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Gulf Coast News

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Lottery starts off with song and dance

By PAUL ANDERSON
Herald Capital Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — The state enters the gambling business today with $850,000 worth of fanfare in 13 cities, but it will more than recoup that cost in free publicity about the new lottery and anticipated first-day sales of $1 million, lottery officials say.

Gov. Bob Martinez, who was a lottery opponent, says he won't play. But he will participate in kickoff festivities in Tallahassee at noon and in Miami this evening, even scratching off the covering on a giant ticket.

"I'm not buying one," he was quick to say Monday. "However, I am kind of curious about how you do scratch it off."

Of the cost of the promotional events — which includes $175,000 for the Beach Boys, the featured act at a free concert in the Orange Bowl tonight — Martinez said: "It's part of doing business . . .

"You have to understand this is not a delivery of services, it's a revenue-driven type of business. To make sales, you have to promote."

By the time Martinez and officials in 12 other cities stage the launch, tickets already will be on sale at more than 14,000 licensed retail outlets. Store owners were allowed to start selling tickets at $1 apiece at 12:01 a.m. or as soon as they opened their doors this morning.

"We're expecting to see lines, yes sir," said Jose Hernandez, Dade marketing manager for Southland Corp., which has 80 7-Eleven stores in Dade, all but two of which are open all night. More than 100 extra employees have been hired just to handle lottery ticket sales in the county, he said.

"We're making a really big issue out of it because we're very enthusiastic and we feel very privileged to be part of it," Hernandez said.

"I hope we sell a lot. People definitely are asking about it," said Nora Cuesta, of The Arcade Sub Shop on Miami Beach, which opens at 8 a.m.

"I'm curious myself to see what reaction there will be," Nick Neamontis, one of the owners of the Bagel Break restaurant in Margate, which opens at 7 a.m. "People are talking about it, that's for sure."

"We have no clue as to whether people will be standing in line," said lottery spokesman Ed George. "It probably depends on the type of business and what kind of traffic they generate anyway."

Lottery Secretary Rebecca Paul said first-day sales numbers won't be available until Wednesday.

Asked what the lottery will mean to the state, Paul offers a brief homily: "The lottery will provide entertainment to millions of Floridians, millions of dollars to a few Floridians and education for all Floridians."

Under the law, half of the lottery's proceeds are returned to players in prizes, 35 percent goes to public schools, 10 percent is used for administration and promotions and the final 5 percent goes to the retailers who sell tickets.

Today's kickoff events will offer free music, prizes and keepsake items such as T-shirts, key chains, cups and posters.

At one site, Miami's Bayside, there also will be protesters from associations for the handicapped who complain that the lottery agency has improperly licensed stores that do not provide adequate access for wheelchairs. A Miami lawyer, Wes White, plans to file a lawsuit in Tallahassee today challenging their licenses, a spokesman said Monday.

Here's the schedule of kickoff events in South Florida:

◆ From 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., kickoff ceremonies will be staged at shopping malls in Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Lee counties.

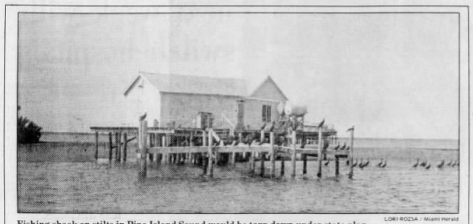
◆ At Miami's Bayside, music will be provided by Nestor Torres, a parachutist will land and Florida International University President Modesto Maidique will scratch off a large ticket.

◆ At the Broward Mall, W. University Drive and Broward Boulevard, the group City Limits will perform.

◆ At the Town Center Mall, 6000 W. Glades Road, Boca Raton, Rising Tide will be on stage.

◆ At the Edison Mall, 4125 Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers, Electraglide will perform.

◆ From 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., there will be a free "gala" at the Orange Bowl featuring the Beach Boys, comedian David Brenner, fireworks and a laser show. Gates open at 5 p.m. With concert staging, the stadium will accommodate about 42,000 people.



