

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST**

ORCA became a tour de force in 2007, raising nearly a Crore Taka for the various relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts for the victims of an unprecedented flood and an even more horrific category IV hurricane that destroyed the lives of thousands of victims.

See the profiles of some of our leaders, who made us proud to be a member of ORCA.

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From The Diary of a Secretary

2007, A Year in Retrospect

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Watershed

Watershed is a ridge that parts streams and rivers. It is a major geological and architectural divide that transforms the upstream to downstream.

2007 is in no uncertain term a watershed year for ORCA. It went through the growing pains of a cantankerous debate during a hotly contested election just prior to coming together at the Spring Picnic at the scenic park in Montgomery County of Maryland. It took another eight months for some of us to heal the wounds and extend our apologies to the silly seniors and accept the same from the enlightened juniors. Ah, such is the norm of a dysfunctional family.

It is adversity that often tests the bond. This year brought a suc-

cession of unimaginable flood and a destructive cyclone to a nation that at best of times, it also endures the worst of times. A nation borne out of poverty, diseases and death found no end



to suffering. The lives and dreams were shattered with a gust of wind so powerful that it uprooted everything in its path. Those of us from far away felt as helpless as those unable to flee the wrath of an uncaring and vindictive act of nature. It is then the strength of our family was

demonstrated. Under the leadership of Siddiqur Rahman, Abdul Hamid, Dipok Mia, Muhammad Wasiul Islam and many others, the sleeping giant sprung to action. Every corner of the globe responded with all their ingenuity and creative flair.

The team in Dhaka took the center piece of a well oiled machine. They inspected and evaluated areas under duress. They formed teams of volunteers and coordinated with their compatriots in the armed forces to go into the most remote areas to deliver relief to those whose lives were hanging by the thread.

Ten thousand pairs of hands extended up towards the open sky praying for the health of the family who provided them sustenance in their hours of need can not simply be ignored. ORCA shall live long and prosper.



In Memory

The year twisted and turned as each week it seems, brought the news of someone dear to us leaving this world. We come and go with an uncanny frequency that often leaves us jaded. And in doing so, we lose a little bit of our humanity.

So, I dedicate this reflection to those we have lost this year. They were our parents, friends and soul mates. They were indeed a part of us. By losing them we also lost a bit of us.

I have never known life to be fair or just. It is simply when our time is up and our hearts stop beating, we rely on those who we leave behind for nothing else

but a bit of remembrance.

Let us then remember them as they were in their youth looking toward an unbridled future. Let us then celebrate them as they were in their lives. Let us sing our hearts and souls with the music they have left behind.

Death In The Family



Cadets of West House, 1967 are frail. It is with increasing frequency, we came to know the deaths of so many parents and relatives this year, it reinforced the view that time is rapidly fleeting. It was mournful to say good byes to those loved ones, who had taken care of us during the time when we could not.

Life has come to a full circle. The children of yester years are now cradling the lifeless bodies of those who gave them their birth.

The first three batches took their place in nearly perfect lines some forty years ago. Today, they are in their fifties and their parents are older and some

The modern economy has created a globally distributed and disbursed community. We no longer have an intact extended family or for that matter the traditional nucleus collocated in the same city.

The tragedy of modern living is that the sons and daughters are so far away that the parents often leave forever without the last good byes, the last kiss or the last hug. Running from the airports to the graveyards to pay our last respect with guilt ridden conscience seems such a high price to pay. In the autumn of their lives, let us find every opportunity to let them know that we understand that price.



Unsettled Departure

Albert Camus, a French existentialist and philosopher began his book, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, with the profound sentence, "There is but one truly philosophical problem, and that is suicide." In 2007, we were not discussing a philosophical problem but a sardonic reality. The reality of a vulnerable teenager, Palash Kumar Roy, taking his own life while under the care of our college.

A few months earlier, another man, a responsible adult, a former RCC teacher and a principal of another

college had made the same choice.



These random acts of violence tragically ended two lives. It left us puzzled. Superficial answers raised even more questions. Why? How? Could they have been prevented?

Growing up in the desolate and barren countryside of a frigid cold Canadian province, I am not unfamiliar with this senseless act, as

these are the places with some of the highest rates of suicide anywhere. But, I also saw a community intent on prevention with support organizations, community outreach programs and social and psychological counseling



"Suicide", Edouard Manet, 1877

and interventions. Perhaps for a poor nation it is already a taxing task to save the lives of those who are most visibly endangered and can not find the resource to save those who are intent on taking their own. Whatever maybe, the system failed for these two with fatal results.

Death does not give us a second chance. But, perhaps we can prevent the next one.

Death By Numbers

The members of the eighth batch is mostly quiet, dignified and faithful. It boasts military officers, a bearded philanthropist who prefers to remain anonymous, a school principal who still remembers and quotes Bertrand Russell, Fyodor Dostoevsky and the baseball philosopher Yogi Bera and an accomplished salesman routinely winning international awards. And on the other side, it has members like myself mostly

hidden from the masses.

We celebrate life. We meet often in groups in restaurants and each others' homes. There's nothing out of ordinary it seems. Yet, beneath the surface, there are uneasy questions hinting tragedies of epic proportions. We wonder whatever happened to the cadet who left so soon after he appeared on our doorsteps. We wonder about the sudden death of Babul in the rip current in front of the college.

And, how did Bokul slip into the abyss of the same killer who took Babul a generation ago. And we only whisper as to the source of that fatal spinal injury that killed Faruk. And now Judge Mannan succumbs to a massive brain tumor.

So many bright stars have been lost over the night sky so early in the evening. I like to think of them as burning bright still somewhere in the galaxy showing light to the lost travelers for an eternity.

$$F_n = F_{n-1} + F_{n-2}$$

The curse of even numbers. Fibonacci too would have been puzzled.



Imprisoned Body, Freed Soul

Youth, vitality and indomitable spirit in 1973

youth, he spent the last few years of his life locked inside his body that didn't understand his commands.

intensely burning bright somewhere near the edges of our peripheral visions.

I'm not much for prayers and I certainly don't have a clue about the divine plans, but I certainly hope that Dabloo Bhai is now in a better place, a more peaceful place and a freer place.



Fate's irony. May he be blessed in his sleep.

The first day of Ramadan, a Friday, an auspicious day for the Muslims, brings us the news that Dabloo Bhai has quietly left us, never to return again.

Vigorous and energetic during his

His friends and families looked on to a dying man with memories of a happier time flashing through those synaptic nerves that somehow kept regenerating glimmers of hope.

Fate had other plans. A terminal illness did take his life. It could not, however, erase our collective memories. He still lives on



"He had lost everyone. His parents, his siblings, his uncles and aunts, all in all fifty two members ... In one fell swoop."

A Generation Vanquished

Mr. P. K. Pal was a rather enigmatic figure. He was at times seemed like a misunderstood man. No one seemed to know what horror shaped his unique blend of thought processes or his eccentric behavior. It was of course, much later, when we found that he was a survivor of the atrocities committed against the nation during the liberation war of 1971. We never realized the scope of the horror though. We never realized that he had in fact lost all. He had lost everyone. His parents, his siblings, his uncles and

aunts, all in all fifty two members of his family lost their lives in one fell swoop. They were killed mercilessly by a blood thirsty enemy wearing the masks of human beings. He was a living testimonial to a national genocide that we still debate today. For him, there was no debate. Dead people do not talk.

I can only imagine what goes through the mind of such a victim. I can not fathom the survivor's guilt or their will to live.

I remember my old Arabic teacher in Mohammadpur. The lone survivor, an Urdu speaking old man by



Mr. P. K. Pal

now, has no more tears, as he describes how he was bound helpless while his teenage children were slaughtered with a knife like goats and sheep in their own home while he watched and screamed. That day no one heard him.

I suspect it is that same scream that our teacher could no longer bear. It is that immense pathos that may have forced him to do what he did. It was the only thing he perhaps could have done to stop the incessant shrills of death.

Two families. Two cultures. Two religions. Total annihilation. The price of hideous hatred paid by a generation. Is blood so cheap that time and time again we must drench our earth and drown our rivers with nothing less than our precious lives? Let us make a solemn promise on his burning funeral pyre. Never again!

Lost Forever In 2007

Death is always a loss and catastrophically tragic. We lost a number of our own this year. Amongst our teachers, we lost Mr. P. K. Pal and Mr. Khademul Haque. Amongst the cadets, we lost Col Aminul Islam



Mr. Khademul Haque

(Dabloo 4/204), Debraj Shaha (22/1205), Mohammad Abdul Mannan Khan (Ruhin 8/440) and Palash Kumar Roy (41/2289). May we now remember them as they were in their best and may they rest in peace.

Let us also remember those who had fallen during the time of liberation. So little is known or documented about these brave souls, I had to go through our archive just

to find a complete list. Who are they? What were they like? What was the circumstances that led to their ultimate sacrifice? Once in a while, some one recollects and posts their fading memory to our email circle, but should we not do more, lest we really forget?

