

Stressful occasions escalate as Spring Break approaches



CAMERON SIEFKES

At this time of the year, my face begins to break out. I find myself sighing much more, my fuse is much shorter and spring break seems like years away.

You've guessed it. I'm stressed. I thought I had planned it out great. My senior year was supposed to be smooth sailing. Instead, I find myself awake at 2:30 in the morning reading, writing and eating. Yes, eating.

I'm a self-proclaimed eater. I've mentioned my eating habits on many occasions. So, when I'm stressed you can find me sitting next to the little pantry in my room chowing down.

Now I will admit, the stress is brought on by my own bad habits. I'm also the self-proclaimed Queen of procrastination. If I can put something off till the last minute, I will. Both of these are unhealthy ways to deal with my stress. So, there are a few things I've had to change.

Finding other ways to channel my stress has become necessary. Otherwise, people may start to wonder what happened to Cameron. They may find I've eaten myself into a stupor.

First, I tried listening to "Rainforest Soundscapes: Soothing Rain, Thunderstorms, and Waterfalls." However, I found myself either falling asleep and getting nothing accomplished or having the urgent need to use the restroom.

Then, I pondered the idea of jogging. Then, I laughed.

Finally, I've settled on yoga. During my sessions in the morning, I'm able to clear my mind. The only thing I'm focusing on is stretching

my body and forgetting about everything I have to do. This is brand new to me, but after the few times I've done it, I've found I'm much more relaxed during the day. Of course I still eat, but I don't find myself reaching for the food in my times of stress.

My second task was to find ways in which to reduce the amount of stress in my life. The answer to that was simple. Organization and looking ahead in my schedule has been all I've really needed to do. With the classes I have this semester and the amount of work I have, there can be no room for me to procrastinate. I'm getting work done in advance and trying to do all I can to be ahead of the game. I slip up every now and then, but it is happening less and less.

One thing I want to change, and having a hard time doing, is saying no. Somehow I always end up saying yes to people and that answer usually piles something else onto my already piled upon plate.

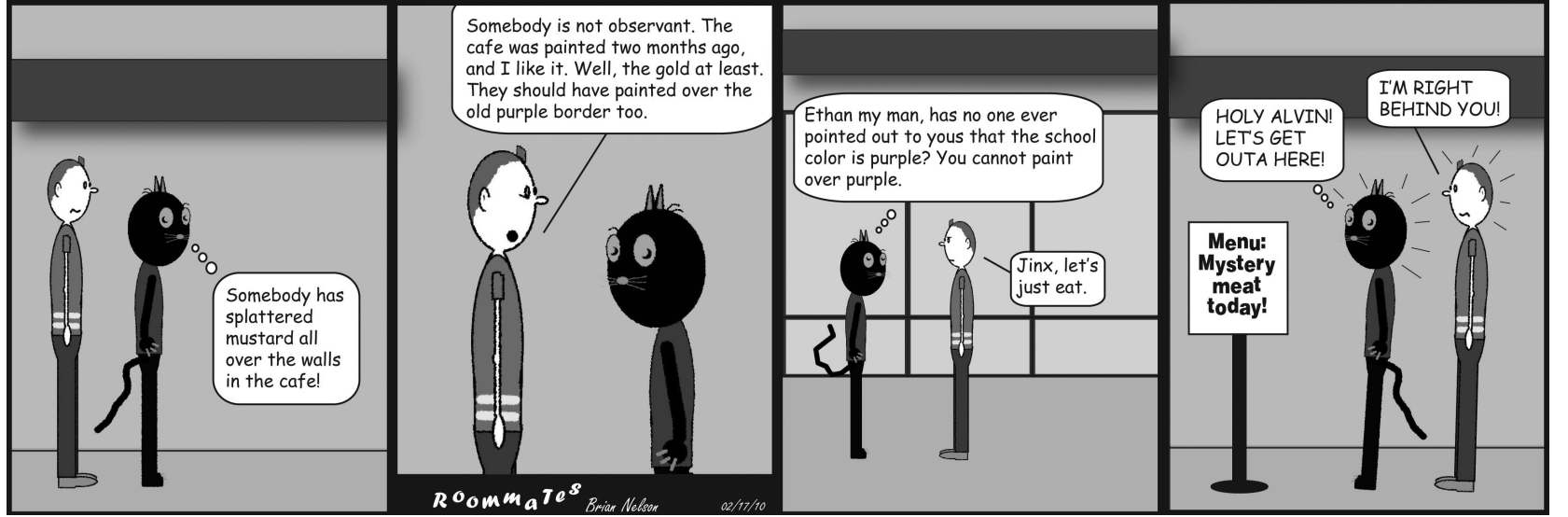
We all have our moments of stress and a lot of the time we only have ourselves to blame for it. To relieve it some people listen to music while others scrapbook or shop. I have a friend who literally stands on her head.

