

The Contra Coaster

32nd District PTA

A publication of the 32nd District PTA,
serving Contra Costa County

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

Sue Woodworth-Bennett, President

Maureen Chang, Editor

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From Our President

As I have stated before, one of the benefits of being part of PTA is belonging to a larger organization. The PTA offers many avenues of support, including the National and California State websites (pta.org and capta.org), and more help on the localized level through 32nd District PTA and your Council (32ndpta.org, Contra Coaster newsletter, phone calls, emails, and face-to-face meetings). In addition, you have bylaws, the Toolkit, and last but not least, the Insurance Guide, and our fabulous Insurance Brokers, UnionBanc Insurance Services, Inc.

I consider the Insurance Guide to be one of the most important tools a PTA President can have. It contains:

- Certificate of Liability Insurance
- Hold Harmless Agreement
- Facilities Use Permit Addendum
- Parent's Approval and Student Waiver
- Participants Waiver
- List of approved and prohibited activities and events

The Insurance Guide contains, in various corresponding colored pages, a list of possible PTA activities. Those listed on the red pages are absolutely forbidden because these activities are either not covered or a danger to children. The yellow pages list activities that may require special arrangements to hold. And, the green pages contain approved events. If you are looking for ideas for programs or fundraisers, look no further, there are plenty of ideas on those (green) pages.

If you have any question about an event, there is a toll-free number (800-733-3036) that you can call. A live person who is knowledgeable about PTA will answer the phone and help you.

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Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

William Butler Yeats

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If you attempted to purchase this insurance for your school privately, the cost would be several thousand dollars. You simply cannot beat the combination of reasonable rates and personal service.

The Insurance Guides were mailed directly to the PTA president's homes during the month of November. If you did not receive your Guide, please check with the past president of your association to see if it was delivered there. If you still cannot locate it, contact your Council president (see list above), or me. You can also download one from the website at www.ari-pta.com user name pta password member.

Sue Woodworth-Bennett
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A Message from Our County Superintendent of Schools

Recently, in the East County edition of the Contra Costa Times, an article described the daily traffic congestion of an area in Brentwood that hosts a comprehensive high school and middle school. One of the parents referred to it as "...mayhem. I leave mentally exhausted every single day." The article went on to describe the "confusion of commuters running red lights, parents making illegal stops and U turns...and youths dashing across the street inside and outside of the crosswalks."

Now, in all fairness, there definitely is a need to look at the traffic flow within the area described in the article, but additional lanes, rerouting traffic, and altering school schedules are also options that need to be considered. However, it is still incumbent upon the parents to drive in a safe and sane manner.

As we approach the rainy season of this school year, it is imperative that everyone become an extremely cautious driver in the vicinity of our schools. Our children are our most precious resource, and to bring harm to them is inexcusable. Additionally, our children are watching us as we drive, and I would hope that any display of reckless driving does not become a standard that our youth would want to emulate when they become old enough to drive vehicles themselves.

So, as we continue with our school year, let's make a commitment to be safe and cordial drivers.

Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools, Contra Costa County



Congratulations to San Ramon Valley Council for winning the 2008 National PTA Outstanding Advocacy Award !

The San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs has been chosen by the National PTA to receive the 2008 PTA Outstanding Advocacy Award. Their combination of local and state advocacy, along with their parent and community education, impressed National PTA and was said to be "nothing short of outstanding". The Council will be presented with the award and a check for \$500 at the National Legislative Conference in Washington, DC this coming February.

California State PTA Convention



State PTA Convention – Long Beach, Online Registration is fast approaching!

Mark Feb 4 on your calendars.

Hopefully by now your unit has identified convention delegates. Our goal is to have 1 delegate representing each unit in the District. If you are a new unit, you may be eligible for scholarship funding, please contact me for more details.

The Online Registration site will be accessible beginning Feb 4 through April 17 on www.capta.org, then click on “Convention Registration”. You will be able to pay for registration, the State PTA dinner on Thursday May 1, the 32nd District Dinner on Saturday May 3, and the \$25.00 District Fee through Online Registration. **The \$25.00 district fee is mandatory for all convention delegates.** The Delegate Lounge (aka Hospitality Suite) is available to all 32nd District participants and will be open the morning of May 1 through the morning of May 4, during non-session hours. The Delegate Lounge will be conveniently located at the Hyatt Hotel, adjacent to the Long Beach Convention Center.

