

THE

NEWSLETTER

GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY

Volume 16, No. 2

10064 Sunn Circle, Fountain Valley CA 92708

May, 2002

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Director - Bob Fauteux - (714) 998-2868
Director - Bob Geiss - (949) 472-9763

JOIN US FOR LUNCH
Thursday, June 6
at Phoenix Club
1340 So Sanderson Ave, Anaheim

William Habermehl
O.C Superintendent of Schools



JUNE SPEAKER WILLIAM HABERMEHL

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin: Those who give up a little freedom in exchange for a little security deserve neither.

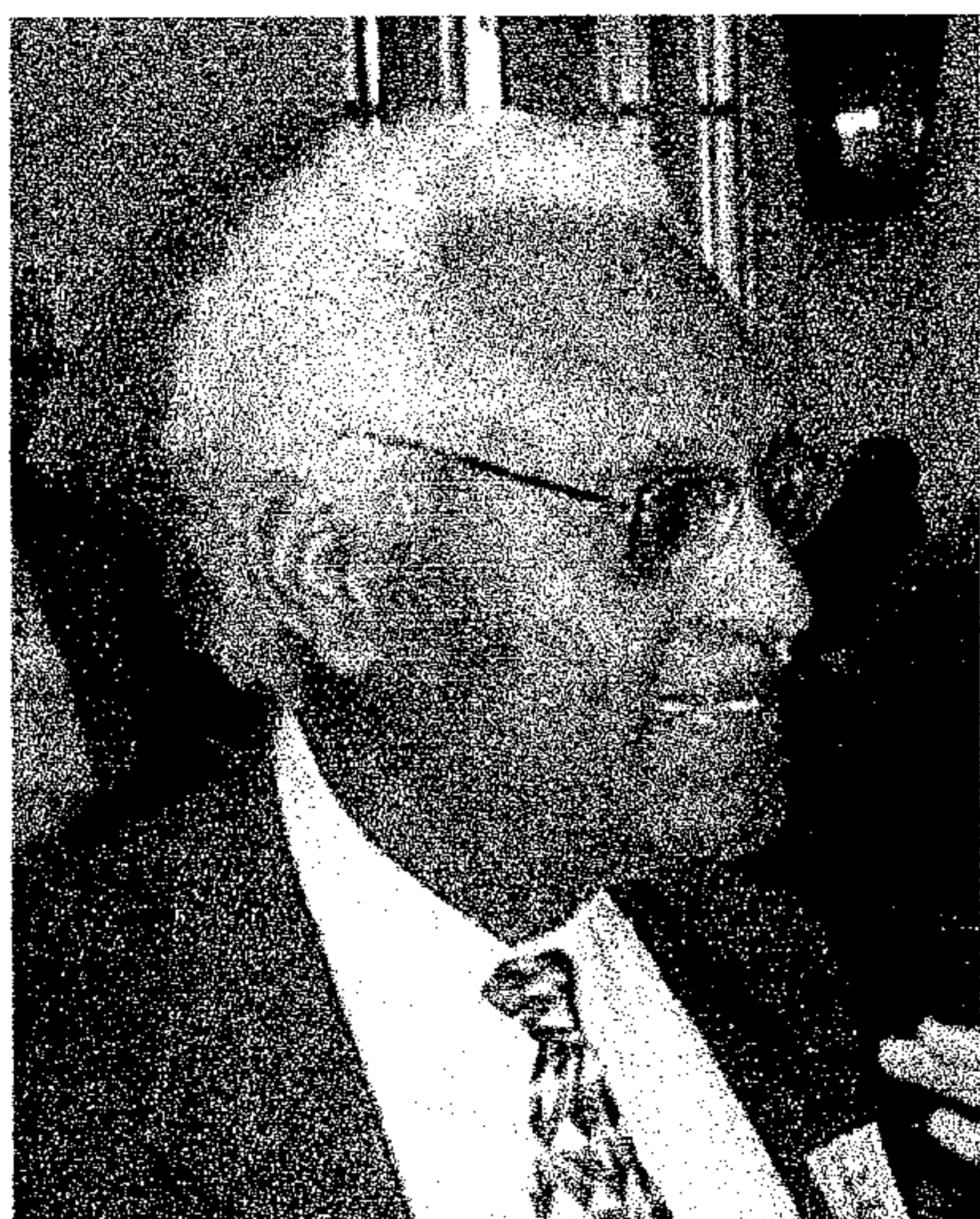
September eleventh is all too vivid to most of us, and is still in our minds. However, as current and former grand jurors, let us take a step back and observe what is happening now. It seems to me that there is definite but subtle erosion of our freedoms taking place in the name of security. Grand juries are very limited in their scope to examine government agencies within the county. I think we should

