



# Grand Jurors' Journal

cgja.org

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December 2020

**INSIDE:** Rolando award | Excellence in Reporting awards | New president's remarks | Marianne Jameson | Napa news | New members | Ask the Trainer | Assistant treasurer opportunity

## A Successful Online Membership Meeting

There was the occasional glitch. "I thought you were recording the meeting" and a few people had trouble logging in. Overall, it went well for a first effort.

At one point there were 93 people in attendance. They ranged from the far north, Humboldt and Trinity, to San Bernardino in the southeast.

Outgoing president (2018-20) Larry Herbst opened the meeting.

Read the [President's Report](#) on the 2020 CGJA accomplishments.



Larry Herbst

## Credibility: Every grand jury's most valuable asset Keynote address: Dick Spotswood



Dick Spotswood, a politics and government columnist for the *Marin Independent Journal* gave the keynote address. He currently chairs [The Sacramento Seminar](#), a San Francisco bipartisan political and civic discussion group. He is a retired trial attorney, former council member and three-term mayor of the City of Mill Valley. He was a director of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District, representing Marin's eleven cities and towns.

Spotswood offered a set of maxims for creating and retaining the credibility of the grand jury. Rule #1 is to stay out of partisan politics. America is divided into tribes (he is a centrist) who trust only their own totems. Commonality is a necessary component of trust and commonality is supported by neutrality. The grand jury must maintain a distance from tribal politics. Rule #2 is to stay out

of local politics. County residents need to understand you don't have an ax to grind.

To increase credibility, the grand jury needs to expand its membership beyond the recently retired. Service clubs are a great place for recruitment. And recruitment provides an opportunity for mentoring as well as increasing credibility.

It is important to talk to individuals and to listen to them. The grand jury's attention to an issue increases the matter's credibility for the press which can lead to authorities taking action. Listen to the public. Ask friends, colleagues, church members about their take on county matters.

Credibility can be hampered by one-year term limits on grand jury members. Therefore, it is critical to follow up on past reports. County chapters are in a position to do that.

He recommended increasing impact by spending time with local media. As soon as a report is released, get an executive summary out. The media want a scoop. Get to the people most likely to cover the issue.

Communicate who you are and what you do. Media people often do not understand the civil grand jury, particularly if they are from out of state. Explain its function and that it is comprised of unpaid volunteers who are there because they care, not as a step to higher officer or with a preordained agenda.

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*continued from preceding page - Spotswood*

A grand jury needs to have a foundation, a structure upon which to base investigations. The foundation is created through the training process and by learning as much as possible about local government. He suggests meeting with department heads and county officials. Get to know them and learn what they do.

Listen. Communicate. Don't play politics.

He offered tips for improving the process. Create a subcommittee to follow up on prior reports. Ask officials about their responses. Quiz candidates for office as to their opinions about past grand jury reports. What will they do, if elected?

Pick the most important issues. Look at both elected and appointed officials. The latter follow the media and don't want to be criticized.

Credibility provides the opportunity to get one's message across as credibility leads to trust.

During the question-and-answer session, Adelaide, from San Mateo, commented on the decline of media and suggested that the grand jury subscribe to local media outlets. Jerry, a CGJA trainer, said "when you are talking about follow-up, you are preaching in my language."

Keath, a former CGJA president, asked about techniques for achieving a more equitably balanced grand jury. Spotswood gave an example of the Hispanic Business Owners of Sonoma County. He advised looking at community organizations such as service clubs, business organizations, church groups or the PTA. People in these organizations are "recruitable." They have already demonstrated a willingness to be involved. Spotswood also underscored the importance of recognizing people's contributions. Say "thank you."

Bob from Contra Costa asked about age diversity. Spotswood pointed out the importance of scheduling. Take age-related and economic employment realities into account. Tim, from Humboldt, pointed out potential of online meetings for reaching out to younger non-retired people. The upshot of the discussion is to make it easy for a potential grand juror.

Karin, from Marin, quoted a Spotswood aphorism "The only thing between god and special districts is the grand jury."

