

Inspira



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FROM MY HEART

Dear Friends,

We have just celebrated our **12th Award Function** and what an event it was! For the first time, we had two celebrity women to give away the scholarships- none other than **Ms. Vinita Bali, Managing Director, Britannia Industries Ltd.** and **Dr. Kiran Bedi the Super Cop!** The Crusaders bring you the detailed account in the current issue. In twelve eventful years the Foundation has witnessed progress in all its activities! The feeling is very satisfying! We have **increased our commitments** and **pray that God** will send us continuous support from friends, believing in the same cause, for helping girls who not only excel academically, but also need economic and moral support. We now have **two Lila Fellows** on the **Board of Trustees** which is **totally committed** to going out of their way to assist the girls. What else does an organization need but to have a dedicated team that assures its future! Due to their **untiring efforts** the Foundation is better recognized as a dedicated Foundation working towards the upliftment and education of needy and meritorious young girls, empowering them to realize their dreams.

We have found that these young minds are **totally unprecedented**, confident, poised and **education seems to bring to these young girls magnified knowledge**. Here I would like to illustrate with a few examples, some of the advanced disciplines in which my young Lila Fellows are excelling. To mention a few, **Computational Genomics, Radar & Landsat Images & Thematic Maps, Optimal Design** of composite cylindrical shells using **Genetics Algorithms** (this is currently being researched at ISRO), research on **environmental factors** causing **Alzheimer's disease**, diagnostic procedures for **detection of breast cancer**, **deafness gene identification**, flat panel displays

and **silicon field emitters**, systems which would be accessible over the network in order to be used in **space shuttle launches** (at **NASA**), role of **calcium** in the **percutaneous absorption** of drugs across skins, **Liposomal drug delivery** systems, secondary **metabolites** as **phyto-pharmaceuticals**, **marine drugs** and **antisense oligonucleotide therapy**- are all the fields they are specializing in. It is **mind-boggling** what these young Indian minds from Pune are achieving. They are everywhere- in medicine, law, finance, land-ocean-aerospace, scientific research, design engineering, performing arts, health and nutrition, physical fitness and of course information technology. But what I am happy with is, that they have not forgotten their **traditional roles** either. God has engineered them to be multifaceted and made them the creator of mankind, a gift none can take away! Motherhood in them still remains undeterred despite their steady progress in the so-called Man's world. Many LF's are married and raising families equally efficiently and have learned the art of managing both the roles with élan. **MY LILA FELLOWS MAKE THE FOUNDATION PROUD!**

This trimester, the Foundation concentrated on **cultural** programs for the Lila Fellows. We had a **Bharatnatyam recital** hymn by **evergreen Ms. Rasika Khanna** which was based on '**abhangas**' (songs dedicated god) of different saints like St. Dynaneshwar, St. Tukaram, St. Mirabai, St. Kabir any many others. **Nritya Sangam** presented a blend of Bharatanatyam by renowned dancer **Sashikala Ravi from Pune** and Manipuri by **Suman Sarawgi from Kolkata**. We also had the opportunity of seeing the play "**Kanyadaan**" written by the famous play writer

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FROM MY HEART

Vijay Tendulkar. Based on a social issue very relevant to the current times, it depicts a daughter's trauma of marrying an OBC boy, and how she transforms, not only herself to lead a new life, but also made her father realize the predicaments of such people. The play provoked many significant social and moral questions to which there are no easy answers.

As a gift to Mr. Poonawalla and me on his birthday, our own Lila Fellows, **Swarada Angal** and **Gauri Swakul** gave a joint dance performance with the theme "**Life Together**" which they choreographed themselves. It was a fusion of **Kathak (a feminine dance-form)** and **Bharatnatyam (a masculine dance form)**. With the help of two dance-forms they depicted two people with entirely different identities, who when come together, make a **beautiful, meaningful and a fruitful life, complimenting each other.** The Lila Fellows had organized this celebration as a theme party where everyone was supposed to dress up like **Hawaiians.** This occasion gave the **LFs an opportunity to network and hone their organizing skills.** At this party we released the **21st issue of INSPIRA**, at the hands of **Dr. Eva Wolf-Manfre, Director Goethe Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan.**

The Foundation organized a tea party for the new batch of Lila Fellows. The objective was to welcome them to the family, to get to know them, and give them an opportunity to know each other and make

new friends. The crusaders of INSPIRA were also present there to introduce the concept of INSPIRA and the theme behind each column that is featured in the newsletter. On this occasion, trustees spoke to the girls sharing with them the goals, the activities, the programs and the expectations of the Foundation from Lila Fellows. It was a very lively interactive party ending with sumptuous eats.

Besides, we had an **orientation program** for the **overseas** Lila Fellows, conducted by our Founder **Trustee Mrs. Thadhani** at her residence. She spent over **5 hours** with the girls, sharing her extensive experiences and guiding them and educating them regarding documentation, traveling, cultural differences, mannerisms, dress codes and what have you.

Lately the girls were invited to a very special program, so important for the youth of today. The event was the book launch of Rev. Dada J. P. Vaswani's latest publication and inspirational talk on "**Peace or Perish – There is no other Choice**". I stop here with this thought-provoking theme. We all really need to spend time on thinking how each of us can contribute to this cause. We have to start with "**I**". **Yes! first I need to do something about this in my daily life.**

Wish you all the best. Goodbye until we meet again in the next issue.



Lila Poonawalla

EVE'S VOICE

The factor that keeps the girls of today from growing still lies at home. Many of the women featured in Inspira have repeated that if conditions at home are conducive, it is easier to pursue a career and also excel! Our own LF, Harshada Nagar is a live example of this belief!

Hello friends! This is Harshada, LF-2001. I received the LPF fellowship for completing my M.Sc. in Physics. I am currently pursuing research, I aspire to do my Ph.D. Born on a very special day 9th August ('KRANTIDIN' commemorating the beginning of our freedom struggle against the British Rule), I believe that maybe I was perhaps destined to be a rebel! Hailing from a middle class, traditional Gujarati family, obviously after completing my graduate education, it was expected out of me to get married into a typical *gujju* family. But instead, I stood 3rd in my college in B.Sc. and went on to secure admission into M.Sc. Physics at the

University of Pune; luckily to pursue this I got financial aid from the Lila Poonawalla Foundation which awarded me a scholarship. Thus, my family could not stop my education under the pretext of it being a financial liability! This scholarship meant me a lot to me as it gave me not only financial but also moral support and boosted my self-confidence. I was also awarded a "book's grant" by the Department of Physics, University of Pune during my M.Sc. Course which I completed with a first class.

