

# THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER



## Donation of Life Saving Equipment to

### Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital

SL Chitale Auditorium • 22nd October 2024

CSR Grant numbers CS2400355 & CS 2400406

**Rtn. Col. Bhupinder Singh**  
Assistant Governor

**Rtn. G Chella Krishna**  
President

**Rtn. Dr Ravi Varma**  
District Chair - Health

**Rtn. Mahinder Jain**





Dear RCMers,

In a recent self-assessment conducted by the Indian government, covering over two lakh healthcare facilities, it has come to light that a vast majority of the country's public health facilities are falling short of essential standards mandated by the government, in terms of infrastructure, human resources, drugs, diagnostics, and equipment.

Institutions like Rotary can play a role in bridging the gap. One small step in equipment donation was carried out by RCM last week. That's the cover story for this issue.



**Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran**  
Editor

**Rtn.A.R.Raghu**nandan  
Chairperson

**Mr.Madhu Mathen**  
Co-Chairperson

## Rotary Club of Madras

### 18<sup>th</sup> Weekly Meeting

SPEAKERS  
DIRECTORS OF THE BOARD OF RCM

TOPIC  
COMBINED COMMUNITY SERVICES MEETING

Tuesday, 29th October 2024 | 6.30 pm  
 High Tea : 6:00 - 6:30 pm | Dinner :7.45 pm  
 at Buttery Bar, Madras Gymkhana Club

Please note that spouses are cordially invited for this meeting

**Rtn. G. Chella Krishna**  
President

**Rtn. Shanno Ravi**  
Director - Club Service

**Rtn. Rajesh Mani**  
Honorary Secretary

**Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan**  
Chairperson - Programs Committee

# THE LIGHTHOUSE

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- Honorary Secretary**  
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- President - Elect**  
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- President - Nominee**  
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Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti
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- Director - Rotary Foundation & International Service**  
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Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan

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- Chairperson :** Rtn. Akur Raman Raghunandan
- Co-Chairman :** Mr.Madhu Mathen
- Mentors :** Rtn.PP.N.K.Gopinath  
Rtn. PP.Indra Subramanyam

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- Rtn.Vummidi Shailesh Raj, Rtn. Bhaswar Mukherjee
- Rtn.Indrani Krishnaier, Rtn.Shri Shakthi Girish
- Rtn.Reji Joseph, Rtn.Maya Thiagarajan
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- Mr. Vikrm.S.Eashwaran, Rtn.Govind Parikh
- Rtn.Rakesh Jaiswal, Rtn.Dr.Rama Narasimhan

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**Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)**  
**Minutes of the 17th Weekly Meeting held on 22-10-2024**  
 at Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

#### Call to Order

The meeting commenced at 01.30 PM.

Sergeant at Arms, Rtn. Jayant Hemdev collared the President.

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna called the 17th weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order and requested all members to rise for a silent invocation.

#### Confirmation of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the 16th weekly meeting were confirmed.

#### Welcome Remarks

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna welcomed all attendees, with special recognition to the Guest of Honour, District Governor Nominee Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju and his spouse Mrs. Paola Ravishankar.

Probus club members Probian Annadurai and Probian Velumani were also acknowledged.

Other guests were welcomed, including District Governor Rtn. N.S. Saravanan and District Governor Elect Rtn. Vinod Saraogi

#### Induction of New Members

Rtn. G. Ravindran introduced Mrs. Shankari Subbiah, co-founder of Redwood Montessori School as a new member. Her vast experience in education, particularly in the Montessori system, was highlighted.

Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan introduced her daughter, Rachna Muralidharan who has taken over the family's automotive manufacturing business and has now joined Rotary after being inspired by the club's initiatives.

Both new members, Rtn. Shankari Subbiah and Rtn. Rachna Muralidharan were formally inducted into the Rotary Club of Madras.

