

The Mela Mood!

The Mela is an exciting event that everybody works hard for and everyone enjoys. Parents and visitors come from afar for a day, to see students' skills and talents and to have some fun. Students move about with their parents, watching the cultural programme and looking at the work on display. The first Mela in Sahyadri took place in 1999 and has continued to be held every year, except in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004.

When we arrived in school in November for the second term, the air was crackling with the buzz about the Mela. The team organizing the Mela includes Vandan akka, Neela akka and Rajan sir. Usually the preparations take one month, but this year an attempt is being made to finish the preparation in two weeks. The Mela has been organized around the hockey court. Earlier, the football field was used as the parking lot for the Mela. However, as the field has been renovated recently, this year cars are being parked outside the guest house and along the roadside. Generally, five to six hundred people come to attend the Mela, and stay until about three-thirty or four o'clock.

About twenty stalls have been planned, including jewellery, handmade paper, science, maths, books, chocolate and iced tea, the theatre, the class ten stall, and several food stalls. The science and maths stalls are new and special this time. The art exhibition is taking place in the Junior Auditorium. The construction of stalls started on 16th December. Bamboo, hay, jute, cowdung, ropes and sheets have been brought from Rajgurunagar and Pune to construct the stalls and the stage. Children are contributing to the Mela by doing art, dance, songs, plays and designing the invitation card. On Mela day, children volunteer by helping in some stalls. This year, the workers are going to try putting up two giant wheels for the Mela.

Preparations for the cultural programme have also been going on, and are getting more rigorous as the Mela approaches. Prabir sir and Anju akka, parents of the school, interacted with the theatre workshop group for four days, to give them a sense of street plays, after which Prabhat sir engaged the group. The script of the drama which will be staged on the Mela day is being written by the students, and the play is taking final shape over the ten days before Mela. Seema akka and Telang sir are doing a play with students of Class 8. They are rehearsing very hard in the last week before the Mela, to be able to stage the Hindi play 'Kenaram and Becharam.' Vandana akka, a school visitor, conducted a workshop with interested children from classes 4 to 7. She taught them a folk dance based on the Tagore song, 'Paush toder daak deyeche.' Neela akka and Nikhil sir are teaching a Gujarati song to the girls of class 7, while Nikhil sir is teaching the 8ths a Marathi song. Class 4 are practicing an action song with Tania akka. Apart from this, Girish sir is preparing class 7 for a sitar

performance and a Bharat Natyam piece is being taught by Juee akka to some members of the hobby class.

This year, the art work of students is not being sold. According to Anjali akka, this is because the school doesn't want to mix art with commercial purposes and would like students to work with art for art's sake. Also, when students produced extra art pieces for sale, it took too much of their time, so their academic work suffered.

Whatever the changes, most Sahyadrians feel that the Mela should never stop. Dilip sir says, "The Mela is a nice get-together. Dadas and didis feel happy that they are sitting in the stalls and talking with people." Sharad sir feels, "The Mela should be an event full of fun and joy and at the same time it shouldn't take too much of time and energy from students and teachers."

Reported by Aaditya S., Pallav and Vedant, with inputs from Sanskruti

Track and Field

Running, jumping and throwing comes naturally to children and how they love it! Sports is very close to the hearts of children. The Sports Fest celebrates the physical side of life and is a two-day festival of competitive sports and group games where students test themselves in races and other events. The Sports Day has been held every year since March 1998, when it was first introduced by the games committee. This year's Sports Fest was held over the 12th and 13th of December on the newly renovated football ground.

Preparation for the Sports Fest started with the leveling of the football field, the venue for the Sports Fest. The field was ready on the 5th, and the tracks and pitches were marked on the 6th of December. Next, the games committee decided the races and events and offered these to the students. The schedule for the heats was made and put up, and these were conducted over 6th to 10th December. The top six rankings were chosen for the main events. Then the relay teams were grouped and the equipment for events such as the shot put, javelin and medicine ball throws was readied. For the food stalls and shamiana, the preparations started on the 10th of December.

On the morning of 12th December, the Sports Fest started at 7:30 a.m. with the opening ceremony and ended at 4:15 p.m. with the ten-lap walk. A crowd of excited participants and an anxious bunch of students and teachers filled the shamiana, waiting for the Sports Fest to start. The school assembled class-wise for the opening ceremony. The 9th and 10th students walked around the track and the

torchbearers, the five best sports students of the school, ran two rounds of the tracks. Karan J. held the school flag and was the torchbearer along with Abhishek, Anisha J., Arushi and Ujwal. In the oath taking ceremony, Karan J. read out the oath, and the school repeated it, promising to participate in the best spirit of sportsmanship. Excitement ran high as the students dispersed and the first event was announced.

