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75 Cents

It's a boy!



David Grunfeld/The Citizen

New Year's baby

At 12:45 p.m. Saturday, Jason Edward Lofft became the first baby of 1988 to be born at Auburn Memorial Hospital. He is also the first child for his parents, Ronda and Kenny Lofft, of Weedsport. Jason weighed a healthy seven pounds, 10 ounces at birth. Kenny Lofft commented that he's looking forward to a family of at least two children, maybe three.

Reagan, Mulroney sign historic pact

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and President Reagan formally signed their historic free trade agreement Saturday, expanding the world's largest trading partnership but raising fears in Canada of U.S. domination.

Mulroney signed the pact in his Ottawa office and Reagan signed it in Palm Springs, Calif.

After consulting Reagan by telephone, Mulroney told reporters: "I have urged the president to ensure that the drafting of U.S. legislation takes place as expeditiously as possible to permit

its early introduction into the U.S. Congress."

Mulroney said the signing sent "a powerful signal towards liberalized trade around the world" and that Canada already has begun preparing legislation to be submitted to Parliament.

Main opposition Liberal Party leader John Turner, speaking to reporters in Toronto, pledged to "fight it every inch of the way."

Canadian big business supports the deal. Opponents include labor leaders and cultural leaders who fear the loss of jobs and national identity.

More than 1,000 union-organized protesters chanting "No Free Trade" defied a court injunction and disrupted traffic for half an hour on the Ambassador Bridge between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit. Police said there were no arrests.

A smaller, peaceful demonstration was held at Peace Bridge between Fort Erie, Ontario, and Buffalo.

About 250 protesters gathered in 7-degree temperatures in London, Ontario, to protest the signing. They filled a black coffin with Canadian products they said would be en-

dangered if cheaper U.S. goods flooded the country.

One schoolteacher told the crowd: "I teach your children. We want a future for them. There's no way I want to use textbooks made in the United States."

The protests underlined the hurdles remaining before the far-reaching trade pact can be ratified and implemented.

Due to take effect Jan. 1, 1989, it would eliminate tariffs over a 10-year period; dismantle many investment barriers; free up trade in energy and services; and create

Please see PROTESTER, Page 2.

SUICIDE MORE THAN OUR SHARE

By BRENDA HILES

On a mild spring evening last year a young man sat in a rocking chair in his apartment, a 22-caliber rifle between his knees, its butt on the floor. His wife was at work; he was alone with the couple's new-born baby.

He stretched his arm to reach the trigger.

Vernon Hayes Jr., 28, became one of the increasing number of people in Cayuga County during the last five years who have apparently taken their own lives.

The number of suicides here doubled last year over the year before, and mental health experts are uncertain why. They suggest the sagging economy, the bad weather, a mental health system strapped for money. But ultimately they just shrug.

"If I could answer the question of why people kill themselves, I would have people knocking down my door to get in," said Dr. Joseph Himmelsbach, a suicide expert at Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse. "But it's hard to make generalizations. Suicide is a very individual thing."

Experts say suicide statistics are often unreliable because counties may report and investigate suicides differently. Authorities may rule a drug overdose, a leap or other deaths as accidental because they lack proof and are reluctant to call it suicide.

Suicide rates would be higher if killers managed to make murders look like suicides. Though Cayuga County has had its share of odd suicides, authorities say it is very difficult to mask a murder.

The suicide of Vernon Hayes Jr., however, was

more common. Like many of the other suicides here, he had been treated for depression. "He held things inside," says his sister, Brenda Hayes. "He didn't talk about what was bothering him."

A few years ago he had asked a cousin to drive him to Bonta Bridge in Jordan. He was going to jump from the bridge, he told his cousin, who talked him out of it and took him home.

He had had a few minor run-ins with the law. Small things, like getting in trouble for walking across a neighbor's yard.

On April 4, 1986, Hayes was unemployed, living on disability payments. Even so, his sister thought he was happy. He had been married for almost a year, and now there was the baby, a son.

"I saw him just two days before," his father says. "I was at his apartment and he was sitting in the rocking chair holding the baby, looking straight ahead. I had seen him do that before. He kept things to himself."

His family still doesn't know what was weighing so heavily on him that night, or what thoughts ran through his mind as he loaded the rifle and sat down in the rocking chair.

