

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

Lazaros arrested, faces 10 charges

Self-repaired mulester Peter Lazaros was arrested last week at a Pontiac pharmacy after a coordinated investigation by five Oakland County police departments, including those of Troy, Bloomfield Hills and Rochester.

Lazaros, according to Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, bilked more than \$50,000 from a number of Oakland County residents and banks.

He has been arraigned on 10 counts of criminal conduct in five district courts, including those of Birmingham-Bloomfield Hills, Rochester and Troy. He stood mute on all the counts.

He is being held in lieu of \$124,000 bond and has asked for court-appointed counsel.

He was transferred from Pontiac General Hospital to the Oakland County Jail last week. He had been taken to the hospital when he complained of chest pains after he was arrested.

LAZAROS WAS CALLED a "con-man extraordinaire" by Patterson and James Mitchell, co-director of the Oakland County Organized Crime Organized Crime Task Force.

Among the 10 felony charges Lazaros faces are five counts of obtaining money by false pretenses, a count of attempting to obtain money under false pretenses and one count of cashing a check with insufficient funds.

Because all the charges are felonies, Lazaros is entitled to preliminary hearings in all five courts. Patterson said he hopes to have those completed in two weeks. "If Lazaros doesn't drag his feet,"

Most of the counts involved Lazaros' alleged use of a "Lazaros Trust" checking account which was opened in the First National Bank in Dallas, Texas.

According to Patterson, Lazaros opened a \$500 checking account and obtained \$5,500 dollars from a Madison Heights bank by cashing a \$6,000 check

drawn on the "Lazaros Trust" account.

Oakland County officials said the \$6,000 check bounced, as did a \$498 check with which Lazaros paid for repairs on a rented Cadillac limousine.

The limousine was rented from the Michigan Limousine Service which is located in Highland Park. The limousine, according to Patterson and Mitchell, has not been found.

IN THE MOST grandiose of the schemes described by Patterson, Lazaros allegedly conned more than \$25,000 from a Pontiac doctor. Patterson said Lazaros convinced the doctor that with the help of his "mob connections," he could get the doctor's brother out of an Argentine prison.

The imprisoned brother, Patterson said, was being held as a political prisoner by the Argentine government.

IN ANOTHER SCHEME, Patterson said, Lazaros obtained more than \$6,600 from a Troy man, Lazaros,

according to Patterson, and Mitchell, told the man that his son owed \$8,800 in gambling debts to Anthony Giaccone, a Detroit underworld figure.

Lazaros reportedly told the man that his son "might be hospitalized or disappear" unless the debt was paid.

LAZAROS WAS convicted in 1971 of lying to a federal grand jury. His sentence was delayed because he complained of heart problems. He received an early parole after complaining of similar heart problems while in prison.

Patterson said Lazaros has used health to avoid prosecution.

"Lazaros has been dying for a number of years," Patterson said. "We're not going to be so easily persuaded by his health complaints. Lazaros is a malingerer and he will stand trial on these charges."

"It amazes me that otherwise intelligent people could enter in any kind of business transaction with Peter Lazaros," Patterson said.

History of mushrooms mighty powerful stuff

"And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

"And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: For they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." (Exodus 16:14-15)

The word "manna" means "What is this?" No one is yet certain what the food was that was heaven-sent to the Israelites to feed them in their 40 years in the wilderness.

Some scholars, however, think that it was a fungus resembling a mushroom, since it sprang up overnight in much the same way they do.

Certainly, mushrooms of the edible variety are tasty enough to be bread from heaven.

In more recent times, mushrooms were considered by the Hebrews to be holy, and only priests were allowed to eat them. To prevent the less privileged from partaking of the sacred mushrooms, a general "taboo," or taboo, was put on mushroom-eating, and all mushrooms were treated as if they were poisonous.

Mushrooms played a profound importance in many primitive religions. Many varieties of the fungus-type growth are hallucinogenic.

Early Greeks believed that the eater would experience delightful hallucinations if he were in a state of grace, and dreadful nightmares otherwise.

Nero referred to them as "the food of the gods." But those who knew their mushrooms well sometimes used the poisonous varieties to rid themselves of unwanted relatives and acquaintances by including them in their menu when these guests came to dinner.

Today it is said that there are over 90 varieties of edible mushrooms. I, myself, love to eat morels, and there is one variety known as the beefsteak



morel of which I am particularly fond. I have gathered and eaten them all my life.

Recently, however, I have learned that only certain people can eat this mushroom; others have violent allergic reactions to them, some of which may prove fatal.

So, unless you are really familiar with the mushrooms you gather, it is much safer for the average gourmet to stick to the huge fresh Michigan-grown, toadstool type sold in the produce department of your local supermarket.

Even these can bring "magical" results when prepared in the right recipe, and served in the proper setting.

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