

Arrests follow teen party tragedy

By GREG BROWN
Staff Writer

State police in Richfield Springs arrested five youths Monday on charges of unlawfully dealing with a child in the wake of a teen party accident that left a Cooperstown High School senior in critical condition in Bassett Hospital.



CONSTANCE LAYMON

Troopers and state police investigators arrested Brian Hazelton, 19, of Richfield Springs; Robert Park, 19, of Cherry Valley and Robert Tines, 19 of Cherry Valley. Also charged were two males 17 and 18 years old whom troopers declined to iden-

tify pending possible youthful offender status.

Troopers said up to seven arrests may be made in the case.

The youths allegedly purchased beer and brought it to the party Friday night in a wooded area near O'Neil Road, about three miles from county Route 50 in the town of Cherry Valley, according to troopers.

Seventeen-year-old Constance Laymon of Oak River Trailer Park in Index, on Route 28, suffered serious spinal injuries when she walked away from a campfire where the party was taking place, and fell from a 75-foot cliff. The accident occurred between 11:30 p.m. and midnight.

Miss Laymon still was listed in critical condition Monday night at Bassett Hospital, where she was taken by members of

the Cherry Valley Emergency Squad and Fire Department.

Troopers said Hazelton attends college in Florida, and that both Park and Tines are believed to attend Cherry Valley Central School. The 17-year-old youth was not a student, according to troopers.

All five youths are scheduled to answer the charge in Cherry Valley Town Court at 7:30 p.m. June 13.

According to investigator Richard Bobnick of the state Bureau of Criminal Investigation, seven youths were involved on three different occasions when beer was purchased and brought back to the party site.

Bobnick said the group's campfire was located about 25 feet from a deep ravine.

According to troopers, Miss Laymon fell about 40 feet straight down, then tumbled

another 30 feet before landing on a pile of loose shale.

Youths who were at the party said about 20 people were there when the accident occurred. Two members of the party descended into the ravine and covered Miss Laymon with shirts and a jacket and kept her from moving until the arrival of the emergency squad.

Miss Laymon is a Cooperstown Central student who attended the BOCES Occupational Center in Milford.

Youths who were at the party earlier said most of the participants were from Cherry Valley. Cherry Valley school officials, however, said their attendance figures indicated that students did not cut classes Friday in the traditional late spring ritual of a "skip day."