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6 drown in Kankakee River during summer

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Six drownings in the Kankakee River over the summer had such a big effect on readers that they placed the string of deaths third among the top 10 local stories of the year.

Constance Corbett, 40, of Bourbonnais, was drowned May 3 in a boating accident near the Kankakee dam. Her body was recovered May 23 near Custer Park.

A father and son, Juan Rodriquez, 41, of Chicago Heights, and Carlos Rodriquez, 21, of Schererville, Ind., drowned June 10. The two were fishing near the dam at South Island Park, Wilmington.

Deshawn Harrell, 12, and Peter Jackson, 11, both of Kankakee, drowned when they were caught in the undertow of the river July 18. The two boys were wading near the Indian Caves at Perry Farm.



Martin Ferguson, 13, of Joliet, died after he was swept away by a strong current at River State Park, July 21. His body was recovered July 22 just west of Warner Bridge.



Improving safety on the river was discussed, but there were few tangible changes during the year. Even if a water rescue squad was organized, it would be unable to respond quickly enough to most tragedies in order to rescue the victim in time, experts said.

As a note, the area has received funding from the state for an outdoor pool and water complex near River Road south of Kankakee. The presence of an outdoor supervised pool could lead to fewer youngsters swimming in the river -- and, thus, save lives.

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