

EQUIPPING STUDENTS FOR LIFE AND FOREVER

CONNECTIONS

MEI ALUMNI NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2020

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black jacket, black tank top, and white pants, is jumping over a grey Mazda sedan. She has her arms raised in the air and a joyful expression. The car is parked in front of a dealership building with large windows. The word "mazda" is written in blue on the building's facade, and "V.I.P." is written in black. Other cars, including a red one, are visible in the background.

mazda

V.I.P.

KELLY WINS A CAR!

Full story on pg. 12

#weareMEI

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MEI NEWSLETTER

Connections is a semi-annual publication of MEI. It seeks to keep the MEI family informed of the ongoing events in the life of its students, faculty, and alumni. To achieve this purpose Connections would like to hear from you! Tell your friends, former classmates, teachers, and the rest of the MEI community where you are and what you are doing.

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Connect with @MEIalumni



STANDING STRONG

SUBMITTED BY VIJAY MANUEL
MEI Head of Schools and Alumnus (1991)

“When I am
afraid,
I put my trust
in you”

Psalm 56:3

It had been another outstanding year at MEI...
and then a global pandemic hit in March!!

Have you ever added stress to a glass cup with a small crack in it?
With just enough pressure, the entire cup will shatter into
many pieces and be completely destroyed.

The pressure has come, and our school community is standing strong! I want to thank our leadership for working together to help guide our ship during these turbulent waters. Teachers and Support Staff, you are truly amazing. Thank you!! Student and parents, wow. Thank you for your trust and confidence.

We often talk and sing about the Rock that we stand on, but it is in times like that these that we see His hand, the hand of our almighty God, at work in the midst of the challenges that we are facing.

MEI Community, let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our hearts devoted to the Word of God, prayer, and fellowship, and let us anchor our trust in the One who can calm the storms in our lives.

With God's help, we will get through this together!

Now Online

MEI Annual Fundraising Dinner



#weareMEI

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for your faithful giving in support of MEI, YOUR school. In the absence of our annual dinner, we are happy to provide some virtual updates including a short clip to inform you on how things have gone over the past year. To God be the glory!

TO GIVE ▶ www.meischools.com/give

Each year our supporters, YOU, contribute \$350,000 to support MEI Schools. With these resources, we have eliminated debt, started new programs, updated facilities, and supported MEI families in need.



Vijay Manuel
MEI Head of Schools

Watch a 1- minute
video update from
MEI Head of Schools

▶ www.meischools.com/give



ATHLETICS

SUBMITTED BY REG WIEBE
MEI Middle School Teacher and Alumnus (1982)

MEI Schools had the privilege of hosting the Gr. 8 Girls and Boys Provincial Basketball Tournament this past February 27, 28, and 29.

Thirty-two teams (16 girls teams and 16 boys teams) qualified from around the province and spent three days at MEI competing for the Championship.

Running a tournament of this size (64 games) requires a lot of volunteers. Our Abbotsford and MEI community, including students, staff, parents, and alumni stepped up big time by helping out with awards, tournament programs, website construction, photography, scorekeeping, collecting money at the door, and running the concessions. Many behind the scenes jobs were tackled as well.

The tournament committee would also like to say a big thank-you to all the people in our community who helped sponsor this tournament. It really requires a community to come together to run a tournament of this magnitude.

Visitors to MEI raved about MEI's facilities; in particular the quality of our three gymnasiums. They were also blown away by the friendly, welcoming atmosphere in each school.

MEI is looking forward to hosting the tournament again next year and making it even better.



SERVICE

MEI MISSIONS

In North America, we are under the illusion that we have our lives so much under our control that we seldom acknowledge just how fragile our plans are. James 4:13-16 reminds us that it is wrong to boast of our plans without the recognition that our plans ultimately are subject to God's sovereign will. This pandemic has reminded us all of this truth.

We were disappointed, saddened, and frustrated with the cancellations of this year's trips. However, I am choosing to be thankful that this virus has served to remind us of the truths that we don't know what tomorrow holds (vs.13) and our lives are like a mist that appears and then quickly vanishes (vs 14).

We are very much looking forward to next Spring Break and, if it is the Lord's will, we hope to send our students to each of the locations we had planned for this year.

There, that sounds better . .

SUBMITTED BY BRAD KNODEL

MEI Secondary Teacher



APEX LEADERSHIP CLASS

As the APEX leadership class, our new circumstances have inspired us to find new ways to keep the student body connected. This looks like organizing an online Summer Showcase, where students can still display their artistic abilities, as well as putting on weekly Instagram challenges. So far, this has had a positive outcome, as many of the students have already participated. In these upcoming weeks we hope to spread joy to the MEI community because we know this time is just a small part of God's good plan for our lives.

