

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### *CASD Owner's Manual*

by Wayne Alan Hughes

*Wayne Alan Hughes is CASD's President for 2009. He practiced criminal and domestic law before joining with his "significant other," Tracee Lorens, to practice in various areas of complex civil litigation. Their first trial, as co-counsel, served as a chapter in Judge Ehrenfreud's book, You Be the Jury. Currently he practices in the areas of mass torts and class actions for which he received two Outstanding Trial Lawyer Awards. He is blessed with three children: Alexander Zaharopoulos Hughes, MBA Oxford, Vice President at Wells Fargo; Cassandra Zaharopoulos Hughes, completing Vet. school; and Alexandra Rose Lorens, first year college student and dynamic carbon copy of Tracee. You can reach Wayne at: [waynecloud@aol.com](mailto:waynecloud@aol.com).*

CASD's signature slogan is "Never Stand Alone". I cannot imagine three better words to describe our most important goals. First, we extend to our clients a guarantee that they need not stand alone in the halls of our courts and systems of justice. To our attorney members we extend a network of fellow attorneys through our group list serve and our seminars which provide an attorney in the smallest of firms with many of the benefits of a large association of attorneys.

"Members Only" access to our list serve gives any member the opportunity to ask literally hundreds of other attorneys for help, advice or information. It is also a party line to share both the good and the bad moments. Who can forget the "losers' party" organized for us all by Alexys Kalafer when she lost a trial once? It was a reminder that attorneys' who never lose a case might not be reaching high enough for their clients. List serve mixers and parties provide low cost opportunities for members to put faces to the names we see on list serve. Seminars such as the "Tuesday Night Labs" are designed so that people in attendance get to know one another and obtain opportunities to form their own professional networks of support.

This month's column is dedicated to explaining how our organization functions and the path any member is invited to follow if he or she desires to express an opinion, participate as a committee member, a member of the board of directors or an officer. In other words, if you want to participate in running CASD in the future, here are the basics you need to understand.

Our paid staff consists of three people. Our executive director, who serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors ("BOD"), is Bonnie R. Benitez. Two of Bonnie's most outstanding acts are the selection of her two staff members, Esther Andrews a.k.a. Lady Esther, Events Coordinator, and Chloe San Agustin, Membership Coordinator. These three are the oil which lubricates the association. These three make everything behind the scenes ready when the curtain goes up on any function. All three wear a friendly smile, even during the most frustrating of times. Treat them kindly. The office contact information is 619-696-1166 or [casd@casd.org](mailto:casd@casd.org).

However, paid staff is probably less than a third of the picture. **CASD exists only because of the work of volunteers.** In a membership of almost 700 last year, a group of less than 30 did 95% of the volunteer work. We would welcome the opportunity to share the work with you.

In 2009, we have a total of 10 standing committees as follows:

<u>Committee:</u>	<u>Chair(s):</u>
Awards	Jim Spievak and Steve Vosseller
Communications	Kerry Hoxie and Jon R. Williams
Education	Joel Bryant and John Rice
Events	Karin Wick
Government Relations	Raul Cadena
Long Term Planning	Scott Levine
Marketing	George de la Flor
Membership	L. Tracee Lorens and Rebecca Lack Mowbray
Outreach	John Gomez and Steve Vosseller
Sponsorships & Affinity Partnerships	Joel Selik

For directors and officers, the starting point is committee work. The majority of what makes CASD function is volunteer work. Our bylaws require that in order to be a director, a candidate must have been a member for two years preceding the election or have served on a committee for at least one year [Article XII, section 4.2]. As a practical matter, when a member is considered for the BOD, the most commonly asked question is “what committee work has the person performed and how well?” In my experience, people selected for the BOD are selected primarily on reputation and merit in their volunteer work for CASD. So the starting point toward leadership positions in CASD is the committee system. On page 17 of this issue is a description of the committees and the members serving on each. We urge you to select a committee and join.

We try to put everyone to work who volunteers. If you want to serve, either ask a committee chair or write me at [waynecloud@aol.com](mailto:waynecloud@aol.com) with a subject line that stands out, *i.e.*, volunteering to work, etc. Generally, if you want to be on a committee, you will be so placed with the possible exception of the Awards committee.

If you want to work on a special project or feel that you aren't being used effectively email me with your requests.

Currently the BOD is a more diverse group than most members know. Without singling out anyone, let me give you some personal observations. One of the more interesting statistics is that of 24 directors, six are married to attorneys (and let's not hear that it is only because no one else would

have them). Approximately 17 are from firms of three or fewer attorneys. Three or maybe four are from large firms. Not all 24 are financially secure. There may be at least eight directors who frequently struggle to make a living yet find time to volunteer. At least four are young in the profession. The areas of law practiced by members of the BOD include personal injury, medical and legal malpractice, employment law, elder abuse, liens, civil rights cases, product defects, premises liability and property law, class actions, focus groups, etc. The BOD is not a monolith nor does it desire to be one. We work to preserve as much diversity as possible in terms of the fields of law represented, gender and ethnic background.

Ten of our 24 directors are women, but only one of six members on the executive committee is female. As the father of two daughters, I strongly believe that women still run into glass ceilings even in otherwise liberal organizations. We need to work on removing any artificial barriers to advancement.

We have failed, in my opinion, as an association to build a membership with anything close to the diversity of our community in terms of ethnic or cultural background. Suggestions in this area are more than welcomed.

When I run into members I don't know, I always ask what they think is being done well and what could be done better. Use [waynecloud@aol.com](mailto:waynecloud@aol.com) to send the BOD your suggestions for what CASD can do to better serve you the member -- the owner of this "Never Stand Alone" organization.

Our BOD is limited to a maximum of 24 members. In most years, three to seven members will be replaced. If you want to be on the BOD, feel free to ask any staff member or board member to be considered once you meet the minimum qualifications.

Six members of our BOD also serve as officers of the association and constitute the executive committee. Each year one member of the BOD is selected to become the newest member of the executive committee -- the parliamentarian. In order to become a member of the executive committee, a member must have been a member of the BOD for at least two years immediately preceding his or her election as an officer. The six members on the executive committee normally rotate through each of six chairs and eventually become president. The rotation goes from parliamentarian to secretary to treasurer to vice-president to president-elect to president. The members filling these offices are listed, along with all the other members of the BOD, on the inside cover of our monthly magazine, *Trial Bar News*, and on our website. Our bylaws are also on our website as is our Mission Statement

In the simplest terms, to lead, volunteer and work.