

BLUE DEVILS' ADVOCATE



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Rodents Run Rampant!

College Searches for Solution to Squirrel Scourge

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The squirrels are running amuck on the Merced College campus. After three years of construction, small vertebrate mammals are being chased out of their native habitats and forced to relocate into populated areas. As a result, Merced College lost power, closing the college for an afternoon on October 18.

"People need to realize and finally get over the thought that they are cute little furry woodland creatures. They have to be killed," said Darol Fishman, Agriculture Division chairman.

All it took was one squirrel to build a nest under a transformer, work his way inside and cross the two poles inside the transformer to cause a short and the power outage.

"We are working with the county agricultural commissioner's office and laying out bait with the hope to kill them (squirrels) and we have been do-



Special to the Advocate/Joey Alvernaz

ing this for years," said Sergio Flores, director of Operations, Grounds, and Health and Safety for Merced College.

Although this is the first time the power has been cut by rodents, this is not a recent problem. The squirrels first started to be noticed three years ago. "It was first brought to my attention by athletic trainer John O'Brian that around the practice field the squirrels were digging holes where students could trip into them, tearing up limbs, knees and joints," said Steve Cassady, athletic director and head

softball coach.

Periodically, Cassady has made the Health and Operations Committee aware of his growing concerns regarding the increasing squirrel population. "One would have to assume that in catching a problem early it would be easier to solve. This is kind of late so it is harder to solve," said Cassady.

As the biggest land users here on campus,

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