

Inspira



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FROM MY HEART

My dear Friends,

INSPIRA will soon be in your hands, giving you the communication about what has happened in the last quarter and also bringing to you some very unique, motivating interviews, and articles by Lila Fellows.

We welcomed the New Year with a fantastic Get-together. We had over 80 Lila Fellows some with their spouses and also children. There were quite a few overseas Lila Fellows and the Trustees too. **This year's party was really different from any other party we have had so far.** We had a number of games and we saw Lila Fellows **blowing the balloons, bursting the balloons, competing to light the maximum candles, making paper garlands and scrambling to search partners and get prizes.** What fun! And all **organized and managed by the Lila Fellows.** As if that was not enough we fixed buttons and also picked beans with straws. Amidst all this Lila Fellows had a ball of a time dancing away to the latest pop and bhangra music. The fun went on late into the night, but none left without enjoying the sumptuous meal that was laid for them. And of course how could the party end without cutting a cake to bring in the New Year and release Inspira by the hands of Mr. & Mrs. Bhavnani and Mr. & Mrs. Mehta! What a wonderful way to bring in the New Year. We missed all those Lila Fellows who could not join us in this memorable event.

Mr. Poonawalla invited all the Lila Fellows, who had **volunteered and worked hard to make the 10th Award function of the Foundation a grand success,** to a most enjoyable **BRUNCH** followed by a movie **RANG DE BASANTI.** Talking of movies, the Foundation also sponsored a Marathi movie **"NITAL".** Our very own Lila Fellow, Devika

Daftardar is the **heroine** of this movie. What superb acting of a very difficult role! Her expressions, her emotions, her body language told all what was going through her mind, more than any dialogue delivery could ever do. She truly is an excellent actress; let us all wish her good luck and pray that she soon becomes a **Great STAR.** And believe it or not, we had the heroine right amongst us throughout the movie show. Fabulous experience for all LF who participated.



Over 17 Lila Fellows completed their Spoken English program. When you meet them now, you can see the **confidence with which they are able to speak.** They no longer feel shy of making a few mistakes, they just speak in English. **Mrs. Surabhi Banerjee, a Personal Development Counselor,** conducted a **Thought Management Workshop.** Over 40 girls benefited from this very relevant program for all of us. You can read all about what the girls had to say, about the workshop in this issue. I am sure many of you after reading the feedback, will regret for not joining in.

I am happy that the number of Lila Fellows participating in **Foundation activities has increased,** but of course it is still not enough. When I ask them, why do you not join the program, many Lila Fellows give the main reason that they are busy and are short of time. **"Well, the most important principle every individual must follow is that of Time Management and only concerned individuals can manage this".** If you want to manage your time and succeed then you must **learn to work a little harder on yourself more than you**

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FROM MY HEART

do on your job. Never must we say, **IF I COULD, I WOULD**, always say **IF I CAN, I WILL**. We must avoid that **comfort zone** and put in **that extra Bit**, to **get done that extra Bit**. Nothing comes easy, not even time management. We must realize and appreciate that it is **not enough to be busy**; the question we should ask ourselves is **what are we busy with?** All of us have the same 24 hours in a day. Why is it that some are able to do so much more than the others? Because they understand priorities. **Never before have we had so little time to do so much**. Urgency should not cloud importance of what needs to be done.

Have a dairy. Plan your time. A dairy helps you to **set priorities and stick to them**, to use your time in a **productive way, encourages thought and reactivity** and helps **reduce tension and stress**.

It gives you **better control of your own life**. Wish you all the best and get going to achieve the best in life.

The Foundation and the Trustees will soon get busy to select yet another batch of young deserving Girls, who will join our family of Lila Fellows. It is the duty of every Lila Fellow to communicate to their friends and colleagues to take advantage of this facility available so that the real deserving girls change their lives. Ask your friends to visit the web site www.lilapoonawallafoundation.com for details.

Best wishes

Lila

Lila Poonawalla

SHORT TAKES

Friends, I would like to share some of my experiences in the US, which were also my first experiences abroad. Let me start with a simple poem

*Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a -sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring! The sweet Spring!*

This is the kind of spring we live in our country India throughout the year.

He who has not tasted bitter knows not what sweet is.

Being away from your home teaches you more and makes you tougher. I work as an Associate Product Developer in BMC Software India Pvt Ltd. The Team Lead and myself were chosen for our product enhancement discussions. I was happy to know that I was selected from amongst all the team members.

After the meeting with our colleagues at Sunnyvale's, California, the communication gap which we experienced before was nullified. In our team of 15, there are just 2 women including myself. To prove yourself the first thing you need to do is forget that you are a woman. Discrimination should not be done at work. I was supposed to grasp whatever was being discussed in the meetings and give a gist of the outcome in the following 2-3 days. Being new, I had to put in more efforts. The best adjective to describe the AMERICANS is 'workaholic'. And I became the same within few weeks. Our office hours were from sharp 9am to 6 pm. After that time frame you rarely can see anyone working around.

The learning curve was tightening day by day and so their expectations from me as well increased. Some of the weekends also I spent working. It's really difficult for women to manage deadlines in IT industry as well as home. At the time of deadlines we are almost under the clutches of this industry.



LF-Vidya Mirajkar-Proudly
Posing for a snap

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SHORT TAKES

During that period we have to put more efforts and you cannot show your back at that moment. Now-a-days the support from the families is tremendous and so women are doing well. Without this support it is difficult in the long run to survive in the industry.

The people there are more honest and forthright and this is what I liked the most and also adopted from them. They do not hesitate to discuss in the meetings about the mistakes made. They take efforts and concentrate on how to correct the mistakes rather than to think who made the mistake. That is where the team spirit comes from and just one team member does not need to take the blame.

