

Woman Found Beaten in San Fernando

A woman who was nearly beaten to death was found in the City of San Fernando early Saturday morning.

By FRANCISCO CASTRO
Sun Staff Reporter

Norma Sanchez, a 50-year-old woman, was found lying on a grassy area next to the parking lot of The Library Plaza in the City of San Fernando, blocks away from her business, Vanessa's Beauty Salon.

San Fernando Police Department Det. Anthony Vairo said Jose Sanchez, the woman's husband, was arrested Saturday night in San Diego County. However, San Fernando Police Chief Anthony Alba said Tuesday the husband had been released due to insufficient evidence. "We haven't been able to gather sufficient evidence to file a criminal complaint," said Alba. Alba said they don't have any additional suspects and will continue investigating the case.

Mario Amaya, who assisted Sanchez before paramedics arrived, said a woman came screaming into the Morning Star store where he works at around 9:30 a.m. asking to use the phone.

Initially, he refused, but then the woman pointed to a body lying on the ground across the street from his workplace. It was then that he saw her. A native of Honduras, who worked for the Red Cross for nearly five years, Amaya put on gloves and rushed out to try to help the woman. What he found shocked him.

"She was so beaten up. She had a hole in the back of her head," he said. "The skin of her face was open. I saw her stomach and it was as if somebody had thrown red dye on her. It was all bruised," said Amaya. He said blood covering her face was dry and dark in color, which according to the training he received in the Honduras Red Cross led him to believe the assault could have happened hours before.

Sanchez was transported to an area hospital in critical condition. She is reported to have suffered severe head trauma with a lacerated liver. Her condition at the time of publication was reported as stable.

San Fernando Police said in a news release that Sanchez appeared to have been assaulted and left inside of her van in the parking lot. Police speculate that she worked herself out of her vehicle and fell onto the ground, next to her car, where she was later found.

Norma Sanchez is a resident of Granada Hills.

No Safe Place: Violence Against Women

According to the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds in the U.S.



Linda Chavez is the Program Director for WAVE

Many of these cases are linked to domestic violence, said Linda Chavez, program director for Women Advancing the Valley through Education, Economics and Empowerment (WAVE).

Chavez said domestic violence is not tied to any one age, race or socioeconomic group. It happens in middle school with teens and pre-teens starting relationships and it can also happen in couples who are in their 70s.

WAVE opened a transitional shelter for abused women and families in 1997, where they provide individual and group therapy for their clients, life skill classes, legal, and housing assistance. The shelter, located in the northeast San Fernando Valley, has capacity for 38 fam-

ily leave an average of 7 to 8 times before she's really able to leave. But every time she leaves, she gets a little stronger and stronger. It's rare that they leave on the first time," said Chavez.

And contrary to what you may think, running away doesn't always help, said Chavez, "because they're generally right behind them." "The best way to escape is to make contact with an agency that can help them develop an escape plan that may or may not include going to a shelter." In some instances, Chavez said women have traveled across the country just to feel safe. "It's difficult. We're asking them to change their entire lives just so they can feel safe. It's not easy."

If you, or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, call (818) 838-9283, a 24-hour hotline where callers can get help in six languages (English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese).

ilies at a time and specializes in large families with up to six children. Women and their kids can stay at the shelter for up to 18 months. "It gives them enough time to get back on their feet," said Chavez. "While they're there they use the time to go to school and learn a trade or a career that helps them support their children. We've had women leave the shelter as paralegals and nurses, we've had a lot of success stories."

But while many women are able to escape the abuse, others aren't. "A woman would gener-

Local Surgeons Perform New Technique For Sleep Apnea

■NORTHRIDGE: Two surgeons are the only physicians in Los Angeles County to perform a new technique that treats the breathing disorder sleep apnea, which affects about 40 million people in the country. Patients who have undergone the procedure say they have been cured.

By IRMA LEMUS
Sun Staff Reporter

Richard Gutierrez, a Winnetka resident, said a new multilevel upper airway reconstructive surgery saved his life. Gutierrez, who suffered of sleep apnea for about five years, said he didn't know he had the condition until he went on vacation to the mountains and he began to panic

because he could not breathe.

