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The Tragedy of Genius

Omar Chishti *discusses the School's attitude towards academics.*

Over the past five years at Doon, I've seen and felt our form change and develop in a thousand of different ways. The obese turned lean; the anorexic became buff. The awkward became suave as the side parts turned to undercuts. The vegetarians switched diets and the falsettos turned bass. Some of us picked up a sport or two. Time has indeed flown, but this isn't yet a farewell piece full of these nostalgic nothings; there's still a year to go before I leave and it's time to address a problem in Doon's environment which most of us barely acknowledge, leave alone talk about.

Notice how I've not mentioned our development in any cerebral arena over my first few lines. This is not to say we haven't grown leaps and bounds, or not learnt much over these years, but only to establish what went awry with how all of us have grown up here in Chandbagh. To quote an ex-formmate of mine, "In Doon, intelligence is a hindrance. All it leads to is complacency." There is indeed a toxic myth which floats around this campus, an all pervasive idea which infects the minds of Masters and students alike. I'm talking about the idea of 'genius' and what it's come to mean within these walls. Seductive whispers of this idea become apparent from one's entry into Chandbagh, and from my very first day here I've faced a constant pressure to demonstrate the miraculous and embody the ultimate 'ideal' of the Dosco academic achiever: to study the least, yet be the best. This pressure isn't subtle or subdued. It's instead apparent from every little aspect of our daily grind, from the marginalisation of the 'lends' during classes to that of the 'rutts' in the evening. In more innocent times, as someone who was relatively new to the Doon fraternity, I was introduced to these monikers with simple definitions; the 'lends' sat in the first row, while the 'rutts' studied even in the parts of the term where no exams approached within a week long interval. Anxious to fit in, I worked to avoid the tags, which only grow more complicated with time. Before I realised it, I wasn't just an inductee into this system. I was one of its many guardians.

This system is all encompassing. The pattern plays out in a smooth mathematical crescendo, as marks on assessments remain sky high, internals begun to plunge and effort grades begin creeping down. After all, "only 'lends' do the homework". Masters, however, are quick to reassure doubtful parents of their son's continued prodigiousness, while the Main Houses exacerbate the problem. Toy monitors borrow from military jargon and assign labels: between FILO (First-In-Last-Out) to LIFO (Last-In-First-Out), there are no prizes for guessing which end of the scale genius 'should' be found. The sad irony of it all is that it's essentially a caste system for yet another inherited variable none of us have control over. Intelligence, essentially, is static. You get what you have from the generic lottery. Knowledge, on the other hand, is malleable. You can always learn more with a bit of effort. Yet we spend some of the important formative years of our lives full of contempt for those who work to develop what they can, while celebrating those who coast by on what they were born with. "Knowledge our light" is quite a misleading motto with such ground realities.

I admit I've been an arrogant student at times, and perhaps this piece adds a bit to the jigsaw puzzle behind that impression, if you choose to interpret it as a 1000 word public rant on my self-diagnosed illness of tragic genius. It's true, there's no high quite like the one you get after coasting through test after test effortlessly; no bigger boost to the ego than the one after measuring in minutes what others measure in hours. But I regret going down the slippery slope of that delirious addiction, and the truth is only the opposite. This piece wants to establish, once and for all, and especially for all the juniors reading this right now, that genius can't sustainably exist or flourish within these walls if we don't change. How tragic would it be if all promising sportsmen from our school were to be conditioned into believing they could only be 'truly great' if they could put on scintillating displays with no practice? What if we as a community were to dismiss those who spent hours on the field, on the stage, or in any

(Contd. on Page 3)



Regulars

The Secret Service

The following have been appointed as **School Prefects** for the forthcoming year:

School Captain: Divij Mullick

Hyderabad House

House Captain: Vatsal Bora

Prefects: Ajatshatru Singh, Deep Dhandhanian, Archit Bharghava

Jaipur House

House Captain: Keshav Maliah

Prefects: Jehan Jhaveri, Jaideep Gill, Arunav Vaish

Kashmir House

House Captain: Kartik Mohan

Prefects: Ishaan Vaish, Vedant Mehra, Mihir Gupta

Oberoi House

House Captain: Salman Mallick

Prefects: Aditya Shah, Yashvansh Chawla, Rishi Choudhary

Tata House

House Captain: Shikhar Trivedi

Prefects: Harshit Bansal, Rishabh Goel, Sumer Vaidya

We wish them a fruitful tenure!