There were decorations put up for Christmas. I visited the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, one of the best tourist places there and an aquarium in which the varied colours of the star fish fascinated me.

Many things we take for granted but when we are far off we realize the value of it. I think each one of us must go abroad if we get an opportunity. When I returned, I was a more responsible, adjusting and bold enough to take on the challenges of life.

I remember that during my college days I was hesitant in expressing what came to my mind. But all such fear ended when I became a Lila Fellow and saw other Lila Fellows taking efforts to express and take efforts to succeed in their fields. I introspected

within myself as to why I cannot do the same as so many of them who are energetic live examples and resemble the potter who moulds clay into perfect shapes. My realization I share with you, "You can never know what you can do till you try". And with this I also end with a poem by Guru Rabindranath Tagore.....

Mind Without Fear

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action---

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

■ - Vidya Mirajkar

LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Pune has seen a wave of change in its culture with services of the women being welcomed at petrol pumps, in the armed forces, as Priests and social activists. In this issue Inspira meets some young women who have chosen neither a feminine nor white collar job..... the privately employed "Security Guards".

Buzzzzzz!!!!!!! goes the alarm at Mega Stores in Pune. The soft, but courageous and confident voice of Hema (31) stops the lady customer who feels offended on being insisted upon for a bag check. But honesty is the most essential quality for the job that Hema is fulfilling with politeness. Hema says that the fear of losing her job has never made her lie or falter in her duties. No wonder she has suffered many times for having spoken the truth, but that's also why she fits in her job well. Her duty hours are difficult; from 07:00 am to 10:00 pm. Isn't a total 15 hours of a standing duty strenuous? "Yes, it is! But I must as that's what my job demands. After my 10th examinations, due to some

personal reasons in the family I had to take up this job. I did have an immense desire to learn English and study further. But to support a big family of parents, 2 sisters and 2 brothers, I did not have another option but to work." Her parents do not allow her to take up night shifts in the locality they stay due to the fear of neighbours passing absurd comments on her being single and on her job profile.

It is now common to find Women Security guards not just at Shopping malls but at various places like housing complexes, theatres, parking areas, corporate offices etc. The difficulties these young

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LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

ladies face are not very different. Nearly each of them has a strong desire for higher education, many having taken up this job having completed their graduation.

Monali Jadhav (21) currently posted with a Software company, is pursuing her FYBA from Mukta Vidyapeeth. Apart from that she is a Champion in the Karate form of martial arts, on the Basketball team of SNTD College, and is also learning Tabla at the Sawai Gandharv Academy. She is one of those few girls in this profession who is blessed by her family's support so as to pursue so much at the same time. All her three sisters are married. But she is earning up to invest part in a policy and the rest she gives her mother. Monali thinks that she has a very individualistic thinking and would not fit well in the institution of marriage and thus thinks she would never get married! She is the girl who does not shun from night shifts at work and travels on her own to work and home. An added quality that this courageous lady has is a brain with a memory like that of a computer. Once she sees or meets someone, she never forgets! She has the computer mind. She never forgets the face of the person she meets. "What about night duties? Is she willing to take night duties? Do they have any transport facility during night shifts?", "Yes, why not? But even in night duties we have to come on our own, no car facility provided to us" answers this courageous lady. I was surprised to learn this.



Women Security guards on duty take a break to pose for Inspira-Hema, Manisha, Monali, Diksha (L-R)

The situation is different for Jyoti (19) who is also a bit shy. She has completed her Class 12 with a commerce background. Though her father has been working as a watchman for a very long time, her parents do not let her take up the night shifts! She

initially was working at MIDC Tablets Company after which she was idle for 6 months. Frustrated for being without a job, she attended the interview for the position of Women Security guard and got it. She says, "This job has taught me a lot and I am no more a shy. I have learned that I need to be bold and courageous to step out of home and now I feel proud supporting my family. It also gives me an immense sense of independence." Even after working for 15-16 hours a day, she helps her mother with the household chores sensing that is her responsibility too.

After selection these young women who join the Private Security Forces are trained for 2 days in fire fighting and in parading/marching. Apart from this, on getting recruited they are introduced to all senior people in the management and taught how to behave and speak with them. They then undergo a 3-week on the job training as to how to speak with visitors, handle customers of the corporate clients, so that they can communicate personally with people of every cadre.

Manisha (21), fair and beautiful, who has joined these services recently is a Commerce Graduate from Wadia College and speaks English very fluently. Even with a little experience she has much to share. "Apart from the regular training we are taught to operate the fire alarm if there is gas leakage. This requires us to be alert, have tremendous presence of mind and be quick-footed on duty. If anything goes wrong, we are directly answerable." She also has a very supportive family but no marriage plans yet. She does feel that when they request people for their baggage to be checked, they feel offended and degraded and at times do abuse in return. But her colleagues and other people whom she meets everyday have taught her to fulfill her responsibilities.

"But these situations are very common for us. Some people create a big scene if they have gone through a security check for the first time. But when they come in the second time, some of them apologize for their behavior also" said Diksha (28), the most experienced of them all. Her reasons of joining these services were first and foremost, the desire to do something different, adventurous, and courageous and of course the other reason was to be independent and support the family. Her big support is her husband who understands her work timings as well as her responsibilities towards job. Her husband used to work at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai as a Mechanical Engineer but somehow lost

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LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

the job and they decided to shift to Pune. When they reached Pune they were broke. But they did not lose hope. Both of them started working as Security guards. She has done S.Y.B.Com from Nasik, is a Karate Champ, a National Level Kabaddi player and a winner of prizes in dramatics from none other than the very talented Film personality Mr. Sachin Pilgaonkar. Speaking about one of the worst situations she might have handled at work she reminisces proudly, "For one of the night shows in famous theatre in Pune, 2-3 people who came were drunk. We, security guards stopped them from taking outside eatables into the theatre. Those people did not listen to me and tried to go inside. But I did not give up before throwing them out." She is ever ready to handle any challenges. It is true that not only on duty, but even generally, she never tolerates any public indecent behaviour by men.

