

Students' News Magazine

Mar - Apr 2013

WATCHOUT!

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Big Story

Interview with
Dr. David Hilmers
Special Feature

Down the
memory lane
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Cultural Council
Indian Institute of Technology
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Watch Out News Agency
Volume: XXXII Issue 2
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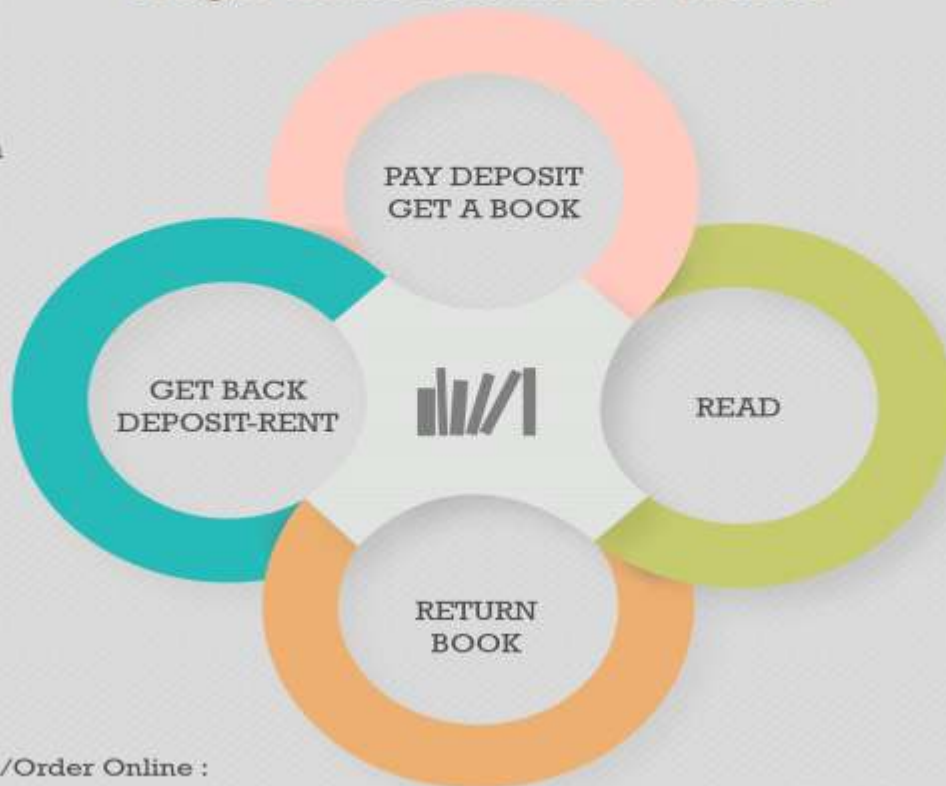
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20th Anniversary Issue

Chairman's Address

I strongly opine that a 'purpose', however over-rated or pretentious it may seem to me, must exist, albeit vaguely, for a group to build its legacy. Ergo, there have been times when I, with an overly serious looking countenance, have thought about the vision and purpose of Watch Out News Agency. You see, the campus refreshes itself every five years, meaning that there is a completely different set of individuals donning the campus as compared to five years back. And hence I wonder, what legacy a news magazine can establish in such a timespan with all its obstacles and challenges. Campus journalism is not a celebrated profession in Indian institutes when compared to our counterparts in the rest of the world. As far as Roorkee is concerned, something like Watch Out lacks the glamour of the performing arts or the vanity of the inter-IIT sports meet nor does it offer the apathy of the lesser-active sections.

Therefore I wonder about 'purpose' that has kept us going for over two decades and metamorphosed us from what must have been a very attractive looking poster in Govind Bhawan to this well-structured magazine that you are reading. The purpose of this magazine could not be as simple as to provide for a platform to enhance one's literary prowess, especially in today's age of blogs and all, it has to be something much more. Nor is it created just for spreading news about campus activities and events, as we do have our fair share of nonchalant members who rarely care about the world beyond their bhawan room door with all their esoteric interests and non-populist line of thought. Consequently, I believe that the prime motive of this magazine has always been to initiate positive changes in the psyche of the institute, to inspire students to make something more of their time in Roorkee, beyond the ubiquitous, and to ensure that their opinions are heard and problems redressed. Through the years, we have tried, and somewhat succeeded, in reaching this goal having addressed most of the major and minor issues and non-issues on campus.

So where do I see Watch Out in the coming years?

As far as the printed magazine and its content are concerned, we should do just fine as long as the administration in Roorkee presents us with enough problems to write about. What genuinely concerns me, is our failure at making an impact online. I mean we are somewhat there with our on and off website- www.wona.co.in, the WONA blog and the regularly updated facebook page, but we can do much more, in the form of a stable and well designed website, filled with detailed stories, online surveys and news updates. All this being said, old school me holds the printed magazine in highest regard but as a group we should not lose out on the scalability the internet offers. So I urge the future batches to make this their prime concern. As far as our batch is concerned, we had a decent year with 3 magazines coming out in print and with the facebook page making up for the unreliable website, besides which, an e-newsletter was launched at the start of the year to make up for the lull of last year. And while there were challenges, the Force always remained strong with us and we can expect a similar, if not better, performance in the coming year.

For the reader who has cared to read this piece up to this point, I must admit that writing this address was difficult, not for the lack of content, but for the fact that this would be the official admission of the fact that I am no longer associated with Watch Out. I never really joined Watch Out to enhance my writing prowess or with any end in mind for that matter, but this motley crew is the single and most important component in my grooming at Roorkee, if there ever has been any. This resignation, of sorts, makes me look back at the past three years that I have been associated and makes me wonder if I could, for once, go back to a Watch Out meeting, just to give another idea for a cover story, or rejoice in friendly banter and share a laugh or two with my friends and colleagues, just for one last time.

Thank you for the memories and best of luck for the years to come.

-Aditya Gokhale

Fourth Wave

There are always some constants in discussions. Any wayside conversation a Watchout alumnus has with her/his junior revolves around the group - typically it is an enthusiastic enquiry about the next magazine after which said junior looks around uncomfortably, or about the meetings in the senate steps in front of the tree that has played the watchful guardian, since 1993, of the bunch of self-proclaimed geniuses sitting together and ideating every so often. Time has come for me to become that boring senior who, in all the metaphorical senility and irrelevance that more than 3 years on campus imparts, makes her corny, tear-inducingly platitudinous statements about the health of the group, interspersing them with banal stories about how it must have been years ago when her seniors' seniors spoke about their seniors' seniors' seniors explaining how their seniors' seniors saw a snake in Govind and decided to do something, like write articles, to make people watch out.

Except I don't think that will happen. The past year in watch out was always about the business. It involved scurrying about gathering articles from the group and walking away at the stroke of 9:55 pm from the senate steps after meetings, without much ado. If there ever was a need to address the group, it meant that the deadlines for submitting articles was temporally so far behind that the coaxing-cajoling stage or even the pointed-humour-that-serves-as-reminders stage had long gone past or the need for some fresh ideas was immense. Some of my seniors would consider it blasphemous if I told them that I don't see the group as a living organism that has its own idiosyncrasies that the current batch of students understands and appreciates, its own proclivities that the students honor and its own whimsies that they smile at. Yet, sentiment, inasmuch as I show in farewells, doesn't offer much in the way of succor against the above-mentioned blasphemy mostly because I consider it unnatural to will it. I hope you don't infer that the group never meant anything to me; What I am saying is leaving the group doesn't make me cry. At the risk of sounding like a wannabe robot, I am solely bothered by the unfinished work in the magazine and the group and for that matter, by the injustice I am doing to this column by rambling about this and that.

The cover story this issue, on placements, was written by compiling some advice we garnered from those who have gambled and won their share this placement season. We don't have grand delusions about the story being the supreme quintessence of all How-tos to crack placements, but we are sure you wouldn't find it to be a collection of blatantly obvious tips. Since none can claim to have conquered the fear of the test that placements are and none can claim to not want a job, no matter what the plans for the future are, it wouldn't hurt ever to get more insight. And, steady improvement has been seen over the years in the placement scenario which goes to prove either that the students are a bottomless reservoir of skills and potential or that the industry never has a permanent lean period for job opportunities. Speaking of potential, the big story is the about the underutilization of institutions such as the Hobbies Club and the Cultural Society. Although we are tempted to point fingers at the administration for their unwillingness to support these student bodies financially and help them flourish, writing this story made us discover that we need to look into the mirror ourselves to see the culprit. Right from the sudden surge of interest in hobbies only during Srishti to staying in the cultural council for the posts or stage performances, we are a lot that needs to get its priorities right.

You will find most of the other regular features resting in their respective places. Make sure you glance through the chat with Dr. David Hilmers, a charming NASA astronaut whom R had the honor of hosting during Cognizance 2013.

Now, I appropriately break the big news right at the end. Watchout is entering its 20th year as the official on campus news magazine. This issue has come to you with 9 celebratory pages which you can read by turning to the other front cover. The alumni have shown their undying love for Watchout, and indirectly for you not just by filling up 8 of those pages and sparing you the regular drivel written by us that would have gone into those pages otherwise, but by funding this magazine completely. At this juncture, I feel infinitely grateful to them and to you, to have forged this group and nurtured it to what it is today.

Thank you!

Enemy at the century gate

There's an eerie silence engulfing the campus - one that permeates seemingly normal goings-on in the campus, one that's impossible to observe at first glance. The intensity of Bakar has not reduced, proxies are given as usual, the queues in the mess are as painfully long as ever and DC++ still works. However, that unnerving sense of heightened tension persists. But, it does so subtly that most of the junta are blissfully unaware of its existence. There's a war we are in the middle of. If there were a thousand words wrapped beneath a fleeting gaze you threw at someone when you were flying down the library slope on your cycle before, there are now a million. If you thought your beloved news correspondents at WONA are trying to poison your peace of mind with misconstrued ideas forged freshly by recent re-readings of 1984 or that they have unfortunately decided to adhere to the unwritten rule that agents of news are obliged, as part of their jobs, to spread panic among the readers, to be the harbingers of inevitable doom, even if that means circulating regular doses of terrifying rumours, then, you thought wrong. War, common sense tells us, and even cold wars for that matter, are never an elephant in the room. And since what we claim here appears to defy common sense, we thought we would better back it up with solid facts.

So, what is compelling us to convince you that the friend from another department that you awkwardly waved to yesterday, may not actually be your friend? In fact, assuming that he/she is your sworn enemy might not suggest that you are being paranoid. One student, who claims to be an astute judge of happenings on campus, an attentive examiner of portents, claimed that the discontent that had been seething for a while boiled and spilled over for everyone to see with a facebook status update. Some CS student sparked it off with a cocky, "Hired by Facebook for Rs. more-than-you-will-ever-get-paid per annum. In your face!". The student didn't blaspheme by leaving out the "yay!" in the status message, no need to worry. Quick to retaliate, an unemployed 9-pointer from



Biotechnology bawled in the comments, "We work hard for a good CG, and in the end, these computer geeks take it all. No fair". It soon snowballed into a furious debate which pervaded the entire online social networking world and is said to have caused some small fry social networks to fear Denial of Service attacks. Bottled up emotions came bursting out, disgruntlement was everywhere and as one would expect, some people cashed in on the chance to film students venting out their frustrations unabashedly, to the beat of Harlem Shake.