The 12th and 13th were warm; the sky was clear and the sun shone brightly. With lively music in the background, students dashing about in gaily coloured T-shirts and the red and orange of the shamiana fluttering in the breeze, the football field wore a very colourful look, making the air festive. The refreshments, like sugarcane juice, cucumber and sandwiches kept the participants going. A long queue snaked towards the sugarcane juice stall at all hours, while, on the field, students and teachers outdid themselves in the races, jumps and throws. Kartik of class nine, stunned the audience with his speed in the 100m race. Niksha and Arushi showed their stamina in the 1500m race. Arjun of class 7 was seen way ahead of other runners, and Sashank of class 6 stood out for his speed in the junior races. Saumya of class 8 performed well in long jump. Joshua, the long jump star among juniors, was a dark horse, as he never used to show up for games or P.T. Anshuman of class 10 proved his strength in the shot put throw. People walked their fastest to complete the ten-lap walk. Fun events like obstacle races, hit the ball and kings were organized. The most interesting and exciting events on the field were the relay races and the fun events. The tug-of-war between different sections of each class was rollicking fun. Class 10 won the tug-of-war against the teachers, although they were outnumbered. The crowd watching the tug-of-war crossed the tracks in their excitement, and would not go back despite several announcements. For the closing ceremony, the school walked silently around the track class-wise and returned to their positions, and the Sports Fest was declared closed.

The games committee organized the Sports Fest. Akshata akka is the convenor of this committee and is assisted by Gopal sir, Rajan sir, Nilesh sir, Gourab sir, Vinayak sir and a few students. Sachi, Aashin, Suhrid and Sujay of class nine as well as Anand, Karan J., Ujwal, Ankit, Dhwanil and Ratik of class ten, are active student members of this committee. They got along well and co-operated with each other. This time the Sports Fest was conducted very smoothly, without any major problems. According to Akshata akka, this was because the games committee members showed a lot of initiative and worked hard. They were very sincere and did not worry any other teachers. According to Akshata akka, the students participating were very disciplined, grasped instructions easily and did not argue with each other.

As the renovation of the football ground was not completed on schedule, students could not practice for their heats, and the heats got delayed. Low participation from the senior school made it possible to conduct heats quickly. The 400m race for seniors was cancelled because of too few participants.

Students felt that this Sports Fest was well organized; a few felt that it was boring. The sugarcane juice lines were very long, although there were two juicers this time. Only one seemed to work at any given time, owing to electricity cuts and the motor that was low on petrol, and the sugarcane juice supply was erratic. Some students felt the music could have been livelier, as the same tracks were repeated. Many students felt it would be better if junior and senior events were alternated so everyone would be reasonably occupied. Most people enjoyed the races, relays, obstacle races, long jump and the piggy back race a lot. According to Gopal sir, the Sports Fest was very competitive and intense and he feels it should be much more enjoyable and relaxed.

This year's Sports Fest had its highs and lows, but the school is already waiting for next year's, where there will undoubtedly be more new records and fresh excitement.

Reported by Satyajay and Siddharth

To Gather Together

During his life, J. Krishnamurti travelled across the world, talking about life. People who were interested attended his talks. When J. Krishnamurti passed away, the need was felt to continue these gatherings so people could discuss his teachings and share their own perceptions on life. These Gatherings are organized by the KFI every year in Rajghat, Sahyadri, Rishi Valley or Vasant Vihar. The first Gathering was held in Rajghat in the year 1987.

This year's Gathering was held on three days, from the 19th to the 21st of November, 2008 in Sahyadri. Eight trustees of the KFI attended the Gathering, in which 225 people from all over the country participated. This year, the theme of the Gathering was Man-Nature Relationship.

Lots of work went into preparing for the Gathering. The Study Centre was responsible for printing brochures, sending them out, receiving registrations, deciding the menu, organizing the programme and collecting study material. Sahyadri School prepared the dorms, classrooms, and the Senior Auditorium for the occasion.

On all these three days, the programme began with chanting and silence sessions which were followed by a talk or by a panel discussion conducted by the trustees. The participants had small group discussions and were shown videos of Krishnamurti's talks. In the evenings, participants were free to join the evening walks. On the third day, there was a Hindustani classical recital by Arati Ankalikar. The participants stayed in the Study Centre cottages, the school Guest House, Naval Veerayatan and in some of the dorms.

Bibasha akka says, "It was amazing meeting people from all walks of life and getting to hear other people's views." Vandan akka says she prefers small group discussions and adds, "When one hears different views, it stimulates one's thinking and one starts introspecting."

Reported by Nishi P.

Highlighting Hikes

Exploring the world and experiencing nature in all its different forms enriches our lives. In Sahyadri School, students go for hikes to explore the natural surroundings. Hikes give them an opportunity to test their physical capacity and to strengthen co-operation.

Three hikes are organized every year: the class hikes, the dorm hikes and the freshers' hike. Usually, the excursion committee (which includes Reena akka, Gopal sir, Rajan sir, Vinayak and a few other teachers and students) along with some dadas, decides the route for each class. The route is fixed keeping the age group in mind. The younger classes go on easy short-distance hikes, and older classes go on tougher, long-distance hikes.

This year, class hikes were held on 29th November. All the groups started out at 6:30 in the morning, carrying their sun caps, water bottles, tuck, sandwiches and sprouts. Fortunately, the weather was pleasantly cloudy and it drizzled a little as the students set off down the hill. The fourths and fifths went down the Python Hill to the Bhima river. Accompanying them were Reen akka and Salim sir. Sudesh sir and Seema akka were with the sixths, who went down the river by the chain path. Class seven, with Nilesh sir, Radhika akka and Vinayak sir, walked around the Parikrama of Shambhu Hill. Ramesh sir, Bharati akka and Rajkishore sir escorted the eighths around the base of Tiwai Hill. Gopal sir, Rajan sir, Smita akka and Sharad sir escorted the ninths to Turtle Hill. The tenths went to Gardu Bai with Prabhat sir, Zabil akka, Moin sir and Ram sir.

