Students Showcase Their Public Speaking Skills in Rostrum Heats

by Mrs Linda Attard, English Teacher and Rostrum Co-ordinator

‘Ayr High School’s display of such a large, self-motivated, enthusiastic group of students has no equal in our experience.’ These were the words of Rostrum Club members, who have been involved with the Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition for 26 years, after adjudicating our recent school heats.

On the evening of Monday 9 and Wednesday 11 May, Ayr State High School’s auditorium was filled with audiences ready to witness our junior and senior students ready and willing to showcase their public speaking skills. Ayr High’s 2016 Rostrum Voice of Youth heats were packed with participants, with 23 students competing over the two nights - we had the most number of students nominating, again, from any Burdekin school. In fact, for many of these students, this was their third year of participating in the competition. Each student spoke convincingly and conveyed their informed opinions on a range of topics including ‘The Time Has Come’, ‘A Change of Heart’, ‘Invisible Barriers’, ‘The Eleventh Hour’ and ‘The Big Picture’.

The speeches on both nights were exceptional and the high calibre of competitors was evident in the quality and material of the speeches that stirred the audience’s passions.

The senior division winners were Holly Cranston and Jordon Harrington, with junior division winners announced as Holly Da Corte and Sarah McDonnell. Holly Cranston impressed the adjudicators with her impassioned speech on the subject of mental illnesses and disabilities, while Jordan’s vividly descriptive presentation challenged the audience to address teen issues that face so many, rather than sweeping them under the rug or avoiding them altogether. No less impressive were Holly Da Corte and Sarah, who also presented rousing speeches that both motivated and enthralled audiences. All winners captivated the audience with their passion in their chosen topics and presented with steel-like nerves, where most others would falter.

These four students, along with winners from Home Hill High and Burdekin Catholic High, will battle it out on Tuesday 24 May, at the Burdekin Regional Finals. We wish Holly, Jordon, Holly and Sarah every success in the finals.

All students who participated in the competition are to be congratulated as they did themselves, their families, and their school, very proud. It was an absolute privilege for me to work with such a dedicated and talented group of young people.
L ast week we held our heats of the Rostrum Voice of Youth speaking competition. Once again the standard of the student’s presentations was absolutely first class. There is both Junior and Senior sections in the competition and the speeches presented in both sections were fantastic. It was a real honour to hear these students speak so passionately about topics of real importance to them. A big thank you goes to Mrs Linda Attard for her work with these students and she was supported well by Mr Tom Pickersgill. I would also like to thank the adjudicators from Rostrum led by Mr Stan Simpson for their support once again this year. Good luck to our contestants who have progressed to the Burdekin final, I know you will do a great job. This week we have had our Music Department performing at the Burdekin Eisteddfod. This included our Concert and Jazz Bands, a senior Rock Band and our Choir. All performed to a high standard with our Jazz and Rock Bands taking out the honours on Monday night and our Choir winning the overall trophy on Tuesday night.

A big thanks goes to Mr Luke Jones and Miss Lauren Stephens from our Music Department for their hard work throughout the year developing our students. Also a thank you to Mrs Monica Liciarendello for her support in both the lead up and on the night as well as Mrs Rachel Webber for her consistent support on behalf of our Music Support Group. Our P&C is running an Interschool Junior Disco on Friday 10 June. This disco is open to all students who are in Years 7-9 from across the Burdekin. This is a major fundraising event and we are looking for volunteers to help out in the planning and on the night. We are having a planning meeting on Monday 23 May at 7.30 pm in the Resource Centre. Please come along and help make this a really successful event. This week we have been talking to our Year 10 students about the appropriate use of electronic media. Our School Based Youth Health Nurse ran a very thought provoking session with the students discussing the long lasting effects of the misuse of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. We discussed the fact that it is common practice for prospective employers to research prospective employees on a range of social media platforms to gauge “what type of person you are”. If you have inappropriate images and comments on your profiles this may cost you employment opportunities. She also discussed how these images and comments can be kept and shared way beyond the borders of friendship groups, the Burdekin, and even Australia. You lose all ownership of this information once it is posted and it can be viewed and saved by almost anybody, especially those individuals who like to prey on young people. I encourage all parents/carers to have conversations with your children about the safe and appropriate use of social media.

Yours in Education
Craig Whittred
Principal

Reflected Upon High School Mathematics
by Mr Kerry Flynn, HOD - Mathematics & Science

In talking to students and parents/carers, we often hear the following comments. From students: “I used to be good at maths in primary school but I can’t do high school maths.” From parents/carers: “I wasn’t any good at maths when I was at high school.” For teachers of maths, we ask ourselves - why do people feel this way about maths? At Ayr High, over the last three years we have engaged the services of a maths consultant, Tierney Kennedy, who has been helping us get to the heart of these two issues. The research indicates that the answer in both cases lies predominantly in the five major misconceptions that people develop in their mathematical understanding of number in the early years of schooling and in many cases carry with them through the rest of their lives. These five misunderstood concepts are at the heart of all high school maths and appear to explain why quite a number of students struggle with maths at high school. Certainly, we see students even in Year 12 still holding onto these incorrect ideas despite our best efforts to help them.

