N E W S

LETTER

Muni View

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Coordinator's Corner

Another year has flown by and there have been a great number of personnel changes in the Supreme Court system. Here at Judicial Education a new MJ program assistant, Carol Koschel, joined us in July. In the Director of State Courts Office, there is a new deputy director in management services, there are two new district court administrators and Marilyn Graves, long time clerk of the Supreme Court is retiring at the end of the month. We have a new Supreme Court Justice.

In the Municipal Judge area, 1999 saw 23 new judges join us, and 3 new courts come on line. Two courts were abolished.

Because the legislature spent almost all of the fall session on the budget, little other legislation was passed. The Municipal Judges Association is supporting several bills that have been introduced or will be introduced at the next session beginning at the end of January. An article on two of these bills is elsewhere in this newsletter.

Personally, as many of you know, this has been a roller-coaster of a year for me. My spouse retired, our daughter got married and the house we were building burned down-all within 4 days. My sincere thanks to all those of you who were aware of what happened and took the time to express your support during that strange time.

Both Carol and I wish you a very happy holiday season and a fantastic year with which to

begin the 21st Century (or end the 20th as some purists say!)

Seminars

The last seminar of the calendar year was held in November, at the Heidel House in Green Lake. The seminar was a Law and Humanities Seminar and dealt with four founding fathers: Washington, Jefferson, Paine and Madison. The seminar was con- ducted by Professors Kaminski and Leffler of the Center for the Study of the American Constitution. The professors knowledgeable enthusiastic about their subject that each person attending the seminar got caught up in that fascinating period of our history. The seminar was a resounding success. All who attended indicated that they would like to attend another Law and Humanities Seminar.

A few persons have not yet fulfilled their education requirement for 1999-2000. The last seminar in which those credits can be earned is Special Topic to be held March 23 and 24 at the Heidel House.

Fees

Reminder: We will be billing for 2000 AND the first 1/3 of 2001 (to take us to May 2001) when we send out our invoices in January. The invoice will total \$733.33 (\$550 for a year plus \$183.33 for 1/3 of a year). Thereafter, municipalities will be billed on a yearly basis from May to May.

No judge whose municipality has not paid its fee, and no reserve judge, will be permitted to attend any seminar after May 1, 2000.

Education Committee Notes

A joint municipal judge education committee meeting was held November 14 and 15 at the House on the Rock Resort in Spring Green. All committee members and all former, still sitting, committee members were in attendance.

Preliminary planning for the 2000 - 2001 seminars began and the Committee also determined that, given the success of the one just held, we should have another Law and Humanities seminar in the 2001 - 2002 seminar year.

The committee also reconsidered their position on shortening the Clerks Seminar. After lengthy discussion, the committee voted unanimously, with one abstention, to continue to have a day and a half Clerk Seminar with a New Clerk Orientation the evening prior to the seminar. However, in order to cover the costs of the seminar, there will be a \$20 registration fee for each clerk who attends. This fee includes the cost of lunch on Thursday. There will be no additional charges for clerks. In addition, in response to a large number of requests to hold the seminar mid-state, the 2000 seminar will be held November 9 & 10 at the Mead Inn in Wisconsin Rapids.

Resignations

Don Preusse, judge of the Village of Palmyra for 33 years, will retire January 1, as will **Dave Ditter,** judge in the

Village of New Holstein for 17 years. **James Bauer** has been appointed in New

DL Suspensions

As you know, the budget bill removed the authority of courts to suspend juvenile and adult driver's licenses for failure to pay forfeitures on **non-traffic** offenses. Most of the Municipal Judges strongly opposed this provision, especially for juveniles, for whom there is now no consequence for failure to pay a non-traffic forfeiture, except suspending a hunting or fishing license.

At the urging of the Municipal Judges Association, we believe that Senator Alberta Darling will be introducing a bill in the next session of the legislature to reinstate that authority -possibly only for juveniles but we do not know yet. As soon as it is introduced, you will receive a copy.

If you wish to see this bill become law, you should call and write your state representative and state senator and urge them to support it.

Appeal Fees

The Justice Information Fee was increased \$2.00 by the budget bill. The cost of an appeal from Municipal Court is now \$2.00 more for each type of appeal. Please change your forms.

For your Clerk(s)

"After 37 years in the Revocation & Suspension Section, deciding to retire was a difficult decision. For the past 15 years I've been a part of your Municipal Court Clerk seminar, and always looked forward to our time together.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ronni Jones for making that possible and to all of you who, year after year, requested Kent and I attend. I will miss the telephone calls, the time we've shared, and will cherish the many memories. "

Holstein and will run in April.

Judy Weger

Web Sites

For those of you with access, you know that there are there are some wonderful websites. Unfortunately, there are so many that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between those that are fascinating and those that are truly useful. This column is intended to share those that can be of help to you as a municipal judge. A few are listed below with just some of the items you can find there. You are encouraged to submit your favorites for sharing with the other judges. Please include a brief description of the site.

- 1. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Wisconsin Court System can be found at: **www.courts.state.wi.us** From this site you can also get the latest decision of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, Attorney General Opinions and Supreme Court Orders.
- 2. Everything you want to know about what is happening in the current legislative session (e.g., Acts passed, bills introduced, hearings to be held) as well as access to Statutes and Administrative Rules can be found at this site: www.legis.state.wi.us
- 3. **www.ajs.org** is the website for the American Judicature Society. This site contains ethics advisory committee opinions from 12 states, including Wisconsin.
- 4. **www.wisbar.org** is the very user-friendly website for the State Bar. You do not need to be a member to use it. From that site you can get recent caselaw, the statutes, information on bills being introduced in which the Bar has an interest.
- 5. The Wisconsin League of Municipalities, which publishes occasionally relevant legal opinions, has bills of interest to municipalities

and legal resources is at www.lwm-info.org

MJ Questionnaire

Enclosed with this newsletter is the 1999 Municipal Judge Questionnaire. We are aware that you will not be able to gather all the statistics for 1999 for quite a while, but we hope, that by getting the form to you early enough, you will be able to collect all those we are seeking.

We hope that in 2000 we will be able to compile some of these statistics through our computer program, thus giving us a picture of how many courts are doing what. Nevertheless, the questionnaires will also be used by the MJ Association to publish the survey. Since municipal budget making begins early in the summer, we would like all the questionnaires returned no later than the end of April so that the information on court salaries and caseloads can be compiled in time to be useful to you when going before your municipal board.

Terms (revisited)

In roaming around in one of the websites mentioned earlier the Attorney General's Opinion enclosed with this *Muni View* was discovered. It may provide some food for thought.

In Memoriam

Robert Schieffer, retired judge from the Village of Lannon where he served for 16 years, died in mid-December. He was 80. His daughter Peg became the Judge in Lannon upon Bob's retirement.

Sincerely,