

LARRY TALARICO 1943-2005

Trailblazer left his mark

A retired dentist, Larry Talarico loved to hike trails and climb mountains
— and worked to help others enjoy the outdoors, too

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY GIL PARKER

Special to the Times Colonist

Once every week, the Thursday Hiking Group heads out into the Sooke Hills. On July 7, the group left from the Sooke Potholes parking lot bound for Peden Lake, but its trek ended abruptly. Larry Talarico, 62, a regular hiker with the group, suffered a heart attack. Despite the efforts of his fellow hikers, the Juan de Fuca Ground Search and Rescue, and Sooke firefighters, Talarico could not be revived.

The outdoor community had lost an active leader and a supporter of wilderness conservation.

Talarico became acquainted with the outdoors only at age 38, first through courses at the Strathcona Outdoor Education Centre. Later, he joined the Alpine Club, climbing and hiking on up-Island trips, but focusing on trails nearer to Victoria. There are still four hikes on the Alpine Club schedule that he had planned to lead.

Talarico joined the Kludahk Trail club; his ambition was to see a trail that ran continuously from the Humpback Road area along San Juan Ridge to the West Coast near Port Renfrew. And he worked with Ian Brown maintaining trails on YM/YWCA Camp Thunderbird lands.

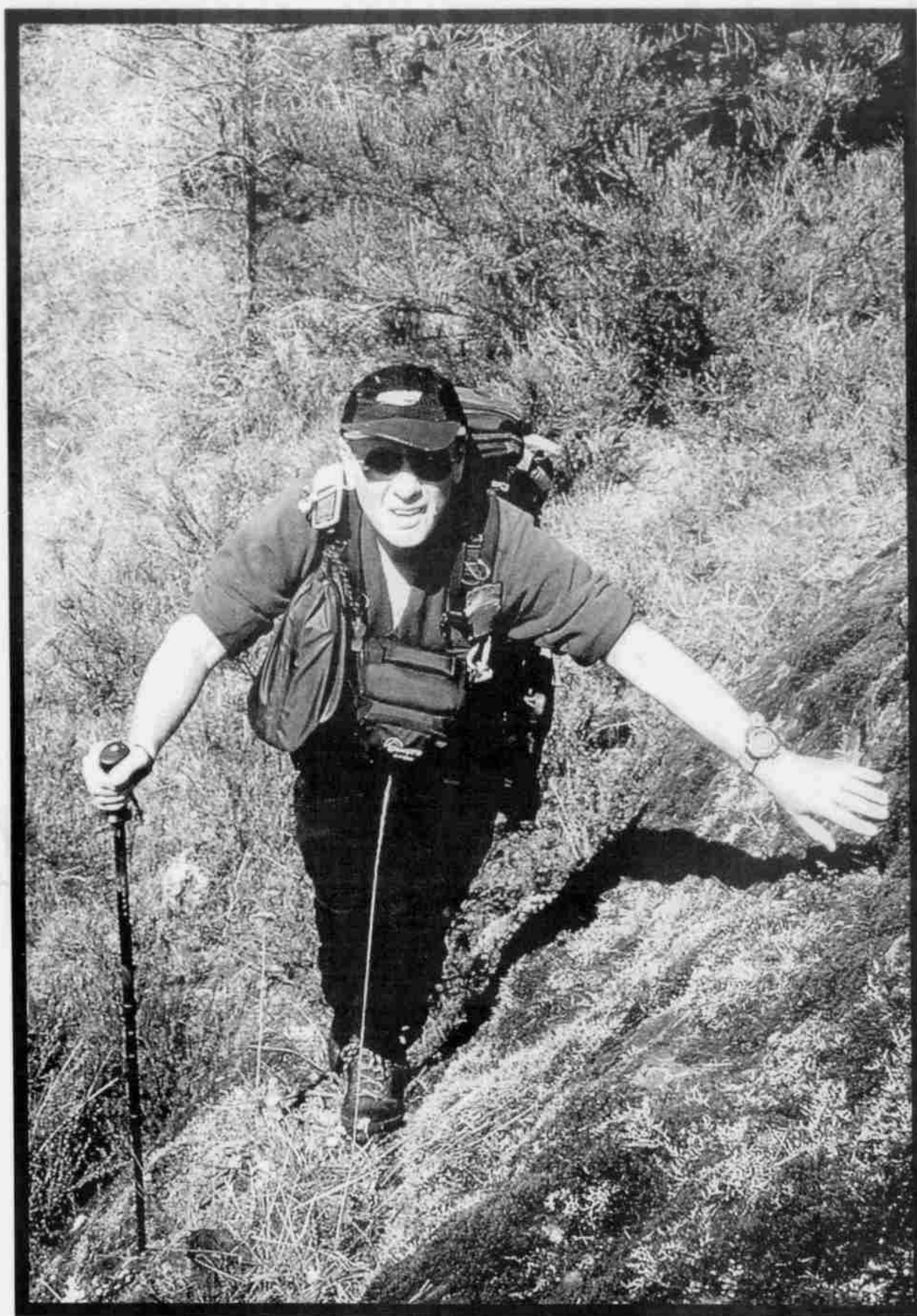
"I miss Larry in the hills for his enthusiasm, for his perennial willingness to help me clear a trail somewhere or find a new one, for his support and his thoughtfulness, as well as his GPS," Brown says.