Around the World in 80 Words

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to begin the repeal process of 'Obamacare'. The United Kingdom's Supreme Court ruled against the Government, stating that any formal exit from the EU would be unconstitutional without prior parliamentary approval. Citizens of Tamil Nadu celebrated after the traditional sport, Jallikattu, was re-legalized by the State Legislature. Serena Williams beat Johanna Konta to enter the semi-finals of the Australian Open. India won all three matches in the ODI cricket series against England.

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."
-Jimi Hendrix

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

Go drink have water.

Aditya Vikram Singh, learn some grammar.

Can I wakes up him now?

Mehraab Singh Pannu, an early bird.

Your parents will be proud on you.

SKR, flocked to at PTMs.

I have made happy everybody.

SDA, makes us laugh.

If we open the window, then the cold weather will come in.

Paras Gupta, chills our ears.

I grew up with them.

Rana Sunjog Singh, outside English class.

It's never been happened before.

Aayush Chowdhry, isn't 'Panglossian'?

I don't want to talk you.

Sai Rajan, neither do we.

What suggesting you are?

Kushagra Kar, bad prospects, Master Yoda.

Obituaries

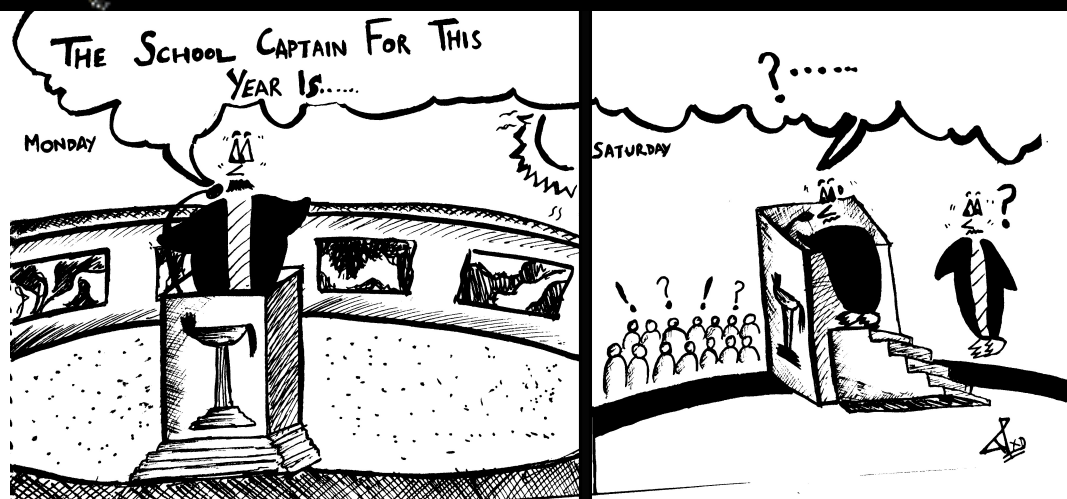
We regret to inform the School community that Mr SP Singh and Mr Sunil John David have passed away.

Mr Singh was the Storekeeper and Catering Supervisor at School's Central Dining Hall from 1973 to 2005, serving for 32 years. He will be sorely missed by all those who shared his company and for his cordial temperament.

Mr David was a master at School from 1981 to 2003, serving for over 22 years. While at School, he taught English and held different multiple offices, including the Housemaster of Jaipur House from 1988 to 1995, and the Dean of Admissions from 1996 to 2003. He will be sorely missed by all those who had the privilege of his company, and will be remembered for the ardour with which he lived.

