

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 1

Friday 2nd February 2007

This issue was edited by Marion Blazé, Education Officer, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! & welcome back for 2007

Welcome back for what is bound to be a busy and productive year. Our 2007 mission here at SVRC is to get you all reflecting on your role as supporters of education for students with vision impairments so that we can do this to the very best of our collective abilities and make the world a more friendly place for our young charges, both now and into the future. Quite an ambition, hey? Make sure you look at the program for our first PD day (Feb 12), which will be the beginnings of this theme!

Professional Development Activities for Term I, 2007

- Professional Development Day for Visiting Teachers – Monday, February 12
(program attached – please RSVP NOW!)
- Orientation Day for New Visiting Teachers – Tuesday, February 13 – yes, we have newbies!
- Educational Support for Blind Students – Friday, March 2
- O & M Morning – Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community - Tuesday March 6

And for Term II...

- Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Prep to Year 8 – Thursday, March 15
- Mountbatten for Beginners Workshop – Wednesday, March 21
- Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Secondary Students – Friday, April 20
- BrailleNote Workshop for Students – Tuesday, May 1
- PacMate Workshop for Students – Wednesday May 9
- Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments – Tuesday, May 15
- JAWS Workshop – Thursday, May 24
- O & M Morning – Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community – Wednesday, May 30
- ZoomText Workshop – Monday, June 4
- Professional Development Day for Visiting Teachers – Monday, June 18

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Athletics Carnival and Picnic Day - Combined Vision Australia and DEd activity

Get your students off to a running start this year. The inaugural Athletics Carnival and Picnic day is happening on Friday, March 30 (the last day of Term I) at the Bill Stewart Reserve in East Burwood. There is a flier attached to this Bulletin. Please distribute to your students and their schools and families and we'll try to get as many as we can involved in some fun and activity. The Eastern Region VTs have decided to make this their 'excursion event' and will be bringing along a group. What an excellent idea!!

Postal Concessions for the Blind

Every year we get questions about "Freepost for the Blind" which is a service funded by the Department of Social Security. Basically, braille and audio materials can be sent free of charge to and from registered organizations or blind people. The service does not apply to ANY print materials, even if they are about to be produced in Braille or audio format. It also does not apply to large print. Before advising schools, parents or students about this concession, read the section on our website which explains it in detail. www.svrc.vic.edu.au - go to 'Concessions and Allowances'.

Braille maths in the new UEB

Attached to this Bulletin is a 'cheat sheet' of braille maths in the new UEB which our braillies have been attaching to the inside of Maths books that are going out in UEB. You may find it a useful summary of the new braille and also a reference for teaching students. Thanks to Maria and the braille gang for this useful resource.

In the Driver's Seat® - 2007

Source: Blind Citizens News, December 2006

Sunday 25th March, 2007 - Sandown Motor Circuit

Event Organiser - Peter Watts

Phone/Fax: 9844 3903 Email: peterwatts1@bigpond.com

This event is a project of the Lions Club of Warrandyte Inc. The purpose of the event is to provide blind and vision impaired people the opportunity to drive a motor vehicle.

Driving School Instructors from Independent Driving Schools offer their time and vehicles free of charge. The situation is similar to that experienced by a sighted person learning to drive. The Driving Instructor sits beside the blind or vision impaired person (V.I.P.) and talks him/her around the circuit. Each participant is allotted a half-hour segment, and for some, this is their first experience of being "In the Driver's Seat®" whilst for others it is an opportunity to relive pleasant memories. Minimum age for participants is 16 years. Participants must be physically capable of handling foot and hand controls.

This event is generously supported by the Ulysses (Shearwater) Motor Cycle Group, the Vintage Driver's Club, the '49-'59 Ford Customline Club, who provide the added excitement of rides in or on their various vehicles around the car park and surrounding access roads. It is envisaged that, between 11:00 and 11:30am bikers, and between 1:30 and 2:00pm the Vintage Driver's, will be able to take their respective vehicles with passengers around the Sandown circuit.

Participants are invited to bring family and friends to share the day.

The day begins at 9:00am and concludes with a presentation at 3:30pm after the last group finishes their drive. The Lions Club of Warrandyte will provide a barbecue, tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the day for all free of charge. (To assist in defraying costs, a donation box will be located in the barbecue area for those who wish to voluntarily assist.) With 165 participants plus families, friends and volunteers we cater for between 500 to 600 people.

For any queries or to register, contact Peter Watts on 9844 3903.

MS Summer Cycle Event

We have been sent some information from MS Australia (via Vision Australia) inviting us to promote their first “Melbourne Summer Cycle Event”. This is to be held on Sunday 25th Feb and it’s hoped that there will be 4000 bike riders. There is a choice of two rides 30km and 40km. Both rides commence at Alexandra gardens and finish at Lygon St.

