

THE GAFFNEY LEDGER

GAFFNEY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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50 CENTS

Clerk clings to life

By **TIM GULLA**
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"She's totally unresponsive to anything or anybody. She's been unconscious since the moment it happened."

"I told them (Cheryl's children) as much as I could tell them without being gruesome, because I was afraid they were going to hear it from somewhere else or on TV. They think their momma will be here tomorrow, and I'm telling them and their father's telling them, no, it may take a long time for their momma to come home."

— Ann Robinson, Cheryl Greene's mother

A Grover, N.C., woman remained in critical condition at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte on Thursday night, still on life support and recovering from a serious head injury sustained when she was thrown from the hood of a car.

Cheryl Greene, a 31-year-old mother of three young children and a clerk at the Wilco Travel Plaza in Blacksburg, was trying to stop two alleged shoplifters from leaving the plaza's parking lot Christmas morning when she was carried away and eventually thrown off the hood of a vehicle a half mile away, just over the North Carolina border.

"Everything's wait and see," Greene's mother, Ann Robinson of Grover, said Thursday afternoon. "She's totally unresponsive to anything or anybody. She's been unconscious since the moment it happened."

Robinson said her daughter underwent a medical procedure late Wednesday evening in the hopes it would lessen the pressure on her brain.

"It seemed to help some," Robinson said, "but for how long, nobody knows."

Two people have been charged in connection with the incident.

Donald Joshua Jones, 26, of Sprouse Lane, Grover, and a passenger in his car, Pamela Dockery, 21, of Grass Hollow Court, Charlotte, face charges in both Cherokee County and Cleveland County, N.C., in the

wake of the incident.

Police allege the two stole about \$200 in electronics equipment at the Wilco Travel Plaza and were attempting to leave when Greene tried to stop them in the parking lot.

Capt. Mike Fowlkes of the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office said it's believed Greene jumped on the hood of Jones' vehicle in an attempt to get him to stop but he continued driving away, eventually throwing her off the hood.

Video surveillance footage from inside the store has been

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Christmas comes and goes but still no Verlisha

By **TIM GULLA**
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Just two days after Christmas, family members of Verlisha Littlejohn removed furniture from her Gaffney apartment, a difficult task that served as a harsh reminder she's nowhere to be found and might not come home.

Her mother, Acquilla Littlejohn, said she spent Christmas in tears and didn't leave the house.

While her aunt Fairline Fair clings to some hope for Verlisha's return, albeit a fading one, a Christmas without Verlisha further cemented in Acquilla Littlejohn's mind that her daughter can't be alive.

Acquilla's grandchildren kept expecting Verlisha to walk through the door on Christmas Day. Verlisha, who was close to her family, would have been home for the holiday, Acquilla said. "She wouldn't have let us down."

Verlisha, who turned 25 earlier this month, worked with mentally and physically handicapped people at the Charles Lea Center. She was last seen Nov. 28 and her last known words were heard during a cell phone conversation with her mother. "Momma, I..." Acquilla heard just before the cell phone call suddenly terminated.

The Littlejohn family has been waiting to hear definitive word from investigators in Troup County, Ga., on the identity of remains found along a roadway in their jurisdiction.

Acquilla said she's never talked to Georgia investigators, but has been told by local investigators that the remains in Georgia are not Verlisha's.

"Everything we looked at so far is not matching," said Chief Investigator Charles Nixon of the Troup County, Ga., Sheriff's Office. "But we still are doing DNA with family members. We're just doing the DNA to be 100 percent positive."

The Georgia investigators are trying to see if they can identify the remains found in their jurisdiction by comparing DNA samples to potential family members. A DNA sample from Acquilla Littlejohn was just received late last week in Georgia and the sample wasn't submitted for testing until Monday.

"We've not got the results of that yet," Nixon said. If the remains are indeed not those of Verlisha Littlejohn, Nixon said his office would continue scouring missing persons reports in hopes of finding a match. His office currently has no new leads and Nixon is hopeful someone will come forward with information. A member of Littlejohn's family has set up a reward for information leading to Verlisha's whereabouts. But Acquilla said the family has not received any new information since before a prayer service was held in Gaffney last week.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office at 864-489-4722.



VERLISHA LITTLEJOHN



Cenora Stevenson, 94, is pictured in a church pew in one of several photographs family members have retrieved from her home following a Christmas Eve fire.

Woman saved by Gaffney firefighters will be released from hospital today

By **SCOTT POWELL**
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A 94-year-old Gaffney woman continues to recover after firefighters rescued her from a Christmas Eve blaze at her home.