★★★★★

## Dianne Hoffman Earns 2020 Rolando Award

The **Angelo Rolando Service Award (ARSA)** recognizes outstanding, long-time service to the association in support of its goals and objectives at both the state and local level.

This year's recipient, **Dianne Hoffman**, was a member of the Orange County Grand Jury. Since joining CGJA in 2001, she has been indefatigable in her commitment.

She was a CGJA trainer for seventeen years and served as director for nine years. Dianne has been CGJA treasurer, assistant treasurer and currently manages the membership database.

She currently serves on the Finance, Legal & Legislative Resources and Membership & Chapter Relations committees. During her tenure she has served on numerous other committees.

Thank you, Dianne!



## Best Grand Jury Report

This award recognizes a report that brings to the public's attention a matter of vital importance and thereby leads to positive change within the community.<sup>1</sup> This year's winner is the Marin County Grand Jury's 2018-2019 report, **Wildfire Preparedness: A New Approach**. It had an immediate impact in the county.

In recognition of the unprecedented danger to life and property posed by wildfire, the report addressed four directly related issues: vegetation management, educating the public, alerts and evacuations. The grand jury's report was released to the public in 2019.

The county fire chief and the head of the Marin County Fire Chiefs Association immediately began planning a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). By late summer the proposal was ready. Two previous fire department documents had expressed the need for a coordinated approach to wildfire preparedness but that effort had not led to a countywide JPA. The grand jury report added the necessary validation that led to a proposal and action.

The quality of the proposal and its rationale – plus the outreach by a working group of fire chiefs, city managers and volunteers that included former grand jury members – insured success. With approval of 17 of 19 eligible fire protection jurisdictions, the Board of Supervisors placed the tax on the March ballot. Over 70% of the voters approved the tax.

The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) brings together 17 jurisdictions (cities, towns, fire agencies) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and to be prepared if prevention efforts fail. While the formation of the agency fulfills the "umbrella" recommendation of the grand jury's report, the MWPA's founding documents show that its purpose is to accomplish the remaining recommendations as well – vegetation management, educating the public, alerts and evacuations.

The award was accepted at the membership meeting by Pat Randolph, the foreperson of the 2018-19 grand jury and a member of the Marin chapter of CGJA. She described the many obstacles involved in obtaining the cooperation of multiple agencies and districts and the effort required for the passage of the tax, the only tax proposal that passed in the election.

## Best News Media Reporting

The media coverage award<sup>1</sup> recognizes individuals and media that have created positive changes in their communities by increasing awareness of the California grand jury system.



Alex MacLean

This year's media award went to reporter **Alex MacLean** for his multiple articles in *The Union Democrat* concerning the report by the 2017-18 Tuolumne Grand Jury titled **Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority (TCEDA)**.

The grand jury report described many problems with the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority (TCEDA). TCEDA was a Joint Powers Authority formed by Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora in 2009 to promote business within the county and city and to market the county and city to outside companies as good places to do business.

The grand jury uncovered problems related to budgetary control, terms of the chief executive officer's contract, board personnel evaluation processes, lack of transparency, and improper rules of governance, among others. MacLean covered this report with at least 26 articles through May 2019 in *The Union Democrat* – from the report's release through many meetings that eventually led to Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora's dissolving TCEDA.

MacLean's articles were objective and thorough. He captured and reported on the substantial debate on the issues by the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors, Sonora City Council, TCEDA Board and a highly interested public.

MacLean accepted the award online. He said that the problematic joint powers authority had been replaced with a more transparent and effective official agency. He commented on how useful grand jury reports were for reporters in providing breadcrumbs to be followed in investigating civic agencies.

<sup>1</sup> Excellence in Reporting participating subcommittee members: Richard Faenzi, Ray Frisbie, Lanny Larson, Mary Lou Oliver and Barbara Sommer (chair).

# New Board of Directors Sworn In



Judge Steven Jahr (ret.) administered the oath of office.