Although individuals may register via mail, 32nd District requests that **ALL** registration be done via the **Online Registration** site for tracking purposes and payment accuracy. For more information please go to www.capta.org/sections/convention.

Hotel reservations are made via FAX or by mail only, also starting Feb 4. 32nd District will reserve a block of rooms at the Hyatt for its officers, but it is up to each unit/group to decide on a hotel and make their own housing reservations. It is suggested that groups FAX or mail their order in together for the best chances to stay in the same hotel. The Convention preferred hotels are (listed in order of closest proximity) the Hyatt, Westin, Renaissance, and the Courtyard.

Each unit/group is also responsible for their own transportation to Long Beach. The closest airport is Long Beach (LGB) and the only carrier from the Bay Area is Jet Blue (www.jetblue.com). Other easily accessible airports are Orange County/John Wayne (SNA) or Los Angeles (LAX). Both Southwest (www.southwest.com) and United (www.united.com) service these airports from the Bay Area. Please book your flights early to get the best fare.

Lastly, the Convention Committee is asking all participants to assist in creating art work for the new State offices in Sacramento. The theme for the collage is “Why I joined the PTA”. Please bring to Convention a 3x5 non-returnable picture of your child or children to be added to the collage.

Convention Fees

- Fulltime registration fee - \$125
- One Day fee - \$80
- Delegate Lounge Fee (at the Hyatt) - \$25
- PTA Dinner, May 1 (at the Aquarium) - \$35
- 32nd District Dinner, May 3 (at the Convention Center) - \$30

If you have any questions or need assistance, please let me know...

Mitzi Reagan
Convention Chair
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925-978-1979

NEW FOR 2008 CONVENTION!

- We have divided our general meeting sessions from four to six meetings in an effort to decrease the length of time per session.
- Student entertainment performances will occur during the general meetings so children will have full attention of delegates when performing.
- PTA Store & exhibit hours increased.
- The State PTA event this year will “kick-off” convention on May 1 with a private party at the famous Aquarium of the Pacific which will include admission to the aquarium, Bar-B-Que dinner and dancing.
- Registration will provide express lines for those with NO registration changes.
- Proof of membership available via online, faxed or mailed registrations.
- Registration fees remain one price from Feb 4 - April 17; next time to register will be onsite, May 1 – 4, where onsite rates apply.
- Join us as we celebrate Students, Arts and Teachers at our various General Meetings.
- Why I Joined PTA! Share with us the reason(s) why you joined PTA by bringing no larger than a 3 x 5 photograph of your child (children) to post on our bulletin board.

Reflections Program



A big thank you goes out to all the Council Reflections chairmen for the wonderful entries that have been turned in for the 32nd District Reflection Program. The entries are all imaginative, creative and so well done! Please mark your calendars for the 32nd District Showcase and awards program that will be held on **Saturday, February 2, 2008 at 2:00 pm at Alhambra High School in Martinez**. The entries being passed on to the State Reflections Program will be announced then.

Wanda Waltman
32nd District Reflections Chairman

Legislation Report

by Janet Abelson

On December 5, 2007, 32nd District President Sue Woodworth-Bennett, Legislation Director Janet Abelson, and Secretary Nancy Vandell attended a meeting with Sarah Hersh from Congressman Jerry McNearney's Office. Our three representatives briefed Ms. Hersh on national issues of importance to the PTA. The topics discussed included full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, and more funding for education.

For more information on these issues, go to www.pta.org.

2008 EdSource Forum on California Education Policy

Big Visions and Hard Realities: What We Can Do Now

This EdSource Forum pulls together top experts from California and around the nation to focus on three of the most pressing issues facing education in California:

- the need to complete a comprehensive education data system,
- the imperative for bold strategies to turn around schools in Program Improvement,
- and the call for a more effective school finance system.

EdSource's 31st Annual Forum focuses on important ideas for state education policy reform.

