



In this Issue

Committee News

1. Membership thanks
2. 2013 International Year of Statistics
3. What I'm reading now

Professional Development

4. 2013 VALBEC conference 'Literacies in a diverse world' • Register now
 - Early Bird member discount
 - Volunteer Tutor conference offer
5. ACAL conference 'Local practices, global contexts'
6. Harmony Day celebrations
7. Fine Print • April issue
8. On and off
9. Contact VALBEC

I'm a little earlier than usual so you can read me before you enjoy the break.

Committee News

1. Membership thanks

Thanks to all those members who have already paid their VALBEC memberships, we value your support. We will notify soon the lucky 3 individual subscribing members who will be offered a 50% discount on their conference registration. In recognition of the work done by volunteer tutors, the committee decided to offer some FREE conference registrations. See below for more information. Fine Print will be in your mailbox soon with a new regular column focusing on teaching and learning from committee member Jan Hagston. The Events listing on the VALBEC website has been updated by Sandie Forbes and the committee is in the process of revising the FAQs to ensure information there is accurate and current.

Volunteer tutor training providers – we want to hear from you. Send details of your program and courses so that we can update and provide a more comprehensive list.

Next committee meeting: Wednesday 17 April

2. 2013 International Year of Statistics

Numbers, Numbers, Everywhere –

This month VALBEC President, Sandra Wolfe, sets her statistical sights on Easter and chocolate with some fun facts and figures that you might like to explore with your students around themes of history, economics, health or sustainability.

- Chocolate bunnies should be eaten ears first, according to 76% of Americans. Five percent said bunnies should be eaten feet first, while 4% favoured eating the tail first.
- Adults prefer milk chocolate (65%), to dark chocolate (27%).
- Australians consume 6kg of chocolate annually.
- J.S. Fry and Sons developed the first solid chocolate bar and it went on sale in 1847. Cadbury Brothers produced their first bar of chocolate in 1849.
- The Ivory Coast in West Africa is the world's leading producer of cocoa - supplying 43%.
- As a global industry, chocolate generates more than \$50 billion a year.
- A 2012 survey of Easter Egg Packaging found that only 38% of the average Easter egg box is actually Easter egg. The rest is paper and plastic.
- Commercial Easter eggs are responsible for up to 3,000 tonnes of waste.
- Dieticians are warning that eating five Easter eggs (the average given to most children) plus the bars included with them, could see youngsters doubling their recommended calorie intake for a week, risking becoming hooked on chocolate, plus seeing their weight increase by several pounds within days.
- Dogs and cats should not eat chocolate as it contains theobromine.

3. What I'm reading now

We have asked the VALBEC committee to share what they are reading each month as a way of keeping the theme of reading every day as an integral part of our lives.

While working my way through the 'Memory Keepers Daughter' (Kim Edwards) I was suddenly lured by an old favourite of mine – Science Fiction. A little bit of history, some family intrigue, unfinished business and a couple of warps in the space-time continuum and I am in there. Yes, I've just finished reading 'The Island House' by Posie Graeme-Evans. The thrill of parallel story lines, jumping in and out of time zones, as the lives of the protagonists became inevitably intertwined was beautifully woven together by the author.

Sandra Wolfe

Professional Development

4. 2013 VALBEC conference 'Literacies in a diverse world' • Register now

Friday 17 May at William Angliss Conference Centre.

[Full conference information.](#)

Early Bird member discount

The Early Bird member rate provides a saving of \$25. Register and pay before April 19, 2013. The offer is applicable only to current financial members. Not a member? [Join here](#).

Volunteer Tutor conference offer

Are you a volunteer tutor in an adult literacy, language and numeracy program? If so, you may be eligible to apply for a FREE conference registration.

VALBEC members or member organisations may apply for one FREE conference registration. Offer available upon application and until 19 April.

[More](#)

5. ACAL conference 'Local practices, global contexts'

Sydney Sep 30-Oct 2, 2013

ACAL invites submissions of abstracts for consideration for inclusion in the 2013 ACAL conference programme. This year ACAL is inviting proposals for presentations in two categories the usual type of presentations, which may be a workshop, activity or non-refereed paper presentations, and peer reviewed academic paper presentations for which additional requirements apply.

[More](#)

6. Harmony Day celebrations

Harmony Day was celebrated at [Pines Learning](#) in an ESL class where the focus was on festivals and celebrations. Students were treated to a lavish 'Nowraz' (Iranian New Year) table spread with objects that represent the advent of the Iranian New Year which falls on the Northern Spring Equinox and Harmony Day, on March 21.

Harmony Day was celebrated at [Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre](#) with students bringing in their food to share with classmates and staff and CDs of Iranian music were played. This food included Iranian soup (aush), Lebanese tabouli, Pakistani biryani, Lebanese sweets, tandoori chicken, Vietnamese prawns and Russian pancakes. Most female students remembered to wear orange clothes for Harmony Day, which has become some kind of tradition at Glenroy. The men largely forgot, but were happy to wear orange ribbons on the day. There was much sharing of ideas, food and cultures and exchange of recipes.

Glenroy's AMEP also has a big black book where students write their stories – where they came from, and what they're doing. This has become a popular way for students to express their experiences of migration and settlement in Australia.

Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre has commissioned Catherine Simmonds (Director of Brunswick Women's Theatre) to film students talking about their life in Australia, and about how Australia has changed over the years. The DVD was shown to students on Harmony Day (21 March), along with a workshop about student interaction.

[See picture on our website.](#)

Has your organisation had a special celebration that you would like to share on eVALBEC?

[Send a description](#) in (100 words or less) and we can link to your website.

7. Fine Print • April issue

Literacy from near and far - Our writers from 'near' include Beth Marr, Maggie Power, Jackie Springall, Jan Hagston and Kerrin Prior. It's good to hear regularly from local experience and our local writers in this issue deliver considered and broad perspectives on a range of topics. All writers for Fine Print approach the task of providing articles for the journal seriously. Fine Print is a must read.

8. On and off

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9. Contact VALBEC

eVALBEC is the monthly electronic newsletter of (VALBEC) the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council.

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This is the electronic newsletter of VALBEC, the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council, and is sent to about 1000 practitioners on the first of each month (other than January). It is also available in the 'News' section of our [web site](#)

Disclaimer: The activities, goods and services mentioned in eVALBEC are not endorsed by VALBEC in any way. People should make their own judgment about the suitability of each item.

How to submit items: <http://www.valbec.org.au/news.htm>