## SOUTH



Ron Zurek

## NORTH



Marsha Caranci



Lou Panetta, Vice pres.

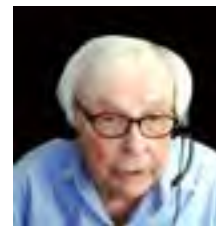
## CENTRAL



Joann Landi



Tim Hafner



Jim Ragan, Pres.



Bob Finlayson



Bernadette Cheyne  
(Not shown, Shirley Boracci)



Travis Gibbons, Treas.



Barbara Sommer, Sec.  
(Not shown, Janet Clark)

## Recent Board Actions

### Special Board Meeting, October 26, 2020

Approved the recommended slate of individuals to serve as officers for the term beginning on October 26, 2020.

### Board Meeting, October 27, 2020

Approved the president’s nomination of director Marsha Caranci to be a member of the Executive Committee.

### Board Meeting, November 24, 2020

Approved the 2021 CGJA budget.

All approved board meeting minutes are available on the CGJA [website](#).

**NOTE:** We encourage members to attend meetings of the board of directors. They are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month via teleconferencing (no meetings in July and rarely in December). [Read more.](#)

## ***from the new president, Jim Ragan***

My first official duty is to close this meeting with some thoughts about what lies ahead. I know a lot of you. I have been involved with CGJA in many capacities for a long time.

But not as long as four CGJA stalwarts who died in the last year. Let's remember them now.

**Sherry Chesney** of Placer County was the founder and guiding spirit of the CGJA training program. We published a tribute to her in the [February Journal](#).

**Ron Miguel** of San Francisco County was one of our original trainers and a valuable member of the Training Committee until he died. We published a tribute to him in the [August Journal](#).

**Audrey Lynberg** of Los Angeles County was one of CGJA's founders and continued her involvement until she died. We published a tribute to her in the [October Journal](#).

**Marianne Jameson** of Contra Costa County died most recently. She is author of the 2004 [History of Grand Juries](#), which you can find on our [website](#). We are publishing a tribute to her in this December *Journal*.

All received the Angelo Rolando Service Award.

**Jerry Lewi**, of Ventura County and a contemporary of these stalwarts, wrote all four tributes. Jerry is past president of CGJA and received the Rolando award in 2009. He says that he is now #3 in CGJA members with the longest service.

So, what's ahead at CGJA?

**Larry Herbst** led us very well as president. We don't see that much change.

**Training**, of course. This is our major service. It's hard to fathom how well grand juries operated until Sherry Chesney, Ron Miguel, and others made CGJA the courts' go-to grand-juror training organization. Last year, 37 of our 60 CGJA volunteers – 57% – were involved in training grand jurors and legal counsels. As for what training will be onsite and what will be remote, we will respond to the need. And lest you ask, the extraordinary **Marsha Caranci** will continue to lead our effort.

**Education** and **Outreach** are our other missions.

**Education** has always been initiated and done locally – with CGJA providing support and resources.

The San Mateo Chapter provides learning resources for middle and high school teachers and students.

Is anyone else interested? How can we help?

Several chapters have developed and delivered courses on the grand jury to people 55 years and older at OLLI – Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes – at most state universities. Currently, I think that the only current course is at Fresno State conducted by the Fresno chapter president, Lanny Larson. Some old OLLI resources are available on our [website](#) (see the chapter page). We were about to restart CGJA's promotion of OLLI with chapters when the pandemic hit. We're now ready to ask chapters: Are you interested? How can we help?

What other ideas in education do you have? Please tell us.

Our main tools for **Outreach** are the *Journal* and our **website**.

The *Journal* is our prime regular communication tool among members. This is mainly how we deliver current information. The *Journal* communicates best when CGJA doesn't write all the articles. The *Journal* is a tool for chapters to share information about what they are doing. It is also a tool for members, through letters-to-the-editor, to ask questions and make comments. My second extraordinary person to recognize here is **Barbara Sommer**, *Journal* editor. She will continue.

Please read and contribute to the *Journal*.

