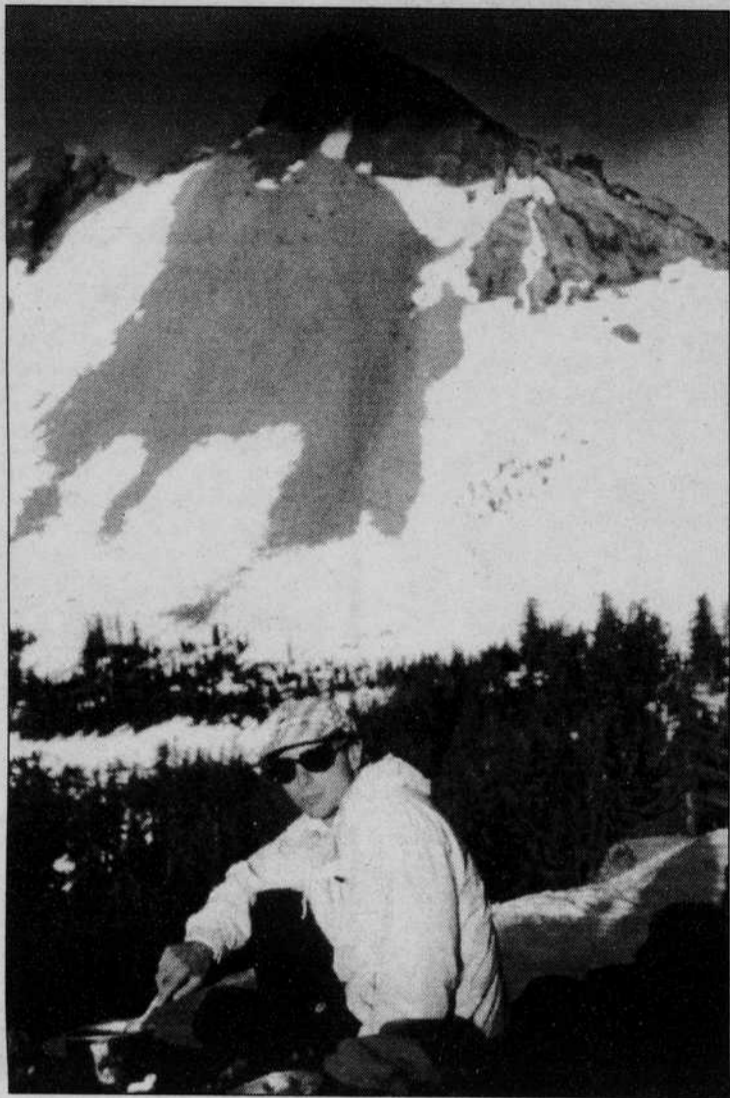


# Get Out!

Explore and enjoy the Eugene area



By Laurel Conley

Most college students who come to the U of O are aware that Eugene and its surrounding area offer many great ways to enjoy the outdoors. The majority of us are aware of the multiple hiking trails in Eugene and have heard about, or hiked, Spencer's and Skinner's Butte. While these are great for close-in hikes, most people are unaware of the hundreds of other hikes that are often less than a 45-minute drive from Eugene. Don't worry if you are not a seasoned "mountain man," there are hikes for any level of difficulty you wish to tackle.

We are all aware that exercise is great for the body, and what better way to feel healthy than enjoying a picnic on the top of Mt. June? The view from this 4618-foot summit is amazing. There are also a couple of other hikes nearby such as Sawtooth, a roundtrip hike of about 10 miles that also includes a 100-foot climb up Sawtooth Rock. If you're looking for a shorter hike, Eagle's Rest is a more leisurely alternative. This two-mile roundtrip hike also offers great views of Mt. June and the "Lost Valley." If vertical hiking is not your cup of tea, Shotgun Creek offers a scenic three-and-a-half mile trail along with a picnic area only a half-hour from Eugene. These are only a few of the most well known hikes in the Willamette Valley area.

I have made many unforgettable memories hiking and biking with my friends. With the arrival of the sun, finding ways to have fun and stay healthy become much more plentiful, if you know where to look. If you are interested in enjoying the great outdoors that Eugene and the surrounding areas have to offer, I would encourage you check out some of the following resources.

**The University of Oregon Peer Health Education Office**  
A great place to get information on the health benefits of hiking, biking, etc...located in the Health Center.

**The University of Oregon Outdoor Program**  
An amazing resource! The staff is very knowledgeable about the Oregon wilderness, and they offer a wealth of information, maps and guide books on any activity that is outdoors related. You can also initiate or join a trip. Located downstairs in the Erb Memorial Union (EMU).

**The Eugene Public Library**  
Guidebooks and maps galore! Be sure to take a look at William L. Sullivan's book *100 Hikes in the Central Oregon Cascades* where the above hikes are detailed

**LTD Bus schedule**  
Most of these hikes require a car ride to reach the trail head, but some of the closer trails can be reached simply by hopping on the bus.

