

Co-workers (Continued from page one)

and seemed to be in a state of shock.

"He looked shell shocked compared to when I saw him yesterday," Murray said.

Sanchez who is being held without bail was questioned for 10 hours on Monday, according to police, during which time he denied any involvement with any of the rapes and murders.

Despite Sanchez's arrest, his co-workers are left puzzled as they recalled "Al" as a laid-back person who was quiet but friendly, nonaggressive but a competitive athlete, and sociable, although he kept to himself.

"He was a mild-mannered person," said one employee who grew up across the street from Sanchez on Normal Avenue in Buffalo. "He was a go-lucky kind of kid, and he didn't change much as he grew up. He was a good guy, and this has been a complete shock for all of us."

"We used to play basketball almost every day when we were younger," another worker said. "But, he was never aggressive, he never got mad. In fact, I don't think I ever recall him losing his cool ... ever ... not even on the basketball

court. He was just 'Al.'"

His neighbors also thought of him as a decent person. Jake Sneva, who lives near Sanchez's Allendale Drive home, said the husband and father of two was a friendly neighbor.

"My wife and I have chatted with him often," he said. "He would often be working in the yard, and his wife had even invited us over for parties in the summer."

"They have a beautiful house and just seemed to be incredibly friendly people," Sneva said.

Sneva said his family and other nearby residents are in shock at Sanchez's arrest.

"My wife runs throughout the neighborhood. In the summer she and I go for runs together. You never think that there is a guy like this out there nearby that could just grab you," Sneva said.

He said that while the news does come as a shock to residents of Cheektowaga, Sneva said his neighborhood is quiet and safe.

"I am glad to know that the suspect has been caught, but everyone should know that our area is still a nice place to live."

According to police, the break

in the investigation began almost two weeks ago when three different units of the investigative team assigned to the case all pinpointed Sanchez as a main suspect.

Police believe Sanchez is responsible for three murders that span more than 16 years, with the most recent being the Diver case.

Two more murder charges are likely to follow, according to police. One is for the murder of 22-year-old University at Buffalo student Linda S. Yalem, who was found raped and strangled to death near the Ellicott Creek bike path in Amherst, officials said.

The third charge is expected to be for the murder of the Clarence mother of four. She was found strangled to death near the Clarence/Newstead bike path.

Since the discovery of Mrs. Diver's body and the connection to the bike path rapist, a sense of fear has clouded many communities. Increased security patrols, Neighborhood Watch committees and public safety task forces have since been established in the Town of Clarence and surrounding communities.

Police said DNA also links



Altemio Sanchez

Sanchez to numerous rapes, many of which occurred along bike paths, leading to the term "bike path rapist." Police said charges for the rapes are not likely to be pursued because the statutes of limitations on those crimes have since expired.

The bike path rapist's ninth listed attack occurred behind a junkyard on Military Road, not far from the company where Sanchez was employed.

His co-workers recalled the incident in which a 14-year-old girl was attacked and remembered hearing something about a "suspect running through the brass (factory), and if it was Al, then no one would know the difference ... he worked here."

Sanchez worked the third shift, which operates from 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. at Luvata. Many of the crimes connected to the bike path rapist occurred during the early morning hours after the third shift let out.

Police said Sanchez had been arrested twice before for soliciting a prostitute in Buffalo in 1991 and 1999, something else his co-workers said they knew nothing about nor could believe.

"This does not fit right with anything about him," his co-worker said. "I've known him for 40 years ... it's just plain shocking."

(Cheektowaga editor Keaton DePriest contributed to this article.)

Speak out. up. let your voice be heard!

VOTE ON OUR ON-LINE POLL

Log onto www.AmherstBee.com today, to cast your vote for next week's on-line poll

Amherst musicians perform in Albany

The Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra, under the direction of Gerard Floriano, performed at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Memorial Observance on Jan. 15 at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany.

This was the GBYO's sixth consecutive invitation. The Youth Orchestra performed "A Music Supreme: Reminiscences of John Coltrane," arranged for orchestra by GBYO musician Angelo Di Loreto.

The following Amherst students performed: Jonathan Ang, Samuel Ang, Sandra Berdick, Natalie Berkman, Alex Boissonnault, Nadine Cohen, Gina DiBenedetto, Angelo Di Loreto, Katie Dryden, Alexas Esposito, David Greetham, Hannah Huang, Joseph Isom, Jinjoo Kang, Cameron Kayne, Jiyeon Kim, Ariella Korn, Elana Korn, Dan Lamancuso, Alex Lamparelli, Allison Lyttle, Eric Mahl, and Emily Mangione.

Also, Pamicka Marinello, Erin McGarry, Michael Metzger, Ioannis Mountziaris, Austin Oprean, Hao Qin, Sara Scofidio, Alexandra Snowden, Holly Spohn, Sam Suggs, Kyle Torres-Hiyoshi, Melissa Tschamler, Jilene VanOpdorpe, Hilary Wittmerr, Kayla Woodworth, Margaret Wydysch and William Zhou.

The GBYO is a prestigious youth orchestra and made up of 90 middle school and high school students from Western New York. The ensemble represents more than 25 school districts.

The GBYO has been invited to perform at the MENC Eastern Division Conference in Hartford, Conn. on March 10.

For more information visit www.greaterbuffalo.org or www.outhorchestra.org.

First Niagara Bank

Money Market Deposit Account

4.75% APY*

for balances of \$50,000 or more

fnfg.com

Great rates come with rewards.

Checking customers who open a new money market deposit account with \$10,000 or more can earn 5,000 ScoreCard™ Bonus Points, redeemable towards incredible merchandise and travel.**

For a more rewarding relationship, stop by a neighborhood branch today.

1531 Niagara Falls Blvd. Burlington Plaza Amherst 831-9618	6409 Transit Road East Amherst 688-3522	35 Crosspoint Parkway Amherst 689-2781	4435 Transit Road Clarence 634-0368	5110 Main Street Walker Center Plaza Williamsville 631-5090	3035 Niagara Falls Blvd. Inside Tops Super Center Amherst 691-2483	3105 Niagara Falls Blvd. Amherst 691-4265	5190 Sheridan Drive Williamsville 633-3857
---	---	--	---	--	---	---	--

Member FDIC * The Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is accurate as of 1/7/07 and is subject to change without notice. A minimum deposit of \$25 is required to open the Relationship Builder Money Market Deposit Account and a minimum deposit balance of \$50,000 is required to obtain the advertised APY. The interest rate earned each day will be based on whether the end-of-day balance is less than \$10,000, at least \$10,000 but less than \$25,000, at least \$25,000 but less than \$50,000, or \$50,000 or more. Current interest rates for the four tiers are available at any First Niagara branch or by calling the Telephone Service Center at 1-800-421-0004. Interest rates for the four tiers may be changed by First Niagara Bank at any time. Fees could reduce the earnings on the account. Funds to open the account cannot presently be on deposit at First Niagara Bank. ** First Niagara Bank checking customers with a MasterMoney™ debit card are eligible for the ScoreCard Program. ScoreCard Bonus Points can be earned with signature-based debit card transactions and for opening eligible First Niagara savings, money market and home equity accounts. Customers opening a new First Niagara Relationship Builder Money Market Deposit Account with a minimum of \$10,000 by February 17, 2007 will earn 5,000 ScoreCard Bonus Points (maximum of 5,000 ScoreCard Bonus Points per account/household). For more information on eligibility, earning and redeeming ScoreCard Bonus Points, please call 1-800-421-0004.