



Newsletter

May / June, 2009



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P.O. Box. 204264, Augusta, GA 30907. 1421 Lukes Rd., Augusta GA 30909. Ph. (706)-860-3864

Upcoming Events

May 17, 2009 (Sunday) 10:00 AM Graduation Pooja

HTS will celebrate the 2009 high school graduation with a Ganesh Pooja. All interested students or their parents can contact Sheila Kamath for additional information (706-650-5751; email sheila731@yahoo.com). As in the past, prizes will be awarded for best essay, highest SAT score, and best youth group volunteer. The topic for this year's essay competition is "The role of the temple in promoting and understanding the Hindu religion among the youth". The essay should not be more than 350 words, typed, double spaced and sent to sheila731@yahoo.com by May 5th. The essays will be judged for content, grammar as well as style. All graduates are asked to come in traditional Indian clothes and bring fruits and flowers. The plates and pooja samagri will be provided by HTS. Parents of the graduates are requested to contact Sheila Kamath immediately for preparation of the prasad.

June 4, 2009 (Thursday) 6:00 – 8:00 PM Meditation Program by Swami Ken

Program is at the new temple and free of charge and the initiation is for people of all paths. Swami Ken received a special type of initiation known as "Tapas" from his guru, Sri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. The tapas initiation, as given by Swami Shivabalayogi, is for a few souls who are able to sit in samadhi for extended periods. After initiation, Swami Ken lived at Sri Shivabalayogi's ashram in Bangalore and practiced meditation for 10 - 15 hours per day. He has sustained his tapas for more than 7 years and his meditation practice more than 25 years. His meditation center, Shantivan Dhyana Meditation Retreat Center, is in Faribault, Minnesota.

June 7, 2009 (Sunday) Discourse & Bhajans by Siddheshvari Devi Ji

11:30 am-1:00 pm: Topic for adults; ' Talking about Hinduism to your children'. As a world traveler Siddheshvari Devi Ji meets many Hindu parents all over the globe who are heartbroken due to their children converting from Hinduism to other religions. Then there are those who struggle with providing plausible answers to their children's questions regarding Hinduism. Added to this, the media and textbooks misrepresent the eternal religion from which all faiths have gained inspiration. In her talk, Didi Ji will provide answers to some common questions regarding Hinduism and will take questions from the audience.

2:00 – 3:00 pm: Topic for children; Story of Prahlad and God. Didi Ji will speak about Prahlad, Hiranyakashyapu and Narasimha (God as half man, half lion). Please contact Padmaja Bapat (706-860-5152) for additional information.

May/June 2009

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Temple News

Committees (BN Roy) The Board of Trustees thanks the following for agreeing to serve on two important committees.

Nomination Committee:

Ravi Jerath (Chair), Rao Pasala and Praful Patel

Construction Committee:

Primary: Pankaj Bhatt (Chair), Adarsh Gulati, Kartik Subramanian, Devindar Mehta, BN Roy

Alternates: Sheila Kamath, Partha Mukherjee and Arvind Shah

Update on old temple renovation (BN Roy) A contract with the architect was signed and drawings are being reviewed. The builder for construction work has been selected. Approval of county inspector is expected at the end of May and construction will begin in first week of June, with Diwali 2009 as a target day of completion.

RANG BARSE (Nidhi Gulati) This Holi program by the HTS Youth Group was held at the Columbia County Library auditorium on March 11, 2009. Over 40 youth group members helped in organizing this entire program including collecting advertisements, providing snacks, and performing an excellent variety program. The program was completely sold out! \$1001 of the proceeds collected from this program were donated to the American Cancer Society and the remainder to our HTS. Congratulations to all the participants and organizers of our excellent Youth Group for a job well done.

2009 SPORTS DAY (Manan Vakil) On Sunday, March 22, HTS celebrated annual sports day at the Kelly Park. More than 30 kids from ages 2 to 12 participated very enthusiastically in the games and enjoyed the nice sunny weather. As in the past, Karthik Subramanian and a few volunteers organized the games for kids. HTS cricket tournament was also played on the same day. The winning team included Ashish Patel (Captain), Vinod Chudgar (Vice Captain), Raju (Ramada), Lalo, Jignesh, Arun, Nisarg, Ishwarbhai, Nilesh, Keyur, Dinesh (SRS), Kantibhai, Manan, Mahesh Shah and Harendrabhai. Several volunteers that made this sports day a success were Mukund (trophies); Achyutbhai, Jay Amin, Haresh, Manan (transport); Kantibhai, Praful, Nita, Dakshaben (lunch); Mahesh Patel, Jignesh, Lalo, Nisarg, Raju, Aditya, Niren and all others.