#### Recognition of District Officials and Guests

IPP Ravi Sundaresan acknowledged the district officials and guests:

1. Rtn. Vidya Ragu, District Secretary
2. Rtn. Sai Seshan, RC Metro
3. Rtn. PP. Ravi Shankar, RC Ambattur
4. Rtn. Srinivas Balram, RC Metro
5. Rtn. K. Vikas, RC Madras Mylapore Uptown
6. Rtn. Muthuswamy, RC Port City
7. Rtn. Ganesh, RC Harmony
8. Rtn. Kumar Rajendran, RC Premier
9. Rtn. Durga, RC Legends
10. Rtn. Hari, RC Green City
11. Rtn. Ravi Varma, RC East
12. Rtn. Prasanna, President RC Metro

#### International Guests:

- Rtn. K. Lalithya, RC Adelaide, Australia  
 Rtn. Folashade Samuels, RC Wuse Central, Nigeria

#### Project Updates and Announcements

Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan and Rtn. N. Prakash were acknowledged for their work on the Bommaji Kulam project, which saw the handover of 29 homes.

Rtn. Arunachalam Palaniappan was thanked for hosting 195 guests at his home for a successful event.

An announcement was made for the groundbreaking ceremony of 25 homes at Irumbedu on the 25th, funded by

Rtn. Mahinder Jain, with a project value of ₹1.04 crores.

Members were invited to attend the life-saving equipment handover function at the Childs Trust Hospital at 3:30 PM.

#### Special Recognition

Rotarian V.S. Narasimhan was commended for securing a CSR partnership with Lucas TVS, benefitting the Rotary Club's projects.

#### Committee Reports

Rtn. E. Aswath Kumar Reddy of the Vocational Services Committee announced a visit to Rotarian Rajiv Khanna's Ice Cream Factory for 30 Interactors from each zone.

Rtn. Asha Mathen presented details about the upcoming major fundraiser, a musical theatre event titled 'Jaya' directed by Lillete Dubey.

#### Secretary's announcements:

Rtn. Rajesh Mani announced the weekly Birthdays and anniversaries for the week. Rtn. Ravee Malhotra contributed a sunshine donation of ₹5,000.

Rtn. Rajesh Mani stated that our next meeting will be at 6.30 pm on the 29th of October at the Gymkhana Club. It will be a combined community services meeting where directors will share updates on their activities this year.

Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath introduced the guest speaker Rotarian DGE. Ravishankar Dakoju, as a person who exemplifies both philanthropy and humility.

#### Guest of Honour's Address

DGE Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju addressed the gathering, speaking from the heart about what motivated him to contribute to The Rotary Foundation and the joy he and his family have experienced in doing so.

The President then requested the District Governor to come forward and offer felicitations. District Governor Rtn. N.S. Saravanan expressed his admiration for the speech and emphasized how Rotary provides opportunities for everyone, regardless of their contribution size, but highlighted the importance of a "big heart" for giving.

The Q & A session followed and when asked about the progress on the Palar River rejuvenation project, DGN Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju explained that the project was initiated with the involvement of the Art of Living and the Rotary Club of Bangalore. They had already taken significant steps in rejuvenating the river, planting around 60,000 - 70,000 trees and using innovative methods to restore water to underground wells.

He invited the Rotary Club of Madras to join their efforts and take up the restoration project of the Palar River on the Tamilnadu side, as part of our Centennial projects that could create a lasting impact on the environment.

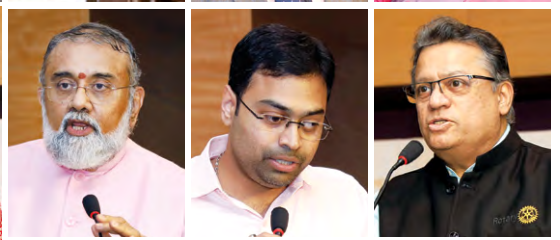
The President invited PDG Benjamin Cherian to propose a formal Vote of Thanks.

There was a flag exchange between RCM and the RC Adelaide and Rotary Club of Wuse Central Abuja Nigeria

#### Conclusion

The meeting concluded with thanks to all participants, followed by a group photograph with the newly inducted members and the District Governor.

The meeting was adjourned by President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna.





## The Joy of Giving is his “*joie de vivre!*”

**H**ow much is 100 crores? You'll need all ten fingers to count the number of zeros after 1.

That is what Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju has committed to The Rotary Foundation and he keeps on giving. It's neither for fame nor for vanity and not to be the most important person in Rotary. It's simply because of his “raison d`etre!” That seems to be his purpose in life, as he decided.

He is not loud or voluble. He admits that he does not possess a high IQ. Whatever he lacks in terms of fluency or IQ he makes up for, with his large-heartedness and generosity.