"It's hard to find out the factors that cause a suicide," Himmelsbach says. "What depresses one person might not affect someone else. There are no generalizations."

Still, Vernon Hayes had several things in common with many of the other suicides here: He was a white male between 20 to 45 years old, who had been treated for depression. And he used a gun to end his life.

Nationally, the person most likely to commit suicide is a 40-year-old white alcoholic male who

is divorced or separated from his wife, Himmelsbach says.

More than half of the 55 suicides between 1982 and 1986 have been young to middle-aged men who have chosen a particularly violent way to kill themselves: rifles and shotguns.

During that same period, five teenagers and 11 elderly residents committed suicide. Only 11 of the suicides have been women.

Seventeen — including six jailed or imprisoned — were caused by hanging.

Numbers can lie, experts say. Areas like Cayuga County, where autopsies are performed by a forensic pathologist, may report more suicides than areas whose coroner has no forensic training, said the head of the National Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners in St. Louis.

"People hate to call a death a suicide," Dr. Gantner said. "In some cases it might be ruled accidental."

Cayuga County's accidental death rate, which doesn't include motor vehicle fatalities, also has been higher than similar-sized counties. In the last six years, Cayuga County has an average of 36 accidental deaths a year, 8 more than the average for Thompsons County which has a slightly higher population.

Cayuga County Coroner William Farrell — who is also a funeral director — decides which deaths warrant autopsies by the county pathologist. Farrell and police do the on-the-scene investigation. State law requires autopsies for all unattended deaths.

Farrell refused to return phone calls to answer questions about those investigations.

Please see UNEMPLOYMENT, Page 3.

Auburnians show their true colors

By TANEY BEAUMONT

NEW ORLEANS — They came to the Sugar Bowl from Auburn. But they definitely weren't Auburn fans.

Led by chairman Chuck Savage, they were the members and friends of the Auburn chapter of the Orange Pack, a Syracuse University booster group.

Their purpose in coming to what one of them called "the nearest place to heaven you'll find" was to see the SU gridders cap a perfect season with a Sugar Bowl victory over Auburn (Ala.).

They may not have seen that, but they had lots of fun just the same.

They not only got their wish, but had a great time in the bargain.

"Seeing an event like the Sugar Bowl in a city like New Orleans makes it doubly enjoyable," Savage said. "I was here for the Final Four and said then that I'd love to come back — I just didn't know it would be only nine months later."

"It's a great community, and the people are fantastic. The Auburn University people are fantastic, too."

Savage then explained how he'd met some Auburn fans who just happened to be from Columbus, Ga. In fact, one of them was a cousin of Dayton Preston, the general manager of the Columbus Astros, who Savage — in his capacity as president of the Auburn Astros — had entertained just two weeks ago.

"It's a pretty small world," Savage laughed. Not small enough, apparently, since the Auburn contingent arrived to find that its luggage still hadn't made the trip.

"We're still waiting," said Linda McHugh of North Seward Avenue late Friday night. "We've been living in the same SU sweatshirts and jeans we wore down here. We were told by the tour people to go

out and get another outfit, that they'd reimburse us."

McHugh and her boyfriend, Dale Parmley, had an advantage over the others, however.

"My brother, Mike Reed, lives here in New Orleans, and he's been touring us around," McHugh said. "This is the first time I've been here, and it's been great."

"This town has great enthusiasm, great spirit — it's been a real good time," said Parmley, who like Savage also visited New Orleans for the Final Four last March.

"Even with the luggage problems and the rain, it's been great. No question I'd do it all over again, given the chance."

Bill Ryan of Union Springs, yet another Final Four veteran of the Crescent City, put it succinctly when he said that "We're rocking and rolling in New Orleans again. It's an absolutely beautiful city, and I couldn't think of one negative thing to say about it."

Being from the Auburn area, however, was no guarantee of a fan's loyalty to the Orange.

"Auburn's going to win," Dennis Davis said Friday while wandering Bourbon Street, "mainly because of their tenacious defensive line, which is going to put more pressure on Don McPherson than he ever thought of."