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*continued from preceding page* - **New President**

Our website has evolved in spectacular fashion. Originally, it was for outreach to our members only. Now, it is a major resource for current grand jurors and our chapters in doing what they do. Please explore our [website](#). My third extraordinary person to recognize is Larry, our webmaster and outgoing president. He will continue as webmaster.

One question that frequently comes up in **Outreach** is how can we promote greater grand jury awareness throughout the state?

In my five years struggling with this issue as chair of the Public Relations Committee, I now know that grand jury awareness comes through local news about reports, grand juror recruitment, and local information about grand juries in general. Dick Spotswood, our keynote speaker, is the perfect example. Dan Walters, one of the premier commenters on California government and politics, has addressed our annual conference two times. He was fantastic. But he has never – to my knowledge – written a column on the grand jury. Think about that. There is no statewide grand jury hook. At least CGJA hasn't found it.

And many grand juries are getting good local news coverage on their reports every year. In 2019, for example, we posted on our website's news blog over 700 articles. The *Marin Independent Journal*, where Spotswood writes, published 43 articles. Next was the *Mercury News* in the Bay Area with 39. The *Mercury News*, of course, covers several counties. One rarely sees an article about grand jury reports in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Sacramento Bee*.

Here's what we do. We focus on local information placement. We have sent press releases on the three awards we made today to chapters to use their contacts to place them locally.

At the beginning of Gavin Newsom's term as lieutenant governor, the San Francisco chapter got him to film a PSA for grand juror recruitment for us. It was used widely for several years. We finally pulled it when Newsom announced for governor.

Several years ago, the Humboldt chapter produced a four-minute video about the grand jury for us, **Agents of Change**. We know that it is still in use. It is great piece for showing to summoned petit jurors as they wait for case assignments and to community organizations in talking about the grand jury. While we no longer have physical copies for sale, it is available for free downloading on our [website](#).

Also available for free downloading is "**The California Grand Jury System**" primer, last updated in 2014. It presents the history of grand juries, grand jury law, and how grand juries work. We are now working on an electronic-only version update. The Kindle 2014 edition is also available on Amazon for \$2.99.

I mention all of these to stress that we want to do everything we can to support grand juries and chapters in promoting greater grand jury awareness – especially ways that benefit all grand juries. Maybe a new PSA is in order.

In any event, this is an invitation to tell us. I can't guarantee that we can do it – but we'll look at it.

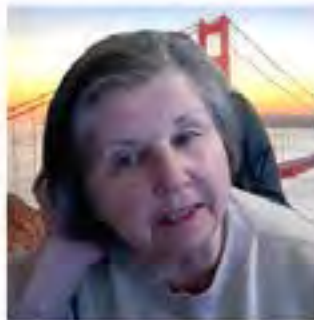
One person in outreach who we are missing is someone to operate our social media presence – Facebook and Twitter. We would like to be a bigger player. Effective social media takes both commitment and time. If you might be that person, please contact me.

Two thoughts in closing.

First, we thank you for taking these few hours to join our first annual membership meeting on Zoom. Ninety-three people attended. We hope that you might want to join the sixty of us who are current volunteers. No travel – except maybe for trainers. The volunteer form is on our website, but maybe you'd just like to talk first. I'm available. Contact me at [president@cgja.org](mailto:president@cgja.org).

Second, we would also like your evaluation of this meeting on Zoom. Rate it on a scale of 0 to 5, 5 being best. Please tell us what was good and bad. What would you like to see? Again, contact me at [president@cgja.org](mailto:president@cgja.org).

I look forward to working with all of you.



Zoom captures  
10-26-20



## Marianne Jameson

by Jerry Lewi

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Marianne Jameson, the member with the longest membership tenure of all. Marianne's lasting legacy to CGJA is her *History of Grand Juries*, published in October 2004 and still available on our [website](#).

We had just been in touch with her regarding her tenure and here is her reply:

I joined CGJA in 1991 back when it was divided into North and South. I served as a director and vice president for the North region. I later served on the Committee that drew up new Bylaws and divided CGJA into the current three divisions. I served on three Contra Costa County Grand Juries: 1989-90, 1990-91 (as foreperson), 1996-97. I am currently secretary of the Contra Costa chapter.

