

CLASSIFIED/100
BUSINESS/40
DEATHS/30

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Jury recommends death penalty for Scott

Attorney: Client is victim of a pawn game

By LORI ROZSA
Special to The Herald

Bradley Phillip Scott should die for killing 13-year-old Linda Plautz, a Punta Gorda jury decided Friday.

The six-man, six-woman jury convicted Scott Thursday of burning Plautz to death in a house under construction in 1976. Prosecutors sought the death penalty.

Charlotte County Circuit Judge William McIver will decide Monday whether he will follow the jury's recommendation.

Friday's deliberations were the last in the three-week trial that captured the interest of Charlotte County residents who packed into the courtroom in the final days.

"We and several of the 200 who said they were in junior high school with Plautz and vividly remembered the crime, attended the trial. Curious onlookers, intrigued by the facts and

details of the case, also watched. Scott's mother, his wife, April, and other family members attended most of the trial, and, like Scott's attorneys, maintained his innocence even in the face of the jury's guilty verdict.

Scott's attorney, Leonard Johnson, said his client is the victim of a pawn game. He said law officers were in a state to enter Charlotte County's most gruesome murder that they arrested the most convenient suspect —

Scott, who has a criminal record and had been seen talking to Plautz and buying beer for her.

Although investigators said Scott was one of their original suspects, he wasn't arrested until 1986. They filed a charge against him in 1981, but state officials didn't have sufficient evidence to prosecute.

Johnson said the state still didn't have sufficient evidence when they tried Scott this month. He said the

state's main piece of physical evidence, a shell from a machine like one she wore the night of her murder that were found in Scott's car 10 months after the murder, could have come from anyone.

Assistant state attorney Donald Felichia said the shell and hair were part of a chain of evidence that linked Scott to Plautz's death. He said the last time Plautz was seen alive, she was talking to Scott.



Nutty for a dip

A man at the Mahalo Hotel told Matt Houser if he wanted to swim in the pool, he'd have to clean the contents out of it. The 3-year-old visitor from Connecticut wanted to swim — he started cleaning.

Friday, Floridians might have thought Friday's 65-degree weather was a little chilly for swimming, but not Matt. "It was 5 degrees when we left home yesterday," he said. "This is great."

Setting sail Plans unfurl for February's Huntington Cup

By TRACEY ELTON
Special to The Herald

As many as 60 crews from across Southeast Florida are expected to compete in a sailboat race in Naples next month, race officials said Friday.

The Huntington Cup will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 21. Dennis Conner, captain of the Stars and Stripes and winner of the 1987 America's Cup, is expected to conduct an awards ceremony after the race.

The race will feature boats ranging from 30 feet to 45 feet long. The boats will follow a 12-hour course that starts near the end of the Naples Fishing Pier, race coordinator John Laney said.

Tickets are expected from sailing clubs from Marco Island to Port Charlotte.

The race is sponsored by the Huntington Trust Co. of Naples, the Huntington Mortgage Co. and the

Windward development on Naples Bay. The Huntington firms are subsidiaries of Huntington Bancshares Inc., an Ohio bank holding company.

Lawrence J. Conner, president of Huntington Trust, said the race is an sport of sailing in Southwest Florida.

The race will be conducted according to the rules of the U.S. Yacht Racing Rules.

For details, call 261-1386.

WBNS-TV 10 in Fort Myers, is expected to give on-site weather forecasts to assist the sailboat crews.

Conner will present trophies to the first, second and third-place winners in each of four classes.

Boat and crew registration for the race will be held at Turner Marina in Naples from 9 p.m. to 9 p.m. Feb. 20.

The registration fee is \$50. Proceeds will go to charity.

For details, call 261-1386.

Ohio-based farm union comes to Florida

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — (AP) — An Ohio-based farm-labor union responsible for a 1979 strike against Campbell's Soup Co. has established a Florida base, having organized more of the state's estimated 250,000 farm workers, its president said Friday.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee, which represents about 3,000 laborers in Ohio and Michigan, plans to target workers involved in several

Florida crops. Exposing the dangers and overseas conditions will be its theme to help rally workers, said Badamer Viscor, president of the union.

President are "a working gang. We feel there is a battle death in this state that people know little about," he said at an afternoon news conference.

While pesticides present a danger to consumers, he said, farm workers

after the stringent effects and should organize to fight them. "I've set up an office in Automobile and will work more the United Farm Workers union in Florida, which has the state's only state 'labor union contract' with the Coca-Cola Co., which sells citrus groves and orange groves.

About 750 workers are represented by that union, said Fernando Cuevas, a

FLW vice president.

Unions, said, as many as 75 percent of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's members from Ohio and Michigan might all be sent to Florida for work.

In 1978, the union organized a strike of 2,300 workers at Ohio farms contracted to Campbell's and then a national boycott, which lasted from 1979 through February 1981.

Out-of-town guests are always welcome — well, sort of

When Bev and I lived in Michigan, we seldom had company, move in with us. Most of our family lived in California. We sometimes had to buy them a plane ticket to come and see us. They're retired to Florida. The first year, we were amazed at the number of friends who wanted to renew acquaintances when the wind-chill factor was below zero elsewhere.

We did not resent this intrusion. We accepted the fact that our golden years would be characterized by a stream of relatives and friends who stayed in our spare bedrooms.

