



SOUP VERANDAH
ESSAYS AND ARTICLE

BUCKET LIST
MONUMENTS OF PONDY

POEMS

FACE TO FACE

**CULTURE
ART FAIR**

THROUGH THE LENS
MONUMENTS IN PONDY

ISSUE 02 / OCT 2015

POUNDY

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the second issue of SLAICE. We the students of EAVP-5 have decided to take forward last year's initiative and efforts in the making of the magazine (A Slice of SAICE). In this issue we have added our own little changes and touches. The one major difference from last year's magazine is that we have incorporated the participation of the classes ranging from EAVP-3 to EAVP-6.

The journey we have taken to come out with this issue has not been easy but nevertheless it has been memorable. In this issue you will come across a wide range of ideas and opinions with different levels of maturity.

The process of making this magazine started by us attending Bubu's (Shashwat) evening classes with the hope that our aesthetic progress would show itself in the final outcome, which is, the magazine that you are about to read!

The sections of this magazine are almost identical to the previous year's. From a peak into the dreamy minds of the poets, the eloquence of the essays, the grins in the humour section, behind the curtains of the Ashram Premier League, to the lively chat with Ashram celebrities, here is a glimpse at the world created by us.

We are sitting in a room, cracking our heads, trying to write a perfect editorial when all we need to say are six simple words: let the magazine speak for itself!

– Aditi, Samanvita, Dhruva

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INTERVIEW

MOULDING INNOCENCE

Simmy-ben played a significant role in our childhood memories. The person whom we looked up to as our second mother. She was there to play with us, teach us, inspire us and mould us into what we are today. Here is a peak inside the mind of one of our favorite people.

What made you want to teach?

It wasn't my choice, I went to the Mother and she asked me to teach in the kindergarten.

For how long have you been teaching?

I started teaching in 1968. That makes it 47 years.

Is it difficult not to have any favorites?

You sometimes have an affinity for some kids more than the others. There is a difference in the way I handle each child; certain children need more care than the others.

How do you feel when you see the kids all grown up?

I feel very happy when I see the students. Their smile is what I recognize them by. Faces and looks may change but a smile never does. The other day I was walking on the beach and I saw one of my old students who looked at me and said, "Hello Simmy-ben!" At first I couldn't recognize him, but then by his smile I could.



**" I FEEL VERY HAPPY WHEN I SEE
THE STUDENTS. THEIR SMILE IS
WHAT I RECOGNIZE THEM BY."**



What are the differences you see in the children of the past and children today?

Earlier children were interested in teachers and now they look for their friends. I think it is a very significant change. They still have a relationship with us but it is not predominant. Kids are also exposed to many more things today. They are very much at ease with electronics. Another big change is that they have a sense of freedom in them and are much less inhibited.

Do you remember your first batch?

Of course! I was very fond of them. I didn't know anything about kids. It used to take me twenty minutes to get the kids in after the recess and they would just run around; it was incredible. I was very fond of them. I used to take them to the park very often. They were quite a group! I really enjoyed being with them.

One day a boy went to The Mother and offered her a chocolate; she wouldn't take it and gave it back to him. He said, " No, no. Half, half!" I found it so beautiful.

How did you start teaching in the kindergarten?

The Mother asked me to teach in the kindergarten. Sometimes I used to wonder why, but over the years I knew. I loved the children and she knew that. Children thought the kindergarten was my home. In fact there is a very nice story about a boy who wanted to go to the kindergarten at two in the afternoon and when his guardian told him no one would be there he said, " No, no Simmy-ben is there. She lives there." This is how even the children perceived me. I mean it was

like my home. I also introduced many things in the kindergarten such as going to the farm. It was one of my wishes and one of my projects.

Was communication ever a problem?

For me, I always spoke in French with the children. But when a child used to cry I used to speak to them in their mother tongue. I didn't know their language but I managed with just a few basic words. But most of the time the children understood what I wanted to say because I used to show them.

Could you tell us some memorable moments you had with the children?

Earlier there were many more dangerous situations . I had a child who stuck his fingers up a gear of a cycle. His finger was extremely fragile and it wasn't coming out. I wasn't sure how to turn it and release the finger. I prayed, I prayed very intensely. Children's' fingers are very delicate and if I pushed it the wrong way I would have broken it, but luckily I managed taking it out. That was a great relief. There is another memory I have. There was a child who had cut his ear and he had to be taken to the dispensary. He needed stitches and when he came back I was asked to keep him in my class. You know what he did? He took a big bead and swallowed it. He started to choke, so I picked him up, turned him upside down and gave him one slap on his back; the bead flew out. You see these were the things that used to happen but I always felt that it was the Mother who helped me.



The other day we went to the tennis ground; it was all red and sticky, as it had been raining. There was this kid, an absolute darling, who took the mud and put it on her head. Her hair became all red and sticky. It was so funny because when I sent her to her mother everybody started taking her picture. She looked adorable. It's all funny in context, it's the way they think and the things they do. They look at life in a very different way, it's very amusing, but I can't recall funny stories. For me life is like a river; it moves, it takes you wherever it takes you. I enjoy the experience and love working with this age group. Because I love children!

—Aditi.T & Aditi.P



INTERVIEWING MIHIR AND NAIVEDYA

INTRODUCTION: In the year 1982 a stunning event took place in sports ground. Mihir Ravikanti made a new Ashram record in cricket ball throw. The ball left his hand, travelled a distance of about 97 meters before falling on the ground. Since then the record was left untouched. A few people tried breaking it, but in vain. Then, this year (2015) another astonishing event occurred. Naivedya broke Mihir's record by 8 meters. In just a few hours everybody got to know about this event. Some questions arose in the heads of a few students and to satisfy our curiosity we asked the two stars a few questions. Here are their answers.

