



January 2011

*international*

**DATELINE**

**FIWAL THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN LONDON**

C/O THE LANSDOWNE CLUB • 9 FITZMAURICE PLACE • BERKELEY SQUARE • LONDON W1X 6JD

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Friends,

Season's Greetings and best wishes for the New Year. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

This year, we have decided that my son will go to celebrate the holiday season with his elder brother and his family in Virginia, USA, and my husband and I will spend three weeks in India. I am hoping that I will meet my loved ones, relax and bounce back to London feeling fresh. Looking at the itinerary, it does not look as if this is going to happen. I will probably need another holiday after this 'action-packed' period. There are two family weddings, back to back, and combined with the season's celebrations, I am afraid that I am going to come back looking like a balloon. It is so easy to accumulate fat and once there, it will not budge. Battle of the bulge!

In India, we start the celebration season earlier than the West. It begins with Diwali, followed by Ramadan, and then Christmas culminating with the New Year. I am Sikh, so I have another festival in between which is Gurburb, (the same as Christmas for Christians). Prayers and parties go hand in hand. Traditionally we participate in all the celebrations. When I came to England, I was surprised to note that Christmas was strictly a family affair, because in India it is party time. I then realized that when the Brits came to India over 270 years ago, the men came on their own without their families, so at this time of the year they would go to the clubs to eat, drink and be merry. The Brits left India over 60 years ago but we, the 'loyal' Indians have kept the tradition going! The restaurants and clubs are fully booked during this period.

As a child, I boarded in a Christian school in the foothills of the Himalayas. I used to look forward to winter as we would celebrate an early Christmas and leave for the plains for a long winter holiday. I really enjoyed singing the carols and my favorite was 'Silent Night, Holy Night' written in 1816 by an Austrian priest, Joseph Mohr. I loved its soft lyrics. It is still my favorite in spite of the passing years.

On a more serious note, I hope you will find some very interesting events in this Dateline to fill up your new 2011 diaries. 2010 was an amazing year for us at FIWAL. Our thanks go out to all the Clubs for contributing to the success of our events and propagating friendship and understanding. We look forward to working with you in the New Year which should be a very exciting one, as it is our 25th Anniversary.

With best wishes to you and your loved ones,

Neena Dugal



## **FIWAL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **A TOUCH OF GREECE**

FIWAL, in collaboration with Lykion Ton Hellinidon and The Hellenic Centre present an insight into national folk costumes from the various regions of Greece, traditional Greek dancing and an afternoon tea accompanied by authentic Greek hospitality on.

DATE : Wednesday 30th March 2011

TIME: 3 pm to 6 pm

VENUE: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, London W1U 5AS

TICKETS: £25

CONTACT: Peggy Skinitis, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Hulya Kocu, [REDACTED]

**FIWAL WEBSITE: [www.fiwal.org.uk](http://www.fiwal.org.uk)**

## FIWAL PAST EVENTS

### FIWAL PRESIDENTS' LUNCH

The FIWAL Presidents' Lunch was well attended by 48 member club presidents and representatives and members. After a warm welcome to everyone, FIWAL President Neena Dugal introduced Honorary Secretary Elisabeth Partyka who had canvassed members in advance, to share their experiences in managing their clubs and charities and highlight any successes or pitfalls they had encountered. A lively and informative discussion followed, very skillfully and diplomatically managed by Elisabeth, as she noted comments on the white board and explored the best deployment of the internet in general and websites and blogs, among other tips, to publicize our respective club activities.



*Donna Thomson, wife of the High Commissioner for Canada (right) and Elisabeth Partyka, FIWAL's Honorary Secretary (left)*

After lunch and dessert were served, guest speaker, Donna Thomson, wife of the High Commissioner for Canada, gave a moving and thought-provoking talk about her and her family's experiences to promote inclusion for her severely disabled son, Nicholas, who has suffered from cerebral palsy for the past twenty one years of his life. She read excerpts from her recently published book 'The Four Walls of My Freedom'. There were some audible gasps in the room when she recounted how she had tried to fulfill her son's heartfelt wish to meet Stone Cold Steve Austin in New Jersey. Wanting the trip to be as memorable and pain-free as possible for him, she inadvertently gave him extra morphine without a prescription and endangered his life. A child protection charge was made against her and an allegation that she had over-medicated Nicholas in New Jersey deliberately because she had indicated extreme levels of stress and exhaustion. She was under investigation as a mother intent on harming her son! It was a traumatic time and she worried that even her healthy daughter, Natalie would be taken away from her.

