



BHARATI **भारती**

A Publication of the India Association of Indianapolis, Inc.

Vol. 29, No. 6

A Magazine with a Mission - to Inform, Communicate and Enlighten

November-December 2005

Good Memories and Great Hope

Dear Friends,

This edition of Bharati reminds us all that the year has almost come to an end, which means its time for the 2005 Executive Committee to express their gratitude and appreciation for allowing us to be part of what was a great year! I sincerely hope you all enjoyed the programs and events the executive committee brought to you this year and I personally want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as the President of the India Association of Indianapolis. 2005 was a year during which we not only had fun but it also brought the community together. Here is a recap.

We started the year with Republic Day event "*Salam India*" followed by the Holi event, "*Rang Mela*". Hats off to the participants, the choreographers and the volunteers who brought these events with a gap of only 56 days in between. A monumental effort performed with great quality. It takes a substantial team effort and I am proud to say that everyone involved gave it their 110%. While most of us enjoyed summer vacation, many of us were getting ready for the India Day celebration "*Mera Desh Mahan*" and simultaneously preparing for the biggest event of the year Diwali 2005. 2005 also brought the most significant recognition for India Association of Indianapolis; sponsorship of the Special Resolution by Councilor Randolph. A Special Resolution recognizing the 59th celebration of India Independence Day was passed by the City-County on 19th day of September 2005. Amidst all the fun filled events and activities, there were a few sad events which brought us all together as a community. It was admirable to see how the entire Indian community came together and supported the people affected by the Tsunami and the Earthquake disasters. With your generous support IAI was able to raise a substantial amount of money which was channeled through the Red Cross and other local agencies in a timely manner.

Generous donations, enthusiastic participation by children and adults, tireless and hard work by volunteers kept us going throughout the year. If there was anything I would have liked to see more of this year, it would have been increase attendance at the events! It was sad to see that the attendance was primarily from the parents and close friends of the participants with a few exceptions of course. I believe as an Indian (member or non-member) we should encourage our children at these events and it begins with our attendance, which was unfortunately low. In further probing I learnt from many of you that the low attendance was as a result of our programs being too predictable and same every time. Trust me

that feedback has reached and plans are underway to make 2006 a year with much more variety.

In 2006 we plan to introduce new events like picnic, talent competition etc. While we will be adding new events we feel we must also eliminate an event due to the timing and the redundancy of a similar event which is held later in the year. Based on your feedback, comments and suggestions we have decided to remove Republic Day celebration and spend more time and energy by introducing variety in the India Day event. By reaching out to the subgroups we hope to organize a true all India celebration. Plans are also underway to reform our membership as well. The board and the executive team are teaming up to provide benefits and tangible returns to the IAI members in 2006. Here are *some* of the examples of the benefits we are seeking to offer to our members in 2006:

- a. Discounted movie tickets
- b. Discount offered by Indian restaurants
- c. Discount offered by local merchants
- d. Free attendance at selected IAI events

To bring quality programs and offer benefits for a non-for profit organization comes with a cost which means we will be structuring our membership a little differently from what we have had in the past. I am confident in saying that these incremental costs will outweigh the benefits we will enjoy as a member and will pay for itself. The new 2006 membership application will outline the details which will be printed in the January edition of Bharati.

Finally, here is what I thought 2005 was for me and my family. It was a year in which we came to know many of you on a personal, one-on-one, basis. It was a year which taught me to be patient and take negative criticisms (and there were a few) in stride and focus on the positive feedback. It was a year in which I learnt that even though some of us had differences of opinions we all wanted to achieve the same goal and that was to see India Association of Indianapolis grow. With that I am looking forward to next year and to see the India Association of Indianapolis grow even bigger.

For all the great times and support, "Thank You"

Haresh Gangwani.

Visit Our Website: <http://www.iaibharati.com>

Special Resolution No. 64, 2005

A Special Resolution recognizing the 59th celebration of India Independence Day was sponsored by Councilor Randolph and was passed by the City-County Council on September 19, 2005.



Disaster Relief Efforts

Members of the Indian community in Indianapolis donated \$38,798 in early 2005 toward the Tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. Of this amount \$19,234 was directed toward aid via the International Red Cross and the balance of \$19,564 is being channeled directly to relief organizations in South India to assist in the rebuilding efforts.

Members of the Indian community in Indianapolis contributed \$2,815 toward the Katrina Relief Fund. Funds were sent through the American Red Cross to aid relief and rebuilding efforts. Your contributions are still being accepted for the Katrina Relief Fund.