Dosco Doodle

Assembly Vibes
Pratham Bansal



(Contd. from Page 1)

other non-academic pursuit, as mere ‘rutts’? But we do that, and worse, for that which is the defining element of school: Studies. ‘Once the transcript looks passably decent, go build a CV’ is our actual unsaid motto.

In this manner, it’s only too easy to push all academic achievement into the realm of those with memories on the eidetic spectrum and IQs a few standard deviations above par. It’s this notion, more than any other, which keeps a vast majority of us content with mediocrity in academics. If we were to cast aside these illusionary and irrational auras we bestow on our scholarly heroes, perhaps instead of monopolies on Markers cups we would see more students aspire to reach equivalent academic heights.

“Enough!” comes the automatic response to this piece. Here’s another vandal defacing the *Weekly* with his murky and rather difficult to understand agenda. The truth is that the institution cannot hide behind its extracurricular excellence and shun academic criticism with proudly announced numbers and college placements every year. It’s the environment which counts, all numbers be damned. It’s all too easy to forget what it means to be an academically selective school. Our prowess in myriad spheres is indeed something to celebrate. But not, in this way, at the cost of our academics. It’s excusable that we haven’t won the Afzal Khan for the past decade. Principles of cold statistics come to the rescue: the best sportsmen of Doon are, after all, just that. The best in a school of five hundred. All of us, however, come into school only after a famously gruelling academic culling. We represented some of the best minds that the nation had to offer, as preteens. No one here should have grown up to be satisfied with mediocrity in academics. If we have, it’s only because Doon has taught so many that beating talent in the classrooms with hard work in the toys is not a victory at all.

Enough morbid musings though, because not everything is as dark as I’ve made it seem. These problems begin to fade in our senior most years, as part of the growth I talked about when I started. Whether it’s the run up to college or the intensified assault of more challenging curricula, most of us do come to respect (and practice) academic labour by our last two years in school. I do still play football every single afternoon during exams, but it’s no longer a coerced display of nonchalance to the ‘unfortunates’ stuck in the nearby Kashmir house toys. It’s just because I need a break from studies. And that, perhaps only to me, makes a whole world of difference.



Under the Scanner

Jallikattu | Aryan Bhattacharjee

As you read this piece looking forward to the weekend, a political storm currently rages across Tamil Nadu. Jallikattu, the ancient sport where a crowd attempts to wrestle an aggressive bull let loose in a closed arena, was banned by the Supreme Court in 2016 under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Unsurprisingly, this move was controversial; however, the debate on this matter is a far cry from the presumed ‘tradition pitted against modern rationality’ archetype and needs to be explored.

Currently, popular opinion supports the banning of the sport altogether on humanitarian grounds. It is felt that the harshness inflicted upon the animals is both cruel and inhumane, likened by some to the brutal displays of gladiators in ancient Rome. While Jallikattu doesn’t involve a bull’s death, recent practices in the sport – such as forcing bulls to consume alcohol, forcing chili powder into their eyes or poking them with knives and spears to arouse aggression – for the purpose of modifying the bull’s behavior before crowds are the reasons sought by the ban’s proponents.



Predictably, Tamil Nadu couldn’t disagree more. To preserve a cultural tradition, they have appealed that Jallikattu is actually essential to the preservation of the vanishing species of bulls native to India. The sport, conducted after the harvest festival of Pongal and prior to the mating season, causes certain hormones to be secreted that leads to special breeds of calves rich in A2 protein milk – a type far healthier than the A1 milk we usually consume. Currently, multinational companies hold patents to A2 milk, which is sold at exorbitant prices and, until recently, had to compete with Jallikattu-produced indigenous A2 milk.

