

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 9

Friday 8th June 2007

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

Professional Development Activities for Term III, 2007

- **WindowEyes Workshop:** SVRC on Tuesday, July 24 – 9.30 to 12.30
BYO Laptop
- **Term III PD Day for VTs:** SVRC on Wednesday, August 8 – 9 to 3.30
- **MAGic Workshop:** SVRC on Thursday, August 16 – 9.30 to 12.30
- **O & M Morning: Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community** on Thursday, August 30
- **Mountbatten for Users Workshop:** SVRC on Wednesday, September 5 – 9.30 to 12.30

To see the annual program and to download programs for professional development activities, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2007.htm>

Other activities

- **Visiting Teachers Combined Conference – Melbourne, Friday, June 22**
At Crowne Plaza: 1 to 5 Spencer St, Melbourne – Cost \$80
Register by May 18. Contact Aurora School on (03) 8878 9878.
- **Parent Support Group Meeting – at SVRC, 2pm July 21**
On the first weekend of next term, this group will be meeting again with Dr James Elder as guest speaker.
The flier is attached so please distribute to families far and wide. We do send out to our mailing list, but further promotion would be great!

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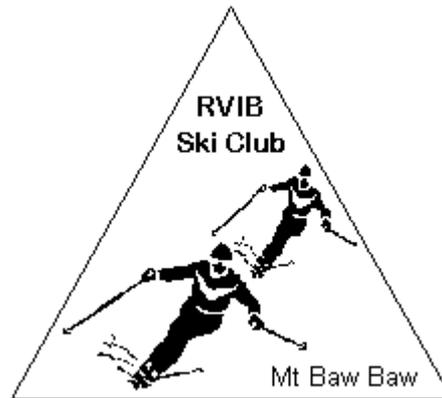
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Ski Baw Baw!!!

Article by Sophie Kerr

Have you experienced the beauty of a snow covered, crisp aired, alpine environment in winter? Here's a great opportunity for you, whether you answered "yes" or "no" to our question!

Winter is almost upon us, and hopefully that means weather conducive to ample snow falls in the alpine areas. The 2007 ski season officially opens on the Queen's Birthday weekend, and whether there is an abundance of snow or not, there are good times to be had on Mount Baw Baw.



For those who don't know who we are, we are the RVIB Ski Club – a not-for-profit organisation that operates and manages a ski lodge on Mount Baw Baw. Both the club and the lodge exists to enable blind and visually impaired persons and their friends and family safe and meaningful access to alpine related activities. The activities on offer include skiing – both cross country and downhill – snowboarding, snow-shoeing and tobogganing. Definitely something for everyone, no matter what your age or ability.

Because of the nature and philosophy of the Club, we are able to offer extremely competitive rates of accommodation to visually impaired people and their friends/family. For first time users of our lodge who are visually impaired, we offer accommodation at discounted rates, and we'd be happy to discuss this with you to work out an offer for you.

Our lodge has ample amenities and is central and within easy walking distance to all services and facilities on the mountain. The lodge is a three storey A frame building, which sleeps a total of 20 people (two of which are on trundle beds), with shared bathroom, living and kitchen facilities. We have a drying room, ski room and even a balcony – perfect for breakfast outdoors on those beautiful alpine mornings. Our lodge is warm and comfortable and can be the superb holiday retreat for families.

We at the RVIB Ski Club have been busy preparing the lodge for the winter season to ensure all our patrons are warm and comfortable as they venture up the mountain. We have installed a new oven/cooktop as our old one retired after many years of faithful service. We have been preparing for the installation of a new sprinkler system, which is due to be installed at the end of the winter season. All other routine maintenance has been completed and the lodge is ready to go.

We are holding our Annual Triva Night on Saturday 16th June at 7pm at Vision Australia (454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong). This is a fantastic night full of fun, frivolity and guaranteed laughs with some fabulous prizes to be won – including special accommodation offers, resort discounts, and loads of chocolate! Funds raised go towards improvements to the lodge. The cost is \$10 per head, BYO drinks and nibbles. This is a great opportunity to come along, meet some club members, and have a great time with friends and family. Put together a table if you like – or join one of ours!! To register your interest, please email sophissimo@bigpond.com.