A CHAT WITH NAIVEDYA

How did you prepare for it? Did you expect it?

When I first saw my schedule and noticed that I had cricket ball throw on the 8th of April, I felt confident because it was early in the month. There was no accumulated fatigue and I was already in the top 5 of the Ashram for cricket ball throw, which spurred me on to come close to the record, if not break it. There was no particular preparation. I felt confident about my throws, but I had visualized hitting the track. The aim was to get as close to it or make it land on the track.

Honestly, I didn't expect it. I thought I would come close to it, but not break it by such a margin.

What was the first thought that crossed your mind when you found out that you had broken a record that was considered unbreakable ?

The first thought was, “Oh I got it, or, could I have done better?”, and then my mind just shut down for the next 2 minutes. I couldn’t quite believe what had happened.

Who in the world of sports inspires you the most? Why?

That’s a difficult question because I watch an array of sports like football, cricket, tennis and the list is never ending. I am inspired by Ronaldo in football, whereas Nadal is my favorite tennis player and Adam Gilchrist is my all time cricket pick, so it varies. I take the individual in his profession and try emulating him or learn by just observing them play, and along with them I try growing as a person and hope to keep improving every day. The one thing in common in all of these athletes is the hunger to keep improving and pushing beyond limits and that’s a key aspect that inspires me and keeps me ticking.

If someone were to give you a cricket ball this instant, would you be able to repeat this record-breaking throw, given the pressure of holding a record?

I feel confident of throwing it in the basketball court, so yes I am capable of reproducing that throw.

Share your experience...

It was a Wednesday and I was in Sports ground at 4:30pm, warming up. I could feel my shoulder muscles twitch and was a bit nervous. I walked till the edge of the track, stood there and went through the whole motion of the throw. I visualized it in a slide to slide manner, periodically, to make it absolutely clear in my mind. I walked back, I did my concentration and focused on the item.

Before my first throw, I felt some pressure but my aim was to throw it over the goalpost. I calculated it to be around 90m and it was an 88m throw. It was a decent start and I felt a bit disappointed but it was close to what I had wanted. My arm felt great and that boosted my confidence level for the 2nd throw.

Just before my 2nd throw I focused on the high jump run up close to the basketball court, and envisioned the ball landing on that run up. I took the ball, gripped it well, I think it was across the seam, and threw it. The result was a 96m throw.

My mind was in a frenzy: the record was in site, I could hear people cheering me and I could sense that my 3rd throw would break the record but I had to control my emotions and not think of the distance. I needed a distraction and went to have some water; somewhere I could sense people on the galleries looking expectantly at me. My father was sitting and talking to his friend; I went to the drinking water area, had a couple of sips, splashed water on my face and was back with my competitors focusing on my technique.

It was my final throw and I felt a weight on my shoulders. Suddenly numbers popped up and I wasn’t feeling comfortable. I started my run up but couldn’t shut my mind and stopped before the line. I was really nervous but instead of thinking too much about what had happened, I visualized the white basketball post and the track. The basketball post was my guideline or direction and the track was my landing. I closed my eyes, forgot everything I had done, ran and threw. I saw the height, my arm felt exhausted and I instantly knew the throw was much better than the previous one. It landed and immediately I felt happy.

A CHAT WITH MIHIR

What do you have to say about Naivedya beating your record?

First of all congratulations to Naivedya! Well done! The one thing noteworthy about this new record throw is that not only has it broken the earlier record comfortably but in the process it has breached the 100 meter barrier, because up until then all the big throws including the penultimate throw leading up to this historic throw were in the 90 meter range. I believe in evolution, the newer generations should automatically surpass what the previous generations have done. Secondly and thirdly, in a lighter vein, I believe this record is about 30 years old which means its “copyright” is over! Now I feel like a “relieved” Atlas (without the globe on his shoulders)!

Do you value this as much as your other achievements?

To be honest most of my achievements or performances came by the way. This record of cricket ball throw also came by the way and went the way it came. Moreover, neither did I work for these performances nor did I want them at any cost, so in a sense there is no real attachment for any one of them in particular. But this does not mean I don’t care for them; I enjoyed what I did.

What do you have to say about the popularity of cricket ball throw, as an item?

Those who play cricket take to this item naturally I guess, but I really don’t know about the others, particularly the girls.



Who in the world of sports inspires you the most ? Why?

All the great sportspersons of my generation. It is difficult really to pinpoint one individual.

– Yashasvini & Pranjana

POETRY

STOP, BREATHE, THINK

Have you ever stopped and thought
What this life is all about?
You run amidst this chaos every day,
Refusing to hear what your heart has to say.
The city lights, the buzz, the noise,
Are all drowning your true voice.
The smoky veil of dirt and pollution
Is wrapping you in its illusion.
The illusion that money, fame, honor
Are the only things that truly matter.
You know better than that so...

Stop, breathe and think.

Unravel the mystery of life,
Shut your desktop, open your mind,
And let your ideas sway in the wind.
Throw your files, grab a pen and coffee
And embark on a journey of self discovery.
Get out from your prison of cramped walls,
And step under the mighty grey heaven.
Stop fiddling with your smart, trendy phones
Go outdoors and try hard to skip stones.
Friends will text from far and away,
But you live the moment, it won't stay, and then....

Stop, breathe and think.

When life seems meaningless and vain
Don't continue bearing the pain.
Quit what you're doing and go upstairs,

Up to the terrace where the wind and stars
Refresh you and heal your worldly scars.
Then with your heart and mind at ease
All your worries and fears will cease.
You'll see something beyond your shallow desire,
And everything else will seem like mire.
Just when you're about to lose all hope
And with this world you can no longer cope, just...

Stop, breathe and think.

