



Xavier College

From the Acting Principal

Volume 12 Issue 10
25th June 2010

The Companion

It is hard to believe that I am writing my final newsletter as Acting Principal. While there have been many events during the first half of 2010, the two terms have gone by very quickly. It has been a six month period which has encompassed some great highs and some difficult lows.

The election of the SRC for 2010 showed the great capacity for leadership displayed by our students, so much so that we had to expand the number of students on the SRC. The many celebrations we enjoyed as a school, such as "Grease is the Word", and the Kirinari and Gamarada picnic day, were great occasions. I also found the opportunity to work closer with families to be a really positive aspect of the role.

As we are all aware the tragic deaths of Mark Gilbert's father, Christopher, and Mathew Loveridge's father, Michael, along with the illness of Ms Hartfield, were certainly difficult moments for individual families and the entire Xavier College community. Unfortunately, I was in the USA and unable to attend the funeral of Mark's father, but I was able to attend the funeral of Mathew's father. and it was very moving to see the support given to Mark by his homegroup and Mr. Wakeling, the homegroup teacher. This support is part of the Catholic nature of the Xavier College community and our prayers continue for all.

I would like to thank the staff for the positive way in which they have embraced the initiatives that I have introduced and Andrew Wonson and Kellie Robinson as school executive for their support, loyalty and assistance during the past two terms. I would particularly like to thank the Acting Assistant Principal, Paul Hocking, for his ongoing support, and for the way in which he took on the role wholeheartedly and decidedly. I thank Mrs. Maidens for trusting to me the school that she has built from the ground up and I am sure that I am returning it to her in good shape.

Finally, I would like to thank all the students of Xavier College, especially those who give a cheery good morning or a smile of acknowledgement, for it is the students that make a school and without great students there are no great schools.

I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday and look forward to returning next term, once again in the Assistant Principal's role. Let me give all the students a 'heads up' that I will be focusing on uniform, appearance and lateness next term.

Yours in Xavier

John Ley
Acting Principal

Dear Parents/ Guardians and Students

This will be my last article in the "From the Assistant Principal" section of our newsletter "The Companion" as I finish up my time as Acting Assistant Principal at the end of next week. I'd like to share some reflections of the last two terms and some directions of my new role in the next two terms.

From the beginning of the year I have had many "firsts" that continue to this day. I attended my first Diocesan Leadership meeting with other Principals and Assistant Principals before the official start of term. I spent much of the first few weeks of Term One learning about the intricacies of timetable and other "software" that often meant Saturdays and Sundays became part of the working week. For the first time I unfortunately had to suspend a number of students for various serious events, but I also took great delight in working through their problems and having them become a more positive influence when they returned to the Xavier Community.

My first assembly saw my fallibility in predicting the weather as we had to scurry to class under heavy rain when I was only a minute or so into my inaugural "from the Assistant Principal" speech. This fallibility in weather prediction continued right through to last Wednesday when we had to finally call off the Athletics Carnival and return students to school after persistent drizzle. Managing events from the Assistant Principal's perspective for the first time, like evacuation drills, staff meetings, and bus issues has been a challenge, but also at times very rewarding, especially when things finally work out.

I have also enjoyed the fact that this role has allowed me to work with many parents in our community, although some do not always like getting a phone call from the Assistant Principal about their child. I'd especially like to thank Mandy Marshall and the team on the Parents and Friends as, for the first time, I sat on a P&F from the "school executive" side of the table instead from my usual role on the parents' side. I'd like to also thank the students and staff for their patience, their willingness to follow directions etc. and for their acceptance of me in helping to lead this great Xavier College community.

Next term I begin my role as the Acting Curriculum Coordinator, which I know will bring many other challenges. I have already conducted my first Teaching and Learning Coordinators' meeting and I have also had a very productive visit from our Board of Studies Liaison Officer. Helping to guide students through our intricate curriculum and assist staff to continue to develop the wonderful learning opportunities for our students is a challenge I look forward to in coming months.

