



Samachar

APR - JUN
2015

Official Newsletter of the India Association of Memphis

Editorial – Community Magic

- Maya Nair

As I write this note in mid June, we're enjoying comfortable mornings. One cannot really complain about the cloudy skies. But temperatures are rapidly beginning their inevitable climb to the 100s and add to that our low humidity...ugh....it's summer time! But that doesn't stop IAM from planning wonderful events and opportunities in serving the community.

We have our very enthusiastic team of youth committee bring to you a week's worth summer camp that will entertain your kids with variety of activities and give you a well deserved break. This also includes board games, outdoor games, and Bollywood workshop. Next month, we will be celebrating Independence day at Longinotti Auditorium which is another great initiative by the Youth Committee. We believe these will equip our youth with skills and qualities needed for leadership and bring in meaningful engagement to promote their participation in community activities.

If you see, we are fixated on the word 'Community'. Our Indian community is like an extended family to us that gives the comfort feeling of being at home and helping celebrate festivals and events. In every city all over the world, people tend to get together, whether for networking, socializing, comfort, leisure or business. Same is true with us too. We all live in different physical location in and around Memphis - be it Germantown, Collierville, Cordova, Bartlett, etc. But what defines us as a community is not its geography but its interdependence. It is something we do together with people we connect with. And therefore every involvement from your side strengthens the foundation of this organization and breathes life into the spirit of IAM. You definitely have the freedom to either stand aside and criticize or join hands to bring a change and promote the act of giving and volunteering, which in turn strengthens social harmony. We grow hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder. Whatever your definition of community may be, I hope this issue gives you something to think about. Think about joining us whenever you can and helping in whatever small or big way possible for you. This helps build camaraderie amongst our extended family here in the Memphis area.

Turning to the issue at hand, somehow we've done it again – managed to fill this issue....Yay!! Thanks to all of you who read, contribute and support Samachar. This issue is made doubly special by the participation of youth group who have written for us. We are not that far away from them in age, I would say, just at different stages of life. :) We also take a look at different events that happened in the past few months across the area. These are some events that revitalize our communities.

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Upcoming Events:

- Table Tennis Tournament - Aug 1
- Independence Day Celebration-Aug 15
- MPL Season 2 - Sep 5
- Salim Sulaiman Concert - Sep 19
- India Night - Sep TBD
- India Fest - Nov 7th

(Contd...)

Editorial – Community Magic

...Contd

We are always looking for ideas that can inspire our readers. Sometimes, people assume we know about every event happening. We find it flattering but it is not necessarily true. We count on you to send us information and share about the events happening in your network. If you have been to an event that you think would be interesting to other readers, please send us a brief summary with some pictures. And as always, we'd like you to tell us what you think about this issue.

That just about covers the quarter from our side, but there's going to be a lot of buzz all through the year, so make sure you don't miss out. Enjoy the summer, and safe travels !

SWASTIKA: A Much Revered and Maligned Symbol

Asan G. Tejwani

Swastika's antiquity is traced back to over 3,000 years, predating the ancient Egyptian symbol, the 'Ankh'. While Swastika is much revered among Hindus, Buddhist, Jains and host of ancient cultures, it also evokes a legacy of atrocities and pogrom committed during the Nazi era, when Hitler subverted it.

The word 'Swastika' comes from Sanskrit – "su" meaning good, "asti" meaning to be and "ka" as a suffix. The image of 'Swastika' was used by many cultures around the world, including but not limited to China, Japan, India, Southern Europe and by middle ages the symbol was well known but called by different names. Ancient city of Troy shows ubiquitous 'Swastika' symbols. In Nessebar, Bulgaria I have seen the swastika symbols as border (tessellation) on church walls.

American Indians, ancient Byzantine buildings, Buddhist inscriptions including on Buddha's chest, Celtic monuments, Greek coins, etc. all displayed this symbol of good luck and sacred connotations. A more modern interpretation is Swastika as combination of 4- 'Ls', standing for- love, Life, Luck and Light. Swastika is not the only symbol whose original godly auspicious significance was subverted for evil purposes. Under the Christian Cross, brutal crusades to convert masses to Christianity took place. During Medieval Inquisitions millions of heretics were burned in fire. In USA black Americans were persecuted and killed by Ku Klux Klan. Yet, the Cross has not become forever detested and condemned symbol.

