

Bal Sandesh

Newsletter of Bal Sabha of Columbia, MO
Republic Day Issue

January 2005
Volume 8, Issue 1

EDITOR'S NOTE



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Happy new year 2005, and also happy Republic Day! This issue has many varying articles, ranging from celebrations, to biographies, tracking asteroids and comets and everyday safety, as well as the continuing poets and kitchen sections. The pictures seen in this

issue have captions detailing the characters in them on the last page. Bal Sandesh would like to express its gratitude to everyone who contributed to the relief efforts for the recent tsunami disaster.

-Ashok Cutkosky



Pongal Urmila Kutikkad, Third grade, Ridgeway Elementary

The festival of Pongal is celebrated in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in India. Pongal falls in the month of January. It is similar to the Thanksgiving day here.

Pongal is a three day festival. The first day is celebrated as Bhogi when Lord Indra is worshipped. Lord Indra, being the ruler of the clouds, is worshipped for bringing plentiful rain and a good harvest. The second day is Surya Pongal and is celebrated to praise the Sun God. Prayers are said to the Sun God to seek his blessing. The third day is Mattu Pongal which is an occasion to honor the cattle. To the farmer the cow gives milk and the bull draws the ploughs in the fields. Therefore the farmers honor their cattle on the day of Mattu Pongal. Lord Ganesh and Goddess Parvathi are also worshipped on this day. During pongal celebrations community dinners are held where rich and poor people, old and young come



together to celebrate.

The Indian community of Columbia celebrated Pongal on January 17, 2005 at the Memorial Union. We had entertainment programs for about an hour. Some of the items were done by us kids.

One of the items was representing famous people from the history of Tamil Nadu. This is a photo of that event. I am Manimekalai, second from the left on the back row. She is the heroine of the great literary work Manimekalai. She was a Buddhist monk and believed that nobody should go hungry or homeless.

We had a food drive on Pongal day and donated the food collected to the Cental Missouri Food Bank. There were skits,

dances, and songs too.

After the entertainment we had a nice potluck dinner with Sarkkarai Pongal as one of the main dishes.

Siemens Westinghouse Competition

Anand Palaniappan, Senior, Hickman High School



Briefly, my research project, Automatic Tracking and Discovery of Potentially Hazardous Earth Approaching Asteroids and Comets, is about tracking near-Earth objects. While baseball outfielders may create the illusion that tracking an object is relatively straightforward, imagine if one outfielder was required to track a hundred baseballs. Odds are, even a hundred outfielders tracking a hundred baseballs would find the task impossible.

In 2005, the Pan-STARRS wide field imaging telescope, being constructed at the University of Hawaii, will become operational, imaging more new objects in its first

months of operation than have been discovered since the invention of the telescope. My project is in developing algorithms to track these millions of new objects—a problem similar to missile tracking. Based on discussion with my advisor Prof. Uhlmann in the Dept. of Computer Science at the Univ. of Missouri-Columbia, I began writing thousands of lines of computer code to solve this task. As I raced to finish analyzing results and writing a paper submission in early October for the Siemens Westinghouse Competition, I never expected to become a regional finalist among only twenty-nine other innovative science students across the country.

This year, in the 2004-2005 competition, over twelve hundred papers (reports up to 20 pages in length) were received. From these submissions, three hundred semifinalists were selected, and in a second round, five individuals in each of six regions were invited for two days of competition and interviews at one of the regional univer-

sity sites. At my regional competition, held at the University of Notre Dame, I met an eclectic group of students from both public and private schools with projects in nanotechnology, computational chemistry, group theory, and physics. All the projects were of excellent quality, so the regional competition seemed to focus on selecting an individual who can communicate their research well to both experts and non-specialists.

The winner of this year's Midwest Regionals was Po Ling Lo, and each of us regionalists received \$1000 for college. Future students should aim to get an early start. However, if taking the whole project on alone sounds too challenging, consider the team competition. In fact, only one hundred team papers were received this year and twenty-four move to regionals. Either way, conducting research is challenging and rewarding. The research done today, inevitably, helps the people of tomorrow.

Thyagaraja

By: Rijutha Garimella, Fourth Grade, Fairview Elementary School



I was saint Thyagaraja on the Pongal parade of famous Tamilians. Thyagaraja was born near Thanjavur on the banks of the river Cauvery in 1767. He

started singing devotional songs on Lord Rama when he was really



young. As he got older he had disciples wanting to learn those songs. In 1907 his students and their students started singing his songs every year in January and other musicians are continuing this.

Balsandesh Poets:



Grandpa's Funeral

By:
Perna Srinivasan,
4th Grade, Shepard Elementary

If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral, you
don't know how to cry.
Chubby tears roll lifelessly down your chubby cheeks.
Sad noises come out of your mouth. sad thoughts come
into mind.

If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral,
You don't know how to cry.

If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral, you
don't know how to frown.
You try to turn your smile upside down, but it won't
let you.
Some people think you are weird, because you smile
when you are angry.
If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral, you
don't know how to frown.

If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral, you can
always remember your grandpa. Yes, you can always
fondly remember your grandpa.

From the time he carried me to the time he played
joyfully with me, there are lots of memories.
I am glad, that I even learned my mother tongue from
him.

If you hadn't gone to your grandpa's funeral, in many
ways you 'CAN' remember 'YOUR' grandpa.
But you can't remember 'MY' grandpa.



