On Saturday, February 23, Dr Vandana Shiva, the founder of Navdanya, visited the school to give a talk on the various environmental issues concerning the world in general. Navdanya is a programme founded by her to support environmental activism. It supports the rights and interests of local farmers, and also plays a major role in conserving the many indigenous seeds and plant biodiversity that is under the threat of extinction.

She began her talk by emphasising the need for the world, especially countries like India, to have varied biodiversity. She explained, through many examples, how most of the ecological problems prevailing in the world were caused by the lack of sufficient biodiversity in the world - for example, she said that the main cause of the climate changes in the world was the shift in the equilibrium of natural biodiversity that, on a general basis, was maintained by nature. She spoke at length about the benefits of having high biodiversity within the state. Slowly the topic of the discussion shifted to biopiracy and why it is causing a problem in today's world.

Having been involved in taking the company, Monsanto, to court for the controversy over the biopiracy of Basmati rice - an often cited example of biopiracy, Dr. Vandana Shiva was able to give us a valuable insight into the political dealings of the case. She spoke with great conviction about the claims that Monsanto had laid to justify its ‘theft’ of the Basmati and its sale under a new name - Texmati. After a few jokes at the expense of Monsanto, the mood lightened considerably in the hall (after all the talk about the way people had proved to be liabilities for the environment through their mismanagement of resources, not to mention being over-consumptive) and, finally, the discussion was thrown open to the house for an interactive session with her.

Many interesting aspects of the discussion were brought to light in this session. For example, it was pointed out that high biodiversity, with its plentiful gene bank, was a good resource for its own survival as it formed a kind of a foundation for the varied genes to provide the base for genetic immunity among the diverse species.

The next day, a group of boys, escorted by the following: PMV, NRK, DEB, PKB and Bobbie Lamont, went to Navdanya on a visit. We were to join a workshop that Dr Fritjof Capra, a renowned physicist and an acclaimed author, had been conducting there. He spoke on his theory of ‘The Web of Life’ that he had been propounding in his books. Although most of the people at the workshop found it difficult to grasp all that he said, they did interact with their questions and doubts. The topic of discussion slowly shifted from the web of life to another one that was, perhaps, easier to discuss for the rest - da Vinci and his works as a scientist. He spoke on how da Vinci preferred experimental learning to the learning by rote which is so common nowadays.

What we learnt during this entire interchange of thoughts and ideas over the matter, in essence, was that when quality time was spent outdoors, only then could one really get an insight into the problems ailing the environment. The workshop was attended by many foreigners, almost all of whom were surprised at the damage that ‘man’ was doing to his environment. Quite a few of them commented that they were really surprised by the protection Navdanya was offering to the economy of farmers and the conservation that it was practising to shield the diversity of seeds in the land.

At the end of the talk, Dr Vandana Shiva thanked Dr Capra for his inputs in the workshop as a physicist and a man of science. After this, she had a small group discussion with all the Doscos and The Doon School masters there. It was then that the topic of Navdanya and its various activities came up. She told us how the cases against the unacceptable government rules were fought, stressing on the fact that mass movements always made more of an impact on the government, rather than a direct appeal. She spoke to us about the impact that the economic policies of the government were having on the farmers and about how, she felt, the government could help the farmers by providing them a kind of governmental security for their produce.

Also, when the subject of the implementation of existing laws protecting farmer rights, rather than the formulation of new ones came up, then Dr Vandana Shiva admitted that as of now, Navdanya was focusing mainly on the aspect of getting the desired environment-friendly laws passed and not really concentrating (until on page 5)
**NEW APPOINTMENT**

Deep Singh (ex 585 HA '01) joined the teaching faculty on February 25 and will be teaching Economics and Music. We wish him a fruitful tenure.

**IAYP AWARDS**

The following boys have completed various levels of the IAYP:

**Gold:** Pranay Kapoor, Jagbir Ningthoujam, Arjun Gulati and Shailendra Singh.

**Bronze:** Sishant Gupta, Arpan Agarwal, Neel Madhav and Shahaan Pushp.

Well done!

**BADMINTON TROPHIES**

The results of the Inter-House Badminton Competition, 2007, are as follows:

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<th>Junior Cup:</th>
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<td>1st: Jaipur</td>
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**House Cup:**

| 1st: Jaipur |
| 2nd: Hyderabad |
| 3rd: O beroi and K Kashmir |
| 5th: Tata |

**Unquotable Quotes**

I’ll give you suspended.

Shreyvardhan Swaroop intends to take stern action. Are you doing your post-graduation in MBA?

Samarth Jaiswal, feeling inquisitive.

Open to page last.

Ayyappa Vemulkar, the shearer.

Someone hit a chalk to me!

Kanav Mehra, failed fielder.

Boys, don’t indulge in talks.