SUBMITTED BY EMILY WIENS AND MALAYA BRANDSMA

MEI Secondary Students



INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT

COMFORT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Well, this has been the biggest shift the International Program has had since its inception. With so much worrying news, it's just great to be able to present the Good News to the International students as they study, worry and think about the future. The online learning has been a challenge for the International students – and I am sure challenging for the homestays. I am confident that this difficult time will bring amazing rewards; the deepening bonds of family, the appreciation of the MEI school community, and the hope that in all of these things Christ is our comfort, our rock and our hope. Please pray for the students of the International Program; for focus, for comfort, for a “return” to normal, so that some of them can return home and be ready for “real” school in September

SUBMITTED BY KEVIN LYNN

Director of MEI International Programs

CONTENT TO BE IN CANADA

“We three are very happy to be together. Nina tells me she is happy to be here in Canada, even during the craziness of Covid-19, because she feels safe here with us (her host family). She misses her family in China, especially her little sister, but is content to be in Canada. They do puzzles together and Nina and her host mom both love to sew. Nina is in a sewing class this semester at MEI and is grateful for her host mom’s guidance. Nina misses her school friends and Suzanne loves having them over. Suzanne can’t wait to have the girls back together once the social distancing rules are relaxed. Once everything returns more to normal, the family looks forward to RVing in their 5th wheel together. Nina is excited to go camping with her host family; it is something she could never experience in China.”

SUBMITTED BY SUZANNE OAKS

MEI Homestay Host





SCHOOL QUOTES

MIDDLE

“MEI Middle has done a great job of transitioning learning from the classroom to online. The communication has been clear, and everyone has been very quick to respond to any issues. In dealing with the Student Support department, to say that they have gone above and beyond to make the transition as seamless as possible would be an understatement. It is very evident how much they love and care for their students and how much they value the input of the parents, it is truly a team effort and is so greatly appreciated.”

Julien Boshart, MEI Middle Parent



ELEMENTARY

“I am amazed at what I have learned in 4 weeks. It is truly incredible, although I still have so much more to learn. I have had tremendous support and have been carried by God’s amazing grace. God has shown me how he is using our gifts and strengths to make a difference in this time and how his power simply overrides our weaknesses. I can only do this journey with God. The power of his word has been my shield from fears and has moved me to take the next courageous step. There are wonderful things that are happening that only God is doing right now in our families. I believe that we will look back and be in awe of what God has done.”

Ruth Sherwood, MEI Elementary Teacher

“Even though all our learning and connecting is done through a screen, Danielle (E.A.) has found so many creative ways to build on that. We really appreciate her flexibility and her guidance as to what works at school and tailoring that to fit into the homeschool life.”

Julie McGraa, MEI Elementary Parent

“Ms. Friesen’s daily video lessons are detailed, easy to follow and always posted the evening ahead! ... But that’s not all. She is so warm and loving with her students, both on Zoom class meetings and individual chats. She makes a point to draw attention to each student at least once during the week at class meetings and uses individual meetings to truly connect with them - both emotionally and academically. She also finds time every day to provide feedback to students and (grand) parents. We post work on FreshGrade, and by the end of the day, she has responded! She is also incredibly patient with my foibles as I learn technology!”

Madeline Beatty, MEI Elementary Grandparent



SECONDARY

"The virtual classroom experience has been an opportunity for teachers to creatively reach out to students to bring learning to them. We are doing what we ask students to do every day: being flexible, taking learning risks, and being bold!"

Vanessa Drew, MEI Secondary Teacher

"Making the videos has been quite the learning curve for me, both in the shooting of the video, as well as editing and posting! It does seem to be working quite well though, for which I am very thankful. I have received some positive feedback from parents. While I miss seeing the kids, and guiding them in the process of cooking, I am seeing some incredible creativity as they work from home. With ingredients being limited, some students are rising to the occasion and producing some very creative work! One grade 6 student made her own graham crackers for s'mores, one student in grade 7 didn't have an electric mixer and made cookies and cupcakes by hand mixing, and many students are learning how to substitute with interesting ingredients. So, all in all, I am reasonably happy with this new approach to teaching cooking."

Marilyn Baerg, MEI Middle Foods Teacher

"After a month of online school, we have been going great! In my experience there were not many technical difficulties and any that occurred were easily solved. Through these difficult times, MEI has done a great job of coordinating with families and teachers to make our learning as simple as possible."

Ella Berry, MEI Middle Grade 8 Student



"MEI's virtual school program has completely exceeded my expectations. Our kids are not just getting by but are actually still being offered a very high-quality education. Well-organized virtual classes have been combined with outstanding accessibility and support from the teachers and the Learning Support Team. I have received phone calls with regular updates and encouragement. I do not feel like our kids' education has been negatively impacted at all through this pandemic. I didn't think it would all play out this seamlessly."

