



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CLUB

DELHI

AUGUST 1992

Dear Members,

After a long, hot and sizzling summer, a very warm welcome!

By the time you get this newsletter, the rains should have started (I hope!), the dust should have been washed away and the flora and fauna should be looking a little more fresh.

May I, first of all, thank Peggy Sood and her Nominating Committee for giving me a wonderful group of ladies to work with. There is enthusiastic Rebecca Mc Cullough, capable and dependable Sarabjit (Gugu) Anup Singh, diligent Indra Jerath, efficient Joan Lee, a superb hostess Raj Nanda, competent Constance Gupta and conscientious Claudia Deiss. Now isn't that a really good committee. For August and September, the newsletter of the WIC is in the capable hands of Robina Arbuthnott, who has very kindly agreed to join us until Constance comes back. Our very grateful thanks to Robina.

And now, on behalf of all of us on the new committee, a big thank you to Gunilla Kettis and her committee for all the help and co-operation extended to us.

The membership issue, as everyone knows, has been bothering us all for a long time so, to begin with, we have formed a committee to go into this problem. This committee will consist of past Presidents (as they have had to deal with this problem during their respective terms) and Honorary Members under the chairpersonship of the membership chairperson of the Executive committee. This committee will review the matter and suggest amendments, if necessary, to the constitution of the Women's International Club, Delhi. So, if you have any suggestions, please send your views, criteria for membership etc. to the chairperson of this committee before September 20th, 1992. If any amendment has to be incorporated in our constitution, it can be voted on by November or December this year.

This committee will also review all pending applications for membership and give their valuable suggestions to the Executive Committee. We would like to recommend that this committee has a two year term with two members retiring every year and two more being nominated in their place. This will help to have some form of continuity in the decisions taken.

Secondly, the coffee mornings for new applicants will henceforth be a 'get-together' of the applicants and the Executive Committee. This is necessary as the applicants may have been introduced to a different Executive Committee when they applied for membership. The applications will be reviewed again finally by the Executive Committee before letters of acceptance are sent to prospective members.

With all good wishes and looking forward to seeing you all soon,

Sincerely

Veena Dass

Veena Dass
President



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CLUB

NEWSLETTER



August 1992

Twenty Second Year

ACTIVITIES FOR AUGUST

GENERAL MEETING



Thursday, 20th August, 3.00 p.m.
Ashok Hotel
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110 021
Tel: 600121

FESTIVALS OF INDIA This programme is the first of a series on the Festivals celebrated throughout India. There will be tableaux performed by our own club members and the choreography will be done by Professor B. C. Sharma of Modern School.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (ART/CRAFT CIRCLE)

Friday 14th August, 3.00 p.m.
Home of Nayana Goradia
145 Sunder Nagar
New Delhi 110003
Tel: 61 7859, 61-5703

"Invisible Strings" This Video is about the unique Salzburg Marionette Theatre, whose full length opera performances on a tiny stage have charmed audiences all over the World. "Invisible Strings" will give us the opportunity to look behind the curtain and watch puppetmakers, costume and stage designers at work. It will give us a glimpse of the magic and the reality of the world famous theatre group with excerpts from Cosi fan Tutte, Don Giovanni and The Tales of Hoffmann.

INDIAN CULTURAL

Wednesday, 19th August, 3.00 p.m.
Home of Veena Dass
27 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi 110011
Tel: 301 2713, 301 0128

Mrs Vinita Jain will give a talk on Ayurveda - the science of life. The word Ayurveda comes down to us from two Sanskrit root words **Ayus** or life and **Veda** meaning knowledge or science. The purpose of ayurveda is to tell us how our lives can be influenced, shaped, extended and ultimately controlled without interference from sickness or old age. The guiding principal of Ayurveda is that the mind exerts the deepest influence on the body . Ayurveda embodies the collected wisdom of Sages, who began their tradition many centuries before the construction of the Pyramids and handed it down from generation to generation. Come and learn more about this fascinating subject.

