

IWA DHWANI

Indian Women's Association

September 2015 • MCI (P) 143/05/2013

Sounds of IWA, Singapore

வணக்கம் / in Chio

Hello 你好 *Bonjour*

नमस्ते नमस्ते

How are you?

Selamat Datang こんにちは



My Little Red Dot

neelambar



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IWA Committee for 2015

President: Sukanya Pushkarna	Events Chair - Neeta Mirchandani
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IWA CARE	Entrepreneur Club - Preeti Dubey
Swami Home - Manjula Bains	Fitness - Padmaja Balaji
Beyond Social Services - Anshoo Berry	Go Green and Sustainable Art - Prerna Rajpal and Chhaya Banga
Position Open	Gourmet Goddess - Nimisha Kesarwani, Neena Mittal
Migrant Workers -Piu Lahiri, Neeta Kapoor, Garima Lalwani	Mahjong - Madhu Suri
SMU Vidya Scholarship: Subina Khaneja	Music Club - Chandan Lehal (Dolly), Madhu Suri
IWA CONNECT	Writing Enthusiasts' Club - Shilpa Dixit Thapliyal, Shilpa Swaroop
Festive Bazaar - Gowri Aiyar, Chhaya Banga	Kids events - Gauri Savadi

UPCOMING EVENTS

9th
OCT

Dosti Extended at Sovereign function room, Meyer Road
IWA joins hands with Singapore Kindness movement to organise a Friendship dinner with our Singaporean neighbours. Look out for registration information in our newsletter.

1st
NOV

Diwali Lunch at The Ritz Carlton Hotel
A fun-filled festive joint lunch along with the Siglap South CC family.

2nd
DEC

Swami Home - Gala Christmas Party. Come dressed in Red/green/ gold/silver and join our carolers bring in the Christmas spirit along with our own Santa Claus and his little elves.

Mid
FEB

(date to be announced) - The IWA Iconic Event

I
Care

- **SWAMI Home for the elderly** - fund raising & regular visits marked with activities.
community@iwasingapore.org
- **Beyond Social Services-** activities & events for under privileged children.
service@iwasingapore.org
- **Migrant Workers' causes**
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- **IWA SMU Vidya Scholarship**
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For all enquiries

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www.facebook.com/iwasingapore



Letter from the PRESIDENT



Dear Readers,

In the four months since our last edition, we at IWA have been really busy!!

Our May Bazaar was a huge success and the vendors went home happy and many are back for our Festive Bazaar this month.

Our membership event "Pita n Patter 2" was a super hit as

old and new members gathered at a restaurant to eat and play fun games, and get to know each other.

In June we joined SWAMI home to celebrate their Fun Fair day. A team of IWA volunteers dressed in brilliant hues manned a stall, selling used books and beautiful potted plants. Our entertainment groups sang songs and put up dances for the elderly residents and other visitors. Many of our parents turned up in support and were moved by what they saw.

Another group of dedicated volunteers and daughters worked with Beyond Social Services (BSS) on their fundraising day and also manned a games stall that brought great joy to the children visiting the fair.

Our migrant workers' team has been working quietly each week to bring fruit supplements to those in need.

In August we proudly watched a member of our executive committee dance in the momentous National Day Parade. Many members were proud first time voters in last week's elections.

Recently, a group of IWA ladies from the music club joined over 75 other men and women of various communities, to dance for integration at the One Community Fiesta organized by the PA. Another group comprising IWA members and daughters captivated the audience with a scintillating dance performance. These women sacrificed many weekend hours to practice for these events. We also ran two popular stalls, one arts and craft for children, a henna corner and photo booth at the same festival.

In October we will be working with the Singapore Kindness Movement to promote neighborliness and in November we will join hands with Siglap South IAEC to celebrate Diwali.

We are excited to see that each of our monthly club events (almost one each week) are regularly going into wait lists as members are becoming more and more active. Some clubs are having to move into function rooms to accommodate the swelling membership.

It gives me great pleasure and pride to see how each club is catering to the changing needs of a particular section of our membership with very little overlap and how our community outreach programs are bringing these groups together.

Kudos to the many beautiful and talented women of IWA whose generosity with their time, energy and ideas makes this possible.

This magazine will give you a glimpse into this world. Enjoy!

Sukanya Pushkarna
president@iwasingapore.org

On the Cover

Artist: Neelam Lara
Title: My Little Red Dot
Medium: Digital Art

Since Singapore is a Melting Pot of cultures and languages I have depicted various greetings in myriad languages spoken here. Colours used are Red and White from the SG flag. Green is representative of The Garden City. Square in SE Asia symbolizes Earth and Circle is symbolic of Heaven. Thank you IWA for giving me this wonderful opportunity to express my greetings, respect and love for "My Little Red Dot" – "My Singapore" NeelamLara – Graphic Artist and Jewelry Designer.

Back Cover

Artists: Kumuda & Shivali
Title: 'Festive Singapore'
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas
Size: 9 inches X 12 inches

IWA Dhvani editorial team: Lakshmi (Lucky) Padmanabhan, Lakshmi Raghavan, Rashantha Therese Devanesan, Garima Lalwani, Sukanya Pushkarna, Neena Mittal, Alka Jogelkar and Piu Lahiri (editor)

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We hope you like this issue of IWA Dhvani. If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding articles and features or if you would like to contribute articles or artwork to our magazine, please write to editor@iwasingapore.org

From the Editorial Team

Hello,

This is the first letter from the editorial team to our readership.

Through this issue, we would like to introduce you to the seasons of Singapore - Her myriad festivals, which are celebrated by the various communities for whom Singapore is home. The year starts with Singapore dressed in Red and Gold, the colours of the Chinese New year. This is followed by the warm hues of Baisakhi and Vesak Day, heralding spring. During Summer, Hari Raya, is celebrated followed by the harvest Autumn festivals of Onam, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri and Deepawali. The year comes to a close when Singapore is transformed into a wonderland with Christmas celebrations of white snowflakes, red Santas and beautiful Christmas trees.

We continue our celebration of former IWA Presidents and we have Shalini Sinha writing about her times, in this issue. The health corner becomes a regular feature as does the Writing Enthusiasts Club page where we have two articles in Hindi, for the first time.

Right from the cover where each community welcomes you in, to the colors, verve, dynamism and energy of the festivals celebrated in Singapore, beautifully depicted in the back cover this issue of IWA Dhvani is a tribute to Singapore's myriad hues as she celebrates SG50.

Write for DHWANI



IWA Dhvani is your magazine and we want you to showcase what excites and interests you. Please send in your contributions to editor@iwasingapore.org.

Dhwani is always looking for articles, poems, personal narratives, artwork and photographs from our members. We welcome first-time writers and we will provide all editorial support.

IWA is not only about women but also about our families. In IWA dhvani we welcome husbands, parents & children to send in their contributions.

Did you know we have a special kid's corner just for showcasing our children? They can contribute a 400 word essay on any aspect of life in Singapore which excites or interests them. It might be about people they have met, places they have visited, new food they have tasted or a skill they have developed.

The artwork or photograph should be horizontal, 210mm x 166.7mm and at least 300dpi. No camera phone photos please!

We try to accommodate as many contributions as possible. Sometimes, if an article, poem or artwork does not make it in this edition, we hold it for another issue.

Dhwani is a magazine for you & by you so start sending in your contributions!



IWA 2008-2011: AND THE BABY SOARS...!

by Shalini Sinha



Nothing gives greater happiness than seeing one's baby grow, take flight and conquer newer horizons, esp. where it's a hard-earned flight.

IWA's Presidency in 2008 came to me in the backdrop of the inhospitable environment of deep recession during which IWA suddenly found

itself financially adrift while having to simultaneously address the newer, younger, working women, arriving as trailing spouses, but with aspirations that went beyond just the Tai Tai tag. It was also the period that kicked in debates on the locals - expat Indians divide, buttressed by Singapore government's National Integration Council's initiatives to bridge that gap.

The challenges of my three-year tenure (2008-2011) were enormous. But with my hardworking and enterprising committee and a fantastically inspired member body supporting us in our efforts, IWA slowly had a makeover, clocking in many of its firsts.

The most outstanding feather in our cap was the super successful IWA Carnival, the first IWA-Singapore People's Association collaborative initiative supported by the Ministry Of Community Development, Youth and Sports. The event had been preceded with IWA's induction on the national level think tank, the National Integration Council, wherein IWA and other handpicked organizations were tasked to create opportunities to foster greater integration between the local populace and the new Indians. The Carnival, held after six months of minutely worked out blueprint, was hailed by all for the laborious effort that went into creating spaces for genuine interaction and collaboration with the locals.

