

November 2008

Newsletter



Chennai

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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 Lauge	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	28353348	9840086858
Angelika Schwering	24490382	9840379471

PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION		
Archana K Meiyappan	28473932	9840998800
Lena Heyman	24493222	9444076800

IWA NEWSLETTER

Volume XXIII No. 6

NOVEMBER 2008

Chennai

MONTH AT A GLANCE

Mon. 3rd Nov.	Managing Committee Meeting	09.30 a.m.
	Executive Committee Meeting	10.30 a.m.
Tue. 4th Nov.	Arts & Handicrafts	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Art Therapy</i>	
Thu. 6th Nov.	History, Culture & Tours	10.15 a.m.
	<i>The Arctic - Land of the Midnight Sun</i>	
Tue. 11th Nov.	Philosophy & Religion	10.00 a.m.
	<i>Life Bliss Meditation</i>	
Thu. 13th Nov.	Health & Ecology	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Waste Management</i>	
Tue. 18th Nov.	Cooking Swapshop	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Noodle Mania</i>	
Thu. 20th Nov.	Philosophy & Religion	11.30 a.m.
	<i>Eid Celebrations</i>	
Fri. 21st Nov.	Current Events	04.00 p.m.
	<i>Consumer Rights and Redressal</i>	
Tue. 25th Nov.	Music & Performing Arts	10.15 a.m.
	<i>Confluence of Ragas</i>	
Thu. 27th Nov.	Book Discussion	10.15 a.m.
	<i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i>	

IWA Blog Site : www.iwachennai.blogspot.com

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,



Whew, what a busy festival month October was! **Deepam** - the festival of lights, our Diwali mela was a great success. The whole atmosphere was one of bonhomie and cheer, just what we had envisaged. We are sure you all had a wonderful Deepavali.

This month on the platter are a meditation workshop - a great stress buster, art as therapy and thought provoking talks on waste management and consumer rights. We have a demonstration of noodles and yet another much awaited festival get-together - the **Eid Milan** lunch. Finally, lose yourselves in the soulful ragas of Indian Classical music -Hindustani and Carnatic.

As always, we look forward to seeing you all during the coming months.

RANI ANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

MANAGING COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mon. 3rd Nov. at 9. 30 a. m.

Mon. 3rd Nov. at 10. 30 a. m.

Meetings hosted by
Leena Suryaprakash & Cherry Venkatesan
At The Madras Boat Club
Boat Club Road
Chennai

ARTS & HANDICRAFTS

Tuesday, 4th November at 10.15 A.M



At: **Apparao Galleries**

7, Wallace Garden III Street
Chennai-600 006

Art Therapy - Expressive and Therapeutic Visual Arts

Art has always been a pleasure, solace and joy. The creative process of Art is both healing and life enhancing. It counters stress, trauma and enhances the cognitive skills, increasing insight and judgment, enabling one to enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of the creative experience.

Art Therapy is a form of expressive therapy that uses art materials, such as paints, chalks and markers and is found in non-clinical settings, such as art studios and workshops. The process involved in creating art is immensely healing and brings one in touch with one's inner emotions and boosts self-esteem. It focuses on relaxation techniques through creativity development and the effective use of the different art materials used.

The merits and therapeutic values of art will be discussed in a presentation of very interesting case studies and experiences by **Sharon Apparao** and a panel of practitioners of art. Art therapy is now packaged formally as a new age therapy though recommended informally to people over the years. This talk will illustrate some of the techniques and ideas of art therapy.

We are very thankful to **Sharon Apparao** of Apparao Galleries for graciously hosting this meeting for us.

NABILA AVAIS

NINNA HOGEDAL

HISTORY, CULTURE & TOURS

Thursday, 6th November at 10.15 a. m.

At: Madras Boat Club
Boat Club Road
Chennai



Land of the Midnight Sun

The Arctic, the "Land of the Midnight Sun", where the sun never sets in summer....you'll see 320 degrees of light, a stunning spectrum on the horizon. Dazzling ranges of ice drift some 40 metres a day, changing contours and colour with wind and light. They crack, and air escapes in a thunderous boom. As you watch, icebergs tumble into the sea. On a cruise, you can make out ponds, lakes, fjords and rivers beneath the ice. Tall ice fjords push 20 million tonnes of ice every day into the Atlantic Ocean. You'll see herds of musk ox, reindeer, Arctic ranger, bow tail whales, overfed sea gulls and a few falcons and ravens.

