



# LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

## NEWSLETTER – March 2007

### Rector's Remarks

Although the winter has been fairly gentle this year this 'Spring' edition of the Newsletter is a timely and welcome reminder that before long all the usual signs of spring will be with us – the daffodils blooming and, possibly less welcome, the lawn mower coming out of the shed.

Life in general does not stand still and that's true for school life as well. It was good to welcome back Depute Head **Jack Laurie** at the end of last term after his illness and at the end of this term we say goodbye to **Debbie Brown**, PT Guidance, who leaves us for a post nearer home. We thank Debbie for her 10 years of service to the pupils of Linlithgow Academy and wish her well in her new school.

On 26 March we welcome our new Head Teacher, **Mr David MacKenzie** and it will be good to have him in post after such a long period of an Acting Head. In this newsletter you will read of an opportunity to meet him before he officially starts and, at the same time, support the hard-working School Board as they seek to take forward the Scottish Executive proposals for parental involvement. I would like to formally record my thanks to the members of the Board for their support during my unexpected spell as Head Teacher.

The festive season seems to have been ages ago but 2 highlights stand out for me and these were the occasions when we once again enjoyed the musical talents of our pupils – the Christmas Concert in school and the Carol Concert at St Michael's Church.

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### Linlithgow Academy School Board

invites

Parents to a Meeting on  
**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007**  
at **7.30pm** in the Assembly Hall

to a consultation  
on the formation of a Parent Council  
which will replace the current School Board.

The guest for the evening is the Rector-elect,  
**Mr David MacKenzie**  
who will take the opportunity to address the  
parents.

### Annual Careers Evening

**Thursday 8 March 2007 at 7-9 pm**

The evening is targeted at second year pupils currently making their subject choice but all pupils and parents are welcome

### Red Nose Day 07 Fri 16 March

**LAA Wine Evening – relax and enjoy**  
**Friday 23 March 2007**

Tickets available from Mary Workman

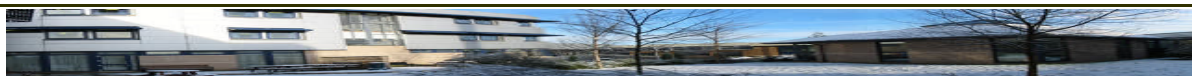
**LAA Race Night – a great night out**  
**Friday 25 May 2007**

Tickets available from Kate Haining 847936  
or Susan Robertson 842932

### Inside this issue

### Page(s)

Inside this issue	Page(s)
School Board Update	3
Fair Trade Group	4
Cluster Health Promoting Schools Challenge	5
Determined to Broadcast	5-6
The Eco Warriors update	6-7
LAA	8
Dates for your diary	See extract



Linlithgow Academy, West Lothian Council, Braehead Road, LINLITHGOW, EH49 6EH

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Both were well attended and the quality of the music was to the usual high standard. My thanks to pupils, staff and parents for their involvement and to the clergy and members of St Michael's for their kind permission to hold the Carol Concert and end-of-term Christmas Service in the church.

In January we held our first 'New Year Lecture' for staff and those who attended enjoyed **Tom Balanowski's** presentation on 'Angels and Demons – the truth about antimatter.'

Apart from the appointment of a new Head Teacher there are 3 other exciting developments which will impact on the pupils of Linlithgow over the next 2 or 3 years.

### **Better PE facilities**

The new games hall and associated facilities are scheduled to start at Easter and be finished in time for the start of the 2008-9 session(?). This will enable us to provide an even better experience for pupils and deliver the 2 hours of PE for every pupil in a quality environment – something we have been needing for a long time.

### **Curriculum changes**

Changes to the curriculum for S1-3 driven by the 'A Curriculum for Excellence' programme. It has been recognised that there is a need to 'free up' the curriculum to give more freedom to staff and schools to tailor the curriculum for their own pupils – and hopefully bring more of the fun back into school.

### **Smaller English & Maths classes S1/S2**

The Scottish Executive have decided that English and Mathematics classes in S1 and S2 will no longer be subject to a maximum of 33 pupils but that they should be no more than an average of 20. This allows us to have classes larger than 20 and smaller than 20 as required. This will put additional burden on staffing budgets although there will be some additional finance. In the Academy it will also put a burden on rooming for one year as the new Sports facility contains an additional 2 classrooms to allow for the reduced class size – unfortunately these will not be available next session and we will need to be very creative in our use of space for a year.

