

# Samarpan

an offering....

Hindu Samaj Temple of Minnesota

Jan-Feb 2013

## President's Note

President-Elect, Temple's Bicameral Administrative Structure, Land Update and More

Dear Community Members,

Namaste! Wish you all a very happy New Year!

As they say "the only thing that is constant is change". With the ushering in of the New Year there are some changes in the Temple's leadership and administrative structure. Details of these changes and a presentation on the roadmap for the new Temple will be made at the upcoming General body Meeting on February 17th. We hope to see you there.

Dev Mukhopadhyay and I have been at the helm of the Temple's leadership for the past 6 years. After two terms it was time to bring in a new crop of able leaders to take over the day-to-day running of the Temple. Santhi Subramaniam (Subbu) was unanimously elected President-Elect and will take over the reins of the Temple on April 1st. Santhi has been an integral part of the Temple administration for the last several years. She has shown admirable leadership qualities in directing the food committee. She and her dedicated army of volunteers have fed countless Temple goers as well as those attending Holi and Deepavali cultural programs. Her mild mannered leadership style and volunteer management will be a great asset as she takes the Temple through another phase in its growth. We wish her and her new team the Very Best!

On our part Dev and I would like to express our gratitude to the community for giving us the opportunity to serve them. It is indeed an honor and privilege to do so. We have received more from you than we could ever give. Thank you for your support and trust. We will continue to serve the Temple and community in other capacities.

The Temple's administrative structure consisted of two entities: the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. Due to lack of personnel the two bodies essentially had the same members. With increasing complexity of Temple administration, need for considerable attention to new Temple development and fund raising, it is now time to formally have a bicameral administrative structure similar to that of our government and other non-profit organizations consisting of the Board of Directors (referred to simply as the Board) and a Board of Trustees (referred to simply as Trustees).

The Board will consist, as it does now, of the President, Vice President, Secretary and up to 12 Directors of individual committees (for example, Religious, Finance, Email, Web, Building and Security, etc.) to assist the President. Each Director, with the Board's permission, may recruit non-board members to a subcommittee to assist in carrying out the numerous activities of the Board. The Board shall be responsible, as it is now, for running the Temple while abiding by the bylaws.

The Trustees' role is that of an advisory body that is expected to provide vision, guidance and oversight to the Board. The Trustees will also help with community outreach and fund raising. The Trustees will be led by a Chairman and assisted by a Secretary. The President and Secretary of the Board will also be Trustees. In addition, up to 9 Trustees will be chosen from among prominent members of our community. Up to two Honorary Trustees may be chosen from the City and neighboring areas.

All the above changes have in part been triggered by the need to have dedicated staff involved with the building of the new Temple. Mr Swami Palanisamy, the structural engineer who meticulously oversaw the construction process of the Minneapolis Hindu Mandir, has generously agreed to provide guidance for planning and building our Temple. Tom Barbeau, an architect (<http://www.barbeauarchitects.com>), has agreed to help us with the architectural planning. He will present a road map for construction of the Temple in Rochester at our Annual General Body Meeting on February 17th. Both Tom and Swami have agreed to join us for our Annual Meeting to answer questions. Please do attend this important meeting where we will also announce the Community Service Awards and recognize our volunteers.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Dev Mukhopadhyay

Suresh Chari





## Editor's Note

By Jayasri Narra

Wishing you and your families a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!

On behalf of the temple Board of Directors, Samarpan Team and the volunteers, we wish to express our copious sense of gratitude to all devotees and volunteers for their magnificent contributions and support to our continually growing temple.

In the year 2012, there has been a perpetual increase in number of visitors to the temple, also new improvements and initiatives in all areas of our temple. We would like to thank all the devotees, volunteers and temple priest for your continued support and determined dedication.

We are delighted to see many devotees attend the Ganesh Pooja (Shubh Arambh) of the land purchased for our new temple. This is just a beginning and now it is time for all of us to support the stupendous effort.

Thank you to every contributor and also we would like extend this by encouraging everyone to submit articles to Samarpan.

We are eager to hear from you. Should you have any contributions and feedback, please email them to [editors@histemplemn.org](mailto:editors@histemplemn.org).

Looking forward for a spectacular year ahead and once again wishing everyone a Very Happy New Year 2013 – Samarpan Team!

Rajani Sohni  
Shyamala Bhat  
Nisha Kurup  
Jayasri Narra  
Unni Krishnan

## Priest's Column

By Sri Hari Krishna ji

Makara Sankranthi is a harvest festival. It marks the home-bringing of newly harvested grains like rice, sugarcane, lentils, etc. Hence we pray to Dhanya Lakshmi, the Goddess of grains. Thanking her for the harvest we offer Sweet Pongal. The astrological significance is that the Sun enters Makar Rasi, Capricorn zodiac constellation, on this day and hence the name, Makar Sankranthi.