"I didn't know I had sleep apnea, but the snoring was a problem for years. The tiredness was always there and falling asleep behind the wheel was always there, but I just thought it was because I wasn't resting properly. What really affected me was when I went to Big Bear, in the high altitude, and I couldn't breathe. At night I couldn't get

any air and I was looking for the vents to try to get air. It was a horrible feeling, I felt like I was running out of oxygen," said Gutierrez. He said that after returning from his vacation he went to see his doctor and was diagnosed with sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a medical condition in which breathing stops for a short period of time. This condition usually occurs at night and patients suddenly wake feeling that they are choking.

Gutierrez said that as part of his diagnosis he underwent a sleep study. He was surprised to learn that his condition was not only very serious, but if not treated he

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Serving in the Military

Dedrick J. Lenox

Marine Corps Cpl. Dedrick J. Lenox, a 1999 graduate of Granada Hills High School, recently completed a two-week bilateral training exercise with Albanian military forces while assigned to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), based in Camp Lejeune, N.C. The unit is currently aboard the USS Iwo Jima.

Lenox is one of more than 4,000 Pacific Fleet sailors and marines who are deployed aboard the ships of the USS Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group. Drawing upon lessons learned in recent operation in Mosul, Iraq, Lenox's unit sought to create a training exercise that included every element of the MEU with specific emphasis on combat service support of secure convoy procedures.

Lenox's unit is an expeditionary intervention force with the ability to rapidly organize for combat operations in virtually any environment. MEUs are composed of more than 2,000 personnel and are divided into an infantry battalion, aircraft squadron, support group and command element. With this combination, Lenox's unit supplies and sustains itself for either quick mission and accomplishment or clearing the way for follow-on forces.

Karla Y. Duarte

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Karla Y. Duarte, a 1999 Chatsworth High School graduate, recently made port visits to Townsville, Australia and the Republic of Seychelles, Africa while on a six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf while assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa, homeported in San Diego.

Duarte is one of more than 4,000 Pacific Fleet sailors and marines aboard the ships of the Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group. Prior to the port visits, she was part of a coalition amphibious force that participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sailors and marines aboard Duarte's ship had the opportunity to sightsee and enjoy the local culture.

She is the daughter of Maria Delayo of Sylmar. Duarte joined the Navy in November 1999.

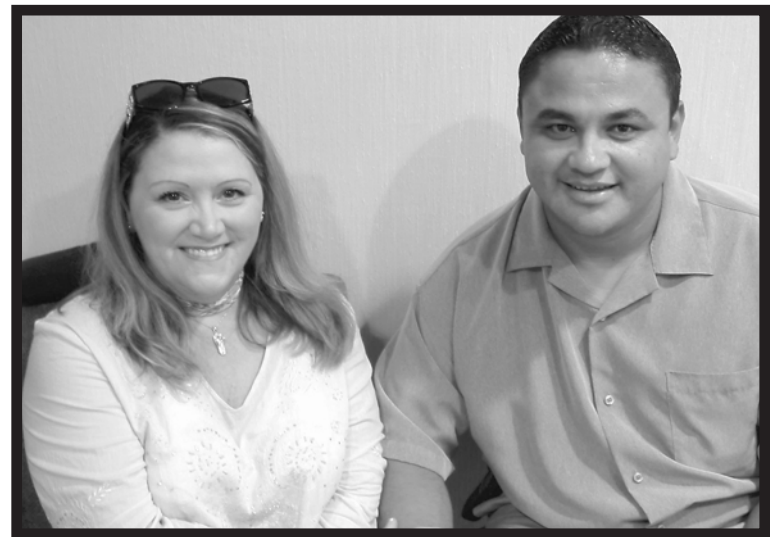
Sleep Apnea

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could die in his sleep. After trying several treatments—including the Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), a machine that helps people breathe during sleep and is used with a mask that goes on the face or the nose—Gutierrez decided to try the new surgery.

