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Two Women Charged With Murder

Two Dead From Drinking Methadone, Alcohol

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

Two men are dead and two Marshall women are charged with murder as the result of a drug-related "drinking session" which took place at a Marshall home Thursday night, Sheriff E.Y. Ponder said Saturday.

James D. Staggs, 42, of Taylor, Mich., and Scott Duncan, 19, of Walnut died Thursday night and early Friday morning apparently from mixing the narcotic drug methadone with alcohol. Autopsies performed on the bodies of the two men showed evidence of methadone, the sheriff said. Ponder said the medical examiner, Dr. Bates Henderson, attributed death to the swelling of the brain and liver as the result of drug ingestion.

Mrs. Joe Gosnell, 22, and Robbie Gay Banks, 22, both of Route 2, Marshall, have been charged with murder in the incident, Ponder said. A preliminary hearing on the charges was scheduled for 2 p.m. Monday in Superior Court in Boone.

Two other men involved in the incident were taken to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville for treatment on Friday. Michael Thomas, 28, of Marshall, and James Adams, 28, of Wyandotte, Mich., were treated for ingesting methadone and alcohol. Thomas was taken back to the hospital for further outpatient treatment on Saturday, Ponder said.

The sheriff's department first learned of the incident when Ponder received a telephone call at 8:50 a.m. Friday morning concerning a dead man

in a mobile home near Walnut. Upon arriving at the scene, Ponder said he found himself at the same home he had visited the night before to deliver a legal paper. Ponder said no one was home Thursday night, but Friday morning he found Staggs dead, sitting in a chair.

Ponder said there was evidence that Staggs had vomited a red substance prior to death, a substance which appeared to be blood upon first examination but later proved to be methadone.

Returning to his office, Ponder said he received another call at 10:40 a.m. Friday about a "sick boy" at the mobile home of Joe Gosnell near Davis Chapel Church just off Highway 25-70 in Marshall.

The sheriff and Marshall Ambulance Service

personnel found Duncan unconscious in the Gosnell home. Duncan was taken immediately to the Marshall-Walnut Medical Center where he was reported dead on arrival.

Thomas and Adams were also at the Gosnell home when Ponder arrived to investigate the call concerning Duncan. Ponder said bottles of liquid methadone were found in the home.

Further investigation revealed that Staggs and Duncan had been at the Gosnell house on Thursday night and had consumed methadone and alcohol there.

Mrs. Joe Gosnell was taken into custody and placed in the Marshall jail. The Banks woman was arrested after she was taken to the hospital for treatment for drug ingestion.

Bellamy Will Represent N.C. At National Conference

Sarawill Bellamy of the Madison County Department of Social Services has been selected to represent all N.C. child protective services workers at the Fifth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Milwaukee, Wis. on April 5-8.

Gov. Jim Hunt made the announcement of Bellamy's selection by the N.C. Social Services Association last week when he proclaimed the week of April 5-10 as "Child Protective Services Worker Recognition Week" in North Carolina to pay tribute to the Social Service workers.

"Social workers providing protective services for children have certainly been and are continuing to be called on to perform yeoman service. They are on call 24 hours per day. Many of them have had a significant increase in their caseload," said Page Shelton, supervisor of the Protective Services for Children Unit in the Division of Social Services of the N.C. Department of

Human Resources.

He indicated that they have a very difficult job and are directly involved in some very sad situations regarding the maltreatment of children by their troubled parents or other adults.

"The major objective of protective services workers across the state is the protection of children. Every worker is hopeful that the abused or neglected children can remain in their own homes while they arrange for services and provide counseling to the parents so they can become adequate parents. However, it is necessary for some children to be removed from their homes by court order and placed in foster homes to ensure their safety and well-being while the workers try to help the parents," he said.

During fiscal year 1979-80, these social workers investigated 25,000 suspected cases of child abuse and neglect reported to county social services departments



Sarawill Bellamy

as required by law. After these investigations, it was determined that protective services were needed for 11,000 of these children.

The number of children identified as victims of abuse and neglect represented a 27 percent increase over the previous year.

