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Details continue to emerge surrounding Terry Silvers' fatal crash

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The death of Terry Silvers continues to dog the Towns County Sheriff's Office, which has come under increased public scrutiny after the release of details concerning the 911 call in the case.

In the call, local resident Heather Segars pleads with a Towns County 911 Dispatcher to send help as she follows behind an erratically driving Silvers and his white Toyota pickup.

Some eight minutes and 52 seconds into the 911 recording, Silvers and his truck, driving north in the southbound lane of NC-69 in Clay County, collide head-on with Tracie Stewart's 2017 Honda Accord.

Stewart, of Hayesville, was seriously injured in the crash and has undergone

multiple surgeries, and her granddaughter, who was with her at the time, is reportedly suffering psychologically following the accident.

Silvers died on impact. The North Carolina State Highway Patrol has ordered a series of post-mortem toxicology tests on Silvers to determine if and how he was impaired the night of the fatal accident, and results of those tests are expected back sometime this month.

During the 911 call, Segars relays the terrifying journey of Silvers' white truck from Fieldstone Cinemas 6 on US 76 until his NC-69 in Hayesville.

Part of the 911 audio that has proven problematic for the Sheriff's Office from a public relations standpoint is when Silvers pulls into the Cornerstone BP at the Junction

right before a patrol car, sirens blaring, passes by the scene.

That patrol car was being driven by Towns County Deputy Greg Joseph, who was en route to Deputy on shift that evening, concerning a potential prowler at a home on Clark Drive in Hiwassee.

Deputy Joseph ended up making it to the Clark Drive residence, but since Hiwassee Police Officer John Carter had already responded to the scene to back up Deputy Spradlin, the home was nearly cleared by the time Joseph arrived.

It is unknown at this time if Deputy Joseph heard the BOLO ("be on the lookout") for Silvers and his vehicle, which went out over the radio about a minute and 20 seconds after the deputy had already passed the Cornerstone BP headed for Clark Drive.



Terry Silvers' wrecked truck at the scene of his Feb. 23 fatal accident on NC-69 in Hayesville, North Carolina. Photo by Becky Long/Clay County Progress

It's also unclear if Deputy Joseph could have made it to Silvers in time if he indeed heard the BOLO and decided to turn around,

as Silvers crossed into North Carolina's jurisdiction less than three minutes after the BOLO first went out.

About 24 hours prior to

Silvers' death, Deputy Joseph responded to the scene of a different accident involving Silvers, this one on Bugsuffle

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Potential school shooting threat deemed 'joke in poor taste'

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

"Don't come to school tomorrow. Pew Pew Pew." This frightening message, appearing to threaten a school shooting, showed up on a Towns County High School student's social media page last week.

The Instagram post was brought to the attention of school administrators during regular school hours on Wednesday, March 6, after which "the school turned this over to the authorities immediately," said School Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong in a March 7 Facebook post.

Once removed from class, the student was searched - no weapons were found - and subsequently interviewed, and authorities handling the



Dr. Darren Berrong

potential threat were advised by the Enotah Judicial District Attorney's Office to take a series of precautions concerning the student.

"Those included what the School Resource Officer, said from what I understand," said District Attorney Jeff Langley. "He did interview the student, he talked to the student's parents, and he made sure this student didn't have access to a firearm."

"The student was suspended for that the next day, and I don't know how much time after that. I talked later to the Resource Officer to suggest that, if he was not suspended, that he needed to be searched upon arriving at school - they needed to be waiting on him."

"Those were precautions that needed to be taken, but the language used and the intent involved in the posting, it appeared that this was a joke in poor taste by the student, not an actual threat. It wasn't

See Threat, Page 6A

Countywide liquor by the drink coming for residents, visitors

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw conducted the First Reading of the Towns County Alcohol Ordinance to allow liquor by the drink at a called meeting in his office on Thursday, March 7.

In November 2018, county residents voted approximately 2-1 in favor of a referendum to allow liquor by the drink in unincorporated parts of Towns County.

For the first time, Towns County will have an ordinance on the books allowing for the sale of beer, wine and distilled spirits by the drink at restaurant establishments.

