



DIGEST

Around and About

RETIRED COUNTY employees have received greater protection against fast increases in the cost of living, under a Board of Supervisors' action of January 2. The board adopted a plan authorized by the 1967 Legislature under which a retired employee's retirement allowance may be increased up to 3 percent a year, if the Bureau of Labor Statistics index shows the cost of living has risen that much. Until now, retirement allowances could be increased no more than 2 percent a year, even though the BLS figures showed a cost-of-living rise greater than that. Harold J. Ostly, chairman of the County retirement board, said the 3 percent limit will go into effect next July 1.

THE THEODORE Barry report recommending pay increases for most of the County's 340 executives rests now with the Efficiency and Economy Committee, the group of volunteer citizen advisors to the Board of Supervisors. The board passed the report on to the committee after receiving it a month ago. The Supervisors asked the E & E Committee to bring back its own recommendations.

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Kaiser Asks One Big Contract

MASTER AGREEMENT OFFERED

THE KAISER Foundation Health Plan, Inc., has offered to sign a master contract with the County covering some 11,000 County employees now enrolled in the Kaiser Health Plan.

If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the master contract will replace the present five contracts between Kaiser and the Los Angeles County Employees' Association, California Association of Professional Employees, AFL-CIO Council 49, Fire Fighters Local 1014, and Building Service Employees Local 434.

These five contracts expire March 31 and will not be renewed, according to James G. Sims, spokesman for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan.

Rise in premiums

At that time, Sims said, monthly premiums will rise slightly to meet increased costs of medical care.

The monthly charge for a single employee will go from its present \$1.75 to \$2.41; for the employee and one dependent from \$11.50 to \$12.82; and the family rate from \$19.95 to \$21.88 a month. The County will pay an additional \$8 on top of each of these premiums.

Sims said coverage also will be extended to include unmarried dependent children up to age 25 who are fulltime students, and to all children who are incapable of self support because of physical or mental disability, regardless of age.

The changeover to a master contract is a step toward putting into effect a Board of Supervisors de-

cision in April 1966 to coordinate most County employee health plans under County administration.

The new County contract will cover only employees now enrolled with Kaiser and new County employees, who will be permitted to join during their first 60 days on the job.

Sims said Kaiser expects to open its health plan to all permanent County workers after it finishes expanding its present facilities. But the completion date is still months away.

Kaiser has mailed new enrollment and payroll deduction authorization cards to employees now covered by the expiring contracts. Those wishing to continue their coverage under the new County contract must return the cards to Kaiser no later than January 19.

Kaiser enrollees who do not receive new enrollment cards in the mail should call the County insurance section at 625-3611, extension 65667.

Double bite for some

Those who are enrolled with Kaiser under the LACEA and the Council 49 contracts will have a double deduction from their March 8 paychecks — one deduction for March and another for April coverage. This will place them on the same prepaid basis as other enrollees.

Employees who want to spread out these double deductions over a six-month period may ask for special time payment cards in their departmental payroll offices.

Around and About

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CAO LIN Hollinger has warned state legislators that property taxes levied by Los Angeles County could climb to \$591 million within five years—an increase of 100 percent, since 1962. This horrible prospect, he said, can be avoided if the Legislature gives counties some substantial type of tax relief, particularly a share of the added one percent of state sales tax provided by the 1967 Legislature. He also stressed the need for a more realistic share of the cigaret and hotel-motel levies. Most of this money now goes to incorporated cities. If the Legislature does not make such changes, Hollinger said, the County will have to be given a share of the state income tax and the right to levy new kinds of taxes. Hollinger spoke before the Assembly committees on Revenue and Taxation, and Municipal and County Government, meeting December 15 in Los Angeles.

LONG BEACH attorney Harry Albert was elected president of the County civil service commission in December. Albert, who has served on the commission more than 16 years, was chosen by fellow commissioners Thelma T. Mahoney and O. Richard Capen.

AFTER January 20, new workers will sign only the one-paragraph loyalty oath promising to support the U.S. and state constitutions—the oath that has been in the California constitution since 1879. Long sections were added in 1952, declaring that the oath taker does not and never will belong to a group advocating illegal overthrow of the government. The California Supreme Court ruled on December 21 that these sections unconstitutionally infringe on freedom of association. The ruling applies to all municipal and state employees in California.

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John Maharg —

IOWA FARM TO THE 6th FLOOR

THERE ARE at least two John Mahargs, of course, just as there are two or more of most people.

John Maharg No. 1 is the bespectacled, bald lawyer who has sat for 14 years at Board of Supervisors meetings, seen but unheard except when a Supervisor asks his advice on a legal matter.

This Maharg, age 54, took over as County Counsel last month, succeeding Harold W. Kennedy, who retired as head of one of the nation's largest legal offices—59 attorneys, 65 other employees, 7,000 estates to handle, \$150 million in law suits against the County to fight each year, and a mountain of other legal business.

And this Maharg lives with his wife of 26 years at a respectable address in La Canada and is sending three sons through universities.

