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The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." - Arthur Foot
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To Tomorrow's India

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Mr Ramachandra Guha who was the Chief Guest at Founders' 2017.

DSW: Being a former Editor of the *Weekly*, could you recollect for us how the publication was run back in the 70s?

Mr Ramachandra Guha (RCG):

In my mind, the important thing about being an editor is to be able to get a diversity of views. In this case it meant getting younger people from different backgrounds to share their views. Additionally, meticulous attention to not only writing but also production and proofing were equally important. One does see these days that such levels of work-ethic are missing in many, perhaps most, Indian newspapers both in terms of quality of articles and the kinds of topics chosen to be written upon. I believe both these components to be critical to the *Weekly*.

DSW: How do you think, if at all, that working on various publications during your tenure in School affected your writing skills which you have used in the later years of your life?

RCG: All you can develop when you are young, is an interest. There are the few exceptions, Vikram Seth being one of them perhaps, who wrote tremendous poetry at the age of fifteen. To most, all the experience gives is a taste of writing and along with the corresponding reading it propels you to pursue these things in the future. I say this for there have been many Editors and Chief-Editors who have not



written anything after they left the board. The Editor-in-Chief while I was Editor is one of them. One's skills are honed mostly when in the 20s, once the reality of life hits one. This is true not just for writing but for any activity one decides to pursue in School.

DSW: On the issue of censorship, is there a barrier you place before publishing any controversial opinions. More widely, to what extent do you think censorship in public fora should exist in a democracy?

RCG: The barrier I place personally for censorship is to not unnecessarily offend living people. I would always ask myself how important is the revelation of offending and hurting someone in public? I would, however, never suppress anything that is written in public interest. I would though, keep my language dignified and

free of vulgar description and abuse. I don't censor on any other front. Otherwise, censorship is important only on things like pornography or explicit materials that incite violence. For any author and scholar, it is important to know that you are fallible and make mistakes. The skill to unhesitatingly be able to say I'm sorry is very important in my opinion. One must never censor but always remain open to self-correction.

DSW: How would you evaluate the present NDA government over the last few years they have been in power?

RCG: I think we have moved from a situation where we had a fairly weak Prime Minister in Manmohan Singh, to where we have an excessively strong one: a Prime Minister who never made up his mind to a Prime Minister

Continued on page 3

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

It is too fun.

Aayush Chowdhry, not for us.

I am applying to States with AIDS.

Gunveer Paintal, planning ahead.

Mibir has broken my arm.

Tanishk Saha, and your heart too?

Unity in strength.

Yashmit Sutodia, going strong.

Even when he is awake he looks like sleepy.

Raghav Dalmia, go to sleep.

I don't want to bear your face again.

Aarnav Sethy, speaking for himself.

We are all publication!

Ranvijay Singh, not so soon.

Is it matters?

VVK, apparently not.

Around the World in 80 Words

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the new members of the Standing Committee, China's highest council of power. Iran re-opened a border crossing with the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Meanwhile, Tesla CEO Elon Musk offered to help a hurricane-struck Puerto Rico with its energy problems. The US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his first official visit to the Indian subcontinent last Wednesday. Manchester United faced their first defeat in the Premier League to Huddersfield Town.

“

**It's not the size of the dog in the fight,
it's the size of the fight in the dog.**

—
Mark Twain

PROLIFIC TALENTS

The following have been awarded **Hockey Colours** for their contribution to the sport:

Half Colours

Gaurav Bhandari, Udaiveer Sekhon and Udesch Kairon

Full Colours

Ajatshatru Singh, Deep Dhandhanian and Udaiveer Jaijee

Kudos!

MASTERING THE MELODY

The following have been awarded **Music Colours** for their contribution to the activity:

Anirudh Bazari, Harsh Dewan, Ishan Mishra, Prabhav Maheshwari, Raghav Bagri, Samarvir Mundi, Tanishk Saha and Zoraver Mehta

Congratulations!

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The following have been awarded **Dramatics Colours** for their dedication to the activity:

English Dramatics

Archit Barthwal and Bharat Choudhary

Hindi Dramatics

Akshat Jha and Shikhar Trivedi

Well done!

THE MAN IN BLACK

Mihir Gupta has been awarded a **Scholar's Blazer**.

Congratulations!

