

Newsletter, Term 3 2009

From the Editor

Dear Colleagues

I hope your Term 3 has been a rewarding one. I have been overwhelmed with article submissions. Thank you so much for your support and willingness to share the wonderful work from colleagues and students. It is my intention to publish two newsletters in Term 4 and more articles would be most welcome!

Chris French

Executive Officer's Report



MYSA's 6th International Conference, May 2009

Connecting in the middle years

Delegates connected in Brisbane using a range of digital technologies, while also discovering more effective ways of connecting with their students using ICTs.

To follow the conference theme, we **'Switched on!'** through

- Judith Baenen's insights into living and working with young adolescents
- Erica McWilliam's 'low threat, high challenge' culture of learning
- Marco Torres' inspiration for our students to be innovative producers using today's technologies

- Mike Anderson's examples of empowering students using multimedia software and digital tools
- students' views and perceptions while being MCs for keynote sessions
- some amazing musical performances by young adolescents.

Delegates were invited to **'Jump in!'** by

- using/adapting ideas from a wide range of high quality sessions and visits to schools
- meeting with colleagues, within and across regions
- networking with other delegates and work colleagues using laptops and wireless provided by sponsors
- maximising resources available at the Trade Displays
- dancing to the music of the Ormiston College Jazz Band at the Conference Dinner.

Now, we are challenged to **'Take off!'** with

- ideas and new learnings back in our own work environments
- continuing our social networking
- being energised by what is possible in the digital world of 21st century
- the visionary suggestions provided by delegates (for the Association) for MYSA in the next decade.

The MYSA Management Committee highly values the work of the Conference Committee and the contributions of those on the Extended Committee. We are most appreciative of the support of the Conference Sponsors: Next Byte, QSA, Teaching Australia and Telstra.

So, in the words of one of the delegates ... *'We came back re-energised and full of ideas - learned so much. Roll on 2011!'*

We would love to receive any ideas/suggestions/comments for the program for 2011. Please contact the MYSA Office with these.

Susan Hearfield

From the President

Term 3 is typically a hectic time of the year for anyone working in schools and it has been a busy time for the Association as well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Management Committee of MYSA, our Executive Officer and Administrative Assistant for their dedication during this busy period. Their efforts this year will see a number of significant enhancements to the services we provide.

Our website is now starting to develop more rapidly with past newsletters available to members alongside copies of our Position Paper, Strategic Plan and supporting documents. Current professional development opportunities and the International Conference video are also listed. Schools seeking to advertise vacancies on the website can forward their details to Leigh Williams, website manager, at leighw@brisbane.coc.edu.au.

A number of you have taken the opportunity to comment on a new category of membership proposed by the Management Committee. Teachers becoming MYSA members under the 'Leadership' category will have access to a range of additional benefits suited to those whose career paths are taking them into management and leadership positions. Implementing this category of membership will require an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held in Brisbane on Thursday 15th October prior to a workshop on Teacher Resilience. If you are interested in this new initiative, please make every effort to attend the meeting. MYSA's constitution requires a quorum to be present in order to effect changes to membership structure.

Our Executive Officer Susan Hearfield has been in New Zealand recently at the invitation of the New Zealand Association for Intermediate and Middle Schooling (NZAIMS) to attend their National Conference. Some exciting opportunities for collaboration are emerging from the conversations between Susan and the NZAIMS leadership team. I would like to thank both Susan for her time as well as NZAIMS for their generosity in hosting us at their conference.

There are a number of other terrific initiatives underway thanks to the hard work of our Management Committee and Regional Coordinators. I look forward to sharing these with you in future newsletters. As always, I would like to thank all of you for your efforts on behalf of young students in their middle years of schooling.

