

The Lighthouse

Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Madras - India



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District: 3230 | Inaugurated: 10-05-1929 | Chartered: 19-07-1929 | Charter No.: 3186 | Club No.: 15860

No.: 36/2010-11 (4 Pages) ₹1/- MARCH 8 2011

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From the President's Desk



The Power of One

For many years, visiting the Rotary Club of Madras East has been a delight for me. The Paul Harris Cricket Carnival hosted by this vibrant Club stands out as the most effective way of promoting fellowship amongst Rotarians in Dt.3230. The camaraderie and fellowship that is prevalent in this Club is to be emulated.

During my recent visit to Rotary Club of Madras East, their Member, Rtn. Dr. Srinivasan spoke on "The Power of One". A short and very inspiring presentation on what one individual or organization may achieve. History is replete with dreamers who achieved the seemingly impossible; Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller, John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela are names that inspire.

On a much smaller canvas, I am reminded of a similar power that carried our back-to-back fund raisers over the last fortnight. The Shillong Chamber Choir and now, Nippon Paint Chennai Corporate Golf Challenge, for the Jhaver Cup, are events that brought together Members of the Rotary Club of Madras for a common cause. The highly acclaimed Shillong Chamber Choir had Chennai audiences enthralled on 26th and 27th February 2011. The Golf Tournament is teeing off on Saturday, 12th March 2011, with India's ace golfer, Mr. Jyoti Randhawa participating & conducting a Golf Clinic.

Our own Members have been more than supportive in ensuring the success of our fund - raising events. I wish to thank all the sponsors from within our Club and all those who made it possible for hosting two mammoth events. The list of sponsors and Members who volunteered their time is rather long. This, in my view, is the power of one. It is time we harness this power and amazing talent to further the various causes we hold dear in our Club. It is also time that more and more Members align themselves to the common cause.

With two major events behind us, we are getting geared to present the "Art Chennai 2011", a project passionately devised by Rtn. Sanjay Tulsyan, partnering Rotary Club of Madras. From March 20 to 26, Chennai will be abuzz with artists from different parts of India. Rtn. Sanjay is presenting a week packed with events revolving around art that Chennai may have never seen before. Our best wishes to "Art Chennai 2011" and to Rtn. Sanjay, who has graciously consented to donate a part of the proceeds to our projects/programmes.

Let us embrace The Power of One.
Cheers and have a great week ahead!

Giving back to Mother Nature... Water

Standing on the ramparts of the Red Fort to make his Republic Day speech, our former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said conscientious citizens were the treasures of any country, and referred specifically to Vanitha Mohan and her work with Siruthuli, saying our country would prosper if it had more people like her.

The speaker of the day Ms. Vanitha Mohan, managing trustee of Siruthuli, spoke about the work done by her organization in and around Coimbatore and Chennai.

She referred the old adage that 'we do to water what we do to those we love', but questioned the truth of that statement today, considering the way we treat water, the elixir of life, and our water bodies.

She then spoke about how Coimbatore district, from being a water rich area in the 70's, was declared as drought prone district in the 80's, with UNDP studies warning that it now held the dubious record of having the fastest depleting ground water level in the world. Despite that, neither the government nor the citizens were ready to listen or take action.

On one hand, with the city expanding - agriculture, industry and the population was growing- the demand for water increased dramatically. On the other hand, there was a decrease in rainwater because of deforestation. The monsoon failed in 2002-03 and the Corporation finally woke up to the critical nature of the situation. Even then, all that happened was an



announcement that there was water available only for a month, and this at a time when water was being supplied to the people only once in 10 or 15 days! The situation was so desperate people wondered if the city had to be abandoned.

Since the response from the corporation was not encouraging, few concerned citizens got together determined to turn the situation round. Thus 'Siruthuli' was born.

Siruthuli means 'A small drop' in Tamizh, referring to the saying "small drops make a mighty ocean", and this was the driving force behind the entire project. Siruthuli is an NGO that works towards recharging water bodies. It was founded by Corporates of Coimbatore, assisted by government and supported by the eco-conscious citizens.

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A matter of minutes

• ROTARACT NEWS •

Thank You

I wish to share my experience with our parent club and club members. I must say I was very fortunate to have got the opportunity to participate in ROTASIA 10-11 at GOA. The journey gave me new wonderful friends. The sessions at the conference were really interesting and kept me stuck to the seat. I happened to meet Rotaractors from various other districts and I was able to learn how differently every district functions.