The main focus of my tenure was on the creation and consolidation of IWA's systems to make it a more profitable and self-reliant organization. After the first IWA Bazaar in 2007 with a handful of vendors in a club function room, my committee decided to scale it up. Much was said on the perils of sinking money into commercializing IWA when we transitioned the bazaar to a larger hotel venue but it attracted business not only from member-entrepreneurs but also

those who flew in from overseas. Today it gladdens my heart to see women walk in hordes into one of the best bazaars in the Singapore calendar, our IWA Bazaar, that has also become the launchpad for many an entrepreneur into Singapore's commercial circuit.

Another first of our tenure was the launch of the advertorial systems and digitalization of the IWA media, making IWA mass media & communications virtual and an effective revenue generator. In the pre-FB, Twitter era, the initial response to paying for email advertising was met with much skepticism, but then, the cash registers began ringing, and we were on a roll! No more sponsor hunting - truly liberating!

Most of all however, our success was in the people connect we established. Be it through the Working Women's group, IWA Connect, monthly Coffees, annual events like Dandiya, Holi and Diwali fundraisers, our philanthropic work with Goonj, BSS & SINDA, the Book, Film & Music clubs and many collaborative events with the French association, IWA drew women from all walks of life. We met so many women and created so many ever-lasting friendships, making IWA truly synonymous with its founding principles: a pan-Indian women's platform. The litmus test came in the renewal of memberships: the first year we had to call and cajole friends and acquaintances to join in; the next year onwards, once our IWA vision had rolled in, Indian women in Singapore embraced IWA as one of its own.

In many ways, IWA feels like a baby that my committee and I nurtured because while my tenure as IWA President was fraught with pain and sweat, it culminated in solid foundations, endearing relationships and a bright future for IWA.

Shalini Sinha, a wordsmith, works with students applying for undergraduate admissions to the U.S. and U.K. universities via UniApp-Assist, an independent university consulting practice she founded in 2013.



The 2010 IWA Committee



Chinese New Year

by Neena Mittal



as the belief is to clean up the negative energies 'huiqi' that would have accumulated throughout the year. Likewise, it is considered inauspicious to use any sharp object or even to clean the house on the New Year's Day. Consequently cooking is kept to minimum, without involving chopping and cutting. The families decorate their house entrance with red paper scrolls scripted with lucky messages for good fortune and paper firecrackers to protect it from evil spirits.

In the Chinese culture, the colour red epitomizes good fortune. People dress-up in red coloured attire, exchange red coloured envelopes called 'Hong Bao'. Customarily, the red envelopes contain money symbolizing prosperity and are given by the elders to the younger members of the family. Yellow is another auspicious colour in Chinese culture. It represents gold generating 'Yin and Yang' thus it's a custom to present oranges to families and friends during CNY. Traditionally, the oranges used as gifts have to be presented in even numbers or in pairs.

The biggest community activity during CNY in Singapore is called 'Lo Hei', (Lo means tossing up and Hei means high) popularly known as the 'Prosperity Toss'. The practice is to toss a dish called 'Yusheng' with chopsticks as high up in the air as possible, while reciting auspicious wishes aloud. Yusheng is made of raw boneless fish, shredded vegetables, plum sauce and other condiments. This embodies abundance, prosperity and vigor. Strangely enough, the rather intriguing practice of 'Lo Hei' is quintessential to only Singapore and not prevalent in Mainland China.

'Lion dance' is performed accompanied by traditional Chinese instruments – drums, gongs and cymbals outside the shops and houses, a representation of good fortune to businesses and prosperity to communities. This is by far the most impressive cultural activity.

The Chinese New Year festivities last for nearly half a month to ring in health, wealth and prosperity.

It's been over 15 years since I relocated to Singapore and ever since, I have observed the Chinese New Year celebrations at least that many times: the lion dance performances, the exchange of red packets and the heaps of oranges flooding the stores, every single year. I realized, that there is no better way to acquaint myself with the local festivals than to interact with my next-door neighbour Mr. Tan Khin Pang, of a native Chinese family.

The Chinese New Year (CNY) is celebrated on the second new moon after the winter solstice. According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the New Year usually falls between January 21st and February 20th of each year. It is also known as 'Spring Festival' as it falls during the spring season. Despite appearing as a marker of a 'New Year', CNY is celebrated for 15 days with the last day being the 'Lantern Festival'. Hence it is considered to be the longest festival in the Chinese calendar.

The twenty-fourth day of the twelfth lunar month, just before the Chinese New Year, is considered auspicious and observed as the 'Kitchen Goddess' Day. A prayer is conducted in the kitchen to the kitchen pots containing sacrificial dishes and drinks for the protection of the household and the family. On the Eve of the CNY the families host a Reunion Dinner attended by their extended family members. The entire family sits around a round table for a steamboat meal. The fish is served as the last course in the meal signifying 'abundance' and is not meant to be eaten. Traditionally, before the New Year the Chinese clean their houses thoroughly,



Neena Mittal is a full-time Freelance Writer covering Features and Travel stories for Travel and Lifestyle magazines.

Baisakhi

Day Celebrations

by Soniyah Sidhu



After relocating to Singapore sixteen years ago there was always this assumption that Sikhs in Singapore would not celebrate the Sikh Festivals with same amount of pomp, gaiety and splendor in Mumbai, India my birthplace. I was pleasantly surprised when I went to the gurudwara to see how beautifully Vaisakhi was celebrated in the gurudwara that evening.

Vaisakhi, also spelled Baisakhi, is one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar. It is the Sikh New Year festival and is celebrated on April 13 or 14.

History: Baisakhi is a long established harvest festival in the Punjab. It had been celebrated long before it gained an added dimension for Sikhs. In 1699 the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singhji used this occasion to transform the Sikhs into a family of soldier saints, known as the Khalsa Panth.

Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa in front of thousands at Anandpur Sahib. He came out of a tent carrying a sword. He challenged any Sikh who was prepared to give his life to come into the tent. The Guru returned alone with his sword covered in blood. He then requested another volunteer and repeated the same action four times until five men disappeared into the tent. The crowd was very concerned until they saw five

men return wearing turbans with the Guru. These five men became known as the Panj Piare, or 'Beloved Five'. The Guru then baptized the men into the Khalsa. He sprinkled them with Amrit ('immortalising nectar': the Sikh term for holy water) and said prayers. This is the basis of the Sikh Baptism Ceremony.

Sikhs celebrate this very important day with joy and devotion. They take an early bath, wear new clothes and visit the gurudwara (Sikh place of worship) to participate in the special prayer meet marked for the day. After a special ardas of kirtans (religious songs) and discourses kada prasad (sweetened semolina) is distributed amongst all present. Later, people sit in rows to relish the langar or community lunch prepared and served by kar sevaks or volunteers.

Major celebrations of Baisakhi are organized at Golden Temple, Amritsar where the Khalsa Panth was founded on a Baisakhi Day in 1699. Most Sikhs strive to visit Golden Temple on the occasion.

Everybody in Singapore is welcome to take part in the Vaisakhi celebrations irrespective of religion.



Soniyah Sidhu is proprietor of Jinders, Singapore's leading indian apparel store .

She has been living in Singapore for 15 years and is the proud mother of two -Priyanka and Rajveer.

Vesak, or Buddha Jayanti

by Tara Dhar Hasnain



Vesak, or Buddha Jayanti, is a day of jubilation for the world's nearly one billion Buddhists. It is observed in different ways in different countries, yet for Buddhists everywhere it is an opportunity to reaffirm their faith in Gautama Buddha as a reliable guide and teacher on life's pathway. Big celebrations take place also in China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, most of South East Asia, and other countries, but my brief is to focus on Singapore and India.

For Theravadins and most Himalayan-style Buddhists it commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and eventual passing away (*Parinirvana*) of the founder.

Many of Singapore's Buddhist monasteries hold an extended three-day celebration, to enable hundreds of thousands of devotees to take part in activities believed to accrue 'merit' or virtue by engaging in positive acts, motivated by an 'other-centred' rather than a 'me-centred' attitude.

The majority of Singapore's Buddhists (numbering about one-third of all Singaporeans), being ethnically Chinese, are Mahayana believers. They start the day early, by retaking the **Five Precepts** for lay people.

They participate in many special activities on this auspicious day- bathing images of the baby Siddhartha, reciting *sutras*, tracing over them, attending poojas, listening to discourses by learned monks, making offerings to help the needy, as well as offering lights, incense, flowers, and donating money. They bring to mind the way the Buddha lived, the life of an 'awakened' being, the ideal to emulate.

For many, it is also an occasion to reconnect with one's 'dharma' friends, like-minded people who support one on the Buddhist path. The atmosphere is festive and joyous, welcoming all, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike.

The *Amitabha Buddhist Centre (ABC)*, which I belong to, offers all this and more. Funded totally by donations, and run by volunteers with guidance from our *Sangha*, it held a three-day event in 2015, under a specially constructed tentage, to accommodate the thousands who participated in this event. Outside it, a huge *thangka*, or cloth-painting, of Amitabha Buddha was unfurled, so large it was actually visible from the nearby MRT station, spreading blessings to all!

