

Established in 1936

The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot

August 1, 2020 | Issue No. 2576



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An Eye to the Future

Varen Talwar

It has been almost half a year since COVID-19 was termed a global pandemic by the WHO. One would imagine that things would have normalised over the course of the past few months, and that people would have adapted to the new world order by now. However, if there is anything that the past few months have taught us, it is that 'normal' has no meaning. Normal keeps changing, because we all just try to stick to our current states at all times. That is why we groaned when we had to leave School at the start of the pandemic; and it is precisely why we will groan when it is finally time to go back to School now, despite the fact that we had wished for the opposite at the beginning of the lockdown.

Humans are, by nature, creatures of habit. Our adherence to our current surroundings gives us a sense of belonging and normality, and in times like this, when the locus of our existence is constantly shifting from one normal to another, we are all desperately trying to tether ourselves to some aspect of our old being. That is why the School is trying to make remote learning as similar as possible to our actual School experience. We have essay competitions, Inter-House competitions, and activities going on. It is also why the *Weekly* tries to mark Saturdays with the same excitement of getting hold of a *Weekly* that one feels at School.

Perhaps it is this obsessiveness

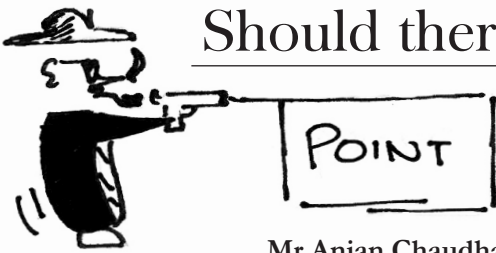
to replicate simpler times that has led to one of the most peculiar and interesting changes in our, or at least my, outlook on life. Earlier, we used to be obsessed with plans for the future: winning this trophy, earning that position, staging this play, or performing that song for the band. We used to be dreamy-eyed planners of the future. However, now, when we are busy struggling to keep the very fabric of our present as close to our memories of the much simpler past, the future takes too much headspace for pondering upon. Mind you, by 'future' I do not mean the horrifying thoughts you might have about your dream college shooting you down, or your grades being dismal. By future, I mean the small things we used to plan for in School – the beloved and hard-fought Inter-House competitions and, more relevant to the current time, Founder's.

People say that we should live in the present, and not worry about the future. I have never been a fan of this philosophy, now more than ever. We are biologically programmed to worry about the future, merely because of our animal drive to make progress in our species' status and fitness. Anyway, 'focusing on the present and forgetting about the future' comes from a point of privilege too high up in the social hierarchy for me to think that it is applicable to me. Of course, I do not mean

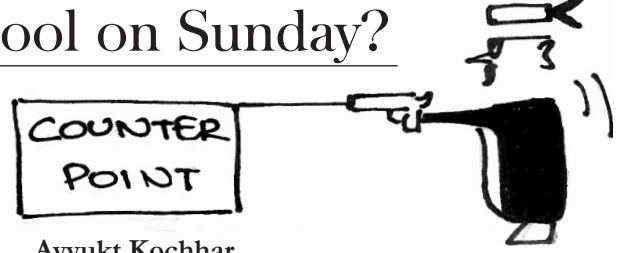
**Our eye to the
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that we should keep worrying about the future. All I am saying is that our eye to the future should always be open, no matter how preoccupied we might seem to be with the present, because the future holds opportunities, while the present only consequences.

It's true that the future can be alarming to think about. However, I feel that, contrary to popular belief, it is also the only thing you can control. Your past is gone, and your present is riddled with the effects of your past. The future, to me, has always been a hopeful, better place – a place full of possibilities. Of course, you have to work in the present, but it is always because of your vision for the future. If you are lost at sea, you hang on because of your dreams about what you will do when you reach land, and not about the sharks encircling you, for sometimes the present is just not good enough.



Mr Anjan Chaudhary



Avyukt Kochhar

Should there be School on Sunday?

Brunch time is now the new school starting time on Sunday. The sumptuous array of food served by Mr. Makhija and his team has changed to a new norm of sitting in front of a digital screen. It was initially hard for me to accept Sunday as the new norm, but slowly as I settled down. I realised that this has been a paradigm shift. So, personal liking or dislike are not important anymore. The online mode of teaching has changed multiple approaches to pedagogy. As a school, which is a miniature version of society, one had to balance the feasibility of synchronous and asynchronous mode and I agree with GYA when he talks about 'substituting' the F2F model with the online one. It has its challenges as in the heart of any interaction is the impact on learning and the SAMR metric is difficult to implement in the first place.

