



Vol. No. 20 / January 2007

FROM MY HEART



My Dear Friends and Lila Fellows,

This is the last issue of your favorite newsletter INPIRA this year. One more year has gone by and your Foundation will soon enter its **12th year**. This decade has brought in another kind of challenge in the life of Lila Fellows. Many have now become of marriageable age. Sometimes there are, as many as three to four marriages in a week, and naturally all LF's want us to be present at their wedding to bless them. **Personally I get great joy from attending their weddings and seeing the girls cross one more threshold of their life cycle.**

It is in light of this phase that I would like to start by congratulating all the LF's who are getting married. Yes, I chose to do so as I have presently **eight wedding invitations from our Lila Fellows**, who are getting married soon. I intend to attend all the weddings. I am sure some more are on the way. This is a great season for bringing young hearts together.

Anticipating this, the Foundation had recently organized a program to guide the young Lila Fellows and give them a different perspective about the institution of marriage. The program was conducted by "**Saath Saath Vivaha Abhyaas Mandal**" which is managed by **Ms. Vidya Bal**, the renowned journalist along with her colleagues from the well-known magazine "**Miloon Saaryazani**". Through innovative ways the team of Saath Saath made the girls understand the **importance of marriage, both in their personal as well as social life.**

This is such an important phase in a girl's life that I too feel like sharing some of my own beliefs on this subject. We all get very **excited about our wedding, and why not!** A lot of preparations are done for this day, we exhaust ourselves, and almost all our resources for making this day a very memorable day, not only for us but more so for all

our guests. But Friends, **wedding is not everything, Marriage is.** Yes! These are two different aspects of one celebration. The joy and

happiness of a wedding should not be a one-day affair. It has to be a daily experience in married life. A married girl has to understand that, **relationships don't just happen, they have to be built.** You have to be patient and to understand your partner, and not just see him and start trying to change him. Appreciating good in your husband will make him appreciate you and will also enable him to open up gradually.

Never give up your career once you are married. A girl should work after marriage, even if she did not do so earlier. This way you will **focus your mind and time on more constructive activities.** Always place yourself in the shoes of the person you are dealing with at home. **Your actions should reflect "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".** Initial hiccups will die down gradually. Never allow ego issues to come in your way of happiness, leading to tension and sorrow. **More than the way the wedding is conducted, what determines the happiness and success of the marriage is the way married life is built, step-by-step, day-by-day.** The celebration and joy on the day of the wedding is not just for that day, but should be the beginning of an **extraordinary and a meaningful married life** leading to prosperity to an individual, a family and finally to the society. **This is what I wish for each of my Lila Fellow.**

It has been a very fulfilling year for the Foundation. As I have said many a times, our **Foundation is Unique.** Financial assistance, though an important step, is only a beginning. Mentoring, coaching the girls through their career, through their personal

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overall development, has taught me much more and I see a very wide panoramic canvas. We are all human beings and our perspective also changes with experience and continuous learning.

In the last quarter we have had many programs for the benefit of the LFs. We started with a special program for the LFs of 2006, focused on positive attitudes & confidence building, communication skills, behavior sensitivity, relationships, etiquette, grooming, personal & public hygiene, awareness on health & nutrition, relaxation techniques, in short on **Total Personality Development**, titled **"STEPPING INTO A NEW WORLD"**. The program was conducted by the internationally acclaimed trainer **Mrs. Ratna Khemani**.

This was followed by a program conducted by **Ms. Cora Menezes**, who is a Management Development trainer of great repute both in India and abroad. The theme of her program was **Transactional Analysis**. She guided the LFs to take a deep look at themselves. **It is one's personal discovery that leads one to initiate better communication**. Instead of expecting others to improve, which may or may not happen - every participant is encouraged and fuelled with enthusiasm to communicate at her very best.

Besides these professional/personal development

programs, the Foundation also sponsored two cultural events. **"Pune Navaratri Mahostav"** was the first festive program, which was spread over nine days. This was followed by another cultural event, but different, as it was being performed by, our very **own Lila Fellow, Ms. Gauri Swakul** and her friends and the senior students of Guru Mrs. Maneesha Sathe.

We ended the big festive season, by having a gala **DANDIYA party for the LFs**. You could see many LFs together with the trustees, playing Dandiya Raas, applying mehendi, grabbing bangles and pasting stickers on each other. Of course with all these activities the young girls were hungry and then we all pounced on lovely Rajasthani food.

As I end this communiqué, the LFs are already busy planning for other party- our most enjoyable event - **The New Year party**. This is to be followed by a **visit to the butterfly park**, and many more exciting and educative events. I am enthusiastically looking forward to yet another wonderful year, full of joy, happiness and success for all of us. Wish you and all your loved one's a **VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR**.



Lila Poonawalla

SHORT TAKES

FRIENDSHIP UNLIMITED – USA 2006

*My children Sharmila/Kevin Hutchins and Sonya are akin to magnets: magnets that exert a captivating force and pull me towards them to USA every alternate year. They live in **Boulder, Colorado** and **San Francisco, California** respectively.*

There I go again. Yet another trip to USA! The long journey from Sahar to San Francisco via Frankfurt on 10th April 2006, was made easy by the adrenaline rush which contributed to the excitement of meeting my kids, close family and dear friends. It was the perfect getaway from Pune's cruel summer chaotic traffic, torturous roads, garbage spills, pollution and the humdrum routines.

However no trip to USA is ever complete without a rendezvous with **Lila Fellows**. They are scattered all over the country. My moments of connection with them were precious and I was delighted to meet/talk with those who got in touch.

Neetu Bhatia (1996) who flew in to San Francisco for a conference, had dinner with me on April 26th. It was hardly surprising to see her so composed and confident. She is VP Investment Banking with

Harris Nesbitt- the investment arm of the Bank of Montreal. That weekend Sonya drove me to Fremont, CA to meet her parents and her brother Akash for dinner.

Surprise, Surprise! Who else should I meet that evening? **Asmita (Katdare) Mondal** (1996)! She lives exactly opposite to Akash. Unbelievable! She walked over to meet us with husband Shantanu and daughter Siona. Asmita works with Jaypar Inc, an IT consulting company in Fremont in their Human Resources department.