GOURMET AND GARDEN

Wednesday 26th August, 3.00 p.m.
Home of Elsebeth Ostenfeld
Danish Residence
24 Amrita Shergill Marg
New Delhi 110021
Tel: 61 7980

Smoerrebroed - Danish open-faced sandwiches - will be prepared by Elsebeth Ostenfeld. There will be a limit of 30 people. Please confirm with Francoise Karim (Tel: 63 1798) or Bindu Talwar (Tel: 683 1242) if you would like to come.

**VISUAL AND
PERFORMING ARTS
(FILM CIRCLE)**

Thursday 27th August, 3.00 p.m.
French Cultural Centre
2 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi 110011

This will be "La Femme d'à Côté" - Francois Truffaut's last film. It stars Gérard Depardieu, Fanny Ardant, Veronique Silver and Henri Garçin. It was made in 1981 and lasts 106 minutes. Bernard Coudray lives with his wife Arlette and his young son Thomas in a house in the country. The house opposite them is for sale. One evening Bernard meets Philippe Bauchard who has just bought the house and also his wife Mathilde who turns out to be the very Mathilde with whom he had had a passionate love affair a few years previously.....

FOCUS

Monday 31st August, 3.00 p.m.
Home of Gita Devi of Kapurthala
B90/A Greater Kailash I
New Delhi 110048
Tel: 641 2029

This is a new programme of discussion, taking points of interest and throwing them open to the floor. Come and join this thought provoking and interesting group. The first programme will be on 'Cross Cultural Marriages' - a subject of universal interest and appeal. Surjeet Man Singh, who herself had the experience of a cross cultural marriage, will enjoy sharing her views and hearing yours.

CHORUS GROUP

Every Thursday morning at 10 a.m.

The first meeting of the Chorus Group will take place at Joya Reiser's house, 56 Anand Lok, New Delhi 110049 Tel: 6460709 on Thursday 20th August at 10.00 a.m. It will be followed by Lunch. Please let Joya know if you are coming. The meeting on Thursday 27th August will be at Frances Clift's house at K27B Hauz Khas Tel: 65 5981 at 10.00am. If you enjoy singing and can sing in tune, do come and join in as it is great fun! New members are very welcome.

The **BOOK CIRCLE** will begin in September, **YOGA** and **EXCURSIONS** will start in October. All to be looked forward to!

NOTICEBOARD

Welcome back to all those who have been away. Well done to those who have remained in Delhi. Wherever you have been, I hope you are all ready for the new season of Women's International Club activities!

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Jean Gurney
Khurana Farm
1040 DLF
Chattarpur
Mehrauli
New Delhi 110030
Tel: 680 1617/680 1627

Maki Mehta
Garden Estate
MA-1/4 Apt 3D
P.O.D.L.F.
Qutab Enclave
Gurgaon 122002
Haryana
Tel: 01272 23314

Frenny Billimoria
A2/2 Safdarjung Enclave
New Delhi 110029
Tel: 688 2520/688 2444

Noni Indrajeet Singh
B41 Maharani Bagh
New Delhi 110065
Tel: 684 8817

CHANGES OF TELEPHONE NUMBER

Deep Dugal - 5563525 and 8332010 Gugu Anup Singh - 5563788 and 8332365

There are some members who feel their homes are a little difficult to reach for programmes. Would these people like to volunteer to help occasionally with food at major functions, or to be a hostess at an event in someone else's house by perhaps giving the vote of thanks or looking after the speaker? Do give your names to any member of the executive committee and they will be most grateful.

Would members coming to the General Meeting be kind enough to look at the newsletter table before they leave. If they see a letter belonging to someone living close to them, would they deliver it for us? This is one way we can hope to save money, cut the cost of postage and ensure delivery! Thank you.

The Treasurer, Indra Jerath, will be at the General Meeting on 20th August from 2.15 - 3.00 to take this year's Membership fees (Rs.300). All fees to be paid by October 15th.

To help Raj Nanda with her Hospitality responsibilities, could you please send Reply cards to her by the 1st week of August. Thank you.