At age 92 I have lived through a depression, a world war, Vietnam, the civil rights movement of the '60's & 70's, but this is my first pandemic. Keep safe. This too will end.

Marianne Mayo Jameson passed away October 11, 2020 at her home after a brief illness from pneumonia and lung cancer.

Marianne was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She attended the University of Texas at Austin where she received a B.A. in Liberal Arts in 1949. She met her husband of 66 years, David Jameson, in Austin. She earned her M.A. in Political Science at San Diego State in 1967 and her Ph.D. at the University of Houston in 1974 while raising four children.

She taught as a Professor of Political Science at Texas Southern University for 20 years until 1988. After "retiring" to Danville, Marianne was a part-time Instructor at Diablo Valley College from 1990-2008.

Marianne also was on the Elections Advisory Panel, Contra Costa County Charter Commission, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission and Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committee.

Lloyd Bell commented that Marianne, a fellow **Angelo Rolando recipient** (2000), was a godsend to the Contra Costa chapter and to CGJA. She brought a depth of knowledge of county and state machinations when discussing and dissecting various issues, and a keen insight into the goings-on within the county and state. She was our "Rock of Gibraltar" who could always bring the conversation back to the subject at hand, and whose knowledge always brought us to a better understanding of the things happening around us.

Up to this year, Marianne was very active on the Excellence in Reporting subcommittee and she attended the conferences regularly.

She grew prize winning roses and was president of the Mount Diablo Rose Society (MDRS) from 2007-09. In recent years she was often asked to judge rose shows. When Contra Costa hosted the annual convention, Marianne made sure all the tables had beautiful centerpieces of roses made by members of the MDRS. She was a joy to talk with and had no shortage of opinions on a wide variety of subjects. She and her late husband had travelled extensively, and she had many stories to tell.

A fond remembrance from Leslie Lea (Contra Costa chapter): For the past few years Mary Lou Oliver and I would take turns carpooling and picking up Marianne for the chapter's monthly lunch and business meeting. We all had a good time and good chats. She will be very much missed. Many of us thought of her not only as a colleague, but as a friend.





**from Napa** by Diane Shepp, Chapter President<sup>1</sup>

**A Year Like No Other – Rolling with Realities – 2020**

*Continuous effort... is the key to unlocking our potential.*

*I never worry about action, but only inaction.*

*It is the courage to continue that counts.*

Winston Churchill



A year ago, our chapter was on the verge of dissolution. The chapter had voted to dissolve due to a lack of interested members. There were however, a handful who refused to let this happen.

The cyclical ebb and flow of CGJA chapters seems to be typical of the species. Chapters grow with interested member participation and dedicated leadership. Then they wane with a lack of same.

There are a few of us who are, for lack of a better term, 'grand jury junkies.' I first heard that term years ago at a CGJA conference. Karen Hern was speaking about her years of involvement with the Marin Grand Jury, the Marin Chapter and the CGJA. Little did I realize that I was becoming one too. Fast forward 10 years....

The year 2020 presented unprecedented challenges, yet the Napa County Chapter CGJA remains. At the beginning of the year the Napa Chapter elected a new slate of officers, set new goals and began meeting in person until the pandemic restrictions dictated otherwise. Undeterred we continued to meet on a monthly basis via Zoom. We lost Bill Cinquini, a former president of our chapter and creator of our website, to cancer. We lost a number of members for a variety of other reasons.

We were challenged by the California Attorney General for multi-year arrears tax reporting (which we were not). The CGJA leadership helped us prove our innocence, thank you very much. PG& E cut the power to many of us in Napa County, therefore we were not able to 'zoom' into the annual CGJA meeting. Nevertheless, the Napa Chapter continues to offer support to the Napa County Superior Court and grand jury as pandemic rules allow.