Everyone was welcome to join, and thousands attended the poojas, talks and blessings by senior lamas, among

other activities. As night fell, they joined the procession circumambulating the sacred images, led by our monks, all chanting 'om mani padme hum', the compassion mantra - a moving sight to behold.

Khen Rinpoche, our abbot, reminded us that this was also a time to recall the basic, simple message of Buddha Shakyamuni:

Do not create any negative action (to that end, do not harm anyone), Accumulate perfect virtues (act with other-centred motivation, to help all sentient beings, including yourself) **And subdue your mind** (to gain mastery over your mind, meditate regularly, and redirect your mind towards positive, virtuous acts) In India too, Buddha Purnima, which falls on the full-moon day in May, is celebrated with great gusto, especially in India's many Buddhist - dominated regions like Ladakh, Sikkim, parts of West Bengal, Arunachal and Himachal Pradesh, and Dharamsala, home to a sizeable Tibetan Buddhist community.

Two very special venues for these celebrations are the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment, and Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his famous first teaching, the Four Truths for the Noble Ones (*Aryas*). Both places are decked out with thousands of lights and flowers, and one can hear chanting, as well as see people bowing and circumambulating the sacred objects.

On this day, the National Museum in Delhi also brings out the Buddha's mortal remains for public viewing. At my centre here, as the volunteers helped carry the special Buddha images and paintings back to the centre at the end of Vesak day, we felt rejuvenated for the year ahead, inspired to continue on the path shown by the Buddha, and grateful to the monks, on hand to guide us on our individual journeys, as well as to show by example how to live a blameless, happy, peaceful life - *Nirvana* right here in the midst of *Samsara*.



Tara Dhar Hasnain has worked as a university teacher most of her adult life, including as permanent faculty at Delhi University for many years, and at SMU as adjunct faculty. She loves books, and is currently an editor with Marshall Cavendish publishing.



HARI RAYA

by Afsheen Shehzadi

*May all the
joys of life be showered on You!*

Eid Mubarak!

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims throughout the world focus on purifying themselves. It is a time for inner reflection, devotion to God and self control. They observe an obligatory fast from dawn to dusk from food, drink, bad behavior and worldly pleasures. Ramadan is also a time of intensive worship, reading the holy book (Qur'an), giving to charity, purifying one's behavior and doing good deeds. Through fasting, Muslims get to experience hunger and develop sympathy for the less fortunate and learn to be thankful for the bounties of blessings that God has showered upon them.

After a month of fasting and abstaining from worldly pleasures, Muslims are rewarded with a celebration of feasting; Eid-UI-Fitr. It is a joyous occasion where Muslims are encouraged to adorn themselves in new clothes, meet friends and relatives to increase camaraderie amongst each other. They also seek forgiveness from one another and rekindle relationships. Children receive tokens usually in monetary form called "Eidi" to reward them for observing fast during Ramadan. This merry occasion is usually celebrated in the span of three days around the world but in Singapore it usually goes on until the "Syawwal" month ends. Greetings such as "Selamat Hari Raya" or "EidMubarak" are exchanged when one meets friends and family. Delicious festive food such as Sheer Kurma, Biryani, cookies and cakes would be served in celebration of the occasion. Eid-UI-Fitr is truly a festival of feasting and joy!



Afsheen Shehzadi is a teacher teaching English and Science. Besides fulfilling her motherly duties to 3 energetic kids, she enjoys reading and decorating her home in her free time.



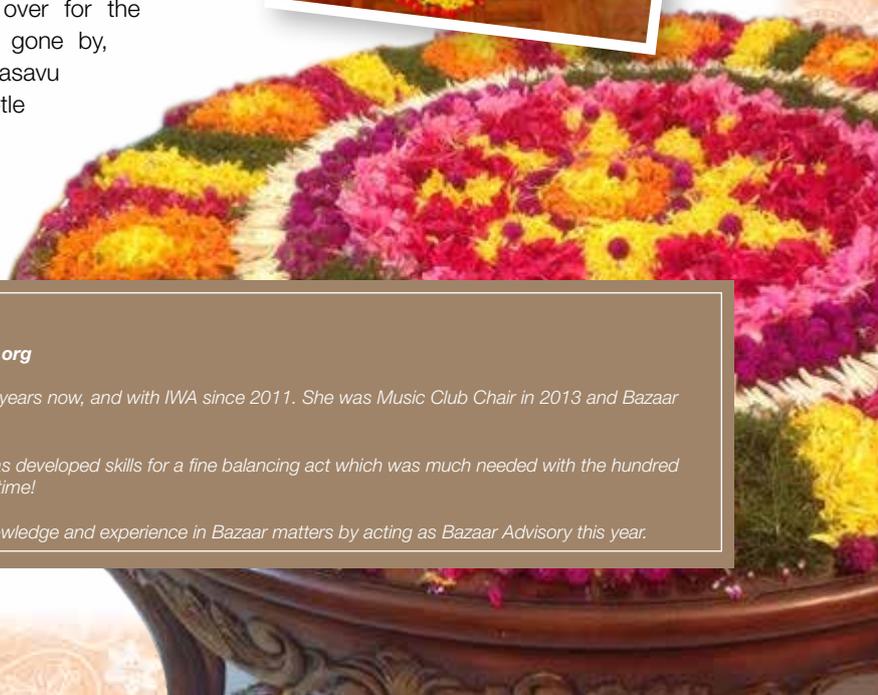
Onam

by Raji Viswanathan



Onam is the biggest festival of the southern Indian state of Kerala. It falls during the Malayali month of Chingam (Aug - Sep). Onam marks the homecoming of King Mahabali, a legendary king, who ruled Kerala in a period believed to be the golden age, when people were happy, prosperous, and lived in complete harmony. This golden age ended when Vamana (an avatar of Lord Vishnu) pushed King Mahabali, deep into the earth. But

happy with Mahabali's honesty and generosity, the lord granted him a wish that he can visit his kingdom, Kerala, and dear subjects once every year. Onam is celebrated for ten days - Atham is the first day and Thiruvonam is the final day of the celebration. On Thiruvonam day people wear new clothes, decorate their houses and put flower rangolis called 'Pookalam' in front of their houses, to welcome the King Mahabali. Special prayers are offered in the temples early in the morning and younger members take blessings and gifts from the elders of the family. A traditional feast of twenty-one homemade curries and sweets are prepared for the ambrosial Onasadya. Spectacular Carnivals of elephants, fireworks, boat races, music and kaikottikali dance are performed all over Kerala. In Singapore too we celebrate Onam by going to the temple, making a decorative Pookalam and inviting friends over for the Onasadya served on a banana leaf. As years have gone by, most of our friends own and wear the traditional Kasavu for the celebrations, which looks grand, as the subtle off-white blends beautifully with the gold border. Onam today has become one of the festivals which connects us across cultures, across countries and makes us truly global Indians.



Raji Viswanathan
Festive Bazaar Advisory
IWA Email ID: bazaar@iwasingapore.org

Raji has been in Singapore for about 23 years now, and with IWA since 2011. She was Music Club Chair in 2013 and Bazaar Chair in 2014.

As a professional Yoga instructor, she has developed skills for a fine balancing act which was much needed with the hundred vendors that vied for her attention each time!

She has agreed to use her wealth of knowledge and experience in Bazaar matters by acting as Bazaar Advisory this year.

Ganpati Bappa Morya



Writing about a festival we, as a big family, celebrate here may seem easy, but there are so many things to write about. All the markets in little India are buzzing with festivity with all sorts of lights, people looking for alluring fresh flowers, flavourful fruits, lovely smelling agarbattis (incense sticks), as well as big and small idols of Ganpati, or Ganesh which is just another way of addressing the same God of knowledge and new beginnings. Living in Mumbai previously, I recall Ganesh Chaturthi being

celebrated with great excitement every year. I believe that the festival is celebrated with just as much spirit here, in Singapore. Besides families who celebrate this festival by bringing their own idols at home, there are also several groups and temples like Maharashtra Mandal, which celebrate the festival. These usually also have a lot of marvellous cultural programmes for people to enjoy during the festival.

Almost a month before the festival, during mid-August, idols of all sizes start popping in stores around Little India. They are all so pretty, that we can never make up our mind! Most of the idols you can find in the markets here are made out of mud, unlike the traditional ones which

are made out of clay. Besides idols, the few days the festival occurs, are fun filled, even though they may seem tiring. Setting the idol on a platform, coming up with distinctive eco-friendly decoration ideas and then decorating it with more flowers, counting out twenty-one shoots of velvety durva (grass), putting the five fruits together, chanting all the artis (prayer) we know, at least twice a day, cavort tasting the amazing modak (sweets made out of rice flour with a sweet coconut stuffing) mother makes, finishing all the pedas (milk based sweet)... The last activity is well, inevitable. We have friends and family over for meals or just to get blessings from Ganpati at any point of the day. Everyone who comes to our house leaves with their own small portion of the prasad (sweet offering), which are usually pedas. Anyway, the one and a half days we spend during the festival, are usually some of the best days of the year. Some people prefer keeping the idols for longer periods of time such as five, seven or even ten days. But at the end of it, when it is time to take the Ganesh idol for visarjan (immersion), it feels rather pessimistic. Not because we cannot have pedas everyday or because we miss the delectable meals without onion or garlic, it is because the idol you looked after with such high spirit will be submerged in a few minutes and dissolved in months, never to be seen again. Other than in your wonderful memories and pictures of course. To end the festival on a positive note, everyone chants, "गणपती बापूया मोर्या ! पुढच्या वर्षी लवकर या !" (Literally meaning, come sooner next year!)

