

Gunnedah High School Newsletter



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**Excellence and
Innovation in a
Unique and
Caring School**

Issue 18

13.11.2009

Welcome Parent and Carers to our newsletter.

The HSC exams have progressed well and I have had only good reports from the Presiding Officer. We have completed the School Certificate Exams last week and I hope our Year 10 students have used the allotted time for each exam wisely and made a serious attempt at their responses. I must admit that I was a little concerned that a number of students left the exam centre early.

Last Monday I hosted the start-up meeting for our gym. This was very exciting as we met, for the first time, the entire team that will bring this dream to reality. Australian BuildPlan are the successful contractors and with New England Department of Commerce and Public Work, senior members of the DET projects team, Mr Josh Edwards (HT PDHPE) and Mr Rod Byrnes we completed the final phase of preparation and planning. It was stressed that the key to the successful completion of this multi million dollar project will be open and honest communication between all parties. We will have monthly meetings which will be held at our school, the second Wednesday of each month, to discuss its progress. Rod Byrnes, our General Assistant, will be the daily contact person and I will involve myself when and where necessary. Shortly after our next meeting we are hopeful that the preparation for the slab will start. I am pleased to announce that we have past the point of NO RETURN and our gym will soon be a reality. The team is hopeful that it will be completed by the end of July, 2010, weather permitting.

Ms Jodie Toft and I attended the start-up meeting for the Science Labs' refurbishment last Thursday. I have held meetings and site inspections with

architects and the demolition crew last week and this major project is also well underway. These also will be absolutely fantastic facilities for our students and staff.

Friday, 30th October was World Teachers Day. Our SRC presented all staff with a small bag of sweets, wrapped in a message from our students. This was such a nice thing for our students to do for the staff and just goes to show that our kids do appreciate what their teachers do for them. My congratulations to the SRC and a big thank you from me.

At the next P&C meeting, Wednesday 18th November, I will deliver a presentation on our proposed initiatives for 2010 under the National Partnerships program. We will also host a Community Information Night on Thursday 19th November in our school hall. I would like to invite all parents and carers to come along and hear what we intend to do to provide a strong platform to improve learning outcomes for our students now, and in the future. We will explain a number of very innovative initiatives and it is particularly important for our Yr 9 parents and carers as this group of students will have several new requirements for next year. If you are able, please come along to one of these information sessions and give us your feedback.

We have been placed back on the Schools in Partnership program (SiP) for the next three years, 2010-2012. Where we received between \$280 000 to \$330 000 per year previously, we have now been

allocated \$63 700 per year for the next three years. Although this is considerably less than we expected, I must say that it can be looked upon as quite flattering as I think it has been recognised that we have made significant gains in both student outcomes and school culture. We will make great use of these additional funds and I again look forward to working closely with our community as part of this program. We are also a PSP school for the next three years and a National Partnership school for the next four years. My challenge and vision for the short term is to be innovative in our approach to learning as these equity programs give us the opportunity to change the way we educate our students and continue the change process within our school to allow teachers to teach and students to achieve their potential. I recently saw a little caption that will become one of our cornerstones:

"If they don't learn the way you teach, then teach the way they learn".

I look forward to seeing you, and talking with you at our community meetings on the 18th and 19th November.

Rod Jones
Principal

Congratulations to GHS Principal Mr Rod Jones

The New England branch of the Australian Council for Education Leadership (ACEL) held their annual awards presentation in Armidale recently, with Gunnedah High School Principal Mr Rod Jones being honoured with the prestigious William Walker Award for Outstanding Leadership.

Mr Jones has been Principal at GHS since 2007. Prior to his appointment to Gunnedah, he was Deputy Principal at Orara High School in Coffs Harbour, and has held educational leadership roles since 1992.

As Principal of GHS, Mr Jones has developed a vision for the future of the school in the form of the 'Gunnedah High School Improvement Plan', which was introduced in Term 1 of this year, 2009, following collaboration with members of the school community. Mr Jones' leadership style involves him being a visible and accessible leader who knows, cares for and understands his staff and students well. He is a team builder and places a high priority on effective communication.

In his time at the GHS, Mr Jones has overseen the implementation of a number of innovative programs including QuickSmart, Reading to Learn, the Chaplaincy Program, and the allocation of staff and infrastructure to support and enhance student attendance.

