

GNC

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5
JULY 2016

CONNECT

FOR MEMBERS OF THE GANDHINAGAR CLUB ONLY



**SAVE
RAIN
WATER**



Dear Members,

It's hard to believe that nearly two years have gone by since GNC Connect came into existence. When the magazine was

being introduced, we debated whether it should be a monthly or bi-monthly affair and looking back, I'm glad we decided on the bi-monthly time-line, given the challenges in putting together quality content for every issue. Ably supported by a wonderful sub-committee, we've overcome the challenges that inevitably crop up from time to time.

It would be easy to outsource this activity to a third party but as we've seen in the past, the quality of the magazine suffers when it's not in our control and ends up reflecting poorly on GNC as an institution. I'm very glad that we've been able to provide you with an uninterrupted 11 issues now, as we go into the final one under my Editorship in September, when I'll hand over the baton to the next Committee Member.

In this issue: Pavithra Venkatagopalan carries on from where she left off and part 3 of her adventure series makes for a great read. Who knew that descendants of Alexander the Great would roam the mountains of the Himalayas? Read all about it in 'Always in the War Path'. Thanvi Srikant may have gone to

Germany on an internship but that gave her just the perfect opportunity to travel and pen a lovely article for all of you bitten by the travel bug in 'Look forward to the journey'. RV Rajan reminisces on the good old workhorse that many of us grew up loving, the humble Ambassador car in 'Amby – Mechanic's delight; Owner's Nightmare'. Malavika Kamath explores the beautiful country of Scotland and returns with many a tale to tell in 'Traversing the Scottish Highlands'. The Foodie Diaries does what he does best and gives you the low-down on places to visit around the City. All this and lots more in another special issue of GNC Connect!

Regards,
 KP Balakumar (B103)
 Committee Member – Library, Magazine, Website and PR.

Team GNC Connect: *Thanvi Srikant Vinay Kamath Sowmya Kumar Arjun Janani Govindankutty Karthik Athreya*

LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2014-16

SL.NO	NAME	M.NO	PORTFOLIO	CON. NOS	EMAIL ID
1	MR.B.VENKATESH	V101	PRESIDENT	9884019021 242337357	venkat@ariel.net.in
2	MR.V.LAKSHMAN	L102	VICE PRESIDENT	9884092480	lakshman@nucsat.com
3	MR.R.V.GOPALAN	G164	HON.TREASURER	9884239590	ergopalan@gmail.com
4	MR.ASHOK SARRANGAN	A129	HON.SECRETARY	9444422444	ashoksarrangan@gmail.com
5	MR.K.P.BALAKUMAR	B103	COMMITTEE MEMBER PR, LIBRARY WEBSITE & MAGAZINE	9940025110	kp.balakumar@gmail.com
6	MR.A.GANESAN	G134	COMMITTEE MEMBER SPORTS	9840267405	ganesanannaswamy@gmail.com
7	MR.S.MAHESH	M151	COMMITTEE MEMBER ENTERTAIN- MENT	9384824333	subashproperties@gmail.com
8	MR.S.SUBRAMANIAN	S195	COMMITTEE MEMBER BAR	9840720728	ssubbu64@gmail.com
9	MR.P.S.SRINIVAS	S243	COMMITTEE MEMBER CATERING	8144415106	pundisrini@gmail.com
10	SAMUEL SURENDRAN.D	S244	COMMITTEE MEMBER MAINTEN- NANCE, PROJECT, GUEST HOUSE AND BANQUET	9444394999	d.samuelsurendran@gmail.com

PUBLISHER

Ashok Sarrangan, Honorary Secretary
Managing Editor
 KP Balakumar – Committee Member –
 Magazine, Library, PR And Website

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Utpalakshi
SOPHISTICATION IN SILK





Dear Members,

In the previous issue we had mentioned that the Renovation work would commence by 20th May 2016. We are happy to inform that the work commenced as scheduled and is progressing in the right direction.

Those of you who visit the club would have noted that the demolition work is almost completed and reconstruction work has started. Building of ramp and steps in the front entrance and platform with underneath storage space is nearing completion. In the next couple of days floor tiling work will commence in the lobby and sports lounge.

Windows and door frames are being fitted. The Leo Coffee counter is being shifted to the lawn area in a premium space. Though in the original scheme of things Leo coffee stall was to be retained in the deck area, change had to be effected to make the Sports Lounge spacious and be equipped with catering service.

Electrical, air-conditioning works will be taken up in the 2nd week of this month. Orders have been placed for furniture and they are expected to be delivered by the month end.

Going by the pace at which the work is being carried out, we are confident of completing it on schedule.

It must be mentioned that after taking up the work there have been a few course corrections and changes to the original plan, though no major deviations. These changes have helped to make the place more functional and also effecting optimises the space.

The pending Health Spa service to be located at the basement of swimming pool toilets is getting delayed due to renoation work at the deck area. No sooner this is completed, the spa will be made ready and put for use.

We are extremely happy that the Architects and the contractors to the renovation are totally committed to deliver quality work well within the stipulated time period. They are present in the club on most days to monitor the progress and are extremely receptive to suggestions and last minute changes. Weekly project meetings are conducted every Monday in the evenings session for review of work completed and for plans the week ahead.

Once the plastering work is over, painting of the club will be undertaken. M/s.Asian Paints have been shortlisted and will be entrusted with the work.

The Tennis Court Renovation is also going on as planned and is expected to be completed as scheduled.

The Dump waiter would be installed and be ready by the time the renovation work is completed.

On account of the renovation work Members have been put to some inconvenience to which we sincerely apologise. We request the members to please bear with us for a few more days which may not be beyond the end of this month.





Two separate temporary entrances have been created. One on the B.Ramachandra Adhithanar Road/ 4th main road, Gandhinagar to enable members access all the facilities inside the club building, and another on the Crescent park Road to use only the Swimming Pool facility. Entries for Members from the lawn have been restricted.

Though quite a few prospective service providers have shown interest to put up shop in the Roof top area, we are putting it on hold for sometime since the renovation work is on and as a result the current inconvenience for movement of Members and Guests.

Upon request from Members we propose to carry out some minor refurbishments in the Bar.

This will also be taken up and completed in a next couple of months.

Consequent to the decision of the General Body, we are engaged in the process of taking in 50 Resident Members. We are glad to have received 70 applications along with full payment. The process of short listing the 1st 50 members and interview by the screening committee are planned from this week. As is the procedure, list of the 1st 20 Members who had submitted their application along with payment have been put up on the Notice Board and the list of the balance 30 will follow sequentially.

While only 50 Members will be admitted we plan to come back to this General Body for its approval to admit the balance 20 members. The fact that demand for Resident Membership with our club is overwhelming even at the cost of Rs.8 lac, speaks of great tribute to the stature of our Club.

Entertainment programs in the lawn area have been affected on account of work being carried on in the area. By early 4th week of this month we hope to resume entertainment activities from where we left.

While there have been no special activities excepting those mentioned already there was an Intra Club Snooker Tournament held on 29th May 2016 with a participation of 36 Members.

Winners are Mr.S.K.Rameshwar (R341) & Mr.Bhalchandra (B178) Runners up Mrs.Sowmini Srinivasan (S246) & Mr.S.Ram (R109). We are thankful to M/s.Leo Coffee for having come forward and sponsored Rs.10000/- towards the Tournament.

We thank the members for their kind co-operation & suggestions to the project and look forward to their continued support to make the project a grand success.

