

CONNECTIONS

BULLETIN OF THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHANDIGARH OLD STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (GMCCOSA)

Vol.3, ISSUE.2

May 2006

From the Editors desk

"Sir, I am in town ...," hesitantly said the voice on the phone. It was Sanjeev Dhankar ('97), who is currently a surgery resident at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester and lives an hour away from my home in Minneapolis. I knew Sanjeev from a few emails and phone calls we had exchanged before and since his move to the USA, but had never met him in person. "What do they look like? What will we talk about?" were among the many questions that raced across my mind as I climbed down the stairs to greet him and his wife, Sumedha (also from the 97 batch). But we 'clicked' instantly. We spent the whole evening sharing our memories of medical college days, and for all I know, we could have been easily mistaken for classmates. And the only common link among us was GMC.

As we pass out from GMC and move on with our lives, this 'link' connects us all with each other and our alma mater. It develops and is fostered over the more than five years we spend together, sharing some of our most intimate secrets and dreams during one of the most impressionable periods of our life. It is almost ten years since I graduated from GMC, and trust me, you cannot establish such a 'link' with anyone again. And it is upto us to maintain this bond and strengthen it further, for it is very easy to lose it during the travails of our busy everyday lives.

So keep in touch.

*Navneet Majhail
('91 batch)*

Adieu Prayaas



GMC is finally saying good bye to the Prayaas Building in sector-38 after 15 long eventful years. Classes for the first batch started there on 9th September 1991. Those wide corridors and expansive classrooms will be missed by all.



Scores of events, dozens of colleges, thousands of delegates and truckloads of labor - 11 to 14 February 2006 saw GMC rocking to Euphoria. Four days of ecstasy and fun had the delegates from all over north and central India flocking the GMC. This time the 2002 batch had donned the mantle of organizing this mega-event, with the support of Prof H M Swami, our Director Principal and guidance of Prof A K Janmeja, Chairman of Euphoria Organizing Committee. The first day saw a dazzling performance by the GMCites as they spread the message of love in the inaugural Euphoriography. The comedy nite by Jaswinder Bhalla was followed by an all-night dance party in the basement of the D-block of the hospital. Of course, the highlight, as always, was the slide show which reaffirmed what we have always known - GMCites rock ... hard!

The second day was action packed. It kicked off with a fiery debate on the topic "information superhighway needs more traffic lights". GMC dominated the event completely from the outset. The western dance contest saw the college students go neck and neck against each other while the audience clapped and enjoyed the music. However, one man's authority was stamped all over - Rahul of our GMC, who left the audience spell bound with his gyrations.

The star-night saw two upcoming Punjabi singers, Sarabjeet Cheema and Amrinder Gill performing to the insatiable crowds.

The stars who walked away with the loudest cheer were not the Punjabi singers but the students of the Institute for Blind who regaled the audience with their melodious voices. The artistes won a standing ovation from the appreciative crowds along with monetary aid from the visiting delegates as well the hosts. They were given Euphoria t-shirts as well. The antakshri contest was a big hit with the audience as the hosts pulverized the opposition and came up trumps.

The grand finale of the second day was a fashion show in which models sashayed down to cheering crowds who just did not have enough.

Euphoria was not all dance and frolic. The quizzards battled each other in the 'Rapier Minds' quiz contest in which GMCH came up trumps to win the first and second prizes.

Every night the delegates gyrated to the beats of the DJ as he belted out popular tracks one after the other. The serpentine queues outside the venue were a testimony to the immense popularity the fest enjoys among the Indian medicos.

Valentine's Day was marked by the 'Made for Each Other' contest. Mr. Euphoria 2006, Dushyant Thakur, wowed the audience and paired up with Ravan Jwanda to claim the runners-up title in MFOE.

On the sports front, GMCH once again came up with a sterling performance which propelled them to the runners up trophy of the All India Medi-cricket. Next year, the boys are planning to bring the winners trophy home! Go for it guys!!

Off stage informal events like arm wrestling, cacophonics, dumb charades, pinocytosis, egg-catching and others kept the zest of Euphoria alive in the hearts of all the delegates.

