

Teen-ager drowns at Sullivan quarry

Divers recover body Wednesday morning

By Diana Graettinger
Of the NEWS Staff

SULLIVAN — An 18-year-old Amherst man drowned Tuesday night when he and two friends tried to rescue another youth who got into trouble while swimming at a former granite quarry in North Sullivan.

Wade A. Tracy was pulled from the water around 9:40 a.m. Wednesday by divers from the Maine Warden Service.

“I don’t know what happened. All I know is he screamed and he went under. There is no reason; he just went under.”

— Rebecca Cone

The quarry, located near a small residential area, has been a traditional summer meeting spot for young people who live in the area. Tracy and his two friends, Jason Lynne, 20, of Hancock and Jarrod Rowe, 18, of Ellsworth, were at the popular swimming hole Tuesday night when an evening of fun turned into a disaster.

Eyewitness Rebecca Cone of Ellsworth, who described herself as a friend of Tracy, said that Alex Sawyer, 20, of Manset had walked to a 30- to 40-foot-high cliff that was a popular jumping-off point into the quarry. Cone said she had decided not to jump off the cliff be-

cause she was fearful of heights. She said she had decided to walk around to the other side of the quarry when she heard a cry for help.

“We heard Alex screaming for help. Wade and Jarrod jumped in the water, but they couldn’t hold him up, so Jason jumped in, and I went in after Jason,” she said. While Lynne and Rowe were pulling Sawyer toward shore, they heard Tracy’s cry for help. “Wade screamed ‘I can’t stay up,’ and then he went under. Jason, Alex and Jarrod came back (to shore), and I saw him (Tracy) go under,” Cone said.

It was not clear why Tracy, who was about to begin his senior year at Ellsworth High School, got into trouble.

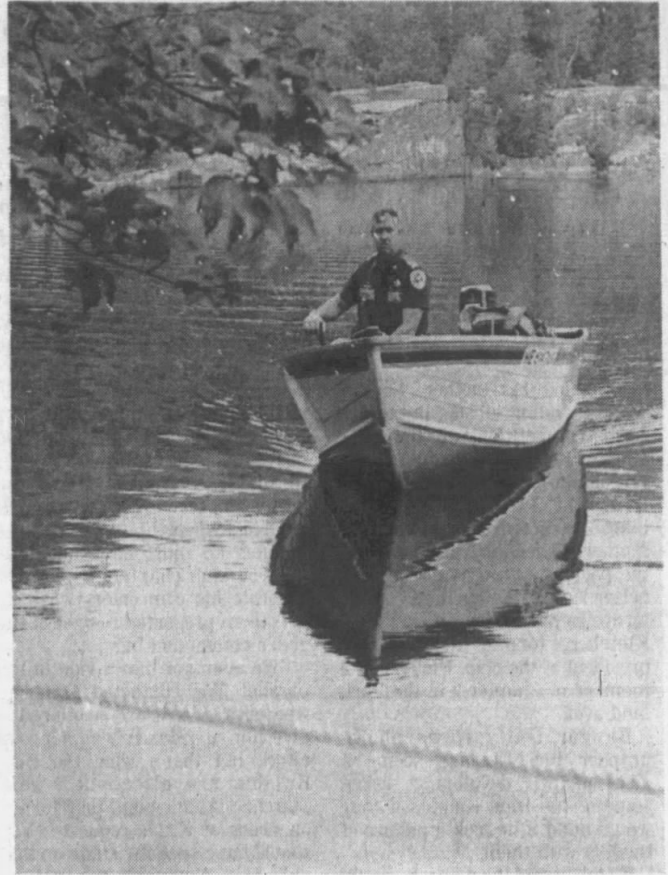
“I don’t know what happened. All I know is he screamed and he went under. There is no reason; he just went under,” Cone said. She said some of the youths rushed to a nearby telephone and called for help.

Cone described Tracy as a thoughtful and loving person. “He cared about everybody. ... He’d do anything for anyone. He’d give you the shirt off his back,” she said.

Harold Reddick, who was at the quarry Wednesday morning, described Tracy as a good friend. “He was a cool person. ... I think he did the best that he could do for Alex,” he said.

Sullivan Constable Walter Kidder said he received a telephone report of the incident Tuesday night and rushed to the scene. Kidder said the spring-fed quarry reached depths of 35 to 50 feet. He said that shortly after his arrival, Sgts. Jim Wilis and Alan Brown and Sheriff William Clark of the Hancock County Sheriff’s Department arrived with a boat.

Clark said his department re-



William Clark from the Hancock County Sheriff’s Department heads back to shore Wednesday after officials recovered the body of 18-year-old Wade Tracy of Amherst who drowned Tuesday night in an abandoned granite quarry in North Sullivan. (NEWS Photo by Diana Graettinger)

ceived a report of a possible drowning at the quarry around 8:30 p.m. He confirmed eyewitness reports that Sawyer jumped off one of the high ledges, swam a short distance and yelled for help. He said two of the three teen-agers who jumped in to help Sawyer were able to get him back to shore. When Tracy developed problems and called for help, the other two youths were so exhausted they were unable to assist him. The Hancock County Sheriff’s Department searched the area until about 10:30 p.m. when they called off the search because of darkness.

Asked if there had been other problems at the quarry, Clark said that the department had been

called to the quarry in the past because of noise problems. “There was always a little alcohol involved. But there is no indication there was any alcohol involved in this situation last night,” Clark said. Clark speculated that Tracy may have been overcome by exhaustion.

Sullivan First Selectman Guy Cyr said that several quarries in the area were popular swimming holes for area residents. “The quarry is a leftover from the days when they dug the stuff out of the ground and shipped it from what is now Gordon’s Wharf,” he said. Granite from the area once was shipped all over the United States.

“Everybody and his brother swims there, and they come in from other towns. It is a little bit secluded. It is not patrolled, and there are no lifeguards. The water is beautiful and it is extremely deep,” Cyr said.

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