There are two kinds of people in the institute: those who know what the population theory of Malthus says and those who don't. When too many of the first type got together, by happenstance, say in the Institute Computer Centre, tense glances would be exchanged for moments after which everyone would break into a sprint to the nearest computer - A sudden realization that a fight for the means of subsistence was not a merely theoretical concept some wise men came up with a couple of centuries ago had hit them. Similarly, a queue outside

the ATM appears calm only superficially. There have been instances of shoving and assaults to get ahead in the line. Some students who used to write down notes with four-colored pens and upload them on Dropbox like true altruists, have long stopped. Some Cogni prize money apparently never reached the winners. Group activities actually hide behind a veneer of politeness and courtesy while a tiny disagreement would bring out the hatred and low cunning.

As with any war, there are sides to fight for and sides to destroy. Students from the same departments have joined hands - ruthless bio-chemical warfare might be on the cards and unethical hacking is on the rise. Those who thought cold wars were fought only in winters should especially be cautious - your stupidity might not help you survive these egregious times. So just to end with a little advice from our side, watch out if someone from a different department is being too nice.

Tapping the untapped potential

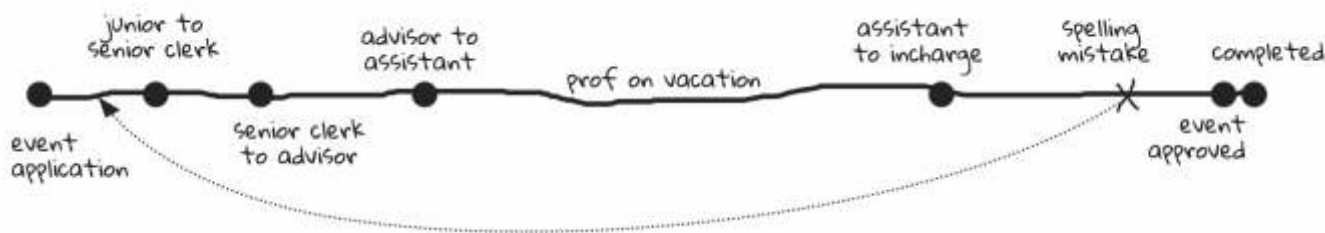
We may carp ad infinitum and begrudge this campus, its lack of facilities, poor infrastructure and a myriad inadequacies that we see this place as strewn with. While it may be true that most of our student bodies, especially our Hobbies club and the Cultural Council are conspicuous only by their absence outside the campus and that our campus, standing as it does in seclusion, is what seems to be the biggest scourge of itself, it is also quite true that as far as the tangible is concerned, facilities are not as meagre as we make them out to be.

The resources which were meant to culminate in a cornucopia of student centred activities and events have, sadly enough, either been under utilized or never

been available to those who deserved it. The perfectly avoidable rigmaroles of getting financial aid, dealing with permissions and unnecessary bureaucracy have indeed strengthened students' proclivities for quelling extra curricular activities in the name of academics.

But even with all the restrictions and enforced surveillance, many have managed to step away from the herd and indulge in other colors of life. The numerous student groups of IITR bear testimony to this indulgence.

Fortunately, concerns about a lot of these noble student bodies being in a metaphoric state of shambles and paling in comparison to their counterparts elsewhere are well within the scope of our present resources.



Of promises and expectations

Srishti brings to life the Hobbies Club of IIT-R unfailingly every year, many thanks to the grades at stake. But to say that grades are the sole motivating factor would be great injustice to those who find Hobbies Club to be their home away from home. Idle conversations with any one of these rare species will leave you in awe of the platform that this unpretentious institution provides. Some may argue that this is the true essence of IIT, uncaged minds giving flight to ideas of tomorrow. But like every other modern day setup, it delivers just a little more than a politician's promise. Who is to be blamed for this? What is stopping them from becoming the unfettered centres of innovation that they are expected to be?

More often than not, people tend to blame lack of funds as the reason for the dismal performance of IITR on a national level. However, surprisingly or not, it turns out that it wasn't the inadequacy in terms of amount but the delay in getting the cash in hand that was the major issue. "We get the proper monetary support," says Shashank Shekhar, Secretary of Electronics section, "but even though the semester starts in August, we

don't get the money before January. By then we have already invested a lot of our own money because we can't wait." Other secretaries complained that even when the money has been sanctioned, it is tough for them to get their bills reimbursed. "It is very tough to get the bills past the lower clerical staff who try to find the most inconsequential of faults in the claim and delay the reimbursement," cribbed Harshil Mathur, General Secretary of Hobbies Club. Nearly all the secretaries who Watch Out spoke to had invested tens of thousands of their own money in their section due to this (possibly avoidable) delay.

Problems escalate when the motivated ones try to venture out of their nest and compete at a national level. While many have actually gone out, participated and won accolades for our institute, these all have been personal initiatives rather than being professor-backed. So, if even the money is sufficient, on paper, the encouragement is missing. The situation seems to be similar for various sections of the Cultural Council, which however have another, altogether different problem to deal with.



All the world's a stage

"We have no room for cultural independence, there's no independence of thought!" claims Sankalp Agarwal, member of the dramatics section. Policing every cultural activity that ever takes place has never helped in the growth of art, if history is any indication. Curious is the case of sections seeking permission to stage their performances in the Convocation hall and what leaves us more curious is that cultural events get cancelled on several occasions, for no apparent reason. It is difficult to fathom what the administration means when they so categorically state that hosting too many shows at the Hall would deviate the focus of students from academics. It is difficult, also, to fathom what terrible difference it could make if only such infrastructural establishments on campus could be put to optimal and generous use.

Problems faced by the students seem unending, be it funds or the lack of encouragement from the administration. The administration appears to be a strong naysayer when it comes to sections of the cultural council participating in cultural fests in other institutes. To book an auditorium for a performance seems to be almost impossible as it requires numerous permissions from different wings of the administration.

With few avenues of professional advice and no professional help whatsoever, the groups in the cultural council continue to struggle. Not only do they lack guidance, they can't even think of inviting trainers for Workshops during the cultural fest, thanks to the sorry state of affairs in the Thomso office.

The monk who can't drive his maruti

But, the buck passes on to the students mainly. What would seem like very basic facilities to an outsider that are currently provided at Hobbies Club remain under-utilised for most part of the year. It's only Srishti that seems to wake many of the cavalier web developers ,

photographers or electronics enthusiasts out of there seemingly eternal state of hibernation.

One should blame the students again when one notices that the spirit of practising arts, for arts' sake, is missing here. Some students join the performing arts sections just to experience the rockstar moments on stage. Most likely, they come off as convincing charlatans at best, when they actually do perform. The performing sections of the Cult Soc lack for originality and give inordinate importance to performance while letting the very essence of art, which lies in creativity and selfishly focussed practice, take a backseat.

This shouldn't ever be misinterpreted as the lack of talented artists. The quality of shows and the reason the cultural council is empty when there aren't shows coming up can only be ascribed to an unfortunate perception of art by the general populace on campus. The audience is more interested in the glamour and the props more than the class of music or the grace of dance. Well, audience and armchair critics are both never knowledgeable but real aficionados are always put off by uninterested audiences or ones that hoot like hooligans at nothing particularly impressive.

The plays staged by dramatics sections are professional, the music section has many highly trained musicians to boast of, but, the shows still don't feature original compositions perhaps because of performers' obligations to bend to the will of the audience. But, given we have all that it takes for far more frequent performances that emphasise only on the art form, why not prove that art doesn't suffer amidst hardcore technologists? And, most importantly, the cultural council should come to the aid of those who are starting out to learn the arts and simultaneously provide healthy challenges to those who wish to practise art rather than facilitating trite performances by those who could have given performances before.

In the hobbies club as well, the onus lies on the students here to make the best of the facilities provided by the institution before demanding fatter cheques and fancier gadgets. The astronomy section's current team, for example, is highly passionate and has managed to obtain funds for a costly, new telescope. Further, the section has developed close interaction with faculties who have been instrumental in providing the oft needed nudge to break the monotony.

SDSLabs, to cite another example, have gone from being virtually unknown to being provided servers by an allegedly stingy administration.. They have proven their worth in various national level competitions like Yahoo! HackU IITD Edition and Deloitte CCTC among others. The electronics section members garnered a special mention in the prestigious Texas Instruments' Analog Design Contest 2012 and have also been participating in Robocon every year along with Robotics section.

The Dramatics section performed in IITD during Rendezvous and the Music section delighted the audience during Pan IIT in Kolkata. Digendra Rathore, secretary of FSAE offers a shaft of optimism by absolving the administration of blame. "Institutional procedures notwithstanding, the administration and the faculty advisors are willing to cooperate." Their performance in Australia last year seems to have received the recognition it warranted. A year into their project, the section has earned the attention and trust that takes years, sometimes, to find its way to most other student initiatives.

Overall, it's an increased presence in and outside the campus that student-driven activities on campus need foremost. Wherever such a presence already exists, one has enough reasons to justify that the involved students could do with more support and encouragement. And, thanks to some pioneers on campus, such support for some technical and cultural activities on campus, looks to be in the offing.

War of Words

Apart from epitomizing Gods, architecture and a substantial amount of literature from the ancient Greeks, the Romans found the art of public speaking naturally intimidating. Ignoring the fact that Charlie Chaplin's satirical portrayal of Hitler in the Great Dictator got nearly as famous as the dictator's speeches themselves, almost no one can match the power that Hitler's words had in creating portentous thoughts in the minds of the Germans.

History, apart from proving its unpropitious innocence all the time, incontrovertibly points to an obvious fact: Great leaders are inexorably great orators.

A leader's opinion might be a very general one, socially popular and ethically correct but what matters most is the leader's stimulating presentation. A thought gives birth to an opinion, an idea. An idea inspires action. Action can be in terms of words or successive responses. Action leads to a reaction, another idea, another opinion. The entropy rises, chaos persists and confusion remains. The vastness of ideas continues to grow frenziedly large. Until, someone, a true leader, rises to tame the beast. When a good orator speaks, his every gesture in terms of speech, body language, facial

expression, voice depth and tone, resolves to decrease these unplanned and unprecedented impulses in the brain of his listeners while making the remaining, coherent with his own.

The leader faces a real challenge when he faces his counterpart, a person almost equally if not more skilled than himself, in swaying the minds of his audience. What emerges as a result is 'The War of Words': the Debate, where the slightest hint of discomfort could change the game of thrones, a modest gesture which could backfire and change the very course of history.

Here again history shows its arrant immaculateness, and reminds us of the great political turnovers – be it Mark Antony's burial address to Romans or George. W. Bush's suicidal glance at his wristwatch during a presidential debate with Bill Clinton, gaining serious public attention.

