

WHAT HAPPENED TO HEATHER?

Family, friends, authorities continue to search for answers

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Brother Jason Bardsley: “Heather would return home if she could”





GRAFTON - Heather Bardsley has not been accounted for since 10:30-11 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 26, and the case continues to completely puzzle investigators, her family and friends.

It is almost as if Heather vanished into thin air, her brother, **Jason Bardsley**, said late last week in Grafton near the site where she was dropped off and last seen.

Jason pointed out that there are video cameras at businesses near where she was dropped off and after that point in the night, she was never seen again on camera or by anyone else. He said he knows Heather well and if she could, she would have already returned home.

The night Heather went missing, she was in downtown Grafton having a few drinks and at about 10:30 to 11 p.m., her next-door neighbors took her from a bar and dropped her off at home.

From what the neighbors told police, they had trouble crossing the creek in front of Heather's home. She got out of the car on the part of the land where there was not rushing water. The couple then finally got the car turned around and headed the other direction. When they looked back, they said they didn't see her but assumed she had gone into her house.

"When they looked back, she was gone," Jason Bardsley said. "She pretty much vanished."

"We are not giving up hope that she comes back alive," Jason Bardsley said late last week. "We are not condemning that she is dead at this point."

Jason urged the public if anyone has any leads, talk or whisper that pertains to this case to call the Grafton Police or any local law enforcement.

"Anything and everything would help," he said.

Her brother has come to the conclusion that one of two things have happened, either the creek swept her away or there was foul play.



Chrissy O'Dell was Heather's boss and co-owner of King Louie's Drive-In in Wood River and friend for 25 years.

One thing that Chrissy says puzzles her is that if Heather was swept away in the stream and taken toward the river, why did they not find some of her food, makeup or anything she might have been carrying in her handbag that she was carrying?

"Heather carries stuff," Chrissy said. "She always had food, cigarettes, makeup, she carried her life with her going here and there. She was constantly on the go. I just felt something, even a pack of cigarettes, had to be laying around the stream area, but nothing has been found."

[SEE "Grafton Continues Search for Missing Woman" VIDEO BELOW:](#)

Since Heather has been reported missing, Chrissy said there has been an outpouring of concern from customers at King Louie's Drive-In in Wood River.

"People from everywhere, Jerseyville, Brighton, Elsah, Wood River, East Alton, Grafton and more have been inquiring about her," Chrissy said. "Heather knows a wide range of people and everybody liked Heather. She had a very outgoing personality. That is why she was a waitress. Some people came just to see her at Louie's Drive-In."

Nancy Sumner saw Heather Bardsley at Senger's in Grafton the night she went missing.

"When I saw her that night, she was fine and happy," Sumner said. "There were a bunch of other girls down here that night. I have been very sad since I learned she is missing."

Chrissy O'Dell said Heather Bardsley had been having some health issues.

"I wonder if she didn't have a stroke," Chrissy said. "She had a mini stroke about a month and a half ago and was hospitalized. She had high blood pressure and I urged her to get some treatment and take her medicine. I told her high blood pressure wasn't something to play around with."



Donnie O'Dell, co-owner of King Louie's Drive-In, said he wanted the public to realize that Heather is a mother, daughter, and sister and he wants to get her face out there because it increases the chances to find her.

"We are grateful for how the Grafton Police Chief has stepped up and for all the people who have helped search for her," he said. "We also appreciate the people coming in with K-9 dogs to search. We want to find Heather and find out what happened to her."

Recently, a woman came into King Louie's Drive-In and donated \$125 to continue to search for Heather.

"Please put this to any search efforts," she said. "I believe in miracles and I believe we are going to find Heather."

Chrissy O'Dell concluded the interviews by saying something she said felt by everyone who knows her: "This is heartbreaking to all her friends and family."

"We just want our Heather back."