OUR VISION
Mercy Regional College serves a wide rural community which values growth and diversity in Catholic Education in the Mercy tradition.

OUR MISSION
In the Spirit of the Gospels we commit ourselves to the core values of community, inclusiveness, learning, care, justice and mercy, excellence and achievement.

OUR GOALS
Community
Through the Mercy tradition we promote the uniqueness of the community and its heritage.

CONGRATULATIONS
Each week our Year 10 students participate in the Community Visiting Program which is part of the Year 10 Religious Education course. The program has proven to be a very successful component of Year 10 RE. This week Mrs Margaret Leahy received the following correspondence from Sylvia Brown at Merindah Lodge congratulating our Year 10 students.

Dear Margaret,

Again and again I am impressed with the students that visit Merindah Lodge. Yet again yesterday the day’s session – ‘Merindalympics’, would not have been possible without the input of your students. They were greeted at the door with a run down of the proceedings and a brief of ‘go with the flow’.

I am continually pleasantly surprised with the abundance of grace, dignity and competence of ALL your students demonstrate. What ever you and your colleagues are doing, it is working well!

Thank you on behalf of myself and certainly the residents who enjoy the interaction with your students and look forward to their visits.

Regards

Sylvia Brown

PREPARING OUR YEAR 12 STUDENTS
There are only seven weeks of Year 12 classes left and the VCE exams commence at the end of October. During the term I have witnessed extra classes being held after school, during the mid-term break, on weekends and at lunchtimes, in most subject areas.

The recent Year 12 progress reports contained many offers, by teachers, of extra individual help for any student who required it. At the end of this term a trial English exam is being held on Wednesday, 17th September, for all students and then trial Maths Methods and Further Maths exam are being held in the first week of term 4. In between all other subjects will be vying for time for their practice exams. Many teachers are also setting aside aside time during the September holidays for extra classes and revision. All in all, our Year 12 students are very fortunate to have a dedicated team of VCE teachers willing to assist them in any way possible to be well prepared for the forthcoming exams.

In return I hope that our students will:

- Make the most of the extra classes being offered
- Attend all scheduled practice exams
- Ask their teachers for assistance
- Commence an extensive study and revision program (NOW!!)
- Review their commitments outside of school to ensure that study in NOW the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY
- Make some sensible choices in terms of social activities, especially on weekends

To do all of the above our students will require the support, guidance and wisdom of parents. Now is the time for both parents and students to agree to some guidelines for the coming weeks.

I look forward to celebrating the success of our students in early December.
**Frayne Speech Festival**

This Friday, 18 students will travel to Warrnambool to participate in the Annual Frayne Speech Festival. The College will have teams representing us in Debating, Public Speaking and Voice Choir. This festival was established a number of years ago to promote public speaking amongst secondary schools in the Mercy tradition. We wish our teams well and I also take this opportunity to thank Ms Claire Younis and Mrs Margaret Leahy for their preparation of our public speakers.

**Uniform**

The College has decided that from 1st November 2008 it will operate its own Uniform Shop. The Uniform Shop will stock all the school uniform items including the new school shirt for boys and the new school blouse for girls.

The Uniform Shop will operate on a weekly basis, with extended trading hours at the beginning of each school year, to coincide with the uniform changes from summer to winter and vice-versa and at the Year 7 Orientation Day.

The uniform shop will be located at the McAuley Campus; however orders will be delivered to the O’Keeffe Campus. Our current suppliers have been notified of this change and the College will purchase any stock not sold at the end of October. Detailed trading hours will be released at a later date.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Reicha’s (Terang and Cobden) and Laffs (Camperdown) for the service they have provided to the College [in supplying the uniform] over many years.

The new school shirt for boys and blouse for girls will be available from November 1st and a phase-out period of 18 months will exist for the current green shirts.

**Victorian State Government Petition for Fairer Funding For Catholic Schools**

Today you are being asked to lend your support to improve the educational opportunities for children who attend Catholic schools.

