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Welcome Spring

Dear Reader

This issue is a landmark as we move towards a more innovatively designed and a more informed format. Hope you like it and find the contents interesting and thought provoking. Do write in to give us your feedback. Bouquets and brickbats both welcome!

Spring is here with trees bursting in myriad colors. The outdoors is indeed inviting and inspiring. Read all about moving your classroom outdoors, how you can contribute to drought hit regions and various curricula based camps, in the following pages.

Don't miss the coverage on Strides in Science featuring the Rockstar physicist Brian Cox, the endangered Red Panda and its conservation efforts and how Fog is being used ingeniously to convert to water in arid zones of Yemen.

Safety in the outdoors has been a hallmark of Trailblazers and hence we were invited to chair a session at the American International School of Chennai at their Symposium. Read all about it inside.

World Bird Migration Day is on 14th May. Spare a thought for these wonderful creatures that fly miles for their food, water and breeding and try unraveling the mystery of migration.

Happy reading.

Ranjan Biswas

Editor

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FORM IV

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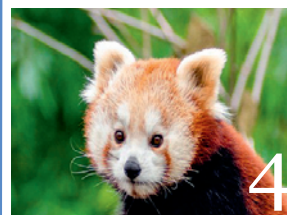
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from the editor

Invariably along with the El Niño comes erratic rainfall, by that I mean less or scattered rainfall. El Niño is a cyclic geographical phenomenon, and the impact on our rainfall was known to all who matter. Yet we are faced with a drought like situation. What is the point of sending all the satellites up in the sky when we repeatedly fail to come anywhere close to forecasting the rainfall?

Standing on Oxford Street, I see gentleman carrying their umbrellas. I looked up at the bright sunny skies and wondered why. I went into Selfridges and just as I stepped out in an hour's time the sky soon changed colors from bright and sunny to dark and hazy. It began to drizzle and then came rain pouring down, so also Selfridges made few more pounds from me as I also purchased an umbrella for full 8 pounds.

Wake up all, be proactive and face the eventualities in a planned manner. Remember the cyclone Phailin over Orissa? Trailblazers were there in the thick of it all. Due to advanced disaster management planning by the government, damages were minimal and the Patnaik government re-elected.

To say the drought is exacerbated because of cropping patterns, I would agree. Sugarcane is a water guzzling crop but it is a cash cow. Politicians have mismanaged and emptied river basins and turned the river around to suit their needs. It's been said adversity brings out a revolution in thought, mind and body. There are enough successful water conservation methods available in India. A case in point – Ralegaon Siddhi and more recently the Hiware Bazar village model.

Once again the people need to urge the government to heed to traditional conservation methods. The agriculture ministry to relook at the cropping patterns, the water resource ministry to re look at the water bodies management and the forest department to plant endemic plants and recharge ground water. Able bodied students from NSS and NCC can help and contribute their labour of love for nation building.

It's time to give back. We need to motivate the farmers and contribute to ensuring that these districts in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and U.P etc. do not ever have to face drought. I am

sure if the people come forth the government will be shamed to do their bit. It's not rocket science.

Lastly I urge all the CAS, SUPW coordinators to come and visit the drought affected region and all international schools collectively contribute at least 100 man/woman hours here. Let's transform to benefit the drought affected areas. We can help build plant nurseries of endemic plants, dig the river beds deeper, do gully plugging and nulla bunding along the hills and create water conservation awareness. We can also undertake a survey. We can all positively do it.

Trailblazers call all CAS, SUPW coordinators, to write us an email and we will announce an action plan for IB, Cambridge, ICSE, CBSE and SSC Schools for Water and Soil conservation programs. We will pool resources and achieve a collaborative CAS, SUPW / projects in Beed. Call or email us if you wish to join to make a difference.

Ranjan Biswas

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Photo credit: Sagar Mhatre

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Call us to participate in our camps/activities 022 25891513 or 022 25891490 or email us on trailblazers@vsnl.com



On the Brink....

