



## ***CGJA News*** ***January 2015***

### ***President's Message***

By Karen Jahr

Dear CGJA Members,

In order to improve the Board of Directors' communication with its members, I will be sending you *CGJA News* during those months when the Journal is not published.

This first edition of the *News* tells you about the Board of Directors' retreat last week in Sacramento.

The retreat was the first opportunity for the entire new board to meet face-to-face. Getting together was important to us, as 7 of our 13 members first joined the Board during 2104. That includes our newest member, Jerry Kunkle of Butte County, who was appointed December 16 to fill the vacant Northern Region seat.

Because we wanted to get to know each other better, we spent several hours participating in facilitated team-building exercises, which helped us identify two primary goals for 2015: (1) the improvement of communications between the Board and all of its constituencies - committees, individual members, chapters,

courts, and counties, and (2) the growth of CGJA membership and volunteerism.

The Board then developed an Action Plan to use as a road-map for the months to come. CGJA is a member-driven Association, and the directors want and need to hear what our members and chapters have to say. Our plan commits the Board to expanding our lines of communication, including having person-to-person contact when feasible.

The Board's other primary goal for this year is to grow our organization through increased CGJA membership and volunteerism. Under our Action Plan, the Membership Relations Committee will be expanded and restructured to put additional resources behind member recruitment and retention and the increased utilization of volunteers.

Our plan also requires the Board to continue our review and revision of CGJA's bylaws and policies, based on our members' input to date, and to seek additional member input in the weeks to come through our expanded Bylaws and Policies Review Committee.

Other elements of the plan address revenue raising, ensuring the financial success of our annual conferences, succession planning, and improving our website.

Even before our retreat, the directors took steps aimed at improving the Association's operations. Our new Treasurer and the revitalized Finance Committee have been reviewing the bookkeeping system, the finance team's organizational structure and duties, and our financial policies and procedures. They have also developed the Association's 2015 Budget, which is posted on our website.

The Financial Review Committee was reconstituted and is now engaged in identifying a CPA firm to conduct an independent financial review for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2014. The Board intends to schedule independent financial reviews on a regularly recurring basis.

We have also been able to fill the last of the vacancies among our committee chairs. I'm happy to tell you that Michael Chernock, our acting Membership Relations Committee chair, has been formally appointed to lead MRC. In

addition, Beate Boultinghouse will be returning to her position as chair of the Education Committee.

CGJA's directors have a lot on our plate. Our new Action Plan will guide our activities over the next several months. As we move forward, the Board will remain committed to listening to and learning from our members - and making real and measurable improvements in how we carry out our mission to support California's grand jury system.

We will keep you updated about our progress through both the *Journal* and, during alternate months, *CGJA News*.

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