

April 2009

Newsletter



Chennai



REACHING OUT IN FRIENDSHIP



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2008-2009
MANAGING COMMITTEE**

PRESIDENTS		
Rani Ananth	24490854	98407 61624
Lynne Connor		98409 75740
VICE PRESIDENTS		
Shobha Hebbar	26411248	98403 38258
Vijaya Rangarajan	28156588	98410 99363
	(O)28288844	
SECRETARIES		
Mridula Srinivasan	24321028	98409 31812
Ruth Laugel	24495199	98402 35222
TREASURERS		
Asha Hemdev	28278165	98403 43528
Jo Frogbrook	42110112	98408 91824

ACTIVITY CHAIRPERSONS

ARTS & HANDICRAFTS		
Nabila Avais		9840026665
Ninna Hogedal	65714286	9952965170
BOOK DISCUSSION		
Nalini Acharya	26449731	9381174164
Bharathi Nair Gopinath	42120726	9884495778
COOKING SWAPSHOP		
Achu Kurian	28365083	9841144072
Balveer Singh	24984989	9940183839
CURRENT EVENTS		
Anuradha M. Uberoi	24329728	9841042520
Tineke Sysmans	45066148	9940135888
HEALTH & ECOLOGY		
Zainab Kachwalla	28292274	9840853652
Helen De Clercq	24510180	9940688738
HISTORY, CULTURE & TOURS		
Leena Suryaprakash	28213067	9840937366
Cherry Venkatesan	28293436	9841023740
MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS		
Ramani Reddy	28353345	9840086858
Angelika Schwering	24490382	9840379471
PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION		
Archana K Meiyappan	28473932	9840998800
Lena Heyman	24493222	9444076800

IWA NEWSLETTER

Volume XXIII No.11

Chennai

APRIL 2009

MONTH AT A GLANCE

Thu. 2nd April	Managing Committee Meeting	09.30 a.m.
	Executive Committee Meeting	10.30 a.m.
Fri. 3rd April	Philosophy & Religion	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Celebration of Easter</i>	
	<i>4/4/09 Elections</i>	
Mon. 6th April	Cooking Swapshop	10.15 a.m.
Thu. 16th April	Book Discussion & Music & Performing Arts	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Slumdog Millionaire - Discussion; Film & Book</i>	
Fri. 24th April	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	10.45 a.m.

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IWA Blog Site : www.iwachennai.blogspot.com

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Dear friends,



Appropriately its International Women's Day as we both sit here writing our last letter to you all. It's been a year of friendship, fellowship and fun. It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Grand Finale together with your spouses and friends. Turning the clock back thirty years or more seemed to suit us all!

A huge thank you must go to the Board and the Executive Committee for planning and charting out such imaginative and entertaining meetings this year. So many meetings attracted big attendance. Thank you to each and every one of you for all that you have contributed to the IWA family. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the Advisory, Membership, Music and Election Committees. Their help and advice has been invaluable.

We also wish to thank you, the members, for your generosity in hosting/sponsoring our meetings. In fact the success of IWA is because of your support.

Looking back, we can tell you now, how uncanny it has been working with each other - we believe the word is telepathic - it's worked for us. All that remains is for us to wish the incoming Board and Executive Committee all the very best in the coming year. Enjoy your year!

RANI ANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

MANAGING COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thu. 2nd April at 9.30 a.m.

Thu. 2nd April at 10.30 a.m.

Meetings hosted by

Nabila Avais

At:

28 (19), Kothari Road

Nungambakkam

Chennai - 600034

Grateful thanks must go to:

The Vice - Presidents:

Shobha & Vijaya: The gentle twosome, for dealing with the printer's devil and bringing out the Newsletter on time with their own personal touches.

The Secretaries:

Mridula and Ruth: The smiling duo, for the meticulous and regular minutes and for posting the Newsletter.

The Treasurers:

Asha & Jo: The graceful duo, for keeping us on track financially and modernizing and updating the membership records.

Arts & Handicrafts:

Nabila & Ninna: The modern duo, for taking us on artistic tours of traditional techniques, designs and colours of Indian arts, crafts and handicrafts. An amazing myriad, rich in tradition of arts and crafts from Kanjeevarams to Kashmiri carpets - from fashions to art village - we're bowled over.

Book Discussion:

Nalini & Bharathi: The classical duo, for creating a forum where members came together to talk about books and the reading experience. From "The Silent Raga" to "A Thousand Splendid Sons", not forgetting "Meeting Lives". We were drawn into the stories - their pages came alive by the ambience created.