Relief effort contributions towards the Pakistan Earthquake are also being sought. The devastation and death count in this terrible tragedy continues to mount. Please show your generosity toward those in need of financial assistance.

All contributions should be made by check payable to India Association of Indianapolis (IAI), with a notation on the memo line as to the "fund" designated (example – "Katrina Fund", "Pakistan Earthquake Fund"). IAI will serve as a conduit and send the amount to the Red Cross. Alternatively, you may make the check payable to the Red Cross and mail it directly (check website for address). Checks sent through IAI should be mailed to: Kanchana Ishwar, Treasurer IAI, 1845 Knaphill Ct., Carmel, IN 46033.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Bharati is a bimonthly newsletter of the India Association of Indianapolis, Inc., dedicated to communicate, inform and enlighten the Community and be a forum for fostering Indian arts and culture. It reaches all the Indian American Community of Central Indiana. *Bharati* invites advertisements, articles and letters to the editor.

Articles should be of general interest and not be more than 600 words. Letters to the editor should not exceed 200 words. Letters should be typed double spaced and must include your name. The editor reserves the right to edit any material selected for publication.

The deadline for receiving articles and advertising for the January-February issue is December 10, 2005

The advertisement rates are as follows. Please make checks payable to India Association of Indianapolis.

| | one issue | six issues |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Full page | \$300.00 | \$1400.00 |
| Half page | \$150.00 | \$ 750.00 |
| Quarter page | \$ 80.00 | \$ 400.00 |
| Business Card | \$ 50.00 | \$ 250.00 |
| Preprinted Full Page Insert - \$220 per issue. | | |

IAI is not responsible for ad formatting and misprint. Please provide pre-formatted ad to our publisher and verify ads prior to print by request. Business Card size advertisements will be provided free to Non-Profit Sister Organizations.

New Committee's for 2006

IAI Board:

| Name | Position | Term |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Subhash Mahajan | Chairman | 2002–2005 & 2006 |
| Archana Thaker | Vice-Chairperson | 2004–2007 |
| Ajai Chaudhary | Secretary | 2005–2008 |
| Kanchana Ishwar | Treasurer | 2005–2008 |
| Niranjan Pati | Joint Treasurer | 2005–2008 |
| Uday Murthy | Member | 2003–2006 |
| Kiran Adhlakha | Member | 2005–2008 |
| Satish Calcuttawala | Member | 2005–2008 |
| Kris Dasari | Member | 2006–2009 |
| Gayatri Devaraju | Member | 2003–2006 |
| Yogen Parishak | Member | 2004–2007 |
| Vijayapal Reddy | Member | 2006–2009 |
| Mahesh Subramaniam | Member | 2006–2009 |

IAI Strategic Planning Committee:

| Name |
|---|
| V.R. Ishwar |
| Raj Patel |
| Vimal Patel |
| Dilip Shah |
| Nalin Shah |
| Subhash Mahajan – Chairman of the Board |

IAI Executive Committee:

| Name | Position 2006 |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Haresh Gangwani | President |
| Raju Chinthala | Vice President |
| Sunil Mohandas | Secretary |
| Soni Dhese | Treasurer |
| Sumit Thaker | Joint Treasurer |
| Geetha Babu | Joint Secretary |
| Amit Chatterjee | Joint Secretary |
| Rohit Dalmia | Joint Secretary |
| Rita Devnani | Joint Secretary |
| Abdul Mohammed | Joint Secretary |
| Manga Rao | Joint Secretary |
| Manoj Sutaria | Joint Secretary |
| Chandra Heeralal | Youth Group Advisor |

IAI Fine Arts Committee:

| Name |
|---------------------------------|
| Arvind Thakkar - Director |
| Kalpna Merchant - Secretary |
| Kshama Ranade - Treasurer |
| Chetan Shukla – Joint Secretary |

IAI Youth Group:

Tarun Gangwani, Reshma Kalimi, Raghava Kamlesh,
Ketki Tamhankar and Gauri Wagle

Kathak Dancers Captivate Audience.

By Kshama Ranade

Kathak Gunjan - an event billed as “a journey of Dance, Rhythm and Melody” lived up to its promise ... and more. Kaveri Agashe and Manasi Tapikar, dancers amongst a team of five artists, enthralled the Indianapolis audience on Saturday, Oct 1, 2005, with their skill and grace.

After opening the concert with a “Vandana”, invocation to goddess Saraswati, the duo went on to demonstrate intricate footwork – Nritta - in slow and fast tempos. Their rendition of the traditional Thumari - a love lyric revolving around the pranks Krishna plays with his beloved Gopis – was unique in the maturity with which these young ladies conveyed intricate emotions. On a lighter note, the joy of colors expressed in the Hori sequence was simply exhilarating. A fusion number incorporating Kathak dance with Jazz music gave a fresh, contemporary flair to this centuries old dance form.