LORI ROZSA - Miami Herald

Fishing shack on stilts in Pine Island Sound would be torn down under state plan.

State: 'Historic' shanties must go

By LORI ROZSA
Herald Staff Writer

They look fragile and lonely out in Pine Island Sound, held up by gangly stilts planted on a spit of sand where a few mangroves cling.

Charter boat captains say the weather-beaten fish shacks stand so close to Captiva Pass that the next big blow to come through the Gulf of Mexico will probably sweep them away.

"At least you would think so, from looking at them," Capt. Dick McCune said as he slowly nosed his motor boat closer to a cluster of six shacks, scaring up a flock of cormorants. "But I guess if they've stood for 60 or 70 years, nothing much can hurt them."

To state environmental officers, the small buildings suspended above the water are eyesores that cause pollution and should be torn down. To local boaters and Lee County officials, the tin-roofed, shoe box-shaped shacks are picturesque reminders of South-west Florida's history.

"That's where our fishermen used to live," Harry Goulding, 80, recalls. Goulding was secretary-treasurer of the Punta Gorda Fish Company, the outfit that built dozens of shacks from Key West to Venice in the early 1900s. "We'd have boats go by loaded with ice and gas and everything else imaginable. They picked up the fish to be shipped up north and left the fishermen with supplies."

The Punta Gorda Fish Company, which began in 1897 and closed in the 1960s, painted all the shacks yellow. Many of them have since fallen into disrepair, or even fallen into the bays and harbors of Southwest Florida. But 11 still stand in Lee County waters, and nine are standing in Charlotte County.

Now they're privately owned. Some are used as weekend and summer getaway houses.

Around the state, more than 400 houses and shacks like the ones in Pine Island Sound stand on submerged land — sandbars and tiny islands that disappear at high tide. The state Department of Natural Resources maintains that because submerged lands are state-owned, all unauthorized structures should be torn down.

The DNR is taking a statewide inventory of houses and docks on submerged land and plans to present a recommendation soon to Gov. Bob Martinez and the state Cabinet on what should be done with them.

"I can see them wanting to protect the environment and keep things clean," McCune said. "But these shacks are already here. And they've been here so long, they're part of the local lore. Why bother them now?"

Judy Wysocki of the DNR in Punta Gorda said the shacks create several problems.

"The ones that are used cause environmental damage because they don't have proper sewage treatment. People use the bay," Wysocki said. "Also, the attention they draw from boaters unfamiliar with the area means that some people are chopping up dense grass beds trying to get a look at them."

She also said people using the shacks throw trash out their back doors into the water. Wysocki said several of the shacks have been modernized.

"In this area, I can see possibly three that could be considered historically significant," Wysocki said. "The others have been altered. I personally would not look on them as historically significant."

Frank Alderman, who with some friends owns one of the shacks, disagrees. He also said people who use the shacks don't litter.

"I was born and raised here, these houses are part of my heritage," Alderman, the chairman of the National Bank of Fort Myers, said. "Why the hell would I go out and litter and mess up the environment I was raised in?"

Lee County is behind local residents trying to preserve the shacks. Last month, the county put the shacks in Historic and Architectural Survey. Being on that list doesn't protect them from demolition, Lee County planner Gladys Cook said. But it could be the first step to getting on the National Register of Historic Places.

"No one has really suggested yet that they be placed on the register," Cook said. "Although if they were, the state wouldn't have the freedom to destroy them. . . . They are very historically significant. I think they could make it on to the register."

Alderman and other shack owners have handed together and hired attorneys to try to save the fish shacks. He said a trip out to the shacks would surprise anyone who thinks the stilt houses are dilapidated and serve no purpose.

"It's truly, truly, unique," Alderman said. "To sit there and watch the sunset over the pass, with a beer in hand of course, is one of the most incredible experiences you can imagine."

Hair strands, seashell called keys to killing

By LORI ROZSA
Herald Staff Writer

PUNTA GORDA — More than nine years after 12-year-old Linda Pikuritz was burned alive in the woods of rural Charlotte County, the trial for her accused killer began in a Punta Gorda courtroom.

