YES WE CAN . . . deliver AJA members highly valued, quality judicial education in paradise. The annual conference at the Westin Resort in Maui, September 7-12, opened with a moving traditional Hawaiian OLE (Chant) offered by Luana Kavaa, an administrator with the Kamahama schools, followed by a warm Aloha welcome by Chief Justice Ronald Moon of the Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii. The conference ended with a fantastic luau, where Hon. Tam Namoto Schumann of Orange County, California, was sworn in as president in front a spectacular sunset on the run-up year to the 50th anniversary of the founding of AJA.

Here are AJA’s officers for 2008-09:

President: Tam Nomoto Schumann  
(tnomoto@occourts.org)

President-elect: James McKay  
(jfm@la4th.org)

Vice President: Mary Celeste  
(mceleste@ci.denver.co.us)

Secretary: Kevin S. Burke  
(Kevin.burke@courts.state.mn.us)

Treasurer: Harold Froehlich  
(Harold.Froehlich@wicourts.gov)

Immediate Past President: Eileen A. Olds  
(eaolds@courts.state.va.us)

William Gorewich (Ontario), Elizabeth Hines (Michigan), and Elliott Zide (Massachusetts) were elected to the AJA Executive Board.

In between, AJA members had the chance to earn 15.50 hours of highly valued continuing judicial education credits. The conference evaluations offer credible evidence that those who attended the 12 education programs, spread over the first three days of the conference, were highly satisfied with their academic experience. Satisfaction rates ranged from a low of 3.70 to a high of 4.63 (out of a perfect score of 5).

Kudos to Hon. Greg Mize (Washington, D.C.) for the highest ranked program, “Jury Trials—Recurring Opportunities to Building Public Trust in Courts,” and his faculty: Judges Michael Town and Shackle Raffetto of Hawaii and Alan Slater, the CEO of the Orange County (California) Superior Court. Runners up include AJA members Richard B. Kayne (Washington), David S. Gorbaty (Louisiana), and Larry D. Willis, Jr. (Virginia) for their ethics program with a raw score of 4.56 and Kimberly Frankel of Oregon for her fast-paced, in-depth coverage of the “Law of Search and Seizure” (4.50). The education committee reviewed more than 400 separate comments about the 29 faculty and 12 courses over the course of the conference and will carefully consider the participants’ many constructive suggestions when planning future education programs.

AJA is fortunate to be able to attract knowledgeable faculty from within our own membership, along with other well-known and respected experts, who work so hard to make conference attendees become more effective judges. AJA also recognizes the significant continued on page two
contributions to the conference from our partners the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Center for State Courts, and the American Judges Foundation. Their efforts and financial support enable the education committee to improve the quality and quantity of judicial education opportunities, helping AJA speak with a clearer and wiser voice that resonates with thousands of judges and the millions they serve throughout the length and breadth of Canada and the United States.

Look for the excellent conference materials on the AJA Web site (http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/) under “Conferences.” Conference photos can be found online here: http://www.pictology.com/ecom/events/events.aspx?vendor-account=1323904082&event-code=aja&event-password=aja

Or follow these instructions:

- Open your Web browser, and go to http://www.pictology.com/
- Enter the photographer’s account number 1323904082, click on the “go” link
- Enter the event code aja
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Mark your calendars for AJA’s 2009 Midyear Meeting, May 14-16 at the Sundial Beach Resort, Sanibel Island, Florida!
Interview with AJA President Tam Schumann

Benchmark recently caught up with incoming president Tam Schumann and had the chance to get her perspective on the year ahead. Here are some of her comments:

Benchmark: Congratulations on the success of the Hawaii conference and your appointment to president of the AJA. What do you see as the greatest challenges to the AJA in the coming year?

Tam Schumann: Thank you. I think our biggest challenge continues to be increasing our membership base through new membership and spreading the word as to what the AJA can offer. Our organization is unique in its ability to provide not only broad education to the judiciary but in fostering the exchange of communication between judges of various states and provinces. This allows for a dialogue for discussing problems and solutions to issues faced across North America. The networking element alone is a distinctive characteristic of the AJA. We have also established a new Legislation Committee, which is charged with keeping members apprised of national and local legislation affecting the judiciary.

