



From the Principal



This is the last VMail before the College celebrates 90 years of service to Catholic education.

Each year we seem to celebrate new "firsts". As we look at photos of our humble beginnings, we see boys, mostly primary school pupils, and lots of boarders. In our ninetieth year, we see girls from Years 7-13, the introduction of a new uniform and the continued development of buildings and facilities to meet the demands of 21st Century education.

Inside the classrooms, we sometimes still see rows of desks but the blackboards have given way to whiteboards, the spirit and ink duplicators have given way to computers and data shows, the large (sometimes overcrowded) classes have given way to smaller numbers.

In many ways, teachers have remained the same: passionate, dedicated, inspirational, committed to enabling their students to achieve at excellent levels, proud of every iota of progress made by "their" girls studying "their" subject. In many ways, teachers have changed to meet the challenges of new technology, the needs and demands of each 'new' generation, to say nothing of the impact of the values, or lack of them, in society as a whole.

As we look ahead with excited anticipation to February 2008, there is so much to celebrate, so much for which to thank our loving and merciful God. There is so much for which to thank our forebears – the Sisters of Mercy and generations of Mercy girls.

So let us all celebrate our 90 years!



VALUES PROJECT

God it is you who teaches me to be MERCY

Each term we strive to promote our value focus for the term in a different way. This term, focusing on Mercy, we decided to use our version of web2 technologies. Web2 technologies are social websites such as YouTube, Bebo, MySpace and Blog sites that provide a way for people to converse using the internet.

And so, a new icon "The Villa Blog" appeared on the Villa Maria intranet site. Each week during the term students have been asked deep and meaningful questions for reflection such as "is it okay to text in Church?"; during Conservation Week we reflected on the question "do animals have souls?"; as the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki came around we asked "is there a God of Mercy when so many places in our world experience war?" Additional to this, on this site, students have been able to provide their own definitions for Mercy, to write prayers and review websites relating to justice and mercy.

Blog responses have been many and varied. Students and staff have engaged in debate and discussion about the different issues presented. It was great to see students logging into computers at lunchtimes to check out the latest Blog site comments and, as well as this, many conversations have arisen in Religious Studies classes throughout the term which indicate that the Blog initiative for Term 3 was a great success. So... have you blogged yet?

WORLD YOUTH DAY

In the last edition of VMail we featured the World Youth Day Cross. Here, some of our Villa students proudly carry the Cross from Our Lady of Victories Church to Villa Maria College on an early morning in July.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL DAY

Catholic Schools' Day was celebrated in great style on 2 May 2007. Despite pouring rain, a group of students managed the journey to Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church for Eucharist with Parishioners, the students of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School and some students from St Thomas of Canterbury College.


This was followed by a very enjoyable morning tea with some of the students and parishioners who had attended the Mass. Additionally, a small group of students had a very pleasant time when they joined St Teresa's Catholic Primary School for their Mass for Catholic Schools' Day.

Meanwhile, back at Villa, all students and staff were presented with a prayer card which had been put together for all students in the


Christchurch West Pastoral Area. This card contained the school crests and photographs of students from the five schools. A poster of a similar style was displayed in the five schools and parishes in the Pastoral Area.

Lunchtime saw a hive of activity in the College Hall as each of the Vertical Groups entered a team of 6 students, from assorted year levels, in an Inter-House Catholic Quiz. Choosing their fastest runner, students had to answer questions then run the length of the hall to deliver their responses to the Religious Studies teachers who were marking the quiz. Congratulations to Vertical Group M1 who won the quiz and to Ennis House which narrowly beat Mercy House to be the overall winners of the Competition.

Christchurch West Pastoral Area Schools
St Bernadette's, St Teresa's, Villa Maria
Our Lady of Victories, St Thomas of Canterbury



God of Mercy,
we ask your blessing on our schools.
May we serve others generously,
pray constantly,
work for justice,
and listen for Your call.
May our school communities be ones where,
knowing Your love for us, we may love each other.
May we help to build a better world
by being people of peace.
May we strive for excellence in all that we do
so that it may give glory to You, our God.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.
Amen



Catholic Schools Day 2007
Radiating Hope Celebrating Excellence
Ko te pae tawhiti arumia kia tata



FAREWELL



Recently Angela Southon retired from her position as Canteen Assistant after several years preparing food for the hungry hordes at Villa. We will see her back occasionally, however, as a casual assistant filling the gaps (and the rolls) when the need arises. She was formally farewelled at a well-attended morning

tea on 15 August. Robyn Noble has been appointed to take over the position.

Stephen Roach
Executive Officer



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FROM THE DEVELOPMENT DESK

TĒNĀ KOUTOU! HELLO!

With so much to crow about, my job has been a challenge over the past six months to stay abreast of all of Villa's high achievers and to ensure these special Villa people receive public acknowledgment of their successes!

I hope you will have noticed that the College website has been updated and we hope to see some further developments in this area later in the year.

We are still actively seeking funds to complete College enhancement projects, such as the fence replacement fund, and needing to seek ways to balance the declining pool of gaming trust grants.

Thank you for the spirit of enthusiasm and generosity that so obviously permeates the Villa community.

The success of the Villa Maria College Development Programme directly impacts on our ability to provide a strong academic programme, enhance technology, offer financial assistance, improve facilities and support co-curricular activities while maintaining a reasonable College Levy. For this, your on-going support is essential.

