

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 6

Friday 9th May 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. 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>

Gene Therapy for Leber's Congenital Amaurosis

The results of new research into gene therapy for Leber's Congenital Amaurosis were published online on Sunday April 27 in the New England Journal of Medicine. Two teams of scientists, one in the United States and the other in the United Kingdom, tested the gene replacement therapy in six volunteers with Leber's Congenital Amaurosis. Four of the six volunteers showed an improvement in their vision.

According to an article in the Washington Post, two of the volunteers who could only see hand motions were able to read a few lines of an eye chart within weeks. In another test a volunteer showed improved speed and accuracy walking through a maze of doors and walls set up in the hospital clinic.

"It's a phenomenal breakthrough," said Stephen Rose, chief research officer of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, which helped pay for one study done at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. There's currently no treatment for the disease, which appears early in infancy and causes severe vision loss. If you would like to read the research online go to: The New England Journal of Medicine web site at: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/NEJMoa0802268>

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Customising the "System Tray" on your Task Bar

A tip for mouse-using computer users from Deb Lewis, Co-ordinator, Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Do you find lots of unfamiliar (and not particularly useful) icons in your System Tray – located at the right hand end of your Task Bar?

For example, when you wish to "safely remove" your flash drive from your computer do you have to click on the "show hidden items" arrow in order to expand the list so that you can find the icon that you need?

You may wish to personalise your System Tray, thereby minimising mouse clicks and making your computer use more efficient.

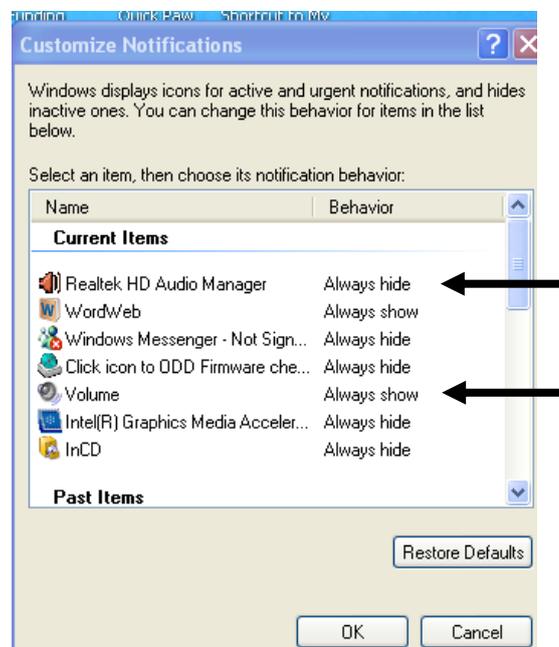
Step 1

Right click in the right hand end of the Task Bar and click Properties which brings up the following screen.



Step 2

Click Customise



Step 3

Go through the lists of Current Items and Past Items and mark them with "Hide when inactive" "Always hide" or "Always show".

For example I marked all of the items "Always hide", except the icons that I regularly use ("Volume", "Word Web" and "Safely Remove Hardware").

Step 4

Enjoy your less cluttered System Tray!

A copy of these instructions can be downloaded from <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/CSSysTray.doc>

Free Audio Books

LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain and release the audio files back onto the net. Their goal is to make all public domain books available as free audio books.

There are several options for listening. The first step is to get the mp3 into your own computer.

There is a search box on the site which allows you to search by title or author or to simply browse the catalogue. Once you have found the book you want right click and save the book to your computer or portable device. You can also download the book of the week as a podcast if you subscribe for this service. The site is at <http://librivox.org/>

Cycling Paralympics Talent Search

A Cycling Paralympic Talent Search will be held in conjunction with Cycle Sport Victoria at the Darebin International Sports Centre (DISC), 281 Darebin Road, Thornbury at 2.00 P.M. Sunday May 11th, 2008 . Please contact Tim Matthews if you would like more information:

Phone: 03 9614 6800 or email tim.mathews@paralympic.org.au

For more information about other paralympic sports go to:

<http://www.paralympic.org.au>

Braille Music Camp

For all you braille reading musicians (budding and experienced) out there, this is the camp for you!!

