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# AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

SATURDAY, March 1, 2003 A B C

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## Questions left by probe



**Akron official Joseph Kidder** has apologized to the mayor for causing embarrassment.

**Mayor, citing poor judgment by aide Kidder, suspends him**

By Julie Wallace  
 Beacon Journal staff writer

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic has suspended Service Director Joe Kidder for one week without pay beginning Sunday for allowing a contractor who does business with the city to play too big a role in building Kidder's house.

Plusquellic meted out the punishment after spending last Saturday reading an Akron police investigation file of about 550 pages. It had been released a year earlier after a nine-month court fight with the Akron Beacon Journal.

The investigation did not result in criminal charges. Still, Plusquellic said, the discipline was warranted because he and his staff must avoid "even the appearance of impropriety."

"I made the determination that Joe made an error in judgment by not taking steps to make certain that this subcontractor didn't do more work than he was supposed to and be involved more than he was supposed to," Plusquellic said Friday. "It didn't look good - whether there was a criminal prosecution or not."

Plusquellic and Kidder both were vacationing in Florida this week. Plusquellic's action came after Kidder apologized to the mayor. Both got to read the file after Summit County Common



PAUL TOPLE/Akron Beacon Journal photos

**Under an unusual, unbid city contract, Cioffi Construction turned part of a former DIY Warehouse on Tallmadge Avenue into county offices.**

Pleas Judge Ted Schneiderman ordered it released last week.

Kidder was not interviewed by the police. He said Friday he did not know, until he read the file, the extent of the involvement that Frank Cioffi had in building his Ellet home in 1997 - at the same time that Cioffi was doing more than \$900,000 in unbid work for the city on an office building.

Kidder said he knew Cioffi was to be a subcontractor on his house, and he obtained clearance from Akron Law Director Max Rothal for that work. But the investigative files indicate that Cioffi played a far bigger role - paying subcontractors for work and buying magnetic signs to conceal the logos on his company trucks while they were at Kidder's house.

Cioffi did not return messages left at his office this week. He

Please see **Suspend, A5**



Polera Construction has borrowed from Cioffi Construction \$42,000.00 for a period of one year with no interest.

**Akron Service Director Joseph P. Kidder's Ellet house was to be built by Polera Construction, but an interest-free loan from Cioffi Construction paid for the lot. Cioffi, which was to be only a subcontractor, was more deeply involved in the construction and took steps to hide that, prompting Kidder's suspension.**

**Investigation of service chief, contractor may have fallen short**

By David Knox and Julie Wallace  
 Beacon Journal staff writers

Six years ago, Akron City Service Director Joseph P. Kidder named Frank Cioffi as the contractor for an unbid building-renovation project that cost the city nearly \$1 million.

Six weeks later, Cioffi gave a Bath Township carpenter an interest-free, \$42,000 loan to buy a lot in the Ellet neighborhood of Akron to build a house for Kidder.

How Cioffi got the unusual renovation contract, who built the house, and whether Kidder got more house than he paid for led to an 18-month investigation by a task force of federal, state and Akron police officers.

The investigation ended quietly more than a year ago, after Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh concluded in a letter to the Ohio Ethics Commission that "there is not enough evidence . . . to support a criminal charge."

However, an Akron Beacon Journal review of about 550 pages of Akron police documents related to the case raises questions about whether the investigation went far enough. The records were made public after a Summit County judge rejected a lawsuit the city brought against the newspaper to keep the records secret.

Included in the documents were statements made to police that:

- A city employee may have provided Cioffi with information about a competitor's estimate for the 1997 conversion of part of the former DIY Warehouse on Tallmadge Avenue into offices of the county Title Bureau.
- Cioffi was deeply involved in the construction of Kidder's house and took steps to hide his role, going so far as to cover up Cioffi Construction Co. logos on the sides of his trucks with magnetic signs.
- Kidder's home may have cost much more to build than the \$203,600 that records show he paid.

Ohio's conflict-of-interest law

Please see **Kidder, A4**

## U.S. urges Hussein to disarm and quit

**Iraq can't prevent war unless both conditions are met, Bush team says**

By Felicity Barringer and David E. Sanger  
 New York Times

**UNITED NATIONS:** The White House said Friday that Iraq could only prevent war by both disarming and sending Saddam Hussein into exile, in an apparent shift from the previous administration position.