The festival of Makar Sankranti is highly regarded by the Hindus from North to South. The day is known by various names like Sankranti in Andhra Pradesh, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Makara Sankramana in Karnataka, to name a few and a variety of traditions are followed in different states.

Makar Sankranti identifies a period of enlightenment, peace, prosperity and happiness. In our Temple, we did Abhishekam to Goddess Lakshmi's idol and prayed for the prosperity of all.

Makar  
Sankranti  
in Rochester, MN



**Lorhi**

By Herchran Singh

Lorhi is a celebration of the winter solstice that originates in Punjab, but has spread to Sindh, Jammu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi, and is celebrated on January 13th. Farmers look at it as the New Year, and thank God for the success of their harvest. It celebrates the natural elements of water, wind, earth, and especially fire. Traditionally, Lorhi is known for the rabi crops (wheat, barley, mustard, sesame, peas), which are sown in the winter and harvested in the summer. This wonderful celebration was featured in the Indian movie *VeerZaara*.

The cultural part of Lorhi is the celebration. Children go house to house asking for Lorhi, like Halloween, while singing folk songs. People hand out sweets like *gachchak*, *rewri* (sesame and sugar), *popcorn*, *gur* (jaggery), *moongphali* (peanuts), and sometimes money. Families that have had a particularly happy occurrence, like a marriage or childbirth, in the past year, invite neighbors over for a bonfire in the evening. Everyone celebrates with singing, dancing and food. A common meal during Lorhi is Sarson da Saag and Makki di Roti.

One of the many songs sung during Lorhi is Sunder Mundriye:

*Sunder mundriye ho!  
Tera kaun vicharaa ho!  
Dullah Bhatti walla ho!  
Dullhe di dheer vyayae ho!  
Ser shakkar payee ho!  
Kudi da laal pathaka ho!  
Kudi da saalu paata ho!  
Salu kaun samete!  
Chacha gali dese!  
Chache choori kutti! zamidara lutti!  
Zamindaar sudhaye!  
Bum Bum bhole aaye!  
Ek bhola reh gaya!  
Sipahee far ke lai gaya!  
Sipahee ne mari itt!  
Bhaanvey ro te bhaanvey pitt!  
Sanoo de de Lorhi, te teri jeeve jodi!*

**Sankranti**

By Keerthi Manikonda

*Sankranti* is a festival that is celebrated for 4 days. The first day is known as *Bhogi*. This day is celebrated by waking up early in the morning and gathering in front of homes to light up a *Bhogi* fire and useless materials are thrown in the fire, which symbolizes driving away of evil spirits from the households. The second day, *Makar Sankranti*, is the main day of the 4 day festival, celebrated to mark the beginning of the harvest season. The 3rd day is *Kanuma*, and the fourth is *Mukkanuma*. On these days, the cattle sheds and cattle are cleaned and decorated. The cattle are also worshipped.

What happens if we celebrate the 4 days into one day and most of the Telugu community gathers to celebrate? We have fun! On January 19th, 2013, the Telugu community came together to celebrate the *Sankranti* festival. Everyone gathered and we had a potluck. There was sweet *pongal*, *rava laddoo*, *vegetable biryani*, and amongst many tasty items, ice-cream! Everyone chit-chatted and got to know each other more. Festivals like this help communities get together. Especially the kids. We sat and talked, played charades, tag, and did other stuff.

And what happened half way across the world a couple days earlier in Andhra Pradesh? Some villages in Andhra Pradesh had rooster fights, one of my favorite things to watch. Last year, when I went to India, I saw roosters, but never saw them fight. This year, when I turned on the TV and switched to the Telugu news channel, I saw two roosters fighting. Even though I wasn't there in person to see it, it was fun. I also remember when I went to India, in front of the doorsteps were colorful rangoli, which are designs made out of chalk powder.

This is what I did for *Sankranti*, and as far as I know, what many other people did to celebrate this festival. What did you do?





## Tamil Pongal Celebrations

By Karpagam Maran



The Tamil community celebrated Pongal for the 8th year straight on January 12th. The name for this Tamil festival is from a dish made that day with new harvested rice and dhal, called Pongal - prepared both as a sweet and a salted version. Pongal is the equivalent of Sankranti celebrated in other parts of India - a harvest festival conveying thanks to the Sun God .

