

Threat prompt lockdown at Nanaimo high school

Times Colonist

Nanaimo District Secondary School was locked down for about half an hour on Wednesday afternoon when a threat was directed at a student.

Lockdown procedures went into effect about 2:30 p.m. During a lockdown, staff and students remain in their immediate area, lock interior doors and stay out of sight.

Nanaimo RCMP officers were at the school throughout the lockdown, and it was deemed safe to end it by 3 p.m.

Students were then dismissed for the day.

Reserve Const. Gary O'Brien said there is no connection between the lockdown and an increased police presence last week at Nanaimo District Secondary and two other high schools in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District — Dover and Wellington — due to an unspecified threat directed at the schools.

Police said at the time they were exercising an "abundance of caution" with their presence at the school.

Driver who flew across median fell asleep: police

Times Colonist

Saanich police say a driver who flew across the median into oncoming traffic on the Pat Bay Highway on Saturday afternoon admitted falling asleep at the wheel.

The incident occurred in the highway's northbound lanes just north of the Royal Oak overpass. A dash camera video taken from an oncoming vehicle shows the car veering into the median and launching into the air before landing in the oncoming traffic lanes.

Multiple cars can be seen swerving or changing lanes to avoid colliding with the vehicle. Police said two northbound vehicles collided as they

attempted to avoid the car, but no one was injured in the incident.

The video appears to show a vehicle changing lanes into the side of another vehicle. The southbound driver who crossed the highway median contacted police to report the incident and ended up being ticketed under the Motor Vehicle Act for driving without due care and attention.

Police said drugs and alcohol are not believed to be a factor, but Staff Sgt. Doug Cripps of Saanich's traffic safety unit said being sleep deprived is another form of impairment.

"This incident is a good reminder to avoid driving if you're tired," Cripps said.

Mount Washington delays opening due to lack of snow

A lack of snow has forced Mount Washington Alpine Resort to push back its planned opening this week. The ski resort said that despite trying to make artificial snow, "the weather just hasn't co-operated."

"If you were one of the 60,000+ people refreshing our webcams yesterday, watching and hoping for a miracle, we were right there with you," it said.

Weather on Vancouver Island has been wet this week and several degrees warmer than normal for this time of year. The resort's website on Thursday showed above-freezing temperatures and rain in the forecast.

General manager Mike Manara said in a video that the resort is doing everything it can to bring snow to the slopes, including snowmaking and trucking in snow.

Mount Washington's website on Wednesday said it had received three centimetres of snow overnight, but the resort was not reporting its snow depth. Its webcams show some snow cover on the mountain.

The resort is still hosting events on Saturday, including a fire outside Eagle View Bistro for free s'mores and "snow dances" to inspire the snow gods. A new opening date has not been announced. —TC



Search-and-rescue crews carry the injured surfer from Sombrio Beach to a waiting ambulance.

By JUAN DE FUCA SEARCH AND RESCUE

Surfer injured at Sombrio after wave slams log into leg

ROXANNE EGAN-ELLIOTT

Times Colonist

Surfer Brian Baker was just walking into the water at Sombrio Beach last week when he looked down briefly to attach his surfboard's leash to his ankle. He had noticed a log in the water but didn't think much of it until a wave launched it into his leg.

He was knocked over by the impact, and when he looked at his leg, he could instantly tell it was broken.

"It was sideways," he said. The 19-year-old called his friends over for help. Waves were lapping him, and he needed to get him out of the water, so they got him onto a surfboard as a makeshift stretcher to move Baker farther up the beach.

"That was the most difficult part, because they had to hold my foot, and you could see my bones sticking out. It was a bad angle," he said.

Baker was in excruciating pain while they moved him, but eventually his friends figured out how to hold his foot in a way that reduced the pain, he said.

Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue received the call around noon on Dec. 5, said rescue

co-ordinator Victoria Clarke.

"It was severe enough that we wanted to ensure that he had quick access to medical attention," she said.

Cloud cover prevented a helicopter from reaching Baker on the beach, which is about 19 kilometres south of Port Renfrew, so crews hiked in a short distance from the parking lot.

Crews assessed Baker, stabilized his injury and carried him on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance, said Clarke. "He was extremely brave and very stoic."

Clarke praised the man's friends and others on the beach for keeping him warm for the roughly three hours it took for crews to arrive, because becoming cold and hypothermic is an added risk after an injury in cold, damp weather.

Baker said a man on the beach gave him a toque, a heat blanket and hot pads, boiled water for him and gave his friends a tarp to shelter Baker from the rain, wind and splashing waves.

"I would have been pretty cold if I didn't have him there," he said.

In hospital, doctors realigned Baker's broken tibia and fibula before performing surgery to install a metal rod and multiple screws in his leg.

Baker said he is grateful to search-and-rescue volunteers who took care of him and got him off the beach safely, and he's looking forward to getting back in the water once his leg has healed.

"I would love to go surfing again as soon as I can," he said.

The incident is a reminder of why it's important for those heading into outdoor activities to be prepared with supplies to stay warm and dry for a few hours in case they need to wait for help, Clarke said.

"Make sure you have easy access to warm clothing and medical supplies, even if you're surfing, because things happen," she said.

Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue crews more commonly respond to calls from injured hikers, Clarke said, but with the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail closed due to significant storm damage, the call volume has dropped.

Hikers appear to be respecting the prolonged trail closure, because the group has not received any calls from hikers on the trail, she said.

The trail remains closed through the winter. An update will be provided in the spring. regan-elliott@timescolonist.com

Police say text scam aimed at drivers

Times Colonist

Saanich police have issued a scam alert after a resident reported receiving a text message saying they had been caught speeding in a school zone.

The text said the person had been clocked doing 43 kilometres an hour in a 30 km/h school zone, and included a YouTube link to pay the fine.

Police said the text is a scam, noting traffic-violation notices are issued in person by police officers. A letter in the mail may also be sent by a provincial agency. "We will not contact you by phone or text requesting payments."

Anyone receiving such a text should not respond or click the link, and should not send money or share financial information, police said.

More arrests made in Walbran protests

ROXANNE EGAN-ELLIOTT

Times Colonist

RCMP made four more arrests and cleared an encampment this week in the Upper Walbran Valley, where opponents of old-growth logging have set up blockades to prevent logging in the area.

Police resumed enforcement on Monday of a court injunction that prevents anyone from blocking roads in the area, after making seven arrests in late November.

Tsawak-gin Forestry Limited Partnership had applied for the injunction in response to protesters setting up camps and erecting a cougar sculpture in August that blocked logging work.

Police said after officers dismantled a camp when they made arrests in November, a new camp was immediately established in a different location.

When police arrived, they found structures erected on the only bridge leading to a work site to which Tsawak-gin employees needed access.

Officers arrested four men for breaching the injunction,



RCMP officers enforce an injunction against blocking roads in the Upper Walbran Valley area. Officers arrested four old-growth activists this week, following seven initial arrests in late November.

one of whom was previously arrested in November. He will be held in custody for breaching the conditions of his release stemming from the earlier arrest. One of the men was also arrested for criminal obstruction of police for allegedly resisting arrest.

The recent arrests bring the total number to 11.

The old-growth activists said in a statement that around 40 to 50 officers were involved in the arrests on Monday.

They said officers burned their structures in November following arrests, and they allege police allowed industry workers to burn activists' personal property. regan-elliott@timescolonist.com

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