

The Contra Coaster

32nd District PTA

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

Kathy Rabun, President Rachel Hurd, Editor

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

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President's Message by Kathy Rabun

Welcome back to a new school year! I hope you all had a relaxing and fun summer break and that you are ready for a great and fun- year in PTA.

Sometimes we have a tendency to think we know everything about PTA because we've been involved for so long. As 32nd District President for the last year, I've confirmed that I definitely don't know everything; in fact I still have much to gain by listening to others, particularly those new to PTA. We **all** need to refer to PTA resources. If we can't find what we need, we should ask for help. Remember, one big advantage of PTA is that we are not alone!

Different levels of PTA are in place support your work on behalf of children. All PTAs in 32nd District (all of Contra Costa County) belong to a Council. PTA Councils include all PTAs in a certain geographical area and are responsible for providing counseling, training and coordination of projects that benefit their PTA units. As a PTA unit officer, you will turn first to your Council for assistance. Your Council is also where you submit per capita (membership), insurance premiums, reports (budget, year-end financials, audits, historian, workers' compensation forms) and Reflections entries. The councils in Contra Costa County are Bayside Council in West County; Delta Council in East County; Las Trampas Creek, Martinez, and Mt Diablo Councils in Central County; and San Ramon Valley Council in South County. All council presidents are a member of the 32nd District PTA executive board.

You may also contact 32nd District. Our responsibilities include keeping lines of

communication open between units & councils and State & National PTA, as well as developing leadership by strengthening councils and units. The 32nd District president is a member of the California State PTA Board of Managers and is the State PTA representative in Contra Costa County. To facilitate strengthening councils and units, 32nd District held a **Leadership Academy** on August 12 at the Willow Creek Center in Concord. We presented 10 workshops on various aspects of leadership and had opportunities for people to network with other PTA people from around the county, as well as get information on county and community based services available in Contra Costa County. The keynote speaker was Pat Dingsdale, a California State PTA Legislative Advocate, who spoke to parents being advocates for their children at every different level, from doctors, schools, school districts, county government, state and national government, and everything in between. It was a great day with a good vibe in the room. Thanks to all of you who chose to be part of it.

To aid with communications, 32nd District will once again provide each PTA President and Treasurer, School Principal, School District Superintendent, and Council Board Member with a directory of every PTA within Contra Costa County. Please use this directory for PTA purposes only; feel free to contact your counterparts to ask questions, share concerns and compare notes on successful programs.

In addition you will receive 6 issues of *The Contra Coaster*. Some of the articles will be directed at officers new to PTA, but we

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Don't miss the opportunity to hear **Delaine Eastin** Past State Superintendent of Education speak at the 32nd District PTA General Meeting on October 16th. See page 3.

A Message from the County Superintendent of Schools

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

By the time this newsletter reaches you, the school year will be well under way and everyone will be preparing for autumn. The excitement and jitters of the first day of school have passed, our children have adjusted to their new teachers (and vice versa), and friendships among our children have been renewed. This is the perfect time to continue to be involved in our children's education as parents. As a father of two sons who now have successfully graduated from college, received their master's degrees, become gainfully employed, and married, I know there is light at the end of the tunnel.

What was important for my wife, Elin, and me as parents was not only that our children do well in school, but that they would enjoy their time in school and become lifelong learners. It was important for us to stay involved in their education. At times, we were advocates for the teachers, and at times we were advocates for our children, but overall we were advocates for an appropriate education.

Every night at the dinner table, we would talk about what each of us had done during the day. I would share what I had done as a teacher or school administrator, my wife would do the same, and our children would share what they had learned both in and out of the classroom. Dinner discussions were always light and informative....and sometimes surprising!

We didn't have the availability of the Internet to tap into our local school's Web site to determine what was required for homework each evening for the subject matters of the various classes our children attended; therefore, in large part, we had to rely on our children's willingness to share with us. We would discuss homework assignments, ask questions regarding what they had learned and the value of what they had learned, and, periodically, check with their teachers in a friendly manner to determine what we could do to support classroom learning while our children were at home.

I am sharing all of this with you because I want to encourage you to do the same. I know that life is moving at an accelerated pace, but it is extremely important to put a brake on that pace periodically to spend time with our most precious resources—our children.

In the September 11th edition of Newsweek, the lead story is entitled, "The New First Grade: Are Kids Getting Pushed Too Fast, Too Soon?" I would suggest that you take the time to read the article and discuss it with your children; also, at your next parent/teacher conference, you may want to discuss it with your child's teacher. It may also be an interesting topic of discussion at your school's next PTA meeting.

