Kayla was an angel getting into the spirit of Christmas during the Preps’ Nativity play.
My Final Newsletter Piece

This is just a quick note to say thank you to this wonderful MECS community, both for this year and for the last 15 years.

It has been such a privilege to serve the school as Interim Principal and the support I have received has been overwhelming. The next phase for me provides the opportunity to ‘fly the flag’ for Christian education at Plenty Valley and I will take with me and cherish everything that I have learned over my time here at MECS. My heart rests with MECS and I know that God will continue to bless the work of this school.

MECS has changed me - not only how I view education but also my understanding of how God’s kingdom is part of every aspect of my life. The decision to leave was very difficult but I am convinced that God is leading me to a new community. Praise be to God who holds all things for his purpose. I look forward to seeing you all at Association meetings or other MECS events and hearing of the wonderful things that will continue to happen at this great school.

Kindergarten Nativity

On Tuesday the 4 year old Kindergarten children gave the gift of a ‘story’, a story that we love to re-tell at this time of the year to remind us that the Crib and the Cross are pivotal events in our Christian faith. The children beautifully demonstrated their knowledge of the Nativity; shepherds guided their flocks, cows mooed and Kings confidently declared their gifts for the boy king. We finished off with some songs from their kinder year and some carols. Thank you to the parents, siblings and grandparents who attended. The party food at the end was by far the most popular part of the day and the children enthusiastically joined in eating together! What a wonderful way to finish off our very first year at MECS Kindergarten.

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

Primary GT Farewell to Liesje

Liesje was the special guest at the nativity Primary get together, as we honoured her 20 years of service to the MECS community. Some long-term friends, former colleagues, Liesje’s 3 daughters and some of her grandchildren came along to join in and say farewell.

Liesje was presented with a ‘Memories Book’ – a compilation of pictures and messages from students and colleagues, and some gifts to reflect her love of gardening – a bird feeder, an olive tree (to represent peace) and a lovely plant pot.

Some students from each level of the Primary school shared their memories and enjoyment of Liesje’s art activities, her stories, her singing and learning about God in her lessons. It was a fitting celebration of a special person.

See page 6 for more on the Primary GT.

Jan
Prep Teacher
The 40th Anniversary year is done and what a marvelous year it has been. The Reflections section of the newsletter this year has provided us with a glimpse of some of the highlights from each of our 40 years. Melissa kicked off our year of reflections, 40 years of first days – with all their nerves and excitement, yet God was there. The 1974 reflection took us on a journey through the challenges of starting secondary schooling. I loved the statement, “one thing was the now obvious absurdity of sending their children to a secular secondary school with its humanist curriculum.”

Fiona Haynes reflected that 1975 and following years were years of great change and silly plays. Andy’s 1977 reflection described his entry to MECS as being like “stepping into an educational paradise; a glimpse of God’s kingdom at work.” Jerry stepped us along the path of taking MECS into Senior Secondary education.

He recalled with thanks to God, the opening of the senior campus buildings in 1979. The 1979 reflection took us through the wonder of seeing Mountain District Christian School (MDCS) come into being here with us in Room 14. Yvonne gave us a glimpse of how the very first Centre Trip adventure unfolded in 1980. Stewart reflected on his arrival as Principal in 1982; he told of his enlightenment regarding integral curriculum and the long serving staff members who guarded this core value.

Stewart mentioned that the staff were plotting to get him to go on the Centre Trip so that he would see firsthand its educational value (the same has already been mooted for our new incoming Principal Narelle). Colin allowed us to see further into our Yuendumu connection with his recollection of their (the Youl family’s) stay there in 1984. Colin noted the great personal impact for him, but let me borrow and adapt some lines from his reflection, for the entire school community: ‘we have been blessed and made better people and better Christians because of our contact with the desert-dwelling people of Yuendumu.’

