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WEATHER

Cool

High: 69°

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Bystanders Stop Suicide Attempt

By JEFF CARMONA

A Cornell student was hospitalized Sunday evening after he attempted to jump into the Cascadilla Gorge but was restrained by several passers-by, authorities reported.

The male student, whose name is not being released, reportedly ran nude through Collegetown before stopping on the sidewalk of the College Avenue bridge. When he proceeded to climb over the stone railing, some witnesses grabbed and held him to the ground until police arrived.

The episode began shortly after 6 p.m. when the Ithaca Police Department received a telephone call from a friend of the student. The student had just left his apartment and was depressed and nude, the friend told police.

Moments later the police received numerous calls that a nude male was on the bridge near 400 College Ave., directly north of the Center for Theatre Arts. When officers arrived on the scene, they learned that passers-by had subdued the subject as he attempted to jump, ac-

ording to Sgt. John B. Saul of the Ithaca Police.

The male, 21, was subsequently taken to the Tompkins County Hospital for an evaluation, Saul said. Although officials would not disclose the subject's name, they did confirm that he was registered with Cornell during the last academic year.

The student will not be charged with any crime, Saul said, adding that hospital officials will be responsible for deciding what treatment, if any, the individual might require.

Good Samaritans

Although hundreds of people saw the nude male run through Collegetown toward the bridge, only a handful chose to intervene in the matter, witnesses said.

Saul praised those who helped avert a possible tragedy, saying "they did an outstanding job."

"These people saw a situation and reacted tremendously," Saul added.

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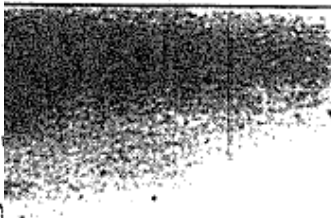
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Pablo Salanova '96, one of those present at the scene, said he was walking along and saw the nude individual but did not immediately realize what was taking place.

"It didn't really hit me," Salanova said, adding that he decided to intervene when his friends realized that the student was about to jump.

Rob Lee '96, another witness, said he first stood back and watched as the nude student talked with what appeared to be a friend. When the student tried to climb over the railing, the friend grabbed his arm and spectators ran over to assist, Lee said.

Lee and Salanova said they grabbed the student by his arms and held him to the ground until a larger group of bystanders came over to help. Neither individual recalls hearing the nude student say anything to those who subdued him.



The two good samaritans added that they might not have intervened if not for the quick thinking of a third friend who was there. The friend, Gretchen Goldfarb '97, suggested that someone help out when she sensed the nude student was planning to harm himself.

"Something just clicked," Goldfarb said, recalling the point when she started to view the situation as a crisis rather than simply a harmless prank.

Goldfarb added, a recent psychology lesson prompted her to intervene. At a Psychology 101 lecture last Friday, Goldfarb said she was told about the phenomenon of bystander nonintervention.

Prof. James B. Maas, who teaches Psychology 101, explained that bystander nonintervention occurs when a large crowd witnesses an emergency, but no one will offer to help out.

Bystanders rationalize their nonintervention by speculating that "someone else will help" or the incident "maybe is a prank," Maas said.

Maas called those who helped the depressed student "true psychological heroes," adding that education has been shown to help prevent bystander nonintervention.