This is not about less for government schools and more for Catholic schools; this is about a fairer allocation of funding for our Catholic schools and families who choose a Catholic education for their children.

**The Issues:**

- The Victorian Government has the dubious honor of providing the lowest level of funding per student attending Catholic schools of all Australian States. Currently funding is 15.1% of the total cost of educating a child in a Catholic school.

- Students with disabilities attending Victorian Catholic schools are currently discriminated against receiving only 1/3 of the funding that is allocated to similar students attending government schools.

**The Solutions:**

- Increase funding to 25% of the cost of providing education and index this to keep pace with the real cost increases.

- Remove the discrimination and provide equal funding for children with disabilities in Catholic schools and government schools.

By signing this petition and by asking friends or family who support improved funding for Catholic schools to also sign, you will be helping to send a clear message to the State Government of Victoria that our children deserve a fairer deal.

A copy of the petition is located at the front reception of both campuses. Thank you for your continuing support in this important campaign to improve the level of government funding of Catholic Education.

**Car Raffle**

Monday 1st September marked the beginning of the 34th year of the Mercy Regional College Car Raffle. The car raffle is certainly now the most important fund raising effort of our PTFA and particularly important this year with our building redevelopment program about to commence at the O’Keeffe Campus. Raffle books and rosters for selling tickets will be distributed next week.

This year’s prizes are as follows:

1st Prize: 2008 CL Ford Focus Sedan valued at $26,880 including on road costs (Auto, prestige paint, air conditioning, power steering, cruise control CD player, and ABS) supplied courtesy of **Manifold Motors**

2nd Prize: Travel Voucher valued at $1000 supplied courtesy of **Harvey World Travel, Camperdown**

3rd Prize: Electrical Goods Voucher valued at $1000 supplied courtesy of **Camperdown Retravision**

4th Prize: Jewellery Voucher valued at $200 supplied courtesy of **Showcase Jewellers, Camperdown and Colac**

5th Prize: Dinner Voucher valued at $100 supplied courtesy of **Madden’s Bar & Bistro, Camperdown**

This year we have again selected a more fuel efficient car which will ensure the running costs for the eventual winner will be more economical.

The College is indeed grateful to our abovementioned suppliers of raffle prizes for their generosity. Where possible, it would certainly be appreciated if our school community could support these businesses.

I look forward to a very successful car raffle result, which can be easily achieved if **ALL** families work together to sell their book of raffle tickets and assist with the selling roster.
**Reflection**

Marriage is not just for the sake of the couple, nor even just for them and their children. Of course, those relationships are central. But the quality, honesty and depth of those relationships speak volumes to others as well. The love within a marriage and a family, with all its twists and turns, says a great deal to the world about the way God loves the human family. The strength of a loving family can sometimes be seen in the way the members squabble with each other: sooner or later, the tension evaporates. It’s a pity that the nations of the world can’t have their arguments and get over them in the same way. At best, human love is made possible by God’s love. It also reflects that love to others. (Michael McGirr - Finding God’s Traces)

**Along the Track**

I have attached to this newsletter, for your interest, on page 10, a reflection title “The Meaning of My Life” written by Jim Quilinan from the Diocesan Catholic Education Office in Warragul. I hope you enjoy this reading.

**HCSN Brochure**

Attached to this newsletter is the new Hampden Catholic Schools Network Brochure. The brochure will promote Prep to Year 12 Catholic Education in the Hampden Region. Information about each of the schools, St Patrick’s School, Camperdown, St Thomas’ School, Terang, St Colman’s School, Mortlake and Mercy Regional College is presented for parents considering Catholic Education for their child. Please take a few minutes to have a read of the information and pass it on to anyone you know who is considering Catholic Education.

**News from East Timor**

Helen Kenna has been able to correspond with us at Mercy on a number of occasions. Helen’s latest correspondence provides for us an insight into life in East Timor, its history and the challenges that lie ahead. I strongly recommend that you take a few minutes to read the following as Helen reaches the half-way mark of her time in East Timor.

