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She's the outstanding Young Woman Achiever. Ms Ekta Kapoor, the 'Queen of television', receives the Rotary Club of Bombay's first Uma Jain Award for Young Women Achievers at the last meeting. With President Paul George in this photograph are Naresh Kumar Jain, whose family instituted the award, his son Mohit and daughter-in-law Radhika

## Ekta Kapoor receives the Club's first Uma Jain Award for Young Woman Achievers

Ms Ekta Kapoor, the uncrowned "Queen of the television industry", received the Club's first Uma Jain Award for Young Woman Achievers at the last meeting. The Award has been instituted by Naresh Kumar Jain in memory of his spouse, the late Uma.

The award, consisting of a glittering silver salver and a Citation, was presented by President Paul George along with Naresh, his son Mohit and daughter-in-law Radhika, as members applauded in appreciation.

Programme Committee Chair Dolly Thakore, who introduced Ms Kapoor, said that she had entered "the big, wide world of entertainment at the age of 19 and in just a few years the Indian television industry had discovered what 'prime time' really meant".

Families re-organised and re-adjusted their dinner timings to ensure that *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* or *Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki* could be viewed without interruption. And the police reported an appreciable drop in traffic around 9 pm on weekdays.

Ms Kapoor was "no south sea bubble that can burst easily" and had

gone on to be hailed as the Tsarina of the television industry. Her soap, *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, created history with 1,500 episodes being telecast. People just could not get enough of the "masala magic" that it offered.

Dolly recalled that she had acted in *Kya Hoga Nimmo Ka*, one of the serials made by Ms Kapoor in 2006-07. "But it only ran for nine months and ended before I could get myself a BMW!"

Ms Kapoor, who was the daughter of the well-known Hindi film actor Jeetendra and sister of Tusshar Kapoor, also a Bollywood actor, possessed the Midas touch.

The media, when not talking about her successful serials, wrote about her love for astrology, her interest in numerology and propensity for the letter 'K'. It was said that her favourite number was 3, which seemed odd for a young woman who was really No. 1, Dolly added.

Hon. Secretary Jagdish Malkani then read out the Citation that was presented to Ms Kapoor along with a glittering silver salver:

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## Men are just 'eye-candy'; women are the real heroes in television serials, says TV Queen Ekta Kapoor

Television serials today are for women, by women and about women. Not only are women the heroes, they are also the villains in TV serials.

In movies, both the protagonists as well as the antagonists are men, with the women coming in just for the songs.

But in TV serials, "Men are just 'husband characters' who stand in the background (I just love it!) Since there are no songs on television, the men serve only as 'eye-candy'."

These are some of the "radical" views held forth by the "Queen of Television", Ms Ekta Kapoor, who had a brief question-answer session with members at the last meeting after receiving the Club's first Uma Jain Award for Young Women Achievers.

She expressed the above views in response to an innocuous question

### 'Bhavishya-Yaan' to take off once again

The fifth centre of the *Bhavishya-Yaan* project is all set to open the doors of the world of tomorrow to some of the less-privileged children attending the N.M. Joshi Municipal School at Parel.

Chairman Manoj Patodia reports that the opening is scheduled for 4 pm on Friday, September 23.

The guest of honour at the inauguration will be the Sheriff of Bombay, (Dr.) Indu Shahani.

All members of the Club have been invited to attend the inauguration of the fifth *Bhavishya-Yaan* centre along with their spouses, families and friends.

The centre will be located at the following address: N.M. Joshi Municipal School, N.M. Joshi Marg, Delisle Road, Opposite Shivaji Nagar, Har Harwala Plot, Currey Road, Bombay 400011.

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from the soft-spoken Camellia Panjabi who said it seemed that the women in her serials were "far more devious than the men".

Ms Kapoor, who was equally soft-spoken, said while replying to another query that she was not planning shows for the youth because young viewers were very small in number. "Television is for women... for women who sit at home. And I'm very happy providing entertainment to the homemaker."

