

PTA[®] in California

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VOLUME 66 • NUMBER 4

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

FALL/WINTER 2003



The Nominating Committee

The nominating committee is one of the most important PTA committees. This group of people must recognize and seek qualified nominees for the elected leadership of your PTA. The committee members, therefore, have a tremendous influence on the future of your PTA and should be carefully selected.

It's not too early to begin looking for qualified people to serve on your PTA's nominating committee. Your members can certainly be recruiting willing candidates now. Sometimes all it takes is a suggestion for someone to consider serving. Then, when it's time for the election of the nominating committee, qualified people will be prepared to step forward.

The nominating committee is the only PTA committee that is not appointed by the president. This committee is elected by the membership at least two months prior to the election of officers. Determining when to elect the committee and how many people to elect is outlined in your unit bylaws. Don't forget to elect alternates, in the event an elected committee member cannot attend a committee meeting. Most units should be electing the nominating committee no later than January or February for the election of officers in March or April.

The committee needs a balance of newer and more experienced PTA members, all of whom should be knowledgeable about PTA:

- Are aware of qualified potential nominees;
- Are familiar with the eligibility requirements and the qualifications necessary for the offices to be filled;
- Are willing and able to devote ade-

quate time to the responsibilities involved and maintain confidentiality.

Don't overlook student and teacher members.

The election of the nominating committee should not be not a popularity contest based on willingness to serve, nor should it consist of the PTA executive board. The PTA president never serves on the committee, and the parliamentarian serves only when elected to serve. The principal may be elected, but should at least be an advisor to the group. No person may serve on the committee for two consecutive years. Be sure to elect your nominating committee wisely!

You've Been Elected to the Nominating Committee—What's Next?

The nominating committee's major role and responsibility is to nominate the best qualified, available nominee(s) for each elected office. Appointed officers and chairmen are appointed by the incoming PTA president and ratified by the board-elect.

Once the committee is elected, the parliamentarian (or president's designee, if there is no parliamentarian) should call the first committee meeting and instruct the members regarding their task (see the *California State PTA Toolkit*). The parliamentarian conducts the election of the committee chairman and then leaves the committee to fulfill its duties. The parliamentarian should be available by phone to answer committee members' questions.

Potential officers should review the PTA officer job descriptions, be willing to attend convention and other training and be prepared to give the time neces-

sary to do the job. The committee should select a slate of nominees that is balanced with new and experienced officers. The committee is not obligated to nominate the president or any other current officer to serve a second term or to nominate automatically the first vice president for president.

The committee chairman has the responsibility of conducting the committee meetings and contacting potential nominees for office. All discussions within the committee must remain confidential, even after the committee is discharged. If a member of the committee is being considered for an office, the member should be excused from the meeting room during the discussion regarding that office, but may return for the vote, which shall be by ballot.

When contacting potential nominees, it is important that no commitment is made to the individual. The committee must know if the individual is willing to be considered for an office, and then nominate the best candidates according to their ability and commitment to serve the PTA.

When the committee has filled the slate of officers, a written report is prepared by the chairman and signed by the committee members. The report is presented to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual election meeting. The committee should continue to work to fill any open positions until the date of the annual election meeting. The committee's work is concluded at the time of elections. Vacant positions become the responsibility of the president-elect and board-elect.

For further information, please refer to the *California State PTA Toolkit*.

Bylaws Committee

Take a Look at Your PTA

Evaluate your PTA's programs and policies. Are these programs and policies sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the school community you serve? Rate your PTA by checking the following actions that may apply.

We are adding inclusiveness training to our leadership training sessions.

We are setting a goal to identify and train members/leaders who are representative of our school community.

We are starting a welcoming committee to reach out to newcomers by matching our veteran members with new members.

We are identifying the leaders of various groups in our community and inviting them to speak to our PTA.

We are dividing up jobs among two or more people so more people can participate in our PTA.

We are including pictures of people of diverse cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds; older people, men and women involved in a variety of non-stereotypical jobs; people with disabilities at work; and diverse family configurations and relationships in our publications.

We are printing our meeting announcements, posters and publications in the languages that are spoken by the families within the PTA community.

We are scheduling PTA meetings at the best times and places for everyone in our school community.

We are addressing our PTA communications "To the Family of..."

We are making sure all PTA programs and activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

We are avoiding the use of PTA jargon at meetings and in publications.

We are offering babysitting services at meetings and PTA sponsored events.

We are inviting non-English speaking people, non-readers and others with special needs to our meetings in person or by telephone.

