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Goodbye and Good Luck

The Doon School Weekly interviews *Nargish Khambatta* and *Himmat Dhillon*, teachers who will be leaving us at the end of the term



The Doon School Weekly (DSW): When you joined School, did it ever occur to you that you would be leaving, someday?

Nargish Khambatta (NRK): Obviously. But I never thought about it for the first couple of years at least. Honestly, I would have liked to have retired from here. This is the longest job I've kept: six years! No other job managed to hold my interest this long.

Himmat Dhillon (HMD): It never occurred to me that I would be leaving. There was so much to take in here, and I took it all like a sponge. I wasn't worried about the next stage. I was engaged with everything. Now that I am on the verge of leaving, I feel that it is surreal. I have no reason to leave; it's just something I am doing. If someone would ask me when I was leaving, I'd say November 29 of some other year. It still hasn't struck me that I am leaving.

DSW: What is your most precious memory of Doon?

NRK: I don't have any one precious memory. There are many. There are moments during midterms, in classrooms, on the games' fields, watching Armand perform in the Rose Bowl; many moments associated with the *Yearbook* and with my tutorial groups. Once, when I was a tutor with H House and made Anindya, Batra, Keshav, Abhimanyu and gang read a few pages of Orwell's *Animal Farm* and discuss it, I was in a hurry to attend a meeting for 'Chucks' and told them that I had put the food on the table and to serve themselves. I still remember the tone of Andy's voice when he said to me, "It's not always about the food, ma'am!"

HMD: I remember being in the House at 1 a.m.

and just being there, knowing that I could help if anybody needed me and knowing that I'd be there, hundred percent. There were boys who needed to be rushed to the hospital, and I was there to help. The time I cherished the most was when I was a Housemaster. In my opinion, the real life in School starts after lunch. It's more than in the classroom.

DSW: After you leave, what do you want to be remembered as?

NRK: I want to be remembered as a teacher who always had time for the boys.

HMD: I want to be remembered as someone who tried to be fair, both inside class and outside it. I was wrong sometimes, but I put value to the fairness. We all have our biases, but I always tried to be fair. I made sure someone got what he deserved. The most deserving person got the authority. Any punishment I gave wasn't because I was vindictive, but because the guy deserved it. Also, I tried to help, no matter what.

DSW: What are your plans for the future? Will you return to Doon someday?

NRK: I can tell you that people are already betting that in six months, or maybe a year, I'll be back! But there's a time to be in a place, and I guess that time is over. I may not come back to work, but I will definitely come back to meet friends, or on Founder's or midterms. Of course, this wasn't Utopia. There were awkward moments too, but, overall, it was the most fulfilling job I have kept. But, I must move on now. I don't have any specific plans. The first thing I'm going to do when I go home is put my feet up and do the things I haven't done (but not for too long!). After that, I'll see.

(contd. on page 5)



WRITING ACCOLADES

The following are the results of the various writing contests:

Historical Circle Essay Contest:

1st: Dhruv Velloor and Vishnukaant Pitty

2nd: Saksham Sharda

Bakhle Memorial Essay Prize Test:

1st: Mansher Dhillon

2nd: Dilsher Dhillon

Well done!

IQ

The following are the results of the various **individual quizzes**:

SR Das GK Prize Test:

1st: Armaan Malhotra and Gurbaaz Sidhu

2nd: Jayavardhan Singh

Dipankar Sen Individual Science Quiz:

1st: Pratham Mittal

2nd: Manav Bhatia

Congratulations!

ART HONOURS

Arun Kothari has been awarded **Art Colours**.

Congratulations!

MUSICAL MAESTROS

Abhaas Shah and Rishiraj Neog have been awarded **Music Colours**.

The following are the music awards for the **Best Musician** for this year:

D-form

Shrestha Khaitan

B Form

Akshay Sharan

S Form

Vedant Chandra

Sriyash Kishorepuriya

Well done!

C Form

Yash Mall

A Form

Shatrunjai Rai Dewan

Divyam Aggarwal

Sc Form

Kushagra Aggarwal

RACQUET MASTERS

The following have been awarded **Badminton Colours**:

Half Colours

Archit Kumar

Kudos!

