

Media

POETRY

Bharat Ganju and Shoumitra Srivastava interview visiting faculty member Tom Lamont and his wife Bobbie

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us a bit about

Tom Lamont (TLA): I am originally from Washington D.C. but since my father was a writer for *Time* magazine, I spent some time in London where I played a lot of cricket and rugby during my stay. I spent my formative years in New York and went on to do an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and that is where I met my wife Bobbie. Eventually, after an attempt at being a rock star, I went to Oxford University for my Masters in History. Presently, I am teaching History in Groton School.

Bobbie Lamont (BLM): I am originally from New York but I spent ten years of my life in Massachusetts and then moved on to Harvard to study Physics and I also did some lab work in Chemistry. We have three sons; two of them, barring my youngest, are attending school in Groton. I am presently a part-time Chemistry teacher there, even though teaching is quite recent to me. I hope I can gain something from coming here. I was pretty happy to know that Chemistry is taught on a larger scale at Doon. In Groton there are only two Chemistry teachers compared to six History teachers.

DSW: Where do your interests lie?

TLA: Bobbie is interested in biking, while my interests lie in an array of sports, ranging from basketball and American football to ice hockey and squash. I used to play cricket when I was young, so I'm quite excited to get back to the game.

DSW: Where all did you travel before coming to **Dehradun?**

TLA and BLM: We travelled around Kerala for a while to get a feel of the place. We stayed with many families and enjoyed a break from American food. We also went to Rishikesh where we saw a lot of people practicing yoga, and many Europeans..

DSW: What impressed you most about Doon School? **TLA:** First of all, the campus. It is very beautiful and reminds me of what Groton was fifty to sixty years ago. DSW: What led you to come to India, and even more,

The Doon School?

TLA and BLM: In Groton, a teacher gets a sabbatical after ten years of teaching, and while conversing with Nishad Das, an ex-Dosco who is the great-grandson of S.R. Das, he suggested this school as an ideal place for our leave, and after thinking about it, we decided it was a good choice.

DEBATE Norwegian Percussion Band

A Review Gursharan Singh

The School Music Society organised a concert by the Norwegian Percussion Ensemble, SISU, on February 7. This was a SPIC-MACAY programme, held at the Music School



auditorium, and enthusiastically attended by students, staff and guests of the School.

The presentation by the artistes was intellectually stimulating and interesting, due to the number of ideas pursued by the performers. Unfortunately, the body of sound created was extremely inadequate from the point of view of listening pleasure. The tonal range generated by the array of instruments was limited and the complete absence of the bass range and spectrum was especially unfulfilling.

The introduction of dramatic content and sequence failed to add musical significance to what was essentially a cameo demonstrating rhythmic permutations and combinations. Manipulating balloons is not an idea that lends itself towards generating meaningful percussion. The idea of creating natural sound, with appropriate rhythmic response, certainly came off very clearly! As an example of free expression and showmanship, the concert had many illuminating features, worthy of emulation by students and performers alike.

The essence of percussion is the delineation of beats. Tonality and resonance are essential elements that rescue percussion from mere timekeeping rattletrap! At this juncture of development in world percussion, one cannot imagine an ensemble statement without the inclusion of the 'talking' drum tradition of Africa, or the 'speaking' fingers that produce the electrifying sound of India's *Taal-Vadya*. It is quite possible, of course, that the performers were without much of their equipment on this occasion and were forced to exhibit a limited repertoire.

In conclusion, while many among the audience were fascinated by the fare, many, like myself, came away a bit disappointed.

News-in-Brief

CHECKMATE

Uday Shriram is the first recipient of the newly instituted **Chess Colours Award**. Well done!

MEN IN BLACK

Saksham Sharda, Shantanu Garg, Dilsher Dhillon and Vivaan Shah have been awarded the **Scholar's Blazer**. Congratulations!

TAKING CHARGE, 2008

Vishnukaant Pitty and Ankur Saxena have been appointed boys-in-charge of the **Boys' Bank** and **Tuckshop**.

Rachit Khaitan has been appointed the boy-in-charge of the **Technology Committee**.

Vinayak Thapliyal has been reappointed the boy-incharge of the **Website Maintenance** SUPW.

