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Training Days

Kanishka Malik reports on the Prefects' Workshop held from February 4 to 6



As a junior, every time I heard about Prefects' Workshops, I would wonder what they were all about. Those days, I simply considered them an opportunity to escape from the strict monitoring of the freshly appointed prefects so early in the term. However, this time, our form was not playing a peripheral role but was at the centre of the event.

On Friday, February 4, the newly appointed prefects, along with the Headmaster, AAQ and ANK left for the workshop. Fortunately, everyone was on time for the departure, giving the Headmaster his first opportunity to pat our backs. At first, no one really paid attention to where we were going. We only had a vague idea of our destination being

somewhere near Rishikesh until the bus halted at our campsite. The site, belonging to the company, Aquaterra, was on a beach on the banks of the river Ganga.

After being allotted our tents (each shared by two people) and introduced to our lecturer, Amit, also known as ADG, the activities of the workshop began. All activities followed a noticeable pattern – they were to be completed and then discussed in order to draw certain lessons out of them. For most activities, we were divided into two teams of 10 and made to compete within a given time period. The activities ranged from completing complicated tasks blindfolded (such as making a square with a rope) to crossing an artificial mine field. Each activity was intended to teach us certain aspects of leadership. For instance, the task where we had to flip a mat by 180 degrees with 10 people standing on it taught us that most problems which appear complicated actually have a simple solution. The first day ended with a series of such tasks and at night, after a dinner akin to that of the CDH, all prefects sat in a circle and played a rather alarming version of Chinese Whispers.

The second day kicked off with another series of activities. While the Headmaster made sketches of the scenery and AAQ corrected his set of test papers, the prefectorial body delved into other areas of leadership through activities, ADG's lectures and ANK's occasional guidance. In one interesting instance, it took the combined efforts of the entire prefectorial body half an hour to solve a seemingly simple numerical problem! Moreover, activities were also used to determine certain characteristics of people. Those dominating in certain activities and discussions had a nature completely different from those who quietly agreed with the actions and views of the former category. Moreover, a couple of activities, such as one where we had to make towers with wooden blocks, blindfolded, were purported to teach us the importance of risk-taking and not underestimating our own potential. The second day, similar to the first, ended with a discussion amongst prefects regarding important issues.

The third day started with one last activity in which all the prefects, after being divided into groups, made a list of the goals (or 'rapids' as the headmaster metaphorically referred to them) they had as prefects and the means to achieve them. ADG and the HM once again reminded us of the significance of our position as prefects and how we were to play a pivotal role in preserving the reputation of our institution.

After this session, with our heads held high, we departed for a thrilling session of rafting. The team was divided into three groups in separate rafts, each group accompanied by either AAQ, ANK or the Headmaster. We crossed a series of rapids – the 3 Blind Mice, Rollercoaster, Golf Course and a few more. Fortunately, not a single raft capsized and no one was injured, although Sagar was tossed into the river when a wave hit his group's raft. Personally, I thought rafting was the best way to experience the Ganga.

After the rafting session, we left for School. When we arrived, the Headmaster once again reminded us of our role as executors of discipline in School. Our form-mates humorously remarked that we had returned from a 'brain-washing session'. Hopefully, my account of the workshop will change their impression.



APPOINTMENTS

Yash Vardhan Singhanian has been appointed as the Boy-in-charge of **IAYP** for the year 2011.

The following are the appointments of the **Art and Media School** for the current academic year:

SUPW: Sagar Karnavat

STA: Vaibhav Gupta

Art Secretary: Gursehej Singh Oberoi

Vaibhav Bahadur has been appointed as the secretary of the **Library Council** for the current academic year.

We wish them a fruitful tenure!

TAJ TALK

Dr Wayne Bagely conducted a talk on the 'Myths and legends of the Taj Mahal' on Saturday, February 6, 2011. A report runs in this issue.

