Meet You In Vancouver, BC
by John G. Carlson, Ph.D.

We will conduct a somewhat informal meeting on April 11 that will include first, a presentation by Jack Rachman. Dr. Rachman is renown for, among other things, his many significant contributions in the area of fear. He has written on a variety of fear disorders, including obsessions, compulsions, agoraphobia, panic, and others, and on fear management in the clinical setting. His will be one of the exciting presentations of the entire conference and an update on the underpinnings of the stress response.

Following the presentation, we will conduct a “business meeting” in which we will go over a few details of ISMA-USA--our budget, our efforts to become a nonprofit entity, our interface with the International Journal of Stress Management, our new web page, and other matters. But, more importantly, we will have a chance to meet one another face to face, to share ideas about the future of our organization, and to discuss particular directions--such as the development of a certification process in stress management. For information contact: John G. Carlson, Chair, ISMA-USA; Phone: 808/956-6006; Fax: 808/956-4700; Email: ISMAJGC@AOL.com.

*In cooperation with the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY AND BIOFEEDBACK This meeting will be held April 7-11, 1999, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

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ISMA Has A Web Site:
www.stress-management-isma.org
by Betty McGuigan, M.Ed.

ISMA launched its web site in early December 1998 with a threefold purpose. It provides information to the public about stress, tension and methods of relaxation. This site also informs professionals about the organization, its branches and its Journal. Finally it provides a means for the members to keep current on the organization's activities, fellow members' publications and links to their web sites.

The site is divided into several sections. About ISMA provides a brief history of the organization and lists the board members. The Stress Tension and Relaxation section gives information on stress related issues. Our publication, International Journal of Stress Management, section includes journal and subscription information and a page with the current issue's table of contents. A Roster of International Branches gives mailing and email addresses for each branch contact person. There is a page posting meeting information, a page for membership application and a page on how to contact leaders in the organization.

The web site is continuously maintained to keep it timely. It is also a work in progress with additions planned. A number of pages are under construction. Each international branch will have pages of information pertinent to that branch. These pages will be posted in two languages - the branch members' native language and English.

ISMA-USA already has its own pages with a welcome letter from our Chair, information on our branch's purposes, its

See fliers for Conference and Workshop registration

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From the Chair …

John G. Carlson, Ph.D.

Let me take this opportunity to thank each of you for renewing your ISMA-USA membership. Through your renewal you will continue to participate in a network of dedicated people working in the field of stress management. Your continued support and contribution are important and will make a positive difference.

With this issue we inaugurate the new ISMA-USA Newsletter. As you may remember, this new form for communication among members of ISMA-USA was adopted in our bylaws last year. Here is everyone’s chance to express themselves on the issues facing us, to begin dialogues regarding stress management methods, to inform members of happenings at your local level, and the like. Plus, we will gratefully receive submissions to upcoming Newsletters in the form of descriptions of techniques you find useful, books or other materials you find helpful, announcements of upcoming events, and opinions you would like to share. This is also a potential medium for advertising your services and products. In short, the Newsletter will be whatever you want it to be as we build our fledgling organization.

At some point, for those of you who have joined the computer revolution perhaps we will interface the Newsletter with our web page to save on time and mailing hassles. Give us your thoughts.

As Chair this year, let me also use this opportunity to say that ahead of us are several tasks, none of them daunting but all of them needing your input and energy as we forge ahead. This is the year for our becoming a nonprofit organization now that--effective this January--we have officers in place, bylaws, and a statement of mission. This is also the year of our first meeting of the organization, as described elsewhere in this Newsletter. We surely hope that, despite the brevity of the program, we can encourage enough of you to attend who may also want to participate in the AAPB meeting to give us the ideas and inspiration we need during the coming year.

An important discussion in the business meeting will concern the possibility of our offering a certification program in stress management, an extension of the mission of the Association that has exciting possibilities in terms of growth and publicity for ISMA-USA as well as a chance to help bring higher standards and structure to the practice of stress management.

In short, this will be a momentous year and this Newsletter is just one of the exciting new pieces. Join with me in thanking the editor and all the contributors for helping us get started on this extension of the services of ISMA-USA.

A page listing useful links will make it possible for the visitor to easily go to other ISMA members’ web sites. If you are an ISMA member, have a web site, and want to have this link to your site, contact the editor to make arrangements.