Swastika around the world: In International Automobile Museum in Reno, Nev. One can see 1920s –era cars with 'Swastika' on the radiators. A white 'Swastika' on a black field was the flag of Boy Scout Troops in Britain and worldwide. During WW I, it was a symbol of British National War Savings Committee. Finnish Air Force has Swastika as its symbol. Theosophical Society of New York incorporated Swastika into its seal. Swastika is the name of a small community in Ontario, Canada. The 45th Infantry of the US Army used Swastika as a unit symbol till 1930. The use of Swastika by the indigenous Bon faith of Tibet, syncretic religions such as Cao Dai of Vietnam and Falun Gong of China perhaps originated from Buddhism.

The San Diego's naval base barracks laid out in patterns like Swastika, built in 1960s, went unnoticed till Google aerial maps. Navy agreed to change the landscape and roof top camouflage after Anti-Defamation League objected.

On the side is the picture of 1930 Greeting Card bearing Swastika and a horse shoe for 'Good Luck'



EMPOWER IMPRESS

FedEx is proud to recognize the achievements and accomplishments of the India Association of Memphis. We applaud and admire how they're strengthening their community with a job well done.

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MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL - SELF DEFENSE WORKSHOP

-Maya Nair

It was something you hadn't thought of - It was not flowers, it was not a card, it was not a jewelry. It was safety right to your ally. IAM celebrated Mother's day in a special way by hosting a self-defense workshop. Moms are typically consumed with making sure that everyone else's needs are attended to. This was a chance to gift her with an effective addition to her arsenal. This workshop was open to the whole family in case she had gotten nervous to take the class alone.

The session was conducted by Marshall Porter from Karate at Collierville. We had a decent participation with moms and teens who were enthusiastic to learn the tricks and drill of self defense. The session focused on ways to neutralize the most common attacks, and how to put an aggressor in a choke-hold or move out of a situation where you are pinned down by an assailant. It was not only a great workout, but a lot of fun, and super empowering for the whole family.



COMMUNITY NEWS

UGADI VEDUKALU

Telugu Association of Memphis (TAM) celebrated Ugadi on Saturday April 11, 2015 at Southwind High School, Memphis.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Special General Body Meeting that was scheduled for June 20th 2015 was cancelled due to lack of nomination for the open Trustee Positions.



IAM Youth Committee
Presents

Summer Camp 2015

Where? 8727 Thor Rd. Memphis, TN

When? July 7-10
9AM - 1PM

Who? Ages 5-10

Cost? \$80 per child
\$20 late registration fee

Activities? Bollywood dancing,
sports, arts and crafts

For the information packet, please contact:

youthcommitteeiam@gmail.com

Swathi Prasad: 901-721-3632

Kavya Jawabnavis: 901-351-8336

Registration deadline: July 3rd

COMMUNITY NEWS

BAISAKHI

Midsouth Punjabi Heritage Foundation celebrated Baisakhi on Saturday April 11, 2015 at Hampton Inn & Suites, Millington, TN. Here are some glimpses from the event.



CHITHIRAI GALATTA

Mid-South Tamil Sangam (MSTS) celebrated Chithirai Galatta on Saturday May 9th, 2015 at Harell Performing Arts Theatre in Collierville.



NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUNDRAISER

By Rajesh and Priyanka Dudani

Thousands of people lost their lives and thousands more were injured with billions of dollars of damage in the recent 7.8 magnitude earthquake that shook Nepal on the 25th of April, 2015.

Nepales residing in Memphis in collaboration with AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) - Mid South organized a Nepal Earthquake Relief Fundraiser on the 19th of June, 2015 at the Esplanade. The event was held to support the massive rebuilding efforts that are ongoing in this beautiful picturesque country with spectacular landscape and diverse, exotic cultures

The event was very well received by all factions of the Memphian community who gathered together for a musical evening that was performed by our local professional singers the TAAL group along with Nepali folk dance. We were able to raise \$45,000 at the event with another \$10,000 in pledges.

All the money was donated to the Rotary international who have been actively involved in the restructuring at the grass root level and would be using this contribution towards building of new schools in Nepal.

This gesture by the community of Memphis clearly shows their solidarity with the people of Nepal who suffered immeasurable losses and it also represents their commitment towards a united goal of peace and humanity for all Mankind.

Three cheers to the spirit of Memphis!!!!



YOUTH COLUMN

Editor's Note: This issue, we have introduced 'Youth Column' to provide our youth with an opportunity to express their voice in the community and encourage them to share their stories, art and more. Youth are our future but they are our present as well. From the submissions so far, I'm confident that all they need to do at this point to be excellent storytellers, reporters, authors, is simply to keep at it. I am hoping to see more contributions for this column in the coming issues.

