16 June 2014

Prospective Families’ Evening  20th May
Sarah Walker invested much effort in organising the prospective families’ evening, and we were delighted with the fruits of her labours when a group of about thirty parents and their children attended. Fleur Roachock and Scott McCulloch conducted tours of the school, and then there was a short gathering in the library. Fleur spoke briefly, to be followed by Joe French from Year 8 who did an outstanding job of talking about his very positive experience of the transition from primary school to PHS.

Simultaneous Story Day  21st May
At 10.30am on 21st May, young children all over Australia joined in Simultaneous Storytelling, and those in Penola were no exception. Ali Bond, Heather Stone and Rob Thornett provided a stimulating and inclusive session of activities based around Ursula Dubosarsky’s book, ‘There are Too Many Elephants in this House’. Rob held the children spellbound with his rendition of the book and then all the children became elephants, paraded around the library and ended up in the ‘elephant house’ which John Bond had created. When the parents cried, ‘Where are the elephants?’, the box was raised and the children rushed out, to the delight of all.

Movement and music were combined in acting out songs such as ‘Elephant Balancing on a Piece of String’, where the young people invited their parents to join in when they ‘called for another elephant to come’.

After introducing mammoths, Heather Stone read ‘Little Lou and the Woolly Mammoth’. Craft followed, with the children making elephant mobiles. This activity required the children to think about colours and the relative lengths of three pieces of string and to use scissors. Ali also provided a colouring activity and a take-home jigsaw, both based on Andrew Joiner’s engaging illustrations. Everyone knows that elephants like bananas, so the children made their own banana splits for morning tea to finish off the morning’s activities.

These sessions are so popular in our community, that many families are making special arrangements for their children to be able to attend.

Mary Mackillop Memorial School Visit  22nd May
The Year 6/7 class from Mary Mackillop visited us for a whole day and participated in a number of different lessons. Class members were particularly excited by the key tags they were able to make with Tom Sutterby in Tech. Studies. Other highlights included Phys Ed with Simone Combe and SOSE with Fleur Roachock. The students were also excited to get their hands on some scientific glassware, supported by Silvana Stephens.

Penola Coonawarra Arts Festival
Many staff and students were involved in preparations for the annual Penola-Coonawarra Arts Festival.

Festival Opening with the Design Prize and John Shaw Neilson Acquisitive Art Prize Announcements  22nd May
Official Festival events began with a gathering of about 150 people in our foyer and Hall. Kristen Bence introduced the Design Prize and co-sponsors Cathy Hughes, a Friend of the Festival, and
PADBATA, represented by Michelle Stehbens. Judge Claire Gilham, from the Art Gallery of South Australia, declared Tom Roberts, a freelance graphic designer and illustrator from Adelaide, the winner and spoke of the features of his work: “Tom’s design immediately communicates the various aspects of the Festival. The design incorporates bold lettering, striking use of complementary colour and repeat patterning and effective use of various typeface styles, which is what made it so successful”.

There was a short interlude during which guests enjoyed wines from Raidis Estate and an array of hors d’oeuvres prepared by our Café 43 students. The students, under Dee Hutchinson’s guidance, had prepared beautiful food and backed it up with excellent service. They richly deserved the many compliments they received.

The official opening of the Festival and the Exhibition commenced with the acknowledgement of country delivered by Fleur Roachock. Fleur went on to welcome those present, acknowledge the exhibition hangers, and Kristen Bence’s contribution as curator, welcome Claire Gillam, thank Dee Hutchinson and Raidis Estate and describe some of the highlights of the Festival program. Finally, Fleur declared the exhibition open. Peter Balnaves, representing the Balnaves Foundation, spoke briefly of the contribution of the Foundation and the importance of the Arts to communities such as ours. Finally, Claire Gilham spoke about the art works in general and then announced the winners. The Youth Prize was shared by Tom Price and Jordan Lovewell. Clare Gilham chose to split the Youth Prize between two equally deserving entrants. She said “Thomas’ work demonstrates a strong connection to and understanding of John Shaw Neilson’s poem ‘Coming Home’. His sensitive depiction of facial expression and body language powerfully communicates this narrative. The piece also shows good experimentation with the charcoal medium to create visual interest and vitality. Jordan’s apparition of a parrot in clouds and smoke is a beautifully imaginative and dream-like interpretation of John Shaw Neilson’s poem ‘The Smoker Parrot’. The work shows good technical ability and the rendering of the parrot’s eye and the feathers are particular highlights.”