Lest We Forget

মানদের ভাঙ্গে দেশ মুক্ত স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধে রাজশাহী ক্যাডেট কলেজের শহীদ কর্মকর্তা, কর্মচারী ও ক্যাডেটদের তালিকা:			
শহীদদের তালিকা (কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী)		শহীদদের তালিকা (ক্যাডেট)	
১। এ বি সিদ্দিকী বি বি	প্রদর্শক	১। আব্দুল মুন্সিফ	১/২৫২
২। আব্দুর রহমান	কোয়ার্টার	২। এস এ মোমিন	২/৩৫
৩। মোঃ হাফিজ আলম	জাফিস সহকারী	৩। মাজিদ হেনা	৪/১৬০
৪। মোঃ আজিজুল হক	পিওন	৪। মোঃ জাফরিয়া	৫/২২৩
৫। মোঃ সালেহ উদ্দিন	মেসওয়েটার	৫। মোঃ আব্দুল আলম	৫/২৩৫
৬। মোঃ নূরুল হক	রাউস বেয়ার	৬। মোহাম্মদ ইনাম	৬/২৪৮
৭। মোঃ ফয়জুদ্দিন শেখ	জটস বেয়ার	৭। আবদুল্লাহ আল-আমিন	৫/২৫৭
৮। শ্রী জগু রাম জয়দার	হেড সুইচার	৮। হামান জাশরাফ	৭/৩৩৩
৯। শ্রী বধুবাম জয়দার	সুইচার		

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Abdul Hamid passes on the torch to a younger genera-

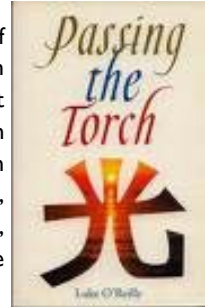
The Passing of A Torch



Cadet One, a founding member of the USA chapter of ORCA, after two consecutive stints at the helm, invited the younger generations to lead with the torch with his invocation, "I am sure ORCA and its chapters, under the overall leadership of Central Executive Committee, will bear any burden, meet any challenge, overcome any hurdle, undergo any hardship, undertake any sacrifice to live up to the ideals of genuine brotherhood and selfless service."

ORCA did not disappoint him with its leadership or the execution of its mandates in the coming months under the duress of natural disasters.

The torch bearers of the first two terms of its inception setting the stage for growth under his leadership were Vice President Mahmudur Rahman, Vice President Golam Sarwar, General Secretary Zahidus Salam Mia, Treasurer Mohammad Wasiul Islam, General members Saiful Islam, Momin, Naveed Ahmed and Asad with honorable mentions of Abu Kamal and Reza Nabi.



We extend our thanks and gratitude to this exceptional team dedicated to that *ideals of genuine brotherhood and selfless service.*

Battle Lines Drawn



I had always shied away from elections where I had to stick my neck out. You may call it a survival instinct, but it is not that unusual for the guillotines to make short of those stretched out necks with brutal efficiency. I'm not ashamed to say that I am a coward.

I was considered to be a difficult child, but I did try to avoid confrontations, although not always successfully.

We don't always know why we take certain steps and not others. It is often much later in the coolness of our head, we understand the decisions we had made and the consequences they had in our lives.

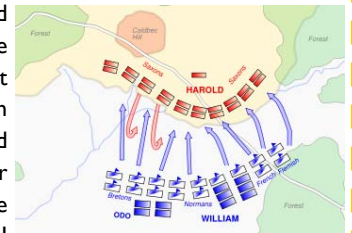
It was with a bit of surprise I found my self sticking my neck out for a bruising battle. The guns were loaded, mud was neatly packed for rows of sling shots and ideas wrapped in bouquet of thorny

"It is not the ammunition we are short of, but rather the respect that comes with the salute."

"I'm not ashamed to say that I am a coward."

words became the lethal weapons of choice.

Alliances were made and foes were identified with callous speed. Tactics and strategies with late night phone calls and sharply crafted emails were exchanged. You could not expect anything less from such a highly trained and disciplined group. Our teachers would surely have been proud. Somehow, I think not!



Battle of Hastings

Harijans Of A Lesser Class

Then there were suggestions that those of us who never completed our tenure at RCC are not the best representative of the college and certainly not qualified to run for any office.

Bullocks, as my English friend on the mountain is fond of saying. I looked around and found surrounded by people who are the most dedicated and generous are in

fact those who for whatever reasons did not graduate from the RCC.

This was a low point of our brotherhood, when being an elitist of an exclusive institution somehow transformed us into an exclusivity reflective more of malice than love. This was indeed a disappointment.

Fortunately, the feeling was not universal and there were many



Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution was passed in 1920 allowing women their full citizenship. The African Americans did not get their rights until 1965.

more who extended open arms with broader minds. And that was indeed a proud moment of our brotherhood. I declare that there are no citizens of lesser class amongst us. And if you should choose to challenge, do choose your weapons. En guard!

A Failed Cycle

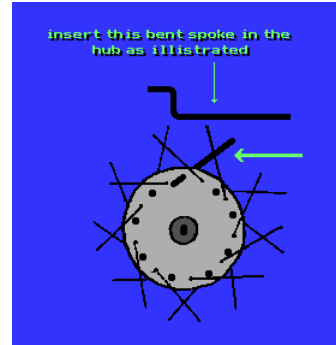
The train stopped with a grinding halt. The machinery, processes, drivers, conductors and the passengers were all left puzzled. Accusations and counter accusations ensued. Who pulled the emergency cord? Under what authority? Is the track stable enough for us to travel during this Monsoon season? Why are they not serving tea? How far is Kamlapur? And how do we start again before the coal burns out? The scene was surreal and almost Kafkaesque.

The first hotly contested election in ORCA's history exposed some

fundamental underlying cracks. It is rarely that the technology fails, rather, it is the lack of will of the people and the absence of trust.

Like all failures, this was an opportunity. The lessons learned was invaluable and provided input in the creation of an electoral process with modern and accessible technology that can withstand commercial use.

However, more importantly we understood that there are legitimate and differing views of who we are and what we want to become. Sometimes in the heat of the battle, these differences are magnified and



The cracks are superficial and can be mended with just a bit of glue made up with love, respect and fairness

take on a much larger shape than they warrant. I believe such is the case with us. I believe that those cracks are really superficial and can be mended with just a bit of glue made up with love, respect and fairness.

N-Tier Architecture

Architecture is defined by the famed computer scientist, Grady Booch, as the salient characteristics that define the structure and behavior of a system. Certainly a mouthful, but that was what we had to grapple with after the failed election. We needed to revisit the architecture of the system in place and design it in a way that addressed a large number of challenging requirements

from a demanding membership.

The question became, how do we create a secure, private, transparent, one hundred percent auditable and easy to use system for a membership that is widespread across the country to be able to cast their votes. The result came in the form of ORCA Election System or OES. After several weeks of development, the design and verification

team tested and certified for its usage. Now it awaits for the opportunity for a real drive.



A tiered architecture is common in modern software applications. ORCA Election System is a three tiered architecture with a thin client presentation layer, an application server hosting business logic and a data tier hosting a back end database.

iMafia

When you are active in the ercc email circle, it is only natural that you develop some common bonds and become protective of those friendships and ideas. Indeed, very few technology if any can be given so much credit for unifying generations of cadets across tens of thousands of miles.

And so as it happens, we do harbor

intensely held differences of opinions and bullet proof ideas. It is this heightened conviction that manifested during this period of election

with emails fired in such rapid successions that the meek became muted and we lost a few legitimate views. That is the goal and the price of a battle.

There are some powerful voices that can not be drowned or threatened with a sharpened fence. Is it not our duty then that every single cadet is able to stand the heat and let his voice be known and face the consequences?

The meek does not inherit the earth. But, neither should an unchecked tyrant.



iVote, A Rite Of Passage

Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream. His stirring speech, "I have a dream" is still reenacted in every classroom in this country. They even have a day commemorating his birth. When he was assassinated in 1968, the country was thrown into a turmoil. Cities were burnt and people's lives were lost.

It was incongruous to me to suggest that ORCA members living abroad in this date and age should not be given an opportunity to be heard in the electoral process.

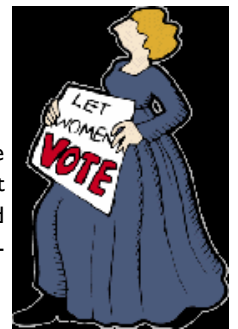


Blacks had to pass literacy tests before they were allowed to vote.

Many ridiculous, self serving, condescending and disingenuous arguments were presented to retain the status quo of this damaging exclusionary policy of disenfranchise-

ment. In another word, there was no real justification for not having an all inclusive and united organization under a single overarching umbrella.

