

Vasant Valley *TODAY*

The Geek Tragedy

When you begin to write about a cultural phenomenon that has gripped the world and changed society so much, you realise the depth of these issues. At different times in history, society has been redefined, with cultures and ideas or just circumstances being the medium of these changes. From women appearing on the TIME magazine wearing skirts after the suffrage movement, to a man called Martin Luther King proclaiming his dream to millions of African-Americans in Washington to young people urging others to “make love, not war”, society has evolved and adapted. Usually these changes have been for better but now a phenomenon which was meant to put the spotlight on the “other guys”, is taking an unfortunate turn.

Like any other phenomenon, this rise of the geeks, if I may call it so, has been marked by the rise of Comicana. This new found love for graphic novel, fantasy and sci-fi content has many reasons. First off, the digital revolution brought geeks like Bill Gates to statuses of power and influence. Then, Hollywood rediscovered a gold mine of entertainment in geek legends like Star Wars. Thirdly, sitcoms like The Big Bang Theory have redefined the concept of a “nerd” and have elevated a sociopath like Dr Sheldon Cooper, whom no one would give a second look to, to the status of a pop culture icon. Finally, it is quite possible that as human beings, we all want to be recognised and respected, something we believe requires a certain level of intelligence to attain. And since comics etc. are associated with geeks (who are the very image of stereotypical smartness) people who are apparently “huge fans” of them may be trying to appear geeky, i.e smart.

A small world created simply to entertain and drive the fantasies of children has now been steam rolled over by commercial items. T-shirts with the word ‘GEEK’ printed in bold are now commonplace. Why label people based on their interests (or things they pretend to be interested in?). We don't see people moving around with stamps on their forehead which say ‘Jock’, etc. This unfortunate trend is a result of two if a result of two major human follies of the 21st century- capitalism and ignorance. A whole sub-culture has been taken over by a symbolic T-shirt and a pair of heavy-framed glasses with no lenses in them. What is more tragic is the rise in the number of self-proclaimed geeks who claim to be gamers or avid comic book readers. I'm not saying that if you have become a fan of Marvel by watching the MCU movies is wrong, but calling yourself a fanboy in an attempt to seem “cool” is an insult to those who fawned over superheroes and were bullied for it.

Just one of the many articles from www.amalgamated.co.in. Check it out and open your mind :)

SCHOOL WATCH

Just a Minute Science -
Class 6
7th April, 2015

Aditya Kapur and Jay
Jagannath from Class 10
judged the event

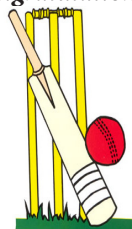
1st
Ansh Mehta and Arshya
Gaur
2nd
Prithvi Mehta
3rd
Ayzra and Joy Ghatak
Sub Junior Inter House

Cricket finals - Red vs
Green House. Batting first
Green House made 64
runs in 19.5 overs. Dhruv
S. Chauhan of Red House
batted brilliantly and
scored 40 runs, took 3
wickets and was adjudged
the Man of the Match.

Shaurya Bhardwaj of Red
House Scored 15 runs,
took 1 wicket and helped
his team to reach the
target in just 8 overs.

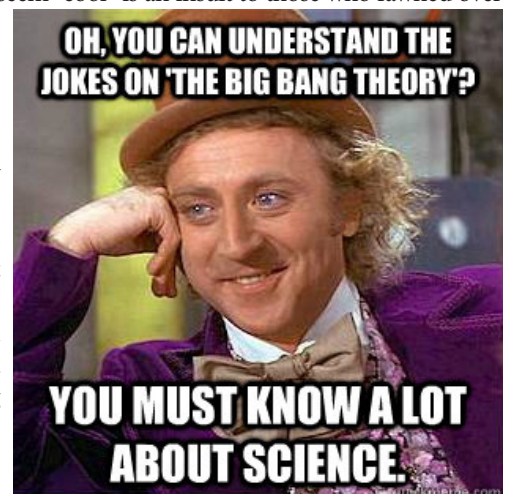
Best Batsman of the
Tournament : Dhruv S.
Chauhan (Scored 139
runs in the tournament)
Best Bowler of the Tour-
nament : Dhruv S. Chau-
han (Took 10 Wickets)
Player of the Tournament
: Dhruv S. Chauhan
(Scored 139 runs and
took 10 wickets)

Congratulations!



