

President's Message

"I don't know about you, but I love new things, new ideas, new experiences, and new ways of addressing old problems."

That was how I started my first President's Message back in February of this year and as time has passed, many new opportunities for the Association have begun to appear.

The Association has now been tasked with taking a much larger role in the Grand Jury recruitment process. Three elements/opportunities where we as past Grand Jurors can step up, show up and more importantly, speak up have opened up.

For starters, members of the Association will be the primary speakers in Petit Jury Assembly when the recruitment window opens on October 3rd. Initially, members of the seated Grand Jury will assist and pass out fliers. Later, if members of the current Grand Jury wish to speak, they will have that opportunity. The goal is to create a solid core of speakers who can bring a strong message and put information into the hands of those who might be interested or know of someone who might be.

Secondly, the Court has come to realize that old methods of advertising for Grand Jury applicants, which over time, have become less and less effective, need to be upgraded. So, with the help of Karen Kindschi, a member of the current R&O committee, and staff from the Court, major changes are coming to social media outreach, Facebook sites, and even the Court website where Grand Jury reports are posted, and the electronic application is located. Even the old flier is going to be upgraded.

And last, but certainly not least, as website and social media outreach expands, Sandy Dunkin and our Speakers Bureau will be getting more requests generated by these new links. So, if a person sees the site, is a member of an organization, and that organization would like to know more about what the Grand Jury is and what it does, they can make contact and schedule a speaker for a presentation.

The Court is also looking for opportunities in all OC Cities and unincorporated areas to set up small racks with fliers as part of the application process. Senior centers and libraries have been key locations in the past for this type of advertising. While the seated Grand Jury will take the lead in this activity, if you happen to have contacts in your community and can obtain permission to set up one of these displays with Grand Jury information, please let us know so we can provide you with the proper materials.

As those who have served on the Grand Jury, we understand the impact that our reports can have on our communities, and our county, and how they hold government agencies accountable. If you have the desire to assist in any of the above opportunities, we welcome you and your skills so that we can continue to make a positive difference.

Doug Gillen

The Summer is slowly winding down, the newly seated Grand Jury is beginning their tour of duty, and as we move ahead as an Association, there are challenges and opportunities on the horizon that we all need to address.

First is the challenge of keeping all of our members connected with a communication platform that is easy to navigate. As technology continues to run faster than we can walk, it is important that the Association has a way to connect to all our members, be they active or inactive so that we all are aware of news releases, luncheon dates, and opportunities for service.

Mike Morris has been the Association webmaster for quite a few years and is now looking to hand the baton over to someone who can take this critical link and make it even better. I know that for some who are not all that tech savvy, this is way beyond our skill set. But my hope is that there is someone out there who, with some guidance from Mike in this transition, can take on a very important role for the Association. If this opportunity sounds appealing to you, please let me know so we can begin this process.

Also, there are challenges for re-energizing or refocusing committees that have gone dormant during the pandemic. Maybe this lull provides time to review our priorities and shape our committee structure to meet some reasonable goals and objectives. Having committees without any members or activity seems counterproductive.

Now, let's talk about opportunities. There are some changes in the Court that will provide members of the Association new ways to assist in promotion and recruitment. The Association has been asked to lead presentations in Petit Jury Assembly. The seated Recruitment and Orientation Committee will assist, and some may take on speaking assignments, but a designated team from the Association will be leading this activity. In addition, more emphasis will be placed on our Speakers Bureau this coming year as civic and service organizations will be contacted so that our team can provide some basic information regarding Grand Jury activities and reports. PowerPoint presentations will be tailored to fit specific time allocations and audiences. And, since social media has now become the primary tool to reach into the community, a stronger emphasis will be placed on building an updated base of contacts and using it during the recruitment period to inform the citizens of Orange County about an opportunity to serve. While the old method of advertising in the newspaper generated applicants in the past, declining numbers of subscribers and an increase in social media outreach have drastically changed how our world is informed. A data base of contacts was started back in 20-21; now other contacts could be added to this list. Having a wide reaching pool and sending out regular updates during the recruitment window has already been shown to be very effective. And there is the potential for restarting the docent program. So, stay tuned.

Challenges and opportunities, much to keep us busy not just doing business as usual, but taking on some new work to promote and support the Grand Jury in Orange County. I look forward to seeing how we as an Association rise to the occasion.