

കേസരി

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Editorial

നവവത്സരാശംസകൾ !

അതീതകാലം മുതൽക്കേ വാക്കുകളുടെ ശക്തി സംസ്കാരങ്ങളുടെ ആദിസ്ത്രോതസ്സുകളെ അറിയിക്കുന്ന ഒരു പ്രധാനഘടകമാണ്. കാലത്തെ പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കാനും കാലഘട്ടങ്ങളെ തിരുത്തി എഴുതുവാനും അക്ഷരങ്ങൾക്ക് കഴിവുണ്ടെന്ന് ലോകചരിത്രം കാട്ടിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആധുനിക കാലങ്ങളിലെ പരിണാമവിധേയമായ ജീവിതസാഹചര്യങ്ങൾക്കിടയിൽ പുതിയതും പഴയതുമായ പാഠങ്ങളും സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളും വളരെയുക്തിപരമായി കൈമാറാനും എത്രേ അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

‘കേസരി’ എന്ന കലാസാംസ്കാരിക പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണത്തിലൂടെ വാക്കുകളുടെ ചൈതന്യം ക്യാപിറ്റൽ ഡിസ്ക്രീറ്റ് മലയാളികൾക്ക് പകരാൻ നമുക്ക് ശ്രമിക്കാം. വർത്തമാനകാല തലമുറയ്ക്ക് വേണ്ടി ഭാരതമെന്ന പ്രാചീന ജനസമൂഹത്തെ കുറിച്ചും അതിലുപരി ദൈവത്തിന്റെ നാട് എന്ന വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കാറുള്ള കേരളത്തെ കുറിച്ചും കുറച്ച് അറിവ് പകരാൻ അവസരങ്ങളുടെ ഈ

നാട്ടിൽ നിന്നുകൊണ്ട് നമുക്ക് പ്രയത്നിക്കാം. ജാതിമതചിന്തകൾക്കും സമുദായഭേദത്തിനും മുകളിൽ നിന്നും കൊണ്ട് ആദർശനപ്രചോദനമായതും മൂല്യസമ്പത്തും നിറഞ്ഞ കുറച്ച് കാര്യങ്ങൾ പങ്കിടാം.

സമയക്കുറവും മറ്റുപല പ്രതിബന്ധങ്ങളും ഉണ്ടായിട്ടും ജനപങ്കാളിത്തത്തിൽ മുന്നേറ്റമാണ് ഈ ആദ്യലക്കത്തിൽ തന്നെ കണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്. മഹാപ്രതിഭകളായ എഴുത്തുകാരെയും അമച്യർ എഴുത്തുകാരെയും തുല്യ പ്രസക്തി നൽകി അവരുടെ കലാസൃഷ്ടികളെ പങ്കിടാനുള്ള ഒരു മാധ്യമമാക്കാൻ കേസരി പ്രയത്നിക്കുന്നതാണ്. അത് പോലെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് സമ്പൂർണ്ണമായ ഔദ്യോഗിക ഭാഷയാക്കാതെ മലയാളത്തിന് തുല്യ പങ്ക് നൽകി നല്ല ലേഖനങ്ങളും കവിതകളും നൽകി ഈ സംരംഭത്തെ വിജയിപ്പിക്കാൻ അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു.

വിദ്യാ വർമ്മ

From the CDMA President's Desk...

Greetings to all on this happy occasion of the CDMA's first newsletter release! We have the privilege to introduce many unknown and upcoming talents in our community through this forum. We enjoyed creating this; hope you will enjoy reading this!

My sincere thanks go to the editorial team who has worked very hard within a tight schedule to pull this together. I take this opportunity to appreciate the team's wholehearted commitment and congratulate them for this wonderful outcome.

As many of you recognize, CDMA is in the path of growth... Our vision for CDMA's growth involves not only an increase in member base but also more effective and purposeful involvement within our community.

We are a very talented and skilled community. Over the years, some of our creative talents have remained

dormant due to lack of opportunities. CDMA's 'Community enterprise skit' and 'Newsletter' ventures are aimed at awakening these dormant talents within each one of us, adults and children alike. I request you to participate and make these ventures a big success.

As announced at the Xmas/ New Year program on January 7, 2006, CDMA wishes to be known as an organization with a conscience. Setting up of the "Jeevan fund" to extend a helping hand to the underprivileged in Kerala is a step in this direction. As a community, we intend to set a good model for our children.

Spring is not far away, friends. We hope to come back to you with more fun activities and community involvement. Your support is crucial for every venture...

My sincere regards,

CuckooJoy



CDMA Christmas & New Year 2006 Celebrations A Grand Success

January 7th. This day holds supreme significance not just to the lesser known Capital District Malayalees, but also to the entire world. For Eastern Orthodox Churches that use the old Julian calendar instead of the 16th-century Gregorian calendar adopted by Catholics and Protestants, this day actually marks the day of Christmas. For some others, this is a day past the traditional twelfth day of Christmas, signifying the closing of Christmas festivities and beginning of Epiphany. Needless to say, there couldn't have been a more auspicious day for CDMA to host the Christmas & New Year 2006 celebrations.



Christmas is probably one of the few times of the year, when the very human spirit transcends all known differences such as wealth, power, language, culture and even religious beliefs. A plethora of traditions and customs with religious, secular and national characteristics surround Christmas. Some of the traditional holiday iconography include Santa Claus, gifts, cards, trees and carols. However, more importantly, this season commemorates family values, human kinship and most often the gaieties of the season

are synonymous with hope and love.



