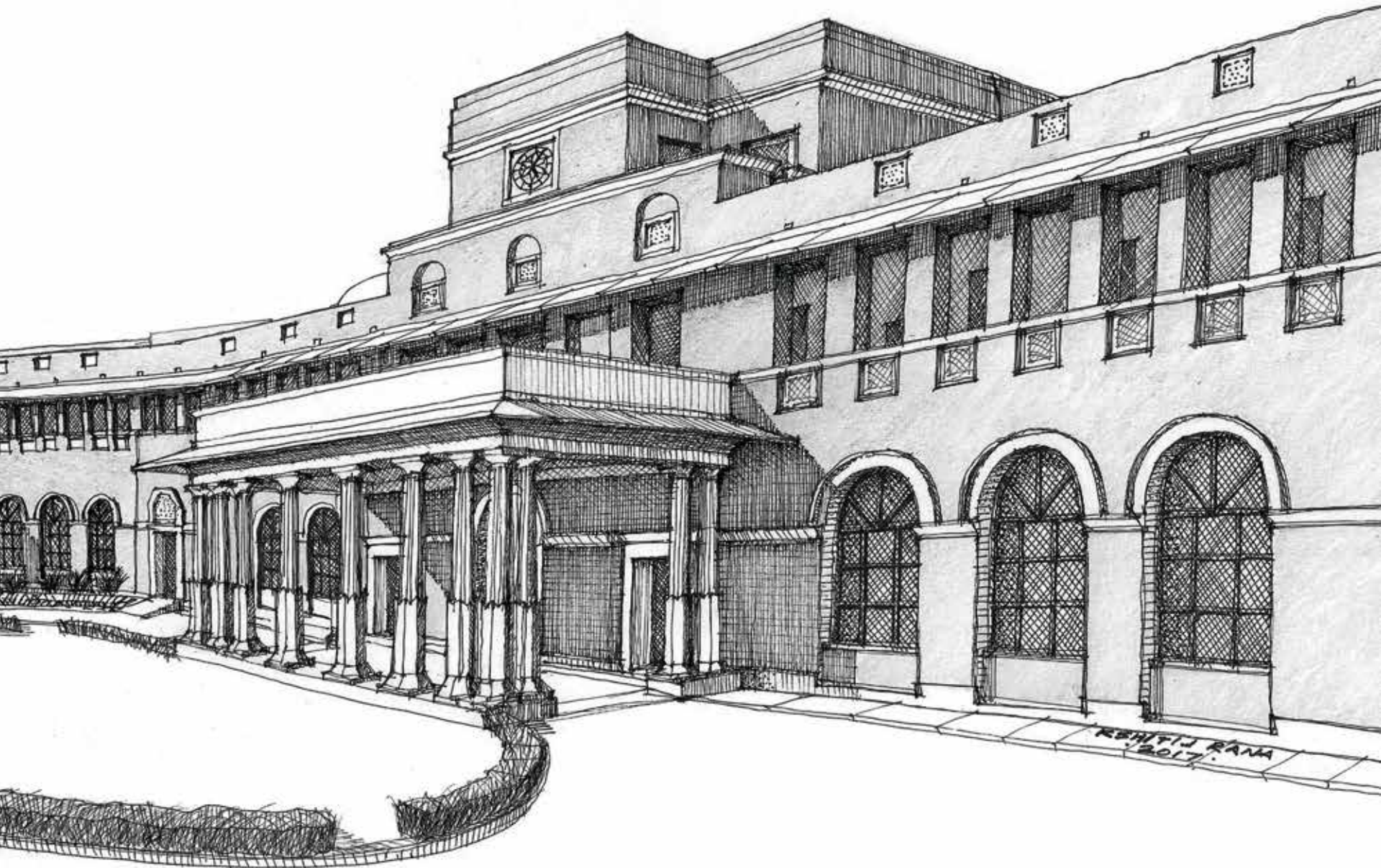


# HIGHWAY '77 REVISITED

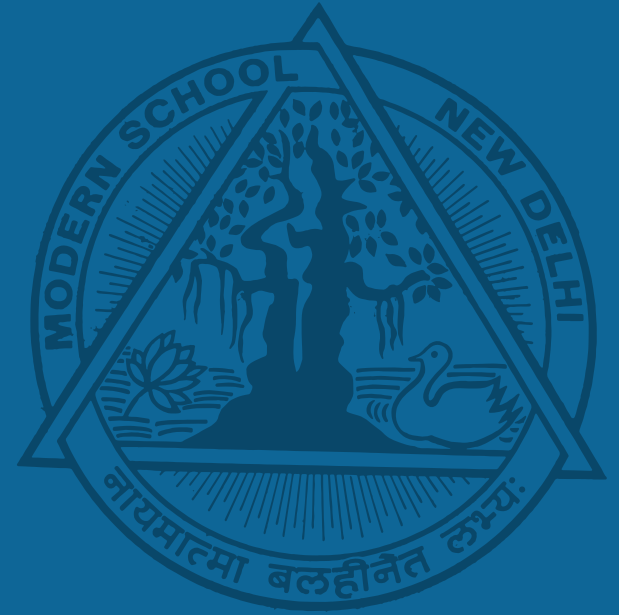


ADARSH









# HIGHWAY '77 REVISITED





“...I’ll trade all my tomorrows for a single yesterday...”

– Kris Kristofferson

Cocooned, sheltered, and happy we thought school would go on forever and ever. We actually did!

We went through school thinking we would never have to grow up. Friendships we had were meant to go on forever. Of course we were all going to magically stay connected even without Facebook, and of course, we were all going to keep in touch because that’s how it was meant to be. So excited to be stepping into the threshold of adulthood – some of us were racing to step into it, almost oblivious of leaving behind some of the best years of our lives.

Alas, how far removed we were from it all! Life beckoned and we had to step into it. Somewhere we got a little lost – some of us in work, some of us in family and children, and some of us in absolutely nothing at all. Some of us, like Atlas, carried the world on our shoulders in whirlwinds that came and went, and in the curves that life threw at us with abandon. Twisting and turning in the maelstroms of our lives, we alone know how fast the years have flown.

Forty years later, here we stand poised to reconnect. Over the years we have all grown just a little older, some of us wiser. We look forward

to the reunion with bated breath and perhaps a little trepidation. We take comfort in the fact that friendships made way back then really do stand the test of time. We so easily manage to slip back to where we left off. School friends really are friends forever. Hoping age has been kind and we still recognise each other. Waiting to reignite lost friendships and emotions as we walk down memory lane at the reunion.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has in some way or the other, managed to spare precious time to organise this reunion. We love the way everyone jumped straight into the WhatsApp group chat to talk about old times.

May this retrospective Adarsh stay on our memory shelves forever and be handed down to our children and grand children to cherish. Hoping that it manages to evoke the essence of our youth. Hoping that you all enjoy this Adarsh as much as we’ve enjoyed putting it together. So come now let’s walk into those glorious times together...

– Adarsh Editorial Team

# UNDER THE SIR SHANKAR LAL DOME

*Guneet Singh Lehl*

## *Time for Assembly*

What made us special and so different from the rest of the schools has a lot to do with our ‘Assembly.’ I came from the Anglicized Convents (I joined in S1). There you went straight to your class, said the Lord’s Prayer, and you got going with the academics and the rest of the day.

And here we were, sitting cross-legged on the wooden floor, singing traditional songs and prayers, and listening to a man called Bond – sometimes for hours and hours. Bond forged a revolutionary form of education whose essence was very Indian and yet it was very contemporary and ‘Modern’. We were far far ahead of all the schools of our times, but we never let it get to our head and were equally comfortable dealing with the guy on the street and talking to him in his own street lingo. I don’t see that quality in other Public Schools. We knew we were the best, and yet our feet were firmly planted on the ground – and during Assembly, even our butts were planted on the ground.

Inside the Hall we’d sit on the durries, class wise, S1 to the left, S5 extreme right. At the back, on the benches, sat the Teachers and the

Prefects and the Sports Captains and the House Captains. Some of these ‘responsible’ lads and lasses were also responsible for the mischief that took place. Can never forget the time around Diwali when some bombs went off in the toilets while the Assembly was in full swing. Usually Bond indicated the song/prayer to Khastu. The Violinists would stand up with their bows and violins, the Sitarists readied their sitars, the Harmonist poised his fingers on his harmonium, Khastu gave the nod and then the whole school would have a blast. We sang Vande Mataram, Saare Jahan Se Acha, ‘Bhajaman Ram Naam Sukhdaai...’, ‘Mere Prabhuvar Meri Tujhase, ye prarthana hai ki...’ and many more. Post the prayer, there’d be the news, the weather report, and the Talk of the Day. On some days we’d have poetry recitations and debates and even talent of the day. “Friends, Romans and Country Men, Lend me your ears...” Boy, the number of times we lent our ears to that speech is not funny! Once, AK Chaturvedi walked up on stage and treated us to an impromptu recitation of Harivansh Rai Bacchhan’s long ‘Madhushala’. His rich, lyrical voice made Hindi poetry sound so





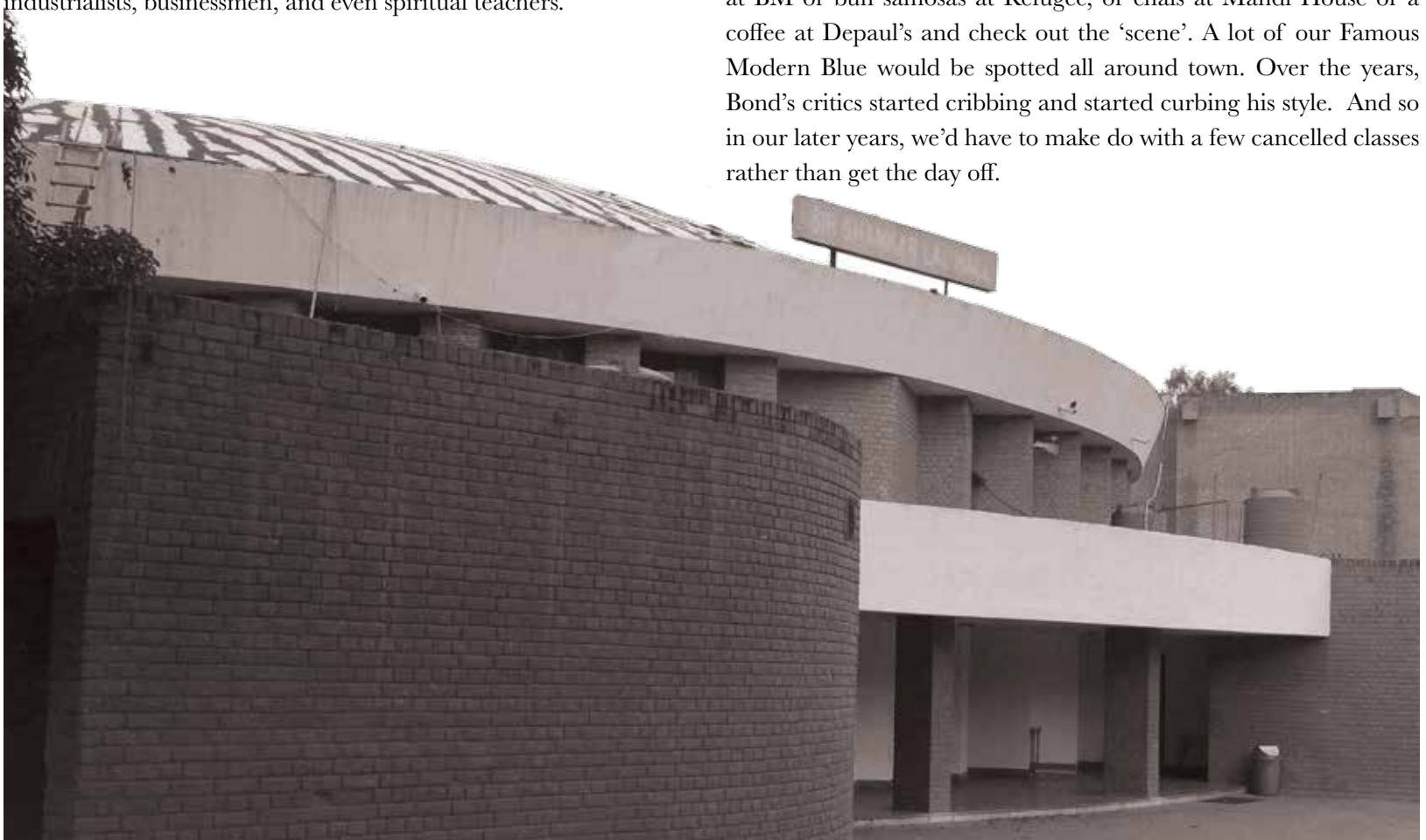


sweet. The same AKC once joined us while we were playing hockey and amazed us with his dribbling wizardry. We had so many heroes to emulate! For the News Reading and the Weather Report, we'd listen to the previous night's news, jot down points from the morning paper, and nervously wait for Bond to ask us up on stage (while we rehearsed the news in our heads a million times).

I'd have that dry mouthed, butterfly moment, as I'd walk up the steps. I'd plant my paper on the lectern, tap the microphone for sound, maybe bend the mike to my level, look down at the 700 strong faces, focus on a smiling friend, take a deep breath and then begin. Public Speaking, even today, is scary and exhilarating. Ever appreciative, ever protective, Bond taught us that fine art. For Talk of the Day we'd usually pick up stuff from the Reader's Digest or a book or some magazine. Some, however, would write their own stuff and present their own original ideas. Today, many of these fine girls and boys are India's leading writers, poets, artists, filmmakers, sportsmen, social workers, academicians, corporate visionaries, industrialists, businessmen, and even spiritual teachers.

## *Bond all the Way*

Bond would sometimes comment on our news or our talk or he'd tell us something he felt important for us to hear. He didn't want us to merely top the school boards. He wanted to develop both our 'Intelligence' and our 'Character'. He encouraged us to be All-Rounders. Academics. Sports. Extra-Curricular Activities. Social Work. Hobbies. He spoke about what makes Leaders. He talked about honesty, fearlessness, moral courage, and that magical esprit de corps. Bond also loved his own voice and could go on for hours. No one had the guts or the gumption to stop him. While our butts would ache, we'd know the more time he spent talking, the less time there'd be for classes. While Zero Hour would be the first casualty, we knew some of the boring, difficult classes would also get scrapped. We'd even take bets as to which class would get cancelled. During our earlier years, if he'd talked for a long time, Bond would announce he'd given us all the 'education' we needed for the day. We'd be told to go home and 'absorb' what he had said. Of course no one went home. We'd 'absorb' what he said eating chola bhaturas at BM or bun samosas at Refugee, or chais at Mandi House or a coffee at Depaul's and check out the 'scene'. A lot of our Famous Modern Blue would be spotted all around town. Over the years, Bond's critics started cribbing and started curbing his style. And so in our later years, we'd have to make do with a few cancelled classes rather than get the day off.



## *The Felons*

While most made it to the stage for legitimate reasons like News Reading and Talks etc., some of us made it to the stage courtesy our felonies. We'd be asked to stand during the Assembly, in front of the whole school. That fateful day, we'd hope Bond would not be present upon stage. As long as he was not there, we knew we were safe. Leaning against the stage wall, we badass hipsters would stare defiantly at the students in the Assembly. Or we'd amuse ourselves watching those pesky pigeons canoodle and dive bomb some hapless students from the girders above. But if Bond was seen on stage, we knew we were in for some serious damage.

If he felt we'd done something unpardonable, he'd invite us up on stage. He had a standard punishment protocol. He'd tell you why he was slapping you. He'd then ask you if you had any reason he shouldn't slap you. And if you couldn't convince him or you manned up to take it on the chin (actually cheek), he'd then tell you to stand straight and brace yourself. His powerful hands didn't swing much and he had a short back lift, but he could knock you off stage (and it was for this reason he'd tell you to brace yourself before he hit you). Of course he'd also use those same strong hands of his to teach you how to "shake hands". All Modernites of our generation have



was Bond. We weren't safe from him anywhere. DHC 1456. Black Ambassador, white upholstery. He'd spot you, even from his car. And

you'd know you had it coming if the car stopped and he beckoned for you. So if you saw that car from afar, you ran and you hid and you prayed he didn't see you.

## *Along with the Misdemeanors, there were also the Demeanors.*

Not everyone who stood during Assembly stood to get punished. Many also stood to be applauded for their good work. You won a match, acted well in a play, did some great social work, or did great academically, you got your due recognition. Bond would tell the entire School about your achievement. That inspired you to do even better, and you became role models for others to emulate. There were many of us who were shy, insecure, and suffered from low self-esteem. Bond had the skill and the patience to recognise our potential and foster our hidden talent. If you were not good in academics, he'd encourage you to play a game, or participate in a play, or he'd make you do something he knew you'd be able to achieve easily. This did wonders for our confidence and most of us never looked back.

Today, 40 years later the times may have changed. Today, Bond's techniques may or may not be considered appropriate. I'm not going to defend our days and I'm not going to defend his ways. Bond ran the show. Good and bad. Me? I felt safe with Bond. He had a sense of fairness about the way he went about his affairs. He encouraged you to be truthful and he encouraged you to be man enough to admit your mistake. He would punish you for your wrongs but he would simultaneously respect you for admitting your wrongs. And he would definitely applaud and encourage you for your good work.

I guess if you are willing to receive the claps, then you should be willing to also receive the slaps. That's what life teaches you. Bond taught us this early. Our school motto is *Naayamaatmaa Balaheenen Labhyaha*: self-realization cannot be achieved by the weak. Where we were weak, Bond made us strong. Where we were strong, Bond made us soar. He was our *Sutra-Dhaar*, our Alchemist, He turned our Lead to Gold. He made us proud Modernites.

# WHAT I LEARNT YESTERDAY IS WHAT I DO TODAY

*Lakshmi Krishnamurthy Kaul*



I have been running a school in Lucknow for the past 27 years; an inclusive school catering to children with special needs, children from economically less privileged backgrounds, and also ‘normal’ children. I was recently asked to write something about my memories of growing up and people who may have influenced me, with specific reference to my running a school. At about the same time, the MHS Batch of ’77 Reunion group was in full flow and I was taken back in time and space.

I joined Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School in J3 from a very offbeat school, which functioned from the first floor of a residential property and had a total of 4 ‘classrooms’. I remember with great fondness my first interaction with Mrs. Uma Sahay, who was my House Mistress (in Sri Aurobindo House) and took me under her wing. She helped make the transition to mainstream schooling a smooth one.

I remember how she groomed me from being a shy newcomer to becoming a bold and active young girl. This memory is one that has influenced me in helping young children joining our school feel loved and welcomed. I was really bad at games, but I remember Mrs. Sahay encouraging me to participate in the ‘Matka Race’ for Sports Day! I was so happy to be on the ground! She gave me

every opportunity to participate in what I was good at – which was dancing and acting. I now realise the importance of acknowledging the talents of every child and allowing children to focus on their strengths.

Mr. M.N. Kapur is the person I think of most often, especially while dealing with difficult situations. He was an absolutely incredible man – honest, fair, fearless, calm, quick to take action, and a firm believer in the importance of character building. I remember how he had the names of each and every student on his fingertips, what her parents were doing, her marks in the last exam, everything! Whenever he met me, he quoted the interaction he had had with my father at the time of my admission. I try to do the same with every child of my school; I remember how special I felt when in that place myself. I also remember the long conversations he used to have with us in the Principal’s period, when he shared his own thoughts and also tried to know what the students were thinking; another practice that I follow, without realising where the idea had germinated from.

All in all, my years at MHS have had a very big part to play in who I am and what I am doing with my life today. Proud to be a Modernite!



# HUMAYUN ROAD REMINISCENCES – THE SIMPLE JOYS OF CHILDHOOD

*Rahul Verghese*

I joined Modern in J1 – my first exposure to a big school. Have varied recollections from there –

The milk break with the ‘malai’ deposit under the bottle cap, which had to be finished, the kites that used to swoop down on the steps and snatch goodies that we would be munching, playing ‘ghodi



ghodi’ with Rahul Bhatia, Krishna Menon, Aditya Arora, Raghuraj, Sanjiv Sant, and several others.

Taking part in a sack race on one of the sports days and actually finishing quite well – don’t remember if I won anything. Acting in our House Play – ‘Lady Dorothy and the Pirates’ as Captain Swordfish, the pirate leader, with Sagari as Lady Dorothy, and then coming back home amidst sirens and black rims on the car headlights as the 1971 war had just broken that night. Enjoying the orange bar at the canteen, the story telling and poetry competitions, reading the news headlines and the Thought for the Day, and hearing the news every day. Having a tough time sitting cross-legged during assembly. Enjoying clay modeling and carpentry classes.

Looking back, it was the simplicity of growing up at that time, with much more human interaction and no thought of caste, creed, economics or any other differences – we mostly all liked each other for what we were – which was great, with the fields being used, without us being digitally tied down to our individual worlds. And at the end of J3, we were ready to hit Senior School.

## SHANKAR'S ON THE SPOT COMPETITION

**T**ODAY I went to take part in the Shankar's Painting Competition. When I went there at 10 a.m. many of my friends were going back. I sat in the 5-8 years age group. After reading the paper, I decided to paint 'Vegetable man' and 'Swimming is fun'. I made two paintings, one with crayons and one with poster colours. When I gave my paintings to Aunty, she gave me one "Dolls' Museum" pass.

RAJAN CHAUHAN  
KG3

## OUR SCHOOL'S HELP FOR BIHAR RELIEF

**I** CONSIDER myself very lucky to have been one of the few children chosen to meet our Prime Minister this morning. All six of us were proud when we presented a cheque of fifty-four thousand rupees and Mrs. Gandhi said our school had collected the largest amount for relief in Bihar.

In the beginning I was a bit nervous about going to the Prime Minister's place and hoped I would not do or say anything wrong, but she was so kind and asked us all our names. Later when she left for a meeting, one of her Secretaries took us inside and gave us something to drink and eat. Now I can tell all my friends that I have met Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

BRAHMGYAN SINGH  
KG4

# WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT?

*Jyoti Sahni Vohra*

Night had fallen and the Shankracharya house function was underway. I was on stage being Karan (yes, me! Complete with a moustache!) to my Kunti. Suddenly, out went the stage lights and a candle came on, confusing the hell out of all of us. Needless to say, we thought it was a regular power cut and carried on. As soon as our ballet was done, and much to the dismay of BC Sharma who had spent days on rehearsals, we were finally shunted off stage and asked to go to our parents.

Something about the whole thing was very intriguing and hush-hush. We virtually ran to our cars and drove home in near silence without any headlights on. War had broken out.

India and Pakistan had gone to war. Black outs were the norm. I for one will never forget our house function being blacked out!



# BLESSED IS THE HORSE

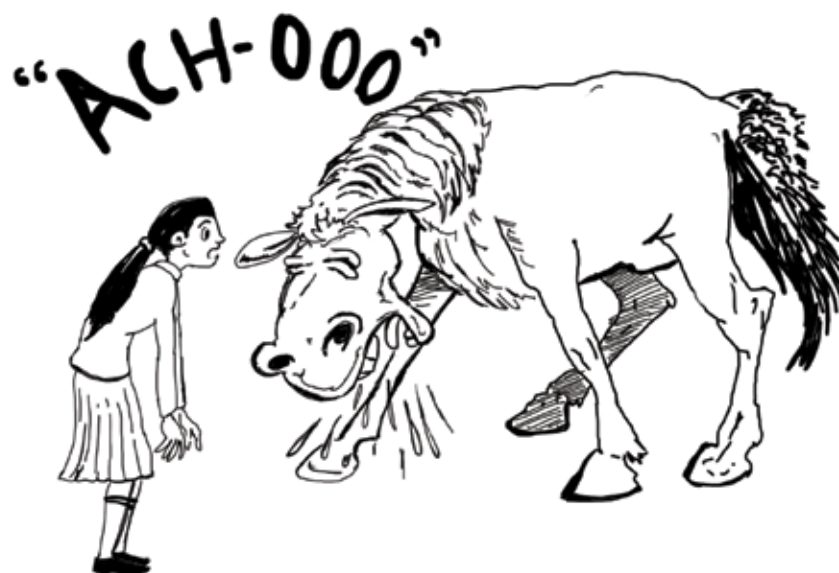
*Kalyani Srinivasan Rajan*

One day, I was hanging out at the riding area in Jr. School during the games period when I caught Tattu's eyes. Yes, he was looking at me oh so fondly. Being an animal lover, naturally I went up to his face and stroked him. I would've kissed him too, but his look suddenly changed from moony-eyed to alert.

Uh-oh.

I started backing away. Tattu followed.

I was walking backwards and he was walking forward.



I quickened my pace, and so did Tattu!

I faltered. Tattu did not.

It must have looked rather comical – but comical it was not – me trying to run backwards with Tattu in pursuit, till I hit a tree and was forced to stop. I turned around in one quick movement, hugged the tree and cried “Save me!”

Tattu's head (the one with those adoring soft eyes before he changed his mind), came right up to my back ... and let out a gigantic sneeze!

# BUDDING PERFORMERS



# SANDS OF TIME

*Kshitij Rana*

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In junior school, we went on a road trip through Rajasthan. It was a mixed bag of kids from different years. The itinerary was Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, and Chittorgarh. We started off in a bus and the fun began. We saw the sights of Jaipur and slept at a dharamsala.

On the itinerary was a visit to the famous boarding school Mayo College. I was looking forward to it as I had a cousin studying there and would have got to meet him. Apparently, the senior boys were a handful for the masters, and by the time we reached Ajmer they were finding it difficult to control them.



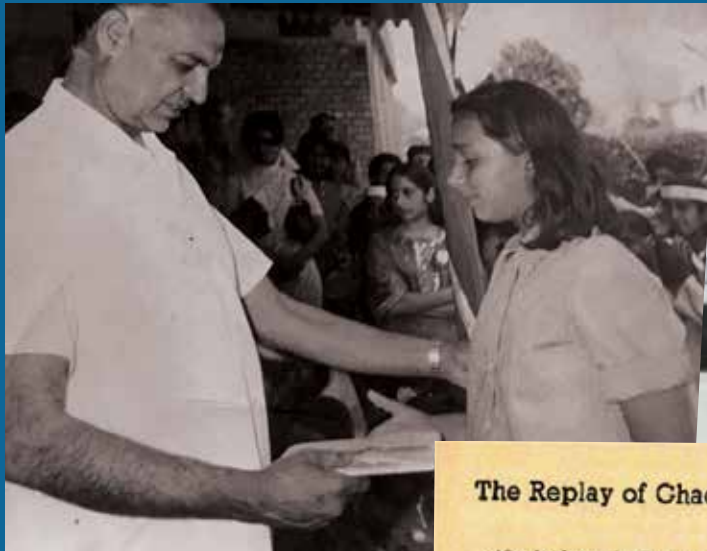
To our disappointment, we were told that as we were “out of control” they could not risk taking us to Mayo as it was Kapur Sahib’s old school, and we might bring him and the school a bad name. No amount of pleading helped and that was that. No visiting the school.

Udaipur and Chittorgarh were nice, but sadly since we didn’t cut the mustard, there was no Mayo too.