Cooking Swapshop:

Achu & Balveer: Our gastronomically creative pair: Cooking swapshop took us on an international gastronomic trip, teaching us that "cooking can be a great art". From pastas to salads to satvik food, we loved tasting them all.

Current Events:

Anuradha & Tineke: Our thought provoking pair: They brought us contemporary happenings of significance, analysis and opinion on top stories - be it business, politics, Raj Bhavan, 26/ 11 or the greatest scam of them all.

Health & Ecology:

Zainab & Helen: Our eco/health conscious pair: Together they made sure that we embrace an eco - friendly, healthy lifestyle for today's world.

History Culture & Tours:

Leena & Cherry: Our intrepid PR duo – History aside, together they showed us how to travel far and near with humour, fellowship and fun. Persuading even the previously faint hearted to dust off their passports and go.

Music & Performing Arts:

Ramani & Angelika – Our musically international pair – blending both East and West in a fusion of music and dance, style and sound, stage and screen.

Philosophy & Religion:

Archana & Lena – Our modern duo – masters of successfully demystifying philosophy, the oldest form of systematic, scholarly inquiry; and religion, the complex phenomena defying definition or summary. From the Hindu “Dharma”, Kashmiri Shivaratri, Buddhism to Judaism, to Easter, they explored the definitions and theories.

Thanks once again,

RANI ANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENTS

It is that time of year again – the time to say goodbye as we come to the end of another IWA year. We are going to miss the deadlines and blurbs and proof reading. It was a wonderful learning experience. We hope you enjoyed reading the newsletters as much as we enjoyed bringing them out every month.

We would like to thank the Chairpersons who were extremely efficient and gave in their well written blurbs on time. Rani and Lynne were extremely supportive and our thanks are due to them. We enjoyed working with all the members of the Board and have made lasting friendships. And we thank you members for giving us this great opportunity.

It has been a wonderful year of “reaching out in friendship”. We leave with fond memories of fun, fellowship and friendship. We wish the incoming team all success.

SHOBHA HEBBAR

VIJAYA RANGARAJAN

FROM THE SECRETARIES

It seems like yesterday when we took over this role during the IWA year of “Reaching in Friendship” and now it is time to say goodbye!

Each IWA year is a learning experience and this year for us was the year of dispatch of newsletters, “minutes” and communication regarding change in address and telephone numbers. While every effort was made to reach your newsletters on time, we appreciated your feedback when it didn't.

Thank you members for giving us this opportunity and wishing you and your families all the very best. Wishing the incoming team a great year!

MRIDULA SRINIVASAN

RUTH LAUGE

FROM THE TREASURER

It has been an eventful and exciting year. I have learnt much on the job and enjoyed the experience. The year has been successful thanks to generous contributions from you members – as home hostesses, co-hostesses and sponsors.

I thank the Activity Chairpersons who planned their meetings throughout the year meticulously, handling the financial aspect with efficiency and presenting their accounts on time month after month.

Thanks to the Management Committee and Rani and Lynne for their support and guidance through the year.

Wishing the incoming Committee all success.

ASHA HEMDEV

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP TREASURER

Another IWA year is drawing to a close and this year has seen a great turnout for our meetings. The overall attendance has been impressive and I hope this continues into the coming year.

I would like to say thank you to everyone who has supported the club as it is only through your active involvement that IWA continues to grow and evolve. To this end we have accepted applications from 21 new members and I hope they enjoy their time with the club as much as I have.

My job has been made easier by the help and support I have received from the Membership Sub-Committee and together we have worked hard to make fair and objective decisions based on the guidelines voted in by you the members. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone on the sub-committee; it has been a pleasure working with you!

JO FROGBROOK

REMINDERS

- Please return your renewal forms together with your cheques for the annual fee made out to 'IWA Chennai'. This can be done at the AGM, or by post or hand delivered to the new Treasurer. **The closing date is June 30th.**
- To ensure our records are up-to-date, please complete all sections of the renewal form accurately.
- In the case of non-Indians who are departing Chennai, please send a letter or email to the Treasurer advising that you will not be renewing your membership. This will enable us to fill your slot quickly by another interested applicant.
- All members are reminded that they should inform the Treasurer in writing, or by email, if they will be absent for a month or more. This should be done prior to, or at the beginning of each absence.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

On Friday, 3rd April at 10.15 am

At: **Madras Boat Club**
Boat Club Road
RA Puram
Chennai 600028

The Celebration of Easter

The world celebrates Easter on April 12th. We bring you the flavour of Easter at IWA.

