

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 14

Friday 12th September 2008

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

Professional Development Activities Terms 3 & 4, 2008

For workshop sessions, please BYO laptop.

Professional Development Event and Activities 2008	Date
WYNN Literacy Software: Workshop for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, and Students – all welcome. BYO Laptop. From 9.30 A.M. Presenter: Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology. For more information on WYNN, visit: http://www.freedomscientific.com/LSG/products/WYNN.asp	Tuesday 16th September
SPEVI Day on Prematurity - @ Vision Australia, Kooyong	Monday 6th October
Expo 2008 - @ SVRC	Friday 28th November

For annual program & to download programs, go to
<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2008.htm>

Yarra Planting Festival 08

The Yarra Tree Planting Festival is on again this year. This is a fantastic event for the whole family with tree planting, food and music. Please let all your families and friends know it is on again this year.

When: Sunday 14th September from 10.00 AM

Where: F A Andrews Reserve

Yarra Boulevard Kew

Melways Map 2D B11

The whole family and extended family is welcome to attend. The event was a great success last year with many many trees planted to help our environment.

This event is supported by the Parks Victoria, Alcoa and Greening Australia.

For more information Phone 9450 5300 or email general@gavic.org.au

Greening Australia <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/>

Inside This Issue

1	PD Activities, Yarra Planting Festival 08
2	Chatter Books-September 1, 2008
3	The EMU Book
4	Quantum Technology Scholarships: Braille Literacy Scholarship Program for 2008 – 2009
5	Quantum Technology & Freedom Scientific - JAWS Scholarship Program 2008, Audio Book Review
6	Write On – Writing Competition
7	BOMBs Away
8	Quick Look, Calculator Game,
9	Serotek Corporation , Vision Australia Further Education Bursaries,
10	New Games – Ideas for PE
11	Staff and Student News

Chatter Books – September 1, 2008

Report from Marion

Ten children attended the Chatter Books Day for National Literacy and Numeracy Week, and they came from far and wide (e.g. Wodonga, Numurkah and Rutherglen). The concept for this fun braille-reading day came from Abbey who is in Year 5. Abbey wanted to get together with other braille reading students and chatter about their favourite books, how they read them and why they like them. All the children (and most of the adults) came dressed as their favourite book character. We had Specky Magee, the Bride's Maid from the Baby Sitters Club, baby bear and Anne of Green Gables, to name a few. The children read from their favourite books, showed each other their technology (BrailleNotes and PacMates) and then went on to produce a radio play, with fabulous sound effects and with the technical help of our IT expert, Michael. It was all great fun and along the way, the children were encouraged with their reading and use of technology. Did you know that Abbey has 200 books on her BrailleNote, which she can read at any time using the moveable braille display (100 of these are from the Baby Sitters Club series!)? This fact certainly surprised and delighted some of the other students.

Prizes were awarded at the end of the day, and we thank the Bolinda company for donating a wonderful collection of their audio books for these prizes. Prizes were awarded for the 'most lovely teamwork' (Michaela), the 'most lovely book review' (Emma Mae), the 'most lovely reading' (Nathaniel), the 'best grassy noises' (Jessica), 'excellent team spirit' (Huzna), the 'most enthusiasm for coming the longest distance on the day' (Bradley), the 'most divine costume' (Alexandra), the 'cutest costume' (Elliott), the 'best idea' for suggesting the radio play (Nathan), and the 'best idea' for suggesting the Chatter Books day (Abbey). Well done, kids!! All participants also went away with a certificate of participation (another of Abbey's ideas) and a CD of the radio plays performed on the day (thanks to Michael).

The picture below shows the children enjoying activities at the SVRC during Literacy and Numeracy Week.



The EMU Book

The very talented Marion Blazé has made her EMU book available for download. The following is a quick snippet from the book.

[The EMU Book: A Curriculum for Using an Electronic Magnifier Unit](#) by Marion Blazé Education Officer SVRC

The term “Electronic Magnifier Unit” incorporates a range of different equipment. Previously, devices which performed the function of electronic magnification were called Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs) or more recently, Video Magnifiers. We have chosen Electronic Magnifier Units as the name to describe many units, which combine camera, screen and magnification capability.

When can an EMU be an appropriate low vision aid?