A leader needs to relate with the general public, understand their situations and act accordingly. But more importantly, he has to make them believe that he understands.



Srishti

"Srishti" may not be a much-touted event, but it has certainly managed to garner praise from all and sundry. With each passing year, it appears that more of the students and professors are beginning to take note of the event. For those who haven't joined the bandwagon yet, "Srishti" is the annual exhibition of the hobbies club, in which each of its sections showcase their work. Each of the 8 the sections had something new and eye catching to enthrall the visitors, be it the chance to see sun spots thanks to Astronomy section or watch Indian cricket on a 3x3 display at SDS.

The Fine Arts Section organized an art exhibition with a tribal theme. The paintings and the decoration in fine arts room depicted almost every aspect of tribal life. Finely dressed tribesmen, made out of sticks, stood at the gate and murals that spoke volumes about tribal life, adorned the walls. From the masks sculpted on the pillar, to the hammers and shovels placed beneath the arts, the room gave deep insight into tribal lifestyle. Once the visitors got over the tribals at the gate, they were greeted by the world famous pout of Angelina Jolie and the portrait of the immensely versatile Johnny Depp. The paintings were beautifully made, even people with no knowledge of brush-strokes and mixing of colours could appreciate their beauty. People trickled in to visit even after 10pm and it was easily the most popular attraction of Srishti.

The Philately and Numismatics Section put up one of the most extensive displays, attracting collectors and laymen alike. The numismatics display had banknotes from 18 different countries and an astonishingly large collection of pre-independence coins as old as the ones issued by Emperor Sawai Man Singh in 1544 and those issued by the East India Company under the names of King George IV, King George V and Queen Victoria. The collection also included post-independence coins that are currently out of circulation. It had many

collectors' items including a set of quarters from all US states. Another interesting set of the collectibles was the large array of notes which had '786' as the serial number.

The Philately display was equally huge. Not only did it have stamps from a large number of countries, i.e., it also had stamps for every theme conceivable from animals to great personalities and historical monuments. The art stamps from USSR were also a special attraction, not only for their beauty but also for their novelty.

SDS Labs, the Software Development Section displayed their skills by showcasing some really cool applications and a game played on a Leap Motion device, played on a Leap Motion device, attracting many students.

Their music app 'Play', which is the Labs' internal DJ, which is the Labs' internal DJ, was the center of attraction as it could stream any song from Muzi or Youtube, and was appreciated by all. It won the award for the "Best Application".. There were other interesting applications like "Presence" which tracked who was present in the lab at any given time, tracked who was present in the lab at any given time, "Echo", their ebook content search engine, content search engine, "Hackview" a peer to peer google hangout with collaborative text editing and Backdoor CTF, their Hacking application. The lab also presented a rather highly advanced Leap Motion Kit which sensed motion and was synchronised to play Fruit Ninja. This attracted some giggling kids all the while through. This attracted some giggling kids all the while through. Besides, SDS Labs also organised a technical quiz "Bits and Bytes" and a coding competition "Codematics" which saw active participation from the entire campus.

Foreign Internships: Tomorrowland



The mad race for foreign internships has taken its toll on us both emotionally and economically. Since a summer abroad remains an important piece of achievement to add to our CVs, and since most of us hope to gain phenomenal academic exposure through a research internship abroad, we start wishing third year onwards that an IIT tag somehow gives us an advantage while applying. Although IIT-R has MoUs with reputed research institutions like EPFL and ETH-Zurich, it is a collective concern that there aren't enough summer exchange programs that we are eligible for, when compared to students from other IITs. Watchout finds out from *Dr. Ghosh, Dean, Planning & Finance* more about IIT-R's international collaborations.

WONA: Very few foreign universities like University of Auckland, some universities in France and NUS have summer internship programs for IITR, when compared to other IITs. Does IIT-R really encourage foreign internships?

Dr. Ghosh: Yes, of course. The institute is not in anyway obliged to find you an internship in your second year but students often spend their summers productively by securing an internship on their own. As for the third year students, students most often manage to obtain research internships of their choice and in some cases, the departments do give them some options through their respective industrial collaborations, but tie-ups with universities abroad that offer summer research programs for undergraduate students are rare. We do have MoUs with more than 20 universities abroad - some in the USA, Europe and Australia. Applying to those universities might surely better the student's chances.

WONA: Could you elaborate on MoUs on an international level?

Dr. Ghosh: Recently, we considered this issue seriously and found that among about 67 MOUs most of them are inactive. To keep them functional though, we need individual students and faculty to put in efforts. We are getting rid now of the previous approach and we have now become very choosy about the MOUs.

Also, signing MoUs with some corporate giants is on the cards. We are looking to focus on better exchange of students and faculty in terms of academic research, infrastructure and internship opportunities.

WONA: What are some inadequacies you find in the internship culture at IITR and what progressive measures are being planned?

Dr. Ghosh: One thing that I have observed is the duration of the summer holidays being insufficient to meet the demands of companies and research programs. Normally at least six months would be required for considerable work, but at an undergraduate level, we are hoping to give students at least three months for summer internships. There are proposals to extend the vacation so that a more fruitful internship experience is possible. Some recent changes were made to the academic calendar with this aspect in mind.

WONA: Do research groups benefit adequately from grants offered by other institutions? Are there some grants for undergraduate students doing some research projects in other institutions?

Dr. Ghosh: We do have a lot of collaborative projects and industry-funded consultancy projects which are undertaken by faculty members from different departments. But, it is only rare that undergraduate students are included in such research groups.

But, there are proposals to provide internship grants for undergraduates who are involved in research projects in the summer. For instance, we have been thinking about developing a fund to help the students with travel during their internships.

Freudian Blip

“What are the odds?”, I wondered aloud. “Easily calculable”, a Sheldon Cooper might have said. One to a few billions perhaps, given the number of DNA combinations, that you find a pair of similar looking people. Even lesser in your mess. Spotting long-lost sisters soon became our mess-time sport and predictably got relegated just as soon. General petulance stemming from mess food crept back in. So did whiny talk of R making one a ghost of one’s glorious past self (a little exaggeration never hurt anyone). And of course, the occasional profound discussions, completely uncalled for. That the whole purpose of life and its origins are largely unknown, the possibility of cosmicism, that man is a prisoner of his own device may be solid premises for an ‘escape from reality’. If it all a puzzle be, then, why tell subversion, despair, indolence, anarchy, hedonism and chaapos from non-indulgence, discipline, commitment, passion and ergomania?

We, being great practitioners of the art of living, have learnt to banish these doubts. Nevertheless, speculative dreams are inevitable. The other day in class, I was quizzically looking at the unintelligible words - “Tool Geass, workpiece” amidst notes that reeked of sleep deprivation. Perhaps a Freudian slip occurred while communicating telepathically with one of the infinite ‘me’s from one of the non-patriarchal, utopian, objectivist, equal and stress-free Many-Worlds. She seemed to be slurping noisily from a glass of butterscotch milkshake on a late October night outside the Hobbies Club. Or, perhaps I was just too sleepy to spell right. Well, Whatever, Nevermind.

Goodbye Roorkee!

Pray! For it’s that time of the year again; when the smell of coffee evokes an unfounded belief that my mind is onto something productive; when the scattering of TBLS books and Xeroxed notes in my room solicit an eerie feeling of sleeplessness and despair.

And, as I flip through the pages of these unintelligible notes, in pursuit of a ray of hope to sail me through, I cannot help my mind from flipping through the poignant memories of R-land. On another day, in another semester, I would have refrained my mind from wandering. But, on this day and for what it’s really worth, I let it sail.

I step outside and look all around. The fresh air seems stunning. The colors of the sky, through my color-blind eyes are more vibrant than ever before. The crowds of people swarming the streets amaze me. A simple conservation leaves me overwhelmed. Never before have I been so aware of the vibrancy of my surroundings.

I guess the value of something is truly realized until when it is being taken away from you. All those unexpected yet random chapos; endless, existential talks over bottomless cups of terrible coffee and the prized freedom from monetary responsibility will soon seem a distant dream.

Everyday sights and sounds start coming at me like a rainstorm. It seems difficult now to accept that only yesterday it was all so easy to get caught up in everything else and lose sight of these experiences. I certainly never appreciated the colors of R-land as I rushed to class every day.

A sudden thought then hurt me. This last semester, which was to have run out so slowly, was running out fast, and tomorrow looked me in the face more steadily than my quivering eyes dared look back. As these four months had dwindled away, to three, to two and now one, I had suddenly become appreciative of this place. Never before had I even considered expressing feelings of gratitude to the IIT administration, for all their harassing and red-tapism. But on this day, as the setting sun glazes the bright white dome of the main building, and the same sun lights up silhouettes of those babus rushing hurriedly out of their offices, I shed a tear that paints a smile,” Thank You, for this journey would never have otherwise been possible.”

I stand there, waiting for the light of day to solemnly fade, as if to capture the moment and live in it forever. I have been so innocent and little here and all beyond is so unknown and great.

In a moment I break into tears. Charles Dickens, in his own words once said, ‘Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of the earth, overlaying our hard hearts.’

I feel better after I have sobbed for I am now sorrier, more aware of my ingratitude and gentler “Good-bye, oh my dear, dear friend!”

Pray then! For it is that time of the year again, but Alas! For the very last time.

-Varun Rao
Final year, P&I

What gets you placed?

IITR is a highly placement centric institute and we all know it. There is much more to placements than just turning up for the interview and hoping to excel, it requires directed efforts and preparation.

If you ever heard an IIT graduate describe his/her alma mater as the stairway to heaven, he/she, in all probability, works in a huge company that pays handsomely. Fortunately or unfortunately, for a majority of students in the institute, that sacrosanct corner of the mind that houses our largest aspirations is filled with big names from the corporate world and dreams of fat pay cheques. A former Editor-in-Chief of the Hindu, N.Ram summed up, many years ago what a lot of Indians feel, when he said the government was providing subsidies and excellent infrastructure in comparison to the rest of the country, to a class which will occupy the higher end of the American economic spectrum, in the future. Alas, it may be true that IITians have blissfully forgotten Nehru's vision or that in today's context, there is no need for such parochialism; Giving ourselves up to the corporate world benefits the global village of which our country is a part. Whichever way it is, if there is a day when we would feel qualms about not directly contributing to rural development or the scientific progress of India, it appears that it hasn't yet arrived. Today, we work towards the final fantasy of our undergraduate lives to ensure it is as good as it can get. Watch out though it apt to spell out the mantra, to get the better of the placement season and land your dream job, for the benefit of all.

The average salaries offered in 2012-13 were about 5-10% higher than the previous year. The number of recruiters increased considerably, though not as much as in the other IITs. IIT-M greeted about a 100 new companies this season. The issue of the location of Roorkee rendering us a disadvantage is an oft-

discussed one and not easy to redress. Speaking of redressal, a motion has been passed for the creation of an external placement cell- that is, a placement consultancy firm will perhaps be supplanting the central placement team which many felt had shortcomings. This is seen as a welcome move since the burden of managing the entire process and handling the communication with the companies professionally was proving to be too taxing for the student body.