Aboli Datey

Student of Year 10 at Tanglin Trust School is a vivid reader and writing enthusiast.



Navratri

I have been celebrating Navratri at my home for nearly 27 years. I started the tradition after my daughter was born and it was also a good way to socialise with the larger community. I do a doll display and have ladies over in the evening for snacks and Haldi Kumkum.

In 2002 it occurred to me to combine my celebration with a Garba that some IWA ladies were practising. I threw open my home to IWA members who came for a sumptuous lunch and a group of 8 ladies also performed the Garba. Everyone came dressed in their festive best and it became a joyous, colourful event. The highlight of the morning was a talk by the Late Mrs. Swarnakumari Srinivasan about Devi, Shakti and how and why we celebrate Navratri. Out of this grew the idea of having an annual IWA Navratri celebration and we started this the very next year. This event was held for many years at the Grand Ballroom of an Orchard Road hotel. Nearly 100-150 ladies attended the lunch dressed in their finery and participated in a group Garba dance.

A lot of us have fond memories of the celebrations.



I have been a member of IWA from its inception and have thoroughly enjoyed the journey with this organisation. I have attended and been part of many memorable and fun events and am extremely pleased with how we are evolving. It gives me great pleasure to be part of the Festive Bazaar team this year and I hope we are able to deliver a unique and satisfying experience to all the shoppers and participants.

Gowri Aiyar

KARVA CHAETH IN SINGAPORE

by Madhu Suri



Karva (earthen pot) Chauth (4th day) falls on the 4th day after the full moon in the month of Kartik. It is predominantly celebrated in the northern parts of India where married ladies fast from sunrise to moonrise for the longevity of their husbands.

I landed in Singapore on 14th October 1980 as a young bride. 12 days later, on 26th October, I had the opportunity to experience my very first Karva Chauth here. I woke up at 5am to the aroma of pranthas being cooked by my mom-in-law. She served it to me along with curd, sweet feni (vermicelli), fruits and tea. In the late afternoon, she chose a red zari sari and heavy gold jewellery for me to wear to the temple for Karva puja.

My husband dropped us off just outside the Lakshmi Narayan Temple in Chander Road. As if managing a heavy sari in a hot and humid weather was not hard enough, I had to balance my 'puja thali' while taking care to keep my balance in high heels.

Back home in Delhi, I used to watch my sister and mother do "karva chauth" puja with 7 or 8 ladies from the neighbourhood at their house. The whole process of passing on the puja thali around the circle 4 times would take them 15 to 20 minutes. To my shock, the number of ladies present in the temple was probably 70 to 80. Doing one round of thali exchange would easily take 15 to 20 minutes. Thus the whole puja used to take well over an hour. Over the years, the number of ladies attending the puja increased by leaps and bounds and just trying to accommodate so many ladies became a challenge. We started experimenting with making several smaller circles.

I used to make my own 'mathhis' at home. In India, it was so convenient to just buy 'mathhis' from the sweetmeat shops. Now, with changing times we have several options of shops to buy sweets and mathhis from. Shelves at Mustafa Centre are filled with Haldiram's packed sweet and savoury items. We can even enjoy mithai and street foods of India in the air-conditioned comfort of restaurants like Kailash Parbat.

It was exciting to go for a mehendi session at a friend's house a day before Karva Chauth. There were only two or three mehendi artists back then. We would enjoy home made pakodas and samosas while discussing our wardrobe for the next day's puja at the temple. Today, one can go to Little India for their mehendi where scores of shops cater to the increasing demand for extensive designs. Expat ladies also organize high tea/mehendi sessions at home.

In the 80s, the temple hall was smaller and not air-conditioned. Sometimes we even had to switch off the fans, as they would cause our 'dijas' to blow off. In spite of the heat and the number of people, we had fun taking photos after the puja and promising to inform one another by calling them up when one of us saw the moon.

Today the ladies do the puja in the comfort of air-conditioned temple. The number of ladies attending the puja has increased so much that the puja has to be performed three times to accommodate every one. The word about the moon sighting also goes around much faster with 'Whatsapp'.

Since joining IWA four years ago, I now get to celebrate all the Indian festivals with my friends on a much bigger scale. We Indians bring India with us wherever we go. JAI HIND.



Madhu Suri came to Singapore in Oct. 1980 after her marriage to a third generation Singaporean. She became a member of IWA 4 years ago and has recently been appointed the Chair of the Mahjong & Scrabble Club and Co-Chair of the Music Club.

Deepavali

by Viji Ramki



"We are going Deepavali shopping today" amma said as she served up some hot arbi fry from the iron cooking pot onto my plate. "Am I getting a pattu pavadai?" This is how the Deepavali excitement started for me. Pavadai, is like a Ghagra, only this is made of pure Kanjeevaram silk with a huge Zari border in beautiful colours. They were bought earlier for my sister and me as amma had to stitch them herself. The feel of the pattu pavadai was heady and exciting for me.

It was still a month away for Deepavali and there were so many things for amma to do. Deepavali sweets and savories took a giant part of it. My memories of Deepavali was always that of the smell of oil and ghee wafting through the house for days before the big day. The way we celebrate remains mostly the same to date, the difference being some eats are store bought but at least one or two are homemade.

For me the excitement remains the same from when I was a child. It starts off with shopping for a new kanjeevaram saree.

The day before Deepavali the pooja room is prepared cleaned and decorated with flowers. Rice flour kolams are drawn everywhere in the house with a red colour bordering to symbolize prosperity. Mango leaves are strung up as thorans and hung at the entrance. New clothes are laid out in front of the deities on a clean kolam drawn table..each one of the new clothes is given a small smear of kumkum in an inside corner. There is a bowl of special something which is also placed in front of the deity which is an essential part of Deepavali in every south Indian household ..DEEPAVALI MARUNDU..I love it now but used to hate it when I was young. One had to swallow this, a marble size of it..it was a paste made of all digestive herbs like coriander, cumin, ajwain, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg etc, a perfect antidote for the excesses later.

On Deepavali day everybody is up very early in the morning, much before sunrise we have to go straight to the puja room with our eyes closed and open them in front of the deity, a marble sized paste has to be swallowed first thing even before brushing. Then comes the special moment..a bowl of gingely oil is heated with herbs and put in front of the god. After a short puja the father of

the household applies a dab of it on everybody's head and we fall at his feet and get his blessings. He hands us our new clothes. We apply more oil in our hair and body and use a specially made herbal powder instead of soap or shampoo to remove it. We wear our new clothes and jewellery and eat breakfast which is generally idlis and sweets along with piping hot filter coffee. We head out to the local temple once the sun is up. It is indeed great to see a lot of Singaporeans out in force in the local temple wearing their new saris and jewellery. We have lunch at home as a family...sometimes we invite some relatives over for lunch. Of course, the whole day we consume sweets and savouries whenever we feel like it.



Viji Ramki is an Applied Psychologist specialised in Guidance and Counselling to empower individuals to perform at their best.



Christmas

by *Rashantha Devanesan*

Christmas is celebrated by Christians the world over to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The date, the 25th of December may have started off essentially as a festival celebrated by Pagan sunworshippers. History shows, that celebrations during the mid winter solstice were held to mark the end of dark winters and the coming of Spring long before the birth of Jesus Christ.

This date was incorporated into the Christian Calendar as the date commemorating Jesus's birth even though historically, his actual date of birth is known to be much earlier in the year.

Due to the spread of Christianity among various ethnic groups and cultures, this festival has taken on a truly international identity. These days almost every country and major city has something that symbolizes this festival. However, it isn't just about the commemoration of Christ's birth any more, it has become a season for people to reflect upon their lives, extend generosity to those in need and to be thankful for Blessings and challenges in the past year.

Each country has its own way of celebrating Christmas, and Singapore being a multi racial and multi ethnic city, has developed its own unique Christmas celebrations.

Being the food and shopping hub that it is, it is not surprising then that shopping and eating, indulging in some retail therapy for ourselves, family and friends, preparing



different ethnic delicacies and the rich Plum cake that exists across the board as a Christmas “must have” on the table, form the cornerstone of celebrations here in Singapore.