We are very grateful to our many hostesses opening their homes to us every year. For this reason we are suggesting that the refreshments served should be limited to tea, coffee, one savoury dish and one sweet dish. If everyone keeps to this, no one need feel 'different' and worried by the extra work too many dishes entail.

MEMBERSHIP

This has been a thorn in the side of every WIC executive committee recently. As Veena Dass said in her letter, your present committee are going to try and find an acceptable answer to the problem at the beginning of their tenure so they can see it through. For this purpose a special committee has been set up under Claudia Deiss. The members of this committee are Shakuntala Mahesh Chandra, Deep Dugal, Bapsi Nariman and Peggy Sood. We have your letters and suggestions sent in to the last committee, but if you haven't communicated your ideas or would like to write with new ones, please do. Letters should be received by 20th September. Remember that the WIC is your club and its success or failure depends on the involvement of you, its members.

It was with great sadness we heard of the death of Mohini Bazaz's husband, Jagdish. You are very much in our thoughts, Mohini.

WOMEN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

Every nation has its national heroines: Indira Gandhi, Marie Curie, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Margaret Thatcher, to name a few. This season, the WIC newsletter would like to highlight a few of these "Women Who Made a Difference" and we ask your assistance. Each month we would like to present a brief sketch of such a woman from a different country. However, we do not want to talk about very well-known women such as those mentioned above. We want the stories of lesser known, but equally important "Women Who Made a Difference" - to their neighbourhoods, communities, or countries and thereby touched the lives of those around them.

Please help by contacting the newsletter editor. You may write a brief description of the woman from your country, including who she is/was and what she does/did (no more than one page), or you may give the editor some material about the woman and we will write the story. We do need your help for this project and we are counting on you

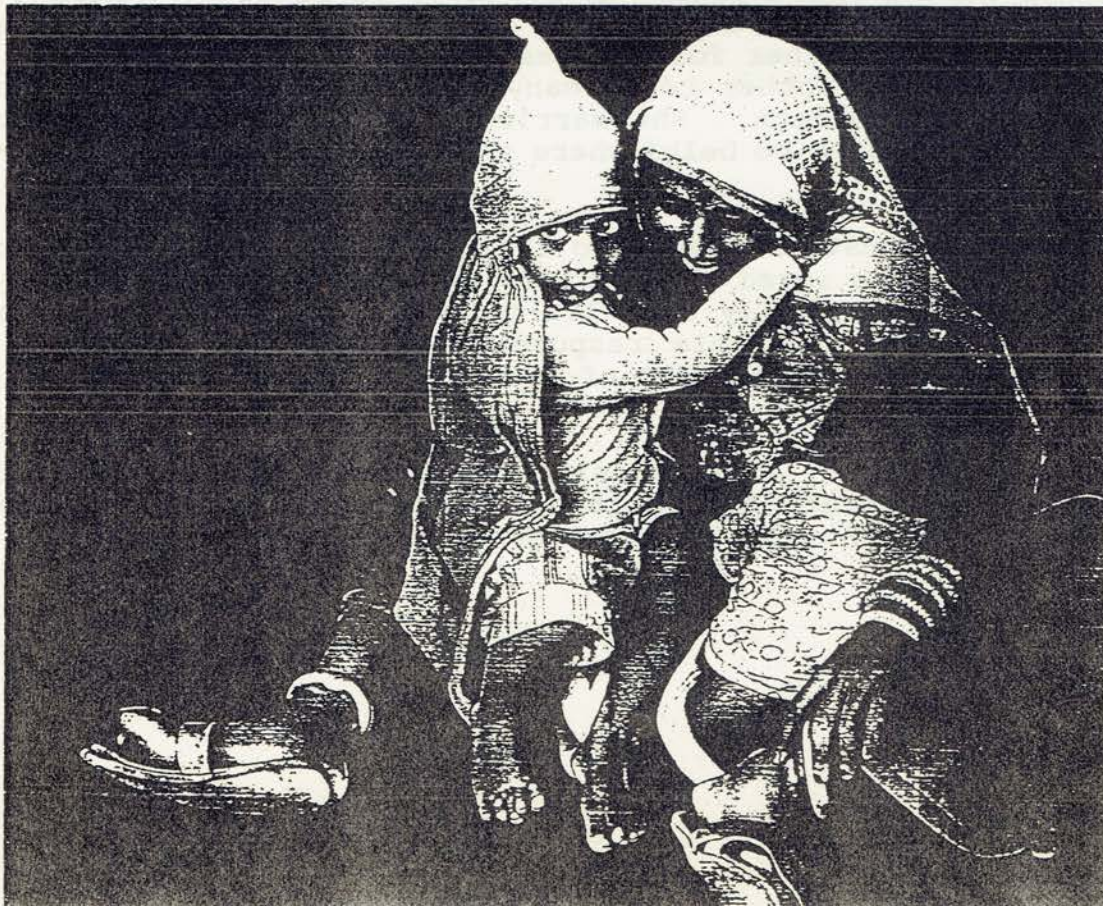
Appropriately we are starting off in India, in Delhi in fact, with the story of Meera Mahadevan the founder of Mobile Creches. Her foundation has helped countless women and children whose voices are never heard because they are some of the poorest people in India - the migrant construction workers who spend all their days toiling on building sites whatever the weather and then move on to find more work to keep themselves and their families alive.