What is Easter? What is the significance of Easter Bunnies and Easter eggs? What are the various customs and traditions associated with Easter? How do the different churches celebrate Easter?

Come and listen to our IWA members, **Shanthi Karunakaran** and **Shanthi Verghese** talk about Easter. **Sarah Chanda** will moderate the meeting.

There will also be special Easter music provided by our IWA Members.

ARCHANA MEIYAPPAN

LENA HEYMAN

ARTS & HANDICRAFTS

We thank **Padma Ashok** and **Anita Kapoor** for sponsoring the décor for the IWA Grand Finale.

CURRENT EVENTS

Our sincere thanks to **Gita Chandrasekaran** for hosting our February meeting on the Mumbai terrorist attack.



FROM THE ELECTION COMMITTEE

Based on the nominations received, we are happy to announce that the following members have been elected unopposed to the posts mentioned against each:

Presidents	
Indian	Non - Indian
Shobha Hebbar	Liz Aston
-----	Sejal Wasani
Vice President	
-----	Manisha Singhee
Secretary	
-----	Jansi Kishore
Treasurer	

Our congratulations to them and our very best wishes for a successful term.

FROM THE ELECTION COMMITTEE

Elections shall be held for the following posts:

Post	Candidates (names in alphabetical order)
Vice President - Indian	Surekha Kothari Mridula Srinivasan
Secretary - Indian	Prithika Chary Ramani Reddy
Treasurer - Indian	Kausalya Jaganmohan Archana Meiyappan

Voting shall take place on Saturday, April 4th, 2009 between 10.15 a.m. and 2.15 p.m. at the IWA Registered office:

857 Poonamallee High Road
Kilpauk, Chennai - 600 010
(Immediately after Breeze Hotel, enter NIIT gate)

On completion of counting of votes, successful candidates for the above three posts shall be announced.

CHAIRPERSON: RUPA KADHIRESAN
MEMBERS: URMILLA AGARWAL
RAMA RAJAGOPALAN
SEEMA SAIT
ALEXANDRA THOMPSON

COOKING SWAPSHOP

On Monday, 6th April, at 10 15 am

At: **Madras Boat Club**
Boat Club Road
Chennai 600 028



Jain Food / Saatvik Food

Food is a dynamic force which interacts with the human system on the physical level, the emotional level, and also on the energetic and spiritual level.

Satvik food is vegetarian, sans onion and garlic (as these produce heat and are considered aphrodisiacs). Satvik food is good for health and vitality. It is simple and is easily digestible. The food is basic and is cooked using minimal heat. It does not involve extensive processing, and is hence usually closest to the way the food item exists in its natural form. Common spices like ginger, turmeric, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, and aniseed are strongly recommended. They have certain properties that are very helpful for digestion. They keep the digestive system and other related systems of the body toned up. Jain food is also very similar to saatvik cooking except that certain root foods like potatoes, ginger, onions and garlic are prohibited.

Naina Shah, born into a Jain family, does not use any root vegetables except ginger and carrot in her kitchen. She is very innovative in her cooking and her table is usually full of a number of exotic dishes. She will demonstrate Jain and Satvik food, sans onion, garlic or any root vegetable.

We thank **Usha Jawahar** for sponsoring this meeting.

ACHU KURIAN

BALVEER SINGH

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Usha Jawahar
5/75, Bonanza I, 2nd Cross Street,
Off Blue Beach Road
Neelangarai, Chennai - 600 042

BOOK DISCUSSION & MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS

On Thursday, April 16th at 10.15 a.m.

At: **Strokeside,**
Madras Boat Club
Boat Club Road
Chennai 600 028



Slumdog Millionaire

'Jai Ho': it is almost an anthem in every Indian's mind! What an enviable spot we have finally occupied in the World of Cinema! Nothing less than the Oscars: and that too 3 of them, a virtual bonanza indeed! It is marvelous that all the 3 Oscars have been awarded to artists from South India.

We have been lucky to be able to pull off the 'Grand Finale' for Book Discussion and Music & Performing Arts combined, with a discussion on the film, "Slumdog Millionaire" and the book on which it has been based, "Q & A" by Vikas Swarup.

