

CAMPUS CONNECTION

Recipe for making dough

SC cookbook fundraiser must reflect group's activities, size



DAVE JOHNSTON
columnist

and fuzzy. After all, an MSC project is nothing if not warm and fuzzy.

As the necessary items are collected, one must consider the cost. Keep in mind higher prices indicate higher quality. Do not worry that the end product will be too expensive, because our meal is aimed at faculty and community members. Student money has already been collected.

Once the ingredients are prepared, it is time to assemble the necessary personnel.

The beauracatic casserole requires at least a dozen cooks to prepare. Each chef must be given a title, the longer the better. Granted, this may cause confusion at first, but most people are able to adapt to the complex hierarchy involved in cooking the dish. Remember, there can never be too many chiefs — er, chefs.

After cooking the casserole, season it heavily. Push the envelope. Don't worry about scaring off potential diners, there is a higher goal — diversity. Do not unfairly omit any spice. This is a college campus, they can handle it. If in doubt, season to the head chef's taste. Other opinions don't matter much.

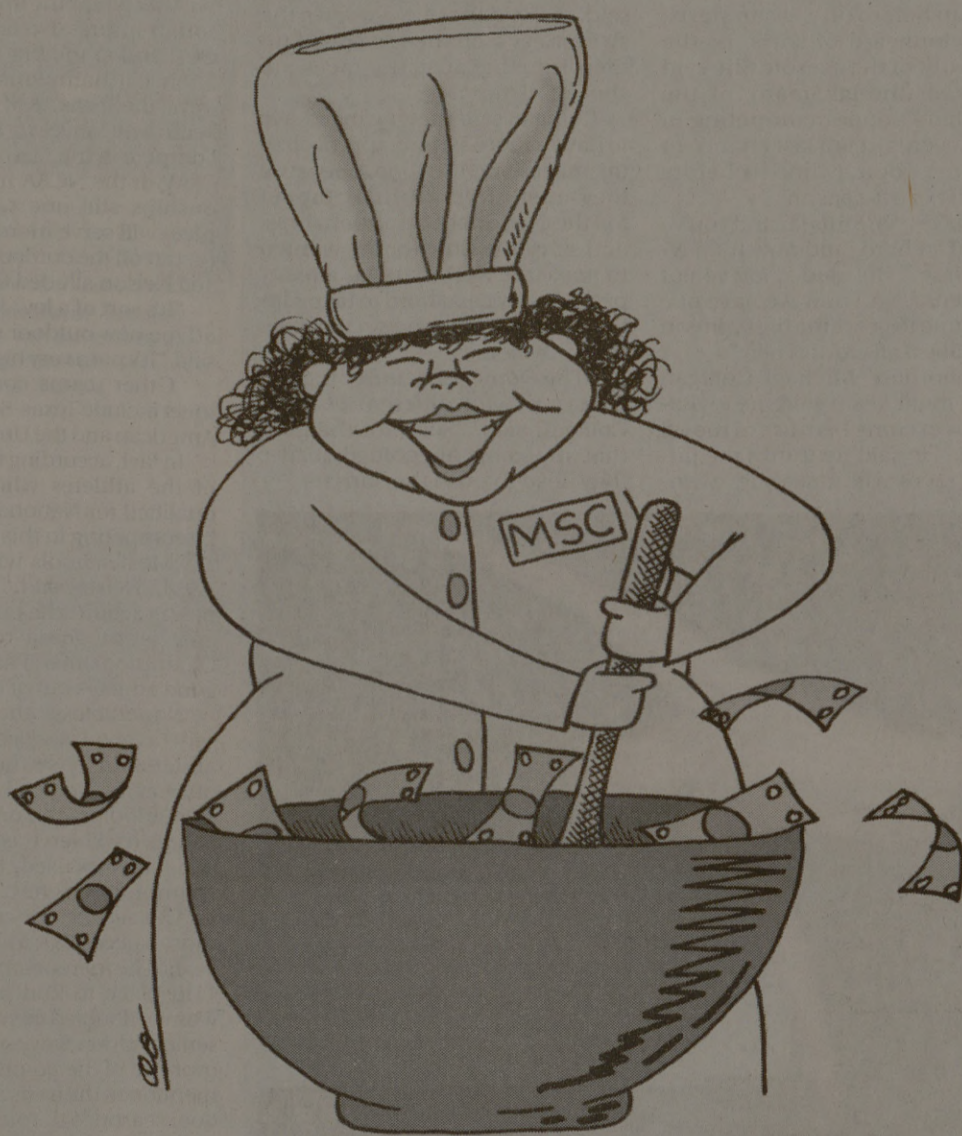
Once the meal has been cooked, pay special attention to the presentation. Garnish is good. The more the better. Don't forget the earlier discussion on cost.

