



Body of Lawrence man recovered from Newfound Lake, NH

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Bill Hardy of Salem, N.H., said he'll forever live with the memory that he came within inches of reaching his beloved brother-in-law who disappeared beneath the surface of a New Hampshire lake.

Just hours before Dennis Bistany's body was recovered from Newfound Lake in Bristol, N.H., last night, Hardy talked about the frantic attempts to pull him back into a boat Tuesday afternoon.

Bistany, 43, a Methuen grammar school teacher and lifelong resident of Lawrence, jumped off a boat on the scenic lake to help Hardy, who was in the water.

"I went swimming as I usually do," Hardy, 50, said in a telephone interview. "I've been boating 15 years on that water. That lake is very cold and a very deep lake."

The wind was calm at first, but it picked up and started to push the boat away from him, Hardy said.

"I said to Dennis, 'Just throw me a noodle,'" Hardy said. "He thought I was in trouble ... and he just jumped over the side with a noodle. In his efforts to try to get to me he was starting to panic and he was getting tired."

The boat, which carried them and other family and friends, was well offshore. Hardy said he told Bistany to calm down, and Hardy's wife, Carole, jumped into the water in an attempt to help Bistany.

"I swam back to the boat," Hardy said during the telephone interview. "I got up on the boat; drove to his location. I grabbed my stern line. As I saw him going down, I jumped over the side. I did my best and I went down as far as I could go.

"It looked like he was inches away, and I couldn't reach him," Hardy said. "That's a thought I have to live with every day. Every minute."

Lt. Todd Bogardus of New Hampshire Fish and Game, which had been leading the search effort since that afternoon, said the body was brought up from a depth of about 135 feet at 8:30 last night.

Searchers using sonar found Bistany's body on Wednesday and spent all day yesterday attempting to retrieve him. At 135 feet, it was too deep for scuba divers to go, Bogardus said.

"It was grappling with the aid of the underwater camera and obviously the assistance of the New Hampshire Marine Patrol with a side-scan sonar," Bogardus said.

Hardy expressed his gratitude for the search and recovery effort.

"New Hampshire Fish and Game and local police have been outstanding," he said. "I can't say enough about them. They keep me constantly updated."

Bistany was a sixth-grade teacher at Methuen's Marsh Grammar School and a local baseball coach. He was unmarried and took care of his father, Robert, 78.

Bistany was vacationing at the lake with his family, and girlfriend and her two children.

"He's such a good man. He doesn't deserve this. He touched so many lives," Hardy said.

The New Hampshire medical examiner's office will examine the body before it is returned to Massachusetts, Bogardus said.

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