

Jonathan Biggerstaff

Youth Dies In Accident

A tragic accident took the life of Jonathan Hayes Biggerstaff, 16-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Biggerstaff of Church Street, Burnsville, on Friday night at 8:30 p.m.

The Burnsville youth was killed and two other Yancey County youths injured slightly when their car ran off a rural paved road in Buncombe County and hit a rock, according to the state Highway Patrol.

Trooper M. A. Eitel identified the other occupants of the car as Albert Glenn Williams, 16, of Burnsville Rt. 6, the driver; and Cleve Pearcy, 16, also of Burnsville Rt. 6.

Eitel quoted Williams as saying he was driving about 45 miles per hour on Holcombe Branch Road, and, being unfamiliar with the road, lost control on a curve.

The car ran off the road, hit a large rock, spun and went backward down a bank, (Cont'd on page 2)



'A Leader'

By Ernie Howard

This story was written only in the way the students at East Yancey and myself could see in the eyes of Jonny Biggerstaff.

Jonny had that certain "never say die" sparkle you could see in him. He was always ready to volunteer when there was work to be done.

Jonny was a leader among men; in the classroom, on the basketball court, and in his church.

Mr. and Mrs. Biggerstaff can be proud of Jonny. He always wanted the better for everyone, never thinking of himself.

Jonny may be dead in body, but he lives in spirit. May he rest in peace.

School Board Appoints Bennett; Postpones Decision On Wilson

With more than fifty interested citizens waiting in suspense outside the school superintendent's office, the four members of the Yancey County met in private session Monday morning and made two important decisions, and postponed taking action on a third crucial matter.

They appointed Mark Bennett to fill the vacancy on the board created by the recent resignation of Chairman I. E. Clevenger.

They elected Albert Edwards to serve as chairman of the board.

They postponed taking action regarding the renewal of Superintendent Landrum Wilson's contract.

Following the announcement of these decisions, all reported as reached unanimously, Bennett said he would decide later, after consultation with the board, whether or not he will accept. He said he had not been following the plans and programs under consideration by the board, and would like to review them before making his decision.

Town Board To Run Again

All three members of the Town Board of Burnsville announce their decision to seek re-election for another two year term of office in the election of town officials to be held on May 4th.

The town board consists of a mayor and two commissioners. Mayor James Anglin is now serving his second term in office; Commissioner P. C. Colletta has served continuously on the board for ten years; Bob Helmle, now serving his second term as commissioner, previously was mayor for three terms.

In announcing their decision to seek re-election, the board has stated they would run on their record, which has been to furnish the town a non-political, business like, efficient administration, making improvements to the extent permitted by the town's financial capability.

An important consideration (Cont'd on page 2)

Bennett had been recommended for the vacancy by the county Democratic Executive Committee. Petitions had been circulated, signed by nearly 500 citizens, recommending the appointment of Dr. Wampler, William Hess, or Carroll Angel to fill the vacancy.

If Bennett accepts the position he will serve the one year remaining of Clevenger's term. In 1972 Yancey County is scheduled to hold its first direct election in recent years of members of the school board.

Before the board went into executive session, Superintendent Landrum Wilson said that

he was interested in having his contract renewed, and reviewed the accomplishments to date of his two year term, which ends June 30 of this year.

The school board, in other (Cont'd on page 2)

Both Drivers Killed As Trucks Collide And Burn On Highway Near Burnsville

Drivers of a State Highway Commission truck and a U.S. mail vehicle burned to death Monday afternoon in a collision about two miles west of Burnsville on Highway 19E.

Gene Thomas, 37, of Green Mountain, was the driver of the state truck which was loaded with gravel. Homer Wayne Buckner, 19, of Weaverville Route 2 was driving the mail truck, according to State

Highway Patrolman, A. T. Canipe.

Canipe said the mail vehicle apparently crossed the center line and the state truck swerved onto the shoulder of the road in an attempt to avoid a collision but was hit in the left side. Both vehicles then overturned down a bank.

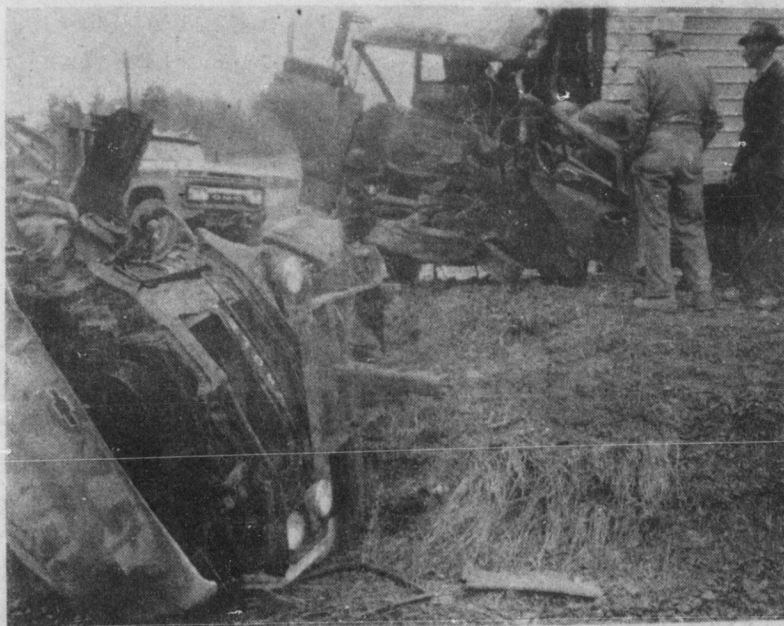
He said the gas tank on the state truck evidently exploded on impact and spewed burning

gas over the cabs of both of the trucks. The mail truck was not loaded at the time of the accident.

Gene Thomas was of the Lower Jacks Creek section of Yancey County. A lifelong resident here, he was a 1951 graduate of Clearmont High School and had been employed by the North Carolina Highway Department for the past 6 years.

Surviving are the wife, Beula Briggs Thomas; one son, Michael Gene Thomas of the home; the mother, Mrs. Dock Cooper of Green Mountain Rt. 2; two half sisters, Mrs. Raleigh Pittman of Burnsville Rt. 3 and Miss Judy Cooper of Green Mountain Rt. 2 and a half brother, Dock Cooper, Jr., Green Mountain Route 2.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. in the South Bend Free Will Baptist Church of which he was a member and choir director. The Revs. Charlie Miller, Cassie Thomas and Francis Radford officiated and burial was in the Fairview Cemetery.



Both Trucks Crushed And Seared By Flames



Volunteers Remove Bodies After Fiery Collision