

Boil it, bake it or even barbecue it

Simple cooking rules outline the skills necessary for making great meals

I've been writing columns for The Battalion for over a year now, and have tried to comment on as many topics as I'm able. I've been preparing occasional meals for my fellow staffers for almost that long. However, no matter how much strain is put into my writing, how long it takes, or even how long I feel after giving birth to a column, they definitely appreciate my culinary efforts far more than my journalistic ones. Except for my roommates, most readers are stuck with having to read my stuff instead of getting to eat it.

FRANK STANFORD
Columnist



they tend to change the subject when I start babbling. The most common examples of such dialogues are:

"Haah yew doo-in' Fruh-ank, whut'cha wraahntin' own?" (he's from East Texas)

"Well Ed, I'm glad you asked. It's about the relationship between the concepts of ..."

"Hay, bah thuh way, wuhtzfer supper?"

Sometimes they even read my work and comment: "Oh, I read your column today, Frank."

"Really?! Did you like it?!"

"Um, it was OK. When are you makin' dinner?"

Or, even more often, words of encouragement from my illustrious editor:

"Are you done with your damn column yet? ... blah, blah, blah ... do you want your pay docked again? ... blah, blah ... are we gonna drink beer and eat at your house tonight?"

Since my parents are the only people who always like my writing, I'm not going to philosophize this time, but instead include a few simple cooking suggestions that even someone who burns toast could pull off.

Here is my easiest, simplest meal:

Chicken and Pasta Stuff

Buy boneless chicken breasts, cream of chicken soup and some pasta. I like fettuccini noodles, but any pasta will do.

Boil enough water for your pasta to swim freely when you stir. Add some oil or butter to make the water a little oily. Most pasta takes about 17 minutes, but scoop some out occasionally and test by eating a piece, not throwing it on the wall.

When the pasta is done, drain the starchy water, add cold water, stir the pasta and drain again. Add a little oil and stir it up. This insures your pasta won't stick together like a second grade art project.

Now chop up whatever vegetables you like into whatever sizes you like, put them on low in a skillet with butter or oil, salt and stir until vegetables are soft. I like onions, mushrooms, green, red, and yellow bell peppers for color.

When the vegetables are ready, add spoonfuls of cream of chicken soup (not the ready-to-serve kind) and dribbles of milk, water or white wine and stir until it looks like vegetables in a cream sauce. If your sauce is too thick add more liquid; if too runny, cook a little longer or add a flour-water paste and stir until thicker.

A few dollops of sour cream or heavy cream can be added to make it whiter. If you stir in grated parmesan cheese your goop will taste like Alfredo sauce. Cheese must be added right before you serve or it will clump.

Mix the pasta with the vegetable stuff, cover and set aside.

Start boiling or steaming some other fresh vegetable like broccoli or asparagus now. Throw in some carrot peelings if your vegetable is green.

In another container, melt some butter or margarine with lemon juice and some parsley flakes and set aside.

Put your chicken breasts on a cutting board, place plastic wrap over them and pound out the thick part of the meat. Use your fist or a thick mug if you don't have a hammer. Now your chicken will cook evenly.

Dip the meat in flour or bread crumbs and set in a hot, oiled skillet and torch it for about thirty seconds on each side. Turn the heat to low and flip again. Let it cook slowly until the chicken is FIRM to the touch. By searing the meat this way, the outside constricts and traps the juice. No more chewy chicken breasts. This method keeps pork chops from drying out also.

The pasta and sauce should still be hot, otherwise microwave it and put it on the plates. Put the chicken breast - whole or cut up - on top or next to the pasta. Add the fresh vegetables and spoon on the butter or lemon mixture. Melt enough of this stuff to spoon over the chicken as well.

With some salad on plates in the fridge and French bread in the oven, you've made a meal grandma would be proud of.

The best thing about this dish is it's versatility. Substitute rice for pasta or spaghetti sauce for cream sauce or shrimp or scallops for chicken, and it's a completely different dinner.

It's important to remember this is supposed to be fun, so have a friend or two over and drink cheap wine while you cook.

First, we must understand that strict, written recipes - for the most part - are only good for cookbook publishers and rigid accountant types (shudder). Not only are there too many directions and exact measurements to remember, but following recipes is just like painting by numbers. The creation is always the same and you never really learn to paint artistically.