Full Colours

Ayaan Patel

Chetan Kaul

ROCK SHOW

The popular rock band, **Indigo Children**, performed for the entire School in the MPH on Thursday, November 27.

BOXING

The following have been awarded **Boxing Colours**:

Half Colours

Arvind Sharma

Gurbaaz Sidhu

Melvin Michael

Angad Singh

Full Colours

Rajat Gangwar

Himmat Singh

Well done!

ERRATUM

In Issue No. 2205 dated November 22, it was erroneously reported in the *Weekly* that Rajat Gangwar had received an RSC in his boxing bout during the Inter-House Competition, while he, in fact, had not. The *Weekly* regrets the error.

Ah, Life...

Nargish Khambatta

Contemplating life...

Pondering our existence,

We are travellers all.

Pausing to reflect...

Where have we come from?

Wither are we going?

Why are we here?

Who are we?

Larger questions spawn little queries,
Guiding us deeper into consciousness,

Into the quiet, inner universe
Devoid of the maddening chaos

Of our existence exteriore,

Until the mind is stilled,

The heartbeats calmed,

And the weary traveller held

In an embrace of ecstasy.

I walk this planet made for me,
Inhaling the intoxicating fragrance of umbra rose

And wild lime,

Drinking in the delightful yellow

Showers of resplendent acacia,

And the delicate pink blossoms of javanica,

Marvelling at the regal gulmohur

Ablaze with glorious triumph.

From dull, mute earth tones

A profusion of colour bursts forth

To herald the arrival of life...

Ah, life!

Contemplating life...

Sorrow

Shashank Peshawaria

What shall I write on?

What now should I compose?

I shall write poetry?

Or shall I pen prose?

Words don't seem to flow at all.

No magic conjures in my head.

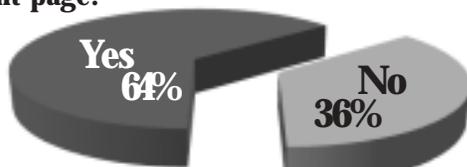
In this distressful chaos,

The writer in me seems dead.



Opinion Poll

Did you like the new design of the *Weekly's* front page?



(310 members of the school community were polled)
(Note: As the design has proven popular, the *Weekly* will be using it in the forthcoming issues.)

I Shall Wear the Bottoms of My Trousers Rolled...*

Saurav Sethia reflects on his six years spent in School

*Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.*

– Sara Teasdale, 'Let it be Forgotten'

Six years in School have passed and I can only marvel at life's brevity.

In D form, the thought of spending six years here invariably evoked the image of a bottomless abyss, or a dilapidated commode-partition. Both are, I think, statements of unspeakable hopelessness. In my junior forms, I dreaded coming back to School after the holidays – there was the occasional senior-worry, the thought of the workload that would inevitably pile up, and the disgruntled look of vinegary masters who seized every opportunity to play hardball with us. All this in the name of an 'all-round education'. I felt somehow unprepared to take it. It is indeed ironic that while I was, at first, homesick for home, it has been replaced, so unnoticeably, with a backward look at, and yearning for, life in School. I think they are called withdrawal symptoms: the vague anxiety one experiences as we draw closer and closer still, to the beginning of the end.

The beginning of the end: so ominous, like a naked bulb casting thin strips of light that slant across a pallid, grey floor.

In time, I, and most of my formmates too, I reckon, got used to School. Yellow cards and laurel wreaths cried out, like unfriendly votives, who we were. This was B form and the formmate who got the least 'favours' was the pussy, a time when we had begun carving out a niche for ourselves. Already, we had started planning sneak attacks (in vain) on some particularly nasty Sc Leaver. We were growing into School and School was slowly growing into us.

Come A form and our playful cheeriness vanished, like the ghosts of our past. ICSE disciplined us in a way and gave us a sense of direction, a taste of the importance of academic success. We had become more and more childish and less and less childlike. We coveted honour boards and longed to leave our names etched in history for years and years to come. It strikes me as being naïve now, but it was delightful then, to consider how we would immortalize ourselves. Ignoring all the lost, nondescript achievements of our lives, it gave us, I think, an odd pleasure in thinking that our names would be cared for, would remain ineffaceable for years, if fate so decreed, in a silent, dignified corner of School. But of course, the School, as a physical entity at least, will not last forever. It too will crumble and decay and our names will also turn to powder (the acid in the paint will gnaw at the wood), but these were considerations much beyond us in A form.