Kiren Bergmann, MEI Secondary Parent



"I have felt very encouraged and supported by the hardworking, caring MEI community during these unique times. Learning from home has brought both pros and cons, with mainly missing the in-person interactions, yet I have found everyone putting in a great effort to keep connections alive. I admire the commitment and pro-active leadership that has come forward through all of this and the creativity to keep the MEI learning experience positive and engaging."

Jessica Quiring, MEI Secondary Student

APPLIED SKILLS

SUBMITTED BY TERRY WARD

MEI Secondary Woodworking and Drafting Teacher

MEI Applied Skills have adapted their entire programs to continue to foster growth and develop skill sets while at home. Woodworking is a very hands-on subject and attracts students who like to be in a shop environment rather than be in a classroom. Students were challenged to finish projects at home if they had the resources or even design and build their own projects. The students who didn't have any means to be able to do this came up with projects that could be made in the shop in the future. Along with this, students have been learning some theory on identifying trees and how trees grow and diseases that affect them.

In drafting the Grade 9's had to start a brand-new program that is not usually taught at MEI. They have adapted well and are right on track with their assignments and projects. The Grade 11/12 students have been designing real-world items for their parents and friends including barns, basements, kitchens and even electrical layouts.

Students recently in devotions were challenged with the question, "What have you discovered about yourself that you did not know before" The questions were varied but a common theme was that they all enjoy school and structure and that they are really glad that God has got this and is in control. I feel through Devotions online the students have connected probably better and participated more than they do in the classroom when most of them don't want to speak up in front of their peers.

THE GRAPHIC BELOW IS A COMPUTER RENDER OF A HORSE BARN BUILT BY AN MEI STUDENT FOR A GRADE 11/12 WOODWORK PROJECT.



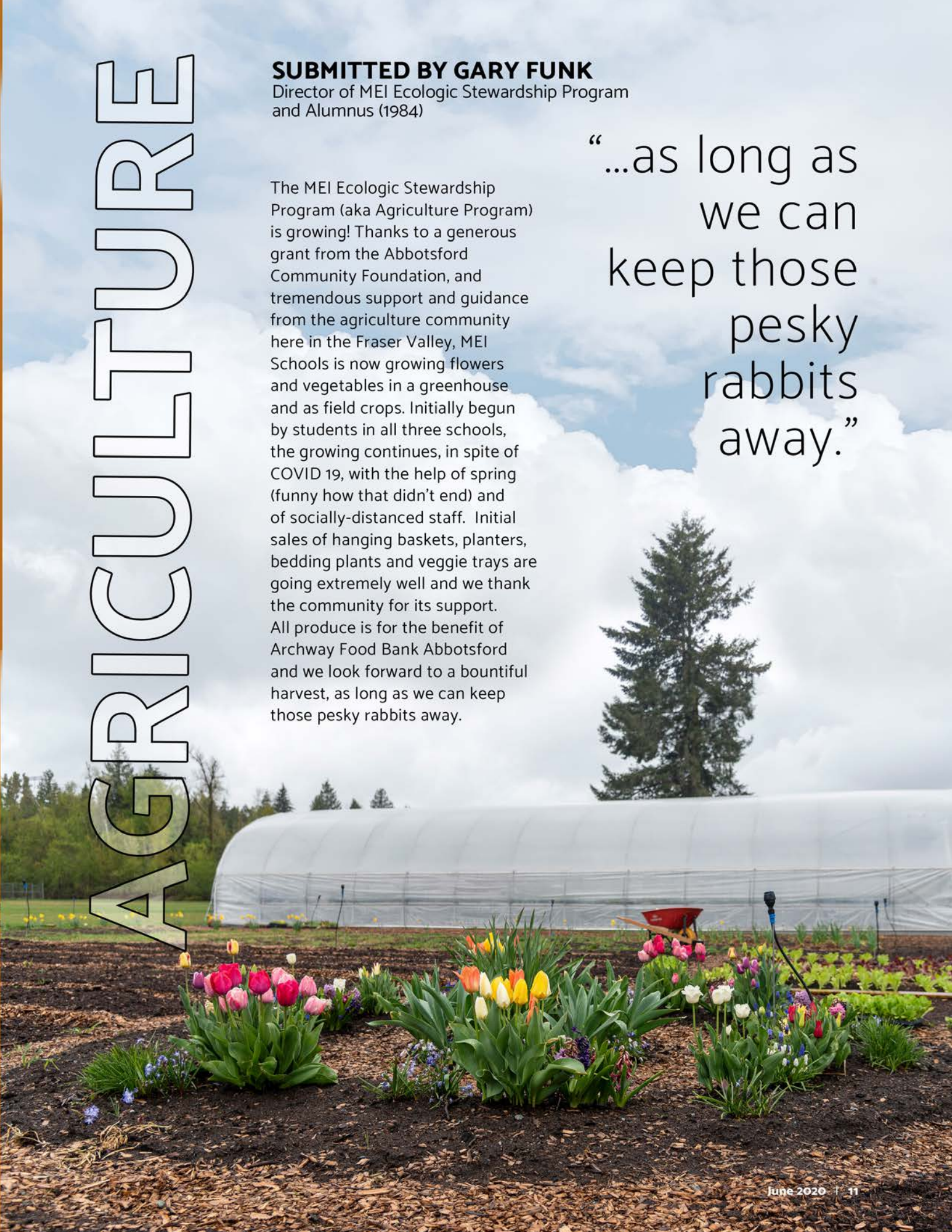
AGRICULTURE

SUBMITTED BY GARY FUNK

Director of MEI Ecologic Stewardship Program
and Alumnus (1984)

