

University Women

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From the President's Desk.....

I have had a very pleasant and enriching experience during my term as President of the Women Graduates Union.

WGU was established in 1915 and in three years we will be celebrating our centenary. WGU's vision for empowering and uplifting women and children by bonding with other like-minded NGOs in the field of education and environment, has enabled us to bring about sustainable change.

From a humble beginning, we are today a premier organization with multifarious projects. Let us look ahead, bring about the relevant changes and achieve all our objectives.

WGU has successfully touched many lives, helped scores of underprivileged children and their families. Life is for loving, giving and sharing. It would be so wonderful if each one of us takes a little time from our busy schedule and gives a hand to the needy of this world. Do they not deserve this?

Education is vital for the empowerment of women and we would like to ensure that young girls and women alike are able to enjoy the fundamental human right to education at all levels. The children of the Behramji Lalkaka Balwadi are introduced to the discipline of pre-primary education in Marathi and English. In addition to regular health check-ups, nutrition is being given to all.

A Study Centre, established with the aim of assisting Municipal School children with their homework, also caters to their nutritional needs by serving them healthy snacks. They have access to our library and are aware of their responsibilities to society and the need to preserve the environment.

In keeping with the advance in technology and realizing the need to compete on equal footing with the rest of the world, Computer classes are conducted. Our Computer Centre offers courses at subsidized rates, particularly to housewives, senior citizens, students and the low-income group. Attractive enrolment schemes are available. For the first time at the WGU, we have initiated Painting and Quiz Competitions for the Computer Centre students and we intend to make these events bigger in time. In our efforts to modernize the Computer Centre, we have replaced all the computers in the WGU Office by networking the very latest machines and packages. The LAN streamlining has really given our operations a contemporary approach.

A major accomplishment was to have our very own interactive website. This has a link to

the Indian Federation of University Women and also the International Federation of Women with whom we have been affiliated from inception. This will enable us to forge links with like-minded women all over the world. Visit the WGU website at www.womengraduatesunion.org.

This year, more than 150 need-cum-merit based scholarships were awarded to a record number of students for research and study in various disciplines. A generous amount of over Rs. 4 lakhs was disbursed. Efforts to increase the corpus so that more students can avail of such scholarships are on-going.

The Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas Working Women's Hostel has received accolades from society for its management and efficiency, and accommodates over 100 working women from different parts of the country and abroad.

Members of the Consumer and Civic Affairs Committee promote public awareness about their rights and responsibilities in various fields. The Complaints Cell that has been set up recently is running very successfully.

The Counselling and Guidance Centre provides free Group therapy and advisory services to the emotionally disturbed. Workshops and Seminars on topics of relevance are also conducted regularly. Mehendi and English classes are regularly conducted for girls living in the vicinity.

Revamping of our library has been contemplated upon for some time. We have started the process, added books and made it more accessible to all our members.

WGU runs a Silver Corner for senior citizens, enabling them to interact with each other, build friendships and share common problems. Aerobic and Yoga classes under trained teachers are popular with members and are well attended.

In order to increase our membership, we motivate the younger generation to actively participate in the activities of WGU - in the hope that they bring in fresh and creative ideas.

The monthly Newsletter to members creates awareness, imparts knowledge and keeps members informed of all our activities.

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the constant support and encouragement that I have been receiving from all the Chairpersons, Members of the Managing Committee and Trustees to obtain sponsorships and donations for conducting our various programmes.

The generosity extended by all our Trustees, members, sponsors, co-sponsors, donors and advertisers has helped us implement our various projects and achieve our goals.

The hard work and commitment of all the Office-bearers, Trustees, Chairpersons of Committees and the entire staff are praiseworthy. They have all supported me wholeheartedly in my efforts to bring in greater effectiveness and efficiency during my term as President.

Thank you and Best Wishes.

— Sheila Shastri

IFUWA THIRD CC MEETING Important Announcement

1. The 3rd CC Meeting of the First Year of the 5th Triennium (2011-2014) of the IFUWA will be held in Chennai on the 29th of July 2012.
2. On 28th morning, a Seminar will be held on "**Higher Education and its Relevance to Women**", in collaboration with Madras University. In the evening the delegates will be presented with a unique educational and cultural show.

Details of the Seminar and the Agenda of the CC meeting, etc., will be sent as soon as possible.

— **Sabita Chuganee**
Association Representative

Colour Coding for Electric Wiring

Our comparative testing of food mixers (INSIGHT, Sept.- Oct. 2009) revealed that some manufacturers were not using proper colour coding for wiring.

Hence, CERC had suggested to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) that the Standards of general safety for electrical appliances should include colour coding for wires/cables as per electricity rules with a modification for colour coding for earthing wires. Earthing wires should be green or yellow-green.

The electrical appliances sectional committee (ET-32) discussed the issue and agreed that only yellow-green or green shall be used for earthing conductors.

— Insight - Sept.-Oct. '11

New Food Safety Act Bans Sale of Gutkha

Action at last

The sale of gutkha and other chewing tobacco products has been banned throughout the country, according to new regulations issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). In fact, the authority has banned the use of tobacco and nicotine in any edible product.

Earlier, the Union Government had amended the then operational Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act 1954 to propose a similar ban across the country. The gutkha industry contested it in various High Courts and obtained stay orders. The petitions against the amendment were transferred to the Supreme Court of India in 2009. But the Government did not pursue the case and the ban did not see the light of day. With the Food Safety Act having replaced the PFA Act, the case lost its

significance.

