



Grand Jurors' Journal

cgja.org

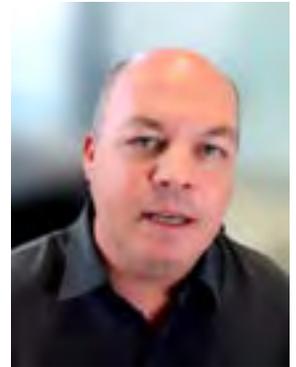
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Membership Meeting 2021: Keynote Address

Neil McCormick, Chief Executive Officer of the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), provided a wealth of information about the organization. CSDA is a trade association representing 55% of the independent special districts in California. It provides information resources and professional development for staff and elected/appointed officials in districts throughout the state. It has an advocacy team (lobbyists), promotes awareness, and offers guidelines for best practices. CSDA is a non-profit organization and serves as a resource for legal questions. In addition, it provides financial resources for infrastructure and risk management. Their membership has grown from 400 in 2002 to a current level of nearly 1,350 members which include public agencies as well as independent districts (California has about 2,000 independent special districts).



He showed a video featuring the Clovis Veterans Memorial District. In addition to California, the organization is expanding its role nationwide by participating in a coalition with organizations from other states. One of their goals is to develop a federal definition of special districts.

McCormick outlined three takeaways from an analysis of grand jury reports (six years ago). The analysis shows that the reports tended to focus on three general areas: 1) Audits and reserves, 2) Board conduct and governance, and 3) Brown Act and transparency. The organization has developed numerous guidelines and best practices to assist members in addressing these areas. An interesting development is that special districts are now required by the state to have websites.

A follow-up survey conducted by CSDA also revealed concerns about the absence of exit interviews, an issue that has since been resolved by our training emphasis on exit interviews as an essential part of the report process.

McCormick also highlighted the programs offered by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) that provide opportunities for recognitions, accreditations, and certification. There are a multitude of resources listed on the CSDA [website](#) that may be of interest to grand juries. View an [interactive map](#) of California's special districts by county. (Ed note: That map is linked on the CGJA website and is referred to regularly in our training.)

A second video featured the Mountain View Sanitary District's process of treating effluent and using the reclaimed water to increase marsh habitat.

In the question period following the presentation, Larry W. asked what happens if districts do not comply with the audit requirement. McCormick responded that the State Controller and County Auditors have authority and can impose a fine. Loydyne Lane inquired about redistricting. CSDA has a resource guide that they will provide on request. Jerry Lewi (public relations chair) asked if the above three areas in which they have developed guidelines resulted from grand jury reports. The response was yes, indicating that the reports had an impact on CSDA policies and resources developed for their members. Marsha Caranci (training chair) referred to our current emphasis on exit interviews and suggested that a new survey of district experience be undertaken. McCormick said he hopes to do that in the next year or so. Mike Henn asked about uncontested elections. McCormick responded that this is a problem of making constituents more aware of the opportunities that exist, something they are trying to address.

Click [here](#) to see his slides.

Civil Grand Juries

An Underutilized Oversight Mechanism

Featured Speaker: Josh Franco

Dr. Josh Franco, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Cuyamaca College (El Cajon, CA), described political science as being “the study of who gets what, when, where, how, and why.” He pointed out that academia’s understanding of oversight is predominantly informed by national and international institutions, but that local institutions, such as county civil grand juries, should inform academia’s understanding of oversight as well.

In other words, he is interested in learning what local county civil grand juries might reveal about oversight, accountability, representation and transparency in government. A specific research question he is asking is: How does a third-party actor with complete discretionary investigatory and information revelation power influence the behavior of other political actors and institutions?

To explore this research question, Dr. Franco has founded the Civil Grand Jury Lab at Cuyamaca College, involving 2-year community college students in the research enterprise, and is seeking a grant from the National Science Foundation. The study proposes to record an entity’s response to every finding and recommendation over a period of years and for every civil grand jury in the state. As responses are limited by the law, these can be readily coded (e.g., recommendation will or has been implemented, will not be implemented, or requires further study). In addition to creating a detailed database of civil grand jury reports’ findings and recommendations, the research will provide valuable experience for community college students.



