Dux of College - Reconnect and Share

As our current Year 12 students near the end of their studies at Mount Eliza Secondary College we look back and reconnect with many of our past ‘Dux of College’ students in this issue.

This has been an annual award for the highest achieving academic student since 1979 when our first group of Year 12 students graduated. In fact we start with news from our very first Dux, Ian McConnell and our current 2012 Dux, Megan Swannell. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed so willingly to this issue - we are indeed fortunate to have such a sharing community of Proteads - and we know you will enjoy reading their news and memories of time spent at MESC.

We will also have more articles from past Dux students, who were unable to assist this time, but are willing to share in future issues - we shall be holding you to this! There are also a few whom we were unable to connect with and you can help us with this by passing on our email to friends and family - Proteads@mesc.vic.edu.au

The recent 30 Year Reunion was a resounding success and we look forward to sharing news from the students of 1993 after they attend their reunion next month.

Cheers,
Lynn, Marcia, Ros
Editors

2013 Student Leaders Pave the Way

Mount Eliza Secondary College Student Leaders are constructing “The Peace Garden” to celebrate the College’s anti-bullying pledge ‘Stand Up, Don’t Stand By’. The native garden will include engraved pavers, all showing support of The Pledge and our eagerness to be proactive when it comes to bullying. We would like to invite all members of our community, both present and past, along with their families, to consider purchasing a paver to be placed in the garden as a representation of your support towards this pledge.

It will be permanently on display for years to come and be a feature within the college grounds. The MESC Student Leaders hope that you will consider being a part of this ‘growing’ initiative - so please consider joining us and also say ‘Stand Up, Don’t Stand By’.

Leah Bourne and Nelson Felsinger
2013 School Captains

For more information, including pricing, please contact Paula Harris, Student Leadership Coordinator pharris@mesc.vic.edu.au
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Ian McConnell  1979

After finishing a Chemical Engineering degree at Melbourne University, I worked as an engineer for Bridgestone and then in pollution control for Transfield. Then went on to manage the atmospheric pollution for the sewage outfall in Sydney at Maroubra.

Following that I worked as a consultant for pollution control in the Melbourne area. After feeling the need for a change in the corporate world I qualified as a tennis coach which I then did for ten years.

I am now employed by Australia Post after an old car accident helped force my retirement from tennis coaching. I am currently living in Clayton with my partner Louise. I enjoyed my time as a student at Mt. Eliza and apart from academic success I also enjoyed my time on the swim team for the school.

[Ian’s parents, Isobell (former History teacher and Librarian 1987-1994) and Stewart (former Mt Eliza tennis coach) are retired and enjoying life in Noosa. Younger brother Andrew is a senior airline Captain in the UK, as is his wife Heather. Older sister Christine is a Royal Flying Doctor based in WA.]

Megan Swannell  2012

It has been an exciting and busy year for me in my first year of Biomedical Science at Monash University, Clayton after completing my VCE last year. I was thrilled to be recognised as the 2012 College Dux – actually I was speechless (for a few moments) as it was something I hadn’t expected. It was a funny feeling not to be returning to school in February, as with my mum (Lynn Swannell, current MESC Librarian and editor) working there it sometimes felt like I’d been a student at MESC for 17 years!

My junior and middle years at MESC were busy as I was involved in student leadership and band before I decided to concentrate on my VCE studies. I had Mr Russell King in Year 7 for maths and science, then again for VCE biology (my favourite subject) - he really challenged me to strive to do my best at all times and it’s something I’m thankful for. The trip to Malaysia in 2011 was also a highlight, it was my first overseas trip, and lots of fun—I would like to travel more and even study overseas if possible.

I started University on the day of my 18th birthday, so ‘O-Week’ was a big week of celebration for me, and I met so many new friends from such diverse backgrounds and locations. This is something that I have really enjoyed about uni and we are often in the same lectures, labs and tutorials. Since starting this degree it’s really made me think about which field of medical science I’d like to pursue further, perhaps becoming a doctor even - well that’s the plan for this month anyway!
Robyn Darby 1982

At MESC I relished the challenge of learning and understanding how things in the world and around me in nature worked. Hence I studied Maths, Physics and Chemistry. Still wondering what I really wanted to do I found myself doing Science at Monash Uni. After that I worked in several laboratories, however found the enclosed and restricted nature of the work environment quite stifling.

