

Service in the Hills

Vihaan Bhatnagar and Madhav Bhardwaj *report on the Social Service midterms held recently*

However cliched this may sound, we realized the true meaning of service, its rewards, and the amount of work involved only after we went on these midterms, one of the most eye-opening experiences of our lives. As the sun rose from behind the grassy hills, we realized that we were looking forward to these midterms more than others, as they promised to be different from the start. This time we had opted to do Social Service in the Kedarnath Valley that was hit by flash floods last year.

Mr O.P. Baijwal was a very simple yet intelligent person. He could have easily become a teacher but instead he chose to educate the people of the village. He himself was from the ‘Chaka’ village, where he was brought up and educated. With a vision of “Knowledge before Success,” he founded the Takshila Public School which aims to impart to its students a long-lasting sense of unity, and the spirit to accept success and failure. Though the school does not provide many facilities, it is still recognized to be the best in all fields in North-Eastern Uttarakhand. Students of this school have cleared top-notch exams such as the AIEE, IIT and have also qualified for the NDA. The school is not just a source of income for Mr Baijwal and his partners, but is also a means to spread awareness regarding education and being literate.

As we all know, the floods in the Kedar valley last year were devastating. This school was one of the many buildings destroyed. It had not only broken down literally, but the flood broke the will of Mr O.P. Baijwal and his colleagues completely.

Now it was time for fifty-one of us to rebuild the school, and in the process, we also hoped to rebuild the livelihoods destroyed by the floods. So on April 2, we packed our bags, and accompanied by four masters,



left on our mission. On our first working day we were given a brief introduction about the school, our project and what we had to do. Ten of us were assigned to teach the students of the school and the rest helped in labour work. Our school has adopted the Takshila Public School. We wanted to start afresh, so we rebuilt the school at a distance and height from its previous location. Some of us were assigned to make bricks for construction. This involved mixing cement, stones, and water in a fixed ratio, putting the mixture into a round vessel called the ‘parat’ and then levelling the ground and making bricks on it. We were placed in groups of five: some brought material, some levelled the ground, and the rest made bricks. In three hours of non-stop work, we made ninety bricks.

The next day we rotated jobs. Ten others got to teach the students while the rest resumed the making of bricks. This time everything went smoothly as there were small groups which worked and were spread out over a large area. Everything was well-organized and even the local labourers couldn’t believe the fact that all of us had just learnt to make bricks the previous day. The work made us think about what those labourers had to face every day.

The third day and final day consisted of a small thanksgiving ceremony, in which our masters talked about the aim of the project and the ethos behind the initiative. Mr Baijwal was grateful to our school for the work that was done and we also told him that his school was ultimately a part of our School’s larger family, and there were no formalities for family members. We were there to help create a foundation for the school and help in its upliftment.

We returned to Doon happy and satisfied after a Midterm of connecting with each other and the people of the village. We encourage the others in our school to go for these Social Service Midterms as they are a great opportunity to make a difference in someone else’s life, and as Gandhi famously said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”



Regulars

IAYP

Vineet Puri and Vedant Agarwal have completed the **Bronze** and **Silver** levels of the **IAYP** respectively. Congratulations!

CHESS

The School Chess team participated in the **Imperia Structure FIDE Rated National Chess Tournament** from March 21 to 24. Sarthak Gupta stood **First** in the **Under-20 Category** and was ranked **22nd** overall. Anuman Goel was ranked **23rd** overall and stood **First** in the **Under-13 Category**. Well done!

HINDI ESSAY WRITING

The following are the results of the **B.P. Chandola Hindi Essay Writing Contest**:
Juniors:
1st: Kanishk Kannodia
2nd: Aaryan Singla
3rd: Nehansh Saxena
Seniors:
1st: Suyash Raj Shivam
2nd: Vibhav Gupta
3rd: Ayush Tripathi
Kudos!

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

A conjunctivitis went into my eye.
Yash Killa, still blind.
Let me take a Selfie of you.
Atrey Bhargava, the selfie-king.
I am flexing my beard.
Nihal Singh Mann, it must be really strong.
I am singing a song.
Nikhil Fatehpuria, song-bird.
I'll man marker him.
Aryan Chabbra is very precise.
Is Good Friday falling on a Sunday?
AAQ, looking forward to hoildays.

