

# Model school charged with deceptive actions

By Gail Smith

A petition filed Friday in Lancaster County District Court by the Nebraska attorney general's office charges Bette Bonn International Modeling and Charm Schools and the partners in the venture, Bette Bonn Ledwith and Evelyn Parker, with deceptive trade practices.

The two defendants have filed lawsuits against Jerold V. Fennell, Nebraska assistant attorney general, charging that Fennell libeled them by sending a draft of the petition to Bonn's husband, Omaha attorney Charles Ledwith, before it was filed with the court.

Parker, of Lincoln, filed the suit against Fennell April 16 in U.S. District Court in Lincoln, and Bonn, of Omaha, filed a similar suit in Omaha's U.S. District Court.

Fennell, director of the Consumer Protection Division of the state attorney general's office, said the letter was sent to Ledwith in the "normal course of procedure" in attorney general's office. He said the letter was meant to indicate that the attorney general's office intended to file the petition.

Fennell said a story in the April 23, 1975, Daily Nebraskan about the alleged deceptive practices by the Bette Bonn schools was one of several factors prompting the investigation. He said there were complaints against the school before and after the story's publication.

### "Inducing Nebraskans to enroll"

In the petition filed against the school's owners, Bonn and Parker, the state alleges that:

-the defendants are currently and have been for some time advertising instruction in a model training course. These advertisements, written by the defendants, were placed in "Help Wanted" sections of the classified advertisements in Nebraska newspapers.

-the advertisements, designed to induce Nebraskans to enroll in the school, led prospective students to believe that the ads were for models, modeling jobs or other paid employment.

-the defendants, through the ads, and through oral and written statements made to Nebraskans responding to the ads, indicated that paying jobs would be immediately available for those who enroll in their course. The defendants also indicated that paying modeling jobs would be available for students after the courses, that persons would need a "modeling card" or document to model in Omaha or Lincoln, that the school would provide and that students would be given lessons in regularly scheduled classes.

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-the defendants have placed few students who were enrolled in or completed the course in paying model jobs. The suit said no card is necessary to model in Nebraska and many persons enrolled in the course did not receive the promised full course and classes often were cancelled.

-the alleged law violations are deceptive trade practices under state law, and Nebraskans have incurred damages as the result of the defendants' practices. The amount of damage was said to be unknown at the time.

### Stop "deceptive" ads

In the petition, the state asks the court to permanently and, pending a hearing on the permanent injunction, temporarily stop the defendants from:

-advertising in the "Help Wanted" sections of papers delivered to Nebraskans.

-advertising for students in a manner which leads persons to believe the ads are for models, modeling jobs or other paid employment.

-falsely indicating that paying jobs will be available upon graduation unless, at the time the student enrolls, each student is supplied with a list of such jobs, including salary and school graduates who have been placed in such paying jobs.

**Omaha attorney Robert Beach, representing both Bonn and Parker, said the state charges are false. He said his clients did not obtain money under false pretenses.**

-falsely stating that a "modeling card" is needed for a modeling career in Omaha or Lincoln.

The state also asks that the court order the defendants to restore money or property which might have been acquired by the defendants through unlawful practices.

Students currently or formerly enrolled in the course should be informed of such an order, the state said, so that those allegedly injured by the defendants may receive rebates for fees paid.

The state also asked that the defendants be permanently stopped from continuing their model training business or any other business they conduct in Nebraska until they comply with orders resulting from court action.

### Suit charges libel

Omaha attorney Robert Beach, representing both Bonn and Parker, said the state's charges are false. He said his clients did not obtain money under false pretenses.

Parker's suit against Fennell alleges that: -sometime before March 31, Fennell drafted or caused to be drafted a petition naming Bonn and Parker as defendants. The petition draft and a letter were mailed to Ledwith March 31.

-since the petition had not been filed in any court, any false statements in the petition are not considered allegations.

-the publication of the statements in the letter to Ledwith constituted the libel of Parker.

-Fennell has deprived Parker, without due process, of her right to enjoy a good reputation in her business and personal affairs and the right to engage in lawful business.

-as a result of Fennell's alleged actions, Parker has suffered actual damages of \$25,000 and is entitled to exemplary or punitive damages of \$250,000.

Parker asks in the suit that the court award her \$275,000 in damages plus attorney's fees and "any other relief to which she may be entitled."

## NETV's auction nets about \$86,000

More than 1,700 items, priced from \$25 to more than \$500, were sold in the Nebraskans for Public Television Auction which ended Sunday.

The auction was broadcast on the Nebraska Educational Television Network (NETV), which will use profits to develop its programming, said Karen Dahlstrom, auction chairwoman.

The auction began last Wednesday and ran nightly from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Dahlstrom said about \$86,000 was raised for NETV during its third auction, \$11,000 more than the projected goal, and about \$31,000 more than the \$55,000 raised last year.

Nebraska merchants contributed auction merchandise, Dahlstrom said. One unusual contribution was a Centennial Rifle and Pistol Set, which Dahlstrom called "a collector's item, because very few are being circulated."

Vacations, motorcycles, furniture, appliances, tools and scholarships from Nebraska colleges were other auction items.

Dahlstrom said she did not have a final list of prices received for each item, but some items sold at "100 per cent or above" retail prices.

"Bidding was more active, and bids were higher this year" than last, Dahlstrom said. She attributed the increase to this year's economy being "on the upswing."

Private citizens were the most active bidders, she said, and "very few, if any" business firms cast bids. Iowa, South Dakota, Colorado and Wyoming residents also participated, she said.

Dahlstrom said about 5,000 volunteers from 38 Nebraska towns helped in the auction as auctioneers, phone operators or solicitors for merchandise.



Photo courtesy NETV

Going, going, \$86,000 gone, to the 1976 Nebraskans for Public Television Auction. Rich Russell, auction producer, mans one of the microphones.

## ASUN agenda

The ASUN Senate is meeting tonight at 6:30 in the Union ballroom. Teachers College replacement senator will be sworn in.

### Agenda

- I. Executive Report
  - A. Ad Hoc Committee on Senate Structure
  - B. Summer Salaries
- II. Open Forum
  - A. Don Wesely—Fee Increase
  - B. Coalition of University Reform—Ron Sindelar
- III. Old Business
  - A. Organic Act
  - B. Computer Date Match
- IV. New Business
  - A. Resolution No. 11—Gay Action Funding
  - B. Resolution No. 12—Senate Speaking Engagements
  - C. Resolution No. 13—FAB
  - D. Government Bill No. 1—Summer Salaries
- V. Announcements
  - A. See you in September

## SHORT SUBJECTS



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