



The Elephant

No. 260

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL

19th May, 2001

Think About It...

Know Thyself

-The Pope, attributed to Thales

EDITORIAL

There are times when an era comes to an end and it is a rare occasion when stalwarts of the past come together to pay their tribute to the one that has created history.

An entire chapter will be re-written on the 31st of May when our beloved principal, Mr. Kandhari, parts from the Welham Community. He is our second founder. We, on the Editorial board, consider it appropriate that we dedicate this issue to this fine figure of a man who has inspired thousands of students over these eighteen years.

He leaves behind a legacy that his successors will find difficult to better.

"I would not paint a picture, but rather be one." Our man is an epitome of these words. A man with a fixed set of principles, who has never shown any sort of prejudice, he is well known for his tolerance, and prompt action once the rules are breached. He loves leading by example, but does not expect anybody to follow him, as he would be happy if each individual would carve an identity for himself.



The infrastructure that the school possesses today can all be credited to him. His perseverance and vision is responsible for what our school is today. With a humble beginning in 1937, our school carried on an image of a 'feeder school' till the day he assumed the post. The first step that he took, was to make our school a senior-secondary, and then built the different hostel for the senior-most boys of the school where they would be left on their own.

The vision that he carried during the beginning of his tenure was one, that some would say, simply anachronistic. His dreams just did not belong to that time. His ideology did not belong to that period. He used to, and still thinks of the future, of the days to come. He does not restrict himself to the present. And it was this vision that has carried our school all these years.

The construction of an extremely well equipped library, i.e. our L.R.C. was next on his agenda. His essential idea in building this structure is reflected in the name: Learning Resources Cen-

ter. Not a library, but a center where every resource is at one's disposal and discretion. It is totally different from the libraries of other institutions, because no other library can boast of having an Audio-Visual room, an Art Gallery, access to Multimedia and of course, one of the widest range of books in the whole country. The pleasure with which he conducts the L.R.C. Council meetings is a witness to the pride that he takes in the building.

Our Activity Center is an unimaginable structure, the architecture having been personally conceptualised by him. It is reputed to be the best multi purpose hall in the whole town, and we can say it with pleasure and pride that it belongs to us. It is with pride that we record that we owe this magnificent hall to him.

Then of course there are the others. The construction of indoor squash courts, the renovation of the entire hostels, and the IT lab. The Multimedia Lab is another example of his vision. The Round Square movement is another aspect where we have made our mark. It is a fact that many foreign students approached our Teacher In-charge during the Conference in Canada for Student Exchanges that they be given an opportunity

to be allowed to spend a term in our school. This Exchange Programme has been equally successful. We have had opportunities to go to schools rated as the best in the world, and we can thank our Principal for this.

It is said that good men and honour go together. Well, it has been the same with our man. He has never bent his knees when facing insolent might, has not compromised with his principles nor the name and honour of this institution. He has withstood dharnas and strikes and has come out stronger, all because he believed in the truth of his stand.

Though there are the usual critics that say he was too lenient, he has been a figure that will stand out as one with a most illustrious career. After our founder, Welham means only him. It is depressing to think of Welham without him.

As he takes his leave and bows out in glory, we all give him and Mrs. Kandhari a standing ovation. Both of them have affected our lives in every possible and positive way.

Thank You, Sir! And our good wishes for a happy retirement.

-Anshuman

WELHAM NOW

1. The first round of the Inter House Science Quiz was held on the 3rd of May 2001. Krishna House leads the way, followed closely by Jamuna.
2. The Career Counselling Sessions was held for classes 10, 11, 12 on the 4th and 5th of April 2001.
3. The Junior hockey team was the runners up in the Council School Hockey Tournament.
4. The senior hockey team stood second place in the Senior Council School Hockey Tournament held at the Doon School.
5. The junior hockey Inter House was won by Ganga.
6. The senior hockey team was again the runners up at the Swing Memorial Hockey Tournament, held at Oakgrove, Mussorie.
7. The B-House Entertainment programme was held on the 12th of April 2001.

W.O.B.S.

There was a get-together organized by the Chandigarh chapter on the 15th of April. It was well

attended by members from the near by regions and by the members of the Executive Committee. Mr.

and Mrs. Kandhari were present for the gathering . The local representative of the area, Mr. Harbir Batra, at the Chandigarh club organized it. Mr. Kandhari briefed the old boys about the school and

its new principal Mr. Mukesh Shelat. The members have decided to organize a farewell party for Mr. and Mrs. Kandhari, which will be held in Dehradun on the 27th of May 2001.