Delancy Street, a popular restaurant situated at the foot of the Bay Bridge in San Francisco is noted for its superb food and service. It employs ex-convicts who have undergone an extensive rehabilitation program. **Uma (Kelkar) Hardikar** (1999) especially drove down there from San Jose, CA, early May, to join Sonya and me for a delicious

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SHORT TAKES



Maya and Uma (Kelkar) Hardikar enjoying brunch

brunch. We gupshopped some more over Chai at home. She works for Advanced Micro Devices as a Senior Design Engineer. Met her with husband Mahesh in Pune recently. She looked radiant. Their baby is expected early next year.

Best of all however was **Sonya's** cocktail party for Lila Fellows in Silicon Valley, on June 3rd. The chirpy evening came alive with bonhomie and laughter as Asmita with her family, Uma, **Madhura Sarangpani** (2002) and **Haripriya Rajagopal** (2003) with fiancé Deepak savored the sumptuous spread and a variety of wines. Camaraderie was evident. Cameras clicked and we all said cheee...z!



Sonya's cocktail party in San Francisco

Mitali Gujar (2000) more than made up for her absence by spending the entire Sunday June 18th with us along with brother Ameya. Sonya treated us to some Chatpati Chaat at the **Chaat Café**, after which we hung out at home. She works for Network Appliances in Sunny Vale, CA, as a Software Engineer, Member Technical Staff. Mitali and Shrinivas Vinnakota will tie the knot on December 14th in Pune.

It is said that the proof of the pudding lies in the eating. Its true. Master chef Haripriya turned out a mouth watering 'Idli Sambar' lunch at her cute apartment in Mountain View on July 9. **Amruta Joshi** (2004) also added her delicacies to the table



Mitali Gujar, Maya, Sonya and Ameya

and sang a gazal from 'Arth'. Madhura joined us as well. Both she and Haripriya work for V M Ware, CA. Madhura is a Software Engineer and handles security for their machines and Haripriya is a Member, Technical Staff. She manages Storage R&D for a product 'Virtual Centre' which is a Management Application Server. Amruta graduated from Stanford University in June and



At Haripriya's delicious idli Sambar lunch

has joined 'Yahoo' in Santa Clara, CA, as a Research Engineer. Her projects relate to Information Retrieval Search, Web Graphs and Data mining.

We were happy to meet senior trustee Freny Tarapore's daughter **Nawaz Taraporewalla** and her family who drove up from Vacaville, CA. They popped in at Sonya's apartment for brunch on July 8th.

San Francisco has so much to offer. Drives across the Golden Gate Bridge to Tiburon and Sau Salito, Clam Chowder at Fisherman's Warf, the Gay Pride Parade, a night at the SF Opera 'Madame Butterfly', Sunidhi Chauhan's blissing concert in

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SHORT TAKES

San Jose, my niece **Alisha's** hi-fi high school graduation ceremony, fine wining & dining and a very special **Mother's Day** week end in **Napa Valley** courtesy Sonya, were the main high lights of my stay in this charming city.

On the other hand **Boulder**, which at 5'600 feet lies nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, is far from the madding crowd. I spent 3 months from June to end September there- relaxing, reading and watching some great shows on TV. The beautiful University of Colorado campus-home to the astronauts- The Flat Irons, a geological wonder, Celestial Seasonings, America's largest herbal tea company leisurely walks down the open air Pearl Street Mall and its proximity to the mountains, make Boulder a haven for students and tourists alike.

Driving through the Rockies to the mountain lakes and **Aspen**, the famous ski resort was a visual treat-exquisite earthy fall colors and stunning scenery all the way upto 11000 feet. No wonder Colorado has earned the sobriquet - '**Gods own country**'.

We had a great time in **Denver**, the state capital. Attended the **Dalai Lama's** talk on 'The Science of a Compassionate life', on Sept 17th, Andrew Lloyd Weber's **Bombay Dreams** and a few Jazz concerts. LF **Jovina Amor Mohare**(1998) and her husband Rahul met us twice: Once at 'Boulder Café' for brunch and the second time at **Sharmila's** home for dinner, where they came armed with butter chicken and prawn curry!

I had long telephonic chats with those who I could not meet. LFs Vanita Kriplani(1997), Jyoti (Dalvi) Malhotra(1998), Dr Vijayalaksmi (Mishra) Shukla(1999), Samidha (Ghatpande) Kinikar and Koyel Ghosal(2000), Ketaki Desai(2002), Shweta Bramhe and Priyadarshani Malusare(2004).

Vanita is on a H4 visa and lives in Bloomington, Illinois. Jyoti works for **Brewer Sciences** as a Senior Research Associate in Rolla Missouri and Vijayalaksmi is a visiting Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine in Gastro **enterology** and **Hepatology** in Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana. She was excited about her baby due in December.

Samidha lives in Canton, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. She has recently joined **Daimler Chrysler Corporation** as a Knowledge Based Application Engineer at their Jeep Truck facility where she has been designated to their electrical and electronics department- Advanced Packaging and Knowledge Based Engineering. On the home front, her 15 month old tornado **Ishan** has the home "Totally upside down!"

Koyel is in Kingston, Rhode Island. She has completed her Masters and is looking forward to working or doing her PhD. Meanwhile she is working on a Cancer project with a senior professor at the University of Rhode Island. Highly talented and much in demand Koyel has several 'Sitar' performances to her credit. She is the 1st Indian to win the **Leadership Award 2006** as President Of Indian Students Association.

Ketaki is completing her PH.D at Texas A.M University in College Station, TX, and has three publications to her credit. She was very excited about her trip to Europe with her mother this summer and talked of all the wondrous sights they saw in ten countries.

Shweta finished her Masters in October and has recently started working with **EMC2** -a storage based company as a software engineer. She is located in **Westborough**, Massachusetts.

Priyadarshani graduated with a Masters in Computer Science from University of Southern California, Los Angeles and is currently with the **National Argonne** lab in Chicago working on "Open Analysis of Programmes".

Then and now. What a transformation! I was astonished and overwhelmed. These very girls I had interviewed straight out of college for our scholarships have raced miles ahead. Their performance graphs vis a vis academic goals as well as career destinations are worthy of praise. More than the big bucks, they are smart, self-assured, confident, self motivated and focused. Their insightful, incredible and heartwarming stories are spun around their hopes and dreams. They all have the **Winning Edge**. I am very happy and proud of their achievements.

