

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 2**Friday 22nd February 2008**

This issue (and sorry it's late) was edited by Deb Lewis, Co-ordinator, Statewide Vision Resource Centre with a lot of assistance from Education Officer Marion Blazé.

Professional Development Activities for Term 1, 2008

Professional Development Event 2008 (see attached for programs)	Date
Educational Support for Blind Students For class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who utilise braille	Mon 25 Feb
O&M Morning - Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community Call Rachel Morgan to discuss a date – 9854 4444	TBA
Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc BYO laptop 1. Spot Dot Braille Embosser - 10.00-11.30am - Ramona Mandy, Humanware 2. Mountbatten - 11.45am-1.15pm - Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Braille Skills - 1.30-3.00pm - Staff from the SVRC	Tues 4 March
Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Prep to Year 8 For class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who have low vision (maximum participants: 65)	Fri 14 March

To see the annual program and to download programs for professional development activities, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2008.htm>

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Report on Our PD day for VTs – February 15

Report by Marion Blazé

Our first session of the day was refreshingly entertaining because we watched a DVD of four pre-Prep blind children who came in to the SVRC last December for a wonderful preparatory course in Braille skills. Whilst watching, Annette, Toni and Marion presented much of the materials which were produced for these children and their schools to kick-start their educational careers. Do you know they'll graduate from school in 2020? Scary, huh!

Lucy from Vision Australia then told us about their library services and demonstrated the wonders of DAISY technology – a navigable form of audio book. You can even book mark pages and quotations!

Marion convinced us (I hope) that computer and touch typing are skills essential for all our students and we should be reviewing them all and asking why they are not provided with the opportunity to develop these skills, given that all (at least in State schools) are eligible for funding.

Many of you will remember Alan Johnston, an eminent optometrist who has a genuine interest in Low Vision. The great news is that he has opened a Low Vision Clinic in East Melbourne and will investigate creative ways to get the optical best for our students. More on this later...

Thanks to Rachel Morgan and Stewart Blair we learnt how guide dogs in schools can now be an option for some students.

Lea Nagel showed us her latest party trick with a BrailleNote (how teachers can know what their students are up to) and we were even treated to some Nagel/Lewis drama - role playing how easily students can access information if already available electronically.

Our final session seemed to be a real hit. 2008 really is the year for it! Participants launched into learning Braille - for the first time for some, or as a UEB refresher for others. We were thrilled at the enthusiasm with which our participants took on this challenge and look forward to many correspondence lessons flooding back in for feedback.

If you missed out, read on....

2008 – The Year to Learn Unified English Braille

This year there are several fantastic reasons why everyone with a VI student should learn Braille.

1. Australia has adopted the new “Unified English Braille Code” (UEB), as have several other countries. The changes aren’t huge in literary Braille, but we need to break some old habits to know this new code.
2. We have had an influx of young, capable blind students into several regions, and need to prepare for their literary futures (and those of others yet to come).
3. Even students with low vision can find Braille a useful tool for organisational tasks. We need to provide these opportunities
4. Next year is the bi-centenary of the birth of Louis Braille. There will be celebrations all over the world – so why not celebrate by skilling up in Braille!
5. We’ll even give you a certificate or letter (or both) indicating the time you spend and the skill you develop, so you can use it to impress your boss or as part of your PD and performance records.

The staff of the SVRC have prepared UEB friendly lessons, which can be done by correspondence, and a kit of information to get you started and help you along the way. If you missed this PD day, make an appointment at SVRC to get an introduction to this course. If you don’t have access to a braille, we can install a "Perkins Braille emulator" on your laptop which allows you to produce Braille dots using six keys on your QWERTY keyboard – so there are no excuses – get into it!!!

Comments from the PD day:

“I’d forgotten how much fun Braille could be!”

“I never thought it would all come back to me so quickly.”

“I didn’t know the UEB was so similar to the old code.”

SPEVI Victoria News

The South Pacific Educators of the Vision Impaired is your professional association. Your Victorian counsellors have already started planning a bunch of exciting activities for 2008 **AND** there are conferences coming up in January 2009 and July 2010.

Please tell all your colleagues about these SPEVI activities and the benefits of membership. Remember, SPEVI has a website at <http://www.ebility.com/spevi/>.

SPEVI gatherings are a fantastic opportunity to catch up with what's happening in the field and with your colleagues. We are a unique bunch of educators, and especially in these times of change, we should be banding together to pool our practice wisdom, and reinvigorate our enthusiasm for our work. So come along and bring a few non-member friends!

Here's all the news and **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:**

**“Challenges and Choices”
SPEVI 2009 Biennial Conference
Adelaide 4th to 9th January**

Attached is the call for papers for the 2009 SPEVI Conference to be held in Adelaide. Get your papers in by February 28th, 2008! For more information, contact Jessica Bosnakis on (08) 8354 2285 or Jessica@aomevents.com.

Victorian Activities

Term II – Friends of SPEVI gathering

Date: Thursday, April 17, 4.30pm until about 6.00pm

Venue: Statewide Vision Resource Centre, 370 Springvale Rd, Donvale

Parking: just North in the Doncaster Indoor Sports Centre car park

Format: 4.30pm drinks and nibbles 5.15pm Guest speaker and panel

Theme: Art and Community access for VI students

Cost: \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members

Come and hear about the London Conference on Art for VI, the “Braille Windows Project” to celebrate the 200th birthday of Louis Braille, Zoo access project, CSIRO Education Programs access project, and more.

Term III – Friends of SPEVI gathering

Date: Friday, August 1, 4.30pm until about 6.00pm

Venue: Guide Dogs Victoria, Chandler Hwy, Kew

Format: 4.30 drinks and nibbles 5.15 Guest speaker and panel

Theme: Our VI students overseas

Cost: \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members

We hope to include reports on students doing Gap years, studying at Yale, attending Space camp or SCORE camp and more. Also find out about the AER Conference.

Term IV – SPEVI Day

We have traditionally devoted the first day of Term IV to a “combined agencies” Professional Development Day. This year we have a theme – looking at prematurity and its implications for our students.

Date: Monday, October 6, 9.30am to 4.30pm

Venue: Vision Australia, 454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong

Theme: Prematurity, vision impairment and development

Cost: tba

Program planning is already underway. We hope to hear from Dr Susan Carden, Paediatric Ophthalmologist who has worked with premature babies here and in Vietnam. We are planning a panel of young adults with “Retinopathy of Prematurity” to speak about its impact on their lives. Hear from parents of severely premature babies, about the implications of prematurity on social, spatial and visual development.

Call for papers for SPEVI PD day: we would like to invite any interested people to present on this day. If you have a particular skill, knowledge or interest in the area of vision impairment and prematurity, then we would encourage you to share this with your colleagues on the day. Please send a (up to) 200 word abstract, including your name, position and contact details by April 30th to Marion Blazé at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, PO Box 201 Nunawading 3131 or marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au.

Forward planning – Conference, July 2010

Just in case you need to negotiate funding with your managers well ahead, SPEVI is joining forces with ICEVI (International Council on Education of the Vision Impaired) for a conference in Sydney, in July 2010.

Contact details for SPEVI Victorian Counsellors:

Lil Deverell: Mobility Instructor with Guide Dogs Victoria

lil.d@guidedogsvictoria.com.au 9854 4444 0418 370 312

Garry Stinchcombe: Principal, Vision Australia School

garry.stinchcombe@visionaustralia.org 9808 6422 0419 528 180

Marion Blazé: Education Officer for Vision, Statewide Vision Resource Centre,
Department of Education & Early Childhood Development

marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au 9841 0807 409 860 251

Some Advice for Students Entering Tertiary Study

Notes prepared by Lee Clarke from “Viewpoint” a CD on tertiary transition experiences from students who are blind or vision impaired. For a copy of the CD, contact the Statewide Vision Resource Centre or Joanne Webber at RMIT University.

What follows is a brief outline of the advice that comes from the CD. The advice is listed alphabetically, and has nothing to do with the relative importance of each dot point.

- approach Disability Liaison Unit, find out who your Disability Liaison Officer is. Develop rapport with them.
- be organised and actually prepare early
- choose course carefully, don't be afraid of technology
- choose a job you'd like, and can you manage in the work environment independently
- connect with Disability Liaison Unit and work out what technology you need
- directly liaise with tutors and lecturers
- disclose all your needs at the start
- don't underestimate what you can do, and what assistance is out there for you.
- don't be afraid to ask
- education is the key to gaining employment
- follow your dreams. Choose course and location, through your aspirations
- get involved with fellow students as much as you can. Social interaction and friends are as important as coming out with a qualification.
- have information formatted to your needs
- if you are struggling, let your tutors know. Speak up.
- know your technology well, know your learning style, be flexible and organised and advocate for yourself
- take advantage of orienteering days and introduce yourself to disability staff, take the opportunity, before lectures start, to meet lecturers
- whatever course you choice, do it for yourself, don't do a course that your parents might like
- you are not the only one there, and your disability doesn't stand out as much as it may have at school. You are more relaxed and it's a lot better environment and you are more accepted as a person.

Direct Braille with Perky Duck! (For FREE!)

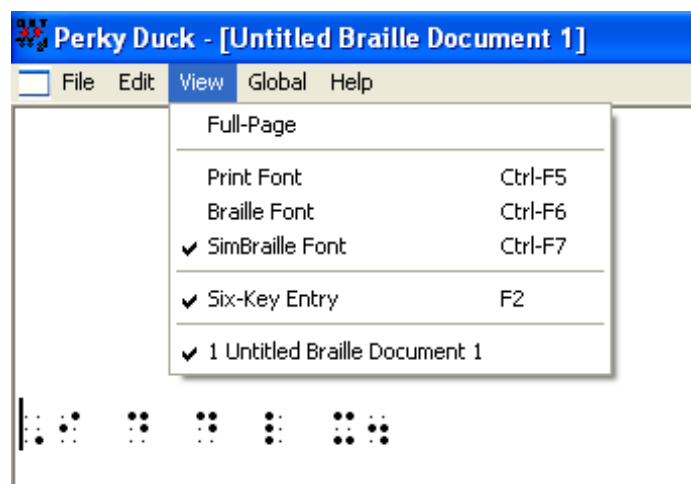
Turn your QWERTY keyboard into a "six key" entry keyboard – and use the FDS JKL and SPACE keys to write in braille using your computer – PC or Mac!

Go to <http://www.duxburysystems.com/products.asp> - scroll down to PERKY DUCK – click PURCHASE and download the FREE software by following the prompts!



Once the program is open (look in the Duxbury folder if you are having trouble finding it) go to file and choose New. Then you can write happily in braille!

Now you can keep doing your SVRC Braille Lessons by Correspondence – even if your Perkins Brailier goes bung!!!



Recreation 2008: Vision Australia Geelong & Bendigo Areas

There may be eligibility requirements for these activities so please make contact with the contact people direct – and for more information Ph 5249 2700.

Ongoing Program Details

<p>Swish When: 1st Wednesday of the month Start Date: 6th February 2008 Where: Vision Australia Geelong Time: 2.45–4.30 pm Cost: \$2.00 Volunteer: Support provided Client Contact: Bob Claffey – Ph 5248 7407</p>	<p>Golf When: 3rd Monday of the month Start Date: 18th February 2008 Where: Balyang Par 3 Golf Course 5222 3336 Time: 10.00am for 10.30am start Meet there or make other arrangements Cost: \$7.00 Equipment: Included in cost Volunteer: Sighted caddies Client Contact: Brian Hunter – Ph 5244 0442</p>
<p>Ten Pin Bowling When: Every Tuesday Start Date: 14th January 2008 Where: Geelong Bowling Lanes 5241 2200 Time: 11.00am till approx 12.00pm Cost: \$12.00 (two games & shoe hire) League Client Contact: Peter Madden – Ph 5241 6033</p>	<p>Indoor Lawn Bowls (Non VA) When: Every Thursday Start Date: January 2008 Where: Highton Bowls Club Time: 12.00 noon Cost: \$5.00 Client Contact: David Blaik 5224 1649 or Bob Claffey 5248 7407</p>
<p>Book Club When: 2nd Wednesday of month Start Date: February 2008 Where: Vision Australia Geelong Time: 10.30am–12.30pm Cost: Nil Client Contact: Mary Falconer 5243 1340</p>	<p>U3A When: 2nd Thursday of month Start Date: January 2008 Where: Vision Australia Geelong Time: 10.30am Cost: Gold coin Contact: Vision Australia 5249 2700</p>
<p>Young VIP's Diners Group (20–50yrs) When: Monthly Friday or Saturday Start Date: February 2008 Where: Restaurants in Geelong Time: TBA Cost: Individual cost Client Contact: Rick Kakol 5278 2206</p>	<p>Rowing (Self Help Group) Rowing on an ongoing basis at the Barwon Rowing Club When: Sunday Mornings Participants can come and try rowing for a couple of weeks – if they wish to continue they must join the club as financial members. Contact at rowing club Anne Brain – 5258 0888 (work)</p>

New Activities Coming Soon

Tandem Cycling – “It Takes Two” Project with Cycling Geelong

Walking Group

Blind Cricket Come and Try, aiming to develop a Geelong team and/or small local competition. 16/3/08 and 29/3/08 more details soon.

