

President's Column

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Since assuming the presidency in Maui last September, I have been invited to attend numerous meetings of other organizations. The AJA reciprocates by inviting the president of these organizations to attend our meetings. This interaction between the AJA and these organizations provides for a closer working relationship between the respective memberships. Listed below are some of the meetings I have attended and a brief description of what occurred at these conferences.

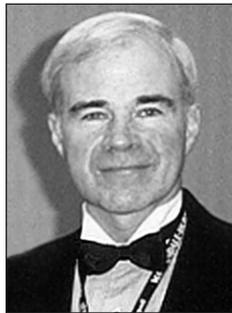
• **Criminal Justice Summit on Impaired Driving sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in cooperation with the National Criminal Justice Association**—November 21-22, 2002, Washington, DC. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation. Approximately 100 participants, all of whom deal with issues involving criminal justice and impaired driving, attended the summit. Representatives from law enforcement, the judiciary, court administrators, corrections, criminal justice, prosecutors, public defenders, and traffic safety attended. The focus was to identify problems within the criminal justice system in dealing with impaired drivers, with a special emphasis on repeat offenders. The attendees were each assigned to breakout groups, which discussed issues pertaining to enforcement, prosecution, adjudication and disposition. At the conclusion, the participants made recommendations to Dr. Jeffrey Runge, MD, the NHTSA administrator.

• **Conference of State Court Administrators, Midyear Meeting**—December 5-7, 2002, Captiva Island, Florida. The three-day conference was presided over by their president, Patricia Tobias, who serves as the Administrative Director of the Courts for the State of Idaho. One of the main topics discussed at the meeting was the issue of managing the court funding crisis. This subject was discussed at all of the conferences I have attended. Other topics of the educational program included a report from the National Center for State Courts, developing performance measures for court operations, a security summit update, and problem-solving courts.

• **American Judges Association Executive Committee Meeting**—January 16-19, 2003, Santa Barbara, California. The date of the meeting was selected to provide a meeting of the AJA's officers midway between the Annual Educational

Conference in Maui and the Midyear Meeting in Billings, Montana. The committee reviewed issues pertaining to the budget, the Annual and Midyear Conferences, site selection protocols, membership, the National Center for State Courts, and the AJA House of Delegates. This meeting enables the Officers to review those issues vital to the governance of the association.

• **Conference of Chief Justices, Midyear Meeting**—January 26-30, 2003, Williamsburg, Virginia. The Conference of Chief Justices was presided over by its president, Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the State of New York. Much of the work of the conference, as is the case of many organizations, is conducted through its committees. I attended several of the committee meetings, including the State-Federal Relations Committee and Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary. Other topics and educational sessions included NAFTA, international trade agreements, and a roundtable discussion regarding confronting challenges.



• **National Association for Court Management Midyear Meeting**—March 2-4, 2003, Tucson, Arizona. The conference was convened by NACM's president, Joi Sorensen, who serves as the Assistant to the Executive Officer of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. Topics of the educational sessions were unequal treatment in the justice system, court interpretations, serving the self-represented, developing cultural competency, and overcoming poverty barriers to equal treatment within the courts. Workshops were also conducted involving judicial branch education as a best practice, problem-solving courts, and defining racial and gender bias, with a discussion of resolutions to those problems as well as developing cultural competency.

• **National College of Probate Judges Spring Conference**—May 7-10, 2003, Galveston, Texas. Judge Lawrence A. Belskis of Columbus, Ohio, president of the college, presided over the meeting. The topics of the educational sessions included modeling a successful volunteer guardianship program, Texas probate law and procedure, community property systems, what psychiatrists wish probate judges knew, and probate reforms.

In conclusion, we share many of the same problems and concerns with these other organizations. We benefit by mutually exchanging ideas on how best to resolve these issues.