

our "Branches" 1978

H. Ambuehl PTA
Castille PTA
Concordia PTA
R. H. Dana PTA
Ole Hanson PTA
Las Palmas PTA
Palisades PTA

Marco Forster Jr. High PTA
Shorecliffs Jr. High PTA
Dana Hills High School PTSA
San Clemente High School PTSA

Niguel Parent Participation Preschool
Serra Parent Participation Preschool

Thirty-one years of Council Presidents

1947-49
1949-51
1951-52
1952-53
1953-54
1954-55
1955-56
1956-57
1957-58
1958-59
1959-61
1961-62
1962-64
1964-65
1965-67
1967-69
1969-71
1971-72
1972-74
1974-75
1975-76
1976-78
1978-79

Mrs. Frederick Schwankorsky
Mrs. J. L. Salisbury
Mrs. J. C. Lyons
Mrs. Charles C. Miller
Mrs. W. Douglas Hammond
Mrs. Lawrence Hemais
Mrs. William Aalbersberg
Mrs. Edmund Kiernan
Mrs. Walter Hoppe
Mrs. Fred Dupree
Mrs. Emmett Gallagher
Mrs. K. C. Hicks
Mrs. William Luebbert
Mrs. Ian Kennedy
Mrs. James Christie
Mrs. Edmund Kiernan
Mrs. Kenneth A. Bloom
Mrs. Alan B. Clark
Mrs. Thomas Wert
Mrs. James Valentine
Mrs. John Sutton -
Mrs. Robert Cazares
Mrs. Leslie Olander

Serra

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED COUNCIL OF PTSAs

OUR ROOTS

The early roots of Capistrano Unified Council came from little seeds indeed. We were born on March 25, 1947 and called "Costa del Sud Council" for several years before it was brought to our attention that "del Sud" was incorrect Spanish grammar, and our name was corrected to "Costa del Sur".

In those days, Laguna Beach was the only school district that had more than one school around here. The early Council was made up of Laguna Beach High School PTA, Laguna Beach Elementary PTA, San Clemente Grammar School PTA (later to become Las Palmas), Serra Elementary PTA (later to move up on the hill and become Palisades), and San Juan Elementary PTA. In the Fall of that first year, they were joined by the Capistrano Union High School PTA (which later moved and became San Clemente High School).

Council met in the morning of the second Tuesday of each month, a tradition that was followed for many, many years. Early projects included participation with the Youth Recreation Program in sponsoring swimming, roller skating, baseball games and dances.

A dental program was initiated in cooperation with the Dental Association using movies and records featuring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Amos and Andy, and Tony Martin. (Does that date anyone?) Local dentists examined the children's teeth assisted by one school nurse and two PTA people. Knowledge of proper nutrition and audio-visual testing were also promoted.

School Housing Committees met with local school boards to identify and publicize their district's needs. Committees discussed county report cards and the "hows and whys" of sex education in elementary schools. Other committees dealt with Music, School and Public Health, Summer Roundups, Homemaking, Conservation and Thrift.

Early Council used the Warrant System to pay their bills and urged that all PTA officers keep up and pass on Procedure Books to their successors. A Bylaw amendment allowed membership of new local associations.

Some general program meetings concerned finger painting and "Dating" (discussed by a panel of students and parents). San Juan Capistrano PTA supported their \$100,000 local bond issue - and it passed! San Clemente PTA worked to put stop signs at all schools. Laguna Beach High School PTA promoted cultural awareness of different countries through films, books, music and foods. Laguna Beach Elementary PTA took up the challenge of undesirable comic books on the market by asking every distributor in their city to abide by the National PTA's approved list of comic magazines - and the distributors complied. Favorable comments from the community were supportive of this effort.

No wonder some early minutes of the Council record, "Even some elected officers are resigning. It would seem that those who are willing to accept responsibility soon become overtired with so many duties and must cancel some".