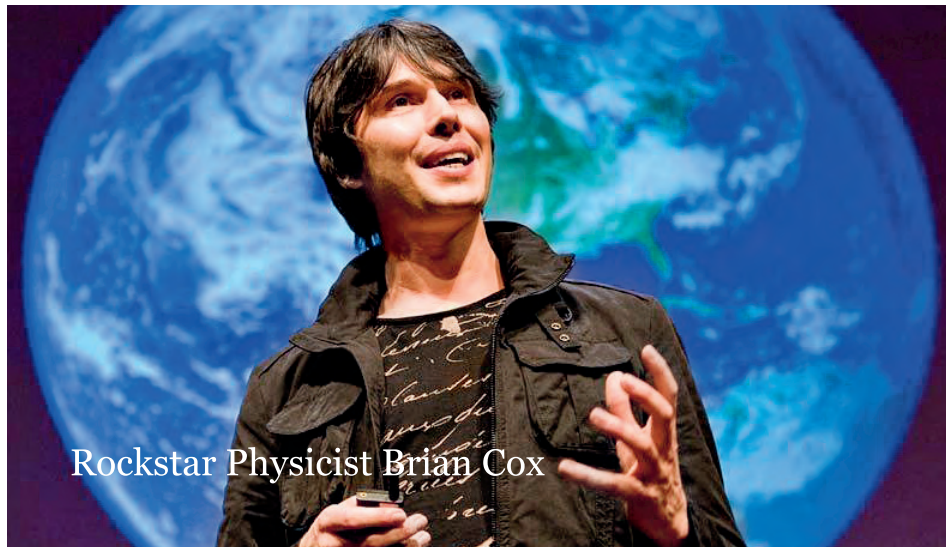
The Red Panda or *Ailurus fulgens* is included in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972, the highest protection possible for a species in India and is also listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List.

The red panda is the state animal of state of Sikkim. Native to India, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar it is vulnerable because its population has plausibly declined by 50% over the last three generations (estimated at 18 years) which is projected to continue, and probably intensify, in the next three generations.



Red Panda diet is 98% bamboo. These plants show mass flowering followed by die off. Red Pandas will not readily find new feeding grounds in a highly fragmented landscape and are exposed to other threats when crossing unsuitable habitat. These bamboos do not easily re-establish after flowering in areas of environmental degradation and deforestation. They inhabit forests at an altitudinal range of 1500–4800 m however in Meghalaya it also occurs at lower altitudes. The Red Panda is slightly larger than a domestic cat with a bear-like body and thick russet fur. They are very skillful and acrobatic animals that predominantly stay in trees. Primarily a herbivore, the name Panda is said to come from the Nepali word 'ponya,' which means bamboo or plant eating animal. In India, several Protected areas have been established across its range to conserve the species and its habitat. Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling and Himalayan Zoological Park, Gangtok have an ongoing conservation breeding program for the species.

STRIDES IN SCIENCE



Rockstar Physicist Brian Cox

Brian Edward Cox is an Advanced Fellow of particle physics in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Manchester. He is best known as the charismatic presenter of science programmes on BBC and author of popular science books such as *Why Does E=mc²?* and *The Quantum Universe*. Before his academic career, Cox was a keyboard player for the bands D:Ream and Dare. He has worked at high-energy physics centres such as DESY in Germany, Fermilab in the US and above all at CERN where he is involved in experimental work on the Large Hadron Collider, the world's

most powerful atom smasher.

As a public figure, Prof Cox is increasingly speaking out on science policy issues.

"I find it inconceivable that the science budget will not be increased as part of a clear strategy aimed at closing the widening investment gap [with] all other knowledge-based economies," he says. "It is inconceivable because every study, every report, every piece of evidence points to a simple conclusion: Investment in the science base leads directly to increased productivity and increased economic growth over relatively short timescales."

Fog Harvesting

Manakha in Yemen is a rural district in the mountains, where residents live in scattered settlements across the remote highlands. Their only natural source of water is rainfall. Water is scarce at the best of times, and with climate change that scarcity is reaching a crisis point.

