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 skills, 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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I've written extensively in my books and on Homeschool Australia about how to cope with burn-out, something that can often happen to over enthusiastic homeschooling parents, most often in the first year but sometimes with unhappy regularity. This is mostly derived from holding expectations that are out of whack with reality. Homeschool reality is usually different for different families. What works for you or your children may not work for me and mine.

Over the years I've noticed that homeschooling is, by and large, self-correcting. Problems can often seem insurmountable, but there's ample time to solve them and progress is steady and sure, unlike the kind of problems you often get in a school environment which can drag on for years and can permanently damage a child's educational and/or social development. It's much easier to solve problems when you're only answerable to your children and yourself, and you have plenty of time and space to explore all the issues and solutions to find what works best for you. That's the home education advantage!

Please visit Homeschool Australia; you'll find plenty to mull over in the Managing Homeschooling Life section, although all the sections contain lots of tips and practical ideas for avoiding some of the issues that regularly crop up in homeschooling life. Here's some snippets to get you started!

**How to Avoid Becoming Overwhelmed**
http://homeschoolaustralia.com/articles/overwhelmed.html
"I find that the things that frequently cause burnout in my life are generally unrelated to our homeschooling practice, though homeschooling always gets the blame. Just recently I completely fell apart again, but only because changing work situations, job insecurity, sudden financial difficulties, and recurring illness in the family finally worked me down to a drivelling heap! It had nothing to do with homeschooling, but suddenly I found myself fretting about Thomas' education and socialisation, adding yet more worries to my ever increasing pile."

**Investigating the Disadvantages of Homeschooling**
http://homeschoolaustralia.com/articles/disadvantages.html
"I am heartened by the grit and determination of parents who stick at it and find solutions, which often work for a week or two before new problems arise and they're back to worrying and seeking yet more comprehensive solutions. When we read about homeschooling it helps to remember that the successes we're reading about are usually written by those parents who have fought hard to overcome their own set of particular problems that made homeschooling seem difficult or impossible. We're reading the 'happy ever after' end to the story – the how we overcame the conflict and obstacles is usually embedded within the story and can be easily missed."

**Homeschooling Through the Bad Days**
http://homeschoolaustralia.com/articles/kidsfighting.html
"Or forget about being the mum you want to be and accept that you are the mum you are, warts and all. I was chronically unwell throughout my children's childhood and it sucked big time, for all of us. Depression was a huge blight on our lives. We're not a dysfunctional family but we definitely have more than our fair share of dysfunctional moments. I'd do homeschooling so differently in a flash if I could go back and wave a magic wand and be a different Beverley... However, the horribly flawed mess I made, in which we lived and struggled to make sense of, produced three okay people, the kind everyone seems happy to meet. They are not a bunch of geniuses and they disappoint my parents but I reckon they are the bees-knees. And they totally forgive me for being an imperfect and loopy parent."

**Staying Motivated and Confident Articles:** http://homeschoolaustralia.com/index/motivation.html
And other articles from the Managing Homeschooling Life list (scroll half way down the page to find): http://homeschoolaustralia.com/articlesindex.html

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Avoiding Burnout

By Marina Wright

Burnout is a big issue – the trick is to never get there in the first place! Women are terrible at avoiding it, as we are more likely to devalue our own worthiness to take time-out regularly. It is even more important for homeschoolers to put in place firm and regular opportunities for time-out, because we are with our children for far more hours in each day than our peers who opt to mainstream school their children.

I don’t claim to have been able to avoid this problem either, although I can list multiple ways that I’ve heard and read about how to avoid it! Some examples are:

- Regular ‘date nights’ with a spouse/partner if you have one, or with a good friend if you don’t.

- Regular scheduled outside activities, e.g. pursuit of a hobby or other pastime that you previously enjoyed, or have always wanted to do (scrapbooking, quilting, yoga, tennis, dancing, etc).

- Consider taking a short course or workshop to further your own education – the WEA has lots of fabulous courses, or even some community centres and libraries have different courses.

- Become part of the ‘café set’, so to speak – that is, work out where there are cafés that have room for children to move, and go as regularly as you can or need to (I like the ones that have the daily paper available for free to the customers so I can read it slowly over a cappuccino and then do the crossword!)

- And of course, tap into the various homeschool outings that are scheduled regularly, as well as the ad hoc ones.

- Consider outsourcing some of your children’s learning. In the first instance, things like music (piano/violin, etc) are usually managed by coaches. There are other ways, too, of arranging things so that you are not the sole educator, e.g. if a family member or relative has a particular skill then they might be happy to teach it to your children, e.g. LOTE (if a second language is spoken within the wider family circle), cooking and gardening (perhaps grandma could be enticed to help out), etc.

Once you have developed a circle of friends within the local homeschooling community, you could also think about doing a lesson swap – one week you could take someone else’s children for an afternoon to teach them something (e.g. craft, nature walk, etc), and the next week your friend could take your children to teach them something different. In this manner, each of you gets an afternoon off once a fortnight to either run errands, go to the beauty salon, or just sleep!

Some people find that only homeschooling for 4 days each week instead of 5 helps, whilst others will homeschool for 2 weeks on and then 1 week off (or some other similar on/off time frame).

Burnout seems most often to come about by either having children for whom you’re forever trying to get to co-operate, or if you are just trying to do too much in each day or week. Choosing the right sort of learning style for you and your children, as well as the right curriculum to go with it, can also be a crucial element to avoiding burnout.

Getting children to co-operate may well be an issue of using a learning style or curriculum that just isn’t right for you and your children. Or it could also have some other cause: for us it was environmental, more specifically, dietary. This was a recent serious problem for us. Once we had identified what was causing our children to be so mentally distractible and constantly fractious, things became much more settled and enjoyable.

If you are already well and truly in the grip of burnout, then don’t despair (as I nearly did earlier this year!) Instead of
making an appointment with the local school Principal, consider taking some time off from homeschooling. You may just need a couple of weeks, but don’t be afraid to take considerably more time off – there is little point taking just a week off, only to find that you are very quickly back where you started from. The time that you take off should be well spent; first, totally de-stressing and then, just getting back to enjoying life and your children.

After this should come a time of re-assessing the various aspects of your homeschool (family dynamics, learning styles, curriculum, time-tabling, etc) and formulating a new ‘plan of attack’: if you use the same approach as before, then you will most likely get the same result! Spending time chatting with homeschooling parents (especially a friend who really knows how you tick) about how things are going in your homeschool can be an invaluable way to find a way out of the trees to see the forest!

Marina Wright is a South Australian homeschooling mother to 3 boys aged 5, 9 and 11.

How to Avoid Homeschool Burnout: Be Aware of Homeschool Peer Pressure

By Marianne Vanderkolk

Coming to a place of ‘burnout’ as a homeschooling parent, or as a homeschooler, means that somewhere in the process, we have lost sight of our goals.

One of the many reasons parents choose to homeschool is that they want to enjoy time with their children. We see homeschooling as an opportunity to spend worthwhile time with our child, exploring learning together and walking the exciting road side by side. Opening the world to our children is a delight and we enthusiastically begin by talking, reading, walking, and sharing life.

However, it isn’t long before ‘comparison’ steps in and we begin to doubt if we are giving our child the best education possible. The focus shifts quickly from the relationship building opportunity to ‘an education’, and unfortunately, our society has taught us to measure education by scores. So, driven by our need to see results in order to compare our children, we set them down to a plethora of textbooks, a CD course, another on-line program just in case... and on it goes.

With our eyes on the next homeschooling family (who fits in so much into their day!) we begin early in the morning. We become the task-master and the time-keeper; the driving force. We stay up late to control programs, we mark their work with a red pen, and we become anxious when the book isn’t being finished according to our timetable. We push harder, work longer and become more irritated.

Then we notice that there are so many activities that the children from the school down the road are involved in. We need to join a drama group, become a part of the homeschool choir, take some music and art lessons and join a homeschool network group or co-op if there is one close by. Our children are now being forced out the door, into the car, the baby needs to be woken up and dragged here and there. We keep our eye on our watches... so that our children won’t be the ones missing out!

It is easy to see how burnout can happen and how we can be swayed by peer pressure from our homeschooling circles and from the community around us. But, how can we avoid burnout?

Let us consider these ways:

• Focus on our unique goals. Firstly, we need to know where we are headed. Each family is unique and we should rejoice in that! We need to take time to consider our own family goals. Where are we headed? What is important to us? What is the lasting quality we want to pass on to our children? When we know that, we need to head in that direction and keep to it.

• Nip comparison in the bud. When our eyes stray to begin to compare our child with someone else’s, or our child to his or her sibling, we need to nip that thought in the bud. Break off the thought there and then! We need to be in control of our thought patterns, and dismiss what is not edifying. Instead, we should substitute that thought with something else: with a sentence or Bible verse you memorize. If you train yourself to actively put another thought in its place, you will be more successful in nipping those thoughts of comparison.

• Be realistic with our time. Everyone has different limitations according to time. We need to make decisions for our unique family as to how much time will be spent at the desk. Do your children have time for sport? Do they have time for a hobby? Time to think and just ‘be’? Time for God? Time for fun?

• Consider our own circumstances. Each family has different circumstances which will affect them as a unit. Health, traveling distance to services, number of children, abilities of children, parent and child personalities: all of these have bearing on who we are and what we can do. We should not be in judgment of ourselves because of our own personal limitations, but rather accept our circumstances and move on confidently and maturely.

So, whether you are a veteran or a new homeschooling parent, I challenge you to keep your focus, remember the goals you have set, don’t give time to comparison, be realistic with your time and accept your personal circumstances. Remember why you began to homeschool and enjoy learning together as a family. When you stop ‘enjoying’ the learning experience, reflect on why you began and review what you are doing.

Home educating mother, Marianne Vanderkolk is the creator of www.design-your-homeschool.com, a guide to help you design-your-own homeschool to suit your family’s goals, and develop your own individual approach that reflects these goals and which complements your lifestyle and needs.
Letters to the Editor

I just wanted to say thank you to Beverley and the other HEA volunteers for the tireless work they are doing. It is so very appreciated by so many of us and we do not say thank you enough.