How many of these so called ‘fanboys’ know the true Civil War and Infinity Gauntlet storylines from the comics? How come Robert Downey Jr. was suspended from school for bullying a kid who was reading an Iron Man comic, and now acts as the superhero himself? There has been some change in the perception of the geek, and that is a fact that cannot be denied.

But who is a geek really? Do we have a clear definition of the word? Are they people on the gifted index who have a proper character evaluation? Or is each one of us, on the inside, a little geek. Maybe being a geek transcends the stereotypes of a ‘shut-in with confidence issues who takes to fantasies as comfort’ nonsense, and has a much deeper meaning. Maybe a geek is someone who has a passion for something and takes it not as just a childish wish but as a part of his personality and a trait which defines him. All of us are geeks about something or the other, and we've just blocked out that side of ourselves. Maybe the new wave of geekiness may bring out that passion back into us, but only if we accept being geeks, not just superficially, but on the inside too.



Yamuna Yatra 2015

It's impossible to sit at home and go on living life the same way we did before Yatra. Twelve days is all it was - less than 1% of what (most of) our lifespans are going to be. Only twelve days, but it was more than enough to make us change the way we see everything. Every single one of the 63 of us had set out with an array of expectations, ideas about Yatra in-grained in our heads by our seniors. "Yatra is the best 12 days of your school life." "Yatra will change you." "Be careful of Mr. Jha." "You won't beat our chaat record." And 12 days later, we came back with experiences of our own to pass on.

When all of us were sitting outside the Janki Chatti guesthouse listening to Mr Jha sing about whether India is really free or not, when we cooked and served (surprisingly edible) food for the kitchen staff and the drivers in the pouring rain, when we stopped in the middle of the Yamuna Expressway and danced to Aaja Nachle with all the teachers just because we could, when the whole batch took the blame and almost got sent home for buying a packet of chips - we didn't realize that we were living memories in the making.



There's something about freezing in the piercingly cold rain that floods your tents and roaming around in raincoats that make you look like aliens. There's something about the turmoil of having to repack your sleeping bag every morning before you set out on another roadtrip. There's some-thing about the Yamunotri trek being so exhausting that you have to stop at every bench on the way even though they're hardly 50 metres apart. There's something about everyone huddling around the same tiny shack waiting for a steaming plate of maggi at Janki Chatti. There's something about that undeniable happiness we felt after doing seva at Paonta Sahib. There's something about the way the air changed from being crisp and sweet to dense and dusty as our journey went from the hills to the plains and everything in between. There's something about sitting silently in a mandir listening to Mr Jha sing for the last time.



We like to believe that our batch was already a family. Who knew Yatra would bring us even closer?

The thing is, Yatra is different for every person and every batch, each person comes back with their own experiences to tell of. And that's what Yatra is - a collection of stories, each one unique, that together become an anthology for us to look back on. But no matter who you are, or what batch you're from, when you remember those twelve days, you're filled with a feeling of nostalgia and thankfulness for the fact that you could go on the journey that is Yatra.

The Journey that is Yatra

Yatra is terra-cotta chai in the mornings with three extra spoons of sugar
Yatra is arguing over music in that over stuffed Innova riding through homes, hills and highways
Yatra is that guilty pleasure of eating chaat that our parents in Delhi would never allow us to sample
Yatra is six feet of snow to cushion your fall when you jump off abandoned rooftops
Yatra is sleeping in the same room as sadhus in a grim ashram 10,000 feet above
Yatra is relieving yourself after 8 days in wheat fields, shielded solely by the hills
Yatra is sitting atop a mountain in solitary reflection, pondering the immeasurable vastness of the planet
Yatra is finally understanding what people mean when they say, 'life goes on',
 It's discovering that everyone has their own story,
 It's melting into the mountains and realizing that there is a world beyond ours.
Yatra is a journey.