"I am Thankful that Nature Still Survives" (A thanksgiving Poem)

By:
Maya Cutkosky,
5th Grade, Fairview Elementary

Yellow flowers flow along golden sheets of grass
Along the lake lotus flowers shower all their beauty
The lake itself, see through blue dazzles with life
A squirrel shivers wet because it has fallen in water
And I am thankful places like these exist.

The wild life is plentiful as well as the plants
A patient little bird waits for its worms
A fox pokes his nose up at a promising scent
The sun set shows while the cool air starts to stir
And I am very thankful such a place exists.

A deer runs about glad to be free
Color flashing around her, such a pretty home she has
A frog hops across the lilies, his back green and blue
The yellow green lilies bounce up and down with ripples
And I am very thankful these places exist.

What a wonder it is that these places survive
Alone in the peace and harmony of nature
More prettier than the endless buildings of society
I am glad nature still survives.

Safety Tips

By Shreyas Srinivasan, Preschool, Southwest Play School

Be careful when plugging in any electrical appliances.
Small mistakes could even cost you your life, like the way it
happened to my paternal Grand-father 33 years back.
Small children under the age of 19 should not talk in their
cell phones for a prolonged periods of time. They waves can
damage the brain cells, leading to poor grades in school.

Always wear sturdy helmets and other safety gear, while
riding your bike, skate-boarding or roller-blading.
Always look in both directions for vehicles, before crossing
the street.
Never eat more than one chocolate a day. It will lead to de-
caying of teeth.

BAWARCHI

The Kitchen Corner

Aswath Kumar,
Third grade,
Ridgeway Elementary

Kollukkattai- not Athribaksha

This recipe comes from an old folk tale.

Once there lived in a village, a man named Shiva with his wife Swathika. On Ganesh Chaturthi day, Shiva went to his mother's house. His mom had made some sweets, and he loved them. He asked his mother what they were called. "**Kollukatti**" replied his mother. When Shiva was coming home he kept on saying the name Kollukatti, Kollukatti, Kollukatti so he wouldn't forget the name. Suddenly he came to a big puddle along the way. He screamed "**Athribhaksha**", as he jumped across the puddle. After he jumped over the puddle he forgot all about Kollukatti and began repeating Athribaksha instead.

When Shiva went home he asked his wife Swathika to make "**Athribaksha**". She did not know what Athribaksha was because she had never heard of it. Shiva hit her because she did not make Athribaksha for him. Swathika sobbed and complained to Shiva. She showed that there were bumps

in her body like "**Kollukatti**" because he hit her. He then remembered that his mother had said that the sweet was called Kollukatti. He screamed, Yes, make "**Kollukatai**" not Athribaksha. His wife made Kollukatti and they lived happily ever after. This is an old folk tale. What do you think will happen today?

Here is my mother's recipe for *Kollukattai*.

Kollukattai:

Ingredients: Rice rava -8 Oz

Grated coconut – 4 Oz
Chopped onions – 2 Oz
Chopped green chillies – 3
Oil – 2 tsp
Mustard – ½ tsp
Urad dhal – ½ tsp
Channa dhal – ½ tsp
Curry leaves,
coriander, salt/ to taste

Cooking Method:

Heat oil in a pan and sauté mustard, urad dhal, channa, curry leaves, onion, chilli, cilantro and coconut. Add 2 cups of water and let it boil. Add the rice rava and salt and cook for a little while. Make round balls out of it and steam it in a steamer. Kollukattai is ready to eat.

Beginning the January 2000 issue this column has become a regular feature in Bal Sandesh. If you have recipes to share with our readers, please send them to our editorial staff or parent advisors. We will select a few recipes to include in each issue. Photos to accompany recipes will also be appreciated.

Bal Sandesh needs your help!

We welcome submissions of all types (reports, poetry, short stories, artwork, puzzles, jokes etc.). Work can be submitted to the Editor or the Parent Advisors. We prefer electronic version of the submission (e-mail or diskette). Artwork can be submitted on paper. Older kids interested in volunteering to serve on the editorial/production team should contact the Editorial Staff or the Parent Advisors.

Photo Captions
Seen on the parade photos on pages 2 from the left are: Narasimha Pallavan, Mahendra Pallavan, Raja Raja Cholan, Rani Mangammal, Thyagaraja with M.S. Subbulaskshmi in front. In addition seen on the front page are: Mathematician Ramanujan, Ilango Adigal, Manimekalai on the left end and Bhalarasawathi and Thiruvalluvar on the right end.

(Photos by Bharat Srinivasan)

Upcoming Festivals, Local Celebrations and Cultural Events

Saraswathi Pooja:
12th Feb, Saturday

Holi in Columbia:
March 6, Sunday

Sargam: (classical)
March 13, Sunday

Ugadi in Columbia:
April 9, Saturday.



THANK YOU

This issue of Bal Sandesh has been made possible through financial sponsorship from:

Days Inn/Travelodge
Howard Johnson/Panda Pals
Taj Emporium

Bal Sandesh

Published Tri-Yearly
Republic Day Issue- January
Summer Issue - May
Diwali or India Nite Issue - October

Editorial Staff

Vellore S. Arthi
Indu Chandrasekhar
Ashok Cutkosky
Anand Palaniappan
Aditya Srinath
Meghna Srinath

Parent Advisor

Hema Srinivasan
Vellore S. Gopalaratnam

Phone

446-0663
446-6143
445-2854
446-1962
446-8403
446-8403

445-2854
446-0663

E-Mail

vsarthi@aol.com

indumania@hotmail.com
anandp87@hotmail.com
adityasrinath@hotmail.com
eggnog68@hotmail.com

srinivasanh@missouri.edu
vsgopal@aol.com