Saksham Sharda has been appointed the Secretary of the **IT Society.**

Shaleen Chikara has been appointed the School **First Aid** Captain.

Himmat Singh and Adhaar Sharma have been appointed boys-in-charge of the **Chair Squad** SUPW.

Akshat Khandelwal and Jaspreet Singh have been appointed boys-in-charge of the **Child Education** SUPW.

Vijay Karan Kapur has been appointed boy-in-charge of the **Weather Reporting Squad**.

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

OLD BOY'S NEWS

Ranjit Khubchand (ex 315 J '59), who rums his own buying agencies – Indus Valley and Green Fields – was awarded the **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the EPCH, Government of India, for his outstanding contribution to the promotion of Handicrafts Exports.

Unquotable Quotes

Take off your textbooks.

RSF starts a trend.

Slight and little are not anonymous.

AKM explores the unknown.

There is no author, it is unanimous.

Prateek Ghei. the litterateur.

Fun does not mean over-fun.

AKM, defining limits.

I'm the dumbest planet on this man.

Piyush Upadhyaya, that he is.

That is illiteral.

Vikram Kejriwal, metaphorically speaking.

How un-rude of you.

Anuj Bhatia being courteous.

He's facebooking on facebook.

Trivikram Singh surfs the web.

Uday, congratulates!

Darshdeep Hora, wishing well.

CAREER CALL

The **Careers' Notice Board** will focus on **Animation** as a career option this week. All those interested should check it out.

|Poetry|

The Devil Inside

Arjun Sethi

Sometimes, in the dead of the night,

Someone or something hiding from my sight,

Creeps up on me.

Dark, mysterious and scary.

It possesses me.

I feel the fierce flames of hell.

A voice like that of the Devil himself will tell,

"Strike!", "Avenge!"

"You need to take revenge!"

I hear the painful cries,

As Satan slowly begins to rise.

I wake up with a start.

I hear the beating of my heart.

What was this?

Definitely not a dream of bliss.

What am I? A werewolf? A vampire?

What is this strange inner fire?

Sometimes when I am alone,

I see someone on a blood-red throne.

He speaks to me from within.

"When?" he asks, "When will you give in?"

"Give up," he insists, "Give up all this joy, all this song.

You cannot stay there long."

" $N_{\text{o,"}}$ I tell myself, "I must be sane!"

I try to, but all in vain.

The voice, it never dies.

It continues to hypnotize.

He, on his throne,

Says in his fiery tone,

"You know nothing of the Earth.

Revenge is the strongest driving force, know its worth.

It is not, as some say, Love.

The vicious vulture has long ago vanquished the dreary

dove.

Satan is now gaining power.

He gathers his ferocious forces,

Yet invisible from Heaven's holy tower.

Trust me, Armageddon is not far.

Princely power perhaps awaits you too.

You cannot avoid what is true.

Realize the renewed power of darkness.

Come join me.

It is but your destiny."

It is getting harder to choose a side.

It is like the Devil inside.

This voice... this darkness...

To it I am drawn.

I cannot hold on.

Children, School and Society

Experiences and reflections on what can be done

Written in August , 1989, Baljit Malik 's (ex 73 K '56) article remains relevant nineteen years later. This is an edited version of the original article

What should a school attempt to do in our times? In this paper the focus has been further narrowed down to those schools which describe themselves as being 'public' or 'progressive'.

When you look at the aims and objectives of these private, independent schools, most of them claim to be geared for character-building, leadership training and

passing examina-tions. In some 66 The early years in Udyogamandal School schools, there is an added were laced with enthusiasm, a spirit of emphasis on moral in- adventure and the pleasure of working struction. What do we really mean by character- with a motivated faculty. There was an building, moral values unforgettable, rather unusual Geography and leadership training, class which ended up on top on Anamudi, especially in a society

economic terms is highly fragmented and hierarchical? There is yet another dimension of our social ethos, which is generally not taken into account in the formulation of our educational ideas and ideals. There is a grossly unfair division of labour between male and female which denies women equality with men and family, at school

and in the workplace. Moreover, in addition to the problem of inequality, there is the daily problem of security for women in public places and public transport.