At the same time, Russia's foreign minister threatened to veto a U.N. Security Council resolution saying that Iraq had missed its last chance of avoiding war.

The hardening of positions on both sides increases the pressure on the six uncommitted members of the Security Council,

who have looked to the work of chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix for guidance on Iraqi compliance.

Blix's latest report, formally delivered to council members Friday, gives ammunition to both sides and does not offer the kind of unambiguous judgment that could help resolve the waverers' doubts.

Both France and Russia seized on Iraq's decision "in principle" to begin destroying its 120 or so short-range Al Samoud 2 missiles as further evidence that the inspections process is working. Blix called the decision "a very significant piece of real disarmament."

His deputy, Demetrius Perricos, was in Baghdad on Friday to oversee the initial phases of the missile destruction.

White House spokesman Ari

Please see **Iraq, A6**



Associated Press

**Protesters burn an American flag in Multan, Pakistan, to show their anger Friday against a possible U.S. war with Iraq. The White House says Iraq can avoid war if Saddam Hussein disarms and resigns.**

## Cleveland Diocese adopts new policy

Review board will assess sex abuse allegations

By Colette M. Jenkins  
 Beacon Journal religion writer

After nearly a year of work by a special commission, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland has adopted a new policy for addressing allegations of clergy sexual abuse against children.

But this action doesn't hold immediate answers for the 15 diocese priests now on administrative leave because of allegations of abuse.

The new policy "reflects this diocese's sincere desire to deal effectively with the horrors of sexual abuse and reaffirms our fundamental policy - no tolerance, immediate notification of civil authorities and ongoing oversight by laypeople," Bishop Anthony M. Pilla said in a prepared state-



Bishop Pilla

ment Friday.

The policy expands the requirements for reporting and investigating abuse allegations, and it calls for the creation of an 11-member review board, primarily composed of laypeople.

The board would be charged with assessing the credibility of allegations, advising the bishop of its conclusions, monitoring cases and making recommendations to the bishop concerning the continuation of ministry or service

Please see **Diocese, A5**

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**Akron-Kent game will kick off season**

In an attempt to improve attendance, Akron and Kent State will move their rivalry football game to the beginning of the upcoming season, Thursday Aug. 28 at the Rubber Bowl. The game traditionally is the final game of the season. See story, Page C5

**Warning labels proposed for ephedra**

The U.S. government began building the case toward a possible ban of the popular herb ephedra Friday by proposing strong new warning labels that the pills can cause heart attacks and strokes or even kill. The warning labels - first proposed in 1997 but blocked until now by the powerful dietary supplement industry - could be on every bottle by year's end.

The herb is popular among athletes and has been linked to the death of Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler two weeks ago. Ephedra has been banned in professional football, college athletics and, just this week, minor-league baseball.

**Today's weather**

Snow

37° High 30° Low  
 NewsChannel 5 forecast, Page B6

# Kidder denies DIY deal, work on home linked

Continued from Page A1

states that it is illegal for a public official to "accept anything of value" that would "manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official." Violation of the statute is a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Kidder has said there was no connection between the DIY project and the simultaneous construction of his house. He provided copies of his bank appraisal and his \$193,344 mortgage, which show the home's value at nearly the same amount as his loan.

And he said he didn't realize the extent of Cioffi's involvement with his house until it was revealed in the police files, which he reviewed this week.

"It's obviously embarrassing to me," Kidder said Friday. "I should have known better."

Mayor Don Plusquellic agreed. He has suspended Kidder for a week without pay, starting Sunday.

## The DIY project

The Akron police investigation began in early 1999, after Sgt. Dominic Avellino "received information of possible misconduct by public officials" in the city, according to court records.

The investigation focused on the unusual purchase agreement between the city and DIY for the Tallmadge Avenue building, and on the construction of Kidder's house.

Investigators also looked at Ray Kapper, a private consultant and former Akron service director who was convicted in 2001 in connection with an investigation of bribery and kickbacks in Summit County government.

Kapper brokered the DIY deal. An internal DIY memo obtained by police described Kapper as the "city's go-between we were forced to use to swing the deal." Kapper received almost \$13,000 for his role in negotiating the agreement.

The agreement required DIY to remodel the building before the city would buy it. But the city was to cover all renovation costs.