We don't exclude other cultures because ours is the dominant culture.

Now count the number of actions you checked. If you checked eight or more, then you are well on your way to becoming an inclusive PTA. If you checked fewer than eight, activate some of these ideas in your PTA. Review your PTA's current structure, procedures and traditional ways of doing things to avoid excluding groups of people.

Member Services Commission



Scholarships...Where are They?

The best way to search for scholarships and fellowships is to use a personalized search like "fastWeb" <www.fastWeb.com>. Fastweb compares your background with a database of awards. Only those awards that fit your profile are identified as matched. To search on the Internet, use the key words "high school senior scholarships."

The UC and CSU systems award thousands of scholarships in recognition of academic achievement, community service, special talents and other personal characteristics. The amount of a scholarship may vary according to the student's financial circumstances. The university system uses information you provide on your application for admission to determine your eligibility for many UC scholarships. The application packet includes information about additional requirements, such as essays or letters of recommendation, for particular scholarships.

Scholarships are also available from community organizations, foundations, corporations and many other agencies. An example is our California State PTA "Scholarship for Graduating High School Seniors." More information may be found at <www.finaid.org/scholarships>.

You can help as a parent by being aware of the deadlines and encouraging your child apply for as many scholarships as possible. Use caution when submitting personal information electronically. Contact your student's high school career counselor for further suggestions and assistance.

Scholarships and Grants Committee

Update Your Bylaws

New bylaws were recently sent to each PTA president in the 2003 California State PTA Summer Service mailing. One bylaws change—effective immediately for all units, councils, and districts—requires that "whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, a written notice of the meeting shall be given not less than 10 days nor more than 90 days before the date of the meeting to each member who, on the record date for the notice of the meeting, is entitled to vote at such meeting." Such notice is a stipulation of California Corporate Code.

To meet this requirement, the California State PTA recommends presidents use a variety of ways to publish each meeting agenda 10 days before association meetings. Executive board meeting notices and agendas must also be sent to the executive board members 10 days prior to executive board meetings.

While the agenda does not need to be detailed, it does need to provide information to members about the business to be considered. "Written notice" may include, but is not limited to, publishing the information in the PTA newsletter, posting it at school, posting it on the PTA Web site, or sending it via Email. Adequate care must be taken that the information is accessible to all members; consideration must be given as to whether members have computers and access to Email or the Internet.

Bylaws Committee



President's Message...

Diversity is our strength. PTA does not just look at the needs of a single school... at the needs of a single child...but rather we look at the broader picture. We speak for every child with one voice. *Hablamos por cada niño con una voz.*

Membership is the vehicle by which we can promote opportunities for all children. A strong membership campaign and strong local leadership are keys to membership growth, and the keys to strengthening PTA's power in meeting the challenges that face us.

To sustain the strength of PTA, it is imperative that we have the capacity to assess member needs and evaluate membership trends. This information will enable PTA to continue to be a credible advocate for children and to provide the programs that support their education, health and welfare.

Unlike most other membership organizations, the California State PTA has not previously obtained the names and addresses of its members. We have only required that each local PTA unit keep a membership list.

For the California State PTA to track member retention, we need to have membership information, information that will enable PTA to analyze membership demographics. Through evaluation of the findings, we will develop programs and identify benefits that will meet the needs of all members as well as enhance our ability to effectively communicate. Diversity is our strength. California Corporation Code Section 6320 pro-

vides that every California nonprofit public benefit corporation—like the California State PTA—shall keep... (2) A record of its members giving their names and addresses and the class of membership held by each. The California State PTA only has one class of membership and each individual who joins a local PTA is a member of the California State PTA and the National PTA as provided in the bylaws of each PTA (Article IV, Section 1 *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*). In addition, according to Article XI, Section 1, our bylaws state: A local PTA/PTSA in good standing is one who...meets other criteria as may be prescribed by the California State PTA.

The National PTA's Strategic Plan provides for developing and implementing an individual member database by June 20, 2005. In order to comply with the National PTA two-year goal, local units in California will begin forwarding membership lists that include members' names and addresses, through channels to the California State PTA no later than the 2004–2005 membership year (April 1, 2004–March 31, 2005). The membership list is for the exclusive use of the PTA and will only be used for our specific purposes. The list will not be sold or given to any other business or entity.

As PTA leaders, you can make this new task a success by beginning now to collect the address information of their members. The membership list is for the exclusive use of the organization. Be proud of your membership in PTA, an organization that has promoted the education, health and safety of children, youth and families for over 100 years.

