

NEIGHBORHOODS

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE ■ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1999

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Martha Rial/Post-Gazette

Dress to impress

Volunteer and PNC Senior Vice President Shaheen Dil, right, shows Lene Thompson, left, of Spring Garden suits donated by Sears during PNC's For Women, By Women, a component of the United Way Day of Caring in which professional women volunteered to help other women. Thompson is hoping to be a data entry clerk or receptionist. The project was one of several dozen that kicked off the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's ninth annual Day of Caring, which is also used to announce the agency's general campaign goal: this year's is set at \$38.1 million. More than 140 companies participated in the events that had nearly 6,000 volunteers fanned out across the area helping local nonprofit agencies with painting, landscaping, visiting the elderly and carnivals for children.

Hispanic leaders are determined that the 2000 U.S. Census record the fact that Hispanics are here in significant numbers.

Latinos have growing presence in district

By Diana Nelson Jones
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Before Ken Rodriguez moved to Pittsburgh, he visited twice to oversee construction projects. In 1976, he checked for the name Rodriguez in the phone book and found a few. Again in '82 he checked. The same few.

"By '93," he says, "there were 50. That's an exaggeration, but it's to say there were many."

When the U.S. Census comes to Pittsburgh next year, it may be as surprised as Rodriguez was six years ago, especially if all the Latinos who are here are actually counted.

Yesterday, Rodriguez, a co-founder and head of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Western Pennsylvania, assembled about 30 state officials and local Latinos for a "town meeting" to devise strategies to avoid an undercount in 2000. It was held in the chamber offices, in the former Alcoa Building, Downtown.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that it failed in 1990 to count 5.5 percent of the Latinos who lived in Pennsylvania. A '96 estimate of 292,060 Latinos in the state counted almost 11,000 in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh's Latino population is expected to have grown to about 15,000 by next year's official U.S. Census count.

Just one indication of this projection is the 86 Rodriguezes and Rodriguezes listings in the current phone book.

Aside from the stable, longtime Latino

population that has been counted for several decades and the more transient but expected migrations of Latinos through academia, the Latino population here is beginning to balance out with more vulnerable constituencies — those who are undocumented, unskilled or, because they speak little English and are underemployed, bouncing around in restaurant work and manual labor.

Maritza Robert, executive director of the Governor's Advisory Commission for Latino Affairs, said the commission was committed to a true count and had assigned two staffers to work specifically with migrants. A majority of migrants are legally permitted to work, but the rest are well-represented among the estimated 10 percent of Latinos in Pennsylvania who are illegal.

Census spokesmen yesterday stressed that people who are afraid — because they are illegal, have come from repressive regimes or are new here and don't know the rules — can be assured that all of the information they give a census taker will be confidential. Only their names will be entered in the immediate census record. By giving their names to a census taker, "They can prove they were here," and have a sort of grubstake in their long-term potential to stay, said Robert.

Census information is sealed for 72 years after the count. Title 13 of federal law requires it. A census worker can be fined and jailed for violating it.

"Not even the president of the United

States has access to census information," said Idalia Muñoz Muñoz, a specialist in a new U.S. Census Bureau program to dig deeper into the grass-roots level of communities and population groups that are traditionally hard to enumerate. The bureau also is now looking for bilingual census takers.

Training is scheduled to begin next month, and the census count will begin early next year.

Robert said the goal of the commission regarding the census was to ensure that Latinos are served.

"We pay a high price by not being counted. We lose out on education funds, health services, transportation and elder care," she said. "We cannot fail again not to be counted."

Yearly, \$200 billion in federal money is distributed based purely on head count.

"Latinos have been an invisible people in terms of sharing the wealth," said Muñoz Muñoz, who works in the regional office in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia has a visible Latino presence of an estimated 89,000. That city has community-service agencies geared toward Latino needs and it has population concentrations. This is not true in Pittsburgh, where the population is highly scattered and no Latino community center has been established.

"There is a perception among people that Latinos come here to take advantage of the system," she said. "But people are here to better themselves."

Man questioned in '92 death of Oil City girl

By Jan Ackerman
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

It will be seven years ago next month that 11-year-old Shauna Howe was abducted in Oil City on her way home from a Girl Scout Halloween party.

No one has ever been arrested for Howe's death, but police conducted a new search for clues this week.

On Tuesday, FBI agents and state police searched a house on Reed Street, near the spot where a witness had seen a tall, unkempt man put the little girl in his car and drive off.

The Derrick, Oil City's local newspaper, reported yesterday that the search was part of ongoing efforts to link a former Oil City resident named Michael Kuciewicz to the crime.

The newspaper said Kuciewicz, who had rented the Reed Street house, was apparently part of a federal grand jury probe of the Howe case that was conducted in Pittsburgh.