That essentially meant that DIY functioned as a conduit for the payment of city dollars to the company doing the renovation. The arrangement meant the city could avoid the normal bidding process used to ensure the lowest and best price, and it effectively hid a nearly \$1 million project from ready public scrutiny.

Plusquellic took the blame for the tight timetable that forced the city to skip its usual bidding process. He thought another building - a former Acme Click store at what is known as Five Points - would be better suited for the Title Bureau, and he tried unsuccessfully for weeks to get the required parties onboard.

That delay left the city facing a 45-day deadline to move the Title Bureau out of the city-owned O'Neil's building - which was being renovated at the same time - or pay the county \$2 million to find new offices on its own.

"That's my fault - my hands are all over this," Plusquellic said. "This had nothing to do with Joe other than he was stuck carrying out our orders to get the job done."

DIY had planned to use Ray Fogg Building Methods of Cleveland to do the renovation.

But in a Feb. 14, 1997, letter to Reynold Hendrickson, DIY's real estate executive, Kidder named Cioffi for the project because its estimates "for the renovation are clearly more favorable."

Kidder, whose department oversaw the project, later explained in a City Council meeting that "DIY's contractor could not do the project in time, so we went through a proposal process."

Kidder told the council that he had called around to four contractors and "found someone who could do it on time."

That someone was Frank Cioffi, a client of Kapper's whose primary business is road and street repair.

Hendrickson argued then, and still argues, that Ray Fogg could have done the job on time.

"Fogg built a large number of our stores in northeastern Ohio," Hendrickson said in an interview this week. "We knew they could get things done quick, and they were very affordable."

Michael J. Merle, Fogg's vice president, also disagrees with Kidder's contention that Fogg couldn't have done the job on time. "Yes, of course, we could," he said this week. He was told that Fogg was losing the work because Cioffi's price was better.

The investigators were told that Cioffi may have had an unfair advantage.

Lee Cottrell, Cioffi's former project manager, told police in May 1999 that he suspected someone from the city had contacted Frank Cioffi and told him that the bid was "so that Cioffi could come in under that price," according to the report.

Police tried to learn who that someone might be.

In August 2000, Sgt. Avellino



PAUL TOPLE/Akron Beacon Journal

The Summit County Title Bureau moved from the O'Neil's building to space renovated by Cioffi Construction Co. in a former DIY Warehouse. The project cost the city of Akron nearly \$1 million.

asked A.J. Pehlivanian, a former employee in the city's Engineering Bureau who had worked on the initial stages of the project, if he had faxed a copy of Ray Fogg's DIY cost estimate to Cioffi.

Pehlivanian didn't give a flat denial. Avellino wrote: "He first stated that he might have done so at the direction of someone above him, he then stated that that would not be an ethical thing to do, so he probably didn't do it."

Asked by Avellino how Cioffi was picked to do the remodeling work, Pehlivanian said, "That's a good question."

Cioffi was out of town this week and did not return messages left for him at his office.

The renovation ended up costing at least \$923,032 - more than the \$862,500 cost of the building itself and \$75,000 more than the highest estimate by Fogg found in the police file.

Cottrell, Cioffi's project manager, told police that Cioffi had said "he pocketed more than \$300,000 from this job."

## The Kidder house

In 1996, Kidder, a former Akron City Councilman who had been working in Atlanta, returned to Akron to be service director. He wanted to build a house in Ellet, the area he had represented.

Kidder, 46, said he went searching for someone who didn't do business with Akron and was given the name of Anthony Polera by a former councilman and a family friend. Kidder knew that Cioffi would do some of the concrete work for the home's basement and driveway, and he asked City Law Director Max Rothal if Cioffi's involvement would be appropriate.

Rothal said he told Kidder it would be OK as long as Cioffi was only a subcontractor.

But, according to the police file, Cioffi had a bigger hand in the project than merely as a subcontractor.

In April 1997, records show that Polera received a \$42,000 interest-free loan from Cioffi.

According to court documents in connection with a lawsuit filed a year later over the loan, its purpose was "to purchase a residential building lot" to put up a house.

Polera bought the lot on Forest Oak Drive on April 11, 1997, for \$42,000, according to county auditor's records.

Kidder said Friday he had no idea at the time that Cioffi had loaned Polera the money to buy the lot. He learned about that when Cioffi sued Polera over the unpaid loan.

