Welcome to the village

It has been said “it takes a village to raise a child.” Stepping Stones for Home Educators is the ‘village’ to which all the members of the Home Education Association of Australia belong.

Welcome to our village! At the heart of our village are our homes. Rich in resources and skill these homes create a vibrant community in which our children are born, grow and thrive. Together our homes form a wonderful village, full of opportunities and support for everyone!

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We’re lucky in Australia – it isn’t often we read about court cases that involve home education. In the USA the situation is different. Late last year a North Carolina judge ordered three children to attend public school because he felt that the homeschooling their mother provided needed to be ‘challenged’.

The case – a custody battle between divorcing parents – highlighted the need for more publicity about home education in the mainstream media. It is a sad fact that many parents who wish to continue homeschooling risk losing custody of their children due to widespread ignorance about the nature and success of home education in situations like this.

The media definitely tend to prefer tragedy or scandals, but will print good news stories when there is something unusual or spectacular to report. If you are doing something that has a human interest angle, for example, homeschool choir sings at aged care home, or homeschool group rescues 42 snake neck turtles, please put together a couple of paragraphs with the kind of photo you see in newspapers (such as a smiling child's face next to the object of story) and send it to your local newspaper editor.

If you are an avid listener to talk back radio and don’t mind waiting in queue to have your say, try to think of ways you can weave the magic of homeschooling into whatever discussion is underway. It doesn’t always have to be an educational discussion either: for example, a discussion on the appalling state of the Murray River lower lakes begs the inclusion of the valiant effort of the turtle saving homeschooling kids mentioned above...

Get involved – if only in a small way by writing letters to the editor. You never know – your support may end up helping a family continue educating their children at home one day!

Beverley Paine, Editor
What is the Financial Cost of Homeschooling or How Long is a Piece of String?
by Michelle Morrow of http://www.downunderlit.com

Inquiring homeschoolers often ask, 'How much does homeschooling cost?' This is not an easy question to answer. Not only do families vary in size but also in income, children’s ages, educational approaches and individual gifts, talents and interests of the parents and children. So, do we give up and say, 'It’s impossible to know the cost!’ No! We can still give an educated guess of the average costs of homeschooling and then individually tweak our budgets to reflect our own situations.

Using the figures below, and a little research, I have put together an average annual budget based on three common homeschooling styles (see Graph 1). These figures will give you a rough idea about the costs.

For all homeschoolers there is the initial set-up cost. These include: a computer, multifunction printer, internet access, dictionary, atlas and a work-space. Some would also say encyclopaedias (I never use them now that I have the internet). I won’t put a price tag on these as in most cases these items are already owned or factored into the family budget. For stationary and art supplies I allocate about $75 per child per year.

Sports, art, drama, music tuition and excursions are all included in the cost of extra-curricular activities. If you budget for a sport or music class of $25 per week for each school term, plus excursion costs of $50 per term, your yearly budget would be $1200 per child. This category is extremely variable. And in many cases children would have done these activities regardless of homeschooling. Your options are unlimited here.

Pre-packaged distance education refers to curriculum such as Accelerated Christian Education (ACE). For the workbooks, membership and residential days you can expect to pay $1200 for your first child and $630 for each subsequent child. You may incur some extra accommodation and transport expenses for residential days.

A custom designed curriculum encompasses various approaches such as: classical; Charlotte Mason; using traditional textbooks; and eclectic. With a budget of $725 per year you could include: a math program and a Mathletics subscription ($80); an English program ($175) plus reading books ($200); a science program, such as Apologia ($120); a history and geography resource ($150). Reusable resources can greatly reduce costs for the second child to around $300.

Graph 1

Homeschool Styles
Comparison Costs (Per Child)

- Prepackaged or Distance Education
- Design your own curriculum
- Natural learning or unschooling

- Homeschool Curriculum
- Stationary and Extra Curricular Activities for 1st Child
- Homeschool Curriculum

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With natural learning or unschooling, everything is considered curriculum. Unschoolers spend more money on extra-curricular activities, excursions, hobbies and interests of the child, so I have added an extra $500 per year for extra-curricular activities for each child. This may be too conservative.

In Graph 1, the cost of homeschooling using different styles only varies by $900 dollars, the range being from $1500-$2400. The new http://www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au/home/(ETR) means that 50% of many of our homeschool curriculum costs can be claimed back, making things even cheaper. Keep those receipts!

School fees for the first child can cost $0 to $300 in a public school and $12000 to $22000 in a private school. You also need to add extra for special events, excursions and uniforms. If we compare homeschooling with private or public school fees we can see that homeschooling is significantly cheaper than a private school education and not much more than a public school education, especially when you consider the ETR which is not available for school fees.

Homeschool expenditure can oscillate enormously and, in truth, it is impossible to give a concrete answer to the question, ‘How much does homeschooling cost?’ Homeschooling can cost as much or as little as you like. You can make things a little cheaper (see my money saving tips) and you can easily blow these estimates but you do need to spend money to homeschool and it is possible to work out the approximate cost.

For many parents choosing to homeschool is not about the cost anyway. Often one parent has given up a career or full-time wage in order to homeschool. It is about what is best for the children and somehow no matter what the cost we would find a way!

Michelle’s Homeschool Money Saving Tips

- **Make a budget based on your income.** Don’t be too miserly with yourself. Buying a few good resources will make homeschooling a lot easier. When you first start it is almost your right of passage to waste some money on things you ‘must have’ and never use. Don’t punish yourself (and your children) by persisting with something that is not working, just because you spent money on it. Put it down to experience and find something else. As the years go by you will get better at discerning what you need and you can direct your funds to cater for the growing interests of your children.

- **Research your curriculum before you buy.** Do you really need a curriculum to teach that topic? Could they just read a book instead? By downloading free samples or borrow a friend’s copy of a resource you are considering you can often save yourself from making purchases that may not work for your family. Ask for reviews on products from other Australian homeschoolers. Join [http://aussiehomeschool.com](http://aussiehomeschool.com); on this forum you will find many homeschooling parents who are more than willing to give their opinion on certain resources.

- **Plan ahead but don’t buy too much in advance.** Planning is good but as we homeschool our needs change. A resource that worked for one year may become stale the following. What worked for one child may not work for another. The new [Australian Federal Government tax refund](http://www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au/home) means that 50% of many of our homeschool costs can be claimed back. Follow this link to find out more:

- **Make the most of your librarian and your library card.** I have requested the library purchase cer-
First of all, work out much you can afford to spend and then set a limit at least 10% less than that. It’s better to realise that you will spend over budget, especially when browsing in art and craft or book stores!

Do you plan to purchase most of your materials in a big chunk each year, or will you purchase smaller amounts of materials each month? This factor may have a significant impact on what you can afford to spend. If you’re like me and only plan your educational program out a month at a time you’ll want a more flexible budget. I tend to buy student text and work books when the children need them and not before...

Plus we use the library a great deal for finding resources for our unit studies. Unit studies can cut the cost of homeschooling considerably - but it can also bump the cost up if your children are like many I know, the ones who love to get right into the topics, making costumes and props, following a subject well beyond what is normally expected of school age students – more like hobbyists!

With a little bit of ingenuity you can recycle household waste into educational materials. A friend used bread tags for math counters; another made a scrabble board and game from a relatively clean pizza box; we made a trundle wheel from timber off cuts. Perhaps you can start a resource library with homeschooling families in your neighbourhood? Don’t throw out those old clothes: save the buttons for maths counters and recycle the fabric into the craft or junk box. You’ll find the junk box one of your children’s favourite haunts...

Collectors’ Corner
How do you store your collections?

Thomas kept his rubber bouncy ball collection in an ice cream container – in fact, he kept a lot of his collections in ice cream containers. They were handy because they stacked neatly on top of each other on his shelf.

Ethan has some excellent storage ideas on his website http://saltthesandbox.org/cicada_hunt/StoringCollections.htm

He keeps his dead insects in cardboard jewellery boxes lined with cotton wool, and stores different types of shells in plastic drawers. We’ve used fishing tackle boxes and plastic screw boxes for sorting and storing shells, rocks and other delicate item.

You can also store items in clear, unbreakable jars – this keeps them clean while on display. Different coloured pebbles from a visit to the beach look great kept in glycerin (algae can grow water if the jar in kept on a window ledge). Talking about glycerin, we even kept a dead baby brown snake we found on the road in a jar!

Leaves and pressed flowers can be kept in an inexpensive photo album. Roger and Thomas kept their coin collection in an old boiled sweet tin: this grew to two tin and then three tins and eventually the coins were slipped into tiny individual clip-lock bags to protect them. Stamps were sorted into countries or different types of pictures and then stored in envelopes – they never made it in albums!

Re-use cardboard boxes – any size and type – by turning them into small and large trays for holding collections.

How do you store your collection? We’d love to hear your ideas – send them to Beverley, editor@hea.asn.au – and don’t forget to send some photos or drawings of your collection too!
Letters to the Editor

Hi Happy Homeschoolers,

I hope you don’t mind me writing to you – don’t panic – it is not a request for money or research information!

I have started a new blog which I hope you will all enjoy reading. It is to do with Computers and Internet and homeschooling. If you want to read more, then here is the link:

http://computersandhomeeducation.blogspot.com/

Cheers,
Kathryn
Homeschooling Mum of 2
Naracoorte, SA

What Curriculum Do YOU Use?

Please send your letters about the curriculum you use to editor@hea.asn.au

Hi, my name is Jillian and I am a home schooling Mum from the mid-north of South Australia. Last year we decided that we would like a change in curriculum and began looking for a curriculum that could give our children a Year 12 certificate.

There were two options: Open Access College or Australian Christian Academy School of Distance Education. We were already registered for exemption with the Department of Education and Children’s Services, so I phoned our exemption review officer to ask what would be required, and whether ACASDE curriculum fulfilled all of the requirements for South Australia. She replied that if we continued on with music, computer and LOTE, all of the state requirements would be met.

We have continued down the path of ACASDE, and are impressed with the quality of the PACEs, and our children are absolutely thriving with the curriculum. This has been a huge change for us as we previously used Weaver, which is a hands-on approach unit study curriculum. Using the PACEs has meant that I now spend time with the children which I previously spent preparing their work.

Thank you for your wonderful and encouraging feedback to our first issue of Stepping Stones for Home Educators. Keep your letters and comments coming – together with items from your children, your homeschooling and unschooling stories, tips, reviews and favourite resources.

