

# Husband says his wife was distraught

Julie Bunn is arraigned on an attempted murder charge in Chester Bunn's shooting.

By Paige Akin Staff writer

Julie Bunn had been "distraught" over problems at work for several weeks before she shot her husband, Chester P. Bunn Jr., three times Monday in their Van Buren home with a 20-gauge shotgun, he told investigators in a voluntary statement.

"My wife was not upset with anyone in particular," Chester Bunn told Onondaga County Sheriff's investigators. "However, she had made mention that she was upset with just about everyone at work."

Chester Bunn said his wife had been receiving counseling for work-related problems. A nationwide alert for Julie Bunn was issued by the sheriff's department on Monday after she shot Chester Bunn, 37, and then fled in her car, deputies said.

Julie Bunn, 38, was arrested shortly before 9 a.m. Tuesday after she returned to their home at 143 Blanchard Blvd. and started loading boxes of possessions into her car, Deputy John D'Eredita said.

Deputies secured the area after neighbors called to notify them. Julie Bunn was arrested without incident, D'Eredita said. Robert Greeley, a neighbor, said he saw Julie Bunn packing her car at the same time as another neighbor noticed her. Both called police.

Julie Bunn was arraigned late Tuesday morning on one count each of second-degree attempted murder and fourth-degree criminal use of a firearm, both felonies. Van Buren town Justice Mary Lessaongang remanded Bunn to the Onondaga

County Justice Center jail in lieu of \$25,000 cash or \$50,000 bond.

Chester Bunn told deputies he woke up shortly after 5 a.m. on a basement couch and found his wife standing over him with the gun in her hand.

"My wife never said anything to me before she shot me," Chester Bunn said in his statement.

Chester Bunn was hit with a bullet in his left knee, left thigh and his face near his right eye, while a fourth shot missed, investigators said.

"I can no longer see out of my right eye, and I have no control of my left leg," Bunn said in his statement, taken at University Hospital late Monday morning.

Bunn was in fair condition at the hospital Tuesday night.

Deputies recovered the shotgun in the house. They're not sure where Julie Bunn spent Monday night.

Bleeding from the wounds to his thigh and knee, Chester Bunn crawled to Greeley's home. Sheriff Kevin Walsh said his department had not been called previously to the Bunn's home for any domestic problems.

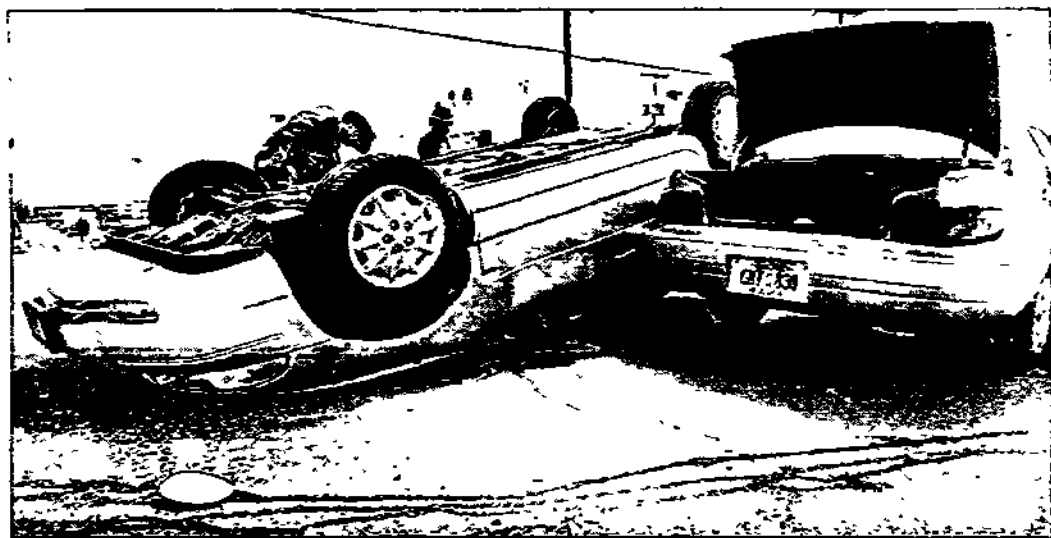
They were together for Easter dinner at his parents' house in Saratoga County, Walsh said. When they came home, Chester Bunn said he felt his wife was acting strangely. He went to sleep on the couch in the basement and she went to sleep upstairs.

"Just before my wife shot me, I had heard her walking around upstairs," Bunn said.

