

Established in 1936



The Doon School WEEKLY



Saturday, March 15, 2008 • Issue No. 2178

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Live from Antarctica

The Doon School Weekly interviewed **Robert Swan**, a prominent environmentalist and holder of the Guinness World Record for being the first man to walk to both the North and South Poles. Currently leading another expedition, he is dedicated to promoting preservation of the Antarctica through renewable energy usage and creating awareness among the youth about these issues. The team shared its unique experience with *The Doon School Weekly* via a live video conversation over the internet

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): What is the purpose of your visit?

Robert Swan (RSW): I'm one of the first persons to have walked on both the North Pole and the South Pole. Many years ago I visited the South Pole, and issues like global warming concerned me then. I am the first person to live on Antarctica relying completely on renewable sources of energy. I am here to tackle some major issues like global warming and ecological imbalance. I feel that renewable energy is essential for the survival of mankind. I want to show people that we should rely on renewable sources of energy and inspire young people like you, who are the future leaders of the fantastic country India, to take up the initiative. We have got solar panels set up here and there is a wind generator put outside.

DSW: How do you cope with the cold, and the darkness?

RSW: Life is not easy here and one has to dress properly in order to save oneself from freezing. If one wears no clothes, one would die before the end of the day. I remember a few years ago, one of your alumni (Shailendra Sinha, ex-156 TA '90) came to Antarctica with me from a hot country and was freezing terribly here! Sometimes it is quite gloomy and you have to keep believing in what you are doing because believing in what you do is the key. I keep thinking about my family, especially my son Barney, who is thirteen and lives in Australia, which keeps me going. I can assure you it's not fun out here and we're down to some serious work.

DSW: For how long do you plan to stay?

RSW: We have put up for ten days and it's been really

tough. When we think of staying for another week, it's not mentally easy in such conditions. When we arrived, there was no energy and it was really hard to get the systems running.

DSW: Could you comment on Antarctica's environmental degradation?

RSW: No country owns Antarctica, but many countries have scientific bases out here. It's all to do about peace and science. Ice is melting here because of global warming and you will be swimming out there in India if no measure is taken. You should keep thinking about energy and it's not a joke here. It is essential to reuse and save energy, es-

pecially by harnessing wind and solar energy. Many bases, when they go back, leave garbage behind. A few years ago, we had a quick mission to try and clean things up. I want you people in India to act and take some initiative because leadership does require *doing* things. Otherwise I wouldn't be here freezing.

DSW: Can any one of us join you in the future?

RSW: I will be upset if one of you does *not* join me on an expedition to Antarctica! It'll be a challenge for you people, the future leaders of India, to eradicate global warming. You can always write on our website www.2041.com and express your views and comments.

DSW: Will you be visiting India at any point of time?

RSW: Of course! I've been thinking of visiting India in the next year and I mean this. I would like to give talks on renewable energy to Indian ecologists, schools and universities, and of course, The Doon School. I would like to see India developing in the economic sector and hope that global warming can be curbed.



News-in-Brief

THE DOON SCHOOL CUP

The following are the results of **The Doon School Cup** 2007-08:

1st Oberoi

2nd Kashmir

3rd Tata

4th Hyderabad

5th Jaipur

Kudos to the winner!

VISITOR

The nutritionist, **Ishi Khosla**, conducted a workshop with staff and students of the School in the AV Room on Thursday, March 13. She discussed dietary dos and don'ts and gave advice on developing healthy eating habits.

* * *

Unquotable Quotes

There's an iceberg at Gomukh.

Mehul Mehrotra plans for midterms.

I'm not a public.

Milind Pandit is private property.

You listen me, I'll listen you.

Keshav Prasad is co-operative.

Look at to me!

Keshav Prasad, School Senior PT Leader.

Give it to me Friday and I'll give you Thursday.

PKN, workaholic.

I'm sick and tired of shouting my lungs at you guys.

RSF, out of breath.

Why do you run to here?

RSF, the centre of attention.

I'll skill you.

Chandra Narain Deo, murder expert.

He thinks you are an imported man.

Saarthak Singh, the xenophobe.

You were scoping and I shattered.

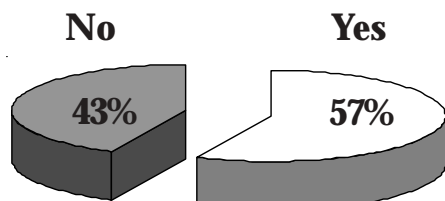
Aseem Balraj Sahni, very mean indeed.

Women and senior citizens get priority in a lower berth.

Aayush Jain reports on the railway budget.

Opinion Poll

Do you follow the American Primaries in the news?



Next Week's Question: Are you looking forward to the new Holi programme?