In your quest for meaning always remember
That this is the one thing that will matter.
No amount of possessions and fame
Will satisfy you when you're old and lame.
When you're frail and weak and dying
And your soul has to be kept from flying,
You'll ask yourself what you've done,
Have you suffered or you've had fun?
When you are at last breathing your last,
And this world is slipping away so fast,
Don't forget that it is never too late, to....

Stop, breathe and think!

– Dhruva, E.A.V.P. 5

WINTER LOVE

She ran through the icy night,
The winter's winds caressed her frosty skin,
She knew that she could no longer fight,
The summer's cold and evil twin.

Between the trees she saw a glimmer,
It was her last little speck of hope,
Or was it Charon's torch's guiding shimmer?
She knew for survival there was scope.

She ran towards it and when she reached,
The last bit of life in her to vanish began,
She knocked the door, fell, and it screeched,
It sprang open and there stood a man.

He looked at her face, her lips, her hair,
The most beautiful ocean blue eyes,
He held her, saw her skin so fair,
With her he felt like he was in Paradise.

Her lips were as red as a rose,
Her cheeks as two suns began to glow.
To his heart he pressed her close,
And knew it was love of long ago.

Without a word they both knew
That they were meant to be,
Because these moments are very few,
Moments of love, truth, and harmony.

– Joshua, E.A.V.P.3

A TRUE FRIEND

A true friend can lift your spirits
Just by holding your hands.
Beside you, for eternity, he sits,
And next to you he stands.

You don't have to speak, he hears,
He knows inside out your fears.
You are the pillar while he the wall,
You can lean and he won't fall.

You are the disturbed ocean while he the rain,
He comes back to you while you are in pain.
While you are the candle, he the match,
What others can't, he can catch.

While you're the sky, he is the water
Reflecting always your character.
A true friend can touch your heart
Even when you are miles apart.

– Anonymous



FRIENDSHIP

In the hearts of us all
Beats the rhythm of joy,
Even if it's big or small,
Little does it matter, girl or boy.
It is a pathway to affection
Endless and strong,
Vicious minds of interruption
Erase not this bond.
It is a promise kindled like a flame
Now isn't this friendship's true name?
Faith and goodwill build this ship
Revealing the happiness of friendship.
It is a friend who brings for sure
Every time the perfect bliss.
Noble relationships, simply pure
Don't all of us deserve this?
Stitches of this, friendship
Have knotted us all together,
It is a firm relationship
Painting our lives forever.

– Anya & Aurosree, E.A.V.P.4



I WISH I COULD TELL YOU

I wish I could tell you, how strong you are,
I wish I could tell you never to give up,
But simply to keep fighting.
Fight, fight another day,
For battle wounds come and go
This you should know.
I wish I could tell you, how I saw the real smile,
Etched across your face,
And that nothing is more beautiful,
Than a smile that has struggled through tears,
For the past umpteen years.
I wish I could tell you, that
In the heart of darkness
Seek the waves of hope and
The ardor of life.
I wish I could tell you,
To hold on to your dreams
I wish I could tell you,
That when you are pushed
To the edge of difficulty,
Trust in God,
For, there are but two things He will do:
Either He'll catch you when you fall
Or He'll teach you to fly.
I wish I could tell you,
Never to do too much of anything,
For that too much can hurt you so much.
I wish I could tell you that
Sometimes the hardest choice
Is the right one.
I wish I could tell you,



That you will dwell on lost lands,
And that sometimes you will be directionless,
But there is always a way hidden deep down.
I wish I could tell you, that between birth and death
There is always a choice.
I wish I could tell you, that you'll fall,
You'll rise, you'll make mistakes,
And that there is no beauty without strangeness.
I wish I could tell you not to live in the past,
It brings tears; never to live in the future,
It brings fears,
But to live in the present with your peers.
I wish I could tell you how your smile changed,
The salty tears into sweet.
I wish I could tell you, how much you mean to me.
I wish I could tell you, all the words
That are inside of me.
I wish I could tell you,
I wish I could tell you,
I wish I could tell you.
But no.
I will let my silence speak, for sometimes
It's the loudest, sweetest, clearest,
And hardest voice manifesting.

– Anonymous

SOUP

VERANDAH

WITH LAZINESS COMES FAME

Have you ever seen those canvases splashed with paint, which are said to convey so many deep messages and psychic experiences? They ooze so much esoteric substance and light that my little ignorant mind only sees confusion and cannot discern anything beyond the thick chaos of oil paint. All I see is a canvas filled with the innocent strokes of a kindergarten toddler, so sorry you mystic artists if you expected me to see beyond your tumultuous play of colors which are so haphazardly blotched over your spiritual representation.

The sophistication of this sort of artwork takes my breath away. It is ludicrous to see how much the artist tries to tell us what he wants to through nanoscopic blotches and lines instead of just drawing or painting in forms, shapes and colors comprehensible to the coherent human brain.

I recently visited this art exhibition, which displayed such phenomenal pieces of confusion that everyone saw something completely divergent in them. Some saw a sort of energy emanating from a crisscross of grey and black lines. A canvas which had three simple hard colors painted below each other was interpreted as a unique cycle of some psychic and yogic powers. All the visitors spoke volubly about the depth of thought the artist had put behind these "paintings" and how incredibly tough it would have been to portray such a difficult concept in such an easy and comprehensible manner.

At this point I panicked. I thought that along with my comprehension power, I was losing my hearing power too. Did these folks just say that all that psychic-yogic mumbo-jumbo was evi-

dent in those three drab colors painted below one another? And the most shocking part was that they all were so convinced that the artist had put thought behind that painting! Wow, all those kindergarten toddlers were junior Socrates' then! If only these guys had seen my nursery scribbling I would now be preaching some gospel from a pulpit in front of a doltish crowd! A little while later, I heard a child exclaim that he saw a celestial form in a canvas which looked to me like cow vomit. I immediately understood that I was in the wrong place and ran away before my surviving sanity dissipated.

