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## French Language Workshop



**Participants in the first French Language Workshop for Children**

Another first for our chapter of the Alliance has been to conduct a language workshop for children during the Christmas break. This workshop was co-ordinated by Pascale Levacher, who, along with Fil Olsen and a band of willing helpers, made the new Language Centre at the Glenmore High School come to life each morning from the 17th to 19th of January.

There were 38 students and these were broken into two groups - four to nine years and ten to seventeen years. Each group worked harmoniously and all had the opportunity of seeing themselves in short movies. While those who had already attended our classes found much of the vocabulary familiar, they enjoyed using their knowledge in a different context and particularly enjoyed the opportunity to cook French foods and to learn the names of the ingredients. The older group turned out some professional looking crêpes while the younger group enjoyed making pizzas to their individual tastes.



**Did you know** that, although pizza is usually associated with Italy, it is also a specialty of Southern France? Here pizzas have a thin crisp crust and French cheeses such as emmenthal and cantal replace mozzarella which is commonly used in Italy. Their favourite ingredients are tomato, basil, and olives. Pissaladière with caramelised onion, anchovies and olives is a famous French pizza.

# Glenmore High Students Travel to Brisbane for a Taste of France

Pascale Levacher

Ten Grade 8 and 9 students participated in the 2010 two day French excursion to Brisbane in November. This excursion was sponsored by the Rockhampton Alliance Française, which donated \$500 towards the costs.

croustillant aux pommes were just a few dishes on the menu. We narrowly made it on time to catch our bus back to New Farm.

Our last day was more laid back. After a **French breakfast at Chouquette** (a French bakery/coffee shop in New Farm) we went to **Mansfield State High** where the students took part in three French immersion classes. The students were



The *pièce de résistance* of the excursion was without doubt the **Valentino Retrospective** held at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art. It had been brought to



very impressed by the overall atmosphere at Mansfield State High, which feels very much like a private school.

Brisbane from the Museum of Les Beaux Arts, Paris. The students were mesmerised by the finishing touches to the garments - all done by hand and representing hours and hours of painstaking work.



The final afternoon was dedicated to **les courses**, shopping in the mall. We set out for the airport around five o'clock by Air Train and caught our flight to

Our second port of call was the **Alliance Française of Brisbane's** new headquarters in West End, for a workshop based on 'Entre les Murs', a much awarded movie about high school life in a low socio-economic *banlieue* of Paris.

Rockhampton where ten very excited (but rather tired) students were welcomed home by their parents.

Next, we travelled to New Farm where we were staying and from there we went out for **dinner at 'La Provence'** in Coorparoo. Here, we were treated to a three course meal of traditional French fare. Soufflé aux escargots, French onion soup, crêpe roulée au fromage, crème caramel, sorbets aux fruits rouges,



It was a wonderful experience for all involved: some of these students had never caught a plane before so it was a really big deal for them! It gave them a taste of French culture through cinema, food and couture, something that couldn't have been achieved here in Rockhampton. I had some excellent feedback from the parents afterwards, thanking me providing the children with such a great experience. We are all looking forward to an encore in 2011!



## From the editor

The focus of this issue is learning. The numbers in the 2010 classes were most gratifying, with record numbers of both adults and children. I thank Pascale for her report on a trip by Glenmore High School students to Brisbane, of which the Alliance has been one of the sponsors for a number of years. Our classes are supported by Glenmore High which offers their library as the venue at a nominal rate. We have benefited from this arrangement and we are pleased to promote the teaching of French in our region. Also Bernadette Bernleitner presents the first of a series of articles on acquiring language, both native and foreign.

We enjoyed an active social calendar in 2010 and 2011 promises to be even busier. Information about the Alliance Française de Central Queensland and its activities can be viewed on the website, [www.afrockhampton.com](http://www.afrockhampton.com) For further information you can telephone me on 4934 1363 or Susan Yates on 0410 878 536. Our new email address is [afdecq@gmail.com](mailto:afdecq@gmail.com)

Issue 6 of *le bulletin* will not be published until later in the year. If you would like to contribute, please contact me.