The last day saw the performance of the Rangla Hassa star Jugraj. Finally, the Director Principal Prof. HM Swami and Prof AK Janmeja gave away the prizes to all the winners. Kudos to Saurabh, Divleen, Amit and their team for such a wonderful Euphoria 2006. The delegates went back with the message: milenge break ke baad, same time, same place, aapke manpasand fest-Euphoria pe!

All in all, Euphoria was lots of fun, frolic, masti and ... ahem ... eye-candy! After a brief hiatus, Euphoria will be back.

*Divyanshoo Kohli
('03 batch)*

GMCCOSA contributed Rs 10,000 to EUPHORIA 2006 – thanks to all alumni for their contributions

Thanks to EUPHORIA 2006 organizers for contributing Rs 10,000 for KOSHISH



Euphoriography 2006



Students of Institute for Blind who performed at the opening ceremony along with Euphoria organizers



GMC cricket team (runners up, All India Medi-Cricket tournament)

KOSHISH Diary

In February I visited India and had a chance to meet with some current students again. This was right after Euphoria. Despite the immense hangover and feeling of emptiness that is inevitable after the boisterous celebrations, about 40 odd students were still able to gather their wits about them and make it to the talk. A special mention goes to Divyanshoo Kohli and Harshabad Singh (both of '03 batch), who were able to galvanize students for the talk and spread the word around.

As before, the desire to go abroad remains unsatiated. Students had questions about the USMLE and residency abroad, visa issues, graduate education in the USA as well as research options abroad. It is also always my firm resolve, after these sometimes intense talks, never to do them again, but I also know my determination will capsize each time. In the end, it's just too much fun...



Students attending Sandeep's talk in February 2006

Most of the gathering was also aware of KOSHISH. I also met with the core group of KOSHISH (Niyati Mahajan, Era Dhaliwal, Harshabad and Divyanshoo) over coffee and sandwiches at...where else, but Baristas. We came up with a plan for future efforts related to KOSHISH...on their suggestion we also welcomed into our fold Adarsh Sai Jindal, who it seems is well respected by his peers in the college. Working in tandem they have now gotten together students from every batch with about 35-40 members. They have also formed an organizational structure, and are in the process of developing and refining the framework and rules within which would KOSHISH will operate...that is what we have wanted all along...for the reins of KOSHISH to be solely and firmly in the hands of the current crop.

About Rs 15,000 has been spent on KOSHISH endeavors and another Rs 10,000 has been sent. Rather than enumerate a laundry list of the contributions, Divyanshoo has enumerated below a few achievements of KOSHISH.

If activities of KOSHISH proceed as envisioned, we will be asking for donations soon. Our coffers are running dry and are in dire need of repletion. And we will ask YOU, as we did before, to contribute again, to keep this going, for as far as we can see, mostly good things can come out of it.

News From Ground Zero

How often does it happen that someone the age of your grand-mother talks to you with folded hands? How many times have people spoken the words 'thank you' and have meant it? Can those two words really convey a deep, moving sense of gratitude? How infectious can a smile be?

In our mechanical unemotive existence, satisfaction is rare. However, for those associated with KOSHISH, such events are common-place indeed. They lead us away from the humdrum of life and bring into focus other perspectives. How...well read on:

Arrrrrrrrhhhhhhgggg! Krishan Sawhney woke up and stretched his arms. He had been woken up by the clang on his mobile phone. Niyati Mahajan, of KOSHISH, had sent an urgent message. There was a patient who needed O+ve blood stat. The hospital blood bank was facing a shortage and the stock of this group stood at nil. One hundred and eighty seconds later, every student of GMCH had received a message on his/her mobile: "O+ve blood needed at A block. Plz fwd to others". Half an hour after her message had been dispatched to the students, Niyati was signing the donation forms of 4 students of the college who had come forward to help. It was another 'home-run' scored by KOSHISH.