Donna spoke about how she, as the primary carer, and her family tried, with various degrees of success, to cope with her son's needs while ensuring that his life, as well as theirs, could have value and dignity. Her personal experience with adversity has led her to question the meaning of a good life and how we can help the most vulnerable people around us, whether they be disabled like Nicholas, or aging parents, live life with dignity and be accorded the respect they are entitled to as individuals in their own right, rather than being judged by their monetary worth or economic benefit to society.

Donna referred to the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen's roadmap of how to realize a good life against so many odds, and seeing the value and beauty, uniqueness and dignity of those with disabilities. He argues that the central concern of having a decent and valued life is freedom. It is not money and it is not accomplishments. He examines the possibilities of humans flourishing within a given set of circumstances, and particularly in adversity. The key idea is that social arrangements should expand people's capabilities or their freedom to promote whatever activities and lifestyles they value. Donna stressed that even developed countries have still some way to go and that she would like to see how families, communities and governments can work together to find ways to support the most vulnerable citizens.



*Fiwal's first president Jocelyn Jones*

Fiwal's first president Jocelyn Jones gave an eloquent vote of thanks to Donna for her inspirational talk and her courage in taking on so much on her shoulders to help ensure individual, family and societal well-being.

*Mona Dahdaleh*

## FIWAL PAST EVENTS—cont.

### FIWAL AFTERNOON TEA



About 45 Fiwal members and friends attended the Afternoon Tea at Salwa Myassi's home.

Our hostess par excellence Salwa outdid herself once again with the delicious afternoon tea spread that she

laid for us and her customary gracious and warm hospitality. A very congenial holiday atmosphere prevailed and President Neena Dugal introduced the guest entertainers. Cenk Karaferya is one of a new generation of countertenors specializing in the baroque and early classical repertoire. A recent graduate of Trinity College of Music, Cenk gave a virtuoso performance of two pieces from the repertoire of the well known eighteenth century castrato Farinelli (1705 – 1782): *Ombra Fedele Anch'io* - Broschi and *Alto Giovo* - Porpora. Cenk was accompanied by Donat Bayer, a pianist and musicologist. He is currently a Doctoral student and has given several recitals both in London and Istanbul.

Thanks to Salwa for her generosity and special thanks to Hulya Kocu and Tulin Warman for all their help in organizing this event.

*Mona Dahdaleh*

## PROFILE OF MEMBER CLUBS

### THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL (TWC)

#### *A Charity's progression*

When I was asked to write something about TWC, the suggested brief said put in some background history, some personal experiences and how the organisation had developed over time, that seemed relatively simple until I began to think about it and realised just how much there is to say and how to condense it into a few short paragraphs; however I will do my best.

Most FIWAL members will be familiar with our basic narrative of women of the UK co-operating with women of Asia and Asia Pacific in aiding disabled children and their families towards integration into main stream education and jobs within their own countries. However, the historical background and TWC's metamorphosis over the years is probably less familiar.

Our story has its origins with the rise in the Indian Independence movement in 1931 when conferences were being held in London on the future of that country. British women who had lived in India encouraged leading London organisations to co-operate with India's emerging women's movements through delegates to those conferences. From the initial support for women's education, the scope expanded to the care of disabled children and led to the setting up of what eventually has become the very different Women's Council of today. We do have a considerable archive detailing this history and thanks to the work of our late archivist, Diana Roberts, much of the work of collating these papers has been done and will be finished over the coming year, ready for placing with The Women's Library to be available for research purposes.

The latest metamorphosis of TWC came in the late 1990's with the beginning of TWC's cooperation with ADAPT Training Centre (Able Disabled, All People Together) in Mumbai and the SETI (Support To Education & Training in Inclusion) based in the Middle East. From that time we have focussed our fund-raising efforts on the Scholarship & Training Programme, providing funding for women to attend the centres. In this we are so generously helped by our Patrons (wives of or female Ambassadors of our 26 member countries), who open their homes to us. This hospitality not only raises funds, but helps to encourage friendship and understanding amongst our members.

For myself, I first became involved with TWC in 2003, when I was running Diplomatic Neighbours at the FCO and the TWC Committee took a stall at the Annual Coffee Morning. As I gradually learned more of its story, I became ever more impressed by its work and the loyalty of those who have worked to keep the show on the road. For me it was the fact that the charity has a practical focus that made me want to join it. For relatively little cost, the Scholarship scheme helps women to gain an expertise that can change their lives and better the lives of countless others in their own countries with the empowerment of disabled children and their families. It can have no better aim and in a changing world, today's Women's Council looks to the future with hope and a determination to continue to punch above its weight.

