

Crash...from Page 1A

Road.

Silvers had been driving his truck loaded down with firewood when he reportedly negotiated a turn too quickly and lost control of his vehicle, damaging a street sign and destroying a length of fence owned by Daren "Bear" Osborn.

Osborn is a detective with the Union County Sheriff's Office and has worked in law enforcement in Towns County in the past.

Despite Silvers passing two field sobriety tests after the Buggywreck wreck, several local residents familiar with the deceased's alleged history of drug abuse have since expressed doubt over his condition to drive that evening, including Osborn, putting the onus in hindsight on Deputy Joseph to have arrested Silvers on Feb. 22 instead of letting him leave the scene.

On March 8, Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton made public the body cam footage regarding Silvers' Feb. 22 accident on Osborn's property, linking to YouTube from his personal Facebook account.

In the same social media post, the sheriff addressed the now infamous 911 call regarding Silvers and his white Toyota pickup.

"In the beginning, the vehicles are in Georgia and there is a deputy nearby, but the deputy is not on the phone with

the caller," said Clinton in the March 8 Facebook post. "The caller is talking to an employee of an entirely different branch of government outside the control of the sheriff.

"This person, not the deputy, tells the caller the deputy is going to another call. At no time during that phone conversation, nor in the decision of when and how to relay the caller's information to the deputy, was there a judgment call made by anyone employed by, supervised by, or otherwise under the control and responsibility of the Sheriff of Towns County."

Sadly, many people continue to be affected by the accident. Segars now requires psychiatric care, and Stewart and her granddaughter are still recovering physically, mentally and emotionally following the crash.

Several of Silvers' family members, in mourning his death, have asked publicly why more wasn't done to prevent the Feb. 23 tragedy.

According to local authorities, Silvers was known to have had extensive run-ins with law enforcement over the years, including arrests for various offenses such as operating a motor vehicle while on drugs.

Herein lies one of the main points of public criticism concerning Silvers' death - aside from what could have been done the night of the

fatal accident, many people have been wondering if the entire incident could have been prevented if Silvers' alleged past transgressions had been taken more seriously by local law enforcement.

However, considering that Silvers reportedly had an extensive history of run-ins with local law enforcement, it would appear that previous efforts to curb Silvers' pattern of criminal behavior had little effect leading up to his death.

Furthermore, had he been taken into custody on Feb. 22, as some people in the community are claiming should have happened, Silvers would have only had to remain in jail for six hours before becoming bond eligible.

As such, it remains unclear what, if anything, could have prevented Silvers' demise that fateful Saturday evening.

There has also been some public outcry about a phone call from Deputy Spradlin to 911 Dispatch after the three law enforcement officers cleared the home on Clark Drive on Feb. 23.

In that call, Spradlin appears to be criticizing the dispatcher for calling out a BOLO while they were searching the home, which he contends could have potentially given their position away had a prowler been inside the house.

Apart from informing Spradlin that it was her duty to dispatch calls as they came in, the dispatcher also informs the deputy about Silvers' death, of which he'd been unaware prior to calling in that evening.

Speech...from Page 1A

they like."

Instructors asked a few students to give their speeches in front of their peers on March 7 so they could comment on ways to help prepare for the big contest coming up.

The contest is open to the public and will be held on April 4 starting at 6 p.m. at the Towns County Senior Center.

Students are competing for monetary prizes totaling \$2,000 split between Junior and Senior divisions.

First Place in each division will win \$400, Second Place will win \$300, Third Place \$200, and Fourth Place \$100.

During the contest, instructors will look for a few key qualities in each of the

speeches, including the way that the students use their body language to deliver their speech.

Some of the fundamentals include walking into the room, using eye contact, how often the student uses notes, if the student moves around, and if the student makes gestures.

Speech coaches try to help with these things by instructing students on the appropriate uses of pauses, gestures, voice inflection, movement, delivery speed, use of humor and sense of confidence.

"We like for them to come out and plant themselves in the center of the stage," said Fullerton. "We want them to move to where the judges are and then move to the group on

the other side of the area, before coming back to the center. This way everybody feels like they've been spoken to rather than standing in one spot."

The program is now in its 10th year, having been founded in June 2009 by Fullerton, who wanted to do it because of his involvement in public speaking during his life.