CAPTAINCIES 2011

The following are the sports captaincies for the current year:

Senior P.T Leader: Prabhjot Singh

Boxing: Vigya Singh

Hockey: Pranoy Bohara

Basketball: Tushar Gupta

Soccer: Anmol Singh Jamwal

Athletics: Udai Bothra

Swimming: Angad Singh

Tennis: Divij Bhudraja

Badminton: Vaibhav Gupta

Table tennis: Ujjwal Singhal

Squash: Sumaer Sandhu

Cricket: Rohan Gupta

We wish them a fruitful tenure!

| Poetry |

Dust

Kanishka Malik

You will never feel them,
They are too light
They fly everywhere,
And are to be swept around
By bigger, more important beings,
Who command pawns with skill.

No one sees them,
For they have no worth.
But when the light is cast,
You know how many there are.
A few then laugh and many are awed,
But no one gives a damn.

Unquotable Quotes

Take off your Bath

RSF, just back from the University of Bath

If you beat me, I will suicide you

Sumer Sehgal, English Topper

Hydrogen burns silently with a pop sound

Ashish Rao, full of reactions

There is a problem behind every reason

AKM, problematic reason

You should visit the Psycrastic!

Prabnur Bal, psychology unleashed

I will go to G-store after haircutting

Rishikant Sharma shows his planning abilities

| Report |

Round Square at Kenya

Dhruv Sirohi recounts his experience at RSIS Project, Kenya, held from December 10-28, 2010

This winter, Akshay Sharan and I represented the school at the annual Round Square International Service project in Kenya, held from December 10 to 28. In Kenya, Round Square has been at work since the past 16 years and has been bringing students from different countries together for the upliftment of the poor. The project was an extremely taxing one, both mentally and physically. Nevertheless, it was enjoyable and at the same time, productive.

We reached Nairobi on December 10 by midday, after an 8-hour long flight. Luckily, we were one of the first to arrive and so we decided to shake off our minor jetlag with an afternoon siesta. Other groups kept arriving at the Starehe Boys Centre (our place of residence in Nairobi) through the course of the day and well into the night. Next morning, I learnt that the project was different from last year's as the work at the old site had been completed. The new site was Riandira Primary School in a village called Sagana, 95 kilometres from Nairobi City. We worked in partnership with The Starehe Boys Centre, Nairobi which is also a member of Round Square and the President's Award, Kenya (which is equivalent to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards). The group comprised 25 Kenyan students and 18 international students from Canada, Australia, South Africa, Germany, Oman and India.

The first two days were spent attending workshops and playing games and the day after that, around lunch time, we set off for Sagana, our worksite. The campsite was a privately owned establishment overlooking a river and had a large garden with a pool. We were accommodated in two-men tents, each paired with a boy from the Starche Boys Centre. After settling in our tents, we went down by the pool for our first briefing. The rest of the evening was spent in group discussions and introductions. The next day, after a short 1.5 kilometres walk we reached the Riandira Primary School in Sagana village. We were quickly briefed on the task ahead of us and got to work straight away. We were to build a classroom (which was vital to accommodate the increasing strength of the school), provide cement for a toilet block, level a classroom and clean the school's library. Over the next ten days, we worked in our respective groups to complete these tasks. We had no mechanical assistance and had to manually prepare cement, mortar and carry rocks to the site. We worked every day, post breakfast till lunch and then got back for some evening activities and relaxation.

Halfway through the project, we visited a local church. It was my first time in a church and that too an African one! After this, we paid a visit to a local family, to which we gifted some basic supplies and also interacted with the family, asking them about their life in the village and the hardships they faced. The family my group visited had a particularly moving story as the woman running the house had 4 children and was a widow. We were all impressed by the fact that

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inspite of all her hardships, the woman was still managing to educate all her children.

The following day we went for river rafting and the activity included body surfing and cliff jumping as well. After this relaxing break, we got back to completing our objective. We finally managed to complete the entire classroom and before we knew it, it was time to say our goodbyes to the boys from Starehe. To celebrate the comple-

tion of the project, we had a cultural night where we all presented short performance pieces from our countries. The highlight of the show was Akshay and me singing a Hindi song!