America is now home to several Lila Fellows. Our get-togethers were a test of our continuing friendship and solidarity. "We really enjoyed spending time with you today and hope to do so each time you visit USA", wrote Haripriya. "I miss our long conversations, while you were in USA. It is always refreshing and warm when you get in touch", said Samidha in her mail. Heartwarming compliments indeed. I'm touched.

None of this would have been possible however, were it not for **Sharmila, Kevin** and **Sonya's** warm and generous hospitality. Lila Fellows are as close to them as they are to me. Thank you for a super holiday and for all your love and care.

■ **Maya Thadhani**
(Trustee, Lila Poonawalla foundation)



LEADING LADY

She has to her credit the making of big brand names like Asian Paints and Fevicol. She launched the nations first Rural Communications Network and has been associated with advertising for Indian Cancer Society, National Adult Literacy campaigns, awareness of National Post and Telegraph services. Apart from imparting her professional skills to development sector, she today defends India's competitive advantage in cashew nut exports to the worlds largest importing Country U.S.A. The recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Advertising Club of Bombay and inducted into the Hall of Fame by the Advertising Club of Calcutta, Roda Mehta has been the Advisor to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (Govt. of India) and a Diva in world of media and advertising. Rajani, Sanchita and Prachi get an insight through the professional journey of this high profile personality.

How did advertising happen to you? What courses did you pursue to get there?

I completed schooling in Science with first class grades from Jesus and Mary in Delhi. After a Bachelor's in Economics Honours with Mathematics and Psychology from Miranda House, University of Delhi, I learned about Management at IIMs as an option. I went through the entrance exam and Group Discussion and got through. Out of the lot, only three were girls. I specialized in Operations Research during my MBA from the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai University. When most were doing their summer placements in banks, I opted to do mine at Bush Electricals.

I was in a dilemma about whether to or not to enter the world of Advertising, when banking was on the high after a background in economics and operations research. I met a brilliant Lady Mrs. Patil while working on my first job as a Media Research Executive at Thompsons, who told me that **"To make a mark in your profession, it is important for your efforts to be recognized. In a field of Economics, banking and marketing where enough had already been done, it is a very difficult task. However, you could be a pioneer and the only one in advertising"** and that is how I got into advertising.

How did a specialization in Operations Research help you?

Those days Hindustan Thompson Associates were doing a National Readership Survey to be able to help the advertising policies of help the different publishers. During those times only Cinema, Vividhbharati and All India Radio were the sources of Information and Entertainment. My assignment was to create a database and mathematical computation of newspaper readership data. This is where I excelled due to my academic training in Operations Research. As a young entrant in the field of advertising, I was a walking encyclopedia with facts and figures about the market intact, but no professional experience. I at times felt like the one eyed king

leading the blind. I knew that the database I had was not raw. I had the skills to process the same database using concepts of research and change media planning.

Meanwhile Clarion another competitor had come up with a Novel Model for India planning and Thompsons being a competitor was supposed to critically review the model in a presentation. Due to my expertise in market research, I was chosen to represent Thompson and I walked up on the dias with confidence in a saree (my father's tip for a work-outfit that added years to my age!) and made a presentation that demolished the model proposed. It made a huge impact on the audience. At 23, I was a celebrity in the world of advertising! This incident also taught me that **it is not information that is important, but its' application that is.**

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LEADING LADY

How did your association with Ogilvy & Mather begin? Can you give us some glimpses of your high profile career graph at O&M?

As I was going through the dilemma at my first job as whether to continue or not when a friend of mine referred me to the management of Ogilvy & Mather who was looking for a Media Developer. This job gave me the freehand to work which in turn made me profit spinner for a agency in doldrums. This made me realize that **"To run a business well, it is important that an individual's values must synchronise with that of the firm"**.

In India women are respected and thus I had never faced a situation when men did not want to work for or with me. However on one occasion when I was attending this international media conference, I found some American men interrupting this lady's presentation every now and then. Instinctively I spoke up asking them to wait till she was at least done with her presentation. The presentation then on went smoothly, but people took notice of my assertiveness and thus my reputation in O&M started growing.

I was the responsible in managing and establishing the big brands Proctor & Gamble, Johnsons & Johnsons, Horlicks, Hindustan Lever, Ponds and in turn they were advertising me through their publications. I felt the need for people to value my expertise and my time and thus I began an appointment system. I became task oriented and my vision was only fulfilling promises I made. They went and complained to the boss that they could no longer work with me. My boss called me, spoke to me calmly, and conveyed that I was expecting more than what they could deliver. I realized that I was not identifying with people my age due to my achievements. I would have to adjust. There was only one way I could grow and that was by moving up not individually but as a team. This pushed me into training my people. A new lesson I learned was, **"Work life is not only about being good at your job. It is about knowing skills of integrating people and being a good employer. To get others to follow you, be a good follower first. Working together also means caring for each other's emotions"**.

In 1980, a 3-month secondment to O&M (London) set me up to pioneer Research & Brand Planning in India. Two years later, at 32, I was nominated to the Board of Ogilvy & Mather India when I found that co-incidentally that about 15-16 leading firms were all being headed by women. I too preferred working with women as I found they were more

diligent, organized, productive, persistent and ambitious.

By 1989 I had created a formidable team. We had built the brands Titan, Bru, Bournvita, Fevicol and Asian Paints. The policy of the team now was "Take a decision, stand by it." No matter what internal differences one would have, but in public we would all speak in one voice. The boss had created great policy of sharing profits right from the peons to the directors, giving them a sense of belonging to the company. In 1994, with globalization MNCs were coming in, I was needed in every international client dealing. I was promoted to Joint MD. By now my boss, just three years prior to his retirement had started getting insecure of my role and performance and said that he could not see a woman succeed him. He started hiring wrong people to the Mumbai office. The values at the advertising agency were changing. My baby, the Media at O&M was declining. Clients were unhappy and wanted to negotiate on costs. I started urging to quit the world of advertising.

In 1996 I attended an Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School where I met alumni women who were doing outstanding work in the non-profit sector. I got a great insight into how my professional disciplines and corporate skills could put to tremendous use in the social / development sector. I found this the best opportunity to silence the discontent my career in advertising career back home. I returned in 1998 and resigned from O&M, formally retiring to pursue my call to contribute to the development sector.

What would you suggest to young girls today wanting to take up advertising?

