From the Editors desk

“The past is but the beginning of a beginning.”

HG Wells.

January 23rd, 1997 – the day we, the first batch of GMC Chandigarh, finished internship. It was an ordinary day; we went around doing our routine tasks. There were no celebrations or farewells. But the excitement among us was palpable. I finished my day, found Jimmy (Nitin Mittal, class of ’91), and we walked down the stairs, which were being dimly illuminated by light filtering in from the corridors (I think the lifts were being installed in the main hospital complex then, as was the electrical wiring in the stairways). As we walked towards our scooters, I turned around to look at the huge concrete structure being raised. Ironically, the whole building appeared as if it was being torn down – there was ‘sariya’ protruding from every pillar, mud and concrete everywhere, lights could be seen only in the lower three floors of the first and only block as the rest of the hospital was still under construction, the bright red ‘EMERGENCY’ sign had not been installed yet and the whole place was desolate, except for the occasional laborer settling down for the night. Despite the gloomy image in front of me, I felt optimistic. We had come a long way since we had started five and a half years before. We had gone through good times and bad times, we had shuttled from the Prayas building (sector-38) to the Polyclinic (sector-22) to the PGI and General Hospital (sector-16) and finally to where I stood now. In 1991, I had entered the medical college as a carefree adolescent, and now I stood in front of it, a man, and hopefully a doctor. The whole world with its opportunities was in front of me, and momentarily I felt vulnerable, the shelter called GMC had suddenly ceased to exist.

I moved from Chandigarh to New Delhi and then to the USA. The farther I went, the more isolated I became from GMC. I would hang on to every bit of information about GMC I could get through phone conversations, internet chats or the occasional email. I desperately needed a forum for keeping in touch with my co-GMCites. The need for such a medium had been voiced before and I was certain there were others who felt the way I did. Late one night on call, exhausted, I was lying in the call room staring at the roof between answering pages (that is the time my brain goes faster than even ‘Chacha Choudhry’!), when the idea of starting a newsletter struck me. The next day, I had sent an email to every address I had in my contact list and the rest is history.

Hopefully, this is the beginning of a long journey for GMCCOSA. Like our GMC, we will start slow, but grow with time to a formidable organization. It is also time we contribute back to our alma mater; how can we do that? I feel the possibilities are endless; we just have to make a beginning.

The success of GMCCOSA and ‘Connections’ has to be measured in terms of its ready access and circulation. Ideally, I would like every GMCite to receive it; however, realistically speaking, I don’t think that is an achievable goal yet. Being an email/web based newsletter, there may be many alumni who may not have access to it. I would encourage circulation of print outs of this magazine so that our friends who are not net savvy might be able to stay in contact with us. This first issue has a circulation of around 200, and I hope with time it will grow.

Next on the agenda is a website for GMCCOSA. A website, besides other things, would give us enough storage space for posting photographs and for keeping issues of ‘Connections’ online for ready access. Hopefully, it should be up and running by the middle of 2004.

So folks, read on … criticize, encourage, contribute, suggest, and certainly do KEEP IN TOUCH.

Navneet S Majhail
(Class of ’91)
**Message From The First Director Principal**

It gives me great pleasure especially as Founder Director Principal of Govt. Medical College Chandigarh that those who graduated from this institute are planning for an e-mail based newsletter for the alumni of GMC Chandigarh.

I have great memories of my association with this college, started in 1991. The faculty and students of this college gave me full support for overcoming the initial teething problems. We worked as a team. The students of the college were the cream from Chandigarh and surrounding area. They were brilliant, disciplined and worked with devotion and performed their duties to the best of their ability for the patient care. I am extremely happy to learn that what I thought were children when they joined this medical college, are now holding some of the best positions in the medical fraternity in India and abroad. I can recall vividly my interaction with the first batch of medical students since it was for the first time in my life that I had the opportunity to admit 1st batch of medical students in this budding institute, which now is recognized as one of the best Medical Colleges of India, in such a short span of time.

I send my best wishes for all those who qualified from GMCH Chandigarh and hope that all of them will excel in their life.

