

The Future School News

THE FUTURE SCHOOL NEWSLET
March 2016

Tourist Season

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Photo Competition



'Tis the Tourist Season - Again

It's that time of year again, when our daily drives coat our lungs in red dust and we reply politely as we get asked for the millionth time where the 'Golden Globe' is. The time of year we know to be tourist season. As February comes along the lines in La Terrace get longer as the tourists wave their Auro Cards in the air requesting a cappuccino with soy milk. We can't help sighing at the numerous drivers on the wrong side of the road, smiling obliviously as they putter along on their rental TVss.

Here in Auroville we have found ourselves a little quiet haven in one of the most populated countries in the world, with 4,900 acres for only 2400 people. So as monsoon comes to an end, and with it a wave of new curious faces appear, things are bound to get a little shaken up.

Some of us Aurovillians have a hard time adjusting to the havoc that is brought along with the visitors. Still, we have to admire their perseverance as they wander along the dirt roads and through the forests of neem and work trees, with only a building scattered here and there, and wonder why it is called 'Auroville', doesn't 'ville' mean city? Yet they keep those smiles on their faces, despite the occasional scowls they are greeted with, and the impossible maps they must read to find a fresh lemon soda.

I for one enjoy the energy that new souls bring to our community; it's a sort of gung-ho, cease-the-day spirit that is refreshing to have around. I try to see Auroville through their eyes and maybe that can take us closer to the dream of what Auroville can become. So as tourists keep rolling in, giving business to our shops and filling up our local events, we have two ways to look at it: turn our heads away till summer comes and they all flee like scared mice, or enjoy the unfamiliar smiles they bring along.

By Amara den Hollander



The Dreaded Results

It's pretty safe to say that the students of Future School have been stressed about exam results at some point or another, either in anticipation of their arrival, or even by the mere thought of them. Part of why is probably because of how real it suddenly feels. It isn't just another math mock that you always score either poorly in or slightly above average...this is the real shit, pardon my language. But growing up in a place where nothing has been about grades or exams thus far, does make your idea of an education quite different than the average Joe's. So it is little to no surprise that you will be a nervous wreck when your first exam results come in. Unless you're one of those calm-as-a-grave souls who is unfazed by whatever is thrown at you... I do really envy those few.

Now the day has arrived, Ema confuses you about when exactly the results are coming. You get slightly exasperated (at least I do) but then that feeling is immediately replaced by anxiousness. At this point it really doesn't matter what the results are, you just want to get it over with. Your class is in its little chatty groups, discussing what they think they will get. Everyone exaggerates how bad it'll be because then any kind of results will come as a pleasant surprise. Classic tactic. Then there comes the time when you think, "What the \$%#! am I even stressing about? Grades do not define me; I am not my results and my results are not me," which is absolutely true, but this beautiful realisation doesn't last long because the first brave student has already gone in to check what they got, and you want to know too.

Meanwhile, as this entire scene unfolds, the third and fourth year students are rolling their eyes at us. They've been through this quite a few times already and believe that we are being drama queens. Which in a way is true. Yet behind those smirks of condescension and annoyance, they are slightly worried about us (I hope they are) because they know that the O-Level is child's play, and we better get prepared for the A-Levels to kick us in the stomach.

And now you walk towards the computer that Ema sits by, you just want the wretched thing to be over. It takes him a few seconds to open up the file and your name is very clearly displayed. If anyone knows me well enough they know that my surname just adds to the sadness of the situation. But right next to it are two grades, two tiny letters that you were worried about, two minuscule pieces of writing that don't tell you anything about the kind of person I am. He reads them aloud and it's done. That's it. It wasn't even that bad. You walk out and frown, knowing that it's only another two months until this entire charade will repeat itself. Oh well...that's high school I guess.

By Ahilya Bamroo



Artwork by: Pavitra

Zika

Our Latest Pandemic

Xenocide is an objectionable word, defined as the actions of one species intended to lead to the extinction of another – in fact it appears to be an even more extreme form of Genocide. However, currently humanity is on the brink of being forced to order the xenocide of a particular species, or live with the consequences of inaction. Which species and what consequences could possibly justify such an extreme response? Well, Mosquitoes.

In the past month the position of mosquitoes on the wanted list has escalated from a minor offender to public enemy number one. This is due to the recent outbreak of the Zika virus of which mosquitoes are the principle carriers. Zika's no new arrival on the disease scene, and was in fact first identified in 1952 in the Ugandan forest which gave the virus its name. Zika was considered a fairly harmless virus and the short outbreaks of it in various areas of Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific have not caused much havoc over the years. In fact, compared to its relatives: dengue and yellow fever, Zika has always appeared to be the more easy-going relation. Unfortunately this meant not much research has been done on the virus, its transmission, or the vaccines needed to handle the virus. With current instruments doctors can only detect the virus in the few days when it is in its infectious phase.

The proven symptoms of the virus itself are in fact fairly mild; typically feeling a bit under the weather, a slight fever, or muscle pains. It is the other correlated problems that rise up in its wake that have the world trembling at its name. Zika is believed to lead to microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with a misshaped head; sufferers of microcephaly will never fully develop mentally, and to a certain extent physically, into normal adults and will struggle with the issue their entire lives. Guillain-Barre syndrome, seen in adults as an after effect of Zika, is a syndrome in which the immune system starts to damage the nervous system (peripheral nervous system). Despite lacking clear proof and absolute certainty that Zika is the culprit for the above issues, rising levels of both microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome, as well as an increase in neurological and auto immune problems in adults are seen in Zika's wake. The drastic rise in numbers makes the link between Zika and these health problems relatively credible.