With globalization coming in, lots of BPOs and MNCs have lots to attract youngsters, who go for materialistic gains. Money is not all but values are. It is not only the duty of parents, but also the moral responsibility of each organization to inculcate in their young employees the right values required for society building. In this, right advertising plays a big role. Advertising is not just all about good communication. One not only needs to be rational but also intutional to justify what is it that attracts a consumer to a brand. It sure looks like a high profile job, with huge desires and consumerism. But in the drive to develop professional life do not lose touch of personal life. Career can be easy if one's personal life is supporting and encouraging.

■ -Rajani Panchang



LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Whenever a woman enters an unconventional profession, the onlookers are either struck by envy or awe! In this column we feature such women who have dared to do something different to follow their dreams. These are the women whom we call trendsetters, opening the door to a new career option; those who live life to make a difference! This time we meet the first Woman Road-roller driver of India, Yamunabai Pawar”.

The scene... a road construction site on Laxmi Road... many laborers picking and removing debris... a huge mixer making asphalt. Amidst the typically noisy traffic, a slim, petite woman, Yamunabai Pawar, riding on a huge yellow-colored road-roller smoothens out the newly laid ballast. Having taken up this job of road-roller driver only in January 2006, 50-year old Yamunabai became the first “Lady road-roller driver” in the country!

Born to a farmer in a small village near Khed-Shivapur, little Yamunabai was always an energetic, bright girl. Though her father wanted her to go to school she instead derived great pleasure in all farming activities like, ploughing the field, sowing seeds, harvesting crops, drawing water from the well, driving the bullock cart, grazing the cattle and milking them. She was never the girl who played with dolls. Instead, Kabaddi, Kho Kho and Lagori were here kind of games with boys as her playmates. She got married and came to Pune 35 years ago. With the encouragement of her husband she started a ‘gharguti khaanaval’ (household mess) and used to supply ‘dabba’ for 20 long years, till one fine day she went to visit a relative patient at Sassoon Hospital. Given the talkative nature that she has, she got into a conversation with a doctor. She spoke about her khaanaval and requested the doctor to get her some more customers if possible using his contacts in the hospital. To her surprise the doctor in turn asked her why she wanted to settle for dabbas when instead she could take over the functioning of the Doctor’s Mess at Sassoon Hospital. Thus she took over the mess and ran it for 5-6 years till her term ended.

Today Yamunabai works with a road construction company as a laborer, though she drives the road-roller for them, out of her own determination to do something different. A laborer for the last 17 years her journey to being a lady road-roller driver was not at all a cake walk. Yamunabai’s husband, who used to work as a Security Guard in Pune Municipal Corporation died, in lieu of which she was entitled for the job of a laborer. Being illiterate, she started her work as any other laborer. But out of her immense passion for doing something different, she started learning the basics of driving a road-roller. She found a mentor in a road-roller driver, Ratan, who is as old as her son. Ratan decided he would help her out of appreciation for her daring to learn to

drive the road-roller. Neither peers, nor circumstances were forcing her to do so. Instead she was overtaken by the want

to be different, given her loads of confidence and energy she recognized she wanted to put to use!!! Ratan trained her by letting her practice on some road construction sites where she could attempt fearlessly.

Gradually she got a good command over driving the road-roller and she started rolling it on busy roads as well. Very soon after she started rolling smoothly, she received a notice from authorities to immediately stop working as a road-roller driver and should stick to the job that she was assigned. According to the notice, she was accused of neglecting her assigned job of a laborer. On receipt of the notice, she did not just sit back. She met Mrs. Vandana Chavan, who not only gave her advice and total support but also personally carried out all the further procedures to procure her full rights for driving a road-roller. Mrs. Vandana Chavan with other Women Corporators met Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Nitin Kareer and finally got the permission for her. No! Not yet!!! obstacles were not yet over. Even after getting official permission, it was now her senior officers who prevented her from driving. Instead they suggested, in capacity of the laborer that she was, she do some office work. Now holding her back was impossible! She formally applied for the post of a road-roller driver, in response to which the civic road department asked her to take a test to verify whether she could actually drive the road-roller. At the time of test, as luck would demand, she was asked to drive an old road-roller, which normally requires 2 drivers just to start it. But, Yamunabai drove this old road-roller for distance of 1 mile forward as well as in the reverse direction. Having thus proven herself, she crossed all the seemingly never-ending series of hurdles!

Today she has a written permission to work as a road-roller but on paper she would be continue to be considered a laborer only. This means she will get the salary of a laborer, which is much more less than that of road-roller driver. Does that trouble her

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LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

or dampen her spirits? "No. Not at all! I want to drive the road-roller and that's it. It's not the money that matters to me, but the importance that a position holds that matters. I strongly believe that my struggle to get permission to drive a road roller will get recognized at least 5 or 6 years down the lane. Today on paper I am a laborer, but someday I wish I should professionally be given the title of a driver, a position of a skilled worker, which hold more importance and also pays you higher.", says Yamunabai. She just has a focused vision and the driving passion which seems to outweigh the weight of the road-roller itself. Soon her work got noticed and she has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Award, Pune Municipal Corporation Award for a Good Worker.

She has funny experiences about driving in public. People usually do not believe their eyes when they see a woman driving a road-roller. And to confirm they start turning their necks again and again to look back at the sight. To top it all, she always gets the right of passage in the most crowd packed roads!

Obviously, even we had the curiosity to know how it feels to ride on a road-roller. And so... Yamunabai gave one of us, Sujata an adventurous ride of the road-roller with her at Nehru Stadium. We must say she was driving it as if we girls drive Scooty or Santro!!! But when Sujata said this to her, she just smiled and said, "I don't know how to drive Scooty!!!" Apart from driving the road-roller passionately, she cares for it like a mother. She

looks oils it and checks the water levels regularly without fail! If she misses to do so, she is not at rest. Currently she is working at the Nehru Stadium, but has not received full rights as a road-roller driver on this site. But I am sure her passion and confidence will see her through this problem too. The Nehru Stadium site gives her opportunities to meet personalities. Proudly she told us, "Just two days ago, Azharuddin was here. He was so surprised! He even clicked a picture with me".

She enjoys the support of her family and is also responsible towards it. She is glad, her daughters, son, daughter-in-law all are well settled in their respective ways of life. When asked if people comment or ridicule her for being so unconventional, she says "I was always tomboyish and people used to think I was eccentric, in my behavior, attitude, talks, etc. But even in office here, I do what I feel like doing and never think before I crack jokes with colleagues." When asked if this attitude of hers has attracted opposition or insult, she says "No! Not at all! Rather people like it and encourage me." She has a small humble message for our LFs: "I feel very proud and happy whenever I see women doing something unconventional like drawing a 'haathgaadi' (human-drawn cart). Try to do something different and do it with complete confidence. If done so, the result will surely be the best!!!"

