

Australia

(continued from page 1)

cans, students and adults, to many foreign nations including Italy, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

Students on the trip can earn a high school credit. To get it we had to keep a journal of our travels and attend pre-trip meetings to learn about the countries we were going to see. These meetings were a good way for us to get to know each other, or at least to become familiar with each other before we left. We all made a few friends at the meetings so we weren't totally lost the first few days of the trip until we got to know everyone else.

We flew out of Philadelphia on June 30 to Los Angeles. In LA we met up with the 13 students/one leader delegation from the area around Fresno, CA who would be with us traveling as one group. We then flew from LA nonstop to Sydney, a 14-hour flight, on a Boeing 747.

"It [the plane ride] was a bit long, but I was able to get some sleep. And Sydney was definitely worth the wait," said Adam Morgan of Dallas.

When we arrived in Sydney we didn't have time to rest. It was 6:30 a.m. there and we had a full day ahead of us. After touring Sydney Harbour, visiting Costello's Jewelers who specialize in Australian gems, where many students bought opals, and eating at Planet Hollywood we were finally able to sleep some 41 hours after we

"The homestays were great. I enjoyed these the most out of everything we did on the trip."

Rachael Ayers
Dallas

woke up three days earlier. Those numbers work if you take into account the fact that we lost a day crossing the international dateline.

Our delegation still had many full days ahead of us. We toured the Sydney Opera House, went to the Olympic Stadium, visited the Australian National Museum where some students participated in a demonstration of Aboriginal dance, and then drove 100 miles north to Newcastle where we spent two days with local families.

The homestays, one in Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia and one in Palmerston North on the North Island of New Zealand, offered us a unique opportunity to experience local life. We spent two days at each homestay with a local family, ate with them, went around town with them, and talked with them about their country and ours. I was surprised at how similar our countries really are. We have most of the same customs, speak the same language — or at least almost the same language — eat the same food, and watch the same movies and TV shows. A lot of the TV shows they watch are American.

"The homestays were great. I enjoyed these the most out of everything we did on the trip," said Rachael Ayers, Dallas, a student at Tunkhannock High School. "The only part that got me a little upset was when I went to school on my second homestay. The girls were very rude to their teachers, and the teachers just blew it off. But my girl was totally different at home and when she was with her friends. My first homestay, I don't have any complaints. That was so much fun. They both were fun."

After the stay in Newcastle, we traveled over 200 miles to Coff's Harbour and then another 400 miles the next day to reach Hervey Bay where the ferry would take us across to Frasier Island, the world's largest sandbar. We took a four-wheel-drive bus tour of the island and one of the stops was a place called Rainbow Gorge, a large cut in the sand with steep walls almost 100 feet high, which several of the students, myself included, and Mary Ann Graham, one of the delegation leaders from PA, chose to roll down.

"Tumbling down Rainbow Gorge on Frasier Island was great," said Morgan "It had all the fun of falling down a mountain, but without the fear of breaking your neck."

On Frasier Island, we saw dingoes, a type of wild dog native to Australia. The dingo could be seen from the road running in the woods. Frasier Island also has a fresh water lake on it where we went swimming. Some of the students, though, stayed out due to the cold water.

"Warmer than Moosic Lake," quipped Conor Kilcullen from Dunmore. He was one of the students who went swimming.

After our stay on Frasier Island, we traveled to Bundaberg where we took a catamaran out to Lady Musgrave Island at the extreme southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef. We did some snorkeling and a few of us even went SCUBA diving.

"The snorkeling was great. I liked the fish and I got some



Adam Morgan Nolan doing the Emu dance with aboriginal Australians.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN GILLIGAN

"The sea cucumber, as a defense, spat out a sticky, sting-like thing that is really part of its intestine. So I was actually attacked by a sea cucumber while chasing sharks."

John Gilligan
Dallas

really great pictures," said Ayers. "The only part I was disappointed in was the coral itself. I pictured it to be colorful and really cool, but it was all brown and tan. I didn't expect that. So I was sort of disappointed, but the fish were cool."

Most of the students took the opportunity to visit the Island itself. The island is made out of coral pieces and sand that washed up over the centuries. You have to leave the coral there though. Lady Musgrave is a protected site and every piece you take is a AU \$1500 fine. After three pieces it's three months in jail.