Another upcoming event with the Ski Club is our Annual Meeting – to be held on June 19th at Vision Australia (454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong). Everyone is most welcome to join us for pizza

beforehand, followed by our annual meeting agenda. If you are interested in learning more about the club and what we are about, this is a great opportunity.

For more information about the RVIB Ski Club and ski lodge, visit <http://www.rvibski.com.au> or follow the link to <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/BawBaw.htm>. There are contact details on our website if you'd like to email us. We also issue regular newsletters to update members and friends on what is happening both within the club and on the mountain. If you'd like to be added to the mailing list, please email sophissimo@bigpond.com. Newsletters are generally issued via email, however print copies are available via post on request.

Report on VT PD Day – June 1

Approximately 30 Visiting Teachers (with one teacher from Vision Australia) gathered from near and far to get the good oil at the SVRC. Elly Gay, who is a lawyer with the Department's Conduct and Ethics Branch, gave a very clear presentation on discrimination law as it applies to support of students with vision impairments. Now that we know and understand the Disability Standards for Education, we are hoping to ensure that our schools and Principals are also aware of these guidelines and their implications for support of our students. Then we were onto looking at the latest technology with the intention of hopefully making some comparisons. Peter Goldie showed us the latest innovations from Mimio, Ramona Mandy demonstrated the wonderful BrailleNote, Lee Kumutat and Trevor Boyd did a very entertaining 'double act' on PacMate and ClearNote, and then Michael Kelly and Lyn Robinson wowed us with the SVRC collection of new electronic audio books. Michael also demonstrated just how easy it is to put an audio book (or even a few) on an MP3 player. The final session of the day was our own Annette imploring us to turn our students into tax payers! She has produced a booklet to be used as a checklist by teachers and students to evaluate readiness for work. The booklet, which will be a work in progress, should be copied and used with any students from about Year 7 onwards. We invite your feedback on this resource.

AND, thank you to all for your contributions to **Australia's Biggest Morning Tea**. Thanks to the SVRC staff for providing the scrumptious morning tea and donating raffle prizes. Thanks to the VTs for buying raffle tickets and donating gold coins for their cups of tea and coffee. We raised \$116 for the Cancer Council.

Below is a scene from 'behind the scenes'– yes, Maria (left) and Dianne (right) loading the dishwasher after our Australia's Biggest Morning Tea!!! It's not just the speakers that make a great PD day – it's all those little and often unnoticed things as well. (Thanks to Leeanne for the photo.)



AFB CareerConnect – fantastic website for our students

Annette also told us about the American Foundation for the Blind's website called CareerConnect. On this website, specifically designed for people with vision impairments, you can get help writing your CV, creating a calendar of appointments, preparing for job interviews and even get in touch with someone with a vision impairment who is already in a career in which you are interested. Go to www.afb.org and click on CareerConnect® (under 'QuickLinks'). There are over 1,000 'mentors' who are blind or VI, and students can contact them by email. Although they live and work in America, it will still be useful for our students to make contact and find out about working or studying in their field, with a vision impairment.

Report on SPEVI Victoria Get-together – 5pm, May 28

Twenty plus educators of the vision impaired gathered at Vision Australia, Burwood to hear a guest speaker and then socialise over drinks and nibbles. One of the aims of this meeting was to welcome new-comers to the field. Our newest comer has been at Vision Australia since March this year. Some of the 'old comers' started way back in the late 70s! So the cumulative experience in the room would have added up to something like 180 years!!

Our guest speaker was Krista Fisher, who has been blind since birth, is now in her thirties and told us of her struggles to find employment as a young blind person. Krista is currently on a mission talking to community groups about the difficulties disabled people have being considered for work. We were also updated on the SPEVI calendar for the next few years. The next SPEVI conference will be in Adelaide in January 2009 and the theme will be 'Challenges and Choices'. We are also very excited that the next ICEVI conference will be in Australia. The 13th World Conference of the International Council for Education of Vision Impaired will be in Sydney, in July 2010. One of the consequences of this will be that there will be no SPEVI conference in 2011 (they usually happen every two years, but it was thought that two conferences within six months might be too much).

