CROSSROAD MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUT VOL. 31 ISS. 2 | FALL 2021 WELCOME TO MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE **FIVE STORY** WHERE ARE **MCI STAFF FEATURE CATCH UP** THEY NOW? Finding our new sense Connecting with Celebrating of "normal" Donna Kroeker Alumni

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"The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear?"

Psalm 27:1

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What Gives Hope?

I see hope in creation.
Every time I step outside,
I try to see the hope
there. Whether it be in a
bright sun, a paddle in still
water, the trees singing
to the tune of the wind.
The Earth, though it too
laments with a passion,
speaks hope, sundogs on
a frozen morning.

The penetrating heat on a summer afternoon. The whisper of the leaves as they fall. The sound of the birds and the smell of Spring. Sunsets.

These are the things that bring me hope.

And this heals me.

By: Ayub Regehr (Gr. 12)

More reflections like this can be found in MCI's recent publication, **Hope & Lament**. This 50 page book is filled with visual and written entries from MCI students and Alumni! To order your own copy, visit www.mciblues.net or purchase at the next MCI function.





P: (204) 324-6451 Altona, MB www.colemacelaw.com



Candy Ho (Gr. 12) and Cherry Lin (Gr. 12) square dancing at the Christian Life Retreat

FROM THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

LOVING GREATLY

It's not complicated. Jesus' answer to a very tricky question is simple. "Love God - wholly, honestly, entirely. And when you do, you'll love your neighbour as you love yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39 – paraphrase mine.) In a world of highly polarized positions, Jesus provides an uncomplicated answer.

We began this school year already fatigued from the long fight with COVID-19; weary from restrictions and even more, from disagreements with neighbours, friends and family. We are tempted to retreat to silent avoidance or strut with self-righteous swagger.

Are we still able to hear Jesus' uncomplicated refrain? Dare we love as he has shown the way?

The students and staff of MCI took up this quest at our annual Christian Life Retreat. The pandemic required creative alternatives to traditions established over many years at Red Rock Bible Camp. Speakers led us in reflection. We learned to play new games, built fresh friendships and raised our voices in song. We experienced God's love in prayer and in playfulness. And we found ourselves becoming less weary and less frightened of our differences.

The community around MCI continues to be highly polarized. Disagreements drive wedges between neighbours and destroy relationships. I pray the love of God will soften our hearts. An old folk song declares,

'They will know we are Christians by your love, by our love. Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.'

Amen. May it be true.

Harold Schlegel, MCI Executive Director







FIVE STORY CATCH UP

The past few months brought a fair share of hardships. Amidst the challenges, there were still many things to celebrate! Here are a few of our highlights:



OWEN & JEWEL @ 7

This year's spring fundraising series raised \$60,000 to support the ongoing work of MCI.

The four week series featured musical numbers from school groups, relfections from community members, a virtual auction and witty commentary from our hosts Owen & Jewel.

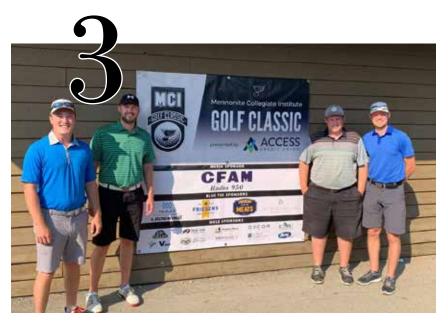
To view the full series, visit our YouTube channel:

GRADUATION

Due to COVID, festivities needed to look different this year, but we still found ways to celebrate this incredible graduating class. The week began with a formal grad ceremony in Buhler Hall for staff & students to attend. This was followed by a few days filled with fun on-campus activities and ended with a drive-in ceremony for graduates and their families.

Hats off to the Class of 2021!





GOLF CLASSIC

This summer we hosted our 7th annual MCI Golf Classic presented by Access Credit Union at the Minnewasta Golf & Country Club. We followed a week long format again this year, allowing many different golfers to join us on the course.