I’m a volunteer with 2 organizations (volunteer breastfeeding counselor with Australian Breastfeeding Association and also facilitator of a support group for parents of autistic kids) so I know how much effort a volunteer puts in but also the benefit we also get out as well in helping others.

I feel that I am very lucky to be homeschooling my kids at this period in time as we have so many experienced people and so many resources to draw upon.

Kind regards,
Elizabeth Salter-Strong.

The Cost of Homeschooling

Not all “custom designed” curricula are expensive and as to whether they are worth the money that really depends on the families using them. Some families need and want the additional guidance and support a highly structured and supervised custom designed curriculum can offer, others prefer to custom design their own to ensure it is relevant to each child at the stage they are at.

Home educators, especially those just starting out, need a while to consider all options and decide what fits them.

Pre-packaged distance education curricula can be expensive, but I know that in the case of at least one Distance Education School offering ACE where the costs are under $350 per child per year. The residential program referred to in the April May issue of the magazine are only for NSW. In Qld this is not a factor and there is no legal requirement to run residential programs.

I personally spend my entire time advising home educators to spend as little as possible on curricula till they know what will suit their child, and even then I see no reason to spend more that $20 per child per subject (and I would only recommend Maths and English here) per year (for Primary aged children, it may be more for Secondary students).

This is achieved by going to your local educational book supplier (the one the schools buy from, like Brodies here in QLD) and have a look at the texts available for each year level and pick whatever your child thinks they might like. If they do not like it you have only wasted $20!

After a few months you will know better the way your child learns and if their needs would be better met by using a pre-packaged Distance Education curriculum. Then you can purchase one at that stage, but you have not jumped in too soon and spent hundreds when less than that may be the best fit.

Extra-curricular activities don’t have to cost very much either. Here in Brisbane we usually broker up to 50% discount and hold classes in the middle of the day when the venue or service is usually not making any money. Enrolment with many Distance Education Schools also includes a regular ‘activity’ or ‘extra-curricular’ day where students can access the usual extra-curricular activities at no extra cost.

It doesn’t have to cost over $1500 a year to access structured and supervised home education curricula. Many come in under $1000 a year for a pre-prepared curriculum and even less if you design something yourself from an educational book store.

This leaves you free to spend as much or as little as you like on fuel for your car to go out and experience all the educational aspects of what is in your local area!

Regards,
Michelle Hornery
### Vegan Choc Pudding

from Megan, W.A

If you like chocolate and you like pudding, try this delectable, delicious vegan chocolate pudding. Mmmm.

Preheat oven to 190 deg C

- 1.5 cups plain flour
- 1 heaped tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 3/4 cup something sweet
  
  (golden syrup, sugar, maple syrup, honey, sugar)
- 1/2 cup carob OR cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- spices to taste (I use ground vanilla pod, cardamon pod, cinnamon bark, cloves, grated nutmeg - 1.5 tsp all up)
- 1 chopped apple, pear or banana
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup oil (grapeseed or coconut works best)
- 3/4 cup water

Mix it all together and put in an oiled dish with plenty of room at the top.

In a cup, mix together 1/4 cup of sweet stuff and 1/4 cup of carob/cocoa powder. Pour or sprinkle this over the cake mixture. Put around 2 cups of boiling water on top and then cook for maybe 30-45 minutes. The cake bit rises to the top and you end up with a lovely baked surface and then the saucy stuff is underneath and the middle is like a steamed pudding.

### Calculating Your Age Using Chocolate Maths!

My daughter sent this to me the other week and at first I was sceptical, but it really did work... give it a try – it only takes a couple of minutes and is fun.

1. Pick the number of times a week that you would like to have chocolate (more than once but less than 10)
2. Multiply this number by 2 (just to be bold)
3. Add 5
4. Multiply it by 50
5. If you have already had your birthday this year add 1759... If you haven't, add 1758.
6. Subtract the four digit year that you were born.

You should now have a three digit number. The first digit of this was your original number (i.e., how many times you want to have chocolate each week). The next two numbers are your age (oh yes it is!)

Apparently this is the only year (2009) that this calculation will ever work, so get your friends to have a play while it lasts.

### Sneaky Brownies

These brownies fool everyone! You won't believe how scrumptious they are (or how good they are for you) until you make them yourself. Just don't serve them warm - it's not until they're completely cool that the spinach flavour totally disappears.

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate
- 1/2 cup carrot puree
- 1/2 cup spinach puree
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light or dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons trans-fat-free soft tub margarine spread
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 large egg whites
- 3/4 cup oat flour or plain flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 350°. Coat an 8" x 8" baking pan with cooking spray.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler or over a very low flame.

In a large bowl, combine the melted chocolate, vegetable purees, sugar, cocoa powder, margarine and vanilla and whisk until smooth and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes.

Whisk in egg whites. Stir in the flour, baking powder, and salt with a wooden spoon.

Pour the batter into the pan and bake 35 to 40 minutes. Cool completely in the pan before cutting into 12 bars.
The Large and the Small
By David Blissett

Over the centuries, writers and film makers have immortalised the concept of tiny jungle clad islands providing home to giant mysterious creatures. There was the giant ape King Kong who lived on Skull Island or the nuclear created Godzilla from Bikini Atoll. Audiences have been fascinated by these isolated tropical islands and the giants they produce. However, this is only the stuff of science fiction writers... isn’t it?

There are a series of small islands in the Indonesian archipelago that prove science fiction can sometimes be as strange as science fact. The world’s largest lizard is a resident of these small tropical islands. Komodo Dragons are a part of the monitor family of lizards and therefore related to Australian goannas.

They can grow to over three metres in length and weigh more than one hundred kilograms. Komodos are also formidable and dangerous predators. With the ability to run at over twenty kilometres per hour and enormous strength, Komodo Dragons are able to hunt large animals up to the size of buffalo.

They also feed on carrion; the carcasses of dead animals. Whether the meal is alive or dead, Komodo’s detect their food primarily by scent. They pick up particles of air on their forked tongues and these are passed across receptors in the roof of their mouths called Jacobson’s organs. The system is so effective, Komodos can detect the scent of meat for vast distances and many lizards will congregate at a kill.

Because they do feed on carrion, a Komodo’s sharp teeth and saliva carry a wide variety of bacteria, many of which are highly septic. This means a Komodo bite can be as toxic as that of a venomous snake. Even prey that escape an initial attack, generally die within days, due to the onset of infections in their wounds. The Komodo’s aggression and size also make them dangerous to humans and fatal attacks do occur.

Komodos are egg laying reptiles. Females bury their eggs in large nests of leaf litter, where the warmth of the compost allows the babies to develop. Despite their fearsome reputation and danger to humans, Komodo Dragons are an endangered species. This is due to their having a limited range of a few small islands. They also regularly come into contact with landholders, who are known to poison dragons with baited animal carcasses. Komodos, however, do well in captivity and you can see them in zoos around Australia, including Taronga Zoo in Sydney and Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast. If you would like more information on the Komodo Dragon, Australia Zoo has some good online information, photos and a fact sheet at http://tiny.cc/2ewCu

Oh, and just in case you were wondering whether only giant things live on small tropical islands, scientists have recently discovered that the world’s smallest lizard is also a resident of a small tropical island. The tiny Dwarf Gecko was recently discovered by scientists on the Caribbean Island of Beata. Proving that not all residents of mysterious tropical islands are enormous, this amazing little lizard would fit comfortably onto the face of a twenty cent piece.
**Book Reviews**

**Eddie’s Garden and How to Make Things Grow**

Author and illustrator: Sarah Garland  
Publisher: Frances Lincoln  
Children’s Books, 2004  
RRP$15.95 Paperback

Sarah Garland is the veteran author and illustrator of more than 40 children’s books. She is also a mother and grandmother and that, perhaps, is what gives her colourful illustrations the gentle realism which draws the reader into an utterly believable world.

In *Eddie’s Garden and How to Make Things Grow*, Eddie, his little sister Lily and their mother decide to grow vegetables in their very own garden.

This is the story, from planting to table, with useful endnotes setting out gardening tips and instructions. The author’s attention to detail ensures that this can be read again and again. It is bound to interest even the most reluctant little gardener.


**Grow It, Eat It: Simple Gardening Projects and Delicious Recipes**

Author: Royal Horticultural Society  
Publisher: Dorling Kindersley, 2008  
RRP$29.95 Hardcover

Good ideas for meals are always welcome in our house. *Grow It, Eat It* is not just a recipe book though. It is a lovely child-friendly gardening manual with suggested recipes for the results.

In this durable hardback you’ll find all the inspiration you need to start a food garden. Glorious photographic strips set out step-by-step instructions in true Dorling Kindersley style. Information about how food grows (photosynthesis to pollination) and how to care for your crop, are followed by a delicious recipe or two for turning each kind of featured fresh produce into a healthy snack, lunch or dinner.

All eighty pages are packed full of information and ideas. Adults and children alike will enjoy this beautiful book. It is available from Leatherwood Books at: [www.leatherwoodbooks.com.au](http://www.leatherwoodbooks.com.au).
Fun Science Experiments
By Jamison Brown, 9

Fun Things to Do With Coke

1. Make a Coke Battery: get three glasses of coke, a small light bulb and light bulb screw, a couple of wires, 3 nails. Put the nails onto the end of the wires, then put the wires into each glass or coke. Attach each wire to the light bulb screw and then the light bulb should light up.

2. Mentos in Coke: If you drop a mentos lolly into a bottle of coke, it will make a fountain. If you put the lid on, it will explode. This can be dangerous so be careful.

3. Coke for Cleaning: If you put coins or nails in coke and leave them for a while, it will make them clean. It won’t clean your chicken bones though, it will dissolve them.

4. Coke Volcano: Make a volcano out of sand and put a cup of coke inside it. Then put some bicarb soda in the coke and it will fizz out of the volcano.

Coke is good for science experiments but whatever you do, don’t drink it because if can dissolve metal, think what it can do to your tummy!

