



CGJA Journal

Vol. 25, No. 3, June 2024

CGJA Trainers Attend Workshop

Thirteen new CGJA trainers and 22 veteran trainers attended an intense three-day New Trainer Orientation and Train-the-Trainer Workshop in Sacramento on April 26-28.



The topics covered included: a review of the 2024 curriculum changes, legal issues and challenges, how to keep an adult audience engaged, best practices, and an interesting discussion about the use of AI by grand juries.

Then our new trainers demonstrated why they were selected to join our training team by presenting part of a seminar topic to the group. [Read more.](#)

Honoring Caranci's 20 Years as a CGJA Trainer



Training Committee members {shown from the left): Jon Tonsing, Gary Cooper, Lou Panetta, Marsha Caranci, Karen Jahr, Richard Rogers, and Bob Phibbs.

In Case You Didn't Notice

The Public Relations Committee chose to update the name of the *Journal* to **CGJA Journal** to more clearly align with the logo and our new name - **Civil Grand Jurors' Association of California**.

Angelo Rolando Service Award Nominations Call

Each year the CGJA honors a member for outstanding service to our organization. The award is presented at the **Annual CGJA Conference**.

We look to the members of CGJA to nominate members they consider worthy of receiving this prestigious award. Nominations will be accepted for consideration by the **Angelo Rolando Service Award Committee** until **August 31, 2024**. Nominations may be submitted online, by email, or via postal mail. [Read more](#).

Ask the Trainers by the Training Committee Co-chairs



Marsha Caranci

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 responses as legal advice, and contact your local legal advisors to answer any question that might divulge confidential information.

Please submit your questions to us at cgjatraining@cgja.org. Our response to your edited or redacted question might appear in a future edition of the Journal.



Richard Rogers

- Are report recommendations ever shared during exit interviews?
- We're having trouble getting everyone together to vote approval on some of our reports. What is CGJA's position on voting during a remote meeting, by telephone, or by proxy?
- If we issue all our reports at once at the end of the term instead of individually, is it okay to give the whole consolidated report to the Board of Supervisors two days before it is published, or do we have to deliver each individual report separately?

Read the answers [here](#).

Conference Registration Is Now Available

Register for the **41st Annual Civil Grand Jurors' Association Conference and Membership Meeting**, which will be held on **October 20-21, 2024**, at the Embassy Suites in Monterey, California, is now open! [Read more.](#)



Time is Running Out!

The **deadline** for nominations for our prestigious **Excellence in Reporting** awards is **June 30**.

See the details for each at [Best Grand Jury Report](#) and [Best Media Coverage](#).

NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Brison-Moll
Rebecca Egipto
Beth Rowett
Barbara Ferguson
Maureen Smith

San Joaquin
San Diego
Marin
Placer
Los Angeles

News from Around the State

from Alameda County

"We're being duped by officials who write local ballot measures" by Mike Henn (board member) and Sandy McCabe (president) of the Alameda Chapter was published as a guest editorial in the East Bay Times on February 22, 2024. [Read the article.](#)



from Santa Barbara County

by Darren Brown, Jury Treasurer

The Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury presented the **CGJA Certificate of Special Recognition** to **Rob Vlieger** on April 29, 2024. The certificate reads

Rob Vlieger has provided invaluable accounting insights and financial assistance to the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury for 15 years. His dedication and selflessness have contributed immeasurably to the pursuit of justice and civic responsibility. Rob's commitment in facilitating the jury's operational needs have been pivotal to the grand jury's success. He is an inspiration to others.

In celebration of the above, the SBCGJ issued its first ever **Grand Jury Proclamation of Special Recognition**. Rob was noticeably touched by the event. We are thankful for all that he has given over the past fifteen years.



Shown with the grand jury proclamation (from the left): Darren Brown, Jury Treasurer; Rob Vlieger; and Eva Macias, Foreperson.

from Kern County

Grand Jury Month recognition by the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 6th.



from San Luis Obispo

by Nancy Welks, Chapter President

On May 1 the San Luis Obispo Chapter participated in **Community Law Day**. This was our fifth year staffing an informational table where we passed out flyers and answered questions.



Dorothy Schlitz and George Tracy staffing our information table at Community Law Day

We also gave a PowerPoint presentation on the vital role of the grand jury. This participation helps strengthen our relationship with the Superior Court. [Read more.](#)



Has your preferred email address changed? Have you moved? Do you have a new phone number?

If so, we want to be able to stay in touch with you. Please **update** your contact information.

Recent Board Actions – [Click here.](#)

Keep us Posted

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.

July 22, 2024

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

Join/Renew your membership

Serve on a committee - see the [committee descriptions](#).

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](#).

STAY CONNECTED



[Visit our website](#)

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Civil Grand Jurors' Association of California | 1017 L Street, # 320, Sacramento, CA 95814

CGJA Trainers Attend Workshop

Our training team is now 39 members strong as we set out to cover 54 training venues this upcoming training season, which starts on June 11 in Orange County. Our trainers hail from 24 different counties, from San Diego to Shasta.