Congrats to our tournament winners: Craig Neufeld, Reed Peters, Delwyn Doerksen & Josh Neufeld with a score of -14!

Thank you to our sponsors, local - businesses and golfers for making this event a great scuess!

REGISTRATION DAY

On September 9th, we welcomed students' families onto campus for the first time in over a year. The halls filled with excitement as students moved into dorm, registered for their courses, and signed up for extra-curricular activities. Friendships were rekindled, and new relationships were formed between students, staff and parents alike.

Our opening program and community supper were held outside on the school lawn. It was such a gift to gather together as a community.



ALUMNI VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

We had so much fun at the Alumni Volleyball Tournament this year with many past graduates returning to MCI to play and compete against current students. This year the event was held outside under Gretna's beautiful canopy of cottonwood trees.

Taking home the coveted title of Champions of the 2021 Tournament was the MCI Staff Team; Nolan Thiessen, Kevin Giesbrecht, Amanda Reynolds, Meaghan Schlorff, and Toby Wiens.





Christian Life Retreat





his past week, September 22-24, we spent intentional time together as a school for our Christian Life Retreat. Unlike most years, we started this big event at school, with the morning filled with regular classes and a guest speaker Kathy Giesbrecht, who spoke about our retreat theme, Loving Greatly (and also handed out playdough). The afternoon was busy with teambuilding activities, with games like "Radioactive Materials", a marble balance game, Tangram, blindfold ball tag and we finished off the day with some rather clumsy square dancing, led by Harold Schlegel.

The second day of the retreat began with dorm kids piling onto the bus, and drive-in students getting picked up on the vans to head out to Winkler Bible Camp. Our early morning ride was full of sleepy conversation, moving towards what we hoped would be an exciting, covid friendly version of the original MCI Christian Life Retreat, previously known as Red Rock Retreat. Once we arrived, our brains (not quite awake) were jump-started with a large field game called Stix. Afterwards, we had worship led by the MCI Worship Band, followed by a session by Richard Bage who talked about his past and opened up about the people who 'saved'

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him as a teenager. In the afternoon, we were split into groups and sent off to participate in different stations such as an obstacle course, archery, low zip line, climbing wall, and the giant swing, (which is scarier than it looks). Once we were done at each station, students were given the opportunity to participate in a beach volleyball tournament arranged by the sports committee, other students chose instead to chase cats and explore the camp.

Worn out from the day, we sat down to a warm meal, to prepare us for the last event of the day. The friendship walk was perhaps the most chaotic event of the entire retreat, a quick get to know you for all students, both new and returning. Due to Covid, instead of the usual sleepover at camp, students returned back home, and to the dorm.

The third day started once again with a bus ride to the camp, where we had a delicious brunch waiting for us. After we had our fill, we were joined by our third guest speaker, Gerry Giesbrecht who told the story of the good samaritan and had us act it out in small groups. Once each group had performed a score was given, and a winner was announced! Then we headed outside for a friendly game of soccer in the chilly afternoon air, some students stayed on the sidelines to visit with new friends. Our retreat ended as the last two days started, another bus ride. This time filled with exclamations of all we had done over our short vacation.

Written by: Belle Dueck (Gr. 12) and Paige Anderson (Gr. 12)

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

I really enjoyed the prayer circle time led by Richard Bage after his session on Loving God Greatly. - Whitney Peters (Gr.10)

My favourite part was the giant swing! - Samuel Law (Gr. 11)

The giant swing was so fun much. I could have done it all day. - Damien Rieder (Gr. 12)

I was nervous about it at first, but I actually enjoyed the friendship walk a lot. - Evian Wiebe (Gr. 10)

Trying out the low-zipline and the beach volleyball tournamnet were my favourite parts of the retreat. - Jonah Ginter (Gr. 12)



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CELEBRATING MS. KROEKER

Donna Kroeker has been a teacher at MCI since 1993. She arrived fresh in her teaching career and has become a trusted leader on staff. She holds the title of MCI's longest-serving teacher currently on staff.