PAINLESS GIVING

Often when we think of giving to our College, we naturally think of giving cash (which is always appreciated!)

However, there are other more painless ways to give that are greatly appreciated by the Villa community:

- Support the College Shop and purchase College memorabilia as gifts! You can even order online! www.villa.school.nz
- Another way is to help both the College and the environment by recycling your ink cartridges in the pre-paid envelopes available from the College. There is not cost to you in doing this and every bit helps!

Development Officer contact details:

Email: development@villa.school.nz

Ph/Fax: 322-6029 (off campus office)

Mobile: 0275 999 041

On-site at College Wednesdays 9am – 1pm and for meetings at other times by appointment.

Thanks a million!

Jill Borland,

Villa Maria Development Officer

GAMING TRUSTS & RAISING FUNDS

Villa Maria College extends its gratitude to the following Gaming Trusts for funding to date in 2007:

- NZ Community Trust – \$2884.89 towards travel for the Cycling Team to attend the National Secondary Schools' Championships and purchase of five wind trainers
- Pub Charity – \$5,000 towards netball coaching fees
- The Perry Foundation – \$1,100 and the Caversham Foundation – \$2000 towards travel for the A Netball Team to attend the National Secondary Schools' Championships

Chasing Environmental Sustainability

Help the College to do its part in protecting our environment and operating in a sustainable way by opting to receive your copy of VMail by email.

VMail by Email (VE Mail) is a victory for the environment and will also help the College to reduce its production and postage costs; freeing up funds for other College projects such as student resources and building projects.

To register for VE Mail please contact the Development Officer – Jill Borland today development@villa.school.nz

Thank you for doing our part to protect our beautiful country and supporting our College.

ADVERTISING VMail is produced at Villa Maria College on behalf of the College, the Proprietor, the Past Pupils' Association, the Board of Trustees and the PTA. The Stakeholders of VMail would like to extend to all advertisers their sincere thanks for this support and ask that readers support these businesses.

If you would like to advertise in future issues of VMail please contact the Development Office: development@villa.school.nz or phone 322-6029 for further information and current advertising rates.



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Or

I am happy for the donation to be used as the College sees fit.

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(Please tick the boxes which apply)

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A receipt for tax purposes AND

A mention in the College newsletter

A mention in VMail

Other (Please indicate)

Contact: The Development Office, Jill Borland
Email: development@villa.school.nz Mobile: 027 599 9041

Villa Maria College 90th Anniversary February 23 & 24 2008

Registration Forms are now available and can be downloaded from the College website: www.villa.school.nz or requested from the College ph: 348 4165.

Memorabilia is also available for sale. See the website for further information on the following:

90th Anniversary Silk Scarves - beautiful, large hand-dyed silk scarves in Villa Maria blues and silver are a stunning reminder of your College and have been created especially for the 90th Celebrations by Christchurch designer, Pippa Davies.

90th Anniversary Shot Glasses - beautifully etched shot glasses with VMC 90th in pewter with a gold trim

Villa Maria College Pens – stylish silver pens with black finger grips inserted into the silver and printed in blue with the College logo. Each pen is tastefully presented in its own navy blue velvet sleeve.

Schola Cantorum Choir on CD - the beautiful voices of Villa Maria College's choir Schola Cantorum with this wonderfully reflective LP recorded to CD.

Other College Memorabilia Available:

Wine Glasses etched with the College crest

Coffee Mugs printed in blue with the College motto in English and Latin

Glass Coasters with the College crest, motto and kōwhaiwhai

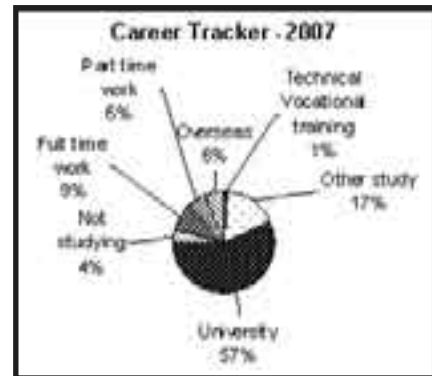
Con Brio Italia 2006 on CD 2006 tour of Rome.

Cead Mile Failte DVD

College Leavers – Where do they go?

For the first time we present statistics about our College leavers and where they go from secondary school. This is valuable information which will enable us over time to get a clear picture of how Villa is preparing students for the world beyond school and where our graduates are headed!

An analysis of the leavers' data (see graph) shows that the majority of Villa Maria leavers (75%), go on to further study at a tertiary institution with 57% indicating that they were planning to enter University to study at degree level.



Seeking Mentors!

Can you help? Do you know others who could?

Villa Maria Careers Department is seeking people who would like to mentor students into career pathways; for example forensics, law, chiropractic, accountancy etc.

If you, or someone you know, would like to take part in nurturing your industry and developing of our talented young women to become and active member of it, please contact:

Marie Marquet, Careers Advisor, Ph 03 3484 165 ext 846, Email: mma@villa.school.nz

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PRACTICE MADE PERFECT



German language students at Villa Maria College walked off with top honours at the recent Oskars, a German language competition held in Christchurch.