- when conventional optical aids cannot provide sufficient magnification
- when the student’s vision fluctuates, requiring varying degrees of magnification of print
- when the student’s textbooks contain a variety of print sizes not accessible through enlargement or optical low vision aids
- when student has difficulty reading own or others’ handwriting
- when alterations in contrast make a significant difference to reading efficiency
- when glare is an issue and a reverse image (white print on black background) or different colour background can help this
- when use of conventional optical aids causes fatigue for prolonged reading
- when student requires significant enlargement of graphics (maybe just for mathematics) and pictures, and uses other media for reading (braille, audio, electronic)
- when other physical disabilities prevent use of conventional low vision aids

Advantages of using an EMU

- Instantly enlarges text or graphics
- Enlargement can be customized
- Colour, brightness and contrast can be customized
- Students can view at comfortable reading distance
- Can relieve visual fatigue often associated with reading print which is a bit too small
- Can enlarge handwriting as well as print
- Can be used post-school when large print is less available

Disadvantages of using an EMU

- Should be prescribed or recommended by an optometrist or orthoptist experienced in the use of low vision aids
- Can be large, heavy and not very portable
- Requires skill and practice to use efficiently
- Requires a power source
- Can require maintenance, although I’m told newer ones really only need a globe changed now and then
- Can be expensive

To download **The Emu Book** go to: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/EMUBook.doc>

Quantum Technology Scholarships

Quantum Technology and Freedom Scientific are offering some very exciting scholarships for students who are blind or are vision impaired. Your student or child may be the winner of a technology package which will greatly assist them in their educational environment. To find out more read on...

Braille Literacy Scholarship Program for 2008 – 2009

Every parent wants the best for their child and Braille Literacy is fundamental to a blind child's success. Starting blind children on the road to Literacy as early as they are able and choosing the right tools is key to their success.

By using modern and appropriate tools:

- Very young children can start scribbling with dots, having fun and beginning to learn through experimentation and play.
- Parents can become actively involved in their child's literacy development.
- Appropriate expectations for children can result from giving them independence to learn and explore.

The Gillian Gale Award for Braille Literacy

This award honours the remarkable contribution Gillian Gale has made to the education of blind students in Australia and internationally.

A Mountbatten Learning System and all associated software and accessories will be awarded to one child in both Australia and New Zealand.

The award is open to applications on behalf of children between the ages of 3 and 8 years, who are learning Braille or are assessed as a future Braille learner.

How to Enter

In one thousand words or less, tell us why you feel Braille literacy will be key to your child's success and describe the role you envisage the Mountbatten Learning System will play in their future.

The winners will receive a Mountbatten Learning System Educational pack containing: MB Learning System, Mimic display, a mini keyboard, Monty Braille Translator, Jot a Dot Pocket Brailer, MBComm PC to MB communication software.

Applications must be submitted with the signature of an Early Childhood or early intervention professional and/or a parent. Parents/professionals are welcome to provide any supporting material/documentation to their application. The winner must be willing to participate in promotional events and to attend a public award ceremony.

Quantum Technology & Freedom Scientific - JAWS Scholarship Program 2008

Freedom Scientific and Quantum Technology has pledged to make life a little easier for Australians!!!

If you are a vision impaired Australian who would find benefit in having Jaws software in your working or educational environment you are eligible to apply. The prize is a copy of JAWS for Windows Professional.

JAWS for Windows, screen reading software grabs information from the computer screen and sends it out in synthesised speech feedback. Documents, email and the internet can all be spoken back to vision impaired users.

- Applications close Thursday 11th of December 2008

- In 500 words or less, tell us why you need a Freedom Scholarship and how it will assist you in your life
- Applications must be attached to an application form
- Application forms can be obtained by contacting Quantum Technology or downloaded from our website at www.quantumtechnology.com.au
- Applications can be submitted via email to info@quantumtechnology.com.au, by audio or by written mediums.

Full details on the Jaws Scholarship Program and for copies of the application forms please see our website; www.quantumtechnology.com.au, or contact any of the Quantum Technology offices listed below. Quantum Technology also provides other scholarships for students who are blind or who have a Learning Disability. Call us for further information.

Quantum Technology also provides other scholarships for students who are blind or who have a Learning Disability. For further information about Quantum and Freedom Scientific scholarships please contact:

Quantum Technology

Head Office:

Quantum Technology Pty. Ltd

PO Box 390, Rydalmere NSW 2116 Australia

Tel: 02 8844 9888 Fax: 02 9684 4717 Email: info@quantumtechnology.com.au

Victorian Office:

Tel: 03 9545 4100 Email: vic@quantumtechnology.com.au

Audio Book Reviews

Looking for a good audio book for a reluctant reader? Then read on, these recommendations from Bryony may be just what you are looking for.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

By: C.S. Lewis

Susan, Peter, Edmond and Lucy have been sent away to a strange, big house in the country so they will be safe from the war. While playing hide and seek one day, Lucy, the youngest in the family, stumbles across a secret world in an old wardrobe. All is not well in the land of Narnia. Can the four Pevensy children help save the land from the clutches of the evil White Witch? ...