Dosco Doodle

Back to Work

Pratham Bansal



Continued from page 1

who never listens to anyone, so we have gone from one extreme to another. There has also been a rise in sectarianism, with many attacks on minorities, which is worrying. Whimsical economic decisions, demonetisation being a prime example, has led to many, not only me, being disappointed with this government. However, that does not mean they will lose the next election, for the opposition is divided, lacks a sense of morale, and has an incompetent leadership. Nevertheless, there is a sense of disappointment in the government, with all the claims of *Acche Din* never bearing fruit.

DSW: Do you think India needs a third national party, which is different from both the INC and the BJP? If so, what do you think could be the major

obstacles for such a party?

RCG: I think India definitely needs a third party. The Indian National Congress is largely defunct. The idea of a national party being run by a single family is completely defiant of democracy's most fundamental tenets. Unfortunately, the Congress has not got rid of this. Therefore, we do need a third party which stands for liberal values but consists of professionals. The Aam Aadmi Party did seem capable to play out such a role at its inception. Sadly, the developments that have taken place over the past two years have made me doubt their credibility. I think the major problem that this new party would face, primarily, relate to funding and finances. It takes a lot of money to run a national political party, perhaps a thousand crores to even start!

DSW: To conclude, as a professional author what advice do you have for boys who want to pursue writing as a career choice?

RCG: Writing is a calling, you must live it and be with it all the time, writing, music, art and science are callings, and you must be consumed by it. On the other hand, banking is a profession, but writing, music, science and art are callings; you must give it your all, and spend time on it. Professions in comparison are more rewarding but they may not give you a depth of engagement and emotional security compared to that given and gained from writing, art, music and science. They consume you totally and make you into who you want to or chose to become.



UNDER THE SCANNER

NCR Cracker Ban | Varen Talwar

Religious and cultural sentiments have often run counter to positive reforms. The scenario after the recent banning of the sale of crackers in the Delhi-NCR till November 1 by the Supreme Court clearly reiterated this prevalent phenomenon.

The decision faced a lot of criticism, with people arguing that this would undermine the very essence of the festival. Some theories on Facebook and Twitter even claimed that the court was trying to encourage 'Islamic rule' and was 'targeting' Hindu festivals. Author Chetan Bhagat also tweeted against the decision, asking the court rhetorically if it was banning goat sacrifice too. However, amidst all this, only the shopkeepers' argument that this would severely harm their livelihood could be called legitimate. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court stuck to its decision – and for good reason.

It has been quite evident that the

amount of air pollution in Delhi has broken unthinkable barriers due to the immense rise in number of vehicles and the population. This has been aggravated due to farmers burning their fields around that region. All this made it imperative to control the pollution, considering that schools had to be closed and construction activity had to be banned after the Diwali celebrations last year due to the heavy resultant smog.

However, despite the predicament of the people because of the extremely poor air quality, many have again chosen to put tradition over their own health. These people have received immense support as BJP spokesperson Tejinder Singh Bagga pulled off a rather 'inspiring' stunt by buying crackers from outside and distributing them among children in *ashrams* in Delhi. Other groups burst crackers right outside the Supreme Court. While both the acts were technically

legal, considering that the ban was only on the 'sale' of crackers, they were exceptionally successful in showing their contempt for the ban and the court. On asking why the court did not ban the use of crackers altogether, it answered that that step would be too radical, and that it should take one small step at a time.

While the ban was quite helpful in reducing pollution levels with air quality being the best in the last three years, the improvement was still not enough as people were still allowed to burst crackers. I feel that banning bursting crackers altogether was necessary, but would have been too radical a decision which could have sparked off an agitation. So a ban on sale was a small step in at least containing pollution. I think that the fact that the Supreme Court did this without another massive protest is a notable achievement. This will definitely stand as a strong example of the power of the court to work for the greater good of humans, whether they realise it or not.

| CREATIVE |

Boy or Girl?

Divyansh Nautiyal

“Who am I: A boy or a girl?” wondered Fatima, enjoying the view of the dry, barren valley that lay beyond her home. The smouldering glow of the sunrise set the surrounding mountains that held the valley in their arms ablaze. It was a new day, but was it? Would they dress up as boys again and still not dare to venture beyond the confines of their home? The deafening silence in response to her question rattled her, demanding to have the silence broken. They underwent the same cycle of routine every day. They woke up, went to school dressed up as a boy and returned to complete the daily chores of their households. From what she had learnt from the few years of education that she had undergone, life was not the same for the others around the world. On one side, when the freedom of speech and expression was far from being a questionable topic for women, life and condition for women in Afghanistan was exactly the opposite.