So UNDP has been working to help communities take advantage of a surprising resource: Fog. Residents in the area have long used fog to cultivate coffee. Coffee is planted in terraces and its tree bases are traditionally encircled with stones. The fog condenses on the stones and then runs down into the soil. The newly developed fog-harvesting units are 3x2 meter mesh screens that condense enough fog to provide drinking water for a family of seven.



Source: UNDP

Casper Octopus



An octopus discovered in Hawaii is lighting up social media with its ghostly appearance! When scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration were exploring the Pacific Ocean they saw something that looked like a ghost - the friendly kind. They found a light-colored octopus, without fins or very much muscle and with suckers in only one row on each arm instead of two. All of these traits led scientists to believe the octopus is likely a new species.

An online post of the creature led some on social media to comment it looks like "Casper the Friendly Ghost" from the comic strip and TV. Octopuses are one of the more advanced creatures, with many special biological features that help them survive.



Move your Classroom Outdoors

Not more than a century ago an eminent poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore created a storm in Macaulay's world by taking the classroom "Outdoors". This happened in Bengal at Shantiniketan and the story goes on. The only replication of it is done by Trailblazers which calls itself "The Outdoor School". Last year when we concluded another stunning outdoor workshop series on Environment, for over 500 B.Ed. students, I had asked if they had any question - a young girl got up and said she had a prediction.

I was not sure what was coming. She said she wanted to join Trailblazers and then she predicted that the schools of the future would be such, which was being addressed by Trailblazers at the outdoor workshop! That the classroom will move outdoors. That there will be no rooms suffixed to class!

The thought led me to think and I wondered why should classrooms be fenced off by walls, in a way fencing off

children's minds. My team of outdoor teachers and me, have been successfully conducting classes, teaching Chemistry, Physics, Math, Statistics, Environment, Economics, Wild life, History, Geography, Sociology, all in the outdoors. The sky is our roof, earth our playground and nature our biggest teacher. What more can one ask for? These have all been truly remarkable experiences for all the accompanying school teachers, students and us. The idea is worth taking ahead.

What outdoor learning does is to fundamentally gear the senses in action thereby making the process of learning stronger. It also makes the children ask questions which sharpens the enquiry process. Many put up hypothesis and see if that applies and works thereby getting a chance to construct an idea and see its results. Many just observe and many still are dreaming. Outdoor learning evokes curiosity and wonder in children. The more fresh air they breathe, the more they play in mud, the more they dance in the rain, they become independent thinkers. These are just some

of the several obvious benefits. There are different pedagogies to help them learn.

Nature in front of you is your living laboratory. It is your art class, it has History to tell you and you need not even change your geography! The light and heat have a story in Physics, the soil and water, Chemistry. You look up and see the birds fly and you look down on the carpet of grass, you sit down, you've just got Botany and Zoology covered. Bored? Let's play football or meditate, do yoga! Want to do Math, the Fibonacci sequence is there to see in the way the floral designs are laid out or even in the curve of a seashell! Sociology is observing the people, for Economics you just visit the local market and in India, Political Science is everywhere. Artists take inspiration from the sunrise, Literature is inspired by emotions all around and the fragrance of the wet mud and flowers in the outdoors makes the possibilities heady! Trailblazers, The Outdoor School's admissions are open... join our Camp.