The Mighty Murray

Reviewed by Leatherwood Books

The Mighty Murray
Author and illustrator: John Nicholson
Publisher: Allen & Unwin, 2005
RRP $15.95 Paperback

Never before have so many people been concerned about the state of Australia’s greatest river system. It is too late to save a large part of this system, but public awareness can turn around the process for the rest of the Murray.

In 2003 The Mighty Murray was crowned as an Honour Book at the Children’s Book Council of Australia’s Children’s Book of the Year Awards. Its strong message is even more important now, as the Murray’s fate remains unclear.

John Nicholson is an award-winning author with a passion for the Murray-Darling system and this is evident from this fascinating and beautifully illustrated account of the river’s past, present and future. On its 2500km journey, the Murray touches the lives of many diverse communities directly. Ensuring its future is important to many more.

Follow the Murray’s route across Australia and learn about the lives of those closest to this lifeline. Chapters include ‘The first people’, ‘Explorers and overlanders’, ‘Settlers and irrigators’ and ‘Engineering the Murray’. Each chapter is divided into several smaller, digestible sections with different typefaces, sizes and colours, making these attractive to reluctant readers. A preview is available on Google Books.

As the future of Australia’s waterways depends on the next generation, this work is very well suited to studies of society and the environment for children aged ten and older. The Mighty Murray is available from Leatherwood Books at www.leatherwoodbooks.com.au.

Peter Lilienfeld and Elsa Raubenheimer own and operate Leatherwood Books, along with Lila (12) and Sebastian (16) who fit in time to help between their homeschool studies.
Australian Nature Stories
by Michelle Morrow
http://www.downunderlit.com

Using nature stories as a part of your child’s education is such a valuable and enjoyable experience. We have read many stories and I must confess sometimes it was boring, but those times are in the minority.

Nature stories educate us about places we have never been and places that we have. But a nature story brings with it the literary strength of description with rich metaphors and detailed observations.

So often we just hear the cricket or trample the fallen leaves but do we really think about these things? Nature stories open up the world of nature to a child. They are not fact dissections with a few interesting points; they are stories with characters who take us on a journey.

Through nature stories, children read and are in awe about creation. Someone once said “nature is God’s second book”.

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know about the value of nature stories. They have many ‘dreamtime’ stories that focus on life lessons or creation. The Australian Aborigines have respect for the land. Today we are seeing a great resurgence of these nature stories. A visit to the library will see you bring back many treasures.

One of the earliest records of these stories is by Katherine Langaloh Parker (you can download this book from Project Gutenberg: http://tiny.cc/QLZ6L)

In the early 1900’s there was a move to educate Australian children about the Australian environment (instead of England). A few authors rose to the occasion and wrote nature stories that were inspiring, educational and very Australian.

At Downunder Literature we wanted to share some of these stories with you and have made a small collection of the best that we have found.

One of my favourite stories in this genre is The Gallant Gums by Amy Mack. This story tells about what happens when a raging bushfire tears through a gully. It also weaves in the Christian story of Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection. We loved this story so much we had it illustrated and produced into a book called Crowns of Fire. We are keen to add to the collection and welcome contributions.

The Warrior Queen
By Emily Cyrill Curran (11)

Far, far away, over land and sea, there was a woman of great bravery, a Queen of Britain called Boudicia: her husband was dead and two daughters she had and half of her husband’s land instead; the other half went to the Roman king, in hopes that he would leave the Queen alone.

But this hope had been short lived, for when the king of Rome found out that the other half of the land had not been given to himself he threw a terrible rage and he ordered men from the Roman land to go and be rude to her. But she was not daunted!

Oh no! Not Boudicia, Queen of Britain – she only sought to seek revenge on that mean and spiteful land.

So followed a series of battles, in most of which Britain came out victorious: on all but one sad day, when she could not bear the shame of it all and said “I would rather die myself than have my country suffer.”

So saying she poisoned herself and her girls and when the Romans broke open the door they found only a dead woman – they found Boudicia the warrior Queen; they found Boudicia, Queen of Britain.
Johannes Gutenberg
the Printer
by Chantelle May Meyers

The youngest son of a patrician family dating back to the thirteenth century was born around 1400 and died in 1468, in Mainz Germany. Henne Ga"nsfleisch zur Laden, known commonly as Johannes Gutenberg would some day change the world by developing the art of printing.

In the Far East, printing had been performed before Gutenberg's time. This was not so time-saving as it is in western countries because the Chinese alphabet has thousands of characters. Also, wood-block printing had been accomplished, but this was time-consuming and very complex. It involved inking up a wooden block that had all the words on it carved out in reverse, placing a sheet on top and rubbing it hard to make an impression. Johannes Gutenberg split every word up into its individual components.

Scarcely anything at all is known about Gutenberg's childhood except for the fact he moved in 1430 to Strasbourg. His father, Friele Ga"nsfleisch, married Else Wyrich in 1386 and they had three children: Friele, Else and Johannes. While Gutenberg's chief accomplishment was printing the Bible which was a large and daunting task, he actually taught a number of different things beforehand. These included the art of printing, the polishing of gems and the cutting of looking glasses.

Also, Gutenberg joined a goldsmith's guild. Barely anything is known about the printer's early life. Gutenberg patiently, successfully, and famously mastered the art of printing.

Numerous presses had already been made, for cheese, wine and paper and Gutenberg cleverly combined all of these ideas to create the wonderful movable type printing press. In the mid-fifteenth century, after Gutenberg had set up his press, he mass-produced indulgences (a pardoning of sins that the Catholic Church sold). He also printed Poem of the Last Judgment, and Calendar for 1448.

His major work was the Gutenberg Bible, composed entirely with movable type. This was manufactured with special inks and on paper, because vellum was too expensive. Producing types efficiently, quickly and cheaply was the key to printing. The master printer needed a lot of patience to produce his masterpiece.

Gutenberg was a goldsmith. Many individually moulded metal types were required for printing. Each letter had to be cut into a metal rod, called a patrice. This rod was then impressed into a soft metal, such as copper. These matrices were cast and moulded to form a right angled cube, making the face and the body of the type. Each type had to be exactly the same height. Being a goldsmith certainly helped Johannes with his printing.

For printing, Gutenberg greatly required paper, not vellum. A new, oil-based ink was needed for printing, because the usual water based inks were not suitable. Gutenberg's new press was made with screws, which evenly transferred the ink on to the paper. Because vellum was too expensive, paper was used.

Gutenberg's major and most beautiful project was the 42 line Bible (B42). While this breath-taking Bible was composed of one thousand, two hundred and eighty two pages, it was actually made in two volumes.

With only 20 staff, Gutenberg made two hundred and ninety different characters and the ornamental initials and signs were carried out later by an illuminator and a columnist. Out of the one hundred and eighty copies made, it is assumed that one hundred and fifty were made of paper and the remaining thirty were made on exquisite parchment. Forty-eight copies remain in existence today. The Gutenberg Bible is certainly one of the most significant books in all the world.

Although he is one of the most famous men in history, Johannes' childhood life remains a mystery. This goldsmith developed the art of printing. While many think of Gutenberg just printing the Bible with his wonderful, movable type, he actually printed other things such as calendars and poems. Gutenberg's invention is undeniably one of the most useful in the world. If books were still hand copied, we would only own a few if any at all.

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New Oxford American Dictionary

Above: Johannes Gutenberg

Below: Page from the Gutenberg Bible
Introducing Children to Art: The Katie and I Spy Series
by Peter Lilienfeld

Homeschooling should be fun. The best lessons are the ones that are so absorbing that they don’t feel like lessons at all. Two series of children’s books set out to introduce children to art in such a way that they enjoy and appreciate the experience.

In James Mayhew’s Katie’s Picture Show, Katie – an adventurous, self-willed little girl – visits an art gallery with her grandmother one rainy London day. Disobeying the Do Not Touch signs, she touches a painting (The Hay Wain, by John Constable) only to find that she has passed right through and finds herself inside the painting!

This leads to a series of adventures, as Katie skips in and out of a number of well-known paintings, causing mischief as she goes. Each painting Katie climbs into is an attractive reproduction of the original, with the other drawings in pen and coloured ink.

This imaginative fantasy is a wonderful way to introduce children to art through fun. Katie’s Picture Show is the first in this delightful series and is followed by Katie meets the Impressionists, Katie and the Mona Lisa and Katie and the Sunflowers.

The other series is Lucy Micklethwait’s wonderful I Spy books. Each book takes a theme such as the alphabet, numbers, animals, shapes or colours, and uses it to play “I spy” with famous paintings. In this way, through play, children scrutinise these masterpieces while at the same time learning about numbers, letters, colours and shapes.

Both series are suitable for children from four to ten years, although the writer finds that children of sixty also enjoy them.

Katie’s Picture Show, Katie meets the Impressionists, Katie and the Mona Lisa and Katie and the Sunflowers (James Mayhew), I Spy an Alphabet in Art, I Spy Numbers in Art, I Spy Animals in Art, I Spy Shapes in Art, I Spy Colours in Art (Lucy Micklethwait) are all available online from homeschool book specialists Leatherwood Books at www.leatherwoodbooks.com.au.
Henry Moore 1898-1986
by Bernie Meyers

One of the great fathers of modern sculpture, Henry Moore first served as a young soldier in World War I. While serving his country, he almost lost his eyesight before he had a chance to pursue his love of art. Attending art school in Britain during the 1920s, he trained in Classical and Renaissance techniques.

During this time, he also spent countless hours in the British Museum observing carvings from other cultures. His fascination with the human form appears to have begun at this time. After his graduation, he was employed by the Royal College of Art as a tutor, but soon quit his position due to criticism. The other staff considered his progressive ideas would corrupt the young!

He was now free to pursue radical inventions, although his work was misunderstood and ridiculed except by those who had already accepted Picasso’s art. This was, after-all, only the beginning of the modern art movement. Filling sketch book after sketch book with images, his inspiration came from commonplace forms in nature: an egg, a pebble or a bone. In these shapes he visualised the semblance of the human figure. He understood the wholeness of creation and concluded that the underlying organic life force which is in people is also found in the rest of nature.

