

# WIC Newsletter: April 2021

## President's Report



Dear Members

We have crossed a year living with the Covid pandemic. A year which has sometimes seemed to drag and has felt so long, and yet at times, has rushed by. Just when we were getting vaccinated and thought we could start meeting friends and family once again, there has been a new surge and once again, we must isolate. We console ourselves with the thought from the Geeta: "This too shall pass". So, let us make the best of it.

I was listening to Kiran Bedi's valedictory address at a prestigious school, where she spoke about us being the privileged ones in this world. She spoke about "The 3 Gs", which really appealed to me and I would like to share them with you.

- ❖ The first "G" is to "**Give**": Give of yourself to others, share your bounty with those who are needy, give to society.
- ❖ The second "G" is to "**Grow**": During this last year, I hope you have learnt something new and grown emotionally and intellectually.
- ❖ The third "G" is "**Gratitude**": Be grateful for everything that God has given you, most of all, good health.

"The 3 Gs" have left an indelible impression on me and I have tried to follow them, but the one I want to share with you is the "Grow". This last year Lakshmi and I wanted to improve our game of bridge and joined some online classes. It has been a wonderful experience; our game has improved, and we have made some wonderful new friends. We have invited our teachers to join us from Bangalore this month and introduce the game to WIC members.

Suneeta is taking us to **Mexico** this month and Leena's circle leaders have organised fascinating programs from around the world. The wonders of online meetings. Do join us for them.

Now for some good news. At last, we can close the saga of the **cookbook**. The publishers have agreed to return our money and that issue can now be closed. I hope our members will be happy with this outcome.

Please take care and stay safe.

**Anita Meattle, President**

## Executive Committee 2020-21

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## Some of the amazing diversity in India this April...



*Baisakhi, Punjab*



*Easter*



*Mahavir Jayanti*



*Pooram, Kerala*

# GENERAL MEETING: 3pm, 21 April

## "Mexico: live it to believe it"

The theme for our April General Meeting is "**Mexico: live it to believe it**".



*Ambassador of Mexico  
HE Federico Salas*

This month we shall have the honour of hosting several guests from the Mexican Embassy in Delhi. His Excellency, **Federico Salas**, Ambassador of Mexico to India, will be

joined by Minister, **Judith Arrieta** and **Santiago Ruy Sánchez** - the Cultural and Tourism attaché, to take us around the beautiful country of Mexico.

Importantly, their presentation will also include the ways in which the two countries, Mexico and India, converge in their culture, arts and literature.



*Judith Arrieta  
Minister*

From **archaeological sites** and **colonial towns** to **cosmopolitan cities**, Mexico's **history** and **geography** offer a wealth of possibilities that are hard to find elsewhere. Walk along the Ambassador of Mexico and get to know its **cultural diversity**, traditions,



*Santiago Ruy Sánchez  
Cultural and Tourism attaché*

prepare yourself to indulge in its **cuisine** and enjoy a place similar enough to feel at home, and different enough to become a great adventure.

Please join us for this exciting trip to Mexico at 3 pm on Wednesday, 21st April on our Zoom link.



## New WIC Executive Committee for 2021-22

At the GM on 17<sup>th</sup> March Bindu Talwar, on behalf of the Nominations Committee, announced the new Executive Committee for 2021-22 which is to be ratified by the Members at the AGM in May. Thanks again to the Nominations Committee and congratulations to the new EC.

President – **Yuka Ando**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – **Madhavi Goradia Divan**

Treasurer – **Smita Mankad**

Hospitality - **Midori Suzuki**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President – **Rosie Sahni**

Secretary – **Surrinder Sarna**

Membership - **Nandani Pattani**

Newsletter/Comms – **Noor Anand Chawla**

# CIRCLE MEETINGS

## Member's Choice: 11:30am, 5 April

### "Introduction to Bridge - The Mind Cricket"



Learn to take singles and twos, hit boundaries and sixers by flexing your mental muscles in this fun workshop – mark your calendars and reserve your seats for this Member's Choice session sponsored by Anita Meattle.

Bridge is a **mind sport** which has made a new entry into the Asian Games, where our players won a gold medal for India in 2018. It is the game which Bill Gates and Warren Buffett play as partners to keep their business acumen in mint running condition. Even the Father of our Nation, Gandhiji played Bridge!

Bridge has been described as **mind gym** which teaches logical reasoning and lateral thinking. Many schools and colleges use it as a fun and challenging maths tool to help students maximise their academic skills, while it's also a growing hobby for corporates and professionals who want to sharpen their strategy and planning skills while generating team spirit.



It is an **engaging pastime** for homemakers and an important **mental exercise** for senior citizens - keeping loneliness and Alzheimer's at bay. Bridge is more than a card game – it is a game played with cards that can be enjoyed by any age group 10 to 100. And you can pit your wits against anyone in the world online 24/7!

