

Wednesday • November 5, 1997

The Chocolate War

European Parliament's vote to preserve cocoa quality sends message to Americans



DONNY FERGUSON
columnist

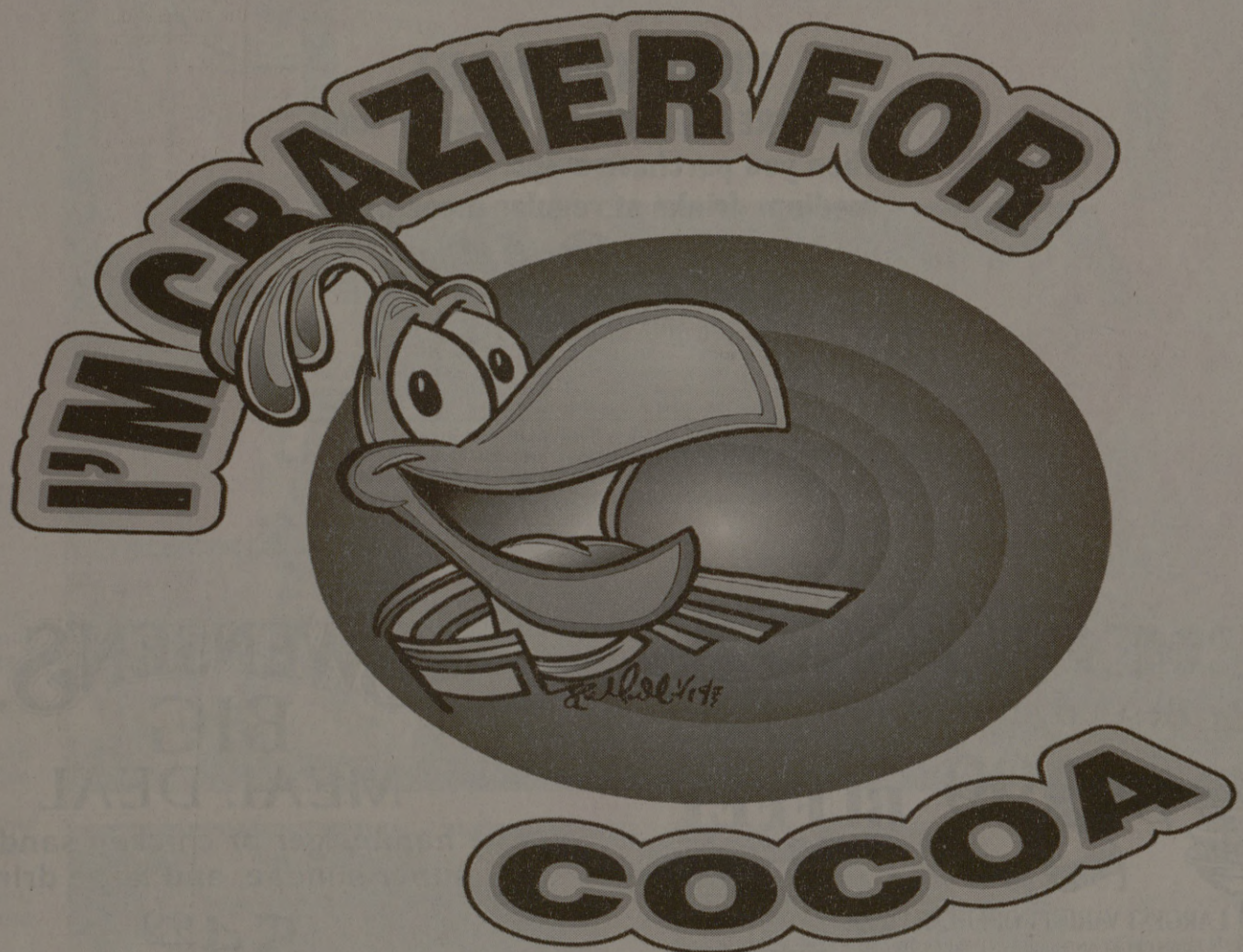
Ministers. There are, however, rumors the measure will be met with violent opposition by Weight Watchers fundamentalists. Despite the obvious danger in angering chocolate-union thugs and other militants with extreme chocolate views, European legislators braved the political storm and cast their pro-cocoa votes.

