

The Dohnavur Post

The Santhosha Vidhyalaya Alumni Newsletter
For Private Circulation Only

It's the start of the new year and hey, The Dohnavur Post has taken the hint! We've turned two and we're now in our second volume. These are heady days at the virtual office. We're having some new writers including Paul, probably the funniest man to pass through the hallowed gates of SV. You can catch him in this issue as he shows us a deft turn of phrase, as he (let's call it) updates some old doggerels; giving a new twist, some vim and zest to some old rhymes. Neha seems breathless as she recollects some bittersweet memories from her childhood at school. Peter has had his bubble burst and writes about it in his usual inimitable style. Steve hasn't stopped celebrating Christmas as you will see and Daniel is seeing Angels everywhere he turns.

We've also been some months into our project to build a kitchen at school. To use an apt phrase, we seem to have gone off the boil. Hopefully we can make some concrete steps towards this project in the upcoming days.

This is a newsletter for all SV guys and we welcome more involvement from all you folks. New writers, new ideas, new editors.... It's the new year anyways. So, here's wishing you the best for this year... Write to us at thedohnavurpost@gmail.com

Happy Reading!
The Team



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...One Sunday Afternoon



It's 2 on a Sunday afternoon and a row of little heads in ponies are lying on bunks in a hostel dorm. Its a beautiful sunny day outside... one that every child would like spend playing outside

than snoozing! The wide French windows give ample view of the attractions outside.. the swing, the sandpit.. the slide not to mention the little insects and plants that never fail to amuse kids.

The warden an amply rounded woman with an almost athletic build strides past the corridor around the room with a sleek shiny stick at her side. Thud.. comes the sound of her door closing.. meaning she should be dozing off for 2 hours or more before she checks on her little wards again.

One little girl slides down from her bunk and disappears. Restless myself, I slide down and tiptoe out into the wash area of the hostel. There I see it... there is the shrub which has a pod of seeds... I had seen some girls put it into water and it had burst. I try it out myself ..and there it does burst! I start to collect more ..by then there are already 2 little girls beside me collecting too. I lose track of time and other things interest me like the sticky

grass ..from which I can make a basket or make little tents. Oh no! seems like our whole class has joined me... the whole area is filled with little girls playing and getting noisy too.

I should have seen it coming... There I see the roundly lady marching up to us! And am I seeing right? there gleaming in the sun is the shiny bamboo stick swinging in her hands. My knees go weak... after that everything is a blur. We are rounded up and interrogated ...who started it? who slid out first? who? I don't know! Me? Maybe.. Wait!! Someone tell me how did a harmless playtime turn into a nightmare... well.. Welcome to SV!

Neha passed out of the School in 1994. She is currently studying Computer Information Systems at Ivytech college, Terre Haute, Indiana. Writing is a hobby and Blogging is her favourite pastime. Get a hint of her writing at www.sparklincystalz.blogspot.com and a whiff of her culinary knowledge at www.indicurry.blogspot.com. She is married to Finney Selvaseelan and they make their home in Indiana, USA.





Christmas...

Hey all,

How did the Christmas season go this time around? Did Carols, cakes and shopping – the three wise men that we wait for round the year finally arrive. This time round I couldn't be home because I couldn't get a few days off at work.

Christmas is an avalanche experience. There is the winter, then come the lights, the carols, the vacation planning, the shopping. The first signs of the season start with the winter chill that meets you late November. Then the vacation planning adds its 'thing' to the season. We hit December and our vacations are planned. The season gathers momentum as the Christmas carols arrive on the music scene. Weekends are filled with Carol singsong services.

The Christmas avalanche has gathered quite a bit of snow now. Living rooms suddenly sprout indoor plantation called Christmas trees loaded with tinsel and confetti. Stars dangle from porches and light arrangement greet you in the local store. Before you know it, Christmas shopping is here. It gets added to the huge Christmas avalanche. And "then one foggy Christmas eve, Santa came to sleigh" as the song goes, Santa with his plastic smile makes an appearance either at your Carol service or the Carol rounds. Cakes have vanished from the Baker's counter overnight.

The avalanche has picked up everything on the way now and has reached top speed.

Christmas wishes start dominating SMS content and there you are at the eye of the storm. It's Christmas eve. It's a magical world. A glow everywhere. A glint in every eye. A smile on every face.

Then the whole season culminates at the Christmas mass or service. The avalanche is about to hit the rock. The Church aisle is a heady mix of perfume and colours. The Christmas day dawns as we leave church and reach home groggy from the rollercoaster ride. The avalanche has truly hit the rock and has collapsed leaving the riders dizzy.

