

Northern Suburbs Support Group

Location: Youth Central

Pearcedale Parade, Broadmeadows (next to the Broadmeadows Leisure Centre)

Just a reminder that there is a TS support group in the Northern suburbs and that we meet every three months on the last Sunday of the month. Everyone is welcome: friends, family members, teachers, kids or adults. There is plenty of space for the kids to play around and get to know each other while the parents can have a relaxing cuppa in the café area that is exclusively available for our use. We can sit outside or inside in the café area depending on the weather and the dodging of basketballs.

At the last meeting we had a sausage sizzle, coffee and biscuits and thanks to the Koster family for a fresh cake made by a TAFE College. There was a great turn up of people. Several families with kids that have Tourette Syndrome came along to share their experiences and have their questions answered. There are also some adults with TS that are a great wealth of advice and information on how they have managed their TS. It is an extremely relaxed environment and everyone is very open about sharing their experiences.



Message from the President

Winter 2007

Frosty mornings, woolly jumpers and the welcome sound of rain.... Winter has arrived, so too has your winter issue of TopicS. I hope you enjoy reading the articles included in this issue and find them informative. On behalf of the committee and membership I would like to extend a very big thank you to Robert Podolak of Kew Village Pharmacy who recently sent in a donation of \$1000. A donations box was set up in his pharmacy and over the past year Robert has collected this fantastic amount from his customers and the nominated charity us. We are very grateful to you and your wonderful customers for their generosity. If you live in the area please support this business at 181 High Street Kew.

The past couple of months have been a busy time behind the scenes for the TSA Committee. We have had a number of meetings to discuss and plan the future directions of the Association. We have noticed over the past couple of years that the amount of phone /email enquiries to the office, attendance at Public meetings and the purchasing of books has steadily declined. We believe more and more people are sourcing the net for a wealth of information now readily available. Your committee members are all volunteers with family and work commitments, the time and effort that they have dedicated over the years to help run the TSA of Victoria has kept this association going where many others have floundered. There comes a time though, when we need to take stock and decide where our time and energy is best spent, hence the survey that we mailed out to you all late March.

Thank you is to all our members who returned the surveys, we appreciate your time and your feedback. Dr Jeni Wilson has a report on the preliminary findings on the next page. In brief, we have decided to scale down the office days for a

trial period from twice a week. Judi will now be in attendance on Thursdays from 10am-2pm. We will conduct just one Public Meeting a year in October. Our Family Days, which have been very popular, will continue, as will the service of advocacy for your child at school. We are in the process of updating our website so have a look at it in the next month, our web address remains the same www.tsavic.org.au

We have had a number of radio interviews over the past 2 months both Agnes and Jeni have spoken about Tourette Syndrome helping to foster a better understanding and awareness of this disorder. Scott organized another very successful Family day at Scienceworks recently as well as the visit to the Zoo earlier in the year - reports and pictures inside. I would like to express my thanks for all the time and effort Scott puts in to organising these family days, they are always well attended and a wonderful opportunity for kids and parents to enjoy a day out and interact with each other. A big thank you also to his daughter Jess who helped cook all the sausages at the Scienceworks day.

Your Membership Renewal form for the financial year 2007-08 is included. Please complete any new details and post back with payment to the office by the due date. We are not able to send out reminders so please avoid being deleted off the membership list and missing out on TS information and get those renewals in ASAP.

To Jeni, Stephen and Susan thank you for another great job in putting together this TopicS. As always without my dedicated team of committee members we could not exist. Thank you for your efforts these past months. 'Till next time, keep well and happy.

Manuela Jovanovic, President TSA Victoria

GOOD NEWS IN ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- Genes and the environment both have a role in the development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- The impact of ADHD can be reduced through sound parenting, good nutrition, adequate sleep and a supportive school setting.
- Research has consistently found that medications reduce symptoms of ADHD, enabling improved learning and social functioning.
- Around 1-2% of children in Australia take medications for ADHD. (ADHD affects around 3-5% of children).
- In most states only paediatricians and psychiatrists can prescribe stimulant medications for ADHD. Prescribers need to apply for a permit from the government to prescribe these medications.
- Through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the Australian government subsidises the short-acting stimulant medications Ritalin and dexamphetamine. These only last 3-4 hours, so children usually need to take a dose at school around lunchtime.
- Many children with ADHD have associated problems such as learning difficulties, coordination problems, defiant behaviour, anxiety and depression. These problems can be as important as the ADHD itself, and need to be addressed alongside the ADHD

News

- Longer-acting preparations of stimulant medication, which last between 6 and 12 hours, are now available in Australia. Children are given a dose in the morning, and do not need to take a dose at school.
- The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has given a positive recommendation to the government regarding adding one of these, Concerta, to the PBS list. At present Concerta costs families between \$100 and \$150 for a month's supply. If listed on the PBS it would cost the same as other subsidised medications, around \$25 (or \$5 for Health Care Card holders).