Wake up, Congress, let's see some initiative and harness the power of government to protect the purity of American goods. Maybe our cheese-gorging, cross-oceanic neighbors are on to something. Perhaps the true purpose of government is regulate the purity of scrumptious sweets. Our own United States Congress should follow the lead of our disco-loving, unwashed European cousins and take measures to ensure the highest level of excellence in junk food. After all, isn't Europe the same continent that gave us the Gabor sisters, Fabio, those Mentos commercials and the Yugo? With a track record of success like that, we can't go wrong.

It's about time lawmakers got on the ball and passed laws requiring chicken nuggets contain at least 10% real chicken. Nuggets may be the only substance known to man which doesn't taste like chicken and it's about time someone did something about it. After years of complaints, it appears only swift government action will force the cold, unfeeling fast-food giants to bow to the wishes of America's French fry-munching populace. Maybe once the nugget problem is resolved, the fast-food giants will get to work on creating an apple pie indistinguishable from a fish sandwich.

Strange tasting meat-based products aren't the only threat to American consumer confidence in the food industry.

Foreign objects and toxic chemicals are frequently found in the food men, women and even children eat. Untold millions have eaten so-called "Cracker Jacks" only to find foreign objects



hidden inside. The lives of millions of children are threatened every morning by small toys and stickers which have somehow found their way into cereal boxes.

Imported foods may be the worst offenders. It is not uncommon to bite into a cookie at a Chinese restaurant and find discarded scraps of paper inside.

The threat of dangerous objects

getting into food pales in comparison to the toxic chemicals which have poisoned our wild fish and game. America's lakes and forests have become so polluted, a day's worth of hunting and fishing is often inedible. Congress should pass tough environmental standards so we can eat a spotted owl without getting sick.

The European Parliament has the right idea. The regulation of "choco-

liciousness" is just the start. If other nations care so much about the purity of their chocolate, the least Americans can do is ensure the quality of our food.

After all, someone has to make sure natural ingredients don't find their way into a Twinkie.

Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.

Donating body to science not just a postmortem possibility



JEREMY VALDEZ
columnist

is described as an "investigational preparation," making it sound like something that was squeezed out of a glowing meteor. The potential side effects and special warnings also can be scary.

Being poor, intrepid and ultimately a gambling man at heart, I decided that I would try to pay my cable bill and restock my macaroni and cheese stash by participating in a drug study.

Unfortunately, I do not have syphilis, chronic pain, a yeast infection or any of the other high-paying diseases. All that I qualify for, from time to time, is the athlete's foot study.

So in the spirit of Aggie Bonfire, I wore the same pair of socks for two weeks, praying each night before I went to bed that I would rise to find an itchy, scorching case of athlete's foot.

My date with destiny finally came three weeks ago, when a very nice group of people at the study center shaved my feet to confirm that I was infected with tinea pedis.

Now I swallow hard each night, uncap a mysterious tube that is a scary shade of, um, black, and slather my feet with ... something.

Happily, my feet are back to normal now, but I worry that I may not be the best experimental subject, because it will be impossible to tell what actually cured my feet — "the drug" or simply the resumption of normal sock rotation.

The current state of medical research speaks volumes though, not just about our attitudes toward our bodies or how far one poor college student and his feet will go for \$100, but about how medical research really works.

No matter how sophisticated medical science becomes, research on live models will always be an essential part of our struggle against disease.

Certainly, cruelty to animals always should be avoided, but not all testing is cruel. The rhetoric against animal experimentation has gotten so loud and emotional that many Americans have forgotten that humans also are used in testing.

This should make us chuckle all the more when we buy shampoo that boasts that it was "never tested on animals." If manufacturers put anything in shampoo that made someone scream "Don't you dare put that on little fluffy bunnies," maybe we should not be so cavalier about using it ourselves.

We all benefit from live model research. Some of us actually participate in it. Along with other kinds of experimentation, it has described our chemical world and made it reasonably safe.

And I have done my part, so don't look to me to go without showers for two weeks in order to participate in the shampoo study. Besides, I'm hoping that eating a month's worth of macaroni and cheese will help me qualify for a far more lucrative acne study.

Jeremy Valdez is a senior journalism major.



MAIL CALL

Halloween origins missed by column

Recently, John Burton wrote an opinion column about the evils of Hallow'een. The actual origins of the holiday indicate that he is mistaken.

Hallow'een, also called Samhain, is a contracted form of "Hallowed Evening." This particular evening was hallowed or holy because it was a day of remembrance of the dead.

To the Celts, and other peoples, Samhain was also the New Year's festival, celebrating the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. This doesn't sound very Satanic to me.