The MEI Ecologic Stewardship Program (aka Agriculture Program) is growing! Thanks to a generous grant from the Abbotsford Community Foundation, and tremendous support and guidance from the agriculture community here in the Fraser Valley, MEI Schools is now growing flowers and vegetables in a greenhouse and as field crops. Initially begun by students in all three schools, the growing continues, in spite of COVID 19, with the help of spring (funny how that didn't end) and of socially-distanced staff. Initial sales of hanging baskets, planters, bedding plants and veggie trays are going extremely well and we thank the community for its support. All produce is for the benefit of Archway Food Bank Abbotsford and we look forward to a bountiful harvest, as long as we can keep those pesky rabbits away.

“...as long as
we can
keep those
pesky
rabbits
away.”





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vipmazda.com

#yougottadriveone

KELLY WINS

THE EAGLES' NEST WAS OVERFLOWING ON JANUARY 31, 2020 - THANKS FOR SHOWING UP EAGLES FANS! CONGRATULATIONS TO KELLY TEBRINKE (ESAU, CLASS OF 2005), WHO WON THE BRAND NEW 2020 MAZDA 3!



A Dream Came True!

In June of 2017 MEI Schools met with Bill Warkentin, Proprietor of VIP Mazda and Class of 1965 MEI Alumnus. He recalled playing for the Eagles and winning Provincials with packed out gymnasiums. Bill loved our vision of filling our gym once again with alumni and community for sporting events and offered that VIP Mazda could help build momentum with a car giveaway. Together we came up with a three-year plan for alumni to participate in the draw. We are delighted with the success of these events, and for their role in reminding us of the vibrancy and electricity of being all together. Our school community sends a HUGE thank-you to VIP Mazda.

"We have worked with MEI Schools for many, many years and were ecstatic to partner with them for the alumni events. These events are an important bridge in keeping MEI connected with its graduates and VIP Mazda was grateful to be a part of keeping these relationships strong. It was an absolute pleasure for VIP Mazda to give away a brand new 2020 Mazda 3 to Kelly. We could not be happier for Kelly and her family and are so excited to welcome them to our VIP Mazda Family."

Crystal Warkentin | Controller | VIP Mazda

"My time at MEI was phenomenal. The school leaders empowered me and the programs inspired me. I built relationships with fellow students that helped shape who I am. I recall proposing events to our Senior Leadership class and experiencing buy-in from fellow ambitious students. Sharing about our vision and gathering talented people, started at MEI and now plays a major part in my current role as Talent Attraction Specialist with Prospera Credit Union.

Returning 15 years post-grad to a basketball game was electrifying. I was so proud to bring along my husband and three kids, beaming as I walked into an event executed with a high standard. I remember MEI's drive for excellence, I remember the focus we were encouraged to have, and the support of our God-given talents.

Winning a car is unbelievable. I didn't see the win coming and I am incredibly grateful to VIP Mazda. I cannot wait to drive my new car to my corporate office in Surrey. Working with the team at VIP has been wonderful as well. I couldn't have imagined a sweeter outcome to returning to my alma mater."

Kelly Tebrinke (Esau), MEI Alumnus 2005

A CAR!

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO VIP MAZDA DONATING A BRAND NEW 2020 MAZDA 3, AND FOR PUTTING WHEELS ON THIS VISION; PACKING THE GYM WITH ALUMNI AND FRIENDS, HAVING FUN, AND BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

