

## BLITS E-Newsletter March 2011



### Message from the Chair

Welcome to another edition of BLITS E-News.

In this issue we feature the Powerful Profile of David Burke, winner of the Australian Tennis Championship 2011, we join in the celebrations of the Centenary Celebrations of International Women's Day and report on the exciting launch of Dragon Code, an art exhibition by Canberra's own Dr Possum.

#### **Powerful Profile - David Burke**

David is a 25 year old tennis champion with an extraordinary list of accomplishments and tournament championships under his belt. David has cerebral palsy and significant hearing difficulties. David successfully competes in mainstream tennis competitions as well as competitions for players with disabilities. He has represented Australian internationally on three occasions. For more on this truly inspiring story and some terrific images of his most recent win, see the article in this issue (below).

#### **International Women's Day 2011**

The week long celebrations across Canberra for the Centenary of International Women's Day were as varied as they were exciting. Starting off the week of events was the launch and presentation by Minister Joy Burch MP recognising ACT Women with the presentation of the 2011 International Women's Day Award Presentation and the launch of the ACT Women's Honour Roll. Congratulations to all the individual and group nominees and award recipients! See the article for more details.

#### **Dragon Code - an exhibition by Dr Possum**

As noted in the December issue of BLITS E-News, Dr Possum launched his latest exhibition at the National Convention Centre Canberra this Month. Entitled 'Dragon Code', this body of work features a number of large format digital prints. The article in this issue provides a snapshot of some of the exciting work on display and more details about this exhibition.

#### **Harvest - an exhibition by three exceptional Canberra Women**

The Belconnen Arts Centre has mounted a breath taking display of works by three local artists. From a wide range of cultural backgrounds, these talented artists have combined forces to mount a unique and exquisite art exhibition of textile, ceramics and multimedia.

I hope you enjoy this issue and I look forward to bringing you more BLITS news soon!

Lois Ford

Chair

BLITS ACT

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### **Powerful Profile - David Burke**



At a little more than 3 years of age David Burke was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and a serious hearing impairment. By the time David was 13 years old, parents Wendy and Jeff, being avid tennis players themselves, could see David was showing a distinct interest in the game, watching friendly matches and televised competitions with interest.

David was discovered spending a great deal of time trying to teach himself to hit a ball against a brick wall. Initially the symptoms of Cerebral Palsy made developing the coordination required to release and hit a tennis ball, (let alone mastering a serve) very challenging, but through dogged determination and with some good coaching by Jeff and Wendy, David was soon developing a suite of tennis skills.

Only two years later, at age 14, David was welcomed into the local mainstream tennis club (where he still plays today) and started to compete in local junior tennis tournaments. By 17 he had risen to the top rankings in local junior tennis.

Things started to really develop for David when, while participating in a Tennis NSW promotional day, he met Peter Smith, (Lleyton Hewitt's first coach). After 'having a hit' with him, Peter encouraged David to set his sights a bit higher and consider bigger tournaments.

David took Peter's advice, and by 2007 David was invited to represent Australia in a competition in China (winning 1st in mixed doubles and 3rd place in men's singles). In 2008 in Poland he competed again and was awarded most valuable player, winning 2nd place in the men's doubles, 3rd place in mixed doubles and 4th place in men's singles). In 2009 he was back for more in Czechoslovakia, winning 2nd place in men's doubles, 3rd place in mixed doubles and 5th place in men's singles.

Since 2004, David has competed regularly in a variety of tournaments in Sydney, Brisbane Adelaide and Melbourne. A regular training regime and local competitions are part of the weekly tennis training schedule.

Fast forward to the present day and at 24 David has 22 tournament trophies and awards and has represented Australia in three international events. Most recently, and a major highlight of his career to date, David won the 2011 Australian Tennis Championship, (ATC) held in January this year. With 43 competitors in this completion, winning the Champions was a major highlight.



Asking David for his thoughts about the final match for the ATC tournament he says, 'It was one of my toughest matches. I had already played three sets in the men's doubles earlier that day, so effectively I had to play 5 sets to win. My playing partner was Zvi Schweitzer from Victoria. We partnered earlier in the day in the men's doubles final. We just missed out winning that match and then had to face each other in the final of the men's singles.

