From The Principal

Holidays are a wonderful time, but it is good to be back. A warm welcome back to all boys and families as you return refreshed and re-energised for the year ahead. The place really comes alive when the students return and it was wonderful to have them back last Friday.

In extending a welcome to all students I would like to particularly welcome those new to the College. This year, along with the Year 7 boys, we have a significant group of older students who have joined us from St Joseph’s Pascoe Vale. I trust these boys will feel welcome at St Bernard’s and am confident they will find that our shared E.R.E.A ethos will help them quickly feel part of the College.

In the final newsletter of 2009 we farewelled departing staff. I apologise for the omission of Sally Newton and wish her well as she takes maternity leave in 2010. This year we welcome the following new staff to the College:

- Rebecca Cracknell  The Strand – Sci / Maths / PE
- Scott Driscoll  The Strand – Sci / Maths / PE
- Rita Krouskos  The Strand – Sci / Maths
- Carmel Saade  Discere
- Chris Mannix  VCAL
- Christina Markin  Clairvaux – Arts/Tech
- David Sutton  Clairvaux – Counselling/RE
- Anthony Ah Lit  The Strand – Maths / Sci
- Emorfia Kupraioiu  Teacher Librarian
- Judy Manassa  Administration support staff
- Kerry Norton  Educational Support / Library
- Joel Duscher  Arts Gap student
- James Davey  Sport Gap student
- Mark Davoli  ICT Gap Student
- Alicia Gangell  Santa Monica Gap Student
- Tuan Nguyen  ICT support

During the holiday period the Margaret Carey Building was refurbished with each the Year 8 and 9 rooms being remodelled. Many have been increased in size with new cladding and ceilings, and with interactive whiteboards installed in most rooms. The students are now in comfortable, contemporary teaching spaces that are state of the art. We were also able to replace the boxtop style desks with chairs and tables in all Year 7 and 8 classrooms. I would like to acknowledge Mr Bruce Wallace and the maintenance staff for their work in making these improvements possible.

The Year 12 class of 2009 achieved excellent results in their VCE. A median study score of 33 (30 is the statewide average) and 13% of students achieving study scores of 40 the best result the College has achieved since the current VCE system was introduced. These results translated into 12% of students achieving an ENTER score above 95 and 22% above 90. Students who achieved an ENTER of 90 or above were recognised at the “Top Ten” awards night late last year. Congratulations to David Baldi who was Dux of the College with an ENTER of 99.6.

Communication is vitally important for a successful working relationship between home and school. With this in mind I encourage all parents to attend the year level information nights held at the start of the year. Each student’s Homeroom Teacher will make contact with the family in the first few weeks of school. I also hope that you have found the use of SMS technology helpful in sharing information relating to student attendance. All families should have received a test SMS message to their nominated mobile phone number. If you did not receive an SMS from us please contact reception to enable us to rectify the issue.

I hope that you have enjoyed the new format and layout of this newsletter and that the electronic delivery improves your ability to access it. Newsletters will be produced fortnightly during the year. I remind families for whom the electronic delivery mode is not convenient that hard copies of the newsletter will be available at reception.

Best Wishes
Tony Paatsch
Upcoming Events
February 9 at 6:00pm – Board Building Committee
February 9 at 7:30pm – Years 8 and 9 Information Evening
February 9 at 9:00am - New Canteen Volunteers Information Session
February 10 at 10:15am – Whole School Assembly/Academic Awards
February 11 at 7:30pm – Year 12 Information Evening
February 15 at 5:00pm - Board Advisory Forum
February 15 at 6:00pm - Board Finance Committee
February 18 at 7:30pm - New Canteen Volunteers Information Session
February 19 at 7:00pm - ACC Swimming Carnival
March 3, 2010 at 10:15am – Opening Mass/Blessing of the Administration Building

Edmund Rice Network News/ Justice Issues:
In this first Newsletter for the year, a reminder to all in our community of ‘Project Kenya’ – our organized support for Br. Beausang Catholic Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. We support the school with fundraising for their needs but more importantly by sponsoring students from the poorest of circumstances to be at school. Much more about this ‘Project Kenya’ is on our school website. If you are interested in finding out more about being personally involved, please contact John McKenna or Bruce Wallace at the College or simply email: jmckenna@sbc.vic.edu.au or phone 9289 1127.

HAITI
In the wake of the horrific disaster in Haiti the January Newsletter of Edmund Rice International has issued an action alert to members of the Edmund Rice Network urging them to sign a petition asking for the cancellation of Haiti’s debts to western financial institutions.

“The effects of the earthquake have been magnified by the extreme poverty and lack of in Haiti, a situation that has existed for many years and which the global community has failed to address. The Jubilee Debt Campaign reminds us that the world’s poorest countries pay almost $100 million every day to the rich world.

Apart from donating money another way of assisting countries like Haiti to get back on their feet is to support the debt relief campaign.”

Vale
Leo Tobin ’44 who attended SBC in his early years before attending Assumption College Kilmore, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded with the love and care of his family, on January 13 2010. He was the father of Shane (’72), Damian (’74), Tim (’75) and Leo (’83) and grandfather of Stephen (’05) Paul (’10) and Year 12’s James.

We also remember in our prayers the grandmother of Year 12’s Matthew Van Den Ham who passed away recently.

