

INSPIRA



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FROM MY HEART

My Dear Lila Fellows,

We are in the midst of a hectic exercise of selecting this year's Lila Fellows. Prabha and the computer have completed their task. Trustees are going through every detail given in the forms that have been short-listed by the computer. Over the next two weeks we will complete this exercise and finally decide on the new members who will join the ever-growing family of Lila fellows.

As informed in past issues of INSPIRA, the crusaders have always given due acknowledgment to those Lila Fellows and friends who have come forward on their own to contribute towards supporting more young deserving girls. In this issue I would like to make a mention of one special gesture from a colleague and a friend—Professor Goran Grosskopf. He has recently retired as the Chairman of the Tetra Laval Group. He has given a magnificent contribution of US \$ 10,000 to the Foundation. Professor Grosskopf, had for many



Professor
Goran Grosskopf

years contemplated on starting a charitable institute of his own. But finally he decided to support LPF. In his own words "Lila, LPF is doing such an excellent job in the complete process of selection, mentoring, training and grooming the future young Ladies who will hold important positions in society, that I thought it better to leave it to you". He has assured that he will continue to support the foundation in the future also.

We have had some exciting times in the last quarter. We started off by having a Warli Painting awareness program, conducted by Mrs. Maya Dongre. Warli paintings take their name from the Warli tribe of Maharashtra. The striking feature of this art is that it is done only using brush strokes. Maya Dongre has been conducting classes on this art since the past 27 yrs. She has painted a 200 sq.ft. wall of the basement canteen of Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital, Pune. At this enjoyable evening we also celebrated Mr. Poonawalla's birthday and released the 12th issue of INSPIRA. Sixteen of the participants found the art of Warli painting so



Warli Painting Workshop results

very interesting and rewarding that they opted to have a full-fledged workshop of 10 days. They have created some fantastic pieces of art

worth admiring. We had a Spoken English workshop for some of the LF's, who felt a need for improving their communication skills in the English language. Mrs. Bharati Joshi of 'Conversations' conducted this program. I attended one of their classes and it is amazing how quickly they have learned to express themselves in this language. Many LF's and trustees enjoyed viewing the hilarious play "PUNE HIGHWAY" presented by the Entre Nous Theatre group. As there was a popular demand from many LF's we organized a repeat program on the importance of Etiquette in ones life, conducted by M/s. Romilla Thakur and Mr. Deepak Thakur of 'Finishing Touch' at Aurora Towers. This is the first time that we organized, in association with the State Bank of India, a seminar for the new applicants, to disseminate information of the various products offered by the Bank to students to assist them to choose the best options available for education loans. Mrs. Uttara Dasgupta, DGM Pune Zonal office and other senior officials addressed the seminar. Two of our Lila Fellows, Gauri Swakul and Swarda Angal performed Kathak, Bharatnatyam and an Exquisite Indo Japanese Fusion dance at the Art Festival 2004 held at Empress garden and sponsored by Nag Foundation. Many Lila Fellows enjoyed viewing the fantastic performance

I have some good news to share with all of you. Our Trustee Mrs. Uttara Dasgupta received National Award for Excellence in Banking and Finance from Wisitex Foundation, at a Seminar focusing on Women beyond 2010. You will also be happy to know that the National Awareness Forum conferred Mr. Poonawalla with Indira Gandhi Priyadarshani award, for his outstanding work in Agriculture, and particularly in Floriculture. Let us all congratulate them and wish them all the best.

I attended marriages of Sadhavi, Amruta, Manjiri and Jolly. It was a nice feeling to see them so very happy as brides. Chandrika, Shalaka, Preeti came home to meet me together with their better halves. Vikshala, Puja, Rajani, Mitalee, Manjusha, Samidha, Radhika and Harsha also came home and I spent some good time with them getting a complete update on their progress. Mrs. Maya Thadhani, who is currently in USA has contacted many LF's and also met some of them. She will of course give a complete overview in the next issue of INSPIRA.

Good Bye until I talk to you in the 14th Issue of our dynamic magazine.

Wish you all the best

Lila Poonawalla
Lila Poonawalla



SHORT TAKES

Maggi, Nescafe, Chocolates and Milkmaid..... Nestle's truly remarkable, isn't it? So is our ambassador to Nestle, RUTAINAMDAR-Soft, charming, sophisticated and talented. She came all the way from Switzerland and managed to steal a talk with RAJANI PANCHANG at the Christmas-cum-New Year Party at Filli Villa.