Latha Menon has kindly consented to talk about the film and **Gowri Ramnarayanan** on the book. We may have a surprise guest if we are lucky and let's keep our fingers crossed on that!

We thank **Meena Malhotra** and **Vanitha Mudaliar** for hosting this meeting.

NALINI ACHARYA
KAMANI REDDY

BHARATI NAIR GOPINATH
ANGELIKA SCHWERING

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Ruku Seshasayee
3/4 Withypool complex,
2&3 Boat Club Road,
Chennai 600 028
Telephone: 4208 8234
Mobile: 98400 84270

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Friday 24th April, 2009

Registration and Refreshments : 10.00 a.m.

AGM: Begins Promptly at : 10.45 a.m.

At: GRT Convention Centre

"Marigold Hall"

120, Sir Thyagaraja Road

T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017

The Annual General Meeting of IWA is to be held at 10.45 a.m. on Friday, 24th April 2009 at Marigold Hall, GRT Convention Centre, 120, Sir Thyagaraja Road, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017.

The Agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

- * Welcome Address Lynne Connor
- * Secretary's Report Mridula Srinivasan
- * Treasurer's Report Asha Hemdev
- * Adoption of the Audited Accounts for the year 2009 - 2010
- * Membership Treasurer's Report Joanne Frogbrook
- * Appointment of Auditors for the year 2009 - 2010
- * Remarks by the outgoing President Rani Ananth
- * Any other business
- * Introduction of the Election Committee
- * Presentation of the new Managing Committee 2009 - 2010
- * Address by the incoming Presidents
- * Introduction of the new Executive Committee
- * Vote of thanks Pushpa Chari

Note: Copies of the Accounts and Reports of the various Activities will be available for members to peruse.

RANI ANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

THE GRAND FINALE

We began our year with Fellowship Morning at the Madras Club and chose to bow out with the Grand Finale at the same venue. Every one of the two hundred and ten available places was taken. Thank you for joining in the fun and fellowship that evening. We chose to put back the clock some thirty or forty years for an evening of retro sixties and seventies music. For many we returned to our youth and judging by how many took to the dance floor - it was done with some style. It was wonderful to see so many men having a good time too. The band was "fab" as we used to say and the dancers entertaining. The "Saturday Night Fever" surely caught on!

The Country Line Dance by some of our members set the mood for the evening.

Thank you Stephanie Thompson, Cherry Venkatesan and Jennifer Ramachandran for having faith in the rest of us. It was fun. Thanks to the dancers who took part: Sapna Sood, Rashmi Mohindra, Asha Hemdev, Mridula Srinivasan, Ninna Hogedal, Cherry Venkatesan, Jennifer Ramachandran, Nabila Avais and Lynne Connor.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Nabila Avais for arranging and coordinating the decoration of the venue and to Aruna Vijaykumar for liaising with the Madras Club on behalf of IWA and formalising the details. Seven of you won door prizes and those of you who inadvertently left them behind found that we even delivered them to your door!

The photo gallery below gives you all a glimpse of the evening. Fun!

RANI ANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

THE BOARD



Board Members at the Finale



The Line Dancers



Posing with the Beetle



The Skit



TRIP TO GUJARAT

What a fantastically diverse agenda our Chairpersons, Leena and Cherry laid out for the 30 of us! If one end of the spectrum had the legendary step wells or 'wavs' with a profusion of exquisite carvings, the other memorable end had a tryst with lions in the Sasan Gir forests. It was a wonderfully balanced and varied itinerary which enunciates the meticulous planning that went into the Gujarat trip.

Day one was the heritage meal at Agashiye House followed by the Heritage Night Walk of Ahmedabad city. We concluded the night with drummers signaling the ancient ritual of the closing of city gates at *Raja no Haziro*, a 600 year old tradition. We visited 200 year old *havelis* which have been restored and maintained as a reminder of an era gone by.

Bhuj, the home of colour and beautiful women! Its exquisite embroidery, the *Dhamaaka*, *Ajrak* and *Resist* - dye printing, the *Rogan* art paintings, the iron bell making craft of Narona, the lacquer ware, tie & dye *bandhni* and the *ikat* weaving pit looms: everything indicates the enormous resilience of the people of this region to overcome adversities. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at Shaam-e-Sarhad resembling a mini village with its handkerchief sized coloured fabric

held together like a canopy of kites which was the ceiling of the tent. How Innovative!

