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The Doon School

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SPARRING AT SLATER'S

Ashish Mitter reports on the Rev. Samuel Slater Memorial Debate held at the Bishop Cotton School, Shimla

When you are told that you are taking part in a competition, not to win, but to receive exposure, you can take it in two ways: you can either get demoralized, and question the very purpose of your taking part in the competition, or you can treat it as a unique experience, and try to enjoy yourself as much as you can. We decided on the latter ; although things didn't go as planned, we still managed to have a great time.

On April 26, 2006, Uday Pratap Singh, Chetan Agarwal, Akshit Batra and I were escorted by Mr. Aaron Jacob (ANJ) to the Bishop Cotton School, Shimla, to take part in the 11th Rev. Samuel Slater Memorial Debate. After a rather eventful eight-hour journey, thanks to a maniacal driver, who kept us on the edge of our seats due to his dare-devil driving, we arrived at BCS and were escorted to our dorms. Shortly after that, we were divided into pools. Our group consisted of La Martinere Girls', Lucknow, Sri Ram School, Delhi and the hosts themselves. As the Slater's Debates are held in a league-cum-knockout format, we were assured of taking part in at least three debates. To our alarm, we were informed that all three of our first round (pre-quarter final) debates were to be held the following day, with the first one against the formidable debaters from La Martinere Girls'. The debates were all held in the Cambridge format. The topic was "Fashion is the pastime of the rich," and the debate, from our point of view, was a disaster! Instead of reading it as fashion is the pastime...we read it as fashion is a pastime, thereby misinterpreting the entire debate. I suffered a bad bout of stage-fright and found myself inexplicably trembling on stage. We were thoroughly beaten and came out of the debate quite demoralized. Fortunately, though, we had no time to ponder over our performance as our second debate was just a few hours away, against Sri Ram School. The topic was "Man is a social animal," and we were slated to go against the topic. After some frantic phone calls to DEB, we prepared a rather haphazard debate, going up on stage with just a few relevant points instead of the customary speech. This proved to be a blessing in disguise, as with nothing to look down at, we were forced to look at the audience which eventually gave us more confidence. Akshit's marvellous use of rhetoric which was to become a trademark of the debates, propelled us to a comfortable victory. Our final topic for the day was, "Witness protection is the responsibility of the state," and once again we found ourselves pitched against the motion. We went into the debate overconfident and still on a high after our win over Sri Ram, and this, combined with the fact that it was the third debate of the day, resulted in the debate turning into a comedy of errors. Chetan, our lead speaker, realized that he had too much to say, and not enough time to say it. This resulted in his fumbling with his cue-cards. Akshit suffered a rare black-out and was silent for thirty seconds. However, the host team was almost as bad, as they read from their text incoherently and rambled on about their 'real-life experiences.' At the close of the first round, Sri Ram, Doon and BCS were tied with one win apiece, while the girls from Lucknow were way ahead, with three wins out of three. After some tension, we were relieved to hear that we had moved into the quarter-final on the basis of the points scored. We were now drawn against Sri Ram. The topic for the quarter-final was "Nothing is bad, only thinking makes it so," and we were once again drawn against the motion. We went up on stage and won convincingly. We were ecstatic, as none of us could digest the fact that we had reached so far. Later that day, we went to Kufri for a short excursion, and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. After that, it was back to the drawing board, as we sat down and brainstormed for our next topic – "Town-planning is a concept which does not exist in India." We were pitted against Mayo Girls', and for

once we felt that the topic was tilted in our favour. We were against the motion (for the fifth consecutive time), and managed to prepare quite a strong debate. Akshit impressed everyone once again with his masterful oratory and Chetan had us all in splits when we rose to defend the prestige of Dehradun when one of the girls talked about the chaos prevalent in 'Suicide Alley.' Before we knew it, we were through to the finals. It was all set to be a fairy tale ending, but the team from St. James', Kolkata showed us that all fairy tales need not have a perfect ending. They were cool, calculated and clinically efficient as they systematically demolished our arguments in the finals, the topic being the vague "India has arrived."

Through the debates, Akshit collected three best speaker, one second best speaker and one third best speaker award. I won two second best speaker awards, while Chetan won a third best speaker along with Uday. Despite our loss in the finals, I shall never forget the trip as a whole. I shall never forget how Akshit swept the floor at the jam session and how Mr. Cecil, the escort from St. James', kept us amused with his prim and 'propah' behaviour. The hospitality shown by the BCS boys more than made up for the food while their chapel service was a unique and moving experience. The trip, as they say, was the stuff dreams are made of.