Today the general public is not surprised seeing Lady Security Guards. As we know women are entering all fields and excelling, fighting every obstacle. Staff and visitors, especially at Software Companies feel that women are very particular

about their duties. They never allow any visitor to enter unless and until he or she is identified from the concerned higher authority. These ladies are even known to have efficiently handled huge crowds, crazy over celebrities at big events such as premiers of movies in the city. Especially when these girls have the responsibility of providing security to the film personalities, they have to keep calm, control their own nerves and have the right presence of mind to do justice to their work.

At the end the question does arise..... Who does their security checks after duty hours? It is mostly their male colleagues; but by and large they all share a very safe and comfortable relationship. One of the girls says "If someone tries to take advantage of you, put your foot down and raise your voice against what is wrong. Your words, actions and assertiveness can be your best defence." *That is surely a good message for all you Lila Fellows to follow!*

■ - Sujata Dongre and Rajani Panchang

POT POURI

LF Sunetra gets an opportunity to interview the most recent Trustee of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, Mrs. Shaheen Patel who is also our very own Lila Fellow (1998).

It gives me a great pleasure in introducing a Lila Fellow, who is now the trustee of the same foundation. Till date this foundation has been FOR the Lila Fellows and OF the Lila Fellows. This is the first step towards making the foundation BY the Lila Fellows...a dream which will in a few years come true wherein the foundation will be entirely managed by the Lila Fellows.

"We respect the dreams and the decision taken by the foundation chairperson Mrs. Lila Poonawalla and the trustees of making the Lila Fellows manage the foundation completely, and we will surely make it happen" says Shaheen".

One who follows her dreams, lives life with her own values, loves pets, and has literature in her blood is how one could briefly describe Shaheen. Her parents loved literature and so always told Shaheen that literature will make her understand life better and will give her a different perspective on life.

She did her schooling from St. Anne's High School and as child Shaheen was quite stubborn, silent and a keen observer initially. She grew into a very talkative, naughty and a bubbly girl - had mad friends, a bunch of cousins growing together in a well-knit joint family with a lot of get-togethers, family functions etc. Hence Shaheen always got a platform within the family to recite her own poems, and enact plays which inculcated in her an interest in linguistics and drama. By the time she was in her 8th-9th class she was pretty sure of making her career in literature. "As a kid -- I was always surrounded by people. I was always amongst the last benchers and never studied particularly hard, but still managed to do quite well. My teacher called me 'The Wounded Soldier' because I always had some bandage on me. After my sister finished schooling there was no one to do the bossing on me. I loved playing with clay, or with my pet Cat, drawing, painting, designing, making sketches of my lecturers (which I still love to do). My Dad made a book of poems written by

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POT POURRI

me...smiles Shaheen and recollects a poem written by her as a kid -- *The Little Licking Fish*".

Shaheen's Mom believed "Life is not just mean learning academics" and there was much more to it. So she always kept her children constructively occupied. Hence, she enrolled Shaheen in various extra curricular activities like music, drawing etc. This made Shaheen always learn something new in life, and kept her engaged constantly. Till date she has attended various personality development and public speaking courses, presented research papers, co-edited various books, attended several seminars and conferences, completed a fashion designing course, Montessori Training, participated in debating, dramatics, sports activities, learnt Hindustani classical music, anchored and compered several programs etc. This has made her a more confident and motivated individual.

Shaheen is an Arts graduate from ST. Mira's College and a post graduate from the University of Pune with English as her special subject. She cleared the State Eligibility Test (SET Examinations) after her M.A in one go and is now a Pune University recognized Post Graduate Teacher of English.

She loves designing and having done a course in designing she took up a part time job as designer during her S.Y B.A. Her design themes were accepted and quite famous hence her work was liked by all at her job. Presently she designs clothes for herself, her relatives and some friends. **Somewhere down the line she wishes to continue to do something on her own in designing.** She has also worked part time as Counselor with Asset International, Camp, Pune, for 8 months.

Shaheen got married to Akil Patel in the year 2001. Akil is working as an Associate consultant with Kanbay Software Pvt. Ltd. "He is one of the most pure-hearted, unselfish and loving person I have ever seen," says Shaheen. "Managing the balance between work, house and studies too is very difficult. Due to family and work responsibilities my M.Phil got stretched as I could not give time for the same. Also we hardly find time for each other. It is not easy juggling all these and it is only now that we understand how much of all this effort goes into making a home." Shaheen and Akil have recently moved into their own house.

Presently Shaheen is pursuing her M.Phil under the guidance of Dr. Prashant Sinha, Former Head of the

Department of English, University of Pune. Modern Drama being the major area of research, "A Comparative Study of the Women Characters in the plays of Sophocles and Ibsen" is the topic of the dissertation which she has recently submitted to the university.

