

Village magistrates attend training sessions . . .

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Greg, Haines; Ann Gibbons, Petersburg; Iris Johnson, Seward; Evelyn Scofield, Glenallen; Charlotte Brower, Barrow; and Ione Wisdom, Kenai. Instruction was offered through lectures by court personnel such as Jess Nicholas, magistrate from Kenai and Ed Crutchfield, magistrate from Delta Junction, discussion, visits to district court proceedings, and participation in mock hear-

ings. Topics ranged from sentencing and search warrants to coroner duties, legal research and emergency commitment of children. The acting magistrates present all agreed that the sessions are extremely helpful since they often, in the past, had only hurried phone calls to rely on for help and instruction. Six of the nine women attending had been to the previous conference but

reported there was no overlapping or repetition in the teaching. They explained that they had been sent a survey inquiring what they most needed to learn and that some of the things they thought they already knew had to be corrected.

Some have been acting magistrates for only two months, others as long as seven years. They describe their jobs as usually a two-woman operation, a clerk and a magistrate, with the clerk taking over when the magistrate is gone. Given all they must know and the procedures they must follow, all emphatically stated that the training was not a waste of taxpayers' money.

Coordinator of the Magistrate System, Susan Miller, said that a separate session was created for the acting magistrates because their difficulties are unique and they share the same problems.

The same reasoning helped create the regional magistrate training conferences which are now held every year and which will follow last week's session. Those will be: a specialized conference for large court magistrates in Anchorage, Oct. 11-15; a regional conference for the

First Judicial District in Sitka, Oct. 25-29; a regional conference for the Third and Fourth Judicial Districts in Anchorage, Nov. 15-19; a regional conference for the Second Judicial in Nome; Dec. 6-10; and a regional conference for the Bethel Service Area in Bethel, Jan. 31-Feb. 4.

The regional training concept was first conceived of by attorney Bill Nix who received a grant from the Law Enforcement Administration (LEAA) to conduct the first sessions. Susan Miller took over the program soon thereafter, modified it and got it on its feet. With about 70 people in the

magistrate system, Susan Miller says organizing their training is a pretty complex job and that most need more than they're getting. Of course, she also admits to having a "perfectionist attitude" and is always aware of what still needs to be done.

She reports that everyone in the system is very grateful for whatever training they can get and even with deficiencies, because there is a majority of good people in magistrate posts, what is lacking in training can be made up for with common sense.

But now the training program is well on its way and is funded by both LEAA and the state legislature. Plagued by rural communications problems, Miller is excited about the satellite phone system which is beginning to operate in the bush.

The other major problem, a lack of direction for the magistrate system in general, she hopes will be at least partially solved by the recommendations of a new Magistrate Advisory Committee set up by the Superior Court which includes attorneys from Nome, Bethel and Fairbanks as well as three judges.

The committee has been given a good deal of power and leeway to suggest ways that the court system should proceed in rural Alaska, says Miller. She hopes their recom-

mendations will be finalized during this calendar year, "then we will know where our resources can go."

It may be that the committee will recommend that more time and money should be put into the magistrate system, that it be enlarged, that more magistrates be appointed, and that a more objective system for bush appointments be adopted. Or they might suggest that the present system be maintained as is or cut back. Conciliation experiments in more districts may be attempted or more traveling judges may be another method used.

In any case, the system will then know where it stands and how to proceed, which will be a great help, according to Miller.

In the meantime, she has some concrete ideas of how she would like to proceed. She wants to see at least two training sessions a year for newly-appointed magistrates. She explains that even though one of five training judges is sent out to a post soon after a new appointment is made, the magistrates often have to wait quite awhile before a more intensive training session is offered.

She also plans to write a better correspondence course program for magistrate training. An old course exists, but is no longer used. Miller would like to see a course offered and intends to be the one to write it.

NEWS BRIEFS...

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of Indian Affairs, Morris Thompson, might soon be the new state commissioner of the Department of Administration following Andy Warwick's resignation. Thompson, an Athabaskan from Tanana, has said previously that his Washington job does not allow him enough time in Alaska. Others being considered for the post are Millett Keller of Anchorage, and Virgil Gillespie of Fairbanks.