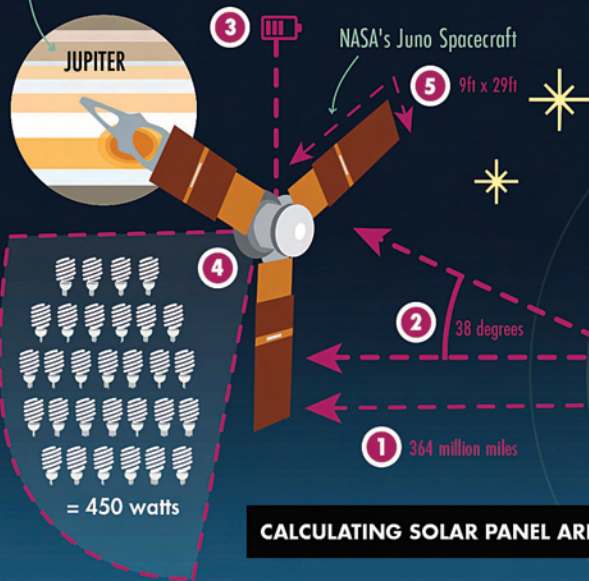
-Editor



ROOTED IN MATH

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WAY WE STUDY THE **ENVIRONMENT** AND HOW WE INTERACT WITH IT. YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH OF WHAT WE KNOW IS **ROOTED IN MATH**.

Jupiter is 5x as far from the sun as Earth and more than 1,000x the size of Earth.



If the sun were the size of a beach ball, then Jupiter would be the size of a golf ball and Earth would be as small as a pea.

MATH + ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

NASA engineers calculate solar panel arrangements on satellites and spacecraft based on:

- 1** distance from the sun
- 2** orientation toward the sun
- 3** the power needed for operation
- 4** the energy output of each solar cell
- 5** the surface area available

The sun's energy output is 386 billion billion (or 3.86×10^{20}) megawatts.

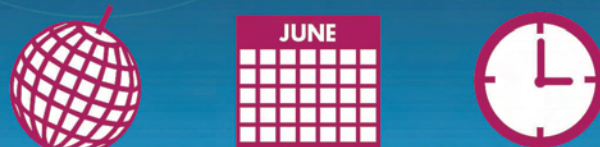
CALCULATING SOLAR PANEL ARRANGEMENTS

MATH + ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

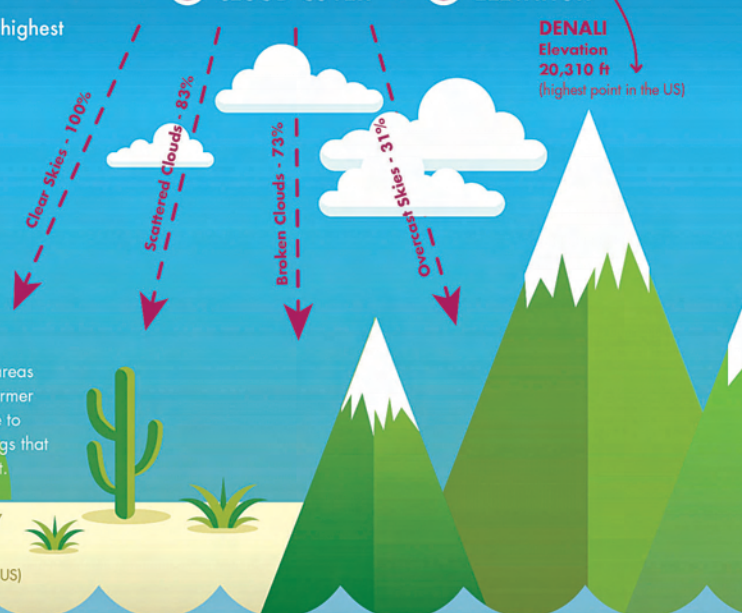
Scientists from the National Weather Service use formulas to calculate the strength of solar ultraviolet radiation (UV), taking into account multiple factors:

- 1** **LATITUDE:** Latitudes closer to the equator have more UV exposure
- 2** **TIME OF YEAR:** UV levels are highest in summer months when the sun is at its highest arc in the sky
- 3** **TIME OF DAY:** UV levels are highest around noon when the sun is highest
- 4** **CLOUD COVER:** UV levels are highest when cloud cover is lowest
- 5** **ELEVATION:** UV levels increase at higher elevations due to less atmospheric absorption

1 LATITUDE + 2 TIME OF YEAR + 3 TIME OF DAY



+ 4 CLOUD COVER + 5 ELEVATION



CALCULATING SOLAR UV RADIATION

Air temperatures in urban areas can be as high as 22°F warmer than surrounding areas due to paved surfaces and buildings that reflect and retain more heat.