Well, what is Christmas? In my opinion, it's an excuse for Christians to have fun. They would have you believe otherwise. They call it "a season of love". "It's the time to remember our Lord's birth"

they would tell you. Their carols speak of "peace on earth and goodwill to men". But I would whistle and walk away singing an empty line from a silly song "tis a season to be jolly, fa la la la la, la la la la" as if to tell them that the season and all its accompaniments are as empty as the line.

To me Christmas is not the season. To me it's the birth of our Lord. It is not 'remembering' the birth. It's the actual birth of Christ's life. When a man would look at himself in comparison with God and cry out in his heart like Peter did on the shores of Galilee "Go away from me Lord, for I'm a sinner", then it's Christmas. Repentance is the first step to becoming a Christian.

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Who is a Christian? Is he not the one in whom we can see the life of Christ. When Christ is born in a man's life just like he was formed in Mary's womb miraculously by the Holy Spirit, its Christmas. When that birth is apart from man and only by God, just like the first Christmas, then its Christmas – the birth of Christ's life in our life. Christmas happens when nobody expects it. It happens suddenly. It happens of God.

It's not remembering the birth of the Lord, for you can remember all you want about the manger scene but it still would make no difference to your life. The world will know when Christmas happens. It will show in the Christian's life. You don't have to sing carols and wear new clothes. The world will know by your life.

The world will know when Christmas happens in a home. We don't have to put up a Christmas tree and suspend a plastic star in the porch. The world will know. It knew when it happened in one Zacchaeus' home and it will know when it happens in your home too. You know what?! There are Christmases happening today around the world. Yes, after all God is still in business.

Steve Jothiraj, a student of the Christian religion, earns his bread as a researcher with IMRB. He plays striker for the Banaswadi Boys and roots for Arsenal FC on weekends.



Kitchen Project Update

We can make this work. Yes, we can make the Kitchen project work if we care enough!

Reaching the budget for the Kitchen Project is easy if we break the whole amount into small parts that can be easily given by each one of us. If 300 alumni give Rs.5000 each, we'll reach the amount. Now passing the message around is the job at hand.

So let's do our part and then spread the message around.

The school has two accounts
1.Dohnavur - Acc No.757 (code 1379)
2.Tirunelveli - Acc No.4648 (code 570)

When you transfer please send a mail to svdohn@gmail.com and thedohnavurpost@gmail.com also so that we could track it.

Let's do it! Let's care!



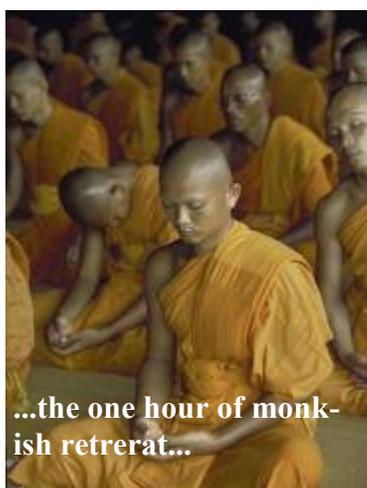
The Bubble

In a world that ran like clockwork, interruptions were seldom appreciated. The Bubble was one such place where everyday was like the one before. It was called The Bubble 'cause no matter what happened in the world outside things within the bubble just remained the same. The bubble was incorruptible and uninfluenced by the big bad world.

Now, Law and Order was of paramount interest to the authorities of the bubble. To the citizens it was a burden they had long since learned to carry. A normal day or to be more precise everyday in the bubble began with its citizens waking up to the sound of wake wakey..... playing over the public address system and the Wake-up pre-fect calling out gettap...gettap. They then moved

in single file towards the box room to get their brushes, clothes and every other accessory with which they would be engaged for the next half an hour. Once brushed, cleaned up and appropriately attired they marched on back to the dorm for their morning study hour. Following that one hour of monkish retreat, the citizens would then go for a meal before they were hustled into their classrooms.

As the day proceeds, they sit pretending to be attentive to the classes till day becomes noon and they are set free of their class work. They then settle for a small tea and snack before being let free into the play ward where they vent out their remaining energy.



...the one hour of monkish retreat...

After the fun time gets over they once again go through the ritual of getting cleaned up and ready for their evening meal. An hour of prayer and another hour of monkish retreat follow before the lights go out on them. The whole bubble from then on

is an epitome of silence; so much so that you could even hear a bubble break.

