

ACLU to challenge sticker law

By ED BIRK
Associated Press Writer

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A mechanic yesterday became the first person arraigned for allegedly violating Florida's new law banning obscene bumper stickers, and the American Civil Liberties Union said it might challenge the statute's constitutionality.

Glenn Wallace Beasley, 24, pleaded innocent to the second-degree misdemeanor in Collier County Court. He also pleaded innocent to several other misdemeanor traffic and parole violations.

If Beasley is convicted of violating the obscenity statute, which took effect Oct. 1, he could face up to six months in jail and a \$500 fine. Penalties double for repeated violations.

With or without the ACLU's help, his attorney said, he will ask a judge to dismiss the obscenity charge.

"My gut reaction is I don't think it's constitutional," said Assistant Public Defender Phillip Roach in Naples. "It gives the arresting police officer total discretion to decide what's obscene."

Beasley was picked up Friday

night in what apparently was the first application of the law passed this spring. Rep. Tom Banjanin proposed the ban because of a proliferation of stickers like the one spotted on Beasley's truck.

It sported a popular but scatological version of the saying, "things happen."

Charlene Carres, a lobbyist with the ACLU in Tallahassee, said she would consult with the group's headquarters in New York about intervening in the case.

She noted that the U.S. Supreme Court set precedent on the issue of obscenity in the 1960s in a California case in which a draft protester wearing a T-shirt denigrating the Selective Service was arrested after he walked into a courthouse.

The high court ruled that the T-shirt's slogan was protected under First Amendment rights of free speech because it pertained to the government.

"I suspect there could be an action brought," Carres said. "I don't see a difference between a T-shirt and a bumper sticker."

State Rep. Art Simon, who helped draft the bumper sticker ban, said the new law simply adds bumper stickers to other forms of printed

and recorded media already covered by state obscenity laws and leaves to the courts to define what obscenity means.

Simon said he wasn't surprised that the law is headed for a challenge, but questioned how much the California case would help Beasley.

"One is going to be hard-pressed to make an analogous argument that something which is a normal bodily function is, in and of itself, an expression of political belief," said Simon, an attorney. "I think we have regulated the subject matter to the fullest extent allowed under the Constitution and now it will require a case-by-case analysis."

State Attorney Joseph D'Alessandro of Collier County said he didn't think Beasley's case would make a good test for civil libertarians because of the other traffic charges filed against him.

In the meantime, the prosecutor isn't making clean bumpers a priority in Collier County.

"(The police aren't) really going out and instructing their people to start making arrests for bumper stickers," he said.

Anniversary leaves brokers apprehensive

By DAN BLAKE
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — The stock market crash a year ago today has left brokers apprehensive and a feeling of malaise on the trading floor, according to the president of the Philadelphia Stock Exchange.

"It's like somebody took a two-by-four and hit you over the back without knowing it," said Nicholas Giordano, "and some are looking over their shoulders afraid they'll be hit again."

Giordano acknowledges individual investors lost confidence in the stock market and ran for the safety of more secure investments since Black Monday, when the Dow Jones industrial average dropped 508 points.

A Media General-Associated Press poll released earlier this week shows nationwide, six in 10 respondents said they were being more cautious with their money.

But fears that the stock market's collapse was a precursor to a recession began to dissipate in the first half of 1988.

"Stock prices have proven to be a particularly unreliable leading indicator in recent years, and the stock market crash of 1987 may prove a telling example," said Leonard Mills, of the Federal Reserve Bank in Philadelphia.

Mills, in the current issue of the Fed's Business Review, writes that the stock market took serious dips less than 12 months before five of the seven post-war recessions. But the market sent five false signals and didn't provide reliable notice of the January 1980 and July 1981 recessions.

The market is subject to many forces that do not reflect the overall health of the nation's economy, making it an unreliable predictor of recessions, Mills said.

The plunge taken a year ago was partly a correction needed to bring the five-year bull market back to reality and partly the result of panic, Giordano said.

"It was a market full of panic sellers. ... The last 200 to 300 points of the drop was the result of panic," he said.

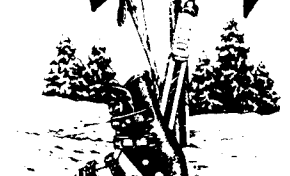
The root cause of the drop was not panic, but a need for a substantial correction, Giordano said.

"Look at all the marketplace had to absorb in the past five years — the bull market, futures volatility, increased investing by foreign investors — these new marketplace characteristics it had to absorb or digest," he said.

Robert Wood, a finance professor at Penn State, said many reforms have been implemented to prevent another crash.

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Campus racism

New racial insults reported at Massachusetts colleges

By CAROLYN LUMSDEN
Associated Press Writer

AMHERST, Mass. — New outbreaks of racial insults were reported at Smith College and the University of Massachusetts as the second anniversary neared of a post-World Series brawl at the state school that injured 10 people.

At Smith College in nearby Northampton, President Mary Maples Dunn sent a memo to the school's 2,722 undergraduates last week saying that notes with racial slurs had been slipped under a student's door and tacked onto a bulletin board.

A separate memo from the Office of Student Affairs said other students had received four similar notes since mid-September. The school said an investigation was under way.

A University of Massachusetts administrator said he was looking into reports of racial slurs made over walkie-talkies two weeks ago, on a frequency reserved for foremen and supervisors of the Physical Plant Department on the Amherst campus of 26,650 students.

"I've been working as dispatcher here 13 years and I've never heard anything like that," said Dennis Hmieleski, the radio dispatcher on duty at the time. "You hear people joking around sometimes and you take it for that, but it was the tone of the voice. You could tell it was no joke."

Hmieleski said he wasn't certain who made the remarks. He said he and other workers reported them to their department's director, who said he expects to make his findings public later this week.

There have been recent racial incidents at other schools in the nation.

Six DePauw University fraternities and sororities apologized for a "ghetto party" with decorations that included graffiti slurs against black and other minorities.

Members of the six organizations at the Greencastle, Ind., campus staged a candlelight vigil Monday night and marched from the Alpha Tau Omega house, where the party was held Friday night, to the Association for Afro-American Students office. Members of the two groups conferred, shook hands and embraced.

At Stanford University, officials promised to look into two racist incidents in recent weeks. Last Friday, a poster at the predominantly black fraternity house Ujamaa was discovered emblazoned with the word "niggers."

Two weeks earlier a flier depicting Beethoven as brown-skinned, with wild, curly hair, big lips and red eyes was left outside the room of a black freshman from Chicago.

The reports of incidents at the western Massachusetts schools came as the University of Massachusetts prepared for a weeklong commemoration of a fight between white Boston Red Sox fans and black New York Mets fans after the Mets won the final game of the World Series on Oct. 27, 1986.

Another fight between blacks and whites at the University of Massachusetts last February sparked a six-day building takeover by more than 100 minority students protesting racial violence and what they said was a low minority enrollment. At least 8 percent of undergraduates at the school last year were minorities.



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