Greetings from Ainaro half way through our stay here! -
Bron, Jenny and I had trouble staying awake during 4 p.m. Mass this afternoon because we had a 4 hour walk to Jakarta 2 this morning. At least it was on a road and not ‘cross-country’ like most of the others!

**Jakarta 2**

The area known as ‘Jakarta 2’ by the Ainaro locals is about 5-6 kms out of town to the south. It is a very narrow stretch of road which forms the precipice of a hill- with sheer drops down both sides. All traffic – especially local, slows to a low pace at this point - but not because of the danger- it is out of respect. Those in the know bow their heads and bless themselves.

During the years of Indonesian occupation, countless locals of the Ainaro district would be ‘taken’ by Indonesian military - supposedly to Jakarta for interrogation. They would never be heard of again. Apparently most of this activity occurred in and around 1983. Locals could expect a truck load of soldiers to pull up outside their home and remove all members of the family for ‘interrogation’ They took to leaving the lights on and all but one member of the family escaping to the hills after dark- in so doing, sacrificing one member to the Indonesians!

Those living closest to the area, now referred to as ‘Jakarta 2,’ were long since suspicious that something was not right in that area- the local dogs spent much time down in the steep valley. It was only when they started to surface with what was obviously human remains, that it was realised that the ‘missing’ relatives were, in fact, being tortured in the vicinity and their bodies disposed of at the area now dubbed, ‘Jakarta 2’.

An impressive memorial now stands beside the road- symbolically a very large crucifix- somehow signifying the sacrifice made by generations of families.

**Cassa**

An hour or so past ‘Jakarta 2’ is the town of Cassa. It boasts mainly houses of the traditional –uma lulic, style- thatched roofs, very elaborate timber framework and latticing to support the roof, space underneath for the cool air to flow upwards [and to house the animals].

They look so idyllic until you look beyond the romance of it all and watch the women and children walking along the road carrying containers, the weight of which make their knees buckle. This whole area has no running water- many of them have to walk kms to access the spring to meet their most basic needs.

Apparently, in similar towns in the Ainaro district, Red Cross has tapped into the springs and is running lines into these villages. Plans are to eventually provide individual plumbing for those along the roads. Don’t we take our ‘basics’ for granted?

But things are happening! Our friend, Valentine, took Jenny and I on this drive and we drove along the dry river bed to inspect the extensive irrigation system that he has recently completed on contract from the government. This water has allowed otherwise waste land to be turned into rice paddies and will provide a livelihood for a great number of local families. The system runs for several kilometers along the river.
Authentic statistics!
Having spent 5 weeks in Timor Leste I now have pictures and faces and friends in my mind to put authenticity to the UNICEF statistics [2006]:

- 45% of the population is under 30
- 75% of the over 30s have never been to school
- 10% of children die before the age of 5
- 50% of the population of Dili is unemployed [90% in Ainaro]
- Life expectancy in Timor Leste is 55 years
- TL has the highest fertility rate in the world

The power of a smile.
For all their hardships the Timorese are a people who smile readily, widely and generously. Having said this, they are obviously not used to this from their teachers! Education here is old-fashioned rote style. The students are spoon-fed by un-trained teachers who have no mentoring in learning/teaching styles let alone any notion of forming a relationship with their students. Yet both the adults in our classes and those just out of school respond so well to our attempts to laugh, to utilise peer-support, to encourage them to work in groups and to establish a non-threatening working environment.

Making katupu with Faviao and Justina
Faviao and Justina and their family have become friends and each time we are with him in a relaxed environment he reveals a little more of his story.

While helping Justina on Sunday he mentioned that he has a relative, a politician- Dr. Jacob Xavier, who is an uncle. When I asked him why he doesn’t carry the same surname as his father’s brother he lifted up his shirt to reveal a large knife wound in his side- and told us that he had been tortured by the Indonesians until he agreed to ‘drop’ the ‘Xavier’ from his name! The scar on his face was caused for the same reason, when he initially refused after being inflicted with the wound in the side!

