

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Women's International Club held at the
Hotel Maurya Sheraton on 13th May, 1998 at 3 p.m.**

Number of WIC Members present : 132 The meeting was quorate.

Regrets: 26

Agenda item 1: Welcoming Remarks

Mary Gore-Booth welcomed new members to the Club and said how pleased she was with the large turnout. As decided at the EGM, the Annual General Meeting would be solely a business meeting, therefore time restrictions would apply, members were reminded to keep their comments to the point and relevant to the agenda item under discussion and not personalise any remarks.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of 1997 AGM minutes

Deep Duggal rose to thank the Committee for circulating copies of the previous year's AGM minutes with the audited accounts in plenty of time for this AGM.

There being no comments on the substance of the 1997 AGM minutes, these were adopted. Proposed by Deep Duggal and seconded by Geeta Thadani.

Agenda item 3: Committee on Nominations Chairperson and Elections

Dorothea Metten stood in for the Chairperson, Bapsi Nariman, to read out the names of candidates on the slate for the Executive Committee 1998-99. There being no comment on the slate, Anita Batra proposed, Kavita Ratra and Neena Dey Gupta seconded it. The newly-elected Committee was congratulated by a round of applause.

Agenda item 4: Presentation of reports

i) 1st Vice President Shyama Gurbachan Singh thanked her team of dynamic, creative and resourceful circle leaders for their unstinting and untiring efforts to arrange such varied and interesting programmes.

She also thanked Virginia for her cheerful co-operation in respect to last minute write-ups and for help whenever needed.

For Shyama the year had been most interesting and she was grateful for the honour and confidence reposed in her.

She wished her successor, Etelka Dallos, the best of luck for the coming year.

Speaking for the Executive Committee she praised Mary, a President par excellence, for being totally supportive, giving encouragement and assistance, respect and affection at all times.

ii) 2nd Vice President Lakshmi Chandra thanked everyone for giving her this year to repay a fraction of her enormous debt to WIC.

The year had seen some wonderful programmes by people from all walks of life, and some special programmes celebrating India's 50 years of Independence.

Lakshmi specially thanked Rupa for her help in finding such great venues and such outstanding hostesses as Shirin Paul, Alexandra Tomasikova and Anita Meattle.

Lakshmi ended with 4 quotations expressing her feelings and wishing Jyotsna Govil lots of luck.

iii) Secretary Anita Meattle thanked everyone for the wonderful opportunity to serve the Club. She had been apprehensive and yet deeply honoured when asked to be secretary. She said that she had been lucky to have had such a special President and committee to work with. She wished Jacqueline all the best.

iv) Newsletter Editor Virginia Hawkins was honoured to have been asked to edit the newsletter this past year and what she had gained from the experience had been immeasurable. Being on the Committee had made all the difference to the last year of their stay in Delhi. She would miss WIC very much. She commented that the Club had been very lucky to have had Mary as its President and it had been terrific working on her team.

Virginia thanked everyone for their positive encouragement through the year and specially thanked Sophie for all her help.

She felt that her biggest contribution had been to have persuaded Priscilla Confiado to be the next newsletter editor and that she would undoubtedly do a fabulous job.

v) Membership Chairperson Mako Lutyens said that she had a wonderful year serving as the membership Chairman and specially thanked her colleagues on the Executive Committee, the Membership sub-Committee and the Membership Group.

The Membership Working Group was a special feature this year. An Extraordinary General Meeting was successfully conducted with members voting on various issues. Mako hoped that the effort started this year on membership issues would be continued in the future.

Mako urged the next year's Committees to work out the priority criteria for reapplying ten year members.

Mako's obsession this Club year had been the recruitment of foreign members. This year 39 new foreign members were recruited, bringing the total to 99 foreign members from 41 countries.

Mako thanked Sophie Devered - Neat for her endless help in keeping membership records straight and wished her successor Sharon, the best of luck.

vi) Hospitality Chairperson Rupa Sahni composed a farewell poem stating the wonderful time she had had serving as Hospitality Chairman and her sadness as the year came to an end. She mentioned the charts she had devised to keep track of everyone's attendance records. She wished her successor, Nandita Lahiri, all the best for the coming year.

vii) Treasurer's Report and Approval of Auditor's Report Darshan Inderjit presented the balance sheet which was proposed by Mona Aggarwal and seconded by Amarjit Bhagwant Singh for the year 1997-98. She pointed out that the Gala Night was completely self-financed. The Club had a healthy bank balance with funds totalling Rs.1,45,855 as on 31st March, 1998. She presented the Financial Statement which had been circulated previously. She thanked the generosity of members who gave freely of their homes thus keeping expenditure low. She enjoyed being on the committee and wished her successor Sohinder Nabha the very best for the following year. Text of Auditor's Report at Annex I.

viii) Welcome Club's International (WCI) Liaison Officer Peggy Sood stated that this was our third year as members of Welcome Club International and that in 1998 the conference was held in Florida and as no one attended from our Club a report was sent of the Club's activities during 1997-98. The problems facing our club are similar to those other sister Clubs face e.g. general representation, inactive members, etc. WIC had paid \$25 as dues for the year 1997-98. At Christmas she received greetings from affiliate Clubs and responded. The WCI Council had started a newsletter, copies of which had been distributed to our members. WIC had also been mentioned in the newsletter.

The list of affiliated Clubs was with Peggy.

Mary asked if any of our members had ever availed themselves.

Peggy's answer was that lists of addresses had been asked for but no contacts had been made, that she knew of.

"The WCI Liaison Officer indicated that she had sent an annual report on the activities of the Women's International Club in Delhi to WCI and handed a text of that report to the Secretary for inclusion in the Minutes (attached at Annex II)".