Carla Niño, California State PTA President



Alternatives to Zero Tolerance

At the 2003 California State PTA Convention the resolution "Student Substance Abuse: Alternatives to Zero Tolerance" was adopted. Some ideas that you will find useful in developing alternatives are now located on our Web site

www.capta.org.

A recent press release by the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding this issue is also posted on the Web site.

Community Concerns Commission

The Power of One Voice

When speaking on behalf of every child, there is no substitute for passion and knowledge. These two essential qualities drive us forward as we work with parents, the school, and the community so that all children have the chance to reach their potential. Passion and knowledge can make a world of difference, but that's not all that allows PTA to be successful. Speaking on behalf of every child requires the strength of numbers. Put simply, the more voices the better.

This makes the need for PTA membership growth more important than ever. The potential is great: in the United States, there are more than 200 million adults. Many of these adults have school-age children, many do not. Reaching out to potential members and working to retain our current members requires a dedicated effort from all of us.

As we draw together more voices and increase our strength, we must also increase the range of our voices. I urge all PTA members to look closely at how well their PTAs mirror their communities and reach out to groups that are under represented. We need to work to make PTA a magnet for more fathers; more working parents; more Hispanic, African-American, and Asian-American parents; more single parents; more stay-at-home-parents; more grandparents; more non-parents; and more students.

Every day you have the opportunity to tell someone one-on-one about the benefits of being a PTA member. Thank you for reaching out to these potential members and showing them how their voices can make a difference.

Linda Hodge, National PTA President



Meetings That Move

No one enjoys going to a meeting after a full day of work or volunteering, only to spend two or three grueling hours trying to complete the business of the organization. To structure your PTA meetings to deal effectively with the necessary business, follow these tips:

- The president is responsible for the tone of the meeting. It is possible to be sociable and friendly and still run an efficient meeting.
- Respect the time of those who arrive on time and encourage the latecomers to be there at the beginning of the meeting by beginning and ending your meetings on time.
- Follow an agenda that has been planned in advance. Make sure each person has a copy of the agenda. Stay on task and deal with each item of business before moving to the next item. Unfinished items of business which were not on the agenda may be dealt with at the end of the meeting if time allows, referred to a committee, or placed on the next meeting agenda.
- Communicate with board members ahead of time if they are expected to present a report or have them contact the president to be placed on the agenda. Request that each person come to the meeting prepared with notes, a written report, or any explanatory handouts that are necessary.
- Make sure everyone knows and follows parliamentary procedure. Motions should be placed on the floor and seconded before discussion takes place. Only one person should be speaking at a time; do not tolerate sidebars.
- Do committee work in committees, not at executive board meetings or association meetings. If an issue cannot be decided upon relatively quickly or needs fine tuning, refer it to a committee for further study and a recommendation for future action.
- Anticipate member needs and possible controversial issues. Plan in advance how you will approach member concerns or deal with a difficult person.

Leading Your PTA Into the Future

As a president or an officer, what can you do to help pave a smooth road for future leaders to travel?

How well do you know the people in your PTA? Are you aware of their special skills and interests as well as their personal preferences? Some volunteers have an aptitude for handling finances while others have an aversion to working with numbers in any shape or form. Interest surveys may help you match the individual to the leadership position.

Be sure to lend encouragement and offer praise for a job well done. Give your co-workers the freedom to use their creativity and to make decisions necessary to carry out the assignment. Act as an advisor, not as a dictator, and you will help nurture future leaders of PTA.

You set an example for others to follow by attending conferences and workshops offered by council and/or district PTA. Encourage others to join you. Share materials that you receive. Don't file them away, never to be seen or used again.

Have you considered using a "straw ballot" to help the nominating committee select a slate of officers for the coming year? A "straw ballot" merely provides an opportunity for people to make suggestions as to whom they feel could best serve in leadership positions. The nominating committee is not bound by information on the "straw ballot." What is helpful to them are brief biographies, filled out by potential candidates themselves, indicating their preferences and abilities.

The future of your PTA lies in your hands. Remember to fill in those "potholes" so the road will be smooth for those who travel after you!

CLIC

•COMMUNICATE•LEARN
•INTERACT•CREATE

So you're planning a project—perhaps an important meeting, an outreach initiative or a fund raiser—but with everyone's busy schedule, it's just about impossible to get a group together to work on it. That's where CLIC can help. CLIC is a Web-based project-management and collaboration tool available from Cable in the Classroom. Originally created for educators, CLIC is also available to PTA members. And it's free—the only thing you need to use it is a computer with an Internet connection.

