

EDITORIALS

OBSERVER

Tis the season...

Turkey, trimmings, family, love and suicide. In our society, we view the holiday season as a time of happiness, togetherness and peace. As we are all aware, the holiday season also harbours, for many, feelings of hopelessness, loneliness and sadness. We remember past holidays, losses of loved ones or reflections of unfulfilled expectations that can increase the anxiety the season creates.

In the most desperate of situations, suicide is often considered the answer. Statistics indicate that in the United States, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death with 31,204 deaths recorded in 1995. Approximately, one suicide occurs every seventeen minutes. Each year there are more suicides than homicides. There is an increase of suicides between Christmas and New Year's Day in the United States. More statistics on this subject is provided by National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Statistics on Suicide and Suicide Facts.

Why do people attempt suicide? According to an article posted by Suicide@Rochford.org (an organization which researches suicide and the prevention of suicide), some people usually attempt suicide to block unbearable emotional pain. Simply put, it is a cry for help. Suicidal people often feel terribly isolated, but they also give warning signs. They want to be rescued for their emotional pain and they feel the only way is by killing the pain and themselves. Feelings of unworthiness, loss of control and shame are often earmarks of suicidal tendencies.

If you feel alone or have contemplated

suicide, please SEEK HELP. This is, however, easier said than done. I want you to know that feelings of suicide does not mean you are crazy. It indicates you need help with whatever problems you may be experiencing right now. Don't feel that your problem is too small to bother someone, no problem is small and if it is important to you, than it is important. There are people that care about you and your problems. Here is something I would like you to do if you start to entertain the thought of committing suicide. First, make a list of 5 people that you think you would be able to talk to about your problems. When the suicidal feelings start to surface, I want you to call or go to the first person on the list and if you don't feel better after talking to them, go to the next until you find one who will listen. Second, I have provided a list of phone numbers where you will find a warm and caring voice on the other end. Please make the call, you are worth it.

Suicide Hotline - 1-888-333-2377 in the USA
Other Hotlines that may be of help are:
National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Hotline: (800) 662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)
National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 333-7233
National Child Abuse Hotline: (800) 4-A-CHILD
National Youth Crisis Hotline: (900) HIT-HOME
National Adolescent Suicide Hotline: (800)621-4000
Runaway Hotline: (800) 231-6946

Cheryl Marie Moore
Editorial Editor

Update on Supreme Court Oral Arguments

Provocative lectures, cutting edge research, and spirited discussion are the hallmarks of college campuses. On November 9th, the Supreme Court debated whether mandatory student fees should be used to fuel the marketplace of ideas outside the classroom. The case, *Southworth v. Grebe*, was originally filed against the University of Wisconsin in 1996 by a handful of law students. They, along with a legal foundation representing the religious right, objected to the viewpoints expressed by 18 student organizations that receive student fees.

The University presented a strong defense. Assistant Attorney General Susan Ullman explained to the justices how student fees create a marketplace of ideas for a diversity of viewpoints to be expressed. She cited art and photography exhibits and guest speakers among the activities that create a lively intellectual climate outside the classroom. Ullman also explained that, in accordance with a previous Supreme Court ruling in *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia*, no groups were excluded from receiving funds based on their viewpoint.

Much of the University's half hour argument was spent addressing technical questions about how the fee process works on campus. Questions were raised about using student referenda to make decisions about student fees, questioning whether that was consistent with a content neutral forum. However, several justices pointed out that since the process for distributing fees had not been explored by the lower courts, that issue was not properly before the court.

The justices followed a harsher line of questioning with the plaintiffs' attorney, Jordan

Loewen. The argument that the student fees amount to forced association was challenged by both Justices Stephen Breyer and David Souter. They stated that the lower court's reliance on labor union and bar association precedents was irrelevant to student activities funding. According to Breyer, a student is not financing a particular viewpoint, but instead "giving money to a bunch of organizations, at least distantly related to academic objectives". Loewen also had difficulty explaining why student-funded activities were less constitutionally sound than those funded by tuition. "The difficulty with your position is that you're asking us to do something against the long tradition of many universities," remarked justice Anthony Kennedy. Other justices were quick to point out the plethora of political and ideological speech engaged in by instructors or speakers whose salaries are paid by student tuition dollars. Their questions reflected concern that a restrictive ruling could have implications for academic life on campus.

On the whole, the University's core arguments about the marketplace of ideas were strong and Jordan Loewen's arguments were met with skepticism. While a lack of information about the referenda process raised questions, several justices mentioned that there was not enough information in the record to rule on the issue. This leaves the possibility that the referenda issue will be remanded back to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals for their consideration. The Supreme Court's decision in the case is expected this Spring. Excerpts of select briefs are available on our web site at www.purg.org/student/speech.

NJPIRG

R-N Chess places third in tournament

On Friday, November 26, Rutgers Newark Chess Club played in its first out-of-state tournament in years. The tournament, held at the prestigious Adam's Mark Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the second intercollegiate chess tournament in two years. Eleven players from four schools played in the five-round tournament.

LaMar Giles and I represented the Rutgers Chess Club. Apart from us, there were four other schools: Globe (New York University), with four players; Montgomery (Maryland) with three; Penn (Illinois), with one; and an unknown school, whose only representative was from Pennsylvania.

Once the tournament started, it became clear that the numerical superiority of the New York players gave them a two-to-one edge over the competition. Their leader, National Master Ilye Figler, scored five out of five points, and their next best player, three, with the other two scoring two points each.

I managed to win four out of five games; however, LaMar scored only one point out of five.

The last round was important because whoever won would get second place and a prize of \$100. Since in this, tournament both individual and team scores counted, it was possible for the team to win (or lose) a prize and for the individual players to win (or lose) the top honors for their respective class strength. I managed to defeat Gulamov, thus clinching third place for our team.

For our efforts our team received a big trophy, and I won the \$100. NYU came in first, and Montgomery, second.

All in all, I would say that we performed admirably, despite our being still a relatively new organization. Come February 2000, I hope to send the R-N Chess Team to not one, but two team tournaments in one month. Until then—we will practice our chess and beat other chess clubs!

Lev D. Zilbermintz

Quote of the Week

"Just because it's digital doesn't mean it's true."

— Stephen Miller, journalist

The Observer would like to solicit "Letters to the Editor" from R-N students, faculty, and staff. The Observer is a public forum, and its editorial section is a running dialogue of ideas. All letters on all subjects will be considered for publication. Add your thoughts to the R-N campus dialogue.

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The Observer requests that each piece be either 600 words or a page and a half of text, doubled spaced. There are no guarantees that your piece will be used.

All materials submitted can and may be edited by the staff of the Observer. Please send all

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