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State police often work on missing persons cases

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The Pennsylvania State Police at Rockview have assisted in many missing-persons cases over the years, including the cases of State College resident Brenda Condon, student Cindy Song and most recently Centre County District Attorney Ray Gricar.

State College Police Sgt. Mark Argiro said one of the most memorable missing persons cases was when a State College woman disappeared on Feb. 27, 1991.

"It was a very sad case," Argiro said. "She had a little daughter at the time."

Condon, who was 29 at the time, had just finished her shift as a barmaid at a local tavern.

Trp. Joseph Cigich, a criminal investigator at the Pennsylvania Police Barracks at Rockview, said Condon was reported missing by a colleague on the late February afternoon.

"When another worker came in on the 27th, he found her car in the parking lot unattended," Cigich said.

The Spring Township Police handled the case from 1991 to 1997 and then Cigich was personally assigned the case in 1999 when Spring Township asked the state police to get involved, Cigich said.

Cigich said Condon was last seen in the early morning hours by bar patrons. Cowboy boots were found in the men's restrooms that were later identified to be hers.

Cigich said that in the last six months, police have received calls about Condon's disappearance.

However, none of the leads have helped to solve the case, he said.

The state police at Rockview are also assisting the Ferguson Township Police Department in the Cindy Song Case, but Cigich said they have not received a call about Song in at least a year.

Ferguson Township Police Det. Brian Sprinkle, the lead investigator on the case, said there are no new leads in the case but added that the case will always remain open.

Sprinkle said Song, who was 21 at the time of her disappearance, was last seen during the early morning hours of Nov. 1, 2001, when a friend was dropping her off at her apartment.

"It was a very unusual case," Sprinkle said.

"There was no crime scene, evidence of a crime, nobody, nothing," he added.

Since 2001, there have been many missing people reported in State College, but the majority of them have been found soon after being reported missing.

State College Police Sgt. John Gardner said there is only one missing person who was entered [the National Crime Information Center] a couple weeks ago for a 55-year-old man from Harris Township.

"There's no indication he's in any danger, but we continue to keep the case active," he said.

Argiro said there are no outstanding missing-persons cases in State College now, and they are generally very rare.

"People turn up at their friend's house, at a neighbor's or on trips," he said.

The state police at Rockview said they are assisting different police departments in all three missing person cases.

"Usually we take the calls we receive about missing persons and work jointly with the police department handling the case," Cigich said.

"And we either credit or discredit the lead or information," he said.

In cases like Condon and Song, where the person has been missing for years, Cigich said it can be difficult getting new information.

Although the validity of these calls can come into question, Cigich said the police still follow up on everything.

"It's really not feasible to conduct searches anymore unless we got specific information or leads that would direct us to a place," Cigich said. "Leads in these cases are usually few and far between."

<http://www.collegian.psu.edu/archive/2005/04/04-29-05tdc/04-29-05dnews-05.asp>