



DIGEST

Around and About

HEALTH SERVICES director Liston Witherill has begun his promised program of "regionalizing" his department—dividing it into five areas, each largely self-sufficient and offering all the services formerly carried on independently by public health, mental health, and hospitals. (Certain specialized care like that for serious burns or spinal cord injury will still be centralized.) First two regions will be in San Gabriel Valley and along the Pacific coast. Within a year Witherill expects to have the remaining three functioning in San Fernando-Antelope Valleys, the central area, and the southeast county. Witherill said boundaries, still tentative, may be juggled around as experience dictates.

THE BOARD of Supervisors wants department heads to submit monthly reports indicating how many persons they have hired and promoted, their sex and ethnic origin—this as a goal
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ANOTHER BIG MERGER PROPOSED

THE BOARD of Supervisors has ordered serious consideration of a proposed merger of eight County departments into one agency concerned with human social services.

The agency would include two major departments—DPSS and probation—and six smaller ones—adoptions, community services, human relations, senior citizens affairs, military and veterans affairs, and the public guardian. In addition, certain related programs would be transferred to the agency from personnel, urban affairs, and the farm advisor.

The plan, which resembles the merger last September of four departments into the big health services department, was formally presented to the Board of Supervisors (Feb. 8) by the Ad Hoc Committee on Delinquency Prevention and Community Action Planning. The Board had named the committee in June 1971 to recommend ways to eliminate overlaps and reduce costs in the County's delinquency prevention and community action programs. Its eleven members are all chairmen of County advisory committees.

The Board last week approved, in principle, the proposed reorganization and instructed CAO Arthur Will, County counsel John Maharg, and the eleven affected department heads to report within 60 days their reactions to the committee's plan.

The committee urged that the Board appoint an administrator as soon as possible to head the new

agency and to work with the CAO and County counsel in designing its structure.

The committee proposed a central management office and four program divisions:

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT. This would be a merger of the adoptions department with DPSS' child welfare programs, and the delinquency prevention sections of probation, community services, and the farm advisor.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL ACTION. This division would result from uniting the human relations commission, senior citizens affairs, military and veterans affairs, and community services, along with personnel's manpower planning programs, probation's gang programs, and several urban affairs programs.

SERVICES TO ADULT & JUVENILE OFFENDERS. This would
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Negotiations Begin

DIRECTOR of personnel Gordon Nesvig announced this week that negotiations on 1973-74 salaries and working conditions are under way with representatives of nearly 40 units of County employees.

Nesvig said he hopes to have signed agreements (memoranda of understanding) with most of these units in time to submit them to the Board of Supervisors in early May
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Around and About

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to get cracking on the County's affirmative action program. The Board instructed director of personnel Gordon Nesvig (Feb. 6) to work out the reporting procedures.

A BEHEST from auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood: if you get an earned salary advance (that's the paycheck on the 25th of the month, the one without a stub) and the amount is incorrect, don't cash it. Return it, so a correct one can be issued. The auditor-controller's computer can issue only one earned salary advance to an employee per month. (Don't ask why. That gets pretty complicated.) If an employee cashes an incorrect one, he will just have to wait for an adjustment on the 10th of the next month.

WORD ARRIVED from Hawaii of the death of Harry Petrie at his retirement home there Jan. 27. He started with the County in 1927, became secretary-chief examiner of the civil service commission in 1953, retired in 1965. He would have been 69 next month.

A CONTINUING series of open-heart operations among County employees has lowered the County's blood bank account with the Red Cross. Donors may replenish it at the next Civic Center bloodmobile March 14 and 15 at the Hall of Administration. Make an appointment through your department's blood bank coordinator.

JOHN TETTMER, flood control, and Orv Placial, health services, incoming president and vice-president of the County Management Subcouncil, are heading a membership drive among the eligibles—line and staff managers below the rank of chief deputy. For info, call Greta Fridlund, 625-3611, extension 65728.

PEACE OFFICERS ASKED TO CHOOSE

BALLOTS HAVE been mailed to some 4,000 deputy sheriffs and D-A investigators, asking them to decide whether they wish to continue to be represented by the Professional Peace Officers association, or to replace PPOA with the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) or—a third choice—to be represented by neither.

The employee relations commission called the election after receiving a petition from ALADS, accompanied by what the commission found to be the required 30 percent "showing of interest."