The Week Gone By

Yuvan Kumar

All the airplanes (buses) have descended from the clouds (hills) into the battleground that school has become. It is almost as if the only people safe at this point are the newly arrived D-formers. Not to say that they don't have their share of challenges. The cross-fire of activities is overwhelming. Masters and boys alike are bending backwards and yanking out their hair to make things work; we'll just have to get used to it. The latest additions to the school community seem to be getting on pretty well, considering their fitness levels. They have gargantuan amounts of learning to do! As the hospital staff seems busier than usual, we know for sure that hockey season has truly begun! Boys across all forms have been getting out onto the field every afternoon, fighting the heat: truly a pleasing sight! The hot topic for discussion in all forums is the recently concluded mid-terms. The school community has surely stepped up to the task and completed the most challenging of treks. With big expeditions like Chaur Peak, Harki-Dun and Kauri Pass, and relatively smaller treks like Nagtibba and Dayara Bugyal, it is clear that the trek parties have surely outdone themselves. Not to mention the private parties that have completed all their treks in all honesty! Well, we have successfully crossed the half-way point, hopefully all in one piece. All activities in School have stepped on the gas and are going full steam forward towards the hot summer. The Inter-House One Act Play and Dance Competition practices are underway as well. Everyone is advised to brace themselves, for pandemonium is coming!

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WORDS

In another case of student violence, twenty students have been injured in a stabbing spree in a school in Pennsylvania, US. Twenty people were killed in a bomb blast in Islamabad. Kim Jong-Un has been re-elected as the North Korean leader. Faint signals of the recorder of the flight MH370 have been detected in the Indian Ocean. Several companies have urged all the internet users to change their passwords as a bug known as the 'Heartbleed Bug' has been detected.

Dosco Doodle

The Flip-side to Midterms
Leonardo Pamei



Chaur Peak

Sasyak Pattnaik

The Hyderabad House A-form, accompanied by BKC and ADS, trekked up to Chaur Peak from Nauradhar, approximately 8 hours away from Dehradun. Our trek was divided into two segments. In the first segment, we hiked midway to our destination, which was nearly 12km away from Nauradhar. We set up our camp there and fixed our tents firmly into the ground to prevent the wind from blowing them over. That same night, after dinner we had a rather tranquil bonfire. Not only did we fight the high velocity mountain winds at 1:00 AM, but we also had to re-pitch our tents at 3:00 AM but we did not lose our enthusiasm. The following day, after bathing in the ice-cold water of the mountain, and having a hot plate of Maggi for breakfast, we further trekked up to our next destination. During this snowy hike, a few of us suffered from some common health issues, which restricted the total extent and duration of our trek. After taking a few pictures, we raced back down to our base-camp. On arrival we found out that all our tents had been brought down by a series of strong winds, and, that we had to survive with what we had for another night. The next morning, we parted and reached Nauradhar. This time, we returned with a sense of accomplishment and wonderful experiences that etched themselves in our hearts and memories. We had a rather relieving day, with much rest and sleep. The next morning, at around 5:00 AM, we left for Dehradun.



Dayara Bugyal

Hitansh Nagdev and Ishan Jhawar

A group of twenty boys and three masters set off for Dayara Bugyal. After eight hours of bus travel our party reached Uttarkashi. At the crack of dawn we left for Barsu. Soon we could enjoy the cool breeze and pleasant weather at our camp in Barsu. Without wasting much time we departed for a long trek to Dayara Bugyal. We ended up with our water bottles empty and wounds and blisters and our weary bodies

needing rest. We pitched our tents and stayed in them until dinner. A pitch black night was soon replaced by the warm sunshine, signalling another day's trekking. As we marched, the sand underneath turned into snow. After a lengthy trek we made it down to Barsu, having had snow fights and taken pictures. The following day we took pleasure in bathing in the natural hot water springs. We managed to overcome the great challenge of climbing the steep wall of rocks and the constant fear of slipping played on the minds of masters and students alike. After reaching the waterfall and being able to enjoy the enchanting place from atop, we returned to our camp site and enjoyed the end of the day sharing stories and thoughts about our midterm. We returned to School with sweet memories and an amazing experience.

Chopta

Deep Dhandhan

Twenty-two students escorted by MGP and Dr. Lanka left for Chopta on the 2nd of April. We were all overenthusiastic upon hearing the news that we were going with the King's Academy, Jordan. When we reached we interacted with the Jordanians and had an informal introduction session. The next day we trekked to Deoria Tal, a lake at the top of a mountain, from where we had an amazing view of Chaurkamba Peak. Unexpectedly, we bumped into our Oberoi House form mates at the lake. We spent about three odd hours enjoying the beauty of nature around us. The Jordanians were overwhelmed by the view and some of them even went to the extent of saying that it was the most picturesque scene they had even come across! The next day we trekked all the way upto the Tungnath Temple. It was a 4 kilometre trek one way, and many people had to push themselves in some places as the snow was very thick and there weren't railings on either side for most of the time. But fortunately, everybody completed the trek. Our trek downwards was more exciting as we slid down the snow most of the way and had snowball fights. After our descent, we met our Oberoi House form mates again and had a snowball fight with them! Unfortunately, five boys got sunburnt and had to come a day earlier. That night, there was a bonfire where we sang Indian songs while the Jordanians sang Arabic songs. Event though we couldn't understand what they were singing, the whole ambience was very lively and we all had a great time. Finally on the last day we roamed around the area, visiting some local houses, schools and fields. We then came back and relaxed, playing games like dumb charades. In the evening we bid farewell to the Jordan party and thanked them for the gifts they had gotten for us. We finally reached School on Sunday refreshed by the mid-term experience and ready to take on the School life again.

