

## Memory misadventures

I admit I've never had the best memory. Indeed details like dates, place names and the exact order of events often prove difficult for me to recall.



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I do not believe, however, that my memory shortcomings are due to a lack of trying to keep the inner workings of my cranium organized. Instead, I think my thoughts have willfully taken the idea of having "a mind of their own" to the extreme.

Offentimes as the light of day crumples softly into darkness, I find myself engulfed by the need to slow down, breathe deeply and rid my mind of the business of the day.

When such feelings overwhelm me, I find a quiet place to rest and let the stillness and warmth of my surroundings sink into me.

Then, one by one I bring forth my memories of the day.

Dutifully I try to examine them each in turn, twisting them to view their many facets from different perspectives and holding them up to the light in search of smudges or fissures.

As I finish my inspection, I place each thought on a shelf in a recess of my mind, being careful to center it just right and to catalog its location. I also keep a record of its specifications, making note of its length, breadth, height and other pertinent characteristics.

I give due notice to each memory and at last the entire day stands before me on the shelf — ordered, immaculate and carefully dated.

I nod in satisfaction, feeling I have done my duty to keep an accurate record, before allowing myself to retreat into the twisting labyrinth of unplotable dreams and misty mindscapes that scatter before my eyes.

Unbeknownst to me, however, as soon as I close

the file to the day's memories, they come to life and begin to willfully mix and mingle with one another. Instead of staying put in their assigned location, they eagerly move about, making the acquaintance of the remembrance of losing my first tooth, the taste of cantaloupe gelato in Italy, a few poetic words from Hamlet and the fondly recalled smell of a bakery in Chattanooga.

By morning, they have become entangled in a confused mass and my carefully catalogued day has been scattered to the far corners of my mind. Each piece is there, but they're divided, disjointed and will, as I've learned by experience, prove to be very difficult to reassemble in an accurate fashion.

The more memories I add, the greater the parties and introductions are while I sleep, resulting in slower recall and more frequent missteps, misquotes and misdirection.

There's oh so much to go awry.

Although I know I'm fighting a losing battle, I'll continue to do what I can to keep my memories in order.

Journaling is one tactic that has proven most effective in this ongoing struggle over the years. After all, once I imprint a memory on the tangible surface of a page, it's much harder for it to escape and distort itself. The problem is my brain has become adept at distracting me, so I get bogged down in journaling about mundane happenings rather than recording the things that are really important.

Oh well, at least years from now when I can't remember the details of life-changing milestones I'll have a good record of such fascinating memories as what kind of cereal I ate in mid-November in 2009 and the details of my college research papers.

Given that possible future, perhaps I should put forth a bit more effort to write about what really matters.

Now if I can just remember where I put my journal...

## BOC approves pay plan for coronor office

by Ryan R Rees

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To comply with state requirements, the board of commissioners reached an agreement on compensation for the county coroner and deputy coroner at its meeting last Wednesday, Feb. 6.

BOC Chairman JC Sanford presented several pay scenarios at the meeting before it was agreed to pay the coroner, Jerry Hensley, \$5,000 plus \$175 per call. Deputy coroner, Melissa Waddell, will receive \$2,500 and the \$175 per call stipend.

However, Hensley would have to conduct a minimum of 30 calls to receive the \$5,000. Waddell would have to handle 15 investigations to receive her salary.

After each reaches the required number of calls, their pay would then be at the \$175 rate.

The agreement must be submitted to the state for local legislation approval.

Sanford said he had talked to both local representatives, Rep. Steve Gooch and Speaker of the House David Ralston, and did not see any problem with the proposal being approved.

The current state regulations require local governments to provide a salary for the coroner's office but do not stipulate payment for a deputy coroner.

In both cases, the salary is in addition to Social Security and Medicare contributions. Both officers will be required to use county vehicles in the future and not receive compensation for using their personal vehicles.

In other action, the board named Darren Gaddis to replace Fred Keener on the board of assessors after Keener had to resign when it was discovered he was an East Ellijay city councilman and cannot serve on two boards at one time.

Gaddis is expected to be sworn into office prior to the next meeting

of the board of assessors, Feb. 21. He will be allowed to vote at that meeting and break a deadlock over the board of assessor's chairmanship, which caused a cancellation of the January board meeting.

The BOC will conduct a work session this Thursday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. to discuss potential budget amendments, maintenance needs for the county library, a potential meeting on economic development, an update on construction at the Clear Creek ball field project and consideration for giving the county tax commissioner authority to make final determinations on all matters relating to the waiver of penalties and interest on unpaid property taxes.

The regular meeting will follow at 6 p.m. On the agenda is authorization to advertise changes to the county charter, approve the Hazardous Mitigation Plan and authorize action by the tax commissioner on unpaid taxes.

