

Owner of postal store faces felony charges

By Brian Lysaght staff writer

The owner of a Bloomfield Township shipping store was ordered to stand trial on three felony charges Monday. Eugene McCormick of Sterling Heights, who was exonerated on similar charges last July, is to be arraigned Dec. 20 in Oakland County Circuit Court on two counts of uttering and publishing and one count of embezzlement. The order came from Judge Thomas Brookover following a preliminary examination in 48th District Court. Brookover dismissed two other felony embezzlement charges against McCormick.

McCormick, 33, owns Mail Boxes Etc. U.S.A., 1994 Woodward. He has maintained his innocence. His attorney, who is questioning the prosecution's evidence, claims authorities are wasting time trying to convict the store owner. Last July, following a preliminary examination, 48th District Court Judge Gus Chifelli dismissed two embezzlement charges against McCormick. "IT LOOKS TO ME they just got their nose out of joint and said 'We're going to get this guy by hook or by crook,'" said Ralph E. Musilli, McCormick's attorney. McCormick's store offers various postal and shipping services and post office boxes. Customers can pay for postage and drop off letters or packages for mailing. In the uttering and publishing counts, authorities claim that McCormick charged postage costs from a third party to American Speed Printing. The company contacted police, said Bloomfield Township Lt. Jeffrey Werner. In the embezzlement count, McCormick is accused of accepting \$10.50 from a customer to ship a \$450 bicycle. The bike was never shipped, Werner said. "The bike was recovered by this department at the store and has since been returned to the customer," he said. Police say they continue to get complaints about the store. The complaints began after news stories appeared when he was first charged, Werner said. "THAT'S NOT surprising, Musilli said. "Once something hits the newspaper, everyone wants to get in on it." In one police report last week, a 30-year-old Union Lake man said in mid-November that he gave McCormick 30 cents to mail a letter containing payment to a credit card company. The letter was apparently never sent, the man said, because he later got a late payment notice from the credit card company. Musilli concedes that the store may not be as efficiently run as it could be. He also said McCormick will probably sell the store. Uttering and publishing carries a 14-year jail sentence, and embezzlement carries a 10 year sentence.

Charley's to be redone with 'true Midwestern colors'

By James Redebaugh staff writer

West Bloomfield Charley's is getting a new look. The restaurant, a longtime fixture on Maple Road, was selected as one of two test stores to be redesigned as part of a plan to pull the financially troubled Charley's Restaurant Group out of the red.

The resulting decor, expected to be in place by the end of the month, will feature "real, true Midwestern colors," said Paul Yarmoluk, the restaurant group's chief operating officer. That means beige accented with black, burgundy and green. "It'll be casual dining, the Ralph Lauren look," Yarmoluk said Monday from the group's headquarters in Farmington Hills. "Now, that doesn't mean people are going to be walking around in knickers."

THE CHARLEY'S RESTAURANT GROUP, which runs several restaurants in Metro-Detroit communities, is reorganizing under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy code, which protects faltering businesses from their creditors. Yarmoluk, 45, who was recruited in August to put the company back on track, said

he's heard the previous Charley's management purposely chose interior color schemes that kept customers from getting too comfortable so they would eat and move on. Yarmoluk, calling the previous color schemes in all the restaurants "weird," said he believes it. Charley's also plans to inject its dining atmosphere with a well-groomed, profes-

sional wait staff and pink lighting to help the food look better. The menu in all the Charley's has been upgraded and expanded to include more of the group's trademark fish, which they say will be fresher than ever — frozen fish has been banished — all in an effort to keep on top of the "changing" tastes of mid-American.

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