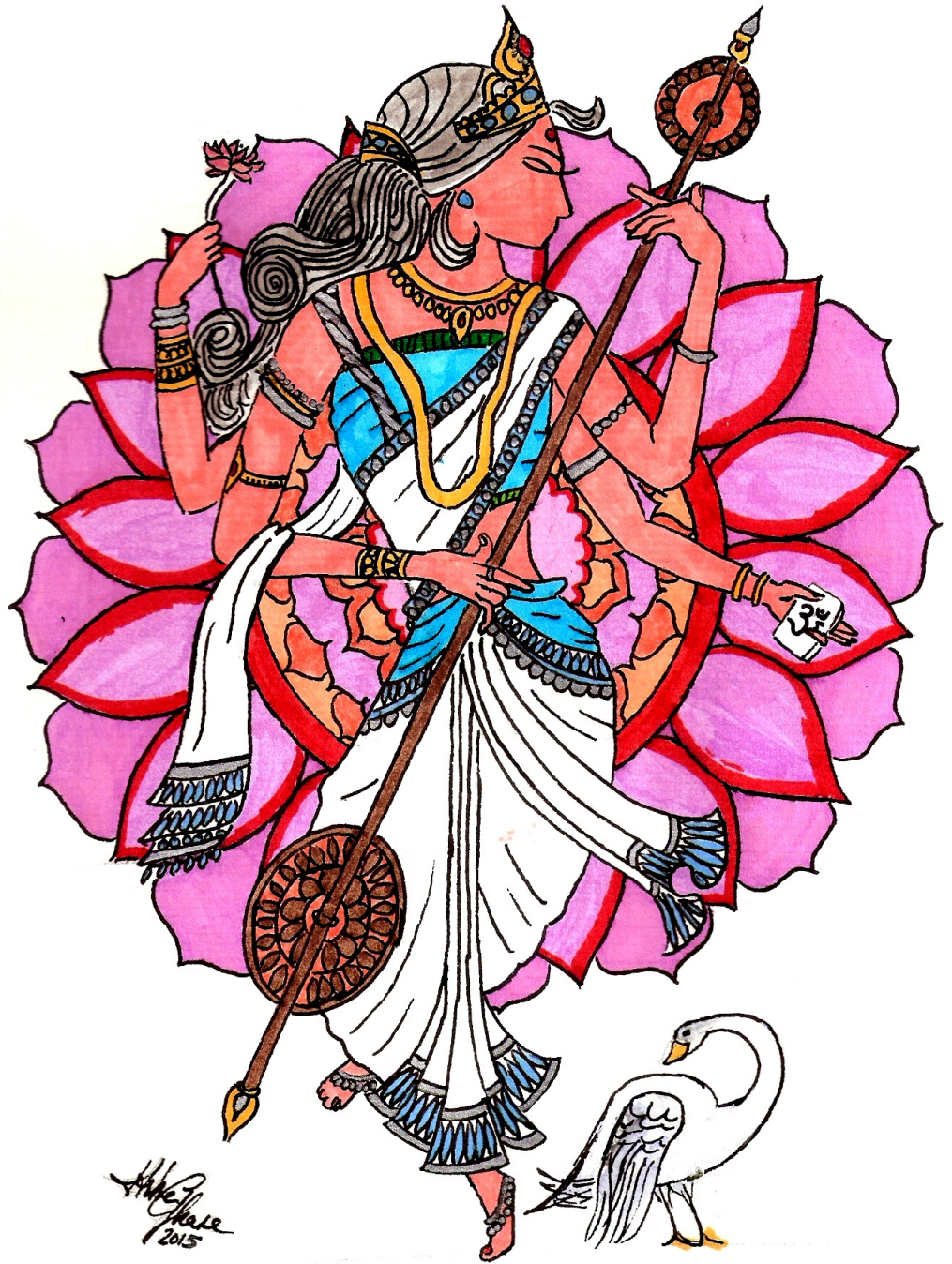


SARASWATI PUJA 2015




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Bridgewater, New Jersey*



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Vol. 7 - Annual Magazine

EDITOR
Manjari Chowdhury

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COVER ART

Saraswati - A painting by Bridgewater
artist Arka Ghose

Hello and Welcome to the 2015 Saraswati Puja of the Somerset Bengali Association.

Saraswati Puja is an iconic festival for Bengalis all over the world. Celebrations are held every year on the fifth day of the Indian month Magh, the first day of spring, to worship Ma Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, music, art and culture.

Somerset Bengali Association is proud to host this year's Saraswati puja. The purpose of our organization is to arrange cultural and educational events in New Jersey that can provide a platform for the community to remain connected with our roots. We have worked hard to make this past year a meaningful one for all our members. Our annual Picnic in the Summer took our young (and younger) members outdoors with sumptuous food and games. Diwali celebrations in the Fall, brought members indoors for a fun festival of dance and music.

On the occasion of Saraswati puja, many of our young members will write their first letters with a traditional "hathe khori" ceremony. Our participants, directors, choreographers and committee coordinators have worked tirelessly to bring you a wonderfully diverse entertainment program and we thank them for all of their efforts. Whether it's the melodious bouquet of songs in Nabojagoron or voices of our young children in Ja Devi, lilting beats of rhythmic Bangla dances in Kaleidoscope, the artful ensemble of band music in Innocence, you will hear tunes and melodies that are sure to fill your hearts with joy. Add to that, a divine medley in Dancing For The God's, the evening's program is chock full of entertaining presentations.

We extend a warm welcome to our professional artists, Abhijit and Shweta. We thank our members, grand patrons, sponsors and retail partners for their generous support in making this event a great success.

We hope you enjoy this magical evening with your family and friends, savoring the delightful delicacies and enjoying the wonderful arrangement of music and dance. We look forward to seeing you at all our future events and becoming an active member of our organization. Please visit our website and FaceBook page for event updates and to become a member.

Thank you for joining us today and for making this event a special one for all of us.

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Kallol Ghosh Mausumi Majumdar
Sanchoy Das Sharmila Ghosh
Soma Choudhury

সমসেট বেঙ্গালি অসোসিয়েশন

Saraswati Puja - February 2015

Officiating Priest: Arijit Chatterjee

Event Managers: Soma Choudhury & Probir Dhara

Puja Arrangements: Suparna Das, Mausumi Majumdar, Teesta Roy, Sangeeta Bhattacharya

Cultural Committee: Parna Kundu, Chandreyee Roy, Mitushi Banerjee

Food Committee: Sanchoy Das, Kallol Ghosh, Soumyadeb Chaudhuri

Fund Raising & Finance: Joyjit Kundu, Sanchoy Das

Guest Relations & Registration: Somesh Choudhury, Kallol Ghosh, Saurav Ghosh

Magazine: Manjari Chowdhury, Sanchoy Das, Prasun Chowdhury

Facilities Management: Anisur Khan, Dibyendu Chatterjee, Sumit Sen, Chanchal Banerjee, Debesh Chakraborty, Rajiv Mukherjee, Subrata Roy, Arkendu Chatterjee, Indrajit Ghosh

Diwali Party - November 2014

Event Managers: Anasua Sanyal, Sharmila Ghosh & Mitushi Banerjee

Thanks to the many volunteers who made these events a success

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SBA thanks the following for their generous sponsorship of the 2015 Saraswati Puja

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India: My Heritage – Diya Paul

India is one of the world's oldest civilizations. That's what makes my heritage so rich with culture, customs, arts, literature, and many other things. Starting with the different religions India follows, which are: Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrian, and Judaism. The Indus Valley civilization, India's earliest known civilization (2500-1700 BC), is known by its interesting culture as well as its artifacts. The strength and basis of Hinduism is virtue to the Vedic culture (about 1500 years ago), as well as the origin of the caste system(system of social stratification).

India has had many different influences throughout its history due to the migration, invasion, or expansion of other nations. India was a wealthy country, economically, and culturally up until the British colonization. Europeans would trade with India for spices or cotton textiles, but when the British colonized, the country's economy declined. This was due in part to abuse and destruction of India's industries and wealth.

