

5 EXCUSES NOT TO GO THROUGH RUSH

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Regional

Expedition leader knew storm was coming

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon Episcopal School officials who planned a student excursion up Mount Hood didn't envision a serious attempt to reach the summit, a former school official testified Tuesday.

Sam Dibbins Jr. testified in Multnomah County Circuit Court in a lawsuit brought by Richard Haeder, the father of one of nine climbers who died.

The group was near the top of the peak when a snowstorm struck the mountain. After spending the night in a snow cave, two hiked out to get help, but only two others survived after spending the next two days in the cave.

Dibbins, the former head of the school's wilderness program, said he and the Rev. Tom Goman, who led the climb, checked the weather forecast before the expedition and knew a storm was approaching the mountain.

"Both of us felt that with the weather forecast, we expected everybody would be back at school by the afternoon," he

testified. "It didn't look good."

The May 12, 1986, climb was part of the curriculum at the school, but no provision was made for an alternate date in case of bad weather.

The Oregon Episcopal School party was the only climbing team on the mountain when the blizzard struck, testimony has indicated in the lawsuit against the school and guide Ralph Summers.

The 13-member party became lost in the storm. Summers hastily dug a snow cave for shelter and the next morning he and another student hiked to safety. It took searchers three days to find the unmarked cave.

"Was the lack of an alternate date a culprit in the tragedy?" asked defense attorney Mark Wagner.

"I accept that," answered Dibbins.

Dibbins has an extensive background in wilderness training and set up much of the school's outdoor curriculum.

"If I hadn't brought those programs to the school, the accident may not have happened," said Dibbins, now an officer of the Pacific Northwest

Tennis Organization. He was the last witness for the defense.

Haeder, whose son, Richard Haeder Jr., died on the climb, alleges negligence in planning and carrying out the climb led to the deaths of the seven students and two adults.

Haeder's attorneys called two final witnesses Tuesday afternoon.

Dr. Cameron Bangs, a hypothermia expert from Oregon City, testified that the nine victims probably suffered pain until they lost consciousness. He estimated the Haeder boy passed out about 24 hours into the ordeal.

Michael Haynes, an economist, testified the boy would have earned \$1.2 million in his lifetime, assuming he obtained a master's degree in business administration. Subtracting 31 percent for the amount he would have spent, Haynes calculated a loss of \$861,000 to the boy's estate.

Haeder's lawsuit asks for economic damages of \$860,000 to his son's estate and an unspecified amount for the child's pain and suffering and the father's loss of the companionship of his son.

Financial documents stolen

EUGENE (AP) — The Hemlock Society, a national organization that advocates euthanasia for the terminally ill, has reported that several financial documents were stolen from its Eugene headquarters.

The theft was reported about 11 a.m. Monday by office manager Ronald Leach. The burglary is believed to have occurred between 4:30 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. Monday. There was no sign of forced entry, police said.

Derek Humphry, executive director, said the burglar or burglars combed through files, stole documents and made copies of check stubs. The papers were related to an ongoing audit by the Internal Revenue Service.

Audit files and letters between the society's lawyers, accountants and the IRS were taken, Humphry said.

The crime was "highly selective," he said. The person or persons responsible "knew exactly what they were looking for."

He said there is nothing in the missing files "which we cannot replace, nor does it contain any information embarrassing to us."

Humphry, 59, said he has "no idea" if the burglary is related to recent charges by his estranged wife, Ann Wicket Humphry, 47, that he mismanaged society funds.

Derek Humphry has denied any wrongdoing. He contends questions about the transfer are matters of tax law rather than financial impropriety.

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