

Chairman's Report

Harry VanKammen



Behold the amazing Gift of Love
The Father has bestowed
On us, the sinful sons of men
To call us sons of God

This is the last issue of the Beacon before Christmas break. Looking back over the past year we are deeply thankful for the many blessings we have received. The fact that we may operate DCS as a school where Christ is central and the students are taught to follow Him brings us great joy. We see our children grow in knowledge and in trusting the LORD. It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that this growth is possible. This growth is most noticeable in difficult times. I remember the occasion that our principal reported on -- a high school assembly organized and led by the students. What happened there, words could barely describe. Ask the teachers and they will tell you about evidence of spiritual growth in your children. I am sure many more occasions at home can be added to it.

This week we may celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is the beginning of the execution of a plan God has for us. It is His plan of salvation for sinners. His plan calls for a relationship restored and a future with God on the new earth, to serve Him perfectly. In this knowledge we can look back over last year and trust God that He will never abandon the works of His hand.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and students of the elementary school for the Christmas concert last week. The enthusiasm of the students was moving. Also the high school choir deserves a big "thank you" for lending a helping hand in the concert. Your participation showed a lot of respect for the elementary students.

I wish all staff and students a blessed time during a well deserved Christmas break. May our heavenly Father renew you during this break so you can take up your task again in January.

To all our members, I wish a blessed Christmas celebration, and that God will continue to care for all of us in the New Year.

*We are God's children here and now
For He made us His own
But what we shall hereafter be
That He has not yet shown.
(Hymn 54:1,3)*

Treasurer's Report

Dolf Feddes

Now that the year 2008 is almost coming to an end it is time to look once more at the school dues and work towards closure of this income tax year. The last day you can send in your contributions for the 2008 income tax year is **Sunday January 4, 2009**. All donations coming in after this day will be applied to income tax year 2009. In this way we will be able to get your receipt for charitable donations out to you as soon as possible.

If you have lost track of how much you

have donated for the year, or you want to compare your records with ours, you can call our bookkeeper Sarah Visscher at 828-3267, myself at 828-3371. If you have not donated this year consider the many blessings the LORD has given to us in this past year and make sure you show your support towards Christian education of your children and grandchildren.

This time I do have a special request for the members who pay **more than the required yearly**

donation amount. For tax purposes it is beneficial if these donations are split in a payment for tuition fees (yearly amount of the applicable membership category) and a payment earmarked as "extra donation". This has a positive effect on the calculation of tuition fees deducted from everyone's yearly donation receipts. Of course you will continue to receive a receipt for the full amount you donated.

Have a blessed Sunday

Principal's Report

Andy Huisman



"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16



Matthew 5:16 is the theme text of the year for Dufferin Christian School. It is interwoven throughout various devotions, assemblies and stands as a guide for the students on a daily basis. It is discussed often with the students and serves as a reminder that in all that we do, in all that we stand for, it is not for our glory, but only for the praise and glory of our Father in heaven.

As you read this report, the school Christmas concert is

another piece of DCS history. The weeks of preparation, the working out of details, the memorization of numerous songs, the dedication of staff, the effort and enthusiasm of students have culminated in a very successful concert! The theme of the concert was "Shine Jesus Shine" in keeping with the school theme. One can't help but think of the message that the students presented with fondness and enthusiasm. It is truly a blessing from God when our young people praise God through music and song.

