

BY VENU PALAPARTHI

# 2002. THE YEAR THAT WAS

In 2002, we set ourselves a very aggressive agenda and succeeded on most fronts. As a group, we pushed the limits in our first year of existence and laid a tremendous foundation on which to build our future success. If you are wondering what these achievements are, read on ...



**The Director in Boston with Prof. SP Kothari**

**BITSAA International (USA):** We expanded BITSAA inland from our beachheads in New York and San Francisco. At the end of 2002, we had 7 active chapters (9 now) in the United States. We launched a massive discovery campaign and added over 1,000 BITSians to our chapters! We connected with BITSians from the 50's and 60's batches – BITSAA now boasts about 60 members from the 50's and 60's. In fact, Harish Jain (graduated in 1953) from Maryland visited BITS Pilani in February of 2003, exactly 50 years after he graduated from BITS,

Perhaps the most notable achievement for BITSAA in 2002 was obtaining our 501c3 status. As a tax-deductible not-for-profit organization, BITSAA immediately embarked on creating an endowment by

raising money from two East Coast fundraisers. This \$16,000 endowment now funds two merit-cum-need scholarships in Pilani in perpetuity. As a pilot project, it demonstrates the loyalty of BITSians to BITS and their keenness to give back. The first two scholarships were awarded to Krishnachaitanya and Charles Augustine in December 2002.

**The global BITS community:** Our biggest focus for 2002 was to bring BITSians together and enable them to communicate with and learn about each other. To that end, our website, launched in February 2002, has been a huge hit with BITSians, helping us organize, communicate and reconnect with each other around the world. We are continuously developing this website as a focal point of our community. Also in 2002, the Sandpaper team started brainstorming a launch. This issue of SandPaper has hopefully revived the magic of that old campus rag of ours.

**BITSAA USA get-togethers in 2002:** Until 2001, the only organized BITSian get-togethers were in the Bay Area and in NY. Most BITSians met their friends over long weekends or “ran into each other” at Indian grocery stores and at universities across US. BITSian reunions are no longer random run-ins at airports or shopping malls. In 2002, we had a total of nine (9) social events where nearly 800 BITSians met each other. And that is not including the chapter events that coincided with Diro's trip. Diro was pleased with the reception in all the cities he visited – NY,

Boston, Seattle, Detroit, and San Jose. It was the first time he had met so many BITSians in the US (or anywhere)!

To enable high-impact networking, BITSAA organized its first golf outing in NJ with about 50 BITSians in attendance. One particularly spirited BITSian insisted that he had played golf on the Sky lawns. Needless to say, BITSians found the sand traps on the course more treacherous than the sands of Pilani.

**BITSian Achievements:** BITSians won accolades around the world as they continued to blaze new trails in science, technology, and the arts.



**The Simputer**

Dr. Dorairajan Balasubramaniam, won the coveted Padma Shri in India for his contributions to the field of Ocular Biochemistry – a first for any BITSian. Two BITSians on the Simputer team, Professor Vijay Chandru and Shashank Garg, won the first ever Dewang Mehta award for IT innovation. BITSians were not only at the helm of companies that brought computers to the common man (the Simputer), they also brought supercomputers to the Indian scientific community (C-DAC led by Dr. Arora launched the ParamPadma).



BITSians won accolades both as entrepreneurs and corporate executives. Vinod Agarwal of LogicVision, was named “Entrepreneur of the year” by Silicon India. Ten other BITSians were on the Silicon

India 100 list. Among the professional executives, Vivek Paul of Wipro was the highest paid professional executive in India according to The Week.

BITSians who did not take the well-traveled path also did extremely well. Mahesh Ramasubramanian won an Oscar for Shrek. A BITSian music director, Aravind (of Aravind-Shankar) produced a major chartbuster in Tamil. Mani Shankar made one of those rare Bollywood hits in 2002 called “16

December.” Anu Hasan won the best supporting actress award for her role in a TV adaptation of Chitra Banerjee’s “Sister of my heart.” A BITSian from Pilani - Kaniha has made a name for herself as an actress with her debut in Five Star.

Last but always the most important achievement of all, our beloved alma mater was ranked third in India in the India Today ranking of engineering colleges finishing at the top in both academic input and curriculum.

Go BITS ! !

## BITSIAN Companies in the Silicon India 100



Company	BITSIAN	Position	Category
Nuware	Venk Krishnan	Founder/CEO	IT Services
Intruvert	Raj Dhingra	VP of Marketing	Networking/Communications
Velio	Vijay Parikh	BoD	Networking/Communications
Axiowave	Mukesh Chatter	Founder/CEO	Networking/Communications
Pinnacle Systems	Ajay Chopra	Founder	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
LogicVision	Vinod K. Agarwal	Founder/CEO	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
Cradle Tech	Satish Gupta	Founder	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
NetScout Systems	Ajay Singhal	Founder/CEO	Software/Internet
Exemplary Software	Ravi Krishnamurthy	Founder/CTO	Software/Internet
Informatica	Diaz Nesamoney	Founder	Software/Internet
Sierra Atlantic	Raju Reddy	Founder/Chairman	Software/Internet

### Excerpts from BITS Director’s welcome message on the BITSAA website



Dear BITSian:

You are a member of this extraordinary global family, a network of BITSians with tremendous intellectual potential and technical abilities. Many of you have reached the pinnacle of your careers thousands of miles from home. As a group you have started world-class companies, won critical acclaim in academics, written books, won awards from US corporations, universities and institutions, and donated generously to many noble causes for the United States, and especially for India.

...On behalf of the Institute I extend a personal invitation to each one of you to revisit Pilani, to meet and greet your old teachers, to share your experience and wisdom with our current students, faculty and to work with us to create a bigger, more powerful, and more dynamic world class Institute.

Regards

Dr. S Venkateswaran