

Hiker killed in fall from trail

By JEFF BELL
Times Colonist staff

A 22-year-old Alberta man is dead following a hiking accident on the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail.

The man, from St. Albert, suffered a broken neck and extensive head injuries after falling Saturday about 15 metres from a cliff near Bear Beach, one of the trail sites designated for beach camping.

He had been hiking on the 47-kilometre trail with a group of people from both Victoria and Alberta, including his grandfather.

A B.C. Ambulance helicopter arrived ahead of a Sooke Search-and-Rescue crew and airlifted the man to Victoria General Hospital. He died Sunday in hospital with members of his family at his side.

His name has not been released because relatives are still being contacted.

Sooke RCMP Cpl. Garth Cunningham said the man had been walking along the cliff area with members of his group when he fell.

"He was apparently at the rear of the group and went out to take a picture of the beautiful scenery out there on a beautiful day," Cunningham said.

"We can only speculate after that as to exactly what took place, because nobody saw it."

"He was actually away from the group for a little bit, and when they realized he was separated they went to search for him and saw that he had fallen some 50 feet below."

B.C. Ambulance was called at 3:22 p.m., and police about 3:30 p.m.

Brian Olsen of North Vancouver was on a weekend hike with a friend when he heard the helicopter arrive. The two men headed down to the beach to see if they could help the paramedics, he said.

"They were already with him when we arrived. We asked if they wanted help and they said yes."

Olsen said the accident victim had fallen into a difficult spot, an opening in a "jumble of logs."

He and his friend held intravenous lines before helping to get the man onto



a spine board.

"It was pretty traumatic," Olsen said.

He said the accident happened above what appeared to be a dry waterfall, where just a trickle of water was coming from the stream bed. "But all of the moss was still slippery and wet."

Olsen praised the work of the ambu-

lance crew and the helicopter pilot.

"The pilot must have done a really amazing job to get where he did, because the beach is on quite an angle."

The Juan de Fuca Marine Trail, opened in 1996, was created through the Commonwealth Nature Legacy after the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victo-

ria. It skirts the rugged Island coast from China Beach, near Jordan River, to Botanical Beach, just outside Port Renfrew. Bear Beach is nine kilometres northwest of the China Beach trailhead.

Bear Beach, a stony stretch of coastline, runs for about a kilometre and features a long, wooden stairway on its eastern end, said Corey Touchette, who manages the area for R.L.C. Enterprise, the company contracted to run provincial parks in the south Vancouver Island district.

"It's a gorgeous beach," Touchette said.

