

in this issue

Girls and Sport



The Alliance of Girls' Schools

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**in Alliance 2007
Editorial Deadlines**

VOLUME 37
Friday 6 April 2007
Career Education

VOLUME 38
Friday 27 July 2007
Women in Public Life

VOLUME 39
Friday 19 October 2007
Global Education

The Editor would be grateful for any articles or photographs for forthcoming editions. Please forward these to Jan Butler at jan.butler@internode.on.net

From the President...

Beth Blackwood



Summer has announced its arrival in Australia through the shift in media coverage from football to cricket. So ... with the theme of girls and sport in mind for this edition of *in Alliance* I could not help but reflect on the equity issue with regard to television and other media coverage of women and sport.

A website search revealed that I am not alone in pondering the issue. Lea Ann Schell, in her article *(Dis)Empowering Images? Media Representations of Women in Sport* states that "Since ... the fitness boom of the 1980s, the number of girls and women participating in competitive and recreation sports has dramatically increased. Subsequently, more female athletes and women's sports have been in the international and national spotlights through television, newspapers, and magazines. The seeming optimism generated from such an increase in media attention given to women's sports, however, is offset by the fact that men's sports continue to receive more coverage than women's sports, and minority women are practically non-existent in sports coverage." Moreover, "when female athletes are the focus of media attention, the images often sexualize and trivialize their efforts ... most covers and story photographs featured white, slender models wearing scanty fitness clothes exposing those body parts equated with feminine sexuality, such as thighs, abdominals, cleavage, and buttocks. Such images divert attention from women's achievements as serious athletes and reinforce misguided assumptions that women in sport are non-competitive and interested only in sex-appropriate sport."

Schell's research is American-based but similar research by the Australian Sports Commission that is carried out every four years to gauge any improvements in media coverage shows little difference for Australian women.

An illusory image: A report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia 1996 shows that, although Australia's "sportswomen are playing harder, faster and more professionally than ever, and have a proven international record, they still struggle for consistent, long-term coverage."

There was some good news, with newspaper reportage of women's sport doubling since the 1992 report and recording just over a 500% increase from

the first survey in 1980. However, results showed only 10.7% of newspaper sports space was devoted to women's sport, compared with the men's at 79.1%. Women were often described in ways that stressed weakness, passivity and insignificance, deflecting attention from their athleticism. Like Schell's research, the Australian Sports Commission reported that sportswomen "were frequently portrayed as girls, no matter what their age".

Schell asks whether we should be concerned and concludes that such portrayal "greatly restricts the availability of role models and representations that depict a wider range of women involved with sport, and may discourage young girls from engaging in those sports deemed unfeminine."

Schell encourages those concerned to challenge media to increase the coverage they provide of women's sport as well as extending "the range of diversity to include coverage of racial and ethnic minorities, larger women, women with disabilities, and older women. We must support (financially and philosophically) those media who do not objectify women athletes or trivialize their athletic endeavors, but do provide positive role models and celebrate the accomplishments of women from various backgrounds. Finally, we must encourage young girls and women to become educated consumers who will have the power to resist biased media images and incite change at the local and national levels."

The participation of girls in sport at all-girls' schools is, I believe, exemplary. An environment relatively free of gender stereotypes and one that celebrates achievement encourages their engagement. One of our challenges would seem to be to teach them to be 'educated consumers' and continue their engagement in sports beyond their schooldays.

Beth Blackwood

Lea Ann Schell, *(Dis)Empowering Images? Media Representations of Women in Sport*, www.womensportsfoundation.org
Australian Sports Commission - Women and Sport, *Media Coverage of Women in Sport* www.ausport.gov.au/women/fsmedia.asp

FOR YOUR DIARY

- 27 November 2006** Annual Conference 2007 presentation proposals due (see back page)
- 17 - 21 January 2007** Student Leadership Conference 2007, Penrhos College, Perth, WA, Australia
- 15 - 17 June 2007** Annual Alliance Conference, Lauriston Girls' School, Armadale, Victoria, Australia
- 26 - 29 June 2007** 2007 NCGS Annual Conference, Roland Park Country School, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

From the Editor...

Jan Butler



One of the greatest challenges highlighted in the media today is the huge rise of obesity in the general population and in children in particular. It is well known and documented that exercise, along with a healthy diet, is an important factor in keeping fit and reducing obesity. Various studies have shown that girls, while keen to engage in sporting activities at primary school, tend to lose interest and are participating in sport at secondary school at a much lower rate than previously and to a lesser extent than boys. It is important that this trend is changed for not only fitness reasons but for social reasons as well.

A fact sheet from NSW Sport and Recreation (www.dsr.nsw.gov.au) states that:

“Those who participate in sport, recreation and physical activity are generally healthier, more confident and feel better than those who don’t. Current research indicates that 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as walking) done most days of the week is the minimum required to maintain good health.”

According to the fact sheet some of the advantages of playing sport are to:

- socialise and have fun
- learn new skills
- keep slim and fit
- feel good and relieve stress
- belong to a team

Girls’ schools have a strong focus on full participation in sporting activities for their students. This is highlighted in articles from our South African and Singapore member schools. There are also many organisations working to encourage girls to continue to play sport. We feature articles from Girls’ Sport Victoria, Womensport Queensland and Womensport West.

See the box on this page for web links of organisations supporting girls and women in sport in your state, territory and country.