Our speaker, P Sridhar, Managing Director, Pyromatic India, makes heat transfer equipment for engineering labs and chills out at the poles. He is only the second Indian to explore the Arctic Greenland and the first person from Chennai to do so. He will talk to us about the stunning beauty of the Arctic region and present a slide show of his trip there. He says, "I stood on a freezing ledge to record the fantastic scenery on camera. You cannot find a more beautiful place anywhere on earth. Every square inch of the Arctic is the architecture of the Almighty."

We thank out hostesses Kanta Gupta, Jennifer Ann Ramachandran, Malathi Ramachandran and Amulya Rao.

LEENA SURYAPRAKASH

CHERRY VENKATESAN

We would like to thank Usha Chandrakumar for generously co-sponsoring the September meeting.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Tuesday, November 11th at 10.00 am

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



LIFE BLISS MEDITATION WORKSHOP-NITHYA DHYAAN

Paramahansa Swami Nithyananda was born in Tiruvannamalai, a spiritual nerve centre in South India. Through intense meditation and study of yoga, tantra and other Eastern metaphysical sciences, he attained inner bliss. From his own experience, he has formulated a Technology of Bliss to explode the individual consciousness and create spiritually strong individuals. He has devised myriad programs that cause one to fall into the natural space called meditation. He says 'Meditation is the master key that can bring success in the material world and deep fulfilment in your space within.'

After having done many of the deeper meditations, people asked Swami Nithyananda for one which could be done everyday. He envisioned a meditation technique which was holistic and complete by itself. One day, this meditation, Life Bliss Meditation (*Nithya Dhyaan*) was revealed to him in a flash. In an instant he could clearly see the different components of this technique, how each one relates to the other. He could visualise in his inner space how this would help raise the individual consciousness in its entirety.

Acharya Sajeevananda, a disciple of Swami Nithyananda, will talk about the necessity of meditation. Thereafter he will take us through this meditation technique. Meditating once a day will make you start experiencing a new dimension to your being and prepare your body and mind to experience the state of pure consciousness and bliss.

The duration of this meeting will be for one and half hours. Please have an early breakfast Refreshments will be served after the meeting. Please bring a yoga mat or a floor cushion along with you.

We thank Meyyammai Murugappan and Valli Murugappan for sponsoring the meeting.

ARCHANA MEIYAPPAN

LENA HEYMAN

HEALTH & ECOLOGY

Thursday, November 13th at 10.15 a.m.

At: **Meyyammai Murugappan's**
'The Laurels'
9 (old 4) Chittaranjan Road
Teynampet, Chennai 600 018



"Waste-d Efforts"

Technology has undoubtedly provided copious advantages but, simultaneously, has also generated large quantities of waste which is discarded in the name of garbage. Not only industrial waste but even domestic waste is today just disposed haphazardly and not handled with proper care.

Solid waste management has emerged as one of the biggest challenges today in urban India. The current situation which gives rise to indiscriminate dumping and burning of wastes has a serious impact on air, land and water pollution and causes a dramatic increase in health hazards in the urban environment.

Such concerns as well as the concerns caused by new technological inventions will be discussed by our speaker **Dr Sultan Ahmed Ismail**, Ph.D., D.Sc. He is an ecologist working on environment related issues since 1978 and is a pioneer in earthworm research in India. He heads the department of Biotechnology at New College, Chennai, and is the Managing Director of the Ecoscience Research Foundation, Chennai. He is the author of the "The Earthworm Book".

We thank **Meyyammai Murugappan** for hosting this meeting

ZAINAB KACHWALLA

HELEN DE CLERCQ

OUR CONDOLENCES TO

Nalini Acharya on the passing away of her mother.

COOKING SWAPSHOP

Tuesday, 18th November at 10 15 a. m.

At: **Strokeside,**
Madras Boat Club,
Boat Club Road, Chennai.



NOODLE MANIA

Whether you gulp them down, or slurp them or twirl them on your fork, everyone loves noodles. Noodles are eaten hot or cold, steamed, stir fried, boiled or served in a soup. For the nutritionally inclined, noodles are an excellent source of protein.

