



# The St Peter's Post





STANDING TALL: Students at a peer support event.

## Year Sevens can succeed with support

By SARAH BELCHER

ST Peter's High School Maitland has had a peer support program since 1992 to help Year 7 students deal with the stress of having new subjects, teachers and classmates.

Year 7 and 10 said the experience was generally positive, with students confirming the program had helped them in their early years at the school.

The program helps the new students find their way around the school, build confidence and meet their new classmates.

Year 7 students said they were looking forward to camp and music classes.

Some students said they liked meeting new people, practical science lessons and gymnastics.

During a community day held as part of peer support, school leaders took part in activities with the Year 7s including a swim at East Maitland pool, a barbecue, handball and a liturgy.

Year 10 students who took part in peer support said they were enjoying the program.

"Getting to know Year 7 was fun," one peer support leader said.

The leaders all noticed that the majority of Year 7 were quiet to begin with and did not like answering questions. But seven weeks on they now see some confident young people in Year 7.

# Netball part of local life

By KATARINA SIMOES and GABRIELLE SCANLON

NETBALL is a popular sport for many girls in the Maitland area but an annual staff-versus-students competition at St Peter's High School also attracts boys to have a go at the game.

This year the staff took out the prize in an exciting finish against the students.

But while boys participate enthusiastically in the staff-student netball competition, few are seen on Saturday mornings at Maitland Park.

Maitland Netball participates in a large range of competitions along the NSW coast.

The competitions bring together teams from all over NSW to compete in preparation for the state age championships.

The championships consist of three days straight of playing netball.

Assistant coach of the Maitland under-14 representative, 21-year-old Alexandra White, has been playing since she was seven.

"I believe it leads to a healthy lifestyle including healthy eating habits and physical exercise," Ms White said.

"Netball is an energetic, skillful and entertaining game built for all ages to participate and enjoy."

Maitland representative netball



FRIENDLY RIVALRY: The students try to keep the ball away from the staff players.

teams range between the ages of 11 and 46 years.

But unlike the schoolyard netballers, weekend players commit to two training sessions each week which consist of a fitness session and a ball skills session.

"I strongly believe that diet plays a major role in the involvement of people in sport," Ms White said.

"How we function depends on how well we eat."

"Netball helps to develop basic motor skills such as throwing and

catching which help children to progress through not only sport but life.

"A healthy lifestyle is a great asset to have as it helps us to participate in events and continue to live life to the full."



FRUITS OF LABOUR: Students on the excursion enjoy a meal at Centrepoint Tower. — Picture by Daniel Oyston

## Food tech excursion goes around

By DANIEL OYSTON

ST Peter's Year 9 food technology students have visited the Sydney Tower revolving restaurant as part of their studies.

The students were split into two groups and given a tour of what goes on behind the scenes of one of the busiest restaurants in Sydney.

The students were taken

into the kitchen to learn about all the equipment and the cooling rooms, which all students and teacher Ms Susan Abela discovered were very cold.

After the kitchen tour, students and teachers were taken in lifts high up to the restaurant, which everyone was eagerly awaiting.

Once all the students arrived they were seated at tables and drinks were

served by waiters. One of the tour guides explained the etiquette of eating in the high-class restaurant.

There was a vast variety of succulent seasonal food available to eat including sides and desserts.

The food included some international foods and exotic Australian meats such as kangaroo and camel.

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# Reading improving lives of teenagers

## Editorial

By LAUREN HURN

IS reading the first thing that comes to mind when a teenager is looking for something to do? No it isn't, and the *St Peter's Post* believes there isn't enough emphasis on young people reading.

Reading helps extend vocabulary, improves literacy skills, helps in many subjects other than English and helps students find a job. But it seems many children are not encouraged to read or even challenged to expand their vocabulary when at home, thus making the job even harder for teachers.

*The Post* feels that reading should be compulsory in Australian high schools to boost declining literacy rates. Between 1975 and 1995, the literacy of boys aged 14 declined. In 2000, 9 per cent of boys in Year 3 and 15 per cent in Year 5 failed to achieve minimum reading benchmarks, compared to 6 per cent and 10 per cent of girls.

Even if it was only 10 minutes reading at the start of every English lesson or before the end of class, *The Post* believes that would make a vast difference in the reading skills and attitudes about reading of students; greatly helping the literacy skills of high school students and improving some of their results in English.

But some people are against the idea of making reading compulsory at school. They say there isn't

enough time to fit it in and that students are so busy after school they don't have time or energy to read.

That is a fallacy. All one needs to do is have a better sense of time management and it can be achieved. *The Post* believes people who make those excuses have not read the reports on how high school English tests have been declining.

Reading can greatly help students get better marks on tests but also gain a well-paid job in the future. It would be better to set aside 10 minutes a day for reading than have a generation of illiterate children.

Many people may ask if there is enough literary material for young people. The short answer is yes. There are many books young teens can read that are interesting and can expand their vocabulary.

