

CROSSROADS

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

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**FIVE STORY
CATCH UP**

Highlights from our 2nd
Semester

**RETIRING TEACHER
THANK-YOU'S**

**ALUMNI
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<<(dis)CONNECTED>>

During this time of uncertainty, we've found creative ways to keep connected, while staying distant.

“

No storm can shake my inmost calm,

While to that rock I'm clinging.

Since love is Lord of heaven and earth

How can I keep from singing?

Verse from hymn: How Can I Keep from Singing

”

On the cover: Socially distant meeting with MCI students

Crossroads thanks the Yearbook Committee for capturing excellent photos featured throughout this issue!

Managing Editor:
Kayla Giesbrecht



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FROM THE Executive Director's Desk

KNOWN & UNKNOWN

We are in a season of many unknowns. Questions abound. Answers are scarce. How long will the pandemic last? When can things get back to normal? What will 'normal' look like?

For MCI the questions are significant. How can we help our students thrive? What is our unique mission in a time like this? What will school look like next year? How should we plan for the future?

Not knowing is hard. It can leave us feeling powerless or frightened or stuck.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the early disciples were also in a time of many unknowns. Everything had changed. They had no idea what to expect next. They asked Jesus "Is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6-8) Jesus did not answer the question. His response was direct and blunt. "It is not for you to know..." That's not the kind of answer we like. We want to know what will happen and we want to know when.

Jesus continues and is quick to redirect the focus and energy of his disciples. "But you will receive power. And you shall be my witnesses..." There is an important message here. Even when we do not know many things, we need not be powerless. The Holy Spirit saves us from fear and moves us to deliberate action.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for us to reset our agenda and to refocus our attention. We do not know the answers to many of our questions. We have a mission to embrace. The good news is that we are not alone. Christ sends the Holy Spirit to free us from fear and to empower us for action.

In this season of many unknowns, let us be certain of our calling. What does it look like for you to bear witness to Jesus Christ – to his love and grace? To the peace and hope he provides? How will you be his witness at home? Across the street? In your community and beyond?

- Harold Schlegel, Executive Director

FIVE STORY CATCH UP

The 2nd half of the 2019-20 school year has been unique, to say the least! Everything was normal, until it wasn't. We went from enjoying life together before the pandemic, to entering a journey of learning to learn remotely, and connect digitally.

Here's a few of the activities we experienced before (and during) the pandemic.

1



VARSITY BASKETBALL

The varsity basketball team played hard all season in games against Rosenort, Elm Creek, and Dufferin Christian schools, as well as a tournament in Gimli. The season came to an end in the zone semi-final game against Rosenort. Though we did not have a girls team this year, two girls played with the guys team. The team grew together and improved throughout the season thanks to the help of their coaches Gerald Barkman and Jennifer Klippenstein.

- Julie Klippenstein (Grade 11)

ANNIE THE MUSICAL

When we embarked upon this year's musical production of Annie, we never dreamed that it would be the last thing that we would share together before being separated indefinitely. We are so grateful that we were able to embrace the story of endless optimism and hope. From Emily Bergen's (Annie) stunning renditions of Maybe and Tomorrow, to Max Wiens' commanding presence as Daddy Warbucks, our students and staff outdid themselves yet again, both onstage and off. It was truly a show for the ages, with a message that transcends the very situation that we find ourselves in today.



2

3



MCI OLYMPICS

The MCI Olympics were packed into two full weeks - sewing flags, Opening Ceremonies, voting on the Good Deeds Cup activities, curling, board games, beach volleyball and snack bar, hockey and disc competition, building and pulling (or breaking) sleds, silly Minute to Win It games in chapel, sports trivia, and Closing Ceremonies. Each day had some team activity mixed into it, even if it was just eating lunch together in team colours. The final medal standings were not decided until the final day of competition, with team Si Fondue coming out on top.