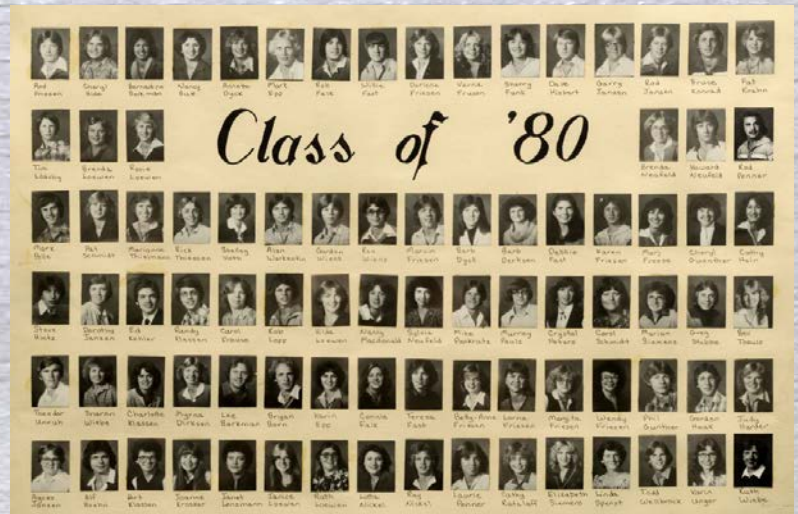
REUNIONS

[POSTPONED] CLASS OF 1980 40 YEAR REUNION

Rescheduled to Friday June 4, - Saturday June 6, 2021

We hope this note finds you safe and healthy at home. With sad hearts, we decided that it's time to make the call on postponing the reunion. We probably all knew it was coming, but it's still such a disappointment as we were all so excited to gather. Like the Olympics, we are postponing this for a whole year, and so you can already pencil in the weekend of June 4-6, 2021, for the 40th reunion in our 41st year! With so many unknowns for the coming months, we felt it best to put it off for a year rather than reschedule for fall.

Contact reunion organizers by email:
meigrad80@gmail.com



MEI Gr. 12 Class of 1980

[POSTPONED] GRADE 13 CLASS OF 1960 60-YEAR REUNION

New date to be determined

Once the Covid- 19 pandemic is behind us and it is possible to have a reunion, the committee will seek to plan another event.

Contact Herman Driediger (P: 604-854-9166 E: hermand@shaw.ca)

Contact reunion organizers by email:
meigrad80@gmail.com



MEI Gr. 13 Class of 1960 at 55 Year Reunion in 2015

Planning a Class Reunion?

Reunions are organized by you and your classmates, and we'd love to help with ideas, facilities, and promotion.

Contact the MEI Alumni Office
E: alumni@meischools.com
P: 604-859-3700 ext. 327
Connect with @MEIalumni



[POSTPONED] CLASS OF 1960 60 YEAR REUNION

Tentatively Rescheduled for Fall 2020

We hope this note finds you safe and healthy at home. With sad This reunion has been postponed until Fall 2020 (likely Thanksgiving weekend), due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please connect with reunion organizers to keep updated.

Contact JoAnne Janzen (P: 604-209-0997 E: jjanzen@shaw.ca)

or Linda Friesen (Ph: 604-793-6387 E:



MEI Gr. 12 Class of 1960 at 55 Year Reunion in 2015

[POSTPONED] CLASS OF 2010 10 YEAR REUNION

Plans for an August reunion are on hold. Please connect with your Facebook group "MEI Grad 2010 Reunion".

Contact Olivia Patillo (E: oliviapatillo@gmail.com)



MEI Gr. 12 Class of 2010 at Graduation

LOVE REMAINS DESPITE COVID-19...

ENGAGEMENTS

Amy McConnell and Benjamin Ens (2017) are planning on flying from New Zealand where they are missionaries, for an intimate wedding in Oregon (where Amy is from) in July 2020!

“The challenges for us have been planning everything overseas and being from different countries. It is up in the air if I can even make it to America for my own wedding. It is difficult that because of group restrictions, we can’t have everyone we want to be there. We have seen God’s faithfulness to us through awesome friends and family. People who have been caring for us and keeping up research and supporting us in this time. And just by God being so intentional in speaking to us and reassuring us that everything is going to be okay and he is in control.”



Kaitlin Wiens (2015) and Nathan Hildebrandt (2015) are planning on having a backyard wedding on July 25, 2020.

“We have gone back and forth on what to do regarding our wedding during this time. We have recently decided to still go ahead and get legally married on our planned wedding date July 25/2020. We don’t know what that will look like, but at this point we just have to take it day by day. If it has to be only family, then that is what we will do! Unknowns are hard; your wedding is something you look forward to your whole life and to have it up in the air is not easy. It gives us peace knowing that God’s plan is always the best plan and His timing is perfect! Through this He has taught us to look to him and not worldly things. This has also helped us focus more on our marriage and the commitment that it is rather than just our wedding day. With that being said, we cannot wait to be married and see what God has in store for us.”



Cherokee Joiner (2016) and Jonny Ens are making their wedding plans for August 8, 2020.

“At this point we still don’t know exactly how our day will look, but we are choosing to be positive and to ultimately trust in the Lord. He knows the plans that we may have, but ultimately how the day looks is up to Him and we fully trust what He has in store for us. We are hoping to have a ceremony and reception of 100 people, but if that is not possible, we will be having a small intimate ceremony with family and a reception to follow at a later date.”



Sandra Eilers (2004) and Jordan Kantola are making arrangements for an intimate elopement ceremony on August 16, 2020.

“Plans changed quickly once we realized we could not have the wedding we both dreamed of as a result of the pandemic. We look forward to celebrating with family and friends at a later date. God has given us both peace through the uncertainties and even though our wedding will look different God is faithful through it all.”