More information at the web site <http://www.melbournesummerycycle.org.au/>

Literacy seminars for 2007

Debbie Sukarna and David Hornsby have switched to a great new venue at The Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre at the Cnr of Bell and St Georges Rds in Preston. Their first seminar is on Comprehension on Feb 17th.

Other seminars for Term 1 are:

3rd March - Improving the Quality of Children’s Writing – Writer’s Notebooks and Revision Strategies.

17th March - Integrated Learning: Planning an Integrated Unit. Developing a sequence of enquiry learning.

See attached flier.

Arts Access – Feedback requested

Arts Access are interested in finding out about the experiences of people with disabilities, including people who are blind or vision impaired when attending the arts. This includes cinema, live performance, entertainment venues as well as many more (see message below).

BCA view this as a positive step forward and encourage you all to consider submitting your stories to ensure that the access issues of blind and vision impaired Australians are more widely known.

If you are interested in submitting your story, please contact Bernie Clifford, Arts Access by Feb 1, at bclifford@artsaccess.com.au or mail to Bernie Clifford, Industry & Audience Development Manager, Arts Access Victoria., 24 Eastern Road South Melbourne, VIC Australia 3205.

Carrie Smith Memorial Scholarships

For Research Higher Degree Studies in Special Education (Hearing or Vision Impairment)

Up to three scholarships are available, commencing in 2007, for candidates for part-time study for the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy in the area of special education (vision or hearing impairment).

The successful candidates will enrol at the University of Newcastle and will undertake their research programs through the Renwick Centre for Professional Education and Research —an affiliated Centre of The University of Newcastle which is administered by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC). The Centre is located on the main campus of RIDBC in North Rocks, Sydney. Applications for off-campus study may be considered on the basis of a requirement for a residential component to the study program.

Each successful candidate will be offered a scholarship comprising a grant-in-aid allowance of up to \$20,000 (for PhD) or \$10,000 (for MPhil). These allowances will be to help defray the costs associated with candidature during the term of the degree program (i.e., up to 3 years for MPhil or 6 years for PhD). Successful candidates will be awarded an allowance to be distributed as grant-in-aid in response to claims for expenses. Eligible expenses include, research costs, including travel and purchase of equipment and consumables.

It is expected that studies by the successful candidates will commence no later than March 31, 2007.

For more information, prospective applicants should contact Professor Phil Foreman, Head of School, School of Education (phil.foreman@newcastle.edu.au or 02 49216292) or Professor Greg Leigh, Chair of the Renwick Centre (greg.leigh@newcastle.edu.au or 02 9872 0372). Information about 2007 Research Higher Degree programs at the University of Newcastle is available at: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/rhd/prospectus/RHD%20Prosp.pdf>.

Applications should be received no later than February 17th, 2007.

National Braille Music Camp

The National Braille Music Camp will hold its 22nd camp at a boarding school in Mittagong NSW. Students from age 10 years up come if they are braille readers and are interested in music. At the camp there is lots of singing, lessons in braille music and a lot of fun and friendship. Everything is provided. Planes and trains are met and campers bused to Mittagong. The dates are from Saturday evening 30 June to Saturday morning 7 July 2007. The camp fees are \$180 and campers pay \$135 towards their air fares. Should anyone find this a problem, please contact Roma Dix. There is adequate supervision and excellent blind musicians who take the singing and teaching. Be warned, once a student has come to camp they will want to come back year after year. Roma Dix 11 Bourne Close Mittagong 2575 NSW 02 4871 1086 romad@westnet.com.au

Duxbury and the new UEB Braille

For those of you using Duxbury to translate to Unified English Braille, please be aware that Duxbury have released a new UEB translation table which can be downloaded from <http://www.duxburysystems.com/joe/enuncp.zip>

To install, download the file then copy into your Duxbury folder on C:\. The new file should overwrite that which already exist within the Duxbury folder.

If you are using Duxbury 10.6, this new translation table should solve most of your troubles.

If you are using Duxbury 10.5, you will still experience some problems with symbols appearing immediately before an end style (such as </para.> or </h1.>). For example, an end quote will appear as a start quote and some wordsigns or shortforms will be uncontracted. This can be solved by inserting a space between the word/punctuation and the end style. Regardless of which version of Duxbury you are using, there are some new codes that you may find useful:

[u] - prevents a contraction

[ui] - inserts a grade 1 indicator

['] (Alt-F2) - inserts a dot 5 numeric space within numbers

[vrn~ida] - place at the top of the document to translate all spaced or double hyphens as unspaced dashes.

[xcs] - breaks a capitals passage

[svgrn~} - removes the letter sign from roman page numbers

[svgrn~;} - re-instates the letter sign for roman page numbers (use before page v & x)

Alt-0149 - inserts a bullet

Alt-0150 - inserts a dash

(Thanks to Leona Holloway, Australian Braille Authority Secretary for this information.)

