



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CLUB

DELHI



December 1992

MADRAS, TAMIL NADU
November 6, 1991

My Dear Members,

With the thunder of Diwali fireworks fresh in my mind, I send you this letter from Madras, where I have gone to make arrangements for a Contemporary Swedish Art exhibition. The exhibition, 'Invocation', will open in Madras on November 14 due to circumstances beyond my control, and it is therefore with much regret that I have to turn over the General Meeting on November 13 to another committee member.

The General Meeting program is one I certainly did not want to miss: a Panel Discussion on Alternative Medicine. Modern Science pushed aside much 'grassroots' knowledge about herbs and chemicals which had been used at the village level the world over for generations. Today there are several systematic efforts under way to retrieve this, often tribal, knowledge. In India, much of this knowledge is currently in use by local practitioners. We shall hear from some of them on the 13th.

In December, our General Meeting Program will be traditional: International Christmas songs from all corners of the world, including a Saint Lucia Celebration from Sweden.

Dorothea Zehnder has graciously offered her beautiful residence for our international Christmas on December 11.

To think that the time has already come to wish you:

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

With my warmest regards

Gunilla L. F. Kettis

GUNILLA L F KETTIS
President



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CLUB NEWSLETTER



December 1991

Twenty First Year

ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER

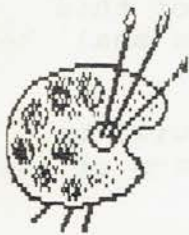
GENERAL MEETING



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS
Wednesday 11 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Dorothea Zehnder
Swiss Embassy, Nyaya Marg
Tel. 60-4225/6/7

As is customary for the December general meeting, the Chorus Group has prepared a special programme for us of songs from around the world. There will also be a *Lucia*, the Swedish traditional 'angel' of light. December 13th is Santa Lucia Day, when every year a blonde maiden is chosen, both nationally as well as in schools and in homes, to be the Lucia. The festival dates from pre-Christian times, and formerly sacrifices were made at midwinter to bring back the light. Now wreaths are made of cranberries and loganberries, saffron buns are offered to the master of the house, sheaves of wheat are offered to the birds, and bowls of porridge are put out for the elves: it is a time to take care of everyone, not just your own household. Come and celebrate with us!

ARTS AND CRAFTS



WORKSHOP
Monday 2 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Sheila Thadani-Chauhan
A-17 Mayfair Gardens
Hauz Khas Enclave
Tel. 65-1997

Now is the time to try your own hand with colours and paper in the lovely surroundings of Sheila's home; she is herself a painter, so come and be inspired! Bring your own paper and colours.

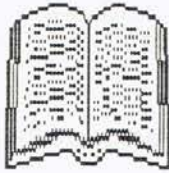
COOKING CIRCLE



SWEDISH CHRISTMAS TREATS
Friday 6 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Gunilla Kettis
Swedish Embassy, Nyaya Marg
Tel. 60-4961

Gunilla will demonstrate some of the well-known Swedish Christmas delicacies, including cookies.

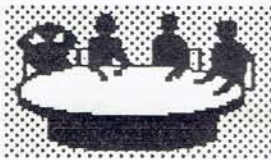
BOOK CIRCLE



'SUCH A LONG JOURNEY'
Thursday 12 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Lakshmi Chandra
A11/11 Vasant Vihar
Tel. 687-4588

Rohinton Mistry's first novel was one of 5 short-listed from the original 100 for the British literary award, the Booker Prize. Mistry was born in Bombay, but now lives in Canada. The novel is set in Bombay against the backdrop of war in the Indian sub-continent and the birth of Bangladesh. It tells the story of Gustad Noble and his struggle to maintain his own self-image and integrity in the face of the changes which confront himself and his family. Priced at Rs 50, the book is widely available; please read it and come prepared for a lively discussion.

