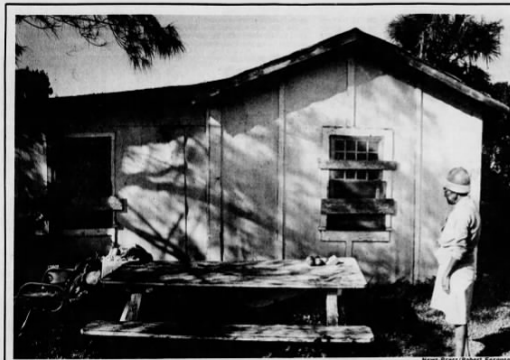


Reports From Staff Writers, Bureaus And Wire Services



Maria Vargas at her Harlem Heights home — no water and \$32 a month rent

Shabby housing afflicts community

By HJUAN DINFORD
News-Press Staff Writer

Harlem Heights is not what its name suggests. It is a rural community, shunning the urban ways of its New York City namesake, and it lies on some of the lowest land in the county.

Similarly, the face, Harlem Heights shows to its Lee County neighbors is equally deceiving.

The southern Lee community appears to be a shabby collection of hovels along Gladstone Drive, a busy county thoroughfare that holds at bay, at either end, the development that has spread south on U.S. 41 and McGregor Boulevard.

The people who live in Harlem Heights, when viewed from the window of a passing car, seem aware of the blight which surrounds them.

Despite its wretched appearance, the Heights is not what its name suggests. It is a rural community, shunning the urban ways of its New York City namesake, and it lies on some of the lowest land in the county.

Similarly, the face, Harlem Heights shows to its Lee County neighbors is equally deceiving.

The southern Lee community appears to be a shabby collection of hovels along Gladstone Drive, a busy county thoroughfare that holds at bay, at either end, the development that has spread south on U.S. 41 and McGregor Boulevard.

The people who live in Harlem Heights, when viewed from the window of a passing car, seem aware of the blight which surrounds them.

Despite its wretched appearance, the Heights is not what its name suggests. It is a rural community, shunning the urban ways of its New York City namesake, and it lies on some of the lowest land in the county.

Similarly, the face, Harlem Heights shows to its Lee County neighbors is equally deceiving.

The southern Lee community appears to be a shabby collection of hovels along Gladstone Drive, a busy county thoroughfare that holds at bay, at either end, the development that has spread south on U.S. 41 and McGregor Boulevard.

The people who live in Harlem Heights, when viewed from the window of a passing car, seem aware of the blight which surrounds them.

The Heights suffers for its poverty. There is a high rate of illiteracy among the adults, according to officials at the Good Shepherd Mission. There is alcoholism and drug abuse, according to the Lee County Sheriff's Department.

The most persistent problem, however, is housing. Some of the dilapidated shacks which pass for homes in the Heights are nearly as old as the community.

The single largest property owner in the Heights, Fort Myers builder Ken Adkinson, estimates that about a third of the 80 units he owns have indoor plumbing.

Maria Vargas lives in one of Adkinson's shacks. She and her husband Luciano, a laborer with Maroon Flower Farms, keep a well-tended yard surrounding their four-room house. There is an orange tree and vegetables planted behind the house, and huge, cone-shaped bags of beer cans Vargas has collected for the aluminum.

Their house, whose door Mrs. Vargas carefully secures with a strap, has no running water and floods during the rainy season. The water she draws from a neighbor's well "smells terrible," she says in Spanish.

Mrs. Vargas keeps their food and possessions in paper bags and boxes cluttering the house and hanging from the ceiling because she says that keeps them safe from rodents.

Before coming to the United States, Maria, now 75, was a housemaid for an American family in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, she says through an interpreter. She cleaned, did the wash, took care of the pets and earned \$3 a month, she says.