COLLECTING METEOROLOGICAL DATA

When a wave reaches a steepness greater than a ratio of 1:7, the wave breaks and spills forward.

MATH + ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

NOAA uses wireless technology and a network of buoys to collect real-time meteorological and oceanographic data, allowing them to mathematically track changes over time.

These buoys track changes in:

- 1 water temperature
- 2 wind speed
- 3 air pressure
- 4 salinity
- 5 water current

MATH IN NATURE

Sometimes mathematical concepts appear directly in natural forms, like the seed arrangement in a sunflower or the curve of a seashell. These examples and more all follow the Fibonacci sequence.

FIBONACCI SEQUENCE

This mathematical pattern builds by adding together the previous two numbers in the sequence. The sequence starts with 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13... and continues from there. Mathematicians have noticed that these numbers and sequences can be found again and again in natural forms and structures.

FINDING MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS IN NATURAL FORMS

THE GOLDEN SPIRAL

The golden spiral is formed by drawing a curve through squares with side lengths proportional to the Fibonacci sequence.

QUICK CALCULATIONS

Did you know that a standard showerhead uses 2.5 gallons of water per minute? Next time you take a shower, time the number of minutes you let the water run.

COMPARE: Repeat these calculations, shortening the usage time of each resource, to see how much you could save!

You can calculate pounds of CO₂ emissions by common household electronics. For a lightbulb, use this equation:

2.5 gallons x # of minutes x 365 days = Gallons of water your showers use in a year

wattage of a lightbulb / 1,000 to calculate kilowatts x # of hours light is on a day x 1.33lbs CO₂/kWh = Pounds of CO₂ emissions per lightbulb each day

the national average for utility CO₂ conversion

Learn more at NEEFusa.org

National Aeronautics and Space Administration; US Environmental Protection Agency; National Park Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Discovery Education



On the banks of the Alaknanda

Little do you know what wonders await you, when you are still at the start of your journey. What is planned out to be a riverside adventure may bring about other beautiful joys which were until a certain point, an enigma. But that is the truth of life; newness reveals itself around every stone, wrapped around the trunk of every tree in the wild. One just has to tread carefully enough to not rustle too many leaves. On Trailblazers' venture into the Himalayan foothills, the students discovered a whole new leaf of experience, which slowly turned every camper's smile into glistening rays of sun.

The students experienced fresh mountain air, laughter and conversations a plenty. Many of the young 14 year old minds were opened up to a sense of adventure for the first time, while they felt the adrenaline rising, as they performed several adventure activities such as rappelling, river crossing, jumaring, bridge slithering and challenging treks both up and down mountainsides. Guided and supported by the expert trainers from Trailblazers, they had absolutely no trouble getting their techniques right. Trailblazers even managed to plant the seed of the

love for nature in a couple of children with special needs, who participated in the camp. The major attraction of this camp was the intense yet completely safe white water rafting experience in the river Alaknanda. A 10 kilometre stretch rafting with a short halt along the way was exhilarating for the kids. With all the varied experiences, the students took home a large basket full of memories, life skills and confidence, ready to take on any challenge in the world. At Trailblazers, what more could we ask for?



At Mumbai's Highest Point



On the 28th of February 2016, Trailblazers Adventure Travel Pvt. Ltd organised a fantastic trek into Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivali, Mumbai. The participation was open to B.Ed. students and was free! The participants only had to pay their own entry fees for the park.

The B.Ed. students took the upper trail to Jambhul Maal, which is the highest point in Mumbai. At the top you can clearly see the three lakes Tulsi, Vihar and Powai. The trek is through dense forest, and is picturesque with glimpses of Kanheri Cave tops in the distance.

The students spotted a variety of wild life including snakes, mongoose, serpent eagles, and many birds aflutter, while walking through the Leopard habitat.

With all the home made food the students had taken, there were many laughs, and enjoyable conversations. All in all it was a great way to spend a well weathered Sunday in the arms of nature, far far away from the madding crowd of the city!

