Agenda item 5: Outgoing President's report

Mary Gore-Booth felt it had been a good year all around. She asked the members to concentrate on the Club's positive influences and to set aside its divisions and to move forward.

Mary said that no increase in dues had been recommended this year, because the fundamental mind set had to change before a realistic price-tag could be put on the activities of the Club. The Club funds in reality only pay for catering a few General meetings, some symbolic gifts and some stationery. The rest is all donated.

For Mary the abiding memory would be of the friendships forged and strengthened through the work of the Executive committee. She then paid tribute to each EC member.

Mary thanked Bapsi Nariman and her Committee on Nominations as well as the Membership Working Group for their care and time and hoped that something positive would come of the EGM.

She thanked all the members who had helped the Committee and Circle Leaders with hosting and catering and advice.

She wished Gita Devi and her new team success in the coming year and wished WIC a fruitful and successful future.

Agenda item 6: Follow up on EGM minutes and recommendations

Mary, as outgoing President, recommended that if the Members felt it useful to carry out a proper follow up of the findings of the Working Group on Membership, that a Drafting Committee be formed to look into all areas where consensus had been found and where new criteria were necessary. This committee should work out acceptable criteria and present them to the Membership during the next Club Year. There seemed to be general acceptance of that recommendation.

Agenda item 7: Any Other Business

- 1) Copies of a letter by Chartered Accountants S.K.Vohra & Company requesting an increase in fees from Rs.1250 to Rs.2500 to prepare the accounts of the Club were circulated to all members present at the AGM. The meeting was asked to approve this increase. The motion was proposed by Kamla Sondhi and seconded by Veenu Baig.
- 2) Sarla Kumar suggested that because May was always so hot, that the Club Year should henceforth end in April. The suggestion did not gain support.
- 3) Pushpa Vadera suggested that we should have more summer meetings to cater for those who stayed in Delhi during the summer. This suggestion did not gain support
- 4) It was suggested that there be more assimilation between Indian and International members. The outgoing President reminded the meeting that this was the rationale behind the "Big Sister" system that had been discussed at the EGM and it could form part of the follow up of that meeting in the forthcoming Club Year.
- 5) Zakia Zaheer suggested that the excursions were the best way to get to know other members better. Mary paid tribute to the hard work that all the members of the Excursion circle had put in to making it so successful.

- 6) The proposed change of wording of Article V Section 5 (g) was circulated to all those present at the meeting. This had also appeared in the Newsletter for all members to react to. The new wording would read as follows:
"Article V Section 5(g) (Duties of the membership chairperson) 1)" to appoint in consultation with the President and the Immediate Past President, a sub-committee on Membership consisting of four members of whom two from among the Club's Past Presidents and two from former Executive Committee Members (other than Past Presidents).

Nayana Goradia expressed concern that this might affect continuity in the work of the Membership sub committee.
The proposed revised text was put to the members attending and since there appeared to be no dissenting voices, the new wording was taken as passed.
- 7) Kavita Ratra made several points. Firstly, she felt that the members deserved to be informed in due time of any changes to programmes. Secondly, that major decisions such as the timing of the Gala Night should be a subject of consultation with the membership as a whole. Thirdly, that she felt that on a particular occasion when she wanted to join a circle meeting with restricted numbers that international members had been unfairly favoured. Fourthly, that the Committee had behaved inappropriately with respect to allocation of tickets for the Gala Night. The main point being that the Committee was "subordinate" to the membership.
- 8) Mary Gore-Booth pointed out in response that the Gala Night coinciding with the General Meeting had been discussed at the EGM fully, that the Committee did everything in its power to ensure that members were told of changes to programmes but that reply cards came in at the last minute. That the limited numbers at most circle meetings was a problem for the Committee and for the members, but the only solution to limited numbers would be to hold all meetings in hotels with subsequent financial implications for the Club. That there is no discrimination at all in allocating places at Circle meetings. Given equal interest an effort was made to ensure that both Indian and International members had equal chances to attend. The members who made it difficult for others are those who sign up for all programmes always but then do not attend, thus depriving others of a chance to attend. As for tickets for the Gala Night, there was such an enthusiastic response and demand for tickets that last minute decisions were problematic. Nonetheless Mary was pleased that Kavita had been able to attend the Gala Night as well as the circle from which she felt excluded and the fact that Mrs.Ratra lived far from Delhi was a personal problem, not one for which the Committee could be held responsible.
- 9) Since the time allocated for the AGM was running out, Mary thanked members for their remarks and their smiling support.
- 10) Deep Duggal stood to thank the Committee for a job well done. Nimma Malhotra seconded the vote of thanks.

- 11) The outgoing Committee then welcomed the Incoming Committee individually onto the podium by presenting them with a folder and a corsage each.

The outgoing President presented the Incoming President, Gita Devi of Kapurthala with a bouquet of flowers, a gesture which was reciprocated. There was applause.

- 12) Incoming President's Speech of Acceptance Gita Devi said that she was deeply honoured by the distinction that had been bestowed upon her. She thanked the Nominating Committee for their faith and for a fine Executive Committee. She thanked Mary and the outgoing Committee for their courtesy and assistance. She was grateful to all the members who had agreed to become circle leaders and who were already hard at work. She bade farewell to all those leaving and moving on and hoped that they would keep in touch. She welcomed new members. She said that it was only with the collective co-operation of all members that we could successfully work to keep this wonderful Club animated, innovative, vibrant and alive.

The meeting was brought to a close and tea was served.

Anita Meattle

Secretary

Anita Meattle

Mary Gore Booth

President

Mary Gore-Booth