Kuciewicz, who is serving time in Connecticut on minor drug charges, wrote the newspaper recently to complain that he had been unfairly questioned about Howe's death for the past seven years. The Derrick published portions of the letter yesterday.

"I am not a murderer," Kuciewicz wrote in the letter, underlining the words.

Kuciewicz said Howe's death "has been a misery to me. Misery to the point of seven years worth of questions, blood tests, polygraph tests, and more done to me, because, I'm told, I, being a male with a minor criminal record, am a major suspect."

On Tuesday, members of an evidence collection team, wearing T-shirts that an-

nounced they were FBI agents, spent hours at the home where Kuciewicz used to live, collecting evidence from the basement and a crawl space under the back stairs.

Bill Crowley, spokesman for the FBI in Pittsburgh, refused to confirm anything about the investigation.

Shauna's body was found Oct. 30, 1992, near Coulter's Hole, a picnic and swimming spot eight miles south of Oil City. She apparently fell to her death from a 30-foot railroad trestle.

Her kidnapping had been reported two days earlier by a witness who saw a man abduct the girl at the corner of Reed and West First streets.

The case changed the quiet way of life in Oil City, making parents more fearful for their children's safety.

Police have always believed the kidnaper was from the Oil City area. Kuciewicz said he moved to Oil City from Connecticut in February 1992.

In his letter, Kuciewicz told the newspaper that his questioning had come to a head in July when authorities tried to serve a warrant on him in connection with the case and then accused him of committing the murder.

"Needless to say, I became infuriated, and was thrown in the hole for spitting upon [an FBI agent]," he wrote.

The incident resulted in Kuciewicz being indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of assaulting and threatening one FBI agent and threatening another.

Crowley confirmed that Kuciewicz has been indicted on the assault charges.

COUNTYWIDE

AT&T CABLE

Customers lose cable TV service

A severed fiber line between the South Hills and McKeesport caused cable outages for AT&T Cable Services customers last night.

Dan Garfinkel, regional director of communications said it wasn't clear how many customers were affected by the outages, which happened about 9:30 p.m. However, customers in Penn Hills, McKeesport and

the Mon Valley were experiencing loss of groups of channels, and Greensburg lost its digital channels, he said. Some subscribers in the city of Pittsburgh and the North Hills also were affected.

The line may have been broken by a tree. However, it also may have been snipped by other crews doing work along the line, Garfinkel said.

Crews were to work through the night to identify the location of the break and repair it, he said.

NORTH NEIGHBORHOODS

ERIE

Presque Isle visitors center planned

Presque Isle State Park has unveiled plans for a \$25 million visitors center.

Presque Isle operations manager Harry Leslie said Tuesday that the new center would promote all of northwestern Pennsylvania, rather than just the state park.

He said studies about whether the center should be built are expected to be finished by November.

A major visitors center was part of the master plan for the park created in the 1950s. The park attracts 4 million visitors a year, nearly as many as Yosemite National Park in California.

McKEAN COUNTY

Clinton authorizes flood relief

President Clinton announced emergency federal money yesterday for McKean County for flood cleanup.

Thunderstorms Aug. 20-21 dumped up to 8 inches on the region, causing flash flooding and damaging about 700 homes and more than 50 businesses.

Residents and business owners may apply for disaster housing, grants and low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses.

"For the families and businesses devastated by last month's severe storms, this news cannot come fast enough," said Gov. Ridge, who had asked Clinton to declare the county a disaster area.

U.S. Rep. John Peterson, whose district includes McKean County, urged residents to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency within 60 days in order to qualify for aid.

BELLEVUE

Bridgeville firm gets road contract

Council last night at its meeting awarded a contract for a \$100,000 emergency road project to T.A. Robinson of Bridgeville.

The company will replace and repair storm sewers in a one block area at Jefferson and South Freemont avenues. Robinson bid \$58,000 for Jefferson Avenue and \$36,390 for South Freemont Avenue.

Repaving will be done in asphalt because of the lower cost. The roads are brick.

SENECA VALLEY SCHOOLS

Audit blasts activity fund spending

An audit released by the state auditor general's office yesterday showed that Seneca Valley officials had used student activity funds to supplement the district's budget, paying for such things as lumber, parent handbooks, flowers, science class materials, a paging system, filing cabinets and coffee for the school office.

As a result Auditor General Robert P. Casey Jr. has recommended that the Butler County district improve the way it manages student activity funds.

District officials could not be reached for comment last night.

The audit covers the 1994-1995 school year, the 1995-1996 school year and a review of student fund operations from July 1997 through June 1998.

Among other things, auditors found that clubs and organizations did not include student officers; some kept inactive accounts; and others kept excessive balances in their accounts.

OIL CITY

Man wounded by police

When Oil City police responded to an early morning complaint about a man screaming in a residential neighborhood, they ended up engaging in a shootout that left the man seriously wounded.