Talarico was a devotee of the latest technology. He used global positioning systems to locate himself in the woods. In the outdoors, Talarico would always carry any kind of equipment that might help him in navigating the terrain. He recorded every point of interest in his miniature tape recorder and fixed every junction by GPS co-ordinates. His fellow hikers benefited from the route maps he distributed.

Talarico was always looking for something that needed his energy and organizational ability. When he joined the Capital Regional District Parks as a volunteer warden, he noted on his application that he "hoped to accomplish something ... to be effective."

In East Sooke Park, he proposed a new trail marking system and catalogued all the invasive holly plants, marking each plant by photos and GPS co-ordinates. He mapped trails on Mount Wells and Thetis Lake parks, and began monitoring the Galloping Goose trail on his mountain bike.

After an abortive search for a missing person in East Sooke, Talarico became interested in ground search procedures and equipment requirements.



An avid hiker, Larry Talarico loved climbing the Sooke Hills. On July 7, bound for Peden Lake with his Thursday Hiking Group, Talarico suffered a heart attack and died. His devotion to the trails benefited others. For example, he used his GPS and a tape recorder to keep track of points of interest which he used to create maps for others.

After barely a year with Juan de Fuca Ground Search and Rescue, he began itemizing the trucks and other equipment,

regularly test running any motorized units that had to be ready at a moment's notice.

Had he not died when he did, he

would have spent the next few days on a tracking course run by the Justice Institute of B.C.



Larry Talarico, left, and Gil Parker atop Mount Adams, with Mount Rainier in the background, in Washington state.

Mark Wilson, a staff person at CRD Parks and a member of the search and rescue group, remembers how quickly Talarico fit into the unit.

"Larry was articulate in what he wanted to do," recalls Mark.

He questioned everything. He said he had so much to learn.

"He drew out the best in you. He was a team player."

Talarico and I hiked together in the Rockies and on the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Manning Park. On long trips, he was a steady trekker, carrying only lightweight equipment and using a simplified cooking system.

We climbed Mount Adams (3,742 metres) in Washington state. Talarico noticed that clouds of blue butterflies congregated at one elevation, then orange ones, like Monarchs, higher up.

We surmised that they were each migrating at different levels in the jet stream. But Talarico needed to know the reason.

Talarico's forebears had immigrated to Canada from Italy and settled near Christina Lake. His grandparents moved on to Portland, Ore., where Talarico grew up.

Once he reconnected with his Canadian relatives, Talarico delved into his Italian heritage with his customary fervour. He found an elderly cousin, Albert Maida, a man who appreciated his love of the outdoors. Maida was a soft-spoken, kind gentleman, known for helping everyone with their problems.

The two made "a profound connection," says Talarico's wife, Alison. "Albert gave Larry his logging chain that he'd carried for years while driving in the bush."

The couple emphasized the importance of family in their own lives too, encouraging their children — daughter, Trina, and son, Tony — to be adventurous and independent in their education and work opportunities.