This bridge demonstration will be conducted by **Priya Ranjan Sinha** and **Bindiya Naidoo**. They are bridge partners who represented India at the last World Bridge Championships in

China in 2019. They also head the teaching faculty with Anglian Medal Hunt and have coached hundreds of bridge students since 2013 across beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.



Bindiya Naidoo

Priya Ranjan Sinha

## Health & Wellness: 3pm, 15 April

### "Prevention of Depression and Dementia"

As Covid resurges and we complete one year of being cooped in our houses, with the normalcy we knew thrown out of the window and a new normal emerging, **mental health and wellbeing** is more important now than ever.



Dr Amit Dias

We are in the process of getting vaccinated and hoping to go back to meeting our friends and relatives but some days it does take a toll on all of us.

We have **Dr Amit Dias** MD, DTM&H, DGM, MSc Clinical Trials, talking to us on prevention of depression and dementia. He is an epidemiologist with a keen interest in geriatric medicine and infectious diseases. Dr Dias is currently Asst Professor (DACP) in the department of Preventive and Social Medicine at Goa Medical College (GMC) where he has been teaching medical students for the last 20 years.

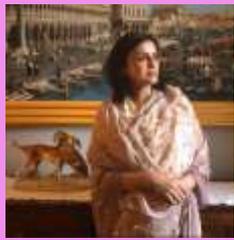
He completed his MD at Goa Medical College and pursued his DTM&H and MSc in Clinical Trials from the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in the UK.

He is the recipient of several fellowships and awards He has been awarded a fellowship in Public Health Leadership at the Emory University, USA. He was the honorary chairman of Sangath, an NGO dedicated to mental health. He was felicitated by the government of Goa for his contribution to Alzheimer's disease in December 2018 and won the late Manohar Parrikar Memorial Award for his contribution to dementia in 2020.

Dr Amit has been actively involved in encouraging vaccination against Covid and recently received the COVID warrior award from the Panchayat of Mandur where he was in charge of the Rural Health and Training Center.

## Art & Beyond: 3pm, 26 April

### "Indigo - a fascinating journey over 5000 years"



Mira Gupta

This month's topic for Art & Beyond is "Indigo - a fascinating journey over 5000 years" and our guest speaker is Mira Gupta.

**Mira Gupta** is a well-known curator and designer in craft-based luxury. She has had working stints with Fabindia, Good Earth, and Ogaan to promote the cause of craft. She is deeply interested in art, travel, architecture, and culture.

Mira will be speaking on **indigo and its use worldwide** both as a dye as well as how it has affected history, culture, and sociology. This bluest of colours has been the most valued pigment for over five millennia and is at the centre of slavery, famine and turbulence. It is a fascinating tale that needs to be told.



## Cultural Kaleidoscope: 3pm, 30 April

### "Bunraku: Japanese traditional puppet theatre"



"**Bunraku**", the Japanese traditional puppet theatre, is considered one of Japan's three great theatrical traditions, together with Kabuki and Noh---all three recognized as **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage**. It is a theatrical performing art composed of chanting (narratives and voices of puppets), shamisen music, and puppets. Each performer is strictly a professional occupation of its own and Bunraku can be played only when these three distinctive aesthetic professions are combined.

It has its origin as a popular entertainment for commoners in Osaka and is said to have established its current form in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Bunraku and Kabuki often depict stories based on adaptation of popular themes of the Edo period (17 to 19<sup>th</sup> century).



Bunraku puppets are about one-half life-size, and the main figures of a play are operated by **three puppeteers**: a principal operator and two assistants. Only a principal operator is in full view of the audience and he is dressed in black to symbolize that he is to be taken as "invisible". To become a principal puppeteer, about 25 years of apprenticeship is required as assistants. A principal puppeteer and two assistants are to synchronize their movements of a puppet: a principal operator is responsible for the head and the right hand of a puppet (and ultimately leading the whole movement), while a senior assistant is responsible for the left hand and a junior responsible for the legs. **Kanya Yoshida**, a veteran and respected

principal puppeteer, who is also a regular in world tours of a Bunraku Theatre, and who has given numerous lectures on Bunraku in Japan and abroad will especially present an introductory program on Bunraku to the members of WIC.

