



GESTA NON VERBA

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES.

Welcome all to the final edition of *Gesta non Verba* for 2007. What a busy and short year it seems to have been! Throughout the mayhem, one personal highlight was my ten year reunion. A casual affair in an inner city pub, the evening was filled with excited conversation, laughter, photos of kids and belated, heartfelt apologies for making me cry when I was in Year 7 (that I, of course, denied ever having done). A big thanks to Robin Legge for supplying a list of email addresses to help tracking down those we'd lost contact with.

Unfortunately, I know a few people from my year who did not hear about the reunion till after the event. To these people, my sincerest apologies, you were missed. To those of you who have a reunion coming up soon, please keep in touch with the school and encourage all your friends to join our union. It is the first point of contact for those who may be organising. Also, a reminder that next year marks the 50th anniversary of our high school. For those interested in helping out with this massive event, please contact the school to register your interest.

Well Ruseters, as the year draws to a close, reminisce, enjoy the festive season and continue to....

PURSUE EXCELLENCE!
Alexandra Streeter (1997)

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE.

The school held its 48th Presentation Day for James Ruse and my first on 11 December.

Our students were externally tested in Year 10 this year in Geography, History, Computing Skills, English literacy, Mathematics and Science. The average marks ranged from 96% in Computing to 86% in History. There were significant improvements in Science (against state trends) and in Computing results. The top marks were: in Geography - 100 (2 students), in History - 99; in Science- 99; in English - 98; in Computing Skills - 100; in Maths - 100 (3 students) In Computing Studies all the students were in the Highly Competent range. In Maths, Science and English, all were in the top two bands. In Geography, there were only 3 students in Band 4, and 10 in History.

Taking into account state movement in numbers in each band, we had similar or improved performance in numbers in the top band in all subjects.

The 2007 HSC results will be available next week. Our Year 12 achievements were highlighted on Awards Day where, in the HSC class of 2006, four students received a UAI of 100 and the median UAI was 99.2. 68 students made the Premiers List of achieving 10 or more units above 90.

In 2007 we have had huge successes in the International Olympiads, achieving 17medals, more than double the success of last year.

- 2 bronze awards in the Asian Pacific Maths Olympiad

- 4 gold awards in the Australian Mathematic Olympiad
- A bronze and a silver in the Australian Science Olympiad - Biology
- A silver in the Australian Science Olympiad - Biology
- One gold, one silver and two Bronze awards in the Australian Informatics Olympiad and 4 silver awards in the Intermediate division

There have been many international and national successes

- Kevin Leow won a medal for English in the UNSW International Competitions
- There were 4 science medals in the UNSW International competitions
- 82 Prize certificates in the Australian Math competition (top 1% of the state). Vaishani Ganapathy in Year 7 achieved a perfect score.
- 10 High Distinctions in the Australian Science Olympiads in Biology
- 16 High Distinctions in Chemistry
- 17 High Distinctions in Physics
- 27 students achieved a perfect score in the Rio Tinto Big Science Competition
- We were first and third in the UNSW School Computer Science and Engineering Programming Competition
- James Sin came first in NSW in the Australian Economic Competition and with 5 other prize winners.
- Pristine Ong won the NSW Youth Week website design competition.
- There were 2 equal thirds in the Australian Geography Competition, in the senior and intermediate divisions.

At Presentation Night we acknowledged 46 sport award winners, 57 co-curricular awards, 85 academic awards, 22 special awards and 41 James Ruse Distinction Awards - these students have fulfilled the criteria and achieved excellence in all 8 sections. These are: academic excellence, school curriculum involvement, interschool representation at sport, the creative arts, music activities, involvement in school life, school service, outdoor activities, such as Cadets, Duke of Edinburgh or Streamwatch or animal care. 41 students live the school motto - *Gesta non verba*.

Our weekly newsletter has outlined our very full range of achievements and activities. These haven't yet stopped. Reports have yet to be completed and

handed out. The Cadets are preparing for their 12 day annual trek, this time on the Great Ocean Road. A group of our 2007 Year 12 students will be making a 7 minute film next week at school to enter into *Tropfest!*

Our school achievements will be formally recorded in our Annual School Report. In that we will describe the progress we made on our targets in History Extension, Stage 5 Visual Arts, student leadership in grade sport and student leadership and decision making skills. We are in the process of evaluating the curriculum area of science in 2007, and our welfare and discipline policy. We evaluated maths last year and will evaluate English next year. These results will be reported in the Annual Report.

Judging by the number of James Ruse students selected for Science, Mathematics and Informatics schools of excellence over the Christmas holidays we will again be making up half the Olympiad teams in 2008, and no doubt bringing back many medals.

We finished the year with 839 enrolments. We will start 2008 with 842.

Each of our new Year 7 students have been interviewed, together with their parents. They have had an orientation day. Our new Year 11 students met the other students at the Peer Support camp.

We have four targets for 2008, which each program and each faculty will work towards. The plan has been a collaborative effort, led by our HT Gifted and Talented, Mr Manoj Chandra Handa.

