

Teenage suicide

County rates level off, but problem still exists

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

Lake-Lehman guidance counselors Flossie Finn and Sylvia Bator say students stop by their offices every day with problems regarding either school matters or their personal lives.

Dallas High School guidance counselors Pat Russin and Mike Shevock say they, too, hear many of the same problems with their students. All agree, however, that most of the time the problems are routine teenage conflicts that all kids experience.

So what's the big deal? While most teenagers manage their problems and pursue a normal course in life, there are those who don't and the results can be devastating.

A national report indicated that 5,000 teenagers committed suicide in 1984 and estimates that the figure may be closer to 6,000. Today, suicide is the third leading cause of death for teens and the second leading cause of death for college students. (Accidents and homicides are listed as the first and second leading causes of death among teens, respectively. The first leading cause of death for college students was not

available at press time.)

Russin says there have been three suicides she can remember in the last five years at Dallas and at least one student who may have had remote thoughts about it this year.

Although there have been no suicides in the past five years at Lake-Lehman, there were two students who needed some counseling in 1985, although neither counselor believed the problem to be serious. The two recently attended a seminar in which one aspect of the program dealt with teenage suicide.

County figures show that the suicide rate has leveled off over the last three years, with 1986 statistics revealing that 22 people have taken their lives so far, four of whom were under the age of 20.

Donna Todd, public relations director for Community Counseling Services of Northeastern Pennsylvania, says one teacher in a particular school district in the Wyoming Valley has intercepted three suicide notes from students during this semester alone.

There is little doubt teenagers face more problems in today's fast-paced world than those of generations past. Whether or not to take drugs or drink alcohol to be accepted by their

peers, what the future will hold for them when a college education will not guarantee them a place in the job market, family problems, loneliness — the list goes on.

"What we have to do is to provide values and priorities for teenagers," says Candice Mamary, public relations director for the Childrens Service Center of Wyoming Valley. "It's tougher for these people today than it was in our parent's generation. Kids come home to empty houses because both parents work. One out of every two marriages ends in divorce, which also has an effect on young people."

"Kids want to talk. They need someone to open up to."

Russin agrees. "Kids have been given a lot more freedom to make their own choices, but I think they want some guidance. They want to be told what to do to a certain extent."

"There is a tendency today to make things as easy as possible," she added. "And I think that

is part of the problem. Say, for example, a student doesn't like a particular teacher. To make the situation easier, they are then allowed to transfer to another class to avoid the problem. We have to tell them they can get through the problem, that they can get through the pain. In the end, they will become stronger for having gone through them."

Says Shevock, "Because we are guidance counselors, we usually do not hear about these things directly. Maybe a teacher will hear something and pass it along to us. Then, we talk to the student about it and notify their parents."

"We are really a referral system," Russin says. "We make sure the right people are aware of the problem."

"The thing is that suicide is highly preventable," Finn said. "A person can easily be talked out of the thought because very few want to actually do it. It's a treatable disorder."

Lehman Band wins another

The Lake-Lehman award-winning High School Band traveled to Langhorne last weekend where it presented its 1986 field show in the Tournament of Atlantic Coast Bands in Group III, and came home with the 'Best Overall', 'Best Music', and 'Best Marching' trophies, as well as the Atlantic Coast 1986 Championship banner.

The band competed in Group III with 24 other bands from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey and New York and placed first overall with a percentage higher than all the other groups.

Lake-Lehman band director John Miliauskas, in his 31st year as band leader at Lake-Lehman, said all the credit for the awards goes to the band members.

"They marched and played their hearts out, they were up to my standards. Whether they won or not, I couldn't be any more proud of them," said Miliauskas.

There are 135 members in the Knights band including the band front and 83 playing members were on the field at Langhorne's Neshaminy High School with Missy Hontz, the first drum majorette of the Lake-Lehman Band in the past 30 years.

The Knights won every competition they entered this season, outscoring Group IV bands and taking 'Overall' trophies in every competition. They have traveled to New Jersey, Harrisburg, Lebanon, and everywhere highly competitive bands participated.

In 1985, the Lake-Lehman Band came in second at the Atlantic Coast Bands Tournament, missing first by 2 points, and in 1984, came in first.

Miliauskas said winning this tournament is the highlight of the entire season. Since he has been director at Lake-Lehman,



Dallas Post/Charlot M. Denmon

Award winners

The Lake-Lehman award-winning high school band took best overall, best music and best marching trophies in the Atlantic Coast 1986 competition at Langhorne Saturday. With the trophies are, from left, Barry Bernstein, Connie Belkowski, Andrew Sabaluski, Jeff Kairo and Kevin Koflanovich.

the high school band has won approximately 700 trophies, an achievement which will be difficult to surpass by other area schools.

In the Tournament of Atlantic Coast Bands, there were more than 300 high school bands competing in their respective groups.

