



Stephania

St. Stephen's College Alumni Newsletter

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A DIGITAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR PVT. CIRCULATION ONLY

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"Where there's a will, there is a way". This was something I learnt as a child and has stayed with me ever since. This line assumes even greater significance as I write the Editorial for Stephania 132 years after St Stephens college was established and thirty years after I graduated from college. The ground work for this publication began over a year ago and even at that stage we were aware that this project would have its share of challenges, but the sheer thought of having our very own publication was what had us digging our heels in and getting on with the job at hand!

Social media has played a key role in getting Stephanians together from all over the world on a number of platforms. While college has had its own website for some time now, the Principal, Rev. Valson Thampu, has provided us with the opportunity to come out with our first Quarterly digital newsletter. This is just the beginning and I'm positive that we will grow in many ways and directions, but having started, I'm equally positive that we will have the support of alumni from all over the globe. For instance, I've been living in Oman for the last twenty two years, but feel as connected with India, Delhi and college as most of you living there.

'Alma Mater, or 'nourishing mother' is a great bonding factor and one that deserves the greatest possible respect and loyalty. On a personal note, I was in Class 8 at Sophia Convent, Meerut when I learnt that St. Stephens College had re-opened it's doors to women. My mind was made up immediately and I informed my parents that I too would love to join St. Stephens. Time passed, we moved to Delhi and I joined the Convent of Jesus and Mary. But the dream remained and I converted it into a goal that I had to achieve. I was the first batch in Delhi to sit for the Class 12 CBSE exams (1979) and shortly after the results were declared, I sent in my application. As it happened, I was called for the interview and my 'dream' came true. Those three memorable years that I spent in college are what drive me to 'give back' something in the very real sense and that is why I believe in what we are setting out to do.

Some of you would recall that we had over 10 days of voting on the college FB board, 'Laal Sitara' with Stephania emerging as the clear winner. Many thanks to Prasanto K Roy for arranging the voting as well as the Questionnaire asking the alumni to indicate their particular interest areas-writing, editing, design, production, sourcing content and funding. Our requirements for all these are still open and you are welcome to tell us how you can help as we need all that you can give and then some!

India is a democracy which guarantees all its citizens the fundamental right to freedom of speech, but along with freedom comes a share of personal responsibility. Con't...

Inside



The Placement Pros -
The St Stephen's Campus Placement Cell is entirely run and managed by students

The Elitism of Merit By Dr Shashi Tharoor

Editorial Team

Editor > Sunaina Serna Ahluwalia

Editorial Consultants>

Prasanto K Roy

Rohit Bansal

Nalin Sharma

Design &

Masthead Concept > Griselda Karen Araujo

If you differ in your opinions, the way to move forward is by ongoing and constructive dialogue. Reach out to your 'alma mater' and you will be pleasantly surprised at what can be achieved. A small beginning would be to visit the college on a regular basis, not merely when invited for a function and see all that has changed and grown since you were there last.

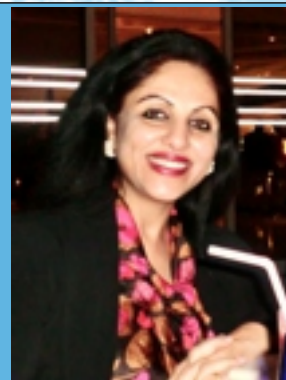
No publication can be brought out without a core group of people. In addition to Rev Valson Thampu, our core group comprises of Prasanto K Roy, Rohit Bansal and Nalin Sharma as Editorial consultants. The layout and design of Stephanian have been done 'gratis' by Muscat based Griselda Karen Araujo who I have had the pleasure of knowing since she was a very young girl.

I would also like to say a very special thank you to Dr Sanjay Saigal in California (who also heads the St Stephen's Institute for Management Excellence), and Srikanth Raja Gopalan in Delhi. And finally, to all our contributors for the first issue, it's been great to receive your work and we hope that you will feel the same sense of pride that we do.

On the 15th of December, we lost Prof Mohammed Amin (Amin Sa'ab) who was one of the strongest pillars and guiding lights of St Stephen's College. Having had the privilege of being taught by him, I contacted him while putting together this volume of Stephanian. When I finally got his residence number and spoke to him from Muscat, I was touched by the fact that he remembered me and enquired about my life today very affectionately. Sadly though, he informed me that he wasn't keeping well, "Tabiyat kuch nassaz rahti hai" and that he wouldn't be able to send in something for this issue, but would try to write a small piece for the next. That wasn't meant to be, but we salute him and will always remember the values and love for history that he awakened in all of us.

I'd like to close with one of my all time favourite quotes by Helen Rowland, "You will never win if you never begin." On that note, it gives me immense pleasure to present the first edition of Stephanian and look forward to hearing from you.

Ad Dei Gloriam



Long time Oman resident, Sunaina Serna Ahluwalia is an author, photographer and communications consultant. After studying History at St. Stephens College, Delhi University, she went on to the Indian Institute of Mass Communications, New Delhi to specialize in Advertising and Public Relations.

Sunaina has been keenly interested in Radio and Television and has worked in both over the years. She also writes features and articles for various publications and is involved with numerous women's related issues.

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President's Note Harnessing the Alumni Potential

Fellow Stephanians,

St Stephen's College, our Alma Mater, provides a unique bonding among all of us. Having spent three or more years in College, we have moved on in our lives and careers. Stephanians have excelled in their fields: bureaucracy, industry, corporate sector, judiciary, the armed forces, and many more.

Despite the fact that Stephanians have made a mark for themselves globally, the sad reality is that St Stephen's College itself has neither expanded nor grown. In fact in the case of Economics (Hons) we have "de-grown" from two sections to one. To my great dismay I found that an aspirant for Economics (Hons) with an aggregate score of 97% could not get admitted because of the paucity of seats.

This is not a solitary case. There are many others with commendable all-

round CVs, who are denied admission. We seriously need to ponder over this as St Stephen's may be missing out on many such deserving students, and this is ultimately a loss for College.

Can the Alumni can play a part in ensuring that College continues to grow? We can. In fact, we must. Each one of us can contribute in our own way to the growth of the College. This contribution need not always be in kind. Vision 2050, as envisaged during the principalship of Rev Valson Thampu, has a special role for the alumni. It enables us to assist our College upgrade not only in terms of the infrastructure, but also ensures the pursuit of excellence, by providing stipends, freeships and scholarships.

The St Stephen's Alumni Foundation has been formed and registered as a Trust Its objective is the growth of infrastructure and excellence of education in College. The teething troubles of the Trust--registration, opening of accounts and other legal formalities--are now almost over. A beginning has been made by contribution from the Alumni. Upgrading and renovation of the assembly hall is to be

taken up. All contributors and donors would also be involved in the project in order to give them a sense of participation and satisfaction.

There is tremendous potential for alumni contribution in the growth of the College. It only needs to be harnessed. It is now time all that Stephanians come together for this noble cause, rather than dissipating their energy on matters which are less significant. There is enough space for all Stephanians to come together for this noble mission.

Ad Dei Gloriam.



Justice Manmohan Sarin, president of the St Stephen's Alumni Foundation, is a former Delhi High Court Judge who is the current Lokayukta for New Delhi

Principal's Note

A Foundation of Fullness

Congrats to Sunaina and her team. Who else could have mid-wifed this Newsletter to nativity?

Stephania is a symbol. A symbol of re-engagement of Stephanians with their Alma Mater. And of our bonding and sense of belonging together as a dispersed academic family of great distinction.

The alumni are the public face of the College. Their love and loyalty to the College is sincere and spontaneous. Yet, between the intention and the effect, as Eliot laments, falls the shadow. The fullness of a glorious connect eludes us.

Seeking fullness is the insignia of the human. We thirst for the fullness that eludes us, almost always. Joy is the by-product of experiencing fullness in any form. A sentence constructed perfectly, an idea articulated in its shining wholeness, a magic dribble ending in a magnificent goal, a cricket shot timed perfectly or caressed delicately to the desired destination: these, and many more, activate ecstasy simply because they put us in touch with fullness. There is no greatness without fullness. Imagine a Gandhi or a Mother Teresa who pursued what they did half-heartedly!

The time has come to establish the alumni-Alma Mater relationship on the foundation of fullness. This has never been the case, though not to anybody's fault. Anything in less than the fullness of its scope is its own caricature...

Fullness expresses itself as fruitfulness. Fruitfulness is an overflow of the self towards meeting needs. A relationship that is sporadic and systemically indifferent to reciprocal needs condemns itself to the bankruptcy of partialness.

Our alumni today are engaged with the College to an unprecedented extent. That is so, both in quality and quantity. The College is substantially richer for it. The extensive renovation of key high-utility facilities in the College – the class rooms in the

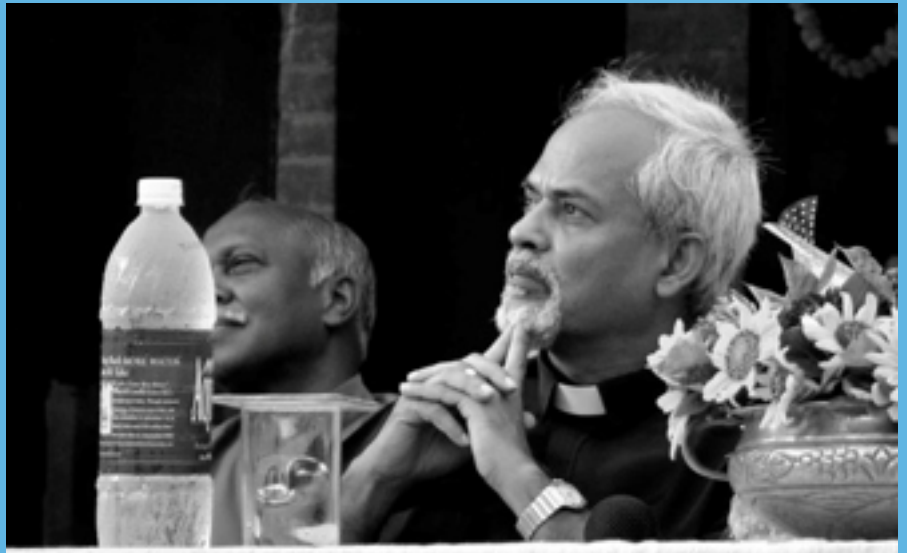


Photo: Ayush Kant Datta

Rev. Valson Thampu

academic block, air-conditioning them as well as the library, café, the JCR, the LCR, the SCR, the Science Dhaba, the Chapel, the pavements, and so on - could not have happened, but for the alumni. Some Stephanians administer add-on courses. Several of them have addressed the morning assembly, delivered special lectures in the College, mentored and motivated Junior Members, extended financial support to the needy among them and worked tirelessly on evolving the Master Plan for the College, as never before. Arguably, the recent years have been the silver era of the alumni engagement with the College. The golden era must now begin.