I can’t help wondering just how many of these beautiful people bear such physical scars to go with the numerous and repeated instances of emotional trauma.

Coming Events

TERM 3
Week 6
Monday 18th August
- Mid Term Break (no classes)
- Outdoor Education Snow Camp commences
- Science Week commences

Wednesday 20th August
- Yr 7 2009 Enrolment Interviews 1:30pm – 5:30pm

Thursday 21st August
- Outdoor Education Snow Camp concludes

Friday 22nd August
- Frayne Speech Festival – Warrnambool
- Science Week concludes

Week 7
Wednesday 27th August
- Central Australia Trip meeting – 7.30pm McAuley Campus

Week 8
Monday 1st September
- PTFA Meeting – 7.30pm O’Keeffe Campus

Week 10
Wednesday 17th September
- Year 12 Trial English Exam

Friday 19th September
- Term 3 concludes at 2.10pm

School Holidays
Monday 22nd September
- Central Australia Trip commences
Wednesday 1st October
- Central Australia Trip concludes

TERM 4
Week 1
Monday 6th October
- Term 4 commences for all students

Reminder
Central Australia Tour Information Evening
Will be held on Wednesday 27th August at 7.30pm in the MPA. Students who are going to Central Australia are encouraged to attend this meeting along with their parents. Also, anyone who has not brought back their Dietary Requirements Form, please do so before next Wednesday.
Mercy Awards

VCE (Yr 11 & 12) Mercy Award

Martin Sargeant for his co-operation with his homeroom teacher and other staff members.

Middle School (Yr 9 & 10) Mercy Award

Kylie Rhode for her excellent commitment and involvement in the community visiting program at Merindah Lodge.

Junior School (Yr 7 & 8) Mercy Award

Jarrod Rethus for his willingness to help others and commitment to school life.

Wellbeing Report

Kerin Glennen

Benefits of Physical activity for Young People:
It is important not to underestimate the wide ranging benefits of physical activity to a young person’s wellbeing. Regular physical activity provides young people with substantial physical, mental and social health benefits. Regular physical activity helps children and young people to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, control body weight, reduce fat and develop efficient function of the heart and lungs. It facilitates developing the skills of movement and can help prevent and control the feelings of anxiety and depression.

Just being involved in physical activity, gives young people opportunities for natural self expression, self confidence, relief of tension, achievement, social interaction and integration: as well as learning the spirit of solidarity and fair play. These positive effects also help counteract the risks and harm caused by the demanding, competitive and stressful way of life that is common in young people’s lives today. Involvement in properly guided physical activity and sports can also foster the adoption of other healthy behaviour, including the avoidance of tobacco and alcohol, as well as the adoption of a healthy diet and adequate rest.

Some studies show that among adolescents, the more often they participate in physical activity, the less likely they are to use tobacco. It has been found that adolescents who are more physically active showed higher academic performance. Team games promote positive social integration and facilitate the development of social skills in young people.

Patterns of physical activity acquired during childhood and adolescence are more likely to be maintained throughout the life span, thus providing the basis for active and healthy life.

Participation in games and other physical activities, both in school and after school is essential for the healthy development of every young person. Access to appropriate spaces, opportunities and good examples from parents, friends and teachers are all part of ensuring that young people get the best start for a healthy body and mind.

Transition Day at McAuley

Michael Clements

Our third Transition Day for 2008 was held at the McAuley Campus, in Camperdown. The aim of the day was to familiarise the grade six students with their new surroundings and to give them an idea on what it will be like at the McAuley Campus next year. Students started the day with a treasure hunt around the school in order to develop an idea on the different areas of the school. The rest of the day was broken into three activities; Science, Woodwork and Physical Education. It was pleasing to see our young guests interact with the bigger, more senior, students confidently and positively during recesses and lunchtime.

Thanks again to the students from St Thomas’, St Colman’s and St Patrick’s for their energy and enthusiasm on the day.