India would be granted its independence again in 1947(after which a slow progression has been seen in its development). Present-day India has made significant headway in large-scale industrialization. As a result, India has become one of the top five industrialized nations in the world. It produces every conceivable industrial item and consumers' goods. India has achieved significant success in frontier scientific research including peaceful application of nuclear energy, space and satellite research, and communication tech and biotech. India also has the third biggest reservoir of scientific and technological manpower. Pioneering scientists such as Nobel laureate C. V. Raman (discovered when light traverses a transparent material, some of the deflected light changes in wavelength), Homi Bhaba (set up the first nuclear power plant), and J.C.Bose (discovered that plants have life and radio and microwave optics) have won laurels for India both at home and abroad the country.

Historically, India is an ancient land with a continuous civilization of 5000 years. The Indus valley civilization (3000 BC to 1500 BC) was followed by the Sanskrit-speaking Vedic period (1500 BC to 500 BC). The first of the Indian empires: the Mauryan empire began shortly after Chandragupta Maurya (274-237 BC). The post-Asoka empires were followed by empires of the Gupta, Pratihara, Pala, Chalukya, Chola, and Pandya dynasties. Afterwards, around the 9th century, the Muslim period was established followed by the arrival of the Europeans, mostly British in the 17th century. On August 15, 1947 India got it's independence back. It adopted a legislative system of government with a union of states proclaiming itself to be a Sovereign Democratic Republic.

India is divided into 29 States and 7 Union Territories. The States have considerable self-government of their own while the Union Territories are governed by the President through appointed administrators. At the village level one finds the system of Panchayati Raj. It is a pattern of autonomy that oversees the planning and execution of projects in district, block and village levels. Adult franchise is universal. India's national flag is a horizontal tri-color of deep saffron at the top, white in the middle, and dark green at the bottom in equal sections. In the center of the white band is a wheel, called Chakra, which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath Lion seal of Asoka. The Chakra has 24 spokes.

24 Spokes of Ashok Chakra



1. Love
2. Courage
3. Patience
4. Peacefulness
5. Magnanimity
6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness
8. Gentleness
9. Selflessness
10. Self-Control
11. Self Sacrifice
12. Truthfulness
13. Righteousness
14. Justice
15. Mercy
16. Gracefulness
17. Humility
18. Empathy
19. Sympathy
20. Spiritual Knowledge
21. Moral Values
22. Spiritual Wisdom
23. The Fear of God
24. The Faith or Trust

A Snorkeling Adventure – Prajit Kundu

The water was a bright blue and I couldn't wait to jump in. I had never gone snorkeling before and I couldn't wait to see how it felt. The boat rocked as I pulled on my snorkeling goggles. For a second I couldn't breathe. But then I remembered to breathe through my mouth, instead of through my nose. It was uncomfortable breathing on the boat, but I figured that it would be easier in the water. My dad told me to wait to take a picture, but I said no. I didn't have enough time for that. And my family hadn't even gotten their gear on yet. I waited in line for my turn to jump of the side of the boat. I could have gone down the stairs, but where's the fun in that? I reached the edge of the boat and kept a hand on my goggles so they wouldn't fall off. And then I leaped off the boat.

I landed in the ocean with bubbles around me, and then I bobbed up to the surface gasping for breath. I put the mouthpiece of the snorkel on my lips and started to breathe. Sure enough, it was easier in the water than it had been on the boat. I looked down and was amazed at what I saw. The captain said that we would be going to a place that was about 20 feet deep. I looked around underwater, slowly kicking. It seemed like there was an infinite forest of coral. Some of the coral looked interesting, others, not so much. Little groups of fish, perhaps some type of snapper, came and swam by. It was usually small ones all alone, though occasionally, the fish would swim in a larger group.

There were quite a lot of people in the water. A few clung to the rope that anchored the boat, though most were inside a little triangle that the crew had roped off. I was just swimming through peacefully, while the adults were thrashing and kicking like they had never been in the water their whole life. It certainly helped that I had practice with snorkels, using them in the summer during swimming practices, while the others were at a disadvantage. But that was their problem. My job was to relax and have fun. My dad joined me later, and I was laughing, and choking because water was getting in my throat. My dad looked so funny trying to snorkel. I tried to give him some tips, but there weren't many. Using a snorkel is something you need to figure out on your own. No one can teach it to you. It's a matter of getting comfortable with the snorkel. My dad probably couldn't hear me anyway.

I have to admit, I was a little worried that a shark would approach us. The waves were choppy and I was bobbing on the waves like a boat in a storm. But thankfully I was a strong swimmer, and I was wearing fins. After a while, I decided to venture out a little further. I saw a new type of coral. It was huge, and it resembled a giant brain. I also saw some new fish. They were blue and looked like Dory from "Finding Nemo." Suddenly, a loud horn blast came from the boat. I heard the captain yelling through a megaphone, signaling the end of our snorkeling period. I was sad that I had to go back, but I suppose all good things must come to an end. Snorkeling was a very fun experience. The water sports activity took about 6 hours, but I think snorkeling was the most fun. I also went parasailing, rode a jet ski with and kayaked with my dad, and played on the giant inflated obstacle courses on the water. I had a lot of fun in Key West, and the weather was much warmer there.

Speech to the Sincere

Arijit Dutta

Being sincere will help in life.
It will make your brain as sharp as a knife.
This does mean studying a lot for many nights
but this will lead to a future that is bright.
You may be known as a nerd,
but it's because you know the definition of every
word.

Sincerity does not run in everyone's blood,
but this only means that their future is mud.
Don't just study for the heck of it,
don't just study for what your parents think,
study because in years to come,
you will thank your past for doing some.

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Did Saraswati Graduate From College? - Ria Giri

Maybe, she could have passed at a young age. Because of her intelligence, she could have become a teacher there at the age of 16. This is probably because she is the goddess of wisdom. The same may have been for her Greek counterpart, Athena.

This brings us to our next story about these wise goddesses in college together. The two may have been the smartest students. In every class, they probably got A+. The two most likely would have been the principal's pet. Athena and Saraswati may have gotten excellent student reports.

They both were probably ambidextrous. Their possible weapon against evil demons may have been boring them to death by making them write a 500,000,000 page essay.



Swapan Kumar - Bagha Chowdhury

স্বপন কুমার বলেছেন সংকলন : বাঘা চৌধুরী

কি হইতে কি হইলো - ড্রাগন এর হাতের অস্ত্র দীপকের হাতে চলে এলো ।

গোয়েন্দা দীপকের এক হাতে টর্চ - আর এক হাতে শার্ট এর মুঠি - এই বার অন্য হাত দিয়ে চালালো সজোরে এক ঘুষি ।

দস্যু কালরুদ্র র ওভার কোর্টের ওপরে স্কারফের মতন করে জড়িয়ে রয়েছে এক বিশাল অজগর ।

মিশ কালো অন্ধকার - তারই মধ্যে এক হেলিকপ্টার গর্জন করতে করতে নেমে পড়ল হেদুয়ার পাশে ।

যতীন হালদার লেনে তখন রাতের আঁধারের ঘন কুয়াশা - চার্চের ঘড়িতে ঢং ঢং করে বেলা দুটো বাজলো ।

মহেশতলার দিকে দ্রুত এগিয়ে চলেছে ড্রাগন একটা হলুদ ট্যাক্সি করে - পেছনে মোটরসাইকেল এ দীপক- হটাথ ট্যাক্সি টা ডান দিকের একটা পুকুরে ঝাঁপ দিলো - নিচে অপেক্ষমান এক সাবমেরিন ।

সারপেন টাইন লেনের আঁকা বাঁকা রাস্তায় হঠাৎ শোনা গেল হাড় হিম করা আঁধার রাতের আর্তনাদ ।

কালনাগিনীর মুখে এক হিংস্র ছাপ - হিংস্রতা তার মাথার চুল থেকে পায়ের হিল তোলা জুতো পর্যন্ত ।

ঘড়িতে বাজলো ঠিক রাত বারোটা - টিম টিম করে আলো জলছে - কুয়াশা ঘন স্টেশন এর বুক চিরে বেরিয়ে গেলো বিশালকায় ইলেকট্রিক ইঞ্জিন এ টানা রাতের মেল ট্রেন - তার কালো ধোয়া মিশে গেল রাতের কুয়াশার সঙ্গে ।

A Physicist to Remember – *Roshan Paul*

“In another [pocket] was a cyanide tablet, in case he needed to kill himself before being captured” (Sheinkin 152). Werner Heisenberg (1901–76), born in Germany, was one of the greatest scientists; a brilliant physicist, mathematician, professor, and pioneer for modern science. He was extremely skilled, dedicated, and creative. Few of the ways he contributed his works to science were included atomic theory, hydrodynamics, and ferromagnetism.

