

# County resolves consumer investigator hassle.

By ROBERT KIPPER

## analysis

OAKLAND COUNTY—Seemingly with a wave of his freshly tanned hand, Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson returned from his Florida vacation and resolved the personnel hassle that engulfed his consumer protection unit in his absence.

Suddenly, the crisis of Marilyn Appel, the consumer fraud investigator who had been fired last week after bringing a rash of bad publicity down on the consumer unit, was solved.

Meeting with Mrs. Appel's attorney, Patterson worked out an arrangement that allowed Mrs. Appel to be rehired, required the prosecutor's office to tone down some of its allegations against her and then provided for

Mrs. Appel to cheerfully resign. Each side got and gave in a little, with only the public left stranded without much of an explanation.

MRS. APPEL'S embittered protest against certain unethical and possibly illegal practices of the consumer unit evaporated. Patterson, whose staff has allegedly been trying to oust the troublesome Mrs. Appel for months, praised her work with the consumer unit and actually wished her good luck in future endeavors.

Even the audit of the consumer unit which had been ordered by County Executive Daniel Murphy because of Mrs. Appel's allegations, was completed and showed little more than that the consumer unit had fallen behind in its paper work.

A happy ending.

UNFORTUNATELY neither side wanted to discuss the matter further with the press. Never mind how eager they were to exchange charges and counter charges. They clamped up when pressed on how this rosy ending came about.

By prior arrangement, neither Mrs. Appel, her attorney, nor anyone on Patterson's staff could discuss the matter beyond a vaguely worded press release which said, among little

else, that it would be "highly inappropriate to have Mrs. Appel's services to the community and on a bitter note."

There were quite a few bitter notes voiced last week.

"In a highly political office like Brooks Patterson's, you either fall in line or you're out," Mrs. Appel said after being fired. "The motivating factor behind the action of the department is not the fact that I am incompetent or inadequate but rather that I questioned my superiors."

MRS. APPEL had questioned her superiors—to their face and with the press.

Last January she was believed to be the news leak for a series of newspaper reports describing the in-

volvement of her boss, Sheri Perrell, in a private public relations firm. Mrs. Appel and others considered at least a potential conflict of interest.

Mrs. Appel, allegedly at her own request, was reduced from a full to a part-time employee after that.

Then, several weeks ago, Mrs. Appel told the press how Miss Perrell was freezing her out of her job by giving her nothing to do during her reduced hours. She said she resorted to working crossword puzzles and reading books.

"Volunteers were told not to talk to me," she said.

AFTER HER FIRING Mrs. Appel went public with a new set of allegations.

One of these charges was that two consumer investigators had illegally "shared" one federally funded position.

According to Mrs. Appel, Patricia Major was hired as a full time investigator but, unable to work full time, arranged for another investigator, Barbara Gesser, to frequently work in her place. Mrs. Major then split her paycheck with Mrs. Gesser, Mrs. Appel said.

This plan, which Mrs. Appel said was arranged by Miss Perrell, enabled Mrs. Major to teach classes at Wayne State University at least two days a week during regular working hours.

The arrangement covered a period of months while the consumer unit was funded by the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) in 1973 and 1974.

Splitting federal funds intended for one full-time employee could require at

least that the misused funds be returned.

Mrs. Appel said she discussed these allegations with Patterson as early as last May but he has remained supportive of Miss Perrell and her handling of the consumer unit.

ANSWERING THESE charges, Miss Perrell and Richard Thompson, the chief assistant prosecutor, said Mrs. Appel was "throwing stones at other employees" to deflect attention from her own "bizarre" behavior that has warranted dismissal for some time.

Thompson said Mrs. Appel once secretly taped a conversation with Miss Perrell, once rifled through Miss Perrell's desk and sometimes blew a whistle whenever certain staff members passed her in the office.

"For over a year we tried to be sympathetic with this kind of behavior," Thompson said.

Mrs. Appel was also charged with falsifying her employment application, violating department rules and causing bad morale among co-workers, in an 11-page notice of dismissal.

ALL THIS bad will has now passed, however.

Patterson said, "We all agree that statements were made which would have been better left unsaid," and agreed that some of his office's allegations against Mrs. Appel "were not entirely correct."

As for the charges that Miss Perrell allowed two of her employees to illegally share a federally funded position, that is still being investigated. Conducting the investigation will be Miss Perrell herself.

## Military Service

### ATTENDING SCHOOL

Coast Guard Seaman Apprentice John C. Barolo of Bloomfield Hills is attending Subsistence Specialist School at the Coast Guard Training Center, Petaluma, Calif.

During the 18-week course, he will receive instruction on cooking and baking techniques, related sanitation procedures, nutritional values and other aspects of food preparation and service.

Navy Airman Recruit Mark V. Haralid, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood E. Haralid of Troy, is attending Aviation Boatman's Mate School at the Naval Air Technical Training Center, Lakehurst, N.J.

He is enrolled in the six-week aircraft handling course which includes instruction related to the arrangement and movement of jet aircraft aboard carriers.

A 1974 graduate of Sterling Heights High School, he joined the Navy in September 1974.

Coast Guard Seaman Apprentice Patrick T. Daly, son of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Daly of Birmingham, is attending the Coast Guard Officer Candidate School at Yorktown, Va.

During the 18-week course, he will receive instruction in navigation, close order drill, oceanography, marine law enforcement and personnel management.

### COMPLETES SCHOOL

Army Second Lt. Eric R. Wildemann, son of Mr. and Mrs. George R. Wildemann of Troy, completed the Army Infantry School's ranger course in Georgia.

The course is designed to develop exceptional endurance in the infantry soldier and teach him the skills of survival and mountaineering, as well as airlanding and special amphibious operations.

### PROMOTED

Navy Operations Specialist Third

Class Scott J. McIntyre, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. McIntyre of Troy, was promoted to his present rank and the amphibious assault ship USS Guam in the Mediterranean.

A former student of Oakland Community College, he joined the Navy in September 1973.

Marine First Lieutenant Jeffrey B. McNamee, son of Mr. and Mrs. W.A. McNamee of Birmingham, was promoted to his present rank while serving at Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

McNamee was graduated from Hillsdale College with a bachelor's degree in 1973. He joined the Marine Corps in January 1973.

### ASSIGNED

Airman Peter J. Murphy, son of Mr. and Mrs. James N. Murphy of Birmingham, has been assigned to Lowry AFB, Colo., after completing Air Force basic training.

During his six weeks at the Air Training Command's Lackland AFB, Tex., he studied the Air Force mission, organization and customs and received special instruction in human relations.

### COMPLETES SCHOOL

The following local residents have completed Basic Electricity and Electronics School at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill.

They received instruction in the use and application of basic test equipment, an introduction to electrical and electronic circuit principles and related mathematical formulas. The course is designed to prepare personnel for continued specialized training in the electronics and electrical fields.

Navy Fireman Apprentice Mark S. Allison, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth H. Allison of Troy, has completed the school and is scheduled to begin Fire Control Technician "A" School, Great Lakes, Ill.

Navy Seaman Ralph J. Dany III, whose wife Jane is the daughter of Robert Burke of Birmingham, has completed the school and is scheduled to begin Fire Control Technician "A" School, Great Lakes, Ill.

Navy Seaman Douglas E. Cross, son of Mrs. Meryle Cross of Troy, has completed the school and is scheduled to begin Electronics Technician School, Great Lakes, Ill.

### GRADUATED

Navy Airman Gary M.E. Broadbent, whose wife Linda is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Plach of Southfield, graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center, Orlando, Fla.

He is scheduled to report to Avia-

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