Just what's in the number?

If you think the pay package is an important figure, so is the CGPA. One can easily be deluded into believing otherwise, but that the sincerity of the student during his four years of attaining graduation, that his being adept at excelling at working under pressure and putting in regular, focussed effort, and his capability to see his endeavours through to the end make no difference to those who have come to assess him, is a far fetched proposition, a childish one at that.

Rachit Jaiwant, an alumnus of the 2007 batch of B.Tech Mechanical Engineering, wrote to us with some advice: "In a country which is obsessed with marks, cricket scores and mileage - numbers - if you get the drift, you will always be asked about the low GPA if you have one. Now, you might believe that that you have phenomenal extra curriculars, that that you are this head or that secretary might help, if you want to be looked at without a nagging doubt of your abilities, maintaining an above average CG is imperative. So keep up that grade point, and keep a healthy mix of extra curriculars and you will do just fine in the real world".

So, no matter what the rumour mongers say, your CG is imperative in getting you placed. All companies short list as a rule of thumb on the basis of CGPA and only CGPA. Having said that, your CG is surely not the only criterion for selection, of course. "CGPA is more of a supporting factor rather than a determinant." said Mohit Pahuja of CSE IV year who was placed in Qualcomm. "The sole basis of selection will be the performances in the interviews, group discussions and the written test scores. Most interviewers don't really insist on selecting people with extraordinary CGPA and sometimes do consider explanations for low grades". But having excellent grades in one's fields of interest, which are also relevant to the company, can always prove to be a helpful red herring.

As Sharat aptly puts it, "Don't be delusional about your phodu-ness, and just assume you will get in wherever you want, that doesn't happen, you require a certain skill set to crack the placements." So the safest bet for everybody still remains to put in that extra effort right now, and start off the placement season with a feather already in place on your hat, on display in big letters right across the top of your resume.

On the day

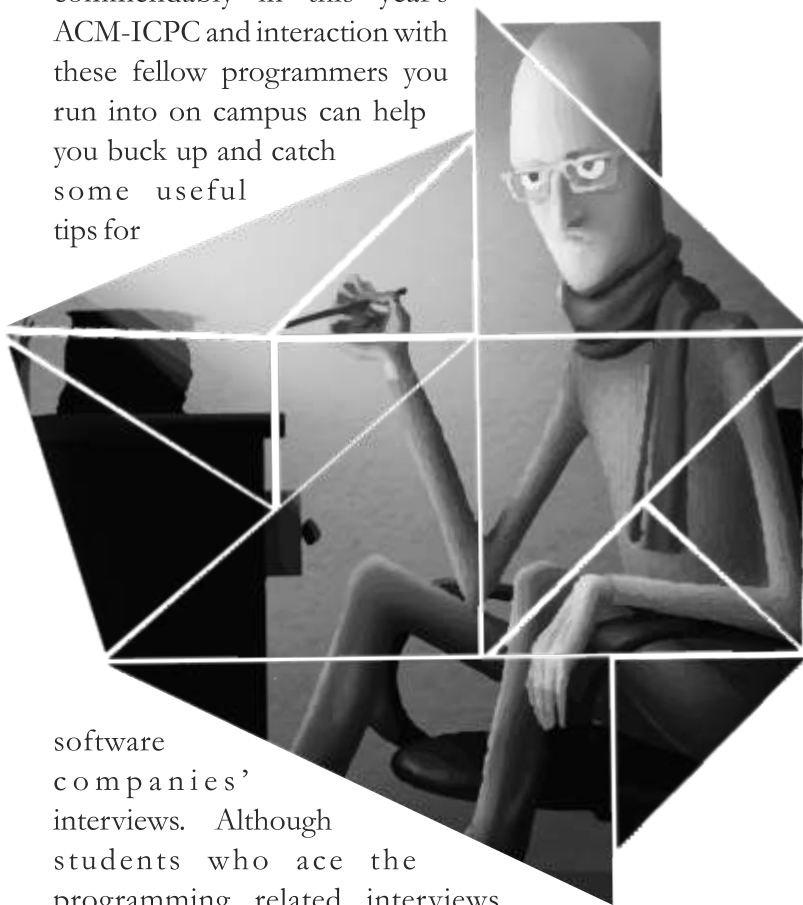
Having a high CGPA is only half the battle won, it alone doesn't suffice. The written tests assess your in depth knowledge of the relevant topics so having focussed knowledge is recommended. Basics of the technicalities of the subject must be strong. Exuding confidence and the ability to establish good rapport with interviewers makes them take notice. It sets a platform from which it would be easy to impress.

The preparation required for a written test varies from one company profile to another. The knowledge and the skill set expected from you obviously depend on the company you've applied for. For instance, a fair knowledge of finance and a good aptitude for economics is what a financial firm will look for in its employees.

And the one skill that hounds those who don't possess it and sees those who do sail to the shore safely is programming. As inexplicably and unfortunately as it can get, a majority of students on campus have unyielding fear of programming. There's a disturbing trend on campus of avoiding all programming related

activities and a general aversion of anything that sounds like EC-101. Like many greats from the world of tech suggest, programming languages are a means and not the end. Programming is an art that's a must to cultivate in order to solve all sorts of engineering problems. For non-CS students who apply to software companies, the required level of coding expertise can be developed with some effort. Websites like SPOJ, Codechef, Project Euler not only give millions of practice questions, they also give tutorials. Almost every top university offers MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) on programming. One can find courses and tips from Coursera, edX, Venture Lab, Khan Academy and a slew of other websites.

An active programming culture is already developing on campus. Savants flex their muscles in regularly organized contests on Codevillage on the intranet and elsewhere on the internet. IIT-R performed commendably in this year's ACM-ICPC and interaction with these fellow programmers you run into on campus can help you buck up and catch some useful tips for



software companies' interviews. Although students who ace the programming related interviews held by a range of companies from software firms to consultancy firms are either in PAG, SDS Labs, or IMG, there is a promising lot of non-CS students who picked up the art of programming on their own.



When confronted with the eagle-eye of selection interviewers, it is inevitable to feel vulnerable. To have a perfect stranger dig intrusively in the world of your experience, aspirations and dreams is more than enough to set your teeth on edge.

As opposed to the general belief, an interview is not a session in which the interviewee is bombarded with probing interrogations and funnelled with restrictive questions. Fortunately, a placement interview is not equivalent to an MTV Roadies audition. There's hardly any nail biting drama, and no breakdowns whatsoever. The interviewer simply looks for a particular profile in his candidates, and selects the best suited one.

What seems to be the most underrated of arts, that happens to count most during interviews, on campus is the art of communication. There's no use smirking at English speakers like they were the bourgeoisie reincarnate. There's no need either, at least from the point of view of placements, to prove your eloquence by discussing everything under the sun in immaculate English and employ GRE-esque words with ease. What we need only do is persuade the interviewers of our employability with elegance and fortitude. Interviews are no place to fumble for the right words even while answering the most non-directed questions but one also needs to ensure one doesn't sound too well-rehearsed and cinematic either.

One needs to sound convincing and confident while answering even their generic questions like, "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?" and, "Describe yourself." "You could sound too ambitious, or not enough. These questions needed to be prepared for beforehand", said Ravnish Bagga of Chemical Engineering IV year who's currently placed in Schlumberger, which doesn't have a technical round of interviews. For the majority of people who have not been blessed with the gift of the

gab, making up these answers on the spot becomes a major obstacle. Those who are a part of various groups on campus gain an advantage, as they have been exposed to loads of practice over the years through all the bakar sessions.

On a related topic, Mohit Pahuja offers a much-needed caveat, "One thing to be kept in mind is that the chances of pulling off a fake resume are negligible, and it would be a gamble with your future". If it is found that a certain candidate is faking his/her resume, he/she is immediately rejected.

A small, concentrated audience, listening to one's proclamations with skepticism and analytical minds, with eager mouths waiting to spurt out questions or agreements or counter-arguments, incredulous smiles passed at every slip of your tongue, and sometimes a void in thinking space trapping one in a limbo of what else to say - all these make a group discussion a nightmare come true. With everybody seeking to impress all at once, it is difficult to butt into the discussion to make one's point.

It is necessary to understand that a GD is as much about one's listening skills as it is about one's ability to contribute to the discussion. So talk about the points presented by others too. The way a group member introduces a new aspect, invokes interest and gives it direction never fails to bring him in good light.

Extracurriculars

The opulence of free time in an average student's daily schedule can drown him in a deep thought about the flagrant untapped potential of that time in hand. More often than not, our attempts at productivity are thwarted right at the start by some or the other more pressing matter like the new episode of Game of Thrones season 3.

Otherwise, many of us have invested and do invest significant amounts of time being non-dormant members of various campus groups. These groups may not count in your resumes, but they give some semblance of direction to your daily lives, in general improve your demeanor towards the world, your outlook on life, and give you a steady set of soft skills. To say nothing of the character-building, personality-honing social experiences, sections effectively teach you loads in team dynamics. To experience both authority, and responsibility, to maintain respect from juniors, without becoming the black-marked obsessive, compulsive senior, to juggle social norms with charm, after 4 years of section drama, exhibiting your soft skills in an interview would be child's play.

As for technical knowledge from sections, very few count. "Companies don't even look at the second page of your resumes," said Sharat, placed in Goldman Sachs, when asked about the importance of being in clubs and sections. But, some companies with recruiting teams which consist of IIT alumni understand the importance of the section mentioned in the resume. There have been instances where HR interviews, in many companies and even IIM interviews, have been centred around one's work in various sections.

But, some people like Sharat explain the status quo in most companies, "The companies don't care, unless it's a highly technical section like SDS Labs or IMG." Groups like FSAE and ASME provide some hands-on experience to mechanical engineering students. Groups like IEEE, Robotics, don't count just by a name, but under their aegis, taking up relevant projects definitely earns you brownie points.

Certificates

Though they add to one's resume, mere custody of various meaningless certificates (read Cogni and Thomso) is futile. What actually counts, is the exposure and experience you've gained in the office atmosphere when working in various organising committees.

