



Wisconsin State Journal

Wednesday

July 31, 1985
Madison, Wisconsin
*** 35 cents

Mountaintop lures hikers to a grisly end

By E.A. Torriero
©Knight-Ridder News Service

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. — Robert Frith was rolling toward his death. Like four of his hiking friends, Frith had been jolted by lightning atop Yosemite's Half Dome. He was convulsing, spitting up food, hysterically chanting meaningless words and thrashing about only inches from the edge of the 8,942-foot monolith. A hand, that of a burned and pain-stricken friend, reached out. For a few seconds, Frith held on. It was raining. It was dark. Death would have its way. The friend lost his hold. He made a desperate reach for a piece of Frith's T-shirt. "Inch by inch, his shirt tore," said Jim Lee, a U.S. park ranger. "Finally the shirt gave. He fell 1,800 feet. That was the end of him." On Monday, U.S. rangers were piecing together the sequence of what they say is one of the worst hiking tragedies in the modern history of the park.

Besides Frith, 24, of Mountain View, Calif., another hiker, Brian Jordan, 16, of Hayward, Calif., was killed when lightning struck the top of Half Dome early Saturday evening.

Two other hikers — Thomas Rice, 28, of Los Gatos, Calif., and Bruce Weiner, 24, of Mountain View — were listed Monday in serious but stable condition at the University of California at Davis Medical Center in Sacramento.

Doctors said the men's legs were burned so severely that the muscles bloated. Surgeons operated for nearly two hours to release the internal pressure caused by the lightning shocks. It was uncertain whether the victims would be able to walk again, doctors said.

A fifth hiker, Adrian Esteban, 27, of San Jose, Calif., was treated Sunday at a medical clinic in Yosemite and could not be found for comment Monday.

Esteban told rescue workers that he was clinging to the granite when lightning struck. Numb for 15 minutes, Esteban suffered burns and bruises on his legs and buttocks from the electrical charge.

Illuminated by moonlight, the survivors were plucked from Half Dome in a daring and dangerous midnight helicopter rescue nearly six hours after lightning danced across the football-field-size peak.

Rangers say the men, part of a nine-member hiking party, played a risky game.

Ignoring three signs warning them to turn back if electrical storms were in the area, the men continued their trek to the crest of granite that was once thought inaccessible to humans.

They literally walked into a charcoal thunderhead that shrouded Half Dome from the view of Yosemite Valley.

Nearing the end of their six-hour hike, five of the men ascended the slanted, wooden, cable-supported stairs that mark the final push to the lip of Half Dome.

There was a driving rain. One of the men reportedly slipped but got up and continued upward.

On nearby peaks, hikers reported hail so large that cars were dented. Thunderbolts lit up the sky every



Half Dome in Yosemite National Park.

Turn to Page 2, Col. 1



Weather takes a dive

Judges at the all-city diving meet might just as well have rated Tuesday's weather a "5" — bad form, with rain and a high of 66 degrees (17 degrees lower than the normal high for July 30). The meet, at the Monona City Pool, attracted 180 divers from seven teams. First-, second- and third-

place medals were awarded in eight age categories. The Parkcrest team, coached by Karl Miller, won the team championship. The All-City swimming meet will be Thursday through Saturday at the Nakoma Golf Club pool. Details in Sports.

—State Journal photo by Joseph W. Jackson III

Town has worst rate of crime

By Marvin Balousek
Police reporter

The town of Madison had the worst crime rate in Wisconsin last year, according to a Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice report.

The rate for index crimes in the town of Madison (pop. 6,480) was 10,493.8 per 100,000 population — the highest in the state. Index crimes include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

Per capita offenses are calculated by figuring the number of offenses if each municipality had a population of 100,000. Milwaukee (pop. 602,934) led the state in raw numbers of crimes — index (48,080), violent (3,456) and property (44,624).

With a rate of 1,250 offenses per 100,000 population, the town of Madison also had the highest per capita rate for violent crime in Wisconsin last year.

In 1984, the town of Madison had no murders, 4 forcible rapes, 11 robberies and 66 aggravated assaults. The number of robberies declined from 21 in 1983 while aggravated assaults more than doubled from 28 the previous year.

The town of Madison also led the state with a rate of 1,018.5 aggravated assaults per 100,000 population.

In Monona (pop. 8,810), the per capita rate for property offenses was

9,534.6 per 100,000 population, second-highest in the state.

The highest rate in Wisconsin for all property offenses was in Glendale (pop. 14,003), a Milwaukee suburb, with 9,644.6 offenses per 100,000 population. The town of Madison ranked third with 9,243.8 property offenses per 100,000 people.

Besides placing second in property offenses, Monona also had the second-highest theft rate with 7,309.9 per 100,000 population and led the state in arsons with 158.9 per 100,000 people. Monona actually had 840 property crimes, including 644 thefts and 14 arson cases in 1984.

In the city of Madison (pop. 172,583) the rate of 252.6 violent offenses per 100,000 population was about the same as the rate for Black River Falls or southern Polk County.

The city of Madison had a rate of 7,173.9 index crimes and 6,921.3 property offenses per 100,000 population. The city actually had 12,381 index crimes last year, of which 436 were violent offenses and 11,945 were property offenses.

The safest place in the state was Waterloo (pop. 2,505), which reported no violent crimes last year.

The lowest crime rate in Wisconsin was reported in Algoma (pop. 3,711), which had 646.7 total index crimes and 619.8 property offenses per 100,000 population.