Next SPEVI Get-together – 5pm, August 8

We're planning the next gathering to be at the SVRC after our PD day for Term III on Wednesday, August 8th. So make a plan now to stay on until 4.30ish to meet up with our colleagues from other agencies.

Focus on Writing – Seminar July 21

David Hornsby and Debbie Sukarna are offering a full day on developing an effective writing program at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment centre on Saturday, July 21, 2007. For more information call Paula Welham on 9499 2065 or see the flier attached to the print copy of this Bulletin.

JAWS Scholarship Program 2008

Freedom Scientific and Quantum Technology is again running the JAWS Scholarship Program for Australian people with vision impairments who are planning on pursuing further studies in 2008 or who are currently enrolled in tertiary studies. The prize is a copy of JAWS for Windows Professional valued at approximately \$2000.

How to enter:

In 500 words or less, tell us why you need a Freedom Scholarship and how it will assist you in your tertiary studies

- Applications must be attached to an application form;
- Application forms can be obtained by contacting Quantum Technology
- Applications close Friday 26 October 2007

For an application form please call Quantum Technology office on 02 8844 9888 or e-mail to info@quantumtechnology.com.au.

Guide Dogs Victoria News

Yarrowonga program May 17 and 18

Sharon, Angela and Dean from the CMS ran a group program in Yarrowonga for 4 students who live in North Eastern Victoria on May 17 and 18. We stayed at a motel in the main street not far from the main shopping precinct and despite the heavy downpours of rain we managed to get out and about to complete a variety of O&M activities. The students explored many of the shops in the main street including the newsagent, florist and antique shop. The students had a number of tasks to complete while visiting the shops and they used tape recorders to make notes about their findings. The shopkeepers were very interested in what we were doing and went out of their way to help the students complete their tasks.

Upcoming Event

Senior program in Halls Gap, July 2- 6. We will let everyone know how the program went.

3rd Australasian O&M conference: Perth 24 to 27 October, 2007

Hosted by the Association for the Blind of WA. The CMS team is submitting a number of abstracts for presentation at the conference. This is an opportunity for the team to communicate with other O&M instructors from around Australia about the work the CMS does and this is especially important as there are no other services in Australia providing an O&M service like the CMS.

Domiciliary programs

While the majority of CMS students reside in the Melbourne metropolitan area the team is also kept busy with O&M programs throughout the state. CMS staff visit students and their families in a number of areas including Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, Bendigo and Gippsland. Visits to these areas are made throughout the year and on a regular basis.

Angela Reynolds, an O&M at GDV who now resides in North Eastern Victoria, is able to provide a frequent service to students living in the Hume Region and she is supported by other CMS Instructors who visit the region albeit on a less frequent basis.

For further information about the **Children's Mobility Service** please contact –

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Dean Johnson | 9854 4506 |
| Rachel Morgan | 9854 4469 |
| Sharon Taylor | 9854 4496 |
| Lil Deverell | 9854 4542 |
| Alicia Madden | 9854 4493 |
| Janelle O'Loughlin | 9854 4520 |
| Erin Galloway | 9854 4521 |

For further information about **The Young Adults Program** at Guide Dogs Victoria please contact –

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Darlene McIntosh | 9854 4470 |
| JR Barresi | 9854 4450 |
| Rose Long | 9854 4415 |

Vision Australia Activities – Tandem Bike Ride

There will be a Tandem Bike Riding Come and Try Day starting at the Cricket Pavilion, 454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong on September 12, 2007, 10.30am to 2pm. The flier is attached to the print copy of this Bulletin, or call Di Hayward on 8872 7000.

Vision Australia Orthoptists

The orthoptists at Vision Australia provide a home and school visit service to help students get the most out of their reduced vision. The orthoptists demonstrate magnifiers and lighting equipment to assist with reading as well as providing advice on positioning, seating, glare reduction etc. The orthoptists can also help with training to use the best part of the student's vision.

There is no cost and no minimum vision criterion.

Anyone can refer to this service but we do appreciate a letter from your eye doctor or optometrist outlining your eye condition.