Thanks & best wishes.
Ashok Sarrangan
– Secretary (A129)

A WALK THROUGH THE GNC WEBSITE



It's been over 6 months since the new revamped GNC Website went Live (www.gandhinagarclub.in). Though a little behind schedule (I'd wanted it go Live by July-Aug 2015), the website has been well designed and meets the following requirements:

1. Allows members to log in and pay their bills at any time
2. Update member details (Address, phone number etc)
3. Gives any visitor, wanting to learn about the club, an overview of our facilities, timings and charges
4. Enables members to stay updated with the latest announcements at the club via the section, Buzz at GNC
5. All issues of Chennai's best Club magazine, GNC Connect, are uploaded on the Website for easy download and reading at leisure.

Of the above, the single most useful feature has to be the ability for members to pay their bills, via the website, at any time.

We've designed the payment feature to provide additional data to the member:

1. On logging into your account, a member will see details of his/her latest bill (Bill No, Bill Date, Bill Amount and Due Date)
2. One can pay part, full or even extra over the bill amount.
3. Two additional columns tell you whether you've fully paid your outstanding (Amount Due Against the Above Bill) and the Current Balance in your Account (on a rolling basis, adds up amounts spent in the current billing cycle). For example, if your Bill for June was Rs 1500 and you paid Rs 2000, the Amount Due column will show 0 and the current balance in your account will show as Rs 500 (this number will adjust as the days go by, based on your spend at the club)
4. When you make a payment towards your account, a charge of 2.4% is added as Bank Charges.

5. Payments can be made via Credit Card, Debit Card or Internet Banking.
6. Online Payments, once made, take 2-3 days to reflect in your account since it takes that long for the funds to be credited into the Club's bank account.

As already communicated earlier, to log in to the website, one needs a user name and password. The User Name is your membership number and the password can be availed by calling the club office.

Please remember to change your password after your first login.

Putting the Website together was a learning experience for me personally, given that I don't have a tech background. The website designers, Broken Glass, did a good job, albeit with slight delays in the delivery timeline. I engaged with a professional photographer to cover all our facilities, given that our Website, like the Magazine, represents another face of the club and contributes to forming a positive image of GNC.

I'm very happy to note that quite a few members have been using the website over the past 6 months to pay their bills, thus saving them a trip to the club just for this purpose. I do hope more of you use this convenient feature. Should you encounter any problems, do send in an email to the club office.

Send Request

If you'd like to update any of the above member details, kindly fill the form below and submit

Subject:

Message:

Submit

KP Balakumar B103
Committee Member

YOGA FOR BETTER POSTURE



Shwetha Seshadri
D/o R Seshadri (S 170)
Kindergarten teacher & yoga trainer
with special training in Kids Yoga

How does practicing yoga benefit you? The top benefits that come to your mind would be increase in flexibility and reduction in stress levels. Am I right? But that's not all! Yoga has many hidden benefits that you may not be aware of. Let me start with saying a few minutes of yoga everyday can do wonders to your body and mind. So if you haven't already started, try it out NOW! Spend at least 10 minutes every day to do a few sun salutations (surya namaskar) and Pranayama. Once you notice the positive change in yourself you'll crave for more! Trust me on that one, that's how I started my practice.

Now let's talk about how yoga can help improve your posture.

Are you slouching right now, as you read this? Do you always look for something to lean on while standing?

If you do then its time you started working on your posture. I'm sure you would've heard this from your mom or grandparents in the past, but I don't mind saying it again. Keeping a good posture is extremely important for your spine; after all it's your spine that supports you all day long!

A bad posture not only results in medical issues like chronic back pain and osteoporosis, it also messes with your confidence and happiness levels! I'm not kidding! The next time you are low on confidence or feeling a little upset notice your posture.

Often, it is lifestyle that contributes to poor posture. Long hours at the desk, long commutes and frequent travel take a toll on the body. Also, we are distracted with our work or personal life that we don't think twice about the way we sit or walk!

Here are a few quick yoga moves that will help strengthen your back and improve your posture.

Tadasana:

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart
- Raise the hands above the head and interlock fingers, pressing the palms toward the ceiling, elbows stretched completely. Begin to feel a lengthening of the spine.
- Lift the ribcage and raise the heels, coming onto the toes. Stay in this pose for up to one minute, or as long as is comfortable.

Bhujangasana:

- Lie down on the stomach
- Place the palms next to the chest.
- Begin to raise the chest and ribcage off the floor, leaving the rest of the body (from hips to toes) on the mat.



- Elbows should be bent and remain tucked into the waist.
- Slowly lower yourself down onto the mat on an exhale.

Sarpasana:

- Lie flat on your stomach
- Bring your arms behind your back clasping the hands together
- Rest the forehead on the ground and relax the whole body.
- Inhale deeply expanding the chest and abdomen as much as possible.
- Begin to lift the shoulders and chest off the mat by contracting the back muscles and tensing the arms. Raise the body as high as you can without causing any strain.
- After a comfortable length of time slowly lower the body to the floor while exhaling. Completely relax the body in the starting position. Allow respiration to return to normal.

Gomukh asana:

- Sit down with legs stretched out.
- Cross your legs with the right knee directly above the left knee.
- Bring the left arm up towards the ceiling, Bend the left elbow, bringing the left hand down the center of your back. Bring the right arm out to the right side, bend the elbow and bring the right arm up the center of your back.
- Hold hands behind the back keeping the shoulder and chest open.
- Hold this posture for 30 seconds. Relax the arms.
- Repeat on the other side.



LOOK FORWARD TO THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE DESTINATION!

Exploring Europe by Train

Thanvi Srikant (S563)

As I read 'The High Mountains of Portugal' by Yann Martel, I occasionally glance at the window to observe the beautiful scenery that whizzes past me. I'm yet to visit Portugal, but I do see high mountains on the horizon. In the foreground, carpets of green seem to roll out endlessly. Perfectly trimmed bushes reflect their greenish hue on the streams flowing beside them. Occasionally, a few farmers' houses stand out amidst the lush natural beauty. There's no doubt that the most scenic views are the ones you see on a train journey.

My train journeys around Europe in the last few weeks have been truly exciting.

These have been extra-special because I have had the experience of travelling alone, which is something I haven't done in the last 20 years!

Given that my destinations were pretty far apart, I have had to travel nearly 6-7 hours by train, with stops in between. The long travel time might sound a little arduous. On the contrary, each journey is an adventure.

Pursuing my summer internship at a University town near Stuttgart, I decided to spend a few weekends meeting friends of mine who are interning in different parts of Germany.

Every time I travel, I have to switch at least 3 trains before reaching my city of interest within or outside Germany. This involves staying alert during travel time, ensuring you know your platform numbers correctly and finding a seat that isn't likely to be reserved. However, the real challenge lies in doing the marathon runs between short train changes.

For instance, there have been times when I had just 5 minutes to change from platform 2 to platform 33, nearly knocking down people screaming 'entschuldigung' in fear of missing the next train.

With a zeal to explore as much of Europe as I can, I have travelled nearly every other weekend by train. Sometimes, you might find yourself feeling exhausted. However, an elderly gentleman I met on the train once told me in jest that I could probably become an expert on train travel. On that note, I have decided to pass on some newfound 'travel gyaan' to my readers:

Meet and greet!

This reminds me of the times when my parents would talk endlessly with the person sitting on the opposite berth in Indian trains. Back then, I would be a little sceptical about it, but now my perspective has completely changed.

It turns out that getting to know the people living around you, is actually pretty interesting. Of course, in exchange you may have to give some vague details about yourself, but that's completely your choice. There are chances you are never going to meet this person again. But if you're lucky, you might make a new friend and even connect on Facebook!