"I was sick," he said.

Cottrell - who worked for Cioffi, not Polera - also obtained the June 13, 1997, building permit for the house. The permit was paid with a Cioffi Construction check, although the mailing address listed on the form was Tony Polera's.

Cottrell said he applied for the permit in Polera's name because Frank Cioffi had asked him

to. "Frank said Tony wasn't available that day," Cottrell told a Beacon Journal reporter this week.

Cottrell said he did other work on Kidder's house, including the preparation of the list of features the home was to have: oak trim, solid oak doors, a wet bar and deck, and sound, security and sprinkler systems. The list was needed in connection with Kidder's application for a bank mortgage.

The list was typed on Polera Construction Co. letterhead stationery, Cottrell said, then faxed to Polera's home. A copy of the faxed document is in the police file.

Cottrell told police he helped prepare the initial cost estimate for the house, based on blueprints provided by Frank Cioffi.

A woman who answered the phone Friday at Polera's home said he "wouldn't be interested" in commenting for a story.

## At the construction site

Tony Polera is not known as a home builder.

Carmine Torio, executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Greater

Akron, said in his 15 years with the group, he has never heard of Polera Construction. Although not all home builders are members of Torio's organization, he said he knows of nearly all companies doing business in the area.

Neither is Cioffi a home builder, but his company is much larger than Polera's.

Polera, who often works as a subcontractor on Cioffi projects, is a one-man operation, Cottrell said, although Polera does hire other carpenters for specific jobs. Cioffi at that time had about 25 employees.

Cottrell said Cioffi Construction dug the basement of the home and worked on the driveway. Polera did the wooden framing. Subcontractors did the rest of the work.

Cottrell said Cioffi functioned as the general contractor: "He oversaw the project" and arranged to hire at least some of the subcontractors.

Among the police investigation documents are several invoices from subcontractors billed directly to Cioffi.

Police also learned that Cioffi spent \$280 for eight magnetic signs, including four reading

## WHO'S WHO

**Joseph Kidder:** City of Akron service director.

**Lee Cottrell:** Former employee of Frank Cioffi. Cottrell took out the building permit for Kidder's house.

**Tony Polera:** Bath Township carpenter. Builder of record for Kidder's house.

**Frank Cioffi:** His Akron company, Cioffi Construction, received an unbid contract for work on the DIY building on Tallmadge Avenue.

**John Harvey:** Plumber who told investigators that while he was working on the DIY building, Cioffi recruited him to work on Kidder's house.

**Reynold Hendrickson:** Director of real estate for DIY. Complained that DIY was "forced" to use consulting firm Kapper and Associates "to swing the deal."

**Ray Kapper:** Former Akron service director who retired, then founded a consulting firm.

Pleaded guilty in 2001 to federal mail fraud charges for failing to disclose that while he sat on the boards of the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Summit County Children Services Board, his clients were doing business with the agencies.

"Polera Construction." Cottrell told investigators the signs were placed on Cioffi trucks when they were at the home construction site.

"When Cioffi's trucks were leaving the construction yard, he would always make sure that magnetic Polera signs were attached over the Cioffi logo on the truck," according to the report.

Kidder learned of the signs when he went to his lot to check on the house's progress. He said he was outraged. "I told them to get those things off there, that they were ridiculous," Kidder said.

Although Cottrell cooperated with police, he said he had no hard feelings toward Cioffi, for whom he had worked for two years. "Frank overall is a good guy," he said. "He's a very good employer. He takes care of his people."

## Recruiting by Cioffi

Interviews with two subcontractors also are included in the police documents.

John Harvey, a plumber, told police "that he was recruited by Frank Cioffi to work on the home . . . while he was plumbing the Title Bureau," adding "that most of the subcontractors who were working on the Title Bureau went from there to the house . . . to work," according to the police report.

Another subcontractor, Guy Fragomeni, was questioned about his painting work at Kidder's home.

Fragomeni told the Beacon Journal that Frank Cioffi, not Polera, hired him to work on the house.

There are indications that the investigators attempted to determine the total cost of building Kidder's house. A spreadsheet among the documents in the file lists breakdowns of "estimated cost" and "actual cost."

The estimated-cost list, which is identical to the estimates that

Cottrell said he worked on, totals \$198,215. About \$5,300 was added later, bringing the total purchase price to \$203,600.

