A TLC Magazine – Issue#1
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EDITORiAP (Don’t read it, rap it)

By Eunsu, Jalin, Mael, Milo, Nadir, Satyavan, Veerle

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Drawing by Jason

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A brief history of TLC

by Milo

The educational experiment, TLC, The Learning Community, which can also stand for tender loving care, started with the idea of using Auroville as the school.

TLC started in 2008 with only seven kids and their parents and Johnny.

Now, in 2015, there are 33 kids and their parents and, of course, Johnny.

Eden was aged six and the first boy in TLC along with seven girls Aloe, Jasmine, Luna, Sagu, Tara, Uraslava and Zea. The first year the kids didn’t do maths but the second year the kids only did maths. The maths teacher was Claudia and Natasha was the English teacher and Johnny taught the kids how to “survive” and would take charge when it came to trips.

So it all started with Eden and Jasmine not wanting to go to any other school [options Transition and Deepanam.] TLC was going to have a vandi and have the classroom in the back and stop some place for a few weeks then close it up and drive somewhere else. Johnny thinks you can learn more and faster if you’re actually doing, than just sitting at a desk in front of a blackboard. But TLC grew so this idea didn’t work out because of too many kids joining.

In the beginning nobody had phones, which made things really hard, until Claudia got one, but that still didn’t make any difference for TLC. But after some time everyone got one (except the kids).

There are many trips in TLC. Some are easy and some are hard. The easy ones are when they stay in hotels and things like that, and the hard ones are when they sleep in caves eating soggy muffins.

The trips that happened went to Gingee, Nadukuppam, Hampi, Kavunji and Natasha’s hometown Panchgani.

It used to be the whole school going on a trip together. Those were the days when TLC was really a proper community. Now we have groups but I have to admit it’s much better with groups. They wanted to make another TLC but that just didn’t happen.

In 2013 TLC had a total of twenty-four students. Because of so many kids joining, TLC could not manage to use Auroville as the “school” as much as they used to. In the same year, TLC was offered its own space. After some consideration they accepted.

Today, in 2015, The Learning Community can boast about their new Johnny capsule maths classroom. Johnny also designed the main building with a library, a computer room and two more classrooms. TLC is most proud of being the only “school” in Auroville that has its own compost toilets. And a very big difference about TLC versus other schools [Transition and Deepanam] is that it runs a small business. The tea shop is called Dew drop inn. It’s run by the kids and the money has helped us make the big Johnny capsule and will later on help us with other things like extending the TLC kitchen. In other words: do drop in!
The Lone Cyclist (part 1)

by Jason

Xing Peng and I were nearby neighbours. One day when he was thirteen years old, he travelled with his parents from Cheng Du to Lhasa by plane. Once back, Xing Peng’s mother told me that, on the way there, Xing Peng had mentioned wanting to cycle the distance. At that time, she thought that he wouldn’t really do it, that he would forget about it. Then, when he was fourteen Xing Peng said he would do it. His mother was worried, as even cars find it very difficult to go up these mountains and at the 5000-meter altitude, people can get ill. She could not believe he was doing it, but at fifteen he went, on his own. Afterwards, I wondered: How did he cycle by himself? Did he meet a lot of trouble? How did he solve the problems and dangers? I decided to interview him.

What time of year was it when you went on your first trip?

In 2013, I started on June 1st, and the trip ended on June 22nd. At 2159 kilometres, this was a short trip.

Did you get any advice before you set off?

Yes, my family gave me some advice, and friends like: Don’t go to Tibet, you should spend the time studying, passing tests and entering a good university in the US. Someone told me the journey is very dangerous, but I really didn’t like what they said.

How did you prepare for the trip?

The important thing is this: I didn’t take any medicine for the trip. I got sunstroke and I had to go to a small hospital. Therefore, for the second trip, I brought some medicine. That was the main learning from the first trip.

Did you cycle by yourself or did you go with a group?

Sometimes I was in a group, but most of the time I liked to be alone.

How many people went with you when you were in a group?

Around two or three people, when I met them on the way.

What part did you like about being in a group and what part did you not like about being in a group?