Like every organised system, the bubble has in

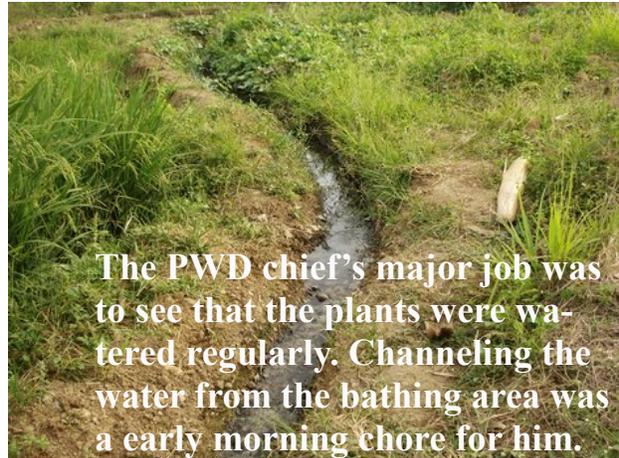
place responsible citizens at responsible positions to see that the bubble way of life remained unthreatened by the lawless. These citizens of order include; the keeper of the treasury (Box room Keeper), the String Inspector, the PWD chief (read plants and water flow) and the keeper of the keys (The Key board In charge) to name a few.

The bubble was perfectly secure and life if not interesting was at least mundanely predictable. The citizens of order were responsible by fear and not by zeal for they knew the price of incompetence. Life at the bubble was different from the perspective of the citizens of order. A normal citizen would have a good night sleep assured that the wakeup

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prefect would wake him up from his slumber on time. The wakeup prefect would have a fitful sleep knowing fully well that he couldn't afford to wake up late. The Box room Keeper knew that he had to have the box room opened by the time the citizens awakened and so the wake up call to him was like the sound of a gun going off at the beginning of a sprint. The PWD chief knew he had to get his act right early every morning 'cause he would have to see that the Casuarinas' were irrigated and the drainage lines from the bath cleaned. He had to see that the right team was in the right place at the right time doing the right work so when the wakeup call was sounded his mind went questioning who?, where? and how?. The string inspector knew he had to crack the whip at every lazy bone of a citizen to have the strings cleared of dry clothes. For him the wakeup call meant just



The PWD chief's major job was to see that the plants were watered regularly. Channeling the water from the bathing area was a early morning chore for him.

another depressing day at the office listening to resentment and anger of the citizens he drove to labour.

The work of a citizen of order was nerve racking. The bubble head knew this and so he had in place a team of citizens of order, who would

take turns at each of these responsibilities. I did say that every day was like the one before in the bubble. But history records a few days called bubble bursts when all hell broke loose across the face of the bubble. I did happen to witness one bubble burst when I did reside in the bubble. It was about the time when B team shifted from box room duty to PWD – casuarinas duty. It was a Saturday and like most weeks the previous day had been full of rumours that the Saturday would be a holiday. What happened on the wee hours of Saturday morning was something phenomenal in the sense that it brought the bubble to a complete standstill for over three hours.

The wakeup prefect woke up the box room keeper and went on to wake the rest of the citizens. The box room keeper was surprised to see that the key to the box room was not there on the key board. Surprised, but unsure if the shift had indeed changed, the box room keeper went back to sleep thinking that someone else had opened the box room and could afford a few minutes more of sleep.

The citizens who had ventured out towards the box room, finding it closed assumed that it was a holiday and went back to their beds. The whole bubble returned to serene slumber as the clock ticked firstly past their wakeup time then through their bathing time. It was about this time when the bubble head who

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...key to the box room was not there on the key board.



had been enjoying a leisurely sleep that morning began to get unsettled in his slumber. He was accustomed to the shouting and the raised voices that accompanied the normal bathing hour. At first he shrugged the feeling off but after an hour of unrest he knew for sure that something was amiss. He opened

his eyes to feel the heat of the morning sun on his opening eyes and for a moment he stood there in utter disbelief. Gathering himself then and with long strides he crossed his outer courtyard and into the dorm he

stepped to find the citizens all asleep.

Now the bubble head could be a real bubble buster sometimes. As his anger seethed through him, he struck every citizen who came his way busting their bubbles as he went from bunk to bunk jostling them from their sleep. The bubble head had taken the avatar of the destroyer. Soon the citizens were doing a fast-forward version of their morning routine. Hurrying through the brushing, cleaning and dressing up. They all settled down quickly for the monkish retreat as the bubble head held court. The B team was summoned and so was the team which had taken charge from them. It was soon discovered that the reason for the bubble burst was a missing key. Investigation was carried out all through the study

hour but the key was no where to be found. The broken lock was by now replaced and the rest of the morning passed by like every other day.

