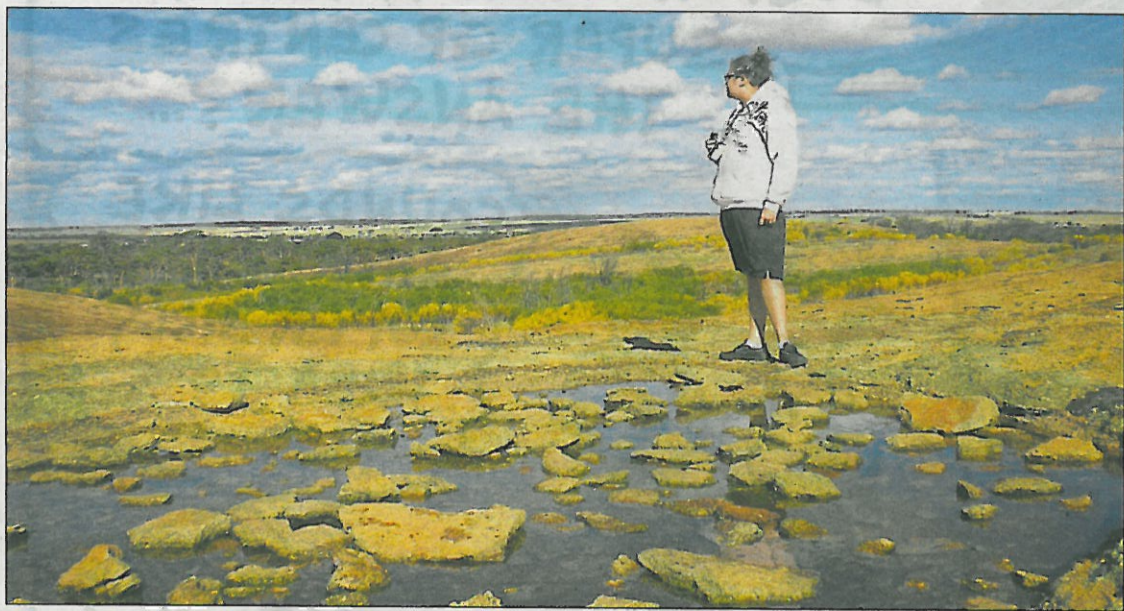


Photographers tell Wheatbelt story



Reflecting life: A photo of Marika Hayden taken by Jenno Hayden at the photography workshop recently.

WHEATBELT residents have been encouraged to tell the story of Wheatbelt life through photography thanks to a project being conducted by the Community Arts Network WA. As part of the project, CAN WA invited professional photographer Brad Rimmer to conduct portrait and landscape photography workshops in Merredin and Kellerberrin recently.

The aim of the June 5-6 workshops was to assist community members to develop portrait skills and capture images of family members, who will also feature in an up-and-coming audio documentary depicting the life stories of local Noongar people.

The workshops covered how to utilise natural light and location to tell a story and capture images that communicate something about the person and the environment.

Brad Rimmer has recently released a photographic publication called 'Silence: The West Australian Wheatbelt', featuring images and portraits from various Wheatbelt towns. It is not the first time Wheatbelt locals have been encour-

aged to take a camera in hand.

Last year CAN WA published a book called "Voices of the Wheatbelt" which featured hundreds of photographs taken by Wheatbelt locals, portraying Wheatbelt life.

The photographs from the book will also feature in an exhibition set to tour all over WA this year.

CAN WA representative Ivy Penny said many of the participants who had been involved in both projects were now becoming skilled at photography and producing inspiring work.

"At the workshop it was great to see people building on their existing skills and capturing some really beautiful and creative images," she said.

The workshops were delivered as part of CAN WA's Strategic Partnerships Initiative, supported by Healthway: Respect Yourself Respect Your Culture, The Australia Council for the Arts, The Department of Culture and the Arts and the Shires of Merredin, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Quairading and Tammin.

More information about CAN WA's projects can be found at www.canwa.com.au.

Competition winners

LAST Wednesday the Mercury judged the winners of its Circus Royale colouring-in competition.

We received 30 entries and judging the winners was very difficult as they were all fantastic.

However in the end the winner of first prize was Maddy Lane, 8, of Merredin. Maddy won a family pass (two adults and two children) to attend Circus Royale in Merredin on the weekend.

Second prize went to Alannah Taylor, 3, of Merredin. Alannah won a double pass (one adult and one child) to attend the circus.

The runner ups, who each received a child pass to the circus, were Chloe Hobbs (11), Clay Kent (6), Lauren Barrass (10) and Tyler Piazzola (6).

The Mercury congratulated all the entrants on their beautiful work.