As we close out this year and look towards a new year, I would like to take a few moments to reflect on and give thanks to God for the blessings of covenantal education at Dufferin Christian School. It is important to point out the intersections of faith and life that occur on a daily basis, so here are a few that I would like to share:

- Thanks to the little kids (even kindergarten) who absolutely love to clear the snow off of anything that has snow on it!
- Thanks to the Librarians who give so much of their time to keep the library up to date and organized. As well, to the fact that they are opening the library to the public on Tuesday evenings, talk about dedication!
- Thanks to the moms who volunteer in school and lend a helping hand whenever it is needed. I think also of the moms who helped out in the Kindergarten this past week making gingerbread houses.
- Thanks to the high school students who volunteered their time again this week in the delivery of Christmas hampers to the local needy families.
- Thanks to the various committee members and the School Board members who spend immense amounts of time working for the benefit of the school.
- Thanks to our volunteer coaches who spend their time giving guidance and support for the benefit of our school athletes.
- Thanks to parents who continually keep the work of Dufferin Christian School in their prayers. Thank you for your support in the many different ways that you show it. We think here also of coming out to the Christmas concert to show your support for the work of the students.
- Thanks to the entire staff (teachers, aides, secretary, janitorial staff) for their dedication and love.

All of these and many more incidents just go to show how truly blessed we are, in many small ways, every day. Let us give thanks to God, for it is only through His care and love for us that we can start everyday anew.

Other News

The only other item that needs passing along is the following exam schedule. Please write the dates on your calendar. Examination times are published early so that there will be no conflict with other commitments, i.e dentist appointments.

A list of the exam rules will be published in the newsletters prior to the exam week. I would also offer a small piece of advice. Start to study early, do not leave things to the

last minute. Research has shown that studying in smaller increments of time over a longer period of time produces far better results than a lot of studying in a shorter amount of time. Structure your time wisely and if you have any questions about the material, feel free to ask your teacher.

Provincial Exams/DCS Exams

You know that the year is really flying by when you are publishing the dates of final exams. Please take note of the following provincial exam dates for Senior Four: ELA – January 6-9; A-Math – January 20/21. These exams all take place during the morning hours. The preliminary schedule for DCS local exams will be as follows:

Monday, January 26 – 9:15

- Reformed Studies 11G – Church History component
- A-Math 20S
- ELA 30S
- World Views 41G

Tuesday, January 27, 9:15 a.m.

- Math 10F
- Science 20F
- Reformed Studies 31G – Bible component
- Chemistry 40S - midterm

Wednesday, January 28, 9:15 a.m.

- Socials 10F – midterm
- Reformed Studies 21G – Church History component
- Chemistry 30S
- Physics 40S - midterm

Thursday, January 29, 9:15 a.m.

- Geography 20F – midterm
- P-Math 30S

As I come to the end of this report I wish that you all may have the peace for which Christ came to earth and a blessed new year. My hope is that all will have a restful break and be invigorated to resume classes in the New Year.

Have a blessed Sunday.

From the Library Committee...



Once upon a time we were moved around a lot at Dufferin Christian School...Now, however, we have a nice place in the basement of the school. We, as books, are very happy there. The kids love us and grab us from the shelves to read us. But one thing makes us books sad – we wish that adults would grab and read us too! There are novels, study books and non-fiction books, lots to choose from. Adults can come during school hours on:

- **Mondays and Wednesdays** from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- **Thursdays** from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

We are very excited to tell you that, **beginning on January 6, 2009**, we will also be open on **Tuesday nights from 7:00 – 9:00 pm.** Come read a book while you are waiting for your kids during catechism hours. There will be coffee ready and soft music playing. You can just drop in and drink a cup of coffee and socialize with others. Feel free to take a craft along, or anything else to keep you occupied. Hope to see you there!

The Library Books at DCS!

Volunteers required

The Library Committee is looking for volunteers **to be in charge of the library on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.** Sharing the evening with someone (one hour each) is also possible. Contact the library committee if interested and they will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Committee Members:

Agnes Vanderveen, Frances Vandermeulen, Gerda Doornbos, Tjarda Koster

Christmas Holiday Public Skating Schedule on the B-Side - Carman Arena

December 23rd 9:00-11:30 and 1:00-4:30
 December 27th 1:30-5:00
 December 28th 1:30-5:00
 December 29th 9:30-11:30 and 1:00-4:30
 December 31st 9:00-11:30 and 12:30-2:30
 January 2nd 9:00-11:00
 January 3rd 1:30-5:00
 January 4th 1:30-5:00

For current ice schedule please call 745-1990

Lego Mindstorm NXT Workshop

William Hoogerdijk

Someday robots will take over the world.