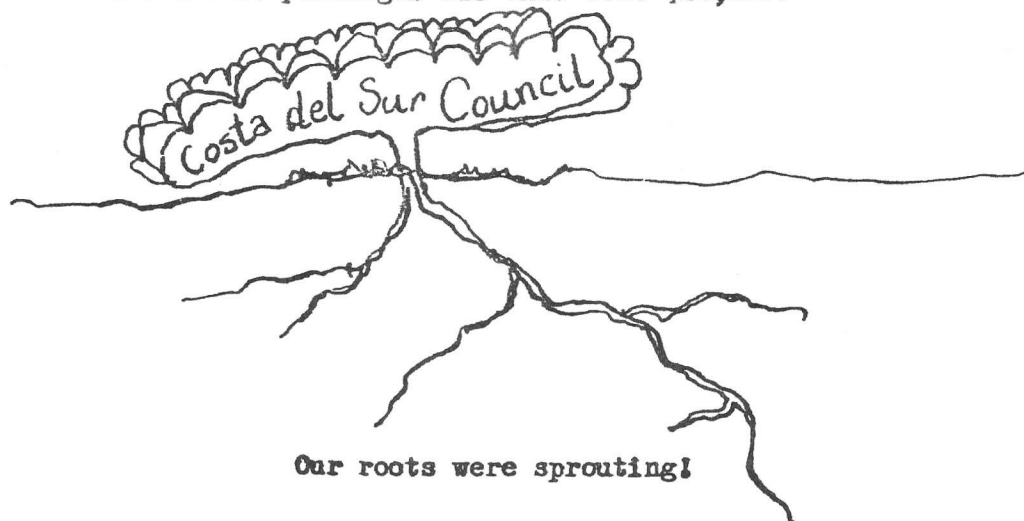
By 1950-51 overcrowding in the schools became a main concern. Council introduced distribution of State and National PTA literature, use of educational radio transcriptions and workshops to familiarize officers and chairmen with their jobs. State and National conventions as well as Fourth District conferences helped parents in each community to keep in touch with what was going on in education.

On April 18, 1952, Council was invited to appear on radio station KOVE in Santa Ana to share their achievements. They boasted of their 1,737 members and explained Capistrano Union High School PTA's Student Loan Fund (financed by a bridge party) that enabled students to borrow "on the strength of their character an amount sufficient to meet his or her needs, which might range from eye glasses to football shoes - to be paid back with no interest charges". To conclude the radio program, our Mothers Chorus sang Fred Waring's arrangement of "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor" and "A Prayer for Peace".

In 1952 San Clemente PTA was active in family oriented programs such as Families are our Business, Families Learn to Live Together, Education is the Families Business, Spiritual Values Begin in the Family, The Family in the Community, As Families Go, So goes the Nation, The Give-and-Take of Family Life, and What PTA Members Must do to Strengthen Home and Family Life - titles, you will note, still pertinent today in 1978.

Early 1952 found overcrowding at San Clemente Grammar School and the school board was urged to purchase land in the southern section near Camp Pendleton (which was to become the home of Concordia) since many

Marine personnel lived nearby. Can you believe that the total budget for San Clemente School District, 1952-53, was \$105,000, and that an old 49-passenger school bus was traded in for credit of \$1,250 on the purchase of a new 85-passenger bus that cost \$12,257?



1952 was also the year that Mrs. Fred Newhart was installed as president of San Juan Elementary PTA, with Harold Ambuehl elected as auditor, and their Honorary Life Membership recipients were Mrs. Marco Forster and Mr. Carl Hankey. Irene Valasques' third grade students presented original musical selections, followed by a panel discussing "Should Teachers Use Corporal Punishment?" (These names are familiar to many of us today.)

In 1953 newspapers throughout the state of California carried stories about PTAs rebelling against the State Board of Managers' procedures for deciding legislative policies, particularly concerning Federal aid to education. A series of meetings and discussions were held in local PTA meetings, with one after the other voting overwhelmingly against Federal aid.

1954-55 found Costa del Sur Council involved in heated discussions on off-shore drilling, and San Clemente Superintendent Leo Varner spoke on the pros and cons of teacher tenure. Studies on UNESCO were introduced to PTAs and this was the first year Radio & TV Chairmen were appointed to executive boards.