Cenora L. Stevenson was listed in good condition at the Joseph M. Still Burn Center in Augusta, Ga., as of Thursday evening, hospital spokesperson Beth Frits said. Stevenson was transferred to the burn center following her treatment for smoke inhalation at Upstate Carolina Medical Center.

A relative of Stevenson's expressed the family's appreciation to the Gaffney Fire Department and Upstate Carolina Medical Center employees for their efforts to save the woman's life.

"Cenora is doing remarkably well. She is so independent for her age," said a relative who asked not to be identified. "She is scheduled to be released from the hospital today at noon. She will then return to Gaffney to begin rehab at the Peachtree Centre."

Gaffney Fire Department firefighters discovered Stevenson lying on the floor unconscious inside her home when they responded to a fire at 5:46 p.m. in the 506 S. Logan St. residence. Firefighters Scotty Richards and Matt Davis found Stevenson while assisting in a full search of the house.

Stevenson was able to place a call to 9-1-1 about the fire shortly before she succumbed to the smoke coming from her bedroom, Gaffney Fire Department Chief Nathan Ellis said.

"The 9-1-1 dispatchers knew from the call that someone was inside the house. They could hear the smoke detector sounding in the background when the call was made," Ellis said. "While on our way to the scene, we received a call from dispatchers of a possible entrapment."

After removing Stevenson from the home, Ellis said firefighters used a "bag valve mask" — a type of artificial respirator — in an effort to put pure oxygen back into the woman's lungs. The fire department carries oxygen cylinders on its fire

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Police will be out in force during New Year's holiday

By **TIM GULLA**
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Capt. Brooks Allison of the Gaffney Police Department doesn't like being placed in a position to beg.

But he's willing to do it. "We're begging people not to drink and drive," he said. If begging isn't good enough, though, police are putting motorists on notice that law enforcement will be out in full force throughout the New Year's holiday, conducting safety checkpoints and doing roving patrols throughout Cherokee County.

While all holidays pose some problems on roadways, police say the New Year's holiday can be especially troublesome for drunk driving.

"People who don't normally drink often drink a little on New Year's," Allison said.

Regardless of legal limits, police say, special occasion users of alcohol can show signs of impairment with much less alcohol because of lower tolerance.

Of additional concern this year is the fact that a New Year's Day falling on a Tuesday makes for a very long weekend for travel and holiday parties.

"Not to mention, we've (also) got some adverse weather moving in with rain," said Lance Cpl. Ron Johnson of the South Carolina Highway Patrol. Bad weather could add to roadway difficulties.

So don't take chances, Allison said. "It's too easy to find a ride and a whole lot less expensive," he said.

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"Cenora is doing remarkably well. She is so independent for her age. She is scheduled to be released from the hospital today at noon. She will then return to Gaffney to begin rehab at the Peachtree Centre."

— Cenora Stevenson relative

"The 9-1-1 dispatchers knew from the call that someone was inside the house. They could hear the smoke detector sounding in the background when the call was made. While on our way to the scene, we received a call from dispatchers of a possible entrapment."

— Nathan Ellis
Gaffney Fire Dept. Chief

SC EDUCATION LOTTERY

Pick 3 Thursday Midday: 2-7-2
Thursday Evening: 8-9-3

Pick 4 Thursday Midday: 1-2-2-1
Thursday Evening: 3-0-4-6

Cash 5 THURSDAY:
3-4-30-32-38 X2

OBITUARIES PAGE 8A

- Blackwell, Robert, 84, of McConnells
- Cobb, Horace, 76, of Mooresboro, N.C.
- Johnson, Paul, 83, of Gaffney
- Matuska, Frank J. Sr., 89, of Blacksburg
- Pennington, Winfred, 64, of Gaffney
- Scruggs, Felix, 94, of Gaffney
- Weathers, Betty Jo, 73, of Blacksburg

SPORTS PAGE 10A

- A torrid shooting night allowed Gaffney to beat Riverside 95-66 Thursday in the opening round of the Greer FCA Christmas Classic.
- Gaffney girls head coach Stacey Parris came into this week's Lady Hilltoppers Classic in Rutherfordton, N.C. believing her team had what it took to win in spite of their youth at several key positions. After two consecutive hard fought victories on their resume at the tournament, it can definitely be stated that the coach was right.

WEATHER PAGE 12A

Mostly cloudy and breezy tonight with scattered showers.

A morning shower Saturday, otherwise mostly cloudy. Cold and rainy Sunday.

Tonight's Low: **46**
Saturday's High: **64**
Sunday's High: **47**