When PP Arvind Jolly asked about the story behind her new film, *The Dirty Picture*, Ms Kapoor said it was a blunt look at the life of a woman of the '80s who had the courage to stand up, to revel in her sexuality and in her passion to become popular, and who, despite lacking the looks, became a "diva" of the decade.

She was the late Silk Smitha who was a popular, "tainted, item number" girl of the South Indian film industry in the 1980s, which was a time of social repression and of big, macho heroes. And yet, she and others of her ilk had managed to create a fan base for themselves through their willingness to expose - "however twisted it must have been, it must have been a form of feminism or 'equal-ism' that they came up with."

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### Forthcoming meetings

September 20, 2011

"Reflections on empowerment," a talk by Prof. Dame Joan Stringer, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University.

September 27, 2011

A talk by Mr. Azim Premji, Chairman of Wipro, on "The role of business in society and philanthropy".

October 4, 2011

Ms Chitra Palekar on "LGBT parenting - Coming out".

# THE ONLY MANTRA FOR SUCCESS IS THAT THERE IS NO MANTRA, EKTA KAPOOR TELLS SITARAM SHAH

(Continued from Page 1)

Apart from that, the film offered an in-depth look at how men perceived women in the '80s and how some women played up to it to become popular.

Burjor Poonawala wondered why some programmes were called "soap operas". What had soap got to do with operas and vice versa? And if they had anything to do with soap, which soap were they talking about?

Ms Kapoor said when it was observed that there were many advertisements for soaps during the breaks in certain serials, they came to be called "soap operas". Besides, in the USA in those days serials used to feature a lot of singing, hence the moniker stuck.

Now, even though they were called social dramas, the old synonym had stuck. But "hopefully, it's a soap that cleans a lot of souls", she added.

When Sitaram Shah requested Ms Kapoor to reveal the main ingredients for success, her reply was revealing.

**"The only mantra for success that I know is that there is no mantra. I wish I knew whether there were any other ingredients. All I know is that it's a lot of hard work, a lot of instinct... and keeping yourself connected to your viewers.**

"I take great pride in talking to anyone and taking any suggestion that comes my way. It may be valuable, it may be trivial, but it is of importance so far as my overall thinking goes... Experience and honing your talent, understanding your viewer... For me, that's an ingredient."

When a Rotaractor wondered which medium she found more interesting and challenging, television or films, Ms Kapoor once again surprised her audience with her response.

"To me, films are like a love affair but serials are my true love. A lot of people look at television as a stepping stone to films. But I believe that

there is no medium as powerful as television. If films are called 'the silver screen', then television is the golden one. People underestimate television."

As for acting schools, she said there were many but they were frightfully expensive. It was better to work with a theatre group.

How did she herself begin? Who was her inspiration?

Ms Kapoor recalled that she was a "wasted kid" at 17. She did not know what she was going to do and hated her studies. That was when her father told her to start working. "I'm not going to support you after a couple of years, so do something," he had said.

She started working in an advertising agency but was like a flunkey, with no clue about anything. Around that time, someone approached her father to make a television show. She just joined him to help him.

"And then I took it over and made it happen – because I realised that TV was my passion. I used to watch a lot of American television at that time and used to be a couch potato. But somewhere I realised that this hobby or passion to see television was getting me to go back to work every day.

**"It's got nothing to do with whom you admire, it's about what you want to do. If you want to do something, you'll wake up every morning to do it. And if somebody as wayward or as aimless as me could find my calling, I think anyone can find their calling. There are many people we may admire, but what we need to do is to do what we want to do."**

Visiting Rotarian Shilpa Shah, who is also a film and television actress, wondered why serials went on and on and why the story was not taken to a conclusion, to an end.

Ms Kapoor said it was plain and simple commerce. Even if she wished to, she could not end a serial when she wanted to. She did not own the rights

of any of her television shows and it was the television channel that decided when to end a serial. If viewers stopped watching it, they gave the producer about a month to round up and end it.

"What you're trying to say is that a story should reach its culmination... But television is not about stories, it's about people. It's taking a look into their lives – and lives continue. So till the day you are interested in their lives, you will watch them."