This spirit and exuberance was tangible as the Malayalees of the Capital District turned out in record numbers at the Niskayuna Jewish Community Center to participate in the festivities. The CDMA Christmas celebrations, however, had technically commenced during the second week of December, when some of our talented members made house visits to render melodious carols. Neither did the freezing temperatures nor the chilly wind stop this group from blending together in one harmonious note.





The evening's programs were guided by the Master of Ceremony, Ms. Rooby George. The preliminary segment of the cultural programs was kicked off with a very impressive adaptation of 'How the Grinch Stole the Christmas'. This was a community enterprise, involving the participation of several CDMA's younger generation. This program, coordinated by Ms. Bindu Thomas, artistically portrayed the tale and presented it with uniqueness without losing its essence. Embracing the traditional spirit of Christmas, Mr. Sam Mannikarottu captured the saga of the birth of baby Jesus with sensitivity and eloquence. About twenty participants, with varied ages took part in this event and engrossed the audience with their talented performances and dazzling costumes.

The second section of the program started with a welcome speech by Ms. Cuckoo Joy, the president of CDMA. The chief guests of the evening, Mr. P.K. Prakash, Vice Consul, Consulate General of India, NY and Mr. Jose Chummar, President, Kerala Center, NY, both distinguished members and enthusiastic proponents of the local Indian community captivated the audience with their vast experiences. Mr. Vinod Pillai, Secretary and Mr. Benny Thottam, a CDMA executive



member delivered special messages. Mrs. Ammu Subramaniam delivered the conclusion by expressing her token of appreciation to all participants and members.



The rest of the evening brought in a variety of entertaining numbers, enriched with cinematic dances, traditional dances and songs. All dances were executed with remarkable rhythm and dexterity. Their vibrant costumes matched some equally lively songs that left the audience spellbound. Dances to current popular Malayalam songs as well as contemporary Hindi songs slowly elevated the evening's cadence to modern trends.



To bear a fitting testimony of the Christmas spirit, a group of younger singers enthralled everyone by their flawless rendition of a season song. This was succeeded later in the evening by a few devotional songs. Both the younger and older generation took part in these musical events in voices that complimented one another perfectly.

Maintaining the Christmas spirit, raffle winner of the day, Tony Vachaparambil donated his prize money to the CDMA. This was greeted with loud applause by the entire audience.



Last, but not least, concluding this report with no mention about the Christmas dinner would be amiss. The elaborate dinner offerings included

all of the traditional Malayalee must-haves and more. It was indeed encouraging to watch people go in for second helping, demonstrating the delicious and scrumptious nature of the dinner dishes.

Even as the best moments of the evening were encapsulated by incessant camera lenses, the three hour long function left quite a positive impact in the minds of all who attended.

With the resonating sound of applause echoing throughout the auditorium, this first community celebration of the year could definitely be described as a grand success. This show of solidarity among the Malayalees in the Capital District region not just through attendance, but also through participation is the best Christmas gift after all...



Note: Due to space constraints, the names and photos of all the participants could not be included in this report. More photos are available at the CDMA website: www.cdmany.org

Vidya Varma

Parampara**Our Heritage****Kathakali: The Magnificent Art form of Kerala**

Shri. Sudarsanan Thirumulpad is a die-hard Kathakali patron, who has made commendable efforts over the years to present and educate the intricacies and nuances of Kathakali to the residents of USA. His article presented as a trilogy offers a glimpse at some of the pertinent aspects of the dance form. In this opening segment, he has portrayed a history of Kathakali's evolution, while paying due respects to its pioneers.

Kathakali, literally meaning 'story play', is a musical dance-drama that originated in Kerala in the 17th century. It is considered as one of the major classical dances of India. Its roots can be traced back to Koodiyattam, the only surviving form of Sanskrit theater in India, which has been preserved in Kerala as a temple art. Krishnanattam, another temple art form is another forerunner to Kathakali in its origin.

Besides these two art forms, elements from martial, ritualistic and socio-religious arts have also influenced in the making of Kathakali. Though Kathakali is only 300 years old, a great deal of enrichment and refinement has taken place in every aspect of its technique during this short period. Scholars are of the opinion that Kathakali is the result of a fusion between all Indian theater tradition represented by Koodiyattam and the indigenous tradition of folk dance forms.

It was Kottarakkara Thampuran (Rajah) who wrote the first play solely intended for Kathakali. The dance drama was an enhanced version of Krishnanattam and was also called Ramanattam as the story pertained to Shri Rama. There were eight stories (episodes); each story was intended for one night performance. In the beginning, the actors themselves used to sing the text while performing. Masks were elaborately used for some characters and percussion was limited to Maddalam (two headed barrel shaped drum), Chengila (Metal

gong) and Elathalam (a pair of cymbals). Many improvements took place gradually in the costumes, make up and dance performance. Chenda (vertical cylindrical drum) was later added to the percussion and thus, the present form of Kathakali came in to being.



Kottayathu Thampuran was distinguished playwright who wrote four stories based on the Mahabharata epic. These are the stories used for Kathakali training, as they encompass every aspect of Kathakali dance. Irayimman Thampi, Aswathi Thirunal, Unnai Warriar (Nalacharitham Stories), Vayaskara Moosad are other famous playwrights whose creations are also used not only as models for preliminary Kathakali instructions, but also for stage performances. Kapplingad Namboodiri made several significant modifications, enrichments and refinements in Kathakali acting including the make-up of the characters. The present style of Kathakali acting has been evolved as result of refinements made by him as well as Kapplingad Namboodiri, and this style is referred to as Kalluvazhi style of acting.

