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Eating disorders: It's time to talk about it

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Features Editor

This year, in honor of the National Eating Disorders Association's Eating Disorder Awareness Week, Augsburg's Center for Counseling and Health Promotion (CCHP) is launching its annual program to bring students, male and female, a new, positive message regarding healthy eating habits and body image.

Cacy Miranda, one of Augsburg's wonderful psychologists from the CCHP, wishes to use this week as an opportunity to stress the importance of having a healthy relationship with food, something she believes many young women, and men, struggle with. The theme of this year's event is "It's time to talk about it."

"The goal of the event is to create conversation," explains Miranda, "there is a lot of shame surrounding this sort of disorder. We really want to encourage sufferers to start the initial conversation."

We live in a society that is bombarded with images—images of beauty, sex, and everything in between. From the gossip magazines, to waifish supermodels, we are constantly being confronted with images of how our society has determined we ought to look. If a quick surf through the television channels, featuring ads inundated with thin, flawless women, and muscular, attractive men isn't enough to convince you of this trend, take a look at the recent cover of February's Sports Illustrated "Swimsuit Edition."

When we add to this trend the immense stress level and desire to succeed of most college students, it is no wonder why so many of people our age struggle with negative body image. And, contrary to popular belief, its not only women who suffer from these problematic attitudes, In fact, as Miranda explains, nearly 40 percent of those who binge and purge are men. One of the offshoots of the media's incessant coverage of this topic has been the tendency to name every instance of unhealthy or disordered eating as either anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or some combination of the two. This, according to Miranda, is an ineffective way of confronting this incredibly sensitive, private issue.

While anorexia and bulimia are two very prevalent forms of disordered eating, Miranda emphasizes that there are a multitude of forms disordered eating and general body image issues can take, and labeling them is not especially helpful. According to Miranda, "what is important is rediscovering healthy eating—it's really about changing our attitudes toward food, and redefining the relationship with food."

As Miranda explains, there are usually issues below the surface that cause one to have an unhealthy attitude toward food. Through the process of recovery from an eating disorder, Beth Carlson, another psychologist from the CCHP, often finds that the sufferer is hungry for something else that is missing from his/her life, whether that is a supportive relationship, a means of self-expression, or an outlet for stress. "It's usually not about the food—it's really about the feeling," explains Carlson.

This is where counseling can play a very important role in the healing process. "To have a space to name it [the problem] and to talk about it, that's really what counseling is about," says Carlson. "Counseling is a place for people to rediscover their own wisdom, and to say, 'Maybe I don't know everything, and could use some support.'"

Miranda elaborates, "It takes courage to ask for help," explaining, "we understand the shame, the secrecy, and the constant thinking about it that goes along with disordered eating. Truly, if someone is struggling with their food relationship, there is so much help available." Miranda also stressed that at the CCHP anyone can walk in at anytime, without any appointment necessary.

Even if you don't think you are struggling with unhealthy eating, the program is sure to provide some helpful insights. The CCHP will be tabling in Christenson starting at 1 p.m. this upcoming Monday, Feb. 22, offering plenty of creative ways to express our attitudes towards food. Following this event, on Tuesday, the 23 from 6-7:30 p.m., Nicole Johns, author of the book *Purge: Rehab Diaries*, will lead a discussion on the recovery process. She will tell the story of her own eating disorder while she was a graduate student, often implementing spoken word poetry to help tell her story.

Along with the Johns discussion, the CCHP will return to the Christenson Lobby on Wednesday, offering helpful information about nutrition and healthy eating. Finally, on Thursday Feb 25, the CCHP thinks, "It's time to talk about eating mindfully." In order to experience this important Eastern method of enjoying our food, the CCHP is sponsoring a dinner with Buddhist spiritual director Brother ChiSing. The point of this event is to teach students to have a healthy relationship with food, including questioning, "why am I eating? How does it feel?" According to Miranda, this method of dining can really help students to recognize a new way of enjoying their food and encourage healthier attitudes.

If you think you may be struggling with disordered eating, it is important to know that there is help available to you. The CCHP is always available to help. You don't even need to make an appointment, just stop by. If you don't feel ready to talk with someone face to face about your concerns, there is a self-test available online, just go to www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/eat/asp.

