

Police captain will appeal guilty verdict

By LYNN ORR

A 17-year veteran of the Farmington Hills police force was found guilty of violating departmental regulations Tuesday.

Two other charges against Capt. Russell Conway, second-ranking officer on the force, were dismissed by a police trial board headed by John Nichols, police director.

The four-person board ruled that Conway violated a departmental rule prohibiting officers from recommending attorneys to persons who could be involved in criminal prosecution.

Departmental action on the ruling was not made public pending an

appeal by Conway, said Nichols. John Lyons, Conway's attorney, said the ruling would be appealed to a police appeal board. Like the trial board, the appeal board would be comprised of city employees, Lyons said.

The ruling stemmed from an incident in September involving Conway and two brothers who own a pharmacy in Farmington Hills.

Richard Niemisto, assisted by P.I. John Hedricks, headed the investigation, which began in February. Hedricks learned of the alleged violation in a casual conversation with Albert Abdelnour, one of two brothers who face criminal charges made by the Michigan State Police and viola-

tion of pharmacy regulations by the Michigan Pharmaceutical Board.

Nichols, his secretary Joanne King, Lt. Thomas Godwin, and Sgt. Norman Kilmer, both Farmington Hills officers, comprised the police trial board.

CONWAY testified that his wife, Margaret, may have recommended hiring attorney Harry Rosen to Basim Abdelnour. Conway made the recommendation, according to Abdelnour's testimony.

"The best that I can recall, he (Abdelnour) called the house around 8 p.m. or so," Conway testified. In response to his attorney's question, Conway said he may have given

Abdelnour his private phone number. "When he first called, he stated he was sorry to bother me and wanted to see me. I told him I wasn't going out," Conway said.

"He said he was afraid of losing his liquor license," Conway testified. He testified that he knew Abdelnour casually because he "played the Michigan lottery" at Abdelnour's store. Conway also said he knew Abdelnour's father.

"After agreeing to see Abdelnour and giving him his address, Conway said he changed his mind.

"I called him back and told him my wife would pick him up," Conway said. He testified that his wife was

going out and he wasn't feeling well and didn't want to "sit around all evening waiting for him."

Conway went on to testify that he told Abdelnour he couldn't help him when Abdelnour stated he "was involved in a criminal matter. Margaret Conway suggested Rosen, an old family friend, Conway testified.

Rosen called the Conway home, talked to Conway, and then talked to Abdelnour, according to Abdelnour's testimony.

Rosen denied talking to Conway, but testified that his son assisted Abdelnour in his arraignment in 47th District Court in Farmington Hills the following day.

Rosen testified that he called the Conway home after receiving a message that Mrs. Conway had called him.

IN HIS summation, Lyons pointed out that the case depended on the credibility of those testifying. Lyons stated that Abdelnour and his brother Albert were promised "letters of cooperation" from the Farmington Hills police in return for their testimony in the charges against Conway.

Niemisto said, "There was no way this department could guarantee them (the Abdelnours) that the charges would be dropped."

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Backhand forehand

North Farmington's Dieter Rucker joined in on the competition during the state's Class A tennis finals. To see the results of that tourney turn to the sports section. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

At public meeting

Hills manager blasts press

'As long as the public interest is served, I feel I've done my job.'
—City Mgr. George Majors

Farmington Hills City Manager George Majors has lashed out at criticism of his administration, labeling a column in the Farmington Observer as inaccurate and "in bad taste."

His defense statement came at this week's council session.

"I've been dumped on and I don't want to take it," said Majors. He was responding to the Crack-erbarrel Debate column in which Farmington Editor Steve Barnaby claimed that relations between the council and administration were "in a shambles" because of Majors' leadership.

The council's action of reducing administration raises from seven to five per cent was paramount to a no confidence vote for Majors, said Barnaby.

"I'm not sure who is concerned with the image of this city. But I suggest that they put their complaints into proper perspective," said Majors in response to criticism that his leadership has led to a negative public image for Farmington Hills.

The council, he said, could direct him to hire a public relations person. "There's not enough appreciation of the job being done by this staff," he said.

Majors pointed to a recent study made by an outside consulting firm which, he said, gave high grades to administration leadership. "The study found that the administration was in good hands and it was extremely complimentary," he said.

In response to the columnist's claim that Majors maintained a dangerously low profile, Majors said his only obligation was to keep the city council informed.

"I've got no obligation to change the Observer into a scandal sheet. I'm not out to titillate the public."

Barnaby's criticism revolved around the resignation of a former finance director. Majors had requested, at that time, that the press remain silent on the resignation.

"As long as the public interest is served, I feel I've done my job," he said.

He pointed to General Motors as an example of a company which didn't announce to the public when it fired an employee. It was his obligation to protect his employees, he said.

Majors, in his remarks, addressed a number of criticisms made in the column including the dust control controversy, budget information, police relations and staff competency.

The column claimed that residents had been provided insufficient information and that Majors had gone against the wishes of the council in the kind of information provided to residents in the letters they received concerning dust control.

"There were some 4,000 residents who received notices and they didn't complain," said Majors about the dust control public hearing in which 300 persons appeared.

The residents' main complaint was the possibility of being assessed for a

service which the city was paying for previously. Majors said it was impossible to get all the information in the letter.

"We hear the complaints but we don't hear the compliments," said Majors.

He lauded his staff for their ability in getting out the volume of mail necessary to notify residents and claimed that some residents didn't receive notice because of postal problems.

He denied that he had abused the city charter, as was claimed in the column, by sheltering department heads from council members.

"The council regularly communicates with the staff. And I set up meetings between the staff and council members. I haven't abused the city charter," he said.

In response to the claim that residents had difficulty in obtaining budget information, Majors said that the Memorial Day schedule, when city halls and libraries were closed, caused the inconvenience.