Currently she is working at the **Abeda Inamdar Senior College for Girls**, Pune, as a **Lecturer at the Department of English**, for the past 5 years. "I teach compulsory, General and Special English papers to all the B.A and B.Com students besides teaching at the Post Graduate level. I was also a Visiting Faculty at A. K. Khan Law College. I have designed the syllabus for and conducted lectures for Autonomous Courses in Spoken English, Communication Skills and Public Speaking, and Personality Development. It was a rewarding experience for me when I conducted Remedial English classes for Scholar Batch, a special batch of



First LF as trustee of LPP - Mrs. Shaheen Patel

meritorious 11th and 12th standard science students wherein I was given a free hand and allowed to formulate the syllabus on the basis of what I thought fit. I have also been participating in the Evaluation Procedure of the University of Pune in my capacity as Examiner" states Shaheen.

About the present generation "I do not find the required interest level in the present generation to learn things, they have different motivations for the subject, the motivation for the subject is lacking in most of the students. However, those who are serious are extremely focused while others have opportunities and

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resources but are not using them. They lack respect for subject as well as the teacher, I really feel bad for them. Constant motivation and liking towards the subject can be developed by the lecturers by introducing new ways of teaching and designing syllabii so that students learn and remain interested."

My association with the Lila Poonawalla foundation is now for more than 7 years and this has been truly a great experience. Frequent tete-a tete with the trustees, tea parties, new friends, professional training programmes and celebrity studded award ceremonies have been enjoyable and enriching - Fond memories stronger bonds and an ever growing family. Last year (2005) I received a phone call from Lila M'am saying that the foundation trustees have chosen me to be on the board of the LPF foundation. I was surprised, happy and stunned for a moment. My family members were thrilled to hear this and were happy for me; they constantly supported me and asked me to take this responsibility. It was difficult for me to accept this fact and wasn't sure initially. But then Lila M'am was always there to explain things to me. What's best is that with each passing year I have realized more acutely what a great honour it is to be a part the Lila family. I feel more special and indebted now than I was back then in 1998.

As a Trustee - I loved the process of evaluation of the new Lila Fellows (year 2005) of which I was part of. It was a systematic process with a lot of hard work, debate and discussion over each individual. Every trustee's views were considered, every small detail considered. Each Lila Fellow is evaluated, cross- examined and screened by all trustees. After knowing and being a part of this evaluation process I have understood how much goes into choosing a Lila Fellow, so we all should be proud of this fact and always think that we are really special and hence a part of LPF. The next best thing to happen being the trustee of the foundation is - I had the opportunity to meet His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Kalam at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Aug 2005 for the release of the book on Lila Fellows, entitled '21st Century Belongs To Them'.

In the years to come we will be introducing few more Lila Fellows on the board of LPF, but I cannot imagine the foundation without the present trustees. I am sure they will always be there to motivate, support and guide.

As a trustee, in future I would like to upgrade the present evaluation process, making it more diverse,

introduce more courses and workshops which help Lila Fellows to step confidently into their professional life. Above all, I would like to bring in more and more Lila Fellows to increase our family and also bring in Lila Fellows as the members of the board of LPF, but by doing all this ***I will not forget the basic principles of the foundation the personal touch, the constant motivation, pampering and the love which all the trustees have given to the Lila Fellows. This will never change.*** Also another important task in the priority list is to take concrete steps with the help of our trustees on the 3 point Plan of action given by Dr. Kiran Bedi for the Lila Fellows to execute (3 point Plan - Lila Laureate- taking the award higher, providing regular oxygen to the foundation by the Lila Fellows and lastly the Book on Mrs. Lila Poonawalla).

My advice to the Lila Fellows: Feel more privileged as you are amongst the few who have been chosen as Lila Fellows and the trustees have taken so many efforts to select you and include you in this ever growing family. So go ahead and become better individuals and better professionals in life. Don't let this opportunity go, give your best to life. Participate in as many activities of the LPF as you can. And the least you can do is - set an example for others so that the foundation feels proud for choosing you.

"Remember, you have something really good in you that's why you have been chosen...(and so have I !!)", proudly states Shaheen.

■ - Sunetra Chaphalkar

EVE'S VOICE

As always, here we are with a Lila Fellow who defines grit and determination
Poonam Pahari (Doiphode) who shares her choice of career
and yardsticks of success ---



Miss Soft spoken,
Poonam Doiphode

I, Poonam Pahari (Doiphode), feel enormous pride in introducing myself as a Lila-Fellow. Born and brought up in Pune, I come from a humble background. My father worked in the construction business, and is presently retired. My mother is a homemaker. The biggest influence on my life in my formative days was

that of my grandfather's, a retired Tehsildar from Pune. I was always very attached to him. I am the eldest amongst four sisters and a brother and my childhood had its share of all the thrills, excitement and challenges which accompany anyone who happens to be part of a big, Indian, middle class family.

During my higher-secondary schooling I had been interested in science, particularly Physics. But to be honest, I never dreamt I would become a Physicist or never knew what it meant to be one, as we were always taught to think in terms of conventional careers. Going by the trend, I had started preparing myself for a career in Medicine. As expected, I did not do up to the mark in my exams as my heart was never into it, although I could have sought admission for Ayurvedic/ Homeopathic branches of medicine. As several of my friends embarked on their MBBS career there was a terrible sense of disillusionment in me, which my grandfather sensed. He stood by me, gave me lot of support and encouragement. He sensed that my heart lay somewhere else and encouraged me to pursue a career in pure sciences. My parents too were very supportive. This was a turning point in my life. For the first time I could dream earnestly as I began my journey towards a new destination. During my Bachelors I always topped and was finally rewarded with the Best Outgoing Student Award from the college. Prof. Inamdar, Principal, Garware College, was a great source of inspiration during those times.

During my graduate studies I also took to YOGA and completed a Diploma-course. My proficiency led me to qualify at the state-level and participate in National and International yoga-competitions. I also became a Yoga-instructor and started conducting regular classes for Yoga.