Ramdas Palsule displayed his well-known mastery of the tabla. In a sawal-jawab rendition, Ramdas met Kaveri and Manasi's challenge – step for step. Shekhar Kumbhojkar took the audience on a meditative journey with two expertly sung bhajans. The quiet but soulful accompaniment of Subhash Dasakkar on the sitar had us clamoring for a sitar solo - which has been promised to us on their next visit to the city.

The relative youth of the team belied years of hard work and dedication to their craft. It was indeed heartening to see the young generation carrying forward the torch of their illustrious gurus with so much passion and élan.

The audience was effusive in its praise of the performance. Many expressed a desire to see more such quality programs in Indianapolis.

We in the Fine Arts Committee, a non-profit organization, appreciate the generosity of sponsors who made this event possible. Your continuing support will allow us to do our best to fulfill our mission - To make Indianapolis a major center for classical performing arts from India. To this end, we look forward to getting your suggestions and ideas on what you would like to see and experience in the areas of music and dance. Please do email or phone to any of the Committee members.

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Chetan Shukla 876-5197 chetanshukla@hotmail.com
Abdul Mohammed 258-4678 abdul@ntierservices.com

Three ways of Being

In the previous issue of Bharati, I wrote about consciousness. To explain a little more about consciousness I will write about three ways of Being that will drill home the point on consciousness.

We are SPIRITUAL BEINGS taking on the experience of HUMAN BEINGS. The problem is we forgot about true nature. What is our true nature? Our true nature is SAT, CHIT ANAND.ie applied knowledge, absolute and Bliss. We are limitless. We are made in the image of God. We have unlimited potentials within us. We have to believe in ourselves that we are created for success. We have everything it takes to become successful in life. Let us see how we can start reconnecting with our true nature. There are three ways of dealing with any situation in our day-to-day life.

- **Emotional way** – When we deal with situation through our emotions, it is not a balanced way.eg most of the parents put lot of psychic pressure on children. We motivate them through fear and greed as a result children grow up having poor self image. Today in America, people are facing the biggest problem and that is poor self image. Parents should motivate children through love. There is no fairness and most often it is an animal behaviour. Anger, fear, lust, etc that gets manifested
- **Intelligence-** There is some fairness and orderliness. But people use intelligence to manipulate and dominate weak people. It is not the best way to deal with, because it is the root cause of misery in today's world. It is mental illusion that intelligence alone will take us to the top. It may take us to the top, but then it will also topple us down to the bottom very fast. The world is full of examples of intelligent people, but with weak moral fiber having failed and bringing down big firms along with them.
- **Conscious behavior-** This is the ideal behavior which brings harmony, trust and love in what ever we do. It is not simply being perfect in what we do. We cannot be perfect .Perfectionism brings about frustration and disappointment. It is about being excellent in whatever we do.ie striving for our best in whatever we do. We should attempt to perform to the best of our ability. In that process, we are using intelligence as a tool within the parameters of moral fiber and by being conscious we apply it to our daily life. Being conscious means

Let us be thankful

Ram S. Ravindran

As Indian-Americans, we celebrate the Thanksgiving Day remembering the immigrants who came to this country on the Mayflower. They had suffered a lot the year before. After a bountiful harvest the next year, they thanked God for all their blessings. We too participate in that tradition. We eat all things indigenous to the Americas on Thanksgiving Day. We are grateful for what this country has given us.

As Indian-Americans we need to be thankful for other things as well. As a physically different looking people we can't lose our identity of being Indians no matter how long we live in this country. As individuals we don't have much of identity. Many of us get mistaken for some other Indians. However, we are given a distinct identity through the India Association. It is run by volunteers who keep it going. They serve the organization as board members and members of the executive committee and officers. The India Association hosts 4 or 5 functions every year. We enjoy attending those functions. Let us think about those who make those functions happen. Let us thank those who spend so many hours and expend so much effort in organizing these events. The community service group builds a bridge between us and the larger community around us. The Fine Arts Association showcases the finer aspect of our culture to the world around us. Many volunteers participate in the soup kitchen and at the International Festival. They all give their time and effort. Let us thank them. The advertisers who advertise their products and services in Bharati support the publication of the newsletter. Yes, my dear fellow India Association members, let us be thankful to all these organizations and individuals and remember them on Thanksgiving Day. Send them a note or e-mail and let them know how they impact you.

acting out of spiritual attitude rather than egotistical attitude. It is about putting God first, others second and ourselves last. It is about following the golden rule ie do as you would be done by. In order to act in a conscious way, we need strong will power, unconditional love to self and others, and surrendering to the will of God.