It is important for parents/carers to know that no amount of extra tutoring or doing textbook type questions will fix these misconceptions - they require targeted teaching and quite intensive assistance from teachers to both identify the problem and then direct students to change their thinking. Telling students how to do a question or asking them to remember a rule doesn’t help. It turns maths into a game of remembering lots of tricks/rules.

So if your child comes home and talks about ‘weird’ activities and questions their maths teacher and/or Mrs Gemellaro are doing with them, it is part of the on-going programme that we are running primarily in the junior classes to address these issues. Over the last three years we have seen some pleasing gains made by students and this is encouraging. In fact once these issues are sorted, students often make very rapid progress in their maths learning.

If you would like to know more about these programmes or if you are concerned about your child’s progress in maths, please contact Mrs Gemellaro or myself. We would only be too pleased to talk to you.

Welcome to Ayr State High School
Our school acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land. Today, they are still the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land. Further to this, our school acknowledges there are other Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Island people who have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of our community.

P&C Meeting
Monday 6 June 2016
7.30 pm, Resource Centre
All welcome.

Music Support Meeting
Thursday 23 June 2016
5 pm, A14
New parents/carers welcome.

Absentee Hotline
4790 4353
If your child is away either:
• phone the hotline/leave a message (messages will be attended to by close of business each day),
• text message or.
• hand in a note, on return, to Mrs Slattery at the office.

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Interschool Cross Country

by Ms Courtney Carrigan, Sports Co-ordinator

Thirty-six students represented Ayr High recently at the 2016 Interschool Cross Country. The 12 year old competitors competed first at the Burdekin District Cross Country (9 Years-12 Years) event held at the old Ayr Racecourse on Friday 6 May, with the 13-19 Years students competing on Tuesday 10 May at Home Hill High School’s cross country course.

There were a number of outstanding performances with ten students finishing in the top three of their age group. These students were:

Under 13 – Adriana Higgs-Ward (1st), Connor Brown (2nd)
Under 14 – Emma Donovan (1st), Declan Dowson (1st), Hayden Doyle (2nd), Logan Cox (3rd)
Under 15 – Aletheia Pacey (1st), Dion Papadimitriou (2nd), John Zaro (3rd)
Under 16 – Sharni Wight (2nd)

The top three in each age-group qualifies them for the Burdekin Cross Country Squad. These students are now invited to attend the North Queensland Cross Country Trials on Tuesday 24 May in Townsville. All students are to be congratulated on their performances and enthusiastic participation.

Ayr High Supports Pink Stumps Day

by Blaise Heron, Sports Captain

Pink Stumps Day was held on Friday 29 April in order to continue our support of the McGrath Foundation (breast care nurses). The day was organised by the Year 12 cohort with the assistance of our Sports Co-ordinator, Ms Carrigan. There were many ways students were able to celebrate the day and be involved - purchasing a ticket in the ‘pink’ raffle, participating in the cricket game, wearing free ‘pink’ dress and the purchasing of the ‘pink stumps day’ hat. In the lunch breaks, students ventured down to the Ayr High oval to participate in a game of cricket. Students were keen, with many putting their hand up to have a go at being a bowler, batter, or just a fielder. The ‘pink’ raffle, which included a water bottle, a pink stumps day hat, wristband, a handball and inflatable clappers, was won by Jordon Harrington from 11D - congratulations. The items mentioned above in the raffle were also being sold on the day as well for anyone who wanted to purchase them. Overall, we raised $535 - congratulations and thank you to all students and staff who supported the ‘Pink Stumps Day’!!
Amazing weather, fantastic students and awesome teachers where the highlights of the annual Biology pilgrimage to Cape Hillsborough National Park during the month of May.

From bus packing to tent construction, camp cooking to data collection our Year 11 Biology class showed a great work ethic and enthusiasm through all activities.

The long, hot bush walk to collect data on various ecosystems proved interesting and exciting with the incredible and numerous forms of fungi and a close encounter with a black snake. However, the highlight of this expedition was the discovery of phone reception on top of the mountain!

The Camp Owner/Manager entertained and disgusted us with a close inspection of the waste water treatment plant where we watched our waste turn into water. Some students had enough courage to go up and look into the tanks full of poo, but many students were way too squeamish. Incredible to think that we could of drunk that recycled water!!!!

The second day saw us racing the incoming tide to collect data about mangroves. Leaving the mud we headed into a palm forest to collect even more data and brave the wildlife - funny how spiders can be more terrifying then snakes for some.

After a well-earned lunch break, Mr Flynn and Mrs Brock lead us to the beach to discover coral, sea stars and numerous other reef organisms. Then we headed up a treacherous, narrow track to the top of Orchid Rock to observe an incredible sunset across the ocean, well worth overcoming our fear of heights.

The bus trip home was extremely quiet as we all slept and dreamed of our great ecological and social experience. The only mission now is to focus our thoughts and data to show how everything is connected in a biological sense.
The Ayr High P&C presents the 2016.....

Interschool Junior Disco
(Years 7-9 only)

7 - 10pm
$5.00
(tickets to be presold)

Ayr Showgrounds Hall
Friday 10th June

Come dressed as your favourite famous person