It must be admitted during this study of our history, there were times when it was noticed that, while profound debates were going on elsewhere, our Council seemed to devote their energies to learning the duties of hospitality chairmen or the art of proper design of corsages and floral arrangements!

A Newsette was introduced in June 1959 and later named Coastlines. To defray the cost of mailing the publication, 25¢ was charged for coffee and doughnuts at each meeting or "10¢ per dip" at Council luncheons.

In 1961-62 the minutes indicate that Concordia, Las Palmas and Capistrano High School co-sponsored a Candidates Night - but the secretary failed to mention the posts the candidates were seeking. "A Study of the Curriculum for the Gifted Child" was a Council program, and films on juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, teenagers, preschoolers and emotional problems were made available to PTA units for their programs. A survey was conducted regarding sales of violent, criminal and pornographic materials, publicity on which caused some news stands to eliminate such materials.

1962-63 was the year Council studied the "serious need for Fall-Out Shelters in the Public Schools", and the Council president urged "Learn about Communism through individual study and organized study groups to recognize how this conspiracy subverts our youth and destroys our freedom" and "Don't send your children to church -- go with them".

Clinics to provide polio prevention were called "Operation Sugar Cube" and films were shown on "Narcotics", "Pornographic Literature" and "Per-
version for Profit". President John Kennedy's film, "Youth & Physical Fitness" was encouraged at local schools by PTAs.

By 1964 membership had reached 3,099, with eight active units (Las Palmas, Concordia, San Juan, Capistrano High School, Laguna High School, Laguna Beach Elementary, Serra and Capistrano Junior High School.) The big drive for that year was to draft a "Guide for Parents" which involved public hearings and input from community leaders. Hundreds of teenage codes were studied and the final "Guide" provided helpful information to parents in guiding youth. The poem that follows expressed the feeling of the committee at the end of the study:

We read in the paper and hear on the air
Of killing and stealing and crime everywhere.
We sigh and we say as we notice the trend,
"Are they all rebels, ^{IS THEIR} ~~have they~~ no end?"
But, can we be sure it's their fault alone?
That maybe a part of it isn't our own?
Are we the guilty who place in their way
Too many things to lead them astray?
Too much money to spend, too much idle time,
Too many movies of passion and crime
AND By too many parents who won't stay at home?

Kids don't make the movies.
They don't write the books.
They don't paint ~~gay~~ pictures of gangsters and crooks.
They don't make the liquor. They don't run the bars.
They don't make the laws. They don't make the cars.
They don't peddle drugs that addle the brain.
That's all done by older folk, greedy for gain.
By the law of the blameless, the Savior made known,
"Who is there among us to cast the first stone?"
For in so many cases, it's sad but it's true,
The title "Delinquent" fits older folk too.

In 1965, a Unification election was successful which combined Capistrano Union High School District, Capistrano Elementary District, San Juan Capistrano Elementary District, and San Clemente Elem. Dist. Compromises included a 7-member school board representing specific trustee areas, elected by people residing in the individual trustee areas, and the name "Capistrano Unified School District" whose boundaries remain essentially the same today. At this time, Laguna Beach formed their own Council and our Council retained the name of Costa del Sur until 1967.

During 1967-68 Capistrano Junior High (later to move from "Old Capo" and change its name to Marco Forster Jr. High) joined the PTA Council, while San Juan Elementary voted to withdraw from PTA and become the first independent parent-teacher group in the area. Mr. Ambuehl, who was their principal for many years, later noted that he thought PTA was such a fine organization and he was sorry when San Juan withdrew.



So - some sprouts died from lack of nourishment, while others blossomed.

Summer school snacks were provided for elementary grades with a net profit of \$347.90. A Youth Concerns Committee found that there were more recreational activities for boys than girls in the area, and a film entitled "LSD - Insight or Insanity" was shown at a Council meeting with a representative from the Sheriff's Department as speaker. Drugs were a frightening problem in society - and everyone had a solution - or so they thought!

