

emerald

Law firm fires first in lawsuit

Group upset by 57-pages of 'life-history' questions

By Ann Portal
Of the Emerald

The first volley has been fired by the Philadelphia law firm hired to defend the State Board of Higher Education against a federal class-action sex discrimination lawsuit.

Morgan, Lewis and Bockuis, the 300-member firm hired by the board as a consultant in the case, last week sent each of the suit's nine female plaintiffs a questionnaire that must be returned to the plaintiffs attorney by May 1.

The questionnaire is 57 pages long and asks for instances of alleged discrimination, past places of employment, past salaries, all sources of income, current assets and liabilities — "essentially everything," says Jane Gray, a University biology professor and one of the plaintiffs.

Another plaintiff, math prof. Anna Penk of Western Oregon State College, says, "They ask my whole life history in this questionnaire." She says that she has spent all her spare time for 10 days on the questionnaire, and is not yet halfway through it.

"Sometimes I get so frustrated I could just scream," Penk says. "I'm quite sure they're hassling us."

She says the state's attorneys seems to be stalling, although the case is moving through the court relatively fast. "They ought to know by now we are quite determined," Penk says.

The lawsuit, filed two years ago, was certified as a class-action suit in October by U.S. District Court Judge Helen Frye. The class-action ruling means that instead of having to pursue affirmative action lawsuits on their own, all faculty women employed in the state system as instructors or professors since July 1979 are represented by the suit.

Penk says that the questionnaire is the state's first request for information from the women plaintiffs. But many of the questions have "no value," she says, speculating that the Philadelphia firm is giving the state advice on "how to hassle" the women involved in the suit.

To get information from the state, the plaintiffs have already had to go to court twice, and expect to go a third time, Penk says. The lag between requesting and getting information has ranged from three to nine months, she says.

Because getting information from the state has been a struggle, the women want to be reasonable and comply with any requests made by the state, Penk says.

Jerry Casby, assistant attorney general and attorney for the State Board of Higher Education, says that "interrogatives" are a standard part of any litigation. The plaintiffs have sent him six different sets so far — and this is just the beginning, he says.

"Everything we've asked is directly relevant," Casby says. "I wouldn't have asked it if it weren't necessary. I don't want to hassle anybody."

The women seem to feel just filing the suit is proof that the state system is liable for damages, he says, adding that "I've maintained from the start that the system is not liable and I'm going to prove that."



Photo by David Corey

Jane Gray, a University biology professor and a plaintiff in a class-action sex discrimination suit, leafs through a hefty, 57-page questionnaire from a Philadelphia law firm.

The women's attorney, Portland lawyer Don Willner, would have gone before Judge Frye if the questions had not all been relevant, Casby says.

Willner declined to comment on the class-action suit, though he points out that both sides in lawsuits have a right to request both oral and written testimony.

The next step in the lawsuit is up to the plaintiffs, who expect to have enough information to be able to file in court sometime in June, Penk says.

British seize harbor; House of Commons lauds Prime Minister

SOUTH GEORGIA, Falkland Islands (AP) — British marines seized a second harbor from defiant Argentine holdouts Monday to complete the recapture of frigid and desolate South Georgia island, British officials reported.

London's strategists next turned their aim on the Falkland Islands, and one report said a preliminary British landing on the well-defended archipelago might be only a day or two away.

But British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, cheered by her supporters in the House of Commons, declared Britain still hopes to end the South Atlantic crisis by negotiation.

"As the British task force approaches closer to the Falklands, the urgent need is to speed up the negotiations, not slow them down," she said.

In Buenos Aires, the Argentine government maintained mostly official silence on the reported defeat and capture of its small force at South Georgia, 1,100 miles east of Argentina's southern tip. Military sources were quoted as saying some troops retreated into the icy back-country of South Georgia and "resistance continues."

Outwardly at least, negotiations appeared at a standstill.

Argentina's foreign minister, Nicanor Costa Mendez, said Sunday Britain's attack on South Georgia meant peace talks were out of the question "for the time being." He presented his nation's case Monday before an Organization of American States meeting in Washington, where the members unanimously called on Britain and Argentina to avoid using force in the dispute.

But, President Reagan said the U.S. mediation effort to defuse the explosive confrontation would continue.

U.S. Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. has been working to make peace between the two sides since soon after Argentine forces seized the Falklands and its usually uninhabited South Georgia dependency April 2-3. Argentina has long claimed the Falklands, which were held by Britain for the past 149 years.

In the British House of Commons, Michael Foot, leader of the opposition Labor Party, urged that the United Nations be asked to help settle the conflict.

A U.N. spokesman in New York, Francois Giuliani, said Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's office was drawing up contingency plans in case it is "called upon to play a role" in the crisis.

In London, Lt. Col. Tim Donkin of the Royal Marines gave reporters this account of the capture of South Georgia, which began early Sunday afternoon:

Helicopters from the 61-ship British armada in the South Atlantic flew over the Argentine submarine Santa Fe in South Georgia's Grytviken harbor, and Grytviken's Argentine defenders opened fire. British helicopter gunships then scored three direct hits on the submarine.

British warships next began bombarding the harbor, and under their covering fire helicopters ferried the British marines onto land, over the mine-filled harbor.

Measure seeks city 'water-fund'

By Brad Berton
Of the Emerald

Oregon voters soon will be asked to decide whether the state should expand its Water Development Fund to include loans for municipal water projects.

Ballot Measure 1 — on the May 18 primary ballot — would amend the Oregon constitution, which now allows the state to support irrigation and drainage projects by borrowing up to 1½ percent of the true cash value of all property in Oregon. The measure would permit up to half of this fund to be used for municipal water projects in towns with less than 30,000 residents.

As a State Senate joint resolution, the

measure would limit loan eligibility to Oregon residents while expanding eligibility to include municipalities.

More than 500 Oregonians signed a petition requesting that an argument in favor of the measure be printed in the state voters' pamphlet.


Democrat Dave McTeague, a University political science graduate running for the 5th U.S. Congressional District, writes "One natural resource essential to Oregon's quality of life is pure drinking water. Another is Oregon's rich fertile farmland, like our Willamette Valley. . . . Our great-grandchildren should share our clean water and family farm heritage."

McTeague's argument goes on to say,

"In 1977 voters approved the Water Development Fund to allow low-interest loans for irrigation projects. The voter's major purpose was to aid Oregon's Small Family Farmers. Our law granted them loan preference.

"However, the Legislature goofed! A major legislative flaw created two dangerous loopholes which could allow: a) funds to be given to large foreign or out-of-state corporations b) funds to be given away without repayment requirements. Measure number one inserts 'for loans for residents of this state' in our Constitution, filling this loophole."

No arguments against the measure were submitted for the voter's pamphlet. An assistant to Albany City Manager



Primary '82

Ballot Measures

William Barrons says the Albany City Council last week passed a resolution in favor of the measure.

Gerald Pacinorsky of the Oregon City Water Office says "In the future, there will be a need to construct an additional reservoir for Oregon City's water system.

"This measure will be helpful — small cities need help with these large expenses," Pacinorsky adds.