STUDENT DELIVERIES DURING A PANDEMIC

As a way of connecting and encouraging students, dorm staff put together care packages of snacks, MCI paraphernalia and a photo collage of staff. Dorm staff drove to all of our students homes around Manitoba to personally deliver these packages (from a distance, of course). Some highlights were driveway conversations, connecting with the students face-to-face, getting tours of yards, hearing stories of quarantine adventures, and meeting many dogs along the way.



4

5



HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING - A NO-GALA GALA

This year's spring fundraiser was held in a different way than most years. Nolan Kehler ('12) and Alyssa Hildebrand ('12) hosted a virtual concert, which allowed viewers from around the world to participate and interact with one another, while watching various forms of art from alumni, from the comfort of their own home.

The No-Gala Gala exceeded our expectations and we were able to raise over \$55,000 thanks to you, our generous supporters. Thank-you again!

Scan with QR Code Reader to view
the No-Gala Gala Spring Fundraiser
Concert





PHOTOS FROM:
MCI OLYMPICS &
BAND CLASS



THANK-YOU MR. SCHOTT *a student reflection*

Mr. (Dwayne) Schott has been a staff member at MCI for the last two years, and my band teacher for the last five. Throughout the time I've known him as a teacher, he has always been patient and kind towards beginner musicians, and he is always joyful and proud when one of his students would finally perfect that tricky rhythm, or finally got that high note at the end of the phrase. These last few years at MCI he has taught us so much more than music. He has always encouraged us to see God's beauty in the music and the world around us. I maintain the privilege of being one of his longest-tenured students in the last years of his teaching career and I am grateful for all of the lessons I've learned in and out of the classroom. His skills, patience, and wit will be greatly missed in our band, as well as our school.

Owen Friesen (Grade 11)



Dwayne is retiring after working at MCI for 2 years (2018-2020). He has breathed new life into our band program and we are very grateful. We wish you all the best in retirement Dwayne!

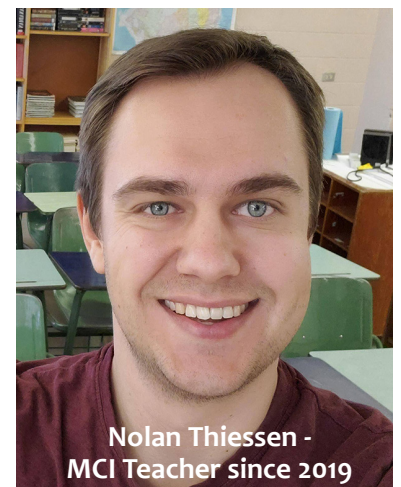
EMBRACING THE UNEXPECTED *a staff reflection*

This is my first year teaching at MCI. Coming in I didn't know what to expect. I didn't attend MCI as a student but, growing up in Altona, I knew of the school and had friends who spoke highly of MCI. To be honest, I accepted the position because it was a full-time teaching job close to home and not because I expected to find anything special here. It did not take long before I started to get the feeling that I was home - this is the school for me. I have always known that building relationships is the most important attribute of a good teacher, and something I value highly. When you have a good relationship with someone, there is a level of trust that breaks down walls and allows amazing things to happen in the life of a young adult. Because MCI is a small private school, I have had the opportunity to build incredible relationships with the students I would never be able to in the public system. That's what I love about this

place - the chance to get to know my students not just as students, but as individuals, every one uniquely created by God. Each child with their own passions, dreams, strengths, and struggles. Students and I have shared some of our deepest struggles and our brightest memories and hopes for the future. MCI allows me to get to know, and therefore teach, the whole person.

With the transition to online teaching due to COVID-19, the thing I love the most about teaching is impossible. Nothing can replace the sounds of students in the halls. Conversations over email don't have the personal touch. Even video chats can't replace those face-to-face conversations with students, which give me such joy. These days the struggles seem larger, and the high points slightly less high. With physical distance comes emotional distance, and with that, the natural walls between

students and teachers start to grow. I am encouraged every day with the knowledge and hope that the students will return and those deep personal connections will once again become possible. MCI has become my home, and I can't imagine being able to teach through this situation if it was not for the amazing staff and students who keep me going. Students returning to school can't come soon enough.