Given that, it is only natural that an Alumni Trust has been registered with Justice Manmohan Sarin, Lokayukta of Delhi, as President, and Dr S Y Quraishi as Vice President. Bobby Kewalramani is the Secretary, Diljeet Titus, the Treasurer and Rohit Bansal, the Associate Secretary with special responsibility for the media and programme coordination. The Alumni Trust – the St Stephen's Alumni Foundation being its full name - is envisaged to be a transparent instrument to facilitate the focused and purposive participation of the alumni in serving and stewarding the College in partnership with other stakeholders, especially the Governing Body of the College.

Stephania has sprouted in the green house of the Alumni Trust.

We now have a medium for staying in closer touch. Togetherness is the banquet of life. I urge and invite all Stephanians to come by and spend time on the campus that all of us love beyond measure. Every effort is being made to keep the campus as green and beautiful as possible. I invite those among the alumni, who have a special gift in this respect and live feasibly close to the campus, to lend their time and know-how in making the campus a thing of beauty. Let us benchmark higher education in every respect, even including the sensitivity to nature that education needs to nurture.

By the way, the College gymnasium is now well-equipped. I shall be happy to let the alumni use this facility on Sundays, provided there are enough users to make such a scheme viable. We can get together on Sunday mornings, have our workouts, and graduate towards breakfast in the café. All of these have to be, however, additional arrangements.

I look forward to the Stephania becoming a household name among us. And I wish you the joy of reading this newsletter and sharing it with your children and grandchildren. (Share it, in particular, with your spouses, if they are non-Stephanians! Your stock will surely go up, if there is any further scope for it.) The Editorial team has worked hard to make this a worthwhile acquisition for all of us.

Ad Dei Gloriam



Photo : Sourced from Laal Sitara and College Archives



Photo : Sourced from Laal Sitara and College Archives

Stephania: Vision 2050

By Bobby Kewalramani

Our alma mater, St. Stephen's College, has played a vital role in our lives. It has nurtured and guided us through our impressionable years and been more than just a college to us.

There comes a day when your alma mater looks up at you, to play a pivotal role in ensuring that it continues to maintain world-class standards of education to benefit future generations of Stephanians, and the country.

We, the alumni, can today play a decisive role in ensuring that our college continues to be the top-ranked educational institution it is today.

'Vision 2050', as envisaged by Principal Thampu, has a special role for the alumni. We have to assist our college upgrade not just the infrastructure but also the intellectual capacity of the students by whatever means of contribution, either financially or by devoting a little time from our packed schedules.

The upgraded infrastructure will not only help the college increase its student strength from the present 1,200 to 4,000, but also attract the brightest faculty members and research assistants from across the globe.

We should also come together to help the college provide stipends, freships, and scholarships to realise its dream to be a model deemed university within the next few years.

Our College's biggest strength is our collective experience and excellence in varied fields such as economics, management, bureaucracy, science and media.

We need to share our strengths with the current and future generations of the College to ensure that this rich 130-plus-year tradition continues to glow brightly and spread the light even in the distant future.



Bobby Kewalramani, co-founder of Perfect Relations, a Delhi-based image-management consultancy, is Secretary of the St Stephen's College Alumni Trust



Photo : Sourced from Laal Sitara and College Archives

The Elitism of Merit

By Dr Shashi Tharoor

The editor's invitation to look back on my years at St Stephen's College raises one awkward consideration at the very outset. After all, what does the very name "St Stephen's" convey to outsiders? Let's face it: to non-Stephanians, the term "St Stephen's" conjures up three overlapping concepts, none of which is meant to be flattering -- elitism, Anglophilia and deracination. One is obliged to confront this stereotype head on.

When I was given the rare privilege of delivering the 125th Anniversary Golden Jubilee Lecture at the College (the 100th anniversary had featured another old boy, Pakistan's then President Zia ul-Haq), I was able to take for granted that few in the audience (which included serving and former Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors and Generals, not to mention the assorted CEO and cricket star) would contest that there is a spirit that can be called Stephanian: most of us had spent three or five years living in and celebrating it. Stephanian was both an ethos and a condition to which we aspired. Elitism -- an elitism of merit, not birth -- was part of it, but by no means the whole.

In any case "Mission College"'s elitism was still elitism in an Indian context, albeit one shaped, like so many Indian institutions, by a colonial legacy. There is no denying that the aim of the Cambridge Brotherhood in founding St Stephen's in 1881 was to produce more obedient subjects to serve Her Britannic Majesty; their idea of constructive missionary activity was to bring the intellectual and social atmosphere of Camside to the dry dustplains of Delhi. Improbably enough, they succeeded, and the resultant hybrid outlasted the Raj.

The St Stephen's I knew in the early 1970s was an institution whose students sustained a Shakespeare Society and a Criterion Club, and organized Union Debates on such subjects as "In the opinion of this House the opinion of this House does not matter". We staged plays and wrote poetry, ran India's only faculty-sanctioned Practical Joke Competition (in

memory of P.G. Wodehouse's irrepressible Lord Ickenham), and invented the "Winter Festival" of collegiate cultural competition which was imitated at universities across the country. If that sounds deplorably effete, we invariably reached the annual inter-college cricket final, and turned up in large numbers to cheer the Stephanian cricketers on to their accustomed victory. (One of my few worthwhile innovations as President of the Union, aside from improving the mess food, was to supply throat lozenges free of charge to the more raucous of our cheerleaders at the cricket final. I am told this is one more Stephanian tradition that, along with our cricket team, has bitten the dust.) We maintained a careful distinction between the Junior Common Room and the Senior Combination Room, and allowed the world's only non-Cantabridgian "gyps" to serve our meals and make our beds. And if the punts never came to the Jamuna, the puns flowed on the pages of Kooler Talk (known to Stephanians as "KT", or "Katie") and the cyclostyled Wodehouse Society rag Spice (whose typing mistakes were deliberate, and deliberately hilarious.)

This was the St Stephen's I knew, and none of us who lived and breathed the Stephanian air saw any alien affectation in it. For one thing, St Stephen's also embraced the Hindi movies at Kamla Nagar, the trips to Sukhiya's dhaba and the chowchow at TibMon (as the Tibetan Monastery was called); the nocturnal Informal Discussion Group saw articulate discussion of political issues, and the Social Service League actually went out and performed social service; and even for the "pseuds", the height of career aspiration was the IAS, not some firang multinational. The Stephanian could hardly be deracinated and still manage to bloom. It was against Indian targets that the Stephanian set his goals, and by Indian assumptions that he sought to attain them. (Feminists, please do not object to my pronouns: I only knew St Stephen's before its co-edification.)

At the same time St Stephen's was, astonishingly for a college in Delhi, insulated to a remarkable extent from the prejudices of middle-class Indian life. It mattered little where you were from, which Indian language you spoke at

home, what version of religious faith you espoused. When I joined College in 1972 from Calcutta, the son of a Keralite newspaper executive, I did not have to worry about fitting in: we were all minorities at St Stephen's, and all part of one eclectic polychrome culture. Five of the preceding ten Union Presidents had been non-Delhiite non-Hindus (four Muslims and a Christian), and they had all been fairly elected against candidates from the "majority" community. But at St Stephen's religion and region were not the distinctions that mattered: what counted was whether you were "in residence" or a "dayski" (day-scholar), a "science type" or a "DramSoc type", a sportsman or a univtopper (or best of all, both). Caste and creed were no bar, but these other categories determined your share of the Stephanian experience.

This blurring of conventional distinctions was a crucial element of Stephanian. "Sparing" with the more congenial of your comrades in residence -- though it could leave you with a near-fatal faith in coffee, conversation and crosswords as ends in themselves -- was manifestly more important than attending classes. And in any case, you learned as much from approachable faculty members -- like David Baker, Mohammed Amin, Ranjit Bhatia, P.S. Dwivedi, the late Vinod Choudhury and others too numerous to mention -- outside the classroom as inside it. (It was at one of Amin-Sahib's Mediaeval History lectures that he memorably translated the words inscribed above the stage in the College Hall -- Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World" -- as "Jesus ne kahan, main Noor Jehan hoon".)

Being ragged outside the back gate of Miranda House, having a late coffee in your block tutor's room, hearing outrageous (and largely apocryphal) tales about recent Stephanians who were no longer around to contradict them, seeing your name punned with in KT, were all integral parts of the Stephanian culture, and of the ways in which this culture was transmitted to each successive batch of Stephanians.

Three years is, of course, a small -- and decreasing -- proportion of my life, but my three years at St Stephen's marked me for all the years to follow. Partly this was because I joined College a few months after my sixteenth birthday and left it a few

months after my nineteenth, so that I was at St Stephen's at an age when any experience would have had a lasting effect. But equally vital was the institution itself, its atmosphere and history, its student body and teaching staff, its sense of itself and how that sense was communicated to each individual character in the Stephanian story. Too many Indian colleges are places for lectures, rote-learning, memorizing, regurgitation; St Stephen's encouraged random reading, individual note-taking, personal tutorials, extra-curricular development. Elsewhere you learned to answer the questions, at College to question the answers. Some of us went further, and questioned the questions.