Ruta, presently an Industrial Performance Technical Support to the Nestle International Head Office, Switzerland, has made it big at a very young age. But at an even tender age, when in class 4, her father passed away when they were in the Middle East. Her mother brought her back to India... to Benares where she worked at the Krishnamurthy Foundation, which was all about theosophy and spirituality. Little Ruta was lost there studying Sanskrit and all. It was only then that they came down to 'aamchi pune'.

Passing out of the Karnatak High School, a Home Science student at SNDT, she was very sure that she neither wanted to be a doctor nor an engineer. She hated textiles during home science. However, she loved food and had a strong inclination towards Hotel Management and Law. Her Uncle and Aunt who were into Nutrition and Diets suggested that she take up a basic degree in one of the disciplines she was interested in. Just the year before, SNDT had started a new B.Sc. course specializing in Food Science and Quality Control, which she took up. The course was basically about food processing with a focus on industrial needs.

During graduation, she began participating in debates, plays, elocution and extra-curricula winning prizes at the College and University levels. But the major thrusts to her bio-data were the annual 2 month long internships. All the students had to organize their own internships. Her interest and luck helped and she always got good companies like HLL, Alfa Laval, Cadburys, Aarey, and other MNCs. She made hay when the sun shone and benefited by gaining experience in varied fields namely product development, analysis, research and quality control. The projects were rated to be really good and were appreciated. Consequently good recommendations helped her in further education; especially abroad where these big names carried weight. With a meaty bio-data Ruta set out to do an MS in Food Science. She was doing a one-year M.Sc. program (to be qualified for the '16-years of Indian University education' guidelines needed to study abroad) from the Mumbai SNDT. She met with an accident and could not complete it. Circumstances forced her to take up the CET and post-graduate degree in Marketing from the Bharati Vidyapeeth under the University of Pune. She applied for the LPE scholarship for the first year of MBA, but due to confusion in information in her application, it had got rejected. However, she bagged the award for the subsequent academic year 1998.

Life accelerated. By the end of her MBA, her GRE scores were soaring high. Among all her US-UK applications, the University of Nottingham- No 1 in UK for Food, Biological, Genetic and Agriculture Sciences granted her admission into the Masters Course for "Food and Production Management". Speaking about her dream education she says- "Life is a bit about luck apart from individual capacity. I was nominated by the department for the DfID scholarship shared between the British Government and a University



Ruta Inamdar

academics. Out of the "sheltered cocoon at home" Ruta says, her stay in the UK gave her a high degree of independence, responsibility to manage on her own, exposure to international culture and at the same time gave her the confidence that she could prosper even in adverse conditions. She stood first in her course and scored a morale-boosting distinction in research.

How did Nestle happen? During her stay in the UK, the International course co-ordinator nominated her and another student to a vacancy at Nestle. However, the company was interested in a person who knew more than one European language and did not have problems with a work permit. Obviously Ruta lost the job even before she had got it! She did not even apply. "Soon after, my mother was visiting me. She suggested that I should not lose hope and should get myself noticed. I sent in my resume to Nestle. I was called for an extensive interview; two days later for a second one, and a few days later I got it! It was her first try and it had surprisingly been a piece of cake! She was just 22 then! After all this she humbly says, "Reaching high is not really about doing remarkably well; if one can get an opportunity and exposure, anybody can do it."

Though it seems an envious job to be in, it is more about taking difficult responsibilities that can handle the competition in the global market. As an IP person she has to improve the line of efficiency and optimize the labor, thereby focusing on reinforcing the 'manufacturing function'. She is presently on "Project 2004 Target" launched for improving the performance of all the factories of Nestle. For the past 6 months she has been working with confectioneries and chocolates. Here, she is in-charge of the 'purchasing function', where she has to manage the raw material without importing any of it, keeping the costs minimum, without compromising on quality, especially maintaining uniformity in the formulation and quality of the recipes and the packaging at all the manufacturing units that requires her critical, personal care. She is the only Indian in her Department at the IHO and is center based. "The appreciation that I get from my bosses and colleagues helps me recognize my own potentials. Plus I never lose focus on my work and in the past 4 years I have learnt faster", she says proudly.