Trophies were awarded to winning teams and everybody enjoyed the lunch provided by Kantibhai. A few pictures of sports day winners are on the next page. You can see all the pictures from 2009 sports day on the web at <http://picasaweb.google.com/mvakil01/HTSSPORTSDAY?feat=directlink>.

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SPORTS DAY 2009



Sports News:

- HTS Tennis Tournament will be held at Lakeside High School on May 16th Saturday at 7:30 AM. Contact Ashok Pillai to register (706-855-1349).
 - HTS sponsored Volleyball tournaments were held on 4/25. Winners are: Dr. Rakesh Patel (Captain), Ashwin, Babubhai (SRS), Dineshbhai (Motel), Himanshu, Janakbhai, Nitin Bhatt, Praful (SRS), Rajnibhai. **Thanks to all participants and coordinators.**
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The HTS group served 320 people at the soup kitchen on March 29th. Thanks to the following people who took the time to serve the needy: Komala Nambiar, Anjana Shah, BN Roy, Arvind and Kshama Shah, Sreelekha and ParthaMukherjee, Hareesh Vyas, Padmaja and Pradeep Bapat, Rani Bhatt, Akash Gulati, Swandipta Misra, Meena and Vinod Chudgar, and Sheila Kamath.

Please volunteer for the Soup Kitchen.

Next Soup Kitchen will be on May 24, 2009. Volunteers are needed.

Contact Padmaja Bapat, Sheila Kamath or Susan Gopal for more information.



Siddheshvari Devi Ji (fondly known as 'Didi Ji') was born in India and spent her formative years in Canada, graduating from York University in Toronto with a degree in languages. From early childhood, Didi Ji had been questioning the purpose of life. Upon graduation, Didi Ji's spiritual quest led her to her Spiritual Master, **Jagadguru Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj**, who has been proclaimed by *Kashi Vidvat Parishad* as the fifth Jagadguru in India, preceded by Jagadgurus Shankaracharya, Nimbarkacharya, Ramanujacharya and Madhvacharya. Didi Ji spent two years in the ashram and learned directly from her Gurudev the intricate mysteries of the vedas and shastras.

Under the banner of **Radha Madhav Society**, a non-profit charitable organization, functioning under the auspices of **JAGADGURU KRIPALU PARISHAT**, Didi Ji is continuously striving to spread the message of Hinduism and dispel the myths and misconceptions related to it. An eloquent speaker, her mission is to simplify the eternal message of the vedas and shastras and awaken love for god within the hearts of seeking souls. Didi Ji's talks are designed to answer the numerous questions that

arise on spirituality, clarify doubts about the path to God-realization and show how we can practically apply vedic knowledge to improve our daily life.

मन

We are happy to introduce a new column for our news letter. *Dr. Ramesh Pai* has graciously agreed to contribute to HTS news letter. *Dr. Pai* is a retired professor of surgery and very knowledgeable about the Hindu faith. He has taught about Hinduism in Comparative Religion class at Evans and Burke county high schools and to 500 ASU humanities students that visit our temple twice a year. His passion is the *Bhagavad Gita* and he is very interested in helping people understand the basics and essentials of Hinduism.

Mythology and its Place in Hinduism

The definition of the word "myth" according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary is "a traditional narrative usually involving supernatural persons and embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena."

At the beginning, it must be strongly emphasized that in basic Vedantic Hinduism, the Supreme Reality is single and formless (*nirguna and niraakara*). However, our wise and ancient teacher sages, the *rishis*, knew that for the vast majority of human beings, it would be extremely difficult to conceive a formless entity to meditate upon. For such persons, they offered a God with *form* and *attributes* (*saguna and sakaara*). This was meant only as a preliminary step for the realization of the absolute single formless God.

The basis of the vast literature of *Hindu mythology* is couched mostly, but not entirely, in our beautiful language *Sanskrit*. It consists of the eighteen *Puranas*, the most important of which is the *Srimad Bhagvatam* of *Sage Vyasa*, and two great epics or *Itihaasaas*, the *Ramayana* of *Sage Valmiki*, and the *Mahabharata* of *Sage Vyasa*. The *Ramayana* has twenty four thousand verses, and the *Mahabharata*, the longest epic poem in the world, has one hundred thousand verses. It is said that all the qualities that can be found in the world, whether good or bad, are depicted in the *Mahaabharata*. The depiction is so inclusive and complete that if any characteristics are not described in this epic, they cannot be found in any other source.