In Rochester this year, the celebration started at 6:30 pm with the arrival of women guests dressed in Indian clothes and jewelry, and men, mostly in jeans, not even attempting to compete with the women! A traditional meal of Pongal, Idli ,Vada, Sambar and Chutney catered this year and the socialization that happened with food, and the cultural program after dinner made up for variety and flavor of the occasion.

Here is the sample of the variety that I am talking about - there were solo dancing and duet performances, group dances with girls only, boys only and mixed groups. The ages of the participants ranged from 4 to 40 plus! Flute and Mridangam were two of the instrumental music programs that day. Music and dance were both classical and as well as choreographed to popular Tamil Cinema beats. While the practiced entertainment was being staged, there was a side-bar entertainment of moms being more tensed than their kids about the kids' performances and dads ready with their cameras to move in front when it was their kid's turn to perform !

Countless emails and phone calls went into organizing this function which was attended by 145 members from the Rochester Indian community that included people of Tamil origin and others. Moms who complained that kids' practices are time consuming before the program have already started planning for next year's celebrations!

Sivapriya Natarajan was the main initiator 8 years ago for the community celebration to start and she is still the official leader of the unofficial Tamil group in organizing this. To make the celebration happen every year she is ably assisted by her spouse and a loyal group of friends.



You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul."

Swami Vivekananda



## Nandalala

By Ganga Gopalkrishnan

### Rochester Vidhyalaya Regional Concert series - Nandalala presented by Kalanjali School of dance

The misty evening of December 16<sup>th</sup> was turned into a mystical experience at the Hindu Samaj Temple. That is when the Kalanjali team led by Guru Meenakshi Ganesan transformed the temple into Vrindavan narrating the stories of Lord Sri Krishna. The halls were decked with jingles from dancers bells and giggles from little ones from Rochester enjoying the stories of mischievous Krishna.

Guru Meenakshi Ganesan, from Kalanjali School in Madison, did her dance schooling from her Guru Prema Nagasundaram and Nritya Shiksha Choodamani Padmini Radahakrishnan. She completed her prestigious degree of Vishaarad in Bharatanatyam and is conferred the Nritya Mayuri award from the Ministry of Education in India. She has choreographed and performed in prestigious stages and academies all over India and the US.



Meenakshi and her 7 students balanced and performed all the intricacies of *Nritta* and *Nritya* in Tanjavor style in the series of stories depicting the birth and the incarnations of Lord Krishna. Starting with *Alarippu* and *Mallari*, the dancers enthralled the audience with the perfection and the intricacies of *adavus*. The *padam* "Jagadodharana" performed by Meenakshi brought out the mother in everyone with her gentle and passionate emotions - who does not like to pamper mischievous Krishna just like Yasodha did. I would think this was the pinnacle of the evening. This was followed by *Kaliya Mardanam* - the killing of evil serpent by Lord Krishna. The budding artists of Rochester were screaming "Go", "Go" to see the fight culminate in the victo-

ry of Lord Krishna. The performance ended with *Thillana* at which there was a void in the hall. The dance students of Rochester Vidhyalaya compared their learning to their Madison counterparts and were able to see themselves as future dancers.

Thank you to Meenakshi and her students for a wonderful performance in collaboration with Rochester Vidhyalaya. It surely did start the holiday season with warmth for all of us.

## Laughing Yoga

By Unnikrishnan



Our community welcomed 2013 New Year with Hasyayoga or Laughing Yoga. Certified training instructor, Lisa Bouta, from the twin cities came to the Hindu Samaj Temple on a weekend and guided us in this session. She explained about the healing properties and advantages of practicing Laughing Yoga. Once the session started, it felt as though we were letting out our exhaustion and stress. People stopped being self-conscious and laughed whole heartedly. She guided us through lots of techniques and props to trigger laughter. The one and a half hours of laughter medicine did do wonders and by the end of the session all of us felt as if we had worked on exercising our core muscles. Many of us felt that it's been long time since we laughed so much and agreed unanimously that it was the best way to usher in the New Year!!



## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA – 150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

By Vaishali Joshi

Swami Vivekananda's inspiring personality was well known both in India and in America. He represented Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. His mission to America was to interpret the Vedanta philosophy of India and as such, he was India's first spiritual ambassador to America. Service to man was his highest teaching to the people of India who were more devoted to the rituals and myths of their faith. He taught a man-making religion.

Under the guidance of his master Swami Ramakrishna, he had a direct experience of Self Realization and saw the divine in all. His love for mankind was evident in his teaching of universal brotherhood and oneness of existence as explained in the ancient Vedic texts. Being a mystic, his mind rejoiced in the bliss of contemplation on God but his heart felt the sufferings of humanity. Between the two, he chose service to man as his mission in life.