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As a boarding school, we are expected to work on Sundays. Designing a timetable is a herculean task given the plethora of subjects School offers. Several schools will not even go on that road to offer added value. I see Sunday schools as more F2F contact knowing very well that the new learning approach has blended opportunities. Even though we have four schools a day, there are multiple disciplines which could not be incorporated with the right balance that we feel our students should be engaged in. Within this routine there are multiple disciplines that require hands-on experience and therefore one needs more online contact. More online transaction time allows necessary discussion which augments curiosity. Have we compared the current scenarios of other sectors like the banking sector or the online sector to their functioning a few years ago? Could we think of them

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Never have so many phone calls buzzed at the same time as they did upon seeing a bizarre extra column in the timetable. But then again, we are The Doon School, and the need to start a new term with a bang runs in our DNA.

So, why exactly is Sunday supposed to be a rest day? Pardon me, all atheist readers, but religion has a significant role to play in this. In Abrahamic religions, it is believed that God worked six days and rested the seventh day while creating Earth. In Hinduism, it is believed that Sunday is the first day of the week, which is supposed to be reserved for worshipping gods and goddesses. St. Thomas once said, "Without work, it is impossible to have fun." This could easily be reversed: without rest, it is impossible to work effectively. You need a day off to recuperate before tackling a new work-week.

All children, regardless of their school or age, eagerly look forward to Sundays as they get to spend time with their loved ones. One of the few silver linings of the pandemic is that it has made all of us reflect on our lives. It has made us realise that in today's day and age, we have forgotten the most important thing in our lives- cherishing the moments we spend with our loved ones. These Sunday classes prevent us from engaging in this.

That the human brain and body can only work so much before it begins to deteriorate is borne out by many recent studies. For instance, a 2018 research conducted by the Pew Research Centre has concluded that despite the numerous advantages of online learning, the negatives are fast emerging; these include poor attention spans, anxiety, depression and lack of in-person social connections as well as the small number of teens who become addicts and non-functioning adults.

The vast majority of us are overworked and stressed out, teetering on the brink of burnout. Stress is hard on the body, and rest is absolutely essential to productivity. While it is imperative that growing kids like us make 'Work is Worship' our mantra, one should not forget that 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.' The fact that DoscOs are accustomed to getting straight back into the fast life and the action-packed schedule of School cannot serve as a justification for Sunday classes. More than the physical fatigue, it is mental exhaustion that is caused by Sunday classes.

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working on Sundays a few years back? Clearly, the norms have changed. It is important we also accept the new norm and take this as an experiment in the right spirit. I know a counter-argument could be raised questioning the hazards of increased screen time, but the ability to strike a balance between online learning and screen time lies in the hands of every individual.

At the heart of a master are our students and we are cognizant that in a digital platform, one is challenged when it comes to assessing students’ learning. Multiple online platforms have been created and while all of them have their own strengths, they come with their own set of drawbacks. I see the new routine has a little more time for live contact and providing our students that much more extra support. One has to realize that even the new norm of assessment is changing, and hence, one also has to ensure an apt level of preparedness for our students. It is important that we embrace this change with a certain degree of positivity and enthusiasm. Finally, any routine’s success rests on discipline and in a world now where things are changing fast on many grounds, it is a reflection for all of us when we come back to school on how to utilise our Sundays.

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Waking up to laptop screens on Sunday mornings is not ideal and certainly worse than waking up to the Chhota Hazari followed by the popular Sunday brunch. The fact that we cannot watch those late Saturday night football matches and movies with our families is mentally tormenting.

Sundays give us a much-needed break to reflect on our lives and allow us to take a moment to be grateful for what we have. This practice of reflection and being grateful transforms from a daily activity in D-Form (the Common-Quadi meetings) to a Sunday-to-Sunday activity in senior forms. Doscors live their childhood in their D and C Forms, their adolescence in their B and A Forms, and their adulthood in their S and SC forms. It is essential that in adulthood we do not forget the core values that we learn in our childhood, and Sunday classes put us in a situation where we do exactly that. Therefore, I feel that Sunday classes are counterproductive.

