

TIMES COLONIST

Thursday, February 6, 2020

Victoria, British Columbia

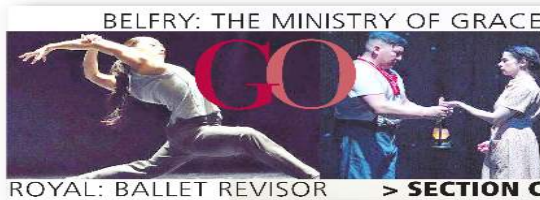
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KIRK DOUGLAS DIES AT 103

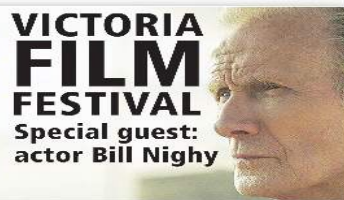
Influential actor starred in dozens of films

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VICTORIA FILM FESTIVAL

Special guest: actor Bill Nighy

B.C. poised to act in forestry strike

No smell is goal for pump-station upgrade at Clover Point



Crews work on expanding the Clover Point pump station, due to be completed in the middle of this year. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Out of sight, out of smell. That's the goal of a project to expand the Clover Point pump station, part of the \$775-million sewage-treatment project for the Capital Regional District. The existing station, built in the 1970s, pumps sewage straight into the ocean. The upgraded facility will send wastewater to the new McLaughlin Point wastewater treatment plant in Esquimalt. The revamped station, being built by Kensa

Contracting Ltd., will be underground and below the grade of adjacent Dallas Road. It's being constructed out of materials that will allow it to blend with the existing facility and surrounding area, the CRD says. It says there will be no discernible smell or noise, thanks to upgraded odour- and noise-control features. The project also includes washrooms, bike paths, a public plaza and street furniture. —Times Colonist

Decision could come today after mediators pull out; thousands on strike now in 8th month

ANDREW A. DUFFY and CINDY E. HARNETT
Times Colonist

The provincial government could make a decision as early as today on how it will deal with the longest coastal forest industry strike in history.

Labour Minister Harry Bains said Wednesday he expected to make a decision in the next 24 hours on how to proceed after mediators in the dispute walked away from the bargaining table.

Bains told reporters he was troubled that Vince Ready, whom he called one of the best mediators in the business, decided to book out of the talks. "I am looking at my options and I will make the decision very soon," he said.

Besides appointing a mediator or fact finder, the minister has the power under the Labour Relations Code to order a last-offer vote or appoint an industrial inquiry commission.

Nearly 3,000 Western Forest Products' employees and contracted workers at six island manufacturing plants and timberlands around the coast have been on strike since July 1.

Talks last broke down before Christmas and resumed on the weekend.

But Ready and Amanda Rogers booked out of talks between Western Forest Products and the United Steelworkers after bargaining hit an impasse this week. Ready and Rogers said they saw no basis for a negotiated settlement.

Bains said he understands that workers, the industry and communities are feeling the pinch of a dispute that is now in its eighth month.

"I am really hoping that the decision we make will bring the parties together and conclude this bargaining in a very timely fashion," he said.

> See DISPUTE, page A2

Three Sooke families, united in grief

CINDY E. HARNETT
Times Colonist

Three sets of parents who each lost a 20-year-old son in an accident on the raging Sooke River last week gathered on Wednesday to console one another.

"We are all coping in our own ways, but we are going to get through this together," said Shannon McInnes, mother of Eric Blackmore, following a meeting of the families at her home on Otter Point Road.

"We all understand what the other families are going through," Cory Mills, Eric Blackmore and A.J. Jensen, disappeared on Friday night, sparking a massive ground and air search.

The pickup truck they were riding in was discovered in the fast-moving Sooke River on Sunday, and the bodies of Mills and Blackmore were found the same day. Jensen's body was found on Tuesday, downstream from the pickup.

The parents who talked to the



The men who died, from left: Eric Blackmore, A.J. Jensen, Cory Mills. They were caught in the raging Sooke River last week. FAMILY PHOTOS

Times Colonist on Wednesday said they believe the three best friends were "puddle-jumping" the truck along Sooke River Road, which was covered in fast-moving water due to a heavy rainstorm.

"We figured they were just going to go puddle-jumping like all of the kids do," said Shannon McInnes. "It's something all the kids do and have done for years and years."

Will McInnes, Blackmore's stepfather, said puddle-jumping is

a popular pastime for Sooke youth.

"They go up to the potholes and they drive really fast through puddles and they splash and they have a great time."

But the river had risen more than six metres from Friday to Saturday because of the heavy rain, according to Juan de Puga search-and-rescue manager Kathryn Parr.

Investigators said there is no

evidence foul play or intoxication

were involved. "They went up there and the water levels were too high and something just happened. We don't know. It's tough, tough," said Will McInnes. "I mean, we're raw right now. We're devastated."

The three men didn't tell a parent they were going out in the pickup.

Had they asked, Shannon McInnes said, she would have dissuaded them from heading out, or at least said what she always said: "I love him and be safe."

A.J. Jensen's father, Mike Jensen, said it was just a tragic accident: "Three good kids fell victim to unfortunate circumstances."

All three young men had been best friends since attending Grade 9 at Edward Milne Community School.

Eric Blackmore "loved to make people laugh," said his mother. "He was really kind-hearted. He was just amazing."

> See SOOKE, page A2

Big expansion of Art Gallery of Greater Victoria could begin this year — hinges on \$10M federal injection >A3

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