

# STRESS

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Professors have it.  
Your roommate has it.  
Now you've got it.  
Right about now, just  
about everyone is  
suffering from the same  
disease: **STRESS**. Read  
how you can beat it and  
come out a winner.

Even though it's the end of the semester, and at last a ray of sunshine is beginning to show through the clouds of classwork and term papers, one barrier still stands in the way of the average student: exam week. And with exams, come stress. Fortunately, stress is not a totally bad seed. In fact, stress is a part of your life every day. Stress is our bodies' reactions to various events, changes and challenges. So when it comes right down to it, it can be just as stressful to get married as it is to get arrested.

But this time of the year, students often start to feel overloaded with stress, which can cause emotional, social and physical problems.

"Stress is a very individual thing," said Lisa Mohn, director of Health and Wellness Programs at USC. "There is probably a list of hundreds of different symptoms that can be either physical, emotional or behavioral."

So as you prepare for exams and then get ready to handle the holidays, keep a few of these tips from Health and Wellness Services in mind.

■ **Organize your day.** This has to do with a little thing called time management. Make a schedule of your day ahead of time and prioritize your projects. If you have a paper due in two days, it may be better to spend more time working on it than studying for a geology exam next week.

Also, try to center yourself on a job until it's done. If you try to do too many things at once, all of them may end up half-done.

Some specific ideas are getting up 15 minutes earlier in the morning, preparing for the day the night before (packing lunch, picking out clothes and organizing books) and writing down your schedule.

■ **Don't try to be a superhero.** Don't be afraid to tell people no. This includes your very own family. Just because you're home for Christmas doesn't mean you have to spend huge amounts of time with each and every relative. Remember quality, not quantity.

And while you're involved with exams, your time for other things may be cut back, so be realistic.

"In this transition time between home and school, try to have realistic expectations," Mohn said. "If you don't have a fantasy family life during the year, it doesn't all of a sudden become a fantasy life or the perfect Ward and June Cleaver situation. We put a lot of stress on Christmas. Trying to view it as just a nice time to be away from school, but maybe not putting as much pressure on the situation for it to be ideal may be helpful."

■ **Eat well, and get enough rest, especially during exams.** You'll need to be your best to do your best, so don't tax your body during this stressful time.

And when you feel tempted to reach for a fattening snack like cookies or potato chips, trying something a little different may be the answer.

"You have to be thinking about some substitutions in advance," Mohn said. "So if you know you're going to be sitting around, and you like to eat, rather than maybe fighting that urge right then, make sure you have some healthy snacks around. It's going to be a whole lot healthier to eat a bag of light microwave popcorn or munch on carrot sticks, because a lot of times when you eat under stress it's not so much you're craving fattening or

junky foods. You want oral stimulation and just something to help the nerves, so a carrot stick can be very rewarding."

■ **Exercise.** It's cold outside, and everybody's busy, so it may be difficult to get proper exercise during exams.

"Purposely have some alternatives. Say every 15 minutes you're going to take that study break and walk around the block or the Horseshoe," Mohn said. "Then you're getting exercise, a little bit, and you're not just sitting inside the whole time."

■ **Practice being calm.** Even though it seems natural to study for exams, students rarely think about practicing relaxation.

One way to practice being calm is to relax each part of your body, starting with your toes and moving to your head. Also try breathing deeply and steadily.

Visualization is a very relaxing technique. All you have to do is imagine yourself doing the thing that makes you the happiest and most relaxed. Many people imagine themselves on a beach sipping lemonade and listening to the waves wash over the sand. What a way to start a calculus exam!

■ **Get away from it all.** This may be the most important of all. Set aside some time to do things you like to do, like reading novels or putting together models or just listening to music.

This private time is important during exam time and the winter holidays. And many times, after you enjoy a hobby for a while you feel more prepared to plunge back into studying or family events.

If you think your life is too stressful, stop by the Health and Wellness for more help and support from staff and peer health educators.



TYSON PETTIGREW The Gamecock

Owner John Hart shows off one of many iconoclastic items he sells at Unexpected Joy in Five Points.

