



DIGEST

Around and About

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER Mark Bloodgood intends to fill County employees' stockings early. He announced paychecks will be distributed next Tuesday (Dec. 23), two days before Christmas.

COUNTY EMPLOYEES taking spare-time college courses now may be reimbursed for tuition for up to eight units a quarter or semester. The old limit was six units. Director of personnel Gordon Nesvig recommended the change in a letter to the Board of Supervisors, saying that while in the past most courses offered were for three units credit (so that an employee could take two three-unit courses at a time), it now appears that "some schools which charge tuition per unit have increased the number of units per course." Nesvig said this tactic tended to limit County employees to taking only one class

Continued on page 2

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PPOA WINS A HALF-VICTORY

The County Professional Peace Officers association defeated Los Angeles County Employees association, 478 votes to 172, in an election to choose a negotiating representative for a unit of 900 supervisory deputy sheriffs, D-A investigators and criminalists. The mail ballots were counted today (Dec. 19).

Nobody won, however, in the balloting to represent 3,400 non supervisory deputies, investigators and criminalists. Only 1,950 (57 percent) voted—1,532 for PPOA, 384 for LACEA, 27 for neither. To win, an organization must receive a plurality with at least 60 percent of the unit voting, or "yes" vote from more than 50 percent of all eligible voters.

CNA Wins Easily

California Nurses association, unopposed, won election as negotiating representative for County nurses. Seventy-three percent of the non-supervisory nurses in Unit A cast ballots, 1,258 of them for CNA, 45 against CNA. Among the 940 supervisory nurses in Unit B, 629 voted for CNA, 41 against CNA (a 71 percent turnout). The ballots were counted at the registrar-recorder's office Dec. 4.

Votes were tallied the same day for two smaller units. Both were no-contests. A joint council of three associations—public health sanitarians, public health investigators and public health engineers—won the right to represent 340 employees in a health-investigative unit. The tally was 278 for the joint council, 14 against.

A unit containing 74 dentists and hygienists, in a relatively light turnout of 55 percent, selected the

Association of County Dental Personnel as its representative. The vote was 39 for the association, 2 against.

Guards Choose LACEA

Los Angeles County Employees Association Security Officers Union, SEIU Local 602, scored a two-to-one victory over AFSCME to represent 275 County guards. The vote count Dec. 10 showed 133 for LACEA, 62 for AFSCME, 17 for

Continued on page 2

Ross-Loos Rates Up

THE 4,800 County staffers who subscribe to the Ross-Loos health plan will begin paying higher premiums next month, the result of rising hospital and medical costs.

Rates in the renewed contract approved by the Board of Supervisors mean the employee buying coverage for himself only will pay \$3.43 more a month. The policy for an employee and wife will cost \$6.26 more a month. Coverage for a worker and family will rise \$7.82 a month.

Ross-Loos, which has been insuring County workers for forty years, last increased its rates in September, 1967.

Subscribers will find the higher deductions taken from the paychecks they receive Jan. 9.

Premiums are changing as follows:

EMPLOYEE ONLY coverage—a rise in the employee's contribution from \$3.44 a month to \$6.87 a month (plus the County's contribution of \$8 a month).

FOR EMPLOYEE AND WIFE

Continued on page 2

Around and About

Continued from page 1

under the six-unit limit. The Board of Supervisors approved the change Dec. 9.

THE SECOND round in a fight between APCD and the city water and power department will take place Jan. 14. Water and power officials will ask the air pollution hearing board to grant them special permission to continue building a \$56 million expansion of the city's Scattergood generating plant at Playa del Rey. The city officials argued vainly before the Board of Supervisors (Dec. 4) against adoption of APCD's rule 67, which has the effect of prohibiting construction of any more power generating plants using gas, oil or other fossil fuels in the L. A. basin. Floyd Goss, water and power assistant manager, has said if his department loses before the hearing board Jan. 14, it will carry its fight to the courts. Meanwhile, Goss said in a Dec. 8 letter to APCD, his department is suspending construction at Scattergood.

THE COUNTY Management council elected Liston Witherill, chief deputy hospitals director, as its new president at last week's fall management conference. He replaces Dr. Robert Schroeder, County veterinarian. In his new post, Witherill becomes a member of the three-man DIGEST editorial board.

A SPECIAL issue of The DIGEST Jan. 19 will describe the 68 evening courses the County is sponsoring spring semester. Registration will open Jan. 22, classes begin Feb. 2.

ELECTIONS

Continued from page 1

neither. Seventy-seven percent of the guards cast ballots.

In one of the closest representation elections thus far, AFSCME squeezed out LACEA to negotiate for a unit of 50 agricultural inspectors. The tally was 26 for AFSCME, 23 for LACEA, and one for neither. All 50 of the inspectors voted.