Reena akka says she liked the weather that day and the hikes were very relaxing. Gopal sir says he enjoyed his hike to Turtle Hill because it was very challenging. Hikes provide a refreshing change from the routine of our daily lives, giving us a taste of adventure and excitement.

Reported by Anshumaan

Excitement Afoot

In Sahyadri, when the talk turns to football, there is a lot of excitement. Since 1999, it has been a tradition to have a football camp in the first term of every new session. The school is so crazy about football that even the 4th standards stayed awake till 2:00 am to watch the Euro 2008 Cup finals between Spain and Germany.

In the first term of 2008-09, a football camp was held from 16th June to 7th July. It was a twenty-one day camp conducted by three coaches — Amit sir, Shree sir and Sanjeel sir. The juniors attended the camp from 6 am to 7 am and again from 2 pm to 3 pm. The seniors attended it from 3 pm to 5 pm. About 106 boys and 34 girls had joined the football camp. Participants carried a bottle of water and wore shin pads and studs so they wouldn't hurt themselves.

In the mornings the campers were told to take two rounds, exercise and then do their drills. The drills involved practising

chip shots, passes, dodging, tackling, chesting, thighing, heading and co-ordination. As the coaches demonstrated the various drills properly, students had no problem following them.

Afternoons found the participants warming up and then playing a game. In last year's camp, they had practised a lot and hardly played, but this year practise sessions and games were planned in a more balanced way. Three inter-school matches and four in-house matches were played during the camp.

Overall, the camp went on fluidly and was very successful.

Reported by Yesho and Arjun, 7th

Fielding It Right

In Sahyadri, football is one of the most popular sports and is played in all seasons. The football field was first created when the school started in 1995, and has always been situated where it is now. This field has recently been renovated and extended.

The ground of the old field was very rocky and had a slope, with a difference of four feet between the two long sides. Enough soil has been packed into the surface to make the field level. The ground appears more even than before. With a long jump pit at the north end, a cricket pitch along the centre and a six-laned 200m long oval track marked in white lime powder, the ground looks as inviting as a chocolate cake with icing. As it has been flattened, the field has become stronger and less soil erosion is expected to happen.

The work of renovating the football field started on 8th October '08 and ended on 5th December '08. Ten workers were needed, and the work was supervised by Satish dada and Shanmugam sir. The process of renovating the field was not simple. First the existing field needed to be ploughed. The clods of soil were then broken. New soil containing black soil, murrum and brown soil was spread, levelled, watered and rolled with a road roller. The machines used were the JCB, tractors, trolleys, rakes, shovels, hand rollers and a road roller. 700 tractor loads of soil were needed and this came from private fields at the bottom of the hill. The JCB dug out the earth and dumped the soil in the trolleys. Fortunately, some unexpected showers provided the necessary moisture and no watering needed to be done. The new field will have to be watered and rolled regularly. Some bunds will be created to prevent soil erosion.

Several problems occurred during the renovation of the field. Unseasonal showers on 20th, 28th and 29th November delayed the work by about a week. However, the rains on 3rd December worked in our favour because the field needed to be watered then. The renovation work also ran into difficulty once when dark, clayey soil was brought, which was not suitable for the field as it would not allow water to pass through it. So this soil was used only on the

periphery of the field. Fresh brown soil was brought in place of the dark, clayey soil.

Arushi says, "I am very thankful to everyone who was involved in rolling and marking the field. This is the best effort the school ever made for the football field." Ratik says, "I thought the stones would be removed but all I see is more of them." Sakhi says, "I feel it's wonderful to have a rolled field. It seems bigger and more welcoming! Apart from the stones, though." According to Ujjwal, "It is amazingly done, but we can't say it will stay like it is now, for the rains haven't come. For this season it is excellent, there are fewer stones and it feels more inviting than before." Karan J. says, "The stones are still there but it has been levelled more properly than in the past six years." According to Gopal sir, "The football field is excellent. It is a good effort, but the soil should have been filtered to remove stones."

Reported by Joshua and Hast

Lights, Camera, ... A-V!

The palm trees sway in the morning breeze. We have assembled near the flag post for Independence Day celebrations. Selected students sing into microphones, their voices booming through speakers. But it suddenly starts to rain! As everyone runs for shelter, the A-V team saves the day, well, at least the equipment! This team of students arranges speakers, adjusts microphones, connects wires and controls the projector for every event. Want to know more? Read on!

The A-V team consists of five students each from classes 8 and 9, Sneha akka, Nilesh sir and Bhau dada. The ninth standard students are Shubham A., Pernashee Dave, Savyasachi, Rangoli and Ajit. The eighth standard students are Vinit, Kanak, Rahul, Nabha and Aditya P.

The A-V team was born around the year 1999. "The purpose of the A-V team is to give children a sense of responsibility; the idea of keeping them in charge is to give them a sense of how to handle things like electronic equipment," says Nilesh sir. Sharukh Billimoria, an ex-student who passed out of Sahyadri in 2002, has donated audio equipment to the school. "Students have become more reliable and responsible over time," is Nilesh sir's opinion. Earlier, teachers were required to keep a watch over the A-V team, but since the students are more mature now, teachers watch from a distance. "There have been accidents, of course," A-V team members say. "A lot of tripping over wires, minor fuses, damage to equipment, but nothing major really."