I went with many different groups. Some people didn’t wait for me when I was fixing my cycle, so I had to continue alone, but some groups of cyclists were kind. They helped me and shared some
things with me. However, I liked better to ride alone. It felt more interesting and some things I could only do when I was not in a group. In a group, usually I had to think a lot, like about keeping the distance from each other and keeping speed.

**How long time did each big stop take?**

I don’t remember each station, but by Cecer Mountains in Sichuan State, I spent the night. On the day I reached there, lightning crashed on the side of the road, on an electric line. It was very dark and foggy; I couldn’t see ten meters in front of me. My face was hurt by the strong winds and when lightning crashed right beside me I got such a fright that I decided to stop at a camp that belonged to some workers. They agreed for me to stay with them for the night. The place was so cold that my hands were in pain. It felt as if my hands were going to freeze and break off from my arms!

**Did you meet with any other difficulties or challenges?**

Just after I met the strong thunder, I got ill. In Scissor mountain, nearly everything was a challenge for me. And at the “Qi shi dao guai” (which means 70 turns) it was very difficult to cycle. The way was made of dirt and I was very thirsty because there was no river.

**When you met with difficulties and challenges, did you ever feel scared?**

I was not scared, usually, but one day I felt scared because I knew there were two people cycling, following me, in the morning, but after a while, they disappeared. When you go down a big mountain, the cycle will go very fast and may crash with a car. Some people fell down from the mountain and their bones where fully broken. Most places are 5000 meters high or higher and some people get a kind of bad illness: pulmonary edema and hypoxia (deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues), due to the high altitude. Some die in this dangerous environment, but what I concluded about those two people is even scarier than that. *(To be continued in the next issue of Squeak)*

*First time camping on purpose and not imposed by nature*
Octopus – To Eat or Not to Eat?

by Jalin

I have always liked octopus and wondered why anyone would eat them. I spoke to Daniel, the manager of Tanto, about serving octopus in the restaurant, but first I want to tell you about the octopus.

Octopuses are amazing creatures

Octopuses belong in a group called cephalopods (Greek: “head-foot”), which includes cuttlefish, squid and nautilus, although the nautilus is the only one with a shell. Cephalopods have been around since the Ordovician period which was 485.4 – 443.8 million years ago. In that period they dominated the seas and vertebrates (animals with backbones) were slowly evolving. There are currently over 300 species of octopus ranging in size from 5 metres (Giant Pacific Octopus) to 1.5 centimetres (Octopus Wolfi).

Humans have tried to copy some of the octopus’s characteristics. For example, the suction cups that hold up hooks in your bathroom are based on octopus suckers. Jet propulsion is one way that cephalopods move. Humans have used the same mechanism for boats, rockets and planes. Octopuses can change both the colour and texture of their skin in order to camouflage themselves. Scientists are investigating how chromatophores (colour-changing mechanisms) in cephalopods work in order to copy this function for military purposes. Each of the octopus’s arms has its own neural network and can function independently, so their arms ‘think’. If one arm is severed it will grow back. Octopuses are extremely intelligent. They have used tools, built shelters out of two halves of a coconut shell, opened jars, and played with Lego. They can breathe both in and out of water and have been observed climbing aboard fishing boats to steal fish. In captivity octopus have climbed out of their tank and into the tanks of others, to find a tasty treat. Unlike many other animals, octopuses have some self-awareness – they can recognize themselves in a mirror.

Cephalopods on the menu

In spite of all these amazing facts, people still eat octopus, one of the top ten most intelligent animals on earth! People have been eating them in Mediterranean Europe, Japan, Korea and to a lesser extent North and South America. A Korean delicacy is to eat a living octopus (see box)!
Korean Delicacy: Living Octopus

Sannakji is a type of raw dish in Korea. It consists of live baby octopuses, either whole, or cut into small pieces and immediately served. The dish is eaten while still squirming on the plate. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eating_live_seafood)

What do you think an octopus is experiencing when it’s being cut into pieces and eaten alive? What’s going on physically when their arms continue to move after they’ve been cut off?