The Year 10 class beat out six other local schools to take first place for a skit they had to write and perform in German. According to the rules of the competition the skit had to include the line "practice makes perfect" (Übung macht den Meister).

Head of Villa's German language, Beate Dix, says the students based their skit on the famous German children's book "Max und Moritz" by Wilhelm Busch, we celebrate his 175th birthday anniversary this year.

"Max and Moritz are two naughty boys who play pranks on people. In the skit written by the students, Max and Moritz try to play pranks on a group of dancers as they practice for a dancing competition. Unfortunately the pranks backfire and in the end the dancers win the competition anyway."

Well, as they say, practice makes perfect!

Judges at this year's competition included representatives from the Goethe Institute in Wellington and the German Languages Department at the University of Canterbury.

Beate says the win is a great motivator for the students. "The Oskar Competition gives them the opportunity to do something a bit different from the normal class routines. They have to put everything they've learnt into practice including getting intonations and pronunciations right."

The win was quite timely for Villa Maria College as the students were getting behind International Languages Week which ran from 19 – 25 August. Among the week's activities, the College prepared International food stalls, and decorated a wall with photographs and maps. The Year 10 students also performed their skit for school.

Beate welcomes the focus of attention on foreign language. "New Zealand is still a bit behind on language learning so it's great to see languages being brought out in to the public more."

John Brandts-Giesen Barristers, Solicitors and Notary Public

John Brandts-Giesen (Principal)

Andrew McCormick (Associate)

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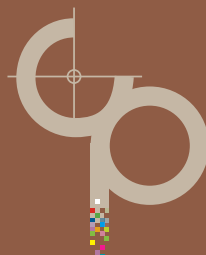
Fax (03) 313 5096 • Email jbglaw@xtra.co.nz

Trip to Japan

In the mid-winter holidays, six girls from Years 11-13 and teacher, Mrs Kathy Watson, travelled to Fukuoka in Southern Japan for an exchange with Kasumigaoka High School.

This was a wonderful opportunity to experience first hand school and family life in Japan. Travelling to school by train, experiencing Japanese cultural activities and making new friends helped to make this an interesting experience.

On the weekend the girls were taken by their host families to see the sights. Shopping was a popular choice, as was visiting local temples and beauty spots. The politeness of the Japanese people and the kindness of the whole school made a lasting impression on the group.



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National Achievers — Take Note!

Our National Achievers will now be seen from far and wide as they appear on our Peer Street signage! We are proud of 'our girls' and congratulate them on their tremendous achievements in gaining New Zealand recognition in their field of expertise.

Those who have received or who are due to receive such recognition to date include:

- **Holly Gibbs** – 2007 NZ Athletics Youth Team
- **Ellen Halpenny** – 2007 NZ Secondary Schools' Netball & Volleyball Teams
- **Nicki McFadzien** – 2007 NZ Secondary Schools' Cross Country Team
- **Carmelle Sorensen** – 2007 NZ Junior White Sox
- **Helen Searle** - NZ Secondary Schools' Choir
- **Johanna Theelen** – 2007 NZ Under 15 Water Polo Team
- **Juliette O'Neill** – 2007 NZ Ice Figure Skating Representative
- **Kate Gallaher** - NZ Secondary Schools' Orchestra

HIGH FLYERS

Has Skates Will Travel

Villa student Juliette O'Neill was selected by the New Zealand Ice Skating Association to compete at Australian National Championships on August 3rd 2007. Juliette competed well against a strong field and returned to take out 3rd place in the New Zealand National Novice Ladies Championships two weeks later. Juliette's older sister, Elizabeth, a former Villa student now studying at university, also competed in the Junior Ladies grade and was placed 2nd. Both girls are eligible for international selection in the coming year.



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Fashion Funds for



The Pope and fashion are not words often used in the same sentence – until now.

Students from Villa Maria College's Textiles Technology classes recently paraded their designs on the catwalk as part of a fashion show fundraiser for the World Youth Day (WYD) pilgrimage to see Pope Benedict XVI in Sydney next year.

The gala event featured the designs of about 20 Villa Maria Textiles Technology students modelling their own creations, as well as showing off the summer collection of Dunedin designer, Charmaine Reveley. Mod's Hair in Victoria Street added an extra touch of glamour to the models.

It wasn't all women's wear either! Seven male staff members took to the catwalk in the new season's men's range from Honour and Obey.

Fashion show organiser, Prudence Reveley says the whole College has been enthusiastic about the project since its conception earlier this year. The event will showcase the talents

FOOTBALLERS FINAL FOCUS

Looking to improve on their 10th position from last year's Tournament Week, the First XI Football Team began their 2007 campaign at Avonhead Park with a disappointing 1-0 loss to Papanui High School. The next day was bitterly cold and the College gazebo provided only modest shelter from the elements when we weren't playing. Another 1-0 loss in the morning against St Andrew's College and then a 0-0 draw with Marlborough Girls College put paid to any chance of making the top 12.

The weather improved mid-week but sadly not the results: a 3-0 loss to St Peter's College, Palmerston North. So, playing now for 17th-20th the girls lifted their game and secured a playoff for 17th-18th with a 3-0 win over Naenae College from Wellington.

Methven's Mt Hutt College was the final hurdle for 17th. The game finished in a 1-1 draw and so it all came down to penalties. A nerve-racking few minutes followed but we kept our composure to beat Mt Hutt 3-2 on the penalty count.

