

Court asked to alter name to No. 1069

United Press International
MINNEAPOLIS — Micheal Dengler wants to be called 1069. Pronounce it one-zero-six-nine, not ten-sixty-nine.

Dengler, 31, appeared Monday before Hennepin County District Judge Donald Barbeau to ask that his name legally be changed to the number 1069.

The judge took the case under advisement and said he did not know when he would make a decision.

"I've got to research the laws," Barbeau said. "This is the first time I've had anyone want his name changed to a number." He added, "I don't know why it can't be done."

Dengler lost a teaching job and was turned down by a judge in North Dakota in his quest for the name change. Now he's working as a short-order cook.

Dengler represented himself in the previous court action. This time he brought along two lawyers.

"Maybe I didn't represent myself too well," he told Judge Barbeau.

Dengler, or 1069, brought along a computer specialist who said numbers lend themselves to identification just as well as names.

The telephone company won't do business with 1069 until a court grants official approval. Neither will a gas company or the state driver's license office.

The phone company gave Dengler a telephone number under the name 1069 but won't list it in the directory. And if it does, the company isn't sure where you put a number for a number.

Northern States Power Co. broke ranks. The electric utility is billing Dengler by the name he prefers — 1069.

"Nobody appeared in opposition to changing his name," Barbeau said. "We checked to see if he wanted to change his name to get out of paying bills or escape a criminal record. He doesn't have a criminal record and doesn't own any property. I've ruled out game playing."

Dengler is divorced and has two children in the custody of his previous wife. He did not ask that their names be changed.

He is firm in the pronunciation of his name — one-zero-six-nine — but he allows those close to him to use the nickname, "One-zero."

With surgery, vision, hope, new to Maria

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PHILADELPHIA — With a broad smile, Maria de Jesus Rodriguez Hernandez hopped up from the stairs where she had been sitting and walked briskly across the living room of the small rowhouse to where her sister stood.

Just one month ago, Hernandez would have needed a guide, or she would have had to walk slowly, groping her way as she went.

When she was 9 years old, Hernandez, now 19, contracted uveitis — a disease that causes cataracts and clouding of the jelly-like fluid in the eye. She went totally blind.

An operation at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia last October, using a revolutionary instrument to withdraw the clouded fluid and replace it simultaneously with a similar substance, restored partial sight to Hernandez's left eye. Her right eye is beyond repair.

The instrument, known as a suction infusion tissue extractor (SITE) was developed about four years ago at Wills by Dr. Jay Federman.

Hernandez's physician, Dr. John Calhoun, said, "She's seeing light very well, but her retina was damaged by the uveitis. She's not seeing movement in front of her eyes."

Calhoun said Hernandez now can see shadows and colors, and some movement when it interrupts light. This makes it possible for her to move around without bumping into things, but there is no chance she will get any better, despite earlier optimism, he said.

The retina, Calhoun said, was severely damaged and because it is nerve tissue it can not be regenerated.

"I wish there was more we can do, but we've done all we can surgically," he said.

Dr. Michael Cortez, an intern at Hahnemann Hospital who first learned of Hernandez's problem and arranged for her operation at Wills, said he is seeking Spanish-language rehabilitation training for her.

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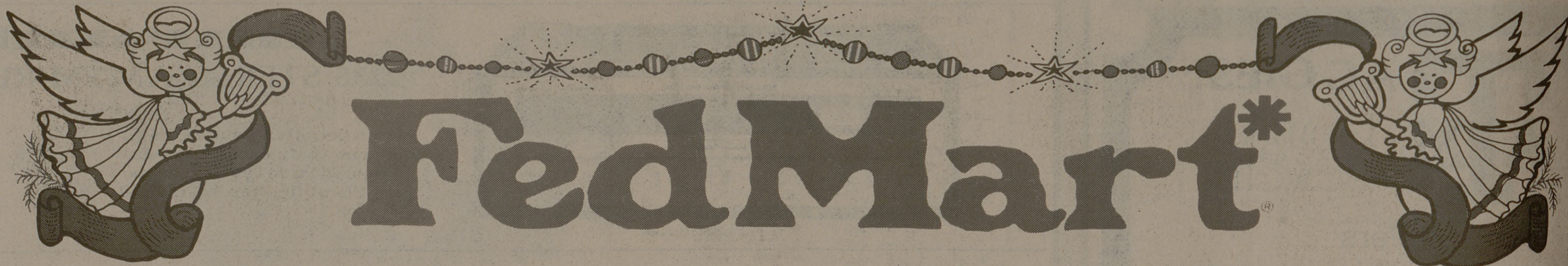
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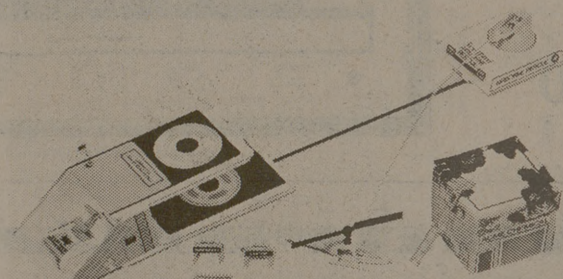
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