AKM, we are listening.

It was a do and die situation.

SBL, the next Bruce Willis.

Did the whole form get a form change?

I’m not going to submit photos under a camera name.

Vivek Santayana invents a new class of pseudonym.

D efence the ball!

Adhijn Singh, the coach.

Today is a very tired day!

Avi Raj, lazy beyond measure.

I said you, mine.

Nikhil Bhushan, calling for a catch.

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**CAREER CALL**

The Careers’ Notice Board will feature Commercial Aviation as a career choice this week. All budding pilots should check it out.
I would like to round off this paper with a few reflections and practical suggestions. When you look at schools today, with a few exceptions, most are lacking the humanistic ethos of compassion and caring. You are not convinced that they are a place where children can look forward to emotional and moral support. Yet, school is where children spend the better part of the day for eight months in a year for thirteen years of their youth. It is where they grow up, where they have their early encounters of the larger world outside home, where they fight their early battles in life. It is so important that they should be able to relate to school without fear, with a feeling of belonging, with confidence that they will find teachers and peers who will listen to them and care for them. A physical and social environment in which they can interact with mutual respect and caring, an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility, instead of fear and suspicion.

And all this, it must be stressed, is relevant not only for students. The staff too should be able to feel relaxed and motivated. They should feel that they have a stake in the school. They should not have to worry all the time about how to cope with an autocratic principal or an interfering, unsympathetic governing body. Indeed, the key to a healthy school atmosphere lies in staff welfare, an aspect that is often sadly neglected. Everyone wants teachers to work harder, to put in longer hours, but seldom are they willing to provide them with a reasonable salary and other amenities. I have yet to come across a private school with any kind of health-care for its staff.

Given the stiff competition for placement in good colleges and institutes, what goes on in the classroom is undoubtedly of crucial importance. But with over-crowded classes, the teachers can hardly be expected to carry out their routine task of checking assignments and marking test papers while also keeping a tab on students with reasonable efficacy and efficiency.

Instead of a few big and over-crowded schools, catering to a privileged herd of an elite; why not many more small schools catering to smaller, less privileged herds? Instead of a bathroom-cleaning campaign, once a month, with students and staff taking to jharoo and pocha, along with the Class Four staff. There also must be a daily check to see that taps and flush tanks are in working order.

Schools fortunate to have financial resources sometimes tend to go in for prestigious buildings, which are not put to optimum use. For example, assembly halls and canteen halls should be designed for multi-purpose functions, including indoor games like table-tennis, badminton and basketball.

We live in a polluted world; a world full of noise, air, polluted soil, water and food in towns and cities which have become wastelands of cement and concrete, with dismal sanitation and sub-standard housing. In an urban environment where nature has been subverted, the human spirit perverted into selfish pursuit of narrow self-interest.

In reaction to this ugly world, why not create a campus that is green and soothing, where cooperation prevails over working – a less ugly and violent than we have created around ourselves.

Why not give our children a chance to discover their inner voice, an inner feeling of peace, another way of living and working – a less ugly and violent than we have created around ourselves.

Given the distortions and problems our development policies have created, it is surely essential to have a continuous study programme to promote ecological and environmental understanding and consciousness. For this there should be a graded course at every level, a course that schools should be able to design for themselves.

Never before has the electronic media been an influence on the shaping of the human mind as it has become now. We have all become subject to conditioning by TV and video culture, also by the growing influence of computers in our lives. Given the distortions and problems our development policies have created, it is surely an essential to have a continuous study programme to promote ecological and environmental understanding and consciousness. For this there should be a graded course at every level, a course that schools should be able to design for themselves.

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Human rights violations have become an unfortunate fact of life at all levels – all the way from home to the parliaments. The same goes for democratic rights, with rights being savaged. It is almost needless to state that duties too have become neglected.

The Indian calendar is full of festivals. Some like Basant are hardly celebrated any more. Another dying festival is Lohri. Festivals such as these are seasonal, common to all communities, linking our rootless modern lives with rich tradition. Schools should celebrate these occasions, combining study and craftwork with fun-filled outdoor activity. A kite festival around Basant could be turned into an annual event, the theme and accent being on yellow. Yellow clothes, yellow flags, yellow decorations, yellow mithai!

It is perhaps also time that certain festivals like Raksha bandhan were re-interpreted. If one of the aims of education is to help in the emancipation and liberation of women from their age-old domestication, then men should also be tying rakhsas a gesture of seeking their protection. A Raksha bandhan in which both boys and girls exchange with each other would be a beautiful celebration of a new relationship between the sexes.

Finally, coming down to the brass-tacks of academic achievement and progress, parents most of all want good examination results. For this there has to be an efficient system of continuous assessment of class work, homework and regular tests.

3. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, March 1
कुछ आपसी, कुछ जानाती
अजील सुकार
अनुबन्ध - श्रीमती बीजालाल
आपसी विद्यालय का निरीक्षण चढ़ा रही थी लेकिन उनके सामने दिखाई देने वाली दुनिया की सजायातीर्थी के सामने दिखी नहीं रहीं। ऐसी भी नहीं कि वह सब कुछ आपसी और जानाती, अजील सुकार के दिखाई देने वाली दुनिया की सजायातीर्थी के सामने दिखी नहीं रहीं। ऐसी भी नहीं कि वह सब कुछ आपसी और जानाती, अजील सुकार के दिखाई देने वाली दुनिया की सजायातीर्थी के सामने दिखी नहीं रहीं। ऐसी भी नहीं कि वह सब कुछ आपसी और जानाती, अजील सुकार के दिखाई देने वाली दुनिया की सजायातीर्थी के सामने दिखी नहीं रहीं।

इस बारा एक नया राज आता है, इसलिए उसे लें। 

4. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, March 1
(cont. from page 1)
on the implementation front.

After this interaction, we left Navdanya having learnt a great deal. What we had earlier thought about the struggle involved in fighting for the environment and farmers, was actually just the tip of the iceberg. An overall awareness was necessary for such a success; and to spread such awareness, we discovered, was an extremely difficult task, especially among people who were too involved in their busy lives, comfortably spent indoors, to look out of their windows and bother about the world outside.

Gaining from Gap

Bharat Ganju and Shoumitra Srivastava interview
Claiborne Thompson, a gap year student-teacher

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us something about yourself.

Claiborne Thompson (CTH): I live in Charlottesville, Virginia along with my parents and three siblings. We all went to the same boarding school, Groton. I grew up playing tennis and picked up squash later. I also like playing golf and skiing in the winter. At Groton, I was in three choirs. I have worked for a weekly newspaper in my town, called The Hook. I love reading and lately I have been reading quite a few books by Russian authors.

DSW: Have you read any Indian literature?
CTH: Well, not yet. I would love some suggestions! But I have read the Bhagavad Gita when I did a course in religious studies.

DSW: Why did you choose to do a gap year and is it a common trend in the West?

CTH: I have always wanted to teach after school and this will also help me reflect on what I have learnt while at boarding school. As far as taking a gap year goes, it is not a very common trend in the students out there.

DSW: What was it like, being a high school student?

CTH: Well, Groton is not near the New Hampshire border. The school is co-ed and we have structured days similar to Doon. We do not have specifically named houses, and everyone lives in a dorm. We don’t really have much to do outside school as Groton is a small town with only three restaurants. I still regard those years as the best four years of my life.

DSW: Do you have any other interests apart from playing tennis and squash?

CTH: Yes, I like painting a lot. I was a part of the environmental group in my school. I was a peer counsellor for some time too. Apart from all that, I also love writing.

DSW: Do you think single sex schools have a future in today’s time and age?

CTH: Well, I’d say single sex schools are definitely better than co-ed schools in some ways. They do have quite a future in this day and age. The environment is completely different in a good way.

DSW: What are the things about India that you have liked the most and disliked the most?

CTH: Before coming to Doon, I did quite a bit of travelling with my family in Bombay, Varanasi, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur and Delhi. It was quite a different experience for me, especially the amount of culture and history that India gathers. Varanasi was the most interesting place I have been to. And, of course, I loved seeing the Taj Mahal as well.

DSW: What are the things about the common trend in the West?
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Camp Fatehpur

Ranjana Adhikari writes about the social service camp held at Fatehpur from December 5-15, 2007

The year 2008 saw the strengthening of the bond Doscos have with Fatehpur, a tiny village off the road to Vikasnagar, which was adopted by us in August, 2005. During our weekends, midterms and vacations we’ve spent many a fruitful hour here.

The village epitomizes social service to many Doscos. From a poor, under-developed village, Fatehpur has now become self-sufficient. Through the perseverance of the villagers, it now has hydro-electricity, a ghatar (water mill) and an improved sewage system. Ancillary activities include a bakery, furniture-making from lantana, a fishpond and a community centre. For the past three years, due to good coordination and the skilful labour of students, a village that is resurgent both socially and economically has emerged. This year, we had Appleby College, Canada, assist us in putting the finishing touches to the community centre. A group of six foreign students and two teachers accompanied a bevy of eager Doscos, all of whom worked tirelessly.

We carried heaps of debris and cement, assisted in preparing cement mixtures, and even made cement blocks. Our rather monotonous routine was thankfully interspersed with our free time in which we would either walk down to the Vikasnagar market (to buy shoes which were distributed amongst the villagers on the last day), or go sight-seeing to the Ashoka Pillar in Kalsi, Paonta Sahib and the Asan Barrage to get a sense of our beautiful heritage and environment, which can’t be studied in textbooks. Sometimes, we chose to stay put in the SKCC hostel at Bhimawala, and play badminton.

