

## Events of Note

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### Coming Up General Conferences

**March 18**

*Alternatives to Litigation*; New York. Fee: \$150 (\$125 for members.) Sponsored by the American Arbitration Association. To be held at the Plaza Hotel. The one-day seminar will deal with options that are available and effective use of alternative remedies. Luncheon speaker is Judge Jack Etheridge, Professor of Law at Emory Law School. For further information, contact AAA, 140 West 51st Street, NYC 10020 or telephone (212) 484-3233.

**April 7-9**

*Turning Conflict Around, State-of-the-Art Training Program in Dispute-Resolution for Executives*; Chicago. Fee: \$495 (\$399 if registered by March 15). Sponsored by American Intermediation Service, 126 Post Street, #600, San Francisco 94108. To be held at Realtor's Midwest Conference Center, Marriott Hotel, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 60611. Limited enrollment. The program teaches participants to identify and distinguish issues and interests in negotiation, to learn practical negotiating techniques in collaborative settings, to develop skill in mediation, and to learn how to achieve "closure" in negotiating settlements. For further information, call AIS at (415) 788-6252.

### Employee Conferences

**March 2**

*Employee Termination*; Chicago. Fee: \$135 (\$110 for members). Sponsored by the American Arbitration Association. To be held at the Westin Hotel, Chicago. Speakers will include Robert Coulson, AAA president and author of *The Termination Hand-*

*book*; William G. Coples of Veder, Price, Kaufman & Kammholz and former president of Kenyon College, and Amanda Fox, vice-president for human resources of Blue Cross-Blue Shield. For further information, call Ms. Malin at (212) 484-3233.

### For the Bookshelf

#### *Consumer Dispute Resolution: Exploring the Alternatives*

Edited by Larry Ray and Deborah Smolover; published by the American Bar Association in conjunction with the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs and the National Assn. of Consumer Agency Administrators. Paperback, 700 pp. To order, write: Special Committee on Alternative Means of Dispute Resolution, ABA, 1800 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or call (202) 331-2258.

#### *Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*

by Roger Fisher and William Ury, Penguin Books, 161 pp., \$4.95. This popular bestseller by the director and associate director of the Harvard Negotiation Project, has now been published in paper.

### To Our Readers

To ensure that our coverage is as comprehensive and complete as possible, we welcome and encourage communications from our readers. Because space is limited, letters generally should be no longer than one single-spaced typed page. Articles and reports on developments in the field should be confined to five double-spaced pages. We plan to publish longer articles as quarterly supplements; please contact the editor before submitting manuscripts in this category. Please address all letters and articles to Editor, *Alternatives*, Center for Public Resources, 680 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019; or call (212) 541-9830.

### ICJ Studies Tort Suit Costs

In Fiscal 1980, Americans filed 661,000 tort cases in state courts of general jurisdiction and 32,315 in federal district courts. To process these cases cost taxpayers \$320 million. State court costs for handling tort cases ranged between \$279 and \$536 per case filed; the comparable figure for the federal system was \$1,740.

These are some of the findings contained in a detailed report "Costs of the Civil Justice System: Court Expenditures for Processing Tort Cases," released in January by the Institute for Civil Justice, an arm of the Rand Corp. in Santa Monica, Calif. Prepared by Dr. James S. Kakalik and Abby E. Robyn, the 91-page ICJ study examined extensive data from the California, Florida, and Washington state court systems, and from the federal district courts.

In the three states studied, only 2.6 to 8.1 percent of the cases reached jury trial, but these accounted for approximately half of total government expenditures for processing all tort cases. The average cost per case tried by a jury ranged from \$2,790 in Florida to \$7,984 in California, exclusive of cases tried in Los Angeles County, where the average cost was \$8,649. In federal court, the cost of a jury trial ranged between \$8,422 and \$15,028. If the cases are settled after a settlement conference, the average costs in the states studied dropped to between \$311 and \$393.

The authors conclude that many civil cases that go to trial "can easily cost the government more money than is at stake for the litigants."

The report (R-2888-ICJ) can be purchased from Rand's publications department at 1700 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90406. For further information, call Paul Weeks at (213) 393-0411. ■