Then, he said, he woke up and she was at the end of the couch with the gun.

The Bunn's moved to Van Buren from California just before 1990. Greeley said he and the Bunn's were close neighbors, and they used to sit on his porch in nice weather.

Staff writer Jerry Rosen contributed to this article.



**UPENDED:** State Troopers Jack Keller (left) and Paul Carney investigate an accident Tuesday at Teall Avenue and Grant Boulevard in Syracuse. "It was just like out of the movies," Carney said. "Unbelievable. I wish I'd seen it." Witnesses said the car at left, a silver 2000 Chrysler Cirrus, came upon traffic at the intersection and swerved to avoid hitting the waiting vehicles. The Cirrus' tires caught the high curbing and the car flipped into the air, over and around a pickup truck. The Cirrus landed on its roof, crashing into a Toyota Camry, which struck another car in front of it. Surprisingly, Carney said, the only injury reported was a small cut to the wrist of the driver of the Cirrus.

# City gunplay a replay

Resident says Tuesday shots echo of 1992.

By Mike McAndrew Staff writer

When the bullets started flying Tuesday near her home, Crystal Lucas couldn't help but recall her family's close call eight years ago, and she wonders when the craziness gripping Syracuse is going to end.

Tuesday, about 7:15 p.m., a group of youths standing outside Brotherly Love Market exchanged about eight shots with the occupant of a sports utility vehicle in the 900 block of Midland Avenue, city police and witnesses said.

Police knew of no one injured by the gunfire, and had no suspects in custody, Sgt. David Pauldine said.

"This has just got way out of hand," said Lucas, who was in her family's 918 Midland Ave. home, across the street from the corner store, when the shots rang out.

In April 1992, three shots hit Lucas' house. One shot, a .45-caliber slug, wound up lodged in the mattress of her 8-year-old daughter's bed. Three men armed with semiautomatic weapons had fired 31 shots outside, killing Tory Reddish, 18, and wounding another man.

Crystal and Larry Lucas' three daughters were at home coloring Easter eggs with a

baby sitter when the carnage started outside.

"That was the most frightening thing," Lucas recalled.

Lucas said she knows why there have been four men shot to death and two others seriously injured by gunfire this month in Syracuse.

"It's gangs. They're here," said Lucas, as she stood on her front porch, watching seven police officers search for evidence. Across the street, Hage Hussein, 23, stood in the doorway of his father's store.

"It was one after another," Hussein said of the shots fired. "Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. Then they scattered."

"The past two or three years, it's been all gangs around here," he complained.

# County would make up difference

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Clay Supervisor Patrick DiDomenico; the villages, North Syracuse Mayor James Hotchkiss; and school districts, North Syracuse Superintendent Pat Carbone.

"The risk is where it should be, with the county, the entity best equipped to absorb a loss," said Dale Sweetland, R-Fabius, who drafted the plan with fellow commission members Bernard Kraft, R-Bayberry, and Martha Mulroy, R-Onondaga, as well as Legislative Chairman William Sanford, R-Salina.

Syracuse Director of Operations Joseph Nicoletti, the city's representative on the panel, said he reluctantly voted against the plan.

"It has a lot of things we

like," Nicoletti said. "It gives us an increase every year and guarantees it. We want just a few changes."

Nicoletti put forward an amendment that would take the "signing bonuses" given to the towns, villages and school districts and give it to the city. The amendment was defeated 8-1.

Joining Nicoletti in voting against the plan were Legislator Sidney Oglesby, D-Syracuse, and Edward Kochian, the Republican deputy county executive. Both said the guarantees put the county at great risk.

With guarantees in place, the county would face a double whammy if sales tax failed to grow at 2 percent. Not only would the county get less, but it would have to make up the difference to everyone else. Sales tax failed to grow at 2 percent in

four of the last nine years, although it averaged about 2.9 percent growth during that time and all the commission members agreed that 2 percent was a conservative estimate.

Nonetheless, Oglesby and Kochian said that if the county guaranteed the municipalities money from a revenue stream the county can't control, investors and bond-rating agencies might rethink the county's fiscal health and perhaps even downgrade the county's credit rating.

They also said the guarantees ignore growing Internet purchases, which are tax-exempt, and a host of potential county problems, from the health of its trash agency to increased Medicaid costs to the uncertainty of future tobacco settlement payments.



A SHERIFF'S DEPUTY leads Julie Bunn from Van Buren Town Court Tuesday after her arraignment on attempted murder charges in the shooting Monday of her husband, Chester Bunn.