When: Saturday 28 June to Saturday 5 April (during the next school holidays)

Where: Mittagong in New South Wales

Transport from Melbourne: travel by train - arrange this through Dorothy Hamilton (03) 9864 9678

Cost:\$180 but please contact Roma Dix if this cost would prevent you from coming (02) 4871 1086

Activities during the week include: lots of singing, playing your musical instrument in a band, daily lessons in braille music and lots and lots and lots of fun!!!

Applications close: soon - so if you are interested, please act NOW!!!

Application forms: available from the SVRC or contact Roma: romad@westnet.com.au

Blind Citizens Australia has Moved

The BCA offices are now located at Ross House Level 3, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000 (this also serves as their postal address). The BCA contact details have also changed to:

Phone: 03 9654 1400

Fax: 03 9650 3200

Toll free: 1800 033 660

Braille Teddy Bear

Line 1. Space, OW, o, 2 colons, OW, o.

Line 2. Space, s, OW, o, OW, o, WH.

Line 3. Space, GH, space, EN, IN, space, AR.

Line 4. Write OW, s, space 4, WH, o.

Line 5. Write IN, GH, space 4, AR, EN.

Line 6. Write e, i, e, 2 colons, i, e, i.

This small teddy bear uses 6 lines down and 8 spaces across. He has two ears, two round eyes, a suggestion of a nose, and is sitting with his front paws up at his rounded sides and his back feet stretched out in front of him. He is cute and cuddly and has a bit of personality. Toni Chilton in the Braille Department has already tested the pattern for the Braille Teddy Bear and morphed it into two other characters, Pikachu from Pokemon and an owl. If you would like any of these please let us know.

Interview with Lee Kumutat

We know Lee from her work with Quantum Technology but in her previous life she was a student attending a mainstream school supported by the N.S.W Department of Education Itinerant Teachers. In an interview she did recently for “It’s Vision Time” (The Bulletin’s N.S.W counterpart) she talks about several topics, this is an extract from that interview.

When did you decide to get a dog and how has it affected you in your general life?

I was never going to get a dog. Uh-uh, not me, I didn’t think that anything with four legs, ears and a tail could do anything I couldn’t, and I believed in the myths that abounded that you told the dog to: “catch the 73 bus, get out at Broughton Street, take me to the hair-dresser, and back home again” and it would; ridiculous expectations.

I met a man who had a dog when I was still at university, and he set me straight about those myths. He made me realise that it was a partnership and that you are ultimately responsible for its success or otherwise. I walked with him from my university to the train station, he with his dog, and me with my cane. The one thing I remember is him whistling a tune as he walked. I remember thinking: “he is so relaxed, relaxed enough to whistle” and I was not relaxed when using my cane. I did some further investigation and decided to try it out. It’s definitely my preferred choice of mobility aid, at this stage. Its hard work, frustrating, fun, rewarding and sometimes hilarious all at the same time. I do understand and stress that it’s not for everyone; I am not a dog evangelist. Some days, it doesn’t work for me at all. The things I like about it though are the relaxed way of walking, the fact that I don’t have to run in to an obstacle that I don’t need to know about, in order to get around it; some of the great things you can work together to do like find steps, doorways, lifts and people in a crowd (only people that the dog knows and loves though).

Where a dog is a real help is in unfamiliar areas and because I do so much travel, this is where I appreciate a dog the most. It’s easy to become blasé about having one, when you do the same route day in and day out, but when you haven’t a clue where you are or what’s around you that I appreciate a dog. You know that there’s a good chance he’ll keep you safe, at the very least.

Getting Things Done

Handy hints to stop procrastinating!

Use these hints to motivate a student learning to touch type, yourself learning braille, or any other skill or habit you want in place.

