

# Coping with stress

## Environment, nutrition, exercise help

By Steve Knight  
Of the Emerald

About exam time, most students have no doubt experienced those tense feelings that take hold of the body: dry throat, nervous stomach, rapid heart beat and excessive sweating.

These are symptoms of stress, and too much stress in a student's life can often lead to unbearable mental anguish.

Candy Reynolds, Crisis Center director, says 80 percent of the 100 to 150 distress calls she and her staff receive each month are from students. And the bulk of the calls are directly or indirectly related to academic stress, she says.

Does this mean most students are destined to go into a traumatized state every time a final or term paper deadline rolls around?

Health counselor Lisa Wilson maintains stress can be controlled. She teaches a workshop at the University on how students can be more relaxed as they pursue a degree.

"Students are particularly susceptible to stress because of time demands and pressure to make good grades," she says, adding that the inability of students to cope with stress can eventually lead to heart attacks, arthritis and ulcers.

Wilson says there are three key factors in a person's life that help reduce stress:

**Environment** — A pleasant environment helps a person's mental outlook. "If your surroundings are run down, it changes the way you look at things and the way you look at yourself," she says, noting that due to budget cuts by the Legislature the upkeep of many buildings on campus is being neglected.

**Nutrition** — The body needs a high blood sugar level to create energy. Most refined foods — such as chocolate donuts — quickly raise the blood sugar level and then rapidly reduce it, causing stress in the process.

**Exercise** — As a person exercises, the body produces endorphin, an anti-depressant chemical that helps fight stress, Wilson says.

Wilson defines stress as simply "the response of the body to any demand placed on it," which means stress isn't necessarily good or bad.

"A passionate kiss can be as stressful as a test," she says, explaining that the body reacts to kissing and test taking in the same fashion: by releasing hormones that stimulate the heartbeat and respiration rate and cause muscles to tense.

The best way a student can reduce his stress level is to learn how to relax, Wilson says.

"But most people believe the University is structured to be stressful, and that if you're relaxed you'll never make it in school," she says.

In her class, Wilson shows students how to relax by incorporating stretching exercises, Kundalini and Hatha yoga techniques, self-massaging and visualization, a type of meditation.

In addition, she teaches how positive self statements can help a student perform better on exams.

"Before going into a test, I'll repeat 'I am capable and intelligent,' 10 times — and it helps. It really makes a difference," Wilson says.

Wilson's stress reduction workshop meets every Thursday afternoon between 4:30 and 5:30 in the Stafford Hall lounge.

## Prof defends dead firs

# Cutting of old growth debated

**Eugene (AP)** — The question of whether to cut or preserve the Pacific Northwest's valuable old-growth Douglas fir forests creates a clash of polar opposites, University sociology prof. Richard Gale says.

He summarized the mood at a weekend conference on the region's old-growth stands at which widely divergent views of forest management were aired.

"How much wildlife, how much diversity, how much fiber production and how many jobs do we want?" said Jeff Sirmon, the new U.S. Forest Service regional forester for the Pacific Northwest.

Those questions will have to be faced after researching the forests' ecological systems,

economic value and esthetic worth, he said.

"On those national forests west of the Cascade summit there are 2.4 million acres of forest which are over 250 years old and have less than 10 percent of their timber removed. This is 25 percent of the area of those national forests," Sirmon said.

He said although he has no mandate to increase harvesting the old-growth trees, it is common knowledge that the Reagan administration wants to increase revenue from federal lands.

Others at the conference said they were concerned such economic pressure would endanger the trees' ecological contributions to watersheds, forest growth and as habitats for

birds such as the spotted owl and the bald eagle.

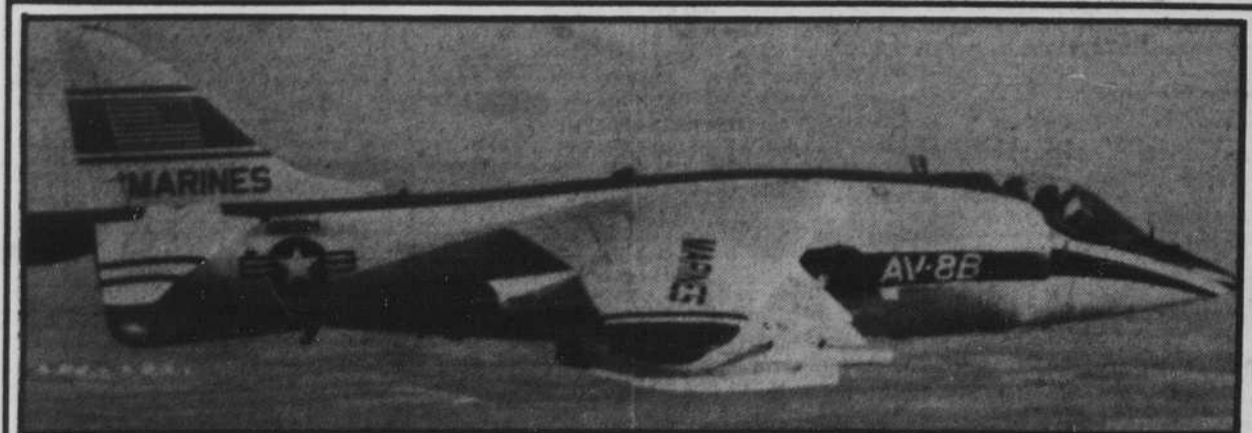
"As a sociologist, I am not convinced that one can easily define old-growth preservation in primarily economic terms," Gale said.

The trees' existence "responds to our increasing need for a greater sense of place and stability within a rapidly changing society," he said.

Wildlife consultant Robert Vincent, however, called the stands "communities of the dead" that contribute little.

Experts attending the conference in Eugene did agree that at least some portions of the valuable old-growth stands should be preserved and that more research needs to be done on the issue of harvesting versus preservation.

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