Hobbies, Self-discovery and introspection

Long train journeys provide the best opportunities for you to do the things you never had time to do. Be it light reading, listening to music, watching a movie on your laptop, writing a poem, or sketching a picture of the water bottle in front of you, there is no better environment that can give you so much inner peace!

When you hear a familiar language

The 'Mera Desh Mahaan' surge of patriotism sweeps in and overpowers all your other emotions. Before you know it, you've already had a glimpse of your fellow Indian's life history.

Unfortunately, we Indians being linguistically diverse resort to English as our sole mode of communication! (Very convenient for the eavesdroppers on the train) That's your cue to speak our National language. Just pray that your Hindi can be understood!

Travel light!

You have absolutely no idea how many people will be subjected to the blows delivered by your suitcase.

Their nasty stares and comments can cause deep wounds that take pretty long to heal (especially if you don't understand what they're saying). A well-organised backpack and a shoulder-bag should do fine for a weekend trip!

The 'Are you a student?' question

I have seen many students travel over the weekends. If you are one yourself, you should break the ice and start a conversation.

This is the best way to meet someone your age. You learn about other courses, universities, cultures, festivals and more!

Having travelled to cities in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria in one and a half months, I have had the opportunity to meet several interesting people during my train journeys. These include a group of garrulous Bangladeshi Civil Service Officers, a German musician who is a big fan of Asha Bhosle, an NRI student based in Delhi who loves to travel, an Estonian who works in the shipping industry, a part-time student heading back to her hometown, an exchange student from the U.S., a Greek woman who detests train delays, an elderly German woman who gave me an insight into climate change and an Italian restaurateur who sings Hindi songs!

However beautiful my destinations have been, the journeys have been equally beautiful. If you really want to have a glimpse of world, you must meet the diverse people living in it!

Try going on a solo trip, make new friends and discover a new path of life. Carpe diem!





ALAPUZHA & AMBALAPUZHA

- K.Natarajan (N-134)

If you have a couple of days at your disposal to enjoy and relax amidst greenery and waters, amongst the so many places in the GOD'S OWN COUNTRY (Kerala), I would suggest the twin towns of Alapuzha & Ambalapuzha, that are about 15 KM apart, as your destination.

Alapuzha is the Venice of India with canals criss-crossing the town along with the backwaters running parallel to the coast. We have seen plenty of writings & photographs in the net and other publications about the extensive backwaters including the charming Kumarakom, Vembanad lake, Coconut Groves, resorts, beaches, etc., however, here I am confining only to the two towns and the local attractions to emphasize that there is plenty to enjoy here, and generally missed by many.

The best way of exploring these places is by hiring a taxi or an auto for two full days since the drivers know every nook & corner, and narrate the local history in their Malayalam+Tamil+Hindi mix. An auto will be better if one can take the strain, to enter/traverse certain locations.

Ride along the narrow roads of Alapuzha with local shops & houses on one side and a canal on the other side, and also bungalows on the opposite side of canal banks. Enroute, one will be thrilled to watch the fishermen on their boats, the local ferry used to cross the canals, small boats with tourists, and when you join them in the backwaters, you come across the small & big houseboats in different sizes, shapes, designs, etc. It is the beauty of the nature with lots of human contribution that exhilarating to the eyes, mind & soul with the chirping of the birds that is pleasing to the ears.



The jetty along another bigger canal is equally rejoicing. Outside Alapuzha, branching off from the main road NH47, near Paravoor, between the two towns, one would come across another breathtaking view of the Kollam-Kottapuram Waterway for Marvel Jetty & Lakeland Cruises to enjoy the huge houseboats parked on both sides of the banks, with some sailing lazily in the water. Stand over the bridge and you don't feel like moving away. In addition, enroute, in the interiors, one can enjoy the green carpet of paddy fields and the far away resorts in typical Kerala architecture.



I am not elaborating on the temples like Mahadevar, Mullakal Rajeswari, etc., and churches like St. Marys, St. Andrews, etc., at Alapuzha. However, mentioning about the Sree Krishna Temple at Ambalapuzha is required mainly for the best or most popular Paayasam specially made out of certain herbs, water from a particular well, and the same special cooking process maintained for ages and the need to book for it in advance.

3 KM from Sree Krishna temple at Ambalapuzha is the Karumadikuttan Budha that needs a mention for its granite statue that was broken into half by a charging elephant per the legend. One can access this location during a backwater boat tour also. Behind the Budha is another amazing view of lake, water and green fields, etc., typical of GODS OWN COUNTRY.

Readers won't spare me if I don't mention about the Alapuzha beach, Marari beach and many more nearby. After your canal and other visits during the day, the best way of spending the evening is to sit and relax at one of the beaches enjoying the shore, twilight & sunset. Stand in the water like a child and allow the gentle waves to kiss your feet.

Local snacks like the popular Milagai Bajji, along with the Chaaya at the beach followed by the sumptuous dinner with beer/wine along with the traditional vegetarian and fish varieties right are not to be missed. For lunch, one should try the local shack recommended by the auto driver (He is careful in his recommendation) on the narrow road adjoining the canal where they serve you the typical rural fish (fresh catch and/or fresh vegetables). It must be noted that this food is totally hygienic and served in a hygiene atmosphere, though you will be enjoying the same like a local with the boiled red rice or Aappam.

Near the Rama Varma Club is another local shop known for its traditional Kerala breakfast items, like Kanjji, Kappa, Pazha Bajji, etc. These eats give a rare pleasure in life and are not to be missed. Well, one can have other famous items like regular Karimeen, Avial, etc, in any normal restaurant and the food is great everywhere.

Well, what else? Pack your bags and enjoy the area with your family, friends or alone if you prefer to. A DSLR camera with zoom lens will be good, though mobile/tablet can be convenient to do the job. For GNC friends, our affiliated Rama Varma Club is conveniently located in the town and the rooms are OK for the night sleep.

PLEASE ENJOY THE PICTURES. Photos generally seen in the net/publications are not included here.





TRAVERSING THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

The writer is taken in by Scotland's rugged beauty and warm people, even though she didn't spot Nessie, the Loch Ness monster

- Malavika Kamath (V322)

Ha! The most dreaded 10th board exams were finally over. I was as free as a bird! I had two months and absolutely nothing to do before I went back to school. This fact alone was enough to make me happy but there was more to come. My parents sprang a surprise on us and said we would be spending two weeks in London and Scotland in the summer! Nothing could have made me happier. I had heard about and seen so many pictures of these beautiful places and couldn't wait to see them!

Finally the date of our departure arrived and we left hot, humid Chennai for a few weeks in the pleasant English weather. The flight via Dubai was long and we were all tired when we arrived. But nothing could make me grumpy now: I was finally in the country of the Queen! Though London has seven airports we landed at the biggest, Heathrow. The airport itself was huge and very different from Chennai's. My first impression of London was already great!

We left for Scotland after a day-and-a-half in London when we made a quick visit to Madame Tussaud's world famous wax museum and saw wonderful, life-like versions of celebrities from all walks of life, including the latest wax statue of Prime Minister Modi as well.

We were very excited to be heading to Scotland — the beautiful, magical country where a majority of the Harry Potter movies were shot. However, our excitement was short-lived as the flight was delayed by over four hours!