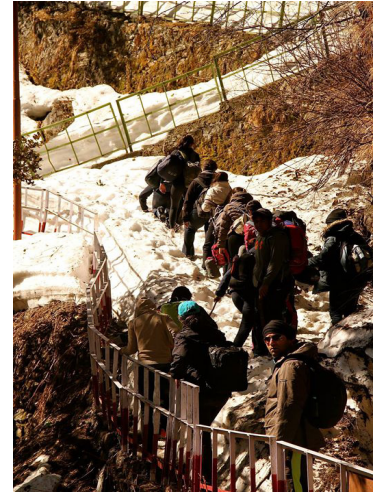


-Kaamya Talwar Sharma & Riya Kothari, 11

यमुना यात्रा के दस सबसे यादगार पल

यमुना यात्रा के दस सबसे यादगार पल
 १. जानकी चट्टी के ठंडे मौसम में गरम गरम मैगी खाना का मजा अलग ही था ।
 २. गंगनानी में उलटी-सीधी शैतानियाँ करने में बहुत मजा आया. "तेरी तो-तेरी तो हमेशा याद सतावे" ।
 ३. खरसाली में हमें गाँव के रहन सहन की बेहतर समझ हुई जब हमें रूढ़ प्रारूप मिलें और नई अप्रत्याशित चीज़ें सीखीं ।
 ४. "सौ में सत्तर आदमी" यह गाना हम कभी नहीं भुला पाएँगे ।
 ५ . यमुनोत्री में सल्फर स्प्रिंग में तैरने से लेकर साधुओं के साथ वार्तालाप तथा यमुनोत्री में हमने जो रात गुजारी उसे हम भूल नहीं पाएँगे ।
 ६ . श्रीमान झा के साथ बर्फ से खेलना, बर्फ में कूदना (और कभी कभी बर्फ में अपने जूते

खो देना) और स्नोबॉल फाइट ।
 ७ . पौंटा साहिब में सेवा कर के सब के दिलों को संतुष्टि मिली ।
 ८ . अपने दोस्तों के साथ वृंदावन की पतली गलियों में चाट, गोल गप्पे, चुस्की खाने और लस्सी पीने में हमें बहुत मजा आया ।
 ९ . आखिरी दिन पर, बारिश में गाड़ियों से जोर जोर से बजते गाने पर अध्यापकों के साथ नाच-गाना ।
 १० ये सिर्फ दस यादें नहीं हैं, क्योंकि हमारी पूरी यात्रा बहुत अच्छी और यादगार थी लेकिन एक बात जो हम सब इस यात्रा से जरूर याद रखेंगे है कि हमारी कक्षा इस यात्रा पर बहुत करीब हुई और हम एक-दूसरे को और अच्छे तरीके से जान पाये ।



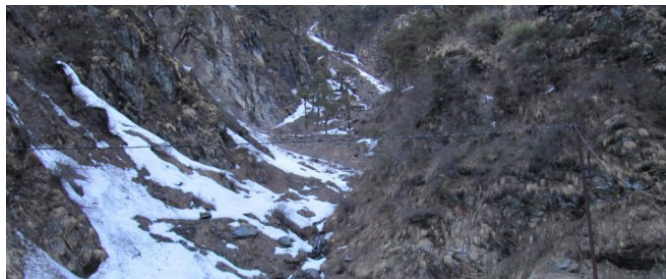
जाहन्वी नागपाल, 11

FLAT LUX

"Let there be light"

All it takes is a spark. A small flick of the matchstick on a rugged edge, to light a spark. A spark that grows into a brilliant flame, illuminating the world around. And when it spreads, it consumes the world around, not in the heat but in its brilliance.

We all have that one tiny part of our hearts, waiting to be lit. For the seven of us, Yamuna Yatra lit the spark. Towards the end of March, we embarked on the Yatra. Today, that very journey has become the driving force behind our campaign. Amidst the expanse of brilliant



snow she dazzles, her gurgling laughter ringing through the calm and chilly air. Worshipped by many, she begins her journey high amongst the snow capped mountains. But as she enters the plains, her laughter fades, and her bubbling excitement turns to milky froth. She dies a slow, painful death.

From the Yatra, we emerged with altered perspectives, with frustration and consequently with extreme determination. We want to give Yamuna a voice, as by the time she reaches Delhi she has none. Brimming with ideas and resolution, simply put we want to make a change.

On one hand it is considered sacrilegious and profane to throw waste in this embodiment of the Gods themselves, on the other, we look at her in the "developed" states, crying for help and begging for mercy. We Delhiites are party to the horror we have created. We are very loving and caring people. We have given so much to this world; the rape capital, the most polluted city in the world, the most unsafe city for women in the world and of course, a jet black 'river' bubbling with methane gas. It can't even be called a river anymore. Simply, it is a drain.