This year's contest is sponsored by the Towns County GOP.

Fullerton wants to help students get better at public speaking so that they benefit from it later on in life, and other students living in Towns County can still participate in the speech development and contest if they want to join.

Students wishing to join the competition must attend the next meeting on Thursday, March 14, to sign up.

Threat...from Page 1A

intentionally disseminated to a lot of people. He did put it on this social media but didn't send it out very intentionally in a sense. There weren't targets that he sent it to.

"Therefore, we weren't recommending criminal charges. Conceivably, we could have tried to make a charge of disrupting school, but we think this was a joke among friends with no intent there to disrupt school by the student."

Echoing Langley's sentiment about the intent of the post, Superintendent Berrong said that, even though it seemed to be intended as a joke, "we do not take social media posts or comments lightly in this day and age and must take any threatening statements seriously."

Unfortunately, the school system did not handle the

messaging around the potential threat as well as Berrong would have liked in hindsight, who said that the schools should have reached out to parents sooner than 24 hours after the potential threat was handled.

A number of students stayed out of school the day after the potential school shooting threat came to light, either scared to attend or held out by their parents, and Berrong said that any absences that occurred for these reasons would be excused by the schools.

"Once I found out Thursday morning that this had gotten out and there were people out in the community and parents that were scared to send their kids to school, if I had to do this over again, of course we would have sent out some kind of information immediately, just to let everyone know," said

Berrong. "I didn't think for a second that that would have gotten out to everybody and caused a concern for parents and their kids.

"We don't ever want parents to feel like it's unsafe for their kids to come to school, and we want them to have as much information as possible. So, if we had this to do over again and I could go back in time, we would have sent something out Wednesday immediately."

Berrong also said he'd heard of a rumor going around that a student had been caught with a gun at school last week, though he said the rumor was completely false.

"Our school is as safe as it's ever been, and Towns County Schools will always be one of the safest schools in the state of Georgia," said Berrong, adding that, however rare, the school system always takes threats of violence seriously and handles them quickly.

Correction:

In the March 6, 2019, edition of the Towns County Herald, the newspaper inadvertently misquoted Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley concerning public remarks he'd made about the North Enotah Drug Court.

The mistake implied that Langley had previously admitted drug dealers into the

Drug Accountability Court Program, which is not the case.

Following publication, Langley reached out to the newspaper to clear the matter up.

"What I intended to explain was that I have had to veto a handful of dealers that have applied, because dealers need greater punishment

than is provided by the drug court program that focuses on treatment," said Langley. "In addition, dealers are potentially harmful to the progress of the other participants.

"It is a firm policy that in cases where there is admissible evidence of sales, that person is not allowed in drug court and can be given treatment while in prison or after serving their time."

The Literary Hour Reading at the John C. Campbell Folk School on March 20th

On Wednesday, March 20, 2019, at 7 PM, the John C. Campbell Folk School and NC Writers' Network-West (NCWN-West) will sponsor The Literary Hour. At this event, NCWN-West members will read at the Keith House on the JCCFS campus, in Brass-town, NC. The Literary Hour is held on the third Thursday of the month unless otherwise indicated. This reading is free of charge and open to the public. This month's featured readers will be, poet and author Natalie Grant, poet Joan M. Howard, and poet Mary Ricketson.



Natalie Grant



Joan M. Howard

Natalie Grant has spent much of her life in Western North Carolina and most of her career as the only high school language arts teacher at a rural K-12 school. She writes both fiction and poetry and is inspired by the landscape of her mountain home, its people, and the many storytellers in her family.

Currently, Grant is writing short stories and a volume of poetry entitled *The Language of Bones*. Her educational background includes an MFA in creative writing from the University of the South's School of Letters, an MA in English from Western Carolina University, and a BA in History and English from Berea College. Grant is also a Rep for NCWN-West.

Howard is a former teacher with an MA in German and English literature and is a member of the North Carolina Writers' Network. She enjoys birding and kayaking on the beautiful waters of Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee.