The Demon Headmaster

By: Gillian Cross

Dinah has come to a new foster home and is starting at a new school. She soon discovers that the school she is to attend is nothing like a normal school. Students work through lunch and never misbehave. There is something wrong and Dinah is determined to find out what it is but she's in for a much bigger adventure than she bargained on...

Charlie and the chocolate factory

By: Roald Dahl

You've seen the movie... now read the book! Charlie Bucket's family is very, very poor. When Willy Wonka, the super secretive chocolate maker says he'll give a tour of his factory to the five people who win a special golden ticket, Charlie never even dreams that he could be one of those five people. When he does win one he starts an exciting journey full of weird things that will change his life forever...

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13 ¾

By: Sue Townsend

Adrian Mole is, according to himself, a seriously misunderstood intellectual. His poetry has been scorned by people who, obviously, know nothing about good poetry. If that wasn't enough, he's covered in pimples, plagued by ill health and his parents are threatening to get a divorce! How is he supposed to handle ALL of that? Find out...

Pride and Prejudice

By: Jane Austin

Mr. Darcy is horrible, arrogant, rude and, unfortunately for any woman of a marriageable age, worth ten thousand pounds a year. Lizzie Bennett hates him at first sight, which is very regrettable because they don't seem to be able to escape each other. Is the well read and opinionated Miss Bennett judging Mr. Darcy unfairly?...

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: by J.K Rowling

Read by: Stephen Fry (unabridged)

A fantastic choice for younger readers who aren't quite sure about the series. Harry Ron and Hermione begin their third year at Hogwarts with a new defence against the dark arts teacher who has a secret. Harry must also be careful to obey rules in order to be kept safe from escaped Convict Sirius Black, who appears to be coming to find him...

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire: by JK Rowling

Read by: Stephen Fry (unabridged)

Strange things are happening in the wizarding world As Harry, Hermione and Ron prepare to start their Fourth year at Hogwarts. Harry now has Sirius to turn to for advice but after everyone receives a big surprise when the running of the Triwizard Tournament is disrupted, this may not be enough to keep him out of danger...

Eragon: by Christopher Paolini

Read by: Gerard Doyle (unabridged)

An enthralling Fantasy novel, the first of the Inheritance cycle, a ripper of a book for reluctant readers. Eragon leads a simple and happy life with his uncle Garrow and cousin Roran in Palancar Valley. Things are turned upside down for this young teenage boy when he finds a mysterious blue stone while out hunting and decides to take it home with him...

Write On !

– Writing Competition

This year the Statewide Vision Resource Centre is holding an exciting new writing competition.

Write On! is open to all students with a vision impairment and entries can be submitted in any format.

This years topic is "MY FAVOURITE THINGS".

Entries can be in any genre you like including prose, poetry and even song!

Currently, we have two separate judging categories: Primary and Secondary.

If we receive lots of entries we may split these categories further.

A flier for the writing competition is attached at the end of this bulletin. Please let all your students know and encourage them to enter- we look forward to reading their stories.

If you would like a braille or audio version of the flier please let us know.

BOMBs Away

I don't usually reproduce an email in its entirety in the bulletin but I didn't think I could do this wonderful piece of writing by Bruce Maguire justice by chopping it up, so here it is...without editing, enjoy!

Hi Everyone,

Today is the 4th of September. What's so special about that, you ask? it's exactly 4 months until the 4th of January. And, er ... what's special about the 4th of January? Well, it will be the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, and it will begin a year of worldwide celebrations of this historic event in the tide of history.

2009 will be a time for blind people to celebrate the gift beyond price that Louis Braille gave to the world. And it will be a time for us to reach out and invite the community to celebrate with us.

Groups will celebrate January 4 itself in different Ways in different places. In Sydney, a group of about 20 blind and sighted people will be working together celebrating this momentous event in a very special and unique way.

We will be down on a Sydney beach (hopefully Manly or Queenscliff, pending approval from the local council), and we will be making a braille message in the sand. The spirit of Louis Braille will meet the spirit of Australia in the sand, the sun, and the surf.