Our reasons for taking action are not solely for Yamuna River. It goes beyond that. This is for the villages that live in the stench on the banks of the river, for the misguided worshippers of a "river" that the government easily directs the drains into. This is for you, for me, for us. It was once said, "The most violent element in society is ignorance." So a fundamental question arises here- when will this very ignorance end? If it is not you and I who should work together to combat this evil, who will?

Pandora's box was once opened and it let out the grief, anger, misery, greed, apathy and hatred that exists in the world today. But one little, yet powerful element still remains. Hope. As long as we have hope and a will to change, transformation will come. We are here for the Yamuna. We are here to resurrect a moribund river. And we will conquer.

-Kamya Yadav & Sarina Mittal, 11

Join the campaign to save the river. Visit thedyingriver.com for more information.

THE DYING RIVER

Cinderella

Cinderella, also known as Cindy was lying down on the sofa and painting her nails. She was wondering what to wear for New Year's Ball that night. She had no clothes to wear. She hated her life in this house with her two ugly step sisters and her step mother. She wanted to live all by herself. Just then she got a call from her Fairy Godmother who told her she had got a shipment of laptops and she needed her help selling them.

The Prince was going to choose a bride at the ball that night. Cinderella needed fancy things for the ball. Fairy Godmother asked her to sell these Laptops for her and she would give her all that her heart desired. She hoped the prince would buy all the laptops so she could make her fairy Godmother happy. When she reached the castle she asked the prince's secretary if the prince was interested in buying the laptops as everyone owned one these days. The secretary told her that the prince was bankrupt so could not buy anything. He planned to choose a rich bride who could look after him. Hearing this Cinderella was very disappointed and she decided to look after herself and work hard and not depend on anyone.

Amyra Singh IV - A



'Celebrating Shapes Week' Nursery and Class - I

Who Am I

Ameera is a pretty girl
 Around her neck she wears a shiny pearl
 Her dog has a long tail
 And he drinks water from a red pail
 She has a big phone
 Which has a fun ring tone
 Her sister is quite tall
 Who plays with an orange basketball
 Her brother Rohan is very bright
 They often have a crazy fight
 Her father is very smart
 and he has a large heart
 She has a sweet tooth
 And she takes funny pictures in the booth

Ameera Chawla 4-A

किकेट

अगर देखना है विश्व कप
 किकेट
 तो लेनी पड़ेगी जल्दी ब्रे टिकट।
 धोनी के चौके पिराट के छक्के
 मुहम्मद शम्मी ने उड़ाए चार
 पिकेट
 मैच शुरू हुआ कुछ लेट
 उमेश यादव ने बनाया अच्छा
 बौलिंग ब्रेट
 जिन्ना ने अढ़ गई उसकी ऐजरेज
 और इंडिया उन गई गेट
 कैशव पॉल 4 ए

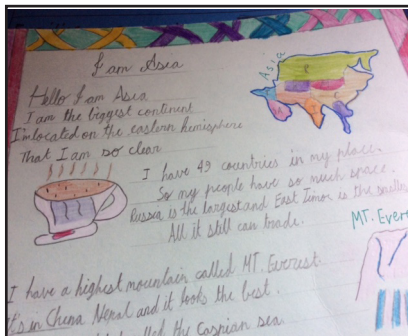
My Home

Here we all are safe and cosy
 Oh! What fun I have at my house
 Unending love we all get
 Safe place for all of us
 Everybody is happy here

Inika Gaur II - B

I AM ASIA

Hello I am Asia
 I am the biggest continent
 I'm located on the eastern hemisphere
 That I am so clear
 I have 49 countries in my place.
 So my people have so much space.
 Russia is the largest and



East Timor is the smallest
 But it can still trade.
 I have the highest mountain Mt. Everest
 It's in China, Nepal and it looks the best
 I have the largest lake, the Caspian Sea
 You can talk with me and have a cup of tea.
 My friend is Europe and Africa



They lie on my west and not so far
 I also have some part in Europe
 Turkey and Russia
 Anyway my favourite place of Asia is India.
 Malaysia, Indonesia are Archipelago in the South
 Also Japan, Maldives and Macau
 All my countries are lovely and green

You can see without any doubt.

Sadayu Manityakul V - B

Families

Families are people
 Who care about you
 My family is special
 Your family is too.