The country which is at the moment suffering the most from Zika is Brazil, but Puerto Rico and El-Salvador are also being struck by the epidemic. Estimates say that almost 1.5 million people have caught the virus. Various theories have been put forward as to the causes of this sudden outbreak of a virus which was always previously relatively manageable. Two of the more credible theories are: Global warming and density of population. Or to elaborate, global warming is creating ideal temperatures for mosquitoes, leading to larger mosquito populations and more people being infected. And the second theory being that the densely populated slums of South America, with their poor sewage systems, provide a ground for the mosquitoes to breed and allow the virus to spread quickly from person to person. Other less likely ones blame the mosquito sprays people have been using, and a genetic modification program that works on reducing mosquito numbers.

Various countries have responded in different ways to the outbreak - with Brazil mobilizing the army to combat the Aedes mosquitoes responsible for transmitting the disease. El-Slavador has recommended all women refrain from getting pregnant until 2018; a rather curious proclamation for a country which does not allow

abortion in even life-threatening cases. Until a vaccine is developed, avoiding getting bitten by the mosquitoes which are active at dawn and dusk is the best option. Brazil's actions may seem extreme, but in the long run the cost of health for humanity might be the xenocide of the *Aedes* mosquito species.

By Cameron



Photo credit: Marissa Martens

Holi

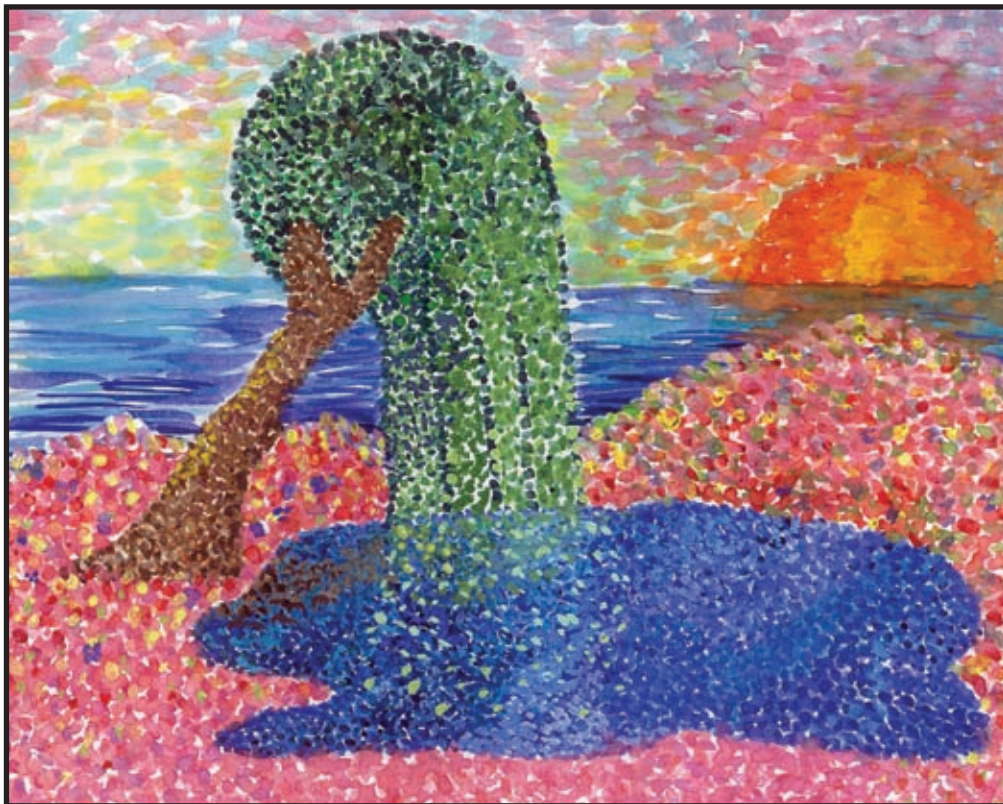
The Festival of Colour

Holi is probably one of the most colourful festivals in the world. It is usually celebrated by Hindus in early March, just as the wheat ripens and is ready to harvest. It's a time when we and nature shake off the gloom of winter and rejoice in the colors of spring. But with new seasons, come new diseases. In the ancient times this problem was solved by having a colour 'fight' with healing herbs and root powders such as turmeric. Holi commemorates not only the passing of winter and beginning of spring but also the mythological tales and adventures of Krishna and king Prahlad.

In most places across the world, the holiday is celebrated over two days. The Holika Dahan (or Chhoti Holi) is celebrated by lighting bonfires and is the day before the Holi festival. The most important day, Holi, is celebrated by throwing coloured powder and water at each other. This year, in 2016, it will be celebrated on Wednesday, March 23rd, and in 2017 it will be on March 13th.

Holi is one of those rare festivals that is celebrated by many, regardless of their religion. It has spread widely across the world not only throughout Asia but also across the farthest corners of Europe and the United States. The celebration of Holi in other countries though, is said to have not kept the same spirit as in India. They have made rules and regulations, boundaries and limits. This holiday represents the loosening of social restrictions and norms. In India, the holiday brings together people of all sexes, statuses and ages. Holi is the celebration that reminds us of brotherhood and equality.

By Aloé Tormo Mir



Artwork by: Tara Rex



The Future Scribbles Photography Face-off

Fetch out your camera,
polish that lens
or look through your best past work

for the Future Scribbles photography competition.

The theme: 'People'

Last date for submission: 15th April 2016

Send your entries to futurescribblescontact@gmail.com.
The winning entry will find a place of honour in the next
edition of the newsletter.





Artwork by: Pavitra

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