CGJA has signed on to collaborate on this study and is enthusiastically looking forward to the results. [Read](#) Dr. Franco’s paper that led to our interest in his work.

Click [here](#) to see his slides. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact Dr. Franco at josue.franco@gcccd.edu or 619-780-5674.

President’s Annual Report



President Lou Panetta stated that CGJA is in a strong position operationally and financially. We are focused on three initiatives: 1) Increasing grand jury awareness, 2) increasing membership, and 3) having a succession plan in place. Our financial position has benefited from the increased reliance on Zoom in that trainer travel expenses have dropped dramatically.

A major accomplishment of this year has been the increase in membership under Diane Lloyd’s Membership and Chapter Relations Committee (MCRC) leadership. Membership in August 2020 was 293 and now it is 337.

We have a new chapter – Monterey. The MCRC has been doing a terrific job. And the four of them need help! Please consider volunteering to help out, especially with regard to chapter relations.

Training has been a major challenge. Grand juries are going in all directions with regard to their term – 12 months, 18 months, annual, fiscal Nevertheless, the Training Committee has met the challenge. They have trained over 1,200 grand jury members across 49 counties. They have put on the highest number ever of report writing workshops. There has been a 25% increase in attendees at the legal adviser’s workshops. The feedback on using Zoom for training has been positive.

Larry Herbst Receives 2021 Rolando Award

This year’s awardee is Larry Herbst for his service as follows:

- 6-year member of CGJA
- Board member for 5 years
- San Luis Obispo chapter member for six years; having served four years on its board (and one who excels at recruiting new chapter members)
- Served as foreperson on the SLO grand jury
- Served on various CGJA committees – currently a member of the Bylaw and Policy Review Committee, Nominations-Elections Committee, Pandemic Response Coordination Workgroup and the Public Relations Committee
- Former CGJA president
- Chair of the Technology Committee
- CGJA webmaster (and managed the website conversion)
- And is our current Vice President.



Congratulations and thank you, Larry!

Welcome, New Members!	County	Name
	Alameda	Subru Bhat
	Alameda	Rhonda Phillips
	San Benito	Lilliana (Roxy) Montana
	San Mateo	Stu Venook
	Trinity	Karen Boltz
	Ventura	Sharon Shou

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. This year's winner is the 2018-19 Santa Clara County Grand Jury for its report, *Inquiry into Governance of the Valley Transportation Authority*.

Stimulated by information circulating in the county about issues surrounding this special district, the grand jury investigated operations of the VTA board of directors, their effectiveness, and financial performance. VTA is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise that serves two million county residents with light rail, bus, handicap transportation, highway planning and related services. Eighty percent of VTA's revenues are derived from county taxpayers.



John Pedersen, Foreperson
2018-19

According to the report

- VTA operates one of the highest cost and lowest ridership transit agencies in the U.S.
- VTA lacks financial management and controls.
- The board was unwilling or unable to reconsider long range multi-million-dollar projects that were no longer viable.
- The board approved a 2.4-mile, \$420 million rail extension in 2019 at a cost of \$720K per rider (due to low usage).

The grand jurors surveyed several sites, rode on buses and rail, interviewed 37 people – several more than once. The interviews included board members, VTA executives and employees, county and city government officials, and other stakeholders. They reviewed U.S. transit metrics, other agency governance structures and performance, and attended most board meetings and several committee meetings.

The report's fundamental finding was that the board suffers from a lack of leadership, experience, and continuity. The grand jury discovered tension among city representatives; domination, in terms of numbers, seniority and influence, by representatives of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and the City of San Jose; and an overall lack of engagement.

Fifteen of fifteen cities and towns, the VTA, and county supervisors responded to the report. Fourteen of the cities and towns agreed in whole or in part with the fundamental findings.

VTA Board governance is dictated by CA statute sections 100060-100063 of the Public Utilities Code. Changing board governance requires action by the state legislature. State Assemblyperson Berman introduced AB1091 to institute a change. Approval of AB1091 in committee was unanimous. The initiative is expected to be taken up by the assembly in forthcoming sessions.



