

Stressed out

Students learn to deal with rigors of life, school as end of semester approaches

BY AMANDA PALM • PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GUY ROGERS

Amanda Gann, a senior journalism major, feels the pressure of finals lurking just around the corner. With those finals come stress and all of the effects it causes, both physical and emotional.

"Finals are coming up, and I am looking for a job, since graduation is coming up soon," she said. "The holidays are stressful, too — buying presents, helping my mom decorate at home, all that stuff. Mom has millions of parties every year, and she puts us to work at home to get everything ready, and things can get crazy."

Dr. Andy Smith, associate director of counseling at Student Counseling Services, said college can cause stress in a student's life.

"People pin a lot of hopes and dreams on college," he said. "It's a major stresser, because there is a lot riding on it. This time of the semester always finds performance stress as a big factor. People begin to wonder if they are good enough or if they are measuring up to their own or others' expectations."

Smith said stress is a fact of life. "Realizing what stressors are normal can help people deal with stress," he said. "Recognizing the normality of stress is important so that you don't get too crazy over feeling crazy. A little bit of craziness is to be expected. When stress begins to interfere with daily life, then it can become harmful."

A major cause of stress is procrastination, especially among college students, who are famous for putting things off until the last minute.

Gann considers herself to be a "former procrastinator."

"I got so far behind one year that I decided I would never do that to myself again," she said. "Now I make lists of all the things I have to do, and I check things off as I go along to manage my time. It helps my stress levels a lot."

Gann's change in behavior is just what Margaret Griffith, health education coordinator at Beutal Health Center, recommends to reduce stress levels.

"Put on paper what you have to do and when you have to get it done," she said. "There are only 24 hours in a day, and you have to sleep some of them."

Smith said procrastinating is inefficient because it forces the work and decreases the quality.

"[Procrastinating] just creates more stress for yourself," he said. "People who purposefully wait until the last minute and then push themselves really hard claim they work better that way. It's actually just a nice rationalization. If they were to set goals and plan, the quality of their work would be better."

Griffith said there is a list of physical reactions to stress, including lack of concentration, a decreased or overwhelming appetite and insomnia.

Gann said she has felt each of the symptoms as a result of her stress.

"I can't sleep at night because I stay up worrying about things," she said. "My appetite changes; I'm not as hungry as I usually am. Anything can set me off. My 'freaking out threshold' is a lot lower, so it can be much easier for me to lose it."

To deal with the effects of stress, Gann said she exercises to get her mind off things.

"I go running in the morning," she said. "It helps me to release my stress. I just think about running, not about tests or anything else that may stress me out. It lets my mind wander."

Griffith said she also has a preferred method of combating the effects of stress.

"My favorite is always humor," she said. "It diffuses stress. It's hard to be tense when you're laughing."

Griffith also said depending on your support network of friends and family and making them aware of what is going on can help you get through tough times.

Smith said it is important to work with your friends to make it through stressful times. By working together, students can help each other stay healthy, he said.

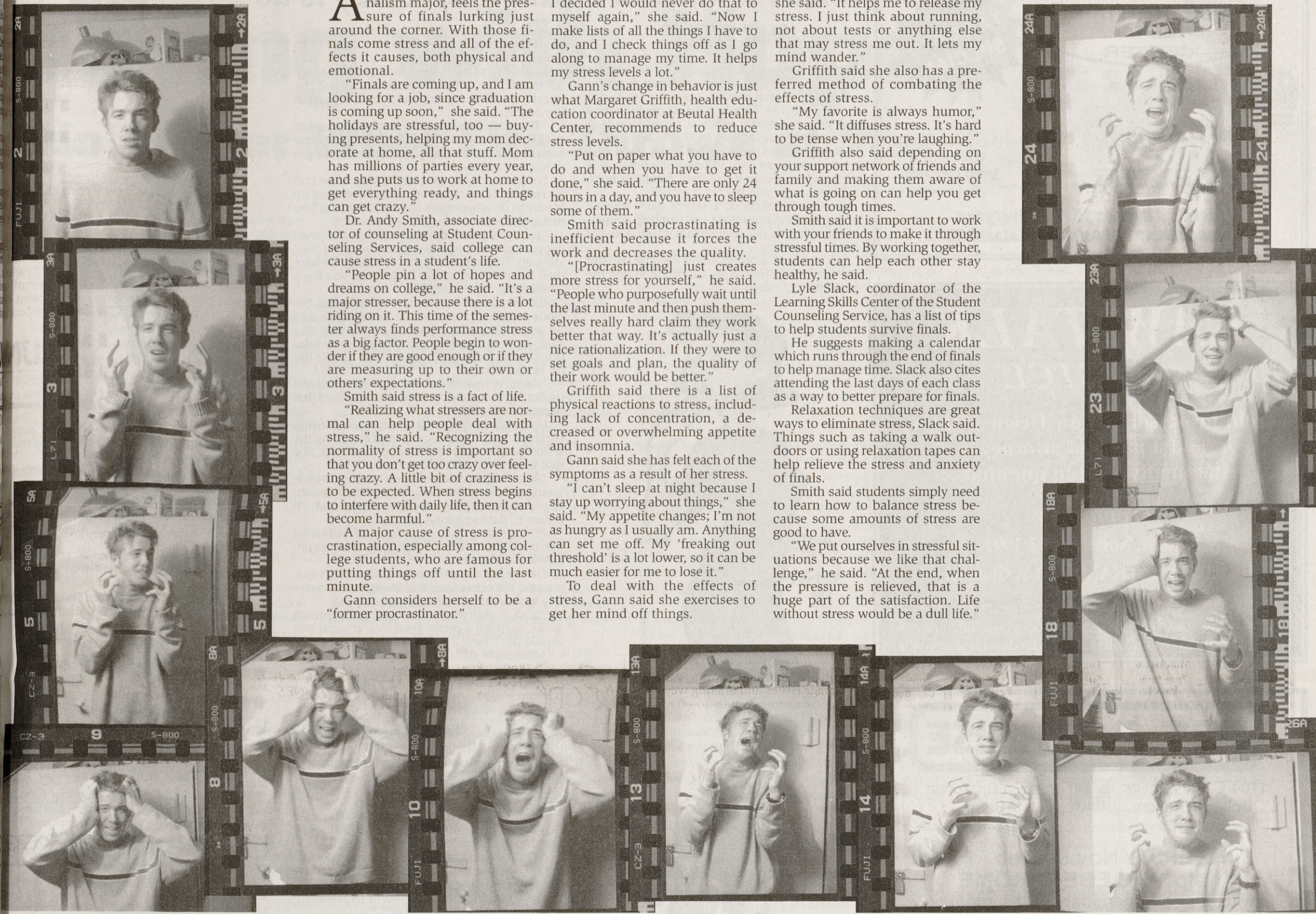
Lyle Slack, coordinator of the Learning Skills Center of the Student Counseling Service, has a list of tips to help students survive finals.