# LITTLE CHAMPIONS

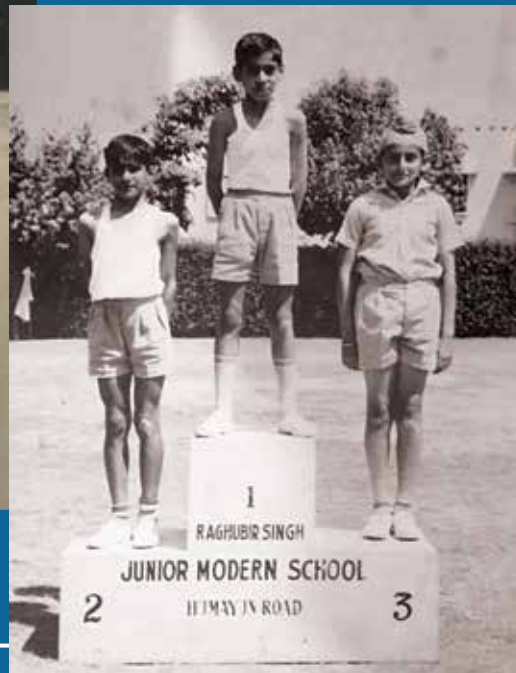


## The Replay of Chacha Nehru Football Tournament

After the draw against D. A. V. School Chitragupta Road. So, we had to play a replay match. Both the teams as the referee blew the whistle and the teams entered. Tilakvir Nanda (Capt.) went for the toss but unluckily he lost. Their captain chose the side so we started. In the beginning it looked as if we would lose the game because the ball remained on our side but our hooks did their bit and so they could not score a goal.

In the second half we kept the ball on their side but again we were unable to score any goal upto sometime. In the 49th minute they got a free kick in the penalty square. It was stopped by Yoginder who passed it beautifully. Raveen Chaudhry who made no mistake in putting it neatly in the goal. The eager spectators appreciated the goal. The goal was scored in the 50th minute. Their team tried to equalize but were unsuccessful. Raveen Chaudhry (Ranny) became the hero of the game. We had won the match and entered the Quarter-finals of the Chacha Nehru Tournament.

Govind Koclar  
J-3



# ADVENTURE ON MOUNT ABU

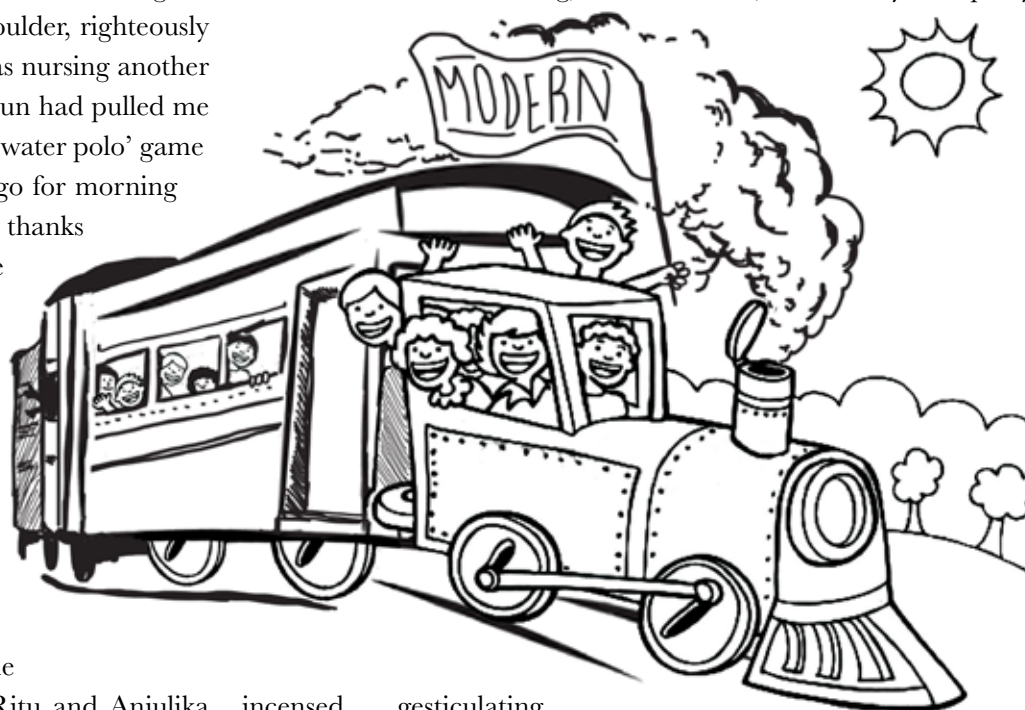
*Maitreyee Barthakur Angelo*

In S1, our class took a train trip to Mount Abu with Mrs. Kalotra (Kalli or Kallo Rani) and Mr. Pahuja as our chaperones. We were a pack of high-spirited 13 year olds with hormones on the rise. Not surprisingly, the foursome of Ritu Sethi and Arun Gadhoke, Anjulika Bhargava and Rahul Gupta that had slowly burgeoned at school, now blossomed... they sat apart from the rest of us during the train journey. Miffed, we gave them the cold shoulder, righteously indignant at their flouting of class solidarity. I was nursing another recent, raw memory; that summer, Rahul and Arun had pulled me in – fully uniformed and bespectacled – during a ‘water polo’ game at the National Stadium pool where we used to go for morning swimming lessons. I survived a near-drowning thanks to (the late) Mr. Pahuja who jumped in from the opposite end and hoisted me up. I was a Modernite... I didn’t tattle... despite having to walk around school all day in a wet blue uniform.

On arriving at Mt. Abu, we made our way to a large ‘guest house,’ nothing but a dharmshala, on a hill which had huge empty rooms with concrete floors. After dinner on our first night, we spread out our sleeping bags – the boys in one large room, the girls in an adjacent one, with Ritu and Anjulika choosing a small ante-room off the girls’ bathroom. After a song and joke session, we were soon fast asleep. I awoke after midnight, and enroute to the bathroom, tripped in the dark upon the supine forms of Anjulika and Ritu, snoring peacefully. Still smarting from their unfriendly behavior on the train (and subconsciously, their association with Rahul and Arun) I crept back to my room and after ensuring that Kalli was still asleep, crept back to the ante-room. Slowly, I slithered up between the two sleeping girls and proceeded to pour a bottle of Palmolive shampoo onto their heads. The cold liquid seeping into their scalps, elicited a few sudden whimpers, but

they were too exhausted from the journey to wake up. The bottle depleted, and feeling justifiably vindicated, I went to the bathroom and back to bed.

The next morning, to my horror, there was no water in the guest house and no one could bathe. I was one of the first ones to go out for breakfast. On returning, an irate Rahul, followed by an equally



incensed, gesticulating Arun, were charging down the hill toward us, Rahul repeatedly, threateningly, shouting my name while peppering it with a hitherto unfamiliar four letter word. While I pondered the ramifications of my expanding lexicon, Mr. Pahuja interceded, and a potential homicide was averted.

The next night, after lights were out, a few boys and I tied down a sleeping Puneet Jain into his sleeping bag and I proceeded to put toothpaste into his wide-open mouth. Then creeping into our own room, I persuaded a few girls to join me in drawing whiskers and



motifs with permanent markers and shoe polish onto the faces of our sleeping friends. I can still recall their fury the next day when they were unable to remove some vestiges of the ink off their faces – prior to meeting a group of boys from Air Force Central School!

We explored the exquisite Dilwara temple and the sights of Mt. Abu. A few days later, we went on an unscheduled two-day bus trip to Baroda to tour a textile mill owned by Puneet Jain's family. Two memories are distinct: a sumptuous thali lunch during which we gorged Gujarati food (most dishes were sweet!) like there would be no tomorrow. The second was our exciting night escapade. After going for a late-night show of 'Rampur ka Lakshman' through which many of us slept, we returned to the sprawling mansion,

presumably owned by the Jain family. Under a beautiful night sky lit by a faint sickle moon, rows and rows of our sleeping bags were laid out on the large lawn. As soon as everyone fell asleep, two of us stripped the white sheets from our beds, covering ourselves from head to toe, and tiptoed between the tall trees surrounding the lawn. A few more joined in the ghostly fun, sheeted and sibilant, stepping between our slumbering classmates and scaring the wits out of them. Their frantic screams woke up Kalli, who, after giving us a stern ticking-off, dispatched us to our beds.



# JUNIOR SCHOOL HOUSES

AUROBINDO

CHISTI

DAYANAND

GAUTAM BUDDHA

GURU NANAK

KABIR

MAHAVIR

MIRABAI

SHANKARCHARYA

ST. GEORGE

TULSI

VIVEKANAND



## ALONE IN MY ROOM

I sit alone in my room  
Feeling as lonely as the broom

My mother scolds me without reason  
As it is here scolding season

All the fault is of my sister  
Though in putting blame on others she is swifter

She shows me her fist  
And my hand gets a twist.

She puts all blame on me  
Oh, poor, poor, me.

And I sit alone in my room  
Feeling as lonely as a broom

Sanjay Prasad  
J-3

## SOLEMN PRAYER

God be in my mind and in my thinking,  
God be in my heart and in my understanding,  
God be in my will and in my desiring,  
God be in my eyes and in my seeing,  
God be in my mouth and in my speaking,  
God be in my ears and in my hearing,  
God be in my body and in my acting.

145

Munish Sehgal  
J-3-A



THE WAY  
WE WERE...



# SUMMONED!

*Kshitij Rana*

As a routine, MNK would visit RSJMS once a week to (I'm guessing) take stock of things first hand. I guess it was KG3 or 4 and it was one of those visit days. Assembly was over and we were in our class room, normal routine for the rest of the day.

A little later someone from the office on the ground floor came up and informed the teacher that MNK had sent for me. All the way to the office I thought of what had I done for the principal to be so interested, as normally a summons like that meant you were in trouble.

I don't think he smiled, but in a matter of fact way said something about knowing my father and then he got down to business.

He said that an American family that had moved to Delhi and they wanted their kids to attend an Indian school. There was a girl who was older and a boy who was our age. He said the boy would need to make friends and that he would sit with me in class.

His name was Edward Vestal. They were from Croton-on-Hudson in New York. I don't remember much of what went on at school with him but I recall visiting his house in Lajpat Nagar a few times, a picnic in Lodhi Gardens, and Sunday visits to the American Embassy Compound.

The compound was Little America and it was my intro to things American: softball, burgers, hot dogs, processed cheese, and sodas other than Coke. They probably spent under a year at RSJMS and then moved to the American School and we lost touch.

# MILK!

Everybody was expected to drink milk in Junior School. They'd line us up house wise and hand us our Milk Bottles. We were expected to finish it.

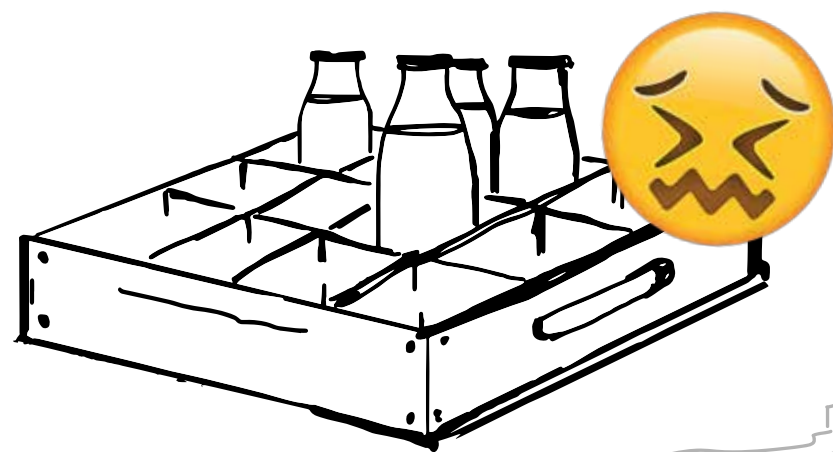
Modern didn't believe anyone could be lactose intolerant. Some nearly threw up. These poor unfortunates would either get sick letters from their parents, or beg others to drink their share.

In Senior School, during the first break, they would place crates of chilled milk. By then you were given the freedom to decide if you wanted to drink it. Some drank, some didn't.

These were the classic milk bottles with those aluminium caps, and when you removed the cap, there'd be that layer of cream on top of the milk.

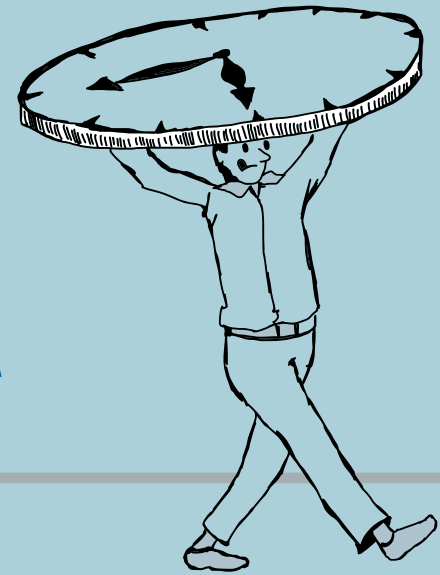
Some of us loved milk. In fact, the sportsmen were given permission to drink as much milk as we wished. Even between classes, we'd zip down to that room where milk was stored and quench our thirst. That room always had that cheesy, rancid smell of stale milk.

From time to time, requests would be made to Bond to get the milk flavored. But nothing came of it.



# THE CLOCK THAT DIDN'T WORK

*Jyoti Sahni Vohra*



At age four, everyone I knew in my little world went to Modern School. Neighbours, friends, friends of friends, and friends of friends of friends! I could hardly wait to be old enough to start school myself!

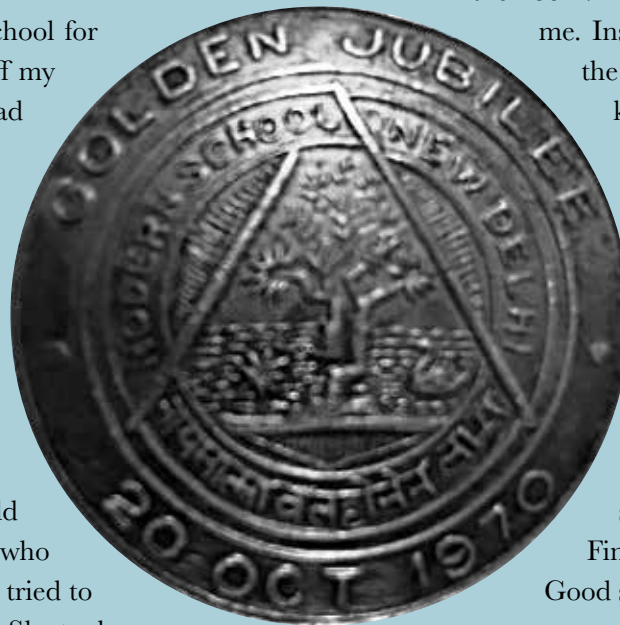
As I (finally!) rode the car to Modern School for an interview, I couldn't wipe the smile off my face. I was so excited. Life, however, had other plans. Things took a strange turn and before I walked into Mr Kapur's waiting room, I decided that this was not the place I wanted to be. I had to be virtually dragged out of the car. Once inside, no amount of cajoling worked. My parents looked distraught but I was adamant. I didn't want to attend Modern School! They knew all too well that once I had made up my mind, wild horses couldn't change it. Mrs. Kapur, who my mother knew well, came forward and tried to entice me to come inside just for a minute. She took me into the garden to show me how pretty it was. She gave me a tiny vial of a vivid red perfume in a bid to befriend me. She told me some fun things that happened at the school. But oh no, I wasn't biting.

Exasperated, I decided to step into Mr. Kapur's room for that interview. Before he could even open his mouth, I blurted out, "I

don't want to study in this silly school. This school has a clock on the building and it doesn't even work!" Of course I had just learnt to read the time. I still remember the pin drop silence that spread through the room. I thought that someone was going to slap

me. Instead, Mr. Kapur said that he would have the clock fixed and call me back. He did. He kept his promise, and before the beginning of the next term he had the broken clock replaced by the school emblem. He called my parents and said that he appreciated my observation skills and definitely wanted me to join. It was an open offer for whenever I was ready. As for me, I was too embarrassed to go back. I spent the first four years of school at Mater Dei Convent and hated it totally. I was secretly jealous of all my friends at Modern. Finally, I conceded and joined Modern in J1. Good sense eventually prevailed.

Till the end of my days at Modern, the school emblem proudly sat atop the tower of the school building. Mr. Kapur never let me forget it and didn't let go of a single opportunity to point it out to me.



# DIVIDE AND SCHOOL

*“Hello. Which class are you in?” “I’m in S1. In Junior school.”*

Our batch was the only one to have had a divided S1. Do you remember why? Was it to solve a transport problem for some? Build a parallel senior school at Humayun Road? Or were some of us just sad to leave our alma mater? Or panicked about going to the campus where the big guys were? Or maybe it was extending the reason for a separate campus in the first place... to keep us small trees out of the shadow of the big trees so that we could grow and flourish in the sun. Thus, some of us stayed back in Junior School while Barakhamba was waiting for the rest with their ink pens ready...

S1 in Junior School started with great promise. Hey, we’d always be the senior most class! That means we get to be house captains, sports captains, prefects, the bosses, or just the big guys all through the rest of our school life, and the poor batch just junior to us would forever be the almost captains just because they happened to be born a year later. Too bad these were just false notions. For one, the J3’s were also eligible for captaincy, so there were also house captains junior to us. They must’ve been pretty thrilled to boss us around. Officially. Pretty pathetic with that ‘trying very hard’ attitude. From the ‘almosts’, J3s became the ‘alsos’. Oh well, a marginal improvement for them. But for us it would be different.

A year later we were to realise that our status would change too. At the end of S1 we were packed off to Senior School. The school board had finished with their experiment. S1s, now S2s would be reunited. From the ‘forever seniors’ to, no, not the junior most, because the J3s became S1s and followed us to Senior school, but we were junior to our own counterparts at Barakhamba! For most of us, promotion to S1 meant moving to Senior school – the Barakhamba Road fascination. A complex emotion of thrill, awe and fear. To wear a white shirt for the first few days so that you were clearly branded as a fresher. The anticipation of having blue ink flung at you – a proprietary form of ragging...

Somehow we seemed to have been robbed of it. Firstly, our own batch beat us to it. They found themselves in a superior position taking sadistic pleasure in flinging ink on us. And secondly, the full attention we would normally have been showered with on being inducted to Senior School was diverted to the full quorum of J3s who became the new S1s and the real bachchas of the big school, even though we had actually joined a few days earlier.

Back then, did we really think of it this way? Or has 40 plus years given us the distance and the sense of humour to look back and ponder, “What was that one year all about?” Yes. It did for us.



# THOSE PESKY PIGEONS OF SIR SHANKAR LAL HALL

Sir Shankar Lal Hall was host to many activities. The Assembly, Examinations, House Functions, Basketball matches, Exhibitions, and even those famous All Night Music Recitals. If there is one entity which has seen everything go down at Shankar Lal Hall, it has to be those Pesky Pigeons.

They were present, 24/7, and many a student, teacher, parent, artist, or even a hapless VIP has 'felt' their presence.

During the assembly, while Bond would be in full flow, we'd also be ducking pigeon poo. We'd have one eye on Bond, and one eye on the dome above. Bond would be busy building our character; and these birds would be busy testing that character with poo. It taught us to deal with the world.

Shit happens!

Sometimes, if Bond had been talking for a long time and the assembly had more or less gone off to sleep, a kamikaze pigeon would wake us up by flying into one of those exhaust fans on the side. They'd literally explode into feathers. And, during exams, for some unfortunate students, while the teacher got to mark your paper later, these pigeons got to mark it first. I'm told it distracted many a serious student's concentration.

These birds would be busy canoodling on the metal girders above. They'd flutter, and in their excitement sometimes even splatter. They kept us alert, interested – even entertained – unless, of course, you were the one who got splattered!

Yes. Shankar Lal Hall sometimes became a war zone as well. I remember Bond giving Glad Singh explicit orders to rid the Hall of these dive-bombers. During the weekends, Glad Singh would take out his air gun and pot them. The hostellers tell me the genial rum drinking Sardar was quite glad eating Pigeon Pulao.

In today's environment, it wouldn't be ethically or morally correct to talk of Pigeon Pulao. I merely write what I heard and saw of those Pesky Pigeons who made their presence 'felt' at Sir Shankar Lal Hall.





# ALONG THE WINDING ROAD...

'Musings of a High School Teen'

*Kalyani Srinivasan Rajan*

---

*The sound of the gong calls friends to part ways  
Rushing to house lines, there's inspection on all days.  
Roll calls and 'yes sirs' and registers in the morn,  
Crossed legs and stifled yawns while the assembly goes  
on... and on...*

*And so begins a day...*

*A myriad emotions, the ups and the downs  
Eyes crinkling in smiles, eyebrows knit in a frown.  
Fire in your eyes at a teachers' reprimand,  
Pout on your lips, unconscious fists in your hand.*

*Pride for recognition, a compliment is delight,  
Disappointment to be overlooked, self-worth... not  
right.*

*The first waves of love lift your heart to the skies.  
The first storm of sorrow hits you with piercing  
surprise.*

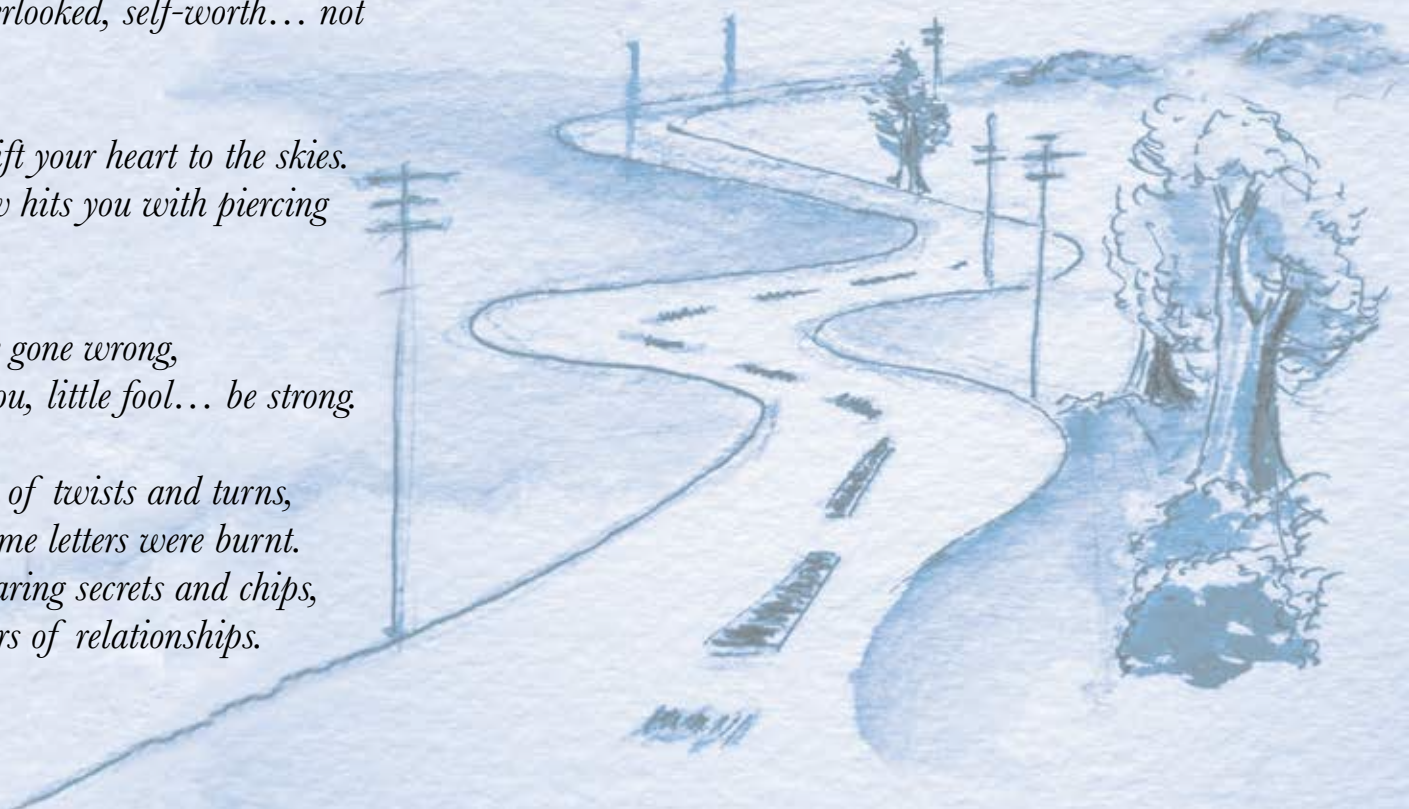
*Eyes welling up at a love gone wrong,  
An inner voice reminds you, little fool... be strong.*

*School life was a drama, of twists and turns,  
Letters were treasured, some letters were burnt.  
Lies and betrayals, or sharing secrets and chips,  
The wonders and blunders of relationships.*

*The comedy in laughter, the tragedy of stress  
Surrounded by friends, or dark loneliness.*

*School was a journey through castles and dungeons,  
From crayons to pens, and ponytails to parlours.  
Gathering medals or scars as the tumultuous road  
bends  
Just lessons in life, as school life ends.*

*For many there were songs, some songs unsung  
On the winding journey, for we were young.*



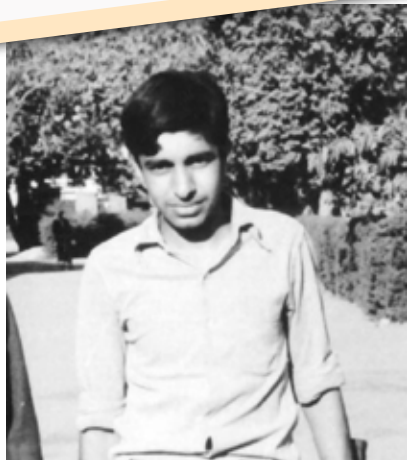
## ARTI

*Gupta Kirloskar*



**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**  
Dancing

**Name 3 things on your bucket list.**  
Paint more, Love more, Be free



## KAPIL

*Kathpalia*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**  
Life itself and the variations it brings with it

**What are you absolutely crazy about?**  
Golf

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**  
Playing golf everyday

## SANDHYA

*Sud Jain*

**What did you want to be when you were a kid?**

**What are you now?**

Wanted to be a psychologist, am an educationist



**Name 3 things on your bucket list ....**

Provide opportunity for education, employment, and integration into society for persons of unrecognised abilities



## BRAHM

*Gyan Singh Majitha*

**What bores you the most?**

Stale and repetitive old News

**People are surprised that I ....**

Have put on so much weight!

**One thing on your bucket list**

Learning at least one more foreign language  
(Targets are Thai and Chinese)



Just Friends



# THE FAMOUS MODERN BLUE

IT WAS THE BEST ALL WEATHER FABRIC. COOL IN SUMMER. SNUG IN WINTER.

---

WE FELT SO COOL WEARING IT. WE LOOKED LIKE DUDES.

---

IT WAS MADE TO ORDER AT KHANNA'S TAILOR SHOP. YOU COULDN'T GET IT ANYWHERE ELSE. WE FELT SO EXCLUSIVE.

---

WE WEREN'T TEMPTED TO MISBEHAVE IN IT FOR FEAR OF BOND.

---

IT WAS BLUE. OUR FAVOURITE COLOUR!