MRS. VARGAS HANGS FOOD FROM THE CEILING — the hanging method keeps the rats away

Murder case No charges filed against Illinois man

By KEVIN BLOOM
News-Press Bureau

PORT CHARLOTTE — An Illinois man has been questioned in connection with the Pizarri murder investigation but no charges have been brought against him.

Byron Snowden, public information officer for the Department, said Brian Patrick Kane, 27, who is being held by Sarasota County lawmen, was questioned last week by investigators in connection with the Oct. 12 death of 12-year-old Linda Pizarri.

Asked if it could be assumed that because Kane has not been charged so far that he will not face future charges, Snowden said, "Nothing can be assumed at this point."

Snowden said investigators would not comment on whether Kane will be questioned again or whether charges are pending.

Kane is being held on charges of grand theft, and failure to appear on a driving while intoxicated

charge.

A Sarasota jailer said Sunday Kane had petitioned a bonding company to post his \$2,000 bond but had been refused.

Sheriff Alan Lefkowitz said the fact that no charges have been brought against Kane does not mean he has been cleared of any involvement in the slaying.

"Nobody's clear at this point," Lefkowitz said of the investigation, which has so far seen more than 75 persons questioned.

One man, Phillip Lee Drake, 30, of Port Charlotte, has been charged with perjury in connection with testimony he gave to Assistant State Attorney Eugene Berry regarding the murder.

Berry previously said Drake is not suspected of committing the murder, but he has been charged with making false statements under oath.

According to court records, Drake denied knowing the 1972 Chevrolet to appear on the day Linda was abducted.

Smile, you'll get your ticket refund

By KEVIN BLOOM
News-Press Bureau

PINLA GORDA — If you happen to be one of the more than 40 Charlotte County residents who will receive a \$1.50 refund in the mail this week, smile.

It was the county clerk's office about 22 days ago that you.

The refund is a result of two recent Supreme Court decisions which overturned a 1977 state statute which imposed the price of moving traffic violations \$30.

If it all sounds confusing, that's because it is.

According to Clerk of the Court Buddy Alexander, it's a long story.

In July 1977, the state passed a law that lowered \$30 and a 5 percent surcharge on any moving violation.

Two months later, the state Supreme Court ruled the \$30 charge was unconstitutional.

Courts were directed to submit a list of all persons who had received citations from July 1 to Aug. 15 for reimbursement.

But the court did not rule on the additional 5 percent surcharge (\$1.50) until February 1978.

By the time the second decision was made, the county was in the process of submitting a list of the 130 persons who had been cited for violations in Charlotte County.

By April, the \$30 refunds were in the mail.

Of those 130 persons, only 123 had paid the 5 percent surcharge.

So the process of researching court records began again.

After submitting a list of the persons who had the \$30 coming, the clerk's office received a check from the state for \$184.50.

But the hitch is that it has cost \$100 to research the records, compile the lists, make up the checks and pay the postage.

But Alexander said, it's a matter of principle.

"Unlike the \$30 refund, we are not obligated to return the \$1.50," he said. "The state paid on this one was at our discretion."

Because it is a judgment call on the part of the clerk, the state will not reimburse the county for the processing cost.

"Regardless of the cost to my office, I think the people are deserving of it," Alexander said.

Besides, if the county had opted not to refund the \$1.50, the state would have kept the money, he said.

"Basically it's just that I don't believe it's right for the people to have to pay a fine that has been ruled unconstitutional," Alexander said.

Disgruntled churchgoer heaves Bible at altar

By ALLEN BARTLETT
News-Press Bureau

NAPLES — A disgruntled churchgoer had a message of his own Sunday and communicated it by heaving a small book across a Naples church sanctuary.

The incident unfolded during morning worship at the First Christian Church, Mandarin Road, as a pre-arranged scripture was being read by the pastor.

According to Naples police, the unidentified man said he threw the book because he "didn't like what the pastor was preaching." No charges were filed against the man, police said.