Room 14 made another appearance in David’s reflection of gratitude on the establishment of the Ringwood Christian School in 1983. Sadly that journey lasted only until 1986; on its closure their students were embraced by MECS. Sharon (here at MECS on day one) shared 1986 with us: the year she returned to MECS as a teacher and the Year 10 students became part of the Senior school campus. It was Sharon’s dream come true – ‘demanding and exhilarating’. (With Roger’s help she also ably taught Year 10 Maths). Centre Trip makes another appearance in Roger’s reflection of 1989 – the first time he participated in the trip. Talk about challenging! And yet Roger spoke truly in his testimony of God’s wonderful provision – fuel, axle and bolts and so much more. I can only say ‘wow’ at God’s goodness seen in that story.

Ruth’s reflection on 1990 contained the words: chaos, scary, tropical downpour, flood, radiation and hot chips (what?) Of course this was the flooded library disaster that the community overcame with God’s help and strength.

According to Ken’s reflection, 1991 saw the MECS pioneered Institute for Christian Education (started in 1979) transform into the National Institute for Christian Education. Words are insufficient to convey the deep significance of this development for the Christian Education movement worldwide. John ‘Pa’ gave us a snapshot of the other drama that occurred in 1991 – the uniform debate. I loved John’s words, “Today the school has succeeded in resolving the school uniform issue without losing the vision that we are all united in our belonging to God, affirming God’s authority over our school, yet recognizing and celebrating the wonder and beauty of the uniqueness of each individual.”

Another former student, Sharon Witt, shared her excitement and nerves as she returned to MECS as a teacher in 1993 – some of the developments pioneered by Sharon are still with us, though I struggle to imagine her as a shy new teacher. Russell’s reflection from 1994 started with the memorable lines, “No two words can capture the feeling of a warm cow pat on a very cold winter’s morning…” and closes with the lines, “Mummy we saw the farm where they turn cows and sheep into meat.” Russell reminded us that it is still vital to get out of the classroom to learn.

The ‘Arie Heatherich Library Resource Centre’ was officially opened in 1996. Marrie shared the joy and blessing of this terrific resource. That reflection also paid tribute to the pioneer, after whom the building is named – Arie Heatherich, a visionary man, instrumental in founding both MECS and MDCS. The late 1990s reflection focused on the tradition of the staff-student footy match. Roger’s blow by blow account of the 1999 match, the last ever. Why? According to Rog, the staff kept getting older but the students never did. The following year, Paul took us back to the memory of the Mount Evelyn bushfire that impacted MECS in 2000. It’s an experience that we never want to go through again but are prepared for if we need to.

The closer we get to the here and now the less we seemed to have been reflecting, or perhaps there was no room in MECS Matters. Dr Daniel, former student now biochemist, formally opened the new science labs in 2003. Daniel was in fact in Preps on the very first day in 1973 and his reflection is full of wonderful memories and acknowledgement of the powerful influence of MECS in his life. Natasha’s reflection on the 2007 opening of the ‘PUMP’ room opened up a lovely window into some of the experiences of returning to your childhood school as a parent. Can a person reflect on their own reflection? The significance of the 2012 reflection on the birth of Ranges TEC (by yours truly) is that it again shows us the threads (new imagery now) that we have caught sight of during the year – the stuff woven together to make MECS what it is after 40 years: dreams, pioneering, passion, the Kingdom of God, excitement, community, belonging, challenge, God’s faithfulness, and incredible commitment.

The final paragraph from our Educational Creed says: ‘Confessing Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the redeemer and renewer of all our life, we pursue the educational task together, with confident hope and humble reliance on God, who, for Jesus’ sake, sent his Holy Spirit to lead us into the truth, which is Christ, and with glad submission to the Word of God as the guide for all our endeavour, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, with the glory and the dominion for ever. Amen.’

I am convinced that this community has faithfully pursued this confession for more than 40 years and ask you to do all within your power to join me in pursuing it until Christ returns.