Even though it was my first time to ROTASIA, I feel it has given me the learning and an awesome experience. I whole heartedly thank our Parent Club - Rotary Club of Madras for being so supportive and kind in sponsoring my trip. I OWE ROTARACT a lot.

~ Rtr. Sharanya, Rotaract Club of Chennai

Continued from page 1

The speaker talked about the 4 Pillars of Siruthuli, namely Water resources management, Afforestation, Waste management and Awareness Programs that went towards making Coimbatore a clean & green city. Vanitha Mohan discussed in detail the initiatives taken in each of these areas, and spoke about the benefits. She also showed slides of how river and tank beds, choked with weeds became life sustaining waterways after Siruthuli worked to desilt and build them up. Where once borewells that were 1 kilometer deep blew out only air, there was now water available at a few hundred meters.

Vanitha also emphasized the need for rain water harvesting to fulfil growing demand of water, and showed slides of Siruthuli's afforestation drive 'Pasumai Payanam' in which 1.5 million saplings, one for each resident of the city, were planted in Coimbatore.

Other endeavours like Solid Waste Management (daily basis to eliminate the problem of flies/bad odour and to hasten decomposition of garbage) and their Awareness Programmes were touched upon.

Vanitha Mohan gave full credit to the eco-conscious citizens of Coimbatore for what they have achieved till now but said that they still had a very long way to go. She praised the efforts of the Rotary Club of Madras in cleaning and restoring temple tanks in Chennai city, and hoped that the Rotary Club of Madras would be an active partner in Siruthuli's water conservation projects in and around Chennai.

She emphasized that as conscious citizen of any city we needed to protect our natural resources, and that we had to take responsibility for the future generations, to ensure we left behind a world with clean air and potable water.

~ Rtn. Mahitha Suresh

Sgt-at-Arms Rtn. V. V. Mohindra collared President S. Gunashekar who called the meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order, followed by a silent invocation.

The minutes of the 1st March'11 meeting was duly confirmed.

President welcomed the Guest Speaker Mrs. Vanitha Mohan, Executive Director of 'Siruthuli'.

Rtn. Mohan Kumar Subramanyam welcomed the visiting Rotarians. President welcomed guests introduced by Rotarians.

President handed over mementos to the Bridging Presidents Rtn. Kamala, RC of

Director, Vocational Service reminded members of the visit to the Ford factory on 19th March'11. He requested members to send in their e-mail or telephone responses either to him or Rtn. Sankaranarayanan or Club Secretariat. He also clarified that Ford has clearly mentioned that no one below the age 18 is allowed.

President greeted the Women who had come on this International Women's day.

He informed that RCM has contributed \$1000 for the Paul and Jean Harris Foundation and thanked PP. N.K. Gopinath for coordinating this donation



Porur, Rtn. Santhanakrishnan, RC of Kancheepuram Temple City who had come on invitation.

President extended birthday and anniversary wishes to the celebrating Rotarians and Anns. He thanked the donors for their sunshine and the cake was cut amidst applause.

Rtn. M. Srinivasan acknowledged the support so far extended by members for the Golf tournament. President added that we have received tremendous support by sponsorship and requested members to participate in large numbers. Ace Golfer Jyoti Randhawa is participating in this tournament and will be conducting a Golf Clinic for beginners.

Rtn. Bharat B. Mohindra, Director, International Service informed that the trip to Sri Lanka is scheduled between 18th and 21st March.

Rtn. Vivek Harinarain IAS retd



towards the renovation of Paul Harris house. He thanked Rtn. Kharche for his donation of Rs.10,001, Rtn. Pratap Kumar for the donation of Rs.3,500 from Calimidi Namberumal Chetty Charities and Rtn. G. Ravindran for contributing 150 kilos of Sujee Atta for 12 months to the BTS.

Secretary Dr. Arulmozhi Varman announced that the next meeting will be at the same venue next week.


Rtn. Mahitha Suresh introduced the Guest Speaker Mrs. Vanitha Mohan.

President displayed a flag sent by Rtn. Zakiah Ali (who had visited our club recently) and read a letter sent by her with much gratitude.