Send to editor@hea.asn.au by the 20th of next month.

“Ta & thanks for your work... I really appreciate what you do... it’s so encouraging to have people supporting us in what we are doing with our children’s education.”
Vicki, Qld

“What a great magazine! Congratulations. I loved the layout and the articles. I look forward to the next issue.”
Velly, NSW
Autumn Harvest
Pumpkin Soup
From April Paine

Last night I fluked this combination and made the best pumpkin soup I've ever had. Too good to keep to myself!

Serves 4

1 large butternut pumpkin
1.5 brown onions
1 tsp celery salt
3 stock cubes
1 Tbs olive oil
boiling water

2 tsp ground coriander
2 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp ground turmeric
pinch ground cinnamon
pinch ground cardamom
pinch ground ginger

pinch ground cloves
pinch garam masala

light sour cream (regular doesn't stir through well, and extra light is too runny)

Rough cut pumpkin and roast in skin at 160 degrees for 1 1/2 hours, preferably well before needed. Allow to cool. Cut from skin.

Dice onions and sauté until soft (not brown) in olive oil in a 2L pan. Add pumpkin, celery salt, stock cubes, and enough water to cover. Bring to the boil, then simmer until pumpkin falls apart easily. Remove from heat, use a stick blender until smooth. Return to a low simmer.

Dry roast spices in a frying pan. Add to soup, stir through thoroughly. Serve with big dollops of light sour cream.

Fun With
Pumpkin Seeds
From Kerry Bennetts

Spread pumpkin seeds out on a baking tray and roast them in the oven until golden and crispy. Add some sea salt and you have a tasty, crunchy treat and a great way to use your pumpkin seeds.

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A Powerful Comeback
by David Blisset

I’m sure you know that over the centuries, the activities of man have had a dramatic effect on the wildlife population of Australia. Since white settlement in 1788, more than 70 species of Australia animal have become extinct and hundreds are now listed as endangered. Habitat destruction, hunting and the activities of feral animals have all had a terrible impact on our native wildlife. However, did you know not all the news is bad? Some species have actually increased in number. The Grey Kangaroo, Pied Currawong, Noisy Miner, Little Corella, Ringtail Possum and Brush-tail Possum are all examples of species that have adapted well to living with people. And if you look a little deeper, there are even more good news stories to be found. According to recent research from Victoria, one of the country’s rarest birds of prey is also beginning to make a comeback – and right on our doorsteps.

The Powerful Owl is Australia’s largest owl and is classified as an endangered species. It lives in tall Eucalypt forests on the east coast of Australia, from Western Victoria to Central Queensland. It feeds on larger tree dwelling mammals and is particularly fond of gliders and possums. It is this diet that scientists believe is helping the birds make a comeback. Researchers in Melbourne found that Powerful Owls were beginning to move back into urban parkland areas on the outskirts of the city. Similar reports have emerged from other big cities such as Sydney. Indeed, I have seen several Powerful Owls in my own Sydney backyard! Previous studies showed that the owls were becoming rare as their native forests were disturbed by human activity. It was concluded that the shy Powerful Owls would not live in areas of forest where humans had intervened. This new research challenges that belief. The Melbourne scientists think that the increase in possums living in our cities has also lead to the numbers of owls increasing. The birds appear to be losing their natural shyness and records have been taken of Powerful Owls hunting in suburban backyards in both Sydney and Melbourne. Similar research on other species has shown that, given the chance, populations of native animals can and will live happily alongside humans if conditions are favourable.

So how do you know if you have a rare Powerful Owl living near you? Well, if you live anywhere along the coast or mountains between Warrnambool in Victoria and Rockhampton in Queensland and have possums living around your house, chances are there are also owls nearby. The most obvious sign is by hearing them call. Powerful Owls call most frequently in autumn, but can be heard throughout the year. They usually call late in the evening and have a long two syllable woooo –hoooo call, broken by several seconds of silence. Someone told me they are the only Australian species of owl that makes a sound like the owls in the movies! If you hear them calling, you can take a torch outside and begin to look for them in the trees. They are large birds, about the size of a cockatoo, with grey wings, a short grey tail and a cream breast marked with large brown v-shaped marks. They also have huge, unmistakable yellow eyes that seem to be out of proportion with their small sized head.

It really is a joy to share your backyard with such rare and impressive birds. However, if you don’t have them in your area, you can see the Powerful Owl up close. Many of our wildlife parks or zoos display this species as they are often brought in by members of the public after becoming injured. Taronga Zoo in Sydney even has a tame Powerful Owl that you can hold and have your picture taken with.
Guinea-pigs are pocket-sized rodents from the Cavy family and are originally from South America. Although they are inexpensive to feed and house, they must only be fed certain foods that are healthy to their diet. Most of the Cavy species are crepuscular (active in the morning and at night), herbivores and live in groups. All Cavies have three toes on their hind legs while they have four toes on their forelegs. The domestic guinea-pigs typically breed after around two months and their young are so advanced, they loose their baby teeth before they are even born. Where is their name from? At the time the South Americans introduced them to England, the British called the South Americans, Guinea-men. This is possibly where the name guinea-pig originated. They come in an array of different earthy colours.

In the wild, guinea-pigs live in underground burrows and occasionally in extremely dense vegetation. If a domestic guinea-pig is kept in a hutch, there should be a snuggery and an enclosed run. A snuggery is a place for cold or wet weather, where a little piggy can keep warm and dry. Inside, there should be clean and dry bedding, such as straw or grass clippings which are free of prickles and nettles. Outside of the snuggery, it is essential to provide an area where the guinea-pig can run around without escaping, but where it can also experience large amounts of daylight and sunshine. An open based cage allows for easy access to fresh grass. Ideally, the guinea-pig should experience life as it would in its natural habitat, for instance grazing on the lawn.

There are many different health problems that can occur if your guinea-pig is fed the wrong food. Because fibre is essential in keeping the bacteria and protozoa’s under control, guinea-pigs should be fed oaten or grass hay. Vitamin C Deficiency (scurvy) is another major problem that can be fixed by providing vitamin C rich foods such as kale, parsley, broccoli, strawberry, kiwi and cauliflower daily. Typically, commercial guinea-pig fodder contains 3-5% fat which leads to obesity, causing heart, liver, respiratory and enteritis diseases. Corn, oats and other grains should not be fed to guinea-pigs either, because they have high starch and energy. Grass hay is the natural diet for wild guinea-pigs and is higher in calcium than phosphorus while grains have higher phosphorus than calcium which can cause bladder stones. Poor nutrition can lead to serious damage to their systems.

All Cavy species are native to South America. There are Guinea-Pigs, Yellow Toothed Cavies and Rock Cavies, which all resemble guinea-pigs. Patagonian Cavies are also in the same family, but have the appearance of short eared rabbits. Guinea-pigs have rounded, stubby ears, which are sometimes crinkly or curly. They have no tail. While their hair can be long or short, it can also be, rough or smooth, wiry, straight or curly. Usually, guinea-pigs breed once a year and have two to four pups. One species breeds all year round provided that the weather is suitable! These diminutive South American rodents, are absolutely, adorably cute.

Guinea-pigs come in a diverse range of colours. Some may be solidly black, albino (white), brown or tawny. Others are mainly white with speckles, streaks or blotches of darker colours. Another combination is a deep chocolate brown, with a stripe of white upon the neck. Typically, guinea-pigs range from 20-40 centimetres (8-16 inches) in length. Although these rodents are tiny, they come in many different colours. Colourful and tailless, guinea-pigs are originally from South America. They suit living in hutches although they naturally live in burrows. They should be fed hay so that they will not become obese and develop horrible diseases and issues. Guinea-pigs make charming pets for anyone who is willing to give them lots of attention.

Interesting Facts:
Female - sow
Male - boar
Baby - pup
Collective noun - a group of guinea-pigs

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- Feeding the Adult Guinea-Pig, by Peter G. Fisher DVM
- Microsoft Student
- My Experience
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Spring is in the Autumn Air
by Bernie Meyers

The moon is full and the night is buzzing with energy. How odd that it is the beginning of autumn, yet the world is invigorated with fresh growth and new life. It has regenerated after the scorching heatwaves of summer. The sun seared the green out of practically every plant as well as our hearts. The grass was brown, parched and crunchy under foot, the heat harsh and biting. It appeared as though a bush fire had been through the land, but it was solely the mark of sun and lack of water. We all empathised with the families in Victoria who lost loved ones and homes. I hoped and pray their lives are beginning to take shape again as the earth is renewed.

It was amazing to see how instantly the green was restored. We had a shower of rain one evening and at first light the following morning, we noticed tenacious blades of grass pushing through the hard earth. Next the torrential downpour came, which brought flooding. The dry dams were overflowing within a day, the creek ran high and the river reached major flood level. We all breathed a sigh of relief and thankfulness.

Flashes of scarlet and green feathers of the king parrots filled the grape arbour. It was a riot of activity this evening. I looked out and spotted eight parrots, four doves and two magpie larks keeping the guinea pig company. Blue faced honey-eaters and satin bower-birds foraged on the new flowers which have appeared on the shrubs and trees. Young parrots and bower-birds impatiently demanded food from their parents.

Suddenly, the earth was alive again! The sound of crickets and frogs was almost deafening as they greeted the world anew - calling across the ponds and answering one another in cheerful conversation. The ponies and the kangaroos are no longer scouring the ground for grass, there’s plenty to go around. The only sign of autumn here is the ponies’ coats becoming fluffy, ready for winter. Watching all of this has given my heart hope for the families in Victoria. Even when things look black and grim, there is promise of a fresh start.

Grubby Hands

A regular column on gardening with children. Gardening stories, photos and drawings from children welcome!

Want to get the children involved with growing things this autumn, but not much of a gardener yourself? Here are some ideas and tips from homeschoolers.

Plant quick growing plants in pots with lots of colour to maintain interest: marigolds (pretty yellow & orange flowers), pansies (flowers all sorts of colors), radish seeds, mini round carrot seeds, baby beetroot, rainbow chard (coloured silverbeet). Plant different flower seeds in a large pot for a fairy garden. Decorate with shells and painted critters made from different types of seeds or cones.

How about growing a ‘pizza garden’? Plant all the things that go on a vegetarian pizza: herbs (oregano, thyme, basil, chives), spring onions, tomato and capsicum.

