Governing Council Staff News

19 May 2014

Interschool Athletics 19th March
The weather gods smiled kindly upon us and the oval was a picture as students and staff from eight South East schools gathered at Penola for the 70th Annual SESSA Athletics Championships. Here is Simone Combe’s account of the day.

On Wednesday 19th March, Penola High School played host to the 70th Annual SESSSA Athletics Championships. Hundreds of competitors from eight schools battled it out on a beautiful sunny day to claim victory. Traditional rivals Mount Gambier High School and Bordertown High School took an early lead and scores from the two schools remained very close for the entire day. Mount Gambier High were eventually crowned winners by the slightest of margins - just half a point. St Martins Lutheran College took out the Improvement Shield – improving their score from the previous year by a massive 45%.

Organising such a large event was obviously a huge job for a tiny school, and I believe the Penola High School community should be extremely proud of the smooth and professional way the carnival came together.

Special thanks must go to:

- The organising committee: Sarah Walker, Vicki McDonald-Burgess, Fleur Roachock, Peter ‘Pud’ Williams, James Braddy, Bob Reece and Mark Heyn. Without these individuals, the day simply could not have gone ahead.
- All officials for dedicating their time to the smooth and professional running of the carnival.
- All parents who came along to support the school or lend a hand with a duty. It was fantastic to receive such a positive reaction from the community, with everyone more than eager to assist in any way.
- Dee Hutchinson and the Café 43 team for their delicious officials’ catering. Everyone was very impressed, and it was excellent to show off the culinary skills of our very talented students.
- Emma Dear and her helpers in the canteen, the DK coffee van and all those who volunteered in the drinks van. Catering for so many people is a challenging task, but everyone left the carnival very well fed.
- Birdie Burgess and Lisa Henningsen for their invaluable assistance in the lead up to the day.
- Penola High students who were not competing - they were excellent helpers, and were put to work in a variety of roles to ensure the smooth running of the day.

Penola High School students who experienced individual success included Aliza Pfitzner (1st U15 Triple Jump, 2nd U15 Long Jump), Bailey Walker (1st U16 High Jump, 3rd U16 Triple Jump), Lewis March (1st U20 Long Jump, 3rd U20 100m, 3rd U20 200m), Brandon McMurtrie (2nd U14 400m), Jack Gartner (2nd U20 Discus), Emily Winter (3rd U14 200m), Elia Kain (3rd U15 1500m), Hannah Klemm (3rd U16 Long Jump), Ashlee Sullivan (3rd U20 800m) and Gus Eckermann (3rd U20 Hurdles)

Harmony Day 23rd March
Harmony Day, with its message ‘Everyone Belongs’ and emphasis on cooperation and working together constructively, was celebrated with a variety of activities undertaken by Home Groups in Learning for Life. Many students chose to wear orange clothing and colourful ‘Harmony Day’ stickers were much in evidence.

Lucindale Field Days
Students from the Café 43 program attended the Lucindale Field Days where they ran a coffee stall. The stall was well-patronised, with happy customers complimenting the students on their efforts. A significant sum of money was raised which will be used to support the students’ proposed trip to Melbourne later in the year.
SRC Camp 24th-25th March

Members of the SRC travelled to Adelaide to attend the GRIP Leadership Conference. Here, they had the opportunity to learn about leadership strategies, and have returned to us armed with new skills and enthusiasm for furthering the work of the SRC.

SSSSA Athletics 6th-7th April

From Simone Combe

On Sunday 6 April 2014 the Penola High School athletics team travelled to Adelaide in preparation for the SSSSA D Grade State Athletics Championships. The following morning, in perfect conditions, we arrived at SANTOS Stadium ready for an intense day of competition. Having completed five weeks of training most students were at their peak and ready to go. Unfortunately, a clash with the Laos trip meant that we were unable to bring a full squad. Consequently, several girls’ events went unfilled and many U14 students gamely filled in for U16 events, some most successfully. There were many exceptional performances on the track and in the field events, with a substantial number of students finishing in the top three for their event(s). The boys finished fifth, with the girls in eighth position.