Mothers are soft and fathers are strict
 Sisters are caring and brothers are cool
 Grandma tells me stories
 And grandpa takes me to school.

One family is big
 While other is small
 Some families have naughty children
 And some not at all.

When we are together
 Or far - far apart
 The people I love
 Fill the gap of my heart

Anirudh Vats IV - B

Of Stigma and Stereotypes- India's Third Gender

I don't think any of us will deny that walking into the Vasant Manch and realising that we were going to listen to a talk by a hijra was both surprising and amazing. When Ms. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi walked onto stage, oozing confidence and sass, I was excited to hear what she had to say. I think we're all very lucky that we were able to witness a talk like this one, because it was not only inspiring but eye opening.

Ms. Tripathi is the first transgender woman to represent Asia Pacific at the UN, and is constantly working towards the betterment of transgender rights. Apart from this, she is a professional Bharatnatyam dancer and Hindi film actress. Ms. Tripathi spoke to us about her life as a transgender woman in India, and made us see past the social stereotypes that surround the hijra community. She focused mainly on the importance of the Supreme Court recognizing a third gender, and the breaking of dogmas inherent in Indian culture that define the hijra community as an anomaly and people to stay away from.

Ms. Tripathi is an advocate for the fact that hijras are the same as the rest of the human population, and that they do not deserve to be discriminated against. She doesn't believe that the community needs reservation of any kind, simply equal opportunities. Ms. Tripathi conveyed to us that there's no reason to be scared of anything – no matter what the situation, because it was only due to the fact that she was fearless in her life that she was able to accomplish so much for herself and her community.



I came away from the talk with a strong sense of understanding and appreciation for not only Ms. Tripathi but for everything that her community stands for. She reinforces the message that it is through belief in your own convictions and strength in character that you can surmount any challenge that life throws at you.

-Kaamya Talwar Sharma, 11

Net Neutrality

The words 'Net Neutrality' have been floating around the internet for a while now. So how does this technical-complicated sounding phenomenon really affect you? Well, the truth is, that if you're an internet user, it affects you more than you'd think. In simple terms, net neutrality is the means for every internet user to freely access any content or application without restrictions. Once you pay for the data through your respective ISP (Internet Service Provider), you have the freedom to access anything on the internet, and at the same speed. This means, you are allowed to decide on how to spend your allotted data, whether by watching cat videos on Youtube, uploading a resume, liking pictures on Facebook, or scrolling endlessly on Tumblr. In current news, it is one of the most talked about issues in India and Airtel's participation with its zero marketing has created quite a stir in the virtual internet world. Should you be worried? Most certainly, because it takes away your freedom of communicating freely and promotes inequality by granting total control to ISPs on which sites and apps get priority. Assuming TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) succeeds in its attempt to diminish net neutrality, you will essentially lose your freedom to use the internet in any way you want. Fortunately, we have big companies like Flipkart supporting Net Neutrality and upholding the crux of the internet, at least for now.

- Noor Dhingra, 12



The Harsh Realities

We all know that the students of the senior school are involved in the Outreach Programme. It's all about being together and learning from each other. The satisfaction that you feel once you have interacted with the children is magical.

Recently, I visited their houses. It was hard to believe that between a jungle of concrete and noise there is a little, peaceful area. It was truly an eye opener. The number of people as compared to the space was utterly disproportionate. There were eight people living in a room almost half the size of our classrooms. There were no windows, no fans but ironically there was a television. There were no beds, only mattresses that lay beside one another on the floor. I hate to admit it but there was a part of me that had a stereotype in my head. I am sure all of us have one, picturing a dirty home nothing inside but people in torn clothes. I was proven wrong, their houses are small but spick and span. It is unbelievable how clean they are.

On speaking to the elders, we discovered that the only reason these people were in this brutal city was for their children's education.



They work day and night just to pay the fees but the outcome of the education isn't great either. The hardships that we face seem to be far less as compared to theirs.

There were no luxuries in the house, but the children seemed more than happy at home. I realized that they were content with the little they had. They didn't ask for more. They knew the harsh truth and they dealt with it with utmost grace. That's what we need to learn from them. We need to be content with what we have and appreciate it.

