November 2008 was not the first time Ed and Tam Schumann had faced a southern California wildfire. “There were voluntary evacuations a year ago,” she said. “Unfortunately, fires in the open hills around us are common.”

On November 15, 2008, “Yorba Linda was ringed by fire,” Tam said. “Everything was totally black, except for the orange flames. It’s what hell must be like.” But unlike a year earlier, there was no question of evacuation. “We were never asked to evacuate—we fled!” They had only five minutes to get out of their neighborhood, and Tam remembers seeing neighbors running, carrying family pets, as a line of cars and bodies snaked down the hill only yards ahead of the wind-whipped flames.

After seeing Tam and the animals to safety, Ed returned to a scene he could only describe as “surreal.” From the outside, the home where they had lived for 16 years looked normal, but embers had entered through roof vents, starting a fire in the attic. (These vents were required when their home was built, but not anymore.) “Every smoke detector in the house was screaming,” said Ed, and the firemen gave him five minutes to retrieve valuable items from the house, which was filled with smoke from the attic. The smoke was so dense that the firemen would not let Ed go upstairs. Instead, they crawled under the smoke and retrieved Ed’s computer, while Ed grabbed some family photos. (Unfortunately, no photos of Tam’s mother survived the fire.)

Ed was too overwhelmed to think of anything else, that is, until the firemen recommended that he save their plasma-screen television, too. Ed and Tam’s house burned for 24 hours. There was nothing left.

When Ed and Tam returned after the fire had passed, they found their devastated neighborhood facing another danger—looters. The police had not arrived, so neighbors resorted to a “cordon” of cars and garbage cans to discourage looters and “looky-Lous,” who were driving through burned-out neighborhoods taking pictures. Tam found it to be an “interesting insight into human nature.”

But life goes on. Ed and Tam found a house within walking distance of their old home, which is being rebuilt. They also found temporary homes for Tam’s horses, Big Easy and U.S. Bucks. And aside from one clerk’s apartment being “partially burned,” operations of the Superior Court of Orange County in Fullerton, 15 miles from Yorba Linda, were unaffected. Tam has served as a judge on the superior court since 1997. Ed is a civil attorney.

AJA Invites You to Florida for the 2009 Midyear Meeting

You really need to consider attending the American Judges Association’s midyear meeting this spring in beautiful Sanibel Island, Florida, May 14-16. The Sundial Beach Resort is a perfect venue for this “must attend” meeting of the officers and board members of your organization. In addition to AJA’s business meetings, Judge Catherine Shaffer of King County, Washington, and the Domestic Violence Committee will provide educational sessions on best practices for reducing violence in families. All members are welcome to attend.

In view of the financial crises, which most states and other court-funding entities face, all meeting participants are encouraged to attend business meetings for discussions among AJA leadership, AJA members, and experts from the National Center for State Courts about ways AJA and individual judges can advocate most effectively for the need to have courts adequately funded.
If you sit as a judicial officer in a state or province facing huge budget deficits requiring personnel layoffs, cutbacks in court hours, and elimination of services (especially those which support judges, such as basic reading materials and supplies and conference travel), you might be looking for a relatively low-cost opportunity to learn more than just how to survive those challenges, which you and every other government employee in North America faces. You might need a morale and spirit booster. You might want to learn with your colleagues and other experts about how to better face these difficult financial times and be a more effective soldier in the battle to ensure fair process, fair play, and justice for all in our courts.

Your membership in the American Judges Association enables you to leverage the shrinking dollars available for collegial conferences and judicial education by helping you acquire the skills necessary to do your work better in these times and the tools that will best help you advocate effectively with your executive and legislative branches for funding necessary to maintain the core functions of your court.

The Golden Nugget in Vegas is a good venue for AJA to celebrate its golden anniversary. Your organization (in an effort led by conference cochairs Mike Cicconetti and Gayle Nachtigal) negotiated a truly affordable room rate ($51/night Sunday-Thursday; $105/night Friday-Saturday), as well as favorable terms for food and beverage service, attractive meeting venues, and education facilities. AJA’s well-earned reputation as “the voice of the judiciary” over the past 50 years helps ensure that we attract superior faculty for well-structured, effective education programming, which will cover at least the following areas of judicial practice: tools to ensure procedural fairness for all, evidence, substance abuse, mental health, elder abuse, domestic violence, best practices to reduce recidivism rates, and effective case management. In addition, Dean Erwin Chemerinsky (University of California, Irvine School of Law) will present the annual review of the work of the United States Supreme Court.