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Regulars

Quizmasters

At the **RIMC Challenge Quiz** held at RIMC, Dehradun, on May 4, the School was represented by Ashish Mitter, Chetan Agarwal and Chinmay Sharma. The school was placed 2nd amongst the fourteen participating schools.

The School was represented by Ashish Mitter, Chetan Agarwal and Yash Gandhi at the **Rajeev Khanna Memorial Inter-School Quiz** held at Scholar's Home School on Saturday, May 6. The Doon School emerged runner-up in the competition. Thirteen schools took part in this quiz. Congratulations!

Smashing Success

The School took part in the **Wasu Memorial Table Tennis Tournament** held at Riverdale High School from May 6-8. The junior team comprising Amit Gupta, Ashutosh Kejriwal and Sagar Agarwal was placed runner-up. Well played!

Martial Artist

Anirudh Khanna has been appointed as the boy-in-charge of **Tae Kwon Do** for the year 2006. Congratulations!

Poetic Voices

In the **Vikram Seth English Poetry Recitation Contest, 2006**, the following are the positions:

Juniors:

1st: Aashray Batra
2nd: Rishi Sood
3rd: Aruj Shukla

Seniors:

1st: Akshit Batra
2nd: Salil Gupta
3rd: Kushagra Agarwal

Well spoken!

Winning Writers

The results of the **Shankar Dayal Sharma English Essay Competition for Juniors – 2006**, are:

1st: K.P. Somaiah
2nd: Yashvardhan Jain
3rd: Manit Bhandari
Well written!

Talk Time

Pavan Vaish (ex-372 K, '86) of IBM Daksh, spoke to the S formers in the AV Room on May 6 on how to start a business and see it grow.

Ajay Bahadur Singh held a talk on local history from ancient to

Unquotable Quotes

They ditch a dig.

AKM gets the order wrong.

"We're going to Ibiza" was sung by Welham Boys'.

Rudra Bajpai, the music-lover.

Aluminium is light-weight in colour.

MTS knows her chemistry.

Stop licking your fingers with your hands.

Nipun Mohan, anatomically challenged.

My ears are as sharp as a hawk's.

KAR flaps his wings.

Pass the face 'waash.'

Shaurya Kuthiala, wanting to be clean.

Too many broths spoil the cook.

Mansher Dhillon, demanding gourmet.

There will be a lot of dead corpses.

STB envisions World War III.

Career Call

The Careers' Notice Board will float information on prospects in the Indian Navy this week. All would-be seamen should have a look.

Did You Know?

- Airports that are at higher altitudes require a longer airstrip due to lower air density.
- Fires on land generally move faster uphill than downhill.
- The average lead pencil can draw a line that is almost 35 miles long.
- As an iceberg melts, it makes a fizzing sound because of the compressed air bubbles popping in the ice.
- If someone was to fly once around the surface of the moon, it would be equal to a round trip from New York to London.
- All polar bears are left handed.
- In the last 4000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.
- TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.

(Sourced from the internet)

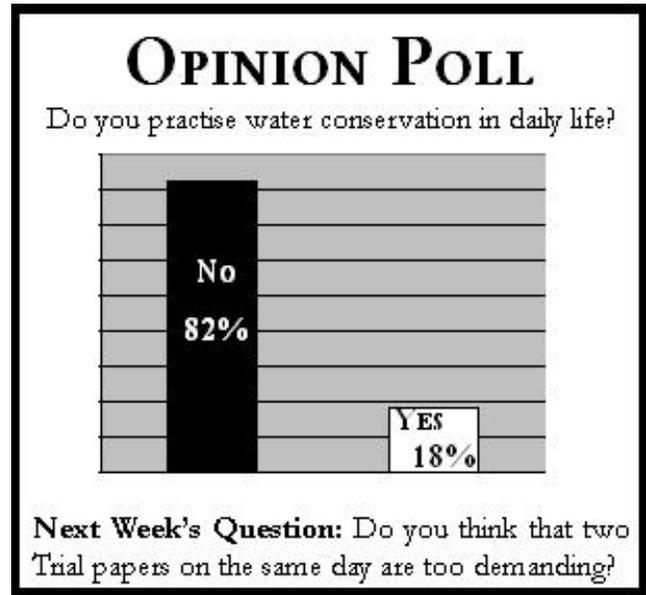
modern times for the D, C and B formers on Saturday, May 6 in the MPH.

There was a talk for the S formers by **Mohit Lalwani** from the Adelphi University on May 5.

Sumit Dargan (SMD) gave a presentation on the IB for the A formers in the Kilachand Library on Saturday, May 6.

