

THE CLARION

THE SAN MATEO COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF FORMER GRAND JURORS' PUBLICATION

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*Regular meetings held every third Monday of the month at the San Mateo Bank of America (3rd Ave.)
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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: *George Habeeb, Pres.*



THE SAN MATEO COUNTY GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION (SMCAGJ) is beginning its year 2007 as an independent organization, by dissociating itself from the California Association of Grand Jurors (CAGJ.)

Historically, SMCAGJ was formed as an independent organization and continued in this position since 1982 to serve the San Mateo County community by providing it with California Grand Jury System information. Around 2001, it was decided that our organization should become a Chapter of the state organization which was to give us more exposure to the other counties around California and find common ground that would benefit CGJA and individual Chapters throughout California.

After months of discussions between CGJA officials and our Board members, a vote by the general membership agreed to go it alone and for SMCAGJ to continue to respond to its local constituency and serve them rather than having to abide by rules and regulations dictated by the state organization.

The action taken by SMCAGJ is not a matter of serious dissension between these two dedicated organizations, but rather an incompatible alliance because of certain protocol issues.

Reasons expressed by the members were that the SMCAGJ's Constitution was not radically defective and we didn't need to abide by the CAGJ's version. Our version was not perfect, but it was a good plan.

As our association advances into year 2007, our leaders, will use all their talent and expertise to lead a group of people to serve San Mateo County as best they know how.

George

Board of Directors

*George Habeeb, Pres.
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APPLYING FOR CIVIL GRAND JURY DUTY

In the year 2000, Judge Quentin Kopp was the presiding grand jury judge who was instrumental in changing the term of office of grand jurors from January 1st to December 31st to the fiscal year June 1st to July 1st. Since this year, prospective new grand jurors have been either appointed or encouraged to apply for consideration to serve on this prestigious jury starting in January and concluding by the end of February.

Interested San Mateo County residents desiring to become grand jurors are normally selected in three ways: 1) Appointed by the presiding judge; 2) Recommended by servants of the court, sundry leaders of the community, elected officials or county government officials; and 3) Initiated by the interested county citizen by completing an application furnished by the County Civil Grand Jury executive secretary.

Candidates appointed by the presiding judge automatically become new grand jurors while citizens who are recommended or apply must meet certain qualifications prior to being interviewed by the presiding judge and his appointed representatives. Candidates in this category who qualify to serve are notified that they are being considered. Their names are placed in a ballot box. At a designated date prior to June 1st, a number of candidates will be added to the appointed jurors totaling 19 members who will take an oath to serve on the new civil grand jury. Their term of office will be for one year. The names of alternate candidates will also be drawn to ensure that replacements will be available in case of illness or death of any of the original 19 selected.

Former grand jurors are encouraged to share this information with friends or associates you feel are qualified to serve as a member of the civil grand jury. As a former grand juror, you also have the privilege of recommending a citizen you feel will enhance the new grand jury. Candidates interested may visit the San Mateo County Association of Grand Juror's website: www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/smcaj and select "**Apply for the Grand Jury**" located on the navigation bar of the homepage. They can also request an application form by writing to: Grand Jury secretary Mas Chikasuye, Hall of Justice, 400 County Center, 2nd Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063. Note well, this should be done before the end of February.

The statutory requirements for each grand juror are: 1) Be a citizen of the U.S.; 2) Be at least 18 year of age; 3) Reside in San Mateo County for at least one year; 4) Have ordinary intelligence and good character; 5) Possess a working knowledge of the English language; 6) Not presently serving as a trial juror; 7) Not having been a grand juror within one year of being selected; 8) Not having been convicted of a felony or malfeasance in office; and 9) Not presently serving as an elected official.

For additional information regarding "applying for grand jury duty" contact SMCAGJ Director Angelo Carmassi at angcarmassi@aol.com.