After many tersely worded missives and failed backroom deals, a compromise emerged. In principle, voting in absentia was approved.



Women are still subservient everywhere.

However, like the literacy tests and other obstacles preventing the blacks from entering the voting booth, there are still impediments we have to cross before we can truly sing in tune. The ability to vote is not merely a rite of passage, it is a right. We must take care to preserve it.



Man On The Moon

The vilified villain tugged in both directions. Reconciliation took mere eight months.

The man on P o c o n o Mountain was given the responsibility to oversee the operation of the election. He was given a fancy title, that of a Commissioner, a mandate from a notarized copy of the constitution and an unlisted phone number that only worked after midnight.

A British trained engineer with the rare skills, gumption and power to shut down multi-million dollars pharmaceutical plants, Mr. Anwarul Haque struggled to bring some sanity and decorum to our electoral game. Yes, politics is not necessarily a dirty sport, it merely attracts the dirty players. That explains why I was elected, although, I'm uncertain about excuses of the other members.

Caught between two powerful groups and compelling voices, at

times he seemed to buckle inside a boiling pressure cooker steaming Chesapeake Blue crabs.

In the trade, we say that he is a tough cookie. He did ultimately prevail, though the scar I left on his chin with my right hook is still clearly visible to this date. What amazes me is even with a lost tooth, his smile is still as broad as ever. But, one thing is for sure. His days as the CTG will not come back anytime soon.



An Intellectual For Humanity

Of all the cadets, with the exception of my family members, Abdul Hamid and Abdul Hafiz, I've spent the longest time with Dr. Habib Siddiqui.

When he was pursuing his post graduate degree in Chemical Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in 1978, I was his photographer taking pictures of his experimental subjects, small metal

pieces coated with corrosive chemicals. Later, his misfortune with people with the same personality traits shaped his outlook.

Brilliant by any standard, Habib Bhai is a consummate and prolific writer. Author of several books and several hundred articles, his causes have ranged from highlighting the entrenched corruption in Bangladesh, the hypocrisy of the Bush administration, the concerted and

unjustified attacks on Muslims everywhere and the plight of the Rhoingas in Burma. He is internationally recognized as a human rights activist who has presented many papers in seminars across the world.

ORCA is indeed fortunate to have such an individual who is willing to take on its leadership to chart its course for the future.



A self described intellectual with a mission to improve human rights, Boro Bhaijan is as generous as stern.

A Mandate Of A Bitter Melon



The main course with a traditional korela dish, left me with a bitter taste after the election. It is supposed to be good for one's health. It cleanse the system and lowers the blood pressure. But it tastes bitter like bat-

tery acid, not that I'm accustomed to drinking acid in my past time.

A traditional dish with bitter melon symbolized our mandate of the election

and the greater ORCA based out of Dhaka. The next thing was to increase participation such that everyone has a vested interest and

Once the new EC convened and set our agenda, it was very clear what we had to do. One of the first item on our agenda was to establish unity both within the US based membership

a sense of ownership. We quickly realized that ORCA is not an all consuming past time for everyone and we had to reset our expectation to match that reality. We fundamentally wanted to maintain the existing nature of the organization where it balanced its activities between those which are centered around our alma maters and those which are primarily charitable. We reaffirmed our first allegiance to our members while acknowledging that we have a special responsibility in the society.



“Is ORCA To Be The Next Red Cross?”

The then General Secretary of ORCA USA had just began to summarize a laundry list of the ORCA sponsored philanthropic projects from Ullipur to Chittagong during the 2007 AGM held at Springfield, Virginia, when the man from UN softly spoke with a purpose. “Is ORCA to be the next red cross? Isn't this an alumni organization?”

Ah, the internal debate took the front stage. In fact, ORCA had

always been both. The first major charitable act it undertook was the OBL program in 1981, when a record number of 57 bags were collected. Now the same program collects several hundred bags during each drive. In fact, ORCA had indeed become the next Red Cross with the distinction of having collected most blood only after Red Cross itself. I suppose the question was really, “Now that ORCA has become the next Red Cross, what does it want to be?”

The answer was given by the leadership in Dhaka under President Siddiqur Rahman this year during our national crisis so forcefully that I suspect this question will become forever muted. ORCA has and always will remain a fundamentally charitable organization in its blood. That is its genesis and its future.

- ORCA Home
- About ORCA Blood for Life
- About ORCA Blood Bank
- News & Bulletin Board
- Request for Blood
- Online Registration
- Photo Gallery
- Guest Book / Sponsor

Our hotline numbers are:
880 2 966 9469 , 880 2 967 1333

Diplomat For Warring Nations

Frequently traveling, this UN ambassador of goodwill willingly goes to the most unsafe of all places. In the process, he has befriended the tribal leaders of the warring factions in Afghanistan and the ruling hierarchy of Pakistan. Forever an optimist, he embodies diplomacy. During the time of sharp exchanges in the middle of our elections, he worked

tirelessly with all of his diplomatic skills to bring sanity and decorum back into the game. The trait of a successful diplomat is that they remain unknown. When is the last time you saw a diplomat being recognized for thwarting a war? Well, I hope it would be this one.

USA based UN representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Rezaul Hassan takes a break to smile in the comfort of his ORCA compatriots in Comfort Inn Banquet Hall in Springfield.



Abuse of Power

A young man kept in solitary confinement for six months without any charge and then eventually let go for proving his innocence. The physical and emotional duress was so severe that he was drained and died from a fatal heart attack shortly after his release. "Justice delayed is justice denied and absolute power corrupts absolutely," are the axioms we learned at the corridors of the Academy Hall of our college. The case of Debraj sadly proves both of these precepts to be true. There are so many deaths in our nation that another one hardly causes a ripple.

One heart stopped is no heartache at all. We bury them, burn them and let the sea and the rivers devour them. A few of those who knew them remember them for a week or two and shed a few tears and then like all memories of past, they fade away in oblivion. But, here in death, there are some lessons. A nation shares collectively its guilt of the crimes it perpetrates against its own citizens. In the case of Debraj, what is tragic is that he was part of one of the most powerful network in the country, with lawyers, judges, generals, police officers and civil servants, yet he was not heard.

He was not heard because no one was not willing to listen, but rather, no one made his case at least sufficiently high up in the hierarchy of the network. There are many sad lessons here. One I hope everyone will take to heart is that when one of us is unjustly treated, it is our collective responsibility to make his case. We have a network comprising of both the people and technology that is second to none. Next time, let's avoid another tragedy. Next time use the resources we have! Next time let us exhaust all of our avenues as for those who tolerate injustices are equally guilty of it.

"He was not heard because no one was not willing to listen, but rather, no one made his case at least sufficiently high up in the hierarchy of the network."

Payback, A Time To Test

ORCA members have a simple motto, "Let us all prosper together." As ORCA has matured so has the semantics of this slogan. Initially it meant our fraternity and our brotherhood. Now that definition has grown to include an entire nation in a redefined slogan, "It is time to pay back."

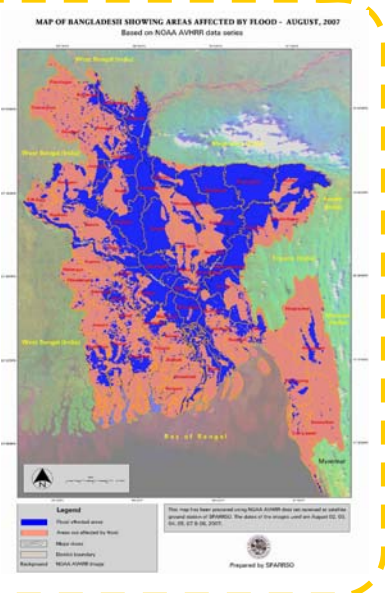
Many of us had wondered how true we are to this mantra. Is this sim-

ply a chant that we put at the bottom of our email signatures or is there some substance behind the lofty statements?

It is clear to me that these questions have now been settled forever. The national emergencies have certainly tested us and our resolve and we have not disappointed. Just as we are grateful to a nation that spent so much resources to make us what we are

today, that nation today stands in gratitude for what we have delivered in small boats, in foot and in military vehicles.

This is a moment in pride. We have not failed the test.



Dark Clouds

During the annual flood season in July and August, the monsoon season brings unending clouds and downpours so strong that the old DC-11 pilots have hard time distinguishing the runways from the surrounding fields in Dhaka airport.

What is mere inconvenience to a small number of international travelers is a source of great misery and sadness in the lives of a vast number of people living in the flood

deltas and low lying grounds. My American friend asked me the other day, "Why do they live there, if they risk to lose everything each year?" The answer is not simple or straightforward. One of the reasons why old civilizations are found around flood deltas is because they provide very rich and fertile land that can sustain perpetual farming without crop rotation that is so common in more arid land in other parts of the world. In

modern times we now have an economic class of people, who are so poor that they are forced to take these high risk and flood prone areas as their homes.