Members are encouraged to check in often, and those with questions, or suggestions for additions and changes to the web site can contact the editor, Betty McGuigan at ISMAusaBJM@aol.com or through the web site.
From the Chair - Elect . . .

Richard H. Rahe, M.D.

Hello, to all of you faithful members! You have been the backbone of this Society, and are the ones who will help it grow. F. J. McGuigan had a splendid vision and nourished his creation through its early years. Now, for the enterprise to thrive, it must recruit additional talented members and solicit more outstanding scientific contributions. In working with John Carlson during this his Chairmanship year, the growth of our society and journal will be my major focus.

One way to generate additional outstanding articles for our journal is to write to our colleagues in stress research and let them know of this Society's particular area of emphasis—the application and evaluation of tools for stress management. In this area we can achieve some individuality, as most other stress journals focus on publishing basic research. Recall that Dr. McGuigan's initial emphasis for this Society was on the dissemination of stress management approaches. Our journal could become a major showcase for such an emphasis.

Additionally, I plan to work with Dr. Carlson and the Board to re-evaluate the current practice of holding our annual meeting in concert with the Applied Physiology and Biofeedback Society. Do the majority of our members belong to this other society? Would we get a larger turnout if we attached ourselves to another stress studies society which held its meetings in an easy-to-travel-to city in the U.S.?

I look forward to getting to know many of you over the next couple of years. Feel free to send me your bright ideas as well as your concerns! My e-mail is rahe@unr.edu.

(Forget what is says inside the journal cover. The University of Nevada, Reno (unr in my e-mail address), is in Reno and not in Sparks - our neighboring city.)

This Newsletter should become an important new vehicle for fostering members' communications. We want your contributions and particularly welcome those that generate lively discussion and debate.

The detrimental effects of chronic stress on health have attracted considerable scientific interest. The neuromuscular events that occur as a reaction to a stressor alter the chemical composition of the body in a manner that lowers resistance to disease. In fact, this line of study has progressed to the stage, wherein, the precise molecular steps that underline stress induced biochemical changes have been identified. Now, scientists are considering the opposite concept-- the effects of a relaxed striated muscular system and positive expectation on the body and the mechanisms through which they allow healing to take place.

One area that is attracting new scientific interest is the placebo effect, whereby; the mere expectation of healing brings about an improvement in health. Now doctors are recognizing that beliefs, desires, and thoughts are much more powerful than were previously thought. Sandra Blakeslee, writing in the New York Times reported that placebos have been found to increase the amount of hair of bald men, effectively control asthma and reduce pain and swelling. Moreover, placebos can produce change in vital signs and induce effects such as nausea and diarrhea.

One line of investigation that is currently being pursued is the interactions between different systems of the body, with each other, and with the external environment. It seems that during information processing, memories and emotions interpret incoming information and produce an expectancy of outcome based on experience. In doing so, complex circuits activate emotional states, as well as, the autonomic and skeletal systems. Thus, our response to a medical procedure is based on previous experiences with medical personnel that were followed by symptom relief. Later, when the active ingredient is removed, the treatment protocol alone produces a similar effect. This process is similar to the pairing of meat powder with a bell in Pavlov's experiment. It is not known how this system might work in detail where placebo effects are concerned.

It seems that the next scientific task will be to identify biological processes, whereby, thoughts and beliefs promote healing and health.

Reference


Mary Macken is a doctoral student at United States International University, San Diego, California.
FOCUS ON STRESS MANAGEMENT

Managing Time for Personal Effectiveness:
Achieving Goals With Less Stress
by Betty Clark Carlson, Ed.D.

As we begin the last year of the 90s, many of us have promised ourselves "this year I am going to stay on top of things and not fall behind like I always do, this year I am going to accomplish something, this year is going to be different". Armed with good intentions and the clean, inviting pages of a new calendar, we may begin by saying we are going to "do better", with hoped for outcomes such as higher productivity, reduced stress levels, and more positive relationships with colleagues, coworkers, and family members. This is a good start; saying we're going to do better is the first important step - verbalizing intent is necessary for change to take place. However, saying we are going to change is only the beginning. Self-talk is not the same as action - and action is what is necessary to move from intent to implementation. Most of us do want to be more effective and efficient in our use of time. We want to be more organized, more accomplished, and feel better about how we manage time, one of our most precious resources. We want to move away from missed deadlines, late nights trying to finish things we have procrastinated about for months, lost opportunities, and strained relationships with people we care about. Instead, we want to move towards outcomes that are life enhancing and result in lowered stress: achievement of valued personal and professional goals, an improved self-image, and positive relationships with colleagues, family members, and friends. The good news is that acquiring time management skills and putting them into practice can be learned. The following steps for effective time management can provide a guide for putting your intentions into action, lowering your stress, and helping you achieve your goals.