CAMPERDOWN AMATEUR BASKETBALL SEASON 2008/09

MIDGET / JUNIOR ENROLMENT

Name
Date of Birth
Address
Phone No.
Please leave at Davis’ Milkbar
Seniors please enter team name, players, colours,grade preferred and a contact phone number
Enquiries to Wayne 55932862 Denise 55951568
Entry closes 20/09/08
The students of MRC were lucky enough to be visited by Simon Higgins, an author and part Samurai. The day consisted of two parts, the boys’ class and the girls’ class. The boys’ class was a lot of fun. Simon taught as about creative writing and how to write a piece of work using ten simple steps.

1. Weather
2. Sound
3. Item
4. Check on the weather
5. Item of clothing
6. Check on the sound
7. Check on the item and a new feeling
8. Check item of clothing
9. Other person’s feeling
10. Speech

After we wrote our stories, he showed off his skills with a samurai sword and told us that he spent much of his youth in various martial arts clubs in South Australia, studying Shotokan Karate and Kodakan Judo as well as Kendo and Iaido (both traditional sword arts) under Japanese instruction. He told us about his life as a police officer in the South Australian Police Department, he served in several different postings over almost nine years, including two-and-a-half years spent as a prosecutor. During his career, he rose to the rank of Senior Constable and earned two commendations; one for initiative in the field, and one for quality of prosecution service. Leaving the police force, he became a licensed private investigator, with cases ranging from murders to alleged UFO incidents. He said he returned to his first love, writing and found that his earlier occupations provided inspiration. When that was over he amused us by imitating voices including Yoda, Bugs Bunny and Darth Vader. All in all a fascinating day.

MRC Chess team
Jared Lynn

The past month has seen the College’s chess team resurrected and in competition again for the first time since 2007. I was fortunate enough to land the plum position of organising and choosing a team from the large number of students who put their names forward to compete. My intentions were to build a team of younger, less-experienced (but hopefully highly motivated players) who would supplement the older students who had represented the College on previous occasions.

On the 29th of July a team of 20 students competed in the Chess Victoria Zonal tournament. Held at Emmanuel College in Warrnambool. Mercy was up against very experienced players from both Emmanuel and Warrnambool College. From the first round it was clear that many of our players were going to have their skills sorely tested. By the end of the day we had two players who had done well to win four games (out of seven). These were James Devlin (9th place) and Sam Burtonwood (10th place). The remainder of the team had to be content with the experience gained from the occasion.

The most recent event attended by the team was the Catholic Secondary Schools Chess championship, held at Loreto College in Ballarat. With a streamlined team of eight players it was going to be interesting to see how they would be able to apply the lessons learnt in the previous competition. There were teams from seven schools in the diocese, including some old friends from Emmanuel. However, after a couple of rounds it was clear that this was a very different Mercy team. Sitting in equal second position meant that our players would be up against increasingly high-quality players. As the day unfolded it was the teams from Warrnambool and Ararat (Marian College) who were leading the competition. In the end, the Mercy team had to settle for 5th place, only a single win behind 3rd placed Damascus College.

Once again, James Devlin proved that he has what it takes to compete at a very high level in chess. His 7th place saw him only half a win away from the tie for a 3rd place medal. Thomas Skene, a newcomer to the team, was also a strong competitor throughout the day, finishing equal 13th. Other players who did well to finish on four wins were Damien Wynd and Connor Saunders. With 3.5 wins on the day, Samantha Alexander was our highest placed female player.

This is a team composed mostly of year nine students so it will be interesting to see how they can improve over the coming years. As an attempt to build skill levels there will be regular meetings of the team. These will be held on Tuesday lunchtime in the library and are open to any interested students. The emphasis will be on practise games as well as some occasional tutoring.
Year 10 Boys Retreat  
Report by: Sam Carlin and George McMeel

Year 10 boys retreat was a good experience for all participants. During the retreat we listened to several guest speakers, took part in planned activities, did some journal writing and enjoyed each others company.