A guest noted that most of her productions revolved around Indian household dynamics and covered the fabric of Indian society. Was there any moralistic message she wanted to convey through her story lines?

Ms Kapoor said she was doing this all the time but enclosing it in an envelope of entertainment. She never wanted to sound preachy because people were not interested in "lessons" – they just wanted to feel; and if they felt something, they would want to understand it better.

One of her characters had started working again when she was 70 years old. What she had wanted to convey through this was that life was not over till it was really over. Showing women working at the age of 70 and living out their dreams was very different.

Similarly, when one of her serials touched on marital rape, she had been roundly criticised, "but I have always found that when we have done something really shocking, or eye-opening, it was criticised more than the stuff that was taken in for momentum. Perhaps it was tough to gulp down".

In one of her current serials, *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain*, the main protagonist was shown as remaining unmarried till the age of 33. Many people had told her that this was blasphemy – "how can a woman be 33 and unmarried? I replied, what's the big deal? Marriage is not a social status, it's a choice; it has to be taken that way."

This week, it was Dr. Nayna Dastur who almost brought the house down with her innocent query: "You believe in numerology and astrology. But do you consult, or is it only for your own belief?"

Ms Kapoor, who didn't get it the first time, said she consulted others and also studied astrology to understand it better. But getting the drift of Nayna's question, she hurried to add that she was not offering consultations as an astrologer!

**However, President Paul George offered her the perfect opening to have the last laugh. When he noted the "dazzling array of rings" on her fingers and wondered which her favourite stone was, she floored him with a deadpan "A diamond!"**

The vote of thanks was proposed by Anuj Arenja.

## Award for Ekta Kapoor

(Continued from Page 1)

*The Rotary Club of Bombay is pleased to present Uma Jain Award for a Young Woman Achiever to Ekta Kapoor*

*For the tremendous body of creative work that she has produced in a relatively short time,*

*For transforming the production values of content in Hindi TV channels,*

*For her contribution to Indian cinema, For her foresight that has seen the introduction of great new cinematic talent in the country,*

*For her role in establishing the dominance of general and entertainment channels as a genre,*

*For boldly leading her company into the exciting vistas of new-age media,*

*For being a responsible youth icon*

Sd/  
**Paul George**  
President

*Rotary Club of Bombay, 2011-12*



*Yes, I wear many rings, but the stone I like best is a diamond. Ms Ekta Kapoor at the last meeting with Programme Chair Dolly Thakore, who introduced her, and Hon. Joint Secretary Sitaram Shah (first picture). In the centre she is snapped with the Jain family, Naresh Kumar, Radhika and Mohit. At right is Anuj Arenja, who proposed the vote of thanks*

# H.R. Rotaractors' street play at the Club on Road Safety



*Silence! An accident is about to take place! Rotaractors of H.R. College presented a street play at the last meeting under the guidance of the Committee for Road Safety, which has Deepak Kapadia as Chairman. They made optimum use of the available space and put up an impressive performance which conveyed the consequences of handing over the keys of cars and two-wheelers to young children who do not have the licence to drive. The group was led by President Junaid Khan, who said that the street play had been performed at several places in the city in order to make people aware about the need to drive safely. It was a delight to watch the Rotaractors take a 'curtain call' at the end of the play*

**D**eepak Kapadia, Chairman for Road Safety, has been working in association with the city's traffic police authorities and with collegians and other youth to spread the message of safe driving – a crying need in view of the fact that India now has the dubious distinction of recording the highest number of fatalities in the world as a result of road accidents.

Statistics have revealed that over 2.50 lakh people died in road accidents in India every year. In other words, one person in India died in a road accident every seventh minute. Sadly, a majority of those killed were youth.

As part of an intensive campaign, Deepak and his Committee had already organised rallies and street plays in order to urge people to drive safely and prevent accidents.

Deepak said that the city Police Commissioner had been so impressed with one of the street plays that he complimented them and readily gave permission to hold performances at various strategic points all over Bombay.

Accordingly, they had staged the play at the Gateway of India, near Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, on Marine Drive, at Nariman Point and other places.

