

The Bulletin

Number 6, Friday 14 May, 2021

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PD events

The 2021 Professional Learning Calendar is now available on the SVRC website. Most professional learning will continue to be online. Events are now on Eventbrite.

Wednesday Aug 10 [Educational Support of students who have low vision](#)

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who have low vision.

From the Manager

Kim Foley, SVRC

It is with great sadness we farewell Lea Nagel as she has decided to retire at the end of term 2, 2021. Lea has been an integral part of SVRC for many years, teaching students who are blind or have low vision, Visiting Teachers, school staffs and the parent community. Lea's extensive expertise and experience in assistive technology, Braille literacy and Braille Music is renowned by all those who worked alongside her. Lea successfully led the Support Skills Program, Dot Power and Professional Learning days understanding the importance of empowering the education community in evidence based inclusive practices. Lea has declined the offer of a formal farewell and we will honour her request. However, SVRC is currently considering ways we can celebrate Lea's distinguished career by gathering blind and low vision community tributes on her educational impact over the years. Please email any tributes, photos and/or stories to svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

As a result of Lea's resignation, a recruitment process was held and the panel has provisionally appointed Marion Blaze to the SVRC Leading Teacher position. We congratulate Marion on her appointment as the Coordinator of the Support Skills Program, Dot Power and Professional Learning. Marion comes to the role with a wealth of experience and knowledge as a Visiting Teacher, EVAC Education Officer and acting SVRC Manager. We excitedly welcome Marion to the new role and embrace her vision for extending the reach of these programs across the state and beyond.

Last Thursday, Quantum RLV presented a training session for the VT Community of Practice on JAWS, Zoomtext and Fusion Software. The SVRC Equipment Library is currently considering purchasing additional Fusion licences and Sarah Hayman would value any feedback on this matter. Stewart Andrews from Quantum RLV recorded the training session for those who were unable to attend. A reminder that the next VT Community of Practice is scheduled for Thursday May 20 and Claire and Natalie will be presenting their project on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) for students with vision impairments. The presentation will be recorded for those who are unable to attend on the day.

Transcription: Help us so that we can help you!

Here in Transcription, we can do many, many things!!! We can braille Japanese; we can draw tactile diagrams of your innards; we can transcribe a Maths text like there is no tomorrow ... but if we can't read the print copy, we really can't braille it! Yes, we can sometimes make an educated guess ... but if we could have good quality scans, it would make our jobs so much easier.

We recently received a piece of music that was small and fuzzy as an image in a Word document (see photo right). We couldn't enlarge it, even with a dome magnifier, so it offered us quite a transcription challenge!

As the Transcriber who received the music explained, "The print original is very small and has various 'arrows' and watermarks on top of the music, which renders the print almost unreadable. Additionally, it appears to have bar lines that split the music in a contrary manner to that which is stated by the time signature."

Is there a moral to this story?

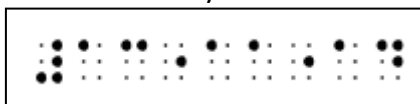
Yes! We'd love it if you could please supply lovely clear copies of the work you would like transcribed. Please make sure you have scanned all the pages and all the text and images including, for example, the edges of the print music! Please, please include publishing details, even if it is just a short piece of text. This will help us to help you!

Thanks in advance!



Q&A: Braille phone number

Question: I recently read a phone number in a braille book. The phone number was 13 11 14 (Life Line). The phone number had 13 followed by dot 5 and the numbers 1 written twice, then dot 5 again followed by number 1 and 4. Is this the way it is done in UEB?



Answer from Kathy Riessen, ICEB Code Maintenance Officer and Coordinator Accessible Format Production, South Australian School for Vision Impaired:

When writing large numbers the print comma was previously used to indicate thousands. Modern notation uses a space to indicate thousands.

When writing these in UEB you use either the comma (dot 2) or the numeric space (dot 5) depending on the original print. The numeric indicator does not need to be restated after either of these.

As symbols in UEB can be used over multi-contexts, the dot 5 is also used for any long number (such as a phone number) which in print is separated into chunks by means of spaces.