I came to MCI after my first teaching job at an independent school in Cartwright. In my second year there I took on the role of principal on top of teaching 9 classes. I was even busier when I began at MCI!

Ms. Kroeker has been involved in many aspects of school life, with highlights including overseeing the yearbook, coaching girls' JV volleyball, running lighting in the chapel and Buhler Hall, and acting as a key member of the Cottonwood Community Drama. She is also known to go above and beyond to meet with her students, staying after school for math help many days each week.

At MCI, I have the opportunity to not just be a classroom teacher. I can become invested in students' lives outside of academics - in the dorm, in after-school activities. This changes the way I can connect with them during the day.

Connecting with students is an important part of what makes Ms. Kroeker a successful teacher. She knows that little interactions, that may not always seem meaningful, can have a profound impact on students.

Many years ago I made a joke in a grade 9 class about a student's erasers, inadvertently making them the center of attention. After class, I apologized for putting them on the spot and they forgave me. Years later, at that student's graduation, her mother told me I was one of her favourite teachers because I took the time to check in with her. That stuck with me.

It's not just connections with students that fuels Ms. Kroeker's love of MCI. Relationships with fellow staff are a big part of what brings her back year after year as well as the faith community.

I have a unique accountability to my faith working at MCI. I don't want to be disingenuous when I share in Chapel. I really value our time of gathering together every day to share our faith. It often feels like God is more real to teenagers — they still have a child-like wonder. There is so much to learn from them.

Spend a few moments with Ms. Kroeker and it's clear to see she loves her job.

Thank you, Ms. Kroeker, for the many years you have invested into MCI, as well as the years to come!



"When the going gets tough ... ask Ms. Kroeker! Michelle Long, genius that she is, still has to ask for numerous hints about Pagemaker from the expert herself - Ms. Kroeker. It seems that only she can get the computer to do what we want it to at times." MCI Yearbook, 1997



"Ms. Kroeker has a lot of patience with her students. She has helped me so much in math, and takes the time to explain things in a way that makes sense to me. She shows genuine interest and care in my future and life after high school." Jonah Ginter (Gr. 12 Student)













MCI ALUMNI

Where are they now?



I have many distinct memories of my time at MCI, several of which are still triggered frequently. Over the past few decades, almost every time I smell fresh cut grass, I remember the feeling of walking out of the residence for soccer practice during my first week at school. I still remember many mornings when someone would shout out "Everyone turn your radio to 92.1" because a good song was being played. The volume went up and sound poured from many rooms as we communally enjoyed the music. I remember weekend meals that Mrs. Lundin and the other cooks made extra special for those of us spending the weekend. The story that I probably tell the most, particularly this year when we have been praying for rain so frequently, occurred in, I believe, the spring of my grade 11 year. There had been no rain and even though many of us didn't grow up on a farm, we could all feel the stress being experienced by our classmates who came from the farms. A poor crop would certainly make life difficult for these families and could affect the ability of some students to return the next year. As the spring progressed without rain, the tension only grew. Then, one evening during study period, we heard some large raindrops hitting the residence. One by one, students started stepping out of their rooms and moving to the doors. In my memory, it wasn't break time yet but this was a moment that no one could miss. The res emptied into the parking lot and field as we ran in the rain,

literally soaking it all in. Several students grabbed shampoo and were showering under the downspouts draining the gym roof (fortunately, I don't recall any lightning). This spontaneous celebration went on for some time as the residence staff joined us outside and we could all feel the joy and answer to prayers for rain. Although there were many other instances of community building, this was one of the most memorable moments for me.