Best News Media Reporting



Camilla Lanham
New Times Editor

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

The recipient of this year's media award is the San Luis Obispo **New Times** for the in-depth description and broad distribution of its news coverage of the 2019-20 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury report, **Paso Robles School District: A Cautionary Tale**.

The investigation grew out of the public's continued interest in the financial mismanagement of the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District (PRJUSD) and a desire to get to the whole truth of the situation. In the fall of 2019, the district was in the midst of a firestorm. The County Office of Education had placed the district on probation and had assigned a county financial monitor to oversee the business efforts of the district. Shortly after, the superintendent resigned, and the County Office of Education hired a former superintendent as interim administrator.

The report highlights significant failures by the district superintendent and administration, the School Board of Trustees, and the County Board of Education in managing budgets, controlling expenditures, and providing the oversight necessary for the health of the school district. It provides an audit trail documenting the ill-advised actions, unbudgeted expenditures by the superintendent, and lack of proper oversight by the Board of Trustees that resulted in a reduction of financial reserves from a comfortable 10% of budget to an extremely precarious, less than 1% of budget, in a four-year period. As a result, for the second time in less than seven years, the district was placed under county financial control.

As an example of what might be considered poor judgment on the part of the parties involved, the grand jury chose to highlight the circumstances surrounding the planning and execution of an aquatics complex intended to be constructed for the benefit of the school district and the community. As of the date of this report, there is no clear plan or path forward for its construction. However, to date, \$1.5 of Measure M funds have been spent.

The PRJUSD administration, the Board of Trustees and the County Board of Education failed to fulfill their obligations, learn from previous mistakes, and balance vision with pragmatism, ultimately offering a cautionary tale and guidance for school districts throughout the county.

The *New Times* San Luis Obispo weekly publication covered the Board of Trustees' response to the report. The *New Times* newspaper has a circulation of 35, 000. The print edition is available at over 1,000 locations in San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County. Additionally, the digital version and its social media platforms reach over 100,000 readers.

Letters

Send your thoughts or opinions on CGJA or grand jury matters to editor@cgja.org.



Zoom Pix 10/25/21

Annual Standing Committee Reports

ANNUAL CONFERENCE (ACC) - strives to present a challenging, inspiring and informative program each year in a convenient yet popular location that will entice attendees to come early or stay after our meetings to enjoy the locale.

Chair, Lloyd Bell

Unfortunately, the pandemic upended the usual plan. Instead, in 2020 we offered a membership meeting (required by our bylaws). That meeting was conducted via Zoom on October 26, 2020.

It was a "first" for the CGJA. Approximately 93 members participated in the event which featured a keynote speaker, the recipients of the Rolando Service Award and the Excellence in Reporting awards, along with comments from the outgoing and incoming presidents. Feedback from the members who attended the meeting was overwhelmingly positive.

Based on the success of the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting and the continuing concern about members' willingness to travel in the uncertain pandemic climate, the board of directors followed the committee's recommendation that the 2021 Annual Membership Meeting on October 25 be conducted in the same fashion.

I am pleased to report that planning is underway for the 2022 Annual Conference which is scheduled to be held at the Embassy Suites, San Rafael, on October 23-24, 2022, with a full complement of award presentations, informative speakers, an update from the CGJA President, and a gala dinner on the evening of October 23. The committee will continue to monitor the pandemic situation to insure a safe environment for our meeting.

We seek members who wish to volunteer their time and talents in planning and executing our annual conference. If you know of someone who would enjoy working on such an event, or if you would find it fulfilling, please let us know by sending a note to annualconference@cgja.org.



AWARDS (AC) - establishes and administers all CGJA awards and recognition, with the exception of the Lifetime Achievement Award that falls within the purview of the Board of Directors. **Chair, Joann Landi**

This year the CGJA will present **Excellence in Reporting Awards (EIR)** for a grand jury report and media coverage and the **Angelo Rolando Service Award**.

We urge our colleagues to consider presenting awards locally. While certain awards must be presented at the annual meeting, i.e., the EIR and Rolando awards, **Certificates of Special Recognition** can be presented at a chapter or regional meeting. This may permit more local people to be present to enjoy the proceedings and congratulate the honoree(s). Details are on the website at cgja.org/awards.

