

Families conclude search of Pointe-Sapin harbour

■ Efforts to find young lovers may resume in the spring, parents say

TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Simone Robichaud watched yesterday as an amphibian-like excavator scooped and sifted through the mud at the bottom of the Pointe-Sapin wharf.

Each time the machine's teeth bit into the ice, systematically lifting and shaking its contents, Robichaud watched for signs of her daughter.

It is not what a mother wants to see, she said, but it is what needs to happen to bring closure to the tragic Halloween accident that claimed the life of her 19-year-old daughter Emma and her boyfriend, 20-year-old Stéphane Daigle.

"It will take a weight off of our shoulders," she said.

With less than two weeks until Christmas, the families of Emma Robichaud and Stéphane Daigle are planning to end the desperate search for their drowned children today.

Last week, the couple's fathers, Guy Robichaud and Gerard Daigle, worked with volunteers to dam, then drain, the wharf area.



VIKTOR PIVOVAROV/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Bystanders watch as searchers use heavy equipment to comb the bottom of the harbour at Pointe-Sapin yesterday.

The volunteers, many dressed in winterized coveralls, hoped to scour the floor of the wharf with long tools. But the mud proved too hard and Robichaud was forced to hire an excavator some referred to as the "frog machine."

The wharf held an eerie calm as friends, family and the curious watched the green and white excavator slowly make its way along one of the wharf's banks.

Many don't know whether the bodies of Robichaud and Daigle will be found. They can't

even hazard a guess.

A black sweatshirt was found, then a tattered T-shirt. The T-shirt is dismissed as being too aged to belong to the couple; no one can say for sure about the sweatshirt.

Each find brings a ray of hope to the grim faces watching the proceedings. Robichaud just wants to find a sign.

"Just a sweater, a sneaker, even a sock," said Simone Robichaud. On Saturday night, the searchers found a jacket

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