■ - Sujata Dongre & Rajani Panchang

EVE'S VOICE

Priyanka's childhood was a beautiful one- an easy happy life full of innocence. Little did they know this was the peace before the storm! Her Engineer father, supervisor in an automobile spares production company was forced to take a VRS due to a lock out and they were left homeless with the company accommodation taken away. About 7 years down the line, she earns and learns.....pursuing a Master's in Microbiology she craves to at least give her siblings what she missed out on.....

After 12th, at the age of 17 she decided to share the responsibilities of her father. In February, being done with board exams, she opted to earn instead of wasting time in the holidays. Job-hunting through newspapers she applied for tons of posts. She came across an ad for a walk-in-interview at Crossword, recruiting personnel with experience. Though not fitting the criteria she applied and got called for the interview. The interview board thought she was too young plus also a fresher. Her need, her family background,

academic aspirations, her intentions and struggle to continue working while studying moved them. She insisted on being given a chance, offered to train under them without pay till she learned her job. This grit, determination and her communication skills got her the job. Though she needed a vacation job for 4 months, she assured them to continue if they wished so.

She underwent 2-month training, got a meager pay but enough to cater to her own expenditure. Her

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EVE'S VOICE

enthusiasm to work so diligently at such a young age impressed the authorities. She was new to the retail book industry. She says, "They would teach me every minor detail patiently, just like one holds a child's hand and teaches him to walk". In August she got her results. She scored 70% which was quite commendable given the fact she never attended coaching classes. "In school I had a marvelous Science teacher and thus I had a fantasy for life sciences; I hate mathematics. With 91% in the biology group I was the state topper. Counseling with a Professor in Garware College, I learned that Industrial Microbiology was similar to biotechnology, but not popular. I got through the course at Annasaheb Magar College in Hadapsar (it was close to my home), but I had to reserve my admission by paying the fees. My father with all difficulties arranged for the money but still I was late, and I had to obtain special permission to pay late. I remember I had people offering me money or offering to pay my fees for another course provided I give up my present seat for them. That is when I realized how much in demand the course was".

What about her job then? "Till then I was doing a full time job; 10:30-21:00 Hrs' job. But now I dreaded to leave the place where people had put faith in me, helped me gain self-confidence". Crossword offered her to continue with a part time job i.e. 4-9 pm, with Friday as a weekly off. Once her college time-table (three days a week as was out and three days three days out of which she had practicals, when she would do half day at work. The other three days she offered to work full time. In this schedule, she hardly got time to complete her journals. She had to travel nearly 40 km to and from home (Fursungi) to work place (Pune Railway Station). She would stay up late to study and complete submissions. "I loved the subject from the beginning. Till 12th standard we had studied only vertebrates. Suddenly, now it was fascinating to be imagining at the micro level. I scored a distinction!"

After completing Bachelors in Microbiology her future plans were higher education for which she had no financial backing. Through one of her seniors she learned about LPF and I applied for the scholarship. "I thought I was a deserving candidate. Then why shouldn't I take a helping hand they were offering. During B.Sc. my annual fees was Rs.30,000/- The college allowed me to pay my fees in installments. The first installment was paid by my father, later I used to pay from my earnings. But now the LPF Scholarship caters to the fees, project fees, thesis, etc. and I can save up my earnings for my siblings who are still studying (sister BCS and brother 11th standard). Even if I could not get the best of it, at least my siblings

should. The LPF scholarship I not just a financial aid, but also a built in relationship which gave me a lot of moral support."

Lucky at the home front, her family never expected her to contribute financially or to household chores, though she and her sister helped her mother at home. "I was in class 9 when I saw what my father went through without a job. I have great admiration for my father, an epitome of courage, because he never broke down and continued to cater to his own responsibilities. Suddenly homeless and jobless, he took to driving an auto-rickshaw. My mother was the backbone of the family and supported my father throughout. They together kept encouraging us for higher studies. We had started from scratch but today I am happy that though small (20m X 20m) house, it is our own and not a rented place. Touch wood!" Her parents have till date encouraged her interest in art. She recollects recently when she wanted to learn swimming but her parents could not afford it. So she took up the front office job in that gym in lieu of which she could learn swimming.

When Priyanka had started at Crossword, the authorities noticed that she was good at displaying books. They picked her upon this talent, refined her further and made her In-charge of display. Starting her third year she was promoted to Senior Sales Support Executive where she now trains freshers, handles communications, part of purchase, compiles reports, maintains the inventory, and orders for goods. Additionally she handles purchase, custom orders, discounts, schemes and corporate deals.

Compared to her peers where does she find herself? She thinks, "I became too mature at a very early age; I missed out on teenage. I missed enjoyment when people my age were freaking out. But the experience I have by now has now placed me far above my classmates and contemporaries. I am proud of myself and my family whom I love being with. But I just do not find time to spend with them."

Any message for LFs? "I have learned that there is no substitute to hard work. My patience and adaptability are my strengths which take me closer to my goal. I have just one guiding principle which my father imparted to me... 'Difficulties are a part of life, which are necessary to keep reminding you about the various hurdles you have crossed and the strength you have shown in overcoming them. They make you realize the importance of each achievement and feel proud'."

■ -Rajani Panchang

POT POURRI

It is said that, "Only when an artist loves and enjoys his own performance, will his audience enjoy". One such passionate performer is our own Lila Fellow, a dance choreographer and a marathi film actress, Devika Daftardar. Devika has to her credit some very heart rendering performances in off-beat cinema, wherein she contributes towards making reformations in the modern society, through her profession. She shares with us the story of her evolution.

I remember during my college days, the thing which bothered me most, confused me most- was my career. I was decided never to sit idle, doing nothing. I was desperate and I still am to make a good career. But till my graduation I was not sure about what I would be passionate about, which will also make me earn my living. Even after I had finished my graduation, I was undecided about the profession I wanted to take up. Out of appreciation for those who were decided upon their careers since school, my lack of decision making capacity, gave me an inferiority complex.