Standing at the College on the 125th birthday of St Stephen's, I remembered the values the college had taught me, in the classroom and outside it. St Stephen's influenced me fundamentally, gave me my basic faith in all-inclusive, multi-spirited, free-thinking cultures, helped shape my mind and define my sense of myself in relation to the world, and so, inevitably, influenced what I have done later in life -- as a man, as a United Nations official, as a writer and

most recently as a politician. Stephania encouraged the development of qualities that would stand me in good stead in each of these activities.

So when I look back at College today, I celebrate the secularism, the pan-Indian outlook, the well-rounded education, the eclectic social interests, the questioning spirit and the meritocratic culture that are the vital ingredients of the Stephanian ethos. These are what the idea of Stephania contributes to the idea of



Dr Shashi Tharoor (History 1975) is India's minister of state for HRD. He worked with the UN for nearly three decades, rising to Under-Secretary-General. At College, he was President of the Students Union Society, student editor of The Stephanian, briefly editor of Kooler Talk (which he resigned upon being elected President), revived the Wodehouse Society and founded the Quiz Club. He is an author of critically acclaimed novels such as The Great Indian Novel and Riot, and over a half-dozen non-fiction books such as India from Midnight to the Millennium and Pax Indica.

India I have described in my books and speeches around the world. The moment any of these ingredients is removed, St Stephen's will no longer be St Stephen's.



Photo : Sunaina Serna Ahluwalia

Walking towards Rohtas's Dhaba and the Cafe

The Last Mughal

By Shazi Zaman

A graduate in History (1984-87) from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, Shazi Zaman has been an electronic media journalist for about quarter of a century. He has worked with Star News, BBC World Service, Aajtak, Zee News and Doordarshan. He is now Group Editor of ABP News, ABP Ananda and ABP Majha. Shazi is the President of Broadcast Editors' Association, which is the apex body of editors of TV news channels, member of governing council of Film and Television Institute of India, Pune and member of executive council of Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

Shazi is also an established Hindi novelist and short story writer. He is well known for his novels – 'Premgali Ati Sankri' and 'Jism-Jism Ke Log' – which deal with complexities of gender relations. Shazi was an active member of the Bazm-i-Adab and Sanskrit Hindi Sahitya Sabha in College.

Once while teaching the Mughal mansabdari system, Amin Sa'ab said, it is believed that the Mughal emperors had a quality called 'mardum-shanasi'. This, as he explained, meant that merely by looking at a person, the emperor could assess his capabilities. Many of us thought that if there's any one person who embodied 'mardum-shanasi' in our times, it had to be Amin Sa'ab. And that in our eyes made him the last Mughal.

As I took leave of Amin Sa'ab at his last resting place on 15 December, 2012, I thought to myself that he had got a place befitting the title we gave him. In the Mughal-age graveyard, just off the road named after the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, Amin Sa'ab will have the famous eighteenth century Islamic scholar Shah Waliullah for company. Also close to him lies the legendary Urdu poet, Ghalib's contemporary, Momin Khan Momin. I am sure Amin Sa'ab will love Momin's poetic company. He would certainly love a dialogue with Shah Waliullah.

There is an anecdote about his extraordinary dialoguing skills that I love relating as many times as I can. Some demonstrators had gathered at the gate of the College. Seeing Amin Sa'ab approach the gate, one of the protestors shouted "'baat mat karna, nahi to convince kar denge" !

I think Amin Sa'ab loved teaching Akbar because the emperor believed in every individual's right to decide what path to tread. This is the philosophy that made Amin Sa'ab comfortable with all, and all with Amin Sa'ab. You could reach out to him if you loved history or loved sports or loved good company or loved Urdu poetry or loved wit, humour and practical jokes or loved exchanging ideas or just loved disagreeing with him.

He could even engage with those who loved themselves. Once he was called to a college I will not name and shown a new sports facility. A faculty member of that college spoke endlessly about the new facility and said "we have created a huge complex." Amin Sa'ab looked at him, smiled and said, "yes, you have a huge complex !"

All of us have a long list of irreverent tales. Here's one. He recited the first line of a couplet, "aao batayein tumhein marne ke baad kya hoga." As we strained our ears to hear what would happen after death, he pulled out the punchline, "pulao khayenge ahabab, fatiha hoga" (there would be prayers and 'pulao' after death !). I can almost hear him recite this at his own 'mazar'.

Till his last days, I had the privilege of engaging him in questions that are not usually answered in academic books. After failing to find the hairstyle of the Mughal emperors because they are wearing turbans in all miniatures that I could see, I approached Amin Sa'ab for an answer. Gently touching his own head, he said with a twinkle, "I think we will have to ask the ladies of the harem".

He made history so interesting and engaging that it remained with us forever. When asked what was the Mughal protocol, he said, "what you see in K. Asif's Mughal-i-Azam." On why no non-Mughal participated in the battle of succession, he said, "with the formation of the Mughal empire, battle of succession became a seeded game...only seeded players could participate !"

Amin Sa'ab had said that Akbar's Sulh-i-kul did not mean tolerance, because tolerance is a negative term. It is not even peace because peace means absence of strife. Sulh-i-kul is harmony. That is the harmony that Amin Sa'ab established between himself and all who got to know him. That is why he is the last Mughal.

And that is why I think anybody who entered his class never really left it. Even now I feel that I am in his class, a student of history for life.



Photo: Rohit Bansal

Shazi Zaman and Prof Mohd Amin at a felicitation ceremony held at Dr. SY Quraishi's residence

Armstrong Pame: An Uphill, Crowdfunded Road



"Most complain of the darkness, but very few light a candle," said Delhi Lokayukta Justice Manmohan Sarin, of Armstrong Pame.

He was presenting a special Founder's Day plaque on December 7 last year, to Manipur-based IAS officer Armstrong Pame (physics, class of 2005).

Pame was cited for his spirit and drive in building his own over-100 km road when there was no government help or funds, in one of the remotest corners of India.

Justice Sarin, who is also president of the St Stephen's Alumni Foundation, said Armstrong had lit a very bright torch, with his leadership, innovation, and positive can-do attitude. "However, while breaking new ground, Armstrong should also make sure that his tracks are well covered, so that years after his outstanding achievement he does not find himself mired in bureaucratic red tape," Justice Sarin added.

Pame's inspiration for the road, now largely complete (though not metaled), was the region's isolation. The last straw was in summer 2012, with an outbreak of tropical diseases like typhoid and malaria. It takes two days for anyone in the village to make it to the nearest hospital on foot. Hundreds of patients had to be carried on makeshift bamboo stretchers. Few made it alive. Town doctors were unwilling to come to the isolated village.

With no funding or government help available, Pame started on the road himself – with family, friends and locals pitching in with small contributions and their time. Armstrong donated five months' pay, and his family members pitched in.

His dream project, the Tamenglong-Haflong road, will link Manipur with Nagaland and Assam, when completed. It will save hundreds of lives by making his village and others accessible for doctors. This is India's first, and possibly the world's first, "crowd-funded" road.

Armstrong's father, a retired schoolteacher, and his mother, a homemaker, brought up their five daughters and four sons, who are no strangers to working for the people. One of his sisters is an English teacher turned social worker, another a BPO HR manager turned social worker, and his youngest sister is studying sociology in Delhi. A brother is an assistant professor of English in Delhi University, and another is studying in the Delhi School of Economics.

Pame was also nominated for CNN-IBN's Indian of the Year (IOTY) award in the Public Service category, one of only six to be so nominated from 193 entries. This nomination is a rare honor, given that the other five nominees (not alumni) are Aruna Roy with Baba Adhav, Arvind Kejriwal with IAC, Dr Devi Shetty, Madhav Gadgil, and the CAG. Pame is the youngest of the IOTY nominees across all categories, except for Saina Nehwal. (The IOTY public service award, presented on December 12, went to Dr Devi Shetty.)

But before that, his story, broken by the TOI, caught the world's imagination (and a single post of the link by me on Twitter got 300 retweets).

Armstrong likes challenges. This high-achieving physics graduate opted for new subjects in the run up to the IAS exam, choosing Public Administration and Geography, "because I got interested in them" and for the challenge.

This is the Stephanian spirit – a liberal arts and science education that prepares you for anything you want to take on.



The Survival Kit of College

By Amlan Bhattacharya

It has been an eternal part of me—College, from the moment a lad of 18 walked in through its gates for the first time. Many would speak of bonds forged, of acquaintances made and of desires unleashed through that catalytic force, College. Others may speak of how they found their calling there.

I will not speak of any of these for these are not unique to our College. There is something else that I wish to talk about--a simple truth that I encountered. That as far as life went, there was always a chance.

Two brilliant years went by in the flash of an eye: the nervousness, eye-avoding and squirming of the first week or two yielding to months of soaking in the knowledge disseminated through lectures, adapting to having one's nose to the grindstone and of basking in a certain comfort and of the pride and glory of being a Stephanian.

I was only a week away from my third year examinations. These were the ones that mattered: a last chance to find glory. Five days of answering papers by hand that would determine forever what course my life would take. I was at my books for the better part of each day. Then I got chicken pox. It devoured me. It seemed to sap away all my energy. There was the fever, the nausea and the all-consuming feeling of helplessness.

It was College that held me together then. It was that institution that gave me the courage to drag myself to a little room, where I sat alone for some hours, answering papers, away from my classmates who were seated together in a room that brimmed with academic energy. Five times in a span of ten days!

Ravaged though I was by the illness, I found hope and empathy everywhere. Those who had taught me came to look in on me at the start of every paper. Our principal came around to the room more than just the once. My classmates would telephone me at my LG's to speak to me about those last minute tips that do the rounds before every examination (those were the days before SMS and email). And not just those I was great friends with. Most of them did something or the other that helped me make it through. There was also that sublime and elevating energy all around--one of rare magnitude.

I found the strength to make it through the examinations when medical experts had suggested that I call it off for the present and attempt them after a year. I emerged unscathed from the examinations (albeit, pockmarked), and also kept my first class.