# Monolingual or.....?

Bernadette Bernleitner

*This is the first of a series of articles on the acquisition of language, in which Bernadette will explore how native language is acquired and, in subsequent issues, the acquisition of foreign languages. She has just completed her Masters of Applied Linguistics (the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching) through Monash University. Bernadette teaches French and German privately and she is a NAATI\* qualified interpreter of both French and German. She has spent 30 years of her life living in Europe.*

In the beginning was the word – hopefully a kind and helpful one. Was it spoken slooowly and LOUDLY in the hope that communication would be achieved? Perhaps we already understood it because we are told, “The whole earth was of one language and of one speech” (Genesis) but of course, in our usual human way we angered the boss and to teach us a lesson he “confounded the language of all the earth”. So much for that initial advantage! Thank goodness he left us the ability to acquire language, and the following is an insight into how we achieve that feat.

Language acquisition has been hailed as one of the most impressive and indeed fascinating aspects of human development – an amazing feat, and performed, in the first instance, by none other than babies who come into the world with innate linguistic skills, and expand and develop these skills during childhood.

Experiments have been used to carry out tests on babies whilst suckling using tonal signals, *pa pa pa*, droning on in a constant stream to the point of boredom. When the signal was changed to *ba ba ba*, the baby perked up and sucked more vigorously, obviously able to detect the difference and hoping to hear more stimulating changes.

Babies are born recognizing the prosody (melody, stress and rhythm) of their mother’s language since this is audible in the womb, and in the first days after birth, react to it when played the sound of other voices and then the mother’s. These experiments have clearly

indicated to researchers that infants can hear subtle differences in the sounds and ‘melody’ of human languages - even the difference between ‘pa’ and ‘ba’!

Research has shown that an extraordinary thing about FIRST LANGUAGE acquisition is the high level of similarity in the early language production of children all over the world. The grammatical developmental sequence, e.g. verb+ing (walking), plurals (two books), possessive (Daddy’s car), articles (the & a) etc. may take place at different ages and at a different pace, relative to the child’s cognitive development, but the order of acquisition is strikingly similar.

By the age of two, most children can construct simple ‘telegraphic’ sentences, e.g. ‘Mummy milk’, ‘teddy sit down’, ‘shoe off’, and we accept them as sentences. There may be no articles or prepositions but the word order is that of the language they are exposed to and the combined words have a meaning relationship. Research has also shown that there is a predictable order in which the ‘wh-words’ (questions) emerge (Bloom 1991). ‘What’ is usually the first and learned as part of a group or ‘chunk’ of words, e.g. ‘Whassat?’ ‘Where’ and ‘Who’ follow quickly with the need to identify and locate people and things within the child’s own world. By the end of year two the absolute favourite arrives - ‘WHY’ - and they have fun with this one for the next year or so, having discovered how well this one engages adults in conversation!

It is a generally accepted fact that by the age of four, most children can report events, ask questions, give commands (!), recognise incorrect sentence structure, and make up stories - having mastered the basic structures of the language they were exposed to throughout these early years. Now these little linguistic geniuses are ready for their next linguistic challenge.

\*The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. It is the only agency that issues accreditations for practitioners in this profession in Australia.

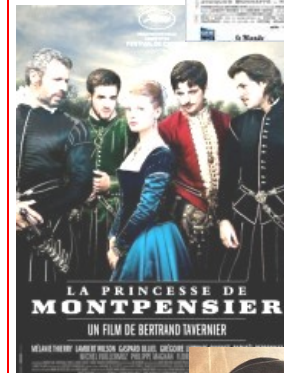
# Film Festival 2011



FRIDAY  
29 April  
Opening Night  
7.30 for 8 p.m.



SATURDAY  
30 April  
10 a.m.



SATURDAY  
30 April  
4 p.m.



SATURDAY  
30 April  
7 p.m.



SUNDAY  
1 May  
4 p.m.

All films shown at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre. All have English subtitles.

# Social and Cultural Activities



The outstanding social/cultural event was the dinner to celebrate **Bastille Day, le quatorze juillet**. Following a very successful Christmas luncheon in 2009, the restaurant **Beaches** was chosen. John Mundell, pictured above with Nola Pontifex and Pascale Levacher, proudly sports his chefs jacket showing that he trained at the Académie Culinaire de France. We shared a wonderful five course meal which was authentically French.