CHILDREN'S MUSUEM OF ART

- Vishwesh Ravva

The IAM Youth Committee recently had the opportunity to volunteer at a children's summer camp at the Memphis Children's Museum of Arts. The theme of the day was India, so our responsibility was to teach the kids about India, from the history to the culture. After introducing ourselves to the kids, we showed them a small presentation about India, teaching things such as our national sport and animal. Afterwards, we passed out little comic books to the kids, with illustrated Indian fable stories inside. Being able to sit down with the kids and laugh as they made their own inferences from the stories brought smiles to all of our faces. After we put up the books, we showed them authentic clothing from India, such as ghagras for the girls and sherwanis for the boys. Along with the bindis and bangles passed out, we all got to see some very colorful outfits that the kids were absolutely ecstatic to wear and take photos in. After eating a brief snack and setting up the carom board, we explained the rules of carom to them. Everyone had a blast watching the kids quickly divide into teams and start playing with each other, trying to score the most points. Thankfully we had one more activity to share, a sport that India is very well known for: Cricket.

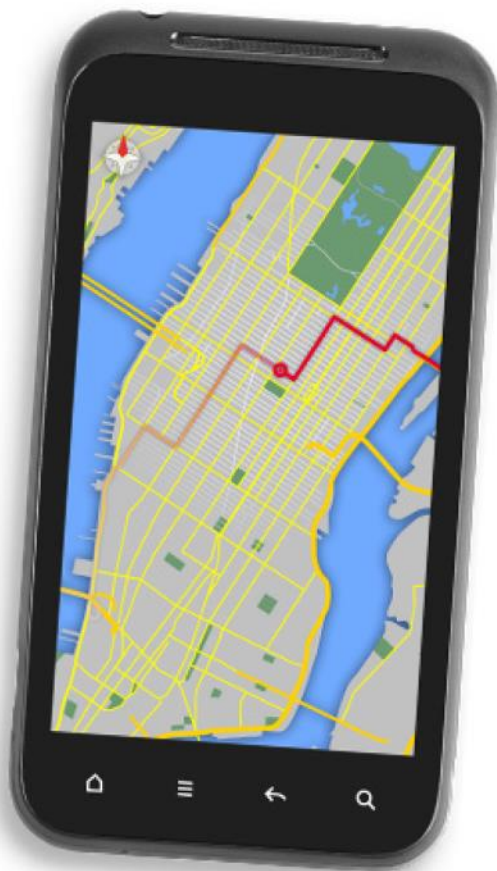


After the kids lined up eagerly and we all went outside to a field behind the museum, we set up little wickets, thanks to a children's cricket set that the museum loaned, and let the kids take turns batting and bowling. After letting them tire themselves out in the hot sun, we all sat in the grass with the kids and let them have their own play time. After marching back into the museum, we unfortunately had to start wrapping up, but not before we could show them the last part of our presentation which were old Bollywood dances performed at Indian events such as India Fest. All the kids enjoyed picking out the individual dancers and begged for a live performance. As we began packing up and hugging the kids bye, all of us felt that we had lots of fun, and that every child that left that day learned just a bit more about India and all of her culture.



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YOUTH COLUMN

MY VISIT TO RED FORT IN INDIA

- Anjali Sindhuvali

On my last visit to India, my family and I journeyed to Rajasthan, to see the Red Fort. This fort was King Akbar's main fortress, built high up on the top of a mountain to ward off various invaders, enemies, and threats. The weather is always extremely hot in Rajasthan, so we awoke when it was still dark outside, and the smell of pani puri lingered in the streets. A driver drove us quickly out to the site of the Red Fort, which was about two hours away from where we were staying. We arrived at the crack of dawn, watching the red streaks of light filter their way through the cotton candy pink sky. Getting out of our van, we wore light-colored shoes so they wouldn't soak up the sunlight and burn our feet.



The fort was aptly named for its reddish-orange color, which appeared brighter as the sun rose higher and higher. The Red Fort's numerous steps left us out of breath, but we finally reached the top, and of course, snapped a typical tourist photo. We left our bags at the entrance and continued inside. Inside the fort, a courtyard with marble carvings was surrounded by many rooms. From the outside, they looked like honeycombs because of the holes in their walls. On the edges, strings symbolizing good luck and religious faith were tied by visitors, creating a wall of yellow, orange and red around the courtyard.

As breathtaking as it was, I couldn't bring myself to take pictures of everything I saw. Continuing on to the upper levels of the fort, steep stairways and ramps led us to the peak of the mountain. In each of the four corners, stood a small lookout area, where men would look for enemies on the horizon in ancient times. The space was only small enough for one person, and the view was breathtaking, encompassing the mountaintop and the steep hills and valleys below. Mirrors were situated along corridors to help reflect light and give the illusion of a bigger area.