Meera was born in Karachi in 1930. She belonged to a small Bene Israeli community. Her Father worked in the Port Authority and she always said she remembered him as a dignified and scrupulously honest man who taught her pride in their simple home, the honour which goes with a job well done and a love for ordinary people. After Partition, the family were uprooted and came to live in Maharashtra. They were hard years as they were for so many people. Meera, having just left school, was the family income earner, teaching herself to type and working for a local business man. Her Father said of her during these years "my daughter is equal to 7 sons". It was, therefore, a tragedy when she married out of her community and was rejected by them and by her Father for the rest of her life. Maybe this rejection was what made her a mother to so many children, and a sister and aunt to so many of their mothers. She married T.K. Mahadevan, an aethiest and intellectual, and came to Delhi where she became part of his extended Hindu family.

Perhaps her passionate response to the need of Creches came also with her own motherhood. She loved her son very much but was frustrated by the ties imposed on her in a family with limited means and angered by the feeling that children were the sole responsibility of the Mother. She wrote several novels during this part of her life which were an escape from what she saw as her inactivity.

In 1969 it all began. Just opposite her house a builder was putting up a pavilion to commemorate the centenary of Gandhi's birth. A great number of Rajasthani migrant workers were being used as casual labour.

She watched the way the children would eek out an existence in the heat and dust of the site. It suddenly struck her that what was needed was a simple creche - a centre of quiet cleanliness and peace for the children to come to every day, which would give them a feeling of security and love; a second home where they could be given one good nutritious meal a day and basic medicine. So mushroomed the first creches, at Okla, USAID, and Parliament Street, usually under patchwork tin sheets and on kutcha floors - with a shared water pump, and no latrines. These were not so far removed from the children's own mobile home shelters. She believed that simplicity was the key to success and that the most important criterion was the quality and realism of the field workers themselves and their training on site, not their equipment, toys and facilities. Her creches could be packed up at the end of the day and put safely away, and transferred to the next site with the minimum of trouble. The next step was to get the idea of the mobile creche accepted by the major building contractors as a necessary part of their building sites and to convince the government of their importance. At the end of the Gandhi Centenary year, the government planners, remote from the field as they were, decided not to support the creche programme any more. Nothing daunted, Meera formed an executive committee out of her volunteers, and registered the Mobile Creches as a seperate society with a donation of Rs100 from a friend to start the bank account! Throughout the years 1969 - 1976 she fought to set up an organisation which had its roots in and amongst the people it was catering for. Persuasion, patience, guile, confrontation, she used them all, refusing to admit defeat. She antagonised some and endeared herself to others, continually shifting her ground to suit new situations (when accused of this she would reply with a Gandhian saying "I go from truth to truth"!) but she won. In 1976 she fell ill and cancer was diagnosed. The disease spread quickly and she died within the year, scarcely 47 years of age. How pleased she would be to know that from small beginnings there are now over 50 centres in New Delhi, Bombay and Pune catering not only for migrant construction workers' children in creches and balwadis (kindergardens) and general education for children up to 12 years of age, but also centres for working mothers in resettlement colonies and slums. More than 200,000 children have passed through the ever open doors and 400 trained workers see that Meera's original ideals are maintained for a network which 'sees the child as a whole being, with a need to be handled with love and respect.' What a difference her life has made to so many families here in India.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1992 -1993