The team thanks Mrs van Kasteren for her role as manager this season and all the parents, friends and relatives who were able to turn up during the week to show their support.

Stephen Roach
Coach



Papal Pilgrimage



of the Villa Maria College students and help promote the profile of Materials Technology at the College.

Not only were all the models Villa students and staff and the College Pasifika group, dancers and Jazz Band performed several items throughout the evening.

"New Zealand is very short of skilled crafts people. This show was a great opportunity to showcase the creative and wonderful things the girls are doing that supports the Government's promotion of New Zealand as a hub of creative industry", says Prudence.

Sr. Anna Nicholls (DRS) supported the Fashion Show's goal to raise money for a group of 60 Villa students to be part of the six-day pilgrimage to Sydney for WYD where Pope Benedict XVI will say Mass.

"WYD 2008 is not just another school trip; it is a pilgrimage that gives our young women an opportunity to celebrate the mission of Christ in a way which they may never again experience," says Sr. Anna. "This is a pilgrimage that may change their lives."

FAMILY CREATES A SPLASH!

The Theelen sisters, Johanna and Anneke, are whipping up a storm in the pool these days!

Johanna was recently named in the New Zealand U15 Waterpolo Team which competed in two mini tournaments in Christchurch; winning both. She will also compete in the Garden City U16 classic against NSW U15 and Wellington U16 and then a 3-series Trans-Tasman Tournament against the NSW Team.

Anneke (along with Villa student Alex Boyd) has been named in the NZ Schoolgirls Waterpolo squad of 32, from which a team of 13 will be selected later in the year.

But Johanna and Anneke's sporting achievements do not stop there! Anneke is captain of the College First XI Football Team. Johanna, a member of the College First XI Hockey Team, was selected in the Canterbury Under 15A Hockey Team but unfortunately had to withdraw from this due to her waterpolo commitments.

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e-mail: dilger.hansen@xtra .co.nz

Villa Maria Netball Remain Top of Their Game

Training began at the end of 2006 in order to upskill our players and continue the club's succession planning for the future. Players were selected from various College teams and given an off-season fitness training programme by fitness trainer Julia Price. This was followed up with twice weekly pre-season training for six weeks prior to the start of the 2007 season: available to all club players.

This season 27 College teams competed in the Saturday competition at Hagley Park. Thirteen teams made the semi-finals; six of which went through for top place in their section, including the Senior A Team playing for Premier status; B U19, R U14 and Y U13 teams playing for the championship and C U19 and Z U12 teams playing for the plate.

The Z team won their plate final whilst the other teams competed strongly for second place in their sections with both the B and C Teams losing by only 1 goal.

The Senior A Team finished off a wonderful Saturday season; coming second in the Senior Grade Section and beating Hearts B in a well played game hot on the heels of their return from the South Island Secondary Schools' Tournament. This has promoted them to the Premier Grade for 2008 season which is a huge achievement for school-girls' netball and especially for Villa Maria! Along with this honour the A Team also won the Canterbury School Sport SuperNet (played on a Wednesday evening) by winning their final match against arch rivals Rangī Ruri. They finished third at the South Island Secondary Schools' Championships and are on their way to Napier in October to again compete in the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Nationals.

Congratulations to the players and coaches (Bev Gordon and Anna Galvan) on a wonderful season.

The Senior A Team again has a depth of talent with five players (Ellen Halpenny, Kathryn Taylor, Hannah Poff, Phil Dean and Tash Hansen) selected after the Nationals last year for the NZ Secondary Schools' Camp in April.

From this initial selection Ellen Halpenny was chosen for the 2007 NZ Secondary Schools' Team and was also selected for the Canterbury U21 Team. To top off a remarkable year she has secured her place in the 2007 Canterbury NPC Team. Anna Galvan, who is a Villa past pupil and current co-coach of the A side, was also selected for the NPC team.

At the conclusion of the South Island Tournament Ellen, Kathryn, Hanna and Phil have again all been identified as talented players of the tournament.

Ten players from Villa were selected to trial for the Christchurch Representative teams this year:

- U19 - Hannah Poff
- U17 - Jo Tripp and Philippa Dean
- U16 - Addie Keast
- U15 - Michelle Barry
- Christchurch U14 Development Team - Rachel Brown and Kiani Smith



- Canterbury Primary Schools representative teams - Natalie Cox Yr 8; Lucy Shingleton Yr 7

The Year 9A Team earned a well respected 6th placing in the Junior Secondary Schools' Competition this year out of 32 teams, and the Year 10A Team were placed 7th out of 39. Kiani Smith was selected for the tournament team from this competition.

We extend a very big thank you to all the coaches, student coaches, managers, umpires and parents who volunteered their time this year. It is a huge undertaking. Also thank you to the Netball Committee who work continuously all year round behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of the club.

STOP PRESS: Villa Maria narrowly missed top national honours in a nail biting 24-25 final against Verdon College at the NZ Secondary Schools' Netball Championships in Napier on October 5th.