Jan Butler

AUSTRALIA

Womensport - Information about women and sport from all states in Australia. Their mission is: “Developing and supporting the aims of women in all aspects of sport and recreation.” www.womensport.com.au

Australian Sports Commission - Australian National Sport Information
www.ausport.gov.au/nsic/webarch.asp

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

www.sport.act.gov.au

CANADA

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity
www.caaws.ca

NEW SOUTH WALES

Womensport NSW. One of their programs is Schoolgirls’ Breakfasts with the Stars. The aim of the breakfasts is to utilise positive sporting role models to inspire and motivate high school girls to continue their involvement in sport and physical activity.
www.womensportnsw.com.au

NEW ZEALAND

Sport & Recreation New Zealand (SPARC)
Dedicated to getting New Zealanders moving. That means everything from supporting elite athletes to getting out into local communities and encouraging people to get active.
www.sparc.org.nz

QUEENSLAND

Womensport Queensland aims to improve opportunities for women and girls in sport. This could mean assisting girls and women to participate and get active or play at the elite level or coach or officiate or be a representative on a board or do all of these activities. The website provides updates on statistics, research and any other information available that is of interest to women and girls in sport.
www.womensportqld.com.au

SINGAPORE

Sports Web Women and Sport Group
www.ssc.gov.sg/SportsWebg

SOUTH AFRICA

Women and Sport South Africa (WASSA) - under the auspices of Sport and Recreation South Africa.
www.srsa.gov.za

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The *Office for Recreation and Sport* encourages the involvement of women in all aspects of physical activity, recreation and sport and is pleased to promote initiatives in this area.
www.recsport.sa.gov.au/training-development/womens-girls.html

TASMANIA

Sport and Recreation Tasmania
www.development.tas.gov.au/sportrec

UNITED KINGDOM

Women’s Sports Foundation
www.wsf.org.uk
National Action Plan for Women and Girls in Sport and Physical Activity
www.wsf.org.uk/docs/WSF-Goodpractice.doc

UNITED STATES

National Association for Girls and Women in Sport - The leading organisation for equity issues in sports - champions equal funding, quality, and respect for girls’ and women’s sports.
www.aahperd.org/nagws

VICTORIA

Girls’ Sport Victoria (GSV) was established in 2001 and is one of the largest independent school sporting associations in Victoria, with 24 member schools. GSV recognises the importance of school sport in developing positive attitudes towards women’s health and a lifelong involvement in physical activity and sport.
www.gsv.vic.edu.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Womensport West is a not for profit organisation dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls of all ages to participate in sport and physical activity as well as recognising the sporting achievements of women and girls.
www.wswest.asn.au

Sports at Raffles Girls' School (Secondary), Singapore

Sports play a significant part in the shaping of young lives in Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) (RGS). The School recognises that a vibrant sporting culture helps to develop its pupils' emotional, mental, physical and social health, and adopts a multi-pronged approach in cultivating in our pupils the importance of sports for girls. RGS seeks to provide a holistic education for its students and sport is one of the platforms offered by the Raffles Program to develop their interpersonal skills in the areas of leadership and team building, as well as intrapersonal competencies such as perseverance and resilience.

The RGS Physical Education Program consists of 13 game modules: Gymnastics, Netball, and Track and Field for Secondary 1 pupils; Badminton, Basketball, and Sport Climbing for Secondary 2 pupils; Rugby, Softball, and Volleyball for Secondary 3 pupils; and Golf, Floorball, Tennis, and Soccer for Secondary 4 pupils. The Games Concept Approach has been integrated as part of Physical Education pedagogy to promote and reinforce in our pupils life-skills such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and esteem building.

The school has a high number of Sports Co-curricular Activities (17 in all): Badminton, Basketball, Cross-Country, Fencing, Golf, Gymnastics (Artistic, Rhythmic, Trampoline), Judo, Netball, Outdoor Adventure, Sailing, Shooting (Air Rifle and Pistol), Squash, Swimming, Table-Tennis, Tenpin Bowling, Tennis, and Track and Field. The School believes in developing each pupil to the fullest potential in her area of sporting talent. A multitude of sporting activities are arranged for the pupils after their End of Instruction examinations, including Kicking Boxing, Paso Dobra, and Kendo.

In addition to the strong tradition of a wide, varied, and excellent sporting arena, the School's House System provides many opportunities for pupils to partake in sporting activities. House practices include mass dancing, track and field events, and cheerleading. Pupils also have the following array of Inter-House sports competitions from which they can choose to participate and represent their House: Badminton, Basketball, Fencing, Floorball, Golf, Netball, Outdoor Adventure Activities, Rugby, Shooting, Squash, Soccer, Sports Climbing, Swimming, Table-Tennis, Tenpin Bowling, Tennis, and Track and Field.