I wrote the following letter to an artist who drove folks like me crazy:

Have mercy on me! I am a puny human who still sees an apple in an apple and a tree in a tree, so please don't surrender so much of your work to my fatuous imagination and force me to glimpse the divine among a throng of colorful streaks and empty spaces. I request you for the sake of the sanity of the world, please be a little less complacent and make your representations more worldly so that we the dim-witted do not feel left out among the "see-it-alls".

– Dhruva, E.A.V.P.5

The background of the page is a collage of mathematical content. At the top left, there is a vector diagram showing a vector \vec{r} in a 2D coordinate system with axes x and y . The angle between \vec{r} and the x -axis is labeled β . Below this, there are various mathematical expressions including $y = (\sin x)^{\tan x}$, $u_2 = (0, 1)^2 / 2$, $u_3 = (0, 43)^3 / 3!$, $y = e^u$, $y' = e^u \cdot u'$, $\ln \sin x$, $y = (\cos x)^{\tan^2 x}$, $\ln \sin y$, $\sin^2 x$, $\sin 3x$, $\frac{2}{1+2x^2}$, $\frac{\sin x}{\sin x}$, $\cos x + \sin^2$, $\lambda^5 - 2\lambda^2 - 5\lambda + 6 = 0$, $(\lambda - 3) = \Leftrightarrow \lambda_1 = 1, \lambda_2 =$, $\frac{x^{n+1}}{(n+1)!}$, $e^{\theta x}$, $y =$, e^c , and $(-\cos^p s$. On the far right edge, there is a vertical text label "SOUP VERANDAH" with a downward-pointing arrow.

VISITING HELL

Have you ever visited hell? Believe me, I have! My friend called me up and asked me if I wanted to attend a talk on string theory by a well-known scientist. I replied that I knew everything about that topic. My friend easily caught the sarcasm I was implying. Still I felt maybe this was an opportunity to instill in me an interest for complicated stuff.

The hall was vast, consisting of a large amount of tables and chairs symmetrically arranged. Students attending the lecture were all identical. There couldn't possibly be a way to distinguish them from their facial expressions or their clothing. Each face reflected last night's boring and head-breaking math papers. The person who said "All are unique just like you" would never have said so, if he had ever visited this hall.

The teacher looked smart and well groomed. The first few sentences he spoke gave me an idea about what I was going to be listening to for the next fifty-nine minutes. His tone was monotonous and flatter than the flattest thing in the universe. Every thought that he tried to express went beyond me. His talk was so dull and lifeless. Through his talk I could actually

read the book he picked up the information from; he had learned it with such accuracy and concentration that even the punctuations were bang on target! What a talent I thought. And let me not forget the flat white projection on the wall; it projected exactly what was being said. It was in fact the dulllest font that Microsoft could ever provide. I began looking for something that could entertain normal human beings. I was furious at the person who wrote, "Please keep cell-phones switched off" at the entrance. But the please with the faded "E" asked for sympathy thus I obeyed. The only comforting machine was the A/C.

Finally after a long patient wait, I came to the conclusion that maybe I could pull out a nap here. A sudden voice echoed in my head, "This is rude and God will severely punish you by sending you to hell."

"Ah god! I am in hell!"

– Sreeman, E.A.V.P.5



ATITHI DEVO BHAVA

At a friend's suggestion I decided to spend my vacation in India. I knew little about India and took the visit as an adventure. A friend of my friend's met me at the airport and led me to the car park. Near the shiny car there was a crowd which turned towards me. In an instant my back was being hammered and my cheeks didn't belong to my face for a while. Frozen by the sudden onslaught, I wondered if I had committed some crime on coming to India.

Then my host declared, "Meet my family, they are here to welcome you." As I looked at the throng of smiling faces, I was relieved and pleased. This was not a frenzied mob attack. I smiled back at my own welcome party and underwent some more 'physical' greeting when everyone was formally introduced. Then my host turned towards the car and said modestly but with an air of Showman. "This is my car, very good speed, very good engine and very very good seats, the best quality leather, the most comfortable seats."

On seeing the plastic covered seats, I nodded and asked, "Just bought it?"

"Yes, new, nine months."

"Nine months!!! Then why haven't you removed the plastic covering?"

"Remove the plastic?!!!" he gave me an are-you-stupid look. "Come, sit."

I took the seat next to the window, two joined me in the back and three joined my host near the driver's seat, then three more clambered into the back and I was plastered against the glass. After half the world had entered the car and taken the leather seats, they all turned towards me; god knows how they did that; and asked in unison, "Comfortable?" I grinned with half my face. Satisfied they continued their chatter which according to them was a whisper.

As we sped down the highway, every few seconds the horn blared loudly. Looking out I realized that the horn was meant for the cows that ambled about rather than the traffic. The streets had of plenty of both. Through my journey I had seen the greater part of India's wildlife. My host turned towards me and said, "We have nearly reached." I think this was the eleventh time he informed me about our whereabouts. I did not look up expectantly, like I had done the first few times.

All of a sudden, he screeched to a sudden halt. I wondered if we had hit some innocent animal. "We have reached", my host announced. Relieved beyond words, I found my limbs as a frail man finds unknown strength and flung myself out of the car. The ground beneath me was uneven and my left foot sank into something. I looked down, and to my disgust, found it right in the middle of fresh dung.

At home..... Lunchtime!

I sat on the table with an overfilled plate in front of me and as I tried my best to reduce the quantity they screamed unanimously, "NO, eat, you are like a shriveled leaf. What do they feed you there?"

