

Two people airlifted from scene of April 2 crash on Young Harris Mountain



A view from the scene of the terrible April 2 crash that occurred on Young Harris Mountain. Photo/Towns County Fire Department

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

YOUNG HARRIS – A South Carolina woman and a North Carolina man were airlifted from the scene of a two-car collision on Young Harris Mountain last week.

Both motorists survived the April 2 crash on US 76 with serious injuries, though their updated conditions were not available at press time.

The accident occurred shortly after 6:30 p.m. that Tuesday, when a 2001 Buick LeSabre being driven by John Mott and traveling in the left eastbound lane of US 76 crossed over the double centerline and into oncoming traffic, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

Mott, of Hayesville, North Carolina, was passing Twiggs Road at the time, according to GSP.

On the other side of the road and passing Fox Run was

Christine Todd of Sunset, South Carolina, traveling in the left westbound lane toward Young Harris in her 2012 Ford Escape, according to GSP.

After Mott passed fully over the centerline, he swerved right, causing the vehicle to spin clockwise in Todd's lane, according to GSP.

Mott's vehicle then struck Todd's head on, with an impact area in the left westbound lane of US 76, according to GSP.

The force of the impact caused the two vehicles to rotate violently in place, with each coming to an uncontrolled rest on top of the double centerline of the roadway and facing the opposite direction from their original lanes of travel, according to GSP.

Trooper Kyle McSween worked the accident, and according to his report, he used tire marks to determine that Mott, who had to be extricated from his vehicle using hydraulic rescue tools, was likely at fault.

Also in the report, McSween said he suspected that Mott was either fatigued or asleep at the time of the crash.

Charges against Mott are pending "due to injuries sustained by occupants of both vehicles," according to McSween's report.

Due to the dramatic nature of the crash and the need for medical helicopters to land directly at the scene, car traffic through the area was re-routed by local authorities, and US 76 was shut down between the city of Young Harris and the Junction.

The April 2 crash occurred about 100 feet from the location of the fatal vehicle/bicycle accident that claimed the life of local resident Stan Lee on Feb. 27, according to authorities.

Both accidents occurred on Swanson Mountain, which is the actual name of Young Harris Mountain.

Bradshaw meets with GDOT contractor to kick off county road safety project



Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw met with GDOT contractor on Thursday, April 4. Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Chris Dolvin of Brown's Asphalt Maintenance out of Winterville, Georgia, met with Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw for a special meeting at the Civic Center on Thursday, April 4.

Brown's Asphalt Maintenance has contracted with the Georgia Department of Transportation to perform the work for the Towns County Road Safety Project, which will be paid for through a grant from GDOT.

Dolvin will lead the project for Brown's Asphalt Maintenance.

Represented at the meeting were the Towns County Road Department and both the Hiwassee and Towns County Water Departments.

The road safety project, as previously reported, will involve new road striping, new signage, speed bumps and other upgrades as needed, and will require every cent of the \$160,727.75 GDOT grant.

The project will affect over 72 miles of county roads and involve adding or replacing well over 700 county road

signs. "We've got all safety signs," said Dolvin. "So, you've got stops, speed limits, curves, chevrons and object markers for hazardous areas."

The meeting was preliminary in nature. City and county management personnel were asked to sign a document that would allow them to deal directly with the contractor rather than having to communicate through GDOT.

"So, instead of locating all 45 roads at one time, we'll give you roads each week to go out and locate," said Dolvin, referring to locating water, gas, fiber optic and sewer lines buried along road right of ways so ruptures could be avoided.

"If you want to start early, we're all for that," he said. "We're just trying to break it up to where it's a little bit easier to do instead of all of it at once."

There was some concern that locator lines were not run where PVC pipe was laid along some roads, especially within Hiwassee City Limits, and it was agreed that city and county personnel would have to dig down and find the unmarked lines in order to locate them.

"Beyond that, this isn't

rocket science – we just ask for open communications," said Dolvin, adding that in the case of some major problem that delays any scheduled locating, that he is notified ahead of time so he can adjust his schedule.

Dolvin said the project would begin about the end of April or beginning of May, depending on the progress of the job they have scheduled just prior to the Towns County project.

When asked about the timeframe, Dolvin estimated the job would take about two months, so roughly, a finish time of mid-June to the end of June.

"I appreciate this (story) being out there so the homeowners know now not to pull up something that's in their yard," said Dolvin. "We have the ability to adjust signs within a certain degree. If there's something in front of somebody's house, we move it if we can. But there are some signs that we can't move."

"We tried to group the roads together (for each week's schedule) so we're not running back and forth all over the county," said Dolvin, adding that it would save on everyone's gas expense.



Towns County Fire & Rescue had to use the Jaws of Life to free the driver of this vehicle following the accident on April 2.

Rathburn...from Page 1A

Becoming a Poet Laureate has been a secret passion of the Southern native throughout her career.

