

Shooting...from Page 1A

hour standoff between Union County law enforcement and Miller.

"We talked with him, and he opened the door three times and invited us in," Sheriff Mason said. "We had been to that residence about a week ago regarding a suspected burglary attempt. We knew that Mr. Miller was a retired Florida police officer, we knew he was heavily armed and we didn't know if he was inviting us in to shoot us or what. We didn't accept his invitation for obvious reasons."

During the course of the investigation, which included five Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents, detectives found about 40 fully-loaded weapons, Union County sheriff's Staff Sgt. Darren Osborn said.

"He was loaded for bear," Staff Sgt. Osborn said.

The 19-year-old, whose name has not been released, was able to escape the home prior to the standoff with law enforcement, Sheriff Mason said.

"It's our understanding that the victim and the great-grandson came home and Mr. Miller was intoxicated," Sheriff Mason said. "As for the motive for the shooting, it's our belief that the victim hid Mr. Miller's liquor and that upset him."

Sheriff Mason said that the best friend law enforcement had during the intense standoff was cover of darkness.



Local law enforcement had a long day on Sunday, piecing together the details of an early morning shooting on Miller Cove Road

"If it had been daylight, there was a greater risk. We knew we had to end the ordeal before daylight, for fear of him shooting at us from inside the home," the sheriff said. "It was dark, and he didn't have any idea how many law enforcement officers were out there. We knew we had to do something before daylight."

Fannin County Sheriff Dane Kirby volunteered Sheriff Mason mutual aid from his department. Sheriff Kirby sent his SWAT team to Union County

to assist Sheriff Mason and his deputies.

About daybreak, Miller was spotted inside his home standing near a kitchen counter.

Fannin's SWAT team broke down a door, rushed Miller and took him down with a tazer, Sheriff Mason said.

"That ended the ordeal," the sheriff said.

As deputies and Sheriff Mason entered the home, they found Grant dead, with six shell casings laying close

to her lifeless body, Sheriff Mason said.

"The casings looked like they were from a .357 Magnum, I didn't pick them up to see for obvious reasons. We also found a speed loader," the sheriff said. "He had an AK47, a SKS assault rifle, several high caliber hand guns. He was heavily armed and we suspected that."

Sheriff Mason praised the 19-year-old, who approached sheriff's deputies as they first arrived at the scene.

"He gave us the intelligence on the layout of the house, and he assured us that nothing could be done to help his grandmother," Sheriff Mason said. "He was an eyewitness to the shooting."

"Giving Mr. Miller time to think, and not pushing the issue, probably weighed in our favor in a very intense situation," Sheriff Mason said.

The GBI Crime Scene technicians processed the crime scene, Sheriff Mason said.

Miller has been charged with the murder of his daughter, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in connection with the shooting of his great-grandson, Sheriff Mason said.

Miller is being held in the Union County Jail without bond, jail records show.

Bike Crash...from Page 1A

"Both driver and his passenger were thrown off the Suzuki motorcycle," Trooper Saunders said.

Two passersby called Union County E-911 to report the crash, Union County Fire Chief/EMA Director Charles Worden said.

"Union County E-911 received two calls around 9:39 p.m.; someone had spotted the wreckage," Chief Worden said.

Trooper Saunders said that Vogan was pronounced dead at the scene by Union County Deputy Coroner Ron Winetraub, and Vonier suffered serious injuries (multiple frac-



Young's Wrecker Service hauls the Suzuki VZR 1800 Suzuki away following a fatal crash on Georgia 325 at the Nottely Dam Overlook. Photo/Charles Duncan

tures) as a result of the crash. "Mr. Vonier suffered multiple

injuries and was airlifted to Erlanger Medical Center in

Chattanooga, Tenn.," Trooper Saunders said. "The investigation has been turned over to the Georgia State Patrol's Special Collision Reconstruction Team."

Vonier will be charged as a result of the crash after his release from Erlanger Medical Center, Trooper Saunders said.

"He's still in Erlanger Medical Center due to his multiple injuries," Trooper Saunders said. "I'm sure he's in for a long recovery period."

Alcohol was a factor in the crash, Trooper Saunders said.

Larry Young of Young's Wrecker Service in Blairsville, said he had seen some bad crashes over the years, but, never a fatal crash in a parking lot.

"Every fatal wreck is bad, but, this one makes you think," he said. "I can't ever remember a fatal wreck like this one before."

Paris puts SPLOST on the Nov. 5th ballot



Lamar Paris

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris has approved a called referendum for Nov. 5th to extend the county's 1-cent Special Purpose Sales Tax.

The referendum will go before voters on Nov. 5th. The six-year run of SPLOST III comes to a close in March 2015.

The county is looking to extend the 1-cent sales tax for six years with an affirmative vote in November.

Collections, if approved by voters, would begin in April 2015.

The early ballot for SPLOST IV allows time to put the measure back on the ballot in two years if there is a negative vote with only minimal lapse in sales tax collections, Commissioner Paris said.

The projected dollar amount for SPLOST IV is \$19 million with the City of Blairsville receiving \$1.5 million of that amount per an intergovernmental agreement.

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