From The Principal
This week the results of the Peer Relations Survey were collated and circulated among the College staff. I’m very grateful to Mr John Samanna for his work in administering and collating the survey. The results indicate that for most students St Bernard’s is a happy and safe place to go to school. Similar surveys suggest that about 20% of secondary students report that they feel bullied at least once a week at school. The figure at St Bernard’s is 9%. While we can feel justifiably proud to have better than average figures we are committed to finding ways to improve these all the time.

At the full school assembly this week winners of the poster competition to promote the antibullying message were announced. Congratulations to all the prize winners but in particular Year 11 student Luke Papillo whose design was chosen as the winning entry. At the assembly I challenged students to find ways to reduce bullying in the College. As a bully, victim or bystander there are ways that we can behave that will make things better. We should be working towards an environment where every student is treated respectfully, feels valued and is happy at school every day.

I also asked that students learn to recognise bullying behaviour and be strong enough to challenge it. The behaviour of the bystander is critical in that their reaction either validates the behaviour of a bully or rejects it and removes the chief source of gratification.

If students feel bullied it is important that they develop resilience. A great way to do this is to remind yourself that, in fact, it is the bully that has the issue and to refuse to allow someone else’s problem to become your problem.

A really significant result of the survey was that 37% of the boys who reported having been bullied said that they never told anyone. Recent media reports have highlighted the damage possible when young people feel bullied and don’t have the confidence to speak up about it or the resilience to deal with it. It is imperative that we encourage boys to speak up when they experience or see bullying. Behaviour unchallenged is behaviour encouraged and it’s not dobbing if you are trying to help someone with a problem.

I hope that the survey results will promote much discussion in classes and that the follow up interviews with students will help them change their behaviour.

Cyberbullying is an issue for many young people. It is a truism that people will often say things by phone that they would not say face to face and this appears to be even more so in online communication and by text. We are offering a seminar on the issue on September 2 (advertised elsewhere in this newsletter) and I strongly encourage you to consider attending.

The Annual Production involving St Bernard’s students opens this Thursday night. It is “The Sound of Music” and is produced this year by St Columba’s. I hope that many of you will be able to attend and I wish our performers well.

I also commend to all members of the community the upcoming “Three L’s” evening on August 11. This promises to be a great night with Matthew Lloyd, Scott Lucas and Ross Lyon and supports the valuable work of the College Foundation. I hope that many of you will be able to join us on the night.

Best wishes
Tony Paatsch

Edmund Rice Network News/Justice Issues:
An extract from Wayne Tinsey, Executive Director of EREA Term 3 letter

“As educators and parents we know that many young and not so young people appear to be rejecting ‘the Faith’. I’m sure that this is not a rejection the power of the Christian vision make a difference in their lives or even of Christ, but a rejection of the forms in which the package of faith is presented to them. The principal purpose of the Church is to transmit Christian meanings and the eternal message of God, not the preservation of traditional cultural forms. Specific beliefs and practices are vehicles that should be assessed, altered and, if necessary, updated, to ensure the preservation of this transmission. It is the content of Christian faith, not the form in which it was originally or has been traditionally expressed, that is sacred.

The Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed, ushered in a new world order characterised by creative relationships of justice, love and peace. The Hebrew word for peace is shalom. Shalom refers not so much to an absence of violence but to a ‘right order’ – to health, prosperity, security, to political and spiritual well being; it implies a sense of equity and fairness in our dealings with each other. There is not shalom if children go hungry; if human rights are ignored there is no shalom – there is no shalom in a world indifferent to the common good. There is no Shalom, no peace in fact, without justice.

From this perspective peace is not seen as something that can be pursued for its own sake or delivered without justice – peace in this context becomes the product or the outcome of justice. The fundamental task of peace-making is to work to counter structures of oppression – whether they are social, economic or political. True peace, true shalom is a world where human rights and human dignity are preserved and sustained. The path to peace is the struggle for justice.

The new wine of the Kingdom challenges us all to move beyond our rigid positions and become more open to the possibilities brought by an ongoing incarnation. Let’s pray that we will not become brittle like the old skins and lose the precious essence of our living tradition. Those of us who work with youth are constantly challenged to become more open in our dialogue on church, mission and what is truly important and essential for happiness and fidelity to the Christian vision, which is both ancient and ever new.”

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. Letters to Mothers of Old Boys will be sent out shortly.

General News
IMPORTANT NOTICE
A reminder for all families that Friday August 21 is a student free day.

CYBER SAVVY – A Parent’s Guide To Promoting Responsible Internet Use - Wednesday 2nd September, 7:30pm
St. Bernard’s, with the support of the Parent and Friend’s Association, will be running a workshop that addresses questions about what your sons are doing online and how it may impact on their wellbeing. Tena Panizza, a psychologist and cyber expert, will explain various strategies that students and parents can put into place to reduce the risks of bullying as well as explore the issues surrounding privacy and security. A flyer with more details and how to book for this workshop will be included in the next newsletter but for further information please telephone College Student Wellbeing Coordinator John Samanna on 9289 1112.

Subject Selection
The Year 10 students began the process of Subject Selection last week and we are encouraging them to seek out information and ask questions so as to complete the process by the 28th August. Information about subjects and the entry of subjects is completed online via the school website.
Subject selection for Year 9 students going into Year 10, 2010 will commence with a student information session on the morning of Monday August 10. The parent (and student) information session is at 7:30pm on Tuesday August 11 in the Auditorium. Information will be available on the school website from Friday July 31.

