

Ex-treasurer pleads guilty, will repay church

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"We continue to support the idea of restitution and expect restitution will be part of the interim and any final sentence," Rittler said. But the \$200 monthly "is a drop in the bucket compared to what was embezzled," he added.

Meanwhile, the church also filed a civil suit and has received a judgment, which Rittler says will be executed when Esler's financial assets

have been determined.

ESLER, A DIVORCED mother of two and a grandmother, was arrested Nov. 27, 1991 by Royal Oak police. According to police, a man who claimed to be Esler's boyfriend acknowledged at the time that he had received large amounts of money, but denied knowing it had been stolen. Esler apparently wrote the checks to herself as loans to the boy-

friend. The boyfriend was not charged.

In an earlier interview Arnkoff said, "Obviously she fell in love with him (the boyfriend). He convinced Barbara to loan him money for business transactions."

In a letter to the 1600-member congregation, Rittler and other church officials said Esler did not take the entire \$150,000 "in one angry gesture as a response to being

tired. Throughout this period, funds were internally shifted to cover discrepancies and some major apportionment billings were left unpaid (while reported as expended) to cover the growing shortfall."

Church officials' request for Esler's resignation "was, in part, precipitated by her unwillingness to produce timely financial reports. Clearly her failure to produce complete and timely records was more a

question of willingness than ability, given her knowledge of what such records would reveal," according to the letter.

After Esler resigned, the church began an intensive audit, which revealed financial discrepancies. A private investigation followed and a police report was filed.

"Despite what has happened with Esler, Rittler says church members remain cohesive. "Nothing, including

a crime of this magnitude, will destroy what we have as a church. We believe Nardin Park is something special and has something special. We won't let anything get in the way of that."

But Rittler admitted there remains some anger over the embezzlement. "The possibility of a light sentence (against Rittler) and what appears to be a low monthly restitution level isn't going to alleviate that anger."

She heads electric car project

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

Lawrence Technological University student Laurie Call is trained in design and working on earning credentials in engineering.

She also is a full-time senior student at the Southfield LTV campus. "I'm a mechanical engineer and have a degree in drafting," said Call, who was a co-op student at General Motors for five years.

Currently, the title Call is most enthusiastic about is that of project manager for LTV's entry in the Ford Motor Co. Hybrid Electrical Vehicle Challenge.

Call recently attended a Ford press conference where she spoke at Cobo Conference-Exhibition Center about the project, expected to take more than a year to complete.

"We will design, build and test a commuter-type electric hybrid vehicle and then put it into competition

'This is a very exciting project because there's no doubt that electric cars will be the cars of the future.'

— Laurie Call
LTU student

with 29 other universities chosen to compete."

CALL SAID the students were given the choice of rebuilding a car from an older chassis or starting from the beginning. Team members decided they wanted to do their project from the ground up.

"This is a very exciting project because there's no doubt that electric cars will be the cars of the future," she said.

Call, a Farmington resident, returned to her parents' home to study at LTU because of the financial advantages.

"When I was at Saturn, they paid for school," she said. "Now, living at home really helps."

LTU was one of 300 schools across the U.S. that applied for the project and competition and ultimately was one of 30 schools chosen.

From that number, only 30 were chosen, a source of considerable pride to students and staff alike.

The object of the challenge is to have the students design, build and then test a practical, two-passenger electric hybrid vehicle by June 1993, said William King, news bureau

coordinator and spokesman for the university.

CALL EXPLAINED that students in the project include 15 mechanical and 15 electrical engineers.

"Everyone will be in on the design part," she said. "We have an off-site garage at LTU which will be available to us during the actual construction stage."

Call said her short-term goal is to complete her design engineering program.

"After that, I hope to go back to Saturn to work at testing in an engineering capacity."

In terms of the competition, her goal is to manage a winning group in the electric car challenge, to win for the students and the university.

In addition to the Ford Motor Co., sponsors of the program to build a commuter-type electric hybrid vehicle include the Department of Navy and the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Ex-township trustee stays on AAA board

Thomas A. Duke, chairman emeritus of the Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington, was re-elected to a three-year term as director of the 1.5 million-member AAA Michigan at its annual membership meeting March 3 in Dearborn.

Duke has been a board member since 1975 and has served as chairman in 1984-85. He is a third-generation builder/developer and is past president of the Builders Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

He is also chairman of the First State Bank of Charlevoix. Duke served five years on the Farmington Township Board of Trustees.



Thomas A. Duke

Phone numbers zoom; area code split likely

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in the ZIP codes. And he says running out of numbers for fax machines, beepers, cellular phones and business and residential phones "is inevitable. We've got to have more numbers."

ON THE OTHER HAND, Jody Soronen, executive director of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, says "businesses will have some work ahead of them if the area code is changed."

Business records will have to be changed, as well as stationery and advertisements. "It's always because you get used to something. You'd have to go through and change your records. It also requires some brain reprogramming," Soronen said. What will be strange is calling somewhere not far away, yet south of Eight Mile, and you have to use another area code, Soronen said.

But Ffarek said an area code change is not expected to change billing — meaning calling Livonia shouldn't become a long distance phone call from Farmington.