We finally arrived at Edinburgh, Scotland, after a lot of waiting and a bumpy plane ride. As soon as we exited the airport we could already see that Scotland was a beautiful place. As we took a local, double-decker bus to our hotel we took in our surroundings. First, we saw rolling green and yellow meadows dotted with flowers of various colours and fluffy sheep lazing around. As the journey progressed, the meadows turned into quaint stone and brick houses with cherry blossom trees at regular intervals. We felt like we were in a different world! There was no skyscraper in sight and it couldn't have been more different from the parts of London that we had seen. We finally reached our hotel and had a late lunch of pizzas. After lunch, we decided to go and see the Edinburgh castle.

As we walked, we saw a huge crowd of people gathered around a magnificent cathedral. We first assumed that a movie shooting was on but, on asking around, we found out that Prince Charles was going to be attending a ceremony in that very church! A man in the traditional Scottish kilt started playing the bagpipes and police cars and bikes went down the cobbled street.

Finally, Prince Charles' convoy arrived but it sped past so fast that I couldn't even see him. However, both my dad and sister spotted him inside the car and entering the church.

Our next stop was the Edinburgh Castle. The castle dominates most of the city and we could see it from a great distance. However, we could not go in as it was too late but to compensate we took plenty of pictures outside. The days are long in May, and it remains bright until 8.30 pm.

For the next two days, to make the most of our visit we had booked bus tours called the 'Highland Experience'. The Highlands — wild, hostile and beautiful — are the most popular tourist destination of Scotland. On the first day of the tour, our guide was a tubby, red-faced man called Kenny. He gave us basic instructions on what and what not to do on the tours. One thing we learnt was how important time-keeping is to the Scots. He gave us strict instructions to be on time and if we were late the bus definitely wouldn't wait for us.

The first stop of the day was a small town called Pitlochry. As it was a beautiful, sunny day the place looked like a picture postcard. Kenny told us that this sunny weather was rare in Scotland and that 23 degrees Celsius was considered to be tropical!



We told him that in Chennai it was 40 Deg C and there was nothing tropical about the Scottish weather. “My goodness, I’ll melt,” exclaimed Kenny.

We stretched our legs and walked about for a while before getting back into the bus 10 minutes later. Our next stop was just a five minute one on the side of a deserted road to look at a picturesque vista of snow-capped mountains in the distance.

The altitude was now quite high and strong, cold winds were blowing at us. The next stop was the highlight of the day — Loch Ness! After a long drive through the scenic Highlands and listening to many, many Scottish artists on the bus music system, we finally reach Loch Ness. This big lake is home to the famed monster affectionately called Nessie.

Though the existence of Nessie hasn’t been proved there is various monster paraphernalia in nearby shops. We were scheduled to go on a cruise of the lake shortly so we ate a quick lunch and ran to the ship. The cruise was amazing — it gave us a great view of the lake as well as the majestic mountains on its shore. We were given a running commentary on facts about the Lake and the monster. Loch Ness is so large it contains more fresh water than all the lakes of Britain put together. On one side of the lake we were able to see the ruins of a beautiful castle. With the sun shining brightly we were definitely able to make the most of the cruise.

Soon the cruise was over and we were on our way to the next stop- the Commando memorial. This place was beautiful. We could see snow-covered mountains all around. There were also statues of soldiers on a pedestal, honouring the martyrs of the Second World War who trained in this region. There were wreaths of red flowers at the foot of the statue. The breathtaking view of the mountains was amazing. We could also see Ben Nevis, the highest mountain of the British Isles.

We were supposed to visit Glen Coe, which is the most photographed part of Scotland. However, the road leading to it was blocked due to an accident and sadly we couldn’t visit it. Instead, we went back to Pitlochry and continued on to Edinburgh. To make up, we made two other small stops: one at a pretty, stone bridge behind a waterfall and another at a forest. This marked the end of the first tour and we all went back, tired but happy.

We were very excited, for the next day as we would finally be seeing the inside of a real castle!



The day's agenda included a visit to the famous Stirling Castle, Loch Lomond, another lake and a whisky distillery. We started off at around 9 o'clock and made a small stop on the side of a road to view the Forth Bridge, a railway bridge over the Firth of Forth. We could see it only from the distance but even then it was quite clear why it is one of the most iconic structures of Scotland. It is also an UNESCO World Heritage site.

We then continued on to Stirling Castle. Several Scottish Kings and Queens have been crowned at Stirling, including Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1542. It is one of the most important castles in Scotland, both for its history and its architecture. The first view of the castle is one of a beautiful stone structure. However, when we stepped out we could immediately feel the gusts of cold air hitting us. We were obviously not used to this weather and it made for quite an experience.

We were given a guided tour of the castle. The castle is magnificent — it has massive rooms, some bare and others with decorated ceilings. The sheer size of the rooms and the halls amazed me. Most of the tour was outside and the cold made it difficult for us to enjoy it. For the most part I was busy stuffing my hands into my coat. We left the castle after an hour or so, happy to be back in the warmth. The next stop was Loch Lomond where we ate lunch and had a small walk. There was not much to see here apart from the lake but as it was a dreary day it was not much of a sight.

The whisky distillery, Glengoyne, was next and was much awaited by my dad, who was eager to taste the whisky. This distillery has been in operation since 1833. It was the only building as far as the eye could see. Behind the building was a hill that was lit up by the afternoon sun. It was all very picturesque.

The visit started with an introduction to the distillery as well as a small glass of whiskey for the adults.

Our guide, Arthur, was rotund and ruddy-faced, and his suspenders made him look even more quaint. He showed us around the distillery, explaining the whisk- making process and demonstrating the machinery. It was very impressive. The whisky is made from barley and is fermented in sherry casks. This, apparently, is what gives the whisky its unique taste. After a tour of the distillery we went into the shop where there was a wide range of whiskies you could purchase.

Finally, after around 20 minutes we left the beautiful distillery and made our way back to Edinburgh. This marked the end of our visit to Scotland. We left Edinburgh the next day, sad to leave such a fairytale region. But we still had a week in London to look forward to!





SNOOKER TOURNAMENT

AMBY

MECHANIC'S DELIGHT; OWNER'S NIGHTMARE!



- R.V.Rajan (R.143)

Hindustan Motors stopping the production of Ambassador cars is old news which had led to a host of people writing about this old war horse which ruled the passenger car market in India for over five decades. Let me add my belated bit of nostalgia about this 'Hold All' of a car!

Yes, the first thing that struck you about the car was the sheer space – both for passengers and for their luggage. In the model I had, with the gear stick attached to the steering wheel, there was space for three adults in the front (including the driver) and four adults in the back, apart from any number of kids. The moving space on the rear side was such that old people could literally walk into the car as against struggling to get into the modern day car with its low seat and limited space! As for luggage, the dicky could easily hold 3 to 4 large suitcases, apart from a host of other small bags. Amby was truly a 'Hold All'.

I remember once while on a visit to a water fall near Arakonam my Amby had 15 passengers including my cousin's family whom we picked up from their home in Arakonam!



I bought my own Amby - my first air-conditioned car in life-a couple of years after I started my agency in 1986. I progressed in life and in due course could afford to buy Maruthi Esteem-with all the advantages of a modern day vehicle.

On another occasion, four kids were accommodated in the open dicky of the Amby, while driving a short distance from my home to a nearby marriage hall.

While in terms of capacity it scored high as compared to any other car in the market, on all other parameters it failed miserably.

The old fuddy-duddy look of the car which the company never changed suffered heavily in comparison with the sleek contemporary looks of the new generation vehicles which were naturally preferred by the younger generation.

Speed was a limitation in the car. On highways it behaved well as long as you were driving at 60 kmph or less but the moment you stepped on the accelerator to take it beyond 60 kmph, the engine would start protesting, the vibration was so bad that the passengers would feel very insecure. Due to the speed limitation, it naturally took longer to reach its destination. Though the company tried to address this problem by offering a version with Isuzu engine, but that could not match the fuel-efficient-maintenance-free engines of the modern day vehicles.

