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Fifty Cents

Testifying against old boss 'difficult'

By Joanne Mallazowski
staff writer

Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer says he's glad his testimony at the embezzlement trial of his former boss, ex-Detroit police Chief William Hart, is over.

"I'm told that was it," Dwyer said Friday after finishing his second installment of testimony. "It was very difficult for me to testify for the prosecution because I've known Chief Hart for 20 years. I did my responsibility and I testified truthfully."

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— William Dwyer
Hills police chief

he was asked to return for another 3 1/2-hours of testimony Friday morning.

THOUGH DWYER appeared nervous Thursday morning when he first took the stand, he said he wasn't.

"I felt comfortable with the questions," he said. "But I was getting tired after almost two hours." Dwyer testified that, beginning in 1993, he processed and signed checks payable to cash from the highly publicized and controversial Detroit police secret service fund.

Hart had told him, Dwyer testified, that "there was a covert operation or operations underway. To assist this covert operation there would be a need for cash from these (secret service) funds."

Dwyer, a former commander on the Detroit chief's staff, is among 70 law enforcement officials who have been subpoenaed to testify in the Hart case in U.S. District Court in Detroit.

West Bloomfield Township Chief Ronald Cronin, who was a sergeant

under Dwyer while in Detroit, is expected to testify within the next two weeks.

Dwyer began his testimony about 11:35 a.m. Thursday and finished about 1 p.m., when U.S. District Judge Paul V. Gadola recessed court for the day. As Dwyer had suspected,

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Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer is mobbed by the television media as he enters the U.S. District Court building in Detroit early Thursday morning.



FOCUS

MARSHALL SEYBOLD, a 74-year-old Farmington Hills resident, wants to reach the "summit" of physical fitness — and raise money for a good cause at the same time.

That's why he's challenging the 1,152 steps of Detroit's Westin Hotel in the hotel's annual "To the Top" stair-climbing fundraiser on Sunday, Feb. 2. The event benefits the American Heart Association.

"Climbing stairs is a great way to stay in shape," said Seybold, "and if climbing the steps of The Westin can help American Heart, that is all the incentive I need to participate. I would encourage more people to enjoy the fun and fitness of stair climbing."

Seybold said his goal is to climb a "vertical mile" — eight times up 7 1/2 flights. The test of endurance will be difficult, but Seybold considers himself a model of fitness.

He keeps a strict exercise regimen that includes high weightlifting and climbing 2,000 steps three times a week. He said he recently passed a stress test that confirmed his fitness.

Seybold attributes his fitness to hard work and good genes: He said he is a direct descendant of Pocahontas, the American Indian princess.

Seybold's fitness is even more remarkable considering that about 30 years ago he fell from a 16-foot ladder, crushing his vertebra and fracturing seven bones, including his right hip socket.

Today, he says he is fortunate that "everything works and nothing hurts."

Seybold has already raised \$125 in pledges for the climb. Those wishing to support him with a pledge donation can send checks or money orders to Marshall Seybold Climb, American Heart Association of Michigan, P.O. Box 160, Lathrup Village 48075.

Climbers of all ages are invited to join Seybold in his climb between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Feb. 2. For registration information on "To the Top," call the American Heart Association at 557-9590.

WHEN IT COMES to food and money, the students and staff from Beahan Junior High, a parochial school in Farmington, collected thousands of dollars for area food depots and the local Goodfellows during December. The money total came to \$1,133, according to school officials.

MEMORY LANE — From the Jan. 31, 1992 Farmington Enterprise:

• Item from the Around the Block column: "It's Dollar Day in Farmington... so gather up the family for a shopping spree. Your hometown merchants are going all out to prove to you that it pays to shop in Farmington. They want to give you bargains and encourage you to make shopping at home a habit."

• Only 10 people showed up at the Farmington-area civil defense meeting at the Farmington Town Hall.

• Auto loans could be obtained from the Farmington State Bank at 4 percent interest with half the purchase price down.

Items for Farmington Focus can be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48330, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



Stephen Ploski, 5 1/2, hoists the judge's gavel as his open house at the 47th District Court in Farmington. Sisters Lydia (left) and Ruth await their turns during an open house at the 47th District Court in Farmington. Magistrate Marla Parker watches the scene.

