Established in 1936

The Doon School
WEEKLY

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

November 1, 2025 | Issue No. 2758

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The Class of 1990 recall hierarchy, discipline, and the Doon-spirit.
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Editorial

Is it My Turn?

Hrishikesh Aiyer

I don't know how to start this. I don't know what to speak about. Whether the words hold meaning, I can't say. Of the pages, however, I'm sure. It is the assurance of these pages that has upheld many before me, with me starting as number ninety. In the flow of things, I just wish to speak, or rather, write my heart out. Just a couple ideas off the top of my head.

Maybe that is how everyone starts. Unsure. A little lost. You sit in front of a blank page and wonder what you can possibly add that hasn't already been said. You think about all the people who came before, all the Boards that tried to put the same thoughts into words. It's strange to think that this has been going on for so long, and yet it still feels new when it's your turn.

There's a certain pressure in that. You feel like you have to say something that matters, but the more you think about it, the harder it gets. Sometimes it feels like the act of writing here is more important than what's actually written. Like the meaning isn't in the words but in the fact that they're being written at all.

When you join the Board, you inherit something. You don't really know what it is at first, but you feel it. It feels like an expectation. To keep the School talking to itself in some way.

And so, you start. You write something. You hope it makes sense. You hope it reaches someone. Even if it doesn't, at least it exists. And maybe that's enough for now.

The position of privilege we hold:

To write here is to hold a privilege that we rarely stop to think about. The *Weekly* brings the voice to you, the Reader. You are in a position to voice the stance you take on anything and everything. Yet, that position can and has become rather self-serving. As a School Community, we fail to recognise that to be published here is not an act of validation; it is an act of responsibility. The naïve D Former bears the peculiar privilege of ignorance — unburdened by precedent, he writes with boldness and abandon, for truly, nothing restrains him. The C Former, perhaps driven less by purpose than by the simple pleasure of seeing his name on the Issue at the CDH, shoulders a subtler duty: to preserve the innocence that the Reader of the publication deserves. Meanwhile, the B Former, A Former, and S Former enjoy a quieter privilege, that of constancy, taking comfort in the familiarity the *Weekly* unfailingly provides every Saturday.

As a Board, we share the collective privilege of someone picking up and reading the pages that carry our names. It is easy to think that privilege lies only in access or opportunity. But in truth, privilege lies in the freedom to speak without fear. It lies in the comfort of knowing that our ideas, even when flawed, will find space here. That is what makes this position so fragile. To write is not only to express; it is to recognise the limits of our own perspective. The *Weekly* cannot claim to be the voice of the School if it only echoes the thoughts of those already heard. We must instead see it as a platform that must be earned, Issue by Issue, voice by voice. The privilege of the *Weekly* lies not in its legacy, but in how honestly it can hold up a mirror to the School. And sometimes, that reflection must be uncomfortable.

Perhaps this privilege is something we can use going forward.

The way situate ourselves in this institution:

The *Weekly* has always existed in an odd place. It is both inside and outside the system. It belongs to the School, yet it must hold the courage to question it. That tension defines our role and the precedent with which the Senior Board and I enter our tenure.

However, it is imperative for us to draw the line of what extent the questioning goes to. It is one thing to complain about the amount of censorship the *Weekly* now has, yet, to use it as a shield to good content is incorrect. There is a right way to question, no matter how much it might vary from another correct way. As a Senior Board, it is our responsibility to convey this means of questioning to the rest of the Board and the School Community.

The journey ahead:

We have reached a point where the *Weekly* must decide what it wants to be.

Every year, a new Board steps in,

(Continued on Page 3)

LISTENER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the School Community have been listening to this week:

Aniruddha Bali: *Lucid Dreams* by Juice WRLD
Rishaan Mahajan: *Have You Ever Seen the Rain* by Creedence Clearwater Revival
Tegh Patwalia: *90210* by Travis Scott

READER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the School Community have been reading this week:

Krishnav Gupta: *A Game of Thrones* by George R.R. Martin
Aarav Singla: *48 Hour Start Up* by Fraser Doherty

WINDS OF CHANGE

The *Weekly* would like to thank its outgoing Senior Board for their commitment to the Publication.
Following is the **Senior Board** of the *Weekly* for the year 2025-26:
Editor-in-Chief: Hrishikesh Aiyer
Editor: Rehhan Chadha
Senior Editors: Ayaan Mittal and Rafay Habibullah
Hindi Editor: Hridhay Kanodia
Congratulations!

