

mardi gras

CAUTION

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28-29 January 1976

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Here we are bringing out the final issue of the daiy bulletin as, clichetically, all good things must come to an end. Many of you may wonder why this issue was delayed; the reason is that we wanted to cover last night's events - so we hope that the delay was worth it.

Before we proceed further, I have a very pleasant duty to fulfill. Thanks to all those who made this issue possible - Mr Krishnamoorthy who typed the copy, Mr Swamy and Amaldoss who translated the copy into the familiar bulletin. They have worked hard and uncomplainingly at a task which must have taxed them tremendously. Mere words cannot express how deeply grateful we are to them - if you liked the slick presentation - the plaudits are theirs, for the errors, hopefully few, we are responsible. We trust, we've kept you entertained, and informed during the last few days.

The Group Debate:

The Literary Events soared to a climax at the Quiz and the 'Just a Minute', fell sharply at the Story Telling and plummeted to a nadir at the Group Debate. The standard was, in general, miserable. For once, anybody who wanted to, could get into the CLT - a sure sign that something was amiss.

There can be no quarrel with the organisers over the subject - "This House believes in the Ascent of Man". The teams were:

Pros

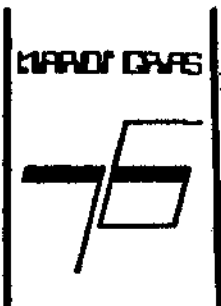
- 1 C A Sundaram (Vivek)
- 2 Vijay Marut (Loyola)
- 3 K Rajaram (RECT)
- 4 Abhijit Biswas (IIT Kgp)

Cons

- Rahul Warrior (St Joseph's)
John Artur (CMC)
Alamelu Sharma (Stella)
Rafiq Gangjee (MCC)

Here's a brief discussion, we can't bear to think too much about it.

- I C A Sundaram - fairly good but his prepared stories didn't fit in too well.
- I R Warrior - spoke well but with perhaps a little lack of fire.
- 2 V Marut - talked rubbish and the crowd which had been very well behaved began to actively participate in the debate.
- II J Artur - He used weak arguments on a religious theme.
- 3 K Rajaram - thought that recorded history is only 1976 years old. Evidently he doesn't think much of life before Christ. Quite to J Artur's taste. He also thought stones were used 20 years ago for settling disputes - grehades being a recent invention.
- III A Sharma - Very weak arguments. (Women's Lib - Oh Boy!)
- 4 A Biswas - Like the others he started the rebuttal during the first session itself. Put he at least brought some semblance of respectability back to the debate. "The common-sense of one generation is the prejudice of the previous one". Aah So.
- IV Gangjee - spoke impressively and kept the audience quiet, but his arguments were like a colander. Tied himself beautifully in knots.



Rebuttal:

A Biswas - Weak.

Gangjee - Weaker.

Rajaram - Progress started a decade ago!!! - Fair.

A Sharma - 25000 millions killed in Vietnam. We've always thought that the world's population was around 5000 million.

V Narut - made things worse and thought it was just Vietnam's population that was 250,000 million!

T Artur - The Vietnam imbroglio deepens. Terrible.

C A Sundaram - O.K.

R Warrior - Tried to make the best of it.

The Results:

1) K Rajaram 2) C A Sundaram 3) R Warrior

The pros have it.

Visitors:

Providence College (The 'desi' equivalent of a Swiss Finishing School) is a nice homely little college located in a palace in Coonoor. The girls too are nice and innocent little things: Your board felt that it should introduce to you some of the more fawn-like guests who have flitted through this campus, shrinking daintily from any sullying contact with you nasty, evil boys. So here comes our interview with the Providence girls.

About IIT boys: They are very conscious of the fact that they are IITians. They need practice in dancing. (The girls suggest that two days intensive coaching before each Mardi Gras ought to set this right). They desperately try to impress the girls. Some poor chap in the final year tried the age old line on them - "IIT is the intellectual seat of India". It didn't work. (Unfortunately, he didn't tell them where the intellectual head was situated).

About the IIT audience: It was quite receptive to their efforts but it was biased against certain other colleges such as JNC. In general, the audience seemed to have decided beforehand, and kept quiet if it expected something good - MCC for instance. About Western Music: They much prefer folk and pop music to acid rock. They are equally proficient on piano and guitar unlike many girls' colleges who rely heavily on the piano.

About life at Providence: It's casual and easygoing, with less of the stupid restrictions, such as "lights out at 10", which exist at the local colleges.

About dramatics: The standard was poor in general. Their own play had been well practised and had been staged at Coonoor earlier.

About the daily rag: The humour has deteriorated from issue to issue (Sob, Sob). The writing was beautiful. (They meant the print and not the content - IBM Typewriters please take a bow).

During the interview: On seeing a deer one gentle creature asked another whether there were reindeer on this campus too.

In conclusion: Very nice girls to get to know. We don't know why they weren't invited last year - we sure hope they come again next year. Aruna, Beena, Radha, Rosemarie, Sunaina, Valerie -- Auf Wiedersehen.

Advice to all aspiring debators - Courtesy A.C. Hall (Best speaker at the Group Debate - by popular acclaim).

