

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

#### Women in Rotary



Dear Southerners,

With Jennifer E Jones readying to take up the presidency of RI in some time, I thought of penning on the subject of 'Women in Rotary'.

Rotary was a male bastion for the first 82 years of its existence, rather a long period for a service organisation. And, surprisingly it took a court decision to let the ladies into Rotary.

Women add colour, flavour, and refinement to any group and I believe that it has happened in Rotary too.

Rajashree Birla (mother of Kumar Mangalam Birla- Chairperson of Aditya Birla group ) is one person who comes to mind when I think about the roles women have played in Rotary. The largest contribution to The Rotary Foundation from a single contributor has come from Rajashree Birla and it has crossed over \$11million. Describing herself as "a proud Rotarian" in the 2017 Atlanta convention she said, "today all of us Rotarians are on the threshold of creating history by eradicating a disease with such disastrous consequences such as polio from the face of the earth. For over 10 years I have been engaged with this organisation and your commitment, compassion, and efforts to do whatever it takes to banish polio struck me deeply. Your clarion call across the world inspired me and I too began championing the Rotary movement."

When it comes to our Club and District we are very much ahead in welcoming women into the fold. PDG Rekha Shetty became the first lady Governor in our District in 1999 and PP Shyamala Jayaprakash became the first lady president of our Club in the same year. PP Asha Marina took up the presidency in 2016 and with the increase in lady members, Southerners are looking forward to collar more lady presidents.

It's worth mentioning that now there are many clubs exclusive for women and recently a new club has been started for the transgender community. However, whether such exclusivities are in the right direction in a world that is opening up is a moot point.

Yours in Rotary  
**Renjit Joseph**

### RIPE ANNOUNCES 2022-23 PRESIDENTIAL THEME

Rotary International President-elect Jennifer Jones wants members to imagine the possibilities in the change they can make to transform the world.

Jones, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, revealed the 2022-23 presidential theme, Imagine Rotary, as she urged people to dream big and harness their connections and the power of Rotary to turn those dreams into reality.

"Imagine, a world that deserves our best," Jones told incoming district governors on 20 January, "where we get up each day knowing that we can make a difference."

Jones, who will make history on 1 July by becoming Rotary's first female president, gave a live online address to precede Rotary's annual training event for district governors from around the world, the International Assembly. The assembly was rescheduled because of the COVID-19 pandemic and was held virtually from 7-14 February.

Jones told the incoming governors about a chance she took when a member asked for assistance in getting a young peace activist out of Afghanistan during the U.S. troop withdrawal last year. At first unsure how she could help, she relied on "that certain Rotary magic" and contacted a former Rotary Peace Fellow she had met a few years earlier. Less than 24 hours later, the activist was on an evacuation list, and soon she was on her way to Europe.

(Source: RI website)



## EXCLUSIVE ROTARY CLUB FOR THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

Transgender inclusion is a high priority in our society and a long-term urge and dream of every transgender. In a unique initiative, RC Madras Coromandel has launched India's first exclusive Rotary club for the transgender community, The Rotary Club of Madras Elite.

The 25 initial members of this club have been carefully chosen from among the transgender community with the help of the NGO, Pharm Foundation, Perumbakkam.

Rtn Sridhar, DG, Rtn Raviraman, DGN, Rtn Saravanan, DGND along with Kalaimamani Sudha launched this exclusive club virtually as part of RI District 3232.



## ANNADANAM AT EEF

The last Saturday of every month is Annadanam Day for RCMS. Rtn Renjit and a few other rotarians would be present at East Eden Foundation to personally oversee and serve food to the inmates. Though the Annadanam continued even during the lockdown period, it was not possible for the rotarians to visit the place. On 29th January President Renjit landed at the place after a gap of several months much to the delight of the inmates. For the information of new members, EEF is an NGO located at Kolapakkam, that rescues mentally challenged men from the streets of Chennai, rehabilitates and reunites them with their families whenever possible. You can contact President Renjit for contributing to this noble cause.

## CHENNAI: A BIOGRAPHY – A MUST-READ BOOK ON OUR CITY BY RTN V SRIRAM

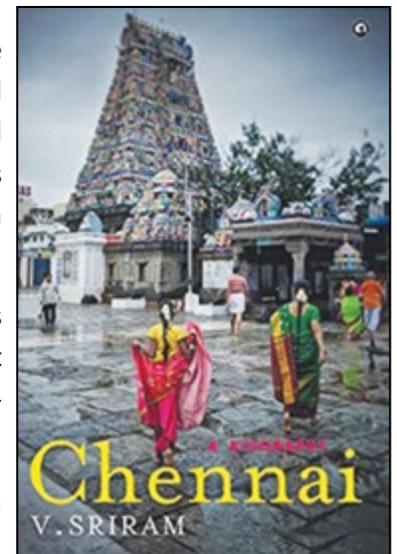
Chennai that was Madras is India's southern metropolis and is considered by many to be synonymous with South India. It has the reputation of being conservative, rigid and unexciting. Chennai too plays along, preferring to hide its history and heritage and downplaying its manifold achievements and progress. To set the record straight, Madras has a strong claim to being the first proper city of modern India and boasts many debuts in that regard.