In S form, we were hopeful and starry-eyed. Yoking sycophancy and rashness with self-control became important. It was indicative of the kind of person you were. What others thought of us mattered more. We were intimidated by the Headmaster, whose presence compelled us to talk in hushed tones (that was sycophancy) and spoke with brazen boldness and uncalculated contempt to other masters (that was rashness). We actually had something of a superficial existence which we carried on for the rest of our school life. It is one of those things you develop with time.

I had always thought that I was going to be in School forever, and then Sc form happened. A seemingly, long year stretched ahead of us, a year of bearing endless responsibilities – responsibilities to our parents (of securing a prosperous future), to the School (of being an exemplary batch), to the juniors (of setting an example). It went away like the blinding instance of a flash. And we recalled moments of trial and of triumph, we remembered friends and people, and came to acknowledge that there were teachers who inspired us. With a heavy heart we imagined the day when it was all slated to be over.

We had evolved, as one of our School Captains eloquently put it, from doing changes-in-break, to dodging them and finally to dispensing them. Really, the transmutation of a Dosco can be summarized in just those words.

Now, as the time comes for me to walk out through the gates I have a profound urge to ask of Doon what Elizabeth, Lady Chandos, asked of Francis Bacon (in one of her letters): "Drowning, we write out of our separate fates. Save us."

How did these years come to pass? There is, in my mind, a panorama of past events unreeling to make something of a motion picture. How will I remember Doon? Not with nostalgia or even reverence. "During the twenty years of Odysseus' absence, the people of Ithaca retained many recollections of him but never felt nostalgia for him. Whereas Odysseus did suffer nostalgia, and remembered almost nothing." – Milan Kundera, *Ignorance*. Nostalgia brings with it a feeling of lonely hollowness. So profound is this feeling that, in nostalgia, we are aware of nothing more than our own suffering evoked by the absence of a distant entity in our life; an entity that we have lost and, more so, because we know of its loss. Our recollections are, therefore, blurred and we remember little of the past: such is nostalgia.

If, and when, I do have any children, I will not bore them to death with elaborate accounts of my adventures (I too have had some adventures!) here. I will remember it as a closed chapter, the most tantalizing chapter, of a book yet to be completed.

(* *I grow old...I grow old.../I shall wear the bottom of my trousers rolled* – The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, **TS Eliot**)

The Interpretation of Murder

by Jed Rubenfeld

Dhruv Velloor

Some murders defy analysis. The tagline accompanying this novel says it all.

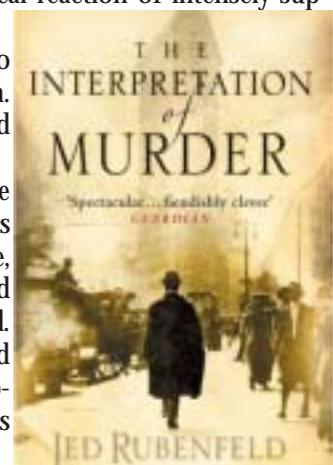
It is quite unjust how thrillers and whodunits are often demoted to the rather dubious category of 'pulp fiction', while their more intellectually-satiating colleagues occupy the sovereignty of being called 'literature'. Here is a novel that has successfully managed to bridge that divide, notable for both, its page-turning ability, as well as the food for thought it provides.

The Interpretation of Murder is Jed Rubenfeld's debut novel. Set in New York in the 1900s, it follows Sigmund Freud's first, and only, visit to the States. The very moment the father of psychoanalysis, accompanied by apprentice Jung, steps off his ship, he is thrust into an intriguing case of murder followed by a similar at-

tempt at one – both of them performed on similarly gorgeous heiresses. His only lead is the survivor of the second attempt, who has been afflicted by amnesia brought on by the psychological reaction of intensely-suppressed memories.

In steps aspiring young psychologist (and protagonist) Dr. Stratham Younger to solve the problem, by trying to help analyse a patient he falls increasingly in love with. However, the killer is still out there, and is ready to tie up *all* the loose ends...and besides; there are lots of people just waiting to bring Freud down.