The workouts in the gym had paid off and all my colleagues yearned for my physique but here according to every woman I was malnourished; my ego was shattered. I stared dumbly at my plate, at the five bowls of curry, which according to my host had very little chili. I didn't believe him for a second.

I took a spoon and tried the curry which looked the least threatening. In an instant I was sweating, my face was flushed, my food pipe was on fire and hot tears were stinging my eyes. It took all my will power to stop the tears from running down my cheek.

I gave the cook a thumbs-up, which satisfied everyone. They shifted their focus on their plate and I turned my tear filled eyes towards mine. The five dishes still remained, challenging me. Maybe I should have taken a trip to the Amazon to swim with the alligators.

– Arpita, E.A.V.P. 5

IT'S NOT FAIR

If only the world really was like fairness cream commercials depict it to be. Success and talent would depend on the color of your skin. If you're dusky or dark, you're a tragedy waiting to be saved by a fairness cream at your nearest pharmacy store. External application of this cream would magically lighten your skin, as genetics, biology and concepts developed by some of the most brilliant minds would go down the drain. Also, if you're already fair, and if you were to fail, or be unsuccessful, then I suppose your skin would drop a shade...?

These commercials are a reminder that the color of someone's skin continues to be an age-old point of heated disagreement, and can be traced throughout history.

Today, we Indians are a target of racism abroad. We are eager to shout out "RACISM!" and we feel victimized when a person of Indian-origin is attacked or when some American judge calls a Sikh man's turban a 'rag', or when Shah Rukh Khan is detained at an American airport. As much as these are all very unfor-

tunate incidents, we don't realize that Shah Rukh Khan himself 'endorses racism' by endorsing fairness creams. He probably did it for the money, but as a person who is literally worshipped by Indians, he should engage in more responsible endorsements.

Then why are these advertisements not banned? They really advertise 'Photoshop' more than anything else.

What's sad is that many people actually fall for this. These advertisements have only supported a mindset in the majority of us that a fair complexion is superior to a darker one. For example, on every matrimonial website you will notice either the groom or the bride's side seeking 'fair and v. fair'. How can someone possibly choose a partner based on his or her color?

We can start by accepting that Indians are not a fair race. Even though most of our actors are super-white, not even a handful of them are dark. One dark actress is Nandita Das, who has launched the 'Dark is Beautiful' campaign, which hopes to halt India's huge industry of

skin whitening products, and has filed a petition against Shah Rukh Khan's 'Emami' advertisement.

In India, as in most nations, the path of ending gender, race and class discrimination is rocky, paved only by a few strong bricks like the 'Dark is Beautiful' campaign. It is a path we are left to tread in our own little ways.

– Tanay, E.A.V.P.3

THE MAN FROM THE 23RD CENTURY

A dialogue between 'him' and 'I'. We walk down a dusty street. There's so much noise I can barely hear his soft voice with an unfamiliar accent.

Him: (looking around interestedly) So this is what it was like...

Me: I suppose so. But tell me more about the future. What is it like?

Him: Well, we still look the same and speak the same language. But our worlds don't look alike at all. In fact... yes very different.

Me: How so?

Him: That man's mode of transport seems to still function on a combustion engine, doesn't it?

Me: Yes, obviously. So you're saying in the future you travel with different engines?

Him: My dear girl! Engines! Ha ha!! Don't you know the world doesn't have enough oil, petrol or diesel to last even a hundred years?

Me: (impatient and annoyed) Yes, but then...

Him: What do we use? Ah well, now if I told you that where would the fun be? Man must discover this for himself.

Me: But if you could tell me I could stop global warming and the destruction of the world and...

Him: (smiling as though he knows a secret I do not) If the world were truly destroyed, how am I here? (pausing) No. Man is a stubborn creature. If he wants to survive, he will. And right now no one realises that they're in for a battle of survival of their own and the Earth's.

Me: (confused) What battle? I don't understand.

Him: All in good time my dear. (mumbling as though speaking to himself) One cannot mix up the past and future because it would ruin the present. (louder) But what is the present? The present to me is July 1st 4015. To you it is March 18th 2015. You are what I read in my history PDFs. I am your future. And yet here we both are at the same place at the same time.

Me: Isn't that mixing up Time?

Him: (ignoring my question and rambling on) Tell me, have you ever wondered how the first discoveries were made? How some men and women's thinking was much ahead of their time? These people tried and failed to speed up man's evolution. But it wasn't time yet. And so Time turned on these people.

Me: So Time is now... a driving force? It isn't just numbers and dates?

Him: (exclaiming) Child! What do they teach you at school? (pausing) Or have I said too much? I might be

one of these famous people in your, as you call them, 'textbooks', who brings about a change for which the world isn't ready for as yet.

Me: (even more confused and lost) But I still don't understand. Why have you come?

Him: So that you know the world doesn't end. So that people keep hoping, and also because I just inherited my grandfather's time machine.

Me: (annoyed) So people's intentions don't improve over time do they? Everyone's still as selfish and as self-centred as before.

Him: (quietly) I can't vouch for the niceness of the people of my time. But I do know that it isn't all evil. And even if my trip to this age wasn't out of compassion to your people, I do genuinely not want you to give up on the World. Time will eradicate what prevents growth and evolution. You'll see all in good time.

He vanishes.

– Tvara, E.A.V.P.6

A WITNESS TO THE MIRACLE

The wind woke me before dawn. It came singing melodiously rousing me from my sleep. I went outside but reigning the sky were still the stars like proud pearls shimmering in the dark sky that were watching us. The air around us was silent but it spoke volumes. It lulled the black filigree of the trees into their slumber. All was dark, all was quiet. Then, from behind the trees emerged a golden light, slowly illuminating everything around. It usurped the kingdom from the stars and like a king, strutted upwards. Birds awoke and their chirrup woke the trees. Nature was bejeweled by the shimmer of the fresh dewdrops. Witnessing this miracle, I stood glimmering as the first rays fell upon me. Soon the town was up, the melodious wind died down and I returned to bed as if interrupted by a dream.