The team usually meets once a month to seek feedback from Nilesh sir. Sneha akka, Bhau dada and the ninth standards teach the eighths about the equipment. "They teach us thoroughly," says Kanak. "They are very helpful and assist us whenever we want them to," says Vinit. As one of the aims of the team is that all the members learn

about handling various objects, no student is assigned a specific job. When asked what precautions need to be taken, Nilesh sir replied, "They need to make sure that they don't use the equipment like a toy and play around with it, and that they clean the equipment regularly, as the tiniest amount of dust can spoil it." The equipment is changed as and when it gets spoiled, and is usually bought from Pune so it can be repaired easily if needed. Otherwise, it is bought from Mumbai. "We keep an eye out for any advanced equipment we can get," says Nilesh sir.

The A-V library stocks DVDs, VCDs and audio CDs. At present, the list of films is as follows: 55 Krishnamurti videos, 254 English entertainment film CDs, 54 foreign language film CDs, 79 Hindi film CDs, 38 Public Service Broadcast Trust documentary films and 100 educational CDs. Sneha akka is in-charge of the A-V library.

Kanak, Nabha and Vinit all have problems about working outdoors on Mela, Sports Day, Independence Day and Republic Day. "In the morning, when there's dew, there's a risk of wetting the equipment as we have no proper covers for it," says Vinit. "When it rains, you have to rush the equipment in," says Nabha. Most people think that ten people are enough on the team. They enjoy being on the A-V team.

Some tenth standards who were once a part of the team recall their own stint with the A-V team. It was a new and great experience," says Ira. "I remember it was very intimidating when I first joined. Slowly I got used to it and now at times I'm called for help." "I enjoyed it a lot," says Malhar. Being on the team may sound like fun, but it has its cons, too. "In ninth standard, when studies increased, it got really hectic," says Karunya.

A lot of juniors are awaiting their turn to join the team. Given a chance, won't you?

Reported by Tanvi G.

Going Green

We are on a hill top which is also home to several animals and trees. So, it is necessary to take care of our environment by living in eco-friendly ways. In Sahyadri, it is the eco-group that takes care of the environment. It started its eco-friendly work in the current academic year 2008-09. Problems related to water shortage, electricity, waste food and plastic wastes have reduced as a result of the work done by the eco-group.

The eco group includes three teachers – Prabhat Sir, who leads the group, Reena Akka and Bipasha Akka. It also includes 40 students from 8th, 9th and 10th classes. The group considered inviting the 7ths to join, but the junior school schedule clashes with the time allotted for the meetings.

The eco-group conducted an audit from July to November 2008 for water and electricity consumption as well as for

plastic and food waste. One group worked on each of these tasks. The group that made an audit of the water consumption found out that a single use of the flush consumes 5-10 liters of water. So, they decided to remove the flushes of the senior dorms. Water used in toilets amounted to a daily total of 32,000 liters. It reduced to 20,000 liters per day. The electricity group found that the generator consumes 150 liters of diesel for every seven hours of running. So they decided that the generator would run only when there is a special request for electricity. The group that audited the food waste formed a 'waste brigade'. Members of the eco-group stand near the waste bins and control the food waste, mainly during senior meals. Some students of class 7 did the same for junior meals for a period of time.

The eco-group had made plans for the greening of the tuck-shop. Over the Oct-Nov vacation, the packaging material used in the tuck shop was reduced. They have also decided to move from chemical products to eco-friendly products. The eco-group had started working on a project called vermi-composting. The food waste was collected in a pit where the worms would eat it and produce compost from it. The vermi-compost is not working now but is expected to resume in the near future.

Whether it was conservation work or making audits, the task was made more difficult because the eco-group was forced with resistance from some of the members. Though there were problems, the eco-group has been successful with its work. But the eco-group thinks there is still a lot to be done. The general feeling among teachers and students is that the eco-group activity should go on. Some students had reservations regarding the removal of flushes. After some discussion the problems have been solved.

Sahyadri is the only KFI school that has an eco-group. Some other KFI schools like Rishi Valley and the school in Rajghat are also quite active in this area. We are grateful that the eco-group has taken on the arduous task of ensuring that life on our hill-top goes on in eco-friendly ways.

Reported by Dipti

The Waste Brigade

Waste not, want not. We must find ways to live an eco-friendly life, and one such way is to not waste food. Many people on this earth go hungry and it is important to learn to respect the food we get. Keeping this in mind, students from the eco-group came up with the idea of manning the waste bins in the dining-hall and keeping a check on the waste.

The students thought about manning the waste-bins because the waste level was very high, particularly on weekends. The waste food had also started harming the atmosphere. The waste was dumped in pits near the *parikrama* and that attracted dogs, flies and crows, whose population started to increase.

Since November 2007, the food waste as well as the extra food has been fed into the bio-gas plant behind the dining hall, which converts the waste into methane. The fruit peels used to be given to the worms in the vermi-bins, where the worms converted the soil into compost. The peels are still kept in the bins where the vermi-compost used to be, but there are no more worms. The school is thinking of making the vermi-bins work again.