Report on Art 4 Kids with VI

From: Marion Blaze, SVRC

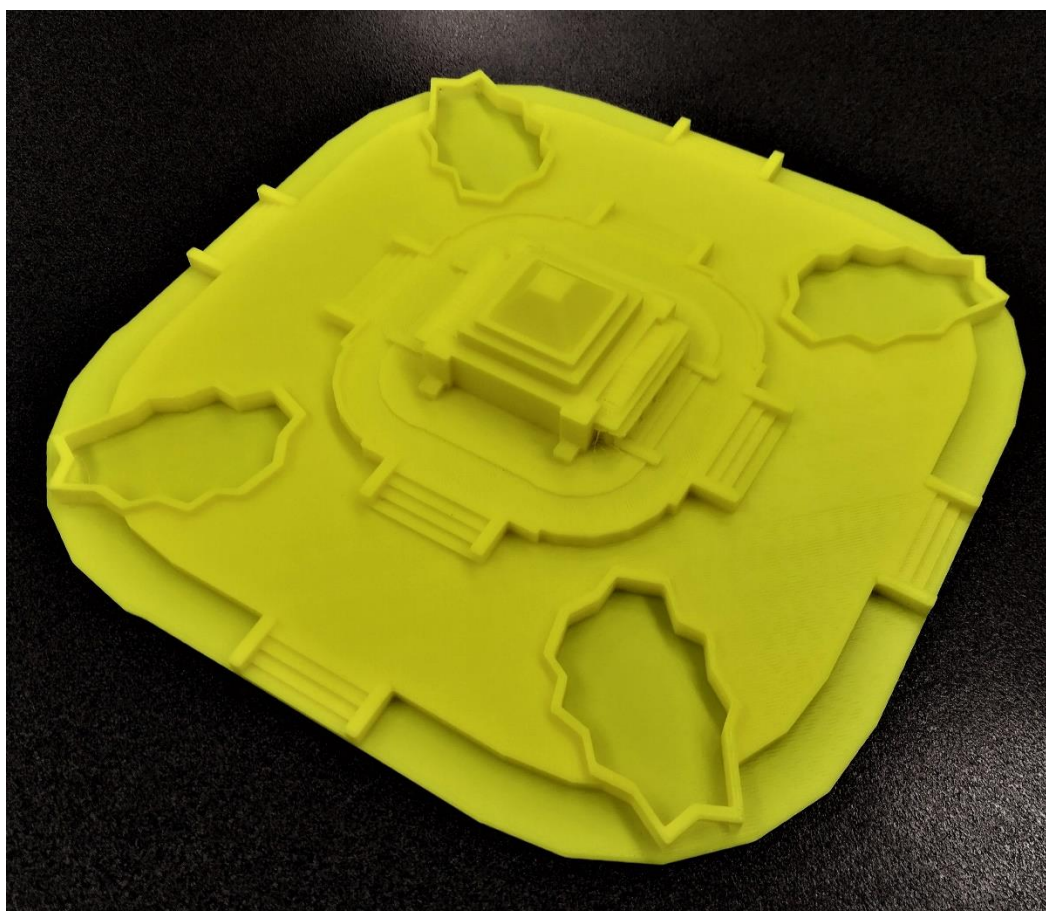
SVRC conducted an online workshop on May 12, 2021, all about inclusion of students who are blind or have low vision in art. The very talented Michael Donnelly, who is actually on Long Service Leave this term, pre-recorded all the sessions for broadcast yesterday, and then hopped online for a Q & A at the end of the day.

Sixteen participants came online from State, Catholic and Independent schools in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and even one from the United Arab Emirates!! Michael demonstrated everything from tactile imaging to audio description, and shared loads of resources and strategies for making art accessible and inspirational. Thank you also to the other Michael (Kelly) who managed all the technology!

3D Printing

From: Sarah Hayman, SVRC

We have a new 3D print of the Shrine of Remembrance in Victoria. This could be used before a school excursion to give a student an overview of the area. This print was designed from GoogleMaps during last year's lockdowns so if there have been any recent changes, please let us know.



Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year

Established in 1946, the annual Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Awards aim to:

- promote quality literature for young Australians;
- support and encourage a wide range of Australian writers and illustrators of children's books and;
- celebrate contributions to Australian children's literature.

This year's short-listed books can be found on the CBCA website:

<https://www.cbca.org.au/shortlist-2021> and to whet your appetite, here are two books that we have available (for eligible students) in alternative format.

Metal Fish, Falling Snow by Cath Moore

Category: Book of the Year – Older Readers

Format available at SVRC: docx

The publisher says...

Dylan and her adored French mother dream of one day sailing across the ocean to France. Paris, Dylan imagines, is a place where her black skin won't make her stand out, a place where she might feel she belongs. But when she loses her mother in a freak accident, Dylan finds herself on a very different journey: a road trip across outback Australia in the care of her mother's grieving boyfriend, Pat. As they travel through remote towns further and further from the water that Dylan longs for, she and Pat form an unlikely bond. One that will be broken when he leaves her with the family she has never known. *Metal Fish, Falling Snow* is a warm, funny and highly original portrait of a young girl's search for identity and her struggle to deal with grief.

Through families lost and found, this own-voices story celebrates the resilience of the human heart and our need to know who we truly are.



The CBCA judges say...

This beautifully written novel is a confident and creative YA debut that explores the themes of grief, family and identity with wonderful imagery and genuine humour. The language used is awe-inspiring and unique. After the loss of her mother, Dylan is taken on a journey across outback Australia towards the grandfather she has never known, challenging her notion of family and forcing her to confront her own racial identity. Dylan is a quirky character, attempting to make sense of the death of her mother, her racial identity and her relationship with her abusive father – a character who is flawed and dealing with his own demons. Her grief is palpable and heartbreaking, deftly explored through the touch of magical realism present throughout the novel. The outback Australian setting adds a feeling of vastness to the story and is so well illustrated that the reader can almost feel the heat of the desert and smell the stale beer in the pubs. It is a welcome change to read male characters who are complex, emotional, present and caring. Dylan's relationships with her stepfather, grandfather and young cousin are a highlight. As a child of Guyanese and French parents, Dylan's commentary on her identity as a mixed-race Australian child is a welcome addition to the YA landscape that feels wholly authentic.