INTERVIEW.

Excerpts of an interview with Mr. Kandhari by our correspondent Rohan Sachdeva.

Q.1 **RS-** You have been the Principal for 18 years and are also known as the second founder of Welham. What stage do you think the school is at?

A.1 **SK-** I was not aware that I was being called the second founder of Welham! I do not think it wise to compare our school with others. The comparison should be with the ideal to which we have a long way to go. A lot has, of course, been done but a lot has yet to be done. When I joined Welham it was going through an identity crisis from a well-known preparatory school to a little known primary school in a state of flux. We needed facilities, trained faculty, infrastructure. These have been provided over the years and what is more important is that Welham is an established entity with both the staff and the students being proud members of the school.

Q.2 **RS-** You have often stressed on compassion and are also known to be tolerant. Why do you rate these qualities as amongst the most important? What other qualities should an individual have?

A.2 **SK-** We, as a nation, are a rather selfish and intolerant lot. I felt it necessary, as a school teacher, to be a role model and highlight the virtues of tolerance. I think each man should be self-sufficient with varied interests, upon which he can entertain himself and others and not depend upon canned entertainment.

Q.3 **RS-** What do you expect out of your successor?

A.3 **SK-** The new successor will have to deal with problems arising out of change and

new techniques. He will also need to lay emphasis on teacher training and their continuous assessment.

Q.4 **RS-** In the near future, what changes would you have made if you had continued as the Principal of Welham.

A.4 **SK-** I think a more intensified academic atmosphere for class twelve combined with an option to specialize in a sport should be present. There should be zero tolerance for infringement of certain important school rules. Equally important is a more structured method of the continuous assessment of teachers.

Q.5 **RS-** Are we at Welham equipped and ready to face the 21st century?

A.5 **SK-** Boys of class twelve are luckier than they know. They are definitely better equipped. I don't think that boys need to be spoonfed all the time, computer facilities are available and the boys get a lot of exposure in the school.

Q.6 **RS-** What is the key to heading and managing a school?

A.6 **SK-** To keep ones eyes and ears open, to have a listening ear, to be able to interact with the community and old boys. The school can be considered well managed when prefects assist in being guardians to those under their charge. When they want the responsibilities and not the privileges.

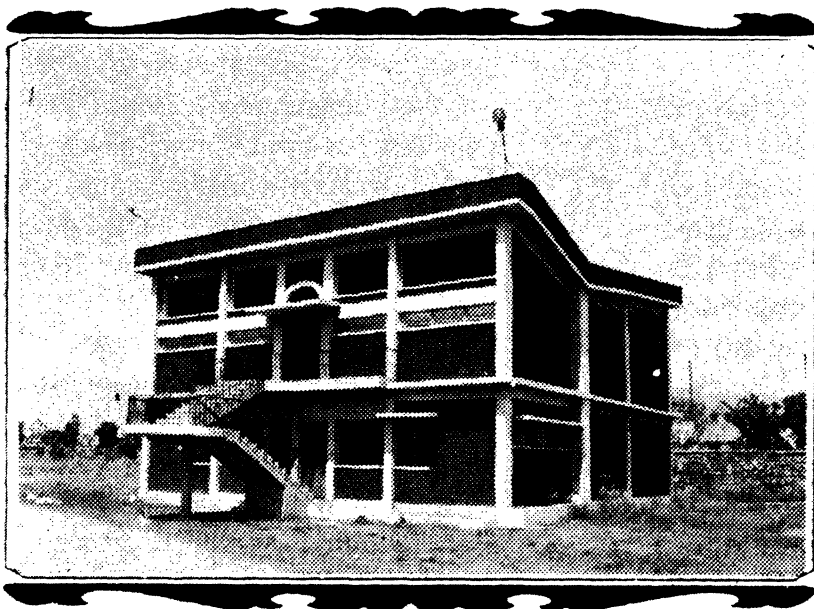
Q.7 **RS-** Could you tell us something about your life as a student, when you studied at Welham.

A.7 **SK-** It is very difficult to look back though it was a period of enjoyment and fun. Being a son of an army man, schooling was often disrupted. Welham provided continuity, a



P. H.
(PRAYAG HOUSE)
HIS BRAINCHILD

WITH
ILLUSTRIOUS
GUESTS - 1987



SQUASH COURTS

**INAUGURATION
OF THE
GOLDEN JUBILEE
1987**



**INSIDE
THE
L. R. C.**

**SCHOLARS'
RECOGNITION
DAY**



place where I made friends, friendships lasting forty years. Life was fun at Welham.