After graduation, I spent the summer working in northern Ontario planting trees, a summer job for six years in the end, following which I attend the University of Winnipeg. I took pre-med courses and was accepted into medicine at the University of Manitoba, graduating in 1988. I subsequently ended up working in the emergency department of the Concordia Hospital for 4 1/2 years and then at the St. Boniface Hospital for the past 28 years and counting. During this time, I met and married Pam Poulter and we have four sons, Aaron, Thomas, Cole and Jonas. We have had the pleasure of attending countless volleyball, basketball, soccer, football and other games over the years. While we still have one son playing volleyball at Providence College, we are filling more of our time with music, both attending and hosting many concerts as well as travel, although the past 18 months have curtailed that somewhat. Personally, I have transitioned from sports photography, largely for our sons' teams, to wildlife photography, largely birds. This has afforded me the opportunity to learn a great deal about the world around me and has taken me down many backroads in all corners of Manitoba as well as places abroad. I find that the concentration needed to find and best photograph these birds can pull me out of my work mind and enter a different world.

Work in the ED has always been challenging, both in dealing with patients' illnesses as well as the stresses that have always been present as we try to balance needs which are growing with resources which are not. Covid has not created this situation but has certainly magnified it. As a Mennonite, I have always been proud of my faith, our history and our longstanding commitment to helping others, both at home and across the world. In the past year, I find my heart becoming heavier and I find it harder to proudly announce that I am a Mennonite. While many of us continue to love our neighbour and do EVERYTHING within our power to help and keep them safe, it is clear that some are not. Our reputation seems to be diminishing and it seems that maybe we aren't as concerned about our neighbours as we have always preached. As people with Mennonite names yell at hospital staff and call us liars over attempts at explaining Covid, become abusive when we are only following institutional guidelines to limit the spread of Covid, I become saddened and disheartened. I would ask that we all do what is right and encourage others to do the same. If circumstances are such that someone can't or won't do everything possible, I pray that they would respectfully accept that with time, all things will open up to everyone again. Now is the time to live with grace and willingly surrender, temporarily, some of those privileges that come with living in Canada for the sake of our neighbours. Our ancestors willingly at times, without options at other times, gave up comforts, not only to practice their faith but to demonstrate it.

And perhaps to turn the other cheek is the biblical admonition to get two shots.

Megan (Dyck) Kroeker

Class of 2002

For my Menno Project, I created a 'time capsule' for my future grandchildren. At the center was a diary. In it I was married to Daniel Kroeker – my MCI boyfriend. We were missionaries and were expecting our first baby. There were more 'diary entries' none of which were totally unreasonable, but all of them were twinged with idealism. Of course, there



would be hard times, but there would always be some sort of happy ending and God would always be there. I got an A on the project and I still have the 'diary' somewhere. Sometimes I wonder if Mr. Wiebe ever brought it to the staff room so they could chuckle at my romantic idealism; especially my certainty that my high school sweetheart and I would end up braving life's storms together.

Well fast forward. Here I am. MCI seems like yesterday, but it was almost 20 years ago (swallow hard). I did marry Daniel Kroeker, my high school sweetheart. Since leaving

MCI I did do a very short stint of missions — I attended CMU's Outtatown program and travelled to Guatemala. I'm still reminded of my time there regularly by sights, sounds, smells and everyday occurrences.

I became an elementary school teacher largely because I wanted to help people and make a positive impact in the world. I wanted to instill a love of nature and a sense of empathy and social justice in children. I now have three of my own children and hope with all my heart that I'm instilling these things in them too. I live an ordinary life. Of course, there have been hard times. Births, deaths, disability, mental illness, worries about money and the future but I've been undeservingly blessed. I'm surrounded by family. I've always managed to have enough. I've experienced healing. I've tried to take things one step at a time and breathe deeply.

I wonder if my MCI self would be pleased with me. Likely they would find me boring. One thing I do know about myself nearly 20 years out of MCI is that I'm trying. I'm trying to let go of caring what others think, and of thinking that they have it all figured out. I'm trying to let go of perfectionism which sometimes makes it hard to try new things. I'm trying to talk less and listen more. I guess I'm trying to instill in myself the things that I want for my children and the children that I teach. And I'm trying to trust God in the moment because when I look back, I do see that He has been here all along.