I had been evading marriage for a long time now. When I got the first marriage proposal, I was in my

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EVE'S VOICE

B.Sc. the prospective groom then had not even completed his Master's degree nor did he have a good job. Luckily, my mother being an educated woman was firm and had turned down the offer. I had kept myself busy ever since with my Master's studies also playing badminton at the college and university level. I also took up short-term training courses for being a beautician, making soft toys, drawing *mehendi*, dancing *Bharatnatyam* (for three years) and many more activities. But, after M.Sc. my parents again became impatient. So I started teaching at my own college i.e. M.E.S Abasaheb Garware college and simultaneously continued pursuing the research project I had undertaken during my Master's at the Department of Physics, University of Pune. I took my mother into confidence and she agreed to support me. I also started coaching XII standard students. I had a hectic schedule starting from 7.00 – 9.00 am (XII classes), 10.00 am – 2.00 pm (college) and then coaching a X standard student. In the evenings I used to go to the University to play badminton, my favourite sport. Finally I used to come back home at around 9.00 pm. Meanwhile, I also took up the office of the secretary for the Indian Journal of Physics Education.

During this course of time I came in contact with scientists and scholars from renowned institutes like DRDO and BARC. Interaction with them gave my self-confidence a tremendous boost, urging me to take up serious scientific research. I proposed a three-year project under the guidance of Prof. (Mrs.) S. V. Bhoraskar, the third super enthusiastic woman in my life. After clearing the qualifying interviews and completing other formalities in 2004, I was appointed as a Junior Research Fellow (JRF) for the project. As the situation demanded, I formally withdrew from all other professional commitments I had and devoted all my attention and time for my project.

Organizing and attending conferences, both national and international, presenting posters, writing research papers, only offered me great experience in the field of research. The R&D atmosphere at the University Department of Physics has been so conducive for my overall development. Recently I made an oral presentation at BARC in September 2006. I was the only one from my batch selected to do so. My colleague Srikanya and me had proposed a new idea for the treatment of cancerous cells and also for waste treatment. Our hard work was bore fruits and we bagged the **BEST PAPER AWARD!**

My growth has been paved with the guidance, strength and inspiration of three women very



Ever smiling Harshada sharing her experiences at LPF's 10th Award Function

important to me in my life (of which, one I have already mentioned before, my research guide). The first one is my very own beloved mother! A scientist in I.I.T.M., she completed her M.Sc. in 1994 whereas my father was a mere matriculate. This difference in their qualifications no doubt caused ego clashes between them. When the physical and mental pain to herself and her two daughters (my little sister and me) was beyond my mother's tolerance levels, she deserted her husband and in-laws and catered to our needs all by herself! For the sake of our education and overall development, for 12 years now my mother has sacrificed and struggled a lot, in 2003 she completed her Ph.D. in Physics.

The second woman, whom I also call my second mother, is Lila Madam. She has always acknowledged my successes, and encouraged me to do better. She always refuels my confidence by telling me that as a Lila Fellow I am different and have bigger potentials. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation Scholarship has induced in me the "Yes you can do it" attitude and confidence. Through various workshops and opportunities to meet renowned and talented guests, my personality has developed manifold in many dimensions. Thank you LPF.

At this point I am reminded of a few lines which have motivated me in life: If we see 10 troubles coming down the road, we can be sure that 9 will run into the ditch before they reach us. To keep the lamp burning I need to continue adding oil to it. It is only in the dark that one can see stars! Though I will try climbing high in the sky, my aim will be always beyond it!

■ - Harshada Nagar

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LEADING LADY

In our August 2006 issue, Inspira featured a special article on "Year 2006- India's year in Germany" which highlighted the Indo-German exchange of academics, science, industry, trade, arts & literature. This time, LFs Sunetra, Jyoti & Prachi got face-to-face with Dr. Eva Wolf-Manfre, the Director of Goethe Institut Max Mueller Bhavan- the icon of Germany in the heart of our city!!!!

What are the objectives of the Goethe Institut in Pune?

The **Goethe-Institut, Pune** is mainly involved in teaching German and training German language teachers. We are best known for our intensive language course program with 25 units of instruction per week. We attract participants from all over India, particularly University students, young scientists, engineers and IT professional, who want to fulfill specific job requirements in a short period of time, or to prepare themselves for a stay in Germany. Besides running language classes, the Pune Centre acts as a regional training and professional development centre for teachers of German who teach at the Goethe Institutes and in the colleges and universities at Baroda, Dharwad and Pune. The Pune Centre is also involved in lots of Indo-German exchange programs to New York for high-school students. Every year three students are awarded scholarships to go to Germany to attend a 4-week course. Also teachers from the Institute are sent to Germany for 2-3 weeks to learn the culture there. We occasionally have guest-teachers from Germany coming over to teach the students here.

What does the profile of 'Director, Goethe Institut' demand of you?

Being a Director of the Pune Centre is certainly a big responsibility and involves managing the staff, building, properties, library, etc.,- a very demanding job! Also maintaining 100% quality is a big challenge to me, as people here tend to settle for even 90% quality. Insisting for 100% quality from everyone here is slowly getting us closer to achieving it. Also punctuality is another major concern, as people here tend to be late. Through all this, one needs to be very patient (smiles). I take training classes for the teaching staff of the Goethe Institut. But due to other major responsibilities as Director, I do not teach regular students. I have started a few monthly/quarterly cultural and other events with printed bulletins detailing the programs. The events include Film Festivals, Theatre Workshops, Exhibitions, etc. These are conducted at the Goethe Institut, FTII, NFAI, some schools, etc. Recently, we celebrated the International Music Day at the institute. But I should say that there is always room for improvement.

How did your association with the Goethe



A rendezvous with Dr. Eva Wolf-Manfre, Director of Goethe Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune

Institut begin?

Born in Heidelberg, Germany, I studied German literature and language, Journalism and Theatre at the University of Munich, followed by a graduation and Doctorate in Philology (Literature History being a core subject). With this strong academic backing, I secured a job as Foreign Language Teacher at Siemens Corporation, and then moved on as Teacher for German literature at the 'School for adult education'. Though I never planned to be a teacher, I enjoyed teaching immensely and hence continued. During my career as a teacher from 1977 to 1985 I also worked as 'Professor' at the Institute for German as a Foreign Language in Munich University. In 1986, I was one of the 20 candidates chosen from around 500 applicants for training at the Goethe Institut in Munich and Chicago, USA, immediately after which, I was offered a job of a Teacher and Teacher Trainer at the Goethe Institut in Berlin. Since then I am with this cultural institute promoting German Language in various roles.

How would you describe your transition within the Goethe Institut from being a Language teacher to the Head of Administration & Management as Director?

From teaching and training students in the German Language, I went on to be the Head of the Language Department at Chicago, USA for 6 years. Then held the office of the Director of German American Partnership Program at New York, USA for 3 years and also that of the Deputy Director of

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LEADING LADY

Human Resources Development at the headquarter of the Goethe Institut in Munich for almost 2 years. At this institute, I could significantly implement the principal tasks controlling the German cultural and educational policy abroad, wherein we draw on the rich variety of our multi-faceted open society and Germany's lively culture. In doing so, we function as service providers and partners for everyone taking an active interest in Germany and the German language and culture. From there on, the transition to the current position as the Director of Pune Centre / Max Mueller Bhavan was logical. It was pretty smooth except that it took me some time to adapt to the cultures of the countries I worked in. I had always wanted to work in foreign countries to promote German through teaching. And now I have been in Pune for the last nineteen months.

