



Newsletter

July / August, 2010



www.augustahts.com

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Upcoming Events

July 28 & 29 7:00 PM **Meditation Program**

Swami Ken's meditation program is scheduled for Wednesday, July 28 and Thursday, July 29 at 7:00 p.m. in the temple's cultural center building. Participants can attend one or both evenings, and it is free of charge. The program and initiation is for people of all paths. After the program, he will be giving out vibhuti to enhance meditation practice, and the participants can also ask him for a special vibhuti for any healing they need.

Swami Ken is one of Shivabalayogi's successors. He lived in Shivabalayogi's ashram in Bangalore and practiced meditation 10 - 15 hours per day. He has received tapas initiation, which is for those few souls who are able to sit in samadhi for extended periods of time. He has sustained his tapas for more than 7 years and his meditation practice for more than 25 years. When he is not traveling around the country giving programs, he resides at his meditation center in Faribault, Minnesota. This is his third year of programs at the temple. Please contact Karen Goodrow for additional information (706) 294-9132.

August 8 10:30 AM **First Day of Balashala**

August 20 6:00 PM **Mahalakshmi Vrat**

August 21 9:00 AM **Hanuman Havan**

Suprabhatam at 9 AM, followed by Abhishek and Puja
Mahaprasad will be served

August 22 4:00 PM **Tagore Film at Cultural Center**

Executive Committee

President: Vidya Sridharan (860-7160)

Vice President: Amitava Ganguly (860-5586)

Secretary: Mohan Wakade (863-3568)

Joint Secretaries: Krishna Prasad (*Scheduling*, 651-1928)

Mukesh Gupta (863-5713)

Sashwat Dhru (951-5662)

Treasurers: P. UnniKrishanan (803-279-3996)

T.N. Muralidhar (860-6856)

Kanaka Sundaram (863-8378)

BOT Bulletin

The Trustees are entrusted with the fiscal management of the Temple. In the past year we have had to deal with issues of replacement and repairs. We recently replaced two A/C units for approximately \$10,000. The donations collected during the annual fund raiser- Lakshmi pooja covered this cost. One other A/C unit needs to be replaced next year. Other upcoming projects are to replace the broken tiles in the foyer, replace carpets etc. Our monthly costs are about \$7500. The entire membership collection last year was \$53,000.

Membership has declined and costs have gone up and membership alone cannot sustain the costs of running and maintaining the Temple. We have used \$10,000 for cultural programs this year and need to be frugal in our spending. The Trustees decided by unanimous vote to change to a two tier structure to make it simple for record keeping and eliminate the membership plus category. \$150 will be basic donor/membership and \$300 and up will be the perpetual donor category. The Temple will continue to sponsor limited number of quality programs. Much will depend on the budget, which in turn depends on membership collection at Diwali and other donations. Some of these programs may be free for members, some discounted and some ticketed events for all. This is a brief bulletin from the Board of Trustees. There are many religious events planned in the weeks ahead. We hope all devotees participate. May God Bless us all!

- **Sheila Kamath**
Chair, BOT

Temple News

Graduation Pooja (Sheila Kamath) The graduation pooja for high school seniors as well as college graduates was held on May 16th. Satyaji conducted the Ganesh pooja and all participating graduates received a silver Ganesh coin. The prize for the highest SAT score went to Pramod Ganapathy. The Youth group representatives Rani Bhattt and Pramod Ganapathy were recognized for their efforts this past year. Mikhil Desai was recognized as the best Balshala volunteer. No entries were submitted on time for the essay writing contest.

Safe Driver Training (BN Roy) HTS hosted the AARP Safe Driver's training class in April. A total of 15 members participated and were awarded the completion certificates.

Tagore Celebration (BN Roy) The 150th birth anniversary celebration of Rabindranath Tagore at the Cultural Center was a huge success. About 200 people attended the program that presented songs, dance, music and drama based on the Nobel laureate's compositions.

A program showing an award winning documentary on the poet's life and work as well as a film by the Oscar winning director Satyajit Ray, based on one of Tagore's most famous short stories will presented on Aug. 22 (Sun) at 4:00 PM in the cultural center. Program is free and all are welcome.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE MAHABHARATA

Gandhari

Gandhari was the wife of King Dhritarashtra and mother of the Kauravas. She was the daughter of King Subala, ruler of a vast area west of the river Sindhu (now called the Indus) extending to Kabul, Afghanistan. The main city was Gandhar (modern Kandahar).

Grandsire Bhishma sent a proposal seeking her hand in marriage for Dhritarashtra. Subala knew that Dhritarashtra was blind, but thinking that an alliance with the powerful Kuru clan would be in the larger interest, agreed to the proposal. Gandhari accepted her father's decision as a dutiful daughter. She wanted to experience blindness and share it with her husband. Showing great strength of mind and in a spirit of personal sacrifice, she voluntarily forewent her sense of sight after marriage by tying a scarf over both her eyes.

