



THE NEWSLETTER

GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY

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YOUR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

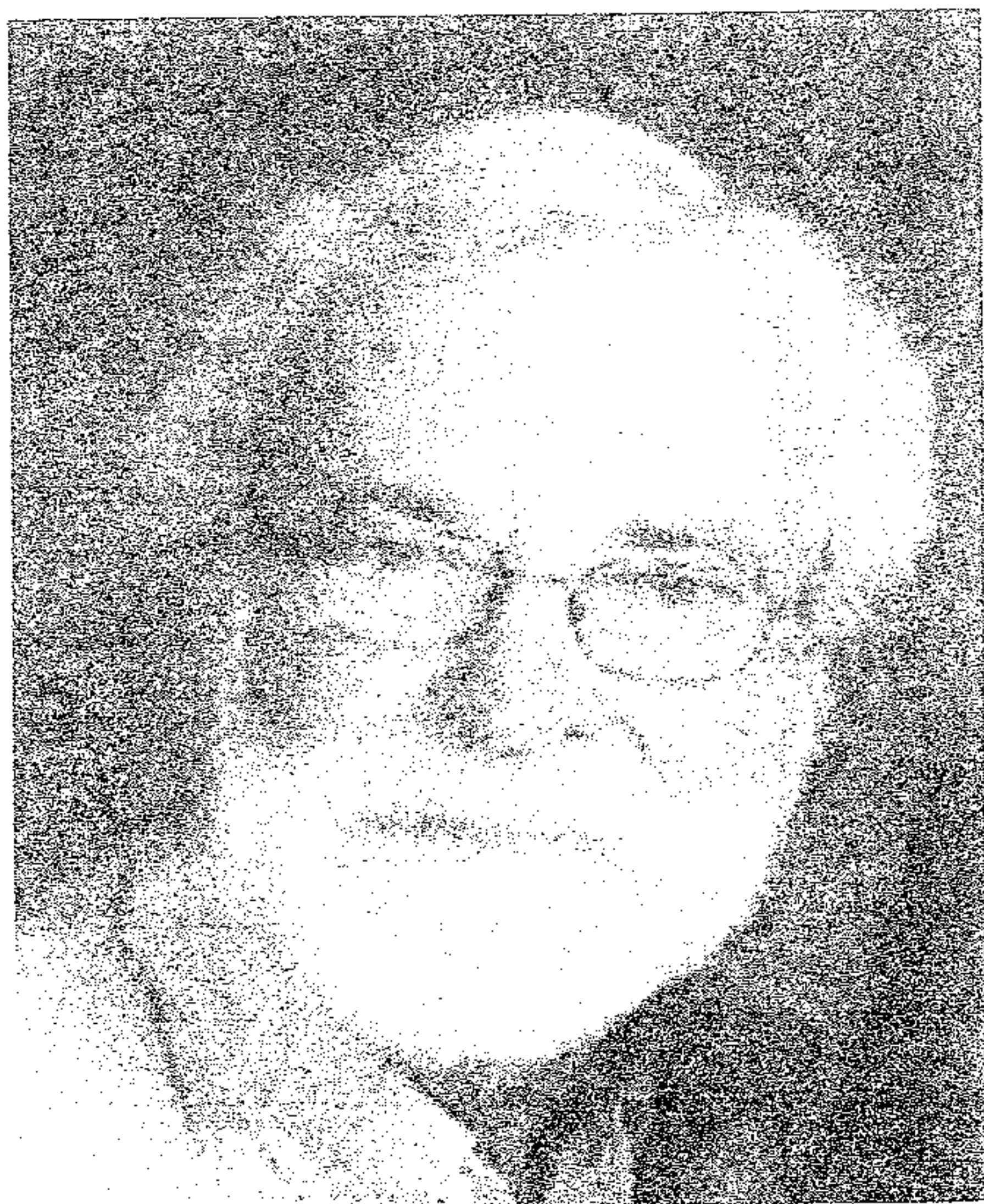
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JOIN US FOR LUNCH
Thursday March 4
at Meridian Sports Club
1535 Deerpark, Fullerton

Jerry Amante
Mayor of Tustin

"Fiscal Crisis in City Hall"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

From the President's Keyboard

With some apprehension and a profound sense of humility, I look forward to a challenging year as the incoming President of the Grand Jurors Association of Orange County. I am comforted by the fact that a talented and experienced Board of Directors will freely (and perhaps gleefully) guide me along the

correct path as I assume my new role in the organization. I am also blessed that Carlos Olvera will be standing close by when I need help.

I am delighted to report that 225 Orange County residents submitted applications to be considered for the 2010/2011 Grand Jury. Early reports had indicated that turnout was relatively low, compared to other years. Because recruitment for Grand Jury pools is one of our primary responsibilities, I had been planning to make recruitment a major focus for the coming year, based on the early numbers. However, with the final tally in, it appears that recruitment efforts were successful. We will continue to work closely with the Superior Court to ensure a successful recruitment cycle for the coming year but I am heartened by the numbers that have been reported.