There is "a very remote" connection between the First Christian Church's denomination and the People's Temple Church in California, said the Rev. Robert Taylor, minister of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The People's Temple is one church of cultist Jim Jones, who led more than 900 persons to mass suicide last week in Guyana, Jones' cult went "sanctioned" by the Naples church, Jones was ordained by the Disciples of Christ in 1964, spokesman for the First Chris-

tian Church said the remote connection is controversial and said Sunday's incident is unrelated.

There was a brief reference to the Guyana incident during Sunday's service, according to one eyewitness.

Members of the church congregation said the man, about 30 years old with shoulder-length brown hair, apparently was passing through Naples when he stepped through the altar.

"He lit a waxy, poisonous incense in a bowl," according to church member K.C. Pittman, who said the man went into a church restroom to wash up before the service.

About two-thirds of the way through the service, said J. Dudley Goodlett, a member of the congregation, the man stood up, walked to the back of the church and heaved the Bible, which landed at the altar.

"He took a small Testament and threw it toward the visiting minister," Pittman said. The visiting minister was Dr. Jim Gentry, regional minister for the Christian Church in Florida. The man then left, walking backwards, and didn't return to Pittman.

Inside Today's B-Section

- **HIDDEN AWAY** in a half-dome office in the state Capitol, Gen. elect Robert Graham's transition team is quietly fitting together a complicated jigsaw puzzle intended to match the right people with the right jobs. **45**
- **ELAINE ESPOSITO** died in her mother's arms, 27 years after the appendectomy from which she never awoke. **48**
- **SEARCHERS FLY** over dense woods of Florida's Panhandle again trying to locate a twin-engine airplane and four Pompano Beach residents missing since Monday night. **55**
- **THREE MEN** missing since abandoning their burning freighter in the Florida Straits two days ago are spotted in a life raft southeast of Key West and rescued. **65**

Efforts to keep passenger train service continue

By JACK HILLHOUSE
News-Press Staff Writer

Efforts to restore passenger train service to Southwest Florida this year call for rerouting Amtrak's New York to Florida "Champion" from a terminal at St. Petersburg to Sarasota.

The Florida Department of Transportation is using the large number of elderly residents in Charlotte County and the over-crowded U.S. 41 highway conditions in Southwest Florida as evidence that passenger train service to Sarasota, and perhaps as far south as Venice, is warranted.

This is one of four proposals the department made this year in an effort to improve the state's rail passenger system.

"This effort, however, is comparable to the old rational expansion of a 'corridor' route," in which two routes were folded into each other. Florida's effort to restore train service is turning head-on into the federal government's plan to cut Florida rail service by more than 80 percent.

The corridor route is expected in December, when the final report of the U.S. Department of Transportation study of the national rail passenger system, Amtrak, is due. The preliminary report, released in May, called for a 24-percent reduction of national Amtrak long-distance routes, including a 62.8 percent cut in those trains operating in Florida.

Yet, the state transportation department still

hopes that passenger train increases can be authorized here. Some of the increased service has been a department goal for at least seven years, the life of the Amtrak operation.

A second Florida proposal, for rerouted passenger service from Lakeland to Arcadia, Punta Gorda, Fort Myers and Naples, was made in a state senator serving the Cape Coral-Venice district. Federal service in this area is unlikely, the state transportation department said. No service here would require a state subsidy plus more than \$180,000 a year from cities and counties along the route.

A third proposal calls for rerouting long and short distance lines "to serve the growing population centers of Florida as interurban lines: Miami to West Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa through Lakeland to Orlando, Tampa to the University of Florida (Gainesville) and Miami to Tampa (requiring a change of trains at Auburndale).

The fourth proposal seeks the rerouting of the Jacksonville to New Orleans train, and possibly rerouting the Jacksonville to Chicago train from Montgomery to Atlanta.

All of the items existed in some form before Amtrak started in 1971.

William W. Miller, director of the state Division of Public Transportation Operations, sent the main proposals to the Federal Railroad Administration's director of rail passenger programs, Robert C. Hunter.

Turn To TRAIN, Page 20