Or a pea teepee? Use three or four bamboo stakes tied together at the top and plant a few climbing beans or peas at the base of each. If you have some sturdy wire mesh, why not build a cubby house clothed in sweet peas? It’s not too late to plant them (soak them for a few hours first). Hammer in four tomato stakes in a square, surround three sides and the top with the wire mesh and plant sweet pea seeds at 10cm intervals at the base of the mesh. In a few months the cubby will be a green cave, which will soon become covered in beautifully scented flowers! Use edible peas for a delicious delight, but don’t mix the two as sweet peas shouldn’t be eaten.

Two hedges of broad beans (planted thickly so the plants support each other) about a metre apart makes a great ‘tunnel’ for all sorts of games. You could mark out a maze, or outline of a fort…

For some great ideas of what to do with the same patch at different times of the year there is a wonderful book called “One Magic Square” written by Lolo Houbein, a South Australian author.
Spudventures
By Bella Sheppard

Mum said that we could each choose our favourite food to grow in our own garden and she would help us set up the garden. Originally I chose herbs, so we planted out the garden with coriander, parsley, basil, oreganum, marjoram, laksa leaf, spring onions, and three different kinds of mint – peppermint, spearmint, and basil mint – I love mint!

Then after we had filled the garden with cuttings, seedlings and seeds, I suddenly realised that the one vegetable that I really wanted to grow was potatoes…but there was no room left! Mum had some organic potatoes that she had left to go to seed and were sprouting big long shoots like aliens in the back of the cupboard. She chose potatoes with plenty of eyes. It is kind of weird to think of potatoes having eyes. So what we did was got a great big tub and layered it up with growing material. First we broke up heaps of small twigs, then we put some of our own compost, then we put some pre-soaked newspaper pellets (the kind you use for kitty litter) then some soil mixed with rock dust and we sat the potatoes on top and just covered them with the shoots facing upwards.

I checked them every day and as soon as the shoots appeared above the soil, I would cover them with a handful of soil. I was really surprised by how quickly they grew. So every few days I added more handfuls of soil until the container was filled to the top. The plants grew healthy and strong and I watered them every few days, sometimes with a seaweed solution for extra nutrients. I wanted to pull them up and check them to see if there were any potatoes growing but Mum said that we needed to wait until flowers appeared – Nature’s way of showing that the potatoes are ready to harvest. It is hard growing potatoes because you can’t see what is going on underneath the soil – with most plants you get to watch the edible parts growing.

It seemed like we would need to wait forever, and then one night a hungry bunch of slugs attacked my potato plants and left me with nothing but stalks! I was so mad, and happy at the same time that the edible part was underground. We left the stalks for a couple of weeks to see if any new growth appeared, but nothing happened. All that waiting for nothing. So we tipped the container out on the ground and it was full of the most perfect potatoes – I couldn’t believe my eyes! We cooked them for lunch and they were delicious. Next year I’m going to grow a whole patch full of potatoes and set traps for the slugs.

Bella’s mum Megan recommends another great book on gardening with kids - ‘Roots, Shoots, Buckets and Boots: Activities to Do in the Garden,’ by Sharon Lovejoy
Books have always been treasures to me. You never know when you open the covers what new worlds the pages will bring. This year I am working on a long term goal of finally producing one off artist-books. For decades I have collected images of nature, leaves, feathers, bird’s eggs, seedpods, leaf skeletons, butterfly wings and other little gems. Using calligraphy, deep embossing, printmaking, ink, watercolour, hand dyed fibres and gold threads I will combine these elements to create precious little books. Each meticulous step in the process contributes to the end result. It is encouraging and inspiring to study the work of other artists and take in the whole development of their work. Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved without hard work and dedication.

Among his many achievements, William Morris collaborated with Edward Burne-Jones, a fellow artist in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as they called themselves, to design a most exquisite modern illuminated manuscript. The Kelmscott Chaucer, or Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Now Newly Imprinted, is richly decorated with entwined plants, medieval imagery and ornate illuminated capital letters. Edward Burne-Jones’ ethereal maidens and chivalrous knights bring the book to life even further. Every detail of the volume was designed and crafted with excellence.

It was originally envisaged that Burne-Jones would create forty illustrations; this increased dramatically to eighty-seven. These were set in eighteen different frames designed by Morris. Burne-Jones declared that he ‘loved to be snugly cased in borders and buttressed up by the vast initials…… if you drag me out of my encasings, it will be like tearing a statue out of its niche and putting it in a museum’.

Morris drew and re-drew the designs with painstaking care, they were then copied by his assistant, transferred photographically to the woodblock and printed. Due to the extreme sensitivity of the assistant, Robert Catterson-Smith’s drawing as well as the care taken in the printing process, the printed version appears identical to the original design.

The title page was Morris’s final design. He began work on it in February 1896 when his health was failing. Burne-Jones admitted to his assistant, who said Morris looked ‘very ghostlike, feeble and old looking’ that he wished Morris would not leave it any longer. The page was, however, completed by May in time for the first books to be printed in June, just four months before Morris passed away.

Four hundred and eighty six copies were produced, forty eight of these were bound in white pigskin which was embossed with a delicate oak-leaf pattern and fastened with silver clasps. These deluxe editions were printed on vellum. One of them was later owned by Lawrence of Arabia. You can view images from the book at http://library.rit.edu/cary/cc_db/19th_century/16.html.

For years I have admired this book from afar. I have never had the opportunity to leaf through a copy in a museum. About a year ago, I had a crazy idea that it may be in the realm of possibility to one day buy a copy. I searched the internet and found one. To my ignorant amazement the asking price was US$200,000! I kept counting the zeros to make sure I had read it correctly. Thank God for online galleries and facsimiles of books. That was a short lived dream! The dedicated work of a team of artists and printmakers certainly culminated in a classic work which has been treasured for many generations. I am inspired to take the time and effort to produce books which will hopefully leave a legacy of love to those who keep them.
These books have a perfect balance of violence, heroism, scariness and even a dash of lurve! in the beautiful Arwen Evenstar part.

My favourite characters are Gimli the dwarf, Faramir, son of Denethor, Aragorn (also known as Strider) and Gandalf the White... and... and... and... everyone is so wonderful... and they are all great for different reasons.

Take Aragorn, son of Arathorn. He's an amazing fighter, a noble man, a true friend, and he would be a good King and husband. Then take Faramir. He's a good fighter but doesn't have the 'wow' factor of Aragorn. Tolkien has taken these characters (and many more besides) and woven a shawl of bright colours that you can wrap round yourself to keep out the cold; a place much better than our own world to escape to.

One thing that The Lord of The Rings does lack though (and I'm sure hobbits will agree with me) is food – alright, there is lembas and a few other things beside, but that's the only criticism I could make, because Tolkien obviously gave them just enough food so that all the food at the end (in The Return of the King, the third book) tasted a lot better.

But food's not really important. It's the battles and heroism and the way Tolkien describes places like Gondor and Mordor – really breathtaking and wonderful. When people are talking is the best because you just get drawn in and you are really in the place with the characters.

If you concentrate on the heroes then it's not scary at all – or the movies, really – my best friend watched the movies when she was three! But scariness can be good sometimes if you're the right kind of person for it.

So now you know that The Lord of The Rings is amazing, terrific, cool, great, the best trilogy ever. Totally. Really. So if you haven't read the books, get reading! I can't lend you my copies because I have to keep them at hand, but I could blackmail my cousin into lending you his! Ha ha, that's all, over and out.
Weapons of Mass Instruction
by John Taylor Gatto
Reviewed by Beverley Paine

In his forthright and often challenging manner, John Taylor Gatto has delivered yet another compelling expose on motivations behind compulsory schooling for the masses. His earlier work – Dumbing Us Down – published soon after his acceptance of the New York Teacher of the Year Award (1991) changed the way I viewed education: until then I was completely unaware of the politics deeply embedded in school curricula.

The clever, but chilling metaphor, Weapons of Mass Instruction, sums up his belief schools are harmful in a deliberate and carefully planned way. Gatto proposes that they follow high-level political theories constructed over millennia by Plato, Calvin, Spinoza, Fichte, Darwin, Wundt and others. The purpose of education, Gatto contends, is to render populations manageable.

For those not familiar with Gatto, you either like or dislike his style – there is no middle ground. He doesn’t waste time bothering to get you on side: as someone who worked within the education system for most of his life his frustration and anger bubbles below the surface of his writing. The message he peddles is radical and confronting, delivered in a powerful way and illustrated by examples drawn from a lifetime of personal experience. Gatto doesn’t simply hammer home his point that schools are dangerous, he builds a credible alternative that already thrives and exists. These are illustrated in chapters such as “A Letter to Kristina, my Granddaughter”; “Flat Stanley”; and “Walkabout: London”.

Ask for the book at any good book-store.

MY MUM

My mum is the greatest mum in the world.
As soft as a pillow and as shiny as pearl.
My mum is the best mum really ever known.
And compared to her niceness I’m as short as a gnome.
The sort of mum that you won’t find
In the house of a rich man or the castle of a king
Because she’s better than that and everything.

By Jonathan Bridge.
Imagination Creation
Western Union Young Writers

WRITING COMPETITION
Sponsored by
Western Union Writers
Kirpal Singh Chauli
Wyndham City Council

Stories: $2 entry
Poetry: $2 entry

10 years and under..... 1st Prize $50, 2nd Prize $25
11-14 years ..... 1st Prize $80, 2nd Prize $40
15-18 years..... 1st Prize $100, 2nd Prize $50
($2 entry in each section covers as many entries as you like)

MARGARET CALLANAN AWARD … $50
For an inspirational poem ages 18 and under: $2 entry

WYNDHAM LOCAL AWARDS … $50
four prizes of $50 each, chosen from Wyndham residents’ entries

Judged by Sherryl Clark

Closing date: 31st May 2009

Entry forms and enquiries:
Margaret Campbell (03) 9741 3577
e-mail margaret_c@optusnet.co.au
La Maison de l’Art Nouveau

Bernie Meyers

Often overlooked, Art Nouveau was a remarkable period of art which encompassed many expressions from delicate jewellery, exquisitely designed and crafted house-hold items to striking iron work and architecture. Characterised by flowing, flaring asymmetrical lines which were derived from natural forms and eastern art, rarely a straight line was found. This proved particularly curious when it came to architecture by designers such as Antonio Gaudi.

