

Yosemite murder case tugs at emotions

EUREKA, Calif. (AP) — The discovery of two people's remains in a torched rental car near Yosemite National Park has added an element of fear to this town's feeling of grief.

And a new mystery: Where is the third victim?

The disappearance of Carole Sund, her daughter Julie and family friend Silvina Pelosso on Feb. 15 prompted a massive search in this mining country just outside the park.

Hope of a possible innocent misunderstanding faded when, within days, Mrs. Sund's wallet was found in the middle of a busy intersection in a town two hours away.

Then nothing for almost a month before someone spotted the burned-out shell of their rental car Thursday and two unidentified bodies were discovered in the trunk.

"I think people here are sort of waiting for the other shoe to fall," said Weldon Benzinger, a science teacher at Eureka High School, where saddened students built hallway displays honoring Julie, 15, and Silvina, 16, an exchange student from Argentina.

Jens Sund, Carole's husband and father of Julie, was in seclusion over the weekend while relatives made a pilgrimage to the site in remote Long Barn where the charred car was found.

"The senseless waste of these precious lives is so incomprehensible I can't even begin to understand why it happened," he said in a handwritten statement.

The last confirmed sighting of the trio was in El Portal, a tiny mountain town at the edge of Yosemite where the three had dinner at the Cedar Lodge.

On Thursday, the burned hulk of their red 1999 rented Pontiac was found off winding Highway 108 in rugged Tuolumne County. The family's hopes were raised: There was no word the three had been found.

But a day later, FBI agents disclosed the discovery of the incinerated remains of two people in the vehicle's trunk.

"That was the worst moment for the family, the worst. That was a very, very long day," said Ron Caton, who is related to the Sund family by marriage.

Carole Sund's father, Francis Carrington, was visibly anguished Sunday as he sat, head in hands, at the site where investigators made their grisly discovery. He and his wife, as well as FBI agents, Silvina's tearful parents and Sund's brother marked the spot with flowers and a cross.

"It's the worst feeling of all, not knowing what happened," Carrington said. "Can you imagine not even finding out if your relatives are dead?"

In Eureka, a tranquil community of 30,000 about 100 miles south of the Oregon border, residents and students took the news of the deaths hard. Orchestra practice continued Friday in honor of Julie, who was a violinist.

But outside, a sign read: "Senior Student Night — Canceled."

'Roaring Rapids' accident kills one, injures 10 at Six Flags

ARLINGTON (AP) — A raft in an amusement park ride has capsized and trapped a dozen seat-belted riders upside-down in waist-deep water, killing a 28-year-old woman in the first fatality involving a guest in the attraction's history.

Ten other people were injured in the mishap Sunday on the Roaring Rapids ride at Six Flags over Texas, said Arlington police spokesman Dee Anderson.

Twelve people were in the large, circular raft when it capsized about 5:30 p.m. a few hundred feet from the end of the ride, Anderson said.

Most were able to

unbuckle their seat belts and escape the overturned boat, he said.

At least one park visitor, a physician's assistant, dashed into the water to help free the trapped riders and later assisted two park paramedics, park officials said. The ride's operators had told visitors not to enter the ride for safety reasons, Anderson said.

Valeria Cartwright, part of a large group visiting the park from West Helena, Ark., apparently drowned, officials said. She was pronounced dead about 45 minutes later at Arlington Memorial Hospital.

Ten others were treated

at the hospital. Most of the injuries were minor, but at least four people were hospitalized overnight. A fire spokesman said one person apparently walked away from the accident unharmed but hadn't been located.

A 9-year-old Lawrence, Kan., girl was transferred to Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth with a leg injury, and a relative of the dead woman was suffering from a possible heart problem, Anderson said. The names of those injured weren't released.

In the ride, the raft-like boats carrying up to 12 passengers float through a

series of rapids in water up to about four feet deep.

In the area where the accident occurred, a final rapids empties into a waist-deep pool where ride operators manually steer the boats toward huge conveyor belts with firehose-like water jets.

Witnesses said the accident happened suddenly.

"I saw a guy climbing up the wall coming out, and I saw a woman against the wall holding a kid," Mike Jones said.

Anderson said an initial investigation didn't reveal a possible cause for the accident.

"We really didn't get a clear picture of what caused the boat to over-

turn," he said. "The boat took a dip or some kind of an incline ... and the consensus was that the boat for whatever reason flipped over."

Anderson added that there was no reason to believe the passengers were rocking the boat at the time.

"There's no indication this was anything but an accident," he said.

As workers drained the pool hours later, the cockpit of the boat still lay overturned. A rubber flotation ring that is normally around the cockpit was stuck halfway under the raft's seats.