## Three things you should do ...

1. RSVP for April meetings using this Doodle link: <https://doodle.com/poll/9k32ux68qgnx22sy>
2. For any Hospitality issues (eg Doodle) contact Grace Kawakami (contact details on page 1).
3. On the date & time of the meeting click on the appropriate Zoom link below to join:

**Learning Bridge – 11:30am Apr 5<sup>th</sup>**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89710940834>

**Mental Health – 3pm Apr 15<sup>th</sup>**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88436058329>

**GM – Mexico – 3pm Apr 21<sup>st</sup>**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87245228317>

**History of Indigo – 3pm Apr 26<sup>th</sup>**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88660849004>

**Bunraku Theatre - 3pm Apr 30<sup>th</sup>**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87080006395>

**Do you need lessons in how to use Zoom?** Message Stevie on [stevieclayton174@gmail.com](mailto:stevieclayton174@gmail.com) or 99990 52593 to make a time for some one-on-one support. As long as you have a computer, iPad or smart phone, I can get you going.

## Membership News

It gives us great pleasure to introduce a new member, **Fatimata Kane Haidara**, to our WIC family.

Fatimata is a lawyer in civil practice and is from Senegal. Perhaps this is the first time we have a member from that country, and of course she will be a fabulous cultural ambassador for Senegal. Fatimata is widely travelled, having been posted to several countries, and is the wife of His Excellency, the Ambassador of Senegal to India.

A very warm welcome to her.

**Serita Kakar**  
Membership

## Forward notice of AGM

Formal notice of the AGM will come next month. This is just a reminder to put the date in your diaries.

**WIC AGM 2021**

**Will be held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May**

**At 3pm via Zoom**

The EC debated long and hard having the AGM face-to-face this year, as we have all been physically separated for so long, but in the end, we had to conclude that it is still unsafe in the face of a second wave of cases, and our members' health must be the paramount concern.

## Remembering Martin Howard

The WIC community deeply mourns the sad loss of Martin Howard, husband to our long-time member Annie Howard. We salute an exceptional man who gave of himself to his adopted country in many ways. Below is an edited version of an article written by Martin in September 2017, in which he talks a little about his life and the school that was so important to him and the local community. I thought WIC members might enjoy reading it. Lakshmi Chandra

## **A school by the community, for the community and transforming the community.** By [Martin Howard, 8 Sept 2017](#)

I was born in Lincolnshire on the east coast of the UK and educated at the local grammar school. Born of farming stock I assumed I would become a farmer, but at 16 I joined the Royal Navy as an engineering cadet. In the Navy I went on to become an aeronautical engineer, a fighter pilot, and eventually a test pilot.

In 1984, after being promoted to Captain, I came to India for an anticipated three years as the Naval Attaché at the British High Commission. With the Berlin Wall falling, I retired from the Navy prematurely, to have more time for other things. That led to me joining Rolls-Royce, running their regional aerospace office in Delhi. After that, Annie and I decided to linger in India, and when a friend bought the land where we now live, I built the house on that spot next to the Aravalli Hills.

From my first arrival in India in 1984, I had wondered what anyone could ever do about India's population explosion. After three years of building, when the house was completed, it suddenly dawned on me that there was no sign of education in the village – no little wanderings one way in the morning and back again in the afternoon, even though there were lots of children in evidence. Then it struck me – the only voluntary and globally effective contraceptive is affluence.

So, I approached the Sarpanch and offered to build a new primary school in the middle village of the three making up his charge – Gairatpur Baas. He offered to provide the land, and we discussed it with the education department in Gurgaon who also agreed. I started to build and guests staying with us watched, and often volunteered to help with funding. I decided we had to make ours an independent school, even if that meant having to fund the teachers – no small task.

After seven years we had six classrooms, a teacher's three-bedroom residence and a children's lavatory and we started teaching in 2007. Today we have 15 classrooms, two teacher's residences, separate lavatories for boys and girls, admin offices, library, science lab, and a school hall with an adjoining medical centre.

We teach in a liberal interactive manner, and we play sport and do athletics, all of which develops character, curiosity, and self-esteem. There is a Montessori nursery where the children play in English for three years before starting primary education, by which time they are comfortably bi-lingual, which in due course will make them more employable. Our education style is all about life and jobs, rather than certificates, though our students rate highly in state exams.

A team of voluntary Trustees was introduced in 2008 to regularise fund-raising, and we are now attracting better quality teachers, simply because they like our system and are happy in their work. The foundation purpose of the Trust is to offer a good, bi-lingual education, to every child in the village who chooses to take it up. Fees are very modest and pay the salaries of only two of our twenty-two teachers.

The school has finally shown its capability, and the village are very happy with what we are doing. Lately, some more senior children have even been taken away from local expensive schools and enrolled with us, in our Gairatpur Baas Panchayat school.



# Calendar for March 2021

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Member's Choice: Learning Bridge @11:30am	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Health & Wellbeing: Mental Health @3pm	16	17
18	19	20	21 General Meeting: Mexico @3pm	22	23	24
25	26 Art & Beyond: History of Indigo @3pm	27	28	29	30 Cultural Kaleidoscope: Bunraku Theatre @3pm	31