Upcoming Elections

The employee relations commission has ordered elections held within the next few months in a dozen units containing nearly 24,000 County employees:

- The bulk of the County's blue-collar workers, divided into four units, will vote Jan. 23 and 26. AFSCME and LACEA will compete for two units—one of 2,700 maintenance men, laborers, working formen, truck drivers, machine operators and others; the other unit of 416 automotive maintenance and repair men, equipment maintenance men and helicopter pilots. Only the Building and Construction Trades council will appear on the ballot for a unit of some 1,200 painters, plumbers and other craftsmen. And only LACEA is contending to represent a unit of 750 supervisors of employees in the three other blue-collar units.

- Ballots will be mailed Jan. 21 to members of two units—206 professional and nonprofessional paramedical and health supervisors (only LACEA on the ballot) and a unit of 820 professional paramedical and health employees (only a joint council of LACEA and associations of medical lab technicians, nutritionists, dietitians and health educators will be listed on the ballot).

- Mail ballots also will go out Jan. 7 to 212 employees in a cultural-scientific-educational unit. They will vote yes or no on whether LACEA should represent them.

- The employee relations commission has approved a unit of 14,500 clerical and office workers, another of 1,300 supervisors in these classes. LACEA and AFSCME will compete on the ballot. No election date has been set.

ROSS-LOOS RATES

Continued from page 1

—a rise from \$15.53 a month to \$21.79 (plus the County's \$8 a month).

FOR FAMILY COVERAGE—rise from \$22.37 a month to \$30.19 (plus the County's \$8 contribution).

The renewed County contract with Ross-Loos has no effect on the premiums of the three other County-administered health plans (Kaiser, Blue Cross and CPS-Blue Shield).

Open enrollment set

Gunther Dumalski, County employee benefits manager, announced that an open enrollment period for all four health plans will be held Jan. 5 through Jan. 30. During this period any permanent County employee may enroll himself or his dependents in any of the four health plans without health statements. The Jan. 2 DIGEST will carry details of the benefits and costs of the four plans.

Debs Optimistic, But--

BOARD OF Supervisors chairman Ernest Debs views 1970 with "cautious optimism" despite continuing problems of excessive property taxes, air pollution, poverty and welfare. However, he said, answers for most of these problems depend upon action in Sacramento and Washington, "proving how very interdependent levels of government have become."

Debs' remarks came in a brief "state of the County" message delivered Dec. 2 as his fellow supervisors reelected him to a second term as Board chairman. He has been a Board member since 1958.

Debs said practically every County department made progress in 1969. He mentioned "establishment of a data processing department to speed up services and cut costs in many County departments . . . pioneering approaches in juvenile health problems, drug abuse and delinquency . . . our affirmative action program to provide equal employment opportunities for ethnic minorities."

County Continues 'Space' Program

THE BOARD of Supervisors has approved contracts for:

—a \$3.3 million building at County-USC Medical Center to house the hospital administration and the chief medical examiner-coroner's department. Estimated completion: mid-1971.

—an adjoining \$2.3 million five-level parking structure with 1,250 spaces and access to the resident physicians' dormitory. Estimated completion: late 1970.

—the \$4.6 million Newhall-Saugus-Valencia administrative center with three municipal courts and branch offices for many County departments. Estimated completion: fall of 1971.

—a \$24,000 expansion of the Venice health subcenter. Estimated completion: mid-1970.

The Board also approved schematic plans for three major remodelings at County-USC Medical Center.

—\$4 million conversion of 14 new operating rooms on eighth and ninth floors.

—\$1 million to convert space now occupied by personnel and comptroller offices into laboratories for microbiology, epidemiology, serology, immunopathology and autopsy.

—\$800,000 to enlarge the hospital jail ward to hold 44 more men and 12 more women patients.

Mrs. Mahoney Named

MRS. THELMA Mahoney has begun serving her second term as president of the civil service commission. She was elected to succeed O. Richard Capen Dec. 6. Mrs. Mahoney, a commission member since 1961, also was president in 1967.

Outgoing commissioner Harry Albert, a veteran of 17 years, received a plaque for dedicated service at the Board of Supervisors meeting Dec. 9. His commission seat has been taken by Emmet Sullivan of Long Beach.

No Punches Pulled at Arrowhead

LIKE THE 13 similar conferences before it, the 14th annual Fall Management conference at Monte Corona near Lake Arrowhead last week (Dec. 11, 12, 13) found County department heads gathered in sports clothing, tieless, enjoying an occasional quaff and poker game in off hours, and letting their hair down generally about County problems. But never had they let their hair down so freely or about so sensitive an issue as formed the theme of last week's conference: how to put into effect the County's "affirmative action" program to insure Mexican-Americans, blacks and other minority Americans equal opportunity to obtain County jobs and promotions.

The 55 department heads and 60 other members of the County Management council had as guests 20 lower-echelon employees from the hospital, probation, CAO, human relations, sheriff and personnel departments—all of them from minority groups. These 20 "resource persons" attended in pairs the ten discussion groups of County brass. The groups' all-day sessions reportedly began in some constraint, but before the day was over sounds of vigorous debate and even table-thumping came from behind the closed doors.