The eco group had made a rota system. Two people stand near the waste bin during meals to see that the waste is under control. The "waste brigade" students work in co-operation and because of their efforts the waste level has reduced to a great extent. However, there also have been a few problems. The volunteers at times forget their turn to man the waste bin, and on such days the waste level increases a little. Students who habitually waste food walk away, leaving plates full of leftovers on the table.

Prabhat sir says that he is very happy to see that so many teachers and students care about the waste. Some students feel that the people manning the waste bin are rude at times. Most teachers feel that this effort will encourage people to reduce food waste.

Reported by Runali

A Heavenly Haven

Life without books is colourless. We have a beautiful new library to help our minds travel into new worlds.

Located behind the dining hall, the new library commands a beautiful view. Built between December 2006 and August 2008, it was inaugurated on the 1st of August, 2008, with a school assembly on books. All the students of class 4 lit diyas and several students and teachers spoke about books and reading.

The first library in Sahyadri was housed in what is now the pre-school classroom. This wasn't spacious enough, making it difficult to house more books. When the library was shifted to the back of the dining hall, it soon faced the same problem. As the dining hall needed to be extended and the library needed to be enlarged, it was decided that a new, separate library would be built for the library. Initially, the area between the labs and the preschool was being considered, but afterwards the area behind the dining hall was chosen, as this was a much larger space.

Nachiket Patwardhan was the architect who worked on the plans for the new building. Ari Carneri, a Brazilian architect, is the interior designer for this library. The library occupies an area of 353 sq.m. Partly circular in shape, it affords a magnificent view, as 700 sq.m. of the wall area is made of glass. Regular glass has been used for smaller windows and toughened glass for the larger glass paneling. The huge windows allow the sunlight into the library and invite one to savour nature's beauty. The windows to the south side of the library provide a spectacular view of the

Sahyadri range. To the north, one can see the green lawns and ponds that form part of the landscaping. A special feature of the design of the new building is the L-shaped mezzanine floor. The extra space created will allow two classes to use the library simultaneously. Four or five computers will be placed along one side. A beautifully carved teakwood railing runs alongside the staircase leading to the mezzanine. A beautiful pattern of squares made of marble and granite adorns the landings of the staircase. Brown and grey-green kota stone have been used for the floor that is highly polished and reflects the sunlight. The terrace still needs a staircase, and will be accessible by June next year, by which time some shady climbers will have grown there.

The building is a reinforced cement concrete structure. Construction began on the 8th of December, 2006 and was supervised by Satish dada and Bochara dada. The footing of the columns was first excavated and then concreted. Concreting of the columns and beams was followed by concreting of slabs at different levels. Construction of masonry walls and plastering happened next. Kota stone was laid on the floor and electrical fixtures fitted in place. The wooden railing was erected along the staircase and finally the building was painted. Most of the materials used, such as fly ash bricks, glass, wood, granite and marble were brought from Pune. The steel came from Rajgurunagar, the metal from Manchar, sand from Narayangaon, Kota stone from Kota and cement from Pune, Rajgurunagar and Wada. About ten to fifteen workers came on an average, and were paid Rs. 80/- per day. The work had been given out to a contractor.

One major problem that cropped up during the construction of the library was with the contractor. Work proceeded very slowly, and as the pillars they built were not strong enough, they had to be demolished and rebuilt. This difficulty delayed the construction work by several months, and the library wasn't ready by June 2007 as scheduled. Hiring the labourers and making sure they stayed was another area of difficulty. Some delays in planning and execution also occurred. Recently, some problems have shown up in the new library. Some of the plastering recently fell off the ceiling and has been repaired. In a few other areas also, the plastering appears to be weak. So certain portions of the library may have to be re-plastered. During the recent rainfall in early December, water entered the library through the gaps in the glass paneling. Therefore, the glass needs to be fixed tightly. The voices of people echo loudly in the library. Another problem is insufficient light at night.

A week was needed to shift the books and furniture into the new library from the old one. More furniture and books are going to be brought in soon. Quizzes, storytelling and different kinds of events are going to be held in the library.

Sharad sir likes the view from the library. Amresh sir likes the design of the building and the terrace. Most students agree that the library is beautiful and meets their expectations.

Poetry in Rock

All the KFI schools are situated in places of natural beauty, and the schools try to create an aesthetic environment on campus. One such attempt in Sahyadri is the landscaping outside the new library. It was felt that the new library building was impressive but the land around it was very dry, rocky and barren. The need was felt to make the outside and the inside more in harmony. A Brazilian architect, Ari Carneri, made the plans for the landscaping in August 2008. The actual landscaping work started in October 2008 and was completed over two months. Prabhat sir, Salim sir, Neela akka, Vandan akka, Sharad sir and Amresh sir were closely involved in the planning.

Several elements serve to make the landscape attractive and lively. A crooked path bordered with sharply carved basalt stones, filled with murrum, running alongside the dining hall, leads to the library. The path is surrounded by plants. As you enter the lush green lawn, you can see the happy sun's reflection on two shallow ponds in which colourful fish swim merrily. Around the ponds are comfortable rocks to perch on and between some rocks, well-shaped basalt stone benches lie scattered. Close to the library is a rectangular rockery with two big rocks and smaller rounded stones. Rounded stones from riverbeds have been laid in small paths between the ponds and the library. The gulmohar tree has a circular basalt bench around it, overlaid with Kota stone. Basalt stones cut into small squares have been laid in circles around three trees along the path from the library to the front of the dining hall.