– Shambhavi, E.A.V.P.4

WHAT IS “INTELLIGENCE”?

Why do some people think themselves to be better than others?

What gives them the right to judge others and put them down?

All of us have some talent hidden within us, a talent that defines us. Some find it early in life, some later, but we all have it, it's what makes us unique. This talent might not be what one considers “intelligence”, but in our defence “intelligence” is a very vague term.

What is intelligence?

I always thought it was the ability to gain and apply knowledge and skills. Well, doesn't that mean a dancer is as intelligent as a scientist?

Yes.

The majority of the people today are still under the impression that math and science students are “intelligent”. And the aspiring poets and painters? They are told to get down from the clouds and do something more constructive.

I wonder where Picasso would have ended up if he was told to do something more constructive. I'm guessing he'd serve stale tortillas in a broken down canteen in Spain.

This is the irony of life.

One cannot be good at everything; it is not possible. But to judge someone because of his or her shortcomings shows the narrow mindedness of people. It is better to be a good shoemaker than a vain genius whose only talent lies in putting other people down.

– Nishtha and Sanjana, E.A.V.P.4

THE KITE RUNNER

SUMMARY: The story revolves around the friendship of Amir and Hassan. Amir is surprised at Hassan's loyalty towards him but betrays him to seek his father's love, and in the process he lets Hassan get molested. Instantly guilt invades him. Amir wants him to take revenge but noble Hassan remains loyal, which disturbs Amir even more. Soon a war breaks out compelling Amir to leave for the U.S.

Years later Amir returns to a war-torn Afghanistan. There he learns that Hassan is his half-brother. Hassan by now has a son. He finds them with a lot of difficulty. Sadly, in the course of the book, tragic events unfold.

The author has created exceptional characters for this touching novel. Human psychology is revealed vividly to the readers and the canvas of the story depicts several characters, ranging from the wicked and complex Assef to Hassan, who has a jeweled heart.

For me, Baba's generosity, bravery, and truthfulness has a lot of value while Hassan's life-long innocence is adorable but the one character that has got my attention the most is Amir. Amir whom one might find cowardly and selfish risks his own life, crosses dangerous borders, adopts his half-nephew, and forgives his father. Therefore, Amir is my favorite character.

The kaleidoscopic plot and sub-plots are written in a very simple manner but the essence is deep. I learnt that one's actions do not necessarily bring out one's true intentions; circumstances play a major role.

Friends, it is a jewel of a novel narrating a journey of guilt, love and relations between parent and child. It's a must read.

— Akash Saha, E.A.V.P.3



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASHRAM PREMIER LEAGUE

The trophy sits desolately on its shelf, a sorry reminder of the failure of a success which had been. The wood has not seen sunlight, nor been hoisted into the air by victors for over a year. The prestige it had once brought the teams now seems mythical, and the celebrations the trophy had seen, the heart of forgotten. The idol that every budding player had worshiped, the trophy that had been churned out of an ocean of intellect and passion to symbolize the rebirth of cricket in the Ashram and its greatest production – the Ashram Premier League – is today ornamental to a dining hall in the Corner House. Let us return to the yesteryears, and retrace the life of this phoenix that is the APL, from its renascence of the game to its burning out back into ashes.

Our story begins when our very own PK, Praveenbhai, set himself the arduous task of reviving cricket in the Ashram; this he did after the poor participation at the Annex, because, for reasons best not written about, most students chose the Theatre as their Sunday cricket pitch. He drew inspiration from the Kamadhenu of the BCCI, the IPL, and with the seniors of the Ashram fraternity chalked up a plan. They called it the Ashram Premier League. Though there was much opposition to the idea – ludicrous arguments against it, we felt and were part of a tidal wave, which made

PM Modi's a déjà vu. In numbers: 104 entries were received – 25 of them were girls.

Needless to say, the league rode on its novelty and the enthusiasm of its participants and the tremendous, dedicated work put in by the organizers (I salute them for it – Merci!). From being in different teams every week and dressing casually, we graduated to wear the colors of teams that we could finally call ours. All of this played a big role in team spirit, and this in turn led to beautiful, timeless moments like a green grouper explaining the rules of the game to a C grouper, and raw excitement as the whole team cheered on as a last-ball six won a match. We the youngsters admired our mentors, but more so the captains we played under, for their exploits and conduct on the field (inevitably, there were a few other things we picked up, like pointing the batsman whose wickets you had just knocked over to the dugouts).

Everyone was sporting, the good players always helping and encouraging the younger ones and the girls; we came very close to achieving what is expected of us, here at the Ashram. No games competition could match the energy, dedication, sportsmanship, and excitement that the APL delivered. For the first time, the players felt that they were part of something much bigger than themselves; in this the APL managed what little else had. By the time the first season was over, the level of cricket deserved polite applause, but the spirit in which the game had been

played merited a standing ovation. The inaugural season of the APL had the perfect, humane blemish of youth and passion on the golden standard of physical education.

The tournament was more than just cricket, as the APL Sportspirit Newsletter illustrated with its very existence. This was a short pamphlet-like weekly which did a tremendously articulate job of complementing the on-field achievements of the league (hats off to the teams that have “travailler comme des ânes” over the years on this!).