This Week in History

1821 C.E.: Peru declares its independence from Spain.

1914 C.E.: Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia, sparking World War I.

1921 C.E.: Insulin is isolated as a pancreatic extract by Canadian scientists Sir Frederick G. Banting and Charles H. Best.

1930 C.E.: Uruguay defeats Argentina to win the first World Cup in football.

1936 C.E.: The Summer Olympics opens in Berlin, and the efforts by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party to demonstrate the superiority of the “Aryan race” are undermined by the success of African-American athletes such as Jesse Owens.

“

All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE WHO?

Who was Alisa Zinov’evna Rosenbaum?

Aarush Saxena: An actress

Udai Dungarpur: An artist

Raghav Periwal: A footballer

Mayank Agarwal: A philosopher

Keshav Tiwari: A writer

Ayn Rand, born **Alisa Zinov’evna Rosenbaum** was a Russian-American **philosopher** and **writer**. She was known for developing ‘**objectivism**’, a philosophical system, and for her two best sellers ‘**The Fountainhead**’ and ‘**Atlas Shrugged**’. She was a Prometheus Award Hall of Fame inductee for her novel ‘Anthem’ in 1987 and co-inaugural inductee for her book ‘Atlas Shrugged’ in 1983.

Around the World in 80 Words

Five French-made Rafale jets landed in the Ambala air base on Wednesday as an addition to the IAF. The Indian Government announced a New Education Policy after 34 years without change. The number of COVID-19 cases in India has crossed 15 lakh. The heads of the world’s biggest tech companies Apple, Amazon, Facebook and Google appeared before Washington lawmakers to face accusations of their being a harmful power. Liverpool FC won the Premier League for the first time after 30 years.

Letter to The Editor

Dear Editor,

This letter is with reference to the Headmaster's interview "At the Head of the Table" in Issue No. 2575 of the *Weekly*. The Headmaster's emphasis on the "bringing sports back" is of concern to us. The idea that "if you have not learnt one sport well, then you are not a public-school boy," we hold, is antithetical to the holistic opportunities that School strives to provide.

The school must be more open and give boys the ability to explore and specialise, to truly develop interests and excel in them, for the preparation in these years, Foot writes, "is of a specialised type".

Fundamentally, we believe that every Dosco deserves the right to mould his time in School doing the activity he chooses to excel in without being bound by restrictions like "learning at least one sport". Such restrictions serve as a tick in just another box of what an ideal "public school boy" should be in order to maintain the balance that exists, perhaps only on paper. While we understand that sports, or any co-curricular activity for that matter, are an integral part of the School's education, being forced to pursue an activity only to conform to a particular idea of the "public school boy" leads to an ultimately shallow experience. And this is exactly what universities abroad have been endorsing for quite some time now: most of the high school students today boast the diverse activities they were involved in, only to later realise that the shocking lack of depth in their involvement.

In the context of the School, we turn to Arthur Foot's foundational essays: Fourteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen. The first two years of D and C form are meant for the boys to explore the activities in the school, i.e. add to the breadth of their involvement. In B form, "a boy should have decided what he means to do with his life". The school must be more open and give boys the ability to explore and specialise, to truly develop interests and excel in them, for the preparation in these years, Foot writes,

"is of a specialised type". To be clear, this applies to sports as well. We think this would help people who are interested to excel more in sport if they didn't have so many other restrictions on them. Our time in school has taught us that since we're given the freedom to explore so late, too many have realised too late what they really want to do, inhibiting their future development.

Historically, an emphasis on sports particularly has led to spill over effects on the flexibility of sports' time. It has been a long-unsaid truth in School that sports time begins whenever the House Sports captain wishes to hold 'House Practices'. The entire house is called onto the field and the ones who are already proficient at the sport play in teams, while the others just sit idle on the side-lines, ultimately deriving little or no learning. The opportunity cost for this standardised practice is too significant to be brushed under the carpet. The fact here is that the pedestalisation of sports contributes to a culture where individuals with other talents don't find the space to express themselves. Old Boys like Sir Anish Kapoor and Vikram Seth have said that they "hated" their time at School due to such a culture. This is no rebuke of physical activity, which is important for the health of the students and sports is a medium of promoting that. But the avenue where learning happens is the time-tabled PE classes, taken by qualified masters who structure the lesson in order to incorporate warm-up and skill development sessions for everyone. A stretching of games time has harmful externalities, with co-curriculars that are relegated to being "Spare Time Activities", and often having to conduct practices late into the night. Thus, all activities besides classes and sports are forced to compromise the toy time. This can be curtailed by a simple attitude shift valuing every activity equally, and not pedestalising anyone.