OPEN FORUM



THE GODDESSES WITHIN US
Monday 16 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Prama Bhandari
9 Padmini Enclave
Hauz Khas
Tel. 686-2807, 66-2525

At the October meeting, someone asked: 'Why Goddesses, and why Greek Goddesses?' The use of Goddesses in these meetings is intended to symbolise in a vivid image different aspects of female character types. The use of specifically Greek Goddesses is to draw on the universally familiar archetypes of Greek mythology and was prompted by a book called 'The Goddesses Within Every Woman'. Using these Goddess archetypes as a structural basis for our discussions, it is hoped to evoke what Gloria Steinem called the 'Aha! Response' at the recognition of a familiar syndrome. After November's meeting involving some role-play, December's discussions will aim to identify some of these Goddesses within us, discover the potential heroine within any woman, see which Goddesses are wounded and which are healthy, and find the link between the Goddesses, illness and healing.

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL




A BULGARIAN AFTERNOON
Wednesday 18 December, 3.00 pm
Home of Maya Savova
Bulgarian Embassy
EP 16/17 Chandragupta Marg
Tel. 60-8220


One of our newest members, the recently arrived Bulgarian Ambassadors, has very kindly agreed to host the International Cultural circle at an afternoon of Bulgarian music, dance, costumes and food.


NOTICEBOARD

Archives: *Mea culpa*, there is a newsletter file, and we have now found it (see November newsletter). Oops!

 Changes of telephone number:

Dolores Dadachanji's numbers are now 688-5090 and 688-3874; and Shakti Gupta's is 462-4761.

 Resignations: Sadly, two more members have left the club: Vijaya Deshmukh has moved to Maharashtra and Desta Hunt has returned to the USA. She hopes to keep in touch with members, and her address is: 6436, Pinia Street, Alexandra, Virginia 22312, USA. Telephone: (703) 914-0122.

 New Members: After so many months of 'sad face' graphics, it is a pleasure to be able to introduce her 'happy' counterpart, as we welcome a great many new members:

Esther Adefemiwa	Nigeria	21 Olaf Palme Marg	68-8416
Isabel S. Beauge	Argentina	13 Panchsheel Marg	301-6467
Mary P. Brill	United States	American Embassy	60-0651
Frances M. Clift	United Kingdom	K-27B Hauz Khas	65-5981
Susan M. Conway	United Kingdom	144 Malcha Marg	301-4549
Arame Diop	Senegal	A-56 Vasant Marg	687-3875
Zeinab A. Elmolla	Egypt	A8/8 Vasant Vihar	687-2804
Marilyn Ewart	United Kingdom	22A Aurangzeb Road	301-3164
Inge Paynter	Norway	4 Aurangzeb Road	301-5356
Maya Savova	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Embassy	60-8220
Vania Theophilou	Cyprus	18 Friends Colony West	63-1391

FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD IN DECEMBER

Christ's birth may or may not have occurred in midwinter, but it was not celebrated at that date until the 4th century, when Christianity adapted aspects of popular pagan cults. These kept 25th December - the Roman winter solstice - as 'the birthday of the unconquered sun' (an anniversary appropriated to Christ as the 'Sun of Righteousness') and the preceding week as Saturnalia, whose merry-making and social levelling were equally well suited to the joyful celebration of Christianity's advent. In northern Europe, the new festival subsequently acquired a great many more customs from the Germanic midwinter feast of 'Yule', and by the mid 11th century the Nativity, Roman and Yule elements were fast synthesising into a recognizable 'Christ's Mass'. The Protestant Reformation stamped on some of the associated jollities- sword-dancing, wassailing, yule logs- and in the rationalist 18th century festivities declined. But under the 19th century religious revival, carol parties sang from door to door, the Christmas tree spread from Germany (promoted by Prince Albert), Christmas cards were introduced, Christmas crackers were invented in 1846 by a London baker, inspired by a crackling Christmas fire, and Charles Dickens wrote his 'Christmas Carol'. Holly, ivy and mistletoe, all magical plants because they bear fruit in a dead season, were used for decoration. Father Christmas/Santa Claus, based on the 4th century St Nicholas, has personified the season since at least the 15th century. His Christmas Eve visits down chimneys, bearing gifts from a reindeer-drawn sleigh, derive from the USA. *Sinte Klaas*, who filled the shoes of Dutch-American children on 6 December, and the German-American *Kriss-Kringle* (who rewarded good and punished bad children) were also grafted on, and re-crossed the Atlantic in the 1870s.