Where you see the library and its landscape today, a few months ago you would have seen only an unused water tank and a barely used tennis court. The landscape is a result of hard work. Before the landscaping was done, the land was rocky, undulating and had some custard apple, lemon and drumstick trees, which were successfully transplanted. Ten to fifteen workers, masons and stonecutters as well as unskilled workers, came regularly and were paid seventy rupees per day. Soil, basalt stone and cowdung was brought from nearby villages, while other materials were brought from Pune. It took two months to complete the landscaping work. The place occupied by the newly built library and landscaping around it is 51,00 sq.m.

Building a landscape is a laborious task. To create the stone garden in front of the library, basalt stones were placed in a rectangular pattern and rounded stones were used to form a winding path within. A circular bench was constructed around the gulmohar tree. A variety of trees like ficus, bakul, and tabebuia rosa were planted. Other new plants in the area include bottle palms, canna, fishtail palm, cycas, Buddha-bellied bamboo, creepers and other ornamental plants. Two connected ponds were constructed with a ferro-cement base. Then the turfing was done with ready made Taiwan grass sheets. This grass is sturdy and does not need much maintenance. Sandy loam and local soil was used in the lawn. To make the path leading to the library, the old path was broken and the area was cleared. Cut basalt stones were used to mark the border of the path, and the centre was filled with murrum and stone

chips. Later, the path was watered and dry-rolled several times to achieve an even path.

Not many problems occurred while making the landscape for the new library. One major problem was finding skilled workers to cut the basalt stones in precise shapes. The front of the library has been landscaped; some landscaping for the back is still being planned.

Most students admire the lawn and enjoy watching the fish cut through the water. Some students wish the fish were bigger. Bharati akka feels that more students have been coming to the library because of the newly made landscape. "Most juniors like to sit outside in the lawn or near the ponds," she says. She also adds, "It would look more attractive if the dorms close to the library are painted properly." Reena akka says, "It looks beautiful. But it would look better if it was semi-manicured." Alok of class 7 say, "It's pretty good. It provides a good place to read." Anjali akka says, "I feel the ponds pose a danger to toddlers. The landscaping shows that the school cares about keeping the land beautiful and cares about people."

Reported by Marziyah, Shruti and Atharva

Happy Healing!

Just after assembly and in juice break, students with health problems make a bee-line for the new M.U., which is near the playground. The new MU was constructed between 6th of December 2006 and September 2007.

The old M.U. was located in a house near the second check post which was small and congested. As it was an old building, the walls suffered from seepage and it did not have all the necessary equipment. So Geetha Iyer, the former Headmistress of Sahyadri, suggested that the school should build a new M.U.

The new MU has been planned effectively. As it is much more spacious, 15 to 20 people can be admitted at a time. Separate rooms for boys and girls, a small office, a storage room for medicines and isolation wards for patients with contagious diseases are all special features of the new MU.

The new MU was designed by Nachiket Patwardhan, an architect from Pune. Where the new MU is there used to be big rocks and trees. So, the trees were transplanted and fortunately all survived. As the rocks were very big, to break them into pieces, dynamite, pneumatic drills and a JCB were used. Then the ground was levelled and excavated for the foundation. After that, concrete columns, beams and slabs came up and the walls and roofs were constructed. The wooden doors were polished 7 times till they shone like a mirror. The inside of the MU was painted and lights and fans were fitted. The ground in front of the MU was landscaped with rounded stones and a circular lawn by Ari Carneri. The construction of the MU did not complete on time because of delays made by the contractor.

It was Amresh sir's idea to construct a wider path to the MU, so that during an emergency vehicles could drive down to the MU. The construction of the new path was started on 20th November 2008. The old path was broken and the ground was excavated. The stones were brought from the stone quarry. Soling was done before concreting the road. A road roller was rolled over the stones. Then, murrum (a type of soil which binds the stones) was sprayed. On 10th of December, the new path came into use.

Those who have been admitted in the MU have varied opinions about their experience. Some students claim that their stay in the MU was like staying in a five star hotel and they felt warm and cozy on entering the MU. Others felt unhappy to be in the MU and complained that facilities like the tape recorder were not provided to them.

Whatever people may feel about it, the MU is our one and only recourse when we are ill or injured.

Reported by Sashank

Bigger and Better

In the school, big and small changes keep on happening and one of the recent changes that has taken place is the dining hall extension.

The dining hall was extended because it was rather small and had inadequate ventilation and light. Satish dada supervised the work. Prabhat sir, Salim sir, Vandna akka, Neela akka, Amresh sir and Sharad sir were the teachers involved in the thinking and planning.

The floor has been renovated with Kota stone which, being natural, was preferred over artificial tiles. In addition, the Kota stone tiles have neater joints and can be polished to shine like a mirror. The dining hall now has more windows and these are bigger in size to give a sense of space so that we don't feel cramped. The windows also give a view of the greenery outside. Four new rooms have been added behind the dining hall, of which two are store rooms. The store is divided into two sections. The first section houses items of daily use and in the second section extra food is stored. The other two rooms are for the dadas and didis to stay in.

