



Established in 1936

The Doon School WEEKLY



Saturday September 2, 2006 • Issue No. 2126

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American Desi

Samaay Mangalgiri recounts his exchange trip to Deerfield Academy, USA

The magnificent gates of Deerfield Academy opened and this time, especially for me! There was this sinking feeling of expectation in my stomach coupled with a foreboding that made me even more eager to discover what lay ahead of me. I entered with the vice-president of the school in his car and was told by him, "Be worthy of your heritage". That was also the school motto. There were so many questions in my mind, but the one that pervaded my mind throughout my journey to the school was whether or not I would be able to 'fit in'. This question was immediately answered as I was greeted by the congenial atmosphere of the school. I made many friends and was inclined to think that they counted me among their friends too.

The first few days, as is the general case, were very exciting, and I was enthusiastically trying to engage myself in everything possible. I was lodged with the Upperclassmen of the school, while my classes were with the Lowerclassmen. This, much to my delight, meant that I could interact with both the Upper and the Lowerclassmen, which I did with some keenness, if I may say so, and they returned the favour. At first I was incredulous at being able to adapt so easily. There is no racial discrimination and the students are very amiable and obliging. One of the students even took me to her farmhouse on a holiday, where all of us had lunch and enjoyed the outing immensely.

I was in the varsity(school team) track and field and achieved positions in all the events I took part in, including the high jump. It was disappointing to know that the basketball season was not on at the time I was in school, as I was looking forward to play a lot of basketball in the land of Madison Square Garden. Yet, I represented Deerfield in a few friendly matches with other schools, and, it has to be said, the standard of basketball in Deerfield is much higher than ours. Though each pass made and every three pointer was applauded, the mistimed shots and fouls were not booed. The sportsman spirit was commendable.

The education system at Deerfield is very different

from that of Doon's. They have wireless internet facility throughout the campus, and most of our assignments were done on laptops. Internet facility was thus available to us 24/7, with marginal restrictions and firewalls in place. The student-teacher relationship is strong, as in Doon, but their education system is more research-oriented as compared to the ICSE curriculum. This feature of their learning particularly grabbed my attention and I was quite impressed at their ability to think, and think fast at that.

The most memorable evening of my stay at Deerfield was the prom night. The prom night is restricted to the twelfth graders; however, there are about



ten special invitees who could also attend the prom. I was one of those invited, and it is impossible to describe to you the kind of elation I felt as I donned a black tuxedo for the first time. Although I loathed formal occasions before this, it was a different feeling that cannot be expressed through mere words.

You just have to feel it to know it! No 'stag entries' were allowed to the prom, so I had to find myself a date for the night. And I am proud to confess that I had a Spanish date for the night, who accepted my request graciously. The atmosphere was so formal yet so enjoyable that it left me enchanted.

And as the day to bid adieu dawned, I felt like I couldn't give up the life I was living. It was an experience that taught me a different culture altogether. It taught me how it can be so easy to live with others, if you really want to. But most of all, it changed the way I looked at Americans and the somewhat biased opinion that I had of Americans had been subject to an entire transformation. I must thank Mr Chalasani for making this trip possible. It truly was an eye-opener of an experience. To all my friends I was forced to leave behind in the US of A: I enjoyed every minute of it. And if I had a chance to return to those times in Deerfield, I surely would. With *senti* farewells I left the land of America...

REGULARS

CLEAN SWEEP

The school badminton team played a friendly fixture with **Pestle Weed College** on August 28. In the junior section, the school played five matches, winning all with a points tally of 105-57. In the senior section, the school won all its matches with a points tally of 105-50.

Well done!

SPLASH!

The school was represented by Aditi Joshi in the **Council Schools' Swimming Competition** for girls on August 25 and 26. She bagged a position in all three events that she participated in, winning a bronze in the 50m freestyle, silver in the 25m freestyle and gold in the 25m breaststroke event.

Congratulations!

SOCCER UPDATE

So far in the **Council Schools' Soccer Tournament** the school has drawn with Marshall School (3-3) and won against Carman School (2-0). Well played and keep it up!