The PBAC has also given a positive

from "Write for Tourette" NSW TSA 2006

recommendation for another ADHD medication, Strattera (atomoxetine). Strattera is a non-stimulant which has been shown to be helpful in reducing ADHD symptoms. It may suit some children better than the stimulants. Strattera currently costs around \$140/month.

- The listing of these two medications for ADHD would be a positive move by providing families with affordable choices of medication. This would enable doctors to tailor treatment to best suit the patient.

On November 1 the Federal government announced that 6-12 sessions/year of psychology therapy for children could be rebated under Medicare. This is good news to help children with a range of mental health problems, including ADHD. Until now, access to psychology services has been difficult for many families of children with mental health problems.

(Article reprinted By TSA NSW in To Write for Tourette from Newsletter 1-2007, Learning Difficulties Coalition of NSW)

Stop Press!! - 'Concerta' (Methylphenidate HCl) listed on the PBS as of 1st April 2007.

Just like you By Evelyn Hondros (13 years)

I blink and I twitch
And I don't know why
I shove and I swear
My head yanks to the sky
When people see me
They think I'm a freak
Well the truth is that I'm just unique
Just because I have a mind of my own
All it is, is Tourette Syndrome
I'm a person just like you
If you got to know me
You'd see it too.

Air Cargo Club Bowls Over the TSAV

Once again The Air Cargo Club has generously donated another \$500 to the Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria. On the 18th January 2007 our son Ben and our family were invited to the Air Cargo Club Fellowship BBQ at the Dousta Galla Bowls club for the presentation of the cheque.

It was an opportunity for the young and not so young to throw down some bowls. The night started with some lawn bowls at the Dousta Galla Lawn Bowls club and was followed by a BBQ and some social drinks.

It turned out to be another fantastic evening with some really interesting lawn bowls techniques. All the people once again made Ben and our family feel very welcome and were genuinely interested in developing a better understanding of Tourette Syndrome.

John is Ben's Grandfather alias GG and I am Ben's father (Scott). It's thanks to John that the initial contact between the Air Cargo Club and TSAV was made.

A letter of appreciation has been sent to the Air Cargo Club from the TSAV thanking them for their generosity shown towards the TSAV and support of people and families with TS. On behalf of my family and especially Ben I would like to thank the Air Cargo Club of Australia (Victoria Branch) for openly accepting Ben and once again inviting him along to their Fellowship BBQ for the presentation of the cheque for the second year in a row. I would also like to thank the many people who bought numerous Baller Bands on the day.

Scott Coward

A Better Understanding Makes The Difference



The more experienced members prepare to show the rest of how it is done



Ben Coward (right), Scott Coward (centre) and John Coward (left).



Some of the dedicated Committee members who help raise the money that is donated to numerous charities including the TSAV.

Zoo Report

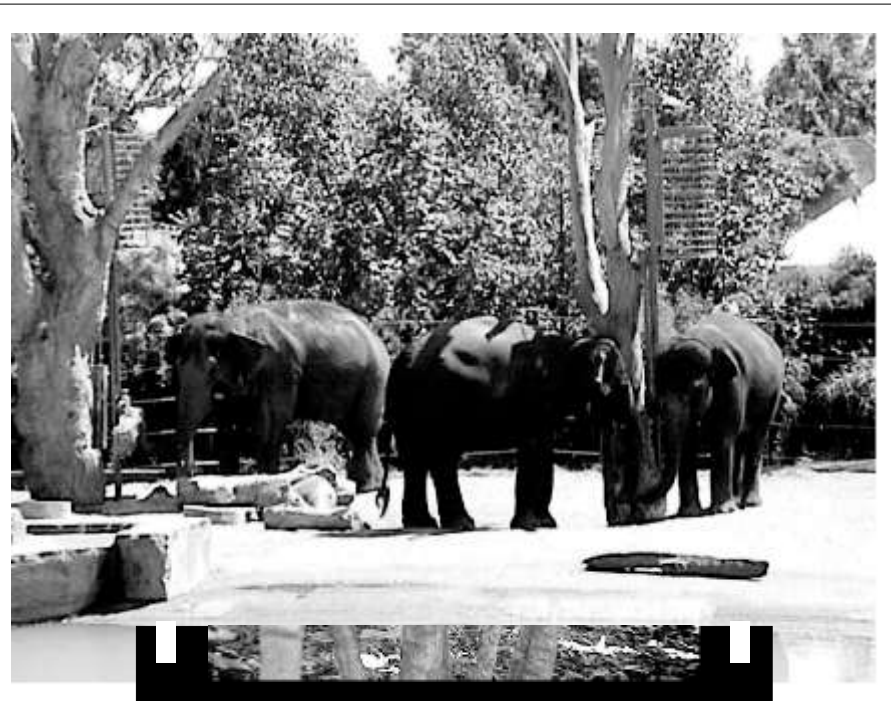
By Madison Thorp
(14 Years)