PTA NEWS

Office Bearers for 2007:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| • Chairperson | Brendan Morahan | Ph: 352 8665 |
| • Secretary | Karen Fitzpatrick | Ph: 332 0773 |
| • Treasurer | Leslie McAuley | Ph: 331 6965 |

If you would be interested to join the PTA please contact Brendan or Karen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

By the time this V-Mail has been printed the PTA will have held another successful fundraiser for the college at the Christchurch Casino. The purpose of this event was to raise funds to provide lighting for the new courts.



These fundraisers are made possible by the support given to the PTA from several sponsors.

The PTA is also assisting with support for the World Youth Day to be held in Sydney July 2008. Denise Gaffikin a well known artist and parent has kindly donated two paintings to help fund students travel to this event.

ON-GOING FUNDRAISERS

Thank you to all who have supported the PTA and taken part in our fundraising efforts. Funds raised in 2007 will be put towards continued building development and further support of the all-purpose courts.

The lily bulbs which the PTA sold proved to be a successful fundraiser and this will be repeated next year.

Umbrellas and drink bottles are still available for sale from the College Uniform Shop Mondays 1pm – 5pm or through Karen Fitzpatrick. The drink bottles were the initiative of Year 13 student Ashleigh Anderson. Ashleigh has made a big contribution to the PTA and we wish her well for her future endeavours.

Umbrellas come in two styles (golf and pop up) These are perfect for Villa team supporters and sport sideline enthusiasts! Both styles come in royal blue and sport the Villa Maria logo.

The PTA is always keen to hear from anyone with new ideas.

Brendan Morahan

Chairperson, Villa Maria College PTA

Villa Maria Umbrellas For Sale

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Golf Umbrellas | \$25 each |
| Or buy two for only | \$40 each |
| Pop up Umbrellas | \$18 each |
| – ideal for Girls backpacks | |

To order contact Karen Fitzpatrick 332 0773
Or email the College Shop shop@villa.school.nz



If you believe in ...

When I was teaching at Villa in the 50s, Sister Celestine produced the musical, "Fairies are Really Truly". Some of you may remember the song.

In 2003, David Gunby, Dean of Post-graduate studies at the University of Canterbury, asked me that provocative question: "Leonie, what do you want to do before you die?" I replied: "Restore poetry to its rightful place in literature and as a key element of the English programme in all classes in all schools, because, unless students study and learn poetry, their spoken, written and visual language will not be in line with the principles of the current English in the New Zealand Curriculum."

Why poetry?

Because, if poetry is "dumbed down", "given a casual nod" or neglected for other options, students are deprived of access to the skills of critical analysis of the language of poetry, self-evaluation of original poetry writing, the rhythm, rhyme, form and figurative aspects of the poetic genre, and a whole body of work distinct from prose style. Students may not receive full exposure to literacy and imaginative development, and for developing "personal, social, cultural, historical, and national awareness and identity" as outlined in the curriculum.

My dream, therefore, at 76 years of age, was to publicly proclaim my belief in poetry as "really, truly true".

It was a tough three years and three months to write 80, 000 words, 330 pages of a tightly edited empirical thesis in the academic genre. Without the enthusiasm and support of two amazing supervisors I would never have made the grade.

In the 90s, after 300 action-packed days on my sabbatical, I completed three courses: writing for children, writing poetry and writing in general. I self-published four books on speech and drama and edited one on the New Zealand members of the Omega order, and one on the SCA members of the Canterbury branch. As I was examining in Australia and needed to know more about Australian writing, I inquired about a BA (Hons) paper – Young Adult Fiction – because six of the course novels were by Australian writers.

Silly me! Back to University 38 years after completing a BA? Denis Walker, the Head of the English Department (or God, perhaps, who seems to step in at certain moments in my life and urges me on to tackle goals I would not otherwise choose to do) suggested I do a complete BA (Hons) of four papers. Having finished that, I said: "No more!" David Gunby "pressured" me into doing an MA. "Me? An MA? No way!" But I did! Having completed: "Making the unconscious conscious through the poetry of Michael Harlow", that was it! "Leonie", said Gunby, "what do you want to do before you die?" I certainly wasn't in charge! And so the PhD began. Endeavouring, as a Sister of Mercy, to be open to God who often uses others to be the Light that shows the way, my last ten years were not of my planning. I WAS going to retire!

My thesis was based upon surveys and interviews, collating the responses and editing them. I posed my questions to:

- 150 first year University students enrolled in 102 English, a basic course aimed at teaching students how to write an essay through studying prose and poetry (Charlotte Boyes was one of these).
- Teachers of English. Survey papers were sent through HODs English to all secondary schools in Canterbury (only one school did not participate). I also interviewed teachers of English who asked to follow up the survey.
- Trainee teachers. I sat in for five weeks at the College of Education (CCE as it was then), observing and participating in the course. I surveyed, also, CCE-trained teachers actively teaching for several years (A former Villa girl was one of these).
- Three teacher educators.
- Year 11, 12 and 13 students individually and in groups.

your dream – Sister Leonie O’Neill

I read many articles from journals for teachers of English published in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Most of this indicated that poetry is not a key element in the English programme. Comments included that there was “no time in an over-stuffed curriculum”; students find it “too difficult”; questions on the external paper for NCEA 1, short text, are “geared towards short stories and print media”; many students need English classes to help literacy and “poems have no place in such a programme”.

It was a depressing situation.