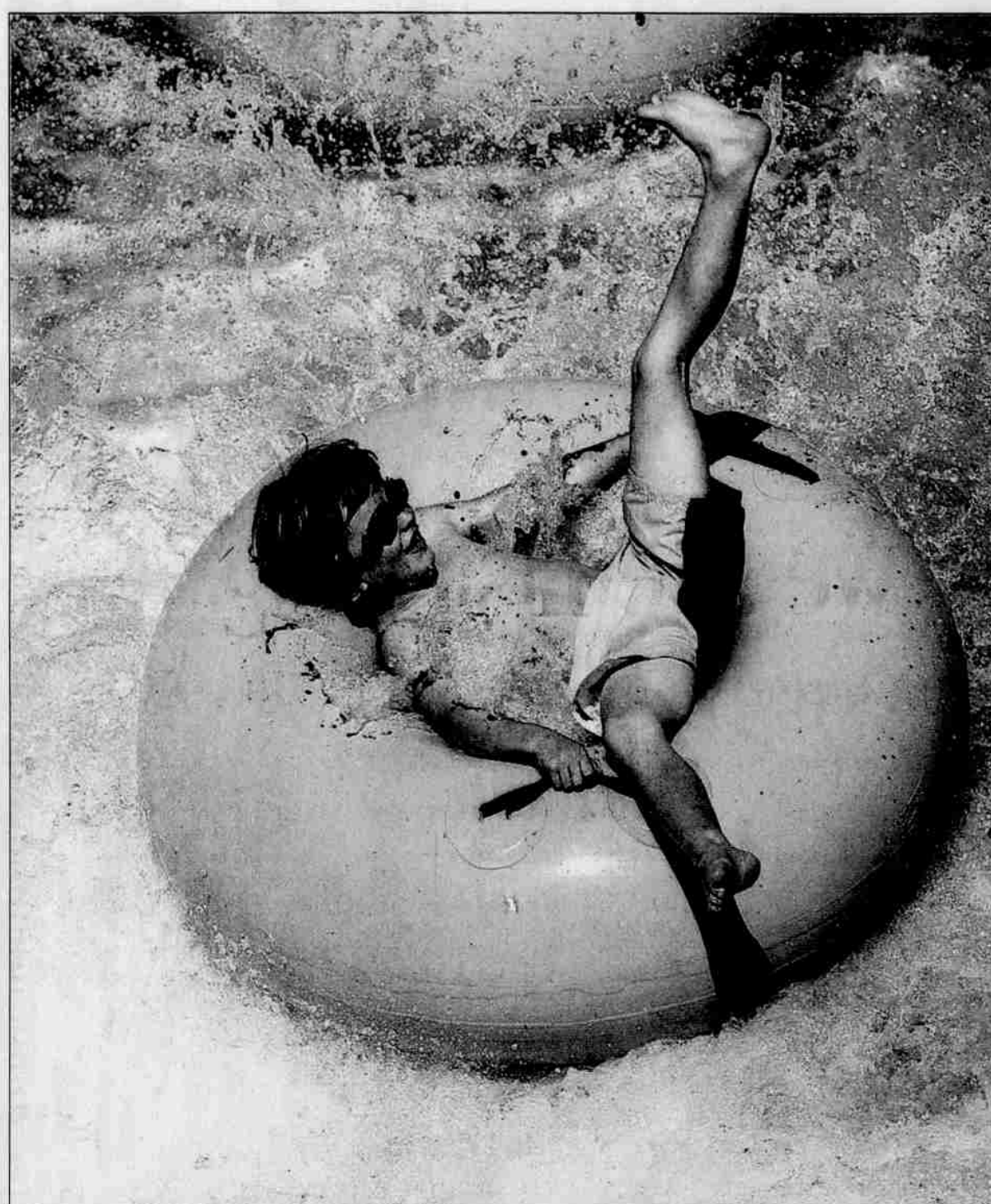
Neither Touchette nor Cunningham could recall incidents on the trail that involved anything other than relatively minor injuries.

For example, Touchette said a hiker suffered a sprained ankle last year.

"It's a back-country area and we hope people know when they start out that there are dangers involved."

Touchette and two others are on the trail regularly during the summer to do maintenance and general patrols.

SLIP SLIDING AWAY



The River Run at All Fun Recreation Park in Langford was the perfect place to be for water enthusiasts seeking a wild time on a sunny Monday afternoon. Sun and highs in the mid-20s will continue for the rest of the week. Bruce Stotesbury/TC

Canvassers may be key in police probe of home invasion

By JEFF BELL
Times Colonist staff

Victoria police investigators have been looking to legitimate door-to-door groups as part of their probe into an attack last Friday on an 83-year-old woman by two young males posing as canvassers.

The Port Alberni woman, who was staying with her sister in the Kiwanis Village seniors' complex on Cook Street while recovering from bypass surgery, was struck with a 46-centimetre piece of pipe. That sent her back to hospital with a broken forearm, bruised fingers and lacerations.

"It was consistent with defensive wounds," Sgt. Les Sylvén of Victoria's Major Crime Unit said Monday.

One avenue of investigation involves talking with people who might have been going door-to-door around the time of the attack and encountered the two suspects, Sylvén said.

"We're following up with that on some door-to-door subscription sellers and different groups like that."

He said officers have also talked to neighbours and the victim again.

Sylvén said one of the suspects has been described as about six feet tall and possibly in his late teens or early 20s, while the other is considerably shorter and believed to be 16 or 17.

"These people were in the neighbourhood and they had gone door to door," he said. "They didn't single this person out by any means. They had been in the complex for quite a while and as luck would have it the opportunity presented itself, and they forced themselves into this unfortunate lady's suite."

Some of the woman's injuries indicate she tried to hold the door and keep her assailants out, Sylvén said. The altercation was noisy, which may be what prompted the youths to flee, he said.

Sylvén said people can use measures such as peepholes, chains or even screens to increase their safety when answering the door. Knowing the people living near you is also important, he said.

"Look out for each other in the community, your neighbours. That definitely helped in this case, where other people were able to help pretty quickly."

Const. Rick Anthony said the attack on the elderly woman was despicable, "and pretty disgusting that these guys are preying on the elderly and the infirm."