The Bangladesh policy makers will need to evaluate these circumstances and determine whether these individuals with children and families are doomed to suffer and die with the clockwork of the annual monsoon season or there are some long term, progressive and sustainable solutions. ORCA with all of its relief and rehabilitation efforts cannot address the scope of this problem. It will take a concerted effort by both public and private sectors to address the root causes. Otherwise, however well intentioned we are, we will only superficially remedy the symptoms.

A Beleaguered Nation



A packet of saline, a lifeline hanging by the teeth One of the poorest nation in the world, Bangladesh has hard time meeting its basic obligations during its best years. How can this nation

deal with the magnitude of such a calamity? How can a country where more than sixty million of its citizens earn less than 65 Taka per day, can afford to feed the people who have lost it all.



So much needs, so little resources

We began to hear that the flood was getting worst with each day by middle of August. We really did not realize the scope of the disaster until we saw the horrific images of women and children in chest deep water and in roof tops waiting for someone to quench their thirst.

This is a beleaguered nation, where nature does not afford us any

mercy and where the rulers do not have the will or the means to protect its citizens. This is a nation where the value of a life is seen through a quick glance from a speeding car of a bloated corpse by the road side or an emaciated body stretching his hands with hollow expression in his face for the kindness of a stranger for the survival of his two year old infant is dependent on it. This is the landscape where we live, breathe and die. But there has to be a better way? Can we not be the torch bearer to find them?

ORCA Responds

When President Siddiquir Rahman announced that ORCA will provide relief support to the flood victims, we were already anticipating his inevitable decision. How can we sit idle during this time of crisis? How can we say that we have kept our promises?

of its comfort zone to distribute them to those who are in real need.

allowed it to be so effective in its relief efforts in the most remote part of the country.



ORCA's response was quick, substantial and meaningful. It organized, raised funds, purchased and packaged relief items and went out

By the time everything is said and done, I expect that ORCA will have raised more than one Crore Taka for the relief, rehabilitation and the reconstruction efforts for both the flood and the hurricane victims.

ORCA has indeed made us proud with its break neck speed in response to the nation's needs.

It was not only ORCA's desire and ability but also it's wide network with the various armed forces that

United We Float

This was an exemplary time when ORCA members where ever they were located from Bangladesh to Australia, England to Canada and Singapore to America, there was an unity in purpose and excellence in execution.

to other Bengalis and non-Bengalis with a simple message that people were dying and we can do something about it.

members also got into the act and raised funds from the local mosques and other expatriates.

Members everywhere did their part. The expatriates banded together and raised funds initially from ourselves and then broadened

Some members, like Professor Abdul Hamid took on a singular mission to raise funds through every single channel that was known to him that he had developed in the last twenty years he has been living abroad. His family

And the real heroes in Bangladesh on the grounds, they performed so superbly that an entire chapter is needed to be devoted to their dedications and sacrifices. Well done, ORCA! We are proud of your unity, dedication and mission.



“Water, Water Everywhere, Not A Drop To Drink”



Salty tears, hunger and despair in their haunting faces



Waiting for relief

Death And Despondence



Death and destruction in such massive scale, relief efforts are overwhelmed.

Hunger And Famine



Empty tin plates hanging by the side of children forming a long line in the dim hope

of finding a few grain of rice to take home is the daily sad routine. These children all too well know the definition of reality.

But, what home? They were mostly destroyed or damaged beyond recognition. But, where else can they go? Their parents have lost all their crops twice this year after repeated flood rotted the roots. Now they don't have a

single penny to plant again. A proud group of people are reduced to beggars just to survive another day.

If this scenario was rare or once in a lifetime, we could explain it as simply bad luck or particularly a terrible year. But no, this series of events reoccurs with such frequency that the locals have given a name for this brand of suffering. They call it “Monga.” We know it as death.



Monga after the flood recedes is an annual plight in Northern Bangladesh

Hope And Optimism

When Wasi called me and Dipok Bhai and made his proposal for a fundraising event with Jasimuddin's play, "Shojon Badiar Ghat," we were initially somewhat unconvinced. Will people come to see the play for a good cause?

Then Dipok Bhai made an executive decision and both of us decided that we will personally absorb any financial loss should the event be not successful. That was our commitment to our hope.

It was a fantastic example of teamwork, where we worked in unison

with the main sponsors, Dhroopad and their very talented corps of artists, musicians, stage hands, directors and producers. We also collaborated with several other organizations including 71Er Golpo and our George Mason University host, Bengali Patriots. It was hard work working late into the nights but we were also full of hope and optimism.

This same sense of hope was pervasive amongst all of the ORCA members engaged in fundraising and in creating an awareness of our national plight to our host coun-

tries. The more we became engaged, more hopeful we became and more sense of ownership we developed to our causes. Hope is indeed a powerful motivator.



Ashraf, Dipok and Raja making souvenirs for fundraising events late into the night.



The orphan children of Chittagong ORCA Home on the sea shore with hope and optimism. The home is primarily funded by the expatriate members.

Can We Rebuild?

ORCA was always a forward thinking institution in that it not only provides immediate relief and reconstruction but also a mechanism for income generation activities such that its efforts are self sustained in the long run.

ORCA has built homes for the homeless and given rickshaws for income generation. It attempts to bring innovative ways to keep the beneficiaries engaged in developing

their own sense of well being to build a better collective future.

Our own Commander Zahanyar also has a comprehensive program to alleviate poverty in his own village. A victim of *monga* himself, he knows acutely well the suffering of his people. If only we can replicate some of his successes across our nation, we can certainly rebuild it with one village at a time.

The scope of our collective national suffering is such that each year a large number of children becomes orphans destined for a life of mis-

ery, poverty and often crime. It has been a number of years, ORCA through mostly the financial support of the expatriates and the members residing near



Commander Zahanyar's model village in Hosenpur for poverty alleviation

Chittagong have sponsored and maintained a small home for a dozen young children. This program, though it makes a consequential difference to the lives of these children, it can not and does not address the scale of the issue faced by the nation. But, we can do a bit more to create a better future for a few more young candles before they are snuffed out forever in the wind of time.

An Army Of Angels

The Old Testament is full of wrath with fire, flood and acrid smell of brimstone from an angry God.

I much prefer the far more gentle version of Him in the New Testament, where we see compassionate prophets and enlightened angels. Well the days of prophets may be gone, but we do have an army of angels. An army of angels who had

descended to the land of flood, famine and pestilence with their youthful and hopeful faces. They are from the young batches. Although they are too numerous to mention by names, a few of them are Arman, Muhid, Salahuddin, Ashab, Asaf, Amin, Goutam, Arefin, Mijan, Sharly, Mahbub. Moqaddem, Jupitar ... Indeed this is an army of angels.



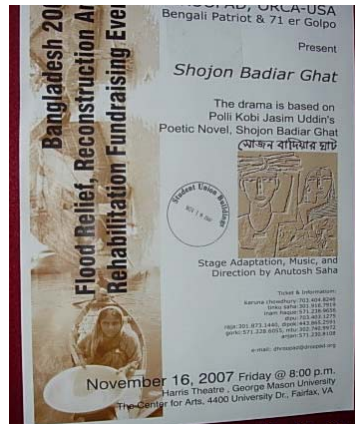
The young generation of ORCA members executes flawlessly a multitude of philanthropic and life saving missions.

An Evening Of Flair



Director Anutosh Shaha and Abdul Hamid relaxing after the event at a local restaurant.

It was a flawless evening. The highly accomplished



director, Mr. Anutosh Shaha



prepared for this evening with his troupes for months. And it went off without a hitch. Everything worked. Even I knew what to say as a last minute replacement for the MC.

The real surprise was the amount of money we were able to raise. When Dipok Bhai and I agreed to take on any financial loss, we had absolutely no idea about our organizational reach or the effectiveness of our message. We are grateful to an army of volunteers, artists, musicians and of course ORCA members for making this fundraising event such a success. At the end, this event is allowing us to send more than \$26,000.

Death Has A Name, SIDR

“Morar upar danda”. The expression reminded me of the eyewitness accounts of the practice of burning corpses on a funeral pyre. When the heat of the fire pulls the tendons, the corpses sit up with a ghostly apparition. The crowd fearing that the body may have been taken by the evil spirits beats with stick furiously to make it lie down and burn in peace. Well, that is the story.

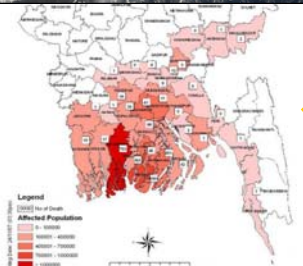
What happened in Bangladesh this

year is no less gruesome. Just when the victims of an unending flood were beginning to recover, all hopes were shattered by a category IV hurricane called SIDR.

