A TLC Magazine – Issue#2

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EDITORiAP (Don’t read it, rap it)

By Eden, Jason, Sarah, Yam, Jasmine, Surya, Lore

You gave us inspiration
To write a bit more
So you cannot ignore
Our issue number two
Coming out for you
With news, reviews and views
We hope it is of use
Feel free to send us stuff
(and we’ll try to keep out the fluff)
’cause we wanna know
What you wanna know
So we can make it so...

squeak

noun
1. a short, sharp, shrill cry; a sharp, high-pitched sound.
2. Informal. opportunity; chance: their last squeak to correct the manuscript.

Cover Squeak illustration by Lore. Cover illustration by Jason.

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Why Do People Come to Auroville?

by Yam

I’m 12 years old, was born in Auroville, and go to The Learning Community. I love living in Auroville and usually use cycles and I feel great because I’m almost environmentally “impact free”. But then, when I actually think about it, I’m being fed with a silver spoon. Many of us are. We come to Auroville, everything is green and beautiful. There’s the Matrimandir glowing in the moonlight and shining as the morning sun breaks through the mist, flowers, animals... and you can have a great life and help our planet.

But what about the people who started Auroville from scratch? They planted trees under the boiling sun, made keet houses, dug the ground for Matrimandir foundations, and above all they had to take a leap of faith, not knowing where the path would lead them. So I’m not trying to say that we do nothing in AV and that all the work has already been done and everything is perfect. I just think we should be thankful for the place we live in and try to harmonize with the people around us, no matter who they are. As I was thinking of all these things I decided to interview ‘B’ who was one of the pioneers.

First, I asked him why he came to Auroville. B said: “First thing was, I was teaching in California in a little college and somebody asked me about Sri Aurobindo.” At that time B didn’t know who Sri Aurobindo was, even. So he asked a teacher and he said “You don’t know who Sri Aurobindo is and you’re teaching in that college? You better start learning fast”. Continues B: “I knew that he was somebody important, so I immediately started doing some research to find out who Sri Aurobindo was.” Back then B was living in Los Angeles and he found out that in the same city there was a woman who actually knew Sri
Aurobindo, whom he had even given a Sanskrit name, Jyoti Supriya. She was the Director of an East West Cultural Centre. Mainly B went over just to meet her but they started to talk about Sri Aurobindo. “I was so impressed by Sri Aurobindo and his work, because I had studied some philosophy and geology, but never had I found anybody that had the depth of Sri Aurobindo. He was combining East and West, the Vedic tradition and western philosophy and managed to put all of it together in a yoga called integral yoga. At the time when I saw Sri Aurobindo’s book Savitri I was in the middle of writing my own similar poem. But when I had finished reading Savitri I went to the sea and burnt my poem. The work of Sri Aurobindo was so good that I didn’t want anybody wasting time on mine”.

While reading about Aurobindo, B saw an article about a group of people who were going to make a crazy yet beautiful dream come true: To plant trees on a hot, dry stone-hard desert land, create Auroville, and live on Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. B immediately got out of his chair, left his breakfast for the termites, and told himself, as a slight breeze caressed his face, “Auroville is the place for me”. He wanted to make a film about Auroville, so he went to a filming company and asked them if they were interested. They said that they were already going there, but then after that they called him and said “no we’re not going to Auroville, we’re going to bail out because there are people there walking on fire, going into trances etcetera.” Disappointed, yet full of hope, B went and spoke to another woman from the Auroville centre in California. She told him that this guy from Canada had contacted her. She said “He wants to move his filming studio to Auroville, maybe you should talk to him” and B, with a strong will power, flew to Canada and met him. The guy said, “Go to Auroville, check it out and then we can bring the studio and make a film.”

“When I got to Auroville”, B chuckles, “well, Auroville was a desert with no trees, no water, no electricity, and only very few people living in small keet houses.” So he called up the guy with the film studio and said that he didn’t think that the place would be that good. The Canadian guy came over to check out the place himself and said that maybe he would have to come back later. When the guy was in Canada, a forest fire came and he lost everything. He tried to rebuild it, but then he got sick and eventually died.

