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The Sandy Post

Vol. 71 No. 26

SANDY, OREGON, THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1981

(USPS 481-180)

Single Copy 20¢

June 25, 1981

Mt. Hood climbing expedition ends in tragedy

by MICHAEL P. JONES

The bodies of four mountain climbers were removed Monday from the northern slope of Mount Hood in the wake of the worst climbing accident in history on the 11,235-foot peak Sunday afternoon.

A fifth climber in the 17-member party died Sunday night in a Portland hospital and five other climbers were hospitalized.

Dead are George Anderson, 48, of Damascus who was the leader of the climbing party; Jim Darby, 35, of Newberg; Garth Wescott, 35 of Bend; Larry Young, 30, of Corvallis; and Leah Klaudt Lorenson, 30, of Vancouver, Wash., who died at Portland Adventist Hospital after being airlifted from the

mountain. She suffered a heart attack at 10:40 p.m.

Chief Deputy Don Hardman, of the Hood River County Sheriff's Department, told The Post that Anderson, the lead climber, slipped or fell about 2 p.m. from the steep slope of the Cooper Ridge Trail near Elliott Glacier "which pulled down the other climbers who were all roped together."

"They dropped 1,200 to 1,500 feet through a snowfield filled with rocks," Hardman said. "With the lead climber roped in with the rest when he fell, it just dominoed the others."

Hardman said that 13 of the 17-member party fell from the Cooper Spur, but could not explain how the four remaining persons were not swept down onto Elliott Glacier which ran north of the area from which they were

climbing.

Hardman, who has been involved in rescue operations since 1959, called the area "dangerous."

"If you fall from any given area on the north side, you fall onto the Elliott Glacier," he said. "It's like a funnel. It just sweeps you through."

David R. Turple, 51, of Portland, and 17-year-old Bill Pilkenton of Newberg died June 6 in a similar accident in the same area. While the pair was descending from the summit, Pilkenton fell and Turple tried to block him.

With four persons dead, another in critical condition and four more injured, John Richard Goss, 20, of Portland, who was also involved in the fall, climbed down the mountain until he met other climbers coming up Cooper Ridge. They returned to Cloud

Cap Inn and notified the Hood River Sheriff's Department with a radio on the premises.

According to Sheriff Robert Lynch, in charge of the rescue operations, his office received the call around 3:15 p.m. and immediately headed for Cloud Cap Inn to set up a command post.

He criticized early media reports that confused the Mount Hood incident with another incident Sunday on Washington's Mount Rainier in which 11 climbers were killed by an avalanche. He said rescuers "were aware of what they were dealing with from the very beginning."

Lynch said three helicopters from the 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, the National Ski Patrol, as well as the Crag Rats, the Alpines and the Moresco search and rescue teams

assisted in the operation.

Hampered by high winds and heavy cloud cover, the injured were airlifted from the mountain by dark Sunday. They were taken by helicopters to The Dalles General Hospital, Hood River Memorial Hospital and Adventist Hospital and Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center in Portland.

The hospitalized were Jan Young, 29, of Corvallis; Jack Bohl, 29, of Portland; Susan Cox, 39, of Portland; Bob Vreeland, 36, of Portland, and Goss.

Early Monday morning, a ground team left Cloud Cap Inn at 6 a.m. The last body was recovered from the mountain by 1 a.m.

The operation was accomplished by "manpower and guts alone," said one sheriff's office representative.

Hardman, who fielded calls from media nationwide, emphasized that bad conditions and accidents "never closed the mountain off."

"Caution and awareness are the things you live with when you climb the mountain," he said. "It can kill both in the dead of winter and in the middle of summer with no snow on the rocks."

Sheriff Lynch said, "Climbers must be prepared and have the proper experience for what they are attempting to do. If not their own experience, then the proper experience in their party. But, even then anything can still happen."

Dr. Chris Mackert, president of the Mazama Club, said all 17 climbers in the party were experienced mountaineers.

Budget set; council OK's adjustments

by DAN DILLON

The city of Sandy budget for fiscal 1981-82 is finalized.

Following some minor fine tuning to incorporate a higher-than-expected cash carryover, the Sandy City Council Monday evening gave its stamp of approval to the \$2,656,394 document.

The cash carryover from the current fiscal year was approximately \$40,000 more than City Manager Roger Jordan had anticipated. At the same time, however, the city lost \$21,819 from anticipated CETA reimbursements forced by Reagan administration cuts.

Those cuts will cost the city the equivalent of one and one-half positions.

With nearly \$20,000 in excess, Jordan distributed those monies in the budget. Unbudgeted fringe benefit increases received \$10,000; police overtime and court time, \$5,000; the library personnel account, \$2,000, and the contingency fund, \$3,000.

That raised the contingency fund to \$44,678 and Jordan told the council that that fund is particularly important. "Failure to have a good beginning cash balance means you have real problems," he said. "If we lost our beginning cash balance, we could be in a world of hurt."

He warned the council that while the budget looks "rosy," the beginning cash balance is necessary for operation of the city. "Hopefully, we can carry the majority of the contingency over to next year for a beginning cash balance," Jordan said.

He told the council that federal and state revenue sharing are both "up a little." The federal money will go toward equipment replacement and paying for a sander. The state monies are targeted for parks and parkway improvements.

The council also saved the city some money Monday evening when it approved purchase of liability insurance through City County Insurance Services, a group formed through the League of Oregon Cities and the Association of Oregon Counties. The plan was written specifically for the needs of cities.

The annual premium on the new policy will be \$16,455. Last year, the city paid more than \$30,000 for liability insurance.