BM: There is a strong Canadian presence in the AJA. How do you see their role in the AJA?

TS: The issues faced by the Canadian judiciary are not so different from those in the U.S. Still, they offer their own perspective on those issues and bring to the table problems and concerns which may benefit from the experiences of their southern neighbors.

BM: Speaking of southern neighbors, would you like to see more participation from Mexico?

TS: Of course. In the past we have had Mexican members and we should foster more involvement. Perhaps members of the border states can take a role in that invitation. For example, I believe Texas judges have some communications with Mexico and hopefully we can explore those contacts.

BM: What is the legacy you hope to leave from your tenure as president?

TS: I’m very excited about the white paper. The focus of the paper is on identifying stressors and, most importantly, suggesting means for reducing stress and increasing psychological wellness in the judiciary. On a pragmatic level, I’m hopeful that our judges can take the results to their courts’ governing bodies who will implement some of the suggestions, such as the concept of sabbaticals for tenured judges. I also hope to energize the AJA, keeping us on the cutting edge of court technology, such as the move toward going paperless and efforts to make our courts more “green.” I want to work toward improving means of communication between our members. As I mentioned, one strength of the AJA is our judicial network; I hope we can find new ways to exploit that strength through innovative means of communication.

BM: What do you see as the impediment to fulfilling your goals?

TS: With the current state of the economy, courts are more reluctant to support judicial education out of state. We see less and less reimbursement for travel expenses and even for registration fees for our conferences. This has a huge negative impact on membership and active participation. I’m optimistic that AJA will continue as a dynamic, interesting, and valuable resource such that judges will make membership a priority.

BM: One last question. On a personal level, what does this presidency mean to you?

TS: I’m extremely honored that I was elected to lead this wonderful organization. I volunteered to be a board member.

New AJA president Tam Nomoto Schumann.

New Committee on Legislation & Elections

AJA president Tam Schumann has formed a new committee, the Legislation and Elections Committee. The purpose of this committee will be to collect information and serve as a resource regarding information on legislation or elections that might be of interest to AJA members. The Chair will be Marlene L. Allen-Hammarlund, senior counsel at Gresham Savage Nolan & Tilden, and former Judge Pro Tem in Riverside County, California. Since this is a new committee, the chair remains open to suggestions about how it can be used to best assist AJA members. Articles will be presented in Benchmark periodically containing information of interest. Marlene would appreciate receiving information from members regarding legislation or elections that impact the judiciary. She can be contacted at Marlene.Allen@GreshamSavage.com, or (951) 823-8305.
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Toni Higginbotham
Richard Kayne

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Steve Leben
James McKay
Leon Ruben

BYLAWS
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Kimberly Frankel
Sheila Woods-Skipper

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Richard Kayne
Steve Leben
Joe Perez

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Peter Sferrazza

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Sandra Thompson, Cochair (2008)
Martha Ashburn
Renee Wilson

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Mary Celeste
Harold Froehlich
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James McKay
Eileen Olds
Elliott Zide

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Steering Committee
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John Conery
Elizabeth Hines
Jerrald Jones
Sandra Thompson

Task Force
Gerard Alonge

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Gerard Alonge

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Michael Morgan
Heather Morse

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William Gorewich, Advisor (2008)

AJA WHITE PAPER
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Interview with AJA President Tam Schumann, continue

member after my first conference where I was impressed mainly with the members but also with what the AJA has to offer. It’s been something of a dream since then—being appointed to the executive committee and then elected into the officer ranks. Hopefully, new members will see this as encouraging their own participation and recognize that this is not an old boys’ club but a vibrant and exciting organization forging ahead. I want to welcome those new members especially to become involved with our various committees and to take an active role in guiding the AJA. I also want to recognize the past leaders of the AJA who have provided me with both role models and valuable mentors.

As the American Judges Association expresses condolences to the family of Charles H. Whitebread, who was the George T. and Harriet E. Pfleger Chair in Law of the University of Southern California School of Law. Prof. Whitebread succumbed to lung cancer on September 16, 2008 at the age of 65.

His annual updates on “Recent Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court” has long been a highlight of AJA’s annual conferences. He was highly regarded for his “larger-than-life” personality and was recognized for his excellence in the classroom with the William A. Rutter Distinguished Teacher award last spring. He has twice been honored as USC’s Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year by the Student Bar Association.

