

Perjury charges dropped for now

By PETER G. JOHNSON
Charlotte Bureau Chief

PUNTA GORDA — Perjury charges were dismissed Monday against a Fort Charlotte man arrested in connection with the investigation into the murder of Linda Plazette.

The charge was dismissed because of a legal technicality on the written charge, but Assistant State Attorney Gene Berry said the defect will be corrected and Phillip Lee Drake will be charged again with perjury.

Circuit Court Judge Richard M. Stanley dismissed the charge against Drake, 26, of 1101 Orlando Ave., after his attorney successfully argued the charge was flawed by some "fatal defects."

Drake had been arrested in mid-November and charged with making a false statement to investigators in the course of the murder investigation who questioned him in the presence of a court reporter.

According to court records, Drake denied having his 1972 white Chevrolet in anyone of the city 12-year-old Linda was abducted and murdered.

Sheriff Alan LeBeau has said his department learned that Drake did not see his car in some Florida on that date and on the two following days. LeBeau also has said there was a report of a white or light-colored car being seen in the area where Linda was abducted on Oct. 12.

Meanwhile, the sheriff's department is continuing its search for the killer of Linda, but a spokesman said Monday there is nothing new on the case.

Linda was abducted on Oct. 12 as she was returning from a local convenience store. Her charred body was discovered in a burning field about six hours later.

Tour

From Page 18

• G. Pierce Wood, a mental hospital of 1,178 patients of which 500 to 550 are geriatric and senile. The hospital has become half a nursing home for old people who can't find room in a private nursing home and half a hospital for the mentally ill. It is the state's third largest mental hospital.

Mans last year helped get 100 new employees for C. Pierce Wood by bringing to other legislators attention the impetus in founding Southeast Florida state institutions.

• Fort Myers Juvenile Detention Center, a 44-inmate facility off Gladstone Drive. The juvenile center's main problem recently has been overcrowding, which brought a court order last spring against overcrowding the building. The Fort Myers center is holding an appropriation for a new 52-bed center to be built behind Sunland, but is attempting to win approval for a larger facility before construction begins.

Current budgets for the four institutions are: DeLeon Correctional Institution, \$6.98 million; C. Pierce Wood, \$13.99 million; Sunland, \$3.52 million; Detention Center, \$24.76.

Mans's subcommittee early in 1979 will visit institutions in Tallahassee, Daytona and Rutledge. Mans said he intends on visiting all state institutions during the next two years.

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