

# Principal's Column

*Brent Gray*

Public Speaking. It is one of those things that you personally either love or loathe. We have all watched people on television being interviewed and sometimes cringed as the question put to them is answered awkwardly, incorrectly or with a series of 'ums' filling the gaps. Being well prepared to give an address is one thing, being put on the spot is something else entirely. I remember when a reporter rang to introduce themselves not long after I had started my job here at Mt Somers Springburn School, and after about three questions it suddenly dawned on me that I was being interviewed. By then it was too late to take back anything said and then I wondered what was going to be in print the next day.



In the lead up to the 2014 Elections, we are seeing plenty of examples of both. Well prepared party launches that stir the emotions of the party faithful, fierce debate from prospective leaders of the country, and the messy 'orange-worthy' responses during the minor party debates. It takes me back to my time at Methven High School when I gave a speech about 'Why Barry Crump should be the next Minister of Transport'. Now that would have been interesting. I guess we would have all been driving Toyota Hi-luxes!

There will be a time where most of us will have to get up in front of a group of people and speak to them. It may be at your wedding (or someone else's), a funeral, a birthday party or special family occasion. It might be as President of the club or association you belong to, at a council meeting or hosting a farm tour. It is something that when you least expect it, someone will expect you to do it.

Over the last couple of weeks, all of our pupils have had the opportunity to give an oral presentation of some description in one of the hardest environments – in front of their peers. From our five-year-olds who presented a poem or nursery rhyme, to our thirteen-year-olds who spoke for over three minutes on a topic of choice, they all got up and gave it a go. The pupils were well supported by their peers and the many parents who turned up to see them speak. It has been great watching their confidence grow from year to year and the content of what they speak about develop. I believe it is a great way to introduce children to public speaking in an environment where they will be supported to do so.

Congratulations to Eddie Millichamp who won the Mt Somers Springburn/Mayfield Schools Year 5/6 final and this week competes against other Year 5/6 pupils from across Mid Canterbury at the Ashburton Plains Rotary Club speech finals.