

NEWS-PRESS Charlotte THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1979 SECTION 8

Reports From Staff Writers, Bureaus And Wire Services

Pay hike for union employees approved

By KAREN FELDMAN News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — The city council yesterday approved a retroactive pay hike for the city's union employees, but denied the union the union most wanted: a grievance procedure for disciplinary action.

A special mediator had recommended that merit raises of at least four steps be granted at six-month intervals. City Manager Robert Hollander said such a move would make the increase automatic, thereby eliminating the merit aspect, the reason for instituting such a system.

Under the city's plan, however, complaints regarding disciplinary action are taken to an appeal board, composed of two people chosen by the union, two chosen by the city and one picked by the four board members.

The council rejected the use of binding arbitration in cases of disciplinary action, saying this would undermine the city administrator's authority to discipline employees, according to the city's chief negotiator, Neil Pedregosa.

Prata said the city had agreed to the grievance procedure, a contract would already have been agreed. The special mediator's recommendation that the city formulate specifications for every job classification was rejected by the council for the present time.



Sitting dunk. We've heard of stuffing a basketball, but not a basketball player. David Babin takes the high seat on a basketball backboard as he plays with friend Richard Water at the city lot placed on Lee Street in Fort Myers.

Owner of bike sought for questioning in connection with Pikuritz murder

By KAREN FELDMAN News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — The owner of a bicycle found in Fort Charlotte, the night Linda Pikuritz was murdered, is being sought by sheriff's department officials for questioning.

According to Byron Snowden, the sheriff's information officer, a girl's green bicycle was found Oct. 12 at 9:12 p.m. just one hour before the 17-year-old Fort Charlotte girl was reported missing.

Linda was abducted on her way home from a local convenience store and then burned to death in a field on Tigard Street. Fourness summoned to get on the bike just before midnight found her body.

Harbor shrimping law appealed

News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — While local legislators try to pass through a new law restricting shrimping in Charlotte Harbor, the state attorney's office will appeal a decision that the existing law is unconstitutional.

Assistant State Attorney Stephen Ellis said he will file a notice of appeal this week on County Judge John Shannon's ruling that the existing law was too restrictive.

The law was designed to protect the shrimp and marine life resources in Charlotte Harbor. The law limited shrimpers to using no more than one net on wider than 25 feet in the harbor.

Two weeks ago, Shannon called the law "unconstitutionally vague" because it didn't define the waters it was seeking to protect and it imposed "travelling restrictions" rather than people to arrest.

Alternative program for dropouts proposed by Charlotte High principal

By KAREN FELDMAN News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — An alternative program for students who have dropped out of high school has been proposed by Charlotte High School's principal, Dr. Raymond Whitehead.

The program would be geared to students unable to deal with the structured environment of the high school and who need a more relaxed atmosphere in which to complete their education, Whitehead said.

The class, designed for about 20 students, would be conducted away from the high school campus, and students would be encouraged to work at their own pace, he said.

Whitehead stressed that the program would not be a substitute high school for students who simply find the idea more attractive than attending regular classes. Those who enroll in the program would have to have already dropped out of high school.

Action on Ponce de Leon Park, aboard-boat residences delayed

By KAREN FELDMAN News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — Action on a proposed ordinance for Ponce de Leon Park and on an ordinance allowing boat owners to live aboard their craft were postponed Wednesday by the Punta Gorda City Council.

But that no definite action has been decided upon. Boarders have been erected there in the past, he said, only to be knocked down. Complaints on file at the Punta Gorda Police Department show there are currently no reports of crimes at the public park.

In 1976, police were called three times to incidents at the park, police records show. Only one time — the January disappearance of the park's maintenance supervisor — turned out to be a real crime, according to Police Chief Donald Bennett. There have been no complaints on police action in the park so far this year, he said.

Concussion C.K. "Irvy" Johnson said he would like to see more evidence of the need for a curfew before the council takes action, and the group agreed to postpone a decision at least until the next meeting.

Hollander suggested that the deckmaster of each marina could supervise the area and inform the police if dumping into the river was taking place. The council postponed action on the proposed ordinance pending further study.

Inside Today's B-Section THE FBI HAS BEGUN an investigation into a complaint of racial discrimination made by a black federal employee against a new Orlando discoteque... DESPITE A PLEA for support from Chief Justice Arthur English Jr., a proposal that would significantly reduce the number of cases heard by the Supreme Court runs into stiff opposition from an influential lawyer group... TWO-THIRDS OF the death row inmates at the Florida State Prison are on a hunger strike to pressure a change in visiting privileges... THE REWARD FOR information leading to the conviction of a man apprehended in a highway search for the missing man, Agriculture Commissioner Doyle Comery says... A JUDGE, ATTORNEYS, expert witnesses and a court reporter will take to the highway sometime soon to test opposing claims about the reliability of police radar, it is decided.

County may gain forfeit payment

News-Press Bureau PUNTA GORDA — Charlotte County Attorney II. William Thompson will represent the state in a Second District Court of Appeals case in which the county stands to win \$100,000. The case is a Sarasota bonding company's appeal of a court order to pay the county \$100,000 for two suspected drug smugglers who missed their trial in November.