

DIRTY APES

BY R. DELUNA



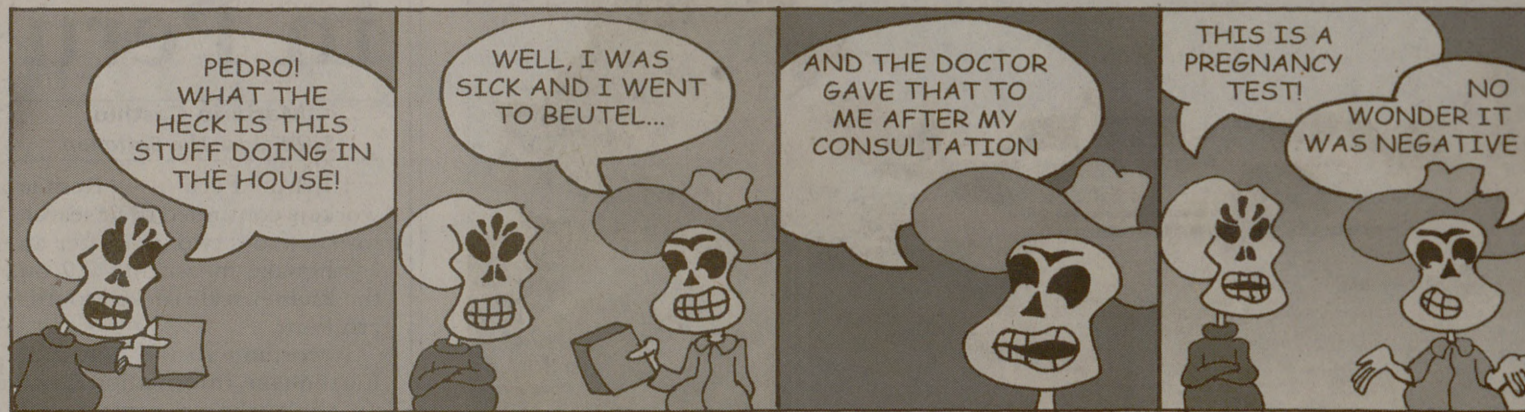
The Fantastic Chronicles

BY J. GOLDFLUTE



HECTOR Y PEDRO

by Adrian



Taste comes before health to consumers, survey says

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — French fries might lower cholesterol if they are cooked in the right kind of shortening, but most consumers may never get a chance to eat them. The shortening, known as Appetize, is one of a series of healthier food products that have struggled as public concern about fat has declined in recent years, even as obesity has reached epidemic proportions. "Health is not a primary driver in our food selection. You must have taste first," said Robert Brown, who follows industry trends for snack-food giant Frito-Lay. Food scientists gathered here for their annual convention this week have not given up the search for their holy grail — a healthy, tasty, affordable substitute for bad fats — but they are scratching their heads over the declining consumer interest. Among supermarket shoppers who said they are very concerned about nutrition, only 46 percent of consumers say they are wor-

ried about the fat content, down from 60 percent in 1996, according to a poll last year by the Food Marketing Institute. Olestra, a fat substitute developed by Procter & Gamble Co., is one of the leading disappointments. Sales of Frito-Lay's

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Wow! potato chips, which are made with olestra, dropped 36 percent in 1999, a year after they were introduced. Nabisco's low-fat Snackwell cookies also have been a disappointment, as was Benecol, a cholesterol-lowering margarine. Frito-Lay added fat to its baked potato chips to improve the taste, Brown said. Meanwhile, sales of meat snacks, pork rinds and fat-laden energy bars are soaring.

"In marketing, the bottom line is taste," said K.C. Hayes, a Brandeis University scientist and one of the inventors of Appetize. Fat affects not only the flavor, but also the color and texture of foods. Not all fat substitutes have flopped. Half-and-half has been made fat-free by substituting corn syrup and removing water from skim milk. In yogurt, tapioca starch is used as a fat substitute. Fat has also been removed from mayonnaise and salad dressing. Appetize, which is marketed by a spinoff of General Mills, is a blend of corn oil and beef tallow that has been stripped of its natural cholesterol. Research suggests its unique chemistry may actually lower blood cholesterol in consumers because of its interaction in the body. It's designed to replace the artery-clogging shortenings, or hydrogenated vegetable oils, that are now widely used in the restaurant and baking industries. The trans fatty acids may be worse for the heart than saturat-