This Week in History

1936 CE: The first electric generator at Hoover Dam goes into full operation.
1944 CE: Anne and Margot Frank are deported from Auschwitz to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they die from disease the following year, shortly before the end of WWII.
2004 CE: Rockstar Games releases Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas for the PlayStation 2 in North America, which sells 12 million units, becoming the console's best-selling video game
2014 CE: A rocket carrying NASA's Cygnus CRS Orb-3 resupply mission to the International Space Station explodes seconds after taking off from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport in Wallops Island, Virginia.
2015 CE: China announces the end of its one-child policy after 35 years, following strict opposition and declining birth rates.

Around the World in 80 Words

Musk launched "Grokipedia," an AI-powered online encyclopedia built to rival Wikipedia. India overtook China to become the world's third strongest aerial power. Cyclone Montha raged towards the Indian East Coast, forcing mass evacuations and shutdowns. Scientists developed a gene-editing technique that can accelerate progress in treating genetic disorders and furthering gene therapy. The Pakistani army violated the ceasefire along the Line of Control on Indian Army positions. Shreyas Iyer suffered an extremely severe injury during an India vs Australia ODI match.

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

Chicken is cow.
Hridhay Kanodia, and I am Barack Obama.
I'm not gaslighting you; I'm petrol-lighting you.
Shiven Singh, do you think this is Children's Park?
I may not have a brain, but I have an idea.
Asvarya Thapa, an honest, like-minded individual.
Your birthday is day before.
Rayan Kapoor, time-traveller.
Your permission may I have for sit down.
Laksh Baheti, the Server we need.
Don't argue me.
GKP, Karlie Chirk.
The car is on autopilot.
Shrey Gulati, certainly flying *high*.
The thing of the hour is financial prudence and fiscal discipline.
KLA, subscriber to the Harvard word-of-the-day.

"Do you love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of. Lose an hour in the morning, and you will spend all day hunting for it.

Benjamin Franklin

(Continued from Page 1)

each with its own ideas about what the *Weekly* should stand for. But the truth is, we often inherit more than we create.

There needs to be reason and a measured stance one takes, no matter how strong your emotional response may be. Keeping this in mind, sensationalism without any substance goes against what we stand for and that is something we need to curtail. So dear Reader, while your journey as a writer is underway, let it be made clear, the *Weekly* wishes to guide you through it entirely. While organicity is a priority of the forthcoming year, do note that publishing for the sake of the publicity the *Weekly* brings you isn't the way forward.

Some words of supposed wisdom:

Those who came before me often spoke about legacy. About leaving the *Weekly* in good hands. But I have begun to think that legacy is rather overrated. What matters is not how fondly people remember us, but how much they question us and engage with us.

Every Editor-in-Chief before me has faced the same fear: that the *Weekly* might lose its voice. But perhaps what we should fear more is that the *Weekly* will stop listening. Writing is meaningless if it exists in a vacuum. The conversation that follows matters more than the words that begin it.

To those who will write after me: do not write to impress. Write to disturb. Be fearless and disruptive. Let the organicity shine through. The *Weekly* needs conviction. It needs people who believe that writing can change something, even if that change is small.

You will be told that you must protect the reputation of this publication. I will tell you instead to protect its purpose. The *Weekly* should always be slightly imperfect, for as Nietzsche said, "One must still have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star."

You will also face criticism. People will call your writing too harsh, too naïve, too political, too personal. That is good. It means you are being read. The only true failure is indifference.

If there is any wisdom to offer, it is this: the *Weekly* is not the heart of the School. It is its pulse. And the pulse must sometimes race, sometimes falter, sometimes quicken with emotion. But it must never stop.

A note on the Community:

A publication is only as alive as its audience allows it to be. To reiterate the advice my enthusiastic self received last night from someone who once held this position: the truth is, we have too many passive readers. Too many people who skim and forget. Too few who challenge or respond.

If the *Weekly* is ever to matter again, it must provoke its readers to care. That means we, as a community, must change how we engage with it. We cannot keep treating it as a ritual to be read on Saturday and forgotten by later-Saturday. We hope to reinstate the connection and link discourse that the *Weekly* once had. The *Weekly* needs to linger in conversation through the week in a manner we have only heard stories of till date.

A passive readership is the surest way to kill a publication.

