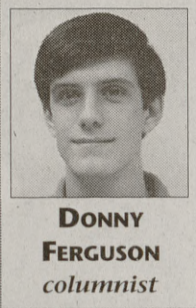


# Don't bogart that brain ... man

## New study on southern eating habits should make people think before they chew

**E**gads, Bubba! Stop eating those squirrel brains! Haven't you heard? It might not be a good idea. Dr. Eric Weisman has discovered and reported a link between eating the brains of squirrels and several cases of the neurological disorder Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a fatal human variety of mad-cow disease. Creutzfeldt-Jakob, which is thought to strike one person in one million, creates brain holes, loss of muscle control and in some cases, dementia, convincing Dr. Weisman to immediately schedule an appointment for Ross Perot.



**DONNY FERGUSON**  
columnist

Dr. Weisman's report, published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* and reported by the Associated Press under the "well, duh" headline "Think Twice About Eating Squirrel Brains," has shaken a hillbilly populous forced to abstain from their gourmet veal after recent beef scares.

Dr. Weisman and the report's co-author, Dr. Joseph Berger, discovered the link in 11 people in rural western Kentucky (where else?) After reviewing the data, Dr. Berger advises, "It is perhaps best to avoid squirrel brains and probably the brains of any other animal."

Berger also recommends people not cook squirrels they have run over with their car, because crazed squirrels are more likely to run out into traffic.

Give these medical geniuses a Nobel prize! Without their insight and relentless pursuit of wisdom, Americans may never have realized eating their beloved squirrel brains "ain't Robert Sullivan, quite right." However, what these medical pioneers have failed to realize is, if you're eating a squirrel's brain, you've probably got a neurological disorder anyway.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Weisman and Berger, squirrel brains now join other tantalizing, hazardous substances the medical community advises people not to eat, alongside lead paint, rat poison and Chicken Mc-

Nuggets. The fact that some people actually do eat the brains of squirrels raises questions like, "What's so appetizing about gnawing on the stuff in a rodent's head?" and "Do you use a nutcracker or a saw?" But why do people eat squirrel brains? Squirrels are by no means Jeopardy! contestants (just drive down a suburban street), and their brains can't be too filling.

Now pigs, on the other hand, are very intelligent animals with plump cranial contents, not to mention people already eat enough strange parts of a pig's anatomy (go sample a hot dog), but you can't order the pig's brain omelette at Denny's. The "Why are squirrel brains so appetizing?" mystery may never be solved, although it may be caused by the same mind-numbing phenomenon which causes university officials to paint Fish Pond a sickly shade of lavender.

Whatever their strange appeal, squirrel brains have gained a reputation as the "Hee-Haw" crowd's answer to caviar. They are about the size of a golf ball and are rumored to taste like mushy liver. Mushy liver? Why didn't you tell us? They sound about as good as those breakfast steak fingers in Sbsia. Despite the obviously appetizing qualities of squirrel brains, Swanson Foods probably has no plans to market "Frozen Squirrel Brains 'n Peas" or the "Squirrel Brains Macaroni" kids platter. The neurological nuggets are, however, sometimes cooked with sauteed onions and served over rice, or scrambled into eggs.

All culinary combinations aside, rural Kentucky is in shock over the tainted squirrel brains scare. Organizers of Floyd County's 18th Annual Slope Mountain Squirrel Festival are struggling to cope with the grim news. "We don't even fix squirrel gravy anymore. We don't serve any wild animal whatsoever. The health department said they'd all have to be checked, so we just decided not to fool with it," said organizer Otis Hicks. Floyd County residents plan to continue with the Squirrel Festival, despite the crushing revelation.

Tennessee native and Frankfort oral historian Janet Norris Gates heard the disheartening news and remembered her father. "In our family, we saw it as a

prized piece of meat, and if he shared it with you, you were pretty happy. Not that he was stingy, but there's just not that much of a squirrel brain," Gates said. "There's no way I can undo what I've done. But I have certainly enjoyed eating them." Hang in there Janet, our prayers are with you.

Central Kentucky farmer Philip Lyvers has no plans to change his di-

etary regimen over "two guys' opinions," despite the obvious lunacy of eating the "rodent delicacy." "I know more old hunters than I know of old doctors," Lyvers said.

Just as the mad-cow and E. coli beef scares have made some Americans change the way they eat meat, the squirrel brains scare may finally make backwoods Alabama rednecks realize

just how idiotic it is to fry up a golf ball-sized morsel of gray matter when they can run down to the Piggly-Wiggly and pick up some Goo-Goo Clusters and Slim Jims. In the meantime, I think I'll take my chances with those steak fingers.

*Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.*



# System of scapegoating destroys image of University

**H**ypocrisy is running rampant here at Texas A&M. A handful of A&M Corps members have been seriously reprimanded for doing what they were taught to do.

The A&M Student Judicial Services in the Department of Student Life concluded hearings Monday of 16 members of the Fish Drill Team who were charged in July with hazing.



**BRANDON HAUSENFLUCK**  
columnist

Information was gathered by the University from nine Drill Team advisers who were charged with hazing earlier this year. Those cadets were punished for their involvement.