Nolan Thiessen -
MCI Teacher since 2019

ANNIE THE MUSICAL *reflections*

I recall as a child, around 8 or 9, going with my mother to an MCI production. As I watched a sassy red head named Anne Shirley march across the stage, I knew one day that had to be me. Fast forward 9 years and I too would don a red wig, albeit this one much shorter and curlier, and sing my way onstage in MCI's 2004 production of "Annie".

Hours of daily practice, maneuvering a foot of hair under the infamous curly red wig, fears of a runaway dog, and some of my favorite high school memories, wrap up my run as Annie. As a 17-year-old girl, I loved every minute of preparation and production.

Fast forward another 16 years (SIXTEEN! How can that be!?) and I am reliving Annie all over again, but this time as an audience member. One other crucial difference? The four children beside me who call me Mom.

The idea that I was once the girl jumping around the orphanage cots and singing "It's a Hard Knock Life" fascinates them more than the actual musical. "Did you sing this song too Mama?" "Did you have a real life dog too Mom?" "Is it exactly the same way you did it?"

Well yes, I did sing that song. Yes, there most definitely was a real life dog (I always breathed a sigh of relief when that scene was finished), and no it wasn't EXACTLY the same, but close enough that I could recall the exhilaration of being on stage, with the cast fuelled by audience reaction.

Life has come a full circle, from child audience member, to cast, to audience member with children, and all have been entertaining and memorable. One that stands above the rest? Unquestionably being the one on stage. That time has passed for me, but it was fun to relive some of those 2004 moments while I watched a new Annie take the stage this past March. As always, MCI put on another excellent performance and if I can't join them on stage, I'm thrilled to take part in the audience.

Jaime Falk, Class of 2004



Photo by Taniesha Ann Photography







LESTER
SCHELLENBERG
MCI STAFF 1989-2019

As an alumni of MCI, something I have in common with 30 years of students, is passing Mr. Schellenberg in the hallway first thing every morning. Always with his Corner Gas coffee cup in hand, headed to his classroom for the day. Often pretending to “bump” into some dorm kid who just woke up and was headed to class, still half asleep. Or sitting through Mr. Schellenberg’s geography class, where we suffered through endless note taking to improve our knowledge on “fish.” These things were normal for us students, as we had all been hearing endless Mr. Schellenberg stories that had been passed down for years and years of MCI students.

Lester was more than just a “teacher” to most students, he was a mentor, coach, listening ear, work out buddy, and friend. Lester always took time out of his day to catch up with students; on how their weekend was, how the basketball game went the night before, to tell us his latest pun or joke trying to get a laugh out of us, or get the latest update on musical rehearsals. These things helped us as students feel like we were a part of the larger MCI community and not just “another student.”

Over my four years at MCI, Lester and I became quite close. Often times I found myself in his classroom at the

end of the day talking about how our day went, talking about sports, and asking him for advice. We became good friends (even if he is a Montreal Canadians Fan) and is someone I will always look up to. His hard work ethic and soft heart have left an impact on me that I will always remember. I strongly believe that Lester made these same impacts on many students over his 30 years of teaching at MCI.

Lester, on behalf of every student you have ever taught and the MCI community, I would like to thank you for your time spent as a teacher. You have touched the lives of many students and left impacts on them that they will never forget: Whether that was as a teacher, coach, teammate, or friend. MCI will not be the same without your friendly face walking those halls, and you will be greatly missed. We wish all the best for you in your future endeavours.

Connor Thiessen ('18)

Lester has retired after 30 years of teaching at MCI. He has moved to Vancouver Island, with his wife Laurie, to enjoy retirement and to be close to his children and grandchildren.