Namaste!
Vetrichelvan Jayaprakasan
www.iamresearchcenter.com

Community Services Page

Sponsored by the **Community Services Group of IAI**

Our Mission

1. To provide community service programs and activities to benefit the Indian community
2. To establish a support system and infrastructure to provide assistance to community members in need
3. To actively engage the Indian community with the local community through increased volunteering activities

Community Services Group Activities

RECENTLY CONCLUDED EVENTS

Wellness Camp at the India Day

(Saturday, August 27, 2005 at Garfield Park)

A wellness booth was organized at the India Day function. Dr. Sudha Shankar, Dr. Ravi Shankar, Dr. Rattan Juneja and Dr. Helmut Steinberg of the Indiana University School of Medicine (Departments of Medicine, Endocrinology, and Pediatrics) volunteered to provide free blood pressure screening, blood sugar monitoring, and general health counseling.

Thanks to all the physicians who volunteered their time and effort to support the wellness booth. Thanks to Ms. Ginger Such from the Indiana Diabetes Center, Clarian Health Partners, and Dr. Mari for supplies/ literature. Thanks to our volunteers Nandita Shankar, Kanchana Ishwar, and Mahesh Subramaniam.

Seniors Club Event # 1

(Sunday, September 25, 3 – 5 pm at ICC)

Nutrition and Indian diet with emphasis on diabetic and heart healthy diet

This event was attended by a small group of 16 participants who braved the rainy weather to take part in this very interesting presentation. Dr. Sarita Bajpai discussed the various food groups, nutritional content in each, calorie count, foods to avoid and specific Indian foods and the composition of a balanced meal. This was an interactive session and the participants had several questions, which made this a very informative and beneficial seminar.

Thanks to Dr. Sarita Bajpai for so graciously volunteering her time and efforts. Thanks also to Dr. Ram Ravindran and Nita Parikshak for their help. As always, without the planning and efforts of the Community Service Group, this would not have been possible.

Financial Planning Seminar

(Saturday, October 8, 2005, 11 am – 1 pm at ICC)

Strategies for Financial Planning AND Personal Investing in the Stock Market

This event was attended by 16 participants. Ms. Sunita Malhotra, a financial planner with Prudential and Mr. Keenan Hauke, an innovative money manager with Samex Capital Partners engaged the audience and offered insights into areas of financial planning and investing in the stock market. The open Q&A session went overtime by popular demand. A survey of the audience showed that the seminar was insightful and informative.

NPR Fall Pledge Drive

(Saturday, October 22, 2005, 8 am – 8 pm at WFYI 90.1FM)

We completed another successful volunteering effort at WFYI 90.1FM, our local NPR radio station. Thirteen volunteers representing IAI answered phones to record pledges during the NPR fall pledge drive.

Thanks to Kanchana Ishwar, Priya Ishwar, Divya Narayanan, Chanda Pandey, Manga Rau, Govardhan Adiraju, Sudha Kalyani, Maya Das, Vijay Gombar, Mahesh Subramaniam, Sukanta Majumdar, and Surekha Gattu for volunteering at this fun event.

The event also provided excellent publicity for IAI as WFYI 90.1FM made several announcements on the air recognizing IAI and our volunteers.

COME, BE A PART OF US

We would like to hear from you if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions to share. We encourage volunteers of all ages. Please contact any of our team members if you would like to serve your community. You can also reach us by email at iai_cs@yahoo.com.

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Editor

I can't help myself but to respond to the article that was published in the July-Aug. issue of Bharati entitled "What's up with Indians and Indian - American?". **Personally I feel there is nothing is wrong with Indians and Indian Americans - neither in the work place nor in how we conduct ourselves at home.**

Positives and negatives in a person or in a community are all relative to others perceiving us. Many a times it is only a perception and not a fact. All human beings succumb to the habit of stereotyping others and take them at the face value with no desire to brake the icing and look deeper.

Why? we too, in our own society, tend to stereotype people from various regions - The Gujaratis, Marathis, Punjabis, Bengalis...etc..

People from every region assume they are next to perfection. Therefore others are bad or not good enough just because their customs, attitude and thinking don't match with theirs. Who is to say what's right and what's wrong? Likewise, people from various countries think the same way about people from some other countries.