We are looking forward to representing CGJA throughout the state and to another fun and successful year training California's civil grand juries.

Current Trainers

Michael Arkelian	Contra Costa	Mary Kennedy-Bracken	San Joaquin
Nancy Baumann	Santa Clara	Mauro Lara	Sacramento
Nancy Brison-Moll	San Joaquin	Lori Macdonald	Ventura
Marsha Caranci	Shasta	Karen Michael	Santa Clara
Ron Chestnut	Sonoma	Connie Jo Neustadter	El Dorado
Gary Cooper	San Joaquin	Jeffrey Olson	Stanislaus
Karen Deeming	Merced	Lou Panetta	Monterey
Rebecca Egipto	San Diego	Bob Phibbs	Yolo
Karen Enzensperger	Santa Clara	Richard Rogers	Santa Barbara
Barbara Ferguson	Placer	Arthur Rolston	Santa Cruz
Robert Finlayson	Contra Costa	Beth Rowett	Marin
Marie Fleischhacker	Placer	Martha Saldana-Wolf	Solano
Bruce Frank	San Joaquin	Margaret Schneider	Shasta
Travis Gibbons	Santa Barbara	Patrice Shepherd	Marin
Theresa Goldner	Kern	Spencer Sias	Marin
Patricia Goodman	Marin	Mark Swan	Madera
David Hammer	Riverside	Jon P. Tonsing	Yuba
Gary Hoffmann	Monterey	Jason Wacha	San Mateo
Michael Hofman	San Francisco	Tim Wallace	Placer
Karen Jahr	Shasta		

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Angelo Rolando Service Award

In arriving at a decision to nominate someone you believe deserving, please consider that this award is for past service and not for anticipated service in future years. Some factors you may wish to consider:

1. Substantive participation at both the state and county level in support of CGJA goals and objectives.
2. Has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and is unusually effective in accomplishing projects.
3. A nominee must be a current member of CGJA and there will be no multiple awards.
4. The currently serving CGJA president is not eligible to receive this award in that year.
5. Past recipients are not eligible for re-nomination

Make the nomination [online](#) or see alternatives below. You will need to have the following information available:

Name of Nominee

Nominee's City

Nominee's County

Nominated by

Nominator's Phone

Nominator's email

Supporting Information

Or send me the above information by email or mail. If you have any questions regarding the nomination process, please contact me at joannelandi@aol.com or 650-365-4184 (178 South Palomar Drive, Palomar Park 94062).

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Ask the Trainer

Q. Are report recommendations ever shared during exit interviews?

A. No. The law limits the jury to only being able to “read and discuss the findings.” All other portions of the report must remain confidential until it is released. However, jurors may and should ask questions about possible recommendations when they are exploring solutions to problems they have identified within an entity during their investigation, and they can also do so during the exit interview. Ask, “How would you recommend solving this problem?” Then you can ensure that your solution (recommendation) is reasonable by asking about the cost and time needed for implementing it.

For additional information, the CGJA website has a template for conducting exit interviews at: [Exit Interview Template](#)

Q. We’re having trouble getting everyone together to vote approval on some of our reports. What is CGJA’s position on voting during a remote meeting, by telephone, or by proxy?

A. All reports must be approved by a supermajority vote of the jury before they can be released. All the jurors should be present to hear a full discussion about a report before voting for or against its release. While meeting in person is preferred, jurors may participate remotely via teleconference using Zoom or another conferencing platform, provided that the jury’s procedure manual explicitly permits remote meetings. In remote meetings, all jurors must be able to hear all other participants and be able to participate in the discussion.

CGJA recommends against votes by proxy, in which a juror who plans to be absent gives their right to vote to another juror. While the Penal Code does not address proxy voting, CGJA believes all jurors who are voting on a matter must participate in the discussion and deliberations in order to be fully informed about the matter before casting their vote. Because the absent juror would not be able to take part in deliberations leading up to the vote, a proxy vote should not be allowed.

Q. If we issue all our reports at once at the end of the term instead of individually, is it okay to give the whole consolidated report to the Board of Supervisors two days before it is published, or do we have to deliver each individual report separately?

A. Individual reports should be delivered separately to each of their required respondents. Under the Penal Code, a grand jury must provide the affected agency with a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that entity two working days prior to its public release. It is problematic to try to meet this requirement with consolidated reports because they ordinarily include several individual reports that list several respondents that vary from report to report. Confidentiality would be violated if a board or individual that is not a respondent to one of the individual reports within a consolidated report sees that report before it is publicly released.

On the other hand, if all individual reports within a consolidated report are addressed exclusively to a single required respondent like a county board of supervisors, then giving that respondent the consolidated report two working days before its release would meet the Penal Code requirement.