In thinking about things that may need more attention, I recall a recent, off-hand comment made by a senior Orange County official who characterized the Grand Jurors Association as a "Lunch Bunch". When I expressed my chagrin, he assured me that his remark was tongue-in-cheek and he, in fact, had the utmost respect for those who sacrifice a year of

(continued on p.2)

President's Message
(contd. from p.1)

their lives to public service. While his explanation was comforting, it didn't quite assuage my concern...Has our Association been resting on the collective laurels of its members and overlooking the lofty goals of our founders?

More than 20 years ago, a county that has a national reputation for its conservative politics surprisingly passed an initiative to impose a 1/2 cent sales tax to address local transportation issues. Measure "M" was passed, in no small measure, because it included an unbiased, independent Citizens Oversight Committee randomly drawn from a pool of candidates selected by the (then?) well-respected Grand Jurors Association. Without our participation, Measure "M" would likely have been defeated at the polls. Instead, it passed easily and has proven to be a highly successful program. In 2006, residents extended the program for another 30 years by a 69% majority vote.

A question nags me. Would voters have been so willing to continue the program if they thought a "Lunch Bunch" was responsible for overseeing the selection of candidates for the Oversight Committee? It seems to me that we need to revisit our Articles of Incorporation and see if we are fulfilling our goals. Specifically, "...to consider and make recommendations on matters of public interest in Orange County and to promote the education of the public and office holders in the func-

tion and purposes of the grand jury system..."

In that spirit, I encourage the membership to think about meaningful ways we can serve the public interests. Our members are the epitome of voluntary public service and have much to offer after serving a year or more conducting in-depth reviews of public agencies. I welcome all ideas, large and small, on ways to educate the public about Grand Jury service. More importantly, I would like to hear your thoughts on how we might be more helpful in local and county affairs. Feel free to share your thoughts or ideas by calling 714-328-3255 or *emailing morelandjoe@hotmail.com*.

**MARCH LUNCHEON
SPEAKER**

Jerry Amante, Mayor of Tustin

Our March meeting speaker will review the fiscal challenges facing local cities because of the ongoing economic downturn and the decline of tax and other revenues. Tustin Mayor Jerry Amante will bring City Manager Bill Huston with him to present how their city is coping with the current economic conditions.

From providing essential services to discretionary social programs, all the county cities and the county and other government bodies are struggling to stay afloat with substantial shortfalls in funding.



They will address how long and how deep current conditions may go. Also the current political outlook including state versus local government problems will be addressed. Relation with public employee unions and coping with the myriad of regulations coming from state boards and commissions will be reviewed.

Amante is currently the President of the Executive Steering Committee, Orange County Chapter of the League of California Cities. The League lobbies for the cities in Sacramento. It has a broad legislative platform for the issues critical to local city governing.

League interaction with state government spans the city positions about Administrative Services, Community Services, Employee Relations, Environmental Quality, Housing, Community and Economic Development, LAFCO Policies, Public Safety, Revenue and Taxation and Transportation and Public Works.

-Bob Fauteux

NOTES & MISCELLANY

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Directions to the Meridian Sports Club (for the March luncheon): Exit 57 Freeway on Yorba Linda Blvd. Drive east on Yorba Linda Blvd to the second signal, which is N. Placentia Ave. Turn right on N. Placentia Ave. Drive one block and turn right on Garnet, which dead ends on Deerpark Dr. Turn left on Deerpark Dr. to the Meridian Club, which will be on your right.

IMPORTANT!

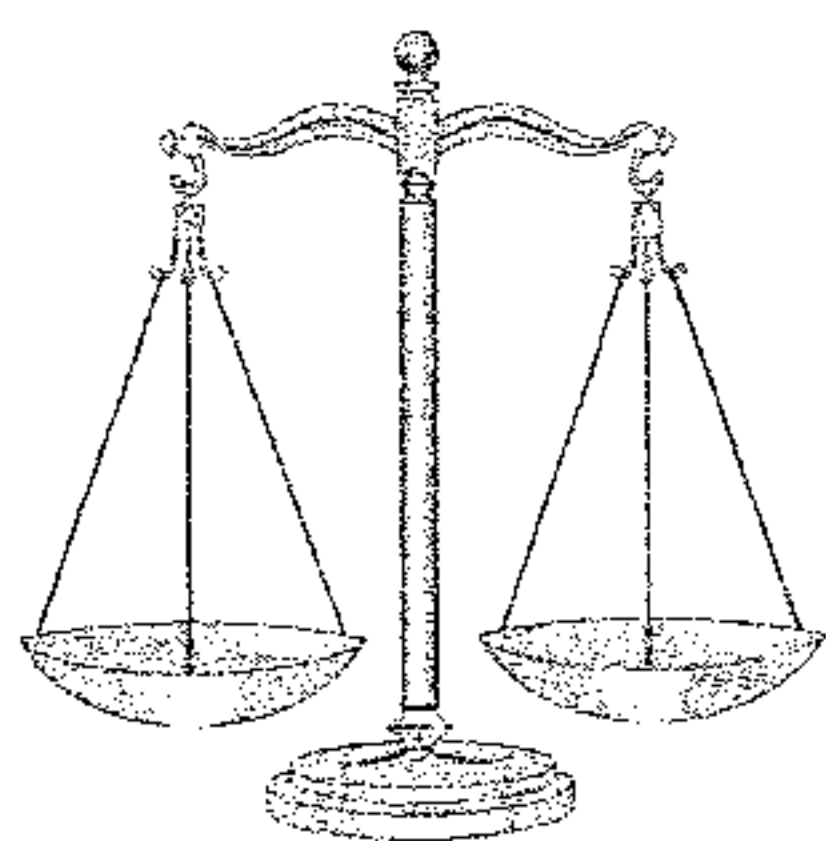
Park your car in the garage on the second level, and enter the club on the second level.