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Mr. William Habermehl, Superintendent of Schools for the Orange County Department of Education will be the Speaker at our June meeting.

Mr. Habermehl has worked in the education field for over thirty-four years with experience in teaching, coaching, site and district administration. He supervises over 2,900 full and part-time employees in the Orange County Department of Education who work with the local Orange County school districts.

Mr. Habermehl and his wife, Holly, have been Orange County residents for 37 years. They have three grown sons - all educated in Orange County public schools, and three grandchildren.



MARCH LUNCHEON SPEAKER
Webster Guillory, O. C. Assessor

Members attending the March 7 meeting were treated to a grand tour of the County Assessor's office by its current occupant, Webster Guillory. Guillory used slides to give a thorough rundown on property values. There are 810,722 parcels of property on the Orange County tax rolls. That's a 74% increase over the last 26 years. And the assessed value of those parcels has increased by more than 780% in the same period to \$245.1 billion. Nearly 63% of those parcels are single family dwellings worth, in aggregate, \$152 billion. Average assessed values range from \$160,000 in Stanton to more than \$630,000 in Newport Beach.

Guillory's statistics show that in December last year the median home price in Orange County was \$332,000. Only five California counties have higher home prices and they are all in the Bay Area, with Marin County's median at \$542,500.

Our speaker discussed the subject of "equal protection" in a case where adjacent or similar parcels have different assessed values because the "base year" of one property puts it at a lower starting point than the other and real estate values have risen faster than Prop. 13 limits. So far, the courts have upheld the apparent inequity in these cases, but the controversy goes on. The "stay-putters," as he calls those who have remained in place and kept an early year as a basis for their assessed home valuation, have benefitted greatly from Prop. 13.



President's Message
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be aware of the encroachment of the State and Federal laws and orders being enacted which limit how our local County, State and Federal agencies act. I raise the issue as to whether grand juries in their reports should examine the affects of legislation on the ability of local agencies to act without impinging upon our liberties. Also brought to light in the same vein is legislation such as the Kelso Proposal and others, which would modify and restrict the freedom of grand juries to report and act. Grand juries do not exist in all states. But where they do, they should remain independent and act as ombudsmen for the citizen. The individual's voice can less be heard today than ever before. Our privacy and freedoms are being usurped by big government. Isn't it partly due to the failure of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and United States Customs to secure our borders that may have allowed this tragedy to occur in the first place? Now we have a Homeland Security bureaucracy rising from the ashes to do who knows what to our freedoms. Grand jurors – be vigilant – when examining our local agencies. Don't forget to look at the big picture to evaluate how State and Federal legislation is affecting the finances, freedom and ability of the local agencies to act in our behalf for our mutual betterment.

-Royal Lord, president

NOTES & MISCELLANEOUS

TREASURERS REPORT

As of May 1, 2002
Checking account balance:
\$5,782.61
Custom Time Deposit:
\$3,289.81
Total Reserves:
\$9,072.42
Joe Quiros, Treasurer

IN MEMORIAM

George Sanchez
1992/93 Grand Jury

Robert Palmer
1986/87 Grand Jury

FREE BUSINESS CARDS

Bob Geiss has located an e-business that will print 250 professional looking business cards for free.

Log on to www.Vistaprint.com and order free cards for yourself or family.

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

We are still looking for good volunteers to work as poll workers or election day coordinators (they serve as trouble shooters for precincts on election day).