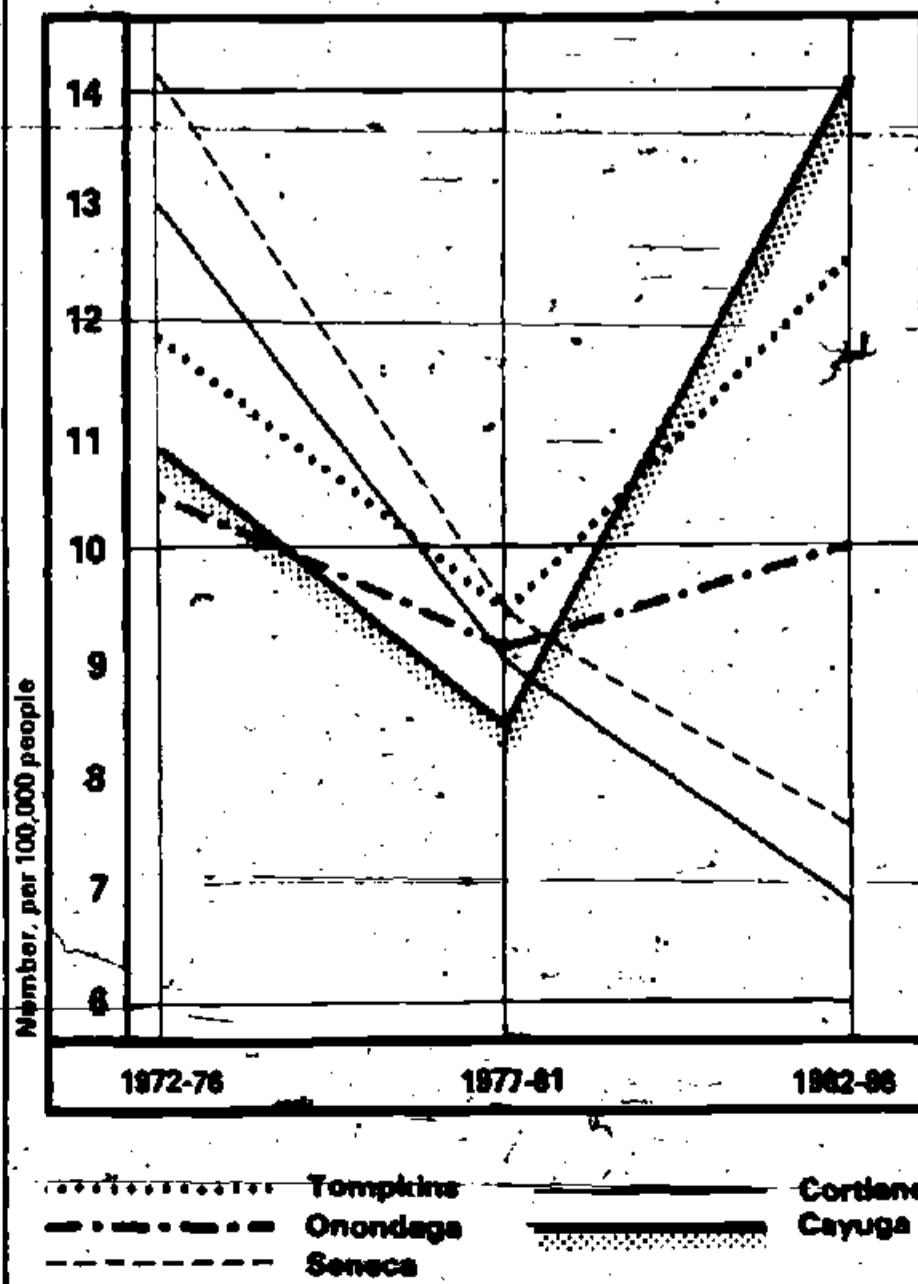
"Syracuse is cocky because no one in the East could beat them, but they haven't seen anything like the Southeastern Conference."

The 30-year-old Davis, by the way, has followed the SEC since he was 10 years old.

"I've been an Auburn fan for as long as I can remember," Davis said with a proud smile.

And why shouldn't he be? He's a true-blue Auburn-area native, for sure, living as he does in Alexander City, Ala.

Suicide rates averaged over five-year periods for five nearby counties



Nagging thought: 'Was it suicide?'