Darlington slaying suspect hospitalized

By Richard W. Jaeger
Regional reporter

Lafayette County Judge Daniel McDonald, accused of murdering a Darlington lawyer, was transferred Tuesday from his jail cell in Darlington to University Hospital in Madison for treatment of malnutrition.

The move was ordered by doctors who examined McDonald after jailers reported difficulty waking him Tuesday morning.

Milwaukee County Judge Thomas Doherty approved the move Tuesday afternoon after an emergency telephone conference among the parties involved in the murder case.

McDonald's lawyer, William Hayes, of Beloit, said jailers called him to say McDonald was lethargic after being awakened.

Hayes said McDonald has contended he was being starved in the jail since he was put there June 22. McDonald is charged with killing Darlington lawyer James Klein, 31, in Klein's downtown office.

"We filed a motion Monday asking the court to change (McDonald's) place of incarceration," Hayes said.

That motion and a request to declare McDonald indigent and assist him in paying court and psychiatric fees were to be heard in Milwaukee today. The hearing has been postponed.

McDonald's trial is scheduled to begin Sept. 3 in Milwaukee. Hayes, a former Rock County



Daniel McDonald

prosecutor, said McDonald's family members told him during the weekend that McDonald was not feeling well and complained he was not getting enough food.

Hayes said McDonald was examined at the jail by two doctors, David Ruf and Richard Roberts. They said McDonald was "about 5 percent dehydrated and somewhat malnourished." They said he weighed 155 pounds. Although he was not weighed when he was jailed, his driver's license lists his weight as 171 pounds.

Special Prosecutor Michael Zaleski said McDonald ate lunch Tuesday and "was alert enough to talk to his lawyer and to state his preference of a hospital."

Zaleski said jailers told him that food trays have been returned empty from McDonald's cell.

Zaleski, an assistant state attorney general, noted that all the jail food is prepared by the Lafayette Manor health care center and nursing home and is the same served to the nursing home residents.

McDonald, a judge for 14 years, has entered an insanity plea.

State quizzes UW booster clubs

Associated Press

Nine booster groups that contribute to the UW-Madison athletic program were asked to provide information about their activities so the state can determine whether they should be required to meet more stringent standards.

As of Tuesday, none of the sports booster groups had provided enough information to determine whether their fund-raising activities will require them to file registration and annual financial disclosure statements with the department, according to Patty Popp of the Department of Regulation and Licensing.

The deadline for four of the groups to meet the request is today.

"My letter has resulted in mass confusion with some of these groups,"

she said.

Under state law, charitable organizations that raise more than \$3,000 annually must register with the state so the degree of their fund-raising is made public, she said.

Two of the groups have submitted letters detailing the scope of their fund-raising and several others had telephoned the department to seek details about the request, Ms. Popp said. She said she would probably ask for more detailed information from the groups after she received their initial responses.

Four private sports groups — Butch's Badger Bologna Benefit, the Dugout Club, the National "W" Club and the Women's Intercollegiate Sports Club — were asked in letters dated July 9 to provide information by today. Butch's is based in New

Glarus. The others are based in Madison.

In letters dated July 16, Ms. Popp asked five more groups to submit the same type of information by Aug. 5. Those groups were the Bench Warmers, the Crew Association, the Overtime Club, the Weigh-in Club and the Wingfoot Club.

The Dugout Club was given an extension until Aug. 15 to provide financial information, Ms. Popp said. The National "W" Club was given an extension until Aug. 6 after a representative called Tuesday, Ms. Popp said.

Today's chuckle

People who live in glass houses are all looking for maids who do windows.

Racing worm wriggles its way to a win

GREEN BAY (AP) — A worm named Betty wriggled past a field of 19 competitors with names like Ugly, Freddie, Mr. Fat Man and Speedy to win the Southwest Branch Library worm race Tuesday.

"Some worms are just born to race," said race promoter and children's librarian Charlotte Davies. "Some are born to be gardeners."

Betty won two heats before inching her way to the crown by crawling out of a nine-inch-diameter circle.

Owner Therese Acaley, 6, gave Betty a breather after the race by letting her hang over her index fin-

ger. Meanwhile, she ate her prize — a red candy worm.

There were problems, however. Anthony Kirby's worm drowned on the way to the library after his grandmother watered him too much.

Luke Traeger, 8, sadly looked at his worm lying lifeless in the bottom of a plastic pail.

"He croaked," Luke said.

For those who lost their worms, Bob's Velp Avenue Bait Shop supplied 24 nightcrawlers as replacements.

Inside

Faulty sensors

A shutdown of a main engine that threatened to dump Challenger into the ocean during launch was caused by faulty sensors and not flawed rockets, meaning that future shuttle flights can go ahead as scheduled, a NASA source said Tuesday in Houston. See Page 2.

Soviets ripped

Secretary of State George Shultz lashed out at the Soviet Union in Helsinki, Finland, Tuesday with an item-by-item recitation of charges that it has betrayed promises in human rights made 10 years ago when it signed the Helsinki Accords.

Shultz spoke at the opening ceremonies by 35 nations of a 10th anniversary observance of the signing of the accords. See Page 3.

Weather

Cloudy and cool today, with a 70-percent chance of rain or drizzle, mainly during the morning. High in the low-70s, and northeast winds at 8-15 mph. Tonight, a 30-percent chance of showers, partially clearing late; low in the mid-50s. Thursday, partly sunny; high about 77. See Page 10.