Gerry
Administration Manager
Friends of MECS

We have nearly finished 2013 and have much to be thankful for. The 40th Anniversary year of the school has been celebrated well. It has been the first year of the new entity 'Friends of MECS'. Due to the busyness of the 40th anniversary celebrations, Friends of MECS has had a quiet year although we have still raised money through our Mother's and Father's Day stalls, school wear and stationery sales. We have spent the leftover Parents & Friends money on the Primary play pod, the Middle School rock climbing wall and an Indigenous Christian Art art panel for the gym wall (which will be completed next year). Next year we plan to expand on the activities of Friends of MECS. If you have any ideas please come and see me or send me an e-mail.

We would like to acknowledge a few of our wonderful volunteers: Evelyn who does the huge job of coordinating the stationery sales each year; Karen who organises school wear sales; Pat who spends time in our MCG (MECS Creation Garden) keeping the garden beds looking lovely and working with some of our SP students and Renee Budden who has been our prayer chain coordinator and these are just a few! We also want to thank each of you who have come to a working bee, gone on an excursion or a camp, helped on Kindergarten duty, helped out in the classroom, made a costume or helped with makeup for the Primary production. Each small act of helping out has contributed to the wonderful community that MECS is.

So thank you for a great year, we wish you a blessed Christmas and a refreshing break and we look forward to seeing you back on February 3, 2014!

Amanda & Nicole Community Relations Officer

Lost Property

As the year comes to an end we have the usual assortment of jackets, cardigans and hoodies filling up the racks in Lost Property. Could you please check the racks by the end of this Friday and claim anything that belongs to your children? We will keep these items probably into the new year then they will be donated to the local op shop. This is also a reminder to parents to PLEASE name your children’s clothing ready for next year. It makes our job so much easier if we can return lost items to the owners straight away, and saves you money in replacing lost clothing.

Melinda

Fond Farewells

There are a number of staff that are leaving us – each has faithfully served our community, some for a short time and others for 15 years or more. Each one has contributed their personality and unique gifts to our community, and we sincerely and warmly thank them for doing their part in ‘Seeking the Kingdom of God in Education’ at MECS. We pray God’s richest blessing for the next part of their journey.

Principal

Paul is finishing the year as our Principal, but has also been Deputy, Senior School Coordinator, Senior School Health and Human Development, Biology, PE & Maths teacher. Paul is taking up a position at Plenty Valley Christian College as the Head of Secondary.

Playgroup

Vee has been our Playgroup leader for the last 3 years. Vee is going to finish her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

Instrumental Music

Kerrie has been the Instrumental Coordinator for over 4 years and has also taught piano lessons. Kerrie is heading off to undertake a PhD in Church History.

Nicole Community Relations Officer

Celebrating 40 Years
Fond Farewells

Primary School

Liesje has taught at MECS for over 20 years teaching Prep, Junior Primary, Middle Primary and specialist Scripture. She has been passionate about sharing God’s word with children, teaching art and sharing her love of nature and awe at God’s creation.

Kate has been a learning Assistant in the Senior Primary classes. Carmen has been teaching in Senior Primary and Matt in Junior Primary this year. They are all heading off to various other adventures next year.

Middle School

Jono has been teaching Maths and Core Studies for almost 9 years. Jono and his wife are relocating to the City of Casey where he has a teaching position at Maranatha Christian School - Officer Campus.

Senior School

Kara has been the Studio Art and Visual Communication teacher in the Senior School for 2 years. Kara and her husband will be travelling overseas doing a mix of volunteer work and study.

Admin/Support Team

Andrew has been a staff member here for over 10 years. His positions have included VET Coordinator, VCAL Coordinator, SS teacher and SS Curriculum coordination. Andrew will be taking up a position as VCAL Coordinator at Plenty Valley Christian College.

Christine has faithfully served at MECS for 24 years – undertaking the positions of Principal’s PA, Registrar, Office Manager and Senior School Secretary. God has called her to new horizons and she is looking forward to the next chapter of her life.