V. Sriram takes us through various aspects of the city's history from the time when it was just a set of scattered villages and shows us what makes Chennai a thriving city, one that effortlessly combines the old and the new, and pulses with life, energy, and opportunities - all attributes of a grand city.

About Rtn Sriram: V Sriram, who returned to RCMS as a member after a break last year is an entrepreneur by profession.

Sriram's passion is the history and heritage of Chennai, which he has been documenting since 1999. Having worked closely with the late S. Muthiah, the city's celebrated chronicler, Sriram is now the editor of the popular fortnightly Madras Musings, which espouses the cause of the city's heritage—built, cultural, and natural. Sriram is also the pioneer of heritage walks in the city, which he started in 1999. Rotarians can buy a copy of the book at a special discounted price.

Contact Sriram @ 9840024200



## 'ILLAM THEDI KALVI' AT KATTUR CLC



Our Community Learning Centre at Kattur, where we started the evening tuition classes for the local school children in December, is now also being used by the TN Govt. for its 'Illam Thedi Kalvi' (Education at Home) programme. The Centre provides the much-needed space for tuition and yoga classes for the children. The children also celebrated Pongal and Republic Day at the Centre in January.



## NARAYANAN KRISHNAN INDUCTED

Rtn Narayanan Krishnan was inducted into our club on 4th January by our senior member, PP Rtn R V Rajan during the regular weekly speaker meeting. An English literature graduate, he is a Property Manager based in Chennai providing end-to-end solutions to property owners. He is married to Ann Meena, a Chartered accountant, who is now a homemaker. Blessed with two children Krishnan and Visalakshi, he was formerly a member of RC Madras Heritage.

## SOUTHERNERS CELEBRATE PONGAL

January is a special month for the people of Tamilnadu with the harvest festival of Pongal being celebrated over four days. Southerner families too got into the festive spirit and celebrated the festival with traditional fervour. Here are some pics of a few Southerners celebrating Pongal.



*Rtn Elumperiyar with family*

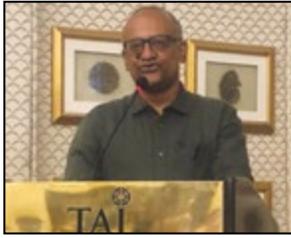


*Rtn V Kalyanasundaram*



*Rtn Suresh Arunachalam*

## WEEKLY MEETINGS IN JANUARY



Date : 4th January, 2022  
Speaker : Rtn V Sriram  
Topic : Heritage tours of Chennai ... and more!



Date : 11th January, 2022  
Speaker : Mr Vijayaraghavan Narasimhan

Musical Accompaniment:  
Master Vidhyuth



Date : 18th January, 2022  
Speaker : Dr J Jeganaathan  
Topic : Decoding Afghanistan



Topic : The life and achievements of Subramania Bharathi

## VISION AND GOALS FOR ROTARY

“In order to live in the kind of society you want, you have to help build it.” This is a quote from my youngest brother and it speaks to the core of who we are and what we do.

I believe we are rooted in what our founders set forward – our core values, the objects of Rotary and our Four-Way Test. These are the principles that are the bedrock of who we are as Rotarians. Times may change – but these remain our sacred truths.

I see a Rotary that increases our impact by focusing on our strategic plan and expands our reach by engaging the Family of Rotary at every age, gender and culture to create lasting change.

As we reflect upon our new strategic priorities, we could have never envisioned that our ability to adapt would become our North Star during what is inarguably the most profound time in recent history. When the world stepped down, we stepped up.

Silver linings rise out of the most challenging circumstances. Using metric-driven goals, I will harness this historic



landscape to innovate, educate and communicate opportunities that reflect today's reality.

As a globally recognized communicator, I will open a direct dialogue with the family of Rotary through our social channels to heighten awareness of our most pressing issues, like Polio Eradication, Supporting the Environment, Elevating Rotaract and Growing Rotary.

I believe that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) begins at the top and for us to realize growth in female membership and members under the age of forty – these demographics need to see their own reflection in leadership. I will champion double-digit growth in both categories while never losing sight of our entire family.

I pledge to Grow Rotary by hosting DEI Summits to create leadership opportunities that foster balance across our membership.

**Jennifer E Jones**  
RIPE (22-23)

*(Source: RI Website)*

## REMEMBERING PDG RTN RAMAKRISHNA RAJA

One of the tallest figures in Rotary during his 60 years of association with rotary and a charter member of the Rotary Club of Madras South, PDG R Raja passed away in March 2020. In order to honour his memory, the first “Ramakrishna Raja Memorial Award for Excellence” will be conferred on Prof V Kamakoti, current Director of IIT Madras on 24th March, 2022. Southerners, please mark the date and ensure your participation at the event. A special edition of “The Southerner” will be released on that day. More details regarding the event will be communicated by President Renjit in the days to come.

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