

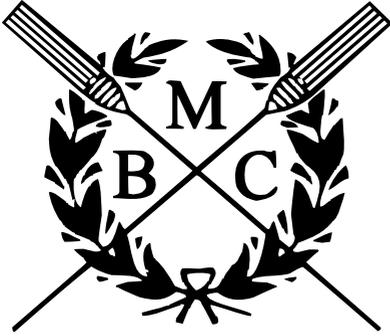
THE
CLUB ELITE

OARSPEAK

BOAT CLUB NEWS

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& PORTFOLIOS 2017- 19**

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PADDLING FOR A CAUSE



Nilambur - the starting point of the Challenge. After a 3-hour briefing and team allotment session, we took to the waters in our colourful kayaks and helmets and life vests. The briefing took awhile because most of us were novices and had to be clubbed with someone who had kayaked before. Unfortunately for me, whilst all others were allotted their kayaks and partners and were testing the waters (literally) my partner had not turned up. So Kaushik's (a founder of Jelly Fish Water Sports) wife -an expert kayaker - partnered with me that day.

Whilst others were gently trying out the waters and understanding their 'boats', nothing had really prepared me for the speed with which we took off and even as I was figuring out how my hands and legs must co-ordinate, she decided I was not the right partner for her as the current was taking us in its fold and sweeping us away at top speed. I had a brief two minutes to explain to her that I was a rower and could understand the waters, except that I had to understand within the first two minutes that the shoulders and hands had to do all the propelling and not so much your legs! Quite the reverse of rowing! So after the initial hiccup we settled down to a

Drifting with the river current, navigating rapids, falling off waterfalls (big and small) - these were things confined to my imagination. Watching National Geographic was as close as I came to experiencing these. Dream became reality when one of our club members posted pictures of her kayaking and standing on something which looked like a surfboard and paddling. Those photos really made me want to try out this sport. So when the opportunity arose, I jumped to it and found myself travelling to Kerala along with some other members of MBC for

the 'Chaliyar River Challenge'.

The Challenge is an annual multi-day paddling event organized by Clean Rivers Initiative and Jellyfish Watersports, a paddling club based in Calicut, Kerala. The Challenge is part kayaking experience, part environmental rally (to highlight the pathetic state of our rivers) and part music festival targeted to attract paddlers and all those who want to protect nature.

GETTING STARTED

So, after a train and cab ride, we reached

smooth fast kayaking experience down the river.

TESTING OUR METTLE

The first day was mostly about figuring out how to stay on the kayak and maintain a relatively straight course. The rapids were gentle with clumps of vegetation throughout the course but of course, being newbies, we kept toppling into the water, keeping the lifeguards on their toes.

The second day we were ready to finetune our newly acquired skills and start enjoying 'GOAD'S OWN COUNTRY' (as a signboard informed us)! This was also the day that I got a single person kayak and so it was me versus the river. Post lunch came the crazy leg of the journey. We had to cross a big rapid under a bridge and we were briefed on how to handle the rapids and most importantly to keep a calm mind and to never lose your paddle. Now the current was pretty strong going towards the bridge and it was all rocky and we were advised to slip in ONLY between pillars 2 and 3 as the current in between other pillars was strong and strewn with sharp rocks on the other side. So we lined up as efficiently as we could along the extreme right side of the river where the current was less and positioned ourselves as instructed. But things are never that simple. As I came near the pillars the current took over, the kayak turned to the side. I thought 'Dear God, I'm going over sideways' only to find that my kayak was facing the other way and I couldn't see where I was headed (felt like I was rowing!). I closed my eyes and listened to my inner voice that said don't fight nature. Of course I kept an iron grip on the paddle because if you lose the paddle, you have no control over anything. I went over the rapid, landed with a slight thud and spun round a bit in the small whirlpool, got caught in the current again and drifted down a bit and then pulled over to the side and clung on to the brush to await my group. Phew!

Many folks took a tumble and plenty of paddles were drifting downstream by



themselves as were unmanned kayaks. People were also happily drifting down after the fall with that 'geez' smile - everyone in a happy place after the adrenaline high. We were all, of course, ready to have another go!