President presented a copy of 'A Timeless Legacy' & a memento to the Guest speaker.

Rtn. Dr. B. Ramachandran proposed the vote of thanks.

The meeting was then declared closed.



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Club activities roundup

Semester At Sea Program

Ever since 1993, this Rotary Dist program has proved to be very meaningful to more than 600 students mostly from the U.S. One accredited semester is being conducted on board M V Explorer during a four month voyage across the continents. It also facilitates two annettes from our Dist each year who spend a few days on board with the students and the selected faculty. Rtn Ahluwalia's son and Rtn Rajan's daughter are amongst the many beneficiaries in the past. This year, RCM appears to have missed out this opportunity, in spite of having an array of admirable annettes.



English. Our young visitors were thrilled to 'bits' to interact with our kids and the two dedicated volunteer teachers. Everyone who visits our center will witness our kids, not just studying but learning.

I wish I had some more time to take our young visitors to our Boys Town to observe 'the Making of a Man' and also to The Inner Wheelers' Barbara Kelly Home... a true show piece of committed care and concern for thirty disadvantaged girls. When I went on

board M V Explorer to leave my guests, I was very impressed by the ambience the management had designed and developed for the youngsters. The opportunity for freedom of expression and the freedom of choice was 'written' all over the place. I was also privileged to meet other students of various nationalities. Very often, I used to look at 2020 and 2030 with a worried look with a dose of pessimism and despair. As these kids and myself discussed and deliberated over a wide spectrum of issues influencing humanity, I now have a reasonable vision of 2015 and beyond. Mostly comfortable.

~ Rtn. PP. Christopher Devapragasam

When the ship docks at Chennai, 30 students out of 600 are selected by the Program coordinators to spend three days in the homes of hosting Rotarians. I had the privilege of having with me Meghan Hines and Claire Fitch, two outstanding and well focused youngsters studying Music and Psychology at Institutes of high repute. Apart from taking them for shopping and to places of cultural and historical places, I was able to 'squeeze in' a visit to some of our projects. Yesterday, we went to Rotary Nagar to meet the thirty 'senior' children undergoing special coaching in Math and

Snippets from the past

◆ RTN. RITA CHAUDHURI

Who is my brother?

In developed countries, welfare schemes for the underprivileged and disadvantaged are the responsibility of the government. In a developing country such as India, they are the responsibility of citizens with a conscience. Mahatma Gandhi said: "Find the purpose, the means will follow". Many of our Club's present mega projects were started on little more than a vision. Each project is a story in itself of how commitment to a cause can change lives for the better.

ICON of Rotaract – Rtn. IPP. George B.Cherian



The District Rotaract Council, Rotary International District 3230 presented the ICON of Rotaract award to Rtn. IPP. George B. Cherian on 27th February, 2011 at the Annual District Rotaract Conference Utsav '11. Congratulations to IPP George and best wishes for many more laurels in the years ahead.

▶ INNER WHEEL NEWS ◀



Bhaktavatsalam and senior member Sarla Bhargava. As part of the usual donations, a VolleyBall and a Net were given to the Ellen Sharma School, which was a personal donation given by the Club President, Sanyuktha Gill, through the club.

This was followed by a 'Debate' that was held for entertaining the guests on the Charter Day. The subject for the Debate was 'Which is easier to bring

The Charter Day Celebrations...

The 45th 'Charter Day Celebrations' of the Inner Wheel Club of Madras, was held on March 3rd at the residence of member, Ann. Seema Bhargava. Though not all, the Past Presidents of the Club who came that day, were honoured and given gifts in appreciation of all the services rendered by them to the Club, in the past. The Charter Cake was cut by the Past President, Mano

up - your Children or your Grandchildren? Some of the Club members took an active part in this hot debate and spoke on both sides, giving their own personal experiences.

The function ended with a delicious lunch served by the hostess, Sarla Bhargava, that was enjoyed by all!

~ Ann Nirmala Santhanam

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Know your Rotarian



Rtn. R. Rajenderan

- a. was born in : Madras
 b. Schooling : Padma Seshadri, Chennai
 c. College : Guindy Engineering and an MBA from Oklahoma University.
 d. Passion : for the good life by excelling in life roles!!
 e. Profession : a Professional, having worked in different Organisations in different segments, across geographies and verticals. Presently with the Lanson Group as its CEO and also responsible for its Strategy and Change Management.

