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JEFFREY FAINTUCK

Magistrate program lightens dockets

The city's first magistrate program is speeding up cases on the court's loaded docket, and new procedures are insuring more immediate hearings for defendants.

The new system, said Southfield 46th District Court Magistrate Jeffrey Faintuck, includes arraignments within two weeks for persons cited for traffic violations.

"The way it works is John Q. Citizen, for example, gets a ticket for speeding 10 miles over the limit," Faintuck explained. "The citation is payable over the counter."

"The ticket says if John Q. fails to pay his fine by the second Wednesday after he was issued the violation, he must appear on that day for arraignment."

In the past, Faintuck said, the court sent notice of violations to traffic offenders and waited three to four weeks. If the fine wasn't paid, the defendant waited another three to six weeks to appear in court.

"In a number of cases, traffic violators admit they're technically guilty, but they want to explain the circumstances," Faintuck said. "The arrangement system facilitates their getting

into court. Alleged offenders used to have to plead innocent to charges to be able to explain the incident to the judge."

IF A MOTORIST contests a traffic citation, he may be arraigned by Faintuck who enters a plea of guilty for the defendant and sets a specific date for trial. Magistrates are prohibited by law from hearing contested cases after arraignment proceedings. They also lack jurisdiction in mandatory court cases such as alcohol-related driving violations.

The state legislature, Faintuck said, has increased magistrates' powers to include accepting pleas for such misdemeanors as being drunk in public. Legislators are considering expanding magistrates' duties to allow them to preside over minor hearings in civil cases.

Most defendants Faintuck has arraigned, including those charged with felonies, appear without attorneys. Faintuck informs the individual of the maximum sentence involved in the complaint and explains the right to a court-appointed legal counsel if the person can't afford his or her own legal representative.

Rights group defends religious cultists

(Continued from Page 1A)

lish a branch in the Detroit metropolitan area.

Physical and harsh psychological pressures are applied to the "abducted" person, who is usually kept under lock and key, around the clock, until he breaks, said Block.

"To sidestep legal liabilities, kidnappers often prearrange agreements with parents who hire them," Block said. "The agreement states any resulting legal action won't involve kidnappers."

Michael Traush, a young Tucson attorney involved in the deprogramming group, said it's the only legal one since members get court orders of temporary guardianship before "rescuing cultists." Traush was also in Oakland County for the program on cults.

"Kidnappers have victimized even mainstream religions like Roman Catholicism, charging that the Bible and Catholic mass will produce mind control over followers and turn them into

mindless, brainwashed robots," Anderson maintained.

"Deprogramming is another bloc and Hitler was the first offender. Who's to decide if sects should be written off as pseudo-religious cults? Is Hare Krishna chanting different than reciting a Catholic rosary? Deprogramming is a form of brainwashing."

ANDERSON and Block said they don't necessarily believe in cults. But they object to the methods used to change young persons' beliefs. APRIL representatives claim it's "blatantly illegal to snatch so called victims, lock them up and use force to deprogram them."

"The issue is kidnappers versus religious liberty and the first amendment," Block said. "Condoning criminal action to violate concepts on which this country was based is only the tip of the iceberg. It's easy to play one religious group against another, using young adults who are searching for something."

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Facing Page

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