Now that I have read the negative comments from our American friends about Indians from the published article and positive comments from Arun Kumar's article, let me throw a monkey wrench and let me present what, I (perhaps we all Indians), think of Americans at work place:

1. They do not even attempt to pronounce our names right. An Indian friend of mine named Madhusudan told his American boss (who insisted on calling him Mat), that sure you can call me Mat if you let me call you Babulal.

2. We do not talk too fast. Every foreign language when listened to, appears to sound faster because it is incomprehensible to our brains. The Chinese, the Russians, the Spanish., all seem to sound faster to me. By the way Americans from Kentucky talk fast too.

3. I do not know about some specific fields but, in the common work place, Americans definitely discriminate against the minorities when it comes to promotions and treating others the same way, as they expect themselves to be treated.

4. Americans waste their time in talking about football and other ball games as soon as they report to work. They waste

their first hour in these talks and eating doughnuts and drinking coffee.

5. I have noticed that in a crowd, Americans are the one who don't tend to have eye to eye contact with us but they seem to do so at one-to-one level.

6. Some Americans have a sense of hypocrisy and they thrust greatness upon themselves

7. Their sense of mingling is going to the bar after work or a ball game. Lots of them are divorced and have no family life and their values of mingling is different from ours'. We invite people to our house for dinners. Do they?

8. If they can heat up a dead animal or a fish in the micro wave oven, there is nothing wrong in heating up Idli - sambhar. Ummmm smells so good !

9. Lots of software programmers smoke due to the stress they go through. This trait does not necessarily apply to all Indians.

10. If 10 Americans went to Germany on work assignment, do we expect them to "not to hang out together" or speak in German with each other? So how can we be different?

Enough said and expressed, some day we all have to learn to seek the best from other cultures and keep our minds open. It just does not apply to Indians but it does to Americans as well. **We should not allow ourselves to be intimidated or put down just because we are different.**

I am a Gujarati and my wife Sudha is from Mysore. Some of my friends used to wonder how we would you get along ? They told me, I am Dhokla and she is Dosa, I am Bhel puri and she is Idli sambhar ? Where is the commonality?

And yet we found the commonality. We found the best in both of our cultures.

Working together is a reality and whether we are Indians or Americans, we should just open up our minds, think a little deeper philosophically, respect all individuals for who they are and find common grounds. When that is understood and practiced these petty issues won't come up.

Deepak Goradia

7669 Pinesprings E Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46256

INDIA COMMUNITY CENTER FUND RAISER

SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2005

This elegant event, held at Primo West Banquet Center on Saturday, September 17th, was attended by about 170 guests and well wishers.

Entertainment was provided by Dhiren Buch, Juhi Buch and Ranjani Datar who mesmerized the audience with their scintillating music numbers. Gregory Hancock Dance Theater once again demonstrated their ability to be a real crowd pleaser. Paromita Bhaumik started off the evening with a classical invocatory Bharatha Natyam dance rendering and energy was in full display with a hand clapping, foot stomping Bhangra number by the young Bhangra dancers. Manjit Trehan was the DJ for the evening and kept the crowd on the dance floor late into the night. The special event for the evening was a Miss IAI 2005 Beauty Pageant. The winner was Bhavi Pandya followed closely by Namrata Thaker, Darshi Bosamia, Fariyah Salman and Vasuma Yarlalagadda. Great job ladies! Not to be outdone, the "Mrs." from the crowd stepped up onstage for a Mrs. IAI contest. Mamta Barmeda took the crown followed closely by ten other equally deserving participants. Winners all!!! Dinner was a delicious assortment catered by Garam Masala Grill, Udupi, India Garden and Kiran Adhlakha.

The event raised \$20,000 before expenses, which will be used for upkeep and major maintenance projects for the ICC. The event would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of every Board Member, contributors, guests, participants, the staff of Primo West, Meghna Patel and Haresh Gangwani as MCs and décor by Treasured Moments.

The following were Sponsors at the \$1,000 level:

Dilip and Pinkey Shah,
Centex Homes, Pulte Homes

The following were Sponsors at the \$250+ level:

Cinergy Foundation, C.P. Morgan Homes, Andrew Dahlem, Purnendu Datta, Drees Homes, Pratap Gohil, Rahul Kapur, Kishor Kulkarni, Subhash Mahajan, Yogen Parikshak, Vijay Patel, Ranjit Puthran, Mr. Raithatha and Vidyasagar Tumuluri.

A listing of all other contributors is provided below. Thank you for your support!

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Hindu Heritage Family Camp organized by Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis

On September 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2005 Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis organized a Hindu Heritage Camp in McCormick Creek Park in Indiana. Around 150 participants, ages 3 to 84, from greater Indianapolis area attended the camp. The theme of this year's camp was "Yoga: The way to discover happiness within and around you."