After completing my Bachelors degree, I sought admission for my Masters in Physics, in Dept. of Physics, University of Pune. It is here that I met Sambaran, my dear husband. His passion for Physics and his determination to pursue a research career made him a natural soul mate. We eventually married in 1997, transcending all barriers of caste and creed. After post graduation I enrolled myself for a PhD in Pune University. It was not easy with enormous financial constraints. But I was steadfast in my goal and was even considering odd jobs. It was at this point in time, that Lila Poonawalla Foundation took me in its folds and I was awarded a handsome aid, enough to take care of my educational requirements. This gracious gift changed my life in more ways than one. In fact, I have been always pampered with love by Lila M'am. I still remember the big beautiful bouquet she had send to me on my birthday, even when I had not been in touch for a long time. I never thought I could be so important to anyone; after all it was for the first time that anyone ever sent me a bouquet.

While I was pursuing my PhD in Pune, I was offered a permanent position as a Scientist at the Institute for Plasma Research, situated in Ahmedabad. I was also selected for their PhD programme. I stood at crossroads, as accepting the former not only required me to give up my PhD, it also meant staying away from my family and fend for myself for the first time in my life. However, it not only offered me an excellent platform to pursue my academic interests it also offered me the necessary security to fulfill my financial responsibilities towards my family. It goes without saying that presence of Sam at IPR, where he was pursuing his PHD, only made the decision easier. I still remember those moments when I attended the interview, which continued for close to about 2 hours before I was offered this post. I started working with Dr. Shashank Chaturvedi in the Pulsed Power Group. My work, in brief, involves Computer Simulation and Modeling that has enormous potential, especially in developing

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EVE'S VOICE

applications of national importance in the field of Material Science and Condensed Matter. Not only have I enjoyed Shashank's enormous guidance, over the years he has instilled in me the virtues of working with a vision. Under his guidance, I also started working towards my incomplete PhD.

My hobbies are playing badminton, reading books and listening to music. Also very recently I have taken fancy to "Kathak" dance form and would love to learn it someday. In all these matters, my marriage to Sam, is fairly responsible in more ways than one, as he is a man of varied interest. Of course, being blessed with a little daughter has certainly changed my priorities in recent times. Above anything it has taught me that life is indeed many-dimensional and needs to be savored in every respect. I must admit here unabashedly, that with Sam around ("an excellent father" to quote Lila M'am!!!) and supportive parents and in-laws, my career continues to flourish unhindered.

For young fellows (I am not that old, by-the-way!!) I would share, not an advice, but rather an abiding belief that one should work for the country and society. India is at the threshold of an economic boom, but we can hasten this if we further concentrate on certain sectors and bring more parity in our development. It is young people like us who

can make a difference in our own ways. With all the privileges and opportunities that I have been blessed with, it is going to be my constant endeavor to translate all these into something - no matter how small- that eventually improves the life and conditions of the multitudes in my country. In this regard, I would also someday like to contribute towards Women Empowerment, as I strongly believe that engineering a social change is a must if we are to raise our head as a proud nation.

I consider myself only too lucky to be part of a family -the foundation- whose very genesis is based on the above principles. Finally I would like to sign off with the following words of Foster C. McClellan, which continues to inspire me, "Trust yourself. Create the kind of life you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny inner sparks of possibility into the flames of achievement."

■ - Poonam Doiphode

LEADING LADY

CAPTURING PERFECTION !

ZERBANOO GIFFORD, author, community politician, founder of the ASHA Foundation and NESTA fellow (Britain's prestigious National Endowment of Science Technology and Arts) has over the past year, interviewed more than 250 extraordinary women of inspiration from across the world.

Human rights campaigner and community activist, Zerbano Gifford was born in India in 1950 and raised in London. She made history by being elected as the *first non-white woman Liberal councilor* in 1982, and is acknowledged as a pioneer for Asian women in public life. She has stood three times for parliament, and described as a "*Political Fireball*".

Zerbano holds *Nehru Centenary Award* for her international work, championing the rights of women, children and minorities. She is the only woman outside India to have been awarded the Nehru Centenary Award for her international political work.

A patron of numerous international organizations, Zerbano is the Founder Director of the ASHA

Foundation, which encourages and supports philanthropy worldwide and works for interfaith and intercultural understanding. Previously, Zerbano helped set up Charities Aid Foundation in India.

In 2004, Zerbano was awarded a fellowship from NESTA- National Endowment of Science Technology and Arts. With the belief that women can bring stability and peace in the world, Zerbano has dedicated her fellowship to connecting influential and inspiring women worldwide and it aims to engage individuals and organizations to network globally, and offer their skills for humanitarian work across international, cultural and religious boundaries. Of her fellowship, which comes at a time when she could not move her work onto another level without this support, Zerbano says: "The NESTA award will give me financial

Contd...

LEADING LADY

Independence - a basic requirement which the world's women still don't have access to." She continues: "It's magical. I have wanted to do this all my life. NESTA has given me not only the opportunity, but also, the credibility to do it. Who knows where it could lead?"



Crusader & LF-Pradnya Interviews
Ms. Zerbano Gifford

Zerbano has sought the good, the great and the grassroots across disciplines, communities and faiths. From academics to actresses, entrepreneurs to environmentalists, politicians to philanthropists, spiritual giantesses to spirited pioneers, chairpersons of media empires to directors of international charities and corporations. The women Zerbano spent time with, have empowered themselves to change the way we live and understand the world. Throughout history there has been speculation about how women, with their different understanding of power and communication, could change the patterns of hostility, fear, and prejudice that have sustained our unequal world order. Zerbano's venture will provide an opportunity for such a speculation to become reality by drawing on the collective life experiences and wisdom of these women together in a groundbreaking book. The book allows us to listen to and benefit from her unprecedented access to so many remarkable personalities throughout the world. In keeping with the spirit of her work, all the money made from the sales of her forthcoming book "Confessions of a Serial Womaniser" will go to a women's led Peace Center.