Registrar-recorder James Allison's office mailed the ballots last Wednesday (Feb. 14), addressed to the peace officers' homes. Deadline for returning the voted ballots is 5 p.m. Feb. 28. They will be counted March 5.

The peace officers received a 5 percent salary increase Jan. 1 under

a memorandum of understanding PPOA negotiated with the County. Similar increases went to approximately 3,000 fire fighters, public defender investigators, harbor patrolmen, and beach lifeguards, whose agreements with the County tied their pay to peace officers' salaries.

Ballots also were mailed last Wednesday to 150 Supervising Children's Services Workers, asking whether they wish to merge with the 1,000-member Supervisory Social Services Employees unit.

In yet another election, an estimated 1,350 resident physicians and interns in County hospitals will decide whether they wish to be represented by a joint council of the Intern-Resident Alumni Association of County Osteopathic hospital and the Harbor General intern and residents association. The election is expected in early March.

NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN ON SALARIES

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as part of his annual salary recommendations. Last year Nesvig's pay recommendations to the Board included agreements with 23 units representing 41,000 employees.

Nesvig said negotiations have not yet begun with the eight units whose salary agreements expire next next Sept. 1. These units include appraisers, building trades craftsmen, engineers, engineering technicians, and automotive and equipment repairmen.

The director of personnel said research teams from the County, City of Los Angeles, City Housing Authority, and Los Angeles public schools are making their annual joint salary survey, determining pay levels for 61 benchmark jobs among private firms in the Los Angeles area. Complete results of the survey will be published April 9.

In addition, Nesvig said, the

County is conducting more than 100 special surveys, mostly for positions not found in private industry.

Nesvig also announced that a major classification study of 10,000 County nursing positions should be finished by next July 1.

A similar study of 6,000 other health-related positions should be completed by next January.

The third large-scale classification survey, covering firemen, deputy sheriffs, and investigators, will begin July 1 and end a year later, Nesvig said.

He warned, however, that the classification studies are being heavily (about 50 percent) financed by federal funds, that more federal aid is being requested for 1973-74, and that if Washington should shut off such assistance, "we cannot complete these studies in a reasonable period of time."

Exams Scheduled for Top-Level Jobs

A RUSH OF work—at least seven major examinations to choose new County department heads—has descended on the civil service commission.

Resignations, effective in late March, were handed the Board of Supervisors by County clerk William Sharp, registrar-recorder James Allison, parks director Norman Johnson, APCD head Robert Chass, animal control director Manley Linville, and Dr. Gerald Heidbreder, former health officer.

In addition, James Mize sent the Board his resignation as public administrator-public guardian, a post he has held (along with his job as executive officer of the Board) since the dismissal of Baldo Kristovich last year. Mize said his resignation will become effective when the Board accepts it.

The civil service commission set Feb. 27 for an examination to select Sharp's successor as County clerk—an exam limited to present employees of the department on grounds that "in this particular case, circumstances clearly necessitate a promotional examination." Sharp, who is 60, had worked for the County 37 years, 11 of them as County clerk.

An open competitive examination will be held March 5 for the registrar-recorder position. Applications may be filed until next Tuesday (Feb. 20). Allison, 55, has 22 years of County service.

Another open competitive exam will be given in March for the job of data processing director, from which Gordon Milliman resigned last October. Tom Kidwell, chief deputy treasurer-tax collector, has been acting DP director since then. Filings for the position close Feb. 26.

The commission has not yet
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CAO Peers into Fiscal Future

WHILE HIS office begins its annual wrestling match with the preliminary County budget, CAO Arthur Will warned the Board of Supervisors that "major shifts in state and national policy for programs and financing of local services [makes] projections of the County's fiscal position more difficult this year than in any year in recent memory."

In a message to the Board last Tuesday (Feb. 13), Will cited influences that will both help and hamper County finances in 1973-74.

Savings should result, he said, from the federal takeover of adult welfare programs next January; from the favorable economic and employment outlook for 1973-74; and from the slowdown in L.A. county's population growth.

Will said that HR 1, the federal measure transferring aid for the aged, blind, and disabled to Uncle Sam, will eliminate up to 3,000 positions in DPSS, saving an estimated \$4.5 million in administrative costs next year. However, Will added, HR 1 gives the federal and state governments more controls over Medicare and Medi-Cal—two programs that provide much revenue for County hospitals. A state or federal squeeze on this revenue would have direct effect on hospital budgets.

