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Twenty-five cents

Lutherans get court go ahead to open school

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

Lutheran High School Northwest will operate on normal schedule at least for fall semester, Oakland County Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert ruled Wednesday. Gilbert ordered the status quo preserved at the Farmington Hills school. The ruling will allow students to return to the classrooms Sept. 8.

The decision was a victory for the Lutheran High School Association of Greater Detroit, which had been prohibited last month from continuing to use the building at 39175 Highmeadow as a high school because it is on land zoned

for elementary school use.

The ruling was made by the city's Zoning Board of Appeals. "We're very happy so far," said Herbert Moldenhauer, superintendent of the Lutheran association.

"We're confident, and from a Christian point of view, we are prayerfully hopeful.

"We believe we can be a fine asset to the community."

Wednesday's court action was an interim ruling. The case is expected to go to trial in a few months.

In the meantime, the association was barred from continuing construction of

a gymnasium on the site.

Timothy Doyle, attorney for the association, said he will file additional motions with the court in hopes of obtaining a final ruling quickly.

THE ASSOCIATION purchased the building for \$332,000 last year from the

Farmington Public Schools. School officials publicly washed their hands of any responsibility for the building's fate.

Formerly Highmeadow Elementary School, the building is in the Holly Hills Subdivision, southwest of 13 Mile and Middlebelt.

City officials claim to be unaware that the high school operated on that site during the 1980-81 school year.

A stop work order was issued when grading began for construction of a gymnasium this summer.

Several zoning violations were is-

cluded, including one for operating a secondary school in a residential area without direct access to a secondary or major thoroughfare in violation of a city ordinance.

The school had an enrollment of slightly more than 100 students last year.

Gasoline caper cover is blown, suspect nabbed

By Gary M. Cates
staff writer

A Royal Oak man accused of trying to empty a service station tank with a 1,000-gallon truck tank was arraigned Tuesday in Farmington Hills on a charge of attempted larceny.

Albert R. Todek, 35, stood mute before 47th District Judge Michael Hand and a not guilty plea was entered for him. Todek was released on personal bond awaiting pre-trial examination.

Ray Keller, owner of a Mobil station at Eight Mile/Farmington Road, reported that last Monday evening he was driving by his station when he noticed a truck at the gasoline storage tanks.

"When I saw the truck sitting over the tank, with mud flaps across the entire back of his truck, and I heard the pump motor and smelled gas, I knew right then what he was doing," Keller said.

After pinning the truck in with his car, Keller called the Farmington police.

"I was on the phone long enough for him to dump the gas back into the tank, however he left his hose in there," Keller said.

"I didn't take long for Farmington (police) to get here. Three cars came in while I was still on the phone."

Police said the truck contained a pump and 1,000-gallon tank along with hoses and other equipment. All of the controls for the equipment were inside the cab, so the driver only had to get out to lower the hose, officers said.

Police said the driver would not talk to them.

Keller said that a bandit who would take only 100 to 200 gallons from a station at a time might get away with the thefts because station owners would not realize they had been robbed.

"It's hard to tally up 100 to 200 gallons. The temperatures make the gas expand and contract in the underground tanks," he says. "My tanks are set in water and they shift, so you can't be certain if you are getting an accurate reading."

Keller said he was in the habit of leaving his gas tank lids unlocked, as many station owners do, he said.

He said he often left the lids unlocked so that delivery trucks could unload gas after station hours. "Now I will wait for them to deliver," he said.

Keller estimated that "a thousand gallons of gas could be sold for \$1,400."

It would only take five minutes to pump out 1,000 gallons and it would be no problem selling it, he said.

Police are still investigating the case.



Detective Vincent Ziegler (left) and city mechanic Jim Burke inspect the rear of the truck that contains the 1,000-gallon tank that was used to store the stolen gasoline.

Investigators link drugs to veterinarian's death

By Judith Berne
staff writer

"A lethal dosage of pentobarbital" was discovered in the body of Dr. Janice Runkle, the small, quiet veterinarian at Pleasant Colony — winner of this year's Kentucky Derby and Preakness.

Toxicology studies to determine the presence of drugs in the body also noted some evidence of a trace of Dilantin, used to control seizure disorders, according to information released Friday by the Lake County, Ill., Sheriff's Department.

Pentobarbital was termed "a fast-acting barbiturate" by the Lake County medical examiner's office. The drug is used "as a sedative, hypnotic and as a pre-operative anesthetic medication," according to the medical examiner.

Runkle, 28, who drew attention as one of few female veterinarians connected with big-time horse racing, grew up in West Bloomfield. She graduated from North Farmington High School and Michigan State University.