---

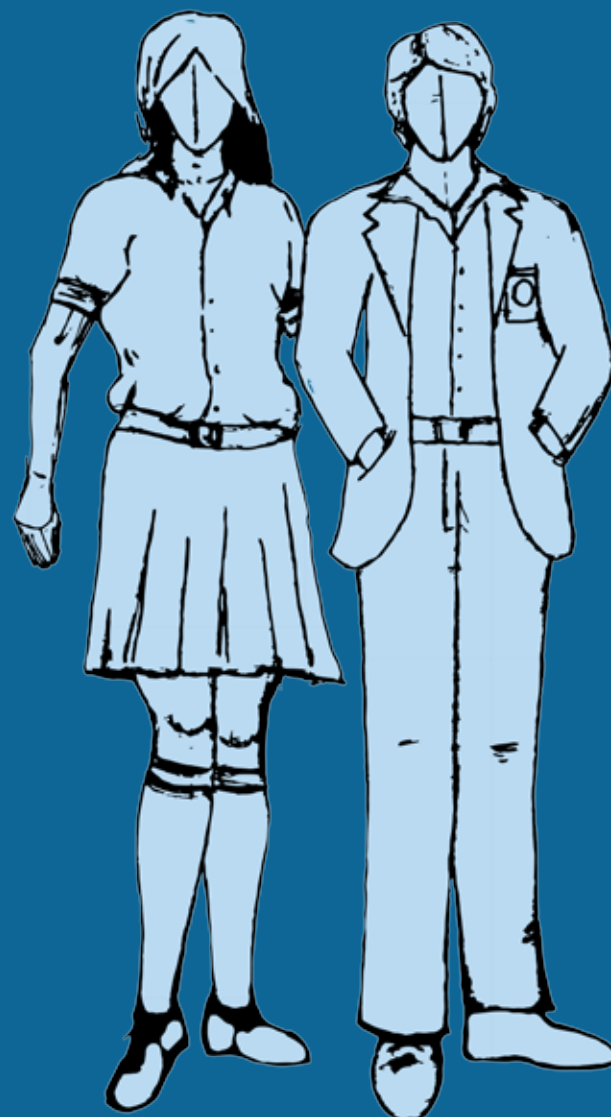
IT WAS SO EASY TO AUTOGRAPH.

---

WE WERE THE PRIVILEGED ONES TO HAVE SILLY GARTERS TO HOLD OUR STOCKINGS UP! GOSH... WHICH CENTURY WERE WE BORN IN?

---

OUR UNIFORM LOOKED EVEN BETTER WHEN IT WAS FULLY SPRAYED WITH INK!





# GROWING UP IN THE BOARDING HOUSE

*Deepak Prakash*



It was a long time ago – I was not quite 10 years old and was joining Modern School as a boarder. My parents were going to drop me off and I was going to be living with strangers till the next break when I could go home. I was filled with great trepidation as to what I was going to encounter in this new place, but my concerns were misplaced.

I joined the Junior School boarding house and ended up living with my brothers and a wonderful staff who we would call Aunties who took such good care of us. The junior school wing of the boarding house was 3 rooms in the school's main building, filled with beds and lockers, where I would spend the next couple of years. I formed friendships which I cherish to this day – being far away I don't see those folks very often but they hold a special place in my heart. After a few years in the boarding house in the main building, we moved to the newly constructed boarding house. One of the things about living in the boarding house was that food was so bad that we were on the constant hunt for food. We had a little reception in the front of the boarding house where parents and relatives came to meet us and bring some goodies. We would scout around to see who was there and as soon as the parents/relatives left we would corner the person and demand some food. Another memory I have is of midnight feasts; this was typically after a break. We all would have brought some food from home, and would get together at midnight and share our food. This was quite an interesting and stressful affair since we had to make sure that the other boys in the room – where

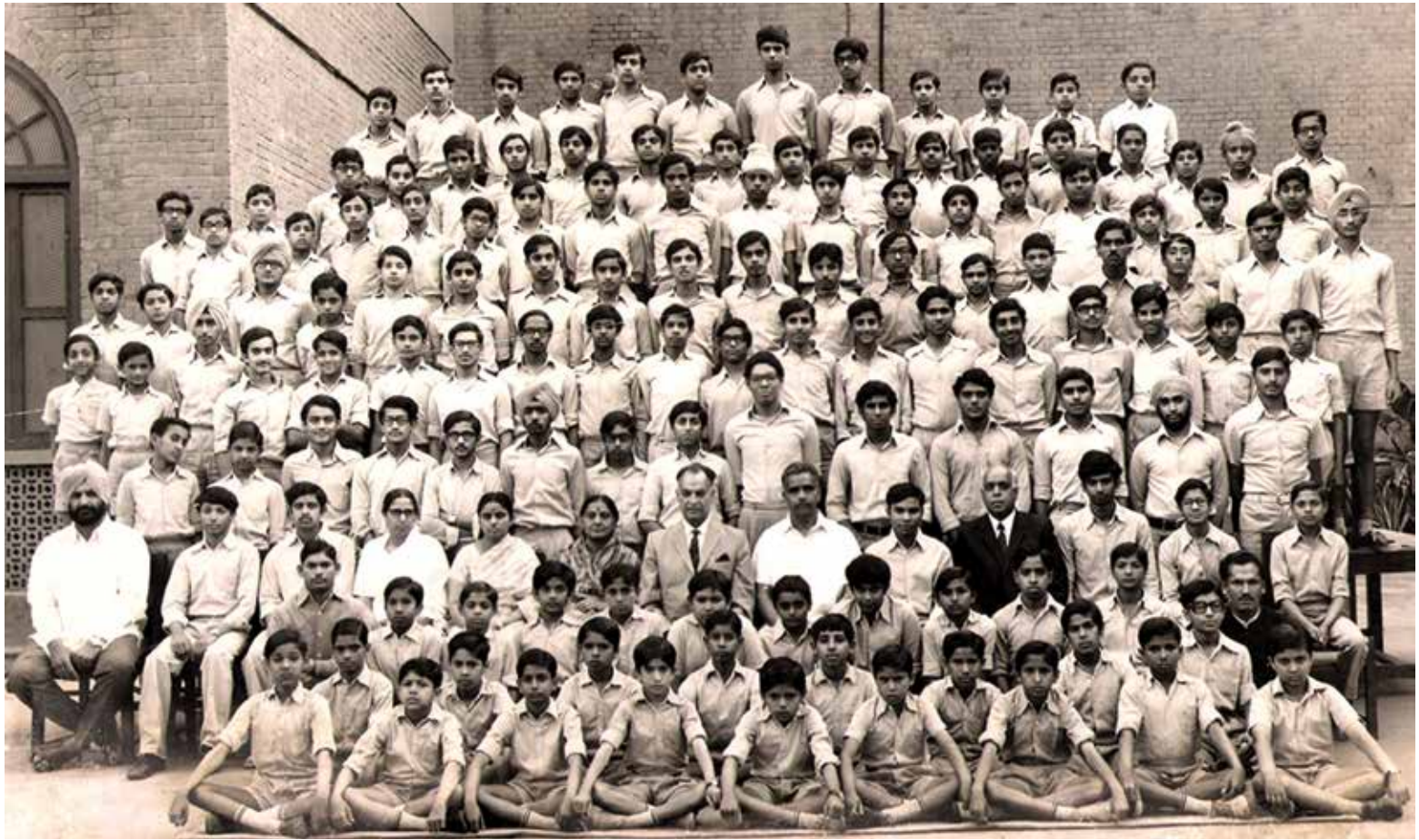
the said feast was taking place – did not wake up, and also no seniors saw us, since they had the right to take all our food! A lot of planning was involved for this – now looking back at it I wonder why one would do this.

The boarding school had a rule that we were not allowed to go outside the school during the school year. When we were in S5, Palika Bazaar opened up and had a coffee shop which was open late in the night. A bunch of us decided that we should visit the coffee shop every few weeks late at night. This was not allowed per the boarding house rules – so we decided to sneak out every so often through the bathroom windows. This was not so difficult for most of my svelte partners in crime but I did get stuck in the bars in the windows more than once and needed a push (embarrassing, isn't it?).

*Those were the days my friend  
We thought they'd never end.*

Those days may have ended but I will never forget them and perhaps will get a chance to relive the memories in March 2017.



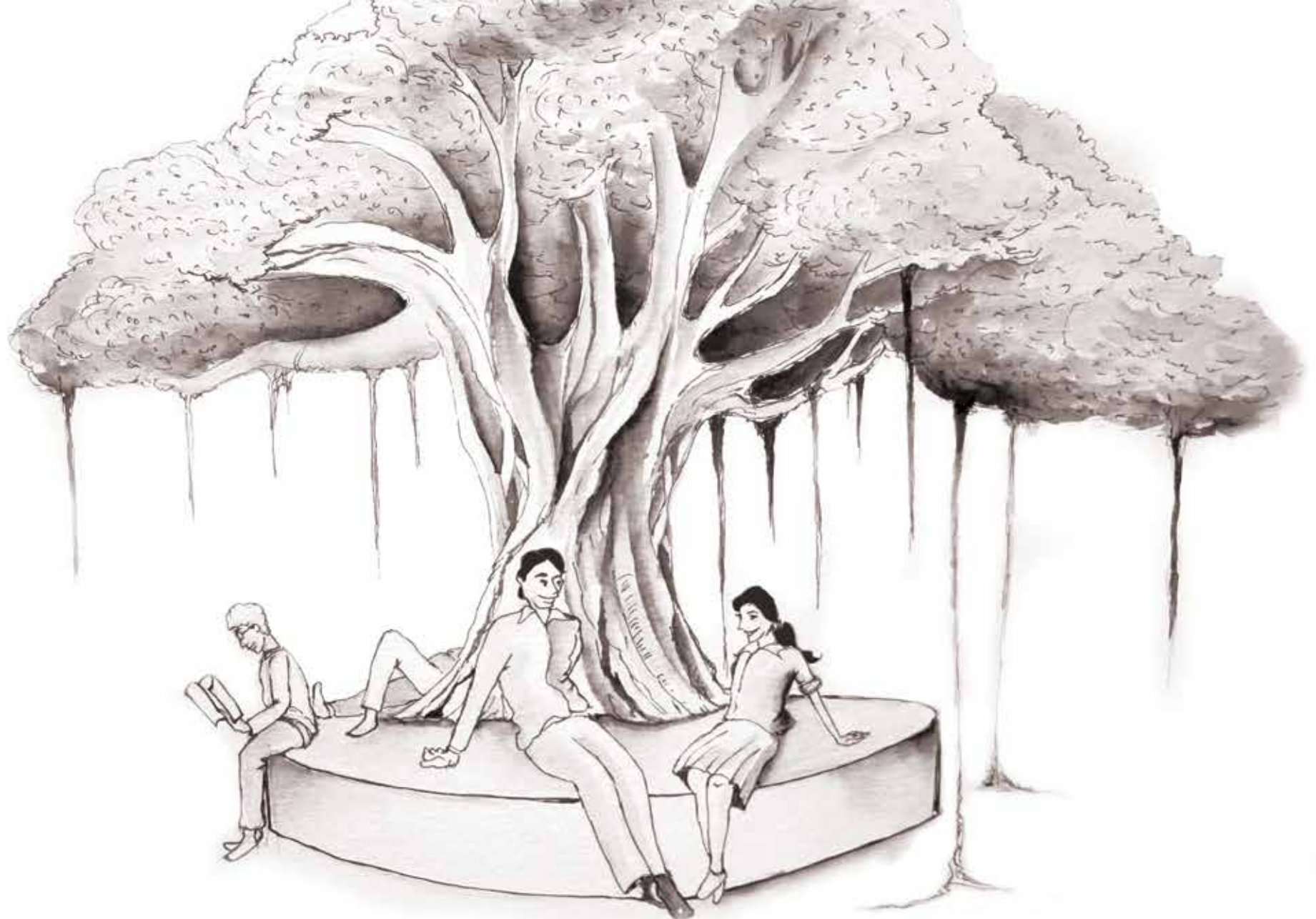


# IDLIS, PAJAMAS & TOOTHPASTE

*Srinivasan Sundararajan*

I think Boarding school was the most fun. It got me a whole bunch of friends that I would have never known otherwise. Indeed, I did get ragged a bit, but I suspect it was my weekly ration of idlis from my grandparents' home that kept the wolves somewhat at bay. Mostly though, what kept me from getting totally fried by the testosterone fuelled gang was this hapless new boarder who took up all the slack. After lights out, the guys used to delicately strip his pyjamas down and squirt tubes of toothpaste up his ass when he was sleeping! I must confess I enjoyed the whole spectacle thoroughly, more so because I avoided becoming the prime object of ragging. This chap was actually a great guy with an amazing attitude, and a very forgiving nature. At least I hope so, particularly if he's reading this!





## UNDER THE BANYAN TREE

---

We don't think there is a single person from Modern School who will contest the fact that one of our favourite places to be in school was The Banyan Tree. From whiling away time while pretending otherwise in Zero Periods, to taking meticulous measurements for

Geography practicals. From major gossip sessions on discovering the intricacies of life to discovering the world of adulthood. From last minute homework hurriedly copied to making last minute cards for friends and teachers, everything happened under the gorgeous Banyan Tree.

Now if only that Banyan Tree could talk, it would tell a myriad stories of friendships forged, of love lost or gained, and of teenage angst. After all, The Banyan Tree was the place where all us little Buddhas gained enlightenment!



## PANKAJ

*Khanna*

Being slapped around by DNK as his pet hobby. Keeping wickets for the school... Partho bowling, and all of us like an umbrella, all leg slips. Not a single fielder in front! And Kirti showering the choicest abuses on the oppo batsmen.

Khastgir going into a trance trying to explain to me that the Sarod Banjo was the most divine instrument, and how I was successfully screwing it!

## VIKRAM

*Dhamija*

**My special memory of a school teacher:** One of the girls fainted in Talli's (Ms. Talwar – Bio teacher) class. She immediately told one of the students to take off the girl's shoes and socks and rub her sole plus throw water on her face, to get her back to consciousness. Coincidentally one of the boys standing closest and peering over her (in surprise though!!!) overdid the task by rubbing her legs too much in anxiety! Talli (embarrassed) had to stop the guy (Ha! Ha!).

**My special memory of an incident in school:** The disbelief on the face of school teachers and students, when Sanjay Srivastava got a Yellow Jacket in S4.

## SANDHYA

*Sud Jain*

Ghoda (Subhash Arora) trying to explain a topic in economics to me even though I was the only one in class who had not understood.

His approach and patience as a teacher motivates me every time I reach a block in teaching a student. Thank you, Sir.

## RASHMA

*Garkal*

Those were the days, we thought they'd never end... and so goes this most beautiful song which we all loved and hummed in those days in school... never knew they'd become so relevant thereafter and even now when we're 56-57.

I joined S1 in '72 in our BK Modern when for the first time, our class was divided into 6 sections: two in RSJM and four in BK. Still remember my first day after assembly. It was raining cats and dogs being July, and I was standing under a ledge when Miss Rita Talwar came up to me and gently reprimanded me for standing there getting wet and sent me packing to my class. Was allotted C section and Pratap house.

## KALYANI

*Srinivasan Rajan*

Of all the achievements possible, I had the distinction to be the student with the best attendance record for S3, S4, and S5! Habitual bunkers, turn away! Obviously not an achievement to be proud of, but Juggi 'made up' for it with her announcement... "the student with the best attendance is also the prettiest in the class." I wasn't, but it was sweet of her to say!





THE MODERN SCHOOL  
Barakhamba Road,  
NEW DELHI.

BUS CARD

Name.....

Class.....Section.....

Notes: 1. This card must be produced when boarding the bus.  
2. This card must be surrendered to the school when  
use of bus is discontinued.



## SWATI

*Nath Verma*

One day, Hemanth Paul decided to borrow my wristwatch in the middle of DNK's class. Simpleton that I was, I figured he just wanted to check the time. But the little devil was in the mood for mischief. He decided to play tricks and began reflecting the sunlight off the blackboard. Before I realized what had happened, he slid the watch back towards me.

The next thing I knew, I was standing in punishment outside the class, in mortal fear of being spotted by one of my many cousins. Tattletaling was common amongst us and I knew that if they saw me, there would be hell to pay when I got home!

## SOUMYA

*Swaroop (Now known as Amit to many)*

Mrs Renuka Khanna crying while reading an emotional passage which I couldn't grasp – but I remember thinking how deeply involved she must have become in the story – that stayed with me.

Bunking the assembly and climbing the dome of the main building.

I.J. is the new teacher came. - Lamba. We begged her to let us introduce ourselves. The lot three said their real names. Paul said to rebark from this side. Su said Sujata Khanna. After that everyone said their kin name was Khanna. Bindu said Brinda. Rajan said Johnny Brigargo, Harsh said Harsh gun gunwala. Paul said Topiwala. Su then changed her name and it became Sujata Bahiwala. There were two Ashok Khannas and also a Rajesh Khanna. I was

## GUNEET

*Singh Lehl*

Alhilal NCC Camp. I got drunk and fell down the Mountain Khud. Bhuvu carried me back to my tent wherein, more drunk than hurt, I passed out. The next thing I know, a panic stricken IS Arora is asking me if I'm ok, his face inches away from mine. I wanted to reassure him I was OK, but he'd then have smelt the booze. So, he kept insisting I say something while I even more determinedly kept my mouth shut.

Next year I gave a miss to Alhilal. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief. The only guy who probably missed me was Karan Singh's Palace Hotel Bartender.



## ASHWINI

*Dewan*

Mrs. Talwar – biology teacher left an indelible mark on my mind – her diligence, dedication, patience, and love for teaching and the subject was inspirational. She was an exceptional educator.

## MUNISH

*Sahgal*

The day Bond caught 6 or 7 of us coming late to school. Everyone got a thrashing except me.

He told me he does not accept this from a sportsman. That day I felt special and worked harder to become a better player.

# GIRLS JUST WANT TO BE GLAM!

Senior School was where fast friendships, fashion, and innocent infatuations livened up our academic life. We were just entering our teens and the girls were becoming aware of their bodies, beauty and boys. Bond, along with Talli and Juggi were the self-appointed guardians of virtue. Along with long hemlines and unpainted fingernails, the MHS edict was “no eyebrow plucking”.

A few unfortunate girls were shamed publicly during assembly for tweezing their eyebrows, and Talli, our hirsute standard bearer, would often accost those recalcitrant on this issue with dire warnings to leave well alone “the beauty that God has given you!” Despite the policing, a few intrepid ones flouted the rules to the continual despair of Talli who would often stop a hapless girl in a hallway to examine if her legs were waxed or her nails too long.

Most girls likely navigated those years, wary and watchful, nursing fragile egos. Those blessed with good looks were popular and got attention, while others compensated perhaps by excelling in academics or sports, or by just being attractive girls, not in the obvious conventional sense, but because their inner personality made them liked by all. When you consider today’s world of blatant social media, the enormous peer pressure among teen girls to look desirable and pretty, and the relentless demands of being trendy in school, MHS in the early ’70s was an incredibly kind and safe environment.

Girls were not mean, malicious or cruel. They didn’t taunt or disparage their classmates on their looks or attributes. A particular talent or skill – say in singing, painting, music or sports – did as much for a girl’s popularity as her looks – maybe more. Generally, we were who we were, and if we had a chance to dress up for the school play or for a party, we did our best and were accepted by our friends. Of course, our school uniform was a great equalizer, along with Bond’s sharp eyes which kept overt fashion statements at bay. The allure of make-up was inevitable. Lip gloss was a sought after commodity. Under the guise of having to dress up for the House Function play, Kalyani Srinivasan’s glorious little white tubes of Avon lipstick



samples sparkled up Maitreyee’s lips. Delicate whiffs of perfume (Charlie was all the rage!) would trail some girls, ostensibly sprayed to ward off the olfactory vestiges of gym class. Sabina, who had come from Canada, lent her outfits for school plays and illicit evening outings to Regal Cinema. Some girls were lucky to have mothers who were open to prevailing fashion, but some would have to leave home with shirt tails demurely flapping and on arriving at the party venue, head straight to the bathroom to tuck in their shirts! Parties were fun, wholesome, innocent, and drug-free – dancing to Boney M and ABBA, eating sandwiches that we’d made, and washing them down with Coca Cola and Fanta and Thums Up. Thumbs up – and cheers – to the good old days when girls could be girls and proud Modernites too!

A self-appointed guardian of beauty with an upper lip fuzz: “God gave you eyebrows not to pluck them. I will be keeping an eye on you.”  
Ms Talwar

# FROM BOYS TO MEN

*Hemanth Paul*

---

December 1976. I forget the date... our school leaving picnic was over and the school buses dropped us off at school... four of us (Partho, Kshitij, Harsh, and I) decided we had finally become men and were ready to test our manhood!

Guided by our man of the world (Partho), we decide it's time to pay a visit to the local cabaret joint... the forbidden 'Lido' in CP! But before that we need to muster up our meagre resources. We pool in and Partho assures us we have enough to 'become men'. We scrape the bottom of our pockets and come up with 50 Rs. each, enough to enter a new world! It's dark and smokey. Shady characters surround us. The waiter takes our order for sandwiches... do we have enough money to pay... yes, we are assured by Partho, it's covered by the entry charge! Sandwiches arrive along with the bill! We are in a fix now. How do we pay the additional 100 Rs.? The music begins, our plan emerges... Kshitij and Harsh are sent on a mission to the school hostel to raise funds, while Partho and I hold fort! While they are away Partho tries to sell the plate of sandwiches to a bunch of 'goondas' on the next table... no luck...KR and Harsh return after borrowing money from the Hostel warden (SP Bakshi!). We pay and scam!

We never noticed what happened on the stage... we are still boys at heart I guess, even after all these years!





## EEDA

*Gujral Chopra*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**

The wonder of learning from it.

**What did you want to be when you were a kid?**

**What are you now?**

Oh I wanted to be everything from a forest ranger to air steward to a car rally driver, and I am None of them!!!!



## RAJIV

*Kapurja*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**

Jazz, specially sax

**What are you absolutely crazy about?**

Walking in the mountains

**People are surprised that I ....**

can dance!

## ASHWINI 'AKA'

*Aggarwal*

What bores you the most?

**Stagnation**

What are you absolutely crazy about?

**Adventure and living on the edge**

What did you want to be when you were a kid? And what are you now?

**Someone who would change the world... and still struggling to be the one!**

What is your biggest regret?

**"Main har regret kodhuenmeinudatachalagaya"**

People are surprised that I ....

**Have managed to remain the same Sweet and Notorious AKA.**



## NANDANI

*Khosla Singh*

**Two things I love about life....**

**1. Nothing stays the same. All times eventually pass.**

**2. The unpredictability of the day yet to dawn.**

**I am absolutely crazy about...**

**Movies. My biggest regret is not taking the right decisions even when I knew about them being the right ones for me.**



## ARJUN

*Dhamija*

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**

Having margarita on a beach

**Name 3 things on your bucket list**

- (1) Trek to everest base camp ("ebc")
- (2) bathe in the hot springs of the blue lagoon, Keflavik, Iceland
- (3) Sky riding



# CHARLIE'S BURGERS

---

Is there anyone here who doesn't remember Charlie's legendary burgers?

We seriously doubt it! Everyone's favourite burger ever was Charlie's burger! Charlie's burgers were these deep fried, carb loaded, pumpkin sauce covered little horrors that would make every nutritionist cringe. A slice of onion was perhaps the only piece of real nutrition in there. An hour before break time, Charlie would furiously start frying a mountain of burger buns and potato patties. He had a huge 'karhai' filled with dangerously hydrogenated smoking fat in which he would fry at break neck speed before the hungry hordes descended. Once the bell went off you couldn't seem to get in edgewise to claim your burger. There was ALWAYS a mad scramble and justly so, because those burgers were definitely worth the fight.

With burger firmly in hand, one just had to retreat into a safe corner lest we hear the dreaded "Can I have a bite?" (Oh no... you cannot!).

Birthdays, of course, were another matter. Everyone had to be treated to a burger and a Coke. God forbid you left someone out or ran out of money. There would be hell to pay.

Charlie stayed open well into the evenings for everyone staying back for anything. A teenager's appetite is never satiated and he knew that well. Sadly Charlie is no more (God rest his soul in peace) and his burgers are no more.

Oh! What we wouldn't give for one of those right now!



# CONVERSATIONS ON NCC

*Rajiv Kapuria, Piyush Jindal and R. Ravi in conversation with Guneet Singh Lehl on email & WhatsApp*

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## *Rajiv Kapuria*

Hi Guneet, a pleasure reconnecting with you after so many years (decades, really). I Remember Aditya Arora (flight sergeant) leading Air wing. He got the Chief of Air Staff Trophy for Best Air Cadet in S4 (1976). He was also the commander of all the three wings for our Founders Day, Guard of Honour. And Sanjiv Sant lead the Army wing. I led Naval Wing in S4 (1976), with “Petty Officer Cadet” rank. Hemanth (AP) Paul and Kushal Dang had Leading Seaman rank. Recall a few others in Naval wing – Sunil Sud, R. Ravi . There’s no other way of saying this except immodestly, but I was awarded the Chief of Naval Staff Trophy for Best All India Naval Cadet in S4.

Five of us were in the Delhi State NCC Boat Pulling Team in 1975-76. We rowed a “cutter” – 32 feet 2+ tonne boat rowed by 5 cadets (3 on starboard, 2 on port) – with the Navy NCO as coxswain. Pervez Dar (1978 batch) and I were the two on the port side. Used to go to Okhla Barrage for practice; it was grueling to get that heavy boat moving. We were supposed to go to Kerala to compete in the nationals, but the dates clashed with Exams (Board/pre-Board?) so we didn’t go. All three wings went to Alhilal (near Dharamshala) for annual camp in the summer of 1976. Had tough competition from Birla Public School, Pilani and Army Public School, Kapurthala among other public schools. Air wing faculty advisor/officer was Taran Bir Singh (Chemistry); Naval wing faculty advisor/officer was Inder Singh Arora (Chemistry).

## *Guneet Singh Lehl*

Thanks, Rajiv. Even though I always called you Kapuria!

## *Rajiv Kapuria*

Yes, it sounds odd, doesn’t it? For years (school and IIT) I was called “Kapuria”, then briefly “Kaps” in IIT, then during the first about 15 years of my work life (in Schlumberger, in USA, then in India) I was called “RK” and the last about 15 years it’s “Rajiv”. I’m fine with any of these, though I now introduce myself as Rajiv and sign my emails as Rajiv.

## *Piyush Jindal*

Guneet, you stirred memories of NCC. I was in the Naval Wing. Don’t remember rank off-hand. Am sharing memories of camps as they come. Andretta, Palampur: trek to Sir Sobha Singh’s Villa. Beautiful paintings.... Night treks in boots with spikes, wondering if they’d slip on the rocky hills. Shaving out of the same taam-chini mug used for tea. Fauji taskmaster who kept shouting “main discipline ka bhookha hoon”.

Remember Supriyo whom we called Supada? His reading out of a desi porn book and the entire truck load of us listening intently? I think even the Fauji driver listened in from his cabin!

I remember doing quarter guard duty middle of the night. Way back watched Barood movie at local theatre, with Sanjiv Sant and Bhardwaj, also Navy. Back in school, I think it was ISA of the Johnny samose-khila-ke-rahega fame, who was the teacher in charge of Navy. Tilla of Air Force. And Army was VK Baweja.

## *Guneet Singh Lehl*

Brilliant. I wasn’t on this one. I went in S3 and dropped out of this one. Lovely.