During his short life of thirty-nine years (1863-1902), he wrote four outstanding texts on the Hindu philosophy : *Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga* and *Raja-yoga*. In addition, he delivered innumerable lectures and was a spiritual guide to many seekers. He also organized the Ramakrishna Order of Monks, which is devoted to the spread of Hindu spiritual culture throughout the world. His life and teachings are written in many books in many languages and his quotes are still an inspiration to many.

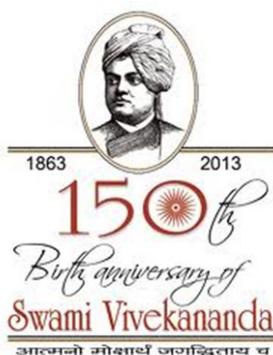
This year, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, was the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of this great personality – Swami Vivekananda. Along with many communities worldwide, this occasion was also celebrated by the Rochester community. Organized by Vishwa Vidya Balagokulam, the event took place at Hindu Samaj temple on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 10am. The program included a video on the life of Swami Vivekananda, talk on his teachings by the keynote speaker Swami Nishpandananda (Ramakrishna Mission, St. Louis) and devotional songs on Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishna by Kalyan ji and Malabika Bhattacharya.

As part of yearlong celebrations, Balagokulam will be conducting activities for all age groups to commemorate this occasion. Vishwa Vidya Balagokulam Rochester and the Hindu Samaj Temple welcome all kids to participate in the Dharma Bee contest. The contest will be held at the temple on 30<sup>th</sup> March from 10am to 12pm. Preparatory classes for the contest will be held at the temple every Saturday from 10am to 12pm to help participants prepare for the written exam. This is a great opportunity for children to learn about the life and teachings of two great personalities - Swami Vivekananda and Lord Krishna, and win awards.

**For registration and details of the contest please visit [www.dharmabee.org](http://www.dharmabee.org).**

Other activities planned are: debate contest for youth, exhibition on the life of Vivekananda and Dharma fest. We invite all to participate and get inspired from the life and teachings of a great hero - Swami Vivekananda.

\*compiled from various sources, including <http://www.ramakrishna.org/sv.htm>



“Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life; dream of it; think of it; live on that idea. Let the brain, the body, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced.” - Swami Vivekananda

## Pongal Recipes

By Karpagam Maran



### Ven ( salted) Pongal

1 cup white rice	1/3 cup yellow moong dal
1 teaspoon finely chopped ginger	¼ teaspoon asafoetida
1 teaspoon whole pepper	1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon black pepper powder	4-5 curry leaves chopped
2 tablespoons halved cashew	2 tablespoons ghee or more according to taste
2 tablespoons oil	4 ½ cups of water for ponni or sona masuri ( 3 1/2 cups if jasmine or long grain rice )
Salt to taste	

Heat a pan on medium heat and roast the yellow moong dal until you get a roasted aroma.

Wash rice and mix with the roasted dal. Add water and cook using a pressure cooker or in a pot or rice cooker until done. Cook until you get the texture to suit your taste. Place a small pan on medium heat - add the oil and roast the peppercorns for a few seconds. Add cumin seeds, ginger, curry leaves, pepper powder, asafoetida and sauté for a few more seconds. Turn off heat and set aside.

Now heat ½ teaspoon of ghee in a small pan and roast the cashew nuts until golden and crisp.

Once the rice-dal mixture is cooked, add the roasted spices, cashew nuts to the rice-dal mixture. Add salt according to taste and remaining ghee and mix. Coconut Chutney goes well with Pongal.



### Chakara (sweet) Pongal

1 cup white rice	1/3 cup yellow moong dal
1 teaspoon whole pepper	2 tablespoons halved cashew
4 tablespoons ghee or more according to taste	3 ½ cups of water for ponni or sona masuri ( 2 1/2 cups if jasmine or long grain rice )
1 ½ cups of milk	3 tea spoons of raisins
3 cardamom powdered	2 table spoons of fresh grated coconut ( defrost if using frozen)
2 cups of powdered jaggery and ½ cup of water ( you can add more jaggery if you want it sweeter)	

Wash rice and mix with the roasted dal. Add water and milk and cook using a pressure cooker or in a pot or rice cooker until done. Place a small pan on medium heat – dry roast coconut to golden and set aside. Now heat ½ teaspoon of ghee in a small pan and roast the cashew nuts until golden and crisp. Repeat this for raisins until they fluff.