All through my professional journey, I have received immense family support. My parents have helped me get a good education, though I come from a small town, but after that I've been on my own. I'm a self-made woman. I've two brothers, who would be willing to help me if ever I need any help. But I've always been independent throughout.

From what academic / professional background do most of your prospective students come from? Can the Indian students who have attained a proficiency in the German language expect jobs with the Goethe-Institut?

Lot of college students enroll for courses at the Goethe Institut, especially those from Fergusson, College. Some students prefer to join vacation courses. Even nuns and priests join courses at this Institute. A teaching diploma is also available for those looking forward to become German language teachers. Some students, who have completed their basic course in German from the Ranade Institute, join the Goethe Institut for advanced and super-intensive courses. After completing a German course **(to complement their basic education)**, students are able to get job opportunities in many Indo-German or German companies such as Mercedes (Daimler-Chrysler), IBM, T-Systems, Bosch, etc. Jobs as translators are also available in India. Some students who have completed their advanced German courses do join the institute in the capacity of teachers. The students here are enthusiastic about learning

German. They are very dedicated and creative as well. But most of the students do take up the courses to improve their curriculum vitae and for better job opportunities. My secretary joined me after completing her course in the institute.

How do you find Pune as a location for the Goethe Institut in India?

Pune is a perfect location for Max-Mueller Bhavan in India. It's the most colourful and happening city I have ever found. Personally, I find this institute to be bigger and better than the other two Max-Mueller Bhavans in Delhi and Mumbai. The

Pune Institute is pleasant with beautiful environs. When I came to India/Pune, I did not know anybody here; but now I have made many good friends. Everybody has been very friendly here.

Do you personally see a scope for the two cultures, Indian and German, to blend?

I find Indian people to be very creative. Sometimes though, they tend to be chaotic. On the other hand, the Germans are rather less creative, but are very orderly. Indians usually don't

follow rules, which is not the case in Germany. Unlike Germany, I find India to be a very colourful and exotic country. Courses on Indology and Hinduism are very popular in Germany. As a matter of fact, Max Mueller himself was an Indologist!

How do you spend your personal time in a foreign cultural setup as ours?

I attended classical music concerts organised by Poona Music Society, movie shows and some other events on weekends. I read a lot. I have also taken Latin-American dance classes, Piano lessons and Hindi language lessons as well. I have toured to places around Pune like Mahabaleshwar, Matheran, Sinhagad etc. **(Wow! Her fluency with the pronunciation of these words left us amazed!)** I have also travelled to Rajasthan and Kashmir.

Your message to the Lila Fellows?

It is very important for today's women to work and be independent. They should be dedicated to their careers, while managing their homes. Through professionalism, they should work towards their own progress and that of the society at large.

■ **-Sunetra, Jyoti & Prachi**
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Sunetra, Jyoti & Prachi share the frame with the graceful German Lady

EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

In 2002 Gauri danced into the hearts of the trustees and bagged the LPF scholarship to pursue an M.A. in Kathak dance. In December 2006 she bagged the Boogie Woogie National Solo Classical Dance Competitions on Sony TV and walked into the hearts millions of Indians, making Pune proud and gluing Puneites to their TV sets, even during repeat telecasts of the episode!

Gauri was in class six when her parents noticed her knack of picking up dance steps and her tendency to sway at every tune she heard. Her family comprised art lovers with her father being an amateur dramatist. They thought she should rather gain formal guidance in dance and through a friend approached Dr. Maneesha Sathe, the renowned Kathak danseuse for admission into her dance school. Gauri remembers that the fees were so exorbitant, that if Maneesha Taai had insisted on the payment of such an amount, she could have never been her disciple. Taai had agreed to accept any amount Gauri's father could afford as long as the disciple promised to value the education imparted to her.

Today, fifteen years since then, Gauri is a staunch believer of the 'Guru Shishya Parampara'. Now what is this supposed to be? Says Gauri, "Whatever Maneesha Taai's guru taught her, she passed on to us; what we inherit from Taai we will pass on to the next generation. The idea is to carry on the legacy and maintain the purity of a particular style of dance for generations to come. They can trace back to the origins of the dance form. I spend about 2-3 hours daily doing riyaz in the morning at Taai's. In the evening I spend another 3-4 hours there, learning from her or teaching the younger disciples. The idea is to spend as much time possible in the company of Taai, so as to be more deeply influenced by her. I do not believe in changing my teachers, or in following many of them, in order to choose the best from all. Rather, I believe in incorporating her style of dancing in entirety, with the good and the bad, which has the traditional and original essence."

Till class X, Gauri had not decided what career to take up. However, her family supported her to make a career out of dance, in which she had shown evident interest. Plus not many took up a career in the performing arts. Many of her seniors in the dance class were pursuing a degree in dance at the Lalit Kala Kendra at the Pune University. However, she opted to do her junior college from SNDT in "creche and pre-school management", an arts subject. She feels if she had opted to do any course in science and commerce it would require her to put in extra efforts and time which was not worth it, knowing that she wanted to continue further in dance.

The B.A. curriculum at the University requires the students to attend lectures on campus and gain



The "Glimpses" of Gauri Swakul that stole the show at Boogie Woogie..... BOO!

practical training under one of its teachers off campus. Dr. Maneesha Sathe being one of the teachers at the Lalit Kala Kendra, Gauri did not need to switch teachers or dance styles. She kept attending classes at the University and practicals at her own dancing school! Initially the university fees ranged between two to three thousand rupees. However when the University hiked the entire fee structure, Gauri had to pay Rs.10,000/- towards her third year fees. It was even higher for the Master's degree and that is when through a friend, she learned about the LPF scholarships, applied and bagged it! Today she has procured two Master's degrees in dance, the conventional academic degree from the University of Pune and the 'Nritya Alankar' from the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya.

Gauri feels that she has been exceptionally lucky with opportunities. Her first tryst with the camera came when she had never before performed on stage! It was a small inconspicuous role in the Marathi movie 'Sarkarnaama', which went on to be a big hit. During her M.A. from the Lalit Kala Kendra, she specialized in Choreography, and learnt to choreograph different themes. This knowledge came of use when Maneesha Taai's daughter Sambhavi Taai offered her an opportunity to record a dance CD for Alpha TV, by the name 'Nakshatraanche dene'. She choreographed 4 children's dances for 'Kilbil', telecast by Mumbai Doordarshan. One assignment she found very challenging and innovative was 'Tumche Aamche Gaane' telecast by Sahayadri, in many episodes.