"The summary sheets were at least as complete as they had been in previous years and the proposed raises were on the sheets," he said.

He denied that he had "defied" the city council by submitting a non-union pay increase sheet which went above seven per cent.

"The pay increases weren't mandated to be seven per cent," he said. "The staff had been asked to include seven per cent increases. Neither Miller (Finance Director Girard Miller) nor I went over every number. There were errors, but we made no attempt to defy the council."

The increases had averaged out to nearly eight per cent.

Majors said that police relations had improved in recent months and that citizen complaints were on the decrease.

The column claimed that police relations with the public were poor because the command had changed three times in one year.

"We had problems when the city was involved in a court suit. But these are old chestnuts," he said.

He lauded a number of personnel, saying his staff had handled well the problems in a city which was quickly growing.

Councilman Keith Deacon came to Majors' defense.

He denied that the council's demand for a rollback of five per cent for non-union raises was a vote of no confidence.

"We merely wanted to get the budget down," he said.

He defended Majors' conduct in the finance director's resignation in 1975, saying that Majors was acting on the direction of the city council.

Deacon criticized Barnaby for his recent columns in which he had criticized the lack of leadership on both the city council and the and by the city manager.

"He'll be getting down to the janitors next," said Deacon.

Fairview alumni take nostalgic trip

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Parents, students and alumni pressed into the warm, child-sized auditorium at Fairview Elementary School forcing late-comers to stand in the hallway.

But the sounds of the crowd as they oohed and aahed their way through five years of slides could not be contained by the auditorium and the sounds echoed into the empty classrooms. They were having a farewell party for the school, which will close in June.

Dan Cowan, principal of the 13-year-old school, looked around the crowded hallway in surprise, as teacher George Gagnuk showed slides he took during the last six years at Fairview.

"I don't think I was expecting this,"

he said as he gazed at the 300 persons craning their necks to see the four screens of color slides.

Most of the visitors paused to talk with Cowan during the slide show. High school seniors who had once been sixth grade students at Fairview stopped to chat with him. Mothers who followed their children through the school offered their condolences to him.

"The school is almost an extended family," Cowan explained.

"THERE'S an emotional involvement in the school with the parents," he said.

A woman, accompanied by her high school senior daughter, stepped up to Cowan and confided, "I feel very emotional about this."

Cowan smiled in understanding at the woman, a former PTA president.

But the main focus of his attention was the Fairview student body which will transfer to Eagle next year.

Making a smooth transition was on his mind after he discovered the school administration couldn't operate the Farmington Hills building with 170 students attending classes.

"We tried to avoid being a lame duck school. We encouraged activities and interest in the school," said Cowan. Fairview's principal for seven years.

The move to a new school was softened by a tour of Eagle. Pictures the students had drawn of their new school were posted on a bulletin board in the hallway outside the auditorium.

"The kids were a little concerned," he said. "We introduced them to the teachers by having an ice cream social with Eagle. We tried to do everything we could to alleviate anxiety," he said.

THE SCHOOL was always small and students were accustomed to the individual attention made possible by its size.

"It was almost a private school.

FYA sponsors car washing

Farmington Youth Assistance is sponsoring a car wash from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. June 10 at North Farmington High School, Thirteen Mile and Farmington roads. For \$1, volunteers will wash a car. The money will sponsor a summer activities program for Farmington youth.

There were never more than 25 youngsters," Cowan said.

Students returning from Warner Junior High School to say good-bye to favorite teachers and Fairview miss the family-like atmosphere.

"We love it," said Jodi Dictor. "Mr. Gagnuk was our sixth grade teacher and we came back to see him."

"We miss it," said Jodi Dictor. "Then, turning to a bulletin board covered with class pictures, she squealed, "Hey you guys, it's me in third grade."

"I felt like I had one-to-one attention," said Dave Perlman, a ninth grader at Warner.

Memories of pranks and discoveries in class were on the minds of Fairview graduates.

"We grew up here," said Michelle Ryke, a Warner eighth grader.

"My best friend Jodie and I were in a group and we stuck together," said Maria Sokol, an eighth grade student. "And it's great to see the teachers again."

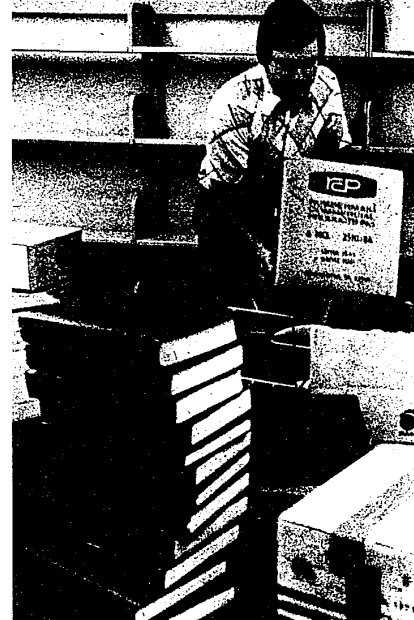
FAIRVIEW STUDENTS who will become Eagle students next fall, took a long last look at the school, too.

"Fairview was the best school in the whole world. And Mr. Gagnuk was the best teacher. And Mr. Cowan was the best principal," said Bill Dale, a sixth grade student.

"I don't want to move. You know everybody here. Eagle's going to be terrible. It's too big," said Jessica Woll, a fifth grader.

When the students left, the hall became quiet again except for the gentle swish of the janitor's mop and the quiet steps of Cowan as he surveyed his school once more.

He's going to Eagle, too, as its new principal.



Packing up boxes and stacking books is a job Fairview's Acting Principal George Gagnuk does with little enthusiasm. The much loved elementary school is to be closed at the end of the school year. (Staff photo)

inside

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