Talking about her strengths she says, "I believe a lot in God. Both my brother and my mother have been very supportive. My mother is my Guru and central strength who keeps motivating me to 'Do it'." This beauty with brains who loves to read romance, make friends, and know cultures has a special message to all Lila Fellows.... "I will not glamorize what I have done, it is not a big thing. Just put a step forward and see for yourself what you can achieve. Try- without which you'll not get it."

RAJANI PANCHANG

LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

A busy morning time in any household is a typical scene. All individual priorities dominate - rush to work, school, college, and numerous domestic chores for the homemaker. Amidst all this one person who can keep the house in order or turn it in to a mess, is the most essential part of our lives-our Domestic Help, the 'Kamwali Bai' as she is popularly known in Marathi.

The Inspira Team decided to take a peek into the lives of these women who make a major difference to OUR lives.

"Aga, aaz na aamachi baaich ali nahi!!!" (Today our baai didn't come) Such statements bring the house down. It is the most dreaded occurrence. But have you ever thought how these people manage both their work and their families, more often in critical circumstances, fighting against all odds, emotional upheavals, financial crunches etc, but coping with them to keep your house in ORDER???

Their work begins very early in the morning. Most of them have working hours from 7 a.m. till around 6 p.m. And before they set out for their work, they have to finish work at home and when they return home after a hard day, they have to complete their household jobs before they can even think of getting peaceful sleep.

27yr old Aarti, works in several homes. She has taken up this work because of a small accident her husband (who is a worker in a factory) met with. But only because of great support from her family, especially her husband, can she work from 11 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon. Hmmm, is it the same story for others? NO!

Aasha is compelled to do this work because of her unemployed drunkard husband & very poor family background. Her husband beats her everyday. Kalpana also has resorted to this task as she has a poor family to support. Her husband has a temporary job in a small company. She has been working as a maid since the last 15 yrs. This is a common situation for MANY of them. The lack of education forces them take up these jobs and work hard to support their families. Kalpana has 2 daughters, Deepa and Sayali; they are in 10th STD & 2nd STD respectively. She tries to pay their fees by borrowing some money. Aarti has 3 daughters who are studying in corporation schools where they get free education. She was only 19 yrs old when she got married. But she doesn't want the same to recur with her daughters. Now her husband is also back to work, yet she is continuing with this job. What for? Only to provide a better future for her daughters. But poor Aasha doesn't have any hopes from her sons. Both go to school but as they live in a bad locality and are in bad company they are not interested in studying.

Aarti and Kalpana, both have a recurring account in a bank and try their best to save some money every month. Kalpana tries to save at least Rs.200/- every month. Aarti too has a policy. Her Ashwini madam helped her to get it. Aasha says, "Madam, we don't have food to eat. I cannot save money at all. All my pay is taken by my husband for his *daru* (hard drink). These experiences are really shocking. In India, we hardly give a thought to these people's struggles. In most other countries, there is no such concept of a domestic help. Everyone does their own work. Otherwise they have to pay high amounts for these services. Look at us. We are taking these services without batting an eye. These women work for us on such small pay packets without much complaint!



Nanda and Anita at work

Aarti, Kalpana and Aasha, all have some bad and some good experiences to share. Kalpana takes pride in the fact that one day her *malkin* (madam) was not feeling well but Kalpana gathered courage and took her to the hospital. Aarti has learnt sewing from one of her *malkins*. Now she earns a little from sewing blouses, doing pico etc. "If I feel well I go to work otherwise I call my *malkin* and inform her." says Aarti. *That sounds like a responsible Baai!!!*

Like all of us, they too have dreams. They want their children to be educated, and they save whatever they can to get their daughters married with the only hope that they get good husbands.

So friends, "do give people due respect and consideration, irrespective of their work."

■ - SUJATA DONGRE

THE VITAL LINK...

When you enter the Lila Poonawalla Foundation office you are greeted with a charming smile, relaxing you instantly. All your queries are addressed with utmost patience. When you become a Lila Fellow you come across this kind soul at each & every function. As days pass by, you become more familiar and amicable and before you know it, you have begun bonding with the one who helped you to break the ice when you had your initial inhibitions about speaking to Lila Ma'am. The bond has now developed into a great friendship!!