Prof. Whitebread taught at the University of Virginia School of Law for 13 years before joining the faculty at USC.

Prof. Charles H. Whitebread
New NCSC Resources for Fall 2008

The National Center for State Courts has developed a new Web site, educational program, and publications on court budgets, election laws, drug-court performance measurement, trends in state courts, and capital punishment.

The new Budget Resource Center provides access to all the pertinent information NCSC has on court budgets—what courts need to weather current and future budget crises—in one central location. Items include Court Executive Development Program papers, Future Trends articles, and links to court-budget Web sites. The Budget Resource Center is a project of NCSC’s Knowledge and Information Services Office and can be found online at http://www.ncsconline.org/wc/budget/home.asp.

NCSC and the College of William & Mary Law School have developed an educational program to help improve judges’ understanding of election-law cases—Election Controversies: The Basics of Election-Related Litigation. This program, which is available free of charge on DVD, includes lectures, an election-law manual, articles, and a glossary of terms. You can review all the materials at www.electionlawissues.org. To order a free copy of the DVD, go to http://www.ncsconline.org/D_ICM/freeresources/index.asp#dvd.

Measuring the performance of drug courts, and helping drug courts compete with the existing priorities of the judicial system for limited resources, is the topic of NCSC’s newest Statewide Technical Assistance Bulletin (vol. 6, July 2008). Performance Measurement of Drug Courts: The State of the Art, which was funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, brings courts up-to-date on NCSC’s development of statewide performance measurement systems for the drug courts of several states. The bulletin is available online at www.ncsconline.org.

Future Trends in State Courts 2008 marks the 20th anniversary of NCSC’s “Report on Trends in State Courts” series with a special perspective on six important facets of court operations: Jury Systems, Caseflow Management, Judicial Selection, Judicial Compensation, State Budgets, and Technology. Trends articles take “A Closer Look” at five important, court-related topics: Technology, Access to Justice, Financial Issues, Problem-Solving Issues, and Judicial Administration. Articles were contributed not only by NCSC staff, but also by consultants and state court officials at all levels. Call NCSC’s Knowledge and Information Services at (800) 616-6164 to obtain copies of Future Trends in State Courts 2008. The new Future Trends, as well as past entries in the series, can be viewed online at www.ncsconline.org.

The current issue of NCSC’s Justice System Journal (vol. 29, no. 3) examines “Court-Related Aspects of Capital Punishment.” Articles are grouped into four sections: The Law and Courts, Lawyers, Jurors, and Efforts at System Reform. Topics include the U.S. Supreme Court’s death penalty jurisprudence, the private bar’s efforts to secure representation for those facing execution, stress and capital jurors, and capital-punishment reform in New Jersey and Illinois. JSJ is published three times per year; rates are $40/1 year, $70/two years (international subscribers, except Canada, should add $30 for delivery via air mail PMT). For more information and to subscribe, go online to www.ncsconline.org/D_Comm/Services/Submissions/JSJ1.htm.

AJA Members in the NEWS

JA Board member Judge John E. Conery was elected president of the Louisiana District Judges Association at the organization’s annual conference on October 6, 2008. The president is elected for a one-year term beginning October 1, 2008.

Judge Conery serves the 16th Judicial District, Parishes of St. Mary, Iberia, and St. Martin, and was also elected chief judge of the judicial district court. Before his election to the bench in 1995, he practiced law for 25 years. Judge Conery graduated cum laude from Loyola Law School in 1970, where he served on the law review and as president of the student bar association.

AJA honored Judge Conery with the Judge Bob Jones Memorial Award for excellence in judicial education in 2006.

Former AJA president (1996-97) Circuit Judge Jeffrey Rosinek retired from the bench of the Miami-Dade Drug Court, the nation’s first such court, in August 2008. Judge Rosinek served there for 10 of his 22 years on the bench.

Thousands of defendants have graduated from the Miami-Dade Drug Court and become productive members of society. On the day of Judge Rosinek’s retirement, he graduated 93 drug-court defendants, and County Mayor Carlos Alvarez presented him with a plaque with proclaiming that it was “Jeff Rosinek Day.”
## AJA Insignia Wear

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