When & Where:

April 18, 2008

8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

at the Crowne Plaza Cabana,

Palo Alto, California:

Cost: \$60 for EdSource subscribers

(which includes PTA members)

Early Bird Special : \$10.00 discount before March 17

Registration Deadline: April 9, 2008



For more information go to : www.edsource.org

Young Drivers

Provided by Rachel Hurd, VP of Parent & Community Involvement

In 2000, 6,495 people between the ages of 15 and 20 were killed in motor vehicle crashes—the leading cause of death for this age group. And although young drivers represent only 6.6% of the nation's licensed drivers, they are involved in 14.8% of fatal crashes. The National Safety Council urges all parents to familiarize themselves with the risks associated with young, inexperienced drivers.

Facts to Know

- Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death among children and young adults.
- More than 3,800 young drivers age 15-20 are killed every year in traffic crashes. More than 326,000 young drivers are injured.
- Young drivers are involved in fatal traffic crashes at over twice the rate as the rest of the population.
- Exceeding the posted speed limit or driving at an unsafe speed is the most common error in fatal accidents.
- About 30% of crashes killing young drivers involve alcohol.
- More than 1,000 young drivers lose their lives every year in crashes because of an impaired driver...be it themselves, or someone else.
- It is illegal in every state for a person under 21 to buy and/or publicly possess alcoholic beverages.
- All states and Washington, D.C. have zero tolerance laws. It is illegal for a minor (under 21) to purchase alcohol, so no amount of alcohol should be allowed in an underage driver.
- Zero tolerance laws are typically set between .00 and .02 *per se* as opposed to .08 or .10 for drivers 21 and older. *Per se* means that regardless of outward signs of intoxication, the amount of alcohol detected in the driver determines legal intoxication.

Graduated Licensing Saves Lives

Since inexperience is a leading factor in traffic crashes involving youth, graduated licensing makes good sense. This licensing system ensures that young drivers accumulate driving experience under controlled circumstances.

Graduated licensing includes three steps: Learner, Provisional (Intermediate), and Full Licensure. Each of these steps includes certain restrictions tied to the permit. Restrictions address things such as: the use of alcohol (zero tolerance), nighttime driving, teenage passengers, all occupants must wear safety belts, permit holder must remain crash and conviction free for a certain amount of time, etc. Currently, 44 states and the District of Columbia have implemented graduated driver licensing.

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Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council, a membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health.

Six Ways to Be a Media-Savvy Parent This Year

By Liz Perle, Common Sense Media

1. Visit an online social networking site. If you have young kids, check out Club Penguin. Embrace their enthusiasm, but educate yourself about what goes on. For your older kids, visit Facebook or MySpace. Ask them to show you their pages.
2. Play a video game with your kid. Not one of the really gross ones -- try one of the Guitar Hero games. Or play a sports game on the Wii, or pass a football with Madden. The best way to keep kids away from violent games is to help them enjoy time with you without having to maim a living soul.
3. Download something your kids will like. Pick a song they've never heard. Then ask them to play something for you that you've never heard. Put in your two cents afterward.
4. Check out YouTube. Your kids have -- probably when they were looking for something funny. So go to the comedy section, find something you like, and surprise them.
5. Invest in a digital video recorder (DVR). All cable systems now have them, and TiVo is always a great option. But whatever method you use, take control of the TV this year. Record what you like, create your own channels (like TiVo's KidZone), fast forward through the ads, and skip the shows that really make you wonder about the fate of humankind.
6. Learn how to manage your kids' online lives. Check site histories, set appropriate age filters, and check out the parental controls on your browser. Teach your kids the basics of safe searching (Google has a safe-search setting), and give them a digital code of conduct. Don't let them figure it all out by themselves. (For more tips, check out our Internet Survival Guide.)

Thanks to Common Sense Media for the above information www.common sense media.org/parent_tips/common sense_view/index.php?id=270

Membership News

The 2007 -2008 membership challenge is that every unit and district increases their membership by 5% to earn a Membership Challenge Award. More important than our challenge, however, is that each PTA actually reaches out to **ALL** members of the school community. Make your PTA welcoming to, and reflective of, the community of which you are a part. PTA needs to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve! Set your own goals and develop your own incentives for membership growth and then encourage everyone in your PTA to work toward meeting those goals.