John's other life

Then there is the other John Maharg, not so well known—the fellow born on a farm outside Ames, Iowa, where his father taught animal husbandry at Iowa State College—brought to Los Angeles at age six when his father joined the University of California extension service—an ambitious boy who, during the 1930s depression, earned his way through UCLA as a hotel night clerk, day laborer, department store messenger, and anything else that came along.

USC law school went a bit easier, thanks to a teaching assistantship that meant John could finish his doctor of jurisprudence degree in 1939.

Rookie lawyer Maharg had two years of practice with the Parker and Irwin firm (mostly oil clients) before the postman brought the well-known invitation to join the World War II khaki club.

First it was the infantry, then military intelligence for Maharg. From his lair at the Presidio in San Francisco he chased the spies whom ally Russia was infiltrating into the Manhattan atom bomb project.

The cyclotron that the University of California operated in the nearby Berkeley hills played a secret part in the project.

In 1944 Maharg bade farewell to the Presidio, wife Katherine and two-year-old Patrick, and joined the gung-ho ranks of OSS, the Office of Strategic Services.

Soon he and a hundred other Americans were parachuting into the north Burma jungle, there to organize the wild Kachin hunting tribes into a guerrilla force to harass the Japanese.

"The Kachins," says Maharg, "had never been subjugated by the British, the Chinese, or anybody, and when the Japanese arrived and tried to get tough, the Kachins were ready to fight back.

"The Kachins, however, had trouble distinguishing between the Chinese and Japanese. I still think that, despite what we told them, they thought they were fighting the Chinese."

Maharg spent a year living with the Kachins in their huts, existing mostly on airdropped supplies. He emerged as a major and unscathed except for a six-week siege in a hospital with amoebic dysentery.

Asked today whether he would like to go through the guerrilla warrior role again, Maharg's enthusiasm is easily restrained.

But he still likes mountains and the wild country.

Their camper-car

The Maharg family car is a light truck camper. Every autumn he and his wife go up into the Utah hills, ostensibly to hunt deer, but really to watch the sun rise over Zion Canyon.

Twice the Mahargs and their two older boys have gone down the fast Colorado River in boats, 150 miles, much of it white water.

Like any officebound executive, however, Maharg during most of the year sees the outdoors only on weekends. There is golf on Sundays

Continued on next page

EVENING CLASSES WILL BEGIN

MORE THAN 2,000 County employees seeking more college education are expected to register for spring semester evening classes later this month.

Most of the 75 courses will be held in Civic Center buildings from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Students may park free in County Lot 17, First and Olive streets.

Students may register Monday through Thursday, January 22-25, from 5 to 8 p.m. in room 493, Hall of Administration.

Or latecomers may go to the first meeting of the class (which will be on January 29, 30, 31 or February 1) and if the class is not filled the instructor will give them permission to register.

NEW COUNSEL

Continued from page 2

("I was lured into it five years ago by Lin Hollinger and some other guys around here"). And during football season he can be found at the Coliseum for every USC or UCLA game. He is, after all, an alumnus of both schools.

And for which one does he cheer when they meet in the big game each November?

The old gung-ho Maharg might tell. But the careful lawyer Maharg will only say, "Well, I'm a little torn."

MAHARG: "Changes but no big shakeup"

NEW COUNTY Counsel John Maharg says he will make some changes in the operation he inherited from retiring Harold W. Kennedy but "nothing precipitous, no big shakeup or housecleaning."

Last week Maharg obtained Board of Supervisors' approval to increase his staff by 23 percent. He said the 34 new employees are needed to cut down a large backlog of legal cases.

Maharg told The DIGEST he will make a major recruiting drive — on campuses for promising law graduates, and among private law firms. Maharg is convinced many aggressive young attorneys in these

Fees are \$2.50 for classes taught by the faculty of East Los Angeles College. Courses taught by city adult school faculty cost \$5.25.

Courses cover a wide range of subjects including supervision and management, psychology, accounting, data processing, real estate, engineering, mathematics, shorthand, Spanish, medical terminology, probation administration, written communications, sociology, economics and U. S. government.

Counselors will be on hand to advise students as to classes during the evening registration periods.

Lists of classes are available in room 555, Hall of Administration, or from each County department's personnel officer.

A Pox on Gobbledygook

A six-day "war on gobbledygook" opens next Monday—an institute to teach County employees how to write letters and reports in short, clear English instead of bureaucraticese.

Jim Harrigan, Personnel Department chief of employee development, said 15 departments have indicated they will send their trainers to the institute in room 538, Hall of Administration.

firms would welcome a chance to handle the high volume and variety of cases—liability suits, condemnations, public contracts—found in the county counsel's office.

Maharg said his other big problem is filling the gap left by George W. Wakefield's resignation as chief assistant county counsel January 1 to join the law firm of Burke, Williams and Sorenson. He was Maharg's major rival for the County Counsel appointment.

"A fine man, a fine lawyer," Maharg said: "I don't think we ever can really replace him, but we'll hav to do the best we can."

Around and About

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THE COUNTY Pound Department is no more. As of last Friday, it became the Department of Animal Control.