Brandon McMurtrie dominated in the 200m and 400m, while Aliza Pfitzner achieved four individual placings. Josh Currie was unlucky to miss out on first place in both Javelin and Triple Jump by 1cm in each event. Another highlight was the strong performance by the two Year 12 students, Lewis March and Luke Gray, who represented the school in athletics for the last time after competing every year since 2010 at Interschool and SSSSA. Lewis March finished his day with one first, two seconds and a third in individual events, as well as a third in the Open Boys relay. Luke Gray was also a member of the Open Boys relay team, and added two individual firsts in steeplechase events to his tally. Another Year 12 student, Mathew Hutchesson, also attended Interschool and SSSSA Athletics every year since Year 8, but was unfortunately sidelined with a knee injury this year. He made a valuable contribution, assisting with official duties and mentoring the younger students.

The Penola High School students must be commended on their true sportsmanship throughout the day, with every competitor shaking hands with their rival competitors after each event. Well done! Students achieving one or more first three placings in their events were Bec Ansell, Joanne Drury, Emily Winter, Aliza Pfitzner, Alana Winter, Ashlee Sullivan, Brandon McMurtrie, Josh Currie, Will Cadzow, Logan Gibbs, Jack Gartner, Luke Gray, Lewis March and Scott Merrett.

Community Sporting Successes

Our congratulations are extended to Lewis March who played cricket this season for the Penola A Grade team. Lewis received the Gary Skeer Memorial Award for best performed junior in senior cricket. Three of our girls have met with major success representing Millicent in the South Australian Country Basketball 2014 Junior Country Championships. Alana Winter and Aliza Pfitzner were members of the Under 16 Girls team which was placed second, while Emily Winter played for the Under 14s, who were also placed second.

Kids’ Time 27th March

‘Frogs’ was the theme for the highly successful Kids’ Time held recently in the library. Activities included Rob Thornett reading ‘Picasso the Green Tree Frog’, and action songs, adapted to the frog theme. Heather Stone read ‘1, 2, 3 Jump’, with the littlies providing a spontaneous chorus. The children had the opportunity to hone their fine motor skills as they worked to produce frog dioramas. Children jumped from lily pad to lily pad as part of a counting game diversified to meet their individual needs and then enjoyed decorating chocolate cup cakes to make frogs for their morning tea.

SA Excellence in Public Education Awards

Scott McCulloch and Sarah Walker have been nominated in the Public Education Awards and we extend our hearty congratulations to them both on receiving this recognition of their ongoing professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm.
Regional VET Awards
We were thrilled to learn that awards in two of the seven categories recognised at the recent VET Awards came Penola’s way. Ms Dee Hutchinson was recognised as VET Teacher of the Year while Taylah Tranter received the Industry Pathways Award. Both awards were well-deserved and we wish both Dee and Taylah all the best for the State finals.

Beef Masterpieces Butchery 8th April
Dee Hutchinson travelled to Mt. Gambier with the Café 43 students to take part in a Beef Masterpieces Butchery and Cooking demonstration at the Barn.

Anzac Day Assembly 10th April
As Anzac Day fell well within the first term holidays, the PHS observance was held on the last Thursday of term. Proceedings began in the Hall, with the school standing for the entrance of the official party including our special guests Heather and Alan Wheeler, Pat Wilson, Kristen Nelsen and Andrew Hills. These guests were welcomed by Laura Price. Camryn Schriever read the Acknowledgement to Land in a deeply moving manner. Cody Faux delivered a highly polished presentation on the Western Front and was followed by Aliza Pfitzner and Bentley Galpin who spoke on the Home Front in Australia. The final speaker was Rob Thornett who dwelt on the need to work for peace and to avoid the aggrandisement and glorification of war.