Gandhari was a votary of Lord Siva. Pleased with her devotion, he granted her a boon that she would be the mother of a hundred sons. Gandhari had been jealous of her sister-in-law, Kunti, who had given birth to two sons. The boon caused her to conceive, but strangely, the pregnancy lasted two years. Out of frustration, she struck her abdomen with an iron rod and surprisingly delivered a congealed mass. Sage Vyasa called for one hundred and one clay jars, carefully divided the flesh into the jars, filled them with ghee, and had them closed. In time, the jars broke, and Gandhari became the mother of one hundred sons and one daughter.

The boys grew up and had their training in the martial arts under Dronacharya. Gandhari, however, noticed that her husband did not restrain the arrogant behavior of his oldest son, Duryodhana, and brought it to his attention on appropriate occasions.

On the eve of the great war, when Duryodhana came to seek her blessings, she said, "Let victory accrue to the righteous." After the war, she was sorely aggrieved that all her sons had been killed, and she wanted to pronounce a curse on the Pandavas. Sage Vyasa, sensing her intention, reminded her of her words. He said that victory had indeed accrued to the righteous as the Pandavas had fought for a righteous cause. Gandhari, however, could not forgive Lord Krishna whom she held responsible for all the tragic events. She cursed him saying that the whole of his clan of Yadavas would die fighting one another. Her words came to be true.

After the war, she retired to the forest with her husband and sister-in-law, Kunti, where they perished in a forest fire.

Kunti

Kunti was the wife of Emperor Pandu and mother of the Pandavas. She was the daughter of King Surasena, father of Vasudeva, Krishna's father. Her father gave her in adoption to his brother-in-law, King Kuntibhoja, and hence she was called Kunti. Her name at birth was Pritha, and therefore, one of the names of her son, Arjuna, is Partha.

A large part of Kunti's character has already been considered earlier when studying Karna in the Mahabharata: how she invoked the Sun God, abandoned the newborn out of a sense of shame because she was not married, how she met Karna again on the eve of the battle and revealed to him for the first time his divine birth.

Kunti accompanied her sons during their first period of exile, having escaped from the arson of the house of combustible material (lac), a dastardly attempt by the evil-minded Duryodhana.

When roaming through the forest, Bhima killed a rakshasa, Hidamba. Hidamba's sister, Hidambi, fell in love with Bhima and wanted to marry him. Kunti gave her consent, and a child, Ghatotgacha, was born. As this boy grew up, Kunti repeatedly told him, "You are the first-born grandchild in the family. It is your duty to come to our help whenever the occasion demands." Ghatotgacha was gigantic in stature, strong, and powerful. He kept his word and fought valiantly in the Kurukshetra war. He paid the ultimate price by sacrificing his life while causing tremendous havoc in the Kaurava army.

During the period of exile, the Pandavas were sheltered by a hospitable Brahmin family in a small town, Ekachakra. Bakasura, an evil giant, was tormenting the people of the town by making demands for cartloads of food and human flesh to be supplied to him every day. Kunti came to know of this when she overheard a conversation between her host and his wife. She showed her gratitude to them and her compassion for the defenseless townspeople by persuading her son Bhima to challenge and fight the rakshasa. Bhima succeeded in killing him.

One of the great qualities of Kunti was her impartiality. The youngest two Pandavas, Nakula and Sahadeva, were her stepchildren, having been born to Pandu's other wife, Madri. They were entrusted to her care when Madri died along with Pandu. She treated her two stepsons as she did her own children.

This led to a rather strange incident. When Arjuna won the hand of Draupadi by his skill in archery at her swayamvara (marriage by choice), the Pandavas brought her to their house in Ekachakra. Approaching the house, they shouted with joy, "Mother, see what we have brought for you today!" Kunti was busy, and thinking it was food, replied, "Share it equally among you." A mother's word is in the nature of an order to be strictly obeyed. This is how Draupadi became the wife of all the Pandavas. - **Dr. Ramesh Pai**

July 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 2p Temple RSVD
4 8a Temple RSVD	5 7p Shiv Pooja	6 6:45p Karthikeya Archana	7 6:45p Krishna Archana	8	9 6:45p Devi Archana	10 9a Balaji Abhishek
11 Priest in India 2p Jain Pooja	12 Priest in India 7p Shiv Pooja	13 Priest in India 6:45p Ramarchana	14 Priest in India 6:45p Krishna Archana	15 Priest in India	16 Priest in India 6:45p Devi Archana	17 Priest in India 10a Temple RSVD
18 Priest in India	19 Priest in India 7p Shiv Pooja	20 Priest in India 6:45p Ramarchana	21 Priest in India 6:45p Krishna Archana	22 Priest in India	23 Priest in India 6:45p Devi Archana	24 Priest in India
25 8a Soup Kitchen 2p Jain Pooja 7p Sathyanarayana Pooja	26 7p Shiv Pooja	27 8a Soup Kitchen 6:45p Ramarchana	28 10a Priest Busy 6:45p Krishna Archana 7p Meditation Prg.	29 7p Ganesh Pooja 7p Meditation Program	30 6:45p Devi Archana	31

