

Court officer lays claim to drug money

BY DAN WEST
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West Bloomfield police are baffled by a claim from a court officer who believes \$1.66 million in drug forfeiture money awarded to the township department belongs to him.

A hearing is set for April 18 to hear Robert Bandy's claim that he's entitled to the cash he found when enforcing a court order last fall to evict someone from The Arbor apartment complex in West Bloomfield. Bandy is seeking to set aside a circuit court ruling that awarded the suspected drug cash to the West Bloomfield Police Department since no one stepped forward to claim it.

"He said he at the time he was scared because it was drug money," said Jim Halushka, director of warrants and investigations for the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office.

"The law is real clear for what happens to drug money and we expect this case to end real quick."

Bandy works for a company contracted by 48th District Court that ordered the eviction.

"He's got nothing to lose," said Lt. Carl Fuhs, spokesman for the police department.

After Bandy found a large sum of money and some drug evidence during his eviction enforcement duties, Bandy called West Bloomfield police to investigate further. Bandy and his attorney filed a claim because he was the first person to find it.

Law enforcement officials disagree, adding Bandy was acting in an official capacity and the money does not meet the legal definition of "lost."

"I find it hard to believe he claims ownership," Fuhs said. "If that's the case, he would then have ownership of the refrigerator, stove, washing machine and whatever else was found in there."

After giving \$156,000 to the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office and \$100,000 to the Farmington Hills Police Department for its assistance in the case, West Bloomfield police planned to use the remaining \$1.4 million for new equipment and crime prevention programs.



Whirl: Fifth grader Mark McGraw demonstrates a vortex similar to that of a tornado.



Under water: Graham Morrison built a submarine. With a mighty puff of air, he blows the ballast tanks and the sub sinks. Abin Abraham watches the demonstration.

Weird science

Longacre scientists display creativity in projects

BY TIM SMITH
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From one side of the Longacre Elementary School gymnasium to the other were rows of scientific displays, demonstrations and experiments. All 120 or so were created by students for the second annual Science Fair, held last week.

Most of those creative students also were in the gym, describing over and over again to parents and other community members the hows, whys and wherefores about their particular projects.

"Every Young Child is a Young Scientist" was the unofficial theme of this year's science fair, organized by the school's PTA.

According to the PTA's Pat Miller, an encouraging sign was that the number of students who voluntarily participated was about double that of last year's. Projects were done at home, with students relying on books and computers for research.

"They could do anything they wanted that interested them," Miller said.

"Some were experiments, or studies of subjects such as electricity or magnets." Miller's own daughter, fifth grader Ashley, was one of the participants. She assembled a project titled "Got Milk?" which demonstrated the relationship between calcium and strong bones. Ashley displayed several plates of chicken bones, which soaked over five days in various liquids.

No bones

The strongest bones were soaked over a five-day period in a container of vinegar with a calcium tablet dropped in for good measure.

"If it doesn't have calcium, the bone breaks," Ashley continued, easily snapping in half a bone that was soaked only in vinegar.

Nearby, fifth grader Jenna Misch demonstrated her "Magic Egg Trick." The egg in a glass of salt water floated near the top, while the egg in fresh water sank.

"That's because salt water is more dense," Jenna explained. "That allows things to float easier."

Proud mom Sharon Misch shook her head while listening to her daughter give yet another talk about her project.

"It's just incredible the thought process," Misch said. "To go from A-to-Z and follow through and explain to people, that takes a lot of depth (of understanding) for these kids to do that."

Looking elsewhere in the gym, there were students such as fourth grader Graham Morrison demonstrating how to make his plastic pop bottle submarine dive and resurface in a fish tank.

"You take out the corks and let the air out and water flows in," Graham said.

"Water weighs more than air."

To bring the sub back to the surface, the student blew as hard as he could into a thin, plastic tube.

Creativity bridged the grade levels. First grader Matt Dellara's entry was about how to conduct electricity, while third graders Katie McGraw and Chris Blaker presented a demonstration on buoyancy and displacement.

Slime

And fifth grader Ali Bangamen talked

to visitors about "marvelous mixtures" and handed out recipes. One recipe was for Outrageous Ooze, made out of corn starch, baking soda, water and food coloring.

"You will know when it is the right consistency, as the wet powder will stick together and suddenly start behaving very oddly," stated Ali's special recipe. "This slime has some of the weirdest properties."

Longacre Principal Bill Smith said the program ties in to North Central Accreditation requirements that students have an understanding of the scientific process.

"If we achieve nothing else (with the science fair), we increase students' love of science," he added.

Concurring was Miller. "It shows the interest our students have in science, and we're hoping this promotes an even deeper interest... that's going to last throughout their school careers. If you look, we have some budding engineers and biologists."