BYLAWS AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE (BPRC) - works with other standing committees and the board of directors to ensure that the association's governing documents are updated as needed, compliant with state law and internally consistent. **Chair, Karen Jahr**

This committee reviews any proposed amendment to the CGJA Bylaws or Policy Manual and makes recommendations regarding the amendment's content, format, and placement within the bylaws or manual. We also review newly adopted or revised committee procedures for consistency with state law, CGJA's Bylaws, and the Policy Manual and report our conclusion to the referring committee. We conduct other reviews as requested.



BPRC –continued on next page

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This past year, BPRC reviewed proposed amendments to the CGJA Bylaws related to the election of the association’s officers and the filling of vacancies on the Finance Committee and in the position of president. We also reviewed proposed amendments to the policy manual, including those related to local achievement awards, the appointment of members to the Finance Committee, and the revocation of chapter charters.

FINANCE (FC) - works with the president, treasurer and committee chairs to develop the annual budget and provide oversight of other finance-related information and activities of the association. The committee actively seeks new members familiar with financial management principles, the nonprofit legal environment, accounting software and administration. **Chair, Lloyd Bell**



This year the Finance Committee

- conducted a successful 2020 year-end donation solicitation campaign.
- conducted a monthly review of CGJA financial records and transactions, including adherence to budget.
- compiled and facilitated approval of the 2021 CGJA budget.
- provided timely reminders to chapters concerning their tax-filing obligations.
- filed IRS CP 119 Form to update subsidiary CGJA chapter nonprofit status.
- filed updated Entity Numbers for Subordinates to CGJA with the California Franchise Tax Board.
- successfully managed finance-related issues with the assistance of the CGJA Treasurer.
- forwarded financial information for 2020 to the CPA for preparation of the federal and state tax returns.
- prepared and submitted the annual sales tax payment to the Board of Equalization.
- prepared and submitted the odd-year Corporate Statement of Information (S-100) to the Secretary of State.
- prepared and submitted an Annual Financial Report for the CGJA Board and membership.

LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE RESOURCES (LLRC) - answers questions submitted by grand juries, grand jurors, CGJA chapter members, legal advisors to grand juries and court personnel. **Chair, Karen Jahr**



As the members of LLRC are not in an attorney/client relationship with any grand jury or juror, the committee does not provide legal advice in response to the questions we receive. Instead, we make “best practices” suggestions based on the information submitted to us and on the collective experience of the members of LLRC. We always inform grand juries and jurors that they should consult with their legal advisors when they need legal advice about the grand jury or local government entities.

Over the years, LLRC has suggested modifications to CGJA’s training manuals and the website’s FAQ page based on the questions we’ve answered. Most of the questions posed to us can be answered informally by a committee member by reference to these resources. We have seen a steady decrease over time in the number of questions that require the consideration of the full committee.

This past year, LLRC or its members provided responses to questions on a number of topics, including the distinctions between inquiries and investigations, whether grand juries can contact public entities about noncompliant responses, how a grand jury can inquire into the condition and management of a detention facility when tours are unavailable due to Covid protocols, county counsel conflicts, investigating matters that are in litigation, obtaining public records, and retaining documents and grand jury reports and the responses to the reports.

LLRC –continued on next page

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The committee also updated CGJA's *Compendium of California Grand Jury Law*, which reprints the annotated statutes related to the grand jury's watchdog function.

Another function of the committee is to monitor legislation that could affect the grand jury system and provide an analysis of the bills to the board of directors. No bills related to grand jury operations were introduced this year.



MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER RELATIONS (MCRC) - responsible for recruitment and retention of CGJA members, manages the CGJA membership and introductory member database, provides guidance to grand jurors in each county who wish to form a chapter, supports ongoing chapters, and maintains a resource information database for both chapters and the general membership. **Chair, Diane Lloyd**

Voting membership has steadily increased over the last year from 270 at the end of August 2020 to 324 at the end of August 2021. This is directly attributable to several successful campaigns promoting the benefits of becoming a regular voting member by drawing from the ranks of Introductory Members as well as individuals whose memberships have lapsed in the last five years. The CGJA Training Committee has been especially supportive of these efforts and as a result, many new members have joined during their grand jury training sessions in lieu of becoming Introductory Members. MCRC has set a target goal of 350 voting members by the end of 2021.