Conference Registration Is Now Available!

Recently added to this year's program is a keynote address by Dr. Michel Karch, a surgeon and author, who will talk about Artificial Intelligence for the everyday person. Returning this year are breakout sessions with some popular topics from last year – in case you missed them – as well as some new topics you've asked about. And, of course, the usual fellowship that is fostered by meeting the new CGJA officers and directors, the recipients of well-earned awards, the latest Angelo Rolando recipient, and the gala dinner on Sunday evening.

Don't forget the ever-popular silent auction, this year with an added twist! Leading the silent auction is Gwen Usher who encourages attending chapters and associations to plan now to gather a silent auction item or basket with something that represents your county's bounty. The twist is that the last event of the evening will be a live auction of an item of special interest to most attendees with our own Lou Panetta as the auctioneer. You will not want to miss this.

Registration information and complete program details are now available on the CGJA website, [click here](#).

[Register now](#). We're looking forward to seeing you there!

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DECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

We're being duped by officials who write local ballot measures

By Sandy McCabe
and Michael Henn

Our group of former members of the Alameda County Civil Grand Jury has devised a rating system to help voters recognize the deceptions in local measures on the March 5 ballot.

Traditionally, most local measures lack information that voters should have in order to make informed decisions. Worse, the local agencies behind the measures — cities, counties and school districts — often deliberately leave out that information.

Indeed, they usually hire consultants to help them craft the deceptive ballot language. They give you just part of the information — the good part that gets your vote of support.

State law requires that the ballot language “shall give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure in such language that the ballot title and summary shall neither be argumentative nor be likely to create prejudice, for or against the proposed measure.” But the up to 75 words you see on your ballot for each local measure are reviewed and approved only by members of the jurisdiction proposing the measure, who want it to pass. It’s the classic case of the fox guarding the henhouse.

Typically, the language exaggerates benefits, glosses over costs and throws in meaningless stuff like “cannot be taken by the State” or “will only be spent in San Leandro”

or hides the fact that the tax is permanent by saying, “until ended by the voters.”

General tax-increase measures regularly tout benefits popular with the public, like fixing potholes, more cops or housing the homeless. Unfortunately, those benefits are not actually required in the official ordinance raising the tax. Instead, the tax revenues could be spent on anything, and nothing need be spent on the improvements or services claimed in the ballot language.

This is not a Democratic or a Republican issue or a conservative vs. liberal issue. This is simply a question about transparency and good governance.

The ballot wording of Alameda County’s Measure W in 2020 was an example of the deception:

“Shall a County of Alameda ordinance be adopted to establish a half percent sales tax for 10 years, to provide essential County services, including housing and services for those experiencing homelessness, mental health services, job training, social safety net and other general fund services, providing approximately \$150,000,000 annually, with annual audits and citizen oversight?”

If you thought this was about voting for money to fund homeless issues, it wasn’t. This measure would not require that a single dollar be spent on homeless issues. Instead, this was a general tax going into the general fund to be spent on any

county expense. The giveaway is the phrase “and other general fund services.”

That’s just one example of how we’re being duped. To counteract this persistent problem, the 2021 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury recommended that the county Board of Supervisors create a watchdog review panel to check this abuse. Not surprisingly, the board refused, preferring to continue to mislead voters.

So the Alameda County Civil Grand Jury Association, our group of former members of the grand jury, developed an effective review system of its own, rating measures on a five-point scale for accuracy and impartiality. Grand jury associations in other counties have shown interest in doing similar ballot-language evaluations.

Our ratings for the transparency of Alameda County measures on the upcoming March 5 ballot range from a low of 2.2 points for San Leandro Unified School District’s most-misleading bond measure language, to 4.2 for Piedmont’s parcel tax ballot wording, which was relatively straightforward and informative.

You can find the ballot title ratings on the Alameda County Grand Jury Association website at acgrandjury-assn.org.

Sandy McCabe is president and Michael Henn is a member of the Alameda County Civil Grand Jury Association.

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News from San Luis Obispo – Community Law Day

Additional Law Day activities included a judicial address by the Presiding Judge, Honorable Rita Federman. Legal service providers and volunteer lawyers were available to provide legal resource materials and free legal information to the public. There was also a mock trial demonstration by Morro Bay High School students.

Community Law Day is observed to celebrate the role of law in our society and to cultivate a deeper understanding of the legal profession. President Dwight Eisenhower established the first Law Day in 1958 to mark the nation's commitment to the rule of law. In 1961, Congress issued a joint resolution designating May 1 as the official date for celebrating Law Day. Every president since then has issued a Law Day proclamation on May 1 to celebrate the nation's commitment to the rule of law.

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Recent Board Actions

- 04-23-24 Approved supplements of \$1,600 and \$1,100 to the 2024 Annual Conference budget to reduce member expenses.
- 05-28-24 Ratified President's appointment of Lou Panetta, Director, South Region.

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