“God has continued to be faithful even in the tough circumstances and we will continue to put our trust in Him”

WEDDINGS

Jenn (Doerksen, 2013) and Karsten Vegsund; March 14, 2020

“It was definitely a little chaotic leading up to the wedding, but we managed to have the wedding two days before the cutoff of large gatherings. Unfortunately, our honeymoon was postponed until next year, but we’re thankful our wedding was able to take place according to plan.”



Catherine Taekema and Mitchell Janzen (2016); May 1, 2020

“We got engaged on June 13th, 2019 and set a wedding date for May 16, 2020. After carefully planning our special day, little did we know that end of March and onwards everything was about to change. April was super busy for both of us with the end of the university year and my graduation from TWU. It was during this time that the challenges of making this wedding happen really started to sink in. We definitely experienced the verse from Proverbs 19:21 “You can make many plans, but the Lord’s purpose will prevail”.

Experiencing a time of sadness that we would not be able to celebrate with our cherished community of friends and family, we embraced plan B (God’s plan A). As the day unfolded, it became more and more evident of God’s hand in our plans from the perfect weather, to the amazing property of family friends’, then a surprise drive by arranged by our sisters of about 60-70 cars then ending the day with an intimate family dinner. Our hope is to celebrate with our larger community at a future date, God willing.”



Candice (Vuong) and Daniel Siemens (2016); May 16, 2020

“Candice and I got engaged in August 2019 and planned a wedding for June 2020, but COVID-19 is the perfect example of how God can take our plans that seem so certain to us and change them for his glory. We felt overwhelmed and stressed in the uncertainty, as we were also both completing our final semesters and preparing for exams. As a couple, we have had to make and re-make difficult decisions as the restrictions continued to shift. We approached these decisions and processed our feelings with prayer. With the Lord’s leading, we eventually decided to stick with a small ceremony with immediate family and wedding parties only, and to move our wedding date up to mid-May.

We have continued to see God’s providence and provision in our lives and in this situation. God has continued to be faithful even in the tough circumstances and we will continue to put our trust in him.”



BIRTHS

To Melanie (Klassen) and Richard Bandsmer (1990)

A son, Isaac Daniel Bandsmer born October 9, 2019 . Welcomed by older sister Bethany (2.5 yrs)



To April (Ellerman, 2003) and Kevin Gerbrandt

A son, Matix George Earle Gerbrandt (8 lbs), born November 17, 2019 Welcomed by older brother Atticus (3.5 yrs)



To Rhianon (Dunfield) and Don Petkau (1992)

A son, Pierce Norman Thomas Petkau, born October 10, 2019 Welcomed by brothers Henry (4 yrs) and Holden (2 yrs)



To Michelle (Croft) and Chris Gaudet (2004)

A daughter, Rosie Grace Gaudet (7 lbs 7 oz), born January 10, 2020. Welcomed by older brother Hampton (5 yrs)



To Natsuki (Kudoh) and Peter Martens (1995)

Twin daughters; Hikari Zoe (5 lbs 5 oz) and Emi Beatrix (4 lbs 13 oz), born on January 27, 2020



To Alyssa (Meggait, 2004) and Derek Blok

A daughter, Lillian Virginia Blok (7 lbs 13 oz), born December 4, 2019 Welcomed by older brothers Noah (5 yrs) and Gavin (3 yrs)



To Carmen (Fast, 2001) and Rodney Hollett

A daughter, Annie Grace Hollett (7 lbs 11 oz), born January 27, 2020 Welcomed by older brothers Jack (7 yrs) and Samuel (5 yrs), and sister Lucy (3 yrs)



To Bethany (Willms, 2005) and Tim Erickson (2006)

Twins; son Bowen James Erickson (6 lbs 6 oz), and daughter Indianna Elizabeth Erickson (5 lbs 13 oz), born April 13, 2020



To Jaydene (Erickson, 2002) and Dustin Freund (1998)

A son, Leif Allan Freund, born January 15, 2020 Welcomed by older brother Huxley (8 yrs), and sisters Poppy (6 yrs) and Marigold (3 yrs)



To Kendra (Peters, 2006) and David Gubbins

A daughter, Daphne Lynn Gubbins (7 lbs 5 oz), born March 4, 2020 Welcomed by older sisters Claire (4 yrs) and Everly (2 yrs)



To Katya (Anikeyeva, 2002) and Randy Berger

A son, Xarr Henry Berger (5 lbs 9 oz), born January 29, 2020 Welcomed by older brother Xander (7 yrs) and sister Xoey (5 yrs)



To Chelsey (Leighton) and Jarrod Reimer (2007)

A son, Brody Daniel Reimer (7 lbs 14 oz), born June 4, 2019



To Rebecca (Schulz, 2003) and Jon Holmes

A daughter, Violet Bonnie Holmes (8 lbs), born November 27, 2019 Welcomed by older sister Hazel (3 yrs)