At the time of writing our senior pupils are well into their prelim exams and, with the start of the actual SQA exams just over 2 months away, I would ask you to support and encourage your young folk in their preparations. Our S2 pupils will shortly be making their choice of subjects for study in S3/4 and I would ask you to make use of all the information available to ensure that the correct choice is made.

School life does not stand still. Things change. Change can be unsettling but it is a sign of life and can be exciting. I trust that the changes which will impact on this school – pupils, parents and staff – in the next few years will be embraced and will take the school forward to new levels of achievement in all areas of school life.

*R. Ferguson, Acting Head Teacher*



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### School Board update

#### Parent Council

Looking to the future the School Board has set up a group, which includes LAA representatives and parent volunteers, to consider the establishment of a Parent Council which will replace the School Board in the summer of this year under the Scottish Executive's Parental Involvement Act. All parents are entitled to contribute their views about what shape Linlithgow Academy Parent Council should take. To enable this to happen we are arranging two events: firstly to send to all parents, via pupil post, a questionnaire to allow you to make your opinions known and secondly, to hold a meeting for parents on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March in the Academy assembly hall at 7.30pm. The evening is also an opportunity for parents to meet the new Rector, **David MacKenzie**, who has accepted our invitation to attend this meeting when he will take the opportunity to speak to parents.

#### Other News

At our last Board meeting we were told that the tender process for the new building should be completed by the end of February and that the lottery bid decision should be available at the same time. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 2007 with completion in August 2008.

Like all School Boards within West Lothian, LASB completed a questionnaire from HM Inspectorate of Education about a range of information concerning the work of the Council's education department.

Full minutes from School Board meetings can be viewed on our website at [www.lasb.org.uk](http://www.lasb.org.uk) where you can also sign up for updates from the Board.

*Jean Long, Chair of Board*

### GroupCall – S1/2; Minimising unexplained pupil absences

May I remind S1/S2 parents, participating in the GroupCall pilot, to notify us in advance of the absence or late arrival of your son/daughter on the Pupil Absence Notification line on 01506 670513. If using the answering machine please remember to leave:

- your son/daughters' name and class
- your name & relationship to pupil
- reason for absence
- estimated length of absence.
- 

We hope with new line, bypassing the main switchboard, will offer a more direct and convenient service for you as well as allowing us to be more informed at the outset of the registration process.

*Jane Morton, Business Support Manager*

### Didn't they do well....

Philip Hancock, Phd in Modular Statistics



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### Annual Careers Evening

The Careers Evening is hoping to continue the success of previous years.

Thursday 8 March 7.00pm – 9.00 pm

The evening will provide the opportunity to speak with consultants from specific career areas, local and national employers. The evening is targeted at 2<sup>nd</sup> yr pupils currently making their subject choice, but all pupils and their parents are welcome.

Local Colleges, Universities and Careers Scotland advisors will also be present.

*Valerie Baynham, Careers lead*



### Fairtrade Group

A number of S1-S3 pupils have come together this session to form the Linlithgow Academy Fairtrade Group. The group meets every Friday break and aims to raise the profile of Fairtrade within the school. In doing so the school's status as a 'Fairtrade School' will be maintained.

Since the summer the group have been very busy, working on a fair-trade policy for the school and contacting groups such as LAA in order to extend our use of Fairtrade products. In Term One the group conducted a Christmas stall over three days, selling more than £270 worth of craft products made in LEDC's under the Fairtrade scheme. They

also held their first 'Fairtrade Friday' event when juice, dried fruits and chocolate were on sale along with skewers of Fairtrade fruit dipped in chocolate from their chocolate fountain, purchased with help from the Enterprise Fund: a memorable and popular way of highlighting Fairtrade to our pupils!

But the group is also aware of the school's Healthy Eating policy and have decided to limit these events to once a term. Letters were sent to all of the feeder primary schools inviting them to become fair-trade schools too. Presently rehearsals are under way as the pupils prepare their contribution to the Linlithgow Fairtrade Partnership's Fairtrade Fortnight Event to be held in the Academy on the evening of Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> March.

**John McAllion** recently stated that Fairtrade is the fastest growing social movement of today and the Scottish Executive hope to reflect that by making Scotland a Fairtrade nation. It is heartening to know that Linlithgow Academy pupils are already involved, are interested in what is going on across the world and that they are prepared to spend time and effort highlighting this very worthwhile cause.

Thank you to **Ishbel Roger, Charlotte Joss, Claire Mellon, Sarah Lockhart, Lucie Douglas, Katie Sim, Monique Ytenma, Kyle Packard** and **Jamie Hoey**.

