Editorial

As yet another year draws to a close it is time to reflect on the year’s events. Also we can take pride in our achievements (which have been many), bid farewell to the ones passing out and get ready to welcome the next batch of toddlers. The realisation that our school has now entered its 60th year is uppermost in our minds. Sixty years of single minded service to society in the field of education is no mean achievement. We must see this as an opportunity to thank our founders for having set us off on this wonderful path. Our school has evolved from a 200 strong boys only school to a leading school in the city with a strength of more than 2000.

Our new logo for this remarkable 60th year says 60 sparkling years and that sums it up. For that is exactly how it has been, sparkling years in educating and shaping students, thus serving society. As the bird in the logo soars, so do our dreams, aspirations and achievements.

It is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to our beloved AG Miss. Her association with Vidya Mandir has been for 50 long years. We will always cherish her memories.

I will sign off with wishes to all for a happy and exciting holiday and a happier return to school.

Anuradha Anand

The end and the beginning:

As I write my last editorial for Dhwanii, I am conscious of the fact that I said my goodbyes in the previous edition, at a time I thought fit in the last few weeks of normal school, and in the last edition of the Dhwanii when I would truly be acting in the capacity of the editor.

Instead I choose to write about beginnings, and not endings, which as the old saying, go hand in hand.

A few weeks ago, on a quick doubt-clearing visit to school, I found myself acquainted with the newest members of our school, a bunch of small, fidgety and excited four or five year-olds, straggling into the school, followed by their rather harried parents, for LKG admissions. Watching one mother attempt to get her son off the ground, where he sat, looking stern and serious, and another little girl circle the banyan tree, I was reminded of the day I came for my admission skipping around the grounds which then became a part of my life for the following six years.

This incident cheered me up a good deal. As we leave school, I think we can’t imagine anything changing about it from small things to big, we imagine that when we come back, a year or two from now, it will still be the same as we left it, perhaps with juniors having taken our place, in the familiar order of things. However, I’m coming to realize that maybe a lot has changed already, and a lot more will, in the time to come. But seeing those kids that day reassured me, that life does indeed go on, in its simplest sense, and that while our life in school was over, theirs was just beginning. At a fundamental level, nothing had changed, and nothing would.

Signing off from the Dhwanii workstation for the last time.

Ramya V.

Publication of the Dhwanii

We write it, you read it, you remember it
In the wee hours of a rainy August morning last year, I left India and moved halfway across the world to the Netherlands. After completing my undergraduate degree in architecture at Anna University, I am currently studying Environmental and Infrastructure Planning at the University of Groningen. The time I have spent here has taught me quite a bit, both academically and otherwise.

Academically this course gives me the freedom to pursue my various interdisciplinary interests, which link together very well under it. Studying here is an interesting change from what I have been accustomed to thus far. The emphasis is on presenting opinions and informed points of view; there are no right and wrong answers. One of the most exciting learning experiences for me has been interacting with my classmates, who come from different parts of the world. Discussing the similarities and differences in our cultural backgrounds and countries has led to many pleasant surprises!

Learning, however, is not limited to the classroom. For example, living alone is quite an experience in itself. Learning to balance academics with simple things that you take for granted at home—food, laundry, groceries—forces you to plan your time better. Living in a student house full of students from different academic disciplines and countries, there is never a dull moment in the common rooms and kitchens!

Looking back, I realize my love for Vidya Mandir grew all the more after I left it. School gave me the comfort of a support structure within which to experiment and discover myself, a safety net of sorts. In school, you invariably meet people who, growing up with you, understand you and play a role in shaping you into the person you turn out to be. Your teachers become your friends after you leave—well-wishers you can always return to for a quick chat or for advice, people who are always happy to see you doing well, no matter how many years it has been since you sat in their classroom. In fact, the Vidya Mandir bond really does exist beyond the reaches of the circle you interact with in school.

I think the most important thing that I have learned through school, undergraduate and now post-graduate studies is how important it is to be open to any sort of learning. I have found that even experiences that seem unpleasant can teach you many things about yourself and the world. Stay curious, and stay open to learning. Remember, you are a work of art in progress. Every experience you have adds a little more colour to that canvas. Adventure is out there!

-Poornima Kumar
Batch of 2009
Most of you who are reading this article probably already know what happened during the elections this year. If you missed it, you can always flip over to page 5, where you'll find the complete report. What you'll find in this article is not a dull collection of the events which took place over the span of those four days, but what happened behind the scenes and what it actually means to be a SPL nominee.