To Amber (Thiessen) and Steven Willems (2007)

A daughter, Maisie Grace Willems, born December 5, 2019 Welcomed by older brother Daxton (4 yrs) and sister Makena (2 yrs)



To Melanie (Stewart, 2007) Alyn Beerda

A son, Arlo Darcy Beerda (8 lbs 6 oz), born May 4, 2020
Welcomed by older sister Mackenzie (2 yrs)



To Megan (Patterson, 2010) and Brad Crawford

A son, Charles Alexander Crawford (7 lbs 5 oz), born February 20, 2020
Welcomed by older brother Noah (2.5 yrs)



To Kaitlyn (Block, 2008) and Ryan Tucker

A son, Oliver Everett Tucker (8 lbs 9 oz), born December 5, 2019
Welcomed by older brother Judah (2.5 yrs)



To Jule (Masurek) and Tyler Koslowsky (2011)

A daughter, Lilly Christin Koslowsky (7 lbs 5 oz), born February 16, 2020



To Debbie (Bosma, 2008) and Spencer Beerling

A daughter, Ayla Taylor Beerling (7 lbs 6 oz), born December 10, 2019
Welcomed by older brother Coen (2 yrs)



To Emily (Baerg, 2011) and Nathan Unger

A son, Ivan Jesse Unger (7 lb 12 oz), born August 12, 2019



To Chelsea (Reimer, 2008) and Nathaniel Muth

A son, Gavin Godric Muth (8 lbs 12 oz), born November 9, 2019
Welcomed by older sister Nora (2 yrs)



To Victoria (Wiens, 2011) and Joshua (Robbie) Friesen (2013)

A son, Callahan Everett (8 lbs 6 oz), born February 1, 2020



To Alyssa (Koop, 2008) and Marcus Krahn (2009)

A son, Marshall Wesley Krahn (8 lbs 4 oz), born April 25, 2020
"We are so grateful to the Lord for our precious son!"



To Liza (Schmidt, 2010) and Zach Funk (2012)

A son, Bennett John Funk (7 lbs 9 oz), born March 15, 2020
Welcomed by older brother Theo (1 yr)



To Jennifer (Harder, 2009) and Simon Jenkins

A daughter, Sienna Wren Jenkins (7 lbs 11 oz), born February 3, 2020



To Sammie (Loewen, 2012) and Dan Cummings

A son, Kayden Dallas Cummings (7 lbs 7 oz), born November 9, 2019



To Hailey (Wall, 2009) and Cody Neufeld

A son, Mars Alexander Neufeld (8 lbs 6 oz), born January 10, 2020



To Emily (Friesen, 2015) and William van Arkel

A daughter, Isla Mildred van Arkel (7 lbs 3 oz), born January 20, 2020



ENGAGEMENTS

Taylor Falk (2013) and Dane Chapman are planning for a spring wedding in 2021.



Megan Penner (2015) and Chance Foster are planning for an autumn wedding. Further details are yet to be decided.



WEDDINGS

Abigail (Toftager) and Brandon Schellenberg (2014); July 27, 2019



Chelsea (Neudorf, 2014) and Brandon Wehr; January 4, 2020



Stephanie (Weiss, 2014) and Scott Currie (2012); October 5, 2019



Malia (Scholz) and Jordan Koslowsky (2015); December 21, 2019



Victoria (Hiebert, 2014) and Mark Stephens; October 19, 2019



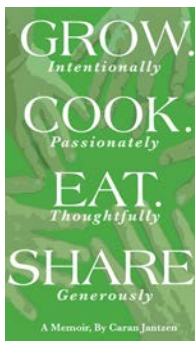
FAMILY UPDATES

Matt Born (Class of 1984) is an avid fan of Eagles' basketball, keeping connected with the school and tracking how the teams are doing. At the recent Alumni Night basketball event in late January, Matt was there with his father, Jake, along with some of his children and grandchildren. Four generations of the Born family were present that evening. Matt will have to wait a few more years to watch his grandson, Erik, play for MEI.



Caran Jantzen (Peters, Class of 1996), her husband Nathan (Class of 1993) and their four children (current MEI students) have spent the past five years working towards greater food independence on their blossoming homestead on the outskirts of Abbotsford, BC.

Throughout the challenging and sometimes humorous homesteading process, they have learned to value the land and animals God created in a more meaningful way, as they work the soil and tend to the animals which will nourish their family and community. Caran has recently finished writing a memoir about her family's homesteading journey, titled "Grow. Cook. Eat. Share".



IN LOVING MEMORY...

Niels Theodore de Boer

September 11, 1999 - April 28, 2020

It is with great sadness and broken hearts that we announce the sudden and unexpected passing of our most beloved Niels.