Dr. Marc Kerner, a Northridge facial plastic surgeon and an ear and throat specialist, and Dr. Robert Hale, an oral surgeon, are the only two doctors in L.A. County who perform the new technique. The new surgery, a multilevel upper airway reconstructive procedure, brings the tongue muscle forward by going through the lower jaw to advance the tongue muscle. An earlier technique developed in the early 1980s, which restricted the soft pallet, was not successful in treating sleep apnea because it did not restructure the tongue, opening the airway, said Kerner.

"When we breathe, especially at night, our physiology changes and as we take a breath the tissues in the upper airway can collapse. What happens with patients who have severe sleep apnea is that all the tissues above the vocal chord can collapse—including the nose, the soft pallet and the back of the tongue. No oxygen gets into the lung and patients wake up feeling like they are choking. Some patients will stop breathing for a minute. If you can imagine this is like being underwater for a minute," said Kerner. He added that people who suffer from sleep apnea never get a full night's rest. The lack of rest lead to patients suffering from fatigue, restlessness and some have even fallen asleep while driving—becoming



Gail Bunya-Ananta and Richard Gutierrez both suffered from sleep apnea. Bunya-Ananta underwent the new surgery on June 30 and Gutierrez had the surgery last October. Gutierrez said that the surgery has cured his sleep apnea and saved his life.

a danger to themselves and others.

"This is a serious condition that could lead to death. People with sleep apnea have a seven fold increased risk of getting into car accidents. This condition can also lead to high blood pressure and stroke. There are many complications involved with this condition," said Kerner, "This surgery gives patients an opportunity to lead normal and healthy lives."

Kerner said that the surgery has been performed on more than 100 patients. Follow up examinations of the patients has proven that patients with sleep apnea have been cured.

Gail Bunya-Ananta, a Northridge resident, said she had the new surgery on June 30 for her sleep apnea. Bunya-Ananta, whose father and brother also suffer from the condition, said she was excited about the possibility that the new surgery would cure her.

"For a long time I didn't know I had sleep apnea, I just thought I snored. I would wake up gasping for air and choking. I literally had no air and my throat would close to the point that I was dead. I would rush to the freezer and open the freezer door and try to

get some air. It was horrible," said Bunya-Ananta, who still had a scar on her throat from the surgery.

Gutierrez, who had the surgery in October of 2002, said that the new surgery has cured his sleep apnea. He added that the sleep apnea also caused other health conditions. Gutierrez also developed pain in his ankle and shoulder and was scheduled to under go surgery for his shoulder. "For me spiritually this was the answer to a prayer. After I had this procedure [new multilevel upper airway reconstructive surgery] all of these other things just went away. I no longer had pain and so I didn't need the surgery. I told my doctor about this and he said it was common because once the sleep apnea goes away other illnesses go away," said Gutierrez.

"This is a life changing thing. I'm happy and my wife and children are happy now because I can now spend more time with them because I'm not tired anyone. I am more focused. I get true rest and I can think better and concentrate better. I try to tell as many people as I can about this. I tell them that there is a cure for this and they don't have to suffer," said Gutierrez.

Chinese Delegation

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Fernando Valley which, along with UCLA, coordinated the program. "They liked the fact that it was a semi-volunteer city council where people have their jobs during the day, they wanted to learn more about that," said Phillips. The delegation was also interested in how the City of San Fernando uses its heritage in its architecture, said Phillips.

But perhaps the best part of the visit came during lunch when the delegation was treated to their first Mexican meal. "They like real spicy food, so we made sure they had good salsa," said Phillips. "They loved the chile rellenos and the guacamole. They were fasci-

nated with the color and the texture," he said. "They didn't know about salsa or the tortilla chips."

The educational program comes a year after the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley and the Valley International Trade Association signed a trade agreement with China. Under the agreement, small and medium-sized businesses from the Valley can connect to their counterparts in China through the Internet portal Alibaba.com. This is the first program of its kind, but more are coming. Phillips said the Economic Alliance is also trying to foster similar relationships with other cities in China and Japan.

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