The participants of the camp were separated into four age groups, having their own specific sessions. The session topics were Raj-Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga. Opening ceremony was performed by Shri Sree Aswath, Vedic Scholar from OH, with Ganesh Puja and Yagna. Everyday in the early morning yoga classes were conducted by Shri Birjoo of Art of Living. Pandit Vijay Shankar Mehta, who came from India, talked in two sessions on Hanuman Chalisa and yoga. During all the sessions children demonstrated their keenness and knowledge about Yoga practices. Devotional Songs (Bhajans) in the evening thrilled all the participants and made them to dance in devotional atmosphere, especially young participants.

In the workshop session, in the guidance of Anita Anil Gupta, all children made small Ganesh idols and decorated them. The workshop ended with Jeopardy. It was impressive to see that many children were deeply aware of their heritage as reflected in Jeopardy session.

The highlight of the camp was Visarjan (farewell) to Bhagwan Ganesh with chants of 'Ganapati bappa Morya'. Idols made by young participants were immersed in creek water inside the camp site. The level of excitement was so high that even grand parents too went down 150 steps to creek waters to bid farewell to Bhagwan Ganesh.

In an overall sense, parents and children alike very well received the camp. Mr. Lahiri, President of the Geeta Mandal endorsed the idea of the camp by spending three days in participating different activities. Nupur, 16, stated that "From the bottom of my heart I say that I enjoyed that camp and this was one the best camps I attended. It was like a big family, so much to learn." Shivani, 12, said, "I learned how Yoga helps control mind. I will continue the same type of camp when I grow-up. Thanks to elders who organized this camp." Ayush, 13, said "We learned four types of yoga Raj, Bhakti, Gyan and Karma. We have learned a lot about our culture and heritage."

On behalf of Geeta Mandal I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped in this big event. I would like to thank Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh and Art of Living for their help in organizing this camp.

Kumar Dave

Balgokulam Diwali: On October 23 in Balgokulam we celebrated Diwali. There were about 30 kids. We did Diwali puja. All the children participated in the puja. After the prasad we did fireworks in the parking lot.

Temple Construction Nears Completion

The countdown to the Temple's Inauguration Day has begun. Since our SummerFest celebration, fueled by your support and inspired by your prayers, all the elements for our Temple opening have come quickly into place.

Construction of the main hall is almost complete. This spacious area contains a large worship hall, kitchen, classrooms, and other facilities. Please visit our Web site at htci.org to see some recent photographs of our progress.

With their new home almost ready, the vigrahas of Sri Ganesa, Sri Durga, Sri Narayana, and Sri Somaskanda have arrived in Indianapolis. These vigrahas and the RadhaKrishna now enshrined at the India Community Center will soon be formally installed with ceremony and celebration in our Temple. We are currently finalizing an auspicious date for the Inauguration ceremony. Please watch your E-mail for further information.

HTCI is also happy to announce that Sri Sandip Sastriji has accepted our offer to become our Temple's priest. Sastriji is a Sanskrit scholar who studied at the Veda Pathasala in Pune and was sent by His Holiness Kanchi Kamakoti Shankaracharya to Varanasi for advanced studies in the Vedas and Upanishads. He is fluent in many languages and has performed a wide variety of pujas and yajnas in India and in the United States. He has also taught courses of religious instruction and Vedic study for children and adults. If you would like to invite Sastriji to perform services, these must be scheduled through S. Chandrasekhar (317-849-0753) or Rama Belagaje (317-815-5524). For details regarding a specific puja or other services, the priest may be contacted at 317-891-9497.

Your prayers and support have brought us this far. Now, it is time for action! The completion of the first phase of construction is only a beginning – we urge you all to contribute generously and help us move quickly to the second phase of construction.

- To all those who have pledged, we ask that you fulfill your pledge as soon as possible. We are counting on these funds to maintain the Temple and to offer services.
- To those of you who have been waiting for the right time – your moment has come! Our Temple is no longer just a good idea or a beautiful dream – it is a reality. In the next few weeks, it will become your spiritual home. For you and your children, the Temple will soon become a place to learn, to grow, and to find peace. Please take a moment today to visit our Web site at htci.org and complete the membership and sponsorship forms.

We will soon be sending out information about the Inauguration Ceremony. This will mark the beginning of regular services in our Temple. We invite you all to be a part of this auspicious moment in the history of our community.

