All the Chews That Fit the Print?

By Art Buchwald

There is good news for newspaper readers. Recent reports indicate it may not be long before newsprint can be turned into food. A process now being developed involves extracting the glucose from the cellulose content of newsprint, then feeding the glucose to a batch of edible yeasts, molds or bacteria inside a fermenter. The protein left over would be dried into a powder and used as a nutrient supplement.

Dr. Barry Coombe of Australia has been feeding pellets made from newsprint to sheep, and he says they have been thriving on it.

This will, of course, present a new problem for the printed media. Not only will news reporters and columnists have to worry about how their words will affect the reading public; they also will have to remember that people are going to eat them.

One question is: What news will be more digestible than others? Should you start the morning with a light breakfast of comics or a heavy breakfast of editorials? What wine do you serve with Jack Anderson's column, and would it be a mistake to eat the text of a Henry Kissinger press briefing before going to bed?

Dr. Coombe did not concern himself with the content of the newsprint he fed his sheep, but I believe a lot more research has to be done before we permit human beings to eat their daily newspapers.

We do know that most people get indigestion when perusing their front pages. But we're not sure how their gastric juices would react if they started chewing on them.

Food for Thought

Capitol Punishment

Another question which would be raised is, if publishers discovered there was money to be made from food in their paper, would they insist on their editors' sugarcoating the news?

In a few years we could expect a series of cookbooks on how to prepare meals with your daily paper. The recipes might go something like this:

"Chop up your newspaper until it is finely ground. Add three cups of water and mix into a paste. Then take a Dear Abby or Ann Landers column and separate the questions from the answers. Beat up the answers and let them stand. Throw the questions away.

"Take a William Buckley column and let it simmer for 15 minutes. Then add a dash of a President Ford speech (not much or your dish will be too bland), a pound of denials by the CIA and season with a hot Herblock cartoon.

"Pour this into a pan, first greasing it with a full-page advertisement from one of the oil companies. Then add three strips of Peanuts and a Lou Harris poll.

"Stir the dish for 20 minutes. When it becomes a thick sauce, pour it over a leg of lamb which was fattened by being put on a steady diet of pellets made from pictures of Jacqueline Onassis. The recipe should serve a family of four, but if you don't have enough sauce you can throw in Evans and Novak for gravy. The important thing is to serve before it gets too sticky."

The reason I have left myself out of the recipe is I am constantly hearing from readers who say that every time they read my column they throw up. If reading it can do this, we have to assume eating it could be very hazardous to your health.

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