# Woman drowns in Oneida Lake

Police say she apparently struck her head when she fell from a slippery dock.

By Larry Richardson Staff writer

Christine Lenz died early Tuesday doing what she loved — feeding the ducks along the south shore of Oneida Lake at her summer home.

Lenz, 50, apparently slipped on a narrow, slippery dock about 4 a.m., hit her head and drowned in 2 feet of water, state police said. Her husband, James, found her shortly after the accident and tried to pull her from the lake before calling 911.

Their permanent home is on Fox Road in Factoryville, Pa., northwest of Scranton, but the couple spent much of their time at their summer home at 2453 Wilson Point Road in Lakeport, in the town of Sullivan.

Lenz was found face down in the water, said Trooper James Simpson, public information officer for Troop D in Oneida.

"The dock was still slippery when state police arrived, and the preliminary investigation suggests that was the cause. At this point the death is not suspicious," he said. Dr. Mary Jumbelic, Onondaga County chief medical examiner,

said Tuesday her office will perform an autopsy, the results of which are expected today.

Simpson said the state police investigation is continuing, pending the results of the autopsy.

"The visible abrasions to the knees and skull are consistent with a fall," Simpson said. "This happened in pre-dawn hours. It was dark."

The trooper said the Lenzes had an early morning appointment in Pennsylvania and were packing the car to leave. "The last thing she would do before she left camp was to feed bread to the ducks and squirrels," Simpson said.

Rescue personnel from Rural/Metro and the Bridgeport Fire Department tried to revive Lenz. She was taken to Oneida Healthcare Center, where she died at 10:28 a.m., said Cindy Sanborn, the nursing supervisor.

Jim Lawler, who lives a few houses away on Wilson Point Road, said Jim and Christine Lenz bought their home in Lakeport about five years ago.

"During the summer they're here most of the time," he said, staring east toward the white house. "In the winter they come up about every weekend."

His wife, Kathy Lawler, said the Lenzes were planning to convert the home here to a year-round residence so they could spend more time in it.

# City dumps old way of handling roadside trash

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the ramp, built around a sign reading, "Welcome to Downtown Rochester."

"This is very important," Arieno said. "It's a lot like the first time you meet someone. What's your lasting impression? A city is the same way. The secret isn't in planting it. The secret is in maintaining it and keeping it up."

Maybe one garden doesn't seem like a big deal. Then again, take a ride down the expressway ramps into downtown Syracuse, and contemplate what visitors might think as they drive in. The West Street ramps are tattered, filthy, overgrown. The Genesee Street ramp from Interstate 690 — the ramp that offers thousands their first view of our downtown — is littered and derelict.

Now, consider a recent Syracuse Newspapers series on the great exodus of the 1990s, when tens of thousands of people left our town for someplace else. In a survey, many of those who moved away said Syracuse, visually, was dirty and depressing — a situation they felt was only getting worse.

"That's the way it was here 15 years ago," said Paul Noto, Rochester's manager of operations.

Yes, Syracuse is in a tough fiscal spot. Yes, the litter problem is too big for any one agency. But Rochester is in a similar bind. Kodak and Xerox have lopped off thousands of good jobs. The Monroe County economy has taken some tough hits, and Rochester officials — just like ours — are hunting for more state aid.

Somehow Rochester's main entranceways, if anything, are only getting cleaner.

That happens because of municipal humility. That happens because officials from many agencies sit at a table and agree to bail each other out. A decade

ago, the Plymouth Avenue exit was a "gray area," Noto said. Rochester didn't really take care of it, and the state didn't really take care of it, and no one really talked about who should be doing it. So the grass grew high, and the garbage piled up.

That changed when the Greater Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce began its "I-490 Beautification Project." Cathy Mahar, a chamber vice president, is the coordinator. She is funny, raucous and efficient, and she won the respect of tough guys from Public Works. She estimates that 25 percent of her time, from April through October, is spent linking all the public cleanup efforts.

At first, Mahar said, each agency focused on its own obligations. "But this town had a problem that went beyond any one jurisdiction," she said. "We sit down now and work out the problems. And it works, because everyone at the table knows each other."

Every spring, officials from Rochester, Monroe County, the state Department of Transportation and the chamber gather for a meeting. They are joined by private landscapers, hired with public and private money to beautify the expressways. They also consult managers from "Monroe County in Bloom," a program in which volunteers plant highly visible public gardens.

"You sit there and listen, and you can tell how proud they are of what they've accomplished," Mahar said.