During the late 1930s he lived in a small country cottage. The artist gathered stones from a nearby quarry and placed them far away so they appeared like sculptures on the horizon. He made drawings of these imagined sculptures and considered their placement from this early stage. They were designed to echo the contours of the landscape. One he envisaged in an orchard, another was pictured with sheep grazing and so on. Some of these were eventually fashioned into full size pieces and installed on location.

Late one evening in 1940 Henry caught the underground train to his home. It was World War 2. The platforms were crowded with people cocooned in blankets. They were using the train stations as air raid shelters, seeking protection from the bombs. This experience had a deep impact on Henry. Although he felt that it would be an intrusion to draw these people as they slept, the images were etched in his mind so that he was able to recall them well enough to make insightful drawings back in the studio.

He was appointed an official war artist from 1940 until 1942. The ink and wax drawings he made of the draped figures were exhibited in the National Gallery London. Unframed pictures were hung on the otherwise bare walls. All the masterpieces had been removed and stored safely away from the dangers of war. Even though his images were modern and unfamiliar to the people of London, he had so sensitively captured the comradely spirit of the moment that the public accepted him and his art.

During the later part of his life, Henry used natural objects such as pebbles, flints and bones as art: he barely changed them but simply arranged them as sculptures adding small parts to complete their form. His hands still constantly feeling the shapes and textures of the pieces he held, he sensed new images and crafted immense sculptures of the human figure. He returned often over the years to the themes of mother and child and families.

This man, known as the greatest figurative sculptor of the 20th Century captured the human spirit, beauty, rhythm and natural forms in a unique way. He carved not only with his hands and eyes but with his heart and left great treasures on paper, in stone and bronze for us to ponder and enjoy.

Art Ideas inspired by Henry Moore

Visit http://www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk/ for lots of links to information and images.

Sculpture – try combining stones and other natural objects to create imaginative sculptures. You can even set them outside and photograph them close up as if they are huge sculptures in the landscape.

Ink and Wax Resist Drawing

Materials needed:
- a candle (white wax gives the best contrast)
- ink – any colour
- soft brushes or a sponge
- cartridge or watercolour paper (thinner paper won’t support the wet ink very well)

Using a candle, draw an image onto the page. Brush or sponge ink over the wax drawing to reveal the ‘secret’ image. Young kids love the surprise and older kids can make some interesting and creative artworks.
However, a few words of caution. Some online searches are free to access and some are not. Those which charge money to search often have other annoying links which will continue to bother you every time you go online! You might also find yourself signing up for something you really don’t want or need. I have also discovered that family searching online means you need to have good virus software on your computer. Government provided web sites, or those provided by church or volunteer groups are usually the best, safest and most reliable sources of information. They are usually free as well! There is a list of good websites at the end of this article.

The local library can also be a great source of information. Some libraries have a family history section and the librarian will be able to help you with information on how to search in the best places. You might just be amazed what you can uncover – I was! State libraries in each capital city have huge reserves of information and with much of it online these can be of enormous assistance. Local museums, historical societies and churches may also be able to help you.

So, why not go and plant a family tree and happy searching! Here is a list of websites that I found especially helpful:

**Australia**
- [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)

**Australian States**
- VIC: [http://tiny.cc/Osnop](http://tiny.cc/Osnop)
  - [http://tiny.cc/k4spY](http://tiny.cc/k4spY)
- ACT: [http://tiny.cc/uLDTp](http://tiny.cc/uLDTp)

**Overseas**
- [http://www.freecen.org.uk](http://www.freecen.org.uk)
- [http://www.freereg.org.uk](http://www.freereg.org.uk)
- [http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/)
- Ireland: [http://tiny.cc/hxjNM](http://tiny.cc/hxjNM)
- NZ: [http://tiny.cc/sz5xG](http://tiny.cc/sz5xG)

**World, especially USA and UK**
- [http://tiny.cc/kMUq5](http://tiny.cc/kMUq5)
Alicia is a special needs homeschooling student.

Alicia recently attended the Australian War Memorial in Canberra to learn more about animal's role in war and peace keeping times, displayed in the 'Animals in War' exhibition.

Sandy, wearing the bridle given to Sandy by Lady Bridges, went to war in Egypt 1915. After Sandy's owner, General Bridges died in battle, Sandy was taken to France to serve. Returning home to Melbourne in 1918 after quarantine in England. Sandy was the only horse to return home.

Maxine's Camel. Purchased for her 2nd birthday by her father in 1941 serving in Syria. Taking four weeks or more to reach Ballarat, Maxine received the camel after news of her father's death, now a treasure in memory of her father Private Geoffrey Maxwell Wheeler.

A salute to the daily duties and admirable deeds of the countless animals who have worked to enrich our lives. Pets and mascots were evidence of humanity in most awful conditions.

Driver, an expert rodent catcher in First World War trenches of France and Belgium, was successfully smuggled home to Sydney in 1919 by his master Leslie.

The horses (Walers), were unsuited for the Western Front, as mounted soldiers were no match for artillery, or the trenches and barbed wire. However, they excelled in the desert conditions of the Middle East.

Buff the German messenger dog was lured with food and captured by our soldiers during World War 1. This took place at the trenches outside Villers Bretonneux. Nicknamed 'Digger', Buff was regarded a trophy. Loyalty is a defining trait for dogs, but for a hungry dog engaged in war, food is a good enough lure to break ranks. (Picture - top middle column)

Mrs Cowie outside of Sydney, cared for pets of men on active service.

Accidentally killed by a vehicle, soldiers held a special service for Merlin before his burial at Tarin Kowt. Pictured below checking items at a local market with handler Peter Lawlis, Afghanistan 2007.
Making dolls with old fashioned wooden clothes pins can be loads of fun for both girls and boys. It is a simple craft to prepare using mostly things found around the house, the only problem being that the kids (and the big kids) want to keep making more and more dolls.

I had visions of making an entire time line with peg dolls, starting with Adam and Eve with fig leaves, then pharaohs with sculpey head dresses, Cleopatra, King Arthur, Leonardo da Vinci, Queen Elizabeth, Captain Cook…

Sadly, time doesn’t seem to be on our side and life is filled with more pressing tasks, but we have thoroughly enjoyed our peg doll sessions.

Materials:
- Wooden clothes pins (these can be found in the craft dept in Spotlight or bargain stores)
- glue (clear quick drying craft glue is best)
- felt and fabric scraps
- beads and sequins for buttons and jewels
- ribbons, wool, embroidery threads
- wool or fleece for hair, history books with pictures of people dressed in the clothes of the day

A few tips:
- non fraying fabrics or felt is quick and easy to use
- make sure you have a strong, quick drying glue, it can be frustrating when things keep falling off
- check which way the legs are facing before gluing the clothes on, we had a few with sideways legs.
- have some fun and make one yourself! I made Emma and Mr Darcy, but Emma found the entire exercise most disagreeable and I was obliged to change him into her Mr Knightly.

Collectors Corner
Beverley Paine

Collecting opens up new worlds for children: it sparks their imaginations about life in the past, and maybe even prompts them to think about what might happen in the future: What will people think of the toys they cherish today in a hundred years time? Will they survive the passage of time, or will they become worn and eroded, like the old coin they found at the back of the drawer? Collecting helps children build a concept of time.

Collecting is a wonderfully creative past time. You get to choose what you want to collect – and it can be anything at all! You also get to use your imagination when working out how to display your collections. Some people hide their collections away in boxes and drawers to keep them safe or tidy, while others turn them into works of art, proudly on display.

Every collection, and every item in each collection, tells a story. That’s the best bit about collections. There is your story: the story of when you found the item, what you were doing at the time, why you kept it and what it means to you.

Then there is the story of the object: where it came from, what it is made of, how old is it, who did it belong to, what is it worth, why was it made… and so on! These collected items can tell us a lot about the culture and times from which they come! They can also tell us a lot about the materials and tools people used to make them, revealing the history of technology.

Collections teach us about important people and events and what life was like in the past. Museums have collections of stuffed animals, rocks, pressed plants: these teach us about the nature of these things. Taking care of collections involves doing things like measuring, keeping accurate records, observing, comparing – valuable skills that transfer to almost every area of life.

Historians use collections to help them understand how people behave; why civilisations grow and advance and why they sometimes disappear. An old scarred coin can tell us so much about how people lived thousands of years ago!

We sometimes collect things to jog our own memories, such as photographs in albums, or videos we put up on YouTube of our holidays or latest project. I collect pebbles and rocks to remind me of places I’ve visited: they are nothing special, just little mementos that will mean nothing to anyone else but bring back happy memories for me.

Best of all, collections let us share our knowledge with others. When we show off and compare our collections with others we learn different things. Collecting can be a great way to meet and make new friends. Why not start a collection and tell us about it in Stepping Stones for Home Educators? Send your stories to Beverley mailto:editor@hea.asn.au.
I joined my first Yahoo group in 2001 and I remember it took some time to get the hang of being the member of an internet based social group. People forget that the normal rules of conversation don’t apply because most communication between people is non-verbal. That, though, doesn’t come through on email, even with a liberal dose of emoticons (those little smiley or not so smiley faces) or acronyms that spell out a reaction, like LOL (laugh out loud).

Communicating by email is a cross between writing and speaking. If we write the thoughts as we think them, our messages often come across confused, because our brains usually think in fragments, sometimes in pictures or ‘feelings’ rather than words – and seldom in whole, perfectly grammatically constructed sentences and paragraphs!

Few of us have the time or inclination to write emails the way we would write a letter or an article. Some of us don’t bother with punctuation or grammar. Some of us are two finger typists – email is not a medium we’re comfortable with because it takes forever to type. All of these reasons, and more, account for why emails we send are sometimes not received the way we want them to be!

Email communication is a difficult medium to get right. I’m not a fan of the saying ‘practice makes perfect’ but, in the case of emailing, frequent emailing is probably the easiest way to get the hang of how to use the medium effectively. But it can be fraught with problems, some of which can quickly escalate into conflict and, most worrisome of all, ‘flame wars’.

