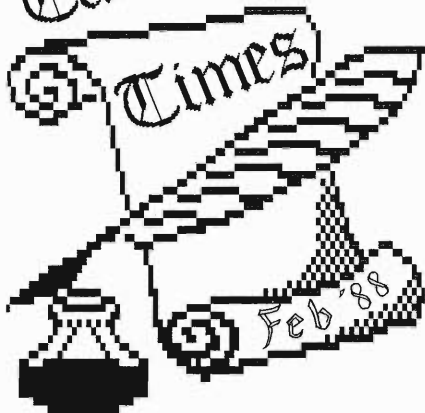


Campus



Feb '88

IN THIS ISSUE:

Edline	..	1
Siemens - Bit by Bit	..	3
Mindbenders - Külla	..	5
Oh-Pun Season - Swaminathan & Sundar	..	6
A Cock and Bull Story - R. Ganesh	..	8
Exotic thoughts of a Quixotic Fellow - Krishna Bharat	..	13
Dream - Vishnu Teerth	..	13
Escape - Jaldeep	..	14
Elegy - S. Sreedhar	..	15
Twilight - Karan Sher Singh	..	16
Life goes on - A. Sudarshan	..	17
Journey to 21st Century - Sthanusubramonian	..	18
Extramundane Lectures - RJEE	..	19
Tall Stories - R. Gopalan	..	23
Festival of Plays - Spring	..	24

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Our heartfelt thanks to Mr. P.S. Sridharan, Dean, Students' Office, Mr. Thomas, IC Engines Lab. and Külla of 343 Ganga for typing of this issue. - Eds.

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## EDLINE

We are back again ! After what seems to be a lifetime, we have been able to compile this second issue. Our attempts at making Campastimes more frequent were stymied by sheer lack of articles - seems like the general drought situation prevailing in the state got to us also. This is the price we have to pay for attempting to maintain some standard and trying to provide light and entertaining reading. Bringing out half a dozen issues would silence those complaining about its frequency but we strongly feel that we will be doing more harm than good that way. We'll surely keep up our attempts at bringing out more issues without compromising on the quality. We hope that our task will be made easier by more active response from you than has been exhibited so far. Some of you did come up to contribute, but one must realize that not all articles can be published and more importantly, it is impossible for us to trace out the author of an unpublished article and return it to him. Of course, the students themselves can collect their manuscripts, published or unpublished, from us.

\* \* \* \*

With the arrival of the Siemens Computer, the getting up early, standing in line to get a terminal, routine will become a part of history. Enthu computing beginners will no longer be put off by the daunting task of punching cards. In fact the enth and gusto with which the Siemens terminals are being attacked by IITians prompted us to run (pun intended) an article on Siemens.

In this connection, another thing which strikes us is the umpteen restrictions placed on the use of the 'n' PCs scattered all over the institute in various departments. The result is their gross underutilization. The possessiveness that the labs exhibit over these 'coveted' machines is quite depressing. Some of us have even been rebuffed with answers like: "When any of our lab students go to other labs, they aren't given any access. So we are sorry, but this machine is only for our lab guys." Now isn't this blatantly against whatever our IIT stands for; that there should be sharing of all resources for producing maximum results ! It is indeed a sad commentary

on the co-operation existing between departments.

Another aspect is that many of these computer rooms/centers close at around 5 in the evening. Certainly this amounts to a thorough waste of computer time. Instead of maintaining a rigid attitude about rules et al, ostensibly for security reasons, alternatives should be thought of to enable students to make most of these facilities. The fact is, if it has been made possible in one department, it should be in others too.

A word on the water problem. Curiously enough, while the rest of the city has been receiving an increased supply of water, the situation in the hostel zone looks none too bright. It is hard (water) times ahead for the hostelites. The Institute, having decided upon tapping ground water to the fullest, has stopped the tanker supply. The hardship is being compounded by the removal of taps from the bathrooms. (May be it has got something to do with the 'tapping' mentioned earlier !!). Sorry, if you found that a bit dry. You know we are not to blame !

To the hassles with which this issue seemed to be riddled was added another, which we confess, we didn't forsee, sheer paucity of electric typewriters that function in the institute. In this context, the diversity of 'types' in which the articles have been typed is, we hope, understandable; for they were done on different typewriters to expedite the release of this issue.

Although we had planned to release this issue before MG, its now inevitable, that another MG would be consigned to memory, before we are through. We will bring the best offerings of MG '88 in our next issue.

Until then.....

- Eds.

Compromise is but the sacrifice of one right or good in the hope of retaining another - too often ending in the loss of both.

- Trydon Edwards

The cynic is one who never sees a good quality in a man and never fails to see a bad one. He is the human owl, vigilant in darkness and blind to light, mousing for vermin, and never seeing noble game. The cynic puts all human actions into two classes - openly bad and secretly bad.

Henry W. Beecher

SIEMENS - BIT BY BIT  
\*\*\*\*\*

Here is something that we thought would make interesting reading - all that you wanted to know about Siemens but were too lazy to ask . We interviewed the manager of the new Computer Centre , Mr.P.Seshasayi and the following is an extract .

CT : How and when did IIT Madras decide to acquire the Siemens Computer ?