Thank You to



for donating 8 pigs to this year's
Southern Meats Fundraiser.

PI FINANCIAL
experience. driven.





COWS & FINANCES

We often receive encouraging notes attached to donations. Here is one that came this spring:

We are happy to donate to your request. My husband & I have 5 children and all of them attended MCI for four years. We really could not afford to send our oldest to your school. She is now 66 years of age. When it came time to pay for second semester, we had to sell a cow to pay for it. It was well worth it. Thanks.

~ Gertrude 'Toots' Sawatzky

Gertrude goes on to describe how she worked with the Ladies Auxiliary to can fruit and vegetables each summer for the next school year and how others would volunteer their time to clean and maintain the campus. Years later there is no doubt the sacrifice was worth it.

Times have changed. MCI still relies on volunteers, but in different ways. Many people still sacrifice because they believe in the mission of our school. Selling a cow is moving illustration of what it takes to keep MCI going. Did you know that one of our donors, Prairieview Pork Ltd., regularly provides hogs to help feed our students? And another, Heartland Fresh Pak, provides all the potatoes we can eat.

In response to an urgent appeal last fall, MCI supporters stepped up their giving in a big way. I thank God for the generosity we have received and the good will of our staff who serve so faithfully. Over 1,000 people have donated almost \$670,000 to the work of MCI this year. The spring fundraiser, "How Can I Keep From Singing – A No-Gala, Gala" brought in over \$55,000 alone.

The COVID-19 crisis has created much uncertainty. The situation remains urgent. Closing the dorm for 10 weeks resulted in a loss of nearly \$50,000. We must finish the school year without a deficit. If you have given, please receive our profound gratitude.

If you are able to give before June 30, your gift will help sustain the mission of MCI – preparing young people for lives of service and leadership in God's kingdom.



Harold Schlegel, Executive Director

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TRIPLE E
 RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

LODE KING

MACRINA MAGAZINE

When I graduated from MCI in 2016, I left the cozy confines of small town Southern Manitoba and arrived in Winnipeg with no idea of what was in store for me. I had planned to take an entire year off after I graduated from high school, but I quickly got restless and decided to start school at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), with the intention of preparing for a social work degree at the University of Manitoba. My plans were quickly spoiled as I was introduced to the world of theology and philosophy. Thanks to the transformative, wise, and supportive faculty, I fell in love with a discipline that I had no prior awareness or respect for. While CMU is where I explicitly found this “world,” MCI was the place that made that finding possible. It was at MCI where I learned from teachers and peers to pay attention and to think critically. These dispositions were then consummated at CMU as I discovered a place where the virtues of critique and attentiveness have a home. This love for philosophy eventually extended outside the classroom, as I began to frequent surprisingly vibrant intellectual communities in the hidden facets of Facebook. Facebook may seem like an odd place to do philosophy and theology, but miraculously I stumbled upon a rich community (if we can call it that) of like-minded individuals. On these platforms, the collective instincts, frustrations, and hopes, voiced in comedic form, came to provide a backbone around which a myriad of online friendships took shape.

This past summer, myself and a particularly close group of these friends, began to speculate about what sorts of opportunities this community could spawn, and specifically, what we could do to take constructive advantage of this unique arrangement. I proposed that we launch a website: An online philosophical journal that would provide a place for strong writers, of all ages and levels of education, to publish material in a well-trafficked space. The idea sounded a bit naive and trivial—and to be completely honest, it still does—but I worked on a project proposal and sent it out to over 30 people who I had connected with previously: Undergrads, masters students, PhD candidates, ministers, and lay writers. The response I got was incredibly positive, and we had enough diverse interest to continue with the project which officially launched on October 26th, 2019.