The next day, we headed back to Nairobi where we finally said our goodbyes to the boys from Starehe. From Nairobi, we headed for the Maasai Mara Game Reserve in the Great Rift Valley. The next five days were spent in a resort in the park, relaxing and going out for safaris. We managed to see giraffes, lions, cheetahs and many other animals found only in those parts of the world. Before we knew it, Christmas was over and the trip was at its end. We returned to Nairobi for the last night and spent the night chatting and getting e-mail IDs, after which it was time to go.

Both Sharan and I learnt a lot from this trip. We saw life in rural Africa and more rewardingly, experienced the happiness that one derives from service

| Review | Doscoc's Anthology

Shatam Ray reviews the book, *Kissan Ki Dhoop Mein*, a collection of fiction written by Ex-Doscoc

Working on an anthology can be a tricky business, especially when you are going through a mine of writings written over a period of seventy-five years. One of the problems you might have to confront immediately is that of selecting a common thread for your stories. However, in the case of this book, the theme was already there: the Doon School and its seventy five years of existence. Not surprisingly, such a project throws up its own set of difficult choices. Should the anthology attempt to celebrate the institution's success, thereby relegating the writings for another occasion, or should it celebrate the writings of Old Boys and let them speak for the school implicitly? Furthermore, what can be the reason behind the selection of one story over another? This is probably the reason why anthology as a genre is one of the more unpopular choices for publishing houses.

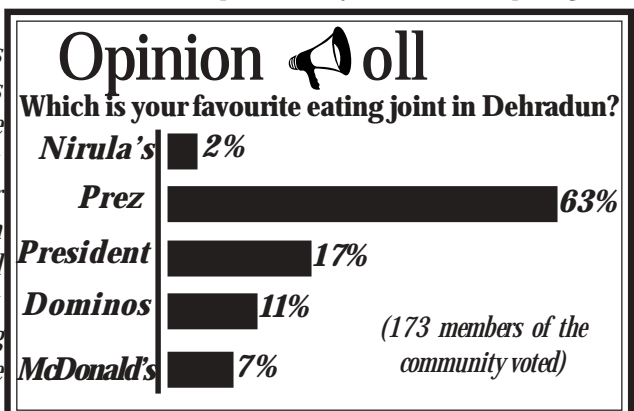
In that sense, *Kissan* is a hugely readable publication. It showcases the changing priorities and preoccupations of Doscoc over the years. A collection of fiction written by Old boys, the anthology also serves a very important purpose. The school is usually associated with its celebrated alumni writing in English; but the anthology brings out the rich tradition of fiction writing in Hindi by the boys. Moreover, what is impressive is that it successfully includes writings from almost all decades of the school's existence even though one can see writing becoming prolific in the 1990's and the first decade of the 2000s.

The stories deal with myriad themes like adventure, mythical lands or even poverty and the more recent ones also represent the transformation in the school life of boys.

These stories are simple to follow and are written, discernibly in *Hindustani* and not necessarily Hindi. This is due to the rich amalgam of Hindi and Urdu that many older boys (coming predominantly from North India) must have been used to.

| Votalysis | Eateries in D.Dun

Over the last decade, the number of eating places in Dehradun has risen. Apart from small sweetshops and plush restaurants, Dehradun also boasts of several fast-food joints including Subway and KFC which have opened recently. But what is surprising to see is that Doscoc still prefer their beloved Prez over the McDonald's, Pizza Huts and Dominos. In a generation where fast-food has taken over the gastronomic world and spread obesity everywhere, it is heartening to see Doscoc still sticking to the local restaurants. Yet, the opening of these fast-food joints and new restaurants such as My Wife's Place, Muse, and Town Table has overshadowed other local joints such as Tirupati, Yeti, Udipi and Countdown, which at one point used to be the favourites of Doscoc. In an article titled 'In Town - Thought For Food' in a previous issue of the Weekly, Tirupati, Yeti and Udipi were some of the most popular eating joints. The Weekly heard no mention of these restaurants when the question was asked to A, S and Sc-formers!



