Our VCE girls team have a bit of fun at the VCE Soccer Carnival.
From the Principal

What’s in a conference?

For the last three days of workbreak, our teaching staff attended Christian Education National’s (CEN) State conference, held at Donvale Christian College. This conference is run every two years and is a gathering of over 600 Christian school teachers from around the state.

We were challenged and inspired by various speakers from Australia and other parts of the world on the theme, ‘My story, Our story and The story’. Each speaker spoke passionately about this theme and intertwined the elements beautifully to create this image of each part of the story of life informing the other.

The key message was that we need to be actively critiquing the stories (lives) that we live; we need to critique our current cultural story in light of the Biblical story - how do we see our lives unfolding in our current cultural context? As teachers, it’s “The (Biblical) story” that must inform what we are seeking to unpack with students and must guide us as we teach them that God has a purpose for their lives. We were encouraged to take this theme back into our classrooms, and were provided with some practical ways to begin this process.

A number of MECS staff (as well as staff from other schools) ran ‘model lessons’ for other teachers to get some ideas on how to teach from a Biblical perspective. What a blessing that the philosophies that we have worked so hard for at MECS are now able to assist and challenge other Christian teachers. It’s in the sharing of ideas about Christian Education that God’s story is shared, nurtured and strengthened in schools throughout Victoria. What a pleasure it was to serve God and others in our community in this way. I am eagerly awaiting the fruit that comes from such a stimulating and thought-provoking event.

1982 - Second Principal

When I took over as the second Principal of MECS in July, 1982 MECS was nine years old. The latest building was the ‘new’ Art Room. The third contingent of Year 12s had graduated at the end of the year before. There had been two exploratory centre trips prior to my coming and the total enrolments were just over three hundred.

Kees had been Acting Principal in the few months between Jack Mechielsen’s leaving and my coming. He was a great help in settling me in. On the staff there were still many of the teachers who had been involved in getting the secondary years started. The ‘old timers’ left over from when there had been ‘giants in the land’ were still there – Ken, Wally, Susan, Sue, Frank & Jeanette, Ron, Jack, Cor, Colin, Geoff and Doug (the latter four comprised the Senior School staff. In those days Senior School meant Years 11 and 12.)

Other formative staff members – Dan, Ian, Bruce, Melissa and John had already moved on and the premature loss, through death, of Hans and Jenny was still keenly felt.

A fairly obvious but unexpressed concern on the part of many staff members was, “Will this Scots Johnny-come-lately appreciate and maintain the unique nature of MECS that we have been part of forming these past nine years?” The greatest single unique quality of the school up until then had been its Integral Christian Curriculum. Would someone from outside appreciate and sustain this educational treasure? Great stress was placed on the unusual adjective ‘integral’ as opposed to the common ‘integrated’ in this expression. I was quickly enlightened with, “God created this world as an integral whole – we at MECS respect this and our curriculum is shaped to reflect this truth. In other schools teachers merely stick together seemingly related bits and pieces of the different subjects and call it an integrated curriculum.” Who was I to argue with God? The matter was settled.

I well remember that frequent times I was advised, counselled or cautioned with “Jack always did it this way” or “We do it such and such a way at MECS.” Some of the ‘old timers’ were still telling me so ten years later!

Otherwise he might cut it out of the budget if he does not see how good it is.”

However, ‘the Scotsman’ and their school board had already been sold on the integral Christian curriculum and they need not have worried. Soon after my arrival the concept of multi-aged grouping was enthusiastically adopted by the school board and by the ‘old timers’ to the extent now that it remains, along with the integral Christian curriculum, one of the distinguishing features of MECS.

Stewart was the second Principal of MECS from 1982 - 2002.
**Our New Mural**

During 2012 I had the pleasure of coordinating a small group of students to create a mural for the Primary School courtyard commissioned by the Education Support team.

Nine Senior Primary students were selected because they had all identified themselves as ‘visual/spatial’ learners according to Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory.

Throughout the year the students and I met regularly to plan and prepare for the painting of the mural. Di had asked us to include Matthew 22:37-39 as it is a verse we often refer to in the Primary School. Initially, we wanted to use the verse as the inspiration for the images on the mural, however after some difficulty coming up with an appropriate idea, we opted instead to create something that would be nice to look at and add to the fun and caring environment of the Primary School playground.

We brainstormed as many ideas as we could before deciding on a jungle theme. The students demonstrated incredible commitment and persistence as we took on the task of painting the mural. Many lunchtimes were dedicated to working on the piece.

It was very exciting to see the finished product up in the courtyard at the end of last term. It has been lovely to see students stopping on their way past to have a close look.

The wonderful artists who created the mural were Tom, Pat, Mia, Christine, Jemma, Jenna, Asher, Britney and Eliza.

Many thanks to Shirley and Di for facilitating this rewarding experience.