As we reflect on our time in School, we cannot help but think that the School needs to focus on providing an environment that is conducive to specialised learning and growth, be it in any sphere. In order to be better prepared for life outside these four walls, we need to have an outward looking perspective, and realise that the world does not require more people who spend their time ticking the boxes in a checklist. Rather, DoscOs should be proud of their individuality and uniqueness. To conclude, we hope that School continues to adapt to a modern paradigm, and we welcome Dr Singh into our community.

Yours Sincerely,

Samarth Mehra (Ex 646-T '20) and Karan Sampath (Ex 231-T '20)

A New Platform

Keshaw Singhania *shares his experience of MUNing and debating online.*

Everyone, especially in an institution like ours, has that one activity which can be perceived as an extension of their identity, and that activity took the form of debating for me. I started debating as a timid D-former who was just trying his hand out and paving a path for the journey he had set out on, and since then I have been growing evermore passionate about it. Although the pandemic no longer allows us the pleasure of speaking at the podium (one of the many challenges that this pandemic poses), it has given us the freedom to devote more time to the activity than we could have in School.

Once I returned home, I did not have very high expectations from the break. I could never have imagined preparing for a debate over a WhatsApp call or debating on MixIdea (an online debate site) from behind the comfort of my desk without even being able to see the faces of the people I was interacting with. But it was said quite correctly, 'Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures', and before I could even know it, I was navigating these platforms with ease. Though makeshift arrangements like these don't give us the true satisfaction of a debate, we have had to adapt ourselves to it.

Throughout the period, I participated in three online tournaments, attended around 25 lectures, and spoke in over 10 practice debates, mostly with my batchmates but some with seniors too. Organisations from around the globe have adapted to these circumstances and hosted their tournaments and workshops over

Zoom. This actually allowed us to attend the best of training from around the world which would not have been possible if we were to travel to the locations of these workshops. We had a diverse set of coaches and judges training us, which allowed us to see global issues from an entirely different lens. Internet connectivity would be troubling sometimes, and the lack of physical interactions was an issue, but the experience was great in the end.

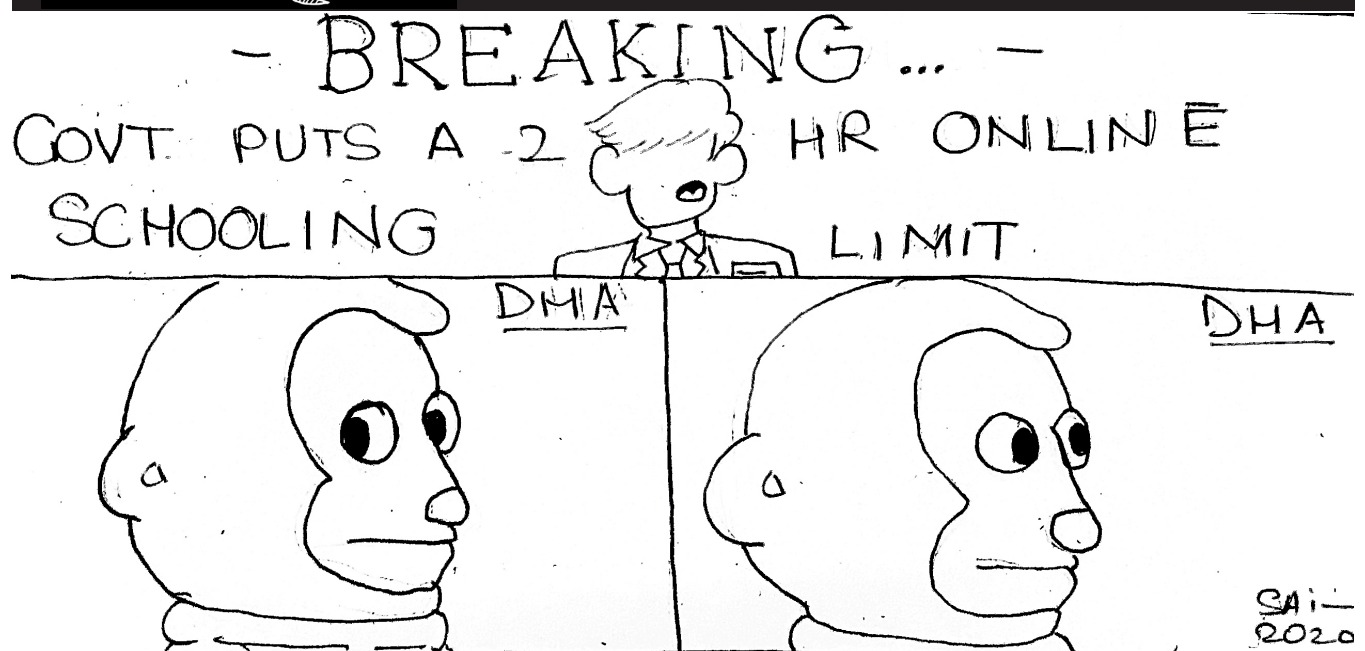
The learning from all these workshops was invaluable, as it deepened my idea of the art itself. The sessions taught me to ask the right questions and challenge the most fundamental norms which we intuitively assume to be true, but more importantly, it forced me to find out the answers myself. I debated motions from a plethora of themes, from International Relations, morality, democracy, feminism, economics and history, all of which have deepened my understanding of the world at large. My experience has transformed how I view certain things. For instance, instead of thinking of reading the newspaper as a painful but necessary task, I now see it as a fun activity. The practice debates were tremendously helpful, as they allowed me to think much faster than my younger self and made me a more confident speaker.

