

Suicide is painful, so columnist confronts stress

By T. Marni Vos

So it's the first of December, the beginning of finals month and the opening of the Christmas season. I sit in my room, watching my stuffed bear and trying to figure out how I'm going to get three term papers in, read five books (starting with *War and Peace*) and, last but not least, how am I going to stretch \$5.87 into 13 Christmas gifts.

I'm working 24 hours a week, three of my plants have died and last Wednesday I had all four of my wisdom teeth pulled. Now a lot of you out there are going, "Jeez, why don't you just blow yourself away?"

Well, in the first place, let me remind you that suicide is against the law. Not only that, pain has never been my favorite thing. I think suicide is a cop-out way of dealing with your stress.

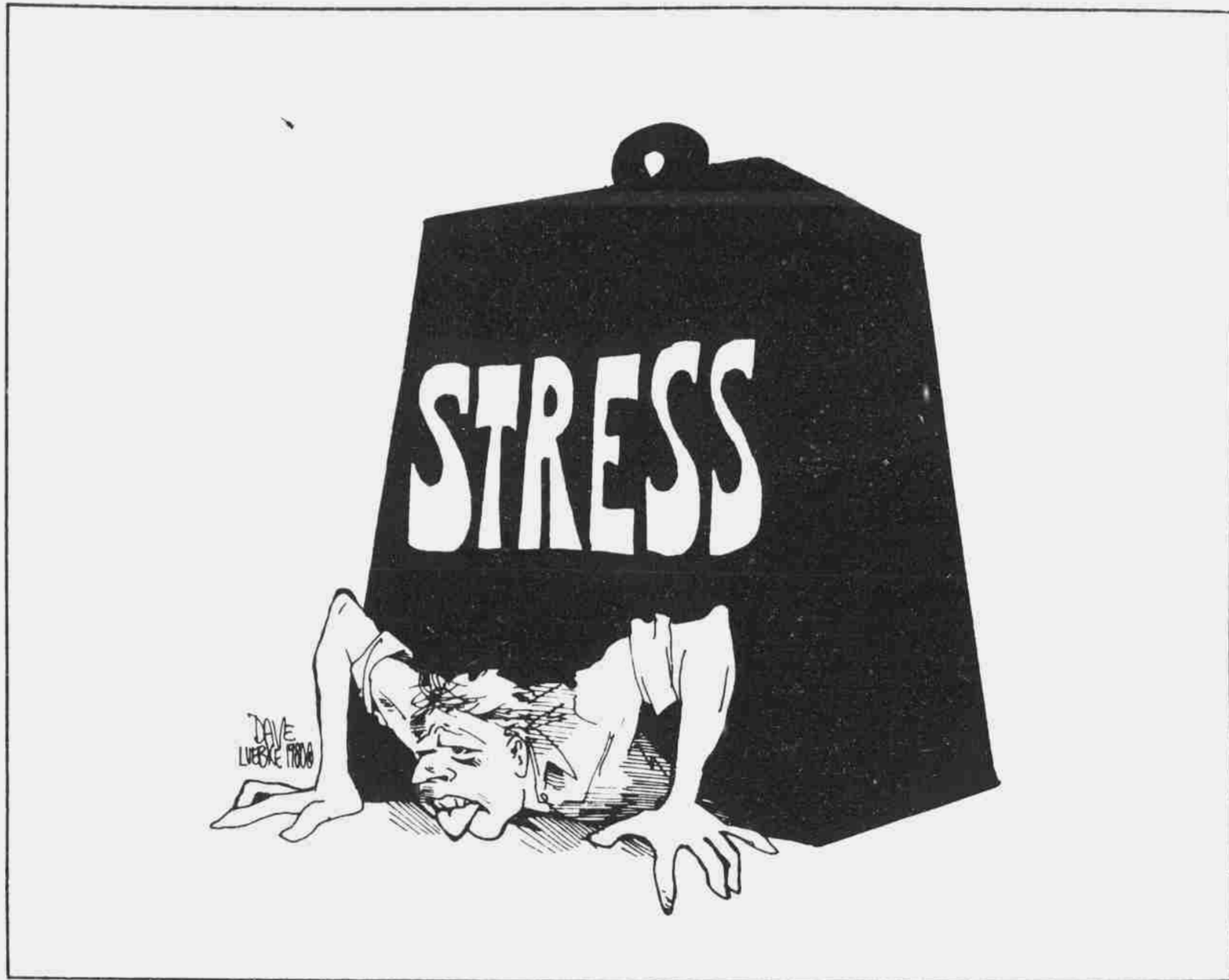
I mean everybody, every-day will probably come across some stressful situation . . . being buried alive, for instance, can cause a great deal of stress or what if, early one evening, when you were all alone, you realized you really didn't know what to do during a tornado? What if one day, after class got out, you headed back to your car only to find a foaming Doberman sitting by your back bumper? Wouldn't you feel a little stress?

How about it one night, upon returning to your home, you found a dead person on your apartment stairs or you realized, at one in the morning, that your ride back to Lincoln had forgotten you?

Stress can be caused by finding a lump in your breast . . . or not being able to find your breast.

Not all stress presents itself physically. Sometimes you have verbal warnings that stress is coming on, for example: "Tim, is that a snake?" or,

"Honey, I've really enjoyed being married to you, but you and I both know that one out of every two marriages just doesn't work . . ."



humor

"This is your pilot. I'll tell ya, I really don't know what to say . . . seems we've lost our left wing . . . This has never happened to me before and I guess I really don't know what to do. I can tell you that the temperature in the Sandhills is right around 73 degrees and we're descending at a rate of . . . of . . . well, we're going down pretty fast . . ."

"Nancy, Nancy I think that's a land mine Nancy? . . . Nancy?"

Recently, I have discovered that illness can sometimes be a coping behavior for the stress in some people's lives. This is not healthy.

According to the book *How to Survive Being Alive*, stress can cause dandruff, warts, backache etc. In other words, if on Monday you found out that turkey causes cancer, some people's reaction to that would be to come down with the common cold or flu instead of coping.

Think about it. What would you do if you found a wasp nest in your glove compartment . . . would you get a headache? Asthma? Would you have hypertension?

If you were in the emergency room and they told you that your insurance had been canceled three weeks ago, how would you react? Would you break out in acne? Have an attack of hives? Bleed to death?

There are healthier ways of dealing with your stress. Talking things out, taking a train instead of flying, reading up on tornadoes . . . becoming a *Kamikazi* pilot . . .

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