MULTIMILLION AMERICANS HAVE ACCESS TO INTERNET

A newspaper article written by David Wallechinsky published in the San Francisco Chronicle listed several categories that statistically rated America the number one leading nation in each subdivision selected in the following group:

1. 371 billionaires
2. 102 summer Olympic medals
3. 296 Nobel Prize winners
4. 460,000 armed forces stationed in 144 countries
5. 3.98 million miles of roads
6. 14,858 airports
7. \$157.88 billion gold reserves
8. 205,327,000 Internet users

To former grand jurors, statistic #8 should prove to be valuable in the area of communicating with citizens regarding the function and structure of sundry grand juries established in the United States. The realization that multimillion Americans are using their Internet services on a daily base and the number of hours per week the average American spends browsing, purchasing items and learning through this miraculous means of communication boggles the mind.

Presently, those of us who have served as a member of the grand jury can assume an effective way to communicate our experiences or to share information pertinent to the California Grand Jury system would be through the Internet.

In the year 2002, the San Mateo County Association of Grand Jurors, an organized body of former grand jurors, established, proposed and approved the launching of a website that would provide information, guidelines, performance expectations, course of study and suggestions that would clearly delineate the role and responsibilities of California grand jurors to interested citizens, students, attorneys and judges. Each year additional educational information has been added to enhance the website which now includes hyperlinks that will quickly allow you to access information on **any** subject imaginable. The **Learning Center** available on this sui generis website will open the door to a vast resource of knowledge in any field of endeavor selected.

The San Mateo County Association of Grand Jurors website pages will provide interested visitors with an insight of how America attempts to provide justice for one and all through its various court systems guided by rules of laws established since our nation was founded.

We highly recommend that you take a moment to visit this unique website, WWW.CO.SANMATEO.CA.US/SMCAGJ and browse our listed categories. Be assured, when you exit, you will have increased your base of knowledge.

Angelo Carmassi



Michael (Mike) Miller

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REPORTS, SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

SMCAGJ WEBSITE "BIG HIT"

The year 2002, was a banner year for the San Mateo Association of Grand Jurors. It was the year our Association launched its unique website which became a universal "**Big Hit**." Initially, it was a source specifically designed for the residents of San Mateo County, and suddenly, has leaped its boundaries into worldwide applicability.

It has evolved into an available and useful technological learning tool that now provides general information, instructions, guidelines, search tools that help you find pages on the web, and educational courses of studies. One can also find a variety of relevant on-line topics, including how to pronounce English words correctly. The SMCAGJ website now offers audiences incalculable riches of topics besides the grand jury system and the various courts that serve the citizens of our country.

Visit our website, www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/smcagj. The old phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" was never more befitting. When you open the website page, click **Learning Center** and then scroll down to **Correct Word Pronunciation**, select any word and it will be pronounced for you.

There are millions of websites available to computer users with on-line services. Depending on interest, awareness and usefulness, visits are made to gather, learn, share and investigate website pages primarily to research information, enjoy creative animation, order commercial products for personal use and a number of other reasons. Therefore, it becomes extremely important that the creators of websites and website managers continually develop interesting material for the site so visitors will return to the site numerous times.

You can assist the Association (SMCAGJ), with very little effort and at no cost, by encouraging and stimulating others to use our site, very simple . . . visit the site and then tell others what you saw and learned from the experience.

Angelo Carmassi

Marketing Director

The **SMCAGJ's Speaker's Bureau** is ready and willing to present a provocative, entertaining and informative talk for your club or organization. All speakers have served on the Grand Jury and tell of their experiences and the importance of the Civil Grand Jury. These differences are explained in the presentation along with examples of the effectiveness of Civil Grand Juries. Learn how to apply for the Civil Grand Jury and what qualifications are needed. (See page 2 in this issue for more information on applying for Civil Grand Jury Duty)

If you are interested in booking a speaker, the talks can be tailored to suit the time demands of your group. Generally, 20 minutes of speaking and 10 minutes for questions, but those times can be fitted to your format. Contact Lois Almen Everett at 650-342-8429 or Mike Miller at 650-344-1074 for further information.