Atomic theory was just developing around the late 19th century and only gained momentum in the 20th. One way Heisenberg added to this theory was his “Uncertainty Principle”. Stated by the Encyclopedia Britannica, the uncertainty principle says that the “behavior of subatomic particles can be predicted only on a basis of probability”. Adding to that, Heisenberg was one of the lead scientist in the construction of the atomic bomb. Even though he was praised as one of the cleverest scientists during this time, Heisenberg was in constant danger and watch due to his take in the war. An American scientist who worked on the atomic bomb was Julius Robert Oppenheimer. Mr. Oppenheimer was the leader of the U.S.A. Manhattan Project. This team of scientists also tried to create the atomic bomb and they succeeded. Columbia University Press stated that “Oppenheimer made important contributions to the development of atomic energy for military purposes”. Although the Americans created it first, it was the German scientist who started with the creation of this project and their materials were bombed by British and American air troops, limiting their supplies.

Another aspect in which Heisenberg impacted science was through turbulence, a section of fluid dynamics. The principle states that the difference of the expulsion of air or water. Situations can be vary due to the viscosity, thickness, speed, etc. of the air/water. An additional important property of turbulent flow is the great ranges of pressure due to the shape of the object. A scientist by the name of Andrei Kolmogorov was credited for deriving the formula of the energy spectrum of turbulence. This formula was important so that there could be a mathematical analysis component to turbulence. A professor in San Jose State University said that “There were other attempts at such analysis before but never such a striking result” Kolmogorov may have been a bright mathematician but Heisenberg was able to find out characteristics of turbulence which defined this field of study.

BrainPop states that “a magnet is any material that produces a magnetic field”. Similarly, a Ferro magnet produces a magnetic field except for the fact that the materials are uncharged. “Ferromagnetism is a kind of magnetism that is associated with iron, cobalt, nickel, and some alloys or compounds containing one or more of these elements ... and a few other rare-earth elements”. The theory of diamagnetism was found out but physicists were unable to explain ferromagnetism from an atomic level. “It was Heisenberg's work in the late 1920's that filled this void” said Sabyasachi Chatterjee. However, quantum mechanics of electrons needed to be discovered. Heisenberg was able to connect the understanding between ferromagnetism and the area of electron bonding. Pierre Curie was also a physicist working on ferromagnetism. Curie was able to find out the point in which the magnetic field change from permanent to induced magnetism. Wikipedia explains in another detailed way- “The Curie temperature can also be used to describe the temperature where a material's spontaneous electric polarization changes to induced electric polarization or the reverse upon reduction of the temperature below the Curie temperature”. Still, Werner Heisenberg was able to create the foundation for more detailed exploration and research.

Continued on page 14 →



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Where Do I Belong? – Trisha Ghosh

The sirens were everywhere; someone had scooped me up and put me in an ambulance as I lay helplessly. My green eyes glanced around only to see my family packed into individual bags. Where they were going or better yet where I was going I didn't know. It all happened so fast, all it took was two seconds and a pickup truck on the icy roads of February. I wake up to the soothing voice of my mother-I wish, I was my crabby old grandmother telling me to get up. Last time I checked being in the hospital didn't work like that but what am I to say. As soon as I woke up she wanted to leave.

"Come on, you're alright" she spat "We're going home because you been out for days now"
"That's okay I'll go home with mom and dad "I replied hoping they were okay and she'd agree.
"No no" Dang it! "Your mom and dad are gone now, very unfortunate, your brother too"

Suddenly I've never wanted more than anything for my brat of a brother to come and scratch up my face. All I wanted to do was curl up in a ball and die, what was the point if the only thing that will ever matter is a mean old lady that hates you. I blindly walk into her home and the smell was unbearable. It was like the combination of a funeral home and burnt milk. She had brought all of my belongings and all I did was question, should I be here? Living with Grandma was painful I did the dishes, cleaned the house, and cooked the food. You may as well put an apron on me and call me a servant. I hadn't finished school because some people in uniforms told me I had something called mental trauma, I wish they knew I'd be fine. But not going to school I'm not letting up that offer. I wish I had the type of Grandma who bakes cookies and knitted sweaters, they probably don't exist but they seem so perfect in the TV shows. I started to play in the backyard and sat in a tree, anything is better than housework. When Grandma has nothing to do she decides to take naps and with me around she just sleeps the day away. All I want to do is run out into the open with all my free time.

So I did, but I went backwards- to the woods. My long brown hair fluttered in the wind as I escaped from reality. In the first few days of my "freedom" I was scared of being discovered but after a while there was nothing to be afraid of. My new routine was to wake up cook three meals and then go out and climb the trees. I now realize that Grandma doesn't even know all the work I do so I stopped. I think it could be like this all the time because all that wrinkly old lady does is take naps. As I ran into nothingness I focused on the sound of my footsteps, the clear spring air, and the budding leaves. I halted; waiting for someone to jump at me all of a sudden my steps don't match mine. I heard some rustling start to fade away as if it were running. Maybe there was someone else, someone running from their own dreaded fate. No, it wasn't possible. I put my hopes away and enjoyed the spring air; it was probably a rabbit anyway. As I start to climb my favorite tree some rough blonde hair flutters across my vision and pulls my attention like a fish on a string-immediately. I sprint away in the search to find her- the girl with the long hair. I ran mindlessly in her direction I just wanted to meet her maybe she's a miserable as me. It would be great to have a friend here we live hours away from my home but I think it would be worse if I lived too close to where my family was. I was desperate to find her and I would. I listened to her footsteps instead of mine, I called out.

"I know you're there, please come out" I tried. "I won't hurt you I just need to know" and her footsteps stop. They were still the only thing you could hear was the sound of the birds cooing echoing in the woods. I stepped forward with caution to see a tall lean figure with dirt everywhere to come from behind a tree. The first thing I saw was her piercing gray eyes staring into mine, but sadly it was the only beautiful thing about her. She was dressed in rags covered in greenery one look and you'd know she wasn't from grandma's rich neighborhood. We stood there for what seemed like hours.

Finally I stepped forward and said “Hi, my name is Abby” and held out my hand without leaving her gaze. She replied in the tiniest wiper like she was afraid someone would hear her in the vast woods.

“Hello, my name is Alana” she uncertainly grabbed my hand and gently shook it

“Where do you live?” I whispered, I was afraid of her answer, I didn’t know why I just was.

“Right here” she slowly replied. “Huh?” I questioned.

“In the wood right here” her face trembled and all I wanted to do is ask -how? We sat down to talk at first it was awkward telling her about my family but soon I was talking to her like an old friend. I told her about my family and what happened to them and she told me her story. Alana had lived with her mother until a few weeks ago. She had run away because as much as her mother loved her there was almost no money left for the both of them. She had again lost her job and Alana thought it would be best if she went away so her mother would only need to support herself. She ran away and walked a few miles and came to these woods. A family had gone camping here and left a surprisingly great amount of items for Alana to put to use. When she finished telling me her story it sounded like a story to sad to be true. I looked at the sky and saw the pink clouds and had a suddenly had an urge to leave. Grandma should never know I was ever here. I dashed home and warmed up her meal and went straight to bed. I slept restlessly thinking about Alana, maybe I could try it. I could be like her and I know it will be better than Grandma.

The next morning I continued to do my daily routine, when I went into the woods Alana showed me the place where she had stored all the stolen things from the campsite. I hated to admit it but I was really considering being with Alana. I wonder how it will be like when we’re older but I decided to cross that bridge when it gets there. That night when my grandma had ordered me to do the dishes and I had officially decided to be with Alana, it couldn’t possibly get worse for me and it was worth a shot That morning Alana and I made a plan to get me out of grandma’s. Her gray eyes twinkled with excitement. I spent the day packing the essentials and cooking enough meals for grandma to last her 3 days so I have time to decide if I want to come home. I ran out in the open with a smile on my face even though my day will be exactly the same except I won’t come home. Alana taught me how she lived. She drank water from a freshwater creek, picked berries and apples, and roasted dead squirrels (ewww); she also slept in a hammock. In a few days I had learned to be like Alana, and grandma had noticed I was gone by now. I wonder if she knows how to dial the police of if she already did.

