



THE

NEWSLETTER

GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY

Volume 14, No. 2

10064 Sunn Circle, Fountain Valley CA 92708

May, 2000

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JOIN US FOR LUNCH

Thursday, June 1
at Phoenix Club

1340 So Sanderson Ave, Anaheim

Speaker:

The Honorable

Kathleen O'Leary

Fourth Appellate District Judge

"Mediation Solution"



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the help of Mike Harris and Jodie Harrod, as well as other Board members, we should have a very successful year 2000. We have been made aware of several different volunteer opportunities in County operations. As examples, there is a need for mediators to work with the Superior Courts system. This function relieves the Courts of many suits which can often be settled by agreement. The Sheriff is also looking for individuals to serve on the Oral Interview Board for potential Deputy Officers. One concern is the possibility that Baugh will introduce his

bill to open up Grand Jury hearings to lawyers acting on behalf of a defendant. This was vetoed last year by Governor Gray Davis. In order for the Association to operate in the best interests of the members, we need to hear from you. I can be reached by telephone at (714) 527-7665 or mail at 3239 W. Ravenswood Drive, Anaheim, 92804. Let us all work together to maintain the example that past officers have set.

-John Baird, president

GENERAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON

On June 1st we will have our midyear general meeting at the Phoenix Club at 11:45AM, 1340 S. Sanderson Avenue in Anaheim.

The Honorable Kathleen O'Leary, who has recently been confirmed as a Justice of the California Court of Appeals, Fourth Appellate District, will be our featured speaker. The sitting Grand Jury has been invited to attend as guests of the Association in honor of their imminent retirement from the jury and in-

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JAN MITTERMEIER- MARCH SPEAKER

At the March 2 luncheon meeting of the GJAOC our speaker was Jan Mittermeier, County Executive Officer. Her talk was focused on the aftermath of the Orange County bankruptcy which occurred only five years ago. Since then, the county has risen from "the laughing stock of the world" to one of the best managed governments in the country. At the time of the bankruptcy, Orange County's bond rating fell to a "D". It is now "AA3", the second highest rating in California (Contra Costa is first.)

Ms Mittermeier pointed out the main reasons for the turn-around:

- Discipline in planning. County departments must make five-year plans and measure their performance against targets they have set.
- Accountability. All levels of employees from managers to clerks are made aware of what is expected of them and how well they are measuring up.
- Incentives. Employees can make

faster progress as they excel in their jobs.

There remains some mopping up of the aftereffects of the bankruptcy which require continued belt-tightening but, Ms Mittermeier contends, if there is a bright side to the bankruptcy cataclysm it lies in the overhaul of the county to more business-like methods and management philosophy.

Questions from the audience were mainly about the hot-button issue of the proposed El Toro airport. Ms Mittermeier makes no bones of her opinion that a new airport is essential to the economic well-being of Orange County and that El Toro is the least intrusive, lowest cost, most practicable way to achieve it. Some of our members agreed with her, some did not. Hardly anybody was neutral on the issue.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Carol Morales has been appointed Chair of the nominating committee. Members for this committee will be appointed by the President and the Committee Chairperson. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Nominating Committee or in serving a two-year term as a member of the 2000-2001 GJAOC Board of Directors, please call Carol Morales at (714) 283-2755.

Lunch - cont'd from p.1

duction into our GJAOC membership.

If fine food, a great speaker, a chance to meet all the retiring jurors and reunion with your own jury are not enough of an incentive to have you join us, how about a bargain? Lunch will only cost you \$15.00 even though the Phoenix Club has had to increase our lunch price to \$16.25. The Association is subventing the extra dollar and twenty-five cents so we save almost 10%. That's the icing on the cake.

Please call Jodie or Charlotte to make your reservations for this grand occasion.

STUPID QUESTIONS

Each year, visitor's bureaus from around the nation report on the strangest questions they've been asked. Among them:

- "I'll be in San Diego Dec. 1. What time will the whales be swimming by?"
 - "How long does it take to drive from California to Hawaii?"
 - "Have we made peace with the indians?" (Asked in Arizona)
 - "Do you have a dance in Salt Lake City that back East we call the ballet?"
 - "Which beach is closest to the water?" (Asked in Florida)
- And two from Alaska:
- "When do they turn on the Northern Lights?"
 - "And what is the official language of Alaska?"