But it's not *just* the plot that keeps this book on its feet (and us on our toes!), but the detail with which this book has been carried out. Mind you, for a debut novel, this is *immaculate*, bordering on obsessive assiduity. Rubenfeld has brought history back to life, without making a Frankenstein of it. The depiction of New York, with all its colour and social diversity, is nothing but brilliant, ranging from dingy Chinatown to the posh Balmoral. Much of the characterisation, and especially of Freud and Jung, is also based on solid fact (and not the Dan Brown variety), drawing from the various letters they had published. Here is a book that intrigues, interests, informs and indulges at various levels; this is worthy of a place in your bookshelf at the very least, if not of awe.



The Picture of Dorian Gray

by Oscar Wilde

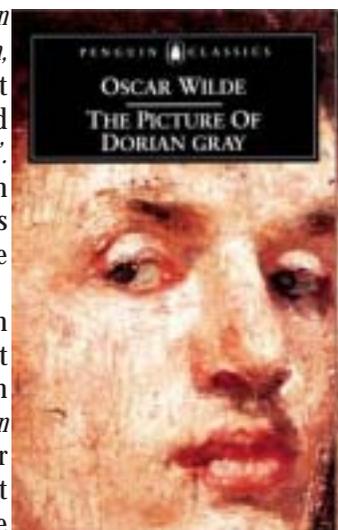
Kanishka Malik

As one of the greatest works in literature by one of the greatest writers of the nineteenth century, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* contains a number of diverse allusions ranging from Caliban of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Venus' love Adonis to the Persian poet Omar. The plot of this book, centres around the lives of nineteenth century Englishmen. In this book, Basil Hallward's portrait of Dorian Gray, regarded as exquisite by Lord Henry, an acquaintance of his, is remarkable because of the way it depicts young Dorian. In the discussion regarding the portrait, Dorian remarks that the art was so perfect that he wishes that the picture become old and he remain young in order to avoid the pain of ageing. This might seem far-fetched, but after a series of events it does seem to come true.

However, as with all wishes, drastic consequences come attached. Dorian Gray's life is severely affected, leaving him in the deepest of regrets for asking for that wish, which in itself is an artistic tragic ending. From his love life with Sibyl Vane to her brother James' attempt to kill him towards the end of the book, the picture goes through a metamorphosis revolving around the condition of his life. The change is so intense that it leaves the painter himself shocked by its state years later. Finally, Dorian Gray, after performing a series of unimaginable acts is left making a decision to "*kill this monstrous soul life*" so that "*he would be at peace*". The whole essence of the final act can be understood when Wilde writes "*As it had killed the painter, so it would/Kill the painter's work, and all that that meant.*"

Besides the plot, if we study its depths, the Wildean witty conversation would be a good source of 'intellectual entertainment'. It gives us an idea of one of the most prolific intellects of the nineteenth century and a glance at a work of true genius. One would be amused when Lord Henry remarks- "*When a woman marries again it is because she detested her first husband. When a man marries again, it is because he adored his first wife. Women try their luck; men risk theirs.*" One might understand this when one reads Wilde's diverse and artistic style of portraying Lord Henry who according to Dorian holds "*wrong, fascinating, poisonous, delightful theories.*". His seductive and witty style of approaching Dorian Gray and other characters can be regarded as highly amusing. However, his ideas are a perfect example of Wilde's genius and through his dialogues one learns the attitudes and mindsets that Wilde wanted to portray.

However, there is a vital message or a subtext underlying all this and one can observe the originality in the thought that gives this novel some of the greatest dialogues in literature. Through the most unexpected (which I must not tell, for even my reading was ruined because of that) ending we learn that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is one of the legendary masterpieces the nineteenth century offers us. Oscar Wilde's sarcasm towards women and marriage, his ability to write with a subtext meaning, his Shakespearean allusions and the whole idea of the story are what make Oscar Wilde a genius. His manner of plotting events and descriptive manner and his overall style of writing ranging from his dialogues, to his character sketches and the way to describe ordeals of every character, give him his own identity in literature just like Shakespeare, Tennyson and every other prolific writer.



Worth the Risk?