Many of the characters in these books have supernatural powers and demonstrate supreme virtues such as courage, heroism, loyalty and sacrifice. Hence they are given superhuman status as gods or part manifestations of the *Supreme*. They serve as role models for the worshipper to admire and emulate. Two familiar examples are *Hanuman*, the monkey god, and *Ganesh* who has the head of an elephant. Most people fail to perceive the deeper *symbolic* significance. It is the same reverence that Christians display for the cross and why Muslims face Mecca during their prayers. The material with which the images are made, whether it is wood, clay, stone, or metal, makes no difference to the worshipper, as he is contemplating on what the image represents. For example, when a devotee stands before the image of Hanumaan, he is not thinking of the monkey form but recalling the events in the *Ramayana* and the glorious achievements of this character illustrating intelligence, loyalty, devotion, courage and heroism. This explains why Hindus worship a multiplicity of gods, and removes the misconception that Hindus are "idol worshippers."

A true incident from the life of *Swami Vivekananda* illustrates this concept very well. In the course of his extensive walking tour of India, he was the guest of a rajah. The rajah was an advocate of formless worship and decried that his subjects were ignorant as they were worshippers of idols. Swamiji, noticing some paintings of the rajah's ancestors hanging on the walls, expressed a desire to have a closer look at the portrait of the rajah's father. His wish was complied with and the painting was placed on a table. Thereupon Swamiji asked one of the courtiers to spit on the portrait. Everyone was shocked and the courtier said, "How can I do that? It is the former rajah!" Swamiji remarked, "It is not the former rajah but only a piece of cloth on which the artist has dabbed some colored paint." The rajah and his courtiers understood how strong mental association could evoke deep emotions such as respect.

It has been rightly said that the worshipper devotee when immersed in intensely deep contemplation is no longer aware of his surroundings and loses body consciousness. He realizes that he is only the inner core, the *Spirit* or *Atman*, and merges with the object of his concentration. This is true *Spiritual Yoga*, the same as *Mukti* or *Liberation*. It is freedom from the recurrent cycles of birth and death. What one devotee attempts to achieve through the difficult path of self-denial, austerity, and asceticism, another achieves by the easier path through worship of GOD with FORM.

धन

Mittal Da Mettle

by Krishna Prasad

Lakshmi Mittal is on quite a few TOP 10 lists of wealth and on covers of magazines. If we can get past the chest-pounding rituals and feelings of economic jingoism when his name appears on such lists, Mr. Mittal's story is inspirational as well as educational. He brought significant changes to an industry that was thought to be mature and less susceptible to innovation and improvements in efficiency.

Lakshmi Mittal's rise to the top of steel-industry is not exactly a 'rags to riches' story (Sorry, Bollywood fans!). Lakshmi Narayan Mittal was born in 1950, in a small village in Rajasthan. His family moved to Calcutta, where his father (Mohan Mittal) started a small steel mill. Lakshmi Mittal worked in his father's company during and after his college education in business accounting. In the 1970s, during the peak of license raj in India, there was little room for growth of private steel mills. Established government (Steel Authority of India Ltd.) and private (Tata) steel makers, in an environment of excessive regulation, made it difficult to expand business. In mid-seventies, with the help and advice from elder Mr. Mittal, Lakshmi started a steel plant (Ispat Indo) in Jakarta, Indonesia. One of the key factors in success of Ispat Indo was the use of direct-reduced iron (DRI) instead of more expensive steel billets or scrap. A government steel firm in Trinidad supplied DRI to Ispat Indo. While Mittal's company was profitable, his DRI supplier was losing money to the tune of \$ 1 million per day. At the request of the Trinidadians, he started running their government steel company and quickly made it profitable in 1989. He eventually ended up buying this company.

In 1992, Lakshmi Mittal bought a mexican DRI steel company (Sicartsa) during a wave of privatization of industries in that country. It is about the same time when the government regulations and economy in India, which forced him to make international debut, were being relaxed. He later went on to buy state-owned steel mills that were in financial trouble in Canada, Germany, Romania and Kazakhstan. He also bought Inland Steel and International Steel in USA, when these rust belt companies were withering. In 2004, Mittal Steel was formed by merger of his steel operations.