It was really exciting to meet this lady with enormous enthusiasm. We had a lovely conversation in which she unfolded her long journey & close relationship with Lila Ma'am. She has been a secretary to Mrs. Lila Poonawalla since the last 32 years. She remarks, "I was a 'bacchi' when I joined her in Alfa Laval (the then Vulcan-Laval Ltd.), way back in 1972." Though Lila Ma'am handled various commanding posts, she was always with her as her secretary, & when Lila Ma'am started out on her own, her loyal support of many years too followed her, leaving a company job. She was there from the inception of this foundation, which is from 1994.

This amazing juggler, who manages her job as a secretary and as a mother of two young girls with equal élan, is undeniably the backbone of the Lila Family. Her work is not limited to office hours alone. She receives calls at home with a fine composure. "Apart from the Lila fellows, there are others who contact the Foundation for so many queries. I am, of course, very polite to them, talk to them in the language they understand. I feel I am cool headed to a large extent." *she informs us.* Gifted with an infectious smile, endless energy and politeness, she goes about her work with a fine eye for screening the applications she receives for the scholarship, feeding them into computers, numbering them, sending mails or couriers to the selected candidates, getting certificates & banners ready & yes, you are right, she meets deadlines that would give the most efficient of us a complex!

She is the first person to greet us & give us our badges at workshops or at award functions. She is the earliest and the last to be spotted. *Talk of dedication to one's job!!!* She scans all e-mails and responds promptly. She's got the memory of a super computer wherein is recorded the name of every single Lila Fellow, her achievements & her complete background!!! "What I like most is that this job keeps me busy and occupied all the time. I have so much to do because this family keeps growing and, fortunately, most of you Lila Fellows keep in touch and obviously your records have to be updated accordingly. The most important call



Prabha at work

thing is to know the Lila Fellows personally, as far as possible. They feel great if they are recognized by their first names. Although I am said to have a bad memory, I do recognize the Lila fellows to a large extent. The moment they are in front of me, I recall their problems, successes, joys and sorrows. (Those that they would have shared with the Foundation)," *she unravels.*

Mrs. Nag, trustee of LPF, says about her, "she is the conduit between Lila Fellows, Mrs. Poonawalla & the trustees. She does her job to the best of her ability & she is always available for the Lila Fellows."

How does she feel in the company of young girls? "Oh, it's amazing. I had worked in a company where the other colleagues were of my age, but here it's different. I am surrounded by talented young achievers & to see the girls advancing towards their goal is really wonderful. It is a cheerful experience! I really enjoy it", *she replies.*

Regarding her boss, she tells us, "I learnt a lot during my career as I spent 95% of the time directly working with Ms. Poonawalla, a very demanding person. She never accepts a NO for an answer for anything, so automatically one has to also learn to live that way. With her qualities of perfection, punctuality, hard-work, sincerity and loving nature, what else can you expect from a person working with her? You decide! I have yet to learn so much from her. To tell you frankly, although the credit for my upbringing and education goes to my parents, the person I am today is only because of Ms. Poonawalla. I have grown with her. She used to praise me for the good jobs I did, but kept pointing out my mistakes and also demanding more and more. The more you did, the more she desired. And that is how I have grown. She, with her excellent performance, kept getting promoted and, at the same time, took me along with her, right up to the highest position. She is, indeed, a great boss and at the same time a very supportive and loving person even when it came to personal matters. I am indeed very very lucky to be so closely associated with HER for more than 3 decades. That is why I have continued working with her and will do so as long as I can. Long live SHE and long live the FOUNDATION." AMEN! We echo!!!

She has a special plea. We Lila Fellows need to keep her informed of our changed e-mail ids, residential addresses and phone numbers. *Now girls, don't we need to take her job seriously?*

If you still cannot figure out whom we are talking about, you badly need a break!

■ - SWARADA ANGAL



LILA FELLOWS

CONTINUE TO MARCH AHEAD.....

Normally at every Foundation Award function an update of the progress made by some of the outstanding Lila Fellows is presented to the audience. The objective of including such a presentation has been to communicate the unique achievements of some of these young ladies. This year, instead, we thought of adding this supplement to the Inspira Newsletter so that we can also communicate with those who, for some reason, are not able to participate physically in the function. There are so many Lila Fellows about whom we could write. However, due to space limitations, we decided to include only a few of them from the years 2000 to 2003. Here they come!