Luckily, I have only a few simple RULES:

1. When making fancy desserts or baking anything, follow the recipe to a tee or disaster will ensue.

2. Chicken and seafood are universally interchangeable.

3. Everything that tastes good has onions or onion powder in it.

4. Spaghetti sauce - bought or homemade - goes with all meats.

5. All pastas are your friends - everyone can boil water.

6. Steal a long, wide-bladed knife from home and keep it sharp.

Obviously there's more to remember than onion powder and spaghetti sauce, but once you get started and gain some confidence in yourself every meal will be a learning experience that gets better each time.

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EDITORIAL

OUTLAW ASSAULT WEAPONS

Ban will increase effectiveness of Crime Bill

A House-Senate Subcommittee passed an amended Crime Bill Thursday in a move toward curbing the escalation of violent crime in America. The bill stipulates more federal funding for law enforcement and anti-crime education, but more importantly, bans the sale of semi-automatic assault weapons.

This provision, more than any of the others, is vital to preventing more loss of life to violent crime.

The bill calls for 19 specific types of semi-automatic weapons to be banned from sale to anyone. Semi-automatic weapons are "rapid-fire" guns which fire each

time the trigger is pulled because of an automatic reloading capability. Automatic

guns fire until the magazine is exhausted once the trigger is held down.

Many varieties of guns come in semi-automatic and automatic versions. These guns most often make the newspaper headlines because of their popularity in drive-by shootings and gang-related murders, not because they make hunting more entertaining or efficient.

The gun control section of the crime bill also limits the size of ammunition magazines used in a variety of guns. This stipulation is an attempt to limit

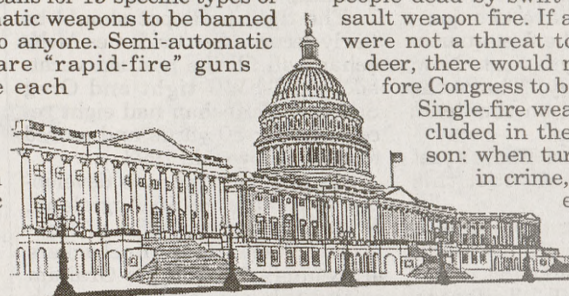
the number and size of bullets shot with any gun. Common news stories detailing bloody deaths from multiple gun-shot wounds demonstrate the logic behind this item.

Representative Jack Brooks, D-Beaumont, an opponent of the bill, voted against the ban on assault weapons stating that it was "an affront to hunters and other legitimate weapons owners." The vast gray area of "legitimate weapons owners" has left many people dead by swift and deadly assault weapon fire. If assault weapons were not a threat to anything but deer, there would not be a bill before Congress to ban them.

Single-fire weapons are not included in the ban for a reason: when turned on humans in crime, there is a higher rate of survival from a single gun-shot wound than from assault gun fire.

Assault weapons were developed to neutralize enemy troops during wartime only, not to kill children, bystanders personal enemies during peacetime.

The other provisions of the crime bill before Congress are designed to limit crime by providing more law enforcement and crime prevention, but until those aspects begin to work, there is no way to prevent the occasional crime of passion. The ban on assault weapons, if finally approved, will hopefully improve the odds against sudden, violent and bloody death.



MAIL CALL
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Baptist doctrine follows Bible, not interpretation

Unfortunately, the society we live in has decided that freedom of speech means freedom to misspeak (and be believed) as well. In her July 28 column on the feminist movement, Elizabeth Preston states that, "One of the reasons that this attitude [the idea that women are less deserving of respect than men] is so rampant is religion." She then mentions several doctrines and their positions on women's roles to support her position.

Preston's statement that the Baptist denomination teaches an interpretation of the Bible that men are the spiritual head of the household is simply wrong. This teaching is NOT an interpretation at all, it is literally what the Bible says. Ephesians 19:23 states, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior," (New International Version). The King James version says the same thing, and the original Greek also teaches the same principle. In no way is this teaching an "interpretation" of the Bible.

If this teaching makes Preston uncomfortable, perhaps she should read a bit further where in Ephesians 19:25 the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," (NIV). What greater love can a husband show for his wife?