In his dental profession, Talarico was an innovator and a meticulous practitioner. After graduation in Science and Dentistry from the University of Oregon, he served as a captain in the U.S. Air Force, a member of the dental corps at Vandenberg Air Force base in California. While there, he took special training in oral surgery, periodontics and anaesthetics.

The Talaricos moved to Terrace and ran their dental practice for seven years before moving to Victoria in 1977.

Alison, a dental hygienist, helped him to create their own record forms and education brochures to allow clients to make informed choices about their care.

"Even when considering retirement [in 2000] and sale of the practice," Alison recalls, "Larry wanted to finish his career on the 'cutting edge.'"

Loss of old forest habitat threatens goshawk

BY CARRIE WEST

Special to the Times Colonist

Most birds of prey soar the open sky, keenly watching the landscape for victims. But the elusive goshawk hunts under a forest canopy, darting in amongst trees to chase unlucky rodents and lesser birds. Its short wings and rudder-like tail gives it great manoeuvrability in tight spaces. And with its rapid bursts of acceleration, it is a formidable hunter.

For centuries, this goshawk or "goose hawk" was prized by falconers. Apparently, falcons were showier, but a goshawk could bring home dinner.

In B.C., a unique subspecies of goshawk hunts in coastal forests, particularly those on Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes. Our Queen Charlotte goshawk is smaller and darker than the goshawks hunting in B.C.'s interior. It's thought that the bird's small size helps it navigate the tighter spaces in our dense coastal forests and its dark colouring masks its presence.

Our goshawk is a "sit and wait" predator and an opportunist, according to Erica McClaren, a B.C. government biologist working on recommendations to protect this tough bird. It's also territorial. In fact,



This is another in a weekly series of columns on the endangered species of Vancouver Island.

that's how McClaren flushes one out of hiding. She walks through the forest playing the call of another goshawk.

On Vancouver Island, goshawks nest about seven kilometres apart.

There is little prey diversity for the goshawk on the Island because we have comparatively few small mammal species like ground squirrels. So commanding large territory is important to this hungry predator.

The quality of this territory is also an issue. Half of our known goshawks on the Island live in our central, dense Douglas fir/western hemlock forests. The tight treetop canopies protect nests from the weather and block sunlight, keeping forest floor vegetation to a minimum. Thus, the goshawks have open terrain to

NORTHERN GOSHAWK

Species: Northern Goshawk, *laingi* subspecies. Also known as the Queen Charlotte Goshawk.

Location in B.C.: Coastal B.C., including the Queen Charlotte Islands and Vancouver Island.

Official Status: Threatened (federal); Red-listed (provincial)

Number remaining in B.C.: Approximately 450 breeding pairs (300 on Vancouver Island; 25 on the Queen Charlottes; 125 coastal mainland)

Ecological significance: Although its range extends into Alaska and down to Oregon, more than half of the world population is found in B.C.

Favourite food: Medium-sized birds and mammals, including: red squirrel, thrush, woodpeckers; grouse.

Favourite habitat: Mature and old-growth forest with high canopy closure.

Key threats: Habitat loss and fragmentation.

hunt their prey.

But the goshawk doesn't need "ancient" or "old-growth" forests to sur-



Vancouver Island offers little prey diversity for the endangered goshawk, which feeds on small mammals.

W. Lynch/Parks Canada

vive, McClaren says. It just needs "mature" forests — on Vancouver Island that means forests that are about 60 years

old. Of course, logging companies also like these forests.

"As soon as the habitat becomes suitable for goshawks, it's economically viable," says McClaren. "It's hard to estimate how much we're losing and that's what the recovery team is struggling with right now, trying to model that and trying to predict harvest levels in the future."

Besides loss of habitat, forest fragmentation also bothers our goshawks, as they don't like to nest on forest edges, McClaren says.

It so happens that the first legislation protecting birds of prey involved goshawks and England's Henry VII, according to the International Falconry Association. This king protected goshawk nests "in pain of a year and a day's imprisonment."

Today, a person or company caught destroying an "active" Queen Charlotte goshawk nest in B.C. could face a maximum fine of \$5,000 under the provincial Wildlife Act. In theory, if that person or company destroys a nest on one of 27 provincial wildlife habitat areas with these goshawks, they could face a \$500,000 fine or two years in prison. No one has ever been prosecuted.

Carrie West can be contacted at carriewest@telus.net.