The only thing I was damn sure about and I am still sure about is that I can't breathe if I ever have to give up dance. This conviction led me into pursuing a post graduate degree in dance. During my 2nd academic year in dance I was fortunate for having got the Lila Poonawalla Scholarship for MA in dance. This was not only a great financial help to me but it also gave me great encouragement and confidence to further follow my goals. Especially the contribution of Lila Ma'am in my career growth is a vital one. She exudes passion, courage and endurance and her personality inspires me and kindles in me a desire to achieve something worthwhile and meaningful in life. I will always be grateful to her.

I was brought up in a family of artists. Not only my parents and my aunt, but even my husband belongs to my profession. He is a filmmaker and an editor by profession. So, even after my marriage, my families supported me to pursue a career in the field of performing arts.

My first professional assignment, the choreography for the film 'Dahavi F', was an important break for me. I had always loved classical dancing, *Bharatnatyam* more precisely. However, conventional classical dancing had not given me that complete freedom of expression which unconventional dancing in 'Dahavi F' gave me. *Dahavi F* was a learning experience on many



other aspects of filmmaking. I learned that along with the dance movements I had to consider and synchronise with the shot division, the camera movements, the costumes, the location for shoot, the mood of the scene in the movie, and much more. The most difficult task was that I had to choreograph almost 30 boys and coordinating all of them was a difficult job. A month prior to the shoot, rehearsals of the boys began. I had to prepare a ready protocol for the choreography in which I had to take into account of the number of beats for every step, corresponding to every line of the song, the pieces of music and also the camera angle. At the time of shoot this written protocol was of a great help. This opportunity of 'Dahavi F' was a big boost for me. I was even luckier to have got the award for 'Best Choreography' from *Alpha Gaurav Puraskar*.

I had been pursuing my passion for dance and on the other hand, since my childhood I had been quite involved in the process of filmmaking. My aunty, Sumitra Bhawe is a well-known Marathi filmmaker, who has been a recipient of several national and international awards for her non-typical commercial films having social relevance. Obviously, by virtue of being born in a family of art lovers, acting for me was always a career option. I was 5 years old when I faced the camera for the first time for a short film 'Bai'. Ever since then I have been making at least a small appearance in each of Sumitra aunty's films.

Contd....

POT POURRI

My first major role was the lead role in '*Devrai*'. Initially that role of '*Kalyani*' was to be played by my sister Renuka Daftardar. She had done several acting assignments, for which she had even been awarded by the state government. But, due to some personal reasons she could not take up the assignment in '*Devrai*'. As a result, Sumitra aunty was looking for a replacement. I was not however an immediate choice as the character was not at all similar to my personality, nor did I have the experience of doing a significant role in any feature film so far. She made me give a screen test, which finally convinced the directors enough to assign me '*Devrai*'.

For me '*Devrai*' was not a simple job. It was a film on schizophrenia, so a background research on such a socio-scientific issue, by studying various case studies and talking to psychiatrists, was mandatory. As far as acting was concerned, as I had faced the camera at a very early age, camera consciousness was never an issue for me. The challenges that faced me were different. Firstly, I had to play a role of a woman a few years older than what I was, having imbibed the characteristics of '*Kalyani*'. Secondly, I was to share the screen with established and talented actors like Atul Kulkarni, Sonali Kulkarni and Mohan Agashe. My preparation started almost a month prior to the shoot. The first step towards preparation was absorbing the essence of the movie through the script; understanding the character, its personality, strengths and weaknesses, its relationship with other characters, the emotional graph of the character and many more things. Kalyani's character was of a mature, good listener, one who had suffered a lot in life. To bring out this effect, I was supposed to speak in a low pitch with a flat voice. This difference really gave the desired output. The next requirement of the role was a spontaneous reaction to the dialogue or action of another character. To be able to deliver this, I needed to think and feel like her in every situation. Various sessions of discussions with the directors helped me get into the skin of Kalyani. My directors were of great help to me. As I had not taken any formal training in acting, the only thing I could do was to trust them and deliver when they demanded and of course do a couple of rehearsals with them before the shoot.

For '*Devrai*' I bagged the award for the 'Best Actress in a Lead Role', which greatly encouraged me to think of acting as a possible career. '*Devrai*', since it was my first feature film in a lead role it was a dream come true!

After '*Devrai*' I was obviously more confident and comfortable working in '*Badhaa*' and '*Nital*', with an open mind to welcome new lessons and experiences. '*Badhaa*' was a film about mental illness and various superstitions related to it in the remote areas of Maharashtra. My role in the film was that of a girl who is victimized as a result of such a superstition. For both '*Badhaa*' and '*Nital*' I had to go through the same preparatory stages of study, research and rehearsals as that for '*Devrai*'. '*Nital*', was a slightly different emotional experience for me as I had to wear a make up comprising white patches all over her face and body so as to resemble a Leukoderma patient. Frankly speaking I really had to be emotionally strong to carry this make up on my face throughout the film. But '*Nital*' is one film which reformed my concept of 'beauty' and made me realize that beauty is within one self and not on the outer physical appearance of a human being. Acting and dancing are the two things, which make me realize the worth of living. Like I said, I will not be able to breathe if I ever had to stop dancing. Similarly I feel, I will not be able to live happily if I ever had to quit acting. For me, it is really difficult to decide whether I am more passionate about dancing or about acting. Today, I am trying to give equal importance to both. I am teaching dance in a school, where I get freedom to do classical as well as non-classical choreographies with the students. As far as acting is concerned, I have mostly worked on projects with social relevance and with various directors whom I get complete work satisfaction. My recent project is a short film on AIDS, which we'll be shooting in Rajasthan. Henceforth also I would love to do meaningful projects in acting as well as in dance, which will help me grow as an artist and as a good human being.

■ - Devika Daftardar

EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

Human Resource Challenges in Software Organizations

A management professional, LF Sunetra Chaphalkar specialized in Human Resources from Institute of Business Management & Research (IBMR) in 2003. Ever since she has to her credit nearly a four year enriched career in recruitment and Human Resource Management. Currently she is with Black and Veatch India Corporation as a Senior HR Associate. As one of the HR personnel, she is often referred to as the 'backbone of the IT industry-Human Resource Managers'. Sunetra shares her experienced foresight with all those young professionals who want to take the plunge into HR....