On the inside . . .

Tim Morrissey Espouses On Horse Sense And Shakespeare.
See Story On Page 3.

Public Meetings

The Madison County Board of Commissioners will hold its regular April meeting on Friday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the courtroom at the Madison County Courthouse.

The Madison County Board of Education will conduct a regular meeting Monday, April 6 at 10:30 a.m. in the courtroom or school superintendent's office in the Madison County Courthouse.

The Town of Marshall Board of Aldermen will meet Monday, April 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

The Mars Hill Town Council will meet Monday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. at the Mars Hill Town Hall.

Biologist Asks Help In Search For Rare Fish

See Illustrations On Page 3.

Fishermen who drop their lines into the French Broad River in Madison County have the opportunity to help further the cause of biology if they reel in a rare or unusual fish.

Professor of biology, Edward F. Menhinick of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is working on a book of the freshwater fishes of North Carolina. He has examined published information and records of collections made by the Inland Fisheries Division of the state and by various universities and has found twelve species of fish which occur in North Carolina (or which may occur in North Carolina based upon their distribution in Tennessee) and are found ONLY in the Lower French Broad River.

Menhinick says that "most of these species are found in the main channel of the French Broad or in the mouths of larger tributaries and are very difficult to collect. Fishermen using trout lines or fishing poles are more likely to take them than are biologists."

The professor is particularly interested in information on five species of which there are no verified records for the state.

The first of the rare five is the sturgeon. According to Professor Menhinick "there is a published record of eight sturgeons taken at Hot Springs on Oct. 8, 1945 by a Mr. West." The professor does not know whether these were lake sturgeons or shovelnose sturgeons as no further infor-

mation was located. He adds that "any sturgeon taken from the French Broad (or any other river that flows into Tennessee) would be very important for the records."

Sturgeon have five rows of bony plates on the body, a flat triangular snout with four large feelers or barbels, and a shark-like tail.

The next fish of interest is the spoonbill or paddlefish. There have been no records of this shark-like fish with a canoe paddle-shaped nose since 1908 in the French Broad. It is two to three feet long.

The skipjack herring has never been reported from the state but has been taken about twenty miles below the border in Tennessee. This flat silvery fish resembles a shad but the last filament of the dorsal fin on the back is NOT unusually long.

Another type that has never been reported in the state is the blue sucker. It resembles the carp sucker and the buffalo by having a sucker-like mouth and a long dorsal fin, but is much narrower than they are. The blue sucker has more than 50 scale rows along the body whereas carpsuckers and buffalos have less than 45.

The last river dweller that Professor Menhinick is interested in is the Ohio lamprey. He says that it occurs in the French Broad of Tennessee several miles below

North Carolina but there are no North Carolina records. This eel-like fish is parasitic on other fishes as an adult and leaves a circular wound on their sides which is about a half inch in diameter. Any fishes with such wounds would be strong evidence of the occurrence of the Ohio Lamprey in this state.

"In this case," says Menhinick, "either the injured fish or just the section of the body containing the wound should be preserved."

Harold Anderson of the Alpine Court in Hot Springs has volunteered to preserve specimens in his freezer. Any fishermen taking any of the described species are requested to take them to Mr. Anderson in Hot Springs. If they are too large to fit conveniently into the freezer, just the head of the fish will do. A good photo might be useful but specimens are preferred.

Concerning the importance of this study Professor Menhinick says, "evidence of the presence of these unusual fishes will emphasize the uniqueness of the French Broad River, and will provide additional cause to reduce pollution of this fine river."

Professor Menhinick may be contacted at the following address: Department of Biology, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, UNCC Station, Charlotte, N.C. 28223.

Family's Prayers Are Answered As Daughter Regains Sight After 11 Years

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

"I saw the light, I saw the light! / No more darkness. No more night. / Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight. / Praise the Lord, I saw the light!"

The words of the hymn aptly fit the feelings and circumstances surrounding the life of Teresa Kay Underhill, 23, of Shelton Laurel.