With family involvement in our children's education, our kids will have no other option than to succeed by being challenged, enjoying learning, and becoming responsible lifelong learners.

strongly urge "veterans" to read the articles as well. Many of us learned "PTA folklore" and may not be conducting business in the most efficient manner, or in the best interest of all children.

District also has a website you may choose to refer to for information: www.32ndpta.org.

As you begin planning another successful PTA year, it is always helpful to remember the purposes of PTA.

- ◆ To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.
- ◆ To raise the standards of home life.
- ◆ To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- ◆ To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- ◆ To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages of physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Remember to have your association approve your unit's budget and programs, as well as accept the audit from the end of last year. Goals=programs=budget.

Good luck to all of you in reaching the goals you have set for your PTA this year, as well as your personal goals. May 06-07 be your best year yet in PTA! Have FUN!!!!

Kathy Rabun

(925) 349-5772, rrabun@lanset.com

Mark your calendar...you don't want to miss this!

All PTA members in Contra Costa County are invited to attend the

32nd District PTA - General Meeting

Our guest speaker will be

Delaine Eastin

past California State Superintendent of Education

**“Breaking Faith with Our Ancestors
and Betraying Our Children:
California Education in the 21st Century”**

Monday, October 16, 2006

7 p.m.

Mt. Diablo High School MPR (Romaine Room)

Mt. Diablo HS is centrally located in Contra Costa County at
2450 Grant Street, Concord (easily accessed from Route 242)

Questions please contact Aleta Schnaitter, VP-Parent & Community Outreach,
(925) 244-1106 or aschnaitter@hotmail.com

Successful Leadership Academy Training for PTA Leaders

By Carol Ruley, Advisor

On August 12, the 32nd District PTA held a Leadership Academy – training for PTA leaders at the Willow Creek Center in Concord. More than 100 attended the training. According to the evaluations, the training was a great success. Here are a few excerpts from the evaluations:

- ◆ “I’m excited to have direction from experienced and encouraging people - unit PTA president.”
- ◆ “Well done. I found it very helpful as a new unit officer.”
- ◆ “Love the location. Great information and very useful.”
- ◆ “Very helpful and informative for me as I am fairly new to PTA.”
- ◆ “I was very happy with the organization of this academy. The information was very helpful and I feel I learned a lot. Delicious lunch. Thank you”

Thank you to our presenters and attendees for making this event a success. 32nd District hopes to make this an annual event. Look for the date for next year. Best wishes for a successful PTA year to all.

Membership News **By Sue Woodworth-Bennett, 4th VP—Membership**

On the National PTA website, there is an *I want to join* function that provides people who are interested in joining their PTA, a way to be connected to their local PTA. If they click on it, a list of PTAs in their zip code will pop up and one can be selected. This automatically generates an email which up to now has been sent to the California State PTA office and the California State PTA president.

Oftentimes these requests are generated by people (sometimes even the officer themselves) who are just curious about the function. Many are already connected to their PTA and are just checking out the website.

During the last year, the state Membership chair has been responding to each one to assess whether to connect them AND these emails have been sent on to the district presidents (or the district PTA office) from the state office. The districts have possibly then been forwarding them on to the council president, who had to forward them on to the unit president.

Thanks to the new officers lists that are being generated and submitted into OMDR (the National database), the automatic forward from the person interested in joining is now being sent directly to the unit president for follow-up (as long as current up-to-date information for the unit president has been submitted). Obviously it is important for every inquiry to get a response of some kind. You never know if this one inquiry might lead you to the next volunteer super star!

Hopefully this information is helpful and explains the curious emails you may have been receiving. Feel free to contact me at 925-964-0491 or bennettela@aol.com.



Treasurer's Corner **By Janet Abelson, Treasurer, abeljanet@aol.com**

Congratulations and thanks! As a treasurer, you have a very important role in PTA. You are responsible for making sure that forms are filed and bills are paid on time. You may also be responsible for deposits. Your unit is counting on you to complete these tasks in an accurate and timely manner. If you ever need help, just contact your council treasurer. If more help is needed, your council treasurer can always contact me. The answers to many of your questions can be found in the toolkit on the State PTA website at www.capta.org.

Units should send the following forms and payments to the council level by the dates below. Thanks and Good Luck!