Mary Ricketson, Murphy NC, inspired by nature and her work as a mental health counselor, has poetry published in *Wild Goose Poetry Review*, *Future Cycle Press*, *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *Lights in the Mountains*, *Echoes Across the Blue Ridge*, *Red Fox Run*, *It's All Relative*, *Old Mountain Press*, *Whispers*, and *Voices*. Her chapbook is, *I Hear the River Call my Name*, and she has two full length collections, *Hanging Dog Creek*, and *Shade and Shelter*. Her new book, *Mississippi: The Story of Luke and Marian*, is forthcoming, 2019, from Kelsay Books.



Mary Ricketson

Joan M. Howard, whose poetry has been published in *POEM*, *The Road Not Taken: The Journal of Formal Poetry*, *The Aureorean*, *Lucid Rhythms*, *Victorian Violet*, *The Wayfarer* and other literary journals. She published the book *Death and Empathy: My Sister Web*, in

combining roles as writer and her helping role as a therapist. Ricketson's poems and activities relate with nature, facilitate talk about a personal path, and focus on growth in ordinary and unusual times.

She writes a monthly column, *Women to Women*. She is a Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor, a Rep for NCWN-West, and an organic blueberry farmer.

For more information about this event, contact Mary Ricketson at: maryricketson311@hotmail.com.

Liquor...from Page 1A

age. A person between the ages of 18 and 21 may serve alcoholic beverages but may not mix or pour except under the supervision of management personnel over 21 years of age.

Further, "all persons who mix, pour or serve alcohol must be certified by Rserve.com. Proof of employee's certification must be maintained by the employee and the licensee."

"No person knowingly and intentionally may sell or offer to sell any alcoholic

beverages for consumption on the premises in or within 100 yards of any" school, church or funeral home, according to the ordinance.

A license to sell beer and wine in Towns County by the pour is set at \$1,000 per year. A license to sell beer, wine and distilled spirits in Towns County by the pour will cost \$3,000 per year, though "for new applications submitted after May 15, the license fee shall be reduced by one-half."

Bradshaw said he, Finance Director Andrea

Anderson and County Clerk Linda Hedden had worked many long hours putting the new ordinance together, hashing out the details with the help of County Attorney Robb Kiker.

Bradshaw said he feels that the new ordinance is a strong one. The date and time of the Second Reading had not been announced by press time Monday.

It should be noted that both of Towns County's cities - Hiawassee and Young Harris - already allow liquor by the drink sales within their respective city limits.

Writers featured at Literary Event March 20th

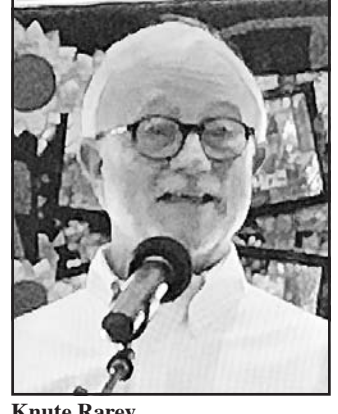
By Carroll S. Taylor

On Wednesday, March 20, at 10:30 AM, Coffee with the Poets and Writers (CWPW) will feature storyteller Knute Rarey and writer Bob Grove. The event will be held at the Moss Memorial Library in Hayesville, NC, and is free and open to the public. An open mic will follow the presentation. CWPW is sponsored by North Carolina Writers' Network West (NCWN-W).

Knute Rarey is a local storyteller. He told his first "official" story in 2015 at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC, and later at the Swapping Ground at the International Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN. Since then he has also told stories at the Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival, the Big Fibbers Festival, the Texas Storytelling Festival, the Moth Story Slam in Asheville, and the Stone Soup Festival.

Born on a family farm in Ohio, he began visiting the North Georgia mountains regularly about forty years ago and fell in love with the people, their stories, the wild rivers, beautiful lakes, and mountains. He moved to Hayesville in 1990 and lived here for ten years. Work then took him away. Four years ago he retired back to Hayesville full-time.

Rarey is a traveler, teacher, grandfather, and lifelong learner. Stories are from his personal life, from growing up on a farm in the Western Carolina mountains, from listening to family tales at breakfast gatherings and holiday meals, from the "characters" that make up his family, and



Knute Rarey

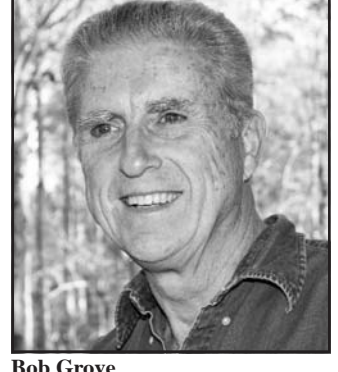
speaker at 14 national conventions and a U.S. Congressional committee.

