

# State agency continues probe of optical chain

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN

Smith's actions are a moral thing. It's morally wrong to take advantage of people," said Smith. Specifically, the controversy revolves around practices which, Smith alleges took place when he was employed for 20 months by Pearle Vision Centers.

Smith said he was manager of a Southgate branch for 16 months when he was asked in February 1978 to transfer to a Belleville outlet. While there, Smith alleges, Pearle management began "pushing hard" for opticians to keep expenses down by filling written prescriptions with lenses in stock, even when they didn't meet the patients' requirements.

In August, Smith gave notice he was quitting. Management responded by firing him.

A few days later, Smith picked the Belleville store in a dispute over holiday and vacation pay to which he claims he was entitled. "Don't Stop, Don't Stop," said the signs which Smith carried.

Pearle then offered to pay Smith money due him if he would agree "not to make or otherwise cause to be made any derogatory statement concerning the business of Pearle Vision Center."

Smith refused to sign an agreement to that effect. He subsequently sent letters to the Federal Trade Commission, the Attorney General's office and a trade journal, "Optometric Management."

Smith charged in his letters that Pearle employees are instructed by regional managers to fill prescriptions with lenses other than prescribed by the doctor if the prescribed lenses aren't available in stock.

Ed Porter, counsel for Searle Optical Inc., which owns Pearle, said that

Smith's accusations are untrue. He added that Smith was fired because "several weeks prior (to the dispute) he indicated he was going to quit but didn't say when."

"We don't have company policy as alleged by Mr. Smith," said Porter from his Dallas, Tex., headquarters. "The accusations are new to us. They only arose after the dispute over his pay."

On Nov. 30, Pearle Vision filed a \$10,000 libel and slander suit in Wayne County Circuit Court against Smith. At the same time, Pearle requested and was granted a temporary restraining order enjoining Smith from talking about his experiences with the optical chain.

While the lawsuit still is pending, Wayne County Circuit Court Judge John O'Hara in January dissolved the restraining order enjoining Smith from talking.

"I argued that it was a violation of (Smith's) First Amendment right to free speech," said attorney DeLamelleure.

In the meantime, the director of the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation said the investigation of Smith's charges may be completed in about a month.

The agency, which has subpoena power, will determine if any Pearle employees have violated Michigan laws governing optometric and health procedures.

If there is enough evidence, formal complaint by the state Attorney General's Office could follow. The case also could go to a formal hearing before the

Michigan Board of Optometry. It's definitely not a snap procedure," said Robert Uluru, head of the complaint analysis office.

In turn, Pearle is suing Smith for libel and slander.

That lawsuit, which is pending in Wayne County Circuit Court, charges that Smith did "immediate and irreparable damage" to Pearle in making his accusations.

Pearle operates 23 stores in Michigan, including branches in Garden City, Canton Township, Southfield and Livonia. They are among 450 such stores across the country operated by Searle Optical Inc., a division of the Chicago-based pharmaceutical firm of G.D. Searle and Company.

"I did what was right," said Smith, 39, who has worked as an optician for 14 years, including a three-year stint in the optical department at J.L. Hudson Company's Westland Shopping Center store.

Smith, who is represented by Garden City attorney Ronald DeLamelleure,


## Tickets are required for museum benefit

The Sunday, May 6, benefit for the Detroit Institute of Arts at the Edsel and Eleanor Ford home will be by ticket only.

Sponsored by the Antiquaries, an auxiliary of the museum's Founders Society, the 4-7 p.m. event to the Ford residence on Gaultier Point, will feature

a program by Dr. Frederick Cummings, museum director, who will discuss the artistic interests of Eleanor Clay Ford, as reflected in the home which was designed in 1927 by Albert Kahn.

Reservations are limited. For information, call 833-7875.



**OPEN HOUSE at CHILD CULTURE CENTER**  
Tues., April 24th 1-4 p.m.  
A Nursery School Program  
Offering The Finest Of Developmental Experiences  
For Your Preschooler  
Ages 2 1/2 To 6 Years

In our sessions your child will be exploring the creative dimensions of his self while interacting with others.

- We stress the fun of being himself—developing into a happy fulfilled child through many and varied play and art experiences.
- The fundamentals of dramatic expression and the realms of music and dance will be introduced.
- Meet our "Child Culture People," a social studies venture into various cultures adopted to the pre-school level.
- 2,3,5 day sessions, mornings, afternoons and full day. Also Mother-Toddler Program.

TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE FOR ALL PROGRAMS.  
FOR OPEN HOUSE INFORMATION CALL 851-1226  
5425 W. MAPLE, between Orchard Lake Rd. and Middlebelt Rd.  
Please come and meet the staff and surroundings at Child Culture Center

**TORO Pre-Season Sale**

**Save \$20-\$40**  
on any 21" Rearbagger Hand or Self-propelled or Key Electric

**SAVE \$30**  
21" Mulcher Model 18017 Reg. \$219.95  
**\$189.95**

**LIVONIA True Value HARDWARE**  
5 Mile at Farmington  
GA2-1155-937-1611  
DAILY 9-9 • Sat. 9-7 • Sun 10-3

**7 Mile & Farmington shopping center**

Home of **KINNEY SHOES**

The Great American Shoe Store

**CREOSOTED HARDWOOD TIMBERS**

4" x 4" x 8'	reg. \$4.99	c/c \$3.99
4" x 6" x 8'	reg. \$5.99	c/c \$4.99
6" x 8" x 8'	reg. \$10.95	c/c \$9.99