I believe his commitment of 100 crores is just a number to him. The way he expressed himself, I am certain there is more to come from Mr. Dakoju.

He started his speech at the weekly meeting of RCM by talking about his mother-in-law, who he had lost the previous year, at an advanced age, and how his dear wife had taken on the role of a mother in looking after her. The resultant stress of tending to her caused a block in his heart, which needed immediate attention and treatment.

The point he was trying to make was, the uncertainty of life, and how we need to take care of ourselves. His take was that we keep doing things like chasing wealth, which, he advises, should not stop us from paying attention to our well-being.

All the while, he was leading up to his favorite purpose. “Give when you can”. Do not postpone commitments to give back to the society.

Throughout his speech, wherever he began, he concluded the narrative with “giving.” That was the highlight of the entire delivery.

He referred to the term “self-made man.” He wondered how anyone could be self-made! He quoted the example of a couple of celebrities and wondered how they are worth hundreds of crores, yet do very little for the society responsible for their success. To him, no one can be self-made without the society and ‘Giving back,’ is a must.

His regard for Rotary and fellow Rotarians is very high, so much so, he considers them a class apart. To him, a Rotarian who played a part in the movement will always be special, having spent a portion of their life in service.

He narrated an anecdote about committing these humongous 100 crores to The Rotary Foundation. A senior Rotarian came to warn him of the consequences of his





announcement, cautioning him that the underworld might get after him and his family, speculating on the enormous wealth he must possess. And he and his family believed that it was within the realm of possibility. It was a real concern for a while.

He says nothing of that sort happened, all to one point. He says "Goodness begets Goodness." You do something good and nothing bad can ever happen to you. Jokingly he says, "Even the underworld dons appreciate that."

There is a general adage that if you give more, you get more. A senior colleague mentioned that to him and he responded by saying, "Rotary is not a business to invest in, to reap returns." However, he says that subsequent to his promise to give, his business growth went up from a normal of 25%, to 400%.

He supports it with a viable reason. Not only does his experience

validate the theory of goodness being reciprocated, but he also says people begin to notice you and want to work with you.

He says it's a natural phenomenon you are surrounded by an "aura of goodness," and that spreads. Also, the publicity and word of mouth align with the principle of natural justice.

When asked about the reaction of his wife, family, friends and relatives to his massive commitment, he said that it was mixed. However, he deeply appreciates his spouse Paola Ravishankar for her support and the way she handled it. He voiced his admiration for her calmness and equanimity and also expressed his complete happiness with how his daughters handled it.

As for his friends, I would hazard a guess that their reaction was mixed, some calling it foolish, others green with envy and the rest secret-

ly wishing they were in his place. This is my take, of course!

In terms of his working style, he says he likes to get his hands soiled. He is a foot soldier who marches up-front, so much so that RI gets irritated with his meticulous follow-up. But he is relentless. That is another quality that sets him apart from others.

"Keep what you need and give the rest away," he says. He even quotes an example of a PDG Rtn. Muthu Palaniappan, who took a loan from the bank to become an AKS member. 'Where there's a will there's a way.' That seems to be his life's purpose.

He is an outlier. An exceptional human, very few can be what he is, but we can always try. That in itself is good enough!

**- Rtn.A.R.Raghuandan  
Chairperson,  
Lighthouse Committee**



Suggest the most quirky, whacky or creative caption/ blurb for this photo (Maximum 15 words). The best entries will be reproduced in the next week's edition of Lighthouse.

Mail your captions to [editor@rcmlighthouse.com](mailto:editor@rcmlighthouse.com) on or before 29th October.

Issue 17



**Issue 16 : Best Captions**

1. "Jim, will these bags be strong enough to hold my lawyer's fees?" - **Rtn.Asha Mathen**
2. A mathematician and a lawyer turning life into an adventure for a trekker – **Rtn. Hemant P. Chordia**
3. "Negotiating deals over gift bags. Business casual, with flair!" – **Rtn. N.K. Bhatia**
4. "Jim... These gorgeous bags! They look so Bagwati!" (bagworthy)- ZNMD - **Rtn. Shanno Ravi**
5. "Hey Ann. Deepti, thank you for the Diwali gift!" - **Rtn. M. Sessa Sai**
6. A spoonful of dreams and a bag full of goodwill from RCM to Sembakkam. - **Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan**

# New Member Inductions



**Rtn. Rachna Muralidharan**

I'm Rachna Muralidharan, born in Mumbai and raised in Trichy. I studied in an all girls Anglo-Indian School. I have a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Engineering and Master's degree in Management Information Systems from Kelley School of Business, USA.

