

Secondary entry #20: Belmont HS

BELMONT
HIGH SCHOOL



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HIGHLIGHTS



TOP CLASS: Leah Henkel revels in the new facilities.

— Picture by Fiona Koller

More than just a block

By GABRIELLE WILLIAMS, TALYA BRIDGE, TAMARA CAMPBELL and RACHEL JAMIESON

STUDENTS are thrilled with Belmont HS's A-block, which was re-opened earlier this year following a devastating fire in 2004.

The reconstruction of A-block took three years due to water damage to walls and floors.

The refurbishment brought the school 11 new classrooms, a new performance space, staff rooms, a computer room and a teachers' common room.

The new features of A-block include concertina doors in classrooms, which allow larger learning spaces to be created, and a state-of-the-art computer and technology room.

These facilities will help enhance technology skills among staff and students.

Students were excited to be back in proper classrooms after their stint in demountables.

"The return of A-block benefits the entire school community," one year 10 student said.

"It's great just to be able to go from classroom to classroom in the new building."

The building of A-block has heralded the beginning for further developments at the school, such as a gymnasium, which is well under way.

Odyssey of mind and body

By EMMA POOLE and SARAH HENDERSON

TO COMPETE in the World Odyssey of the Mind finals, which will be held in the United States in 2008, students from Belmont High School must undertake a fund-raising odyssey.

The Belmont team has won the Australian tournament for the past two years and must raise \$25,000 to travel to Washington D.C. and represent Australia against students from 80 other countries.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students.

The students apply their own creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics.

Five year 10 students: Gabrielle Vial, Sarah Morice, Samantha Clarke, Emma Poole and Sarah Henderson, and their coach Andrew Kelly (teacher at Belmont High), will travel to the US for the competition.

While touring, the team will be visiting several tourist attractions including the NASA space institute, which sponsors the Odyssey of the Mind tournament international.

The Odyssey team has been working very hard to raise the



HOPING FOR PHYSICAL ODYSSEY: Members of Belmont High School's Odyssey of the Mind team, from left: Teacher Andrew Kelly, Gabby Vial, Emma Poole, Sarah Henderson, Samantha Clarke and Sarah Morice.

— Picture by Matt Parkinson

funds needed for the trip. They have held car washes inside the school, sold raffle tickets through Rotary Australia, sold Odyssey of the Mind wristbands, and sent letters seeking sponsorship.

"This is a wonderful opportunity

for the students and a great learning experience in self-reliance and work ethic," said Belmont HS principal Peter Morgan.

"They are already working hard to reach their goal and we support their effort."

The team is still seeking sponsorship. Individuals or businesses who would like to support Belmont High School's Odyssey of the Mind team's fund-raising efforts should contact Belmont High School principal, Peter Morgan, on 4945 0600.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION: Belmont HS's new gymnasium.

— Picture by Matthew Cook

Trampolinists spring into new year

By SAUL WEEDON, SCOTT SHERLOCK and MATTHEW COOK

A NEW gymnasium is currently being constructed at Belmont HS, on the site of the school's old basketball court.

Belmont HS is among the oldest schools in Lake Macquarie. Consequently, many of its buildings are old.

The hall was never

designed to house the school's dedicated and successful trampoline team, which has consistently produced state champions despite the limitations on its training facilities.

However, hot on the heels of the rebuilding of A block, construction of the new gym is scheduled to finish around April next year.

The gym will give the school a new place for tram-

poline and PE classes while the hall, where these classes used to operate, will be used for cultural presentations and school functions.

Brett Austine, the school's trampoline coach, PE teacher, sport co-ordinator and former trampoline world champion, along with the school's P&C, has been campaigning for a long time for a new gym to be constructed.



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Public or private: why the divide?

Editorial

By LEAH HENKEL

ON one side of the scale, modern-day society views public school students as the source of the havoc reported daily in the news. On the other side, private-school students are represented as the upper market of the Generation Y onslaught, with their dress codes, swimming pools and tennis courts, and frequently being driven to school in mum and dad's \$100,000 car.

Why the divide between public and private?

It isn't necessarily true that one is better than the other, even though people from both sides frequently say so.

Many public school students believe that private schools are not the optimum choice for a superior education.

Yes, private schools often receive more money and have better facilities and resources. But look at the academic side and consider the recent marks of HSC students around the state. Many public school students outshone the private schools' academic elite.

Belmont High School's community, led by principal Peter Morgan, Margaret Lewis and a dedicated team of executive and teaching staff, has developed a set of values that epitomise the school's character in the 21st century and provided ample evidence of how public schools are achieving worthwhile things.

After rising from the ashes of

the 2004 A-block fire, the school has raised the bar ever higher through academic, cultural and sporting successes.

With champion athletes and conscientious scholars, public schools are out to change people's minds for the better.

By showcasing drama and art works at the recent Actors and Artists Festival, introducing applied studies and emphasising literacy and numeracy strategies, Belmont High is paving the way for students to achieve the best they can through creative, academic and social processes.