The city, especially Orchard Road, lights up in a beautiful display of colours and glitter. Large ornately decorated Christmas trees adorn the pavements in front of the big shopping malls. Santa is seen everywhere and there is even a “Snow experience” at one of the Big Shopping centres in warm, humid Singapore.

All in all, it is a time of infectious festivity, socializing and making merry regardless of whether one is Christian or not. Those who observe Christmas as a religious festival are sure to be part of celebrations in the different Churches in Singapore, and for the rest, it is a time to join friends and family for a time of fun and togetherness.



Rashantha Devanesan is an artist and jewelry designer. Sri Lankan by birth, has spent her school, university years and after in India. She now lives in Singapore and has been a member of the IWA since 2010.

Integration Carnival

On the Saturday morning of 5th September, some ladies from IWA made their way to Marina Barrage for an annual People Association's Integration Carnival. One Community Fiesta brings a sense of community to all of Singapore's diverse cultures, races and even languages. Many local cultural associations were invited to paint a rich tapestry of festivals that Singaporeans celebrate, made all the more special due to SG50. The performances ranged from Latin Salsa, Malay dances, Chinese Folk dances, Turkish dances, amongst others. The Community Sing and Dance performance stood out as a truly cohesive routine that combined much-loved Singaporean classics in Malay and Tamil and also a multi-cultural group of dancers which included our own IWA representatives: Anita Mehta, Bhavani Bannerjee, Chandan Lehal, Harshita Singh, Jahanvi Vats, Mamta Tripathy, Nitya Shukla, Ruchi Dokania, Varsha Chopra.

IWA was asked to represent Navratri. Alekhya Raghavan, Dhanashree Sharma, Nitya Jain, Shilpi Tripathy, Shruti Tripathy, and Simrit Lehal put on a Garba and Dandiya-Raas to the Rajasthani Bollywood tunes of the expressive Mor Bani Thanghat Kare and the powerful Nagada Sang Dhol. IWA's performance attempted to take its audience on a journey from the melodic deserts of Gujarat starting as a roosting peacock awakened by the sounds of the sand. After the peacocks warmed up with a round of garba, they finished with an electrifying performance that got the audience on their feet and they enjoyed watching the flaring lehengas during spins, and rapid dandiya movements.



There was an Indian themed photo booth. The guests had a choice of Rajasthani kurtas, bandhni dupattas, silver jhumkas and much more to try on and get photographed. The booth also gave away dandiya sticks and the audience appreciated it greatly, particularly after watching the dandiya raas. Music and dance brought the communities together.



Written by Shruti and Shilpi Tripathy

Friends & Partners

Born into a family of doctors and artists, Uma Rajan grew up to combine triple careers in healthcare, arts and community service which has cemented her a place nation wide in Singapore, as a health care professional, an accomplished dancer, arts administrator, a promoter of arts education and appreciation, and a passionate community service volunteer.

A doctor by profession and a graduate of Indian Classical Dance, she is well known for her contributions to Singapore's health care sector as Director, School Health and Elder Care Services of the Ministry of Health, as well as her involvement in the arts, community and social service sectors in various capacities as Advisor, Board Member, Chairman etc to date..



Dr Uma Rajan

She is the first Singaporean to study dance formally in India from 1949 and return as a graduate of Bharatha Natyam from Chennai in 1954. She has been bestowed many titles in India, Singapore, & Malaysia - :Natyakala Bushanam, Natya Arasi, Natya Mani. In 1991, she became one of the first 15 charter members of the newly-inaugurated National Arts Council, and went on to lead all three of its Festivals of Asian Performing Arts.

More recently, she turned her skills to writing, penning *A Life For Others*, a biography of the Buddhist nun, Venerable Ho Yuen Hoe in 2006. In 2012, her *Celebrity Cookbook Spice Potpourri* won for Singapore, the World Gourmand Award for the Best Indian Cuisine Book and Best Fund Raising,

Charity and Community Cookbook in Asia.

She has always been passionate about the welfare of women coming from a family where the men strongly supported education for women, remarriage for widows and support for single mothers. Her support for the cause of women was inextricably but silently linked with her own life giving a helping hand wherever possible to women in need. Her involvement with the IWA was an extension of her belief and support to the rising status of women on par with men. She has joined hands with IWA to

organize various social events to bring fun and cheer to women and their children and families. She works closely with IWA whenever and wherever possible to bond families.

She is a recipient of many awards – International, National and Community awards for her contribution to health care, admin service, arts and culture, social service, cookbooks etc. The most recent being the Tamil Language & Cultural Society's "Avvaiyar Award" in 2015.

IWA's association with Dr Uma Rajan (whom we fondly call Aunty) and the Siglap South CC family started with a joint Holi celebration in March. Followed by a yoga event on World Yoga day. We have a joint Diwali dinner that is coming up in November too. We have had the privilege of getting to know Aunty Uma and finding out what a sharp, super organized planner she is, with attention given to each detail. We treasure our relationship.



Shobha Tsering Bhalla is the Managing Director and Founder of India Se magazine, the leading publication for the Indian diaspora in Singapore and the region. The high quality monthly magazine, which is also available through mobile apps, celebrates Indian culture and aims to connect overseas Indians in the region. Shobha is a veteran journalist and a former banker: She was the pioneering Managing Editor of Lycos Asia, where she was in charge of Internet content for nine countries in Asia. Prior to that, she was the Regional Research Editor in the equities research division of ING Barings, and earlier, she was a Research Editor at OCBC Investment Research. From 1989 to 1997, she was a senior correspondent with *The Straits Times*, after which she joined MediaCorp's TODAY newspaper as the Marketing/Property Editor. Shobha hails from Sikkim, India and is now a naturalised Singaporean. In India she began her working life as a management trainee (Probationary



Shobha Tsering Bhalla

Officer) and subsequently as an executive at the State Bank of India, the country's largest bank, before moving to Singapore with her businessman husband over 28 years ago. She has lived with her husband in India, Egypt, Singapore and Russia, and has a broad range of cultural experience. Shobha was educated in boarding school in Shillong and holds a post-graduate degree in English Literature, and graduated with honours in English, Political Science and History. She is married with a son and daughter.

Shobha's association with the Indian Women's Association goes back to its founding days when she was the journalist who reported on its founding in *The Straits Times* way back in 1998. Since then, Shobha, has supported our events and activities specially our AGMs and Bazaars through the years by featuring them in her magazine India Se. We are privileged to call her a "friend of IWA".

Majulah Singapura



Oh boy! What an exhilarating experience it has been! Worth every bit of the time and sweat put in. The journey started in December with auditions. Over 1500 auditioned and only 800 odd got selected. In March our practice sessions at Kranji Camp kicked off. Sacrificing all our Wednesdays and Saturdays for ongoing rehearsals to perfect our performance was no mean task. It was a sacrifice made not only by the participants but also their families, friends and colleagues.



costume. It was a 3kg transformer elegant dress layered to display different colors at different times.

Towards the end of the evening, we came back in again for the GRAND FINALE. Hand to heart, the pledge was taken and the national anthem was sung in one resounding voice as One People, One Nation, One Singapore. The fireworks lit the sky in a burst of glorious colors. Truly, it was the biggest party the nation threw to celebrate its journey.

(The theme of our performance was true to the spirit of Soka) Soka too believes that unity based on the spirit of Itai-doshin is essential. Itai-doshin means Many in Body, One in Mind.

For me it was the most memorable experience that will be relived again and again in conversation for years to come. And that it was SG50 just makes it extra special.

A total of over 800 women from the Singapore Soka Association put up a performance portraying unity in culturally-diverse Singapore. The words formed were "UNITY", "PROGRESS", "VICTORY" and "MAJULAH", in Singapore's four official languages - Mandarin, English, Tamil and Malay. Every formation got a loud round of applause. The loudest cheering came for our last formation MAJULAH. Not only because it holds a special place and meaning in people's hearts but also because of how our costumes magically changed color from black to red. The highlight of our performance was our



Name: **Chandan Lehal**

Number of years in Singapore: 9

Number of years with IWA: 2

My life at IWA is all about Living Large and Taking Charge



Body Image & It's impact on Self Esteem in



by Vinti Mittal

Have you heard of statements like, “If only I were shorter/taller/had curly hair/was thinner/born with a smaller nose or longer longer legs, I’d be happy”. We often hear of these wishes from children of various ages. Research shows that children’s obsession with appearance start much earlier than we think. It appears that the need to look perfect is fast spreading across all age groups, ethnicity, strata and the influence seems to be impossible to ignore. Unfortunately, we are often surrounded with perfect pictures of men and women, unrealistic expectations are being set by using air brushed pictures of models.

A child, who constantly looks for assurance on appearance, is overly conscious and obsessed with looks, might be struggling with Body Image issues. Body Image, is how one views their physical self –which includes how they feel about themselves or how others feel about their looks. In simple words, it relates to one’s shape, size and weight.