Anderson said investigators didn't know if the

ring was separated from the cockpit when the boat capsized or during the rescue.

Spokesman Nancy St. Pierre said it was the first customer death at the park in its 38 years.

"It's been a devastating day," she said.

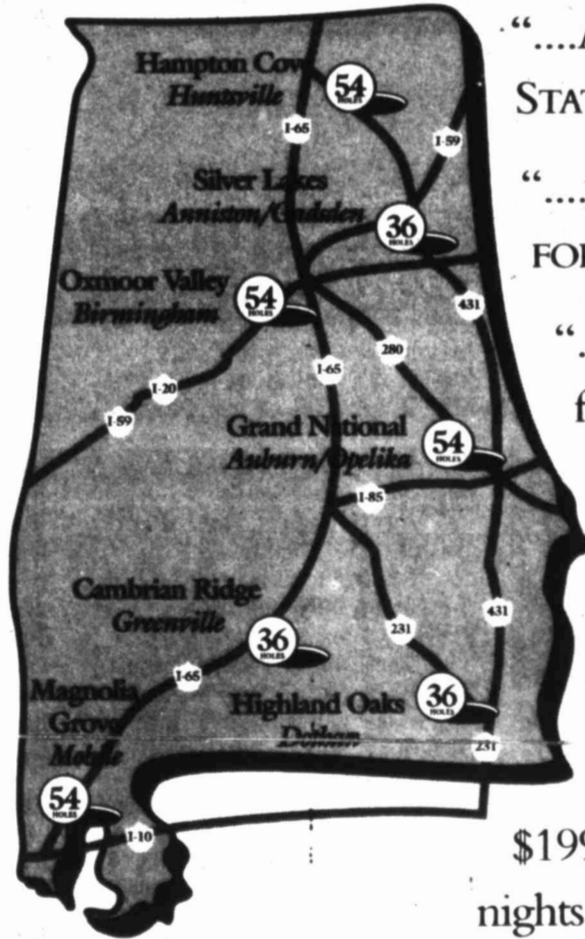
The Roaring Rapids opened in 1963, and there have been no such serious accidents before. Ms. St. Pierre said rides similar to the Roaring Rapids are in operation across the country.

Premier Parks, an Oklahoma City-based amusement park operator, purchased the Six Flags chain of theme parks from Time Warner.

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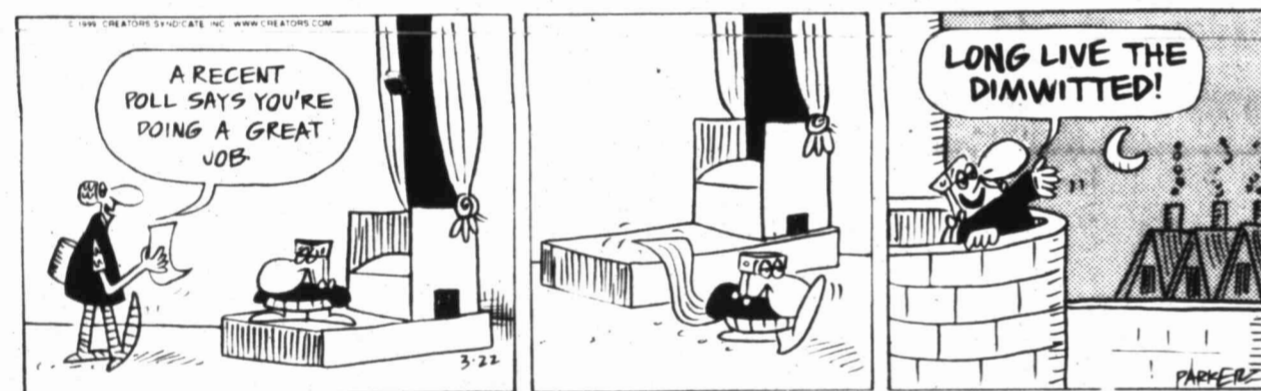
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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Monday, March 22, the 81st day of 1999. There are 284 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 22, 1895, Auguste and Louis Lumiere showed their first movie to an invited audience in Paris. On this date: In 1638, religious dissident Anne Hutchinson was expelled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In 1765, Britain enacted the Stamp Act to raise money from the American colonies. The Act was repealed the following year.

In 1820, U.S. naval hero Stephen Decatur was killed in a duel with Cmdr. James Barron near Washington, D.C.

In 1882, Congress outlawed polygamy.

In 1894, hockey's first Stanley Cup championship game was played; the home team Montreal Amateur Athletic Association defeated the Ottawa Capitals, 3-1.

In 1933, during Prohibition, President Roosevelt signed a measure to make wine and beer containing up to 3.2 percent alcohol legal.