Films

Rudra Srivastava

For most of us, Bollywood films are all about dancing, singing, acting, set and costume designing and maybe even the storyline once in a while. We relate cinema merely to its entertainment value, without realizing that there is a lot more to delve into in terms of human nature, identity, existence and social relevance.

Ms Namrata Joshi, a noted film critic and Senior Associate Editor of 'Outlook' magazine, held a two-day workshop on Film Appreciation in School to broaden our scope of understanding of films. The workshop kick-started with a discussion on how films mirror the cultural, social and political context of a place at a particular time. The discussion was followed by a screening of 'Supermen of Malegaon', a documentary film that captures the making of a spoof film in a town called Malegaon in Maharashtra. Malegaon is situated 300 kms from Mumbai and has various pressing social issues such as political coercion, religious discrimination and discrimination against women. The people of the town work in looms and get a holiday on Fridays, on which day movie theatres become the primary source of their entertainment. Films are one of the very few distractions that allow the people of Malegaon to take time off from their hard lives. Hence, in ways that are difficult to imagine for us, their lives are enmeshed with the lives of the people they see on screen and the worlds that are created in front of their eyes.

The documentary is about the passion for film making of a director and his crew, and how this passion allows them to overcome various hurdles and make a movie with minimum equipment. The movie inculcates the basic understanding of the making of cinema. After the documentary we viewed an Alfred Hitchcock thriller, 'Shadow of a Doubt', which introduced us to an innovative way of cinematography. The way Hitchcock uses sound to build up suspense was highly admirable. The plot follows the life of a young girl whose life is completely changed when her uncle 'Charlie' comes to visit her. The film kept us on our toes and was a pure thriller. After this marathon movie watching session we took a break, only to go watch 'Queen' in a local theatre hall later that evening.

The next day we were shown a couple of short films that followed a format of exposition, development and climax. We watched 'Shor' and 'The Epiphany', two films by Neeraj Ghaywan. Driven by realism, both movies had similar elements which clearly showed the impact of the director on the making of the film. 'Shor' focused on the life of a poor family in which the wife is the sole bread winner. The husband continues to rebuke and insult her until the moment of 'realization', when the husband has a close encounter with death. 'Epiphany' showcased a divorced couple who travel together from Pune to Mumbai, until they meet a crisis which allows them to realize what they truly are. 'Sujata', a short film by Shlok Sharma, was also screened and depicted the life of a girl who is constantly harassed by her cousin. After lunch, we

were all asked to write a review of the film 'Queen', thus giving us a better understanding of what it takes to write a good movie review.

We also discussed the nuances of animation as it too requires a great deal of technical and artistic mastery. We watched two animation films, 'The Triplets of Belville', a French film, and 'Persepolis', an Iranian film. The 'Triplets of Belville' depicted the life of a young boy who is passionate about cycling and dreams of winning the Tour de France. The other film showcased, to a great extent, Iranian history, especially the revolt against the Shah. Iranian cinema is considered to be the most imaginative in the world and largely revolves around children. We were shown another Iranian film – 'Children of Heaven', in which a boy from a humble background misplaces his sister's shoes and tries his best to get her a new pair.

The workshop gave us a great insight into the world of films and for the first time we realized that cinema was not just about entertainment, but also about a whole lot of complex processes that go into the making of a film. At the end of the workshop we all felt that such workshops should be conducted regularly to introduce more students to the aesthetics of cinema.

Truth

Aditya Bhattacharya

I stared, transfixed
By its beauty.
The Light shone unmitigated,
Perennial as the Plain.
I felt naked, vulnerable
In its presence, haunted
By it, I distanced myself.
It cut through me,
Incisive, unforgiving, inevitable.
But I did not bleed.
No tears of red did they cry,
Brave gashes. No pain.

I stared, perplexed
By its benevolence.
The Darkness shone unchallenged,
Powerful as a potentate.
I felt ashamed, violated
By its presence. Fearful
Of it, I tried to run.
But there was nowhere
For me to go.

Opinion Poll

Should the Doon School Quiz be restarted?



(307 members of the school community were polled)

Online Edition: <http://www.doonschool.com/publications/the-doon-school-weekly/latest-issue>

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IPSS: All rights reserved. Printed by: The English Book Depot, 16 Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand – 248009, India. Published by: PK Nair, The Doon School, Dehradun.

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