We were wrong. It has not worked out that way. After the first couple of

years, we seldom have guests.

Friends only arrive for a night or two in a sporadic basis. Either they feel we are too old to entertain or the novelty of a Florida beach vacation has worn thin.

Last week, Bev and I were talking about the changes that have occurred. We were missing the visitors.

The day after that discussion, we received a letter from a relative in Southern California that gave us a new appreciation of our privacy. The family member who wrote to us is a member of two teen-agers. She is a beautician, and her husband works on construction projects. They have a modest home that they are buying with a mortgage. "It's been so long since I have written anyone a letter, I apologize for being so far behind. I've had our Christmas cards for three months and never even opened the box. We figured we have had permanent company for one year and three months without even one day for a break.

We need to think it was an imposition if our company, during our first year of retirement, lasted for more than a week! This relative explained how their health has improved.

I started with our nephew (17 years old) for seven days there. Then our nephew's friend from North Dakota came and stayed for four months. That left us with hundreds of dollars worth of phone bills and other unmet charges. We got many promises but no pay back.

"My brother, wife and I and two teen-agers arrived from Hawaii with no plans to live and had the means to get their own place. We kicked out our so-called "friend" and they moved to Los Angeles. After five months, this middle brother of mine and his wife finally made arrangements for another place to live. They left on Dec. 21st from my younger brother arrived on Dec. 21st from Hawaii for a two-week stay over the holidays. When he left for Honolulu on Jan. 4, we finally took down the "vacancy" sign from our hotel.

We took a deep breath of relief for

the first time in 15 months. So now we have to catch up with our own lives. I have to start looking for "four" rather than eight. It's a new, weird change.

The longest stay of visitors that we experienced occurred four years ago. We had taken one of our first retirement junkies to England, where we knew a couple of ladies. While in London, they contacted us with a big party for the "Tanks." Bev got carried away and said the friends "come and see us anytime." They did.

Five who were at the party (four women, one man) arrived in Miami on Jan. 7, 1984. We borrowed a van to meet them after their flight from London. That's when we discovered they were staying with us for 17 days. They had an excursion plane ticket that required last-minute before the return flight. We were horrified but we'd asked for it. We were hospitable.

As one point, this friendly welcome was annulled. They called an English

friend who was temporarily working in New York and said, "Come on down. The weather is beautiful!"

Bev explained that the condo rules for our size unit only permitted a total of seven people to stay overnight in the apartment. The New York friend had to rent a motel room. He did not sleep here but his feet were under the table whenever Bev got a meal out. That was three times a day. This gang was short on funds, a good one with that group of visitors, but it was true. We were on the plane back to London. Since then, Bev is careful at parties. She never gets carried away.

She'll say, "If you're in the neighborhood, stop by and we'll buy you a cup of coffee."

We learned that lesson after a 17-day experience. We have to wonder if the young woman in Southern California learned anything after 15 months of solitude.



DON JENSEN

Sanibel set to meet flood plan deadline

The state's top insurance official Friday said Sanibel Island is one of 21 communities in danger of losing federal flood insurance protection, but an island official said there's no cause for alarm.

The National Flood Insurance Program recently sent letters to officials in Sanibel and the other communities saying their coverage is about to be canceled because they have not submitted revised floodplain management plans.

Flood damage is not covered by conventional homeowners or renters insurance and is available only through the federal program. Federal officials require management plans to prevent or minimize floodwater damage to houses and other structures, in an effort to control costs of the program.

Sanibel officials have begun working on revising their floodplain management plans and don't expect any problems in meeting the federal government's March 5 deadline, said Bruce Rogers, director of planning on the island.

"We've been working now for several months on an ordinance to adopt the federal changes," he said.

The Sanibel City Council is expected to consider the ordinance at a public hearing Tuesday. Insurance Commissioner Bill Guster said 51

'We've been working now for several months on an ordinance to adopt the federal changes.'

Bruce Rogers, planning director

Florida communities are in danger of losing flood insurance protection.

"I want the people who live in these areas to know that they are at the very tip of being the only flood insurance available to them," he said. "If this occurs, they are at risk of losing everything they own in a flood and having to use to pay the bill."

Existing flood insurance policies will not be canceled in communities that lose their eligibility, but policies will not be renewed when they expire, the commissioner said.

Communities who will be kicked out of the program unless new floodplain plans are approved by Feb. 4 are Callaway, Cassberry, Cedar Grove, Cedar Key, unincorporated Charlotte County, Clewiston, unincorporated Clay County, Coconut Creek, Apalachicola, Atlantic, Belleair Bluffs, Belleair Shore and Brooksville.

Other communities have until Feb. 17: Cocoa City, Ferrandina Beach, Estero Beach, Delray Beach, Chula Lake, Dunbar, Crescent City, Great Springs, Dania, Dade and Delafair Springs.

Still others have until March 3, unincorporated Flagler County, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Meade, unincorporated Franklin and Gulf counties, Gulf Breeze, Haines City, unincorporated Highlands County, Holly Hill, Inglis, Interlachen, Jupiter Beach, Jupiter Inlet, Collier, Kenansha City, Lymon Haven, Manalapan, unincorporated Monroe, Vero Beach, Palm Bay, Palm Bay North, Okeechobee, Pomona Park, Port St. Joe, Sanibel, South Daytona, Fort Pierce and Haverhill.