They don't make excuses. They don't shrug, wring their hands and blame the citizens. They respond to litter in the same way they respond to snow. It comes with the season, and they clean it up. Mahar hands out a schedule that runs into the fall. The landscapers mow the islands and shoulders of the expressway at least once a month. Every spring, the state DOT chooses one Sunday in April for

closing the downtown expressways. Rochester city crews fan out on that day, picking up roadside trash from the winter. The county, city and state compromise on such "gray areas" as exit ramps, making sure that someone is responsible. Volunteer gardens are planted at visual trouble spots. The sheriff's department provides prisoners for cleanup crews into the fall.

Deputies, with the direct support of the sheriff, crack down on trash haulers whose trucks are spilling garbage. Deputy Terry Roe, who coordinates the jailhouse cleanup crews, sometimes knocks on the doors of businesses along main highways. If the property is a mess, Roe politely asks the owner to clean up. If it doesn't happen, Roe comes back and threatens legal action.

From all that, John Arieno got the chance to plant his garden. Maybe, amid daunting urban challenges, one pretty exit ramp is not such a big deal. But Arieno remembers how motorists honked their horns and stuck their thumbs up on the day he built the garden. Eight years later, those flowers are as beautiful as ever, the welcome mat for many first-time visitors to Rochester.

"It's very important," Arieno contends. "When a city is clean, it shows that someone cares about it."

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# Overtime reasonable, officials say

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reviewed Bernardi's proposed 2000-2001 public works budget Tuesday at a finance committee meeting. Several members suggested that the merged crews be separated.

"It was a dumb idea when the mayor proposed it, and it's clearly proven to be a dumb idea now," said Council Majority Leader Kate O'Connell, who voted against the plan in 1995. "Because of the way things are currently done, no one is minding the store. ... Our overtime and temporary service costs are out of control."

This year, the city set aside \$451,344 to cover overtime and temporary help in the DPW's building services division. The division is responsible for the repair and maintenance of all city buildings and park structures.

City budget projections, however, show the division this fiscal year is likely to spend \$805,735 — nearly 80 percent more than expected — for work that its 30-person, full-time staff couldn't get to during a regular workday.

Bernardi has proposed spending \$732,978 on overtime and temporary workers for the division for the 2000/2001 budget year — a 62 percent increase.

City officials say the overtime is reasonable, and has not been caused by the two-headed oversight of the parks maintenance crews.

"All this work is work that needed to be done," Public Works Commissioner Tony Iacqua told councilors Tuesday. "We looked at it all carefully, and decided the budget was just too low."

Councilors Tuesday said a more efficient way to handle the problem might be to add people to the payroll instead of paying time and a half.

"The goal should always be to adjust your staff to get the overtime figures down to zero," Mahaney said.

In some cases, such as when many jobs requiring different skills need to be done, paying overtime can be more cost-effective than adding full-time staff who are eligible for benefits, City Operations Director Joe Nicoletti said.

Nicoletti acknowledged the two-headed oversight of parks maintenance crews is inefficient, but said this has little to do with rising overtime costs. He said it has more to do with the number of special events the city runs and the need to respond flexibly to park vandalism.

Although overtime costs are watched carefully, Iacqua acknowledged Tuesday that keeping those costs in line is not his main goal.

"We monitor it on a monthly basis, but my primary mission is to get the job done," he said.

The 1995 consolidation moved the park's maintenance workers and skilled laborers into the DPW, in hopes of saving hundreds of thousands of dollars by sharing a garage, vehicles and personnel.

Because the parks department's maintenance crew had been repeatedly cut for years, city officials figured the merger would augment the dwindling parks labor force with DPW workers, Nicoletti said.

Despite councilors' impressions, that is exactly what has happened, he said.

Iacqua told councilors Tuesday the reorganization has indeed resulted in some efficiencies, mainly in the use of city vehicles.

He and Nicoletti agreed, however, that the current structure ggested by councilors Tuesday.

The city, he said, plans to give sole control of the maintenance crews to Iacqua, the public works commissioner. The parks department would then be completely out of the maintenance business and would focus primarily on recreational programs.

"People have got to get used to the fact that we need to run more and more like a business," Nicoletti said. The department heads aren't going to like it, but we are going to make the system more efficient."

## The Dirty Dozen

What's the dirtiest spot in the city? Call NewsLine at 472-2111. When prompted, enter category 2345 and describe your nomination for the Dirty Dozen. Please leave your name and phone number so we can contact you. We'll list the dirtiest sites Sunday.