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Man Arraigned In Embezzlement

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A former Columbia man accused of embezzling more than \$135,000 from the Marlborough Moose Lodge when he was its administrator was arraigned today in Superior Court in Manchester.

Robert S. Arsenault, 48, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., is charged with first-degree larceny, second-degree forgery and illegal use of a credit card, court records show.

Judge Raymond Norko set bail at \$250,000 for Arsenault, who had to be extradited from Florida to face the charges. His next court appearance is June 14.

Gerald A. Del Piano, a lawyer for the lodge, told Norko that Arsenault is also facing a \$430,000 judgment that was awarded to the lodge in a lawsuit it brought against him in 2005. The judgment included punitive damages, in addition to the actual losses the lodge suffered.

After the arraignment, Del Piano said members of the lodge felt betrayed by Arsenault, who used their trust to steal the lodge's assets.

In an arrest warrant affidavit, state police said Arsenault stole from the lodge by using a variety of methods, including the forging of checks and using business accounts for his personal use. The thefts took place while Arsenault was the lodge administrator from August 2000 to November 2004.

As the lodge administrator, Arsenault was responsible for bookkeeping, management of the lodge, membership and the lodge's assets.

State police began investigating the lodge's finances after its members conducted an audit and found that several checks that bore the treasurer's signature had been forged. All checks for the lodge required two signatures, those of treasurer Charles Smith and Arsenault. Many of the checks were written to Arsenault's wife, Kathy.

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