Our organization’s strength is derived from the energy and intellect of its individual members and the demonstrated ability of AJA leadership to harness and encourage the abilities of members for a common purpose: to be a strong, effective voice for judges across North America.

We will celebrate AJA’s Golden Anniversary, September 13-18. But even more important, this conference will look optimistically forward as a colloquium of judges teaching and learning together about best practices for surviving and flourishing in these challenging times.

Look for announcements on the AJA Web site: http://aja.ncsc.dni.us. We hope to see you in Las Vegas.

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News from the Legislation and Elections Committee

Please forward any articles, cases, legislation, or information that might be of interest to other AJA members to Marlene Allen-Hammarlund, chair of the committee, at Marlene.Allen@greshamsavage.com. A library of this information will give members access to resources relating to legislation that affects the judiciary, election issues, or other areas of interest. If you would like more information, or have any ideas as to how this committee can serve AJA members, please contact Marlene via e-mail or at (951) 684-2171.
Courts looking for guidance in tough budgetary times can turn to two resources by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC): the newly revamped, online Budget Resource Center and the latest issue of the Survey of Judicial Salaries. Both this Web site and this biannual newsletter provide valuable new data for courts facing budget shortfalls.

The Budget Resource Center at http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Budget/home.asp provides all of NCSC’s information on court budgeting in one place. Features include a Google news feed for up-to-date information (for example, news video of California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s call for furloughs of state workers); links to NCSC publications related to court budgets; an interactive map of state activities regarding budgets; and resources directed toward more specific topics (such as collecting fines and fees).

The latest issue of NCSC’s long-running Survey of Judicial Salaries (vol. 33, no. 2) relates the salaries for judges at all levels and court administrators as of July 1, 2008. About 52 percent of states reported salary changes for judges, justices, and state court administrators by that date. According to the Survey, between 2003 and 2008, salaries for chief justices have increased by 2.99 percent, for associate justices by 3.01 percent, for intermediate appellate court judges by 2.97 percent, for general-jurisdiction judges by 3.03 percent, and for state court administrators by 3.04 percent. This issue also provides a special section on state constitutional provisions regarding reductions to judges’ salaries.

Both of these resources are produced by NCSC’s Knowledge and Information Service in Williamsburg, Va.

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An award winning, highly respected non-fiction production company is seeking experienced, energetic and personable judges for new television projects.

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All entries and communications are kept strictly confidential.
Nominations and Elections

The nominations committee chair, Judge Eileen Olds, requests early nominations for positions to be filled at the annual conference in Las Vegas. In order for the nominations committee to give each name full consideration, it is important that nominations be received by **July 1**.

**Officers:** A president-elect, vice president, and secretary must be nominated for one-year terms.

**Governors:** AJA’s bylaws provide that the number of governors representing a district depends on the number of members in that district. Based on the current membership roster, 16 positions on the Board will be up for election. Of these 16 positions, 11 currently are held by incumbent Board members who are eligible for reelection. All positions are for three-year terms.

- **District I** (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick). Three positions, Elliott Zide, Gerald Locas incumbent; one unfilled vacancy.

- **District II** (NY). Two positions, Eileen Nadelson incumbent; one unfilled vacancy.

- **District III** (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA). No vacancies.

- **District IV** (NC, SC, VA, WV). No vacancies.

- **District V** (AL, GA, FL, VI, PR). Two positions, James Oxendine incumbent, one position due to unfilled vacancy.

- **District VI** (AR, LA, MS). Two positions, John Conery and David Gorbaty completing service.

- **District VII** (OK, TX, Mexico). One vacancy. Sherry Jackson completing service and Nathan White incumbent. Membership in this district is such that it is eligible for only two governors, so Judge Jackson’s position will not be filled unless membership in the district increases before the annual meeting. (Corrine Mason is the third District 7 governor, but her term does not expire until 2010.)

- **District VIII** (IL, IN, KY, TN). Two positions, John Rosson incumbent; Leon Ruben completing service.

- **District IX** (OH). One position, Larry Allen completing service.

- **District X** (MI). One position, Brian MacKenzie incumbent.