Family environment and culture often influences a child’s view of their body. Different cultures and families have varied ideas about ideal body shapes and sizes - some are more encouraging and realistic than others. The pressures to look perfect may affect the child’s perception of Body Image. A healthy Body Image in childhood lays foundations for good physical and mental health, later in life.

Body Image plays a part in a child’s Self Esteem. Self Esteem is said to be the “real” opinion one has of themselves.... Body Image plays a major role in child’s Self Esteem, as it’s

hard to feel good about oneself if one is unsatisfied with their body. Even though Self Esteem is something that cannot be touched or seen, it seems to follow a child like a shadow or reflection in the mirror. Children with lower Self Esteem are often seen with lower self worth about themselves. By manipulating their Body Image (using fad diets and extreme eating practices) some children are trying to compensate for the way they feel inside.

Tips To Help Boost Positive Body Image

- Encourage using of positive statements when talking about food, weight, body sizes and shapes.
- Compliment children on their qualities rather than their physical appearance.
- Discuss the genuinity of the images, on shows, in magazines with your children.
- Educate children about bodily changes specially during the teen years.
- Practice healthy eating habits and physical activities to ensure “fit” children with healthy Self-Esteem and Body Images, avoiding fad diets or extreme eating practices.

What can I do, if I am in doubt?

Parents are often seen concerned of the children’s dissatisfaction with appearances. They wonder whether it should be ignored or could it be the start of a bigger issue.

If you’re feeling this way, seeking help by seeing a counsellor, who specializes in working with children, will help your child deal with the Body Image issues.



Vinti Mittal is a counsellor in private practice. She has been providing counselling support to children (2 -16 years old) and adults on various issues like stress, anxiety, self-esteem, body image, depression, social skills and academics. She helps children from various schools systems, culture and nationalities. She supports parents with their issues and conducts educational workshops for parents. Vinti conducts therapy in English, Hindi and Bahasa Indonesia. She has been living in Singapore for last 12 years and is a parent herself. She can be reached at vinti@tenderagecounselling.com/ vinti@sacac.sg

OBESITY IN KIDS

Your Trusted Partner for Health
RafflesHospital
Singapore

Kids these days are spending more time eating in front of their TV and computer and less time on outdoor activities. Hence it comes as no surprise that the younger generation is battling weight issues earlier in life.

“Genetics, lifestyle habits, or a combination of both may be involved,” says Dr Wendy Sinnathamby, Specialist in Paediatrics & Consultant at Raffles Children’s Centre.

Overweight kids are at risk of developing problems that will affect their health and quality of life. These risks may include:

- High blood pressure, high cholesterol, abnormal blood lipid levels, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes which may lead to an increased risk of heart disease, heart failure and stroke in adulthood
- Shortness of breath, making physical activity difficult
- Sleep disorders, such as obstructive sleep apnoea

Source: 123RF

Tendency to mature earlier (Taller and more sexually mature than their peers, irregular menstrual cycles and fertility problems in adulthood)

- Liver and gall bladder disease
- Bone and joint problems
- Depression, low self-esteem due to being teased by peers



Studies have shown that a child’s risk of obesity increases if one or both parents are overweight. While the role of genetics is undeniable, people in the same family tend to have the same eating patterns, same levels of physical activity, and adopt the same attitude towards lifestyle.

Healthy kids begin with parents who lead by example. As a parent, you can prevent your kid from becoming overweight by making adjustments to your family’s diet and activities. Parents should also seek help for their kids if the latter is only indulging in unhealthy foods or putting on weight rapidly.

Follow these tips from Dr Sinnathamby to help your child achieve a healthy weight:

- **Inculcate good habits early.** Children who are exposed to foods such as fruits and vegetables from a young age are more likely to continue eating these foods as they grow older. Introduce these foods as early as when solids are first introduced, and continue to encourage the child to eat them even if they show resistance initially. Your child should have about five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- **Avoid feeding children with junk food** that is high in calories, saturated fats, salt and sugar. Junk food has limited or no nutritional value but tastes good and it is addictive. When given such foods, children will have a higher tendency of shunning healthy foods that are rich in nutritional value.
- **Encourage your child to be physically active every day** through activities like walking, games and sports. Cut down on TV, computer games and discourage eating while watching TV.



For enquiries, please contact
Doris Tay at 6311 2047 or email
tay_doris@rafflesmedical.com

A visit to SWAMI Home

On July 7th 2015 I had the opportunity to attend the annual fair for SWAMI Home, which is a residential facility for older people in Singapore. The Foyer, the big hall, the pathways and open spaces were full of stalls selling interesting items, food, games. There were many young faces, all busy in their respective chores preparing for the fair. Music added to the festivities. People looked cheerful and had smiles on their faces. Infirm, older people made their way around the place in wheelchairs. They were greeted with flowers and presents along the way. Youthful, energetic volunteers were everywhere

I made my way to the Indian Women's Association (IWA) stall where Indian origin women, resplendent in their colorful and elegant sarees, were arranging books and plants for sale. They were also assembling snacks and water bottles for distribution to the performers they had recruited to entertain the senior citizens.

The IWA Music Club participants kicked off the entertainment with Hindi songs. When a young Indian girl took the stage and started singing in Chinese, her melodious voice touched the hearts of everyone present. She was cheered and applauded by one and all. A group of children took the stage next to perform several Bollywood dances. This was followed by a touching cake cutting

ceremony. A group of IWA ladies wheeled the older SWAMI Home residents to the front of the stage and helped them cut a giant cake. All those present wished the veterans of the home by singing the Happy Birthday song.



As I was about to leave a group of Chinese dancers arrived on stage and I sat back down. What an amazing performance they put up. As they twirled and swished, they changed their appearance! One minute their face was white and another it was Red, while one half of the face was black the other would turn white, all this without missing a beat while dancing. It was a magical performance.

During the visit I noticed that the rooms and beds of the residents were neat and tidy. Many of the older residents were seated in wheelchairs in front of their rooms with attendants standing beside them. When I tried to greet them, some looked away shyly but a few responded. I was happy to see such care being taken by Singapore of its elderly population. Enthusiasm of the younger generation for their elders was visible and impressive. I wished my country had such nice Old Age Homes. I was grateful to IWA for inviting me to join this impressive event.

Sudhindra Gemawat
IAS (Retired) (Garima Lalwani's father)



Mr Sudhindra Gemawat is the founder President of the Jaipur Cancer Relief Society, member of ethics committee Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, Executive member of Ramakrishna Mission, Jaipur Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur. He is associated with Prayas, an organisation that works with special needs children. He conceived and helped build a Jain temple where various Jain sects could come together to worship under one roof in Jawahar Nagar Jaipur. His dream is to develop a model old age home in Jaipur.

Singapore Higher Education Fund

Asians believe in good education and therein lies the ethos of meritocracy in Singapore. As a measure of giving back and encouraging a talented but underprivileged child to attain higher education, IWA launched its first **'IWA Vidya Scholarship'** with SMU. The objective of the Scholarship is to support one undergraduate in the degree programme at the University, with demonstrated financial need under MOE. IWA pledged a sum of SGD 5000 and signed its MOU in the month of December with disbursement to be made over the current year. This is the first time that an Indian Women's Association is reaching out to help in the area of higher education with SMU.

And this was the profile of the student:

DOS would like to recommend Daryani Mrinal Anup as the most deserving student to receive the IWA Vidya Scholarship for AY2014/15. Daryani has a CGPA of 3.53 and his CCA includes SMU Climb Team and Mixed Martial Arts Club. He is also an active organiser and participant of community service projects. Attached is his application and academic profile for donor communication.



Full Name	Per Capita Income	Admit Year	Primary Program	Cum GPA	Gender	Citizenship Type	Ethnic Group
Daryani Mrinal Anup	\$440.00	2011	BSocSc	3.53	Male	Singapore Citizen	Indian



I Care

by Raji Viswanathan

The Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME) registered as a society and charity in 2004 and is dedicated to upholding the rights of migrant workers in Singapore, including victims of human trafficking and forced labour. The organization provides free shelter for mainly women and victims of human trafficking with ongoing investigations. After our meeting with the staff of HOME we could appreciate the kind of challenges the organization faces in running on going services like legal aid counseling, free shelter, skill training programmes, free dental clinic, help desk lines and welfare programmes.

As a part of the IWA ethos and under the I Care initiative the Friday Fruit drive was launched for the sheltered women of HOME in May 2015. It is an effort to be involved towards the humanitarian work for the marginilised communities in Singapore. The objective of this drive is to supplement the basic meals of residents of the shelter with a nutritious fruit once a week. It was very heartwarming to see the response towards this drive and the members and well wishers of IWA came forth and sponsored all Fridays of 2015. These are people who are passionate about providing justice and hope for the migrant workers of Singapore. Here is what some of our volunteers have to say:

The Friday fruits for the 'HOME' has been a very thoughtful initiative started by IWA I Care team. I have picked up and delivered fruits 3 times for the various volunteers who generously donate week after week to the 'HOME' and the happy, thankful smiles on the faces of the girls are heartwarming to see, to say the least. Thanks IWA for we are able to contribute to a section of society, the maids, who are the caretakers of our homes and our kids...our extended families in Singapore.