At the cusp of a new century, Art Nouveau was born around 1895 and continued for a decade. Artists, architects, designers and craftsmen were inspired by the intricate curves and spirals of traditional eastern and western art but they looked outward to exotic cultures such as Japan and used modern methods of production and materials to create a new style.

With the opening up of Japan to trading in 1853 by Commodore Perry, Art Nouveau artists owe much to ‘japonisme’ with its bold simplification and emphasis on decorative line and flat patterned work.

Samuel Bing was a German art dealer who lived in Paris and imported Japanese art to sell in his shop La Maison de l’Art Nouveau. Soon artists such as Tiffany, Beardsley, Lalique and Galle filled his store with new and original works. The shop gained such notoriety that he was allotted an entire pavilion at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900.

Following The Great Exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace, London, the influential art critic John Ruskin challenged craftsmen to produce well designed and made pieces to counteract the mass produced and second rate products of the Victorian era. William Morris was to found Morris & Co, a company which produced a complete range of furniture, textiles and furnishings for the home. Lewis Day wrote of Morris’s Merton Abbey Workshop “…an old-world air clings to the place, an atmosphere of quiet, and of some leisure, in which the workers, not harried to death, have space to breathe, and to enjoy something of repose and beauty of the world… long strips of printed cotton a-rinsing in the stream; great hanks of yarn, fresh from the indigo vat, drying in the air…” With the Arts and Craft Movement well underway, what better setting for the dawn of the Art Nouveau period?

So, if you are looking for something different to study in your art time, try learning about this fascinating period. Take an adventure in Barcelona with Antonio Gaudi or travel the Paris Metro to embrace this amazing style.

Look up these artists or click the link below.

Gustav Klimt
Aubrey Beardsley
Alfonse Mucha
Antonio Gaudi
Egon Schiele
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

The following link has information about Art Nouveau and the artist’s of the period.

http://www.artchive.com/archive/art_nouveau.html

Ideas for activities to do with children to familiarise them with the Art Nouveau period.

Art Nouveau
- Make a piece of jewellery out of sculpey
- Architect Antonio Gaudi - design a building inspired by plants
- Gustav Klimt - use gold paint and decorative pattern

Books
- Practice calligraphy
- Create your own illuminated letters
- Make a miniature book
- Printing – potato prints
- Design a decorative page border
- Research ‘artist books’ and create your own ‘artist book’!
Some Freedom to Learn
by Janette Cassey Ingham

“I wandered lonely as a cloud…”
William Wordsworth

“The best way to teach people is by telling a story.” Kenneth Blanchard

“Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.” Plato

“Love is patient; love is kind…”
God

All these thoughts and many more were written down one day on a piece of paper, perhaps a journal. Words that came from experience, great thought, learning and time.

Are you feeling ready to try something like this for your children? Something simple but a little different? What about giving your children somewhere to write their thoughts? What about giving them their very own journal?

Why? Because you will be giving them a space of their own, a place for some freedom for thought and discovery. If you think about it, one of the best things about home educating in comparison to school is that children are not slotted into categories such as ages, classrooms and rows of chairs. Nor are they slotted into levels that show how ‘clever’ they are based upon a set of marks. Learning does not have to be compartmentalised or categorised into subjects either, especially when we are young. In fact, children should be encouraged while they are growing up to think of learning less and less in that way.

Rather, our aim should perhaps be to help them develop broader perspectives or horizons. To be able to encourage them to ask questions like: How does what I am learning fit into the real world? How is it used; what is its purpose? And as well, they don’t have to always be told what, when, where and how to learn; home educated children can enjoy being free to learn!

Giving children something as simple as a journal can help them to feel freer to learn, and to have fun learning what they are interested in even without realising it. Ask them: “If you can put anything into your journal what would it be?” Let them know it is theirs to use however they wish. It could be used for drawings, writing, a diary, painting, puzzles, gluing in pictures or a collection of some kind: leaves, feathers, flowers, animals, numbers, anything that appeals.

Art, architecture, poetry. If you give them a new book each year their interests and choices may grow too as they grow. You may see an interest or direction appearing. If so, encourage and help them to pursue it further; for example, on the internet, at the library, etc. Provide or show them where they can do additional research, where the tools, activities or opportunities are (these things are also skills that are good to possess). There is SO MUCH information out there now, at the tip of your fingers. Take http://www.gutenberg.org, it is full of all the out of copyright historical books to explore, I’ve been using it to write my new book.

Encourage their interests or directions and nurture them. Learning is something we all are designed to enjoy when we are given enough freedom, time and direction to find what we are drawn to, comfortable with, or talented at.

The trouble is that sometimes we, as parents, have been taught from our own school days to be a little afraid. What if we don’t do it the ‘right way’ (like at school)? But by the time most children reach middle high school they are tuned out, distracted and disinterested by the limitations of the school system and routine.

Being made to learn or do things that you don’t understand makes learning harder, it becomes discouraging. No wonder dedicated and hard working teachers struggle to get their students attention, let alone engage them in learning. If you think about it, keeping twenty or thirty students interested is a tall order without even getting something actually learned!

I think children have plenty of time. Time to understand where what they are learning fits in to the world. If they come across something of interest they can take time to investigate it further,
put it in their journals. Try it out or put it into practice, make it mean something in the real world. Share together how they would use what they are learning. Perhaps they could help you organise, manage finances, do the shopping, banking etc. As you go you can discuss what kind of jobs people do, things like that.

Back to their journal, in time an interest or interests might start to really develop that will go on to a career, perhaps the beginning of a journey leading to their future. Or perhaps it will just be for fun and relaxation, that’s important too. Or maybe it won’t help at all… And what about we homeschooling mums or dads? Why not start a journal ourselves on a topic? You never know where it may take you!

Journals are great for any topic you may be studying or are interested in too. Topics with a storyline have a kind of flow that makes them easier to remember and more rewarding to follow. And you can also learn about other subjects as you explore.

Take Australian history for example... With an Australian history journal you can add pictures and write thoughts about how life has changed since the early days of our country. The travel, the communication, the troubles and much more, there are plenty of things to discuss. Then, you can discover Australia’s geography as you find your way across the country with our explorers and come to really appreciate their labours and struggles. Understand how scientific inventions have helped us over the last 200 years and investigate our fascinating and unique botany and fauna when you read about our botanists and such. Then there’s Australia’s wonderful Aboriginal people and their stories, their struggles and past. Government, freedoms and political issues and so on.

Using journals in these ways may inspire and help your children to find their own interests and learning directions as well. Take mathematics for instance: I try my best to explain what the high school mathematics my son is learning is used for in the real world. How it might relate to life or a job or skill. What the point is of learning it. If we give what we are learning a place and a purpose in the world it becomes useful and relevant and stays with us longer, perhaps even taking notes in a maths journal, if it’s your passion. By the way, you can’t go past God’s word for this, it is ‘the way, the truth and the life’, now and forever.

So give your children some space, a journal of their own, and with it freedom and encouragement, the exploration and discovery that learning should be. And perhaps it will help them to set off on a journey of learning that lasts a lifetime!

Janette is a homeschooling mum, author and illustrator living in the ACT bringing AUSTRALIAN history and learning to life! For creating an Australian history journal www.AustralianHistoryPictures.com is a great place to start....

William Dampier

Exploring at sea was my desire,
For gold and adventure my heart was on fire.
Sailed to Jamaica my money soon lost,
Indentured to labour for a cheat was the cost.
On the Spanish Main we were treated cruel made irate,
Henceforth lured by gold I became a pirate!
Though I'm none too proud of some things I have done,
Taking gold from the Spanish was jolly good fun!
Of the things I wrote down, the creatures and such,
Storms and tides and winds, of these were made much.
My notes I carried across huge rivers in flood,
Through thick jungles, tempests, at sea and in mud.
Then I was near dead with disease or starvation,
But now they have made me the toast of the nation!
Just handwritten notes kept dry in bamboo,
Have made exploration a science it's true.
I encountered New Holland as it is called,
Though with its northern parts I was rather appalled.
No water, no native welcome, and above all ....
NO REWARD!
On using the internet as a homeschooling resource

Veronica Brandt

The internet is very mixed. Sure, there are some great resources out there, but there is also a lot of junk, rubbish, lies, opportunists, get rich quick schemes and malevolent material. Children need to be supervised if they are to browse the internet themselves.

Less time on the internet means more time for more important things like thinking, reading and talking.

Keeping a dial-up connection can help limit time spent on the net. Broadband can be dangerous as well as pricey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadband</th>
<th>Dial-up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Download large files quickly and easily</td>
<td>May need to get someone else to download large files for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend as long as you like online, without tying up a phone line</td>
<td>Need to regulate time spent online. Be frugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your computer is at a greater risk of viruses, adware, malware, hacking, et cetera</td>
<td>Risk to your computer is less as you use the internet less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More distractions from internet attractions</td>
<td>Internet games are slow or impracticable so not as attractive</td>
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A caching proxy can allow offline browsing -- a great advantage with a dial-up system. This means that recent webpages are kept on your hard drive and can be searched and viewed without having to reconnect to the internet.

WWWOFFLE ([http://www.gedanken.demon.co.uk/wwwoffle/](http://www.gedanken.demon.co.uk/wwwoffle/)) is what I use for this with Debian Linux. There seems to be no shortage of people on broadband plans who can download any large files that a dial up account won’t allow. Some public libraries also have this facility. Even paying for these instances seems much cheaper and much safer than having a broadband account yourself. I have since succumbed to broadband, but still think dial-up is worth considering.
Want to be a Homeschooling Contact Person but Worried about Being Inundated by Spam?

by Beverley Paine

You’d like to offer to be a contact person but don’t want your email address posted on a website, vulnerable for collection by a rogue ‘robot’ looking for email addresses to spam. It’s a real worry, but one that can be overcome if you take a few precautions. Your email address has been in the public domain on the internet for over a decade and, because I’m careful, I don’t have problems with too many unwanted emails or sneaky spyware slowing down my internet enjoyment. And my computer has only ever been infected with one virus.

Spam emails are like the junk mail that lands in your letter box. That’s annoying enough, but unless you fall for some of the slick advertising copy and send off money for something you don’t really want, or respond to chain letters (which are illegal), there is a limit to the damage done. Spam emails, on the other hand, have the potential to do considerable damage to your computer’s operating system by downloading spyware, viruses and other forms of malware.