Dilwara is a virtual fairy-tale haven on earth. Built by Vimal Shah, Tej Pal and Vastu Pal, Bama Shah and, finally, by the labourers themselves. We stayed the night at the Cama Rajputana Palace Resort. One cannot forget the Sunset Point in Mount Abu where we were awed into silence at the sheer visual poetry of nature and the brief visit to the Ashram of the Brahmakumaris

In the **Rann of Kutch** (derived from '*kachua*', tortoise) live the Rabari tribes who can trace their antecedents to France and Germany. The night of Valentine's Day was at Khatau Infinity Resort with its tent-like cottages, serene and lovely in the womb of Nakathrana village.

What can one say about the *Aaina Mahal*? We could still see glimpses of its beautiful façade and its European architecture in spite of destruction wrought by three earthquakes. And the *Prag Mahal*; with its gorgeous embroidered garments, the mirrors, the jewelled walls in *minakari* and its elaborately detailed doorways. The food everywhere was sinfully rich and tasty! The Prince Hotel in Bhuj was the best with *jilebis* and *kadhi* to die for!

In **Gondol** we were divided into two groups and stayed at two heritage hotels, Orchard Palace and Riverside Palace, both with sprawling gardens and peacocks roaming free. We were served by uniformed waiters catering to our every need. So pampered! The next morning was a tour of the Rajah's automobile collection and his opulently furnished private monogrammed train car which gets attached to the Railway train.

Sasan - Gir, the home of the majestic 'King of the Forest' left us awestruck with wonder. The Lion Safari Camp at Phalchell was our home. We went on 2 safaris, one in the evening and the other early next morning. Unfortunately, our entire group was not lucky, only some among us got to see a lioness the previous evening, and a male lion as well as three lionesses the next morning: A virtual bonanza indeed for the lucky few!

It came as a complete surprise to hear that the '*Siddi*' community came here from Africa when traders with black slaves passed

through India and left some of them behind at the behest of the Mughal rulers. They have a distinct resemblance to African blacks and presently there are more than 15000 of them in Gujarat. A group of them entertained us at the Phalchell camp and some of our ladies joined in the dance.

The next morning we headed out to the **Somnath** temple on the sea-shore. This was followed by a visit to **Lothal** (the place of the dead) where we got to see remnants of the Harappan Civilization. Our home for the night was Nilambagh Palace Hotel at **Bhavnagar**.

At **Palitana**, we went for a trek up the hill by foot, climbing nearly 4000 steps to visit the holy Jain shrine. Only nine of us intrepid souls braved the adventure. Jain shrines are exquisitely and divinely beautiful! The vision was worth the climb! The *Dharamshala* at the foothill built and run by Sanjitha's parents is a peaceful haven, spotlessly clean and a good resting place for the nuns and the pilgrims.

We returned to **Ahmedabad** for the final leg of our tour. A must see is the Calico Museum of Textiles run by the Sarabhais. It has the most unforgettable and awe-inspiring collection of ancient textiles. That afternoon we went to the Gandhi Ashram at **Sabarmati** and it made us humbly grateful for the vision and sacrifice of the Mahatma.

Our final morning was a visit to the Sun temple in **Modhera**. I wonder why Sun temples have a profusion of erotic art?! This temple has a *Surya Kund* which is a step tank and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* is designed in such a way so as to enable the rays of the rising and setting sun to fall on the bejewelled deity on the day of the equinox.

The *Rani ki vav* (stepwell) in **Patan** is a monument which has been buried for centuries. It has the finest carvings ever made and is considered a 'queen' among step wells in India. Patan is also the home of *Patola* weaving.

Our thanks to Leena and Cherry for a fabulous and unforgettable trip. Our thanks also to the ever cheerful unflappable tour guide Lalitha Krishnan.

RAMANI REDDY



Members at the Sun temple at Modhera



Lions at Sasan - Gir

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

To all Members:

Notice is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting of IWA will be held at Chennai on Saturday the 28th of March, 2009 at: 10.15 a.m. at

Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium

M.Ct.M. Chidambaram Chettiyar Mat. H.S. School Campus
179, Luz Church Road, Chennai - 600 018.

The Agenda for the meeting is as under:

To increase the membership fee which is currently Rs. 1100/- to Rs. 2000/- with effect from the financial year April 1, 2009.

After carefully reviewing the budget for the year and due to rising costs of printing, courier charges, hotel and club charges, etc., it is proposed to raise the annual subscription from Rs. 1100/- to Rs. 2000/- with effect from April 1, 2009.

(For purposes of record only)