Our first speaker was paramedic, John Davis, who spoke to us regarding risk taking and the dangers of underage use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. He also spoke about being aware of who you share the roads with. He showed us slides about all the accidents he had attended and told us the stories that accompanied them. John stayed and shared morning tea with us.

Following some free time, kicking the footy, Father Trevor spent time with us. Father Trevor spoke to us about fears and hardships that we will face in our lives. We then went into smaller groups and discussed some of the issues that were brought up. Following the group discussion we all came together and shared in a Mass. In the evening, we had tea and Mr. Glennen ran a session about the expectations placed on boys / young men in our society.

The next day saw Damien, a male nurse, ex VFL footballer with Richmond and father, speak with us about the affects of alcohol on young people. Damien is also president of a country football club and he explained what his club is doing regarding informing the junior members of the dangers of underage drinking. Damien spoke of his own experiences with football culture. He also shared with us his story of becoming a male nurse.

Following this and after a short break Mr. Walsh spoke with us regarding his story and the effect of his dad’s illness on him. He spoke about the relationship that boys have with their fathers and how important that bond is. He then told of his own story about growing up and the decisions that he made in his life and the consequences of these in his life.

As a group, we then sent postcards home to our families and completed some of our journal-writing activity.

We would like to thank Mr. Horan and Mr. Castles for preparing and supervising our PE activities, Annette for the wonderful meals prepared for all, Mr. Walsh for his Trivial Pursuit and reflection session and Mr. Glennen for looking after our mobiles and the reflection session.

It was great to get away with the "boys" and be given the chance to talk about things and have so many guest speakers work with us. Also, thank you to the Year 10 boys who assisted with the planning, Eamon, Andrew, Sam and George.

English Report

Newspaper Project: Camperdown Chronicle  
By: Simone Fleming

8600 papers a week is a fair effort for the independent newspaper company of the Camperdown Chronicle. The Camperdown Chronicle publishes 5 different papers a week, including the Camperdown Chronicle, Cobden Times, Mortlake Dispatch, Terang Express, and the Western Plains Advertiser. They have 20 workers who work from Monday to Thursday and Friday being a non-production day.

Being in a small town is sometimes difficult for the journalist to find stories to write about, with the journalist sometimes having to ring people to encourage stories from them. Sometimes it takes just a simple drive down and around the streets of the local towns to discover something to write about. Some journalists can write up to 1000 stories a year! When a journalist is writing a story, or interviewing somebody, they have to remember the 6 main questions of: Which? Who? What? When? Where? How? and Why? Without these base questions the story has no foundation.

The Camperdown Chronicle is a very environmentally friendly business, because all of their paper is 100% recycled! They use 1 roll of paper, which weighs around 480kg and could be rolled from Camperdown to Cobden! Any scraps, or leftover paper, is sent away to be recycled and reused.

The business of the Camperdown Chronicle relies on advertisements to pay for all of the cost of machinery, paper, other equipment, wages etc. used in the business.

Once the papers have been printed off it’s an early morning start for the deliverers as they are expected to deliver the papers to the stores at 4.30am!