Ideally, I would have liked to spread this article out over two editions because there is so much to write about but since that isn't going to happen, I'll have to skip straight to the fun parts. The best part of the elections is, without a doubt, the time you spend with your friends making the charts and preparing the speech. All of them did their little bit, whether it was coming up with slogans, making charts and banners or posting creative yet embarrassing morphed images on Facebook. I've thanked them before and I'll thank them again because without their support, the whole endeavor would have been unimaginable.

One of the most important parts of an election is the campaign speech. As someone who is a part of the audience, it's probably the only time when you actually get to connect with the nominees before the elections. I've watched a number of campaign speeches and what I always ask myself is- “what are the people going to remember from this speech?”

Easy- the punch dialogues! Well, that wasn't allowed this year so I wanted to come up with something else.....something dramatic and innovative- something the people would remember. That's where the “coat” and the “bang” (which obviously didn't work out) came in. Here's a tip for those of you who may want to follow in my footsteps.

Before you do anything out of the ordinary in front of 800 odd people, make sure you practice it over and over again and when you're sure that you can nail it, practice it again! Performing in front of all those people is no mean task. This is especially for me because I become extremely nervous in front of large crowds. A lot of people don't know this but if you had looked closely at my left leg that day, you could have seen it oscillating at nearly 400 Hz!

One of the problems I knew we'd face was the partition that took place. I think, as nominees, the four of us really had the chance to figure out who we want on our side. This was probably the most torrid time of the elections. It was heart-wrenching to see a batch that is generally cohesive at logger heads over a school election! When the results came out, more than anything, I think we were relieved that it was all over and a sense of normalcy returned. But then again, what do we know about “normal”. I was thinking about how I should end this article, and one thing’s for sure: definitely not with a “Bang”!

-Skanda Vaidyanath
The annual Project day was held on the 15th of November amidst great excitement and enthusiasm of students and parents alike, showcasing the creativity of students from KG to grade 8. The Chief Guest was Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas, a school director, who inaugurated the day with a fun-filled inaugural function which included villu pattu by the primary students, a mime skit by the students of the Alchemy theatre and the presentation of the year’s first edition of Vidya Dhwani.

The kindergarten portrayed the different types of houses found in the world with colourful drawings. The primary section’s project, titled ‘Tell me why’ answered many of our day-to-day questions across various topics. The project of class 6 was about the neighbouring countries of India complete with maps. Class 7 did their project on the dances of India. ‘The sound of music’, class 8’s project featured the different types of music and musical instruments of the world. Last but not the least, the arts display, ‘Budding artists’, showcased the talent of young artists of our school. Overall, it was a successful and memorable day.

-Rohit Ashok

Every single student from Class VI onwards partook of a “green” initiative by an alumnus of VM by planting seeds in used milk packets.

Boys! It’s time to buck up!! The Girl’s Basketball Team has been placed runner-up in the CBSE National Meet as well as the Junior NBA Contest in a fitting tribute to Mrs. Pushpalatha’s completion of twenty year’s of service to the school!

“Charity begins at home. The Interact Club members took this one step further by honouring those who care for their second home.”

Hear oh hear! On 26th January 2015, six VM RSP cadets R. Ashwin Jayaraman, J.Chandrasekar, Praveshika, V. Dhaarini Shraddha, R. Shanjana Dhevi and Shree Nandini proudly participated in the State Republic Day Parade while our very own Viswanathan Sir was one of the trainers for the contingent. Jai Hind!

This year, the Library Week Competitions were held during the month of November. The weeklong celebrations were held for all classes in their respective library periods. The theme selected for this year’s competition was ‘Library and Books’.

Contests like designing bookmarks, posters, book covers were conducted for middle school children and few primary classes. Joining the dots, colouring the picture and giving suitable titles to the story were other activities for the primary children. An essay competition was held for high school children. The children participated enthusiastically and enjoyed this year’s competition.
January rolled in, and we all knew what that meant - SPL elections! For weeks, that seemed to be the only thing the entire 11th grade could speak, think, and even dream of! When the nominees were finally announced, not a single senior was even remotely taken aback by the surprisingly expected results: Sreeraman Venkat, Skanda Vaidyanath, Nidhi Prasad, and Shobana Sundar.