One problem in building the extension was that the plan of the old building is lost, so it was difficult to know whether a wall or a pillar was supporting the ceiling, so a structural engineer had to be called in for advice.

Reported by Sudarshan

in the heat of the sun. Seeds and saplings were brought from Akola, Rajgurunagar, Varanasi, Chennai, forest nurseries and capital nurseries. Silt was brought from the river Bhima. Our school uses organic manure as fertilizer. Drip irrigation and hose pipes are used for watering the plants.

From August to November 2008, about 99 trees were planted. Among them are 76 forest trees and 23 fruit trees. Some of the forest trees planted are bamboos, tabebuia argentums and banyans. Some of the fruit trees are jamun, wood apple and mulberry. A total of 1,935 forest trees of thirty different species were also planted. 558 fruit trees of thirteen different species have also been planted. Ari Carneri, a visiting landscape architect, came up with the idea of transplanting four banyan trees with the help of JCBs (excavators) this year, as they were obstructing the landscaping of the new library. This transplantation was also required because of overcrowding of trees in certain areas. Sadly, two of the transplanted banyan trees were infested by wood borers and therefore died.

Most of the plants were bought from a nearby forest nursery and a private nursery. Some delay in work was caused by shortage of labour. As most of the plants were planted in the rainy season, the workers did not have to water the saplings regularly.

Some harmful plants are also growing wild on campus, like congress grass, railway creepers and subabool trees. Their growth needs to be controlled. Plants, especially weak ones, get attacked by infections, insects and other dangers. In such cases, organic pesticides are used, and harmful creepers are cut off. Gogate sir wants to plant rosewood, red sandal and char trees. Every time a tree is planted, the earth grows a little greener. We hope that in the years ahead, Sahyadri will become a little forest that will help to heal the earth.

Reported by Navjot, Pareen and Viraj

On the Nature Trail

Sahyadri is home to all kinds of organisms. The changing weather over the two terms is conducive to the growth of diverse organisms. Last term, Sahyadri was wet and lush green. This term, it is dry and golden all around. This December, the days are hot and evenings and nights are cold. People are seen wearing sweaters and jackets around Astachal time.

Recently, in the ponds in front of the new library, fish like guppies and koi carps were brought to establish a water eco-cycle and to reduce the breeding of mosquitoes. Every year a wide range of animals, including insects, birds and snakes are spotted on campus. During the October-November vacations, Reena akka spotted a spectacled cobra crawling near the new library. In this same vacation, some didi's cutting grass spotted another spectacled cobra, and called Gopal sir. Gopal sir caught it and along with some six standard boys, left it near the football field. A number of Russel's vipers were seen by Prabhat sir in the vacation. So

far in the term Anjali akka and Zabil akka have seen three hares between them. Last term, about the seventeenth of September, at 11.30 in the night, while returning from Pune, Zabil akka saw a dark golden leopard near the 'U' turn. According to her, the driver, Ayub dada, noticed it first and stopped the car. By the time Zabil akka saw the leopard, it started to run away, so she got only a fleeting glimpse of this magnificent animal. Year after year, many flowers bloom and birds visit, making our campus more attractive. Taking a walk around the campus this time of the year, flowers like the bougainvillea, tecoma and bottle brush are found blooming. Bright orange berries decorate the duranta bushes. The common trees include the gulmohar, neem, jamun, banyan, babul, subabool, mango, palms, spathodia, sandalwood and pariyaat. A lot of plantation work has taken place recently and by growing a lot of trees of all sizes, some rare organisms can be helped to improve their number. A good thing happened this monsoons: the trees shot up in height. Flowers like the glory lily and taman bloom in the monsoons. The hibiscus and pagoda trees bloom throughout the year.

The most common birds are the red vented bulbul, the jungle crow, the jungle babblers, the oriental white eye, the Indian robin, the shrike and the sunbirds. Also heard and spotted are birds like the kingfisher, the munia, the black-shouldered kite, the black ibis and the papiha. Birds like the shikra make their appearance once in a while.

Insects form another immense category of creatures found on campus. Close to 400 species of moths are found each year. The hawk moth family contains many different species. The lunar or moon moth is also found. A wingspan of 20-30 centimetres makes the atlas moth the largest in Asia. It is often spotted in Sahyadri. About 40 species of butterflies including the blue pansy, brown pansy, common yellow and common wanderer are seen here. A number of beetles including the rhino beetle and the long horned beetle buzz about during the monsoons.

The mosquito menace is a growing monster. Some precautions can be taken to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes. Covering any stagnant water and using natural insecticides are two such steps. The subabool trees are proliferating on campus, and pose a threat to the growth of other varieties of trees. The plan is to use the branches as fuel or replace the trees gradually. Another big problem is dying of earthworms. This is happening because after the monsoons, the soil has dried, and so the earthworms come out, searching for wet and shady soil. Some succeed, but most die on the concrete paths because of the scorching heat.

Students learnt about their natural surroundings through 'Tree walks' which were held during assembly time, last term. Ravi Bhagar from the Agarkar institute also visited the school to identify the trees on campus. A poster was put up every week showing the 'Flower of the Week' on the senior auditorium board, for a few weeks last term. And every Sunday morning, Prabhat sir sets forth with interested students for nature walks, to observe organisms and natural phenomena on and around campus.