Some of the popular stories used for stage performance are Kalyana Sougandhikam, Nala Charitham, Bali Vadham, Sitha Swayamvaram, Bali Vijayam, Dakshayagam, Keechaka Vadham, Duryodhana Vadham, Kiratham, Santhana Gopalam, Poothana Moksham, Kuchela Vrutham, and Karna Sapatham. Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon and Manikkulam Mukunda Raja popularized Kathakali by founding Kerala Kalamandalam, which has become the center of

Kathakali learning for young artists. It has become largest fine arts institution promoting all Kerala art forms, such as Koodiyattam, Mohiniyattam, Panchavadyam, Ottamthullal etc. Guru Kunju Kuruppu, Acharavaryan Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon, Guru Gopinath, Padmashree Kunju Nair, Padmashree Krishnan Nair, Padmashree Keezhpatam Kumaran Nair, Kalamandalam Raman Kutty Nair and Padmanabhan Nair are all associated with Kerala Kalamandalam. Gandhi Seva Sadanam, Kalanilayam, Kottakkal PSV Natyasangham and Margi are other centers of Kathakali training.

Kathakali is considered to be a total theater form, as it constitutes of dance, music, percussion, acting and painting. It is Kerala's biggest contribution to the field of art.

In the next two segments of the trilogy, Shri. Thirumulpad concentrates on the Structure of Performance and Techniques of the art form respectively.

``THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. CALL HIM BY ANY NAME AND WORSHIP HIM IN ANY ASPECT THAT PLEASES YOU, YOU ARE SURE TO SEE HIM``

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Submitted by: Lakshmi Ravikumar

Parampara**Our Heritage****My Keralam, My Heritage**

The frothy crests from the Arabian Sea ride the surging waves and lash the sandy shores to expire later in a last hiss. The sounding cataracts rush down in relentless falls, foaming and spraying the lush greenery that abounds in their environs. The rhythm of the ‘panchavaadyam’ resonates in the air and syncopates with my heartbeats. The evening breeze is cooled by the fragrance of jasmines that gleam in the waning twilight. The coconut fronds sway under the haunting moon, forming a serrated canopy and the mango trees bloom into creamy pagodas with promises of delectable fruits. And I dream, “I am home”.

Nestled between the majestic Western Ghats and the expansive Arabian Sea, Kerala lay, for centuries, ready for the avid traders from Rome, Judea, Arabia, China, and later Europe. They came to her shores for the precious gems, spices, ivory, exotic birds and wood. Kerala’s ports like Muziris (modern Kodungallur) were well known to the traders of exotic and expensive goods.

But, now, so many of us have left her shores for distant lands! Yet, we carry the torch for this green gem, this land retrieved from sea by the bloodstained axe of the epical Parashu Rama.

We still chuckle at the humor in Kunjan Nambiar’s satiric, but vivid portrayals of Rukmini’s foolish suitors in “Rukmini Swayamvaram”. We grieve with the deaf Vallththol’s “Badhira Vilaapam” and sigh at the transient nature of our lives in Kumaaran Aashan’s “Veena Poovu” and “Karuna”. Naalappatt Narayana Menon’s “Kuchela Vriththam Vanchippattu” kept the beat of the boat races for us. Changampuzha’s “Ramanan” can still move us with the lyrically tragic love in his pastoral elegy. G. Shankara Kurupp’s iconoclastic poems urge us to stand by our beliefs and values.

Who can forget the inimitable Soori Namboothirippadu in Chanthu Menon’s Indulekha, the nineteenth century pioneer novel in Malayalam? Keshava Dev’s Odayil Ninnu and Mudiyaanaaya Puthran have honed our social outlooks. We laugh at society’s flaws and foibles

in E. M. Kovoov's Honey Puraanam. Umma in Bashir's Ntuppaappakkoru Aanendarnnu reminds us about Amanda in Tennessee Williams' Glass Menagerie. The story of the star crossed lovers and the folk beliefs in tandem with nature's vagaries in Thakazhi's Chemmeen have been immortalized for us in all of visual media.

Kerala has served us well with heroes and heroics. The bravery and patriotism of Pazhassi raja and Velu Thambi Dalawa in taking a determined stand against the British, even at the risk of their own lives, will stand in good stead in our efforts in not allowing our individualities to be submerged in a herded culture.

The swashbuckling stories of Thachcholi Othenan , Thachcholi Chanthu, Aaromal Chekavar, Unni Aarcha, and Ummini Thanka are still exhilarating. Marthanda Varma's fight against the treacherous feudal lords and the Mamaankam of the Samorin of

Kozhikkode has come down to us in the many chapters of history and romance.

We are standing on the shoulders of giants. Shakthan Thampuran's planning of the city of Thrissur is an example of visionary farsightedness. Swaathi Thirunnaal's statesmanship nurtured the kind of education we carried with us. Raja Raja Varma solidified the structure of Malayalam and strengthened means of communication. We have benefited from all these.

Today, Kerala is still with us in our hearts. That is our heritage. We gather together to savor that which came with us. We forge communities based on what we carried. We organize our activities colored by our heritage. Now we communicate through this venue because of our commonality, our heritage.