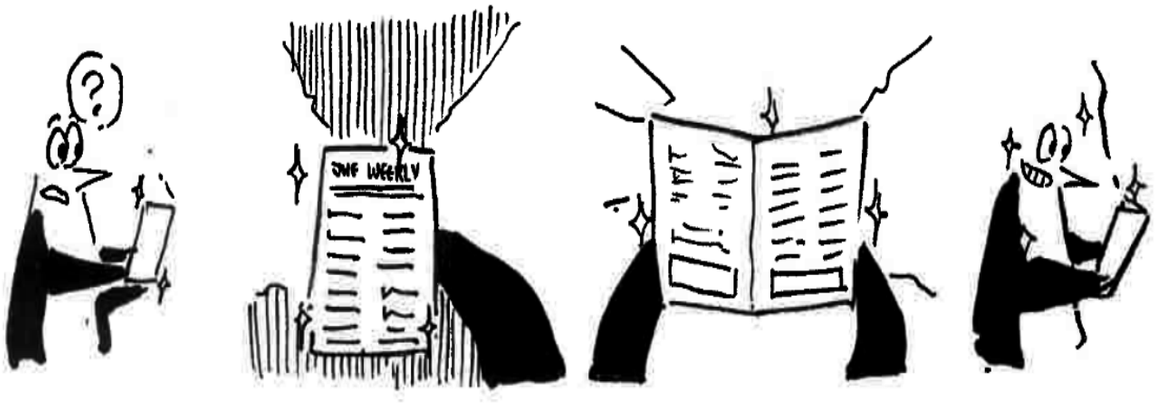
So, dear Reader, do not be polite. Be involved. If you find something shallow, call it out. If you find something profound, push it further. If you disagree, write your own piece. The *Weekly* is yours as much as it is ours.

In conclusion:

At this point, I could try to end with certainty, but that would be dishonest. I do not have certainty. What I have instead is belief. Belief that these pages still matter, belief that words still move people, belief that the *Weekly* can still mean something real.

Perhaps the best thing about being number ninety is knowing that there will be ninety-one. This publication will continue long after my words fade. Someone else will pick up where I leave off unprepared, but willing as I am today.

So I write this not as an Editor-in-Chief, not as number ninety, but as one voice among many, trying to keep the conversation alive. Because when the conversation dies, so does the School.



Echoes of '90

Old Boys from the Class of 1990 *reflect on hierarchy, sanctions, and the unshakable spirit of House life, offering a glance of School, as it once was.*

My father was a stickler for punctuality. On a rainy morning, we drove from Delhi to Dehradun, determined to reach School by 9 AM, as instructed. We arrived on time, my trunk, hold-all, and suitcase in tow — the baggage of a new Dosco. Since I was joining late, there was no space left in Foot House, and I was placed in the Main House. There, we met the Housemasters of Jaipur House: Mr Vohra, better known as 'BOND,' and Mr Sharma, fondly called 'SHORTY.'

By the time we settled in, it was past noon, and we went to the iconic Kwality Restaurant for lunch. Back from lunch, I was handed over to Amlendu, a C Former, since my guardian would arrive later that evening. He took me around the House and the rest of the School. I was immediately struck by the colonial architecture, the sports fields (Football Season was on), and the facilities in general.

By late afternoon, the House began to fill with excited voices echoing through the corridors — old friends meeting after two months; the Delhi party had arrived! As the only D Former in the House, I felt a little overwhelmed to be surrounded by older boys I did not know. That fear quickly faded as the C Formers made me feel at home.

The next day, I met my Batchmates in class and was allowed to spend time with them in Foot House. Hierarchy between the Forms was carefully observed, but beyond the usual day-to-day frictions, nothing troubling ever occurred. Over the following weeks, I settled in well and began forming close friendships with the B Formers. Sport played its part too: earning a place on the School Senior Cricket and Basketball teams in C Form gave me early access to the S and Sc Formers, who treated me as a teammate.

There was certainly plenty of collective physical sanctions in my time, but never physical abuse. In fact, we often found humour in it — whether in extra PT, the sixty days of early-morning sessions after the *Toll-Poll* incident, or 'Change-in-Breaks,' which became a contest to see who could complete them fastest. These challenges toughened us but also forged bonds, since no one ever 'sneaked.'

The Masters were legends, admired for their academic and extracurricular achievements. They command enormous respect even today, from generations of Doscos. Icons in their own right, they remain figures of reverence for the Batches of the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

The House structure, too, was invaluable. Dames and Tutors opened their homes to us, guided us, and fed us whenever needed. Relationships with Masters, Housemasters, and Tutors were close and respectful. At Doon, few things mattered more than winning. Each House was the centre of life, with its own traditions, rituals, and competitiveness. That spirit created a deep sense of belonging and camaraderie. Yet above all, the larger spirit of School always triumphed — and even today, among ex-Doscos, House rivalries survive only as playful banter at Old Boy get-togethers.

