From The Principal

Last weekend my local parish priest, Fr Kevin Dillon, wrote an interesting and thought-provoking piece about entertainment on television. It is especially timely given recent media reports of increased violence in the community, particularly among young men. I’d like to paraphrase some of what he wrote in the hope that it will promote discussion in your family.

Much of reality television involves bullying behaviour and often emphasises exclusion as a key component of the entertainment, with nastiness and rudeness often used in an attempt to garner interest in these shows. We can probably all remember programs where comments on the weight, appearance and dress sense of participants featured. Some shows tend to emphasise profanity, graphic depiction of brutal crime and are often accompanied by story lines bereft of moral responsibility.

This leads to the question of whether such entertainment is simply reflecting our culture or, indeed, shaping and directing it. The phenomenon of desensitisation to violence is extensively documented. In simple terms, it means that if you are exposed to violence, real or on television, you are less disturbed and more accepting of it. Perhaps the same is true of these other phenomena and our entertainment is thus shaping and directing behaviour.

The response to people who complain about the content of television shows is “If you don’t like it just turn it off”. To some, this is a common sense approach; to others, dismissive arrogance. The recent demise of some high profile television entertainers has perhaps indicated that those who complain about offensive content on television may be heard more now than in the past and perhaps with this will come a change in television content, bringing with it a reduction in the exposure of young men to violence and therefore a safer society.

Last Thursday I had the privilege of attending the production of “The Sound of Music”, this year produced by St Columba’s and involving their girls alongside boys from St Bernard’s. The show was brilliant and the talents of the young people involved quite extraordinary. To be able to bring joy to others by applying such talent is a wonderful capacity.

There has been a deliberate policy of promoting the performing arts and music at the College over the last few years. These disciplines are a vitally important part of providing a holistic and challenging educational environment for boys. Boys are often less comfortable being challenged to perform in artistic than sporting endeavours but it is essential that we continue to challenge them in this way.

The music program has expanded in recent years and now boasts high quality instrumental and choral groups involving about 250 boys across all year levels. The program itself is ably supported by an active group of parents known as the “SBC Friends of Music”. This group is currently raising funds to purchase a baby grand piano for the Auditorium through the “Keys to Success Program” and are seeking sponsorship of each piano key to the tune of $150 per key. I commend them on this initiative and encourage your support of it. It will be wonderful for our pianists to have the opportunity to perform with all my companions whilst walking increased dramatically day by day as we all needed to help each other out at various stages along the track. At one point we decided to play a game of touch rugby in the rain. That, I think, was the best fun I have ever had, even though the porters thrashed us. It will be good to look back at this experience with all my friends and share all the stories.

I can only imagine what it was like in 1942 for the Aussie diggers on the Kokoda track. My grandfather, Harold Meade, was amongst these men who fought so bravely to defend Australia. Our tour guide Pam Christie said that the weather conditions on our crossing were the worst she had experienced in her 40 crossings, but I can’t help but think we did not have to contend with frightening Japanese soldiers shooting at us in the jungle. We owe a great debt of gratitude to those brave Australians.

The trip made me really appreciate all the simple things in life that I, and many another people around me, could easily take for granted. A clean pair of dry clothes to put on in the morning, fresh water to drink instead of putting purification drops in river water, these are things we don’t think twice about but not everyone is as fortunate. Words can’t even describe the harsh and rough lifestyle the PNG people endure on a daily basis, but I guess that is all they know. The Kokoda experience really changed me and made me see the world in a different light. We are lucky here in Australia.

Reflection

Year 11’s Michael Trainor’s experiences of Kokoda 2009

Travelling to PNG was a real eye opening experience, seeing the vast difference in culture and lifestyles of the Papua New Guinean people. They are really so poor by comparison with us, constantly dreaming of having something more. Travelling to the only school in PNG that has a broadband internet connection, and seeing the different ways in which they are taught was extremely enlightening, with those students not as academically strong as others learning how to farm and tend crops in their field.

We flew into Kokoda with great expectation. The first day on the track hit me hard, particularly late in the day. No training could possibly prepare me for what was to come. The heat, the heavy pack, the humidity and the terrain took its toll early on in the trek as I suffered from heat stroke, but I managed to recover later in the evening, ready to face the challenges ahead.

The mateship formed with all my companions whilst walking increased dramatically day by day as we all needed to help each other out at various stages along the track. At one point we decided to play a game of touch rugby in the rain. That, I think, was the best fun I have ever had, even though the porters thrashed us. It will be good to look back at this experience with all my friends and share all the stories.

Parent & Board News

Ladies and Friends Auxiliary

The ‘Mothers of Old Boys’ Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 2009 in The Pavilion commencing with pre lunch sherries at 11.30am.

General News

IMPORTANT NOTICES

A disturbing trend has come to the attention of Year Level Coordinators in Years 10 and 11 with regards to the frequency with which notes are being received from parents excusing their sons from compulsory sport (Year 10 on Tuesdays, Year 11 on Wednesdays). Many are legitimate appointments though it increasingly feels as
though some parents are using this time to book their sons into medical appointments. Each school day for all students in Years 10 and 11 runs until 2:55pm so if a student is injured or cannot participate in sport, a note from home must be supplied and the student must stay at school until this time. In the extraordinary event that a medical appointment is made on any school day during school hours, the student must provide a medical certificate from their doctor for their absence. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Mr Shaun Lancashire, Year 11 Co-ordinator

A reminder for all families that Friday August 21 is a student free day.