GARDENING NOTES FOR DECEMBER



December is the time to sit back and enjoy the colourful and sumptuous 'fruits' of all the labour of the last few months.

Annuals: In case of frost, cover delicate shrubs and potted plants with a straw thatch, leaving the eastern side exposed. Water less frequently, after testing the lower layer of soil for moisture content.

Cannas: Feed with well-rotted farmyard manure as the plants fade. Flood the beds towards the end of the month to

protect from frost.

Chrysanthemums: As flowers begin to fade, don't forget to attach identification labels to each plant.

Fruits: Prune grapes, peach and plum trees. Remove weak, dead and too low branches.

Roses: Remove all wild rose suckers which come up below the budded portion of your bush. Cuttings for root stock can be planted until January; begin budding on healthy root stocks now and continue until March.

Vegetables: Continue successive sowings of beets, carrots, lettuce, radish, spinach and turnips until the end of December. In case of insect attack, spray another dose of 'Malathion' (2cc per litre of water).

Happy Gardening!

Kavita Ratra

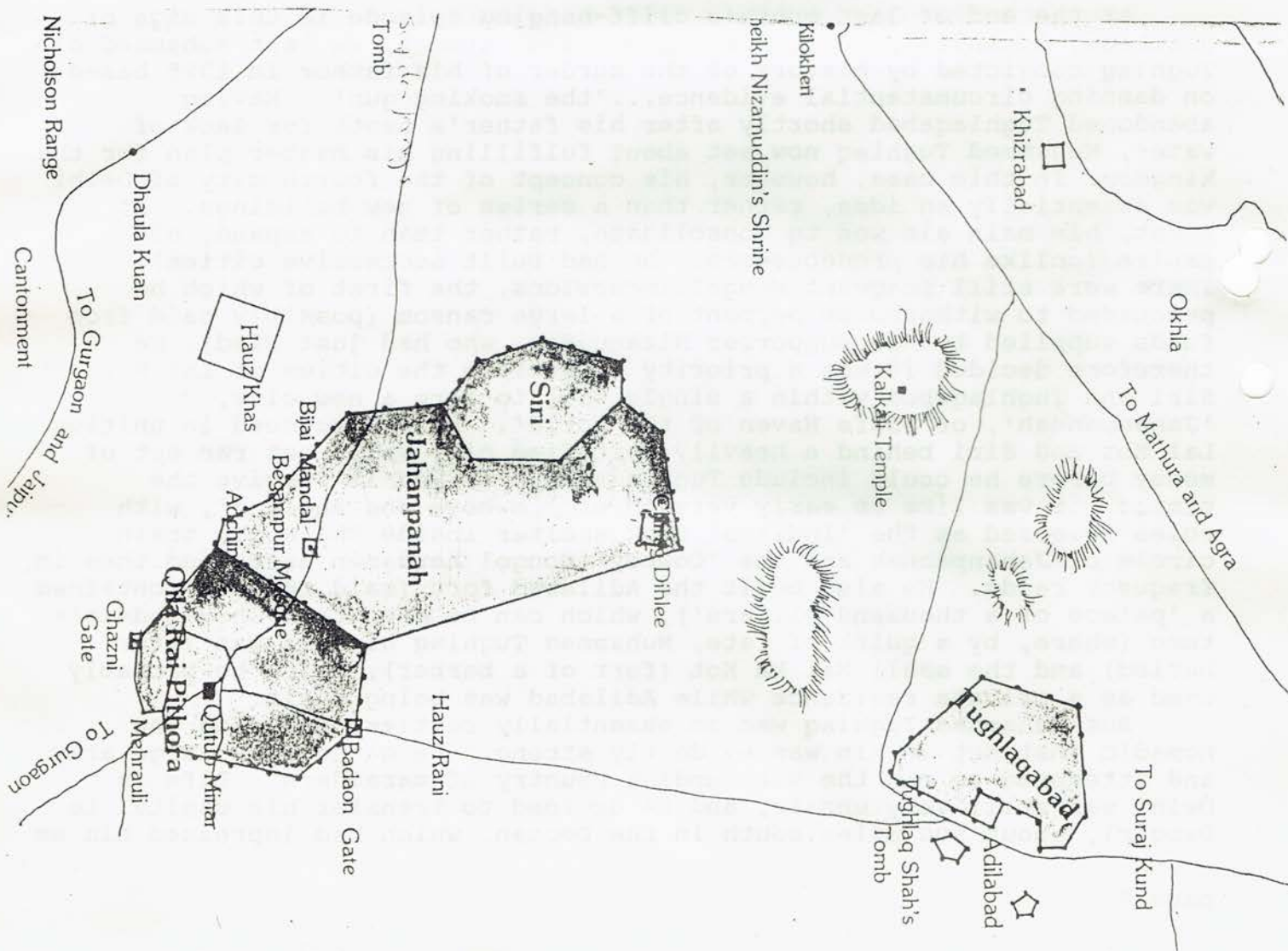
DELHI DAYS

At the end of last month's cliff-hanging episode in this saga of ambition, conspiracy, bloodshed, power and revenge, we left Mohammed bin Tughlaq convicted by history of the murder of his father in 1325 based on damning circumstantial evidence... 'the smoking gun'. Having abandoned Tughlaqabad shortly after his father's death for lack of water, Muhammed Tughlaq now set about fulfilling his master plan for the kingdom. In this case, however, his concept of the fourth city of Delhi was essentially an *idea*, rather than a series of new buildings. At first, his main aim was to consolidate, rather than to expand, his empire (unlike his predecessors, who had built successive cities). There were still frequent Mongol incursions, the first of which he persuaded to withdraw on payment of a large ransom (possibly paid from funds supplied by his supporter Nizamuddin, who had just died). He therefore decided it was a priority to enclose the cities of Lal Kot, Siri and Tughlaqabad within a single wall to form a new city, 'Jahanpannah', or 'Safe Haven of the World'. He did succeed in uniting Lal Kot and Siri behind a heavily fortified city wall, but ran out of money before he could include