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WANTS CHANGE — Fisher is seen earlier this year with her attorney, Patrick Lauer Jr.

Defendant now denies embezzling

By Mike Feeley
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NEW BLOOMFIELD — A Perry County woman, who last month pleaded no contest to embezzling \$196,000 from Penn Twp., wants to clear her name and yesterday asked the court if she could withdraw her plea.

I could not plead guilty to all the charges when I knew they are not true.

— Patricia E. Fisher

Patricia E. Fisher, who was to be sentenced on 15 felony counts of theft and forgery yesterday, testified she never forged the names of township supervisors and did not steal the money.

"I want the people and press to be able to tell truthfully what I feel," she said during a brief hearing before Judge Keith B. Quigley.

Quigley said he will rule Monday on whether Fisher's request would be granted, which would clear the way for a trial.

Fisher's no-contest plea meant that while she did not admit guilt in the case she was willing to accept the penalty. She faces a maximum 114 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A former Penn Twp. secretary-treasurer, Fisher was charged in December with forging the names of township supervisors on checks and stealing \$196,400 from 1985-89.

She originally faced 172 counts of theft and 114 counts of forgery, but those charges were compacted into 15 felony counts, according to Elizabeth Frownfelter, Perry County assistant district attorney.

Fisher testified that she understood only "partially" her rights when she pleaded no contest, and did not know her sentencing date until she read it in the newspaper.

Under cross-examination from Frownfelter, Fisher said she pleaded no contest on the advice of her attorney, Patrick Lauer Jr.

But Fisher said if her trial date had been continued and she could have afforded to hire a certified public accountant, she would not have given up her right to a jury trial.

Fisher said she planned to use the time

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