



Established in 1936
The Doon School
WEEKLY



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Forging Friendships

Siddharth Bathla and Rishabh Chatterjee report on the Round Square Regional Service Project conducted in Fatehpur from December 4 - 14, 2009



Abhyun Chatterjee, Smitha Nair, Bipasha, Malini Malviya and the two of us, escorted by AKS, took part in an RSRS project in Fatehpur between December 4 and 14, along with seven students from the Sanskar Valley School, Bhopal. We left on December 4 at around 11:30 in the morning and reached the SKCC hostel, which was about five kilometres away from the village the School has adopted. That day we didn't work at all, but visited the work site, met the villagers and mentally prepared ourselves for the tasks ahead.

Work began on the second day. The team managed to plaster three houses, make a toilet pit, an entire roof of a newly-built house and complete a miniature temple. We learnt, in our interaction with the villagers, of a non-government authority that gave women loans at lower interest rates, without too much pressure to repay them. Cooking and baking were skills that the women in the village had, and each household boasted its own special dish. The women and girls were mostly in charge of the cattle and household work while the men and boys handled construction and farming. The younger children went to a neighbouring village school and were being taught basic Hindi, Math (poor souls!) and a bit of English as well.

The villagers gave us sugarcane as refreshments, and, after a hard day's work, and we enjoyed eating it the way it was meant to be. By way of entertainment, we went on walks along the stream nearby during our breaks and shared a number of ghost stories with the villagers. On the final day we distributed sweets and skipping ropes to the children as they enjoyed skipping.

Later that evening, we had a great bonfire dinner back at the camp and thanked the hosts, Mr & Mrs Furtado, for bearing with us for ten short but action-packed days.

We left Fatehpur with knowledge and experience in the field of social work and also the great memories we gathered. To our minds, it was a successful project, one which we had fun engaging in and it will be a part of our lives forever.

Karen Experience

Devashish Singal on his trip to Thailand for the RSIS, 2009

I was given an opportunity of a lifetime and I made the most of it. In the beginning, I was a bit skeptical about whether I should go for the RSIS or not, as representing my country might have been too much of a responsibility for me. However, I made up my mind to take up the challenge.

We (Arjun Mahajan and I), along with two Mayoites, were the last ones to reach Chiang Mai and stayed overnight at the Inthanon Resort. The next morning, during breakfast, we got acquainted with other students who had similar fervour. The group, comprising six students from Canada, five from South Africa, four from Australia and one from England, apart from the four of us Indians, had to work with the Pakanyor Foundation, a local NGO that had been working with Round Square for a decade.

The objective of this RSIS project was to bring clean drinking water to a Karen hill tribe community, *Ban Mae Aeb Nai*, in northern Thailand. The group was put up in the homes of the local villagers. We started working on the very first day by carrying long, thin pipes from the village up to the water source. During the initial days, our work ranged from making a reservoir at the water source to hoeing a path all the way down to the tank site for laying the water pipes, from carrying tonnes of sand, rocks and gravel for building the foundation of the tank to cutting thick rods and thin wires. To increase our efficiency and decrease the individual work load, we used to form long chains from the village to the tank site. We also tried our hand at preparing the concrete which consisted of sand, gravel, water and cement. Everyone had added responsibili-



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Regulars

ON CAMPUS

We welcome back **Dr Harold Snedcof**, a visiting teacher from Bard High School, New York. He will be on campus until Friday, the 19th, and will teach American Literature. We also welcome **Pradeep Venkatesh**, on student exchange from Southridge School, Vancouver. We wish them a pleasant and fulfilling stay.

The Board of Governors visited School from February 10-12 and interacted with various members of the School community.

GAMES' CAPTAINS

The following have been appointed **School Games' Captains** for this year:

Senior PT Leader: Shreyvardhan Swaroop

Boxing: Arvind Sharma

Table Tennis: Devansh Khaitan

Squash: Sumaer Sandhu

Swimming: Angad Bawa

Soccer: Vahin Khosla

Hockey: Karanbir Dhariwal

Cricket: Rajdeep Deo Bhanj

Basketball: Aseem Kumar

Athletics: Uddhav Prasad

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments for the year 2010 are:

LAMDA:

Secretary: Vivek Santayana

Coordinator, Public Speaking: Uday Shriram

Coordinator, Reading for Performance: Bharat Ganju

Coordinator, Speaking of Verse and Prose: Arjun Sethi

Secretaries, Historical Circle Society: Arjun Sethi and Saarthak Singh

Boys-in-Charge, Boys' Bank: Chirag Ambekar and B Dinesh Reddy

Boy-in-charge, IAYP: Arvind Sharma

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

DIPLOMATS AT HARVARD

The following boys represented the School at **Harvard University's Model United Nations Conference** over the winter break: Uday Shriram, Bharat Ganju, Sachit Taneja, Arnav Sahu, Revant Nayar, Vikram Kejriwal, Shoumitra Srivastava, Arjun Badal and Dhruv Velloor. They were escorted by Purnima Dutta. A report runs in the next issue.

