

Suicides increase following holidays

by Mark Neerman

Confronting the rigors of the real world after the holidays proves to be troublesome for many people. For them emptiness and depression make suicide attractive, especially amidst Christmas blues. A telephone volunteer at the suicide crisis control center said in a recent interview, we receive more calls during the post-holiday season than any other time of year. In light of this, more information must be spread, to prevent the tragedy of teen suicide.

"I was very lonely, scared, and really afraid. I wanted to do it more than anything." So says Julie Cunningham, 16, who tried to commit suicide but fortunately failed. Her story has a happy ending, but others do not. Each year some 5000 teens kill themselves, a number that has tripled over the last 25 years and continues to rise. Every hour around 57 children and teens attempt suicide. It is a phenomenon that has no prejudices. It affects men and women, blacks and whites alike. Robert Wilson, director of counseling at UNC-G says there are at least one or two attempts a semester

at the university.

What has driven so many teens to the same desperate conclusion? There are many reasons, as any expert will explain. Some point to the degeneration of the family as a support system and this inherent loss of structure. According to volunteers at Crisis Control, the increasing pressure to succeed frustrates many potential suicides. But the greatest factors are depression and drug and alcohol abuse. Four Winds Hospital in Kastonah, New York estimates 75% of teens admitted into the drug/alcohol rehab unit have made "suicidal gestures." When discussing depression as a factor in teenage suicide a book describing teenage suicides, Drs. Mary Griffin and Carol Felsenthal authors of *A Cry For Help* say that "as the number of divorces tripled, so did the number of teenage suicides."

Almost always there will be warning signs, say experts. It is the victim's 'cry for help.' Often the victim will take an interest in death, or become extremely moody. He may become withdrawn from friends and family, or give up once

treasured pastimes. These are signs of desperation, and as Adolphus Coplin, a guidance counselor, of Reynolds High says, "Communication is the key." Those who know someone like this should take his feelings seriously. Talking to a responsible adult is important also. The worst possible action is to keep it a secret. One can keep a friend alive, and in the long run, the person will be thankful.

People in need can take several actions:

1. Call the suicide crisis control center hotline at 852-4484
2. Call Contact - a suicide prevention service
3. Go to a hospital, emergency rooms are always open
4. Call a friend or a confidant
5. Call 1-800-621-4000 toll free. This is the National Runaway switchboard and they deal with all types of problems.
6. Talk with a guidance counselor, who may recommend other available people.

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"Voice of the Whirlies"

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photo by Will Sykes
Mike Woodell enjoys the shortened school day due to Dec. 20 snow.

Just another fish story

by Brian Kaiser

There's a new group at GHS known as the "Bass Masters". No, it's not a rock group or prize-winning fishermen. They are better known for throwing fish than catching them. Their premier performance was held before a packed house Jan. 3 during the third quarter of the Page-Grimsley game.

At the end of the third quarter, when the Pirate cheerleaders were doing their routine, approximately seven or eight dead fish became airborne and hit the gym floor. The GHS administrators reacted immediately to stop the fish throwing.

According to a GHS senior, who was among the fish tossers, the event was planned at the beginning of the basketball season. At least one of the involved was a recent Grimsley alumnus. It is

speculated that the fish, which were typical freshwater brim, were brought by the alumnus.

The target of these flying fish were the Page cheerleaders, who may have been warned ahead of time about the scaly invaders. No fish actually made contact with a cheerleader, but a few came close. Many fish slipped from the throwers' grasp and fell beneath the bleachers.

The act was said to have been all in school spirit and just for fun. "We were thinking of ourselves and not others," said one student involved. Indeed, many GHS students worried that the Grimsley image would be damaged by the incident.

Mr. Renn gave no names as to who was involved, but did say that those caught would be punished as written under Rule 7 of the Code of Conduct.

The show didn't stop with the end of the game. The next stop on the tour was the Burger King on Battleground.

Students from both Page and Grimsley were present. The tiny fish incident brought about big tempers as tables were torn from the floor and plumbing damaged in the mens' room.

Police arrived on the scene, but they could not pinpoint the perpetrators and no arrests were made.

Burger King was forced to close in at midnight, four hours earlier than usual, in order to clean the mess brought about by a few of our fine finned friends.

So for those who enjoy coming to Grimsley-Page games, stop the half-hearted cheering and fill it to the rim, with brim, in spirit of course!

Success Story: Irwin Smallwood

by Shana Morrow

It is most students' hope that once they have graduated from high school they will be remembered, and to one day be considered a successful alumnus. This article recognizes a very special and successful Grimsley alumnus, Irwin Smallwood. To see the impressive reputation that he has acquired, it is not surprise that he was also a prominent student while attending Grimsley.

Irwin Smallwood graduated with the Whirlie class of 1944. High school had a great impact on him, even more so than college, and he claims it "molded his life." Smallwood credits most of what he has learned to his high school teachers. One in particular, Louise Smith, who was his journalism advisor, "taught me the love of the language and how to use it." And even today, he still remembers her by keeping a picture of her on his desk. Smallwood was chief editor and sports editor of Grimsley High Life, and also worked for the Greensboro paper during his years at Grimsley. But in no way

was journalism his only interest; he was also vice-president of the student body, and a drummer in Herbert Hazelman's marching band. Smallwood, along with the class of '44, "moved many a wheelbarrow of dirt," he recalls, to build Jamieson stadium. He also claims to have "fallen in love in English class" with Allene Parks, his wife of thirty-eight years.

Irwin Smallwood's interest in journalism carried over to his college days at Chapel Hill where he was sports editor for the Daily Tarheel. After graduating from Chapel Hill, Smallwood began working again at the Greensboro Daily News (as it was named then), and began to climb up the ladder of success, and today he can look back on thirty-eight years of achievements.

Smallwood has held many positions at the Greensboro News and Record; he has worked as city editor, assistant managing editor, managing editor, and sports editor. He was managing editor for fifteen and one-half years for the Greensboro Daily

News, and then when the Daily News and the News and Record (the morning and afternoon papers) merged, Smallwood became the deputy executive editor. After two years as deputy executive editor, Smallwood decided to return to his first love-sports. As Smallwood says, "back to fun and games in my old age."

He has been the sports editor for eighteen years, and his work involves writing a Sunday column, occasionally covering a special sports event, and more or less as he puts it, "being in charge of what we cover and how well we cover it." When asked to describe his job, he says it is "exciting," and agrees with his father, who once said that "what he did best working for a living."

Smallwood contributed much to the class of 1944, and in return he enjoyed his high school days immensely and received a lot out of them. He has great memories that he will always be able to treasure, and only time will tell, who from the class of '86, will make a difference



photo courtesy of the Greensboro News and Record