I worked as a management consultant with Accenture Consulting and was the Vice President at Barclays UK heading their business readiness for personal, corporate and wealth customers for one of their compliance programs. I moved to India in 2016 to be part of the family business. My husband and I run an automotive component industry, where we manufacture engine cooling components for OEMs in India and abroad.

I met my husband in the USA. We both love travelling and have been to almost 20 countries and counting, thus far. He's an avid landscape and architecture photographer. We have a eleven year old daughter who is in Standard 6 at PSBB TNagar. Apart from work, I've done a couple of treks to the Himalayas and Ladakh. I also like to strength train and I play tennis as a stress buster. I'm really looking forward to forging some wonderful friendships and being part of the exemplary social service here at RCM.



**Rtn. Shankari Subbiah**

I'm Shankari Subbiah and I'm the co-owner of Redwood Montessori School. I grew up in England where I did my schooling and university. I love to travel. I lived in France for a while and also in Sri Lanka. It was in Sri Lanka that I found my passion for Montessori and I did my primary Montessori diploma there. I came to Chennai and started working at Abacus Montessori School as a primary teacher. I wanted to study Montessori further, so I went to England and I did what they call 'Diploma in Assistance to Infancy' which meant that I could work with toddler children. I came back to Chennai and started with Abacus Montessori School Starlight Abacus, which I ran for about four years before I started Redwood.

I have a passion for food. I really enjoy trying different cuisines. It's quite ironic actually because I can't cook or should I say, I'm a very bad cook ? But I'm quite adventurous where food is concerned and will eat everything and anything. I enjoy theatre, though I am no thespian and I get stage fright when I'm on stage. Thanks to my love of reading, you can always find me with a book in hand. My storytelling sessions with the children are a lot of fun....so that's a little bit about me. I'm really looking forward to being a part of Rotary.



# Celebrity Endorsements for 'JAYA'



After its stellar run in NCPA Mumbai and Siri Fort Delhi ,RCM in association with Access Healthcare, is bringing JAYA, the rock musical of the Mahabharata, to Chennai as a fundraiser.

Front row seats have been exclusively reserved for Rotarians with donor passes of Rs.25,000/- (Admit 2). Please contact Rtn. Asha Mathen ( 9840298983) to block your pass and support RCM's projects .



"There's so much of hard work that's gone in there and you can see it. It is wonderful, it is beautiful. I think, for all of them to sing like that, to convey the whole Mahabharata the way they've done..... Lillete has done it again. "

**Rajeshwari Sachdev,** actress, National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Sardari Begum* (1996)



"Lillete Dubey's new play Jaya is a victory and it is based on the Mahabharata....but a new type of tweaked Mahabharata is what they have portrayed. Congratulations and hats off to the direction of the play which is marvellous ! All the actors are superb, they're such great singers and very well done ! It's a must.... you must watch at least once."

**Smita Jaykar,** actress, known for her compelling performances in films like *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, Devdas and Pardes.*



"I'm speechless after watching Jaya! I think Lillete Dubey has done a fantastic production, brought together some of Bombay's best performers and just to see a show like this, which I know is going to do so well. This has a wide audience! Hats off to the team !"

**Neil Bhopalam,** actor known for his work in films like *Shaitan* (2011) and *NH10* (2015) and TV series like *Four More Shots Please!* and *Masaba Masaba.*



"I just saw 'Jaya' and honestly I can't..... I'm just so moved. Mahabharata I think, is the most dramatic epic saga we have ever had and to put it in a rock opera style and to present it like this.....! Only Lillete Dubey can manage to do that..... and everybody, I mean the writing, the music by Ashutosh Phatak and the dancers! The whole play is an experience! I think this is one of the most innovative pieces of theatre I've seen in a long, long, long time."

**Neena Kulkarni,** actress, producer and director, known for her work in international projects, including "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" and a French series, "Rani".