PS : An Indo-German agreement was signed in July 1986 , under which a Siemens 7580 E Computer was to be given to IIT Madras by FRG . We did not have a choice on the make of the Computer - this was dictated by the agreement .

CT : Under the agreement did IIT or the Indian Government have to pay anything ?

PS : The Indian Government contributed something like 18 percent of the cost of the Computer, the rest being met by FRG . (The approximate cost is around rupees two crores ) .

CT : Is the Siemens Computer now the most powerful in our country ?

PS : I cannot say that it is the best , but it certainly ranks among the best . Among the Siemens' products there is only one other system which is more powerful than this , and this , they are supplying only to Japan

However , we are getting from Siemens , what is termed as " Luf " software . Siemens will treat IIT on par with other German Universities having such systems . Thus , we will receive any software updates that the German Universities will get .

CT : How many terminals have come from Siemens ?

PS : Eighty have come , and all are functioning .

CT : How will these be distributed on a permanent basis ?

PS : There will be around 30-35 terminals here at the CC and remaining in the Campus . Right now we are keeping them all at one place to judge the response times etc. However there are certain problems in distribution .

CT : Like the length of line ...

PS : No , I have procured cables for this purpose , so that shouldn't be a problem . There is no need for modems , though this is also possible . In fact we had a Siemens terminal at the CSI exhibition , recently held in Madras , connected through telephone links to the main frame here .

But apart from this , there are some problems in distribution . Firstly , how long will it be kept working if a terminal is in a Lab ? Who will take care of the maintenance of the terminal ? Will it be kept in a dust-free environment ?

Another possibility is to have clusters of 8-10 terminals at a few points in the Campus . A decision about this will be taken shortly .

CT : Will the Computer be running 24 hours a day ?

PS : This will be possible only after we make it available to users on a permanent basis . We plan to allocate numbers from the 28th of this month . We are training people from the Computer Science Dept. , Institute faculty and Administrative staff

CT : What about training for students  
 PS : We started installation of the system from 23rd Nov. and completed it on 7th Dec. Immediately after , I invited three members from each dept. for a short course . Right now the system is under "training " and students have started learning from others .

CT : But will there be any courses specifically for students ?  
 PS : Yes , of course . We will be organising courses for advanced topics . We are also preparing User's Manuals with information like how to compile in Fortran , Pascal or Cobol ; how to program in F77 etc. There are other manuals which will be tied down to the terminal rooms . I am also thinking of bringing out a plastic folder having a collection of oft used commands and tying it to each terminal .

CT : Is there any proposal to keep terminals in the hostels ?  
 PS : As I said , there are certain problems in keeping terminals separately . Once these are solved , I don't see why we can't have terminals in the hostels .

CT : Will each student get a number ?  
 PS : I am allotting around thousand account numbers from Jan 28th . The students or the faculty who wish to get a number should approach us through their Departmental Computer Administrators . The disk space will be allotted according to the needs of the users . For example , research scholars and people working on structural analysis will require more space

CT : How many Graphics terminals are there at present ?  
 PS : One . This is a high resolution PCMX2 colour terminal with 1024 \* 1280 pixels . It has an 8 color plotter with it. Wireframe modelling is possible on this terminal .

CT : By the way , what was the cost of construction of this new building ?  
 PS : Somewhere in the region of Rs. 85 lakhs , but I don't know the exact figure .

CT : Will the terminals be permanently kept in the main computer room ?  
 PS : No , this is a temporary arrangement only . As I said earlier , we shall be distributing the terminals . Actually its possible to connect another 70 VT 100 terminals to the system . These will be slightly slower than the Siemens terminals . We can also connect IBM PCs through a data switch to the mainframe to act as VT 100 terminals . So if any of the labs having IBM PCs want a connection , we can lay a line uptill the lab . The PC can function on its own , or as a Siemens terminal in the dialogue or file transfer modes .

CT : We are also curious to know why there is so much space available in the main Computer room ?  
 PS : This is to provide space for expansion . Tomorrow if we get a supercomputer , we should have space for that . If FRG provides further equipment like additional processors or laser printers , the extra space will take care of this

CT : What will happen to the IPL and IBM systems ?  
 PS : The IBM system will have to be wound up ultimately . However a number of application programs like SAP IV are running there , for which no comparable programs exist on the Siemens system ( Siemens has agreed to procure these for us ) The Institute payroll and Academic program have to be shifted to

this system . This might take around six months .  
 CT : Thank you sir for this very informative session .

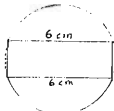
.....  
 To give a general idea of the superiority of the Siemens system vis a vis the IBM and IPL systems , here is a comparison of some characteristics :

	IPL	IBM	Siemens
Main memory :	2 MB	0.5 MB (Batch processing mode )	16 MB
Speed :	-	1.5 MIPS	4.5 MIPS
Tape unit : (in BPI)	-	1600 & 800	1600 & 6250 (higher density)

.....  
 Interviewed for Campas Times by R.Ganesh & C.K.Muralikrishnan .  
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MIND BENDERS

1. A cylindrical hole is drilled through the centre of a sphere . The length of the hole from end to end is 6 cm . What is the volume of the remaining part of the sphere ?  
 (Hint : The radius of the sphere need not be known)



2. Surgeon's gloves : There is one surgeon having three patients . Each of the three has a different kind of infection . The surgeon doesn't want any patient to come in contact with others' infection , nor does he want to get infected himself . He has only two pairs of gloves and water situation being what it is he is unable to wash the gloves , once used . How will he go about it if he has to operate on each of the patients ? ( Note that outside of a glove gets infected after an operation )

Answers on page : 25

.....  