Finally, I'd like to publicly thank and affirm John Ley and Tricia Maidens for giving me these opportunities. In many respects, following the leadership beliefs and styles of these two well recognised leaders in our diocese is both a challenge and a great delight. Working with staff, students and parents in Catholic education is something we all share, but it is especially rewarding at Xavier College.

Yours in Xavier

Paul Hocking (Acting Assistant Principal)



Titration Competition 2010

On Saturday 19th June, two teams of 3 students from Xavier College entered the annual Royal Australian Chemical Institute Titration Competition at UWS Richmond.

Titration is a chemical analytical process which determines exact concentrations of substances using chemical indicators, precise measurements and calculations. Results are based on how close students get to the actual concentration of a given substance with measurements having to be accurate down to the fourth decimal place (0.0001mol/L). Error points are awarded for measurements further away from the actual concentration, so, like golf, the individual and then team with the lowest score wins. Students compete in teams of 3 with individual results added together. Titration "machines" usually get within 50 points of error, with the average chemistry trained "human" getting around 150 errors. Over 19 teams competed on the day with the winning team getting a combined score of just 40, with second and third place scoring over 200.

The Xavier Students who competed were Amanda Stevenson, Jake Wilson, Jessica Newman, Jahme McLoughlin, Brittney Wilcox and Mathew Melville. Each of these students practised after school on a weekly basis to improve their techniques and accuracy. Special thanks goes to Jessica Newman in Year 11 who helped the five Year 12's by learning this normally Year 12 chemistry skill so all students could compete. While the teams from Xavier did not win on the day, they competed very well and attained scores that showed they are up with the top students studying Chemistry in the state. Notable mentions must go to Jake, who scored an excellent 10, and Amanda, who scored 37.

It is hoped that the Xavier Year 12 Chemistry students next year will compete as well and maybe even go on to the state finals in this prestigious competition.

Paul Hocking

Chemistry Teacher



YEAR 11 RETREAT



'I had great fun playing all the games but I liked "Battle of the Sexes" the best. The girls were robbed – they should have won!' Danika Buttigieg



'I had a wonderful time; even the food was so good that I did not miss Mum's cooking!' Benjamin Refalo



Nabil Sleiman

Wouldn't it be good if we could go on Retreat every week, especially here where the camp is so nice!

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION
“Health Promotion Initiatives”

Dear Parents and students,

Throughout this year, each newsletter will contain some Health Promotion information sourced and developed by the current Year 11 PDHPE students.

“Health Promotion is about individuals and communities working together to take action to improve their health by using a combination of personal and social resources. It recognises the need for change in the way individuals live their lives and the environment they live in to improve their health” Peak Performance 1, Buchanan, D etal 2010.

As such, students have identified a number of health issues to advocate for. Hopefully you will find their work of interest and benefit to either your health or that of someone you know.

Mr. Kennedy
TLC Coordinator (PDHPE)

Asthma Foundation

Asthma is

‘a disease of the airways or branches of the lungs that carry air in and out. These airways narrow, the lining becomes inflamed and swollen and produces more mucus.

This causes coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and shortness of breath’.

Asthma affects people of all ages; it affects 1 in 6 in children in Australia and 1 in 9 adults. Reasons why people develop asthma are still unknown but we do know that people with asthma in the family often have a history of hay fever also. Exposure to cigarette smoke during pregnancy and early childhood significantly increases the risk of children developing asthma. Other factors that play a role are exposures to allergens in the environment: dust mites, pollens and mould.

There is no cure for asthma at this point but, if managed well, people with asthma can live a full and active life.

Asthma Foundation, NSW

<http://www.asthmansw.org.au/>

Asthma Information Line 1800 645 130

ask@athmansw.org.au





At Parent Line we are dedicated to helping families develop richer, more rewarding relationships and create safer more nurturing environments for children to grow and develop into happy, healthy, confident, contributing young adults.