For the next few days, the campus was bursting with more activity than usual. The 11th graders, with a lot of help from their enthusiastic junior counterparts, worked tirelessly, making posters and racking their brains trying to come up with catchy slogans.

The following day saw brilliantly delivered speeches by the four nominees, each with their own ideas, and plans towards betterment of our school.

The next day had the school looking as colourful as ever, followed by the most anticipated part of the elections: the campaigning, which is the only 40 minutes in school life where shouting at the top of your lungs won't get you sent to the principal's office.

Finally came the day of the voting, and the results were finally announced, after what seemed like an eternity, with Sreeraman coming first, as VM's new SPL, and Shobana and Skanda coming a close second and third respectively. This election was nothing short of an exhilarating experience, and a taste of our own democracy within the walls of VM.

-Nethra P.

and hence we have "Events Extraordinaire"

Not to be left out, the members of Trekkers' Club @ VM have attended an adventure camp at the picturesque village of Tirumurthy Nagar near Udumalpet.

Hajimemashite! V. Sreeraman and Aditya Prebhu of Class XI visited Japan under the Japan East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths Program under the Arts and Sports categories respectively. While the trip included a visit to The University of Tokyo and the village of Tochigi, the highlight was the 'home-stay' being hosted by a Japanese family! Sayonara!

A group of 8th graders, under the able guidance of Mrs. Vijaysree Sarath, celebrated the spirit of the month of values in February by visiting Vivekananda House on Beach Road. The students presented banners (made at extremely short notice) bearing words of wisdom from Swami Vivekanda's teachings.

The die-hard chemistry students unionized on Mole Day to put a good show this year as well!
January 26th of every year is an important day for India and for VM. The date commemorates the beginnings and successes of an emergent and thriving republic, and for us VMites, it symbolises a change of guard.

Republic Day is an event of national importance, and is celebrated in VM with no less gusto. From the RSP Cadets who represented VM in the Republic Day Parade, to the tricoloured flags covering the hearts of the patriotic students of VM and India, VM realises the importance of being Indian.

The day was coupled with Investiture, the function which symbolises the senior set of prefects passing the baton to the next set of prefects.

The programme comprised of some sprightly dances and an educational session on the United Nations, and the role it plays in our world.

The Investiture began, with the rhythmic and solemn drum beat, as the prefects marched into the open air auditorium. They went up on stage to hand over duties, symbolized by the ‘handing-over’ of the flag and sash. This was followed by the oath, and a speech by our principal, Ms. Shoba Raman, who explained how responsibility is something we all must learn to carry, and finished with a humorous story about optimism and positivity.

The function ended with the outgoing SPL, Harshavardhan Shankar, sharing some of his thoughts and, the current SPL, Sreeraman Venkat, leading the school in the national pledge.

-Madhav
Founders’ Day is when the school pauses to celebrate its rich past and its promising future: the past, as we honor the people who established the school and learn from them, and future, as we plan to uphold the school’s great name. This year’s Founder’s Day, which was on 3rd of February, 2015, was exceptionally important, as it is our school’s diamond jubilee. The event was planned to capture the essence of Vidya Mandir’s 60th birthday.

This special day in our school’s history began with our school’s very own choir singing classical songs. On this occasion, Mr. Ravi, a member of our school’s M.C. and an alumnus of VM, spoke a few words in honour of this special day. Following this, Narmada Miss addressed the gathering by talking about the history of our school and its founders who had laid a strong foundation for this institution.

Then, our chief guest for the day, Mr. Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, chairman of Sri Sakti textiles, Polachi and President of the Sakti Institute of information and Management, gave a speech which touched the hearts of almost every single student present for the occasion. He believed the development of our country rested on the shoulders of the youth. His talk focused on how children, being the assets of the economy, should dream big and work hard to achieve their goals. At the end of his speech, one could see the impact Mr. Vanavarayar left on the school’s students.

Finally, a new logo of our school was released to commemorate our diamond jubilee. Created by Mr. C.V. Baskaran, the logo consists of a bird against the backdrop of a mountain signifying that the students and the teachers shall together reach new heights in the years to come, thus capturing the essence of Founder’s Day.

-Tharun S.