// Unquotable Quotes //

Glass is transparent, so air will come through it.

Suryavir Madhav, Newton in-the-making.

Detention is better than cure.

SSM gets it right.

Pass your mouth-wala deo.

Jaspreet Singh needs to freshen his breath.

Bhutan is the capital of Nepal.

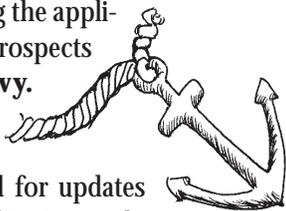
Chirag Nangia, geographically challenged.

CAREER CALL

The careers notice board will be posting information regarding the application process and job prospects in the **Merchant Navy**.

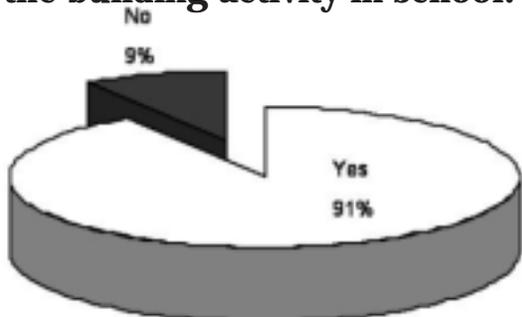
Would-be sailors, cruise by the board!

Also, check the board for updates on career talks to be held in September.



Opinion Poll

Do you feel inconvenienced by the building activity in school?



Next Week's Question: Do you think the singing of 'Vande Mataram' in schools on September 7 should be compulsory?

Making Music

Shaurya Kuthiala reports on the band workshop conducted by Mr. Deepak Castellino

"Music is all about working hard. It's not enough to have an inborn talent for music; you have to practise, practise and practise." So says Mihir Misra, the school Western band leader. Last week Mr. Deepak Castellino, a professional Delhi-based musician, conducted a workshop for three days with boys of the House bands. The workshop was held from August 25-27.

Mr. Castellino helped us get started and developed the songs chosen by the boys. Music is never easy, but Mr. Castellino reduced the amount that we had to sweat. He would take three or four Houses in succession and work with them. Gaurav Sood, the Hyderabad House Western band leader, said that the workshop "helped us to explore our musical avenues further." Indeed, many were delighted with the help that they received from Mr. Castellino. He would take each song apart, strand by strand, and then help us put it together again, which made us understand what made it 'tick' (or click!). Mr. Castellino and PCH also helped the pianists rehearse their parts. With expert timing, he helped the vocalists come into the picture when it was just right.

The singers also felt satisfied with the beautiful blend of harmonies that Mr. Castellino brought into the songs. Vaibhav Bansal, the music captain of Kashmir House, commented in admiration, "Mr. Castellino is a true connoisseur of music." Mansher Dhillon also shared the same opinion when he said, "Mr. Castellino brings out the inner musician in you."

A music workshop is not easy to conduct, especially when many different groups with different genres of songs are to be worked with. I agree with Mihir that music is all about working hard and practising. It is also not enough to just practise, but to give your best while practising. The boys had started working on their songs earlier and covered quite a lot of ground with Mr. Castellino. Salil Gupta remarked that the workshop was more like a "crash course in music." Modulations, bridges, riffs, all fell neatly into place. Music is an art, but there's a lot of scientific precision involved as well.

Throughout the sessions, one could see the lines of concentration running across a guitarist's forehead, the steady fingers of the pianists, the solid rhythm of the drummer and one could also hear the (finally!) melodious voices of the vocalists.

Harsh Mall, Kashmir House's ace pianist and drummer said, "He taught us how to employ our resources to the hilt. Often, one feels a song is difficult to perform at an amateur level, but the workshop helped me realize that recognizing musical elements and harnessing them to available resources really does work." This workshop lived up to its expectations as the bands enjoyed working with Mr. Castellino. Vivaan Shah, the Tata House music captain, made an insightful comment when he said, "the workshop was a sorting-out experience".

The workshop was a success and the bands now have a solid base for their songs. Rohanjit Chaudhry, the leader of the Jaipur House Western band, enthusiastically called this workshop "an amazing experience that made great songs even better." I think his opinion sums up all that the others had to say.