| Report | RSIS at Jordan

Shaurya Sinha recounts his experience at RSIS Project, Jordan, held from December 8 -21, 2010



On December 15, 2010, a group of six boys and one master landed in Jordan for the Regional Round Square Conference, 2010. This group comprised Shaurya Sinha, Prabhjot Singh, Pranjal Singh, Pranoy Bohara, Saud Khan and Udit Kapur with NTC as the escort. We were immediately placed under the care of the students and staff of the Kings Academy. Barely having enough time to freshen up, we were hurled into a series of activities, starting with the ice breakers. After a few games and activities, we were assigned into our *Barazza* group and soon got acquainted with other members and *Barazza* leaders. We were then escorted to watch a play called *The Crucible* which was about the Salem witch trials. Afterwards, we

even shook a leg with the other delegates (with Hindi songs comprising most of the music!)

The next day we headed off to visit some of the heritage sites of Jordan which included an ancient church, followed by a trek to the top of a cliff which offered a picturesque view of the panorama below. Returning to the school, we attended the opening ceremony, followed by a speech on 'Water Conservation' by the keynote speaker of the day.

On the third day, we went to a site at which the Kings Academy had constructed a structure which symbolized their support for water conservation in Jordan. We then continued towards Petra (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) and the Dead Sea, on a tedious 7 hour bus ride.

Petra was an absolute jaw dropper! The pure skill with which it was constructed so many centuries ago was breathtaking and what added to the astonishment was the number of structures in the complex. Even though we had to walk uphill for a few hours to reach the caves, we were delighted by the company of other schools and the distance gave us enough time to strike up interesting conversations.

We went to visit the Dead Sea the next day. Floating without any effort was great fun, even though we were conscious of the glares from other people! In the evening, we had the 'international evening', for which people were supposed to wear something that defined where they came from and perform a piece on stage. Our school chose to dance and even though we had just five minutes to prepare, people hailed us as showstoppers! The rest of the performances followed and we cheered for our favourite ones, mine being the delegates who performed a play on water conservation.

On the last day, we were a bit low because we were about to leave all the friends we had made. After the closing ceremony with one last keynote speaker, we moved towards our *Barazza* groups, where we addressed the issue of water conservation one last time with our friends. Exchanging things to remember each other by as well as Facebook ID's, we said a final goodbye and left for home with memories of a great experience and new friends.



Votalysis

Considering such a large majority of students believes that cricket practices are taking too much time away from their day, the daily schedule ought to be reviewed. Cricket, being a compulsory sport starts at 3 and finishes at 5:30(or so it should). This leaves students with no time for other activities and stalls progress in other areas. No other sport takes more than one and a half hours from the daily schedule, yet cricket receives two and a half to three hours. If cricket was to start from say, 3:45, it would give students more time for their projects and other activities. Advising captains to allow boys to leave the field at their will may sound like a solution, but it is an impractical one. Hopefully, the majority will convince the School to reconsider this schedule.

Opinion oll

Do you think cricket practices take an unfeasible amount of time each day?

Yes 83%

No 17%

(322 members of the community were polled)

Next week's question: Do you think midterms should take precedence over other activities?

| Report |

Tour de Diu

Rashid Sharfuddin (with inputs from Philip Burrett) recounts his experience of a motorcycle tour, from Dehradun to Diu and back, over the winter vacation



While sipping coffee on a warm December afternoon in Delhi, a friend of mine enquired rather derisively, ‘Do you want a tiger on your bike or a girl?’ Caught off-guard by this rather abrupt query while watching the grand parade of shoppers at Select City walk, I replied absent-mindedly – ‘I would rather have a tigress’. This was provocation enough for her activist avatar and she launched into a tirade about how we spend hundreds of crores on saving tigers in India while paying lip service to the plight of the girl child. Firing her next volley, she said India had only 842 girls left for every 1000 boys! ‘Save girls; we can save the tigers later’, she concluded. I nodded my head in agreement and called for the cheque.

