

Mahomes, Chiefs comeback a Super Bowl for the ages **SPORTS >B5**Flood recedes but some still out of homes in Cowichan Valley **>A3**

TIMES COLONIST

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High 4. Low 2. Details, B8



Juan de Fuca search-and-rescue and RCMP continued the search for a missing man on Monday.

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Three men disappeared as Sooke River rose

One man, 20, still missing after pickup truck found in river

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Times Colonist

The Sooke River was rapidly rising when three young men were believed to have been travelling nearby on Friday night or early Saturday in a pickup truck. That pickup truck ended up in the river, the bodies of two of the men were found on Sunday, and the search continued Monday for the third man.

Police aren't sure how the truck ended up in the river, which was believed to be travelling on Sooke River Road, which runs along the river. Sooke RCMP are trying to determine where the vehicle left the road, and noted that it appears the road was covered in "fast-moving" river water Friday night.

There is no indication of intoxication or foul play, police said. The B.C. Coroners Service is in the early stages of its investigation to determine how the men died.

Juan de Fuca search-and-rescue manager Kathryn Farr said the river rose about 4.5 to six metres, flooding low-lying areas of Sooke River Road with several feet of water, after heavy rains hit the area late Friday and early Saturday.

"It's my understanding that the river levels on Friday and Saturday were the highest they've been in about 25 years," Farr said.

A search on Sunday led to the truck that Cory Mills, Eric Blackmore and A.J. Jensen, all 20, had been travelling in.

Officials discovered the truck in the river and found two bodies



The men who went missing on the weekend were Cory Mills, left, Eric Blackmore and A.J. Jensen, all 20. They were in a 2004 blue Dodge Dakota pickup truck. FAMILY PHOTOS

along the shoreline downstream shortly afterward.

"The names of the men who died have not been released by police, but family confirmed that Mills had been found dead."

"We are blessed to have had him in our lives for the past 20 years," parents Joanne and Sean Mills said in a statement. "We know in our hearts that he knew he was loved and we may not be able to hold him in our hands anymore, but we will always hold him in our hearts."

Mills was best friends with Blackmore and played lacrosse with Jensen, his family said. They described him as a compassionate, respectful, funny, quirky and giving person.

"He was always the first to be the one to offer a helping hand," said Desirée Arnold, speaking on behalf of the family.

"Cory was always there for his friends and family," she said. "He always had a smile on his face and was always able to be the one to bring a smile to other people's faces."

His family said Cory was athletic and loved sports.

"He was energetic and just loved life," Arnold said.

Ground and air searches continued Monday in an effort to find the third man.

Search-and-rescue volunteers trained in water rescues were out in kayaks and searching the shoreline on foot. The search is focused in the area around Sooke River Road before Sooke Potholes Regional Park.

"We have searchers searching from the river where it's safe for them to do so up to the road where (the water) crossed," Farr said.

The force of the water snapped trees on the river's edge, moved concrete barriers and lifted sunken logs into an elevated parking lot.

Locals said the rain transformed the river and would have flooded parts of the road with more than two metres of water.

Family and friends initiated a search for the three men after they went out on Friday night and didn't return.

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Man missing for eight years found in Victoria



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For eight gut-wrenching years, Dan Thanh Vo's family thought he was dead. Then, in November, came the stunning news: Dan, living with severe mental illness, had been found on the streets in Victoria, half a continent away from where he had disappeared.

And then came the frustration. As desperate as his family is to bring Dan home to Ontario, red tape has stranded him here, unable to travel.

After all those lonely years of sleeping in Chinatown doorways, eating out of garbage cans, being stabbed and beaten, and trying to cope with untreated schizophrenia in a friendless world, a lack of identification documents has grounded him here, unable to fly home.

"I hope to have ID with pictures so I can go back to Ontario," he says in a quiet voice, sitting in the downtown rooming house where he has lived since late November. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of his family, mental-health workers, politicians and bureaucrats, the documents he needs remain elusive. He turns 60 this year.

His story goes back to 1990 when his family fled Vietnam, where he was born. They spent 2½ years in a Thai refugee camp before settling in Toronto, where Dan eventually gained Canadian citizenship. Today, he has two brothers in Ontario — one in Milton, near Toronto, the other in Barrie — and another brother in the U.S. and two sisters in Vietnam.

It was around the end of 2000 that Dan's behaviour began to change. At one point, he told his brother Dan Tam Vo — whom we'll call Vo — that he was hearing voices in his head. Dan went missing for a long period, then called from the West Coast. The family brought him back to Toronto, only to have him disappear again. "We looked for him everywhere," Vo said. Dan emerged in Montreal.

It was in 2007 while Dan was in Montreal that, listening to the voice in his head, he smashed the window of his apartment. His aunt paid for the damage, and persuaded the landlord not to kick him out, but then Dan broke the window again. After police took Dan to hospital, Vo brought him back to Toronto.

A few months later, Dan vanished once more, staying off the grid until March 2011, when he phoned from an Ottawa homeless

shelter. His relatives drove to Ottawa but Dan balked at coming back with them; Vo says Dan didn't want to burden them with giving him the help he needed.

Dan eventually relented, though. The family bought him a bus ticket back to Toronto, where he hung in for awhile before, out of the blue, disappearing again one day in late 2011.

"Suddenly, he's gone," Vo said.

"The first year, we were looking everywhere." They scoured the streets of Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. Vo tried to file a missing persons complaint with the Ottawa police, but they told him to go to their Toronto counterparts instead, which he did. No luck. He pleaded with Dan's bank to let him know if there was any activity in the account — Vo had sent Dan money — but the bank refused, citing confidentiality.

Eventually, Vo had a dream that his brother was dead. So did other family members. As time dragged on with no word of Dan, they came to accept that it was true.

He wasn't dead, though. He had gone first to Vancouver, where he spent a few months in a shelter, and then Victoria. "It's better for me to be here because Vancouver is so big," Dan says. When you carry all your possessions on your back, a compact community is better.

In Victoria, his untreated schizophrenia left him unable to organize his life, but still able to function well enough to survive without attracting too much attention. He was a fixture in Chinatown, and police were aware of him, but for some reason the Toronto missing-person file never popped up.

It was a hard life. "I have no money," Dan says. He slept in doorways. "I eat food in the garbage cans."

All alone, he was vulnerable. He was stabbed once, and on another occasion needed six stitches after being punched in the face. He took a blow to the head in a third attack, requiring surgery. Each time, he ended up back on to the street.

He finally came into the care of VICO, a multi-agency team that works with the most vulnerable people on Victoria's streets, last year. In November, after his illness caused Dan to act out — "I smashed the windshield of a car" — he was taken to Royal Jubilee Hospital.

That's where the actions of a nurse proved key. While on a computer in Our Place, Dan had come across a YouTube video in which an uncle in Houston, Texas had posted information about a family funeral, including his phone number. The number stuck in Dan's head. In hospital, he gave it to the nurse, who called his uncle in Texas. Dan had been found.

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Friends, colleagues remember Brian Small — Greater Victoria's tireless economic advocate

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