August 2010

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1	2 7p Shiv Pooja	3 6:45p Karthikeya Archana	4 9a Priest Busy 6:45p Krishna Archana	5	6	7 9a Karthikeya Pooja
8 2p Jain Pooja	9 7p Shiv Pooja	10 6:45p Ramarchana	11 6:45p Krishna Archana	12	13 6:45p Devi Archana	14 9a Balaji Abhishek
15 10a 3rd Sun. Puja	16 7p Shiv Pooja	17 6:45p Ramarchana	18 6:45p Krishna Archana	19	20 10a Priest Busy 6p Mahalakshmi vrat	21 9a Suprabhatam 10a Hanuman Havan
22 2p Jain Pooja 4p Tagore Film	23 7p Shiv Pooja	24 12p Raksha Bandhan, Onam 7p Sathyanarayan Pooja	25 6:45p Krishna Archana	26	27 6:45p Devi Archana	28 7p Ganesh Pooja
29	30 7p Shiv Pooja	31 6:45p Ramarchana				

Announcements

Arts in the Heart Festival (Sheila Kamath) The Arts in the Heart of Augusta is the largest ethnic festival held in downtown Augusta. This year's festival will be on September 17-19. Fifteen countries participate in the festival showing pride in their food, arts, music, dancing and culture. Brazil is the featured country this year.

HTS will sponsor the Indian Pavilion and showcase our tents with food and Mehendi. About 40,000 people visit the festival over the weekend each year. Prizes are awarded for Best Entrée, Best dessert, Best costume, Best booth, Best presentation etc.

The Indian Pavilion has won prizes every year since we began participating in 1995. So please sign up and help us succeed again this year. Volunteers are needed for cooking, serving and managing the tents. Monetary donations as well as donations in kind are very welcome. Participation in such an event requires considerable organization and planning. It is a matter of national pride. So please be gracious with your time and resources, especially when help is requested.

If you wish to volunteer your services for food preparation, contact any one of the following: Sheila Kamath 706-650-5751, Samlesh Bansal 706-855-1174 Gita Shah 706-951-6712 or Bharati Gowda. For showcase of Indian ethnic dancing on the global stage, please contact Surekha Prasad 706-854-9488. For volunteering for set up /clean up and general help, please contact Kartik Subramanian 706-831-3459

Entrance tickets at the gate are \$7 per person. I will have limited tickets bought in advance for \$5. Entrance for children under 10 is free. Volunteers and performers will be provided specific arm bands for entrance.

Play by Paresh Rawal (BN Roy) The caravan group of Augusta is sponsoring a Hindi play by famous bollywood comedian Paresh Rawal on Tuesday, August 31 at Etheridge Center, USC Aiken. Tickets start from \$35 per person. Contact Ravi Verma or Meena Patel (706-877-1991) for more information.

Thanks!! (Vidya Sridharan) HTS executive committee immensely appreciates all the volunteers, who have been helping with temple pujas during Satyajit's trip to India.

Book Release (Vidya Sridharan) Congratulations to D.K. Bhaskar on successful release of his Book "The Fragile Forest: Inside Brazilian Amazonia". It is a celebration of the spirit of the Amazonian rainforests. The book provides many photographs, useful maps, fact files, environmental diversity and relevant information for prospective travelers and readers.

Science Bowl Winners (Amitava Ganguly) After competing against 20 other teams from throughout South Carolina and northern Georgia, and winning the 20th annual Department of Energy Savannah River Regional Science Bowl, the Lakeside High School team, from Evans, Ga., competed at the prestigious National Finals (all-expense paid trip), in Washington, D.C. The competition is the country's longest-running science tournament. The Lakeside championship team includes Rahul Saha, son of Arunava and Ruby Saha and an active youth group member of HTS.

Fund Raisers (BN Roy) Two members of HTS community were recently recognized as the top two individual fund raisers for the "Heart Walk" campaign at SRS. Sudhamay Bhattacharjea – Highest, Babu Patel - 2nd highest
SRS this year raised the largest amount in the whole southeast US with ample help from Sudha and Babu.

Condolences (Girdhar Vandra) Kusum Desai's mother passed away on June 11 at 6:30 AM pacific time in Mumbai. She was 92 years old. Kusum is currently in India. May God give peace to Kusum's mother's soul and courage to Kusum Desai to overcome this loss.

SCHEDULE

Mondays	7pm	Shiv Puja
Tuesdays	6:45 pm	Kartikeya (1 st) / Ram Archana
Wednesdays	6:45 pm	Krishna Archana
Fridays	7pm	Devi Puja (1 st Fri.) / Archana
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

The Hindu Temple Society
P.O. Box 204264
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