The hard steering wheel was another sore point of the car. For those who take power steering for granted, driving an old Amby could be a nightmare. One needed a lot of energy to steer the wheels at turnings! Unless you were used to the vehicle you would find it difficult to even change the gears in an Amby, (that was an art by itself!).

During long distance travels or while climbing hills, the engine would become so hot that one had to stop the vehicle at periodic intervals to replace the boiling water in the radiator with cold water.

During our trips to Tirupathi in the good old days, we had to stop atleast three to four times on the way to perform this ritual.

Similarly during rains, you would find maximum number of ambassador cars stuck on the flooded city roads as water would have entered the carburetor located at the lower end of the engine. In such situations, the driver had no choice but to wait patiently for the water to drain and the carburetor to dry before he could start the engine, while watching with jealousy as the small Maruthi 800s', waded nonchalantly through the flooded streets!

Amby was a favourite of all the 'hole in the wall' roadside mechanics- because they had enough Amby owners ambling along with some problem or the other. As long as Ambys' were ruling the roost, the mechanic's life was good. Yes, Ambys' were the mechanic's delight but owner's nightmare!

The first official car I got was an Amby with a driver attached when I became the Dy CEO of an ad agency I was working for in Delhi in the early 70s. I bought my own Amby -my first air-conditioned car in life-a couple of years after I started my agency in 1986. I progressed in life and in due course could afford to buy Maruthi Esteem- with all the advantages of a modern day vehicle. I was proud of my new acquisition, but my parents thought otherwise.

I distinctly remember my parents comments after I took them on a joy ride in my new vehicle- "What kind of a car is this? It is so difficult to get in and get out! Your Ambassador was any day a better car than this!"

And I am sure that a lot of senior citizens of that generation would be inclined to agree.

Feedback welcome on rvrajan42@gmail.com or 9840392082.

ALWAYS IN THE WAR PATH

FROM THE GREEK INVASION TO THE KARGIL WAR



Da Hanu Valley, Indus River Photo credits: Hetal R. Punjabi, Tiruchirapalli

- Pavithra Venkatagopalan, PhD (P229)

It's May 3rd, 1999. Just another day in the windy, frigid Da Hanu Valley, in the Batalik sector, Kashmir. Tashi Namgyal is watching his sheep and yaks grazing on the sparse vegetation. He lights up his cigarette and gazes towards the sky, contemplating life. He notices movement in the Indian army bunkers along the mountain ridges. He doesn't think much of it. After all, it is a heavily armed region. He takes another puff, makes himself warm. All of a sudden, a shiver runs down his spine. The hair on his arm is standing on its end and it's not because of the cold. It's winter. He knows the bunkers aren't manned by the Indian army during winter. So who is up there?

He hurries down the slopes and rushes to inform the local commanding officer (CO). The wary CO threatens Tashi Namgyal if the information turns out to be false or an ambush for the soldiers. Three soldiers go on a reconnaissance mission and come under heavy fire. These are not some lost shepherds taking shelter from the weather. The Pakistani Army has crossed the Line of Control (LOC) and occupied the Indian bunkers along the ridgeline. This is the beginning of the Kargil war.

We are in Darchik village in the Da Hanu valley. We are sitting in his kitchen, around the bukhari, sipping hot tea, as Tashi Namgyal tells us this astonishing story.

The last time, I promised to tell you about the descendants of Alexander the Great, living today, in India. Tashi Namgyal belongs to the Drokpa or Dard tribe. The Drokpas or the flower people are thought to have settled along the Indus Valley when Alexander invaded India in 326 BC.

The Drokpas believe that they are direct descendants of Alexander himself and consider themselves to be pure Aryans. As a molecular biologist, I know for a fact that the concept of racial purity is a myth, but to them, it's the core of their identity. The Drokpas look very different from the Ladakhis. They have high foreheads, sharp, aquiline noses and the women are statuesque, unlike the Ladakhis, who have Mongolian features and are petite. The Drokpas intermarry within their tribe only. They are a very liberal, fun loving people who enjoy the beauty around them. They used to follow a pagan or animistic religion but most have converted to Buddhism or Islam to feel a sense of belonging. Everywhere in this world, religion is divisive, religion is uniting. However, they still sing and dance their traditional tunes and speak a scriptless Minaro language. The women never cut their hair and manage all the household activities with knee length hair beautifully braided into four or 5 bunches. Both men and women adorn themselves with flowers and exquisite silver jewellery. Predominantly farmers, they produce apples and apricots.

The two days we spend with them is fascinating. On the second day of our stay, the rest of my group go to some other villages. I over eat the fresh apricot seeds and promptly fall sick. So I stay home, with quick access to a restroom. I chat with the lady of our homestay as she does all her chores with industrial efficiency. I ask her where she was during the peak of the Kargil war. She looks at me over her shoulder, pushes her braid away, and says- "yeh to ghar hai. Aur kidar jaaon?". This is home. Where else will I go? Her home has electricity for a few hours in the evening. Her niece watches Tata Sky every evening and sings the latest Hindi songs.

Her home has no phones though. The entire village has a single satellite phone, with spotty signal. No cell phones. It's too small a village for any of the network providers to put up a tower. What about a medical emergency? A bus goes by her village twice a day.

Neo- Nazi German women travel in secret to the Drokpa villages to carry the pure Aryan seed back with them. An underground industry exists to connect such women with willing Drokpa men, all in the pursuit of racial purity.



Tashi Namgyal Photo credits: Hetal R. Punjabi, Tiruchirapalli.

She can take it to go to Leh. I listen to her, transfixed, evaluating my own home and the facilities I have access to.

The rest of our party return from their trip. As usual, we gather around the bukharis to exchange stories. Our host plays a documentary about his people. We learn about their culture, language and traditions. In passing, one of the Drokpas interviewed mentions that he has a German baby. Suddenly, the documentary takes on a darker shade. Adolf Hitler believed in the superiority of the Aryan race.

Being a part of this industry, gives a substantial boost to their income from farming. The documentary says these Drokpas make enough money to build palatial houses, with multiple bedrooms. We all remain quiet, no longer wondering how our host got his palatial six-bedroom homestay.

The following morning, we return to Leh. We don't speak much on the ride back. Perhaps its fatigue, perhaps its shock, perhaps its excitement that at the end of our ride, a hot shower awaits.

THE FOODIE DIARIES

KP Balakumar (B103)
www.thefoodiediaries.in



KIPLING CAFÉ:

The drive to KC still remains the dark, mysterious type, I mean literally! Not a light or a soul (at least, the living kinds) for the couple of hundred meters leading up to the restaurant.

Thankfully, the restaurant retains the same charm it always did and on this visit, a Saturday, the place was packed!

The menu also retains some of the old favourites with a liberal dollop of new age contemporary cuisine. Seating is now available in three sections -

1. outdoor, either a central open air seating or within a little cabana,
2. air-conditioned or
3. the roof top.

