Term 3, Week 6: 23 August 2010

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Phil Fitzsimons

Principal’s Position
I mentioned in a previous newsletter that the position of Principal at Murray Bridge High School was being advertised to fill the vacancy left behind by Merilyn Klem for the next 5 years. It is now my pleasure to inform the Murray Bridge High School community that Regional Director Peter Chislett has offered me the position and I have accepted. The tenured position begins January 2011 and ends January 2016.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform parents/caregivers and the wider community of Murray Bridge that I am proud to be the Principal of Murray Bridge High School. Through my leadership I will endeavour to work together with all stakeholders in our community towards building on the school’s core values of Excellence, Respect and Working Together.

Having been employed at Murray Bridge High School for nearly 11 years I am fully aware of the challenges the position of Principal faces in ensuring the fine reputation of the school is upheld in the community and the need to challenge some negative perceptions held of the school.

As I have mentioned in numerous newsletters throughout the year the culture at the school is beginning to change. Facilities are being upgraded through the funding support of the state and federal Governments. Examples include the refurbishment of 4 classrooms into language laboratories, the Trade Training Centre and Trade School for the Future – due for completion in April 2011, the installation of 2 lifts and the re-designing of the courtyard outside A16 – due for completion this October. Finally, the installation of 157 computers with 348 additional computers and 12 laser printers coming online within the next 6 months along with a wireless network and new server designed to accommodate a 1:1 student/computer ratio will see Murray Bridge High School meet the Information Technology demands of the 21st Century.

Murray Bridge High School has the capacity to become a leading regional government school within the state of South Australia. It has achieved excellence in the past being recognised at state, national and international levels and with the right structures in place will continue to strive for excellence in the future. I look forward to working together with all the Murray Bridge High School community over the next 5 years.

Parent Opinion Survey
Parents/Caregivers are reminded that the due date for the submission of the Parent Opinion surveys is this Friday, 27 August. This due date applies for the DECS intended survey as well as the school initiated online survey.

CALENDAR

TERM 3 2010

Week 6
Fri 27/8 Dance Technique Moderation

Week 7
Mon 30/8—Thu 2/9 Yr 10-12 Subject Counselling
Wed 1/9—Thu 2/9 Yr 8/9 Subject Counselling
Fri 3/9 SCHOOL CLOSURE — Show Day

Week 8
Tue 7/9 Finance Committee — 7pm

Week 9
Tue 14/9 Parents and Friends — 6.30pm
Fri 17/9 Governing Council — 7pm
Sat/Sun 18/9 & 19/9 Pedal Prix Murray Bridge

Week 10
Wed 22/9 Youth Opportunities Graduation
Fri 24/9 Sports Day
Last day of Term 3 — 2pm dismissal

Students Leaving School Grounds
Parents/Caregivers are asked to support the school’s policy of students remaining on school grounds for the duration of the school day and not to encourage their student to leave school grounds to purchase food from nearby outlets. The school has a duty of care to ensure all students are safe while at school but is not resourced sufficiently to monitor students off school grounds. The school has received numerous complaints from nearby business owners and residents of inappropriate student behaviour. These complaints can be easily avoided if school rules are followed. Parents/Caregivers are reminded that the school canteen must meet the demands of the state Government’s Healthy Eating policy and not sell food or drink items that contain high levels of sugar or fat.
“Exploring the Deep Sea”

On Friday 30 July the school was visited by a team of scientists from the South Australian Museum. The visit was sponsored by the Country Arts SA program and Murray Bridge Ripples whose aim was to increase awareness in the sciences in regional SA.

The team consisted of Professor Steve Donnellan who is the Principal Researcher at the SA Museum, Mr Thierry Laperousaz who has the role of Collection Manager for marine invertebrates at the museum and Ms Sharon Morris who was here in her capacity as the manager of Community Engagement for the museum.

Professor Donnellan spoke on the way animals select mates and used as his example the story of the Cuttlefish colonies near Whyalla. Although he spoke with regard to the cuttlefish the overall feeling was one of concern for the fragility of our marine ecosystems and the impact that we have upon them via development. His comedic interpretation of how females select males was highlighted by a weird yet amusing use of fruit in relation to genital size. Certainly the frogs come out on top in this regard.

Thierry spoke about his role of collection manager and the wondrous range of marine life that exists off the SA coast. His specimens and slide presentation certainly highlighted the great wealth of sea life and its abundance around the state. The students I know were impressed with the range of specimens and they certainly brought forward a raft of questions that interested them.

The students that attended the sessions were from our Year 10 cohort along with members of the Year 11 and 12 Biology classes. The subject matter certainly complimented their studies, in particular our senior biology students who study ecosystems as part of the subjects focus.

To have the chance to hear our guest speakers as well as participate in sessions was a fantastic opportunity as visits such as these are few and far between. I only hope that we have further opportunities for students from the school to take part in such events and gain from their participation as I am sure that these students have.