All major Indian brands of smokeless tobacco products contain around 2,095 chemicals, including those causing cancer, says *Down to Earth*

Safety first.

— Insight - Sept.-Oct. '11

Library in the Lounge

The WGU Library is being relocated to the Lounge on the second floor and should be welcoming members there soon. It will be easily accessible and members and residents can read and relax in pleasant surroundings and a more conducive atmosphere.

The books are being neatly arranged in brand new cabinets with good shelf space.

The Library is currently open on all Sundays from 10 am to 12 noon and on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 12 noon to 2 p.m. The timings are likely to be extended, so do check with the office.

Please donate books which you feel would be of interest to members and residents and which you are quite happy to pass on after you have enjoyed reading them. Do also suggest titles you would like to read and send us your feedback.

Reminder

Membership Fees

Ordinary and Associate Members are requested to pay Rs.500/- and Rs.200/- respectively for the current year April, 2012 - March, 2013. Subscriptions for the previous years (if not already paid) may also be sent along.

Special Request

Members are requested to send in their email addresses to the WGU office as soon as possible as we need to have these on our records to send special announcements and changes in plans.

We would also like to send you the Newsletter by email as well as by post, as the post is too slow and unreliable these days and many complaints have been received about late receipt or non-receipt of Newsletters.

Off the book shelf

Books remain greatly in demand and widely read despite television, the internet, Kindle and distractions such as mobile phones. Readership of books has been affected to a certain degree, specially for the younger generation, but the popularity of Libraries, swanky new bookstores in cities and towns and on-line bookshops such as Amazon and Flipkart, vouch for their continuing necessity.

Turning the pages of a tangible book beats reading it on the computer or tablets like I-Pads, at least for most of us.

In a developing country, books are absolutely essential tools to spread the network of education till it reaches each and every individual. Let's kindle the interest in education, let it spread and turn into a forest fire, rekindling hope for complete literacy for all of us in India.

Only books provide companionship when one is alone; only books can chase away boredom; only books can widen the mind and provide information on any topic in the universe; only books can give you hours and

hours of undemanding joy and pleasure, entertainment and, most importantly, education. Often, reading is sheer escapism from the real world.

Whatever the reason to read, life would be incomplete, lacking and unbearable without books.

Suggested Reading

CITY OF DJINNS BY WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

HOT, FLAT AND CROWDED BY THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

These two books, which I recently enjoyed reading and which I found not only interesting about also most informative, are highly recommended.

William Dalrymple's *City of Djinn*s was first published in 1993, after the author and his young bride spent a year living in old Delhi, on the top floor of old and shrewd Mrs. Singh's bungalow.

He spent his time researching the history and the still discernible and distinguishable historical sites of this remarkable city.

Meticulously following leads, Dalrymple traces the turbulent history of the city under the various and varied regimes from the time of the early days of the Mahabharata to the Moghuls, the Rajputs, and the British. In the book he interweaves history and the many facets of the city, by speaking to archeologists, religious heads, diverse scholars and historians.

The book is impressive for the insights, the dogged perseverance displayed by the author to uncover the truth and the mass of historical data packed into the pages, all garnered and analysed so incisively in a

years' time and laced with typically gentle British humour, which is directed mainly at our Indian idiosyncrasies, foibles and disparities.

A really refreshing history lesson served up in an easily readable style.

In *Hot, Flat and Crowded* by the acclaimed author of *The World is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman argues why the world needs a green revolution and how we can renew our global future.

He takes a fresh and penetrating look at the two biggest challenges the world is currently facing: the global environmental crisis and the US's "surprising loss of focus and national purpose since 9/11" on this issue.

Friedman clarifies how global warming, rapidly growing populations, and the astonishing expansion of the world's middle class through globalization have produced a planet that is 'hot, flat and crowded'. In just a few years it will be too late to remedy.

He argues that this great challenge and opportunity needs commitment and leadership of the world and in particular of the US, which has lost direction in according this important and necessary topic the earlier focus and commitment it displayed. He insists, with entertaining and vivid chapters, that the green revolution, so necessary now, is like no other revolution the world has ever seen. It will be the greatest innovation project in history, changing everything we now use like petrol and electricity. Solar power is seen as one of the energy sources that will finally be globally developed and provide relief.

The results will not only be cleaner air but also the fruits of intelligence, creativity and innovation, changing the world as we know it today.

WGU Goes Online

In keeping with the times, and as mentioned in "FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK", Women Graduates Union has uploaded its website alongwith Facebook and Twitter accounts.

You are invited to visit the site. The details are given below:

Website URL	www.womengraduatesunion.org
Facebook	Women Graduates Union
Twitter	womengraduatesunion

The WGU is now moving forward to create a branding through the virtual media. This gives greater mileage as it enables global access and puts us on the map of the internet world.

Apart from the Newsletter, through the website, Facebook and Twitter, we will keep you updated on the events that are coming up alongwith reports of events that have already been organised.

You can also communicate with WGU through Facebook and Twitter.

For those of you who have yet to have Facebook accounts, please go ahead and create accounts and ride on the internet bandwagon.

Illusions commend themselves to us because they save us pain and allow us to enjoy pleasure instead. We must, therefore, accept it without complaint when they sometimes collide with a bit of reality against which they are dashed to pieces.

— SIGMUND FREUD

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