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A controversial tail

Ronald Pratte's pigtail has become a tale of controversy. The Welfare Department states it makes him unemployable (See Story). VALLEY PRESS PHOTO.

Long-hair vs. welfare (case continued)

More testimony in the case of Ronald Pratte versus the county welfare department is scheduled to be heard tomorrow, October 22, at 10 a.m. by Judge Charles Franich.

Pratte, a 27 year old Boulder Creek resident, is seeking a court order to compel the welfare department to give him support under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. His welfare payments were ordered stopped after it was determined he was not cooperating in seeking employment because of his beard and long braided hair.

At a hearing Friday, only one witness was called before Judge Franich ordered the case continued because of other matters on his docket. Testifying was Nancy Albaugh, a clerk in the welfare department who took Pratte's application.

Under questioning by Dennis Barret, Pratte's attorney, Mrs. Albaugh said his benefits had been cut off on orders of John Zehner, a supervisor in the department.

Mrs. Albaugh said she heard Pratte had refused employment at the Inglis Frozen Food company but, upon checking, found he had not been offered a job.

"I was told it was not my job to verify the report," Mrs. Albaugh said. She added she did not know if anyone verified the report.

Barrett then produced a directive handed down by the state welfare department and approved by Director Robert Martin which specifically said hair style should not be a factor in determining an applicant's eligibility.

Mrs. Albaugh said she did not recall ever being shown the directive. Barrett emphasized Mrs. Albaugh had been subpoenaed to testify.

The hearing opened with Dwight Herr, deputy county counsel, asking for a dismissal of the action on the grounds Pratte had not exhausted all administrative remedies and an appeal of his suspension would be heard by the welfare department.

Herr said Pratte would continue to receive general assistance from the welfare department for the rest of October. However, when Judge Franich asked if the hearing would be held this month, Herr said he considered it doubtful.

Barrett said the hearing might not be set for some time and it could be 60 days before a decision was reached.

Pratte, a former resident of Pennsylvania, applied for welfare on August 20 under the Aid to Families program. His application was denied when he refused to cut his hip length pigtail, on the grounds he was not cooperating. He was later placed on general assistance, a county funded and administered program.

His wife and 21 month old son were present in court Friday.



Recommendation

Last Wednesday evening's meeting of the Ben Lomond Recreation board of directors presented another good view of Mrs. Alice Earl Wilder and her game of "the public be damned."

She used every maneuver possible to prevent a candidates' night slated for last night (Tuesday) in Park Hall. (See the story in this issue).

She is derelict every month it seems in her duties as secretary of the board, failing to get