In light of these reasons, the Supreme Court revoked its ban conditionally, with several regulations to protect the safety of bulls and maintain a population of A2 producing calves within India. Tamil Nadu’s legislature too, passed a law in this regard. However, the ban has been challenged yet again, with protests turning violent across Chennai. The end to this controversy is expected in a few days with a final Court ruling on the matter. Till then, Tamil Nadu waits eagerly with a burning desire to preserve its tradition.

An Immortal Folly

Aviral Kumar *comments on our perceptions of mortality.*

Mortality: what does it mean? Well, in literal terms, it means being subject to the experience of death; but to us humans, what does it truly embody? Many say it merely means losing one's life, but I beg to differ. The human world consists not only of physical limitations, but extends beyond into our minds, which differ from an animal's due to our ability to reflect, to remember, and to imagine. I believe that upon death, we only 'die' in the flesh, continuing to survive where it matters most – in the memories of those who knew us. Gilgamesh, the protagonist of the world's very first epic (which was named after him) encapsulates this belief. Although the Sumerian King has long left this world, he lives on through his tale. Unfortunately, the average human frankly doesn't care about this concept, for in today's materialistic world, life too has become a currency, with many scrambling to prolong it as much as possible. The result is pathetic: life being measured in 'days left' instead of 'days well spent'; men and women desperate to cling on to existence, even when it is evident that their appointed hour has arrived. This mentality has resulted in death being treated as a tragedy. While I wholeheartedly agree that an early death due to cancer is saddening, and in no way imply that these deaths be treated with indifference, I think that the most common cause of death – old age - occurs naturally and must therefore be treated as nature taking its course. This is also scientifically supported, for the proper functioning of the world requires aged organisms to be replaced by newborn ones. If attempts to fit them all together are made, the results are eventually negative, as evidenced by the overpopulation crisis we are facing now.

Once again, the majority of humanity has decided to ignore this fact, and it is only after our population has increased by five billion in a matter of decades has the world noticed. Yet, in spite of it all, humans continue to prolong their lives with new technologies. As coequal members of the global ecosystem with all other creatures, we must see the folly in this: such actions are unsustainable for the planet.

Before I conclude, I must reiterate that I have no intention of sounding morbid, but feel that our issue with mortality is a huge mistake on our part. There is more to life than just 'living': it is not just a thing to be experienced, but also something to be enjoyed, to be cherished, and to be relinquished at the right moment. The true value of life comes from the fact that it is finite, which makes every natural moment worthy of enjoyment, for as Marcus Aurelius noted: "It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live."

| Poetry |

I See

Aryaman Kakkar

I see the world in a different way,
Imagining tendrils of silver.
They connect me to every being,
And everything that sings 'life'.

This silver is my energy;
My imagination; my causality.
It gives my life pleasure,
A blissful escape from reality.

Reality: what a job!
It really keeps me busy; my escapes.
I think once I find my Gold,
I will savour Eden's grapes.

In this quest, I've realised,
Everything holds paired existence.
But as I embark to embrace two-halves,
I see. I see... my Gold!

I escape reality to avoid the world,
A truly, wretched place,
And seek solace in conceived heaven,
With the warmth of love's embrace.

Skyglow

Nehansh Saxena

3 AM.

The cosmos lay unconquered;
The incandescent crimson clouds
Flickered with the night's fire.
A troposphere of twilight;
Vermillion merged into navy blue.

In three hours the sun would rise,
Paling the sky; disturbing the solace.

The city lights were bright, lustrous.
They glimmered more than their
Contemporaries that hung above
Like a sequined tapestry.
They gave hope.

My weary body against the balcony
Was left to the railing's mercy.
My eyes glistened.
I was one with the skyglow.

Expanding the Electorate

Should D-Form and SC-Form be allowed to vote in the election of the School Captain?

Point

Ishaan Kapoor

It is perfectly normal and human to be wary or sceptical of change. That said, change isn't always a bad thing. While I can understand certain apprehensions in letting "unaware" D-Formers cast a vote or "apathetic" SCs do the same, I don't particularly agree with either. While this may seem a slight stretch, I do believe that each SC carries a sense of responsibility towards an institution that has both housed and groomed him or her through their school life. Even if this is a leap of faith and not everyone is willing to take it, there are plenty of good reasons for giving the D-Form a right to elect his own choice of School Captain.