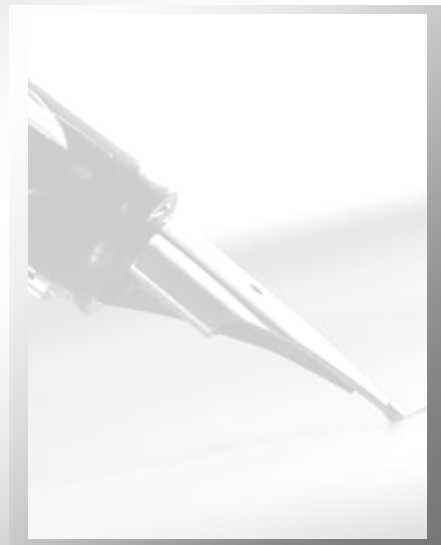
Rosy V. Pynadath

Articles Wanted!

For publication in Kesari...

- Short Stories
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- Biographies
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- Household/Health Tips

Email: cdmanewsletter@yahoo.com



Parampara**Our Heritage****Saluting the Malayalee Spirit**

We have heard of the joke that when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, he was offered a cup of tea from a *Mallu's 'Thattu kada'*. There is a great message in this light humor. It shows the resilience of the Malayalees. Leaving our beautiful land, aptly called 'God's own country' behind, the Malayalee has traveled around the globe and settled down in all parts of the world in search of a better future for himself and his ilk. It is not easy to relocate, as we would know. But such is the passion and the will power of the Malayalee that he moves on undaunted. He settles into the new surroundings making them his own. In the face of challenges, the Malayalee keeps pegging away, till he finds gold! Yet again and again, he fights against all odds and does the impossible! He cherishes his traditions, but also creates new ones by his deeds.

We are a hard working people. We are the faces of all walks of society - be it the fisherman on the shores of Kerala, the stall owner outside VT station in Mumbai, the laborers in the Middle East or the subway driver in New York city. Be it the software programmer in the Silicon Valley or the scientist at NASA; look closely and you will find a Malayalee name. Be it the nurses or teachers or doctors, we have never shied away from tough challenges. We are proud of our great heritage, but we are also believers in our own ability to bring forth good by sweat and toil.

Malayalees have a history of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Hindus, Muslims and Christians have co-existed and grown with mutual love and respect for each other in Kerala and elsewhere for centuries, and also grown to adapt and appreciate each others' values and principles. This is a great lesson in harmony and love that we have to continue to nurture and not allow selfish interests to reign in and destroy.

We are part of this great community of Malayalees who are placed in the Capital District of Albany with a purpose. We have a responsibility to grow in our values and traditions and at the same time use them in meaningful ways that are relevant for our surroundings today. We have to be part of the society in Albany here, to learn from them and share with them. Let us be a beacon of light for

our fellow human beings and share our heritage and values with them, as also involve them in our activities so that we be part of them and they a part of us. In a world torn apart with strife, cunning and petty quarrels, we can spread love and goodwill and thus give ourselves and others a glimpse of 'Maveli vaana kaalam' as we say, which is so strikingly similar to what Jesus showed as the 'Kingdom of God' or the 'Jannath' portrayed in the Quran. Let us hold hands, work together and spread the joy.

Sunil (Mathew Samuel)



ധർമ്മവും അധർമ്മവും

സഞ്ചാരി

ലോകത്തിന്റെ നിലനില്പിനെ സഹായിക്കുവാൻ 'ധർമ്മ' പ്രചാരണം അത്യന്താപേക്ഷിതമാണ്. 'ധർമ്മം' എന്നാൽ അനുഷ്ഠിക്കേണ്ട 'കടമ' എന്നർത്ഥം. സൽപ്രവർത്തികളിലൂടെയല്ലാതെ ഒരു ജനവിഭാഗവും നന്നാവുകയില്ല. ധർമ്മത്തിന്റെ ആവശ്യകതയെക്കുറിച്ച് എല്ലാ ആത്മീയ ഗുരുക്കന്മാർക്കും ഏകാഭിപ്രായമാണുണ്ടായിരുന്നത്. എല്ലാത്തരം കൃത്യവിലോപത്തെ ഒഴിവാക്കുവാനും, കർമ്മത്തിന്റെ പാത സംശുദ്ധമാക്കുവാനും ധർമ്മികബോധം നമ്മെ സഹായിക്കുന്നു. എല്ലാവരേയും സമഭാവനയോടെ കാണേണ്ടതാണ്. നിത്യവും അവസരവും ആർക്കും നിഷേധിച്ചുകൂടാ. ദുർവാസനകളെ പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നവിധത്തിലുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ കാലത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയെ പിന്നോക്കം പായിക്കും.

ഒഴിവുകഴിവുപറഞ്ഞ് കർമ്മത്തിൽനിന്നും പിന്മാറുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന അലസന്മാരെ കർമ്മോന്മുഖരാക്കുവാൻ ധർമ്മികബോധം സഹായിക്കും. ഇരുളും, വെളിച്ചവും, ലോകജീവിതത്തിലാവശ്യമാണെങ്കിലും, സത്തയില്ലായ്മയുടെ പ്രതിരൂപമാണ് ഇരുൾ. 'ധർമ്മം' പ്രകാശമാണ്. പ്രകാശത്തിനുമുന്നിൽ ഇരുളിന് നിലക്കെളിയുണ്ടാവില്ല. 'ധർമ്മ'വും 'അധർമ്മ'വും, ഒരേ നാണയത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടു വശങ്ങളാണ്. നെല്പാടങ്ങളിലേയ്ക്കു നോക്കൂ, നെൽച്ചെടികളോടൊപ്പം, അപകടകാരികളായ 'കള'കളും തഴച്ചുവളരുമില്ലേ? വേണ്ടസമയത്ത് കളകൾ പറിച്ചുനീക്കിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ നെൽച്ചെടി പാടേ നശിച്ചുപോകും. ഇതുപോലെയാണ് 'ധർമ്മ'ത്തിന്റെ കാര്യവും. അധർമ്മത്തെ തുടച്ചുനീക്കി, ധർമ്മികബോധത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് സഹായകമായ നിലപാട് സ്വീകരിക്കുവാൻ ഓരോ പൗരനും തയ്യാറാകണം. എങ്കിലേ ഈ ലോകം നന്മയുടെ സുഖമറിയൂ.