On the 20th of February, the students of the kindergarten of Vidya Mandir presented the 60th Annual day celebrations. Firstly, there was a song cum dance emphasizing the importance of numbers in our lives. The melodious music changed the ambience and set the stage for the rest of the show. Following next was a recital of two shlokas. Then, the students of LKG and UKG presented an English play titled ‘A Lost Friend’ which told the tale of two hummingbirds. A Tamil folk song, ‘Ennama Tozhi’ was the next item on the list which was performed by the students of UKG. A few extra lines were added to create more awareness among the students.

Next was ‘Twinkling toes’, a splendid performance which comprised of an array of traditional dance forms from India, Russia, Japan and Scotland. A Tamil song ‘Avargal thanda

The grounds were cleared, the chairs were laid out and the stage was set. The Annual Primary School Day had officially begun on the 6th of February as the cars rolled up at the threshold of our school at around 4 past noon, the inhabitants about to experience a delightful feast in the form of compassionate performances in the fields of music, theater and dance.

With the Amrithalahiri, or the School Orchestra, serving as a delectable appetizer, the performance of a standard set of three carefully chosen songs was rendered with great gusto and harmony leaving the excited audience enthralled. The play ‘Beauty and the Beast’ by the first graders followed in suit making us relive the happy childhood fantasy we all love and enjoyed and personally I found the Beast more cute than scary!

For the main entree, we had the second graders perform a skit titled ‘Holka Polka’ that revolved around a not-so-cliche ‘witches are good’ scenario that tells that stereotypes are about as true as a student’s expectations of his or her test results and that even the worst of the worst can be a good side despite the odds stacked against them. The third years exhibited grace and fancy footwork in their ‘folk dance’ themed display. The English Play showed us the classic tale of the modest merchant Wali Dad and how his humble nature resulted in the happy marriage of the noble prince and princess of the land.

Desserts brought us the Hindi Play, Tamil Dance Drama and the Tamil play. While the Hindi play kept us beaming with its wit and humor, the Tamil Dance Drama was about the Tamil legend ‘Aarupadai Veedu’ and held us in awe as the powerful emotions expressed by the actors echoed across the stage into the hearts of the audience. ‘Mahishasura Mardini’ or the story of Maa Durga was depicted skillfully by the fifth graders clad in ancient garb bringing a spectacular end to the positively delightful menu presented thus far.

On the whole, the event was a grand success to say the least and it’s all thanks to the amazing students who participated, the selfless teachers that created and the audience that completed the event. Special recognition goes to the arts department whose tireless effort sealed the magic of the evening with the colorful and appropriate back drops without which the occasion would have never been complete.

-Shivani Devi
**Roast of the Rhythm**

- KSB Miss: "Meaningless song"
- H.K Miss: Liked "Merasalayiteen"
- Sudarshana Miss: Recognised the Song as "the google-google song"
- EM Miss: Danced to the song
- Maya Miss: Loved the song "Aao Na Desi"
- EM Miss: Danced to the song "Aao Na Desi"

*We played some of today’s hit "Merasalayiteen" and "Aao Na Desi" songs, and noted our teachers’ reactions.*

*The above were some of the verdicts.* - *Tharun Srikant*

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**Mary Poppins**

Charming, magical, full of whimsy and delight, Mary Poppins holds up awfully well half a century after it was made. Catchy tunes and superb dance numbers highlight this diverting classic children’s movie, along with a starchy, confident performance by the young Julie Andrews that keeps the whole thing from getting too treacle. Embark on the adventure of a life time and witness how Mary Poppins in a quite literal sense, magically reunites a family and in the process teaches the audience that family must come above all.

-Kailasam

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**The Great Escape**

Directed by John Sturges, ‘The Great Escape’ was, and remains to be one of the most famous movies released. Originally a book, the movie starred Steve McQueen, Richard Attenborough, James Coburn and Donald Pleasence. Beginning as a comedy, the film is set in a German Prisoner-of-war camp during the Second World War. The story tiptoes into its adventurous plot when the British and Common Wealth prisoners of war begin plotting their escape from the specially designed camp. This camp was designed to be “inescapable” to house their most troublesome inmates.

The movie goes on to describe the plotting and execution of one such attempt. It describes the slow and consistent efforts taken by the prisoners and the friendships that grow from the inescapable manner in which each prisoner is bound to his end. But the real question is after all the trouble and the punishment, will they escape?

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**Movie Review**

These are a few classics we strongly recommend for your pleasure this holiday season

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**Cartoons by Riya Nagendra**