General News
SMS Attendance System
As you have been previously notified, St Bernard’s is contacting parents about their son’s absence via SMS in 2010. Last year you were asked for ‘primary contact’ mobile phone details and this is the number to which we will be sending messages. On Tuesday February 2 a broadcast message was sent to all of the primary contact numbers reading:

“A reminder that St Bernard’s will be notifying parents of student absence by SMS for the reminder of 2010. Do not reply to this message.”
If you did not receive this on the mobile phone that you identified as your primary contact number last year, please contact the College reception on 9289 1000.

As well as receiving messages from St Bernard’s if your son is ‘absent without explanation’, you may now notify the school of your son’s absence via SMS. The contact mobile number is 0428 937348. (Please store this number in your mobile phone as St Bernard’s College so you can identify a message if one is sent to you.) Included is an example of a sample message you may wish to send to the College notifying us of your son’s absence.

If you are unable to contact the College via SMS please ring reception on 9289 1000

Mr Nick Scully, Clairvaux Campus Director

Information Evenings

The Year 8 and 9 Parent Information Evening will be held next Tuesday February 9 at 7:30pm. We shall meet in the College Auditorium to hear some important information before moving to homerooms to meet homeroom teachers.

Ms Siobhan Loukomitis

The Year 12 Information Evening will be held next Thursday on February 11 at 7:30pm in the College Auditorium. Parents and their sons are welcome to attend.

Ms Vittoria Alcorace

VCAL 2010

VCAL 2010 is off to a good start. The beginning of the year is a time for ensuring timetables, work placements and TAFE courses are all in place and thanks to the hard work of Mr David Rosel and Mr Greg Harding, all is in readiness.

I recently attended the RMIT TAFE orientation and was impressed with the boys’ punctuality and enthusiasm. Most students will commence their TAFE courses starting next Wednesday. Similarly work placement will be on Tuesdays for Year 11 and Thursdays for Year 12. I am looking forward to this year and hope the boys are ready to achieve great things.

Mr Chris Mannix

Time & Space Program - Year 10 Students and Their Dads

All Year 10 families have received wonderful program aimed at Dads/mentors and their Year 10 son. We currently have room for 5 more participants so if you are considering doing the program or would like more information about it please contact John Samanna, Wellbeing Leadership Coordinator. All applications close on Monday February 22. If you have already applied you should have received a preliminary acceptance letter with a final acceptance letter sent after applications close.

Mr John Samanna
After School English Tuition: Clairvaux Campus
Every Monday afternoon from 3:00pm until 4:00pm, English Teachers are available to provide extra English help for students. Students from Years 10, 11 and 12 are encouraged to attend. The sessions take place in Year 11 classrooms. You may be notified by letter that your son would particularly benefit from attending. Please contact the Clairvaux English Coordinator, Mrs Christine McGee, if you require further clarification.

Mrs Christine McGee

Italy Study Tour Experience:
St. Bernard’s College is offering the opportunity once again for students to participate in our biennial Italy Study Tour Experience. This will be our 4th tour. It will take place at the end of Term 3: September 16 – October 3 2010. An information evening has been planned for Wednesday, February 17 in the College Boardroom, commencing at 7:30pm. The Tour is offered initially to students in Years 11, 10 & 9 with a maximum of 18 students participating. All interested students and families are invited to attend. Further information can be obtained from Mr. Bruno Spiller, Senior Teacher of Italian, Clairvaux Campus.

Mr Bruno Spiller

Music News
I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new members to our College community and inform everyone of the array of opportunities for music involvement at St Bernard’s. We have opportunities for one-on-one & paired instrumental tuition, rock band tuition, involvement in Concert Bands, Jazz and Big Bands, Guitar Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble and vocal groups. Opportunities exist for undertaking practical and theory examinations through the AMEB and to undertake theory exam preparation through after school classes.

Much of the information concerning these opportunities are currently being updated on the College Website’s downloads section and should be available soon. Hard copies of the music enrolment and application forms are available from the Music Department. Parents and students are welcome to contact the music office with any enquiries and we encourage newcomers to the school to consider participation in music.

The first rehearsals for the College Concert Bands will be as follows:
Intermediate Concert Band: Thursday February 11 at 7:30am
Senior Concert Band: Friday February 12 at 7:30am

All students who have private tuition on woodwind, brass & percussion are expected to participate in one of these bands and have been given a placement. Group lists are posted on the Music Department notice board. Students who play an instrument but not undertaking tuition are welcome to join an appropriate group for their level. Vocal groups, guitar ensemble and percussion ensemble will be starting soon. Students will be notified in future newsletters and in the morning bulletins.

Keys to Success Project: This Friends of Music initiative has raised approximately $14,000 to date and we are nearing the $17,500 required to purchase a piano for the Auditorium. Only a few opportunities remain to ‘sponsor’ a piano key at $150 each. Donation forms are available from the front office or as a download from the College Website. The first Friends of Music meeting will be held in the Music Department, room 302 on Monday February 22 at 7:30pm. New music supporters are most welcome.

Mr Carmelo Puglisi, Director of Music

Careers News

CASUAL JOBS
Ascot House Receptions (Ascot Vale) are looking for casuals (min age 15) for kitchen hand positions. Shifts range from Friday-Sundays and include evenings. Email Sarah: sarah@ascothouse.com.au to express interest. Make sure to include your resume.

Mr David Rosel, Careers Advisor