One of the street plays, which sought to create awareness about the cause and occurrence of deadly road accidents, was enacted before the beginning of the main programme at the last meeting of the Club by members of the Rotaract Club of H.R. College.

The troupe was led by President Junaid Khan who, incidentally, is the son of the popular film star Aamir Khan, and consisted of many young boys and girls.

Introducing the play, Junaid revealed that the idea about organising it had come from his Club's International Service Director a few days before International Youth Day. He had immediately approved the idea and suggested that they approach the Rotary Club of Bombay and Deepak for their help and guidance in the endeavour.

## Birthday donations

President Paul George thanked Russi Taraporevala at the last meeting for his generous birthday donation of Rs. 25,000.

He also expressed his gratitude to Ashok Jatia for making a contribution of Rs. 5,100 and Dev Thukral for giving Rs. 2,001 on their respective birthdays.

## Anonymous donation

Another link in the chain of anonymous donations has come in the shape of a contribution of Rs. 22,000 for various Club projects.

President Paul George, who thanked the donor, announced at the last meeting that the contribution had come along with a request that Rs. 11,000 be used for the *Bhavishya-Yaan* project and Rs. 11,000 for Cancer Aid.

And sure enough, the assistance they offered had helped the Rotaractors to organise the street play and to obtain the permission for staging it.

About half a dozen young Rotaractors took part in the stage play that was then enacted.

A "narrator" explained that one major factor was that many young, under-aged boys and girls were out on the roads, sitting behind wheels but without a driving licence. And that led to tragic accidents and a large number of fatalities on the city's roads.

**While the "actors" staged their play, the remaining ten to twelve boys and girls stood in the background, holding aloft placards carrying the message of safe driving, use of seat belts, avoiding cell phones while driving and so on.**

Members who witnessed the play were surprised to see the confidence of the young "actors" who took part in it and conveyed their appreciation through sustained applause which continued when the Rotaractors lined up before them to take a "stage bow".

Well done, Deepak. And Junaid.

## At the last meeting

(Held on September 13, 2011)

**P**RESIDENT Paul George called the meeting to order and welcomed the guest speaker, the Visiting Rotarians, Rotaryans, guests and others.

### BIRTHDAYS

Members and spouses celebrating their birthday during the week were felicitated.

### ATTENDANCE

Members	173
Visiting Rotarians	5
Rotaryans	8
Guests	15
Total	201
Svc. box collection	Rs. 6,000

# PILLARS OF STRENGTH

By Helen Reisler

(As told to Stuart Cleland and Donna Polydoros)

On July 1, 2001, I was installed as the first woman President of the Rotary Club of New York. The Club was about to celebrate its 92nd anniversary and it made a big production of my installation. A group from the New York Police Department marched me in, singing *New York, New York*; I announced my agenda for the coming year; everybody toasted. And we thought that that would be the historic event of the year.

The morning of September 11 I was in my Brooklyn apartment getting ready for a Club meeting. My daughter called and told me to turn on the television. I watched as the second plane struck and it dawned on me that I was on an island. My family was not there: My husband was in the suburbs at our home, my children were scattered. I worried that some of the members of my Rotary Club were at the World Trade Centre – a fear that was later confirmed. I'd never felt so alone.

Then I turned on my computer. Messages from Rotarians all over the world were pouring in – from Lebanon, England, Israel, France. Club Presidents were asking, "How can we help?" I spent days at my computer trying to keep up with the messages from people in different time zones. I hardly slept. The cheques began coming in. I called our Club's Executive Director and asked him to work with the Chair of our Club's Foundation to open a special account. Then I called an emergency Club meeting.

We had 185 members at the time and were fortunate not to have lost anyone in the attacks. I remember thinking it was important to keep the members feeling safe and hopeful. I worried that those who didn't live in Manhattan might be afraid to come to the meeting. But everyone showed up. I recalled how, as a child during World War II, I'd participated in air-raid drills at my school. As the children were hiding their heads in their hands, my music teacher had asked me to run down the halls singing *Home on the Range*, just to give them some hope. After 9/11, I felt the same call to inspire the members of my Club.