Q.8 RS-What do you and Mrs. Kandhari plan to do now.

A.8 SK-I do not intend seeking employment but will continue to assist the Friends of the Doon and help local primary schools and promote environmental awareness. An other one of my ambitions is to create a garden.

Q.9 RS-Sir, what do you think have been your success and failure?

A.9 SK-I wish I could have been more successful in making senior boys more self disciplined and staff members to have been more interactive with the boys in a friendly

and firm manner. I feel that I have succeeded in giving Welham a name, an identity and the vision of the future.

Q.10 RS-Mrs. Kandhari has been a source of inspiration, and has of course assisted you in many duties. How much credit does a husband owe to his wife?

A.10 SK-Well, she has been a great asset, and taken a lot of workload off me. Mothers and young children have found it easier to talk to her. She has been a sounding board and wonderful all the way.

Q.11 RS-Finally, Sir, your message to the school community.

A.11 SK -*KNOW THY SELF...*

THE WELHAM STAR...

-Dedicated to the BAT(caped crusader)

He came here as a boy, to become a man
But Welham made him what he could and can.

The man attained success, the man attained his goals

The man became a saviour to many of us poor souls.

Eightteen years of experience as Princi of Paradise
Now ahead of him, his retirement lies.

Although he is going, but not too far
You can truly call him, the Welham Star...

-a disciple

LITERARY AFFAIRS.

Entries from an unclaimed diary.

1st December, 1982 –

As I get ready to sit in this much-coveted office, I feel a sense of pride, and at the same time, a sense of belonging to this place that I've come to. I place myself 30 years back, in the days of the Lady, the founder. As a kid, a toddler, this place was my paradise. And now, I am the head. I just can't believe it. I could never imagine myself sitting in this chair, this place.

The sight outside my office is a pleasant one. Trees seem to love the bright sunshine in this

chilly weather. However, I feel an empty space, a void gap in this academia. There is something missing here. I must fill up that blank space. I know I must.

It is quite a pleasant surprise when one returns to one's alma mater, especially as the Principal. The feeling that one gets sitting in this chair as the head of one's own school cannot be explained. It is not duty that connects me to this institution; it is a sense of belonging that makes me feel I have always wanted to be here.

The school seems much different than what it was in my days. No more little kids around in the place; there are senior boys that look at me with a weird look. New faces, except for a few faithful teachers, are all that I see.

As I take steps towards the beautiful Peacock stage, I feel that my presence has been expected for a long time. Everyone seems to call out to me with unknown familiarity; I don't feel new at all.

I think this school can still be developed. The potential that it possesses has not been tapped. Given resources, and infrastructure, every boy here will turn out to be a complete man. I visualise a different institution in a few years, with secondary education, new hostels, technological advancements and education in a complete sense.

Am I expecting too much?

31st, May 2001

I can't believe this. I am leaving Welham today. Oh my god! I have been expecting this day since last year, yet I can't get myself to believe that the Day has finally come.

I am amazed at the heaviness in my heart that slowly creeps up to my throat. There are no kids around; they have all left for their vacations. I long to see their bright faces once again. I know I

will, but then I will no longer be the head. The school seems desolate, as is usual during holidays. but this time the loneliness seems to remind me more of a phantom-like existence.

In all my life, I have never felt this way. Time has defeated me, for once. As I slowly leave the premises, I try to relive the days that are now just a part of me.

My desire seems fulfilled. The school's infrastructure is a pleasure for all that live here. The students seem happy to live in Welham. Yet, there is a dream that needs to be fulfilled, the dream that every student here will have access to the wired world.

I know I have been strict when I shouldn't have been. I know I have been lenient where I should have been strict. Yet, I feel Welham has taught me a lot more than I have taught it. I have learnt, children are often better teachers than the most qualified adults.

I feel proud as I look at the library, the multi purpose hall, and the Internet facility. These stand witness to my labour, my dreams. And these reveal the hard work that has been put in this institution.

The time has now come to pass on the mantle to a younger man. It is he who will now carry the torch.

-Amish Mulmi

MR. K , AND HIS WAYS..

18 long years, seven new school buildings, 10+2 addition, member of Round Square, purchase of litchi orchards and White House, and hundreds of polished products with a glorious future. This man has not changed a bit. He is the same Surendra Kandhari that came to Welham in 1983, with an ambitious dream and abundant enthusiasm. Enthusiasm that has not ebbed since then; and a vision that has materialized, probably even beyond his own expectations. The above mentioned accomplishments are the tip of what he has done to make this school to what it is, from to what it was.