Having thoroughly enjoyed teaching poetry as a vital element in English in my twelve years at Villa and seven consequent years at St Mary’s Greymouth and St Mary’s Hokitika, as well as 58 years (and still working) teaching drama and speech, I turned to my students of those years. I asked:

- What do you remember of studying, learning and speaking poetry in school or in speech and drama classes?
- How has poetry contributed to your success and satisfaction in your occupation, job or profession, or life skills over the years?

I sent out 60 papers to former students of mine whose addresses I was certain of and who covered a range of years, and occupations, from 1954 to 2000. Four people apologised for not being able, at that time, to reply. I received 72 responses – all of them positive; all of them extraordinary tributes to poetry and poetry teaching. Eighteen of these were former Villa girls. I felt very humble and very moved.

Poetry DOES work. Poetry DOES stay in the heart and mind and language. Poetry IS important in the English programme for all secondary students no matter what their level of intelligence or aspiration in life – doctor, manager, nurse, teacher, lawyer, laboratory technician, entrepreneur, shop assistant, restaurateur, M. P., boiler-maker, process worker, musician, artist, security guard, farmer, – with or without School Certificate or NCEA 1 – need I go on?

Standing on the stage in the Town Hall, graduating on 27 April 2007, I felt I was publicly proclaiming my belief that “Poetry is really, truly a vital element in the English programme for all students from year 1 to year 13”. I was able to make my point again in the interview with Tom Fraser on TV1 and Katrina from the Broadcasting school on CTV.

Now, all I want is to get a copy of my thesis into the staff rooms of every primary and secondary school. It is on line from the Digital Library of University of Canterbury, and the Christchurch City Library. Perhaps I should send a copy to Steve Mahary?!

Have you a dream? Is there a road to somewhere that you want to follow? If you believe in your dream, a really truly dream, follow it. “Fan into flame the gifts that are yours”.

Sister Leonie O’Neill (officially, Helen Josephine O’Neill)
Teacher, Villa Maria College 1954–1967; Christchurch Speech
and Language teacher from 1973

Editor’s Note:

The College congratulates Sister Leonie on her amazing achievement. She is an inspiration to us all and a true role model for “lifetime learning”.



Memoirs of Villa Maria – Alice Clayton

1937 – New Zealand was emerging from the Great Depression and I had completed my primary education in 1936. My Dad, in common with many men of that time, was not fully convinced that education for women was much of an idea. My mother though sensed that I was eager to continue, I having signalled at some stage that I could be interested in teaching.

But to go back to 1937 – my father took a long time to commit himself and made up his mind the very day before term 1 began. It sounds incredible nowadays, but the fact was that I just turned up! There was no pre-enrolment, I had no uniform, just ordinary clothes to wear for the first weeks. To be able to attend boarding school the head of the house had to realize the expenses he would have to meet, and this was just at the time when farms were beginning to be able to sell their wool, crops and the like following the worst of the depression years.

It was not until years later, the war having intervened, and after my dear mother had died, I felt some gratification when my father saw me capped B.A., and I had the pleasure of seeing him so proud of me, he realizing by this time the value of higher education. That is a lovely memory I still treasure.

Sister Immaculata was the one teacher teaching the “professional” subjects in the Secondary. I cannot think of her without recalling her supernatural patience, her friendliness, her ease of manner, her lack of moodiness, which all commanded such respect.

Villa Maria, being so small, meant that we could never shine in the sports world, but we made it big in our choir singing – winning the competitions three if not four years running. Our deportment on the stage was outstanding, not a hair out of place, our ties displayed over the yokes of our gym tunics, our hands clasped together making a straight line across the stage. Once again we were lucky enough to have a wonderful singing teacher who never accepted that anyone could neither sing, nor was tone deaf. This Sister Chanel had a sister, probably better known than she was – Mother Mercedes. They were gifted women indeed, and the story was told that Mother Mercedes had been offered a career in the wider world of music prior to becoming a nun.

I grow restless when I read such accounts as told in books such as *Convent Girls* and wonder which planet they were on. Maybe the pre World War II years were especially blessed, but I think of the likes, apart from the nuns I have mentioned, of one Sister Kevin, washing breakfast dishes in the pantry off the verandahs we were pacing along before school. In the winter it could be very cold and we kept walking to keep warm but our hands would be cold. She would call out from the window for us to come inside and warm our hands on the hot washing water. We would pass on jokes to the teachers and describe our holidays. I can still see Sister Immaculata bending over double as one of the hotel-keeper’s daughters described how her parents sometimes had to hurriedly evacuate the bar when word would come that the police were on their way. When I, along with my parents, went to dances in the local school room during the holidays, the teachers once had to put up with me being weary on returning to school. I’d caught a bus at 8 am after four hours sleep on that occasion. By the afternoon history lesson I could not cease yawning, but I tried unsuccessfully to hide my tiredness. Sister Immaculata pressed on regardless until the finish, when she said “I’m glad this lesson is finished, Alice. I was afraid of being swallowed.”

The Reverend Mother in 1937 was Mother Claver. She was into her 80’s, having been a postulant when the Mercy Order first arrived in Hokitika from Ireland during the 1870’s. She was a short little nun, and when speaking to us she would put her hands on our shoulders, having to put her head back in order to speak to us with such earnestness. There are just a few of us left now, also in our 80’s, who can claim to have known one such pioneer stretching back to early Catholic days in Canterbury.

