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## EDITORIAL

### A noble line: Reel squirrel fishing in as Club sport

"A squirrel leaping from bough to bough, and making the wood but one wide tree for his pleasure, fills the eye not less than a lion, is beautiful, self-sufficing, and stands then and there for nature."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

From time to time, a new phenomenon is so culturally significant, so attuned to the contemporary American ethos, that anyone exposed to it recognizes instantly the dramatic social potential it offers. Gutenberg's generation saw the printing press; Ford's generation had the automobile; and our brave new world has, of course, squirrel fishing.

The gist of this adventurous sport is this: The "fisherman," wielding a fly fishing rod, attaches a peanut to the end of the line and casts the bait to attract the rodents. Once an attracted squirrel has latched on to the nut, the sportsman tugs on to the line until the squirrel snatches or releases the peanut.

Clearly, squirrel fishing ranks among the most noble natural pastimes, a tradition that will without a doubt long outlive anyone reading this warm but ultimately insufficient tribute.

Squirrel fishing, then, transcends mere sporthood; it is, in its own right, a modern spiritual enterprise. In what can be described best as a subtle but powerful dance between human and squirrel, the endeavor exemplifies man's intimate commune with nature.

And our furry campus is particularly suited for the consideration of this bold, new phenomenon. Even those outside the community recognize the school's long-standing tradition of human-squirrel symbiosis. Jon's World o' Squirrels, a Web site (<http://www.gottshall.com/squirrels/>) created by rodent enthusiast Jonathan Gottshall that offers squirrel-related resources, rated the University campus four squirrels (out of five) for squirrel friendliness.

A new breed of cultural protectors has emerged on this campus: A group of students seeking to make squirrel fishing an official Club sport.

Responses have been mixed.

"The reactions we get around campus are usually really enthusiastic or really upset," explained Jason McIlhane, the club's co-president.

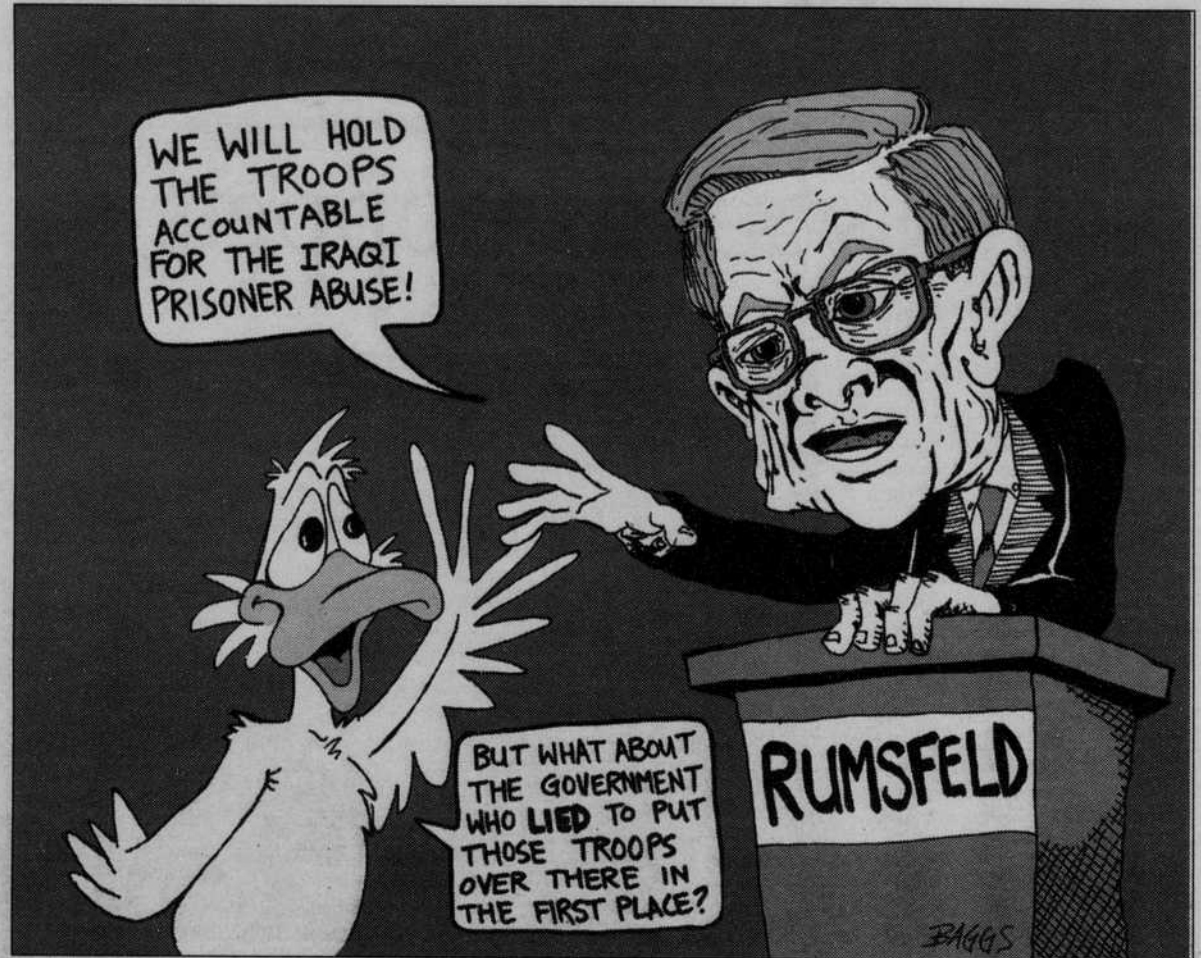
The five-seat Club sports executive committee has delayed, for now, sanctioning squirrel fishing as a Club sport, citing potential ethical concerns.

