

Anti-incinerator activist convicted of voter fraud

By PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Irony? Or poetic justice?
An Oakland County woman convicted of making false statements while trying to vote is to be sentenced — on election day.
Marlynn Burton-Ristau of Orion Township faces a maximum five years in prison after a circuit court jury Monday found her guilty of one charge of making a false affidavit to register to vote and a second charge of giving a

false statement on an absentee ballot.
She is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Richard D. Kuhn on Nov. 2, the same day dozens of Oakland County communities will conduct municipal elections.
Burton-Ristau, a Canadian who has permanent resident status because she is married to an American, was found guilty in a three-day trial of twice filing statements for receiving absentee ballots in 1990.

In the process of applying for the ballots, Burton-Ristau signed statements saying she was an American citizen. She testified that she did so after an employee at the U.S. consulate in Toronto, Kenneth Shivers, advised her she was eligible to vote in local elections.
"It was a mistake," she said. "Had I known I couldn't vote, I would not have tried."
The prosecution contended Burton-Ristau violated voting

laws. The jury agreed.
"They jury obviously rejected the argument that it (the statements) was a mistake," said Gerald D. Polsson, chief assistant prosecutor. "Existing law clearly mandates that we prosecute violations of election laws and that's what we did."
"The purity of the election process must be preserved. It's the way we elect officials and decide issues of public policy."

Polsson said the prosecution will not ask for the maximum penalty. "It's up to the judge, but I don't think she'll even get jail time."
Burton-Ristau's supporters, in the meantime, insist the prosecution against her was politically motivated.
"She stepped on some toes," said Thomas Strangway of Orion Township. "This whole thing was politics."

Burton-Ristau was president of RAIL (Residents against Incinerators and Landfills) and a vocal critic of Oakland County's proposed \$500 million solid waste program that included a \$200 million incinerator in Auburn Hills.
In 1991 Burton-Ristau was in the forefront of a highly controversial campaign as county officials sought voter approval on a bond issue to finance the solid waste program.

OU sets talk on Mideast

Vernon Egger, Ph.D., expert on Islam and recent interviewer of the PLO's Arafat, will present a free public lecture at Oakland University Oct. 8 on "Rethinking the Middle East: The August Surprise of Israel and the PLO."
Egger, a faculty member at Georgia Southern University, will lecture at 2 p.m. in Rooms 126-127 of the Oakland Center. The talk is sponsored by the OU Department of History.
Egger is fluent in Arabic and has done research in Egypt, The United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Yemen Arab Republic, Morocco and Tunisia.
Egger has received numerous fellowships and travel awards. His most recent book bearing completion is entitled "The Islamic Experience."
A reception for Egger will follow in St. John Fisher Chapel.

Health fraud forum at OU

Oakland University will host a forum on health fraud at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion.
Tickets are \$30. Call 370-3198.
Evelyn DeNikie of the Food and Drug Administration will speak. Her topic is "Current FDA Issues and Initiatives."
The purposes of the forum is to increase awareness in recognizing health fraud, to educate professionals and the public about new food labeling requirements and to review new recommended requirements for vitamin and mineral products to support claims of their benefits.

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