In 1945, the Arab League was formed with the adoption of a charter in Cairo, Egypt.

In 1946, the British mandate in Transjordan came to an end.

In 1972, Congress sent the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution to the states for ratification. It fell short of two-thirds approval needed.

Ten years ago: National Football League Commissioner Pete Rozelle announced plans to retire. Fawn Hall, Oliver North's former secretary, began two days of testimony at North's Iran-Contra trial in Washington.

Five years ago: The Federal Reserve announced it was raising short-term interest rates from 3.25 to 3.5 percent, the second such boost of the year. 'Woody Woodpecker' creator Walter Lantz died in Burbank, Calif., at age 93.

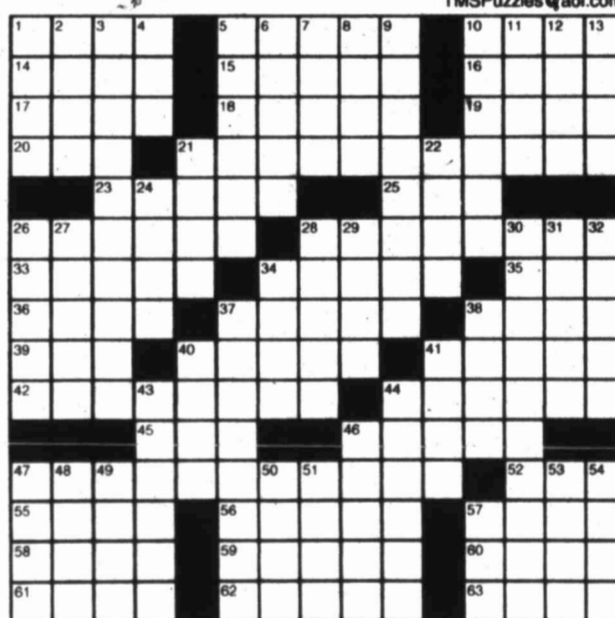
One year ago: President Clinton departed Washington for an historic 12-day tour of Africa. A deeply divided United Auto Workers union approved a new contract with Caterpillar Inc., ending a 6-year contract battle. Eleven young campers died in a mountain cabin fire in Centre County, Pa.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Karl Malden is 87. Actor Werner Klemperer is 79. Pantomimist Marcel Marceau is 76. USA Today founder Allen H. Neuharth is 75. Composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim is 69. Actor William Shatner is 68. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) is 65. Actor M. Emmet Walsh is 64. Singer-guitarist George Benson is 56. Singer Jeremy Clyde (Chad and Jeremy) is 55. Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber is 51. Actress Fanny Ardant is 50. Sportscaster Bob Costas is 47. Actress Lena Olin is 44. Singer-actress Stephanie Mills is 42. Actor Matthew Modine is 40.

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

- ACROSS 1 Tennis zero 5 Banjo beat 10 Scheme 14 OPEC member 15 Jungle vine 16 Change the decor 17 Author Ayn 18 Dine at home 19 Garden of 20 Mr. Baba 21 Inn in the East 23 Vase on a pedestal 25 Gain a lap? 26 Ambush 28 Invent 33 Guaranteed to get 34 Stiff bristles 35 Chopping tool 36 Game played with 32 cards 37 Burrowing animals 38 Machu Picchu honcho 39 Whitney known for his gin 40 West Coast capital 41 Sample house 42 Out of one's mind 44 'Spur' wheels 45 Danish 46 Power option 47 Of the Gospels 52 Night flyer 55 Sewer segment 56 Tex-Mex order 57 Foot or Simone 58 At any time 59 Unmoving 60 Israeli carrier 61 Listening devices 62 Surrenders by treaty 63 Diminutive ending DOWN 1 Bologna money 2 Spoken 3 Thackeray novel 4 Final one 5 Disreputable 6 Crownlet 7 Pro (in proportion) 8 Part of UNLV 9 Bull Run by another name 10 Magic word 11 Castor and Pollux's mother 12 River to the Baltic 13 Curtis or Danza 21 Russian ruler 22 Riviera city 24 Oodles 26 up (got informed) 27 Leg joint 28 Removed text 29 Object 30 Nashville sch. 31 Surpass 32 Brazilian money 34 One-and-only 37 Attractive? 38 Heart of the Corn Belt 40 Close-fitting 41 Defoe's Flanders 43 Doubleday and others 44 Cooks with dry heat 46 Twenty 47 Alternative to a saber 48 Zapatal' 49 Impersonator 50 Lois of the 'Daily Planet' 51 Frosted 53 Art school subj. 54 Piece of gossip 57 Born in Bordeaux



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