

Love those wide awake, coffee addict blues

by Elaine Ostry

Coffee, the elixir of energy, has taken over the world. The U of A is a perfect example of this power.

It all began when some Ethiopian goatherds began to wonder why their goats couldn't sleep, but were leaping about bug-eyed. They took a closer look at what the goats were eating and lo and behold! they discovered. . . THE COFFEE BEAN. Society was changed forever.

Look around you for a moment. Notice the everpresent litter of styrofoam cups. Notice the crowded tables of coffee drinkers. There's no denying that coffee is an integral part of the University. The coffee break is a valued social institution, an accepted excuse to avoid work.

Java Jive is the hub of the U of A coffee scene, and has been for ten years. As many as 30 coffee lovers line up for their morning fix. Approximately 3,000 cups of coffee are sold at the HUB outlet each day. "Wouldn't mind being the guy who owns it," said one student.

Their coffee is in demand because "it's the best", claims Georgette Ferguson, manager of the HUB branch. The highly-graded coffee is bought as green beans, and is roasted in the shop. It is stored as beans to retain its flavour.

Two coffees are served each day, a dark and a light variety. The light coffees are the most popular, espe-

cially the Colombia and Mocha brands. The most popular dark coffees are French and Italian. Although the dark coffees are much stronger in taste (European style), they actually have less caffeine than the lighter coffees.

Java Jive certainly tends to the coffee connoisseur. Most of their brews comes from South America and Africa, plus exotic brands as Cafe Vienna and Sumatra Linfong. For the true junkie, there are even chocolate-covered coffee beans.

So what is it about coffee that's so great? As usual, science has the answer. Caffeine. Of course, a lot of people claim they only drink it for the flavour. But its real attraction, whether or not they admit it, is its stimulating effects.

Coffee sets your heart pumping faster, and your nerves buzzing. Coffee has certain advantages over other drugs — it's cheap, legal, and tastes great.

Like any drug, you can get intoxicated by caffeine, usually after taking in 250 mg of the stuff. A cup of coffee contains 100-150 mg of caffeine — doesn't take much, does it!

You know you've had one cup over the line when you exhibit the following symptoms: restlessness, nervousness, muscle twitching, flushed faces, psychomotor agitation, insomnia, periods of in-exhaustibility, and a rambling flow of thought and speech.



Do these students resemble jittery, twitching masses of nerves?

Photo Bill St. John

Of course, a lot of these symptoms are reasons why you drink the stuff!

Yes, coffee certainly is useful. . . it helps you through anything. It puts you into a strange stupor: you're exhausted, yet wide-awake, jumping at the slightest sound.

You're suffering in the "it's-3 a.m. -and-I'm-only-half-finished-the-paper-due-tomorrow" blues: not to worry, coffee will pull you

through.

Everyone agrees that their intake increases during exam week: "Yeah, by about 10,000 per cent," said one student.

Despite the usual discouraging news from the world of medicine — over 4 cups a day leads to health problems, including an increased chance of heart attacks — coffee will never go out of style. The love of coffee is far too deep-rooted.

Most people claim they could survive without coffee. But is coffee essential to the typical University student? Student Darcy Verrier's opinion: "I think beer is more important."

Still, it would be interesting to ban coffee during exam week. Then we could see how important caffeine is to the U of A, as students go berserk from withdrawal symptoms and storm Java Jive.

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