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Dallas lists Education Week activities

The Dallas School District announces the following schedule of activities for Education Week, November 17-21, 1986:

Dallas Elementary School, Hildebrandt Road: Nov. 19-Open House from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Parent-Teacher Tea at 2:45 p.m.

Westmoreland Elementary School, Lehigh St., Trucksville: Nov. 18, Open House grades four and five, presenting lessons in science, math, and social

studies, beginning at 1:30 p.m.; Nov. 19, "Doughnuts with Dad" at 6:45 a.m.; Nov. 20, Open House grades first and third,

beginning 1:15 p.m., presenting lessons in science, math, language arts and social studies; Nov. 21, Open House for second grade at 1:45 p.m., presenting a play entitled "Thanksgiving, A Time of Harvest," under the direction of Miss Argento, Mrs. Herstek, Mrs. Faerber and Miss Scott.

Junior High School, Conyngham Ave., Dallas: Nov. 18, Open House for parents and students in grades six through nine, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Program in auditorium, tour of the building, classroom visitation, and refreshments.

Senior High School, Conyngham Ave., Dallas: Nov. 19, "Education Fair" in the cafeteria at 1:30 p.m. Open House and Parent Visitation beginning 7 p.m.

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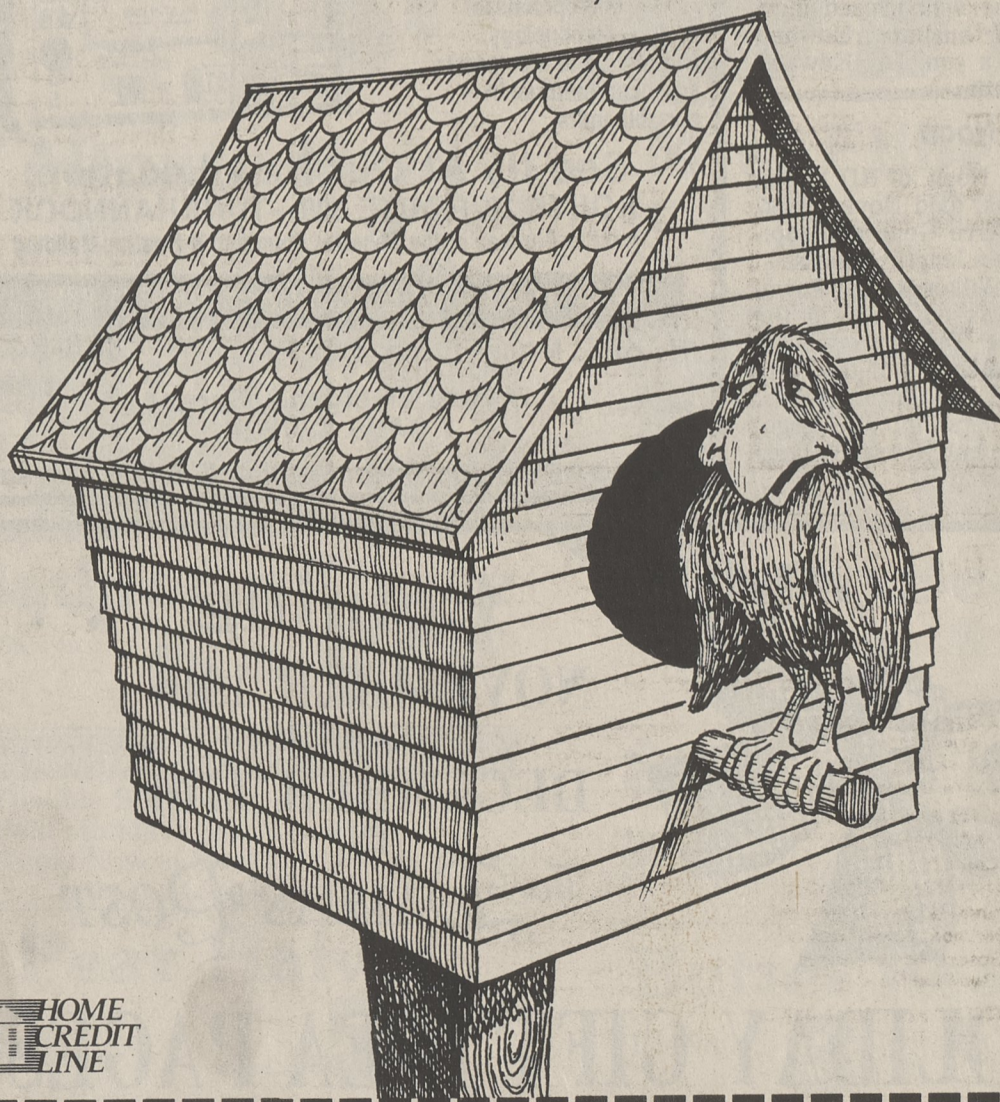
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