



Schuyler County Sheriff William Yessman said an infant's death by tree was a freak accident that couldn't have been foreseen.

Infant death a tragedy, accident

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A falling tree that killed an infant Wednesday on Catharine Creek was a freak accident that couldn't possibly have been foreseen, according to Schuyler County Sheriff William Yessman.

But the tragedy is another reminder of why it's not a good idea to use area rivers and streams to cool off during hot summer weather, Yessman said.

The sheriff's office assisted state police who responded to Wednesday's accident.

The 5-month-old infant and his 12-year-old sister were in Catharine Creek accompanied by their parents around 3 p.m. Wednesday when a dead tree fell over, striking the children and killing the infant, state police said.

The sister was not injured, troopers said.

The accident took place in a fairly deep hole along a stretch of Catharine Creek in the Town of Montour, Yessman said.

Drowning is the usual risk associated with swimming in streams, but Yessman said Wednesday's tragedy proves there are other dangers as well.

"I know it's a really common occurrence for people to go to the creek to go swimming. I don't know if we'll ever stop people from doing it," Yessman said. "Along the creek in a rural area, nobody scouts for rotted trees, or trees that might come down from flooding. It was a hot day, over 90 degrees, and they wanted to cool off."

Don Walker, of Horseheads, a veteran Catharine Creek trout angler, said conservation groups he belongs to will often keep an eye out for trees along the creek that might be loosened by flooding and soil erosion, and work with the state Department of Environmental Conservation and other agencies to address those hazards.

Walker said he didn't see any trees that looked like they were ready to fall over when he was fishing along Catharine Creek this spring, although he added one good rainstorm could change that.

The tree that killed the infant wasn't loosened by flooding or erosion, Yessman said. It was just ready to fall over, but the timing couldn't have been worse, he said.

"It was just a rotted old tree that fell. It broke off at its base," Yessman said. "There were no branches or limbs on it. It just looked like a pole. For it to hit that spot at that time was just a tragedy. What are the chances?"

Follow Jeff Murray on Twitter @SGJeffMurray.

LOTTERIES

N.Y. lottery: (518) 388-3300
www.nylottery.org

N.Y. Daily (day): 6-5-0
N.Y. Win 4 (day): 1-3-6-7
N.Y. Daily (night): 0-8-9
N.Y. Win 4 (night): 2-1-4-5
N.Y. Take 5 (Thursday): 1-9-10-24-30
N.Y. Pick 10 (Thursday): 1-4-6-12-16-17-19-21-22-23-25-33-41-47-49-54-58-67-69-78
N.Y. Cash4Life (Thursday): 15-16-26-27-51
Cash Ball: 2
See Monday's editions for Mega Millions results.

CORRECTION

A canning class instructor was misidentified in a photo caption on Page 1A Monday. Carole Fisher instructed the canning class at the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension Office.

The Journal attempts to correct errors in its news columns. To report a need for a correction or clarification, call 274-9261 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



NICK REYNOLDS / STAFF PHOTO

An Ithaca College graduate student helps a camper get ready for the next song at the Southside Community Center concert Thursday.

MAKING MUSIC, CHANGE AT CAMP

Children learn about social justice at Southside program

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Ask anybody in the neighborhood about Plain Street on Ithaca's Southside, and they'll tell you the street is anything but.

Plain Street has long been an epicenter for change in the city. In the days of the abolitionists, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass walked the street and spoke at Saint James Church, and escaped slaves hid in the basements of nearby homes. Eleanor Roosevelt was on the street in 1937 to open the Southside Community Center, a place where residents could see a doctor or get a meal. Today, the center at 305 S. Plain St. still stands for change and progress, only now it begins the movement, starting with the city's youngest residents.

The Community Unity Music Education Program is more than just a summer camp or a music school. It is a finely-tuned academic program, with the power to not only teach children about important social justice issues and



NICK REYNOLDS / STAFF PHOTO

Community Unity Music Education Program campers dance Thursday night at the Southside Community Center.

stoke their creative flames, but to do it in a way that is both fun and engaging, all in the space of 16, three-hour days in July.

"It's about providing different forms of curriculum; alternative, creative ways to keep kids engaged and learning and fall in love with learning and studying who they are," said Nia Nunn-Make-

"It's about simplifying complex messages through music."

NIA NUNN-MAKEPEACE
SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Digital

See more photos with this article at ithacajournal.com.

peace, the center's executive director. "It's trying to do things that you don't always see in classrooms and schools, and we try to make it happen here in 16 days."

Makepeace has been running the

See CAMP, Page 5A

4 cited for trespassing at Second Dam

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ANDREW CASLER / STAFF PHOTO

A group of four people float on inflatable rafts while sipping beer on Monday in the popular, but illegal, swimming hole upstream of Second Dam on Six Mile Creek in Ithaca.

Four people were charged with trespassing for swimming at Second Dam in the Town of Ithaca on Wednesday, according to the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office.

The citations were issued just days after a Virgil man drowned while swimming near the same spot.

Receiving appearance tickets were: Richard N. Evans, 22, of Delaware, New Jersey; Daniel K. Pak, 22, of Delran, New Jersey; Justin M. Dobran, 22, of Delran, New Jersey, and Francisco C. Valazquez, 22, of Liverpool, New York.

The four are scheduled to appear at 5 p.m. Aug. 5 in Town of Ithaca Court.

On Sunday, about 300 people were at the dam when emergency officials responded to a report of a possible drowning at the dam at 6:05 p.m., according to Ron Goosen, dispatch supervisor.

Eric Richardson, 20, of Virgil, was swimming with friends when he jumped into the water south of the dam and failed to resurface.

After several attempts, bystanders found Richardson underwater and brought him to the surface. He could not be revived.

Staff writer Kelsey O'Connor contributed to this report.

Police charge pair in theft at Richford U-Pick berry stand

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The Tioga County Sheriff's Office said it has charged two people after money was taken from a U-Pick berry stand Sunday in Richford.

Video footage showed a man entering a porch and removing cash from the pay station at a residence at about 7:21 p.m. Sunday. Also shown was a sedan with a passenger.

The Tioga sheriff's office asked for the public's help in identifying the subjects and reported Thursday on their Facebook page that the pair had been identified and charged.

Jessie J. Miller, 47, of Church Lane in Marathon, was cited with two counts of petit larceny. He was arraigned by Justice Peggy Anderson in Town of Richford Court and remanded to the Tioga County Jail on \$500 bail or \$1,000 bond.

Also charged with one count of petit larceny is Tiffany I. Goff, 31, of U.S. Highway 11 in Marathon. She was arraigned before Justice Anderson and released on her own recognition.

Both are scheduled to reappear in court on Aug. 17.

Staff writer Kelsey O'Connor contributed to this report.

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Ithaca, NY

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