

## Coordinator's Corner

The first year of the new millennium, or the last year of the old one as some of us believe, is just about over. No computer crises, no need for the bunkers and the stored food, and no bizarre happenings, unless you count the election.

The first year of our May to May seminar year was a little bumpy but generally successful. I plan to see about 40 of you who have not yet earned your 2000-2001 education credits at the Special Topic seminar in March.

We have also finally coordinated our billing year with our seminar credit year. Therefore, bills will be mailed in January for the May 1, 2001 to April 30, 2002 education fee. It will remain \$550.

Municipal Court Commissioners are joining reserve judges as May to April appointments. Now, everything related to credits and fees for every municipal judge

and commissioner is on the same schedule.

## A Request

You will recall that in *Milwaukee v. Wrotten* the Wis. Supreme Court held that municipal courts have the power to declare municipal ordinances unconstitutional. The Hon. James Gramling of the City of Milwaukee is interested in doing an article on municipal court decisions that have been written within the past ten years, on the constitutionality of ordinances and statutes. Please send or e-mail him the name of the case, a brief description, your ruling, and whether there was an appeal. If time does not permit, simply send him your name and phone number and he will call you for details. Jim Gramling, City of Milwaukee Municipal Court, 951 N. James Lovell St., Milwaukee, WI 53233. (414)286-3809 gramling@ci.mil.wi.us

## Resignations/New Judges/New Courts

**Peg Schieffer**, Village of Lannon, resigned. As you may recall, Pegs father, Bob, was the municipal judge for 16 years before Peg took over in 1993. It will be strange to be without a Lannon Schieffer!

The **Town of Somerset** created a court in December. They will elect a judge in April.

**Mark Liedl**, Northeast Community Court, resigned to return to Minnesota. **Dennis Sieg** has been appointed to replace him and will run in April 2001.

The City of Wisconsin Dells has created a court. **Sandra Sweeney** has been appointed judge and is running in the

April 2001 election for the position.

## Elections

107 Municipal Judges are up for election in 2001. At this time, we know that long term Judges **John Kerski**, City of Marinette (22 years) and **Frank Murn**, City of New Berlin, (20 years) will not be running.

Also not running are **Michael Ganzer**, Village of Brown Deer (12 years) and **Christen Denu**, Village of Arena (4 years). It is likely that the court in Area will be abolished.

After the January filing date, this office will be sending a form to each judge who is up for election. The form asks if you are running and if you have opposition. If opposed, we request the name of your opponent(s). We hope that none of you will be opposed, but we ask that all of you return the form so that our records will be current and correct.

## Municipal Judge Benchbook

The Municipal Judge Manual Committee met on December 11 and 12. The first order of business was a motion that carried unanimously to change Manual to Bench-book. Henceforth, the "red bible" as some call it, shall be the Municipal Judge Benchbook.

Secondly, there was much discussion about the unwieldy size of the Benchbook. It was decided that to alleviate that problem, we will print on both sides of the page. Therefore, all chapters that have any changes in them will be reprinted entirely. Those with no

### *Muni View*

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changes will not be reprinted at all, this time around.

## Legislation

As you know, the Wisconsin legislature will come back into session at the end of January. Last year in the budget bill, Court authority to suspend the operating privilege for failure to pay a non-traffic forfeiture was eliminated. Many municipal and circuit judges have expressed concern that this leaves them no meaningful sanction for juveniles who fail to pay a forfeiture. Representative Bonnie Ladwig, from the Racine area, will be introducing a bill early in the legislative session that will restore court authority to suspend for **juveniles** who fail to pay forfeitures. The LRB number of this bill is 0849/1.

A similar bill was introduced late in the last session. It passed the house with a large margin, but never came out of the senate committee. Therefore, if you support this bill, it is imperative that you write to your representative and your senator asking for their support of the bill and telling them why you believe it is needed.

Rep. Ladwig has indicated that the Director of State Courts office and the Municipal Judges Association, along with town, county and municipal organizations; police and sheriff agencies and school groups are supporting the reinstatement of this authority.

You can also write to the governor asking him to reinstate the suspension authority through the budget bill.

## Seminars

The final judge seminar for the 2000-2001 seminar year will be March 22 & 23, 2001 at the Paper Valley Inn in Appleton. The seminar is the Special Topic Seminar, and it will cover dealing with out-of-the-ordinary people and situations. We hope to have a large turnout and especially look forward to seeing all those who have not yet attended a seminar this education year

The Clerk Seminar, held November 9 & 10 at the Mead Inn in Wisconsin Rapids was a huge success. Over 160 clerks and municipal court personnel were in attendance. The hotel was excellent and the program faculty were outstanding. The Municipal Court Clerk Advisory Committee, Liz McCredie, Village of Deerfield; Sue Heller, Village of Shorewood Hills; Christine Pecard, City of Marinette; and Kim Proulx, City of Waukesha, are to be commended for their hard work and conscientiousness.

## Did You Know?

The Benchbook (fka Manual) Committee discussed a large number of questions that had come up at seminars and been asked of personnel at the office. A few are included here; others will be included in future issues of the *Muni View*. Most of these answers can now also be found in the appropriate chapter of the Benchbook.

What can you do to a juvenile if your municipality has never adopted Ch. 938.17(2)(cm)? Very little. Submit the sample ordinance in the Benchbook to the municipal governing body ASAP.

What kind of charges can a municipality add to a municipal ordinance violation ticket? **ONLY THOSE AUTHORIZED BY STATUTE.** Moreover, a municipality must strictly follow the bond schedule for traffic offenses and can add nothing to it.

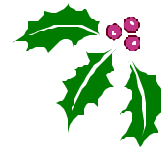
Can a muni judge order a dog impounded if not licensed? **NO.** Municipal courts do not have "equitable" jurisdiction. They can impose a forfeiture for every day the dog is not licensed, if there is such an ordinance on the books.

## Tis the Season

At the end of December there are many religious holidays, all of which are celebrations of one sort or another. Regardless of which, if any, you recognize, Carol and I would like to wish you a most happy holiday season and a healthy and happy 2001.

We look forward to seeing and talking with each of you in the coming months.

For those of you who are running for re-election, we send our very best wishes for your success.



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*Ronni and Carol*