## Shooting

from 1A

said Capt. Frank Copeland, were Lloyd Silvers, 46, of 150 Benny Bennett Road in Chatsworth (the brother of Ricky Silvers), and Dennis Kermit Gravely, 48, of 167 Toccoa Valley Drive in Blue Ridge.

Addresses for Ricky Silvers and Ben Forrest were not available since they have not been arrested.

Gravely has been charged with two counts of felony aggravated assault. Lloyd Silvers has been charged with two felony aggravated assault counts and a parole violation. Warrants will be executed on Forrest and Ricky Silvers for aggravated assault when they are well enough to leave the hospital, Copeland said. Lloyd Silvers has three past drug charges in Whitfield County Superior Court, and received a five-year prison sentence in 2006 on one of them, records show.

"(Stafford) was shooting at the four people, and three or four of the people that showed up were shooting at them while they were in the house," he said of Stafford and the woman.

Around noon the sheriff's office received a call from North Georgia Medical Center that a female shooting victim had been brought to the hospital by a man who then left on foot. Authorities identified the man as Stafford, but were not naming the

woman.

Copeland said Tuesday the GBI was managing the crime scene and he could not say if drugs were found at the residence. Agent Dustin Hamby of the GBI said late Tuesday he did not want to release any information regarding evidence found at the home, including if drugs were found.

Silvers and Forrest were taken by air ambulance to Atlanta Medical Center, Sheriff Stacy Nicholson said Sunday. Spokeswoman Nicole Justin of Atlanta Medical Center said on Monday Silvers was not a patient at the hospital and that Forrest was in critical condition. Copeland said Ricky Silvers was in ICU but was not as seriously injured as Forrest.

The woman was shot in the leg, he added, and the wound did not appear life-threatening.

Nicholson said Stafford left the BMW he was driving in the hospital parking lot. The BMW and the van the four men arrived in have been impounded for evidence, Copeland said.

A search for Stafford near the hospital and around Ellijay and East Ellijay in a pouring rain proved fruitless Sunday afternoon, and was scaled back around nightfall.

Nicholson said his officers were familiar with Stafford. Roberts said her neighborhood was mostly quiet, but there had been "disturbances" across the road before and she had seen deputies come to the

residence.

Involved in the search were local sheriff's office deputies, city police officers from Ellijay and East Ellijay, Fannin County Sheriff's Office detectives, Georgia State Patrol officers and probation officers from the Department of Corrections. Gilmer detectives and agents with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation investigated the shooting.

Copeland was asked Monday if charges would be filed against Stafford.

"I can't say if we're 100 percent sure he'll be charged," he replied.

Stafford is a convicted felon who spent time in prison after an arrest in 2003 for manufacturing and distribution of marijuana, according to a jail spokesman. He has had probation violations in February and May of 2011, and last November.

Copeland added the GBI is working the case and could bring charges against Stafford. He believes Stafford will "turn up eventually, we just kinda scaled back

(the search for him)." But he added officers have not stopped searching.

He was asked if the woman will be charged.

"I don't think so," he said. "About the only thing she did initially (was) misrepresenting the truth a little bit, but she changed pretty quick early on in the investigation and started being forthcoming with what actually happened up there."

Copeland said an officer is on duty at Atlanta Medical Center.

"We've got a deputy down there that's sitting with Silvers," he said. "As soon as he can be released, we're going to be bringing him back to the jail. There's a warrant for him. It hasn't been executed yet, but we have somebody sitting there waiting for the time that he can be arrested. We don't want to lose him."

Gravely and Lloyd Silvers remain in the county jail and have not had bonds set, the spokesman said.

## Stock

from 1A

they are possibly considering selling two of those facilities but did not indicate which ones.

Jeff Dunn, chief administrator for the NGMC, told the *Times-Courier*, "They (SunLink) haven't said anything to me or publicly" about the status of the 50-bed hospital and 100-bed nursing home.

"When I hear something, I will be sure to let you know," he added.

The company announced this week that it is offering to purchase all its common shares held by those with 99 or few shares as of Jan. 31, 2013. SunLink is offering \$1.50 per share plus a \$100 bonus. Shares were listed at \$1.08 midday last Tuesday.

SunLink estimates the buy back will affect about 12,000 shares, held by more than 300 shareholders and could cost nearly \$200,000.

The system said the primary reason for the buyout is to limit the number of shareholders to less than 300, which is required for a company to go private.

The company reported a net loss of \$1.42 million for the first quarter of its fiscal 2013, compared with a loss of \$1.56 million for the same period the previous year. It has reported a net

loss in four of its past five quarters.

A deal to merge with Foundation Healthcare Affiliates in Oklahoma City fell apart in November 2011.

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