**Olivia**
Art Teacher

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**Future Enrolments at MECS**

One of the great ways people come to know about MECS is by personal invitation and referral by our current families. We appreciate this greatly. If you have friends and family who would be interested in Christian education, please encourage them to telephone the school to speak with either Nicole or Amanda regarding coming in for a personalised tour of MECS. Or you can let them know about the Open Day on Saturday May 18, from 10am to 1pm.

We are currently processing enrolments for 2014 and future years. If you have a sibling of a currently enrolled student whom you would like to be considered for a position at MECS, could you please ensure that you have completed an ‘Application for Sibling Enrolment’, available from the office and return it to the school office as soon as possible.

This will help us tremendously in our forward planning. If you are unsure as to whether you have already completed a form, please contact Chris Paech via the office. Many of our classes are close to their optimum numbers for 2014 and 2015 already. Please note that if your child is not attending MECS in 2014, the school requires one full term’s notice.

**Amanda & Nicole**
Community Relations Officers

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**VCE Soccer Carnival**

Last Tuesday 23 April, 21 VCE students attended the interschool soccer carnival at Seaford. We had a wonderful day that gave the students a chance to escape from their studies briefly to enjoy some lovely weather and positive competition. The girls team (as pictured on the front of the newsletter) worked together to each fill their role in the team and were spurred on by the supportive guidance and encouragement of Captain Kendra. The boys faced some tough opposition but played well and approached the day with a sense of fun and camaraderie. However, it must be said that the spotlight of the day was stolen by our Ranges Tec compatriots who won their pool in a thrilling penalty shoot-out.

**Emma**
SS Teacher
MUSIC Notes

Music Theory Group

Throughout Terms 2 and 3 we’re running a music theory course as friendly group lessons for all ages. Theory is all-round useful for musicians and it is a prerequisite for higher level instrumental exams.

Who should enrol? Any musicians playing at (or above) Third Grade level and those who are thinking of doing VCE music. Ask your instrumental teacher if you should be involved.

When? Starting Wed 8 May at lunchtime until the end of Term 3.

Where? In our Instrumental rooms.

Cost? $14.50 per class plus course material (approx. $18).

How to enrol? Via the instrumental music enrolment form to be found on the website under School Life/Extra Activities/Music/Instrumental Music Booklet.

Further questions? Ask Kerrie (instrumental coordinator) or Brett (theory course teacher).

Kerrie
Instrumental Coordinator

Open Day Help Needed

Open Day – Saturday
May 18, 10am - 1pm

We are looking forward to our Open Day on Saturday May 18.

If you have family or friends who are interested in Christian education, you are most welcome to take them on a personal tour on Open Day or encourage them to come along. We have quite a few activities happening around the school on the day.

We would appreciate some volunteers, parents and Student leaders to help with:-

- Welcoming Team
- Making sandwiches
- Serving Devonshire Tea
- Supervising our jumping castles or cup cake decorating
- Face painting
- Being Tour Guides
- Helping in the classrooms
- BBQ Cooking

If you are available to help us (even for an hour), we would really appreciate it. Please phone Amanda or Nicole on 9738 6022, or email us on asteele@mecs.vic.edu.au

If you have a busy day and are not sure if you can squeeze it in, then please just drop in on the day when and if you can.

Thank you for your support.

Amanda and Nicole

Open Day Musicians Needed

As is our tradition, we are inviting musicians and singers from our whole school to perform a 5, 10 or 15 minute set of music as part of highlighting Music and Performance at MECS on Open Day.

It’s a great opportunity to perform as background music and gain some confidence and experience for beginners but also showcase your skills for the more experienced.

There will be 2 performance spaces- outside the PS Pump Room for all PS aged performers and outside the Main Staffroom for MS and SS performers.

If you are able to perform for this event please contact me via email (ahummerston@mecs.vic.edu.au) and I will book you in a time-slot between 10.30-12.45pm on the day.

Please include your name, age, time frame you would like to play for (5, 10, 15 minutes), your availability on the day between 10-12.30pm and a parent contact number.

It has been a great part of our Open Days in the past, and I hope we can have lots of willing performers for this year’s Open Day!

Annora
Music Performance Coordinator

Open Day
10am – 1pm
Saturday May 18, 2013

Celebrating 40 Years
How to be Brilliant at Music
Advice for young musicians and parents

Dear young musicians,

I’ve been thinking a lot about how to be brilliant at music – on stage, in the church band, or in the lounge-room. And I’ve found that all brilliant musicians have one thing in common – and that’s practice. Lots of practice. You see your music teacher once a week, but what happens in-between lessons makes all the difference. So here’s some advice.

