

# Suicide: Not Discussed Yet Must Be Confronted

By Jane Elliot

On February 17, 1995, I lost a friend to suicide. He was 22 and was graduating in the spring with a triple major. He was a great D.J.; yet he was the one who took his own life.

None of my friends nor I saw it coming. He did not seem depressed. Though his pain was internal he never shared his pain, but last Saturday he hung himself.

He did not leave a note nor any answer as to why he chose to take his life. He left a lifeless body for his roommate to discover, and he left grief to devastate his friends and family. His act was impulsive; he had made plans for the future.

How could his pain be so great that he had to intervene and create his own fate? How could his pain be so great that it blinded him from realizing the pain he would place on his friends and family? How guilty he makes us feel for not being there when he needed us the most. How hopeless, angry, and empty we are, and yet we have these feelings without understanding why.

Suicide is full of myths, it being an act of manic depression where losers kill themselves. The truth about suicide is that anyone might be a victim. Suicide is universal; there is no "type" that commits suicide that it why everyone of us should be concerned.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death between adolescence and 24 years of age. Every 80 seconds an adolescent attempts to take his or her own life. Once every 100 minutes one succeeds. Each year 5,000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 die by recorded suicide. Thirteen out of every 100,000 people age 15 to 24 take their own lives.

Why do we know and do so little about an epidemic that has such astonishing statistics?

Research indicates that four of five suicides are preceded by some sort of warning, a cry for help. Warning signs include a preoccupation with suicide or death, such as putting affairs in order, or having known someone who recently committed suicide. A depressed person may suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness as well as a loss of hope. Insomnia, or sleep disturbances may also be indicators. A person

considering suicide may neglect his or her appearances and may suffer from radical personality change. When a student is considering suicide grades may drop, and the student may become apathetic in the classroom.

Suicidal acts are very impulsive. The actual suicidal crisis lasts a very short time; about two minutes. If a person considering suicide is helped through that period, the impulse may disappear.

The following may help to prevent a suicide from happening. If a friend seems very depressed or talks frequently of suicide, encourage that individual to see a professional therapist or counselor. If the person refuses to see a mental health professional, suggest that he or she speak to a physician, clergy member, professor or advisor. Encourage the person to call a suicide prevention or crisis intervention hotline.

Confront a friend who appears troubled and may be considering suicide. If an individual who has been very depressed suddenly and unexpectedly adopts the attitude that everything is fine, there is cause for concern. Most importantly, listen to what people are saying or not saying. Be aware of the type of questions that these people are asking.

If suicide is occurring as tragically as the statistics show, why is there not greater prevention? Why do people not speak out about suicide? Education should exist; or people should be educated that suicide is forever. The impulse and depression do not last forever unless it is acted upon and suicide is committed. There should be more education saying that help and prevention lines and services are there. They only need to be sought out.

If you are depressed and considering suicide, call the Penn State line and think about how permanent death is and the pain you would cause the ones you left behind. There is always someone who cares enough about you to listen and to help.

Help is available at:

\*Penn State Delaware County Campus, Personal Counselor Sharmon Bryant, 892-1272

\*Philadelphia Suicide and Crisis Intervention Center  
Crisis phone (215) 686-4420

\*Service for Teens at Risk (STAR Center) (412)624-1000

## Editorial: SGA Elections Hit a Sour Note

(Continued from page 4)

This in itself was just one more delay. More dates were set back.

Following the decision, a student familiar to the "sports" crowd, which commonly can be found in the cafeteria in the early afternoon, decided to run for president of SGA.

On election day, a meeting was held in the cafeteria. Candidates were given a chance to speak to the people present and give background information on themselves as well as advertise and campaign. These election speeches were not advertised anywhere on campus, and many people did not know the candidates were even going to introduce themselves publicly. The only thing any posters or any other messages on campus said was the date and time that the ballot box would be open.

Keep in mind that the speeches were only given in one place, the cafeteria. Most students that usually

occupy the Main building or the Vairo Library were not present, nor even aware that campaign speeches were taking place.