One from the Album

Chinmay Sharma

Yesterday, while cleaning the attic, I came across a faded yellow photograph of our joint family. I was still a baby then, cradled in my mother's arms, swaddled in bundles of clothing to keep me warm in winter. It was a typical family photograph, taken in black and white. My extended family, the hosts of uncles, aunts and cousins were there, as if jostling for a place in the photograph, beaming up at me. The sight of them stirred up a storm of memories and I sat there in the attic adrift in remembrance.

Where should I start from? Which memory should I pick up? The one where I fell down while playing, skinned my knee and caused havoc in the household? Or when I brought home an 'untouchable' and caused even greater chaos? I'll start, I guess, from the earliest memories that I have of childhood, writing gibberish in expensive diaries, getting a treat of a candy from my favourite uncle and then lying down at night and slowly drifting off to sleep with grandmother crooning in my ears. She sits there, in the photograph, matriarch of the family, regal in her silk sari, queen of her tribe.

Then, should I move on to my first trip to school, clutching my tiffin box in one hand and mother's sari in the other? The nausea that swamped me when I saw my mother turn her back and leave the school grounds. The relief that overwhelmed me when I saw her coming through the gates, smiling. She stands in the photograph, looking harassed, but nonetheless smiling brightly, proud of her motherhood.

Then should I move on to my adolescence, going to a boarding school to study? The excitement of my relatives, palpable in the palatial building, that their child was going to a boarding school. And then the tears of parting at the school gate; mine, mother had not come. She feared that she would make a fool of us by crying. I still remember my father, blinking sternly from behind his glasses, telling me to stop crying, be a man, and to grow up. The family retainer placed my luggage in my allotted room. He too stands in the photograph with a frown, the only one not smiling.

Then, should I move on to my college years, abroad, in the arms of a foreign country, while my joint family disintegrated after my venerable grandmother's death? My father, with his frown and spectacles, and my mother moving to a new house. And then my mother moving out, out of our lives forever.

I never went back to father, holding his frown, his spectacles, him, responsible for my mother's death. I got the photo by courier the day after father passed away. And I kept it in my attic, to be forgotten. But it resurfaced again yesterday and I learnt that some things can never be forgotten...that memory condemns us to pick perpetually at the dust-heap of the past.

Too Hot To Handle

Naman Goel muses on striking a balance

"With great power, comes great responsibility." Perhaps we have all heard this famous dialogue from the movie *Spiderman*. At the first instance, it seems to be just another dialogue, meant to create a moment in the plot of the movie. But it is one dialogue that relays more than a thousand words. This dialogue transforms Peter Parker into Spiderman. And what we fail to understand is that this dialogue is relevant not only to super powers, but to more modest human powers as well.

Power and responsibility are like two sides of a coin. Everybody wants power but nobody is ready to handle the responsibility that comes along with it. The Prime Minister, for example is the most powerful man in the country but he also has to bear the burden of responsibility of the entire nation. Such a burden is not for the weak-shouldered. It is also because of this reason that, contrary to common belief, power does not bring happiness. The Prime Minister, even with all his powers, is always tense about his responsibilities, and thus, can never be truly relaxed and happy.

We join the school in our D form or in some cases our C form, and all the way to the end of our S form, we live in envy of the Scs. Everybody wants their powers and privileges. We all want the freedom to wear white trousers for classes, give change-in-breaks, lead the School and the House, and so on. But what we don't realize is that the responsibility that comes along with it is a huge burden. It is only in the Sc form that you understand the true meaning of responsibility. It is only because of some of the Scs, whom I greatly respect, that I

know what it means to be responsible.

Every Dosco has the ambition to become the School Captain, or at least the House Captain, but not everyone has the capability to handle the responsibility. Whenever somebody comes late for meals, it is the prefects who are held responsible. When boys make noise late at night, it is the House Captain and the prefects who face the music.

In our D form, we can lie around the entire day, and do nothing much. But in the Sc form, there are so many pressures from all directions that it can be hard to handle. I agree that the Scs have immense power and authority, but they have no one to guide them, support them, and correct them. It is now their responsibility to guide, support and correct others. The powers they get are mere tools to help them carry out their duties.