Becoming a group owner takes a few minutes and usually seems like a good idea at the time. It does involve taking on responsibility for the way members of the group behave. It’s like inviting a whole group of strangers into your home, or your friend’s house. There are some basic standards and ground rules you want everyone to comply with so that you can all achieve the group’s goals or purpose.

Plus, if you have started a Yahoo Group, as owner or moderator you need some measure of control to abide by the guidelines and conditions set by Yahoo. I don’t think Yahoo checks groups, but it will follow up on complaints. You can find the guidelines on this page: http://tiny.cc/1BpUt

In addition, Yahoo Group Help Topics has information for group owners and moderators. Have a read of the topics under ‘Inviting, Promoting and Managing’ on this page: http://tiny.cc/HI67G

I started my own group shortly after being a member of a Yahoo group. It is important to me to work at keeping my groups on-topic and pleasant places so that members get what they need from interacting with others in the group. These are some of the things I do:

1. I think my personality comes through and sets the tone of the groups. In order to achieve this I need to post frequently and reply to posts. This is a gentle ‘example setting’ moderating technique similar to how we behave as adults around children. That’s not to say that I think of the members of my group as children, but that if I wouldn’t do or say something in the presence of a child because it isn’t behaviour I’d want that child to emulate, then it isn’t appropriate for my group either.

2. I am very careful about who I allow to join the group. I have set my groups to require me to approve members before joining. This helps to keep the ‘scammers’ out. If there isn’t enough information entered about why someone wants to join the group, I email and ask them to supply more. If I’m not satisfied that their intention is in keeping with the group’s purpose, I don’t join them.

3. When people get off-topic I skillfully bring the subject back on topic without needing to say ‘that’s
off-topic’. For example, in my main groups, I work at cultivating my ability to relate almost any conversation to learning – and home education is about learning. It is easy to focus on what is being learned or needs to be learned. By bringing the subject back to learning, I’m reminding people of the group’s reason for being. Different groups have different purposes – if people get too off-topic, simply post one or more on-topic posts and swamp them that way. Rather than point out where people are straying, remind them by example of the group’s purpose by creating a few on-topic posts.

4. I remove posts that I think are controversial. I’ve only had to do that once, and then I had to apologize because I’d completely misread it. Luckily the poster forgave me. I publicly posted my apology, I think it is important for people to see that I am a learner, rather than an expert. And if I feel that someone is scamming, I ask them both on and off the group to use the group appropriately and give them the chance to reply.

5. Most groups set up a regular email reminding posters of the group’s rules (netiquette), but I haven’t yet had the need to do this. It is a popular and useful method of reinforcing appropriate email communication behaviour. Many group users aren’t familiar with emailing and appreciate an explanation of terms, acronyms, how to search archives etc.

6. I don’t encourage nitpicking, particularly about spelling and grammar. I accept that people who come to the group come from different backgrounds and abilities. I see this kind of nitpicking happening on other groups and it can get nasty quickly. If someone engages in nitpicking behaviour I usually email the ‘victim’ privately to check that they haven’t been offended. I don’t start up a conversation on the group unless others jump on the bandwagon. My aim then is to encourage tolerance.

7. Looking through the archives shows that I am the person that posts the most on my groups. I believe that kind of ‘hands-on’ gentle moderation is necessary. I believe that one of the reasons homeschooling works well for children is that, as parents, we’re there most of the time, gently supervising, ‘keeping an eye on the play’, always ready to ‘head-off’ potential or escalating conflicts. Sometimes however we do need to sit down and go through the ground rules.

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Time Management Techniques for the Homeschooling Entrepreneur

Audrey Harvey

When you’re homeschooling, you’re juggling a few more balls than a regular stay-at-home mum. You are still cook, cleaner, chauffeur and all the other roles a mum plays, but you also add ‘teacher’ to your job description.

Can you add ‘business owner’ to that list? Can you really find the time to fit one more thing in? Yes!

To get everything done and maintain your sanity, you really need some effective time management techniques. You can come up with your own ideas to fit it all in by talking with your partner, but right now I’ll share with you some of my favourites.

I can’t function without a daily ‘to do’ list. I have categories in my list: children’s stuff, business stuff, household stuff. Within each list I have priorities. So, if everything doesn’t get done, I can rest easy knowing that the big, or most important, jobs are covered. Each night I make a ‘to do’ list for the next day, so I can get started straight away.

I also schedule my day, to a degree. When you’re working with children, nothing can be cast in stone. When we’re doing schoolwork, I plan to do maths and English in the morning and schedule fun hands-on science at different times. The same can work for your business. Schedule blocks of time for your business and as best you can, stick to it.

Another of my favourite time management techniques, which you may or may not feel comfortable with, is to relax a little about the state of my home. My children are well educated, my family is fed and we have clean clothes to wear. I may not have got around to sweeping the floor this morning, but I’ve decided that ‘that’s okay’.

Next, look at what you can delegate. One thing I really had to overcome was my dislike of asking for help. However, I’ve discovered that if I want to get things done and leave myself time for my business, I can’t do it all myself. As my children get older, they are more able to help with chores. Delegating can even go so far as to order your grocery shopping online.

As your business grows and starts to earn an income, outsourcing is one of the most important time management techniques you can master. Find an assistant to promote and market your website, or write your content, and you can concentrate on further developing your business.

Monitor your time online. There are lots of great forums where you can learn a lot, and fun social sites like Twitter, but they can really chew up the hours. Perhaps use the forums as a reward when the job is done. Sometimes using forums and searching the internet are part of your research and your promotion of your business, but you know when you’re working and when you’re not. If you don’t take on board any of the other time management techniques, don’t forget this one: self discipline. It’s hard, but without it you’ll get nothing done.

Lastly – and this is a big one for many women – give yourself permission to take the time to build a business. It will be great for your family; you can perhaps pay off that debt or save for a vacation. Just as importantly it will be great for you. As a stay-at-home mum, sometimes we devalue our contribution to our family. While what we already do is vitally important, having a business you have built yourself can be wonderful for your self esteem.

Nobody said it would be easy, but it will be worth it. Time management techniques will help you get there.

Audrey is a homeschooling mum in Brisbane who writes a regular blog showing homeschooling parents how they can earn an income online without getting caught up in the scams and without investing a lot of money: www.homeschoolingincome.com
When Groups Go Sour: helping our children become better friends and avoiding group conflicts.

By Beverley Paine

Sometimes, not often, but sometimes, at homeschool group a couple of children fall out of friendship. In such close knit groups this can be quite unsettling for everyone. I have to admit I used to over-react and try to coax the children into being friends again. They rarely appreciated my interference and most of the time they didn’t need it either. It usually didn’t take long before the grumpy youngsters were best friends again, problem forgotten.

That’s something I learned from children: it’s okay to ‘let go’ and simply get on with life sometimes, rather than always analyse the situation, resolve the conflict, apologise and forgive. Children move quickly, physically and mentally, and my clumsy attempts at patching things up were too slow. I know this because the children would look bored, as well as pained, that mum was ‘doing her thing again’.

Every now and then though, one friend would cross the line with his or her behaviour and the whole group dynamic would be shattered. No one wanted to play with that child again. The parents would gradually ostracize the family of the offending child. Excuses might be made that would confuse and hurt the excluded family. It is sometimes easier to reject a friend altogether than to complain about her child’s offensive behaviour.

Often, the final action that breaks the friendship comes after many attempts by the other children and families to solve the problem. Children are amazingly resilient and forgiving. Usually when issues between children come to the attention of parents it is because the children have already exhausted their repertoire of problem solving skills. They’ve had enough. It’s harder when the children have reached the point where they gang up on the offending child. This is well past the point of intervention by adults.

No one should have to put up with offensive behaviour. As parents we need to champion our children: this doesn’t mean immediately taking their side or protecting them. It means showing them how to avoid conflicts by being better friends in the first place.

Probably the most important way we do this is by modeling positive and constructive friendship behaviours with our friends. Reading books and watching movies about friendships and talking about the way in which the characters resolve their conflicts is another tool we use.

Few of us are taught what it is to be a friend – we learn it by becoming friends, by having friends, and by being a friend. Often this isn’t in the most ideal conditions. Schooled children learn friendship in a competitive environment. I’ve watched countless children new to homeschooling disrupt the happy dynamics of a homeschool group, with games they’ve brought from the school playground. These games are often not very friendly in nature and set one group up against another group, or victimize one or more children.

Adults say it’s all part of learning and growing up and making friends. I don’t think so. But that way of playing is a fact of life and there isn’t much we can do – other than promote home education – to change it. We need to help our children find ways of coping with this kind of established anti-social behaviour.

When we, as adults, put up with this kind of anti-social behaviour what does that say about the way we think? What are the thoughts that motivate acceptance of it? Are these the thoughts we want our children to embrace and internalize, the same way we did?

For me, I was always afraid of what people would think of me if I didn’t go
along with the crowd, even when what was happening didn’t make sense, wasn’t friendly, hurt others or myself… I believed the nonsense that I wouldn’t be liked or respected if I stood up for myself or my friends or what I believed. Because my children were seldom subjected to anti-social playground behaviour they didn’t have that set of fears and behaved differently. They weren’t afraid to put a stop to anti-social games, or to simply refuse to play. This challenged me at first – I was afraid my children wouldn’t fit in, or wouldn’t have many friends, or they wouldn’t be liked, etc. My children lived and operated in a new paradigm though, one in which their self-confidence and respect for themselves and their friends took centre stage. My fears proved to be unfounded and essentially irrational.

Children are taught to be unfriendly, selfish, mean, nasty, and anti-social. They are taught that to be a ‘good friend’ they need to put up with that kind of behaviour and that in some instances it is even okay to instigate it. This is a corruption of the whole idea of friendship. We don’t have to play the social game by those rules!

Facebook and other internet social networks is the ultimate expression of this corruption of the concept of friendship. It is understandable that we and our children think twice about ending friendships. However, when friendships consistently involve disrespectful, aggressive, violent or hurtful behaviour it is time to think carefully about how healthy it is to have that friendship in our lives.