Alana and I continued to discover the woods in all the excitement in the past few days we never thought of anything else until..... a few men dressed in uniforms had started to go through our “camp”. Alana bravely told them to stop, one of them pointed a flashlight in my eye and asked me my name, I softly said “Abigail”. He asked Alana the same question and she replied the same way. They all mumbled to each other and grabbed us by the arm. They dragged us all the way to grandmas where I dreaded the events to come. They immediately put Alana in a foster home because her mother never reported Alana’s disappearance. The police told grandma that they would consult a child psychologist and they may take the case to court because grandma may not be a suitable guardian for me, considering I ran away. I don’t know how it’s possible but I hope I get put in a foster home like Alana.

I was not allowed inside the court but I told the social worker who spoke for me my story. At the end they put me in a foster home because grandma couldn’t take care of me (duh). I don’t think we have foster homes in our small town so we were moved to the big city NYC where there were plenty. In the foster home

Continued on page 14 →

*Continued from page 13 → **Where Do I Belong?***

we still had chores but not nearly as bad as grandma, those were indescribably impossible. I was much happier. A few chores is nothing in exchange for the care and love the nannies gave us. Week after week I saw poor mothers and fathers who wanted a child but I didn't want them. Everyone in the foster home dreamed of having a proper home but I was content here I never wanted to replace my beloved parents and annoying brother. I didn't feel right; having a new home was simply not a possibility.

I needed to escape my family and the ones I love; it would seem like the easiest way, to forget. Even though they would never want this, I want to, I want to so bad. Every night the thought rolled over my head with guilt and hope. How do you get over your entire family dying in a car crash that you survived? Maybe I am crazy; maybe I should just let them fix me. Trying to forget your family is a big decision but it would be easier if I let someone take me home. This thought had taken me over until Alana had asked what was wrong. I had told her about how I'm considering forgetting my family. She immediately said no. She thought I should move on but never forget and I guess she's right it'll get me nowhere to forget my family. I turned to be like all the other girls in the foster home- wanting a new family. I still watched all the parents wanting children and finally I wanted them back. After a few weeks it was the midst of summer and this one woman kept coming in and Alana would turn red and hide. I wanted to know but Alana never told me. When I asked she told me it was her mother and I stared at her in shock. Then I thought of course she would want another child but she knew Alana would never come back to her. I finally encouraged Alana to speak to her I watched them from behind the couch.

"Oh my god" her mother shrieked and turned pale. "Yeah" Alana whispered. I left letting them talk it would be rude to eavesdrop. Alana called me to meet her mother and Alana was a spitting image of her. She sat us down and spoke with a voice that could've been my mother's

"I would like to tell you that I have gotten a good job with admirable pay and enough to support a family and a home" she said carefully "so if you'd like you are welcome, the both of you, to live with me and I promise to be able to sustain a happy life.

"I don't know" Alana whispered and she ran away and I ran right after her". "Come on it's worth a shot don't tell me you completely gave up on her"

"I guess you're right she deserves to know she did something right, still I don't want to watch her struggle again". "Remember we can still leave like you did and I promise we'll never have to go back" . "Ok"

We told her mother our decision and she adopted me since Alana already belonged to her. In a week she took us home. Alana was extremely surprised with the changes she looked like a true middle-class citizen. Now I was happy where I was. My family was with me knowing I would turn out fine. I moved on and in September I started 8th grade with Alana and made new friends but none of them would ever know how I got there, I kept it to myself. No one needed to know because this is where I belong.

*Continued from page 10 → **A Physicist to Remember***

There were many other amazing scientist beside Heisenberg. Nevertheless, through great struggle and pressure, he was able to research and publish many of his works for the science committee and public. Before Heisenberg died, he said that when he went to heaven, he would want answers for quantum electrodynamics and turbulent flow of liquids- the scientist wanted to know as much as he could. Mr. Heisenberg helped expand our knowledge on atomic theory, hydrodynamics, and ferromagnetism. In conclusion, Werner Heisenberg was not only a great scientist but a person with a great interest, passion, and devotion for science.



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Childrens Natok Group : Ja Devi

Directors: Mitushi Banerjee and Parna Ghosh

As autumn gradually fades into winter and the nights start getting longer, the weekdays feel forever and the weekends lackluster due to limited social interactions. The quick jaunts of summer give away to looking outside the window on snowy days confined and bored. It is this time of the year that the rehearsals start. This year it was decided that the kids of SBA would do a drama instead of the traditional group song they have been successfully doing these past years. After a flurry of activity, a script was procured from far away Kolkata. Parna Banerjee got her friend Anupam De to lend us his script and then the hunt for the perfect cast began.

The rehearsals started even before Thanksgiving and a group of tentative kids came together to literally get their act together. It has been a mixture of fun and pride to see these kids maturing from reading out of a script to acting out memorized lines with expressions and emotions. It has been a joy to see these kids forge new friendships and cement old ones, and most importantly develop self-confidence in portraying their characters. Hopefully these weekly rehearsals and the culmination at the Saraswati Pujo performance sow the seeds for a lifelong love of theater in these young minds.

Miami Beach - Pranita Kundu

Miami Beach is awesome,
Miami Beach is cool,
I went swimming in the ocean,
It was better than a pool.

There were lots of sea shells,
There was a lot of sand,
I made a big sand-castle,
The sand tickled my feet and hand.

When the break was over,
I wanted to go back,
So I told my parents,
"Can you pack my bag?"



Oreo and Me - Monali Dey

I am going to be telling you all about my friend
Oreo the puppy.

One thing about us is that we both have
something in command and it is that we both love
each other. Oreo Knows I love her when I give her a
dog treat and when I hug her. I know Oreo loves me
when she sits on my lap. She jumps on me, and
sometimes when I go upstairs she usually waits for
me until I return. Another thing about us is that we
play together indoors and sometimes outdoors.

Inside the house we play fetch with a squeaky
toy and outdoors we play the same game but with a
tennis ball. Even if I'm not with Oreo she is still in
my heart. When I am feeling blue Oreo cheers me up
by licking my hand. When Oreo is happy she wags
her tail and she jumps on me. That makes me happy
as well. By the way do you guys know why she is
called Oreo? Well that's because she is black and
white like Oreo Cookies.

My Favorite Place - Priyanka Chatterjee

Whoosh!! Swoosh!! The baby waves rippled along the Atlantic coastline as the warm sand shifted under my feet as though running away from me. At my special place, I play in the waves, create in the sand, and play games in the sea shore.

At my favorite place I love to play in the waves. I cherish the feeling of salty water rolling over me. The foamy waves come softly. The frothy waves leave softly. They towered over my head as I stared at the distant sky blue horizon. I was so tempted to join the waves! At first, I was a bit scared to just dive into the waves. However, I soon got over my fright. No time to think, got to jump! Every time a giant wave came dancing at me, I leaped up to ride, in-sync with the rhythm of the breakers. Sometimes the waves caught me unaware, which made me feel as though I was drowning in the whirling water. Sometimes I also felt the rough sand against my skin as I was pushed to the shore by the turbulent waves pounding on the shoreline. Another thing I like to do at my favorite place is play in the sand. I grab my blue bucket and yellow shovel, and build four majestic sandcastles with a greenish ball sitting proudly in the middle looking like king of the mound. I also collect some seashells and decorate my castles with them.

Lastly, I love to stroll along the seashore and the boardwalk. Sometimes we play with a ball, kicking it high in the air and then racing after it. It is fun to watch the ball go helter-skelter on the sand.

We saw a wonderful sun set at this point. As the big golden ball dipped down, it painted the water red. It really looked awesome!!! I can't wait to return to my favorite special place- Myrtle Beach in South Carolina!