There are 26 CGJA chapters representing 28 counties. Several groups of former grand jurors are currently in the process of becoming or revitalizing chapters in their counties. It is anticipated that these will be completed in the next few months and we will be able to welcome at least one new chapter before the new year.

In April 2021, we hosted our 2021 Presidents' Get-Together, allowing our chapters and associations the opportunity to meet and get to know CGJA President Lou Panetta as well as members of MCRC. A lively exchange of information and ideas convinced all involved that this should become a regularly scheduled event to demonstrate CGJA's support of its chapters and vice versa.

In the last several months, we have instituted a follow-up welcome letter to both new voting members and new Introductory Members. The letters incorporate many of the most popular links on the CGJA website that have proven to be most helpful to chapters as well as currently impaneled grand juror members. They have served to remind our members that their membership is valued and appreciated.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PRC) - continues to present timely information about CGJA and the California civil grand jury system to our members, our chapters, sitting grand jurors, and interested others. **Chair, Jerry Lewi**

Shortly after last year's membership meeting, our committee and all of CGJA suffered a grievous loss with the passing of newly elected President and PRC Chair, Jim Ragan. The Public Relations Committee (PRC) has taken Jim's legacy to heart and is endeavoring to carry out the programs he recommended while continuing to carry out its regular duties. This report will add those items.

We have accepted the challenge of increasing public awareness about grand juries that is both a part of our mission statement as well as a recently adopted strategic goal. We have taken action along several fronts that include seeking publicity by widely read journalists throughout the state, developing a state-wide media contact of journalists who regularly cover grand juries in their community, seeking chapter assistance wherever appropriate, and updating, publishing and promoting our Grand Jury System book.



PRC – *continued on next page*

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Website

PRC continues to manage the content responsibility of our news blog, [Grand Jury News](#), on the website. It continues to post all news articles we can find about grand juries. The technical responsibility for the blog has been turned over to the Technical Committee which is endeavoring to restore a feature whereby interested persons can automatically be notified when new items are posted. Your chair is anxiously searching for a volunteer to assist in the search and posting of new items on a continuous basis.

The Grand Jurors' Journal

The bimonthly *Grand Jurors' Journal* continues as a vibrant information vehicle to reach our members, current grand jurors, and court and county staffs. Barbara Sommer, our editor, continues to produce first-class editions. In each journal, one can find CGJA announcements, chapter news, training information, and other topics of interest to readers. Our [website](#) contains [Journal Archives](#) that go back to 2001 (and even a few issues before that).

CGJA News and Juror Messages

This is a support-function for PRC. We continue to support the president and committee chairs in electronically sending messages to members and others under two conditions. The first is when the messages cannot wait for the next edition of the journal. The second is when the messages are so important that they require emphasis outside the journal.



TECHNOLOGY (Tech) – oversees and supports the technical, data, and communications resources and deploys a cohesive technology strategy across the association ensuring the security and privacy of its financial, legal, and membership information. **Chair, Larry Herbst**

The Technology Committee's area of focus for 2021 has been the continued technical support for CGJA – primarily for the website, Dropbox file maintenance and Zoom. For the website, new and updated sample documents were added, newly released examples of well-written grand jury reports were uploaded, and additional chapter resource documents are now available.

Dropbox users were provided with links to key documents by the CGJA secretary making access easier for key committee and board members.

A Zoom license was added to support the widespread use of Zoom in CGJA training workshops given the increased reliance on remote training due to the pandemic.

Recently, the Technology Committee took on the technical support of the CGJA Blog while its content continues to be managed by the Public Relations Committee.

On the new and exciting front, work is underway to establish feasibility for the automation of the membership database linking it to the personal information provided by new members who use the website to join CGJA. For many years the CGJA membership database maintenance has been a manual effort on the part of the Membership and Chapter Relations Committee requiring a monumental effort on the part of the membership database manager. If successful, this automation will significantly reduce that manual effort.