Susana Heide-Thiessen



I enjoyed every aspect of my time at MCI - okay, almost every aspect! The teachers and staff were so dedicated and truly cared about the development and well-being of the students. The people I met and friends I made have left a positive impact on me to this day! I have to admit that I even enjoyed the learning part - thoroughly!

After graduating from MCI I enrolled in the B.A. Social Sciences program at Providence College in Otterburne, MB graduating in 1995. Shortly afterwards I moved back to my hometown in Chihuahua, Mexico. While raising my 4 beautiful children I decided to add a hobby to my daily routine. I enrolled in some online photography courses. A year later I decided to set up my own studio and photo lab and within months it had become my full time occupation. For about 12 years I did studio and location photography, exclusively children and newborns. Working closely with

children and trying to capture their essence was a very rewarding experience!

In 2014 I got an opportunity to travel to The Netherlands to be part of a photography workshop - and I've never looked back. Since then I've had the opportunity to travel to numerous different parts of the world doing what I love, traveling with a heavy camera hanging around my neck and a backpack full of lenses! In my photography adventures I've been deeply touched by the places and people I've met! It's impossible to not be impacted by the people in the streets and markets of New Delhi and by the tribal people in the Omo Valley in Ethiopia. My mind, eyes and heart have been expanded by observing city life in places such as Hong Kong, Paris and Dubai. I enjoy every type of travel photography but I'm most drawn to the faces... those faces that tell a thousand stories in a single click. To display a few of the many images taken over the years I co-authored an instructional photography book which was published by Random House in 2017.

I feel immensely fortunate and grateful for every opportunity I've had to merge work and passion into one!







FINANCIAL UPDATE CORNER

'O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good. God's faithfulness endures forever.' Psalm 136:1



Grade 10 students; Whitney Peters, Presley Schroeder and Annabelle Wiebe at the Outdoor Alumni Volleyball Tournament

ith joy in our hearts, we can report that MCI enjoyed a modest surplus of funds for the second consecutive year. This follows three years of deep deficits. We are truly grateful for the prayer-filled and generous support we have received.

MCI organization.' Faith informs our teaching and our daily activities. In faith we step out each year trusting that God will provide what we resilience and creativity shone need to accomplish our mission curious students, committed staff and financial resources. Last year almost 30% of our revenue came from donors. We celebrate

to MCI's success last year. Each gift, whatever the size was highly valued. Together we have made a lasting difference in the lives of young people.

COVID restrictions limited so is truly a 'faith-based much of what we do. Yet we in-class instruction than most gift today. schools in Manitoba. Student through repeatedly. After a year of reduced salary, staff returned to their regular compensation. We were able to celebrate with our graduates in a week-long series of

the 1200 people who contributed festivities, including several days of 'outdoor education.' We give thanks for these and many other signs of God's faithful goodness.

With the beginning of a new school year, there is renewed energy and 2020-21 was not an easy year. hope. We step forward again in trust and hope. We rely on the generosity of people like you. Please consider were able to offer more days of supporting MCI by making a financial





DONATIONS MAY BE MADE BY:

Giving Online: www.mciblues.net/donate-now

By Mail: Cheques may be sent to MCI, Box 250 Gretna MB, ROG 0V0

By Credit Card: Call the office at (204) 327-5891

(Please indicate which project you would like to support)

For more information on fundraising projects or other ways you might support MCI, please contact Harold Schlegel, Executive Director, haroldschlegel@mciblues.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events are subject to change due to Public Health Guidelines.







FALL SHOWCASE

Join us online for MCl's Fall Showcase. Hear students and staff reflect on the school year thus far and enjoy music from student groups. Follow our social media pages for more information.

AGM

Join us for MCl's virtual AGM on November 9th at 7 pm. Visit our website or social media pages to access the zoom link.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Join us in celebrating the Christmas season at our Christmas Concert at 7:30 pm. Our students are already preparing for a concert you won't want to miss! An offering will be received to support the ongoing work of MCI.