Because we're hoping to use part of Manly beach, we've called the event Braille on Manly Beach, or BOMB for short. Here's the broad outline of the BOMB as we envisage it at the moment:

* From around 3am on January 4, we will start making the braille message in the sand on the shoreline, between the low and high tide points. Each dot will be about 0.5 metre round and 0.5 metre high. The message itself will comprise about 6 words. This exercise in "night writing" will produce a message that stretches along the beach for about 50 metres. Obviously, this will be too big to read with the fingertips. It is meant to be felt in the making - braille will become a whole-of-body experience as we walk in out and through it.

* At sunrise, we will have a concert including a performance by a shakuhachi ensemble (the shakuhachi is a Japanese bamboo flute that produces wonderfully atmospheric music perfect to greet the new day).

* we will then have a French-style breakfast on the beach (with croissants and French champagne, naturally).

* The message-making will continue, and this will be a time when other people who aren't able to be there during the night can participate.

* At around 10am the message will be complete, and so there will be a few formalities, including some personal tributes to braille and blessings from representatives of a number of spiritual traditions.

* By this time, there will be hundreds of people on the beach for a surf carnival, and they will be able to admire the braille and join us in celebrating it. By this time, too, the tide will start to turn.

* At around 1pm, the tide will be lapping at the base of the braille dots, and eventually the message will dissolve and unite again with the expanse of sand and ocean.

* At this point, some specially-designed bottles containing braille and print messages will be released into the sea, to be carried who knows where in the world by the endless ebb and flow of the tides and currents. The words from a particular beach will thus live on through braille.

* at various times during the day, a helicopter or light plane will fly over the braille sand sculpture, to take panoramic photos for showing on TV and the Internet. We will do our best to arrange for parts of the event to be streamed on the Internet so that people who aren't able to come to the beach can still be a part of the celebration.

The idea for making a braille sand sculpture was conceived by Anne Walton, the video performance artist who has developed the Braille Window project (www.braillespace.com). We have been fortunate to be assisted by Dennis Massoud, a well-known Australian sand sculptor who is himself vision-impaired. At this stage we are still looking for sponsorship to assist people participate in the event and meet the expenses that will be involved. A plastics manufacturer has already agreed to supply the plastic dome-shaped moulds that will be used to make the dots.

Even though it is still in its early stages, the BOMB has already attracted quite a bit of interest, and we have started having discussions with various media organisations.

We realise, of course, that this isn't the way everyone wants to celebrate Louis Braille's 200th anniversary (for one thing, it will involve being on the beach for several hours). However, if you are interested in celebrating with us, or would like to be put on a mailing list for updates as our plans unfold, please contact me, either by email or phone. My phone number is 02 96863665.

The Braille on Manly Beach event won't be a birthday party with candles, icky cake and fairy bread - where's the poetry and symbolism in that! Rather, it will be a chance for those of us whose lives are daily enriched through braille to celebrate it creatively and meaningfully in a way never to be forgotten. As we feel the braille with our hands and our hearts and share it with others, we will be empowered to rejoice in the genius and generosity of the human spirit.

Cheers
Bruce

Quicklook

Quicklook is a hand-held, full color, electronic magnifier with an integrated 4" (10.2 cm) TFT display. It can magnify text, photos and maps or just about anything. It's small enough to fit in a jacket pocket or a handbag, but big enough to make a difference. If regular print is too small to read, Quicklook can help. Use it as you would use a magnifying glass - it can be orientated in any direction. Signing cheques and writing notes are all possible due to the tiltable camera.

Magnification up to 5.5x. Find out more at <http://www.quantech.com.au/Quicklook>

Thanks to Jeni Blake for this information.

Calculator Page

Calculator games for students. Includes a game called the broken calculator where students must complete sums with only limited keys. E.g. use 2 and 5 to make the following numbers using only a plus or minus sign. The numbers to make are 7, 4, 3, 9, 1 etc. This site also has a large print calculator which is black with large white keys on it.

http://membres.distributel.net/~redeemed7/calculator_page.htm

SEROTEK CORPORATION

Mission Statement: Accessibility Anywhere

Vision: Serotek Corporation is a leading technology company that develops software and manufactures accessibility solutions. Committed to the mission of providing accessibility anywhere, Serotek launched an online community specifically designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

SAM Net is Serotek's renowned Internet Community that delivers the widest and most complete content ever assembled for the blind community. Services include:

- Email
- News Center
- Entertainment Guide
- Internet Games
- The Accessible Internet
- Weather Information Service
- SAM Net Forums
- Information Center
- TV Listings
- Chat
- Local News for (Specified State)
- My Newspaper
- My Blog
- My Web Site
- Member Web Sites, Bookmarks, and Blogs
- SAM Net Account Self-Service Center
- SAM Net Users Forum

Visit Serotek at <http://www.serotek.com/index.html>

Vision Australia's Further Education Bursaries

Each year Vision Australia awards financial bursaries to tertiary students who are blind or have low vision for the purchase of adaptive technology such as CCTVs, laptops and screen reading software. Such technology enables easier access to course materials.

