

# NEWS-PRESS Charlotte

SECTION 8 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1978

Reports From Staff Writers,  
Bureaus And Wire Services

## City to name bridge after Beecher

**By KAREN FELDMAN**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — In an effort to avert further accidents at police roadblocks, the city council decided Wednesday to look into the possibility of renumbering roadblock precincts.

The council also passed by a unanimous vote a resolution to name the Marion Avenue bridge over Bass Inlet after Richard

Beecher, Punta Gorda assistant police chief, who was killed when a car failed to stop at a police roadblock set up to catch escaped prisoner Raleigh Porter.

Presenting Beecher's widow, Paula, with a copy of the resolution, Mayor Charles Phipps said, "In the past week, thousands of words have been written and spoken about Richard but council's action today will be a memorial of a more lasting nature."

Beecher's death, and injury suffered by Leonard Fawcett, a sheriff's office jailer who was struck by a car at another roadblock were the incidents that motivated the council to act.

Councilman C.R. "Tim" Johnson said, "Based on the two tragedies which occurred relating to roadblocks, I think we should investigate the adequacy of our roadblock procedures."

"People are used to seeing police cars with blue flashing lights by the side of the road," he added. "This isn't a police problem — it's a city and county problem."

Johnson suggested that a city-county committee be formed to study the problem and possibly to reward protesters.

Punta Gorda Police Chief Don Bennett described the accident involving Beecher as

"very nearly a textbook set-up of a roadblock." He told the council he and members of his department returned to the scene of the accident Oct. 11, the day after Beecher was hit, and that based on their findings the police cars should have been visible to drivers up to a half-mile away.

Results of an investigation into the accident are expected to be released by the Florida Highway Patrol next week.



**Who's in there?**  
"He certainly doesn't look like a fireman to me," seems to be the sentiment of Vanessa Wright (left) and Lynn Sellers, both 4 years of age. They and their classmates at Funtone Nursery in Naples were thoroughly frightened when Naples fireman Sheldon Reed donned the hood of an abandoned "ambulance suit" as part of an equipment display for the youngsters Wednesday.

## Dual taxation resolution introduced

**By KAREN FELDMAN**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — City Councilmen S.C. Fitzgerald and C.R. "Tim" Johnson introduced a resolution Wednesday which they believe is a "workable solution" to the problem of dual taxation.

The document was given to City Attorney Ed Geron to review. He will report his findings at council's next meeting scheduled for Nov. 1, after which the city may submit the resolution to the county commission.

The two-page document states that the Florida constitution prohibits dual taxation, which occurs when city residents pay county taxes for services from which they do not benefit.

It lists several services and facilities which benefit only those who live in the unincorporated area of the county including the following:

- Sheriff's services relating to radio operations, records and identification, criminal history and training.
- Courts and jails.
- Road and bridge.
- Parks and recreation.
- Fresh water canal maintenance.
- Administration of the county board of commissioners, administrator, engineering department, attorney, purchasing and non-judicial county clerk functions.
- Any other capital expenditures for the services and facilities of the above.

The resolution proposes that the county find another source of revenue to finance these services and that city residents be reimbursed for taxes paid for such services.

Johnson suggested that another clause be added to the document that would prevent future dual taxation.

## Grand jury returns five indictments

**By KAREN FELDMAN**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — After a third day of hearings, which included testimony from a child-molester, the grand jury investigating food drug emporium returned five sealed indictments Wednesday.

Assistant State Attorney Gene Berry said he would file the indictments if the grand jury returns them.

No added that they are expected to be arrested within the next few days.

The 15-member jury deliberated behind closed doors all day before returning the indictments.

During the morning session, the grand jury heard testimony from two Sarasota men, one of whom whose face was concealed by a white sheet and was escorted into the courtroom.

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## Sheriffs continue search for young girl's killer

**By KAREN FELDMAN**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — Sheriff's department officials continued their around-the-clock search Wednesday for the person who abducted and killed Linda Pihartz last Tuesday night.

The department remained silent on the progress of the investigation

but, according to Public Information Officer Byron Snowden, all of the many leads provided by area residents are being checked out.

He added that the sheriff's office has been "flooded with calls" about the Helping Hand program which is being organized by a Fort Charlotte couple to protect county children.

An organizational meeting of all

prospective block parents, those whose houses will display the red helping hand sign on their homes, is scheduled for tonight at the Cultural Center Centennial Hall at 8 p.m. Details of the program and block parent applications will be available at the meeting, Snowden said.

Investigators believe the 12-year-old Port Charlotte girl was abducted

Thursday at about 7 p.m. as she was returning home from a convenience store where she went to buy chewing gum.

She was reported missing about three and-a-half hours later and her charred body was discovered at midnight by firemen summoned to put out a brush fire in a field near Toledo Blade Boulevard.