Chef Shivajee Chandra will demonstrate different dishes using noodles. He has studied in Singapore and worked in a number of hotels and restaurants there. Chef Chandra has also traveled to places like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and Australia, learning the local cuisines. Using his expertise on Asian food, he started his own catering service, **Call a Chef** in Chennai which caters to individuals who appreciate Asian food. He has done consultancy work for Taj Connemera (Hip Asia), the Hilton, Chennai and the Savera Hotel on Asian food. He has done a number of food festivals at the Taj, the Savera, the GRT Heritage and a number of other restaurants.

We would like to thank **Asha Ram Mohan** and **Rashmi Mohindra** for sponsoring this meeting.

ACHU KURIAN

BALVEER SINGH

We would like to thank **Darley Mathew, Rajni Sabherwal, Usha Saravanan** and **Shanti Verghese** for co-sponsoring the September meeting.

ONAM CELEBRATION

We would like to thank **Aruna Vijaykumar** for hosting and sponsoring the Onam Celebrations at her lovely home. We thank **Gayatri Bewoor, Usha Chandrakumar, Latha Barathan, Beena Ram Mohan, Jaya Menon, Rathi Nilakantan** and **Prabha Nair** for co-sponsoring the event.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Thursday, November 20th, at 11.30 a. m.

At: YWCA
1086, Poonamallee High Road
EVR Periyar Salai, Chennai - 600 084

Jash Ne Eid

Ramzan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar year, the month when the Holy Kuran was revealed to the prophet by Allah in 615 A.D. as guidance and as a declaration.

With the end of the customary fasting during Ramzan, Eid- ul- Fitr is celebrated. Eid ul Fitr, often abbreviated to Eid, is an Arabic word meaning 'Festivity'. Fitr means to 'break the fast' and so symbolises the breaking of the fasting period. As the day depends on the sighting of the moon or scientific calculations, the exact date varies from country to country. The common greeting for this occasion is the Arabic greeting 'Eid Mubarak' (Blessed Eid).

Join us in celebrating and devoting this day to the spirit of Love Sharing, Peace and Sisterhood.

We thank Saleema Amza, Zubeida Asgarali, Nabila Avais, Fakhira Ayer, Bilquis Chida, Rehane Yavar Dhala, Mahmooda Haja Shareef, Sufia Hussain, Zainab Kachwalla, Thayabae Kakar, Sadiya Khaleel, Bela Mistry Khaleeli, Mahin Rabi Khaleeli, Malek Begum Lalji, Badrunissa Mahadevan, Farida Majid, Bilkis Moosa, Fazeela Nurdeen, Seema Sait, Sabine Erlich Salam, Raziye Sheerazie, Naaz Tyebbhoy and Rahila Karim for hosting the meeting.

ARCHANA MEIYAPPAN

LENA HEYMAN

We thank Bilqis Chida, Amala Emmanuel and Rupa Kadhiresan for sponsoring the September meeting.



CURRENT EVENTS

Friday, 21st November at 4.00 p.m.

At: Presidency Club
Pearl Room
Ethiraj Salai,
Chennai - 600 008

Consumers' Rights and Their Redressal

Aggrieved consumers do not know where to complain and how to get their grievances redressed. To help citizens, the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was passed. It is a social welfare legislation. The main objectives of the act are to provide for the better protection of the interests of the consumer, to make provisions for establishment of consumer councils for settlement of consumer disputes and to provide speedy and effective redressal for consumer disputes.

Our speaker, N. L. Raja, will address the issue of consumer rights and responsibilities. He will tell us how to seek remedial action and the effectiveness of the action under the Consumers' Protection Act. N. L. Raja is a practicing lawyer in the Madras High Court. He is a Trustee of the Consumer Citizen and Civic Action Group.

Please note the that this is an evening meeting.

ANURADHA M. UBEROI

TINEKE SYSMANS

WELCOME ABOARD

Noelene Goonan
KG Kensington
1A, 3/8 New Beach Road
Thiruvanmiyur
Chennai 600 041

Liz Neisloss
5/119C Seshadri Avenue
Injambakkam
Chennai 600 041



MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS

Tuesday, 25th November 10.15 a.m.

At: Seetha Muthiah's
'Coromandel House'

14 Boatclub Road, Chennai - 600028.



Confluence of Ragas

The two main traditions of Indian classical music, Carnatic music found in the south and Hindustani music, found in the northern and central parts, claim Vedic origin. The historical roots of both have the same stem- Bharata's *Natyashastra* and started to diverge only around the 14th century AD. Carnatic classical or *kriti* is mainly lyric oriented, while Hindustani music emphasizes on the musical structure. Both have absorbed folk tunes and regional characteristics, elevating many of these tunes to the status of ragas. These two systems of music have always mutually influenced each other.