The very next day as the B team sat out their PWD – casuarinas duty, Menace brought out something stealthily from his pocket. As we stooped down to look at what the object was that shone so brightly in the dim morning moonlight, we were shocked to find that it was the missing key lying harmlessly in Menace's palm. He then went on to explain how he had forgotten to return the key and how he was for once stumped by his own rumour of Saturday being a holiday. Surprisingly, the key that the whole bubble was in search of had been lying in his bed the whole time the bubble was prey to the wrath of the bubble head. As we looked down at the key in wonder we knew it could never be returned back. It would for ever be one of the many skeletons buried on the casuarina canals. Hopefully, some PWD team did dig it up in the course of their cleaning the casuarina canals or perhaps it just got buried



Peter, the Newsletter's star writer is a teacher by trade. He lectures on food technology at the Karunya Institute of Technology. Apart from churning out brilliant articles for the Newsletter, he does a lot of reading.



... He played basketball like an angel

It was the yearly picnic from our church. We had decided to go to a small beach a little away from our town. The bus was overflowing with food, fun and laughter as we drove away from the church. I smiled and looked at my pretty wife sitting next to me and said, "Well, we'll need an army of angels to take care of this bunch of kids". She laughed as she



said, "You better ask for the best, maybe the Arch-angel Michael. This bunch would be more than a handful for the average angel".

On the beach, we watched as the kids ran out, some to the water and some to

over the globe. A globetrotter, I thought; must have been on some of those UN Peacekeeping holidays, I thought cynically. He said he'd never had time for games and that he'd been on duty for what seemed like many millenniums. I smiled as I asked him what he did with his friend; he must have friends! He said his friend Gabriel and he spent their time flying around the world. He smiled calmly as my wife giggled and someone sniggered behind us. He was quickly building up air miles talking to us, we thought.

I asked him if he wanted to shoot a few hoops with the kids. He was obviously a novice, but he did look quite good and I assumed it must be because of his army training and his ability to focus. One of the kids asked him if he wanted to go for the basket.

the activity area. Some of our kids were shooting hoops at a small court on the beach. I saw a man standing and watching the children playing. He looked very fit and bronzed with a strong chiseled face and an aura of power and authority. As he walked, he looked like he floated over the ground. He looked like a tough man to tangle with. I assumed he must be a soldier or officer from the nearby army base. Finding myself beside him, I fell to talking with him. He told me he was a protector and protected people for a living. Well, I thought, this was the first time I've heard a soldier describe himself this way.

He said nostalgically that he had not played basketball though he had seen it played all

The man looked a bit confused at that until one of the guys showed him a lay-up. His eyes lit up and after seeing a few dunks, he decided to try his luck. After his shot, there was a stunned silence on the court. We had never seen someone stay that long up in the air. He seemed to float up in the air for ever and ever. With time in the air like that, he could be the next Michael Jordan, I thought. There was an awkward silence on the court, we had seen the impossible.

The stunned silence was broken by the



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sound of panicked voices behind me and I turned to look at the sea. The horizon was broken by a huge wall of racing water. I looked and I realized our children wouldn't make it to safety in time. I felt like I was in a time warp and the beach seemed to spin in front of me. I thought of each kid running now for his life including my son as I dropped to my knees and poured my heart into a prayer. Suddenly the beach was full of running men helping the kids. They looked tough, capable and seemed to float over the ground. They seemed superhuman in the speed at which they moved.

I looked at the Stranger calmly standing and watching. He looked at me and smiled, "I'm Mike and those are my men. We protect people for a living".

Did you by any chance fight a dragon I asked. He smiled his angelic smile as he and his men seemed to shimmer and seemed to fade away into nothing.

"For he shall give his Angels charge over thee, to protect thee in all thy ways, Psalm 91:11".

Daniel is an Export Professional working for Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. His interests are in Reading and in Writing, when possible. His passion is football and he supports Arsenal F. C.



Paul's Take on Popular Rhymes

Ba Ba Black sheep, Have you any wool?
Edison Sir, Edison sir, Three bags full.
Strum for the master, Sing for the same,
Gun for the little boy, Who winks at the dame.

Ingy pingy pongy,
Vembu beat the donkey,
Donkey cried, wet clothes dried,
Ingy pingy pongy.

Humpty dumpty sat on a wall,
Come September, Courtallam falls
All the sotta boys who were acting like

men (especially Ben)
Couldn't take bath in cold water again.

Johnny Johnny, yes papa
Eating puttu, no papa
Picking lice, no papa
Smelling nice, yes papa
Open your mouth. Agha!
Agha!

Ringa ringa roses,
Basket full of moses
Huska, buska, pharaoh is a clown.



Paul Raj passed out of school in 1997. Paul and his wife Arthini make their home in Bangalore. Paul likes lightening up the SV mood. Paul earns his living by being a part of the Motorola think tank.