As 2020 comes to a close, may we continue to be a beacon for citizen participation and oversight of local government. I am heartened by the resurgence of hope and thankful for the continued dedication of our members and their courage to continue efforts to support the Grand Jury system in Napa and California.

In the spirit of the 2013 Annual CGJA Conference: Rolling with Realities, be safe, wear a mask.

See you in the New Year!

<sup>1</sup>Angelo Rolando Award recipient, 2013

**new MEMBERS**

County	Name
Kern	Renn Amstead
Madera	Andrea Beck
Marin	Alicia Levin
San Joaquin	Gary Cooper
San Mateo	Dan Freeman
Santa Cruz	Sylvia Caras

## Ask the Trainer by Marsha Caranci, CGJA Training Chair



*This regular column allows the CGJA training team to share with Journal readers our responses to questions we receive from grand jurors. Please remember: Do not take any response as legal advice, and contact your local legal advisors to answer any question that might divulge confidential information.*

*Please submit your questions to me at [cgjatraining@cgja.org](mailto:cgjatraining@cgja.org). Our response to your edited or redacted question might appear in a future edition of the Journal.*

**Q. Our grand jury wants to request copies of documents by email from the department we are investigating so we don't have to pick them up. Is that okay? Is an email disclaimer regarding confidentiality sufficient?**

**A.** The grand jury can request documents personally during an interview, by letter, by phone call or by email. However, we believe that the last three methods should be used only for general information about the entity, such as its budget, policy manual or organizational chart. Any request that would reveal the exact nature or scope of the investigation is confidential and should be accompanied by a formal admonition (as opposed to a typical email disclaimer). Such requests are usually given both orally and in writing during a grand jury interview.

Email correspondence from the grand jury might be shared with persons other than the intended recipient, even when marked "confidential." We discourage use of email correspondence for anything other than general communications from the grand jury, such as a routine document request or confirming an appointment for an interview.

**Q. Other than issuing a continuity report, what can our grand jury do if any responses to last year's reports are late or do not include the required language?**

**A.** First, make sure that the responses you have identified as non-compliant are actually required by Penal Code section 933(c), which applies only to governing bodies and elected county officials.

You may wish to take into consideration that the elected bodies and officials may not be meeting regularly during the pandemic, so some delays in responses might be expected this year.

Because the responses must be sent to the presiding judge of the superior court, we suggest that before requesting a respondent to file a response, you check with the court to see if the response has already been submitted. If authorized to do so by the judge, the jury can send letters requesting a mandated respondent to file a response or to amend a response that does not contain the specific information required by PC §933.05. Examples of such letters are available on our website under **Sample Documents**.

## Letters

*Send your thoughts or opinions on CGJA or grand jury matters to [editor@cgja.org](mailto:editor@cgja.org).*

## Assistant Treasurer Opportunity

The Finance Committee is looking for a talented member to assist the organization’s treasurer.

Responsibilities:

- As directed by the treasurer, track CGJA receivables and payables
- Pay invoices online and by check
- Special projects as assigned

Requirements:

- Basic accounting knowledge
- Ability to reconcile a bank statement
- Familiarity with QuickBooks Online is a plus
- Familiarity with Dropbox Cloud storage a plus
- Ability to scan documents into PDF files
- Ability to navigate Microsoft File Explorer filing system
- Ability to send, receive and file email attachments

For any questions and to apply, please contact **Ron Zurek**, Finance Committee Chair or **Travis Gibbons**, Treasurer.

## Keep us Posted

Send us your chapter or association news and accomplishments. Format articles in Word and send as email attachments to Barbara Sommer [editor@cgja.org](mailto:editor@cgja.org). For more details see [How to submit an article](#).

**DEADLINE for submitting articles for publication in the next issue**

**January 25, 2021**

**Change of address** - Please notify the [editor@cgja.org](mailto:editor@cgja.org) of any email address changes.

**The mission of the CGJA is to promote, preserve, and support the grand jury system through training, education, and outreach.**

Contacts: [Officers and directors](#), chapter and association [presidents](#).

### CONNECT!



*Visit our website*

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