A tiny seashell and a strand of brown hair found nearly a year after the killing link Bradley Phillip Scott to the 1978 death of the junior high school student, assistant state attorney Donald Pellechia told the jury of six men and six women Monday.

Scott's attorney said the evidence against the former lawn maintenance worker won't prove anything.

"I sincerely hope some of you read mysteries and are fans of Agatha Christie, because this is a whodunit," Scott's attorney Leon-ard Johnson told the jury. "The question is who. It is not known who burned Linda Pikuritz. . . . Vital pieces of the puzzle are missing."

Pellechia said the hair and shell were found in the car Scott drove when police searched it 10 months after the Oct. 12 murder.

He said FBI agents did tests and found the hair in the car "had the same microscopic characteristics" as Pikuritz's hair.

The shell matched those on a necklace she owned, Pellechia said. He said deputies found a broken shell necklace in the burned brush near Pikuritz's body.

"One tiny shell was missing from that necklace," Pellechia said.

The prosecutor said Scott "de-stroyed the life of a 12-year-old child. . . . He also tried very hard to destroy all evidence. He suc-ceeded in destroying Linda, but he failed in his attempts to erase the traces of that night."

Scott, 36, dressed in a gray, pinstriped, three-piece suit, occa-sionally jotted down notes in a yellow legal pad as Pellechia spoke. He frequently smiled back at his wife Kathy, who was sitting in the courtroom.

Scott's attorney told the jury a strand of hair and a seashell are not enough evidence to convict Scott.

He said hairs can't be positively identified as belonging to a partic-ular person. Johnson also said the seashell police found in Scott's car is the kind of shell commonly found in shell shops. He said Pikuritz's mother bought three shell necklaces at the Shell Facto-ry in North Fort Myers, and gave one to Linda.

Johnson suggested the shell found in Scott's car could have been dropped in the car by Scott's mother, who used those types of shells to make lamps, ashtrays, and necklaces.

Investigators said Scott was one of their original suspects, but he wasn't arrested until 1986.

"What were they waiting for?" Johnson said. "This isn't a murder case. It's a farce."

Among the witnesses who testi-fied Monday was Joseph Pikuritz, Linda's brother.

Pikuritz testified that he and Linda rode the school bus home from Port Charlotte Junior High together. When they got home, Linda changed into blue jeans, a yellow Shaun Cassidy T-shirt and red sneakers. He said she was wearing her seashell necklace, too.

Linda told him she was going to ride her bike to the Little General Convenience store about four miles away, Pikuritz said.

That's the last time he saw her alive, he said.

Arthur Moore, a used car sales-man, testified that Scott traded in a white 1971 Mercury in the summer of 1979. A few months later, Charlotte County sheriff's deputies seized the car.

Judge orders trial videotape

By LORI ROZSA
Herald Staff Writer

Over the objections of Bradley Scott's attorneys, Charlotte County Circuit Judge William McIver Mon-day ordered court personnel to videotape testimony in Scott's murder trial.

"I grant you, this is a kind of experimental procedure," McIver said. "I haven't heard of other courts doing it but I feel it's within the realm of new ground and I'm willing to break it."

McIver said the tapes will come in handy if jurors want to refresh their memo-ries during deliberations. Usually, when jurors have questions the court reporter reads from transcribed notes.

"If, in fact, they want to see it played back, I think the videotape will show the demeanor of the witness and how the witness said it," McIver said. "It will save time, too."

In another unusual move, McIver also offered jurors pads and pencils to take notes during the trial, over objections from Scott's at-torneys.

He said because the trial could last for as long as five weeks, jurors might want to jot down notes to keep the witnesses straight.

Jurors declined the offer.

Teen given probation in baby's death

By LORI ROZSA
Herald Staff Writer

Michelle Clark, the 16-year-old Golden Gate girl who stabbed her newborn baby to death last year, won't have to go to prison, Collier County Circuit Judge Ted Brous-seau ruled Monday.

Brousseau sentenced Clark to five years probation and ordered her to continue psychiatric treat-ment and family counseling.