## Medical Equipment Donated to Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital



On October 22, 2024, the Rotary Club of Madras presented vital medical equipment to Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital at an event held in the S.L. Chitale Auditorium.

**The donation included:**

- An autoclave and incubator for the Microbiology Department
- A specialized pediatric operating table
- Two advanced "Target Controlled Infusion" pumps for the operating theater
- A pulse oximeter for the Newborn ICU
- A Video EEG system
- An ECG machine

The total value of the donated equipment was ₹27 lakhs, funded through two CSR grants provided by Rtn. Mahinder Jain and his company, Access Health Care.

Several notable attendees were present at the event, including Rtn. Col. Bhupinder Singh (Assistant Governor, RI District 3232), Rtn. Dr. Ravi Varma, District Director for Health, Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, President of the Rotary Club of Madras, Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju and Rtn. Mahinder Jain. In addition to these dignitaries, several members of the Rotary Club also participated. During the





ceremony, Rtn. Col. Bhupinder Singh, Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, and Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju shared their thoughts. Additionally, Rtn. Dr. Bala Ramachandran provided an overview of the hospital's history and its longstanding relationship with the Rotary movement.

-Rtn.Dr.B. Ramachandran



## ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

### FULL CLUB FELLOWSHIP

CURTAIN RAISER

**MADRAS CRICKET CLUB**

**10 NOVEMBER, 2024**  
**11.30 AM ONWARDS**

Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran Chairman - RCMPF. Rtn. G. Chella Krishna President 2024-25	Rtn. S. Balakrishna Co Chairman - RCMPF. Rtn. Rajesh Mani Hon Secretary 2024-25
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WE WELCOME YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE TO JOIN US!

# Athithi Devo Bhava

(Guest is God)

The guests of Shruthi & Arunachalam Palaniappan were accorded such warmth in hospitality, that we left feeling nothing lesser than the Gods.

The Diwali Full Club fellowship, celebrated on the 19th of October 2024, at Ampa Abode in TNagar was an outstanding success on all accounts.

The theme was “Chettinad” all the way. It started with the invite, featuring the famed Athangudi ceramic tile design, guests were asked to wear traditional South Indian attire and boy, it was such a pleasure to see everyone so well turned out in tune with the evening’s theme.

The hosts and their family greeted every one of us, with Nachammai (Kalpana) Palaniappan giving malli poo to all the ladies. Their house, gardens and porch were adorned with little pinnal koodai (woven baskets) and marigold flowers along with the famed Chettinad-checked fabric as decor for the bar counters and tents. Tables with traditional Chettinad games and bar counters with all sorts of beverages got us all huddled and there was an icebreaker for green Rotarians and spouses.

The most endearing part was seeing the whole family involved in hosting us, with





Arun's father, Ampa Palaniappan and mother Kalpana Palaniappan leading the way. Arun and Shruthi were there to greet everyone at the beginning and while we were leaving, Shruthi stayed to give away thoughtful gifts, once again in true Chettiar style. Arun's sister Ulagammai and her husband Sathappan helped play hosts to nearly 200 guests! As the evening progressed, we danced to English, Hindi and Tamil songs.

I have saved the food for last - it was outstanding! No one left without raving about the meal or slipping into a food coma. Arun ensured that the awesome spread was prepared by authentic Chettinad cooks and they delivered beyond expectations. Every dish competed to be the best. I personally think the simple podi idli with ghee was divine.

Despite the anxious moments that the weather Gods gave us, they ensured that the rain stayed away. How could they not? Athiti Devo Bhava.

Shruthi and Arun, thank you so much for a such a memorable evening and what a way to begin the Diwali season! You have now set a trend and we look forward to Diwali 2025.

Deepavali Valthukal !