Article



Game Trouble – With a Deck of Yu-Gi-Oh!

It should have been a tranquil, quiet Friday night. Well... *at least* both my husband and I were endeavoring for just that. A 'Mohanlal' movie, dimmed lights, a packet of potato chips (yeah! after a few years of the American life, this unhealthy, sinfully tasteful stuff is an integral part of our movie watching process as well) and beer for my husband – we all but set the stage. All week...In *our* minds...

But I guess, “Man proposes, God disposes”! We had discounted several factors while weaving these deliciously wonderful schemes. Someone else was vigorously plotting an equally evil, excruciatingly brutal conspiracy against us. My eleven-year-old son... Who would have thought that our own son would turn out to be so devious and focused in his vengeance? Oh no. Please don't get him wrong. He is a well-raised, well-liked and courteous young boy. He is extremely responsible and very intelligent. But as is the case with most children, he is hyperactive and demands constant action. So our premeditated plans, all made in full glory came to a crashing halt and was sidelined and ousted for a game of cards. A what? Yes, a game of cards with some nauseating, hideously ugly and seemingly violent characters – the Yu-Gi-Oh deck!

Ah ha...now that might rattle some loud, alarming bells with other parents who have boys. For those who have been fortunate to escape an introduction, let me enlighten you... This heroic character, widely popular with pre-teenage boys regales the magical powers of a young boy named Yami Yugi, who uses his so-called extraordinary ability to *duel*

monsters and overcome evil forces. Dubious? Don't be. You read right. Yeah! Kind of weird and unusual when all other reigning super heroes have to actually exercise both their brawns and brains for this crusade against vice. Yu-Gi-Oh's recognition amongst the younger circles has augmented beyond imagination through the never-ending streams of animated television series, movies, spawned card games, computer games, videos, t-shirts, and action figures. Why! My son even has a complete bed set adorning his bedroom! So much for pleasant dreams...One encounter with Yugi and even some of the most hard-core comic atheist would be more than willing to literally kiss the masked feet of Superman or Spiderman, gratefully, for being...well... for being just there!

Now for the more interesting stuff. Yes, the card game. Though I am not much of a card game person, I would anytime, any day trade this obnoxious game of Yu-Gi-Oh deck with the more traditional forms of card playing, namely poker or black jack or even rummy. And let me reiterate, those games are far better to comprehend to our already fried, world weary, cynical, saturated brains. Believe me, even the most intelligent and scientifically advanced minds would reach a temporary zombie status, and go dense just by attempting to decipher its rules. Why! Even Einstein would have had a *relatively* effortless path towards the solution of his theory than analyzing the intricacies of this highly complex and convoluted game!



Okay. Here are some of the rules. Two players face off in an all-out battle that involves skill, practice, strategy and luck to emerge victorious from the duel. The primary battles are waged using about 20 menacing monsters, each with their own unique combating styles. In addition, players can use Spell, set traps, alter the battlefield, and even fuse two monsters together to form a single monster with enormous power! The objective of the game is pretty straightforward. Each player starts with 8,000 life points and takes turn in playing cards in an attempt to destroy your opponent's life points. The player who loses all his life points first becomes the loser. This is to keep the long story short and sweet. There are several other factors with which players can manipulate to vanquish their foe.



There are predominantly three main card types - monster cards, magic cards, and trap cards. Monster cards are the fundamental units of the game, used to attack and cause utmost damage to your opponent. Monsters are labeled as Normal, Effect, Polymerization and Ritual monsters. They

are further categorized into 6 main-types and 20 sub-types or attributes. Also, each monster is associated with a different number of stars depending on its overall strength. Magic and Trap cards help in strategically modifying the direction of the duel. The Magic card types are Normal, Permanent, Equipment, Field and Instant and they are specific in their impact. For example: Normal magic cards are played during the main phase and can only be used once, after which they are destroyed and sent to the graveyard. Trap cards generally are used during your opponent's turn to set the trap, if they already exist on the field, as they cannot be used directly from your hand. Like magic cards, the Trap card types, Normal and Permanent are used for specific purposes.

Hmm... This is definitely not checkers. It seems like the rules go on forever. I must admit, though. However much revolting the game may sound, there are some potential advantages and positive consequences by playing this game. As the game is about mind dexterity and strategy, the game tones one's psyche to reason, judge, analyze and gain control by playing intentionally, carefully and strategically. Hey! Worst case! You child can learn mental math pretty easy just by using those various math operands repeatedly while calculating those life points.

At the risk of being a weirdo mother, I applaud the intelligence of the younger generation in keeping their sanity intact and yes, for making this strategy game fun. Wait, did I just say fun? Yes, maybe it is, you know. So, parents... There's no escape next time. But on a warning note - be prepared! I would suggest you all be equipped to deal with all the complexities of a brainteaser.