You can contact Rose Moreno for more information and for whom to contact.

CA GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION

The Annual Conference transcript will be available for sale soon. This is a good way to be informed about items that were presented at the annual conference.

Rose Moreno arranged for a court reporter to record the transcript this year and she has produced a 94 page document. You may contact Rose for purchase information.

The next state conference will be in Marin County sometime in October, 2002.



GJAOC ELECTIONS

Each year six members are elected as two-year terms on the twelve member Board of Directors. Members may be re-elected to serve a total of six consecutive years. This year the following members are eligible for re-election:

Cheryl Brothers
Royal Lord
Jim Nolan
Joe Quiros

John Baird and Bill Guthrie are completing their six year terms and they must be replaced.

Nominations to the Board may be made by mail until August 15th or from the floor at the September meeting. Written consent of the nominee is required.

The Nominating committee Chair is Jim Nolan. If you have any questions, please call him at 714-964-7024, or write to 10348 Bunting Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 or e-mail to jfn3wbthrs@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The final notice is in the mail for 2002 membership dues.

This is the last Newsletter we are able to send to former Grand Jurors whose dues are in arrears. This does not preclude our mailings to the Board of Supervisors, County Department Heads, Superior Court Judges, Federal and State Legislators and other interested organizations and individuals.

In addition to the Newsletter, members receive notice of our quarterly General meeting and luncheon, are included in our annual membership book and receive any special notices and publications throughout the year.

It should be noted that the Board of Directors has again voted to keep the cost of the luncheons at \$15.00. The Association pays the additional \$3.00 charged by the Phoenix Club. This means that attendance at our luncheons can effectively reduce your membership dues to \$3.00 per year.

A word to the wise should be sufficient. Good food, good company and an interesting speaker. Guests are welcome, but walk-ins are discouraged. See the enclosed flyer to respond with reservations and menu selections. We expect to see many more of you at our June General meeting.

If you can't be big, don't belittle

MEASURE M

Oversight Committee members will be selected from OC districts 3, 4 and 5 this year. Selection Committee Chair Joe Quiros heads up the efforts of the Selection Committee as they read applications, interview candidates and put forth recommended candidates to OCTA for final selection. May 5th was the deadline to apply. Selections will be made soon.

Hats off to Joe Quiros and his team: Carol Morales, Bob Fauteux, Jim Nolan and Hiro Kranz who have put in many volunteer hours on this selection process.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Bob Fauteux has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the GJAOC, effective May 2nd. He was a member of the 1994/95 Grand Jury and has been active in the Association since his jury was discharged. Most recently he performed the annual examination of the Association finances. He also worked with the Measure M Oversight Committee selection panel. Bob will fulfill the remaining year and a half term of Keith Blunt whose resignation was accepted at the April Board meeting. Keith cited increased personal obligations which precluded his continued participation as a Board member.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Keith for his years of dedication to the GJAOC.

MEMBERSHIP

There are currently 179 members in the Grand Jury Association Orange County (GJAOC). In July, we will welcome 19 retiring panel members to our ranks for a complimentary 6 month membership. Let's welcome them at the June luncheon.

Drawing for 2002-03 panel members will be in C1 at the Central Court house on Wednesday, May 15 at noon. Public is welcome. Be the first to congratulate the incoming Grand Jurors.

The new foreperson will be selected on May 23 and announced on June 10. Swearing in will take place on July 1, 2002, at 10:00 AM, Central Courthouse, C-1.

The new panel members will be given an orientation beginning June 10 through June 21 by the 2001-2002 Grand Jury members.

KELSO REPORT

CONTINUES ... but barely.

Bob Geiss and other grand jury watch dogs attended a reform workshop in Sacramento in February sponsored by Senator Dick Ackerman. Professor Kelso's proposals were reviewed and the professor will take his comments back for revision and will bring it forward again sometime in the future for consideration.

Our comments and opposition to some suggested changes seems to have had some impact for now. As the situation develops, we will keep you informed. Bob is doing a great job on our behalf to protect the effectiveness of California grand juries.