Excerpts of the Memoirs of ex-student Alice Clayton.



The last five months has been a busy time for our Board.

Multi-Purpose Courts

Our new multi-purpose sports courts were officially opened by Sally Mene (nee Flynn 1964-66) and blessed by Bishop Barry Jones. These will be a wonderful asset to the College and provide substantially better opportunities for training and competition for our students.

Special Character Review

The Catholic Education Office has just completed a review of our College special character. This is an external audit to ensure that we are upholding our special character;

- Ensuring that the College demonstrates acceptable standards of Catholic community, pastoral care and religious education;
- Providing an assurance to our Proprietor that the College is authentically Catholic;
- Showing that the College works collaboratively with parents to provide for the faith formation of their children.

The review was a very positive experience for our Board, and the report concluded:

“The Board of Trustees and staff ... provide Catholic education where the dimensions of Catholic community, pastoral care and religious education are highly valued. The Catholic Special Character of the college is being effectively maintained and promoted”.

Strategic Planning

It is now time for our Board to set new strategic goals for the College; the Board’s aims, objectives, the educational goals and students outcomes we want to strive to meet, and directions and priorities for the next 3 - 5 years.

Ultimately, the reason for the College Vision Day is to discuss how we want a Villa Maria graduate to be: her educational goals, her values, her skills and other attributes. We can then determine what resources we need and how they should be allocated to meet this vision.

At the time of print, representatives from all Villa Maria College stakeholders have been invited to take part in our Vision Day to maximise the value of our consultation. The Board is looking forward to a stimulating and productive discussion on the future of our fantastic College.

Once again I would like to thank all our trustees for their ongoing commitment and contribution to Villa Maria.

Virginia Noonan
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

The Villa Maria College Foundation is a vehicle through which capital contributions, bequests and donations can be invested for the benefit of future pupils.

The objectives of the Foundation include:-

- Maintenance and support of the special character of the College and its Mercy charism.
- Support of students who may be disadvantaged either financially or socially.
- Assisting the promotion and the wellbeing of the pupils of the College.
- Participating with the College Proprietor and the Board of Trustees in capital expenditure.
- Contribution of scholarships, grants and provision of teaching materials and equipment.

Donations may be made directly to The Villa Maria College Foundation, PO Box 13131, Christchurch. Donations are tax deductible and receipts will be provided.

Bequest forms are available at the College office and bequests can be organised through your solicitor.

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BEQUESTS If you wish to initiate a bequest or make a donation please either contact the Foundation in writing or complete the form below and return it to: **The Villa Maria Foundation PO Box 13 131, Christchurch**

Villa Maria College Foundation | DONATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

DONATION I wish to make a donation of \$ _____ to the Villa Maria College Foundation. I understand that the Foundation has charitable trust status and that therefore this donation is tax deductible.

PLEASE TICK EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

- I am happy for my donation to be used for the general objectives of the Foundation at the discretion of the Foundation Trustees
- I would like to be contacted by the Foundation to discuss a specific purpose for my donation.

REUNION – THE THIRDS OF 1960

At Labour Weekend 2006 29 third formers of 1960, including four from Australia, met for a class reunion; the occasion being that most pupils were reaching the age of 60 years! A number of women had not been in touch with other classmates since leaving school in 1963 or 64. The group met at Villa Maria on the Saturday afternoon for a tour of the College by Mrs Lynch. This was a great experience particularly for those who have not had daughters at the College and therefore not in touch with all the new amenities and other changes. It was a great change for those of us who were boarders to discover that the convent, dining room etc are now used as classrooms! We met on Saturday evening for drinks and nibbles followed by a superb meal with lots of chatter and catching up slotted into the evening. On Sunday morning we boarded a bus and the first stop was the Little River Gallery and Café and then on to French Farm Winery for lunch and further catching up; arrived back at Villa at 6.30pm. Two women were heard to describe the Sunday event as “the icing on the cake” probably due to the relaxed trip and the opportunity for everyone to move around and mix with different people. These past pupils are keen to meet again in five years time!



Obituary

Sisters of Mercy

Sr M Anselm Fitzgerald
Sr M Benedict McQuillan
Sr M Joachim

Past Pupils

Mary Frances Thwaites (nee Duncan) 1928 - 1930
Melissa Hebden 2000 - 2004
Aimee Gordon 1994 - 1997

In each issue, we honour those who have died. To make it possible for us to include these past pupils we would appreciate if you could let us know of any deaths that have occurred from within our College community.

IMPORTANT DATES

2007 School Leavers' Breakfast:

Thursday 8th November 2007 8am at the College

2006 Leavers' Dinner:

Wednesday 21st November 2007 at Rydges.

Fifth Friday Get-Together:

November 30th 2007 at Chateau on the Park from 5.30pm.

50 Years on:

Class of '58 reunion February 2008. Contact Elaine Berry ph 348 1660.

90th Anniversary Celebrations:

Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th February 2008. Registrations open now. Have you received information? Phone 348 4165 xtn 822.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Lorraine Allison who won the “Night for Two at La Rive Motel, Akaroa” in the Mid Winter Dinner raffle. Thank you and much appreciation to Bernadine and Alan Harris for their generosity.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Bernadette Forbes (Stewart) 1973-76 and it is with some trepidation that I accept to role of collating the Past Pupil News page from Debbie Frank.

