

SOUNDINGS



Faculty & Staff Newsletter

University of Alaska
Southeast

Vol. 5, No. 21

May 15, 1992

Student recognition event successful

More than 200 students, parents and well-wishers attended the JDHS Recognition Program held in the Mourant cafeteria May 12. About 50 high school students were recognized for outstanding achievement during April and May. Ermalee Hickel, Alaska's First Lady, Bob Locke, president of the Juneau School Board and Barbara Muir, president of the Parent's Advisory Council each spoke at the event.

Sarah Hanson, a JDHS graduating senior, was presented the first UAS scholarship for a student in the recognition program. Hanson has distinguished herself in drama classes and productions at JDHS. She will attend UAS in the fall to pursue an associate of arts degree.

The student recognition program was created in 1989 by a parent's advisory committee. The monthly program recognizes the achievements of students who are nominated for an award by faculty.

Hard work makes commencement successful

The 21st annual UAS commencement ceremony honored about 120 graduating students at Centennial Hall, May 8. Aside from the usual palpitations and sweaty palms, the event went off without a hitch. The unsung heroes of the evening were the many members of the commencement committee who spent weeks planning the ceremony, and the physical plant crew which labored many hours to make Centennial Hall look great.

Guest speaker Judge Thomas Stewart spoke on the need for change in the national and state political systems, which he said were in a state of decline. Stewart blasted Alaska's open primary system and also faulted the news media for its intensive scrutiny of prosaic details concerning politicians' personal lives.

One of the event's many highlights came when Clark Gruening, grandson of late statesman Ernest Gruening, presented the first Gruening Award to student Colleen Campbell. Gruening spoke about his late grandfather's association with Judge Stewart and Major Carl Heinmiller, both of whom received honorary degrees at the ceremony.

Notes From Personnel



The following is the second of a two-part series on COBRA.

COBRA- How does it apply to the active UAS employee?

COBRA, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, mandates that the university offer continuation group health care coverage to plan participants and certain family members for 18, 29 or 36 months, after coverage has ended. Coverage may end for a number of different reasons, such as voluntary or involuntary termination of employment, reduction of hours worked, the death of the employee, dependent child reaching limiting age, or divorce. The continuation of coverage is offered at the university rate plus a 2 percent administrative cost.

Dependent Child Reaching the Limiting Age of Group Policy

The University of Alaska's health insurance covers dependent children through the age of 18. If dependent children are full-time students the coverage continues regardless

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News Briefs

Bear season follows commencement



Word comes from the physical plant that bear signs have already been spotted

between campus and student housing, so be extra careful about following the standard safety practices. Pay closer attention to garbage disposal, make noise when walking along heavily-vegetated paths, etc.

Some newcomers to the UAS campus may be surprised to know that black bears are occasionally spotted during spring and summer wandering near the shore of the lake. Keep your ears and nose alert. Bears are often heard or smelled before they are seen.

Juneau responding to student housing shortage

The shortage of summer housing for UAS students has gotten so bad that Tish Griffin has taken out ads in the Juneau Empire asking local residents to take in a student for the summer. The ads began this week and at least six calls have come in. The housing crunch is due to high summer attendance and renovations at student housing. Juneau has a rental-housing vacancy rate hovering at 1 percent. Anyone interested in housing a student or faculty member coming in for summer programs should call student housing at ext. 528.



Get well cards for Charlton

Statewide Risk and Records Management Director Ike Charlton is in Providence Hospital in Anchorage after undergoing heart surgery recently. He will remain there for about two weeks. Cards and letters can be sent to Charlton in care of:

Providence Hospital, P.O. Box 196604, Room 287, Anchorage, AK 99519

O'Clair returns to campus

Biology faculty member Rita O'Clair has returned to Juneau and UAS after spending a number of weeks in Seattle having her hearing surgically improved. The operation was a success and O'Clair will be back in the classroom in fall semester.

"They put so much stuff inside my head it looks like a hardware store when they X-ray it," says O'Clair.

O'Clair carries a miniature computer in her pocket which sends signals through a magnet into her ear. She will be going to Seattle once a month or so for checkups and rehabilitation.

"The doctors told me it would take a few months of practice with normal conversation to feel comfortable," says a good-humored O'Clair. "I still have trouble with people with beards."

Notes from Personnel continued from front

of age as long as the dependent can continue to be claimed on the employee's income taxes.

If the employee's dependent becomes ineligible for coverage the employer must be notified within 60 days of the qualifying event. After notification the employer will provide continuation information to the employee. The employee must elect the coverage within 60 days after the receipt of the continuation information. The first payment must be made within 45 days of the election of coverage. Coverage can be continued for 36 months.

Divorce

The ex-spouse of the employee has the right to the continuation of coverage under COBRA. The employee or the ex-spouse must notify the employer of the divorce within 60 days after it has been finalized. After the notification, the employer will send the continuation information to the ex-spouse. The ex-spouse has 60 days after receiving the information to make an election. The first payment must be made within 45 days of the election of coverage. The coverage can be continued for 36 months.

When does coverage end?

In most instances, the chosen coverage can continue through the months outlined above. However, coverage may terminate earlier if the covered individual fails to make timely payments, or the covered individual becomes covered under another employer's group health plan, and that plan covers a pre-existing condition which is currently being covered under the COBRA plan, or the covered individual becomes eligible for Medicare.

Summary

The above are COBRA highlights. For each case there may be more details and explanations. You are encouraged to contact Kay Bosshardt, ext. 507, or Irene DeLand, ext. 473, with questions.

Chantry recovering

Donna Chantry, president of the UAS classified association, is in Bartlett Memorial Hospital recovering from hip replacement surgery. Husband Dean Chantry says the operation was a success and Donna will begin therapy soon. If you would like to send Donna a get well card here's the address:

9219 Gee St., Juneau, AK 99801

Donna will return to campus in July.

Here's an IDEA

Tips from Communications Briefings

- Create a time-saving resource by keeping an index-card file next to the fax so employees can add names and numbers of people they fax often.
- Use recorded books or articles on tape for professional development while driving. This can be a valuable use of time when you can't seem to get the reading done you'd like to.
- Guest Tip from Mark Twain: "I never write 'metropolis' for 7 cents when I can get the same for 'city.'"

Tips on misused words from Strunk, Jr. and White

- All right. Properly written as two words - all right.
- Can. Means "am able." Not to be used as a substitute for *may*.
- -wise. Not to be used indiscriminately as a pseudo-suffix: taxwise, marriagewise, saltwater taffywise. Chiefly useful when it means "in the manner of": clockwise. There is not a noun in the language to which -wise cannot be added if the spirit moves one to add it. The sober writer will abstain from the use of this wild additive.
- In ordinary composition, use orthodox spelling. Do not write *nite* for *night*, *thru* for *through*, *pleez* for *please*, unless you plan to introduce a complete system of simplified spelling and are prepared to take the consequences.

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is published by the University of Alaska Southeast's Office of Public Information. It is distributed to UAS employees each pay period, and to others upon written request. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday noon prior to that Friday's publication. Send submissions to Room 108, Maurant Building, University of Alaska Southeast, 11120 Glacier Highway, Juneau, Alaska 99801, 789-4530.