ed fats, scientists say. The Food and Drug Administration is proposing to require trans fats to be listed on food labels. The Mayo Clinic uses Appetize, which has been on the market for six years, in its employee cafeterias and it also is in a few university and department store restaurants. But no fast major fast-food chains have bought it. Bill Norton, executive vice president of Appetize-maker Source Food Technology Inc., says it will probably never be anything more than a niche product. The company is currently selling about 5 million pounds a year, a tiny fraction of the 6 billion pound a year market for cooking oils and shortening. Part of the problem for products like Appetize is consumer confusion about shifting health claims and research findings, say food scientists. Consumers have been warned for years to stay away from saturated fats, such as the beef tallow used in Appetize, but now there are concerns that the trans fats are worse.

FACULTY

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supposed to [just] get married," Grimes said. "But we try to expose them to individuals who have ventured out." Aside from hosting events to help the community, Winder hosts four annual etiquette training dinners for A&M students. "Basically the dinners are designed to teach students to feel better in dining intervals," Winder said. "Companies equate good etiquette to business competence, so if you do

not have good manners they... incident that with incompetence... Winder, who attended the International Protocol School of Washington to become a certified business etiquette consultant, said he has seen the etiquette training classes expand from 150 participants each semester to more than 2,000 participants each semester. Winder said that he and other Faculty Club staff are currently working with the Office of Information and Technology Exchange, Susan Lancaster, to make a etiquette training video for all A&M students.

SPY

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operation, and said Montesinos would be tried "like any other delinquent in our country." Montesinos was considered the power behind former president Alberto Fujimori's administration. The Waisman report, an investigation into alleged corruption in Fujimori's government, accused Montesinos of heading an intricate web of bribes, drug trafficking and arms dealing. He was accused of taking more than \$265 million, which now sit frozen in Swiss and other foreign banks. Montesinos also has been charged with human rights abuses, including running death squads and ordering the torture and execution of those who opposed him. Montesinos secretly filmed meetings in his office — a col-

lection now known as the famous "Vladivideos." The videos show Montesinos allegedly bribing congressmen to cross over to Fujimori's political party, as well as meeting with generals of the military forces that have linked with arms trafficking. Caracas daily El Universal reported that according to Venezuelan minister Danilo Cabello, Montesinos had undergone plastic surgery. Peruvians are less optimistic that Fujimori can be brought back to face charges of plotting death squads to operate along with other human rights abuses. He fled to Japan in November and faxed in his resignation as president. Fujimori, also a Japanese citizen, makes it impossible under Japanese law for him to be extradited.

DONATIONS

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Looking for dollars, Powell said President Bush made "a rather passionate" pitch for more AIDS fund contributions during his recent meeting with European Union officials in Goteborg, Sweden. At that same meeting, Powell described what he saw during a visit to Africa last month. "I was very candid," Powell said. "I said, 'You've got to find a way quickly to show your commitment to this. The EU has to give a lot more.'" The fund, kicked off with \$200 million by the United States last month, now contains \$582 million. France and Britain, former colonial powers in Africa, offered \$127 million and \$100 million respectively, with the rest coming from private entities such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which matched Britain's donation. "That's not a bad start but it is nowhere near meeting the need," Powell said. "I also don't think we should just restrict it to the big, affluent, former colonial powers. We really need to engage everybody."

African AIDS pandemic... report in the latest issue of the journal Science estimated that the world's poorest countries will need \$9.2 billion a year of which would go to sub-Saharan Africa. Citing President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda as an example, Powell urged heads of state to get personally involved in AIDS education efforts — down to delivering a strong message in unfamiliar terms. "To listen to (Museveni) cuts no slack," Powell said. "This is what is causing it is irresponsible heterosexual sex." It kind of jars you when you hear it, ... but that is the leadership message that has to be given. Other world nations, Powell said, should help by providing AIDS drugs, lowering prices, putting health care delivery systems in place. Most importantly, provide AIDS education to children young as 7, "drilling it into them just like we do with anti-smoking and other campaigns."

QUAKE

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was one of tire-sized precast concrete walls blocking streets. The press conference addressed disaster relief issues largely overshadowed by questions concerning the capture of Peru's fugitive ex-spy Vladimiro Montesinos.

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