

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 57

March 2002

Top Scholars

It is not only encouraging to read of these impressive academic achievements but also very instructive for us all to examine the few contributing factors revealed in the press.

An 18-year-old, Michael Oehley, a graduate from St Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton, was named as the top all-round male scholar in the 2001 University Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship exams. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority has awarded him \$8000 in prize-money for his marks, which included perfect marks in Bursary history and geography, 94 per cent for biology, 92 per cent in chemistry and 89 per cent for maths with calculus. Michael, who was chapel prefect last year, also played the lead role in a musical production, plays tennis, sings, has a national award for debating, trims hedges for pocket-money in summer and studies a few hours each day for exams. Until now there have been no academics in Michael's family, although they all have "built-in" work ethics cultivated in their home country, South Africa, from which they emigrated to New Zealand about eight years ago. Michael has just begun studying medicine at the University of Auckland.¹

Abbi Fox, a 17-year-old graduate of King's College in Otahuhu, was top all-round female scholar, scoring a perfect Bursary exam mark in English, 92 per cent in chemistry, 91 per cent in French, 92 per cent in maths with calculus and 94 per cent in physics. She says sheer determination and healthy competition between students at King's College

motivated her to work hard throughout last year. She spent the two-week term break in September tucked away in the college library, poring over books and dreaming of winning the dux award. Upon hearing the news, Abbi "was just overwhelmed. I just thought they might have made a mistake...I first topped a class when I was at primary school so I think that got me into a really good work ethic quite young." She is now studying for a Bachelor in Science in biomedical science and says she wants to relax more this year and enjoy a better social life.¹

The Bursary exams involve more than 26,000 students each year. Both students will put their prize-money towards course costs.¹

Michael mentions a work ethic inherited from his parents and his South African background. They would certainly have struggled with many issues in leaving their home country and settling into NZ. He was involved in many and varied things, was disciplined in his studies and had a vision for his future career path. None of these factors can be claimed as exclusive to school environments. Abbi mentions competition with other students, a definite school factor. She also mentions personal determination, a work ethic, disciplined study habits, deferred

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Keep Kids Learning Longer

Talk of raising the school leaving age to 19 appears to encompass a number of strategies. The present government is considering such a move to include in its election manifesto for this year. Tertiary Education Minister Steve Maharey concedes that the cost could be huge because it proposes spending more money on 16 & 17 year olds who have left school than is currently available through existing training schemes.

The plans do not include shifting the official school leaving age: it would remain at 16, and so school rolls would not necessarily increase. But some kind of financial incentives, perhaps such things as income and family support and cheap fees, would be offered to keep people studying until they turn 19 or find a job. Too many 16 & 17 year olds are

leaving school with no qualifications and no jobs. As soon as they hit 18 they are eligible for the unemployment benefit and so become an extra burden on the tax-payer.

The scheme, if it is ever implemented, would probably focus on directing youths into vocational training, such as apprenticeships, rather than toward polytechnics or universities. Hopefully there would be fewer unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, fewer unemployed 18 year olds on the dole and overall more young people working toward and achieving some kind of skills-based training.

The Queensland government has announced it will deal with similar problems by simply

gratification in the social arena and a vision of success tempered with humility and surprise at succeeding. Both students express sober intentions for the scholarship money which they can, in fact, spend any way they like.

John Chen got 82 per cent when he first sat Bursary maths at the age of 11. Now the former Auckland Grammar School student has scored the highest mark possible in Bursary maths with calculus. He scored 87 per cent in English, 95 per cent in music, 87 per cent in Latin, 89 per cent in physics and 93 per cent in maths with statistics. John has always been a high achiever in maths. "I hardly studied," he said. "When it came to Bursary, it was a lot easier because we had done harder stuff during the year." The student attributes his success to an early start and positive encouragement from his family, who started teaching him maths from the age of two. "I think the secret is starting young. I think that is what's holding back a lot of New Zealanders these days. They need to start young."