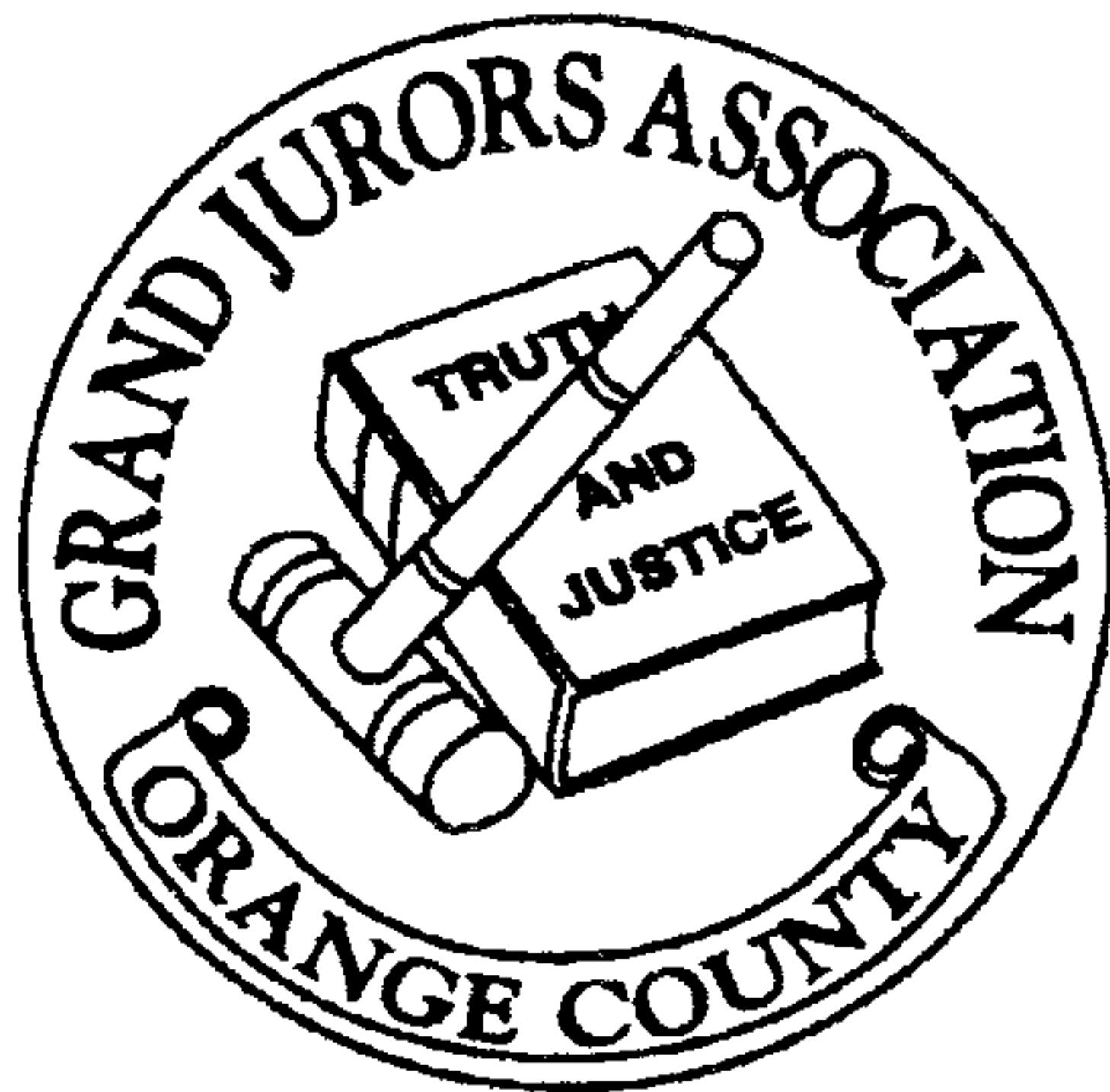
NOTES MISCELLANEOUS

LEGISLATIVE BILLS

Your Legislative Committee has been keeping track of current bills that may affect California Grand Juries.