By BRENDA HILES

Three years after Joseph DeVoe found his best friend dead, he still wonders whether it was suicide.

"A lot of things never added up," he said.

James Vasile apparently shot himself in the stomach, making his suicide one of several in Cayuga County that experts would call unusual.

Other rare suicides include two men who burned themselves up in cars and a man who slit his own throat, wiped the knife clean and waited to die.

Police, who say they investigate each suicide as though it were murder, have ruled out foul play in

all those deaths.

DeVoe says he was never completely satisfied with the investigation into Vasile's death.

"It just never washed with me that it was a suicide."

The city has declined to release the records on the advice of Assistant City Attorney Michael McKeon.

Jimmy Vasile apparently shot himself Thanksgiving Day, 1984. DeVoe discovered the body the next day.

Vasile had become obsessed with the Julie Monson murder case, friends say. He testified before the grand jury that later indicted Thomas Bianco, whom Vasile knew.

Please see A, Page 3.

Help can be just a phone call away

By BRENDA HILES

Plans for a 24-hour mental health crisis hotline in Cayuga County were scrapped several years ago because of costs, said Dr. Peter Midura, former director of the Cayuga County Mental Health Center.

It is unlikely the center, strapped for funds now, will set up a crisis line soon. The closest one is the Contact Telephone Counseling Service in Syracuse.

A crisis line is a pretty good tool for reaching isolated people," said David Blair, acting director of the Mental Health Center. "Every once in a while it stops a suicide."

Blair declined to estimate the number of emergency calls his agency receives a year or how much a crisis line would cost.

The center handled five emergency calls the Sunday after Christmas from people who were suicidal or dangerous to others.

Please see CALLS, Pg. 3.

Weather	2
Auburn	3
Global News	5
Editorials-Columns	6
Obituaries	8
Sports	17-23

Need a winter coat? Look in Classified for the best buys.



Farmland sale paves way for incinerator

By NANCY WARD

CONQUEST — The sale of 340-acres of farmland could pave the way for the next step in a Mentz businessman's drive for a trash burning steam plant in Cayuga County.

The owners of the farm, Ann and Bert Mealus, signed final papers Thursday for the transfer of the property on Bush Hill Road to Gene Crandall, owner of C-M Fibers in Mentz, said Ann Bealus Friday.

Crandall said in a Nov. 23 letter to the Conquest town board that he planned to use the property "to construct and operate a municipal/hospital waste co-generation incineration facility."

He said he planned to use less than five acres for the incinerator.

The farm has been used to raise livestock and crops. Part of the land is wooded.

Mealus' ran a dairy and crop farm on the land they called Back Break Acres. The couple, who bought the farm 10 years ago, live in an older, two-story farmhouse on the property.

When their farming venture failed they were forced to sell the property.

Crandall's letter said the land was well-suited for his plans. "The farm has been an agricultural failure, and from our engineering testing and study, limited for residential useage," he said in the letter.

This past Wednesday, more than 100 residents of Conquest and the surrounding area held a second meeting to organize protests against the plant's location in the town.

Most of those attending the meeting signed up as new members of Citizen's Against Pollution, the group formed in Mentz to oppose the incinerator there. They have begun circulating petitions to present to the Conquest Town Board and have sent a letter to town officials indicating they would like to attend future meetings. They asked that the January meeting be held somewhere other than the trailer used for regular town meetings in order to allow more residents to attend.

—Another meeting for residents has been scheduled for 8 p.m. Jan. 6 at the Conquest Fire House.

Crandall's initial plans called for a \$25 million plant in the Mentz. Citizens there organized protests against the plant and his plans were changed to a recycling/transfer station on Route 31.

In February, a bid by Crandall to buy 100 acres of land on Route 31 in Mentz was thwarted when the owner of the property, Hazel O'Hara, decided not to sell the land despite a signed purchase offer.

The 82-year old woman said she changed her mind when she learned plans for the property included a proposed trash incinerator.

Crandall, maintaining that nothing was mentioned at the time of the agreement about use of the land, began legal action against O'Hara. Allan Bentkofsky, O'Hara's attorney, said nothing has yet been resolved.