17/12/2003

(Jagjit S. Chopra)

MBBS (Pb), DCH, FRCP, PhD (UK), FAMS, FIAN
Editor-in-Chief World Neurology
Professor Emeritus Postgraduate Inst. of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh
Honorary Member, American Academy of Neurology

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**The GMC Chronicles**

**ANATOMY – THE BEGINNING**

There were no cadavers, no anatomy museum with specimens, and no dissection tables (the department of Anatomy was initially housed on the third floor of the Prayas Building). Then the dissection tables came. Each group would sit around the table, our ‘Cunningham’s’ open in front of us. And we would talk and gossip, though only in whispers, always afraid Dr Jaswinder Kaur (then head of anatomy, more famous as just ‘JK’) might come into the D-hall any time. She would enter the D-hall through one door, and by the time she had passed and exited through the other door, at least a quarter of the class had been thrown out on some pretext or the other (she would make two or three of such rounds during a typical three hour dissection period). For the first few weeks, we mulled over the skull, trying to memorize all the foramina and their contents. Around a month after the college had started, we got four brain specimens from PGI. We would spend the next four months pondering over the gyri and sulci and all the pathways that went through the brain (I am not sure if that ‘toxic’ exposure to the brain had something to do with at least three of my classmates subsequently choosing neurology as a career (Harvinder Taneja, Kavita Mohindra and Preeti Sahota), but my grey matter is still white about ‘the neuron’!). In late January 2002, GMC received its first few cadavers. That is when dissection started with earnest. Gradually, we moved from Gray’s anatomy (believe it or not, that is what we read for the first month) to Cunningham and then finally discovered and graduated to Chaurasia and Inder Bir Singh (we had no seniors to guide us through the nuances of medical school, so we had to learn most things the hard way!). Besides Dr Jaswinder Kaur, there were Dr Ptnaik Gopichand (currently in GMC Amritsar) and Dr Kanchan Kapoor (she has been here since the inception of GMC Chandigarh). Puneet Tuli was ‘the dissector’ of our batch; he could spend hours at end in the D-hall and would be a guest of honor and visiting dissector at most other tables where no one had the expertise or the motivation to use a scalpel (he is currently doing MCh plastic surgery at PGIMER Chandigarh). At the end of the year, we cleared our exams and moved on to the second prof, most of us hoped that would be the end of anatomy for us. But anatomy still tags along with us to this day, irrespective of what specialty we are in. And at times, I wish I could do it all over again (minus the stages and the sub-stages of course!).

Navneet S Majhail
(Class of ’91)

Check out the GMCH website. Has a lot of scope for improvement and also needs to be updated (the only thing that seems to have changed since its inception is the directors message and list of faculty!). Nevertheless, gives details of the hospital and the medical college. Going through the list of faculty brought back some good memories, especially Dr Kanchan Kapoor (anatomy) and Dr Nageshwari (physiology), who were present when the first batch started training twelve years ago.

**www.gmch.nic.in**

**Write to us ☉:**

gmccosa@yahoo.com
Finally made it to the end of the day and as we trudged after shuffling through the various lectures and labs we days to come. The Prayas building itself was then under construction with only the lower three floors ready for use. By eight in the morning the whole building probably had a strength of 70 people, including the faculty and junior and office staff, and that was all GMC (then called CMC – Chandigarh Medical College) could boast of as strength. “Well, probably that’s all we need”, we thought as we gingerly took our first steps up the five story building (the building was not to have an elevator for another 2 years). Those moments were great as each of us thought that he or she was going to change the shape of medicine on the planet.

Every thing in the building was brand new, complete with a set of brand new students shuffling uncomfortably in spotless white new lab coats to a set of brand new teachers. A new lecture hall had hurriedly been put together for accommodating the new batch. There were fifty chairs in the room (of course, no tables) and the chairs were marked Govt College for Men Chandigarh, proudly declaring their allegiance to their Alma. But the podium was brand new, which Dr Chopra, with his infectious smile and hawkish eyes readily occupied. He welcomed everybody and all the kids clapped. It was getting to be so much fun. He then introduced the faculty – an entire group consisting of seven people - two each in Anatomy and Biochemistry and three in Physiology. There were multiple rounds of applause for everybody and then the “ceremony” ended and the first day of GMC started.

Enter Dr. Bharti, then head of Biochemistry, who later over the months became more popular for her hairstyle and demeanor than her expertise over her subject. The first thing she did was make all of us sit in rows according to our roll numbers - sounded very reasonable and organized at that time - but now in retrospect reflects the vanity of our atomic origin. “This is the only day when you will smile. The only other day in MBBS when you will smile is when you graduate,” she retorted.