 RDPLA

SHARK

L ST AND FOUND  
 BER WALLIN

OH-PUN SEASON

[From the memoirs of Col. Hunter, the big game expert]



I came back, tired, along with Moses, my so called gun bearer, who had done nothing but carry my kepi all day. I guess he was born to be a copybara. I washed my face in the bison. Later, lion on a platform hyaena tree, I thought about the day. No good gnus at all. I had chased a leopard for an hour in the morning till he breathed

very hard - Yes sir, he was a real panther. And then he had started chasing me, and for an hour, I panted wildebeeste chased me. "My deer boy!", I consoled myself, "Take hart. You couldn't doe a thing about it." I had not killed a single animal the whole day. Even the rabbits had burro'd into the ground. They mouse-d have thrown up a lot of dust while doing it. But I had seen a lovely acacia tree, tapir-ing to almost a point. Well, I was thirsty now. I rummaged in the Mrs.' trunk, only to zebras and other feminine apparel, no drink. My mind started wandering. What was I, a mamba of the Young Experts Club for Hunters (YECH, for short) doing, beating around the bush here, any way? Well, ever since I had met the Mrs. in New York, antelope'd with her to Africa, she had wanted to come on Safari with me. Well, here she was, with me stuck in the middle of nowhere. Surrounded by tribes, who caribous and poisoned arrows and are probably cannibals, and there was the rumour that the rebel HQ from where the gorilla war was being planned was quite near. Well, why not think of more pleasant things? Like the time I hunted polar bears in the Tundra and Tiger regions of Russia? Or about how Jimmy Bungo, my prime

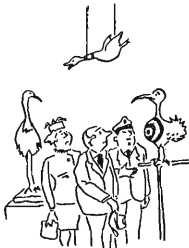


rival, had once lost at hide and seek with a bunch of leopards - and lost because one of them was a cheetah:

Well, the Mrs. came up and said, "I think it's going to reindeer". I said "Heck, no. But it's painful. You came-ong for thrills and its quite boaring out here." "Big fox!" she said, "I came here for you !". Well, I never ! Then she tried to change the topic. "Is it true that dried coconuts are called cobra in India?" "Yes", I said, "And remind me to fix the windscreen viper on the jeep tomorrow". I was getting sleepy. I looked for the giraffe who came around just this time, every night and spider among the thorn trees nearby. "Good night giraffe" I said, sadly remembering the dreary day. The Mrs. knew it at once. "Don't worry, darling. It's nothing to moose over again an' again". And as we both drifted off to sleep, I thought of the family motto: "Grin and bear it". Well you bet I would. And we dozed off.

- V. Sundar

- M.S.Swaminathan



"... This species rapidly became extinct. Nobody knows why."

A COCK AND BULL STORY

This happened quite some time back, so I cannot set the events down with as much accuracy as I would have liked. Still what occurred was so striking that I can never forget it, and what I write is substantially true.

I was returning from Bangalore on a night bus, having failed to get a seat on any of the trains which ply between Bangalore and Madras. I was cursing my fate and feeling pretty miserable, for I am by nature a light sleeper and could not hope to sleep a wink during the journey. I was reading a book in a desultory fashion by what light the small blue bulb in the bus afforded but after some time gave this up and commenced looking outside through the window. The night was very black and the cold wind rushing past my cheek dispelled any semblance of drowsiness in me. The section of the road on which we were travelling was in a very bad condition, on account of the recent rains, scarred by many pits and craters. The bus had slowed down and was wending its way cautiously, now and then jolted by the potholes on the road. It was then that I saw the incident. I cannot clearly recall what illuminated the side of the road, for there were no street lights; it might have been the light from a nearby house, though I cannot imagine anyone living amongst that forbidding wilderness, or the headlights of the bus reflected, or merely the moon. I observed two men in the wash of this light, one tall and heavily muscled, and the other shorter and of slighter build. Both were wearing lungis and their upper bodies were bare. The heavier of them had a scar running all the way from his eyebrows along his cheekbone to the tip of his nose. He was holding his companion in a vice-like grip around his neck and plunging what looked to me a knife, repeatedly into the other's chest. I also fancied that I heard a scream above the noise of the bus, but that might have been my imagination. You must understand that all this took place in a second or so, and I could not immediately react. I expected that an alarm would be given by those who

had seen this amazing and shocking incident. But everyone was quiet and it dawned on me that I was the only witness to this singular occurrence. I thought of shouting to the driver to stop and telling him what had happened, but then considered; even if the driver and the other passengers believed my story, no one would like to turn back. Who knew what complications would result? Anyway how was it their concern if a man was killed? The police would find the body in the morning and track the killer. Reasoning thus, I kept quiet.