### *R RAVI*

I was in the Navy branch. My high point was being selected as a marksman for the .22 firing competition. Competed with a bunch of cadets from other schools. Escaped assembly many days because of that – because we were driven to some Army practice range or the other. Don't remember much else. Went to the camp up in HP. Near Palampur. No photos or anything, unfortunately.

### *Guneet Singh Lehl*

Thanks Ravi. I too was a marksman. But Army wing. Yes. We went to Alhilal for boot camp. We even had a shooting competition out there.

### *R Ravi*

It's amazing how much I don't remember! We must have done target practice in Alhilal, but no recollection. Shobha Singh gallery, I do remember. Beautiful cottage. And the Sohni Mahiwal painting.

### *Guneet Singh Lehl*

Wow. Now you're telling me things I don't recall!

These are great collective memories... perfect triggers for collective nostalgia. And laughter!



# NCC & BASKETBALL

*Govind Kochhar*

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Can never forget these two episodes....

Had gone for the NCC Camp to Alilhal In Dharamsala/Palampur, Himachal Pradesh and we were in two finals competing with other schools. First was the Rifle shooting final. We were five of us pitted against 5 from another school. Turn by turn we had to shoot a target and we were all given 10 shots each. There was Gopal Kochhar, Ajay Sanghi, Rajan Sawhney, myself, and Sanjiv Sant in that order.

So when the scoring started, Gopal, Ajay, and Sanjiv had all 10 each on target. I, for some reason, had 20, and Rajan Sawhney had none. We were all zapped initially but suddenly realised that Rajan was targeting my board instead of his and therefore we lost the finals. We all had such a laugh at the end of it. Winning or losing never mattered.

Another one from the Basket Ball Court...

Modern was playing a friendly match and we were losing a little at half time. I was fouled out with 5 personal fouls. At the break, Gopal, who was not feeling too bright, suggested we switch our T's and I was in again. No body has ever figured out to date and we eventually won by a point. Twinnny advantage I guess!

These two incidents are embedded so deeply that one always has a smile even when thinking about it!



## HOCKEY VS. SAILING

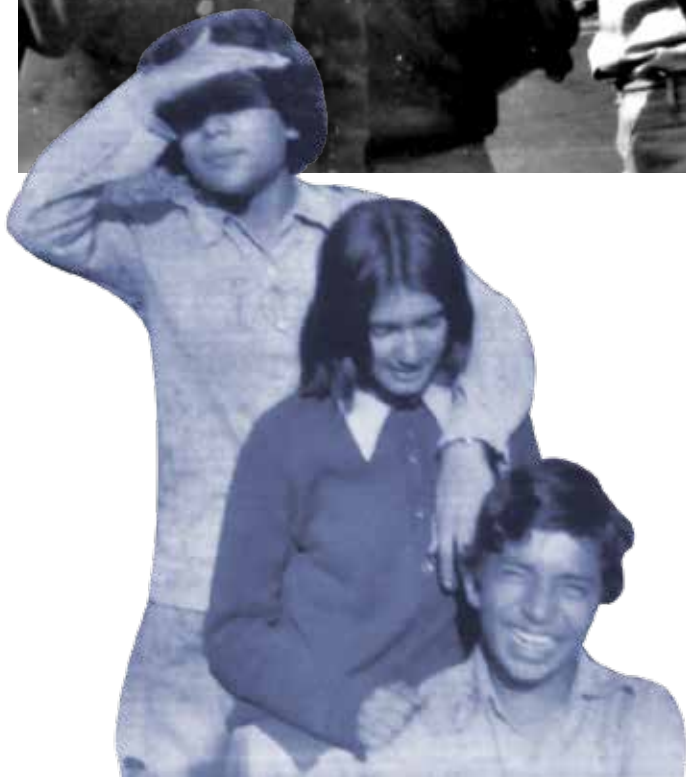
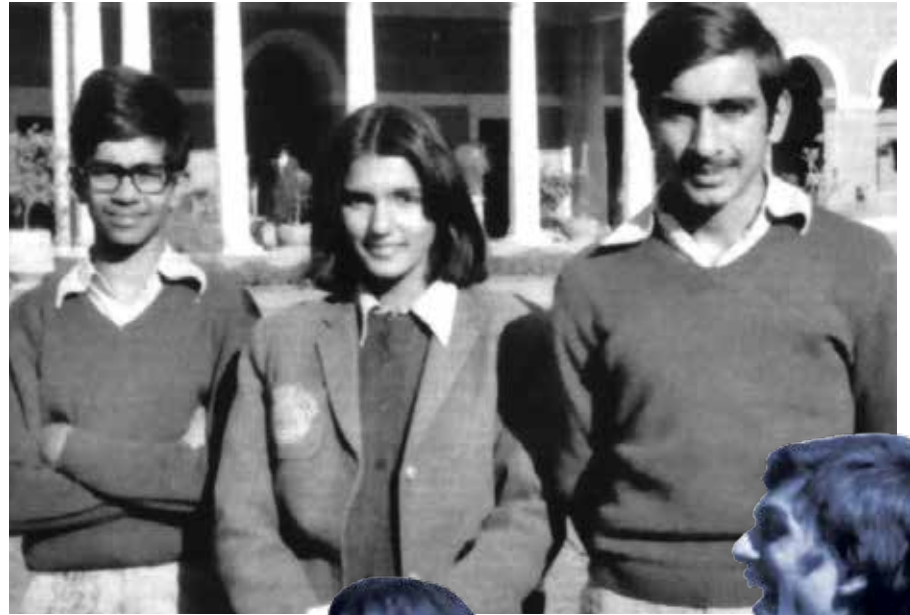
*Brahm Gyan Singh Majithia*

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In S5, I was required to play a crucial Hockey match in Delhi one evening and be in Mumbai the same night for the National Sailing Championships starting the next day – only possible by School providing me an Air Ticket quite unheard of then. When presenting Mr. Kapur with the special note to sign enabling this, he sternly questioned me whether I would pay back by Cheque or Cash – my response was, “Sir – by Achievement” – and this got me a large thump on the back and a very warm handshake of encouragement. A special Bond moment for me that I remember so well.



A Myriad  
Triads





# ADVANTAGE PHYS ED

*Rashma Garkal*

Some of us girls in S5 were in physical education and had basketball as our main game. We were challenged by the boys of our class for a game of basketball during break-time. We put a condition that only those boys would play with us who didn't have phys ed as their subject, which was complied with. So the game started, but alas, we girls lost the game rather badly, hardly scoring many points. We never heard the end of it for many days to follow. At that point of time we were rather ashamed and embarrassed but now when one looks back, that one instance taught us the spirit of sportsmanship or should I say, sportswomanship, to take failures and losses in our stride in the right spirit, make a better effort, and fight back to win.

The other incident I remember was when our whole A sec in S3 or S4 were punished by Mendiratta, whom we called Mooli, for I think making too much noise in class. We were all sent to the hockey field

to take 10 rounds in the hot summer. We all started running to take our rounds. A lot of us who had phys ed as our subject had more resilience and stamina than the others. Those who didn't, however, started lagging behind. It wasn't till the 5th or 6th round that we heard someone fall. When we looked back, we saw that it was our dear Jaggu darling. God bless her soul, she saved all of us from further torture since Mr. Baweja who was supervising us got rather concerned and worried lest this happens to more of us and so Jaggu became the heroine for the day for us.

There's so much more but don't think it could ever be compiled in our many issues of reunion recollections also...

# THE MOUNTAINS BECKON

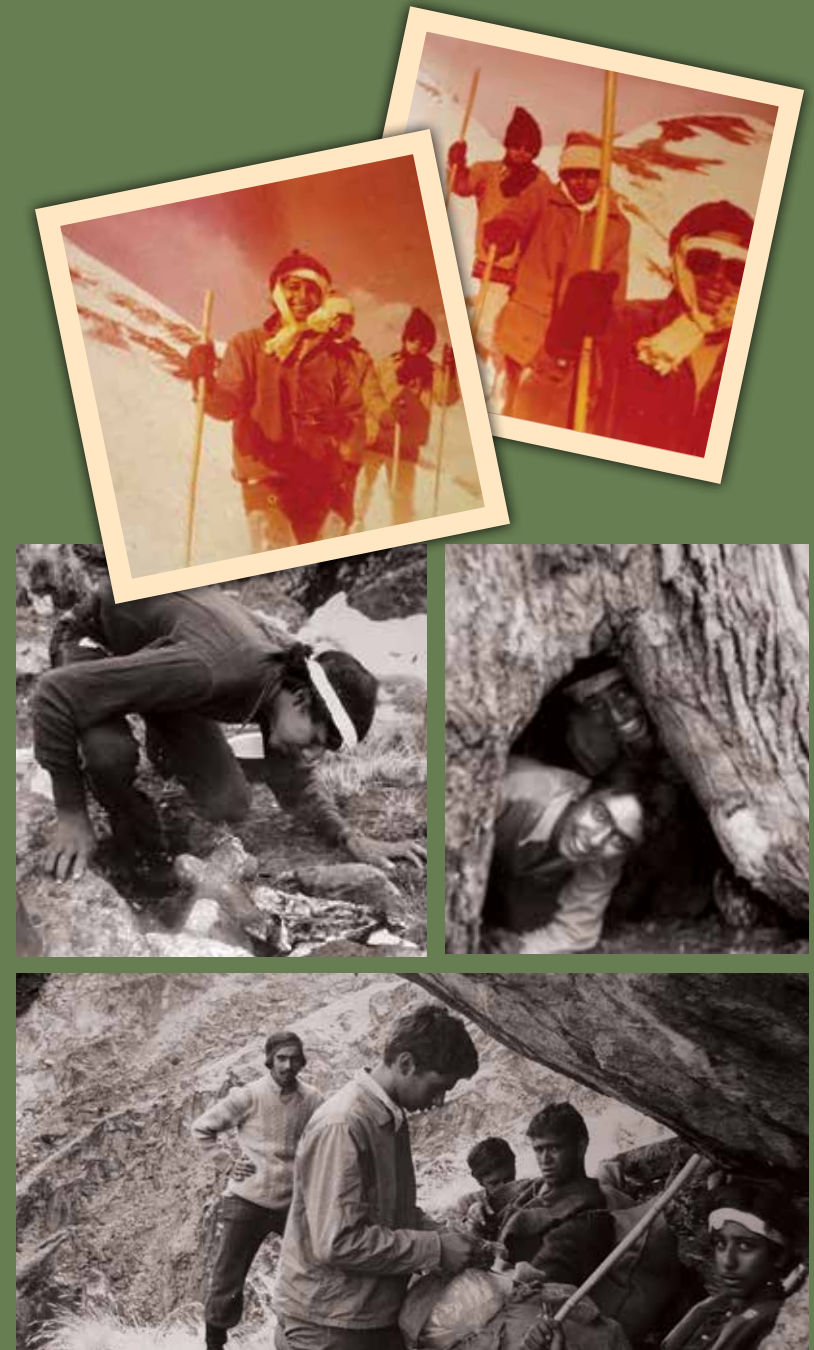
*Rahul Verghese*

The mountains have always fascinated me. My 1st trip was at the age of 10 with my family up to the China Border at Shipki La in Himachal.

In school we had a trip to Nainital in S1 with some mild trekking and then in S3, 9 of us went to Pindari Glacier with Harsh Grewal as our leader, and then it was a trek to Roopkund with Aditya Arora, Sanjay Prasad, and Vivek Agnihotri – the frozen lake at 16000 ft, the Adventure Course at Nehru Institute of mountaineering, Roopkund again, this time with R. Ravi and Tejbir Khurana and a cousin, and then attempting to climb Kolahoi peak in S5 with Tejbir Khurana. Along the way, Sanjay Prasad and I met up with Mr. Kapur and told him we wanted to start a mountaineering club in S5. He was very supportive; we bought a huge trunk and got a couple of rucksacks and some basic gear... so we had a club trunk instead of a club room!

The trips were always refreshing, humbling, and educational as we got to stay and meet with various locals on our trips, board hill buses with goats in our laps at times, experience some harrowing road journeys, and get a little more educated about nature and the niceness and simplicity of folk away from the big cities. I only wish we had cameras back then and could have taken some nice photographs. However, those memories are etched deep within each one of us who went out on a trip. Coming back from above the snow-line, we learnt to appreciate grass, and as we descended further, the trees, then humanity as we got into the hamlets, and then the first scrambled egg as we got into the town, and then would go for a big hog which would end in a stomach blowout with over eating when we got back to Delhi.

I would give anything to be in S3 again and head out to the mountains with my school buddies!



# THE PLAYING FIELDS OF MODERN

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The Duke of Wellington had famously said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. Bond agreed with the Duke.

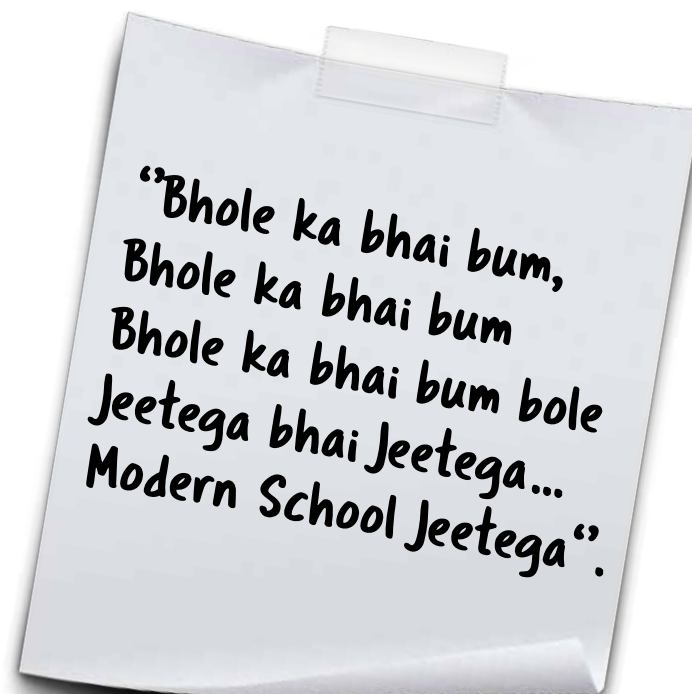
Bond believed that Sports, and especially team sports, was the perfect way to teach us discipline, the importance of hierarchy, the skills, the codes of honor, the team spirit, the never-say-die spirit, and the leadership qualities necessary to help us win our Waterloos. Yes, we truly had some great athletes and sportsmen in our batch. Aditya Arora, Brahm, Dhamija twins, Kochhar twins, Kirti, Mukul Diesh, Munish, Partho, Pankaj Khanna, Rahul Sharma, Sanjay



Srivastava, Sant, Tilak, Tuli, Vivek Agnihotri, Yogi... the list goes on. Brahm had got a repeat India color for Sailing, Yogi for Squash, and Kirti Azad was appointed Captain of the Indian Schoolboys, and our athletic whiz kids would win us the All India Inter Public Schools Athletics second year running.

Aditya informs us nobody till date in Delhi State has been able to break his 100 meters hurdles record of 13.1 seconds he set way back in school.

There were also many amongst us who were not as naturally gifted, but every time we played for Modern, we'd get lifted to a higher level. It had a lot to do with our proud sporting legacy. We knew we came from Champions and we Champions just 'know' how to win. We knew we played for the team and we'd give our best for our team. That's esprit de corps. We possessed it. Of course, we also excelled because we knew the whole school would be cheering for us.



## Athletics

Aditya Arora, Sanjay Srivastava, and Vivek Agnihotri were our Chariots of Fire, our Usain Bolts, our Sebastian Coes, and Mo Farahs.

They'd write some serious history in the annals of Athletics. No one has been able to replicate what these guys did.

### *Aditya Arora: (over the phone)*

"Sanjay and I would not just win, we would set National Records! I ran 100/200; Sanjay 400/800/1500, while Vivek ran long distance and was the Athletics Captain. Between the three of us and Mudgil, (a batch senior) who was primarily a jumper, we had it all covered. Along with my Hurdles National Record, which still holds, I'd also broken the 100 meters' National record (11.1 seconds)



I remember the time we'd won everything at the Public Schools Meet at Gwalior. That night, when Sanjay, Vivek, and I went down to the hostel to have dinner with the rest of the schools, we were booed. These guys just couldn't figure out what had hit them."

### *Vivek Agnihotri: (Over The Phone)*

"Doon, Mayo, Scindia, Sanawar, 4 Army (Sainik) Schools, Delhi College, Rajkumar College... 14 schools participated in the Public Schools Meet. Before us, Modern used to come last. Bond was extremely reluctant to send any team, but we changed the script. We won Gold, Silver, and Bronze in everything and won by record points. We gave our school the momentum and self-belief that we could win." Modern would go on to win the Trophy for the next 30 years. Amongst Vivek's many memorable wins, his Delhi State Record for 5000 meters (which stood for 23 long years), holds pride of place!

## Hockey

We won all the Inter-Schools and we made it to the Semi Finals of Sardar Mohan Singh Hockey Tournament. It was a first for Modern. We'd have these bruising matches against the Surds from Khalsa and GHPS. No

quarter was given, and none asked for. Arjun Dhamija picked up the Best Player Award of the Tournament.

### *Arjun Dhamija (Right Half):*

"Ganeriwala was always at attention, like ready for the national anthem. Yogi looked like a Nawab Saab who had just got out of bed and walked straight onto the field, but once the game started he was razor sharp. Jogesh always had the serious professional look, and Brahm was always looking annoyed and shaking his head, horizontally, not vertically, from left to right."



### *Guneet Singh Lehl (Centre Forward):*

“Brahm convinced me to play and I’m forever indebted to him. I also knew he’d kill me if I played badly!

Monty, our Captain, was famous for his Goalkeeper charges. And none of the opposing forwards wanted to play against the fierce Dhamijas. They’d even stop a tank from getting through, and in the very next moment these guys would set up a counterattack for us. Brahm, as center half was the ‘pivot’, the Sutra-Dhaar. He and I had this sixth sense; I just knew where he’d scoop the long balls. In a flash I’d chase them down and try to score or earn a corner or pass it to the other forwards.”



### *Vikram Dhamija (Left In):*

“On a lighter note, once after practice, our Coach, Mr. Bedi, got high on his Old Monk. We put him on his Royal Enfield and he rode back on auto mode. He was a great guy. Always good to the girls!”

## *Swimming, Water Polo, Diving*

Try climbing up to the 10-meter diving board. Then try looking down. The pool will look very tiny and very far away. Yes, diving separates the men from the boys! Varun Tuli was our Diving and Water Polo captain.

Ronesh was also part of the school diving team. Partho was our brilliant Swimming captain and great at Water Polo. He’d set the pool on fire. He held the State Record for breaststroke and for medley. We seriously suspected he was half man, half fish.

Kshitij too was part of the swimming and water polo teams.

### *Varun Tuli:*

“On the last whistle, we used to dive deep into the pool and catch frogs for the bio class... it was quite a ritual! I also remember the fistfights we’d have with Bal Bharti during our matches at National Stadium, both sides being cheered on by their schools. Same used to happen during the basket ball matches...”

## *Cricket*

### *Pankaj Khanna (Wicket Keeper):*

“Rahul was Captain and our ace batsman (Rahul Dravid mode). He had one of the best leg glances ever. Partho was our main fast bowler with an amazing out swinger. I kept wickets and batted middle order, but given the lineup we had, I didn’t get to bat often.”





*Rahul Sharma (Captain):*

“Raveen Mahendru and Rahul Bhatia would also turn up. Mahendru bowled a bit; Bhatia could throw his bat around.

Batting basically centered on Kirti Azad smashing the ball to all parts of the school while I'd be the run accumulator. In one final, Kirti and I put on a partnership of 240 runs with him smashing 150 while I made the other 85. I went onto make a 130 odd and we won the game by an innings with Partho and Sant picking up the wickets. Deora, Tuli and Pankaj always chipped in with the middle order runs with Partho smashing a few late boundaries.”

At one point, the Delhi State team comprised seven from Modern – Kirti (Captain), Rahul, Partho, Deora, and three from our junior batch.. Raju Sethi, Raman Mehra, and Suhail Dutt.

## *Football*

Tilak, our ‘little Messi,’ was the Captain. He'd drive his team crazy by making them do multiple rounds of the school even before school had started.

*Tilak Vir Nanda: (Over the Phone)*

“Mr. Balam was my mentor, and Mr. Chadha was very encouraging. Ajay Sanghi was our main goalie (Ashok Diwan the reserve one). Sant, Ashim (one batch junior), Yogi, and I were the other forwards. I remember this game in



which we scored 12 goals; Yogi was playing Right Out and I was Center Forward. The beauty was no one else touched the ball. We moved up passing the ball between the two of us and we set the goals for each other. I scored 7 and Yogi scored 5. Our epic games were against Raisina Bengali. Initially, we'd lose to them but over time we got the hang of their game and even started beating them.”

The others who played football for the team included Govind, Gopal, Mukul Diesh, and Sanjay Gupta.

**1,2,3,4! Who do you think is gonna score?  
M...H...S (loud chorus)**

## *Basketball*

*Gopal Kochhar:*

“Govind (Raju) Kochhar was the captain, I was the Vice Captain. We both played Delhi State Nationals. Aditya Narain, Sanjay Singhal, Sunil Trehan, and Sanjay Suri also played for the team.

We'd insist on playing all our matches inside the Shankar Lal Hall, and we'd get our entire school to cheer for us. No wonder we always won.”

**2,4,6,8!  
Whom do you appreciate?  
M...H...S (loud chorus).**

## Table Tennis

### *Deepak Prakash:*

“I remember the good times we had during TT practice and during our school matches. Ashwini Juneja was the captain. As I look back, I wonder why I chose an indoor sport like TT rather than being out in the sun? Now I remember. I never liked to run and TT required the least amount of running.”

Ha ha.

### *Guneet Singh Lehl:*

“I was part of our junior team and Aditya Reddy was our captain. Many years later his mum told me he’d learnt to play from Mr. L.K. Advani.

Juneja’s game was very difficult to read. His returns were very quick and he’d always wrong foot you! He had this loopy grin on his face while he played.

## Volleyball, Softball, Kho Kho, Tennis, Wrestling, Riding...

### *Sunil Kamboj:*

“I was the Volley Ball team captain in senior school and my team won the Gold medal in Delhi State Championship. I was also a softball player.”

### *Vikram Dhamija:*

“I was Captain of Kho Kho and chosen for Nationals. Tidda, Arjun Dhamija, and Aditya Narain too were part of the team. I was also in our Pole Vault team and selected for Delhi State.”

### *Piyush Jindal:*

“I was junior Tennis Captain. In Softball, I played first stop position. Our Maths teacher Sudershan Taneja was the coach. Cool dude that he was, we called him Satta —”



### *Bhuvanesh Khanna:*

“Rajesh Sehgal and I were selected for Competitive Serious Riding. The other riders were Ravi Bali, Ajay Sanghi and Pankaj Khanna.”

### *Puneet Dhar:*

“Harsh Grewal, Rajesh Rawal, and I were the wrestlers!”

### *Sanjay Gupta:*

“I was captain of the Softball team (and also a member of the football team). And I’m the Sanjay from Gandhi House since we’ve two Sanjays, both in C section!”

### *Kapil Kathpalia:*

“Samir Thukral, Sanjay Sandhu, and I were part of the tennis team. Samir was the captain. The others who also played included Rajat Chhabra, Piyush Jindal, and Ashwini Dewan.”





## *Our Teen Patti Champs*

### *Bhuvanesh Khanna:*

“Munish, Aka, Deep, Ajay Kapoor, Arjun Puri, Kirti Azad, Ravi and Shiv Bali, Deepak Kwatra, Ganeri, Pankaj – they were the pros. The “Badd se Badnam” C section guys would play during Dr. Bharadwaj’s Sanskrit class. While the rest of the class would learn Sanskrit on the front benches, these guys would be playing “blinds and chaals” at the back.”



# पकड़ो पकड़ो !

*Sujata Mehra*

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School, a distant dream at one level, and just yesterday at another. Traveling down memory lane, the distinctive feature is the sense of freedom and confidence. Freedom to be and to explore, be it music, sculpture, sports, horse riding, ballet, plays, orange ice cream placed on blades of a fan slowly dripping on the teacher's shirt, or smoking in unused staircases.

The faint memories are multifaceted. Things in retrospect tend to acquire a lofty status so please excuse any inadvertent discrepancy.

I would like to dedicate these memories to Mr. Juneja, the Head Master of Junior School, Mr. A.K. Chaturvedi, our House Master at Lajpat House and of course Bond, who chiselled us with love, care, and precision and without whom none of us would have learnt to appreciate our shoes.

My fondest memories are of the riding fields and the horses. We had Kali, Noorie, Shyama, and others. I enjoyed riding both Kali and Noorie. We also had a Shetland pony called Tattu. In Junior school, Tattu, being diminutive, would dive under the rope and jump the wall, off to the stables in Barakhamba. He would choose to do this once a week. The unwary rider (including me), would be hit by the rope, thrown off. Tattu meanwhile, would have gracefully gone under the rope, spread complete panic in the playing fields, jumped the wall at the far end near the plate washing area, and run off. The mayhem that would ensue would include horses being prepared to run to catch him. The mad hatter's party would ensue as everyone on the playing fields either ran away or ran towards him shouting "Oye

Tattu bhag gaya, pakdo pakdo" Then we had Shyama who was brilliant and eccentric. She was a challenge to ride but she had her moments. I once won the horse jumping competition while riding her, much to her amusement and my surprise. She was flawless on the day that mattered. And I forgot, she often bit the horse in front.





## MY FRIENDS AND I

*Eeda Gujral*

I never thought life would get better than the time I had at school. Thanks to my gang of girls, Sabina, Nalini, Arti, and Anshoo, for making that possible. The best times I shared with Sandhya in S2, the cakes that Jo would make for my birthday, and Bindu for being in and out of my entire school life since my oldest memory at age 8... our trip to Rajasthan. Of course, all the naughty boys who added to all this fun. The basket ball matches and cheering for Govind and Gopal. Walking to national stadium to watch hockey. Bunking in Sanjay's jeep to go to DePaul's for cold coffee, first romance, bunking assembly and Bond's lecture to go eat our tiffin above the science lab and getting caught by Mooli – I think it was with Nannu, Sabina, Trehan and can't remember others. Bunking class & hiding in Shankar Lal hall! Bunking class and hiding in the bus doesn't get weirder! I wonder when we studied as we seemed to have bunked a lot.

English teachers could conduct cooking classes: "If they didn't put sookha atta on chapatis...the chapatis would stuck."

- CK CHADHA

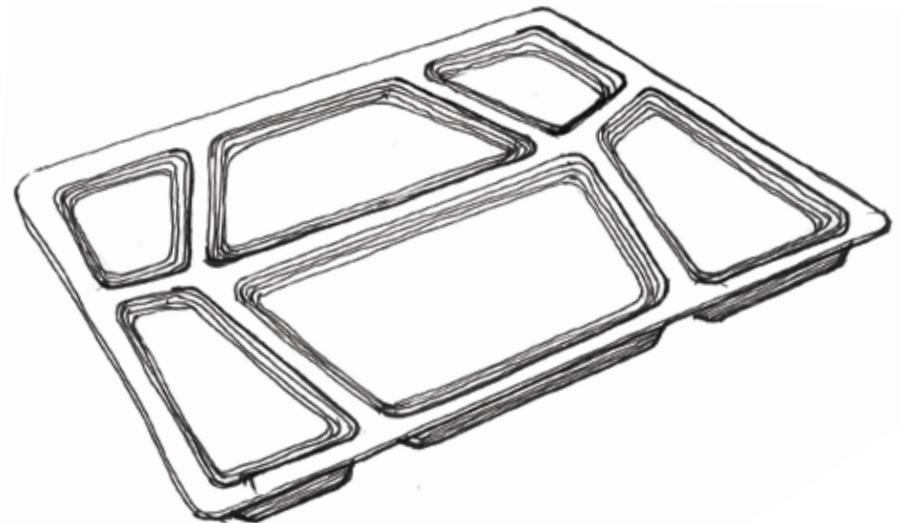
## SCHOOL LUNCH

*Sabina Taneja*

One day Eeda and I decided that we really wanted to try out the school lunch. It cost a paltry Rs 1 or 2 (can't remember) and everyone who ate there complained about it. Regardless, the grass is always greener on the other side and we were determined and very keen to sample the gourmet (?) delights.