ART STUDENTS VISIT THE REGIONAL ART GALLERY

By Goran Yakas

On Wednesday 11 August the Year 12 Art students were given a guided tour of the Regional Art Gallery and the two exhibitions currently on show.

They examined the work of Robert Hannaford, one of South Australia’s premier painters of nature and a very respected portrait painter. His amazing work was a contrast to the comical and entertaining constructions of David Archer.

The students were guided through the exhibitions by Susie Chapman who was able to share her broad knowledge of the exhibiting artist.
We have been very busy in Maths this term.

On 22 July many classes celebrated pi (π) day. 22 divided by 7 (22/7) approximates the value of π (3.142), hence pi day. Pi day is also celebrated in the USA on March 14 (3.14). The classes that celebrated pi day enjoyed many activities involving both π and pies. Calculations about the circumferences and areas of the pies they had brought to class were made. The culmination of the lesson was sharing and eating the pies. Many students brought pie recipes to school and entered a competition to design the front cover of our π/pie recipe book.

On the evening of Wednesday 4 August, a group of ten Murray Bridge High School students braved the icy cold to attend the Maths Association of South Australia Annual Quiz night at Coomandook Area School. Two senior teams and 1 junior team entered. During the evening the students were asked to answer questions about Maths and General Knowledge. They also had 10 scrambled words, 5 Maths and 5 Olympic host cities, to unscramble. Finally, there was a challenging Maths problem for them to solve. One of the two senior teams won the award for Senior Best Mathematics Team. This team was made up of Caitlin Hobbs, Yuanting Xiao, BinBin Zheng and Olivia Davies.

The second senior team was made up of Jarred Lloyd, Tom Lang, Ben Hindle and Thomas Hicks. The junior team is to be congratulated on attending and attempting all the questions as they were short by two team members. This team was made up of Kayla McDiarmid and Elizabeth Mafara. It was generally felt to be a fun evening and a chance to catch up with students from other schools in the area.

A big thank you to the staff members (Daniel Irvine, Glenda Stevens, Greg Fulwood and Ann Ruckert) who attended the event and supported our students. We felt, without any bias, that the students from Murray Bridge were the best behaved and most well-mannered students there.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2010 is scheduled for Week 7 this term. From 30 August to 3 September maths classes will be involved in the “Reach for the Stars” Programme. This is an Australia-wide programme with data being generated by every school involved that will be shared across all schools involved. The programme should provide our students with quality learning through fun and engaging activities.
SENIOR SCHOOL NEWS

Formal

The formal was a great success and congratulations to Mrs. Hicks and the Formal committee on their organization. Well attended by staff. A review suggested:
- Photographer should have three places to take photos from on the night.
- Better organisation of on lookers in the street.

Year 11 Coordinator

Deb Johns has won the position of Year 11 Coordinator for the rest of this year. Her main focus is on behavioural management and attendance.

Youth Driver Education Program

This was presented to all Year 11 students. Students were given an informative presentation of road safety emphasizing:
- Road rules
- Speed
- Alcohol and drugs.

Graphic stories about some consequences of bad decisions while driving were given.

Intervention for Underperformers

Letters were sent out to parents of students who performed below acceptable standards in the Semester 1 reports. These letters contained information to the parents regarding:
- Student being at risk of repeating their current year level, or
- For 17 year old students who were not engaged in learning to investigate an enrolment review.

These parents and students were invited to an interview to complete a Student Development Plan.

Course Counseling Time line for 2011:

Week 4: Students given subject selection forms and Curriculum handbook. Mail out to parents re course counselling dates and times.

Week 5: Parent information Evenings
- Year 10 to 11 Tuesday 17 August
- Year 11 to 12 Wednesday 18 August

Week 6: Home Class teachers and subject teachers talk to students about courses.

Week 7: Course Counseling meetings with parents and students.
- Years 10 and 11 Monday 30 August to Thursday 2 September 1:30 to 8:30pm
- Years 8 and 9 Wednesday 1 Sept and Thursday 2 September 1:30 to 8:30pm

No lessons for students except Year 12 classes on Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 of September.

Work Experience, VET & Workplace Practice Classes

Students continue to undertake Work Experience and Structured Workplace Learning within their VET and Year 10, 11 or 12 Workplace practices classes. Several students have been asked to attend a second week as employers want to check suitability for Apprenticeships - School Based or full time Apprenticeships. Students have been successful in gaining School Based Apprenticeships in Cabinetmaking; Transport & Logistics (Warehousing); Automotive Technology and Automotive Vehicle Body Work.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Academic Achievement Letters

In order to align the Middle and Senior School progress pathways, all Year 9 and 10 students who are in danger of not receiving successful results in at least fifty percent of their subjects have received ‘Academic Achievement Letters’. These letters outline to the student and their parents/caregivers the importance of working towards excellence in their studies. The letter prompts the parent to make an appointment with the relevant year level leader in order to discuss how successful results can be achieved and formulate a student development plan. It also states that if the student does not improve their results they may be required to repeat their current year level.