On one side, when the freedom of speech and expression was far from being a questionable topic for women, life and condition for women in Afghanistan was exactly the opposite.

A long time ago, she saw her parents being beaten up in the middle of the bazaar with *lathis* and stones. They returned home with multiple injuries and bruises with blood dripping down their forehead and arms. They explained that but failed yet again. They explained that they had tried their best to liberate their daughters and apologised to Fatima and her elder sister for failing them yet again. However, the beating and the apologies did not make sense to her seven-year old brain back then. To the little girl's immature and uncomprehending mind, their fight for a cause and fight for change seemed pointless and not worth getting beaten up for.

Years later, the profundity of her parents' cause strikes home. Fatima sees now that they were fighting for what should have been - and is, in many places else - a natural and inalienable right to be equal and free. The stifling stranglehold of patriarchy has marginalised women like Fatima for too long. For a girl child of her age living in a patriarchal society in Afghanistan, she was a fairly knowledgeable girl. Having acquired such knowledge from the books that

her dad had brought for her, she was highly aware of what went around the globe. Many around the globe were an inspiration for her to fight against the Taliban and to break the oppressive regime of her country. But the fight for a voice has to begin from somewhere far from her homeland, somewhere where even just the possibility of protest is not unimaginable. Her homeland that she seeks to liberate is far from the right place to begin with.

So now her family is on the move. Home deserted, they leave for the lands where they can truly get the freedom that they have yearned for ever since. Looking back at her homeland, the mountains, the deserts and the valleys that she was leaving behind, she did feel nostalgic. However, her love for her homeland, whatever be its state, will never cease and shall only grow stronger as she is on the move to make it better. Fatima realised that she would be away from her native land only for the right cause, and not because she wants to flee her country that she loves and wants to make it a better place to be. And when she comes back, she won't play the boy anymore.

And Back Again

Hitansh Nagdev

The leaves blend with the wind,
And come back again,
The waves kiss my feet,
But go back again,
The setting sun fades,
Only to rise again,
And Death takes life,
Only to give it again.

I can't feel time,
So I go back again,
To see her;
Once again,
To feel her;
Yet again,
But just when I feel time,
I come back again.
All I am left with,
To Hope time and again,
For I know; One day,
I will see her again,
And I know; One day,
I will feel her again.
As the leaves that blend with the wind,
Do come back again,
The waves that kiss my feet,
Do go back again,
The setting sun does fade,
Only to rise again,
And death takes life,
Only to give it again.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a proud, gay ex-Dosco, I was touched by Ethan Chamberlain's article ("Behind the Scenes") in the October 7, 2017, issue of the *Weekly*. I want to commend the *Weekly* for running the piece, and more importantly, Ethan for his bravery in writing it. In his piece, Ethan raised some valid critiques of the School and its acceptance of students who may be different from the stereotypical Dosco.

Ethan criticised the conformist nature of some School policies, which force students to dress and appear in a similar manner. While some may find these rules stifling, I believe that these rules encourage an egalitarianism that forces boys to see each other as equals, irrespective of financial background, skin colour, religion, and yes, of sexual orientation. Ethan will soon learn that vast swathes of the real world are similarly conformist. The corporate world, where I now make a living, has somewhat rigid expectations about dress code and conduct. The similarities between Doon's traditional ways and the established norms of the corporate world might explain some of the tremendous success that many ex-DoscOs have achieved in commerce and industry. I would therefore encourage Ethan to think of Doon's rules as valuable preparation for the real world. You may not love it, but it is what it is, and you're better off being prepared for it. That being said, Ethan shouldn't let those rules and expectations snuff his spirit of individual expression. I'm reminded of the words of transgender actress and LGBT activist Trace Lysett: "I spent all those years trying to blend in, when I was really meant to stand out."

The bullying that Ethan has faced in the UK and at Doon is unfortunately a shared reality for many students (gay or straight) who are simply different.

I also believe that it is this same egalitarianism that makes ex-DoscOs more tolerant than Doon itself might be. When I came out of the closet as a homosexual man a few years ago, some of my Doon classmates were the most supportive allies I had (and they continue to be till this day). The fact that we all wore those itchy regulation woollen socks and ate the same inedible food (at least in my day) for six years, probably encouraged my Dosco friends to see me as

no different than my heterosexual classmates.