*Caroline Muir, Chairman of The Women's Council*

# CLUB ACTIVITIES 2011

## Tuesday 11th January

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey:

**January Monthly Meeting** With guest speaker, Jane Garrett, author of 'A Portrait of the Surrey Hills'. 9am – 2pm, Chertsey Hall, Heriot Road, Chertsey, KT16 9DR.

## Thursday 13th January

KCWC: **General Meeting**

With guest speaker historian Kate Williams, whose first book, England's Mistress: The Infamous Life of Emma Hamilton (2006) was a biography on the scandalous life of Lady Hamilton. Her talk is on two strong ladies behind two of the most famous men in history: Lady Hamilton and Admiral Lord Nelson's love story, and Napoleon and Empress Josephine's turbulent life together.

At 9:30 am – 12 noon at the Royal Geographical Society (No. 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR; entrance on Exhibition Road).

## Saturday 15th January

Welcome to London: **New Year Tea Party**

At the Institute of Directors in Pall Mall at 3.30 pm. £15. Please send a cheque payable to 'Welcome to London Women's International Club' to Helen O'Brien, [REDACTED]

## Wednesday 19th January

FOCUS: **Career's Development Programme**

Join us and receive information on how FOCUS can help you with your career goals and kick-start your way to successful job searching. All welcome but pre-registration essential ([www.focus-info.org](http://www.focus-info.org) or [office@focus-info.org](mailto:office@focus-info.org)) as this proves to be a very popular programme. At 11.00 to 12.30.

Free for members and for non-members. At FOCUS, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.

## Thursday 20th January

FOCUS: **New Year's Drinks**

Join us for a fun social gathering to celebrate the start of the New Year. Drinks and Nibbles. RSVP by 17th January at [office@focus-info.org](mailto:office@focus-info.org). From 18.00 to 20.00 at FOCUS, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG. Free for members and their guests.

## Monday 24th January

Commonwealth Countries League: **Coffee Morning**.

In the exclusive and elegant surroundings of the Picture Room of the Athenaeum Club at 10.30 am.

Please contact Helen Elam, Tel: [REDACTED], email: [REDACTED] Hilary Hugh Jones, [REDACTED]

## Tuesday 25th January

American Women's Club: **Monthly Meeting** at the Lansdowne Club

Come and hear Anna Venturi, the mastermind behind Venturi's Table, the UK's only dedicated Corporate Cookery Centre. At 10 am. Contact 020 7589 8292

## Wednesday 26th January

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey,

**Saddle Club: Volunteer Day**

Join us for our first-ever volunteer day at the Horse Trust, a sanctuary that cares for the retirement needs of more than 100 horses, ponies and donkeys.

10.30am – 3.30pm.

More details online at: [www.awbs.org.uk](http://www.awbs.org.uk).

## Wednesday 26th January

KCWC: **Afternoon Tea à la Grace Kelly**

Just tap into your inner Grace and celebrate friendship and femininity in Grace Kelly style! At The Palm Court, The Park Lane Hotel, a winner of the UK Tea Guild's Award of Excellence 2010. Afternoon French pastries prepared by Executive Chef Sarah Hartnett, voted Pastry Chef of the Year 2010 at the Craft Guild of Chef's Annual Awards dinner in June.

Contact Kathleen Herman at [events2@kcwc.org.uk](mailto:events2@kcwc.org.uk) for more information.

This event is open to guests and friends alike.

## Monday 31st January

London Ladies Club:

**Tour of Denis Severs' House and Lunch**

During a fascinating candlelit tour of this atmospheric house you will be transported back to the mid-1700s Huguenot silk weaver's house in Spitalfields, followed by a very special luncheon at The Market Coffee House, which is of the same period as Denis Severs' House and just a short walk from Liverpool Street Station.

Contact 020 7730 4640.

## Tuesday 1st February

FOCUS: **Seminar on Working for the Voluntary Sector in the UK**

Elaine Smethurst, Head of Workforce Development at the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO), will outline the size and shape of the voluntary sector in the UK.

She will share key sources of information on both volunteering and paid work positions within the voluntary sector as well as tips on finding the right opportunity for you.

Please register online at [www.focus-info.org](http://www.focus-info.org) or by e-mail at [office@focus-info.org](mailto:office@focus-info.org). From 10.30 to 12.30 at FOCUS, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.

Free for members and £20 non-members.