In spite of the stated opinion of our California Attorney General, Dan Lundgren, that Grand Jurors are protected from libel suits as a result of their participation on the jury, many people are still very concerned. In response to that concern, a bill is now in process that will put into law a confirmation of Lundgren's "opinion". To date there has been no renewal of interest in Representative Scott Baugh's legislation allowing lawyers inside the Grand Jury room during hearings.

We'll keep listening, watching and keeping you informed.



TRACKING & IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE - TIC

Bob Geiss, Chairman of the Tracking & Implementation Committee - TIC is busy reading responses from last years final report. His partner is sitting grand juror, Bruce Johnson who has taken charge of soliciting all responses. Sitting panels for the last few years have done a remarkable job in gathering responses. The "cracks" have narrowed and the few remaining gaps are being filled as never before. Geiss and Mike Harris are re-writing the TIC charter based on the sitting panels new activism.

In August, Bob will have completed his review and will be actively looking for help with our TIC report.

TREASURERS REPORT

As of May 1, 2000
Checking account balance:
\$9,061.07
Custom Time Deposit:
\$3,000.41
Total Reserves:
\$12,061.48

Elsie Carruthers, Treasurer

IN MEMORIAM

Nat Lamm
1998-99 Grand Jury
Died December 1998

Jim Park
1987-88 Grand Jury
1998-99 Grand Jury
Died Nov. 28, 1999

Edna M. Sage
1993-94 Grand Jury
Died February 28, 2000

Elsie Kroesche
1966 Grand Jury
Died March 3, 2000

William "Bill" Puffer
1978-79 Grand Jury
Died March 29, 2000

Ellen A. Wilcox
Foreman 1983-84 Grand Jury
Died April 2, 2000

AUDIT

Thanks are in order for Robert Fauteux and Viola Sadler for their prescribed audit of the GJAO. No irregularities were found.

GRAND JURY SYSTEM

The Grand Jury system in California and particularly in Orange County has been criticized for not representing a cross section of the county population.

Orange County Jury Services, with the support of the GJAOC and former grand jurors, has done everything possible to attract a greater number of minority and/or female and/or young volunteers. The results to date have delivered a "retired, white, male jury". This past year there were less than 170 applications. Our membership chairman Sheldon Singer, in concert with the sitting Grand Jury is working through the county process to have the Board of Supervisors approve two items:

- 6 days of pay plus mileage for incoming members during orientation.
- Original proposal was to raise members per diem pay from \$25.00 to \$50.00.

It is hoped that a raise would entice a better cross-section of our community to jury service. Beginning in July 2001, the modified approach will be to propose a 3-year trial period during which the hope would be to show a measurable difference in the number and diversity of applicants. Some feel the monetary increase could be the tool to encourage people in the community who cannot afford to lose a regular income or subsidy. Singer expects this item to be placed on the Board agenda by the CEO some time in June, 2000.

WANTED! TRAINED MEDIATORS!

Tactful? Persuasive? Loaded with people skills? Would you like to use those skills as a volunteer mediator with the Orange County Superior Court system? With the success of its first year at West Court, the small claims mediation program has been expanded to Harbor Court and to North Court. The expansion has resulted in the need for more dedicated and committed volunteer mediators.

The only drawback is the cost of training. However the cost can be reduced by volunteer hours with any of the five agencies involved. The five agencies and contact individuals are:

Community Service Programs - Rosanna Bertheola (949) 851-3168

Fair Housing Council of Orange County - Erika Jimenez
(714) 569-0825, Extension 203

Institute for Conflict Management - Scott Mather (714) 288-5600

Human Relations Commission - Alfonso Clarke (714) 567-7470

The Mediation Center - Kate Hoffman (949) 574-5990

Trained mediators through the above agencies provide services to the small claims courts, to schools, in civil cases, and in misdemeanor cases (the latter with The Mediation Center and the Institute for Conflict Management).

For those interested in the courts and their operations, mediation is a great way to keep abreast of what is happening and to provide some valuable services. For information on training or to arrange for observing mediation sessions call any of the above listed agencies. Member Rose Moreno has been involved with the program since November and would be happy to discuss the program with interested members.