Crandall has not yet filed a permit application with the state Department of Environmental Conservation for an incinerator in Conquest, according to Robert Torba, deputy permit administrator. A permit application for a recycling/transfer station in Mentz was returned to Crandall because it was incomplete. A new application has not yet been submitted to the DEC for the Mentz facility.

Crandall has been unavailable for comment.

Goulds' purchase approved

By DAVID TOBIN

Goulds Pumps will purchase the Columbian Rope Building for \$2.4 million, officials said Friday.

The Seneca Falls pump manufacturer received approval Thursday from the Auburn Industrial Development Authority to sell \$3.4 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds to finance the purchase and renovation of the property. Goulds had planned to lease the Wright Avenue building from Ellis Associates, an Auburn realty firm.

Goulds will move their entire shipping operation to the 237,000-square-foot building in the next few months and plans to begin assembly of two new pumps shortly after, said Anthony Stuhreyer, general manager of the company's water systems division. The company may begin manufacturing pump components at the site within the next two years, he said.

Closing on the 25-acre property will take place in late January or February, Stuhreyer said.

In the previous arrangement with Ellis Associates, Columbian Rope had agreed to a \$2.6 million purchase price.

AIDA officials expressed pleasure at Goulds' expansion to Auburn.

"It's a giant step forward, having a Fortune 500 company locate here," Mayor Ed Lauckern said.

"Goulds had always indicated they intended to purchase the property," said Vijay Mital, Auburn city planner and AIDA secretary.

"This feels like a much cleaner deal."

Goulds did not want to wait until their 10-year lease with Ellis expired to purchase the building, when the value of the property might be several times more, Stuhreyer said. The company has also requested a change in the tax abatement schedule originally set up with the city when Ellis was eyeing the property.

AIDA and the city council is expected to discuss Gould's tax abatement schedule for the property later this month.

Goulds will initially bring 10 to 12 people from the Seneca Falls plant to man the new facility, and hire up to 50 others during the next five to ten years, Stuhreyer said. Ten other tentative tenants will lease portions of the building from Goulds, with Ellis Associates acting as the rental agent.

Auburn will receive more than \$600,000 in back taxes owed by Columbian Rope when the sale is completed.

Horton says super collider not justified

Frank Horton doesn't want a superconducting super collider in his district.

The Rochester Republican, who represents Cayuga County in the U.S. House of Representatives, opposes the \$6 billion project planned for one of eight sites around the country. One of the sites selected is in Wayne County, where it has met with significant opposition.

The sites were recommended to the Department of Energy based solely on technical considerations and did not consider community support.

Horton, in a press release, says the entire project is unlikely to find congressional support because of its expense.

He said, "How can Congress justify adding billions of dollars for this project, wherever it is ultimately sited."

The Energy Department will release a list of "best qualified" sites later this month and the final site selection will be made in July.

Uncertainty prevails in doubling of suicides

A telephone call ... the sound of gunfire; questions keep coming

Continued from Page 1.

Julie Monson, 19, disappeared in September 1981. Her body was found in a swamp at the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge in Seneca County 1 1/2 years later.

Bianco was convicted of the murder last year. His attorneys are appealing the decision.

DeVoe says he doesn't think Vasile knew anything about the murder but wanted to "play detective."

"You had to know Jimmy," DeVoe says. "He wanted to play detective. He told me during the (Monson) investigation his phone was tapped."

Most of the rumors came up after Vasile's death, DeVoe says, such as a rumor that he had a video tape connected to the Monson case. Vasile was a videotape buff.

"He was always making video tapes."

According to the coroner's report, Vasile called the Battered Women's Shelter at 1 a.m. that Thursday demanding to speak to his wife. When the woman who took the call turned him down, Vasile told her he was going to kill himself.

Shortly after that, the report says, the woman heard a pop and then only the television in the background. Others, including DeVoe, say they were told a woman screamed or cried in the background.

The woman from the shelter called police, the report says. Officers found the house dark, the front door locked. They didn't go in.

Shortly after 7 a.m. Friday DeVoe stopped at Vasile's house on his way to work. He went in through the unlocked side door he always used. Two lights burned inside.

Vasile lay on the living room floor, the telephone still in his hand. He had been dead for several hours, a gunshot wound through the lower abdomen.