SOUL FOOD

The organisers had ensured we stayed at some lovely places – the first night at a beautiful resort (complete with hot water to get rid of all the aches and pains) and the second night we camped on an uninhabited island. We sure needed that hot water considering we put in some long hours on the water – from noon to 6 pm the first day and then on the second day we began bright and early at 6 am for a whole day of kayaking. We, of course, took breaks for meals. Lunch was a casual affair – pulling up on the riverside and walking down to a shack to dig into kappa and meen curry. Yum!

Though we were tired at the end of the day, we were also invigorated by all the hard physical work. For the evenings, traditional music and dance

by local troupes had been arranged and of course we all invaded the dance floor to shake a leg to traditional Malayalam folk songs. On the third day, at 6.00 in the evening we docked at the Jelly fish water sport complex along the river and relaxed for a fantastic dinner served on the traditional plantain leaf. Others went on to the music fest while some of us reluctantly left to catch our bus back to reality.

Hats off to the JellyFish team who worked hard to make sure everyone had fun while staying safe. Last year there were about 90 participants and this year there were about 250. This clearly speaks to the nature of the event and the popularity it is gaining. The Challenge aims to encourage people to take up kayaking but also to sensitize people on the growing pollution of the Chaliyar river. It will be good to take a leaf out of their book to find innovative ways to draw attention to our polluted rivers.

*Vishnupriya
RV053*

ANNOUNCEMENT

I) MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO:

- ▶ COLLECT THE 150TH YEAR SOUVENIR MUGS OF THE MADRAS BOAT CLUB FROM THE RECEPTION. MEMBERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED FOR THE 150TH YEAR CELEBRATIONS MAY KINDLY COLLECT THE SOUVENIR AFTER SIGNING IN THE REGISTER.
- ▶ PROVIDE THE E-MAIL IDS TO THE CLUB'S OFFICE AS MOST OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ARE ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS BY MAIL.
- ▶ FURNISH THE MOBILE NUMBERS OF DEPENDENTS FOR SENDING SMS REGARDING PROGRAMS.

II) MEMBERS ATTENTION IS HEREWITH DRAWN TO CLAUSE "B" OF RULE "XXI:STAFF" OF THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION WHICH READS AS UNDER:

" NO MEMBERS SHALL GIVE TO ANY STAFF OF THE CLUB ANY SUM OF MONEY OR GRATUITY UPON ANY PRETEXTS WHATEVER. ANY STAFF THAT RECEIVES SUCH MONEY OR GRATUITY SHALL BE LIABLE FOR PUNISHMENT ,WHICH MAY EXTEND TO DISMISSAL. ANY MEMBER INFRINGING THIS RULE SHALL BE WARNED AND IF THE OFFENSE IS REPEATED , MAY BE SUSPENDED UNDER RULE XV".

MBC COMMITTEE

ERRATUM

THE OCTOBER 2017 ISSUE OF OARSPEAK CARRIED AN ARTICLE TITLED, 'SWIMMING IN CHEMISTRY'. THE AUTHOR'S NAME WAS INADVERTENTLY OMITTED. THE OARSPEAK TEAM APOLOGISES TO THE AUTHOR, DR. ARVIND PARTHASARATHY (LA043), FOR THE ERROR.

CONGRATULATIONS!



CONGRATULATIONS SURABHI P, TAARUSHI G, TULSI S, AND AHAANA B ON WINNING THE BRONZE, WITH A TIMING OF 3.59.78, IN THE 1000M COXLESS FOURS EVENT AT THE 38TH JUNIOR NATIONAL ROWING CHAMPIONSHIP 2017 HELD IN ODISHA IN NOVEMBER 2017.

SHRI BALA'S KITCHEN



KERALA SQUID RINGS

- ▶ Squid – 10 to 12 cut into rings - (exercise care while cutting into rings the edible ink should not spread to the rings)
- ▶ Ginger Garlic Paste – 1 tblsp
- ▶ Chilli Powder – 2 tsp (Increase as per taste)
- ▶ Pepper Powder – 1 tsp
- ▶ Turmeric Powder – 1 tsp
- ▶ Maida (all purpose flour) – 4 tblsp
- ▶ Garam Masala Powder – 1 tsp
- ▶ Lemon Juice – 1 tblsp
- ▶ Salt to taste
- ▶ Oil – 3 tblsp