Donating food is a great way for our family to celebrate special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. So when the chance came for me to donate fruits for HOME, I jumped at the opportunity. My parents have been donating food for years and now I could follow the tradition. Such a simple and easy way to contribute towards providing nutritious snacks for those who need it. It has been a very rewarding experience. by Garima Lalwani



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
 WE, THE SONS, DAUGHTER, LADIES WANT TO SAY
 THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO BRING FRESH FRUIT
 EVERY WEEK. YOUR BRINGING AND HELPING US IN THIS
 WAY WE APPRECIATE.
 WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU FOR
 BRINGING - BRINGING WITH US YOUR BRINGING FRUITS.
 WE ARE VERY HAPPY + ENJOYING YOUR / BRING
 FRUITS BECAUSE IT HELPS US TO HAVE A
 HEALTHY.
 TO ALL OF YOU WHO BRING YOUR BRINGING
 FRUITS TO US, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR
 BRINGING.
 GOD BLESS...
 THE CHITRE LADIES



Gourmet Goddess Club

by Neeti Tandon



The culinary event organized by Gourmet Goddess Club at APS Lifestyle, on 28th April 2015, was an enjoyable experience both for the mind and soul. It was a live cookery demonstration conducted by the celebrity chef Sarab Kapoor. It was a perfectly planned and executed event to my experience.

The cooking session was then followed by a sumptuous meal. Most of the dishes served were the ones that were demonstrated and this helped me understand the intricacies involved in cooking those dishes.

The lunch gave us an opportunity to network and make new friends - something we all look forward to experiencing again through the events organized by Gourmet Goddess Club of IWA.

Each attendee was provided with a printed copy of the recipes at the beginning of the session. Sarab then, invited the volunteers to participate in the cooking process. I was thrilled to get an opportunity to participate and assist her.



The Climbing of Mount Everest

by Akshandha Banerjee (Won her the first prize)

One dark stormy night, Lisa switched off the lights and climbed onto her bed. She pulled up her blanket and slept.....

Morning Lisa and her parents went to the Beach. Lisa collected Sea shells, made Sand Castles and enjoyed swimming in the Sea. After a while when Lisa came out of the water she realised that her parents had left for home leaving her behind. She thought They thought she was in front walking home as their house was nearby.

Lisa was worried and started looking around. Lisa found her bag. She changed her clothes, ate her food and went in search of her parents. Lisa met a boy named John, who was also

lost and was looking for his parents. Both Lisa and John decided that they would climb the Mount Everest so that they could see their parents. Lisa remembered that her father had packed hiking things in the bag, but did not go hiking. Lisa took them out and wore them.

She gave a set to John. They then started climbing. Every 15 minutes they took rest. They helped each other. If Lisa slipped John would help and if John slipped Lisa helped.

Finally they were about to reach, but there was a loud call... Lisa Lisa get up its morning. She realised it was a dream.

After 6-7 years, Lisa met a friend named John in College, but not when she lost her parents on the Beach. She did go hiking on Mount Everest.



Artists: Kumuda & Shivali
Title: Deepavali
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas
Size: 30 inches X 40 inches

This painting is created in the 'madhubani' art style which has its origins in Northern regions of India. This painting is titled Deepavali as it represents the coronation scene as a visual narrative from the epic 'Ramayana'. It is believed that Prince Rama returned to Ayodhya victorious after defeating Ravana and was then crowned as the King of Ayodhya. On his journey back home it was a moonless night and so people and devotees, lit the path with lamps to show him the way back home. The motif in the border depicts lamps lit up to show the way from darkness to light.

फ़िलिमियाँ बुखार का पूरा दारोमदार अगर बुआ पर डाल दिया जाय तो कोई न-नुकुर करने वाला नहीं। सोत -जगते, उठते-बैठते उनके सिर पर फ़िल्मी भूत सवार रहता। छत पर किताब लिए घूम-घूम कर पढ़ते समय भी मर्फी रेडियो पर आ रहे विविध भारती से बढ़िया फ़िल्मी गानों का आनंद लेते रहना, मतलब एक पंथ दो काज! उस समय के पढ़ाकुओं की अतिरिक्त खूबियों में बखूबी शुमार था। छम्भो बुआ इसमें पारंगत, सरताज थीं।

मुझमें फ़िल्मी बुखार के कीटाणु विरासत में मौजूद कब पाए गए, ख़बर नहीं। हाँ, इतना तो था कि हम बड़ों से आँख छिपाकर फ़िल्मी स्टाइल में जुल्फें, नुकें निकालते और बनते सँवरते। इस तरह पनाह दिए फ़िलिमियाँ बुखार के कीटाणुओं के फलने-फूलने के लिए माकूल माहौल मुहैया कराते। कोई जान-बूझकर नहीं, ये तो खुद ब खुद होता चलता। साथ ही घर में होने वाली साहित्यिक चर्चाओं के साथ-साथ चुनिंदा चलचित्रों पर चर्चा, विवेचना, आलोचना एवं माधुरी सारिका, धर्मयुग और साप्ताहिक हिन्दुस्तान जैसी पत्रिकाओं से प्राप्य ज्ञान बढ़ावा देता। अपने-अपने प्रिय अभिनेता-अभिनेत्री, गाने-दोगाने को सबसे ऊपर और सर्वोत्तम सिद्ध करने के लिए अड़ियल टट्टू बने रहना आम बात थी।

हीरो-हीरोइन कोई भी हों पर अक्सर चर्चा गाँव के जीवन पर आधारित फ़िल्मों पर होती। इन चर्चाओं ने जाने - अनजाने मेरे सरल फ़िल्मी मन में गाँव की सादागी और सुन्दरता को कब चाहत दे दी ये पता ही न चला। चाहे 'नंदिनी' की नूतन का 'अब के बरस भेजो भैया को बाबुल' या 'मदर इण्डिया' की नर्गिस का 'गाड़ीवाले गाड़ी धीरे हाँक रे' और 'तीसरी कसम' की वहीदा का 'लाली - लाली डुलिया में ...', वाला गीत हो। इन गानों के मिस गाँव की सौंधी मिट्टी की गंध सा मौलिक सपन-संसार रचता बसता नज़र आने लगा। उस पर 'हरिऔध' की अमर काव्य पंक्तियाँ - "अहा! ग्राम्य जीवन भी क्या है..." ने उस पर मौलिकता की मुहर लगा दी। और तो और इधर चमकी मौसी ने चट मँगनी पट ब्याह की तर्ज पर गाँव का दूल्हा खोज कर मुझे ब्याह दिया।

विदा हुई! कार से पीहर की सरहद तक पहुँचा दी गई। अब गाँव की सीमा ने सगुन की सौगात दी। पालकी ! सामने पालकी देख, मेरा फ़िल्मी मन डोल उठा! सारे 'डोली' सीन मस्तिष्क के पर्दे पर उतर आए। मुझे डोली में मीना, नर्गिस, शर्मिला, राखी, वहीदा दिखने लगी। डोली और दुल्हन का रिश्ता- ज्यों मंदिर में पावन दिया टिमटिमाने लगे। मुदित मन खो गया। दखल दी चार कहारों ने। उन्होंने झटके के साथ पालकी को उछाल दिया था। इन्हें ये भी नहीं लगा कि अन्दर कोई बेजान वस्तु नहीं, जीती-जागती जान है ! मैं कुछ कह भी नहीं सकती थी— चुपचाप सह लेना ही बेहतर समझा। इस दृश्य और सिनेमा के सीन में दूर- दूर तक कोई ताल-मेल नहीं था। अब मैंने पूरी ताकत से पालकी के डंडे को पकड़े रखा क्योंकि गिरने से स्वयं को बचा लेना ही उस पल मेरा लक्ष्य था। सफल भी रही।

थोड़ी दूर तक जाकर पालकी से उतारी गई। राहत की साँस ली ही थी कि पता चला अब बैलगाड़ी से घर तक पहुँचना है। सगुन के लिए इतनी पालकी यात्रा हो गई। बैलगाड़ी ! फ़िलिमियाँ जिगर फिर उछलने लगा—वहीदा ! बैलगाड़ी ! और शर्मिली सी दुल्हन बैलगाड़ी में बैठी, राजकपूर गाड़ी चला रहा 'सीन' चल रहा था! पीछे-पीछे गाँव की लड़कियाँ गाती हुई चल रहीं—लाली-लाली डुलिया में लाली सी दुल्हनियाँ ... तभी किसी ने गाड़ी में बैठने का इशारा करते हुए कहा कि सँभलकर बैठना। ठेस लगी विचारों में खोए मन को। आ गई यथार्थ के धरातल पर।