**- Rtn Shanno Ravi**  
Director – Club Services

<b>Birthdays</b>		(28th Oct to 3rd Nov 2024)
Rtn. M. Fazal Mohamed		28/10
Rtn. T. G. Thyagarajan		30/10
Rtn. Vijay Kumar Kadel		30/10
Rtn. Pranay H. Gambhir		30/10
Rtn. PP. A. Verghese Chummar		31/10
Rtn. PP. A.S. Venkhat Ramani		31/10
Rtn. Manu Reddy		3/11
Rtn. Sanjay Madhavan		3/11
<b>Spouses' Birthdays</b>		
Ann. Vidya, Spouse of Rtn. R. Vasudevan		29/10
Ann. Manisha Singhee, Spouse of Rtn. Ravi Prakash Singhee		29/10
Ann. Sujata, Spouse of Rtn. Gopalan Kannan		31/10
Ann. Nagu Chidambaram, Spouse of Rtn. Geetha Nagu		2/11
Ann. Rohini, Spouse of Rtn. N. Vivek Pai		2/11
Ann. Raheela Kareem, Spouse of Rtn. Abdul Kareem Sait		3/11
Ann. Stuti, Spouse of Rtn. Himanshu Budhia		3/11
<b>Wedding Anniversary</b>		
Rtn. PP. S.N. Srikanth & Subha		29/10
Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan & Dr. A.S. Ganesan		30/10
Rtn. P. C. Shyam Sunder & Mohana		31/10
Rtn. Suman Voora & Shalini		1/11
Rtn. Deepak Chander & Divya Chetti		2/11
Rtn. Dr. M. Parkavi & Rtn. Kathirganapathiappan		3/11

# Rotary Nostalgia

## The Matter of Attendance

### Hundred Percent Attendance Days

Beginning with 1965, the Club began observing 100 percent attendance days each year, only that none of them saw 100 percent attendance. These special days were advertised months in advance in the issues of 'Lighthouse.' In the years that they were observed, care was taken to invite star speakers, and sometimes there were even dinner meets, with the Anne in tow. But the members seem unmoved.

On the first 100 percent attendance day, initially announced for April 6 1965, and later advanced to March 16, the register showed 75 percent of the members present. As if fatigued with their overwhelming presence of that day, attendance tapered off alarmingly in subsequent weeks. And on Charter Night, July 19, even the requisite quorum was not there. A measly 38 members out of a strength of 136 had come. It must have jarred that Rtn. R. Raghavachari from Thanjavur gave a brief talk on how his club achieved 100 per cent attendance.

Hundred percent attendance days were observed until 1975 and then given up. One of the most successful was in 1974 when Rtn. R. Ratnam, as attendance committee chairman, had the meeting hosted by M. A. M. Ramaswami, the scion of the Chettinad family, at the sprawling Chettinad House. The total strength in attendance was 117 out of 176 members. Perhaps the curiosity to see up close, how the uber-rich lived, had exerted a sufficient pull.

In an era where the Club's newsletter, the Lighthouse, was a major source of information, its pages were put to good use to further the cause of attendance. Thus, on May 31, 1966, there was a tract taken from an international periodical and republished:

- ATTENDANCE is the bulwark of Rotary.
- ATTENDANCE measures the height,

breadth, and depth of Rotary in you.

- ATTENDANCE determines the area of your unselfish service.
- ATTENDANCE reveals your interest in your club activities.
- ATTENDANCE demonstrates your desire for making new and retaining old friendships.
- ATTENDANCE spells the story of what Rotary means to you.
- ATTENDANCE is all that the Club President asks of you – a greater Rotary year will result.

Yet another article thundered against the practice of seeking leave of absence: "Yes, a member may ask the Board of Directors for leave of absence or to be excused, but, provided this is granted, what leeway does this give you? Actually, an excuse merely protects your membership since if you were absent from four consecutive meetings, without leave or excuse and without making up your attendance, you would automatically lose your membership. So please don't assume that you are given attendance credit just because you were given leave of absence."

Dr. V. S. Subramaniam, during his year as President, hoped that the Club would be "able to improve the programme for the coming year, so that we will have better fellowship, better attendance and better Rotary work. The programme is to be well planned and well organised to make it really attractive, and it is not just enough to invite Tom, Dick, and Harry and make him talk to us for 15 mins. In addition to the usual talks to us by some person or other, we must think of other programmes like a musical evening, entertainment, discussions, visits, and picnics. The one or two picnics we have arranged before have really proved to be a great success, and what is more, the fellowship during those picnics was some-thing phenomenal."

Another idea that was tried was the recognition of hundred percenters. This began in 1966 with Lt. Col. N. Vasudeva Rao being congratulated for being one such. The same year, it was decided that

recognitions would be given each quarter to the 100 percenters of the previous three months. By the early 1970s, this had become "Feather in the cap" cards for 100 percent attendance during the month! A special lapel badge was to be given to the Rotarian who had been a 100 per center for three consecutive years. This too lost its appeal, and in 1986, we read of how, of the 56 people recognised with the 100 percent badge, only 38 turned up to receive it!