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EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

She had to choreograph about 18 songs with 8 persons, narrating Ratnakar Matkar's drama of the same name. This required her to recreate the period during the 1970's and '80s, which she did by choosing the right props and costumes.

The most memorable and treasured moment in Gauri's life came when she was able to perform as a lead dancer in front of Pandit Birju Maharaj and film Director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, in Pune recently, at a program "Jeevan Hyaana Kalale Ho" (translated as "the one who understood life") conducted in dedication to Pt. Birju Maharaj. She performed to the tunes of "Kaahe ched ched mohe....." from the film Devdas. Exuberantly she says, "It was a great challenge and honour to present the creation (that particular song) to its original creators (the original dance choreographer and the film director)".

In December 2006, Gauri won the National Solo Classical Dance Competition on the leading TV show Boogie Woogie telecast by Sony TV all over the country. When asked about this particular experience, she did not get the least excited! To this she explains "The organizers of Boogie Woogie generally keep a track of dance groups and keep informing them about the forthcoming events from time to time. In July-August 2006 a junior group of girls from our dance class had participated in Boogie Woogie and won it. It so happened that towards the end of 2006 they had selected 6 candidates through auditions for solo classical dance competitions. They were in need of one more candidate for the final round and so they called up Taai requesting her to send one of her students for the event (a direct entry into the finals is courtesy "unparalleled reputation Maneesha Nrityalaya"). I am still unaware why I was Taai's immediate choice. Who was I to question her decision? We chose the song 'dhoom machi aur naghme phoote....' from Indian Ocean's album Kandiza. We merged the slow beginning of the track with the fast end and made it a 3 minute piece. Taai choreographed it and we did a lot of riyaz. I went once before the event for the lengthy technical rehearsals at Andheri, 10 am to 6 pm. Given my previous experiences with stage and camera, I was not nervous. The organizers were so impressed with my fast "girkyaa" ('rotational dance movements', characteristic of Kathak) that they asked me to go round thrice in the same tempo, give out a punch and say their punch-line- "Boo!". They captured it on the camera to enhance their show. The recording was done in the morning and again later we performed in the presence of the judges Javed, Naved and Ravi. Things went off very smoothly and I won! Though I feel this event was a cake walk it gave me wider viewership and fame. It taught me a lot, because I had gone to Mumbai alone with a friend from the class and I was solely responsible for the technical decisions to be taken."

Gauri has had varied opportunities to perform

abroad especially, twice in Japan under the Indo-Japanese exchange programs. "Recently the 2550th Birthday of Buddha was celebrated at Bodhi Gaya in which participants from almost all countries from the Buddhist faith had participated. Obviously the program saw a blend of different traditional dance forms: The Korean fan dance, the Japanese Dragon Dance, The Chinese Ribbon Dance and the Indian Kathak Dance which was done to the beats of the traditional Japanese drums, the 'Taiko'. The rehearsals for all the dancers were held in China for a week. What amazed me was their eye for perfection. One day we had to remain in our position on stage for six hours, till they finally got their light arrangements perfect! To back it up, the stage for the event, the biggest I had ever seen, was made in Japan, and bought to India and assembled!" Through her experiences with the Chinese and the Japanese, she opines that they are extremely professional and are perfectionists to the core.

She assists her guru in conducting dance classes for the juniour batch and also represents the dance class at performances, individually and as part of the "Nrityalaya" troupe. They have had opportunities to perform at prestigious award ceremonies like the Hirakani Puraskar and the Navratna Puraskar sponsored by the Sahayadri TV Channel. Such professional endeavours not only give her a means of income but have also helped get good professional exposure and contacts. She also professionally makes jewellery and accessories required by dancers, manually and even Taai gives her lots of orders for the same. Gauri is also an announcer at the Pune 'Akaashwani' and a regular news reader for 'Dinmaan', the local cable-TV news channel.

She is currently getting a scholarship from the Government of India, Department of Human Resource Development to continue pursuing her education in Dance. Aspiring to do a Ph.D. in the same field one day, Gauri wants to dedicate her life to teaching and propagating this traditional dance form. "True. Remuneration from any career in performing arts is meager. The school that you represent, your struggle, your luck and how well you make the best of professional contacts matters a lot. It's an unpredictable field. Teaching, public performances and cinema are the best opportunities. However, very few do well enough to match any other main stream career. But equally true is the fact that people who pursue such careers do so because its not the money that interests them; rather, it's the satisfaction and sense of fulfillment that gives a meaning to their life. Each one must pursue some art-form because it gives a lot of peace of mind and happiness. One develops knowledge about an art-form, which makes him a good critic- of art as well as that of life!"

■ -Rajani Panchang Dhumal
(rajani_panchang@rediffmail.com)

SHORT TAKES

Keeping up with its mandate "Of the Lila Fellows, For the Lila Fellows and by the Lila Fellows", the Lila Poonawalla Foundation invited yet another Lila Fellow on its Board of Trustees this year. Crusaders Jyoti and Harshada, introduce our new Trustee Dr. Neelu Nawani (LF-1997), a microbiologist and a teacher.

Grand-daughter of refugees who came to India during the partition, Neelu completed her graduation in Mumbai securing 72% in B.Sc. Microbiology and stood 1st in Mumbai District. She shifted to Pune with her maternal uncle in 1996 for pursuing a Ph.D. She learned about the **LPF scholarships** from her friend and Lila Fellow Nusarrat, after which she applied for the same in 1997. She was awarded the scholarship for one year, with some assistance for the consecutive year as well. In 1998, she was awarded the **Lady Tata Memorial Fellowship** which continued till the completion of her Doctorate. Currently, Dr. Neelu Nawani is lecturer of microbiology at the Anna Saheb Magar College and a part-time lecturer at the Microbiology Department, University of Pune. Here are a few excerpts from our tête-à-tête with her....

On the importance of research in the academic curriculum....

I am reminded of the words of the honourable Vice Chancellor of Pune University, Dr. Narendra Jadhav- "*Academics and Research should go hand in hand in Universities.*" I believe that a good teacher is not necessarily is good researcher; but only a good researcher makes a good teacher. A researcher, I feel, is capable of giving updated knowledge to the students and so I firmly advocate research to complement education. Though research in India is good, our researchers should try for possible collaborations with institutions abroad, which would result in significant knowledge inputs. More research communities should be developed for exchange of ideas, etc. Young researchers should be given more opportunities.

On her research interests....

During my Doctorate, I began **researching on the enzyme 'Chitinase'**, which has gained importance as a promising antifungal antibiotic. Furthering this work as a young scientist in a DST (Dept. of Science & Technology, Govt. of India) funded project, I am currently concentrating on treating seafood wastes with the chitinase enzyme, before dumping the wastes into the sea, to prevent a likely environmental hazard. Utilizing these antioxidant properties of the resulting end-products, after enzyme treatment are also worth studying.