The savings won't have a major impact on the 1981-82 budget, however, because the insurance payments are broken down in five separate funds. "There's not any big boon to any one fund," Jordan said Tuesday. "but it will help out. The plan appears to be better than what we've had in the past and it's cheaper."

The city's agent of record, George Morgan of Sandy, presented the city with a pair of policies to choose from. The other policy, from Transamerica Insurance, was for \$18,370.84.

In other action, the council: — Granted Jordan a merit increase in his salary and commended him for his job as city manager, based on its evaluation of his actions. "We're very pleased with the work you're doing and the way the city is operating," Council President Deane Wesselink told Jordan.



Oscar and Felix bring their antics as "The Odd Couple" to the Sandy Community Theatre on Proctor Boulevard next Friday, July 3, kicking off a three-weekend

run. Hank Emrich, left, plays Oscar, the incurable slob. Glen Dickman is Felix, his impeccably clean roommate. The opening night performance begins at 8 p.m.

Rippling River investigation clouded

by MICHAEL P. JONES

The investigation into who was responsible for the sewage spills at Rippling River and how they occurred seems to have become clouded by regulatory agencies lacking funding and manpower to do the job.

When the byproducts of a spill or deliberate "dumping" were discovered along a small waterfall just below six 5,000-gallon sewage tanks near the development, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) threatened to fine the developers.

In fact, after Dick Wixon of DEQ initially investigated the spills, he warned Rippling River personnel that they must notify his office if a spill ever occurred again or they would be subject to a fine. Now, however, lacking funding and manpower, the investigation has halted.

A closer examination of the spill area raised questions because of the large quantities of restaurant or kitchen grease found in the area. Rippling River does not have large quantities of grease flowing into its tanks and some believe the spill might have been "mid-night dumping."

A resident living near the development reported that he saw a pumper truck backed up to the waterfall area and thought it was "going to go off the edge."

According to Dan Bush, soils scientist with Clackamas County Environmental Services Department which has begun its own investigation, he was more pessimistic than optimistic about discovering who is really at fault.

"We are not going to get very far, to be honest," Bush said. "We need hard, undeniable facts like a photograph or eyewitnesses which we just don't have."

According to Robert Hornsby, superintendent at the Sandy Sewage Treatment Plant which has a sewage treatment agreement with the development, he has had problems in the past treating sewage from Rippling River "that actually did not come from the development."

In a letter written to Rippling River officials Dec. 8, 1980, Hornsby said the treatment plant had "recently experienced the discharge of a large volume of burnt grease into our system... However, I am confident that the grease did not come from your

system."

Hornsby said because the treatment plant is set up to process fresh sewage only, when old sewage is discharged into the system, problems can develop. In the case of the burnt grease, it took two full days over a weekend to clean up approximately 800 pounds of "old restaurant grease" that got into the system.

In the same letter, Hornsby also complained that the development's "sewage hauler," Schulz Sanitary Service of Portland, was delivering sewage during unauthorized hours, on weekends and holidays, which did not allow the plant workers the opportunity to observe what was being discharged into the system.

He emphasized that new controls were going to be instituted in order to "have better control over this matter." "While I am in no way implying that any commercial hauler is dishonest," Hornsby wrote, "the present arrangement certainly presents the opportunity to be."

Shortly after Rippling River officials were notified of the stricter controls, Schulz Sanitary Service stopped hauling for the development. Cascade Sep-

tic Service of Estacada took over the pumping operations Dec. 18, 1980.

Hornsby says that since Cascade took over the operation there has been no grease or old sewage processed from the development.

Bush said the possibility that Rippling River's holding tanks were being used for disposal of sewage from other holding tanks or residential septic systems exists. He said the development may have had sewage pumped directly into their holding tanks through the cap on the pumping riser.

Bush said that most people have little reason to question where their sewage goes after it's pumped, leaving it up to the pumper to properly dispose of it. "Sewage is out of sight, out of mind," he said. "It's a headache that's expensive. The priority of sewage is the lowest in people's minds. It doesn't become a priority until it's a problem."

Bush would not say that Rippling River is not at fault for the spills because DEQ has held fast on their findings. But, he did say, all new information would be turned over to DEQ and this "could be a case where Rippling River is an innocent victim, and they may not know it."

Local schools try B ballots again Tuesday

Sandy's two school districts take their 'B' ballot proposals to the voters this Tuesday, June 30.

For the Sandy Elementary School District, the vote represents the final attempt to salvage several existing programs.

For the Sandy Union High School District, the vote offers an opportunity to counter a projected shortfall in state revenues.

The elementary school district's 'B' ballot was defeated initially in March. A proposed \$160,000 kindergarten program was eliminated, but the ballot went down again in May.

Under state law, Tuesday's vote is the last time the district can present a 'B' ballot to the voters this year.

If approved, the \$198,000 ballot would provide funding for the talented and gifted program, after-school athletics and activities, outdoor school, guidance and counseling services for grades 1-6, Sandy Community School program, the purchase of two school buses and a grounds maintenance tractor, and improvements to the aquatic center.

If the levy passes, district patrons will pay an estimated \$8.25 per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

The high school district, on the other hand, is making its first attempt to pass a 'B' ballot since the May approval of its 'A' ballot.

Its \$355,296 proposal would buffer against projected losses in state monies and provide \$96,000 for renovation of an art room, hiring a guidance counselor, library improvements, athletic field improvements and a new school bus.

Unlike the elementary district, the high school district can approach voters again in September if it fails this time.

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