At that time, in Auroville there was nothing to do except plant trees. B worked at the Matrimandir nursery but there was no solid Matrimandir yet. They started digging the hole for the foundation. “And that’s how it all started”, concludes B, “I’m very happy I made the choice to come to Auroville. I’ve learnt so much. I feel that this is my life and this is where I want to be, and I’m very grateful.”

My final question to B was: “What could help Auroville?” He answered: “I think more people. And if we manage to live the ideas that we have, there’s nothing special or new that we need, but we have everything, all the information. The only thing left to do, it’s more about doing and it doesn’t matter what the project is, but if we can all feel good about it and do it, then it’s very satisfying. And more people will come and everyone will live in peace. We can do it!”
The Lone Cyclist *(part 2)*

*by Jason*

This story about Xing Peng, who was my nearby neighbour, is continued from issue 1 of The Squeak. Xing Peng cycled, when he was fourteen years old, from Chengdu to Lhasa. Xing Peng told me: "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."

**What happened?**

In the evening, when I arrived at my destination, some people were reading some news. It said that yesterday two cyclists died where I had just passed that morning. I was seriously scared. Were the two people that I saw on the road in the morning the ghosts of the two cyclists that had died the day before? Had I met two ghosts that morning?

**How many kilometres per hour were you going when you rode your fastest and slowest?**

The fastest was 13km/hour and the slowest: 4km/hour

**Did you normally feel safe when you were cycling?**

When I started on the trip, I felt lonely and scared, but after some days, I felt safe.

**Bad weather on the horizon**

**Did the trip change you?**

Yes, my brain could think more clearly and I don’t want to travel by car anymore.

**Were you ever homesick?**

No, because I was doing my own fun thing that I like. I don’t like to just stay at home.

**Anything else you want to tell me about?**

You need to have a real experience and you can’t just have it without trying. To travel by cycle is to use your own power to transport yourself. If you go like that, you get something more out of it all than by travelling by car or bus.
Why did you decide to go cycling?

Because cycling makes me feel that every day is interesting and exciting.

Did you decide to go on another trip?

After my first trip, I decided to go on another trip, cycling from Lhasa to Xing Jiang. Oh yeah, I had a partner on my way to Lhasa, a person who repairs bicycles. He could ride the cycle very well. He also is a cyclist. He told me about cycling to Xing Jiang.

Did he help you?

He told me about the way from Lhasa to Xing Jiang and he gave me a lot of Xing Jiang information, like what animals may pose a danger to me. I think he helped me a lot for my second trip.

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Octopus – To Eat or Not to Eat? *(part 2)*

by Jalin

*In issue 1, I introduced the amazing octopus, one of the top ten most intelligent animals on earth, as well as the fact that a Korean delicacy is to eat them alive. Here you find out what Daniel, the manager of Tanto, says about serving octopus in the restaurant.*

About 2.5 million tons of cephalopods are caught each year and China and Japan catch more than any other country. Since Japanese restaurants have become more popular worldwide, more and more octopus is being eaten. Also, they are on the menu in many fancy restaurants, in dishes like ‘tender grilled baby flower octopus’, ‘octopus a la plancha’, and ‘octopus carpaccio’.

Supermarkets in England stock octopus in oil as a ready-made starter snack. For their Karyatis Seafood Salad Sainsbury’s even got the labelling wrong: “Ingredients: Shellfish & Crustaceans (60%); [Squids, Baby Octopus, Cuttlefish, Mussels, Prawns]” - but squid, octopus and cuttlefish are neither shellfish nor crustaceans, but cephalopods; all three are in the mollusc phylum (see box in part 1 of the article, issue 1 of Squeak).
Auroville, Tamil Nadu, South India: the case of one restaurant