Ethan rightly questioned why he is the first openly gay Dosco. In response, I would offer two potential explanations. First, Doon is a premier academic institution in a country where it is still illegal to be gay, and where liberal views are increasingly under assault.

When I came out of the closet as a homosexual man a few years ago, some of my Doon classmates were the most supportive allies I had (and they continue to be till this day).

Against a societal backdrop where homosexuality is ridiculed and sometimes even persecuted, it shouldn't surprise anyone that gay DoscOs chose to hide their sexuality. Second, some DoscOs may not realize or fully accept their sexual orientation at such a young age. It took me over six years after graduating from Doon to accept and publicly own who I was, despite the fact that I attended a very liberal and accepting college for four years in the interim. For many gay men, coming to terms with their homosexuality simply takes time.

The bullying that Ethan has faced in the UK and at Doon is unfortunately a shared reality for many students (gay or straight) who are simply different. From one gay man to another, I want to assure Ethan of one thing: it gets better. As much as Doon may claim that it is a microcosm of society, it is a mere seventy acres in a large and eclectic world. At Doon, your closest friends are chosen for you by the arbitrariness of a housing lottery. In the real world, Ethan, you will get to choose friends who love and support you not despite your long hair, but because of it. You will meet other gay men, and will find fraternity and strength from the commonality of your shared experiences. And yes, in that wide world, you will still encounter a vicious intolerance of your ways. However, it is precisely the courage that it took you to write that article in the first place, that will help you face down the critics and stand up for who you are.

Ethan, you may be the first openly gay Dosco, but I thank you for making the path of those gay DoscOs who will surely follow in your footsteps a little easier.

Regards,

Vidur Sehgal (449-J, Batch of 2006)

The Review That Goes Wrong

Omar Chishti reviews the Founders' Day English Production, The Play That Goes Wrong.

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results."

- Albert Einstein (*attribution contested)

In theatre, especially in the realm of comedy, the quote can instead be altered to read: "The definition of insanity is performing the same joke over and over again, but expecting laughs every time." It's a huge credit to the ingenuity of cast members (or the insanity of audience members) that 'The Murder At Haversham Manor' managed to commit this comic sacrilege of recycling jokes, while still somehow eliciting the same boisterous peals of hilarity from the audience each and every time.

I've heard it said that anyone can be cruel, while not everyone can be a critic. Being pressed into writing this review, I'm afraid I fail to be either: there's nothing I could find to possibly be cruel about, and nothing I, being alien to theatre, am qualified to critique. Here follows, then, not a review, but just a loyal audience member's short impression of 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'.

First off, kudos to the Director, Mr. Nagalia, and the Boy-in-Charge, Bharat, for cleverly incorporating all of Doon's idiosyncratic shortcomings in choosing a script for this year's Founder's Production. From the AV Squad's hilarious 'jam ups' and the stage setup's final day tantrums to the accidents caused by the over-athletic manoeuvres of cast members, all facets of previous years' plays were accounted for, and duly parodied, in this one script.

The fourth wall was broken, nay dismantled, demolished, and dissolved, from the opening seconds of this highly entertaining dramatic satire. If



the brochure hadn't made it quite clear, a never-ending series of unconventionalities soon made it apparent that this production was not standard Founder's fare. It remains a great mystery to all whether the dramatic disasters sprinkled liberally through the show on the main day were genuine, *deliberate*, disasters or were complemented by some fresh gaffes. The genius behind the premise of 'The Play That Goes Wrong', you see, is that it's safe to call any errors 'improvisation', and leave it at that.

From period costume to gender reversing make up, no holds were barred in lending the play an initial air of authenticity to disguise the chicanery to follow. Stellar performances were delivered by our in-house Sherlock, Archit Barthwal, as Inspector Carter; the ever charismatic Bharat Choudhary as Charles Haversham; the ethnically convincing Lorcan Thomas as Cecil Haversham; the *Weekly's* own Aryan Bhattacharjee as the coquettish Florence Collymore; Siddhant Shyam as her zealously protective brother Thomas Collymore; Milind Khemkha as the comically inept Butler Perkins; and the insistent 'stand-in' Aarsh Ashdir, also as Florence Collymore along with the conspicuous AV co-ordinator, Advaita Sood. The versatile cast was rounded off by a solidly jam-

up ridden (and well practiced, of course) accompaniment from the crew. Technical Director (Prakarsh Gupta) and Stage Managers (Naman Khurana and Ritwik Saraf), along with their able teams, worked tirelessly behind the scenes. On a lighter note (and to no one's surprise), the AV Squad and the Stage Committee, after decades of practice for the same, delivered a flawless series of flawed cues, infallibly fallible stage props, and perfectly timed mis-timings.