At every meeting, we played patriotic songs. I invited fire-fighters and others who'd been injured to attend. I invited people who had lost loved ones: a widow and her child, a father who had lost his son and who continued to attend meetings. I made the Club a haven for those who had been affected by the attacks – not only to support them, but to motivate the members of my Club.

I often was up until 3 am coordinating the teams I'd organised. That



An illustration commemorating 9/11 by Louisa Bertram

was one of the most important things I did: make personal contact with members, organise and motivate them, give them hope. I had an Internet team to spread the word. We used the Internet to explain to donors what we were doing with their money and to show them the reality of the situation in New York.

Another committee organised members to head to ground zero to volunteer their skills. All of our members have unique skills. One is a forensic dentist who helped identify victims in the days after the attacks; one is an officer in the New York branch of the American Lung Association who tested the air quality at the disaster site; another, who owns a courier service, used his van to bring bottled water to the volunteers. We also had an 85-year-old member who helped Salvation Army volunteers serve food.

Then there was a committee to identify people who needed emergency funds. Some of the committee members weren't even Rotarians, but they later joined. I made applications to hand out to people who needed assistance. Team members travelled on foot to churches, synagogues, firehouses and police stations. Everything was personal and well organised. We went to meetings of the Better Business Bureau and various charitable organisations to find out where the need was greatest.

We found individuals with touching stories who needed our help. Some had lost their adult children and suddenly found themselves the sole caretakers of their grandchildren. Another man lost his daughter who had been helping him pay rent and maintain his home.

When Rotary Clubs in Michigan volunteered to assist children who had lost a parent in the attacks, I formed another committee to coordinate that effort. In all, the Michigan Clubs adopted eight mothers and their children. For an entire year, the Clubs sent the families money for expenses, along with letters of support.

The committee also organised a way to give back to the first responders who worked day and night at ground zero in the months after the attack. Volunteers offered fire-fighters and police officers weekend family getaways at vacation rental homes in Nantucket. We even sent a fire-fighter and his new wife to New Zealand and another couple to England; the host Clubs and Districts welcomed the New Yorkers as if they were their own. One fire-fighter told me he cried when he got the application for his vacation.

Every year, we honour the fire-fighters and the police and every year I receive a phone call from one of the men and women whom we helped. Last year, I invited John Jonas and his crew to speak at our Club. Dubbed the Miracle of Ladder Six, they are a group of fire-fighters who were inside the World Trade Centre on 9/11. The crew recounted how, as they were running down the stairs of the north tower, each carrying 100 pounds of gear, a woman they were helping collapsed from fatigue. Though the building was crumbling around them, they refused to leave her and, as a result, became trapped in the stairwell. Hours later, they were able to escape with the woman. But had they not stayed to help her, they said, the entire crew would have been killed in the collapse. When they finished telling the story, Jonas thanked his men for their bravery. Everyone in the room was clearly moved.

People often remark how terrible it must have been to be the President of the Rotary Club of New York on 9/11. I say just the opposite. I thank God I was in that position. I'm grateful to have used my skills of coordination and my ability to inspire. One of the greatest compliments I received was when one of the men in my Club said, "You know, Helen, we were talking about what you did after 9/11. We looked around and asked, 'Who, out of all these men, could have handled that?' No one."

I did it for myself and to open doors for other women. Many women have joined the Club since then, many of them young. Somehow, I've set myself up as a mentor (that's what the members of my Club call me, anyway). And I love it. I love to inspire them. I love to help them feel proud to be Rotarians.

Courtesy: **The Rotarian**, September, 2011

## She has played a key role in higher education and public service

Professor Dame Joan Stringer, the British political scientist, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University since January, 2003, will address the Club on September 20 on the subject "Reflections on empowerment".

An eminent educationist who was the Principal and Vice-Patron of Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, before she took up her current assignment, she holds a Ph.D. on the effectiveness of the industrial training policy in Britain. She has published and spoken widely on this topic. Apart from this, she holds a string of degrees and titles – DBE, BA (Hons), CertEd, PhD, CCMi, FRSA, FRSE.

