

## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times' (Charles Dickens – A Tale of Two Cities)



The tragic death of Ross Olsen, a very popular, committed and well known teacher from the Huon Campus of the Wodonga Middle Years College, reminds us all of the incredible and indelible impact teachers have on so many people. Ross has left a tremendous legacy in the name of education. I would like to convey my thanks to the Olsen family for the tireless manner in which Ross gave a commitment to making things better for the young people. The thoughts of the education community of the Hume Region go to Janine, Ross' wife, and their family.

Congratulations to Tony Gooden and the team from the Seymour Network for organising and facilitating a very productive Hume Regional Leadership Conference. The conference, entitled "Leadership – Doing It Better", was notable for contributing to a strong sense of a regional identity and spirit; an exploration of some aspects of educational leadership; the willingness of participants to engage in learning and reflection; excellent input from Darrell Fraser, supported by Judy Petch, and the very professional manner in which the conference was conducted. Darrell Fraser in his most recent newsletter notes: "I came away with some useful insights and a strong sense of the collegiality that exists between principals in the Hume Region". Well done to the Seymour Network.

Congratulations also to the participants of the conference that raised \$2500 for State School Relief. Great work! I wonder what we could do as a region if we had a contribution from all schools to this great cause.

The conference for 2007 will be the responsibility of the Wodonga Network. In shaping this conference, there will be an opportunity to look at ways to think about how such gatherings can be shaped to enhance the ongoing challenge of appropriate and differential learning for leaders. If you have ideas, please get involved and express these to David Cummins, Senior Education Officer and Vern Hilditch (Chair – Wodonga Network).

Since taking up my appointment as Regional Director, my constant and consistent mantra centres on the need for excellence with respect to our core business – teaching, learning and curriculum. Recently, I had the great pleasure of participating in an authentic example of this. Jocelyn Owen, Principal of Wodonga West Primary School, has developed, in partnership with teachers, other schools, students, parents, TAFE and the local business community a wonderful, rich learning task. The task involved the use of Wodonga TAFE staff, the Tallangatta based 'Hospitality on Wheels' truck, staff and the students of Wodonga West PS, to successfully host three food theme nights as the school's "Monet's Restaurant". The students were amazing, the food superb and the depth of learning immense. This is the standard all schools should be aspiring to achieve. Well done, Jocelyn and Wodonga West Primary School.

Over the past few weeks I have had the opportunity to provide a key note address at conferences. The theme of these presentations has been "Pupils – Our Central Focus". All students must be of our highest interest and concern - educational leadership. How many of our regional schools are displaying excellence in this core aspect of their role? Just take a moment and reflect on the following and think about how well you are performing as an educational leader:

- ✍ Having **currency of knowledge** about curriculum, teaching and learning.
- ✍ A belief that **all children can learn**.
- ✍ Modelling a commitment to ongoing **learning, reflection and improvement in professional practices**.
- ✍ A willingness to challenge the norm and **dare to be different**.
- ✍ **Leading curriculum** construction /configuration.
- ✍ Having an excellent understanding of **teaching, learning and particularly, THINKING!**
- ✍ Having a **powerful personal vision** informed by a strong sense of the future.
- ✍ A willingness and desire to make a **DIFFERENCE!**

Later this month, our review of the region formally commences. Each network will have the opportunity to provide input via the Network Chair and another nominated principal. I look forward to hearing from principals. This feedback will be used to formulate and inform aspects of regional operations and settings.

This week I had the privilege, as part of Education Week, to recognise and celebrate the work of a number of teachers/administrators from our region who have attained milestone of service awards ranging from 25 to 45 years. Well done to all award recipients!

Late last month, I received an invitation to open the Residential Outdoor Schools Association (ROSA) Conference hosted by Dean McLean and the staff of Rubicon Outdoor Education Centre. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to a base camp located by the Goulburn River, for an evening activity including a Koori welcome ceremony. Congratulations to the three Principals and staff from Rubicon Outdoor Centre, Bogong Outdoor Education Centre and Somers School Camp for their commitment to professional development and their willingness to further develop exciting outdoor learning opportunities for many students throughout Victoria.

Professor Peter Gronn from Monash University was invited to our fortnightly OSDE leadership meeting to engage in discussion about his current work, including the content of this latest book, *The New Work of Educational Leaders*.

Another busy but productive month. I look forward to continuing the momentum.

## In the spotlight:

\* National Safe Schools Week  
May 15 – 21, 2006  
<http://www.safeschoolsweek.est.gov.au/>

\* Advancing reconciliation with your students: Creative approaches to VELs, May 29  
<http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/>

\* New student report cards - broad range of support materials and further software training are available for schools and teachers to assist with introduction of the new report cards.  
[https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Circulars/2006/s132-2006\\_new\\_student\\_report\\_cards-emi.doc](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Circulars/2006/s132-2006_new_student_report_cards-emi.doc)

\* For details, contacts or links to the dates below please go to: <http://www.gner.vic.edu.au>

## Calendar of key dates:

	MAY
Education Week	8-14
Merit and Equity Training Program for Principals, Teachers and School Services Officers	16
Flagship Strategy 1 Professional Learning Package	Various dates
It's Not OK to Be Away Student Attendance Program	17 & 23
Shepparton Management Committee Meeting	18
Early Years Literacy Coordinator Training	18,19 & 30
Wangaratta Network Meeting	24
Seymour Network Meeting	31

Please refer to next page for Stephen's calendar for May.....