The "actual cost" column totals \$253,562.02.

Two of the line items in the list are designated as paid by Kidder - \$898 for a concrete patio and \$1,435 for a garage door. Cioffi did both jobs, and copies of checks from Kidder to Cioffi are included among the documents.

But even subtracting those items paid directly by Kidder leaves the total at more than \$250,000.

Torio, of the Home Builders Association, questioned whether any Summit County builder would agree to construct a house much larger than 2,500 square feet for the \$198,215 estimate that Polera initially gave Kidder, which is for 2,780 square feet of living space, according to auditor's records.

Assistant county Prosecutor Michael Carroll, one of three senior staffers involved in evaluating the investigation, saw it differently.

"Clearly there's evidence that Cioffi was involved in the construction of the house," Carroll said. But the review of the investigation failed to establish that Kidder got more house than he paid for, Carroll said.

"Our conclusion was that (Kidder) paid a fair price for that house," he said.

As for the DIY building renovation, Carroll said the fact that Cioffi's contract was with DIY and not the city meant that Kidder did not decide who got the work.

Carroll conceded that Kidder had named Cioffi as the city's choice, but "DIY decides," he said.

That doesn't mean the prosecutors approved of the DIY deal or the way the house was built.

In Walsh's October 2000 letter to the Ethics Commission, she wrote: "There is some evidence of questionable business practice in both the DIY Warehouse/Summit County Title Bureau contract and the building of Kidder's house."

And despite her conclusion that the investigation's evidence was insufficient to support criminal charges, Walsh said Friday: "We still consider this an open investigation."

In the last meeting with Akron police investigators, Walsh said prosecutors made suggestions for further work. "We did have some thoughts on what might be helpful," she said. "We haven't heard anything."

The investigators aren't commenting. Sgt. Avellino declined to be interviewed this week on the advice of his supervisors. Police Chief Michael Matulavich said he couldn't answer specific questions because most of the investigation was conducted before he was chief.

Matulavich referred all questions to the Ethics Commission. "We were part of a team, and everything we did was forwarded to the Ohio Ethics Commission," Matulavich said.

Paul Nick, chief investigative attorney for the Ethics Commission, said Walsh's letter effectively closed the investigation "as far as the commission is concerned."

Although an Ethics Commission investigator worked on the case, Nick said the commission has no power to bring charges independently. "We have to refer to the appropriate prosecutor," he said.

Beacon Journal staff writers Gloria Irwin and Andale Gross contributed to this report.

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## Documents in the police file

Cioffi Construction tried to hide its deep involvement in building Joseph Kidder's house, after Kidder had named it the city's choice for the DIY work.

### Order from Cioffi Construction for signs to cover its name

Below is the invoice for four magnetic Polera Construction signs bought by Frank Cioffi from Graphic Detail. The signs were used to cover up Cioffi Construction's logo on its trucks while they were at the construction site of Joseph Kidder's house.



Quantity	Description
4	MAGNET. SIGNS "POLERA CONST." 1 COLOR BLK

### Letter from Joseph Kidder, Akron service director

Below is the Feb. 14, 1997, letter by Kidder to a DIY Warehouse executive naming Cioffi Construction as the city's choice to do the renovation work to move county Title Bureau offices into the former DIY.

Dear Mr. Hendrickson:

Based on estimates obtained by the City of Akron for construction of the necessary improvements on the referenced project we have determined that it is in our best interest for you to suspend the renovation design/build work of Fogg Builders per the date of this letter. The estimates offered by Dodson-Stilson Inc. for the design and Cioffi Construction Company for the renovation are clearly more favorable.

Full texts online

To read the letter from Akron Service Director Joseph P. Kidder to Mayor Don Plusquellic and the mayor's complete statement on Kidder's suspension, go to www.ohio.com

Diocese

Board will determine own structure, by-laws

Continued from Page A1

of priests, deacons, seminarians and other diocesan employees. This means that before any of the priests on administrative leave - some since last April - learn whether they can be reinstated, their cases will have to be reviewed by the board, which won't be established until after May 1.

That's the deadline for submitting to Pilla names of nominees for the board positions.

Once the board is established, it will need to create its own structure, by-laws and timeline for reviewing the cases.

The Cleveland Diocese covers eight counties, including Summit, Medina and Wayne. Its new policy calls for a two-stage review process for the board to follow in abuse cases.