We are fortunate that we are given the opportunity by the school to understand how the people of rural India live. Assisting them helps us to put into practice the aspects of environmental education that can perhaps never be learnt in a classroom. However, none of this would have been possible without the initiative and guidance of our teachers. Our relationship with Fatehpur will continue for some time in the near future as it remains the focal point of all the social service done at school and is now like another home away from home.

This project was not only about hard work to help the underprivileged who are deprived of the basic necessities. It also gave us a wonderful experience, and helped us make a host of acquaintances. An experience like this makes one realise how much of a difference one can make with just a little effort.
School vs. Indian Public School

Gursharan Singh

The School played the Indian Public School on Sunday, February 17. The Indian Public School team has had a complete makeover since last year, when we beat them rather easily. This time, the tables were turned on us quite decisively.

Keshav Prasad won the toss and put the visitors in to bat, with the idea of using the early dampness in the pitch, and the slight moisture in the air to his advantage. The School bowlers, however, squandered the opportunity, and allowed our opponents to get off to a good start. Mehul Mehrotra and Rohan Gupta were both ineffective, and bowled a number of wides. Tusshar Gupta and Divijender O’hero were quickly introduced, and made an immediate impact on the proceedings. Divijender was immaculate in length while extracting disconcerting bounce and Tusshar was simply fast and straight, with no frills!

The galloping run-rate was effectively checked, and for a while we seemed to have control of the game. However, our young and inexperienced spinners Viga Sing, Chandrachuda Shukla and Angad Bawa could not contain the rampaging IPS batsmen, and the visitors totalled 209 for four in 35 overs.

The School batted after lunch, in good conditions, but against considerable pressure, which grew steadily as Itihaas failed to get off to a start against some very clever and restrictive bowling by Atul Yadav, who bowled mesmerising deliveries! Shashvat, too, mistimed several attempted square-cuts and the score languished at 21 in 5 overs, and a mountain to climb ahead.

Predictably, it got to the batsmen, and first Itihaas, and then Shashvat were run out – Shashvat by a brilliant direct throw! Chetan Kaul seemed quite out of sorts as he shuffled and prodded, clearly displaying symptoms of low confidence. Not surprisingly, he left his stumps in a half-hearted attempt to latch on to a very wide delivery, and was stumped. Chetan must organise himself to bat, with the idea of using the early dampness in the cricket field to his advantage.

Mehul Mehrota to put our innings out of its misery. Chandrachuda was bowled. He failed to cover the line of the ball.

Quite frankly, Rohan, Suryawir and the others fell victim to the mounting pressure of chasing a huge total, and while Mahajan and Mehrotra batted sensibly at the end, Mahajan became too adventurous, and ran out Mehrota to put our innings out of its misery.

While, on paper, it appears that the School stumbled and fell short in the chase for runs, it is more probable that our poor bowling and inadequate fielding cost us the match in the morning session.

The team has, I hope, learnt many valuable lessons from this large defeat and will work individually and collectively to measure up in the days to come.

Scores:

Indian Public School: 209 for 4
Kunal - 68; Siddhartha - 43; Vaibhav - 32;
Viga - 1 for 19; Divijender - 1 for 29; Keshav - 1 for 36;
The Doon School: 134 all out
Rajdeep - 39; Divij - 9;
Amit - 3 for 24; Vaibhav - 3 for 22.

Letter To The Editor

Fond Memories

This is with reference to Ashim Mukherjee’s (ex 44 T, ’58) Letter to the Editor, dated November 17, 2007 (issue no. 2171), ‘Sudhir Khastagir Remembered,’ which certainly stirred up many memories for me.

As mentioned, he was not only a great artist, but had many other admirable qualities in him. I would never have been involved in art in the first place, had it not been for the encouragement I received from Mr. Khastagir.

Incidentally, Jaiveer Singh was the Tata House Soccer Captain at that time, and a very able one, too. He steered the House to numerous victories and we won the soccer cup in 1955.

As for boxing, Mr. Khastagir would chide me a lot on it, because I used to neglect the Art School during the boxing season. He even challenged me to a bout, saying that he would knock me out in one punch. To which I replied, “Sir, I am sure you can knock me out, but I would still love boxing as much as I love painting.” Thereafter, he not only continued to encourage me with my painting, but also with my boxing. Such was our great Art master.

But then, The Doon School has been made famous, to a great extent, by the wonderful masters and teachers we have had, and I am sure that this tradition still continues to this day.

Thanks for bringing back those good memories.

(B. N. Roy
ex 103 T, ’55)

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6. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, March 1