Sunetra Chaphalkar

Mankind's thirst for knowledge has increased the demand for information technology to an extent that the Software Industry today is the largest revenue and job generating industry. It has in just a few years, grown at a rapid pace, employing millions of professionals worldwide. The Indian software industry has prospered, showing nearly 50% compounded annual growth rate over the recent years. The IT boom has brought with it, its own set of challenges to organizations. With global explosion in market-opportunities in the IT sector, the shortage of manpower, both in numbers and skills is a prime challenge for HR professionals. Being a knowledge-based industry, a high intellectual capital lends competitive advantage to a firm. Intellectual capital comprises human capital and intellectual assets. Being a service industry, its ability to put systems and processes that are in tune with the IT revolution in place, its strategies and competitiveness in the IT era, and its potentials to offer quality service, are certain factors that determine success. This leads to the fact that the creativity, innovativeness, knowledge and skill of the employees are the important assets. How to manage these assets is the biggest challenge the IT industry is facing today. It is not capital, finance or marketing management that gives the competitive edge but rather how well a firm can manage its human resources that drives the business. **Hence a major challenge that the IT industry per se has been facing is in the field of Human Resource Management.**

But what is wrong even if it remains the way it is at present? Does the IT industry really need to change? If so, what should change and to what extent? Are we referring to the entire reengineering of HR? As mankind progressed and the standard of living improved, the traditional motivators changed. Employees are now considered as rationally thinking beings capable of making decisions. This is the time to plan,

envision, prioritize and set goals for the new challenges. Competitive companies today need fast, flexible and dynamic teams of enthusiastic, motivated, creative and fully self-expressive people. In such a scenario, the team spirit amongst members is greatly enhanced due to job-satisfaction. The related issues are varied indeed; recruitment of world-class workforce and their retention, compensation and career planning, technological obsolescence and employee turnover, Training & Development, Compensation Management and HRM as a whole.

Recruitment has become an important sub system in HR especially in the IT industry. When major assets are Human Resources, it is important that quality people join an organization. **How one is able to fine tune his recruitment process so as to engage the best talent available and then how well he is able to design the system such that the employee and his job profile are a perfect match are yet other major challenges to a software organization.**

Challenges continue with how to manage the performance of the employees. Another challenge would be to create a '**performance driven work culture**' wherein opportunities are provided for enhanced performance and where delivering optimum performance becomes a way of life.

In the software industry where skill redundancy is very fast, employees need to be technically trained periodically and regularly. Training and development is another area where challenges arise. In the IT industry training takes a new connotation. **It is not just identifying training needs and imparting the required training. It is foreseeing and anticipating the requirements and developing suitable training programs, so that the employees are well equipped to handle the demands of the market.**

EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

The IT industry is one of the high paying industries. Since it is also very competitive, peer companies attracting the best talent by offering the best possible compensation package to their employees is in itself a challenge. Now IT companies are having ESOP with the compensation package.

Software is one of the industries with the highest attrition rate. The challenge facing software companies is how to keep this as low as possible. Various companies adopt different techniques to retain their employees. Most of them offer exorbitant pay packets. It has to do with the opportunities that are offered to employees and the prevailing work environment in the organization. Employees are being given the opportunity to learn and grow in the company itself. ***The more challenging the work assigned, more the employees find the job interesting and satisfying, making it difficult for them to leave the organisation.***

Yet another major challenge is to incorporate all the sub systems in HR and help them in achieving the ultimate goal – ***'exceptional performance'***. In a ***'performance driven work culture'*** industry like IT, this becomes all the more important. People have to be groomed to get in tune with the performance culture. ***Creating an environment that stimulates the generation of information, its sustenance and its dissipation throughout the organization will be the challenge for organizations in the future.*** How to tackle this new frontier will be the HRD's new challenge and it can no longer afford to stick to its conventional functioning. This is when ***'Human Resource Information Systems'*** will have to be adopted to cater to the new requirement. The function of this system would be to build and sustain a performance driven work culture.

The role of HR professionals will shift to that of a facilitator, a guide and a counselor in the near future, when they would have to involve the whole organization in the process of human resource development. The following points need to be taken into account during this process of profile transformation:

Integrating HRM strategy with Business Strategy: The strategic HRM role focuses on aligning HRD practices with business strategy. The HR professional is expected to be a strategic partner contributing to the success of business plans, which to a great extent depends on HR policies pertaining to recruitment, retention, motivation, and reward. In order to perform this role, HR professionals

should have thorough knowledge of business as well as of human resource functions, ability to lead any change process, innovation, problem solving capacities and leadership qualities to influence the organization.?

Emotional Intelligence: An organization is not able to harness the best from its employees because it is not able to cater for their emotional needs. One of the key focus areas in the immediate future should be to enhance the emotional intelligence of the employees. Even though one is equipped with the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind and an endless supply of smart ideas, he won't make a leader if his emotional well being is not taken care of. Smart people are no more the ones with high IQ; they are the ones with High EQ.

Balancing work and personal life: Balancing work and personal life is a significant area of concern for the IT industry. It believes that achieving the right balance between the work place and home is crucial for the efficient running of an organization.

Change Advocate: Now there is a need for HR professionals to work as change advocates. Change advocates are those who are responsible for inducing change in individual behavior patterns. For being a better change advocate one needs to be extrovert, possess considerable interpersonal skills, be creative and take risks and have to be good at organizing activities. *Empathy, Proximity, Structuring, Openness, and Rewarding* are the qualities that an HR professional should bear in order to be a better change advocate:

Human Touch: To inculcate better HRD practices into an organization, it is important to have a conducive atmosphere. Quality of work life is one of the most important factors that lead to such conducive factors, whatever company does for the welfare of its people should have human touch in it. Gone are the days when candidates used to change jobs just for salary. Now what they are looking for is what companies are offering beyond the salary. This can be easily justified from the fact that most of the IT companies are concentrating more on the non-financial benefits. Social gatherings to celebrate achievements made by teams and individuals, Flexi time, paid vacation, cards/ mails to recognize personal achievements, appreciation letters, picnics / excursions of project team at the end of the successful completion of the project, free health check-up, canteen facility, recreation rooms, etc. These activities definitely motivate employees

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SPECIAL FEATURE

The "Pune Navaratri Mahostav" is a nine-day celebration held every year. As a part of the celebrations various cultural programmes were organized this year between 23rd September and 2nd October 2006. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation



Ms. Lila Poonawalla being awarded the Maharshi Puraskar

sponsored a total of 100 entry passes for these programmes at Ganesh Kala Krida Ranga Munch for Lila Fellows their parents, relatives and friends.