Few firms like Schlumberger keep an eye out for the physically fit. For physically challenging or exhausting jobs, a sports background seems to act as a qualifier. A few companies that hold importance for an Inter-IIT

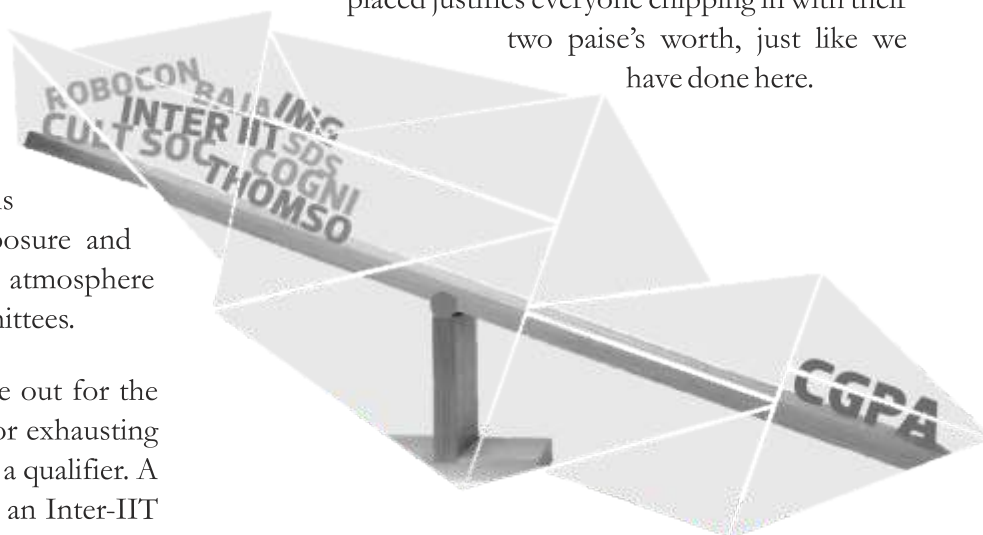
certificate even give CG allowance, and decrease the limiting criteria for preliminary sorting. More than anything, certificates simply help in breaking the traditional stereotypical image of a bespectacled, tongue-tied nerds, thankfully making the interviewers a tad bit friendlier.

Alternatives

The impending fear rooting from the perpetual uncertainty about the harvest of the placement season may not be to some of our tastes, and we may consequently look for alternative slingshots to catapult our career higher up in the world. Becoming proactive and getting yourself a job by yourself may seem inviting for some, some may blanch at the very idea.

If you have contacts placed highly in the outside world, this would be the time to call upon them for as many favours as you can demand. Or if you're genuinely very sure of your ability to impress, you can approach your dream companies yourself, and ask for an audience, off-campus. Of course, if falling prey to the materialistic world still doesn't interest you, and you'd much rather just continue your routine of joyful irresponsibility and playful gambols of a student, you could follow up on your studies. That opens a deluge of doors, and you can take your pick from research, management, literature and what not. Exams like the CAT, GRE, TOEFL offer even more options, or if you're so inclined you may even go in for the Indian Administrative Services.

One cannot write down a set of "Do's and Don'ts" for your placement season and deliver definitive pieces of advice for getting you through, without sounding trite and awfully stale. But, just the importance of getting placed justifies everyone chipping in with their two paise's worth, just like we have done here.



An interview with an astronaut



Right on time for our appointment with him, he shook hands with us and introduced himself humbly before we sat down. We began with the regular questions about space and NASA as one would expect out of student journalists who just read the wikipedia page about him before reaching the N.C. Nigam house. *Dr. David C. Hilmer* answered the icebreaker questions quite cheerfully. He said he was prepared to be astronaut Hilmer in the lecture because that's what he was called upon for. What he really wished to talk about though, was global health, an area crying for attention in the world right now. Excerpts-

WONA: Has there been any time when things appeared to have taken a wrong turn somewhere? Did you ever think you could have well heard the death knell sound during your space travels?

Dr.DH: Luckily, no. There were obviously many technical difficulties when on flight but they were all brought to our attention in time and were within our expertise to solve. Awareness and safety concerns during space travels have increased tremendously since the 1970s. At the time of my first space mission, nobody ever considered the possibility of a NASA mission failing. In fact, we didn't have the sophisticated spacesuits that astronauts currently don.

My second mission was NASA's first after the Challenger fiasco. It was obviously an emotionally challenging mission. Engineers had worked thoroughly on the safety requirements in the shuttle. When the now retired shuttle Discovery returned safely, it was a huge relief and it restored everybody's faith in continuing space exploration. But, like the O-rings that failed to expand in the Challenger or the debris in the wing of the Columbia, there will always be preventable losses that sometimes, unfortunately, are allowed to occur however proactively an organization claims to be working.

WONA: When and why did you decide that your calling was in medicine?

Dr.DH : I decided to enroll in medical school before my final space mission and continued working as an engineer at NASA. I always wanted to be a doctor and I wasn't about to give up my dream just because I turned out to be a NASA astronaut! I used to work in the mornings in the Johnson space center and pull off allnighters to understand various medical terms for my medical school entrance exam.

About a year before STS-42 Discovery, one of the crew members died in a plane crash. When they called upon me to be a replacement, I explained to them about my medical school plans, and they said, "David, you can handle both. Good luck with the training". So, I began the training and just before the mission, wrote the entrance test. Five months after I came back from space, I hung up my boots once and for all and joined medical school. Over the next eight years, I equipped myself with two degrees - pediatrics and internal medicine.

WONA: You told us that you go to Vietnam every year, what's your take on the war?

Dr.DH : As a US marine, it was above my station to question the veracity of the justifications made by the government for the Vietnam war. There are many Americans lending a helping hand to the developing world and to sort out their issues. I am primarily concerned with the health concerns among children who are still facing the gruesome consequences of the war in Vietnam. Many years ago, as a soldier in the USMC, I was taught a few important lessons in the war. When I witnessed deaths at close quarters, I felt more blessed than ever before. I felt I had to come back and contribute in some way.

WONA: Do you consider expenditure on space programmes wanton too?

Dr.DH : The US government spends hardly any money on the space programme when compared to its income. Besides, there are other reasons space exploration is special. I remember during the 1960s how it was the entire nation's single-minded goal to get a man on the moon and NASA did it. Similarly, I felt proud to be on Atlantis' mission just after a three year hiatus following the Challenger's crash. I had indeed been saddened by the avoidable loss of seven of my colleagues but I knew that NASA had only emerged stronger since. In each of my missions, we conducted some invaluable experiments in space. During my last mission, we performed more than 50 microgravity tests that represented various scientific disciplines and 11 different countries.

(Full text on the website)

Foreign intern for dummies



Get inspired by cool senior at Bondi Beach.



Publish 37 papers in the Prof's research area.



Assemble a League of Ordinary Fachchas to apply for you.



Pester your seniors for tips. For everything else there is Quora



Mrigank Pillai

B.Tech.

UG(III Year I Semester)

Email: kool.iitian.amit@gmail.com



Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

CGPA

~~6.9~~ 9.6

PROJECTS

Detailed analysis of Ohm's Law: Obtained a graph between Voltage and Current using state of the art Voltmeter and Ammeter under controlled temperature & pressure conditions.

Paper on implication of $P=NP$: Concluded $N=1$ or $P=0$ through various experimental means.

SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Computer Languages | C, C++, Java Script, jQuery, Python, PHP, Java, Lisp, Basic, Ada, Haskell, Erlang, Lua, Go, Matlab, 8085 Assembly, 8086 Assembly |
| Languages Known | Hindi, Punjabi, Haryanvi, Madrasi (all 4), English, Esperanto, Klingon, Swahili, NewSpeak |
| Software Packages | Microsoft Word, Notepad, Sticky Notes, Google Chrome, IDM, DC++, VLC, GTalk, Skype, Whats app |
| Additional Courses Taken | Advanced Quantum Computation, Super String Theory, Structural Analysis using Geomatics, Science- Boon or Bane |

EXTRA CURRICULARS

Blood Donation: Donated blood twice in NSS Blood Donation Camp.

Class Representative: CR of a batch of 15 students.

Winner Intra-wing Chess Championship of First Floor, A-wing, Rajendra Bhawan

Convener, Industrial Trip

Participant, Not For Food

REFERENCES

Bhupendra Singh

Canteen Owner

Ravindra Bhawan

Shakti Bhai

Washerman

Radhakrishnan Bhawan

Sulemaan

Cycle Rickshaw Driver

The winds of change



In a surprise move, the administration decided to do away with two mid-terms a semester and follow the other IITs in this regard. The mid semester breaks students fondly look forward to were also done away with. Also, the senate has planned to make many academic changes such as inclusion of minors and an option to opt for IDD courses after third year. In this interview with Watchout, the *Dean of Academic Studies, Dr. Manoj Arora* explains these moves and what other changes are to be expected.

WONA : Why was the shift from two mid terms exams to one made?

DOAS : It was not a sudden decision as the students opine on it being. It was a well discussed and thought out agenda that went through the usual acceptance procedure. All departments were consulted before the decision was made. In fact, the idea was put forward the SAC itself, so all in all, it always had been a student initiative.

WONA : The decision also includes doing away with the mid semester break. What do you have to say about that?

DOAS : Students must realize that there is no such thing as free lunch. One must realize this leads to an extension of the summer break, something students found beneficial especially with respect to their internships. Also, every semester has 3-4 days holidays, which students very cleverly convert into long breaks by getting classes cancelled. These "unofficial" breaks compensate for the loss. Also, we need to have a full 14 week working semester as per government guidelines. Ergo, this blueprint came out to be most fitting and satisfying for everyone.

WONA : But changes to the academic calendar haven't resulted in longer summer vacations.

DOAS : Quite frankly, the extension of the breaks will take effect from next semester onward, because the decision was taken after the calendar was brought out. As I have mentioned before, students go for internships during semester breaks, and they need more time for the successful completion of their projects, so this structure benefits student internships especially the ones abroad. Also, faculty members go on vacations and need a good break. This comes as a boon for them too. Another very important thing is the field trips can now be accommodated during those periods so that usual classes aren't jeopardised by interruption.

WONA : There were certain changes made to rules for branch changes recently. They seem quite unclear now.

DOAS : The regulations for branch change are being reconsidered and no firm decision has been arrived at. There will however, certainly be changes in the next academic year.

WONA : The rules for procuring the highest grade in a subject has also been changed. now students deserving A+ on relative basis (who didn't get them earlier due to the 80% rule) will be awarded the grade. Has this rule been implemented?

DOAS : yes, these rules have been put into action, but students must not be affected by it as students who think they deserve good grades will get them regardless of rules. Grades should not be given as much importance as learning itself.

WONA : Sir, you mentioned that the senate will meet in the last week of April to discuss and review amendments. What exactly would be the agenda of the meeting?

DOAS : Every meeting's agenda is students' benefit because that is why we are here. We plan to bring in more flexibility for students to choose their subjects and disciplines. Various ideas have already been put forward. for example, the concept of B.Tech (Hons.) could be introduced wherein students would be given 20 extra credits to pursue courses of their choice. this means one can complete B.Tech in Electrical, say with one minor specialization in Physics. So each department is going to prepare a basket of those subjects so that the students \can choose from the options being made available. Also, IDD will be made more versatile as meritorious students can, at the end of third year, choose to pursue M.Tech and leave with a dual degree. All these points will be discussed and eventually finalized. But you can see changes only from July 2013 and most of them would be pertaining to new entrants.

Finding Captain Nemo



Few people have had the privilege of being part of IITR folklore. Captain Nemo, sometimes called Abhay Bir Singh Rana, has been a famous pirate, hacker, tutor, blogger, quizzer, web developer and a friendly bot. What he has never been, we can swear by the lines of code that went into Muzi, is just almost famous. Well, not many were surprised when during the interactive session of TEDxIITR, people swarmed him instead of the panelists.

Luckily for us, he agreed to appear in this column and gtalked with us.