It is hard to see any meaning or justice in such a heavy loss paid mostly by the poorest of the poor. Their crime is that they were born in a place where nature takes no prisoner, shows no mercy and gives no future. This is our home.



The killer storm just off the coast line



Is Anyone Out There?

The monster hit the coast line with such ferocity that we had not seen in more than ten years. It redefined the landscapes, uprooted massive trees like twigs, lifted homes from their bases like origami, twisted cars and metals into heaps of junk and stamped out the lives of thousands in a fury of wind and water.

When the water receded and the

multitude of corpses bobbed with the broken twigs, the shell shocked survivors grasped the sharp blades of the grass near their hands and looked up toward the sky. What they hoped to find or what they screamed in silence, that we do not know. We do know that we are here and that we have a profound responsibility. ORCA must not fail in delivering that promise.



An Evening In Darnestown



East to West and North to South. The Mid-Atlantic region is one exception where we have a relatively large number of members within a short distance.

My invitation was extended to a



region covered by at least a hundred mile radius. Indeed, several of them

including

L2R Back:

Raja, Dipok, Firoz, Hassan, Khan, Kamal

L2R Front:

Wasi, Tito, Habib, Mahfuzul, Chunnu

Hassan, each

drove for more than a hundred miles in each direction. Dipok Bhai had to drive only seventy miles each way. But no one seemed to mind. It was like old times. Good food, outrageous stories and the finest Dominican cigars made the evening short.



This country is so large that it is almost impossible to have a get together with any meaningful numbers. The ORCA members are dispersed in every region of this country from

Khan Baba Chisti

Looking at this couple, you would not think that Patricia and Khan Baba have been married for such a long time. They definitely disprove that notion that sure killer of happiness is nothing but marriage.

The couple, who lives in Southern United States, flew over to attend our mini reunion in Maryland in October. Even though I have been



talking to him on the phone for

years, I hadn't seen this batch mate for more than thirty years. Yet, his warmth and affection was instant.

Both Patricia and Khan Baba were at ease and seemed to truly enjoy an evening of food, barbs and mirth. He is a long lost friend.



Recently appointed as the Economic Minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in the US capital of Washington, DC,

Economic Minister

Mahfuzul Haque is a most unusual civil servant. An workaholic by nature he begins his day at the embassy before anyone else and routinely turns the light off when he leaves in the evening.

After a quick meal and a trip to the gym he hardly has any other time for socialization.

So, it was a bit of surprise, when he accepted the invitation for a wild

time at Dipok Bhai's home recently. The fearless Dipok Mia, alone at home, without the supervision and care of Bhabi, who was in Bangladesh visiting her family, relished the opportunity to demonstrate his short lived freedom.

But even there, the minister was incorruptible. He refused to believe our claim that Amaretto was a sweet after dinner Iranian tea that had a little bit of kick to aid with the digestion after the consumption of buttery and delicious biryani. Almost like borhani with a bit of extra spice. No, this minister wasn't born yesterday.

Leaving A Legacy

I think something magical happens at the age of forty. Or that we begin to realize that more than half of our life is over and someone will be reading our eulogies rather soon, if we just happen to be that lucky. Time also moves a lot quicker just as our bodies and muscles slow down a bit further. This is the nature of things. It is silly to fight it and we are wiser to accept it.

So we begin to dream of grandeur and immortality. It is not that we are looking for a magical potion,

but rather, a statement. A statement that leaves a bold legacy of what we were, what we are and what we hope to be in that far end of future that we cannot see with our limited vision.

We dream of a legacy that generations after generations build upon and remember that there were those who built with their labor and love, an enduring testament against the shifting sands of time. That sand we stand on today, we dream will transform into beautiful and lasting ideas and durable



structures of lofty ideals.

There are still miles to walk and days to dream. Won't you join us on this day on the sand?



The site of future ORCA Bhavan

It was an electrifying announcement from our President Siddiqur Rahman. ORCA is purchasing a piece of land. It has a

ORCA Bhavan

been a bone of contention for many that for the last thirty five years ORCA has been collecting Life Time Subscription to create its own home, had failed to do so with successive administrations. That wait is now over. In 2007 ORCA purchased a piece of land at an extremely attractive price in Dhaka city.

The current leadership must be

congratulated for this bold initiative as it had to raise large sums of fund within a very short period of time to be able to realize this opportunity.

Now the second chapter of this initiative is upon us. It will take a lot more fund and lot more energy to build a structure on an empty piece of land. The challenge is upon us to walk in unison with our visionaries. The first few steps have been taken. We can not step back.



A Difference In Opinion

Like all decisions of consequences, the decision to acquire a piece of land to subsequently build a structure, is not without its controversy.

A number of differences in opinion has emerged over the last several months. One question that is raised, is why in that remote region of Dhaka, far away from the hustle and bustle of a vibrant center, is the location of our future home? Why is it so far from the student com-

munity, which takes on the most active role? Why such a location where there is no convenient access?

Although, I don't think our EC has done an effective job explaining their rational behind their decision, I suspect it has to do with simple economics and our limited ability to pay. Members knowledgeable about Dhaka real estate prices will readily testify that the price we paid for this piece of land is proba-

bly only twenty percent of the market value. That is just an opportunity we could not have missed without regrets.

There was also another legitimate argument placed forward in that the return on investment from this fund if left in financial instruments like stocks, bonds or fixed deposit accounts, would have far exceeded any return we will get from the rental of the structure. That may be true, but it presupposes that we would have been able to raise this much fund for simply leaving them in a bank account. Further more, a structure provides a notion of permanence. It provides a physical and emotional anchor for us to identify with and to grow with to our destiny. It is indeed a deposit on our legacy.

A Leader Leads



ORCA President Siddiqur Rahman's commanding view

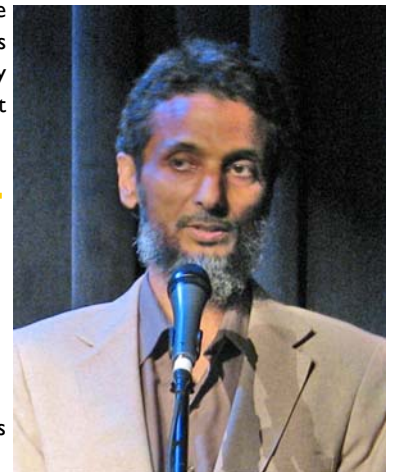
An engineer by profession, Mr. Siddiqur Rahman has a vested interest in ORCA, for he is one of its original architects.

Some what stubborn and single minded, it has served him well, especially during the last few months. With broad strokes of leadership, he has mobilized within a short few months an organization that is an envy of the NGO's.

He lives the original mission statement of ORCA constitution for giving back to an impoverished nation. He did not hesitate to an-

nounce with conviction ORCA's intent to carry on relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects across the country side where very few if any had gone. He not only mobilized the members across the world and inside the country, but leveraged his relationships with the armed forces, Rapid Action Brigades, Navy and police force to conduct the relief operations with unprecedented success.

As though he did not have sufficient challenges during these last few months, he seized the opportunity to establish an ORCA complex for the future generations by negotiating and purchasing a tract of land at an extremely attractive cost structure. This is the type of leadership that inspires us to make the necessary sacrifices for the benefit of all.



Cadet 1, Abdul Hamid raises awareness of the plight of Bangladesh citizens. His voice reverberates with, "A ten dollar note feeds a family for a month."

A Giant Of A Skeleton

At barely 100 pounds of bone and skin, he stands giant amongst us.

Was it not Confucius's prodigious student, who said, adversity makes us strong? That may be so, but it has also robbed us of a future that I could only imagine under the brightest sun.

A brilliant mind and a disciplined body stood in ruins after a se-

quence of tragic events beginning with a misdiagnosis and nearly a fatal treatment. Lady fate has an ironic twist. The man who was voted to be the most likely to lead in the national scene, struggled for four years to read a single printed sentence.

He may have been broken, but certainly not defeated. Slowly and painstakingly he rebuilt what was taken away from him with the

strength that only comes from the solitude of faith.

Today you see him lead with vigor, efficiency and precision that can only be executed by the most accomplished of generals. His kind smile and penetrating eyes still to this date hide a burning furnace.

To be sure adversity has not robbed us of everything.



Sylheti Shaikh In The Kingdom Of Sauds

"Leading from the front."

It was an early morning, I woke up and stopped the annoying rings of my telephone by picking up the receiver. I heard a strangely familiar voice on the other side, but I'm certain I've never heard it before. The man on the other end was none other than Mr. Sadek Afzal calling me from Riyadh. He introduced himself and told me he had seen some of my emails in the ercc circle and he was

interested in drafting me to put me to work. Yes, without pay, of course. This man was definitely used to giving commands. Within ten minutes he explained the purpose of his call and convinced me to give up my spare hours for the next few weeks to advance his mission.