Discovering hidden areas and learning about the historical importance of the place transported me back in time to ancient India, and I thought of what life must have been like for King Akbar and his supporters in this fort. Standing at the northeast lookout point, I cast my eyes upon the vast valley below and transported myself to another time, grateful for the glimpse into history.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Spiritual Foundation presented 2015 "LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD" to Dr. Prasad S. Duggirala on May 2nd at ICCT Memphis Temple. Our hearty congratulations to Dr. Duggirala on receiving this award !



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UTHARA - Best play back singer for 2015

C. P. Chandradas

UTHARA, the daughter of the famous Carnatic vocalist P. Unnikrishnan and Bharathanatyam Dancer Prithi Unnikrishnan of Chennai was selected by the Indian film industry for the coveted best female play back singer award, for the current year. She also received a cash prize of Rs.50,000 at a glittering function at Delhi. This is the first time that a person is getting national recognition at this tender age.

The recipient of the award is the disciple of Sudha rajah of Madras. She is now a fifth standard student in the Tamilnadu's capital. Her elder brother, is very good on Piano. UTHARA is keen to study western music as well in future.



She got the prize for her first recorded song, for the Tamil picture Saivam directed by A L Vijay the song AZHAGU was penned by Na Muthukumar, who was also given the top award for his lyrics. The song describes a child view of the beauty around her.

There are moments in our lives, when the Goddess of Fortune appears at our doorsteps to give a spectacular lift to us in life. It is said that music is a gift from the Almighty. The gifted person's ascent in life is also ordained by God. And in this child singer's case, the Goddess was completely on her side.

Orthodox Hindu families in South India arrange the Bommai kolu during the Navarathri season. The women in the family invite women and children in other families to inspect the kolu on a specified day. The guests will be received with all respect, food served and gifts given to all the visitors for divine grace.

Priya Unnikrishnan, the mother of the young UTHARA was invited by Saindavi, a talented singer in the Madras scene. UTHARA went for this function with her mother in the Dasara season of 2013. She started her music lessons when she was six years old and she sang some bhajans with all devotion and innocence, at this religious meet and that paved the path, for her success in life later.

G V Prakash Kumar the husband of Saindavi was deeply impressed by Uthara's performance. He was the music composer for the Tamil Movie Saivam. He asked Uthara to sing a song for his movie and that was recorded.


Young Uthara is now in the company Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Kishore Kumar, Dr. Yesudas and her own father P.Unnikrishnan in the film world. All prayers for her to reach Himalayan heights.

Author: C.P.Chandradas can be reached at cpcdas@gmail.com

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Kitchen Couture

CHICKEN SAMOSAS

A popular snack that goes very well with a hot cup of chai or serve as a delicious party appetizer that is a sure crowd pleaser ! Crunchy on the outside and savory-spicy on the inside.

Makes about 8-10

Ingredients :

1 boneless skinless chicken breast
 1 finely diced red onion (medium size)
 2 tsp diced ginger
 2 -3 diced green chili - (can adjust according to spice level)
 1 tsp diced cilantro
 2 grated Carrots -medium size
 1/2 tsp lemon juice
 Salt
 Oil- 1 tbsp plus for frying
 Egg roll wrapper - store bought

Method :

Directions to make the filling:

Cut chicken into large cubes, wash thoroughly and drain. Add salt and cook on stovetop until fully cooked. Allow it to cool down. Shred the chicken into fine pieces (I put the chicken cubes into a chopper and give it a couple of quick pulses).

In another sauté pan add 1 tbsp oil and heat. Add the diced onion and let it sauté for a couple of minutes. Add the ginger and green chillies. Within a minute add the grated carrot and the shredded chicken. Cook on high heat for 3-4 mins. Add salt, cilantro and lemon juice. Turn off heat and let it cool.

Directions to make the samosa shape :

Take one sheet of egg roll wrapper and cut into half. Place one half on a plate horizontally. Take the top right corner and fold it down to the middle of the bottom side. Take the top left corner and fold over to opposite side to form a triangle shape, making sure that the sides overlap. Stick the edges together by applying a little water with your fingertip.

Fill the samosa with about a 1 tablespoon of filling. Seal the open edges down with water. Make sure the 3 corners of the triangle have no openings in them. This will prevent oil seeping inside while frying. Place oil in a deep fryer and heat. Add the samosa and fry till golden brown. Eat as is or with ketchup.

Bon appetite!!