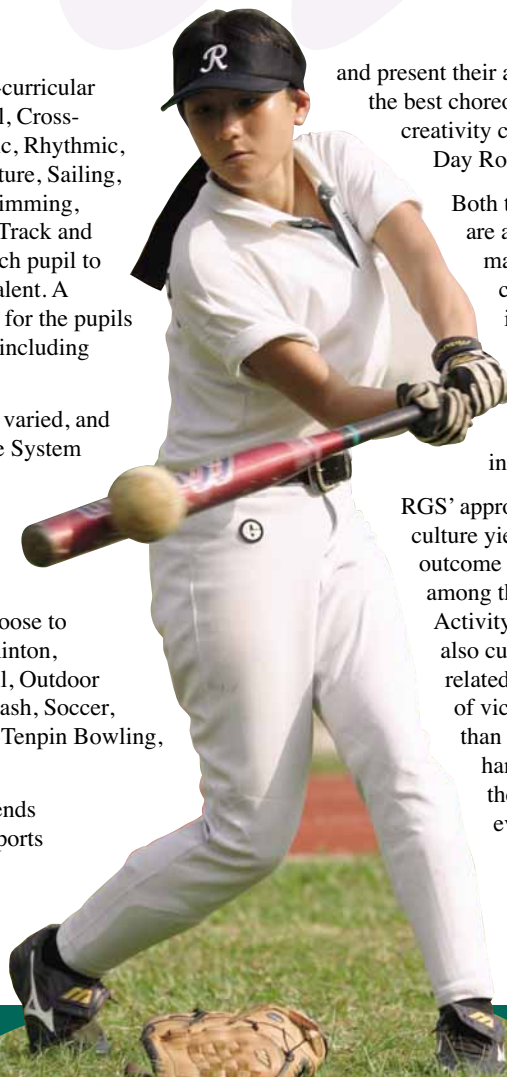
The Inter-House competition system transcends numerous annual mass sports events. The Sports

“Focusing on personal excellence rather than glory alone, and offering sporting handshakes in defeat are attitudes reflecting the mindset of the students in RGS, where every scholar is also a sportswoman.”

Festival is when the pupils see the fruition of the House practice hours they have spent preparing for the mass dance performance, and competing in track and field events, telematches, and cheerleading. Besides providing a platform for pupils to compete in traditional swimming events, the Swimming Carnival gives pupils the avenue to try many water-based activities: for example, water captain's ball competition, mass swim, and aqua-aerobics. For the annual and national All Children Exercise Simultaneously (ACES) Day, pupils from each House prepare, choreograph and present their aerobics routine to judges. The House with the best choreography which fulfils the fun, fitness, and creativity criteria will be selected as the year's ACES Day Routine for the School.

Both the Sports Festival and Swimming Carnival are also organised at Inter-Class level. Another mass sports event that is based on Inter-Class competitions is the Netball Carnival which involves the entire pupil population. Four separate Netball Carnivals are held annually, one for each level of the pupil population. Competitions in cheering and Netball Shooting are also incorporated in this sports event.

RGS' approach in sustaining an excellent sporting culture yields an additional important desired outcome – the nurturing of a sense of belonging among the pupils to their class, Co-curricular Activity, House, and ultimately, to their school. It also cultivates sportspersonship, a virtue strongly related to those of respect and grace in the pursuit of victory. Focusing on personal excellence rather than glory alone, and offering sporting handshakes in defeat are attitudes reflecting the mindset of the students in RGS, where every scholar is also a sportswoman.



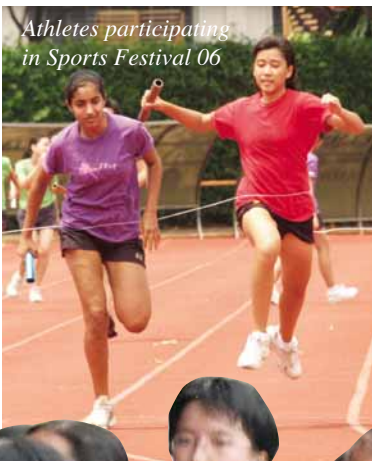
Softball at RGS



Sports Festival 06 - the 5 houses together



Dance competition @Sports-Festival 06 - Hadley House



Athletes participating in Sports Festival 06



Swim carnival 06



Netball at RGS



Supporting the swimmers

Saints Sport and Recognition, South Africa

Karen Prinsloo, Deputy Head, St Stithians Girls' College, South Africa, www.stithian.com

We offer sport at St Stithians College; in fact, if a sport exists and girls wish to try it, we will source a coach and offer it. As a result we offer hockey, netball, tennis and swimming - sports we consider as traditionally offered at girls' schools. Over and above these we offer athletics, cross-country, squash, soccer, diving, water polo, rowing, touch rugby, Saints striders (our non-competitive walking program) and our girls also compete in the schools equestrian league. Many of our activities such as swimming and athletics provide the core skills needed for other minor sports such as water polo and touch rugby for example.

We are also very fortunate to be able to offer these sports on the most beautiful campus in Johannesburg, grounds which are exquisitely maintained, where parents and girls are provided with eats and refreshments at the edge of the astro, pool or field at the end of a match. Altogether a very privileged experience!

Our philosophy at Saints is to provide our girls with opportunities to participate and experience the life skills that are so easily taught through fun team participation in sport. It is commitment to shared visions, the ability to win graciously and lose with dignity that we aspire to teach our girls. Sport also provides a wonderful avenue to promote, develop and hone leadership skills – one of our strategic goals in the Girls' College.

“Sport at Saints and the enthusiasm for the activity are closely related to the enthusiasm and passion displayed by the staff member in charge of the activity...”