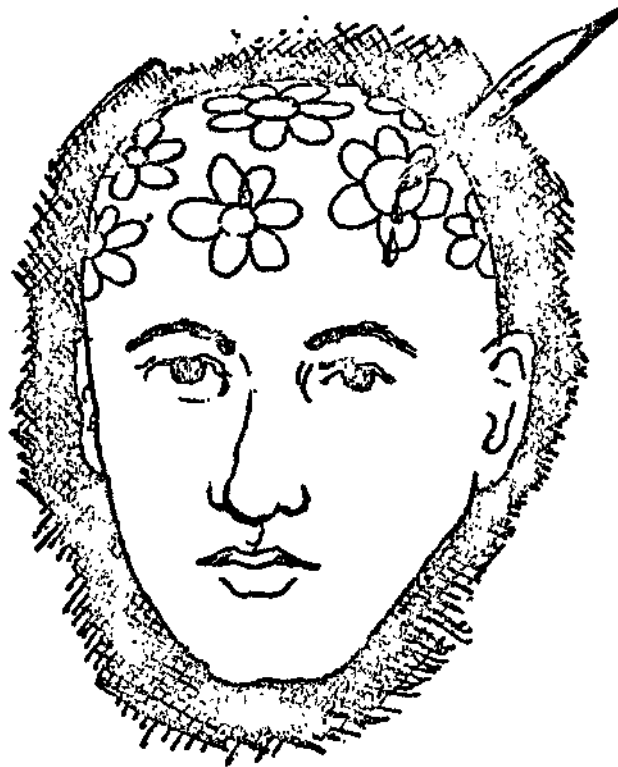
- 1 Address the Chair - not the audience, because if you speak to the house you elicit a response which affects your speaking.
- 2 Stay clear of the microphone. Use it by all means but do not be dependant on it.
- 3 It might pay to be emotional but it's always dangerous.

Regarding feminist objections - 'Man' is assumed to embrace woman.

On the debate - "We came here neutral, and I think we leave here neutral".

MAHESH MADHAV WAGLE is another one of those tireless organisers who has remained behind the scenes...so here we mercilessly expose him to the public eye.

Wagle, Abhay to his cronies, is the Fine Arts Sec and he is responsible for the sketching, collage, and clay modelling competitions and also the art exhibition. With his trusty band of helpers Big Chief has designed all those zapping T-shirts, sling bags, calendars and (for the lucky ones) prizes. If these souvenirs of Mardi Gras bring back pleasant memories in the days to come, Wagle and the organisers of the festival will feel that their time was well spent.



PERSONALITY:

Shanti Abhishekam: Shanti studies in Jyothi Nivas College, Bangalore and arrived here with a bevy of beauties for her first Mardi Gras.

A very talented young lady, Shanti plays piano and guitar. She appears to specialise in blues and says she only lets go with Black Music. She doesn't like crowds (stand back over there) and took some time adjusting to them here. Now that it's all over she wishes she had met more people here and is very sorry she is leaving (Congrats all you chaps). She "hasn't done any reading for the last few years". We're shocked.

When asked to compare Mardi Gras with other festivals, Shanti was non-comittal. The atmosphere was too strained during the first few days, but things eased up later.

Shanti's acting prowess was recognized here when she won a Judges' 'Special Prize' in the dramatics. Her other success was a Special Prize in Western Music - she played mouthorgan and piano and composed a couple of pieces. Altogether a very 'special' person.

Twisted Tales:

A novel, well-conceived feature which supplants 'variety entertainment'. But the participants did not allow their imagination free rein; the tales were twisted only fractionally.

MCC transported us from the Sahara to Rome to demonstrate that "water is denser than oil". A very comical ass, who trembled at his knees when danger approached, bore them through this journey. They did not stint on either costumes or acrobatics. Very slickly presented and executed.

'The Owl and the Pussycat' came from RECT. They narrated in verse, to the accompaniment of guitars, and the lines fitted in very neatly - well rehearsed and well performed.

IIT should have gone off to a standing ovation. For this was probably the last performance (in IIT) of a consistently brilliant and original entertainer, Bhaskar Bhat. I felt a twinge of imminent nostalgia. IIT did not develop a good enough 'story'. Their coming first was something of a surprise.

In future, if participants apply themselves more seriously to fashioning a good story, 'Twisted Tales' could become one of the prime items.

RESULTS: 1) IITM 2) MCC 3) RECT

Judges' Special Mention: Joe Cherian (IIT M)
Ravi (MCC)



Fancy Dress:

Organized on a large scale (a cat walk leading from the OAT stage) and surprisingly well attended, especially by the faculty and their families (the time and place seemed to suit them). There was an unaccountably long delay in getting started - one hour for an event that lasted half as long. The topics originally selected (the rules were relaxed later) were "Alice in Wonderland/Thru' the Looking Glass" and "Creatures the World would Rather Forget". The second one, intended to allow scope for freaking out, only produced a spate of leprous beggars.

UAS started the show with two of these. Another cow, Naidu jerked his way to third place with his Karate/Bharata Natyam number. IIT's twisted 'Little Red Riding Hood' had inaudible narration.