On the road of school life, you travel your way from D form to Sc form, and there are infinite paths to make your journey. Either you can be hungry for power, bend the rules and take shortcuts, or you can be responsible and make the most of your journey and let the powers come to you. It is only at the end of the path that you realize it is not the destination, but the journey that counts. At the end of the road you'll rue every shortcut you took, and regret missing the most wonderful parts of the trip.

If you really long for great super powers to climb walls and swing on webs, you have to learn to be responsible for the world around you first!

Service in Scotland

Rohit Khandelwal reports on his RSIS trip



It all started on the night of June 21, when a group of three Doscocs – Ankit Durga, Anant Johri and I, met up at Delhi airport. After our parents saw us off, in no time we were through with the security check and the immigration part. An hour or so later, while boarding the British Airways flight, I could sense all the excitement and also the various problems that we were going to deal with on this trip (no master was escorting us). We were served our meal and then I dozed off, while Ankit and Anant watched the movie *Garam Masala*.

The next time I opened my eyes, our flight had landed at Heathrow airport. The sleep had refreshed me. About two to three hours later, after exploring the duty-free shops (and also getting lost once), we found our way to the connecting flight to Edinburgh.

What was pretty interesting was the number of Indians on the flight, which made us feel quite at home. On arriving in Edinburgh, we were received by Al, one of the co-instructors, and also by some students from schools of Appleby, St. Stithian's, Deerfield and Lakefield.

After a road trip of a couple of hours, we reached Murton. On meeting another set of students, we had a brief introductory session about the plan for the project. We were also made aware of the routine and the tasks which we had to do. After that, we pitched our tents and called it a day.

The project began on the next day. The first three days turned out to be exhausting, as we worked in trenches and dug up tons of wet soil. In these three days, we built a couple of barbecue areas, a path and also some garden benches. Somehow, we survived every day's work. But it was the shower system that made me unhappy. We were allowed to take a bath only every alternate day, and we did so across the road in the shower blocks of the caravan park.

And then came a long-awaited lighter task, comparatively, that is. Our job for the next ten days included the construction of a wooden bridge over a gully, children's adventure amenities, wooden boxes as homes for sand martins and some more benches. We went on regular walkabouts to local sights such as the Glamis Castle (we were escorted by Lady Strathmore – from the royal family), Caledonian Railways, a ghost walk, the Church of Priory and also, the most frequently visited TESCO (their form of our *Big Bazaar*). All of us also played a lot of football and rugby. We went rabbit-hunting quite a few times, and sometimes had beach barbecues.

Every third night or so, we had dinner hosted by students of a particular nation with the menu consisting of their traditional dishes. I could predict, the Indian night was going to be a flop. We tried making chappatis and naans on their solar cookers. Everything we attempted, turned out to be disastrous. But fortunately, foreigners have little idea of Indian food and so, they really liked it.

On the last night, we attended a Scottish cultural programme, where we danced to Scottish tunes and had haggis – a traditional dish. We also did a Zulu dance, which a South African had taught us. With that, our project came to an end.

The next morning, we left for Edinburgh and after a day's sight-seeing, some of us went off to Glasgow, while the rest of us stayed back and watched the World Cup finals.

The last four days were spent in London, touring almost the whole of Central London. From Big Ben to the London Eye, St. Paul's Church to the cruise down the Thames, everything was amazing. We went for the world premiere of *Superman Returns* and also met Mahendra Singh Dhoni at the airport. Although everything was expensive, it was money well spent. On July 14, our trip came to an end and on the return trip, I began recalling all the incidents, small and big, that had made my experience so worthwhile.

I may have stretched this a bit, but truly speaking, our Round Square International Service was an unforgettable experience and I regret having doubted my participation in it in the beginning. We got a lot of exposure out of it and learnt how to deal with many problems. Moreover, we had a lot of fun and made many friends from all over the world. Living amidst nature was a valuable lesson, and the interaction with different cultures was also educational. The memories I have are going to remain with me for a long time to come.

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

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