As the day unfolded we were bundled up into batches and exported into the dissection hall and laboratories. The labs were, of course, in the process of being established and the only thing that faintly resembled an academic institutional setup was the blackboard on the wall. But of course we were all fresh and young and so we enjoyed the experience of sitting on the floor for our classes. We were soon exposed to the perils of Dr Jaswinder Kaur, then head of Anatomy (to be popularly known as JK and then occasionally more colorful names) and our initial experience itself defined the agony of the endless humiliation in the dissection hall in the days to come.

After shuffling through the various lectures and labs we finally made it to the end of the day and as we trudged down the stairs none of us realized the impact of the tumultuous years that lay ahead of us. We have come a long way since then with a unique set of bitter-sweet experiences, with struggles ranging from getting a water cooler installed to getting the college listed in the WHO list of internationally recognized medical schools. All these experiences have gone a long way in carving our personalities. And now, in retrospect, I still cherish the joy and pleasure I experienced that day on being a part of a new institution - a feeling that has never been surpassed to this date.

Hemender Singh
(Class of ‘91)
GMCH holds fourth convocation

Graduates of the ‘96 and the ‘97 batches received MBBS degrees at the fourth convocation held on 2nd November 2003 at the new GMCH auditorium. Sharad Prabhakar from ‘96 batch and Roosy Aulakh from ‘97 batch received the best graduate awards respectively. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest, Prof Kartar Singh (Director, SGPGI, Lucknow) said, "There is a great responsibility on your shoulders as the role of doctors has assumed even more relevance today as they have to not only cure patients but also undertake research to give panacea to the ailing humanity." We welcome both the classes to the ‘real world’ and are confident they will continue to make GMCH proud.

(Parly adapted from www.tribuneindia.com)

First Batch of GMCH Post-Graduate Residents to Pass Out in January 2004

The first batch of GMCH post-graduate (MD/MS) residents will be passing out in January 2004. Though starting MD/MS courses in GMCH has been on the cards even before the first batch finished their internship in January 1997, the concept finally materialized under the guidance of Dr VK Kak, the second director-principal. Post-graduate training began with ten residents in four specialties (two in anatomy, three in anesthesia, three in pathology and two in ophthalmology) in January 2001. The MCI has subsequently approved and MD/MS courses have started at GMCH in chest & TB, community medicine, forensic medicine, obstetrics & gynecology, pediatrics and orthopedics.

Other medical courses currently being conducted at GMCH include: B.Sc. in ophthalmic techniques, M.Sc. in Anatomy and M.Sc. in Physiology.

In The News...

THE TRIBUNE, May 18, 2001

City Doctors, Engineers Shine in IAS Exam

Doctors and engineers from the city have achieved top positions in the civil service examinations this year. ... Dr Nipun Vinayak (Class of ’93) from Panchkula is ranked 25th ... this graduate of GMCH, sector 32, says he cannot believe his luck.

... Dr Atul Handa (Class of ’91) a resident of sector 32, has secured 98th position ... A medical graduate from GMCH ...

THE TRIBUNE, May 15, 2002

City’s Achievers Sparkle with Success

... over 15 candidates from the city have cleared the civil services exam this year. ... Ranked fifth, Dr Dinesh Arora (Class of ’93), says there is no substitute for hard work ... Dr Amit Saini (Class of ’94) who is ranked 256th ...

THE TRIBUNE, May 3, 2003

Two Bhatinda Docs Make it to IAS

Two doctors of the city have been selected in the civil services examination, the result of which was declared by the UPSC last evening. ... Dr Sanjay Goel (Class of ’91) ... ranked 24 ... completed the MBBS course at the age of 22 from Government Medical College, Chandigarh ...

We Want To Hear From You

Wish we had a crystal ball to find out about everyone!

Keep in touch!! To make this whole concept a success and to keep it thriving, we need suggestions, criticisms and contributions from you. So write back to us, share your stories with us, tell us where you are and what you are doing and tell us of your achievements. We all had memorable experiences during our tenure at GMC – jot them down, send them to us. Scan and send us photographs taken during your stay in GMC. We also want volunteers for the editorial board – the only prerequisites are a working knowledge of English and being a student/graduate of GMC Chandigarh. The more material we get, the more frequently we will be able to publish this newsletter.

We plan to bring out ‘Connections’ at least twice a year to begin with. Hopefully, with time and your support, we should be able publish it more frequently.

