From The Principal

At the completion of the 2010 school year we farewell a number of teachers who are leaving St Bernard’s. John McKenna and Russell Wright retire after each has spent most of their working lives in Catholic Schools. Significantly for each, most of this has been in Christian Brothers’ schools and both have made a wonderful contribution to the education of boys in the Edmund Rice Charism. John McCann and Robyn Sullivan leave St Bernard’s to take up positions at CRC Melton. Both have played significant roles at St Bernard’s over many years. John’s care for boys in his role as Year 9 coordinator and Robyn’s contribution to English and Literacy will be missed. Fiona Donohue leaves St Bernard’s to travel and pursue new ventures while Brendan Douglas has accepted a secondment to E.R.E.A to work in formation. Anna Walker will take maternity leave with the arrival of her first child imminent. Each has left their mark on St Bernard’s. We thank them for their contribution and wish them every blessing in their new challenges.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the work of all the staff throughout this year. We are blessed with a group of educators who seek and expect the best from each boy and who are prepared to work extremely hard to make this happen. Thank you to the boys who have worked hard and cooperated in their learning, and to parents and families for your support of the College.

The College Board met last week and approved the annual budget. As always there was much debate about fee levels. The Board is acutely conscious of the need for education at St Bernard’s to remain accessible to all who choose Catholic education for their children. At the same time we need to maintain a high quality educational offering and balance our budget. Educational authorities annually determine an Education Consumer Price Index (CPI) where all costs pertaining to running a school are factored in. The Education CPI for 2010 is 6%. The Board has determined that the student fee will increase by 6% in 2011. The quantum of this increase is approximately $300 for the year. As always we encourage any family for whom this poses undue hardship to contact Ms Carol Alexander, the College Credit Controller.

At the end of the academic year we hold a number of functions to celebrate academic excellence. VCE students who achieve an ATAR of 90 or above are invited to gather in the pavilion at 7.30pm on Monday December 13 for the VCE High Achievers evening. Families will be contacted by phone during the day that the results become available. We are optimistic that this will involve a large number of families again this year.

Awards ceremonies for student in Years 7 – 10 will be held on the evening of Thursday December 9. Details of this function are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Once again I remind families that award winners are expected to be present to receive their awards. In the event that unavoidable circumstance prevents attendance, prior contact should be made with Ms Caroline Sheehan (cshee@sb@.vic.edu.au). Students absent without prior explanation and approval will forfeit their awards.

As Christmas approaches we begin to see nativity scenes, shepherds and angels on cards and shop windows, and find that the supermarket “muzak” has become carols. It is a reminder of the proximity of the great Christian feast of Christmas. This is not the only sign, with the liturgical season of Advent commencing this Sunday. Advent is a time of expectancy and preparation for Christmas. It is also an opportunity to remind ourselves of what Christmas is really about, that is the gift of Jesus Christ who brings the presence of God to our world and our lives. I hope that in your time spent with loved ones over the Christmas break you have the opportunity to experience the presence of God and to be Christ to each other.

I wish you and your families a joy filled, safe and restful holiday period and look forward to the students rejoining us on Thursday February 3rd (Year 7 and VCE students) and the following day (Years 8, 9 and 10).

Best Wishes
Tony Paatsch

College Closure and Opening Dates
December 17 - College Reception closes for Term 4 holidays
January 24, 2011 - College Office opens for the 2011 school year
January 26 - Australia Day holiday
January 31 - Key Personnel & New Staff Meetings
January 31 - Academic & General Pre-pack Book Collection in the College Gymnasium (9:00am – 4:00 pm)
February 1 - Staff Professional Development Day
February 2 - Staff Professional Development Day
February 3 - Years 7, 11 & 12 return to school
February 4 - All students return to school

Check the College website for more dates.

Found
A blazer with the name of Joshua was handed into Reception on the November 5. It was found at Essendon Station.
Edmund Rice Network News/ Justice Issues:

Every year the St. Vincent de Paul Society host a Christmas lunch for over three hundred people from the local area with the St. Bernard’s Community generously donating a Christmas present for each person. Without the Vinnies and St. Bernard’s these people would end up with nothing for Christmas. The numbers of people asking to be part of this celebration has grown remarkably this year so our support is more important than ever. All families should have received a letter explaining that at our last assembly on Friday, December 4, we will be presenting to a St. Vincent de Paul representatives what we have been able to collect for the needy over Christmas. As for the present itself the letter indicated who each family is to buy for, be it a male or female adult, child or teenager. A large amount doesn’t have to be spent on these gifts - just something you’d be happy to receive yourself - and they can be dropped off at Reception anytime until December 4. We have a great tradition of excellent support for this very worthy cause to help the less fortunate in our midst at this special time of the year. Please be generous and support our efforts in any way your can.