Disclaimer: All the views expressed in this article are the irrational thoughts of a hassled and beaten mother.

Vidya Varma



Story

The Mishap -- A Distinct Paranoia A Story untold



Summer is what we always long for as we surpass the crisp of winter. As the espresso drains down the throat, with its soothing warmth, it brightens the day as it's yet to flow...

About 40 miles away from the foot of Himalayas and in the city of Shimla, one of the most famous hill stations in India, there is a small village named Tattapani. It's a place where ages of rich Indian tradition, warm and hospitable people, a landscape of breathtaking variety and beauty reside together. Far from New York, though so different, there is one thing common between the two places; the harsh winter and the boiling coffee. People in Tattapani bless their kettles for keeping them warm all day long.

Varuha, a middle aged man lived in Tattapani with his wife Mandini, and three kids Shilvan, Raishali and Tara. They were a happy family who desired no more than the joy that they thanked their lord Shiva for. The kids went to school and mom stayed home to cook, when Varuha setoff to the railway

station where he worked as a guard to run his family. Though he came from a reputed illiterate *kisan* family he enjoyed doing his job. He always wanted his kids to go to school and pursue to college unlike him. Though Varuha came from a rich family he never got any education and after independence he had to live a life of the ordinary. After his job at the railway station he worked in his fields to earn his savings. Even in the tearing winter, it was his dream that kept him toiling. His son Shilvan would help him, but only after his home-works were done. On the other side of the village there lived another happy family.

Moorthi was a travel agent who lived with his mother Sarasvati, wife Bhumathi, and new born son Rahul. Moorthi too had a dream to see his son grow up and play cricket with him and see him in a high position that would raise the family's name with pride.

One day Mandini, with the kids, decided to pay a visit to her sister Shanti and her new born baby. As it runs in the Indian culture she made sweets, dishes and sweaters knitted by her own hands. They hired a rickshaw and set forth for their journey. Varuha promised to join them as soon as he finished his daily errands. He even promised his wife that he would skip his trip to the fields.

On his way to Shanti's home, Varuha recollected the memories of the day when his kids were newborns and how he had to struggle with different issues. Those memories brought a chuckle on his face that he thought he might save for the day when he would see his kids in high positions. On the same day Moorthi decided to take his family



for a movie and on the way back he decided to stop at his friend's house for a get together.

With his memories still fresh Varuha reached Shanti's home to see a crowd standing in front of her house. With shaking legs he walked to the door as the heart throbbing cries of the family approached him. He neared the door when the smell of incense thawed his frozen nose. Shanti's husband Mangal stood by the door with tearful eyes. Varuha entered the house to see three bodies laid on the floor, covered in a white shroud. His world shook and his numb legs tripped, but Mangal's shoulders helped him back on his feet. With his arms embracing Varuha, Mangal whispered into his ear, "On their way the rickshaw crashed with a car. Shilvan, Raishali, Tara and the rickshaw driver died on the spot and Mandini was taken to the hospital. The car driver's son too died on the spot as the car toppled over, and the rest of

the family is in the hospital. The driver was arrested by the police."

With a burning heart, shivering torso and a melting soul Varuha still walks to his job. It's no longer to fulfill his dreams but to remind him of his dream. His wife still cooks with tearful eyes and a cold heart which no longer feels the warmth of the kettle nor the summer.

On the other side, with his dreams shattered, Moorthi awaits his trial in the court room, cursing the moment when he got into the car after drinking three large pegs.

When you are sober, think of a way to remind yourself, to stay away from your car when you are not sober.

Thomas Chattathil

Poetry

To India, My Motherland!

Like the dew drops on the rose buds leave it's blossom,
like the glowing mist under the rainbow fades with the sunrise,
The Sun set, in the dawn of her rising charms.

With smile of envy
they sailed the serene oceans
coloring them in red as they tread.

They stepped across the threshold
with innocent open arms waiting
to embrace them with bosom of love.

Days are gone, time has fled,
The Eagle has fought its sore wounds,
to soar high on spellbound trails.

As her diamond still shines in the Queen's throne,
Art of men, who fought their coarse life, polished It to a brighter glow.
With pride and dignity, today she stands tall on its manifold cultures!

Thomas Chattathil is a Biochemistry student at RPI.

Poetry**Lost Summers**

Rain drops fall heavy
Making the earth soft
In search of my lost memories
I walked along the leaf-strewn
Pavements, staring at years
Of dust settled into the corners
Of my old university buildings
Memories come and go;
Big green umbrellas outside
The little café, the big pool
Outside the library, the stone
Benches, the fountains, the air
Smelt so mine, how strange
The feeling of being home!

Life seemed light years away
The real world became a myth
I walked on
In a great deserted silence
In the middle of crowded streets
Searching for familiar faces
I found a few, but did not wait
Afraid of breaking the silence,
The sorrow of joy was endless
And when the day was over
I turned back, the night was still
Tear drops fell heavy
Making my cheeks damp
As I drove past the trees
Which once shaded me
I looked up at the moonless sky
The stars too had stories to tell
And I thought to myself
How strange the pain of leaving home!

Dr. Lekshmi Seemanthini

Dr. Seemanthini is a practicing resident physician at Brooklyn, NYC. Here she reminisces about her lost summers back home in Kerala during a recent visit.... A nostalgic journey into life's past moments.

Letters, Letters, Letters...