Amanda
Community Relations Officer

MECS Notes

Christmas Cooking

Dylan got into the spirit of Christmas by decorating this fantastic Christmas tree cake which he later shared with the class. He still had enough left to take home and show his family.

Sandy
Learning Assistant

Welcome baby Astrid

Congratulations to Beth and Jay Van on the birth of Astrid Annemarie, sister to Starr (Year 4), Wyatt (Prep), Aurora (Kinder) and James. At just 2 days old her enrolment forms are already being filled out for her to come to MECS. I think that is the record!

Heather
Newsletter Editor

Celebrating 40 Years
Primary Christmas Get Together

What a performance! Monday marked the start of our last week of the school year as well as our final GT as a Primary School. The Preps performed a Nativity play and we had a lovely farewell to the amazing Liesje. It was great to see such a wonderful turn out of people, from parents to close friends and colleagues of Liesje.

The Preps demonstrated a unique perspective of the story of Christmas as perceived from Heaven. Joshua Broadhead played God who expressed his love for his children by sending his son Jesus to show his love and to bring all people closer to him. This is something we have often heard and know quite well but is always an important reminder of just how much God loves each of us. The angels cutely responded to each decision relating to God sending his son Jesus with ‘they won’t be expecting that!’ It was great to see the Preps sing, dance and act so confidently. They have come a long way throughout this year.

Rebekah
Prep Teacher
Year 6 Graduation

Last Friday night teachers, staff, friends and family gathered to celebrate the graduation of our Year 6s from Primary School. The students enjoyed a delicious meal in the beautifully decorated theatrette with their teachers and then made their way to the gym where the audience was treated to a very confident, polished and entertaining presentation of the Year 6s speeches. The MECS Primary believe that all of our students are ‘wonderfully created’ and each child was presented an award from their teacher acknowledging one of their gifts that had been a positive contribution to the Senior Primary community this year. The students all looked wonderful in their finery, marking this significant milestone with the formality and celebration it deserves. It was a wonderful night, full of proud moments for teachers and parents (and the students themselves) and lots of fun. Year 6, 2013 has been a wonderful year and we wish the students God’s richest blessings as they embark on their ‘Next Step’.

Melissa
SP Teacher
MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

Things for Sale

Dining table & chairs
This solid Ash dining suite is too big for our new home as we downsize. Table measures 2100 x 1060. There are 8 chairs with padded seats, teal in colour with lovely matching lead-light feature in the back. Excellent used condition. $700 or best offer.

Recumbent exercise bike.
Very little use. As new condition. $150.

Coffee table.
Large, octagonal, glass topped (bevelled edge) coffee table measures 1025 from point to point or 960 across flat sides. 370mm high. $70.

Contact Rosalie. Pickup is from Bittern on the beautiful Mornington Peninsula.

Coldstream Junior Football Club

CJFC promotes team work, mateship, leadership, skill development and confidence. You can become a player in U9-U17 teams for season 2014 with experienced and skilled coaches. Fees: $110 U9’s & U10’s, $120 U11’s to U15’s, $130 U17’s, $10 family discount. Free Club jacket and bag for all new registered players. Free Auskick registration for all players up to 12 years. Helmets are mandatory for U9’s, U10’s & U11’s (supplied by the club). If you would like to join please contact Club President, Shannan.

Seville Netball Club

Seville Netball Club are currently recruiting players of all ages (under 7 - open) for their winter season commencing Sat 15 March. All games are played on Saturdays at Mooroolbark. Training for under 7s, 9s, 11s, 13s & 15s are currently held on Wed afternoons at Seville Netball Courts, Seville.

Registrations close Feb 8. Contact Sue Lennie, or attend registration night at Seville Courts on Wed 29 Jan from 4-5pm.

Admin Jobs

There will be some new admin positions available at MECS beginning Term 1 next year. We will be advertising these over the Christmas break on the Christian Jobs website, so keep an eye out if you’re interested in applying.

NOTICES SENT HOME THIS WEEK

• Year 8 Man Camp 2014 Letter