Investigation into the Fate of Deported People

Following significant disquiet expressed by a range of organisations at a 2000 Senate inquiry, the Edmund Rice Centre’s Phil Glendenning, along with Sr Carmel Leavey, Mrs Margaret Hetherton and Dr Tony Morris from the Australian Catholic University commenced an investigation into the fate of asylum seekers deported from Australia. The results have been disturbing with evidence of false documentation and asylum seekers left in unsafe environments, often outside the law of the country they are returned to. The information uncovered by this research has led to the publication of several reports; submissions and testimony given to Federal parliamentary enquiries; public meetings; investigations by Federal police into allegations of illegal actions by immigration officials; extensive media coverage; and most recently production of a documentary film.

Support is urgently needed for Edmund Rice Centre’s on-going research into the fate of failed asylum seekers who have been deported by the Australian Government into situations of danger. Information about the research and copies of the reports are available on the edmundrice.org web site. To donate to support this work please go to the donations page on the same web site.

Excerpts from the most recent Edmund Rice Centre e-newsletter which can also be found on the same web site:

“The three fields of interest to ERC’s national advocacy work for greater respect for human rights have each seen key developments in recent weeks - with clear signs that the coming two to three years will likely be pivotal: climate change, reconciliation, and asylum seekers. As the weather heats up, so too does the push for recognition and action on the real impact of climate change. Last week, the Edmund Rice Centre, through the Pacific Calling Partnership participated in the Tarawa Climate Change Conference in Kiribati. The success of this event - in both the process and outcome - is hoped to be seen repeated at the UN Climate Change Summit to be held in Cancun, Mexico later this month. Information and analysis of these processes can be accessed below, and there will be reports of ongoing developments and news in the next two editions of ERC InTouch.

Indigenous recognition has returned to public attention and the media, with the announcement of a national referendum for constitutional recognition. The public debate is a welcomed opportunity for all Australians to engage in this discussion, with hope of a general increasing awareness and understanding to accompany whatever change proposals may emerge. Recently in Sydney ERC partner Patrick Dodson led a national conference which seeks to advance discussions on reconciliation.

The High Court decision about the denial of access to the courts to some refugee claimants has put into relief the inequity of a two-tiered system with one set of rules and treatment for those who, when fleeing persecution, have travelled by plane, and yet a whole different arrangement for those who have travelled by boat. Following the ruling, the cases of hundreds of asylum seekers will need to be reviewed a process that will take many months. Whilst large numbers are now passing the one-year mark under immigration detention, the suicides demonstrate to us the human cost of prolonged detention in terms of mental health. The next six to eighteen months will see a grave need for renewed broad-level engagements by ordinary Australians to advocate for humane and just asylum seeker policies.”

FAMILY Matters- A helping hand for families, by families

Family Matters is an initiative being undertaken by the St Bernard’s community in co-operation with the community of St Columba’s. Working together, we hope to be able offer a helping hand, when it is needed. We are asking families who think they can offer assistance in the areas of meals, home maintenance/garden, household/ironing, transport (adults only), babysitting and shopping to join a bank of helpers who can be called on when needed. If you feel you can offer assistance please fill out a form that is available from either Reception or the Canteen. Names will then be placed on a database, and when required you will be contacted by a member of the Family Matters Group.

If you have any questions please contact Dennis Hobson, Faith Development Coordinator, on 92981063 or 0423730212.
General News

Important Note for Parents of Strand Students
Parents of Strand students are reminded that school finishes for the year on Friday, December 3 at 12pm. Buses will depart to the usual venues a few minutes later. All boys are asked to go straight home and change out of uniform before their holidays begin. This means that they are not permitted to visit fast food outlets or other schools on their way home. School for 2011 begins for all students in Years 8 & 9 on February 4.

Could all parents of Year 8 and 9 students also please ensure they have their calculator order forms and payment sent to Abacus Calculators by Thursday December 9. If anybody did not receive the letter and order form handed out a few weeks ago please contact the College Reception.

John McKenna, The Strand Campus Director

Important Note for Parents of Year 12 Students in 2011
There is an essential Year 12 2011 Parent Information Night to be held on Wednesday December 1 in the College auditorium which all parents concerned are expected to attend.

Academic Awards
The presentation of Academic Awards for Second Semester 2010 for students in Year 7-10 will be held on the Thursday December 9. Please be aware that students receiving distinctions and/or merits certificates and/or subject prizes (Year 10 only) will need to attend the evening to receive the certificate or subject prize unless there is valid excuse (as per Principal’s comments). We would ask that all students are seated 10 minutes prior to the beginning time:

Year 7 at 7:00pm in the Gym
Year 8 at 7:45pm in the Gym
Year 9 at 8:30pm in the Gym
Year 10 at 7:30pm in the Auditorium

Academic Awards presentation to VCE students (those in Year 11-12, 2010) will occur on the February 16, 2011 beginning at 10am.