- **District XI** (IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD, WI, Ontario). Two positions, Mike High and John Williams incumbent.

- **District XII** (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan). One position, Lynda Howell incumbent.

- **District XIII** (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon Territory). One position, Richard Kayne incumbent.

- **District XIV** (CA, HI, NV, Guam, American Samoa, Marshall Islands). One position, Bert Brown completing service.

**Court of Appeals:** One position (five-year term), Bruce Campbell completing service.

Please send your nominations and the Declaration of Candidacy form to Ms. Shelley Rockwell, American Judges Association, 300 Newport Avenue, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185, (757) 259-1841.
NAME: 

COURT: 

ADDRESS: 

CITY: ________________________________ STATE/PROV: _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE: 

PHONE: ______________________________ FAX: ______________________________ E-MAIL ADDRESS: 

All candidates, including incumbent governors for reelection, must declare their candidacy by this declaration submitted as indicated at the end of the form. The nominations committee will interview all candidates for office, including first-time governors, secretary, vice president and president-elect, on September 13 during the conference in Las Vegas; incumbent governors for reelection will not be interviewed.

I am a member of AJA in good standing. □ YES □ NO

I have been a regular member of AJA since ______________

I have attended the following AJA midyear meetings, district meetings, and/or annual conferences:

I am declaring my candidacy for the following position:

□ President-elect  □ Vice President  □ Secretary  □ Governor, representing District _____  □ Court of Appeals

State briefly your court-affiliated duties and experience and describe your qualifications for serving as an elected official of AJA. The Nominations Committee will pay particular attention to whether each candidate has (1) a knowledge of the duties of the office, (2) a commitment to perform those duties, and (3) a record of prior service and performance to the organization. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)
State your reasons for wanting to serve as an AJA elected official. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

Yes        No

☐ ☐ Will you attend the annual conference in Las Vegas?

☐ ☐ Will you be available for an interview on September 13, 2009?

☐ ☐ Will you be able to attend all AJA board meetings or any special meetings that may be called?

☐ ☐ Will you be willing to serve on or chair committees when asked?

☐ ☐ Have you served previously on any committees? If so, which committees and what was your function on each? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

Signature:__________________________________________ Date:______________

Mail completed form with your résumé to:
Shelley Rockwell
American Judges Association
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147

NOTE: Declarations of Candidacy must be postmarked by July 1, 2009.
All candidates will receive a written confirmation, which acknowledges receipt of your materials. If you do not receive a confirmation by July 15, 2009, please contact the Association Management Office at (757) 259-1841.
**AJA Insignia Wear**

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Send order form with check or money order to the American Judges Association, 300 Newport Avenue, Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147 or fax to (757) 259-1520.
2009 AJA Awards

The AJA Awards Committee welcomes your suggestions for recipients of AJA’s 2009 awards. Please look over the form and fill it out with information on any person you would like to nominate. Be sure to fill in your own name so that we know whom to contact if we need further information.

Award of Merit: To a judge for outstanding contributions to the judiciary.
Glenn R. Winters Award: To a layperson who has made substantial contributions toward improving the image of the judiciary.
Judge William H. Burnett Award: To an AJA member for outstanding service to the association.
Judge Bob Jones Memorial Award: To an AJA member to recognize significant contributions to judicial education.

Please send your suggestions by **July 1, 2009**, to Denise Lightford, Phoenix Municipal Court, 300 West Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85003-2103; phone (602) 534-3864, fax (602) 534-4779, e-mail dmlightford@aol.com.

Name of person submitting nomination(s). ____________________________________________________________

**AWARD:**  □ Merit  □ Winters  □ Burnett  □ Jones

Name __________________________________________
Title __________________________________________
Address ________________________________________
Telephone ______________________________________
Reason for nomination __________________________________________________________

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**BENCHMARK**

American Judges Association
300 Newport Ave.
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147
(757) 259-1841

President
Judge Tam Nomoto Schumann
Orange County Superior Court
North Justice Center
P.O. Box 5000
Fullerton, CA 92838

President-elect
Hon. James McKay
4th Circuit Court of Appeal
410 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Editor
Edward L. Schumann
1801 Orange Tree Lane, Suite 240
Redlands, CA 92374

Managing Editor
Chuck Campbell
National Center for State Courts