Rajani Panchang

Masters in Geology in 2001 Pune Univ. topping the merit list. Has completed a short course in Remote Sensing at Indian Inst. of Remote Sensing, Dehra Dun. Joined Nat. Inst. of Oceanography Goa as Project Scientist. Has registered for PhD at Goa Univ. Has written a dissertation thesis titled "Geology of Western Coastal Tract. She received the Best Paper Presentation Award for 'Young Scientist', and the "International workshop on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology". Two of her research Papers got accepted in International Journals. She supervised an M.Sc.Dissertation.



Kavita Datta

Masters in Computer Science from Pune Univ. 2001. Joined Assetlink Corpn as Software Developer. She has been officially deputed twice to Switzerland & U.K. for client projects building customer relationship and also defining the technical requirements of the projects. Currently, she is working as a Sr. Software Engineer and Team Leader on a new product development.



Rashmi Soman

Masters in Computer Science - University of Pune, 2003. She has also completed an Advanced Dip. in Japanese Language, Univ of Pune 2001. She passed the Level 2 of Japanese Language Proficiency Test with flying colours. Currently working with Geometric Software Systems Co. Ltd. as a Quality Assurance Engineer.



Pradnya Harkare

Masters in Computer Science - University of Pune, 2003 - among first 25 students. She received the Best Graduate Student Award from M.E.S. Abasaheb Garware College, Pune. Worked initially with Symbiosis Institute for Computer Science and Research for 1 year as a Lecturer in Computer Science. Now she is in DES-Resolve Fergusson College, as a Lecturer for PG-Computer Science students.



Shilpa Khekale

Masters in Industrial Pharmacy.-St. John's Univ. NY - 2003. Her thesis subject was "Soft gel microencapsulation for prednisolone sustained release". She started with Ph.D. in Sept. 03. Currently working as an intern with Forest Research Inst. In Long Island.



Mukta Phatak

Masters in Computer Science (bioinformatics) - Univ of Cincinnati - 2003. Her thesis is titled 'Minimum Haplotyping Problem'. Presently she is pursuing Ph.D in Biomedical Engg. She has been given fellowship from Cincinnati Children's hospital.



Ashonita Chavan

Masters in Biomedical Inst. From Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY 2004. She is pursuing Ph.D. at the same Institute. She topped the Ph.D. Qualifiers in Microelectronics Field. Internship - Trumpf Photonics, New Jersey - Summer 2004



Anahita Dumasia

Masters in Hotel & Tourism Mgmt. from Inst. Vatel Nimes, France in 2004, ranking 1st in whole of France & also topped in her class. She then did her internship at Marriot Hotel, Paris. During her training itself she got a job at the same hotel as Head Receptionist. Presently she is employed as Reception Front Office Manager. She has received work permit for one year.



Gauri Swakul

Masters in Kathak from Lalit Kala Kendra. She has Choreographed 20 songs in Marathi play "Tumche Aamche Gane" 1st price in competition by Mahalakshmi Mandir. Also 2nd prize in State level and 3rd prize in West zone for solo classical. Stood 3rd at Rajkot Youth festival.



Ketaki Desai

Masters in Biomedical Engg (Robotic Surgery & Biomechanics) from Texas A&M Univ. Her Professor hired her for a direct PhD in physiology. She is presently busy with her PhD qualifying exams in Tamu which is ranked 1st in the US.



Preeti Joshi

Masters in Electrical Engg (Digital Signal Processing) Univ of Buffalo. During Master's she did two internships to get practical work experience with Cummins, Columbus, and Tavtek, Buffalo. Has been offered a full time position in Cummins (Columbus, Indiana). Has almost completed her thesis and looking for a right time to graduate (Dec 2004)
Extra-curricular activities: - worked on election comm. of Graduate Student Assn., & part of a music group in Buffalo - 'Amherst Chae Aaroa Aavroha'.



Madhura Sharangpani

Masters in Computer Science (Data Bases) Stanford Univ June 2004. She has worked as a research assistant in field of biomedical informatics with Ralman Lab at Stanford Medical School. Recently she has joined Oracle Inc.



