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JOE WORKMAN
Joe Clark — a principal hero for our schools

Joe Clark is the ideal for 'The Band of Joe Clark.'
Or Joe Clark T-shirts.
Or Joe Clark for Congress.

That's his thinking but principal Joe Clark is not right now. He has caught the attention of the Pasco County, N.J., School Board, the U.S. secretary of education and the White House. But most important of all, he has captured the attention of his students.

Clark, 45, is principal of Eastside High School in Paterson, a school once condemned as a "cathode of failure." But that was before Clark signed on six years ago.

IN HIS FIRST YEAR he expelled 300 students and ordered codes of dress and discipline for faculty and students. He was caught in teacher strikes, signed a deal with the school with a ballgame and a baseball ball. His students call him "Larry" and "Crazy Joe."

He teaches a new vocabulary word over the school loudspeaker every day. He works 70-hour weeks and walks the halls of his school with a ballgame and a baseball ball. His students call him "Larry" and "Crazy Joe."

"We look a school that was one of the worst in the state, one of the worst in the nation. Cuts, shabbings, killing, rapes, of infanticide. You walk through this building today and you will find no semblance similar to Eastside," Clark declares.

"We dared say, 'If you come to Eastside, you're going to work. You're not going to be disruptive. You're going to grow men and women, banging around doing nothing.' And that seems to have caused great consternation in Paterson and the nation."

Constitution, indeed. The school board is after his head for expelling 60 students last fall without its permission. Furthermore, he was charged with violating fire codes when he locked doors to keep drug pushers out. The charge was thrown out of court.

FM ON CLARK'S SIDE. But the scope of his disciplinary actions is not too narrow. He ought to be back in through the lines of past school boards and principals and make his basketball band and score the daylights out of the parents who have neglected the upbringing of their own children.

Clark, though, but he says the students he expelled are the best ones. They go to a stern lecture and benefit from it. Clark said some of those he expelled were "beyond-repair" he called "teachers" not interested in learning.

The animals he's having to kick out didn't want until they get to school to learn animal ways. Kids won't get caught out if they're allowed to run wild until school age and at night, weekends and during vacations.

But Joe Clark can't go around shaking up every parent and past school officials, the ones really responsible for Eastside's decline. So he'll just have to stick to the task of making his school a suitable environment for learning.

From most accounts the parents, teachers and students are behind Clark, and responsive to a telephone poll was running 100 to 1 in his favor.

"There must be an establishment of good discipline based upon sound concepts and precepts, not some arbitrary liberal regulations," he preaches.

Right on.

Maybe Joe Clark is a lot like the hero in the old play where the gallathea is hired to chase away all the bad guys and clean up the town. After order is restored, his rough ways are too much for the town fathers and they want him out.

That might be the thinking of the Pasco County School Board. The ban, my foot. Better to give him a raise and name a school after him.

They should stick with Crazy Joe, for the kids' sake.

Joe Workman is a News-Press columnist. His column appears Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Charlotte

New building contract helps local subcontractors

By LOUISE HENIGMAN
News-Press Staff Writer

Charlotte County subcontractors will have a better chance to participate in the construction of the new county administrative services building thanks to changes made Thursday in the final draft of the building contract.

Building contractor Peter Brown Taylor hired by the County Commission in part because they were a local firm dedicated to hiring local subcontractors, told the building committee Thursday that the contract has

dered their ability to hire locals.
The contract had specified that the cost of replacing an unsatisfactory subcontractor would be taken from the contractor's profits.

With their profits on the line, Peter Brown Taylor would not want to contract with any business which could not furnish at least \$300,000 bond for the project.

Very few contractors in Charlotte County could afford such a bond.
It would be too much of a risk other than to bid, said project manager Jim Stewart. "It's the little guys who go under."

County Commission Chairman David Schmidt, a member of the building committee, didn't like the idea.

"One of the big points in selecting a local contractor was because this contractor knew who was in this county," said Schmidt. "I thought it would be known to his county."

In an effort to smooth the way for more local participation, the committee included the cost of replacing a non-performing subcontractor in the \$6.3 million guaranteed maximum price, excluding any legal fees.

"It's willing to take the risk on them," Schmidt said of the local subcontractors.

"Let's keep it here. Charry begins at the home."

Even with that cost included in the \$6.3 million, the contractor pays for any amount they might exceed over that figure.

Schmidt was not as confident of how the county commission must feel about the change.

The final draft of the building contract, which was approved by the building committee Thursday, will be presented to the commission Tuesday.



Snake in the class
Peter Caron, president of Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Center in Punta Gorda, introduces a common box tortoise to kindergarten students at Camberly School in Fort Myers. The center got the snake after the box became too heavy for its former owner, an exotic dancer. Octagon is a non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation and public education.

Panel OKs \$1.3 million Murdock shopping plaza

By KAREN S. PARKER
News-Press Staff Writer

Charlotte County Development Review Board members approved a proposal for a \$1.3 million retail shopping plaza between U.S. 1 and West Coast Street in Murdock.

Brown's Vesta Development Corp. estimates that once permits are pulled and site plans given final approval, the 2.3-acre site should take less than a year to complete.

The plaza will consist of two buildings with 70,000 square feet of retail space. One building will have 4,100 square feet. Another larger building will have 14,700 square feet of space — room for 17 stores.

Located near Toledo Blade Boulevard and just north of the drive.

