FIRST AV LANDS, COURAGE FLATS, ECO SERVICE, SINGING...

A TLC Magazine – Issue#4

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EDITORIAP  (Don’t read it rap it)

By JASMINE, SARAH, SURYA, JASON, EDEN, YAM and LORE

Issue number four
Is coming out the door
You’ve never seen anything like this before
This is for all our fans,
to learn about AV lands
What’s it like to live in a flat?
I bet you’ve never thought of that
Find out how Eco service works to stop the flinging
And we also have an article on singing!

(skwēk)

An escape: a close squeak.
Phrasal Verb: squeak through (or by) To manage barely to pass, win, or survive: squeaked through the test; squeaks by on a limited income.

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Cover illustration by Lore

This magazine is by the Media and Communications Class at Auroville’s The Learning Community (TLC). Kids aged 10-14 participate. We aim to develop writing skills and understanding of how Media works. You can pick it up at PTDC. And we have put laminated versions at the library. Facilitated by Petra. This issue prepared spring 2016 and printed after the summer.

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First Auroville lands

by Nadir (12 years old)

I was born here in Auroville in 2003 and until now I never thought: where was the first piece of land that was bought in Auroville? So then I thought, why not find out, and I went to talk to Aryadeep in the Town Hall. He said that the first piece of land was probably bought around 1964. It was bought by the Sri Aurobindo society, from a farmer, and was named Promesse.

Promesse is located just by the tollbooth on the way to Sadhana Forest on the Tindivanam highway. At that time one acre cost 2,000 to 3,000 rupees and now it's a breath-taking 30 to 50 lakh's. It's amazing, the leap in price, but then there were no trees and no bushes, just plain dry hot crackling desert, so there are some reasons, if you really think about it. And if you ever wondered why they bought this particular piece of land, it was, explains Aryadeep, not only because it was empty (cheaper) and close to Pondicherry (good because back then there weren’t many bikes or cars, so it was close to reach by walking), but especially because the actual planned location of Auroville was there, then. Actually, Aryadeep explains, the present highway passed right through the middle of the planned Auroville. Auroville’s chief architect Roger Anger suggested to the Mother to shift the planned township area towards the sea side, to avoid the highway passing through the future city, but some lands were already bought by then.

Back then it was much easier to buy land. You would just talk and on a blank paper write your name and the deal was done. Once the land was bought, they built keet houses to protect themselves from the wind, rain and sun. If you wonder if we will buy more, we will, because according to Ayradeep we need to finish Mother’s dream, the universal town with 50,000 Aurovilian citizens and it will be partly up to us, the youth, to finish it.

A few questions remain:

• Where will the money come from to buy these precious pockets of remaining land?
• Will Auroville sell outlying lands to be able to afford these pieces?
• Is Promesse in danger of being sold off?
• What can be done to safeguard the lands that are located in these areas outside of the Master Plan?
Courage flats

by Surya (12 years old)

I’m Surya, a boy, and I always wondered why there are weird rooms and random pillars in our flat. That is, until I got a school assignment: to write a story for the TLC magazine, so I thought “Wow I can write and find out why my apartment is like this.” And I did.

Where we live affects us. Auroville is a place where we try to build houses nice and cozy, but for that we need to experiment with shapes and materials. That’s why we find houses made with bamboo, wood, cement, earth bricks, metal, mud, tetra packs, ferro cement, tiles, and roofs made with keet, straw, and tiles. There are also tree houses, capsules, containers, dismountable houses, traditional houses and apartments.

Most of the housing projects in Auroville are experiments for nicer spaces, which are in touch with nature, trying to use eco-friendly materials as well as affordable and nice materials. That’s how Courage Community is participating; in each apartment there are six pillars, which make it possible to design your house however you want.

In our case, we didn’t design our house; it used to be a Youth Apartment. Half of the building was an open terrace with a kitchen, two rooms and a bathroom. The housing service redesigned it. They closed the open kitchen and added large windows. I think there is still some misused space, though. The apartment was experimental, so it’s got some funny edges here and there, but what’s really nice is the roof. One can lie at night and look at the stars. There are also two small terraces that come with each room.

It’s good that there are projects like these, so the housing style isn’t always the same. Also, Courage is a place that tries to use space as efficiently as possible, and at the moment they are building a new set of flats. After that there will be no more Courage flats, unless Auroville decides to buy the land in front of the community to build more apartments.

According to Eugen, the architect, Courage is the most compact community in Auroville. But even though the apartments are close together, there are individual gardens and a community garden.
Nature doesn't create waste!

by Lore (14 years old)

Eco Service is managing the waste of Auroville. An Eco Service team goes around Auroville collecting waste from communities, guesthouses, households, schools, restaurants and units. Then a team of sorters sort the waste at the Ecoservice building or shed in Kottakarai.