Film Fare

The documentary, ***New Boys***, made by **David MacDougall**, was screened in the Library for the faculty on Monday, May 9. This was followed by a discussion. The following evening, the same film, made on the D formers of Foot House (batch of '98-'99) was shown to the S formers. A lively discussion ensued.



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Keeping the Faith Arjun Rao

My mother totally freaked out when it was time for me to sit my first Board exams (I found out much later that she thought I was going to fail!). And once my December exam results reached home, she decided that she had had enough, that she was too young for all that tension (she wanted to live to see her grandchildren. She's never said it, but I know!) and she decided to find a tutor for me.

She got onto MSN - Mother's Secret Network. An insider told me that they discuss the problems with children's fashion and morals, the food that their kids are served at school, how someone needs to develop pasta that will not go soggy by tiffin-time and other such dangerous threats to their children. My mother was an honorary member as I went to a boarding school and daily problems were just not applicable. In record time someone highly recommended was decided upon.

On my first meeting, December 6, (90 days left for the exams), my tutor-to be asked me – Mathematician banna hai?

Me (taken aback, but trying to hide it) – No, Sir.

Him – Scientist banna hai?

Me – No, Sir.

Him – Achhi baat hai. Tum na, (and here he squinted at me) Eco karna college mein.

I nearly burst out laughing. Eco?! However, my mother's look silenced me and all that came out was a whimpering, 'Okay, Sir'.

He then proceeded to berate my teachers and told my mum that school teachers think they are giving their students gyan but are actually burdening the kids with knowledge that will get them nowhere.

Since I had missed much of the year's classes, at a discount of Rs. 1000 per session, he agreed to five-hour sessions a day with me. Five hours!

That December was the worst, yet most enlightening month of my life. My day began at six in the morning with Math and Science homework, followed by Math and Science classes from nine to two, lunch at half-past two (brain food that consisted of spinach, broccoli and sprouts!), study from four to six, French tuition at six, dinner at eight (normal food – my father refused to eat brain food after two days), further study till midnight, and fast asleep a minute later. I had never studied so much in my life and yet, as I understood the difference between a bio-gas plant and a compost pit, I felt that something was missing. But what this was I could not quite figure out.

A month and a half later I went back to school, much against my tutor's protestations (Ek aur mahina hota, to main 90 nikaal deta) and shocked everyone as my marks doubled and then tripled. The Boards came and went and surprisingly enough, my mother's nerves survived. As we headed into May, the temperature outside, and the tension inside the house, rose. And suddenly, the papers declared: CBSE announces results.

Everyone stayed home from work and Mum screamed at us all for dialling the wrong numbers for the school. I finally finished 11th in my class (or thereabouts) out of a class of around 90. My tutor became God, my mother convinced herself that her son could study Science (a story for another day), that her husband's genes had been overpowered by hers, and never asked me to study again.

Today, nearly ten years later, I am faced with a huge dilemma when anyone asks me whether they should send their child for tuition during the holidays. Since I am probably the only teacher who went to a tuition centre and knows how it feels to go from 36.3% to 79% in a month and a half, I am sorely tempted to say yes. School is for fun – theatre and sports – who cares about class?

But then I look around me and realize that no teacher will ever tell a student to vomit the textbook out in an exam. No teacher will ever tell a student that the Holocaust is just a question that comes for four marks and must be written in 'upto 150 words' with the words Hitler, Jews, concentration camps and Auschwitz underlined. No teacher will ever tell a student that Galileo's blindness is irrelevant. No teacher will ever tell a student that it is unimportant that Othello killed Desdemona because he loved her with a passion that he could not control. And then I look at the parents and their child (who is looking at me so helplessly and, like me, cannot wait for this day to be over), and say very confidently, "Have a little faith. Do you think that we (their son gets included in this, much against his will to be held accountable for anything) will let you down?"

And as we head for that hated time of the year, mid-May, I silently thank everyone for the faith they have shown. In their children. And in me.

JEDSpeak

Bharat Ganju recalls his participation in the Inter-House Junior English Debate – 2006

It was 4:15 in the evening on April 30, 2006. Four House teams had arrived at the Kilachand Library. The team

from Hyderabad House was absent. Six topics were given to us by DEB, four of which were vetoed and out of the other two, a toss of the coin decided which one was to be discarded. The motion for the debate read: "High competition spells doom for the sporting spirit." The teams were now to prepare their debates and the team members had to decide which stand they were going to take. The teams then retired to different corners of the library and utilized its resources to the fullest. Over the next two hours, the participants undertook the strenuous task of writing a perfect debate which would, ideally, break all the arguments of the opposition. They walked around with sweating foreheads and trembling legs. Their nervousness could be gauged by their body language.

