, I don't know. I might have to travel.

AG: I have a friend in Utah who's doing culinary arts. I don't know if you want to go to Utah.

BU: I've heard it's a stinky town.

AG: Well anyway, um, do you eat with any groups that you belong to? Like swim team, or church, or any groups like that?

BU: Um, usually every year we have at least a couple potlucks with the swim team, and, like we would always do something from scratch, But it, like, I would also see like pizza, and [pause] like fried chicken and all those unhealthy things, But there're also a lot of salads too that you can find. Um, when I was younger we always did a spaghetti feed at our church, so that was always put on and we had everything, from carbs to salads... it was just a healthier meal, and also to raise money for that, to help our church. Um, we did a lot of community service things, just my family in general. Uh, we did things for St. Patrick's Day, and, um...

AG: Providing food?

BU: Yeah. Cooking, like, most the time it'd just be cookies or something like that, But, I don't know. Cooking's always been a hobby.

AG: Do you think your family contributes to that? Like, do they enjoy cooking, and are they healthy conscious?

BU: I don't know if my parents are as much as I am. Like, I think I've changed a lot just this year because [pause] I had some health issues, that's why it had to change, But I'm not much of an eater either, so it's not healthy to not eat anything all the time. Or if I do it's in small quantities. I'm just glad that I changed my eating habits so I feel better.

AG: How do you think that farmers and ranchers are fairing in the community?

BU: I think they're starting to get a little desperate, um, cause we did a research... project on... bovine growth hormone, which is a hormone they introduce to cows just for them to produce more milk, and that's just, it, I don't know. I don't really want to get into that cause it's so detailed, and this interview would probably go on for a **long** time. But I think that they are becoming a little more desperate because there's not as much land for them to, you know, roam their cattle, or stuff like that, or just work in general, so, I think it's becoming a lot harder for them. That's why prices might be going up.

AG: Do you think there's a lot of demand for their meat? Or do you think there's any kind of a health trend? Not that their meat goes against health...

BU: I think that [pause]

AG: You might not know; that's fine.

BU: Um [pause] I think more people are coming, like, I don't know if this is particularly answering your question, But I think more people are becoming dependant on meat, so, um, there's also been issues where they have thought about cloning just to have more meat to supply, But [pause] I don't know. I'm not sure if that answers your question.

AG: Do you know, here in the community do you know any low-income or elderly people? Do you know how they get their food? Or have you had any experience with that?

BU: Um... I still see, like my grandparents for instance, they would tend to go out once in a while, but [pause] like more than I do, But they still, they're still pretty healthy. I think the older that you get, um, the more they try to take care of themselves. Because as far as being old, you, they have to worry about health. And if you're not taking care of that, then you're probably not gonna live very long.

AG: Do you know, in general, the food that people eat here, do you know where it comes from?

BU [15:21]: I don't know where it comes from? I just see them going to fast food, eating stuff like that, and because Lakeview's a small town it's being introduced into our younger generations, so like my age or younger, they're seeing, they're getting this same food that like, overweight people are getting, which is kinda sad because they're following in their parents' or other people's footsteps to an unhealthy life.

AG: So do you think that there's anything, that people could change the food system here? Have you heard about anybody here or any other places changing that and going towards healthier options?

BU: I don't think it's going to change here just because Lakeview's such a small town it'd take a lot of effort and a lot of money which this town doesn't have, in order to,

like, change something to make it seem beneficial. I mean we've got a Subway, But that's only gonna be good for so long. I'm sick of Subway, But... um [pause] I don't see anything happening with this town unless we get, like, a major boost in population where we get more income, and, if that doesn't happen then, I don't see anything beneficial happening.

AG: What do you see here as far as the food system in 10 or 20 years?

BU: I think it'll probably get worse. Mainly because it's such a small town and, you know, 10 to 20 years isn't that long away, so, I guarantee that this pretty much will be all the same; people will still be eating the same way, and, it's just... it's just sad watching them degrade themselves to a lower standard.

AG: Is there anything else that you think is important for us to know?

BU: I just, I think it's important that, um, people are trying to at least get those main food groups; those nine essential nutrients, But, you know... so many people aren't aware of what they're eating; what could be in it, or, so... I don't know.

AG: When we come back to present to the community, do you think that seeing something like that will trigger any kind of a reaction?

BU: I think it might have some effects, but not enough to change anything. You know, people are, some people are worried about, like, their weight or what they're eating, but, it's not enough to make a big difference. Especially here, because we're such a small town, I don't think there's gonna be enough people to have really something change. And, what I've always been told is, if they don't want to change [pause] it has to be their choice to change. You can't do it for them. Which is sad because a lot of people aren't willing to change, once they've already started something; it becomes a habit.

AG: Do you think if you ended up living here, would you try to change anything?

BU [19:10]: I'd tried to find my own ways of doing things, you know. Um, just, you know, what my family eats, we're, we try to stay really healthy with the foods that we eat, But there are times where, you know, we just go out, or occasionally. I guess also moving from here to Ashland, it was different kind of food, so I was used to the stuff here, But I, when I got over there, any fast food I was sick, I'd get sick from. And then I'd come, I got used to healthy food up there; I'd come back here and I got sick again. So [laughs] I'm basically limited to what I can eat, but it's pretty much healthy stuff. I really read labels and stuff like that.