Sharing and passing on customs and traditions

We all came to this country seeking a better life for us and our children. A few generations ago, the immigrants who came to this country arrived here because things in their countries were terrible. However, in our case we could have lived in India and had a decent life. We chose to come to this country. Those of us, who have been in this country for at least about 20 years, now realize the effects of our migration on our lives and our centuries-old values and traditions. Our children who have not had the experience of living in India for a long time can not appreciate some of the values, customs, and traditions that are dear to our heart. These things give us sense of self. We certainly like to connect with the next generation through them. We can teach them and provide them the reading material to know about them but they will not simply get to the inner soul of them. Values, customs, traditions have to be “pickled” over a period of time-meaning they have to be passed on in an environment where everyone else does the same year in and year out. So I really can’t blame our kids for not being as enthusiastic as we are about certain things that are dear to our hearts. Yes, it is easy to understand but so hard to let go.

India has been a single political entity for about 58 years now. However, since we don’t migrate (travel and set root) to various parts of India many customs, traditions, festivals, and celebrations remain confined to certain regions and certain groups of people. Unfortunately, the media in India, even today do not encourage or help in the dissemination of the uniqueness of various peoples and parts of India.

Diwali is one holiday celebrated by most of the Hindus, all over India. However, in the customs and traditions there are variations. Even in explaining as to why we celebrate this holiday there are differences. I like to focus on the commonality. As I get older, see India and Indians from afar, and associate with more Indians from different parts of India and religions, I see lot more commonality among Indians than differences. I wish many could share the same perspective.

What do we do around Diwali time? Pray, offer thanks, light diyas, wear new clothes, burst firecrackers, eat good food, visit friends and relatives and have a good time.

In Gujarat, they observe it as a 5-day or even 10 day event

1. Vagbaras. They have special prayers, eat special foods

2. Dhanteras (Lakshmi Puja). On this day they soak gold coins, silver coins, and old coins and family coins in

panchamirtha, and put them in front of Lakshmi and offer prayers and Puja

3. Kali Chaudhas. This day is more like the American Halloween. On this day you offer special pujas and do rituals to get rid of your home of all the bad luck and bad spirits.

4. Diwali. Nothing special. Eat sweets, wear new clothes, burst firecrackers and share them with your relatives.

5. Sal Mubarak. It is the New Year Day. The beginning of the financial and religious calendar with the first day of Karthik month starting the New Year. Children get their blessings from the parents, relatives and friends and get lots of money.

Two days after Diwali is the observation of **Bhai Dooj**. It is almost the reverse of Raksha Bandan. The brother goes to the sister’s house and gets treated with a good dinner. But he still “gets” to shower the sister with gifts.

If you celebrate a function or festival in an unusual way, whatever, religion or linguistic group you may belong to, please send me the information.

Ram S. Ravindran

Aashique

*Yeh dil aashik tumhara
Tumhai yakeen na hoga
Ek din churaloonga
Tum ko tumhee say
Yakeen tumhai tab hoga
Bhool kay akelay na niklana ghar say
Chori chori har baat pay nigah rakhte
Hum say acha koyee aur na hoga
Yen daaway say kahte hum
Doli may sajakay lay jayagay
Iss chand kay tukde ko
Yeh sirf hamara hai
Sub ko sumjha deegay
Abh to maan ja Heeriye
Yeh Raanja aashik tumhara*

By Uma Gupta

Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis celebrated Diwali

“Deepavali” or “Diwali” is one of the greatest Hindu festivals. The word Diwali means “rows of lighted lamps” and the celebration is often referred to as the Festival of Lights. The celebration means as much to Hindus as Christmas does to Christians. Because there are many regions in India, there are many manifestations of the Diwali festival, from worshipping Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, to Kali, the goddess of strength. This day also focuses on abolishing laziness and evil. As the legends say, Diwali commemorates Lord Rama’s return to Ayodhya, defeating the demon-king Ravana. Moreover, Diwali marks the destruction of the tyrannical demon Narakashura by Lord Krishna. Legendary king Bali is also remembered during Diwali. Bali, an ancient Indian king, destroyed the centuries old philosophies of the society. However, in addition to this, he is remembered for being a generous person. Thus, the focus of this day is to see the good in others, including enemies.

Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis celebrated Diwali with family and friends in the spirit of sharing joy with others on Saturday, October 29. Three major highlights of this year’s Diwali function are Puja (religious ceremony), cultural program and children’s projects related to Hindu religion. In fact, the planning and preparation of this function had started two to three months ago during the monthly congregation of this organization by the Executive Committee, and rehearsals of the program were periodically carried out by the participants since then.