Looking forward, the Technology Committee is planning on the introduction of a new Blog platform targeting early 2022 for release and we continue to strive for improvements on the Grand Jury Report Topic search function to improve the relevance of returned results.

Committee reports – *continued on next page*

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TRAINING (TC) – develops and conducts annual training programs presented at statewide locations for new grand jurors. **Chair, Marsha Caranci**

CGJA’s Training Committee started 2021 hoping that things would be back to “normal” after such a crazy year in 2020 due to COVID. But we all know now that the pandemic seems to be stretching into at least a two-year event, with its effects lasting even longer, including in our training program.

The new year started in an unusual way – January saw us providing our regular training to new grand juries who were being impaneled for a calendar-year term; and that came right after an extended Report Writing Workshop season that didn’t end until December 15 due to late impaneling of some grand juries in 2020.

The “winter” regular training season was followed by a new “spring” Report Writing Workshop season, and sprinkled in between were some timely Foreperson and Pro Tem Workshops and Legal Advisor Workshops. Then one week after our last “spring” Report Writing Workshop, we started our “normal” summer training season. Training grand jurors has definitely become a year-round endeavor.

Our total number of training venues for the year can be summed up this way.

Time period covered	Regular seminars conducted on Zoom	Regular seminars conducted in-person	Foreperson and Pro Tem Workshops (Zoom)	Report Writing Workshops (mostly Zoom)	Legal Advisor Workshops (Zoom)
Jan - March	15	0	2	2	1
April – June 8	1	1	0	9	1
June 9 - Sept	21	7	3		1
Oct – Nov (scheduled)	1	0	0	18	

A total of 49 counties were trained as new grand juries in 2021. There were two counties that were unable to impanel a grand jury at all (Alpine and Sierra), two that will participate only in our Report Writing Workshops, and three that will not take part in our training at all this year. Two other counties have recently impaneled a grand jury and are considering scheduling training soon.

Scheduling our normal curriculum review and revisions has been challenging during this time, but we got it done and will do one more round of reviews before we start a new “winter” training season this January for those grand juries who are now on a calendar-year term.

Each year we identify grand jurors during our training seminars and workshops that we think would make good CGJA Trainers. The process of inviting them to apply, reviewing their applications, and conducting interviews takes place over the fall and winter months, and this year was no exception. We are always trying to grow and strengthen our training staff as every year we find ourselves needing to replace retiring trainers.

This year we were very successful in recruiting new trainers. We received applications from 14 people, 10 of whom passed the screening and selection process and were approved by the Training Committee. Of those ten, seven are still with us and one is on sabbatical, bringing our total number of trainers as of September 1 to 22 (although two of them have been inactive during COVID).

TC – continued on next page

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Our New Trainer Orientation program was conducted virtually again this year, which made it hard for the new trainers to get to know each other and the veteran trainers. We hope to get everyone together for an in-person workshop soon. But our “freshman class” this year has been amazing. They have all observed multiple seminars (mostly on Zoom but some in-person) and have had mentoring sessions on Zoom with our lead trainers. And all have presented at least some or all of one presentation. Several of them have already been determined to be a “qualified trainer” in one or more topics. We have been fortunate to add some excellent and skilled trainers to our staff this year.

Like the rest of the world, we have adapted to remote training – showing our PowerPoint slides, playing our mock interview demonstration videos, conducting interactive sessions using breakout rooms, and making the learning experience as interactive as possible. But we look forward to the day when most or all training can once again be conducted in person.

I want to thank all of our trainers and support volunteers for their dedication to CGJA’s important mission of providing training to California’s civil grand juries.

2022 CGJA Training Dates for January

A number of courts will be impaneling a grand jury in December of 2021 or early January of 2022 for a calendar-year term. The CGJA Training Committee is pleased to announce the following training dates for these juries in early 2022:

Grand jury training seminars for jurors and alternates

The general training seminars can be arranged for each individual county at a time convenient for them by contacting cgjatraining@cgja.org.

Foreperson and pro tem workshop

A workshop for new forepersons and pro tems will be held remotely on Tuesday, January 18, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (with a one-hour lunch break). It will be presented on Zoom with attendees participating from their own computers. Registration deadline is January 10.

Report writing workshops

These workshops will be scheduled in late spring of 2022; dates to be announced.