Sport at Saints and the enthusiasm for the activity are closely related to the enthusiasm and passion displayed by the staff member in charge of the activity as well as the coaches employed to assist the staff member. We also try to provide opportunities for all of our girls to compete in leagues, and if a league structure does not exist for an age group of 6th team for example, we will organise a friendly tournament or friendly games for the more social or non-first teams. A housing structure is also in place to promote the pleasure of sport at our school. By dividing the school into the four houses this provides greater participation in the competitive side of activities on offer at our school. We have inter house and often staff versus pupil activities and on occasion girls versus boys matches with our brother school across the field. This year we have embarked upon a very successful Spirit Committee which is committed to promoting a supporting team of girls to accompany the athletes at all of our 'high' games. This has had an incredible effect on those girls competing and also on the spirit committee themselves. They are all 'fired up' for the season. It is a delight to see and hear their enthusiastic cries from the edge of the field and pool.

We strongly encourage all of our students to maintain a healthy balanced perspective of school life through sport and by becoming involved in cultural activities, playing traditional instruments,



Hockey Team on Argentina tour





'giving of themselves' in acts of service to the community and of course to still maintain academic excellence. This is quite a demanding load and then on top of all that we are quite revolutionary in our outward recognition of their achievements.

None of our girls 'wear' their colours for sport and academics on their blazers, we don't have prefects and there are no 'badges' for achievement or captaincy worn outwardly on their uniform. We do however recognise all efforts and achievements whether it be an improvement to a breaststroke time from the beginning to the end of a season or to the presentation of South African colours for a sport.

Our girls are recognised in Assembly, they receive their colours certificates at a formal end of year 'Celebration' function and we often forward their photos to the press. We also acknowledge activities like dancing, fencing, karate, kick boxing, ballet and wake boarding that are not offered at the school but where our girls participate in clubs or at community centres. These 'gifts' are showcased at school events such as at our annual Spring Festival and Arts Festivals, are listed in our newsletters and acknowledged at the annual function.

The underlying philosophy behind this is that not all our girls can obtain badges for the many 'gifts' that they might possess such as friendship, integrity, character or being a good listener. Nor should girls with sporting talents grow up thinking that they are better than others. Who you are and become should be shaped by your positive deeds and actions and your internal measure of self worth. We are encouraging our girls to build their own intrinsic motivators and not to rely on what others think about them.

At Saints we encourage mass participation and strive for excellence – a delicate balance exists between these two viewpoints, but what is pivotal is that 'you have to enjoy what you do – you have to have fun!'

Women come in all shapes and sizes

"When are we going to stop talking about the shape of women's bodies and start to recognise that women come in all shapes and sizes?"

The recent discussion about Serena Williams' body shape is reflective of how disapproving the media is of women who do not fit an 'ideal' body type. This, coupled with recent reports that schools are conducting weigh-ins of children and young people, only adds to the growing number of people, in particular women, who feel that they are less than perfect and who struggle with body image issues, disordered eating patterns and low self esteem.

What should be highlighted is that Serena Williams sends a message to all women that she is confident, strong and participating in a sport that she loves and enjoys. Her recent win shows that she is a formidable competitor who should not be written off.

Must we again, in 2006 go over old ground that questions the participation of women in sport as a threat to feminine virtues and appearances?

Arguments like this heighten the anxiety of women who feel uncomfortable about their bodies and does nothing to help address the current low participation rates by women in sport and recreation."

Womensport and Recreation Victoria,
<http://www.womensport.com.au>

GoGirlGo.com

At the 2006 World Conference on Women and Sport a group from the United States spoke about empowering girls in sport around the world. The group has developed a website called GoGirlGo.com to encourage girls, parents and program organisers to get active and mix with like minded people. The site has an area for girls, an area for parents and an area for program organisers. The area for girls is a great way to bring active girls together and provide them with a space to chill out, chat and learn more about things they are interested in. There are four sections to this area including a School, where higher learning intersects with sport in a girl's life; girls can read about how their favourite athletes deal with curveballs, and how to become a leader themselves. The next section is the Lounge; this is where girls can hang out and put shootouts to team mates on the message board. The Gym has videos on how girls can perfect their game, information on over 100 sports, and wise words from a Sports Diva. The final area is the Action Centre, a place for girls who want to lead the way in making sure all other girls have a chance to play and be active. The parents' area is a place for adults to give them information on how to get their girls active, as well as providing sponsorship opportunities for the site and girls in the community.

From the Womensport Queensland web site:
<http://www.womensportqld.com.au>

Increased Opportunities: Girls' Sport in Queensland

Barbara Barkley, Chief Executive Officer, Womensport Queensland



Womensport Queensland was initially established in 1993 to celebrate the achievements of extraordinary women in sport through the Mazda/The Courier-Mail Queensland Sportswomen of the Year Gala Dinner. Queensland sporting greats including Vicki Wilson, Susie O'Neill, Karrie Webb, Kerrie Meares, Joanna Stone and Leisel Jones have been announced Queensland Sportswoman of the Year at these dinners.

Fourteen years later the organisation actively promotes opportunities for women and girls in sport, increases women's well-being through sport and physical activity and is extending its networks and support for women and girls across Queensland.

With the recruitment of its first Chief Executive Officer, Barbara Barkley and the increased strategic focus of its Board, Womensport Queensland is now undertaking a stronger advocacy and advisory role on behalf of women and girls in sport across Queensland. This

advocacy role continues to recognise the outstanding achievements of Queensland's female athletes as well as increasing opportunities for women to take on leadership roles.