You have two main strategies for fighting spam. The first is to become educated about how spam works. Like junk mail it preys on the unwary. Your best protection is to become aware of the tricks and techniques spammers use to get your attention. They pretend to come from authoritative sites, such as banks or credit card companies, or from websites such as Ebay or Facebook. They always ask you to do something, and usually ask you to click on a link to fix a ‘problem’. If an offer of easy money looks good to be true, it usually is. Some of these annoying emails are organised rackets for laundering money, or designed to steal your bank account details and password. A quick tip is to check spelling and grammar: many of these spam emails have incredibly poor English.

How can you have an online presence as a contact person and stay unharmed by spam emails? Try these tactics – they really do work:

- Be careful about when and where you give out your email address. Have a ‘free’ email account as your public email address – use hotmail, yahoo or gmail, etc. Remember to check your online mail box regularly and delete unwanted emails. If you publish your email address online there are tricks that you can use to hide it from bots that regularly roam the internet searching for unprotected email addresses. Use an image instead of text, or write ‘at’ instead of @ – the HEA employs this technique on its online support group directory to protect HEA members.

- When you sign up for online newsletters or services don’t use your home or business email addresses. Click any ‘opt out’ boxes when registering as a user on websites and always read privacy statements, terms and conditions. Make sure they explicitly say they don’t sell or give away their email databases.

- Learn to recognize spam messages. If you don’t know the sender, chances are it is spam. If you can tell from the subject line the email is spam, delete it without opening it. That is the safest way. Typical words to watch out for are ‘love’, ‘money’, sexual references, or offers that are unsolicited. Don’t answer emails from email addresses you don’t recognise if the subject line is overly familiar, as if the sender knows you. As a homeschool contact person I generally feel safe if the words ‘homeschool’ or ‘home education’ are used in the subject line.

- Never reply to a spam message. Not even to complain. This is what they want you to do. If you do you are almost sure to regret it.

- Never click on a link in an email without hovering over it first with your cursor to check that the web address is the same as the link purports to be: often they are not! Clicking on a link tells the spammer that they have a ‘live’ email address. It can also open a ‘back door’ to your computer’s operating system.

- Resist the urge to forward emails to several of your friends. Particularly chain emails that demand you forward them on to 20 of your friends or else… These chain mails are illegal – even the fun, friendly ones. And be wary of petitions: only sign those you know are truly legitimate and that you can check by tracking back to the original source.

- Finally, use email programs that allow you to safely preview messages before you open them.

You can also use technology to help filter spam emails. I filter my emails and that’s why I only get two or three spam emails a day. Filters are easy to set up and personalize – click the ‘help’ file in your email program if you have any questions, or search for an answer online. Hundreds of free or low cost spam filters are available. Before downloading filter software check that it is compatible with your computer’s operating system and do a search for reviews about it online. Find one that has favourable reviews – you’ll know it is legitimate then. Although your ISP provider uses spam filters and other techniques to protect you from spam and unwanted or illegal internet content, you would be unwise to rely on their technology alone to keep spam away.

If you aren’t convinced that it is a wise idea to have your email address published on the internet, another way to help new families or share your homeschooling experience is to join an online forum or support group. Privacy is protected in different ways. Some groups are closed and moderated. Most hide member’s email addresses, or allow you to set the level of privacy you want. Being a member of an online community of home educators can be a rewarding experience.

If you are interested in becoming an individual contact or want to list your local or online support group on the HEA website, fill out the form on http://hea.asn.au/resources/support_add.asp
Now, here's a situation I find totally fascinating. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php) has emerged as the leading USA advocacy organisation focused on infusing 21st-century skills into education. The organisation brings together the business community, education leaders, and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st-century education to ensure every child's success as citizens and workers. The Partnership encourages schools, districts and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st-century skills into education and provides tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change. A quick perusal of the list of the current members reveals some big names associated with this organisation - for example, Apple, Adobe Systems, Dell, Lego, the Microsoft Corporation.

So, what are the 21st Century Skills? You can download an informative (and free) PDF with the details: http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/framework_flyer_updated_jan_09_final-1.pdf. In summary, the “skills, knowledge and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century” are:

1. Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes
   - English, reading or language arts
   - World languages
   - Arts
   - Mathematics
   - Economics
   - Science
   - Geography
   - History
   - Government & Civics

   In addition to these subjects, we believe schools must move beyond a focus on basic competency in core subjects to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st-century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects:
   - Global awareness
   - Financial, economic, business & entrepreneurial literacy
   - Civic literacy
   - Health literacy

2. Learning and Innovation Skills
   - Creativity and Innovation Skills
   - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills
   - Communication and Collaboration Skills

3. Information, Media and Technology Skills
   - Information Literacy
   - Media Literacy
   - ICT Literacy

4. Life and Career Skills
   - Flexibility & Adaptability
   - Initiative & Self-DIRECTION
   - Social & Cross-Cultural Skills
   - Productivity & Accountability
   - Leadership & Responsibility

Then there's Route 21 (http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/route21/). This is where you can explore “examples and videos of 21st-century skills in action in today’s classrooms”, “Noteworthy selections by the board and staff of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills”, or “Browse through the [currently 525] resources for 21st Century Skills.” All you need to do is register, just like I did, no questions asked (at least, not the ones that would have sifted me out!) That’s the thing about Web 2.0, isn’t it? It’s hard to keep a secret. And if I hadn’t obtained the information from The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, I would have found it from somewhere else.

The internet gives me access to what professional educators are thinking and/or doing. And not just professional educators associated with The Partnership for 21st Century Skills – I subscribe to many newsletters from the world of the professional educator. And then there are all those blogs...

Not only can I get the inside stories on what’s going on in the minds of professional educators, I have access to the same tools that teachers are using in the school classroom. Or not... Because, if what I’ve been reading about life in the classroom over the past several years is anywhere near accurate, I’m more likely to be actually using those tools than they are! Like I said, it’s a fascinating situation.

Bob Collier is an Australian homeschooling father. He puts together an excellent monthly e-zine: http://parental-intelligence.com
Red, Orange, Green Behaviours: A simple method to encourage your child to stop, listen and heed your warning.

By Beverley Paine

“If you go out the gate and play on the road a car will come along and squash you dead and you won’t be able to have cuddles from me or daddy anymore.” At the time my warning and behaviour seemed appropriate, particularly as it had the desired effect on my almost three year old. She didn’t wander down the driveway and out the gate again…

In her mid-teens we were waiting to cross the road in a quiet country town. She looked left, then right, then left again. So far so good. As I had taught her. Then she looked left again, then right, then left again. She hesitated. She checked again and then crossed. I don’t know what made me wait and watch. Had I stepped out onto the road she would have followed and I wouldn’t have witnessed the consequence of my diligent decade-long well-intentioned training regime… The road was empty. There wasn’t a car in sight from either direction.

Throughout our children’s lives we will experience many moments of anxiety, even panic, at the thought of our children becoming injured, or worse still, dying. I remember lying awake at night worrying about cot death. Or imagined scenarios where the children had hurt themselves and I wasn’t there to help. In the small hours of the morning I would make plans to eradicate or control the potential risk. Luckily I wasn’t very good at implementing them or my children would have lead very sterile, cotton-wool wrapped existences!

My incompetence can’t claim all the credit, however. Before my youngest was born I had the good sense to attend an effective parenting course where I learned to recognise the difference between truly dangerous situations, risky or slightly hazardous situations, and those that are a nuisance but won’t hurt the child or others. We were told to identify them ‘red light’, ‘orange light’ and ‘green light’ situations. Red light meant ‘Stop!’ Remove the child from danger. Orange light meant ‘Caution!’ Watch closely, ready to intervene. Green light meant ‘Go!’ Be observant from a distance, allow the child to explore and discover and learn.

The most valuable lesson I learned was that when I limited saying “No!” and “Stop!” to truly hazardous situations my children immediately responded. There weren’t desensitized to the importance of these warnings by overuse. They could tell by the urgency in my tone that they were in danger. I didn’t need to raise my voice (unless I was distant from them) and I certainly didn’t need to use frightening stories that would haunt them for years to come!

Orange light situations usually called for a few cautionary words: “I need you to watch where you are walking so you don’t trip and cut yourself.” Or, “I need you to hold my hand before we cross the road so that the drivers aren’t worried you’ll run onto the road. It means they can pay more attention to what the other cars are doing on the road.” Early driver education in action! Children learn so much more from explanations – it is an easy and simple way to teach them so many of the things schools embed in text books and assignments. And it improves and adds to their vocabulary. If you are lucky, you’ll end up answering half a dozen questions, a mini-lesson in action generated by their curiosity.

In both red and orange light situations I was careful not to smile, even if the situation looked cute or funny or was ironic in any way. This would only confuse the child. So often parents warn their children with a smile on their face, as though to sweeten the sting of the threat! Facial expressions, like the tone of our voice, carry more weight than the words heard. As my children grew older they became incredibly sensitive to a look or a glance from us across the room was enough and they adjusted their behaviour accordingly. When they were young I found wagging my finger, or shaking my head, reinforced the message.
Green light situations allow us to let our children know that they aren't on their own. “Yes, you can push the buttons on the video, but gently. Pushing too hard could break the switch behind the button. Can you find the volume switch and turn it down? Thank you.” Most parents don’t have time to use conversational language to teach their children in situations like this, but as home educators, not only do we have the time, developing this habit means that the overall time our children spend doing ‘lessons’ is a fraction of the time spent by their schooled peers.

The red, orange and green light scenario helped me learn to react positively and constructively during moments of worry, anxiety and panic I experienced as a mother. It gave me a framework on which I could respond firmly and consistently. My children learned the importance of heeding warnings, of looking to me for guidance, not from fear, but because the approach I used made sense to them. Eventually they were able to guide themselves and my role as guardian of their health and safety diminished.

Sadly, I’d already done a lot of things that had made them anxious and afraid of taking risks in some areas of their lives before I learned this valuable lesson. This meant that I needed to spend time encouraging them to “Don’t say no – have a go!” in middle childhood and beyond. Happily that tactic worked, because as young adults they’ve done so much more than either I or their father would have done at the same age. Their courage and resilience impresses both of us. Yes, they still have their anxious moments, and yes, I can often trace that to the way we parented, but for the most part it isn’t something that holds them back from living the life they want.
In a busy homeschool day, doing craft with the kids can seem like the proverbial straw – it’s messy, it’s time consuming and something best left to a Play-school presenter. Goodness knows, there’s only so many times a mama can help make a bus out of a tissue box and keep her sanity. Even if you can handle the process, there’s always the problem of what to do with the finished product. How many iceblock stick photo frames does Grandma really want on her mantelpiece?