# Mind Matters

By Amy Papé

In an introductory psychology course my freshman year, I was introduced to the mysterious placebo effect. We were learning about research methods when my professor described how therapy effectiveness was measured against a control group which received an inert treatment: one that the patient believed was a true therapy, but was actually a psychologically or medically useless therapy. When the "inert" provided therapeutic benefit, it is called the "placebo effect." In subsequent courses and studies, I continually came across the placebo effect merely used as a comparison tool to "real" treatments. But I wondered about this placebo effect, this phenomenon of people feeling better without true medication or therapy.

There are three areas of thought surrounding what is going on when a person experiences the placebo effect. The first is that the placebo effect is due to a person believing that they are receiving a treatment. Basically if we believe that we are getting help, our body reacts as though it is, even if the help is fake. The next theory states that the placebo effect is simply a measurement of the body taking its natural course. When left to heal itself, the body often combats

an illness. Thus the placebo is just nature at work. The third theory states that it is the process of receiving care and attention from others (in this case researchers) that affects the mood of the subject and triggers hormones that make the person feel better.

What each of these theories shares is the principle of the mind/body connection, the understanding that thoughts and attitudes affect physical health. In an emerging field of study called psychoneuroimmunology, researchers are looking at just how our moods and self-talk can boost or break down our immune systems. Janice Keicolt-Glaser, PhD, and Ronald Glaser, PhD, who are leading researchers in the field, found that during finals, stressed medical students showed a decline in immune cells that fight off tumors and viruses. Michael Antoni, PhD, at the University of Miami found that HIV-positive gay men who go through stress management training have a slower rate of decline in T cells than those who did not undergo the training. What these researchers are learning is that our emotional state plays an enormous role in the health of the body.

So, how can we use the mind-body connection to help us? We can

become aware of how our attitudes affect our bodies. If we feel really stressed, depressed, or anxious, we can get help before it affects our bodies. A great place to go is the Counseling Center above the UO Health Center. They have drop-in hours every day and the sessions are free. Call 346-3227 for more information.

Another therapy that is available at the Health Center that can help with stress, anxiety, pain management, and healing is Therapeutic Touch (TT). This energetic modality began in the 1970s by nursing professor Dolores Krieger and clairvoyant healer Dora Kunz. It is currently used in hospitals across the country (including St. Charles Medical Center in Bend) to increase the healing potential of patients.

Jude Kehoe is the Health Center's nurse TT practitioner. In TT, the practitioner uses her hands to access the body's energetic field and smooth out any areas that are out of balance. In a therapeutic touch session, the patient lies on a table while the practitioner passes her hands about one inch above the body. The therapy evokes the body's relaxation response creating a feeling of peace and relieving stress. If you want to make an appointment or get more information about TT call 346-2768.



# Laughter as Medicine

By Ted Dervin

Do you remember the last time you fell into laughing hysterics? Think about that time—what feelings came over you? Remember being a child again and how easy was it to laugh? We found humor in nearly everything. Discovering the different sounds you could make with just the air in your lungs was incredibly exciting. Hopefully this time wasn't so long ago that you have forgotten how nice it was to cut loose and laugh with your whole body. I'm one of those people who find things to be funnier than the average person. The other day, for example, I saw two squirrels fighting and I started to laugh so hard I nearly fell over. If you've ever seen this happen I'm sure you'd have done the same. They are like raging balls of fur that squeak. It is always surprising how good laughing makes us feel. For me, it is certainly a relaxation exercise—my mood is suddenly uplifted and the bad things in life instantly seem to matter less. Apparently I'm not the only one to realize how important laughing is for the body, because laughing clubs are being started all over the world.

Laughter clubs are exactly what they sound like they are: an organization of people who gather on a regular basis to partake in laughter exercises. The idea comes from the studies published in the book *Anatomy of an Illness* by American journalist, Norman Cousins. Cousins was suffering from an incurable illness of the spine which was extremely painful. By incorporating humor into his life by way of comedic movies he succeeded in helping the pain subside and diminish his symptoms. In 1995, Dr. Madan Kataria, inspired by Cousins' book, brought four people to a park in India to practice the art of laughing. The four were tentative at first, but once the health benefits were

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explained to them they were more than willing to laugh and soon the number of members in the group increased. Now there are more than 800 laughter clubs around the world.

Some of the health benefits of laughter described by Dr. Kataria, affectionately referred to as the Giggling Guru, and others include the following:

- decreased blood pressure
- reduced stress hormone levels
- increased muscle flexion
- boosted immune function by raising levels of infection-fighting T-cells, disease-fighting proteins called Gamma-interferon and B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies.
- release of endorphins the body's natural painkillers, and produces a general sense of well-being.

In one study, the physiological response produced by belly laughter was opposite of what is seen in classical stress, supporting the conclusion that mirthful laughter is a eustress state—a state that produces positive emotions.

Although there are many benefits that affect the chemistry of your body, simply practicing laughter can help you to enjoy life more fully. Many clubs are being started around the world, although none are very close to Eugene. If you are interested in setting one up in your area, the guidelines can be found at [www.indiabuzz.com/laughter](http://www.indiabuzz.com/laughter). But hey, who needs a club to laugh? There are plenty of things around Eugene that can make the laughter bubble up inside of you. If nothing else, rent your favorite comedy and let yourself make the infamous belly laugh. I myself am going in search of angry squirrels.