Myers moves to Dunckel

One of Farmington School District's chief administrators is going back to school, taking over for retiring principal Pam O'Malley

BY TIM SMITH
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One of Farmington Public Schools' top central administrators is going back to school, and he can't wait.

Jim Myers is returning to a principalship after three years as executive director of K-12 school and student services for the district.

Myers, in the fall, will take over as principal at Dunckel Middle School, succeeding Pam O'Malley, who recently decided to retire.

"I miss the kids and the daily interaction with kids and staff," said Myers on Monday inside his soon-to-be-former office at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center. "Everything's been fine down here. We have a terrific board and Bob Maxfield is the best boss you could ask for."

"... But every so often, when I go to a student function at a building or dealing with the (Student) Roundtable kids, I have so much fun talking with them and interacting with them."

Those "special relationships" with young people are something Myers said he has missed while tending to district-wide discipline issues and other problems of a much-grandier and sometimes less-personal scale.

"It (his administrative job) has played out to be pretty much what I expected," Myers continued. "But yeah, it's a difficult situation, the rewards are more difficult to find" than as a principal.

Myers knows from a long tenure as a principal in two school districts exactly what he is missing. He was a building administrator at the middle- and high-school levels in the Wayne-Westland School District for 22 years before moving over to Farmington High School in

1990. There, he was assistant principal for one year and became principal in 1991, a job he held until the end of the 1997-98 school year. At that time, he took over a post which opened up when Don Cowan retired.

He is willing to take a hefty pay cut to be back with the kids, too. This year, his salary is in the vicinity of \$100,000; as Dunckel principal, his salary will be about \$90,000.

"Money's not the issue," he said candidly. "If I'd have gotten into a business to be rich it wouldn't be as an educator."

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said he will miss Myers' sensitive and sensible approach to handling important student disciplinary matters and a long list of other duties. But Maxfield knows enough about Myers to understand his choice to take a new position.

"He thought about it last year when we had a couple of principal vacancies," Maxfield said. "He said he's enjoyed his experience here (on the central administrative team) but his first love is principalship."

He loves that whole environment working with teachers and kids and he thought about it again this year when Pam (in early March) announced her retirement."

Possible restructuring

Maxfield, who admitted that Myers' current job is "a pressure cooker," said the Dunckel staff was very receptive to the change in school leadership during a meeting last week. School board members also were informed.

What will next need to be determined is whether there will be enough money in the budget to hire someone to fill the void after Myers goes to Dunckel.

With more than \$3 million in budget cuts expected in the next



Movin' on up: Farmington Schools administrator Jim Myers is taking over the principalship of Dunckel Middle School, replacing retiree Pam O'Malley.

several weeks, Myers' job duties could be restructured and doled out to others — without hiring a replacement.

"I don't know yet," Maxfield said. "We'll be looking at possible realignment. We're in a tough budget-cutting year and there could be reductions."

O'Malley won't be the only secondary school building administrator to retire after this year. Both Mary Brown and Jim Pardon, assistant principals at Harrison High School and Warner Middle School, respectively, have announced their retirements.

Myers emphasized that he has enjoyed working with the central administration, and wasn't leaving out of dissatisfaction.

"I've grown a bit, too," Myers said. "Dealing with difficult problems (is something) I'm more adept at. Professionally, I've gotten to be a more effective administrator and it's been a wonderful growth opportunity for me."

Workshop assists college-bound students with disabilities

The Southfield Campus of Oakland Community College will host a workshop on "Students With Disabilities - Making the Transition to College" on Tuesday, April 24, from 4-8:30 p.m.

The Workshop is free and open to the public, however pre-registration is required. To register, call (248) 233-2780. High school seniors and adults thinking of pursuing further education are especially encouraged to attend.

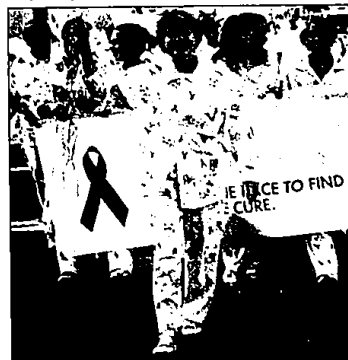
Workshop topics will include the college selection process, adaptive technology, ADA laws and accommodations, career awareness and decision making, and college survival skills.

The Southfield Campus is located at 23322 Rutland Drive, a mile west of Greenfield, south of Nine Mile Road. Free parking is available.

Karen Neuburger personal appearance & pajama party

Friday, April 20
Noon to 2 pm and 4 to 6 pm
In Intimate Apparel
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Join us for pajama party giveaways, trivia and fun, and meet designer Karen Neuburger. She'll be happy to sign your purchase of pink ribbon pajamas, which support breast cancer research. And register to win an opportunity to walk with Karen Neuburger and Jacobson's in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure® on Saturday, April 21.



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