I think sometimes the most important thing to do is to stop and think about the situation. In that time when you think your life is coming to an end, ask yourself if what you are stressing about is a life or death situation. Is the drama with your boyfriend or girlfriend really going to change the rest of your life? Are you going to die if you forget a word in your speech in class tomorrow?

I will admit, it is very difficult to lead a stress free life. If you have the answer, please let me know.

If you can do only one thing to help yourself out just remember, you are so close. Spring Break is around the corner.

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Setting sail into the financial world is not easy

By Brian Nelson
Editor in chief

EDITORIAL

Plastic is evil. Not only does plastic litter the world, but it also allows people to spend money they don't have. Due to the current economy Americans are in debt, and while credit cards are the only means of survival for some, they are a nuisance to others.

Shopping sprees start as soon as credit has been approved and the card has been issued. A new pair of shoes, some cool shades and a few trips to the all-you-can-eat buffet compile into a sum beyond the average college student's budget. The minimum payment is made, and provides enough to pay the current month's financial fees. This pattern continues and the selected credit card continues to be fed with charges until the maximum credit line is met.

Then a new credit line is started and the same routine picks up.

Piling debt is frustrating, though financial problems are not the fault of credit cards. The spenders are at their own fault. For college students, an easy solution is to budget spending.

Setting a budget and sticking with it is easier said than done. Money is needed for the necessities, such as food and school supplies. Then there is also gas for the car and of course a little spending money, just for fun. But a little fun tends to turn into a lot of fun and the budget is pushed to the side for a week or two and the bank runs dry before the next pay date. Credit cards are left as the only option, along with the occasional cell phone pleas to parental figures

for pocket change.

The circle of debt continues. If only the worn-out saying were true: "if money only grew on trees." Or maybe children should be born with the money and budgeting knowledge. World hunger would be solved. If only.

If only young adults were not bull-headed they would listen to their parents' warnings about credit card debt. Then again, credit cards are not the only reason for debt. Student loans tend to stack upon one another for four years following high school graduation. They're easy to pay off after college, because a higher education results in a professional future along with gold, diamonds and trading currency called cash.

As a reality check, the only gold and diamonds in the distant future for undergraduates is an engagement ring, and that is only for the selected

few who are able to celebrate Valentine's Day. In other words, student loans will be tagging along into the future, right along with the car payment and eventual house payment.

This is why it is important to consider money and only spend money that can be accounted for. Student loans can be overwhelming or bearable, depending on proper planning. Applying for every possible scholarship will help, along with a part-time job and a savings account.

Money is not fun to work with, and most certainly will not blow away in a consumer-driven society. Learn to manage with what is given. Setting sail into the financial world is not easy, but is manageable.

Set a budget. Work with it. Use plastic with caution.

Brian Nelson is a senior majoring in English. You may e-mail him at brian.nelson@sc-kans.edu.

Writer expresses concerns about maintenance department's initiative

By William Neely
Letter to the editor

LETTER TO EDITOR

We've all heard the maintenance horror stories. Some tell of a faulty bathtub left unfixed for weeks, others have tales of rodent and mold problems, there's even the story of the leaky roof that resulted in a flooded room. Whatever the stories are, we all have heard them or experienced them personally; maintenance has become the butt of an ongoing series of jokes. While it may be fun to laugh as friends tell of their encounters with maintenance, we generally believe that maintenance takes care of bigger issues before getting to problems that might be deemed small in the overall picture. So what happens when a broken pipe leads to

a health code violation in the cafeteria's cleaning supply room? Surely that gets repaired fairly quickly right? Sadly, the answer is no; unless you believe the definition of fairly quickly to be four months. Yet even this example is easy to overlook as it didn't present an imminent danger to the student body. However, what happens when we have a snow storm that does present these dangers? Well if you were around to witness the empty campus last Friday, you'll know that maintenance's response to the storm was to play ostrich (that is, they stuck their heads in the sand that they were supposed

to be putting on the roadways). In the midst of cars crashing, students falling down stairs, and uncleared pathways, maintenance has the gall to call it a day at four in the afternoon. When asked why the maintenance team was sent home early, one worker said they had no clue; it was a decision made by management. This presents a real problem. It would seem that our maintenance department has put profits ahead of safety. This ineptitude has led to an unfortunate situation. Students involved in accidents on Friday due to maintenance's multiple failures may have to bear the costs of maintenance's profiteering. These costs include vehicle repairs and doctor's appointments. When these costs are calculated, I am certain that they will