Booklists
Booklists were distributed to Year 9 on Thursday November 25 along with subject advice letters and the information package about Notebook computers for 2011. It is very important that parents and students read this Computer information package carefully, returning the Notebook Computer application by the due date.

Booklists for current Year 7 students will be distributed on Monday November 29 whilst those boys in Year 8 will receive theirs on Tuesday November 30.

Caroline Sheehan, Director of Learning

Scholarship Recipients – University of Melbourne.
Congratulations to James Lynch and Andrew Gavaghan from Year 10 who were both winners of University of Melbourne Kwong Lee Dow scholarships. Over 1,700 applications were received and 700 offers made across the whole state, as well as the border regions. The KLD scholars program recognises not only outstanding academic achievement, but equally as important, the applicant needs to have demonstrated a consistent engagement in extra-curricular activities, outside of the classroom.

James and Andrew will have the opportunity to be part of the university’s welcoming ceremony on the 10th of December.

VCAL News
Our last industry visit this year was to the QANTAS maintenance hangar and the Kangan TAFE Aviation Training Centre. Students had the opportunity to see aircraft engineering in action and also participate in a brief cockpit training exercise which made for a very interesting day.

To finish off the year, VCAL students (11V) completed an overnight stay at Santa Monica. In the short time they were on the coast, students managed visits to a number of places including the new Zip Line Tour at the Otway Fly. After a brief fishing attempt on the Lorne Pier, students travelled to the Ford Discovery Centre in Geelong before returning home.

Congratulations to all the students who successfully completed their VCAL certificates this year, and further best wishes to those who have already moved into the work force as apprentices, trainees or full-time employees.

Chris Mannix
Thank You
On behalf of Mandy and myself, I would like to thank all our canteen volunteers for another successful year and wish you and your families a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. See you in 2011.

Sharon Grass, Canteen

Music News
Upcoming Events: Tuesday November 30, 12:30pm – 2pm at BMW Edge, Federation Square: Festive Harmonies featuring the SBC Honours Band, Junior Band, Intermediate Concert Band & Big Band. This is a free public concert which family and friends are welcome to attend.

Private Music Lessons: A reminder to parents and students that the deadline to give notice regarding the cessation of private music lessons in 2011 has passed. Music students who do not provide this notice will be automatically enrolled for music lessons in 2011. Likewise, students considering enrolling for Instrumental Music Lessons in 2011 are asked to do so before the end of November to ensure a spot next year.

Queensland Music Tour 2011: We are pleased to announce that this trip will go ahead next year over the dates of July 15 – July 20 2011. At this stage, all places are full (53 students).

Musical Instruments: Students and Parents are advised that any school-owned musical instruments that have been borrowed are to be returned for inventory and maintenance by November 30.

Carmelo Puglisi, Director of Music

Australian Secondary Schools Team Golf Championships Final
Good luck to Scott Sinnott, Joel Ward & Edward Donoghue who will represent St. Bernard’s College at the Australian Secondary Schools Team Golf Championships in Sydney from Sunday November 28 to Tuesday November 30. The tournament will precede The Australian Open Championships and is a fantastic opportunity for the boys to rub shoulders with the best professional players in the world. The competition will include the best school teams from each state vying for the title of “best school team in the country”. We wish the team the best of luck and hope they can go all the way.

Business Directory
For the past thirteen years the College has circulated a Business Directory to all current students, current families, all on our enrolment register and all on our Old Boy Register - approximately 10,000. Response to the Directory has been very enthusiastic and many businesses have reported good results from their advertisements. The Directory includes useful College information for parents and as such the Directory is a worthwhile reference for the entire year.

The 2011 Directory will be forwarded in late January and if you are interested in having your business associated with the larger St. Bernard’s community please contact the Development Office, 9289 1106, or E-mail to mperrett@sbc.vic.edu.au by December 10th.

The Directory is open to all friends of the College.

Strathmore Bowling Club
Strathmore Bowling Club are looking for young players to join their club. The offer is open to any students in the area who would like to have a go! Junior Scholarships to the value of $1200 are available to students so why not give it a try! If you are interested in having a roll please contact Alan Colson on 0410467972 or email Rob Baker - rob_be@bigpond.com at the Strathmore Bowling Club.

Carols and Choirs in Queens Park
The whole community is invited to Moonee Valley City Council’s annual Carols and Choirs in Queens Park on Sunday, 12 December. The evening will feature favourites such as the Moonee Valley Brass Band and Essendon Choral Society along with a range of great acts. The festivities begin with free children’s craft activities from 6pm. Candles, songbooks and refreshments will also available for purchase before the performances start at 7pm.