

Local teen-ager dies in traffic accident

By **IRWIN M. GOLDBERG**
Dispatch Staff Writer

BARSTOW — Sixteen-year-old Marta Barnes was a captain of Barstow High School's junior varsity volleyball team last year and had been named to the varsity team.

But she won't get a chance to play after a traffic accident ended her life prematurely on Sunday.

Barnes, a Hinkley resident, was on her way to work at Denny's in Lenwood at about 1:40 p.m. when the accident occurred, according to her aunt, Rose Proctor.

A CHP press release said Barnes failed to stop at a stop sign on Pera Road and started to turn left from

westbound Pera to southbound Hinkley Road into the path of a vehicle driven by 54-year-old Johnny Blevins of Hinkley.

Blevins, traveling northbound on Hinkley Road at between 30 and 40 mph, hit his brakes but couldn't stop before striking Barnes' vehicle, the press release said.

Barnes, who was wearing a seat belt, was taken to Barstow Community Hospital and later transferred to Loma Linda University Medical Center where she died later that evening, Proctor said.

A passenger in Blevins' car, Stacey Blevins, 20, of Hinkley, suffered minor injuries. The driver and another passenger weren't injured.

Barnes had only been working at

Denny's for about two weeks, according to co-worker Aimee Smith, 16.

"She was supposed to be here at around 2 p.m. I had a co-worker call the house and she was told that she (Barnes) had already left. Another waitress, her sister-in-law, said she had been in a bad accident," Smith said.

Smith left work to go to the hospital and visit her friend.

"She was really nice ... I swore she was going to make it," Smith said. Close friends agree.

"She was always caring. She would do anything for you to help you out. She was always there for you," said Kevin Upperman, 17.

Best-friend Melissa Lee knew Barnes since third grade.

"We did everything together," Lee said. "She always put everybody else first and made sure everyone else's needs were met before she worried about herself."

Barnes' sister, Gloria, said Barnes helped her mother take care of her four nieces and nephews.

"She was real responsible and did all she could to help out with the kids. She was very mature ... a very loving and giving person."

BHS Volleyball coach Vicki McDaniel called her a "wonderful kid."

"I'm going to miss her so much," McDaniel said.