Tughlaqabad. If you'll forgive the simile, it was like an early version of 'Cowboys and Indians', with roles reversed as the 'Indians' took shelter inside the wagon train circle of Jahanpannah and the 'Cowboy' Mongol herdsmen harrassed them in frequent raids. He also built the Adilabad fort (said to have contained a 'palace of a thousand pillars'), which can be seen from Ghiyasuddin's tomb (where, by a quirk of fate, Muhammed Tughlaq himself was later buried) and the small Nai ka Kot (fort of a barber), which he probably used as a private residence while Adilabad was being built.

But Muhammed Tughlaq was an essentially restless man, and the nomadic instinct in him was evidently strong. He gathered a large army and attempted to rid the surrounding country of marauders. Life in Delhi was still very unsafe, and he decided to transfer his capital to Deogiri, about 500 miles south in the Deccan, which had impressed him as

an attractive site. In 1338 he ordered the inhabitants of Delhi to move there in a body. A revolt at Multan soon brought him back, and the people were also allowed to return; but in 1340 they had again to set out for Deogiri, and he saw to it that they had no inducement to remain by burning their houses. It is said that 'not a cat or dog was left among the ruins.' A new capital was begun in Deogiri, but famine struck and the people were again permitted to return to Delhi in 1345. Throughout this time, rebellion was rife and, while seeking to put down an uprising in Sind, he died near Tatta, on the Indus, in 1351, after ruling for some 26 years. Ferishta sums up his reign: 'he seems to have laboured, with no contemptible abilities, to be detested by God, and feared and abhorred by all men'. This is pretty harsh, as he was undoubtedly also a patron of literature and founder of colleges and a good general. But he was above all a great strategist and empire-builder, with a view of an united community in an extensive kingdom. His move to Deogiri was not a mere capricious whim, as it is sometimes depicted, but a necessary part of his overall plan. The charitable description of him would be 'a man ahead of his time' or a 'man of ideas'. He was not in any sense of the word, however, a democrat, and his attitude to the people (to paraphrase a later ruler in another country) was: 'When you've got them by the throat, their hearts and minds will follow'.