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Saraswati Puja 2015

Cultural Program Schedule

Time: 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School, Bridgewater, NJ

4:00 PM **Welcome Announcement**

Parna Ghosh and Prasun Chowdhury

4:05 PM **Innocence : by Art n Beat**

Conductor: Rumela Bandyopadhyay

Participants : Aishani Basu, Debisha Dey, Naina Bardhan, Nitant Gupta, Rajeev Ramacharan, Rinchen Sahni, Saketh Sitaram, Sanjay Ramcharan , Shreya Adupa, Unmukt Gupta

4:50 PM **Dancing for the God's : A Divine Medley - Subhanjali School of Performing Arts**

Choreographed by : Suba Ramesh Parmar

Participants :

Sriman Narayana- Arpitha Gorur, Deeksha Udupa, Iswarya Manivannan, Katyayani Kolluri, Manasi Narayan, Sandhya Narasimharaj, Vaishnavi Ramanan, Vinaya Akavoor

Ashtalakshmi - Deepa Irakam, Isha Vemuri, Iyanah Vemuri, Joshika Kumaran, Jyothi Maruthanal, Nandana Vinod, Prithika Satish, Roopa Irakam, Saverina Iruthayaraj, Shonchori Mukherjee, Shreya Balaji, Sitara Vaidy, Smruthi Sathya

Shree Vigna Rajam - Aathira Nair, Shonita Srinivasan, Divya Krishnan, Harrinee Senthilkumar, Ishana Senthil, Mira Mehta, Nimisha Kumar, Pavni Bhardwaj, Roshni Datta, Sathya Gopinath, Seva Sona, Venya Bhardwaj

5:15 PM **Announcements**

SBA Board of Trustees : Sharmila Ghosh and Mausumi Majumdar

5:25 PM **Children's Natok 'Ja Devi' written by Anupam De**

Directors: Mitushi Banerjee & Parna Ghosh

Music: Niloy Jana

Sponsored By:



CAST

Durga - Atreyi Sanyal

Laxmi - Ria Mukherjee

Ganesh - Rishi Mukherjee

Narado - Prajit Kundu

Bhringi - Shounak Ghosh

Lion - Rishabh Das

Swan - Ishaan Ghosh

Reporter - Devjit Bhattacharya

Shiva - Nipun Banerjee

Saraswati - Hiya Khan

Kartik - Rishit Roy

Asur - Abheek Dhara

Bison - Nirav Banerjee

Mouse - Imon Khan

Owl - Swapnil Chaudhuri

5:50 PM Raffle Drawing

Grand Prizes Donated by our Sponsors

5:55 PM Nabajagoron

Conductor : Malini Mazumdar

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Participants: Bibhas Mitra, Deboshree Saha, Lopa Das, Malini Mazumdar, Milli Ghosh, Niloy Jana, Ranjana Sanyal, Satabdi Choudhury, Subhrojit Dutta, Sudipta Chatterjee, Sumita Dhara, Suparna Das, Swasti Bal, Tathagata Ghosh, Teesta Roy

Musicians: Spreeha Choudhury (Keyboard), Chandreyee Roy (Sitar), Gokul Panda (Tabla)

Script Narrator : Aditi Biswas

6:20 PM Raffle Drawing

Grand Prizes Donated by our Sponsors

6:25 PM Kaleidoscope: A Dance Medley of Rhythm, Color & Melody—presented by the SBA Dance Team

Choreographed By : Debolina Sanyal

Participants

Sponsored By: Samragnee Majumdar



Youth: Aditi Dhara, Ananya Sanyal, Atreyee Ghosh, Kunjana Datta, Nishka Abraham, Pranita Kundu, Prisha Ghosh, Priyanka Chatterjee, Rashi Roy, Ria Mukhopadhyay, Roshni Dutta, Rupsa Jana, Saatchi Chattopadhyay, Shruti Roy, Trina Ghosh, Trisha Ghosh

Adults : Anjali Bhatia, Arpita Gupta, Chandrima Banyopadhyay, Debolina Sanyal, Deepa Tripathy, Devi Mukherjee, Koel Chatterjee, Mousumi Mitra, Padmaja Upadya, Parna Kundu, Sarbani Ghosh, Sayanti Basu

7:00 PM Dinner Break

8:30 PM Feature Artist Show

Abhijit Pachegaokar & Shweta Ranade accompanied by live band—Opening act for Bappi Lahiri

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10 PM Closing Remarks

Thank you and recognition to the artistic directors and wonderful performers.

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Finding Peace - Rupsa Jana

Brisk colorless leaves of questions fluttering,
tormented by the antagonistic wind
Misty gray fields without a hint of crop, truth not
grown
Beauty hindered under the scraggly, rough blanket of
hate
Grimy waves of ignorance sulk as they sink into
trenches
As deep as the seas of thought
We are unrecognizable aliens, carrying the "burden"
"Oh no!" It's too late now, when it's really not

The world is always changing despite the moments of
stillness or silence
Raising crinkles on our foreheads, bumpy hills
packed with suspicion
But, still we forget, perched on steep mountains of
luxury
Slipping away chances slyly of realization
In fear of defeat or failure

There is so much death and destruction, sometimes
too much to endure
Which shatters our lives into jagged pieces
The unloved corners of the world jammed together
by earthquakes of crisis
Yet, glassy years can't confide so much we haven't
wished to see
What's more? The same terrifying circle repeats,
unstoppable

Food scraps and smoke pits on bustling streets
An unnerved musty feeling of shock
Starving poor people, hungry and homeless
Slim hope for survival in the unfolding drama
A craving for freedom tomorrow or the day after

How to solve and finally end these troubles?
Certainly, no advanced scientific formula needed
The only answer is Humanity
The power to respect and the power to heal
The amazing quality of selfless giving and
compassion
So, the world can become a better place
And then... Only then.....
The pitch gray grimy rivers will flow with the sweet
honey of happiness and love

Princess - Arushi Sanbui



The Ladoo Thief - Rohan Giri

In the city of Kolkata, there was a man who sold ladoos. His name was Ravi. One day, Ravi was selling ladoos outside, but it started raining. "I better go get my coat! Or I'll get wet!" said Ravi. He went home but forgot to put away the boxes of ladoos.

A boy named Harish was walking home and saw the boxes. "YAY! Nobody is watching, so I'll take the ladoos and share them with my friend, Vinod," he cheered. He then snuck up and stole the ladoos.

Harish went to Vinod's house and rang the doorbell. Vinod opened the door. "Hi Harish what are you holding?" asked Vinod.

"I brought us some ladoos that we can eat!" cheered Harish. "Yay! Yummy ladoos!" cheered Vinod. They munched on their ladoos.

But when Ravi got back he was furious. "Grr!!! WHO STOLE MY LADOOS!" he growled. Tomorrow he was going to be more alert.

The next day Harish reached his arm out for the ladoos. Suddenly Ravi stomped up to Harish. "NO STEALING YOU PEST!!!" he yelled. He sprayed red ink all over Harish. Harish ran away screaming. All the kids in the neighbourhood saw the red ink stains on Harish and made fun of him. "Stupid thief!" they cried out. Harish was so embarrassed. He never tried to steal again.

Bigger Than Big – Abheek Dhara

“Whoosh!” The inflated double-donut raced down an icy slope, holding me and my mom, both on opposite sides. We flew up on a bump and landed safely. That’s what you call the best ride at the biggest snow tubing park in the U.S.A., at Camelback Mountains.

The day after Christmas, 2 of my friends and I went to Pennsylvania to go snow tubing. Camelback makes their own ice, and it’s more slippery than ever! It is even more slippery than an ice skating rink. You can do stunts, like spinning, “boogie-boarding” on it, going backwards, and much more! If I were to be asked about what I did on vacation over winter, one of the top things I did would be snow tubing. Getting presents on Christmas is good enough, going snow tubing is ten times better. Of course that would be the best. What could be better? First, I took a double-tube with my mom, since it was the first time trying tubing. When it was our turn at the start, we pushed with all our might and slid down the track. For a minute, I just held my breath and watched an image of the terror. The feeling was exactly like being on a roller coaster for the first time. It actually went smoothly. And seconds later, it was done. “That was actually fun!” I exclaimed, as I shook the off the snow on my gloves. “I want to go again!” The second time we went meant being on my own. I grabbed a single tube and climbed onto the escalator. Sooo heavy! When I reached the top of the mountain, I hauled the loop of air to a short line to wait for my turn. Then when it was my turn, I launched away, down the hill. I was not trying to, but I spun, and was going down backwards! I closed my eyes, and opened them. Yup, this was real. Then I controlled it and learned how to go backwards. I bumped, but hey, that’s ok.



