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# State conference gives insight

## Expert: Control stress with practice

By Andrea Halbert  
Reporter

Although there is no immediate cure for stress, people can learn to control it with practice, a College Station psychologist told Texas Agriculture Extension Service employees Thursday.

Jim Hyden said effective stress management is important because stress is unavoidable and can cause serious physical symptoms if it's not handled properly.

Some possible consequences of prolonged periods of high stress are irritability, fatigue, insomnia, headaches, high blood pressure, anxiety and stress-related diseases, including heart disease and cancer, Hyden said during a professional development workshop, part of the Extension Service's state conference.

"Stress," he said, "is anything that requires you to adapt. Stress is not all bad if you manage it well. It can motivate people."

Hyden said most people need

to learn to deal with anger to avoid stress-related illness.

Finding outlets for anger keeps the emotion from building up and coming out in the form of physical symptoms, he said.

"Driving ranges and punching bags are great for this," he said. "So is yard work."

Hyden said anger is a healthy emotion but can be harmful if it is repressed. Many people assume that anger is gone when they stop thinking about it consciously, he said, but usually this is not true.

Anger can bury itself in the subconscious mind and cause problems if you don't do something to get it out of your system, he said. Physical activity and discussion are much more effective ways to deal with anger than trying to forget about it, he said.

Relaxation is another important aspect of stress management, Hyden said. He said most people don't know to relax.

"Most people think they're relaxing when they pop open a cold

one and watch the ball game," he said, "that's not relaxing — that's leisure."

Hyden said leisure is important, too, but is not a substitute for "true relaxation."

"True relaxation," he said, "is a skill which is learned. It is not difficult to learn, but it does require time and effort."

It takes most people two or three months of practicing 30 minutes daily to achieve true relaxation, Hyden said. People can practice relaxing using a technique called progressive muscular relaxation, he said.

Hyden conducted a 15 minute demonstration of the technique, which involves relaxing muscles one at a time.

Hyden also said proper diet, regular exercise, effective time management, good communication skills and assertiveness training are important stress management tools, but he did not discuss those aspects.

DPS official says training will improve bad memory

By Lyn Jenkins  
Reporter

There is no such thing as a good or bad memory, only trained or untrained memory, reported Marx Howell of Texas Department of Public Safety told members of the Agricultural Extension Service.

Howell spoke on memory improvement at the State Extension Conference Thursday in the Memorial Student Center.

People remember through repetition and association, an association being the strongest method, Howell said.

"When you want to learn new information, you associate it with something you already know," Howell said.

An example Howell used was this method was simplifying the height of Japan's Mount Fuji (12,365 feet) by breaking it down and associating it to 12 months and 365 days in a year.

Once the memory has been associated with a familiar experience, it must be rehearsed through repetition, Howell said.

Howell said intensity, duration and frequency affect how people remember events.

In illustrating the intention to remember where they were and what they were doing when John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Members of the audience stood up and were able to recall in great detail the events surrounding them that day.

Howell said he only wanted to share his ideas, not impose them.

"You have got to exercise your memory if you are going to use it," Howell said.

He suggested practicing instructions with a friend to build strategy of remembering names.

One such strategy is to list carefully, make a mental picture and repeat the name, Howell said.

# Specialist stresses success skills

By Russell James  
Reporter

Effective communication skills and flexibility are the two keys to a successful business career, Dorthy Taylor, a family life specialist, said.

At the biannual meeting of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Taylor said there is always conflict on the job.

"Conflict doesn't mean a heated argument — just a disagreement over an issue," she said. "Most people don't want to change. They dig their heels into the dirt and wait for the other person to give in."

Taylor said two types of relationships exist in the business world — the missionary or individual worth and the power struggle.

Missionary workers are intimidated by progress. They'll do anything to avoid conflict or a confrontation, sacrificing personal goals and achievement. They are content to remain in the same position for years.

The second type is the power strugglers. They take a verticle climb to the top of the corporate ladder. This relationship will produce conflict with fellow employees as they work for their career goals too.

"Every life is filled with stress, and the winners are those who learn to deal with it," Taylor said. "First, you've got to like yourself. There isn't a successful person alive who doesn't believe in himself."

"You've got to believe that what you're doing is the right thing."

This is where flexibility and an open mind is a necessity, Taylor said. Listening to other points of view not only expands the amount of information you have, but creates a harmonious environment, she said.

Taylor's gave a list of the areas of conflict that usually arise in the work place and at home.

Money — who makes it, who spends it and how. Also in terms of equal salaries among co-workers, money is a source of tension.

Politics — in the sense that at times it's who you know and not the job you can do. This leads to resentment and hostility among fellow employees.

Taylor lists sex, friendships, the use of leisure time, religion, family, death and love as sources of conflict.

"Self esteem is directly related to how you can cope with conflict," Taylor said. "If you have the attitude that 'I can't then you won't.'"