With CLIC, your project gets its own secure Web site, where members of your group can post and work on documents, engage in discussions, and share resources like Web sites and electronic files. Tasks can be assigned and timelines established and you'll have a complete record of your work.

Each team member can work on CLIC whenever they have time—after the kids go to school, and from anywhere they can go online. Any day that work is posted on the CLIC site, everyone automatically receives an Email digest of all the activity.

To learn more about CLIC, or to sign up for one for your PTA unit or project, go to

www.ciconline.org/clic.

Cable in the Classroom is the cable industry's nonprofit educational foundation. It is an allied agency of the California State PTA; a representative serves as an advisor to the California State PTA Communications Commission.

Resources for Protecting Children from Internet Predators

With today's widespread use of the Internet, your child's access to the Web may be a mixed blessing. Parents need to be aware of the threats to their children's safety that occur over the Internet, and should teach their children to make responsible choices for the online material they view.

The National Academies has developed a Web site to provide parents with valuable information about the potential threats of the Internet, including how to recognize sexual predators online, how to protect your children from such predators, and additional resources for parents to use <www.NetSafeKids.org>.

National PTA is actively involved in protecting children from harmful Internet content and in helping parents and schools establish acceptable use policies (AUPs) for children's safe Internet use. In the article "A Combined Strategy for Internet Safety," National PTA President Linda Hodge and Herbert Lin of the National Academies' National Research Council have outlined an integrated approach between parents and schools which includes the following strategies:

1. Parents need to establish the types of good and bad material that their children can access. This involves parents setting an AUP in writing that tells their kids what sort of material they should not view, either at home or at school.
2. Teachers should also establish AUPs, and class time should be spent discussing appropriate Internet conduct. Instruction on Internet use should be tailored to the students' ages and needs.
3. Technology-based tools such as filters can help to supplement AUPs that parents and teachers should have already established with their children, but should not be entirely relied upon.

The article appeared in the April/May 2003 issue of *Our Children* magazine <www.pta.org/members/respub/OurChildren/0403/features5.asp>. There is further downloadable information on Internet safety at the following Web sites <www.SafeState.org> and <www.NetSafeKids.org>

Community Concerns Commission



Staff Appreciation Celebrations

"Teacher Appreciation Week" and "Classified School Employees Week" are just around the corner. How should PTAs/PTSAs celebrate?

According to the Finance Section of the *California State PTA Toolkit*, Section 5.8.1, "PTA funds should not be used to purchase personal gifts, equipment for staff lounges and lunchrooms or for furnishings for principals' offices. Personal gifts include baby showers, "Secretary's Day," bereavements, weddings or birthdays. If the membership determines that such items are necessary, individual members can make personal donations to purchase the designated items. These donations should not be commingled with PTA funds."

However, this does not mean that the PTA cannot conduct activities to recognize teachers and staff. If a unit chooses to recognize school staff with a "Staff Appreciation Day," a line item must be included in the annual budget. This line item should estimate expenses for such things as materials, supplies, and/or hospitality. Remember, all projects, programs,

and activities must be approved by a vote of the association.

It is recommended that a specific project be chosen in which students actively participate. Think of a project that is inexpensive and fun.

- A basket of appropriate supplies for each staff member with items donated by the students' families.
- A book of thank you notes or articles from the students to teachers, custodian, secretary etc.
- Laminated placemats of special drawings by the students.

Keep it a surprise. Ask teachers for a few minutes to speak with the students privately. Tell the students that PTA wants to surprise school staff with a special recognition. Ask for the students' help. Create a flyer for students to take home to their parents requesting donations.

If you plan to provide a luncheon, seek sponsorship from local markets and restaurants to minimize the cost. There are many ways to recognize schools' staff without spending much money. Be creative!

Finance Commission

Volunteer Fingerprinting

Want to volunteer at your child's school this year? Don't be surprised if you're asked to submit to a background check or to be fingerprinted first.

At many of the nation's schools, the days of happy parent volunteers walking directly into classrooms are over. At least six states—Arkansas, California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Utah and New Hampshire—require school districts to conduct background checks or fingerprint volunteers. Many other school districts are doing it on their own.

Does this make being a volunteer more daunting? Maybe, but educators say it does protect children. Principals say there are so many volunteers, they don't who they are.

National PTA takes no position on such policies, says spokeswoman Jackie McCarthy. She says a lot of parents initially bristle and feel uncomfortable about this. But if you ask them if they'd want a known criminal in the classroom with their child, they say no.