President	Veena Dass	301 2713	(INDIA)
		301 0128	
1st Vice-President	Rebecca Mc Cullough	67 2336	(U.S.A.)
2nd Vice-President	Sarabjit Anup Singh	556 3788	(INDIA)
		833 2365	
Secretary	Joan Lee	643 6288	(U.K.)
Treasurer	Indra Rani Jerath	61 6632	(INDIA)
Membership	Claudia Deiss	60 3965	(AUSTRIA)
Hospitality	Raj Nanda	688 4833	(INDIA)
Newsletter Editor	Constance Gupta	61 8459	(U.S.A.)

GROUP LEADERS FOR 1992 - 1993

Book Circle	Mary Brill	60 0651	Ext. 2435
	Zakia Zaheer	332 7382,	332 9472
Chorus	Usha Srivastava	641 6621	
	Frances Clift	65 5981	
Cultural	Usha Venkateshwaran	225 0730	
	Jane Parker	60 1371	Ext. 496
Gourmet and Garden	Francoise Karim	63 1798	
	Bindu Talwar	683 1242,	63 1161
Excursions	Sarla Kumar	66 0445,	66 2879
	Margrit Heydemann	69 3341	
Focus	Gita Devi of Kapurthala	641 2029	
	Deep Dugal	556 3525,	833 2010
	Rebecca Mc Cullough	67 2336	
Visual and Performing Arts	Galina Drukov	688 5009,	605 0875
	Shanno Khurana	61 7236	
	Shakuntala Mahesh Chandra	644 0780	
	Sigrun Srivastava	646 8908	
Yoga	Indu Sahni	23 1832	

AUGUST AT A GALANCE

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>
Thursday 20th	Ashoka Hotel Chanakyapuri New Delhi 110021 Tel: 600121	<u>GENERAL MEETING</u> FESTIVALS OF INDIA
Friday 14th 3.00 p.m.	Home of Nayana Goradia 145 Sunder Nagar New Delhi 110003 Tel: 61 7859/61 5703	<u>VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS</u> (ART/CRAFT CIRCLE) Video "Invisible Strings"
Wednesday 19th 3.00 p.m.	Home of Veena Dass 27 Aurangzeb Road New Delhi 110011 Tel: 301 2713/301 0128	<u>INDIAN CULTURAL</u> "Ayurveda"
Wednesday 26th 3.00 p.m.	Home of Elzbeth Ostenfeld 24 Amrita Shergil Marg New Delhi 110003 Tel: 61 7980	<u>GOURMET AND GARDEN</u> Preparing Smoerrebroed
Thursday 27th 3.00 p.m.	French Cultural Centre 2 Aurangzeb Road New Delhi 110011	<u>VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS</u> (FILM CIRCLE) 'La Femme d'a côté'
Monday 31st 3.00 p.m.	Home of Gita Devi of Kapurthala B90/A Greater Kailash I New Delhi 110048 Tel: 641 2029	<u>FOCUS</u> Cross Cultural Marriages
Each Thursday 10.00 a.m.	Beginning Thursday 20th Home of Joya Reiser 56 Anand Lok New Delhi 110049 Tel: 6460709 Thursday 27th Home of Frances Clift K 27B Hauz Khas Tel: 65 5981	<u>CHORUS GROUP</u>