Was it this conviction that made me join my 19 colleagues on a 3500 kilometres road trip from Dehradun to Diu on a cold, foggy January morning? Probably not! Dressed in our biking gear, we looked more like gladiators ready for mortal combat rather than a bunch of sincere riders, crusading for the right of the girl child to live. But what united us that morning in sacrificing two weeks of our vacation was the sense of adventure and excitement that waited to be explored on that stretch of never-ending road.

The motto that emerged (outlined by Mr Burrett) as we headed for the coast was “Bike hard but eat and sleep well”. The schedule and stay was planned accordingly. Our routine allowed us to travel about 250-280 kilometres a day, enabling us to reach the day’s destination with plenty of time to rest and explore.

Along the way, we spent a pleasant evening in Pushkar and watched the sun set over the peaceful sarovar while we sat, sipping coffee at the Sunset Cafe. We also visited the shrine of the Sufi saint Moinuddin Chisti in Ajmer, wandered and shopped in the by-lanes of Udaipur and marveled at the fort and Lake Palace. In Ahmedabad, we savoured the traditional cuisine of Gujarat at the Vaishala complex and paid homage at the Sabarmati Ashram where Gandhiji spent his early years. On the last leg of our journey we posed in front of the board that said ‘The tropic of cancer passes through here’ and entered the territory of the Asiatic Gir lions, hoping to catch sight of more than just the ubiquitous peacocks, sambars, nilgais and chitals.

The sight and smell of the sea at Diu lifted our spirits and we spent more than two days resting and getting our energies back. During the day, we broke up into different groups and explored the Portuguese fort, experimented with cuisine and enjoyed beach cricket and parasailing. It was then time to head back.

On our return journey, we explored the impregnable Chittorgarh fort that looms over the city like a giant, hearing stories about the sacrifices and valour of Rajput princes. Four of us also had the unforgettable experience of seeing the Indus valley site at Lothal bathed in the light of the full moon. Among other things, we were very graciously hosted and invited to share our experiences at the special assembly in Mayo College, Ajmer. We also planted a tree in the visitor’s grove to mark the occasion.

In two weeks, we had not only travelled the planned distance but had also traversed through time and different periods of history. The journey ranged from the dangerous Doon-Delhi NH 37 to the four-lane Golden Quadrilateral stretch between Ajmer and Ahmedabad, from the ‘Highway to Hell’ about 50 kilometres short of Gurgaon to the narrow sandy village roads in the Kathaiwar Peninsula. The ride covered everything from spectacular beaches, rocky cliffs, dry casuarinas and stunted vegetation in the inland regions at Diu to miles of cotton plantations. What a setting for the next B Form educational trip I thought!

A journey of 3500 kilometres through six states on all types of roads without a puncture to a bike speaks well of our planning and teamwork. But what mattered most was that we came back safe and sound to a warm reception at the Library where the rest of our colleagues awaited our return. I shall never forget the time when Mr Burrett treated his 220 cc pulsar as a camel while some of us clocked 120 or the time when one colleague ordered camel meat and pigeon eggs at a restaurant. The legendary snoring of few of my colleagues, Mr Tomar’s occasional siesta while riding on his bike, nearly being arrested for not having permits at the Gir forest gates, or singing with the entire group around the camp fire, all are memorable instances of this wonderful experience.

In all fairness, one must thank our sponsors – ONGC, HSBC, Mahindra bikes and Corbett ply for providing the necessary financial support as well as the various colleagues who helped us plan and execute the trip. Mr Asutosh Goyal was very kind in helping us with organising our stay at various places.

