



AALAYA SANDESHA

Subhamastu Avighnamastu Vijayostu

Sri Venkateswara Temple Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Devotees,
Namaskar,

The highlights of this quarter of the year were the Annual festival of India/Health Fair, Temple anniversary and a stellar Bharatanatyam recital by Meera Damaraju.

This year the Health fair raised net amount of \$ 55,000, about the same as last year. This net amount is approximately the same as last year. The average monthly expenses for the temple are about \$22,000. Our ambition was to raise a net amount more than last year, but we are thankful to all our donors and booth owners for raising the amount that we did. A special thanks to the team of all the volunteers led by Dr Srikanth Damaraju. The success of this event is in great part due to all of your support and participation. The cultural program was well organized and very entertaining. We definitely had a greater attendance this year than last year. Our aim for next year should be to spread our wings out further, invite more of the general public to attend the event and remove any roadblocks to such attendance, e.g. parking. It seems that this festival has taken a foothold in the coastal Bend area and we are hopeful to raise more funds next year. Each and every devotee is our goodwill ambassador and we appreciate your support.

Our Temple Anniversary also was also celebrated in the middle of May with great success. In spite of it being in the middle of the week, we had surprisingly good attendance, and we continue to pray that attendance to such programs will increase further over time. We are thankful to the priest Sai Chandrasekhar Sarma and his uncle Priest Sreeman Vijaya Prasad Murikipudi who came to help at this auspicious occasion.

Meera Damaraju, the niece of Dr Srikanth Damaraju performed a Bharatanatyam recital on May 31st, 2014. Her performance was very well attended and appreciated by the community. We encourage and welcome such performances at our temple.

This summer there will be a summer camp for children organized by Pooja Bindingnavale. This will be held at our temple, the details of which will be sent to you soon.

In terms of improving things for the temple and its events, efforts are being made to streamline the timing and duration of events to encourage the attendance and participation of devotees. We continue to maintain a clean environment with the help of our many volunteers and we are particularly thankful to all the food donors who bring Prasadam for devotees to partake. Any suggestion to improve the viability and function of our temple is highly encouraged and welcome.

God has always provided financial supported one way or the other to our temple such that we have managed to balance our books. The generosity of the devotees in support of this divine venture is a blessing to all.

Thank you,

Vandana Kamat MD

President

STHS Board of Trustees

Priest's Message
Morning prayer.



**“Karaagre vasathe Lakshmi
Karamadhye Saraswathi
Karamoolethu Govinda
Prabhathey Karadarshanam “**

Meaning : The front part of the hands(the finger tips)are ascribed to goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth , the middle part (the palm proper) to goddess Saraswathi- the goddess of learning at the root(the part of hand near the wrist) to Govinda (god). Therefore every morning one should have a respectful look at one's hand which symbolizes honest labor.

Meera's Dance Performance 2014

By

Srikanth Damaraju, MD FACC FSCAI



The South Texas Hindu Society was pleased to host a fundraising temple dance on May 31, '2014 between 4-6 pm

The solo Bharatanatyam recital was performed by Meera Damaraju, a talented 15 year old from Hyderabad, India – and my niece. Meera has been a student under Guru Hemamalini Arni since age five. An excellent student of the form, she was able to carry all the dances with elegance and precision. Her *abhinaya* (expression), *mudras* (hand gestures) and *natana* (dance) were flawless.

She started with an invocation to Lord Ganesha (Gajananam) and an *Alarippu*, which means “blossoming of the body”, a warmup that puts the dancer thru various tempos and sets the stage for the main event.

The *Varanam* or body of the dance was *Pachai Mamalai*, a song in Tamil about a devotee searching for his master, Lord Vishnu. At times soulful, at others vigorous and graceful, it was the best part of the evening. After a short break we were regaled with *Ananda Natana* depicting Lord Shiva after he ingested *halahal* from the ocean of milk and saved all of creation. *Thaaye Yashoda*, a classic song about gopikas complaining to Yashoda about Lord Krishna's mischief and *Thillana*, a pure dance item were the closing pieces of a wonderful performance.