Yesterday, Chief Robert Moyer issued a statement saying that the wounding of Theodore M. Woodworth, 35, of East Sixth Street, was justified. In accordance with department policy, Moyer said, Oil City police will conduct an internal investigation, and he has asked the Pennsylvania State Police to process the crime scene and in-

vestigate the shooting.

Moyer said in the statement that police who responded to 22½ E. Sixth St. at 2:05 a.m. yesterday heard Woodworth threatening to shoot someone.

Here's the police version of what happened:

Moyer said officers approached a stairway leading to the entrance to Woodworth's apartment and asked him to come to door. He used profanity and threatened to kill them.

With a rifle in his hands, Woodworth slammed open the door and took aim at two officers as they were ordering him to drop his weapon.

One officer at the bottom of the steps fired at Woodworth, who retreated into the apartment, disappearing behind a refrigerator. Within seconds, he reappeared, aiming his rifle at the officers who returned fire a second and third time.

The suspect fell to the floor. He was taken to the Northwest Medical Center in Franklin, then flown by helicopter to a hospital in Pittsburgh.

Woodworth's condition could not be determined last night.

PINE

Bad-water issue spurs meeting

This evening the board of supervisors will meet with residents of Ardmore, Brookside and Fair Oaks streets who insist their water is no longer drinkable because an Ohio developer has contaminated it. Continental Communities, which began grading a tract of land next to them last winter, however, isn't taking responsibility — not yet, at least. As of last week, Mabon Lichtenfels, the developer's representative, was still testing it.

Monday township employees hand-delivered letters to these 40 residents, inviting them to the meeting set to begin in the municipal building at 7 p.m.

Also invited are Lichtenfels, a Department of Environmental Protection hydrogeologist, state Rep. Jane Orie, R-McCandless, and state Sen. Melissa Hart, R-McCandless.

RICHLAND

Buying senior citizens van OK'd

One resident who often rides the township senior citizen van has offered to contribute \$5,000 to replace it. Two of the van's doors are so rusted that passengers can see the road through the holes.

Township Manager Dean Bastianini assured the board the van is safe for now but added that it probably won't pass another state inspection.

Council agreed to find a replacement for the 12-passenger van next week and authorized spending \$27,000, including the resident's \$5,000 contribution.

SEWICKLEY

Man accused of sex crimes

A man faces a preliminary hearing Tuesday on charges that he improperly touched a 14-year-old boy and showed other boys pornographic pictures.

Robert Roy Hegner, 48, of Sewickley, is accused of trying to show the boy a wrestling move while the two were naked at Hegner's home in May.

Police said Hegner had invited the boy to his house once a week to help him with a weightlifting program.

In the May incident, police said, Hegner had removed the boy's clothes to measure his hips and thighs.

He is charged with indecent assault, indecent exposure, corruption of minors and endangering child welfare in that incident.

Police said Hegner, a firefighter for the Sewickley Fire Department, also has been charged with showing other boys pornographic pictures on a computer before taking them on a water-skiing trip last year.

Hegner is free on bond. He is to appear before District Justice James Russo on Tuesday.

CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

LARIMER

Court upholds gang convictions

A federal appeals court has upheld the racketeering and narcotics convictions of three reputed members of the Larimer Avenue/Wilksburg, or LAW, gang.

Roberto Williams, Kelvin Wallace and Nathaniel Weatherspoon were convicted in a five-week jury trial in 1997 of racketeering, racketeering conspiracy and narcotics offenses involving crack and cocaine.

Williams was sentenced to 20 years in prison; Wallace and Weatherspoon were each sentenced to 14 years.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the convictions, the U.S. attorney's office announced yesterday.

The men were charged in a 160-count indictment. Of the 49 defendants, 45 pleaded guilty to various offenses, and one defendant was tried separately and convicted of narcotics offenses.

HOMEWOOD

Man charged in robbery

A Homewood man was arrested yesterday in connection with a shooting and robbery that happened Aug. 25.

Jermaine Cook, 24, was charged with robbery, conspiracy and reckless endangerment of another person. Cook was released on \$100,000 following his arraignment last night in city night court.

According to police reports at night court, Cook was one of several men who approached Alex Collier, 27, of Cora Street, as he was walking from his car to his house late that evening. Two men pulled out guns, and one fired, hitting Collier and leaving a laceration on his forehead. He was taken to at UPMC Presbyterian.

Pittsburgh police arrested Cook yesterday on Tioga Street in Brushton.

Police have issued warrants for two other men in connection with the robbery. They are Anthony Williams, 24, of Homewood; and Gregory Price, 23, of Homewood.



WITH NEWS FROM THE JOINT PG-KD BUREAUS COVERING BEAVER, BUTLER, FAYETTE, WASHINGTON AND WESTMORELAND COUNTIES