The question thus arises, what should there be in school life that can relate character building, leadership training, even class work to an understanding and consciousness of some of the basic problems of our society like poverty, class, caste, religious and gender differences? A few other peculiarly Indian middle-class failings should be mentioned here, such as, a resistance to manual labour, a reluctance to keep the body in good shape and a hesitation to explore and experience the unknown, to stray off the beaten track.

Over and above the daily routine of school, if only we would heed the call of the mind and body for search, discovery and adventure. If only there could be an atmosphere, opportunities and conditions to make physical and intellectual adventure of school education. Apart from providing a base for further education, today's schools have an equally critical task to perform in preparing boys and girls for their family life as adults. We are in the middle of sweeping and far-reaching changes. As women begin to come out of home to participate in various non-domestic economic activities, their position, status and role in the family will also be radically transformed. It is high time schools began to anticipate and respond to some of these changes.

The ideas for action being outlined here have been synthesised from my work experience in three very different schools. My first experience of school teaching was as an assistant master at The Doon School (1964-49). A fully residential public school in a classic British mould, its main features of internal organisation were the house and prefectorial systems cast in a very obvious pecking order of hierarchy. All positions of leadership and student authority were nominated by the housemasters and headmaster, depending on extent and delegation of power. Thus, monitors with power limited to a particular house were selected by housemasters whereas prefects, whose jurisdiction covered the whole school, were selected amongst the monitors by the headmaster. Those who laid down the design of the Doon School

system were careful to see that the writ of the headmaster and housemaster did not dominate each and every school activity. Thus, authority to select captains of games, besides conducting various inter-house competitions and adjudicating disputes in the field vested in like ours which in social and the highest peak in Southern India. 59 a games committee. The

> headmaster and housemasters were not necessarily members of this committee. There was also an elected school council, which worked as a direct channel of contact between the student boy and the headmaster, though its members had no powers to enforce discipline.

> Apart from the regular course work, there was much scope for adventure, sport, fine arts and social work. The school was indeed very daring to encourage trekking expeditions, cycling tours, and riverside outings for those over fourteen years without even being accompanied by a teacher! The academic programme was supplemented by a good range of club activities which served to deepen as well as broaden the concerns of a classroom. The science, history, geography, literary and other societies organized their own schedule of talks, discussions, exhibitions and other activities.

> The examination results were presented in a way that avoided ranking students in serial order of merit. The reason for avoiding this common practice was to encourage good performance not only through competition, but by helping students to put in their best effort according to ability. If a student worked hard, but managed to secure only mediocre marks, the effect of a serially graded list would be demoralizing. At the same time, while avoiding competition and the risk of demoralizing students with lower achievement level, care was taken to institute an effective system for rewarding academic excellence. Those who secured high marks were given a special mention at a special assembly with the added privilege of signing the Honours Book of the school.

> My next phase (a relatively short one from 1969-71) was as senior master/ Vice Principal of a school that I helped to organise in Kerala with a former senior colleague from Doon School. Instead of an idyllic campus, we were in the heart of a public sector industrial township. While the school building was being constructed, we worked in thatched huts along the river bank. Being a new school, there was plenty of scope and opportunity for innovation and experimentation to establish a lively school environment. One of the first things we did was to evolve our course work in junior classes for Social

Studies, General Science and English. Instead of following only prescribed books, an attempt was made to introduce concepts through local history and geography; to introduce Indian writing in English; to relate general science to flora and fauna, climate and field work in the immediate environment around the school and in the district and the state. In Kerala, compared to the north, the educated elite was much rooted in its own indigenous culture. It was common practise for civil servants, senior managers of industrial enterprises and other senior professionals to wear local dress and eat with their hands. Taking a cue from this, the children were encouraged to be proud of their living culture and not to be swept away by imitating western ways.

Those early years in the life of the Udyogamandal School were laced with enthusiasm, a spirit of adventure and pleasure to work with a cooperative, motivated faculty. When the new school building was completed, all the boys and the girls and teachers literally carried the books, equipment and furniture from the old to the new premises. And for the school foundation day, some of the students and teachers wrote their own play about Gandhiji's life and produced it with all two hundred and fifty students taking part in it. There was also an unforgettable, rather unusual geography class which ended up on top of Anamudi, the highest peak in southern India.