I have now worked in the Pharmaceutical industry for over 20 years. I enjoy the challenge of understanding new therapeutic treatments and how they work in the body and then how to present this information to Health Care Providers. The work environment means I am never in the same place 2 days in a row and I have flexible working hours.

Outside of work, my passion is travel. My husband and I have travelled to many countries where we usually hike, ride or ski as the main focus of our trip.

Rosalind Coulson 1984

Lindy (Rosalind) is currently a Consultant Neurosurgeon at Royal Brisbane Hospital, Senior Lecturer at the School of Medicine-Royal Brisbane Clinical School, University of Queensland and Honorary Associate at Sydney Medical School-NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, University of Sydney.

It was great to see that with such an impressive resume Lindy still lists her ‘Dux of School’ and ‘BHP Best All-rounder Medal’ under her awards and scholarships. Lindy is now known as Lindy Jeffree and is married with two children.

[Looking back through our archives we found articles from ‘The Town Crier’ (1981) of Lindy’s early endeavours as a scientist at the age of 14. Lindy won prizes in the school competition organised by the Science Teachers’ Association of Victoria and in the article stated that she ‘hopes to be a research scientist or surgeon’.

Lindy’s sister Lizzie (Elizabeth) Coulson is an Associate Professor at the Queensland Brain Institute (The University of Queensland) and head of Brain Cell Death research. Lizzie completed her undergraduate Honours degree at The University of Melbourne, majoring in genetics and biochemistry.

Following time spent at the University of Heidelberg, Germany and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute back in Melbourne, Lizzie became a founding member of the QBI in 2003. She is Lizzie Duncan at home with her husband and two children.

[We are hoping to hear more from Lindy and Lizzie in a future issue and thank her parents, Marion and John for sharing the above news with us in this issue.]
Anne Price  1987

Annie (Anne) Price—Life story in a few sentences:

- Creative Director at McCann Worldgroup Advertising.
- Live in 60's modernist Beaumaris home, hunt down vintage treasures every weekend.
- One bloke, Jamie. One daughter, Dottie (aged 4). One dog, Muttley.
- Mum still in Mt.Eliza, visit frequently.
- Great life. Very blessed & lucky.

The one teacher that stands out more than any other is Mr. Alan Wittick. And as it happens, his son Lachlan works with me now in account service at the ad agency I work for. I couldn’t believe it when I put two & two together, he wouldn’t even have been born when I was at school! He’s a wonderful young man who’s been brought up very well by my favourite teacher.

Why do I remember Mr Wittick so fondly? Because he always made learning enjoyable. We ate German food and sang German songs. After 26 years, with faded memories, German is the one class that still remains strong in my memory. Especially our rendition of Nena's '99 red luft balloons'!! I also remember imitating Mrs Roscoe’s wonderful Yorkshire accent in ceramics class. Got me into trouble but I think she was secretly quite impressed.

I’m still very good friends with Kate Anderson (nee Christie), Lisa Bragg (nee McCartney), Marlo Litchfield (nee Smith), Luke Crocker, Cam Croaker, Nelly Phelan, Glenn Cameron and Pia Carter. We lost a beautiful friend Kimberley Sparks (née Smith) to motor neurone disease. All Mt Eliza High graduates.

Fiona Hudson  1992

Sitting in a hospital foyer in Copenhagen waiting for Princess Mary to have a baby. Chasing drug lord Tony Mokbel down an Athens street. Cruising in the South Pacific to investigate the deaths of an Aussie couple who fell overboard. Every so often in my job I stop, scratch my head and wonder, ‘how on earth did I end up here?’.

Through high school, I was determined to become a journalist. After completing my VCE and a degree at RMIT, I jagged a cadetship at the Herald Sun -- my dream job. I’m still there now.

I’ve had various roles over the years, including assistant editor, city editor and Europe bureau chief. (VCE German came in handy after all.) These days I’m back on the road as a senior reporter, covering the civil courts in particular.

I live in the inner-city, but frequently visit Mt Eliza. I’ll always be grateful for the great education and opportunities the school provided. And I’m always happy to hear from any alumni who might have a yarn to share.
I’m one of four Rodriguez girls who attended MESC, with us all achieving excellent academic results including three MESC Dux awards and two Australian Student Prizes between us!

Admittedly, my sisters and I were academically focused growing up, all completing similar VCE subjects that would give us the broadest option for university entry: maths, science and languages were key at the time. We all went on to complete degrees at Monash University but the similarities end there. We have each ended up on entirely different career paths in medicine, mining, banking and bio-medical research.