We value your comments, suggestions and even criticism...
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Yuvavedi

Poetry



Sweet Memories

When I was young in India, I would wake up in the morning to the sound of bustling traffic outside my house. The loud horns honking and bicycle bells ringing would stir me from my sleep.

I smelled wonderful aromas from the kitchen where my mother cooked a hearty breakfast of idli with stewed vegetables and lentils and chutney. This was my favorite food and my mouth watered just at the smell of it.

When I was young in India, I would hold my mom's hand and squeeze it tight while we walked the crowded street to the bazaar to do some shopping. All over, I would see stalls of colorful fruits and vegetables. We would buy balloons from the vendors on the street.

I would travel in buses, trains, cars and rickshaws to get around. On weekends, we would visit my relatives and I enjoyed playing with my cousins.

When I was young in India, I would go out to the park just below our high-rise apartment almost every day.

I would play tag with my friends, go on the spinning merry-go-round, slip down the slide and reach for the stars from my swing. What fun I had!

Sometimes, the torrential monsoons kept me at home. I would wait for my dad to come from work, while listening to the pitter-patter of raindrops falling.

When I was young in India, I could not play in the snow or go camping. Those are some of the things which I cherish here, but deep down in my heart, I will always love India and hold these memories dear.

Junia Anna George

Junia is a Grade 5 student at Guilderland Elementary.



Yuvavedi

Article

Are You Rich?

Are you rich? How many ways can you be rich? You can be rich with money. Can you be rich in other ways?

As I said before, you can be rich with money. You can buy whatever you want and wherever you want. That's awesome.

Can you be rich with food? Sure. You have all the food you want. It is like a buffet. Some very poor people living in different parts of the world can't afford a basic meal everyday.

I'm rich with friends. What does that mean? When you're rich with friends, it means you have a lot of friends to have fun with.

Another way you can be rich is to have good health. Many people suffer from diseases and die. We're lucky to have a healthy life, unlike some other people in this world.

Is there another way? Yup. You can be rich in knowledge. Life-changing people like Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison were very, very rich in knowledge.

So, I hope that after reading this essay, you have learned that having heaps of money in your bank account isn't the only way you can be rich.

Malavika Nair

Malavika is Grade 5 student at Glencliff Elementary.

Narmavedi

A "Mallu" female (from the heart of Kerala) went for a job interview for the post of a SECRETARY. When the manager saw the Mallu's colorful attire and gold and well oiled uncombed jet black hair, his mind was screaming "NOT THIS WOMAN." Nevertheless, he still had to entertain the Mallu. So he told her "If You could form a sentence using the words that I give you, then may be I will give you a chance! The words are GREEN, PINK, YELLOW, BLUE, WHITE, PURPLE and BLACK." The enthusiastic Mallu lady thought for a while and said: "I hear the phone GREEN GREEN GREEN, then I go and PINK up the phone. I say YELLOW.....BLUE's that? WHITE did you say? Aiye, Wrong number... Don't PURPLELY disturb people and don't call BLACK, yokeeyy? Thank you." The Manager fainted...



Yuvavedi



Sidharth Varma is a Grade 5 student at Pine Bush Elementary



**Yuvavedi...
Kids Works Wanted!**

Get your kids works published. Articles in both English and Malayalam accepted.
Short stories . Articles. Poems. Sketches .



Akathallam

Kitchen Corner

Thankamma's Chicken Curry

Ingredients:

1. 5 lbs. chicken cut into pieces
2. 2 tbs. red pepper
3. 2 tbs. coriander powder
4. 1 tsp. turmeric powder
5. 2 tsp. masala powder
6. salt to taste
7. 2 small onions, thinly sliced
8. 4 cloves of chopped garlic
9. 1 small piece of chopped ginger
10. 1 small chopped tomato



Directions:

In a medium sized stock pot, or other stainless steel pot, heat up a little oil and add mustard seeds. When the seeds begin to pop, add the onion, garlic, and ginger. Sauté until the onion turns slightly brown and becomes translucent. Then carefully add the red pepper, coriander, turmeric, masala powder, and salt. Mix well and then add the chicken. If the chicken is frozen, add a ½ cup water and cover. Cook the curry for about 30 minutes or until the chicken is fully cooked.

Thankamma George

Thankamma George's favorite past time is cooking for her grandchildren.

Narmavedi

How does a Malayalee spell the word 'MOON' ?
Yem wo yettanudherwo yen-uh!

How does a Malayalee spell Malayalam?
 YAMM - YAY - YELL - YAY - WHY - YAY - YELL - YUMM.

What did the Malayalee do when the plane caught fire?
 He JEMBED out of the VINDOW...

Akathallam**Household Tips****Recycling Tips**

- Used dryer softener sheets - Use for dusting instead of the Pledge grab-it or Swiffer cloths. Impossible to clean pots and pans? Fill with water and used sheet, let sit for awhile, and stains will be easier to clean. Great for removing soap scum from shower doors.
- Plastic grocery bags - Donate to local Salvation Army. They deliver meals on Wheels to elderly and are a non-profit organization and need bags to put food in to deliver.
- Soap Wrapper - Place it inside your shoe cabinet or shoebox. It's a cheap way of filling the air with a nice smell.
- Coffee filters - Use to clean and polish, or as a replacement for cheesecloth, paper towels, and napkins.