In 1971, I left Kerala to become principal of Vidya Bhavan in Udaipur, Rajasthan (1971-75). This was then a forty-year old institution, well established with a concrete philosophy that tried to adapt public school ideas to Indian needs. Compared to Doon, here was a radically different set-up. Hindi medium, with school fees graded according to parental income, an elected panchayat instead of the prefects, and co-educational. VB was a combination of a residential-cum-full day school. Boys and girls across many castes and classes interacted here, including Adivasi boys on scholarship from the social welfare department. There were many unique features about this school, some of which are described below:

A congenial community atmosphere instead of authoritarian ethos. An important part of this was the panchayat system. Instead of prefects and monitors, there were elected class representatives and secretaries for various societies. At the staff level considerable emphasis was put on staff meetings. Important decisions about school matters were preceded by discussion, dialogue and participation in the decision-making process.

The Anniversary Project and Vanshala were two interesting activities of great educational value, each organised in rotation every other year. The school's anniversary, or foundation day, was treated as a six-week project combining study, exhibitions, talks, music, dance and drama around a particular theme. In this way every teacher and student became an active participant in the anniversary project. The Vanshala, also called open-air session, was perhaps the most challenging and exciting of Vidya Bhavan's innovation. Once every other year, the junior and the senior schools would move out to a pre-selected site for a week long school-in-camp. The Vanshala was organised after surveying a camp site in relation to what it could offer for field work in Science,

Social Studies, Art and Craft. New vistas were opened up at the Vanshala for students and teachers, enabling them to discover links between the classroom and the outside world.

At the camp-school there was a daily routine of cleaning, study, games, helping with the cooking and recreation. An excellent opportunity for students and staff unused to boarding school life to be out in the open, doing things for themselves and learning to live within a group. The Vanshala also provided an experience of rural life, short hikes, bonfires, taking turns at various camp duties, leadership training and being close to nature. Another unusual but important feature at Vidya Bhawan was that home science, tailoring and dance classes were attended by girls as well as boys as were the metal and woodwork classes.

In the three schools, where I worked for a total of eleven years, I always tried to teach the subjects of social studies and literature in ways that would be relevant to social realities and current affairs. We even went to the extent of going all the way from Udaipur to 24 Parganas in West Bengal to work in the camps of refugees from what was then East Pakistan. We also studied the recurring cycles of drought and famine in Rajasthan and did what little we could to help with relief work in villages located near Udaipur.

We found the textbooks were seldom adequate or good enough to make the subject real, to enliven it with a sense of purpose, a feeling of usefullness. Whatever the compulsions of the syllabus, textbooks had to be supplemented with projects and work from the library. A good library is thus an essential requisite of a good school. My other, almost compulsive, interest was to initiate a monthly or bi-monthly school journal. This served many useful functions. It acted as an effective medium of communication between school and parents; and it served the role of a school diary, besides generating a debate on various matter and encouraging attempts at creative writing.

Another activity which I considered very important was some form of community service within or outside the campus. Within the campus there were activities helping in the library, serving a community meal, helping weaker students at remedials, organizing a function, etc. and outside activities like helping out in institutions for the handicapped, village-development work, running adult education classes and so on.

There's nothing as refreshing as being out on the sports field, and every good school should be able to organize supervised games and activities for all students. In a healthy institution, all the staff should be encouraged to take up a game or activity of their choice. Students love to see their teachers in a role apart from the classroom, and it is always good for school morale to organize periodic matches between staff and students. At Vidya Bhawan, we carried out a rather successful experiment in mixed games of hockey and basketball for boys and girls. This enabled the girls to play a more sturdy, sure-footed game and also quickened their reflexes, whereas the boys learnt to be less rough and more skilful in their play.