This is not, said Bradshaw, a precursor to retail liquor stores coming into Towns County.

Previously, only restaurants licensed through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Regional Economic Assistance Program were allowed to serve liquor by the pour, like Brasstown Valley Resort and The Ridges - until now.

Restaurants in unincorporated parts of



Cliff Bradshaw

Towns County will be able to apply for a liquor license through the county to serve beer, wine and distilled spirits following a subsequent Second Reading and approval by the commissioner.

Two types of on-premises alcoholic beverage licenses will be available in Towns County: "malt beverages and wine only for consumption on the premises," and "malt beverages, wine and distilled spirits for sale for consumption only on the premises."

A major caveat of the new Towns County Alcohol

Ordinance is that "alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises must be sold in an eating establishment serving prepared food, with a full-service kitchen."

And the restaurant "will regularly serve food every hour that they are open" for business. So, a bar or club would not qualify.

Another major caveat in the new Alcohol Ordinance is that the restaurant establishment must "meet the requirement that at least 50 percent of its sales are from non-alcohol sales." And this means food, not trinkets, clothes or other merchandise.

A monthly establishment will be required of the establishment showing at least a 50/50 split between food and alcohol served.

A licensee may serve alcoholic beverages in Towns County between the hours of 11 a.m. and 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday. No alcohol may be served in any establishment in the unincorporated parts of Towns County on Sundays.

Persons who mix, pour or serve alcoholic beverages must be at least 21 years of

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American Legion Post 23 to celebrate organization's 100th Anniversary



L-R: John Harkins of American Legion Post 23, Dean Swanson of the Sons of the American Legion, Robin Halfon of the American Legion Auxiliary and Lloyd MacBride of the Legion Riders.

By News Special
Towns County Herald

The American Legion is turning 100, and American Legion Post 23 in Hiwassee is planning to celebrate on March 16.

The American Legion was federally chartered on Sept. 16, 1919, and quickly became an influential force at the national, state and local levels, dedicated to service to veterans, strong national

defense, youth and patriotism. On Saturday, March 16, the Hiwassee Post is excited to share both the legacy and the vision of the organization.

Located at 1329

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TCSO arrests suspect on drug and obstruction charges

By News Special
Towns County Herald

YOUNG HARRIS - On Saturday, March 2, Towns County Sheriff's Deputies responded to a residence located on King Cove Road in reference to a domestic incident.

Upon arrival, deputies located a white female suspect in the yard of the residence. After speaking with witnesses at the scene and completing an initial investigation, the deputies arrested the female.

The female was identified

as Summer Dawn Wilson, 40, of Morganton, North Carolina.

She was arrested on the following charges: possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects; two counts obstruction of a law enforcement officer; and simple battery.

Wilson was charged with the two counts of obstruction when she resisted arrest at the scene.

The case report will be forwarded to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution.



Summer Dawn Wilson

Students prepare for Top of Georgia speech contest on April 4

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

A number of ambitious students who are either homeschooled, attend Towns County Schools or Eastgate Life Academy have been practicing their speeches for the Top of Georgia Student Development Contest.

The contest itself will take place on April 4, but participating students took part in their second week of practice on Thursday, March 7, at the Towns County Senior Center.

During these practice sessions, the students get into groups where they talk to their peers and instructors about their speech plans and how they should present themselves

during their speech.

Students have the opportunity to decide what they would like to talk about, that way they seem more interested in their own work and motivated to give a good effort.

"We asked them to speak at least four minutes," said Sam Fullerton, founder of the contest. "They can go five or six and we won't say anything about it as long as they get to four minutes."

"They get to pick the subject, but we tried it different from that and gave them 10 subjects to choose from, and we found out that if we let them choose what they want to talk about, they do a better job because that's something

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Student speakers and sponsors involved in the 2019 Top of Georgia student speech training and competition.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

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Mar 15 vs. Athens Acad. 5 PM

SOCCER
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Mark your Calendar for the Annual EASTER EGG Hunt

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New UGH CEO Welcome Reception

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