

3-year delay angers suspect

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Sharon. The privilege generally doesn't allow one spouse to testify against another without the consent of both.

In the event of a trial by jury, Kaluzny said, "we may want her as a witness anyway. There are things we feel she can help with in his defense, providing she tells the truth."

Oakland County prosecutor John Slevin said, "Everyone is chomping at the bit to get this under way. An unconditional, totally voluntary waiver of marital privilege guards against retrial two years down the road."

Last April, Kaluzny filed a motion in circuit court waiving Vermeulen's marital privilege with Sharon as of Nov. 11, 1985 — the date Vermeulen married Lewis, a naturalized citizen from Yugoslavia. He filed for divorce from Sharon Nov. 1, but it was not final until February 1988.

Mester denied the motion, Slevin said, because it was made under duress. Vermeulen said he was tired of waiting. "That's not a voluntary waiver," Slevin said.

Vermeulen, who has maintained Lewis' death was a tragic accident during a failed suicide attempt when he shot himself twice in the chest in the couple's two-bedroom unit at Mulwood Apartments, Grand River

"I'm my only defense. Every day I spend in jail just hurts my chances of vindication. I'm losing intrinsic details of what took place. Just forgetting one small detail could make the difference in whether I'm vindicated or not."

— Jon Vermeulen charged with murder

and Drake, wants an immediate trial after years of waiting. He faces first-degree murder and felony firearms charges.

"I'M MY ONLY defense. Every day I spend in jail just hurts my chances of vindication. I'm losing intrinsic details of what took place. Just forgetting one small detail could make the difference in whether I'm vindicated or not," Vermeulen said.

Vermeulen spoke by telephone from Washtenaw County Jail in Gaysford, in central Michigan, where he was transferred from maximum security in Oakland County jail Nov. 1. He

has been in protective custody since testifying in a murder trial last June.

Sharon's testimony is based on conversations with her then-husband during the week of Dec. 19, after Lewis had separated from Vermeulen.

Lewis, unaware her marriage was illegal, was planning to file for divorce on the day she died. She was five-six weeks pregnant, Vermeulen said. She died from a single gunshot wound. Vermeulen also shot himself twice.

"She (Sharon) says I told her I would kill Renee if she ever tried to

leave me. What I said was I'd kill myself if Renee left me," Vermeulen said.

Vermeulen threatened to kill Lewis several weeks before her death, he told Sharon, while they were still married, according to circuit court records.

Sharon Vermeulen testified at his preliminary examination in 47th District Court in Farmington in May 1986. But her testimony was disallowed by Judge Michael Hand. In December 1986, Mester ruled Sharon could testify. When the defense appealed, the appellate court reversed Mester's ruling. The prosecutor then appealed the case to the state Supreme Court.

"LOOK AT the magnitude of what's happening, an alleged statement (by Sharon). I don't understand the judicial system," Vermeulen said.

"It's a lot more relaxed, and the food is excellent, like eating in a restaurant," Vermeulen said of his new environment.

Unlike the Oakland County Jail, he is aware of day and night because his cell has two frosted windows.

Vermeulen's only exercise is walking in the jail's hallways; he has no access to a library.

5 months later, still no pacts in C'ville

By Kevin Brown staff writer

Clarencetown School District and union officials have yet to settle contracts affecting 165 school employees.

Working under the terms of contracts which expired last Aug. 31 are the district's 106 teachers, 20 custodial-maintenance employees, 17 secretaries, 12 transportation employees and 10 cafeteria workers.

Negotiations are taking "a little bit longer this time," said Ralph Skrocki, assistant superintendent for business in Clarencetown, which serves students in Livonia, Redford, and Farmington Hills. Skrocki said bargaining sessions have been held roughly every two weeks.

Jim Carlson, chief negotiator for the employee unions, said there have been "probably 16 sessions with teachers" and administrators. Carlson said that while a negotiation session with teachers is tentatively scheduled for late this week, negotiations with the other unions are on hold.

WHILE BOTH sides declined to discuss in detail outstanding issues, Superintendent Michael Shibley said, "The principal issue is the district at this time does not have the funding resources to offer salary increases."

"This district for years has been dependent on state aid," Shibley said.

Because it lacks the industrial or property tax base which some richer districts have, Clarencetown gets most of its school funds through a state aid formula.

State aid increases to the Clarencetown schools in recent years have lagged behind inflation, forcing budget cuts and layoffs last spring.

Employee salary increases are "obviously one of the issues" yet to be settled between employees and administrators, Carlson said.

All unionized employees received 6 percent pay raises in the 1987-88 contract, Skrocki said.

Skrocki said that, so far, neither side has suggested arbitration as a means to reach a contract settlement.

Alkateeb weighs resignation

Continued from Page 1

also has been absent from recent joint city council meetings with the city's boards and commissions.

said the note said, "I'm not going to be coming to the meeting because there will be war." At that meeting, Sever distributed the list of board

and commission members interested in reappointment.

"I don't want say anything more for now," Alkateeb said.

SEVER DECLINED comment on Alkateeb's absence and his apparent unhappiness with the city council. "At this point in time, I really have no comment on that. His absences and attendance should speak for itself!"

Absent from the latest meeting Jan. 23, Alkateeb said he sent Sever a note explaining his absence. He

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Farmington Observer
(USPS 187-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, MI 48012. Second-class postage paid at Birmingham, MI 48012. Address all mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3589) to P.O. Box 2426, Livonia, MI 48151. Telephone 531-4200.

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