The assembly moved to the quadrangle, where Year 8 SRC representatives, Emily Winter and Joe French, assisted Mr Pat Wilson to lay the wreath. Madeline Powell read The Ode, and this was followed by the Last Post, one minute’s silence and Reveille.

At the town ceremony on Anzac Day, Cody Faux presented an edited version of her talk and, assisted by Rob Thornett, laid the high school wreath.

End of Term Assembly 11th April
A brief farewell assembly was held at the end of term. Mrs Roachock spoke of the need for everyone in the school community to choose acceptable behaviours consistently. Jackie Poumako presented the Year 12 students who participated in the Lions Youth of the Year Quest with their certificates and Rob Thornett presented certificates to Laura Price, Cody Faux, Bentley Galpin, Aliza Pfitzner, Camryn Schriever, Madeline Powell, Josh Currie, Joe French, Emily Winter, Doug Blow-Oeser and Luke Gray for their contributions to the Anzac Day commemoration. Finally, Mrs Roachock presented VET Training Awards to Taylah Tranter and Mrs Hutchinson.

Laos Trip starting 2nd April
Kristen Bence’s full account appeared in the School Newsletter. Here is a summary of the main points.

After 12 months of fundraising and planning, on the 2nd April 2014, fifteen students and four leaders left Adelaide Airport, destination Louangphrabang in northern Laos. The trip was organised through Antipodeans Aboard as a Service Learning Tour, providing Penola High School students and staff with the opportunity to experience another culture and undertake a service project, completing the construction of a boys’ dormitory for Sop Jak High School in Na Pho. This building is essential to house students from distant villages.

Arriving in Louangphrabang, students set out for a walk in the old city and were surprised by the grandeur of the Buddhist temples and the cleanliness of the country. Then followed a beautiful three course Laotian meal. Students toured temples and learnt some of the history of Laos. Climbing 467 steps to a Buddhist Monastery overlooking the city was quite a challenge. The day ended with a tour of the night markets where students enjoyed their first bartering experiences.

Day two started with a scenic mountain drive as the party headed to their home stay in Na Pho Village, where they were greeted traditionally and presented with bouquets of flowers. Students settled into their host families homes and then visited Sop Jak High School where they spoke to students about Australia and the purpose of their trip.
Five days were spent installing the ceiling in the dormitory and painting both the interior and exterior. Only hand tools could be used, and this presented a considerable challenge. Our students were fortunate to complete a task begun by other groups and to have the privilege of presenting the keys to the dormitory to the Principal. On the last night in Na Pho the teachers and students of the high school performed a customary dance as a thank you.

While at Na Pho village, the group also visited a local primary school where our students read stories to the students, played games and taught them to play football. These activities gave the students the opportunity to teach English and a range of games to the local children. This was a highlight of the trip for all the students.

The PHS students embraced village life with enthusiasm, listening attentively as the village elders told stories of their culture and history, participating in a friendship dance, and learning basket weaving from the village men. The students went white-water rafting and swimming in the local river and undertook a three hour hike on a steep, muddy path to a mountain village. A two-hour long soccer match resulting in a three all draw formed the culmination of the village visit.

The visit ended back in Louangphrabang, where the other highlights included more visits to the local night market, riding elephants at an elephant sanctuary, visiting a local waterfall and bear sanctuary, waking up at 5am to attend the Buddhist “Call to Alms” Ceremony, where the students gave rice to the monks, and visiting local temples. A boat trip down the Mekong River to the Buddha Caves, where over 300 Buddha statues are worshipped was also undertaken.

The student comments on our journey said so much about their experiences: “When can I go back?”; “A real eye opener”; “We have so much here in Australia”; “Their lifestyle is so hard, but beautifully simple all at the same time”.