I met him for the first time a few months later. Partial to Cuban Cohibas, he straddles the East and

the West with such fluidity that it was clear that he was equally comfortable in both settings. His Canadian background also made me close to him as we shared the hardships of bitter cold weather during our youth.

A Saudi Prince with such warmth and generosity, that he keeps on giving. Whether it is SERVE University Project, Flood and Cyclone Relief, ORCA Bhavan or the matching fund for dollar for dollar for Verizon Walk-A-Thon, he never blinks. If one was ever to wear the title of a Shaikh, it is only befitting him that he shares his wealth with those around him. This prince will never grow poor for his heart and mind is richer than any money can buy.

An Enlarged Heart

A broad shoulder, large six foot frame and a beaming smile disguises a no nonsense, detailed oriented and participatory leader of the ORCA expatriates living in the United States.

Professionally a very successful chemical engineer, Zahidus Salam Mia's first love is ORCA which is a significant source of absurdly funny marital discords.

My belief is that people like Dipok Mia needs to be extremely wealthy, as one thing he knows is how to give. On every occasion dating back years, he has given. You will

even find ORCA accounts named by him.

In medical terms, an enlarged heart is a telltale sign of high blood pressure and heart disease. In his case, it is a sign of immense generosity.

His level of energy exceeds that of many half of his age. It was only a few weeks ago, he drove several hundred miles in a single day just to meet a few of us to organize some of the fund raising efforts for the flood relief. He is incredibly efficient and keeps a mental note of every single project undertaken by

ORCA. Although, he practically grew up in the United States, his command of Bangla language is exemplary as demonstrated during his recent interview by Voice of America.

He is expected to return to Bangladesh permanently on July 16, 2010, a date coinciding with his youngest son's graduation from University of Maryland.

It will be a massive loss for the expatriates.



The Wizard

Tough, straight forward and extremely hard working, Reza Nabi is the back bone of the ORCA's electronic infrastructure. He runs an array of sites often single handedly from his home office. He is the community technical wizard. And best of all, he is free. He along with 16 other dedicated souls gave the paper based directory into a searchable electronic format via internet at our <http://e-orca.org/> website.



Dedicated and generous, he is yet to refuse a request for help.

He is currently finishing a Masters Degree in Computer Science and someday sees himself as teaching at

an institution of higher learning.

His innovative initiatives have given us multiple web sites, ftp sites and polling applications. But, this is just the beginning. I'm certain that he still has a few more tricks in his bag for our benefit.

Concerto Of The Saints Of Jose

If Abdul Hamid is the fundraiser of the Eastern Shores, then Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal is definitely the champion of the West Coast.

An extremely successful electrical engineer with specialty in sub micron ASIC chip design, his real love is philanthropy. He has been involved with charitable organizations for many years and now is taking a

leadership role in building a series of institutions for alleviating the sufferings of Bangladeshi citizens afflicted with renal diseases. Approximately 40,000 citizens die each year due to kidney failure. Kamal is intent on reversing this discouraging statistics.

He is like the conductor of a renowned orchestra with intricate sections of strings, keyboards, per-

cussions and brass. You really have to have the skills and energy to make all the pieces work to make a great concerto. He has just done that one evening recently with his immaculately planned fund raising event held at the Greater San Francisco area that raised as much as US\$40,000 in great style. May this conductor continue to create great symphonies.





A Truck Driver Extraordinaire

simply Gorkey, is an extraordinary young man with a can do attitude and an indomitable spirit. When the challenge came forward for raising fund for the flood victims he organized to host a fund raising event with a Jasimuddin's play that eventually netted more than US\$26,000.

A financial analyst for one of the largest telecom companies in the world, Verizon, he runs on high octane energy with commitments in a half dozen organizations including Dhroopad, 71 er Golpo and Voice of America, not to mention his

investment as a critical executive member of the USA chapter of ORCA.

I know that I'm not deserving of his respect, but I am always flattered by the respect he shows to his elders. He lives by the axiom, if you need to get something done, you will have to do it yourself.

When his warm cloth drive initiative resulted in one extra truck load of donation for the victims of our homeland, he filled the truck and drove for more than 200 miles to New York City to the shipper.

Now that is indeed extraordinary.



A hyperkinetic asteroid burning the Northern Sky. Muhammad Wasiul Islam is a multi talented superstar.

Muhammad Wasiul Islam, known in the Washington, DC, circle as

Signature Seller Of The South

Humble, thoughtful and articulate, Miftaul Amin is many things, but his real talent is in the persuasive art of sales.

He played several critical roles in ORCA this year. During the election he served as part of the commission and persuaded cooler heads to prevail.

It was during the recent fund raising

event we realized how much of an



establishment he is, when he single handedly brought in nearly fifty percent of the audience for the event from as far away as 120 miles from the stage hall. This is called real pull. His behind the scene energy was critical for the success of that event.

Stack of tickets sold by Mr. Miftaul Amin



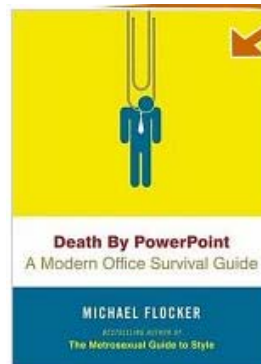
Points of Power In A Family Picnic

Always dressed immaculately, this former military man is on a mission. Tito Anwar runs his own company, travels frequently to Bangladesh and holds an annual family picnic on a tranquil site of Pennsylvania that is attended by mostly ORCA members.

Intensely loyal, Tito Anwar will

defend his friends to his own detriments. Classically trained as an officer, he moves with confidence and precision. You definitely want this man on your side.

When our principal requested for a few audio visual systems for transforming his teaching staff to use modern techniques, he immediately donated a laptop and his time to



oversee the project.



Aiming Higher In Georgian Bay

When my father was admitted this year to one of the best hospitals in the world, Toronto General, Mr. Monzurul Haque sent me a private note saying that he has some reserved fund for his daughter's tuition in Toronto that he could make available for me should the need arise. This is from a man I had never met in my life.

When he came to Toronto this year, I made a point to see him at his relative's home in Scarborough. He was a wonderful and kind host

in a home away from home. The number of dishes, prepared by bhabi, extended from one end to the other end of the table.

A soft spoken and highly successful business man is the chairman of the first mutual fund of Bangladesh, AIMS. He is generous with his wealth and measured in his actions. Like most of those who are dedicated workers of ORCA, Mr. Haque has the delicate balancing act of managing his ORCA activities with his domestic commitments that has the additional charm of the

fear of wrath from his better half.

The sign of Mr. Haque's wisdom and maturity came absolutely evident that evening when one quick glance of bhabi at him left his sentence hanging midway. Lucky for him!

One can only hope that he has the better sense not to share his email alias with his family. We definitely do not want him to be balanced, delicate or otherwise.

Where is the happiness of making up without transgressing the rules a few times, eh? Thank you Monzu Bhai!



Nut Case Of Bushland

Ever since our American president with the IQ of a gerbil came to power, we somehow absconded the infamous title from the Aussies of being a Bushland.

Yes, our superbly trained, Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Yawer Sayeed, is of course an Aussie with that slight Queensland drawl distinctly different from that of our imbecile from the Crawford Ranch of Texas.

The legend has it that when this CEO was born, the midwife dropped him on the cement floor and left a small indent on his left lobe. At least that's what he says is the cause of his insanely outrageous humor. But that is only part of the story. Beneath the expression of his razor sharp tongue, this Harijan graduate of RCC is as serious and thoughtful as they come. He is not only adept at the subversive use of humor against abusive power, but also equal at ease with corporate

and litigious procedures and processes to tie up an entire bureaucracy in knots for months. His rolex is said to be legendary and his monthly communications to his shareholders are intimately personal with minute details of each encounter.

It will indeed be my honor to share the sanatorium with this wonderful and generous man.



Mr. Sayeed with one of his investors, the noble laureate, Professor Yunus.
"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the number of moments that take our breath away". Mr. Sayeed's email slogan

Great Presence Of Damascus

He was offended when I addressed him as Hazrat, as he felt that title was exclusively owned by the prophets. It took me a long time to explain to him that the literal translation of this Arabic word is "great presence" and the title had been worn by many prominent figures into the present time.

Firoz Kabir is passionate about

making an impact. I remember him intently listening to numerous speakers at a Bangladesh American Friendship Conference about how the expatriates can make a positive impacts to the social, political and economic development inside Bangladesh. He knew the identity and the credentials of all of the speakers. I on the other hand had real difficulty keeping my eyelids open.

His easy going manner and great humility have made him successful in both his profession and his philanthropic works with ORCA.

Mark my word, he is a leader of our future.

He currently has gone AWOL, but expected to return upon the New Year, with renewed energy and fresh perspectives.



Sufis Pull

Sufi Hyder Zulfiqar Rahman has a mission in life. He wants to make the perpetually poor and distraught communities ravaged by flood and other calamities an opportunity to sustain themselves with income generating activities.