At 6:15, everyone moved to the AV Room. The judges for the evening were PCH, NRK and STB, while the chairperson for the debate was Saurav Sethia, ex-secretary of the Junior English Debating Society. The debate was to be held in the Oxford format with a three minute debate and one minute rebuttal. The debaters presented substantial points. The standard of debating last year at this competition may have been higher, but expectations were met this year too. All the speakers spoke with a lot of zeal and passion. Their animated debates won the hearts of the audience and of the judges. The H House team finally arrived and did well on short notice. They were given only fifteen minutes to prepare. Although the confidence of the team might have been low, their points were persuasive and the courage they displayed was greatly appreciated. Finally, the eagerly-awaited results were announced. Jaipur House emerged victorious and I was adjudged the Best Speaker of the debate while Subhro Jyoti Ganguly was awarded the Most Promising Speaker of the debate. A learning experience, indeed!

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Letters to the Editor

The following is an excerpt from a letter written in appreciation of Debashish Chakrabarty's (DEB) article on plagiarism in the April 22nd issue

I read with amusement and a certain degree of concern your excellent article in the April 22nd issue of the Weekly.

As you have rightly pointed out, the crying need of the hour is to introspect our respective roles in leading upto the present situation, unpleasant though it is.

We, as parents, are equally to blame for creating this hype about marks and grades (and all associated forms of evaluation) as the ultimate yardstick of a student's performance. Agreed, at a macro level, one does need a standard formula to assess the academic worth of a pupil, but that remains only ONE aspect of the complete picture. The development of the student has to be seen from a holistic perspective, the ultimate goal being to produce a well-rounded personality, polishing the innate attributes to a gem-like quality that projects the optimum potential of the person.

In the haloed context of the Doon School, the issue assumes greater significance as we move towards the IB Certification. I am reminded of another thought-provoking front-page article some time ago in the Weekly, by none other than the Dy.HM, Mr. Philip Burrett, deliberating on whether we were indeed ready in the true spirit for the IB. Apart from other infrastructural requirements for the IB, which the school is naturally taking care of, it is to be seen whether the general ambience (read mindset of the students) is indeed in a state of readiness. A lot of ground needs to be covered, considering the IB places a high premium on honesty in terms of assignments etc. In the backdrop of the ugly controversy of plagiarism, you have raised some very pertinent questions in your article. Please accept my compliments for the well-written article. In today's scenario, there are not many role models for the confused adolescents under constant pressure to perform. On a campus like Doon, the teachers are under constant scrutiny 24X7, being evaluated more by their actions than by hollow words. There are only a few who actually lead by example, and believe me, the boys worship them as icons. The younger generation has a far greater sensitivity than what we credit them with...it's more often a collective failure on our part to lead them up the right path with the strength of

I do hope the debate you have tried to ignite through your article would be carried to its logical end.

(Udita Chowdhary, Parent)

Creative Kudos

Please allow me to express to Naveed through the columns of the Weekly, my very deep sense of appreciation for his short story 'A Greenish Fate' which appeared in the Saturday, April 15 issue.

I remember, in my days, Mr. S P Sahi, who was our English teacher, laid considerable stress on the art and quality of writing. Short stories and essays were always his favourites and I remember how keen we were to write in those days. Although I was nowhere near the Deelip Surves, Mani Shankar Aiyers, Swaminathans, Deepak Lals and so many others, yet, I never gave up trying. Today while reading Naveed's article, I am very happy to learn that the same practice, albeit in different times and ways, continues at the old alma mater.

If the Editorial Board agrees and the Headmaster permits, I am willing to offer a trophy in the name of my parents for the best short story written each term.

(Ashim Kumar Mukherjee, ex-44 T '58)

Nature's Bounty Shashank Peshawaria (C form)

*Nature is an oasis
A fertile spot, where
Fresh water flows, and majestic palm trees grow.
It has its own depth
When you seek for it,
You hear incantations,
In its fresh breath.*

*It has its own magic,
Rustling dry leaves, swaying trees,
Snow-capped mountains,
Flower-strewn valleys.
The piercing rays of sunlight,
Dance off the flowing water,
Taking you into an unknown world of colours and
shades.*

*The cycle of seasons,
The animal kingdom,
And mankind alike,
All bow before Nature's might.
It nurtures your heart and soul,
Awakening the far reaches of your mind.
In abstract gestures it reveals
The meaning of life.
Treat Nature like a good friend,
Or it will give all life, an abrupt end.*

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