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Investigation underway after two found dead in car

BY BRITTANY WHITEHEAD
Staff Writer

WHITLEY COUNTY — A death investigation is underway following the discovery of two deceased individuals inside a vehicle near the intersection of KY 92 West and KY 2792 on Sunday morning.

According to a news release issued by the Whitley County Sheriff's Department, Major Tony Dingess was dispatched to the scene around 11:10 a.m. Sunday after a caller reported a suspicious vehicle stopped in the middle of the roadway.

The vehicle, a gray Chevy Malibu, was found blocking the road with the engine running and the driver slumped behind the wheel.

Upon approaching the driver's side, Maj. Dingess observed a deceased male later identified as George Glenn Gaertner, 60, of the Strunk community in neighboring McCreary County.

A female passenger — identified as Surja M. Gaertner, also 60 and of Strunk — was found deceased inside the vehicle as well.

A handgun was recovered during the course of the investigation.

The Sheriff's Department has opened a death investigation under case number 25-118-0060 and an autopsy has been scheduled with the Kentucky State Medical Examiner's Office in Frankfort.

Further details have not yet been released pending autopsy results.

Corbin Tourism discusses potential marketing proposal

Also talks future trade show participation to reach out-of-state tourists

BY BRITTANY WHITEHEAD
Staff Writer

CORBIN — The Corbin Tourism and Convention Commission met for a special-called meeting Wednesday to discuss updates to its bylaws, new marketing partnerships, and future trade show participation to reach out-of-state tourists.

Commission members reviewed proposed changes to the Tourism Commission's bylaws, with the most significant revisions including the option to conduct special-called meetings via video teleconferencing and a new standard meeting time of 4:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. After review from their legal team, the bylaws will be voted upon in an upcoming meeting.

The group also discussed a

SEE TOURISM, PAGE 3

Prosecution rests in Alexandra Ward trial

Laid out timeline of final days and hours of 3-year-old Amoura Smallwood's life

BY BRITTANY WHITEHEAD
Staff Writer

WHITLEY COUNTY — In the ongoing trial of Alexandra Ward, prosecutors finished out their case last Friday and have laid out a harrowing timeline of the final days — and hours — of 3-year-old Amoura Smallwood's life, culminating in the presentation of a disturbing video on Day 4 that left many in the courtroom — including some jurors — visibly shaken.



ALEXANDRA WARD

Ward, 22, of Corbin, is charged with complicity to commit murder and complicity to commit first-degree strangulation. Her boyfriend at the time, Jordan Taylor, has already pleaded guilty to murdering the child and is serving life in prison without parole.

Text messages read by witness Kentucky State Police Detective Logan Gay, who led the digital investigation, show a months-long pattern of threats and admissions of abuse from Taylor — messag-

es Ward repeatedly received and acknowledged.

In one exchange, Taylor wrote, "I whooped Amoura," to which Ward replied: "Baby, please tell me you didn't leave a mark. Please."

Other messages from Ward show concern but no action, stating, "Be nice to her. Seriously, don't whoop her no more. Put her in the corner."

The messages also include direct threats of violence toward Ward and the child. Texts show

SEE WARD, PAGE 3



Law enforcement is shown on site after apprehending Daniel Graiber, 49, of Illinois, who reportedly made threats towards attendees of a Williamsburg funeral service. | PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAMSBURG POLICE

Illinois man arrested following threats made to funeral attendees

BY BRITTANY WHITEHEAD
Staff Writer

WILLIAMSBURG — A man from Illinois was arrested Saturday after allegedly making threats toward individuals planning to attend a local funeral service.

According to a news release from the Williamsburg Police Department, officers began investigating after Officer Dorman Patrick received information the day prior about concerning statements made by 49-year-old Daniel Graiber of Wheaton, Illinois.

The nature of the threats suggested an intent to cause harm during the service, prompting authorities to act swiftly.

As the investigation developed, officers learned that Graiber had traveled from Illinois and made stops at two local gun stores in southeast Kentucky, where he

reportedly attempted to purchase a high-capacity gun magazine — specifically a 100-round drum.

Just before the funeral was scheduled to begin, Corbin Police located Graiber traveling south on I-75 and initiated a traffic stop. Officers intercepted him at the funeral home where he was allegedly asking questions about when family members were expected to arrive.

He was taken into custody at the scene.

Police say Graiber was found in possession of multiple gun magazines, ammunition, a law enforcement-style tactical ballistic vest, suspected hydrocodone pills, one baton, and several cellphones.

Investigators also recovered items and written materials they believe were associated with his alleged attempts to impersonate

law enforcement. During questioning, Graiber reportedly claimed to be affiliated with the CIA, FBI, and Kentucky State Police.

He is being charged with second-degree terroristic threatening, impersonating a peace officer, attempted disorderly conduct in the first degree, and first-degree possession of a controlled substance.

Graiber was being held at the Whitley County Detention Center at press time in lieu of a \$25,000 bond. Having entered a not guilty plea at arraignment Monday, he is next scheduled to appear in Whitley District Court next Monday for a preliminary hearing.

The investigation remains ongoing with assistance from the FBI, Corbin Police Department, Whitley County Sheriff's Department, and the Kentucky State Police.

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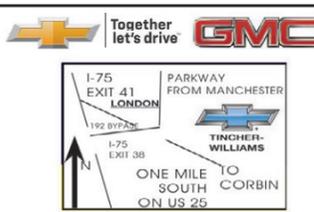
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TODAY'S WEATHER 11
Mostly sunny today with
a high of 66 degrees. Low
of 49 degrees tonight.



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