Charlie, as people call him affectionately, is his himself an ex-Welhamite. It would not be wrong to say that he has in him each and every positive quality an 'exie' is expected to have. He is

a disciplinarian who stands by his principals against all odds. His liberal and unconventional ways of schooling did raise many an eyebrow. This inclination towards the American style of functioning was much debated upon. One thing all the exies must be grateful for is the construction of 'P.H.' (Principal's house now known as Prayag house). He wanted to give the senior most boys' of the school, a feel of a junior college where they could independently but responsibly utilize their time. Whether P.H. has lived upto his expectations, one cannot say. This man has always moved with the times, whether in schooling, technology or for that matter in dress. The stylish old man is always, "in", such is the Welham spirit. Mr. Kandhari's stylish "frenchie" must have made many a female heart skip a beat! His dress sense proves that he is young at heart.

This “18-till-I-die” type of dress makes him our man, after all he is a Welhamite. Recently, the fad of wearing woolen caps caught him, a different one everyday. Blue on Mondays, green on Tuesdays and so on. The twelfthies blazer introduced by him, I assertively comment is the best among all Indian schools. His cloak, however earned him the name of Batman but this Batman, minus the Robin was alone enough to kick indiscipline out of school. He was often compared to a vegetable. But he was level headed enough to take these jokes in their stride. However when it came to serious business, he was one tough guy. A word out of his mouth was like a bullet out of a gun, unstoppable. Verbally he could take just anyone for a trip. He was gifted in this ability to put anyone in a sort of a ‘heads-you-lose, tails-you-win’ situation. If you have undergone his tongue twisting treatment, you would know exactly what I mean. Physical punishment would not do to a boy, what his treatment could! He would make Jay Leno gulp for words. If he talks to you in Hindi, then you’ve had it, especially if it begins with a – ‘abey bevkoof... one thing that connected him and some of the boys and staff was his Punjabi origin. He would burst out in his mother tongue whenever he was in the mood.’ (I wonder how he would look like in a pagari!!’) Mr. Kandhari’s occasional filling in for Mr. Khaira’s geography classes would send a chill down one’s spine. Boys, who never bothered to attend the class, would amazingly turn up well equipped with geometry boxes, atlases and crayons! I remember one instance, when one of my classmate, before a class, took a bath, oiled his hair, applied cream, put deodorant and even cut his nails. Unfortunately, in the process he got late. I need not mention that he underwent Mr. Kandhari’s treatment! It would take real guts to bunk his class. In his class we would sit like a bunch of psyched out zombies, unable to even lift a finger. Whew...!

In his assembly speeches he would often say things he pondered over on his way there. His

anger would, many a times, be seen in these speeches. He would not hesitate to cut down to size any “bloody barbarian”! His last resort would be to sharply criticize offence. We have grown with him – “how shall I put its’ and ‘think about its’”. When he ended his speech with a – think about it, one could not help but do so. He could become ‘sarcasm in flesh and blood’ when it was required of him. However we have also witnessed his sudden spirits of humor in the assemblies.

His powerful personality could also put the staff into a trauma. ‘The boss’ as he is known amongst them, was always there to keep an eye. His occasional outings would consequently be declared an unofficial holiday! When the cat’s away, the mice will play! A teacher lazily giving the class free school, would suddenly get up with a – “So, where was I, boys...!” upon his appearance. When he shifted his office from the junior school to the Academic block, it was the staff that cribbed more than us. Such was his control. Thanks to his dynamic leadership, we have teachers like we have today.

Sometimes, however his whims and eccentricities have sparked debates. But I suppose this to be a natural reaction of laymen to the unconventional ideas of a man as great he is. It is because of these ideas that Welham has truly gone from strength to strength. It is under his tenure of 18 years that our school has seen many developments. His graying hair is an example of all the hard work he has put into the making of this institution. My sympathies with Mr. Shelat, who will be under great scrutiny from critics who have been used to expecting nothing but the best from the Principal. However, we are sure he will live up to our expectations.

Today, as Mr. Kandhari stands at the threshold of retirement, he has each and every reason to be proud of and to smile about.

-Prayaas J.B. Rana

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Published By : Welham Boys' School
Registration No. :- 20208/86

Desktop Editors: Sagar S. and Abhishek Shrestha
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W.O.B.N : Mr. Jagjit Singh
E-Mail: oliphant@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in
Web-page: www.welhamboys.org
Printed at : EBD Printers, Dehra Dun.