Often chefs are faced with more guests than they anticipated. This problem is easily taken care of. Don't be afraid to water down the beauracatic casserole.

An odd feature of the dish, no matter what precautions are taken, it never seems to serve everyone.

Maybe this casserole isn't the greatest dish in the world. It is possible this recipe has not met its original intent or is not worth the effort it requires. But then, perhaps that's the whole point.

Dave Johnston is a senior mathematics major.



STUDENT LIFE

Parking problems not just PTTS' fault



JOE SCHUMACHER
columnist

As long as there are students with cars, there will always be a problem with parking. Many students feel parking is one of the biggest problems, if not the biggest problem, facing them.

Most people have returned to their car to find a yellow envelope tucked under their windshield wiper at least once, anyone who has received a ticket knows how infuriating it is. Additionally, many students feel that citations have been on an increase while parking spots have been on a decrease.

To play devil's advocate, the Department of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) is doing their job.

If you think finding a parking place is difficult now, just imagine if there was no PTTS. The parking lots would be anarchy. It would become survival of the fittest, where huge trucks park on top of smaller cars like some monster truck rally.

Okay, that is a slight exaggeration but you get the point.

Perhaps the biggest problem with parking is a lack of time management by students. Or maybe the problem is not a lack of parking spaces but a lack of desirable parking spaces.

According to PTTS, the parking lots are not full. They may not be the most desirable spaces but the back rows of Olsen field always have spaces open.

Or maybe students have just gotten lazy and the idea of a walking is just too much to bear. So they will just drive around for 20 minutes waiting for an excellent parking space to become available to them. Never mind that they could have parked and walked to class in the time that they spent driving around waiting for the parking space to become available.

Ticketing students just seems like another way to raise revenue from the student who has already spent thousands of dollars to attend A&M. Perhaps that is why people get mad when they receive a ticket.

It is more hard-earned money that they would like to spend somewhere else now has to pay for a stupid parking ticket.

Parking tickets are very frustrating. Students here are virtually being nickel-and-dimed to death for everything. It seems there has not been a single item which has not received some sort of fee increase. So receiving a ticket seems to be the straw that breaks the student's back.

The blame for receiving the ticket has to fall on the students, who probably had a good idea they were illegally parking in the first place.

The PTTS workers make easy targets because they are the most visible of people "taking your money." Nobody sees the people responsible for fee and tuition increases wandering around campus, especially after they have passed some outrageous new increase.

According to PTTS, the handing out of citations is actually down from last semester. Additionally, parking citations only account for approximately 29 percent of revenue, although permit sales and visitor parking comprise 51 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

This money in turn is not spent on other projects outside of parking, but is spent on the payments for the three parking garages, security and maintenance.

As of February 15, A&M has the most parking spaces available to students attending universities with enrollment over 30,000.

The number of spaces available will increase to 26,000 by Apr. 1 when the Reed Arena parking lot is scheduled to open.

There is no doubt that parking is a hassle, especially on a campus as large as A&M. Whether the addition of these new parking spaces will alleviate the problem remains to be seen. But if it is that much of a hassle, one suggestion is to just ride the bus.

Joe Schumacher is a junior journalism major.