We settled on the name Macrina Magazine, based of course on St. Macrina the Younger, the fourth century ascetic and sister of the influential theologians, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Basil the Great. Something I’ve learned at CMU is that in the modern university, philosophy has come to be considered as an autonomous and specialized discipline of the mind, abstracted from affairs of the world. What Macrina represents, alongside the intellectual vision of places like MCI and CMU, is an understanding of philosophy as a way of life. As Kevin Corrigan puts it, in summarizing Macrina the Younger’s

vision, “philosophy is the spirit of living wisdom which embraces the whole of human life: Prayer, manual work, hospitality, care of the sick, of the poor and dying. It is a life entirely given to God, a life not without risk, a life lived ‘on the boundaries’ of human nature, and it culminates in the divine love of a person, Christ.” This is what philosophy looks like.

The magazine, then, is an attempt to cultivate this way of life intellectually, through the craft of thought and writing — in the form of essays, poetry, and literature. The downside is that this craft can go to waste when writers do not have avenues to explore ideas outside of the classroom, or outside of the academy. I think that we ought to push back against the assumption that philosophy only takes place in the University. Macrina Magazine seeks to foster an intellectual space that is suspended somewhat precariously between the esoteric rigour of academic philosophy and the underwhelming hollowness of mainstream Christian journalism. Given the outrageous costs and high specialization of academic journals on one hand, and the overwhelming volume of smaller, private blogs on the other, we seek to be a resource that allows for critical reflection that is accessible and challenging for all willing to give their attention and wonder. We seek to offer a respite for overstimulated, yet undernourished, minds that are hungry for more substantial reflection than the twenty-four-hour news cycle can provide regarding our world and how we ought to live in it. By featuring diverse and engaging content, we hope to enable readers to engage with intentionality, thoughtfulness, and charity – both as thinkers, as well as people of faith.

Micah Enns-Dyck ('16)

Macrina Magazine has published four issues and is accepting submissions for the fifth. For more information you can visit macrinamagazine.com



Micah Enns-Dyck - Founder and editor-in-chief of Macrina Magazine (Photo by Lynette Giesbrecht)

IT'S IN THE WAITING, THAT WE DISCOVER WHAT WE'RE REALLY AFTER

I lived in Mod J, woke up at 8:15am and showed up to class at 8:29am. I was head of the Christian Life Committee and the Yearbook Photographer. I loved Chamber, musicals, and Res life. But above all, I loved just existing within the parameters of MCI: The afternoons of lying on hallway floors reading, the evenings of watching sports in the Res Lounge; Mock Awards, MCC runs, sitting in the grass watching soccer. That's what MCI was for me. A collection of moments that felt like home. Family. Community.

And that's what I imagine Doulos Discovery School to feel like. Doulos is a private, English school located in the mountains of the Dominican Republic. My husband Matt and I have recently screamed YES to the Lord, and decided to move to Jarabacoa, DR, in July. We've committed to serving alongside the staff at Doulos for three years, as Kindergarten Teacher (myself), and Activities Coordinator (Matt). Doulos' seeks to educate and disciple Dominican children to empower and raise Godly, Dominican leaders. We cannot wait to join this vision. We are honoured to become a part of an existing staff that is furthering God's kingdom in the DR through Christian education. We've waited years for this. We've prayed and sought out missionary opportunities since we were first married, over six years ago. But the Lord knows our hearts, and He knows the hearts of others, and while we waited, He refined us. He solidified what we were really after.

We have babies now; two of them. Our spunky Hayden is 3, with eyes like saucers and a spirit like wild fire. He takes after my Dad, who passed away 9 years ago: All energy and no rest. And there's our sweet Sawyer who is 1, with the biggest grin and the most relaxed attitude.