*The Geography Department*



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### Cluster Health Promoting Schools Challenge 2007

This term Linlithgow Cluster Health Promoting Schools are running a six week Challenge to help pupils and their parents or carers to think about some of the choices they make each day which impact on their health. Around 600 pupils plus their parents from across the schools in the Linlithgow cluster will be involved.

Linlithgow Academy senior pupils have invited pupils from S1, P7 and P6 to invite a parent or carer to be their partner for the Challenge. Each week the senior pupils will set a Challenge for the week e.g. to think about what you choose to eat or drink, what you munch for lunch or how many steps you take each day. The Captain's Team will deliver the Challenge through an information session at S1 Assembly or to the primary classes. Pupils will be given an information pack and a weekly Challenge activity task to complete. Pupils have been issued with a folder to file the Challenge information and a series of competitions will take place throughout the 6 weeks. At the end of the 6 weeks we hope many of the teams will share their folders with us to help us to measure the impact of the Challenge!

This Challenge is part of the Health Promoting School curriculum and is funded through West Lothian's Hungry for Success whole school approach to healthy eating initiative. A number of partners including the Active Schools Co-ordinator, WL Food and Health Co-ordinator, Dieticians and WL Catering Services as well as Health & Food Technology, Personal and Social Education

and PE are involved in planning the Challenge. We hope that you will support the Challenge and ask you to pledge your support.

### Determined to Broadcast: Broadcast Bus – 15 January at Armadale Academy

The Determined to Broadcast initiative, with links to the Determined to Succeed programme and Enterprise, allows pupils the opportunity to take part in completing a short radio broadcast on a topic of their choice. The 'studio' is contained within a double-decker bus which can be driven around Scotland, visiting a variety of locations, and offers a unique experience to young people.

Linlithgow Academy joined pupils from Deans Community High School and our hosts Armadale Academy in researching, scripting and recording a 45 minute broadcast.

The day began with an introduction from the two professionals involved, **Max and Robert**, both employed within radio broadcasting in Scotland. They briefly explained how the day would be divided and what would be expected as an end product, and the pupils soon got started on their ideas. It had been previously decided that the theme would be that of prejudice, so each group of five worked on a specific area. Linlithgow S3 pupils **Madeleine Macaulay, Alan Coleman, Abigail Mowitt, Caitlin Mayhew and Stuart Kelly** had been given the task of considering both bullying and asylum seekers. After researching the issues the group produced an informative and thought provoking segment which was then recorded.



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One of the most impressive aspects of this initiative is the fact that the equipment on the bus is actually a professional radio desk, able to record voices, edit interviews, insert music, adverts and jingles. The desk was easy to operate and pupils could take turns in being a DJ for a day!

All pupils involved were impressed by both the professional equipment on offer and the friendly and relaxed attitude of **Max and Robert**. It was certainly an interesting and enterprising day!

### **Pupils' Comments:**

"I enjoyed having the chance to see what it would be like to be a radio presenter."

**Abigail Mowitt**

"I found editing the interviews challenging!"

**Madeleine Macaulay**

"I enjoyed creating a show from nothing and broadcasting it."

**Stewart Kelly**

"I have realised what it might be like to work in Radio."

**Alan Coleman**

"It was most challenging getting research and finding people to interview."

**Caitlin Mayhew**

*R Davies, English Dept*

### **Comedy Club February 2007**

Comedy Club have had a busy time of it recently. We enjoyed a trip to the King's Theatre Pantomime (Cinderella) in December with the junior Drama Club. A great guffawing afternoon was had by all.

We have also been working very hard on the forthcoming Red Nose Day on Friday 16 March. As part of the school's effort to raise money for Comic Relief the Comedy Club will be performing two shows on the Friday morning for first and second year. We hope pupils will enjoy our versions of famous comedy sketches and will make a generous donation at the door!

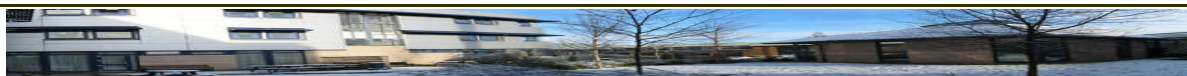
We are also planning a ticketed evening of comedy in June. Watch this space for more details!