Zerbano has authored numerous books, including *the Golden thread*; *Asian Experiences in post-Raj Britain*; *Dadabhai Naoroji: Britains first non-white member of Parliament*; *Thomas Clarkson, and the Campaign Against The Slave Trade*; *Asian Presence in Europe*; and *Celebrating India's 50 Year Anniversary*.

Zerbano's guiding aims are to cross cultural and racial boundaries to encourage people to work together to, quite literally, change the world. "My goals have always been to work towards world peace, prosperity and the end of poverty," says Zerbano. Part of her success is due to her immense networking skills, which mean she is able to access eminent figures from around the globe, to get involved in many pioneering efforts in which she has a hand. Zerbano believes that the 21st century will be more holistic, with more people making connections across cultures to combat personal and collective greed.

She says: "For the past 5,000 years, the world has been based on masculine principals like logic and analysis. But this forgets the need to balance with the feminine principles of synthesis and intuition". Zerbano's project is centered on initiating and developing connections and collaborations among influential, inspiring women from all walks of life and offers an exceptional and timely opportunity for women to share and develop their strengths. Her project truly befits the new century in which we have so many resources available for communication and yet fail to connect meaningfully in order to tackle basic enduring problems such as violence, hunger and poverty, as well as the spectrum of terrorism.

I was surprised and overwhelmed listening to such an exceptionally successful international personality. She says exactly what she believes in. She wants all women to collectively work together from different countries for empowerment and efficiency. According to Zerbano, Women must be strong and efficient with 5-E's: Education, Economy, Enlightenment, Equal rights and Enjoyment. Women in India should be spontaneous and confident enough to change the political climate. Dynamism and spontaneous generosity will help to change the attitude and mindset of the male dominating community.

Zerbano Gifford's book on 250 extraordinary women in the world features five Puneites which includes Anu Aga, an educator of the deaf *Dhun Adenwalla*, young and hardworking girl committed to the animals *Simone Poonawalla*, a professional *Karen Anand* and our very own successful businesswoman *Lila Poonawalla*. Zerbano says: "Lila is a woman who ensured that she empowered not just herself but other women too. The financial help extended to young girls for further studies through her foundation is commendable".

Contd...

LEADING LADY

With so much personal success behind her and the strength and purpose of so many remarkable women alongside her, Zerbanoo's forthcoming book promises to be indispensable and fascinating reading for an international audience.

"Enjoy yourself. Courage is very important in life. Keep courage to do what is right, to choose what is right, do not go by others evaluation, do what is expected, pure motivation always gives pure results, behave completely natural!" - best wishes from Zerbanoo to all Lila Fellows.

Let us see what is possible when all influential and inspiring women across the globe cross the boundaries and work together!

■ - Pradnya Kashikar

DONATIONS

We thank our Trustee and Lila Fellows who generously Donated to the Foundation.
We really appreciate this gesture



Mr. Parshuram Date
Trustee
(Rs. 25,000/-)



Ms. Shiwani Sambarey
LF-2005
(Rs.30,000/-)



Mrs. Kanchan Lakkapragada (Nikumb)
LF-1997
(Rs. 75,000/-)



Mrs. Alefiya Poonawalla (Faizullabhoy)
LF-1997
(Rs. 10, 000/-)

Ms. Asmita Mondal LF-1996 (Rs. 4,500/-), Ms. Madhura Dhoka (Khangaonkar) LF-1998 (Rs. 500/-).

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



LPF Welcomes the year 2006 with a bash



Inspira release at the hands of Mr. & Mrs Bhavnani and Mr. & Mrs Mehta (L- R) well wishers of the foundation



Trustees celebrating birthday of Mrs. Shaheen Patel with few overseas LF's



The Trustees & the Volunteers at the 'Rang de Basanti' show



The trustees & Lila Fellows posing with the lead actress of Marathi movie 'Jalebi', LF Devika Daftardar

BOOK REVIEW

Magazines Today

Things have definitely changed...

From black & white picture to fine colored photo prints, From letters to E-mails, From cover page to summary, Magazines too have gradually changed; showing glittering events, musical nights, glamorous Hollywood, happening Bollywood, tasty foods, latest fashions, blessed tourism, brand new cars and ... the list is non ending. You think of 'any thing' and you will find the magazines available on it.

If you are a beauty conscious young charming girl then you can get your entire make up done by cosmetic and beauty related magazines. If you are a speed loving guy, you will get brand new cars and rhoom... rhoom...(Dhoom) bikes just in your hands. If you are planning to buy a new house, don't worry! From construction to interior decoration, magazines will do all for you. Umm... feeling tired and hungry, just turn the page of your magazine and here is short and sweet recipe ready for you! Still getting

tired and want something to talk in the evening's kitty party, just go through the Bollywood gossips and you will get the stuff for an entire week. Even if you are busy buddy from IT, magazines are ready to serve you also.

Femina, Stardust, ORACLE, India Today...the list is growing day by day and giving you the best. Where do you get magazines? CROSSWORD, Path Finders, main streets, book stores, anywhere and at any dam corner of the city. Even the 'Raddi Wala' will help you out to get the old issues of magazines if you need.

But above all, one should be selective before buying anything among these because somebody had said, "You may glean knowledge by reading, but you must separate the chaff from the wheat by thinking."