Your membership campaign can strengthen the PTA voice so that policy makers in all areas and at all levels will hear strong unified message on behalf of children, youth, and families... every**child.onevoice**. You still have many opportunities to recruit new members:

- Write monthly articles for your newsletters explaining the value of PTA membership
- Create welcome packets for new students with an invitation to join PTA
- Have a membership table at all school events, including Back-To-School, Open House, Carnivals, Talent Shows, and Musical Presentations etc.

Please submit all per capita dues collected so far to your council/treasurer as soon as possible. The final mandatory installment is due to 32nd District by March 15th. Each unit should submit their dues monthly rather than waiting until the deadline

If you have any questions, please e-mail me at Poochcfl@aol.com.

Chris Low, 4th VP of Membership, 32nd District PTA

DELEGATION: THE KEY TO GROWTH

Reprinted with permission from the CA State PTA Communicator

Here are six steps recognized by most management authorities to achieve effective delegation:

1. Review the tasks to be done. Determine which ones others should do.
 2. Select the person *best suited* for the specific task.
 3. Encourage, train and motivate the person to accept the assignment.
 4. Explain the task fully and then turn over the job and the authority to accomplish it to that person.
Check to be certain that your instructions are clearly understood. Give the reason the job needs to be done.
Specify the results you expect. Ask questions to be sure that you have been understood and then step away and let that person complete the task.
 5. Provide support, encourage independence and help develop confidence.
Restrain from over-checking on the progress of the task.
 6. Keep supervisory control, because, ultimately, proper completion of the task is your responsibility.

Nominating committee already!

It is that time of year again; Time to get your nominating committee elected. What? You say. But it is only January and elections aren't for several months. That is exactly why you need to do it now.

If you have already elected your committee, fantastic job! You deserve a gold star. Hopefully they are well on their way to building a successful PTA board for your next school year.

The purpose of the nominating committee is to seek out qualified nominees for the elected leadership of your PTA. Who they nominate will affect the future of your PTA and they should take great care in their duties. The committee should represent the full membership of your PTA and not just one group. They should be knowledgeable about your school community and PTA's purposes.

Your nominating committee is not appointed. They are elected at least two months prior to your annual election meeting. Your bylaws specify how many members are on the committee and how many alternates. Remember, no member can serve two consecutive years on the committee. The president of your PTA also cannot be a member of the committee.

It is important that the nominating committee is discreet and confidential in their discussions. This is not an open meeting. In order for the committee to do a thorough job in choosing the best nominee, they must be able to discuss and know the qualifications of all potential nominees.

Be sure your nominating committee has all the tools to do their job. They will need a copy of your bylaws and job descriptions. More information from the California State PTA can be found in your toolkit or at: <http://www.capta.org/sections/management/nominations.cfm>.

Annette Lewis, 32nd District Parliamentarian

DOs and DON'Ts For Nominating Committees

DO Study carefully the qualifications of members before presenting the name as a nominee.

DON'T Submit a member's name as a nominee because she/he is a friend of yours.

DO Check the membership list to be sure nominee is a member of the organization.

DON'T Nominate a person with the thought that it is a good way to get him to join the PTA.

DO Remember that committee DISCUSSION is left in the meeting room.

DON'T Repeat what was said in the committee meeting to anyone.

DO See that the report of the nominating committee is publicized through the proper channels.

DON'T Report the results until it has been publicized through the proper channels.

DO Accept an office yourself if you are sincerely interested in the purpose of the organization.

DON'T Accept the office if you are only interested in having your name in the yearbook.

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32nd District PTA Calendar 2007-2008

February 2	2:00pm	Alhambra High	Reflections Showcase
February 11	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
February 28	6:15	Zio Fraedo's	Founder's Day Dinner
March 17	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
March 31	7:00-9:00pm	CCCOE	General Meeting
April 21	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
May 1-4	-	Long Beach	CA State PTA Convention
May 19	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
June 16	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting



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We're on the Web!
www.32ndpta.org

32nd District PTA

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