Vivek Santayana questions scoping season

At the end of a gruelling year, there are some things I am looking forward to, and there are some things I am not. There are just two words, really to explain it all: that's life. Interestingly, I was asked, in my Exchange interview, how I would feel if I didn't get selected. Isn't it obvious? I'd be miserable, although it would have been momentary. You win some, you lose some. It wouldn't be the end of the world. I wouldn't have lost anything. It's just that I wouldn't have gained something. I'm sure all of us are looking forward to something, and we would be similarly affected if we didn't get what we wanted.

What if you stake everything? Then how would it feel if you lost it all? As Kipling wrote in the poem *If*:

*If you can dream – and not make dreams your master,
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same...
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss...
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!*

But can we never breathe a word of our losses? Can we be so immune to the change in fortune that we will not show the slightest of change?

Someone had told me towards the end of his S form, "I don't want to scope and I don't want to be an authority, for the simple reason that people change when they become something, and I don't want to." (I hope he remembers this. And I hope, after reading my article, he realizes how much his casual remark meant to me.) 'Scoping season' is a tradition in School. The hunt is on for the prefects of tomorrow. The only problem is: it goes too far. The S formers begin practising how to be a prefect by dispensing punishments for something as trivial as *chota hazri*. Everyone is inevitably promoted to the level of his incompetence. Three-quarters of the form scopes, even when their positions are foregone conclusions. I wonder whether there is any need for such a pointless tradition. I have seen people change. We all have. I have lost many friends to their prefectorial counterparts. We all have. Someday, it will be each of our turns to choose what we want to become. We run the risk of becoming the very thing we despise. We run the risk of continuing what we cursed in our junior forms. Is this right?

I am going to ask a simple question. I don't want the answer. Just think about it yourself. What if you get 'shattered'? It will be depressing. How much have you risked? Unfortunately, when you lose, you lose it all. When you win, it is immaterial. There are some things that matter more. For a moment, reflect upon what you have gambled away. It's not too late to make up for what you've lost. If you feel that you have done anything that you shouldn't have, now is the time to correct it. Life, unfortunately, is too complicated and too unfair for many of us. As far as School goes, you must ask yourself this: what do you want to be remembered as when you leave? Above all, ask yourself: what memories am I going to carry with me?

(contd. from page 1)

* * * * *

Maybe, I'll indulge a whim. Doon was incomparable. There was not a dull moment.

HMD: I am going to Jakarta. I'll be running a school there. The reason is because it's the next level of evolution. I'll be happy there, no doubt, but I'm going out of my comfort zone. It's going to be a totally different environment. I'll be challenging myself. Firstly, the language is *Bahasa*, a language I am not at all familiar with. I know my way around here, but I'd have to ask people directions to my own office there. They have a total strength of 2,200 children! As for coming back, there's always a future. I was born in Dehradun, but the longest period I have stayed here, incidentally, was when I worked at Doon. It's going to be like coming home. A former Headmaster had guaranteed me that I'd leave within six months, but I stayed on.