(The concluding section of this article will appear in the following issue)

"The Media Can be Believed"

Point

Arnav Sahu

As Bruce Jackson said, "Often you knew that lump was a dead body only because a chattering reporter told you it was"

Media, perhaps, is the only way the voice of the people can be articulated. Media has come a long way since the word was first coined. Its intial objective as a public utility service has transformed into a business, spread out to every corner of the world. It is an in-

herent part of our per, advertise

day-to-day lives. Be it the newspa and killed a dog along with his cattle!" "Breaking News! A villager lost his mind ing in the smallest of towns is sensationalised and then dished out

ments on web sites, television - media incorporates it all.

Of late, though, the reliability of the media is being questioned. Firstly, it is being pointed out that most of the news we are informed about is grossly exaggerated. Certainly, this is true because of the fierce competition in the market. But the important point is that only a certain part of it is fabricated, though even here, it is based, in any case, on fact. This base acts as a breeding ground for reporters to thrive on. Prob-

ably, some of it is yet without the elementary news, the

anything but news, | The Media can distort the news, but | waves. The public sense is numbed cannot fabricate it.

media cannot operate. For instance, take the death of Benazir Bhutto. Some news channels went as far as accusing Pervez Musharraf of being behind her as-

But again, the fact that Benazir was murdered in a suicide attack is irrefutable, and this topic states that 'the media can be believed'. Yes it can, but only to a certain extent. As a viewer, it is our responsibility to use our own knowledge and power of discrimination. The counterpoint may project the media's tendency to distort truth, but cannot deny that a part of it is based on solid fact.

Let's take another example - the scratch on Aishwarya's ankle. It was ridiculous to put all the limelight on such a petty matter. Yet, the news that she was hurt is true, irrespective of whether the news report was a case of misplaced priority or not.

Secondly, if the media reportage was based on complete falsehood, it wouldn't be one of the booming sectors in the world. The media is stamping its authority everywhere and being a money-churner, it cannot afford to deceive its viewers or readers completely. The competition in such a field is tough, with one trying to overshadow the other. The consumer, after all, is king, with a choice of an ample number of channels to watch and newspapers to read. Fabricating news can lead to litigation and, worse, a complete loss of credibility, which will be disastrous to the media in the long

Thirdly, it is the media which reveals to us the happenings around the world through sting oprrations and undercover reoprts. It is the media that gives us an insight into every nook and corner of the world: without it we would remain ignorant of much of the injustice and corruption that plague our society.

Counterpoint

Vibhav Gaur

The media today has become very commercial, rather than being informative. News is printed or screened just for the sake of giving publicity to trivial incidents. News of utmost stupidity and irrelevance is conveyed to viewers or readers so that the news channel or paper keeps

> running. Any insignificant happento the general public in the form of

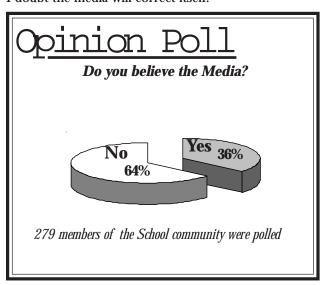
newspaper reports or repetitive T.V. footages. In reality, nobody has the time or inclination to watch or read anything like this. A few examples that I have personally viewed - "Breaking News! A villager lost his mind and killed a dog along with his cattle!" "A village ruled by a snake! People worship it due to belief that if it is not worshipped it will bring death!" We may call such things 'news', but it is of no use to people like you and me. In fact, it is useless to everybody. All that the media does today is doctor the news to make it more interesting.

> Hype and sensationalism rule the airbeyond repair.

The media has become an instrument of highlighting some very trivial happenings. We find less information that is of use to us. Thus, in my opinion, the media should not be trusted entirely.

Newspapers are influenced more by political figures, rather than reason and sober fact. It has ceased to be a public service and goes to any extent to grab the attention of its readers. Recently, one channel boldly proclaimed that Mumbai will be flooded by the Arabian Sea by 2009. This instils a feeling of panic in viewers, who then get hooked on to the channel to watch further apocalyptic announcements.