Throughout its history, Womensport Queensland has appreciated great loyalty from its sponsors which has included Mazda, The Courier-Mail, Sport and Recreation Queensland and St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School. Our organisation would not have had the

success it has achieved without the support of these and many other fantastic organisations that acknowledge the importance of improving the opportunities for women and girls in sport.

In 2005, Womensport Queensland, in partnership with our sponsors, Sport and Recreation Queensland and Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, delivered several Active Girls' breakfasts and professional development forums across Queensland where 600 schoolgirls attended breakfasts in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville. There they were inspired by outstanding Olympic cyclists Kerrie and Anna Meares, Paralympic swimmer Karni Liddell and softball Joy Lester. This year, schoolgirls in Mt Isa, Cairns, Noosa and Gold Coast have had the opportunity to be inspired by presenters including Olympic cyclist Sara Carrigan and Townsville Fire basketball player, Naomi Pedro.

Womensport Queensland provides information to anyone interested in increasing opportunities for women and girls through its website and electronic newsletters. Information can be accessed on upcoming sporting events throughout the State, available funding and interesting topics related to women and girls in sport.

For more information on the Active Girls Breakfasts; the 2006 Mazda/The Courier-Mail Queensland Sportswoman of the Year Gala Dinner; the Kumamoto Conference on Women and Sport; and other Womensport Queensland activities; or to become a member of Womensport Queensland visit www.womensportqld.com.au or contact Womensport Queensland on 07 3004 6860.



“Womensport Queensland is now undertaking a stronger advocacy and advisory role on behalf of women and girls in sport across Queensland.”



Leading by Example: Girls Sport Victoria

The following segments have been reprinted from the GSV web pages (<http://www.gsv.vic.edu.au>) by permission.

Girls Sport Victoria (GSV) was established in 2001 and is one of the largest independent school sporting associations in Victoria, with 24 member schools. Under GSV 16,500 girls from Years Seven to Twelve have the opportunity to be involved in more than 20 sports - in weekly competitions, carnivals, tournaments and skills development programs. GSV also conducts a Year 7 Sports Expo, showcasing up to 30 different sports. GSV encourages girls to participate in sport at all levels, from skills development, to friendly competition and elite performance.

GSV recognises the importance of school sport in developing positive attitudes towards women's health and a lifelong involvement in physical activity and sport.

Sport the Winner as School Principals Lead by Example

It's not often that you can gather the Principals from 24 schools together and even less often that they come together in an act of solidarity. But on a crisp, sunny morning at Bundoora Park this morning (Friday 26 May, 2006) that's exactly what happened when Principals from 24 independent girls' schools swapped their business suits for track suits and came together to 'walk the course' at the Girls Sport Victoria Cross Country Championships.

With hundreds of proud and excited girls in tow, the Principals kept a very brisk pace, proving they were serious about demonstrating their own fitness and commitment to physical activity. They led the way, figuratively and literally, and inspired their whole school communities to get active.

President of Girls Sport Victoria and Toorak College Principal Margaret Webb said it was a fantastic experience to walk with the girls and 23 other Principals as a warm up to the Championships. "It was simply marvellous to be out there; the atmosphere amongst the Principals and girls was just inspirational," she said. "As Principals of girls' schools we all felt such a strong sense of coming together, encouraging girls to get active. It made us very proud to be a part of GSV."

"There was a terrific buzz out there and already talk about raising the bar next year." Principal of Shelford Girls' Grammar, Pam Chessell, said the walk was important to demonstrate to girls that, as leaders of our school communities, we take sport and physical fitness seriously and that it is a lifelong commitment.

Girls Sport Victoria has a strong philosophy to encourage girls to get involved in sport in their school years and to stay involved in sport and physical activity throughout adulthood.



The 24 GSV schools are: Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Fintona Girls' School, Firkbank Grammar School, Genazzano FCJ College, Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School, Kilvington Girls' Grammar, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Lauriston Girls' School, Loreto Toorak, Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School, Melbourne Girls Grammar, Mentone Girls' Grammar School, Methodist Ladies' College, Our Lady of Mercy College, Presbyterian Ladies' College, Ruyton Girls' School, Sacre Coeur, St Catherine's School, St Margaret's School, Shelford Girls' Grammar, Star of the Sea College, Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School, Tintern Girls Grammar School and Toorak College.

Steps to enhance girls' participation

“Girls who play sports have higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression than girls who do not play sports.”

Edwards P, 1995, *Facts on Sports and Smoke free Youth*, 6 Oct 2006, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research_data/youth/ythsprt1.htm



Schools can...

- Celebrate girls' participation in sport activities
- Provide PE specialist teachers in primary schools
- Encourage high profile sportswomen to visit their school
- Encourage students to design and choose their own sports clothing
- Provide opportunities for girls to gain equal access to sports facilities
- Ensure women in sport issues are included as part of the PE curricula
- Provide adequate shower and change facilities for girls which allow for some privacy
- Ensure a more even balance of male/female PE teachers and PE Heads of Department

Community Sports Clubs can...

- Provide non-traditional sports for teenage girls
- Experiment with different sports and length of seasons
- Encourage and support girls to conduct their own competitions
- Provide competitions which focus on the fun and social aspect of sport participation

Students can...

- Assist teachers to develop their sport program
- Provide feedback to the school on changeroom facilities
- Assist in the selection and design of appropriate sports clothes
- Provide encouragement and feedback to their peers, champion their participation

Teachers can...