The development of a strong link between the community and the GHS has been a key part of Mr Jones' vision for the future growth of the school. With the introduction of a Community Liaison Officer to bridge the communication gap with parents/carers and the community and a close working relationship

with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), the school has seen a rise in cultural awareness, an increase in all students' achievements, and a closer bond with the local community.

Whilst Mr Jones' time is dedicated to the future growth of the GHS, he has also undertaken a number of regional and state leadership roles. He is currently the Secondary Principals' Council representative on the Asset Management Reference Group and the Professional Learning Reference Group, as well as the State Asset Management Committee.

We, at Gunnedah High School, are very privileged and honoured to have a Principal of the calibre of Mr Jones as our leader. Congratulations, Mr Jones, and we hope that you are here for many years to come.



P & C Association:

The next meeting of the GHS P & C Association will be held on Wednesday November 18th in the school library, commencing at 7:00pm. As this will be the last meeting for the year, the P & C Executive and Principal, Mr Rod Jones, would like to send out a special invitation to all parents/guardians, grandparents, carers and community members to come along as there are a number of very important issues that will be addressed as we prepare for 2010 at GHS. These include the new school leaving age of 17, Lap-tops for Learning, school facilities up-grading and much more. This will be a very informative evening and will help to keep the community up-to speed with the exciting developments at GHS. We look forward to seeing a 'full house' of parents/carers, guardians and community members in attendance.

Dates to Remember	
17/11/09	Year 12 Presentation & Farewell @ Gunnedah Services & Bowling Club Paul Matthews will be in the Baxter Room from 5pm onwards to take photos
10/12/09	Year 10 Presentation Night @ Town Hall
11/12/09	Years 7, 8, 9 & 11 Presentation Day @ Town Hall
16/12/09	Term 4 concludes for ALL students.

Nor'Wester 2009:

A competition was held for the design of the covers for the Nor'Wester. There were only a few entries and it would be great to have lots more in the future. However, those entries we did receive made it very difficult to choose.

The winner was **Callan Davidson** of Year 8 who had the wonderful hand drawn entry and concept of a brick wall with students' pictures on it. This was brought to fruition by **Mrs Louise Hill** who has done an outstanding job on the cover. Second place and back cover design was won by **Millie Pease** of Year 9.

Well done and thank you to all that entered.



Rural Fire Service Cadetship:

During Third Term, a group of Year-9 students successfully undertook Rural Fire Service cadetship training. The course, which was conducted by staff and volunteers of the Liverpool Range Zone of the RFS, included instruction and practice in radio communications, map reading and first-aid as well as a host of activities associated with fire fighting. Members of the NSW Police Force, Ambulance Service, Fire Brigade and State Emergency Service also provided instruction regarding their special areas of responsibility when conducting joint operations with the RFS.

Throughout the course of the cadetship the students conducted themselves politely and respectfully and were very willing and enthusiastic participants in all of the activities, particularly those that incorporated the use of high-pressure hoses.

The RFS staff were very pleased with the attitudes and levels of participation demonstrated by the students and they expressed a willingness to continue the relationship with GHS in years to come. To this end, the cadets demonstrated their new-found fire-fighting expertise to the Year 8 students who will be eligible to undertake the course next year.

For their efforts, the successful cadets received a framed RFS Cadet certificate and an RFS medallion.

Congratulations to:

Hayley Affleck, Elinor Bruce, Shae Drayton, Kayla Gillham, Heath Glennister, Liana Goninon, Tom Hassan, Melanie Johannesen, Kaytlin Langdon, Brent Nelson, Bianka Owen, Millie Pease, Hayley Pryor, Jarrod Revell, Brad Sandercock and Brodie Waterford on successfully completing the cadetship, and on being fine ambassadors for GHS.



Year 12: The Final Countdown

Congratulations and best wishes to all Year 12 students following the completion of their final HSC exams. It's finally a chance to stop and take a deep breath and a well earned rest as they await their HSC results and move on to the next exciting chapter of their lives. To all the parents, carers, guardians, siblings and relatives of our Year 12 students who have been their support team for many years, thank you for a great effort. But, it's not over yet. The GHS Year 12 Presentation and Farewell will be held at the Gunnedah Services & Bowling Club on Tuesday November 17th 2009, commencing at 6:30pm.