From seeing the unconscious to-be Mrs. Haversham dangling out of the window with her (his?) skirt leaving *very* little to the imagination to the sight of the not-quite-dead corpse of Charles Haversham serenely following his pall bearers when the stretcher fails, memories of scenes from the performance shall elicit fond reminiscent chuckles from the audience for years to come. Particularly memorable are the stichomythic exchange during Inspector Carter's interrogation of Ms Collymore, wherein Ms Collymore answers questions before they're asked, and the time loop of sorts the cast finds themselves in when Perkins keeps circling a few pages backwards in the script. This rollercoaster ride of a play closed with the house nodding along to chart topping *Despacito*, and wishing the performance could have gone on *just a little longer*.

A Home Away From Home

Ishikaa Mukherjee recounts her time spent in School.

Every experience, good or bad, is a priceless collector's item. - Isaac Marion.

This quote sums up my stay in India. It was an experience full of ups and downs, great moments but also difficult situations. Before coming here, I set up crazy theories, full of excitement and anticipation about how my trip was going to be. My imagination went wild, and to be honest, I was a little scared as well, this being the first time I would be away from home for so long. This was also my first time travelling half way across the world without my parents. Even though we try to travel to India every year, we just visit my relatives where I get pampered and royally spoiled; an idea which essentially sums up my expectations of India.

Honestly, I never considered myself to be very Indian at all. I never understood why my parents love this place so much. This was one of my ulterior motives of visiting The Doon School: to learn more about my culture and my country, a task I have, in some ways, accomplished. I will probably never be completely Indian but staying here has taught me what a special and magical place India is.

Being at The Doon School has taught me not just about my country, but also about my education. I have studied in International schools all my life; I am used to a specific type of education and way of learning. The Doon School is quite the opposite of that, and it was fascinating to see the different ways in which the teachers teach, and students learn. In the International school I go to, there is a completely different atmosphere in the classrooms. Students interact with each other and the teachers are a lot more communicative, we are free to discuss, contribute and ask questions. The teachers are

just there to guide us while we are doing the learning ourselves. In contrast, the atmosphere in the classes at Doon are more severe and disciplined. In almost all classes the teacher is upfront holding a lecture and writing notes on the board, which the students are expected to take down and revise from.

I got the feeling that contributions were not welcome and that the teachers felt uncomfortable with me talking or asking questions in class. After sometime, I could see myself adapting to the environment and becoming more reserved and quite exactly like everyone else!

—————

I got the feeling that contributions were not welcome and that the teachers felt uncomfortable with me talking or asking questions in class.

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This is one of the things I found most challenging because I felt like I had to change myself to fit in. I feel this teaching style requires all students to be extremely book smart and disciplined; something in stark contrast to my school back in Germany, which was more research and interaction based. I don't know which learning style is more effective or if there even is a superior type of teaching, but for me it was challenging at first to get used to this type of education.

Nevertheless, The Doon School is amazing in so many different ways! I was stunned when I saw the campus and it literally took me a week before I could come home on my own. The variety of subjects and activities offered here is a

luxury; it ranges from swimming to dancing to art. I was astonished by the things children my age are capable of! The sprinters are nothing short of Olympic level speed, the dance competitions are legendary and the art works in the art gallery are so mesmerizing, that I was taken aback that children my age could be so talented.

When I was first told that in this school the boys are like brothers to each other and the teachers are like parents away from home, I thought it was just a selling point and something to impress me. But being here, I can see that it is the reality, the seniors discipline the juniors (sometimes too hard for my liking!) and the juniors look up to the seniors for guidance. Living together brings everyone closer but I feel the girls are slightly excluded in the whole family feeling. The boys joke around each other but are also always there for each other, while around girls they act totally differently and somehow distanced. I am still not sure if it is out of respect or disdain. Either way I think this is something important that should be looked into. Being from a co-ed school I was bewildered to see the vast difference in attitude among the boys and girls. There was visible discrimination which was difficult for me to adjust to.

To come to a close, I just want to add the famous quote of Dr. Seuss; "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened". I am not only smiling now, but am really thankful that this experience was possible for me at such an early stage of my life. My last thoughts; I will miss you all in a very positive way and I already look forward to meeting you all in this long journey of life. *Auf Wiedersehen...* See you once again, as the Germans would say!