"Even when I was in college, I saw the national Poet Laureate and thought it would be so cool to be the top poet," said Rathburn. "So, I was really excited to be nominated for the state Poet Laureate."

The position requires large amounts of traveling across the state and other parts of the country to talk with students and other Councils for the Arts about the craft of poetry.

Alongside Bettie Sellers, Rathburn is the second Poet Laureate to teach at Young Harris College, and she began the Creative Writing Program there.

"I designed the major and launched the major back in 2013," said Rathburn. "There was a long history of some really terrific creative writers teaching here."

"We had Dr. Steve Harvey, Janice Moore, Bettie Sellers, who was state Poet Laureate. So, there was a long

tradition of creative writing at Young Harris, but it wasn't until I was hired that we developed the formal major."

Rathburn hopes that the Poet Laureate position will bring more attention to the college and help it to grow by showing how great the programs are.

"I think that being Poet Laureate is great for us," said Rathburn. "I already believe – truly believe – that in terms of the curriculum here, we have the strongest Creative Writing Program in Georgia. And we see that at the Agnes Scott Contest, where our students are finalists there and they go on and do really great things."

"The Poet Laureate position is all about writing poetry and spreading poetry throughout the state. But it also makes me proud that, since I'll be moving around the state, more people will hear about Young Harris more than they would otherwise. And that's exciting for me, because I'm proud of our program and I like to go out and be able to talk about it."

Rathburn released her

most recent collection of poetry earlier this year, "Still Life with Mother and Knife," which addresses themes surrounding postpartum depression and the entrance into motherhood.

"My new book is largely about childhood and motherhood," said Rathburn. "It's told in interlocking sections, so the different sections are in conversation with each other. So, it's largely about childhood, motherhood, the female body, women's bodies in visual art, and it's about storytelling, so there's a lot in there."

Added Rathburn, "Becoming a mother made me think back on my childhood in different ways, so there are poems rooted in my childhood and thinking about some of the really dangerous experiences that I had, and then thinking about my own daughter's future."

Towns County Herald Staff Writer Jarrett Whitener, who authored this article, is a student of Chelsea Rathburn's in the Creative Writing Program of Young Harris College.

Hank Jr. ...from Page 1A

When the intermission finished, the audience cheered in anticipation of Hank Jr. appearing on stage.

"I've never been to a Hank Williams Jr. concert before, this is my first one," said Robert Johnson, one of the attendees of the event. "I'm excited, and I really don't know what to expect, but I can't wait to see him play in person. I've been a fan since the '80s, and I love listening to his music."

As soon as Hank Williams Jr. stepped out on stage, the entire audience immediately stood to give the country crooner a thunderous round of applause.

The crowd continued to stand through the entire performance, while some attendees filled the aisles to take pictures and get a better view of the icon on stage.

And though the group of people outside did not have the best view of the star, they made the most out of their time by dancing in the grass and celebrating the music in unison.

One of the songs that brought the most cheers from the crowd was "Keep the Change," which people sang along to as they shouted their



Andrew Chastain opened for Hank Jr. on April 6, having earned the chance during the Best Band in the South contest on March 30. Photo by Derek Storm

praises toward the stage.

Following that was "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight," which got everyone dancing more than ever.

Each of song in Hank Jr.'s set sparked the same cheerful reaction from the crowd, and the energy from that evening lasted until the very end of the

concert.

The next concerts at the Anderson Music Hall are Big Daddy Weave on April 13, then the Outlaws and Renegade Tour with Travis Tritt and Cadillac Three on May 18.

For more information on upcoming events, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

TCSO...from Page 1A

some people out in the world that want to destroy things, and hopefully, we can find out who did this, and they can be punished for it."

All damage will be covered by insurance, though Thomason said the gate will have to be replaced.

Saturday was also the sold-out Hank Williams Jr. concert at Anderson Music Hall, and fortunately, no operations were interrupted anywhere in the Fairgrounds as a result of the mischief from the night before.

"Hank had a good

time, and Hank said he loved Hiwassee and he wants to come back," said Thomason.

The contemporary Christian band Big Daddy Weave will play The Hall this weekend on Saturday, April 13, with doors opening at 6 p.m. for the 7 p.m. show.

Dye...from Page 1A

and using my address to mail the cards to, but it's a scam, and you would think people would realize that that's what it is," said Dye. "But we would never call anybody and warn them that we were trying to pick them up, and especially, we would never tell them to send money."

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation is looking into the recent spate of scam calls.

one of these calls should hang up immediately and dial 911 or call Towns County Non-Emergency at 706-896-7460 to report it.

Residents are being asked to note the number of the originating call, as well as the time that the scam call came through.

People can also hang up on potential scammers and dial the institution alleged to be making such calls at the

institution's publicly listed phone number to ask about the claims being made.

Please call family members who may not use Facebook to make them aware of the scam.

"Again, Towns County Sheriff's Office personnel DO NOT call residents by phone to acquire funds/cash," according to a TCSO statement.