



THE NEWSLETTER

GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY

Volume 22, No. 1

10064 Sunn Circle, Fountain Valley CA 92708

February, 2008

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JOIN US FOR LUNCH
Thursday, March 6
at Phoenix Club
1340 S. Sanderson Ave Anaheim
Speaker -

Chip Prather
Chief, Orange County
Fire Authority

Anatomy of a Holocaust

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We ended the year 2007 with the election of a new board of directors at our Christmas Luncheon. We each enjoy serving you, the membership, and if there is anything that our attention should be turned to, please do not hesitate to let us know. As always, we enjoyed Federal Judge David O. Carter at this luncheon who swears in the new board and gives us an update on the federal system. Several of us also attended the Judge's pancake breakfast at the Federal Court House where we got a tour of the Judge's chambers and court room. Nice digs!

If you have a message to share with the membership, please submit it to our newsletter committee for review for possible inclusion in the newsletter.

The prospective Grand Jury Orientation for the 2008/2009 panel was held the end of January. The 150 citizens who were in attendance received a peek into what the Grand Jury does. I recognized several who were reapplying for another term. Your president was there to extol the virtues of life after

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MARCH LUNCHEON SPEAKER



In October 2007, a series of wildfires broke out in Southern California. At least 1,500 homes were destroyed and over 500,000 acres of land burned from Santa Barbara County to the U.S.-Mexico border. Nine people died as a direct result of the fires 85 others were injured, including at least 61 firefighters.

On October 21, in the foothills north of Irvine and east of the city of Orange a fire began in Santiago Canyon. It quickly spread to Modjeska, Live Oak, and Trabuco canyons. Fifteen homes and nine out-

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

the Grand Jury and how one keeps in touch with Orange County through membership and our quarterly luncheons.

And speaking of luncheons, our March luncheon is up soon as announced within this newsletter. Get your reservations in early and join us in another informative presentation of Orange County happenings. The sitting grand jury has issued their first report, "Grand Jury Casts Vote of Confidence in OC Election Process." You may read it at www.ocgrandjury.org/reports.asp

Carlos N. Olvera - president

MEET THE PRESIDENT

Carlos N. Olvera was foreman of the 2002/2003 Orange County Grand Jury. He is a retired vice president of engineering and retired navy commander. As an engineer he last worked as project manager of a \$60 million geothermal power plant in El Salvador where he lived. Before his career in industry, Carlos served in nuclear submarines, received a direct commission and was subsequently involved in Naval Intelligence. He is past and current president of the Dana Point Historical Society and founder of the Dana Point Heritage Museum. He is active in genealogy research projects. Last month, Carlos and his wife of 25 years Georgelean, were recognized as the Citizens of the Year for 2007 by the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce.

Luncheon Speaker (contd. from p.1)

buildings were destroyed. Eight homes and twelve outbuildings were damaged, and eight firefighter injuries were reported. In all, the fire burned 28,445 acres. Without doubt, the toll would have been much higher except for the skillful and heroic actions of the Orange County Fire Authority.

At our March 6 luncheon meeting we will hear more about battling the tragic fires of October from the OCFA Chief, Chip Prather.

Prather became Fire Chief in, 1997. He is responsible for the daily operation of one of the largest fire organizations in the State of California. Under his direction are a total of 1,400 firefighters, reserves and professional staff. The OCFA serves 22 cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County, with a total population of more than 1,300,000, from 61 fire stations and has an annual operating budget (FY 2007/08) of 257 million dollars.

Don't miss Chief Prather's fascinating insight into the anatomy of a holocaust.



SLOW RECRUITMENT FOR 2008/09 JURY

On January 3, 2008, Superior Court made the following statement as part of a press release:

"Applications to Serve on the 2008-2009 Orange County Grand Jury Must be Submitted by January 11, 2008.

The number of Orange County residents seeking to serve on the 2008-2009 Grand Jury is significantly lower than previous years. Only 79 applications have been received and just eight days remain until the close of the application period."

We do not have any information about the final number of responses. Last year, at this time, the court had received 238 applications.

During the recruitment process, 5,000 mailings were sent out to prospective jurors. Flyers were distributed to 1,000 companies and 93 minority organizations.

The orientation for grand juror applicants was held January 22. Now the first step in the selection process will begin: Each qualifying candidate will be interviewed by two Superior Court judges and background investigations will be conducted by the Sheriff's Department. Judges of the Superior Court will then submit the nominations of 30 qualified applicants from which 19 individuals will be selected to serve on the Grand Jury in a random drawing.

NOTES MISCELLANEOUS

IN MEMORIAM

Clarence Kaufman
1989 - 90 Panel

Ray Littrell
1991 - 92 Panel

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

A volunteer opportunity may be coming up in the O.C. Recorders Office soon.

The Feds have resolved that Social Security numbers may be removed from public documents. The county has not had staff or time to do this. I will be contacting the Assessor and County Recorder to set up a cadre of GJAOC volunteers to aid in this effort.

If you would like to be added to this list, and for more information, contact:

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92708

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- GJAOC membership stands at 138 today.
- Jim Nolan will be at the March luncheon meeting to collect dues.
- GJAOC would like to thank Terry Dancing for her generous cash donation at the December meeting.
- The California GJA annual conference will be held in October in Bakersfield. Details to follow.
- GJAOC by-laws are being revised by the Board of Directors and will come to the members soon for adoption of the clarifying language changes.
- The Board is also drafting a Policies and Procedures document.



GRAND JURY AWARENESS MONTH

Governor Schwarzenegger has proclaimed February, 2008 as Grand Jury Awareness Month. In his proclamation he emphasized the three functions of California grand juries: Oversee local governments, investigate public officials, and indict criminals. The governor urged citizens to dedicate a year of their time to perpetuate the Grand Jury system, and thanked the citizens who have already served.

TODAY'S THOUGHT

Teach a child to be polite and courteous in the home and, when he grows up, he'll never be able to merge his car onto the freeway.

TRACKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Your Board of Directors is considering whether to reestablish a Tracking and Implementation Committee to provide follow-up on those recommendations of prior grand juries that the county and other governances had agreed to do.

Such a follow up done on a selective basis would not impinge on the prerogatives of the sitting Grand Jury, but would provide a report card on how well the county and other governances are doing what they agreed to do in response to prior grand jury recommendations. This is not a new idea. It had been floated before and agreed to by the Board of Supervisors in July 1996. Additionally, such a notion would promote continuity between grand jury efforts from year to year.

Other counties have embraced similar ideas with success. For instance, San Francisco and San Diego have such review committees. San Diego enjoys the support of the County Administration office which helps with setting appointments with agency chiefs and arranging for reports on the progress made in implementing recommendations with which the Board has concurred.

A suggestion for Orange County would be for the County Executive Office to conduct an annual follow-up meeting (in early winter?) to discuss the status of recommendation implementation with the sitting Grand Jury and representatives from the Grand Jurors Association of Orange County. Prior to the meeting, the CEO could provide a written report that would summarize the agreed-to recommendations from various prior year reports and their implementation status. Minutes from the meeting would provide the Board of Supervisors and other participants as a report card on the implementation process. Recommendation implementation from cities and other agencies could be handled in a similar manner.

This setup would promote both the awareness of the grand jury system and the concept that someone is continuing to watch our governance. Your comments are welcome.

- Bob Geiss, Member