"Your calling patterns will not change. Charges will not change," Ffarek said.

Though today there's no need to be put on a waiting list, that possibility could happen if something isn't done to provide more phone numbers. "We're looking down the road. We don't want to reach a point where we

'Most people think that if you have to dial an area code then it's automatically a toll call. That's no longer the case. We have to overcome that barrier.'

— Joe O'Connor

have to put someone on a 6-month waiting list. Or can you imagine putting people on extensions of the same phone number?" Ffarek said.

Southeast Michigan isn't alone when it comes to area codes. In the last eight years, new area codes have been added to telephone systems in New York, Los Angeles, Boston and Chicago.

"The major stumbling blocks in those areas were they didn't start educating the public early enough," said Joe O'Connor of Birmingham, director of the citizens committee.

"We learned from other areas that when doing this it is a change in dialing patterns. Most people think that if you have to dial an area code then it's automatically a toll call. That's no longer the case. We have to overcome that barrier," said O'Connor, whose committee met with representatives in other cities that have new area codes.

club circuit

FARMINGTON SINGLE PROFESSIONALS, a non-profit social group for singles aged 25-40, meets to share common interests, among them wallyball and roller skating.

Wallyball games are at 6:45 p.m., Tuesdays at Racquet Ball Farmington, Nine Mile west of Farmington Road.

FARMINGTON AREA ASSOCIATION of Retired Social Personnel meets Tuesday, March 10 11:30 a.m. at the Shiawassee Community School, Shiawassee and Tuck Road for a brown bag luncheon, program and business meeting.

NORTH FARMINGTON Garden Club meets at noon March 10 at the Farmington Hills Library, 32737 12 Mile road. Speaker will be Lucile Moore. Guests are welcome. For more information call Ginny Webber at 553-2029.

FARMINGTON/FARMINGTON HILLS OPTIMIST CLUB will observe an annual highlight at its Wednesday, March 18, oratorical contest. Girls from the Farmington

Middle and High schools will vie for honors speaking on "If I Could See Tomorrow."

Boys from the same schools will get their chance to compete Wednesday, March 25. Meetings are at 7:30 a.m. Wednesdays at the Farmington Elks Club, 23666 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington.

HILL AND DALE GARDEN CLUB of FARMINGTON meets Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m. at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile Road. Guest speaker, Irene Murray, owner of "Bloomin' Things" in Okemos will demonstrate the art of preserving and arranging flowers. Guests are welcome. Hill and Dale's order forms for the upcoming annuals and perennials sale are available by calling Gale Weisman at 661-1225.

FARMINGTON PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK will hear Evelyn DeVine, consumer affairs officer for the Food and Drug Administration, address "Health Fraud and the role of the FDA" at 7:15 a.m.

Friday, March 13, at the Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road. Members and guests may attend. The cost is \$7 for members, \$9 for non-members. For information, call 476-6907.

BETHANY FARMINGTON, a Catholic group for divorced and separated adults, meets the second Friday of each month at Our Lady of Sorrows social hall, on Power, at Shiawassee in Farmington. A separate group for newly-separated HURTING meets weekly. For details call 471-2708 or 476-0533.

QUAKERTOWN the Farmington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, will hold its next meeting at noon Tuesday, March 10, at the home of Lucille Fairchild. The sandwich luncheon will feature Area Field Representative Vince Syracuse speaking on Leader Dogs for the Blind. Arrangements will be discussed for the DAR State Awards Day, to take place Tuesday and Wednesday, April 7-8, in East Lansing. RSVP to hostess at 344-9938 or Zelma, Delph at 534-1086.

THE NATIONAL Association of Career Women-Metro Detroit Chapter meets Thursday, March 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Steak & Ale Restaurant, Orchard Lake Road and I-696 in Farmington Hills. For reservations, call 628-0752.

A GENEALOGICAL Workshop offered to the public Saturday, March 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Royal Oak Library, southeast corner of 11 Mile and Troy Street sponsored by Ezra Parker Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Royal Oak Library. For more information

call Shirley Morse at 353-5236.

SPIRIT OF DETROIT-SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL CHORUS meets to enjoy barbershop music and camaraderie at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in the VFW Hall at Inkster and I-96 in Redford Township. The chorus is comprised of nearly 100 women from throughout metro Detroit dedicated to singing four-part harmony a cappella. New members are welcome. For details call Jan at 534-4468 or Edna at 801-0417. It isn't necessary to read music, just be able to carry a tune.

THE BREAKFAST OPTIMIST CLUB OF FARMINGTON/FARMINGTON HILLS meets every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. at the Elks Club, 23666 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington.

ITALIAN DINNER dance held for Jewish Singles over 50 Sunday, March 29 at Tempel Israel. For more information call Barbara Ginsburg at 353-7261 or Edith Ellis at 932-0025.

THE FARMINGTON NEIGHBORS Club holds a benefit luncheon and fashion show for the Rainbow Connection of Michigan Wednesday, April 15 at 11:30 a.m. at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills. For more information, call Mariela Devoto at 471-7398.

All club news and announcements for this column should be addressed to: Club Circuit, Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336. The information must arrive before noon on the Monday before Thursday publication.

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