Thanks to the quality of teaching staff throughout those many years (1988-2005), MESC allowed us to achieve our academic potential. Having said that, the memories I have of high school are less about the classroom, CATS and exams and more about the school camps, excursions and extra curricular activities.

Early on I was involved in debating, interschool hockey and volleyball, but the real highlights were:

- Year 10-11: Joining the MESC Ski Team in Year 10 & 11 and participating in two Interschool Championship at Mount Buller and going on an excursion to the water jump park (now only accessible to authorised athletes and coaches!)

- Year 9-12: I had a real interest in music and piano playing, so I was involved in school productions, initially helping out backstage, but later as rehearsal pianist and in the production band. I managed to convince my parents that I could ditch Specialist Mathematics as a VCE subject in favour of music. There weren’t enough students to form a VCE class, but MESC organised for a small group of us to complete the subject under Bev Woodford’s tuition.

- Year 11-12: I was the first student (guinea pig!) to go on a three month German exchange program to a sister school “Gymnasium Immenstadt” in Bavaria. It was an amazing experience and I have maintained close friendships with my German family and school mates to date. I believe the exchange program itself (managed by Mr Wittick) was very successful and both my younger sisters also participated during their VCE years.

All of these experiences influenced what I did later on. I ended up studying music as part of a double degree (with Commerce) at Monash University and was very involved in the local theatre scene (PLOS, Panorama and People’s Playhouse) during those years.
The German exchange experience opened up the whole world of travel and wanting to live in different countries to experience different cultures. In my final years at university the key attraction at Careers Fairs were the companies that promised lots of opportunities to travel and see the world. I ended up applying for a graduate placement at BHP Billiton, not because I particularly wanted a career in the mining industry, but because they were looking for candidates who were "geographically mobile"; I thought I fitted the bill.

Interestingly, in the competitive environment of graduate recruitment for big corporates, it was actually my commitment and achievements in the realm of music and theatre that set me apart from other candidates.

I started with BHP Billiton as a graduate straight out of university in 2001 and have worked for them for the last 12 years. Initially I was based in the Melbourne head office (and sure enough joined in the Corporate Ski Races when they came around!). I moved to Port Hedland in northern Western Australia for a couple of years to live the real mining experience, and with the experience of operational mine sites came a succession of international roles that took me to Chile (2005-2007), Indonesia (2008-2009) and most recently Guinea, West Africa (2011-2013).

Looking back on it all it is amazing to acknowledge that MESC did provide an excellent foundation for my future.

[Marie-Lise has three sisters who also graduated from MESC and we hope to hear their stories in future issues.]

Alexandra Rodriguez (2000-2005)

International Women’s Day soccer game in G’Bakore village, Guinea, West Africa - March 2013

STUDENT REUNIONS 2013

Class of 2003
We’ve heard rumblings about a possible 10-year reunion for the Class of 2003, if you have any further details, or would even like to plan one yourself, please contact us.

We also have your VCE Certificates which were not available at the time of graduating — think what a great night you could have handing these out!

Class of 1993
A 20-year reunion for the Class of 1993 is being organized by Sarah (Hill) Dickinson in October 2013

http://www.facebook.com/groups/279765625470016/
Hayley Strickland 2009

I am in my fourth and final year of uni, studying a Bachelor of Arts (media and communications) and a Diploma in Modern Languages (Indonesian).

The highlight of my degree has been going on exchange to the US for a semester at The University of Virginia. In fact this time last year I was walking past Fraternity Houses in absolute awe. I not only got the chance to live the American college life for a semester but I also got to travel around America for a few months and it was just the best thing that has ever happened to me. I’m not sure what my future holds after I graduate but I just know that I want to travel around the world and keep enjoying being young.

I miss high school so much and only have the best of memories of MESC. I miss being in school productions, playing for the school netball team, learning (I think I’ve gotten dumber since I started at uni!) and all the generous and amazing teachers and of course my classmates. Thanks!!!!

Christie Farag 2010

I am currently in my last year studying the Bachelor of biomedicine at the University of Melbourne and after graduating this year I am planning to continue doing a postgraduate degree in the medical field.

After three years of intense university studies it has helped me decide on aspiring to one day become a lecturer at university level.

I have very fond memories of my secondary schooling and often wish I was still there..... I felt a commitment and connection from all my teachers especially in my later years, which indeed helped me reach my academic goals.