Glimpses of Trailblazers Programme held for an International School



Contact: kiran@trailblazersindia.com or sachin@trailblazersindia.com for your school's requirement for Global Perspectives, Group 4, CAS, Economics; History, Culture & Heritage; Wildlife and Adventure camps.

From Fictional Teachers and Mentors

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>John Keating <i>Dead Poets Society</i></p>  <p>“ No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world. ”</p> | <p>Remus Lupin <i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2</i></p>  <p>“ It is the quality of one's convictions that determines success, not the number of followers. ”</p> | <p>Albus Dumbledore <i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i></p>  <p>“ Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open. ”</p> | <p>George Feeny <i>Boy Meets World</i></p>  <p>“ If you let people's perception of you dictate your behavior, you will never grow as a person. ”</p> | <p>Gandalf the Grey <i>Lord of the Rings</i></p>  <p>“ All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us. ”</p> | <p>Mr. Miyagi <i>Karate Kid</i></p>  <p>“ It's okay to lose to opponent. It's never okay to lose to fear. ”</p> | <p>Ms. Valerie Frizzle <i>The Magic School Bus</i></p>  <p>“ Take chances, make mistakes, get messy. ”</p> | <p>Yoda <i>Star Wars</i></p>  <p>“ Do or do not – there is no try. ”</p> | <p>Qui-Gon Jinn <i>Star Wars</i></p>  <p>“ There is always hope, my friend, though it often comes in forms not looked for. The key is knowing how to see it and seizing that opportunity. ”</p> | <p>Will Schuester <i>Glee</i></p>  <p>“ It's not the broken dreams that break us. It's the ones we don't dare to dream. ”</p> |
| <p>Charles Xavier <i>X-Men #2</i></p>  <p>“ The greatest power on Earth is the magnificent power all of us possess... the power of the human brain! ”</p> | <p>Mary Poppins <i>Mary Poppins</i></p>  <p>“ In every job that must be done there is an element of fun. ”</p> | <p>Iroh <i>Avatar: The Last Airbender</i></p>  <p>“ It is important to draw wisdom from different places. If you take it from only one place, it becomes rigid and stale. ”</p> | <p>The Fairy Godmother <i>Cinderella</i></p>  <p>“ Even miracles take a little time. ”</p> | <p>Master Splinter <i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i></p>  <p>“ There is not a monster more dangerous than a lack of compassion. ”</p> | <p>Miss Honey <i>Matilda</i></p>  <p>“ I've often thought about it, but... I can't abandon my children. And if I couldn't teach, I'd have nothing at all. ”</p> | <p>Rafiki <i>The Lion King</i></p>  <p>“ Oh yes, the past can hurt. But you can either run from it or learn from it. ”</p> | <p>Mufasa <i>The Lion King</i></p>  <p>“ I'm only brave when I have to be. Being brave doesn't mean you go looking for trouble. ”</p> | <p>Fred Rogers <i>Mister Rogers' Neighborhood</i></p>  <p>“ Knowing that we can be loved exactly as we are gives us all the best opportunity for growing into the healthiest of people. ”</p> | <p>Mr. Ratburn <i>Arthur</i></p>  <p>“ Once you've learned good work habits, you'll discover you're capable of more than you think. ”</p> |
| <p>The Samurai Lord <i>Samurai Jack</i></p>  <p>“ Nothing worth having is easily attained. Sometimes you must fight for what is yours... and what you believe in. ”</p> | <p>Master Shifu <i>Kung Fu Panda</i></p>  <p>“ Anything is possible when you have inner peace. ”</p> | <p>Dewey Finn <i>School of Rock</i></p>  <p>“ One great rock show can change the world! ”</p> | <p>Fa Zhou <i>Mulan</i></p>  <p>“ My, what beautiful blossoms we have this year. But look, this one's late. But I'll bet when it blooms, it will be the most beautiful of all. ”</p> | <p>The Emperor of China <i>Mulan</i></p>  <p>“ The flower that blooms in adversity is the most rare and beautiful of all. ”</p> | <p>Laughing Bull <i>Cowboy Bebop</i></p>  <p>“ Do not fear death. Death is always at our side. When we show fear, it jumps at us faster than light, but if we do not show fear, it casts its eye upon us gently and then guides us into infinity. ”</p> | <p>Glenn Holland <i>Mr. Holland's Opus</i></p>  <p>“ Playing music is supposed to be fun. It's about heart, it's about feelings, moving people, and something beautiful, and it's not about notes on a page; I can teach you notes on a page; I can't teach you that other stuff. ”</p> | <p>Grandmother Willow <i>Pocahontas</i></p>  <p>“ Sometimes the right path is not the easiest one. ”</p> | <p>Ms. Norbury <i>Mean Girls</i></p>  <p>“ I know having a boyfriend might seem like the only thing important to you right now, but you don't have to dumb yourself down in order for a guy to like you. ”</p> | <p>Tatsuo Kusakabe <i>My Neighbor Totoro</i></p>  <p>“ Everybody, try laughing. Then whatever scares you will go away! ”</p> |