Changing problems into opportunities for skills development

As adults we often forget what it was really like to be a child. We might have memories about events but we often forget about all the wisdom and knowledge that has been learnt along the way and that it did not come easily. We often expect our children to be able to manage all kinds of situations without difficulties and then become frustrated when they have problems.

The most common reason parents seek help from Parent Line is in managing their child's behaviour. Parents often feel embarrassed to tell other people that they are struggling with their child's behaviour. They feel it could be seen as a reflection on their parenting capabilities.

Parents sometimes blame it on others: "It's the teacher that's causing my child to behave like that" or "She's bored at school so she misbehaves" etc. We as parents have all done that!

At Parent Line we suggest to parents that a very effective way of working with the problem is to view the problem as an opportunity for the child to learn skills. It might be a process of self discovery, or it might be about learning relationship skills, problem solving skills or even help seeking skills.

This approach is about understanding that children can't know how to manage every situation. It is acknowledging that we all continue to learn and develop throughout life and that mistakes are just opportunities to learn. If the mistakes continue to happen then the learning isn't happening.

It helps eliminate some of the frustration and gives parents a different mindset that has an outcome. Instead of being just the disciplinarian, parents take on roles such as coach, mentor, limit setters and the child's cheer squad all in one.

This method creates opportunities for relationship building and closeness between the parent and child. It helps parents to break down the issue into parts that they feel that they can influence. There are many steps along the way that help parents put this into practice.

(adapted from Ben Furman, "Kids Skills", 2007, St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo, Vic)

If you are interested in averting the negative spiral of being frustrated with your child's behaviour, stopping the nagging and the blaming, call us at Parent Line **1300 1300 52**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or log onto our website for more parenting information on www.parentline.org.au

<i>Important Dates</i> <i>Term 2 2010</i>	
<i>Thursday and Friday</i> <i>1st & 2nd July</i>	<i>Staff Reflection Days</i> <i>(pupil free days)</i>
<i>Monday 19th July</i>	<i>Term 3 Begins</i>

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Catholic Schools Parent Forum - Learning for today's world

Topics include:

- What does contemporary learning and teaching look like?
- How does this impact on the learning environment (e.g. flexible learning spaces)?
- How can personalising learning cater to the diverse needs of all students?
- Does the educational research support this approach?

Hosted by Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta, in partnership with the Parent Representative Council. More details to follow in Term 3.

Concert in St Patrick's Cathedral: 1st July

The Sydney Symphony will bring the power of brass and organ to Parramatta for a special performance on Thursday, 1st July at 8pm. Program includes music by Monteverdi, JS Bach, Richard Strauss, Wagner and more. Tickets: \$30.

Bookings: Sydney Symphony Box Office tel (02) 8215 4600 or at: www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com

Theology on Tap: 5th July

Immaculée Illegalize, (author of *Left to Tell*) survived the 1994 Rwandan genocide, hiding in a bathroom for 91 days with 7 other women, while most of her family was murdered. Come and hear her moving story of living faith, hope and charity that led her to forgiveness. Starts 6.30pm at PJ Gallagher's Irish Pub, 74 Church St, Parramatta. \$10 steaks before 7pm. For young adults 18-35. Details: www.theologyontap.com.au

SCENE – Sydney Congress Embracing the New Evangelisation: 12th-16th July

Bishop Julian Porteous, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney and chair of the congress, welcomes people of all ages, especially youth, to come together and learn about the New Evangelisation, called for by Pope John Paul II. Details:

www.scene.org.au

Parramatta Marist 190th Anniversary Dinner

On Friday 29th October, Parramatta Marist High School, Westmead is holding its 190th Anniversary Dinner at Sarah Grand Ballroom, Le Montage, Lilyfield. Tickets: \$90 each. Corporate sponsorship available.

Contact the school (02) 9635 7066.



UNIFORM SHOP
THE UNIFORM SHOP
IS OPEN
THURSDAYS
9.00AM –4.00PM
Phone 4777 4068

REMINDER TO PARENTS

Parents are asked to notify the College if your child will not be attending school.