Memories enclosed: Punta Gorda buries a capsule for future

By JUDITH NYGREN
News-Press Staff Writer

The Punta Gorda Cemetery Committee decided to bury the capsule as part of its year-long celebration, said Baker, chairman of the committee. Although the event ran into 1988, it did mark the culmination of the centennial year, she said.

"Everything we did was a huge success," Baker said. "And I'm just thrilled with the capsule. There are a lot of things in here for generations to come."

Several proclamations were passed into the 50th anniversary of the cemetery. "The grand old days will never be forgotten in there. They'll be around and that will bring a smile to my grandchild's face."

See CAPSULE, page 2B

Speedway plan gets starting flag by county board

By KAREN S. PARKER
News-Press Staff Writer

LeRoy Davidson's dream — a Charlotte County speedway — was given the green light Thursday by the Charlotte County Development Authority.

Davidson's speedway will be the first modified stock car track in Southwest Florida. Dirt-racing fans have had to travel a long four-hour commute to the Florida Fairgrounds in Tampa to enjoy the sport. Davidson said he hopes to have the speedway completed in time for this year's season which begins in April.

Modified stock cars, sprint cars and Florida modified stock cars will race on the clay track. Davidson plans to spruce the track with water between races to reduce the amount of dust generated by the cars.

Several proclamations were passed into the 50th anniversary of the cemetery. "The grand old days will never be forgotten in there. They'll be around and that will bring a smile to my grandchild's face."

See SPEEDWAY, page 2B

District 13 candidate stresses local action

By BARBARA L. COMPTON
News-Press Staff Writer

Brian Pappas of Naples officially joined the race for the District 13 congressional seat Thursday, proclaiming a need for more local representation in national government.

"Congress should help local people," Pappas said. "I'm a Republican, and it's a great honor to represent my constituents in national government."

"I could see cutting the budget by localizing," he said. "Social programs such as housing and food stamps could be taken out of the national realm by encouraging local sponsorship," Pappas said.

"A person could contribute and receive tax credits," he said. "But the changes would have to occur gradually," he said.

"We're not taking a muck-it approach," he said. "Pappas said he works as a tax lawyer and his schooling, which includes a master's degree in taxation, adds to his concerns about the national deficit and cutting the budget.

Defense waste needs to be cut, and money could be saved on Medicare if private insurance companies are encouraged to cover health services needed by older folks at an affordable price, Pappas said.

"We need to encourage the private insurance industry to develop policies people can pay for when they can afford it," he said.

The government must continue to provide Social Security since it has been paid for by contributions, but recipients ages could be gradually phased back to save more money than the program, Pappas said.

The eligibility age could be moved back, six months at a time, to 68 or 70 years of age, he said.

Since people are living longer, the phased back eligibility could help ensure that recipients get Social Security through the end of their lives, he said.

Pappas, 38, said he decided to join the race in November as a result of encouragement from friends and supporters.

Incumbent Rep. Conde Mack, R-Cape Coral, announced in the fall he would not seek reelection to the seat because of his plans to run for the U.S. Senate.

Pappas said he was asked to enter the race at that time by someone who had supported him in the 1986 bid for state commissioner of education.

"It was an unexpected request," he said. "Pappas lost the education race but said he carried about 35 percent of the vote in the Republican primary in Lee and Collier counties.

The 13th district includes Lee, Charlotte and Sarasota counties and part of Collier County.

Rep. Wilton, a Sarasota businessman, retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James Doster of North Fort Myers, and Lee County Commissioner Porter Coles of Sanibel — all Republicans — also have announced plans to run for the seat.

But Pappas said he is the only candidate who offers a money-back guarantee.



Brian Pappas, a Republican, officially entered the race Thursday.

If he does not raise \$100,000 in campaign contributions by March 31, Pappas said he will pay back all contributions and withdraw from the race.

Pappas is married and has three children.

Doctor: Pikuritz killed by fire

By JANE MUSGRAVE
News-Press Staff Writer

Linda Pikuritz was still breathing when her own clothes were placed on her bare back and pinned to the wall of the room that killed her, the doctor who examined the 12-year-old boy testified Thursday.

Although it is doubtful that Pikuritz was conscious when the fire hit, she said, and asked found in her throat and lungs showed she was still alive, said Dr. Peter Tom, Charlotte County's associate medical examiner.

"If she was conscious, she would most likely have tried to escape, and we would not see the clothing on her chest," Tom said. "But, he said, there is little doubt as to how she got there and how she died. She inhaled then. This was the last of four witnesses to

See PIKURITZ, page 2B

MORE NEWS

Here's where to find more local news and information in this morning's edition of the Charlotte News-Press.

New charges: A couple arrested on drug and sex charges a week ago was back in jail Thursday on similar charges. Their original arrest stemmed from drug charges filed against former Punta Gorda Patrolman Gerry Nels.

Collier elude A consultant says Charlotte County has a way to go before being considered a cultural haven.

Lettery wins Three days into the lettery, Charlotte County is experiencing some headaches.

Almanac: Charlotte County's most comprehensive daily report on clubs and other activities.

Oblivious: Services set for Carl Henning and Walter Gilman, 45.

Police reports: Daily crime reports from the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department and the Punta Gorda Police Department.

Kipartek says: Bill Kipartek takes a swing at the new miniature golf course in Charlotte Harbor, 12.

Secret march: Results of the Charlotte/Port Charlotte soccer match, 10.

Headline: The second week of the Bradley Scott trial comes to an end. Please see Saturday's Charlotte News-Press for the full story.

MARTINEZ GIVES INFERIOR SECRETARY FOUR OF FLORIDA'S REEF/7B