On the 22nd of February, 11 families, 24 kids and 19 adults avoided sun stroke, while having a good time laughing with some of the new members. All day it was almost 40 degrees with no signs of the sun giving up! Most people got there on time and because we were only an arms reach away from the reptile farm everyone had fun looking at the numerous snakes and crocs which looked too good to be true!

The guides came and split us up into several groups. I was put with my family and some old friends, who I haven't seen for ages. The tour guide asked us if we wanted to go and see any animal in particular but it turned out that she took us to all her favourites anyway.

I really enjoyed seeing the monkeys swing freely through the tops of the trees, dwelling in the hand made enclosures. It was good to see a young couple teaching the young baby how to climb the fence.

We were lucky to see the mother Sumatran Tigers sun baking under some of the only shade in the whole zoo. It was really good to see a lot of new members to the Tourette meeting, I wish them all the best for school and look forward to seeing you guys in the future.



Extracurricular life exists on planet VCE

Study isn't everything, writes **Skye Melki-Wegner**.

YEAR 12. Just hearing the phrase makes you shudder, doesn't it? It's the year of trials and tribulations, of horror and heartache, of stress, studying and sod all else (and apparently of very bad alliteration). But if you work towards a well-balanced routine, it can be so much more.

Year 12 can seem, at times, to surpass *Psycho*, the *Scream* films and *The Ring* when it comes to sheer horror. Nothing can really prepare you for five SACs in two

days, or for the last day of term when your kind, thoughtful teachers decide to make you write the equivalent of a novel for each subject during your two blessed weeks of holidays. Oh, sorry, did I say "holidays"? That's a forbidden word. I meant "study break". Oh well, more time to develop procrastination into an art form.

On the other hand, nothing can prepare you for the friendships you'll form, the joy and exhilaration of signing shirts and dressing up for the formal, or the thrill of receiving your graduation certificate. And above all, the comradeship. When everyone receives his or her score for a particularly awful methods SAC, the ability to commiserate and joke about finding work as a garbo is truly priceless. Even

people you rarely speak to can become kindred spirits, ploughing wearily through the murky, ink-stained swamp that is VCE.

The problem is the unshakeable conviction that this is the Year of Doom and that studying hard is all that matters. It's a cliché when it comes to study advice, but balance is everything.

About now you might be tempted to cut back on things you enjoy doing to concentrate on work. Don't. In fact, take something extra on. Join a sports or debating team. Tackle a small role in the school musical or join the magazine committee. If you're a born organiser, don't be afraid to take on a leadership role as sports or school captain.

Studying is crucial, but if you have a passion, whether it be playing the bongo drums or

reading Tolkien, don't give it up! Extracurricular activities can provide a very effective stress-relief valve during a pressure-cooker year.

You won't achieve a high ENTER if you're so utterly drained and depressed by the end of the year that you can't summon up enough energy to perform well in the exams.

Year 12 is exhausting, but it's also a true rite of passage that allows us to strengthen friendships, develop new passions and eat about 5 million tonnes of chocolate. No matter what you've been told, year 12 is not the end of the world. It's the beginning.

Skye Melki-Wegner was a year 12 student at Glen Waverley Secondary College last year.

Every week can be Awareness Week

What can you do to raise awareness?

- Buy a book about TS and donate it to your school and/or local library**
- Offer to talk to school staff about TS (get advise about this from the TSA Vic office)**

Pass out flyers at your local shops

Ring your local paper or radio about TS Awareness week

Buy some TS baller bands to distribute or sell

Become a member of the TSA Vic committee and work with a team to raise awareness

I am sure you have other ideas. The office staff welcome your calls and can offer ideas and support.