Excitement mounting, at the sound of the gong, we trotted over to join the queue of lunch goers at the food hall – a largish building situated close to the riding course. In the vast dining hall, a line had already formed to get the best seats and lunch was served... or rather the games had begun. What a circus! Lunch with entertainment. Worth every penny. Frantic running around by kitchen staff slopping servings of dal and vegetable curry into a stainless steel tray with separate compartments. A mound of Rice already in place. Chapati bits flying around, boarders screaming at the 'mundoo' replenishing the dal, etc. A disagreement or two over the 'meetha'.

All in all, a wonderful experience and quite delicious but perhaps once was enough? We went back to eating our home lunch the next day.



# HIKE ON A WET, WET NIGHT

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“The midnight bus to the cloudy hills of Mussoorie...” could well be the beginning of a song.

But it was a rickety vehicle packed with a bunch of trekking enthusiasts and opportunity grabbers departing from the school gates on Barakhamba Road on the evening of 25th September, 1976.

It was a quick, fun-filled trip organised for us wannabes, not the serious trekkers and mountaineers who did the more pro trips. Nevertheless, organised by the master organiser and our own Edmund Hillary, Mr Verghese. I’m pretty sure he had no idea how us useless folks might tarnish his reputation!

The 11km hike to Mussoorie from the base at Dehradun was killing. Vicky Agnihotri was trying to drag the girls up the mountain while Atul Khullar carried their bags all the way. Eventually even Mr. Verghese had to try and pull us along, if nothing else but to salvage his reputation as the inspiration to acquiring trekking interest and skills in enthusiastic (but useless) people. But we made it!

Fatigued and famished, we trudged into the only restaurant that was still open. Chinese. With great anticipation, Maitreyee B. ordered some cream of tomato soup. It came in a cracked bowl... the thinnest and worst simulation of (cream?) tomato soup she had ever eaten, belying the notion that anything tastes good when one is hungry.

Food done with, Maitreyee and Kalyani dashed for a taxi to avoid the return downhill hike to the good ol’ rickety bus waiting at Dehradun patiently.

It rained. And it rained and rained and rained. Wet people trudged down the mountain. Wet people piled into the bus. Aching legs and a terrible desire to sleep the pain, wetness, and chill away. Something was happening at the back of the bus. Silly talk happening at the front. Some of it by our juniors. It helped to indulge in a little hysterical laughter and temporarily forget the wet, wet chill. Maybe not for what was happening at the back of the bus.

It took forever for everyone to board.

A bus load of tired, wet people returned to the gates at Barakhamba, half drugged, half frozen and quite asleep a little past midnight with no intentions of ever walking again. Yet a bunch of people who would happily add the experience as “I did that” to our ever blossoming selves.



# LOVE STORY WITH MODERN

*Anuradha Basu*

Only after I compared my children's experience in elite American high schools with my own experience, did I appreciate the amazing job Modern School did at giving us a well-rounded education that emphasized not merely academic excellence but also the importance of developing other talents. Thanks in large part to Mr. Kapur's vision, we were forced to step out of our comfort zones and demonstrate talent in other spheres, be it in sports or music or theater. It's hard to believe that I stood in front of hundreds of students and sang Rabindra sangeet!

MHS provided a great learning environment, not least because of my classmates.

In Spring 1976, my parents decided that we would move to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as my father had accepted a UN job there. I was devastated to leave school. So were all my classmates, it seemed. When it was time to say goodbye, they presented me with the 'Love Story' record album. After spending the summer at an all-girls' convent in Kuala Lumpur where I was struggling to learn British history and geography, in preparation for the 'A' levels, my mother decided that we would return to India to allow me to complete my final year of school.



At first, I was delighted to be returning to familiar territory. Then, I was mortified, imagining how my classmates would respond. Would they not mock me for saying farewell, and then coming right back? How would I explain this about-face to them? What about the presents and farewell notes they'd given me? I didn't have the courage to face them. My mother reasoned with me. There was no question that returning to MHS made sense from an academic perspective. The School was willing to re-admit me. She said I could take gifts for all my classmates. She said if they really liked me, they would respect and understand my decision to return. She was right. From recollection, all my classmates were happy to have me back in class.

I loved my final year at school in S5D. All the teachers were really caring and likeable, including TBS, even though he called us (Yasmin and me) "zeroes" for snacking on oranges in his Chemistry class. His remark really stung me. It made me work twice as hard in Chemistry, and resulted in my doing better in the finals than ever before. Returning to school at the start of S5 was the wisest decision I made, based on my HS results and admission to Stephen's. I can't recall what presents I brought back for everyone, but am happy to report that after 40 years, the Love Story record is still lying intact at home in Delhi.

# GROWING UP...

*Nandani Khosla Singh*



I joined modern in class S1. My first days were a whirl of faces and people as I came from a small hill town in Kashmir. Everyone knew everyone else since forever and I remember that Rashma became my first friend. It is today that I realise the kindness that prompted her to befriend a bewildered new girl and take her under her wing.

Gradually, I grew to love school despite the long hours and the myriad activities that filled up every minute but also the great times in the breaks and the house activities and annual day preparations. For me, Modern School was a world apart from any of the multiple schools I had been in, being the child of transferable job parents. I realised more acutely than anyone else that this was indeed a school with a difference. Having travelled forty years since we passed out, I have no reason to have found a better one. Those halcyon days where one spent many hours in the music room with Mr Khastagir, or playing hockey, and getting exemption from lessons still remain etched in memory as the happiest times I have known. The times flew by with friends Pinki and Sabina, and then Maitreyee, Kalyani and Sagari, becoming one happy bunch. It's a bit hard to actually pinpoint the exact moment when we felt all grown up but that too happened somewhere along the way.

Today I sometimes meet the people I held so dear all those years ago and feel a familiar sense of comfort that doesn't happen with new friends. Life leads us on different paths and we then cease to be who we were at that time. Still when we come upon each other on an unexpected turn, shrieks of delight mark this meeting as we once again revel into who we were, and where we are now. I am looking forward to reconnecting with the bygone era of my life with excitement and trepidation in equal measure.





NAME:

BHUVANESH KHANNA

HOUSE:

PRATAP

SEC:

C

Device:

Multiple Diwali bombs with  
cigarettes as fuse

Accomplice  
in crime:

Many including Ravi Bali



**The serial bomb blasts conducted with precision: between the metallic shutters on stage of Sir Shankar Lal hall where the Late Mr Moolraj Mendiratta was taking the assembly and was a office holder!**

Investigators put by Bond to unravel the conspiracy & catch the perpetrators: the proclaimed infamous few: Bhuvanesh Khanna, Ravi Bali, Ronesh, Rajat Chhabra etc.

With no progress in the case, one day Ravi Bali and Bhuvanesh khanna pick a fight and Ravi Bali meets and spills the beans to Bond.

Bhuvanesh Khanna is suspended.

But he still left home each day to attend school with lunch and bag, but spent time in bong...

The parents were clueless about his suspension.

One day his American Embassy employed pipe smoking dad comes to school and meets Bond to check on the progress of his ward and to pick him from school.

Bond enquires from day, "How's the lad doing after his suspension?"

Dad, "Suspension? What suspension?" The pipe that day had more than just smoke spewing after the Late Mr RC Khanna came out of the famous room that housed Bond's office.

Sr Mr Khanna pulverized Jr in school, on the way and at home.

But Bond as Bond was, he had me back and under his care...lesson learnt.

**This was just one amongst many escapades of Mr Bhuvanesh Khanna, now 56, going on 57!**

# ROOPAK

So how many of you were a part of Mr Ved Vyas's famous magnum opus... The Roopak "Ek lakshya, Ek Abhiyan"? No? Seriously? We think most of the class was. That was what made it so fun. It was all-inclusive in more ways than one. How many of you remember the stay backs for Roopak practice? The second tiffins, the jaunts to Bengali Market, the chitter-chatter, the sore throats from the endless practice? Mr. Sharma telling you how to emulate swans instead of thumping your feet on stage. Khastagir's tantrums and the endless times he told you to get out or told you how 'besura' you were? Mr. Ved Vyas admonishing you for not showing up on time? Aren't those the reasons the Roopak was so much fun anyway? In spite of all that, 'Hamara Chatra Dal' met the challenge head on and put on a great show!

We dare you to forget the songs! 'Kadam kadam badhaye jaa, khushi ke geet...' You're already singing along! One of the most beautiful songs was Mr Ved Vyas's version of Robert Frost's 'Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening' – "Abhi to chalna hai milo..." The haunting melody and sheer intensity of its lyrics held our attention and kept us humming for years.



(रूपक के गीत)

हमारा छात्र दल, (दो बार) देश का है शक्ति यह  
देश का है बल - हमारा छात्र दल, (दो बार)  
जा रहा है युद्ध में जैसे खेल हो अजल  
हमारा छात्र दल, हमारा छात्र दल  
आँधियों के सैन्धता, बिजलियों का कैंधता  
शैरो का दहाड़ना, जय पताका गाढ़ता  
बादलों के लींधता, बेगबान भर प्रबल  
हमारा छात्र दल, हमारा छात्र दल !  
देश का भविष्य आज, फिर तुम्हारे हाथ है ( दो बार )  
आँख खेल देखे ~~कब~~ न साकार शक्ति साथ है ( दो बार )  
माना है कालि जग, जोध के न चल कर  
इस प्रश्नाल को देखता, लक्ष्य अपना केधता  
सावधान होके चल, कालचक्र दे मरल  
हमारा छात्र दल, हमारा छात्र दल  
पूब में विश्व देख, लाल आसमान देख  
विश्व में न आज बन, शक्ति तीसरी सबल  
देश का भविष्य आज फिर तुम ही हो छात्र दल  
हमारा छात्र दल

(2)

वन्दे मातरम् !  
सुजहं सुफलं प्रलयज शीतलाम्, शरय श्यामलाम्  
मातरम् - वन्दे !  
शुभ ज्योत्सनां पुलकित धामिनीम्, फुल्ल कुसुमित  
दुन्दल शोभिनीम् / सुसासिनी, सम्पुत्र भाषिणी  
सुखदाम् वरदां मातरम् - वन्दे मातरम् !

(3)

सारे जहाँ से अच्छा हिन्दोस्तां हमारा  
हम पुलकिते हैं इसकी भर गुलसितां हमारा - (सारे जहाँ)  
मजहब नहीं फिरवाता आपरु में बैर रखना  
हिन्दी है हम ( तीन बार ), वतन है हिन्दोस्तां हमारा  
सारे जहाँ से अच्छा

(5) (नामोल गीत)

भारत देश स्पष्ट देहर सोल्लुवार मिडि  
 भयम कोल्लुवार तुमर पगथी वैल्लुवार (तीन बार)  
 वैलि पानि मलाधिनि मीडुला लुवाम - अदि  
 मेलई कडल मुडुदुम करपल वीडुवोम (दो बार)  
 पिल्ल तल मनई तुम, कौडल सेडुवोम ( " " )  
 एडगल-भारत देश स्पष्ट तोयल कोडुवोम (तीन बार)

(4) हो कोमेने जीर ही कोमेने चीर  
 हो उन्नत शीर नाहिं भौध  
 भूली भेदा भेद शान  
 हो गौके आलुवान  
 शोये अये अगवान - नाहिं भौध!

(6)

सरप्रोशी की तमना अब हमारे दिल में है  
 देरवना है जेकर किमना काजुस कातिल में है  
 वरन अजने दे जता देगे तुम रे आसमां ( दो बार )  
 हम अभी से क्या कराये क्या हमारे दिल में है!  
 सरप्रोशी की तमना - - - - - !  
 अब न पहले बलबले हैं और न अरमानों की भीड़ ( दो बार )  
 एक तिर जाने की हमरत अब दिले विरहिल में है!

(7)

विजयी विश्व तिरंगे छारा, भड़ा अचें रहे हमारा  
 उस भड़े के नीचे निर्भय, ले स्वराज्य यह अकिंचल निरचय  
 वोलें भारत माता की जय!  
 बितवना है ध्येय हमारा  
 भड़ा अचें रहे हमारा!  
 इसकी शान न जाने जाये, कोहे जान भले ही जाये  
 विरव विजय करके दिखलौं, तब होवे प्रण पूर्ण हमारा  
 भड़ा अचें रहे हमारा!

(8)

नजाधिपाल धुंग पर बिडा दुड  
 लुद की तरंग पर अही दुड  
 स्वर्ग में सभी जगह गरी सुड  
 अरल चोजा तरी लपेट केसरी

चोजा गीत

(ii) न सोभया के समथ यह रुकी  
 न दाड भे के समथ यह रुकी  
 सगि अज शत्रु शोभा पर रुकी  
 विजय चोजा तरी लपेट केसरी

(iii) -पले इसे सिलाग आज सब करे  
 -पले इसे प्रसाग आज सब करे  
 अजर सदा इमेलिय डुर जिमें  
 अजर सदा बने लिर डुर गीरे  
 अजय चोजा तरी लपेट केसरी!

(9) (अलोप)

वक की कलम, लिरव रही थी भूं, गगय देश का  
 कारु पल मे वर गई थी रूप, चांदनी, उवा (तीन बार)  
 पकरो की - जोदियां, जल मे अरमां, चरा ( दो बार)

(10)

शानि पथ का राही लोकिन अभय सिपाही  
 अलियान देके अपना चिरनीं सो गया है  
 शिब की तरह जहर को खुद ही वह पी गया है ( दो बार )  
 जीत जिसे हैं कहते देते वह जी गया है ( दो बार )  
 अब छोड़ कर जमीं को खुदगारा हो गया है - ( अलियान देके - )  
 दिल्ल, सुरालमान हिन्दू सब को या सब जान  
 मां भारती के शर का सब को ही मौनी माना  
 पर मोतेयां में लाल वह असगाय ही खो गया है  
 ( अलियान देके - - - ! शानि पथ )

(11)

कान देके सुन परा, वह रा तिरंगे क्या  
 कह रा है ये मुझे शुक मेरे गीत हैं  
 बेसुरी है तान मन्द पड़ गई है लय  
 न काल में है शरण, बेकरार है गगन  
 धुंध है चरा कह रा है यह मुझे ( कान देके सुन - - - )  
 रू से मेरी जब तलक शत्रु हैं दुकारने  
 कुल नाग से विदे, बेकनह कुंठ कारने  
 तब तलक न मेरे नीचे आके कोड गीतगा ( धुंध है चरा - - - )  
 जब तलक हैं भाई मेरे नजे भुंके मर रहे  
 इर उनसे चन्द कब्रम सोना जोरी भर रहे  
 तब तलक न मेरे नीचे आके कोड गीतगा  
 धुंध है चरा - - - - - ! ( कान देके सुन )



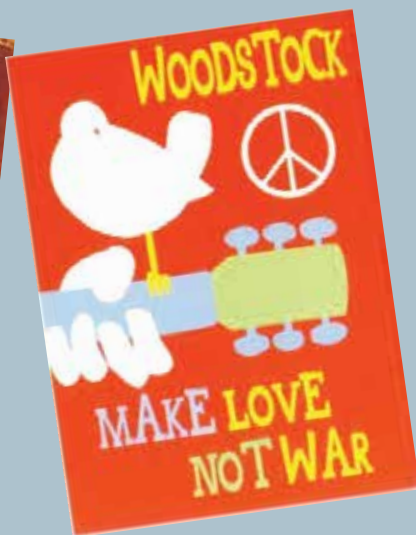
# WE LOVE OUR MUSIC

*Guneet Singh Lehl*

The Clothes we wore. Our Fashions. The trousers with flares, even our long hair. Bengali Market and CP. The Assembly, our Playing Fields, and all the other cool things we did at school. All this is core to our collective memory. It defined us and made us who we were.

But the one thing that truly brought us all together was our love for our music.

Those were the days of Woodstock and Rock 'n' Roll. And Hare Rama Hare Krishna and Dum Maro Dum. We'd listen to records and cassettes and tune into Yuva Vani, Forces Request, and Date with You, even Ceylon Radio. And while it was considered no longer hip, we'd all hum the melodies of Mohd. Rafi, Hemanth Kumar, Mukesh, Kishore, RD Burman, Lata, Asha, even Usha Uthup. Chitrahaar too was a must see. Every Wednesday we'd sit in front of our Black and White TVs, and enjoy that half an hour of films and music.



The '70s also gave us some of the greatest Rock 'n' Roll Bands the world has ever heard. I'm sure you'll find your band amongst these...

The Beatles, Doors, Clapton, Traffic, Tull, Led Zep, Stones, Hendrix, The Who, Dylan, Cohen, CSNY, CCR, Neil Young, Bowie, Eagles, Steve Miller, Fleetwood Mac, Van Morrison, Uriah Heep, Dead, Floyd, Janis, Joni, Baez, JJ Cale, Marley, Zappa, Deep Purple, Grand Funk, Steppenwolf, Bad Company, Rare Earth, Velvet Underground, Curtis Mayfield, Jefferson Airplane, Alice Cooper, Osibisa, Santana, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, Brubeck, Billie Holiday, BB King, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Muddy Waters, Ray Charles...

Jo's (Sahni) music was the talk of town. It was actually her brother's, Arunjit, a 1973 Modernite. He'd send her the best Rock and Blues and Jazz albums from the UK. We'd go down to her basement and feast on the music and fresh cakes and quiches and muffins she'd bake.

We'd also listen to (and sing) songs of Neil Diamond, Paul Anka, Tom Jones, Carpenters, Sinatra, Elvis, Simon and Garfunkel, Cliff Richards, Engelbert Humperdinck, Abba, Cat Stevens and some





more. By then, Ravi Shankar, Alla Rakha Khan, Anand Shankar, and Akbar Ali Khan and some others had taken the Western audiences by storm. Some even came to school and performed for us the whole night through.

There was the emerging Disco of Boney M. And everybody danced close to George McRae's "Woman take me in your arms, rock your baby" and everyone went Kung fu Fighting with Carl Douglas. (Bruce Lee had already blown us away in Enter The Dragon). And then there was the Motown and Soul and R & B music of Marvin

Gaye and Roberta Flack and Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder.

There were also the Dance Parties we'd throw whose success we'd measure by the 'latest' music we'd play and the amount of girls we'd get to come and the dances we'd get with them. And we'd beg our



*'We had joy, we had fun,  
we had seasons in the sun...'*

parents to let us serve beer and rum punch.

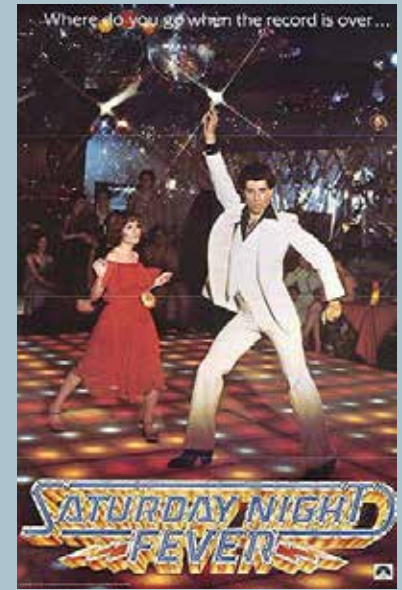
And Terry Jack's 'Seasons in the Sun' and Mary Hopkins 'Those were the Days' topped our list of nostalgic songs. We'd even get Donna Summers tapes to school and get all excited listening to her 'Love-to-

Love you Baby', and later there'd be "Susie, he's looking at you" in Cerrone's 'Love in C Minor'. BeeGee's Saturday Night Fever and then Grease would come out in our first-year college. And from then on, it would be just Disco Deewane and Funky Town.

Way back in S3, Rajan Chauhan, Mickey Ghadoke and Sanghi had got some drums and guitars together and they started their own rock 'n' roll band. They'd even jam on stage during Assembly.

A couple of batches senior, Abhinav Dhar and his Band, on one Saturday Assembly, turned Shankar Lal Hall into a rock arena. The doors were shut, windows darkened and they played Sly and the Family Stone's 'I want to take you higher' and we all yelled 'higher, higher, higher'. Post that session no one was in the mood for any studying and so Bond let us off early to go get 'higher'.

To be part of Khastu's Orchestra you needed to be top notch. Kalyani, Sandhya (Sud), Sant, Anuradha Basu, Lakshmi and even the other Sandhya (Narain) were the ones who'd made it to play Sitar. And the Violinists comprised Rajan and Soumya. Other Sitarists included R. Ravi and Roma, while Dilruba remained Jassi and Rajiv Kapuria's choice. Vivek (Agnihotri) too tried his hand at the Violin but Khastu told him to run off (and he's been running ever since). During Talent Time at Assembly we'd have Rajan Chauhan perform. He'd play guitar and he'd sing both Hindi and English songs. Kishore's 'Kabhi Alvida Na Kahena' was one of his favorites.



Maitreyee too would sometimes join Rajan; they'd sing 'Summer Wine'. She'd also sing "Aa ja re Pardesi" from Madhumati. Sometimes Kalyani and she'd be found roaming around school singing Petula Clark numbers. Kalyani broke orthodox Khastu's heart the day she walked up on stage and sang Joan Baez (instead of his precious classical Indian). Meenakshi, meanwhile, continued to sing classical/



semi classical and stayed true to her roots. And Shelly sang sweetly and excelled in playing string instruments, any he'd lay his hands on. While Rahul Verghese sang Dylan's 'Sara' almost as if it was his own. And Soumya played perfect Violin. And while at Architecture College, he'd decide instead to live amongst the Adivasis and help them in their struggle to live their life with dignity. Later, he and his wife would start a residential school for Adivasi children as well. And Sunil Kamboj played mouth organ. Bond would meet him years later, and still remember (that he played the harmonica). And the hosteller's, and we of E section, often heard Sukhi Arora sing, "my dear Sunday chetti aa", Monday to Saturday, week after week.

Rajesh Sehgal would also sing (on the entire C-section's popular demand), a song called "Zara pay karo attention, mujhe tumse prem hai".

And then there was C-sections' Anthem 'Julie, I love you'. Every time they're together, and are a few drinks down, Rajan tells us they break into song.

Yes. We of '77. We loved our music.

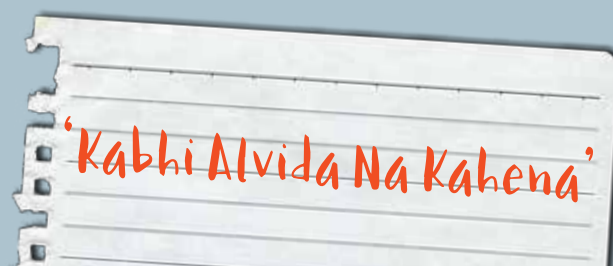
We loved our music then. And we love our music now.

Brian Adams had sung '18 Till I Die'.

Yes. I'll remain 18, 18 'til I die.

But when I'm with you guys and girls...

**I'll always be '77. '77 'til I die.**

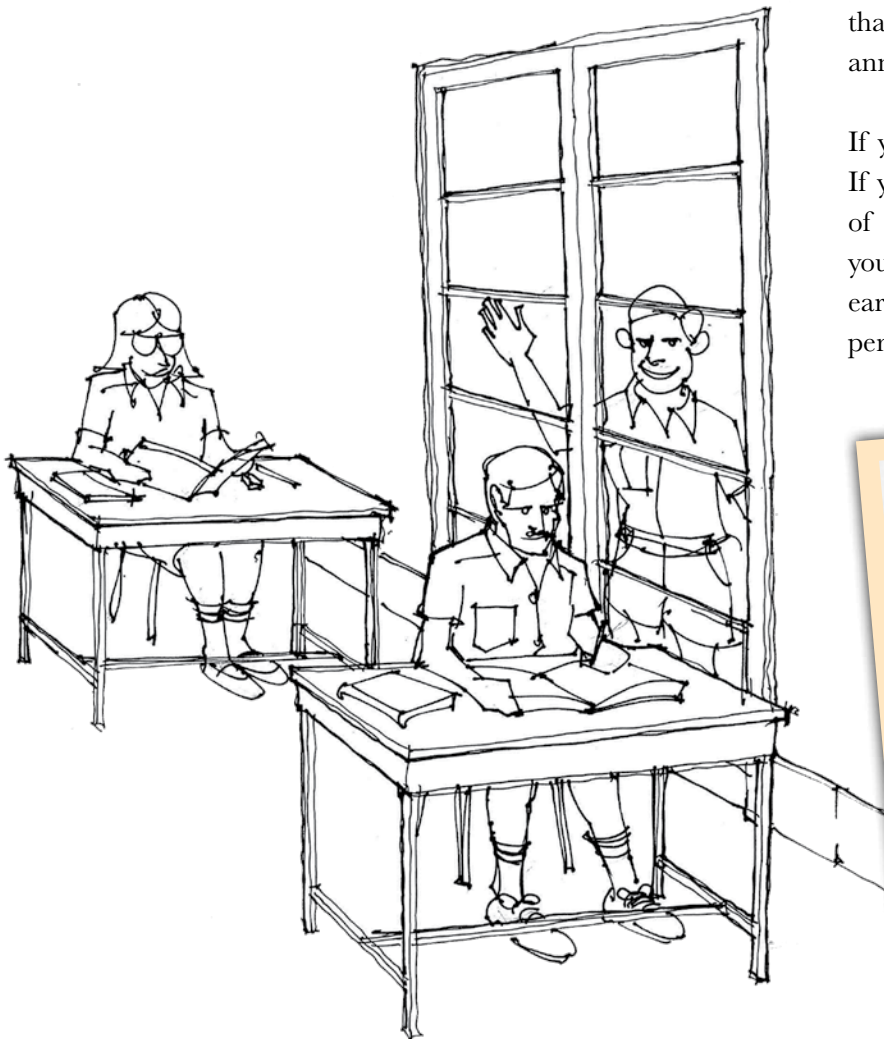


# LEGIT-BUNKING

Legit-bunking definition: opportunity to bunk with an official reason where the focus is on bunking rather than the reason to miss class.

Oh, there were enough reasons to miss class! Sports tournaments, play or dance rehearsals, inter-school competitions... all in pursuit of honours or recognition of talent. But once a year, a legit-bunking opportunity presented itself to all of us.

Officially known as **office duty**.



Office duty definition: student assigned duty as principal or headmaster's errand runner or school-bell ringer. No talent required to sit outside Bond or Mooli's office or to ring a bell.

You could sit at a desk and play hangman by yourself. Sometimes you would walk around school feeling important or go and peep into your own class and make faces at people then run away if one of your pals accidentally gave you away. Occasionally you would get the chance to make an announcement or hand a note to the teacher in a class where your secret heartthrob sat. Silently hoping that 'he' might notice you. In which case, you probably fumbled the announcement.