SRIDEVI BALASUBRAMANIAN (PUC 559) IS A FINANCE PROFESSIONAL WHO MOONLIGHTS AS A CHEF. HER FORTE IS SOUTH INDIAN CUISINE. SHE CONDUCTS FOOD FESTIVALS IN TOP HOTELS IN THE COUNTRY, TRAINS CHEFS IN AUTHENTIC SOUTH INDIAN FOOD, HOSTS A FOOD SHOW ON PUDHUYUGAM TV. YOU MAY HAVE SAMPLED HER FOOD AT THE INTERNATIONAL REGATTA HOSTED BY OUR CLUB IN JULY 2017. VISIT HER FB PAGE SHRIBALA'S KITCHEN, OR CATCH HER ON INSTAGRAM @SHRI_BALA OR TWITTER @_SHRIBALA

METHOD:

- ▶ Mix everything and transfer into a ziploc bag. Let it rest for a minimum of half hour in refrigerator.
- ▶ After 30 minutes, take out of the ziploc and give it a gentle shake so that the masala mixes properly.
- ▶ Add sufficient oil to deep fry the rings in a pan and let it heat well.
- ▶ Now drop the rings in one by one and fry them till golden brown.
- ▶ Fry two sprigs of curry leaves and add them to the rings.
- ▶ Serve hot with spicy tomato garlic chutney.

TOUR OF OSLO - IN A BOAT



Me, and a bunch of friends have always enjoyed rowing. Over the last couple of decades, we've rowed two or three times a week, often for about an hour. Having done our bit to stay fit, we would then grab a couple of beers, have a few laughs and head home. It had become a way of life.

Then for a while we felt the need to improve our rowing, test ourselves against other rowers. So we did the round of regattas – local first and then FEARA masters and then a couple of open international regattas. Our audacity being such, we even went to the world masters!

We slogged for at least 6 months to get into shape. It was wonderful to be part of a huge international regatta. I still love seeing a world masters tee shirt with my name on it along with another thousand who came to the races, but I don't think it's an experience that I want to necessarily repeat. It is not just a question of how we measured up against others

but the entire experience itself. There was a race every 3 minutes continuously for 4 days. Nobody knew who won or lost a race. No one cared except for the crew that beat 6 or 7 other similar crews. You were in the water for a maximum of 4 minutes. The regatta was so vast. People took themselves so seriously that it was never fun! It was simply a test on a global scale. To be honest, one should definitely do it at least once in a lifetime if you are a rower. But that is it. When I am 50, do I really care that I was fitter than 7 other crews?

Why am I saying all this? Because this was the process that led us to finally discovering the sheer joy of rowing, combined with a strong element of fitness and a lot of fun! Tour Rowing.

Tour rowing is like trekking with your close group of friends in some exotic land – on a boat! Fifty odd people get together in 10 to 15 boats, row 30 to 35 kilometers everyday for a week in a

beautiful part of the world, see the sights from a completely new perspective like the first explorers used to when they landed from the ocean at an exotic new land, go back home exhausted by the evening, with laughter in their faces ready to party with their friends with whom they share a very special bond, sleep a bit and wake up ready to explore a different part of the world the next day! That in a nutshell is tour rowing. It does need very good endurance. But you do it with a group of people who take that endurance for granted, row as if it were second nature and use it to have fun!

Early this year, the Oslo Rokrets, an association of rowing clubs that row in the Oslo fjords in Norway announced a rowing tour to commemorate their centenary year, and we got very excited. Krish, Ranji and I applied and got accepted. It was also very

special because it started a day after Krish's sixtieth birthday! And none of us had ever been to the Viking land.

SCOPING OUT OUR NEW HOME

From our hotel room in Oslo on the 7th floor, we could see the fjord just a hundred meters away! We

excitedly went down to

the waters and saw

a whole fleet of

beautiful Nordic

wooden boats

on the shores of

the freezing

fjord. As we

stood there in awe,

rowers from across the

world started coming, pulled

in by a magnetic force that

they had felt in their bones

for years. Everyone had a

huge smile at the sight of

what was to become our joy-

filled liquid home for the

next ten days. Our tour had

started.

That evening, we met our

fellow rowers from 20

different countries and

were given our crew list

for the week. Crews were

constituted to ensure that

you never rowed with the

same person again ever, you

never rowed with anyone

from your own club/country

and you rowed in a different

boat everyday! It was a huge

feat that was tailored to make

sure you experienced true

rowing and made true rowing

friends.