But I was not able to put down the uneasy thoughts in my mind, and when I arrived at Madras. I was haggard and weary. Even then I thought of reporting the incident at a police station and setting my mind at rest. Again I was afraid that the Sergeant would not believe me. He would ask me questions like the exact location of the occurrence and why I had not raised an alarm, for which I had no convincing answers. He would probably end by telling me that this did not fall in his jurisdiction and shunt me to some other police station. I thought that I would rather stay quiet than become a laughing stock in my attempt to bring justice.

A few weeks passed and I had quite forgotten about this. It was my wont to go to the temple near my house every Saturday in the evening. It was on one such visit that I saw him. I was circumulating the deity along the outside perimeter of the temple deep in my thoughts when I saw him. He was wearing a lungi and a shirt, and the scar which I glimpsed from the bus, I could see clearly now. I had seen him for merely a second in the dim light from a moving bus, but something in the way he held himself or the profile he presented towards me, apart from the scar running down his face, evoked instant recognition from me. This was a shock and I sank down onto the raised cement platform that was built around a tree nearby, and collected my thoughts. It was quite impossible for him to know that I had been a witness to his act, so he represented no danger. Rather it was I who was a danger to him; an

inconvenient witness. As I came to my feet, I saw him again, turning the corner, and began following him. He was dark in complexion and looked like a poor labourer or farmer. His shirt was patched at a few places and his lungi dirty. He was middle aged and his hair was beginning to turn grey along his sideburns. He had a superbly muscled body with not a hint of fat, probably the result of constant physical work. I had him in my view all the time till we came out of the temple. He must have known of my interest and scrutiny, for he suddenly turned on me and with an angry scowl demanded my business. I was taken aback by this sudden accostal and a little apprehensive, but since there were so many people milling about, I could not see how I could come to any harm. I answered, pleasantly enough, that if he could spare a moment, I wished to talk with him. He hesitated, but observing my general demeanour and appearance assented.

I bade him sit on the stone ledge by the side of the road and told him briefly of what I had seen. To my surprise he neither displayed fear nor was prompted to any violence. Observing my surprise, he said that he was not at all repentant of his actions, and if another such situation arose, he would not hesitate to do the same thing. He had a strange tale to tell, one which illustrated the way, of life of the people of the villages and the wild and uncontrollable emotions to which they were subject.

He was, he said, a poor share cropper in one of the villages which was beside the highway between Bangalore and Madras. His wife had died a year after their marriage and he had no issues. He was living a lonely life and when he attended the local fair one day, he was struck by the cockfight which took place there. He decided to raise a fighting cock. Not only would it give him something to do in the evenings but also enable him to earn some money if his cock won at the fights. Fired with this idea he invested his savings on a cock and began rearing it with the advice of a local expert. It was not

long before he entered his cock in a few fights, and to his great joy, it won in most of them, bringing handsome sums of money.

It was then that he conceived of the grand plan to invite the local expert himself to pit his bird against his. Naturally this aroused tremendous interest in the village and a great deal of betting took place. The day of the contest arrived. When he went to the coop <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ give his bird, feed, he was aghast to see it lying crumpled, in a limp ball of feathers. It did not take him long to find out that somebody had poisoned it in the night. His suspicion fell immediately on his opponent, the local expert. Crazy with grief and rage, he rushed to his opponent and charged him with the dastardly deed. The expert stoutly denied this and hot words flew. But my man was nevertheless convinced that the expert had committed the crime and discussed this with his friends. They were of the unanimous opinion that it was useless to report this to the police and that such a heinous crime should be punished by instant death. So off he went, on that fateful night, and stalked his quarry as he was returning from the toddy shop, befuddled and inebriated, and took him unawares and did him in.

The same night he packed his meagre belongings and took a bus to Madras. He reasoned that if he could elude the police for a few years, they would close the files and he could then go back to his village. But, he said, he did not regret his action for there was nothing else an honorable man could do and did I not agree? I made a few vague sounds of approval and took leave of him as soon as I could. He was a strange man and I could not say if any of my actions might not spark off his violent impulses.

Epilogue: I did not complete my story for a very deliberate reason. You would not have believed it. But I wish to keep the record straight for it is said that concealing facts is tantamount to deceit and I wish to be no party to this. As I was walking away from the man, he leaped at me and in one swift smooth

movement took out his knife and stabbed me in the back. I died almost instantaneously, and having nothing much to do in my grave decided to relate my story.

— R. GANESHI

★ \* \*

#### QUEASY TIME

1. On which river can you find the "Bridges of Konigsberg" ?
2. Who acts as 'JAWS' in 'Bond' movies ?
3. Who has the nicknames "Stiletto" and "Shadow" ?
4. On which island was Pearl Harbour located ?
5. In world cup T.T., what are the trophies for Men's singles and Women's singles events ?
6. Name the battle fought by Alexander against Porus ?
7. Who awards the Pulitzer prizes ?
8. Who wrote the best selling thriller "Break Point" ?
9. What is the home town of Tintin ?
10. What is the junior version of Davis Cup ?
11. Who was the first person to face a ball in test cricket ? He also scored the 1st run and 1st century in test cricket.
12. Where can you find the cricket stadium 'Eden Park' ?
13. Which country's national anthem goes "Hail ! O Fatherland..... " ?
14. Who lived at "Mt. Vernon" ?
15. Who ordered the building of a wall for protection against Indians, after which Wall street got its name ?