We get the cabana and get to ordering right away, knowing, at least historically, that service at KC can be slow. A mix of Thai and Italian for this meal – Satay chicken, Ravioli Vesuvio (ravioli stuffed with spinach and ricotta, served in a tomato based sauce), Mamy Pizza (Mozzarella, Buffalo Mozzarella, Parmesan (you read that right,

a whole lot of cheese!), some basil and aubergine, on a tomato sauce base) and a Prik Pad Bai Grapou (a lil tongue twister, wasn't it! Spicy minced chicken, basil and veggies served with rice). Of the lot, the pizza and the satay stood out. The ravioli had a delicious filling and sauce but the ravioli itself was doughy while the spicy minced chicken was decent. Dessert for the night was a phenomenal tender coconut Panna Cotta – this has to be one the tastiest desserts I've ever had, worth being greedy over and a Tiramisu – decent but not earth shattering, could have done with a lot more coffee. KC still retains the charm that I remember falling in love with but the food quality seems to have dropped a tiny notch. Would I go back there, most certainly..for the TC panna cotta and the Pizza.

Meal for two: Rs 2000
Address: 16, J Ley Avenue,
Akkarai, ECR,
Chennai – 47.
Ph No: 73052 20330

THE PADRINO:

Images of Don Corleone played on my mind when I heard that an Italian restaurant by the name The Godfather (google never fails to enlighten – turns out Padrino means just that) had opened in town. Hasty plans are made to try it out, seeing the very strong positive reviews on Zomato. Situated on Siva Swamy Road (go past Vivekananda College and turn left, the restaurant is about 50 meters ahead to your left) and is pretty easy to find. Tried the pizza, a grilled chicken in mushroom and cream sauce served on a bed of buttered noodles, Norwegian salmon (yup, I should have known better than to try salmon at an Italian restaurant) and gelato for dessert. Winners - Pizza and the gelato, both were yum! The salmon was undercooked and the chicken while decent was served with rubbery noodles. Portion sizes are not in tune with prices - the chicken was at Rs 550 and the salmon at Rs 850. The pizza, interestingly, comes in various sizes..9, 12, 18 and a monstrous 30 inch (man v/s food, anyone?! The 9 inch Pizza we ordered cost Rs 360+. Gelato was between Rs 250 and 300 depending on the flavour (I had hazelnut, was delicious while a friend loved his cookies and cream). Since the restaurant is new, I do hope that they work on the pricing/quantity mix, so that folks like me who loved the pizza and gelato, come back more regularly.

Meal for two: Rs 1500
Address: 38, PS Siva Swamy Road,
Sullivan Garden, Mylapore,
Chennai – 04. Ph No: 2499 0651

HALEEM WARS:

I first tried Haleem a few years ago and didn't particularly like it (especially since it was supposedly authentic). And after that experience, I've always wondered why people went ga-ga over this dish that's made from meat, dal, wheat, spices and oodles of ghee. I finally realized its goodness when I tried it recently at a Ramzaan Bazaar near the Phoenix Mall. Packed a small portion given my past experience and came back to try it at home. After the first spoonful, the rest of it disappeared before one could say Haleem! It was ridiculously tasty! This beautiful dish that was pasty in texture and mozzarella-esque in its stretchiness, had me hooked! At the Bazaar, I could see how it was being prepared – in a massive cauldron and the cooks/chefs (from Hyderabad) constantly stirring the mixture with a humongous wooden ladle. Making a large batch must be incredibly taxing on those cooks. Having tried and loved the Haleem at this Bazaar, I had to seek out another source for a more regular supply and zeroed in on Pista House (Royapettah) – from Hyderabad and famed for its Haleem. Pre-ordered it for delivery via Swiggy (you gotta love technology!) and couldn't wait to try it. The Haleem from PH was certainly tasty but paled in comparison to the flavour of the one from the Bazaar. I do hope those cooks from the Ramzaan Bazaar decide to make Chennai their permanent home.. delicious Haleem all year round, yum!

Pricing: Rs 150-200 per portion.
Family Pack at Rs 750 Best to order via Swiggy (Pista House). Ramzaan Bazaar is on at the corner before Phoenix Mall

ASHOKA HOTEL:

The Ashoka Hotel is a legend and a landmark in the City. It's especially special to me 'cos it's where my parents first met, an arranged marriage of course..my mother and her parents having made the trek from Kerala to come see this very eligible bachelor boy, a Doctor no less, in Chennai. While we'd been there many times when I was a child, the visits became less frequent as we grew up. We would still, of course, get our hands on the deliciously translucent gulab jamuns from the Ashoka some time or the other. A recent breakfast visit was inspired by a sense of nostalgia and to see how an old legend was holding up against hordes of newcomers and better established chains around the city. The first thing that hits you as you drive into the Hotel is the feeling of going back in time. Whether it's the residences that house the rooms or the restaurant itself, which still holds a vintage design with uniformed waiters and functional seating, everything harks back to an era long gone..and it was so beautiful to be amidst that. The Hotel has moved with the times and offers a buffet breakfast (which, I guess, makes sense given the in house guests) but you can also order a la carte. It covers all the standard South Indian breakfast fare and we try quite a few of them. While the food itself is very decent, I'd made the long drive from Adyar to Egmore with one motive.. to get my hands on those beautiful golden balls (oblong shaped at Ashoka) of desire, the legendary Ashoka gulab jamuns! But for a tad too much rose essence, the gulab jamun is just as how I remember it to be. Two of them disappear just as quickly as they arrive and all seems well with the world. A visit to the Ashoka is to go back and connect with a little bit of culinary history in Chennai. It may no longer be the best, in terms of the quality of food but it sure remains an icon in its own right.

Meal for two: Rs 400
Address: 47, Pantheon Road,
Egmore, Chennai – 8. Ph No: 2855 3377





DOWN TOWN:

A chain of café's (the one in Chennai is their third, the first two being in Calicut), Down Town opened up about 6 months ago. This highly under rated café ticks all the right boxes – good interiors, quick service, good food and friendly service. I've been there 4-5 times over these past few months and have come back pleased almost every single time. The beverage menu is really vast, lots of coffee (hot and cold), tea (hot and cold), smoothies, milkshakes, juices and even the good old Milo! The food menu competes with the beverage menu in terms of choice (this usually isn't such a good thing..I've always found that places that have a more restricted menu do more things better than those who try to do too many things). It covers everything one can think of in terms of a café menu and lots more..Burgers – tick, Sandwiches – tick, Pizza – tick, Pasta, Lasagne, Steak, Sizzler, Soups, Salads, Appetizers, Wraps, Hot Dogs..tick, tick, tick! I've tried a range of burgers and sandwiches (both have been pretty good), the coffees (excellent), the pancakes (large portion but a tad dry, tasty though) and pastas (good). I haven't tried any of their desserts as yet, though they do look quite appealing in the display. Definitely worth a visit and good value for money (something that's getting increasingly harder to find these days).

Meal for two: Rs 800
 Address: 45, A&B, Shubham Building,
 7th Avenue, Besant Nagar,
 Chennai – 90. Ph No: 4264 6000

CAFÉ DE PARIS:

Baker Street, that beautiful place for amazing desserts and breads in Pondicherry, makes its presence felt in Chennai through the Café De Paris in Cenotaph Road. This quaint little café stocks quite a variety of breads, sweet treats and savory bakes. We try their baguette chicken sandwich, a chicken quiche, vanilla éclair, lemon tartelette and the almond croissant.

The lemon tartelette and almond croissant are simply outstanding, few places in Chennai where you'd get your hands on something this good. The quiche and the éclair were disappointing, not being fresh. The sandwich was tasty, though having it with a baguette wouldn't be my first choice, given the chewy nature of the bread..great for a jaw workout though! It's a lovely addition to the 'fine baking' options in the City and I sure do hope that they ensure that everything at this outlet is fresh, to keep up with the formidable reputation of the original one back in Pondicherry.

