

Time has run out on late tax filers

By Gary Gerew
Staff Writer

Now that the grace period has expired, taxpayers who still haven't filed 1986 returns are again turning to man's best friend as a friend in need.

"You can't believe the number of people who tell us the reason they haven't filed is because the dog ate their returns," said Paul Rickard of the state Department of Taxation and Finance. "It's also incredible how many people report having their homes robbed and their tax records stolen."

"I don't know what the market value is for that sort of thing, but it must be something," he said. "All I can picture are these guys sitting in a back room somewhere after a robbery saying, 'Oh boy! Tax records!'"

Hungry dogs and peculiar burglars aside, both state and federal tax officials say their offices have been flooded with tax returns this week after the four-month extension offered those who didn't file by April 15 expired.

AN ESTIMATED 400,000 New York taxpayers filed for automatic extensions in April. That was about 40,000 more than last year.

Procrastination is usually the real reason for the delayed filings since waiting doesn't save taxpayers money, said Michael Basile, a spokesman for the Internal Revenue Service in Buffalo.

Those who believe they will owe money must pay 90 percent of their estimated tax by April 15 and make adjustments afterward, said Basile and Rickard.

"But there are just as many people who will get refunds that ask for extensions," Basile said.

Rickard said changes in the federal tax law for 1987 returns may have caused some delay in 1986 filings as people got rid of investments that won't be worthwhile for future tax purposes.

"A number of people were selling things off at the end of the year and didn't get the paperwork back that quickly," Rickard said. "That would be a legitimate reason for an extension."



Fair exhibitors arrive from 'sister' Siracusa

By Connie Bramstedt
Staff Writer

A delegation from Siracusa, Italy, was to arrive today to set up the first sister-city exhibit ever at the State Fair.

Five people who will sell wares, demonstrate crafts and distribute information about Syracuse's first international sister are part of a group of 30 who will attend the Fair at a cost of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to the city of Siracusa, said Betty Jane Boudreau, president of the Syracuse Sister Cities program.

It is one of their ways of displaying how eager they are to cement their relations with Syracuse.

use," Boudreau said. The two cities established their sister-city relationship in 1984.

The Mayor of Siracusa, Fousto Spagna, will lead a delegation of 25 officials to Syracuse on Tuesday, she said.

The group has built a booth, designed by Italian architects, that will be airlifted to Syracuse next week, Boudreau said.

"They wanted to have something made in Siracusa to their own specifications so that it would be particularly special," she said.

The Siracusans will be displaying ceramics, Venetian glassware, pottery, Siracusan candy and 19th century landscapes of Sicily and famous landmarks.

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DA denies he knew of memo by staffer Directive urged sale of tickets

By Jim O'Hara
Staff Writer

A veteran investigator with the District Attorney's office recently issued an inter-office memo to all assistant prosecutors and investigators directing them to sell a minimum of \$120 worth of tickets to an upcoming fund-raising luncheon.

District Attorney Richard A. Hennessy Jr., though, denied through an office spokesman Thursday any advance knowledge of the ticket-selling directive.

Hennessy was attending law enforcement conferences in New York City Wednesday and Thursday and could not be reached for comment. But he issued a written statement through his office late Thursday.

"I had no knowledge of the distribution of this memo nor was the individual who wrote the memo authorized to do so," Hennessy's statement said.

The memo, dated Aug. 6 and addressed from investigator John Menchella to "all ADAs and investigators," addresses the sale of tickets for the 20th annual District Attorney's Advisory Council luncheon, scheduled for Sept. 22 at the Hotels at Syracuse Square.

The DAAC is a bipartisan organization of business, education, government and law enforcement officials from the community. The council shares concerns about the criminal justice system with the District Attorney's office and works toward fostering a better public understanding of the system.

It is not directly associated with the prosecutor's office although two members of Hennessy's staff are members of the DAAC.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Larry Vozzo said Thursday the DAAC annual luncheon is designed not to honor Hennessy or his office but to recognize a crime victim and the strides made during the year.

The Menchella memo, however, clearly makes this year's luncheon sound like a tribute to Hennessy, who is running for re-election in November.