I cannot speak for the other religious doctrines mentioned, but the Baptist doctrine, based on the Bible, speaks clearly of the equality and equal value of men and women. Husbands are told that their wives are "... heirs with you of the gracious gift of life ..." 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV). The Bible does not say heirs after you, or heirs before you, but heirs WITH you.

The Baptist denomination is not given to basing its doctrines upon interpretation. Doctrine is based solely upon the inspired word of God, the Bible.

Can the love the Bible teaches be such a bad standard to live by?

Robert L. Betts
Graduate Student

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.
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Original Aggie shared tradition of turmoil

From first to last, John C. Crisp fought for honor at different, but familiar, Texas A&M

WILLIAM HARRISON
Guest Columnist



"I am proud to suffer for the cause of right and truth for my young and gallant comrades and my beloved alma mater."

— John Clayborne Crisp, 1879

When cadet John Clayborne Crisp first walked on the Texas A&M campus, his feet did not touch anything concrete. On the "A. and M. College" - little more than a small plot of pasture in its inaugural year of 1876 - Crisp would spend three and a half years of his life trying to earn a degree, not of accomplishment, but of respect.

By his own account, he was the second student matriculated at A&M, making him one of the time-honored "Original Six" who showed up on the campus' doorstep to begin the first academic year.

And in three years, he would be the eye of a storm that threatened to shut the faltering school down.

In that time, Texas A&M's problems were 118 years different from those of our modern day University. The "College" barely held enough funds for anyone to even dream of misappropriating them; the few hundred students in A&M's all-male, all-white and all-cadet classes posed much more of a diversity problem; and instead of campus crime, the cadets had to contend with wolves and other wildlife that could approach in the night and skulk undiscovered in the high weeds surrounding the campus.

Discipline problems abounded in the cadet ranks. In those days, A&M's military emphasis attracted not only genuine students, but also unruly boys whose parents sent them to A&M to be "straightened out." The administration could not contain these problem children, and the cadet leaders were left to maintain a policy of rank discipline - enforced by fists. The cadets were in charge of their own in these matters.

From this atmosphere, Crisp rose through the ranks and earned respect from his classmates, who would compliment him in the student newspaper for his "good conduct, stability of character and free mode of thinking."

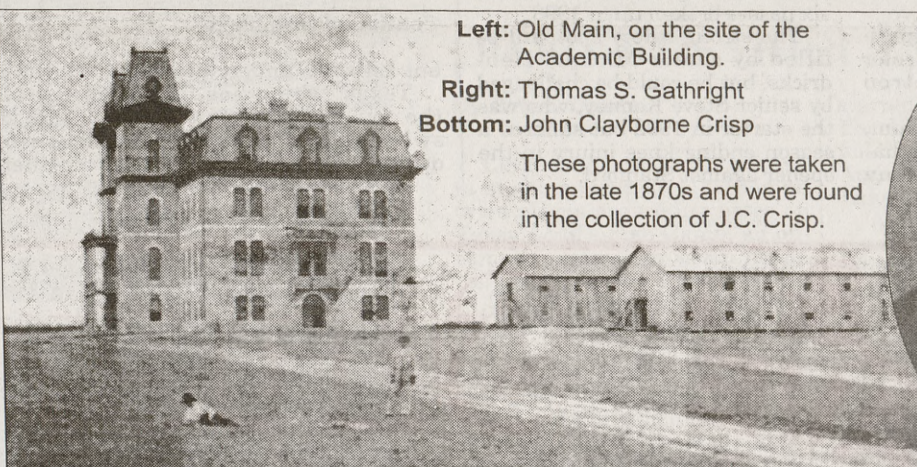
In his third year at A&M, Crisp commanded Company B. He compiled an excellent scholastic record with no demerits as the captain of this company, and as was the tradition, Crisp would be nominated to the captaincy of Company A for his fourth year, the highest position a cadet could attain. A faculty confirmation was only a formality.

But Thomas Hogg, an ambitious A&M professor of "pure mathematics," stood in his way.

A feud erupted between Hogg and A&M President Thomas S. Gathright after Hogg instrumentally negated Crisp's confirmation in a five-to-four vote of faculty members.