The next ride I linked with one of the 2 friends I brought with me. This was the fastest one. The wind was slapping against my face, and my friend was screaming the life out of her. As I got out, my hair was messed up, and I was feeling dizzy. We rested for a little while, and a few minutes later, we were gone. I couldn’t stop myself, so my friend and I made up a cool stunt that we called “The Double Crossover”. It was on. We grabbed a double tube and went up the mountain. Then we tried our stunt. I faced forward on the back, and she was on the front, facing me. We crossed our legs and slid down the mountain. Awesome, right? I still wanted to go, so I went again. I went straight up then straight down. Up. Down. Up. Down. That was how it was. I begged for 1 more ride. My dad sighed. “Just one.” He mumbled. This ride, we rode, while spinning and riding the board on my stomach. It was scary. But I figured nothing would happen. Nothing but last minute fun.

After that, we realized that 3 hours had passed. We had a spectacular time. The snow tubing resort had a fireplace outside, so we stood and wandered randomly for 5 minutes. Then we were ready for a 2 hour drive back home.

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Saraswati Puja - Aditi Dhara

Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge,

Art, music, and wisdom.

Reading and writing.

A veena is in her hands.

Swan is Saraswati's pet.

White is the color of the flower that she is on.

All about kids.

Traditional Indian festival.

I love Saraswati puja!



Kaleidoscope - A Dance Medley of Rhythm, Color & Melody Directed by Debolina Sanyal

This year, the local Dance Ensemble presents a Kaleidoscope of Rhythm, Color and Melody under the direction of Debolina Sanyal. Twenty eight adult and children perform a group of six dances set to pulsating rhythms, classical, folk and contemporary tunes, in a whirl of colorful costumes and accessories.

The program concludes with a finale set to "My India is Great," an original composition by the accomplished musician, Sumit Roy, of Kolkata, and courtesy of Rimli Roy of Surati. Kaleidoscope seeks to embody of the aspects of dance that make it such a universal vehicle of celebration, and an activity that so many of us look forward to participating in year after year, on the occasion of Saraswati Puja.



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Experience – Bibhas Mitra

Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, arts, music and culture, represents the free flow of wisdom and consciousness. She is the mother of the Vedas, and chants to her, called the 'Saraswati Vandana' often begin and end Vedic lessons.

Saraswati is the daughter of Lord Shiva and Goddess Durga. It is believed that goddess Saraswati endows human beings with the powers of speech, wisdom, and learning. She has four hands representing four aspects of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness, and ego. She has sacred scriptures in one hand and a lotus – the symbol of true knowledge – in the other. With her other two hands, she plays the music of love and life on a string instrument called the Veena. She is dressed in white – the symbol of purity – and rides on a white swan – symbolizing Sattwa Guna or purity and discrimination.

Many of us know all these mythological facts. But how many of us know that Somerset Bengali Association (SBA) is one of the most transparent associations dedicated to proudly uphold Bengali culture and heritage when our very own culture is constantly being challenged by dangerous outside forces? I hope that my experience would bring something new to you and learn a little bit more about SBA.

We have been involved with Saraswati and Durga Pujas in Chicago. After moving to New Jersey last year, we have been checking on the Bengali organizations in the area. My college senior, Prabir Dhara, introduced us to this association and subsequently the group cordially invited us to participate in Saraswati Puja cultural program. It is almost a no brainer for me and my wife to say 'yes' to the invitation without hesitation as we learnt about the purpose and culture of the group.

It has been an amazing experience so far for us for the last few months. My wife and I have been meeting the members of the group every weekend to rehearse for the cultural program. We meet members of the core group and make new friends. The enjoyment from pure Bengali 'adda' has been working as a catalyst to get back to routine life on Mondays.

The rehearsal schedule and venues have been meticulously planned in advance by senior members of the organization. There has been a lot of interest among the members to host rehearsals and showcase hospitality. As our rehearsal progressed, the quality of food items gradually got better – it was almost an unspoken challenge. I think, we all have won together by creating an even stronger bond and working towards showcasing and helping preserve Bengali culture and heritage.

The group is very accommodative, helpful, friendly, and most importantly, a lot of fun. At the same time, the group is serious about its vision, mission, and purpose. I am impressed by the cultural program to be presented to Non-resident Bengalis (Prabasi Bangali) at Saraswati Puja. The SBA Cultural Committee consciously differentiates itself and has carefully crafted the program that truly reflects and bolsters our cultural heritage. The program not only offers refreshing enjoyment, but also effectively spreads and upholds our culture.



Adults's Song Group - Nabajagoron

Directed by Malini Mazumdar

It is the mission, vision, and purpose driven culture of this group that provides the drive and courage to remain different from the norm and stay true to the purpose. The pure Bengali culture and heritage is in the DNA of SBA.

I am also amazed by the passion of the members of the vocal group. Malini's dedication was unparalleled. Her baby was born just a few weeks before the Saraswati Puja, but that did not slow her down. She planned well in advance, selected songs, and had a backup contingency plan. We now have our newest member of the group and Malini is back to her "best" role after only two weeks of the baby's arrival to help us have the best ever Sangeetanjali performance in SBA's history!

I have been associated with many Indian associations and involved with cultural programs in the USA. I find no other association as vibrant and authentic to its purpose as SBA is. The group is constantly driven by the noble cause and the nominal subscription fee they collect is just enough to help support and strengthen that cause. I am happy to be part of SBA and thankful to the group. I wish to do everything possible for continued success of the association to facilitate preservation and growth of our very own Bengali culture.



মোদের পেয়ারে দোস্তো
থাকুক পুজোর রেশ তো
সংগে কচুরি বা আলু পোস্ত
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ভরসা - সুচেতনা মুখোপাধ্যায় চক্রবর্তী

তখন আমার বয়স ছিলো চল্লিশের কোঠায় -
আমি কলকাতার রাস্তায় রাস্তায় লজেম্প ফেরি করে বেড়াতাম
খুলোয় মাখা রোদ্দুর কিংবা আষাঢ়ের জোলো হাওয়া কোনোটাই আমার
পথের কাঁটা হয়নি কখনও | শীতে নরম রোদে পীঠ সৈঁকতে সৈঁকতে সারা দুপুর
ঘুরে বেড়াতাম | কাঁধের ঝোলাটায় তখন লাল, নীল, সবুজ লজেম্পের ঠাসা ঠাসি |

তখন আমার বয়স ছিলো চল্লিশের কোঠায় -
আমি পাড়ায় পাড়ায় ছোট্ট ছেলে মেয়েদের মুখে হাসি ফুটিয়ে বেড়াতাম
আমার জন্যই ওদের অপেক্ষা | দু আনা, চার আনা দিয়ে নিয়ে যেত ওরা |
ওদের কল-কাকলিতে ভরে উঠত চারদিক | ওদের নির্ভেজাল হাসি ভরিয়ে তুলত মনটা |

তখন আমার বয়স ছিলো চল্লিশের কোঠায় -
বাড়ির পাঁচ-পাঁচটা মানুষ বসে থাকত আমারই প্রতীক্ষায় | আমি যখন বাড়ি ফিরতাম তখন
পড়ন্ত বিকেলের আলোয় ওদের ম্লান চেহারায় ফুটে উঠত বালখিল্যের হাসি
চার-চারটে ছেলে মেয়ে আর ওদের বাবা | ওদের বাবা এখন বাড়িতেই | কদিন হলো কারখানাতে ছুটি
মালিকেরা বলেছে আর একটুখানি অপেক্ষা আর তারপরই -
ভাঙ্গা দেওয়াল পেরোলেই ঘর | ঘরে কেরোসিনের আলোয় একমুঠো খাবারে ভরে যায় পেট, আগারের শব্দ |