Betty Clark Carlson is a professor in Special Education, Chaminade University of Honolulu, Honolulu, Hawaii.

1. Identify your personal and work-related priorities.
This is a key step in the process. Think carefully about outcomes that are important to you. Write them down, being as specific as possible. Specify exactly what you want to accomplish and by when. If you have multiple priorities in the same area (personal or professional), try to select only one or two initially, or try to rank them as to importance. Trying to work on too many at the same time will increase, rather than lower, your stress level.

2. Translate your priorities into concrete goals, with component activities.
Break each goal into its component activities; identify what steps are needed to achieve the goal. Identify the requirements and resources you need related to each activity step. This helps you organize for success and have what you need to move forward towards goal attainment. Pinpointing resources is especially important if accomplishment of your goal requires the cooperation or assistance of other people.

3. Identify deadlines/intermediary time frames related to each activity step and goal attainment.
These could include deadlines for personal goals (sign up for an exercise class by March 1) or work-related goals such as report deadlines (gather needed data to complete quarterly report by March 30). Write these activities and their individual deadlines on your calendar; scheduling them gives you a direction and affirms your commitment to carry them through, step by step. If you need access to libraries, media/computing centers, or other resources, find out their availability before you need them. Plan time in your own schedule to access these resources in advance; don't wait until the day before a deadline occurs.

4. Consider your monthly calendar or planning notebook a time-saving device.
Keep it with you and use it to schedule important activities, due dates, deadlines, and appointments. Consistent use of your calendar will provide you with a visual reminder and help you keep track of your commitments. Periodically review your calendar to assess your progress in accomplishing the steps to your goals. Highlight important dates with a marker; this will keep them visible and can serve as a colorful reminder of your planned steps towards goal attainment.

5. Learn to say "No" to opportunities and requests that take your time and don't move you forward towards goal attainment.
To the extent feasible, saying "no" is an important safeguard of your time. Doing so with courtesy and conviction will make it easier to say "yes" at a later date and simultaneously affirm your commitment to yourself to follow through on your scheduled activities.

6. Identify your own barriers to effective use of time.
If you find you tend to procrastinate (join the human race!), overbook yourself, or "forget" to use a planner or calendar, do some thinking about why. Discovering the motivation for your resistance to time management may assist in understanding your behavior, or lack of it. Is the task to be done boring? Do you really want to do it? Do you feel "too controlled" by the use of a calendar or planner? Reflecting on your own thoughts and feelings about using time may help identify areas you may want to explore further, especially if you aren't satisfied with your achievement of personal or professional goals.

7. Strive for a balance between “doing” and “being”.
Remember to plan some "fun time" in your schedule. With better time management strategies, you can be more productive, experience improved relationships, and enjoy more "good times" with a minimum of anxiety and stress. Doing "more" is not the ultimate goal of effective time management. More is not necessarily better, and cramming your schedule full to "to do" items doesn't necessarily lead to higher life satisfaction. Effective time management is a tool to assist you to achieve meaningful life outcomes, not merely "more" outcomes. Use the steps presented here as a guide to your own journey of meaningful accomplishment. Good luck!
Stress Management Applications In a Business Consulting Practice  
by Wes Sime, Ph.D./MPH/Ph.D.

BACKGROUND
ISMA has a strong history of innovative ideas in stress management. It appears that we are in an era where more of this is needed. Many faithful members of the association have demonstrated very profound and effective methods of teaching stress management, but few have made a solid business practice of it. Recently, one of the major insurance carriers in the USA tapped me for information on how to provide Stress Management Services for the staff involved in workers compensation cases. Obviously there was value in cost-savings to them for providing this service. Similarly, in the USA there are pharmaceutical companies providing stress management services to their professional providers while actively marketing to the public a plethora of medications to give quick fix, temporary, inadequate relief of stress and tension symptoms. What a contrast while managed care providers are cutting back on clinical services for non-medical, psychological needs of their patients.