This process will also become a part of the Year 8 progress pathway in the very near future.

SAPOL Cyberbullying

At the end of last term the Middle School students had informative sessions on Cybersafety and Cyberbullying from Constable Martin Nunn from the Murray Bridge Police Station. Martin spoke to students about issues surrounding appropriate mobile phone and internet usage, and tips on staying safe online. Students also got the opportunity to ask questions about issues that they were curious about.

In week six of this term Martin will be presenting a modified version of this program to staff, so that all staff at Murray Bridge High School are aware of the potential risks that surround our students both in and out of school.

Middle School Excellence

The Middle School SAAC are devisoring a Middle School Excellence day in term four to celebrate the achievements that our students have accomplished throughout the year. It’s a secret day being planned, so more details will arise in term four!

Pedal Prix Round Two

Round Two of the Pedal Prix was held on Sunday 25 July at Victoria Park Racecourse. The student support from the Middle School Cohort was immense, with a strong riding team and mechanics ensuring that the junior bikes ran smoothly on the day.

There were several Elite bike riders who were injured prior to the event, so some of our Year 8 and 9 students got the chance to jump in the Elite bike and assist the Elite team in continuing the race. With a bit of extra seat padding so our younger students could see over the dash, they had a great time in the car, maintaining a smooth pace for the duration of the race. The Middle School pedal prix teams are now training hard for the third and final 24 hour event in Murray Bridge, on 18/19 September.
SPECIAL EDUCATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS
By Steve Ide

Social Skills Program
Headspace has commenced this program with small groups of Year 8 and 9 students, 5 students/group, 2hrs/week, for 14 weeks.

Zoo Crew
Katie Noble and Greg Fulwood have commenced this program with Year 9 Supported Class students supporting the Year 8 Supported Class students in environmental studies at Monarto Zoological Park for a 4 week trial period.

Pedal Prix
The second 6 hour event held at Victoria Park was very successful, due largely to Isaac Brooks’ organisation and management, staff and parent support. Once again students’ behaviour was exemplary.

Results

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<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
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ICAN / FLO
44 referrals. Workskil has employed an additional case manager due to increased referrals.

Programming issues are being addressed, programs are in place for most clients and service providers are working with school and support services to engage currently disengaged clients.

Jason Dikkenberg and I visited John Pirie HS and Boys’ Town on 27 July to examine a country ICAN/Flo program that has been in operation for a period of time (4 years). The visit reinforced that we are on track to implementing a best practice program.

We will be having a planning day for Special Education/Alternative Programs in Week 6 to:

- develop integration of Rock & Water and Restorative Practices into classroom practice and
- to review models of support for students with disabilities and special needs.
CIRKIDZ WORKSHOP AND CIRCUS OZ
By Zara Lehmann

On Wednesday 4 August, 30 students from Year 8 to Year 11 participated in a Cirkidz workshop. Cirkidz founded in 1986, welcomes over 350 young people every week, ranging in age from 2½ right through to teenagers and adults. Workshop programs are run in schools, community groups and for corporate clients all over South Australia. The Performing Troupe is well-known in the Adelaide arts community for their high-quality roving and staged performances at festivals, events and in-theatre seasons.

Cirkidz workshops teach young students the secrets of the circus giving them an engaging opportunity to learn about cooperation, team work, inclusion, confidence, creativity and the benefits of healthy activity. Our students were given the opportunity to experiment with flowersticks, juggling balls and hula hoops. It was great fun, with lots of smiles and laughter.

On 17 August, 50 students from Year 8 to Year 11 attended a Circus Oz performance held at Murray Bridge South Primary School. Circus Oz, are Australia’s own internationally acclaimed, animal free contemporary circus. This was their first time performing in Murray Bridge and they entertained us with comedy, music, clowning, aerial mastery and stunt-jumping acrobatics. We were very lucky to be involved with these two companies and look forward to future activities.
YEAR 11 FLINDERS RANGES BUSHWALKING CAMP

By Katie Noble

On August 2, a group of 20 Year 11 Physical Education students, along with two teachers and two bushwalking leaders from Wilderness Escape left Murray Bridge High School and headed towards Wirrabara Forest in the Flinders Ranges. This year, the camp had changed its structure and location to place more of an emphasis on learning map reading and navigational skills. The students were required to complete reflection questions based on the things they had learnt and observed that day.