WONA: We'll break from the tradition (shudders) and ask a different first question because we desperately want to know the story behind your alias.

Nemo: I was part of an Age of Empires clan in Kota. I used to play under various names, like Godfather, Eragon, and of course Harry Potter, but none of these stuck, and I was still nameless. I was like Maerad in the The Gift, looking for her true name. I brainstormed with a single-mindedness only the urge to find your true name can bring about, one night, scanning my mental repository for all that I had and read (quick as pagerank, we are sure!).

Nothing quite chimed the bells of approval in my brain as Capt. Nemo did. Captain Nemo from "20,000 Leagues under the sea", by the immortal master of Sci-Fi, Jules Verne, is someone I tried to understand the first one million times I read the book. He is a classic example of the anti-hero, neither helping nor hindering the protagonist. The name "Nemo" itself means "No One", and I felt connected to that definition somehow (I was in some sort of Ayn Rand fever at the time).

WONA: That's one mission accomplished. Now, you have earned yourself a popular image of a bot on campus. But, is there a female R2D2 we don't know about?

Nemo: Sadly, no. Well, people like to draw unfounded connections to pass the time of course. It was Nimmo they chose for that in my third year, because of the obvious similarity in our names, I suppose but it's high time I quashed any rumours you might have heard. If you insist on me coming clean about who my first crush on campus was, I would go with Krati.

WONA: As one would expect, you reached a certain level of admirable notoriety on campus with your hacking skills, in your first year itself. Care to enlighten the juniors who might not have heard of your shenanigans?

Nemo: Harshil and I were working from the Committee room in the Hobbies Club and we managed to sniff out the FTP password of Cognizance. To have some fun, we decided to mess with them. We moved ahead incredibly fast in Illushun and obviously everyone got suspicious. While we should have left at it leaving everyone miffed by climbing up the leaderboard with the speed of light, we went ahead and cleared the entire database. This really riled up the Cogni people who wrote an impressively long email to the Disciplinary Committee claiming 40k in damages. But, the gods were kind. We were let off with a fine of 20 disciplinary marks and Rs.5,000. In our defense, we were naive first yearites. If we were to do it now they won't even know what hit them. (Sure, and you thought he would be apologizing?)

WONA: For most of us, that little (mis)deed would have been the be-all-and-end-all of our purpose here. Considering we are interviewing you, have you done anything crazier?

Nemo: Once, in my first year, someone mailed the entire college from img@iitr.ernet.in saying that the next day was a holiday. Now I'm not publicly claiming to have done this but rumour mills have it that a certain someone with an army rank in his pseudonym is responsible. Let me know if you find him/her, he/she seems awesome. And, as cool as your magazine might be, there are other fruits of my work that you can't talk about.

WONA: What do you think of WONA?

Nemo: I used to read WONA cover to cover. Now, I mostly just skim through, though. (your loss, really!) I think that WONA is great at what it does, but it is lagging behind the times. I have no kind words for your web team and your website has never really amounted to much. I think you people should stop dragging yourself and really try to fly. I think it should be more than just a news magazine and become something far bigger/better than that.



75th Anniversary
Issue Special

Cryptic Dross-words

While I was sifting through possible ways to begin this article, I came across what aphorist Mason Cooley once said - "Journalism never admits that nothing much is happening". Well, I'd hope that if someone is best known for his witty aphorisms, then he'd better have said something more sensible and informed. It might be that this one was his poorest but exposing the ludicrousness of unwitting remarks or exploring a lean phase in an aphorist's life is not my intention here. Rather I would like to point out that what he said might be admittedly relatable to the team constituting an on-campus news magazine like the one you hold right now.

The words that you see arranged neatly on these pages didn't spawn themselves, not now and not once in the last 20 years. It is for that very reason that the following pages are special- They celebrate a magazine that has sustained itself for two decades for no self-evident reason. The pages you are to read when I take your leave(I do apologize for this holdup), salute that writers' block, I mean, that writers' bloc, that somehow helped in presenting these issues before you unfailingly, for an incredibly long time. You might argue that every group, according to its team, has its own specialty that the longevity of its survival only enhances, but here is one group that you have chosen to give your time to appreciating, dear reader, and we are sure, or rather hope humbly, that you already do.

"Better a good journalist than a bad assassin", Sartre said- I apologize for throwing quotes at you like a diligent school essayist, but this one was key to continuing my monologue here and to giving a reason to some of you Sartre loyalists to not tear up what you might feel is an excuse of a column. Either way, the point is there might not be any strong political purpose to batches year after year, gathering in the senate steps to discuss ideas every week, choosing some democratically before spending excessive amounts of time writing, editing, begging-for-funds and formatting to present before you what everyone, including us, end up feeling is quite similar to what we have done before , but drastically different of course.

That strikes through reason 4 stated in the popular Orwellian essay, "Why I Write". But, not entirely and not for me. My perspective of WONA and the reason for my engagement with the group, has changed over the three years but one thing that has remained constant throughout and held out the guiding lantern in my third year in the group is my respect for those who have been part of the group before me. The fact that I am lucky to be remembered in the same league as them and should do my best to justify a classification with them. But, my active involvement in the group was due, not just to the respect I had for my seniors at Watchout, but for their purpose or rather my interpretation of their purpose. Even being class representative is not in my nature, not to mention contesting elections or being in the vanguard of positive changes in the institute. But, I have giggled childishly at the thrill of fervently typing out my opinions on various campus-related issues and being convinced of the force and worth of those anonymous words. What we did try to do was decide the value of an article based on how informative the reader might find it to be.

I tried thus far to put across to you what my thoughts about the group were but never have I presumed to define the group's purpose for it. I believe that is a variable that could be a weighted average of the purposes of writing that George Orwell claims all writers fall prey to and the weights, I am sure, vary with individual batches. All I ever was one oarswoman among other rowers for a short while. Work in Watchout is honorable but not rewarding like in the other groups. A like on facebook or a friend who reads the magazine is the most you can hope for.

That's why the group needs a pat on its back and these pages filled with articles by our alumni, some of whom are in their final years, do more than just tell you tales of their lives on campus and as part of this wonderful magazine - their ideas, their eloquence and the fondness they reserve for WONA that made them write so readily when called upon cemented my affection for the group and my faith in the fact that the future batches will remember this when they see the truth in Cooley's words and admit that nothing is happening really. I enjoyed reading every one of these articles and I won't spoil anything by telling you which one is my personal favorite. I hope you are excited to read them too even if you hadn't been about the last issue or the one before that. I really do hope that this magazine is something you will always remember about R.

Thanks for everything!



Looking Back

We were in a store-like room; just not the settings I had ever seen or even pictured for a debate. It seemed difficult to summon the best of one's faculties in surroundings so demeaning for the art. Nevertheless, I was in one of those highly revered temples of intelligence. I had dreamt of being here. In anticipation of brilliance, fuelled by the abstract ideas of a higher state that my own mind could achieve from this confluence, I almost saw the heads around me radiating light. Now, in retrospect, the topics seem quite ordinary, even for my novice self of yore and the arguments- well, that's what this is about.

A coordinating senior ran around whispering topics in the teams' ears. The speakers, though, betrayed his enthusiasm. I thought they could possibly, not be sticking to the topics given to them. For, how could this forum have decided upon ones, so rudimentary as those! But, they'd been spelling out just what was allotted to them.

One of the teams argued about online social networking. They had spoken and were waiting for questions.

The freshers sat all over. In the front left corner, however, was a group, huddled together, aloof from others. Those in the front row were marking with pens and papers and I knew they were judging. But, towards the latter rows, this group trailed into a few amateurish-looking people, who

were cautiously trying to hold an air of confidence.

They looked quite like us. But, their manner politely dismissed such speculations. They had been listening intently and trying to ask the best of questions. After the online networking debate also, one of them rose excitedly. His aspect betrayed the imposed calmness of his countenance. He asked the defendant of the motion, "What if you get introduced to a senior online and start following his advice, only to realise later that he had been misguiding you?"

In the flow of the session, this argument was also received by me with reverence and great amazement, although something seemed amiss.

Next moment, the senior-most lot could be seen laughing and the question was brushed aside. The interjector sat down, seeming slightly lost, but confident of the merit of his query. What I couldn't understand was, whether the question was a deliberate joke or an ignorant blooper.

The last four years have been a mere recursion of this dilemma. But, it has left me richer in experience. Now, I can, somewhat, tell the flippant situations from the grave ones and also that, they're all the same after all.

Mrinal Tripathi
(Batch of 2013)

One Last Time

I've never been a fan of happy endings. Primarily because happy endings do not exist: whichever way you twist it, an 'ending' is bound to bring with it profound sadness and a sense of bereavement. You can't really run away from endings, because let's face it- what comes after an ending? What must lie beyond death? It's something absolutely final- the last thing you'll do.

The curious thing about life is that we die several deaths during its course, until we die no more. Leaving school, leaving college, leaving friends, burying pets and mourning family members; everything leaves us broken, pale shadows of our former selves, only getting paler with each successive 'death'. To put a clichéd but

necessarily cheerful glint to it: you die, but you are reborn to commence a new life, only (here endeth the cheer) with the caveat that it will inevitably end exactly the same way as this did- in tears and loneliness.

I shudder to think how much Roorkee and its inhabitants have changed while I've been gone. I go back to the place every night- every single night- and it's always the same. I'm sitting with my friends on the banks of Solani. I'm devouring the chicken at Baadshah. I'm plotting my escape out of a particularly boring lecture. I'm wandering aimlessly around the sun-kissed streets of the campus I won't be forgetting in a hurry. Of course, that's not how it must be now: the

cooks at Baadshah may have been replaced, the authorities may finally have demolished the aqueduct and there may not be, in general, a single face I'd recognise while roaming the streets.

In my dreams, I'm answering quiz questions or lamenting the fact that I don't know the answer to a quiz question or indeed, sharing the joy of winning a quiz with my beloved teammates. In my dreams, I'm looking up in wonder at the Watch Out chairman and I'm flicking through the pages of a printed issue with pride and I'm urging the kids for ideas of the kind that change the world. In my dreams, I'm still wondering if Lit. Sec. could get a room of its own or if Watch Out could overthrow the Administration and take over the campus. In my dreams.. I never left Roorkee.

I may not remember these 4 years after, say, 20 more years have passed. The laminated degree lost somewhere inside my drawers would probably be the only remnant of the time. There would be many more deaths and many more goodbyes to shed tears over by then. But today, as of this moment, there is nothing I miss more. I would give up all the gold and all the silver in the world if I could go back to R for one last evening. For one last bakar session, for one last Watch Out meeting, for one last quiz, for one last glance at the pretty face that I miss. For one last time, to feel like nothing's changed.

Arun Kumar
(Batch of 2012)

Paranoid Android

In the course of human history many have tried, and failed, to describe life. Indeed, it cannot be described in a hundred million words, let alone a thousand. Many have had the audacity to try and have, in their own fields, achieved a measure of success but none have truly succeeded. I intend not to try the feat, but I do intend to describe a small part thereof to the best of my abilities.

