

Academic stress puts students on edge

by Jennifer Corn

The student enters the library intending to master American history. She forms a cocoon in an isolated corner of the library.

As she places her encyclopedia-size textbook before her, she forms a thick, imaginary force field around herself to keep out annoying intrusion.

Her eyes begin to follow the words of the book in a slow, pendulum motion, drawing the material inward like a magnet would steel.

Suddenly her eyes protrude, and the inner brow lowers as the outer brow heightens, forming a scornful look of confusion and disgust. She glances up as if to seek help but learns there is no help available.

She vigorously skims through the pages

of the book, stopping on one particular page. As a sparkle of enlightenment suddenly shines through her eyes like the turning on of a light bulb, you could assume she has found her answer.

Any college student has experienced the stress involved in last minute cramming for a big test, having three final exams on the same day, or simply struggling through a course that cannot be mastered easily.

However, most people do not realize what can result from stress due to academic pressure.

"Academic stress, like any other form of stress, places serious physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental strain on students," said Dr. Rosemary Homak, professor of psychology at Meredith. Homak teaches a new course in stress management this semester.

Homak continued by linking suicide rates among college students to academic stress.

"Statistics show that college students who committed suicide were almost always good (above average) students.

"This has been interpreted to mean that those who make good grades feel added pressure to continue making good grades or progress," said Homak.

Homak said the relationship between alcohol and drug abuse to academic stress has not been researched.

"However, statistics reveal that with stress there is an increase in alcohol and drug consumption, and in my opinion, this pertains to academic stress as well," said Homak.

Many students affected by academic stress may wonder what can be done to lessen the

strain.

Homak suggested the following "systems" for coping with academic stress:

■ Take care of yourself. Exercise, eat the right kinds of foods, and get as much rest as you can.

■ Try to keep a positive outlook.

■ Place college, as well as other life events, in proper perspective.

■ Learn to ask for help when you need it from family, friends, and professors. Marge Shelton, college counselor, is trained to help you cope with stressful events like examinations.

■ Make friends who support you and make you feel good about yourself, and seek their company.

■ Take time to participate in events that you enjoy.

'Baby Boom': It's a cute comedy

by Mary Fracker

Diane Keaton, as J.C. Wyatt, a hard-nosed business woman in New York City, faces a domestic and professional dilemma when she inherits a little pink bundle of joy from a distant relative in England. Ms. Wyatt, known by her associates as the bold and competitive "Tiger Lady," is soon put to the test: will her business sense completely overtake her maternal instinct, or will she find a happy medium as the glorified "mother/career woman" of the 80's?

Keaton's role here demands versatility, and in every instance she seems perfect for the part, whether it be professional advertising consultant, inexperienced baby sitter, live-in girlfriend, pioneer woman, entrepreneur, or loving mother. At first, she emerges as a *summa cum laude* graduate from Yale, who is married to her job at a prominent New York advertising agency. Since she is on the go 16 hours a day and working her way into a partnership at the company, motherhood is the last thing on her mind when little orphan Elizabeth enters the picture.

Elizabeth, played by twins Kristina and Michelle Kennedy, melts J.C.'s heart with her endearing coos and snaggle-toothed smiles. But J.C. soon discovers that working this little person into her single career woman's lifestyle is a bit of a challenge. J.C. is forced to take a cram course in child care, and this is where all the laughter begins. She learns that babies can't be carried like briefcases, that spaghetti and meatballs are more fun to throw than to eat, and that disposable diapers do have adhesive tabs that work better than duct tape.

Unfortunately, J.C.'s colleagues frown on her predicament, especially when little Elizabeth accompanies her to work. After seeing J.C. work with a mobile over her desk, they warn her, "You can't have it all." Besides, they're tired of having the toddler spill milk on their pin-striped business suits. It seems that J.C. really hasn't looked into the necessity of hiring a babysitter yet, but when the interviews begin, J.C. meets a motley crew of German nannies, veiled Arabian slave girls, and schizophrenic deadbeats.

J.C. tries to shake off her growing concern for Elizabeth. She even decides to put her up for adoption, but when she takes a look at the couple who will take Elizabeth away, she can't bear the thought of consigning the little one to a future life working at the Dairy Queen, wearing pink frosted lipstick. Once baby Elizabeth is in her life for good, J.C.'s climb up the career ladder halts, and she drops out of the yuppie rat race.

Next, J.C. moves to a cozy mountain cottage in Hadleyville, Vermont. Her new home is deceptively inviting, but problems arise when the roof starts leaking and the pipes freeze. Britt Leach, who plays the town plumber and roofer, patiently listens to J.C.'s temper tantrum when her repair costs run over five thousand dollars. Nevertheless, J.C. proves herself by overcoming the adversities of a dilapidated cottage and a non-existent love life. She keeps her spirits up, making jar after jar of baby apple sauce and flirting with the local veterinarian. Both pastimes eventually turn out excellent results as profits pour in from her new line of gourmet baby food, and her young vet's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

The film ends predictably but happily. Moviegoers in the mood to see a cute film should see this one. Some may not appreciate what it has to say about a woman's place, but there are some strong messages about chauvinism at the office and single women struggling for upward mobility in their career while playing supermom at home.

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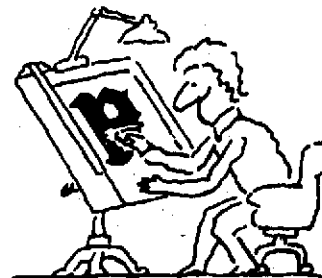
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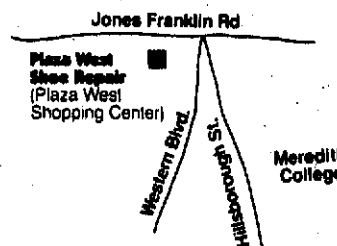
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