Answers on page 15

EXOTIC THOUGHTS OF A QUIXOTIC FELLOW

Of Knights and their deeds I've often read  
 And envied them deeply for the lives they lead,  
 And their noble missions the land to free  
 From dragons and witches and sorcery.

O for those romantic days of old  
 When women were chaste and men were bold  
 And Knights were noble as noble can be  
 And followed the norms of chivalry  
 When hearts were strong and men were brave  
 And damsels in distress were plenty to save  
 And the air was pure and kept you in fettle  
 To gallop and wallop and show men your mettle.

When a lady was escorted by Knights in armour  
 Raring for battle with anyone who'd harm her  
 Galloping alongside, reckless to tilt  
 Not pausing a moment till blood was spilt.

When all around me I'm saddened to find  
 The deplorable state of human kind  
 Often in my fantasy do I blissfully fly  
 And recapture the flavour of times gone by  
 And find solace in visions galore  
 Of those thrilling, swashbuckling days of yore.

Krishna Bharat

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DREAM

Had a dream at night  
 Was blind  
 My fingers touched your face  
 Could feel the upstick  
 And the tears also  
 Could smell the beauty  
 You're so frail  
 Like the poems I read in braille.

Vishnu Teerth

ESCAPE

It was late in the evening and when I glanced out of the window, I could see the lengthening shadows and the dull gloominess of the night set in. Mentally I ticked off every point of my plan. I had broken a leg off the bed for a weapon. On the floor I had poured a mixture of crushed pulses, rice and water that looked enough like vomit to fool the unsuspecting guard.

I waited for him to come and bring my dinner.

My name and country are of little moment. I was once the dictator of a small West African state. But a military coup and a traitorous palace guard combined to defeat me. I had lost the battle, but the war was still to come. I would escape and I would take revenge. Life had but one meaning now - revenge.

Suddenly my senses grew sharper and my nerves tensed as the first soft footfalls of the sentry were heard. He opened the door and was about to speak when he saw me collapse on the floor. He bent for a moment to look closer and at that moment, I hit him with the wooden piece. He fell to the ground, gasping. I hit him again. Quietly I shut the door and exchanged clothes with him.

Brimming with the confidence of success, I walked towards the exit. At the end of the corridor I could see two guards sitting at a table and drinking. A pack of cards lay scattered on the table. Beyond them was the inviting world of freedom. I fumbled in the jacket pockets for some identification. As I passed the two I flashed it for an instant.

One of them was too drunk to notice anything, but some perverse instinct made the other rise to see it better. I suddenly and foolishly panicked. Pushing him down, I fled.

Behind me, I could hear the alarm being given. I ran desperately across the courtyard. The gates were only a few yards away when the lights came on and I saw the guards converging on me.

Failure. That dark, grim word is imprinted on my brain. I will try again.



Yes, I will try again; I decide as I look out of the window at the courtyard of the Mental Asylum.

Jaideep. L

ELEGY

Bofors of Sweden (may their bribes decrease),  
 Arose on morn to shatter the peace  
 Of a harried PM, bothered by Fairfax,  
 And at the very whiff of kickbacks  
 Cried V.P. Singh, the PM's nemesis,  
 'Thine bankers are the Credit Suisse  
 And thou hast a plane ready at Safdarjung".  
 And with these words a surprise was sprung  
 On Lamboo and brother. And lo and behold,  
 A dozing MP in Parliament grew bold,  
 To actually snatch papers from a Minister  
 With all the gusto he could muster.  
 But alas! Bofors refused to show or tell,  
 Prompting the Opposition to move an official  
 In Sweden, requesting investigations  
 Into Bofors' generosities and prevarications.  
 And in the meantime Win Chaddha had run  
 Right from under the nose of the lawmen.  
 The result—Rajiv is in the hot seat  
 Facing more demands that he can meet.  
 Let him beware, another is in view  
 Even bofor he can say HDW.

S. Sreedhar

Answers to Queasy Time

1. River Pregel
2. Richard Kiel
3. Ramesh Krishnan
4. OAHU-HAWAII
5. St. Brides cup, Gasper Geist cup
6. Battle of Karri
7. Trustees of the Columbia University
8. Ille Nastase
9. Brussels
10. Sunshine cup
11. Charles Bannerman
12. Auckland
13. Ecuador
14. George Washington
15. Peter Stuyvesant.

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 TWILIGHT
 

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Twilight descended on the city, as the lighting of flickering oil lamps cast an eerie glow in the dimly lit pub. I sat at a table, my eyes fixed on the man four tables away. For the first time in my life I was unsure of myself, being so supremely confident in the past. After a quick glance at my friend who sat across me as if taunting me to prove my ability, I got up, crushed out my cigarette and followed the man who had just left the pub.

He was a balding man in his forties, dressed in an immaculate grey suit, brief-case in hand and despite being extremely overweight was surprisingly agile, for I found it hard to keep up with his blistering pace. He seemed to be in a great hurry and my doubts turned to reality as the chase led me to the docks where the sound of a steamer told me he had a ship to board. I was sure my friend was not far behind but time was running out.

