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President's Column

Brian MacKenzie

In my first column as president of the American Judges Association (AJA), I wrote about how our organization was working to improve itself. In the time since, I believe that effort has proven to be successful.

The growing number of Canadian judges in the AJA is a reflection of our commitment to representing all judges across North America. In this issue, you will see a new column from Canadian judge Wayne Gorman with the heading "Thoughts from Canada." He has provided some very practical advice on the issue of recusal, along with an overview of Canadian recusal rules.

It is not simply an influx of new Canadian judges that has fueled the renewed growth of our organization. Rather, the AJA has worked hard to spread its message that it is the Voice of the Judiciary®, with goals to reflect the diversity of judges across North America while keeping its commitment to Making Better Judges®.

As part of that effort, this year we began publishing a series of email broadcasts entitled "The Rundown" in an effort to explain how the AJA represents its members. If you haven't provided your email address or your spam filter has prevented you from receiving the emails, you can find them at this link: <http://amjudges.org/updates/>.

In October, the AJA's newest position paper, "Procedural Fairness and Drug Treatment Courts: Making The Judge The Key Component," will be presented at our annual educational conference. This position paper builds off the groundbreaking work on procedural fairness that has been a hallmark of the AJA. Our efforts to bring the four principles of procedural fairness to the forefront of the judicial conversation will continue next year, as we have reached an agreement to work with the National Association for Court Management to develop a joint

position paper and benchbook on the topic of the procedurally fair court.

This year, former AJA president Elliott Zide led an effort to revise our bylaws. In this issue of *Court Review*, there is a discussion of these proposed bylaws changes. (See pp. 126-27.) They are designed to modernize the AJA's governing structure so that it is better able to withstand challenges in the 21st century. The new bylaws will be voted upon by the membership at

the Seattle conference, so I hope you will take a moment to read about these proposed changes. Even if you're not going to be at the conference, please let us know what you think.

If you are thinking about attending the conference, it will be held October 4-7 at the Sheraton in downtown Seattle. This year the AJA has partnered with the Washington State Judiciary and the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE). Bringing together three organizations into one conference was challenging and exhilarating. Every year I look forward to the AJA conference, but as a result of these joint efforts, the scope of the offerings is truly exceptional. If you haven't been to an AJA conference, perhaps this is the time to attend. In closing, let me repeat the challenge that I made in my first column: Do more than be a member. Join one of the many AJA committees, and share your thoughts about making us all better judges. Think about running for the Board of Governors and working to grow the AJA. Get involved, if in no other way than by sending the incoming president John Conery an email with advice and asking him to share it with the membership. Lend us your voice to strengthen our voice in the ongoing debate about role of judges. I hope you enjoy the rest of this issue of *Court Review*; when you set it down, I hope that you will take up the AJA.