"We would like to request the full cooperation support from every ADA and investigator in making this luncheon a successful tribute to the Honorable Richard A. Hennessy Jr., District Attorney of Onondaga County," the memo reads. "It is only once a year that

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Rescue workers work to save a boy Thursday at Sylvan Beach.

Windsurfer saves one boy, but his brother drowns

By Mark Hartz
Staff Writer

A Syracuse boy drowned in Oneida Lake Thursday, but his brother was saved by a Utica man who jumped from his sailboard and immediately began to revive him.

State police said the two boys, Eric Lichunsky, 7, of 138 Burns Ave., and his 8-year-old brother, Brian, were swimming in choppy water between 100 and 200 yards from the shore of Sylvan Beach when the two began to have trouble.

The boys' aunt, Mary Jo DeSocio, had been watching the boys and ran into the water yelling for help when she realized they had disappeared beneath the water about 3 p.m.

Troopers said the boys' mother, Joan Lichunsky, also was present.

John C. Rich, 31, of Sunset Avenue, Utica, told troopers he was on his sailboard when DeSocio began yelling and he immediately jumped into the water to help the boys.

"I saw what I thought was the mother screaming and waving," Rich said. "I went out and saw the boy, jumped in, gave him mouth-to-mouth and gave him back to the woman (DeSocio) on shore. Then I went back to find the other boy."

However, Rich and others weren't able to find the younger boy.

Sgt. Robert Marquart said Oneida Lake was too rough Thursday to launch the state police boat for the search, so about 50 volunteers clasped their hands to form a human chain and spread across the water feeling for the missing boy.

A state police helicopter and one from

the Oswego County Sheriff's Department also helped in the search as did state police divers.

Eric was found about 4:40 p.m. in shallow water about 100 yards north of where the two boys last were seen, troopers said.

Nicholas Harmatuk, a state trooper stationed at Sylvan Beach, jumped from a helicopter hovering about 5 feet above the water to take the boy and ran him onto the beach where rescue workers tried to revive him.

Paramedics and troopers flew the boy to Syracuse about 10 minutes later.

Eric Lichunsky was pronounced dead at 5:27 p.m., a University Hospital spokeswoman said.

Brian Lichunsky was treated at Oneida City Hospital and released.



People joined hands and formed a human chain to comb the choppy waters of Oneida Lake in search of a missing Syracuse boy.

Herald-Journal photos by Mark Hartz

New-clinic plan would aid medically poor on the North Side

By Henry Davis
Staff Writer

The Syracuse Community Health Center is one step away from bringing health care to the roughly 10,000 medically indigent residents on the city's North Side.

The Central New York Health Systems Agency (CNYHSA) approved a plan Thursday that would allow the Syracuse center to build an "extension clinic" on the North Side, where there is only one family practitioner per 6,322 residents.

"We are filled to capacity at the

Syracuse center, and there are a large number of people in the north side-Eastwood area who are not cared for. They go to the hospital emergency room for a crisis, but they are not involved in preventative care," Dr. Ruben P. Cowart, executive director of the center, said Thursday.

THE STATE Office of Health Systems Management must give final approval to the extension clinic proposal. That's expected to take about six months, Cowart said.

The Syracuse Community

Health Center, which opened in 1978, is a family oriented ambulatory-care clinic for Syracuse and Onondaga County residents who can't afford regular health care. It offers a comprehensive line of medical services, such as internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, dentistry and counseling.

The extension clinic will provide the same services.

Plans call for the Syracuse center to build the clinic at 129 Grant Blvd. at a cost of \$576,726, almost half of which would be paid for by

a state grant.

Initially, a full-time physician and full-time dentist will staff the new clinic. Additional physicians will be hired as demand for the services grow.

It's estimated the clinic in its first year will handle 3,200 general medical service visits and 2,400 dental visits.

"Currently, we are leaning toward constructing a new building, but we may also renovate and lease space. The problem is that we have been unable to find an existing building that is large enough

and close enough for the people it will serve," Cowart said.

ABOUT 4,000 square feet of space is needed for the satellite building.