Advocacy Training

Please see attached information about a course in advocacy training for young people with disabilities run by the Youth Disability Advocacy Service.

Quantum Braille Literacy Scholarships

Please see attached information about this fabulous new scholarship program or go to www.quantumtechnology.com.au.

Come & Try Tandem Bike Riding Day

Vision Australia and Blind Sports are running another day to come and try tandem bike riding. It's on Feb 7 at Kooyong, so get in quick. See attached flier.

Come & Try Bowls Day

Vision Australia and Blind Sports are running this try day on March 29th. Flier attached.

Summer Snorkelling Trip to South Molle Island

Vision Australia and Aquability are running what looks like a fabulous trip to South Molle departing March 24 and returning March 31. Flier attached.

Deafblindness website

Chris Glavin runs a website devoted to providing resourceful information for a number of topics in education and disorders. He has created an information page on Deafblindness including communication, causes, books, videos, organizations, support services & mailing lists.

He asks us to please take a moment out of your day to visit the page. If you would like to help in any way please do not hesitate to contact him. He is always looking for individuals interested in providing articles and resources for Deafblindness.

<http://www.k12academics.com/deafblindness.htm>

Call for Papers - 2007 Round Table Conference

If you are interested in presenting at the 2007 Round Table Conference you must submit an abstract of approximately 200 words by Friday, 2nd February 2007. Submissions of abstracts are invited for the 2007 Round Table Conference being held from Saturday 5th May to Tuesday 8th May 2007 at the Chifley Hotel, Adelaide, South Australia.

The conference Theme is "Print Disability: Developing Individual Lifestyles in a Technological Age." Full details are available on the Round Table Web Site <http://www.e-bility.com/roundtable/> Follow the link under "National Conference".

Staff & Student News

• Welcome to our NEW VTs!!!

Yes, spectacular news! We have several new Visiting Teachers joining the ranks of the Vision team. Can't wait to meet you all on Feb 12 and 13.

A hearty welcome to Kim Foley (Eastern), Anne Hall (Northern), Phill McKenna (Northern – and a name you might know!), and Pauline Fahey (with the CEO Warrnambool and Ballarat areas).

Congratulations to Lea Philp (Northern) who is now 0.9. Meredith Walsh and Janie Macleod (also Northern) are on extended leave, and Sue Rampling (formerly with CEO Ballarat) is taking on a leadership role and no longer working as a VT.

• Peggy's Travels

Former VT student, Peggy is doing her 'Gap year' in Worcester. Here are excerpts from some emails she has sent.

"Hi Guys,

I am now in Worcester at RNIB New College. It is so much fun being here, I love it. I am staying in a boarding house with other students. I've been spending time getting to know the students and getting to know the school. People have been really helpful especially all the house parents and other volunteers who are here at the moment have been helping out as well.

The weather is pretty cold. It's about 8 degrees and it's windy and raining today. The buildings are very warm inside so that's ok. At Reading, someone set off the fire alarm at 1.00 in the morning and we all had to be out of the building. I was in my pyjamas with no shoes outside in the cold it was raining. It was horrible.

It's been an eventful couple of weeks. I've been to watch a play and seen a concert and joined the school choir.

I went to 'Food and Folk' at Rushwhick which is about 10 mins away from the school. That's a concert which has mostly folk music. Some of the students play there and it's really good. It was good to see some of the students musical talents, and to see some of the locals talents. Just on the weekend, I went to see a play of Hurcules (sorry about the spelling). It was performed by an amiture theatre company."

Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Diana Hayward, Peter Le, Peggy, Kathryn Mackay, Di Francis, Renée Williamson, Charlie Roberts, Maria Elford and the braillies, Leona Holloway, Tammy Axelsen, Jessica Zammit, Frances Gentle, and Sue Rampling for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to our fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', please contact:

Marion Blazé (who can be emailed at marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au).

Athletics Carnival and Picnic Day

Combined Vision Australia and Department of Education Activity

Friday, March 30, 2007
9.45am to 2pm

Bill Stewart Reserve
Burwood East
Melway 62 C8

COME for some FUN!!!!

Fun activities will be planned, with a picnic lunch, a chance to catch up with friends and ribbons will be awarded!!

There will be two categories of participation: a 'Championship division' and an 'Achiever division', for students with additional disabilities.

Please send, email or fax (ASAP) your expression of interest with the following information to the SVRC:

Name of student:

Year level or age:

School:

VT:

Sporting interest:

Likely to compete as 'Champion' or 'Achiever':

Person who will 'escort' student participant:

Person who could act as running guide for student participant:

Contact details for student and/or escort: