

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 5

Thursday 24th April 2008

This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Resource Teacher, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2008

For workshop sessions, please BYO laptop.

Professional Development Event 2008	Date
Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. WindowEyes - 10.00am to 11.30am Ramona Mandy, Humanware 2. WYNN - 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Digital Media - 1.30pm to 3.00pm Staff of the SVRC	Wed 30 April
Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments. Maximum 60 Participants.	Wed 7 May
Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. PACMate - 10.00am to 11.30am Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 2. Introduction to the Visiting Teacher Tool Kit - 11.45am to 1.15pm Lyn Robinson and Michael Kelly 3. JAWS - 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher	Thurs 15 May
Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day	Tues 3 June

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

Conference Snippets

Melbourne has been host to two very exciting conferences this month. The International Council on English Braille (ICEB) meets once every four years and this year was held in Melbourne. Delegates from countries which use English Braille attended the conference and exchanged information about braille projects in their countries. This was followed by the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities (Round Table) Conference. This is a meeting of organisations involved in the production of alternative format materials in Australia. One of the roles of the Round table is to provide member organisations with guidelines and standards for the production of alternative format materials such as Braille, etext, audio and large print. Marion Blazé and I attended the conferences and hope to bring you some interesting snippets in the next few editions of the Bulletin.

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Braille News

- The latest version of Duxbury Braille Translator is version 10.6 and includes ‘tables’ for the Unified English Braille code. Version 10.7 is in the pipeline and Version 11.1 is due in about 8 months.
- There will be a new version of Unified English Braille Mathematics Guidelines which will be available at the end of May, 2008 from the Australian Braille Authority.
- The Unified English Braille Code Primer was released in March 2008 and the Braille files are now available for public download from the Round Table website.

<http://www.e-bility.com/roundtable/aba/publications.php>

A new Braille Code for the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was launched by Bill Poole of the U.K. This will replace the only other reference for the IPA which was produced in 1936. We were very excited to hear this news particularly as quite a few blind students are choosing to study English Language at VCE level. The guide will also be invaluable to students studying languages or linguistics as University.

Bicentenary of Louis Braille’s Birth

2009 will be a very important year for braille as countries commemorate the birth of Louis Braille. Different countries already have plans in place, here are some of their ideas:

- Canada, is hosting a website called Braille 200 which will be used to publish activities for the Bicentennial. There will be a writing competition for people to write about their experiences with braille, a song and DVD about Louis Braille, activities for sighted school children, braille bookmarks, stickers and kits for schools.
- The U.S.A. is producing a commemorative coin which will have the braille letters, brl, (short for braille) on it!
- Australia and New Zealand will have a commemorative stamp.
- The U.K. will hold an organ recital in honor of Louis Braille.

The World Blind Union and the International Committee for the Commemoration of the Bicentenary of Louis Braille’s Birth are organising an international conference in France from 4th to 8th January, 2009. The conference will include a tour to Coupvray, the birthplace of Louis Braille, a historical exhibition entitled “Louis Braille, his life and his works” and a visit to the tomb of Louis Braille at Pantheon. If you would like a copy of the conference program please contact the SVRC.

If you have any ideas you would like to share about ways in which we could celebrate Louis Braille’s birth please let us know at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

JVIB

A case study by our very own Kerry Fitzmaurice and Lee Clarke appears in the March 2008 edition of the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness. You can access the article entitled “Training Children in Eccentric Viewing: A Case Study” at

<http://www.afb.org/afbpress/pubjvib.asp?DocID=jvib020304>

Well done Kerry and Lee.

Seven Marathons in Seven Days

A blind man who set himself a worldwide challenge to run seven marathons in seven days has finished his final run. Dave Heeley ran the London Marathon after spending a week running in Brazil, the Falklands, Los Angeles, Sydney, Dubai and Tunisia. Mr Heeley, 50, from West Bromwich, has been running with guide Malcolm Carr to raise money for Guide Dogs UK. The pair

are among only four people to complete the challenge. The others are Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Dr Mike Stroud. Mr Heeley and Mr Carr finished the London Marathon in five hours and 23 minutes.

Fantastic adventure

Mr Heeley was met at the finish line by his wife Debbie, 42, and daughters Dannie, four, Georgie Lee, 6, and Grace, 17. He said: "I'm going to have a rest now." He added: "To think last week I was in the Falklands, it's just too incredible for words.

"I am the first blind person to do this. It's been a fantastic adventure and one I'm going to talk about for a long time." He said he had chosen his charity so that "other blind people could have the freedom and independence I've had". Mrs Heeley said: "I'm looking forward to having him home for a while.

From: BBC News Sunday, 13 April

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/west_midlands/7345172.stm

Freedom Scientific Invitation

Eric Damery (Freedom Scientific Vice President Software Product Management) will be visiting Australia to conduct an information tour in mid-May . The purpose of the tour is to provide an opportunity to:

- Learn about the recent innovations in JAWS, Openbook, MAGic and other Freedom Scientific products;
- Discuss plans for future developments;
- Obtain feedback and ideas for improvement.