Monitor lizards live on our campus and have been spotted a number of times. The adult lizard is at least a metre long. People often mistake a garden lizard for a chameleon. The easiest way to differentiate between them is to observe the tail. The chameleon's tail is spiral while a garden lizard's is straight.

Sahyadri is a large enough home for all of these creatures and has space for more.

Reported by Ram

Hold Fast to Dreams

Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die
Life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly.
- Langston Hughes

In a Master Plan, many ideas come together for future development. Sahyadri School has recently come up with a Master Plan in order to ensure planned development of the campus. In August 2008 a group of teachers, including Amresh sir, Prabhat sir, Sharad sir, Salim sir, Vandan akka and Ramesh sir put their heads together to create a Master Plan. They were assisted by Ari Carneri of Brazil, an architect and a friend of the school.

Certain plans relate to the near future, while others are more remote. The areas that the school proposes to deal with in the next five years are being presented here first.

- The Art Room will be redesigned in the next two or three years. At present the pottery section has very little space and the roof of the art room leaks. The translucent roof makes the art room very hot and there is very little ventilation. A new building for pottery will come up beside the art room. Other aspects of the design are still in the pipeline.
- The school also intends to introduce Class 11 and 12 in the coming years. According to Amresh sir, up to thirty five students and about ten new teachers may be needed. Some more equipment will be added to the science labs. The 9th and 10th cluster will be extended into the space behind the office to create new classrooms for 11th and 12th.
- Five or six new dorms will be built in the next four years. Two dorms for boys will be constructed beyond Palash, and three new dorms for girls probably near the Dhobi Ghat.
- A new hockey field will be created on the land beyond the football field in the next two years.
- Every year, six or seven thousand plants will be planted. This process has already started, with the school having planted about seven thousand saplings and small trees in 2008-09.

The plans for the next ten or more include new staff quarters, an indoor stadium, two tennis courts and, perhaps, a swimming pool. Farming activity will be started on a small scale on the campus. On weekends, camping activity will be conducted for students.

We all look forward to the realization of these dreams of our school.

Reported by Sanskruti and Nabilah

So, What's Next?

Sports Fest and Mela 2008 sprang the new term into a state of excitement. But life continues beyond these events, and other exciting moments will fill our lives.

Just after the Mela, on the 22nd of December, starts the cricket camp. Finding a good coach is always difficult. Ajay Gupte, who has been a cricket coach in Sahyadri for many years, is coming again. Earlier, he used to bring two of his students as his assistants, but this time he is bringing his coaches to help him! In earlier years, the condition on the field was very unsuitable as the ground was sloping and a lot of stones lay scattered about. The space for playing was too small and the artificial pitch created a lot of problems. However, this year the school has renovated the field by levelling it, filling good soil in the pitch and extending the field.

As the cross country is scheduled in the middle of the cricket camp, on 27th December, one morning session of the camp will be missed. According to Akshata akka and Gopal sir, the cross country is held because it's a good way for children to challenge themselves, to check their fitness and to develop a taste for hard work. For the cross country, medical kits will be provided near the school board, near Naval Virayatan and at the entrance of the Parikrama. The teachers and some of the unwell students will also be posted there to distribute Glucon-D and help with medical aid.

Akshata akka and Gopal sir will be organising the cross country. For the first level, students will run down the hill and up again, which is about 4.5 kms. For each of the next four levels, students will take a round of the parikrama, which is 3.25 kms. The total length of the race is 16 kms.

The tradition of cross country in Sahyadri started about eight years ago. For the very first cross country, students went near the Naval Virayatan grounds. At that time, Naval Virayatan did not yet exist. At a later stage, the students would go down the hill and come back. Then, finally, the cross country took its present form.

Festivals like Makar Sankranti and Christmas will be celebrated. The school celebrates these festivals by having a special lunch or dinner. Christmas carols were sung in earlier years but this has been stopped in order to place Christmas on the same footing as other festivals. Makar Sankranti is celebrated by flying kites in the afternoon and by having special lunch or dinner. To celebrate Republic Day, the school gathers to salute the flag, sing the national anthem and recite patriotic songs, early in the morning. Then the school disperses for a free day.

The Parent-Teacher Meetings are scheduled between January 24th and February 8th this term. The teachers came up with the new format of the PTM last year, as it was felt that the earlier interaction format wasn't working well. When parents turned up on regular school days, teachers would be busy and were not able to prepare effectively for giving feedback. In the present format, parents and teachers of a particular class all assemble on one day so the teachers are well prepared and able to attend to parents better, and the process of meeting teachers is a more efficient one for parents too. Parents and teachers alike are happy with the new format.

Class 9 will conduct a Farewell for class 10 on January 30th, 2009, and the Musical Eve will be celebrated just before students go home for the summer vacation. A few years ago, the Musical Eve was staged outdoors, on the hockey field. Telang sir feels that it is harder to conduct the programme outside, and it has been happening in the Senior Audi in recent years. The Musical Eve helps to close the term in a light vein. Earlier, plays and dances were not allowed on Musical Eve, but now these are included.

Reported by Unnati

s a h y a d r i s c h o o l
k r i s h n a m u r t i f o u n d a t i o n i n d i a

post: tiwai hill, taluka: rajgurunagar, district: pune - 410 513 tel: 02135 325582, 325971
email:sahyadrischool@vsnl.net website: www.sahyadrischool.org