- Junk Mail - Put it through paper shredder and use as packing material when shipping gifts.
- Wallpaper books/samples - Use to make book covers, decorative envelopes, or wrapping paper. Or make your own beautiful envelopes: take apart any envelope you have, and trace the pattern onto the back side of the wallpaper, then fold and glue or tape.
- Tennis ball - Split it and hide your valuables inside.
- Kleenex boxes - Store plastic grocery store bags in them. You can then grab the bag just like you grab a tissue out of the box.

Compiled by: Rosy V. Pynadath



Aarogyam

Health Tips

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

It is an infection caused by avian virus. People can get infected with Asian bird & other bird viruses directly from birds. Most human infections have occurred after people had extensive exposure to chickens, ducks, turkeys or other environment. Many people in Asia who were infected with the current Asian bird flu strain developed typical influenza symptoms of fever, Cough, muscle ache & head ache. The risk of consumer exposure to bird flu virus through foods & dietary supplements in the US is low.

How can we protect from getting bird flu from food?

1. Wash your hand with soap & running water after handling poultry & eggs to remove the virus
2. Wash counter tops, knives, cutting boards & other utensils with hot soapy water to prevent cross-contamination from contaminated poultry & eggs to other foods.
3. Follow recommended cooking times & temperatures for eggs & poultry. For example egg should be cooked to 160degrees Fahrenheit. Refrigeration & freezing do not kill influenza virus.
4. Avoid eating or tasting food that may contain raw or lightly cooked Example home made ice cream or dressings or sauces made with raw eggs.

We can play active role in preventing infections both with bird flu and with common

food borne pathogens by following these safe food handling guidelines.



Influenza - Vaccination by nose

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first intranasal flu vaccine. It is the first Flu vaccine to contain live virus. The virus is modified so it does not replicate well at body temperature but it stimulates the immune system to fight against flu.

The appropriate age to receive flu mist for healthy people is between 5 & 49. Patient ages 9 to 49 need only one dose but children ages 5 to 8 need two doses given 6 weeks apart. People at high risk for severe illness from Influenza (like babies & toddlers, elderly, and those with chronic health conditions, including asthma) should continue to receive the injected vaccine instead. It is better to be safe rather than sorry.

Compiled by: Suja Thomas

*Reference: The Journal of Clinical Excellence,
www.fda.gov*

Community Info...

Wedding Anniversaries

Congratulations to all of you!

Job Sebastian & Elsy Job
Sam Athimoottil & Laly Varghese
Tommy Abraham & Leena Abraham
Sunny Paul & Sherly Sunny
Anil Thomas & Bindu Thomas
Sivaprasad & Shyamala Prasad

Birthdays

Kesari wishes you all a very happy birthday!

George Paul
Peter N Thomas
Amal Peter Thomas
Andrea Susan Thomas
Soosamma Mathew
Vinod Pillai
Shijumon Mathew

New Birth

Dominic & Priya Mathai have a new addition to their family.
Alpha Mathai born on June 13th 2005.

Congratulations to Dominic & Priya!

Anil Prasad & Bindiya have a new addition to their family.
Maya born on June 13th 2005.

Congratulations to Anil & Bindiya!

New Members

CDMA welcomes new members!

Babu John, Celin Babu (Wife),
Evlina Babu & Christine Babu (Children)

Suresh Gangadharan, Sreeja Gopalan (Wife)
Suraj Suresh & Surya Suresh (Children)

Madhu Chengat, Ushus Madhu (Wife)
Neelima Madhu & Nikita Madhu (Children)

Shijumon Mathew

Deepu John Varghese

KESARI FRONT COVER PAGE DESIGN COMPETITION

A picture can tell you more than words... Kesari - Capital District Malayalee Association's Bilingual Newsletter is pleased to announce its first cover design contest to promote excellence in design and creativity.

ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all, irrespective of age and gender. In line with the objectives of Kesari, the participants are requested to adhere to the following criteria in designing the cover page:

- All entries must be received no later than **March 1, 2006**.
- You do not need to be a member of CDMA to enter.
- Entries should reflect the contributor's original artwork. Plagiarized work will be deemed ineligible.
- Designs can be paintings, illustrations, sketches or drawings. No photos are allowed.
- The work can either be in color or black and white.
- Designs should reflect some common theme between Easter and Vishu
- Design must be appropriate in content and nature. Any entry with obscenity will be ignored.
- Submit only on full-page A4 sized sheets.

Entries not satisfying any of the above conditions will be disqualified.

JUDGING

Judging for all categories will take place between March 5, 2006 and March 15, 2006. Only a single work may be chosen as the best of show. Judging is conducted democratically through



VOTING. All entries will be scanned and uploaded. The voting link will be emailed to all CDMA members. Individuals can view and then email CDMA their choice. Judges are recommended to evaluate each entry on how well it accomplishes its design objectives as well as for its originality and exceptional talent.

NOTIFICATION

Winners will be announced on March 25, 2006 via email to everyone belonging to the CDMA Newsletter group. Kesari's Editorial Board cannot return entries and do not accept any responsibility for materials entered.

RECOGNITION

The winning entry will be published as the cover page for the special April-Vishu/Easter issue. Design by the runner up will be used for the consecutive publication. Winners of the first five entries will be recognized for their outstanding ability at the Vishu-Easter CDMA function.

ENTRY METHODS

The designs can be send by the following method:

Email: cdmenewsletter@yahoo.com, with a subject line of 'Kesari Front Cover Page Design Competition'

Pls. include your name and a few lines about yourself along with the submission.

Disclaimer: CDMA Committee and Kesari Editorial Board are not responsible for the voting process. The tallying is conducted by the Kesari Editorial Board.