Vision Australia's Further Education Bursary aims to assist clients who would not otherwise be able to afford adaptive technology, thus increasing their ability to participate in further education.

Since 1996, almost 150 bursaries have been awarded by Vision Australia to students studying a broad range of disciplines – from Natural Medicine to Music and Business.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, applicants need to:

- Be a resident of Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, the Northern Territory or Tasmania.
- Be (or become) a client of Vision Australia
- Demonstrate the need for financial assistance to purchase adaptive technology
- Be applying for, or enrolled in, a tertiary course graded Certificate IV or above.
- Be available to attend a presentation ceremony during their first semester.

How to apply?

To apply for a bursary, applicants need to:

- Complete an application form – download at www.visionaustralia.org.au/bursary
- Have an adaptive technology assessment with a Vision Australia consultant
- Provide some documentary evidence (outlined on the application form).
(Applications are treated in the strictest confidence.)

When are they awarded?

Applications must be submitted by 10 November 2008. Recipients are selected early 2009 and the bursaries are presented at ceremonies during the first semester.

For more information contact:

Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant,

Phone: (03) 9520 5555 or 1300 84 74 66

Email: max.bini@visionaustralia.org

New Games – Ideas for PE

Some years ago, I won't say how many, "New Games" were all the rage. Well apparently they still exist and have gone on to bigger and better things. New Games have their own web site where you can find books, DVDs and equipment to support New Games in the P.E. program. The beauty of "New Games" is that they can be easily adapted to suit the needs of the participants. For those of you still wondering about New Games here is some information from their web.

New Games embody an attitude toward play. They are cooperative games sometimes including competition where participants play together rather than against one another. The capacity to join and have fun with others is more important than winning. Everyone can play New Games regardless of age, ability, size, or gender. They require little or no equipment and are presented and played in a safe manner that encourages participation, creativity, and personal expression. New Games offers a new direction for traditional sports, physical education, and recreation. Ultimately, by cooperating in play, we learn to live together better.

New Games are for... elementary to high school classes; businesses (from conflict resolution to team building); physical education programs; retirement homes; after school programs; community groups; youth groups; religious groups; parents. In short, anyone who leads or is part of a group.



Dale N. Le Fevre started teaching New Games with the non-profit New Games Foundation in 1975 as a volunteer. In 1977 Dale formed his own project, Play Express, which took New Games into schools. The latest direction for Dale has been the New Games Mentoring project, where older students are taught New Games and how to lead them with school children to teach cooperation, tolerance, and to provide physical activity.

New Games Web Site: <http://www.inewgames.com/default.htm>

SVRC Staff and Student News

Good luck to one of our students, Johanna, who will be performing at the State Schools Spectacular this weekend as one of the feature dancers with the education performing arts group.

Congratulations to Deb who has become a grandmother for the first time. Her daughter Melissa has had a baby boy, Jeremey. Mother and baby and grandmother are all doing well. Congratulations also to Dianne who has become a grandmother for a fourth time, her daughter-in-law has had a baby girl, Isobel.

Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Bruce Maguire, Jeni Blake, Di Bennett and all those 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', or you would like to receive the bulletin by email please contact:

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

Write On!

This year the Statewide Vision Resource Centre is holding an exciting new writing competition.

Write On! is open to all students with a vision impairment and entries can be submitted in any format.

This years topic is “MY FAVOURITE THINGS”. Entries can be in any genre you like including prose, poetry and even song!

Currently, we have two separate judging categories: Primary and Secondary. If we receive lots of entries we may split these categories further.

PRIMARY:

Maximum word limit is 500. There is no minimum.

Your piece must have a name

SECONDARY:

Maximum word limit is 1000. There is no minimum.

Your piece must have a name

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH

The winners of **Write On! will be announced at the SVRC Expo, which is being held on Friday, November 28th.**

Good luck to all the entrants.