Prof. Stringer began her career in education in 1980 as a Lecturer in Public Administration, having read for a joint degree in History and Politics at the University of Keele. In 1988 she became Head of the School of Public Administration and Law at the Robert Gordon University and in 1991 was promoted to Assistant Principal.

She became Principal and Vice-Patron of Queen Margaret College, in Edinburgh in 1996. Her time at the college saw much expansion and, in 1998, the college was awarded full degree-awarding powers, changing its name in 1999 to Queen Margaret University College. She left in 2003 to take over as Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University (then Napier University) – the first woman to be leader of a Scottish university.

Prof. Stringer has also held a number of appointments outside of academia, including Chair of the Northern Ireland Equality Commission Working Group, 1998-99, and Lay Member of the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland from 2002 to 2007; at present she is Chair of Education UK Scotland.

She was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2001 for Services to Higher Education. In the same year she was awarded an Hon. D.Litt. by the University of Keele for her contribution to higher education and public service.

Prof. Stringer was awarded a DBE (Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in the 2009 Birthday Honours list for services to local and national higher education.

She was made an Honorary Citizen of Shandong, China in 2007 and is a Fellow of the 48 Group Club.

## A live band, a samba number and an unusual theme

A band performance and a Samba number – these were just two of the highlights of “Pinnacle”, the sixth installation programme of the Rotaract Club of Jai Hind College which was held recently.

Several members of the Rotary Club of Bombay, along with the parents of some of the Jai Hind Rotaractors and the Directors of other Rotaract Clubs in the District, attended the programme which was held in the college premises.

It was just as IPP Saksham Mendiratta and the outgoing Board of Directors bid farewell that the band struck up and the Samba number followed. The two performances were greeted with thunderous applause by the assembled gathering.

This was followed by a video show which highlighted some of the programmes and projects undertaken by the Rotaract Club of Jai Hind College in the year gone by. It revived memories of the hard work done by the Rotaractors all through the year.

Before he made his final speech, Saksham presented awards to the best performers. The award for Best Director went to Wayne D’Cruz, who shared the award for Best Avenue with Nilofer Rehman (for Editorial). Aanchal Samtani was named the Best Coordinator. The award for Best Member (Male) was presented to Aditya Shah, whereas that for Best Member (Female) was shared by Priyanshi Somaiya and Aneri Mehta.

Once this part of the programme ended, Kunal Kumta was installed as President of the Rotaract Club of Jai Hind College for 2011-12. He gave an inspiring address and revealed the Club’s Theme for the Year, “Where You Belong”, through a video presentation.

The new Board was then introduced, inducted and presented mementoes with a request to continue their good work and to take the Club to greater heights.

The District Rotaract Representative also gave an inspiring talk in which he lauded the Club for its zest and innovation.

But it was not yet over. Taking everyone by surprise, the name of the Club President for 2012-13 was also announced on the occasion! This was the first time that a President-Elect had been named so early in the year. And the young person named as a future leader of the Club was none other than Aditya Shah who had earlier that evening received the award for Best Member (Male).

## Seniors shower their blessings, juniors put up a dance show

*“The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible – and achieve it, generation after generation.”* That’s Pearl S. Buck expressing her views on youth.

(And thanks to Meenakshi Dhanani and Yash Hiranandani, the young Correspondents of the Rotaract Club of H.R. College, for refreshing one’s memory about the Nobel Laureate’s profound observation.)

Here are reports of some of the activities undertaken by the H.R. Rotaractors which show that the youth of Bombay have their hearts in the right place.

Everyone knows about the four phases of life, the rigours that they entail and the joys that they yield – childhood, youth, adulthood and middle age.

However, it is the journey beyond middle age (which is also called old age) that increasingly appears to have been stripped of all kinds of joy in the case of some unfortunate people. Increasingly, many of them in India are now being forced to live in homes for the aged, a comparatively recent phenomenon here.

Just when they want to sit back and relax after all the rigours of earning a living, bringing up children, helping them to settle down and have their own families, the least that the seniors expect is to be neglected or, worse, discarded and despatched to a home for the aged. But that’s a reality, a bitter pill that they have to swallow whether they like it or not.