All 16 students were one-time members of or upperclassman advisors to the

rigorous drill unit of freshman students in the Corps of Cadets.

Five of the 16 students are still members of the Corps, eight are enrolled at A&M but are no longer members of the Corps, and three of the cadets are no longer members of the A&M student body.

The sanctions for the students convicted ranged from deferred suspensions to letters of reprimand.

The A&M Administration has adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward hazing, which it has exercised frequently these last couple of years. Two fraternities last year lost their charters after two unrelated hazing incidents occurred. However, it has taken a while for the administration to crack down on the Corps.

When Corps Commandant Maj. Gen. Ted Hopwood took over last year, he was quick to make changes in the way the Corps operated. Last fall, for example, Hopwood ruled that freshman were not to run on the Quad — a Corps tradition

as old as sliced bread. Upperclassmen were devastated.

I'm not trying to say Hopwood was out of line in his ruling, not at all. He is actually the first Commandant who has ever taken the Corps by the horns and thrown it around a little bit.

This summer, for example, a Fish Drill Team adviser was expelled for hazing. He was a student in good standing at A&M who took pride in his role as a leader in the Corps of Cadets. He was a student Aggie could boast about, and he led the Fish Drill Team to new heights.

The student was expelled for doing exactly what had been done to him and every other FDT member. He was kicked out of school for doing what he was taught. The Commandant needs to look at the big picture, and not make scapegoats out of his most prized students.

In the 1997-98 A&M Student Rules catalog, hazing is defined as: "any intentional, knowing or reckless act ... by one person alone or acting with others ... that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student."

Granted, cadets will valiantly deny any wrong doing after they have run an out-of-shape freshman until he or she pukes bile. And if an eye is put out by a flying rifle, then that's just too bad.

It's all in how you interpret it.

The Rules catalog states that hazing is defined as one who is being subjected to "any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, [or] confinement in a small space."

We've all seen it. There is always a disrespectful Corps member sitting in the front row of a class sunburned and asleep, probably because he or she is claustrophobic and cannot enjoy their two hours of rest in the tiny dorm rooms. But as they drool and bob their heads, we as their fellow students, subject to the same rules they are, sit and watch a victim of hazing, and accept it. Because that's what they joined the Corps for, right?

A&M administrators are doing what needs to be done. They are effectively enforcing the laws the govern us as Aggies and as Texans.

Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, is one of the main administrators involved with every hazing incident. As an extremely popular and well-respected leader on campus, he must make decisions based on what is right — not on what will make him more popular.

In a University Relations press release, Southerland said Big Brother will be watching.

"Texas A&M takes any and all allegations of hazing ... or any other violation of our student rules extremely seriously," he said.

Unless some serious changes are made in the operation of some student organizations, there will be many more scapegoats.

*Brandon Hausenfluck is a senior journalism major.*



### MAIL CALL

#### Reveille as a mutt proves a good idea

*In response to John Lemon's September 10 column:*  
Lemon's opinion column about the next Reveille sparked my interest. Adopting a mixed-breed from a pound is an admirable act, and the notion of having an Old Army Reveille is one that I like, as I'm sure many Ags would.

But first and foremost, Reveille is a symbol of Texas A&M. She is supposed to stand for what is great about our school wherever she is, at any athletic event, at every review and on her way to class with her handler. She represents all of us every day. I support the idea of Reveille VII being a mutt. A&M as a

whole should be proud of every Aggie that is part of this university, and the message a mixed-breed Rev would send is that we as students, and all those affiliated with A&M, support our own regardless of background, simply because they are Aggies.

I learned through my four years in the Corps of Cadets that being an Aggie means loving A&M and supporting the Aggie teams, win or lose. To me that means I'll cast my vote for a mutt Rev, but I still am proud of Reveille VI.

*Bob Riggs*  
*Class of '97*  
*Exchange student at The Citadel*

### Class instruction requires a syllabus

*In response to Helen Clancy's September 8 column:*  
Speaking as an instructor, I can empathize with Clancy's sentiments in her column. Certainly the first week of the semester tends to be the dulllest, and I wish that I could follow your advice and just jump right into classroom activities, and on other occasions ignore the syllabus. Unfortunately, both

professors and we graduate assistants have several constraints.

First, departments, colleges and the University have established numerous guidelines regarding syllabus construction and presentation. We must include and discuss certain policies such as absences, grading, student services, etc.

Second, a class' make-up changes drastically during the first week because of drop-add. Late-adding students can read the syllabus to learn policies, but they cannot make up group work and class discussions, important elements of smaller classes such as technical writing or public speaking.

Third, the syllabus is a contract. It protects students from potentially unfair treatment and allows the instructor to encapsulate his or her expectations.

For grade-conscious students such as those at Texas A&M, the syllabus provides the standard for evaluation.

Although I agree with you that syllabus presentation is boring and that too much adherence to it can be reductive, I think that it is a necessary and important part of each class.

*Jeff Todd*  
*Graduate student*

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