So why do I include regular craft sessions as part of family life? Well, I’ve just sent my own kids to play outside after our first try at felting. Working with wool was a good fit for the cosy autumn season. The felt beads the children made – in purples, greens, yellows and blues – are drying on the table, next to a vase of yellow gerberas, and the afternoon light has that distinct cool-season softness. It’s a happy place to write. The half hour we spent teasing out unspun wool, dampening it, rolling it between our palms until the fibres began to link and felt, were all physical ways of greeting the change in season, helping us move from the long outdoor summer days to the shorter and darker ones of winter, when we draw together more often around the kitchen table.

It was a peaceful half hour as well, partly because the craft was kept simple – easy enough for the preschooler to ‘do it myself!’ (and great fine motor practice for him too), just right for the eight year-old who felt pleasingly competent and independent, and who enjoyed the chance to wind down and chat after the morning work. An older child improvised and made her own changes to the basic craft, using her growing design skills.

Like all of us with busy lives, no matter the size of our families, feeling pulled in many different directions is a daily issue, so I appreciated the togetherness of our crafting – one mother, one activity, meeting the needs of us all.

Peaceful as well because of the quality of materials we were using. After years of ‘bargains’ at the $2 shop, I’m a bit of a convert to the idea of using the best materials we can afford, even if that means we craft a little less often. For our felting we were using so-called ‘Magic Wool’, ordered online from a Steiner inspired toy shop (www.winterwoodtoys.com). The use of good materials, as well as being pleasing to the hand and eye, seems to discourage waste and promotes an appreciation of beauty, colour and form.

I also find it helpful to keep craft sessions purposeful, linking them to a seasonal or cultural celebration or, alternatively, I choose a craft that will help teach a genuinely useful skill (sewing, knitting, beeswax modelling, scrapbooking and the like) that the kids can then choose to take further if they wish.

I’ve come across some fabulous resources over the years as I’ve researched our crafts.

Thomas and Petra Berger have a lovely series, published by Floris Press, about Easter, Christmas and Harvest crafts. The Creative Family by Amanda Blake Soule (Trumpeter Books) has been another recent stand-out, worth a place on the homeschool shelf.

Online, The Crafty Crow http://belladia.typepad.com/crafty_crow has ideas for all ages and all occasions.

On this occasion, I’m just waiting for our felt balls to dry and then we’ll string them up as a mobile, or, if I don’t get around to that, display them in a dish on the hallway bookcase. Either way, all winter we’ll have their jewel colours to remind us of a skill learnt and a good time had.

Melissa lives in Sydney and is an eclectic homeschool mother to Emily (11), Liz (9) and Noah (5).
As a relatively small but growing subculture, home educators make an interesting subject for research. Increasing opportunities for post-graduate research by universities, together with the quest for original topics, will continue to draw attention to home education.

Research of home education in Australia is welcome. Ignorance created by lack of information about home education hampers the ability to make decisions, create policy and offer appropriate support by home education organisations and government agencies.

Indigenous Australians are by far the most researched minority in Australia: participating in research has not always led to workable solutions to issues or better living conditions. ‘Research fatigued’ is a term that has been coined to describe communities that have experienced more than their fair share of research participation.

There are important lessons to be learned from the indigenous experience for home educators. The American home education experience demonstrates that research is invariably full of assumptions and biases which serve particular purposes not necessarily in the interests of home education.

Researchers create different frameworks – lenses – or what Law (2004) calls “inscription devices”, with which to discover and analyse the data and information they collect. For example, if one were to assess home education solely on examination statistics, then one could generate a table in which schools perform well and home education performs poorly. This particular device would completely ignore the fact that many home educating students do not sit examinations. If, however, one were to create a device to measure maturity and entry into the workforce, the research might produce a very different result. How research studies are devised and performed, and for what purposes they are created, can influence the lens through which collected information is interpreted.

There is direct link between knowledge and power. The right to determine what education can be is an exercise of power. Defining and placing a value on research can increase the magnitude of this power, because research can be used to determine the limits of what is thinkable or acceptable. Research is never neutral: different kinds of research favour different political interests, as do restrictions on ownership and creation of knowledge.

Introducing the ethics of research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research says:

The relationship between researchers and research participants is the ground on which human research is conducted... respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence – help to shape that relationship as one of trust, mutual responsibility and ethical equality.

If, as a home educator, you are approached to be a research participant there are a number of questions the researcher needs to answer. Typically, you should be provided by the researcher with a ‘participant information sheet’ that answers the following questions:

1. Who is the researcher, who do they represent and what is their address?
2. What is the purpose of the research?
3. What will be required of you as the participant?
4. Has the researcher advised you that you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason?
5. When, where and how will the research be published?
6. What will happen to the data; will it be kept confidential and what will be published?
7. How will your input to the research and your intellectual property be acknowledged or protected (this is important in the case of photos and artworks especially, as research increasingly involves digital media)?
8. Who can you complain to and what is your line of recourse, if you are not happy with the conduct of the research?
These are the kinds of basic information that should be provided as part of building an ethical relationship between researcher and the participant.

There are other ethical questions that need to be considered, such as who should really initiate research into home-education? One argument could be that only home-educators should initiate research since they are the ones for whom research beneficence should accrue. Alternatively, if home education contains something of value, or impacts on other Australians, perhaps there is a need to research what home educators are doing for other reasons. This is a fairly thin argument however, since research is a fairly blunt instrument, and good news tends to travel faster by word of mouth, than through reports and academic publications. People catch on quick.

In respect of government, however, there is a lack of basic information. How many home educating students or families are there in Australia? How much money is spent on home education relative to independent and public school sectors? How are homeschoolers discriminated from other learners? Official agencies do not as yet appear to publish home education statistics. These are possible arguments for further research.

References:
Keeping research on track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics
Taking Charge, A to Z Home’s Cool Homeschooling http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/weblinks/TakingCharge.htm

Eight Types of Learning
S. Bennetts

Conventional education generally fails to consider that there may be more than one type of learning. Some schools will concede that children may have different intelligences or even learning styles (the way they approach learning) but learning is just learning, isn’t it? Well, according to Brent Cameron, there are actually eight types of learning.

1. **Modeling.** Imitation, observing and repeating, association. As we distinguish between our own actions and others, we can then engage in modeling.

2. **Enthusiasm.** Curiosity, exploration, discovery, creative process, play. This type of learning is based on our natural enthusiasm and curiosity. Our fascination with newness allows for the growth and expansion of our intelligence.

3. **Rote Learning.** This includes data acquisition, 1-1 correspondence, following directions and instructions, matching, memorization of facts and figures, direct instruction and classification. The major type of learning recognized by schools, yet only one eighth of the entire picture.

4. **Identity.** Categorizing, maturation, conversation, association. Identity is about the learning which arises through the exploration of who we are and how we relate to the world, the examination of our thinking and what knowledge is.

5. **Heuristic.** This type of learning is goal-directed and outcome driven. It includes project management, self-evaluation and working to criteria. In both Identity and Heuristic learning we reflect on our process and make strategic choices as a result.

6. **Mentoring.** Modeling excellence, challenging, tasking, mutual interest, co-fascination and resonance. Through mentoring, our patterns of living can be modeled to perfection by working with mentors – those individuals already engaged in the practice of excellence.

7. **Synergistic.** Synergistic learning is collaborative and group-based and involves learning through community, team experience and project coordination. In both Mentoring and Synergistic types, learning arises primarily through relationship.

8. **Life Quest.** This type of learning is about expressing one’s life purpose, realization, mystery, self-actualization and expressing our authentic selves.

Brent Cameron believes that to truly experience all types of learning, with the exception of Rote, we must be interacting with the world and with ‘real life,’ rather than a classroom situation.

He suggests that experiences in school which mimic the other types of learning, such as having children work in groups on projects, evaluate their own work or engage in play are poor, fake imitations of real experiences.

**Questions about types of learning:**
What types of learning did you experience at school?
How can you nurture the different types of learning in your child/ren?
Do you think any types of learning are more important than others?
In your daily life, which types of learning are you using the most?
Which types of learning do you use in different situations?
Why do you think so much emphasis is placed on Rote learning in schools?

People often tend to think of Rote learning as simply memorization, however rote learning also includes the acquisition of facts and data, following instructions, taking orders, absorbing information from direct instruction, answering ‘closed’ (yes/no answer) type questions and classification. How many school experiences can you think of which aren’t based on Rote learning? Which types of learning are they based on?
I'm discouraged to register, as I believe signing the form would give away my rights as a parent to provide my child's education. It's pretty much a Catch-22 situation. It would be reassuring if we had some really capable people who could lead us into some changes in regulations and the law here in Queensland.

Dora Sumegi

My name is Dora and I'm an unschooling single mum in Queensland. Ten years ago I emigrated from Hungary to Australia. My daughter is 9 years old and went to school until the end of grade 2 at the age of 7.

When I took her out of school, I received threatening letters from the Home Education Unit. I sent the last two of them back unopened and wrote with 'back to sender' on them. The Home Education Unit haven't bothered me since. Still, it's underneath my skin every day of my life and bothers me, worries me. I work in a local gymnastics club, teaching school children gymnastics every day of the school term, so I can't really hide that I home educate, as my daughter always gets questions related to her schooling and I freak out every time she answers with "I don't do any homework!"

I wish I had an acceptable reason such as conscientious objection on religious grounds, but that's not true. It would make it easier when people ask me about my daughter's schooling; I could be more open and honest about homeschooling. I would also like to promote homeschooling locally, but I don't have much backup legally, as I'm not registered. However, I don't intend to hide or pretend that I am registered. I've done a bit of research on the internet related to our Home Education Act in connection with the Human Rights which has given me a small measure of confidence.

My work – on weekday afternoons – was one of the reasons I chose to homeschool my daughter. If my daughter went to school, I not only wouldn't see her from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., but I wouldn't have much to do with her from between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. either, as I'd be busy with my gym class kids. Centrelink then raised the number of hours I have to work, which means I can spend even less time on 'providing her with a high quality education' required by the regulations.