WATER DISTRICT TOUR

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) has extended an invitation to the Grand Jurors Association for a tour of the Ground Water Replenishment (GWR) System.

In the past two years, the OCWD has produced 34 billion gallons of the highest quality drinking water. This joint project between OCWD and Orange County Sanitation District has garnered numerous awards and has been featured in many national and international broadcasts and publications.

We have been invited to schedule a tour of this amazing facility. If you would be interested in a first-hand look at visionary project and hear about future expansion of the project, the GJAOC will be happy to make arrangements. Please call or email our board member, Bob Fauteux and let him know. If enough people respond, Bob will set something up. rhfauteux@yahoo.com or 714-998-1868.



IN MEMORIAM

**Carol Jules Gandy
1998-99 Panel**

TAXPAYERS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Taxpayers Oversight Committee (TOC) is an independent committee formed after the passage of Measure M in 1990. The committee upholds the integrity of the measure by monitoring the use of Measure M funds and ensuring that all revenue collected from Measure M is spent on voter-approved transportation projects.

Recruitment

Recruitment for openings in the First, Third, Fourth and Fifth Supervisorial Districts will begin April 2, 2010, at which time applications will be available on the OCTA web site at www.octa.net/toc

-Charlotte Fox

A LOOK AT SUPERIOR COURT TODAY

by Frank Mickadeit

O.C. Register Jan 18, 2010

I stepped off the elevator on the seventh floor of the county courthouse last week and rather than being greeted by jurors milling around on a break or an empty hallway, which are typical, before me was a deputy sheriff sitting behind a counter that didn't exist a few weeks ago.

State budget realities have hit the Superior Court in perhaps the most visible way yet. Bailiffs are being removed from the courtrooms of judges who handle civil cases, ending a tradition that goes back as long as anyone can remember. Instead, a single deputy will be stationed in the hall, covering security for all five courtrooms on that floor. The seventh-floor setup is a pilot program, but the intent to eventually remove bailiffs from the 30 civil courtrooms countywide, trimming about \$1 million from a \$41 million annual security contract the state has with the sheriff.

Obviously, everything's a trade-off. The question is: are the courts sacrificing safety to an unreasonable degree to save money? Government spokesmen – John McDonald of the Sheriff's Department and Mike Hyams of the Superior Court – say no. Unlike the old days, there are now weapons-

screening stations at every courthouse entrance. Civil trials are generally docile affairs. Similar programs work in L.A. and San Diego.

But Wayne Quint, president of the deputies' union, calls the change "irresponsible ... outrageous. They are going to have a tragedy, and when they get sued, there goes your savings."

At one point, O.C. courthouses had 360 deputies. That's now down to 305, according to Lt. Mike Hiller. But the weapons-screening stations are efficient and effective, he says. "We recover literally hundreds of items a month." Rarely is a firearm found, he says, but lots of pepper spray, brass knuckles, knives disguised as belt buckles and collapsible batons. I don't know whether that makes me feel better or worse.

GOOD GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Three proposed Constitution Amendment ballot measures carrying exceptionally good government messages have signature petitions now in circulation.

- The Public Employee Paycheck Protection Act- makes illegal the use of public employee wage deductions for political activities. Sponsored by the Citizens Power Campaign. Web site: www.unplugthepoliticalmachine.org. (Signature deadline: 5/3/10).

- The Local Taxpayers Public Safety and Transportation Act-

prohibits the state from taking funds used for local government projects, transportation or other services. Sponsored by the Californian to Protect Local Taxpayers and Vital Services committee. Web site: www.savelocalservices.com. (Signature deadline: 5/17/10).

- The Citizen Legislature Act- reduces legislative sessions and pay by at least 50 percent (part time legislature). Sponsored by the Citizens for California Reform. Web site: www.reformcal.com. (Signature deadline: 3/29/10).

Signatures from 694,354 registered voters are required to qualify the proposals as Measures for the November 9, 2010 Election.

- Bob Fauteux

ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS

The CA Grand Jurors Assoc. publishes the Grand Jury Achievement Report that documents reports that have resulted in a positive change in local government. This effort provides state-wide results with solid evidence.

We are looking for is your help. Guidelines and forms for submission are available on the CA website www.cgja.org Grand Jury Achievement tab.

Contact our Pres. Joe Moreland joenkay@dslextreme.com for more information or to submit your report. The current report is available from John Sitton, sitton_john@yahoo.com for \$10.00.