Review process

In the first phase, a preliminary assessment of the allegation's credibility will be done for the bishop. If the bishop concludes that a reported incident of abuse is not clearly false, he will place the alleged offender on administrative leave, pending a full-scale investigation.

This will be done in the second stage, and after the investigation is complete, the accused will be able to apply to the review board for a recommendation for reinstatement. Before making a recommendation, the review board will consider such factors as a psychological evaluation, treatment, the strength of the evidence and whether an appropriate assignment is avail-

Highlights of the diocese's new policy

- Employers will take precautions to assure that only qualified persons are chosen to work with children. Criminal background checks will be conducted.
• All allegations or suspicions of abuse will be immediately reported to civil authorities, without screening, investigation or legal judgement by the diocese.
• Allegations will be immediately reported to the bishop.
• A three-member response team, comprising two licensed mental health professionals and a certified pastoral minister, will assess and respond to the

- needs of the victim, offender, parish, church leaders and others affected by the disclosure of an allegation.
• The diocese will provide seminars and workshops to address the need for healing.
• An administrative investigation of all allegations will be done regardless of pending civil and criminal action.
• An 11-member review board will assess the credibility of allegations, advise the bishop of its conclusions, monitor each case and make recommendations concerning the continuation of ministry or service.

- The bishop will have the ultimate decision-making authority.
• The diocese will not enter into confidentiality agreements unless there are grave and substantial reasons brought forward by the victim.
• The diocese will notify parishioners, parents and others involved, if an alleged offender is removed from his or her post.
The entire policy and an application for membership on the review board can be found on the Web at www.specialcommission.org.

bishop, who will appoint the board members, by May 1. According to the new policy, the review board should include two people with clinical expertise in abuse cases, a past victim of child sexual abuse, a parent, a parish priest, a canon lawyer and others with experience in investigation and dispute resolution. The policy emphasizes that an allegation may be deemed credible without a conviction in a criminal court. In December, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor William Mason ended an investigation of diocesan sexual abuse allegations with indictments against one priest and six diocese employees.

Now Mason is asking a judge to determine whether the public may see the documents compiled in that investigation. These documents involve accusations against nearly 500 alleged sexual offenders, including 145 priests. Mason has said that many of the priests avoided criminal charges because the statute of limitations had expired.

The 15 priests put on leave by Pilla include the Rev. Joseph Lieberth of Holy Family in Stow, the Rev. John Mueller of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Wooster and the Rev. Raymond Bartnikowski of St. Victor in Richfield. All three priests are seeking reinstatement.

Bartnikowski's attorney, James Hinton, of Akron, has asked to review Mason's files. Hinton could not be reached for comment on Friday.

Akron Attorney Lawrence Vuillemin, who represents Lieberth and Mueller, declined to comment pending his review of the new policy.

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able.

"This is a new process, and almost every step involves formulating proper procedures," said Robert Tayek, spokesman for the diocese. "Everyone involved wants to be careful that everything is done in accordance with civil law, canon law, the national charter and the norms established by the Vatican.

"We hope that everyone understands that this is being done deliberately and with great care and that patience truly becomes a real virtue in this case."

The policy announced Friday is based on the recommendation of an independent 22-member commission appointed by Pilla last March to evaluate and make recommendation on the diocese's old abuse policy, which had been adopted in 1989 and amended in 1992.

Provisions

The new policy calls for the permanent removal of any per-

son appointed by the bishop who commits an act of abuse and for the immediate reporting of an allegation or suspicion of abuse to civil authorities and the bishop. Other provisions deal with a response team, educational programs, screening of employees and administrative investigation procedures.

William Denihan, who headed the commission, said he believes the new policy is balanced in addressing the needs of the victim, the accused and everyone else involved.

It is consistent, he said, with last year's recommendations by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Vatican dealing with the clergy abuse scandal that has rocked the church since January 2002.

"Our recommendations are on point and we are thrilled that Bishop Pilla accepted and adopted them in whole," Denihan said. "This is a comprehensive policy that provides for the prevention of sexual abuse and a

thorough process for addressing allegations. The bottom line is, children must be protected and this policy is an assurance that they will be."

Denihan said that the final recommendations of the special commission - initially projected to come out last June - were delayed by the revision of the bishops' national policy and its approval by the Vatican.