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A NEW TASK FORCE ON women and alcoholism has been organized in Fairbanks after the recent visit of Jan DuPlain, head of the Office on Women of the National Council on Alcoholism. The task force will meet next on October 13 at 7 p.m. at the Comprehensive Alcoholism Program Office at 1318 Alakaket in Fairbanks. All interested persons are invited.

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AT A DISCUSSION between 14 state Senate and House candidates and the Alaska Conservation Society and friends held in Fairbanks last week, the governor's recent decision on limiting use of the haul road was a major topic. A conversation began on whether northern Native villages want roads after Republican state House candidate Jim O'Sullivan said that villages are asking for 5,000 foot airstrips with or without the road, and that a network of roads is inevitable. Sally Smith, Democratic House candidate who says she has worked with village problems for several years, said, "they may want runways but they are not interested in a big network of roads."

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PLACEMENT OF Alaskan children in foster homes or adoptive homes outside

Other region...

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revenue" position. Also, if sand and gravel are defined as surface resources, they will then belong to the village and not the regional corporations. The outcome of these hearings will have a major impact on the ways in which the corporations will go out about tapping their resources for profit. Happily, says Timme with a sigh, the arguments over legal issues are about exhausted.

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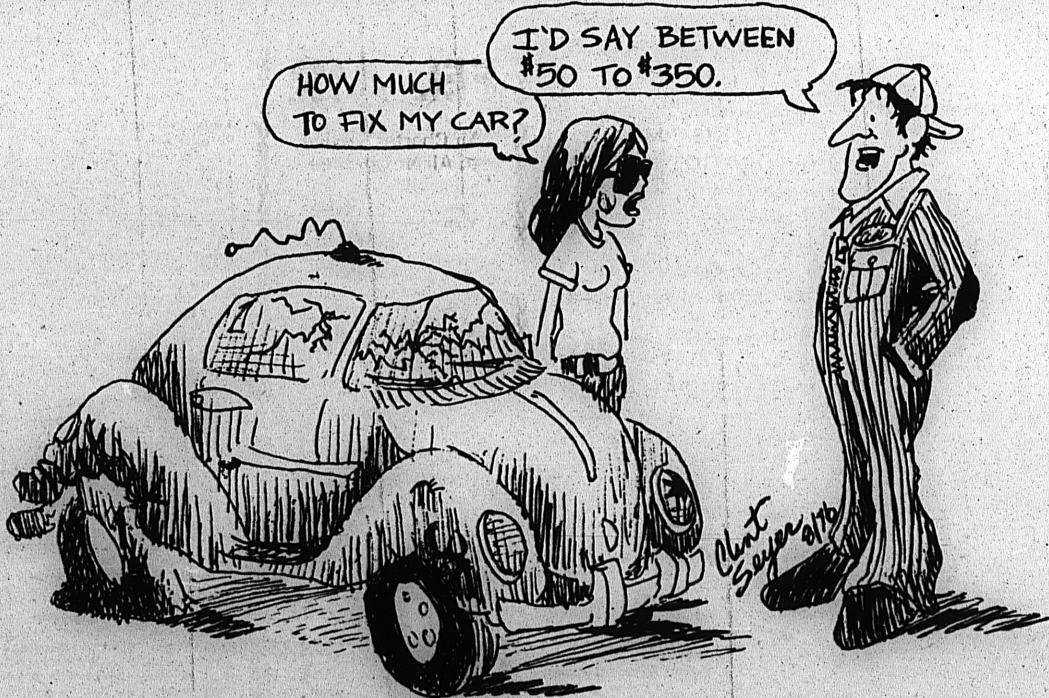
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THE U. S. HOUSE voted last week to close Glacier Bay National Monument, Mt. McKinley National Park and four other parks to future mining operations and defeated a measure proposed by Don Young (R-Ak.) to exclude the nickel-rich western portion of Glacier Bay from the ban.

Another Young amendment approved by voice vote would require the Sec. of the Interior to submit to Congress within two years his recommendations for modification to the existing boundaries of the monument that would exclude significant mineral deposits. The Senate has already passed a similar mining ban bill for the six parks.

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YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN EXACT ESTIMATE!

A new law passed by the Alaska legislature will give you the right to request an itemized repair estimate from your mechanic before work is begun on your car. If you are given a price estimate, the cost of repair cannot exceed the estimate without your permission.

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