Since 2004, ORCA in collaboration with SPANDAANB have given rickshaws to several hundred individuals that has a significant positive impact on several hundred families.

ORCA simply does not provide immediate relief to the victims. It is

engaged in sustainable development through reconstruction of housing and income generating activities for the victims.

The rickshaw distribution program was designed to help the flood victims overcome their losses, to organize the beneficiaries in groups and familiarize them with group dynamics, to make them self-reliant by providing them moral and

Supporting Income Generation Activities are core part of ORCA's approach for reconstruction and rehabilitation



40 Rickshaws at the Union Parishad Complex Gangachara for handing over

material supports and to grow savings for building their future. A rickshaw can pull many things. What ORCA believes that it will also pull the people out of their misery.

A Youth's Wisdom

When I labeled him as Bush's Spy, he smiled and responded, "Don't I know it. But, you know, I don't think they have a clue."

Supremely confident, Lieutenant Colonel Kamal is being trained as an anti terrorist expert by the Bush government. He has been sent to the prestigious National Defense College based out of Washington, D.C. to earn a Masters degree from the very best and the worst this

country has to offer. Kamal's challenge is to understand their agenda and control them.

Confidence and arrogance is often separated by a thin line. His disarming smile and boisterous laughter makes it more palatable to accept his incredulous claims of accomplishing the impossible. After all, he is the architect of the current CTG and all their controversial policies.

But he is not without real wisdom.

That came through loud and clear one evening when he said, "Raja Bhai, you force us to use our dictionaries when you write your emails. That's why we delete them as soon as they arrive in our inbox."

This young man still has a lot to teach me.



Supremely confident Lt. Colonel Kamal

Major, Sir!

Soft spoken, reserved, extremely courteous and hyper attentive with clear memory of extremely small details make this man a candidate for the upper echelons of power in the armed forces.

He was recently in Washington, DC for a few days to attend one of those training du jour in terrorism

sponsored by Bush Bubba and his forty chors.

His training in the armed forces have made such an indelible impression on his persona that even in an ORCA gathering he is habituated to refer to his superior officers as sirs.

Underneath this professionalism though, he is tough and straightforward with an eye for fairness and

justice.

This man reminds me of another officer, now wearing the title of a Major General, during his younger years when he came to the US for training. I think the history is on the side of this major. Yes, Sir!



Major Mostafiz on a training mission in Washington, DC

Flying High

A Harvard trained academician, Dr. Halimur Khan traces his roots back to the days when the best and the brightest were given scholarships to the Soviet Union to bring back the socialist ideals to Bangladesh. Things have changed since those early days of the formation of our nation. Soviet Union is no longer there and their model of government has been discredited. However, Russia is still a very important country and its language is still at a premium in the West.

Dr. Halimur Khan, fluent in Russian, French, English and Bengali with extensive training as a translator, is still in demand. Today, rather than exporting a soviet style of communism, he dispenses his knowledge of the language, international policies and theorems in leadership to the air force cadets of the prestigious United States Air Force Academy in the mountains of Colorado.

Having lived behind the iron curtain and in the permissive society of the western countries, he brings rather unique set of views to the issues

Dr. Halimur Khan looking stern and serious from high atop the mountain.



and challenges of Bangladesh. He absolutely wants to make a positive contribution in our national health by opening incisive and provocative dialogues. Just listen to his intonations carefully, lest it all gets lost in translation.

Conscience Of Power

Dallas Morning News has a very unusual staff in its technology department. Dr. Golam Sarwar is an accidental tourist and a renaissance man if you like. He was trained as a geologist and an environmental scientist, who now supervises a cadre of database designers, developers and administrators at one of the leading news organizations in Texas.

You can never be sure where the

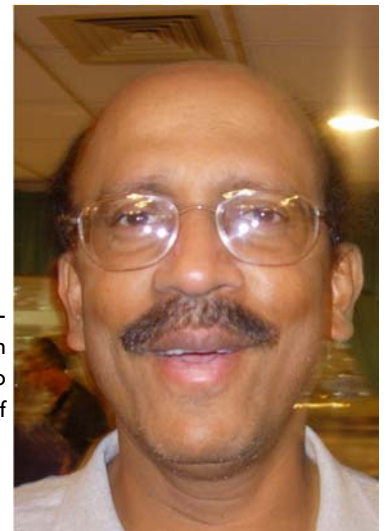
water will flow, but it does tend to take the route of least resistance. We are not sure what prompted this exceptionally bright and perceptive man to take this route under the hot and dry sun, but we can certainly be sure that his employer is very fortunate to have him.

He always brings focus to our discussions in the general and EC meetings and charts clear set of actionable agendas. He is flexible

Former VP of ORCA USA, Dr. Golam Sarwar beams at the 2007 Reunion

but resolute in his convictions. He is a very tough opponent if you happen to be on the wrong side of the fence.

We are definitely glad that he is on our side!



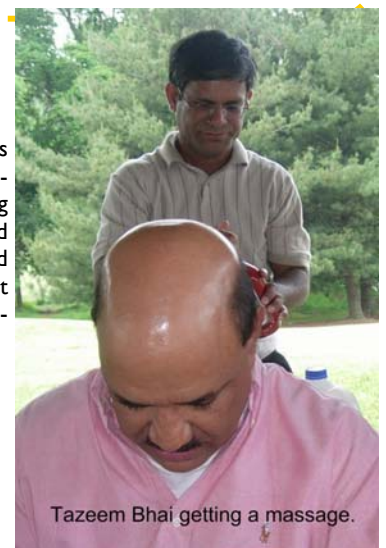
Reflection On Lake Ontario

His head is as reflective as the crystal clear, deep blue and glistening water on Lake Ontario seen from the 68th floor of Scotiabank tower on 44 King Street West in Toronto, where Tazeem Hassan makes decisions on multi-billion dollar investment proposals from dozens of South American countries. A fun loving and light hearted man with a distinctly bent sense of humor, he was nick named Pagla Babu of Hemaitpur, although the assertion that

he actually resided in that facility is vehemently denied. I can testify in no uncertain terms that if that was the case, it was certainly before or after my time. He is wonderfully generous and approachable with such an easy grace that you may even forget that he is actually one of those who are wise beyond their years. Not unaccustomed to travel, he was a member of the Canadian contingent, who came to our picnic in Maryland this spring to really appreciate the watermelons. Food

maybe his passion, but his real expertise is on high-flying finance for building the economy of third world countries. It is sad that his talents are not being utilized by the leaders of our nation.

The consummate Canadian banker, Mr. Tazeem Hassan relaxes with a massage at the annual picnic in Black Hills Park at Montgomery County,



Tazeem Bhai getting a massage.

Food Or Drugs, Name Thy Vice

Always polite and somewhat subdued, Dr. Ashraf came to Washington, DC on a cold morning. He called me to say that he has an interview with US Federal Government's Food and Drug Administration.

I picked him up from the train station and brought him home. My father-in-law, who was visiting me at that time, was elated to find a physician who spoke in Bangla and peppered him with questions about all of his supposed ailments. Dr. Ashraf took the time to respond to

each and every one of the questions with deliberation and with tremendous respect and a soft voice. He did not appear to be in a hurry, even though the future of his career dependent on the outcome of the interview only an hour later.

When I took him to the FDA building and wished him luck, he was determined. His quiet confidence backed up with years of experience in research convinced the panel that he was indeed their candidate.

He is clearly a rising star that we will see for some times to come.



Ashraf beams at US Government's Food and Drug Administration

Forever Connected

Running a business in the flood plane of Dhaka from the desert of Arizona is not an easy feat. Separated by a dozen time zones, Shumon works extraordinarily long hours to keep his American and Bengali teams in synch.

Son of a Group Captain, he pursued not a career in air force but in engineering and computer science.

He aspires to create the next Wipro and Satyum of Bangladesh transferring billions of dollars of IT off shoring opportunities to an emerging market in Dhaka and Chittagong.

My father used to say, "Without ambition you shall achieve nothing." If the opposite is true, then this man one day will move the country.



Shumon calling Dhaka after midnight on a mission to change the landscape of outsourced contracts.

Father Theresa

Call him a left wing nut case, a defunct socialist, do goody two shoes commie, a member of the secretive cult, a Latter Day Saint, or an Angel of Mercy, Mr. Razaqqe Khan is by all accounts an iconic social worker in its truest sense.

Silver haired with a ready smile he knows the reality on the grounds only too well. His network of donors extends multiple continents.

His annual travel plans accumulate thousands of miles as he makes painstaking presentations to countless donors to give his projects a chance. Each year, he makes a trip to the US to be an uncomfortable conscience in our face as we fail to justify our fantastic waste. Daunting as it is, he keeps the faith and slogs along the lonely path for days, months and years for many depends on him for their livelihoods.