Payments

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Per Capita: | |
| Early Bird | October 1, 2006 |
| Chairman's Club | October 15, 2006 |
| Mandatory 1st Remittance | November 1, 2006 |
| Mandatory 2nd Remittance | January 1, 2007 |

Liability & Workers Compensation Insurance:
January 1, 2007

Free Will Offerings (Founder's Day Gifts):
as received

Forms

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Workers Compensation Form | January, 2007 |
| 2005-06 Year-end Financial Report | November 15, 2006 |
| Approved Budget 2006-07 | November 15, 2006 |
| Year-end Audit 2005-06 | November 15, 2006 |
| Mid-year Audit 2006-07 | March 15, 2007 |
| Copy of IRS Form 990 (if gross income \$25,000 or more) | November 15, 2006 |

Leadership Sound Bites **By Kim Lonie, VP Leadership Services**

Being a good leader means giving up the reigns! Good leaders are those that recognize that they can't do it all, all by themselves. Delegate, delegate, delegate! Here are some tips that will help you be a successful leader:

- ~ By delegating you share the responsibility of getting the job done.
- ~ You will develop a mutual trust and self-confidence among the group.
- ~ You will be helping to build future leadership for the organization.
- ~ Remember that PTA isn't everyone's first priority, so don't overburden.
- ~ Try to match individual abilities to the tasks.
- ~ Provide a reachable goal for everyone involved.
- ~ Be generous in your praise. Remember that you like acknowledgement too!
- ~ Be clear in your expectations about the assignment.
- ~ Be encouraging.
- ~ Form a timeline/deadline for the assignment.
- ~ Have periodic progress meetings.

(From the California state PTA Leadership Handbook)

Volunteer Hours – Why Do We Collect Them?

By Carol Ruley for the Historian

Every PTA needs to keep track of its volunteer hours. Next June the California State PTA will be looking forward to recording all the volunteer hours from every unit, council and district in the state.

Once you collect your volunteer hours, your PTA council will ask you to complete an Annual Report. Hours should be collected for the fiscal year from July 1 to June 30.

What hours should be collected?

- ◆ Time spent writing PTA agendas, minutes, correspondence, reports, newsletter articles, etc.
- ◆ Time spent on PTA-related activities at school or within the community.
- ◆ Telephone and computer time regarding PTA business.
- ◆ Travel time to and from PTA activities.
- ◆ Attendance at meetings, workshops and other functions in which you represent PTA.
- ◆ Convention attendance.

Why collect volunteer hours?

- ◆ It is your record of how much PTA members contribute to your school and community.
- ◆ It's a helpful tool when we seek funding for PTA projects
- ◆ It helps empower the California State PTA legislation advocates in Sacramento as they work to better the lives of children, youth and families.
- ◆ It keeps our nonprofit status with the Internal Revenue Service.

A sample of a volunteer hour tally sheet can be found in the summer mailing and on page 471 of the Toolkit. Count your hours. Our children are counting on us.

Parent Involvement – The Rent We Pay For Living

Inspiration from August 2006 Board Meeting, provided by Carol Ruley, Advisor

Marian Wright Edelman is the founder and director of the Children's Defense Fund. She wrote a book called "Lanterns - a Memoir of Mentors. In her book she wrote about the Parent's Pledge and Lessons of Life:

- ◆ Don't wait for, expect or rely on favors. Count on earning them by hard work and perseverance.
- ◆ Don't listen to naysayers offering no solutions or take "no" or "but" for an answer.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to stick your neck out, to make mistakes, or to speak up.
- ◆ Keep your word and your commitments.
- ◆ Be strategic, focus and don't scatter your energies on many things that don't add up to a better whole.
- ◆ Watch out for success. It can be more dangerous than failure.
- ◆ You can't do everything by yourself but you can do a lot.
- ◆ Asking the right questions and measuring the right things may be more important than finding the right answers.
- ◆ Be a pilgrim and not a tourist in life and don't confuse heroism with fame or celebrity.
- ◆ Bear all or most of the criticism and share all of the credit.
- ◆ Be real. Try to do what you say, say what you mean and be what you seem.
- ◆ Be a good ancestor. Stand for something bigger than yourself. Add value to the earth during your sojourn.
- ◆ Never judge the contents of a box by its wrappings.
- ◆ Take responsibility for your behavior. Don't make excuses, blame, or point fingers at others or hide behind "everybody's doing it."
- ◆ Possessions and power don't make the man or woman; principals, character, and love do.

Marian Wright Edelman describes parent involvement as "the rent we pay for living! It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time." Each and every one of you is important in the life of a child. You generously give your time --- your energy --- your ideas --- and your creativity to all you do in PTA. You are literally helping to shape the next generation.

Auditor Note **By Will Sanford, Auditor**

The Auditor's job while often appearing minor is actually one of the most important jobs of any PTSA/PTA. The audit does several things. First, it provides a neutral set of eyes to review the financial information of the PTSA/PTA. Second, it compares the information in the Treasurer's records with the official minutes taken by the Secretary, to ensure that the membership has voted on how to spend funds in order to meet the goals of the PTSA/PTA and has been kept apprised of how funds are actually spent. Finally, it provides protection for both the organization and those individuals charged with the issuance and signing of checks.