About this time was the start in Council and various units of many of the people with whom we present PTAers have been associated or at least can remember. From 1969 to the present -

~ CAN YOU REMEMBER WHEN?

Prior to the hot-lunch program, Council sold hot dogs to the children once a week. Headed by Ruth Clark, it proved to be a good fund raiser as well as providing the kids with one hot lunch a week. Later, when Ruth received an Honorary Service Award, she was given a necklace of strung, stinky hot dogs in memory of the year when she, "The Hot Dog Queen", had implored every PTA member to buy the leftovers, freezers overflowed with the darn things, housewives exchanged ideas on variations of hot dog recipes, and husbands could be heard groaning, "Not hot dogs again!"

Capistrano Unified School District was literally torn apart over the issue of sex education in the schools, and school board meetings had

standing room only. When Council president Wilma Bloem presented a panel of experts speaking on "The Broad Scope of Family Life Education", the local paper headlines the next day read "Council Program rated "X" by the Concerned Citizens Committee of CUSD Area",

After rehearsing for weeks on a comedy musical skit called, "We Are The PTA", Council presented their act for the administrators and principals and, as president Patsy Sutton danced down the aisle, she stopped and planted a bright red lipstick kiss on John Crain's bald head, at which point John turned as bright red as the lipstick.

Council ladies, escorted by Tom Wert, decided to do a "sociological study" of the new Topless Bar in Dana Point after an executive board meeting and, when the lights went on after the "show", discovered two principals and their wives had also come to "investigate" the establishment. This little tid-bit was all over the school district by 8:00 AM the next morning. Incidentally, the bar soon folded.

Palisades was the only summer school in the school district, and PTA people from all the schools helped as teacher aides and at nutrition break. Elaine Hubbard coordinated the entire volunteer effort for new principal Charles Bossard.

Corinne Parker, as Council Health & Welfare Chairman, chaired the meeting co-sponsored by our Council, Laguna Beach Council and the San Joaquin School District which indicated the need and instigated the starting of our Multi-Handicapped Facility, now famous throughout the State.

Council sold chocolate-covered raisins at summer school nutrition break, and they were wormy! We returned them instead of claiming their nutritional value as extra protein and fresh meat.

Council jolted CUSD into an early application for Early Childhood Education funds when Program Chairman Lee Steelman invited Dr. Washington, Wilson Riles' Assistant Superintendent, to speak on the program at one of our meetings.

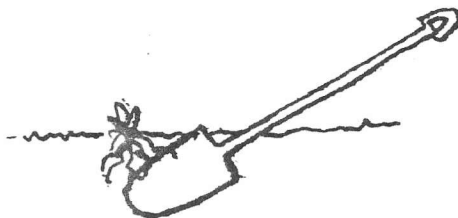
SOHS PTSA parents had to be fingerprinted and mugged by the Sheriff's Department in order to be permitted to sponsor a Halloween Street Dance in Capo Plaza featuring a Rock n' Roll Band that was expected to attract a "hippie" crowd.

Council operated two Clothes Closets, cheerfully decorated, where needy customers could "shop" free of charge for clean recycled clothes at Ole Hanson and Marco Forster. After hours of mending, washing and ironing by Margaret Koster and Charleen Wert, the sizes available sometimes did not fit the needs, but most families that needed to be outfitted were very satisfied. The huge collection of unclaimed "Lost & Found" items from all CUSD schools were recycled this way until the closets had to be closed because of lack of available space in the schools.

Two San Clemente High School delegates to State PTA Convention in San Francisco (1972), Chuck Raht and Mike Chemotti, became so enthralled with the real caring about students and their ideas evidenced by adult delegates at the convention - that they made a motion for a bylaw change to be considered adding "Students" to the name of the State PTA. We were so proud of them that our Council came home and added "Students" to our name immediately, but it took the State until the 1978 convention in Fresno to officially become the "California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students."

Council held a joint meeting with Fourth District executive board in the elegantly carpeted and oak paneled offices of the Western White House.

Following are some of the memories of our units roots that were "dug up" as this report was researched.