It is all about scale. Here we have a morally corrupt administration that spends more money every three weeks on the war effort in Iraq than Bangladesh's entire annual budget. I just wonder what a country like ours could have done with such sustained investment for year after year. That of course will not happen. That is why it is so important for us to have our Razaqqe Khan, who speaks for the poor and the destitute.

Mr. Razaqqe Khan searches our souls with his incisive eyes.



All I Wanted Was To Have Fun

Someone who believes that work is overrated, I sure have a knack for finding unnecessary work that pays nothing.

Ever since I was in junior high school, I seem to be working. In the beginning I dug earth for my school teacher and then quickly moved to making ice cream for Dairy Queen. Later I swept and mopped the floor and painted their building as a payoff for moving up in the hierarchy.

After I graduated from University of Saskatchewan I began as a de-

fense engineer for NATO and Canadian government, I crisscrossed that country for more than ten years working on everything from frigates, destroyers, helicopter avionics, weapon systems, nuclear reactor safety shut down systems and advanced air traffic control systems. When telecom was booming, I became a switch designer, first for the wireline and then the wireless sectors.

When I came to the US, I was put on a plane nearly every week to sell the IBM's vision for everything from MDA, MDD, SOA, SCM, TQM, RSA, SSM, and a zillion other three

character acronyms that have long ceased to have any definition or any real meaning inside my head.

Now, I roll these unpronounceable words like a true Subject Matter Expert in front of the gullible executives managing millions of dollars in budget. But truth be told, I know only as much as the next person standing beside me, that is to say, nothing. This is the real reason why you have elected me uncontested to this post that makes me work and pays me, you guessed it, nothing.

Give me a young coconut and a straw on a beach anywhere in the world and I shall show you the meaning of work.



Books In Alcohol



It was minus twenty degrees Celsius outside, but I was on a mission. I traveled to this

Ethanol factory in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, Canada

barren land to reminisce about my past and to find a few books hidden in a warehouse inside a massive ethanol plant. I was looking for a few good books that can be used by our present day cadets at the college, after I saw a request from our principal.

When I finally adjusted my eyes to this darkened and cavernous space, I was astounded to find over half a million books of all categories stacked ten feet high in palettes wrapped in plastic.

Although the books are destined for poor African schools, the Chief Executive Officer of Help Interna-

tional has agreed to give a few thousand books to us provided we agree to share these valuable commodities with others through a library exchange. There is an opportunity here to create an inter cadet college library program with some of these books. Knowledge should indeed be so intoxicating.



Here Lies Adhu Bhai

History is written by the winners. Columbus never stepped his foot on the present day America, yet he is canonized as the discoverer of the new land. His descendants, on his landing spot near Santo Domingo in Dominican Republic has elevated him to heavens with the largest light house in the world shaped like a cross as the center piece of his mausoleum. The same spot that was the home of the na-

tive Tainos for centuries now lights up the sky with the shape of a massive cross that can be seen for a hundred miles from the middle of the Caribbean Sea.

The genocide that occurred after the Spaniards came in the late 1400's made the Tainos extinct. Yet, until I arrived at this island, I had never heard about them.

If the victors write the history, why is there then so little known about

the genocide we endured in 1971? Why is there still a debate? Are those countless we lost, destined to be forgotten like the Tainos of the Americas?



Will the real Mr. Columbus stand up? The Dominicans claim that his bones are in this box, which they open each year on October 14th.

Succession

Part of every single leadership's mandate is to put in place a succession plan to ensure a smooth transition to carry on its mandate without any obvious interruption.

ORCA has a wealth of young members ready to take on the challenges of leadership to chart a dynamic and bold course.

In the USA, the membership is indeed very fortunate to have a large number of bright, young and energetic young men, half of my age, ready to try on the wheel with

a bit of support and encouragement from their elders.

Judging from the astounding results of all of the projects undertaken in Dhaka for the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, my view is that we have no shortage of young emerging leaders who can lead and execute magnificently in Bangladesh either.

Both here in the US and in Bangladesh, these new stars need to be given the opportunity to lead with the support they deserve. In the military establishments there are

clear path for growth. Then, why should there not be similar path in ORCA? Wisdom and leadership is not restricted to the members of the senior batches. In fact, we are only stepping stone to senility.

An organization reinvents itself with the vigor and energy of the new generation. And, so we should allow that progressive redefinition while retaining our core values.

There are many interesting and dynamic ideas on the table that proposes to include more fully an ever increasing number of disbursed and distributed membership. We can not cling on to the same ideas forever as the world changes in front of us. We need to change to be meaningful in the new world and with the new generation. Otherwise, we cease to become relevant to the silent majority. We can indeed do better.

RCC In The 21st Century

Iwrote a while back to Professor Abdul Hamid, "Why is it that we have only three hundred students at RCC for the last forty years and not nine hundred?"

He responded by saying that I've an interesting proposal and I should present it to the officer in charge of the cadet colleges.

I was coming from two angles. First, it is more cost effective to increase the enrollment in an estab-

lished institution that has the infrastructure and the capacity for the absorption than creating brand new colleges to address the demand.

Second, the only way we can increase our ORCA membership is by increasing the RCC enrollment. Currently with the life expectancy as it is, and the enrollment being flat around fifty per year, ORCA membership is expected to plateau around twenty five hundred to three thousand.

There is absolutely no reason why RCC can not accommodate one hundred fifty students per year without affecting quality and rigor. If it is well planned, the enrollment can be increased slowly over five or six years with continuous monitoring and evaluation. There is definitely a demand for cadet colleges as demonstrated by the mushroom of new colleges in the last few years. Does it not make sense to increase the overall capacity by increasing the enrollment? It definitely makes economic sense.

"Why is it that we have only three hundred students at RCC for the last forty years and not nine hundred?"

What Do We Want To Be?

ORCA has become many things to many people. It is first and foremost an alumni organization with its loyalty to its members and the college of its origin. So, each year, it gives scholarships and loans to the members and materials and expertise to the college administration upon request. It has given books, computers, projectors and expert advices to the college staff on how to

motivate the students and get better placements in the board exams.

The ORCA we have come to know and love is of course much bigger than simply being an alumni organization. It is an institution that has an entrenched belief that when an impoverished nation spends forty times what it spends on a student at a regular school, its members have a special responsibility and

obligation for giving back substantially to that nation.

This driving principle of "but what you can do for the nation," has shaped its future from its signature OBL program, shelter for the orphans to its vigorous and meaningful responses to national emergencies during flood, cyclones and natural disasters. It has the resources and the will to make a lasting impact.

Yet, there are still lingering questions as to ORCA's future. Where are we heading? What will be our legacy? What is the next step of OBL after collecting blood for twenty five years?

Surely, the next generation of leaders will respond to these questions with solidarity and strength they deserve.

Parting Shots



President Dipok Mia changing the tire of the ORCA Mobile.

Mukthapuri Harijans lost in Chinatown in New York City



Please send comments, criticisms and suggestions for improvements to raja@orcausa.org



2008 Leaving Inflection Of An Asymptotic Curve

If 2007 was the watershed year, in 2008, ORCA will leave the inflection point for rapid and spectacular growth and maturity. All of the ingredients are there to grow the organization at an unprecedented rate.

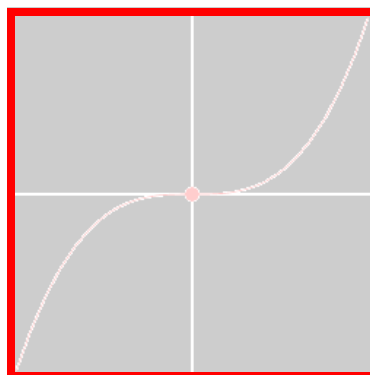
The leadership is strong, the community is prosperous and generous and the will to leave a lasting legacy is intense. How can we fail when the window of opportunity is so starkly defined?

We now have a piece of land to call our own to build a foundation of legacy built with bricks and mortars, and sweat and tears.

We now have the blessings of a thousand destitute who is now better off today than before because of us.

We now are united in our focus, energy and dedication. How can we fail!

Inflection on a window of opportunity. We simply cannot miss it.



In 2008, ORCA is poised for an unprecedented growth, stability and unity in purpose.

A Thank You

It has been a little less than a year, since the current executive was elected under a cloud of doubts.

I can say without hesitation that those clouds have surely been given away to a much stronger wind of hope and optimism. I'm indebted to the members of the executive, Dipok Bhai, Kamal, Naveed, Wasi, Momin and Tipu for all the support they have given to make this year a tremendous success. I would also like to thank each and every member for their unflinching support and contribution at every juncture. I don't have space for mentioning all of you by names, but you know who you are. Chacha, are you reading?

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the fantastic leadership of our parent organization, led by Siddiquir Bhai and his exceptional team for making this year so memorable. Congratulations everyone for doing a job well done.

Happy New Year and Best Regards,

Raja, 8/425, QS, ORCA USA