Christian imaginatively combined the two topics. The irrepressible Gangjee traipsed daintily on stage as Alice and kept the audience guessing as to when his towel would drop down. Easily the best entry.

Nothing worth mentioning followed. Loyola won the second prize with a spooky Alice skit. Jyothi Nivas' creature would hardly have been remembered, let alone forgotten. Altogether an event not worth the effort that the organizers put into it.

DRAMATICS: 2nd day:

R.E.C.T. opened the day with Asif Currimbhoy's 'Inquilab' - a fiery play about the turbulent years of Bengal. Put the script lost all its fire along the way as the actors struggled to echo the prompter. A tip to all prompters: Make sure the microphone backstage is switched off. Plus points for their very genuine Bengali accent.

The fair ladies of Coonoor followed with an insipid stage-adaptation of Max Schulman's "Love is a fallacy". Redeeming feature: The brisk exchanges between Polly and her mentor. Polly (Aruna Achaya) looked 'real terrific' with a reasonably convincing performance to match. Rosemary brought sufficient highbrow superciliousness to her role.

The trend towards abstract plays climaxed with St Joseph's "Silence" (by Harold Pinter). The play had a very tricky script but was admirably executed with some of the most sensitive portrayals of the evening. Congrats Janaki Nair.

For the next fifteen minutes, three ladies from J.N.C. laid bare their "Suppressed desires" (under the able guidance of Dr Russel) to a very tame plot. Henrietta's dead pan acting was more than compensated by the very volatile Mabel (Philomina Fernes). Stephen's role was tastefully underdone by Shanti.

Engineering College of Guindy, the second last college of the evening, staged a macabre production titled "Rats" (by Israel Horowitz). It was a powerful portrayal of America's ethnic chaos with all its insecurity and mutual distrust. Outstanding performance by Manavendranath who knew "when to play it tough and when to play it cool". The bizarre black baby served to heighten the intrigue.

M.C.C. rounded off the day with Joseph Strummer's "Words and word listeners". The father (Toots Verghese) makes pathetic attempts to kindle a spark of life in his retarded son. In a climax surcharged with piercing anguish, the dam of repressed hate is breached and the son "shoots" his papa. The ultimate realization of defeat was touching in its totality. Toots' performance was definitely overshadowed by Vijay Menon's classic performance as the zombie son. Finally, I would like to state without any reservation, that I found M.C.C.'s play the most rewarding experience of the evening. One wishes that theatric talent were contagious.

Judges' Verdict:

Mitra Devanesan found the plays 'rankly amateurish'. Much more thought ought to have gone into the selection. The theatre of the Absurd was definitely out for a competition, especially one held in an open air theatre. This was experimental stuff and out of context here. He remarked however that 'Rats' was "very interesting". Christian would have ranked higher with better voice modulation. "Mike consciousness" was another widespread sin. One of the Loyola actors indulged in it to the point of absurdity. Jyothi Nivas was the only college to use props effectively. He failed to see why the spotlights had to be used in the way they were used in St Josephs' 'Silence' - blinding the players. Janaki Nair, he felt had put in an outstanding performance.

:5:

Vidya Hydari did not have any unqualified comments to offer. She was disappointed that no one had seen fit to put up folk theatre. She confessed that she did not approve of the avant-garde plays that were put up.

Ganesan, the senior most judge found the players' poise and fluency in the English language wearing thin in the emotional scenes. They tended to overact and to be melodramatic in a manner common to the Indian screen. He commended Vivek's Sundaram for recapturing the audience's interest after the diversion.

Soap Box:

Started off uproariously, but petered out. The crowd got bored and moved away, having expended all its ammunition. The later speakers could say what they pleased without fear of physical retribution.

All the MCC speakers entered into the spirit of the thing, and entertained the crowd. Gangjee looked the part of a proselytizing demagogue. Somewhat naughty, but witty. The results were arrived at on the basis of an audience ballot:

1) R Sridhar, RECT 2) P Abraham, MCC 3) R Gangjee, MCC

Overheard:

- . "We would like to take Asoka Modi home in a suitcase -- he's so cute".
- . Ikkada, this is Mardi Gras - what are the snakes doing here ra. (At reception).

Farewell:

Conclusions are always messy things. By the time you read this most of you will be heartily sick of Mardi Gras and itching to get back to your lectures, labs etc.. Oh yes, I know it's true. I can see that gleam in your eye as you discuss the non-linearity of the mess grub and chuckle over the humour of thermodynamics. No more will this little rag assault you, but at the risk of sounding sentimental, let me say that we enjoyed being with you over the last few days. If some of you felt that this rag lacked 'pep', we apologise. You see people can't hit back when we attack them here, so we pulled our punches. Let me introduce the villains of the piece.

Villain: 1 Somu
2 P.C.
3 Ramku
4 Oboe

Arch Villain: Philip

Thanks to Paula and Donovan who helped with the tedious job of stapling; Chaitanya for his report on the Indian Light Music, and Vijayalakshmi for covering the 'Just a Minute'; K Prakash composed the Graswords.

Adieu

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