

Living with AIDS cont.

Cramming with caffeine

Students faced with exams and deadlines often turn to caffeine for a wake-up call

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suffered from depression. When Lewis-Thornton was diagnosed with full blown AIDS three years ago, she decided to break her silence.

"When I told my friends and family I was infected, it was like tons of bricks were lifted off my shoulders," she said.

Although the psychological burden of hiding her disease was alleviated, Lewis-Thornton still suffers from the physical burden of AIDS.

"Chronic fatigue- no matter how much sleep I get, it's never enough," she said.

She has gone from a size 12 to a size four, and struggles not to become size two. She suffers from sporadic menstrual cycles, prolonged yeast infections, and herpes.



Living with AIDS: Rae Lewis-Thornton shed her political career to educate young adults and adolescents about AIDS.

**"I can handle death-it's the loss of who I am that scares me."
-Rae Lewis-Thornton**

The stories of hope and inspiration that Lewis-Thornton hears while on the public speaking circuit are what keep her going. But she admits that sometimes she feels crazy for doing it.

"I want you to be transformed by the renewing of your mind," she told the crowd at the beginning of her talk. "AIDS is the most difficult thing I have ever had to do in this life."

Every day, Lewis-Thornton hears from admirers who call her extraordinary. But she is quick to downplay such hero status.

"I tell you I'm not extraordinary- I'm fighting for my life. I can handle death- it's the loss of who I am that scares me."

The Health and Wellness Center provides free AIDS testing for all students (x6164).

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (CPS) -- Gordon Braun, a third-year University of Florida exercise and sports science major, slept a total of four or five hours during finals week last week between studying for general chemistry and qualitative analysis, human anatomy and personal growth.

In that time span he went through two boxes of Vivarin and about 20 cans of Mountain Dew or Dr. Pepper.

"I was just so...so...wired," he said, describing how his knees and hands shook from all the caffeine.

Eric Bragger, a second-year UF microbiology major, described how an all-nighter actually helped him pull off a B+ on a western civilization exam, for which he said he had "no clue."

"It's so quiet, and it's so dark, and you've got your desk lamp on or something, and you're concentrating so hard..." Bragger

said. "But then on the other hand, you're so tired...and all of a sudden your brain stops, and you're like, 'I need another soda.'"

Most students have at one time or another used caffeine to pull them through a long night of studying. According to Loren Chastain, a student in UF's pharmacy program, caffeine is a stimulating drug that when taken in moderation can improve awareness, performance and mood.

"The system is acting on an increased level in carrying out its normal functions," he said, describing the drug's effects.

On The Down Side
Though caffeine is primarily found in coffee, tea, coke and chocolate, according to a Food and Drug Administration consumer report, it also is found in baked goods, frozen dairy

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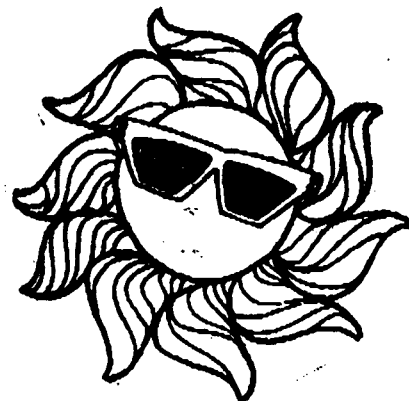
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- MATH 021
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- MATH 040
- MATH 110
- MATH 140
- MATH 141
- MATH 251
- MCH T 111
- MRKTG 470
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- MUSIC 005
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- PHIL 006
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- PSYCH 130
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- THEA 100
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