If you were a bell ringer, you had to time your gallivanting to the T. If you were game, you must have fibbed your way to get a friend out of class. "Mr Mendiratta wants so-and-so...". If you were meek, you might have been bullied by the 'ne'er-do-wells' to ring the bell early to end a class, or late to extend the break, lunch, or games periods. If you were daring, you'd do it without being asked.



## SWATI

*Nath Verma*



**What is your biggest regret?**

I cannot sing!

**What would you tell your 17 year old self?**

Curly hair is not all that bad.

**People are surprised that...**

I have a tattoo.

**Name 3 things on your bucket list.**

To stay in an igloo.

## SUJATA

*Mehra*



**What bores you the most?**

Hearing complaints.

**Name 3 things on your bucket list:**

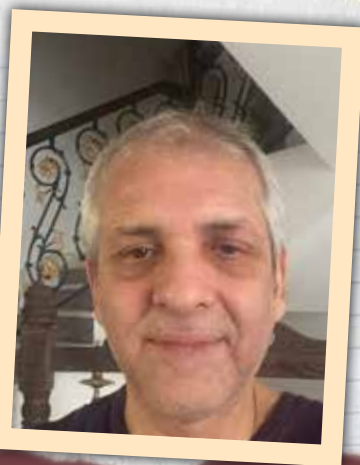
Seeing the northern lights, Going to Kailash Mansarovar, Going on a river rafting expedition in Ladakh.

## ASHOK

*Dewan*

**What bores you the most?**

Filling questionnaires such as this one



## HEMANTH

*Paul*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**  
Discovery and adventure

**What are you absolutely crazy about?**  
Good times

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**  
Riding my bike, riding, "I want to ride my bicycle... With my queen", "Baby you can drive my car..."



# OF BONDAS AND BM

*Vinita Bijlani Bimbhet*

Human memory can be remarkably fragile and even inventive when it comes to remembering past events, often completely rewriting itself! My memory of the lethal, bubbling in sugar syrup, zillion calorie, mouth watering gulab jamuns (and bondas) was put to test recently when my office moved to Tansen Marg!

As good as ever! So the suggestion, that a childhood event that could have led to persistent false beliefs that have lasting behavioural consequences (like hogging gulabos, gaining weight and acne) was completely untrue. The gulab jamuns and everything else were

as delicious as ever and their memory true and as vibrant as ever. We were all starving and the bonda beckoned. It was a hot summer day, we crossed the fields and came to a gap in the wall somewhere behind the stables (I think) which led almost directly to Bengali Market. The bonda was divided and consumed rapidly, as was the gulab jamun... we were very nervous and had to be quick before the bell rang for class. It was the only time that I had broken out of school during school time and of course, on the way back promptly got caught and had suitable punishment meted out.



A bio teacher's definition of colocasia:  
"that thing they put in chaat in Bengali Market". Yet no assurance of full marks for that answer in an exam.

# EEDA'S LUNCH BOX

*Jyoti Sahni Vohra*

---

Oh no! How long is this man going to drone on and on about some silly Chem equation?? Who cares about Chem anyway! I mean, how the hell is this going to help me? Is it going to improve my life in anyway? All I know right now is that I'm starving and there's no way that I can get out of here before... oh no... another thirty seven minutes. The stomach is rumbling and things are not looking good. The guy from Eeda's house should be about to leave home just about now. Somewhere the smells from her kitchen are already wafting across my nose. Wondering what's cooking today. Even my boring sandwiches are almost beckoning. If they were Bindu's Garbage sandwiches that would be another matter. Now how to ask Bindu whether or not she has brought Garbage (read the yummiest sandwiches ever !) sandwiches? Pssst... Bindu?

As I turn to tear out the last page from my Chem copy to shoot a note to Bindu I am stunned out of my reverie and hauled off to the front of the room as an enraged (Always at me for some reason I never quite fathomed!) Mr Arora decides that Chem was more important than lunch. Now what was he thinking?

Anyhow before he could humiliate me any further I hear the sweet, sweet sound of the most important bell of the day... The Lunch Time Bell.

We all scramble straight to the school gate to see what's in Eeda's huge lunch 'Dabba'. Eeda's lunch always arrived steamy and hot straight from her kitchen across the road from school. All of us would scramble around to see what was in it. Our own lunches were all but forgotten for her 'dabba'. Sabina remembers the level of urgency

with which we would wait for Eeda's dabba as our own tiffins would be well over by break time. "But then we were always starving. Right from the time the assembly ended." Of course we were!

Eeda in the meantime would be busy trying to swap her lunch for Arti, Nalini and my school lunch. Alas! Our tiffins were always empty. Now how could she? She had this very strange affection for that wretched school lunch for some reason I still can't come to terms with. Sabina too. Sabina would scrounge around collecting money to buy a school lunch voucher.

Some of our most fun memories of school seem to revolve around that dabba and the waiting for it. Thank you Eeda for all those yummys!



# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST— ABOUT FOOD!

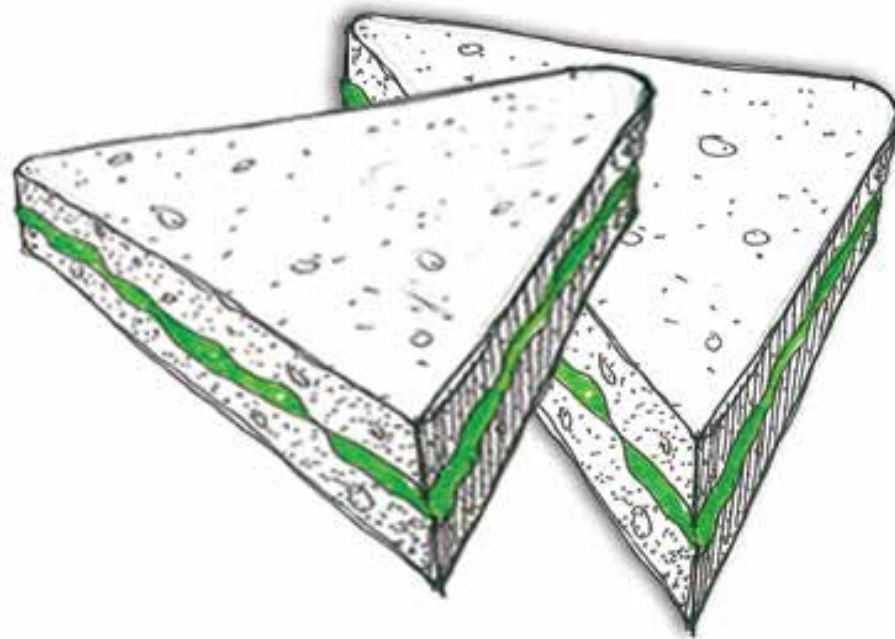
*Maitreyee Barthakur Angelo*

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Amongst the myriad memories of Senior School, many center around food. Rahul Verghese made it his mission to steal my lunches and no matter how many times he was caught, was limitless in his enterprise. I loved sitting by the backdoor of the classroom; he'd snake in a stick, snag the handle of my jhola and drag it out, leaving my half-empty lunchbox outside! Sometimes, when he felt contrite, he made up for his transgression by stealing Brahm Gyan's schoolbag, and the two of us would climb the central stairway to the secluded landing and share Brahm's usually delicious and more-than-ample lunch. Our reasoning was simple and logical: one person should not be eating three hot dogs for lunch.

To curry favor, Rahul would generously offer my lunch to his cohorts and "Maitreyee's lunch" acquired a gastronomic reputation.

Something had to be done. One day in late March, I announced that I would be bringing lunch the following day for all who desired my food as I was tired of mine being stolen. True to my word, the next day, I took a big batch of chutney sandwiches to school. At the sound of the lunch bell, all the hopefuls gathered around the banyan tree. I magnanimously distributed my sandwiches...and watched as my friends chomped away. I will never forget their expressions when they realized that the coveted "chutney sandwiches" were neither mint nor coriander, but ground and spiced up tasteless green leaves ensconced between two innocent slices of bread. "April Fool" I chortled as I sped off. I was chased all over school and until I could sneak onto the school bus at 3:30 pm, hid in the art department all afternoon for fear of retribution.



# THE SURD AT THE GATE

Nobody remembers his name. We just called him ‘Sardarji’.

Every time we’d enter school, he’d be sitting at the gate. He controlled the gate and the cycle shed. And he wouldn’t let anyone leave school until school got over. We’d tease him and try tricks to get out, and that made him grumpy. To leave school early, you needed to hand him a note from your teacher. Usually the teacher would let you go if you were unwell or sometimes if your parents wanted you home early.

Some of us would con our teachers to give us the note to let us go. But the Surd would easily see through our con and while he’d let us go, he’d tell us we’d come to no good if we continued down this path.

Of course like all things in India, there was also another way ‘out’ with the Surd. That too required a note. This one however came from the RBI. It was a two-rupee note.

The Surd would accept that note as well. He’d let us go, but even then, he’d tell us we’d come to no good. And it’s exactly for this we loved him and his grumpy ways.

# Farewell Dinner at the boarding house!



Picnic  
at Sultanpur!



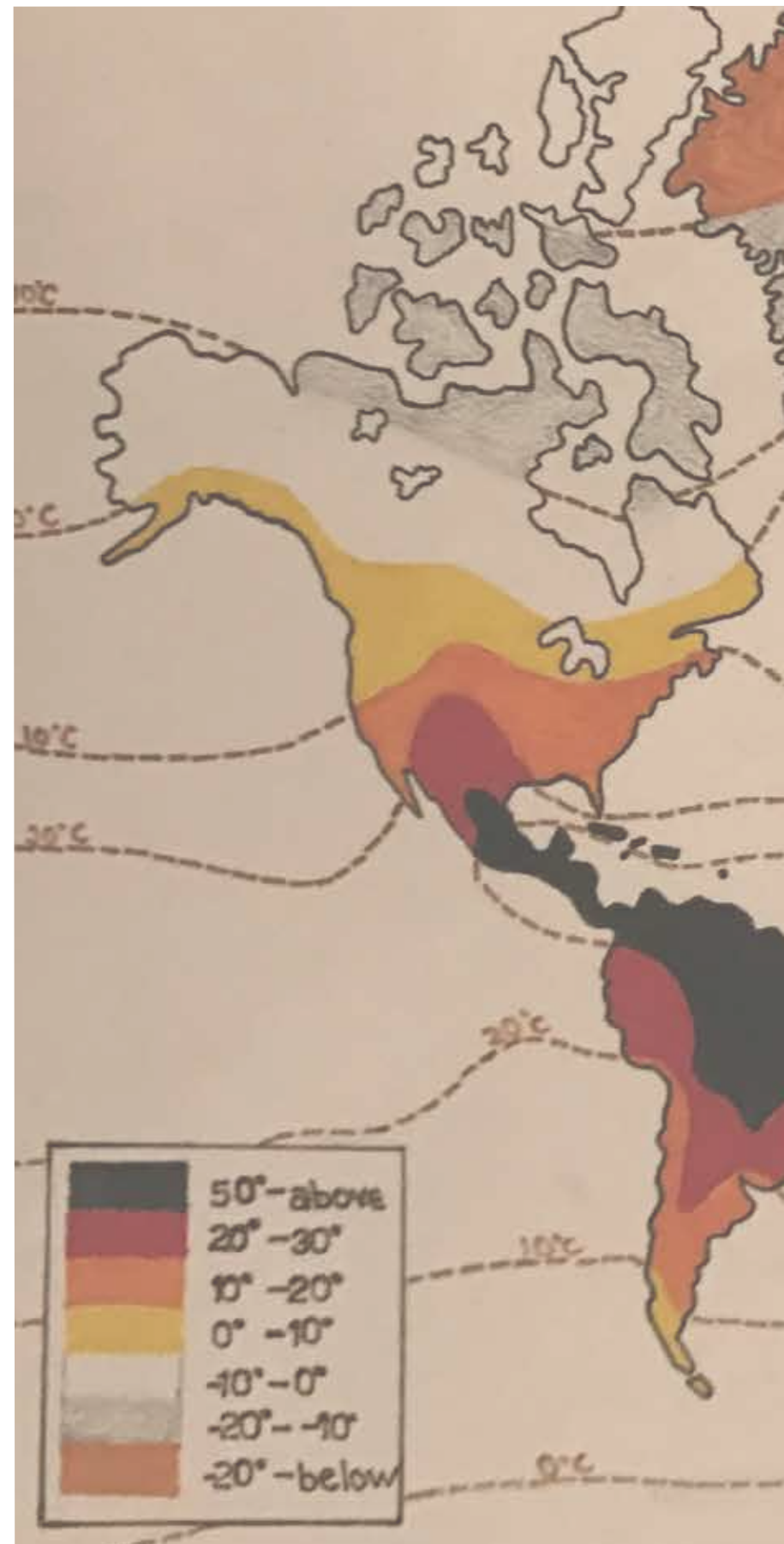
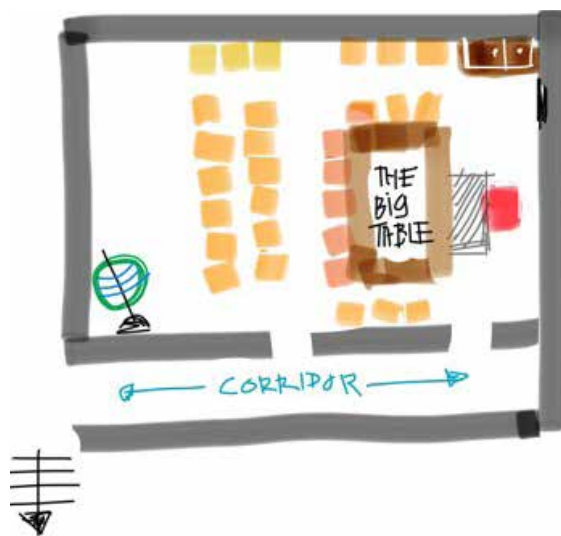
# THE GEOGRAPHY ROOM

One of our favourite rooms in school was the Geography room. It was charming, small, and different, and seemed to exude Mrs. Jogindra's (Juggi) character. It was like she had poured her soul into it. Being compact and set out the way it was made it possible for her to keep an eye on every student.

Unlike other classrooms which had seats arranged in rows, Mrs. Jogindra's class had one big table in front of her, two rows of seats behind, and one row on the side. Students sitting directly on the 'big' table couldn't hide from her eyes.

Unlike other classes, you wanted to be right in front. You wanted her eyes to be on you, so she could tell you how brilliant your diagrams or maps were. Or your handwriting. She always had a keen eye for aesthetics. When she gave you a compliment it would make your day!

We loved the way she taught and all her nuances and word play kept us forever entertained. The colourful maps and diagrams on the wall made it easy to cheat in her exams. We think fondly of how she would throw a chalk at anyone whose mind tried to wander even for a moment.



If I have a travel bug, it is at least in part thanks to Mrs Joginder. Once she brought an issue of the National Geographic which had a special feature on the Grand Canyon. The page unfolded till it stretched as long as her arms and revealed these spectacular photos. I believe it was because of that one day that I took up geography and one of the things I did on my very first trip abroad was to go to this canyon and remember that day she introduced us to an amazing world. I enjoyed her classes and I think she was always nice to me. But who can forget her steely look and bending her finger to beckon a girl with a higher than permitted hemline. Oh, boy! That was trouble.

— Priya Jain



“Jo hain ni...keep chatting and nattering  
all year long...you'll get a big zero...then  
don't come crying to me.”

—MRS. JOGINDER SINGH



# ON CELEBRATING BEING A MODERNITE

*Shailendra Pratap Jain*

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Being a professor, I write for a living. Yet writing this essay has been more challenging than anything I have written recently. Many vivid memories, positive and negative emotions, highs and lows of school life – all swam in front of my eyes as I began clicking the keys of my laptop. My journey at Modern began when I was admitted in a newly formed section of 7th grade at the Humayun Road branch. MN Kapur interviewed me with his penetrating gaze and unforgettable smile. He asked me the price of the shirt I was wearing and I happened to remember it which I blurted out. The fact that I received admission led me to believe that knowing product prices signals smarts and since then I hyper vigilantly try and remember them.

I was caught cheating in a math exam, and when called upon by Goyal, the head master of the Humayun Road branch, I admitted it. I later heard that in behind the scenes discussion between the faculty and the administration, it was a touch and go decision whether to throw me out of the school. Ostensibly because I admitted to my crime without a fuss, I was let go with a reprimand and a zero in that exam. It was a humiliating experience but I later went on to do well academically. Strangely, the notion that you can bounce back in life even if you hit rock bottom is something I have done again and again. Come to think it is not at all strange. I learnt how to do this from this incident. Modern gave me this gift. Moving to Barakhamba next year was an awe inspiring experience. In the thick of Delhi's foggy and cold winters, wearing shorts, as pants were for 11th graders only, and sprinting to jump onto the steps of a DTC bus to get to school pumped adrenalin.

Before Modern, I was an ordinary kid just going through life. Something changed profoundly after Modern. Friendships in all shapes and forms, countless unreciprocated crushes came and went. School life was heart breaking, challenging, scary, joyful, rewarding. I fell in love frequently (never expressed) and in hindsight it was

simply a process of dealing with my emotional turbulence. Life felt like a peak, daunting yet worth a shot from being around the likes of Sanjay Jain (topper, All India Higher Secondary board exam, 1975), H V Jagdish (placed 2nd, board exam, 1976), Kirti Azad (Indian cricketer), and Om Shivpuri (Bollywood character actor). The pain of walking on egg shells around larger than life figures like MN Kapur, LN Khurana, Rita Talwar, Renuka Khanna felt fearful yet evoked pride. The Modern experience, complete with the unique blue uniform and beating DPS at virtually every sport there was at that time, was like belonging to a group creamier than the cream of the crop. Most students came from families well-known in politics, business, bureaucracy, armed forces. These were kids who would grow up to be world class citizens and they rubbed shoulders with each other on a daily basis. I came from a humbler background which may explain why life as a Modernite to me was an amusing and surprising mix of feeling empowered.

Bemused, I saw girls and guys in our class having romantic relationships right in front of one's eyes on campus. Folks 'bunked' school to go to BM and some of them used this as an opportunity to smoke and feel all grown up. This is where I learnt the joys of playing truant, scary as it felt, and learnt to be anti-establishment in the process. Sadly, I never tried sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll at school, and envied guys who I heard, did. Yet somehow, Modern prepared me for mainstream life. It was here that I developed the audacity to dream big because everything at Modern was larger than life. I have lived more than half my charmed existence but the audacious dreaming continues. Recently someone was asked what makes a human being great, and he said "Confidence." I'm a few lifetimes away from greatness but if I can sum up what Modern gave me in one word, it will have to be confidence. The confidence to dream and the confidence to pursue the dream. Modern. Confidence. A priceless gift which refuses to get depleted, and keeps giving back.





Together



# MAGIC IN THE ART ROOM

*Priya Jain*



Memory is a funny thing and forty years later a little bit like faded black and white snapshots. Or perhaps a mood or a smell – hard to remember precisely, yet it's there just under the skin, as though a word or sentence by someone who shared that space could suddenly evoke a lost time.

The art room at the side of the main building (and below the library) was a large room with two side rooms. The main room was partitioned in some way by a panel on which works of art could be displayed. One of the side rooms contained sculptures and work by Kanwal Krishna who was head of the art department. It was perhaps his work space and office and we were forbidden from entering it. It was Mr. Krishna's wife, Devyani, an artist in her own right, who was our art teacher and who eventually retired as head of department the year we finished school. She was small built and slightly stern but that was perhaps a requirement of teachers at our school, what with students going wild at the drop of a hat.

In the cooler months, Devyani Krishna would send us out to draw from real life – usually flowers which might be in bloom and it was

a treat sit on the lawns (otherwise forbidden), drawing the nasturtiums growing in a flower bed. Mohini Aunty elegant in her silk saris would sometimes come by supervising the gardener and stop to talk to us.



Indoors we learnt batik, tie and dye, lithographs and print making – opening up a whole world of exploration. We would sit on stools around a little gas stove that stood in the middle of the room with bees wax bubbling away (it had a nice aroma),



dipping our brushes in it and going over the batik design we had first drawn on the fabric in pencil. The dyeing process would take place in an adjoining room with large sinks. After the cloth had dried, it would be cooked (!) to remove the wax. From this messy, wet, coloured rag would emerge, magically, our attempts at batik.

Devyani also taught us how to tie fabric in knots, dye it, using multiple colours and again something unexpected would emerge when the threads were removed. We made water colour paintings too but the magic of creating batik, tie and dye and lithos was something else.

The art room had a sense of dark, cool, calm. The frantic noise of school with hundreds of kids rushing from class to class would fade once you entered. This was a different zone where talking was not encouraged and we worked, focusing on our art.

Somehow I have this memory that the three of us (Yasmeen, Jyoti and I) were Devyani's favourites (or so I liked to think). When Founders Day came around – or rather some weeks before that – we would be asked (as Devyani's favourites) to stay back after school and help prepare the art room. First the walls, had to be white washed; hard work but actually fun. There was a nice rhythm to taking a broad paint brush and going up and down the walls. Feeling satisfied as sections got completed. Then some days later after the walls had dried, the selected art work would be pinned up and how pleased we felt if one of ours made the cut.

After a hard day's work, Devyani would cook us halwa on the little batik stove and delicious it was too.

We were very lucky I think to be exposed to the arts under well-known artists. In Junior School it had been Bishamber Khanna and in Senior School, Devyani Krishna. There were other teachers for photography, theatre, sculpture and music who were also well known in their fields. The love of the various forms of the arts, I believe, was inculcated by these people who exposed us to something of their worlds. Modern School then was unique for giving us these opportunities.



# THE MUSIC OF THE MAGICAL MONSTER: MR. KHASTAGIR

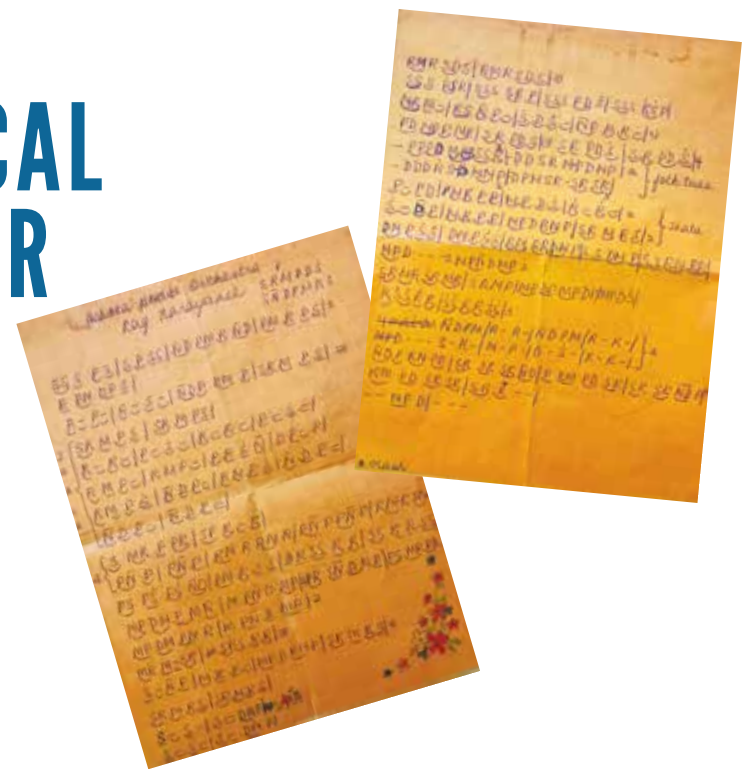
No one, who was privileged enough to be in the music class, could forget the formidable character of Mr Khastagir.

Rajan Chauhan was Music Captain in S5 and Khastagir's pet. Khastu, as he was fondly called, was devastated that Rajan had dropped music as a 6th subject. Rajan was so scared of Khastu, he felt that if didn't stand first in the AIHS, Khastu would kill him. So, he just dropped music altogether. Did Rajan regret decision?. Did you Rajan?

In a lot of ways Khastu was a genius at creating the most complex and beautiful compositions. No raga was simple; each asthai and antara

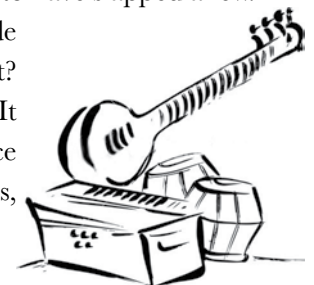


combining the raga's defining notes with utmost delicacy. Most often his magic was reflected in the exquisitely melodious house orchestras and music for the Founder's Day and house function ballets. The folk tunes were always the prettiest. Most of us who played in the



orchestra may still hum them today. He was composer magnificent. Joining hands with the Guru of choreography Mr Narendra Sharma, they mesmerised audiences with vivid story telling through music and dance. Us S4 girls danced to the charming folk melody in yellow, but charming as it was, Yasmin and Kalyani wished they could have been part of the S3 girls 'River', gracefully dancing to lilting music of the entrancing flow in blue. For many of us, it was an honour to be handpicked by the duo. However, for some, it wasn't. Trying to drop out after being selected was asking for punishment. God forbid if you goofed up with Khastu! In class, he would fling a violin bow across the room and he'd glare at you, and tell you that you'd never make it as a musician. He'd reprimand you if your fingers didn't bleed while playing the sitar. He even kept a little box with some healing oil handy. Such was his demand for perfection.

It wasn't just the aspiring musicians who suffered. For those in boarding, Khastu's terror continued after school. He roamed the grounds wearing a scowl. He was known to have slapped a few. Someday, one of us may create an ode to Mr Khastagir. Where would we start? Yaman Kalyan? Bhairavi? Jaunpuri? It would be a terrifying task to create a piece worthy of the music god. Wherever he is, would he approve?