## Monday 7th February

FOCUS: **Seminar on Distinction**

Join us for an interactive and informative session that discusses the best approaches to handling the demands of expats and properly managing expectations.

Please register by email to [helen@theamericanhour.com](mailto:helen@theamericanhour.com). From 11.30 to 12.15 at Russell Hotel, 1-8 Russell Square, Bloomsbury, London WC1B 5BE. Free for members and non-members.

## CLUB ACTIVITIES—Cont.

### Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th February

London Ladies Club:

#### The Mall Tavern Cookery Masterclasses

Join talented young chef Jesse Dunford Wood in his kitchen where he will show us how to prepare some of his signature recipes, including soufflé, and let us try our hand at preparing some of the dishes which we will then enjoy for our luncheon at the specially prepared Chef's Top Table in the kitchen.

Each group is a maximum of 8 and further days can be arranged to avoid disappointment.

Members £35. Guests £42.

Near Notting Hill Gate Underground. Start at 11.30 am.

Contact 020 7730 4640.

### Wednesday 9th February

#### FOCUS: ABC of Taxes for Americans in the UK

For more than 20 years Jaffe & Co/American Tax International have been providing US Expatriates with comprehensive tax preparation and compliance services.

Join us for this workshop.

Please register online at [www.focus-info.org](http://www.focus-info.org) or by e-mail at [office@focus-info.org](mailto:office@focus-info.org).

From 8.30 to 20.00 at FOCUS, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.

Free for members and £20 for non members.

### Thursday 10th February

The Maple Leaf Trust, the charitable arm of the Canadian Women's Club: **Inaugural Luncheon Series**, with Moya Greene: A Personal View.

Ms. Green is CEO of The Royal Mail and viewed as one of Canada's Top influential women and twice as one of Canada's most powerful women for her work in the private and public sectors.

This will be a fascinating and empowering opportunity at 12:30pm at the Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall, 107 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ER.

Tickets are £50 payable to The Maple Leaf Trust c/o Canadian Women's Club, One Grosvenor Square, London, W1K 4AB. Please email Marie-France at [info@canadianwomenlondon.org](mailto:info@canadianwomenlondon.org) to make a lunch reservation.

### Thursday 10th February

#### KCWC: General Meeting

Guest speaker architectural historian Mike Hope will talk about 'The Continuing Fascination with the English Country House' particularly in television series such as *Brideshead Revisited*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and most recently, *Downton Abbey*, as well as films such as the Oscar-winning *Gosford Park*.

At 9:30 am – 12 noon at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD).

### Monday 14th February

#### Commonwealth Countries League: Bridge Afternoon

With home-made teas, prizes and raffles. This is at St. Colomba's Church of Scotland, Pont Street, SW1. Tickets £20 each (£80 for a table). Details and tickets from Helen Elam, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] or Hilary Hugh Jones [REDACTED]

### Tuesday 15th February

#### FOCUS: Workshop on Travel Photography – Snap your way to beautiful images.

The renowned travel photographer Chris Caldicott is running a hands-on workshop. Join us and learn how to take full control of your camera, be able to visualize your photo and know how to capture it. Please register online at [www.focus-info.org](http://www.focus-info.org) or by e-mail at [office@focus-info.org](mailto:office@focus-info.org).

From 10.30 to 12.30 at FOCUS, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.

Free for members and £20 for non members.

### Tuesday 15th February

Welcome to London: **Valentine's Lunch** at Bombay Brasserie. At 12.30 pm. £25.00.

Please send a cheque payable to 'Welcome to London Women's International Club', to Helen O'Brien, [REDACTED]

### Friday 18th February

#### American Women of Berkshire and Surrey: Road Trip

Join us for a Friday-night road-trip to see Monty Roberts, an award-winning horse trainer who teaches non-violent methods of breaking and correcting horses.

Location: College Equestrian Centre, Keysoe, Bedfordshire. 6pm until late. More details on the AWBS site.

### Tuesday 22nd February

American Women's Club:

#### Monthly Meeting at the Lansdowne Club

Talk by Women for Women, the organization focused on helping women in war-torn countries.

At 10 am. Contact 020 7589 8292.

### Tuesday 22nd February

London Ladies Club:

#### Tea Party at The Milroy at Les Ambassadeurs Club

Towering over Park Lane and Hamilton Place, Les Ambassadeurs Club is one of the most exclusive private and historic gaming clubs in the world playing host to celebrities and the highest rollers.