As much as the first season was about the revival of the game, the second was about consolidating its place in the Sunday columns of everybody's timetables. This time, the participation increased to 115, but only 14 girls signed up. This season witnessed better cricket, but a lot was still left to be desired. After the initial outburst of curious excitement, the game was concentrated upon more seriously in APL 2; a net practice area with two pitches was readied and a bowling machine bought. The APL had stamped itself as a regular on the Ashram notice board, but teething troubles,



PHOTO CREDIT : AMIT L SHAH

like the disregard for the weaker players, surfaced.

There was no doubt about a third season. Spectators still crammed the shadows cast by colorful parasols, witnessing the new formats that were introduced. Improvements were being made every season and each was more successful than the last. Particularly, from this edition, players were graded by their capabilities, and played against players of the same grade; this meant that youngsters were given a fairer chance to prove their mettle. Nevertheless, without being meticulous, what I wish to convey is that, as of that point in time, the Ashram Premier League displayed all signs of a healthy organization; it constantly smoothed or attempted to, anyway, its creases so that its existence be viable. I say all this in contradiction to what the numbers suggest; this season witnessed only 5 of the original 6 teams compete, and a drop in participation to under a century of people for the first time.

The fourth season saw a reincarnation of the teams and a revision of the format to answer to the complaints of the fringe players while simultaneously giving the top brass the test matches – a little over 250 minutes of game-time in a day. This season, unlike the previous three, was spread over the two non-competition seasons, from January to March then again from June to August. While, admittedly, the weaker players were given a greater scope to prove themselves, they were still made to field under the relentless sun as the

“good” players batted and bowled their hearts out.

This was the beginning of the end of the APL. The first and foremost reason for this was that the spirit in which the league had begun was forgotten. To add to that, the captains were no longer charismatic enough to command the respect of the youngsters, who were becoming more and more disgruntled with the elitist functioning of the league. What had made this league stand out from all others in the Ashram was that tournament and team came before the individual. Dejected, sportsmanship watched helplessly as it was relegated back to being only an idealistic word.

The fifth season was much like the fourth, as participation continued to drop. We were back to playing a game of just throwing, seeing, and hitting ball. Personally, though, I played under the best captain the APL has ever seen. Sadly, there was a gross lack of such players to keep the plunge of the league in check. The tournament, which was to nurture the youngsters, was the wicked stepmother who hunted them down and sent them away, leaving the defectors disgusted with the decision makers. The newsletter, which, like the tournament it wrote about, had begun with electrifying enthusiasm, had become too much of a burden on a couple of people. The fifth APL was the last it documented, and anyway, nothing much of what took place in the last two deserved to be in print. Interest

**NO GAMES COMPETITION
COULD MATCH THE
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dwindled, standard fell, and the league failed in its every aspect.

2013 witnessed the last couple of seasons of the APL, which were poor events compared to the grand and successful first trio. The league left a lot of its participants bitter. The red strip in the Annex was once more a disturbance during football games and the once loved cricket league did not deserve any more attention.

Like with most enterprises that fail, the APL too started well, had a majestic peak followed by a tangible decline. The first couple of seasons were proof of the magic that we could produce. The peak was the third season. The beginning of the end was a modest, (the players were certainly not) reasonably successful fourth season. A fifth season witnessed waning interest and the Ashram Premier League careened off the cliff of the sixth tournament and sunk into the abyss after the sheer drop of the seventh and last season.

What went wrong? Let's just say that we need to do all in our power to make sure no undertaking which begins so successfully is obliterated because of selfishness or any other vice from the part of any of those to whom it truly concerns. I confess that hindsight is best sight, but if the students – primarily the so called average ones, who veritably provide the mass and back bone of any organization – had asked to be more involved, we might have found a way to salvage our beloved league. This year's Art Fair is proof



PHOTO CREDIT : AMIT L. SHAH

enough that this could, should, and must be the way forward. It is truly unfortunate to see something that is for the betterment of those who make it up and which functions on its intrinsic ideals, to leave behind those very visionary values and perish.

The trophy still sits in desolation, a mnemonic that success is not too far off for those who dare to dream. The wood might never be celebrated again, but all those who value those days, "hamare zamane mein", will remember the ideals for which it stands. The Ashram Premier League will always be a token of bitter memories to those who wish to see it in that light, but not to those who choose to see what it achieved and made us dream of – Here's to the APL!

– Chirag, E.A.V.P.4



ART FAIR 2015

Last year, the students of S.A.I.C.E started something quite spectacular-the Art Fair. The thing that is unique about the Art Fair is that for the first time, younger students of S.A.I.C.E. got to create something of their own and put it up on stage. It was not the usual E.A.V.P.6 and Knowledge program. It ranged from



E.A.V.P.3 to Knowledge.

This year, the Art Fair started with all the aspiring participants meeting at eleven thirty on the galleries in school. The appointed organisers set about asking people what they wanted to do. We had dances, songs, and a play.

By the end of two weeks, we didn't think that we would be able to put up a program which would last for even half



an hour! We were all really discouraged. Soon people started dropping out as their enthusiasm waned and we were left with just a couple of items. Then started the pep talks. Encouraging them took a while and a lot of energy, and slowly people started gaining back the confidence with which they had first started.

Everyone worked hard and by the end of the month we were all more or less ready to put up the show (though still

lacking in confidence). On the final day with all the feverish excitement going about, we managed (if we may be a little boastful) to put up a fantastic performance which was very well appreciated by the audience.

Here are a few pictures. We hope that by looking at them you feel part of the joyful ambiance of the Art Fair 2015.





IT'S OVER!

BUCKET LIST



BUZKASHI

Buzkashi (literally “goat dragging” in Persian) is a Central Asian sport in which horse-mounted players attempt to drag a goat or calf carcass toward a goal. It is the national sport of Afghanistan, although it was banned under the Taliban regime as they regarded this sport immoral. Traditionally, games could last for several days, but in its more regulated tournament version it has a limited match time.