'At one point I was down 4/2 and really had to fight my way out of that hole. In the last game of the match I was up 5/4 but down 30 love on my serve. The match was full of long rallies and fortunately I managed to maintain focus and my ground strokes were accurate and fast enough to get me through.

'I lost this same match in Melbourne last year to Zvi, he is a good player and I am sure we will play together and against each other again soon.' He added with a smile, 'I will work hard to try to get the same result!'

Tennis great Wally Masur took time out from covering the Australian Tennis Open next door to watch David play, afterwards seeking out Robyn Smith, CEO of Ausrapid to comment on the level of play and sportsmanlike conduct of the players at the ATC tournament, being impressed not only with David's talent but his conduct and that of the other players in the tournament. David's talent has created a string of bushes with fame, on one occasion, having a hit up with Samantha Stosur in a promotional day, he surprised the tennis star by getting a number of strong backhand passing shots by her, attracting compliments from her after the session.



I asked David what advice he might give young players wanting to improve their game.

He replied, 'Develop and work on your power and your serve, but most of all focus on accuracy in all your training drills, but most important of all, stay calm and have fun!'

Footnote: The Australian Tennis Championship is staged by Tennis Australia to coincide with the Australian Open. This event is supported by Ausrapid and proudly sponsored by Lord's Taverners Australian (Victorian Branch).

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### **The 2011 Australian Tennis Championship**

The Australian Tennis Championship provides an opportunity for tennis players with an intellectual disability to compete at the highest level possible in their chosen sport with the focus on their ability and exceptional talents.

The event, held at Albert Reserve and Melbourne Park, allows players to compete on the same courts as the world's best tennis players, which attracts local, interstate and international players. This showcase event enables the wider Tennis Community to accept, understand and support tennis programs that include all Australians.

Tennis Australia has been the primary driving force behind the Australian Tennis Championship since 1996. The inaugural national tennis event for players with an intellectual disability, supported by Tennis Australia and Ausrapid, was the Australian Tennis Open in 1998.

This year marked the 14th year of the national event, Australian Tennis Championship, formerly Tennis Australian Classic. This tournament is now played at the Albert Reserve Tennis Centre and since 2008 it has been scheduled to take place during the last week of the Australian Open with the finals being played at Melbourne Park.

The Lord's Taverners Victorian Branch was the major sponsor of the 2011 Australian Tennis Championships. This marked its 14th consecutive year as major sponsors. The Lord's Taverners make an important contribution financially, but also make a significant commitment on a personal level with Taverners Committee members attending all functions throughout each Tournament.

There are other state tournaments each calendar year including the Victorian Tennis Championships, Queensland Tennis Championships, NSW Tennis Championships and SA Tennis Championships.

Tennis Australia has formed a long standing partnership with Ausrapid and the Lord's Taverners Victorian Branch to run this event. Tennis Australia also provides significant resources and financial support towards staging the Championships each year and has recently embarked on furthering the participation pathways from state through to national tournaments.



## International Women's Day 2011

On Monday 7 March, the Minister for Women, Joy Burch MP, opened the celebrations for International Women's Day 2011 with the presentation of the 2011 International Women's Day Awards and the launch of the ACT Women's Honour Roll. This event took place at the Canberra Institute of Technology with emcee ceremonies Louise Maher.

'As we celebrate International Women's Day this year we are able to reflect and honour the amazing contributions of women from generations who have paved the way for women to reach the highest levels in professional and community life. The nominees as well as the final recipients of the awards act as role models and support the aspirations and ideals of others, and we commend them for their efforts and contributions.' Ms Burch said.



Asked about the most positive aspect of this celebration of Canberra women,

Ms Burch said,

'This day allows us the opportunity to celebrate and reinforce the valuable contribution women make to our community as a whole. In terms of fully recognising women's role and achieving equality, we have come a long way since these awards were first formally celebrated in Canberra 1989. The progress has been significant but also more slow and deliberate than meteoric and there is much more to achieve yet. Issues affecting equality in the workforce and access to employment remain standout areas of opportunity for improvement.'

Asked about recent media reports of plans for after school care for children with disabilities, Ms Burch replied, 'Many women with children with disabilities have difficulty securing after school care - this can be a serious obstacle for some mothers who wish to or need to maintain a job or career. We are currently developing a business case for the provision of after school care for older children with a disability including holiday clubs. Providing these facilities is one way we can move further equality in the work force.'