Sowmya Kumar Arjun hails from a family that has always encouraged the performing arts. A child prodigy who could identify ragas from a very tender age of three, she is a graded artiste with the All India Radio and has won several awards and prizes. She regularly gives performances in all major sabhas in Madras. Sowmya is also a bharathanatyam dancer having trained under the Dhananjayans. On the academic front she has an MBA in International Marketing from Thunderbird, USA.

Meghna Dandekar learnt Hindustani Music for 20 years under Pandit Yashwanth Rao Marathe, and later under Lalith Rao. Born and brought up in Pune, she currently resides in Chennai. She is a graduate of commercial art, and is a b-high graded artiste in All India Radio. She gives concerts regularly in Chennai

The program will cover many of these ragas where Smt. Sowmya will sing a couple of lines from the Carnatic style and Meghna Dandekar will sing the Hindustani version. They will be accompanied by mridangam and tabla.

We thank Seetha Muthiah for hosting the meeting.

RAMANI REDDY

ANGELIKA SCHWERING

BOOK DISCUSSION

Thursday, November 27th at 10.15 am.

At: Madras Club

Mowbrays Hall

Adyar Cub Gate Rd. Chennai 600028



A Thousand Splendid Sons by Khaled Hosseini

A Thousand Splendid Sons is a superb second novel by Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini who shows himself once again to be a natural storyteller in this tale of war torn Afghanistan. It is a story of two quite ordinary women who struggle to survive in a battle zone amid starvation, human deprivation and world apathy. Spanning 30 years of Afghan history, it is a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith and the salvation of love.

Geetha Doctor will be reviewing this book for us. She is a well known journalist and writer who describes herself as a life style journalist and whose commentaries on life, literature and society have always sought to be provocative and controversial. She is a regular reviewer of books on literature and art in the Indian Review of Book, Art India and the Lalit Kala Akademi's journal for the arts. She has interviewed many leading writers, artists and dramatists for these publications. She now writes for The Indian Express, Mint, a Hindustan Times publication and contributes to India Today.

We wish to thank Eira Doshi, Radha Gopalakrishnan, Gayatri Krishnaswamy, Rita Lal, Chandra Lulla, Lily Madhok, Asha Mohan, Sushil Natraj and Shobhana Reddy for sponsoring this event.

NALINIACHARYA

BHARATINAIR GOPINATH

We wish to thank Sulo Alexander, Rani Chada, Radha Gopalakrishnan, Princess Naik Rekha Rangaraj and Vidya Singh for participating on the panel for the book discussion meeting which was held on September 18th.

IWA TRIP TO GUJARAT

From February 11th to February 21st

Gujarat is a state rich in crafts, history and natural beauty. It is renowned for its beaches, holy temples, architectural marvels and wildlife sanctuaries. It is amongst the most colourful and culturally rich states of India. IWA will tour this exotic state and see some of its amazing sights.

Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat, is our first stop. Akshardham with its beautiful Swaminarayan temple, the Calico Museum and Gandhi's ashram are some of the highlights of the city tour. We then proceed to Bhuj and the unique tribal villages of the Kutch region. We go on to Bhavnagar and Palitana, which, with its 1300 exquisitely carved temples is considered the most sacred Jain pilgrimage place. A thrilling jeep safari in the Sasangir National Park awaits us. The ancient Indus Valley site at Lothal is next on our itinerary. We go on to Gondal and Somnath, where we find the most sacred of the twelve Jyotirlingas (lingas of light.), symbols of Lord Shiva. Our next stop, Patan is rich in architectural marvels, like the Rani ki wav step well. It is also famous for its Patola saris. Our final stop is Mount Abu where the exquisitely carved white marble Dilwara temples stun your senses with their beauty.

The approximate cost for the tour is between 35,000/- to 37,000/-.

This will include:

Air fare

Accommodation on twin sharing basis

All meals, (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Transport by A/C Deluxe coach

Guide Service

One escort from the Agent

Entrance fees for Indians

One bottle of water everyday

Train ticket by A/C 2 tier

The difference in cost for the Non-Indians' entrance tickets is Rs. 1000/- per person. We will be taking a group of 25 only. Do warn in by November 30th with Leena Suryaprakash at 98409 37366 or Cherry Venkatesan at 98410 23740.