Parts of the Jahanpannah walls can still be seen, although they have been removed over long stretches and built over. The walls cross the Delhi-Mehrauli road about 14.5 kilometres from Delhi, and can be seen at several points, such as to the north of Begampuri and south of Khirki mosques, to the north of Chiragh-Delhi, at Satpula, and close to the Hauz-Rani gate of Qila Rai Pithora. Jahanpannah is also commemorated as a park in Chiragh Delhi.





To mark the Club's 21st birthday, we have asked our first President, Shakuntala Mahesh Chandra, for some of her:

REMINISCENCES AND RECOLLECTIONS

On 11 November 1991, the Women's International Club was 21 years old. Coming of age and becoming a major is an important event in a person's life, and an equally significant milestone in the life of the WIC. It is a good thing at this stage in its growth, and also relevant for future planning, to review and assess the progress made by the club from the time it started, to see whether its past record, its present commitment and its future development reflect the hopes and aspirations of the founding members.

It was hoped that the WIC would be able to create a warm and friendly atmosphere which would encourage international cultural exchange. This kind of atmosphere was successfully created, and soon members began building cultural bridges that enhanced their understanding and appreciation of each other's culture. Friendships blossomed and thrived, even when friends were living on opposite sides of the globe.

It was further hoped that the club would provide the members with a suitable forum for stimulating talks and discussions that would improve their minds. This was achieved through the monthly general social meetings, and the special interest group activities. The Club has been most fortunate in having a wealth of talented and dedicated members, who were willing to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to working on the Executive Committee or being group leaders.

From the time the WIC started, the Executive Committees have worked hard to arrange programmes of cultural and educational interest, covering a wide range of topics. These topics covered family-related issues, like the need for child care, the shaping of a new health system that included euthanasia, innovative educational methods that emphasized the importance of character formation and stressed the concept of individual responsibility for one's actions, at whatever age.

There have also been a number of talks focussing on the social and economic problems of working mothers pursuing full-time careers, and the difficulties faced by single parent families, and 'latch key children'. Some unusual discussions gave fascinating insights into the varieties of human experience, religious and otherwise, that are encountered by women in different cultures.

The monthly social meetings, which most members attend, are an important part of the WIC's activities but, according to the majority of members, it is the special interest groups that are the heart and soul of the club. These have been a special feature of the club from its inception and their popularity shows that members find it far more enjoyable to share a hobby with others than to pursue it in solitary

splendour.

The WIC has been evolving continuously over the last 21 years and in the process has built a strong foundation, so that its image is now one of confidence and maturity. Like a human being, however, the club had to go through all the various stages of growth before attaining this image. In the first stage of growth were the 'teething troubles' that caused financial constraints, followed by the 'growing pains' due to the rapid increase in membership.

At the inaugural meeting held at the India International Centre on 11 November 1970, and soon after, there was a flood of applications for membership - which was very gratifying for the founding members as it clearly showed the need for such a club in Delhi. At the same time, the growth in numbers necessitated some serious thinking about suitable places for the club's activities and the hospitality involved at these meetings which, in view of our limited funds, posed a big problem. These problems were solved by the generosity of members, who willingly offered their homes and their hospitality for the general social meetings, and for the group activities.

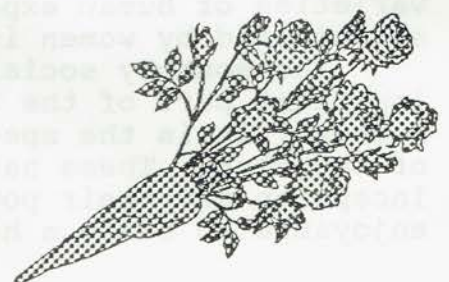
This charming practice of having the meetings in the beautiful homes of the members, and being welcomed by the hostess, imparts a personal touch to the meetings, and a unique character to the club. This would inevitably change if the club were to become bigger, as some members want it to, as very few private homes would be able to accommodate more members than they do at present.