Recipe contributed by Susan John. She can be reached at sue_john@hotmail.com



INDIA FEST 2015 - "WEDDINGS OF INDIA"

- Maya Nair

We are all eagerly awaiting the 2015 India Fest. This year's annual highlight, the 13th India Fest celebration will take place on Nov 7th, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday at the Agricenter International. This fest has become one of the premier events of Memphis, with each year attracting over 10,000 people .



As the name suggests, India fest provides a festive atmosphere that brings people together. We have guests from all over the world who enjoy learning the diversity of India. It is also a great learning for our children who get to experience other regional cultures and automatically learn to give respect to all and have an understanding of their religion, food, dress, language, etc.

The theme for this year is "**Weddings of India**". Rich in traditions and customs, an Indian wedding is a magnificent ceremony. The regional, religious,

cultural and traditional diversity calls in for grand variety that can be shared with the Memphian community in an enjoyable and spirited atmosphere. Our deep heritage and culture will be displayed at the forefront of the fest.

Are you wondering "What can I do at India Fest?". Believe us, there's a lot ! A more than dozen events will grab your curiosity about India and provide an unforgettable experience. Visitors will be able to immerse themselves in many facets of Indian society through different booths that will be spread throughout the arena, each focusing on a certain aspect of Indian culture. Some offer traditional Indian cuisines, popular Street foods called Chats, Colorful Indian Clothing, Jewelry, Henna art, Dances, Bollywood workshops and much more. Even as an Indian, you may still find it interesting learning about other regional cultures. There is something for everyone to explore and enjoy. Consider this to be a mini vacation to India, only difference being this India is in your backyard. And the best part is this trip will be extra sweet on your bank accounts too.

We have a great community with diversely talented members. And this is a time when they get together and bring different aspects of Indian life and art together to life. The fest has always relied on the power of volunteer efforts....whether it is posting flyers and posters across the city or immense planning behind the scenes or helping with execution on the days of the festival itself, the heart and soul of the fest are the volunteers who make it happen. Volunteering also means meeting incredible, new people while helping to make one of Memphis's most astonishing Indian event a reality. Every year presents new and exciting challenges as we set out to organize and promote our events.

Let us all come together, roll up our sleeves and put on a good show for the community of Memphis. Join us and be a part of something that brings us together. If you are interested in helping in any small way, please send a note to iam.committee@gmail.com or any of the IAM Committee Members (contact details on the website) and we will call you to discuss where you would like to contribute.

Mostly lets get together to celebrate life at India Fest and celebrate the Weddings of India !

2015 IAM Event Calendar

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
			
IAM Summer Camp by YC	Jul 7-10	9:00 - 1:00 pm	Thor Rd, Cordova
Independence Day Celebrations - by Youth committee	Aug 15	TBD	Longinotti Auditorium
Youth Picnic	TBD		
Table Tennis Tournament	Aug 1	TBD	
Salim Sulaiman Concert	Sep 19	7 pm	Landers Center
India Night (India Unlimited)	Sep	TBD	White Station Auditorium
Memphis Premier League (MPL) Season 2	Sep 5	TBD	Bartlett & Hickory Hill
India Fest	Nov 7	10:00- 7:00 pm	Agricenter International
General Body Meeting	Dec TBD	1:00 - 4:00 pm	Cordova Community Center
			

We will duly communicate detailed information regarding every event on IAM website, Facebook page and will also be emailed to all a few weeks before the actual date of the event .



Become an IAM Member Today!

When you become a member, you support all events and activities that IAM organizes and at the same time gain a better perspective of our community as an individual or as a family, and simultaneously help the community to remain connected and united. IAM provides many opportunities for social, networking, community and cultural development, express their talents and expose them to Indian culture. You can become a member at <http://iamemphis.org>

There are numerous round the year events for Indian community to stay in touch with the Indian Culture:

- **INDIA REPUBLIC DAY**
- **HOLI**
- **INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- **INDIA NIGHT/ DIWALI SPECIAL**
- **INDIA FEST**
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INTERNATIONAL PAPER

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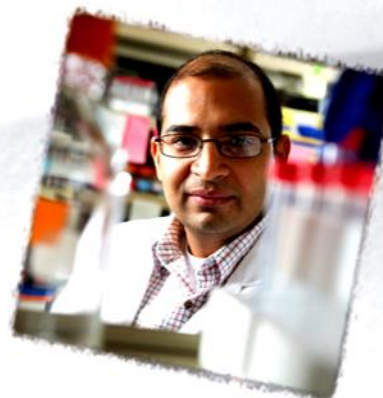
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