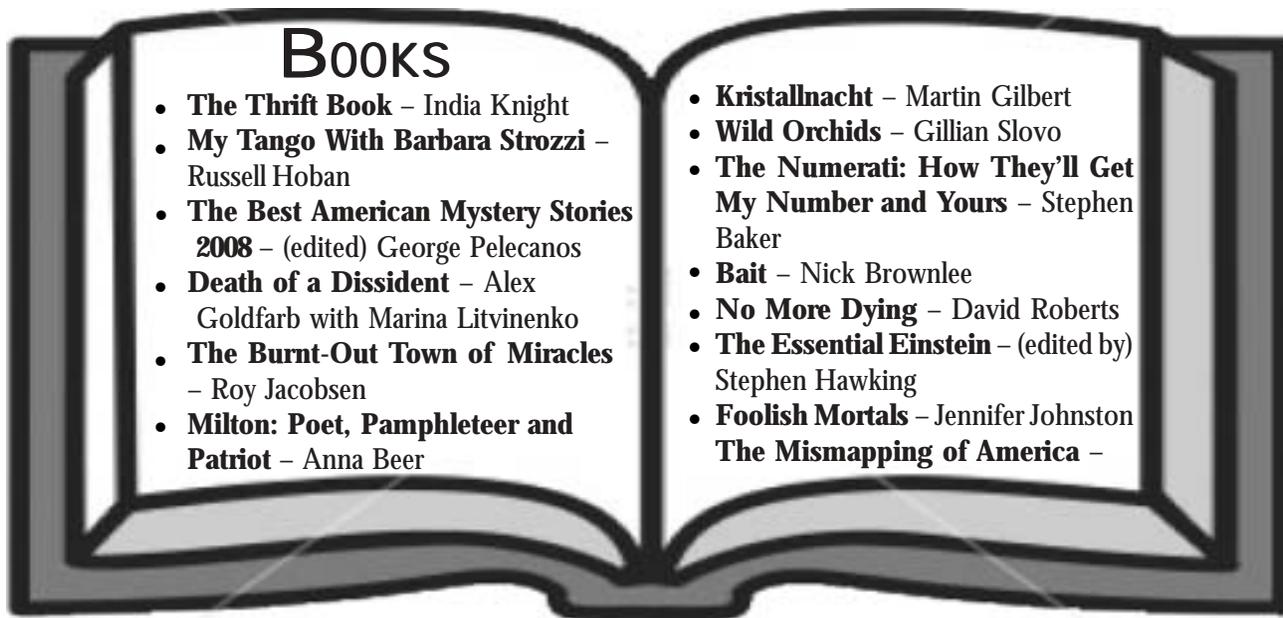
DSW: As you leave, are there any 'pearls of wisdom' you'd like to leave behind?

NRK: The O House Scs say that I, somehow, always manage to slip in a quote or give advice. I don't want to do that now. What I'd like to say to all of you is that the basic, inherent Dosco is a great kid. He loses his way,

sometimes, but he's a great kid. (And, Vivek, you've made me *senti* all through this one month by reminding me that it was the last debate I was judging, last midterm, etc. If you make me *senti* again, I'll give you a *jhaapl*!)

HMD: One thing is that we always give tags to people, especially negative tags. You know, calling someone untrustworthy, what we call a 'hera'. But, the moment you have faith in them, they won't let you down. I used to teach the fourth stream once, and that was when streaming still happened. They were the fourth stream, you know, the pick of the lot. Everyone had YCs and RCs and everyone was on the verge of going home. But I didn't judge them on reputation; I judged them on what they did then. I treated them as humans. Another thing I want to say is this: show up for everything. Keep your doors open in School. Get involved. That is how you'll grow. I have been here a dozen years. But, trust me, a dozen years is nothing.

(The Weekly wishes NRK, HMD and their families the very best for their future. We hope to see them again in Chandbagh.)