‘Mirch Masala’

‘Connections’ is not the first newsletter to roll out of GMC. The first periodical was ‘Mirch Masala’, the brainstorm of Jaswinder Singh (’91), Harvinder Taneja (’91) and Navneet Majhail (’91) (I am sure the ‘91 and ’92 batches will recall it). It was a fortnightly gossip magazine, handwritten and then photocopied and sold for a rupee. Stories included had headlines such as ‘Main gungi nahn hun’, ‘Jo jeeta wohi sikandar’ and ‘Monga sahib ka nya motorcycle’ (one can just imagine the quality of journalism there). Though extremely popular (at least to the people not included in the news stories), it was withdrawn from publication after two issues – the editors had started receiving threats to their life. The second issue was rather a bit too volatile, copies were publicly burnt and the editors had to go underground for a while. The profit of around a hundred rupees that was made before the magazine went out of print was spent on appeasing and making up with (taking out to dinner) the ‘Personality of the Week’ of the second issue (again I am certain the ‘91 batch will remember the ‘personality’ and the accompanying cartoon). We will try to publish articles from ‘Mirch Masala’ in the future (of course, the censored versions).
Stork Line

ARJUN (4th October 2003)
Gunjeet ('92) & Ved Bhushan ('92)

DIYA (25th July 2003)
Rupinder ('92) & Rishi ('92)

GINA (14th September 2002)
Maninder & Jaswinder ('91)

GURNOOR (06th December 2001)
Inder Raj & Navneet ('91)

IRA (20th March 2002)
Reena & Hemender ('91)

SHAAN (16th September 2000)
Surmeet ('91) & Jay

SIMR (15th February 2003)
Nindu & Datinder ('93)

VYOM (20th May 2002)
Kavita ('91) & Sudhanshu

Congratulations

As many of us have (hopefully) been blissfully married for sometime now, we will only be including those who have recently been united in matrimony.

Amandeep & Harkirat ('97) (Jul 2003)
Pooja & Sumesh ('93) (Oct 2003)
Jasmine ('94) & Amit Bir ('92) (Nov 2003)
Ashima ('97) & Sachin (Dec 2003)

Kudos

To everyone, who is making GMC proud both in India and abroad – keep it up. We will keep on updating accomplishments of GMC graduates as we hear more from them. Meanwhile, best wishes to everyone appearing in PG entrance and USMLE exams and to those who are interviewing for residency positions in the USA.

Congratulations to all the graduates (and now doctors) of the 1998 batch and to the new interns of the 1999 batch.

Punkaj Gupta ('94) received the Graduate of the Year award during his MS in Biomedical Engineering at Florida International University, Miami, Florida, USA.

Where is Everyone...

Class of '91

Amarender Prakash; Resident, Anesthesiology, Univ Miami Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami, Florida, USA
Amit Monga; Research Fellow, Gastroenterology, Mount Sinai VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York, USA.
Anu Goyal; Senior Resident, Ophthalmology, Benaras Hindu Univ, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
Anupam Goyal; Senior Resident, Gynecology & Obstetrics, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Devender Grewal; Junior Resident (MS), Anesthesiology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Harvinder Taneja; Senior Resident (DM), Neurology, SGPGI, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
Hemender Singh; Resident, Internal Medicine, Univ of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.

Kamaldeep Sandhu; Senior Resident, Dermatology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Kavita Mohindra; Resident, Neurology, Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, Michigan, USA.
Meeta Singh; Resident, Psychiatry, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA.

Navneet Majhail; Fellow, Hematology & Medical Oncology, Univ of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.
Neeraj Manchanda; Private practice, Internal Medicine, Oscoda, Michigan, USA.

Nidhi Gupta; Assistant Professor, Physiology, UCMS, New Delhi.
Nittin Pal Mittal; Senior Registrar, Orthopedics, Dayanand Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab.
Pawan Kumar; Medical Officer, NDMC, New Delhi.
Preeti Sahota; Senior Resident (DM), Neurology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Puneet Tuli; Senior Resident (MCh), Plastic Surgery, PGIMER, Chandigarh.

Shalini Grover; Fellow, Nephrology, John Hopkins Univ, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

Surmeet Kaur; Resident, Internal Medicine, Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois, USA.
Vishal Pall; Resident, Internal Medicine - Preventive Medicine, Univ of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas, USA.

Vivek Ahuja; Manager Medical Affairs and Lead Pharmacovigilance, Reliance Life Sciences, Mumbai.

Class of '92

Alka Rani; Senior Resident, Ophthalmology, AIIMS, New Delhi.
Amit Bir Chawla; Senior House Officer, Psychiatry, Hellesden Hospital, Norwich, UK.
Ashootosh Sharma; Senior Resident, Anesthesiology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Deepak Modi; Senior Resident, Chest & TB, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Gunjeet Dua; Senior Resident, Anesthesiology, AIIMS, New Delhi.

