

## THE TATTOO

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MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 11 No. 14

## Teacher leads anti-death penalty fight

By STEVEN DUREL  
The Tattoo

At the forefront of the fight to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut is Terryville High School teacher Robert Nave.

Nave, who teaches social studies, has for the last four years coordinated Amnesty International's effort to ban the use of capital punishment in Connecticut.

In recent months, his anti-death penalty work put Nave in the limelight as convicted serial killer and rapist Michael Ross neared execution.

Ross was put to death early Friday by lethal injection, the first death row inmate to be executed in Connecticut in 45 years.

Last week, Nave was on the front lines, protesting the execution.

But Nave made it clear the issue wasn't Ross.

"This is a matter of pure public policy," Nave said while traveling with fellow activists last week to protest the Ross execution.

"We do not speak for or support Michael Ross," said Nave. "We are simply against the fact that the state thinks it has the ability to kill a person. We don't believe that the state has a legitimate right to legalize homicide."

Working through all of the channels available to him, Nave rarely seems to take a rest from his battle against state-sponsored death.

On a personal level, the activist teacher is also a realist. He said he understands that not everyone is free from blame and that consequences must follow action.

But he remains committed to his stance.

"If society really wants to kill every psychopath out there, then we have a whole lot of people left to get rid of," Nave joked a few days before the execution.

"Is Michael Ross a nice person? No. I know him. He is one of the sickest people that I have ever met. But in the end, our organization is not about saving Michael Ross or anyone else in particular," Nave said. "The person in question could be Adolph Hitler or Slobodan Milosevic, Michael Ross, or even you or me. The point is, the state should not have a license to commit homicide."

Ross admitted killing eight young women in Connecticut and New York. Six were teenagers.

Dzung Ngoc Tu, 25, a Cornell University student, was murdered on May 12, 1981.

Ross killed Tammy Williams, 17, of Brooklyn, Conn., on Jan. 5, 1982.

Two months later, Ross murdered 16-year-old Paula Perrera of Wallkill, N.Y.

Debra Smith Taylor, 23, of Griswold, Conn., was slain June 15, 1982.

Ross murdered Robin Stavinsky, 19, of Norwich, in November 1983.

Two 14-year-old girls from Griswold, Conn., April Brunais and her friend Leslie Shelley, were murdered together April 22, 1984.

Wendy Baribeault, 17, of Griswold, was the last of Ross' known victims. She was killed June 13, 1984.

Ross had given up his

appeals process and 'volunteered' to be executed. Still, his family members, former defense attorneys and others fought in court to stop it. The battle dragged on for years until it finally ended early Friday at Osborn Correctional Institution.

Protests were part of the drama, and after police said opponents would have to stay a mile and a half away from the prison, Nave's group filed suit to stay close, and won.

In his fight against capital punishment, Nave at one point called upon Gov. Jodi Rell to push the button to end Ross' life.

"If the state is going to kill someone," Nave said, "then the governor should be the one to do it."

Nave acts as the director of the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty and also works with the Urgent Action Network. With his large group of volunteers, Nave wants to end Connecticut's use of capital punishment.

A dozen states have already banned it, he said, four of them in New England.

But Nave is less than optimistic about the goal in the wake of the Ross execution.

"With an execution under our belt, there will be a psychic imprint on people's minds that this is acceptable, that we can be as hostile as the murderer," Nave lamented.

"I don't believe that's the right message to send to our citizenry," Nave said, "particularly the youths: 'Murder is okay as long as the state administers it.' That's a very scary message."

Terryville High School social studies teacher Robert Nave leads Amnesty International's fight against the death penalty in Connecticut.

Stefan Koski / The Tattoo



## In class, Nave gives lessons useful to my life

By TYLER WENTLAND  
The Tattoo

You know those television shows about school where you have that one teacher who seems to affect every student around them?

On "Boy Meets World," it was Mr. Feeny.

At Terryville High School, it's Mr. Nave.

Almost every senior who's taken one of his classes will tell you that they've learned something, or can apply his lessons to their own life in some way.

Nearly everybody can say he's made them think about something a little deeper, or put a thought out there that they hadn't considered before.

I've had Mr. Nave as a teacher for two years

now. I took one of his classes last year as a junior and this year, as a senior, I've had two.

Sociology and psychology, the studies of human nature and mentality, are the perfect choice for Mr. Nave, a social studies teacher who also happens to be leading the fight in Connecticut to abolish the death penalty.