My Homeschool Story
by Dora Sumegi

Will the States Agree to a National Curriculum?

The last time the federal government tried to implement a national curriculum only one state made it compulsory for public schools. The stumbling block for most states was what they considered an inadequate senior school curriculum particular as the prestige universities were vociferously against the national curriculum.

At present each state develops its own curriculum. Some states are way ahead of others in best and/or innovative practice. The won't want to go backwards to fit into a national agenda!

All states have gradually adopted the move to raise the compulsory school leaving age to 17, with NSW one of the last states to implement this change. Has this affected home educators? TAFE has a minimum age of 16 for entrance to its courses, but has been known to accept younger students on a merit basis, where it can be proved the student is capable of studying at this level. Many home educating students have used TAFE as a pathway to university, entry to apprenticeships, or for further training and education.

Some states have in place flexible learning programs at years 10 to 12. Queensland's 'Senior Phase of Learning' allows students to earn credit points by doing subjects at school, TAFE, workplace training, or through other approved activities such as referee certificate, AMEB exams, 'early
Why I Homeschool
by Wendy Bridges

Jonathan, my son, now eleven, has ASD, (Autistic Spectrum Disorder or High Functioning Autism or Aspergers) followed by Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyspraxia.

As a toddler he could hardly sit or stand still any longer than for a few seconds. As he grew older he would walk and talk rapidly together, we could only understand a few words in spite of having an advanced vocabulary. (He is slowly growing out of this.) It makes me dizzy just thinking about it.

He had a ‘Lazy Bowel’ which was not diagnosed until age four. I wondered why my boy was so far behind other children with toilet training. I did not see any improvements until he was 5. Now at eleven you would not know he had this problem.

His concentration was very poor and ‘oh, oh’ the tantrums we had long after he was meant to grow out of that stage caused us much concern. We found it difficult to go out anywhere for fear of this but grateful for our supportive friends from church who understood.

A ‘gut’ feeling told me a lot of his behaviour was not typical for children his age. It was a ‘gut’ feeling that made me think that he was going to have big problems at school.

When I first heard of ASD and its characteristics, it sure sounded like Jonathan. Then I heard the guru of ASD Dr Tony Atwood speak about ASD on TV and I said, ‘this sounds like Jonathan’. This was a little too obvious to ignore.

When Jonathan attended pre-school at the age of five the teacher asked me to have him assessed because of behavioural problems (putting it mildly). We had to pay to see a private pediatrician due to a long waiting list with the public system. We knew he would have to attend a public school at kindergarten level in NSW for five days without the support of a full-time Special Educational teacher which he’d had at his school in Brisbane. Although he needed a teacher aide, he would not get one if we did not have a diagnosis from a Pediatrician. We were very grateful to get the diagnosis of Asperger’s quickly but it was still painful to accept. That came with time.

The school Jonathan started at was a small country school. He had a lovely teacher aide who was meant to be there for him for six hours per week. But she often was not, due to other duties she was asked to do. I am aware that it is up to the school as to how and when it uses the teacher aides, however, I was asked to sign a form giving them permission to hire someone for Jonathan to help him. He actually needed more than the six hours and it would have made a big difference if he had a teacher aide each morning. But who am I kidding? School life is designed for the good of the majority (fair enough): knowing that did not help him or me.

His time at kindergarten was okay, but as time went on the children became less tolerant of his peculiar ways. He was teased daily, bullied and rejected by other children. He told me that some days he used to just shout, ‘Will someone play with me?’ Some of the loneliest places for children are playgrounds where there are no friends, and those who do speak tease them. Imagine this scenario where you work!

Imagine going to work each day, trying to be friendly and people don’t want to talk or co-operate with you and some are even rude and abusive. You are lonely, frustrated and angry and hurt. Then you have to work with such people in a professional manner… Would you complain? Quit your
job? At least you have alternatives. All organizations have an Abuse and Harassment Policy or a department to turn to for help.

Now relate this scenario to a child! Many ASD children face such rejection, teasing and bullying. They then have to enter the classroom with the same children and somehow sit and work with them. Their disorder is a further disadvantage as they struggle to communicate these problems. No wonder they are angry and frustrated. There is no way to vent those hurt emotions.

What do they get told? Ignore it! Or to parents, ‘He will learn skills later on in life’ or ‘It will toughen him up’!

I am convinced ASD children are not naturally violent or aggressive. They become that way because they have no outlet for all the hurt and anger built-up inside of them. A part-time visiting counselor will not give that to them!

Just so Jonathan could cope a little better with school, I tried to medicate him. It helped a little with his concentration but to my disappointment did nothing to improve his social or communication skills. It did not make him more acceptable to other children. By grade two he was shunned by his class. The medication caused headaches many days of the week, and loss of appetite and weight (he was already very thin). Jonathan also spent a lot of time outside of the classroom because he was frequently disruptive. He was banging his head, having nightmares and talking about his own death. He was constantly afraid to go to school. Yes, at seven!

The inevitable decision was made! I took him off all medication and started to investigate other alternatives such as homeschooling and other private schools even though we could not afford this. If we lived in the city I would have had more choice than that found in a rural community.

After months of investigation I had only two choices, homeschool or his current school. I chose homeschooling. I did not want and still do not want my intelligent, sensitive son to become a statistic at high school (i.e. a drop out and a psychological mess).

So, what therapies did Jonathan do/does?

1. Wheat free diet: We tried this on and off for many years without noticeable improvements except for his ‘bowel’ problems. However, he is also very fussy eater and we struggled to find suitable alternatives for him to eat. I experimented with a variety of recipes and foods but the ones he would tolerate he would only eat small amounts, just because he was forced to do so. I found he was often very tired due to being hungry (he took multivitamins as a supplement). Now he is back on wheat food but we control the refined wheat flour foods. He is happier and has more energy.

2. Homeschooling: Jonathan now works in a quiet environment with minimal distractions. He works well with a set routine following a daily diary. His concentration has improved enormously in this environment. I have found a Private school which can cater for him but they cannot give him a place until Year 7. So it is one more year of homeschooling and financial savings.

3. Sound Therapy: Listening to adapted classical music to relax him. He no longer needs this.

4. DORE: This is like brain gym. He graduated from this program in November 2007. This was well worth the two years and money spent as his concentration improved.

5. Nutritional therapy such as ‘Rescue Remedy’, ‘Fish Oil’, ‘Brahmi’.

6. Creating social opportunities

   where he can learn social skills at a level he can manage. We have tried gym, basketball, swimming, tennis, church run Kids Clubs. He is now more confident which is often shown by making friends on his own in different situations. Also, we have bought Social Skills books for ASD children which we discuss and often dramatize each week. We have a lot of fun with role playing and it is very effective.

7. Teaching him how to read people’s emotions and expression through a computer program called ‘Mind Reading’. This has helped him become more sensitive towards other people. I certainly have benefited from this as have others.

My ASD son is now a happy child with good self-esteem. He laughs a lot, tells great jokes. He is a sensitive caring child who is highly emotional. When I started homeschooling him he could not write two sentences on his own without crying. Now he can hand write a paragraph and type on the computer fantastic reports and imaginative stories. Most recently he came top 6% in his State for an International English Comprehension test. ASD children are not known for their English Comprehension skills. What a thrill for us all!

I am very grateful to my God who has guided me into making the decision to homeschool him. It is demanding but I have never regretted it. The rewards are slow to come but they do come! I simply take one day at a time trusting God to give me much wisdom and a ‘bucket full’ of patience.

Snails, Snails, Snails
by Jamison Brown

Giant Snails (top left): Some snails can grow up to 30cms long, like the Giant African snail. Giant snails can be found in Africa, the Philippines, some Asian countries. Unlike the Australian snails, Giant snails are giant, but they’re not dangerous unless you get rolled over by one.

Sea Snails (middle left): Some sea snails can surf. They can live under the water and in the air. Some sea snails can be very big too and they can leap in water. They leap by pulling their body into their shell and pushing it out again with force so they jump.

Ordinary Snails (bottom left): You can find snails nearly anywhere and they seem to come out when it rains. They can live in many habitats. Normal garden snails live for about 2-3 years but in the wild, some snails can live for 5-7 years and some in captivity have lived for 15–30 years. Their shells grow with them and they can move faster when it’s wet.
The highlight of the year for our family is Diana and Bill Waring visiting from Lake Stevens in Washington State. We have all been caught up in the buzz and busyness of preparing for their trip, sending emails, making phone calls, arranging itineraries, changing them, booking venues and finding places to stay. This plethora of cyber mail and phone calls has given us a chance to get to know the Warings. A few months ago I thought that we would have plenty of time for finishing off all those conversations during the couple of weeks and thousands of kilometres of driving we have together later in the year. Now, I’m not sure that a lifetime would be long enough.

This is all to say; Don’t miss the wonderful opportunity to meet this lovely, warm, seasoned homeschool couple. Diana will be speaking on parenting, home schooling, life, history and more. Her trusty husband, Bill, is great with Q&A sessions. I’m sure he’s good at lugging stuff, but I think she is really bringing him along for his company.

When I began homeschooling, I was unsure about teaching history as it was never a great joy for me as a student. But thanks to one extremely passionate lady, I have had my eyes opened to see that it can be interesting. She truly brings the past alive with amazing adventure stories, heart warming family narratives and tales of heroes, discovery and intrigue.

Diana recently started a monthly radio program on Blogtalk Radio where she interviews knowledgeable and experienced homeschool speakers and writers. These encouraging shows are available live and are also archived so you can download them at any time. It’s free so why don’t you check it out at: http://www.blogtalkradio.com/WATCHTalk

The dates for the Living, Laughing and Learning Conferences have now been confirmed.

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There will be a small selection of homeschool suppliers at some of the venues. If you have a business or product which specifically serves the home school community and you would like to bring it along, contact Bernie.