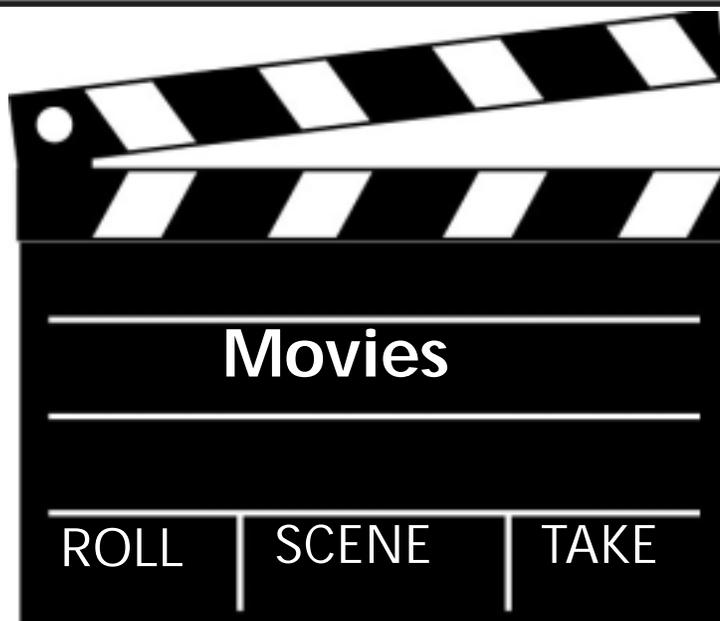


BOOKS

- **The Thrift Book** – India Knight
- **My Tango With Barbara Strozzi** – Russell Hoban
- **The Best American Mystery Stories 2008** – (edited) George Pelecanos
- **Death of a Dissident** – Alex Goldfarb with Marina Litvinenko
- **The Burnt-Out Town of Miracles** – Roy Jacobsen
- **Milton: Poet, Pamphleteer and Patriot** – Anna Beer
- **Kristallnacht** – Martin Gilbert
- **Wild Orchids** – Gillian Slovo
- **The Numerati: How They'll Get My Number and Yours** – Stephen Baker
- **Bait** – Nick Brownlee
- **No More Dying** – David Roberts
- **The Essential Einstein** – (edited by) Stephen Hawking
- **Foolish Mortals** – Jennifer Johnston
- **The Mismapping of America** –

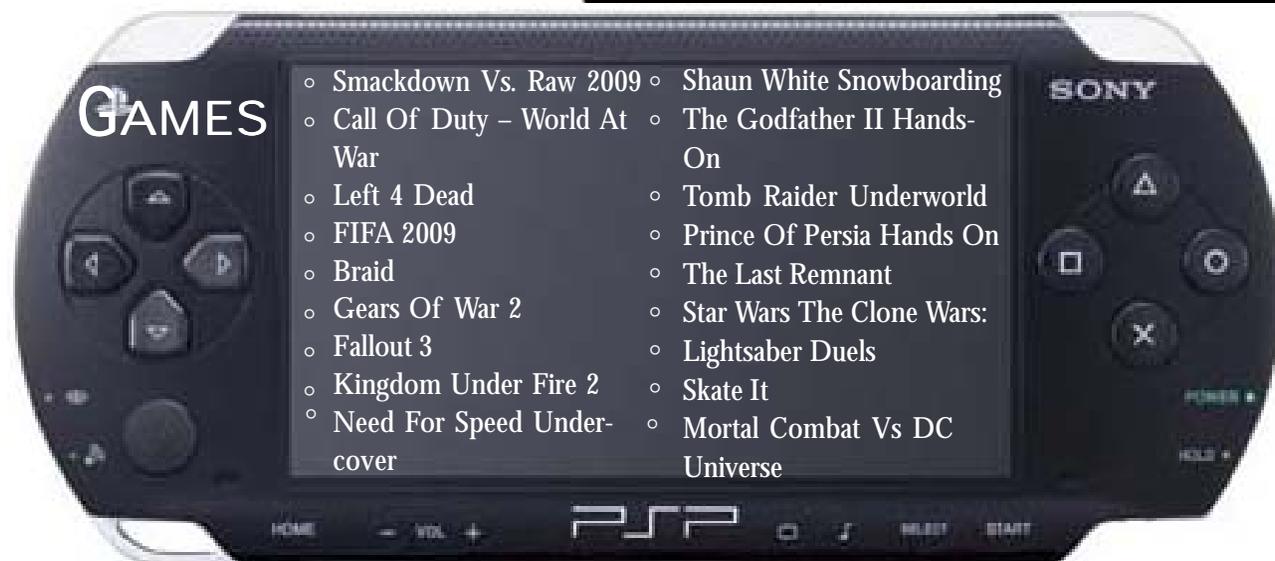
To Do: These Holidays

- Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa
- Cadillac Records
- The Day the Earth Stood Still
- Yes Man
- The Spirit
- Revolutionary Road
- Punisher: Warzone
- The Reader
- Seven Pounds
- Grand Torino
- The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
- Bedtime Stories
- Frost/Nixon
- Dostana
- Quantum of Solace
- How to Lose Friends and Alienate People
- Dominos
- The Bucket List



Movies

ROLL | SCENE | TAKE



GAMES

- Smackdown Vs. Raw 2009
- Call Of Duty – World At War
- Left 4 Dead
- FIFA 2009
- Braid
- Gears Of War 2
- Fallout 3
- Kingdom Under Fire 2
- Need For Speed Undercover
- Shaun White Snowboarding
- The Godfather II Hands-On
- Tomb Raider Underworld
- Prince Of Persia Hands On
- The Last Remnant
- Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels
- Skate It
- Mortal Combat Vs DC Universe

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