Call 1300 8474 66 for your nearest Vision Australia centre and the intake worker can then take the client's details and they will be contacted by the orthoptists. We prefer to have recent letters from ophthalmologists for new clients. The client's family can also contact us themselves.

You can also contact specific offices directly to talk to the orthoptist. Here is a list of Vision Australia branches and the orthoptists that work at them. The orthoptist will probably see the client both at school and at home.

Vision Australia orthoptists

Ballarat

1300 Howitt St, Wendouree Vic. 3355
 PO Box 169, Wendouree Vic. 3355
 Phone: 03 5337 4555, Fax: 03 5338 2795
 Orthoptist: Trudy East

Boronia

1/252 Dorset Rd, Boronia Vic. 3155
 Phone: 03 9761 0011, Fax: 03 9761 2455
 Orthoptist: Ros Wellington

Essendon

Cnr Lawson and Albion St, Essendon Vic. 3040
 PO Box 77, Essendon Vic. 3040
 Phone: 03 9370 6111, Fax: 03 9326 0915
 Orthoptist: Anita Egan

Geelong

79 High Street, Belmont Vic. 3216
 Phone: 03 5249 2700, Fax: 03 5249 2799
 Orthoptist: Julie Fitzpatrick

Heidelberg

104 Mount St, Heidelberg Vic. 3084
 PO Box 594, Heidelberg Vic. 3084
 Phone: 03 9457 6611, Fax: 03 9457 7826
 Orthoptist: Dianna Awad

Kooyong

454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong Vic. 3144
 Phone: 03 9864 9222, Fax: 03 9864 9210
 orthoptist: Khoa Nguyen

Oakleigh

69-71 Atherton Rd, Oakleigh Vic. 3166
 Phone: 03 9569 7255, Fax: 03 9569 7565
 Orthoptist: Natalia Dawson

Seaford

38 Harnett St, Seaford Vic. 3198
 Phone: 03 8770 6800, Fax 03 8770 6855
 Orthoptists: Nick Jones and Jane Brownfield

St Kilda Road (Footscray Team)

557 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne Vic. 3004
 Phone: 03 9522 5222, Fax: 03 9510 4735
 Orthoptist: Anastasia Sakellariou

Warragul

2A Mouritz St, Warragul Vic. 3820
 Phone: 03 5623 0100, Fax: 03 5623 0130
 Orthoptist: Helen McKinley

Warrnambool

229 Moore St, Warrnambool Vic. 3280
 PO Box 187, Warrnambool Vic. 3290
 Phone: 03 5560 2300, Fax: 03 5560 2399
 Orthoptist: Nicole Moore

Paralympic Talent Search

On June 24 at Mentone Grammar School there will be trials for the Paralympics. See flier attached or call Tim Matthews 9614 6800.

2007 Braille Competition

The Australian Braille Authority of NSW invite participation in their annual competition. See the attached flier or call Nicola Stowe for a Competition Entry Package.

Staff and Student News

- Lea's student Abbey received a CD containing cartloads of her favourite books - "Baby Sitters" - that she can read via her BrailleNote. She writes:
 Thanks very much for the books I really like them. Leanne saved them in a folder called library because there are so many.
 My favourite place is my warm bed when I'm reading.
 From Abbey

Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Dean Johnson, Lea Nagel, Sophie Kerr, Paula Welham, Di Hayward, Nicola Stowe, Tim Matthews, Renee Williamson and Nick Jones 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).

Parent Support Group

Saturday, July 21st

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

370-380 Springvale Road Donvale

(In the grounds of Heatherwood School - second driveway on the left after heading north from the Eastern Freeway)

Time: 2:00 till stumps

Guest Speaker: Dr. James Elder
Associate Professor
Director of Department of Ophthalmology
Royal Children's Hospital.

Dr. Elder, a paediatric and genetic ophthalmologist, will discuss new research and techniques in the area of low vision.

For more information call Annette Godfrey-Magee or Marion Blazé on 9841 0807
John and Judy Bowen: 9842 5103
Leigh Heaven: 9857 0152 or 9878 4477

Baby Sitters and afternoon tea provided.

Hope to see you all soon.