We can't wait to raise our boys in a Spanish culture with brick houses and humid air. We are terrified of leaving all that is comfortable, but we are ready to meet Christ outside of our comfort zones. That's where He shows up: In the waiting, and outside our comfort zones. As missionary staff, we are required to raise our full salaries. Our goal is to raise \$4,500/month in order to pay for rent, food, clothes, transportation, vehicle, insurance, etc. Again, the Lord has met us in our discomfort. He has brought us to our knees, stripped us from our pride, and reminded us that money is not ours and that WE ARE HIS. Again, it is in the waiting and the discomfort that we are refined by His Spirit. And again,

"We fix our eyes not on what is unseen, but what is seen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18

Lisa Wiebe ('09)

Blog: mattlisawiebe.travel.blog

Donate: <https://gcfcanda.com/doulos-discovery-school/>

More about Doulos: doulosministries.us

“

And so we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

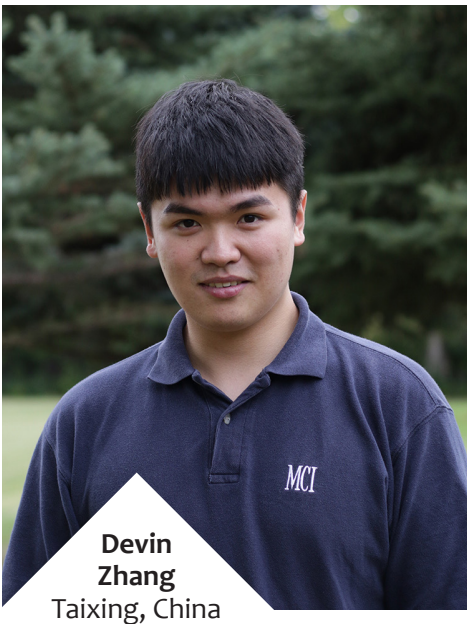
2 Corinthians 4:18

”



Matt & Lisa with sons Hayden (3) & Sawyer (1)

CONGRATULATIONS MCI GRADS!





**Max
Wiens**
La Barriere, MB



**Melody
Odekunle**
Lagos, Nigeria



**Merle
Yin**
Toronto, ON



**Natasha
Heide**
Boissevain, MB



**Nelly
Peters**
Cuauhtemoc, Mexico



**Sam
Driedger**
Gretna, MB



**Tielle
Thiessen**
Rosengart, MB



**Trinity
Blair**
Altona, MB

Class of  *2020!*

To Our 2020 Grads

Grade 12s, your last year at MCI has been made memorable for a very different reason than we had all anticipated at the start of the school year. There is no good way to describe the frustration and longing to have a normal graduation like everyone before you for the class of 2020. To be physically separated during the last months of your grad year, separated from each other and from life at MCI, creates an enormous gap in our lives of “what could have been” and an incredible sense of missing out on great memories with each other. Our hope is that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has filled those gaps in your life and given you His peace in our crazy world, during these crazy times.

We would want nothing more than to have you in our classrooms and to see your desperation to get out of our classrooms. You deserve the opportunity to be exhausted from the demands of MCI, to experience the shared excitement of the end of your high school careers, and the impending grad trip and grad day celebrations.

The lesson learned here is totally cliché, but we are clearly living out the “appreciate what you have, you never know when it will be gone” saying. May we never take life here for granted and see our daily routines as a nuisance. God grants us each day and we need to be thankful for the stability in Him, regardless of how our daily lives have changed.

Grade 12s, we wish things were different, we wish things were back to what we are used to. Regardless of how, we will celebrate with you (even if it means we all go to Costco and announce your names over the intercom), we will feel your Grade Twelve-itis even through Google Classroom, we will remember the good times together even at a distance. Even though the last few months might feel like a write-off, we have many cherished memories of your time at MCI and we will hold onto those and celebrate what God has gifted us with together.

Toby Wiens, Teacher/Principal





How Can I Keep from Singing?

A NO - GALA GALA

WE CAN'T STOP SINGING

The energy in the building was palpable, you could feel it to the core. After weeks of isolation at home, the six people in the building felt like a crowd. Even though everyone participated from their own room, there was a sense of nervousness, excitement and anticipation.