Subject Selection
All students who are interested in Agere in Year 10, 2010 should, along with their parents, attend the Agere information night on Monday August 17 at 7:30pm in the Agere rooms.

All students in Years 9-11 have now attended information sessions for Subject Selection, 2010 and should be working on gathering information in order to choose their subjects. All subject selection must be completed by Friday August 28 at 3:30pm and further details regarding this and other subject selection information can be found on the school website. Any student wishing to accelerate should submit their Acceleration form before Tuesday August 25.

Caroline Sheehan, Director of Learning

Premier's Awards Successes
On Tuesday July 21, two students from the class of 2008 received Premier’s Awards at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. David Ireland received the Premier's Award for Physical Education and Andrew Hruszowski received the Premier’s Award for Studio Art. This latest honour follows their outstanding VCE results, both being placed in the top 5 VCE scores at St. Bernard’s, with David the dux for 2008. Both boys scored a maximum score of 50 in their respective subjects and were amongst the top five students statewide in their subject to receive the Premier’s Award. On the day, David and Andrew were warmly congratulated by their teachers, Hayden Kennedy and Eddie Stejkovich (above), their proud parents as well as Geoff Caulfield, VCE Coordinator.

Class Clowns
Congratulations to Year 12 students Michael White and Ray Lawrence who have been selected to perform their self-scripted theatrical comedy piece, Limbo, at the upcoming National Class Clowns Grand Finals.

The hotly contested competition is being staged for an audience on September 15, 1-2.30pm, Beckett Theatre, The Malthouse.

For grabs is the Grand Prize of $1,000 to the school, a $1,000 worth of “good comedy stuff” for the individual performers and life long glory!

Tickets for the event will go on sale soon so please stay tuned for details. The event will also be re-mounted in the Town Hall next April as part of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

Congratulations!!
It has just been announced that Year 7’s James Portelli (left) has been selected to play State Hockey for the Victorian Under 13 team that will compete nationally in Coffs Harbour in October 2009. Well done James!

Mr Gerard Brown

MUSIC NEWS
The Keys to Success Project
Old Collegians and current families at the college would have received the ‘Keys to Success’ project brochure with their latest edition of ‘The Strand’. All who are, and have been associated with, the College are welcome to sponsor funds towards this project, which will culminate in the purchase of a baby grand piano for the College Auditorium. We seek sponsorship of $150 per key for the piano (88 keys) and those who contribute will be recognised on a plaque commemorating the funding & purchase of the piano. The Friends of Music Committee at the College look forward to further contributions as the brochure is circulated.

Spring Concert
A significant change to previous years, the SBC Spring Concert will be held in the Last week of Term 3, Tuesday September 15 at 7:30pm in the College Auditorium. All the College Bands and Ensembles are gearing-up for this important showcase so we encourage you to get along. Tickets will be sold at the door at a cost of only $5 per individual and $15 per family.

Friends of Music
A reminder that the Friends of Music will be meeting for Term 3 on Tuesday August 25 in the music department 302 at 7:30pm. Planning for both 2010 music projects and the commemorative plaque for the piano purchase will be high on the agenda. All are welcome to attend and contribute ideas for the future direction of our highly regarded music program.

Carmelo Puglisi, Director of Music

Snow Sports Team win 7 Medals at Mt. Hotham
Congratulations to all the boys who competed in the Victorian Interschool Grand Prix Event held at Mt. Hotham recently, especially the following boys who achieved a podium finish:
- Div. 1 Skier X – Kieran Benton (gold); Thomas Lynch (silver); Luke Micallef (bronze);
- Div. 1 Boorder X – Daniel Marusic (silver); Michael Schoofs (bronze);
- Div. 2 Boorder X – Michael Satterley (silver) above
- Div. 3 Boorder X – Daniel Spiller (bronze) below

Other students who competed were: Brendan Keryk (4th); Jordan Caruana (5th); Sean Fahey (6th); Kristian Said (6th);

A number of students are now turning their sights to the Victorian Interschool Championships, to be held at Mt. Buller from Sunday, August 23 till Wednesday August 26. We wish them well and thank them for representing the College so magnificently.

Mr. Bruno Spiller, Snow Sports Team Manager

ACC Athletics
Thank you to all the parents and team members who attended the Athletics presentation night on Wednesday July 29. It was great to see so many there and was a wonderful way to celebrate the win and to farewell our Year 12 athletics. Thank you also to the coaches for your help with the evening and to Mr Tony Paatsch for attending to present the gold and silver honour pockets. For those squad members who were unable to attend I will try and catch up with you in the next few weeks to pass on your pennants. Honour pockets will be presented at your next year level assembly.

ACC DVD Highlights
Please return the form at the bottom of this newsletter to Mr Brown with your payment if you would like to purchase either or both of the ACC Athletic DVDs for 2009.

Mr Gerard Brown

Full track event DVD $5.00
ACC Athletics Highlight Package (Presentation night DVD) $5.00
ACC Athletics – Full track event DVD $5.00

Please note: if you are buying both DVDs the cost will be only $8.00