We grant each form a vote on the premise that they are governed by the laws of the institution and they deserve to have a say in the legislative and executive practice. In the same vein, each D-Former is also governed and punished by the same code of conduct that other "enfranchised" students in the community work along and in turn deserves a say in this legislative measure. The fact that they have not been inducted into the main houses yet may prove beneficial to the vote as for starters it removes any senior imposed bias that may prevail in the houses. Thus rather than fall in the "popular" bandwagon they would cast a vote from the perspective of an objective third party. Moreover, they will be inducted into the main houses shortly after the vote and understand that they are not immune from the consequences of their vote in the haven of the holding house.

Similarly, SCs understand better than the younger student community the implications and requirements of the role of school captain and if at all know the repercussions of falling into the popular bandwagon. Furthermore, much like the unsuspecting D-Former, the SC has seen first hand the conduct of candidates and how they tackled the same situations that the SC may or may not have overcome. This gives the SC the better evaluation matrix for assessing any nominee and predicting his or her conduct should they get the post.

For either party the enfranchisement is a good thing as it is for improving the legitimacy of the election process by involving a spectrum of voters. This in turn not only decreases the effect of any possible "campaigning" but also increases the responsibility on the thus elected school captain towards all member of society, creating both a more inclusive and informed community within school.

Counterpoint

Arjun Singh

When selecting the leader of any community, especially one who is quite influential, the consent of those he will govern ought to be sought, which is done through elections. Such is the case with the School Captancy, where an election is conducted to determine who the to-be-governed student body wishes to lead them.

However, the latest expansion of the School Captain's electorate to outgoing SC-Form students violates the aforementioned principle. This is due to the fact that the outgoing form won't be governed by him, as his duties nominally extend to his own form-mates and junior students. He will neither lead the outgoing SC-Form, nor exercise any authority over them, instead remaining their 'junior', with barely a month having passed after they've relinquished their authority over him – clearly not enough time to shed previous attitudes. The SC-Form is, therefore, neither affected by election's outcome nor under the authority of its winning candidate, which negates their vote in an election that seeks "the consent of the governed". While some may claim that outgoing students can offer perspective on candidates, and hence should vote, it must be noted that adequate knowledge within an electoral system isn't a prerequisite to vote. It's the same reason why adult voters don't have to pass 'Voter Tests' before real-world elections: an assessment of a voter's knowledge is highly arbitrary, and there is no generalized level of 'awareness' to suggest an adult voter's competence. Arguing that a 'good perspective' is a qualification for the SC-Form to vote is thus futile. However, the enfranchisement of 'all' the governed is an unwise move as well, which has been undertaken with D-Form. Akin to the concept of Universal Adult Franchise, just as we adolescents are yet to turn eighteen and begin our independent lives to form an understanding of the world, D-Form is yet to leave the microcosm of their holding houses as independent students and form a comparable understanding of the School. Thus, despite being fully affected by the outcome of the election, the little time D-Form has spent in School allows for their 'awareness' – unlike the SC-Form – to be sufficiently generalized as inadequate in a non-arbitrary manner, showing their ineligibility.

As I conclude, it's important to clarify these Forms aren't excluded from the community. However, when electing the most influential student leader, it would be wise to follow the mature electoral principles observed by democracies worldwide. In such prudence, the School would be wise to reconsider.

The Week Gone By

Omar Chishti

As the other 'Mohammad' who was supposed to write this column has been understandably occupied (enjoying an extended euphoria) this past week, it falls to me to write this Week Gone By. Though it already feels like it's been ages, those of us who could not cook up excuses ranging from the wildly implausible 'grandmother's neighbour's cousin's kindergarten friend's wedding' to the good old 'stomach ache' returned to school last Friday. Aside from a morning SAT, the weekend was quite uneventful (a 'calm before the storm', if you'll excuse the cliché).

