

The HABIBIAN

Onward & Upwards!

ALUMNI Newsletter of the HABIB PUBLIC SCHOOL

Volume 1 Issue 2

14th August 2018

EDITORIAL

Independence Day bears special significance in the lives of all Pakistanis, in particular Habibians, and on this 71st birth anniversary of Pakistan the winds of change have taken on new momentum that bodes well for Pakistan by the grace of Allah.

In this Issue we carry a brief narrative of the efforts that have gone into the formation of the HPS Alumni Association, and also carry the thoughts of our president Mr. Nazim Haji who takes us on a wonderful trip down memory lane, and sets the HABIBIANS a worthwhile B.H.A.G (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) for the way ahead.

Times are tough and promise to get even tougher as Pakistan resolves to stand on its own two feet minus the infamous 'Kashkol'. In such times a closing of ranks becomes mandatory, and that, dear friends, are what Alumni Associations are all about so we can shed the doubts and fears that have crept into our minds through the rough and tumble of life so far, and hark back to the days when we were carefree and full of optimism about the future.

The genius of life is to carry our child's heart into old age, is an ancient saying that has been validated time and again over the ages, and we, dear friends, are in need of validating it once again with the proviso that an admission of old age is not an option!

Thanking you and wishing you all the choicest of health, wealth and happiness.

CHAT WITH THE PRESIDENT

Nazim Haji was in Landhi having his sons' factory roof filled when the HABIBIAN caught up with him. It's a sorting and grading station for used textile clothing with supplies from North America and Europe marketed in Africa.

"Our Alumni Association is long overdue, and should have been formed 50 years ago," he says. Nazim's HPS registration number is GR #228 and he joined in the first year that the school was established. Nazim's father was on the HPS Board and decided to send all his children to this not-for-profit school so that standards could be maintained at the highest level.

Leveling the playing field

"Majority of the HPS students came from less privileged backgrounds. The thinking was to put your money where your mouth is and put your own children alongside the less privileged." Nazim and his two brothers were studying in St. Lawrence and were shifted to HPS along with all the Habib family boys, including Abbas Dawood Habib who is the chairman of Bank Al Habib.

"With ZAB's nationalization of schools the standard of education was hit for a six with rowdy students and teachers unions. Finally it was reverted back to the original ownership/management and they have succeeded in turning it around and are doing a fantastic job."

Giving back

In a nutshell we want to give back to the school to which we owe everything that we are today, says Nazim. "That's where our upbringing and basic foundation was done. Hasan Akhtar was the principal of the school during our time and dear to all of us. Most of our teachers have passed away. Asghar Naqvi was there teaching us Mathematics. Rizvi Sahab taught us Urdu. Ishrat Hussain was our English teacher. This was between 1959 and 1963."

"We have tried bringing the old boys together a few times without success and, having learnt from our past experiences, are determined to do so once again. Saeed Allawala is a great catalyst and has talked me into assuming the president's function. I have crossed 70 years of age and have my plate full with a number of commitments, but I consider the alumni association important enough to get involved and persuade others to get involved."

Great memories of HPS

Nazim says that he has great memories of HPS and can remember himself as a child going to school with his hockey-stick from which dangled his playing shoes, laces tied together, black shoes polished and shining, and the khaki trouser and white shirt starched and ironed to perfection! And let's not forget the tie!

“Sports were a major focus of HPS along with the associated physical training. At that time we didn't have the swimming pool which came later on after I left. I was saved from any potential bullying by the seniors because I had elder brothers in the school to protect me! There was one toughie that I took on, but that was a one-off incident. Our canteen served us 'daal' and 'roti' every day. Lunch was served in school for a nominal charge, with meat once a week. Most schools ignore the nutrition factor, resulting in 40% of our school going children being stunted.”

There were around 600 students at HPS at that time, says Nazim, and now with the college section added on the student population has increased considerably.

“Hockey was, and is our sport, and HPS even then was at the top. We had very good coaches like Samad sahib. Aziz sahib coached athletics. Bashir and Ghulam Hussain sahibs were physical training instructors.”

Think big

With the revival of cricket in Pakistan the alumni have promised to contribute a proper cricket ground and pavilion at HPS which has the space for it, and Nazim made this offer in a speech at the inauguration of the artificial turf hockey pitch, and has already got the donations committed for this new addition. Back in his days at HPS Nazim proudly recollects having got a prize for cricket ball throw!

On a macro level Nazim feels the HPS Alumni should look at adopting the Hockey Club of Pakistan which is in a shambolic state, and focus on reviving inter-school activity and spectatorship. HPS has the high moral ground in hockey, and well positioned for forging a public-private partnership. Hockey, athletics and swimming should be the focus of HPS Alumni with a view to generating inter-school activity where parents, teachers and students can share common platforms to further the grooming and nurturing process of our future leadership.

nazimhaji@gmail.com