Principals say they can't guarantee that children will be completely safe, but they can tell parents that they're doing everything in their power to make sure they are.

*Adapted from Woman's Day,
September 2003*

Finance Commission...

Keep PTA Money Secure

You should be aware that every year there is more and more PTA money that disappears in one manner or another. Is the PTA under your direction following proper financial procedures? Following correct procedures is a board responsibility. PTAs need to ask themselves: the following questions;

1. Does your board know which bank your PTA funds are deposited in?
2. Do you have two signatures on your checks and names of three elected officers on file at the bank, per your bylaws?
3. Are your bank statements mailed to the school and not to the treasurer?
4. Does someone other than the treasurer reconcile the bank statement?
5. Do your financial officers give monthly reports on all accounts?
6. Are financial records audited twice yearly?
7. Do two people always count cash and sign a cash verification form?
8. Is a receipt always given to the chairman of the event and one retained by the treasurer?
9. Are funds deposited in a timely manner?
10. Is your treasurer recording all financial transactions in a bound ledger?
11. Are all expenditures authorized by the association?
12. Are receipts attached to authorizations for payment?

PTA is a business and should be handled as such. The leadership of a PTA must guard against any mismanagement of PTA funds. Some signs of possible mismanagement are: lack of treasurer's report and/or lack of receipts for money received; payments made in cash rather than by check; missed meetings, unanswered phone calls or mail. If you suspect mismanagement of funds it is very important that you do **NOT** make any implicit, explicit, written or oral statements or accusations.

These are only warning signs, and are not proof of any wrongdoing. Call your council president or treasurer if you suspect or have any evidence of mismanagement of funds. All information regarding the incident needs to remain confidential.

Mismanagement of funds is a serious issue. PTA has guidelines in place to address and remedy the situation. Check your PTA's financial procedures.

Unrelated Business Income

Most PTAs are exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code and further defined as a public charity. Tax exempt status means that the PTA does not pay federal income tax on income from activities that are substantially related to the purpose for which the PTA was given exempt status.

However, the PTA may be required to pay tax on other types of income, referred to as unrelated business income (UBI). The law requires nonprofits to report income from unrelated business activities when gross receipts are at least \$1,000 and to pay taxes on net receipts. Nonprofits risk losing their tax-exempt status only if such activities become the primary focus and make the tax-exempt mission secondary.

For an activity to be classified as yielding unrelated business income, three factors must be present. The income or activity must be:

1. From a trade or business. To be a business, the activity must provide income, but does not have to produce a profit. The PTA must take an active role in the generation of the income for the activity to be a business.
2. Regularly carried on, and IRS regulations state that activities that are carried on only "discontinuously or periodically" will not be considered to be regularly carried on. If activities are of short duration, but follow-up or preparation is carried on over a long period, it could be UBI. An activity occurring only once per year may be considered UBI if a commercial company performing the same activity would also be active only once a year.
3. Unrelated to the organization's exempt purpose. If an activity is not substantially related to the PTA's mission, then it could be considered unrelated to fulfilling the exempt purpose of the PTA. It is important to remember that the substantial relation to the PTA's exempt purpose cannot come solely from the PTA's need for money.

The destination or use of the income has no bearing on determining if it is unrelated business income. This determination is made by how the income is earned.

The IRS is continuing its scrutiny of nonprofits' income-producing activities to determine whether these activities are subject to the UBI tax. The IRS is planning to sharpen its focus to look at several emerging areas, including income derived from the Internet and fees paid to nonprofits to advertise on their Web site.

Most PTA fund-raising activities, however, are exempt from federal income taxes for the following reasons:

1. They are conducted only once a year, or
2. Volunteers conduct 85% of the work on the activity, or
3. They consist of selling donated merchandise (such as a silent or live auction of donated merchandise).

There is no rule that says PTAs must never conduct activities that produce UBI. But, in order to retain tax-exempt status, PTAs must not allow fund raising to become the primary focus of the organization.



Where is Our Oak Tree?

The scalloped “oak tree” logo is being preserved for historical purposes as the official “seal” of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. As the official seal of the organization, the oak tree logo will be judiciously used on formal documents such as proclamations, certificates, special awards, and select jewelry items.

The modern slanted PTA logo will be used in all day-to-day operations of the organization and form our external “face” to the public. The modern slanted PTA will be used in all marketing materials and stationery items in order to give all PTAs a universal symbol to use to identify themselves and their work.