- Siddharth Bhide (Ex 184-J, 1990)

I often marvel at the experience of being part of a system that equally combines tradition, discipline, and was a comedy show.

Hierarchy was everywhere. Seniors were like minor deities who controlled our lives, while Juniors were somewhere between unpaid interns and occasional experimental lab rats.

I remember one term when I had to get *Chhota Hazri* for Sc Formers. None of them had it, and some of the *heras* even refused to show up for PT. This got me so mad that I loved it when Sadu, the Master-in-Charge of PT, made a surprise check to catch the sleepers. The next morning, all of Room Nine were doing extra PT (in slow motion), as it was their friend who had been tasked with handing it out.

The Master-Student relationship was equally fascinating. There were Masters… and there were **Masters**. In one math class, three months into the Term, I was still stuck on Exercise Five while Harshvardhan Kaul was already on Exercise 41. Yet I still managed to get a glorious five (maximum) for effort and a one for achievement on my report card. Balance!

I was also once called out during a Hindi debate because I was shooting spitballs from the upper gallery onto unsuspecting students below. A Master watching whacked me so hard, my ears rang for a week.

Being a Master at Doon had to be a true calling — for those who really wanted to be there. Some of the boys could be tough, but the Masters knew exactly how to handle them.

Ah, the sanctions. Where do I begin? Running endless rounds of the Main Field in A Form made me think it was part of the daily schedule. A short, highly complex House Monitor had been named "*Two-Firsts*" by the Boys. I thought he had overachieved as a Dosco when he made it to the fourth monitor. Most A Formers got two firsts almost daily. On a bad day, it was *two-firsts* and *two-seconds*. Two-first, two-second, and two-third were usually reserved for Sanju, and he seemed to treat sanctions like a fitness goal.

On another occasion, I was asked to write an essay on the civilian use of nuclear power in the Soviet Union. For Christ's sake, I was in B Form — we didn't even have computers in School, let alone ChatGPT!

But life wasn't all pain. Sports and activities were the great equaliser. The sports field produced some of the best stories. Like Mayank, who, during a Hyderabad House cricket match, screamed, "*Mine*! *Mine*! *MINE*!" at the top of his lungs while going for a high catch. We all backed off — only for the ball to land squarely on his nose. The sound of his nose bone cracking is still engraved in my mind. Five seconds later, through the pain, he muttered his final word: "*Mine*."

Another classic was when Jaipur House won the Swimming Cup after getting me disqualified from my favourite event. Pran somehow convinced Sattu that I swam an extra race. Sattu, never one to argue against reducing work, promptly agreed and disqualified H House. I pleaded with Pran, a close friend, but clearly, the Swimming Cup was a closer one.

And then there was the House spirit. Being picked up from Martyn House by a B Former and being marched to the Main Field to scream, "*Jeetega bhai, jeetega*!" was not a favourite, but screaming ourselves hoarse for Dhillon during the five thousand meters was unforgettable. He was leading by four hundred meters at one point. The entire House was cheering him on against School's best runners. Of course, he burned all his energy too early and came in last — but for a moment, the House-spirit of Hyderabad House felt magical.

My years at Doon were among the most memorable of my life. I was above average in studies, managed to stay above average on the sports field, and even rose to the dizzying heights of a second monitor in Sc Form. In short, my record was consistently "*above average*." But what truly mattered wasn't the grades or the positions — it was the fun we squeezed out of every single minute at School, and the memories etched into every corner of that campus. Those, I wouldn't trade for anything.

- Sumeeth Nath (Ex 142-H, 1990)

I still remember my mother at the Hyderabad House Gate. She'd always been composed, even in hard times, but that morning something was different. She didn't wave, didn't say anything, she just held my eyes. Her hands were tight around her bag; you could see she was holding herself together. There was no showy emotion, but the silence had weight. Standing there, I began to understand what letting me go meant for her. That memory stuck at Doon, a quiet, stubborn reminder of home and how much courage it had taken her to send me away.

Doon, in those first few weeks, felt immense. The buildings, the legacy, the pace of life was was all a bit overwhelming. But gradually, through morning PT, Assemblies, Toye time, and Callover, a rhythm emerged. The unfamiliar began to feel familiar. Somewhere between routine and tradition, it started to feel like home.