With only a few hours of campaigning under his belt, Jason Mills began running a tight race with SGA secretary, Pauline Ferzetti. Pauline began her campaign literally a month before the voting day, sporting clever posters with catch phrases, and also a virtual resume covering all of her history, platform and proposed ideas for this campus.

I know that Jason Mills was on the baseball team. That's all I know.

The most heated speculation comes from the topic of the actual ballot box. Again, like the speeches, there was only one box, located in the small entrance room before the cafeteria. No other boxes were anywhere else on campus. Friends and supporters of Mills rallied together and coaxed as many people as they could to vote for



Intramural Basketball, played Mondays and Wednesdays during Common Hour, is in full swing.  
Photo by Greg Jurkowski

## Meet The Republican Line-up

(Continued from page 5)

Rich Guy Steve Forbes recently found himself the victor in the Delaware primaries, forcing Dole to settle for second, followed by Buchanan. Forbes stands on a strong tax reform platform, declaring his "flat tax" program the way to go. His plan is to take less taxes from the rich in order to stimulate business. He has been criticized for 'buying' the race and spending his twenty-five million dollars mostly on negative campaign ads. Not to mention he looks like a wooden board in front of television cameras.

Then there is Lamar Alexander, promoting himself as the backwoods common man. Sporting a red flannel shirt symbolizing his down-to-earth appeal, he and his supporters repeat enthusiastically, "Just remember your ABC's. Alexander Beats Clinton!"

Lamar is the mid-stream Republican, encouraging new jobs and pushing business. He also has an interesting pet peeve. He has made one of his key issues the fight against terrorism, and the abolishment of long range nuclear weapons. Good ideas—however, not the top of the list. Lamar has been coming in fourth on a consistent basis, and he is quickly losing funds.

It is all too close and much too

soon to call now. Dole is sliding, the underdog Buchanan is now the favorite, and Forbes and Alexander are close behind.

It's really almost laughable. Buchanan is the best choice as far as the GOP candidate, even though he is far too conservative and has what some would call 'nationalist' and 'isolationist' views. Most Americans believe that foreign trade and international business are what keep the country going strong. Competition among world leaders is good for both the corporations and consumers of this country. Buchanan says jobs will stay at home and NAFTA will be destroyed. Give it a chance—after all, it was designed for the long haul.

Billy is laughing the most. President Clinton, of course unopposed in the Democratic party, sits back and smirks as the Republicans trash each other. If Dole wins the GOP, Clinton has another problem other than Whitewater. But if Buchanan wins the Republican vote, the gung-ho cowboy with all the wrong ideas, Clinton can ride the Whitewater wave for four more years, or until it crashes down all around him.

Close Republican primary race or not, it's really just the level of entertainment that is in question.

Not the President of '96.

him, which was perfectly legal. Though when asked why they should, one individual simply stated that Mills played baseball here. With a lack of knowledge of either of the two candidates, baseball sounded good enough for most spontaneous voters.

When the vote was counted, Jason Mills defeated Pauline Ferzetti. Though Mills did nothing himself to taint the election in any way, I find it a little unusual that a person can literally come out of nowhere and defeat a long-running campaigner whose work here on campus is well documented.

Many people speculate that the current standing SGA president, Mike Hyde, persuaded him to run. The friendship between the two is well known. Hyde campaigned for Mills.

I personally question whether Hyde sold out on his own administration, preferring a friend to take his office instead of a more likely, experienced candidate who worked

underneath him for a full term. Regardless, Hyde should have stayed totally neutral on the matter, if not pushing for his own staffer-- his secretary, Pauline Ferzetti.

Finally, to Jason Mills, new president of SGA. Congratulations! I don't play baseball anymore. Tell what else should qualify you to be president. Surely you have more than that.

### CRAFT SHOW

Sunday, March 17, 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Penn State Delco Gym

Sponsored By

Adult Student Organization

Campus Scholarships

2nd Annual

**Battle of the Bands**

Wednesday, April 10

Sign Up Your Band Now!

Contact SGA in Rec Lounge Office