"I just want to make sure that we're not doing anything offensive to the squirrels," committee member Lauren Anas said.

But surely the activity represents quite the opposite, that is, an elevation of both squirrel and human as partners in a mutually beneficial arrangement: Squirrels sate themselves on delicious peanuts, while humans can take a brief reprieve from the bustle of the modern world and immerse themselves in a long-standing — and intensely personal — natural tradition.

Better yet, about 30 students are already involved in the club, some three times the number required to form a Club sport.

For the enhancement of University's culture and spiritual health, the Emerald Editorial Board heartily encourages the Club sports executive committee to add squirrel fishing to the University's fine roster of Club sports activities.



Steve Baggs Illustration

## DIVIDED WE STAND



Chuck Slothower

Taking issue

military will retain every meaningful source of power.

Voters increasingly realize that the cost of the occupation, in terms of both money and lives, is greater than what the Bush administration led them to believe. As much as Republicans will try to hide the truth from voters with photography bans and curiously timed requests for Congressional appropriations, Americans know Iraq is going down the toilet.

Hopefully, voters will concentrate on substantive issues and ignore the usual political mudslinging. What makes attacks on character and experience so annoying is that they're so effective.

Bush has a powerful weapon in his charge that Kerry is a flip-flopper. What makes it so powerful is that it's true. Kerry has never met a politically advantageous position he didn't like.

He voted to give Bush the authority to invade Iraq, but refused to pay for the occupation afterward. He voted for the USA Patriot Act, but now criticizes it as an encroachment on civil liberties.

The list goes on, which brings me to Kerry's first flip-flop: Vietnam. He served with honor and distinction in Southeast Asia, where he commanded a small boat and earned three Purple Hearts, a Silver Star and a Bronze Star for his courage.

Kerry then returned to the United States and worked actively with Vietnam Veterans Against the War. This particular flip-flop shouldn't bother voters.

Kerry went to Vietnam to serve his country, and returned horrified by the atrocities committed by his fellow soldiers. He took the only honorable course of action at that point and spoke out against the war.

Conservatives gain nothing by alleging that Kerry's first Purple Heart — which the military awards for wounds sustained in battle — was the result of a mere scratch. If Kerry got shot badly only twice instead of three times, does it really matter?

Such attacks also attract unwelcome attention to Bush's record in the National Guard during Vietnam, when he joined a country club unit notable for its upper-crust members and skipped out on it.

Both men's Vietnam experience is ultimately unimportant to how they would act in office and distract from more important issues.

Kerry has pulled his punches in recent attacks on Bush. He told Hardball's Chris Matthews recently that weapons of mass destruction could still be found in Iraq.

If Kerry wants to sit in the Oval Office, he needs to quit dancing around Bush and go for the knockout. It shouldn't be hard to do.

Should Kerry do the unlikely and beat Bush in November, progressives will rejoice for a short time. But they should consider themselves warned that Kerry has too much Clintonian scheming in him and will sell progressives out when it becomes necessary. If Democrats wanted a progressive with a backbone, they should have nominated Howard Dean.

Ultimately, Kerry will need the stars to align perfectly to defeat Bush. In the advertising age, Bush's \$187.5 million reelection fund speaks loudly.

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