



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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Date: August 1, 2019
Time: 3:00 P.M.

News Release

Death Investigation Concluded

On Sunday, June 30, 2019, at approximately 8:00 a.m. 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 aboard. The two friends, 53-year-old Gary Bishop and 49-year-old Christopher Avila, both of Arroyo Grande were transporting Bishop's boat from the Channel Island Harbor in Ventura 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 they 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 two deceased persons to conduct a Coroner's Investigation.

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

UPDATE

On August 1, 2019, the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office Coroners Bureau concluded the investigation of this incident. It was determined by toxicology reports that the cause of death is Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. The manner of death is determined to be accidental.

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