So be selective and get the best one for you!

■ - Prachi Harkare

YOURS TRULY

Hey folks back again with another interesting and motivating issue for our Lila Fellows!!!

Here's something exciting we had in the last quarter. Wow that New Year party full of games organized by Lila Fellows and our Inspira release with a new look and font, with those beautiful and interesting additional insertions, I am sure you all have liked it and found it useful. I recollect the contents of the past issue.... the award function article which took us back to the auspicious day full of celebrations; the Warli tribal description; the interview of the leading lady Superintendent of Prisons, Mrs. Swati Sathe; and ofcourse the article on Ms. Saina Ruzbeh Bharucha-Director of the India Vision Foundation really came out to be interesting. We have once again won accolades from the well wishers of the Foundation for each time bringing out something different with



The proud Crusaders during the release of the New Year issue of Inspira

the blend of our creativity and social awareness. **Well done Crusaders! Way to go!!!**

Oh yes! How can I forget Uncle Firoz hosting a brunch followed by the most happening Rang De Basanti show, especially for all the volunteers of the Award Function! The "Thought Management Workshop" for the Lila Fellows by Mrs. Surabhi Banerjee was a thorough learning experience for all! We knew jobs and people could be managed. But managing ourselves via our thoughts was surely a new approach!

Lila Fellow (Devika) doing a fantabulous job in the lead role in the Marathi film 'Nital' is another feather in the cap of LPF. We sure are proud she is part of our family. Devika, we wish you luck in all your future assignments!

Great going gals...n... 3 Cheers for LPF...Hib Hip Hurray!

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Today is an age when professional competency demands you to be a superhuman. Especially women have to balance between home and work place. What goes for a toss is physical and mental health. Rajani Panchang speaks to Exercise Physiologist Amruta Gogate who recognized the importance of fitness and chose to make it a career.

Lila Fellow Amruta Karandikar (Gogate) was sincere but never studious; was a lot into extracurricular, but again never a hard-core sportsperson. She definitely did not want to be a doctor or an engineer. Never having planned a career she found one out of her hobbies. In 1996 after her 12th class, with a neighbour she joined the Talwalkar's Fitness Centre for aerobics out of curiosity and for fun. Initially she loved the feeling of being fit; but eventually realized that fitness was a science in itself. This brought in her the urge to learn and to teach. That is when she got the idea of making a career in fitness and started looking for colleges, sadly to discover there was nothing in India. All relevant courses abroad required her to complete 16 years of University education. She was then in her very first year of B.Sc.(zoology). As a stepping-stone to her goal, she did a Masters in Health Sciences from Pune University, for which she received the LPF Scholarship Award. At the end of this Master's program she was only glad as it gave her a much broader picture of health than the one she had before. Elaborating on the issue how her education was different from the conventional Indian studies on fitness, she says "We do have Physical Education in India that qualifies you as a conventional P.T. Teacher that we have in schools. But this course I did at Iowa State University was a 2 years Master's in Exercise Physiology which covered theory and practical in physiology, biomechanics, statistics, research methods, sports psychology and sports sociology. Nutrition is an inseparable part of



Amruta Gogte

fitness and I studied the basics of nutrition though not in the way dieticians do. I was also taught to prescribe exercises according to individual needs. Currently there are certifications as trainers that are available in India but none compatible to what I did. Additionally I earned a certification in Yoga from Yog Vidyadham, Nasik."

Taking up a full time career in exercise physiology, with an uncertain demand in the job market and not competent enough with contemporary industries like IT and BT was really risky! What was the attitude her family and friends had towards this decision? Amruta was lucky that her father knew of fitness as a career since long. Both her parents and in-laws being fitness freaks themselves have supported her thoroughly. About the prospects her career offers she says "When I took it up the demand in market did not matter to me because I was pursuing what I loved doing. Abroad you have lots of opportunities; you can join

Contd...

SPECIAL FEATURE

as managers in big health facilities / gyms. You can get into teaching and research. You can become sports coaches at colleges and high school. But after having returned to India after three years I admit I am pleasantly surprised by the fitness situation here. It's becoming a money making career with the market booming. I would surely recommend young people to enter this field. Sports and media industry and of course big health clubs and gyms offer you lucrative jobs. But right now the industry is quite disorganized and as an individual one needs to start from scratch."

After her MS in USA, Amruta worked as a study coordinator for a NIH, (National Institute of Health, a very prestigious funding agency in U.S.A.) funded study in her university itself. She was in-charge of training 50 unfit individuals above 60 years of age. She asserts the fact that because of her university background everyone was aware of her qualifications for which she earned a lot of respect and love and it was a delight working with seniors. She realized that as long as one knows what one is talking about, one's words are taken seriously. During the same tenure, she simultaneously managed the gym at the department and taught undergraduate students "how to teach". Did she find a major difference between the Indian and the American attitude towards exercise and fitness? No, not really. She feels that obesity and unfit people are in both the countries and the difference is not much amongst the ordinary people. Both the countries have their share of disciplined and not-so-disciplined exercisers. But the most important point is that it is an **UPCOMING SCIENCE THERE.**

One would think that Amruta has a very enviable profession as compared to other full time

office jobs! But rather she feels that her biggest problem in her job is the timings. She explains, "When I was at the University, my work used to start at 5.30.am even in snowy winters. All is not served on the platter for my husband!!!! Mostly I am given early morning timings when home front demands most or else they are late evenings when I have to compromise on social events. When I work as a personal trainer, I have to go whenever my client has time. I have taught in colleges, worked in gyms as instructor and manager. But right now I am in a phase of defining what career really means to me, especially because I do not fit into the typical housewife niche. In all this I am very glad my husband has been very understanding and has supported me throughout."