Built in 1810 with the spectacular club restaurant, 'The Milroy', long-restricted to members only, it is now opening its doors to non members and welcomes us for a sumptuous tea party and a chance to view the ornate interiors of this historic mansion.

Members £25. Guests £30. Contact: 020 7730 4640.

## CLUB ACTIVITIES—Cont.

### **Saturday 26th February**

Association of Turkish Women in Britain:

#### **Annual Charity Ball**

Enjoy a wonderful evening of music, dance and entertainment with a special guest star from Turkey at the five- star Renaissance Chancery Court Hotel, 252 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7EN.

Reception 6.30 pm; Dinner & Dance 7.30 pm.

All proceeds will be donated to domestic violence victims in the UK and Turkey.

Tickets £85

Contact: Zuhai Thiemann [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Tuesday 1st March**

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey:

#### **March Monthly Meeting**

Guest speaker, Colin Evans, from the BBC will discuss Great Gardens of Britain. Location: Chertsey Hall, Heriot Road, Chertsey, KT16 9DR.

### **Tuesday 8th March**

Welcome to London: **Lunch celebrating the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day**

There will be a special lunch, speeches and music at the Over-Seas League.

Further details to come.

### **Tuesday 8th - Thursday 10th March**

London Ladies Club: **Trip to Amsterdam**

Travel by Eurostar with our favourite guide, Angela Cotterell. Visit 'The Immortal Alexander the Great' exhibition at The Hermitage Museum, as well as the glory of the bulb markets, a traditional canal trip and some delicious dining. The delightful and centrally-placed Museum Hotel is close to the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum which are optional visits, alongside the fascinating Van Loon House, The Botanical Gardens and the Amsterdam Museum of Bags and Purses. Please call our office on 020 7730 4640 to reserve your place at the soonest opportunity.

Members £525. Guests £560. Including travel.

### **Friday 18th March – Sunday 20th March**

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey:

#### **Trip to Madrid**

Join us for a weekend packed full of fun and adventure in Madrid. Contact details and itinerary available online at: [www.awbs.org.uk](http://www.awbs.org.uk).

### **Monday 21st March**

Welcome to London: **Buffet Lunch and Concert**

At the historical Banqueting House in Whitehall, which is still a Royal Palace, and is much as it was when built by Inigo Jones for King Charles II. At 12.15pm.

Very reasonably priced at £20.00.

Further details to come.

### **Tuesday 15th March**

American Women's Club: **Founders' Day Luncheon** at the Royal Thames Yacht Club

Contact 020 7589 8292 for more details.

### **Tuesday 22nd March**

American Women's Club:

#### **Monthly Meeting** at the Lansdowne Club

AWC will host Dr. Rita Rakus, one of London's leading cosmetic doctors. At 10 am.

Contact 020 7589 8292.

### **Wednesday 23rd March**

London Ladies Club: **John Lewis Tour**

A private talk by the Managing Director and tour of John Lewis on Oxford Street to learn about the history of this famous store. Special culinary treats, with a party entertaining theme, will be served upon arrival from the Waitrose Food Hall (and wine bar). See what goes on behind the scenes before a tour of the fashion floor with Fashion Advisory experts with the latest collections for Spring-Summer 2011.

Members £10. Guests £15. Contact: 020 7730 4640

### **Friday 8th April**

London Ladies Club: **Fashion Show and Luncheon**

View the latest Summer collection of Gerry Weber to complete your capsule holiday look and add some essentials to update your wardrobe.

A fashion show with refreshments starts at 11, followed by a 2-course private luncheon at 12:30 at the charming Café Concerto overlooking 'White City'.

Members £35. Guests £40.

Contact 020 7730 4640

### **Thursday 5th May – Sunday 8th May**

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey:

#### **Hiking trip to the Black Forest, Germany**

We are planning 3 days of hiking, staying in different B&B's each night to make the most of exploring the area. In the area there are nice spas and casinos for night time entertainment.

More details online at: [www.awbs.org.uk](http://www.awbs.org.uk).

### **Thursday 5th May**

KCWC: **Annual Fashion Show 2011**

At the Chelsea Town Hall. This event will be open to guests and friends alike. Start spreading the word!

### **Sunday 15th May – Thursday 19th May**

American Women of Berkshire and Surrey:

#### **Tuscany Hiking and Biking Tour.**

More details online at: [www.awbs.org.uk](http://www.awbs.org.uk).

### **Tuesday 17th May**

Australian Women's Club: **International Coffee Morning**, in the Downer Room, Australia House. Further details will be available in the next edition of Dateline.

## WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Remember Zainab Salbi? Bill Clinton recently nominated her as one of Harpers Bazaar Magazine's 21st Century Heroines, stating that "where women endure, so does peace" As Zainab (Founder and CEO of Women for Women International) has shown us through her life and work, just one woman with hope in her heart and the courage to begin again can make all the difference.

Many of us first learned about Zainab when she spoke at FIWAL's Women of Vision Conference in May. Since then, we have been active in looking at ways we can support Women for Women. Several FIWAL members took information material along from the last board meeting and we distributed a video clip to be shared with others to help spread the word about Women for Women International.

Tuesday 8 March 2011 will be the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. For the second year running, Women for Women International is organizing the 'Join Me on the Bridge' campaign. On this day, women, men and children around the world will meet on bridges to show solidarity and support for women who are helping their war-torn nations to lay down arms, resolve their conflicts, and move toward a peaceful future. Time is running out for women in two countries

described as the world's worst place to be a woman. Urgent action is needed to support our sisters in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to help them build lasting peace. The main campaign is for women around the globe to live in a more secure world, have the chance of earning a sustainable living, and - now more than ever - have an equal voice at the decision-making tables in building the bridges of peace for our future.

For more details, please look up the following website: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/bridge/sign-the-pledge.php>.

Please join us in this global movement by joining us on the Bridge in London. London's activities will be inspirational and it would be wonderful to have as many FIWAL member clubs/members as possible participate.

Details are still forthcoming with updates at the [www.womenforwomen.org/bridge](http://www.womenforwomen.org/bridge) website.

Please contact me [REDACTED] for any additional information about the Bridge Campaign. For right now, Save the Date and plan to Join Me on The Bridge on Tuesday 8 March 2011.

*Elisabeth Partyka*

## TASIS THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

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[www.tasis.com](http://www.tasis.com)



## SEASON'S GREETINGS

This is the month to exchange seasonal greetings and good wishes for the New Year. However, it is also worth noting that this period can be quite stressful. A tremendous amount of hype is built up by television programmes, advertisements, chat shows, etc. Picture perfect families may be in abundance in Christmas catalogues but in fact many are far removed from festive bliss.

Violent stories during the Christmas and New Year period capture the nation's attention and make headlines around the world. Commentators and newspaper editorials question whether greed and consumerism are trumping our values and making the holidays a particularly violent time of the year. This is the time when police and medical professionals see a rise in domestic violence. Most domestic violence cases don't make the news unless they prove fatal. Holidays do bring out the worst in some of us.

Experts point to a number of factors for the seasonal rise in violence. As it is a time to celebrate, there is an obvious increase in the consumption of alcohol and drugs. There can also be acute stress from the expectation of giving and receiving gifts despite intense financial constraints, causing unaffordable expenses and high credit. Money is the root of many family problems and arguments. On top of this, people who don't necessarily like each other but must pretend to get along are brought together, potentially explosively, with pre-existing domestic tensions, or conflicts with the in-laws, in a confined space. It is little wonder that emotions intensify and can get out of hand.

Break ups are common during this time and the financial crisis around the world will impact even more families

this year. Domestic abuse is the wielding of power over a partner. If a relationship is abusive, the batterer may feel even more insecure if he can no longer financially support the family. If the batterer feels that he has lost control over finances, or who their partner talks to or goes out with, it is possible that violence will escalate as he tries to regain power and control. Under the influence of celebratory alcohol and drugs, the outcome can be deadly.

Family violence is a pattern of behavior by the abuser that is not explained by the victim's action. It knows no boundaries and can affect anyone. One of the most affected victims is children. Yet, most people who abuse their partner can control their violence. They can restrain themselves towards friends and colleagues, and can suppress their anger towards their partner in the company of others. Some limit assault to the parts of the body which can be covered by clothing.

Like any time of the year, the goal is to stop this violence. If the abuser will not get help, then it is best for the victim to leave the relationship. The victim needs a network of family and friends with whom they can stay, as well as the knowledge of the nearest domestic abuse centre. Religious institutes can also point abuse victims in the right direction.

Most importantly, people should remember that they should not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional, verbal or psychological abuse at any time of the year no matter what. This should be a time to cheer and not to fear!

*Neena Dugal*

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The next issue of "Dateline" will be published in April 2011.  
Please ensure that all club information reaches the "Dateline" editor Ayesha Khan,  
no later than 15th March 2011

If you would like to include a profile of your club,  
or an article for inclusion in Dateline please email Ayesha Khan.