60% goes to the recycling dealers, and about 40% goes to Auroville landfill (putting large holes in the ground and dumping waste that is not recyclable, and hoping that it will compost.)

Eco Service does not make profit from this work. The money that they do make goes back into the building, pick-up truck, staff and the landfill.

Nature doesn't create waste. Only people do.
The most important place to start to improve waste management within Auroville is with you.

Eco Service’s primary goal is to minimize as much as possible the impact of Auroville’s waste on the environment. It achieves this goal by recycling as much of the community’s waste as it can, and land filling as little as possible.

They hope to ensure that the community’s waste has as little impact as possible on the environment and that in the future Auroville can be Litter Free! Also, to bring forth awareness among Aurovilians about the importance of responsible waste disposal and to create proper waste disposal systems in households and in communities. And to work to a “zero waste” policy.

Alex is a new newcomer with bright, good ideas for the Eco Service. He says: “For me, the stuff we use is an extension of our Self. The computer is used to enhance our mental, a music instrument helps us to get in touch with our emotions, whereas the bike helps us to multiply the force of our body. I believe using stuff is a tentative to enlarge our Self so we feel less limited and feel better. So we are not just our little self but also the house we live in, the motor bike we use and the iPhone we own.

In the same way we relate to people, we relate to stuff. We fall in love with stuff, then do not always take care of it. Sometimes we fall lazy, take things for granted. Other times we are full of gratitude. Sometimes we share our stuff, but most of the time we want our stuff to ourselves. Long relationships are a lot harder… so when it doesn’t serve our needs anymore we get rid of it, then it’s someone else’s stuff, right?

You can learn a lot by observing the relationship that people have with their stuff, and their waste. When people reconnect with it in Eco Service you can see so many different reactions, it’s so interesting! Many spiritual seekers found their true Self while meditating on death. I believe meditation on waste can also be quite enlightening!”

Interesting Fact

Today Eco service collects about 2/3 of Auroville’s waste. 1/3 chooses to handle their waste differently.

Interesting Fact

The material most land filled in AV is cloth.

Interesting Fact

In January 2012, Ecoservice counted all their waste for only one month. They collected 6,057 kg of waste, and out of that 1,510 kg (25%) went to the landfill.
Joys of singing

by Veerle (13 years old)

To me singing is saying something in a different way. I find singing is also a way of finding out what you can do with your voice. There is a lot you can do with your voice. It is a beautiful way of communicating with each other. For me, I like to sing quietly. If I sing loudly, I lose my voice quickly and it comes out really badly and hurts my throat. But if I sing quietly a new world opens up.

Singing makes me feel happy when I am sad or angry. For me it works really well. I also like making up my own songs, especially when I am sad. Singing can change your mood, well my mood, anyway. So it is not just beautiful, but also helpful. And that is not all one can do with one’s voice, so I am going to show you how it is for someone else.

This is how it is for Nelly (Nelly speaking): “It all started when I learned recorder and singing, and I listened to classical music with my father. After two years I wanted to learn the violin. But then my parents told me to first play mandolin. As long as I was with them I was not allowed to play the violin. So I took mandolin lessons. Then I played in an orchestra. I played light classical music with my mandolin. When I was fifteen I stopped, this was not what I wanted to do, I wanted to play the violin and sing. I did not want to spend life in a way I didn’t like.

When I was twenty I took singing lessons and then I got electric guitar lessons from a musician. Later, I had three years of singing lessons in a music school. And for two years I sang in a jazz improvising course, preparing for a conservatory (music academy). But instead of that I went to an art academy. I didn’t want to go to the conservatory, because I wanted to sing from the heart, not from notes. Then I hitchhiked through Europe, to sing on the streets. I went to Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain and Greece. After that I sang in a band, and with an experimental music group.

A lot later I took violin lessons and sang in two world music bands at the same time. And while singing I played my violin. That was the type of life that I really enjoyed.”
Riddles
By Sarah, Satyavan, Surya and Jason

1. Paul's height is six feet, he's an assistant at a butcher's shop, and wears size 9 shoes, what does he weigh?
2. A man walks; he sees a little green man. The green man disappears; but the man continues walking; then he dies. Why does he die?
3. What do these words have in common? Madam, level, eye, Otto.
4. What is yours but other people use it more.
5. It is an insect and the first part of its name is the name of another insect. What is it?
6. We have two kinds of beans and we put them into a pot and cook them; then on a plate the two beans separate from each other, automatically. How many beans are there?
7. What do the letter "T" and an island have in common?
8. What is greater than God, more evil than the devil and poor people have it and rich people need it and if you eat it you die.

The answers will be published in the next issue of the Squeak or e-mail us if you can not wait: TLC@auroville.org.in

Answers to last issue: 5 errors: Missing heart, flash, black face, flower, less ivy. Problem of the building: It has no left back leg. And did you find the hidden error? Unbelievable, hey?!