# BUN SAMOSA ZINDABAAD!

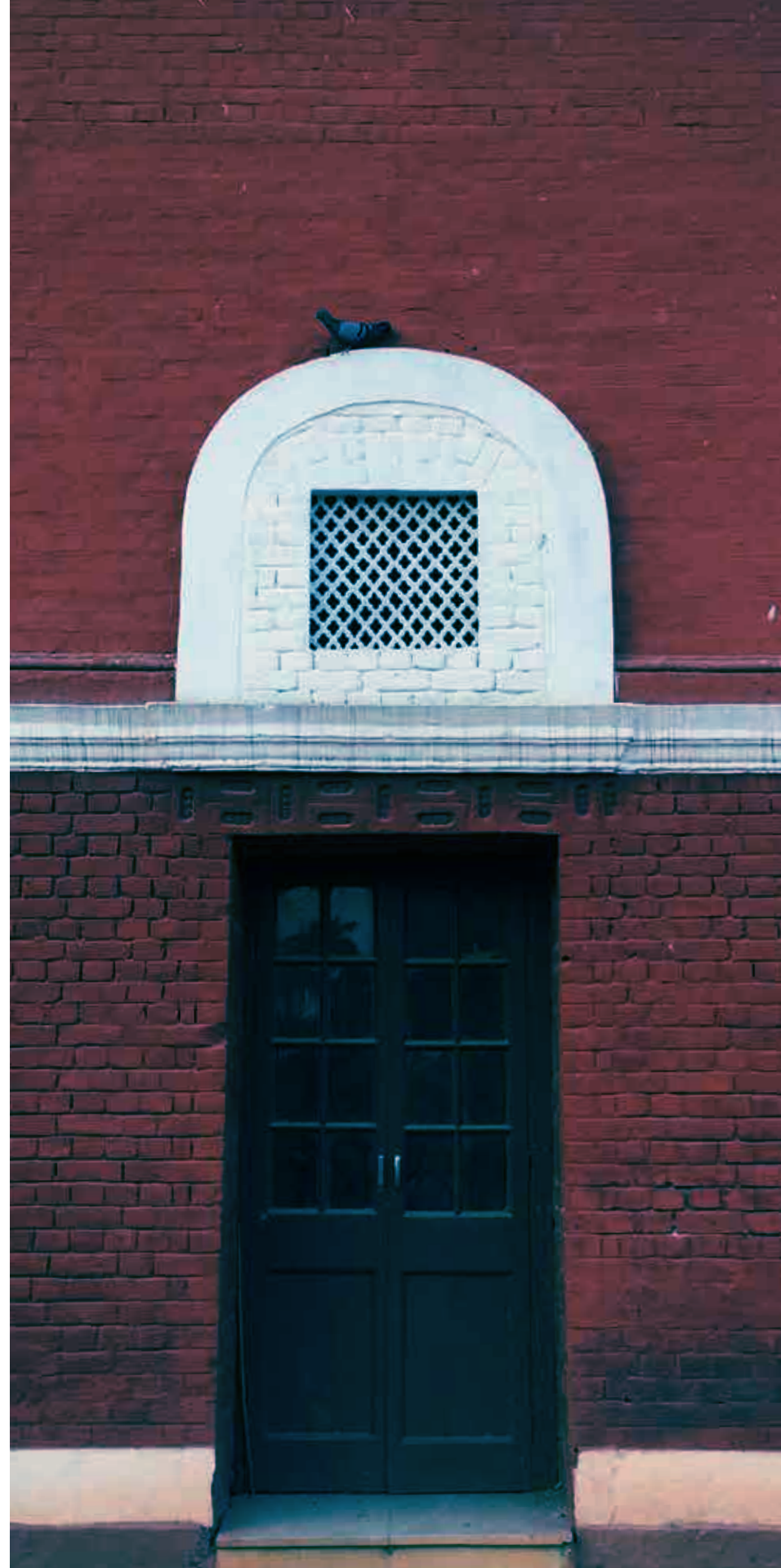
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Does anyone remember skipping off to Refugee Market for a Bun Samosa?

Haha... that was a trick question. How is that even possible? Huge, slightly sweet buns drenched in imli chutney with two whole samosas smashed in between. Pure comfort food, most needed with all the stress we carried on our little shoulders.

Do we see you drooling? Remember play practice? Sports practice? House function stay backs? Any excuse at all stay backs?

The Bun Samosa reigned supreme!



## KALYANI

*Srinivasan Rajan*



### What bores you the most?

Chronic name dropping

### What are you absolutely crazy about?

My bipolar beagle mutt... Dylan.

Liverpool Football Club, my other obsession.

### What would you be doing

#### if you weren't doing what you're doing today?

I'd like to say married to a millionaire

and travelling around the world but seriously?

### What is your biggest regret?

I have quite a few. But I've moved on...

### One thing on your bucket list

Spend one night in an observatory  
somewhere at a high altitude.

## SOUMYA

*Swaroop*

### What are 2 things you love about life?

How a zillion things coexist in balance and harmony – from cells to nature the urban chaos.

### What is your biggest regret?

Too soon to regret.

### People are surprised that I ....

I'm from Modern! Especially when they meet me in my village house.

### Name 3 things on your bucket list

Writing a book, writing songs, painting, learning the harmonica.



to

## DEEP

*Mohan*

What bores you the most?

### BOREDOM

What are you absolutely crazy about?

### WIFE...oops..sorry LIFE

What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?

### Selling Chai at the Railway station in anticipation of becoming the PM of India

Name 3 things on your bucket list.

1. Sky Diving
2. Visit Mt. Kailash



## MAITREYEE

*Barthakur Angelo*

### Name 3 things on your bucket list:

Hiking the Inca Trail to Macchu Picchu; visiting Angkor Vat and Bali; spending several idyllic months in Tuscany/Scotland.



## KSHITIJ

*Rana*

### What are 2 things you love about life?

Glorious sunsets & trips to the jungles

### What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?

Be in the laughter business, but I seem to have misplaced my sense of humour...

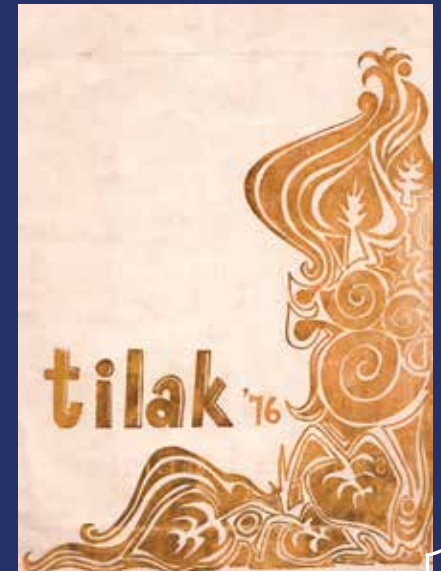
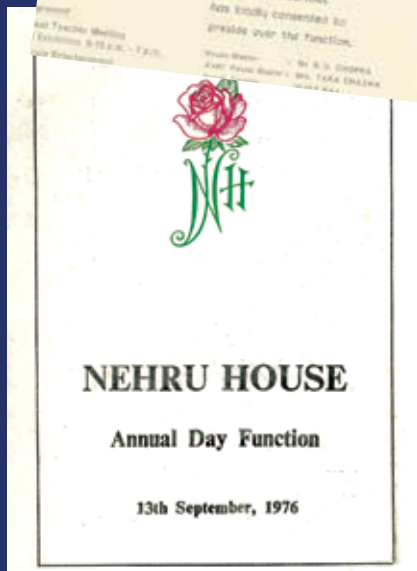
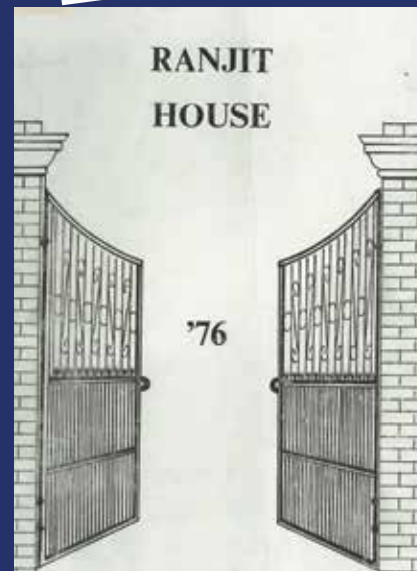
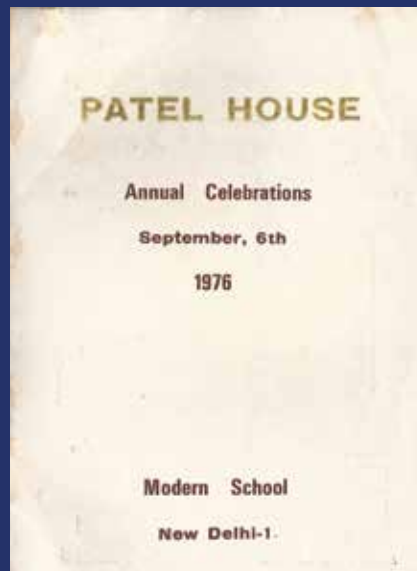
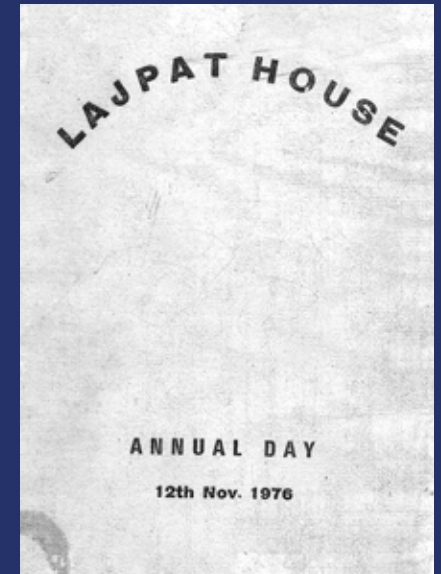
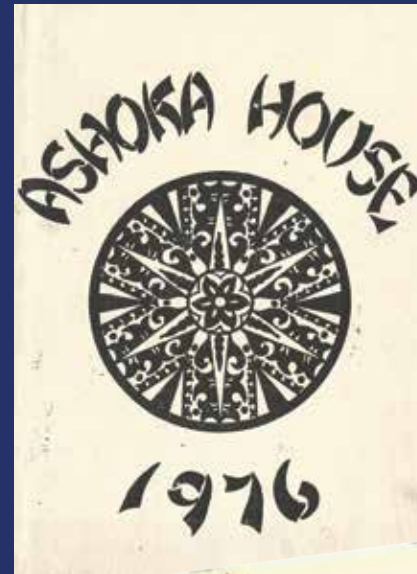
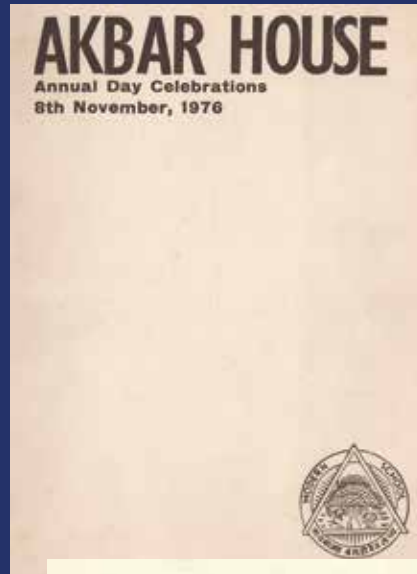
### What is your biggest regret?

Losing interest in things I shouldn't have lost interest in



# THE NIGHTS OF A THOUSAND STARS

GANDHI  
PRATAP  
SHIVAJI  
SUBHASH  
TAGORE



# HOUSE FUNCTIONS

House function practice was usually a lesson in how to stay in control. Forgotten lines, misplaced steps, colourful excuses for being late... and a bona fide excuse to stay back after school. Regardless of practice times, there would usually be a few opportunities to sneak off to Wenger's for a quick mushroom patty or shammi kabab, then saunter in to Nirula's to wash it all down with a Jamocha Almond Fudge. After all, one needed sustenance to counter Ravi Baswani's remonstrations at flubbed lines or Mr. Sharma's frustrations at those who fell short of grace, but were full of motivation. And of course, rehearsals were the perfect time for burgeoning school romances; one could disappear behind the tailor shop for a few trysts, or if one was very lucky, the art department would be open for a colourful session. Late night scootie rides home after rehearsals acquired magical dimensions when your hand was held by your current paramour.



## *Ashoka House S5, English Play...*

Ravi Baswani changed the name of the play at the last minute from 'When the Roses Bloom Again' to 'It's a Wild World' because he wanted to use the Cat Stevens' song as the theme music. Sanjay Singhal reacted with a 'No!' so violently that the pigeons relaxing on the cross bars in Sir Shankar Lal Hall fluttered in fright. The house function brochure was at the press with the wrong title.

## *Lajpat House, S5, House Brochure:*

Write up for Vinita Bijlani Bimbhet without her photograph reads... "Her presence is felt by her absence".



Vinita is a good actress and is musically inclined. She makes her presence in the house felt by her absence formerly of a very cheery and mischievous disposition, Vinita seems to have undergone a drastic change. She now keeps to herself and one cannot help but miss that bundle of fun. We wonder whether to attribute it to maturity or indifference. However, She's good in studies and holds her own among the geniuses of S 5 A.

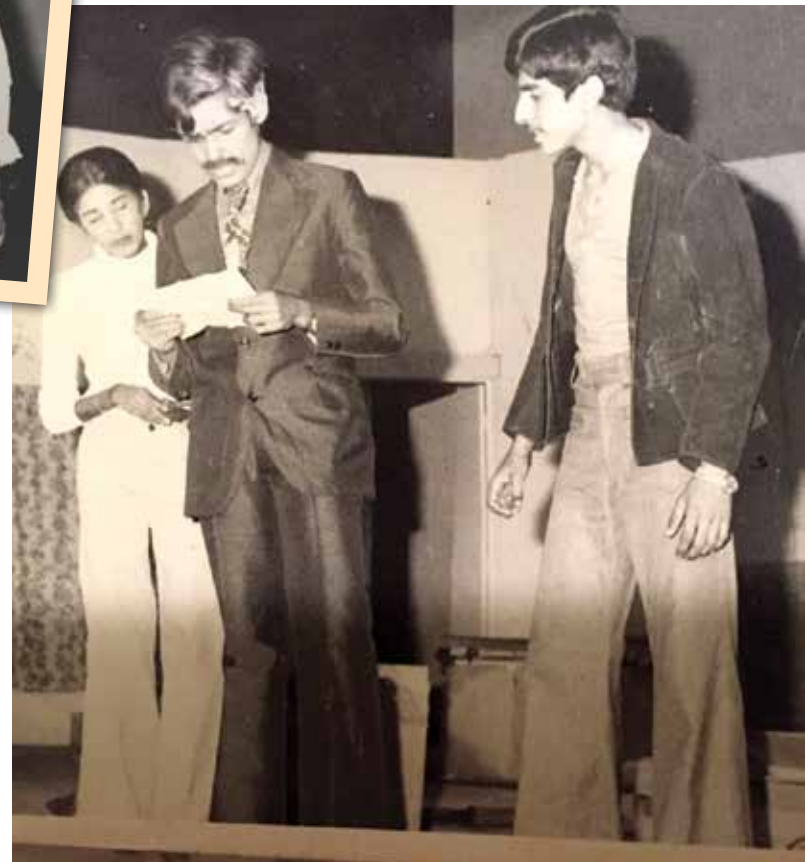
Vinita Bijlani





## *Akbar House, year hazy, English Play...*

House Master, Mr. S. P. Bakhshi (of flared nostrils fame) chose the play, intending to liberate his hitherto latent directorial skills. Instead he let loose bedlam; lines were deliberately forgotten, laughter behind his back at Bakhshi's inglorious attempts to lend his sonorous diction to the dialogue... each successive rehearsal was worse than the last, blocking was all haywire. Finally, Ravi Baswani was called in, and few in the audience ever knew what went into putting on the English Play 'Sganarelle' that year.



## *Gandhi House, SA.*

Priya and Sanjay (Munjal) were Guncet's parents in a play called "Ghost in the House" directed by the lovely Ravi Baswani. Priya's ashen look was less on seeing the ghost and more on her forgetting her lines. As usual the son and father (and the ghost) came to the ashen mother's rescue and ad-libbed their lines and saved yet another play for good old Gandhi House. Now that's what a good Gandhian family is all about.

# THE JOYS OF THE LIMELIGHT

*Jyoti Sahni Vohra*

Hardly had I stepped in through the gates of Senior School that I was pushed headlong into play rehearsals for the house play. My bit-role in *My Fair Lady* turned out to be the headiest experience of school for me. After that, nothing escaped me, and I wanted to be a part of every play that ever got staged. Endless rehearsals, Charlie's burgers and hot steamy chai. Dress rehearsals the night before and staying back in school till midnight. Being reprimanded by Feisal Alkazi for lines forgotten and miscues. Trying on costumes and putting on makeup (Ah!). Standing for what seemed like an aeon in the wings.

Who knew then that Ravi Baswani, Alok Nath and Om and Sudha Shivpuri would all head off to Bollywood. I still remember a Roopak audition with Mr. Ved Vyas where he told me "Hindi toh tum aise bolte ho jaise muh mein kanche hain!" Ouch! That hurt!

After school hours there was the hanging out at Triveni and generally being a part of Ruchika and TAG. Mr Kapur would encourage this as well. Pitching in with everything from costumes to sets to backstage and if I got lucky, on stage.

Dramatics became a passion. I loved to act. A whole new me would emerge every time I stepped on stage. I would wait for that one moment of glory endlessly. Waiting for the school day to end became excruciating. Any excuse to go check out what was happening at Shankar Lal Hall or the Junior Gym and I was off. Any auditions anywhere and I was there. I proudly wore my cloak as Dramatics President in S5, even though it really meant nothing more than getting to sit on the benches at the back in assembly. My legs thanked me for that!

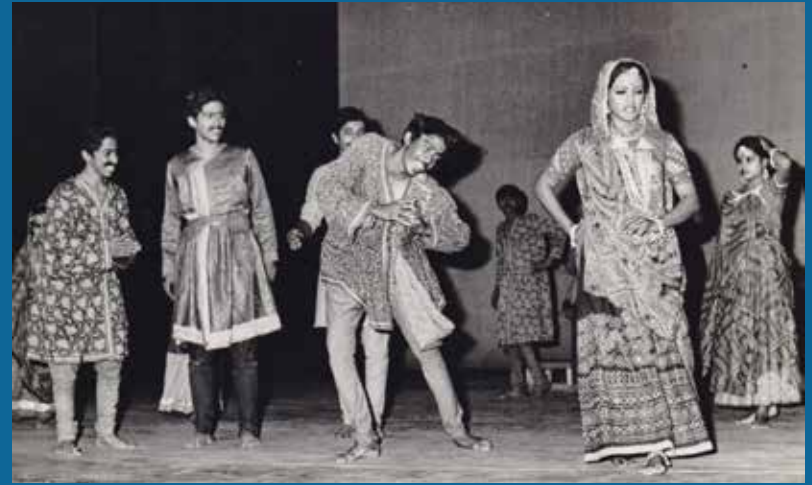


FOR THE  
LOVE OF THE  
ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE



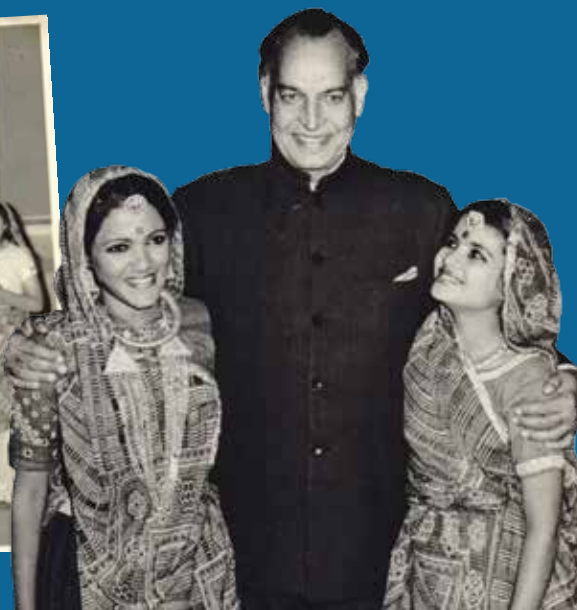
# नाटक मंच के सितारे





# GRACE IN MOTION





## THE MORNING AFTER

What invariably followed house function nights were the prolonged assemblies where Bond would ramble on and on about the function. Good performers would wait with bated breath to hear their name announced and complimented on their performance. If your name was mentioned, you made the cut. If your name wasn't mentioned, sorry, you weren't really noticed. There was a hierarchy too, in the recognition you received. You were a good, a very good or an outstanding. But you could also have been just an efficient. Then you would rather Bond hadn't mentioned you at all. Occasionally Bond would spout eloquent on the subliminal message in a play. Or the lesson from history in a ballet. In which case the compliments on your performance would be clipped short. Or forgotten. Sometimes Bond singled you out for a different kind of attention. He met your father, or grandfather or your mother's brother's nephew... or some such relative at the function. Which reminded him of your uncle's son who was a student previously in the school. Known for some antic or the other.

Then it was all over. The attention would now shift to the next house function. Yes, that day you suffered a hangover. The melancholy calm after the drug enhanced storm.

But, ah! What a trip it was!

# SANJAY

*Gupta*

**What angers you the most?**

When I get angry for no reason.



**People are surprised that I ....**

Don't drink, smoke and am vegetarian – all no no in today's world , especially a modernite.

**Name 3 things on your bucket list**

To be able to Sing, climb Mt. Everest , Be the president of India and enjoy all the Royal treatment ( that's the closest one can be to Royalty)

# MUNISH

*Sahgal*

**What bores you the most?**

Sundays

**What angers you the most?**

When there is no action at work or otherwise

**What are you absolutely crazy about?**

Wife and Beer

**What did you want to be when you were a kid? And what are you now?**

When I was a kid I wanted to be a man and now I am one

**Name 3 things on your bucket list**

Mug soap and shampoo



# NALINI

*Krishna*

**What bores you the most?**

Big parties and small talk



**What did you want to be when you were a kid? And what are you now?**

I wanted to be an interpreter... but instead I am a stock-broker, with a passion for home furnishings and printing.

**What is your biggest regret?**

I'm not sure...just made the wrong choice at the right time!

**What would you tell your 17 year old self?**

Hey follow your dream and don't be in a hurry to get married. Thats going to be a mistake.

# GOVIND

*Kochhar*



**What are 2 things you love about life?**

[1] Every day is a new day

[2] Life is full of surprises

**What bores you the most?**

Only Boring people get bored. However, people who don't make conversation, bore me.

**What angers you the most?**

Fake People & Slow Traffic.

# THE CIRCLE OF CP

During our time, Modern was truly the center of all that was hip and happening in Delhi. Next door was Mandi House, with its dance, arts, music, and theatre and those young NSD actors, and on the other side was CP, with its restaurants, cinema halls and fashions and promenades. If India Gate was our Arc de Triomphe, and Mandi House our cultural hotspot, then CP was our Champs-Elysees.

CP had the great theatres of our times: Odeon, Plaza, Regal, and Rivoli (where the curtains would go up before the movie began).



Then there was The Cellar on the corner of Regal and Kwality's. It was India's first ever discotheque. A Modernite, Satinder Singh, (1961 batch) and his brother, had set it up. They'd decided the time had come for India to rock and roll. Most of us had our first heady discotheque experience at Cellars with the DJs blasting out a Jim Morrison song or a Rolling Stones number. They had these Vat 69



bottles for lampshades and walls covered with psychedelic crayon scribbling (they'd got school children to do that for them). Out there a hamburger and coke cost Rs.5/-. And just next to Cellars was Gaylord's where our parents had probably met on their first date. The Old and the New stood side by side.

There was also the Softy outlet next to Regal where we'd eat our strawberry, vanilla double flavored softy ice cream. There was Standard Restaurant, Wengers, Keventer's, Volga's, Embassy and a few other restaurants in the inner circle of CP along with the bookstores and shoe shops and FUs and Jean Junction. And there was The United Coffee Shop where all the intellectuals (pseudo and otherwise) would meet.





And of course Nirula's on the outer circle. There was also the Cottage Emporium, with its famous Bankura's Cafe. Another iconic place was Depaul's at Janpath, known for their cold coffees. They'd also play great music. You sat outside on the railing, and sipped your coffee, maybe even got your shoes shined. And you watched the cool cats come and go. It was our Times Square. If you stayed long enough, you'd probably meet your entire world.

This was pre-Palika era. Sanjay Gandhi had still not dug up CP for Palika. In the Centre of CP was Rambles, the alfresco cafe. And you'd also have the old World War 2 Harley 'thumpers', the Phat Phati Motor Rickshaws calling out for passengers to Daryaganj, Jama Masjid and Chandini Chowk.



There were the Hippie Caravans parked out in the center that'd come down the Ancient Silk Route through Istanbul, Tehran, Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Lahore, Amritsar and then Delhi. Many times, we'd skip school to go stare at the Caravans and Motor Cycles parked out there. And we'd hope to catch a glimpse of some skimpily clad hippie girl emerge from one of those caravans.

Over the years, most of the iconic places of CP have vanished. But for many of us, our memories remain as fresh and as vibrant as they were then. When from school we'd hop, skip and dance all our way to the Circle of CP.







# OUR BRUSH WITH EMERGENCY



Some of us guys in the Ed Board and a few of our buddies need to thank the Emergency to make it into College with a half decent aggregate.

Indira Gandhi called off the Emergency in March 1977 and declared Elections, and thankfully our exams got postponed by a month. That extra month gave some of us grasshoppers enough time to get our act together and put up a good fight during our exams.

This incident is when our exams had just got over and we guys were having a blast. We'd meet up nearly everyday and were totally foot loose and fancy-free. By then, Indira and Sanjay had also been handed a resounding defeat.

One afternoon, some of the usual suspects, Pauli, Kshitij, Partho, Guneet, and Harsh were hitching rides outside Safdarjung Tomb towards AIIMS.

This white Matador Van pulled up (Pauli even remembered it had floor shift gears). And we all happily clambered inside. It was then we realized it was none other than SANJAY GANDHI at the wheel. India's most powerful man during the Emergency, the man who'd thrown people into jail, the man who'd spread terror amongst all men thanks to his Nasbandi drives, was offering US A RIDE. Needless to say, we guys were equally excited and terrified. Of course we pretended we didn't recognize him. And we remained totally silent lest we piss him off or something. (You never know with these politicians!) And we quickly asked him to drop us off at INA itself.

Actually Sanjay had seemed quite harmless. Maybe, while getting off his Matador, we should have told him to thank his mum from our side to have declared the elections and given us that extra month to make it through our exams. After all, his mum did do us, and the entire nation, a huge favor by calling off the Emergency.



# TWINNINGS

We had three of them. The Kochhars, the Dhamijas, and the Balis. The first two were identical. While the Balis were not identical, they too displayed their own crazy pattern.

The Kochhars were always together, and we'd simply call them Govind Gopal, not knowing who was Govind and who was Gopal. They'd even play the same sport, Basketball and Football. These dirty, rotten, good looking scoundrels even shared girlfriends, the poor clueless girl having no idea that she was with the wrong one.



The un-identical Bali twins had their own peculiarities. Bhuvi says that while Ravi was all about making any girl he saw his "sister", Shiv would be busy sitting under the Banyan Tree and giving tutorials to his Bhakts on sex education and teaching big hulks like Atul Kapahi how to develop busts!

The Dhamijas, Arjun and Vikram, were no less. They too were inseparable, and both played hockey and kho kho. They'd confuse the hell out of the opposition and the referees. These guys also had their own twin cons going. But they're tightlipped about it.

Even today these twins have a lovely vibe going on amongst them. And they're as crazy as ever!

# PANKAJ

*Khanna*

## What bores you the most?

Self obsessed people and braggers

## What angers you the most?

Apathy towards poor people and lack of civic sense

## What are you absolutely crazy about?

Golf

## What did you want to be when you were a kid? And what are you now?

Astronomer/ Retired businessman

## What is your biggest regret?

Not having helped someone when I could have



# SABINA

*Taneja*

## What are 2 things you love about life?

Living in the city I love. Waking up to a new day and realizing the possibilities are endless

## What are you absolutely crazy about?

Animals, birds and all sweet things

## What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing now?

Running after George Clooney

## What is your biggest regret?

That we cannot view the world through rose coloured glasses



# PRIYA

*Jain*

## What are you absolutely crazy about?

Coffee ice cream! – has to be really good.

## Name 3 things on your bucket list

Travel. More travel. Learning Qigong (or Tai Chi).



# RUCHI

*Singhal*

## What is your biggest regret?

No regrets, I just forget!