Media has now become a business instead of a public forum and time has come that we stop getting brainwashed and become more discerning. Unless we the public voice our discontent with what is being fed to us, I doubt the media will correct itself.



| Viewpoint | Perils of Indifference

One of the greatest lessons of history, and particularly the 20th century, is that of the perils of indifference. The holocaust, the genocide in Rwanda; more recently, the crisis of countless civil wars, coups and assassinations have taken place as the rest of the world has turned a blind eye, remained indifferent. Millions of people have died because of indifference, millions of more lives have been broken. And although, in the vast expanse of outer space and the tiny structure of the atom, Man has unveiled great secrets, and in art and literature and religion has shown a sublimity of feeling, the doctrine of indifference has shown our race to be destitute of wisdom, incapable of impartial love. A narrow-minded nationalism, grounded in this doctrine, has ensured that even today, we are unable to think of 'man' rather than a group of men.

As in life, of the great lessons learnt in our school, one is that of the dangers of indifference. In my opin-

Letter To The Editor

While reading Vihaan Khanna's *Epic Battles*, (in the issue dated November 10, 2007) a well-written article concerning the battle between parents and children, I encountered strong reasoning: however, my outlook differs. Regarding Vihaan's statement, "(parents) provide us with unconditional love", his statement is obviously valid, for all parents love their children. However, Vihaan's objective proving the tyrannical attributes of parents lacks a multi-angled outlook.

"Parents, in my eyes, are nosy busybodies. Their version of 'communicating to us' is prying with our lives". Although Vihaan highlights this bothersome aspect towards parenting, he fails to analyse the superego of us children, therefore ignoring our similar actions of prying and pestering into our parents' lives. There has never been a child who has refrained from eavesdropping on private parental conversations, therefore ultimately invading privacy. In addition, all children nag their parents, demanding a superfluous collection of games, clothes, and other impressive and costly items. Evidently we hassle parents to such an extent our 'battle' for demands are at par or perhaps surpass those of our elders'. Other demands we bombard our parents with are extending curfews, bed-times, allowances and other privileges for our lifestyle. We essentially quarrel over such issues because we as children occasionally take our luxuries for granted- not because our parents pry, and alter our comfortable lifestyles. By taking comfort for granted, we pester them further. In addition, our blase outlook on life

ion, the greatest threat to the dignity of being a Dosco, to the worth of that tag that we must carry with us for the rest of our lives, is a philosophy of indifference: indifference towards the community at large. For, being a Dosco is synonymous with a concern for the basic dictates of self-respect, with a sense of caring for fellow Doscos, with an interest in what happens outside the four walls of Chandbagh, and what can be done about it. Indeed, being a Dosco should imply being opposed to all kinds of indifference. Indifference goes against the grain of the Dosco spirit.

Despite the lessons learnt from history and from our school lives, the doctrine of indifference remains a tempting one. It is so much easier to say, "I don't care" or "let things be the way they are", than to actually take some action, to actually stand up and do something. And yet, indifference takes the humanity away from humankind. It robs Man of the emotions of love and pity and compassion, and also of anger and hate: emotions that serve as the props and pillars that help Man to not only endure, but to prevail.

maintains a tendency to 'stress out' our parents – an issue Vihaan introduced in his article. It is imperative for Vihaan and children across the world to analyse our own attributes before accusing others of meddling with our lives- for we perhaps possess similar qualities.

Towards the end of the article, Vihaan stresses the issues of children's inability to speak up in order to defend their rights. I partially agree with Vihaan on this concern, in the sense it is fundamental to defend oneself against others-yet with a civilized and polite approach to the situation. In addition, bargaining with parents, again in a civilized manner, is also imperative as it boosts confidence. However, I see this dilemma as a cultural issue, versus a universal and common problem. Children in America are raised differently, for they have different morals instilled in their minds, and mature in a different environment than India's. With in India, disrespect towards elders is defined unruly and audacious, with castigation as a consequence. On the other hand, American children react differently towards parents, telling them to "shut up" or saying "you are so retarded!" Arguing with elders is not always immoral. It creates an open, free relationship between parents and children. Ideas can be expressed with ease (of course, with limitations) therefore solving quandaries involving communication, and privacy predicaments.

Vihaan has written an informative and insightful article regarding an interesting topic on the 'battle' between children and parents. I thoroughly enjoyed reading his article, and interpreting his carefully planned notions.

(Gautam Bhagat 8th Grade, Trinity School, New York)

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