In addition, Belmont HS has the distinction of being the school that generated the Newcastle region's premier annual school cultural event, Star Struck.

Also in evidence is this school's outstanding record for promoting social conscience. Students enthusiastically celebrate Harmony Day and reconciliation celebrations. They also raise money and awareness for causes including World Vision, SIDS, breast cancer research, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea and Legacy.

Private is not better than public. Public isn't better than private. Action needs to be taken to create a stable learning environment for all tweens and teens, no matter what education system they are part of.

Public education does not need to be changed; it just needs extra funding for new facilities and resources. The government and the public can make our education system a lot more worthwhile.

Why the divide? Everyone is at the same level when they get to university.



ON A STRING: At rear, Stephanie van Dijk, left, and Alexis Gearing keep Matt Parkinson, front left, and Tye Parker hanging out.

Picture this

By EMILY NORTON and EMILY SYKES

BELMONT HS recently held its annual Actors and Artists Festival to showcase the creative works of its talented young people.

The festival consisted of an art exhibition, followed by captivating drama performances.

The host of the evening was Jessie Edgar Jackson, aka Blanche Dubois, a year 9 student who was recently accepted into the Hunter School of Performing Arts.

She kept the audience mesmerised throughout the night with her comic portrayal of creeping inebriation.

The art exhibition showcased work from the school's years 7 to 12 visual arts, photography and visual design classes.

The exhibition of major works by year 12 students was a stand-out during the exhibition.

Ceramics, multimedia, photography and digital media, painted and documented forms were all exhibited on the night.

Drama performances allowed the audience to view the work of vibrant young actors.

Students in years 9 to 12 put on two 12-act shows. The two-night season featured the school's year 12 HSC performances, including *Throwing Stones*, *White Man Takes a Bath* and *Dot Dot Dot*.

The event was enjoyed by both performers and members of the audience.

Staff and students at Belmont HS are already looking forward to putting together another event in 2008.

Google Earth zones in on Belmont

By CASSANDRA VILLA, SARAH FROMSON and MADDIE FELTON

SCIENCE has always been a passion at Belmont High School and, during August's National Science Week, students made the most of it.

Science Week celebrated its 10th birthday in 2007 and to commemorate the occasion Belmont ran competitions using GPS, brain teasers and prizes.

The school's head teacher of science, Greg Carruthers, led the way by actively involving students in all areas of scientific study.

One element of the competition used new technologies such as GPS and Google Earth programs in conjunction with catchy clues.

Students were given sets of co-ordinates to locate "hidden treasure" around the Belmont area.

Once students located the positions they had to produce photographic proof of themselves standing at the sites, collect hidden raffle tickets and bring evidence from all four locations to the science staff-room.

A number of students were awarded with prizes at the school assembly.

Josh Willott, a year 11 student, said the competition was great fun and a great way to learn science.

Billeting brings out best as east meets west

By JANE WATSON

FIFTEEN excited Japanese students were billeted with host families from Belmont HS recently during a three-day cultural visit.

The itinerary included visits to Blackbutt Reserve, Nobbys Beach and a dolphin cruise.

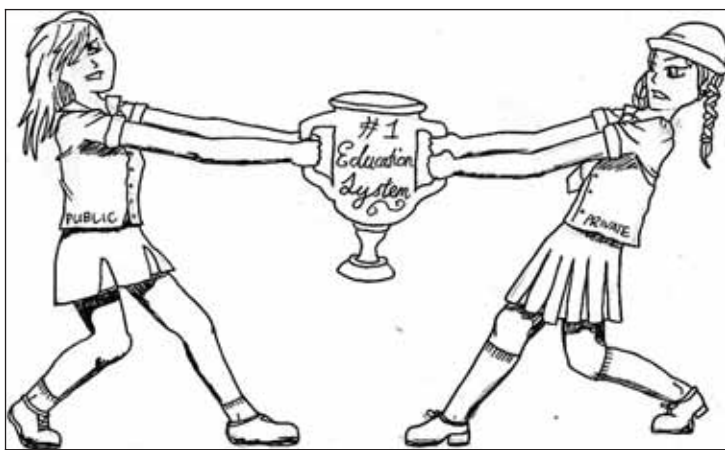
During the exchange, students had a chance to bridge the communication gap, find out more about each other and brush up on their mutual languages.

Another milestone for the billets was venturing out into the playgrounds at Belmont HS.

They mingled with a range of diverse people and, even though they spoke a completely different language, they did very well communicating and having fun.



MEMORABLE: A day at the beach. — Picture by Danielle Roberts



— Illustration by Fiona Koller

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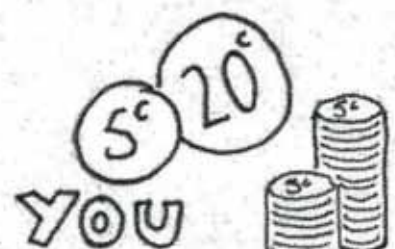
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