Members of the Rotaract Club of H.R. College went King George Memorial, which is an old age home located at Mahalaxmi, on September 5 as part of their project christened “Blessings”. And what did they do there?

They just sat down with the residents of the home and asked about their well being. While most of them put up brave faces and made a pretence of being cheerful, a few broke down, saying that they missed their families, their children, their grandchildren, their homes and many other things.

Most of the seniors showed that they were bravehearts, narrating their tales with grim stoicism; but the same could not be said about all the Rotaractors. Some of them turned red-eyed and others had tears rolling down their cheeks as they heard the seniors unburden themselves.

Some of the Rotaractors had learnt a few important lessons at the conclusion of the visit. A few of them sent up a silent prayer, hoping that they would be spared such tough times.

But soon their eyes lit up when at the very next institution that they visited, “Vatsalya”, they were greeted by cheerful faces and with a robust dance performance by the destitute, underprivileged children residing there.

What a contrast between the two institutions and their respective residents.

Rikin Sukhtankar and Amit Jethwani, Community Service Directors and event coordinators for the project, said that the idea behind the twin visits was to show the fresh-out-of-school boys and girls a slice of the real world and to prepare them to face the harsh realities of life.

The true meaning of *Janmashtami*, which is celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm all over the city, is often lost on the poor and underprivileged. To make a difference this year, the H.R. Rotaractors organised *Mauj*, a celebration of Lord Krishna’s playful pranks, for the benefit of children assembled under the banner of Akanksha at G.D. Somani Memorial School on August 23.

A PowerPoint presentation, a short film and a brief talk, all of them bringing alive the *Leela* of Krishna when He pranced around as a little child in Brindavan, were arranged. But the biggest surprise for the children was a taste of the traditional cream that Krishna loved so much that He even stole it to satisfy His craving. Also on tap was some buttermilk to add to the flavour of *Janmashtami*.

It was one of the most appropriate names ever thought of for a workshop on Chartered Accountancy – “Tallied” (based on the accountancy software called “Tally”).

And when it was held in the college premises on September 10, it helped lift the fog of doubt from the minds of all those who participated in it.

The H.R. Rotaractors were thrilled to see their Principal, (Dr.) Indu Shahani, and Vice-Principal, Ms Anila Pillai, in their midst for part of the workshop.

A total of 118 young students, some from the first year of junior college and others from the Third Year B.Com., attended the workshop.



H.R. Rotaractors at King George Memorial, a home for the aged



The faculty comprised, among others, a former H.R. alumnus who was a rank-holder when she appeared for the CA exams (CPT, IPCC and the finals).

Apart from clearing various myths surrounding the course, the workshop also enabled the participants to form an opinion on the much debated issue of “CA vs MBA”.

When the programme ended, there were many who said that they had been made aware of many facts for the first time and that they had learnt a great deal.

Apart from Pearl S. Buck, the members of the Rotaract Club of H.R. College also seem to have taken to heart the words of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose – “One individual may die for an idea, but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheel of evolution moves on and the ideas and dreams of one nation are bequeathed to the next”.

Sadly, those living under-privileged lives also have to carry the cross of illiteracy and remain ignorant of the pearls of wisdom bestowed on the people of India by her illustrious freedom-fighters, revolutionaries and nationalists.

The H.R. Rotaractors made an attempt to take the words of Netaji and other leaders to those who were only faintly acquainted with them. For, they believed that it was only if they knew where they had come from, that they would be able to decide where they wanted to go.

On Independence Day this year, the Rotaractors celebrated the occasion by interacting with the underprivileged residents of “Smile” and “Vatsalya”, two homes that accommodated them and cared for them.

A skit incorporating the words of leaders such as Netaji Bose, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was staged, followed by an enthusiastic dance to a few patriotic songs played on a CD or recited by some of the members.

Thus, the children were given a glimpse of India’s past and the thoughts and visions of its great leaders, as also the path that they had wanted the people of India to follow. Also on show was a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the independence movement, the national flag, the national flower and so on.