When the constitution of the WIC was being framed, the size of the club was considered and discussed at great length. After careful consideration, it was finally decided to limit the membership to 200 members, half of them being Indian women and the other half being women from the international community. It was intended to be a fairly small club so that there would be more interaction between members. The quota for Indian members was soon filled, and successive Executive Committees have grappled with the question of how to take in more Indian women, as the waiting list grew longer. Then in 1989 the Executive Committee decided to admit new Indian members on a 10 year basis.

The next stage after 'growing pains' was the period of 'adolescence'. This period was one of anxiety, as some members felt that the WIC was going off the rails because certain procedures for nomination and election of office bearers for the Executive Committee were not being properly followed, thus causing confusion and uncertainty about the slate of office-bearers. This was contrary to the friendly spirit in which it had always been done in the past, so to clarify and settle the matter the constitution was amended in 1986, and since then the club has been functioning smoothly.

To encourage members' husbands to take an interest in our club, it was decided to have a function that husbands could attend. It was a great success, so Husbands' Night became an annual feature of the WIC year.

Many members have said that the Women's International Club has enriched their lives, and one member associated with the club for a long time summed WIC up for all of us when she described it in the words of an old song - 'A Many-Splendoured Thing'.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1991-92

President	Gunilla L.F. Kettis	60-5749	(Sweden)
1st Vice-President	Mona Aggarwal	329-4482	(India)
2nd Vice President	Janet Chawla	61-1821	(U.S.A.)
Hospitality	Niru Kapur	641-5855	(India)
Membership	Halina Bialy	38-6816	(Poland)
Newsletter	Laura Sykes	67-6994	(U.K.)
Secretary	Nandini Pattani	301-6713	(U.K.)
Treasurer	Ramindra Ajit Singh	67-6507	(India)

GROUP LEADERS FOR 1991-92

Arts and Crafts	Claudia Deiss	60-3965
	Savi Prakash	331-1683
Book Circle	Nayana Goradia	61-7859, 61-5703
	Jean Gurney	687-5810
Chorus Group	Patricia Stephenson	680-2304
	Usha Srivastava	641-6621
Cooking	Raj Nanda	688-4833, 688-2395
	Micheline St-Cyr	683-0722
Dance	Kavita Ratra	61-7252, 61-5662
	Blanca Schmenger	67-5840
Excursions	Margrit Heydemann	69-3341
	Sarabjit ('Gugu') Singh	329-1788
Indian Cultural	Vinu Baig	683-8946, 683-5801
	Pamela Evans	60-4212
International Cultural	Sumru Fenmen	60-2803
	Anginee Roma Dass	67-1739, 67-6152
Museum Study Group	Bapsi Nariman	686-2980
Music	Audrey Fowler	60-1371 ext 494
	Meera Burman	329-3873
Nostalgic Singalong	Dolores ('Dolly')	688-5090, 688-3874
	Dadachanji	
Open Forum	Prama Bhandari	686-2807, 662-525
	Sofia de Ortiz	687-6423
Theatre	Gita Devi of Kapurthala	641-2029
	Surinder Dugal Jain	69-9448
Yoga	Indu Sahni	23-1832

DECEMBER AT A GLANCE



<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>
Wednesday 11th 3.00 pm	Home of Dorothea Zehnder Swiss Embassy, Nyaya Marg	GENERAL MEETING Christmas Meeting
Monday 2nd 3.00 pm	Home of Sheila Thadani-Chauhan A-17 Mayfair Gardens	<u>Arts and Crafts</u> Workshop
Friday 6th 12.00 noon	Home of Gunilla Kettis Swedish Embassy, Nyaya Marg	<u>Cooking Circle</u> Swedish Christmas
Thursday 12th 3.00 pm	Home of Lakshmi Chandra A11/11 Vasant Vihar	<u>Book Circle</u> Rohinton Mistry
Monday 16th 3.00 pm	Home of Prama Bhandari 9 Padmini Enclave, Hauz Khas	<u>Open Forum</u> Greek Goddesses
Wednesday 18th 3.00 pm	Home of Maya Savova Bulgarian Embassy	<u>Int. Cultural</u> Bulgaria




MERRY
CHRISTMAS!