Radhika Lahankar

Masters in Computer Science (Distributed Systems) - SUNY Buffalo. Got a job in Bloomberg L.P. in Manhattan before even completing Masters. Presently continues to work with Bloomberg as a Network Designer/Engineer. Her job is to design and maintain the complete network infrastructure (more than 20,000 routers).



Shweta Lagu

Masters in Computer Science - Univ of Pune, 2004. Initially worked as an Instructor for BCS students at Garware College. Presently working with Assetlink as Software Developer (Credit Swiss Bank project).



Swati Khedkar

Post-Graduate Diploma in Hotel & Business Mgmt I.H.M.E.S., U.K. She has a confirmed job at Hotel Ranaissance London Gatwick. She has also received a work permit for 5 years.



Kaumudi Kulkarni

Masters in Botany - Pune Univ - 2004 - with final G.P.A. as 7.4. Stood 3rd in Univ and 1st in specialization of Cytogenetics. She has also done Diploma in German Language. She plans to pursue her doctoral studies in molecular biology. Presently, she coaches 12th standard students in the german language



Haripriya Rajagopal

Pursuing Masters (Computer Science - Networking) at Stanford. She has got confirmed assistantship at Stanford Linear Accelator Centre i.e. full tuition waiver for balance semesters and also a research stipend. She has been offered internship at Amazon as software development engineer.



Vidya Shinde

Masters in Pharmacology (Phytochemistry) Nashik 2003. Secured highest marks for thesis (125/150) Research work on Liposomal drug delivery systems, secondary metabolites as phyto pharmaceuticals, marine drugs and antisense oligonucleotide therapy. Now with Hindustan Lever, Mumbai, - Research Centre. Practices yoga received honors at SURYANAMASKAR & YOGA competitions.



Vikshala Kamble

B.Ed (English) Pune Univ. 2003

Passed the final exam of Sales Tax Officer Class I and has been selected for the post of Sales Tax Officer (Group A) by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission.



Alkab Shaikh

Pursuing CIEP Intl. Prog of Political Studies (Economics) at France. 1st in Pune in Diplome Superieure de langue et de cluture francaise. Also secured a mention 'Tres Bien' excellent in diploma in business French conducted by Chambers of Commerce & Industry in Paris with score 90%.

When one achieves as much as she has, confidence and self assurance automatically follow. Meet the quiet and unruffled KAVITA DATTA who shares her experience in Switzerland and UK where she went to represent her Organization.

After completing her HSC in Science stream from Fergusson College she decided to pursue BCS and MCS there. She applied for the Lila Poonawalla Foundation Scholarship and was very fortunate to get it, she adds. She regularly attended lectures and at the same time enjoyed her college life to the hilt.

"I started my career with Asset Link Pvt Ltd, Pune, as Software Developer and just within 6 months was promoted to Senior Software Developer. I was lucky enough to handle an independent project and learnt lot from our managers. Asset Link was the best place to start with. It follows total work culture, with no politics and has very good tradition to help one to grow. I improved considerably here in client interaction, communication skills and presentation skills. I was the one who was selected to visit our Asset Link office in Switzerland and also represent my organization to our Client Syngenta in the UK. This was scheduled for 6 weeks in Jan 04."

"Traveling all alone to 2 different countries was a bit scary but I took it as challenge. There were numerous difficulties on my trip right from getting the flight but finally I made it and was in the beautiful city of Basle, Switzerland. Basle was freezing at 7 degree C, but the snow was awesome. I tried to capture the whole of Basle on my camera."

"I found it difficult to remember roads, understand the currency and decide meals. Orange juice was the usual drink for me. I was terribly homesick and alone. Cooking food was the only pastime initially. The people of Basle are very independent and want you to be the same. They are kind and helpful and are eager to know more about Indian culture. They treated me like one of them and appreciated that I was making the effort to get accustomed to their lifestyle and understand their culture. My colleagues in Asset Link office invited me to dinner. I had Thai food for the first time and also went to Casino OH which was a cultural shock for me but we all enjoyed the evening a lot."

"The following week, 2 Indian colleagues joined us in Basle and we decided to serve Indian food to our Swiss friends. It was a Thursday night. I still remember vividly the Butter chicken with Parathas, which was relished by everyone. They all loved the Indian food and had fun. As a token of appreciation, they gave us Champagne which I brought back for my father."