In turn, the children of the two institutions staged a skit and a dance performance for the Rotaractors, surprising them with their drive and enthusiasm.

The children were then treated to a drive along Marine Drive – of course, with the national flag painted on many a blushing cheek.

At least for a short while that evening, the children were made to feel proud as Indians.

## Fellowship trip to Pune

Fellowship Chairperson Shernaz Vakil and her team have urged members to "Enjoy Pune in the monsoon when it is cool and green".

It has organised a two-day Rotary Fellowship visit to Pune on September 24 and 25. The group will stay at Hotel Parc Estique in Viman Nagar.

According to an appeal issued by the Committee, "Pune in the monsoons is delightful... so come and enjoy this special offer and make a fellowship of it!"

Those staying at the hotel will be required to contribute Rs. 3,500 per night (on a twin-sharing basis, inclusive of breakfast and taxes). The charge for single occupancy will be Rs. 3,000.

Further, for those staying at the hotel, buffet lunch on the first day and Fellowship dinner that night will be complimentary.

Hon. Secretary Jagdish Malkani made an announcement about the Fellowship at the last meeting and urged members to contact Shernaz or Mr. Eruch Irani for further details and registrations.

### Registrations begin for the Marathon

Hon. Secretary Jagdish Malkani revealed at the last meeting that the Rotary Club of Bombay had registered as an NGO for the forthcoming Mumbai Marathon scheduled to be held on Sunday, January 15, 2012.

Requesting members to register early for what is known as the **Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon**, he informed them that the Club would be in a position to send only about 25 participants. Therefore, those keen to take part in the Marathon would do well to register their names as early as possible. The application forms were available with the Rotary Secretariat.

### 'Oberoi Melting Pot' on October 16

The 14th edition of the annual international cultural programme, the "Oberoi Melting Pot", will be held in the Regal Room of The Trident Hotel from 6 pm on Sunday, October 16.

The fund-raising programme is organised by the diplomatic community based in Bombay in association with the Oberoi Group of Hotels and the Rotary Club of Bombay.

This year, the proceeds would be donated to three charities, viz., the Cancer Patients' Aid Association, an NGO called Pratham and to the Salaam Balak Trust.

Making an announcement at the last meeting, PP Gul Kripalani said that the donor cards were priced at Rs. 3,500 each and were available at the Rotary Secretariat.

September 20 to September 26, 2011

## THE 'PARSI NITE' REVISITED



Several members have sent in requests to see more photographs of the 'Parsi Nite' organised by the Fellowship Committee on August 26. In deference to their wishes, here are some more pictures from the event. While the first photo features (from left) Jimmy Pochkhanawalla, S.K. Mitra, Burjor Poonawala, Sandra Merchant, Suresh Goklaney and Aliakbar, the one at right has Hon. Treasurer Ishraq Contractor chatting with Nidhi Aggarwal



The Fellowship team, which did an outstanding job under Director Fali Mehta, not only ensured that the venue, The Joss, was up to the mark for the grand event, it also organised such brilliant music that most members were swaying all through the night, even when they were not on the dance floor. The picture at right features (from left) Arnaz and Dr. Phiroze Soonawalla, PP Ashish Vaid, President Paul George, Fali and PP Sandip Agarwalla



The smiling faces behind the success of the 'Parsi Nite'. Snapped along with Fali (second from right in the first picture), are Ritu Desai, Khurshed Poonawala and Fellowship Chair Shernaz Vakil. The second picture features another smiling quartet. From left are Alok Sekhsaria, PP Harry Singh Arora, Fali again and Madhusudan Daga. Madhu, himself a former Chair for Fellowship, was full of praise for the arrangements made for the event



Having the time of their lives. Among those who can be seen in the first picture are Meher Poonawala, Burjor, Dr. Ameet Pispati, Shernaz and Aliakbar Merchant. The second photograph needs no description. Burjor and Dolly Thakore execute some deft movements, a sight that holds many spellbound. Those members who were unable to attend the 'Parsi Nite' are reported to have regretted that the loss was entirely theirs

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