Two artists, Ardris Vanderheyden and Diana Wiseman, were highly commended for their works. The Packer’s Prize was won by Jo Jo Spook and the Local Prize by Dagny Strand. The John Shaw Neilson Acquisitive Art Prize was won by Kate Smith.

IGA Junior Chef Competition
The IGA Junior Chef Competition has become a favourite with families during the Festival. This year, three heats were held during the week, leading up to the Saturday final. Four local chefs, Catherine Robinson (Di Vine), Darren Powell (Rendezvous), Simon Bowen (Pipers) and Ian Perry, provided support and advice throughout the competition. Shane and Kerry McPherson of Penola IGA Fresh provided full funding for the event, and we are greatly indebted to them for their generous support. Callum Hann and IGA representatives made guest appearances at the Saturday final. The recipe for the competition was created by Andi Zerk. The heat winners were Kate Skeer and Georgie Sharman, Ned Balnaves and Lauchy Croser, Aaron Zerk and Tom Tranter and Brooke Hutchesson and Phoebe Tregenza. The overall winners were Kate Skeer and Georgie Sharman.

Youth Arts Workshops
On the Saturday of the Festival 20 children and their parents enjoyed Kids Time in the park with Ali and John Bond, Rob Thornett and Kristen Bence. The theme this year for the children’s program was zoo animals, as we had the travelling Nylon Zoo visit for storytelling. The children made wonderful zoo animal masks and then they were told two stories about Edward the Emu and a mouse visiting a zoo. Students danced to the song “We’re All Going to the Zoo Today” and decorated a miniature version of their favourite zoo animal. All children thoroughly enjoyed the morning.

The second workshop, Funky Animal Art, was for older children. Kristen Bence took students on a journey of discovery as they created camouflage or landscape backgrounds on canvas using acrylic
paint, sunset colours and a range of painting techniques. Students then had to cut out a zoo animal stencil of their choice – quite a challenge. These were stencilled onto the canvas backgrounds once they were dry. There were some really creative and individual designs.

Kalangadoo and Nangwarry Primary School Transition Visits
The entire student populations of Kalangadoo Primary School and Nangwarry Primary School attended Penola High School for one day as part of their transition program. The students took part in a variety of lessons throughout the day. These included Physical Education, Tech Studies and Art. Students also made sausage rolls for their peers for lunch during a Home Economics lesson. Other lessons included SOSE, English, IT and Science

Volunteers’ Morning Tea 29th May
A morning tea was held in the seminar room to celebrate the contributions which volunteers make to our school. A number of volunteers were able to be present, and joined teaching staff to enjoy a repast, much of which had been prepared by staff as a measure of our appreciation for the contribution made by our volunteers. Winsley Wighton welcomed guests and Sarah Walker’s superb organisation was apparent in the smooth running of the event.

School Laos Assembly 2nd June
The whole school attended an assembly to celebrate and share in the Laos trip. Kristen Bence acknowledged country and introduced John Stayte and Barb Smith who spoke about the origins of the trip. Then, to a background slide show of photos taken during their adventure, each of the students spoke about some aspect of the trip which was particularly meaningful for them. We heard about village life, the contentment and generosity of the villagers, the enthusiasm of school children, the beauty of the country, lemongrass, chillies and rice, waterfalls and elephants, hilly terrain, basic building, a memorable soccer match, night markets, alms giving, the students’ gratitude to their hosts and much more. For those who went, this was truly a life changing experience. The assembly finished with the presentation of humorous certificates to each of the participants.

