

State and Local

Rapid weight-loss plans called harmful

Experts frown on fad diet promises

By Suzanne Shuford
Reporter

The average American resorts to a quick calorie-reducing diet 10 times a year and this often leads to health hazards, a Texas A&M nutrition specialist says.

"Everybody wants to be sleek in a week, and something is definitely wrong," says Dr. Alice E. Hunt, nutrition specialist for the agricultural extension service at A&M. "Statistics show that people are very unsuccessful with these diets."

She says many fad diets involve special dietary supplements or products other than real food.

"Being the social beings that we are, we cannot interact socially and use a weight control supplement as a food source," Hunt says. "You can't keep that up and be a happy, healthy person."

Rapid weight-loss diets are physically harmful, Hunt says, causing weight to fluctuate up and down by 10 or more pounds.

She says the fluctuation causes an increase in blood lipid levels which, in turn, increases the chance of chronic heart disease.

Hunt says this "yo-yo syndrome" often seen in fad dieting causes distortion in body composition. A person loses lean tissue instead of fat and gains back fat instead of lean tissue, she says.

A person's percentage of body fat is more important than his weight on a scale, Hunt says.

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The ideal body fat percentage for women is 15 percent to 22 percent, while for men it's 10 percent to 22 percent, Hunt says.

Dr. Mary K. Sweeten, an A&M nutrition specialist, says another hazard of diets promising a one-pound loss per day is rapid nutritional deficiency.

"Dropping food intake to lose seven pounds a week threatens to disturb the dieter's nutritive balances," Sweeten says.

She adds that to lose a pound a

week, dieters must reduce their calorie intake by 500 calories a day—3,500 a week.

Therefore, losing seven pounds a week requires eliminating 24,500 calories from the dieter's weekly intake, Sweeten says.

The body needs a certain

amount of calories just for basic metabolism to work, she says.

Hunt says the basal metabolic rate is the rate at which the body burns calories at rest without being engaged in physical activity.

The type of people that are attracted to fad diets are those who are not knowledgeable about the correct way to lose weight, she says.

"The best way to diet is to reduce your portion sizes and make sure that you have a balanced diet

which includes fruit and vegetables, a source of protein, a source of dairy products and a source of whole grains," Hunt says.

But, she says, it's not necessary to have three square meals a day.

Hunt says people now are into a type of eating called "grazing" which allows them to get the recommended daily allowances of vitamins and minerals. "Grazing" is basically snacking all day long, she says.

"In many places you can get finger foods, foods that people can graze on that are nutritious," Hunt says.

As examples, she cites the following: salad bars, cheese and crackers, fresh fruit and hors d'oeuvres at bars.

"People don't realize that just half a cup equals a serving size, the size of a tennis ball," Hunt says.

So, even dieters with busy lifestyles can obtain good nutrition if they choose the right foods, she says.

Also, Hunt says it's important to increase physical activity while reducing calorie intake.

State senator says Texas must offer drilling incentives

By Craig Renfro
Staff Writer

Texas' natural gas reserves are running low, and unless measures are taken to provide drilling incentives the state could face a cold winter without adequate heating fuel, state Sen. John Sharp said Monday.

Sharp, D-Victoria, who is campaigning for railroad commissioner, spoke before a small crowd at Easterwood Airport. He said it is ironic that the state leading the nation in energy production could be without the fuel to warm our homes and run our factories, but the possibility looms larger each day that no new wells are drilled.

However, Sharp said, getting banks to invest in oil and gas exploration won't be easy. Sagging prices provide less incentive to drill because there is less chance of financial return, he said.

"Bankers will be skeptical to invest," he said. "They need a reasonable assurance that they will make a profit."

Sharp, a 1972 graduate of Texas A&M and state senator since 1982, said the state must consider several

alternatives to help alleviate this problem.

Most importantly, Sharp said, an oil import fee must be implemented. Most people don't want the fee because they don't want government control, he said. However, he added, that is already the situation.

"People say they are against an oil import fee because they don't want the government to control the price of oil," Sharp said. "But the countries of OPEC already control the oil price."

To provide drilling incentives, Sharp said the Railroad Commission has several alternatives. Sharp said the first possibility is to lower the gas production tax from 7.5 percent to 4.4 percent as already proposed by state comptroller Bob Bullock.

Another possibility is to grant a four-year severance tax to oil and gas producers who drill wells within six months of the enactment of the exemption.

Sharp also said the 1971 National Fuel Use Act should be repealed. It stated that natural gas can't be used as a fuel in new power generators, which decreased the demand for natural gas and caused a downfall in drilling production, he said.

Faculty Senate OKs senior exam schedule

By Sondra Pickard
Senior Staff Writer

The Faculty Senate Monday reaffirmed its position on final exams for graduating seniors by approving a resolution requiring seniors to take their finals at the same time as other students.

In January 1984, the Faculty Senate voted for a resolution which will require degree candidates to take final exams beginning in Spring 1988.

Final details on the policy's implementation haven't been finalized by the administration yet, and as the policy is written now, seniors could be given final exams at a different time than the rest of the students.

By doing this, graduation could be held at its regular time and students could determine ahead of time whether they had fulfilled graduation requirements.

This procedure, however, would place a heavy

burden on professors, who would have to schedule special exams for graduating seniors and process their grades in time for graduation.

If graduating seniors take finals during the regular test week, some may have to receive a case without a diploma because their final grades may not be ready.

The 1984 Senate resolution stated that appropriate changes should be made to provide for reporting of semester grades for seniors at the same time as for other students.

According to the resolution, efforts were to be made to maintain graduation and commissioning ceremonies, although "in no case should these administrative matters prevent implementation of the new policy."

In its action Monday, the Senate in effect restated its objection to exempting seniors from fi-

nals, as well as its objection to requiring special exams and early reporting of grades.

Sen. Jon Bond, associate professor of political science, introduced the resolution.

"We have a traditional ceremony and I recognize this," Bond said, "but when symbol comes into conflict with what it symbolizes, the faculty prerogative should prevail."

"Commencement is important, but compromise with a symbol and not what it symbolizes falls short of what the faculty at this University want," he said.

Sen. Murray Milford, professor of soil and crop sciences, expressed concern over whether the Senate should dictate the details of a policy in which the Senate's stance already had been made clear.

A roll call vote showed 48 senators for the resolution and 9 against it.

A&M student still in coma after horse-riding accident

A Texas A&M student who was injured Thursday night in a horse-riding accident is in a coma and listed in stable condition in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan, a hospital official said Monday.

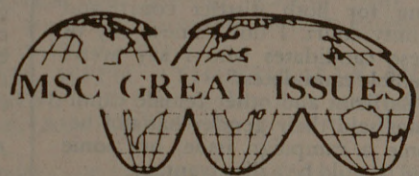
Gabrielle Bradfield, 21, a junior animal science major, suffered head injuries and underwent surgery for brain hemorrhages Friday morning.

Shelley Germany, Bradfield's

roommate, confirmed Monday that the accident happened when Bradfield fell from a horse that tripped while being led on the grounds of University stables, maintained by Parsons' Mounted Cavalry.

Bradfield is an employee at the Meat Science and Technology Center and is a member of the livestock judging team.

Germany said no visitors are being admitted to the ICU.



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