Las Palmas PTA (Organized as San Clemente Grammar School PTA, 1929)

Las Palmas was built as a combination theater, community center and school for the new San Clemente community in 1927 - with less than 50 students and only two classrooms. Truman Benedict started teaching there in 1949 and became its first full-time principal in 1954 when the staff included teachers Bill Limebrook and John Crain.

To this day some old PTAs can't look at a frozen banana without remembering the fiasco that occurred the time they decided to sell frozen bananas at the La Christianita Fiesta. After researching the recipe from Knott's Berry Farm, purchasing buckets of green bananas and chopping buckets of nuts, and carefully preparing and freezing hundreds of the delicacies - they didn't sell!

After years of holding school in a non-Field Act safe (but beautiful) old building, the new Las Palmas facility was dedicated in 1973.

Palisades PTA (Organized as Serra PTA in 1946, the move up on the hill to Palisades was carried out in stages & accomplished in 1961)

Recently retired teacher, Ewald Kayser, was superintendent of Capistrano Elementary School District until Unification and his wife taught kindergarten at Palisades until their mutual retirement. Palisades is famous for its strong roots and production of seeds. Many of its leaders have gone on to serve PTA at junior and senior high schools, Council and Fourth District. They are the unit that instigated Fourth District's annual Conventionette. They have been sponsors of the Serra Parent-Participation Preschool in San Clemente for many years.

Palisades' reputation for having the latest meetings in town started with Dorothy Overton's massive agendas and questions for principal John Crain - and his inability to answer any question in less than 1/2 hour. Adjournment was usually way after midnight.

Palisades PTA (Continued)

A dark memory for some is the year they sold light bulbs (Purchased at a discount from the president's electrical supply company) at every PTA function. When they moved on to other ways and means projects, no one had to run out and buy a light bulb for their home or the school for years!

Mickey Valentine recalls the Christmas Bazaar when she cajoled her teenage son, Jeff, to dress up and play Santa Claus for the little kids. When the kids rushed out and nearly smothered him, he turned back and wailed in mock agony, "I want my Mommy".

Concordia PTA (Organized in November 1955)

Concordia started out with grades 5-8 students, and Dr. Leo Varner doubled as Superintendent of San Clemente Elementary School District and their first principal. The first PTA president was Maxine Hoppe, and charter members totaled 169!

When Concordia opened, a contest was held to name the new school as well as re-name the old school, San Clemente Grammar School. "Concordia", meaning "in harmony" in Spanish and "Las Palmas" were chosen. In those days citizens put much of their community effort into the schools, the neighborhood men got together and put in the lawns and sprinkler system, everyone (not just parents and teachers) attended the Spaghetti dinners, and the Fiesta Taco Booth and Haooloween Carnival were joint efforts of Las Palmas, Concordia and the total community.

Gene O'Brien, who was a young teacher when Concordia started, is still teaching there, and some of the original students are now parents of current students. At one time, Supt. Varner and all but one school board member resigned, discouraged by two years of failure at passing a school bond issue. At the time the Superintendent's salary was an astronomical \$10,000.

Ole Hanson PTA (Organized April 21, 1965)

Ole Hanson was the third school in San Clemente and was named after the founder and developer of "The Village by the Sea". Virginia Hall was the first PTA president and, many years later, her son received a scholarship from SCHS PTSA to further his studies at Saddleback. Custodian Elmer Robbins (father of Dave, EBR teacher at SCHS and father-in-law of Faye, originator of Dental Assistance for Youth - DAFFY) was everybody's favorite friend on campus, and received PTAs Honorary Service Award at his retirement. He was well known for feeding the seagulls with leftovers from the Class A lunches - and for his tomato garden which grew by the kindergarten

The children of Ole Hanson participated in the clothing drive for Vietnam refugees, and are famous for their organic gardening and the murals each class painted to decorate the school. Many PTA and school records were destroyed this year in the fire which gutted the administration building.