তখন আমার বয়স হলো পঞ্চাশের কোঠায় -
পিঠের ব্যথা আর পায়ে ধরা টানটা সামলে থেমে থেমে চলি শহরের পথে পথে, জনতার ভিড়ে | বেলা গড়িয়ে
বিকেল এখন | কাঁধের বুলিটা এখনো ভারি | আমার আগের খদ্দেররা এখন বেশ বড় |
ছোটো ছোটো শিশুরা এখন আর লজেম্প খায় না | এতে দাঁত নষ্ট হয় | দামী মোড়কের মিল্ক চকোলেটটাই
তো ভালো? সিনেমা হল কিংবা স্কুল এর বাইরেও তেমন বিক্রিবাট্টা নেই | ওদের বাবা এখনো বাড়িতেই |
মালিক এখন আর কিছু বলেনা | তাই নতুন রিকশা কিনব বলে এক আনা দু আনা সরিয়ে রাখছি |

এখন আমার বয়স হল ষাটের কোঠায় -
ঘরের মেঝেতে চাদর পেতে শুয়ে আছি | জনলার শিকের ফাঁক দিয়ে বিদায়ি বিকেলের লাল আলো
আমার গায়ে এসে পড়েছে | পা দুটো অবশ একেবারে | মাঝে মাঝে টনটনে ব্যথা | জনলার দিকে চেয়ে আছি,
বড় মেয়ে মালতি ফিরল বলে | আমার ঝোলাটা নিয়ে | ওদের বাবা রিকশা নিয়ে ফিরবে রাতে | ঠিক তখনি
আকাশে চাঁদ উঠবে | মিশমিশে কালো রাতের ভরসা একফালি চাঁদের আলো | জ্যোত্স্নায় ভরে যাবে চারদিক |
আমিও যন্ত্রনায় কাতর পাশ ফিরব সেই একমুঠো ভরসারই আশা নিয়ে |

K Road Runner Club- An Interview with Anirban Bhattacharya

চলো দৌড়ই - একটি ছোট্ট আড্ডা অনির্বান ভট্টাচার্য র সাথে

এক কোথায় বোঝাতে গেলে KRRC - একটি কমিউনিটি রানিং ক্লাব। মূলত "রানিং আউটসাইড" - রাস্তায়, পার্ক এ, Trail এ! এটা শুরু করার ইচ্ছেটা হয়েছিল একটু অদ্ভুত ভাবেই। প্রথমেই স্বীকার করা জরুরি, যে আমি কোনো বিখ্যাত দৌরবীর নই। In fact athlete-type ও নই। তবে উত্সাহ আছে বহু বিষয়ে এবং সেই সূত্রে একটু পরখ করা। এরকমই উত্সাহে ভর করে আমি রাস্তায় ছুটে ছিলাম বহুকাল আগে, দেশে, ছাত্রজীবনে ভারতবর্ষের ৫০তম স্বাধীনতা দিবসোতোরপর বিভিন্ন সময় এদিক ওদিক ছুটেছি কিন্তু ধারাবাহিকতা ছিলনা! এদেশে এসে বাইরে ছোট্টার অনেক সুযোগ বিভিন্ন সময় appreciate করেছি কিন্তু রেগুলার আনন্দ করে ছুটেছি এরকম ছিল না | কিন্তু সেটা বদলে গেল - ওই যে বললাম অদ্ভুত ভাবে -

২০১২ মে মাস নাগাদ আমি যেখানে থাকি তার পাশের পারে একটি 5K হচ্ছে দেখে ভাবলাম নাম দিলে কেমন হয়। যেমন ভাবা তেমন কাজ (তখন আমি একটু আধটু ছোট্টাছুটি শুরু করেছি, যেমন আগেও করেছি- ছেড়েছি সেই রকম)। সেটাই USA তে আমার প্রথম রেজিস্টার্ড 5K . ছুটে ফেললাম আর ও অনেক এর সঙ্গে, ছেলে, বুড়ো - সবাই ছিল সঙ্গী। বেশ লাগলো - কিন্তু অদ্ভুত ঘটনা তা ঘটল বিকেলে (রান তা ছিল সকালে) যখন দেখা হলো আমার পাড়ার বন্ধু, ৬৫ বছর বয়সী Neil Geminder এর। তিনি হঠাৎ আমায় বললেন "তুমি ছোট্টো মানে ছুটতে ভালবাসো?" বললাম ছুটি একটু-আধটু, কিন্তু যতটা ছুটলে "ভালবাসি" বলা যায় ততটা ছুটি কিনা বলতে পারিনা --Neil বললেন ছোট্টো যখন ভালো নিশ্চই বাসো, সঙ্গে মুচকি হাসি! তারপর বললেন চল - lets run together one day . run together ? ভাবলাম, তুমি রেগুলার runner , আমি তোমার সাথে ছুটতে গেলে তো মারা যাব - কিন্তু মুখে বললাম ঠিক আছে চল একদিন।

এই ভাবে একদিন শুরু হলো Neil এর সাথে রাস্তায় দৌড়োনো and this changed my perspective । এতদিন ধারণা ছিল যে দৌড় ব্যাপারটা একটা self -motivating sport , একটা মোক্ষম ধাক্কা খেল! Neil আর আমার "রানিং টীম" বেশ ছুটতে লাগলো গড়গড়িয়ে । ছোট্টার সাথে সাথে শিখলাম গল্প করতে করতে দৌড়োন, কজা করতে শিখলাম মন কে যেটা একটা বিশাল skill । তৈরী হলো ছোট্টার নেশা। ছুটতাম সুন্দর সুন্দর জায়গায় আর সঙ্গে জুড়ে থাকত সুন্দর পাখি, দৃশ্যর "ক্যামেরা বন্দী" স্মৃতি, পরিচয় হলো কত নতুন মানুষের সাথে আমার এই journey তে ।

যাইহোক এই ভাবেই Nov 4, 2012, ছুটে ফেললাম হাফ ম্যারাথন, যা স্বপ্নেও ভাবিনি তখন ভাবলাম আচ্ছা আমিও তো Neil এর মতন আরো কয়েক জন কে উদ্বুদ্ধ করতে পারি? এই ভাবেই বোধ হই KRRC'র বীজ মাথায় বুনলো । প্রথম প্রথম athlete type বন্ধুদের বলতাম কি রে ছুটবি নাকি? অমুক জায়গায় 5K হচ্ছে যাবি? সবাই দূর দূর করে তাড়িয়ে দিত. তারপর weekend এর পার্টি তে লোককে বিরক্ত করতে শুরু করলাম। শেষ পর্যন্ত পেয়ে গেলাম এক খেলা পাগল বন্ধু **অলোক দে** কে | কিন্তু মনে মনে ভাবছিলাম কিছু করে বাচ্ছাদের টেনে আনতে হবে এই ক্লাব এ। Catch them young - idea! . তখন শুরু করলাম connecting and

coordinating with the mothers of young kids । Ebong luck favored here. I found a very dedicated mother and supporter Shakuntala Sanyal কে! সে তার ছোট্ট ছেলেকে নিয়ে এই "running experience " চেষ্টা করতে রাজি হয়ে গেল। সাহেব এর আগে স্পোর্টস বলতে বুঝত "scrabble and chess" । সেই সাহেব , my first child recruit is an avid runner - now running is his religion! আমাদের KRRC-r poster child!



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চলো দৌড়ই - খুব সুন্দর নামটা - এর পেছনে ইতিহাস টা কি ?

November 2012, তখন আমি Frankfurt গেছি একটা কাজের কনফারেন্স এ। একদিন বিকেলে, মিটিং শেষে হাঁটতে বেরিয়েছি, হোটেল এর পেছনে একটা নদী পথ, পাশাপাশি হাঁটার জায়গা, একটা রেল লাইন একটু সরে গেলো। লোকে রং বেরঙের জামা , জুতো পরে হাঁটছে, ছুটছে। হটাথ শ্রীজাত র একটা গানের কলি মাথায় এলো "চল রাস্তায় সাজি ট্রাম লাইন"। তৈরী হয়ে গেল আমাদের দৌড় ক্লাব এর ট্যাগ লাইন " চলো দৌড়ই "।

ফিরে এসে তৈরী হলো ফেইসবুক এর গ্রুপ। ধীরে ধীরে ছোটো ছেলে মেয়েদের দল বাড়তে লাগলো। মা, বাবা , দাদু, দিদারা আসতে লাগলেন। কেউ, হাঁটেন ধীরে, কেউ হনহন করে আর কেউ ছোটেন। New Brunswick Johnson Park এ সপ্তাহে দুদিন আর শনি - রবিবার মিট করি আমরা। Rocky Hill এ **ইন্দ্রজিত গিরি** শুরু করেছে আর একটি চ্যাপ্টার of the group। ইন্দ্রজিত, আরেকজন "passionate and dedicated রানার" - completed his first full marathon in 2014।

আগামী দুই বছরে কোথায় দেখতে চাই KRRC কে?