"On Friday I was in London at my client's office at Syngenta. UK has a very formal and professional atmosphere all over and a lot of



Kavita Datta

traffic on the roads. London has beautiful and vast parks and gardens with lakes and a very good but unpredictable climate. They have quite a similar culture to ours, but I found the Swiss friendlier than the Brits. Here you are left alone. You get good Indian food here and I was relishing it after a long time."

"Understanding the 2 different countries, people, the culture and trying to be one amongst them was a great experience for me. I look forward to visiting my Swiss and British friends and familiarise them with Indian culture."

"At the LPE, I have always attended all the training programmes and feel privileged to be associated with the Foundation. It is great to be with all the Trustees and Lila Fellows."

"I enjoy listening to music, love traveling and painting and yes I am a television addict! I want to work for some social cause sometime in my life and I am sure I will."

"My dear co-Lila Fellows Always believe in your self and be confident, know your own potentials and say 'I can do it.' Most importantly, never lose your identity and work hard to achieve your goals. I am sure you all will enjoy this path- this is what I have learnt from Lila Ma'am."

■ -SUNETRA CHAPHALKAR

LEADING LADY

If war comes can peace be far behind? Our film stars and politicians are taking the lead to welcome peace, which is at our threshold. The common man desires to follow suit. Our two leading ladies - **Ms. NAHEED AHMED** and **Dr. TALAT NUR** dispel some of the off beam notions that we possess of our immediate neighbour - Pakistan. We learn that their citizens live lives that are very dissimilar to what is contorted by the media. **UZMA KAZI** brings to us a piece of the enlightening conversation....



Inspira team with Pakistani Ladies delegation to India

We have very often heard this famous saying, "**LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF**". I realized the truth of this when I met some of the Pakistani women who were a part of the delegation from Soroptimist International. (This delegation comprised of 20 women representatives from different parts of Pakistan and most of them were professionals from different fields, while some were home makers too!)

I had the pleasure of interacting with two of these empowered women, Ms. Naheed Ahmed and Dr. Talat Nur. Since our Leading Ladies of this issue are from the other side of the controversial border, let me familiarize them to you.

Ms. Naheed, the head of this delegation, is a practicing Lawyer in Karachi, Pakistan. She has been practicing Law since the past 24 years. She is also associated with several reputed organizations in Pakistan like the Lions Club, Red Cross society, Women Lawyers Association, works for Women's rights and a School for adoption for women. She is also the Legal advisor to the Federation of Business & Professional Women. Some impressive bio-data this! I must say.

Our other woman of mettle is the young General Surgeon at Dr. Ziauddin Hospital- Dr. Talat Nur. She has her own consultation clinic at the National medical center. She would like to concentrate more on providing health related services to women, educate them, bring awareness in them about their various medical problems and also provide required financial assistance.

We discussed the similarities and dissimilarities between our cultures and the purpose of their visit which was the promotion of **PEACE** and understanding between the two nations. As Ms. Naheed put it, the common man from both the countries feels that we should **interact and learn** more about the 'other' and develop strong relations so as to enhance cultural, educational and trade exchanges and not get bogged down by political pressures and interests.

They felt that the issues related to women are very common to the two countries. Talat also said that there are many wrong notions that Indians have, for example, Pakistani women don't venture out without the purdah, which is not true. There are many women who are career oriented and are doing very well in various professions with and without the purdah.

They said they get many Indian products in Pakistan like clothes, music, movies, food etc., and are most excited and look forward to seeing some film stars. Ms. Naheed feels that women bring peace as they are more compassionate and hence more such meets should be organized. They were very happy to see the developments taking place in India, particularly in the field of technology and education and would be very happy to have their students come here for higher studies.

The only thing that disturbed them were the slums and people sleeping on the streets. They said that they do not have slums in Pakistan. Everyone has at least a small house to live in.

We were thrilled to learn that in Pakistan they have 33% reservation for Women in the Assembly. Wow!!! Talk of women power!!! They feel that it is a Herculean task to make women stronger and independent. They feel women need to help themselves to fight for equality and create a place for themselves.

Like their host in India, Mrs. Kasturi Shankar, National President of Soroptimists International Club in India said, for her and her club members this was "*a meeting of two lost sisters*".