Sources: www.Wikipedia.org | www.IMDb.com

Experiential Education and Service Learning Symposium - Safety and Outdoor Learning



Mr. Ranjan Biswas Managing Director Trailblazers Adventure Travel Pvt Ltd and Editor Ecotrail addressing the participants on Safety and Outdoor learning at Experiential Education and Service Learning Symposium held in American International School of Chennai. Extreme right Mr. Ryan McFarland, Department Head - Physical Education - American International School of Chennai

The American International School, Chennai hosted the 1st Symposium on outdoor learning at the school campus between 4th and 6th of March, 2016. The event, attended by some of the most eminent teachers from across India, South East Asia and SAARC regions, focused on discussing how to allow students to make the most of their outdoor experiences. Trailblazers Managing Director Mr. Ranjan Biswas headed a discussion on Safety in the Outdoors and the steps that venture providers, schools, teachers and parents must take in order to ensure first and foremost, that the children are given a safe and secure environment in which to undertake the learning process.

Safety is not an action but an attitude, and it needs to be approached with utmost attention to detail. The range of topics covered by Mr. Biswas included the lead time for planning student camps and experiences, ideal group sizes and adult to student ratios, degrees of control and how they affect the danger level of any activity, preparedness to spot and deal with child predators and many other critical factors. The lively audience consisting of teachers and outdoor service providers from International schools across the country listened and participated actively in trying to find solutions to the safety issues that arise from negligence on the part of the organizers.

www.trailblazersindia.com

Another topic that was intensely discussed was the evolution of service aspects of camps as part of the CAS aspect of the IB curriculum. Everyone widely agreed that students and schools can contribute greatly towards making a meaningful change in society through long term engagements and better structuring of the students' community oriented work.

The participants of the symposium also had the pleasure of having a tete-a-tete

with renowned educationist and TED prize winner Sugata Mitra. He discussed the evolution of the pathbreaking concept of the "Hole In The Wall" to becoming the present day "School in the Cloud". The one thing that was evident from this august meeting of minds was that the possibilities from students are endless and one of the most exciting places to be these days, is back in school.



Below: Mr. Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology, addressing the participants on the pathbreaking concept of the "Hole In The Wall" to becoming the present day "School in the Cloud."