- Getting started each day can be the hardest thing, so keep your instrument somewhere obvious. Leave the case open and the music on the stand.
- Play and play until all the bumps in your music are smoothed out. Practising the hard bits is essential. After all, anyone can do the easy bits. Show some determination and persistence and strength of character. All brilliant people do.
- Let your teacher know which are your favourite pieces so they can find more music you’ll enjoy… but be open to new ideas too!
- Momentum is everything. Practise daily for as long as you can, then you’ll improve, and then you’ll feel like playing more because you sound so good.

Dear parents,

As a teacher and parent, I’ve found this advice helpful – and I hope you do too.

- Students (of all sizes) really do need friendly reminders to practice and they do need help in setting and maintaining a routine.
- A lot of younger students don’t like to miss out on the goings-on at home and they do like an audience… so let them practice in the kitchen or the living room, and listen in because they are motivated by your (and their teacher’s) approval. As they progress, their motivation increasingly comes from their self-identification as an instrumentalist – and they’ll want to play on their own. But, for the first few years, being a daily audience (who may be simultaneously cooking or doing other things) is a great encouragement.
- Encourage students to play music beyond what is set for practice. ‘Play’ really is a part of playing music.
- Intrinsic rewards are best – new music books, concert tickets and, most of all, the appreciation of listeners.
- Encourage social music making - informal family concerts, school recitals and ensembles. These experiences help students to identify themselves as musicians and that prompts them to make the most of lessons.

Kerrie
Instrumental Tuition Coordinator

April Board Report

In the recent board meeting Paul Oldman gave us a brief overview of what’s been happening around the school. It was exciting to hear that while the students enjoyed the last week of their break the teaching staff were hard at work at the Victorian Teacher’s Intensive at Donvale Christian College with around 650 other teachers. This occurs bi-annually as part of the professional development our staff undertake to hone their skills in teaching from a Christian perspective. A number of the staff from MECS conducted some of the sessions.

The annual audited financial report was presented to the board. This will be available at the Association AGM in May. We are truly blessed in this area by our Lord with another healthy year financially.

A copy of the updated Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2017 incorporating the 2013 Operational Plan was distributed to the board. The board spends time each year reviewing our strategic goals. The school Executive develops an Operational Plan that aligns with the strategic goals of the board. These are important to ensure that we are not just running on ‘cruise control’ and that we have a map in place to follow to continuously develop and improve.

Each month the board is updated each month on key areas. As mentioned in previous reports, the school is to be audited by the government department responsible for registering schools. It was reported that we are well prepared for this and are awaiting advice as to the ‘depth’ of the audit. An update was also provided on work being done to cross checking our school based curriculum with the national curriculum.

The board looks forward to catching up with many of you at the AGM on May 9.

Ian Bushell on behalf of the board

MECS Notes

Congratulations to Lanita & Laura

The MECS community would like to congratulate two of our students on significant achievements.

Current Year 12 student Lanita has been selected to represent Australia in the Junior World Orienteering Championships to be held in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic from 29 June until 6 July, 2013. This competition will be extremely challenging for Lanita as she competes for Australia against the very best in the world. Lanita is also at the very young end of this age group and will be pitting her skills against girls who are much older than her. She is viewing these championships as a “challenge and a massive learning experience”. This is a wonderful achievement Lanita and as a school community we offer you our prayers and support.

Laura (Class of ‘06) recently graduated with an Honours Degree in Speech Pathology from Charles Sturt University. Subsequently, she was awarded a research scholarship to undertake a Ph.D in the area of Clinical Speech Pathology with a focus on the area of stuttering. The area of research also has an international focus and so next year Laura will be carrying out some of her research in Vietnam. Laura’s achievements are a wonderful testament to a young lady who had to take the long route to speech pathology after not achieving the necessary ATAR in her Year 12. Her hard work and determination have finally paid off. Congratulations Laura.

Dr Roger
VCE Coordinator

Careers Newsletter

There is a new Careers Newsletter on the MECS Website under Resources/ Careers Help/Careers Newsletters.

MECS Facebook Pages

Did you know that MECS has 4 Facebook pages?

This is a good tool to keep up to date with events and news at MECS. Please ‘Like’ our pages so you can get regular updates.

Mount Evelyn Christian School – MECS
MECS – Past Students
MECS – Kindergarten
MECS – Music For Young Children Program
Friends of MECS

Get involved with the Friends of MECS

It is fitting in our anniversary year that we introduce ‘Friends of MECS’ – the group within the school to support fundraising events. The Community Relations department are planning the variety of roles that ‘Friends of MECS’ have within the school, and would like you to be involved.

One of these roles is coordinating the Mothers’ Day stall. Over the past 40 years the ‘Parents and Friends’ group have coordinated and organised the Mothers’ Day stalls at MECS. These stalls provide a wonderful opportunity for our younger students to purchase inexpensive items for their lovely Mums. The Community Relations department have a huge amount of Mothers’ Day presents for our lovely children to buy, but we need some help in organising this event, wrapping presents, and manning the stall on Friday May 10. If you feel that you would like to be involved please call Amanda or Nicole as soon as possible.