1. Commitment. Commit yourself to your habit change, big tie. Make your commitment as public as possible – put it on your blog, join an online forum and tell them about it, tell your family and friends, send out daily emails updating your progress. The more positive public pressure, the better.
2. Practice. Changing your habits is a skill, and like any skill, it takes practice. Commit yourself to a 30-day Challenge, and try to do your new habit every single day for 30 days. You will be training yourself to do that new habit, over and over. If you mess up, don’t beat yourself up, but just try again. Practice makes perfect.
3. Motivation. Find as many ways to motivate yourself as possible. Reward yourself.
4. Tracking. It’s best if you log your progress on your habit every day. This may sound difficult, but it will make your habit change much more likely to be successful. Log it in before you go to bed, placing your log next to your bed. It’ll motivate you, and make you feel great as you look back on all your progress.
5. Support. Join an online group, or do your habit change with a partner. However you find it, get others to do a habit change with you, and it will be much easier.

6. Rewards. Reward yourself often, early on – at the end of each of the first three days, and then at the end of every week. And then a big one at the end of your 30-day Challenge.
7. Focus. It's extremely important that you maintain your focus on this new habit for the full 30-days. That's why it's hard to do more than one or two habits at a time – you can't maintain focus. Find ways to bring your focus back to your habit. Post up signs or posters around your desk or home. Send yourself email reminders. Put it on your desktop picture. However you do it, keep a laser focus!
8. Positive thinking. This is perhaps the most important element. If you tell yourself that you can do this, that you will do it, then you will. Squash all negative thoughts, and replace them with positive ones. You can do this!

Plan Now to Celebrate 200 Years of Braille

Louis Braille was born on 4 January 1809 and blindness organisations in Australia have the unique opportunity to be part of the worldwide bicentenary celebrations. To help promote the event throughout the coming months, The Renwick Centre at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children has some ideas.

- Place signs on desks, counters, in reception areas with a Braille-related message on them
- Acknowledge the event in correspondence.
- Have the organisation use a special letter or envelope stamp for the purpose. Include some words about the event in telephone holding messages, in lifts and waiting areas
- Have shop-front (or up-front) staff hand out bumper stickers, or decorative stickers
- Display posters about the year prominently
- Erect a Louis Braille Bicentenary display in foyers, highlighting what the organisation does for Australians who use Braille
- Invite schools and community organisations to display in your organisation's foyer
- Organise your own conference or seminar on Braille
- Hold an Open Day for families to see what your organisation does and how it assists Braille-using Australians
- Hold a special in-house (Departmental) celebration
- Have a special Louis Braille Bicentenary issue of your agency's newsletter or magazine
- Put a Louis Braille Bicentenary message on accounts, salary slips, cheques, and via other automated supports
- Produce colouring-in sheets for kids, for use in public contact areas, - malls etc
- Arrange a shop-front display with the Bicentenary focus
- Have the Louis Braille Bicentenary message superimposed on agency TV commercials
- Mention the year in any campaigns your agency runs
- Hold a series of lunchtime seminars on for example, Braille technology

Thanks to Mike Steer for passing on these ideas to us. For more information contact The Renwick Centre via <http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/index.asp>.

Tactile Map Software

Although I haven't tried it yet this may be of interest to some of you. The Tactile Map Editor is a tool to make it easy for map makers to make tactile maps for the blind. It is a vector-based drawing application based on SVG. Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) is a graphics programme based on XML developed by W3C (<http://www.w3.org>).

The software is in the development stage and is available in beta version. Download from <http://ix.cs.uoregon.edu:8988/jforum/forums/list.page>

Professional Learning at Renwick

Supporting Families and Children with Vision Impairment (VI)- How we get agencies to work together?

Rationale

This Renwick Centre Continuing Education Course awards a Five Hours CPE Certificate and will explore the theory, policy and practice of inter-agency collaboration within the field of **childhood studies and vision impairment**. Participants will learn about and discuss some of the approaches used in Scotland and how these can be implemented in NSW and other parts of Australia. Inter-agency approaches stem from a **pathway analysis** approach and this will be a core feature of this course.

When: June 4th 2008.

Presenter: Dr John Ravenscroft With input from Corinne Loomes RIDBC Teleschool.