In another incident, a woman in a wheelchair was robbed by people who coned their way into her apartment Sunday. Police are looking for two female suspects who got into the disabled woman's residence on Gorge Road East about 4:50 p.m. and stole her purse.

Anthony said the victim buzzed the women into her building after one of them identified herself as Cathy, and the victim assumed she was a friend. Once the two were in the apartment, police said the victim was too intimidated to ask them to leave.

One of the intruders is described as five-foot-two and 110 pounds. She is in her 50s, has bad teeth and was wearing her blond hair in a ponytail. She was wearing a pink-and-white long-sleeve shirt and pink pants.

The other woman is in her 20s, and is five-foot-three and 130 pounds. She has dark hair and is possibly three months pregnant.

Parks strike puts Island sites behind picket line

By ELAINE MARSHALL
Times Colonist staff

Striking Parks Canada employees stepped up their tactics and instituted a general strike in B.C. on Monday.

For the first time in the four-day-old strike, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada were walking a picket line at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse, Pacific Rim National Park, Gulf Islands National Park and other sites in B.C. The union leaders said they would return today to the rotating strike, with only certain members of the union off the job, but they hope increasing pressure will force Parks Canada back to the bargaining table.

Neither side is moving on the key issue of wages, and there are no negotiations, but striking worker Dave King, walking the picket line at Fort Rodd, said public support is keeping workers' spirits up.

"We're hearing a lot of people honking as they drive by, a lot of people waving," he said. "There is still very good morale."

Employed by Fort Rodd as the curator, King was in his first day on strike. Over the weekend only interpretive staff at the site were on strike, allowing the park to stay open and the public to get in for free. Despite the expanding strike action and picket lines, Fort Rodd remained open and free to visitors.

Parks Canada spokesman Jim Barlow said Gulf Islands and Pacific Rim National Parks were both open and charging normal fees. The West Coast Trail is open and visitor centres in Pacific Rim are also open, but have no staff.

Despite the strike, visitors were still wandering the grounds at Fort Rodd. New York City resident and lighthouse fan Barbara Shea said crossing the picket line was not good, but this may be the only chance she gets to see Fisgard Lighthouse.

"I'll probably never get this way again," she said.

Negotiations to avert the strike of more than 4,800 Parks Canada employees broke down last Thursday after the two sides could not agree on wages. The union demanded a reduction of a 20 per cent wage gap between Parks Canada employees and workers in the private sector. The union said the government offer addressed this issue with an offer of four per cent.

Parks Canada's Gaby Fortin, director general for Western and Northern Canada, said the government offer, which includes an increase of as much as 11 per cent over three years, is "reasonable and fair."

"What Parks Canada employees make compared to their provincial counterparts, we're paying 13 per cent higher," he said.

Fortin said he hoped the union leaders would take the government's offer to the membership for a vote, but Patty Ducharme, PSAC's executive vice-presi-



A Parks Canada employee who didn't want to be identified pickets at the entrance to the Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse national historic sites Monday. He was joined on the line by five other park employees. Deddeda Stenler/TC

dent for B.C., said that is not going to happen. "We've obviously told them to get stuffed on that point," Ducharme said. "It's not an offer that we're going to take to our members."

Ducharme added that the union is aware that the government has slashed the budget of Parks Canada, but suggested that Parks should be asking the Treasury Board for an increase in its budget to help accommodate the union demands. Fortin scoffed

at the idea. "That's very easily said," he remarked. "The Treasury Board doesn't have an endless purse either."

Both sides say they are waiting for the other to return to the negotiating table. Until that happens, Barlow said that because Pacific Rim is still charging normal fees, the strike has not yet led to a significant loss of revenue at Vancouver Island sites. "The large revenue generators are at Pacific Rim," he said.

Council chews over proposal for organic farm

By BILL CLEVERLEY
Times Colonist staff

The seed was planted years ago. Monday it was about to bear fruit as Saanich councillors considered rezoning a chunk of Haliburton Road property for organic agriculture.

The 2.9-hectare property off Haliburton up a hill from the Pat Bay Highway is to become a demonstration farm for organic growing practices.

The rezoning was needed because the property was zoned for a utility.

"It's sort of a boutique-type zone," Mayor Frank Leonard said of the new rural zone: demonstration farm zone.

"It just fits their needs but it also gives the neighbours some comfort. I think, that it's not going to be a pig farm."

Only one neighbouring property owner expressed concerns about the proposal. Vic Burstall said he did not object to use of the property as an organic farm.

Please see HALIBURTON, B2