LEENA SURYAPRAKASH

CHERRY VENKATESAN

DEEPAM



On Saturday' October 11th the Ramaswamy Hall wore a festive look. There were stalls galore selling everything from designer sarees, jewellery, to spices, green tea and ice cream. The whole scene was like a *mela* complete with *killi josyam*, *mehendiwali*, and the lac bangle maker.

There were games-Housie-Housie and the ever popular Khazana which set the pace for a fun filled morning. As for entertainment, the rarely seen *Pinnal Kolattam* had the audience spell bound. The lovely young dancers in their colourful *pavadais* wove intricate plaits and very deftly opened them. Their dance was pure joy. Dr.Sudha Seshayyan's talk on the different ways Diwali is celebrated in India was very informative.

The lunch surpassed everything else.

We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to Visalakshi Ramaswamy for giving us the use of the lovely kalyana mantap hall.

Genial and poised, Prithika Chary as Master of Ceremonies took the audience on a pleasant journey and ensured they had a good time.

Thank you Prithika.

Padmini Subramaniam's mellifluous voice and soulful singing of the invocatory song, raised the curtains to the entertainment that followed. Thank you Padmini.

Many thanks to Aruna Vijayakumar, Radha Gopalakrishnan and Tineke Sysmans for handling the Khazana so efficiently.

We are greatly indebted to all those who sponsored the door prizes and the khazana gifts.

Last but not the least, to all our committee members without whose help and co-operation the function would have not been such a grand success, a very big THANK YOU.

RANIANANTH

LYNNE CONNOR

DEEPAM



The Stalls



Pinnal Kolattam



Dr. Sudha Seshayyan's talk on Diwali

AN IBERIAN EXPERIENCE.....

Eight hundred years of Islamic dominance followed by years of the Christian *Reconquista* left a colourful mosaic of a country and culture... a mosaic we twenty IWA members and eleven friends were continually amazed with as our journey began and Portugal and Spain rolled out in front of us.

A *Fado* dinner welcomed us in Lisbon. A melancholic song of love, life, fate and despair, *Fado* is sung from the heart ... a perfect introduction to the passionate country we were about to traverse. Set in a typical Portuguese restaurant in the old cobble stone quarter of Lisbon, we knew from the word go that the vegetarians were in for trouble. "Senora, are you vegetarian or are you normal?" asked the waiter in exasperation!!!

Lisbon, a beautiful city nestled on hills overlooking the River Tejo had many magnificent sights to offer like the *Jerimico* monastery where Vasco Da Gama was laid to rest, the *Belem Tower* and the *Monument of the Discoveries*. It was plain that these countries were hugely proud of their Maritime Sailors who discovered the New World.

A short drive out of Lisbon is the beautiful hill station of *Sintra* and *Cabo da Roca*, where we had the exhilarating feeling of standing on the western most point of the European continent. Continuing the drive along the picturesque coast of cliffs, blue skies and aqua seas, we stopped in *Cascais*, a fishing town and then in *Estoril*, a small town magnified with its famed *Casino - a la James Bond!!!*

Driving across the sun soaked Andalusian plain we took in the sights of Moorish Spain - *Evora*, *Seville*, *Granada* and *Cordoba*. These charming cities, whose old quarters have stood still in time with their narrow alleys, arches, flower decked balconies, stark white houses, wrought iron grills and tiled patios were a feast for the eyes. The *Bones chapel* of *Evora* was made entirely of human bones, giving us the message - "We here are bones, and we wait for yours" - a constant reminder of our mortality!!

Seville's Plaza de Espana was magnificent, its *Grand Cathedral* showcasing Gothic, Renaissance and Mannerist styles and the *Alcazar Palace* boasting plasterwork of the most intricate designs and ceramic tile mosaics in that gorgeous combination of blue, green and mustard ...not to forget the courtyards of oranges famous for its marmalade. A *Tapas* dinner followed by an evening of *Flamenco* with its intensely passionate movements, swirling colourful skirts, tapping of heels and castanets and the guitar was an altogether soulful experience. *Cordoba's Mesquita* or Mosque Cathedral was outstanding with its brilliant red and white arches. The *Alhambra Palace* in *Granada* with its complex history was magnificent in its magical use of space, light and water, creating almost a heavenly abode. Its history is so complex that our guide begged us not to make 'Historical Salad' out of it!!