CAREER CALL

The Careers' Notice Board will feature **Public Relations** as a career choice this week. All interested should check it out.



Am I An Ugly Sparrow?

Shashank Peshawaria

The sparrow school is shut now,
And holidays have begun.
Playing on the seashore, I am
Rejoicing in the sun.

The magic begins to envelop me,
Incantations flow by the shore.
A female sparrow is dancing,
Staring from metres four.

She loves me I think,
Or why is she looking so?
For there are fireworks too,
And the wind has started to blow.

Do I take the first step?
Should I come and ask you out?
You are the one that has touched me,
Amongst everyone in the rout.

We have no amusement parks.
We have no pubs or bars.
But once I have you, sparrow,
We can touch all the stars.

I have a fine lineage.
I have saved grains in store.
For your life of gold and silver,
I can work for grains more.

Her wings get her towards me,
And my voice makes her twitter.
She looks at me in her flight,
But why does she stop near the litter?

Her call is not to me, I realize,
Her beak is searching the ground.
She puts crumbs in her mouth,
That someone for her had found.

I have crumbs with me, darling.
I have grains too. You don't know.
Come with me to Sector Fourteen,
If you want me to show.

You looked at me so lovingly,
The way no one has looked before.
In school they say I am ugly,
I am fat, equal to four.

In maths. class, one day,
'Circles' were being taught.
Larry looked from the corner of his eye,
And my tummy was his spot.

Tim raised his hand.
Miss Christie asked him to speak.
He said that I was a circle too,
And tears ran down my cheek.

Can you here me?
Can you hear me? I repeat.
Is your reason the same too, sparrow?
If it is, don't worry, I'll retreat.

PROJECT THAILAND

Vikram Aditya Chaudhri reports on the RSIS trip undertaken in December, 2007

First off, I think it is necessary to say that the opportunity to represent, not only one's school, but one's country is a great thing to have. Ambar and I were selected to represent our school in a Round Square International Service Project in Thailand.

We reached Bangkok and caught a flight straight to a city called Chiang Mai. There we met students from around the world. Let me list for you the diversity of people who had come for the project, in terms of where they were from. We had four people from India (Doon and Mayo), three from England (Westfield and Wellington), three from Australia (Ballarat Grammar School and St. Philip's), six from Canada (Collingwood, Lakefield, and St. Clement's) two from Germany (Salem), two from Scotland (Gordonstoun) and two from South Africa (St. Cyprian's). All in all, there were twenty-two students from around the globe. Our coordinators were from England and South Africa.

The first day saw people keeping to their own groups. The acclimatization walk on the second day broke the ice. We left for the village of Ban Sob Mae Phae, which was to be our worksite. The village was inhabited exclusively by the Karens (Karen is the name of the language they speak as well). We stayed with the villagers in their houses, which were made entirely of teak wood. At the village, we met an interesting person, who used to work for the Secret Service. He talked to us about life, and about the culture of the people in the village we were staying in.

From the first day itself we began to work on our project. We had to make two water tanks for the village as there were many deaths caused by water-borne diseases in that area. Along with the two tanks, we also built a stagnation point on the river, which was three kilometres away from the village. This task entailed carrying pipes up the mountain to the river worksite.

We would wake up at about seven in the morning and meet for breakfast at eight. Thanks to Hom and Oratai (our cooks) we would begin and end the day with food to die for. Work would begin at about nine. This would range from going down to the river and getting big rocks for the foundation of the tanks, to mixing the cement with sand, gravel and water for the construction of the tank, to going up to the river and laying the pipes and digging trenches to put them in all the way back down to the village.

After about six days in the village, we went to the city of Mae Hong Song. There we enjoyed two days of well-deserved rest and came back to the village to finish the work. I know that all this work may not sound like fun, but when you have friends like Oscar cracking wise jokes, Meg doing her usual (I wouldn't say stupid) stuff, Freddie and Hugh multi-tasking *everywhere*, Sonje and Marc having their own 'talks' and the Doscocs storming the area, then believe me when I say that it can turn out to be quite eventful.

After having completed our task, we went to the beautiful city of Chomthong for a night's outing. The next day, we found ourselves in the city of Changrai. This was a fascinating city with a bustling night market. Two days later, we headed back for Chiang Mai. On Christmas, all of us got together and went for a fabulous lunch where we exchanged gifts.