Harminder Longia; Resident, Internal Medicine, Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, Jamaica, New York, USA.

Editors: The above lists are not all inclusive; they only contain information we could verify. Please keep us informed so that we can keep our database up to date.
Navneet Chawla; Senior Resident, Internal Medicine (ICU), Fortis Heart Institute, Mohali, Punjab.
Navneet Dhillon; Resident, Internal Medicine, Univ of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas, USA.
Rishi Kad; Resident, Internal Medicine, Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.
Rohit Jindal; Senior Resident, Orthopedics, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Rohit Rambani; Senior Resident, Orthopedics, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Rupinder Arora; Resident, Internal Medicine, Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.
Tania Lamba; Fellow, Ophthalmology, George Washington Univ, Washington, DC, USA.
Ved Bhushan Arya; Senior Resident, Pediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi.

Class of ’93

Anamika Rai Sharma; Completed MD (Radiation Oncology) from PGIMER, Chandigarh, applying for residency in USA.
Datinder Deo; Resident, Internal Medicine, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan, USA.
Mini Kamboj; Resident, Internal Medicine, Michigan State Univ, East Lansing, Michigan, USA.
Nipun Vinayak; Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Umrer, Nagpur.
Rakhi Aulakh; Junior Resident (MD), Pathology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Rozi Bhatia; Senior Resident, Ophthalmology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Sanjeev Dhankar; Senior Resident, Pediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi.

Class of ’94

Ashish Behl; Student (MS Gerontology), Appalachian State Univ, Boone, North Carolina.
Ashish Bhatnagar; Medical Officer, Fortis Heart Institute, Mohali, Punjab.
Nancy Sharma; Student (MS Gerontology), Appalachian State Univ, Boone, North Carolina, USA.
Pawan Prashar; Junior Resident (MS), Ophthalmology, Govt Medical College, Patiala, Punjab.
Punkaj Gupta; Resident, Pediatrics, Miami Children’s Hospital, Miami, Florida, USA.
Satinder Oberoi; Student (MS Applied Gerontology), Univ of North Texas, Denton, Texas, USA.
Vikas Sharotri; Will be starting residency in Internal Medicine in USA in July 2004.
Vinay Mehta; Student (MS Applied Gerontology), Univ of North Texas, Denton, Texas, USA.
Vishal Singla; Medical Officer, Fortis Heart Institute, Mohali, Punjab.

Class of ’95

Anu Thukral; Junior Resident (MD), Pediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi.
Gagandeep Goyal; Junior Resident (MS), Anesthesiology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Hemant Sharma; Junior Resident (MS), Anesthesiology, Medical College, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.
Surabhi Wig; Junior Resident (MD), Internal Medicine, Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab.
Swati Bansal; Junior Resident (MS), Ophthalmology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Yogesh Sharma; Demonstrator, Biochemistry, GMCH, Chandigarh.

Class of ’96

Advitya Malhotra; Research Fellow, Hepatology, Yale Univ, New Haven, CT, USA.
Harmeet Singh; Junior Resident (MS), Orthopedics, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Mahip Roy; Resident (MS), Ophthalmology, Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College, Belgaum, Karnataka.
Mohit Bansal; Student (MPH), Univ of Illinois at Springfield, Springfield, Illinois, USA.
Preeti Modi; Student (MPH), Univ of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.
Ritu Gupta; Demonstrator, Community Medicine, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Sahil Pahwa; Demonstrator, Pharmacology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Sonica Saini; Student (MPH), Western Kentucky Univ, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Class of ’97

Ankur Bansal; Student (MPH), Univ of North Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, USA.
Ashish Saini; Demonstrator, Physiology, GMCH, Chandigarh.
Maninder Bal; Clinical Observer, North Hampshire Hospital, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK.
Pooja Malhotra; Junior Resident (MD), Pathology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Sanjeev Dhanak; House Officer, General Surgery, West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen, UK.
Sumedha Bangar; Junior Resident, Dermatology, GMCH, Chandigarh.

Class of ’98

(Completing Internship on 31st December 2003)

Class of ’99

(Starting Internship on 1st January 2004)

The above list is not all-inclusive; it only contains information of alumni whose current appointment we could verify. We will keep on updating this list regularly. Please keep us notified of your current designation.