Celebrating **le Beaujolais Nouveau** is a big festivity in France and our chapter of the Alliance came on board for the first time in 2010. Orders for the wine were made through the Melbourne Alliance which distributed them to participating Alliances. The vintage was an extra good one and, for a wine only six weeks old, was excellent value at \$12 a bottle. Pascale hosted our party to celebrate life, wine, and a grand French tradition.

**Films** are always appreciated. **Rocky Flix** provided three excellent French films as part of their programming - *Micmacs* - directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, a visually enthralling and amusing revenge story, and *Le Concert* (Radu Mihaileanu) in which a former Bolshoi Orchestra conductor collects his former musicians to go to Paris to perform in place of the real orchestra. The third

film, *Gainsbourg* (Joann Sfar), gave an account of the life and loves of the famous songwriter, singer, actor and director Serge Gainsbourg (1928 - 1991). A big thank you to Judy Couttie for seeking out such interesting films. Added to this selection was *La Grande Séduction* (Jean-François Pouliot) shown at the **Glenmore High School**, with supper provided by the audience. These nights are always special and this film, another intrigue, was very well received. Thank you to Pascale for organising these evenings.

In December a **French choir** made up of students, teachers and parents, organised by parent Rebecca Cowan, sang at the Gracemere **Carols by Candlelight** They sang *Il est né, le divin enfant* and were very well received by the community. Thank you Rebecca.

Following a suggestion from Bernadette Moore, we are planning a **French immersion weekend** to be held at the **North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre** (nkieec.eq.edu.au) on the weekend of 15 - 16 October. It is anticipated that we will run some workshops and immerse ourselves in the French language for the whole time we are there. The cost will be around \$140 and a minimum number of 15 is required, with 45 the maximum.

Plans are also underway for the commemoration, in June, of our **tenth anniversary**. The Cultural Attaché from the French Embassy, M Pierre Labbe will be present for these celebrations. We are keen to have as many **past members** as possible share in the action. Watch the website for details.

## Positions Vacant!

**Treasurer:** A new treasurer is **urgently required**. Nola resigned at the end of last year but her position has not been filled. She is continuing to act as treasurer but she needs to train someone ASAP as she is taking long service leave soon. As well as the usual duties of a club treasurer, skill in

handling wages is a necessity.

**Secretary 2011:** I will be resigning at the end of this year. My energy levels and memory are failing me. While the Alliance could function without a secretary, **it cannot function without a treasurer. Please Help!**

# Classes

## Adults

- Beginners, intermediate and advanced
- Wednesdays 6.30 - 8.30 p.m.
- Library, Glenmore High School
- Qualified Teachers

## Children

- Preschool 9.30 - 10.30
  - Primary 9.30 - 10.30
  - Secondary 10.30 - 11.30
- Saturday mornings, RGGGS Music Room, via Little Athelstane Street.

## Private

- By arrangement
- Susan Yates (0410 878 536)
- Bernadette Bernleitner (4933 0301, 0438 642 778)

## Interpreting

- Bernadette Bernleitner  
NAATI qualified



## Calendar 2011

**Conversation group** Fridays, 1 p.m. at the Heritage Hotel.  
**Evening Conversations**, replacing the lunchtime meetings as advised.  
**Film Festival** 29 Apr - 1 May  
**10th Anniversary** 11 June  
**Bastille Day Dinner** 16 July  
**Immersion Weekend** 15 - 16 Oct  
**AGM** 7 Dec

## Classes

### Adults

Term I 2 Feb - 15 April  
 Term II 27 April - 22 June  
 Term III 13 July - 14 Sept  
 Term IV 5 Oct - 7 Dec

### Children

Term I 19 Feb - 9 April  
 Term II 6 May - 18 June  
 Term III 16 July - 10 Sept  
 Term IV 8 Oct - 3 Dec



## Websites

Alliance Française de Central Q'land  
[www.afrockhampton.com](http://www.afrockhampton.com)  
 Federation of AF's of Australia -  
[www.alliancefrancaise.com.au](http://www.alliancefrancaise.com.au)  
 North Keppel Is Education Centre  
[nkieec.eq.edu.au](http://nkieec.eq.edu.au)