HITTING THE WATERS

The next morning we woke

up to a cold, windy day with a

drizzle in what was supposed



to be their peak summer. We started with a homage to Jens, the soul behind the tour who had passed away just a couple of months before the tour. The doyen of tour rowing across the world, a powerhouse who sat on the FISA board for decades, he promoted non-competitive rowing the world over. A great friend to many who had gone on the tour because of his personal invitation. It was a somber moment when everyone walked to their boats to the bagpipes playing *When the Saints Go Marching*. But that was the only somber moment in the entire tour. It was pure fun and games from that moment the fleet of 10 fours and 4 quads took to the waters.

ROWING TOUR OF THE CITY

On the first day, we did a 'city tour'! The boats snaked their way through open waters, ducking into narrow canals before we came up again on open waters to look at Oslo for the first time from the fjords. As we cut past huge cruise liners that traverse between Oslo and Copenhagen, we suddenly came upon the perfect view of Oslo – the historic dark red city hall, the old palace and the modern glass slopes of the opera house on the water front in one sweeping view. The captain of my boat from Berlin said his purpose of coming on the tour was already fulfilled the moment he saw the city hall from the waters. The first time he had seen a picture of the building was of his father standing near the building when he came there during the Second World War. This is the same sight he would

have seen when he sailed in, minus the opera house! Nothing else had changed. We rowed all the way around and went back to our hotel after rowing nearly 30 kms on the very first day.

The next day was sunny and we got into our boats feeling good. But the organisers were looking anxious and we wondered why. They had a conference and then came back to say they had decided to reverse the route for the day. The weather forecast said that the winds would pick up in the afternoon and go upto 14km an hour on the fjords. How bad could that be, we thought, after all we were on what was essentially a lake. Little did we know. We had a beautiful row in the first session, picnicked on a lovely island for lunch, and then post lunch we rowed peacefully for an hour. We could see our hotel just 4 km across open waters. All the boats stopped before we entered the open waters and started crossing the final stretch together. And within five minutes we saw the wisdom of seeking safety in numbers! Three different arms of the fjords were coming together in that final stretch before we reached our bank. There was a strong undercurrent. Big liners were crossing those waters on their way to distant lands, creating waves. And the wind! It was so rocky, that half the time our oars were missing the water completely as they waved harmlessly in the air, while the oars on the other side were buried deep in the water. A second later a wave would buffet the side of the boat so hard that you wondered how those



old wooden boats withstood the force. You hardly had time to panic before you heard the bow of the boat next to you lift out of the water and once the wave passed, hit the water with a thud. Through all that, the experienced coxes kept their calm, directing the boat to meet the waves at a 30 degree angle to ride the wave and get the boat moving in the right direction.

Were we sailing or rowing? Why did the shore still seem so far away? If we fall, were our feet going to slip out? Is there any point in even trying to swim across? I can hardly swim!

S. Prabhakar
RP026

Read the concluding part of the article in the December 2017 issue of Oarspeak.



SHEFALI RANGANATHAN, DY. MAYOR SEATTLE USA

CHENNAI GIRL BECOMES DEPUTY MAYOR OF SEATTLE

In another proud moment for India, Shefali Ranganathan (38) a PIO from Chennai has been appointed Dy. Mayor of Seattle, USA - the founding city of greats like Micro Soft, Amazon, Boeing etc.

Shefali Ranganathan, originally from Chennai is a past student of Good Shepherd Convent Nungambakkam, where she became vice captain. She was selected outstanding sports person of the year at Stella Maris college. Thereafter she became a gold Medalist from Anna University.

After finishing her PG courses at Washington DC, Shefali became CEO of the organization overseeing the light rail project in Seattle. On account of her outstanding work for the project, she was selected as one of the 40 outstanding citizens under 40.

In a recent development, Mayor of Seattle Jenny Durkan, has selected Chennai girl Shefali Ranganathan to be her Deputy Mayor (most likely to spearhead transportation and housing). Shefali's parents Pradeep and Cheryl Ranganathan are residents of Chennai.

Shefali was a participant in many rowing events at Madras Boat Club, rowing for the club and the University. She was part of the victorious team which won a Gold in Inter-University Rowing Competition held at Madras Boat Club.

Shefali's husband Murari is VP of Expedia and her 5 year old daughter goes to school in Seattle.