"WE ARE ASSUMING she ingested probably an oral solution of pentobarbital," said Sgt. Frank Winans, chief investigator for the sheriff's department, since no pill or capsule residue was evident.

Police estimate it took approximately 15 minutes for the dosage to take effect.

"We are not saying she did it deliberately or accidentally," Winans said.

"We are quite sure she did not take them inadvertently. That large amount would have a taste to it."

"We have no reason why she would want to take the drugs or her own life," Winans added.

"There was no trauma found in the way the medicine was taken," reported Detective Daniel Collins, also of the sheriff's department. This would tend to rule out a theory that the medication was forced on Runkle.

Earlier, police had reported no evidence of a struggle. "There was no trauma to the body. The area immediately around the body didn't indicate any violence," reported Winans.

PENTOBARBITAL, WHICH is available in both liquid and capsule form, is most commonly prescribed as

the drugs Nembutal or Carbrital, Collins reported.

As a veterinarian, Runkle would have had "total access" to the drug which is also used for sedating animals, Collins said.

A local veterinarian, who asked not to be named, verified pentobarbital was commonly used "intravenously on animals to put them to sleep — not something you would take orally, usually."

He also added that the drug would have been available to Runkle.

Runkle was found dead Aug. 1 on an isolated Lake Michigan beach, preserved by the state of Illinois as a nature area. Her body was partially decomposed, indicating it might have been there several days.

She was reported missing from her New York residence earlier that week by a sister. Later, it was reported she

had flown to Chicago and registered at an airport hotel under an assumed name, paying cash for both transactions.

POLICE SAY they don't know how she travelled the 45 miles from the airport to Waukegan, the nearest town to the state park. They have not recovered the glasses she wore.

Police earlier indicated letters to her sister and a friend gave instructions and authorized funds for taking care of her two horses. They suggested she was going away for awhile.

Lake County Police say those letters are in transit from New York authorities.

Winans speculated the investigation would go on at least for another week.

Funeral services were Thursday in Birmingham. Burial was private. Contributions may be sent to the Detroit Zoological Society.

Students opting to clean up court

The landscape surrounding 47th District Court in Farmington is getting special attention this summer thanks to 46 young adults arrested for being disorderly June 10.

The youths, charged with being part of a loud, disorderly, bottle-throwing crowd, are choosing three days of work at the courthouse in lieu of five days in the Oakland County Jail.

Three more opted for the landscaping work last week. They are David Delorey and James Whitworth of Farmington and James Whitworth of Farmington Hills.

James Larkin of Livonia — one of the few arrested who wasn't a graduating senior from Farmington High School — requested a trial postponement.

Many students including Delorey, Maloney and Whitworth changed their pleas to guilty after pleading innocent or mute at their mass arraignments June 22. Trials for the others are expected to continue through September.

THOSE WHO OPT for the three days of work also are fined \$50 and \$5 in court fees. If they keep clean records

for a year, the disorderly charge will be dropped from their records.

"We have them mowing the lawn, landscaping. Some are working inside, like Larry Bemis, who is adding shelves in the records room," said Howard Aldrich, court officer.

Aldrich admits he's running out of assignments for the youths.

The court has struck up a deal with Farmington High School Principal Jerry Potter, who is willing to put his former students to work on school grounds under his supervision.

The mass arrests took place in a field on Westchester, southeast of Nine Mile and Haggerty in Farmington Hills, during graduation week revelry.

Police went to the field on complaints about the size of the crowd (estimates range from 150 to 400 persons) and noise from fireworks.

Officers claim they were pelted with bottles and obscenities and that the crowd failed to disperse when ordered to do so.

Nineteen vehicles were confiscated by police.

Cops probe Hills girl's rape

Police are looking for two men in connection with the reported rape of a 16-year-old Farmington Hills girl in Novi July 21.

The girl told police she was sitting with a girl friend in a parked car in Farmington Hills when a maroon Grand Prix containing two men pulled up alongside their car.

She said the men asked the girls to go with them for a ride and to smoke marijuana.

The girl said the men asked them to meet with them at a party store on Nine Mile and Middlebelt, but when the girls went to the location the men were not there.

She said she drove her girl friend home and then noticed that the two men were in their car following her. She said she left her car and went with the men.

The three drove around for some time, stopping for 20 minutes to smoke

some hash, she said. They then took her to a parking lot where they accosted and raped her, she reported.

The girl described one attacker as being a white male, 20-21 years of age with a muscular build and medium-long blond hair and mustache. The second man was described as a white male, 19-years old with a thin build, light mustache and long, brown, frizzy hair.

what's inside

Mercedes and Corvette Painting

Barry Kizes of Troy placed an Observer and Eclectic classified ad on painting Corvettes and Mercedes. "I've received enough response to keep me busy through the winter." Remember, one call does it all!

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