Photographs will be taken from 5pm onwards in the Baxter Room by Mr Paul Matthews.

Year 10: School Certificate Exams

This week also saw all Year 10 students sit for their 'School Certificate' exams. It is certainly a time of change for all year 10 students so we wish them all the best. As of January 2010, New South Wales will have a new school leaving age. This means students must complete Year 10 and then they have a number of options to follow until at least age 17.

These include the following

They must be: a) in school, or registered for home schooling, b) in approved education or training, c) in full-time, paid employment: average 25hours/week, d) in combination of a, b, c, or d.

This applies to all students who complete Year 10 in 2009 and to all subsequent years. Should you require further information, please contact the school main office on 6742 0155.

GHS Reading Challenge: Term 3

Twenty nine Year 7 and twenty four Year 8 students received their achievement awards from Principal, Mr Jones, at the whole-school assembly in Week 3. Recipients were recognised for their participation and time spent reading over a period of 13 weeks, Phase 2 of the 2009 Reading Challenge.

Teacher Librarian and Challenge coordinator, Mrs Carr, was delighted with the marked improvement in student effort and enthusiasm in this leg of the challenge, particularly from the Year 8 group. Achievers were:

Year 7:

Star level: Amelia Gallagher, Shannon Skavinski, Natasha Fenech, Amia McDonald. \$10 vouchers (lucky draw) went to Courtney Brandon, April Ireland, Paris Bartlett, Kimberley Wilkinson & Matt Hassan.

Bravo level: Jasper Squire, Dylan Ireland, Matthew Martin, Luke Thomson, Xanthe Robinson. \$15 vouchers went to Justin Carter, Katie Hunt, Taliea Endicott, Libby Korn & Ellen Moore

Honour level: (all achievers received \$20 voucher) Sarah Clark, Alex Koenig, Krystal Lynch, Benj Porter, Angela Vering, Lara Guest, Tianna Constantine, Ramona Wynne, Josh Day & Jessica Mitchell



Congratulations to every student who had at least one book on their log sheet. Your English teachers are proud of you too!

Year 7 students can look forward to continuing their participation in the Reading Challenge in 2010 but of course, everyone is encouraged to keep on reading on a daily basis. Lots of new books will be arriving this term and will go on display in the library over the next few weeks.

Year 8:

Star level: Rachael Billingham, Kylie Crowley, Lacey Davis, Hayden Maughan, Hannah Riley, Olivier Sandercock, Sheree Smith. \$10 vouchers (lucky draw) went to Nina Cleal, Stewart Faulkner, Chloe Beasley, Kalin Eade, Jannice Banks.

Bravo Level: Sherstyn Barnes, Callan Davidson, Crystal Boag. \$15 vouchers went to Maddison Giffen, Ethan Woodward, Paige Oliver

Honour level: (all achievers received \$20 voucher) Judd Goninon, Amy Elder, Tegan Lodge, Shannon Moran, Laura Sharman, Alecia Styles.



Apex Club Public Speaking:

Congratulations to GHS students, Patsy Stanley, and new 2010 GHS School Captain, Sam Schubert, on their encouraging efforts in the Gunnedah Apex Club Public Speaking Competition held at the PCYC recently. Patsy Stanley's speech on 'cotton wool kids' was acknowledged by the judges as being a well thought-out and presented talk and secured her first place in the Secondary Schools section, with Sam Schubert announced as runner-up. Patsy will now go on to represent Gunnedah Apex Club at the district level, and a win there will see her progress to the State finals at Narromine, in February 2010.

Trivia Night: Ooh La La!

French excursion co-ordinator, Mr Dowe, was wrapped with the great response to their "trivia night" that was held in the School Hall last Friday night, November 6th 2009. With approximately 100 trivia buffs in attendance, the night proved to be a very enjoyable event, as well as raising much needed funds for the GHS 'french excursion' in 2010.

Athletics:

Following a 4 day Aboriginal Athletics Camp at Armidale recently, GHS Year 7 student Angela Vering (12) has been identified as a potential elite athlete, in discus and shot-put, with a goal of making the NTID Australian Invitation Team to visit London in 2012. Following the latest camp, under the guidance of camp coaches Calista Lyon (a former Australian junior representative in discus) and Ken Harradine (head coach at Hunter Sports High School) Angela has made a remarkable improvement in her technique and results.