She has first hand knowledge about the exercise trends in USA and India both. So we asked her why the west is so crazy about Yoga? In contrast, a decade ago India was taken over by a rage of Aerobics. Which form of the two is better and why? She says "Actually both are cardiovascular exercises, help weight training and increase flexibility and strength. They both are self-sufficient full packages. But Yoga has completely different objectives viz. improving concentration, relaxation, and stress reduction. It involves regulated and controlled breathing and meditation which raises your energy levels making you mentally calm. The asanas which are supposed to be held for a few seconds give lots of mental benefits, which I have personally found are unique to Yoga. Today's competitive and fast lifestyles demand lots of stress relievers and increased mental stamina and thus Yoga is in demand.

Any form of physical exercise if discontinued will lead to weight gain. However, there is no

Contd...



SPECIAL FEATURE

significant weight loss in Yoga and consequently the weight gain too is not much. None of the exercise forms is better than the other. Actually, each person likes to choose a form of exercise identical to his own temperament. Many find meditation and breathing exercises very boring and enjoy dance. So they prefer aerobics or may be other rigorous forms like hiking, cycling, jogging, trekking, etc. The trends keep changing and the craze keeps changing very fast in the west. For example recently there is a trend of 'power yoga' in which the way and pace at which the same asanas are designed are different and lead to significant loss of weight."

Brainstorming over the issue if theoretical exercise physiology should be included in the mainstream curricula of schools and colleges or not, she says "In schools I do not suggest that exercise physiology should be included in curricula but yes the same PT should be more practical and closer to life. By this I mean that most kids active in school sports stop after school. Most people think that exercise is meant only for weight reduction. But fitness encompasses our whole life especially for females it is important to cope up with all the events in life like monthly periods, pregnancy, delivery, lack of strength and flexibility after delivery, menopause, old age, etc. For females other problems are unnecessary weight, thus obesity related diseases, stress, osteoporosis, thyroid and many more. Right nutrition and exercise is something that we should follow for life."

She also told us how she can use her education in improving the quality of life around her. Her personal area of interest is health in middle and old aged people and women's fitness. With her present qualifications she can and she does address these issues with the women she meets. Her other

competencies are preparing individualized exercise prescriptions, preparing fitness-schedules for persons with special needs, performing fitness tests and stress tests, teaching aerobics, aqua-aerobics and body toning classes. Over the past few years she has realized the lack of awareness in women and is now determined to target these issues on a larger platform. She understands that there is a lot of health and fitness data for the western society. But we as Indians live in an entirely different society and such database cannot be applied here. For this research and studies on the Indian populace is a must. These she feels are the efforts required to mainstream physical fitness with routine life styles.

In her efforts to reach her goals of spreading awareness about physical fitness and health, Amruta offers to begin at home i.e. she volunteers to conduct a training and awareness workshop exclusively for Lila Fellows. So what say girls???? Wanna do it?

■ - Rajani Panchang

SPECIAL FEATURE

Thought Management Workshop by Mrs. Surabhi Banerjee

Recently over 40 Lila Fellows participated in the workshop "Thought Management Workshop" organized by the Foundation. The resource person was **Mrs. Surabhi Banerjee** who is an accredited Dynamic Living Program Instructor and Personal Development Counselor. It was a pleasure to note that the participants represented each of the LF batches starting from 1996 to 2005. The Trustees were happy that Lila Fellows from every batch (1996 to 2005) attended this workshop. The concepts dealt with during the workshop were - to understand the techniques of affirmations, setting goals, creative visualization and Alfa state of mind and how by adopting these skills and techniques one can realize the maximum potential within himself.



Participants of "Thought Management Workshop"

Inspira talked to some of the participants to get a feedback about their experience of the workshop, which is summarised below:

One of our Lila Fellow shares *"My whole approach to life has changed. I have learnt managing my thoughts, and managing myself. It was really a great experience for all of us."* For most of the Lila Fellows this workshop was relaxing and gave them the direction to think positive. It offered a practical know-how about managing thoughts into a productive and positive outcome. It helped them to recognise the potential hidden in them and the girls felt thankful to have had a wonderful trip through their minds. They learned to identify their responsibilities and to fulfil them.

Lila Fellows appreciated the idea of optimistic thinking and affirmations and liked the relaxation techniques; they learnt that positive vibrations help to succeed. Attaining the Alfa level mentally was a new and amazing experience for all. Mrs. Banerjee's style of talking was especially appreciated by all the participants as they felt it was straight from her heart.

The participants felt this workshop would definitely help each one of them to set goals and be successful in ilfe.

■ - Sunetra Chaphalkar.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Playful Celebration at New Year Party - 06

The year 2006 was welcomed by our Lila Fellows this time in a very different way. Along with dance and music, we had many party games conducted by the Lila Fellows, for the Lila Fellows and played by every one that evening.

The games were truly unique and very original. The Scramble Game, Enjoy with Bursting Balloons, One minute games like -- Lighting Candles, Blowing Balloons, making Paper Garlands, Fix Up Buttons and finally picking up Beans with Straws. Oh all so exciting! making one and all run, laugh and enjoy to the fullest. What more? The winners of these games won exciting prizes! Participation that evening was phenomenal.... All happy moments captured on the camera and frozen in time!



Lighting Candles



Enjoy with Bursting Balloons



Blowing Balloons IN ONE MINUTE



Picking up Beans with Straws



Making Paper Garlands IN ONE MINUTE



Winners of the Scramble Game

■ - Sunetra Chalkar