If you have any past pupil achievements or news that you would like to share please contact me at forbesfamily@clear.net.nz I would love to hear from you. Thank you Debbie for all the work you have done for Villa Maria. I hope you will keep in touch whilst on your travels. I am sure the readers of VMail will be very interested to hear from you.

SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

Those of you who are not life members will receive your subscription notice with this issue of VMail. You may wish to consider the 10 year subscription of \$70 or even the life membership of \$130 (which is extremely good value). Please don't put the account aside where it may be forgotten as your subscription is vital to cover the ever increasing costs of administration of the Association. Many subscriptions are unpaid from 2005 and 2006. Please send any subscription enquiries and changes of address to our Treasurer: Mary O'Brien ph 332 1582.

Subscription for Villa Maria Past Pupils' Association

Surname: _____ Maiden Name: _____
 Christian Names: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____ Email: _____
 Started College: _____ Finished College: _____

SEND TO: The Treasurer, VMPPA, 21 Peer Street, Christchurch 8041
 I ENCLOSE: Annual subscription: \$15 • 10 years: \$70 • Life Membership: \$130



Past Pupils' Association

President - Madeleine Hoadley-Currie (03) 548 1331
 Secretary - Elizabeth McCormick (03) 359 6066
 Treasurer - Mary O'Brien (03) 332 1582
 Address for all correspondence:
 c/- 21 Peer St, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch 8041
 E-mail: villa@villa.school.nz

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We are trying to trace the following Dux of Villa Maria. If you can help with contact details please email me at forbesfamily@clear.net.nz

- 1970 Mary Gavigan
- 1971 Susan Hundleby
- 1972 Marta Steeman
- 1973 Susan Lines
- 1974 Elizabeth O'Connor
- 1975 Elodie Meijer

Dear Past Pupils

Where has the year gone? It is only two months until Christmas! We hosted our Annual Luncheon in June at Rosebank Winery with the largest attendance yet! It was wonderful and thank you all who made the effort. Wasn't it lovely to catch up? We all left saying 'see you next year'. Our raffle of the day was a Night for Two in Akaroa at La Rive Motel. Thank you to Bernadine Harris for donating the prize. I am sure the recipients enjoyed your hospitality. We do appreciate all that our Past Pupils do for us.

Debbie Frank, a past PPA secretary, Committee Member and stalwart of our Association is off to East Africa. She will be spending a year as a volunteer at Edmund Rice Sinon High School; a Christian Brothers' school in Tanzania. It is a Catholic co-ed high school of 900 students. Debbie is excited about this opportunity and is looking forward to helping out in a culture so very different from our own. We send our love and prayers with her on this journey and look forward to hearing news of her adventures.

The PPA caters for the 2007 Year 13 Leavers' Breakfast which will take place at the College on 8th November. We enjoy this time as we meet our Villa Ambassadors for 2008 and knowing that we are going to hear great things from them at the Leavers' Dinner next year makes it very worthwhile.

On Wednesday 21st November we are hosting our 2006 Leavers Dinner at Rydges Hotel. This is an opportunity for last year's leavers to catch up and share their experiences of their first year since leaving Villa. The Association presents a Study Grant to one lucky student on this occasion; a small token to assist with some of her education costs. We all look forward to this reunion and love to see the enthusiasm for life these young women exhibit. They are always an awesome group and place Villa Maria College 'right out there', which is appreciated by all associated with our College.

Our fifth Friday 'get togethers' at the Chateau on the Park are well received and we look forward to a full muster for our last for this year on 30th November at 5.30pm onwards. Partners are always welcome.

As we go to print we are waiting Mercy Celebrations due 22-23 September in Nelson, with girls' coming from Christchurch and Blenheim. A lovely programme has been arranged; Dinner on Saturday evening with Sunday Brunch held after morning Mass at St Mary's with lots of 'nattering' in between. This we hope to be the continuation of our bi-annual celebrations with Blenheim taking their turn in September 2008.

Please make sure you have registered for the 90th Anniversary Celebrations in February 2008. You can obtain a registration form online at www.villa.school.nz or contact the College.

We must remember our own Sister Leonie, Dr Helen O'Neill, as we are so proud of her achievement of a PhD in English. Congratulations Sister! God Bless and love from us all.

We welcome new past pupils to our Association. It is just wonderful to hear from you all.

In closing I wish you all a Wonderful Christmas with family and friends. Good Health and Happiness for the New Year. God Bless you all.

Madeleine Hoadley-Currie (President)

PAST PUPILS NEWS

Roslein Wilkes (Mahar; 1954) from Blenheim was recognized in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. She received a New Zealand Order of Merit for her work with Riding for Disabled. She was the Special Olympics equestrian coach for NZ in Ireland four years ago and will head the equestrian Team to the China Special Olympics in September.

Georgie Newsome (nee Columbus) attended Villa from 1993-96 before leaving for 1 year as an AFS student in Denmark. Georgie graduated from Canterbury University in April 2006 with an MA in linguistics. Several months later she headed to the University of Alberta where she took up a research assistantship. Her PhD is investigating how non-native speakers acquire a second language. Georgie says her interest in languages stems from her time at high school where she was encouraged to study languages and took French, Latin, German and Spanish.