NEW STAFF at MCI



Terry Mierau Head of Maintenance



Amanda Reynolds ('08) Educational Assistant



Kieran ReynoldsDirector of Student Life



Meaghan Schlorff ('15)
Dormitory Staff





ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

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



Janae Hochstetler ('14) and Jonah Short-Miller were married on June 7th, 2021 in Washington State.



Kari Enns ('12) and Lester Gonzaga were married on September 12, 2021.



Ivy Kayla Reimer was born on April 7th, 2021 a 9 lbs 1 oz and 21.75 inches long, to Paul ('13) and Lindsay Reimer.



Cooper Wiebe ('14) and Michelle Herms were married on June 18th, 2021.

John Thiessen & Rick Heppner Mueller Financial Advisors

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Cooper William Jacob Giesbrecht was born May 6th, 2021 at 7 lbs and 1 oz, to Kevin and Kayla Giesbrecht (MCI Staff). Cooper is a little brother to Carter.



Renee Peters ('14) and Micah Zacharias were married on September 2nd, 2021.



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Nora Mae Friesen was born July 14th, 2021 at 9 lbs and 3 oz, to Amy (Falk '09) and Joel Friesen.



Abby Cornelson ('18) and **Luke Voth ('18)** were married on September 18, 2021 at West Hawk Lake.



Brooks Mitchel Funk was born on September 10th, 2021 at 7lbs 2 oz and 21.65 inches long, to **Danielle (Goerz '14)** and Ryan Funk.



Karen Heinrichs ('77) March 6, 1960 - April 6, 2021

It is with profound sadness that we share that Karen passed away peacefully at the Hospice at Glengarda in Saskatoon on April 6, 2021.

Karen is survived by her loving daughter Jericho Penner, father Neil (Dianne Church) Heinrichs, brother Barry ('76)(Darlene) Heinrichs, sisters Donna ('78)(Norm) Heinrichs-Gale and Laura ('80)(Dan) Dyck, nieces Rebekah Heinrichs, Glynis (Michi) Gale-Schodterer and their children Albin and Oscar, Anna (Liam) Smith, Selena Dyck, Caley Dyck, and nephews Sam (Jill Belanger) Heinrichs and Graham Heinrichs-Gale. She was predeceased by her mother Esther Heinrichs and her brother Darcy.

Karen loved people and made a difference in many lives, especially the lives of children (some of whom

never knew her), via her long career in early childhood education. She started in day care centres and later was recognized for her distinguished service with the Saskatchewan Department of Education, most recently as Program Manager of the Early Years Branch Central Region in Saskatoon.

Karen was a very accepting person whose kindness walked ahead of her at all times. She was a special advocate for the vulnerable. Prior to settling in Saskatoon, she volunteered at a summer camp for children with disabilities in Manitoba and with Mennonite Voluntary Service, serving disadvantaged populations in Chicago and St. Louis.

Karen was a lover and supporter of the arts. Her work as volunteer chair of the Saskatoon Fringe Festival won her accolades as well as a Tourism Leadership award from Tourism Saskatchewan for her distinguished service. She was a strong advocate and ally for LGBTQ+ rights. She loved to sing and made strong friendships both as a chorister and board member with Saskatoon's Bridge City Chorus. A spirit of volunteerism in big and small ways coursed through her veins.

Karen's family and friends would like to thank all the caring staff at the Royal University Hospital (especially in CancerCare) and at the Hospice at Glengarda for their love and compassion shown during Karen's brief stay, as well as their support to visiting family and friends.



Congratulations Class of 1951!

In June, the Class of 1951 marked their 70th anniversary MCI Graduation with a Zoom reunion!

The reunion was organized by Florence Driedger, who was first female Moderator of General Conference Mennonite Church. Victor Thiessen ('41) who taught this class Algebra & Chemistry was able to join the Zoom call from Abbotsford, BC.



Attention Classes of 2012, 2002, 1992, 1982, 1972, 1962, 1952: This is a BIG reunion year for you!

Contact MCI to assist in planning your reunion gathering - whether it may be in person or a virutal meeting.

Give us a call at 204-327-5891 or email alumni@mciblues.net.



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