John's real passion is music, for which he gained a Bursary scholarship in his fifth-form year. He is now studying music, along with science, at the University of Auckland. John, along with 28 other top subject scholars, will receive a \$5000 scholarship from the Qualifications Authority, which he plans to use in furthering his study overseas after he graduates from university.²

Eighteen-year-old Hannah Searle has been named the top Bursary art history scholar. She received 96 per cent for art history -- the top possible mark -- 89 per cent in history, 94 per cent in Japanese, 81 per cent in Spanish and 93 per cent in English. Art and language have always interested the former Westlake Girls student who began studying art history only last year. "I loved the paintings. You learn so much about countries and buildings through art." Winning the scholarship has made a big financial difference for Hannah. "Over the years I have sort of missed out on things, so it was great," she said. Hannah is now studying for an arts and law degree at Auckland University.²

encouragement from a very early age. He also followed a real passion in music and has a vision for using scholarship money for further studies. Hannah also followed her interests, pursuing formal study in a long-standing area of interest only recently. She also demonstrates a feature of unit study or thematic study: that you incidentally learn a lot about other areas when you study your interests....and you also make a lot of connections that would perhaps be missed if those areas were studied as separate subjects. Hannah also speaks of deferred gratification (missing out on some things now in order to focus on a task of higher priority). Both Hannah and Sara obviously pursued areas of interest, Sara doing so in interesting ways, and both had future plans of study they are now pursuing.

Home educators may perhaps have more difficulty in providing academic competition for their students, but they can pretty well provide and encourage the other factors mentioned. Many of them are character traits and attitudes: deferred gratification, a strong work ethic, being self-disciplined and focussed, having a vision or plan for their future career path. It is well recognised that being under pressure of some kind, even to the point of suffering, has mostly a positive effect on a person's character traits. Therefore one must not look upon the normal kinds of trials or deprivations we all face for a season in our lives as a negative, but in fact as a positive factor in our family's development. Parents can guide their children by their own attitudes and examples in these areas. In addition they can constantly -- and from an early age -- be teaching and challenging and encouraging their children to master new areas of endeavour, whatever they might be, as well as to pursue those areas the children find naturally interesting. The study of anything worth studying will cause incidental learning and understanding in other areas, as Hannah testified. Being able to pursue things with humility and being grateful for the help

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TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of the Home Education Foundation, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. Information herein is not to be construed as legal advice. Opinions expressed in TEACH Bulletin are those of the writer and should not be assumed to reflect those of the Home Education Foundation Trustees or Board of Reference Members.

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Hear, my son, your father's
instruction, and reject not your

Seventeen-year-old Diocesan School old girl Sara Jackson spent many late-night study sessions on the internet reading French newspapers and listening to French radio online. Such discipline helped to earn her the title of the country's top French student. Sara also scored 86 per cent in English, 90 per cent in Spanish, 93 per cent in history and 80 per cent in art history. She is now studying art and law at the University of Auckland.²

John's story obviously combines exceptional natural ability with exceptional parental

Trading Post



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Helen Bryant

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Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning by Douglas Wilson.

Contact:

Michelle Moore
ph. (03) 355-9876

(Continued from page 2: **Scholars**)

received from others also appears to contribute to academic success. HEs can all these things and with fewer distractions.

References:

1. Condensed from NZ Herald article "Top scholars credit work ethic", 1 March 2002 by Libby Middlebrook, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=1090273&thesection=news&thesubsection=general>
2. Condensed from NZ Herald article "Perfect score no problem for young achiever", 4 March 2002 by Elizabeth Binning, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storyprint.cfm?storyID=1090483>

University Study

by Rosalind Peterson

(The following is a reply to a previous article, "Tertiary Education: Weigh the Costs Carefully" which appeared in TEACH Bulletin #56, February 2002.)

I believe that some people have been given by God the ability to enter a profession such as Dentistry, Law, Engineering (which all *require* university study for registration). In my opinion, those people should do the necessary university training for it. First of all because it is a proper use of the "Talents" that God has given them. Secondly, because we need more Christians in those fields!

In your article you referred to gaining a Bachelor of Arts degree (& possibly an MA). But in NZ a BA (& MA) have never really been "appreciated" by employers. That is, a BA in Art History, for example, is not exactly a fair representation of the benefits of a university education in NZ.

In your article you recommended delaying university study for five years, but I suggest that for some people (e.g., for my son) that working in an unskilled job (e.g., in a supermarket) for five years *before* university study would not be as good an option as working for five years *after* graduation. Note that the ending age is the same, and the number of years of "work experience" is the same in each case. However, in the latter case of working *after* graduation, our hypothetical student will not have earned a mere \$50,000 (as per the example in your article), but instead a hefty \$200,000 (based on the typical starting salary of \$30,000, rising by \$5,000 per annum, for a "useful" degree such as a BSc, BCom, LLB, BE, etc.) And the "work experience" is more relevant to the long-term career.

