

Lack of Sunlight Brings On Winter Blues

But Chapel Hill Residents Aren't Prone to Suffer From Seasonal Affective Disorder

BY GREG KALISS
STAFF WRITER

Winter's colder weather and shorter days can bring more health concerns than cold toes, the flu and a need for earmuffs.

A serious psychological ailment called Seasonal Affective Disorder can be the mental equivalent of frostbite.

SAD is a type of depression caused by the lack of sunlight during the winter. Its sufferers report feeling sluggish, needing more sleep, lacking motivation and having other depression-related symptoms.

And some reports say that its effects are felt by nearly 35 million Americans, most of them women. So, "the winter blues" aren't just a mythical creation. Some people may be suffering from a genuine, weather-related depression.

Although all research on the disorder is relatively recent, studies suggest that excess melatonin, produced by the body during long periods of darkness, is responsible for feelings of depression.

If excess melatonin is the root of the disorder, it probably won't be too frequent among UNC students. Both Linda Craighead, associate professor of psychology at UNC, and Lawrence Gusman, a clinical psychologist in Southfield, Mich.,

Signs of Seasonal Affective Disorder

- Do you find you have less energy than usual?
- Do you need more sleep than usual?
- Do you have no control over your appetite or weight?
- Do you feel less productive, less creative?
- Do you withdraw socially from people or enjoy life less?
- Do you feel sad, down or depressed?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of these questions, you may have SAD.

SOURCE: DR. NORMAN ROSENTHAL

pointed out that the area's climate could keep SAD from being a problem.

"It's always going to be a low-frequency phenomenon, particularly around here," Craighead said. "It'll probably be getting a lot more attention in places like Alaska and the Scandinavian countries."

SAD is still a subcategory of depression, and its diagnosis takes time and is difficult to distinguish from standard depression, Craighead said.

"It's definitely a judgment call," she said. "Most of the time, in order to make a diagnosis, a person would have to have a clear case of depression several years in a row, in which it occurred in winter and

having the students get some hands-on experience with the University's facilities."

Carolyn Wood, Ackland's educator for University audiences, creates programs that relate to some class curricula.

"One of the aspects of my job is to create tours that are tailored to suit the needs and objectives of the classes at various levels," she said.

Wood also designs programs that include lectures, performers and conferences in conjunction with a particular exhibition. Wood has planned programs for vari-

cleared up on its own."

Once a diagnosis has been made, Craighead said, treating the ailment is not difficult. "It's actually quite treatable," she said, noting that there were two different treatment options for the disorder.

The first option is taking anti-depressant drugs, just as a person might for standard depression. But the second method, light therapy, is unique to SAD sufferers.

In light therapy, patients are exposed to extra bright light every day in an effort to simulate sunlight. The idea of the therapy is that exposure to extra light will make up for a lack of natural light and prevent the body from producing excess melatonin.

Most patients try the light therapy on a trial basis after a conjectured SAD diagnosis is made, Craighead said, adding that she had heard of patients for whom the light therapy had been successful.

And, because light therapy has fewer possible side effects than anti-depressants, it can be attractive to those who think their depression is weather-related. However, not everyone is sold on the idea that SAD is an actual ailment. "I'm not sure it's a genuine disorder," Gusman said.

While light treatment seemed to improve patients' depression, there was no absolutely clear correlation between the amount of light and any physiological changes that could cause depression, Gusman said. "Who knows whether it's physiologically or psychologically caused?" Gusman said. "There needs to be more research to clarify that."

ous departments, including English, political science, anthropology, history, economics and religious studies.

For instance, she designed a program for one political science class that worked with a photography exhibition. The exhibit dealt with images of poverty as they related to gender.

Wood has also designed programs for economics classes that show how the value of art is determined. She said, "I would encourage people to use the Ackland as a resource regardless of their field of study."

PlayMakers Co. Combines Magic, Spirituality in Holiday Production

'Beauty and the Beast' Features Distinct Twist With Oriental Costuming

BY ALISON MAXWELL
ASSISTANT ARTS/DIVERSIONS EDITOR

At the conclusion of the arduous semester, escape into a happier time and place than studying for exams — go see the PlayMakers Repertory Company's revival of "Beauty and the Beast."

According to Susanna Rinehart, who plays Belle in the production, the play can be a re-entry for students into a "childlike world."

"The play leaves room for a audience's imagination ... often you see a lot of cynicism on a college campus with people wondering what is life all about again ... with the play you can have a collective experience," she said. The performance, directed by UNC graduate Michael Wilson, follows the same storyline as the Walt Disney classic. But this version adds a distinctive twist — that of the nontraditional eastern Asian flair. This means the production will use Oriental influences in sets and costumes coupled with a dreamlike quality in lighting and music.

"The theater brings the spirituality back into the Christmas holiday in a universal way," Rinehart explained.

Wilson added that the play was full of magic and enchantment with lots of glitz. "It's a visually beautiful production," he said.

"Beauty and the Beast" unfolds the story



Susanna Rinehart as Belle surrounded by the "bed bugs" in PlayMakers' "Beauty and the Beast."

"The beast obviously has a transformation, and everyone else transforms to find the beauty within ... it is the discovery of the best of who we are."

SUSANNA RINEHART
Belle in "Beauty and the Beast"

"The beast obviously has a transformation, and everyone else transforms to find the beauty within ... it is the discovery of the best of who we are," Rinehart said.

Those who viewed the production last year will find many subtle changes in this year's performance. "It's nice to have the bedrock of work from before, but what we struggled with last year is solved," Rinehart said.

Wilson said he had added a new opening, new costumes and new choreography. But perhaps the most interesting change is the emphasis on the beast's humanity. The beast, which wears a massive 9-foot-tall costume, now has a new robe made from new material. He also is able to blink his eyelids, point his fingers and clench his fists.

"The production moves me more this year," Wilson said.

"Beauty and the Beast" officially opens Saturday, with a preview performance at 8 p.m. today.

Performances will continue at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and at 2 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 21.

Tickets are now on sale for all performances. Ticket prices range from \$9 for Tuesday community nights to \$27.50 for opening night. Call 962-PLAY for more information.

ACKLAND

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for free with their UNC ONE cards. The collector as well as three of the artists will be present.

The Ackland is also useful to University professors and teaching assistants, who take their classes to the museum.

"We have an excellent resource in the Ackland," said English graduate student Annalee Cato, who has taken her classes to visit the museum during class. "I enjoy

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