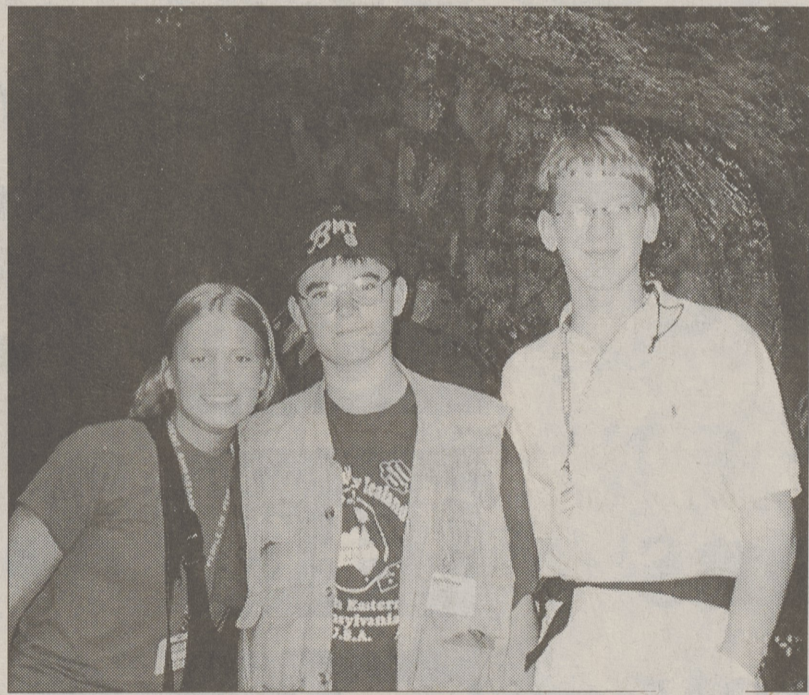
A type of tree grows on the island that has a very interesting relationship with a local species of bird. Every year the bird nests on the island in only this kind of tree which pro-

duces a sticky berry that gums up the wings of some of the birds. The birds die and rot and the tree uses the nutrients to help it grow in the poor soil on the island.

Adam Morgan, Dan Sperraza of Wilkes-Barre, and I went wading into the ocean from the island when I spotted a black tipped reef shark swimming with us in the shallow water. We went after the shark to get a photo. As it turned out there were actually four sharks, all between four and five feet long and very fast swimmers. After the sharks swam away without waiting for a picture, I picked up a sea cucumber, a small bottom dwelling animal that looks like a cucumber and crawls around on the bottom eating the little creatures in the sand. The sea cucumber, as a defense, spat out a sticky, sting-like thing that is really part of its intestine. So I was actually attacked by a sea cucumber while chasing sharks.

After our day on the reef we went to a farm resort where we went horseback riding through the bush and saw a mob of eastern gray wallabies. Then we went to Brisbane and toured the Queensland Parliament Building. Afterwards, we flew to Auckland, New Zealand where we spent a lot of time looking at the sheep industry. New Zealand has more sheep than people in it. We went to Rotorua and saw the geothermal vents, then we continued on to Wellington, the capital, and toured the parliament.

After our stay in Wellington, we took a 10-hour train ride through the New Zealand countryside back to Auckland where we caught our flight home.



Maura Popson, John Gilligan and Adam Morgan Nolan, on scene in the land "Down Under."

Middle School renovations 40% complete in Dallas

By BILL GOODMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. - As the Dallas School District continues to prepare for renovations to the middle school, school board directors heard about an alternative to traditional gas or electric heating and air conditioning that could save the district almost \$2 million over a 20 year period.

At Monday night's work session, Bob Dooley, of R.J. Dooley & Associates, presented a plan to install a geothermal heat pump instead of electric or gas heating and cooling systems. The system involves drilling holes into the ground and tapping the heat in the ground to maintain a constant temperature in the circulation system.

Unlike traditional systems, a geothermal heat pump system would allow the middle school to be air conditioned throughout the summer. The geothermal system is less expensive to install and maintain. A similar system has been installed in facilities in Nanticoke Area School District.

Dooley estimates the geothermal system would cost \$1,997,149 to install, and \$405,964.97 to maintain over a 20 year period. Maintenance for the other methods cost almost twice as much for the same period of time.

The board also heard from Foreman Burkavage about the status of the middle school designs and an update on the construction of the new stadium.

Architects from Foreman Burkavage, along with Dr. Gilbert Griffiths, superintendent of schools, traveled to Harrisburg to meet with Pennsylvania Department of Education representatives about designs for renovating the middle school. "It went extremely well," said Paul Degillio, architect at Foreman Burkavage.

"The state was impressed with the excellent flow in the building itself," said Griffiths. "They were impressed with where we wanted to put different pieces."

Degillio presented revised plans for the pool. Architects decided to cut costs by eliminating the proposed second floor. The locker rooms have been subdivided into two larger and two smaller areas, and two of the rooms are acces-

sible to the pool area. The locker rooms are located to the right of the pool, toward the center of the building. "We have a workable plan," said Degillio. "We don't have more locker room than we need." The deck area can seat 220 spectators on the left side and 190 on the right side.

The seats that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act can be folded to accommodate non-disabled users.

Jeff Angstead, construction manager for the stadium project, played a video showing the status of construction. He said that 40

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Dr. Gilbert Griffiths
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percent of the project is complete, and 18.3 percent has been billed. Work has been delayed for nine days because of rain. The concession stands and bleachers are still expected to be done for Sept. 1, but the field house will not be finished until mid-September because of the setbacks caused by the weather.

Ernest Ashbridge, president of the board, announced that several school board members had volunteered to serve on a committee to work with the architects and construction manager throughout the design and building phases of the projects. Maureen Banks, Tony Barbose, Karen Kyle and Frank Natitus will serve on the building committee.

"I don't want any surprises," said Ashbridge. "The board has to be kept abreast of everything." The committee would also monitor and report on the change orders issued during construction.

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