He rushed on board and I was swept away too along with the tide of people rushing in. Just then the gangplank was raised, and I found myself moving, involuntarily destined towards a foreign land. Braving the consequences, I fought my way through the mob and found myself face to face at an arm's length from the man. I raised my hand and brought it down on his shiny bald pate. I turned to look straight into the eyes of my friend on the shore, who stood holding a familiar green currency note, looking as bewildered as the man I had hit.

I had won my bet.

Karan Sher Singh

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I swear to the Lord  
 I still can't see  
 Why Democracy means  
 Everybody but me.

- Langston Hughes.

That which is everybody's business is nobody's business.

- Isaac Walton

LIFE GOES ON

The brilliant rays of the morning sun prod me into consciousness. There is a nip in the air. I gather my tatters closer around me. Hunger-my master-forces me to my feet. With bowed head and aching limbs I set off in the direction of the houses. Another day has begun.

Yesterday night a kind soul had invited me to the warmth of a fire. The warmth had been pleasant but the light had been a nightmare. The dancing flames, leaping to an unknown, frenetic musical composition seared through my dazed brain. The crackle of the fire had been a crescendo. The fire was a symbol. I had had a past! I am not what I was and the fire was the symbol of it all. But that was when I passed out. Thankfully my kind friend left me to my own mercies.

I reach the houses. Suddenly a voice shrill, piping, shrieks - 'Paçal Baba!' The lament passes around. As I reach the gate, the fat lady of the house charges out. 'Don't come in! I will give you food.' She commands. I am not even a leper. Grubby leftovers are dumped into my bowl. A good beginning.

As I start moving towards the next house I look around to see a crowd gathered around. A crowd of children.

"Stay away from him!" screams another worthy from the breed of mothers.

Those rosy cheeks and the wide eyed yet mocking smiles can be cruel too. Who tells them that I am mad? Or does my bent over fatigued body, my iron grey curls, carry the message? Cherubims all, all perfectly capable of throwing stones. I have had several wounds to remind me of that. I do not know how to react to it. Cruelty in a child escapes me. Maybe the breed of fathers and mothers have something to do with it or they learn it at those places where they go with those full heavy bags.

The lady of the next house merely lets loose her dog. The unkind neighbour has a kind dog. It merely barks.

The sun is hot now. My throat is parched and I feel dizzy. I sit down under a tree and try a mouthful of the stuff in the bowl. It is too rich. I retch. The effort brings me down. I am supine. I drift into a stupor. Time passes by and life goes on.....

A. Sudarshan \*\*\*

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### JOURNEY TO 21ST CENTURY

The bullock cart moves on  
 With its wheels rolling over  
 The asperities of the old road  
 Cart driver sighed and thought-  
 I will change the wheels  
 As he could do nothing with the road!

The bullock cart moved on  
 With the bullocks labouring  
 Against the steep gradient ahead

Driver cursed the bullocks  
 And thought I would change them  
 As he could do nothing with the road

How could we go to 21st century  
 When the path is full of asperities  
 Of race, caste, money  
 And the hillocks of corruption in the way  
 Change the bullocks of government  
 Change the wheels of machinery

Can't the cart driver  
 Change the roads  
 21st century is up in the Zenith  
 Where only parallel lines meet!

- Sthana Subramaniam

EXTRAMUNDANE LECTURES

Afterall if one is going to attend an eml one is bound to feel totally exhilarated. That is how I feel when I'm about to enter the CLT.

The lecture is going to start at 4.15. Then something strikes me as odd - well, very hard - yes; that was the solid door of CLT. But I console myself - afterall, these days things always start with a bang.

I grit my teeth.

A/c is not on.

I grit my teeth.

At 4.30 p.m. Gen.Sec. comes and announces that it will take only 15 minutes to condition the A/c.

I grit my teeth.

Suddenly, I feel nostalgic.

Yes I remember - this was how I could save on tooth - powder. Just by attending one eml I was able to generate enough of it to last me for a week.

4.45 P.M. Gen.Sec. welcomes the wellknown personality (?) and says that he needs no introduction and then introduces him by continuing to read from the yellow-literature that is put up on all hostel notice boards.

4.50 P.M. The extramural lecturer (emler) (Why is that they always happen to be males?) donning the coat, ad nauseam slowly limps to the lectern and starts off with the usual theme. Even before he finishes he sets off a few howlers mainly because of the sound system. He blames the sound system and speaker for this.

I don't agree with him because our system is basically sound and only the speakers (eg. Jakher, Pandian, @waini etc) are bad.

- ... All of you are young geniuses....

The tall guy next to me could take it no more and starts

yelping. Audience quickly steal glances at one another.

- ..... the phenomena of braindrain should be curbed.....  
The way we should tackle the problem should be very practical.  
I would advise the sewerage boards of the four big cities to  
seal the drain pipes of the embassies hermetically because it  
can be rightly deduced that only through them the phenomenon  
occurs....

We feel foolish as to how we did not think about this  
solution.

4.55 P.M.

Talakchabak

.....

Talakchabak

Talakchabak

That is a bloke coming up the gallery stairs - wearing  
the ubiquitous blue strapped sandals.

But the elmer goes on.

He says he is going to reveal himself and then proceeds to  
unbutton his suit adding that the atmosphere is hot.