जैसे-तैसे बैठी एक बार तो गिरते-गिरते बची। घूँघट से दिखे न दिखे अंदाजे से काम ले रही थी। गाड़ी में मोटी खेस और धूप से बचाने के लिए गोलाकार सरकंडे में शायद धोती लगा कर छाया करने का प्रयास किया गया था। गाड़ी चलते ही वह पताका की तरह फहराने लगी। किधर की छाया ! धूप तमंचा-तमाचे मार रही थी। गाड़ीवान ने दया करके अपनी छतरी पकड़ा दी।

मेरी हालत बेहालत! अरे वहीदा ! कैसे तुम इतनी फ्रेश, सजी-धजी और मुसकराती शर्माती वो भी बिना ज़रा सा भी मेकअप बिगाड़े गंतव्य तक पहुँच गई! यहाँ तो भीषण गर्मी, बैलों का लीक पकड़कर दौड़ना, मेरा बार-बार सरक-सरककर बैलगाड़ी के ऊपरी हिस्से से नीचे आ जाना, फिर छाते को, घूँघट को, बेंदे, नथनी, चादर, बटुआ, चप्पल और खुद को सँभाले रखना। ये कोई छोटा-मोटा इन्तहान तो नहीं, यहाँ तो इन्तहान के दादा-परदादा खड़े थे। चारों तरफ खेत ही खेत, हरे या सूखे किसको परवाह थी अभी। एक परिंदा भी नहीं दिख रहा था पर अचानक उसी समय साईकिल पर दो-तीन लोग पास से निकल गए। रास्ता खत्म होने का नाम ही नहीं ले रहा था। दाई ओर एक छोटा सा प्राइमरी स्कूल दिखा। बैलगाड़ी और मुझे देख यहाँ भी कुछ लड़कियाँ भागी आ रही थीं। भाभी आई! भाभी आई!

मेरा फ़िलिमियाँ दिल धड़का! अब की बार इसके पहले कि ये सिर चढ़ कर बोले मैंने कसकर पकड़े रखा और कहा—अब बस! बिलकुल बस ! तेरी कसम—'तीसरी कसम' अगर मेरे आस-पास तो क्या ख़्वाब में भी फटकी! फ़िलिमियाँ बुखार उतर चला



written by Anjali Tripathi



अम्माँ का घर

माल रोड पर नानी का घर...नानी को प्यार से हम सब अम्माँ बुलाते थे । बिटटू मेरा भाई और मैं जब वहाँ जाना चाहते,तो कहते थे 'अम्माँ के यहाँ जाना है'।उस घर का नाम ही 'अम्माँ के यहाँ' लगता था।ये घर असल में एक बहुत ही बड़ी कोठी थी,शहर के बीच में इतनी बड़ी कोठी! कैनटोनमेन्ट में थी।ये कोठी पहले गिरजा हुआ करती थी।मेरे छोटे मामा जो अब आर्मी से रिटायर हो कर ,इसी कोठी में रहते हैं,बहुत अच्छे पतंग बाज़ हुआ करते थे ,कोई उनकी पतंग नहीं काट पाता था।पीछे लालकुरती का छोटा बाज़ार था,जिसमें घोलिये का मोहल्ला था-घोसी क्या होता है मुझे आज भी पता नहीं ।तो घोलिये के लड़कों का मेरे मामा के साथ पतंगबाज़ी का मुकाबला रहता था।सुनने में आया है ,वैसे तो कभी उनकी पतंग कटती नहीं थी लेकिन अगर कभी कट जाती तो दीवार के उस तरफ से आवाज़ आती 'अबे बढ़ा ले बे गिरजे वाले'।क्योंकि इस कोठी में अंग्रेज़ों के ज़माने में गिरजा हुआ करता था।

बहुत बड़ी और आलीशान हुआ करती थी ये कोठी।तीन बड़े -बड़े खेत हुआ करते थे,एक खेत में गेहु उगते थे एक में आम का बाग था एक में अमरूद का।सामने जो लान था वहाँ गुलाब उगते थे... खेती की तरह।कई तरह के गुलाब ,बेहद खूबसूरत ,कुछ अभी भी है ।इन गुलाबों के बड़े अच्छे अंग्रेज़ी नाम होते थे।बड़ी मंहंगी नस्लें लविना नरसरी से आती थीं।मांसी के साथ कई बार मैं भी गई हूँ ।बड़ी सी कोठी थी माल रोड के किनारे पे,एक बहुत ही सभ्य महिला थीं जो ये नरसरी चलाती थीं।उनके पति शायद रिटायर्ड आर्मी अफसर थे।

अम्माँ के यहाँ हम लोग काफ़ी जाते थे।सनडे को बहुत अच्छा कश्मीरी खाना बनता था।पीतल की बड़ी बड़ी थालि यां थीं।हम चार कसनस एक ही थाली में खाना खाते थे।चावल के ढेर के बीच में मम(मम मेरी मांसी थी सभी बच्चे उन्हें मम बुलाते थे)बिटटू और बॉबी (मम का बेटा) अच्छी अच्छी हड्डियाँ चावल में छुपा देते थे।

अम्माँ गरमी की दोपहरी में आम के पेड़ के नीचे चारपाई डलवा कर वंहा लेटती थी।हाथ के पंखे रखती थी अपनेपास ।एक हर वक़्त उनके हाथ में रहता था,और तीन जो कोई आ जाये उसके लिए।दोपहरी भर किसी न किसी का रोना दुखडा सुनती रहती थी।उनसे बात कर के सभी अपना मन हल्का करते थे विमला की माँ ,मालन,पणडतानी जी की बहु,दर्जन ,सरदार जी।आज मुझे लग रहा हैवो लाइफ़ कोच का काम करती थी।

अम्माँ की शादी तेरह बरस की उम्र में हो गई थी।लाहौर की उनकी पैदाइश थी।ज्यादा पढ़ी लिखी शायद नहीं थी,लेकिन अपना हिसाब किताब उर्दू में करती थी।उनकी एक हिसाब की डायरी थी जिसमें सब हिसाब लिखती थी।एक उनका डिब्बा भी होता था जो हिसाब की किताब के साथ रहता था,जिस में उन के पैसे रहते थे।

अम्मा पूरे घर का केन्द्रे थीं .सब कुछ उनके ।ईर्द -गिर्द ही रहता था।लकड़ी का चूल्हा जलता था रसोई में -बहुत बड़ी ही रसोई थी।

अभी सोचती हूँ तो लगता है कोई पिछला जन्म था ये सब ।घर के पीछे दो बाज़ार थे-लाल कुरती बड़ा बाज़ार और लाल कुरती छोटा बाज़ार -ये अंग्रेज़ी फ़ौजी जवानों के लिए बने थे।अम्माँ अपनी छोटी मोटी रोज़ मररा की खरीदारी के लिए लाल कुरती जाती थी।एक दिन वहाँ उन्हें एक छोटा सरदार बच्चा मिला .किसी साइकिल की दुकान पर काम कर रहा था .अम्मा की उस बच्चे से बात हुई तो उन्हें उसकी दुख भरी कहानी सुनी तो वह बच्चों को अपने साथ घर ले आई .यबी बच्चा उस समय १०-१२ बरस का रहा होगा .अम्मा को उस से इक दम लगाव होने की वजाह थी की वोह पाकिस्तन से थाजहाँ की अम्मा भी थी ।यह बच्चा रावल पिंडी में हॉस्टल में पढता था ,उसके दो भाई भी वहीं पढते थे .उस साल होली की छुट्टी में सब बच्चे घर चले गए ,उनके दोनों भाई भी .किसी कारण से इन्हे स्कूल में रुकना पडा .इसी छुट्टी में इनके पुरेगाँव को और सारे परिवार काँ दंगाइओ ने तलवार से काट डाला .

Edited by Prabha Rao. Prabha has been teaching Hindi to high school students since 1996. Currently a Hindi teacher for IB at UWC East.



written by Rakhi Sameer

Summer Bazaar





Gourmet Goddess Club



Entrepreneur Club



Fitness Club



Thank you Bazaar Team



Book Club



Caring Connecting Celebrating



Pita n Patter



Health Talk at Raffles Hospital



World Yoga Day



Music Club



At SWAMI Home



Mahjong Club



Writing Enthusiast's Club



Adda Club



Go Green Club Visits ACRES





Artists: Kumuda & Shivali
Title: 'Festive Singapore'
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas
Size: 9 inches X 12 inches

This painting showcases the festivals in Singapore when the streets are lit up as a mark of celebrations and festivities. Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Hari Raya and Christmas are some major festivals celebrated in Singapore and people celebrate traditional festivals in Singapore throughout the year. Singapore's rich heritage is a mixture of cultures, each with its own unique set of beliefs, values and traditions. The festivities include great food, fireworks and fun!

From beginning to end of the year, one finds various streets of the city dressed up with bright and colourful decorations centred on the different racial, religious, traditional and even mythical festivals.