On March 16, Kay discovered sight was returning to her right eye after 11 years of total blindness in it, and vision in her left eye which was diagnosed as legally blind has improved significantly.

"It's the most amazing thing I've ever seen in my life," said Mrs. Mildred Underhill, Kay's mother. "You hear about these things happening to other people, but when it happens to you, it's different. It's truly the work of God, and I know it. There's no doubt in my mind," she said.

The discovery of Kay's regained sight in her right eye came when she went to Dr. John H. Killian, an Asheville eye specialist, for a routine examination. After administering preliminary eye tests to Kay, a nurse in Killian's office reported the results of the tests on both eyes to Mrs. Underhill who questioned the

results and pointed out to the nurse that Kay had had no light perception in her right eye for the past 11 years.

A check of Kay's medical chart confirmed Mrs. Underhill's statement, and the nurse quickly summoned Killian to examine the young lady. Killian held a small light in various positions in a hallway and asked Kay to follow its movement. The doctor concluded from the test with the light and from having her count his fingers that she did have some visual acuity in her right eye.

"Before that examination, she had no light perception in that eye as far as we could tell," Killian said. "And, the vision in the left eye, which we have listed as 20/200 is better than she did have."

Killian said Kay's condition was a case of optic atrophy, and he said he would be hesitant to call the improvement in her sight a miracle since there have been other known cases where enough optic nerve fibers have been left unatrophied to reactivate and produce sight. But, Rev. and Mrs. James Underhill and Kay believe the new found sight and Kay's overall physical improvement recently is the answer to 11 years of daily prayers.

Kay's sight and medical problems began in 1968 when a malignant tumor was discovered on one of her optic nerves. An operation in Nashville, Tenn., revealed to Kay's doctors that the tumor was cancerous, and according to Mrs. Underhill, "the doctors told us Kay would have died on the operating table had they tried to remove the tumor."

The Nashville doctors put Kay into cobalt treatment for the tumor, but its previous growth had effected the function of her pituitary gland as well as her sight.

Kay's fight with the tumor was a difficult one. Her mother said the doctors called the family to the hospital three different times expecting the young girl to die.

"They told us Kay would only live for a few years," Mrs. Underhill said.

After Kay's cobalt treatments in Nashville, the Underhills moved to Florida for a few years where Kay was under the care of a neurologist and other doctors. The subsequent damage of the tumor produced both mental and physical growth retardation in the young girl. She was enrolled in a school for the handicapped in St. Petersburg. Kay's mental abilities are on a



Kay Underhill

third or fourth grade level, Mrs. Underhill said.

In 1973, doctors performed a brain scan on Kay to check on the tumor and, according to

Mrs. Underhill, discovered "there was no evidence of the tumor anymore." Doctors kept a close check on Kay. (Continued on Page 2)

Hendon Calls For Task Force

WASHINGTON — Congressman Bill Hendon called today for the creation of a bipartisan congressional panel to investigate America's

defense readiness.

Hendon joined a number of other congressmen Friday in cosponsoring legislation that would establish a 30-member

"Joint Select Committee on Defense Readiness and Mobilization Capability."

The committee would be made up of key House and Senate members charged with "conducting a full and complete investigation into the kind and extent of threats to our national security and the quality and quantity of manpower, material, transportation and other resources needed to meet these threats," according to the proposed legislation.

"However, there is a wide divergence of opinion on how we should go about restoring our national defense capabilities," the Western North Carolina congressman said. "I believe that this special task force is the best way to insure that we make the right decisions as we begin to restore a strong national defense in the months and years to come."

Hunt At Open House

Wayne McDevitt, Director of the Governor's Western Office announced today that Gov. Jim Hunt will be in attendance when the Western Office of the Governor holds an Open House on April 3, from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.

"The intent of the Open House, McDevitt said, is to familiarize area residents with the Office, giving them an opportunity to meet our office staff and to learn of our goals for serving Western North Carolina."

The Governor's Western Office is located in Suite 208 of the One Oak Plaza Building on Charlotte Street.



Wayne McDevitt