Clark pleaded no contest to manslaughter in October. She had been charged with the second-degree murder of her infant, who was named Andrew Knowlton Clark when he was buried.

Clark's attorney Nelson Faerber and Assistant State Attorney Jerry Brock agreed to the plea and sentence, although Brousseau could have given Clark 15 years in prison.

Faerber said it would serve no purpose to put the teen-ager in jail. She served about one month in a juvenile detention center after her arrest.

"She is able to remember all the horrible details that surrounded the birth," Faerber said Monday. "That is worse for her than prison."

According to court records, Clark had her pregnancy from her strictly religious family. On Jan. 14, she stayed home from school and gave birth alone, records state. Investigators said she stabbed the infant more than a dozen times with a pair of scissors.

They said she put the body in a plastic bag and hid it in her bedroom closet. Her mother, Gail Clark Owens, came home from work and found blood soaking through the living room carpet and her daughter's bed clothes. She found the body, and took it and her daughter to Naples Community Hospital.

Faerber said Clark blocked out the events for several months, but through therapy and counseling has been able to recall them.

"It enters into her life," Faerber said. "But it's not something she thinks about every day."

He said Clark is attending school, and plans to go to college to study interior decorating.

BUSINESS ON THE GULF COAST

Forum Club to hear '88 investment strategy

"My 1988 advice to savers, taking stock for tomor-row" is the topic planned by veteran financial investment counsel David R. Sargent at the noon luncheon for the Forum Club of Collier County at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club.

Sargent, president of United Business Service of Bos-ton, says he plans to discuss investments in stocks and mutual funds and what people should do with their money after the Oct. 19 crash.

The Forum Club consists of 300 business and profes-sional members from Naples and Marco Island.

NAPLES HOSPITALITY — Free training seminars be-gin Wednesday through Friday for all hospitality special-ists in Collier County's tourism industry. The seminars are part of the Naples, Marco and Everglades City Chambers of Commerce "We're Glad You're Here" campaign start-ing Feb. 1.

BANK OPENING — The Northern Trust Bank of Flori-da Naples has opened its new "Park Shore" office in a 2,300-square-foot facility located at The Village on Vene-tian Bay, Park Shore Drive and Gulf Shore Boulevard. The branch office will provide a complete range of bank-ing, trust and brokerage services.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNED — Ground-breaking is set for late February for Whiskey Pointe, a group of gar-den condominium apartments located in the Bonita Bay residential community. Developed by Naples-based, Lundstrom-McDonald Development, Whiskey Pointe will consist of five buildings, housing 40 apartments overlook-ing one of Bonita Bay's lakes.

FINAL FOUR — The final four villas on Park Shore Beach are under construction at Villa Mare, a community of cluster beach homes on North Gulf Shore Boulevard. Designed by Naples architect David Humphrey and land-scaped by Smallwood Landscaping of Naples, Villa Mare consists of 27 Mediterranean villas. Construction should be completed by June 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS — Harry Quay has been elected to the west coast advisory board of the Better Business Bureau of South Florida.

◆ William B. Ward Jr. has been appointed vice pres-dent of estate and trust administration for the Naples trust office of Southeast Bank.

◆ Donna Fiala has been named director of communi-ty relations representing Naples-based Community Home Services, Dial-A-Nurse, and Naples Day Surgery.

— TYKE VANDER ZEE

Business on the Gulf Coast appears every Tuesday in The Herald. To publish business news, send releases to Gulf Coast Business, The Miami Herald, 1053 Fifth Ave. S., Naples, Fla. 33940.

Jet fuel spilled at Naples airport

Between 500 and 1,500 gallons of jet fuel gushed out of a fuel truck at the Naples Airport Mon-day, causing safety and environ-mental concerns.

Airport director Lawrence Mul-lendore said the fuel drained out of the truck after a valve on the truck apparently failed. He said a small amount of the fuel drained into the ditch near the spill, which was near the general aviation terminal.

Mullendore said the state De-partment of Environmental Regu-lation will be called in today to examine the spill.

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