For our Diwali day, devotees and the volunteers started coming at the early hour of Saturday to decorate the Radha and Krishna deities (temple) as well as the Hall of the community center. While the wall on one side of the hall was beautifully decorated with posters from the children’s projects of Balgokulam, the wall on other side was artistically covered with religious posters. This had provided a unique opportunity to everyone to express their spiritual thoughts with an artistic touch. By early afternoon, the entire hall wore a festive look with brilliantly-lit walls and various colorful art works. Particularly, the surroundings of deities were brightly decorated with flowers, garlands, streamers and diyas (lamps). The lamp symbolizes knowledge and encourages reflection upon the purpose of each day in the festival. The goal is to remember the purpose throughout the year.

As evening fell, hundreds of people began thronging the temple to offer their prayers to Ishwar. After invocation to lord Ganesha, the puja was performed to goddess Lakshmi by chanting Sanskrit hymns in the presence of a large number of Hindu devotees. This was followed by Arati and Prasad distribution, a common practice after every Hindu puja. Since Diwali represents the triumph of good over evil, it was, therefore, befitting to dedicate the evening cultural function to Lord Krishna who always protects the humanity whenever and wherever there is a decline in spiritual values and noble forces. The cultural program, which consisted of songs, dances, musicals and a short play, started in the evening and lasted for 2 hours. It was done with a great deal of grace, elegance and spontaneity. This wonderful program was a reflection of a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual fabric of Hinduism. This was also evident when one hears the sound bites of different languages, such as Hindi, Gujrati, Bengali, Telegu and others during the ‘meet and greet’ time. Display of cultural diversity was at its best, which is always a cherished goal of the Hindu faith. The program was followed by prize distribution to all participants and delivery of vote of thanks. But then what is Diwali without fire-crackers and that part was taken care of in the previous week. In fact, the Balgokulam kids enjoyed playing with fire-crackers one week earlier in a Sunday morning. Following the enthralling entertainment, Geeta Mandal concluded the Diwali program with a sumptuous Hindu meal and Diwali sweets. The participation of over 90 children in this function in the presence of over 350 people bears a true testimony of dynamic spirit of Hindu community in Indianapolis.

Finally, the volunteerism by so many people with their generosity, loving spirit, and positive attitude has made this event successful. Geeta Mandal is proud to be host of such a colorful program, which reflects the true value of Sanatam Dharma of shraddha (respect), bhakti (devotion) and karmayoga (noble action). Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis extends Diwali greetings to everyone and on that positive note we all await the next year’s Diwali function.

Debomoy K Lahiri,
President,
Executive Committee of the Geeta Mandal of Indianapolis

The Best Things in Life are Free

1. Taking a drive, or a pretty day.
2. Laughing so hard your face hurts.
3. Lying in bed and listening to the rain outside.
4. Hearing your favorite song on the radio.
5. A special glance!
6. Midnight phone call that lasts for hours.
7. Laughing for absolutely no reason at all.
8. Having someone tell you that you are good looking.
9. Friends.
10. Falling in love for the first time (Pehla Nasha!)
11. Waking up and realizing that you still have a few more hours left to sleep.
12. Making new friends or spending time with old ones.
13. Giggling.
14. Late night talks with your roommates that keep you from sleeping.
15. Having someone play with your hair.
16. Sweet dreams.
17. Holding hands with someone you care about.
18. Running into an old friend and realizing that someone (good or bad) never change.
19. Hugging the person you love.
20. Watching the expression on someone’s face as they open a present for you.
21. Watching the sunrise.
22. Getting out of bed every morning and thanking God for another ‘Beautiful Day’.

Submitted by Dr. Mohini Ahuja

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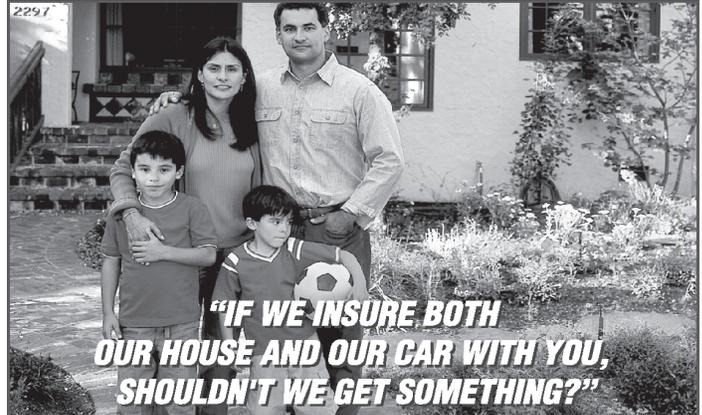


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Diwali Celebration 2005



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