All this while, a woman was battling for her life. Her diagnosis read: carcinoma rectum. Her husband, too old to arrange money (and too drunk to comprehend the need for it) lay slumped in the chair. The intern in-charge took up the matter with KOSHISH and ensured that the chemist gave most of the material needed for the surgery at hefty discounts. A week later, with a many a thanks and infectious smile, she walked out of GMCH.

*Sandeep Kochar ('93 batch)
Divyanshoo Kohli ('03 batch)*

GMC – First Sports Day

The first annual sports day at GMC was held on 17th to 19th August 1994 with participation from the first three batches ('91 – '93). The organizing committee was led by Prof MS Sekhon, then Head of General Surgery, and Vivek Ahuja and Vishal Vir Sharma, both from the 1991 batch. All events took place in a large vacant plot of land in sector-25 adjacent to the Prayas building.



Inaugural chess game was played between Prof MS Sekhon (extreme left, Head of General Surgery) and Prof JS Chopra (extreme right, Director Principal); in the center is Vivek Ahuja ('91), the sports secretary



Prof JS Chopra awarding trophies to the best athlete's Amit Bir Chawla ('92) and Kavita Mahajan ('91)

Sports Day 2006

On 25th and 26th February, the faculty and the students were seen sans coats and in sneakers. Kamlesh Kumari ('03) kept up her amazing domination over the best female athlete trophy for the third time running. She seems to be rather fond of the trophy and would go any distance to keep her vice like grip intact. Manpreet Bhandal ('02) reclaimed the trophy for the best male athlete after having been edged out last year by Saurabh Behl ('01). The overall trophy was won by the 2002 batch while 2004 came second. 2003 batch, champions of the march past last year, had to settle with the runners up trophy for marching as 2002 were crowned winners.

GMC Chronicles – Some Firsts

As the first fifty of our college, we in the first batch of GMC got used to be associated with so many "firsts" that they became a way of life. In fact when it came down to not being associated with some, a situation almost resembling an identity crisis developed which used to last till we blew off another (now in retrospect, stupid) act. This idea of talking about some of those situations came to our mind recently and I sat down to reminisce some as a sideline to our newsletter. Though some of these 'unos' have been indeed worth credit, some of them are best forgotten but for the archives sake I will mention them here.

The First Bunk

Planned for no specific reason, the bunk was an outright success with total absence and the whole class instead collecting in front of Neelam cinema hall to watch the Madhuri extravaganza 'Saajan'. The planning was complete with an espionage team standing in camouflaged dress at the college roundabout (then in Prayaas building) to check on the 'sneakers'. This was followed by a knee-jerk rebound thrashing by the six member strong faculty. Official memos were sent by Dr Chopra (the principal) to parents of all students (the efforts so many of us had to put in to bribe the mailmen for a special hand delivery of that 'important' letter are best forgotten). From then started the saga of 'apology letters' that plagued the GMCites for ages to come. We also ended up celebrating the 'first Lohri' of GMC, which incidentally happened to fall on the day after the 'first bunk'. Organized within a few hours, it was a last ditch effort

Visit www.gmccosa.org for more photographs of first GMC Sports Day

to do some damage control (it was sheer coincidence that an anatomy stage had been previously scheduled on the mass bunk day!). Needless to say, the tireless all night singing of 'Sundar mundriye...' had no effect on Dr Jaswinder Shergill (then head of anatomy) and the whole class collectively scored a total of less than 5 marks (we were in fact surprised it was not zero). In retrospect the whole 'bunk' episode probably just deserves fading into oblivion.

The First Cafeteria

Nobody can imagine the joy of our batch when the first ramshackle cafeteria was set up after pestering the principal for many months. It started with five tables to sit and boasted of the menu of tea, cookies and cake. It soon developed into the official 'hanging out place' for everyone. The crowd used to especially build up during the afternoon dissection sessions as more and more people got kicked out of the D-hall (at times for days together). Those wonderful afternoons still linger in the memories of so many of us.

