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NEWS-PRESS

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Man charged in '78 Pikuritz death

Bradley Philip Scott 'was our No. 1 suspect all along'

By ROBIN POLACK
News Press Staff Writer

PORT CHARLOTTE — Thursday's verdict of the man charged with murdering 13-year-old Linda Pikuritz eight years ago brought back chilling memories yet signs of relief for her parents.

"Thank God — it's about time," said 77-year-old Evelyn Reuser, who was with Pikuritz the day she was killed. "It's been eight years, and someone should be punished for her murder."

See SCOTT, back page this section

By CHUCK TOBIN
Charleston Staff Writer

PUNTA GORDA — One of the original suspects in the 1978 death of a 13-year-old Port Charlotte girl was arrested Thursday in West Palm Beach and charged with murder.

Bradley Philip Scott, 35, was charged in the first-degree murder of Linda Pikuritz. The murder had gone unsolved for more than seven years, Charlotte County Sheriff John McLaughlin said.

Scott is being held without bond at the Palm Beach County Jail and will be brought back to the Charlotte County Jail today, the sheriff said.

See PIKURITZ, back page this section



Counsel named to probe Deaver

By HOWARD KURTZ
Washington Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — William Northley, a former U.S. attorney general, has been named to investigate allegations of improper lobbying by former White House aide Michael S. Deaver.

Deaver, 62, was named by a three-page special court panel here and charged with causing whether Deaver violated federal conflict-of-interest laws in representing Canada and Puerto Rico since resigning as a White House aide in 1981. He is also accused of setting up a multimillion-dollar consulting firm.

The Justice Department's seven-page report to the court, made public Thursday, cited specifically only the Canada and Puerto Rico allegations. But it said the independent counsel should look into "all other allegations" referred to in department files that General Accounting Office, Office of Government Ethics and the Democratic Caucus, as well as "any related matters" developed during the probe.

See DEAVER, back page this section

Dowell guilty of murder

Real estate saleswoman murdered on Sanibel

By DENISE HUSTY
News Press Staff Writer

Markham William Dowell was found guilty Thursday night of first-degree murder and armed robbery in the January 1985 shooting death of Sanibel real estate saleswoman Sheila Lankin.

Dowell, 31, of Cape Coral, put a handkerchief to his eyes and wept silently for a few minutes after the jury of eight women and four men found him guilty of the murder. He was sentenced to life in prison with no parole for the next 25 years.

"I just thank God it turned out like this. I feel like I'll be able to sleep at night again. My family will be able to sleep at night again," Lankin said after regaining his composure.

Lankin went on to say "Nothing would make me happier than to see this man try. I will be from now on either of them newspapers."

Lankin's son, Jerry Lankin, 36, of Cape Coral, put a handkerchief to his eyes and wept silently for a few minutes after the jury of eight women and four men found him guilty of the murder. He was sentenced to life in prison with no parole for the next 25 years.

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See DOWELL, back page this section



Drinking age saps cash flow on U.S. roads

By BEVERLY CANEROY
Columbus Staff Writer

States across the United States are slashing their revenues at a federally mandated drinking age — proportionally on highway funding.

Seven states and the District of Columbia have refused to set the drinking age at 21, and they'll lose 5 percent of their federal highway funding Oct. 1 — the start of the fiscal year.

And the cash flow is only to 15 other states.

Some states are trying to exempt. Others said they're tired of having the funds used as an over their heads.

In 1984 Congress ordered withholding 5 percent of next year's highway aid from states that allow those younger than 21 to drink after Oct. 1.

Two percent will be taken away from states that still don't comply by Sept. 30, 1987.

South Dakota officials claim the law to be unconstitutional. They filed suit against the Congress in September 1984. Vermont, Colorado, Texas, Idaho, Montana, Ohio, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Wyoming sided in the suit.

Just a federal district court and appeals court that the federal government can withhold funds if states don't do as it said.

South Dakota isn't giving up. It wants to take the matter to the Supreme Court and hopes the voters will join it.

Based on last year's appropriations, unappropriated funds range from \$2.5 million in Florida to \$2.6 million in the District of Columbia. Whole states and New Hampshire, said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The law will mean delayed highway construction in the affected states.

Southern hospitality ends here

By JACK WILLIAMS
Columbus Staff Writer

As the 1986 hurricane season begins Sunday, little is certain — how bad it might be, whether appetite storm monitoring will hold up or how much relief money will be available.

The only sure thing is that millions of residents along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are being told not to take the threat of a hurricane lightly.

Forecasters have no way of knowing how many storms will hit, where they will hit or how strong they'll be, said Stu Gerber of the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Hurricanes made land last year the worst season in nearly 70 years.

"The message we need to get out is be ready," he said.

Forecasters face another season with a nagging fear that the one provision's solution that keeps an eye on hurricanes could fail. The May 21 explosion of a Delta rocket, carrying a second satellite to space, dashed hopes for a Thurgood Marshall.

While other satellites and airplanes can ensure against a hurricane, the message we need to get out is be ready," he said.

See HURRICANES, back page this section

March to jail

Fort Myers Mayor Art Hamel is "sentenced" Thursday by Judge Alex Stone of WINK-FM to raise \$1,000 for the March of Dimes. The March of Dimes is offering a way to play a trick on a pal and raise money at the same time. Until 8 p.m. today, it's sponsoring its Jail-and-Bail fund-raiser. For \$5, you can have a friend, boss or co-worker "arrested" by bailman and taken before a judge at the Edison Mall.

After the judge sets bail, the arrestee will be put in a mall "jail," whose walls are made of 1,000 cases of Coca-Cola. From jail, the person will have to raise bail by calling friends for donations. For information and arrest warrants, call 275-0614.