



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

Two Arroyo Grande Men Located Deceased on Boat Near Santa Barbara Harbor

Santa Barbara – The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office is investigating the deaths of two Arroyo Grande men who were located deceased on Sunday, June 30, 2019, on a vessel located approximately 20 miles southwest of Point Conception. The investigation began at approximately 8:00 a.m. on June 30, 2019, when a concerned family member contacted the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and requested that they be on the lookout for a white, 34-foot Sea Ray Sundowner with two men on board. The two friends, 53-year-old Gary Bishop and 49-year-old Christopher Avila were transporting Bishop's boat from the Channel Island Harbor in Oxnard to Port San Luis Obispo. The last time family members had contact with the men was on Saturday, June 29, at approximately 6:30 p.m. Family members were concerned that the men were not reachable and had not called to update their progress.

USCG personnel began searching for the missing vessel. Just before 8:00 p.m. on Sunday it was located by a USCG air crew approximately 20 miles Southwest of the Santa Barbara Harbor. Rescue personnel were lowered onto the vessel where it was discovered that the two men on board were deceased. The USCG towed the boat to the Santa Barbara Harbor where the Sheriff's Office took custody of the vessel and the decedents to conduct a Coroner's Investigation.

The Coroner's Office positively identified the decedents and notified next of kin. The Coroner's Office is investigating the circumstances surrounding their deaths. At this time there is no evidence to suggest foul play or suicide. The cause and manner of death is pending additional investigation as well as toxicology and lab results.