So I received my BA (Hons) Economics degree. Twenty two years ago. The emotions have not waned. I found great love, warmth, a great compassion and care that gave me the courage to write those papers without reading a single line from any text or notebook during the examination fortnight.

It taught me a wonderful, immortal lesson--it liberated me from the confines of rigid thinking, one-dimensional responsiveness and of declaring catastrophe. In that session, in those weeks when the wailing of the sirens of calamity and distress were in the air, when naysayers held forth on the guaranteed futility of my efforts, perched on the cusp of hope and despair, it was College that nudged me gently on to embrace hope.

My life has not been an easy one (and others would say the same, I am sure). I have had encumbrances that would perhaps fell many. Perhaps it is the Stephanian in me that keeps the fire burning. It's College and the residual scars from my 'pox' days, that tell me that the night shall always yield.

I hope for this to come across with humility for I mean it in every sense of the term. I have always somehow found a way through skies besmeared by the shadows of soulless clouds. It has taken time and more.

I am greying now, neither rich nor famous. But College taught me that there would be a corner in this world for me alone. I had to merely go the distance. That is what College means to me. It gave me a survival kit to last me through my life. The three years in college have given a less than ordinary man the audacity to grapple with the most severe ups and downs in the business of life.

St Stephen's, there can be no word limit on what you have taught me.



Amlan is from the BA (Hons) Economics Class of 1990 and has an MBA degree in Finance from the University of Wales. Having worked in various capacities in India, Germany and the UK, he now serves a Mumbai-headquartered branded jewellery conglomerate as Vice-President, Corporate Strategy & Investor Relations. He loves writing, follows cricket with a passion and is an avid movie viewer. He also harbours hopes of writing a book someday.'

A Royal Visit

By Shrabani Basu

Sitting on the grounds of Buckingham Palace during the recent Diamond Jubilee celebrations, tucking into a five-course picnic hamper served up by the Queen, it felt like we had all turned into royalists.

The potted salmon with a lapsang souchong tea infusion, the jubilee chicken prepared with a dash of Indian spices, the dessert with strawberries from the Queen's Sandringham estate, and the cakes and champagne ... were a treat. There was even Cobra Indian beer, a reminder that Britain had become a nation of curry lovers. The 86-year-old Queen had sampled each of the items in the menu. Like a good grandma, she had even packed a poncho in the picnic hamper, in case it rained on her party. Luckily, it didn't, so we simply spread it out as a picnic rug. There was a flag too, but I drew the line at that. The Union Jack would simply have to stay folded in my hamper.

Watching Prince Edward mingle with the guests, my mind went back to my days in college and my first encounter with British royalty. Prince Charles was making a visit to India. The year was 1980. We were in our first year of College, one term in, flush with enthusiasm. We had settled into the routine of nimbupani, GJs and mince-cutlets. We loved nothing better than flopping on the lawns and admiring the roses that were beginning to bloom in the Delhi winter. History lessons and tutorials were a seamless flow of the wisdom of Dr Baker and the dry wit of PSD (PSDwivedi).

The announcement of the visit of the heir to the British throne (at that time still not married to Diana) was going to disrupt our cosy little world. Suddenly everyone was going weak at the knees for Royalty. Granted, those were the days that Prince Charles still had a full head of hair, and was considered the most eligible bachelor in the world. But he was not one of the stars on our firmament. That space was reserved for John Lennon and his fellow Liverpoolians. Yet, it was obviously a big thing for the college, so we remained casually enthusiastic.

Till we were told we could not sit on the grass. We -- who had claimed a piece of Allnut Lawns as our patch --

were told we would have to leave. The grass had to look pristine for the Royal visit, and our bodies lying on it in a muddled heap, was a non postulo. Worse was to come. They started digging out the flower beds. We watched in shock horror as our roses were dug up, to make place for new ones. No longer could the higher discussions about the costumes for the next Shakesoc play take place, or indeed the essay on the Tudors that was overdue. We sloped around the college like displaced refugees, out-turfed by Royalty.

Then came the reports in the papers -- the controversial "virginity tests" -- which were being imposed on prospective Indian women immigrants who were applying to join their husbands in the UK. Horrific stories emerged of Indian women being given the once-over by doctors at Heathrow Airport. The Indian government had protested calling it "obscene". It was time for the fur to fly.

On the day itself, our college dressed up to receive its Royal visitor. But the anticipatory calm was disrupted by a loud group of demonstrators from Delhi University who marched in through the college gates shouting slogans against the British government and Prince Charles. A crowd of students and teachers lined up to watch them in silence. Such scenes did not happen in St Stephen's. An automatic barrier seemed to go up between "us" and "them"; shouts on their side, stony faces on ours. And suddenly something snapped. Four of us stepped out and joined them. I can still remember the shocked and pained expression on Amin Saab's face, and Dr Baker's. PSD was frowning and pulling his beard. He was clearly very upset.

It was over in minutes. The DUSU crowd left, pleased at having disrupted the peace. A few hours later, Prince Charles arrived, blissfully unaware of the events of the morning. He



Shrabani Basu studied History at St Stephen's from 1979-82, and continued to do her Masters from College. She is the London correspondent for the ABP group and writes for The Telegraph and ABP. She is the author of Victoria & Abdul, The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant, Spy Princess, The Life of Noor Inayat Khan and Curry, The Story of Britain's Favourite Dish.

looked pleased, shook a few hands, said the right things and left. Sitting in the hall, still flushed from the morning's events, I remember thinking he spoke rather well.

Our little moment of madness had caused an uproar in the staff room. How could they, was the general feeling. We were thoroughly chastised and made to feel like we had let down the team. But all we had wanted to do was to sit on our lawn.

A few years later, when I was in London working as a journalist, I was introduced to Prince Charles at an Indian event. It was all very proper and polite, but I remember suppressing the urge to giggle as my thoughts flew to our winter of discontent. What would he have said if I had told him that I nearly got thrown out of college for demonstrating against his visit?

Time has flown since then. I have covered Royal events, the death of Princess Diana, the wedding of William and Kate, attended the Garden parties, researched my book in the Royal Archives in Windsor Castle and handled Queen Victoria's letters and journals. I wrote Victoria & Abdul, The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant, about an Indian man who caused a storm in the court and nearly de-railed the monarchy. They didn't send me to the Tower.

It's a funny old world, as they say. Sitting on the grass at Buckingham Palace that day, I guess it made up for being thrown off our lawn all those years ago. I've made my peace with college and the Royals. I just can't fly that flag.

Stephania's Legacy

And how it can change the world

By Srikanth Rajagopalan

I ran away from India and St Stephen's over 25 years ago, without graduating. When we were in College, bumping into celebrities was no big deal and inviting national names to College events was routine. Perhaps it happened so often that we became and continue to be, blasé about it.

Yet this casual interaction with success is ultimately a failure if we underachieve. Such as if we do not utilize our legacy to build national institutions larger than ourselves--and more in line with the giant that is SSC in the field of education.

Outside SSC is the “real world”. In the US, where I have spent my working life, it is a meld of disciplined aggression and channeled ambition. Within India, it is a daily struggle with the “little” issues and big wins. Roads are broken while the economy bounds ahead (believe me, India is still thriving compared to the stresses in other places). Yet, even as I move ahead in my own work and career, a small voice sometimes asks me: “What have you done to uphold the principles of College in your daily life?”

St Stephen's is undoubtedly a top-notch institution. What have I done to help other institutions in India or elsewhere achieve such quality? The honest answer must be: Not much.

More often than not, I yield: I quietly allow myself to be extorted even if my paperwork is in order for various government interactions. I am equally quiet in bribing a cop to get out of a traffic ticket when the right option would be to face the music and pay the fine. Sometimes, I make the excuse that if I raise my voice alone, I will merely get blacklisted as a trouble-maker rather than be supported.

I am not talking about influence--that's just another way out. I am talking of having rational processes for operations and enforcement for everyone--including those who may not have the backing of an alumni network like ours.

As Stephanians, we are successful personally or professionally--we start off as winners because we are Stephanians. However, we could be even more successful if we sought to make the institutions we are part of as accomplished as the institution that has made us leaders.

If we look back to our web site to look at the mission, however, we see what it is to take inspiration from the teachings of Jesus to realize spiritual, moral, intellectual and aesthetic values. What does this mean, for those of us who lead, in small or large ways, due to our learning from St Stephen's? That we should continue to lead—but in service of the community and in ways that are lasting.

Many Stephanians have already shown the way ahead. Especially, but not only, in the Civil Services. Stephanian IPS officer Aseem Arun had his senior colleagues in Agra take a no-bribe pledge. In the coming years, this should result in greater efficiency--as it likely will: once corruption is removed, merit is the only means by which to rise. When that happens, the Agra police force will probably lead the country in effectiveness.

However, the story is not so much about Arun the individual, as it is about the institution he is developing. Is it easy to do so? Of course not—he undoubtedly faces a lot of political pressure. This is where the Stephanian bureaucracy as a whole can help build the institution—by supporting his initiative and helping resist pressure. Stephanians in politics and in the bureaucracy can unite to support such initiatives.

If political leaders can enforce campaign finance restrictions, the incentive to fund elections will go away, which in turn will reduce the incentive for bribery down the line. However, this can only be done by leaders who want to improve the character of the institution as a whole.

There is much that we can do together that we will have a great deal of difficulty doing alone. In turn, this will give our national institutions an incentive to simplify administrative rules rather than make them more



Srikanth Rajagopalan is an entrepreneur running an IT services firm with a presence in the US, India and other countries

obtuse. Stephanians can rewrite processes and make it easier to get things done and consequently, get more done in less time. A think-tank to exchange ideas would be a great way for people to support each other in our work days as we move forward, not just as alumni of a great institution but as students dedicated to applying what our College taught us.

Another Stephanian, Sanjeev Bikchandani, has also made an institutional effort to reduce underground money in real estate through his firm, AllCheckDeals.com. This is already a successful site, and one that all need to support for the practice to gain even more traction. Not everyone can buy and sell property via “100% cheques” because if we did, we might not get the best price. However, making an effort in that direction would certainly be a positive move.