A six hour drive to *Madrid* just flew by with *antakshari* led by Naina, Sureka's solo numbers, the food, the gossip, the chatter and laughter, the camaraderie - I thought of Nirmal and how proud she would have been to see the spirit of her IWA remain in full bloom. In *Madrid* we had a chance to soak in the masterpieces of the greats at the *Prado Museum* - the *Rubens*, the *Goyas*, the *Van dycks* and the *El Grecos*. The *Royal Palace* was awesome in all its grandeur. A visit to *Toledo* took us to a city museum of medieval architecture. Of course, through it all we were wine and dined to the hilt, and we chilled out on pitchers of *Sangria* - that delightful concoction of red wine and pomegranate juice - not to forget the mad shopping whenever we could snatch the time.

The high speed *Ave* train got us to *Barcelona*. Birthplace of modernism, it is a city of style and chic all the way. Be it in the avant garde works of *Antoni Gaudi*, the *Picasso* museum, the fashion street, *Passeig Garcia* or rambling in the *Rambblas* and its markets, *Barcelona* has it all - much too much to be absorbed in a day !! And then to end it all, the benediction of *La Morenata*, the Virgin mother of *Monserrat* - a scenic drive through olive groves and a short funicular ride up the mountains got us to her beautiful *Basilica* abode where, made of black stone, she wears Her gracious compassionate smile. Touching her feet we felt blessed. A perfect

photo op outside the Cathedral and we were back in Barcelona to join in the revelry of the Fiesta of Our Lady of Mercy – a bonus indeed! As we sat among the crowds and watched the colourful floats and historical pageants, children singing and dancing, the skies burst with a million coloured stars as the grand firework display began. We were in the heart of it all, feeling the pulse of a people born to celebrate life to its fullest – a grand finale indeed, we could not have asked for more.

Back at home, my mind recalls ten marvelous days of fun and fellowship, of sharing and caring, of learning and adventure. Kudos to **Leena** and **Cherry** and **Pramila** for having organized to perfection a fantastic experience for us all. **THANK YOU** – we are grateful.

ALAGUMUTHU

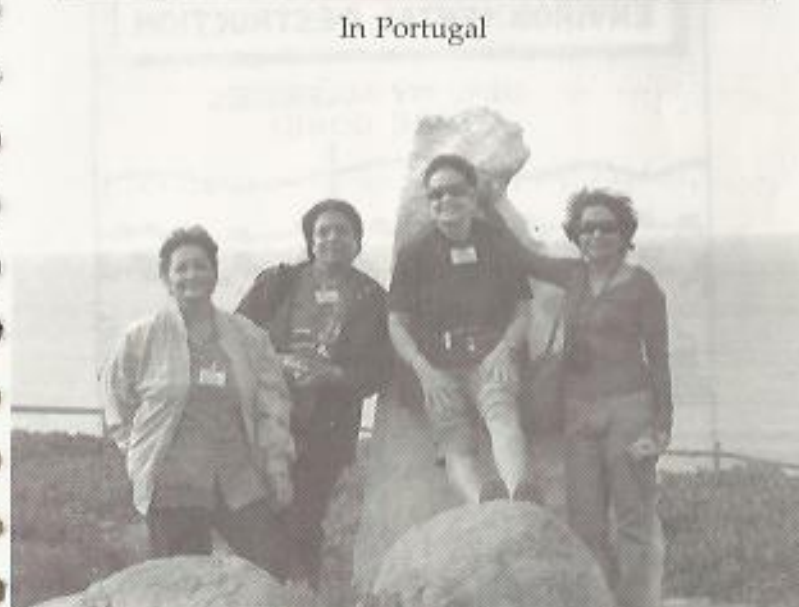
AN IBERIAN EXPERIENCE



The members on the Spain and Portugal trip



In Portugal



Spain - at the western most point in Europe

The Weatherman?

A husband and his wife were sound asleep when suddenly the phone rang. The husband picked up the phone and said, "Hello? How the heck do I know? What do I look like, a weatherman?" He then slammed the phone down and settled into bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife.

"I don't know. It was some guy who wanted to know if the coast was clear."