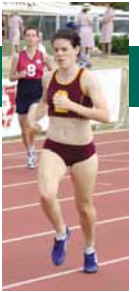
- Be aware of the issue of body image for girls
- Segregate groups on ability, rather than gender
- Give girls more involvement in the selection of the PE sports
- Experiment with different sports, lengths of PE lessons and season
- Modify rules and invent games which encourage the fun and social aspect of sport
- Provide coaching and activity programs for girls entering high school with inadequate skills

Parents can...

- Celebrate girls' participation in sporting activities
- Be spectators and enjoy your children's participation
- Encourage girls at a younger age to be involved in community sport
- Assist in the development of skills through practice and play at home

Reprinted from the Womensport West web site by permission, www.wswest.asn.au/research.html





Women of Achievement

Jane Barker – Founder of St Catherine's School, Waverley, NSW, the oldest Anglican girls' school in Australia

Lynne Stone, 11th Headmistress of St Catherine's School, Waverley

Celebrating its 150th year educating young women, St Catherine's at Waverley, Sydney owes its foundation to an amazing woman – Jane Sophia Barker, nee Harden, the wife of the Bishop of Sydney. It was her vision for an outstanding education for girls, coupled with her immense drive and commitment, that laid the foundations for Australia's oldest Anglican girls' school.

Jane Sophia Harden was born into a well-educated family in the Lake District of England. In her youth, Jane was surrounded by those who are now household names in English literature, art and education. Visitors to her home included the painter, Constable, and poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. Jane knew and was very fond of the Arnold family of Rugby fame. Whilst touring Europe, entertaining artists and poets wherever they went, the family met Lord Tennyson, and Jane's father sketched the only surviving portrait of Tennyson with Arthur Hallam, who was the subject of his famous poem, *In Memoriam*. Hers was a most cultured and diverse experience of life.

Still single in her early thirties, it was not expected that Jane would marry but, like other women of her generation, would keep house for her widowed father. Her life, however, took an unexpected turn in 1839 when she met Frederic Barker, an evangelical clergyman, and married him the following year. For fourteen years they worked together in the parish of St Mary, Edge Hill, near Liverpool, before Frederic was offered the post of Bishop of Sydney. In early 1855, Frederic and Jane set sail and it was on this journey that Mrs Barker commenced the journal letters to her sister, Jessie. Journals had been a part of her travels when she was younger and it was natural for her to adopt this way of recording and communicating her experiences.

These letters became known as 'Mrs Barker's Diary', of which only 1855 – 1856 survived complete and they record the establishment of St Catherine's School.

Disenchanted with the frivolous, materialistic society of Sydney, within three months of their arrival, the Barkers undertook a tour visiting country clergy. Mrs Barker was a resourceful traveller and loved the open spaces, despite the discomforts of the journey and the need to travel light. Dismayed at the absence of opportunities for the daughters of the clergy she met, on a wet night in Molong she recorded her decision to establish the school that was to become St Catherine's. With her characteristic matter-of-factness she stated

An institution for the education of clergymen's daughters, similar to Casterton or Brighton...would be a very great boon to the poor burdened country clergy; and we have determined by God's blessing to establish one. There will be many difficulties and great expense but I daresay not more than can be overcome.

Casterton is best known as the school attended by the Bronte sisters,



Charlotte and Emily. Difficulty and great expense were certainly to come in abundance.

Brushing aside the objections and doubts of her contemporaries, Mrs Barker set to work and early in November launched the first of many fund-raising appeals for St Catherine's. By the

new year she had over 500 pounds and had engaged staff, secured premises in what is now Ocean Street, Woollahra and enrolled the first students. Less than 117 days after she recorded her decision, the Clergy Daughters' School opened on 5 March 1856 with three students and a further two expected at the end of the week. While not subject to the myriad of regulations of today, it was still a considerable feat to achieve this in such a short time.

In June 1856, the strength of her determination is evident from her diary,

A Clergy Daughters' School I am bent upon erecting and I shall spare neither friend nor foe in the attempt.

No doubt she was a formidable and persuasive advocate for her vision.

From the start Mrs Barker set high standards for the Clergy Daughters' School. She had no intention of training the students in lady-like accomplishments; tuition was to be practical and scholarly, in

Visiting Guest Speakers for the Alliance

Dr Leonard Sax

Negotiations are in progress for a return visit and lecture tour to Australia in May 2007 by Dr Leonard Sax MD PhD, Executive Director, National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE).

In our last issue of *in Alliance*, we featured an article by Brian Lamb, director of the Lauriston Institute, who discussed a recent visit by Dr Sax and his ideas relating to gender difference. In reference to the notion that “girls’ eyes are constructed so that they respond to warm colours and to the texture of objects while boys’ eyes detect silver, black and blue and are more attuned to action and movement”, Dr Sax asked *in Alliance* to clarify that he was citing the work of Yasumasa Arai and associates in Japan, who used the term ‘warm’ to describe the colours preferred by girls and ‘cold’ to describe the colours preferred by boys. He emphasised that when he is presenting the work of others it is not necessarily his own opinion. He comments “I am personally uneasy with the statement. One reason for my uneasiness is that I have personally seen boys who are very happy to use colors such as red, orange, yellow, green, and brown; and I have personally seen girls of all ages who are happy to use black, grey, silver, and blue crayons.” He goes on to say, referring to the work of Dr. Edwin Lephart and others:

“Female eyes -- in humans as well as in laboratory animals -- appear to have a predominance of P ganglion cells. P ganglion cells are hardwired for fine discriminations of color and texture. Male eyes in humans and in laboratory animals appear to have a predominance of M ganglion cells. M ganglion cells are hardwired to detect movement. These hardwired sex differences in the wiring of the retina may have significant implications not only for how children draw and what kind of art they prefer, but also for best practices in teaching literature, language arts and creative writing.”