Meal for two: Rs 600
 Address: 24, Cenotaph Road,
 Rathna Nagar, Teynampet,
 Chennai – 18.
 Ph No: 98848 15553



A New Day

The overcast sky, the dark horizon
seems to engulf all in its mood ;
People hurrying back know this
to be harbinger of no things good.

But happily, a hesitant sun peeks out,
the dark clouds slip away unnoticed;
The world seems to be cheering up,
enthusiasm is afoot, who would have guessed.

The Rain

The parched earth gulps the drops,
But who has the time to slow down, stop ;
The sun dares to peep out from the dark clouds,
And lo! Myriad colors of the rainbow abound.

The trees droop in abject surrender,
Lakes fill up as to tear asunder;
Occasional thunder, lightening add to the chaos,
As if overflowing roads, drains not enough for pathos.

-Kumud Kamath

ZUCCHINI CHILLA

- Ruchira Ramanujam

Ingredients:

(Makes 6)

- 1.5 cups grated zucchini
(One medium zucchini)
- 1 cup chickpea flour/besan, sifted
- 2 tbsp brown rice flour
- Salt to taste
- ¼ tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp chaat masala
- Pinch of turmeric
- 1 green chilli, de-seeded and minced, optional
- Handful of fresh coriander leaves, chopped
- ¼ tsp lemon zest
- ¼ cup of water, or as needed

School re-opening is always a challenging time for moms because of the need to get back overnight into the breakfast-lunch-snack box groove after the lazier summer days. Keep your little champs filled and fulfilled with these super nutritious Zucchini Chillas, even if it's only until the time that the much awaited lunch bell dings!

Method:

1. Mix together all the ingredients except the water in a large mixing bowl. Set aside for 15 minutes. The zucchini will start to release its water and make the flour wet.
2. Add enough water to make a pancake batter type consistency. Mix well.
3. Preheat a nonstick tava or griddle, grease lightly. Pour in a ladle of batter in the centre and use the ladle to spread the batter into a 6" circle. Cook on medium heat until the chilla browns on the bottom and then flip and cook the other side.
4. Serve hot, with tomato ketchup, chutney or raita.





POTATO SALAD

- Rajani Sivaram

This is a wonderful summer recipe. It's more of a side dish than of a salad. The big plus of this dish is that it is served chill and therefore can be prepared ahead. The mayonnaise can be substituted with Greek yogurt and the eggs can be skipped. It's a good side to serve with burgers. The recipe makes 4 servings.

Ingredients:

- 4 medium potatoes
- 2 hard boiled eggs
- 2 sticks chopped celery or ½ cup chopped capsicum
- 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- 1.5 teaspoon yellow mustard
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- Salt and pepper

Method:

- Dice potatoes into 1/2" cubes. Cook until done and let it cool. Chop two hard boiled eggs.
- In a mixing bowl, add yellow mustard, mayonnaise, salt and pepper as needed and chopped celery. Add finely chopped red onion, vinegar and the eggs. Mix gently to combine.
- Add the potatoes and gently mix everything. Taste test and adjust seasoning according to your preference. Serve chilled.

THE DEDICATED WORKFORCE AT GNC: INTERVIEW WITH RUBY THOMAS, OFFICE MANAGER

I believe that for success in administration, one has to stay calm while you work. I love carrying out my responsibilities in an effective manner.



-Janani Govindankutty (G 175)

In 2008, I walked into the GNC with my dad, keen to become a member of the club. We were directed to Ruby Thomas at the office. A calm and patient lady, she guided us through the process- from the paperwork, suggestions about different kinds of membership, and scheduling the interview. It was a hassle-free procedure; we finally became members of GNC.

Though a familiar face at the office, I was glad that I got an opportunity to interview her for the magazine. It took a while to convince her to agree for an interview. In a freewheeling conversation, she talks about her job, its challenges and the special bond she shares with the club. With almost two decades of service to GNC, Ruby Thomas has risen from a Secretarial Assistant to an Office Manager.

Club Connect(CC):What are your earliest memories of working at GNC? How did it all begin?

Ruby Thomas (RT): I joined GNC way back in 1996 right after graduation. I was quite young then. I was interviewed by the President, Mr.B. Venkatesh (who was then the Secretary). In the interview, we just discussed my likes, dislikes and keenness for the job. Though I was nervous, it went off quite well. I was the youngest employee at the club then. The Committee members and staff were very supportive and encouraged me a lot while I worked. I liked that. Though I had worked in another company for few months, I enjoyed my work at GNC better. The construction work of the new building at GNC had just been completed and I got the privilege of starting work in the new premises.

CC: A typical day at GNC...

RT: When I joined GNC as a Secretarial Assistant, I attended phone calls, ensured that all the paperwork was ready for the Secretary, worked on the minutes of meetings. But now, as an Office Manager, I have added responsibilities. I help the various Committee members in their different portfolios, do all the coordination for the projects-between vendors, contractors and Committee members, and also schedule meetings. It is a wonderful experience while working towards expanding the membership of GNC as you get to meet new people. These different activities make up my daily routine at work.

CC: What are the challenges that you face at work?

RT: The challenges arise when a new Committee is formed.

I have to learn to adapt to their needs, likes and dislikes and figure out a way of working with them. The atmosphere is a bit tense till I gel with the new Committee members. It is natural to anticipate change with every Committee and I try to work in the best possible manner.

CC: What do you do to de-stress?

RT: I find pleasure in simple activities. I watch TV or take my kids out to the Elliot's beach as it's close to home. Once in a while, I make time to read a book. I'm a religious person and find solace in praying.

CC: What's your mantra for effective administrative functioning?

RT: I believe that for success in administration, one has to stay calm while you work. I love carrying out my responsibilities in an effective manner. I do that by staying calm, even when under pressure and working hard to finish within the deadlines. Once you lose your calm, I believe everything goes haywire.

CC: Are there any changes that you would like to bring about during your stint?

RT: I think the club has adapted to the changing needs of the staff and improved the working environment with excellent technological support over the years. At the secretarial and administrative level, our work has been made easy due to the latest software, computers and supportive staff.

CC: What is exciting about your job?

RT: My job profile is very exciting and I like everything about my work. Whether it's dealing with statutory authorities, coordinating meetings or handling the administrative work, I keep track of all my responsibilities and try to execute them in a careful manner. If I leave a task unfinished at work, it's right there at the back of my mind when I'm at home and all I want to do is to rush to work next day to finish it off.

However, over the years, as the membership has grown, more people are getting involved in the club's functioning. A lot of the club's young members are coming together to organize and make things work.

CC: Could you tell us about the work culture at GNC...

RT: The staff who work with me at GNC are very cooperative. I'm glad to have a great team in the administrative division who come together for delegated work. There is a lot of transparency and that helps in smooth functioning. Everybody is aware of what the other person is doing and what is expected from them. I have trained the staff of my department to work in my absence as well.

CC: How has the GNC shaped your career? Where do you see yourself in the future?

RT: GNC has helped me progress in my career right from the day I joined them. From a Secretarial Assistant to an Office Manager, I have slowly moved up the ladder through my consistent hard work and dedication. The GNC was supportive during my turbulent times. I had the opportunity of coming back to work at GNC after a seven month break which I took for personal reasons. I want to stay and grow with GNC.

CC: Did marriage alter your career choices?

RT: I got married in 1998, two years after I joined GNC. My husband and in-laws had a modern outlook and were glad to have a daughter-in-law who worked. I want to ensure that I give my children (a son, and daughter) the best possible education and support them as they make their careers.

CC: What do you aspire for your children?