Class of 2017 (attended in Middle School)

Niels was born in Langley, BC on September 11, 1999 as the fourth child of Dutch immigrants Marga and Fred de Boer, being the little brother to Tom, Laura and Ingrid. Growing up in the Langley area Niels made friends wherever he would go. He attended MEI schools in Abbotsford, followed by KSS in Qualicum Beach. His smile was ever contagious, and his friendly demeanor would win over hearts wherever he set foot. His passion was to travel all over the world, and he did so without a worry or fear. At the age of 18 he already embarked on a journey all over the European continent, to satisfy his craving to engage in different cultures and languages (and to make new friends of course). Upon return to BC Niels focused on his future by attending the University of the Fraser Valley, while working at the family business. Niels' study was later continued at Vancouver Island University, where he reunited with old friends from the area.

Niels, as he was called from time to time, was an intelligent young man; always enriching his knowledge on a broad spectrum of topics. Not necessarily in the classroom however, but more so independently. As soon as the next edition of the Economist magazine would be out, or if there was a book to be read (written in a foreign language or not), he would be all over it.

Niels leaves behind his parents Fred de Boer and Marga Wilson (Andy), his big brother Tom (Allie), and his sisters Laura and Ingrid (Sander).

Also left to mourn are his grandparents de Boer and Ruijgrok, all the aunts and uncles, cousins, Cora, friends and relatives in Canada, the US and all over Europe.

Funeral services will be held in private in Parksville on May 9, 2020 with a celebration of life to be held later.

The exact location and date to be announced, please register via the email below.

We ask for condolences and contact information to be sent to rememberingniels@gmail.com

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Engagements, weddings, births, memorials, and other family / vocational milestones can be included in the next issue of Connections by emailing the details to alumni@meischools.com.

Please model your information after these current listings and include name (both married and maiden names as applicable), and graduation year.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

SUBMITTED BY ERNIE REIMER

MEI Class of 1951 (Senior Matriculation)

MEI teachers played a foundational role in my life; because of their influence I chose majors in Biology and in History. I chose the teaching profession because I realized that teachers impact students tremendously. It was the staff at MEI who placed the reinforcing rods into my Christian faith. It was the MEI that gave me a keen interest in the world about me, including current events, cultural values, and the need for Christian service.

And how did this foundation present itself? The thirst for adventure, Christian service and sharing the Good News were motivators. The influential message from Wm Neufeld was "Students, Canada is greater than Abbotsford. It is huge. See it and serve the Lord." I tried to apply his vision. A by-product of service just could be a wonderful spouse (and so it was). I became a teacher and served with MCC in Northern Newfoundland. Then three years in the Arctic and finally in the Peace River country. I was a Teacher, Principal and School District Superintendent. This was followed by a short stint with SFU in Fort Nelson. Then came an early "retirement" at 57 and my work began as I continued to find opportunities for serving the Lord.

In 1992, immediately after the Soviet Union collapsed, we were asked to help set up a Christian based liberal arts college in Lithuania. Yes, I was to be the president (and no PhD)! This is now a full-fledged university with 700 students from 50 countries. Then came retirement again and now at 88 I am still serving as a counsellor in the local church in Fort St. John. The community does have people with needs and needy folks don't mind seeing an old man for help. One of these years I will retire.

Thank you Dr. Dan Froese, Bill Wiebe, Wm Neufeld, F.C. Thiessen, and others; for getting me interested in nature, in seeing the world, in serving our Lord, and emphasizing others rather than self. Thank you, MEI, for assisting me in the foundation building aspect of my life.

**Ernie had published a book, titled:
"It's Been Good: Anecdotes and Episodes from My Life"**



THANK YOU TO ALL FRONT-LINE WORKERS!



Jesse Dawes (2002) and Nathan Etsell (2003) work full time for the City of Abbotsford



Samantha Schroeder (2015) is a nurse at St Paul's Hospital in Vancouver



Sushil Dosanjh (2012) is currently a nursing student at UFV but working with Fraser Health as a Covid-19 Active Screener at Long Term Care homes



Nathan Bahnman (2015) is on call at Cultus Lake Fire Department



Steve Thiele (2000) is a Cardiovascular Perfusionist at VGH



Becky (Rees) Wiebe (1992) is serving as a swab nurse at the Mission Covid testing site



Marcy (Froese) Neudorf (1988) is a NICU RN at ARHCC



Gabi Kroeker (2013) is a Maternity Unit Clerk ARHCC



Julie (Neumann) Wiebe (1991) RN Maternity ARHCC



Doreen (Wiens) Wall (1979) is an HCA at Menno Home. "So far we are COVID-19 free!"

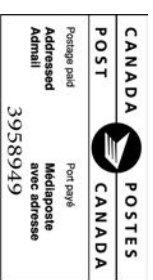


Leanne (Jones) Kroeker (1982) RN Maternity ARHCC

... AND SO MANY MORE!
THANK YOU!



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