Opinion Poll

Is it too cold for PT?

Yes  **92%**

No  **8%**

(228 members of the community were polled)

Next Week's Question: Is Valentine's Day against Indian culture?

LAMDA TALLY

The following is the tally of results of the LAMDA Examinations in the various levels:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Grade 5 | Grade 6 |
| Distinction: 4 | Distinction: 16 |
| Merit: 6 | Merit: 22 |
| Pass: 11 | Pass: 8 |
| Absent: 2 | Absent: 2 |
| Grade 7 | Grade 8 |
| Distinction: 20 | Distinction: 8 |
| Merit: 23 | Merit: 7 |
| Pass: 11 | Pass: 2 |
| Absent: 12 | Absent: 4 |

Well done!

IAYP AWARDS

The following boys have completed various levels of the IAYP:

Bronze: Aviral Gupta, Aakansha Mohan, Sanat Kumar Thakur, Shubham Dhingra, Abhishek Bansal, Jaskrit Singh, Dhairik Fuletra, Vaibhav Bahadur, Mahak Sharma, Angad Singh, Madhavan Saklani, Kabir Chatrath

Silver: Prabal Jindal, Nipun Batra, Ashwin Dokania, Lakshit Joshi, Ashray Batra, Milind Pandit, Anshuman Bhargav, Prahlad Singh, Saransh Sethi, Dhruv Sawhney, Arpan Agarwal, Siddharth Bathla.

Gold: Piyush Gupta (who has been awarded the **IAYP Blazer** for completing all three standards of the IAYP). Congratulations!

'SMASH'ING

Kabir Sethi, Abhishek Parasrampur, Vedant Chandra and Archit Kumar participated in the **Badminton Nationals SGFI Tournament** in Pune. The Under-17 team reached the pre-quarter finals. The Under-19 team was eliminated in the first round. Well done!

Unquotable Quotes

You will have a surprise test day after on Chemical Kinetics.

MTS, what's the surprise?

I can't die to save my life.

Dhruv Velloor struggles for survival.

One plate of boneless paneer, please.

Nilesh Agarwal, half-vegetarian.

doontoon



Career counselling

COLD COMFORT

Shashank Peshawaria

School has a climate that compels me to write. Despite being in a commune of several friendly trees and people, I am, in reality, ineffably lonely. My close friends are there to help me when I am hungry for help, the masters to show me the way, the flora to hear me patiently when I vent out my emotions. But even in all this, I am alone. Alone in my thoughts, alone in feelings and alone in love. There's nothing that gives me more comfort or support than writing. Writing to myself. Or writing to you, the imagined reader that keeps listening to me, often complaining (!), but listening, nonetheless.

Home never gives me this loneliness. My mother can never be a tree. My sister can never be just a friendly flower. And my father, never like a teacher that only points the way. There, I don't need to write. There, I don't feel the need to write. I don't need to imagine a reader of my life. Because there, I am not lonely.

'WHILE YOU'

Shashank Peshawaria

While you
Imagine Bukowski,
Or Dostoevsky,
Or whoever –
Austen? Blake? –
Just sitting down,
Blown away by madness,
Writing life, love,
Writing everything,
Don't forget to look:
Most things of life –
Mine, yours, ours –
Are still unwritten.

The Editor's Dilemma

Abhilaksh Lalwani

There he sits on the judgement chair:
Slashing left –slapping his head – cutting right
Breaking down, laying the language bare –
Not an apostrophe is out of sight.

And then he goes back to the beginning
And slashes, and slaps, and cuts,
No signs in his eyes of forgiving –
He strikes with red where it most hurts.

And then the martyred corpse is taken
To a chair of further judgement –
Where the limp carcass is laden
With some catchy embellishment.

And still at the end of it all, in the end,
After drafts on drafts of coffins have gone,
And he has gone, and drafts have gone,
There still is an error that does it all rend.

But, that is not all. He thinks to himself:
"Had I but that one eternal ink had
That will allow me to revise myself:
I would never have chosen to be this".

(contd. from page 1)

ties at the end of the day such as maintaining a journal, washing the dishes, ensuring safety or briefing the group on the day's events.

After reaching halfway through the construction of both the tanks, we were taken to Mae Chaem for a mid-project break, where we stayed in a resort. This helped us relax for two complete days and get to know each other better. We played cards and group games, and even swam in the resort pool. Finally, we were back at the village to complete the project. Since the dining area was near the village school, the project-in-charge told a few students to stay back every day and teach the children some Math, English and drawing. Some of the children got so attached to us that they waited for us to come down for our meals and play with them. Often, after dinner, we would light a bonfire, stand around in a circle and sing Karen, Hindi and English songs, and strangely, everyone seemed to have an affinity for Bollywood hits. The difficult part of the construction work was over. We also fabricated a bamboo base, cemented the walls and finished the tank. The artists amongst us painted a logo for RSIS-09. Sadly, the project ended before we even knew it.

