

# Jury Ponders Merlo's Fate

An Oakland County Circuit Court jury of five men and seven women began pondering the fate of accused killer John Merlo late Tuesday afternoon, but after 75 minutes was excused for the night by Judge Farrell E. Roberts and ordered to re-



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sume deliberations Wednesday morning.

The prosecution seeks a first degree murder conviction of the 25-year-old defendant for the slaying last January of his 18-year-old wife, Sharon Ann, of 19340 Gaylord, Redford Township.

She was shot while going about her duties as an operator in Crest Beauty Salon on Eight Mile Rd. and Rensselaer in Farmington Township. Six customers were in the shop at the time.

A HIGHLIGHT of the final day's testimony was the statement on the witness stand by Sharon's mother, Mrs. George Kamen, that Merlo had called her in February and declared "I'm not sorry I did it."

Merlo's attorney, Daniel Devine, told the jury that Merlo had been sufficiently provoked by his wife "to deprive his mind" and asked for no worse than a second degree verdict if the jury cannot agree on manslaughter or outright ac-

quittal.

Merlo had admitted from the witness stand that he had shot his wife four times, but said it was in a blind rage after she had spit in his face.

He testified that he went to the beauty shop on the morning of Jan. 6 in an effort to effect a reconciliation with his young wife, and that he had a loaded gun with him only because he planned to shoot himself if he was turned down.

Witnesses had described earlier that when he entered the shop Merlo beckoned Sharon to join him in a back room. While there, he said, "She spit in my face and pushed me up against the wall and said, 'Why don't you get the hell out of here, punk.'"

When she emerged from that room, Mrs. Merlo went to a chair where a customer, Mrs. Lois Whitaker, was waiting to have her hair done, and Merlo followed immediately behind.

"I couldn't see nothing. I was in a rage," testified the husband. He fired all four shots over Mrs. Whitaker's left shoulder.

Merlo admitted under questioning that before going to the beauty parlor he had stopped at a bar and had had "about eight drinks."

TWO OF THE bullets fired by Merlo were found in his wife's body at the time of the autopsy. Two others passed through the body and were recovered by police from the floor.

It was the prosecution's charge that the shooting was deliberately executed as the climax to a series of marital disputes between the pair. They had been married only six months when Mrs. Merlo told him she was going to file for a divorce, Merlo testified. That occurred at the time of their separation in October, 1966, he said, and he told the jury that after that his wife started seeing another man.

AFTER THE SHOOTING, Merlo escaped from the Crest Salon and drove a rented car to Cleveland where he abandoned it. He was arrested in a Philadelphia, Pa. bank two weeks later while attempting to cash an alleged bad check, and disclosed to authorities himself that he was being sought in Michigan.

Philadelphia Detective Allan Roslund testified at the trial here that Merlo had told him of the shooting, laughing because newspapers had called him "the nonchalant killer."



**ELECTED — Norman Cook, Jr.** of Farmington was elected Chairman of the Board of the newly formed Michigan Snowmobile Dealers Association last week in Detroit. Cook is the owner of Grand River Boat Sales.

## Chesley Employees Dress Dolls

Again this Christmas, the women who work at Chesley Industries are making a big contribution to the happiness of little girls in the Farmington area. They dressed exactly a third of the 120 dolls distributed for Goodwill baskets, said Mrs. Robert Witt, who headed the doll-dressing project for the Farmington Jaycee Auxiliary.

Their cooperation is especially appreciated, Mrs. Witt added, since most of them do not live in Farmington. They have dressed many dolls for several Christmases. Special praise should go to Mrs. Eleanor Suminski, of East Detroit, who made hand-crocheted costumes for five dolls, a majorette, Hazel the maid, Flora Dora, Bunny Doll and Little Model.

"All five of her dolls would have been on our ten best dress list," Mrs. Witt said, "but they were so lovely we pulled them out for special mention so we could honor others."

Mrs. A. Bailey of Chesley Industries was one of the judges of the dolls, along with Mrs. P. Nowak, president of the Auxiliary and Mrs. C. Findlay of the Farmington Library Staff. The Goodwill dolls are on display in the Farmington Library.

Scout Council Nears 50th Anniversary

Soon to observe its 50th birthday, the Clinton Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America is one of the oldest councils in Michigan.

The Clinton Valley Council is the organization of citizens chartered by Scouting's National Council, New Brunswick, N.J., to promote and operate the Cub Scout, Boy Scout and Explorer programs in this area.

The council's boundaries include all of Oakland County except the townships of Bloomfield, Troy, Southfield and Royal Oak, and all of Macomb County except the townships of Warren, Erin and Lake. More than 550,000 persons live in this area.

And while there has to be an organization on paper, it's the people and their efforts which make Scouting go.

Locally more than 10,000 boys are involved as Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Explorers. Approximately 3,300 volunteer adults, both men and women, supply leadership. And close to a score of other persons, including professional, full-time Scouting executives, staff the council's service center in Pontiac.

Call 334-2509, 132 Franklin Blvd., Pontiac, if you have questions concerning Scouting.

## Meadows Judging

Farmington Meadows Homeowners Association will sponsor a Christmas decorating contest. Gift certificates will be awarded as prizes to the families with the best decorated homes.

Homes will be judged between 6 and 7 p.m. Dec. 22



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