It's that time of the year and the end of the twenty second year of my life draws close as does the end of my fourth and final year at R-land. Nostalgia threatens to overwhelm and this got me thinking about one of the basic tenets of life, continuity. Or, in other words, legacy. I sometimes wonder whether the concept of continuity has been hard-coded into our genes. Everything we do, or everything we want to do seems to be in aid of continuity and legacy. The worth of a human is usually measured in the legacy s/he leaves behind. Like the protagonist says in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, everything is in aid of the "brats you spawn to replace yourself". Nothing is appreciable at face value, instead we are stuck ascribing future value to each and every action we take. Quite a grim and dark outlook on life to be sure, but true nonetheless.

Thinking about the future sometimes threatens to engulf and suffocate me. College life, then what? A job? Then what? What about marriage and children? How does that happen? Am I expected to provide for them? What about my parents' expectations? What will my pay

package be? Is It enough? What if I lose my job? Are my parents happy? Will my children? Are these questions even supposed to pop up in my head now? Too many questions all at once, and the suffocation builds. No wonder it's easier to be mired in nostalgia, thinking of days past, the good memories mixed with the bitter and the bittersweet. But one does tend to think of legacy and what they leave behind for the generations to come. In the end, we all fight simply to be remembered. I'm not talking about something as base as fame (or infamy) but simply an imprint, a memory, in people's minds. For what would we be without such memories? Invisible, not physically, but invisible because people refuse to see you (Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*).

So, what is my legacy? What is it that I will be remembered for? Nothing comes to mind. No claims to fame, no claims to infamy either. Neither have I (unlike my more illustrious batch mates) scored a perfect 10 in any semester, nor have I (again, unlike my more illustrious batch mates) ever relieved myself in front of the girl's hostel in a heart-broken, alcoholic rage. Neither have I ever been a big-shot in either of the college fests, nor have I ever been caught growing illegal plant life in my hostel. The doubts creep in. Was I even liked in the small group that I maintained? Was I like one of those people I often ridiculed, so lost within themselves, they can no longer figure out who they are? "No, no" claims a small voice in my head, drowned out

by a chorus of “Shut up!”s and a lone voice asking for directions to the restroom.

Thinking back, these last four years are peppered with tiny moments, sparks. Walking to Lipton on a cold winter night to drink disgustingly watered down soup from plastic cups. Cold drinks at Alpahar in the heat of a summer's day. Beverages (of unclear provenance) enjoyed to the accompaniment of, in equal parts, Hindi dance tracks and Pink Floyd. Arguing with the Quizmaster at the weekly quiz, even though you know you're wrong. Laughing with friends at the senate steps week in, week out on the pretext of a “meeting”. The sheer absurdity of seeing someone download “The Making of Cocktail – The Movie” from the CC. One last trip to Goa, a last huzzah, one last moment of freedom before we transition from one skin to another. Sounds so clichéd, but the most important moments seem to be the little things in life. The tiniest of moments that take your breath away as you let the memories wash over you, slowly building up a flood,

nay, a veritable deluge. My legacy, I realize, is the gifts I have given myself. A skein of memories to last me a lifetime, and yet it seems so... paltry. And here we come across another enduring tenet of life, greed. Chugging memories down like mild beer, consuming more and more until all you can do is drown in self-pity and regret. Take a step back, I say. Take a step back and savour each one. Value each memory for its own worth; do not compare, do not judge, for each one of these memories is what has built you. Do not discard them, keep them safe. Lock them down, learn from them. Then move on, with a smile on your face and the wind in your hair (well, at least one of the two).

Now that you've read the rants of a half-crazed fourth yearite desperately trying to cling on to what little time he has left on campus, you have a pretty good idea of what's going to happen to yourself in the near future. Beware. And May The Force Be With You.

Vignesh Ramani
(Batch of 2013)

There and back again

On 14th November 2009, at close to 1400 hours, Lefty became an engineer. The Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, with the power vested in it by the senate, and by its recommendations, declared me one. Fully decked in the quintessential graduate attire- robes, cap, sash; under the gaze of perhaps the most respected and accomplished engineer in India- E. Sreedharan, I was handed my B.Tech. Several moments later, along with over 250 of my batchmates, the Engineer's oath was taken. Somewhere along this entire ceremony two decades of my life. And for those infinitesimally few seconds as I accepted my degree and walked down, with Mamma, Papa, Chacha and Dadi intently watching, I did feel that with each step that I took, strides were made into another era, into another stage of my life. E.R.- two letters that no one can take away.

Back in Mech 254, most familiarity, an attitude of flippancy and frivolity was replaced by feelings of immense joy and unmistakable pride. True, this was not one small step for man one giant leap for mankind. True, better and more deserving hands have accepted the same degree and shall continue to do so. And most importantly, true that the attitude of flippancy and

frivolity came rushing back moments after the ceremonial hats had been joyfully tossed once the last dregs of nauseating formality had left the hall. Yet, this was a Moment in time and some unfamiliar faces in front of me. A blackboard showcasing different languages of India (and some imaginary ones, Klingon being conspicuous by absence) all saying one word- the word that is not right- behind me. The encore had begun. I still believe I could never have asked for a better last bow, but this was a quiz to remember too. Dela proved, more than once, how my faith in him was never unjustified. Murty had some amazing cracks and didn't disappoint on the ones I'd hoped he wouldn't, yet another reminder how any hopes that I have from that particular trio can never be high enough. The Silent Assassin spoke little, but spoke exceedingly brilliant. And all this while, Ahuja, Raka and co. slowly but surely inched towards their first first. The joy on their faces was palpable, and increasingly reminiscent of that night in April more than 2 years ago, when a certain dinosaur and southpaw had celebrated after finally overcoming the final frontier. Vinu was the quizmaster then, and that was somehow comforting.

Some 40 minutes on my stairway to heaven. Constantly surrounded by ghosts of my past. So many good times came flooding back. The wisecracks would never be the same, the camaraderie had changed forever. This was an orchestra I didn't belong too- there was no Khandu, Shrey, SriP, Midha or Sarthak with me. As I blabbered incoherently, visions of the past would keep flashing by. Baadshah, thank God, made sure I concentrated on only one thing, and on its part concentrated on satisfying only one sense. Changezi, Afghani, fried, none of my demanding taste-buds was left complaining.

An evening like so many at Nesci. Sumedh and Aato on my left. Mittal and Boki on my right. 4 of us keeping up a charade for the benefit of the 5th. A charade that had been so comically and mutually discovered only moments ago. Aimlessly shifting the conversation from this to that, all in an attempt to remain rooted to the spot during those ever lengthening minutes. The black Pajero arrived, and out emerged that familiar lovable silhouette. Google maps tells me that 4136 miles need to be traversed to come from London to R and Sajji had

traversed each of them to answer the call that he decided could just not be kept waiting. The hugs and greetings fell woefully short of describing the happiness that that moment held, and trying to put it in words would be the most futile exercise I've ever undertaken. I'll just say Euphoria and carry on.

Random moments from 4 days just gone by. Random reminders of 4 years that flew past. So much happened over the weekend, yet so little now that I look back. I had planned to go back, it transpired that I had never left. I wish I could claim to be the first to make this profound statement, but I have to accept that a certain balding pot-bellied best-selling author did make an observation along similar lines. There's a lock on G-81 but some things can just not be locked in or out. Physical absence notwithstanding, a chunk of the 20 grams of Lefty's soul flits around from corner to corner at a spot 172 kms from the Capital of India. 25 years later, when I finally go back, perhaps I'll take it away.

Saagar Sinha
(Batch of 2009)

Happy Twentieth

I turned twenty in a dingy Azad room four forgettable summers ago. It was one of those desolate what-the-hell-am-I-doing-with-my-life birthdays that seem to be the norm on the wrong side of your teens- any excitement I felt about soon becoming the Editor-in-Chief of Watch Out was amply offset by the inescapable ennui that comes with being a 3rd year Electrical Engineering student. I didn't know it then, but it would turn out to be a year of resignation- it was in my twentieth year that I admitted that the odds of me realizing my career goal of becoming an astronaut (with 'Premier League footballer' as my backup option) were fairly slim. At some point amidst the endless cups of coffee at Nesci and the jaunts up and down Thomason Marg, I had shruggingly come to terms with a life of obscurity and purposelessness.

But purpose is a funny thing. In the three years of Watch Out's incredible journey that I was witness to, we wrote about the need for WiFi a year before the first router was installed in Ravindra Bhavan; we had a cover story on the lack of student-professor interaction on campus shortly before most department societies took

up the issue, we ranted and whined about the food in the messes until...well, alright, not all our articles were roaring successes. I'm fairly certain even the 10 PM female curfew has stood the tests of time and common sense. Nevertheless, we wrote. We wrote in the blind faith that our articles would somehow make the insti a better place, that it was our constant bickering that had brought about the aforementioned changes, blissfully ignorant of the post hoc, ergo propter hoc fallacy. Would those changes have happened just as well even without us? Did our rants make even a jot of difference?

Does the answer even matter?

Twenty is the time most men embrace the limitations of human action and accept the fact that our lives seldom amount to anything at all. A magazine, thankfully, doesn't have to be held back by that sort of cynicism. Or so I hope.

Happy twentieth.

Abhishek Sundar
(Batch of 2010)

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious once again

The moment the current batch of WONA asked me to write a guest column for the 20th year anniversary issue, I instinctively knew that I was given this honour solely because of the immense respect, admiration and popularity I enjoy with this group and the fact that the writer chosen to replace the writer who'd cancelled, had also cancelled. Still, it is moments like these that take me back to that fateful day four years ago when through an effective combination of articulate oratory, jovial coaxing and a few light-hearted thumps on my head, I was made to leave my room and attend the intro talk of the official on-campus news magazine. Being an informed and erudite person who spends hours poring over newspapers and scouring the internet especially at the mention of the words 'wardrobe malfunction' or 'leaked MMS scandal', I was quick to realize that this was indeed the ideal group for me. It was right there then, as I listened to the impassioned speech of the members beckoning us to join them and be the voice of change and dissent that I, in a moment of impulsive whim, decided to go back to my room and sleep for a few more hours. But the fear of further skull damage kept me there and I participated in their grilling selection process which involved tricky literary tasks such as naming any three novels not written by chetan bhagat etc.

Four years have passed since then, three of which I have spent with one of the brightest, coolest, most dedicated groups on campus – my AOE gaming clan. But WONA wasn't far behind either. Every endeavour of ours, whether it was the quarterly magazine issue, the Thomso newsletter or the e-mag, was the result of several days of painstaking hard work, dogged determination and patient persistence in searching for the right websites from where we could reproduce articles in our magazine without worrying about

copyright disputes. Not all our ideas got the appreciation we had hoped for. Oftentimes, we were bombarded with angry responses from doubtful critics who questioned the veracity of our articles. Having been the chief editor of this magazine and having pulled one too many all-nighters with the group, I can assure you that any piece of information, however ludicrous it may have seemed, was published in the mag if and only if:

It came from a credible source, and by credible source I mean anyone who could validate his claims with substantial proof or by saying 'Motherpromise' at least three times without crossing his fingers.