In other ways, we can see the power of mass effort: the pioneer of NGOs. Stephanian Bunker Roy is rightly respected because he empowered millions of Indians around the poverty level to learn and, in turn, become productive citizens of their communities. One of the most influential people in the world, according to Time, Roy has shown what we can do when we give of ourselves and give back, even as we continue to apply Stephanian values to grow ourselves. Roy has not shied away from controversy where he felt the need but his capacity to build institutions makes him stand out beyond other NGOs.

Given the scale of challenges that India faces, can we do anything overnight? Of course not. However,

due to our unique positions, Stephanians can do more, and faster, than probably any other group in India, if we only set our minds to do so. If we can move in the right direction as a group, we will have

made life easier for the national and international community.

Make no mistake: the scale of what Stephanians can do will impact not just our life and domestic industry, but

also foreign investment in significant ways. The result will be a positive for all of us, everywhere.

Now, all I need to do is find out how to go to court and pay that traffic fine.

The Opportunity

By Satyarth Nayak

My first reaction was 'He doesn't look ill at all.'

He still looked the same as he had seven years ago. I remembered standing outside his room back then. I was nervous. The students going in and out were making me nervous. The long empty gothic corridors were making me nervous. The red bricks gleaming in the sun were making me nervous. Even the white notices flapping on the board were making me nervous. The door opened. It was my turn.

Three men sat behind a huge table. In an instant, the figures on the sides melted away. I was only looking at the deity in the centre. Dr Anil Wilson. Principal. St Stephen's College.

The jovial face, the eyes perfectly framed in glasses, the shapely moustache and the salt and pepper hair were all a part of the picture. I also discovered his impish smile. He had it on his face when he asked me during the interview, 'You can't get accommodation here. Are you fine with changing two buses to come here every day?'

I stammered, 'I don't mind. I'll manage as long as I get admission in St Stephen's.'

At the end of the day, my name was in the final list of Masters students.

Dr Wilson strode those colonial corridors, a colossus. In winters he looked all the more regal in a black coat, black scarf and black gloves. His classes on Eliot, Donne and Coleridge were phenomenal. Morning assemblies echoed with his booming oratory.

If you are a literature scholar, you tend to be a writer by default. I had written a couple of articles. I wanted his opinion. Nine times I had walked up to that door and turned away. One afternoon I finally pushed open the door. I crossed the threshold and walked up to his table, requesting him to go through my scribbling. He looked at me quietly

for a few seconds, took the papers, and nodded. As I reached the door, I heard his voice.

'Thank you for giving me this opportunity.'

I choked. Wilson thanking me? I wheeled around. He was smiling. I smiled too. But my eyes were wet.

That was seven years ago.

Today I was nervous again. As a health correspondent, one of my jobs was to cover people battling incurable diseases. I had met many an inspiring subject who had a twinkle in his eye despite the pain in his body. Today I was meeting a subject I knew. He was my former Principal, Anil Wilson. And he was fighting pancreatic cancer.

I stood outside his bedroom with a beating heart. The medicines on the table were making me nervous. The look on his wife Rita's face was making me nervous. The book titled *The Last Lecture* sitting on the bedside shelf was making me nervous. Was it really that bad? Then the door opened. As he appeared at the threshold, I was instantly relieved. He didn't look ill at all. Perhaps the tumor was not too malignant. As he approached, my joy waned.

He looked tired. He was straining himself to take every footstep. His frame was thinner and his hair was whiter. His cheeks had sunk in but his eyes were alive. As he wished me, I could hear how the tumor had robbed some of the tenor off his voice. But the cancer eating up his insides had failed to steal that impish smile.

The video shoot started. We found out that the cancer had spread to his liver and bones. Despite his condition he carried on with vigor. Each shot and each frame captured his battle against the tumor. We logged on to the internet and took shots of the many get-well messages posted by his students and friends. 'He is a man of tough mettle. Thank you for touching our lives.' a student had written. Another student had



Satyarth Nayak, who did his MA (English) in 2003, is writing a fiction thriller (and here discussing it with novelist Vikram Seth.) He won the SAARC Award for Health Reporting while at CNN-IBN

begged him to try yoga as a therapy. He was looking at the messages with silent eyes. They were all praying for him. They believed that prayers could move mountains and create miracles.

Wilson spoke about his condition in almost clinical terms. He had decided to give himself up for medical trials on pancreatic cancer. He was ready to fight. The man also had a plan in case he was defeated in the end. He had pledged his organs for research. I still remember his words. 'We are mostly insulated from the sufferings of others until we suffer ourselves. I want to contribute in a small way to save the lives of similar patients.' My eyes went to a thin paperback book on a side table. *Whispers of Immortality*, compiled by Dr. Anil Wilson.

He was getting tired, and we wrapped up the shoot. The lights were switched off. The camera stopped rolling. I touched his feet and he went inside his bedroom. As I neared the front door, I heard a voice. I turned. It was Wilson. He had come out of his room. His voice was strangely familiar. 'Thank you for giving me this opportunity.'

He was smiling. I smiled too. And my eyes were wet again.

Wilson today rests at Nicholson Cemetery in Kashmiri Gate. Whenever I pass him, I thank life.

For the opportunity.

St Stephen's Institute for Management Excellence

A Conversation with Sanjay Saigal, Executive Director

Following a BA at St Stephen's, Sanjay Saigal gave up a seat at IIM Kolkata to pursue a doctorate in math at Rice University in Houston, Texas. A life in math, he recalls, was where he felt he belonged. His subsequent career, though, has revolved around business management.

Around the time he finished his PhD, Sanjay's research area – optimization – gained prominence in tackling complex Supply Chain Management problems, then emerging in the first wave of e-commerce. As an optimization consultant, Sanjay worked across sectors and continents, going on to success in entrepreneurial and executive roles. In 2009, he first taught in the Professional MBA program at the University of California at Davis. That experience led to him proposing and then running St Stephen's Institute for Management Excellence in collaboration with College. We asked Sanjay about the Institute's origins.

Establishing an institute is a big leap of faith, isn't it? How did the idea for the St Stephen's Institute come about?

In 2007, Nandita Narain invited three math alumni – Saurav Sen ('94), Manav Das ('89) and me ('84) – to talk about post-mathematics careers in her class. After Nandita's panel, we met with (then Acting Principal) Rev Thampu and other senior staff for a chat about how alumni could productively support College. College, all of us felt, stood at a point where “business as usual” would no longer work. New initiatives were needed. The remarkably candid discussion opened to me the possibility of playing a role in College's future, even though I don't live in Delhi.

In 2009 I began to teach working professionals analytic decision-making. I was immediately struck by the difference between them and the traditional MBA students whom I had previously taught. Working folk bring to the classroom a keen focus, a hunger for the practical, and the ability to contextualize material against the matrix of their experience. The two populations exhibit different learning profiles. When I began to look into it, I also found that, at least in India, nobody seemed to cater to mid-to-late career executives on their terms. Executive education, I found, was often MBA coursework dressed up with a few “real-world cases”. I visited College to see if we could do something about it.

Did you find College receptive to the idea?

Somewhat to my surprise, yes. I was surprised for a few reasons. First, business management has never been offered by St Stephen's College. Choosing management as an area of expansion was not obvious. That was my interest, so that was the only idea on the table.

Second, because executive education lives or dies in the marketplace, we suggested setting up – what we named St Stephen's Institute for Management Excellence – outside College's DU-based structure, as a freestanding entity. Nominally we're a for-profit corporation, but one with a very clear mandate to maintain the standards of excellence for which College is known. Rev Thampu threw his support behind the idea because, I suspect, the prospect of sidestepping DU's bureaucracy was not entirely unwelcome.

Finally, I had some apprehension because, at least initially, we would not be targeting College's natural constituency – undergraduates. At start-up, our focus would be mid-to-senior executives. I think I was able to convince the administration that it was the most under-served segment of the management market, and thus our best opening move.

What about the partnership with Rice University?

Our strategic plan called for connecting with a world-class business school for curriculum and faculty support. We selected Jones Graduate School of Business at my post-graduate alma mater – Rice University. Though smaller than its more celebrated peer programs – compare Jones' 100 student MBA class to 800 at Wharton – Jones School is particularly strong where it matters to us: executive education. Business Week ranked Jones #6 for its professional MBA. It's routinely awarded top-10 ranks in teaching quality, and in areas such as Finance and Entrepreneurship. Like the small and selective St Stephen's College, Jones School boxes far above its weight.

The Institute offers an Accelerated Development Program, for executives. Why not start with an executive MBA?

Good question! An executive MBA is certainly part of our future plans. But to begin with, we chose to address the most acute demand, which is for professionally trained business leaders. Getting senior executives into the classroom is not easy. Their availability is naturally limited. In such a situation, a short and intensive learning intervention provides a greater ROI than an MBA, which, however well-compressed, takes at least a year. That led us to the ADP. Think of the ADP as a grown up MBA on steroids: over a four week period we cover the topics most critical to a general manager's productivity.

Jones School offers a very highly-regarded ADP. As it happened, Prof Brent Smith, who put together the agreement with the Institute, and who also runs Jones School's ADP, had previously helped establish the ADP for London Business School. With his input we created a program tailored to India. Our program has some innovative features. For



Sanjay Saigal splits his time between Delhi, where he is executive director at St Stephen's Institute for Management Excellence, and Silicon Valley, where he teaches and consults on supply chain management. In his Cirrus SR20 monoplane, he's an avid recreational pilot who also volunteers for Angel Flight, an NGO that connects pilots and patients who need transport

instance, to minimize down-time, classes meet on a Friday – Tuesday schedule. Nobody misses more than two days in a work-week. Further, 2-4 week intervals between successive Fri-Tue sessions let attendees get back to work and to reflect on lessons learned.

