POCONO RECORD

Ex-mayor, ex-convict, seeks to get old job back

By News Briefs:
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CARBONDALE (AP) — The former mayor of Carbondale, who has served prison time for harassment and conspiracy to commit election fraud, announced he will run for mayor again.

Joe Vadella, 45, pleaded guilty to federal and state misdemeanor charges and served four months in jail and one year probation for his involvement in a 1997 election fraud case.

He and his brothers, Michael and James, were accused of tampering with absentee ballots during James' bid for a district justice seat.

While the state Constitution says a person convicted of an "infamous" crime cannot hold public office, there isn't a "case on point" that defines whether Vadella's convictions qualify as infamous, said Joseph O'Brien, solicitor of the Lackawanna County Board of Elections.

Deadbeats released early to save money

— ALLENTOWN (AP) — A judge released 40 convicted deadbeat parents from county jail before they completed their sentences as a money-saving move.

Northampton County Judge Stephen G. Baratta on Friday cut short the punishment for 51 child support delinquents in all; the other 11 were on extended furlough, only required to report to the prison at regular intervals.

Prison officials made the request, saying it will save the county about $66,000 a month in payments to Lackawanna and Monroe counties to house overflow inmates.

The county has budgeted $3 million to pay other counties to house its inmates in 2003. It paid $1.2 million in 2002, including $160,000 in December.

Ex-wife drops dime on bigamist

— READING (AP) — A former Berks County man was charged with bigamy after one of his ex-wives notified police, authorities said.

Colin D. Fish, 50, wed Joan M. Keim in June 1998 but he still was married to Linda Y. Fish, his second wife whom he married in November 1990, police said.

The divorce for that marriage was not final until September 2000, investigators said.

Fish, a native of England, was arraigned Tuesday before District Justice Ronald C. Mest and remained free pending further court action. He and his attorney, Michael R. Dautrich, declined to comment.

Investigators said shortly after Colin Fish left Joan Fish, who lives in Brecknock Township, in May, she found the paperwork from her husband's divorce with Linda Fish.

"I was horrified, because I trusted him," she said. "Then I got mad and went to the police."

Colin Fish now lives with a woman in North Carolina, police said.

Historic church to close

— SCRANTON (AP) — A historic church will likely close its doors amid a shrinking congregation and rising maintenance costs.

A sticker with the words “sale is pending” recently appeared on the for-sale sign in front of Simpson-West Park United Methodist Church but church members are saying little about whether they plan to disband or join another congregation.

Other churches in the region have had to close for similar reasons. The final Mass at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Dickson City, was celebrated Jan. 12. A diminishing number of parishioners, deficit spending and major building repairs forced the small church to close its doors.

Maria Orzel, spokeswoman for the Diocese of Scranton, said there are no plans yet on what to do with that building.

Elderly defendant asks to die in jail

— ALLENTOWN (AP) — A 79-year-old man asked to be put to death, moments after a judge found him guilty of trying to lure a 16-year-old girl into his car.

“I go to jail right now and stay till I croak?” Emil T. Doncsecz of Lower Saucon Township asked Northampton County Judge F.P. Kimberly McFadden, who convicted him Tuesday and sentenced him to pay a $500 fine and to serve nine months of probation.

“I’m not doing none of this,” Doncsecz said. “The sheriff can pick me up.”

The judge repeated that she wasn’t sending Doncsecz to prison. “Well, the electric chair then,” he said. “I just want to go to jail and croak.”

McFadden also ordered that Doncsecz undergo a psychological evaluation and said she wanted the county’s Area Agency on Aging involved.

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