

NEWS-PRESS Charlotte

SECTION 8 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1978

Reports From Staff Writers,
Bureaus And Wire Services

Lawmen follow leads in murder probe

By KAREN FELDMAN
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — Several descriptions of "suspicious" people who might be the killer of 12-year-old Linda Plakuntz are being checked out by investigators in the case, according to officials.

Li William Clement, chief investigator for the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department, said investigators have received numerous descriptions from area citizens but some are more pressing than others.

Clement said the number of leads coming in daily has slowed, allowing the department to be more selective and meticulous in the ones that are investigated.

Clement said the sheriff's department is expected to be more detailed. "They're up to help local police and sheriff departments with this type of case," Clement said. "They're good at it."

Investigators believe the 12-year-old Fort Charlotte girl was abducted Oct. 12 at about 7:15 p.m. as she was returning home from a convenience store where she went to buy chewing gum.



News-Press Kevin Brown

One of two helicopters bought by sheriff's department, for which commission has yet to approve funding

Sheriff receives two helicopters

By KEVIN BROWN
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — The Charlotte County Sheriff's Department was delivered two helicopters Monday, but there's a hitch.

Triangi said the "actual appropriation will be brought before the board later and will be formally voted on."

Triangi said part of the commission's agreement with LeBeau was contingent on the sheriff documenting that the maintenance costs in successive years would not be shouldered by the commission.

Triangi said, "I'm not trying to give the sheriff a hard time but we are interested in how these helicopters will be sustained year after year."

Police chief involved in one-car wreck

News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — For the second time in two weeks, Punta Gorda Police Chief Don Bennett has wrecked his 1973 Corvette, with both wrecks occurring in almost the identical location.

Bennett said the car was involved in a one-car wreck at about the same spot when an opposing truck forced his car off the road.

In that accident, about \$200 worth of damage was done to the car.

According to Bennett, the earlier accident occurred when he was driving home along U.S. 17 when a pickup truck squeezed him off the road.

Veteran TV newsman leaves anchor post

By JIM MEGEE
News-Press Staff Writer

Langtime Southwest Florida television newsman Lee Phillips said Monday he is leaving the news business and his post as news director and anchorman at WFTS-TV.

Phillips, 38, came to Fort Myers in 1970 as anchor and news director at WFTS-TV. During that time, he wrote editorials which were read on the air by Berry, who also used to work for WFTS.

Phillips is no stranger to changes in "directions" by local television executives. WFTS fired Phillips after a private consultant hired by the station said he didn't figure as a new game plan.

Phillips took an anchorman slot with WINK-TV. During that period, he said, WINK's local news ratings showed marked improvement.

Missing girl returns home

By PETER G. JOHNSON
Charlotte Bureau Chief

PUNTA GORDA — A 15-year-old girl who disappeared from home more than a week ago has returned unharmed, according to the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department.

Christine Gadella was reported missing Oct. 14 after she left her home for a walk on the previous evening and never returned.

Inside Today's B-Section

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Robert Graham says Central Florida will be the key to victory over Republican nominee Jack Eckerd.

DADE COUNTY is involved in yet another battle over homosexual rights, but many of the principals show little enthusiasm for repeating last year's bitter campaign.

Suspected smuggler turns himself in

By PETER G. JOHNSON
Charlotte Bureau Chief

PUNTA GORDA — One of five people indicted by a grand jury last week on drug charges has turned himself in to the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department.

The other four still are at large and authorities say their identities will remain secret until they are under arrest.

Correction

The News-Press, in its Monday edition, incorrectly attributed a quote to Nancy Eckerd, daughter of Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Eckerd. The quote — which should have been attributed to Adelle Graham, wife of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Robert Graham — says: "Some people have said that Bob is a politician. He is a politician and he has shown himself to be an effective one in fighting for important legislation."