San Clemente High School PTSA (Transferred from Capistrano High in 1965)

Being built in increments, SCHS started out with only 9th graders, and Mrs. T. H. Miller was their first PTA president in the new campus. It became a PTSA in 1970.

People can remember the time when the PTA president resigned in anger at the principal and took most of her executive board with her when she stormed out on the eve of Open House. Every PTA in the area baked cookies to fill the commitment for refreshments at the high school Open House.

Project START ("Society to Act Rather Than Talk") was developed at SCHS with the goal of providing tutors for the Mexican-American students who needed them, as well as promoting pride in their heritage while making Anglo students aware of the problems of the Mexican-Americans.

San Clemente PTSA provides vocational scholarships each year to graduating students. Their most famous ways & means project is the Whale Watch excursions which they have operated for years, and which have furnished a learning experience as well as an adventure to hundreds of people.

R. H. Dana PTA (Organized June 19, 1966)

Named after the adventurer who landed at Dana Point in 1835, R. H. Dana PTA has been very community minded since it first separated from Palisades' attendance area. They donated \$200 toward the statue of Richard Henry that stands in the harbor, and the total studentbody was in attendance when New York sculptor, John Ferken, did the final retouching of his model for the statue.

They have been successful in securing safety measures such as bike paths and stop signs for their students, are the home of CUSD's multi-Handicapped Facility - and have this year doubled their membership from the 400's to the 800's!

They remember their first fund raiser (a paper drive) with reluctance, however, because the price quoted at the beginning dropped from \$11 to \$3 per ton after the papers were collected, the driver of the truck that picked up the papers recklessly knocked the rain gutter off the newly built school, and, after waiting many months for their "profit", the check bounced!

Marco Forster Junior High PTA (Organized October 12, 1967)

Marco Forster started off with a ready-made and eager studentbody, staff and PTA when they transferred en masse from Old Capo. Helen Phillips was their first PTA president, and Walter Spencer the first principal.

A "Smart Teens Club" was formed to combat the rising threat of drug abuse in the area, with posters, programs and speakers projecting the idea that it was smart not to try drugs.

At one of their less successful rummage sale fund raisers, professional rummage sale followers were noticed tossing goods to their accomplices stationed outside an open window - and the profits went out the window too.

A student riot almost occurred when the PTA membership chairman built her drive on a surfing contest between the 7th graders as "Roadrunners" and the 8th graders as "Coyotes". Since the school mascot is the Roadrunner, the 8th graders were indignant!

Dana Hills High School PTSA (Organized in June 1972)

This PTSA was started in June and, by the time they moved into their innovatively designed new campus in February (after double sessions at SCHS for one semester), their dynamic enthusiasm got them off to a fantastically successful start. Adonna Kimmel was the first PTSA president and Walt Spencer was their principal, well loved for his "How can I help?" attitude.

The tragic loss of Walt's sudden death in 1974 was felt deeply by students, staff and parents, as well as people who knew and loved him throughout CUSD. Donations came in from all over towards the still-to-be-completed Walt Spencer Memorial Stadium at Dana Hills. Another tragedy was deeply felt when Adonna's son was killed in an automobile accident.

DEHS PTSA is famous for its cooperative attitude in working with and helping the Booster Clubs and other groups involved in their school - as well as being mutually cooperative with SCHS PTSA. Their recent successful Home Tour is an example of the rewards such a cooperative attitude can bring.

Castille PTA (Organized March 26, 1974)

Castille is located in the northern part of CUSD in Mission Viejo, and almost didn't get to open on the day planned because it was discovered just the night before that the electricity was inoperable. Under the light of flickering candles and kerosene lanterns, the crew solved the problem during the long night hours - and school opened on time.

Their first PTA president was Judy Bone, and she was elected just in time for her attendance at Calif. State PTA Convention to be approved by the State Board of Managers on the night before Convention opened. So, Castille was first welcomed into PTA by an announcement on the convention floor to 3,000 delegates who voted that she could be seated - with applause.