Now, rewind to a month earlier. We're all in a ZOOM call, acknowledging the fact that there is NO way we will be together for a fundraising concert. After taking the time to come up with a vision, and having the excitement build, it was all about to be taken away. And then, amidst the dreaming of what 'could be,' a title gives way for inspiration and creativity: 'How Can I Keep From Singing? A No-Gala Gala'. With roots in the famous old hymn, but visions of a new gathering of voices. Here began the process of what would become an hour & half production, MCI's first virtual fundraising concert, a 'No-Gala Gala'.

It all felt like a leap of faith, a stepping out in courage. We were not going to let the pandemic stop us from coming together and celebrating the people that make up the MCI family. Thanks to the commitment of a team of people, creativity flourished, and we put on one of our most highly attended fundraisers to date.

Taking you back to that night, there's six of us in the MCI building, and the energy is as exciting as if Buhler Hall was filled to the max. I remember when the music for the intro started, I'd heard it 50 times by now, but it felt different. Over 100 people were already watching it, from across Canada, and into the states. We felt together and comments of encouragement flowed in. By midpoint, over 250 households were watching (at the time of writing this article, we have over 1,600 views of the concert, and over 500 hours of watch time, more than 3 times what Buhler Hall can host)

Then, we introduced our General Fund. The minute that finished, the phones started ringing, the online donations flooded in, and by the end of the night we had raised over \$55,000. One, long-time friend of the school said it this way:

"I've never felt so connected to the whole MCI community like this at any MCI event."

Powerful words to sit with, to ponder. People from across Canada were able to attend that never have before. We could communicate during the concert, which never happens... There was something learned here and we're still not sure how that translates into the future. But what we realized is: The impact of MCI reaches far and wide, and the power of community can be experienced even if we're physically distant. So thank you for showing up, we feel your love.

Paul Peters, Director of Student Life



ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

Do you have news to share? Email alumni@mciblues.net to be featured!

BIRTHS



Jessica Raupers (Spanjer, '09) and Martin Raupers are happy to announce the birth of twin girls on December 26, 2019. **Lydia Marie Raupers** born at 3:41PM, 5lbs 10z, 18 inches long and **Eleanor James Raupers** born at 3:42PM, 5lbs 6oz, 17.5 inches long.



Elise Corinne Muehling was born January 22, 2020. Parents are Melanie (Schellenberg, '05) and Jonathan ('05) Muehling. Jonathan is an associate pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg; Melanie is a policy analyst for the Manitoba government.



Milo Ezra Gerbrandt was born on January 18, 2020 at 8 lbs 3 oz and 21 inches long to Sophie (Schegel, '13) and Zach Gerbrandt ('11).



Miles Jacob Peters was born on February 14, 2020 at 9 lbs 4 oz and 22.75 inches long, to Paul ('05) & Carianne Peters (both current staff). Miles is a little brother to Simon.



Patrick Walter Reynolds was born on March 26, 2020 at 6 lbs 10 oz and 50cm long, to Amanda (Franz, '08) and Kieran Reynolds (Both Dorm staff '12-'15)

WEDDINGS



Greg Carman ('84) and Andrea Heinrichs ('84) were married December 31, 2019 in Winnipeg.



John Thiessen &
Rick Heppner Mueller
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DEATHS



Abram (Abe) Thiessen ('59)
Oct. 12, 1940 - Nov. 23, 2019

On November 23, 2019, Abram (Abe) Thiessen, age 79, passed away peacefully at the Actionmarguerite personal care home in St. Boniface.