Someone from high up the administration hierarchy sanctioned us to do so.

Our intrepid reporters carried out bold interviews and unearthed inside information.

Time and again, we were at the receiving end of considerable criticism from the junta in the form of disapproving looks, hate mail, decapitated animal heads in our drawers etc. Quite often, we were accused of being elitist. And by elitist, I mean chetan bhagat hating, scrabble playing freaks who bandy about words like supercalifragilisticexpialidocious and hippopotomonstrosesquipedalian in their daily conversations. And by accused, I mean looked up to in awe and a fair little bit of envy. Yes, we've had our share of critics. But for the most part, WONA has been the news magazine IITR deserves, and also the one it needs. Which is why sixty years down the line, WONA will hold a special place in my heart as I'm regaling my grandkids with stories from my life, before as is inevitable, they place a choke hold on me and beat me to death with my own walking stick.

Varun Arasu
(Batch of 2014)

The R days

There are friends and then there is family. While you get to choose your friends, family is definitely not optional. Ever since I was a kid, I have been extremely careful while choosing who to befriend. Parental pressure and advice always played a big part. As a kid often certain friendships were struck purely on the basis of the

parameters dictated by controlling parents. There would often be dictums like "strike a friendship with the topper of the class", "you cannot befriend any of the naughty boys, you too will get spoilt", "Beta only if you stay with intelligent kids only, will you also become intelligent" and what not.

Weird therefore was the experience when on my very first day in IIT Roorkee, a stranger entered my room and declared himself as my new friend, no questions asked!! The exact dimensions of the deal soon emerged as everything that I owned was automatically declared 'common hostel property' much to my indignation and horror. My laptop, one of the few such pieces in the hostel was rarely in my own room. (In those days few people entered Roorkee with a laptop in hand. The situation I am guessing is starkly different these days) Often I had to comb through half the hostel to recover it. Rare would be the occasion when I would get to taste any edibles brought over from home. The horror as I defined it then lasted for another six months. After that I just got used to it.

It took me another six months to realize that the bond thus forged ran both ways. I had hoped to make a fresh set of friends while entering IIT Roorkee, what I ended up with could be better described as family. We did not share high GPA's or a common taste in sports or music but I was able to share my deepest fears and secrets with my friends in Roorkee. Once when I was asked to list my strengths and weaknesses for some form, all I had to do was to call all my neighbors and pretty soon a late night bakar session was in motion with all those attending happily chipping with the worst of my qualities till date!! They were also my greatest critiques, chiding me openly and bluntly whenever I would act haughty or mean. And of course the refrain a friend in need is a friend indeed was often put to test. We stood by each other during exams, diseases and fest brawls (the three things that seem to happen most frequently in Roorkee). I remember the case of one of my first year juniors who messed up her entire end term in order to stay by her roommate's bedside in the infamous institute hospital.

The best part of these friendships was that they outlasted our stay in Roorkee and it is only now that I realize the true worth of the friends that I made there. Once you set your foot outside the campus, the entire world and its ethics go for a spin. Everyone behaves in a diplomatic and appropriate manner. Any concern shown for you runs just surface deep and it is in these circumstances that you come to rely on your Roorkee

friends the most. These are the places where you can barge in unannounced in the middle of the night stone drunk with few heckles being raised. They continue to provide you with moral as well as financial support (I know of several cases where people have taken the plunge into vocations of their choice, even social causes with the financial support of their friends in Roorkee. Why even Kejriwal often turns to his Kgp friends to provide his bail guarantees!).

One of my beliefs was that while the corporate world is understandably different, things while pursuing higher studies would seem relatively familiar. That belief too stands shattered as I study in an IIM and continue to depend on my fellow Roorkee students there when in need. It is not that you do not develop new friendships but that these friendships do have their limitations and there is no family like trust that you are able to nurture the way one does in Roorkee (For one I can guarantee that there would not be even one soul on campus who would stake his examinations no matter how minor for sitting by my bedside in any hospital!! Why, the very thought seems abomination when put in the IIM context.) Once outside the scene is quite often every man for himself with friendships there for mutual benefit and no one willing to sacrifice even an inch of their own interests for others. Compromises are often the toughest of tasks, as opposed to being the order of the day, as they were in Roorkee. One can think of several incidents like pre-exam pacts and practicals and projects where the entire batch would reap one man's harvest!)

By now I guess the message would have gone across that the most precious thing that you can get out of IIT Roorkee are your friends. Sorry for sermonizing but I do pity several of my batch mates now who spent their four years shut inside a room studying or playing plain dirty politics (hiding class notes and refusing to help other students in exam time). They may have landed themselves great jobs and awesome CGPA's but I believe that they missed the entire point of being in Roorkee.

Piyush Tariyal
(Batch of 2011)

Issues over the years



Oct-Nov 2004

'Just study for these two years and get into IIT', our parents had told us. 'Your life will be made'. And so we bunked school, joined coaching classes that were a million miles away from home, spent our teens in darkened classrooms while our friends were out having the time of their life in the autumn sunshine...and finally made it here. Welcome to IIT! Relative Grading hit us on the nose and we were back to where we started. Mug, mug and mug some more- After all, it's your career at stake here. There was a new GPA based caste system now. Convenient labels were chosen... 'Chaggi', '6-pointer'...till the label came to define the individual. And although popular perception put the chaggis at the bottom of IIT's unique feudal structure...they still remain a beacon of hope; for all those who believe life is not just about a good GPA.

Five years are about to pass since UOR became IITR. We can crib, complain, cry or curse, but we still love the insti. Correction, our insti. For let's face it, as the song goes, "These are the best days of our lives." Be it cruising down the DOMS slope with the wind rushing through the ears and LBS flashing by or sitting at Nesci and eyeing the rare cheese, that feeling of – "This is my college, this is where I belong" is something else. Something that gives us a high no White Mischief or Classic can ever compete with. There are students here from all parts of the country and they're all loving it. We've got optimists, introverts, ghissus and girls, and they're all loving it. We've got UG's and PG's and RS's and Profs, and even they're all loving it. So this time we set out to find out – what is it in the insti that appeals to the different 'varieties'?



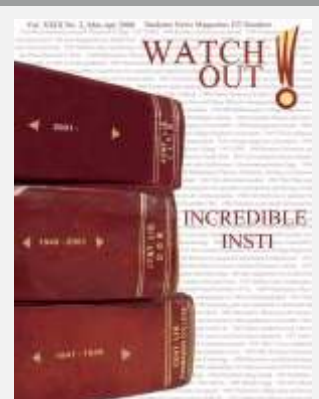
Aug-Sep 2006



Jan-Feb 2007

We seem to be living in our own shells, not even aware of the benefits of amicable student-professor relations. It has become all too easy to forget that the idea of a residential institute is to allow for such relationships to flower and thus help in the making of a fonder four years of undergraduate study. The faculty and student body have become too sundered to allow us to imagine that the professor teaching that dreaded 4 credit course might actually be a benign soul sharing the same interests as any of us whipper snappers. In fact, the situation is so dire, that any student who gets too close to a faculty member is generally shunned by his or her peers because it is seemingly 'uncool' to have a prof for a good friend. The other side of this great void is equally clueless and indifferent in most cases.

Adam's hill, the year 1847. A certain knight of the British Empire decided that to provide for the country in terms of the multitude of public works officers that would be necessary, a centre for Civil Engineering needed to be set up in India. This idea was taken up by the then Lt-Governor of the Empire in India. The aforesaid knight was later charged with treason for "empowering natives." He was during his lifetime, publicly censured in the columns of 'The Times'. The institute which he envisioned did in fact empower a lot of us "natives" and continues to do so even to this day. For the knight in question was none other than Sir Proby T. Cautley (let's hear it from the gaon-wale!) And the Lieutenant General who did most of the ground work was Lord James Thomason. Today, Adam's hill is better known as Main Building, IITR.



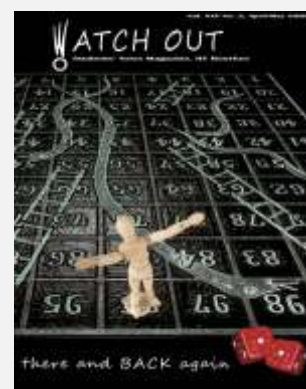
Mar-Apr 2008



Oct-Nov 2008

For 15 years, we have cribbed, complained and whined incessantly. We have stood by the students' cause all the time and have offered solutions par excellence. This has been possible largely because we looked at these issues through the students' eyes. However, in order to have a complete perspective of the prevailing conditions, we have decided to put ourselves in a different standpoint – one we haven't tried so far. This issue we have taken the views of the professors on life, the insti and everything. We take the liberty of delving deeper into hitherto unexplored realms – the lives and views of the educators of IITR. IITR boasts of a distinguished faculty from every nook and corner of the country. Many studied in this very institute while others still chose to graduate abroad. Yet, their lifestyle and views on most issues converge.

Like most things in this world, Backs were introduced for a noble cause. Its purpose – To ensure that every person who passes through the hallowed portals of this institute is qualified enough to uphold the insti's reputation; to certify, not only, that the quality of a JEE qualifier isn't compromised, but also that there is a constant value addition (what?) over the years. However with the course of time, this very aim stands forgotten and backs are now nothing more than an endless pit with no escape. A student, who is unfortunate enough to encounter this trap once, is forever doomed to this vicious circle, pulled endlessly into its darkest abyss. This should then mean that clearing an arrear not only serves its purpose (to aid the students' better understanding of a subject) but also makes life a lot easier as it fetches you better grades.... Nothing however can be farther from the truth.



Apr-May 2009



Oct-Dec 2010

...It's difficult to say, but one thing is for sure- fundamental human values, ethics and morals, all matter two hoots to human beings in this age. It is a fact painfully visible in a society where fake certificates and financial prowess contrive to rob some deserving person of a college seat. The scourge of unscrupulousness hasn't spared our insti either. Whether it is cheating in exams, producing falsifications to obtain scholarships or espousing various social vices, the students are treading down the inglorious path. But do they care? Watch Out makes an attempt to highlight some of the evils and unethical practices that plague the campus today, and search, mostly in vain, for a potent solution to the same.

The first Indian Institute of Technology was founded in May 1950 at the site of the Hijli Detention Camp in Kharagpur. On September 15, 1956, the Parliament of India passed the IIT Act, declaring it as an Institute of National Importance, consequently making these institutes the official Mecca of Indian intellect. As many would like to put it, there is something about an IITian that acts as a differential due to which he is assumed to be more competent. For reasons myriad, allegations of mediocrity notwithstanding, brand IIT represents a set of vibrant individuals who make it big in their lives. Promises by each and every section aside, life on campus itself grooms our character and makes us better equipped to face the challenges the outside world has to hurl at us. WONA attempts to unravel the mystery surrounding what goes into making a global forerunner out of a laid back insomniac. What makes the Brand IIT?



Nov-Dec 2011

Team WONA

