



ALSC BATTLES TO IMPROVE

Overburdened Service Squeaks Through by 'Dedication, Bubblegum'

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW
Staff Writer

The critical issue of continued and improved legal services to the poor in the state of Alaska is at stake this week in Washington, D.C.

David Wolfe, executive director of Alaska Legal Services Corporation, is fighting for an increased budget for the state's Legal Services program in order to meet growing demands on a system already overburdened.

"Alaska Legal Services is a program stretched taut and held together by dedication, imagination, and bubblegum," said Wolfe. "It is time to replace the bubblegum with nuts and bolts."

"No other legal service program in the nation is confronted with the vast physical dimensions of Alaska, the dispersion of the poor, the weather conditions, the methods of travel, and the broad variety of legal and economic problems which prevail today in Alaska."

In spite of these facts, Wolfe pointed out that Alaska receives about half the funding of similar projects such as that of the Navajo. Staff lawyers work under impossible budgets and

trying conditions for far less pay than their counterparts — the public defenders, the district attorneys, and the attorney general's staff.

Depending heavily on fresh-out-of-law-school VISTA attorneys and "Reggies" (recipients of Reginald Heber Smith fellowships) the program suffers from inexperienced counsel and a high turnover rate.

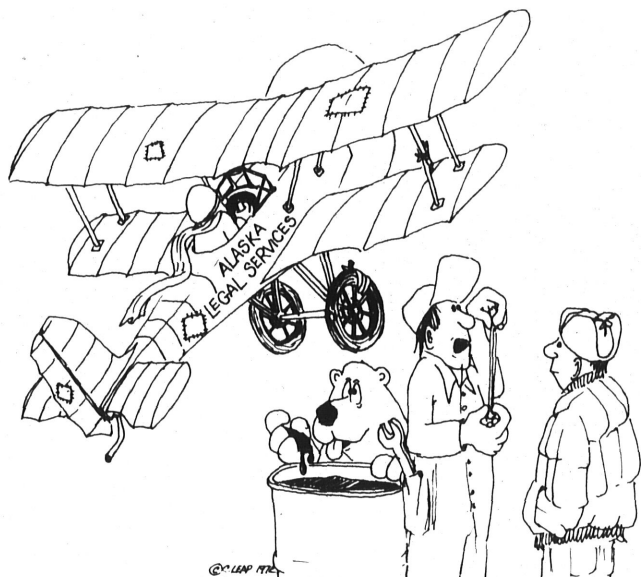
As soon as a young attorney gains enough experience and familiarity with Alaska's unique law problems to be of real help, his year is up and all too frequently, he moves on.

The new budget would provide an increase in salary for staff lawyers and while it still would not approach that of the public defenders and district attorneys, it would provide a little more incentive for an idealistic young lawyer to stay within the Legal Services program, rather than go into private practice or other more lucrative forms of law.

In addition to increases for the present staff, the proposed budget would expand that staff and place it in more remote locations. With offices already located in Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Nome and Sitka, new offices would be established at Dillingham, Kodiak, Kotzebue, and Unalakleet.

At the present time, for example, there is absolutely no service to the entire Aleutian chain. The Fairbanks office handles an area from around

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"It's a kind of unique new government plan — lots of dedication, imagination, and bubble gum."

Seeking to upgrade delivery of legal justice to the bush, Alaska Legal Services asks for increased funding from the national offices in Washington, D.C. — Cartoon by CHARLIE LEAP

Gravel Optimistic About Village Road Construction

Senator Mike Gravel in an exclusive Tundra Times interview Nov. 19, was optimistic about the outlook for village road construction in the coming session.

He predicted the passage of two proposals that failed in the last Congress, due to an attack on the Federal Aid to Highways Bill that had absolutely nothing to do with the Alaskan amendments.

One amendment, pushed jointly by Sen. Gravel and Rep. Hale Boggs, would have included village boardwalks in the eligibility for funds allotted to pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths. A fund of 10 million dollars was established to back up this program.

The other amendment succeeded in changing the limitations on Indian Highway appropriations, so that they can be applied to privately owned village properties not just tribal reservations. Authorization on these appropriations jumped from 1 million to 10 million dollars.

"Obviously we in Alaska, in our village areas that don't have roads, will now be encountering a lot of road programs," said the Senator.

Gravel expressed concern about the mechanics of surveying large areas of land mass in relation to the Native Land Claims.

"It's all tied to our regulations within the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management. If the time frames are not adhered to, it will be 20 years before this thing is worked out."

"So obviously at some point along the way we're going to have to go back with an omnibus bill to correct various deficiencies in the Act. And certainly the land selection process will be one of the areas."

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Carter of AFN Resigns — Wants Time for Land Use Planning

By MARGIE BAUMAN

ANCHORAGE — Board members of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. have accepted the resignation of executive Vice President Harry Carter offered during a stormy annual meeting several weeks ago.

The action came Sunday at a Board meeting in the Koloa Building in Anchorage, with Carter and the Board citing his growing responsibilities with the federal-state Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska as the prime reason.

Carter, the lone native on the ten-member commission said he felt it was "impossible to serve at the same time two organizations whose activities are growing greater every day."

"I think I can best serve the Alaska native people on the Land Use Planning Commission... and will be happy to continue serving the Alaska Federation of Natives in every way," Carter said.

"He has done a tremendous job under the circumstances," said State Sen. Willie Hensley, president of AFN, Inc., and the board stressed the importance to Alaska Natives of Carter's role on the Land Use Planning Commission.

Word of Carter's resignation came during an open Board meeting following an all day executive session on finances and personnel. It followed by two months and three days the ouster of Donald L. Wright as president, with Hensley elected to replace him.

Wright chose to take the matter to court and it was during the convention, as members of the board were being

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Federal Buildings Hearings Date Changed to Dec. 8

The U.S. Senate Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee hearings, originally scheduled for December 6 here in Fairbanks, have been rescheduled to December 8 at 9:00 a.m. at Wood Center on the University of Alaska campus.

The information came from Senator Mike Gravel's Washington office. Gravel is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds.

Pegge Considers Running— For Husband's Seat 'If and When a Vacancy Occurs'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mrs. Pegge Begich, wife of Congressman Nick Begich, has indicated her decision to be a candidate "if and when a vacancy occurs" in Alaska's At-Large seat in Congress.

"I will remain optimistic and confident that Nick will be found and will assume the seat to which he was elected on November 7."

"However, after discussing all of the possibilities and seeking the opinions of my children and family, I have decided that if

and when a vacancy occurs I will seek the Democratic nomination to run in a future special election in the coming year.

"My children have grown up in a home in which political considerations have always been important. They have been aware for a very long period of time of the importance of public service and their father's political philosophy. They have unanimously agreed that I should make a concerted effort to continue their father's work."

"In nearly sixteen years of

marriage to Nick we have made many political decisions and have been active in many political campaigns together."

"I know the full measure of commitment that Nick has to Alaska and to the people of Alaska. It is a commitment I will take most seriously and pledge the same dedication and service to the people of Alaska."

"Throughout the difficult period of the last month, I have been and continue to remain hopeful of Nick's safe re-

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