Extrapolating his act, some horrified girls leave CLT in  
a huff.

The tall guy next to me has started snoring. He reminds  
me of a snorkel.

- ..... simply put, without equivocating, we can unambiguously  
say that.... cling-chilling.....cling-chilling....cling....

The desperate audience level their eyes at the entrance.

It turns out that it is none other than our Ding Dong  
Belle.

Suddenly the audience finds the lecture more interesting  
.....

-..... not without considering the fact that it may not  
be impossible, still with a degree of certainty we can somewhat  
reconcile the differences between their themes.....

The lecturer then explains as to how 5+7% of Indian

population (148.3124 million that is) had crossed some blasted barrier and as to how 40% of 68.4 is 48.987 etc. etc.

Some of the audience note down these revelations.....  
 Snorkel takes out his calci and desparately jabs at the buttons -  
 He gets tired - starts snoring away to glory at 53 Hz.

5.10 P.M.

Tabbak chapak

Tabbak chapak

.....

Tabbak chapak

A guy nimbly gives up and walks out..... sheer escapism,  
 that we veterans put our backs at our infinite capacity to  
 withstand torrents of statistics and still remain static despite  
 being dynamic.

What that bloke started was an exponential decay. Soon the  
 CLT is full of tabbak-chapak and we veterans of many a lecture  
 grin wickedly and at the same time cast disapproving glances at  
 them.

The lecturer, because he believes in the doctrine of  
 Karma, goes on and on irrespective of the results.

Now another guy comes up walking in a vague manner  
 brandishing discarded computer cards.

Snorkel snatches one from him and starts scribbling. He  
 cribs that the card is full of punch-lines and it is impossible  
 for him to add one more of his in it.

I agree with him.

Now only veterans remain - belonging to the hardcore type  
 we don't give up easily.

Snorkel suggests that attendance rule should be amended  
 in such a way that students have to attend atleast 55% of the  
 lectures not counting the last 10 lectures.

The emler summarises his points (namely,..... )  
 and settles down comfortably for the Q & A session.

After heavy censorship, Gen.Sec. reads questions like.

- a) How can the IITians improve their country of 1) Birth  
2) Domicile?
- b) How to combat depressions of  
1) economic 2) Personal 3) Bay of Bengal types?
- c) How can the value system be changed to effect infrastructural changes in the social institutions that are governed by the norms arising out of culture patterning and learned behaviour from the superstructures? Kindly elucidate. etc. etc..

The lecturer is extremely pleased with all these thought provoking questions. (He does not know that we maintain a QB for this purpose) and lets off another barrage of statistics. Snorkel starts growling.

6.15 P.M. Gen.Sec. grabs the opportunity of interrupting the emler now when he is answering the questions posed to him at 5.35 P.M. and thanks him for a nice and informative lecture. He presents him a memento.

The emler performs simple harmonic oscillation in the vertical plane, having become emotional. He says he could not find words to express his joy. Audience heave sighs of relief.

6.17 P.M. Gen.Sec. announces that the rest of the session will be at the Ganga mess.

Myself and Snorkel make a dash for the nearest exit.

Outside we find quite a few desolate guys with tearful eyes.

But I am in high spirits.

I am not from Ganga.

- RJEE

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Around, around the sun we go:  
The moon goes round the earth  
We do not die of death  
We die of vertigo.



TALL STORIES

Tall men are a pitiable lot. One temperamental gene decides to confer this attitude on a select few and they are doomed for life.

Take myself - with all my 72" - for example. Add to this a harmless looking PTC bus and mix a pinch of my stubborn idiosyncrasy on my insistence on travelling by it - and what do you get? A tragicomic melodrama which any Bombay producer would lap up with joyful glee. Let me explain.

The first thing that strikes you - literally - as you enter the bus is the roof ! You are forced to stand with your head crouched and at this point you make an important discovery on population averages. You discover that the average Indian height is such that when a person stands close to you, as in a crowded bus, his hair just manages to tickle your nose !

You twist your head to keep off the strong South Indian Coconut Oil Odour and are about to gulp in a breath of fresh air when you feel something crawling up your leg ! With visions of elves, goblins and boa constrictors you glance down furtively only to find your co-passengers 3-year old hanging on to your leg for support and grinning impishly up at you ! With a few none too gentle thrusts of the knee you manage to push him away and dive for the empty seat which has just been vacated.

You find that the leg space isn't enough and that you are forced to haul up your legs and sit awkwardly. You also earn a disapproving-what-is-this-younger-generation-coming-to-look-from-the-elderly-gentleman-next-seat. At this point the ticket collector arrives and insists on 'change'. You discover, to your dismay, that 'change' is in the back pocket of your tight jeans and you are forced to stand up and go through the calisthenics of unwinding yourself to obtain it.

In the meanwhile, a smart alec has grabbed your seat and you drop the change down in frustration. Now bending yourself all 6'0" down is bad enough, but having to do so in a crowded bus and among trampling feet, looking for a small coin, can make you wish you were in hell.

Finally you manage to obtain your ticket and make for the exit, realizing, with relief, that your destination is approaching. This is again easier said than done. You are harrassed, bullied and forced to take part in a closely played musical chairs game before you can get off, two stops farther away from your destination !