Also, reviewing thousands of responses from public meetings held by the commission throughout the diocese took more time than expected, he said.

Applications

The commission now is requesting applications for membership on the new review board.

Deadline for submitting applications is March 20. The applications will be reviewed and interviews and background checks conducted by April 24. Nominations will be sent to the

Man, 29, gets 155 years for backing Hezbollah

He was convicted of leading cigarette smuggling ring, sending \$3,500 to group

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C.: The first person convicted under a law that bars aid to terrorists was sentenced Friday to 155 years in prison for leading a cigarette smuggling ring that funneled profits to the Lebanese group Hezbollah.

Mohamad Hammoud, 29, masterminded a scheme to bring cigarettes from North

Carolina, where low taxes keep down prices, to Michigan for resale. In June, he was found guilty of sending \$3,500 to Hezbollah.

"Terrorist acts cannot be carried out without the wherewithal of those who fund them," assistant U.S. attorney Ken Bell said outside court.

Hammoud's older brother, Chawki Hammoud, was sen-

tenced to more than four years in prison for his role in the smuggling ring.

On Thursday, three other men were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two years to 37 months.

In a rambling 20-minute statement before he was sentenced, Mohamad Hammoud described himself as a lover of peace and freedom who had

hoped to live in the United States.

"Perhaps I went in the wrong way to achieve my goal," he said. "I admitted that, and I'm sorry for that."

His lawyer, Stanley Cohen, said he will appeal.

"This is a politically charged climate. These are difficult times in this country," Cohen said. "Sentences are being handed out that are out of proportion across the country."

Mohamad Hammoud was convicted on 16 separate counts, and U.S. District Judge Graham Mullen sentenced him to a series of consecutive prison terms that add up to 155 years.

The Hammouds were among 18 people charged in what the government said was a Charlotte cell of Hezbollah, which fought Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. All but one of the other defendants pleaded guilty.

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With our 100,000 sq. ft. showroom and huge warehouse our buying power assures you the best values. Over 80 desks on display. Knowledgeable sales people to help with your selection. Bring in your room and equipment sizes to have it built to your specification with Wayside custom manufacturing. Ask about our Stanley Factory Authorized Sale on all home office & entertainment home theater furniture.

Super design & value by Stanley Available in 4 styles "Corinthia"



4 Pc. Set \$3599\*\* TV area 44W x 24.5D x 42.5"H

WOW piers are 24" deep, not including molding to help hide the TV



Entire unit 110W x 28D x 84"H



American View

Unique courtesy back panel

These sale prices end March 21.

Stanley's bridge and shelf come with a 26"H back panel!! \$2199\*\* All 5 pieces.



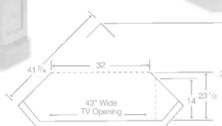
Corinthia computer credenza \$1099\*\* 73W x 24D x 30"H Matching massive 54"H Hutch \$949\*\*



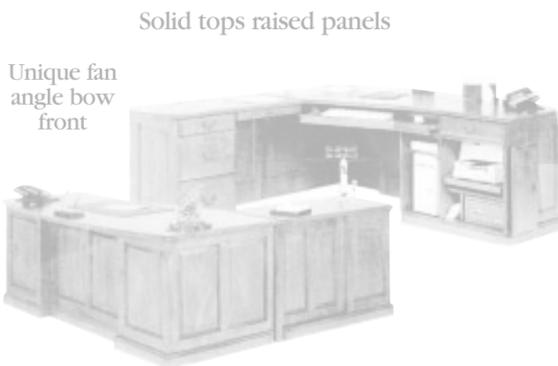
Sale ends in 1 week \$1689\*\*



7 Finishes Solid Oak or Alder same price Alder, a hardwood w/grain similar to Cherry



43" wide TV opening with 1" wood frame covering vertical bevel of TV frame. 80" height



Solid tops raised panels

Unique fan angle bow front

\$2789\*\*

Oak or maple, 10 finishes mirror image same price

Quality accurate drawer tracks finger joint drawer construction



Unique pocket door to hutch & credenza

Hutch \$1769\*\* Credenza \$1849\*\*



Phone 733-6221 Daily 10-9, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 1-6

1367 Canton Rd. Akron Rt. 91, Just 1/4 mile south of Rt. 224



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