Where: Renwick Centre

For more detail, please contact, Dr John Ravenscroft, Senior Research Fellow in Special Education
RIDBC Renwick Centre

361-365 North Rocks Road

North Rocks, N.S.W. 2151

Phone: 02 9872 0248

Fax: 02 9873 1614

E-mail: john.ravenscroft@ridbc.org.au

Web: www.ridbc.org.au/renwick

For Sale

BrailleNote Classic

The details are:

BrailleNote Classic, Braille keyboard, 32 cell Braille display, Keysoft version 7.5, Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1GB compact flash card, serial and parallel cables, headphones and carry case. The asking price is \$4500 (negotiable).

Please call Kate if you are interested on 5422 7417 or email katestep@bigpond.net.au

ClearView Desktop Video Magnifier

A black and white ClearView Desktop Magnifier with a 17 inch screen is for sale. It has 2.5 to 50 times magnification. It was purchased new for \$4,000 less than a year ago. It is available for sale at \$2,650 (or near offer). Delivery within the metropolitan area can also be negotiated. For further information please contact Terry Phillips on (03) 9500 2133 or 0408 007741.

The Great BrailleNote Trade In

Trade in any brand of personal data assistant such as BrailleNote Classic, VoiceNote Classic or PAC Mate regardless if it has refreshable braille or not, and receive the following -

1 BrailleNote mPower BT or QT with 32 cells of refreshable braille (normally \$9,390) for \$7,500
That's \$1,890 off!

1 BrailleNote mPower BT or QT with 18 cells of refreshable braille (normally \$6,390) for \$5,100
That's \$1,290 off!

1 VoiceNote mPower BT or QT (normally \$3,450) for \$2,900 That's \$550 off!

- Trade in device does not have to be functioning.
- HumanWare must receive the trade in before supply of new product.
- Trade in offer ends 30th September 2008

If you are interested contact Ramona Mandy, Office 03 9686 2601 or Mobile 0404 834 924 or
Email ramona.mandy@humanware.com

Recycled Equipment Website

The Australian Blindness Forum ABF Update for February 2008 reported that Australia's delegates to the World Blind Union (WBU) Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly in China last August received endorsement for a surplus equipment exchange scheme to be piloted in the Pacific-Oceania Region. The website was launched in November 2007.

The ABF urges all blindness organisations in Australia and New Zealand to help make the pilot scheme a success by adding their lists of available equipment to those already on the Equipment Register at <http://www.rsb.org.au/wbu/index.html>.

So if you have any equipment you no longer require please think about adding it to the register.

Get About Newsletter

The Guide Dogs newsletter is included with this edition of the Bulletin. The Bright Mobility camp is coming up at the end of June, all the information is in edition of the newsletter. The Junior Mobility Camp was held recently at Guide Dogs in March. The students had a fun filled week of activities which included meeting some of the Guide Dogs in training at the centre and learning a little about interacting with dogs. Other "Fun with Dogs" programs will be offered to students in the near future, if you would like to know more please contact Erin Galloway on 9854 4521.

SVRC News

We are very excited to have four new staff members for this term, Dawn, Linda, Maddy and Taryn. So if you see some new faces around the place say hello and introduce yourself. News from Nicole is that she is having a great time and has found work and a place to live in Ireland. Visiting Teacher, Helen is on long service leave for the rest of the term and is off to Europe for 8 weeks.

On holidays recently, Denise Probert found an article in the Hobart Mercury, headlined "Bungle delivers a real eye-opener". According to the article a Hobart hotel employee received an unusual courier delivery: a box containing a human eye. The foam box marked: "Live human organs for transplant": was delivered by mistake, late one night, by an unwitting taxi driver. The hotel employee signed for the delivery and opened the box. "I thought, this is just too weird. I went and put it in the fridge because I didn't know what else to do with it." A short time later a courier arrived to retrieve it. According to the rest of the article "...the eye was still useable".

Finally

Thanks to Denise Probert, Mike Steer, Deb Lewis and all those people who contributed 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).

To receive the bulletin via email please contact **Deb Lewis** at deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au