**American HOME CENTER**  
31245 West 8 Mile at Merriman in Livonia 476-8240

COLONIAL - TRADITIONAL FURNISHINGS & INTERIORS

**Soble's COUNTRY SHOPPE**

SINCE 1952

531-3430  
20620 Fenkel (Five Mile)

**CAREER NIGHT**  
Can you succeed as a real estate counselor?

**7:00 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, MAY 1**  
SNYDER, KINNEY & BENNETT

Gallery of Homes  
4272 Orchard Lake Rd.  
West Bloomfield 851-7000

It takes a special person with certain abilities and personality traits to succeed. If you are considering a career in real estate, you are invited to our Career Night to learn about the profession, how to get started, training opportunities, and the earning potential.

If you wish, I can help you determine how comfortable and successful you would be. Using a professional 5 step interview and an Interest Analysis, I can advise you whether real estate is a good career choice for you.

If this sounds fair, call now **851-7000**  
DAVE BUSCH Manager

SNYDER, KINNEY & BENNETT  
Gallery of Homes  
4272 Orchard Lake Rd.  
West Bloomfield

**Philip B. Thomas, Inc.**

Specializing in Personalized Custom Designing & Creative Styling of Jewelry

JEWELRY • REPAIR • REMOUNTING  
WATCH • CLOCK REPAIR  
478-9050

In Business Since 1949  
In Farmington

33425 Grand River  
Suite B 1  
Side Entrance  
Mon. - Sat. 9:30 - 5:30  
CLOSED WEDNESDAY

**WATCH FOR US NEXT WEEK**

HOME AND GARDEN SECTION  
OUR BEST ANNOUNCEMENT EVER

**474-1144**

**FIFTY NORMAN'S**

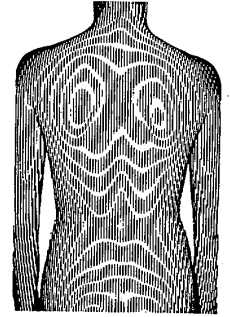
Ground Rounds  
Dinners  
Ribs  
Sandwiches

**FAMILY TAVERN**  
Neighborhood Gathering Place

**NOW OPEN SUNDAYS 2-10 P.M.**

Also Open for Saturday Lunch  
Banquet Room • Piano Bar  
Disco Parties  
1403 S. Commerce, Walled Lake  
**624-6660**

**Contour Analysis Helps To Locate The Underlying Cause of Backache and Headache**



Call the **CHIROPRACTIC HOTLINE**  
for taped message about Contour Analysis  
**522-3300 or 427-6382**

**THE REYNOLDS COMBINE!**

Newest Member in the Reynolds Family of Quality Water Conditioning Products.

The Combine is a combination of three water conditioners—

- It softens the water.
- It removes the iron and rust
- It filters out the cloudy yellow and turbidity.

This is no ordinary "water conditioner"—the Combine is completely unique for the purpose of solving real water problems.

The Combine is available in Cabinet Models, Compact Models, and 2-tank all fiberglass models—in a size for all homes and small commercial applications.

Liberal trade-ins

Yes, you may rent them, too. Rental fees apply toward purchase.

Reynolds—Michigan's oldest water conditioning company—since 1931.

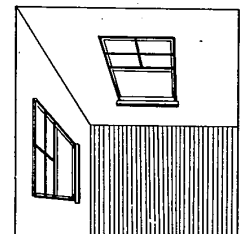
A name you can really trust!

Call day or night for a free water analysis from a factory representative, no obligation

**REYNOLDS WATER CONDITIONING CO.**  
Local Representation since 1931  
Call Free 1-800-572-9575

**D'Martin Carpets & Rugs**

D'Martin's Annual Springtime Carpeting, Rugs & Flooring Sale



It's that time again, Mother Nature's changing her flooring. We hear it's going to be a deep pile bright green carpet this season. We are following her lead and are offering these fantastic annual Springtime savings in carpeting, rugs and flooring. But hurry, our sale only lasts until the end of the month.

Name Brand Carpets	10 to 50% off
All Carpeting - Nothing Held Back	
Large Selection . . .	
LUXURY Group Carpeting	40 to 60% off
Name Brands - Room Size Remnants	
Imported & Domestic Area Rugs	20 to 50% off
Entire Selection of Hardwood Flooring	10% off
Includes Bruce & Chickasaw	
Imported & Domestic Ceramic Tile	20% off
All No-Wax Vinyl Floors	10 to 30% off
Congoleum, Armstrong & Worthington	
Congoleum "Prestige" Special Sale	20% off

Installation At Additional Cost.

**We cover interiors**  
FREE DESIGN CONSULTANTS

**D'Martin Carpets & Rugs**  
478-6020  
34769 Grand River Farmington  
Mon.-Fri. 10-9 PM. Tues. & Sat. 10-6 PM  
1/4 Mi. W. of Farmington Rd.  
VISA • MASTER CHARGE WELCOME