Legal advisors’ workshops

CGJA offers MCLE credit to grand jury legal advisors who attend our Legal Advisors’ Workshop. The workshop will be held remotely on January 27 and 28, 2022 (two half-day sessions from 9 AM-12 PM each day); to be presented on Zoom. Registration deadline is January 17.

More detailed information may be found on our [website](http://www.cgja.org). Or for further information, contact Marsha Caranci at cgjatraining@cgja.org.

2021 Contributing Volunteers

Fulfilling CGJA's many purposes and functions requires the commitment of many people.

Executive Committee

Lou Panetta, chair (President)

Travis Gibbons, member (Treasurer)

Larry Herbst, vice-chair (Vice President)

Barbara Sommer, member (Secretary)

Marsha Caranci, member (Member-at-large)

Standing Committee Members

Annual Conference

Lloyd Bell, Chair

Janet Clark, Vice-chair

Tom Borden

Travis Gibbons

Colleen Leahy

Jerry Lewi

Bylaws and Policies Review

Karen Jahr, Chair

Marsha Caranci, Vice-chair

Larry Herbst

Karin Hern

Joann Landi

Finance

Lloyd Bell, Chair

Marsha Caranci, Vice-chair

Travis Gibbons, Treasurer

Dan "Don" Freeman

Karin Hern

Dianne Hoffman

Diane Lloyd

Steve Rubin

Awards

Joann Landi, Chair

Trudy Craig

Barbara Sommer

Terrie Stevens

Subcommittees

Angelo Rolando Service Award

Joann Landi, Chair

Medsie Bolin

Trudy Craig

Dianne Hoffman

Kathy Wylie

Certificate of Special Recognition

Terrie Stevens, Chair

Excellence in Reporting Award

Barbara Sommer, Chair

Bernadette Cheyne

Richard Faenzi

Lanny Larson

Mary Lou Oliver

Legal and Legislative Resources

Karen Jahr, Chair

Teri Goldner, Vice-chair

Karin Hern

Dianne Hoffman

Jon Tonsing

Kathy Wylie

Membership and Chapter Relations

Diane Lloyd, Chair

Dianne Hoffman, Db. mgr.

Shirley Boracci

Janet Clark

Kathy Mastako

Leanne Thomson

Volunteers -continued on next page

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Nominations-Elections

Shirley Boracci, Chair
Ray Frisbie
Bob Finlayson
Kati Martin
Larry Herbst
Lannie Larson

Tellers

Ruth Henderson, Chair
Margaret Ansel
Cindra Wilfong

Public Relations

Jerry Lewi, Chair
Joann Landi, Secretary
Barbara Arietta
Bernadette Cheyne
Bob Finlayson
Larry Herbst
Lanny Larson
Barbara Sommer

Technology

Larry Herbst, Chair
Lou Panetta

Training

Marsha Caranci, Chair
Karen Jahr, Vice-chair
Travis Gibbons, Secretary
Bernadette Cheyne
Bob Finlayson
Teri Goldner
Laura Griffin
John Heckel
Jerry Lewi
Lou Panetta

Curriculum subcommittee

Karen Jahr, Chair
Marsha Caranci
Bob Finlayson
Teri Goldner
Arthur Rolston

Program Administration subcommittee

Marsha Caranci, Co-chair
Laura Griffen, Co-chair
Shirley Boracci
Karen Jahr
Joann Landi
Judi Lazenby
Leslie Lea
Diane Lloyd
Cheryl Nelson

Finance subcommittee

Travis Gibbons, Chair
Marsha Caranci
Joann Landi

Trainers

Marsha Caranci
Bernadette Cheyne
Gary Cooper
Karen Deeming
Heather Esemann
Bob Finlayson
Travis Gibbons
Teri Goldner
Laura Griffin
John Heckel
Karen Jahr
Juliana Jones
Jerry Lewi
Walter Moore
Lou Panetta
Richard Rogers
Arthur Rolston
Gayle Saxton
Dee Schweitzer
Jon Tonsing

Inactive Trainers

Karin Hern
Kathy Mastako
Carol Perry

Public Relations subcommittee

Jerry Lewi, Chair
Travis Gibbons

Technology subcommittee

Lou Panetta, Chair

Trainer subcommittee

Karen Jahr, Co-chair
Bernadette Cheyne, Co-chair
Marsha Caranci
John Heckel

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. Our response to your edited or redacted question might appear in a future edition of the Journal.

