

Police call off search for missing woman

East Sooke resident who vanished in park had been a search-and-rescue volunteer

KATIE DeROSA
Times Colonist

Sooke RCMP have called off the search for a 59-year-old woman who disappeared in East Sooke Park on Thursday.

"The search has been suspended for the time being," said Sooke RCMP Staff Sgt. Steve Wright said Monday. "The whole park was covered. Every trail and off the trail was covered."

Anywhere they could possibly think she may be has been searched extensively."

Dozens of search-and-rescue volunteers have been combing the park since Thursday night when Robin Penwarn, an East Sooke resident, failed to return home after going for a walk.

Her husband found her car, with her purse and cellphone left inside, in the parking lot at the Aylard Farm entrance. That

sparked a massive three-day search that covered most of the trails in the park. A helicopter searched from the air and boats searched the shoreline.

Wright said he spent an hour with Penwarn's grieving family Sunday night explaining why the search is being called off. He said they were very thankful for the massive effort that went in to finding her.

Wright said Juan de Fuca search and rescue volunteers took the search very personally, since Penwarn spent more than 10 years volunteering with the group. She also volunteered with

the Juan de Fuca regional park watch society and the East Sooke fire department.

"The search master really took it hard that we had to suspend the search," Wright said, thanking the volunteers who tackled the dangerous and difficult terrain in their efforts to find Penwarn.

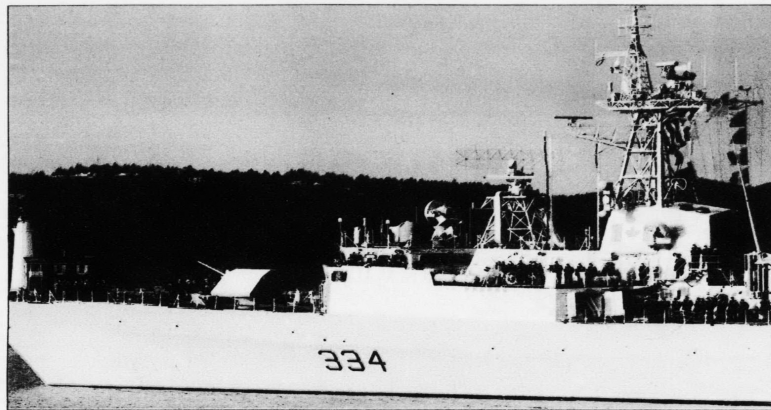
"They were so exhausted and they were dejected but they were prepared to go out again (Monday), but there were no more areas for them to search. That speaks to their camaraderie and that she was part of their team for 10 years."

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FAMILY PHOTO, VIA CHEK NEWS
Robin Penwarn, 59, did not return from a walk on Thursday.

Farewell, HMCS Regina



PHOTOS BY DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST
HMCS Regina leaves CFB Esquimalt Monday to conduct maritime security and counter-terrorism operations in the Arabian Sea region as part of Operation ARTEMIS. Family, friends and onlookers wished the 260-member crew well.



Pierce Anderson, 4, says goodbye to his father, Lt. Jeffery Anderson, just before the departure of HMCS Regina.

Victoria councillors leery of politicking over mayoral vote

Too early to campaign, most agree

BILL CLEVERLEY
Times Colonist

Victoria councillors hope electioneering doesn't overshadow decision-making, now that incumbent Victoria Coun. Lisa Helps has declared she will challenge Mayor Dean Fortin in November's municipal election.

"It's unusual to have two declared candidates quite so early," veteran Coun. Geoff Young said.

"In the course of any discussion, I will make comments that are either supportive or unsupportive of the positions that are taken by other councillor or the mayor," Young said.

I certainly hope we won't get into a situation where comments are construed as supporting somebody or not supporting somebody because of the prospects of them running for mayor," Young said.

It's unfortunate that elections seem to be starting "earlier and earlier," Coun. Chris Coleman said.

"The problem with people saying now what they are doing is it then taints whatever they say about the issues that come forward because people think it's electioneering," Coleman said.

Coun. Ben Isitt, who makes no bones about his plans to run for re-election, lauded Helps for being transparent about her plans.

With a third of the current term left to go, both Fortin and Helps have said they plan to focus on the business at hand and not get into active campaigning for several months.

Isitt said that as a first-term councillor, he hasn't been through this before.

"There's always a danger that as an election approaches, public figures will shift into campaign mode," Isitt said.

"I think if we all exercise some self-discipline and we make sure we put the people's interests first before our own, we should be in a good position," he said.

"It's part of a political process — and having people be transparent about their intentions can only be a good thing."

Coun. Shellie Gudgeon said she doubted Helps's announcement will make much difference in how council operates, given that Helps has been telegraphing her intentions for some time.

"I think Lisa has been pretty clear that she has been considering running for mayor for a long time," Gudgeon said.