Your Birthday Was The Best! by Maggie Hutchings

Category: Picture Book of the Year

Format available at SVRC: braille with tactile illustrations

The publisher says ...

From the author of the best-selling *Mermaid!* and *Unicorn!* and one of the world's hottest new picture-book illustrators comes the story of a plucky young cockroach who gate-crashes a birthday party – with hilarious results. Funny, silly and surprisingly cute, *Your Birthday Was the BEST!* is the perfect blend of downright gross and delightfully entertaining.

The author says...

What inspired me to write "*YOUR Birthday Was the BEST!*"?

The first time I visited Affirm Press's office, I was keen to make a good impression. I was after all, meeting everyone for the first time, and I wanted to be taken seriously as a writer of quality stories. I thought I'd stun them all with my deepest thoughts about all things literary...but of course I didn't. Instead, I told the entire staff about the time I saw REAL rainbow poo in a knife and fork drawer and how I thought it was some sort of cake decorating sugar sprinkles...

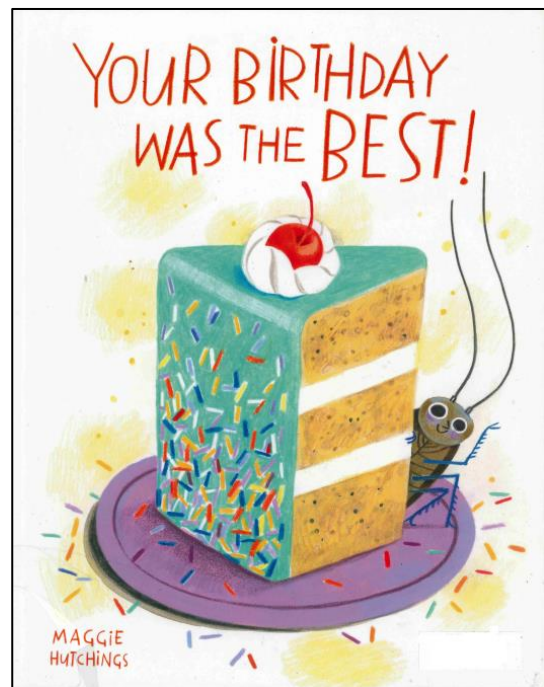
Just to be clear... It wasn't sugar sprinkles OR unicorn poo (obviously unicorns can't fit in knife and fork drawers). Knife and fork drawers are where cockroaches like to party, and if cockroaches eat wax crayons the cheery result is tiny pellets of poo in many waxy colors! After I'd told the story, I said "I should write a book about that."

SO....I did! AND it was the BEST.

The CBCA judges say...

The premise of this story is refreshingly new and offers a different perspective on birthday celebrations. Hutchings and Sala work in perfect union to introduce the reader to the amusing antics of these cockroach anti-heroes. The result is a series of witty situations which encourages the reader to consider that bugs might revel in all things gross such as hairy cheese and toenails. The minimal and powerful text gives room for the illustrations to carry much of the story. This book works on many levels; a scream of fear or a scream of excitement? Readers will delight in the inventiveness of this bold and uproarious story.

Note: If you have a book from the list that you'd like in alternative format, please send us the print book and we'll get started!



AFL Blind Auskick

From: Ned Brewer-Maiga, Community Assistant, Hawthorn Football Club

AFL Victoria would like to invite anyone with a Vision Impairment to attend our AFL Blind Open Skills Sessions. This is an opportunity for new and existing players to have a go at AFL Blind in a fun and safe environment.

Saturday 15th of May 2021

10:00am-12:00pm

Action indoor sports centre Tullamarine (2, 10-12 Carrick drive, Tullamarine 3043)

And/or

Saturday 22nd of May 2021

10:00am-12:00pm

Action indoor sports centre Tullamarine (2, 10-12 Carrick drive, Tullamarine 3043)

To register please e-mail Steve Odgers: Steve.Odgers@afl.com.au

And finally ...

15 things we bet you didn't know about eyes!

1. Your eyes focus on 50 different objects every second.
2. The only organ more complex than the eye is the brain.
3. Eyes can distinguish approximately 10 million different colours.
4. It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.
5. Ommatophobia is a fear of the eyes.
6. 80 percent of all learning comes through the eyes.
7. Eyes can detect a candle flame 4.3 kms away.
8. Your iris (the coloured part of your eye) has 256 unique characteristics; your fingerprint has just 40.
9. Heterochromia is the medical term for having two different coloured eyes.
10. Only 1/6 of your eyeball is visible.
11. Eyes are comprised of rods and cones. Rods allow you to see shapes, while cones are responsible for detecting and deciphering colours.
12. The average person blinks 12 times a minute (bet you just blinked!).
13. The shark cornea is nearly identical to the human cornea, and has even been used in human eye surgery!
14. Your eye is the fastest contracting muscle in the body, contracting in less than 1/100th of a second.
15. The optic nerve contains more than one million nerve cells.