He suggests making a calendar which runs through the end of finals to help manage time. Slack also cites attending the last days of each class as a way to better prepare for finals.

Relaxation techniques are great ways to eliminate stress, Slack said. Things such as taking a walk outdoors or using relaxation tapes can help relieve the stress and anxiety of finals.

Smith said students simply need to learn how to balance stress because some amounts of stress are good to have.

"We put ourselves in stressful situations because we like that challenge," he said. "At the end, when the pressure is relieved, that is a huge part of the satisfaction. Life without stress would be a dull life."



Role reversal: National Enquirer editor slams celebrities as media manipulators

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — When it comes to institutional images, tabloid newspapers are right up there with HMOs, personal-injury attorneys and, perhaps, snakes in the grass.

Mainstream journalists look down on them, celebrities try to sue the pants off them and just about everyone glances over their shoulder before sneaking a peek at them in the checkout line at the grocery store.

How bad can they be? National Enquirer editor Steve Coz was given a rare opportunity to answer for his sins and the relentless pursuit of that juicy detail at a recent privacy-and-the-press forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Instead, he called celebrities to task, characterizing some of them as whiny babies who want it both ways: self-promotion and privacy.

"There's a \$5 billion-a-year machine out there that exists to sell an image, and whether it's true or not, it doesn't matter," he said. "It exists to get the public to buy the image so celebrities can accumulate more power, influence and money."

These media manipulators are fair game, he said, bristling at suggestions the media is invasive with its celebrity coverage.

"It's one thing to be invasive and another to be scrutinizing," he said. "I think when that line between

the word "privacy" and "scrutiny" gets blurred is where the media takes a bashing."

The increasing intersection of politics and celebrity — Donald Trump, Jesse Ventura, Warren Beatty, Alec Baldwin, even Cybill Shepherd — requires aggressive coverage of what was once considered the private lives of public figures, the 42-year-old editor said.

"There is a sense we are going through the looking glass when it comes to politics and the media (because) we have politicians who have become celebrities and celebrities who have become politicians," Coz said.

"As we move through this looking glass, there is a benefit to the Enquirer because we have already gone through that looking glass."

And they are using the word "privacy" to control the public, he said.

"We have a celebrity community that has political aspirations and political power," Coz said. "Why has privacy become such a fashionable word? 'I think what you have taking place is a huge powerful institution — the celebrities in this country — who are extending their influence and control into all areas of our lives. Now they are doing politics.'"

Celebrities only complain when they lose control of their own publicity machines, he said, citing Demi Moore and Michael Jackson as classic examples.

They protest their privacy has been invaded when unflattering photographs or scandalous stories are published — particularly in the Enquirer — but are not shy about trying to use the media to their own advantage.

Years ago, the Jackson camp fed photographs of the pop singer in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber for use in the Enquirer. The tabloid rejected them because they were poor quality.

"They had them taken again and sent them to us to use, but only if we included the headline 'Bizarre!'" he said. "It was bizarre." The Enquirer ran the picture.

Jackson is a chronic complainer his privacy is invaded.

Jackson spokesperson Bob Jones would not comment, saying the oxygen-chamber photos were published before his arrival at MJ Productions.

Moore posed nude for a Vanity Fair cover while pregnant. She showed up nude again on a magazine cover in a post-pregnancy pose and bared a lot of skin on the "Late Show With David Letterman" to show she had regained her figure.

"At the same time, she says, 'I cherish my privacy,'" Coz said. "Demi will do anything in her power to create publicity, to create a sexy image for herself."

Using a chart to make his point, he said the National Enquirer has done 25 sensational stories on Moore's private life, including details about her divorce from Bruce Willis.

"Demi would probably say we pick on her," he said. "We don't pick on her, she thrusts herself at us."

The Enquirer has not carried any stories on Oscar-winning actress Meryl Streep in five years.

"Meryl promotes her art, not herself. She's the opposite of Demi Moore," said Coz, challenging the audience to come up with any details about Streep's children or where she lives.

"Demi is a household word. She's become a part of the soap opera of our lives through her self-promotion."

Moore would not comment on the Coz statements.

"When there's a project to publicize, she publicizes it," spokesperson Pat Kingsley said. "Then she goes back to her private life."

Coz said he feels vindicated by the gradual tabloidization of mainstream media in recent years.

"When Barbara Walters sits down with Monica Lewinsky and asks 'What's phone sex?' — who's the tabloid?" Coz asks.

"We know exactly what we are. We go to cover sensational events in a sensational manner. At least I'll tell you that. A lot of the other media won't."

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