TECH TALK

Computer hackers present security problem

A new excuse has been added ranks that might eventually over take the classic "my dog ate my homework" excuse.

"I couldn't do my homework because FBI agents were searching my house last night."

Cloverdale, Calif., this excuse was one of much consequence to two high school boys' houses searched and property was confiscated by the FBI in an effort to find a group of computer hackers who infiltrated the Pentagon's computer network.

The boys were actually caught in the act of hacking a non-classified Pentagon computer.

The FBI agents, armed with sealed warrants, took computers, printers, and software from the boys' houses, did not arrest them, because of their age. However, the boys will continue to be involved in the investigation.

All of this comes after the Pentagon suffered through a massive "cyber-attack" that apparently focused on getting at personnel records and payroll matters.

The hackers looked through non-classified Pentagon computers and tried to leave "trap-doors" that would make access back into the computer at a later date easier for the hackers.



BEVERLY MIRELES
columnist

The two boys, possibly working with other hackers, used a local Internet service, Netdex, and then leapfrogged onto other systems, including the University of California at Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, two sites in Mexico and multiple military sites.

Though the hackers did not penetrate the classified network of the Pentagon, Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre told reporters that the matter remains "a very serious, long term problem."

Well, no kidding.

The current defense budget allots about \$24 billion for defense, with \$1 billion of that for information security.

Let me repeat that — one BILLION dollars for informational security and two 15-year-old boys break into the Pentagon's system. Are we kidding, here?

I know technology is hard to keep up with, and hackers design programs for the express purpose of getting around these informational fire walls, but come on.

The Pentagon should at least have a minuscule department for keeping the hackers out. It seems that hospitals aren't the only ones against preventive care.

This is not the first time something along these lines has happened. And the recent attacks are a tell-tale sign that they doubtfully will be the last.

Last year, the General Accounting Office of Con-

gress reported that about 250,000 attempts have been made on military computer networks in the previous year. Out of that number, 65 percent, or some 162,000 attempts, were successful.

Apparently I'm the only one who sees a problem with that.

Frankly, it just looks like the government is wasting a very large amount of money on something that obviously is not keeping out hackers. If the government is just determined to throw money away, they might as well give it to me.

I'm sure I could do lots of good with \$1 billion. Note to self: first pay off college tuition and back lab fees. Then, squander the couple million left on Hot Tamales and CD clubs.

Seriously, though, the Pentagon needs to get its act together on this one. If two teenagers working on home computers can break into a complex system, what would come of a more organized effort to break into the Pentagon computers by a larger, more experienced group?

A serious breach in national security, no doubt.

To put this in easier, more understandable language for the people at the Pentagon: This is not just a "wake-up call" — attention should be paid to what hackers are trying to do, and most of all, watch your back.

Beverly Mireles is a freshman microbiology major.



MAIL CALL

Students can benefit from absence policy

In response to Manisha Parekh's March 5 column:

I enjoyed your column. If I may be so bold, perhaps it would be useful for you to interview a few faculty members to see what their policy is and why they adopt that policy.

In the past I have had trouble deciding what to do when a student calls the morning of an exam to say that she or he is ill. Generally, my experience is that it is the weaker and less prepared students who call (based on their final grades). I never doubt that they are

ill, but I wonder whether the illness simply means that they were unable to pull an all-nighter to make up for a lack of work.

Exams and quizzes in the middle of the semester are easily handled by simply giving an excuse and reweighting.

Final exams, though, are a much more complex issue. Malingering simply isn't fair to the other students, who have a fixed time period to prepare, and it is also extremely difficult to prepare a fair make-up exam.

My experience is that students who do a make-up exam for a final uniformly do poorly, although the difficulty of the exam and the student's knowledge are confounded.

My guess then would be that faculty are pretty flexible with illness in the middle of the semester, but less flexible and more stringent during finals.

It might be fun for you to try to verify my conjecture.

I'm not interested in my comments appearing in print. I do think it's a fun issue to look into further.

Raymond Carroll
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