During an Alpine ski trip in December 2005, Lakshmi Mittal and his son Aditya came up with a plan to acquire Arcelor, a French steel giant with operations across Europe. When they made the bid, the French officials were not quite sure if they were being attacked by Indians, Americans or British (Mr. Mittal lives in London). Guy Dolle, then CEO of Arcelor, was reported to have referred to the bid to buy with shares of Mittal Steel as bunch of Indians offering 'Monkey Money'. After intense negotiations, Mittal Steel acquired Arcelor to form the biggest steel company in the world, Arcelor-Mittal. "Cold Steel: Britain's Richest Man and the Multi-Billion-Dollar Battle for a Global Empire", a book by Tim Bouquet and Byron Ousey is interesting to read with the suspense, secrets and strategies of these negotiations.

It is interesting that Lakshmi Mittal had to face the protectionist attitude of French government, at the end of his meteoric rise to the top of global steel industry from the beginning of his international venture that was forced by Indian government's protectionist policies. Along this journey he was successful by acquiring firms that were failing probably because they were state-owned. The lesson in the current troubled economic times and natural tendency to support protectionist measures across the globe is clear. As with all of us mortals, Mr. Mittal is not flawless. Sure, he could have parted with more of his wealth to make it to the philanthropy lists. He could have toned down the lavish spending at the weddings of his two children and he certainly had his share of controversies. But the fact that he improved efficiency in steel industry and helped decrease world-wide costs of construction is certainly a noble achievement.

(Views expressed are those of the author and do not represent HTS)

May 2009

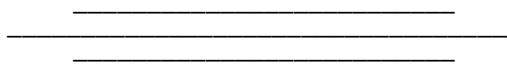
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 priest dayoff					1 7p Devi Puja	2 9a Karthikeya, Puja Priest busy
3	4	5 7p Satyanarayan Pooja	6	7 Narasimha Jayanti priest dayoff	8	9 9a BalajiPuja Priest busy @Temple
10	11	12 7p Ganesh Pooja- Angarica	13	14 priest dayoff	15	16
17 10a 3rdsundaypuja GRADUATION PUJA	18	19	20	21 priest dayoff	22 Priest Busy	23 Priest Busy
24 Priest Busy Soup Kitchen	25 Priest busy 7p Shiv Pooja	26	27	28 priest dayoff	29 10a Priest Busy	30

June 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Priest Day Off	1 7p Shiv Pooja	2	3 7p Satyanarayan Pooja	4 priest dayoff 6p Program by Swami Ken	5 7p Devi Puja	6 9a Karthikeya Puja, Priest busy
7 11:30a Discourse by Siddheshvari Devi for Adults 2p for Children	8 7p Shiv Pooja	9	10 Priest Day Off	11 7p Ganesh Pooja	12	13
14 10:30a Priest Busy	15 7p Shiv Pooja	16	17	18 priest dayoff	19	20
21 8a 3rd Sunday -Havan- Temple-Priest Busy	22 7p Shiv Pooja	23	24	25 priest dayoff	26	27
28 priest dayoff	29 7p Shiv Pooja	30 10:30a Priest Busy				

SCHEDULE

Mondays	7pm	Shiv Puja
1 st Friday	7pm	Devi Puja
1 st Saturday	9am	Karthikeya Puja
2 nd Saturday	9am	Shri Venkateshwara Puja
3 rd Sunday	10am	Monthly Puja
2 nd & 4 th Sunday	2 pm	Jain Puja



We thank the following HTS alumni for their donations to the temple:

Saipriya Neti, Saiprasanna Neti, Sreyoshi Roy, Siddhartha Roy, Ananya Mukherjee Lively,
Sharmistha Roy Mowry, Rajarshi Ganguly, Rajib Bhattacharjea and Praveena Venugopalan.

<p>The Hindu Temple Society P.O. Box 204264 Augusta, GA. 30907</p>	<p>DONATE GENEROUSLY TO YOUR TEMPLE</p>
<p>THE LAST DAY OF INPUT FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 20th OF THE MONTH. PLEASE SEND YOUR INPUT TO</p> <p>sashdhru@gmail.com Bkrishnaprasad@msn.com</p>	<p>PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>BE A PERPETUAL DONOR</p>

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