Another reason why some people (such as my son or myself) should *not* work fulltime for five years in an unskilled job (i.e., *before* university study) is that they might well be pretty useless at it!! I had various unskilled jobs before going back to university (and finally graduating at age 27), and in my opinion, I was pretty useless. My brain was often "elsewhere" thinking about something more complex than what I was meant to be doing.

This reminds me of a story about Isaac Newton, the inventor of calculus. He was a teenager, home from university for the holidays, when he was given the task of minding the cows. Several hours later someone came to find him and the cows. He was sitting down on the grass thinking, and cows were nowhere to be seen. ("What cows?") ... He had completely forgotten about the cows, while he did some complex mathematical calculations in his head. He simply couldn't keep his brain on something as simple as watching cows.

To have told Isaac Newton that he needed to spend five years minding cows, *before* he was allowed to go to university would

have been really unkind and a dreadful misuse of his talents.

Foundational Home Education Pioneer Dies

Dorothy Lucille Nelson Moore passed away in the early morning of ~~21 February 2002 in Honolulu,~~ Hawaii, aged 86. She was born on a farm in Bruce, South Dakota, on 30 October 1915, and attended Long Beach (California) Junior College and Pacific Union College.

As the wife of Dr Raymond Moore, she and he together are known as the Grandparents of home education. For the last 27 years since the publication of their book *Better Late Than Early* by Readers Digest Press, the Moores have zealously encouraged families around the world to home school. They gave a tremendously increased air of legitimacy to earlier talk of schooling at home by people such as John Holt. That book and a radio interview with Dr Moore in 1983 on a "Focus on the Family" programme forcefully launched the current home education movement.

Dorothy Moore toured New Zealand with her husband in October 1988 speaking to groups about Home Education in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch. A further meeting in New Plymouth had to be cancelled when low cloud closed the airport to the private plane in which their group was travelling. (The group included Raymond and Dorothy Moore; the two tour organisers, David Worboys of the A.C.E. School of Tomorrow and Craig Smith of Christian Home Schoolers of NZ; and the pilot from Christian Aviation Ministries, who always prayed for us before takeoff.)

I remember the Moores as very gracious and humble folks. They were in NZ to serve and were willing to do whatever we asked of them. During a bit of down time, I would notice Dr Moore catching Dorothy's eye and saying

to her, "You're such a cutie." He pointed to a wee hole in his trousers and told me how Dorothy would not let him spend money on clothes when there were so many other pressing needs around. They would accept no honorarium or cash of any kind for their week of touring. Dorothy had culled out a few resources of excellence from hundreds on offer and promoted only them as we toured. A real highlight was watching Dr Moore handle a Radio Pacific interviewer who was out to discredit his ideas. She would throw the toughest, most awkward and loaded questions she could at him, and he would invariably respond with enthusiasm and often a remark such as, "Oh, I'm *so* glad you asked that!", before pouring forth a steady stream of wisdom backed by quotes from world-reknown research and authorities, most of whom he knew personally. By the end she was eating out of his hand and totally on his side!

The Moore legacy for me personally means the three point Moore formula of Home Education: academics, work ethic and service. They also forever convinced us of the unmatched effectiveness, privilege and opportunity in Home Education of being able to have your child interact all day with us parents rather than with a text book or work book.

Messages can be sent to Dr. Moore at:

moorefnd@pacifier.com or

The Moore Foundation
Box 1
Camas, WA 98607
U.S.A.

See also:

www.moorefoundation.com/memorial.html

Economic Illiteracy

Fifty-two percent of New Zealand's senior high school students do not have the personal financial skills needed to cope with life beyond the classroom, a survey has found. Thirty multiple choice questions were put last year to 804 sixth and seventh form students from 68 schools. The test included questions about banking terms, investment and insurance, and canvassed issues of saving, personal budgeting, repaying debt, interest cost calculations and basic tax issues.

The worst survey results came from students at the two ends of the socioeconomic scale: that is, in the schools from the highest and lowest socio-economic areas. There were no differences between boys and girls. In some cases, it appeared that students from wealthier families did not believe that they needed to worry about managing their finances because they were well provided for.

"The implications are quite severe," says research coordinator Lyn Morris of the Enterprise New Zealand Trust. "If you don't learn these skills early on in life, then in many cases you don't learn them at all. And these kinds of decisions made at household level accumulate into national characteristics."

As Ms Morris has here indicated, financial literacy is household-level stuff...it is not rocket science. Everyone deals with economic issues every day, for they are a foundational part of life in any society. Home educators are particularly well placed to ensure their children are intimately familiar with all the common aspects of household finance and economics from an early age. The secret is simply to do your household finances with your children on a day by day basis. Parents simply teach them what they themselves know.