According to a recent poll by the National Eating Disorders Association, nearly twenty percent of college students admit to struggling with an eating disorder, and the actual number of those affected is estimated to be much higher. This issue affects so many young men and women, and it is not something to be ignored, ashamed of, or embarrassed about. Help is available, and recovery is possible—you have to take the first step.

For more information on any of the topics covered in this article, visit www.nationaleatingdisorders.org, http://www.augsburg.edu/cchp/eatingconcerns.html, www.edap.org, the eating disorder institute at Park Nicollet's website at www.parknicollet.com/edi, or The Emily Program's website at www.emilyprogram.com.

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EATING DISORDERS
BOBSLED
FOOD
SPEED SKATING
AUSGBURG COLLEGE
FIGURE SKATING
SPRING
APOLLO
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OHNO
STEP-UP
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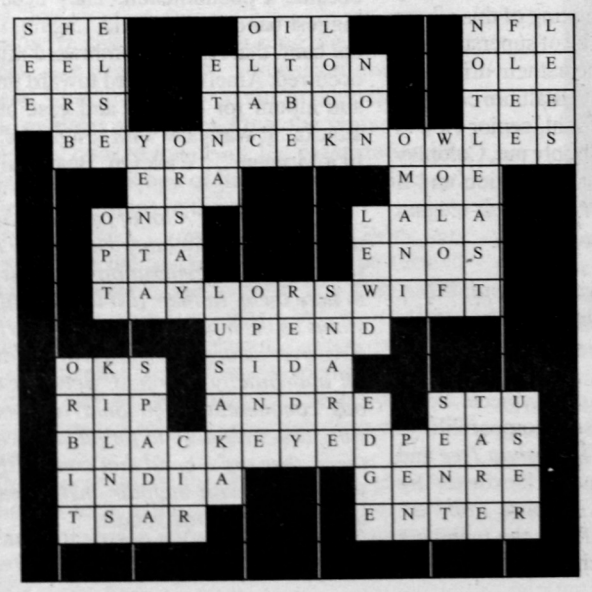

HOROSCOPES

Sam Smith and Colin Stanhill, 6th Floor Ballers
Staff Writers

Your birthday this week: Birthdays mean nothing to androids.

Aries (March 21 to April 20): Your natal moon is a waxed Sagittarius, which means that this week you will be especially compatible with Avantio and the Philistine (KAUG's newest radio show, Tuesdays at 10:10 p.m.).

Taurus (April 21 to May 20): Time has a way of healing all wounds. I dare you to try and keep that in mind during your knee surgery this weekend.

Gemini (May 21 to June 21): After all these years you will finally catch what all the hubbub is about this "internet" – when you realize you don't have to be in your car to tune in to Avantio and the Philistine (___ on your FM dial) but can listen online by going to augsburg.edu/kaug this Tuesday night at 10:10. Yippie!

Cancer (June 22 to July 22): Enlivened youth gather in city centers to overthrow tyranny and you rot away at the bar of Post 428, such are the inequalities of Legion.

Leo (July 23 to August 22): Aquarius's moon is right in your face this week and you're really going to have a bum time of it. Flush those nasty thoughts and wipe your spirit clean this Tuesday at 10:10…it's Avantio and the Philistine!

Virgo (August 23 to September 22): You will skip enlightenment in favor of an emotional meltdown this week when you realize that money is an illusion disseminated by the federal government and perpetuated by a billowing mass of stooges like you.

Libra (September 23 to October 22): All this week you'll keep recalling that hysterical segment about Norwegianhood from last Tuesday night's Avantio and the Philistine. Or didn't you listen in? Perhaps this is the week you start putting some effort into staying hip.

Scorpio (October 23 to November 21): It's cool. They weren't using it anyway, right? I mean, and it's not like they can't get more. But you, man, you need this! Be cool!

Sagittarius (November 22 to December 23): This is not the time for rash decisions with dramatic consequences. This week, fill that time you would normally spend on base-jumping by taking a little time out for triviality with Avantio and the Philistine, Tuesday at 10:10 p.m. on KAUG radio!

Capricorn (December 24 to January 19): This week, you're bringing nihilism back. Nope, don't argue. We're putting this on your shoulders.

Aquarius (January 20 to February 18): Hey, sports fans! Tune in at 8:00 on Tuesdays for The Backdoor Cut for an occasionally raunchy, and always compelling journey into sport.

Pisces (February 19 to March 20): Hey, everyone else! Guess…