The First Elevator

The Prayaas building did not have an elevator for many months. When one was finally installed it landed up being a chauffeur driven elevator (luxuries only known to India) and cut the commute up the five floors. However the joy was short lived as Dr Chopra soon slapped on an order for the elevator to be used only by the faculty. Well, needless to add that we all had to comply. We soon came across an idea to get solace from this 'insult'. We made sure that anybody who went past that elevator pressed all the buttons so as to convert the smooth ride for the faculty into a local bus trip stopping at all floors. The more recent graduates can never get this feeling after being pampered at the new Sector-32 hospital building.

The First 'Rejection'

There is no feeling worse than feeling rejected. And we, the first fifty, got a big and heavy dose of that very early in our course. Very soon we realized that the existence of our college was far from the 'goody good' feeling projected by our miniscule faculty. Struggles at the very basic level of getting clinical training in the local sector 16 hospital were a rude awakening. Then followed our monumental strike and the whole experience with the administrative system was disgusting. We found ourselves stuck in a situational whirlwind buffeted equally by administrative indifference and personal egos. The MCI (medical

council of India) threw in the final stinker with ultimate rejection of any recognition, spiraling the career of all students (the first batch being the most affected) into an abyss. The legal route was the last option. All the students (including the 4 junior batches) plugged in their support for the petition against the MCI, the state and local governments and the President of India for playing with the careers of so many students. In the end, our efforts did bring fruit with the college receiving unconditional recognition from the MCI. In those chaotic six months I experienced many firsts. The first visit to a lawyer's office, first visit to the Supreme Court, the first letter to the chairman of WHO amongst many others. And rest all is history.

The purpose behind these articles in the chronicles of GMC is not so much to laugh at our miniscule origins but also to remember the long road we all have tread to come where we are today. We stand at the crossroads of moving ahead and giving ourselves and our college a new identity at the international level (we are already nationally acclaimed). And every single effort to bring forth that identity collectively helps the whole GMC community.

We encourage all the batches to contribute their experiences to make us and everybody else familiar with their struggles. Needless to add that unless someone writes about them nobody comes to know of them.

*Hemender Singh
('91 batch)*

Convocation 2006

The 4th convocation of GMC was held on February 5th 2006. We congratulate all the graduates of the '98, '99 and '00 batches and wish them trail-blazing success.



Kudos

...to Jatinder Singh ('96) for being appointed as Senior House Officer (Anesthesiology), William Harvey/Kent and Sussex Hospitals, Kent, UK.

...to Sachin Verma ('99) for being selected for Masters of Public Health course, Victorian Consortium of Public Health, La-Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

...to all who have been secured residency positions in the USA starting July 2006, including:

- Maneesh Gupta ('94), Internal Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon.
- Gaurav Aggarwal ('96), Internal Medicine, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Mohit Bansal ('96), Family Practice, Southern Illinois University, Springfield, Illinois.
- Sonica Saini ('96), Internal Medicine, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska.
- Ankur Bindal ('97), Emergency Medicine, York Hospital, York, Pennsylvania.
- Geetinder Goyal ('97), Internal Medicine, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas.
- Harkirat Saggu ('97), Psychiatry, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.
- Sanjeev Dhankar ('97), Obstetrics & Gynecology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.
- Sumedha Bangar ('97), Internal Medicine, Grand Rapids Medical Education & Research Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Stork Line

Sanjay Goel ('91) was blessed with a son on 23rd January 2006.

Anju ('92) and Sushil were blessed with a son, Aaryan (pictured below) in September 2005.



Congrats

...Pawan Kumar ('91) got married on 21st January; he is currently Senior Medical Officer, Directorate of Health Services, Delhi Govt, New Delhi.

Album

Mini-reunion '94 batch, January 2006



Editors: Please send us photographs of your re-unions, meetings, weddings, etc (anything) to gmc cosa@yahoo.com

Editors:

Navneet Majhail ('91), Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA; Hemender Singh ('91), Marshfield, Wisconsin, USA;
Rohit Rambani ('92), London, UK; Sandeep Kochar ('93), New York, New York, USA;
Divyanshoo Rai Kohli ('03), Chandigarh, India.

Contact Us:

gmc cosa@yahoo.com