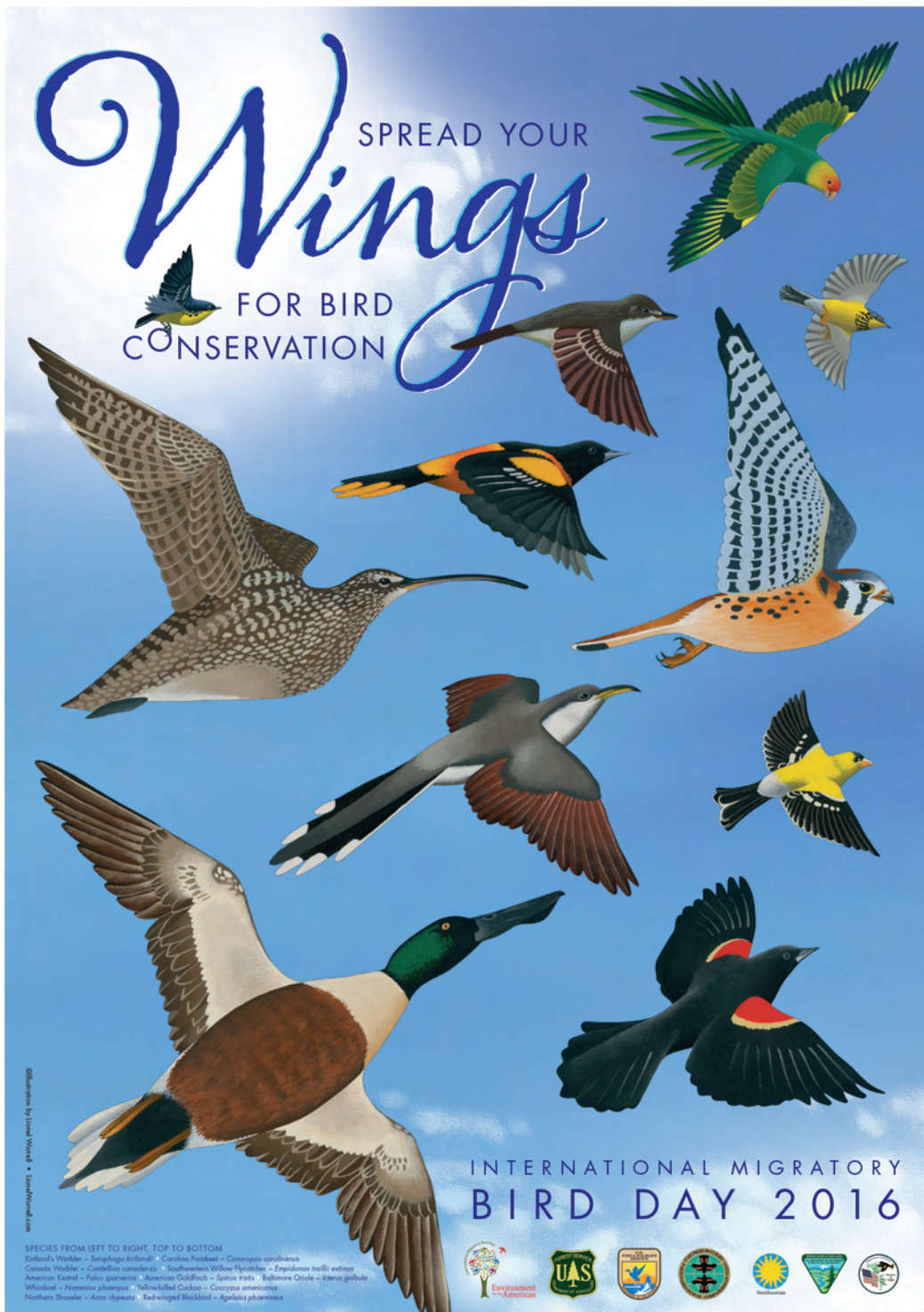


Illustration credit: (c) Lionel Worrell for Environment for the Americas, International Migratory Bird Day

Lets go Birding with Trailblazers

Trailblazers is organizing a bird watching trail in Sanjay Gandhi National Park on 14th May to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day! Nature lovers, photographers, ornithologists, interested in participating please email Sachin on sachin@trailblazersindia.com to register. The International Migratory Bird day celebrates the incredible journeys of migratory birds between their breeding grounds in North America and their wintering grounds in Mexico, Central, and South America. The event, which takes place on the second Saturday in May each year, encourages bird conservation and increases awareness of birds through hikes, bird watching, information about birds and migration, public events, and a variety of other education programs.

- 14 MAY - WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY
- 21 MAY - WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT
- 22 MAY - INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
- 29 MAY - INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS
- 1 JUNE - GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS
- 5 JUNE - WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
- 8 JUNE - WORLD OCEANS DAY
- 14 JUNE - WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY
- 17 JUNE - WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT
- 21 JUNE - INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA



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