As the auditor for the 32nd District, it is my job to help train council auditors and support their training of unit auditors, to collect and track audits for all units of the 32nd District, and most importantly to perform an audit of the 32nd District books and report at our October and March Membership meetings. Audits are done a minimum of twice a year (for the period July thru December and the period January thru June) as well as whenever a treasurer or other authorized signer leaves the Executive Board or if an unusual situation comes to light and people want a quick review of the records before proceeding.

You should be sending your June 30th, 2006 audits through channels (to your council) so that I receive them no later than the 31st of October. If you have questions, please give me a call at (925) 244-1237 or email me at willsanf@aol.com.

September is National Preparedness Month

Provided by Aleta Schnaitter, VP-Parent & Community Outreach

September is National Preparedness Month, a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to prepare, plan, and stay informed in order to be ready in the event of a large-scale emergency. You can make sure your family is prepared by

- ◆ Creating an emergency supply kit.
- ◆ Planning ahead.
- ◆ Learning the most appropriate way to deal with different types of emergencies.
- ◆ Finding out what your state and local government agencies plan to do if a disaster strikes.
- ◆ Having conversations with your kids about emergencies. Explore the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready Kids website as a family, and use it as a way to talk with your children about their fears, concerns, and reactions.

After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies, take the next step—get training in first aid and emergency response, and get involved in preparing your community. Citizen Corps provides residents with opportunities to prepare for emergencies and support local emergency responders. For more information or to get involved, visit citizencorps.gov.

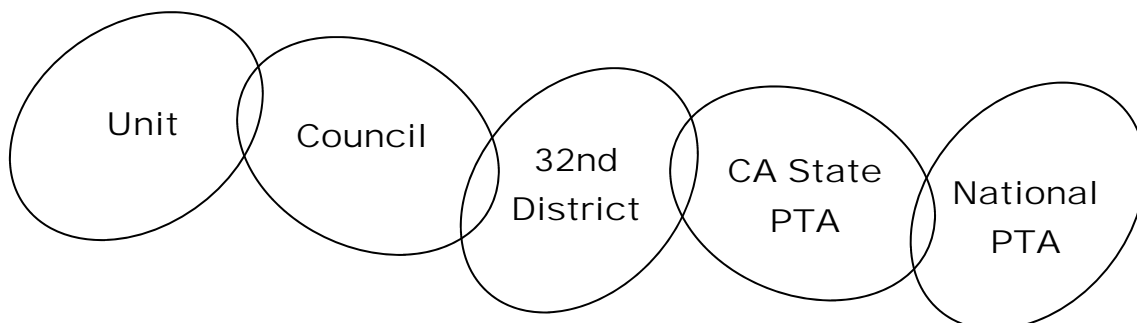
From "This Week in Washington" The National PTA Weekly Newsletter, 9/12/06

California State PTA Convention: May 3-6, 2007

By Maureen Chang, VP-Programs and Convention.

The California State PTA convention will be held May 3-6, 2007, in Sacramento. This is a great way to motivate and train PTA officers and is a legitimate PTA expense. Make sure you include the Convention when approving this year's budget. Housing reservations will be accepted beginning in mid-December and Early-bird Registration will begin in January. This year all Early Bird and Advance registrations will be handled on-line. The District Fee and the optional District Dinner Fee will be collected at the same time. Council Fees and Council Event Fees will be need to be collected separately if applicable. Look for more details closer to these dates. If you would like more information please contact me at 925-743-0464 or at chngng@aol.com.

PTA's 5 levels are linked



32nd District PTA Calendar

| Date | Time | Place | Event/Deadline |
|-------------|----------------|--|--|
| October 16 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE- Las Trampas | District Board Meeting |
| October 16 | 7:00 p.m. | Mt. Diablo High School Romaine Room | General Meeting—guest speaker, Delaine Eastin, former State Superintendent of Education |
| November 13 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| December 8 | | | Reflections Entries due to District |
| December 11 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| January 15 | | | High School Scholarship Applications due Honorary Service Award Nominations due |
| January 20 | 2:00 p.m. | Alhambra High School | Reflections Awards Ceremony |
| January 22 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| February 1 | | | MY PTSA Award applications received by State |
| February 22 | 6:00 p.m. | Zio Fraedo's Ristorante | Founders Day Dinner |
| February 26 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| March 19 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| April 16 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| May 3-6 | | Sacramento | CA State PTA Convention |
| May 15 | | | Annual Reports & Officer Contact Data due |
| May 21 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |
| June 18 | 9:30 AM - Noon | CCCOE | District Board Meeting |

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

Kathy Rabun, President
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