In 1970, Rtn. G. Ram Phadke came up with the idea of dividing the club membership into attendance groups. There was to be a competition between these units as to which was the best when it came to attendance, and the group leader was tasked with getting his flock to come to the meetings. Initial results were encouraging.

"The attendance Committee met regularly every month," recorded the Lighthouse. "By organising group competitions for two quarters, by writing suitable letters to fellow Rotarians whose attendance average fell below 60%, by presenting 100% lapel badges and attractive bottle openers to those members who have put in 100% attendance for a continuous period of three years or more, and by presenting a nice and useful diary for 1970 to all members of our club, the attendance average for the Rotary year has gone up to 72.05%, 2% more than the previous year." But within two quarters, the enthusiasm had evaporated.

"Three months of the Rotary year have run out, and I am very concerned to observe that our attendance is again beginning to fall off," lamented the President.

"We reached an average of 80% in August, but there has been a sudden down-trend in September to 70%. In order to stimulate attendance, we observed a 100% day on September 15, but curiously the attendance for that week, including all make-ups, has been less than 75%. I am afraid our appeal to



our members to attend our Club regularly or, alternatively, to make up in the other three Clubs in the city, is evidently of no avail. May I, therefore, very humbly ask the minority of members who neither attend regularly nor make up, what we could do to get them more interested in our Club and in Rotary? I am content to record that a 70% rate of attendance with four clubs active in this city, is not doing us much credit."

**The Creative Lure**

One of the most creative campaigns the Club ran, though the end result was not anything to write home about, was a series, where a sponsored space in the Lighthouse carried what was ostensibly a message from the sponsoring Rotarian. It connected attendance with their profession/classification. Some samples:

- 'What Elevates Us Here is your attendance – My foot! It is OTIS' – JM Bhavnagarwala.
- 'It is attendance that cements friendship. Our brand gives you a

better bond' – N Srinivasan.

- 'Attendance flavours our meets; PV Sauces flavours our eats' – PV Subramaniam.

A skit was staged in 1994, with Rtn. M. K. Raju organising a series of one-acts. The description is of interest: "The play consisted of seven scenes with no specific Hero or Heroine, but with a common villain, M. K. Raju, the task master and the tormentor. The histrionic talents of the Rotarians came into full view, and what a performance each one of them gave! The crux of the play was how the truant Rotarian, who is averse to attending Rotary meetings, is forced to become a 100 percenter by the machinations of such diverse persons as the Office Secretary, Waiter and Spouse. Rtns. S. Ravi Katari, Ram Phadke, Tushar Mehta, M.S. Nagarajan, Gunasekhar, Dr. Venkat Arun Sarathi, Krishna Hande, V.V. Mohindra, Pratap Kumar, Anns Indira Hande, Savithri Nagarajan, Padhmavathy Gunasekhar and Sushila Nataraj were the players. Written & Directed by Rtn. M. K. Raju.

Stage Manager: Rtn. N. K. Gopinath  
 Compere: Rtn. & Ann. Jayanthy Gopinath  
 Music: Shanker Ganesh & Party."

Whatever its efforts, the Club probably realised that it was on a losing wicket on attendance. By 1984, the weekly statistics were given up altogether. And by 2004, even the recognitions and awards ceased, or were at least not taken seriously. This was, of course, not just a trend at the Club but with Rotary overall.

By the new millennium, the Club had gone hi-tech. It introduced biometric readers and later, post the Covid pandemic, face recognition software as well, to record attendance. And there is also the register, as the Club is a society, which has to record as per statute, the signatures of the members who attend

Courtesy: **Rtn. V. Sriram**,  
 Renowned Historian.

Sourced by : **Rtn.PP.N.K.Gopinath**



Learning trip for Interactors to a dairy factory, organized by Rtn. E. Aswath Kumar Reddy and Rtn. Deepak Chander under the joint initiative of Youth Services and the New Learnings on Vocations Team. Special appreciation to Rtn. Ravishankar and Rtn. Shanno Ravi for sponsoring the transportation and Rtn. Rajiv Khanna for hosting the visit at his factory.



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