We thank the Camperdown Chronicle for showing us, the students of Yr 8, around and sharing many facts and information about the newspaper and how it has developed over the years. It was very enjoyable!
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 w/e 5/9</td>
<td>RE English Maths PE Drama Home Eco Science</td>
<td>Outcome 3 - Compare Jewish / Christian / Aboriginal Religions Short Story Geometry Test Theory Assessment Task Workbook Collection Folio Poster – Chemical Reactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 w/e 5/9</td>
<td>Maths [9N] Humanities PE</td>
<td>Statistics Chapter Test Analysis Task Theory Assessment Task</td>
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<td>7 w/e 29/8</td>
<td>Maths [General] Maths [Methods] Business Management Art / Photography</td>
<td>Simultaneous Signs Test Simultaneous Equations Test Outcome 1 Shoot 2 – Photo Manipulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 w/e 5/9</td>
<td>English PE Outdoor Education Computer Applications</td>
<td>Text Response Essay Practical Skill Evaluation Learning Activity 2.17 Database Test 1</td>
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<td>7 w/e 29/8</td>
<td>RE Maths [General] Studio Art Physics</td>
<td>Outcome 2 (A) – Religious Rituals Networks Test Journal Test</td>
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<td>8 w/e 5/9</td>
<td>Biology [Unit 2] PE [Unit 2]</td>
<td>Test Information Poster</td>
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<td>7 w/e 29/8</td>
<td>Legal Studies H &amp; HD</td>
<td>Guest Speaker – Barrister Bill Gillies SAC 1</td>
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<td>8 w/e 5/9</td>
<td>Maths [Further] Legal Studies Physics</td>
<td>Networks SAC SAC (2B) Civil Procedure Test</td>
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Legend:  w/e [Week Ending]

* Please note that changes may occur and students will be notified by subject teacher of any changes.
CAREERS REPORT

DOXA CADETSHIPS
For Year 12's there is information on Doxa Cadetships for those looking at social sciences, applied sciences, law, arts, commerce, economics business, psychology etc worth a lot of money and a job. Please see Ms Davies for more information.

A Doxa cadet receives:
- Financial support - $6,000 per year
- Assistance with purchasing university textbooks and materials
- Quality work experience with their sponsor company
- Personal and professional development program

To be eligible for a Doxa Cadetship, applicants must:
- Be a current Year 12 student who will commence university studies in the following year
- Hold Australian citizenship
- Be socially and financially disadvantaged and need support to undertake University studies.

Degree Programs most suited to a cadetship are: Bachelor of Commerce/Information Systems; Business (Tourism Management; Arts (Major in Criminology); Engineering/Commerce; Commerce/Arts; Business/Arts; Accounting/Banking & Finance; Information Technology, Commerce/Law, Communication (Journalism); Business (HRM & Marketing); Business and Commerce; Commerce; Engineering (Civil) / Management; Engineering (Civil); Architectural Studies; Economics & Finance.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

OPEN DAYS
Sunday 24th August – Burnley Campus – 12pm – 4pm
Sunday 31st August – Dookie Campus – 10am – 2pm
Please check out our Visions Open Day preview video at: http://visions.unimelb.edu.au/episode/46

New Courses at University of Melbourne for 2009
Bachelor of Environments Bachelor of Music

NEW PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE: “A guide to choosing VCE subjects for students in Year 10 and 11
To download or order these publications plus more please visit:

OPEN DAY AT UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT
Brochures about the Open Day at University of Ballarat for Sunday 31st of August are available outside Mrs Pope’s office. Please take one if you are considering going.

ACCESS MELBOURNE SPECIAL ENTRY AND SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES
Please see Ms Davies for information on Special Entry and Access schemes for Melbourne University. It will also come up under SEAS and scholarships. Be proactive and apply for these.

DEFENCE FORCE RECRUITING
The Defence Force Recruiting team will be at MRC on 21st August - 2:00 to 2:45. Please give interested names or classes to Ms Davies.

TERTIARY RESIDENCES FOR 2009
St Mary's has information and phone numbers for those looking at Universities in Melbourne Please see Ms Davies

LA TROBE GUARANTEED ENTRY SCHEME
Please see Mrs Pope for information on the LaTrobe Guaranteed Entry scheme for any Year 12 looking to go to LaTrobe next year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAREERS, DATES OR INFORMATION SESSIONS PLEASE SEE MRS POPE.
Along the track

The Meaning of my Life

Summer holidays (a distant memory now) can provide a much needed and welcome chance to catch up on reading – the daily papers are usually full of articles and bits and pieces to help us pass the holiday hours. Sometimes something catches the eye of the imagination or strikes a chord in the memory or even jolts us out of our summer slumber. One such article gave me such a jolt – it contained interviews with four very different people exploring the experiences that shaped their lives and what drives them when the road ahead grows dark.