Thank you so much, we look forward to hearing from many of you.

Amanda & Nicole
Community Relations Officers

Year 9 Open Village

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese!

How does food reach our plates? What food is produced in our local area? What ethical issues exist in the production of food? How do you make flour? What is the difference between organic and conventionally grown food? What the heck is permaculture? Why does Mr Wouters enjoy talking about vegetables so much and where on earth did he get those socks??

These are just some of the questions we are looking at in Open Village this term and to kick our unit off, we had a day of watching, listening, making and tasting. The centerpiece of this day was the delicious spread of cheeses and relishes from the Yarra Valley Dairy (well worth a visit if you haven’t already got out to their Coldstream farm and store). Just a couple of personal recommendations – try the House Cow with a gout of Rosemary Jelly … sweetness, creaminess, umami, tang, BANG – exquisite!! There’s also the Ash Grabetto in tandem with a healthy slug of Syrian Spiced Fig Jam … HELLO, you can dance the caramel tango on my palette any day. Methinks we may have a few student converts to the world of gourmet dairy goodness already – as for the rest of the term, come to my arms!

Tim
Year 9 Teacher
Our New Mac Lab

A recent change in the Middle School is the scheduled upgrade of the computer room or ‘Media Centre’ computers as part of our ICT Educational Plan. It has been fitted out with Apple iMac computers which allow the use of both Windows and Mac software, providing for greater educational possibilities for students. Very exciting!

Mic
ICT Coordinator

Preps Play Puppets

Tying in with our social skills topic of ‘Getting Along’ and looking at the seasons in Core Studies, the Preps had the opportunity to watch a puppet show called ‘The Ugly Duckling’ by Jeanette of Dove Puppets. The Preps learnt about the importance of inclusiveness and appreciating one another’s differences. At the end of the performance, each of the Preps were given the opportunity to get behind the scenes and have a go at performing with the puppets. The Preps really enjoyed the new experiences of their first incursion at school.

Rebekah & Jan
Prep Teachers

Considerations for Parents regarding school camps and excursions from the Asthma Foundation of Victoria

If your child has asthma, attending school camps and excursions can introduce them to new asthma triggers especially if they are going into new environments. It is essential that your child can participate fully and safely in all school activities. The following is a list of considerations to make for your child before they go on school camp or an excursion:

• Is your child’s asthma currently well controlled (e.g. no symptoms at night, reliever use less than 3 times per week)?
• Has your child had an asthma attack or asthma symptoms recently?
• Does the school have an Asthma Action Plan for your child?
• Has the school asked you to complete a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form?
• Does your child have their reliever medication and spacer on hand at all times?
• Are they attending with any other medications to be taken on the camp/excursion? If so, are there sufficient instructions to staff for use/dosage?
• Does your child self-administer their medication? If so, has their technique been checked recently?

For more information please contact The Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 278 462 or www.asthma.org.au.
House Needed
Family looking for 3 bedroom house with garage in local area. Contact Tammy.

Montrose Soccer club
Requires players in boys under 14 and 15 team and girls under 15/16 team. If you are interested in playing please contact Martyn or www.montrosejuniorsooccer.com.au.

House Available (Short Term)
Brick Veneer 3 Bedroom home with Central Heating (Gas) in Lilydale available from 20 May to 27 June 2013. Contact Klaas.

Ranges TEC Open Campus
Saturday 18 May, 1pm - 4pm. Please come along and bring any friends and family who may like to visit Ranges TEC. 1/9 Hightech Place, Lilydale 3140.

Woolworths Earn & Learn
This is on again - please collect stickers. There is a box in the office for you to place your completed sticker pages.

Entertainment Books
Please order your books now. They have arrived and all ordered books will be handed out from 1 May. The book costs $65 and the school makes $13 on every book sold.

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is a major component of the Australian Government’s package ‘Building a Healthy, Active Australia’ that aims to improve the health and well-being of Australian children. MECS is once again participating in the AASC program in Term 2, 2013.

The Term 2 activity still with places is: Thursday 3:45pm – 4:45pm: Bootcamp 3 Places left
The program will run for 7 weeks beginning 29 April.
Children attending will be offered fruit for afternoon tea prior to the activities commencing. Please ensure that your child brings a refillable water bottle to each session.
The program will offer fun, safe and inclusive activities which will provide children with the opportunity to develop their motor skills. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle in a comfortable, non-competitive environment.
If you would like your child to participate in this free program, please complete a parental form (available from the office) and return this to the office ASAP.
For further information, contact the Main Office.

The Letters below went home last week
• Year 7/8 Soccer Day
• Speech Pathology Note
• Student Leadership Training Day Letter
• Year 7-12 Cross Country Run
• JP Newsletter Term 2