Subject selection for Year 11 students going into Year 12, 2010 must attend a student subject selection information session on the morning of Wednesday August 12. Information will be available on the school website from Friday July 31.

Notice to parents of students in Years 10 & 11
Formal work in Unit 3/4 subjects begins on November 23, 2009 for students who will be doing 3/4 subjects in 2010. It is intended that this will assist students to optimise all learning opportunities in their senior classes, the classes themselves operating with input, homework and introduction of assessment tasks. Classes will run from the November 23 till December 2 and attendance is compulsory as part of the 2010 academic year. It is hoped that this will assist with planning for end of year family activities and holiday employment options.

Ms Caroline Sheehan, Director of Learning

Kokoda

By the time you read this article, 7 SBC Year 11 students will be walking the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. Luke Larsen, Jarrod Bye, Isaac Madden, Michael Trainor, Matthew Van Den Ham, Simon Caven and Daniel Vogl are representing the College on the 96 km hike, which should take 9 days and 8 nights. All students have been training extremely hard and we are confident that all will finish in very high spirits.

This is the first year that St Bernard’s, along with Ave Maria, has been involved in this Moonee Valley Police initiative. The program itself is currently in its third year and has previously involved students from the Kensington/Flemington area.

This picture was taken over the school holidays at the Police Academy in Glen Waverley, just after all participants completed training in the Dandenong Ranges.

Mr Hayden Kennedy

2009 Snow Sports Team Camp, Mt. Hotham.

29 students plus 4 staff attended the 3-day annual Snow Sports Team Camp, held at Mt. Hotham from July 24 – 26. The Camp caters for those students who wish to improve their skiing/boarding technique. Students attended morning lessons with qualified instructors and then practised on their technique for the remainder of the day, exploring the exciting & challenging terrain offered at Mt. Hotham. A number of students also competed in Round 6 of the Interschool Grand Prix Race event, which was held on Sunday at the Road Runner Boarder/Skiier Cross Course. There were some excellent performances, with some students gaining a podium finish with official results to follow in the next College Newsletter. A big thank you to the staff and students for their contributions in making this camp another memorable experience.

2009 Victorian Interschool Competition, Mt. Buller.

Students are invited to represent the College in the 2009 Victorian Interschool Snow Sports Carnival, to be held at Mt. Buller in late August. Any student wishing to enter will need to register his interest with Mr Bruno Spiller by Friday July 31, as entries close on August 5.

St Bernard’s College - Changing the way we travel

St Bernard’s, in conjunction with the Victorian Government and Moonee Valley City Council, are pleased to announce an exciting new initiative for our community. Recently our school began working on developing a TravelSmart travel plan designed to support change from high car usage to more sustainable travel for the journey to and from St Bernard’s - such as walking, cycling using public transport and carpooling. Travel planning has been shown to have significant benefits for communities including:

- Reduced traffic congestion
- Better health and fitness
- Increased travel choices
- Improved safety
- Greater social connectedness with St Bernard’s and the local community.

The schools TravelSmart travel plan will be under development over the next year and we would like to see the whole community involved. As part of our participation in the program, TravelSmart will be setting up a working group aimed to help us to better understand existing travel behaviour, ascertain the barriers and opportunities to sustainable travel and analyse that information for our travel plan.

Any parents interested in participating in the working group please contact Anna Walker at awalker@sbc.vic.gov.edu.au, or if you require further information please contact Lisa Bagnati on 9243 8762 or lbagnati@mvcc.vic.gov.au. Look for regular updates in this newsletter and there will be opportunities for discussion.

The Sound of Music

St Columba’s, in conjunction with St Bernard’s, is proud to present THE SOUND OF MUSIC on the 6th, 7th, 8th, 13th, 14th and 15th August at 7.30pm in St Bernard’s Auditorium.

Tickets are selling fast so to book visit this website link:
http://www.trybooking.com/YO

EMA

Holders of current Healthcare/Pensioner card (i.e. 13th July, 2009) who did not lodge an EMA application form in February may do so now. Forms are available at the Accounts Office and must be lodged with us by August 7, 2009 and late applications will not be accepted by the Education Department.

EDUCATION TAX REFUND – Don’t forget to claim!

How do I claim the Education Tax Refund?

- In your tax return.
- If you don’t lodge a tax return, claim on a separate form or over the phone.
- If you use a tax agent, make sure you ask them to claim for you.

The Education Tax refund lets you claim up to 50% of eligible education expenses for school children. If you are eligible, you can get back up to $375 for each primary student and up to $750 for each secondary student.

You can claim things like textbooks, stationery and even Internet costs.

If you receive Family Tax Benefit Part A for a child at primary or secondary school, you will be eligible. Some other people are eligible too, to find out more about this and other information such as what you can and can’t claim, go to australia.gov.au/educationtaxrefund or call the Tax Office on 13 28 61.

Remember, you need to keep all receipts for expenses you claim.

College Foundation Sportsmen’s Night

The College Foundation will be conducting its annual Sportsmen’s Night on Tuesday August 11 in the College Pavilion. A great panel consisting of past students Matthew Lloyd and Scott Lucas, plus current St. Kilda coach Ross Lyon, will be in attendance. The night, commencing from 6:30pm, will be compered by past student and SEN presenter Francis Leach. Bookings at $50 per head, which includes dinner and drinks at bar prices, can be made by contacting Michael Perrett on 9289 1106 or Cameron Evans at ccevans@sbc.vic.edu.au