On the "happening" of a Trustee....

In 2006, I received a **special message from Mrs. Lila Poonawalla**, along with my birthday gift,



Jyoti & Harshada pose with LF-1997 & our New Trustee Dr. Neelu Nawani

mischievously asking me to return the foundation's favors. Subsequently, I was requested to be a **Trustee of the Lila Poonawalla foundation**. I instantly agreed. I was flattered and did not want to miss this opportunity of being able to serve the foundation in this way at least!

Experience as a 'Trustee' during the selection interviews....

The current year's applicants were really good! I find the selection procedure our foundation follows very interesting and unique, in that the other trustees care for the girls and make them feel comfortable. At the same time, they are very jolly.

She spends her free time in....

Surfing the web to keep myself updated about my research. I am fond of singing and like to read English novels; Sydney Sheldon and Irvin Wallace are my favorite authors. I have a penchant for political mysteries. I think they help me understand people's psyche very well.

For Dr. Neelu, 'success' signifies....

Being a good human being! If one can't do any good for others, then at least one shouldn't harm others. One must progress and **succeed** on his own merits. I believe in destiny and the adage 'You will not get more than what you **deserve** and not before your destined time.' Parents should be placed next to God and service to parents is service to God.

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LPF identifies talent and makes them Lila Fellows to give them that extra propulsion the girls need to launch themselves closer to their next destination. Even for the LFs it's not a fellowship received and forgotten. They continue to scale newer heights making the foundation proud. Starting this issue Inspira will make a special mention of a few achievements in its annual column "Zenith"



Ms. Harshada Nagar, LF-2001 received her scholarship to pursue M.Sc. Physics at the Department of Physics, University of Pune. Continuing there as a researcher, she was awarded the Late Dr. M. R. Bhide Prize for her commendable **"research having industrial application"**.



Ms. Gauri Swakul, LF-2002 had danced her way through into the hearts of the LPF trustees to bag the scholarship to pursue M.A. in Classical Dancing (Kathak) from the, Department of Performing Arts 'Lalit Kala Kendra', University of Pune. She won the First Prize in the national level solo classical dance competition on the famous TV show **"Boogie Woogie"** on Sony Television.



Mrs. Devika Walsangkar (Daftardar), LF-2003 was awarded the LFP scholarship to pursue M.A. in Dancing (Bharatnatyam) also from the Department of Performing Arts, University of Pune. Inspira had featured her in the 20th issue. Already having bagged the **"Award for Best Actress in Lead Role"**, she has recently been honoured with the **"Special Mention Award"** at the International Film Festival by the international jury, for her performance in the Marathi feature film, *Nital*.



Ms. Swarada Angal, LF-2003 who was awarded the LPF scholarship also for pursuing M.A. in Dancing (Bharatnatyam) from the University of Pune has been awarded a **Scholarship from SPIC MACAY** (Society For Promotion Of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst Youth) to pursue higher education in dance.



Ms. Bhavana Dalvi, LF-2005 was awarded our scholarship to pursue M. Tech. (Computer Science) at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay in which she has secured the **First Rank** in her stream. Having done a dissertation in devising a search engine, her work gained recognition from **"Google" in the form of a job offer**.



Ms. Kiran Pardeshi, LF -2006, currently pursuing her Master's in Personnel Management from Naralkar Institute post LPF Scholarship, received the award for the **"Best Female Student in Management Courses at the Naralkar Institute"** for the academic year 2006 - 07 and the **Smt. Indirabai Natu Smriti Paritoshik Scholarship Award**.

Note: Lila Fellows please keep the Foundation updated about your achievements and progress at kalyani@lilapoonawallaoundation.com so that we are able to feature it in this column.

■ **-Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**
(rajani_panchang@rediffmail.com)

LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

"Bigari Women- the unskilled labourers who have toiled at par with men from time immemorial"

Construction activity is an integral part of a country's infrastructure. Rural & urban development and the construction sector is one of the largest employers in India, as it absorbs rural labour and unskilled workers (in addition to semi-skilled and some skilled). It does not only provide an opportunity for seasonal employment thereby supplementing their income from farming (if any) but permits large-scale participation of women workers. Jyoti has a revealing chat with few such women construction workers colloquially called the "Bigari".

Irrespective of the scorching heat or biting chill at any roadside or building construction site, women labourers carrying out most of the physically strenuous work is a very common sight in India. The most common assignment is to carry sand, bricks, rocks, or mortar loads on the head. While very few *bigari* women perform certain skilled jobs which include masonry, carpentry and painting, most work as unskilled manual labour, including soil digging, carrying inputs in concrete mixing, concrete curing, etc. Most of the women labourers cannot afford to learn a skilled job because of financial problems and family responsibilities.

Yellama (20) is an illiterate but her 2 sons are studying; one of whom consistently tops at his school. Narsamma a widow, nearing 60 years of age has been doing this work for more than 30 years now. Neelima started working at construction sites with her parents, since she was 11 years old. She's now 14, but happy because her two other sisters and brothers are all going to school. She herself left school after the IIIrd



The "Bigari Women" toil in the sun to build roofs for us

standard. Though Bhimbai's mother is a teacher, she herself has only passed the IVrth standard. She started working at construction sites along with her husband 2 years back. Sushila (15) and Anusha (22) who is married and has two kids are both sisters and have

studied till the IVrth standard. Their father is the supervisor at the construction sites they work at.

Most of the *Bigari* are girls below the age of 20 years and half of them are illiterate. And most of those who have been to school have attended only primary school. Most of these women expressed that they took up these jobs due to circumstantial poverty or by chance, not by choice. They work for subsistence, and for income to take care of the households, especially children and the aged. For most of them, the workday begins between 7 and 8 a.m. and ends between 5 and 6 p.m., depending

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LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

on the nature of work. A tempo or a jeep carries them to their destinations along with their tools. On an average, they work for 9 hours, with an hour off for lunch. Every woman works for approximately 20-25 days in the non-rainy season and earns 100 rupees per working day.

All the women disclosed that although they are happy with the work they are doing, they feel they are not paid enough, or at least equal to what their male counterparts earn, though they work just as hard. Despite an 'Equal Wages Law' in place in India and women doing tougher jobs than the men, the latter earn more than women for unskilled manual jobs, the wage difference being 40-50 rupees a day! Regardless of whether they have infant children or not, they are not provided with crèche facilities. The labourers claim that availability of crèches would make their job easier and they would be able to put in more working hours. The employment is casual and temporary and is characterized by uncertain working hours, lack of basic amenities and inadequacy of welfare facilities.

Their jobs are characterized by their inherent risk to the life and limb to workers. Sushila recounts an incident where a cement block fell from above at work site and bruised her forehead, dangerously close to her eye; fortunately her eye went unhurt. Though such incidents are rare, they do happen. But some contractors are very caring and helpful to



They smiled for us straight from the heart

their labourers. When Yellama'a daughter once swallowed a coin, which stuck in her throat and wouldn't budge, the contractor readily incurred all the expenses for her surgery.