In a teaching booklet used at Upstate Medical Center, the late Dr. William D. Alsever, assistant medical examiner in Onondaga County, said self-inflicted gunshot wounds in the lower abdomen are unusual.

"Areas that would be suspicious of homicide are the face, eye, abdomen — other than the upper center — right chest and neck."

"There was no way he could have killed himself," DeVoe says. "It might have been accidental. The rifle had a hair trigger. When the cop tapped the barrel, it fired."

Vasile had been treated for depression. He had his good days and his bad days. DeVoe saw him through both.

"He used to joke about suicide. But that's all it was, a joke. He was in the car business. Sometimes he would say, 'If I don't sell a car today, I'll go home and kill myself.' But he didn't say it seriously."

DeVoe says police might have saved Vasile if they had entered the house Wednesday night. DeVoe said he was told Vasile did not die instantly.

"Why would they knock on the door and go away when there wasn't an answer?"

Assistant Police Chief John Walter said police may have been afraid of violating the law.

"You get a call from a neighbor that someone next door is going to commit suicide. You go and knock down the door and that's not the case. Where does that leave the officer?"

There were at least three other unusual deaths ruled suicides here in recent years.

Cayuga County pathologist Janice Ross said suicide rulings are made only when pathologists are certain the death was not accidental. Foul-play was ruled out in the following suicides.

• Ivan Hares' On May 14, Hares, 55, drove down a dirt path about 1,000 feet from his home, poured a flammable liquid on the car and ignited it with a Bic lighter.

Investigators said Hares had financial problems. A relative said he also suffered from great pain in his legs and knees, which may have contributed to the suicide.

Sheriff's deputies said Hares had purchased "flammable material" that week.

—In the booklet called "Suicide, Accident or Homicide?" Alsever, said instances of self-immolation are rare, though the presence of a flammable substance supports suicide. A suicide note — present in only 20 percent of all suicides — was not found.

• Robert Fowler's. On a cold, December morning in 1983, a Cortland man drove down a secluded road in Summerhill, poured a five-gallon can of gasoline over his body and car and ignited it.

The fire was spotted by a Dryden highway crew plowing the road. No note was found. Fowler, 52, was dead on arrival. According to the coroner's report, there had been no mention of depression.

• Paul Stone's. On Jan. 13, 1986, Paul Stone, 39, cut his own throat with a knife and wiped it clean. His landlord found him a few days later.

The door of his apartment was locked from the inside. Police said three keys existed — two found in the apartment. The third belonged to the landlord.

A Social Security check was stolen from Stone's mailbox 10 days before his body was discovered. Three months later, a Union Springs man was charged with possessing the \$582 check.

After a three-month investigation, police said Stone, who had a long history of mental problems, committed suicide.

Help is available for those contemplating suicide.
In Cayuga County, counselors at the Cayuga County Mental Health Center may be reached any time at 253-0341.
Counselors are always on duty at Contact Telephone Counseling, Syracuse — 1-445-1500.

Cayuga County deaths since 1970 by selected causes

	1970	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
Total deaths:	851	864	843	841	816	728	810	755	756	719	752	795	727	746	781	801	811
Suicides:	6	12	7	7	10	9	7	10	6	3	8	6	13	7	12	8	15
Homicides:	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	1
Traffic:	25	13	18	16	21	10	11	14	19	16	24	19	10	12	19	24	15
Accidents:	41	37	35	46	40	35	23	40	34	30	37	35	24	31	36	32	23
Cancer:	129	131	125	161	160	146	159	135	150	164	151	155	156	158	166	200	172

Source: New York State Health Department

Unemployment, the economy blamed for high suicide rate

Continued from Page 1.

New York law seals autopsy and death records, and no record available shows how many autopsies Farrell has ordered.

Suicides are treated as homicides until the possibility of murder has been ruled out, Assistant Police Chief John Walter says.

"The first officer who arrives on the scene calls a detective, and it's treated exactly like a homicide," Walter said. "You always wonder why people do it."

Local mental health officials frequently blame the high suicide rate on unemployment and the economy.

The first officer who arrives on the scene calls a detective, and it's treated exactly like a homicide. You always wonder why people do it.