The Week Gone By

Aayush Chowdhry

With a significant ten Inter-House Competitions round the corner - post the insufficient Diwali break - DoscOs returned to School jumping right into the fire. Ironically, the unprecedented chilly early morning P.T (deemed unnecessary by most) has served to extinguish the inner fire of most. Apart from the crammed numerous inter-house sporting events coming up, the School Cricket team is preparing for their week long IPSCs, with only one daring soul who has opted IB being in the team. Along with the many 'ill' students, the School Athletics team also makes a late return this week; just in time to tell the IPSC Boxing

team to break a leg.

On the academic spectrum, boys face the feared phenomenon of 'serious' studies for the first time post trials. However, the main academic focus among the senior boys has been the rigor of standardized testing. With SAT results providing for a more auspicious Diwali in some homes, or a rather less polluted one in the others; this term has kicked off with fervent preparations for its counterpart test: the ACT. Even our last batch of ICSE victims get their first taste of 'college-readiness' with their PSAT this week. Word is some efficient masters still haven't returned answer scripts from September trials, but everything pertaining to the exams seems to be forgotten by most, even the learning!

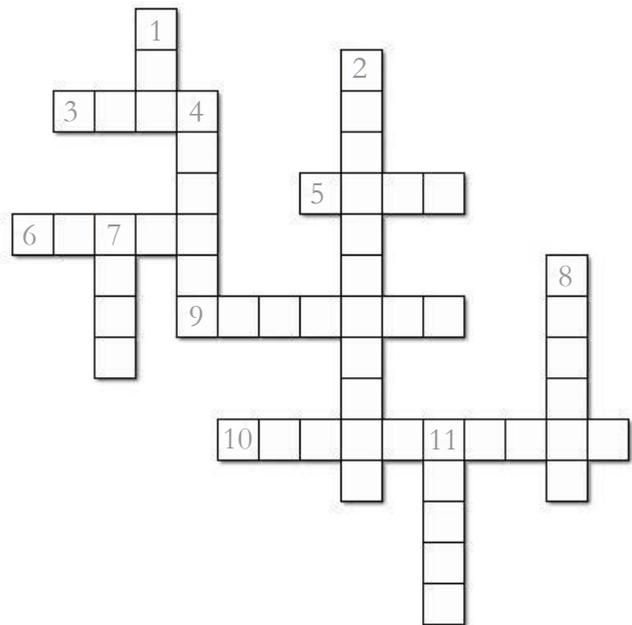
The co-curricular activities in School have also slowed their pace due to the foreboding of new

appointments; debating, however, makes it final pull to the finish line with preparations for the Chuckerbutty debates - that were made apparent due to the multiple announcements. The wait for our desperate ambitious S Formers grows evermore agonizing due to the delay in announcements, which is seen even in the *Weekly's* modified editorial board with 5 editors. Parallel politics begin even in SC Form as the shine of school colors and colleges grows brighter. For those who don't indulge in 'scoping,' however, the prospect of 'No Shave November' (hinted at by the headmaster) seems exciting. Whatever the case, all of this coupled with the upcoming workshops, for positions as well as relations, puts it beyond doubt that the upcoming 7 weeks will be eventful, least to say.

Crossword | Riddles

Across

3. Voiceless it cries, wingless flutters, toothless bites, mouthless mutters.
 5. What can you catch but not throw.
 6. The only English word that retains the same pronunciation, even after you take away four of its five letters.
 9. When you have me, you feel like sharing me. But, if you do share me, you don't have me.
 10. You can see nothing else, when you look in my face, I will look you in the eye, and I will never lie.
- ### Down
1. What walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon and three at night?
 2. What is the word that is spelled incorrectly in all dictionaries?
 4. A word I know, six letters it contains, remove one letter, and twelve remains.
 7. Many have heard me, no one has seen me, I only speak when spoken to.
 8. There is a house. One enters it blind and comes out seeing. What is it?
 11. In a riddle whose only answer is chess, what is the only word that is prohibited?



Note: All answers related to people in this crossword refer to their surnames.

Answers to This Week's Crossword	Down	Across
1. Man	3. Wind	10. Reflection
2. Incorrectly	5. Cold	
4. Dozens	6. Queue	
7. Echo	9. Secrets	
8. School		
11. Chess		

Source: <http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/>

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