Some of the topics to be covered include:

- Constantly changing Microsoft environments: Windows Vista, Windows Mobile 2006
- Consumer needs: portability, licensing flexibility and scripting;

The information and discussion session will be of interest to all educators working with vision impaired students of any age.

Date: Wednesday 14 May 2008 Time: 2:30 – 3:30 PM Venue: Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Making Sense of Tactile Graphics

"Despite the constantly improving technology which makes it possible to produce tactile graphics - the closest we can get to illustrations found in books for sighted learners, understanding spatial relations represented graphically remains an extremely difficult task for someone who has to rely on the sensitivity of fingertips and on crispness of lines and textures which bear no resemblance to real objects. For a totally blind child, with a fragmented knowledge of the world, limited opportunity to engage in activities allowing her to understand the cause and effect, or the spatial relations between objects beyond reach, making sense of tactile graphics must be even more difficult."

Adapted from an article by Professor Boguslaw Marek in *Visability*, Summer 2004.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Nigel Herring , author of *Picture Braille* who spoke recently at the International Council on English Braille (ICEB) Conference in Melbourne. For those of you not familiar with *Picture Braille* it is a software package which allows simple outline drawings to be produced on the computer and then embossed in dots using an embosser. Nigel spoke of the potential and drawbacks of producing graphics tactually, likening some people's rapture in highly complex graphics to the fable of the "Emperor's New Clothes", everyone expresses their delight but its real value to a braille reader may be of dubious benefit. Nigel commented that simple tactile graphics are fondly received by many young students and has suggested that a tactile graphics lexicon may well be what is needed so that there is some consistency in how pictorial information is presented to braille readers. For a copy of Nigel's paper please contact Lyn at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Tandem Bike Ride To St.Kilda

Vision Australia along with Blind Sports Victoria are organising a 34 kilometre Tandem Bike ride from Kooyong to Racers Café at St Kilda and back to Kooyong on Wednesday 7th May.

The cost for the day is \$5.00. Riders will buy there own lunch at Racers. The ride will leave Kooyong at 10.30 and return by 2.00 PM. Places are limited so if you are interested please ring Di Hayward on Ph. 9760 0006

Braille Window Project

The Braille Window Project was a very exciting addition to the windows of Mantra on Russell during the recent ICEB and Round Table conferences. The windows to the entrance of the hotel were covered in braille which was produced from the writings of the many braille writers, some of whom were Department of Education and Early Childhood Development students.

Touching Tale-The Age 10 April 2008

“A city window is helping to convey the beauty and value of braille text. To passers-by, the artwork on the windows of the Mantra Hotel in Russell Street looks and feels like an intricate pattern of raised shapes. But to people who can't see, it's a window into their experience of Melbourne: the rattle of trams, the click of high heels or the slap of runners, the smells of coffee, perfume and diesel, the sun and wind on their skin.”

The full article from The Age is attached to this copy of the bulletin or you can access it online at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/in-depth/touching-tales/2008/04/09/1207420476344.html>

The braille for the Braille Window Project was embossed by the staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. Maria, our Braille Coordinator took her grandchildren into the city to explore their wonderful handiwork.



Maria's grandchildren enjoyed feeling the braille.

Crafty Idea

For those of you who love shopping and want to be creative Vision Australia is running a fun 6 week course visiting Op-shops to buy things for a creative project. Under the guidance of Maret, artist extraordinaire, you will create a one off designer item from your purchases. If you have low vision and feel that this would be of interest why not call Maret on 9864 9260 to find out more or check the flyer attached at the end of the print edition of the bulletin.

Introduction to the Visiting Teacher Tool Kit

If you would like an opportunity to explore the Visiting Teacher Tool Kit with Lyn and Michael on May 15 please come along to the Statewide Vision Resource Centre for a guided tour between 11.45 AM and 12.15 PM. It is part of the Skill Power Workshop for Visiting Teachers Program and replaces the Enlarging Options which was scheduled for that day. Please see the flyer which is attached to the bulletin for all the Skill Power 2008 workshops for this term.

SVRC News

Prue Kilpatrick's student Stephanie has been selected by the World Blind Union as a participant to attend the "Listening to the Children" congress in Spain in June, 2008. Her mother reports that "she is thrilled to bits to be one of the representatives from the Asian-Pacific region!" What a wonderful opportunity - congratulations Stephanie!

Another student, Samuel, recently auditioned and won the lead role of the Huntingtower School musical, Anything Goes. Congratulations Samuel!

Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Prue Kilpatrick and Maria Elford for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to the fabulous team of proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

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

Lyn Robinson (who can be emailed at lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au).