STEVE'S CALENDAR FOR MAY				
M	T	W	T	F
1 Melbourne Hume Leadership Conference	2 Melbourne Hume Leadership Conference  pm Performance Evaluation with Darrell Fraser	3 am Regional Office  pm ARLF Teleconference	4 am Mtg with HR Manager re Your Job Your Say  pm Lunchbox Reflections – Wangaratta Network  Evening – dinner at Monets Restaurant, hosted by Wodonga West PS	5 am Mtg with Dare to Lead team  pm Principal contract renewal meetings Mtg with Bill Sykes MP
8 Melbourne OLT Forum - Jay McTighe & Robert Marzano	9 Melbourne OSE Leadership Team Mtg  pm OLT & RDs Mtg  Evening - 35, 40 and 45 Years Service Dinner	10 Melbourne Schools in: 2020 Summit	11 am Regional Office Meetings – School Improvement Mtg & Management Mtg  pm Travel to Melbourne  Evening – Education Excellence Awards	12 Regional Office
15 am Regional Office  pm Travel to Toowoomba QLD with School Improvement Team	16 IDEAS Conference Toowoomba QLD	17 IDEAS Conference Toowoomba QLD	18 School Visits – Yarrowonga and surrounds  Late pm - Award presentation 40 Years of service Cobram SC	19 am Regional Office  pm Mtg with Wendy Lovell MLC - North East Province
22 School Visits – Seymour and surrounds	23 Melbourne OSE Leadership Team Mtg  pm RDs Meeting	24 am Wangaratta Principals' Network meeting  pm School Improvement Team Overnight meeting Beechworth	25 School Improvement Team Overnight meeting Beechworth	26 School Improvement Team Overnight meeting Beechworth
29 am Mtg with Bill Brown re regional review  pm Principal contract renewal meetings	30 am Social Sector Agencies Group Meeting  pm Interagency Teams Regional Support Group	31 am Seymour Network Meeting  pm Regional Office		

### Professional Reading.....

"It is the purpose of professional reading to equip the leader for independent creative thinking. It is through the literature that the school executive lives and thinks in the presence of a swiftly moving and complex profession... ." *Professional Administrators for America's Schools*, 38th Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators.

For your interest, please find below a list of the books the Management team at Regional Office are currently reading and intend to read for 2006. Each team member has nominated a book for the list and we aim to read one book every four to six weeks. At the end of this period, a team member will lead a discussion or presentation in a Management meeting and complete a book review in relation to their nominated book.

- ✍ A Framework for Understanding Poverty – *Ruby Payne*
- ✍ Thick Face, Black Heart – *Chin-Ning Chu*
- ✍ The Tipping Point – *Malcolm Gladwell*
- ✍ Leading for Results, Transforming Teaching, Learning and Relationships in Schools – *Dennis Sparks*
- ✍ Who Moved My Cheese? – *Dr Spencer Johnson*
- ✍ Passionate People Produce, Rekindle Your Passion and Creativity – *Charles Kovess*
- ✍ Life Is So Good – *George Dawson, Richard Glaubman*
- ✍ Why Business People Speak Like Idiots – A Bullfighter's Guide – *Brian Fugere*
- ✍ Vital Signs – *Craig Emerson*

The School Development Officers have also developed a reading list:

- ✍ The Dance of Change – *Peter Senge*
- ✍ The New Leaders – *Daniel Goleman*
- ✍ Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Security – *Andy Hargreaves*
- ✍ What's Worth Fighting For Out there? – *Hargreaves & Fullan*
- ✍ Bowling Alone – *Professor Robert Putnam*

If you are interested in reading any of the above, please contact Cristina Perra and she can arrange for a copy to be loaned to you. If you are reading a book, publication or paper that you believe others in our Region would benefit from, please email Cristina the details and she can add it to the next newsletter. Cristina will be working towards having a complete list of reading available on our revamped Hume website.

*Congratulations to.....*

Jennifer Barr, Cobram Secondary College – Premier's VCE Award, Physical Education

Hanne Watkins, Wangaratta High School - Premier's VCE Award, Psychology

Jenni Dolling, Mansfield Secondary College – VCAL Student Achievement Award- Senior, Work Related Skills

*Your job Your Say for Principals* – Hume Region scored a response rate of **83%** - the highest of all regions by a considerable margin! Well done!

*Snapshots from the Conference.....*

*You Won't Die Laughing session!*



Smart schools are thoughtful places, in the double sense of caring and mindful. Firstly, people are sensitive to one another's needs and treat others thoughtfully. Secondly, both the teaching and learning processes are THINKING CENTRED. (Perkins: 1992).