The unemployment — as well as the number of suicides — increased in 1982. But in 1986, with the unemployment rate at its lowest in the last decade, the suicide rate was at its highest.

County pathologist Janice Ross and health department physician Phillip Gola, blame at least some of the suicides on the weather.

"Have you ever noticed how often the sun shines around here," Gola says.

Ross says she sometimes sees two or three suicides during long periods of rain.

Several studies have linked depression to a lack of sunlight.

As the suicide rate increases, mental health agencies struggle under heavy caseloads and too little money.

The Community Mental Health Center has been without a full-time psychiatrist since July when Dr. Peter Midura retired after 27 years. A psychiatrist finishing her residency in the Bronx is expected to begin next summer.

The county Legislature last week approved a \$751,000 budget for the center next year, funding two more staff positions. About \$2 1/2 million was budgeted for mental health services in 1988, including the mental health center and services for the mentally retarded and disabled.

Officials blamed a low salary — \$65,000 a year — for the delay in finding a psychiatrist willing to settle in Cayuga County. The salary was raised to \$80,000.

Several years ago the mental health board discussed plans for a 24-hour crisis line. Those plans were abandoned because of the cost and staff needed to operate a hotline, Midura said. Counseling centers say emergency cases are seen within 24 hours. Cayuga Counseling has a six- to eight-week waiting list for non-emergency cases.

Sixteen-year-old Tammy Flanagan was one of the emergencies. Her mother called Cayuga Counseling Nov. 10 and asked for an appointment. She was told someone would call her. The call was returned within 24 hours — too late.

Early that morning Tammy took a .22 rifle, walked to the woods behind the Polish Home and killed herself.

Tammy had been diagnosed as suicidal. Her mother called Cayuga Counseling when Tammy didn't come home from school that day. She was worried what she might do while depressed although she had not threatened to herself at that time.

David Sealy, executive director of Cayuga Counseling, declined to comment on the case but did say there is a waiting list because of the case loads of counselors.

"Anytime we have an emergency or suicide we get them right in," Sealy said. "We just haven't been able to keep up with the services needed."

"We try to see as many people as we can."

Calls: Counselors at the ready

Continued from Page 1.

The center gets more calls around the holidays — but fewer suicides. People get depressed in the winter but more kill themselves in the spring, experts say.

Every time the center gets an emergency call after hours, a telephone pager calls a counselor who returns the call in a few minutes.

The calls can come anytime — a Sunday afternoon, in the middle of the night, at dinner.

Jan Liddell, director of Contact Telephone Counseling in Syracuse, said Contact probably gets more calls at night, some from Cayuga County residents with nowhere else to turn.

Contact receives about 25,000 calls a year — 5 percent of those are from people contemplating suicide. Some callers just want someone to talk to. They don't have to give their names.

"We get them around the clock," Liddell said. "They can just pick up a phone and connect with a trained volunteer."

Contact is staffed by 130 volunteers who have completed 70 hours of training. It has a budget of \$170,000 a year which includes services and training to schools and other agencies in Onondaga County.

Each case is different, Liddell said. "The most important thing is to communicate caring, understanding and warmth."

The Cayuga County Mental Health Center handles calls much the same way, though many of the callers have been to the center for counseling and have an assigned therapist.

Counselors ask a series of questions about physical health — weight gain or loss, fatigue — which they say help gauge a person's mental health.

"We also listen for negative verbal clues," Blair said. "They might be saying they don't care if the world ends tomorrow or they might be telling people there's no point in going on."

If the caller is imminently suicidal or homicidal, the counselor will send police take the caller to the hospital where they're evaluated by a psychiatrist.

Contact counselors try to get an address from someone who appears to be in danger. Calls can be traced but it's a complicated procedure, Liddell said.

About 400 patients were admitted to the psychiatric unit at Auburn Memorial Hospital in 1987 — 32 percent came in through the emergency room, AMH Director of Nursing Mary Headd said.

People who really want to kill themselves don't call hotlines, Liddell said.

"The person who calls is desperate. They can't think of anything else to do, or they can't think of a way out. But they reach out one last time."

"We point out to them that the situation may be difficult, but it's not hopeless. It's very important to communicate that."

We get them around the clock ... each case is different ... the most important thing is to communicate caring, understanding, and warmth.