The *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, *Twilight Saga* by Stephanie Meyer and also books by John Marsden are perfect examples of literature to which teenagers can relate because their main characters are young people and the books are easier to read because they are aimed at young people. The latest novel, *Breaking Dawn*, by worldwide bestseller Meyer has caused many teenage boys and girls to go running into book stores across Australia.

So perhaps there is hope. Perhaps the next thing people should do after reading this is ask their teacher if the class can take a trip to the library and find a book to read.

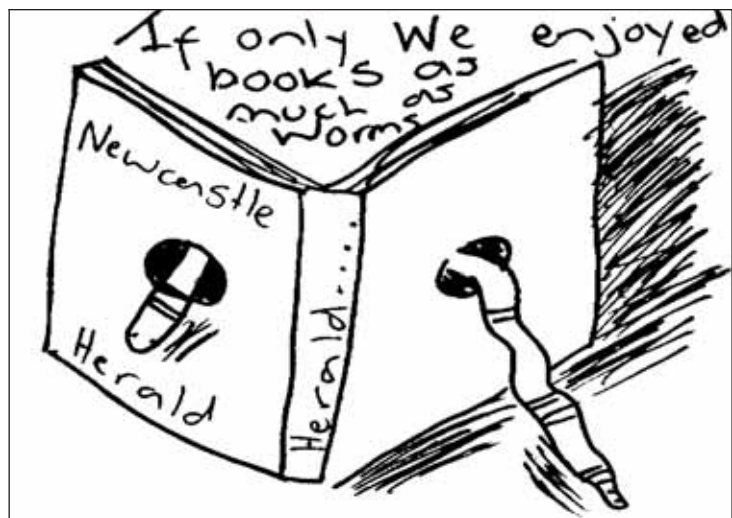


Illustration by Dean Watts



SCARY: Some of the St Peter's dance students who also attended the play.

# Shakespeare brought to life

By BREANNA PICKARD

ST Peter's High School's Year 10 students have gained an insight into the work of William Shakespeare by attending this month a performance by Maitland Repertory Society of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

*The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written by Shakespeare in 1597.

Although Shakespeare lived and wrote his plays more than 400 years ago, his works still capture the imagination of people in the 21st century.

Maitland Repertory Society has performed many Shakespearean plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the

actors who took on the characters of Sir John Falstaff, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford played their roles fabulously.

Students viewing the performance found themselves feeling as though they were experiencing the issues first-hand.

Shakespeare's language was well understood by the audience after most students had admitted to a lack of understanding while simply reading the play. The language was not changed but parts were removed or rearranged so it could be better understood by a young, modern audience.

Small set and costume changes were also made without catching the attention of the audience.

# Station marks 150th at celebration of steam

By TEMIKA HICKEY

EARLIER this year Maitland railway station celebrated 150 years in operation during Steamfest, the city's annual steam train festival.

This year Steamfest ran over an entire weekend at Maitland train station and surrounding areas.

The general consensus about who would win the annual Great Race was in favour of the Tiger Moth vintage aircraft over the train but poor

weather was against the plane this year and the steam train won.

For three days people were treated to live entertainment, fairground attractions, market stalls, vintage cars, steam-powered transport and steam trains.

Despite the rain, the crowd this year was estimated at 50,000 people over the three days.

Steamfest was established in 1985 when the South Maitland rail line to Cessnock was closed.



OLDEN DAYS: One of the steam trains on show at Steamfest. — Picture by Temika Hickey

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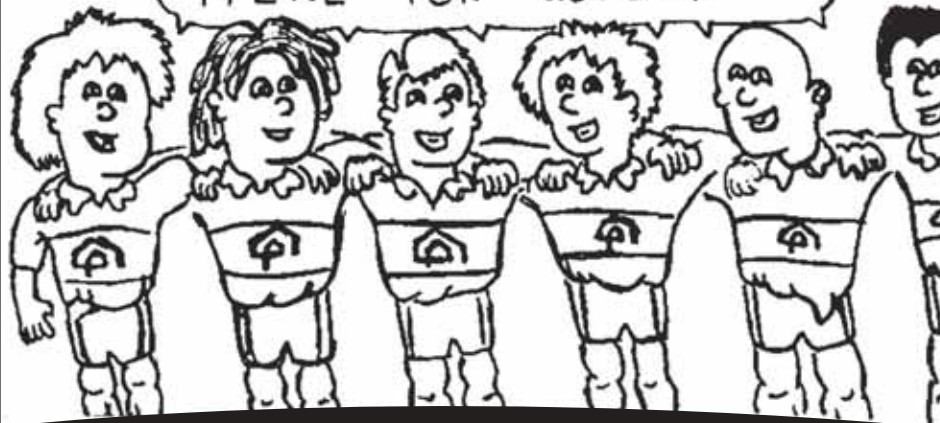
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