be higher than the amount of profit maintenance extracted from Southwestern students by sending workers home. This should not be. We need to hold maintenance accountable for the problems they cause. We can't have maintenance appreciation days until maintenance shows some real attempt at reform. It costs too much to live on a campus where residents can't even get a leak fixed in a reasonable amount of time. It costs too much to go to a school where a single tenth of a mile stretch of road goes unsalted and leads to crashes. It costs too much to go to a school where pathways aren't cleared along main sidewalks. It's time maintenance stopped worrying about their profit margins and kept those on our campus safe.

Star-studded movie released in time for romantic holiday

By Lea Shores
Staff reporter

MOVIE REVIEW

When it comes to Valentine's Day, people fall into two categories: they either love it or hate it. Men across the world let out a collective groan when it was announced that "Valentine's Day" would premier Feb. 12, just in time for that romantic date. While the movie does fall into chick flick territory, it doesn't focus entirely on the sugary sweet side of February 14.

The movie is packed with a cast of today's biggest stars whose lives

intertwine to reveal the highs and lows of this romantic holiday. Ashton Kutcher (Reed) plays a florist who is recently engaged to Jessica Alba (Morely) and is best friends with Jennifer Garner (Julia), an elementary teacher falling too fast for her new boyfriend Patrick Dempsey (Dr. Copeland). Jessica Biel (Kara) is a high profile publicist who can only be comforted by chocolate and her annual "I Hate Love" party. Eric Dane (Sean), a professional football player struggling with a failing

career and a skeleton in the closet, is the only thing keeping Biel from locking herself in her office on the worst day of the year. Shirley Maclaine (Estelle) and Hector Elizondo (Edgar) are about to renew their wedding vows when a secret from Estelle's past threatens to tear them apart.

Others in the cast include Bradley Cooper (Holden), Anne Hathaway (Liz), Queen Latifah (Paula), Taylor Swift (Felicia), Taylor Lautner (Willy), Julia Roberts (Captain Hazeltine), George Lopez (Alphonso), Jamie Foxx (Kelvin) and Emma

Roberts (Grace).

The number of characters may make it seem like the movie is hard to follow but many of the plot lines are not very deep and the characters aren't all thoroughly developed.

Love is examined from all angles in the movie: new love, unrequited love, puppy love, and the love of a parent for a child. "Valentine's Day" also features some surprise looks at adultery, lust, forbidden love and "adult phone entertainment."

Overall, the movie is predictable. It follows the formula for a romantic

comedy and most of the characters receive their happy ending. However, there are a few surprises in store and the size of the cast allows for some surprising matches. Don't expect to pick things apart and figure out the ending for all of the characters.

Even after the infamous holiday has passed, "Valentine's Day" will provide some unexpected laughs to help pull you through the rest of February. It's a worthwhile date

movie but is more suited for a girls' night out. If this weekend left you feeling as hard and stale as the left over boxes of chocolate, grab your best girlfriends and go ogle the eye candy together. The movie won't be an award winner, but it's sure to win its way into even the bitterest hearts this month.

Lea Shores is a junior majoring in English. You may e-mail her at lea.shores@sc-kans.edu.

Word on the Hill

"What do you think about group projects?"

By Cameron Siefkes



"Group projects are more of a joke than anything because it's going to be a couple of people who put a lot of time into it and those who don't do anything."

Blake Carter
communication senior



"I think group projects are a terrible idea because many people end up not doing work and one or two people have to pull the weight for the whole group."

Jamie Girard
theatre senior



"I like group projects because I like the idea of a team, unless people don't pull their own weight."

Molly Komlofske
philosophy & religious studies sophomore



"In my experience it's a great idea that in reality doesn't work because of the free-rider effect."

Phil Schmidt
professor of history



"I like them because our many ideas can come together as one great idea."

Meeka Gentry
undecided freshman



"Half the time I get stuck with people who don't want to work and I end up doing it all. I don't think they are too bad because you interact with people you haven't met before."

Erica Dunigan
communication sophomore



"I like them because you get to share ideas and hear different perspectives, but I don't like them because it's really time consuming trying to get everyone to meet up at the same time."

Esther Hoon
psychology freshman



"I think that group projects are awesome because I like collaborating with others."

Jacob McGuire
philosophy & religious studies sophomore



"Group projects are great because it gives us a chance to collaborate with other students in ways we normally wouldn't. As a music major that's really important."

Tanner Seidel
music performance freshman

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