Abe was born in Stanley Municipality, south of Winkler, on Saturday, October 12, 1940 to Agatha Thiessen (nee Sawatzky) and Jacob Thiessen. Abe is survived by his loving wife, Bonnie Ellen Thiessen (nee Timbers), his children: Ruth Ellen (Kamal Pandya), Mark Thiessen (Carol, nee Enquist) and Karen Boily (Carole Boily), grandchildren: Blair Thiessen (Meaghan Wylie), Sarah Thiessen (Bobby/Rob Eames), Simon Boily and Julien Boily and one great-grandchild (Blake Wylie). He is also survived by two brothers and two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews. He was pre-deceased by three sisters and a brother who died in infancy.

Abe was strong and energetic; he grew up working on the family farm south of Winkler and, from the age of nine, he worked full-time hoeing sugar beets and harvesting other crops every summer. Fortunately, he was also gifted intellectually and his teacher, Frank F. Enns, encouraged his family to honour this gift and allow him to complete high school. Abe followed his teacher's example; he attended MCI in Gretna, MB, and then Normal School with financial support from the manager of the Winkler Credit Union, Henry F. Wiebe. After completing these studies, he taught at the Mason

School, south of Morden, for a year and then moved to the city where he spent the remainder of his career teaching at all levels in the Winnipeg School Division. At the same time, he continued to study part-time at the University of Manitoba and earned several degrees, with post-graduate studies in History. However, he never lost his love for the land, and, for many summers after he had completed his formal studies, he worked as a hail insurance adjuster.

His love of learning and hard work left an indelible stamp on many of those he taught. He had a genuine interest in students' well-being and cared deeply for every one of them – those who were gifted and those who faced challenges alike. He connected with his students through countless hours of after school activities: Running, skiing, bike repair and computer clubs, plus the traditional coaching of team sports, as well as more focused one-on-one interactions. He had an intrinsic need to see people succeed and reach their potential.

Abe was a committed and loving husband to Bonnie for 57 years and had three children that he loved unconditionally. He encouraged both his wife and his children to be all they could be and viewed their successes and achievements as goals attained for the team. He put everything into insuring that each member of the family would succeed and live in a better world.

But, suddenly, in his early 50's, Abe found that he had to stop teaching. At first, this was a puzzle but, gradually, we began to see his struggles. Still, for some time, we did not recognize his symptoms as dementia. How could this happen to such a mental giant? Well, it can, and it did! Eventually, he was assessed and diagnosed with Alzheimer Disease, a truly devastating disease. Undeterred, Abe capitalized on his physical prowess and, after moving to Vancouver Island, he took up hiking. He loved the woods and was known for removing a wide-spread invasive species by "broom bashing" along the trails. He and Bonnie were Park Wardens at Neck

Point Park and Abe, together with help from their hiking group, virtually rid the area of invasive broom and daphne laurel. The fruits of those efforts are still evident today. All told, he struggled with ongoing deterioration for 26 years. In spite of this, he left an incredible legacy by always making the very best of difficult circumstances. Abe will always be remembered for his zest for life and the quarterbacking all things positive. Who he was will truly be missed!



Jessie Neufeld (Cornelson, '51)
Sept. 29, 1932 - Nov. 22, 2019

Jessie married Peter Neufeld ('48) and they farmed near Boissevain until 1994. They were blessed with 5 children: Wendy (stillborn), Tenley ('76) (Herman) Dyck ('72), Tannis ('77) Nostedt (Kevin Lillijord), Rocky ('79) Neufeld, and Velvet ('83) (Dale) Sulymka. Jessie resided in Winnipeg from 1994 until 2015 when she relocated to Victoria Landing in Brandon.

She was blessed with 4 grandchildren: John (Alicia Elliott) Nostedt, Jordan (Sarah) Nostedt, Sterling (Taylor Ledingham) Nostedt, Jada Roser-Dyck (2010) (Hannah Roser-Dyck), and 1 great granddaughter, Aspen Nostedt. Her faith and her family were the focus of her life.

Jessie passed away November 22, 2019 at the Wawanesa Health Centre after a brief illness.

For the complete obituary please visit willmorchapel.com (Jamieson's Funeral Services in Glenboro).

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