Seeking Dux Students

We have been in touch with many of our Dux students and look forward to having more stories in future issues. There were a few who we did not hear from and if you are in touch with any of these past students please ask that they contact us with a view to sharing their own memories of time at

MESC proteads@mesc.vic.edu.au
In the news…..

Yorick Piper (1981-1986) and his wife State Labour MP Jacinta Allan are expecting their second child, a sibling for 18-month old daughter Peggy, in December. Yorick is a CFMEU National Executive officer. (Sunday Herald Sun, 1/9/13).

Rohan Heasley (2002-2007) described this week as a ‘pacy Mt Eliza midfielder’ (Frankston Standard Leader, 16/9/13) tied in voting to win an ‘EV Shade Medal’ at the recent MPNFL Peninsula league awards evening. Rohan also won the league U18 medal in 2007.

Martine Pavey (1978-1983) has been entertaining audiences at the Frankston Arts Centre in her one-woman show, Stardust, which is “essentially the story of Nat King Cole” (Frankston Standard Leader, 9/9/13). Martine also describes performing as ‘one of the highlights of her life’ and tells how she began her stage career at school. Martine and husband Ron Halliday have developed a number of shows and together they run the Voicebox Singing School.

Pia Blair (1994-1997) and husband Luke welcomed their son, Alby, in August. Pia is also a former Dux (1997) and last year provided us with a great article about her days at Mount Eliza Secondary, time spent in Vietnam, and her success as an artist producing collage artwork—some which was on display in recent episodes of reality television show ‘The Block’. You can re-read Pia’s article via the MESC Newsletters page on the website—www.mesc.vic.edu.au (Proteads Newsletter, September 2012).

‘Junior Archies at Mount Eliza’—following up on our article in our last issue regarding the recent “Archibald Prize Exhibition” at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, we congratulate Annie Jeffreys (Year 10, 2013) - Winner, Year 7-10 Category and Sam Brett (Year 11, 2013) Runner Up, Year 11-12 Category. Sam also won the award for “Best Young Artist” at the annual Derinya Art Exhibition and Annie won a “Highly Commended Award”. These are certainly two young artists to watch out for in the future.

30 Year Reunion: What a Night to Remember!

The Class of ‘83 celebrated 30 years since graduating from (what was then) Mt Eliza High School at Canadian Bay Hotel in Mt Eliza. The evening kicked off with a tour of the school. Despite being dark, it was a wonderful opportunity to reminisce about the many hours spent in ‘C Block’ (now the Year 7 area) and to see the Senior Learning Centre (newly revamped Library where morning registration took place in 1983). The touring party also marvelled at the fact that the Home Economics rooms still appear to contain the same cutlery and utensils—colour coded of course—as they did in 1983! This was confirmed by our generous tour guides, Ros Williams (Miss Affleck), Marcia Claringbold (Miss Clem) and Susan Bollard, all of whom taught the Class of ’83 at some stage.

The celebrations then moved on to the Canadian Bay Hotel where memorabilia was shared, stories were shared and confessions were heard. (Including the painting of the new gymnasium roof!) The evening flew by and the general consensus was that we shouldn’t wait until 40 years to get together again. I am pretty sure it was Gary Raymer who put his hand up for organising the next reunion.

Many thanks to all those who travelled significant distances to attend (Allison from Canada will always win this prize for furthest travelled) and to all those who helped make the evening a success. [Thanks to Muriel Bakker for her report of the evening and sharing the photos that follow.]
30 Year Reunion: What a Night to Remember!

The revamped library which is now the Senior Learning Centre

Jane Hatfield and Vanessa Chappel

Paula Delazzari, Michael Bourke, Heike Raymer and Katharine Fisher

David Greenhill, Rosalie Carter and Christine Compson

Katharine Fisher and Dorothy

Allison Parrott and Katherine Sanders
30 Year Reunion: What a Night to Remember!

Gary Raymer and Katherine Sanders

Richard, Michael, Steve, Steve, Raeleen, Anne and Michelle

Class of 1983 Reunion—10th August 2013
In 2005 two teams and two singles competitors qualified for the Australian National Championships, with great results—Secondary Dance Theme (5th Place), Secondary Advanced (5th Place), Junior Singles (7th Place), Senior Singles (3rd Place). Students were trained and supported by teachers Ros Williams, Marcia Claringbold and Kathryn Nightingale.

Aerobics and Dance Aerobics teams, and individuals, have been representing MESC for over 20 years and we’d love to have you share some of their memories in a future issue of the ‘Proteads Newsletter’ - please contact proteads@mesc.vic.edu.au