"All bad things must come to an end" you mutter as you get off the bus when the coup de grace is added: A sweet, young thing leans out of the window and sighing deeply exclaims "Ooh, I wish I were as tall as him !"

R. Gopalan

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#### FESTIVAL OF PLAYS

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Year after year, IIT "Dramatics club" (sure it exists?) bursts into the limelight by organising a futile exercise albeit grandiose. You have guessed it, haven't you? It is indeed the "greatest and most resplendent fete on earth" - the festival of plays.

The very cliché is a contradiction in terms. You can either exude a festive mood or enact a play. You certainly can't do both! The wisdom of this statement can be discovered from the very nature of the "audience response". The audience that dons the garb of a patron and enconces itself in the comfortable seats of the CLT is the very antithesis of anything (quality) that a connoisseur should be. Loud hecklings, churlish utterances (sometimes bordering on the very periphery of public decency); downright lack of observance of and disregard for the rules of public etiquette etc form a part of this deleterious and obnoxious atmosphere that these "high enthuguys (and gals)" create. Isn't it blasphemous to the hallowed tenets of theatrical performances that plays should be enacted before these "knaves of creatures" that are not conversant even with the methods of dignified applause?

The actors don't come out much better either. Their demeanour seems more reminiscent of the "keystone cops" than of a budding Laurence Olivier. Where else in the world, but in "IIT - M FLOP" would you find players adorned in garish apparels, mouthing dialogues with an absolutely pretentious and a phony accent? Affect an accent, if you must and if the role demands it but do make sure you pronounce the words in apposition to the accent (with perfect intonation and pronunciation). This obviously means all conspicuous twists of the tongue and grimaces and contortions of faces to produce the "absolutely english" accent are out.

A more amusing flaw is the lack of coordination and stage movements. Should these collegiate actors/actresses be such an incredibly obtuse and static lot that they can't even cover the stage adequately? And should they be so lacking in coordination that the prankster has to work overtime?

An even more hilarious aspect of this innane charade steeped in underheadedness is the bizzariness of the make up (esp. on the distaff side). These charming ladies must realise

that what cuts the ice with the audience and elicits an overwhelming appeal for an encore is not those pancakes they embellish their faces with but their vivaciousness and vitality and of course their rapport with the audience.

Last but not the least, this writer is in a quandary as to why none of these plays are accompanied by music? After all it is only when the atmosphere is charged by the notes emanating from a functional orchestra, that the audience can sense a feeling of subtle enrapturement and be literally made to imbibe the emotional upheavals that the characters go through. ( Even radio plays are accompanied by functional orchestra ) Devoid of this, all important aspect, a play descends to the level of a skit.

If the "dramatics club" by its efficient functioning cannot plug these gaping ugly and unseemly holes in its "piece de resistance", then it had better, as a token of reverence to the glorious and hallowed traditions of the theatre, ( amateur and professional ) put an end to this unsavoury, contemptible and unpalatable though much vaunted about farce.

- Spring .

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REJOINDER TO THE ABOVE ARTICLE

As a dramatics coordinator, I would like to say that I have done my best to promote dramatics in the Institute. I have organised a workshop and done a few other things. There is always scope for improvement.

As regards the article by Spring, I only wasted my time consulting the dictionary and do not feel obliged to defend myself, for all those who attended the festivals of plays over the years know the truth.

M. Ravichandran

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MIND UNBENDERS:

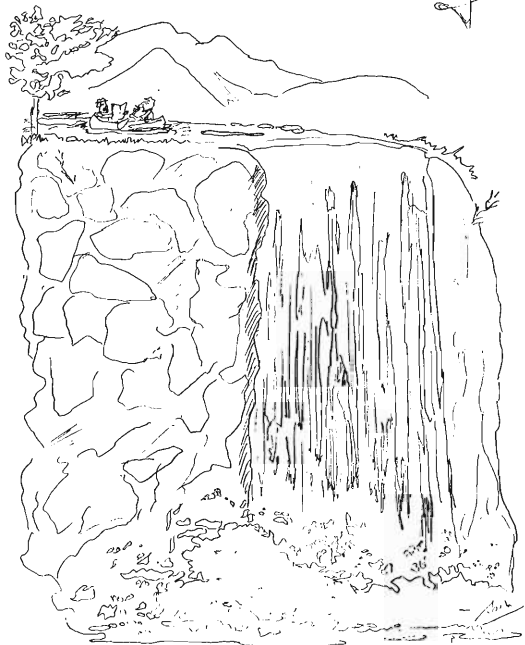
1. Since the radius of the sphere is immaterial, our problem has a unique solution. The size of the hole is proportional to the size of the sphere, the remaining volume of the sphere being always constant. Extending this concept, the hole size will tend to zero as the diameter of the sphere approaches 6 cm. Hence the solution is the volume of a sphere of radius 6 cm.  
( Maths Buffs can prove the above through integration )

2. The surgeon starts off on the first operation wearing one pair of gloves over the other. For the next operation he uses the inner pair only, as its outer surface is still uninfected. For the final operation, he inverts the discarded pair and wears it atop the one used for the second operation.





..... Last Cry



" Odd .. Right about here the name changes from 'Parana River'  
to 'Iguazu Parana River' "