So what next! Maybe a trip to the biker paradise of Pokhara in Nepal or a token representation at the Isle of Man Race in Japan? Only time will tell. At the moment the world is divided between people who ride a bike and those who wish they could ride one.

| Interview |

Welcome Aboard

The Doon School Weekly interviewed **Chit Ranjan Kagdee**, a new master on campus

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

Chit Ranjan Kagdee (CRK): I have been in the teaching profession since 1999. I have previously taught in four different educational institutions in Dehra Dun, including Unison World School. I am originally from Jabalpur which is located in Madhya Pradesh. Teaching is my passion. My interests vary from making models and science oriented projects to stage craft, decorations, backdrops, cultural activities and designing. I have a Masters Degree in Bio Sciences and a Bachelors in Education and I am currently pursuing PGDSLM from IGNOU.

DSW: Which is your favourite sport?

CRK: Well, I don't play any sport in particular since my other interests are time consuming. However, I do like to follow sports like cricket and soccer. Sachin Tendulkar is my favourite sports person!

DSW: Which activities do you plan to involve yourself with in school?

CRK: I think that I would like to pursue activities which are related to science projects and art and craft work.

DSW: What do you think of the education system followed in school?

CRK: Well, I believe that all boards, be it ICSE, CBSE or the International Baccalaureate, have their own importance in various spheres. Personally, I feel that since the CBSE is now using the grading system, students have been taking their studies lightly. On the other hand, in ICSE, the spirit of competitiveness greatly helps in encouraging students to take their studies seriously. The International Baccalaureate is also a great board, particularly for those who wish to go abroad for their higher studies. It combines conceptual learning with practical application, thus helping students in the long run.

DSW: Why did you decide to come to The Doon School?

CRK: I had been hearing about The Doon School since childhood. Though I did not succeed in coming to study here in my early years, I am happy to be a part of this institution now. It is the best institution of education in the country and many who are involved with the teaching profession aim to come to The Doon School. Apart from the unique background and the culture of this School, it is the exposure that it provides that made me join Doon. Also, the system of teaching here at Doon is excellent and one is encouraged to try his or her own ideas and methods of teaching.

DSW: What other interests do you have ?

CRK: Being a Biology teacher, I have always loved nature and the environment. In fact, that is the reason I

chose to become a Biology teacher, since it is through the study of Biology that one comes closest in appreciating nature.

DSW: What do you think of Environmental Education being removed from the ICSE syllabus from next year?

CRK: Personally, I am not too pleased with Environmental Education being removed from the ICSE syllabus. I feel that all students should be given proper education concerning the environment. However, if it is removed, steps should be taken to incorporate it into other subjects. It is possible to inculcate Environmental Education into subjects like Biology, Geography and even Chemistry.

DSW: What do you feel about the steps taken at the Doon School to curb environmental degradation?

CRK: I haven't been here long enough to speak much about that. However, there is a lot of greenery around. The lush green environment gives one a feeling of learning in the midst of nature, quite like the way it used to happen in the gurukuls.

| Report |

The Taj Talk

Aditya Bhattacharya and Mihir Kiran report on a talk conducted by **Dr. Wayne Bagely** on Saturday, February 5

This Saturday, we were witness to an unseemingly interesting talk by Dr. Wayne Bagely. It was compulsory for C and B formers and as we made our way to the A.V. room (rather apprehensively!), none of us realized that the 'facts' we knew about the Taj Mahal were going to be proved false. As the talk progressed, it seemed to us that we knew even lesser and lesser about the Taj Mahal. Many facts such as Shah Jahan building the Taj Mahal only for Mumtaz were actually proved to be myths! It was built as both a memorial for Mumtaz as well as a display of Shah Jahan's grandeur. In fact, while the Taj Mahal may only come across as a beautiful monument, it also has an ingenious drainage system which would power the fountains as well as stop the Yamuna from flooding the area. Furthermore, while many people believe that Shah Jahan had his architects' hands chopped off after the completion of the Taj Mahal, it is not true. He realised he had an amazing architect working for him and decided to keep him busy with many other projects after the Taj Mahal was completed. We were also introduced to various other interesting facts. For example, the borders of the whole compound are an exact copy of the Vatican city borders! The talk ended, leaving most of us surprised and feeling a whole lot smarter. It also taught us not to believe opinions and rumours without proper evidence.

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