Throughout the task, the head of the Pakanyor Foundation (an ex-MI 6 agent!) gave us some intriguing and informative talks on the history, culture and lifestyle of the Karen folk. It was astounding as well as deplorable when we learnt that the largest ongoing genocide was not against the Jews during the WWII, but the Karen people. On the last evening, the village folk gave us a very sentimental farewell by giving each member of the group a Karen-stitched shirt and tying a white thread (a Buddhist custom) on our wrists. The students gave a basketfull of packed food (chips, noodles etc) to their respective host families and parted ways. There were tears in all the eyes on the last morning in the village. A strange bond had been formed between us and it seemed as if we had known each other for ages.

We were taken to Chiang Mai for the last five days, where we had ample time for ourselves. The night market in the city was just amazing, enough to tempt us into shopping. In the course of these days, we went to an Elephant Conservation Park, learnt to cook Thai delicacies and were given a tour of the city and its beautiful temples. The project in-charge treated us to a grand feast on the occasion of Christmas.

The sentimental goodbyes still linger in my heart and remind me of the friends I made in the span of those three wonderful weeks.



Valentine's Ramble

Vivek Santayana takes a satirical glimpse at Valentine's Day

"Random thoughts for valentine's day ... [it] is a holiday invented by greeting card companies to make people feel [terrible]." (opening lines from the 2004 film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, altered for the sake of propriety).

I am just a spectator to the mawkish ferment that we are often gripped by, and, I confess, I am most amused by it. The in-your-face display of the not-so-fine-art of wooing is most enjoyable to watch. Our youthful perception often throws the nature of a youthful crush out of perspective, and we find ourselves doing the most ridiculous things, which we only realize in retrospect. Proportion will return gradually, until when the cycle will continue.

Facebook's revenue had increased dramatically on one Valentine's Day, owing to its virtual gift system. Archie's has flourishing business annually around this season. Even the General Store would be getting an abnormally large number of requests for sketch-pens and chart paper (the number of requests being second only to that near Founder's Day). Valentine's Day is not just a commercially beneficial occasion; there will also be a sudden upswing in the poetic output of the entire community over the next week. Scandalous gossip will sweep the campus. All of this, this grand pretence, is truly a feast for roving eyes. The fortunate ones will laugh off the occasion, and seize the day like love-struck schoolboys. Those of us on the other side of the dichotomy, however, will dart through denial, anger, bargaining and depression, and find ourselves at 'acceptance' in time for Socials (or even DSMUN). Such a representation excludes the other complications: jealousy, rivalry and the like. But these emotional dynamic would be more complex (not to mention, chaotic) were Doon to turn coded. It is better to be a dispassionate observer rather than a party to either side, as such conditions would make us oblivious to the buffoonery around us.

Songs play endlessly on repeat in the season of puppy love. Only a sadist would deny us the pleasure of such flights of fancy, when, momentarily, we have a sense of contentment, fulfilment, and a number of other feelings that are otherwise too grand or have too many philosophical undertones for us to enjoy at another time. There is great pleasure to be had from worthless romances, and that is perhaps part of our childhood. We will grow out of it eventually, but, whatever little it may be now, it'll be worth the memories. Let's not grow up too fast. That would be the real disaster. It may be natural that we feel confined in School; perhaps society has not liberalised enough to tolerate contentment with an envi-

ronment like ours. But the momentary refinements in our mannerism, the scent of expensive cologne wafting across the Skinner's, swamping the more delicate floral aroma of the Circular Garden in full bloom, the sudden change in our taste in music and inexplicable chivalry are most welcome.

I am resigned to spending Valentine's Day with my workload, which isn't quite the experience I would ask for. Then again, my Math assignment does have some very attractive figures. I could perhaps dine with Tita in Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, which might be more ecstatic an experience than an encounter with so-and-so. I could also admire the aesthetics of my ToK syllabus. The possibilities are endless. It's either this, or I indulge in watching the theatrical absurdity around me. Then again, there's a possibility that I will waste an entire Sunday in indecisiveness.

The Doon School Weekly asks members of the School community for names of songs and films that they relate to Valentine's Day

FILMS

- Four Weddings and a Funeral – HCH
- Pretty Woman -- SBL, SSM
- 500 Days of Summer – Sriyash Kishorepuria
- Love Actually – KAR, Nilesh Agarwal
- The Ugly Truth – Sanat Garg
- A Walk to Remember – Tushar Gupta
- Valentine's Day Massacre – PMC
- Stepmom – Aditya Sukhia
- The Notebook – Jayant Mukhopadhaya

SONGS

- Can't You See by Marshal Trucker – HCH
- Till there was You by The Beatles – Sriyash Kishorepuria
- Bloody Valentine by Good Charlotte – Kushagra Singh, Arjun
- 'Kaun Hai Jo Sapno Mein Aaya' (from the film Humraaz) – SSM
- Vanilla Twilight by Owl City – Dipankar Tiwari
- Afterglow by INXS – Milind Pandit
- November Rain by Guns 'N' Roses – KAR

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