The women did express that they feel comfortable working with the men as they are friendly and supportive. Even their contractor or sub-contractor is quite congenial towards them. The contractors are helpful many times and offer loan to these women on a totally interest-free basis, but are required to pay back in convenient monthly installments. They are given bonus or some useful household items during

Diwali. Most *bhigaari* women feel that they are allowed ample rest in between tasks. Also, with the introduction of newer and better construction equipment such as the automated sand sieve and lifts for bricks, etc., their jobs have become slightly easier. The best part is that most of the women send their daughters to school and are optimistic that someday their children will get better jobs.

Have any one of us ever realized that these homeless people who tread stony dusty roads barefoot spend their entire lives building comfortable houses and smooth roads for their privileged counterparts in the same society????

■ **-Jyoti Otageri**
(happyjo240@gmail.com)

Another round of "Family Planning"

Like every year, this year too, the Lila Poonawalla Foundation received almost 150 scholarship applications for Indian and overseas courses. After a first round of rigorous screening, 80 girls (45 for Indian & 35 for overseas) were short listed for the round of interviews held at the Taj Blue Diamond. Witnesses to the scene, Harshada Nagar and Prachi Harkare interacted with the candidates and bring us the mood live

As usual, the applications were multidisciplinary. However, the majority were from IT, Microbiology, MBA and Pharmacy. 'Radio Mirchi' was the prime source of information about the LPF scholarships for most girls. There were candidates who had also learned about the scholarships through mouth to mouth publicity and were holding some of our past LF's as their ideals! Though everyone found the procedure very systematic and structured, some of them were initially confused as to why so many sets of documents were required to be submitted. But during the interview, they realized the strength of the panel and the interest-cum-need of each member vis a vis their credentials.



An interview session in progress



The trustees say "cheese!" as they wait for a candidate to walk in

Most girls who came for the interview had immense family support and their parents evidently wanted to see their daughters climb high up in their careers. Though many had a problem speaking in English, the trustees made them comfortable by speaking to them in a language the candidate preferred.

Some girls expressed that the interview is actually a round of self introspection. The questions made them know and understand themselves, their interests, their decisiveness, their determination, their priorities and their goals in life. Many found themselves thinking on such lines which they should have done before, but had not! After the interview, Vaishali, Upasana, Anuja and some others said- "Being grilled by a panel of experts

comprising stalwarts within their own fields, obviously caused tension, nervousness, tears and fear. However, every Trustee was very kind and nice, always trying to maintain our comfort levels throughout the interview. The best part was Firoz Sir giving us chocolates while leaving the interview hall that made the girls relax".

The Trustees found this year's batch more confident and coming from very different & interesting academic disciplines like fine-arts, horticulture, veterinary science, food & nutrition, etc. Another important observation the panel made was that this year the overseas candidates were mature and independent enough to survive in a foreign country.

This year, the foundation had gifted the applicants a book on Lila Fellows **"21st century belongs to them"** along with their application forms, so that they could read and know more about the Lila Fellows and their amazing success stories. All girls were thankful to the foundation for giving them such an educative opportunity in terms of the personalities they met and the unique interview experience.... which they found enriching enough; and were not bothered if they subsequently got the scholarship or not!

■ - Harshada Nagar & Prachi Harkare
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AWARD FUNCTION

The Lila Poonawalla Foundation continues to make dreams come true!!!

On the occasion of its 12th Award Function, the Lila Poonawalla Foundation received the privileged presence of two dynamic personalities - Ms Vinita Bali as Chief Guest and Dr. Kiran Bedi as its Guest of Honour! Sunetra recaps the wonderful occasion recreating an aura of celebrations....

First of all.... Inspira extends a very warm welcome to all the 38 new members of our LPF family; all young, deserving awardees of this year, who received their scholarships at the much awaited award function of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, held on the 28th July 2007. The event was witnessed by many older Lila Fellows, parents, and distinguished guests.



Chief Guest-Ms Vinita Bali, Dr. Kiran Bedi & LPF Trustees light the lamp and inaugurate the Award Ceremony

Guest of Honour, Trustees, Lila Fellow's and all invited guests present during the function in which he expressed "The joy of love and giving is the greatest and cannot be expressed in words". Soon the guests and trustees encircled the traditional lamp and lit the many 'dijas', dispelling the darkness and spreading the light of knowledge- the prime belief of LPF.

The Function was presented by LF and Trustee, Ms. Shaheen Patel (Shaikh) and began with a vocal recital of the Saraswati Vandana and Nandi, presented by **two of our talented Lila Fellows**, Kasturi Paigude and Madhavi Prabhumirashi. This was followed by Tabla Vaadan



Vocal recital by LFs Madhavi Prabhumirashi & Kasturi Paigude during the inauguration

performed by a newly selected LF, Tejal Sonpatki. Mr. Firoz Poonawalla welcomed the Chief Guest,

Trustee Ms. Shernaz Edibam

introduced the foundation beginning with its inception, followed by its objectives and its mission. She went on to declare- "Today LPF Trustees are the proud parents of over 385 girls and it has made its mark all over. We will continue to do so ahead".

A very pleasant surprise at the function was the attendance of Dr. Kiran Bedi. Our Chief Guest at the first award function, had promised she would come back to celebrate our 10th award function, as well. An admired and respected IPS officer, she is always at home at the Foundation's Award Ceremony. A living legend, she needs no introduction to any of our family members, because, by now, she has become a part of our family. Her address is always inspiring and everyone looks forward to it. Dr. Kiran Bedi in her address said "I thank Lila & Firoz for inviting me for this function due to which I could meet with the Chief Guest of today's function, Ms Vinita Bali -another great leader in this country. Also I am amazed to see this Foundation growing and becoming a Role-model for all other existing

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AWARD FUNCTION

foundations in this country. The caliber of each trustee, the methodology, the manner in which the Trustees are selected and the manner in which the Lila Fellows are selected is all leadership. I would love to see LPF- "Delhi" too" smiled Dr. Bedi looking at Mrs. Poonawalla. Keeping up with her practice, she gave a new challenge to the Trustees and the Foundation- "LPF is setting the right leadership and the right management style. It is making a national contribution to society in building individuals and to give it a larger magnitude we need more Lila Fellows who can change the country with their talent pool. With their leadership skills, they become critical agents of change and we can call them islands; when these islands unite they become an ocean. My dream is to see the islands turning into an ocean and to start with, we get 1000 Lila Fellows and then we celebrate! I wish more and more strength to Lila, Firoz & the Trustees to convert these Islands into an Ocean sooner." She once again promised to celebrate with us once the foundation attained the new height that she proposed.



