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## Charges possible in death of Shevlin teen found in snowbank

Clearwater County Attorney Jeanine Brand says some of the 15-year-old's friends admitted they were all drinking alcohol at another friend's house and then dropped the teen off at his home in the early hours Saturday.

By: Stephen J. Lee, Grand Forks Herald

Criminal charges are possible in the investigation of the death of a teenager over the weekend near Shevlin, Minn., which is about 24 miles west of Bemidji on U.S. Highway 2.

Jared "Bubbs" Gilbertson, 15, was found by his father, unresponsive and lying in the snow in the woods outside his rural home near Shevlin about 11 a.m. Saturday.

He had been drinking at a party with classmates the night before in another rural home nearby, and friends dropped him off at his home about 1:30 a.m. Saturday, Clearwater County Attorney Jeanine Brand said.

Gilbertson was found lying in the snow by his father, Russell Gilbertson, later Saturday morning after the father woke up and couldn't find Jared in the house.

Emergency responders tried to resuscitate him, and he was taken to the Clearwater County Memorial Hospital in Bagley, then airlifted to Meritcare in Fargo, where he was declared dead Saturday night, Brand said.

Gilbertson's body is in the medical examiner's office in Hibbing, Minn., where an autopsy's results should tell the cause of death, whether it was exposure, alcohol poisoning or something else, Brand said.

Jared's funeral is at 11 a.m. today in the Floodwood (Minn.) Assembly of God Church, with visitation for an hour before the service.

Determining how Gilbertson obtained the alcohol could lead to criminal charges, Brand said. There were at least four or five students at the party, Brand said. "And we heard there were more."

Two friends of Gilbertson drove him home about 1:30 a.m. Saturday and said they saw him walk into his home, Brand said.

There was only a single set of tracks from the house to where Gilbertson was lying in the snow in the trees, indicating no one else was with him when he fell or lay down, Brand said. She doesn't know if his door was locked or why he would have entered, then left his home, Brand said. "His friends said they saw him go into his home."

But investigators aren't getting total cooperation in their interviews with Gilbertson's classmates, Brand said.

"There's some hesitancy when students don't realize that finding justice for a death is more important than 'narcing' on their suppliers," she said.

There were two adults — one of them a parent of one of the young people — at the home where the party took place, Brand said.

She doesn't know yet how much the adults knew about the party going on. But state law prohibits adults from furnishing alcoholic beverages to under-age drinkers.

Although some counties and cities, including Bemidji, have ordinances governing "hosting" parties where under-age drinking occurs, Clearwater County does not, Brand said.

But there also are possible civil liabilities when adults are around under-age drinking, she said.

There hasn't been anything out of the ordinary with underage drinking in the county recently, Brand said.

"But alcohol is always an issue" she said. She is prosecuting a case now of an adult man charged with furnishing alcohol to minors in Bagley, Brand said.

Before the school year started, Jared had moved from Tyler, Minn., where his mother and sisters and two of his brothers still live.

"Jared lived his life to the fullest," according to his obituary posted on the Web site of Atkins-Northland Funeral Home in Cloquet, Minn. "He took pride in everything he did, from playing with his friends as well as his school work."

Gilbertson competed in dirt bike racing, loved snowmobiling and played football and basketball and golfed, bowled, snowboarded and water-skied.

Jared's survivors include his father, his mother and stepfather, Sandra and John Spindler, Tyler, Minn.; sisters, Brianna and Hailey, Tyler; and brothers Jesse, Duluth; and Justin and Jonah, Tyler.

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