

High court will rule on Pledge

The Supreme Court agrees to decide if reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unlawful

By Matt Krupnick
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — The U.S. Supreme Court will consider whether public schools can include the Pledge of Allegiance in their daily routine.

Justices agreed Tuesday to consider a California lawsuit that brought wide attention last year after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that recitation of the phrase "under God" in schools was unconstitutional.

The appeals court ordered a stay on the decision earlier this year until the Supreme Court could decide whether

to hear the case.

Michael Newdow, the Sacramento man who sued a school district to prevent his daughter from being exposed to the pledge, said Tuesday he was optimistic about the Supreme Court review.

At issue is whether the mention of God violates the First Amendment. The appeals court ruled the pledge — when recited in public schools — amounts to government endorsement of a monotheistic religion.

Pledge supporters say the God reference, introduced to the pledge in 1954 to distinguish the United States from communist nations, is more traditional than religious.

"There's a history here and I think the public overwhelmingly believes the phrase 'under God' should be kept in the pledge," said attorney Richard Thompson, head of the Thomas More

Law Center, which plans to file a brief in support of the school district.

Two factors could complicate the Supreme Court review, which is expected next year.

First, Justice Antonin Scalia, who criticized the appeals court's decision, recused himself from the case. His absence establishes the possibility of a 4-4 tie, which would leave the 9th Circuit ruling in place.

Further entangling the issue, the court must decide whether Newdow had the right to sue on behalf of his daughter, over whom he did not have custody. If he improperly filed the suit, the court is unlikely to address the merits of the case, legal experts said.

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MASTURBATOR

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Once they realized it was not a joke, they screamed and ran into Shannon's room.

"We started yelling and banging on the wall to wake up our third roommate," Shannon said.

After waking the third roommate and her boyfriend, the four went back into the kitchen to see if the man was still there. He was gone and had left the back door wide open.

"He just vaporized," Kraus said. "Like a ghost."

There have been several indecent exposure reports in the past month, five or six of which are related, said Eugene Police Department spokes-

woman Kerry Delf. In each incident the offender disappeared before police could catch him.

Rumors of the campus masturbator originally began in 2002 when three incidents of a man masturbating in front of female students' residence hall windows were thought to have been perpetrated by the same male suspect.

Victims of the 2002 incidents described the campus masturbator as a Caucasian male in his 20s. Kraus described the man in her kitchen in a similar light, adding that he was dressed "like any average ... guy who'd gone out to a nice dinner."

Delf advised female students to be very aware of their surroundings, especially if they are walking at night by themselves. If confronted by a threat-

ening individual, distract him or her if possible, she said, adding that distractions might keep the offender from running away so that police can apprehend the suspect.

Delf said victims should also get as accurate of a suspect description as possible and call the police immediately.

Kraus said she was worried that the man might come back to the house another night, or that his fascination with scaring females might manifest into something more dangerous.

"It's really scary," she said. "Our doors aren't ever going to be unlocked again."

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at alishoughnessy@dailyemerald.com.

GTF

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department, said many of the history GTFs don't have teaching experience, but they do have strong academic careers.

"The decisions we're making are really about academic merit and academic promise," he said.

Ostler said history GTFs are not required to attend workshops, but many do on their own. They also get much of their training from working closely with professors.

History GTF Tyler Fall said he feels comfortable with his ability to lead discussion sections because he was a substitute teacher at a middle school, and he gets tips from other GTFs as well as professors.

"The professor who teaches the class has always given me ample advice," he said. "It's not a matter of just being thrown into a situation."

Fall has taken workshops to learn more about managing a classroom

and how to relate to students, which he said is important for getting students to participate.

Students have different opinions on GTFs' effectiveness as teachers.

Freshman Jenny McMahon said her psychology GTF creates a welcome environment by urging students to discuss material together.

"He really cares about what your opinion is," she said, adding that he presents himself professionally but isn't as intimidating as a professor.

Freshman Natasha Yeoman said she wasn't so lucky. She said she dropped a class at the beginning of the term because she felt her math GTF didn't have enough experience or grasp on the material to lead a lab section.

"She didn't explain everything," Yeoman said, adding that at one point the students had to show the GTF how to do a math problem.

Cooper said that even if GTFs do know the material well, it isn't always enough to make them good teachers.

"It's much, much more complex than just delivering information," she said. "That may or may not have anything to do with whether (students) are learning."

TEP also offers a one-day training class for faculty and staff in September that Cooper describes as "a very intense day" of training. It was originally five days long, but not enough people could fit it into their schedules. She said that although this leaves little time for training, more people are able to participate, adding that last September about 200 GTFs attended.

Lohan said she would probably attend more workshops if she had the time, or if they counted toward the hours GTFs are required to work.

"With the graduate schedules, often our days are full," she said.

For more information on TEP, visit <http://tep.uoregon.edu>.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.

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