Authorities have ruled out any connection between the little girl's death Thursday and the disappearance Friday of 17-year-old Christine Godella, Punta Gorda.

Snowden said the sheriff's office believes Miss Godella has run away and is on her way back to Wisconsin, from which she moved about two weeks ago.

## Classroom teachers back Duncan in District 75 race

**By KAREN FELDMAN**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — The county Classroom Teachers Association (CTA) Tuesday officially endorsed Democrat Wayne Duncan for state representative in District 75 over Republican incumbent Fred Burnell.

CTA Executive Director David Besire said Duncan was selected because of his long background in education.

He said the teachers object to Burnell because of his stand against collective bargaining for public employees.

According to Dennis Derrick, chairman of the CTAs political action arm, Council was chosen because "he has served his constituency for the past 14 years as a teacher at Sarasota High School. Council will provide the cradle of the district with the same integrity, honesty and dedication which he has displayed as a teacher of our children." Derrick also cited Council's support for environmental protection, prompt construction of I-75 and investigating of the Sunshine Law which requires public officials to conduct the public's business in public.

"He is a dynamic, energetic leader who will be responsible to the people," Derrick said.

The group failed to endorse a gubernatorial candidate because of an insufficient number of votes. To gain endorsement by the CTAs, a candidate must receive a two-thirds majority, Besire said.

"I have been chairman of the committee overseeing this for about the last year," Derrick said. "I was against this at first until it was recognized there was a real need for it."

Once the system is installed, calls will go directly to the sheriff's department, the Punta Gorda Police Department, and the court-house where it is equipped.

"One of the reasons I was originally

## 911 system scheduled by January

**By KEVIN BLOOM**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — A 911 emergency system will be operational for county residents by January 1979.

John Derr, disaster preparedness coordinator, said Wednesday the county has contracted with Doughty to have system in operation Jan. 15.

With the system installed, residents dial 911 for police, fire and ambulance service in emergency situations.

The equipment will be paid for by a grant of more than \$70,000 awarded to the county by the governor's Highway Safety Commission.

"The only cost to the taxpayer will be the upkeep of the system," Derr said. The estimate that will be about \$10,000.

A 911 system has been in the works for about five years, Derr said.

"I have been chairman of the committee overseeing this for about the last year," Derrick said. "I was against this at first until it was recognized there was a real need for it."

Once the system is installed, calls will go directly to the sheriff's department, the Punta Gorda Police Department, and the court-house where it is equipped.

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## Inside Today's B-Section

- A 15-year-old neighbor who lives a few houses from where two women and a young girl were brutally beaten to death is arrested and charged by the triple murder. **108**
- JUDGE A. Zimmermann, a Guatemalan who reportedly may be a key informant in the 1968 assassination of an American ambassador, remains in federal custody although granted parole from a U.S. firearms violation sentence, his attorney says. **18**
- INTERNATIONAL Inspector Guillermo Hernandez Carayza and his former aide, Salvador Alderagosa-Ora, are indicted by a 12-member federal grand jury on two counts of U.S. passport violations. **18**
- A COMMITTEE OF oil importers is saying the U.S. Coast Guard did not act quickly enough to contain a spill of 40,000 gallons of oil which eventually washed up on miles of mangroves and beaches in an arm of Tampa Bay. **18**
- HOUSE Speaker-designate Ryan Brown names five more committee chairmen, including a new Finance and Tax Committee leader who opposes a Commission Revision Commission as an obstacle to a "special interest boondoggle." **18**
- REACTING TO arguments that the right of citizens to criticize public officials could be threatened, the Ethics Commission refuses to award attorney's fees to the estate of a former Milwaukee councilman cleared of ethics charges. **128**
- THE ETHICS Commission wants to banish 11 public officials who have refused to disclose their 1977 finances, dumping the matter in the lap of Gov. Reubin Askew. **128**

## County offices will return unspent funds

**By KEVIN BLOOM**  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — The county sheriff, property appraiser, tax collector and clerk of the court will return more than \$200,000 in unspent funds to the county budget.

Financial reports from the four elected officials show the departments will return \$70,532.46 in excess of anticipated carry-over revenues.

Sheriff Alan Leflow will return \$16,561.78 from a budget of \$1.5 million.

Property Appraiser Oliver Lowe underspent his budget by \$16,161.10 in the last fiscal year.

About \$1,000 will be returned to the commission's budget.

The remaining \$208 will be distributed on a pro-rated basis to five independent taxing authorities in the county.

Because the property appraiser sets the value of the property in those districts, they get a proportional share of Lowe's budget.

If the budget is underspent, the districts receive a pro-rated share of the excess.

Tax Collector Vic Deagan's budget falls in \$116,845 less than allocated.

The excess from the tax collector