Taylor also has what she calls the "6 Big Turn Ons", characteristics that successful people demonstrate: a willingness to participate, a sense of pride, a sense of teamwork, self-respect, a willingness grow individually and a responsiveness to recognition.

"If you want credit for success, then you have to accept blame for failure," she said.

Taylor said it just takes hard work and common sense to deal with conflict.

"Sometimes things just won't work out, there's nothing anyone can do," she said. "That's when it's time to agree to disagree."

Members of the audience stood up and were able to recall in great detail the events surrounding them that day.

Howell said he only wanted to share his ideas, not impose them.

"You have got to exercise your memory if you are going to use it," Howell said.

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# Convoy goes through customs station

LAREDO (AP) — The persistent Veterans' Peace Convoy on Thursday went through one Mexican customs station after having crossed the Rio Grande with 14 trucks and a school bus without incident, but in defiance of a trade embargo with Nicaragua.

"They're on their way south," said Tom Hansen, a spokesman for the group opposing U.S. policies toward Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government.

Convoy members were later delayed at a secondary customs area after Mexican authorities discovered firecrackers in one of the vehicles, an official said.

On at least three separate occasions, the U.S. Treasury Department has blocked the group's trucks from leaving the country.

The department contends that taking the vehicles in the convoy into Nicaragua would violate a 3-year-old trade embargo.

Eight "convoyistas," as they call themselves, were arrested Saturday in a tense confrontation with U.S. Customs officials, Border Patrol agents and Laredo police after Customs refused to let the convoy drive across the border.

One of the eight was rearrested early Monday and charged with blocking traffic at the same bridge when Customs again refused to let him cross.

Later Monday, however, the group said it started crossing vehicles and finally drove the last one across on Wednesday.

The group said the first 11 vehicles passed through the station without question, while the last four vehicles were told by customs agents to provide personal and vehicle identification.

"A very funny thing that hap-

pened was that different officials, police and border and treasury officials ran into us in Laredo and different places and advised us to go one at a time late at night," said convoy spokesman Jay Singer.

"And so we tried it and it worked," he said.

Convoy coordinator Raul Valdez, 40, of Austin, said, "They mace us, they arrest us, they break our windows, they impound our vehicles — and then all of a sudden they let us pass."

Valdez said he drove "Pathfinder," the lead convoy vehicle, directly past U.S. Customs officials and paid his 75-cent bridge toll at 10:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The truck was involved with all three incidents at which U.S. Customs has blocked the group's exit.

Customs spokesman Donna De La Torre said Thursday the convoy had crossed into Mexico without the knowledge or approval of the U.S. government.

He said the group still faces possible prosecution if it does not return the vehicles within 30 days.

Violating the Nicaraguan Trade Control Regulations potentially could mean fines for the group of up to \$50,000 and up to 10 years in prison.

"I think that they've realized that they made a mistake and are trying to back out of it as quietly as possible," Hansen said.

Some of the vehicles bear signs and brightly painted slogans, including a multicolored school bus emblazoned with, "Veterans Peace Convoy to Nicaragua," and "Bikes, Not Bombs."

De La Torre said the govern-

ment's policy toward the convoy had not changed.

A convoy attempt to cross on June 15 with 38 vehicles and 106 people was blocked by Customs officials who stood in the roadway and temporarily detained four of the group's trucks.

The activists then drove to Washington, D.C., tried unsuccessfully to meet with federal officials and returned to Laredo last Friday.

The government's position is that the food and medical supplies qualify as humanitarian aid exempt from the Nicaraguan Trade Control Regulations, but that the vehicles are humanitarian aid.

Convoy members say the numerous vehicles are a form of humanitarian aid for the Arabs.

The convoy is sending some tons of aid by ship.

About 10 tons was loaded on vehicles when the group arrived Laredo last Friday for its second attempt at crossing the border.

It also filed a lawsuit in Laredo against the government last week in an attempt to have its trip declared legal, but U.S. District Judge George P. Kazen has not issued a ruling.

A 4-foot-long gator was found in the algae-clogged swimming pool of an abandoned Houston home.

A 5-foot-long alligator was moved this week from a bayou into a residential area.

Another property owner reported a 7-foot-long alligator had taken up residence in his yard.

As the animals are captured, they are turned over to the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife for release in less populated areas, Armstrong said.

Armstrong has been with the agency for 5½ years and says he never gotten any alligator calls now.

# Rude reptiles invade homes of Houston residents

HOUSTON (AP) — Reports of alligators in unusual places are up in the Houston area, and officials are wondering whether to blame the recent drought for the rise in the reptile reportings.

"I just know that every one that we've picked up so far has been one foot bigger than the previous one," animal control director Dr. Robert Armstrong said Wednesday.

Over the last six weeks, Armstrong said his officers have received a variety of calls about the big varmints.

One man found a 3-foot-long alligator in the front seat of his car.

The creature apparently crawled into the vehicle through an open door while the man was in a convenience store.

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