For further information and registrations please contact Bernie Meyers at meyersdb@tpg.com.au or ph (02) 4938 8142

Workshop descriptions, costs and venue details will be updated at www.berniemeyers.com as the information becomes available. Click on ‘Homeschooling’ then ‘Diana Waring Visit’.
HEA Courses and Workshops

HEA FAQ Session
Yass NSW
26th of April
Cost is $20/person, information pack included. Time 2pm-5pm. If you are thinking about home education but want to know more, this talk will answer the most often asked questions and more. For venue details and to register your interest, contact: Alison Beresford, phone: 0412 480 577 email: alisonandphil@yahoo.com.au

HEA Introduction to Home Education Course
Albion Park, NSW
8th and 9th of May
Times will be 10-4pm for both days. For venue details and to register your interest, please contact Alicia Parker, email: parkerfam5@aapt.net.au

If you have a group that has a minimum of four participants interested in having an HEA FAQ talk, Introduction To Homeschooling Course or HEA Comprehensive Home Education Course in your area, we can travel to your area and help with venue payment. Contact Cathy Chisari: chis31@primusonline.com.au

Adult Learners Week
By Paul Reader

Adult Learners Week (ALW) is 1-8 September 2009 The HEA is researching the possibilities for participation in this event, for parents and post-compulsory age learners making the transition to employment and training.

ALW is an international festival of learning supported by the Commonwealth Government. Some state authorities may also offer financial support to organisations and ALW events in their state.

Home education support groups might want to visit the relevant web sites as listed on the HEA news item:


Please contact the HEA Secretary, Paul Reader secretary@hea.asn.au if you are interested in developing an ALW event in your state.

Eureka Prizes Are Open

Are you a scientist, school kid, journalist, science teacher, young film maker, researcher, leader, innovator, educator, communicator, environmentalist or photographer?

If you have answered yes, you could be eligible to enter the 2009 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes.

This is your opportunity to:
- win cash prizes
- advance your career
- recognise your colleagues
- gain professional recognition
- get personal satisfaction
- make connections and collaborations
- raise national awareness of your work
- increase your profile
- reward your team
- celebrate your success

This year there is something for everyone with 18 prizes worth over $180,000 up for grabs!

For further details on this year’s line up and how to enter go to Eureka 2009 Prizes
http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/index.cfm?objectid=FF6AB91D-D3C1-9A5C-72A3555D3CCBF573

Illustrations

‘Forest Floor’ (right) and
‘Nest Collage’ (left)
by Bernie Meyers
Sovereign Hill
Costumed Camp

Monday 2 November till Thursday 6 November

Would you like your children to experience the life of 1850s school children? Sovereign Hill gives these children a chance to attend a goldfields school. Dressed in 19th century-style clothing, and using classrooms and equipment typical of the era, your students will enjoy two memorable days in one of our four themed schools as they role-play the lives of goldfields students and come to understand social conditions during the great Victorian Gold Rush.

The cost for these children includes the two day costumed school, entry on the third day and entry to Blood on the Southern Cross.

Welcome Stranger Holiday Park

Cabins are reserved for home schooled families who are part of our camp. Book directly through the Welcome Stranger Holiday Park. You must mention that you are with our group or you will be told there are no vacancies. They have a jumping pillow, playground, mini golf, flying fox, tennis courts, sauna and swimming pool available. These will be accessed and included as scheduled activities at no additional cost.

The cost of accommodation will depend on the style you choose. Refer to their website for further details. All prices are for the cabin, regardless of how many are sleeping in it.

Cost for the camp accommodation:
- Camping: $96
- Cabins: $261—$450
- Ensuite Cabin: $261
- 1 Bedroom Cabin: $291
- 1 Bedroom Holiday Unit: $321
- 2 Bedroom Holiday Unit: $375
- 2 Bedroom Deluxe Holiday Unit: $450
- 3 Bedroom Deluxe Holiday Unit: $450

7 — 9 year old students $35.50
On Monday 2 November, 7 and 8 year old children can have a unique goldfields school experience. Activities may include reading, writing and arithmetic, music and drawing. Of course, students will also experience the highlights of Sovereign Hill. Another activity will be provided at Sovereign Hill on Tuesday 3 November for this age group. The cost for these children includes the one day costumed school, entry on the second and third day, as well as entry to Blood on the Southern Cross.

5 — 6 year old students $33.00
Sovereign Hill opens lots of fun educational activities. Exciting structured sessions with our education officers are offered for all students. Explore all our exhibits over one, two or even three days including visiting our vast array of shops, industries and cottages.

The cost for these children includes entry for three days, as well as entry to Blood on the Southern Cross.

** I recommend exploring the option of a teacher membership, which is free for registered home schoolers. Attach the registration form to the application form. It is one form each parent. Adult has teacher membership or Sovereign Hill membership, the cost is $30. Without it, the cost is $66

Bookings need to be made for BOTH camp and accommodation

Full payment for Sovereign Hill activities must be received to secure a place.

Bookings will be taken in the order they are received as there is a minimum of 20 and maximum of 35 children in the 7—9 and 9—12 age group for the camp.

Sovereign Hill Activities include entry to the museum for 3 days, and Blood on the Southern Cross.

Cost for Sovereign Hill Activities:
- Adults $66 or $30 **
- Children under 5: free
- 5 - 6 yo children: $33
- 7—8 yo children: $35.50
- 9—12 yo children: $43.50

** I recommend exploring the option of a teacher membership, which is free for registered home schoolers. Attach the registration form to the application form. It is one form each parent. Adult has teacher membership or Sovereign Hill membership, the cost is $30. Without it, the cost is $66

Bookings for accommodation: 1800 622 777
Bookings for camp: hs.excursions@gmail.com to book.

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On Sunday 5th April 2009, Quest Lifelearning hosted an exhibition and sale of art works and projects by home educated children and teens.

Homeschoolers from a number of different groups in Perth, W.A participated in the Exhibition to showcase exceptional work and projects.

Art works displayed included: a photography display, a range of mini succulent gardens using hand-painted pottery shells, fragrant bags made by two enterprising young ladies, a selection of cards, magnets and calendars, a range of amazing painted pottery, superb cushions, magical minicards and sets of cards which were professionally printed and featured photography and ‘my wish for the world’ quotes by homeschoolers.

The exhibition also launched two books written by groups of homeschoolers - ‘Did You Ever,’ a trip down memory lane to relive the joy of childhood, and ‘If You’re Bored and You Know It, Read This Book,’ which contains 164 and a half suggestions for boredom busters.

A selection of delectable home-made food was delightedly consumed and visitors were treated to a performance by the Free Spirit Singers, a homeschool choir.

A group of teens gave a presentation about one of their current projects - to create and publish a family-friendly ‘How to Host a Mystery’ game. Another group of teens gave a presentation of their project - to create and produce a book and dvd of Creative Thinking and Problem-solving activities for homeschool families. A group of children also gave a presentation about Quest Lifelearning.

The exhibition was an outstanding success and enjoyed by all, and part proceeds from the sale of art works will be donated to an International Children’s Care orphanage in the Philippines.
Save The Natural Child Project

Jan Hunt of The Natural Child Project has promoted attachment parenting and natural learning since 1996 and loves helping families, but the current economic climate has made it difficult for her to continue. She is asking supporters and Natural Child Project newsletter subscribers to ask for a small donation. If everyone gives just $5, she can continue to encourage and inform attachment parenting families around the world.

The Natural Child Project vision is a world in which all children are treated with dignity, respect, understanding, and compassion. In such a world, every child can grow into adulthood with a generous capacity for love and trust. Our society has no more urgent task.

Donate online with credit card or PayPal: www.naturalchild.org/donate
Thank you for your support.

The Natural Child Project
www.naturalchild.org

Future Schools Offers currently available to HEA members

☑ One off pricing! Mathematics and English grammar plus
Discovering English - $39.95 (12 monthly) (per month) - this equates to $10 off every month what is available via registration on website (ends May 31, 2009)

☑ One off pricing! Mathematics and English grammar (including 1800 free call tutor service - speak with a teacher) $59.95. Saving of $20 every month on special package only available to HEA members. (ends May 31, 2009)

For more information please visit: http://www.futureschool.com.au/heapromo

www.AustralianHistoryPictures.com
Email Janette janetteso@mac.com for some FREE COLOUR & LEARN BOOKMARKS for your local group and friends!

Janette is taking pre-orders for her new book, a series of lively narratives to go with the pictures entitled:

OUR AUSTRALIAN STORY ~ PART 1

This resource of stories is being written for you to share and to inspire your children in learning our country's fascinating past. Children colour and learn from the Pictures while you read the narrative aloud and afterwards do some of the questions and activities suggested as well.

The book has been thoroughly researched; written from and inspired by the historical journals and diaries of the time to really bring our past to life. You will discover how our country once was. It also integrates other subjects along the way. Eg botany, fauna, geography, sciences, social issues, etc.

Children can see life through the eyes of the characters, listen and imagine as each story unfolds... walk along the streets of rough towns that are now our crowded concrete cities. Explore our big land, discover it for the first time as explorers once did... Our Australian Story, brings AUSTRALIAN history and learning to life! And New Zealand’s early history is incorporated too.

BUSINESS FROM HOME

Learn how to start a home business that’s easy, rewarding and satisfying.
Promote scientifically validated Glyconutrients. Natural and exclusive dietary supplements that assist with cellular communication and provide optimal health.

This substantial financial opportunity will suit those looking for both full-time or part-time commitments.
Be part of the next trillion-dollar industry ‘The Wellness Industry’. Contact Tracy (02) 6564 8434; v8fordtz@dragnet.com.au

For more information please visit: http://www.futureschool.com.au/heapromo
Welcome to the Learnery...

We are a cooperative group of home-educated families who partner with a facilitator to provide experiences which enhance and extend a child’s education.

The Quest Learnery is a home-away-from-home dedicated to nurturing people to realise their potential. We specialize in programs which empower children and youth to become powerful, passionate people who make a difference, who are lifelong learners, creative and critical thinkers and whose relationships rock!

For more information, check out www.questlife.com.au or email quest@questlife.com.au

Always Learning Books


Beverley Paine writes and publishes books and booklets about home education and natural learning.

Quest Inspirations

Quest Inspirations is a range of inspiring, funky, innovative and high-quality books and cards made by home-educated youth. Check out the products in detail at the Questshop: http://www.questlife.com.au/pages/questshop.php or email us for a catalogue: quest@questlife.com.au

Design Your Homeschool

Free “Keep On Track” e-zine will provide you with practical advice and food for thought. Helps you focus, keep motivated and strive towards your homeschooling goals.

Subscribe: http://www.design-your-homeschool.com/Home-schooling-E-zine.html

Downunder Literature

Downunder Literature English and handwriting resources introduce classic literature, rich in cultural heritage, and help teach the basics, with a distinct “downunder” flavour.