Will said that another new law, state tax reform SB 90, "places flat dollar tax rate limits for the first time upon the County property tax levy for general purposes." SB 90 requires the Board of Supervisors to select as its maximum tax rate either its 1971-72 rate (\$4.43 per

\$100 of assessed value) or its 1972-73 rate (\$4.03 per \$100) as the County's maximum rate.

The selected rate may be increased only (1) if the cost of living and county population grow faster than the county's assessed valuation, (2) to pay additional costs mandated by the federal government or the courts, (3) during an emergency or a severe threat to essential services, or (4) by a vote of the people.

Will's message to the Board also stated:

(POPULATION) "With local population stabilizing and beginning to decline, County programs tied solely to this gross indicator of workload might be curtailed . . . I would caution, however, against projections which indicate that County spending should level off or decline automatically in the same manner as population."

(NIXON BUDGET) "The President's budget for 1974 contains many shifts and reductions in programs directly supporting County programs [including] manpower, housing, and many other programs we now operate on grant funds."

(PRIORITIES) "Construction of new programs in areas such as juvenile crime, consumer protection, air pollution, health services and others will require a significant rearrangement of priorities, if we are to meet these needs in the face of adverse financial constraints. We are designing into our budget recommendations a system by which program priorities may be presented to the Board and alternatives considered."

Maternity Leave Now Mandatory

THE CIVIL service commission has revised its rules affecting maternity leaves, probationary periods, and other employee concerns. The 16 changes adopted by the commission Jan. 29 went into effect immediately.

Rule 17.04 now makes it mandatory that a permanent employee, if she requests it, shall be granted a maternity leave of absence "for the time the employee is temporarily disabled as specified in a written certification from competent medical authority."

The commission, in obedience to County charter amendments passed at last November's election, ruled that examinations for department heads and chief deputies "shall be open competitive unless the civil service commission finds in any particular case circumstances clearly necessitate a promotional examination." (Rule 8.05)

Responding to another charter amendment, the commission in-

TOP-LEVEL JOBS

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scheduled examinations to choose replacements for Johnson, Chass, and Linville.

Johnson, 60, with 38 years in County service, has been parks-recreation director since 1955.

Chass, 54, has been with APCD since its beginning in 1947. He became control officer two years ago.

Linville, 57, is another veteran County employee with 35 years on the books.

Dr. Heidbreder, 65, was named health officer in 1966. When his department was merged into the new department of health services last September, Dr. Heidbreder became deputy director for community health services. His successor will be named by Liston Witherill, director of health services.

serted into rule 13.02: "In those classes where the commission finds that an extended period of probation is required to determine the fitness of appointees, it may provide for a period of probation not to exceed 12 months . . . after a public hearing on the classes in question."

(The Board of Supervisors subsequently, on Feb. 6, voted to request the commission to set a 12 month probationary period for all newly appointed department heads.)

The commission, in a move designed to encourage management to give a second chance to an employee who has been reduced in grade, adopted rule 13.01 allowing departments to require the restored employee to serve a probationary period before his reappointment becomes permanent.

A companion rule (13.04) permits departments, when moving a temporary or recurrent employee into a permanent position, to credit the employee with time already served toward his probationary period, thus shortening or in some cases eliminating probation.

Other revisions adopted:

— A time limit of six months was set on the "improvement needed" rating. After that the rating must be changed to either "competent" or "unsatisfactory." (Rule 21.04)

— An employee who believes his superiors are discriminating against him in work assignments must seek relief first through the department's grievance procedure, later may take his appeal to the civil service commission. (Rule 16.05) The commission said it believes many complaints will be solved at the grievance level.

— The commission may grant two or more employees the right to bring appeals before the commission as a class action. (Rule 5.16)

MERGER

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be the existing probation department minus its gang and delinquency prevention activities.

CASEWORK & FINANCIAL SERVICES. This division would include DPSS (minus its child welfare work) and the public guardian department. The committee noted that "a sizeable number of persons receiving public guardian services are also DPSS clients."

Later, after the agency is well established, the committee recommended that the County park department's recreation programs be absorbed into the agency. The committee said the sheriff and district attorney operations should remain separate from the new organization.

Other committee proposals:

— The agency should offer its services through a network of community centers, much as the health services department plans to set up regional centers throughout the county

— The center staffs should include local residents, even though this may require changing civil service procedures

— All staffers would receive training to sensitize them to the cultural differences, social, educational, and language problems of their clients

— The centers must alter traditional County working hours so that they are open seven days a week and during late evening hours.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

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