The winning entries are on display at the Mercury office.

\$81,000 to fix sport stadium

A REPORT presented at last Tuesday's Merredin Shire Council meeting stated that it could cost up to \$81,018 to repair the surface of the indoor netball/basketball courts at the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre.

Since the flooring was installed in 2006, climatic expanding and contracting of the control joints which connect the concrete floors slabs has caused bubbling in the floor surface.

The manufacturer has offered a 50 percent discount to fix the problem, and if the shire chooses to forego the optional 1mm wear coat on the floor surface, the repair cost can be reduced to \$48,216. There is no allocation in the 2009/2010 budget or in the draft 2010/2011 budget for the work. Shire chief executive Greg Powell said the bubbles in the court did not seem to be dangerous so the Shire was going to consider the options at length before taking any

action.

Discussions have been ongoing between the building project manager, the manufacturer and the supplier and installer on a remedy for the situation.

Asylum seekers for Muresk?

FEDERAL Government last week suggested it was considering using the Muresk Campus of Curtin University to house asylum seekers.

The Muresk campus is an agricultural college near Northam which houses a number of Wheatbelt agricultural students, but Curtin is considering closing the campus.

Western Australian Farmers Federation president Mike Norton said he absolutely rejected the idea of closing the college and using it to house asylum seekers.

"The Federal Government should be making commitments to ensure Muresk continues to be a provider of quality agricultural education, rather than accommodation for asylum seekers," Mr Norton said.

"In considering the Muresk facility as a possible location to house asylum seekers, the Federal Government has now recognised that Muresk is currently at risk of closure by Curtin University.

"Now that the Federal Government knows where Muresk is, and what its situation is, they now have an obligation to direct their focus to ensuring that the needs of Western Australia's agricultural industry continues to be served.

"WAFarmers reminds the Federal Government, and Curtin University, that the Muresk land was given to the Government for use for education purposes, and is currently under a management order to this effect."

Mr Norton said in proposing to close the college, the university was focusing solely on profits rather than the interests of the community, students or WA's agriculture industry.

Tea raises thousands

A TRAYNING lady has been responsible for raising thousands of dollars for the cancer council over the past 20 years.

Pat Langford has been holding one of the Wheatbelt's largest and most successful morning tea cancer fundraisers each May.

This year's morning tea, held on May 21 at the Yelbeni Golf Club, attracted 85 people and raised \$2900.

"When it started about 20 years ago I used to just go around the all the farms collecting donations, then I decided to hold the morning tea," Mrs Langford said.

"At first I just made soup and sausage rolls, then it snowballed from there.

"When it started all those years ago, I used to cook everything myself but I wouldn't be able to do it now without all the help of the girls from the golf club and all the other helpers."

The annual event now includes a fully catered morning tea followed by a hot lunch as well as stallholders, raffles, a door prize, and a guest speaker.

This year the guest speaker was Cancer Council support coordinator Jill Treiling from Northam.

"On behalf of the Cancer Council I would like to sincerely thank everyone who attended and donated so generously on the day, as well as the volunteers who helped make the day a success," Mrs Langford said.

Keep your business fit

SMALL business owners can learn how to recession-proof and strengthen their business in a workshop in Merredin on June 29. The BizFit Local Business Forum is being held from 11.30am - 1.30pm at the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Center on Bates Street.

The cost is \$20, including GST and a hot lunch. Central Wheatbelt

Small Business Centre manager Sal Marais said the BizFit program would allow business operators to get exclusive information on the impact of the changing environment on local conditions and businesses. "It will also offer practical ideas you can use immediately to improve your business, and give you the opportunity to ask questions about the future of your region and how that forecast might affect your type of business," Ms Marais said.

Speakers will include various experts on business strategy, marketing and planning.

To attend the BizFit workshop call Sal Marais or Kerry Dayman on 9041 1211 for registration details.

Rural photo competition

COOPERATIVE Bulk Handling's annual photographic competition is now open.

The theme this year is Up for the Challenge and entrants need to visually depict life in WA's grainbelt by capturing the triumphs and challenges of living on the land; the growth of the ever-changing grains industry; and the spirit of partnership and the community in working together for the future.

The competition is divided into various categories including CBH staff, grower-shareholders, children, rural community residents and others.

Prizes will be awarded for each category as well as an overall winner and also a 'peoples' choice' award. This year's prizes include selected cash prizes, an accommodation voucher for the Esplanade River Suites in South Perth and tickets to a Western Australian Football League football match. Entries can be submitted online through the CBH Group's website at www.cbh.com.au. Alternatively post them along with a completed entry form to 'Up for the Challenge' CBH Group photo competition, GPO Box L886, WA 6842. Entries close at 5pm on August 6.

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