In reflecting on the origins of Samhain, a particular Aggie tradition comes to mind. I begin to ask myself; "doesn't this sound quite a bit like Aggie Muster?" What would we think if people started "trashing" that tradition? We expect people to respect our Aggie traditions, so why can

we not extend the same consideration to traditions much older.

*Erik McKee
 Class of '99*

Seats should be opened to alumni

I was very disappointed with the lack of student attendance at the OSU game. I'm sure the players, who had been on the road for two weeks, felt the same when they saw a half empty third deck. It was not something they could over look from their bench.

I would like to suggest that the students be assigned third deck seating and the second deck student section be released to the 12th Man Foundation for the next school year and subsequent years.

This recommendation would permit more participation from the alumni, and add revenue to the football program, and would help to eliminate the unsightly view of empty seats.

*Homer A. Miller
 Class of '63*

Society contributes to sexual attitudes

James Francis makes a good point in his column concerning Nushawn Williams. Counseling and medical help are not readily available for low-income minorities who find themselves with a

terminal disease. Certainly, if Williams had been given adequate counseling, this tragedy may have been averted.

However, Williams is not the victim here. He is the criminal, and he made a conscious decision to infect these nine girls. Yet, a bigger question arises. What the hell are nine girls doing having unprotected sex with a homeless drifter? Somewhere along the line, society failed these young women.

There is something wrong when a 14-year-old girl thinks it is safe and morally correct to have unprotected sex with a stranger.

Perhaps if the media, and society in general, did not portray sex as the end-all, be-all of human achievement, these girls would have thought twice before ruining their lives for one sexual encounter.

*Jon Appgar
 Class of '99*

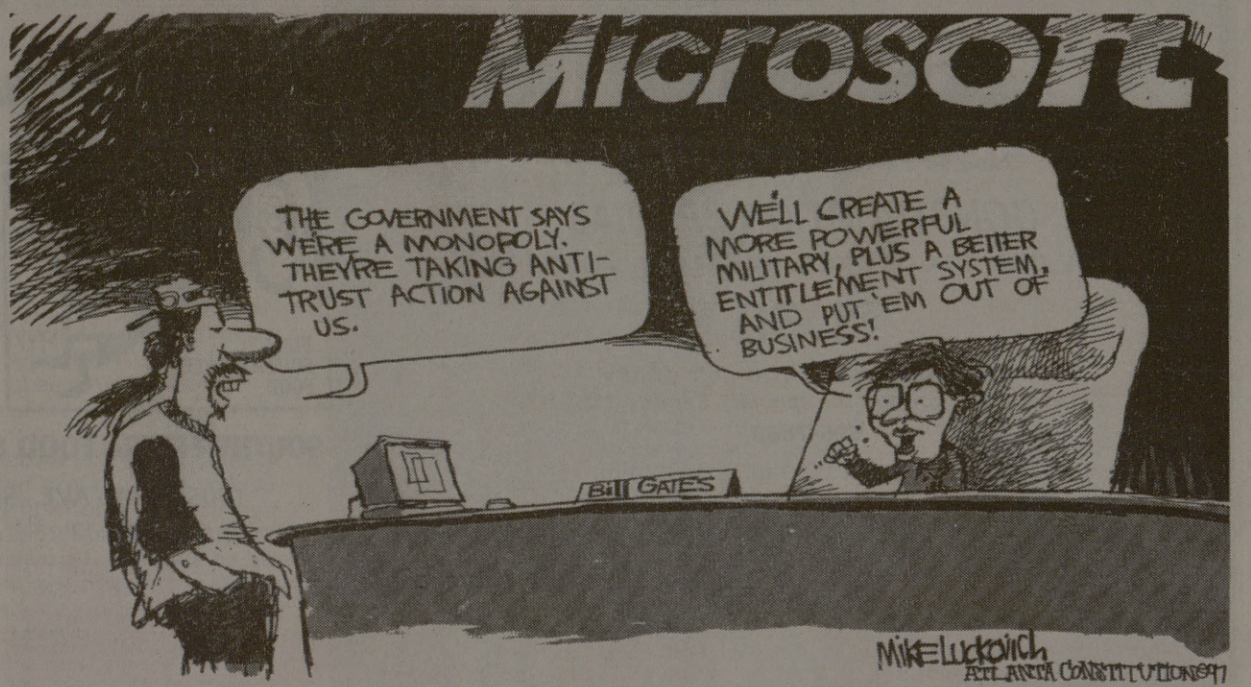
The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
 013 Reed McDonald
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX
 77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
 Fax: (409) 845-2647
 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.



*Mike Lutz
 ALL AREA CONSTITUTIONS '97*