Tabala Vaadan by new LF Ms. Tejal Sonpatki (LF-2007)

We had a few senior LF's sharing their experiences with the Foundation. They congratulated all the new Lila Fellows. Amongst them was Ms. Nitu Bhatia, who having spent 12 years in the US has returned to India to use her potential skills for the betterment of our country. She intends to start her own Company soon.

Our New Trustee Dr. Neelu Nawani (LF-1997) did the honours of introducing our Chief Guest for the evening, a very eminent achiever in her own field, **Ms. Vinita Bali**. She said "Excellence to whom, is not an act, but a habit. Ms. Vinita Bali, after

spending over 16 years overseas in a variety of positions with eminent multinationals like the Coca-Cola Company and Cadbury Schweppes, is currently the **Managing Director of Britannia Industries Limited**. Ms. Bali received her Bachelor's Degree in Economics from LSR at the University of Delhi and her MBA from the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies at Bombay University. Thereafter she pursued postgraduate studies in Business and Economics at Michigan State University. At the start of her career with Voltas Ltd., she launched the Rasna soft-drink concentrate. In 1980, she joined Cadbury India as Brand Manager and rose rapidly to become the youngest General Manager. She changed the rules of "marketing chocolates" and accelerated the growth trajectory through energizing innovation. The Coca-Cola Company chose her as its worldwide Marketing Director in 1994; she was one of the key players in doubling the historical growth rate of the brand which contributed to 70% of the Company's profit. Ms. Vinita Bali is a transformational leader and is credited with turning around businesses in Cadbury Nigeria and South Africa and Coke in Latin America. She is in the midst of leading a business model and cultural transformation in Britannia. She has received several business and marketing awards in recognition of her performance. Here we have with us today the person who has worked with brands of chocolates to biscuits to drinks- Ms Vinita Bali!"

Aristocratic, yet very humble and approachable, **Ms. Vinita Bali** expressed her joy and wonder in sharing the dais with Leaders. Very enthusiastically, she went on to talk about Leadership, Opportunities & Happiness- "Leadership is about transformation, it is about courage, having humility, having tenacity to pursue your dreams. It is about vision and it is about Mrs. Lila Poonawalla and Dr. Kiran Bedi. In its own way this foundation is providing opportunities to the young girls of Pune; it is about living in the world of opportunities and turning dreams into realities. As this entire generation is providing a lot of opportunities, I invite you all to seize this opportunity and keep on moving further firmly and success is yours. I believe that happiness is not having all but in making what you have. I want all the Lila Fellows to believe in themselves, have courage of conviction and not

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AWARD FUNCTION

allow little deviations distract you from anything. Do not forget to enjoy the journey of success. Be thankful and clear in life, think of how your work fits in your life, maintain good friendships, relations and extend help to foundations like LPF. I wish the very best to the foundation to achieve the target of 1000 Lila Fellows soon and look forward to hear more and more from LPF".

Trustees Mrs. Maya Thadhani, Mrs. Freney Tarapore and Mrs. Vasantha Ramswamy made the scholarship announcements for this year, for the Overseas, Local and Special category scholarships, respectively. This year 38 girls were awarded the scholarships which included 7 Overseas, 21 Local and 10 Special scholarships, magnifying the strength of the LPF family to a handsome 385 Lila Fellows! The new batch comes from diverse academic streams; they are mature enough and have clear ideas about



The entire new batch of 'Lila Fellows 2007' with the Chief Guest Ms. Vinita Bali, Guest of Honour Ms. Kiran Bedi and the trustees of LPF

what they want in life. They dream to make India a better country and when they spoke, we heard mind blowing quotes- **"Delay does not mean defeat, it only means wait", "I don't follow but create the footsteps that would follow me", and "The road to success was made by a dream"**.

None were deprived of the special gifts comprising fresh roses from Mr. Poonawalla's farm. While the Chief Guests and Trustees were felicitated and the Inspira team thanked, the new Lila Fellows were welcomed with flowers.

The 12th LPF award ceremony left behind nostalgic moments for each one of us to cherish for a long time to come!



"Trustees and Their spouses Thanksgiving Get-together" for their valuable contribution to achieve the set objectives of the Foundation on Monday, 6th Aug 2007

■ -Sunetra Chaphalkar
(sunetrac@gmail.com)

DONATIONS THIS QUARTER

DONATION FROM THE WELL WISHER "A SPECIAL THANK YOU"

Dr. Chandra Grubb, a close friend of LPF Trustee –Mrs. Shernaz Edibam and a well-wisher of the foundation recently donated a huge sum of Rupees Twelve Lakhs to the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. Sunetra digs in to the thought behind the deed....

"Way back in 1949, I had seen 200 girls in a Delhi College studying medicine! Then itself I had realized that it wasn't an age of darkness in a new Free Country. In fact, there was special consideration for educated women and the country felt proud of them. That period was very much to the advantage of Women, but changed over a period of time due to several reasons; one of them being lack of funds for education in the family. I am keen on seeing that age coming back once again. Hence, I felt it would be a good idea to part with some money for things I believe in and care about. I would have wasted my life if I left this money for someone's dowry" smiles Dr. Grubb.



Dr. Chandra Grubb

Born to a Hindu Sindhi Family in Karachi, Dr. Mrs. Chandra Grubb completed her M.B.B.S and specialized in Pathology from Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi (Punjab University) in 1949 and worked for 3 yrs at her Medical College as Assistant Lecturer and sometimes served at the Madras General Hospital as House Physician. She moved to England with her husband in 1953. For three years she worked with the Stocke Mandeville Hospital famous for spinal injury. In 1958, she was appointed as Registrar London Chest Hospital for 1.5 years in Histopathology (study of tissues). Here she was also introduced to a new subject known as Cytopathology where she learnt to diagnose lung cancer. As the only Research Assistant in the department of Cytopathology at the Royal Free Hospital, London, she worked as a Temporary consultant at their Training Centre and soon became a permanent consultant in the department. Meanwhile, she was awarded her Ph.D. from the London University. She has authored a very famous and expensive comprehensive book on Medical Diagnostic Cytopathology, which earned her a lot of royalty for almost 10 years. In 1972 when the Royal Free Hospital amalgamated with the University College

Hospital, London, she was appointed as the Head and Director of the Cytopathology Training Centre, a position she held unto retirement.

About her association with the foundation she says- "I strongly feel education of women / children will help them in realizing all their dreams. Mrs. Edibam introduced me to Mrs. Lila Poonawalla. I learnt that she had a single minded commitment to women's education and wanted to fulfill a lot of dreams which is why this foundation exists. I have been to a few award functions of the foundation and I call them 'Passing out Parades'. The amount of dedication which goes into this foundation is truly commendable and I feel it is one of the few organisations actually doing this in an

extremely efficient and professional manner. I knew that this Foundation was demanding but didn't know it was so tough and uncompromising on quality & standards. The Foundation demands that its successful applicants are academically strong enough to realize their dreams; the degree of commitment is thoroughly assessed. I wish it to be extended to other parts of the country too. Something very different about the foundation is Mrs. Poonawalla and the Foundation encouraging the girls for overall development and personality grooming of the awardees, apart from mastering academics." Thoroughly impressed by the management of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, Dr. Grubb decided to contribute towards the betterment of the society in a small way through LPF by donating a large amount of Rs 12 Lakhs. She adds "My Best wishes to the Lila Fellows and the Foundation. You can go as far as you dare."