## What would you tell your 17 year old?

“Abhi toh party shuru hui hai”

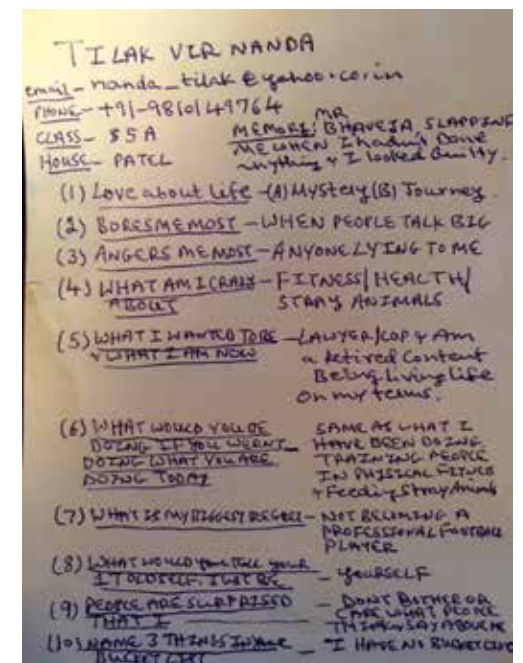
## Name 3 things on your bucket list

to make my artworks communicate more, to travel more, and to be free.....



# TILAK

*Vir Nanda*





# THE SOUL OF MODERN

*Sagari Chhabra*

Childhood is always imbued with a sense of magic, and looking back, one wonders at halcyon days. What made Modern School so special was that sense of space, not its sprawling lawns and rambling, old building – now declared a heritage structure – but a sense of inner space.

The Banyan Tree under which we spent ‘zero hours’ was an incredible concept of our times, a space in which we could read a book or go to our teachers to ask for guidance in any subject. The Banyan Tree is both an enduring image and a lasting insignia of our times. It had its roots deep within and from it sprang shoots from which one could hang or swing, and those shoots in turn became roots. Under the Banyan Tree we could lie on our backs and gaze into the sky, take our notebooks and write poetry – I did – or share your tiffin while conversing with a friend.

The Banyan Tree housed several squirrels, mynahs and flocks of sparrows, but it also housed the dreams of generations of children who were growing up. What did the future hold for us, each of us had wondered? The Banyan Tree enabled one to be close to nature and connect with one’s inner space – the soul. The Banyan Tree became the soul of Modern School.

## VIKRAM

*Dhamija*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**

Challenges & Jugaad (Juggaar)

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**

A Musician and lip reading.

**What is your biggest regret?**

No big regrets. Life has treated me well and I have treated life well.

**People are surprised that I...**

Manage to surprise them!



## SANJIV

*Gupta*

**What angers you the most?**

Only my thinking at times

**What are you absolutely crazy about?**

All good things in life

**What did you want to be when you were a kid? And what are you now?**

A professional advisor and a good human being

**What would you tell your 17 year old self?**

Live life the way the new gen lives

## ASHWINI

*Derwan*

**What are 2 things you love about life?**  
Interaction with my kids / Being with Nature

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing today?**  
Farming or playing music

**What is your biggest regret?**  
Not taking chances early enough in life

**What would you tell your 17 year old self?**  
Believe in yourself

## RAJENDRA

*K. Arora*

**What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing now?**  
Live in a forest

**What would you tell your 17 year old self?**  
Hi there!

**People are surprised that I...**  
Am still skinny

## LAKSHMI

*Krishnamurthy Kaul*

**What angers you the most?**  
Gender bias and unfair expectations, violence against women

**What did you want to be when you were a kid?**  
I wanted to be on stage – either dancing or acting.

**What is your biggest regret?**  
That I didn't make my Bucket List much earlier than when I actually did.

**People are surprised that I...**  
Don't behave my age! That I am constantly up to something new and exciting.





Portraits



# CYCLING DOWN MEMORY LANE

*Guneet Singh Lehl*



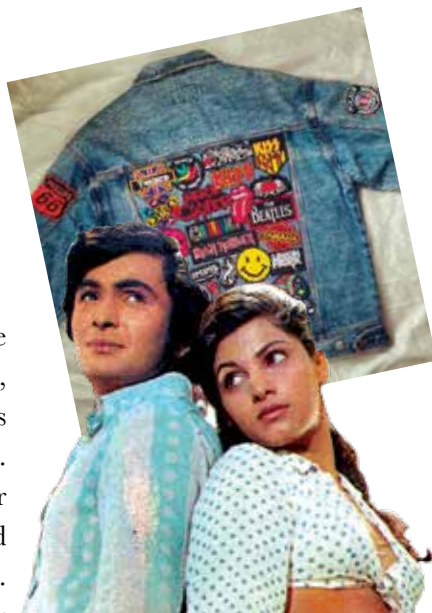
Rajiv Kapuria, Neeraj Dogra and I. We'd cycle down to school. Lodhi Estate to Barakhamba. 20 minutes max.

Past Khan Market, at Sujaan Singh Park, the college crowd would be waiting for their DU Specials.

The clothes they wore were hippie, bohemian, and kitsch, loud, even filmy. Guys had long hair; wore flares with printed shirts, butterfly collars and scarves. Some wore tight jeans with broad studded belts. Girls wore wide legged, flared jeans and trousers, large polka dotted



shirts tied at the waist (Dimple Bobby style) and kaftans, maxis, minis and high necks and beads and platform heels. We too tried to grow our hair long and we'd push it behind our ears to hide it from Bond. We'd also beg the school tailor



to add 'flares' to our trousers, while our mother's shook their heads with amused wonderment.

Levis and Wranglers were the jeans and jackets we sought. And we'd sew 'patches' on them and on our Army Parkas and Para Jackets. Make Love Not War, Peace, Love, American Flags, Chevrons and any other patch we could get our hands on, we'd

sew on. FUs and Jean Junction ruled. So did the tailors at Lodhi Colony, Shankar Market, and CP's Mohan Singh Palace.

Our school denim shirt was also extremely hip.

When you bunked school, you just slipped on a pair of jeans (over your shorts) and you were ready to rock.

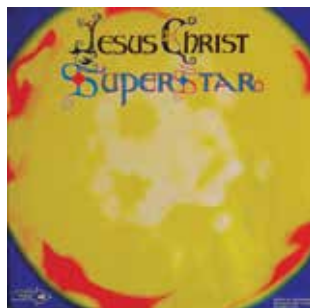
From Sujaan Singh Park (via Humayaun Road, Junior School, Shah Jahan Road), the next milestone was India Gate. India Gate holds so many memories. Come monsoons, we'd eat Jamuns straight from the trees. They'd put them in an earthen pot, add rock salt to it, shake the pot and serve them to you on a leaf. Once while returning from school, Meetu (Gurmeet) and I tried lighting a cigarette while a strong wind blew. We giggled our way through an entire matchbox before we managed to light those damn things. And we thought we were such pros when we did it.

Those days, many people still called Rajpath 'Kingsway', and Janpath was called 'Queensway'. And even twenty long years after Independence, King George's statue stood under the India Gate Canopy, before our newer Indian masters finally brought it down. The country, like us, was young. Our parents and teachers had spent their impressionable years as 'slaves'. Many of them had been impacted by the Partition. All this left its impression on us as well.



We were the transitional generation as we grappled to break away from our past and forge our own distinct identity.

From India Gate we'd cycle to Mandi House via Lytton Road (it would later be renamed Copernicus). Mandi House was all about our dance, music, and theatre and arts, both Indian and Western. At Kamani the rock opera 'Jesus Christ Superstar', (directed by a then young Barry John), had really caught our young imagination. Nearby, at Max Mueller Bhawan (on Curzon Road) the Jazz Yatras would take place.



At Shriram's Bharatiya Kala Kendra the famous Ramlila performances would take place; and at Rabindra Bhawan (with its Art Academies and Libraries), we'd get to see Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's personal items and letters and writings. Way back in 1936, the great poet had himself visited Modern and remarked, "... it is one of the best educational experiments in India..." Mahatma Gandhi too had visited us in 1935 and praised our "cleanliness and the purity of our atmosphere".

At the Mandi House Roundabout, there was Alkazi's 'National School of Drama'. Naseer, Om Puri, Anupam Kher, Pankaj Gupta, Raj Babbar, Rohini Hatangadi, Om Shivpuri and even our very own Ravi Baswani. They were all from NSD.



Many of them (they were yet to achieve fame) would hang out at the Mandi House Dhaba. They'd sit on the same moodas we'd



sit, they'd sip chai from the same tiny glasses we'd sip from, and they'd smoke the same Sri Ganesh Beedis we'd smoke, except we'd do it furtively since we'd be in our school uniforms.

And then a few moments later, down Barakhamba Road, we'd swing into our school gates, go past the khaki clad Surd at the Gate, and park our bikes in the cycle shed.

We'd reached School.

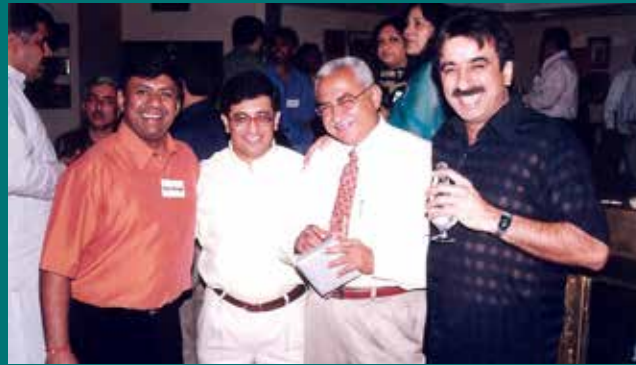
Sandhu, Chunni, Trehan and some of the other "usual suspects" would be hanging around at the Shed. I'd stay with them. My housemaster and I had this "agreement" that it was for the best that neither of us saw too much of each other. The cycle-shed area was a kind of a no man's land. Not many teachers ventured there. It was neither school, neither not school. Many things happened out there. But what went on at the Shed shall remain at the Shed. Some stories are best left untold.





*25 years later*





## Class of 77

(Modern School)

### *THE GOOD OLD DAYS*

*When you look in the mirror,  
What is it you see?  
Is there a touch of silver,  
Where there shouldn't be?*

*Your vision blurs a little...  
And sets your memory free...  
You drift into a dreamland...  
To the time you were most carefree.*

*What fun you had in those days  
Playing tricks and breaking every rule!  
The bunking, the ragging, the parties,  
The best time of life was in school!*

*The memories of longlost buddies  
Bring twinkles to your eyes,  
your first crush is almost 40,  
'So am I' your own heart sighs.*

*You come back to reality,  
Your vision clears again,  
The mirror brings you back to date,  
The silver gleams again.*

*It's been 25 years, Class of '77,  
Our Silver Jubilee!  
Wouldn't it be great to get together,  
And celebrate our anniversary?*

*So tell me if April 26 is a good date,  
At the Intercontinental  
Barakhmba Road if you agree,  
Do come along with your spouse,  
Be sure to RSVP me.*

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*35 years later*

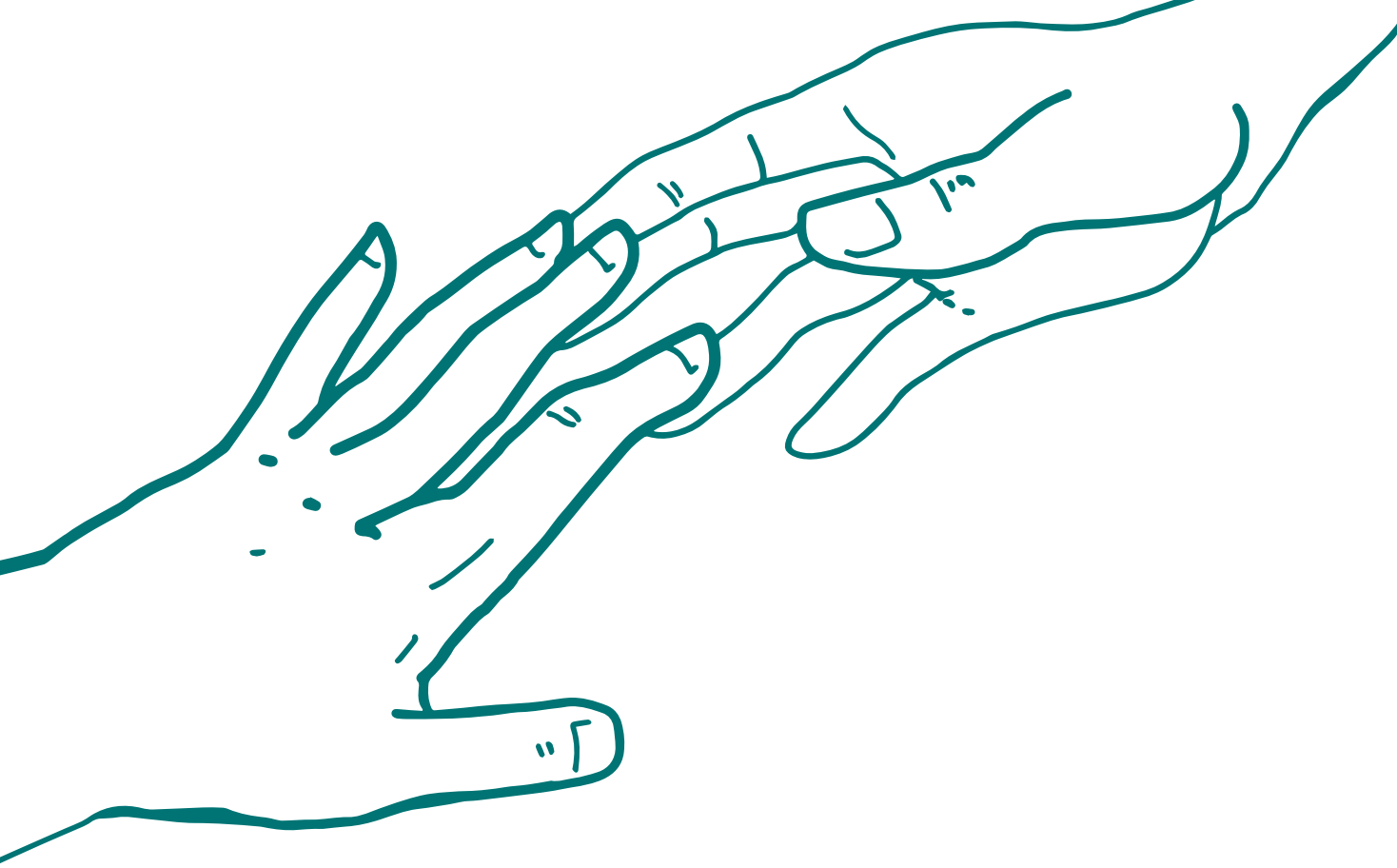


# “Somewhere between Then & Now”









## A TIME TO GIVE

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As school students, we had only ourselves to think of. We were the centre of the Universe. How incredibly selfish we were! But somewhere along the way, Modern taught us the joy of giving and caring. For the community and people less advantaged than us.

Some of us, in S4, would write the board exams for the students of the Blind School every year. S5 were busy writing their own. Of course, we got to skip our regular classes on those days, but it was heart-warming to hear the students tell us how much they appreciated our being their “eyes” and their vehicles of expression. Since the course was the same as ours, we might have had the mad temptation to write some answers ourselves, or fix a thing or two. But the students were amazingly confident and firmly directed us on how to go about it - rejecting any help we offered.

Some also read and recorded text books and novels for the blind. About once a year, we would visit the school on the school bus and spend some time with the students. Our Community Development Prefect, Maitreyee, was in charge of fund-raising for humanitarian projects. In S5 the annual MHS Diwali Mela, raised enough money to provide 400 blankets to the homeless around Delhi. That year, a four-day humanitarian project was organized; a competition to see which S5 section could raise the most money (by shaking empty cans of Dalda under people’s noses!) culminated in a quadriplegic man from Hanuman Mandir being fitted with prostheses at AIIMS. There was enough money left to also get him a wheelchair.

The early seeds of lifelong philanthropy were planted and nurtured at MHS. For many of us, it has become a part of our adult lives.

# THE VALUES OF BEING A MODERNITE

In the 40 years during which we have hobnobbed with our peers from other educational institutions, we must have come to realize that being a Modernite (from Barakhamba Road!) has a cachet, an indisputable *je ne sais quoi!* True, we complained endlessly about our distinctive blue uniforms that betrayed any attempts at truancy, but it is that same uniform that made us hold our heads high. We instinctively sensed that there was something special about us, and that no matter what wayward tricks we got up to in school, we had a reputation to uphold outside its walls.

Looking cool and casual at BM while gulping gol gappas. Sauntering nonchalantly from Wenger's after shammi kababs and mushroom patties to Nirula's for their renowned pizzas and finishing off with pineapple pastry and Jamocha Almond Fudge ice cream, we still tried to maintain the "good and decorous" behavior expected of a Modernite. Perhaps that's why, after all these years, an ineffable pride swells up in our chests and puts the wind beneath our wings to fly in any direction we choose. It must have meant the same for a lot of us.

And it didn't matter whether one was a boarder or a day scholar; from the interminable hours spent cross-legged on the floor during morning assembly, to the exciting hours devoted to extra-curricular activities, we gleaned confidence, determination, sportsmanship, humility, humour, competence and compassion. Rehearsals and performances, debates, theater, Khastu's music classes, singing, the Krishna's art classes, marching, punishments, memorable slaps, Mr. Khurana's demanding sports, "phys ed",

school trips, House Functions, Founders' Day, pranks on teachers and classmates, burgeoning teenage romances, bunked classes, were the proving grounds where imagination, fortitude, patience, laughter and camaraderie built lifelong bonds.

Some experiences, like the annual Shankar Lal Music Festival were unique to us Modernites. For a few days, the cricket field would be transformed by a huge white shamiana above the expanse of dhurries on the ground. Amidst the air of festivity and anticipation, renowned classical music maestros – from Ravi Shankar and Amjad Ali Khan to Shiv Kumar Sharma and Hari Prasad Chaurasia – as well as renowned exponents of vocal music performed free for us students, through the winter nights...as we valiantly tried to stay warm, awake and listen.

Little did we appreciate then what it took to get these stalwarts to come to MHS. Those concerts were our nascent exposure to Indian classical music, an intangible, precious, and lifelong gift.

Yes, we had music, academics, sports and art. Buttressing them all were the daily doses of sermons dismissed by us as Bond's inveterate ramblings intoned endlessly to prolong our assembly. Yet that wisdom has percolated down through 40 years; Bond's oft-uttered adage, "I used to complain I had no shoes... till I saw a man with no feet" still rings in our ears when we find ourselves wallowing in self-pity. That ability to perceive the positive in the most trying of circumstances is perhaps Modern School's greatest gift to its generations of students. We, Modernites, are resilient, resourceful, and some, redoubtable.

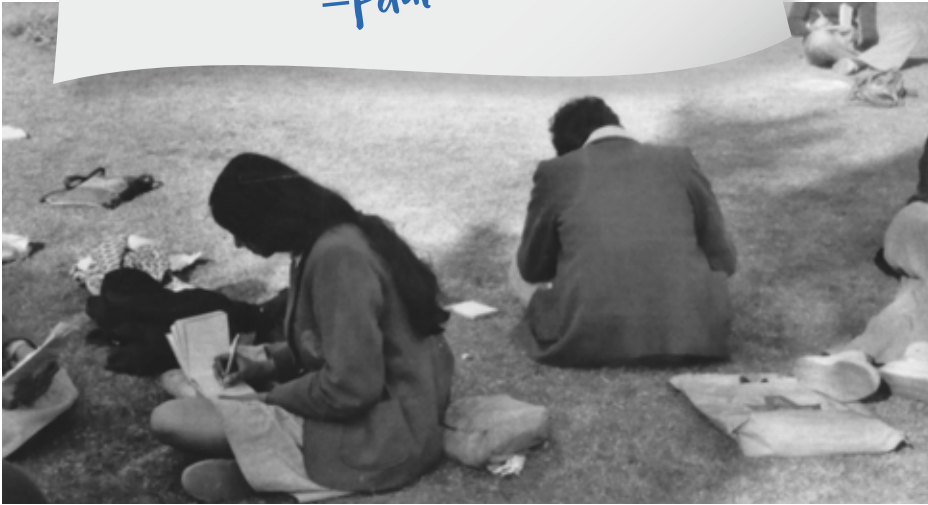


# THE TRAVELLERS ON HIGHWAY '77

Abhay Dhond	Deepak Chandra	Radhakrishnan Nair	Sanjay Munjal
Aditya Arora	Deepak Kawatra	Raghu Raj Singh	Sanjay (Chunnu) Tripathi
Aditya Narain	Deepak Prakash	Rahul Bhatia	Sanjay Prasad
Aditya Reddy	Eeda Gujral	Rahul S. Verghese	Sanjay S. Sandhu
Ajay Bajaj	Girish Mohan Ganeriwala	Rahul Sharma	Sanjay Singhal
Ajay Kapur	Gopal Kochhar	Raj Ajmera	Sanjay Srivastava
Ajay Sanghi	Govind Kochhar	Rajan Chauhan	Sanjay Suri
Ajay Walia	Guneet Singh Lehl	Rajan Duggal	Sanjay Uppal
Alok Sharma	Gurmeet Singh	Rajan Kapur	Sanjiv Gupta
Amit Chandra	Harsh Grewal	Rajan Sawhney	Sanjiv Kashyap
Amitava Sen Gupta	Hemant (A. P.) Paul	Rajan Shokeen	Sanjiv Khanna
Anita Panjwani	Jagdeep Azad	Rajat Chhabra	Sanjiv Manocha
Anjali Jain	Jasjit Singh Kohli	Rajender Kumar	Sanjiv Sant
Anjali Gupta	Jogesh Nayyar	Rajesh Rawal	Shailendra Pratap Jain
Anjulika Bhargava	Jyoti Sahni	Rajesh Sehgal	Sarada Natarajan
Anoop Kumar Tawakley	Jyotsana Malhotra	Rajiv Kapuria	Shashwata Mitra
Anshoo Nath	Kalyani Srinivasan	Rajiv Thukral	Shiv Bali
Anuj Khurana	Kapil Kathpalia	Rajnish Garg	Sonia Inderjit
Anuj Mehra	Krishna Menon	Raju Makhijani	Soniya Puri
Anuradha Basu	Kshitij Rana	Rakesh Bhatia	Soumya Swaroop
Arjun Dhamija	Kushal Dang	Ram Chuttani	Srinivasan Sundararajan
Arjun Puri	Lakshmi Krishnamurthy	Rashma Garkal	Sujata Mehra
Arti Gupta	Madhu Krishna	Raveen Mahendru	Sukhvinder Singh Arora
Arun Gadhoke	Maitreyee Barthakur	Ravi Bali	Sunil Anand
Avinder S. Chopra	Maya Bhagwat	Renuka Jain	Sunil Kamboj
Arvinder Singh Puri	Meenakshi Talwar	Richa Bhardwaj	Sunil Pawah
Aseem Gupta	Meera Garg	Ritu Sethi	Sunil Sud
Ashok Dewan	Mohinder Narang	Roma Bhagat	Sunil Trehan
Ashok Khanna	Mukul Diesh	Ronesh Mehra	Sushant Agarwal
Ashwini Dewan	Munish Sahgal	Ruchee Wadhawan	Suwendu Banerjee
Ashwini Kumar Aggarwal	Nalini Krishna	Ruchi Singhal	Swati Nath
Atul Chopra	Nandani Khosla	Sabina Taneja	Tarang Mahendra
Atul Kapahi	Nandini Sharma	Sagari Chhabra	Tilak Vir Nanda
Atul Khullar	Neeraj Sharma	Sajeve B. Deora	Varun Tuli
Bhuvanesh Khanna	Pankaj Gupta	Samir Thukral	Vijay Raj
Bindu Jain	Pankaj Khanna	Sandeep Chandra	Vikram Dhamija
Brahm Gyan Singh Majithia	Partho Choudhury	Sandhya Narain	Vinita Bijlani
Brij Mohan	Pinky Sachdeva	Sandhya Sud	Vipin Luthra
Deep Mohan	Piyush Jindal	Sanjay Agarwal	Vivek Agnihotri
Deepak Ananth	Priya Jain	Sanjay Bharadwaj	Vivek Chandhok
Deepak Bakshi	Poonam Jain	Sanjay Gupta	Yasmeen Tayebbhai
Deepak Beri	Puneet Dhar	Sanjay Jain	Yogendra Singh
Deepak Bhardwaj	R. Ravi	Sanjay K. Gupta	

# Autographs

Time it was, and what a time it was,  
A time of innocence,  
A time of confidences  
Long ago, it must be,  
I have a photograph  
Preserve your memories;  
They're all that's left you  
—paul simon



# THANK YOU!

---

What a fantastic idea from the Core Group to bring out a special edition of the Adarsh to commemorate the occasion of 40 years!

We began on a blank page. Five of us in Delhi and one representing the Indian diaspora. And one silent partner of the Core Group to tie up with all activities and events planned for the grand reunion.

It has been one hell of a ride! Joining hands after 40 years was like making friends all over again. The beginnings of forging bonds on a small scale, yet knowing that what we planned would be an even greater bond with a 150 strong batch of Modernites re-connecting at a time when we've matured enough to shake hands and share forgotten memories together.

We wanted a bit of everyone to create a memoir which we'd be able to treasure and become something meaningful to pass down the generations. It was tough. Getting everyone on board. To send photographs, express who they are today, to re-create memories of the days back in school. So that all of us could smile or grimace at some of the sweetest or wildest things that made us who we are.

Thank you everyone. Without this lovely bunch of people of Modern '77, we would not have much to celebrate. We would have loved to

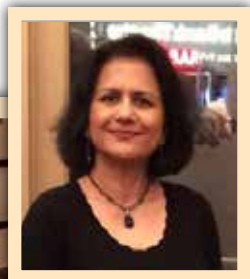
have had more of each and every one of you... in written pieces, in photographs, in magical memories. So, if you've been missed, we're terribly sorry.

We are thrilled to have been a part of the team to bring you this special edition of Adarsh. Jyoti would prepare a feast of scones, lemon tarts, sandwiches, sausages and other scrumptious treats while Kalyani would bring wine to dull our senses and get us misty-eyed to remember the past... while Hemanth, Guneet and Kshitij trudged all the way from Delhi to Gurgaon mostly for the temptation of Jo's preparations but also for the sheer fun we were having putting this memento together for everyone. But let's not forget the scraps we had! It happens, when people are passionate. Maitreyee was operating at a distance, but she made sure her presence was felt. Together, what we've created is a labour of love.

We hope that you will treasure this book as a remembrance of our launching pad, our alma mater that gave us this wonderful universe for us and our families.

On behalf of the Adarsh Editorial Team,

**Guneet, Hemanth, Jyoti, Kalyani, Kshitij and Maitreyee.**









**“WISH YOU  
WERE HERE...”**

**AJAY KAPUR**

**ANSHOO NATH**

**ATUL KAPAHI**

**JAGDEEP AZAD**

**POONAM JAIN**

**RAGHURAJ SINGH**

**RAJAN KAPOOR**

**SONIYA PURI**

**SUNIL ANAND (CHUNNI LAL)**

# Creating New Memories





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We thank all contributors for their written articles, submissions of questionnaires, photographs, memorabilia, resources, support, and conversations that allowed us to put together the content for the book.

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The Adarsh Editorial Team has done everything it can to ensure that names, incidents and events are correct – to the best of its ability. After 40 years, our individual and collective memories are not as sharp, so please forgive any errors or omissions and enjoy this Adarsh for what it is – a labour of love and a testament of our memorable years at Modern School.