Interviewees were asked questions such as who inspired them, who they most admired, a turning point in their lives, the best advice ever received and so on.

One respondent, a young sportsperson, was inspired by ‘myself more than anything. I know what I want to achieve and what I could achieve and that pushes me’.

The turning point in her life to date was Realising that I deserve to win. The worst advice given to her was after the loss of a game – ‘Cheer up, it’s not that bad’!

Deep down each of us wants to be special in some way or another – to make our mark. There’s nothing wrong with that. We are not just a cog in an evolutionary machine, we are not just another one of the six billion people who inhabit our earth at any one time. We are not here by accident. We know we are more than that. Our faith tells us, for example, that each one of us is made in the image and likeness of God, that each of us in some way images God to others.

Being successful at something is important but over inflated egos can cause significant problems. Identifying so strongly with winning or with the trappings that come with achieving some kind of fame can be quite deceptive. It is sad to see many of our young sports men and women ‘crash’ when the hard times come or when life does not keep delivering wins, fame and prosperity. If our ego is only about winning, only about self promotion, we are in for a big fall. Theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote that, at a certain time in your life, you realise that you have only two choices: to succeed before something greater than yourself or begin to self-destruct. That may sound somewhat harsh but there is a lot of truth in it.

Very early on in the public life of Jesus, immediately after his baptism where he was told that he was God’s chosen one, God’s beloved son, the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. The Judean wilderness is a harsh and lonely place. It is very, very hot during the day and cold and lonely in the nights. It was here that Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights – not only fasting from food but from companionship, from daily comforts and the pleasures of life with others. Afterwards “he was hungry” – not just for food – perhaps ‘hungry’ might be better translated as ‘vulnerable’. And so he is tempted three times, firstly with the offer of satisfying the body (these stones will become bread), twice with fame and power.

Being important to oneself, feeling that my life has a purpose, knowing that what I do is special in some way is not dependent on fame and fortune – it is not dependent on how much we earn or how many possessions we have or how many people know what we do. Much of Jesus’ message is about how special ‘the poor’ are in the eyes of God, how the first shall be last and the last shall be first.

There are times when we can feel empty, that my life at this time appears to have no purpose, that what I am doing is not so special, not really needed. But I can feel empty and still be imaging God. Being blessed and special is not dependent upon how full or empty my life is at a given moment – after all, Jesus felt depressed and lonely and afraid more than once occasion. Our being special is not dependent on having a VIP status, or on having any special privileges that set us apart from others.

Eric Clapton’s autobiography provided a real contrast in summer reading. It is the story of the love of creating music by the best blues guitar player in the world. It is also the story of his struggle with his obsessions, addictions, ego, and the drink. At one stage, after a month of treatment to help him overcome his addiction, and a month of hoping that something would change in him without having to do anything much about it, a sense of despair overcame him.

At that moment, almost of their own accord, my legs gave way and I fell to my knees. In the privacy of my room, I begged for help. I had no idea who I thought I was talking to, I just knew that I had come to the end of my tether. I had nothing left to fight with. Then I remembered what I had heard about surrender, something I thought I could never do, my pride just wouldn’t allow it, but I knew that on my own I wasn’t going to make it, so I asked for help, and getting down on my knees, I surrendered.

Within a few days I realized that something had happened for me. An atheist would probably say it was just a change of attitude, and to a certain extent that’s true, but there was much more to it than that. I had found a place to turn to, a place I’d always known was there but never really wanted, or needed, to believe in. From that day until this, I have never failed to pray in the morning, on my knees, asking for help, and at night to express my gratitude for my life and, most of all, for my sobriety. I choose to kneel because I feel I need to humble myself when I pray and with my ego, this is the most I can do.

In some way, in some form, my God was always there, but now I have learned to talk to him.

Clapton’s final message contrasts strongly with some of those interviewed in the summer magazine –

You are never more of a mature adult than when you get down on your knees and bend humbly before something greater than yourself.


Regards
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