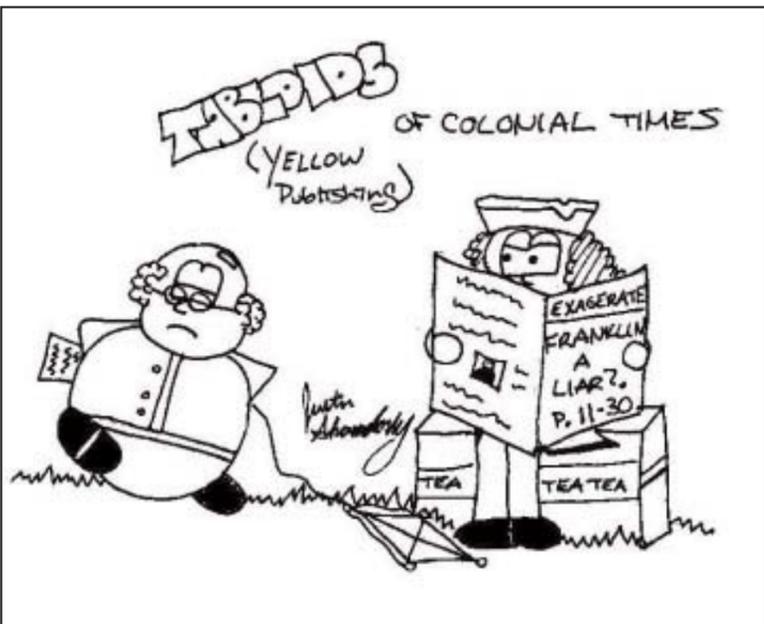
He's always willing to share a story about his own life to help us better understand the things that go on in ours.

After his classes, I can honestly say I always learn something new or come out a little more open to the world around me.

Few of us have teachers that we can say have truly made a difference in our lives, and few of us can say that we have actually put what our teacher has said to good use, or full thought.

But Mr. Nave proved that even with today's barely conscious youth there are still a few people that can catch us and open our eyes.

## Appreciation



Justin Skaradosky / The Tattoo

## 'An eye for an eye' isn't right

By HEATHER MOHER  
The Tattoo

The death penalty is a hot topic right about now. Many people are for it, and there are also many who oppose it.

I, personally, am against it.

"A life for a life" doesn't seem right to me.

I did a little research and found that there are many reasons why it's pointless.

The human rights group Amnesty International even has a branch specifically for the abolition of it.

I can't see how the term "an eye for an eye" could work in modern society.

To me, a life for a life seems a little extreme. I'm not saying a mur-

derer should be let on the loose, but life in jail seems like a good enough

## What I say

punishment.

I imagine just having to live with the guilt of taking another's life would be torture enough.

If you look at the literal meaning of "a life for a life," the murderer would get murdered, then the executioner. It would just keep resulting in more and more death.

The death penalty doesn't accomplish anything except cutting down the number of people on

death row.

Capital punishment is expensive.

Death penalty opponents say carrying out one death sentence costs two to five times more than keeping that same criminal in prison for the rest of his life.

Most of the costs go to time on death row, lawyers, appeals, court dates, etc.

I'm sure taxpayers don't want to spend money to support all of this.

Many are well aware of the hatred toward America from the international community.

A lot of the problems, especially with Europe, would be resolved if the United States would abolish the death penalty.

Our country should step up to the (moral) plate.

## The gut-wrenching choice to come out

By ZACH BROKENROPE  
The Tattoo

It's kinda funny, if you think about it, how words have so much power. I mean, it's startling how what appear to be a completely random collection of syllables and letters can change your life.

When you say the words "I love you," you can complete your life; with the words "I'm guilty," you can relinquish your freedom, and with the words "I'm gay," you can change the way the world, and other people, define you.

I think it's about time you know I'm gay, not that it's important or anything, but to tell the story of my freshman homecoming, it's a fact you need to know.

I'm only going to tell you about part of it though, and that is the part that is important to me, the memory that I know I will always keep.

To freshmen, homecoming holds a desirable glamour, a feeling of growing up you just beg to obtain.

It makes you feel like your life has finally begun to achieve that pinnacle of high school experience that you've heard about for so long, not to sound corny or anything.

I have to say mine was beautiful, as far as school dances go. It was held in the old gym of our high school, a building from before our parents' time that smelled eternally of sweat and floor

polish.

It was the first year the administration had broken down and hired a professional DJ. In the past, it had been an older guy who at some point always insisted on playing "The Hokey

## the freshman diaries

Pokey," much to the aggravation of the student body.

Crepes hung from every corner of the gym, covering the walls and crisscrossing as it hung limply from the rafters of the ceiling. The strobe lights hit the room at random intervals and the pulse of the music vibrated against the windows and doors that had been pried open to allow fresh air inside.

I was the first one there, me and my date, a girl named Molly I randomly asked to go with me. We'd never been that close, but knew each other fairly well and didn't want to be complete losers by going alone.

We had managed to regain this title, however, by showing up at least 15 minutes before anyone else and eating our homecoming dinner at Pizza Hut. (We even had reservations. God, doesn't that just reek "loser?")

For about half an hour we sat in the bleachers, just observing our friends and peers as they came in and danced.

To me it was amazing how everyone appeared beautiful, how just the night managed to transform every assorted outcast and oddity into creatures of life

and magnificence.

It was at that moment I knew that night was the night. As I watched my friends dance, I knew it was the night I would tell the first person.

Anyone who is gay and reads this knows what that's like - the days of getting ready, thinking, contemplating who it's gonna be, who will act the best, who you trust the most; and preparing yourself for the worst possible outcome: total rejection.

I knew it was going to be Marissa, one of my best friends. We had worked together every day the previous summer and had come to understand and know each other better than anyone else around.

We shared the same aspirations: to get out of Nebraska, become famous, and to live life like it was meant to be.

Marissa and I understood each other in perhaps the simplest ways.