Laos Presentation Evening 2nd June
There was a real buzz in the Hall as a group of over 100 people gathered to learn about the Laos trip. All sectors of the community were represented: there were proud parents and grandparents, younger and older siblings, friends, Lions, other interested community members and our Mayor. Mrs Roachock welcomed everyone and acknowledged country, before Kristen Bence introduced Barbara Smith and John Stayte who spoke about the origins of the trip. Then it was over to the students, past and present, who attended the trip. Each of them spoke briefly about the highlights of their adventure and what it had meant for them. Cards were presented to the many sponsors and community members who had supported the students in their fund raising. Finally, the Mayor presented certificates to each of the students, and Hannah Klemm, Ella Kain and Jess Frankling presented the students’ thanks and a gift to each of the teachers who had participated in the trip: Kristen Bence, Barbara Smith, Josh Praolini from Grant High School and John Stayte.

University Visit 4th June
Thirteen Year 11 and Year 12 students travelled to Naracoorte High School with Rob Thornett and Winsley Wighton to listen to a presentation from representatives of Flinders University and UniSA. The presenters described their universities, courses on offer, SATAC applications, ATARs, and student life on campus before opening the meeting to questions.

School Assembly 5th June
A whole school celebratory assembly was held to recognise student achievements in a number of fields. Simone Combe presented certificates to all place-getters at the Adelaide Athletics meet, while Rob Thornett handed out Geography Competition awards. Congratulations go to Josh
Woodbridge for attaining a High Distinction and Rachel Murphy for her Distinction in this academic event. Finally, awards were presented to the members of the successful Grape Stomp team.

**Pupil Free Day  6th June**

Kristen Bence led the staff through three sessions of an informative and highly engaging study of the work of Carol Dweck, which deals with fixed and growth mindsets. As well as listening to Kristen as she delivered a polished presentation, staff watched relevant video clips and participated in a number of activities which involved them in much lively discussion. The big idea from the day was that growth mindsets can be fostered in students, leading to a development in intelligence and a desire to learn. Consequently, students embrace challenge, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, learn from feedback and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others. As a result of our work on this day, teachers may be having an increased focus on and response to the effort students invest in learning tasks rather than the end product alone.

**Interschool Cross Country  11th June**

From Simone Combe

Twelve Penola High students competed in the Interschool Cross Country Championships. This year, the championships were hosted by PHS and were held at the Penola Racecourse and the surrounding paddocks of Zema Estate. The runners battled tough conditions, particularly with running on the long grass of the racecourse, but all managed to finish the race with very respectable times. Scott McCulloch and Tom Walker also kept everyone well fed with a sausage sizzle, and raised money for the school. Penola High School finished fifth overall out of eight schools, which was a dramatic improvement from previous years. Special mention must go to Brandon McMurtrie who finished fourth in the U14 Boys and Ella Kain who came fifth in the U15 Girls. It was excellent to see plenty of students having a go and representing Penola High School.

Students competing were Lucy Butler, Emily Winter, Rachel Murphy, Ella Kain, Samantha Sims, Kelsey Batt, Brandon McMurtrie, Jamie Colbert, Bradley Tregenza, Daniel Meek, Logan Gibbs and Jacob Ellery. Students were very well behaved and gracious to their competitors. A special mention must go to Rachel Murphy for one particular incident. A Naracoorte student had an asthma attack halfway through the U14 girls’ race, and Rachel was part of a group of runners who stopped to help the girl and send for help. The girls were very calm and mature, and had no problems with sacrificing their own race to help a stranger out. I was certainly very proud!

Our involvement in Cross Country had dropped off in recent years, but the past two years have seen a resurgence. We went from not competing at all in previous years, to competing but finishing in last place in 2013, and improved to fifth place in 2014. We urged last year’s group of Year 8 students to get involved, and it was pleasing to see them continue their involvement in Year 9. We applied the same "gentle encouragement" to this year’s group of Year 8’s and plan to continue with the strategy in the coming years, with the eventual goal of having competitors in every age group. Very exciting times for athletics at Penola High School!

Thanks must go to the Penola Racing Club and Zema Estate for allowing us to use their facilities, as well as to Mark Heyn for his fantastic set-up of the course. Student helpers for the set-up and pack-up included Scott Merrett, Gus Eckermann, Lucy Butler, Emily Winter and Rachel Murphy. Their help was very much appreciated!