Tanto is a popular restaurant in Auroville. It has been open for about seven years, serving mainly pizza and Italian food. Octopus and squid are also on the menu. According to Daniel, the manager, the locals don’t fish for and eat octopus, but squid are commonly caught. Every morning at 7:30 a fisherwoman comes with her catch to Tanto. Octopus is cheaper than both fish and squid, but are not always available because they are by-catch. Interestingly, cuttlefish are not at all available because a Japanese company buys them all up at a high price. Daniel is very fond of and knows a lot about octopus. He says: ‘Actually, I feel it is a pity to cook them [octopus], because I like them very much and they are very smart animals.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English:</th>
<th>Octopus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German:</td>
<td>Tintenfisch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian:</td>
<td>Pulpo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian:</td>
<td>Os’minog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek:</td>
<td>Chtapódi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic:</td>
<td>Akhtabut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean:</td>
<td>Mun-eo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese:</td>
<td>Tako</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil:</td>
<td>Aktopas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seafood watch says: avoid eating octopus caught with trawler nets or where there’s habitat damage...

Octopuses grow fast and reproduce early. Though they’re not generally vulnerable to overfishing, there are conservation concerns with some populations. Octopuses from Mauritania, Morocco, and the Philippines are all on the "Avoid" list due to heavy fishing pressure, habitat damage and a lack of fishery management. Octopuses from Spain and Portugal caught with trawl are also an “Avoid.”

Watt I always Wondered

by Eden

I always wondered, can’t we use less electricity if we are conscious of energy being very costly and precious, but I feel we don't care! We keep installing TVs and A/C because, in Auroville, we have free electricity, thanks to Varuna. Yet, for me it’s about attitude: Even if we have free electricity, it does not mean we have to abuse it.

That is why, when someone told me about the Wattmon, a device that calculates the energy coming from your solar panels, and made by Aurovilian Akash, I was instantly interested.

The Wattmon tells you how much and how long your devices can continue to run. If it is a cloudy day, for example, the graph may show that the fridge has six more hours to go. If you have a hybrid system it will show a graph of all your devices and how many watts in total they are. If you would switch off your fan, it will show fewer watts in total.
More about Akash and the Wattmon

Akash is 38 years old and has lived in Auroville all his life. He helped to make the electric bike the Humvee. While building this EV Future bike, they did not know how much the bike could continue to run before the batteries were empty so he made a sort of Wattmon for the Humvee, an LCD screen that tells you how much your batteries are charged and how long they will last. Then Akash designed a type of Wattmon for the house. He has worked on the Wattmon for three and a half years, full time. Before the demand was big the Wattmons were 95% made in Auroville and the mother board was made in Gujarat. Now 50% of the Wattmons are made in Auroville and most of the parts are assembled in Chennai with an automatic machine. Fifty Wattmons have already been installed in Auroville. It is a relatively expensive device but a discount is given for Aurovilians. You can purchase the Wattmon in a Akash’s office in Maitreye (last house) and online at www.wattmon.com

These are the appliances in my home at Madhuca...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appliance</th>
<th>watts / hour</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>hours of usage</th>
<th>total watts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fridge</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFL</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fan</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>washing machine</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laptop</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wifi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water filter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tube light</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>super fan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixer</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>printer</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incandescent</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... and here the consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>watts</th>
<th>units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total house hold</td>
<td>15278.5</td>
<td>15.2785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per person/day</td>
<td>3819.625</td>
<td>3.819625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per person/month</td>
<td>114588.75</td>
<td>114.58875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per 4 people house hold/month</td>
<td>458355</td>
<td>458.355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I think I found my answer: “Gratitude with attitude is okay with a thank you and please. But attitude without gratitude is like pizza with no cheese” (Save energy, even if it is “free”!)
Amazing maze by Jalin

The arrows don't mean anything
You have to get the key and then unlock the finish
As soon as you reach a dead end, start again.

Feel free to rip out, fill in, scan and e-mail it to TLCSqueak@auroville.org.in, or to drop the paper off at Base Camp - We’ll reward you if you get it right!
In the next issue:
- Eternity
- AV Food choice
- Ecoservice
- Porcupines in AV
- ... 

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E-mail us to be one...
And: Special thanks to Audrey who donated, just like that!

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10% discount for Volunteers.
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The next issue will be out soon!

Non-TLC student illustration by Oliver
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