Our PHS community, but particularly Kristen Bence, Barb Smith and John Stayte, thank everyone who supported the Laos Trip by providing the opportunity for the students to fundraise, and for those who donated funds towards the project at Sop Jak High School. We also thank Josh Praolini from Grant High School for his leadership and assistance whilst on the trip. Kristen, Barb and John particularly acknowledge the students who were outstanding ambassadors for our town and country through their generous and kind spirits. It was a trip whose memory we will all treasure for a lifetime.

2014 Vintage Stomp

We are delighted with the organisation, enthusiasm and effort which Mathew Hutchesson, Luke Gray, Doug Blow-Oeser, Lewis March, Hayden Lambert and Shannah Faulds brought to the Di Giorgio Family Wines Vintage Stomp 2014. The team members acquitted themselves well, exhibiting fine sportsmanship. Their efforts were crowned with success as they were runners up and each received a $20 gift voucher from Sportspower Mount Gambier/Naracoorte in recognition of their achievement. As Vicki M’Donald-Burgess said, “We congratulate and acknowledge their fine representation of Penola High School. Will our 2015 Year 12 group be as successful, or could they even go one better? The challenge is on!!”

The School Vineyard - News from Vicki M’Donald-Burgess

The school vineyard is being re-vamped. Most of the school vines have been removed to make way for a winter pasture. The re-introduction of agriculture into the school’s curriculum requires that the infrastructure on this land be altered to accommodate this learning area. Projects such as this are made possible by generous donations from our wider community. In particular, the PHS community wishes to express its gratitude to Alex Burgess of AB Spraying Services, Kevin and Dianne Merrett and Jamie Tidy of Naracoorte Seeds.

Library Expert Visit 23rd April

During the term break, Mr Kevin Hennah, library expert extraordinaire, spent a day in our library with library staff and Board members. Keeping our budgetary constraints in mind, Kevin prepared a list of recommendations. These were discussed by the Board at its May meeting, and the decision was made to act on the recommendations as finances allowed. It is necessary to reduce the non-fiction book stock, so a
determined weed of this section will be the first part of the project undertaken. Keep an eye out for possible book bargains coming your way.

**Parent Teacher Interviews  6th May**

Staff were delighted with parent response to the Parent-Teacher Interview evening held in the Hall. Many parents were able to visit for a series of chats with their children’s teachers. As teachers, we find these occasions valuable as they follow logically from the focus on individual students and their progress which we developed during report writing and, even more importantly, provide us with an opportunity to develop our understanding and appreciation of each of the students we teach.

**Year 9 da Vinci Trip  7th May**

The Year 9 cohort attended the Leonardo da Vinci Machines Exhibition in Mount Gambier, as part of their Art, Agriculture and Science courses. The exhibition is interactive and students enjoyed being able to interact with reproductions of sixteenth century machines and build a bridge from interlocking logs. They also loved the room of mirrors where, standing in one spot, they were able to see themselves from all angles. Students will have the opportunity to develop a machine of their own in response to this visit.

**Year 11 Outdoor Ed. Camp  4th-7th May**

By Simone Combe

On Sunday 4th May, ten Year 11 Outdoor Education students plus Miss Combe and Mr Heyn loaded up the bus and trailer and headed over the border to the Grampians for a three day camp. The group stayed at Halls Gap and enjoyed a variety of activities, including rock climbing, abseiling and bushwalking. The session on Monday was conducted along the top of the Wonderland Range, and with temperatures reaching a balmy 10 degrees (plus wind chill) the students looked up at a 15m rock face that they were told they would be climbing today. The students attacked the challenge with gusto, and didn’t let a little drizzle dampen their spirits. It was very heartening to see students face their fears and encourage one another to hang in there (literally!) to complete some of the tougher climbs.

Tuesday saw the students embark on a 14km bushwalk in two groups, completely self-managed without extra assistance from the teachers. The students shared navigation duties and managed to complete the walk with minimal wrong turns. The teachers’ heart rates started to rise when one group hadn’t surfaced 45 minutes after the first group returned, only for them to casually stroll up to the bus announcing that they’d taken several breaks and had been relaxing on a log just out of view from the bus for the past 20 minutes.