Congratulations to all of the individual winners and to the group winner.

A full list of the ACT's 100 Key Women is available at ['ACT Women's Honour Roll'](#)

#### 2011 Individual Winners

- **Sarah Corrigan** - ACT Rugby Union referee
- **Darlene Cox** - ED Health Care Consumers Association
- **Bea Evans** - Migrant Women Community Support Volunteer
- **Maria Luz Gonzalez** - Chilean Folk Dance Volunteer Manager
- **Sandi Plummer** - Physiologist and Educator
- **Marluce Silva Peters** - Women's Refuge Coordinator
- **Caroline Stacey** - Artistic Director and CEO Street Theatre
- **Petronella Wensing** - Migrant Women Tutor

#### 2011 Group Winner

- **Women's Centre for Health Matters**



#### Exhibition by Dr Possum - National Convention

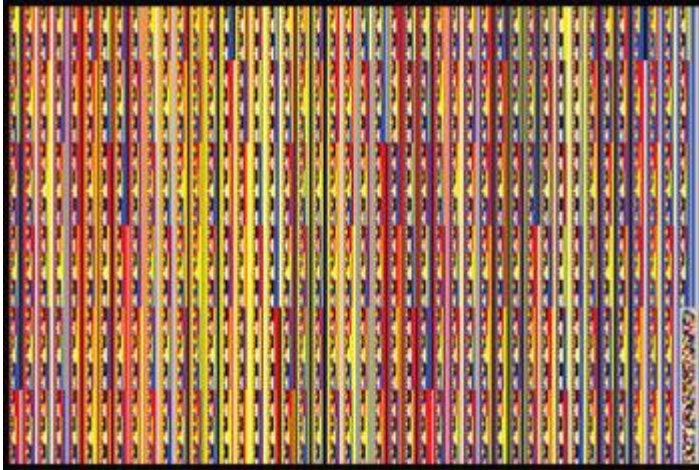
##### Centre

image right: Dr Possum with 'Deteriorated Computer System'

Dr Possum launched his latest series of digital illustrations and drawings at the National Convention Centre on Thursday 3 March. Images depicting 'Dragon DNA', 'Kinetic Innovation Network System Concept', a 'Deteriorated Computer System' and an 'Interactive Solar Panel' were among the works on display.

Cindy Young, Manager of the National Convention Centre Canberra says, 'We were delighted to be offered this excellent range of art works by Dr Possum. As always his work generates excitement and wonderment. I look forward to seeing a great number of locals and visitors alike enjoy this exhibition.'

The Exhibition runs to 31 March and is open to the public.



Dragon Code

Dragon code is a form of genetic material consisting of 5 main ingredients; Oxygen, Nitrogen and protein, these make Glutamedilcide, including muscle and bone they make Polymixin, to create Genesis. - Excerpt: Dragon Code explanatory notes, Dr. Possum

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### **'Harvest' - Art Exhibition - Belconnen Art Centre**

The exhibition 'Harvest' features three outstanding Canberra artists from very different backgrounds. Maiju Altpere-Woodhead (Estonia), Elena Bozhko (Tajikistan) and Fatima Killeen (Morocco) have joined together to present this dynamic and culturally penetrating display of their talent.

Opened by Dr Helen Watchirs OAM, ACT Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner and Joy Burch, MLA, Minister for Women, Disability and Multicultural Affairs, this well attended exhibition launch is not to be missed.

#### **Maiju Altpere-Woodhead**

Maiju's work explores the reciprocal relationship between recollection and new environment.

Incised plaster slabs are used onto which liquid coloured porcelain is brushed and cast to form thin ceramic sheets and lift the image.

#### **Elena Bozhko**

Elena's works are dedications to the Circle of Life and women in the form of cast ceramic surfaces and decorative vessels.

#### **Fatima Killeen**

Fatima's contribution is a tribute to the resilience of women and their daily struggle in zones of conflict. Stretched looms anticipate newborn gift giving and hope for peace in the future.

Exhibition runs to 20 March.



*Maiju Altpere-Woodhead with her work: Safe Passage*