Junn Kato

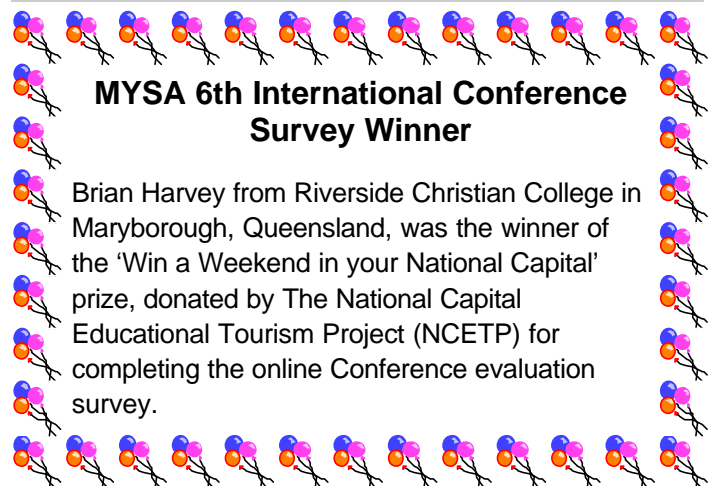
NZAIMS Conference

The New Zealand Association of Intermediate and Middle Schooling (NZAIMS) held their annual conference in Takapuna, Auckland, earlier this month. The theme was 'Engaging with the best from our community: Where our community leads our thinking.' When choosing this conference theme, we realised our challenge as school leaders and teachers is to equip students to be outstanding citizens in their community - local, national, and global. So what better way to assist us than to invite outstanding community leaders to share their expertise? Speakers of the quality of Rob Oram (Economics); Judge Andrew Becroft (Youth Court Judge); Archbishop Roger Herft (Migrant Community) and Professor Rodger Faull (Adolescent Health) each gave their particular insight into our community's expectations from middle years' education. Alongside these speakers, three forums were held. Members of Parliament, secondary principals, and intermediate and middle school students shared their perspectives on this important area of compulsory education.

All who participated in the conference were challenged to question their own practices and school expectations. Such a challenging program, supported by a very active social agenda, ensured that delegates had a number of opportunities to share their own understandings and develop these through professional discussions with colleagues. We were pleased to have the opportunity to host Susan Hearfield from MYSA, and discuss ways to strengthen the ties that already exist between our two associations.

Following the conference, over 700 educators of emerging adolescents across Waikato and Auckland were able to meet together and work with Mr Andrew Fuller for a day.

Brian Hinchco
President, NZAIMS



**MYSA 6th International Conference
Survey Winner**

Brian Harvey from Riverside Christian College in Maryborough, Queensland, was the winner of the 'Win a Weekend in your National Capital' prize, donated by The National Capital Educational Tourism Project (NCETP) for completing the online Conference evaluation survey.



Kelly Cavanough (right) receiving the MYSA Award at the University of Queensland for her achievements in the BA (Middle Years of Schooling) studies. The award was presented by Rhonda Nolan (Ipswich Girls Grammar School).

SCHOOL FOCUS

Coffs Harbour Community Christian School

Year 8 Boot Camp Program

Boot Camp is a winner for Year 8 boys at Coffs Harbour's Community Christian School. Our Middle School commenced in 1998, with the aim of best addressing the needs of Years 6–8 students. In 2003, we instituted a Year 8 boys' Boot Camp Program.

The decision to establish a Boot Camp program came on a number of levels. Firstly, boys were becoming boisterous and restless during the day and the advantages of channelling excess energies were obvious. Secondly, we believed it would aid in meaningful relationship building between peers and staff mentors. Boot Camp has been a great leveller in terms of bringing some egos 'down a peg' and building others up. Staff struggle (and sweat) as much as the kids and the boys love this! Boot Camp runs twice a week for 15 minutes. During this time, the roll is marked, exercises occur and a short devotion or pastoral talk concludes the session. Boys change before the bell and arrive in their Boot Camp shirts (which are screen printed). There are a range of abilities and fitness levels and the aim is to improve through genuine effort as opposed to reaching a predetermined goal or 'beating' other students. A 'one in – all in' mentality results in students

and staff completing additional sets of exercises if an individual is late, forgets gear or demonstrates lack of effort! Participants learn quickly it pays to get things right or bring a note from home! Three male staff members work on the Boot Camp Program and it has expanded into Years 9 and 10 this year. They are relatively fit and enthusiastically model self-discipline through direct participation in activities. Activities are simple and appropriate for our basketball court. The most popular include sit-ups, push-ups, squats, star-jumps, and relay runs. Boys enjoy additional challenging static exercises that involve holding a position for a given period of time.