Renovation could cost less, but Cowart said it's important that the building be conveniently located on bus routes near or within walking distance to the patients' homes.

The Syracuse Community Health Center serves about 2,000 of the city's 20,159 medically indigent residents, more than half of whom live on the north side.

Prison guard who suffered a heart attack wants a break from the state

Victor Campione is a state employee on leave from his job. He contacted me last week about the column I wrote on Walter Sher, another state employee on leave from his job.

Walter worked nearly five years as a counselor at McCormick Center, a state camp for troubled youth near Ithaca. Top salary for the job is \$27,000. Before that he served 20 years for killing a Long Island jeweler in a stickup. He once was on death row.

The column had to do with Walter being busted recently on a felony drug charge. That led to his suspension. It was mentioned that having a \$27,000-a-year state job had nothing to do with the fact Gov. Mario Cuomo once represented Walter "pro bono" in an appeal of his murder conviction.

Victor, who lives in Cato and grew up in Syracuse, used to be a corrections officer at Auburn Correctional Facility. He was 37 and had been on the job about two years in June 1986 when he was stricken with a heart attack while on duty in Auburn's D block. This took place

as Victor was attempting to help an inmate who was having a seizure.

He hasn't worked since. The job paid \$23,600. Victor's leave gives him \$133 a week in workers' compensation when the checks arrive on time, which they sometimes don't. Victor has a wife who works and a daughter. His efforts to convince the state to find him a job of equal pay with less stress have gone nowhere, so far.

One of the points Victor said he wanted to make to me was the observation, growing out of personal experience, that the state treats its inmates better than it does the men and women it hires to keep the peace in the prison system. This, according to him, is part of "the best-kept secret in the state, how corrections officers are treated. We get no respect."

Victor said working behind the walls of a high-security facility like Auburn is "the reverse of the 'Wizard of Oz' in the movie, the film goes from black and white to color when it moves from Kansas to Oz. Behind the walls, you go from Oz back to Kansas. Color to black and



Dick Case

white."

He said his main gripe with the way his own case was handled is that the state doesn't recognize that the pressures of the corrections officer's job could bring on a heart attack.

"If I had had my heart attack in Connecticut, I would have a 100 percent disability. In New York, they turn their backs on you."

Victor can't understand why the state gives so much to the inmates and so little to their keepers. He talks about the free medical, legal and educational benefits provided to the felons he "corrected" at Auburn. The movies, the conjugal visits, the dental plan, the law library, the cable TV, the canned squid on sale at the commissary



Victor Campione

"When I got sick I had to do everything myself," Victor explained. "I was helping get the inmate on to a stretcher when I felt the first chest pains. I had to walk to the nurse's office down several corridors and through gates to the second floor. Then back down again two flights of stairs and wait for a driver to take me to the hospital in a state station wagon with no emergency equipment."

"If an inmate had the same symptoms, he would be taken by stretcher to a waiting ambulance. I'm a corrections officer, I had to walk."

Victor had passed a physical and had no heart history prior to the attack. He spent 10 days in the hospital and rehabilitation time at St. Camillus after that. His doctors told him he would not be able to go back to work as a corrections officer. Maybe if there were a less stressful position — say as a tower guard — but the safest thing would be to look for another line of work.

"All of my training is in law enforcement," he explained. "That's where I want to work. Before I went into correc-

tions, I was a street cop, in Clay. That's less stressful than behind the walls. I want to go back to work, and I certainly can't get by forever on \$133 a week."

"I've followed all the procedures I was told to follow, but I can't seem to get any help. I had to fight all the way. Originally, they gave me \$53 a week. Sen. Tarky Lombardi helped me get an increase. Now I'm up against a wall. The rehabilitation people said my income isn't low enough to retrain me. If I had connections, I know someone would find a job for me. I have no connections."

Victor's main challenge here is that he lacks seniority to bid on a corrections job with less pressure. Such as a tower guard or a campus security position.

"I can't believe the state of New York doesn't have a place for me at a salary close to what I made and in this part of the state. All I want is a start at building my way back."

Victor would settle for the same sort of break given to Walter Sher, as a matter of fact.