-Aditi Singh, 9

BOOK REVIEW- THE WARRIORS SERIES

The original series of the warriors books, was first published in 2003, has grown to spawn four spinoff series of novels (The new prophecy, power of three, omen of the stars and dawn of the clans), as well as other limited series. They are written by authors Kate Cary, Cherith Baldry, Tui Sutherland, who collectively use the pseudonym Erin Hunter. If one is into these books, they offer years worth of reading to enjoy. It is very interesting and one gets gripped into them immediately. All of the books take place in a world of characters that belong to different "clans" that have different talents, abilities and loyalties. Parallels can be drawn between the clans (which think and feel like humans), and human cultures, making these books an excellent point



of discussion about cultural differences and prejudice. Cats engage in wars and battles, in which some of the characters are wounded or killed. There are descriptions of injuries that sensitive people could find scary. However, the books are action-packed and always leave the reader wanting more. The books use opposing views of war and battle to engage the reader. Overall the books are interesting and I would recommend them.

TEACHER OF THE WEEK

Ms. Jindal

Q) What drove you to become a teacher?

I had a MA in English, and I had no clue what to do with it. So I gave teaching a bit of thought and decided to give it a try. I ended up liking it, so you could say that I became a teacher by chance.

Q) We heard about all the college acceptances; Congratulations on getting into Brown! What are you planning to do there, and why did you choose it over the others?

I am going to do a master of arts in teaching in English. I chose Brown over Harvard as Harvard was offering me training for an administrative role while Brown enables me to teach classes 7-12. Brown is also offering me a 50% scholarship.

Q) Are you working on any books currently?

No, my last book was just published recently so I will give it a bit of a rest. I never really wrote books for profit; I wrote them for myself and right now I don't feel the need to write another.

Q) What is your favourite TV show?

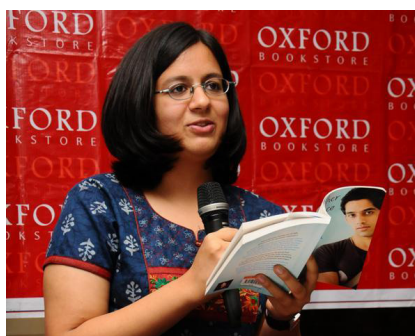
Supernatural. I have been following them since 2006 all the way to season 10. I love it for all the blood and gore.

Q) What are your thoughts on students wishing you a happy birthday every day?

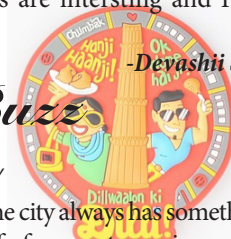
At first it was rather entertaining after which it made the transition onto irritating. But by now the kids have forgotten so it's a relief.

The Editorial Board wishes Ms. Jindal all the best with her future, and hopes that she has an amazing time at Brown. (Happy Birthday, Ms. Jindal!)

(Interviewed by Aryan Sadh, 9)



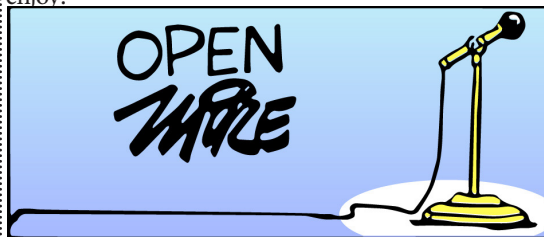
Delhi Buzz



-Devashii Sahu, 6

Your guide to events in and around the city

Delhi is forever bustling with activity- the city always has something new and exciting to offer. Here's a selection of a few events coming up in Delhi and NCR. Check what interests you. Save the date. Explore, experience, enjoy!



Caferati@ Habitat- The Open Mike Series. April 24, 2015 at 7 p.m. at India Habitat Centre, Lodi

Road, New Delhi. Grab an opportunity to perform your own work, poetry, fiction, diatribes and songs. It's all good. You get two minutes and the microphone; rest is up to you.

Ektarey Ki Ankh by Contemporary Puppet Theatre. April 25, 2015 at 4 p.m. Meghdoot Theatre, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi. A play based on life of saint- poet Kabir told by puppets. Improve your knowledge while enjoying the show!

Cookies and Cream Promotion at all Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf coffee shops. On till April 30, 2015. Chocolatarians who are allowed an occasional coffee, try this delightful beverage of the month. A sweet coffee blended with creamy vanilla and chunks of chocolate cookie. Sounds amazing!

Rabiya Gupta, 9-A

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