CHEESE ROLLING

The Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling is an annual event held on the Spring Bank Holiday at Cooper's Hill, near Gloucester in England. It takes place on the last Monday of May. It is traditionally by and for the people who live in the local village of Brockworth, but now people from all over the world take part.

From the top of the hill a 9 lbs (4.08 kgs) round of Double Gloucester cheese is rolled, and competitors race down the hill after it. The first person over the finish line at the bottom of the hill wins the cheese. In theory, competitors are aiming to catch the cheese; however, it has around a one second head start and can reach speeds up to 70 mph (112 km/h), enough to knock over and injure a spectator.

Cheese rolling is said to have Pagan origins for the custom of rolling objects down the hill. It is thought that bundles of burning brushwood were rolled down the hill to represent the birth of the New Year after winter.



EXTREME IRONING

Extreme ironing is an extreme sport in which people take ironing boards to remote locations and iron items of clothing. According to the Extreme Ironing Bureau, extreme ironing is “the latest danger sport that combines the thrills of an extreme outdoor activity with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt.”

Some locations where such performances have taken place include a mountainside of a difficult climb; a forest; a canoe; while skiing or snowboarding; on top of large bronze statues; in the middle of a street; underwater; in the middle of the M1 motorway; whilst parachuting; and under the ice cover of a lake. The performances have been conducted solo or in groups.

Purists of the sport claim that it was started in 1997 in Leicester, England, by resident Phil Shaw in his back garden. Shaw came home from what he recalls as a hard day in a Leicester knitwear factory. Preferring the idea of an evening out rock climbing, he decided to combine the two activities into a new extreme sport.

The 1st Extreme Ironing World Championship was held in Munich where 12 teams from 6 different countries took part. Competitors were tested on their abilities to cope with five arduous ironing tests on a variety of fabrics and in different environments ranging from rocky to forest, urban and water. They were judged on their creative ironing skills as well as the creases in the clothing.

GOTMAR

Gotmar literally means stone throwing ('got' = small stone & 'mar' = beat). This is an event unique to the village of Pandhurna in Madhya Pradesh. Every year the Savargao family places a tree trunk in the middle of the river Jam which flows through the Pandhurna village.

A flag is tied on top of the tree trunk. People from the neighboring village of Savargao and Pandhurna gather on either side of the river banks in the morning. The people of Savargao try to save the tree trunk (flag) from the people of Pandhurna by throwing stones at them, and the Pandhurna people try to push back the Savargao people and cut the flag on the tree trunk and bring it into Pandhurna. If the people of Pandhurna can pull the tree trunk and bring it into Pandhurna by 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., then they are declared the winners. After pulling the tree trunk into Pandhurna, people carry it to the Chandika Mata temple. If the people of Pandhurna are not able to cut the tree trunk and bring it into Pandhurna by evening, then together the people of Pandhurna and Savargao cut it and bring it to the Chandika Mata temple. This festival is celebrated every year. This is a very bloody and gruesome custom, and there are usually several deaths and hundreds of injuries every year.



MOBILE PHONE THROWING

Mobile phone throwing competitions were first arranged in the year 2000 in Savollinna, Finland. Back in the first event, a leading insurance company sponsored this for recycling purposes. The sport resembles somewhat a cricket ball throw competition. It is played to throw away the frustration of people along with their mobile phones, which can ultimately become a toxic waste. Eighteen-year-old Ere Karjalainen from Finland set a new world record by throwing an old Nokia phone at a distance of 101.46 meters.



WIFE CARRYING

Wife carrying is a contest in which male competitors race while each of them carries a female teammate. The objective is for the male to carry the female through a special obstacle track in the fastest time. The sport was first introduced at Sonkajärvi, Finland.

HISTORY

It originated in Finland. There was a man called HerrkoRosvo-Ronkainen who was considered a robber in the late 1800s. He lived in a forest, and ran around with his gang of thieves causing harm to the villages. Rosvo-Ronkainen and his thieves were accused of stealing food and women from villages; they carried these women on their backs as they ran away, (hence the “wife” or women carrying).

- The length of the official track is 253.5 meters.
- The track has two dry obstacles and a water obstacle about one meter deep.
- The wife to be carried may be your own, or the neighbor’s, however, she has to be over 17 years of age.
- The minimum weight of the wife to be carried has to be 49 kilograms. If she weighs less than 49 kg, she will be burdened with a rucksack containing additional weight to bring the total load to be carried up to 49 kg.





WORM CHARMING

Worm charming, worm grunting, and worm fiddling are methods of attracting earthworms from the ground. The activity is usually performed to collect bait for fishing but can also take the form of a competitive sport.

The World Worm Charming Championships began in 1980. The contest has taken place every year since, consistently growing in popularity, but changing very little. The wormers are given small squares of land to fiddle, grunt, and charm their way to glory by collecting more worms than anyone else. The current world record for worm charming is held by Miss S. Smith and Mr. M. Smith, who won the championship in 2009 with 567 worms.

The collected worms are released that same day after dark, so that they are less likely to be eaten by birds.

THROUGH THE LENS



Varadaraja Perumal Temple
F/13 / 1/750 / 400





PHOTO CREDIT: ADITYA

Eglise de notre Dame des Anges
F/13 / 1/500 / 640



PHOTO CREDIT: ADITYA

Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
F/13 / 1/500 / 640



Statue OF Duplex
F/11 / 1/100 / 100

SO WHAT DID YOU GUYS THINK OF THIS ISSUE?

After reading this issue we're sure you all have plenty of comments and opinions.
Do share them, we'd love to hear them!

Thank you,
Editors

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L to R (back row): Dhruva, Satya, Aditi.P

L to R (front row): Samanvita, Arpita, Sreeman, Aditi.T