With a sizeable audience, a wonderful performance and a meal to follow, it was a full cultural evening at the Sri Venkateshwara temple. Meera certainly made us all proud. The event was made successful thanks to all the support of our temple community.

We hope to continue the cultural mission of our temple through such events.

Ekaadasi
By
Dr. Mahesh Maruvada



We hear a lot about “Ekaadasi” mentioned as an auspicious day for several occasions, poojas, festivals and such. Many of you may know what is Ekaadasi about. For those who don't know this can be informative. Sri Mahaa Vishnu has more than Thousand names, one of which is "Hrishikesa".

“Hrishika” means "Indriys", "Eesha" means Lord who controls the " Indriyas". We have 11 Indriyas, 5 "Karmendrias", 5 "Jnaanendrias" and one "Antarendria", or "Antahkarana" (Buddhi). Eesha (Vishnu) controls the 11 Hrishikas. VISHNU is not just a name. He is not different from EESWARA. Both are same all pervading in the universe. They are not 2 entities sitting on top in Heaven and controlling the Universe and Terrestrial elements. They are a “Sakthi that is all pervading”, visible to us in form of Pancha Bhutas-- Bhoomi, Agni, Jala, Vaayu and Aakasha.

"Hrishikasya Hrishikena Seva" meaning, with our Indriyaas we service Hrishikesa. That service is in different forms, Bhakti, Bhajan, Poojas, Kratuvu and such. Because of this intertwining of Hrishika and Hrishikesa, Ekadasi is Lord's most favourite Tithi. Ekadashi refers to the 11 tithi of lunar days. The Ekadashi day is recognized as the best of all days to fast because it is on this day of the moon phase in which the rays of the moon actually nourish the subtle nerves and feelings of the heart. There are 24 Eekadasis (26 in a leap year) in a year. Bheeshma Ekadasi and Vaikuntha Ekadasi are most popular and observed as most auspicious Ekadasis. Some people observe complete or partial fasting which also is way of controlling our Hrishikas. Sri Satyanaarayana Pooja and several other poojas are performed on Ekaadasi Tithi.

EDITOR'S CORNER

By

Lalitha M.Janaki MD FACR

Namaste, Greetings to you all.



A number of families are visiting India for the summer vacation. I think that, it is a big blessing to be able to visit family and friends back home.

The next quarter marks the beginning of major festivals. Salutes to our teachers!! Guru Poornima falls on the full moon day in July, and this year it is on the 12th.of July .This day is also celebrated as Vyaas Poornima . Rishi Vyaas compiled and organized the four Vedas for easy reading and understanding for common people. This is our Teachers day, the day we pay respect to our teachers for the proper guidance and the right path to Dharma. Though the teacher gives unselfishly ,not expecting anything in return, we do offer Guru dakshana , a small token of Appreciation .

Other important festivals that fall during the summer months are, Rakhsa Bandhan .I do not think it needs any description, as we all are very familiar of the importance of this ritual. Upakarma is also performed on the Rakhi Poornima day. It means renewing of the Sacred Thread (Yajnoopavitta m) performed by men. The other major festivals during the months of July and August are Ganesh Chaturthi and Janmashtami .We had a very successful, well attended Festival of India, and Health Fair. Thanks to the organizers, volunteers and the participants. Congratulations and a warm welcome is in order to Srimathi Anusha Srinivasacharyulu.As most of you are aware, our priest Srinivasachari Garu was in India and returned with Srimathi Anusha Srinivasacharyulu Anikepalli.

Please join me to welcome Chi. Nivyan Mahadevan , Chi. Pavnas Ramaswamy and Chi.Pavitra Ramaswamy, our new arrivals to the community, three little angels .

Congratulations and best of luck to our high school graduates, Sonal Ahuja,Sonia Alexander, Anushka Bowal and Sara Surani.

My sincere thanks to Divya and Pratyusha for helping me prepare this news letter.

Festival of INDIA and Health fair --March 2014