Finally, our instructors teach from research and experience. They are required to demonstrate non-academic experience, in full-time business roles or in consulting. For instance, Brent is a leading researcher in the psychology of effective leadership. But he brings his real-world experiences as an executive coach to the ADP seminar room. Take Suresh Krishnamoorthy, who teaches Finance. He was most recently Chief Risk Officer for ING Investment Management on Wall Street. In a room populated with Type AGMs and Chief Engineers, neither Brent and Suresh lecture from notes. Instead, they lead from experience.

How has it gone so far?

It's been a remarkable journey. We complete ADP #2 in July. Participants came from all over India, some even from the Middle East! Attendee feedback has largely been along the lines of “this is the best management course I've ever attended”. Our US-based faculty – academics and industry folks alike – have enjoyed engaging with attendees who are clearly going places. And the Institute has contributed to College's financial corpus. So far, so good.

What comes next?

In large part due to attendee reports, companies have begun to ask us to design and deliver specialized courses. For instance, our Strategy and Marketing guru, Prof Vikas Mittal from Jones School, was asked to deliver a workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility to a large energy firm's HR top brass. We're working with another firm to adapt the ADP to their in-house leadership development needs. The market is definitely more active in this area than we'd expected. And of course, come October, we plan to offer the open-enrollment ADP again.

At a personal level, the chance to extend and deepen the footprint of St Stephen's College has been tremendously gratifying. Plus, after 20-odd years of visiting Delhi at 2-3 year intervals, I now enjoy “scrambled on toast” and a chhota pot at the Café practically every other month!

Email interview conducted and edited by Stephania editorial staff.

Down Memory Lane.. Summer of '68

By Amit Khanna

Over four decades have gone by. Yet my first day at College remains sharply etched in my mind.

It was 1968. I was a third-generation Stephanian. I felt proud to carry forward a family tradition. Adding to the excitement was the fact that a number of my high school friends were either already enrolled or were entering College with me.

The first day was the usual assembly, introductions, and a bit of ragging. Soon we all settled in. New friendships were forged, and some old ones revitalized. The very environs of the College had an aura of a hallowed tradition.

I was a day-scholar, but spent long hours in or around College. There were no women in College then. Since I was interested in theatre and writing, I was immediately sucked into several College societies. I was also busy with off-campus activities. So while I enjoyed attending lectures, it was equally fun bunking classes. Messers Sircar, Rajpal, Shankland, Kapadia, Amin, Bose, Yogi, O'Connor, Hala were among our teachers. And there was good old Robert Sa'ab sitting by his window to solve all our problems!

St Stephen's was probably the first college in India to start the concept of 'tutors'. You could always walk to your tutor and seek help or guidance on

academic and not-so-academic matters. I began to understand the importance of a well-rounded personality.

The Café was a favorite haunt. We spent hundreds of hours over coffee and mince. Of course Sukhiya was there too! The University Coffee House was another rendezvous, for pretty company and for a quick bite. The JCR was another popular haunt. Personally I most loved going to the library.

Students in residence seemed to have more fun, I admit. But we got our unique share on the U-Special from Mandi House. There was always something happening: from doping to revolution, drama to cricket, cramming to jamming. As I sit back and think several faces (and names) come alive. The mind pulsates with memories. College days are perhaps the best days of one's life. One stands on the cusp of a new beginning.

I also was involved in a few off campus activities. The first was setting up of DUDADS – the Delhi University Debates & Dramatic Society. I was also busy editing a magazine 'Tempus'. Many a budding artist and writer did his first bit in these efforts. In College it was the ShakeSoc and the Drama Soc and even the Sanskrit Hindi Sahitya Sabha. College Elections were another fun annual ritual in which I actively participated. Although never a serious cricketer myself I was always there at the matches as a few of my close friends played for college. And then quick jaunts to other colleges for special 'meetings'!

Over the years I have to begun to value my years at College. The shared pride of a Stephanian is something quite unique. How many times has the mere mention of St Stephen's opened new doors for me? It's is a kinship quite unlike any other. I still attend alumni meets in Mumbai, and I still look forward to connecting with my alma mater in one way or another. It's great to see several on-line communities connecting us.

I was among the earliest Stephanian to join films. The emergence of television and other media over the years have seen our numbers rise further. So many of my contemporaries have distinguished themselves in their professional spheres that we practically represent a National roll of Honor!

Today, not only in the central services, but in banking, business, politics, public affairs, education, media and entertainment and sports, many high achievers remember these words with a thrill: Ad Dei Gloriam.



Amit Khanna has been involved with Media since School. He has worked in Theatre, Radio, Television, Journalism, Films and New Media for four decades.

The Dhaba

The Dhaba has its origins in the early 1930's when Sukh Ram, popularly called Sukhia, set himself up as a pan wallah opposite the Maitland Hostel near Kashmere Gate. He initially sold pan at the rate of two banarasi pans for a paise. He later began selling pedas and barfis. In 1941, he moved to the present campus along with his friend Bade Mian. First set up shop near the present site of the Hindu college gate but then moved to the college extension.

Rohtas and Banarsi his sons manned the kiosk donated by Daljeet and Charanjit Singh of Campa Cola AND Meridian fame...er began selling pedas and burfis. In 1941, he too moved to the present campus along with his friend Manzoor Ahmed,

affectionately called Bade Mian. They both set up shop near the present site of the Hindu College gate but soon shifted to a verandah where the Cafe Extension now exists. The present Dhaba now manned by Sukhia's sons Rohtas and Banarasi was donated to Sukhia by an old student who was the head of a big soft drink bottling company. The kiosk is still maintained and repaired by the benefactor. Sukhia started the kitab or a log book to enter credit purchases at Kashmere Gate and this continues even today. During his last days in College, Sukhia attributed the decline of the country mainly to Paneer ki Mithai, Hartals (sweets and strikes) and ostentatious and wasteful expenditures especially at weddings. Sukhia claimed to have smoked only once, that too after seeing a movie, Sant Tulsidas. Sukhia died on 4 May 1986. er began selling pedas and burfis. In 1941, he too moved to the present

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When the Cross was Green and Yellow

And when saying Grace would end with an “Aloo” instead of Amen

By Arup Dasgupta

My joining St Stephen's was kind of by default.

I'd always had an engineering bent of mind, and had fixed my eye on the IITs, after school. However, to please my mother who wanted me to join the IAS, and therefore join St Stephen's, I put in an application for the Physics course.

However, my attempts at getting into an engineering course were put paid to by my eyes, which were myopic and considered to 'unsuitable' for engineering studies.

And so I found myself, one July day in 1962, in the chamber of Sircar-saab, trying to explain why I wanted to join St Stephen's and why I wanted to do Physics. My admission was almost certain as my school results were very good, but my lack of any extracurricular accomplishment was a concern, according to him.

Be that as it may, I joined College as a day-scholar and began my rites of passage, which included an introduction to my tutor Rajmohan Gandhi, the Café, the JCR, and ragging. Having acquired a rank in my school in the Senior Cambridge exams, the size of my head tended to err on the positive side, a condition which was corrected within a week.

I also joined ShakeSoc on the exhortation of W S Rajpal, who used to take our assembly, and I was initiated into the Photography Club by 'Tich' Agarwal.

As a day scholar and a 'science type' my interaction with College was restricted to Math and English classes, and a weekly session with the tutor. That's because Physics and Chemistry classes were in the University departments. Luckily, the JCR was on the way to the rear gate that led to these departments, so one could relax if the classes got boring--which was often.

In my second year my father got transferred, and I applied to become a resident scholar. The opportunity came one day when Anand Doraiswamy gave up his room, J-8 in Rudra North, and I

was informed by Robert-saab that this room was for my taking.

Anand had left for me a railway metal plaque advising all and sundry not to pull the chain or face dire consequences. He also left a HMV signboard purloined from Connaught Place.

Joining residence meant another bout of ragging, this time having to be the referee at a boxing match in the veranda of our rooms. My tutors changed as well; first it was Doc Ghosh and then Balbir Singh.

Being in residence gave me many new experiences like 'sleeping for, getting 'slept for', post dinner debates (my first and only experience of Krishna Menon - live) and of course Bose saab and his saying Grace before dinner. The one I remember, in my third year when I opted to stay back during Christmas break and swot for my finals: "...and for those unfortunates who linger here, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year".

I also contributed a piece to Kooler Talk, written along with my friend Sushil Auluck on demystifying the theory of relativity, which I am told was greatly appreciated. At least by Nirupam Sen of Eco, who said "Now I know what you guys do". Nirupam and Sushil were neighbours in Allnut South.

*Other highlights included a stern talk by Sircar saab after someone painted the Cross atop the building in alternate stripes of green and yellow. Was it a famous Rhodes Scholar who did it?

Also the phenyl isocyanate case - in the Physics department, and it earned two Stephanians a week's 'break' from classes.

And then there was the annual Shakespearean drama. One stands out: Julius Caesar, where Messala was addressed as Masala by one of the cast, much to the merriment of us in the balcony seats.

*Throwing eggs and tomatoes was de rigueur, but they could be substituted by potatoes. In fact potatoes

were the main actors during lunch and dinner, resulting in Grace ending with a chant of 'aloo' instead of 'Amen'.

I graduated in 1965 with a decent first class which was a bit of a wonder considering all my extra-curricular activities during College life. Being from St Stephen's helped in my admission to Indian Institute of Science for my Bachelors in Electrical Communications Engineering--my first love. The engineering world had lost some of its myopia in these three years, and would allow a myopic person to study engineering.

To cut a long story short, in 1970 I joined the Indian Space programme after my Masters in engineering, and retired after 34 years of chivvying electrons to do my bidding--first in communications and then in computers.

What did I get from St Stephen's? I became a well rounded person. I developed many interests in the world around us. I made some very great friends among my seniors, classmates and juniors. Through them, I learnt to appreciate art, drama, literature and even economics.

Oh, I also learnt some Physics.

Do I have any regrets? Of course. Why did College wait so long to go co-ed?



Ahmedabad-based Arup Dasgupta (Physics 1965) is Managing Editor at Geospatial Media and Communications. He retired as Deputy Director of the ISRO Space Applications Center in 2005, after 34 years at the space agency.