As parents we need to help our children end friendships that hurt them. In our own friendships we need to model the importance of communication, of seeking clarification, of listening attentively, of saying what we mean and being honest about our feelings. We also need to use language in ways that build strong scaffolds for our children to use in their relationships. Sometimes this means being explicit and spelling out in more words than we’d normally use in conversation, with the same care and attention we’d give to helping our children learn any other part of the ‘curriculum’.

One of the most useful tools I’ve found is using ‘I’ statements, changing my colloquial use of the word ‘you’ in everyday speech to take ownership of my thoughts and beliefs, rather than projecting them onto the universal other, ‘you’. This sidesteps the issue of blame and recriminations, which doesn’t generally lead to solutions or ‘win-win’ outcomes. Instead of shouting “You always quit, you’re a loser!” to manipulate someone to stay and play (fear of being abandoned) communicate what you really want: “I like winning, but I like playing with you more – please stay and play and I’ll help you learn how to win too.”

By modeling this way of talking about what is happening in our friendships our children naturally pick up the tools to manage and handle their relationships. It is the cornerstone of assertive behaviour and helps children build friendships by first getting to know themselves – the natural way to learn socialization skills.

continued from Internet Cafe

Software Review: Armadillo Run
Reviewed by Bastian Russell, 13 years.

I have come across a game that is fun, challenging and educational. The object of the game is to build a structure that will help the armadillo into a portal to the next level. The game will teach your child about physics, maths and engineering, plus everyone enjoys a challenge! It will appeal to ages 10 and up.

You are given different materials such as cloth, metal sheet, metal bars, rockets, rubber and elastic, to complete different 3D levels within a certain budget.

You can trial this game for free at www.armadillorun.com. The $25 version is well worth it. It has a lot more levels. Enjoy!

continued from Town Hall

To read the full competition terms and conditions, go to http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au.

Tell us what you would do if you were the Children’s Commissioner for a day. Your entry can be in the form of story, poem, poster design, music or performance. You can enter as many times as you want. Closes on Friday 14 August 2009.
Art Hour didn’t really change my life. Like all occasions of minor revelation, this one quickly became obscured by the detail and the busyness of homeschool life. And really, it could have been Soccer Hour, or Bake-A-Cake Hour or Dance-Around-the-House-to-the-Four-Seasons Hour. Maybe even Maths Hour? It’s just that ‘the arts’, for me, is a shortcut to meaning and beauty, themes my thoughts had been humming on. My Thoughts went something like this:

A child’s life isn’t mere preparation for her ‘real’, adult life. To be 4 years old is of as much significance as being 40 years old. Why shouldn’t a 4 year old have as much beauty, meaningful work and leisure in her day as I crave in mine? Why fob her off with ugliness – rubbishy toys, too much time cooped up indoors or dragged around malls and play-centres – or worse still, force her too early into a world of worksheets and assembly lines – when she could be learning the daily rhythms of work and play in a home environment?

I’m preaching to the choir here, I know. And, like all Thoughts, these ones got a little woolly when put into lovely, chaotic practice. My 4 year old at the time had a charming way (having been deprived of the battery toy, the DVD and the wonders of Wizzy World) of moaning “I don’t know what to doooo…”

Cue patient mummy.
“Shall we do some lovely beeswax?”
“No thanks.” He was, at least, a courteous moaner.
“How about the library? No? A nice walk to collect treasures for the nature table?”
What patient mummy really needed to do was take it from the top.

Art Hour was how they actually worked, those fine Thoughts of mine, one particularly coherent afternoon. I sent the bored child away (nicely) and I cleaned up the kitchen. Table extended, I laid out all the watercolours we had – tubes, pencils, crayons. I set out jars of water, brushes, and the kind of quality paper you spend a good 15 minutes in internal debate over before purchase. Then I sat down and started to draw.

Within minutes the little one had sniffed me out and was getting seriously stuck into mixing colours. (When he began requesting “another piece of paper please”, I promise I only winced on the inside.) For bonus points, my eldest joined us and started on the latest in her ‘Girls on Cliffs’ series, and my art phobic middle child (“my drawing is terrible”) decided it was getting lonely outside and plonked herself down in the kitchen to paint a portrait of her ballet class.

The watercolours were nice, the expensive paper even nicer, but what I really noticed was the silence. Concentration. Beauty. Relaxation. The things I’d been thinking of and trying to offer.

And really, all I had to do was live it myself and when the children appeared, allow them to live it with me.

Melissa lives in Sydney and homeschools Emily (11), Liz (10) and Noah (5).
Many beginning home educators face questions from friends and relatives about how they might teach science without a laboratory. Sometimes we may even wonder ourselves about the kinds of resources we can find compared to those found in schools.

The science question has been well and truly answered by Geetha Narayanan’s *Project Drishya (Vision)* which demonstrates that science can be learned even by Bangalore's street kids without access to school facilities.

The line of questioning on resources rarely flows the other way. For example, how do schools create authentic learning when all they have are classrooms in which to hold and teach children? This article is about *authentic learning*: the kind of learning found in doing real things, which develops practical and abstract knowledge; instead of learning abstractly about subjects in a classroom-like place or state of mind.

Before continuing, however let’s return to this idea of schooling as learning. When I think of schools, I think of fish all swimming in one direction, then in another. When I think of classrooms or even school laboratories and other practical spaces, I imagine schooling in the industrial revolution. There are plenty of novels of that period, about school ma’ams and masters not sparing the rod as they seek to discipline their unruly rural pupils into a new generation of industrial workers.

Since then, schooling has become so much part of modern culture, it is almost unthinkable to question its legitimacy, or even less its increasing demands for abstract learning. Perhaps my image of schooling is a little outmoded, there may be lots of interesting places inside schools where authentic learning could take place, but my image of factory like school is probably still not that far from the truth.

At least two ex-school principals (Loader 2007, Warner 2006) have called for educational reform in the 21st Century, because they recognise that learning in the world today has outstripped the relevance of industrialised schooling models. In our family we still have a school-like curriculum, but for quite some years I’ve been far more interested in the learning that seems to happen outside, beyond, and over and above it.

I’m introducing the magic of our garage this way, because I only recently discovered it as a power I hadn’t fully understood. In the past, I was largely blinded by thinking of our home education more in the context teaching perhaps as a board of studies might conceive it. I wonder if they believe in magic, nature or Creation in the way I have come to know it. “What exactly is this magic?” you may ask.

Our garage and a number of other places around our previous homes have always been sites of practical productivity. When our first children were small, we built our own home. When we moved to our current home we extended it upwards. Each Christmas there have been small projects secretly under construction, later revealed as presents on Christmas day; arks, fortresses, doll’s houses, tables, picture frames, the list has grown over the years as various family members, mainly the males took up residence in the garage. By and large the girls tended to occupy other equally productive spaces, with appreciably less sawdust.

Over the years, I’ve largely forgotten these things from the early years of our family life, until now. My own work became increasingly more abstract, during twelve years of part-time postgraduate study and teaching. I largely disconnected from the day to day workings of home education. I put aside all these memories of past family constructions.

Our HE curriculum has always had some craft and woodworking components, but it was the boys in particular who took to self-directed learning in constructive arts. Pieces of furniture, carving in talc, eventually violins, all began to appear. I was always delighted to see these things, in which I had almost no input. Invariably there was a craft textbook or project book with designs. Sometimes bought, but as
with the violins, often borrowed from the local library. A pattern of authentic self-directed learning emerged and grew in strength in each individual, later to be emulated by siblings.

In large families, parents tend to lament that the care and attention given to the first child goes un-replicated by the seventh! Television denied to the first, is commonplace for the last, as they sneak, increasingly and skilfully into the viewing circle of siblings’ horror movies. There is magic in it, while as a parent one is not watching, the same processes are happening elsewhere – in the garage, for example. Skills and practices are being tacitly absorbed and learned earlier by younger siblings. No one is aware of knowledge creeping in. It is deep below any level of assessment, or even below any frame-making for assessment. I doubt that one could intentionally develop a test for it. It would be just as difficult to assess this magic learning taking place as it would be for the damage caused by TV and DVD watching. Should we attribute this or that trait to Big Brother, Lord of the Rings or Shrek? The questions: ‘what was learned in the garage?’; ‘what was modelled before?’; ‘what will be the future usefulness of this unidentified secret knowledge?’ all remain unanswerable, until something emerges from the garage and it is connected to a future event.

Early last year, the biggest project of all did emerge through the roller door and even though it was magnificent, it still did not trigger any true understanding of the real magic for me. Our garage was always too small to fit our people-mover. As a space it was a bit TARDIS like; small roller door, but half the floor area of the entire house inside. Much of the space is occupied by stuff, the surplus of a family of nine living in a consumer society.

Every so often a project is declared; much of the space is emptied, as it comes under a new project manager. In 2007 a homeschool Year 11 project filled the space to capacity with a new project, the building of an 18 foot sailing cutter. As with all the earlier projects, I checked the budget, occasionally asked insensitive questions, and became increasingly tentative in questioning as the project progressed. I've always felt some trepidation venturing too far into the magic space, when something is underway.

There has hardly ever been any teaching in the garage. Comments are controlled, questions are more frequently unanswerable, until something emerges from the garage. It was not until the cutter finally slipped from the carport this Christmas and I looked through the roller door to see the next project in the early stages, that it hit me. There were the stations and the first strips of a 16 foot strip canoe, as if it had come from nowhere. This wasn’t Year 11, it was Year 9. The canoe was needed to retrieve model boats on the local dam. Its construction naturally followed the last project out the garage. Magic.

Constructivist educational theory holds that the individual learns in an environment. We learn from each other in the places that we inhabit and we change the place as we learn and inhabit it. We become part of what is possible in such places. This is the magic of the garage, but it is not just the garage, it is the kitchen, it could be the garden, it may be the sports field, or even the virtual space of a web-server. Under other circumstances it might be a school science lab. Clearly one doesn’t have to fret if there is not science lab or gym at home, because there are plenty more spaces to inhabit that can support even more useful learning.

