

Alcohol abuse served up as focus for April

■ Alcohol Awareness Month kicks off on campus with free screenings this Thursday

By Lindsay Buchele
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the sake of the 14 million Americans diagnosed with alcoholism, and for many others who haven't been diagnosed, April is the time for families and communities to talk about alcohol abuse.

In 1987, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence designated



April as National Alcohol Awareness Month. During this month, there are services and information available for people who suspect they or some-

one they know have a drinking problem.

Mac Prichard, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Human Services, said April is the time for communities to provide information on alcohol abuse to the public.

"This month is so important, because there are tens of thousands who suffer from alcohol abuse and others who put themselves at risk with their drinking behaviors," Prichard said. "Studies have shown that families who talk about drinking have fewer problems with alcohol abuse."

An important part of the national Alcohol Awareness campaign is alcohol screening. On April 5, 1999, the non-profit organization Screening for Mental Health Inc., established National Alcohol Screening Day, with support from several government agencies.

Screening includes filling out a

confidential questionnaire and talking with health professionals to alert people to possible drinking problems. People can also fill out questionnaires to determine whether or not a family member or friend may have a drinking problem.

Katherine Cruise, spokeswoman for Screening for Mental Health Inc., said colleges across the country take part in the screening.

"Students are usually surprised by the results of their screening," Cruise said. "They don't realize how much they drink and how it's changed their behavior."

For this reason, Oregon Partnership spokesman Christopher Curtis said college students who drink responsibly or not at all can be a good example for other students.

"There are a lot of responsible students out there that can be role models for their peers when it comes to drinking," Curtis said.

The Oregon Partnership, a non-profit organization that works toward preventing substance abuse, has begun an aggressive campaign to provide information about alcohol abuse to the public.

The Partnership is working on television and radio spots, submitting editorials to newspapers and distributing information packets to prevention professionals.

"We not only want to help those who may have alcoholism, we also want to promote prevention and encourage people to act as role models when it comes to alcohol use," Curtis said.

The Oregon Partnership supports the statewide screening, including the screening that will be done by Lane Community College and the University on Thursday.

Because of the controversial drinking habits of college students, Cruise said it's important for students to have a description of risky drinking behaviors so they can recognize if they have a drinking prob-

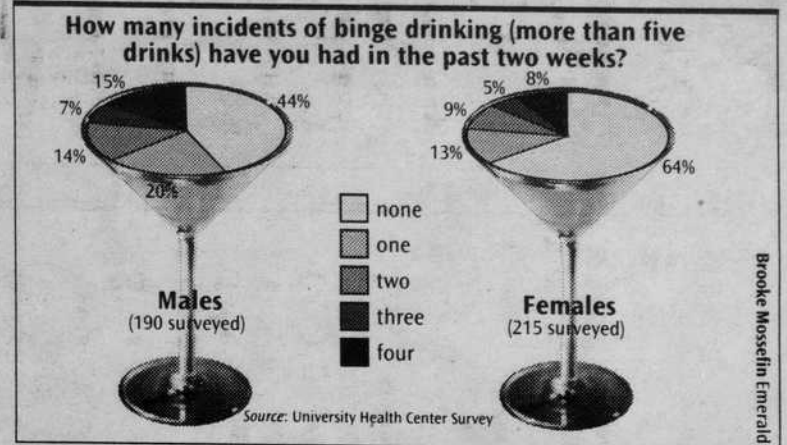
lem.

Sheryl Eyster, the University assistant dean and associate director of student life said the University's screening is not a tool for diagnosing alcoholism, but a way for students to recognize if they have risky drinking behaviors.

On screening day, students will have the opportunity to fill out an anonymous self-assessment and talk one-on-one with a professional staff member from the Health Center, Counseling Center or the Substance Abuse Prevention Program. From there, students can receive information on resources for help.

"High-risk drinking can lead to poor academic performance, property damage, injury or even death," Eyster said. "We're not attempting to offer a diagnosis in any way, we just want students to be aware of any problems they may have with drinking and give them the opportunity to get help."

Barbara Cimaglio, ODHS administrator of the Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, said it's im-



portant for anyone who is questioning their behaviors to take part in the screening, especially college students.

"Statistics show that 44 percent of college students reported binge drinking," Cimaglio said. They need to be aware of their risky drinking behavior."

Supported by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Center for Substance

Abuse Treatment and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the screening programs have grown nationwide but are still in the beginning stages, Cruise said.

"We organize the screening, but it's the screening sites, set up by the communities themselves, that conduct the screening," Cruise said.

Screening on campus will be held Thursday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the EMU River Rooms.

Crew

continued from page 1

As a result of the talks, the Bush administration believes the crew managed to destroy some of the intelligence information on the plane, the official said.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhu Bangzao, said China's decision to allow the meeting showed its "humanitarianism" and desire "to handle this case properly." Earlier, he said the crew's fate would be decided in light of a Chinese investigation. Asked when the crew would be released, Zhu replied: "I don't know."

"The U.S. should face the facts squarely, shoulder responsibility and apologize to the Chinese side instead of seeking excuses for itself," Zhu said in an earlier press conference.

In Washington, a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it appeared Beijing would insist on an official U.S. government apology before allowing the crew to leave China. But no Chinese official has made any such promise publicly.

President Jiang Zemin said the EP-3E violated international law and intruded into Chinese airspace. "The responsibility fully lies with the American side" for the collision, Jiang said, according to Zhu. "We have full evidence for that."

Jiang called for an end to U.S. surveillance flights off China's coast "so as to prevent similar accidents from happening again," Zhu said.

Xinhua said the United States should cooperate with China in investigating the incident and compensate "China's loss of life and property."

China said its fighter pilot, Wang

Wei, parachuted out after the collision and was still missing Tuesday, despite a massive search. U.S. officials say China did not respond to an offer to help search for its missing pilot.

The meeting with the crew took place somewhere in or near Haikou, the capital of Hainan, a tropical island about the size of Maryland off China's southern coast. The collision occurred about 60 miles southeast of Hainan, a popular tourist destination 400 miles west of Hong Kong.

Zhu did not respond directly to questions about whether Chinese officials have boarded the plane. But he dismissed U.S. assertions that the plane was sovereign American territory and could not be entered without permission.

"If this plane is sovereign American territory, how did it land in China?" Zhu said.

China "has the right to investigate the whole incident as well as the plane that caused it," Zhu said.

U.S. military officials say the Chinese undoubtedly boarded the plane and examined its sophisticated equipment. "We have every reason to think the Chinese have been all over the airplane," U.S. Ambassador Joseph Prueher said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

The U.S. military says the EP-3E was on a routine surveillance mission in international air space. Zhu said the plane "made a sudden and big movement," hit the Chinese fighter.

The escalating dispute also affected U.S. stocks Tuesday with the Dow Jones industrials falling 292.22 points, or 3 percent. Analysts blamed the decline on the dispute and worries over company earnings.

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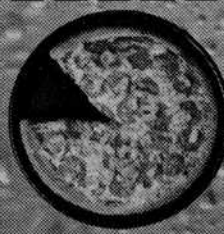
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