Boot Camp is about encouraging lifelong physical fitness and an active lifestyle within the constraints of a busy schedule. It is also about challenge through a regime of assorted activities.

(Home Room Teacher)

I've been involved with Boot Camp for a few years and really enjoy it. We have lots of fun, the boys love it (although not all would admit it) and it is now an established facet of Year 8. The Year 7 students can't wait to start Year 8.

(Teacher)

I love to get out and about. Boot Camp helps me burn some energy off before school starts.

(Year 8 student)

Once you start, it is good. It is good to get the energy out by running around. The worst thing about boot camp is push-ups — I get sore arms.

(Year 8 Student)

Boot Camp Program is a real winner. At a time of life where authentic and positive mentorship is essential to the well-being of a young man, Boot Camp helps to provide that and has enriched our students' educational experience. Our next challenge is to start a Boot Camp for girls with willing staff!

David Rae
Head of Middle School
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Northside Christian College

History Week

Had you wandered through the Middle School courtyard at Northside Christian College during History Week you may have been 'fleeced' by a bushranger, confronted by a Spartan Hoplite or even swept off your feet by a chivalrous

knight. History Week for 2009 brought the past to life throughout the Middle School and our Northside students played the historians with particular panache this year.

Day one found our Year 7 students exploring Australian Colonial History, dressing up as convicts, early explorers and pioneering women. They discovered 'The Man from Snowy River', participated in colonial games on the oval and were educated and entertained by Australian Colonial characters, performed by our guests from Living History Australia.

The Middle School courtyard took on an ancient feel on day two with our Year 8 students transforming themselves into Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman characters. Living History Australia introduced the students to 'artefact exploration' as they interacted with replica Ancient Roman spears, placed a hoplite helmet over their heads and felt what it must have been like to don this Ancient Warrior's armour.

In exploring the ancient world, the courage of all of our Middle Schoolers was tested as all year levels had the opportunity to display their might in the Gladiatorial Ring. Many captured a glimpse of performing before thousands at the Colosseum as their classmates cheered them on to victory.

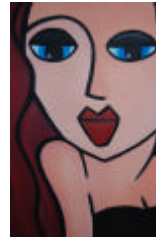
The timeline fast forwarded some hundred years on day three, as the Year 9 students stepped into the Middle Ages as noble ladies, knights of the round table and Robin Hood with his merry men. After re-enacting the experiences of pilgrimage to the Holy Lands with Living History Australia, the students displayed their class colours, in the form of their medieval heralds and sent forth their champions to tournaments, battling for the pride of their classmates. The champions and their squires josted, apple-bobbed and lay down their gauntlets before their opponent in gentlemanly swordsmanship – medieval style!

In the course of one week the Middle School travelled from Ancient to Medieval times and strolled through Australia's colonial past. Lots of fun and many new historical and educational experiences were had by students and teachers alike.

Amanda Gook
Head of Middle School SOSE
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STUDENT TALK

Coomera Anglican College



At Coomera Anglican College we have an energetic and enthusiastic cohort of students. They are fortunate to have their own exhibition studio, art rooms, sculpture area, framing room and a brand new kiln. Current artwork by Years 7-9 students will be on exhibition in November at our College Art Show.

What students think of our Art Program!

Creative and fun because we get to paint our first canvas and we are treated like artists

Is the best subject because we use many things to create with like wire, wax and clay. At the moment we are doing Sticky Tape sculptures.

Inspirational, because we get in Artist from around Queensland; we just had Don Waters who is an International artists, we are very lucky.

Exciting, because we get to work towards our end of year Art Show, get prizes and have an auction with a real auctioneer.



Liz Hampson
Art HOD
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Congratulations Sharon Grosskopf!



Sharon receiving her CQU Middle Years of Schooling Association Award from Stephen Smith (MYSA Regional Committee member).