At the conference closing session the next morning, Herbert Carter, human relations commission director, summarized conclusions the ten groups reported they had reached. Excerpts follow:

DISCRIMINATION: "County managers should accept the reality of discrimination in County government and quit denying it. If we don't admit the problem exists, we will probably never have real solutions."

RECRUITMENT. "We must intensify recruitment in minority communities. This effort must be tied to realistic job requirements. We might substitute experience for some of the educational requirements we have . . . Many department heads say they have difficulty recruiting minority people, they can't find them. They should consider using the informal communications networks that exist within minority communities, from cousin to brother to sister to uncles and aunts and neighbors, through churches and social clubs."

PROMOTION. "All the scurrying to bring minority people into the County at entry-level jobs without an opportunity for full mobility upward is just playing games . . . A problem here is how to compress the experience necessary for promotion into a much shorter time than has been true so far in County government . . . County managers must resist any attempt to use seniority as a basic requirement for promotion. Otherwise, we simply reinforce the system that already exists. . . Managers might develop managerial talents of minority people in their departments by assigning them to administrative duties during the regular supervisors' vacations . . ."

SEX DISCRIMINATION. "Some departments seem to find it easier to employ a Negro or Mexican-American or Oriental woman than a man from these groups. We need to be sure we're not taking the easy way out here."

FOLLOW THROUGH. "We've got to go beyond just issuing policy statements. Top management this weekend has made a start toward a firm commitment. Our challenge is to adopt an open-arms attitude toward change. We've got to make something happen. This may cost money, but if you have true commitment, you will stick your neck out and say we must have the money."

Q & A: Saturday Holidays in '70?

"Editor, The DIGEST:

"I have been going over my new 1970 calendar and find that Memorial Day, May 30, and July 4 come on Saturdays. Does that mean County employees will get the preceding Friday off?"

Alas, no. The County long has followed sections 6700 and 6701 of the Government Code which specify state holidays. This state law provides that if a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be a holiday. It makes no such provision for holidays on Saturday. A kind of fifty-fifty break.

At that it's a better break than most workers in private industry get. County employees in 1970 will have eleven holidays including two election days—June 2 for the state primary and Nov. 3 for the general election. In Los Angeles private in-

dustry, most employees will have nine or fewer holidays.

The holiday situation will change in 1971. Assembly Bill 66, which Governor Reagan recently signed, provides that four holidays will always fall on Monday, to give a three-day weekend. These are Washington's birthday, which will always be the third Monday in February; Memorial day, the last Monday in May; Columbus day, the second Monday in October; and Veterans day, always the fourth Monday in October. Of course, the present fixed-day-of-the-week holidays (Labor Day, Thanksgiving and part of Good Friday) will remain as is.

The new law goes into effect Jan. 1, 1971. It will mean that County employees will get an average, year in and year out, of 11.5 holidays a year instead of the present average of 10.9 holidays.

BOOK REVIEW:

A Mixed Bag — but Should We Shake it?

THE UNITED States has plenty of county governments, more than 3,000 of them, but nobody has written much about what they do, day in and day out.

That, in essence, is the plaint with which UCLA political scientist John Bollens opens his new book *American County Government* (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, \$15).

And what research his fellow academes have done, Bollens says, has been mostly into the forms of county governments, how they look on paper, rather than into their actions.

Since Bollens currently heads a task force of the County Economy and Efficiency committee studying possible changes in the County charter, it is interesting that he quotes, with seeming approval, another writer, Alan Richards, who says that changes in a county's organization may save money "but they may also disrupt social structure, threaten the existence of

groups, and even affect the community's mental health. Changes in forms of government may well be evaluated by criteria other than 'economy and efficiency.' Indeed, from the point of view of the total well-being of a community, a change in governmental form may prove detrimental even in the economic sense."

Bollens adds that:

"County governments are a mixed bag. They show signs of adaptability and inflexibility, of innovativeness and sluggishness, of being the most important local government of the future and of becoming practically lifeless . . . As members of the late twentieth-century system of American government, they are in transition to increased or decreased political vitality."

After these opening ruminations, Bollens devotes the bulk of the book's 440 pages to capsulized reports on scores of books and papers which have discussed county gov-

Rule Issued for Employee Meetings

DIRECTOR OF personnel Gordon Nesvig has sent department heads and employee organizations new ground rules for arranging meetings of the organizations in County facilities.

The new rule (No. 692) was issued after months of consultation with employee representatives and County management.

It provides that registered employee organizations may use County facilities, whenever available, for meetings outside of working hours, if the meeting will not interfere with County operations. The organization must send the affected department head a written request for the space seven days before the meeting, although this requirement may be waived by mutual consent.

The rule specifies that the meeting must be open to the public without admission charge. The organization also must comply with established regulations of the department of real estate management.

Nesvig said this is the first of a series of employee relations rules his office will issue.

ernment in greater or less length. Subject areas include finance, inter-governmental relations, organization, politics, reforms, and services. Los Angeles County's "Lakewood plan" of contract services to cities comes in for several mentions.

County of Los Angeles

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