It would seem that high decile schools cannot assume their students are financially literate. It

would seem that parents also cannot assume their children are being taught foundational financial concepts at school but must see to it themselves.

(Information extracted from *Dominion* article "Students not ready to budget for the real world" of 22 February 2002, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,1110572a11,FF.html>, and *Auckland Central Leader* article "Students fail financial literacy test", 27 February 2002, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/print/0,1103,1116439a1501,FF.html>)

Why They're Dumbing Down

"Harder work is more interesting to teach, but academic challenges can be threatening to insecure children. ... Work that makes students comfortable and feel successful causes fewer discipline problems. ... Dumbing down is a discipline technique that keeps children who prefer entertainment to instruction orderly and safe." -- from *New York Times* article "A View From the Trenches", 8 April 2001.

The education statistics in the United States should shock us all. As (former US Secretary of Education William) Bennett has written in the latest issue of *Hoover Digest*: "The longer a child stays in (public) school in the United States, the dumber that child gets relative to students in other industrialized nations." The purpose of an education, writes Bennett, "is not merely to prepare citizens for work, it is to prepare them for life -- for the eminently practical tasks of living well, thinking wisely, and acting sensibly." -- Cal Thomas, "School Vouchers are Dead, School Choice is Not", 30 May 2001.

Answering the Critics

American journalist Marilyn vos Savant writes: "I believe that traditional homeschooling (one parent stays home to teach all children in the family up through the high school years) can be a fine alternative to an unacceptable public school, but I would not

recommend it broadly unless most schools were inadequate and most parents could teach everything from English literature to physics. And I don't believe that either is true.

"If home-schooling were institutionalized, half of the youthful potential of Americans would go unfulfilled. Say that a bright young parent sacrifices a rewarding career to stay home and teach the children. When those children grow up, would half of them (one parent from each married couple) also sacrifice their potential to stay home and teach their own children? If so, then much of the result of homeschooling would be the creation of more home-schooling parents for the next generation, and so on.

"Maybe homeschoolers can justify this loss. If so, please write. I believe that home-schooling is a noble experiment done for the right reasons, and I hope to hear why it may prove to be a success."

Dear Marilyn,

A few years ago I was the managing editor of several international editions of a world-famous computing magazine. I worked 80-hour weeks, my children were being raised by the maid, and my life had no meaning. I was a unit of production. I produced children to be raised by strangers, and I produced articles read -- and forgotten -- by people around the world. My work went out in the next day's trash. (Sound familiar?)

For what it's worth, I have advanced degrees in law, finance and journalism. I'm a fluent Chinese speaker, a passable French speaker and an experienced editor and writer. I'm also an author with more than a dozen published books under my belt.

I'd like to tell you about my latest and most fulfilling project. In a specialized classroom I am educating a group of brilliant

young people to become scholars, athletes and contributing, well adjusted members of society. I've rescued these people from their institutionalized caregivers and have given them something they never had before: their mother. I've given them direction, civilized them, educated them, motivated them, taught them a set of values and have started launching them into society to make their own mark.

I pray they've learned from my once-bad example to focus on what brings true joy and what gives life genuine meaning. "Public adulation" and "a rewarding career" are at the very bottom of that list.

-- LauraMaery Gold, educator

(From *The School Liberator* e-newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 1, 4 March 2002 ccuthbert@fix.net)

HE in Scotland

A Scottish Executive Consultation Paper, "Circular 10, Home Education Guidance", has alarmed home educators in Scotland. Roland Meighan, Special Professor of Education, University of Nottingham, comments:

The Guidance illustrates what is wrong with our mass, coercive schooling system. The system is riddled with domination. It is based on the dictat, "You will do it our way - or else." Consequently it has become (a) obsolete, (b) counter-productive and (c) an abuse of three and sometimes four human rights. It is mass rather than personalised, coercive rather than invitational, schooling rather than education.

Those trained in the methods of crowd instruction and crowd control that schools require are seldom equipped to judge other learning systems, especially the personalised learning style adopted by most home-based educators. It is outside their competence, experience and often their imagination. They usually resort to "judging tennis by the rules of basketball", as it were, even though they are different games with different logistics. The first nation to act decisively on the findings of current research on the

(Continued on page 6: **Scotland**)

Coming Events

Choon Tan Seminar

Choon Tan is a full time maths tutor, author of *Teach Your Children Well* and father to three academically accomplished home-educated children, such as Michael who at age 7 became the world's youngest child to pass Bursary level maths.

