

United Way Drive Below Half Mark

By BARBARA HUNTING
Tribune Staff Writer

With two weeks remaining in the campaign, the United Way of Greater Tampa has collected \$78,130.77 of the \$2,200,000 goal for 1978.

Campaign Chairman Susan B. Taylor said the next report handbook will be Oct. 21, the day the campaign closes.

"I like being first but I do not want to be first in over-estimating and over-extending the campaign," Taylor told the group.

Taylor urged the workers to complete the campaign on time with the full quota.

The United Way Announcers, who have reported the area United Way of former years, took part in the group at Friday's meeting. Those who told of their impressions and experiences at the various agencies were: C. W. Parks, Tampa Electric Co.; Mark Linsbury, Jack Hayes Family Music Center; Mary Mandelino, Broadway Bank of Tampa; and John M. Mellis, Exchange National Bank of Tampa.

Six more local firms have joined the United Way House Bill. To qualify for the honor, all the employees of the company must have contributed 75 percent of their salary, which is one hour pay or more a month, in the Tampa United Way. The firms that have qualified are: Dorian Co. Co., Florida Federal Savings, Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center, Suncoast Insurance Co., Scholastic Motor Co., United National Bank and the USIA.

The United Way serves 36 human care agencies.



Car Buffs Flock Together

Show car exhibitors pull the finishing touches on their displays Friday before the opening of the Stars and Cars Show at Curtis Hixon Hall. The show draws 175 exhibitors to

Tampa with sleek, custom cars, competition cars and motorcycles. Jim Barlow's "Hudson of Elvis" will also be an attraction. The show, which offers 32 awards to exhibitors and \$5,000

in prizes, runs through Sunday. A "People's Choice" award will also be presented to the exhibit which wins the most votes from visitors to the show. — Photo by Fred Fox

Jury Vote Test Set By Judge

By KEVIN KALWARY
Tribune Staff Writer

A Hillsborough Circuit Court judge Friday agreed to question, about 100 "non-witness" allegations, the foreman of the jury that convicted Charles Kenneth Valdes of raping and kidnapping a Tampa woman last month.

Defense attorney Dennis Alvarez filed a motion two weeks ago asking the court to let him interview the jurors, but Judge Gilbert said he would do the questioning and only the jury foreman would be asked about the alleged improprieties.

Alvarez based his motion on a newspaper article that quoted the foreman as saying, "One lady tried to converse with me, she quoted her law class."

Alvarez said Wednesday, "All I want to know is if the jury heard its decision on any less other than the law the judge said they read on."

"To they did," Alvarez said, "then I think there are grounds for a new trial."

Assistant Hillsborough State Attorney Paul Whitaker III, the prosecutor in the four-day trial, said, "I'll file with me if the judge wants to ask the questions. All I ask is that the defendant be present."

Valdes was tried on charges that he kidnapped a young Tampa school teacher at midnight last year, drove to a secluded area of the Hillsborough County and then raped her.

It was the 27-year-old rapist's second time arrested on the charges. A trial was declared after the first trial last November when Valdes was convicted of kidnapping and raping the teacher.

Those convictions — and sentences of two life prison terms — were overturned after defense motions were filed claiming that the judge had been partial during the trial.

Defense attorneys filed the motions after they discovered that various court officials and the rape victim were seen dining out together while the jury was deliberating.

Valdes is expected to be sentenced Friday on his most recent conviction.

Fire Death Of Girl, 12, Called Murder

PORT CHARLOTTE (AP) — A 12-year-old girl who vanished after leaving her home for a short bicycle ride to buy chewing gum was killed by being burned alive, a medical examiner said Friday.

Firemen fighting a blaze on a field last Thursday found the body of young Linda Platter, and investigators first thought the girl had been killed, then the field was used to destroy the evidence.

But an autopsy Friday disclosed an even more grisly death.

"The cause of death was burning," said Dr. Peter Tim, assistant medical examiner for Charlotte County.

He said he found ash in the girl's lungs, indicating she was alive when she was burned.

"I'm sure the girl had not been sexually abused, and had no internal injuries or brain damage. Tests were being conducted to determine what might have been used to start the blaze."

A shaken Sheriff Alan LeBaron said, "In my 20 years of law enforcement, I have never seen a slaying like this, but

have any of my own. This was a brutal slaying done by a very cold individual."

Sheriff's spokesman Byron Stowden said there has no question in the minds of investigators that the girl's death was homicide.

Stowden said officers began going to homes in the isolated area Friday afternoon. "They're going door-to-door to see," he said, "asking for any help at all from the public."

Sheriff LeBaron said three residents had called to say their children were approached Thursday afternoon by a

person who tried to pick the youngsters up. But he said investigators were having trouble learning details about the incidents because the children involved were very young.

Stowden said the girl, whose family had moved in July to this area from Florida city from Middletown, N.Y., had left her house at about 6:30 p.m. Thursday for the mile-long trip to a convenience store.

When she didn't return within several hours, an older sister called police

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