Resource: Marketing Kit for State PTAs, National PTA Member Services Commission



Helpful Hints to Handle Email Overload

With today’s technology and access to the Internet we face information overload. We expose our minds and lives to enormous amounts of clutter. On a daily basis we are challenged to sort, filter, organize, discard and assimilate the massive amounts of data. It’s easy to get overwhelmed. So what are we to do? Here are 10 helpful hints.

- 1. Don’t let your Email control you.** It’s not necessary to check Email every few minutes.
- 2. Set up rules.** Email programs allow you to sort email as it comes in. Establish a set of criteria such as sender’s email address, the address to which it’s sent and content.
- 3. Customize your Email program.** Take time to learn more of the features of your Email program and then customize it to work for you.
- 4. Use templates.** If your Email has templates, use them. Create a message based upon your pre-established template and edit as needed.
- 5. Customize a signature file.** By creating you signature it personalizes your Email and shows your different levels of involvement.
- 6. Cut, copy, paste.** To save typing time, cut and paste information to transfer from one document to another.
- 7. Flag messages for later action.** Most Email programs allow you to set the action, time and date of the reminder.
- 8. Deal with similar Email responses all at once.** Sort your Email by creating folders and subfolders; you can deal with similar messages all at once. You save time by not having to look up the same information over and over again.
- 9. The delete key is your friend.** Hitting the delete key is the best way to “dump” data.
- 10. Create folders.** Use folders and subfolders to sort your mail. This allows you to find messages much easier.

Adapted from “Do You Suffer from Information Overload?”

<http://successnet.org/overload.htm>

Communications Commission



Criticism—Where and When?

Few things are harder for a leader than responding critically to a board member’s idea or proposal. If you feel inclined to criticize, you can minimize the sting and increase chances for a good result if you first consider the following:

1. Does the situation/idea really call for criticism?

Always hesitate before criticizing a board member. Look inside and be sure your comments are motivated by a real problem and not personal feelings. Be absolutely sure the situation is serious enough to warrant criticism. All criticism risks creating bad feelings.

2. Practice finesse. Don’t blurt out criticism.

Don’t jump in with the big guns. Ask for permission to offer it. “Ralph, your idea for the carnival seems a little out of our reach as a PTA. Can I offer some suggestions that might make it more realistic for our organization?” This way turns criticism into feedback, which is less likely to raise personal defenses.

3. Pick your time and place.

Never criticize a board member in public. Timing is also important. Avoid delivering criticism when you’re feeling rushed or stressed out.

4. Follow critical comments with praise as the situation allows.

Communications Commission

Hidden Stress

Most of us are alert to obvious signs of stress, such as a lack of energy or mental exhaustion. But, few of us are attuned to the subtlest symptoms—sometimes called “hidden stress”—that can prove even more dangerous because it can go untreated for weeks or months.

Classic signs of hidden stress include sleep difficulties, inability to concentrate, and unprovoked irritability. If any of this sounds like you or someone you know, consider the following suggestions:

- 1. Take a vacation or a mini-vacation.** A week at the beach or up in the mountains may be just what the doctor ordered. If you can’t do it, try a mini. Sit for an hour under a tree and watch birds. Take an afternoon off and go visit family members or friends you don’t see as often as you’d like. Take a short weekend trip without a set destination.
- 2. Utilize diversion.** A short walk in the midst of stressful events can help blow off steam and calm your mind. Concentrating on a hobby such as knitting or scrap-booking for an hour or two can help compose your mind and spirit.
- 3. Serve others.** Forget your own troubles by helping others who may be under stress. Your efforts to help them may give you perspective on your own stressors.

Health Commission



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**Be sure to check the Web for
 specials and new items**

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**If you are no longer a PTA president,
 please forward this and all mailings
 immediately to your successor.**

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Fall/Winter 2003. Official newsletter of the California State PTA,
 Volume 66, No. 4. Eight issues published annually: Summer,
 Summer/Fall, Fall, Fall/Winter, Winter, Winter/ Spring, Spring,
 Spring/Summer. 2003-2004 Subscription rate \$5.00. Circulation
 6,800. ©2004 California Congress of Parents, Teachers, and
 Students, Inc. All rights reserved. PTA® is a registered service
 mark of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

President: Carla Niño
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The mission of the California State PTA is to repre-
 sent our members and to empower and support
 them with skills in advocacy, leadership and commu-
 nication to positively impact the lives of all children.
Adopted March 1999.

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Los Angeles, California 90015-1322

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage
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