*Elaine Kerridge, Comedy Club*

### **Spring Eco Update**

Many thanks to all of you who donated your old mobile phones after Christmas. We were very pleased to receive over 20 old mobiles and various chargers and equipment. This will now be spent off to Oxfam where they can recycle them in exchange for money. Many thanks too to all the staff and pupils who brought in stamps from home. We have collected a whole box full and these will now be sent off to RNIB. We will now continue to collect stamps throughout the year as the scheme has been so successful and is in aid of such a good cause. Please send them to **Mrs Russell-Pearson** in C14.

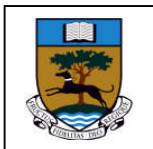
The S6 Eco Warriors are now running a weekly paper making group every Tuesday lunchtime in C14. A great opportunity to make a mess in someone's classroom and not get a row for it. If you are interested, come along one Tuesday!



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We are making headways with our Energy saving, one of our main priorities for Eco Schools this year and the school now has an Energy Management Team (made up of staff and pupils) who are in charge with tackling the reduction of energy in the Academy. At the moment this involves educating people, particularly the teachers, on how to conserve energy. We are in the early stages of this so watch this space!!

Finally, a very big thank you to LAA who gave us funds to buy in litter pickers and gloves, and also a bird table for the school's quad. This equipment will go a long way to help making the school tidier and a more enjoyable place to be.

As always, if you have any suggestions on what we can do further in school let us know through Mrs Russell-Pearson in the Geography department.

*Eco Warriors.*

### **S1/2 National Football Tournament (Coca Cola sevens)**

The first year boys team consisting of a squad of 10 players coached by Mr Clark won the regional qualifying tournament for the national Coca Cola sevens tournament. They now go on to play teams from other regions in the next round which is played at Livingston FC. The final stage should they progress through this round is played at the national stadium, Hampden Park. The girls S1/S2 team played with great determination at the same tournament narrowly missing out

on qualifying due to goal difference despite conceding no goals at all!

*Ron Clark*

### **Napier University Fitness Challenge**

The 4 pupils that attended Napier University for a fitness testing challenge managed to win 3 out of the 4 categories available and won the overall schools trophy. Congratulations to **Rebecca Stephen, Jamie Henry, Stewart Murdoch and Cathy Wood.** Well done.

*Graham Wight, PE Dept*

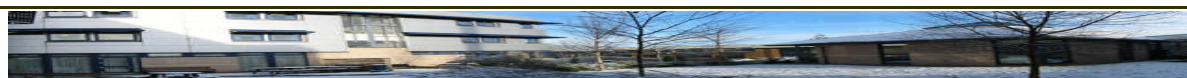
### **Sainsbury's Active Kids**

The school is again collecting Sainsburys Active Kids vouchers. We must thank all those who have helped in the past few years.

From the thousands of tokens collected we have managed to get 30 Heart Rate monitors which we use with certificate classes. We have also acquired fitness equipment; athletics equipment, netball bibs and balls, carry bags, whistles, flippers and weights for the pool.

This year one of the items we hope to raise enough tokens to buy is some large play mats for the pool as the ones we have at present are broken and falling to bits.

I will have to look over the catalogue for other "goodies" but the more tokens we have the more we can "buy". Please hand in any tokens to the school via your student or directly to the School Office.



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Thank you for continued assistance to the school.

*J MacFadyen, PE Department*



### **Linlithgow Academy Association**

Unfortunately, due to lack of support we have had to cancel our planned February Disco. We try to plan events that we think parents will be interested in attending and supporting so in the end you our supporters have the final word.

The following are the next events:

**Wine Evening**, Friday 23/3/07 tickets available from Mary Workman.

**Race Night**, Friday 25/5/07 tickets available from Kate Haining 847936 or Susan Robertson 842932. If you haven't been to one before come to this one, great night out.

Money given back to the school this year from LAA £6199. In the last few years there has been a very dedicated committee planning fundraising activities and raising much needed money for the school. We are finding it increasingly difficult to get support for new events, any ideas or offers of help are greatly welcome. Please contact any of the above committee members.

***Linlithgow Academy Association  
Linlithgow Academy, Braehead Road,  
Linlithgow EH49 6EH***

**Important notice:** publication deadlines for inclusion of text in 2007/8 are as follows:

Summer edition - Third week in May  
Autumn edition – First week in Sept  
Winter edition – Third week in November  
Spring edition - Second week in February

Please note all electronic contributions should be MS Word compatible.

All articles and news is most welcome.  
Thanking you in anticipation.

*Jane Morton, School Newsletter Editor*



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