The important lesson seems to be to seek out good spaces that fruit. They say 'travel broadens the mind', but perhaps it is not so much the travel, but the spaces we choose to inhabit, and the instruction we decide to give or withhold in regard to such spaces. Instruction can be useful, but it can also be noise in the learning space. Finding out and respecting what is already happening; understanding that not all learning may be visible, or explicable, can aid learning in productive, creative spaces. There is a place for well-framed questions or even totally off-beat questions in the magic of these situations. One just never knows what may emerge from the garage next.

References:
Narayan G. 2008 'Moving Beyond the Plenitude’ Ed Media, Vienna

Video of presentation
http://elearningblog.tugraz.at/archives/989

Also see: http://tiny.cc/2tuY9


My Daughter’s Journey to Employment.
Gwen Thring

Susan is the eldest of our six children. She has always been home educated using a variety of workbooks. I guess you could say she’s had an eclectic work book based education.

When she was only six, I decided to join Susan into the local Joey Scout Mob (kept the socialisation worries in the extended family content). Over time Susan moved up through the ranks of Cubs then Scouts until finally arriving at Venturers. Only problem with that is there is no Venturer Unit in our small town of Denman! The nearest unit is in Muswellbrook, 26km away. Fortunately that is also where we shop, undertake music lessons, and where my husband works.

Our routine became shopping, music then drop Susan off at work with Dad. She would read a book while he finished work then they’d have dinner together. Dad took Susan to Venturers then they both came home. Eventually he asked Susan to do a bit of filing as he was running out of time and wouldn’t get it finished that day. It wasn’t long before the Administration Officer noticed what was happening and asked if Susan would like to come in for a whole day. ‘Work experience’ became a one day a week event for a year.

When the big boss from Melbourne came up for a visit he wanted to know why “that little girl isn’t in more often”. He was surprised to discover she was only fourteen as he considered her contribution to the office valuable.

Last year Susan was made a permanent casual employee working one day a week during term time and up to five days per week during holidays. Until the Administration Officer resigned: then, for a few weeks until a replacement was found, Susan, at only fifteen years of age, was the entire Administration staff for an office of more than twelve people! Not bad for someone who hadn’t even finished Year 10!

After a new Administration Officer was employed, Susan spent the remainder of last year working a minimum of two days per week, at least one of them on her own. She was able to finance her trip to Perth in January with the Venturers for their major camp. Now, work is putting her through TAFE (Cert 3 in Business Administration) and she works every spare minute she has. Funny thing is, Susan still hasn’t finished her Year 10 work!

Her long term plan is to complete AMEB 6 in Classical Singing next year and go to the Conservatorium in Newcastle the year after to become a singing teacher. Susan doesn’t consider this time a waste even though it’s not her ultimate career of choice. She is aware her office skills will always come in handy and the quality of reference she will receive will have the value of gold.

Susan will be seventeen in August. By then she will be one of those rare people, a school leaver with both qualifications and experience.

The Review Process
Cynthia Marston

When we began our homeschooling journey, one of the most confronting experiences for me was the review process with the Education Department of South Australia. I knew deep down that I was doing what was right for my daughter and our family, but in reality, presenting my reasons and preparations to an Education Department official seemed another matter altogether. So, having experienced several reviews and coming up for another, I thought I’d jot down a few of the things I’ve learned and share with those who may be starting out...

First of all trust yourself, you can do this. Remember why you decided to homeschool in the first place. You are able to provide a comprehensive education for your child(ren), you know them better than anyone else and if you follow your instincts, you will be able to give them all they need to thrive.
Be prepared… Decide basically how you want to do things. I looked at the subject areas on the SACSA website at www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/. There is a lot of information which may be overwhelming at first, but if you break it down, it basically lists age and subject areas and a general idea of what similar aged children may be learning. You don’t have to memorise all the details, but I found it helpful just to familiarise myself a bit with the overall structure of things.

I tend to look at my children’s interests and fit the SACSA areas around that (often after spontaneous learning has taken place). Most topics can be tackled using concrete learning, which tends to make things a bit more interesting (good homeschooling books and resources are invaluable here, as well as your local library, the homeschool library, garage sales, op-shops, and salvage places like That’s Not Garbage, can keep costs to a minimum).

There also tends to be a lot of ‘cross-curriculum learning’ taking place as life is full of learning experiences, but knowing how to label different experiences into subject areas can be invaluable in preparing for a review.

For example, cooking can be classified as maths (measurement, counting), design and technology (planning, method and evaluation), science (change of state as the food is cooked, reactions between materials), LOTE (cooking foods from different cultures, origins of food), English (sharing culinary terms and language, poems, songs for younger learners), society and environment (recycling containers, not wasting food, composting scraps) and so on.

I find it helpful to get ideas for extending a topic by watching which area my children seem to grab onto after different experiences. It tends to vary according to their age and interests at the time.

I’ve also found that by making myself familiar with resources in the community, meeting requirements for socialising and learning via different mediums is not an issue.

Homeschooling groups tend to cover a lot of hands-on learning experiences as well as being an invaluable social outlet. Utilising our local community resources, and some of those mentioned in the ‘What’s On’, ‘Displays and Activities’, and ‘Special Events’ sections of the SA Home Based Learners newsletter, plus sport once a week tends to give my children enough interaction with others to keep them happy. I choose not to be out all the time with my children, while other families love getting out and about most days. Homeschooling is all about finding a balance that suits your family, and the reviewer will generally take this into account.

Exemptions are granted generally on a 12 monthly basis, but 6 and 18 month exemptions are sometimes given. Once your review is completed, you will receive a copy of your child’s exemption in the post.

Just remember, the most important thing is that you and your family are happy with what you are doing, the rest can be worked through.

Cynthia produces the South Australian Home Based Learners Newsletter. To subscribe visit: http://www.hblsa.com/

May 2009: Registration Interview with NSW BOS

By Zuhal, HEA member
(first posted on http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HomeSchoolAustraliaFAQ)

My interview with the Board of Studies went really well and I got my full two years registration.

First up I had a few things put together, one of which was the written programme outlining what I intended to do with the children for the rest of the year. Both were identical considering my daughter is in Year 1 and my son is in Kindergarten: I explained that if my daughter understood a concept better I’d make it a little harder/challenging for her.

I also had a Learning Naturally Diary from Always Learning Books http://alwayslearningbooks.com.au that I bought last year: because it was weekly I didn’t bother adding which days I did what, only adding comments of how their natural learning was taking place. The HEA Emergency Pack http://tiny.cc/06uKx was really useful, simple easy to understand, straight to the point and had lots of tips which I used.

Then I had a folder which contained the photocopied index pages of their textbooks. In between each subject I had some loose pieces of work lying around so I put them in.

This really didn’t have much at all apart from English, nothing in math and probably two sheets each for science and HSIE. For each index page that I had photocopied, I placed a tick to indicate work completed, and that was it. There wasn’t much more that I could add simply because the work they do for their subjects is completed in their textbooks anyway - and the officer said so as well.

The last thing I presented was the scrapbook that I had prepared. I take photos of the kids a lot and on all our trips away wherever we go, and had included some captions to describe the obvious: she picked up on the Jervis Bay and Bowral pictures immediately. This book was her favourite and she was very impressed.

Overall she really liked what I showed her, and really couldn’t praise the work enough. I was proud as punch that I got ‘approved’ especially knowing that my children get out a lot regardless of what government inspectors think.
Okay, that was us in panic mode. Let me back track a little. Our two older girls (ages 12 and 10 respectively), have a language disorder and learning difficulties and (according to the school system), were respectively up to five years and five plus years behind and getting further behind all the time.

Despite providing assessment reports clearly explaining the ways in which the girls would be able to learn and suggesting approaches that the school could take to help achieve this, along with multiple meetings with education department ‘experts’, we were repeatedly told that our children fell ‘below the radar’. In effect this meant that as they ‘weren’t the worst’ they would not get the assistance they needed.

At this stage both children had almost completely stopped doing any work with the exception of visual arts, were deteriorating behaviourally in the classroom and were reported to be walking around the playground in tears on a number of occasions. They had stopped being curious and asking questions for the most part and neither wanted to go to school, making every weekday morning a hellish time only matched by the afternoon homework dramas.

Fast forward. The girls have not been to school since the 25/11/08 and were officially withdrawn from the school system on 18/12/08, one day before the end of fourth term with much cheering on their part and fear and trepidation on ours.

Our daughters now sing, dance, play, and plague us with questions every day and once again want to know ‘why’. It is not unusual for me to be greeted first thing in the morning (before my morning coffee, I might emphasise), with “What are we gonna learn about today Mum?”

They are exploring their world every day in a multitude of ways, doing minimal book work but learning every second of their waking hours. The girls are self-initiating learning tasks, becoming more adept on a social level across a wide variety of ages, improving in their written work, expression and comprehension and settling down significantly on a behavioural level. After five months we have happy, active, curious children once again who are keen to learn...

This is why we homeschool.

It annoys me to no end that I’m having to ‘prove’ that my children aren’t hermits: I have to do that with my family constantly so I guess I’ve had some practice.

The things she did ask me were whether the children go to the library, if they use computers, and to see our daily time-table. At some point I had mentioned that my son is a LEGO fanatic and can sit and build things beyond his age, including the portable fan, and that was the only piece of information that I volunteered.

She was very much pro-homeschooling and the only thing she suggested was that I date the work that I finish in our textbooks and recommended that I send future registration applications by post. She also suggested that I take a piece of the children's work every three months and file it in a portfolio. I pointed out that it would be hard to do that for science only because we do things outside and she was very understanding with that, saying “just photocopy a page, that’ll do.”

Thank you to everyone who helped me with our application, and I hope if there are other newbies out there, that this article helps them too.

Why I Homeschool

Sharyn Grebert

Let’s start with a brief overview. First of all I spent so much time on a merry-go-round trying to address my children’s various learning needs, looking at them from almost every perspective possible and agonising (along with my husband), over whether homeschooling was something we should or were equipped to do. I mean, we were only parents after all... Didn’t you have to be a teacher or something? What if we “got it wrong?” What if we “stuffed it up?” This was after all our children’s future we “playing with!”