NASSPE has gathered on their web site, at <http://www.singlesexschools.org>, a wealth of material about studies relating to gender differences in education, and the talks by Dr Sax promise to be extremely interesting and likely to provoke lively discussion. There now appears to be good evidence to support what those in favour of girls’ schools have long believed.

Some quotes from the NASSPE website:

“Girls who attend single-sex schools are more likely to participate in competitive sports than are girls at coed schools.”

“Single-sex schools break down gender stereotypes. It’s cool to study.”

“We now have good evidence that single-sex classrooms can break down gender stereotypes. Girls in single-sex educational settings are more likely to take classes in math, science, and information technology. Boys in single-sex schools are more likely to pursue interests in art, music, drama, and foreign languages. Both girls and boys have more freedom to explore their own interests and abilities in single-gender classrooms.”

Marie Wilson

Marie Wilson, founder and president of The White House Project, was featured in the Women of Achievement section of the last issue of *in Alliance*. She will be a keynote speaker at the Alliance Annual Conference in June 2007 and will also travel around Australia talking to students, parents and teachers at member schools.

More information will be sent to members and will appear on the Alliance web site when the tour details have been finalised.



preparation for their roles as clergy wives themselves and responsible for the education of their own children.

Mrs Barker poured an immense amount of energy into this project. By August 1856 she had secured a five acre land grant at Waverley and before the end of the year, Mrs Barker had raised a further 1000 pounds for St Catherine’s as she had decided to name the school. Anxious to maintain the momentum of fund-raising and keep the project in the public eye, Mrs Barker organised the laying of a foundation stone, something she had eschewed in the building of Bishops court at Randwick.

The plans for the school building which is still the nucleus of St Catherine’s School were drawn up by Governor Sir William Denison, a most important ally for Mrs Barker. The thirteen pupils of St Catherine’s moved to the Waverley site with its seven room sandstone building in 1859. St Catherine’s School was already a success. Her ‘little missionary settlement’ at Waverley was also to have included a church and a parish school, but only St Catherine’s was built. Jane continued as its patron and general manager until her death in 1876. When she died the clergy of Sydney decided that the endowment of St Catherine’s School would be a fitting memorial. The 2000 pounds raised, together with the 3000 pounds already put aside, secured the future of the school she had loved and nurtured for thirty years.

The references for this piece are available on request. I gratefully acknowledge the work of Evangeline Galettis, Archivist, in gathering the sources.



Women Leading: some insights

Carolyn Hauff AM, Principal of Clayfield College, Queensland

In Carolyn's closing keynote address at the recent Alliance Annual Conference, she shared some statistics about women in business and leadership positions, and suggested areas where delegates can influence their students, the leaders of tomorrow, to make some important changes.

In Business

Women need to help themselves. Women:

- need to get diversity of experience especially line management positions
- need to manage careers - set goals and roles
- need to be 'visible'
- need to promote themselves
- mustn't hide ambition
- need to move more quickly through the promotion levels of the company or business (they spend much more time in a position than male counterparts)
- need to negotiate rates of pay commensurate with the job and position
- need to be attracted into IT, sciences, manufacturing, sales business to increase their access to wealth generation
- need to be part of the decision making process, eg politics
- need to understand the need for financial literacy - economic self defence

In Australia:

- Women on average earn 84% of male full time earnings
- 4 of the top 200 richest people in Australia are women (3 inherited their wealth)
- 28% of parliamentarians are women
- 3.2% of top executive positions are women
- 6% of University graduates are women
- 45% of the workforce are women
- 33% of small businesses which are owner-operated are managed by women
- 25% of the managerial and senior administration positions are held by women

Leadership

- The challenge of leadership is the Great Man theory. The Cinderella myth continues for females. We must overcome these myths.
- We have images of what leaders look like which get in our way.
- An important leadership trait is having passion for what you are doing.
- Women are less hierarchical. They are encouraging, speak from experience and work outward.
- Men have the trait of positive illusion and the belief that they can do everything.
- Females need to claim the authority to lead and trust their vision.
- Females need to push the boundary further, take risks and never consider their success to have come through good luck.
- There is not a glass ceiling, but a thick layer of men.

Problems for Women in the Corporate Sector

- Juggling caring responsibilities with the demands of the job, ie family unfriendly hours
- Lack of part-time manager roles, perception that part-time equals part commitment and limited career path for part-time workers
- Assumptions about what women can/can't do (ie. assuming that a woman won't take an overseas assignment or high risk or high profile project or promotion for family reasons)
- Assumptions that women aren't as ambitious as men
- Lack of female role models and mentors
- Lack of critical mass. Women feel 'out on a limb', more visible and mistakes more noticeable.
- Management reluctance to give women line management experience
- Retention
- Pay inequity
- Inability to access informal networks where key decisions are made or that give men visibility
- Women are more likely to work part-time where the opportunities for promotion are limited
- Inhospitable workplace cultures

News from the US and the UK

Did you know it has been illegal to provide education in single sex classes in United States public schools?