The old name, it was felt, suggested a mean old man with a net chasing kids' dogs, whereas the department now actually works more at such duties as regulating pet shops and kennels, and controlling what director Marvin Thronson says is a growing fad—the keeping of exotic pets like lions, tigers, monkeys, boa constrictors and wildcats.

COUNTY REAL Estate Administrator Arthur G. Will has shown no ill effects from his much publicized lunch in the Hall of Administration basement cafeteria. Will, whose department handles the concession for operating the cafeteria, ate there last Wednesday at the order of the Board of Supervisors. The board asked Will and the CAO to report back on whether employee complaints about cafeteria food are justified. Will downed his 98 cent lunch of liver and onions, potatoes, salad and coffee while t-v news cameras surrounded him, afterward said he found the meal "good." The Supervisors probably will receive a report from Will, the CAO and the Employees Cafeteria Committee next week.

THE SMALL building at Temple and Grand, the De Lisa Building, will have a new tenant. The Board of Supervisors voted to let the Music Center Operating Company transform it into offices that the company will lease to theatrical firms connected with the Music Center. The site, which includes County parking lot number 30, once was condemned for a courts building. Later the two-story De Lisa Building was headquarters for contractors erecting the Music Center. Recently it has been used part time for County employee training classes.

It's New, It's Free —the DIGEST

Merged for Love? No, Money

Any enterprise that has 55,000 employees scattered over hundreds of square miles and handling everything from brush fires to ballot counting to baby clinics is bound to have trouble letting its left hand know what its right hand is doing.

That explains the appearance today of Volume 1, Number 1 of the County of Los Angeles DIGEST, Number 2, will be out January 25.

The DIGEST will contain news that affects large numbers of County employees—actions by the Board of Supervisors, by the Civil Service Commission, changes in policy, fringe benefits, actions by the courts and the legislature that have repercussions in the County.

The DIGEST also will cover major changes in County personnel, and openings that have developed for advancement and further training.

The publication's general policy will be set by a three-man editorial board—the Chief Administrative Officer (L. S. Hollinger), the Director of Personnel (Gordon T. Nesvig) and the president of the County Management Council (County Veterinarian Dr. Robert J. Schroeder). They will supervise the editor, Lorn Peterson.

The DIGEST will be available free to all County employees at their place of work. The press run for this first issue totals 11,000 copies. The run for future issues will be increased as demand warrants.

IT WASN'T exactly a romance, the merger of the County Recorder's office with the Registrar of Voters ten days ago. It was more a marriage of convenience.

County Recorder Ray Lee, who became Registrar-Recorder and head of the combined departments January 1, put it this way:

"We're both offices that create and maintain records. So we can save money by combining our equipment and our know-how."

Lee said the Recorder's rented punched-card machines are almost senseless by today's fast-changing EDP standards. The machines can print only 150 lines of information a minute.

But the tape-using equipment recently acquired by retiring Registrar of Voters Ben Hite produces more than 1,000 lines a minute. These faster machines, until now idle part of the time, will take over processing index cards made from approximately 4,500 real estate documents and 750 marriage, birth and death certificates filed with the Recorder's office each day.

Lee said the merger will have little effect on the two departments'

employees. There will be some shuffling back and forth of administrators and technical experts. But most employees now stationed at the Registrar's office at 808 North Spring Street will remain there, and the same is true of the Recorder's staff in the New Hall of Records.

Driving Rule Relaxed

THE CIVIL SERVICE Commission has liberalized its rule that until now has prevented hundreds of applicants with below-average hearing from obtaining jobs as social workers, probation officers, sanitarians, public health nurses, field assessors and craftsmen.

The old rule excluded anyone with a 20 decibel loss of hearing from driving on County business, and this automatically barred the applicant from positions that involved using a car.

The commission December 13 approved its medical advisory board's recommendation that the rigid no-driving rule be dropped. It reported it could find no solid evidence that persons with impaired hearing are necessarily bad drivers.

Instead the commission ruled that applicants with below-average hearing will be judged individually to determine whether their hearing is adequate to perform the duties of the job.

In the C-NOTE CLUB

Introducing County employees whose better-work suggestions have won them \$100 and membership in the Century Note Club.

WALTER RANDLE noticed that he and other maintenance men were spending many hours removing the 1,600 nozzles in the Music Center fountains each time they had to be cleaned.

Walter designed a small cork-screw-like tool to clean out the silt without removing the nozzles.

Estimated savings the first year: \$1,055.

The Suggestion Award Board granted Walter \$100.

One Way to Start

AN ARTICLE in the General Hospital publication *In General* illustrates that high-rising County careers may have low beginnings—for instance, in a waste basket.

This year was 1947. Two graduating seniors scanned the bulletin board in the Pomona College placement office. Nothing for them there. Then Jack glanced in the waste basket and pulled out two bulletins from Los Angeles County offering jobs at \$110 a month.

Jack decided to try for the one as student personnel aide, his friend Loren applied for student administrative analyst.

Today Jack Titterington is the new personnel officer at General Hospital. And Loren Enoch, former management division chief in the CAO's office, is Chief Executive Officer of Ventura County.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

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