The first target has to do with our charter as a selective school and therefore our obligation to focus on higher order, differentiated outcomes in all our teaching/learning programs. We will use a model widely used across schools in NSW called the Quality Teaching model.

Our second target is to continue to identify our gifted underachievers, and to implement strategies to address issues associated with underachievement. We are also finalising a proactive welfare curriculum for each year group, to support our students.

Our third target is to complete the development of the Internet and Intranet and to use cognitive technologies to enhance the learning of our students. You will see the installation of quite a few interactive whiteboards across the school and other technology updates. Stage I of new website will go live on 20

December, later than expected. There will be an official launch early next year.

Our fourth target is to develop leadership capabilities among teachers and students. The executive has already begun work in this area. Students at James Ruse are given many leadership opportunities. We are trying to be more explicit in this area. Our Student Leadership Program was extended from 24 Year 10 students in 2006 to 89 Year 9 and 10 students. We are now up to the service component of this program. Early next year I am expecting a range of innovative and worthwhile service projects to be presented on the last day of this program.

We have a few staff changes for next year. We have a new Head Teacher, English, appointed, Mrs Annetta St Louis. On behalf of all the school I would like to thank Mrs Liza Mayers for taking on the role of head teacher, English, when Mrs Yvonne Scorer was unwell. She has been selfless in giving her time and energy to this role. I would like to thank Mrs Scorer for her contribution to the school as Head Teacher English at James Ruse and I wish her well in her retirement.

Mr Lisle Brown, who has been Head Teacher Agriculture since 1979 at this school, finishes up next week. We will formally farewell him tomorrow. Thank you, Mr Brown, for being a wonderful teacher, a strong advocate for Agriculture, and for having the vision and knowledge that has resulted in excellence in Agriculture being synonymous with James Ruse. This position will not be filled until next year.

Mrs Judith Farrand has accepted a transfer to Glenwood High school for 2008. Again, we will miss Mrs Farrand's expertise, particularly in senior Geography. We wish Mrs Farrand all the best in the next part of her career. Mr Greg McNulty has been appointed fill this vacancy for 2008.

Mrs Robyn Hill retires at the end of this year. She was appointed to James Ruse AHS in July 1994. For more than 13 years she has managed a big staff of School Administrative Assistants. She has welded them into a very efficient, supportive, professional group with a wonderful service attitude. We will miss Mrs Hill's outstanding willingness to solve any problem and to work tirelessly for our students. We wish Mrs Hill all the best in her retirement.

To assist the Music teachers, and to expand the concert band program, Mr Glenn Armitage has been

appointed as a Band director for two days a week in 2008. He has already worked with the 60 new Year 7 students who will form the Year 7 Training band in 2008.

Two teachers are taking leave for 2008 and will return in 2009. They are Mrs Sue Briggs and Mr Lou Bialy. We hope you have a wonderful year. We welcome back Mrs Kerrie Ballantyne, who picks up her Supervisor of Girls role. Mrs Natasha Romanov will be her assistant. Mrs Lisa Kim returns part time from maternity leave. Mr Eddie Woo, an ex-student, has been appointed to this vacancy. He will be here full time.

Our building challenges continue. We have not received the \$450000 funding grant for our gymnasium. We are exploring other avenues, such as grants from clubs or partnering with clubs. We will continue to chase the grant. We will get the gymnasium built somehow. It will happen.

The bus bay is nearly finished, but there has been a hold up over the electricity pole - is it to be moved or can it stay? If it is to be moved, who will pay for it. Not us, certainly. Let's see what happens over Christmas.

Mary Oliver, a Pulitzer prize winning poet, wrote:

"Doesn't everything die at last and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

I have every confidence that our present students will live their precious lives as passionately, ethically and as successfully as our ex-students. Russians and ex-Russians don't talk about it, they do!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you.

Larissa Treskin

REUNIONS

A reunion is being planned for the **class of '76**. Please contact Malcolm Hawkins at malhawkins@exemail.com.au if you would like to be involved or attend.

Would any ex-students who started in 1958 and completed their leaving certificate in 1962 please contact Brendon Stewart on 02 98797290 with regard to joining in with the 50 years celebration of James Ruse Agricultural High School.

For ex-students who would like to keep in touch in an informal way I have been advised that there is a growing presence of JRAHS alumni in Facebook.

I received an email from the Legge Gallery advising that one of their artists, "Old Boy" **Neil Evans ('68)**, has won the Viewers' Choice Award in this years prestigious Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize. His entry was titled / Cumulus serious - A Developer's Idyll. It is a clever sculpture made from recycled milk cartons painted over with pastoral scenes and wonderful fluffy clouds, and is a scathing inditement on the ugly suburban creep into was once productive agricultural land. Neill mentioned the study he did to earn First Level Agriculture in the Higher School Certificate played a big part in both the conception and realisation of the quirky artwork.

Neil's prize winning work can be viewed at <http://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au> or visit the Legge Gallery site www.leggegallery.com to see more of Neil's work.

Thank you all for your contributions to "Gesta non Verba" during 2007 and I wish you all a safe & happy Christmas and the very best for 2008.

Robin Legge