During the summer, Crisp remained on campus to study German, and also wrote postcards to friends, seeking testimonials and backing to bypass the faculty and lodge a formal complaint against Hogg at the next A&M Board of Directors meeting.

Crisp charged Hogg at the meeting of being a learned mathematician, but an incompetent teacher. He went

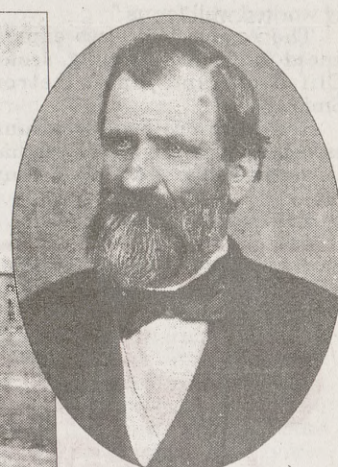


Left: Old Main, on the site of the Academic Building.

Right: Thomas S. Gathright

Bottom: John Clayborne Crisp

These photographs were taken in the late 1870s and were found in the collection of J.C. Crisp.



further to criticize Hogg's lack of discipline and character, saying Hogg told Crisp that he could mark his own grade if he would grade and keep the record for the rest of Hogg's class.

Hogg and his faction retaliated by leveling their own charges against Crisp, claiming he was a discipline problem and contributed to "regular annoyances." Hogg sent this letter to Gathright to sign and bring to the Board, recommending Crisp be sent away from the College.

Gathright sent it to the Board, but without his signature. Gathright's vote fell with the four faculty in favor of Crisp, and his support did not waver. Later, Gathright testified that Crisp "... is as good a boy as [Gathright] ever knew, and entitled to promotion in view of all the rules, methods and customs of governance."

Hogg confronted Crisp and asked him to quit his war of correspondence. Hogg denied that he was seeking to kick Crisp out of A&M, but would immediately request that Gathright remove him.

A headstrong and "imperious" educator, Gathright backed Crisp and pulled no punches as the affair divided the faculty and the city of Bryan. In personal accounts, Gathright lashed out at Hogg as "... unfitted, by reason of some fatal peculiarities, for instruction of youth," and criticized others with equally vivid descriptions. ("I would prefer a reeking corpse in the College to ..." and "... is a parody on men and professors.")

The president and all concerned made enough of a disruption for Texas Governor O. M. Roberts to call an emergency meeting of the Board to investigate the matter. The meeting made the front page of the Galveston Daily News.

All the participants, including Crisp, submitted testimony. With a petition of 97 out of 120 cadets advocating Crisp and Gathright's cause and divisive testimony from the Hogg faction, the only thing clear was that conditions couldn't remain as they were at Texas A&M.

On November 22, 1879, Roberts demanded the

resignation of the entire faculty of A&M, including Gathright. The faculty would retain their jobs until they trained a new group to step in. But Crisp would remain a student, his honor upheld by the Board's decision and the students' support.

Afterwards, Gathright moved to Henderson, enduring a hard and bitter life before dying from a liver ailment.

Crisp stayed one more term at the College before leaving without his degree to pursue a long and varied career as a teacher, journalist, lawyer and judge. He died in Beeville on February 27, 1920, at age 63.

John Clayborne Crisp is my great-grandfather. For me, he is only one of 14 immediate ancestors, but certain aspects of his life have proved to be similar to my own experience, as I and my family have found from piecing together his life from various accounts.

Crisp was a staffer of A&M's first newspaper, The Texas Collegian, and had a great knack for getting himself into trouble. One of the newspapers he founded after leaving Texas A&M was rumored to have been torched by landowners angered by one of his editorials.

I have had my own scrapes at Texas A&M, sat in a very grave president's office and seen my own scandal published and broadcast in the media. I have also been very critical of A&M, political organizations and leaders.

But in one way I find myself most similar to my great-grandfather. In trouble, I have stood on the edge of ruin and people have helped me overcome adversity, much like Gathright and the Corps helped pull Crisp through. I can equate our similarities with those cadets from another time who settled their disputes with fists and anger, but backed up one of their own when it counted. Stick together, but don't pull any punches.

William Harrison is a graduate teacher's certification student and writing his last student column