The only thing we knew for certain was that our children were ‘drowning’ in the school system, getting further and further behind; they were miserable and so, consequently, were we.

We researched, chatted, bought the HEA’s Emergency Kit and I attended one of the training courses they run. There was loads of information and lots of support, so with the girls behaviour and learning skills continuing to deteriorate at school and having decided that “we couldn’t do any worse,” we jumped in “boots and all.”

Despite providing assessment reports clearly explaining the ways in which the girls would be able to learn and suggesting approaches that the school could take to help achieve this, along with multiple meetings with education department ‘experts’, we were repeatedly told that our children fell ‘below the radar’. In effect this meant that as they ‘weren’t the worst’ they would not get the assistance they needed.

At this stage both children had almost completely stopped doing any work with the exception of visual arts, were deteriorating behaviourally in the classroom and were reported to be walking around the playground in tears on a number of occasions. They had stopped being curious and asking questions for the most part and neither wanted to go to school, making every weekday morning a hellish time only matched by the afternoon homework dramas.

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They are exploring their world every day in a multitude of ways, doing minimal book work but learning every second of their waking hours. The girls are self-initiating learning tasks, becoming more adept on a social level across a wide variety of ages, improving in their written work, expression and comprehension and settling down significantly on a behavioural level. After five months we have happy, active, curious children once again who are keen to learn... This is why we homeschool.
NEWS FLASH!!

The MS Readathon is celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2009 and would like to extend an invitation to homeschooled students to help us celebrate this milestone year.

For 30 years children and adults of all ages have flicked through the pages of their favourite books and collected sponsorship for the books they have read to raise money for people living with MS.

MS is a serious neurological disease affecting the lives of over 20,000 Australian families. When the average age of diagnosis is 30, with no known cause or cure... we need your help and support to continue the search for a cure and help those who need the ongoing services of the MS Society.

It is time once again! Registrations are now open for the 2009 MS Readathon. Register online at www.msreadathon.org.au

In 2008, 154 Home Schooled students registered for the MS Readathon and read 2655 books while raising funds for people living with MS. 110 Students completed the program and returned an astonishing $16,570.65 in donations. What an incredible effort!!

This year we encourage everyone to CLICK- onto the MS Readathon website to register, www.msreadathon.org.au

FLICK- through the pages of your favourite books throughout June, and COLLECT- sponsorship for the books you read so that you can collect your reading rewards when you return your sponsorship.

Reading starts June 1 so hurry and register online for free today at www.msreadathon.org.au! Everyone who registers online will receive a cool MS Readathon wristband.

Check out the MS Readathon website for more information and to follow what Bosko, the MS Readathon Mascot has been up to lately!

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Homeschooling T-shirt Sayings

This child/teen is a natural product. The slight variations in growth, development, and temperament enhance his or her individual character and beauty and in no way are to be considered flaws or defects.

I can’t go to school...
I’m autodidactic

CAUTION:
HOMESCHOOLING HAS BEEN KNOWN TO STIMULATE PROPER USE OF THE BRAIN, WHICH IS NOT ENDORSED BY ANY GOVERNMENT NOR HUGE CORPORATIONS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROFIT FROM A BRAINWASHED AND ENSLAVED POPULATION.
Looking for an excuse to read lots of great books this winter?

We’re once again inviting home educated people of all ages to participate in the Home Ed. Winter Read-a-Thon. Not only will it give you the perfect excuse to read lots of great books this winter, but you will also be helping to raise funds for the aid agency TEAR Australia (see below for information about TEAR which, by the way, rhymes with “near”).

If you’re home educated and would like to be part of the read-a-thon, all you have to do is print, complete and return the registration form below. Once we’ve received your completed registration form, we will send you everything you need to get started.

- The read-a-thon will run from June 1 to August 31 - you can read for all or part of this time.
- All the money you raise will go directly to TEAR Australia.
- You can include books of any length or genre. Picture books, chapter books, non-fiction, comics, audio books - they’re all eligible to be included. If you’re still learning to read, you can include books which have been read to you.
- You can participate with as little as one sponsor - every dollar raised counts.
- TEAR Australia will issue receipts to all sponsors who request them.
- Every participant will receive a certificate from TEAR Australia. The participant who raises the most money will receive a $20.00 gift card from book-sellers, Angus & Robertson.

We hope you will be a part of the 2009 Home Ed. Winter Read-a-Thon.

The Ephraums Family - Grace, Judy & Brian (Melbourne home educating family)

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Home Ed. Winter Read-a-Thon 2009 Registration Form

please print this page

Name of read-a-thon participant: ____________________________
Age of read-a-thon participant: ____________________________
Name of parent/guardian: _________________________________
Postal Address: _________________________________________
Contact phone number: _________________________________
Email address (if any): _________________________________

- Please complete a separate registration form for each participant, even if members of the same family.
- You can register anytime from now, until the first week of August. The earlier you register, the quicker you can start reading.
- Please POST your completed registration form/s to: Grace Ephraums, P.O. Box 484, Bentleigh, Victoria, 3204
- Once we have received your completed registration form, we will mail you everything you need to get started, including a book log (to keep track of the books you read), and a sponsor form (to keep track of who your sponsors are). We will send this to the postal address you have given us on this form.
- If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to email us at vampir12@bigpond.net.au or ring us on (03) 9557 8262.

Thank you for your support; we hope you enjoy participating in the Home Ed. Winter Read-a-Thon 2009.

The Ephraums Family – Grace, Judy and Brian

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TEAR Australia works in Australia and overseas to create opportunities for people living in poverty to change their lives and their circumstances. TEAR is involved with development, relief and advocacy projects which focus on the poorest and most marginalised people, and give priority to their rights, interests, needs and capacities. TEAR seeks to address both the symptoms and the causes of poverty through projects that produce tangible, lasting improvement in the lives of the people they serve. TEAR hopes to strengthen individuals and communities in their efforts to address their own development priorities into the future.

For more information visit www.tear.org.au or phone 1300 244 996
Camp With Wings
Michanne Aunela

[First published in HomeWork The bi-monthly newsletter of Home Education Network of Canberra And Southern Tablelands Inc. HENCAST is a network of home educating families from Canberra, Queanbeyan, Bungendore and surrounding areas.]

New friends, old friends, fun, laughter, singing, dancing, talking, teaching, learning, growing wings and learning to fly… That is Camp With Wings.

After Camp this year I came home and told my mum I wanted to write something about CWW for the newsletter, but now that I’m sitting here, I find it hard to know what to write. There is just so much I have to say, how to say it is the problem: Ever danced on a tennis court at 2am? Swam in a freezing pool at midnight fully dressed?

Camp With Wings is a week-long home education camp in Queensland run once a year in January by Janine Banks for 13 -18 year olds. Janine has been running Camp With Wings for 5 years now; she first started it based on the home education camp in America – Not Back To School Camp. Janine and her family have been attending the NBTSC for many years and she wanted a similar camp in Australia, a place where home ed teens from all around Australia can meet one another and spend a week together learning new things and enjoying each others’ company.

It’s such a great experience you shouldn’t miss out on it. I taught a 13 year old to play a card game one year… She came back the next year and thrashed me at it. She had practiced all year so that she could surprise me and be better than me. I’ve been to four camps now; each one is different but just as life changing. All the beautiful people I’ve met through CWW is just wonderful; all the new things I’ve learnt and all those I never thought I’d do. Everyone is accepted for who they are:

you could be the youngest, most talkative, most energetic, oldest, quietest, an amazing dancer, all the little quirks that make you who you are – is what makes camp fun.

Camp With Wings is like one big family. Have you ever pictured yourself helping to run a quest/treasure hunt/obstacle race type activity and making people sit in front of a clock for 3 minutes without letting them move an inch? I did it at CWW.

Each year after camp I am left feeling sad about, leaving all my friends. But I am also happy and excited and can’t wait for the next camp, where I will see old friends again and meet new people. It seems so far away, but well worth waiting for. I would love to help camp grow even more, and I really do recommend CWW for any home ed teen. Registrations for 2010 open in June/July: http://www.campwithwings.org/.

View a YouTube video about last year’s Camp With Wings: http://tiny.cc/5XV7L

"There is almost a sensual longing for communion with others who have a large vision. The immense fulfillment of the friendship between those engaged in furthering the evolution of consciousness has a quality impossible to describe." ~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Living, Laughing and Learning with Diana Waring
September/October 2009

Living, Laughing and Learning Conferences with Diana Waring

Many people know Diana as the author of her world history curriculum. Don’t be put off if you aren’t using her history course. This conference will be an inspiration to every homeschool family. Diana has an amazing way of communicating her wealth of knowledge in an entertaining and transparent way that will have you relating to her joys and struggles and encouraged by her years of experience as a homeschool mum.

See all the latest information on our new website: www.dianadownunder.com

Early Bird Bookings available until the end of June

Don’t miss this fabulous opportunity to hear an inspiring speaker. There will be a small number of quality homeschool suppliers at the conferences. The presence of suppliers at individual locations is still being confirmed. Some of the vendors will be Adnil Press, Beverley Paine, Bookshelf Treasures, Chariot Press, Credo, Downunder Literature, Homeschool Favourites Janette’s Pictures and Kirrily Kurshert.

Visit the website for details of workshops, venues and more! Or Contact Bernie Meyers
ph: 02 4938 8142
email: mailto:meyersdb@tpg.com.au

Itinerary

22nd September: Inverell
23rd September: Hunter Valley
25th - 26th September: Sydney
28th September: Maitland
10th October: Brisbane
16th - 17th October: Melbourne
20th October: Adelaide
23rd - 24th October: Canberra
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
and
Global Children’s Art Gallery
www.naturalchild.org/gallery

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 re-searched; 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.

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

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.AustralianHistoryPictures.com
Welcome to the Learnery...

We are a cooperative group of home-ed 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:


or email us for a catalogue: quest@questlife.com.au

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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.