Q. Our grand jury's procedure manual is vague as to how we should handle complaints. Are there any legal requirements? In particular, we are not sure how to respond to complaints that we decide not to investigate, either because they are not within our jurisdiction or they don't meet our criteria for what we should be working on.

A. We recommend that each grand jury adopt as part of its procedures manual a system for how complaints are handled during its term. State law does not directly address complaints, so this response reflects CGJA's best practices recommendations. Complaints are discussed in general terms in our *Grand Jurors' Training Manual* at Tab 5, page 6.

The procedures you adopt (by a supermajority vote) might include acknowledging each complaint, as a courtesy. However, your acknowledgment letter cannot reveal the jury's decision whether to conduct an investigation because that would disclose the jury's vote for or against taking up the complaint, thus violating one of the confidentiality statutes.

However, there is one exception to this prohibition: if the complaint is not within the grand jury's jurisdiction, the jury has no discretion to investigate the complaint, so it can advise the complainant that it has no jurisdiction. In this case, we recommend returning all materials that came with the complaint.

On our website, under Jury Resources, then [Sample Documents](#), we have several examples of acknowledgment letters.

Your procedures should also include the requirement to consult with the District Attorney if any complaint the jury receives appears to involve criminal activities.

The grand jury may not forward complaints to other agencies. Once you receive a complaint, it becomes confidential. The exception is that you can share complaints with your statutory legal advisors, which include the DA.

With regard to complaints that are of interest and appear to be within your jurisdiction (to be confirmed by your primary legal advisor), setting up criteria for how your jury spends its limited time and resources is a good idea. Your jury might want to look at the document called "Choosing Which Complaints to Investigate," also found under [Sample Documents](#) on our website.

Some grand juries establish a complaint committee to review all complaints and bring a recommendation to the full panel. Other grand juries feel that it is important for each member of the full panel to see each complaint before voting on whether or not to investigate it. The Penal Code requires that members of each grand jury adopt their own procedures for this and other ways they fulfill their duties.

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Q. What if we don't have a quorum at a meeting – can we still conduct business?

A. The Penal Code does not address a quorum of the grand jury, but rather states that certain activities (adopting rules of procedure, public actions, and adoption of final reports) be by a defined number, which we refer to as a supermajority. That number is 12 for a jury of 19. It is 8 if the jury was impaneled with 11 members, and 14 in Los Angeles, where the jury has 23 members.

Many grand juries adopt rules of procedure that state that a quorum for conducting business is the same as their supermajority, i.e., 12 in a jury of 19. This ensures that you will have enough votes if an investigation or report is being voted upon.

Some grand juries specify that those activities that do not require a supermajority vote – such as deciding when to meet next, or whether to seek advice from their legal advisor – can be approved with a simple majority of those present. Each grand jury needs to set its own meeting rules and adopt them by a supermajority vote.

So, depending on what kind of business is being conducted and what your rules of procedure say, normally a jury of 19 will not be able to hold a meeting and take votes on anything unless at least 12 jurors are present. Proxy votes should not be allowed because all jurors should hear all sides of any discussion or deliberations by the jury before casting their vote.

Recent Board Actions

By unanimous email vote, October 17, 2021

Approved the Monterey Chapter.

Board Meeting, October 26, 2021

Approved Amended MCRC Membership Incentive

Created Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup

Appointed Robert Finlayson, Chair, Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup

Created Diversity Study Workgroup

Appointed Barbara Sommer, Chair, Diversity Study Workgroup

Board Meeting, November 23, 2021

Approved the 2022 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 Zoom (no meetings in July and rarely in December). The agenda along with Zoom information is available a week before the meeting. [Read more.](#)

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](#).

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. For more details see [How to submit an article](#).

DEADLINE for submitting articles for publication in the next issue

January 24, 2022

Change of address - Please notify the editor@cgja.org of any email address changes.

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