After a 4 hour bus ride, the camp began at the Ippinichie Bush Campground— an area specifically set up for campers, with a long drop, rainwater tanks and designated fireplaces and picnic benches. The students were allocated tents and roll mats and were given a demonstration on how to set up their tent. Once the camp was set up, students were split into two walking groups and the navigation lessons began. Students were shown how to read a map, use a compass and some key navigational skills. Students were then able to demonstrate their understanding of the process, using the techniques taught, around the camp site. While some students picked up on the idea straight away and got the group successfully to a ‘tree’ or a ‘bench’, others were unsure of the techniques and missed their marks by a few metres or more. At this stage it wasn’t too concerning due to the confined area that the students were in, however, the next day the students would be leading their groups through much tougher and thicker terrain to their next camp site and so nerves were evident throughout the group.

The next day saw the students packing up all their equipment and attempting to fit it all into a pack that they were to carry on their backs. Once the students ‘thought’ they had it packed, they then had their weight checked as well as their packs to ensure that they were not carrying too much for their body weight. Some struggled to fit in all their gear having to empty out their packs many times to reduce the weight. Others, were happy to help their peers out and take extra ‘weight’ to allow them to bring that extra snack or article of clothing. After about an hour of packing and repacking, the students were finally ready to head out into the wilderness.

In pairs or threes, the students were given a grid reference from the map – a 6 digit number that informed the students of where they were to navigate to. The pair leading were to navigate the group through thick bush land and pine forests to get to their check point, which was generally at the top of a large hill. If the students believed they were at their check point the bushwalking leader would question the pair, and generally help to guide them to the actual check point. At the end of the navigation for day 2 we were at our designated camp site where we would be for the next two nights – a junction of a creek, 3 tracks and a pine forest – no running water, long drops or designated fireplaces – it made the first night’s site seem like luxury!

Day 3 began with rain! And the rain didn’t stop until late into the afternoon. Much to the student’s dismay, they were still expected to navigate through the rain and wind to find their designated check points. While one group only managed to get to half their check points before finding their way back to camp and into warm, dry sleeping bags, the other group fought through the tough conditions to find all but one check point.

Day 4 brought much nicer conditions. Many more hills were conquered and when arriving back into base camp, the first group in had used their initiative to begin a fire and design a ‘clothesline’ – a piece of rope between two trees – to dry all their wet clothing from the previous day. Spirits were high as the students realised that all the hard work was completed. The final night thankfully was dry, which allowed all students and leaders to join at the camp fire for several rounds of the much loved camp game ‘Mafia’.

The final morning had arrived and all that was left to do was pack the bus. The students wilfully did this efficiently knowing that as soon as it was completed, they would be allowed onto the bus where their phones and iPods lay in waiting!

The camp was very successful, even with poor weather on day 3! All students were well behaved and in high spirits the majority of the time. I would like to thank Mr Duncan Handley for taking his time to assist on this camp, as well as the Bushwalking leaders, Felix and Fiona from Wilderness Escape.

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ZOO CREW 2010

By Katie Noble

After the successful work completed by the Zoo Crew of 2009, Murray Bridge High School has decided to continue Zoo Crew in 2010. The group are starting with a four week trial to ensure that the dedication is evident from the boys. At this point the boys have attended 2 sessions and both were very successful with Monarto Zoo being very thankful for the work the boys have completed so far.

On each Tuesday morning a group of 14 boys from Year 8 and 9 have been attending Monarto Zoo. The ‘crew’ have had a job to complete each day. On day 1, the boys were given a task of transporting 150 bricks from the Indaba Bush Camp to some of the offices for a patio area to be created. As a team the boys were able to stack and count the bricks out, demonstrating logical thinking and physical ability. Once this task was completed the boys were taken out to the ‘old homestead’ on Monarto Zoo’s newly purchased property. The area surrounding the homestead was covered in old wire fences and rusted tin roofing. The boys set out to clean this area up. Trailer load after trailer load was filled and emptied out at the scrap metal pile. Teams of boys worked together to remove wire that had ‘grown’ into the grass. The majority of the metal required a lot of strength to move, but the boys were able to demonstrate excellent team work to get it all done. Once the boys had worked hard for a solid hour and a half, Ian Walton, the Education Officer at the Zoo took the boys on a small tour of some of the animals as a reward.

Day 2 began at the old homestead, with more wire and metal to clear. Old medicine bottles and engine parts were discovered along with hard to remove tin in the ground. Once again the boys demonstrated excellent leadership and team work skills to move all the metal. The next job was to remove wooden stakes and logs that could be used at the Indaba Bush camp as fire wood. The boys worked in pairs and groups to move the heavy logs and then place them in the Ute for Ian to take to the camp. Once again, as a reward the boys were then shown the White Rhinos and taken through the Giraffe exhibit.

The boys have successfully completed two sessions of Zoo Crew. With another two sessions the boys will ensure that this program can continue for the remainder of the year. A big thank you needs to go to Greg Fulwood for his leadership and support with Zoo Crew.