His interests have led him to treasure hunting in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador, exploring in Alaska, roaming through old, abandoned houses, and sightseeing the beautiful Grand Canyon of the Pacific on the island of Kauai.

Now retired and a prose critique facilitator for the North Carolina Writers Network-West and the Ridgeline Literary Alliance, he has published 19 books and hundreds of articles in 23 magazines.

With more time to write, Grove varies his topical genres from humor to drama, and even dabbles in occasional poetry. He is a popular performance reader, evidenced by his well-attended annual reading, in costume and British dialect, of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown.

For more information about this event, please contact Glenda Beall at: glendabeall@msn.com. NTMar13Z11)CA



Bob Grove

Legion...from Page 1A

Sunnyside Road in Hiawassee, Post 23 will have free hot dogs and half price drinks from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. that day. All the American Legion Family are invited as well as non-member veterans.

The local post supports all veterans and assists with their needs. It also provides scholarships to students and helps local law enforcement.

The American Legion Post 23 Family consists of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders.

For more information, call the American Legion post at 706-896-8387.

"The American Legion was founded in March 1919 in

Paris, France, by U.S. World War I military personnel stationed there who were dedicated to four pillars of service and advocacy: veterans, military personnel, youth and patriotic values," according to Legion.org.

"The American Legion today consists of 55 'departments' in each of the 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, France, Mexico, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. There are approximately 13,000 local posts worldwide.

"Current national membership is about two million. Combined with the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion, membership in what is known as the American Legion Family

exceeds three million.

"American Legion membership is open to military personnel and veterans who have served their nation on active duty during wartime. Eligibility has been open to all who have served on active duty since Aug. 2, 1990, the beginning of continuous U.S. armed conflict in the Middle East and other locations around the planet.

"The Legion has been instrumental in the creation of a number of major institutions of American society, including formation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, creation of U.S. Flag Code, passage of the GI Bill and more.

"American Legion posts annually: donate more than 3.7 million hours of volunteer service in their communities; provide assistance on more than 181,000 VA benefits claims and cases; donate more than 80,000 pints of blood to collection centers nationwide, which makes the Legion the nation's single largest blood donor;

"Awards more than 8,000 medals to Junior ROTC students; sponsors more than 2,500 Scouting units serving more than 64,000 young people; (and) awards more than \$4 million in college scholarships.

"The American Legion will mark its 100th anniversary with a 15-month celebration running from its national convention in August 2018 through Veterans Day 2019."

For more information on the history of the American Legion, visit Centennial.Legion.org.

AARP Smart Driver™ Class March 21st at North Georgia Tech

AARP Smart Driver™ - the new and enhanced driving refresher course from AARP Driver Safety will be offered at the North Georgia Technical College Conference Center in Blairsville. The college is located at 121 Meeks Avenue (off Highway 515). The class will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, March 21. The class will be taught by certified volunteer instructor John Daniel.

Since 1979, AARP Driver Safety has helped over 15 million older drivers stay safe, educated and confident behind the wheel. AARP Smart Driver Course participants will learn: valuable defensive driving skills; proven safety strategies;

how to stay current with the latest driving technologies; the current rules of the road, specific to your community, and how to manage and accommodate common age-related changes in vision, hearing and reaction time.

Participants are encouraged to check with their insurance agent to see if they are eligible for an insurance discount. There are no tests required to pass the course. The course is open to drivers of all ages and costs \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. Lunch will be on your own.

Participants need to pre-register as class size is limited. Call John Daniel at 706-400-9957. NTMar13Z3)CA

the Journey of Mourning to Joy Grief Support

The Journey of Mourning to Joy Grief Support every Tuesday evening from 5:30-7 PM at Homestead Hospice in Blairsville, GA, 97 Deep South Farm Rd Unit #2. Please call Homestead Hospice at (706) 835-3960 if you have any questions. Bethany Clark - Bereavement Coordinator; Bclark@homesteadhospice.net. NTMar13Z2)CA