Date & Time:

Monday 25 March, 7:30pm

Venue:

Greenlane Presbyterian Church, cnr Greenlane & Great South Rds (diagonally opp. MacDonald's)

Cost:

\$10 per person (no pre-booking required, pay at the door)

Contact:

Alex Waller, ph. (09) 444-4515

(Continued from page 5: *Scotland*)

brain, multiple intelligences, varied learning styles, and then follow the logic of our information-rich society with its information technology and communications know-how, will give its people enormous advantages for the future. To do this mass, coercive schooling will have to be phased out.

Home-based educators have been trailblazing many of the techniques for us to do this because they point in the direction of a personalised learning approach throughout life, conducted within a democratically-sensitive value system and places for learning. Ironically, we already have such places in our midst. They are the Public Libraries...used extensively by home-based educators as part of their flexible learning approach. Home-based educators are also meeting in co-operative groups and developing resources in both local and cyber learning centres. The intelligent response, in the light of 25 years of research worldwide, will be to either hand the monitoring (of HEs by the state) over to a home-based education committee or defer to the expertise of experienced home-based educators and researchers.

(Circular 10 can be viewed at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/views/views.asp>)

Christian Home Schoolers of NZ Worldview Conference

Sunday to Friday
7-12 April 2002

Willow Park Convention Centre
Eastern Beach
Auckland

Speakers:

Dr David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times* a detailed analysis/comparison of Marxism/Leninism, secular humanism and Biblical Christianity;

Chuck Edwards of Summit Ministries, Colorado Springs, USA.

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For Brochure Contact:

Carol, ph. (09) 410-3933
cesbook@intouch.co.nz

Timetable

Sunday

5:30pm Registration table opens

7:30pm Opening.

8:00pm-9:00pm Noebel: The Biblical Basis of Worldview Analysis.

Monday

8:45am-10:15am Edwards: Thinking in Worldview Categories.

10:15am-10:45am Morning tea

10:45am-12:00 Noebel: Major Players in Western Worldviews.

12:00pm-1:00pm Lunch

1:00pm-2:00pm Edwards: Developing Discernment. (Asking Key Questions)

2:00pm-5:30pm Continuous afternoon tea, talk with speakers, look at book stalls, sports equipment available.

6:00pm-7:00pm Tea

7:30pm-9:00pm Noebel: The Three "isms" of the 20th Century.

Tuesday

8:45am-10:15am Noebel: Practicum: The Homosexual Revolution.

10:45am-12:00 Edwards: Worldviews in Popular Culture: Movies.

1:00pm-2:00pm Edwards: Setting the Captives Free (religion, truth, and morality)

2:30pm-4:00pm Debate: Should Abortion be legal? Chuck Edwards & Matt Flannagan versus Dr Bill Cooke & Dr Zoe Doring. (Dr Cooke is head of the Rationalist Humanist Society, and Dr Doring is a medical doctor.)

7:30pm-9:00pm Noebel: The Secular/Marxist Humanism Worldview.

Wednesday

8:45am-10:15am Noebel: Defending the Biblical Christian Worldviews.

10:45am-12:00 Edwards: Worldviews in Popular Culture: Music

1:00pm-2:00pm Adrian Bates: Creation/Evolution.

2:00pm-5:30pm Adrian Bates will show videos as an optional extra for those who want to attend plus have books for sale until 5:00 pm

7:30pm-9:00pm Edwards: Making a Difference in Your World.

Thursday

8:45am-10:15am Edwards: Postmodernism.

10:45am-12:00 Edwards: How to study the Bible.

1:00pm-2:00pm Geoffrey Botkin: The Media in New Zealand.

2:00pm-5:30pm Continuous afternoon tea, talk with speakers, look at book stalls, sports equipment available.

7:30pm-9:00pm Graham Capill: Christians in Politics.

Friday

8:45am-10:15am Mark Munroe: Economics.

10:45am-12:00 Craig Smith: The Final Challenge.

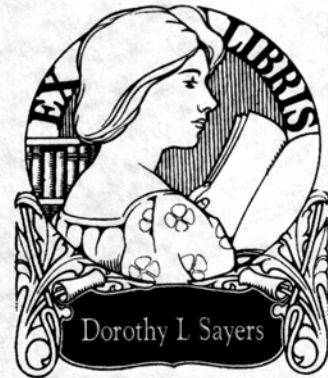
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