The Tutors played a larger role than I expected. They weren't just academic guides; they noticed things. They listened. They quietly showed up when it mattered. I remember dropping by AAQ Sir's house, often without a real reason — just a feeling that I needed to be there. He always welcomed me with the same kind smile. That simple gesture carried more comfort than I could have imagined.

Life at Doon is a careful balance of structure and freedom. The rules don't stifle; they shape. Expectations aren't burdens; they call us to rise. Whether it was a House Debate, a bruising game on the Skinners, or my first Founders in the Rose Bowl, every experience left its mark.

The friendships here run deep. Quiet spaces between missed meals, early mornings, shared setbacks, and small triumphs, they became the backbone of my time here. These aren't just Formmates, they're the people I grew up with.

I came to Doon carrying the image of my mother at the gate, trying not to cry. I will leave with memories, mentors, and a clearer sense of who I am. Her letting go wasn't an end. It was the beginning of everything that has shaped me since.

- Samarth Arora, *an S Former, gives his take on discipline, sanctions, and House-spirit today.*

The Week Gone By

Ayaan Mittal

I must confess that I'm writing this piece sitting in the backseat of a rickety Ertiga, far away from the lush tranquillity of Chandbagh, so excuse me if I can't recall what the dinner menu was, but anyways, as they say — you can take the Boy out of School but not the School out of the Boy.

Anyway, good morning to you, dear Readers. You may have noticed that the grey box at the end of the *Weekly* looks a tad bit different. That is because I am now your friendly neighbourhood Senior Editor (and then there are three others who aren't really as significant), here to report the week.

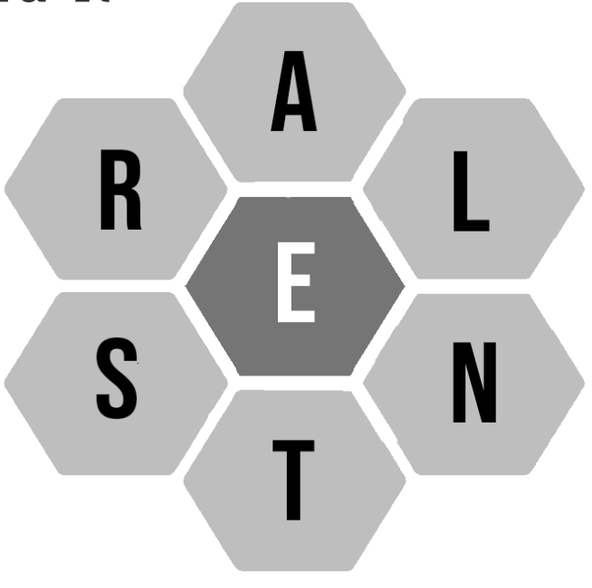
Flocks of 'plompier' penguins waddled back into campus on Sunday, finally restoring a (almost) full house in Assembly. These 'deviants' appeared wholly unmoved by the Grand DS 90 Treat they "missed," and as for the "inevitable consequences" of their delayed homecoming… well, some mysteries are best left to folklore. Or, the Auditorium podium, for that matter. Moral of the story: mass bunking worked out! A doctor's note, a smog alert, or a "study leave," are all you need to have *ghar ka khana* for one more weekend. Take notes, kids.

And as the Founder's frenzy lifts from the campus as a fog does off a moor, suddenly the end of Term seems so much closer, and for some, November seems to be the light at the end of a tunnel, while others might call it the barrel of a gun. Our dear Penguins nevertheless, can be seen burning the midnight oil. Are they buried in books or Common Rooms for Basketball, Boxing and racket sports? That is still up for speculation. Pro tip: procrastinate and then 'wing it.' After all, nothing inspires a sudden spiritual connection to one's syllabus quite like discovering what's in the exam by seeing it in the mid-year paper.

Speaking of fog, an amorphous dust settles on campus as the Old Guard prepares to ride into the sunset and the new Knights await their annointment. To my fellow Batchmates: fret not. In the immortal wisdom of Drake, it's all "God's plan." Whether this is the end of your beginning or simply the beginning of your end… well, choose whichever sounds more dramatic.

So, dear Readers, (the ones that are reading this *Week Gone By*), as we drift into the last of this Term, my advice to you is simple: beat on, boat against the current, for the end is near, and don't forget to share your dessert with your favourite Senior Editor.

Word-It



Some answers to this week's Word-It:
1. Rentals
2. Salter
3. Stern
4. Renal
5. Lens

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