Jennifer Mather (expert on cephalopod behaviour at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada):

“There is absolutely no doubt that they feel pain. The octopus has a nervous system which is much more distributed than ours. [...] the octopus, which you’ve been chopping to pieces, is feeling pain every time you do it. It’s just as painful as if it were a hog, a fish, or a rabbit, if you chopped a rabbit’s leg off piece by piece. So it’s a barbaric thing to do to the animal. My thought is that if you had a whole octopus and tried to eat it, it would be a completely repellant situation because the octopus would try to climb out. I find it difficult to have any sympathy for people who choke on a live animal that they’re eating piece by piece.”

(To be continued in the next issue of Squeak)

Games People Play

by Jasmine

Lots of people love playing games, just like I do. Card games, board games and outdoor games, they are all fun, but when I find one I really love I can play it a thousand times over. Why? Because it makes me happy, and if a simple deck of cards can do that, then it’s totally worth it. Some people might think playing games is a waste of time. They may tell me to stop and do something useful. But before I do I think, isn’t having fun a useful thing to spend time doing? Okay fine, sometimes the so called useful things have got to be done, so I do them, but who is to say that they can’t be fun as well? And if we try we can make a game out of them and play just like with a card or board game. So according to me life is a game and our only job is to play it.

Which brings me to Veronique, who lives in Svedame and also loves games, and agrees that life is a game. She hosts an event every Sunday, where she plays a game called Lila. It’s a game about life and it originates from the Vedas. It is meant to evaluate spiritual levels. She also thinks that life would be boring without games, saying “the more you play the better life will be”. She enjoys playing with kids and adults but nowadays only adults are invited to her game sessions. Some people like competitive games, but Veronique doesn’t. Her opinion is that everyone is a winner, even the last person: “playing games is not about winning, it’s about the experience”. She has lots of games and gets most of them from the internet or other people give them to her. She makes some and others she buys. The last thing she said during my interview with her was that life is a game and people should play more!

Games have been played forever

GO is a game which was invented in ancient China. The ancient Chinese people started playing GO in 2000 BC. This game used to provide entertainment to the people who lived during the time of the Shang Dynasty. Othello is a simplified form of the board game GO.
I also interviewed Yury, a man who makes games. He has made ten educational games. Coconaka is a game about gardening. It was sold in several Auroville outlets including the visitors centre. Yury also made games in Russia before he came to Auroville. He makes the games with his wife. He usually invites friends over to play the games before he gives them to schools or sells them. He does this to make sure there are no mistakes in the rules and so on. This is what he calls testing the game. Yury also likes logical games, in addition to the games he makes. He started making games in 2008. His wife and him, together, take five months from an idea of a game to testing it. But the first game they made took only two months, although the rules were not that clear. All in all Yury seems to enjoy making games.

**These are a couple of my favourite games**

**Rat-a-tat Cat:** A game of suspense, strategy, and anticipation. Get rid of the high cards (rats) and go for the low cards (cats). Sneak a peek, draw two, or swap cards for an added twist. Low score wins the game. (A poker face helps!)

**Gubs:** Behold this clever card game that casts you in an epic contest to build the mightiest Gub colony. Seek wisdom from The Esteemed Elder or protection from a Toad Rider as you fend off a myriad of traps, lures, and other surprising events. Victory lies down an ever-changing path and no one is safe until the final card falls!

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**POEM by Shel Silverstein selected by Lore and with an illustration by Surya**

Talked my head off
Worked my tail off
Cried my eyes out
Walked my feet off
Sang my heart out

So you see... there’s not much left of me...

---

**COMIC by Satyavan**
Find the Mouse! by Eden

Sudoku by Veerle

Anagram: Find the words! by Eunsu

1. FULTYDFCI
2. MANARGA
3. CHEMNCI
4. EPANL
5. AIAYLWR
6. MRIEAAC
7. LNIZEPI
8. MLEEHT
9. YEODNK

E-mail your answer to:
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Spot five (5) differences! by Jasmine
In the next issue:

- Coming to Auroville
- The wattmon
- Lone cyclist part 2
- Octopus... part 2

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