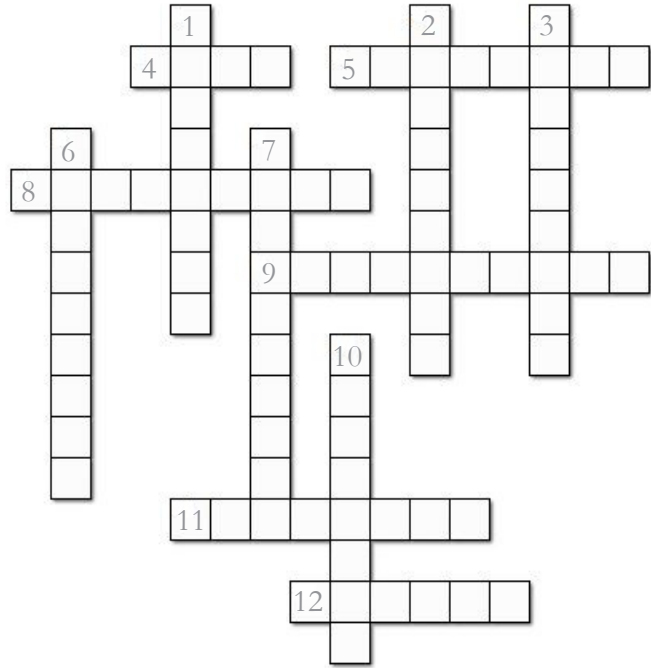
Monday morning dawned bright (habitual pathetic fallacy; it was as grey and cold as any other morning) and spelt the end of all the work, speculation, gossip, hopes and dreams. As an outsider to the whole affair, the most important thing I carried away from the election was the importance of giving any future Doon bound progeny a surname which begins with 'M', with bonus points for goalkeeping or goal scoring skills. With all the anticipation and suspense, one can certainly forgive the Headmaster for skipping the outgoing prefects of a certain house in the hurry to announce their successors. Good luck to the new prefects! It's funny how little the announcement impacted S-Form after the first few hours, when such a long year of friction had led to that moment. The old saying holds true I guess: "all's well that ends well".

Cricket season was kicked off (bowled off?) with the start of practices, and the whites can now be seen on fields for long hours every afternoon.

The ATs and SC-Form face their pre-boards in the bitter cold of the MPH: may God (or at least the masters) have mercy on them. The cancellation of the bread and milk supply to the ATs was met with a fiery protest, which fizzled out when they realised all the powers that be were busy rafting down the Ganges. The NAPU (Non-Appointed-Prefectorial-Unit) and SAPU (Self-Appointed-Prefectorial-Unit) received their call to duty when the actual prefects left for their workshop. The freedom of the past few nights will definitely be missed by junior forms, while the absence of the numerous accompanying masters over the week certainly won't be. Fear not ATs, I've heard from reliable sources that the shivering twenty one who returned yesterday will raise a motion to reschedule the workshop to a season of less ungodly cold for their successors.

Crossword

Vocabulary



Note: All answers in this crossword begin with the letters 'In'.

Across

4. A unit for measuring length.
5. An allusive or oblique remark.
8. A conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning.
9. Certain to happen.
11. A sleep disorder.
12. To formally accuse of or charge with a crime.

Down

1. Existing in something as a characteristic attribute.
2. A general increase in prices and fall in the purchasing value of money.
3. Something which cannot be forgotten.
6. A word for unpleasant weather.
7. A synonym for native.
10. Do something without compassion for suffering.

Answers to This Week's Crossword	
Across	Down
11. Insomnia	7. Indigenous
9. Inevitable	6. Inclement
8. Inference	3. Indelible
5. Innuendo	2. Inflation
4. Inch	1. Inherent
12. Indict	10. Inhumane

Source: <http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/>

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