Once the rice-dal mixture is cooked, heat a pan add jaggery and water and let the jaggery melt. Keep the flame low for 3 minutes and then add the rice and dhal mixture and cardamom powder. Keep stirring in low flame for 15 minutes. At this time if you feel it is dry and not your consistency you can add milk or hot water and let it cook for 5 more minutes. Add remaining ghee, roasted raisins, cashews and roasted coconut and mix well.

Heat a pan on medium heat and roast the yellow moong dal until you get a roasted aroma.



## North South Foundation Educational Contests

By Usha Asirvatham

Every year the North South Foundation (NSF) conducts educational contests for children of Indian origin. NSF is a volunteer driven non-profit organization whose mission is to develop human resources by giving scholarships to brilliant but needy students in India entering colleges, regardless of religion, gender, caste or creed. By 2012, NSF has distributed more than 4,500 scholarships to students in India.



Majority of funding for this mission comes from the educational contests organized by NSF in the US to encourage academic excellence among Indian American children. NSF conducts spelling, vocabulary, math, essay writing, public speaking, brain and geography bees.

**US Contests Information:** These contests are open to children of Indian American origin. Based on the contest category, the contests are grouped into Junior, Intermediate or Senior levels for children from first through twelfth grades. The contests are conducted every year in two steps. First, children participate in Regional contests held at various locations throughout the country during the months of March through May. Participants with high scores, based on a cut-off, will be invited to the National Finals to be held in August-September. We can support such a noble mission in 2 ways:

1. By directly donating to the organization or by volunteering to start a new chapter anywhere in India. If interested please email: nsfindiascholarships@gmail.com

2. By encouraging our children to participate in the regional educational contests.

Registration is now open for regional contests in Math, Science, Vocabulary and Spelling bees in Rochester. Contests are planned for March 24<sup>th</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Please visit [www.northsouth.org](http://www.northsouth.org) to register online and learn more about the contests. For any questions regarding the contests or the informational sessions, please contact Usha Asirvatham at 358 9552 (ushaasirvatham@hotmail.com) or Bhavani Anandarao at 282 7385 (anandarao.durgabhavani@mayo.edu).

## Quiz

By Nisha Kurup

1. Swami Vivekananda was known in all these names except:

- a. Naren    b. Vireshwar    c. Narendranath Datta  
d. Narayen    e. none of the above

2. He is not a prominent leader of Brahma Samaj:

- a. Keshab Chandra Sen    b. Devendranath Tagore  
c. Subhash Chandra Bose    d. Raja Ram Mohan Roy

3. The date for Makar Sankranti hardly changes and most often occurs on the 14th of January as it is dependent on the:

- a. Lunar Calendar    b. Indian Calendar  
c. Nine Planets    d. Solar Calendar    e. Gregorian calendar

4. A complete practice or Sadhana of Soorya Namaskar / Sun salutation involve the:

- a. Asanas    b. chakra meditation  
c. pranayama    d. mantra    e. all the above



## Quiz - Food for thought

By Nisha Kurup

5. This prominent personality is not a member of the Theosophical Society which was founded in New York, but has its current headquarters situated at Chennai:

- a. Henry Olcott                      b. Annie Besant  
c. Rabindranatha Tagore    d. Jiddu Krishnamoorthy              e. All are members

6. Who according to the great epic Mahabharatha is accredited with the origin of the the 1000 names of Vishnu or Vishnu Sahasra-naamam ?

- a. Adi Sankara                      b. Yudhishtira  
c. Arjuna    d. Bhishma                      e. Sri Krishna

*Please email your answers to  
quizmaster@histemplemn.org  
with the title "Food for Thought".*

7. The text that deals with temple construction and worship is:

- a. Agama Sastra    b. Artha Sastra  
c. Kaama Sasthra    d. Tharkka Sasthra                      e. Sankalpa Sasthra

8. Name the personality or personalities not considered as a Trimoorthy in South Indian Classical (Carnatic) music.

- a. Pattammal                      b Swathi Thirunal  
c. Shyama Sasthri    d. only a & c                      e. b and c only                      f. only a & b

9. Who is the music composer of Richard Attenborough's famed movie "Gandhi"?

- a. Akbar Ali Khan                      b. Nino Rota  
c. Ravi Shankar                      d. Maurice Jarre

10. Andal, the Tamil Saint who is an epitome of devotion or bhakthi, wrote these two works that are revered and sung by devotees.

- a. Devaram                      b. Tiruppavai                      c. Tiruvachakam    d. Nachiyar Tirumoli  
e. a and c                      f. b and c only                      g. b and d only

## Laughter the best medicine

-Unni