Students are to be commended for their behaviour and attitude throughout the entire trip, with each student pitching in and assisting in the smooth running of the camp. One particular incident highlights this maturity. Shauna Allen had injured her ankle. Even so, she attempted Wednesday morning’s walk, but, unfortunately had to stop partway due to her discomfort. Members of her group organised for some of them to stay with her while the others went on to let the teachers know what had happened. The students consulted their map to organise a pick up spot so that Shauna had only to walk the minimal distance. Bravo!

Students planned out the food aspect of the camp in great detail, with everyone being well fed but with minimal wastage. They learnt from the previous camp and adjusted their menu based on feedback from the group. Students also worked together constructively to ensure the set up and pack up of the campsite was done very quickly, and zero rubbish was left behind.

The camp was very enjoyable for all involved. Thanks to Kevin and Dianne Merrett for the loan of their trailer, as well as to Birdie Burgess for his assistance with loading on the Sunday.

**Rostrum Voice of Youth  7th May**

From Jackie Poumako

On Wednesday the 7th of May at 7pm, six of our students participated in the Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition held at Grant High School. We were represented by five SRC members from years 8 – 1.
French and Emily Winter (year 8), Bradley Tregenza and Amy Wetherall (year 9), and Ashlee Sullivan (year 11), and Alana Winter (year 10).

The year 8 and 9 students in the junior division spoke on the topics ‘Climb Every Mountain’ and ‘Never Say Never’ while in the senior division Ashlee and Alana spoke on the topics ‘We Hear What We Want To’ and ‘Freedom or Licence’ respectively.

All students spoke beautifully, maintaining great poise throughout the prepared speeches and showcasing some quick thinking in their short speeches in which they had a mere 15 mins to plan a speech on surprise topics that included ‘Off the Map’, ‘A Missed Opportunity’ and ‘Message in a Bottle.’

This was the first time our school entered the Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition, and our pioneers did a fantastic job forging the way for future participation. All students were relieved at the end of the proceedings, but happy to have had the experience. As the adrenaline rushes wore off, we saw competitive glimmers in the eyes of our competitors and look forward to returning to the competition next year.

All students were terrific ambassadors for our school and should be commended on their participation and dedication to developing their public speaking skills as the leaders and ‘voices’ of our school.

**Crime Scene Investigation Naracoorte 15th May**
From Tom Sutterby
On Thursday, 15 May 2014, the year 10 class attended the Crime Scene Investigation at Naracoorte High School. The day was run by the South Australian Police (SAPOL) in conjunction with the Motor Accident Commission (MAC) and Save a Life Australia.

The students attended three workshops which covered Vehicle ANCAP ratings, Serious Crash Unit investigations and a driving simulator.

Three of our students, Bradley Rowe, Mystique Ropiha, and Zac Oppelaar were given the opportunity to drive in the simulator in a variety of situations with different distractions, reaction times and results. Students were surprised at how easy it was to become involved in an accident.

**Sporting Success: State Representatives**
Kelsey Batt has been selected to represent Secondary Sport SA and the SANFL at the School Sport Girls Australian Football Championships to be held in Sydney in July. We extend our congratulations and wish her luck.

Our congratulations and good wishes also go to Alana Winter who will represent South Australia in the Under 16 basketball SA Country side at the National Basketball Competition to be held in Geelong.

**Pupil free Day 19th May**
The pupil free day was used productively. In the morning many teaching staff and SSOs completed the update of their BELS first aid training while Kristen Bence and Suzanne Gray worked on updating the Literacy Policy and Intervention Plan. The first part of the afternoon was devoted to a viewing of a Will Rogers video dealing with good class room management, followed by a discussion of salient points. Finally, teachers worked in ‘triad’ groups to plan their personal performance program for this term.