"I think part of our dysfunction at the council table has been the jockeying to show leadership. I'm hopeful and I'm optimistic that they really will refrain from too active campaigning," she said.

Gudgeon, who was undecided about her political future early in the current term, her first, said she plans to run again.

Young, too, said his plans are to seek re-election in the fall, but noted that plans are always subject to changing circumstances.

He said he's regularly asked about taking another shot at the mayor's job (he ran in 1999). However, he said that if he were to take another stab at the top job, he wouldn't announce his candidacy until much closer to the election.

"It's not at the top of my list at this time," Young said.

Coleman said he, too, will "probably" seek re-election.

Coun. Pam Madoff said it's too early to announce her intentions.

She said the idea of a candidate announcing an intention to run, without then being in election mode, "seems a little hard to visualize."

"So for me, I try to keep working on the work of council for as long as I possibly can before getting into that kind of fray. And a year out seems a bit soon for me," Madoff said.

Coun. Marianne Alto, first elected in a byelection in 2010, said it has always been her intention to seek re-election for a second full term as a councillor. However, she has no plans to start campaigning soon.

"I certainly, personally, would not consider running for mayor after only one term as a councillor and I certainly don't have any plans, personally, to do any significant campaigning in the foreseeable future," Alto said.

Coun. Charlayne Thornton-Joe said she's undecided.

"I haven't given much thought yet about my future decision," Thornton-Joe said in an email.

"I will continue to stay focused on the work at hand and not be distracted by whatever plans my colleagues have," bcleverley@timescolonist.com

UVic faculty union vote could come next week

LINDSAY KINES
Times Colonist

Professors and librarians at the University of Victoria could vote as early as next week on whether to form a new faculty union.

The faculty association applied for certification as a trade union last Thursday, and the B.C. Labour Relations Board has called a hearing into the application for Friday in Vancouver.

Anyone objecting to the application can give evi-

dence at the hearing.

Association vice-president Jason Price said union organizers are confident they have more than enough support to withstand any challenge.

The association said 540 professors and librarians — 63 per cent of its membership — signed union cards during a recruiting drive before Christmas.

The labour relations board requires 45 per cent support before ordering a vote.

"From what we're hearing, there's no problems with the cards at all," Price said. "There's such an overwhelming number of cards that we could survive any challenge."

A vote has to be held within 10 days of the application unless it's done by mail, which could take longer.

Price said the parties are deciding whether to hold the vote on campus, electronically or by mail-in ballot. A simple majority will decide how faculty and

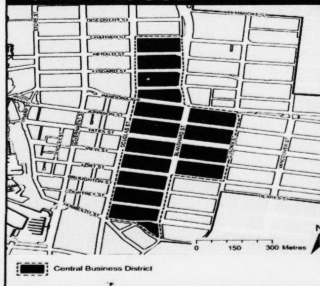
librarians will be represented in the future.

The university's administration has taken no position on the union drive and says it will respect whatever its employees decide.

"[We] believe strongly that the process must be respectful, and whatever the outcome, must be regarded as an opportunity to move forward together in particularly challenging times," the administration states on its website.

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OPEN HOUSE



Downtown Zoning Open House - Tell Us What You Think!

The City of Victoria is proposing a new Zoning Regulation Bylaw for Downtown, focused on the Central Business District. You are invited to attend an open house to learn more about the proposed changes and to provide your feedback.

Why is the Zoning Regulation Bylaw Being Updated?

The Downtown Core Area Plan contains new policies to guide growth and development over the next 30 years. The new zoning regulations will implement the policies and vision for Downtown. Proposed changes include new regulations for density and building height allowances, permitting more uses to accommodate a range of commercial, institutional, and residential space, and introducing regulations for building form that will encourage pedestrian activity and create special places.

Join us to learn more about the proposed changes.

When: 3 p.m. - 7 p.m., Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Where: City Hall Antechamber, 1 Centennial Square

For more information:

www.victoria.ca



Vermin infest Vancouver courthouse

The Province

VANCOUVER — There's a rat in Vancouver's Provincial Courthouse. And a lot of bedbugs and mice too.

The association that represents B.C.'s prosecutors says the government isn't doing enough to deal with an infestation of vermin in the aging building on Main Street.

Phyllis Fradette, president of the B.C. Crown Counsel Association, said the problem with the bedbugs in courtrooms and Crown counsel offices goes back quite some time.

But about a year ago, employees in the building noticed that the infestation was getting worse.

In response to complaints,

officials increased the number of inspections for bedbugs to twice a month from once a month. Heat and steam treatments were used in an attempt to eradicate the bedbugs.

Then in November, as the cold season began, employees began to notice more and more signs of vermin — nests and mice feces in their offices — as the creatures sought out a warmer environment.

In mid-December, a rat was spotted in the offices that house nearly 75 prosecutors. Traps were put out and a suspected point of entry was plugged.

Fudge said not enough is being done by the company contracted to provide cleaning in the building, perhaps due to an inadequate maintenance budget.