Q WHAT WAS THE FUNNIEST PRANK YOU HAD PLAYED IN SCHOOL?

A [Thinking hard!!].. come to think of, don't remember playing any kinda prank in school, but I wish I had. Quite a serious kid in a serious school!

Q NAME 1 THING YOU MISS ABOUT BEING A KID.

A Ah!! the good ole days... The carefree school life without any worries [except for ensuring my grades..]; anyways I am still a kid at heart, as someday I'll be 18 going on 55!

Q ANYTHING THAT YOUR CHILDREN (AMOG & EKISHA) DO NOW, REMINDS YOU OF YOUR CHILDHOOD?

A I wish... kids being so tech savvy, we are at their mercy to help us through our attempts to manage routine gadgets.. happy that both my children are interested in reading and proud they are 'regarded' as soft spoken, respectful and focused kids.

Q HOW IS PRIYA INVOLVED IN THE BUSINESS?

A Priya manages a retail store (which is associated with our Group) on her own, and it is me who gets involved by supporting her as and when required.

Q GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO CHANGE?

A As hindsight is 20/20, there are a lot of things in our lives that we would like to change. But then again, the question is what would be the eventual outcomes of these decisions. Going back to the future is as complicated. I would live the same way, and absolutely enjoy life to the fullest with my family and friends.

Club Corner

PDG. J.B. Kamdar to Serve on the RI Finance Committee

As announced by PDG.Krishnaswami at the meeting held on 1st March 2011, reproduced below is a small paragraph of the invitation letter to PDG.JB from RIPE Kalyan Banerjee-

"As the President Elect of R.I, it is my privilege to invite you to serve as a Member of the Finance Committee commencing on 1st July 2011 and ending on 30th June 2014. This committee, mandated by the RI Bylaws, shall advise the Board on all finances of RI. It will recommend the annual budget and five year financial forecast, review financial statement activity, monitor revenues and expenses, recommend investment policies and monitor the performance of investment managers. The committee shall consider the RI Strategic Plan in its financial advisory role. You have been selected for this appointment because of your experience and knowledge of Rotary and its programs."

In addition, PRIP. Bill Boyd (Chairman of the Trustees of the Rotary Foundation) has also appointed PDG JB as a Member of the National Committee for Permanent Giving to The Rotary Foundation for the year 2011-2012.

As we all know, JB has been quite active in Rotary at the International level having successfully conducted the Rotary Institute at Bangkok which is considered to be one of the best in last 30 years and he has also come out with flying colours at the District Conference of RID 3140 (ie) Mumbai District where he went as RI President's representative. Following his appeal 4 Rotarians contributed 40,000 US\$ to the Rotary Foundation.

Congratulations to JB for bringing laurels to our Club - truly a matter of pride to our Club and District.



Birthday

Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari - 16th March
 Rtn. G.S.K. Masud - 17th March
 Rtn. T.V. Sai Srujan - 19th March
 Rtn. N. Raghunath - 20th March
 Rtn. Dr. P. Suresh Rao - 20th March
 Rtn. Dr. N. Mahalingam - 21st March
 Rtn. R. Vasudevan - 21st March

Wedding Anniversary

Rtn. R.S. Mani - Ann. Geetha - 18th March
 Rtn. Nataraj Ramaiah - Ann. Sashi - 20th March

Sunshine

Rtn. Dr.K. Rajan - Rs.1001
 Rtn. Giridhar Hemdev - Rs.12,000 (BTS)

ROTARY QUOTE

"What has been accomplished by others is now Rotary history. It is our time to add to our glorious history. What is said of us in the future will be determined by you and me."
 — Address to 1972 Rotary Convention, Houston, Texas, USA

Forth-coming events



Weekly meeting 1:00 pm Tue Mar 15, 2011 at the Taj Connemara - Joint meeting with the Rotary Club of Madras East. Ms. Sharmishta Ray, will address the meeting on "Appreciating Modern & Contemporary Art"

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY:

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With best compliments, printed at:

NPT Offset Press Pvt. Ltd., New No.111, Avvai Shanmugam Salai, Chennai 600 014. Design: www.studiodescience.com

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