The new school was fondly referred to by staff and parents as "The Oasis" in spite of the fact that landscaping was yet to be accomplished, and the windblown dust was a constant battle. One lone tree was strategically planted in the midst of the portables while the main buildings were still under construction, and today a lovely park has been built around it. Symbolically, the tree survived - and so has Castille.

Harold Ambuehl PTA (Organized October 26, 1977)

Harold Ambuehl School was named after everybody's favorite long-time principal at San Juan Elementary who retired several years ago and then passed away recently. Mrs. Ambuehl is regularly seen at the new school volunteering her time to help teachers, parents and kids.

Their first and continuing president is Cindy Johnson, and their first principal is Chuck Bossard. They have two past PTA presidents from Concordia employed at the school - Nina Archbald, secretary, and Frank Weirath, teacher. Their first year of operation was a busy, howling success!

Shorecliffs Junior High PTA (Organized November 15, 1977)

Our newest sprout is healthy and growing strong. After years in the blueprint stages, Shorecliffs was completed just last year. After a semester of double sessions at Marco Forster, students and staff moved to their new home, and the formal dedication on January 13, 1978 featured L.A. Dodgers Manager Thomas Lasorda as guest speaker.

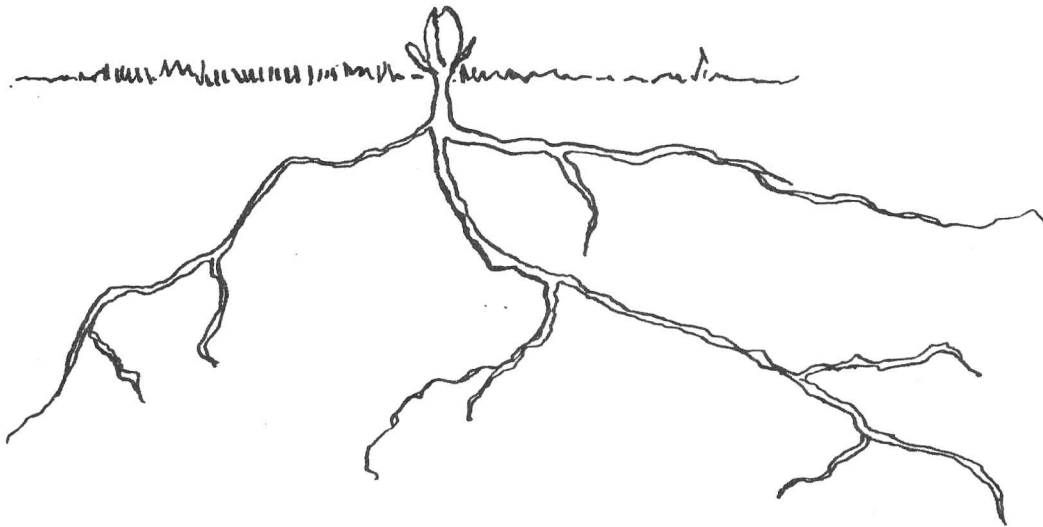
Their very first PTA executive board consisted of five past PTA presidents, including two Council presidents. Judy Ferguson was their first president and Maureen Redfield is the principal.

With a board full of this much experience, one would think they could make no mistakes. But, in their enthusiasm about Student Fun Day they purchased nine 3-lb bags of popcorn (luckily the merchant talked them down from their original desire for 14 bags) and, since only two were sold, the Shorecliffs field mice had a popcorn banquet with the seven leftover stale bags - amidst female screams when it was discovered that the mice had arrived for dinner!

The End

"If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust. But, if we work upon immortal souls, if we imbue them with immortal principles, with the just fear of God and love of fellowmen, we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten all eternity."

Daniel Webster



The purpose of this Historian's Report is not to belabor a tired old story, nor to dim the already dimmed eye, but to present highlights and human interest - and even the humorous - from the beginnings, the past and the present of Capistrano Unified Council of PTSAs.

Our PTA roots grow deep in California soil, and we owe much respect for the courage and vision of men and women who paved our way.

Nancy Thayer
Council Historian 1977-78

(Art Work by Lisa Spinelli - Typing by Charleen Wert)