I think that in the end, not only did we make friends whom we will never forget, we also learnt a great deal. We learnt about working together, about pushing ourselves beyond exhaustion, about a completely new and rich culture, about respect, about how to obey curfew (11 pm), about life in general (Thanks, Jim), and about who we are, and what we are capable of. I would encourage everyone to try this as it is a remarkable opportunity. It has given us both another album to add to our memories.

| Viewpoint |

An Idea Called God

Vivek Santayana

It all began when there was no reason. It all began when the truth didn't exist. It was the same member of the animal kingdom on the same planet with the same world and the same reality. The only difference was that we did not know what reality was, and we did not know that we did not know. The only problem with having a gaping hole in our knowledge and understanding of the world, along with the desire to know more, follows in the absence of the means to do so. It is then that we usually tend to improvise. This bit of improvising happened some centuries ago. It happened when people didn't know what an earthquake was. It seems very amusing to read in a History textbook that at one point of time the Greeks believed that there were demons locked underground and they fought to break free, causing vio-

lent tremors and cracks. Now, the fun has been reduced to a few paragraphs on tectonic plates and how they are continuously in motion.

What God is, is nothing but a concept we have been indoctrinated with. It all began when we began to worship the unknown. As time went by, we gave a little more identity to the inexplicable, through personification. As this went on, we had a deity for every occasion. Going further, we gave them more human-like features with many 'supernatural' characteristics which made them different and superior to the human race. And so we went on, creating more and more deities in different religions and continents. We made saviours and messiahs, creators and destroyers and other such sets and singles that

(contd. overleaf)

Talking Politics

Bharat Ganju interviews Adnan Farooqui (ex-365 TB '98) who gave the school a talk on India's unity in diversity

The Doon School Weekly(DSW): What is your academic background?

Adnan Farooqui(ANF): After leaving Doon, I went on to St. Stephen's where I studied History. I then did my M.A. in Political Science from JNU. I am presently pursuing a PhD in Political Science, elections and public policies.

DSW: Why did you choose to speak on this topic?

ANF: I feel it is very interesting that India, being such a diverse country, has survived so many years. I find it fascinating as India has gone through so many problems and still survived. An example of this is the proposal for Hindi to become the national language of India. Even though the South, especially the Tamils, made a huge row, India stuck together through it. Apart from that, there's the spat over Marathi-speaking Indians getting job preferences.

DSW: Do you think India's diversity will survive?

ANF: I definitely think it will. The fact that democracy has become a very important part of India shows that now, unlike twenty or thirty years ago, the Lok Sabha can easily be dissolved. This makes sure that all parts of the nation, rich or poor, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, will be represented. Nowadays, poorer people vote more than the upper class of society. There have been so many different religious groups and parties being formed and India has dealt with them very well. I feel that Indian diversity will expand even further.

DSW: How do you think India has changed over the years?

ANF: India has changed a lot since Independence. At that time, India was a poor nation. It was a nation that was considered a third world country. Today, the Indian economy is the second-fastest growing one in the world. This is a clear indicator that India is definitely on the road to success. There has been rapid industrialization and we have made good use of our human capital. Today, it has world class institutions such as the IITs, IIMs and the National Institute of Design.

DSW: Do you think democracy is the best form of government?

ANF: I think it is, because there is no better alternative. It has its positive and negative points but I think it is ideal for India. In democracy, all parts of society are represented and, as I said before, the government can be dissolved easily. Everyone has their say and the government is always on their toes. Society gets its way and as the Constitution says, it is "for the people, by the people and from the people".

DSW: What do you think of the multi-party system?

tem? Is it a way of preserving diversity?

ANF: The multi-party system shows that Indian democracy is maturing. Until 1980, the Congress had a monopoly but this system originated from there. Now people from agricultural backgrounds are MPs due to coalition governments. Hence, different sections of society are represented well and no one can be ignored. It might just be the answer to preserving diversity in India.

* * *

Sudoku

Vishnukaant Pitty

8	1	4	7		3		9	
		5			8			6
	9					8	3	
9		8		5	1			3
5			8	2		6		1
	5	7					8	
4			5			1		
	6		4		2	5	7	9

* * *

(contd. from page 3)

made the world go round. Science slowly began to come into the picture, and what was considered heresy at one point of time is now third grade syllabus. But still, the old ideas remain, along with a few unanswered questions.

This concept did at one point of time rule the minds of the masses. God was supreme and heaven was everyone's goal. Everyone had the fear of excommunication in the medieval days. This led thousands of men to fight in the Crusades. In the not-so-distant past, fundamentalism has literally been having a blast. Many terrorists believed or were forced to believe that they were performing noble deeds. India's struggle for independence also saw a lot of Hindu-Muslim friction. These differences of belief have led to wars and riots. The idea of 'God' became something to justify men's own prejudices.

Have these ideas been defeated by the truth? The fact is that scientifically, God does not exist. In spite of all the advances we have made, these ideas of 'God' still continue to exist. So, I ask you – is there a God or is He just an idea?

Online Edition: <http://www.doonschool.com/magazine>

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