

Collision claims life of Clearlake Oaks man

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson
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CLEARLAKE – A head-on collision early Friday afternoon claimed the life of a Clearlake Oaks man and sent two other Oaks residents to the hospital with major injuries.

The California Highway Patrol's Clear Lake office reported that the accident took place along Highway 53 approximately one-half mile south of Highway 20 at 12:52 p.m.

Ronald Neville, 53, of Clearlake Oaks was driving his 1990 Mazda pickup southbound on Highway 53, the CHP reported. Coming from the opposite direction was 63-year-old Carla Sawyer of Clearlake Oaks in a 1993 Dodge minivan. Both drivers were traveling at between 50 and 55 miles per hour.

For an unknown reason, Neville's pickup drifted to the left and into the opposing lane, which was directly in Sawyer's path, the CHP reported.

Sawyer was unable to avoid the collision, and the two vehicles hit head-on in the Highway 53's northbound lane, according to the CHP report.

The CHP incident logs reported that there was "utter chaos" at the scene, with both cars blocking the roadway and emergency personnel on scene to help the three accident victims.

At just after 2 p.m., CHP confirmed that Neville had died of his injuries.

Sawyer and her passenger, 56-year-old Craig Sawyer of Clearlake Oaks, both sustained major injuries. Carla Sawyer suffered a fractured pelvis and a fractured upper arm. Craig Sawyer had a fractured neck, fractured leg, a broken sternum and broken ribs.

One of the injured was flown to Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, but CHP did not specify which.

Highway 53 was completely shut down for about 15 minutes before one lane was reopened, CHP reported. Both lanes once again were clear by 2:16 p.m.

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