The foundation sincerely thanks Dr. Grubb for her kind and generous gesture.

■ - **Sunetra Chaphalkar**
(sunetrac@gmail.com)

DONATION FROM LILA FELLOWS AND TRUSTEE



Ms. Shaheen Patel (Shaikh)
LF - 1998 & Trustee
(Donated Rs 20,000)

LF - 2001 **Ms. Rashmi Joshi (Soman)**

LF - 2005 **Ms. Rajashree Ahirgawall**



Dr. Eva Wolf-Manfre, Director Max Mueller Bhavan releases the 21st Issue of Inspira at the Hawaiian party on occasion of Mr. Firoz Poonawalla's B'day

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



Launch of Rev. Dada J. P. Vaswani's latest publication "Peace or Perish-There is no other choice"



Mr. Poonawalla in the presence of LF's and friends, cuts his 70th birthday cake



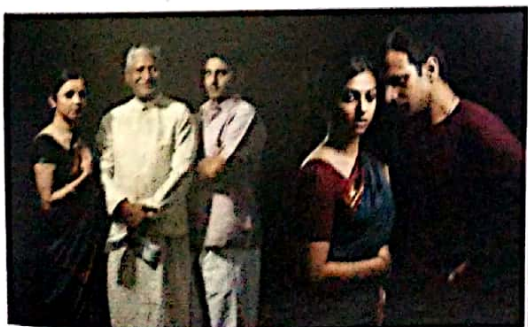
Overseas LF's 2007 during the Orientation Programme organized by Trustee Mrs. Maya Thadani at her residence



Ms. Rasika Khanna & Mrs. Lila Poonawalla during Bharatanatyam recital based on 'abhangas'



Tea Party for LF's 2007.... Lets get to know each other better!



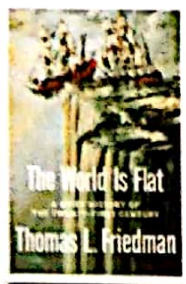
A scene from the play "Kanyadaan - the giving of a daughter"

Shashikala Ravi presenting a blend of Bharatanatyam and Manipuri at the programe - "Nritya Sangam"



The Inspira team & Ms. Jayshree Shahade

BOOK REVIEW



The World is Flat

A brief history of the Twenty-First Century

Author : Thomas L. Friedman

Publisher : Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Thomas Friedman brilliantly discusses how fast changing technology and increased capacities to catch-up with it has made the world flat. The three times 'Pulitzer Prize' winning author exemplifies the transformation in lifestyles since the days of Columbus to the modern day Indian Call Centers; since the typical 10 to 5 jobs to today's flexi hour jobs.... a transformation which has culminated from complex reformed foreign policies and economic issues, especially since the beginning of the 21st Century, and more recently due to globalization.

The author has included in his discussions, CEO's of several leading companies and their views on the booming software industry especially in Indian cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, and Pune. He quotes one of them as saying "At a particular moment I am sitting here, connected live with others in New York, London, Boston, San Francisco, and we all supervise live, an implementation in Singapore . . . That's globalization!"

Friedman recounts many examples in which companies in India and China are becoming a part of the large global complex supply chains that extend across the oceans

through a process called 'outsourcing'. The author has nicely explained the terminologies like: **Outsourcing, Open-sourcing, Off-shoring, Supply chaining, In-sourcing** – a must-know in the era of globalization.

Friedman encourages better education and training, as Americans now compete for positions not only with other Americans, but with the most brilliant minds around the globe. He observes that competitive play-grounds between industrial and emerging market countries are leveling and discusses how this could affect countries, companies, communities and individuals; and how governments and societies therefore need to adapt. As he moves towards the end of presenting his theory, Friedman warns of the forces that could seriously harm or slow the flattening of the world. To summarize, he has compared contrasting factors such as **Developing Countries and Flat World, Companies and Flat World, Geopolitics and Flat world**. The chapter named '**11/9 versus 9/11**' is an interesting must read and deals with globalization in India as a separate sub topic.

As people become more able to collaborate, compete and share with others of different cultures, religions, educational backgrounds and languages, 'The World is Flat' is a necessary reality check to bring these factors into perspective. 'The World is Flat' - is truly a different context, a different narrative and an altogether different imaginative book.

■ **-Prachi Harkare**
(prachiharkare@gmail.com)

YOURS TRULY

We are back with a bang celebrating the foundation's new milestone.... 385 fellowships over 12 long years! The team of Inspira extends a very warm welcome to all 38 new members of the LPF Family! Girls, be sure that the award function and the tea party you girls have been recently treated to, are just the beginning of a saga of events that will cause a manifold personal, emotional and professional change in your personality- and believe me, it will be towards growth! I invite you girls to read the previous issues of Inspira at **www.lilapoonawallaoundation.com** which will give you an idea about the vivid events at the foundation and in the columns we feature. Actually it's surprising for us also, to realize that though we set out with different objectives for each column, invariably each one ends with an inspirational message! Apart from columns like Eve's Voice and Empowered Lila Fellows dedicated exclusively to LFs, Inspira offers the best platform to those who pursue creative writing as a hobby / profession. Here I must mention the participation of our three new correspondents- LFs Jyoti, Harshada and Yogini who volunteered to shoulder responsibilities this time. As Editor of Inspira, not physically present in Pune, I must really thank each member of my team who take turn to cover different events & interviews herein, and Maya

Aunty for endlessly scrutinizing each article before it is sent to the printer. The entire team is actually very thankful to the foundation and especially Mrs. Poonawalla for inviting the Inspira team to every event non-categorically. Such participation is challenging! I say so because as a regular invitee, an LF is supposed to sit back, enjoy and at the most learn and absorb. But as an Inspira Crusader, the challenge is to have a broad perception of a journalist as well as that of a critic to able to translate the real story to our readers.

The last issue of Inspira attracted major appreciation. Quoting one of our readers "Every article in the current issue of Inspira, right from **From My Heart to Your's Truly** is thoroughly inspirational!" A journalist from the Indian Express approached us in admiration of our feature on Lady Bus Conductors, wanting to contact them herself! This indicates that we are being successful in our attempt to get these lesser known women-professionals the identity they deserve! I invite our readers to continue sending us honest feedbacks and LFs to write to us about their life experiences or professional expertise. So.... till we meet again with another new issue, I take leave wishing you all a very fruitful and successful academic year ahead. Amen!

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