

Man drowns in old quarry in Westerly

20-year-old goes under
while swimming across

By **JOHN-PAUL SHIVER**
Day Staff Writer

Westerly — A 20-year-old Warwick man who came to Misquamicut Wednesday to vacation with some friends drowned while swimming in an abandoned quarry.

Police divers found the body of Fred Hein at about 6:50 p.m., almost four hours after his friends saw him go under. His body was found at the bottom of a section of the quarry about 65 feet below the water level.

Bob Garcia, 20, of Warwick, had picked Hein up in Warwick Wednesday morning and brought him to a beach house that Garcia and his friends had rented for the week.

Garcia, Hein and other friends went to the quarry for a swim. Some of them swung on a rope over the quarry before jumping in. Others used another rope to lower themselves down onto some rocks and then dove into the quarry.

Hein was sitting alone on the other side of the quarry, according to Garcia, when he entered the water.

"Fred was afraid and so he stepped into the water slowly," said Dennis Souza, who was vacationing with Garcia.

Hein began swimming from one side of the quarry to the other, but stopped less than half way and disappeared under the water.

"He just turned around, stopped and went under," said Garcia with tears in his eyes. "It was his first time swimming with us and the first day of his vacation with us

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and it lasted two hours."

Some of those at the quarry jumped in after Hein and others went for help.

"We all watched. He just stood there for a second, then went down. Then everybody jumped in," said Todd Magiera, 18, of Warwick.

Julie Skorupa, 16, also of Warwick, dove into the water and tried to direct Souza toward Hein. She said the water was so dark that it was difficult to see.

Hein went down for the last time, according to Skorupa, when Souza was about eight feet away from him.

"I just didn't make it in time," said Souza.

Years ago, granite was mined from dozens of quarries in town. Today, many of them are popular swimming holes even though property owners, neighbors and police try to keep people out of them.

Quarry Road, which leads to the quarry, is littered with empty beer cases, broken beer bottles and plastic soda bottles. Signs that read "no trespassing" hang from several trees along the road. "Keep Out" is written in white spray paint on the road outside the entrance and in pink neon on several boulders scattered around the quarry area.

Jennifer Petersen, 23, who lives at 39-B Quarry Road, said the po-

lice rarely come around to stop people from swimming in the quarry.

"The kids watch the police leave and then just come back," she said. "This is a very sad. But I hate to say it, the kids know they are not supposed to come down here. It was just a matter of time before something like this happened."

Police received a 911 call at 3:15 p.m. Before entering the quarry area, they had to call for a bucket-loader to remove large boulders blocking the entrance. Divers from Ashaway, Stonington, Hope Valley, Westerly and Rhode Island State Police participated in the search.

Hein's body was taken to the Chief Medical Examiners Office in Providence. Westerly Police said late Wednesday night that the incident is still under investigation.

Hein was a graduate of Warwick Veterans High School, where he was a member of the wrestling team, friends said. He was attending Community College of Rhode Island in Warwick and working at a meat market.

Magiera, a Warwick teen who didn't know Hein, said he felt bad for Souza, who tried unsuccessfully to save his friend.

"He's going to have nightmares all his life, seeing his friend go under," he said.