RT: My daughter, Merlin Sandra is in Class 12. She is quite keen on becoming a HR professional. While my son John Melvin in Class 7, he is yet to decide on what he wants to do. Today's children are well aware and decisive about what they want to pursue. I will whole-heartedly support my children in their decisions and encourage them to be passionate and strive for excellence as they work towards their goals.

CC: How has the club evolved over the years?

RT: Initially, when I started working at the club, only a few members would take interest in the club's activities and be a part of the Committees. However, over the years, as the membership has grown, more people are getting involved in the club's functioning. A lot of the club's young members are coming together to organize and make things work. There has been increased participation.

CC: How would you define your relationship with GNC?

RT: GNC is my second home. I joined right after graduation and plan to stay here. I'm quite content with my job profile. By continuing to work here, I will ensure that my children get the best education and lead happy lives. If I'm not at home, I'm at GNC. I have no other place to be.

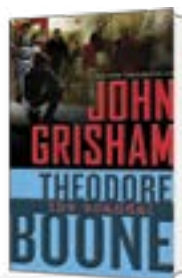
After my chat with Ruby, I realised that as the GNC has expanded over the years, it has also taken its staff along in its growth trajectory. Long serving employees are testimony to its amicable work culture. The staff work behind the scenes to make our experience at the club better.



Rick Riordan
The Trials Of Apollo
The Hidden Oracle



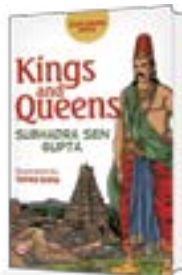
Lincoln Peirce
Big Nate Blasts Off



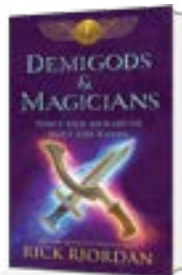
John Grisham
The Scandal Theodore Boone
Book 6



Mima Sinclair
Mug Cakes: 40 Speedy Cakes
To Make In A Microwave



Subhadra Sen Gupta
Kings & Queens :
Exploring India



Rick Riordan
Demigods And Magicians



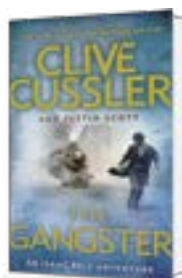
Geronimo Stilton
A Dream On Ice



Harlan Coben
Fool Me Once



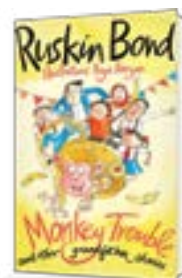
CHRIS CLEAVE
EVERYONE BRAVE IS
FORGIVEN



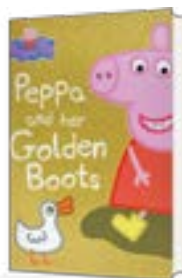
Clive Cussler
The Pharaohs Secret



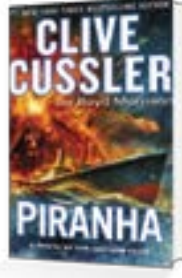
Enid Blyton
The Secret Island



Ruskin Bond
Monkey Trouble & Other
Grandfather Stories



Peppa And Her Golden Boots



Clive Cussler
Piranha



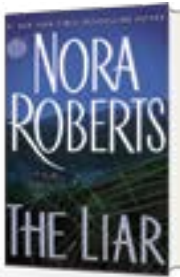
Geronimo Stilton
Ride For Your Life



Advaita Kala
Almost Single



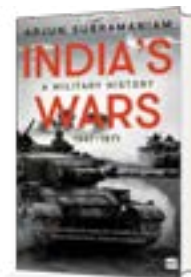
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Mahabharatham
Aanmeega Sinthanaigal Part 2
Karna Parambarai

CLUB AFFILIATIONS

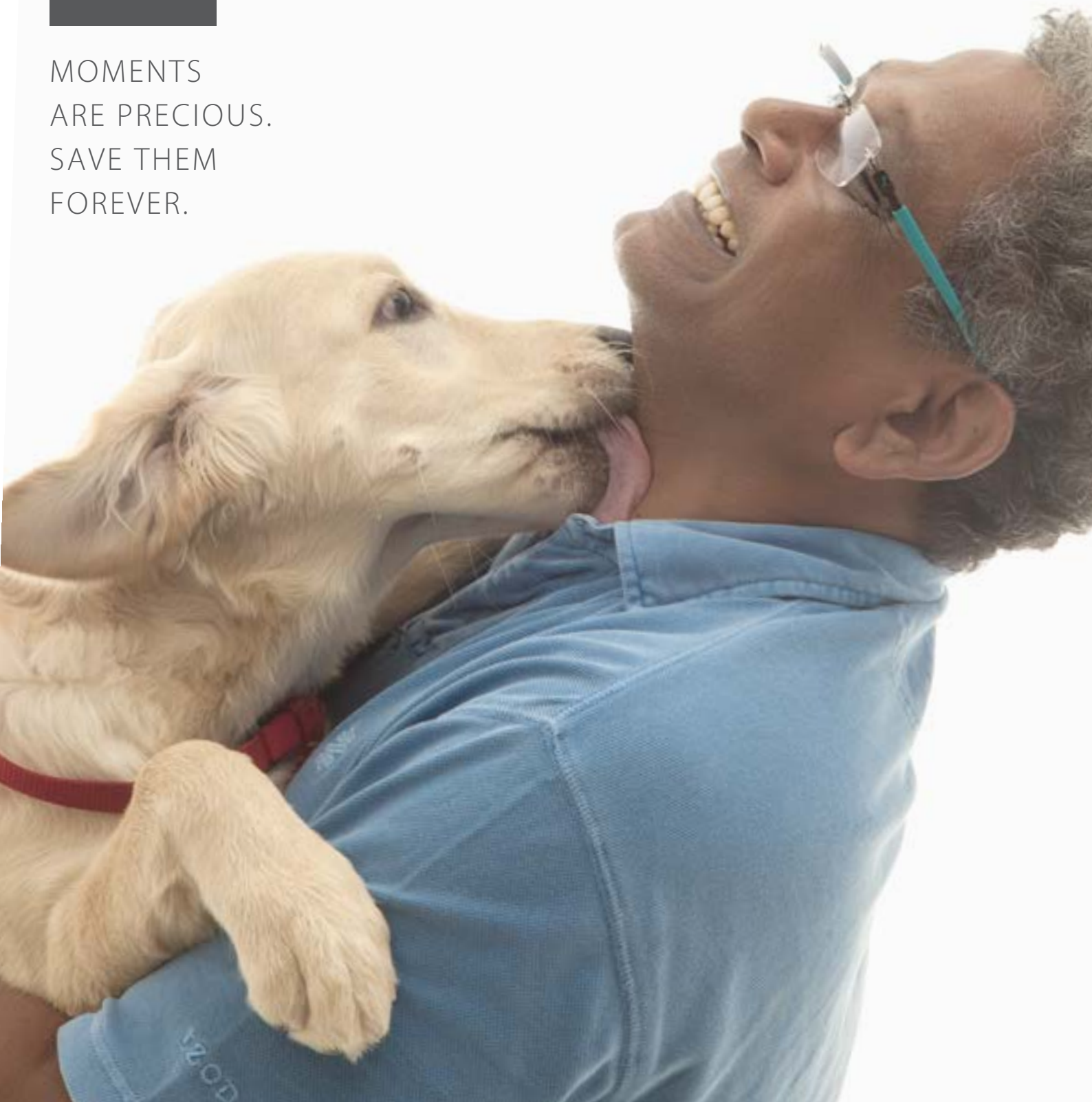
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