Dr. Talat believes that the young generation is going to unleash a sea change in these areas.

Yes, friends the onus is on US!!

- UZMA KAZI



Trustees with visiting Lila Fellows

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



Lila Fellows at training programme Corporate and Social Finesse



Release of 12th issue of Inspira



Interview for New Batch 2004 in progress



Spoken English training in progress

DONATIONS TO LPF



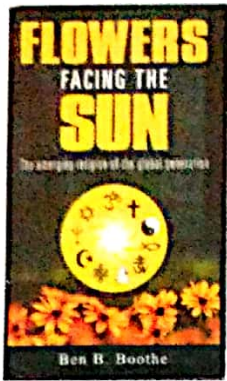
Warli Painting Awareness Programme by Mrs. Moya Dongre



*Chandrika Srinivasan
(LF-1996)*



*Nandini Vishwanath
(LF-1999)*



Title : Flowers Facing the Sun
(The emerging religion
of the global generation)

Author : Mr Ben B Boothe

Price : \$ 12

Publisher : Unicorn Press at Ben
Boothe and Associates,
Inc.

Flowers Facing the Sun (The emerging religion of the global generation). Who will like reading this book? Anyone interested in religion, anyone interested in politics, anyone interested in business and economic trends? Well, actually everyone who is interested in Peace.

This Book will change your life. It will give you a different perspective to understanding religions and their followers. It is a brilliant grasp of the world economic and social movements.

Ben Boothe, who has authored six books and hundreds of articles, is a businessman, economic consultant and world lecturer on global trends. He researched on this book during seven trips around the world while giving economic consultation for the World Bank and the USIS. This book is a result of three years of his efforts and a research in the United States, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Flowers Facing the Sun, starts with explaining who and what we are. This question can lead us to areas that we have in common; the areas where we are one.

You and I at the most fundamental level are spiritual beings. Yes, We are one!

Defining ourselves as Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, or Atheists merely defines the intellectual and spiritual path that we have chosen to organize our spiritual thoughts. Religious and political language is often a negative language. Everybody claims his religion to be the right one and that of the others to be wrong, which continues conflicts and religious violence in the name of Peace. But at the same time there is a phenomenal change sweeping the world. It is not coming from institutions. It is so pervasive that it could be called a new global religion and could represent hope for the world. It arises from the connected generation, *the global generation*. This emerging religion is revolutionary, dynamic, educated, well traveled and is based upon what we have in common.

We are like flowers in a field, at sunrise facing the sun and following it until sunset. We are seeking enlightenment, energy, and the source of life. Like flowers, we are individuals - distinct, with different lives and even come across as different species. But we are all seeking the common thread in all humanity. All major religions share some common teachings - love, compassion, respect, honesty, generosity, kindness and goodness. This is what the book talks about. It offers a new way of dealing with terrorism and hate. It touches the reader and can be a great discussion tool.

Deeper than religious labels, we are all one and if we are all convinced of this, there is possibility for peace on Earth.

■ **Sunetra Chaphalkar**

YOURS TRULY

On behalf of the Inspira team and all the LPF it is my pleasure to welcome the new Lila Fellows who will be joining *The Lila family*. I congratulate all the new awardees and wish them all the best for their future on behalf of the LPF. I also look forward to see these girls enthusiastically participating in various workshops and activities arranged by the Foundation. I am sure they are going to enjoy this long-term association with each other.

This quarter saw creative activities taking place in the Foundation. A workshop on Warli painting has received a good response from the Lila Fellows. It was conducted by Mrs. Maya Dongre, the mother of one of our LFs from last year, Sujata Dongre. All the girls enjoyed doing the creative paintings on their own. We also had Spoken English workshop and a repeat

program on the importance of Etiquette in one's life. I am sure the girls learnt a lot, enjoyed and benefited from them. A big thank you Maam!!!

Inspira, through its interesting columns is marching ahead as is evidence from the feedback received by us from our readers. The article on Lady Priests which was published in the last issue was of interest to many and was much appreciated. This is what encourages and helps us to move further towards improvements. *Great going girls!!!*

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P.S Good news..!!! LPF congratulates Uzma Kazi, our editor, on becoming a mother of a baby boy.... on 5th July 04!!!

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