Sculpting Workshops – Weekends no dates yet.

Short Courses between 1–8 weeks eg silk scarf painting, pottery, computer, sewing, leather work, cooking etc

Region Holiday It is being considered to plan one, possibly two holidays within our region.

Recreation forum for young people and parents

The Gordon TAFE Computer Café and other supports

Annual Recreation Events

<p>Corio Bay Geelong Lions Club Sailing Day When: Sunday April 6th 2008 Where: Geelong Yacht Club Time: 9.00am–12.30pm Cost: Nil lunch provided. Must book. Contact Person: Jan Jones – 5248 8633</p>	<p>Fishing Charter When: One Day In 2008 Where: Port Phillip Heads And Waters Time: TBA Cost: TBA</p>
<p>Geelong Sculptors Inc Exhibition ran successfully in 2007 and is planned to be held again in 2008</p>	

Other Important Recreation Contacts

Blind Citizens Australia, Geelong Brian Hunter 5244 0442

Leisure Networks – 5222 3911

Blind Sports Victoria (03) 9822 8876

Geelong Yacht Club – Sailabilty Murray Mitchellhill – 0408 159298

Audio Books Direct

Audio Books Direct is an Australian company that specialises in audio books which can be viewed and purchased online. It lists over 16,000 Australian and overseas titles on cassette and CD – many of which are in MP3 format and some of which are compatible with Daisy players. Check out their website: <http://www.audiobooksdirect.com.au>

Museum of disAbility

This website is presented by People Inc., a non-profit human service agency serving people with special needs, seniors and their families in Western New York. The website contains virtual exhibits documenting various aspects of the history of individuals with disabilities, as well as an extensive bibliography. Though there is a text version available, the website is largely based on photographs (no alt text descriptions) and brief information. And from what I could see, audio output is not included.

To access the website, go to <http://www.museumofdisability.com/>

New Online Newsletter

Source: Welcome to the first issue of Imagineering Our Future—the online newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute.

The dictionary lists "imagineer" as a verb meaning to put creative ideas into practical use; to devise and use imaginative ideas or technologies. Imagineering—turning creative ideas and partnerships into practical research, education, technologies, products, and services to help the world's blind achieve independence—is at the heart of the work in the NFB Jernigan Institute.

The purpose of this new online newsletter is to deliver timely, dynamic content to our friends and supporters about the innovation, inspiration, and imagination being generated through our work in the Institute and throughout the National Federation of the Blind.

VA Residential Training Programs

Attached is an Expression of Interest form for the Residential Training Programs being offered by Vision Australia this year. For further information or additional copies of the forms, contact Arlene Pacheco on 9808 6422.

New Product- Bierley Shopper

The "Bierley Shopper" is a new product with a tiny hand-held camera which is attached to a 7" screen. Selling for \$945, it is available from Advanced Digital Development Pty. Ltd. See attached for more information or contact advanced.digital@gmail.com / 0425 771795.

Blind Climber Helps Youngsters Climb Their Own Peak

In 2001, Erik Weißenmayer became the first blind man in history to reach the summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest peak. A few years later he decided to lead a Himalayan expedition which included six blind Tibetan teenagers and this week the film of the expedition - Blindsight - was released in Australia. For a transcript of a recent interview on the ABC 7.30 Report see <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2007/s2157114.htm>

Premier's Reading Challenge 2008

Source: DEECD Email S015-2008

The Premier's Reading Challenge is open to all Prep to Year 10 students in government and non government schools in Victoria. Students who participate and complete the Challenge will receive a certificate signed by the Premier.

For the list of books for students in year levels P-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10 (some of which are held in braille/large print/etext/audio formats at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre), see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/prc/books/default.htm>

Vacancy

There is an exciting opportunity for a teacher of the vision impaired to work in the NT. If you are interested, the information can be found at the following web address:

[http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcis/RMS.nsf/\(LookupWebVacancy\)/85475453B6929910692573E9001EDDAC?Opendocument](http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcis/RMS.nsf/(LookupWebVacancy)/85475453B6929910692573E9001EDDAC?Opendocument)

If further information is required please contact Chris Dinning on (08) 8999 8704 or christine.dinning@nt.gov.au

Finally

Thanks to Marion Blazé, Chris Dinning, Maria Elford, Arlene Pacheco, Lyn Robinson and Mike Steer for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to my fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

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

Deb Lewis (who can be emailed at deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au).