They've made robots that think and act like humans. Those robots will be taking your job soon.

Well, these phrases have come and gone and resurfaced over and over. They've been the subject of various movies and books over time. While these haven't come true in the way many people might have thought, the use of robotics is becoming more common in many areas of society.

On December 5, I had the opportunity to attend a robotics workshop hosted by the Prairie Rose School Division in Elie. During the workshop we were able to hear presentations about the use of robotics in various applications. We were also able to work with some robotics kits for a portion of the day, designing robots to perform simple tasks.

The use of robotics can be seen in things as simple as using GPS in various large implements. In some cases the GPS systems can be used to control large machinery through guidance signals received from satellites. Reference stations can transmit data to satellites regarding positions of the implements and the satellites can then communicate appropriate data for guiding the implements correctly. Other applications of GPS include mapping land attributes and monitoring crop, soil and climate. While some of these seem less connected to robotics, some clearly indicate how robotics can be used in agricultural applications.

One presenter illustrated the way in which Machine Control and Guidance is used in heavy construction industries. Using antennae mounted on the corners of blades, GPS receivers, interactive displays, radios and other simple equipment, large machines can essentially begin to function as simple robots. Machine control systems include laser and sonics, robotic total station tracking, or GPS machine control.

Using the example of GPS machine control, the presenter illustrated how the desired terrain can be mapped using digital data (the same data used by surveyors to stake a job), loaded into a machine, and then used to guide large implements in sub-grade balancing, finishing sub-grades, placing material, and finishing the material. The use of GPS allows these large machines to continue working regardless of time of day since they no longer need to make use of staking. Some jobs can be completed even if the area they are working on is under water. Setting the data in the interactive display allows the GPS to control the machine to eliminate some of the guesswork and eyeballing that might otherwise take place.

So how does this apply to the classroom? Recently there has been an increased interest in the field of robotics in educational systems as well. This is evident in the increasing number of robotics competitions and the introduction of various curricula dealing with robotics.

Aside from preparing for robotics competitions and completing robotics curricula, there are additional applications for this in schools. In the simplest connection, robotics requires the programming of machines. Although the end user might only have to input some data, someone along the line had to program the machine to understand the data. This programming forms a direct connection to various computer courses available in the provincial curriculum.

Robotics can be used in other courses as well including Physics when studying motion, forces, work, etc. or in Geography when mapping or studying landforms. Other applications involve designing robots to test substances in chemistry or biology. In addition, the study of robotics will help a number of students in preparing for various workforce applications.

Aside from all the course connections, robotics also offers the unique opportunity to applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills in a very practical way. Once students have become familiar with the materials, simple challenges can be thought up by the students or presented to them to get them thinking about ways to solve everyday problems. This could be as simple as moving objects safely from one area to another. It could also be more complex like enabling a colour blind individual to work through a chemistry lab in which a colour change indicates a reaction is completed. Robots could be used to sort materials according to various properties, physical and chemical.

The application of this topic in schools is essentially limited only by imagination. The opportunity to use this in connection with the current curriculum allows students to engage in hands-on learning activities, expand critical thinking and problem-solving skills, develop communication skills, work cooperatively in team settings, and become creative in looking for solutions to everyday problems. Many of these skills are essential to any workplace situation they may come across later in life.

As with anything, there is a need to evaluate the use of robotics in ensuring they are used in an ethical and stewardly – Godly – manner. This is part of our teaching process regardless of subject and would continue to be a key aspect of the education process also in this topic. The opportunity to use robotics to serve one's fellow man also presents a challenge to see this as one more conduit through which we can fulfill our calling.

Developing skills with robotics while carefully considering the Godly use of this resource will then allow students to, in one more way, become prepared for "living a life of Christian discipleship in contemporary society."