Dr Leonard Sax, director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE) has provided the following information for us:

A most historic development: after more than four years of delay, the United States Department of Education has this week finally issued new regulations legalising single-sex education in public schools. In the United States, more than 90% of students attend public schools, i.e. state schools which charge no tuition for attendance. Previously the single-sex format was of questionable legality in public schools, although the number of such schools has grown to 241 nationwide since the founding of the NASSPE four years ago.

For more information on the NASSPE, visit <http://www.singlesexschools.org/>.

An article from the education community's daily news service, *Education Daily*, discusses the ramifications. A section from the NCGS web site has been reproduced here.

Single-sex schools offer flexibility, with obstacles

By Kris Kitto, Staff Writer

The Education Department's announcement of new Title IX provisions that will grant public schools more flexibility in separating their students by sex has reignited an ongoing debate about the merits of single-sex education. But no matter their positions, several education experts and district administrators around the country agreed that no schools can or should jump into this option headlong. The new amendments to Title IX allow schools to offer single-sex classes in all subjects and even to launch entire single-sex schools. The only requirement is a "substantially equal" option - either coeducational or single-sex - for the excluded sex.

Single-sex public education, however, will not be an instantly viable option, experts said. It will require support from the

community, special training for teachers and an understanding of how boys and girls learn differently.

"It's not just separating boys and girls," said Meg Milne Moulton, the co-executive director of the National Coalition of Girls Schools. "It's really responding and teaching in ways that reflect where they are developmentally."

Moulton said she credits single-sex education's growing popularity to an opportunity for students to buck longstanding stereotypes, like girls being bad at science and boys not excelling in language arts. Moulton said a large number of single-sex students defected to coeducational options in the late 1980s; the tide reversed, however, in the mid-1990s. Forty new all-girls schools, both public and private, have opened since 1996, she said.

Some public school districts continue to experiment with single-sex education options. The New York City Department of Education has opened nine single-sex schools since 2004. Miami-Dade County Public Schools opened an all-girls academy this fall, with plans to open an all-boys academy in the 2007-08 school year. Officials from both districts said they are tackling the single-sex education option slowly, taking into consideration students' best interests.

Equal protection clause debated in context of Title IX

By Steve Berlin, Staff Writer

The newly announced Education Department amendments to Title IX allowing development of more single-sex public school programs immediately set off a clash of contradicting legal opinions.

Civil rights lawyers said the department is "inviting" schools to violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, while supporters of same-sex education disagreed. The 34-year-old Title IX directives mandate gender equity in all aspects of education, from allowing females to enroll in previously male-only classes, such as auto mechanics, to fielding girls' athletic teams.

The new rules go into effect November 24.

Supporters of the policy, including Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute, said there is no constitutional violation because the changes to Title IX do not mandate students attend single-sex schools. "Very simply, it doesn't require anybody to do anything," said Leonard Sax, Executive Director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education. "It says single-sex education is no longer being prohibited to people who don't have \$30,000 a year for a private school."

Education Daily, Vol. 39, No. 194, Thursday, 26 October, 2006

Do pupils do better in single-sex schools?

Does separating girls and boys at school increase their confidence and allow teaching to be adapted to the needs of each gender – or does it simply restrict their opportunities and narrow their perspectives?

Brenda Despontin, President of the Girls' Schools Association in the UK, and Headmistress of Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls, and Professor Alan Smithers, Director of the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham, debated this question recently in *Candis*, a UK magazine "for all the family with health, lifestyle matters, features, news, celebrity interviews, consumer advice, ideas for the table, home and garden ..."

Some quotes from each side of the argument are reproduced here:

"It's easier for children to learn without worrying about the impression they are making on the opposite sex."

"Boys and girls interpret topics in a totally different way, with mixed schools allowing a wider range of perspectives."

You can view the whole article at <http://www.gsa.uk.com/default.aspx?id=NewsItem&cmnID=4457>



2007 Annual Conference

womenleading@global.edu

15 – 17 June 2007

To be hosted by: Lauriston Girls' School,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Heads and senior staff of girls' schools are invited to attend the
Annual Conference of the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia

Keynote speakers already confirmed:

Marie Wilson, founder of The White House Project, a leading advocate and voice on women's leadership

Mark McCrindle, one of Australia's foremost youth speakers

The Annual Conference of The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) will have the following themes:

- 1. Leadership In Education** - mentoring, developing staff, innovation, communication
- 2. Demographics** - Trends in girls' values, aims, educational needs, including student voices - girls' involvement in education
- 3. Knowledge Management** - sharing information, accessing and distributing information, learning communities, change management, using data to inform teaching and learning

Call for Papers

The Annual Conference is a valuable opportunity to share, with other members, what is happening at your school. You are invited to submit proposals for presentation at small group workshops during the Conference. Priority will be given to proposals that link to the Conference Themes.

The Call for Papers Form should be submitted on the Alliance web site at

http://www.agsa.org.au/what_con07.html
by **Monday 27 November**.

The organising committee will then select abstracts, and presenters will be notified by **Monday 26 February 2007**.

Conference details will be continually updated on the Alliance web site at www.agsa.org.au.
Please email queries to Jan Butler, the Executive Officer, at jan.butler@internode.on.net