Reflections

by Shweta Avilash Bisht, Class of 2003

Reflections

Those were the best days of my life. In reflection, best does not necessarily mean happy. There were low times as well. Most of us made the transition from teenage to adulthood while in college, the time when there are numerous questions. This place was my resort, the Chapel, place for my reflection.



Secret Desire

Always had a secret desire to go up to The Cross but could never venture into it. However being part of Hiking Club I knew the way to go there. Use to sit at this spot and think about different 'routes' that could be taken.

Knowledge Centre

College experience would not have been the same without our teachers. They encouraged us to comprehend and not just know. Owe a lot to them.



Lifeline

B.A. (Royale) Pass course was incomplete without this place, 'The Dhabba'. The conversations over "Hot Sams", "G Jams" and "Nimbu" would always be cherished and not to forget the "Informal Interactions". Thanks to the meal coupons, (earned after 2 hours of early morning basketball practice) had the privilege of having an "account" with Rohtashji. So requests for treats were always entertained and at times with barter of homemade food.



College Pulse

You want to know the mood of college, visit this place, the main corridor. New Session, Harmony, Exam Times... the pulse varies



Elegance

College building is indeed a fine piece of architecture. Love the Red Brick Facade



Stephania's Sixties Secrets

From Café and Rez Life to the one venue for meeting women from MH, LSR and IP

By Amit Shah, Somerville, MA,

Amit became a publishing entrepreneur, after decades in corporate publishing. He has two sons and two cats.

The three years that I spent at St Stephen's College, from the summer of 1967 to 1970, were my most memorable and life-defining years. At 62, looking back to those years is fraught with the danger of cloudy nostalgia, little contextual understanding, and a filtering that shrouds the truth.

The truth that I know and what I'd share is:

1. I came from Calcutta (before it was Kolkata) and chose St. Stephen's because Calcutta University seemed to be uncertain about whether its students could physically sit for exams and graduate. Repeated *hartals*, *bandhs*, political posturings made it difficult to consider what I thought was a given almost throughout my life.
2. I hadn't really heard of St Stephen's since there were very few students from Calcutta who'd gone to this institution. I did have a good friend in high school whose brother was at Stephen's a year ahead of me and he raved about Stephen's and its mix of eccentric, extremely intelligent, urbane, and elite students.
3. We were the 1967 "Bong" (Bengali) Brigade: I, and a few others, notably Adhip Chaudhuri (Eco 1970, topped DU) and his brother, Pradip Chaudhuri (Chem 1970). We were a bit awed by being at St Stephen's, with the very privileged group of young people from all over India, especially the public schools such as Mayo, Doon, Sanawar, St Paul's and St Edmund's. There was even a fellow who'd gone to Harrow in the UK. We nicknamed him "Harrow" and to this day only remember him that way.
4. 1967 the year that saw a peasant uprising the small north Bengal village of Naxalbari, a year after the Bihar famine. Many Stephanians who were senior to us had gone to Bihar for famine relief work, and it had changed their lives forever (though we didn't quite know how much till years later). Among them were Bunker Roy, Dilip Simeon, Arvind Das and Rabindra Ray.
5. "College" was dominated by the fellows in Residence. There were about 150 of us out of a total student body of about 750, I think. We were insular, cocky, and dominated academics. Sports, though, was dominated by "dayskis" – the day scholars.
6. I stayed in C-2 Allnut South. Many years later, I visited Stephen's with my oldest son and not knowing that Allnut South now houses only women, marched into the building and headed for my old room, only to be confronted by a somewhat perplexed woman, who asked how I'd gotten past the *chowkidar*! Our rooms were Spartan compared to now, I imagine. They had 2 charpoys, one desk, one chair, two sets of built in shelves. That's it. We rented table fans in the spring and summer from the gyps. All else was improvised. Walls started to be decorated with flags stolen from Janpath and Rajpath ceremonies; imported car hubcaps were a mark of prestige. And so on. I can't even remember having extra table lamps.
7. "Ragging" was an established tradition and we unquestioningly dove in. Freshmen ragging lasted for a month. From middle of July when we started the semester to late August. We were perhaps lucky since nothing horrendous happened to us and we made friends very quickly with a lot of people. I met many lifelong friends in that period of time. Among them were Falguni Sen (Physics 1970), Banbit Roy, Devajyoti Ghosh, Brijeshwar Singh, Biswajit Bannerji and Pulok Chatterjee (all from Eco 1970), Dhroova Saikia, Ranjit Chowdhury and Amar Kundu, my roommate in freshman year (all from English 1970), Shahid Amin, Prasenjit Duara, Yogendra Jain, Partha Sengupta and Jayanta Bhuyan (now deceased) (all from History 1970)...and I also made some friends across the road, such as Nirmalaya Ghosh (Eco 1970 at Hindu).
8. In my first week at St Stephen's, I, with a bunch of other freshmen and some seniors, were invited to one of Pricipal Sircar's dinners at his house. I think I was late getting ready, being delayed by some ragging incident, so I was frantically trying to find the house (I was a bit disoriented about the campus geography) and found myself bushwhacking through the brush behind the Principal's house. I cut and scratched my ankles and arms. Sweating profusely, I showed up and enjoyed a terrific meal. Principal Sircar didn't ask me what had happened.



College production of "MacBird" with Kapil Sibal in the title role.
Amit Shah with black glasses and a suit as one of the reporters (far right)
Prasenjit Duara (1970 History) - looking directly at camera
Amar Kundu (1970 English) in white shirt, dark trousers, about to move forward.

9. I jumped head-first into life at St Stephen's. I joined the Student Council, became a contributor to "Onset" and "Katy," joined student dramatics, and was a member of the committee for the World University Students (which had an unfortunate acronym). Prasenjit Duara and I had to arrange the gatherings for foreign students (I think Mizos and Nagas were also considered foreign students then) and we ordered the best pastries we could find. There wasn't the huge choice of societies, awards, and extracurricular activities that are options these days. But hitchhiking was popular then.
10. Adhip and I became Arvind Das's campaign coordinators for our year for Arvind's successful run for the College Student Union Society presidency. With its political tone, this was a watershed moment.
11. I had played cricket for my high school, so I thought that showing up at Kashmere Gate fields for cricket practice was a good idea. Partho Sengupta, who was also a high school cricketer, and I showed up. It took us all of 10 minutes to realize that we were competing for slots with folks who'd played for their states! And that was that.
12. And a ride to Connaught Place was readily available if we could position ourselves at the right spots on the university side of the Ridge. CP had one discotheque---the "Cellar"--- which was smoke-filled from tobacco and other leafy items and blasted Led Zeppelin and Fat Mattress to our delight. This was also the venue for meeting young women from IP College, MH and LSR, the only women's colleges of repute at that time. Hindu College, which was also co-ed, didn't seem to figure in our equations.
13. On campus, we spent an enormous amount of time in the Café having mince and scrambled-on-toast. I think we had coffee too, but I can't remember that. Sukhia ruled the space outside the Café, under the tree, near Allnutt Gate. Selling *barfi* and cigarettes, he also became the "banker" for many students. Recently, one such beneficiary gave Sukhia's now ageing son Rohtash a very large check to cover the initial loans plus the interest of decades!
14. The library was well stocked but Spartan compared to libraries that we went to in the US only a few years later. The trick to being in the library was to get the recommended books for papers before the "hog" (some earnest but selfish nerd) would get them all out and hoard them from the rest of his classmates. I had become friendly with two students who were a year senior to me and shared their papers with me and I learned a whole lot from their scholarship --- Gyanendra Pandey (1969 History) and Dilip Simeon (1969 History).
15. Stephen's afforded me the opportunity to stretch my thinking and imagination. It allowed me to get involved in many activities that I might not have if it hadn't been for the confidence I had as a member of the group at Stephen's. We were insular, extremely well off and elitist but we also were, to a great extent, becoming aware of what the world around was like and why. Many of us struggled to make sense of that world and our place in it. Without St. Stephen's College, we'd be different people today. Of that I'm sure.



Photo : Ayush Kant Datta

Justice Sarin presents a memento to our living legend, David Baker, who's writing history of College, about "How Delhi's history has overlapped with that of St. Stephen's"



Photo : Ayush Kant Datta

Reunion 2011

Provocateur: The Great Dayski vs. Res Debate

By Jaideep Nirula

Much has been said and written on whether it's essential to have lived on campus to have really experienced St Stephen's College.

The topic is usually raised by former students who happen to have lived in Residence ("Res"). The most politically correct may broach the subject by wondering out loud if day scholars ("dayskis") missed out on certain aspect of College life. At which point someone from the damn-the-torpedoes brigade will assert that, let's be honest, dayskis aren't truly Stephanians. The resulting free-for-all will drift off into whether admitting women to College was such a great idea, if reservation in admissions is such a great idea, whether Indian democracy is such a great idea, etc. Inevitably Hitler ends up in the mix. That is the way of Internet conversations...

Ever since my college days in the mid 80's, I have wondered whether, being a dayski, I had missed out on being a "true Stephanian". I have occasionally met folks who, when identified as Stephanians, immediately asked, "which block?" The moment I mentioned the word dayski, their interest in talking about College waned.

I joined St Stephen's in the Great Admissions Struggle of 1984. I was happy to enjoy our great college environment and the comforts of living at home. Home-cooked meals, being with loving family members, and getting to spend evenings with friends was a perfect backdrop for the academic grind. I used to see Res types on Friday afternoons and wonder how they'd be feeling over the weekend without the comfort of their own homes.

Then the first Student Council elections came and ground reality hit me in the face. If memory serves me right, Pawan Duggal stood for President, canvassing as a dayski. Election Day seemed to be treated as a holiday by dayskis, who largely absented themselves. Res guys certainly wouldn't vote for a dayski! Pawan got few votes.

That's when I actually realized the sharp divide between the Res and dayskis. I asked myself, was I, a dayski, missing out on Brand Stephen's? But I was able to console myself with the thought that it really couldn't be so since none of the girls were in Res and they seemed to harbor no such feelings.