Due process

Bill of Rights' 200th year is observed

By Alleen Wingblad
special writer

The entire Ploski family — Cas, his wife Pamela and their five children — went before Magistrate Marla E. Parker last week at the 47th District Courthouse in Farmington.

But they won't go to jail, or even be fined. It was all in fun for the Ploskis, who turned out for the recent celebration of the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Bill of Rights at the Courthouse on 10 Mile Road.

Local officials, dignitaries and "legal eagles" were on hand to mingle with area residents and to explain the legal process. They also discussed goings on at the court-

house and led tours during the open house. "I think people are showing an interest in the community," said Shirley Saltzman, an attorney who organized the event with Judge Fred Harris.

"There are lots of concerned citizens and community leaders who are displaying interest in this type of event. And government leaders have a duty to share what they know and make people be aware of how things like the Bill of Rights affect them."

"It's the start of community involvement with the courts, councils and other organizations which can lead to a more informed electorate," added Saltzman, who chairs

the Oakland County Bar Association's District Court Committee.

THE EVENT was a learning experience for the Ploski children, who range in age from two to 11 and who enjoyed a full tour of the facility by Magistrate Parker and the opportunity to get answers to questions about the legal process.

"The kids have expressed interest in the process, so it's really interesting to see what goes on here," said Cas Ploski. "Also, children have a natural fear of authority, but if they are introduced to it, that instills a type of familiarity."

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Rules are changed again for primary

By Joanne Mallazowski
staff writer

Just when you thought it was safe to declare your political party preference for the March 17 closed presidential primary, the rules have been changed.

The rules of the game originally required that you officially declare whether you are a Democrat or Republican by Feb. 18.

But the state Democratic Party got those rules changed a bit. State Attorney General Frank Kelley ruled Friday, Jan. 17 that political party rules — same-day party preference — apply unless reversed by a court.

That means that if you have not officially declared your party preference and you are not a declared Republican, you can declare your preference for the Democratic Party when you go to cast your vote in the closed primary March 17.

"If you have not declared a party preference, you can declare and vote on the same day (for the Democratic ballot)," Farmington Hills City Clerk Kathy Dornan said.

If you are a declared Republican this new rule does not apply to you and you cannot change your preference, and declare yourself a Democrat at the polls March 17.

WITH A 47-41 vote Thursday, state House Republicans failed to discharge a bill from the Elections Committee that would have made the March 17 election an open presidential primary.

"We're not going to have an open primary. The Democratic National Party has given them (Democrats) the option of same-day declaration," said Republican state Rep. Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills.

The Republican Party will make a decision within a week whether to follow the Democrats lead and adopt a same-day declaration policy, according to Republican Party spokesman Bryan Floyd.

When you arrive at your precinct in Farmington or Farmington Hills March 17 and have not yet declared your party preference and wish to vote the Democratic ballot, you will be asked to fill out a declaration form right then and there. When completed you will be given a Democratic ballot, Dornan said.

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Building cleared for 3 hours to clean up chemical leak

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A south side Farmington Hills office building was evacuated Friday morning after reports of leaking chemicals and a noxious odor from one of the offices.

The incident, which occurred at 9:27 a.m. at the Fawzi Schwab Medical Lab, 22000 Springbrook near Grand River, prompted about 10 people to be evacuated from the building, although fire officials said there was no immediate danger of an explosion.

The chemicals Xylene and a 99 percent concentration of isopropyl alcohol — both commonly used, flammable solvents — apparently leaked from their containers in a storage locker. The fire department was called by occupants of nearby office suites who could smell the chemicals and were concerned about their safety.

No one was reported injured because of the spill, although some office workers reported some nose and eye irritation.

"People noticed a sweet, sickly smell," said Wally Kurzeja, hazardous materials specialist for the Farmington Hills Fire Department. "They wanted to know if people should have left the building. If they could get sick."

KURZEJA SAID occupants in the lab and in other offices were exposed to "a limited amount" of the chemicals. He said they should not be concerned about any consequences from the chemicals coming in contact with their desks or other office items.

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