## Shopper's heaven awaits at The Unexpected Joy

AMY SBARDALLA Staff Writer

When was the last time you visited a shop that was really, truly interesting, with a variety of fascinating wares that were actually affordable? Located on the edge of Five Points across from Food Lion, The Unexpected Joy fits this almost unheard-of bill.

As you're window shopping on a bright Saturday, paperbacks advertised for 50 cents line the sidewalk, hand-blown glass bottles gleam in display and slow-burning incense beckons. The Unexpected Joy could easily be taken for another trendy counter-cultural shop, possibly sporting smiling brass suns, stick incense, and posters of James Dean.

When you enter The Unexpected Joy, however, generic expectations falter. A monastic chorus fills the air, and the incense becomes more pungent. Mystery abounds. Icons of saints stare down from the wall. Across shelves, plants, candelabra and, of all things, a propeller beam await inspection.

Reminded of the movie "Needful Things," I know there is more here than meets the eye. But this store's proprietor is on the right side of Purgatory.

John Hart, a tall man with a brown beard and stocking cap, opened this Eastern Orthodox bookstore a year ago this Saturday, in December 1995. The store contains, on the one hand, worship aids, such as icons — pews, even — devotional books and theological guides.

In San Francisco about two years ago, he thought of the idea with a friend after seeing a particularly impressive Eastern Orthodox store. Hart moved to Columbia, selected Five Points as his location and set up shop with help from his twin brother, who painted the bright blue and yellow logo outside.

"This needed to happen," Hart said. "I was available and had resources. I'm just learning as I go along."

Although The Unexpected Joy has remained open through that critical one-year period, Hart has never taken a business course. He opened the store in response to his jobless condition.

A former German language student, he never envisioned owning a store. (Signs of hope, ye liberal arts majors and erstwhile slackers!)

Although Hart is a traditional Reader in the Orthodox church, his store is all but conventional, and one queries over the combination of iconography and odd objects — the sacred and the profane.

"I guess I have a strange sense of humor," Hart explains. "I'd put all kinds of junk out on the sidewalk, they'd pick it up and come

inside, and see the real 'treasures.'"

The "junk" to which he refers usually comprises attractive handmade objects — vases, maracas, ash trays, incense burners — of glass, wood and various metals.

It is impossible to separate the store from this man, as the shop is so much an emanation of the owner's personality.

"One of the reasons I opened is I had too many books," Hart said. He also showcases abstract and still-life paintings by his brother, who dreams of opening a gallery.

Hart awakens at 5 a.m. to cull the flea markets, antique malls and thrift stores of curios and just stuff that he likes, in hopes that others will, too.

Incenses of 120 varieties, including three grades of frankincense, as well as myrrh and copal, are imported from the Middle East, Mexico and from across the United States. Hart assures his incenses are made of resins: "You won't find any sticks or cones here."

The Unexpected Joy is quite student-friendly, given its eclectic stock of leisure reading, literature, biography, reference books and even textbooks, which students sell "for food money."

Language majors have the best digs, with all imaginable tomes and translations, particularly representing works in German, Italian and Greek.

Merchandise aside, this store already seems to have its own mythology, acquiring a handful of anecdotes in its relatively brief life. In one recollection, Hart, still incredulous, relates how his store stood untouched by a fire that ravaged neighboring shops on either side.

One customer described the store as "the soul of Five Points." Hart must contribute to this estimate, because he is one of the most affable people I have ever met.

If you do venture into The Unexpected Joy, the angst-ridden Christmas mall-pilgrimage will seem a long-forgotten nightmare. And leave the credit card at home. Hart's prices are low.

Incense usually sells for \$1 an ounce, while candles range from 25 cents to \$2.

For a selection of Christmas gifts combining seasonal atmosphere, personal warmth and originality, don't miss the sale this Saturday. In celebration of the Feast of the Unexpected Joy — the store's one-year anniversary — Hart will reduce his already abysmally low-priced items another 10 percent. Frankincense and myrrh will sell by the pound.