

Rescuers: ‘The drama on the lakefront was heartbreaking’

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Wyland and the Walkers were watching the Denver Broncos beat the Pittsburgh Steelers when, at around 4 p.m., the ordeal began.

“Tim looked out the window and said, ‘Oh my God, that canoe just flipped over,’” Brian said. “We looked out, and, yep, there was an upside-down canoe in the lake.”

They charged outside and assessed the situation.

“I yelled, ‘Do you need help?’” Kyle Walker said. “And the kid is saying, ‘My daddy’s underwater!’”

As Kyle Walker called 911, Heather dived into the water and swam eastward toward the pair floundering more than 100 feet away, near the middle of the narrow lake. The brothers unhooked a neighbor’s floating

dock; Tim grabbed an oar, Brian a two-by-four, and together they rowed out.

“If you were to look at it in real time, it wasn’t that long,” Brian said. “It felt like forever.”

Heartbreaking

Harkless had attempted to turn the canoe upright and crawl back into it, but to no avail. “It looked like a rolling log, water splashing everywhere,” Brian said.

“He expended a lot of energy very fast,” he said. “It was a matter of, maybe, three minutes before he was gone.”

“The dad was gone before Heather even got halfway out there,” Kyle Walker said.

Meanwhile, they could hear, from across the lake, Harkless’ wife. “The mother comes out and (is) screaming, ‘That’s my husband!’” Kyle Walker con-

tinued. “The drama on the lakefront was heartbreaking.”

When Heather reached Logan, she tried to comfort and console him while holding onto the canoe. Tim and Brian hoisted the boy and Heather onto the floating dock. By the time the group reached the far shore on the property of absent homeowners, Logan was showing signs of possible hypothermia.

“There was very little color in his skin. His body core was trying to conserve as much heat as it could,” said Brian, a former emergency medical technician. “He did not have a lot of time left. He’s honestly lucky to be alive today.”

Brave young man

Tim removed Logan’s life jacket and replaced the boy’s wet sweatshirt with his dry one.

When the medics arrived minutes later, they wrapped blankets around Logan and Heather, who rode in the ambulance together.

“(Logan) was in shock,” Brian said.

The Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office, the Warrenton police and fire departments and the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Astoria arrived on scene to assist in rescue and recovery.

That evening, the county marine patrol and dive team located and recovered Harkless’ body a short distance from where he went under. He wasn’t wearing a personal flotation device, the sheriff’s office said.

“In water temperature like this, it’s a one-way trip down, unfortunately,” Brian said.

Heather, a 52-year-old grandmother who took to the water without a flotation device,

was treated at the hospital.

“She was in no shape to get out in that g--damn water, but she did it anyway,” Kyle Walker said. She added, however, that Heather seemed fine physically and was “more concerned about how Logan was doing.”

Heather and Tim, a Salem couple, did not want to be interviewed at length, but Heather left a note: “Logan’s parents would be proud of him for being such a brave young man.”

Relieved yet sorry

From the pile of wet clothes left behind, somehow Logan’s sweatshirt ended up with Brian and Kyle Walker. On Monday afternoon, Brian tried to take it to the Harkless family — whom they’d never met before — but nobody was home.

“They don’t know us from Adam. They don’t know Heath-

er from Adam,” Kyle Walker said. “I’m a mother, and I don’t know that I could take that extra input, you know? I don’t know that I could.”

Still, she added, “I wish I could give that mother a big hug.”

All four of the rescuers wish they could have done more. Though they weren’t exactly numb to the experience Sunday night, Monday night was “probably going to be a little harder,” Brian said.

“It’s never something you can just ignore, you know? We feel terrible for the family,” he said, his voice starting to break. “I mean, 27-year-old guy, just getting started... We just feel absolutely horrible for them, and relieved that we were able to save Logan, but so sorry we weren’t able to get there for Kyle.”

Ashley: ‘I’ve done so much to strive for achievement in my life’

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The award goes to six children, one for each military branch. Fish is one of 15 semifinalists for the Coast Guard. She is one of two semifinalists from Oregon, along with National Guard child Lily Moser from Portland.

Fish’s father, Robert, retired in 2008 after nearly 30 years in the Coast Guard. A child of an Air Force family, she said he didn’t want her family to experience moving across the country with each deployment.

“For my entire life, he switched between the Alert and Steadfast,” Fish said, adding her father worked in the engine rooms until retiring when she was 12.

On average, previous recipients of the Military Child of the Year Award have had at least one parent deploy for 18 months or longer and have relocated at least five times due to a parent’s military assignments, according to Operation Homefront. Despite his being stationed close to home, Fish said her father missed about half her childhood while

he was enlisted, adding that as a child, she had trouble recognizing him in between deployments. “Even though he wasn’t home with me, I knew he was protecting the country,” she said.

Thirst for knowledge

“I’m a good fit for it because I’ve done so much to strive for achievement in my life,” Fish said about her pursuit of Military Child of the Year. “I almost don’t know why. I really just like learning... and having all the possible knowledge I can attain.”

She is currently enrolled in

about 10 courses, seven of them at the high school and several honors-level, while holding a 3.96 GPA. She takes a yoga and online fitness course through the college, along with a stress and depression management course as part of the college’s Lives in Transition student support program. “I thought that would be interesting, because I eventually want to be a criminologist,” she said.

As part of the Military Child of the Year award, Fish said she was asked about her leadership ability. She mentioned to her

interviewers FishSt1ckz, the award-winning Lego robotics team she helped create at Warrenton Grade School, a team named in her honor.

Fish also takes part in her high school’s robotics team, building underwater robots and competing against other schools around the state. Since her sophomore year, she has worked in the district’s technology department, helping prepare computers for students over the summer, and repairing them during the school year. Fish also volunteers with the

Clatsop County Animal Shelter.

Heading back to school today, Fish is gathering recommendations for her bid to be a finalist in the Military Child of the Year award. Each of the six recipients of the award receive a \$10,000 scholarship, a laptop and a trip to Washington, D.C., for an awards gala in April.

Ultimately for Fish, winning is a pragmatic endeavor to help her satiate her thirst for knowledge, which stretches toward a master’s and possibly a doctorate in criminology. “I’ll need every bit of funding I can get,” she said.

West: It’s unlikely federal land will be turned over to states, counties

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rule, which farmers and ranchers say gives the feds control over what Walden called “every stock pond and intermittent ditch.” Walden said the vote sends a “very clear message” to the Obama administration about environmental “overreach.”

The Senate approved a similar measure in November, but the White House has threatened to veto it. Congress is unlikely to assemble the two-thirds majorities required to override a veto, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Meanwhile, Walden said it’s unlikely federal land will be turned over to the states or coun-

ties, as many in the West favor.

But he and others said a number of incremental changes would help matters. For starters, the statute requiring the five-year mandatory minimum sentence for Dwight and Steven Hammond, the Harney County ranchers at the center of the issue, could be revised, Walden said.

He said the statute was written after the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City and was aimed at acts of domestic terrorism that damage federal property. The fires set by the Hammonds burned acreage managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management. “But in Oregon, the punishment doesn’t

fit this crime,” he said.

The idea received support at the recent American Farm Bureau Federation convention in Orlando, Florida.

Delegates approved a policy recommendation that Congress prohibit prosecution of farmers and ranchers under federal anti-terrorism statutes for common

agricultural practices, like setting backburns to protect their property from wildfires.

If this threat isn’t neutralized, it will have a “chilling effect” on farm practices among growers who fear facing mandatory minimum prison sentences, said Barry Bushue, the Oregon Farm Bureau president.

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