বয়স সবে দুই, কিন্তু আমাদের দল অনেকটাই বড় হয়েছে - KRRC এখন আর শুধু বাঙালি community তেই সীমাবদ্ধ নেই! এটা কিন্তু একটা উল্লেখযোগ্য বিবর্তন! এবং এইজন্য আমাদের সকলেরই দায়িত্ব অনেক বেড়ে গেছে! আমরা সদস্যরা যদি আর একটু উদ্যোগ নিয়ে এই দলের গল্প আর ও ছড়িয়ে দিতে পারি তাহলেই এটা টিকে থাকবে -- এখন প্রধান লক্ষ হলো এই দৌড় এ বাচ্ছাদের আগ্রহী করে তোলা



***Art n Beat Ensemble
- Innocence***

Directed by Rumela Bandyopadhyay

Innocence. This nine-letter word can have various different interpretations. It can resemble a child's honest promise. It can resemble the clarity of one's heart. However, that innocence is affected once a person enters the real world. Negative conceptions can make one forget the simple pleasures of life. Everything becomes a competition among friends, a bloodbath to the finish. This thirty-minute production demonstrates the clarity in the world, no matter what negativity hurts it. It will represent the simple pleasures of life, from your "favorite things" to where you feel as if a little innocence still resides within you.

Jokes Aside - Raj Das

Wife: Shall I prepare Sambar or Rasam today.

Husband: First make it, we will name it later

A couple was having dinner at a fancy restaurant.

As the food was served, the husband said "the food looks delicious, let's eat"

Wife: honey....you say a prayer before eating at home.

Husband: that's at home sweetheart.... here the chef knows how to cook.

Employee: Sir you are like a lion in the office!
What about at home??

Boss: I am a lion at home too; But Goddess Durga sits on the lion there!



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Marriage Plans in a Fish Market ! - Amrita Kangle

This is a story which is exactly one year and two months old..... give or take a few days. My son is now 27 years old and as is normal, well meaning aunts, uncles and cousins have all been enquiring as to when I intend getting him married, ever since he turned 25!!! My standard reply to them all is ' I am ready to do that tomorrow but the boy himself has to agree'. The boy in question started the discussion and ended it just as promptly by saying that he will marry who HE chooses. This was totally ok by me because honestly I am scared to go through the 'girl choosing' process. I barely know myself so how on earth will I know a nice, good, docile, educated girl who will be right for him? I gave him the go ahead straight away and from that day on looked very hopefully at every girl he was friends with....as a potential daughter-n-law.

My Dad of course was aghast at my attitude. He told me that he would do the looking and grandson only had to do the marrying. Just as firmly, my son told him that not only the looking he (my Daddy) could do the marrying too. Now, don't get me wrong. There was no feud here. Grandfather and Grandson were the best of pals! I was the person at fault... because of my lax attitude. But children!! They are such horrible, contrary little monsters!! I swear, I sometimes wish that I had eaten him up as soon as he was born!! Having gotten all the freedom to choose a girl for himself he turns around one day and tells me that if at all I want to get him married I should look for a bride for him..... since it is my 'Motherly Duty'. He would rather have a doggy anyways which he had wanted ever since he was five. So, there I was, with this nice pickle on my plate. 'Why pickle?' did you ask? I will tell you! I am a true blue Bengali and my husband is an even truer bluer Maharashtrian. So, where do I look? Why can I never have simple problems in my life?

To tell you the truth, I want a Bengali bahu. Bengali girls are so nice, so sweet, so cultured, such great home makers.....so perfect in every way!!! Well just look at me!! Am I saying anything wrong? This is the argument that I put up to the H. Do you really see him contradicting me on this one? One must always know the right cards to play when one is looking to win a point!! It was at this stage of our lives that my son and I went to Kolkata to spend a few days with my Dad. It was magic from the word 'go'. Long, lazy days that began with an early morning cup of tea sitting in our magical balcony with the Palm fronds swaying lazily, the Gulmohurs majestically surveying the world in all their fiery glory, the Shaliks strutting about as if they owned the world and the brilliant blue of the swimming pool rippling with the laughter of kids splashing about. A huge breakfast followed accompanied by discussions about the lunch menu!! Lunch means fish. Fish means the fish market.....the Maniktala fish market to be precise. The Mecca of fish lovers.

Grandfather decided that Grandson must be educated about fish marketing and as a first step, switched off the AC in the room where Grandson was blissfully reposed in the land of nod. As expected, there occurred an uproar! Grandson felt he had been grossly ill treated. How could Dunda be so inconsiderate? Even cattle were treated better!! And all to buy fish?? Why, one could always go and buy fish at a more human time.... like about three in the afternoon, when a human being was nice and fresh!! But, Granddad was not to be pushed around! He got his way and having mollified grandson with a 'meager' breakfast of eggs, sausages, bacon, fried tomatoes, mushrooms and chocolate pastries.....the two started off for Maniktala market. My Dad was always impeccably dressed. Never have I seen him with so much as a hair out of place!! Now his grandson was another matter. Here he was with tousled hair, jeans rolled up to his knees, rubber slippers on his feet, one arm protectively on my Dad's shoulders....both Grandfather and Grandson, one 5'-5" and the other 6'-4" walking in perfect tandem into the fish market. Now, for those of you who have never seen the place let me describe it for you. It is a huge market devoted to selling fresh fish and produce. The star of the show however, was the fish! Fish of all shapes, sizes and hues. Fish so fresh that they literally jump out of the large tubs they are housed in. Huge big Rohus and Katlas and Bhetkis and Magurs and Kois all crying for your attention. Their shiny scales and smiley faces just tempt you to reach out and touch them. And the Fishmongers with their huge big 'Bontis' .. cry out their ware. It is absolutely fascinating!!

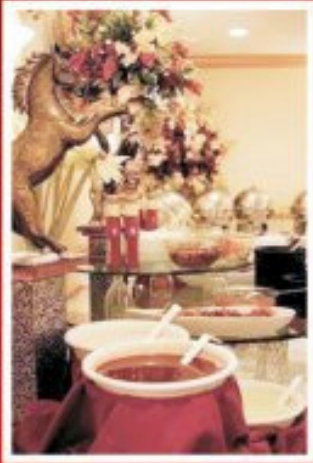


Dancing for the Gods: A Divine Medley - Directed by Suba Ramesh Parmar

Shubanjali School of Performing Arts, NJ, USA founded by artistic director Suba Ramesh Parmar in 1992, is a pioneering non-profit art organization whose mission is to encourage excellence in the practice of Bharatanatyam and Indian Folk dance in the US and around the world. Shubanjali represents a rigorously conceived methodology whereby its unique curriculum allows students to develop a thorough understanding of this art through the systematic study of technique, culture and representation of Indian arts to a global audience. The institution's creations reflect a wide range of artistic expressions ranging from traditional works to inter-cultural collaborations with artistes of diverse cultures.

Continued from page 36 → Marriage Plans

Into this Fishy heaven.....we entered. My sonny, his sleep forgotten, eyes round with delight got totally and whole heartedly into learning the art of fish purchase from a master.... my Dad!! Having bought up almost half the market as we were walking towards our car Grandson announced, "Dunda, I will marry a Bengali girl from Kolkata! That way , I will always be able to come to Maniktala market" . The Bengali in him had surfaced!! He had thought with his stomach and the argument was laid to rest finally. Grandfather was ecstatic. He had killed two birds with one stone. He had taught his grandson the finer nuances of fish purchase and in the traditions of 'Buy one, get one free' had sowed the seeds of a Bengali wedding into his Grandson's mind. I was of course, a mere fly on the wall..... Just closed my eyes and sent up a silent prayer to the Fish God for having aided me so beautifully. Now I just have to break the news to the son's father. He will understand I am sure..... He just needs to start thinking with his stomach!!



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One Dessert	Two Desserts	Three Desserts
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