The virtual debating experience was new for me, as online classes were to all of us, and although it ended up being quite productive, I still do not think it could ever compensate for the offline interactions at the podium!

Dosco Doodle

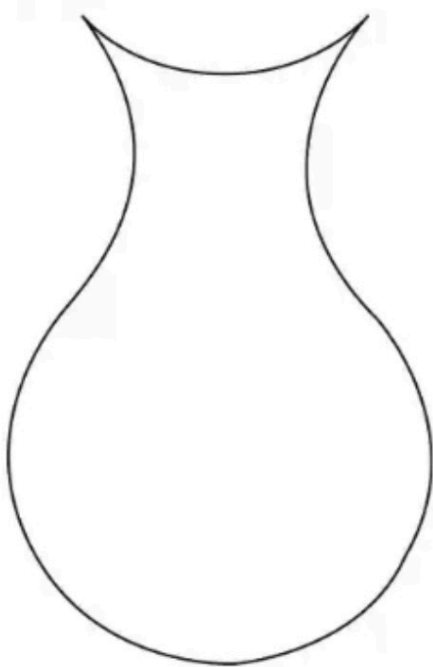
The Evader

Sai Arjun



The Problem of the Week

With two straight line cuts, divide the vase into three pieces that can be reassembled to form a square.



Source: The Guardian

What Have You Been Reading During The Lockdown?

The Godfather
Author: Mario Puzo

Set amidst an all-out mafia war in the United States in the 1940s, the book explores their unique, yet absolutely sound, perspective to life. The astonishing depth expressed in the character of Don Corleone compels one to question what greatness truly means, and offers valuable insights about diplomacy, family, and the morality of the mafia. The transformation of Michael Corleone from an innocuous Mathematics professor to the ruthless don is truly an experience to watch. The only point of disappointment from the book: it's a bit too straightforward for my taste.

-Yuvraj Sarda

What Have You Been Watching During The Lockdown?

Moneyball
Director: Bennett Miller
Cast: Brad Pitt and Jonah Hill

The film, based on a true story, attempts to provide an insight into the reinvention of baseball with the adoption of sabermetrics as a means to scout players. When Billie Bean, the Oakland A's General Manager is faced with the insurmountable task of building a successful team on a lean budget, he drops conventional wisdom and uses empirical evidence to enlist players. It brings home the point that a man's belief in himself surmounts every adversity. Sports fans and mathematics geeks will find a lot of common ground in this movie!

- Gurmehar Bedi

The views expressed in articles printed are their authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Weekly or its editorial policy.

Online Edition: www.doonschool.com/co-curricular/clubs-societies/publications/past-weeklies/ weekly@doonschool.com



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