Pune Navaratri Mahotsav, is led by a local corporator, Aba Bagul. This being the twelfth year of these celebrations, the Mahotsav felicitated 12 eminent personalities, at the hands of Dr. Kiran Bedi in recognition of their achievements in diverse fields. **Mrs. Lila Poonawalla was declared 'Best Entrepreneur of the Year' for which she was awarded the Maharshi Puraskar comprising a citation, a silver idol of Goddess Saraswati and a Shawl.** What added to the excitement of the on looking Lila Fellows was the appreciation that Dr. Kiran Bedi expressed with regards to the Foundation and she witnessing its



Ms. Lila Poonawalla being awarded the Super Achiever's Award

evolution over the past ten years. Amongst the others felicitated were Scientist Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, renowned social worker Shobhanatai Ranade, Veteran Cricketer Chandu Borde, Vice President Asian Association of Agriculture Bhudhajirao Mulik and woman health care activist, Dr. G.P. Pradhan.

Mrs. Poonawalla was also conferred the '**Pune 2006 Super Achiever's Award**' by ASM's-Institute of Business Management & Research, Chinchwad, Pune & IIBR, one of Pune's leading Management Institute. The award recognizes excellence and leverage leadership in areas of innovation, product development, creativity, technology, social responsibility and entrepreneurship. **This award is given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions with specific reference to social development, lending an upswing to the country's economy and bridging the gap between Industry & Academia.**

■ - Rajani Panchang

Continued from previous page....

to work with full concentration which in turn increase their efficiency. There also exists a need to increase the credibility of HRM within the organization that can be done by being accurate in all HRD work, being predictable and maintaining consistency, meeting commitments on time and within specified budget, being personally comfortable with peers, subordinates and superiors. By understanding human beings and providing the appropriate work environment it is possible to harness that latent power within every individual, which will make all the difference between success

and failure in the time to come. In the future the competitive edge that the organisations will get will only be through their human resources. How organisations are able to manage them, will determine whether they will continue to be in the race or be left behind. Flat structure, open and informal culture, authority based on expertise and ability rather than position, and flexi-timings are some of the norms software firms follow. The idea is to make the work place a 'fun place' with the hope of increasing loyalty and commitment.

■ -Sunetra Chaphalkar



"Transact to Win" by Ms. Cora Menezes



**Marriage Counselling by
Saath Saath Vivana Abhyaas Mandal**



Dandiya Party



**LFs at Ratna Khemani's total
personality development workshop
Stepping into a new world**

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



**Mrs Vasantha Ramaswamy
cutting her birthday cake**



**An Ensemble of Diversed Art Forms KALA-SANYUJ
A Kathak Jugalbandi by Lila Fellow
Ms. Gauri Swakul and group**



**19th issue of Inspira being released by
Ms. Win Win Nu Lindqvist MBA Candidate
Stockholm School of Economics**



**LF-2002 Suhasini Gadgil
(Donated Rs. 20,000)**



**LF-2000 Rajani Panchang
(Donated Rs. 10,000)**

**LF-2003 Ms. Haripriya Rajagopal
(Donated Rs. 5,050)**

BOOK REVIEW

Yamuna Gently Weeps.

....a journey into Yamuna.

Author : Ruzbeh N Barucha



This book takes us into the homes and lives of Yamuna Pushtha slum dwellers and the vicious political involved in one of the biggest demolition in India. The Yamuna Pushtha, settlement in Delhi, it was home to nearly 40,000 families, which housed more than 1,50,000 people. In 2004, the slum was demolished in an ill mannered way, in just some matter of weeks, leaving children, old people, pregnant women, those ailing and bed ridden became homeless and without a source of livelihood..

The book takes us into the life of the people who have formed a small world of their own and are living happily with their meager means of livelihood. The politicians had assured them that they would not be homeless yet one ugly day the past, present and future, bulldozed to the ground. Yamuna Pushtha was for the past forty years. The author takes into the journey through demolitions. He has taken the interview's of several residents staying there. The traditional communities like dholakwaley are searching for the place they would call as home. Author has given several live

examples of why people migrate to cities and later have to survive for the survival. The book is supported by heart rendering photographs. The author has captured pictures of certain places like schools before the demolition and the same place after demolitions. The research has proved that these people are not the real polluters of the Yamuna but they are blamed. Even after two years after the demolitions, the government has not provided basic civic amenities. The book answers all queries like why did the government destroy it? Same reasons the politicians give and in this how the blame game begins between the government, politicians and the local authority. The people are shifted to places where there are no means of earning, no schools and no basic amenities like food, water and electricity. Thousands of houses of the poor are demolished leaving lakhs of our countrymen on streets yet this hardly matters to the selfish politicians.

Yes....this book is of pains and sorrows, loss and miseries of people who are struggling for a place they would call as their own, peace in their poverty stricken lives. Are they demanding too much? This book is aptly titled "Yamuna Gently Weeps". It is for all the people who have heart.

■ - Sanchita Thenedar (LF-2005)

YOURS TRULY

Ring out 2006 and in comes 2007! Wishing all our readers a Merry X'mas and a rocking New Year! We are back again, in the new-year with one more issue of refreshing and informative Inspira! It has been one happening year full of training programmes, achievements, festivities, celebrations and soooooo many LF marriages!

The new LFs benefited from the two training programmes conducted by Ms. Cora Menezes on Transactional Analysis and Mrs. Ratna Khemani on Total Personality Development.

Kudos to the crusaders! Inspira once again received appreciation from its readers; especially those articles contributed by the empowered Lila Fellows, Priya Lele on the career prospects in Corporate Law and Anagha Mitra on the role of an economist in an NGO, based on their professional experience. The prime objectives of Inspira have been to keep LFs all over the world connected and

provide each one of them a platform to express. **When LFs come forward and contribute to the varied columns, the purpose of Inspira is achieved. Keep it up girls..... You are the pulse of Inspira! Do you all know that we have created a "Lila Poonawalla Foundation" community on ORKUT?** Oh yes, and its fun! When I was in Germany for six months, I found it **THE easiest way** to keep regularly connected with the LFs all over the globe. Do join the community and keep it happening!

Girls, many more innovative events are coming up your way in the new-year which has just begun! Just keep participating and benefiting. Larger the attendance, greater is the fun in growing up together. After all we are the privileged few, so why not make the best of it!

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