NEW OPTIONS IN BUSINESS CONSULTING
On Sunday and Monday April 11-12th ISMA is hosting the first Stress Management Business Consulting Workshop at the Hyatt Regency in Vancouver, BC, immediately following the end of the AAPB/ISMA conference and the ISMA business meeting. It is scheduled to begin at 2:30pm Sunday and will end at 5:00pm on Monday April 12th.

The workshop is designed to create an opportunity for participants to learn methods of establishing a successful business practice while also making a significant positive impact on employee health and in corporate efficiency.

The cost for this 15 hour workshop is $295 to the public. The workshop fee for members of ISMA has been reduced to $150. Continuing Education Credits are under review.

For more information on the content of the workshop and to make advanced registration for the workshop - - see the descriptive materials and the application form provided with this newsletter. For more specific information you may contact Dr. Sime directly at email address: wsime@unlinib.unl.edu, and also check the web site description of Stress Management Content at www.unl.edu/stress

OTHER SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PRACTICES IN STRESS MANAGEMENT
In Europe there are other examples of successful business practice in organizational stress management. Cary Cooper in the United Kingdom has documented excellent research results, numerous papers and books to substantiate his work internally with corporations. Human resource loss and damage control are two of the important stress outcome variables that insurance companies consider in the evaluation of stress management services.

Another successful model exists in Scandinavia. My good friend, Sven Setterlind. He has a 10-15 year history of successful business practice consulting with many companies throughout Sweden, Norway and Denmark. He utilizes the Stress Profile, a 224 item, well-validated survey that identifies personal stress vulnerability together with family, social and occupational factors that contribute to the level of stress. His follow-up consultation with individuals and across departments throughout the organization provides valuable insight to managers. Identifying areas of need and solution-oriented action plans to resolve some problems are examples of the practical stress coping methods that can be discovered in this process. I have used his instrument and the consulting methods in several demonstration projects and have found that it works exceptionally well when applied in a professional or business setting where the leadership is supportive and motivated toward long range goals.

Finding ways to market these services in the USA is the most difficult issue for most professionals in ISMA. The Stress Management Business Consulting Workshop described herein will be a practical experience featuring case studies, skills in networking, marketing, negotiating, and day-to-day consulting. Participants will be actively involved in developing a business plan and will gain an understanding of the advanced applications of stress management in several work settings to include: clinical, educational, corporate, community and sport competition.

PRESENTER:
The workshop presenter is Dr. Wes Sime, Professor in Health and Human Performance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is a long standing member of ISMA and was co-founder of the Stress Management Education Certification Program. He has conducted research on occupational stress, exercise therapy for depression and competitive stress management. Dr. Sime is one of only a few professionals alive who worked with Edmund Jacobson, the originator of Progressive Relaxation. For questions regarding workshop content: Contact Dr. Sime by email: wsime@uninfo.unl.edu, or see web site on www.unl.edu/stress/
**Position Available**

Wanted: ISMA-USA Newsletter Editor

The ISMA-USA Board seeks a member to serve as Editor for the ISMA-USA Newsletter. Duties would begin with publishing the Fall 1999 issue.

Responsibilities include the following: working with the Chair in planning and selecting content for the Newsletter, soliciting articles for possible publication in the Newsletter, corresponding and working with authors on the articles, preparing news articles about ISMA-USA, and overseeing the overall publication of the Newsletter so that it reaches members in a timely manner.

Applications for this position should send a cover letter, vita, and sample materials supporting the application to:

John G. Carlson, Chair, ISMA-USA.  
Department of Psychology 
24030 Campus Road 
University of Hawaii 
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

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**ISMA and the Stress Management Education Certification**

by Wes Sime, Ph.D./MPH/Ph.D.

Stress Management Education Certification Program has been in existence for almost ten years under the sponsorship of the Biofeedback Certification Institute of America. Unfortunately BCIA has decided not to continue offering the certification option for the future. Recently there have been some discussions about the possibility of having ISMA take over the administration of the certification for stress management, especially since it fits under the rubric of the organization very well.

If you have an opinion about the future of ISMA and the certification opportunities that lie ahead, we encourage you to attend the business meeting scheduled for Sunday, April 11th, from 1:00 to 2:00pm to share in the discussions.

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**A REMINDER**

ISMA-USA Board wants to hear from YOU--

- articles for this Newsletter
- ideas for our web site
- titles of publications for web site posting
- useful web sites for web site linking
- proposals for the stress management certification
- any other suggestions

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**ISMA-USA 1999 Board of Directors**

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