As time passed, my feeling of missing out the Res life grew. By my second year, a few dayski friends joined the Res. Their ranks grew by the third year. One could see the change in the lives of these dayski-to-Res converts: they became much more involved in College activities and seemed to increase their circle of friend. I continued to wish to be active in the student council. But the fear of contesting (and losing) elections as a dayski always held me back.

When I went to the US for graduate school, I opted to stay in a dorm rather than an apartment. That's really where I realized what I had truly missed out on. Being able to spend time with peers in the dorm, and enjoy the resulting deep



Jaideep Nirula, BSc 1987, has helped develop mapping technology that's used in areas ranging from election analysis and ERP to radio taxi dispatch

friendships, was a wonderful gift of my later youth. The bonding and the camaraderie that developed made me feel as if I was staying in a large family. We were all together in moments of fun, lows, success and failures. Though an international student, a new arrival, I ventured to stand for the college elections. I was elected Vice President, a post never before held by an Indian. I realized how much I had missed out on as an undergraduate. I never really had that feeling of truly belonging as a dayski at Stephen's.

The Res-related discussions on Facebook Stephanian groups are there for all to see. The mention of Res brightens up the whole group and everyone chips in with their comments. I can appreciate the sense of one happy family reminiscing with happiness and pride. Further, the bonds Res guys shared with faculty is something else we dayskis missed out on.

I am sure not every dayski will agree with my thoughts. But today, if anyone were to ask me if a Res person is more Stephanian (whatever that means!) than a dayski, I would say yes. The real feel and essence of the Stephen's experience comes out when you listen to Res types.

On a parting note, I can't help mentioning lines sung by the Late Jagjit Singh:

*“Yeh daulat bhi lelo, yeh shauhrat bhi le lo
Magar mujh ko lauta do woh college ki din...”*



Reunion 2011: Archana with Sagarika Ghose of CNN-IBN and Sonia Singh of NDTV



Photo: Ayush Kant Datta

Reunion 2011 Lunch

The Placement Pros

The St Stephen's Campus Placement Cell is entirely run and managed by students

By Satyaki and Ariba, edited by N Raghunathan

Ariba is president of the CPC and Satyaki is vice-president; both are third-year Math students. N Raghunathan, who heads the Dept of Economics at St Stephen's, is CPC staff advisor.

“Top salary offer of Rs 19 lakh at St Stephen's beats average IIM salaries”, said the Economic Times headline on February 2.

The international bank's offer was a third higher than last year's top offer of Rs 14.3 lakh at College, and higher than the Rs 14-17 lakh average pay for freshers at leading IIMs including Ahmedabad. The average salary offered at St Stephen's is up 30% over the previous year, at more than Rs 8.5 lakh a year.

College saw AT Kearney, Goldman Sachs, Pernod Ricard, Swiss Re, Aptivaa and MXV Consulting come in for the first time, adding to the regulars.

A year ago, 17 companies had offered jobs to 37 Stephanian junior members, at College. The median package then was Rs 6.6 lakh, the mean, Rs 7.1 lakh.

Meet the body that handles all placement activities: the Campus Placement Cell (CPC) of St Stephen's, entirely run by College students under the guidance of a staff advisor.

The CPC assists final year students in getting placed, by inviting companies to the campus and helping them recruit. Before that, it organizes workshops for the junior members, to develop and prepare them for recruitment. A structure and process helps companies connect to the right talent, and guidelines for students avoids 'wastage' of jobs.

Last year, the CPC has also started internships, supported strongly by alumni. In the 2012 experiment of bringing alumni and interns together, the CPC placed 40 interns from across the three undergrad years at College.

The CPC uses its database, built over the years, to invite companies on campus. This includes companies that have visited College in the past, those who have contacted College on their own, those roped in through personal contacts, and companies where there are senior alumni.

CPC activities start with the College academic year, and take place throughout, from end-July to mid-April. After inviting companies through emails and on the phone, where there's a positive response, the CPC then negotiates the details for on- or off-campus interaction, and finalizes the dates.

At the beginning of the year, we register final-year students who wish to sit for placements, and they are made aware of the CPC's activities and opportunities through newsletters sent via e-mail. Students who register then fill up a form, stating their preferences among various sectors, the kind of pay packages they would be interested in and other details which would help us understand their needs and choices better.

In the past two years, about 175 students registered with the CPC. This year the number has gone up to 230 now. The top contributing streams are Eco and Math Honors (adding up to 40%), followed by Physics. Many of them want to pursue an MBA, and

From the Archives...



Photo : Atul Vijay Singh



Photo : Atul Vijay Singh



Photo : Atul Vijay Singh

want some work experience before pursuing that. Work experience is an eligibility requirement for several MBA and other postgrad programs.

One reason for the relative paucity of students signing up from other courses such as English, Philosophy, History and Sanskrit could be that many of them wish to pursue higher studies. But another reason could be that the nature of jobs offered so far by companies that have visited us and recruited has, by and large, not been of the kind that might interest students from these streams. We are, therefore, actively looking for ways to broaden the range of opportunities, by drawing in companies from the media and publishing, and similar sectors.

In the past three years the CPC has seen a steady increase in the number of companies coming to the campus for recruitment, and in the percentage of students accepting these offers. Top recruiters include McKinsey & Co., Monitor Group, Bain Capability Center, Deutsche Bank, Citibank, DE Shaw, Deloitte Singapore, Google, Essex Lake Group, Jaypee Group, Baring India, Max New York Life Insurance. There's also Educational Initiatives, Glyph, Times of India, Hindustan Times, and Indian Express. More companies are welcome.

Companies with the highest pay packages are mainly consultancies and banks. Mostly these companies do not necessarily have any inflexible eligibility criteria in terms of the course being pursued. However, in the case of financial institutions, evidently there is a preference for students who have shown an interest in finance-related activities in the past. These students typically belong to the Economics, Mathematics and Physics streams, and hence they tend to get these jobs.

Similarly in the case of consultancies, logical and analytical and quantitative thinking is given a lot of importance while solving case studies, and Economics, Mathematics and Physics students again tend to have an edge over the others in this, due to the nature of the subjects they are studying. And so the numbers recruited from these streams tends to be the highest.

Of the 37 students recruited a year ago, 14 were from Eco, 11 from Math, and 4 each from Physics and the BSc program. The average pay package also tends to be higher for students from these courses: Rs 7.35 lakh for Eco, Rs 5.29 lakh for Physics, Rs 4.67 lakh for math, Rs 4.58 lakh for BSc, and Rs 3.65 lakh for others.

A sector-wise break up shows that the largest number of job offers were from the consulting sector, followed by banking, education, e-commerce and conglomerates.

Ever hear of such a student-run placement/internship program in an undergrad liberal-arts/science college in India? We haven't. As far as we know, it's unique to St Stephen's.



Photo Credit: Atul Vijay Singh

Gavaskar in the Dining Hall, on his way to IDG Meeting in the Hall - 1984

From the Poet's Corner...



Vinod Vyasulu was born in Guntur, attended St Stephen's College between 1964 and 69, traveled in Mexico and other places, and settled down in Bangalore after marrying Poornima and he lived happily ever after."

The Stephanian Zeitgeist (Vol 1)

I

I have often wondered
At the bond Stephanians enjoy
With each other
Across generations.
There are other great colleges in the country.
Madras Christian College
Is rightly famous.
Presidency College in Calcutta
Has an ethos of its own
Bengali and Indian at once.
Pune's Ferguson College Has remarkable alumni.
But none has the
Spirit of Stephania.
Sad but True.
Other colleges have alumni
We are Stephanian.

Reading Economics (Vol 1)

When I was young and bright
St Stephen's tried to teach me economics.
It is the study of how scarce resources have alternative uses.
We were a men only institution
There was, not a scarcity
But a complete famine
Of women.
We had to import them from MH.
What were they talking about?
It made no sense.
It is the study of man in the ordinary business of life.
This seemed right in a men only institution.
The ordinary business of life
Was eating in the dining hall
Because we had no money.
It was so banal!
Economics understands Opportunity cost.
Given the constraints of Attendance
Which classes should we cut?
This made a lot of sense.
I became an economist.



David I Masilamani, Batch of '78, is a maverick Stephanian. Ever since college as a professional and personally he has travelled the lateral route...of the free bird.

From illustrating for Siddarth Basu documentaries in his early days to a stint with Bunker Roy in Rajasthan. Dabbling in the hotel Industry for a few years to stepping into the world of advertising.

As a performer playing under the name Blackjack! (His christened name at St. Stephens College as a fresher was Black Jack Jigg), David went on to become Indias #1 Classic Rock and Blues DJ. He has his own online radio channel called BLACKJACK 24x7 featuring his chosen genres.

Jack Jigg as he is popularly know on social networking site Facebook, when not riding with his pan India Royal Enfield club Wolfe Pack India is a graphic designer and poet/thinker.

He would like to go back to his acoustic guitar, do a little acting in cinema and perhaps publish a book of his poems.

~ Dandelion Dreams ~

Let me lie beside your tenderness
Trace your tender lips and wonder
Hear you breathe through gentle kiss
What spell is this I'm under?

What madness grips my tired soul...
When darkness drops around thee.
I chase a shadow heavenward
While sadness still surrounds me.

I meet you in that insane place
Where this emptiness is longer
I fail. I fall. I fail. I fall again...
Each time I fall I'm stronger.

~ Beauty! Oh! Beauty. ~

Beauty!
She walks alone, always alone.
Down Life's long winding lane.
Sometimes, she moves that way,
Sometimes, she steps in to this, this.

Beauty.
She comes to me silently
She fills my empty mind anew
With sweet desire, what is this fire?
Wisdom cautions me I know, but Need is my Fool.

Beauty!
Oh! sublime Beauty!
To dwell for a moment lost deep inside
Your soft warm embrace and then to trace...
To shift my Ugliness for even an instant
If only to drench it's space, with your Love.



Photo : Ayush Kant Datta

You've got to hand it to the folks across the road: they have by far a better view