



IndUS of Fox Valley

Sandesh

The Message

Reconnecting with roots



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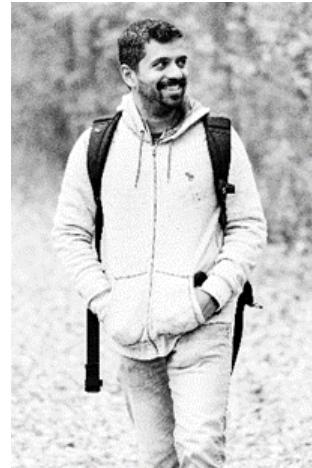
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On the covers

By Deepak Sreedharan

On a trip with my family to the Badlands National Park and Black Hills National Forest, I learned a lot about Native American history. It was an eye-opening visit filled with stories I had never heard before; some were heart-breaking while others were of survival and resilience. During our visit, we chanced upon a concert by Brulé, an award-winning Native American music group. They are best known for thrilling their audiences with a fusion of cultural rock and theatrical instrumentation. The music was awesome, the lead singer's voice was heavenly, and the performers were amazing. After the show, they graciously posed for pictures.



Deepak Sreedharan works as a software engineer and has lived in Green Bay for several years. Photography is his passion, and he likes to travel and explore nature. He enjoys taking pictures of nature's beauty, from wildlife and birds to landscapes. He loves to spend his free time exploring the beauty of the Midwest through his lens.

IndUS of Fox Valley, Inc. Mission Statement:

Promoting Indo-American friendship and goodwill by serving the community through social, cultural, educational and charitable activities.

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The views expressed in the articles are not necessarily that of the Sandesh Editorial team or IndUS of Fox Valley

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We need your help!

The mission of *Sandesh* is to be a medium for building connections between people and to strengthen the community. We conceptualize the magazine as belonging to our body of readers with content generated by locals for the shared enjoyment of the community at large. *Sandesh* is mailed out to several hundred members in the area. We make the magazine more accessible by leaving copies of the issue in areas of common public attendance like libraries, cafes etc. Please support *Sandesh* by advertising your business or organization in the magazine. Ongoing corporate sponsorship will notably ease our financial burden while supporting this incredibly diverse community endeavor. Individual donations are much appreciated. Cheques may be made payable to “IndUS of Fox Valley,” with a mention of *Sandesh* as the focus, and mailed to IndUS.

We would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Shveta Pant for her valued monetary donation towards this issue.

From the Editor

We bring you this issue as we enjoy yet another glorious summer. We are blessed with this season of exciting summer activities, gatherings and outings with friends and family. Life in its predictable cycle of change, keeps us moving forward.

Creating this issue has been rousing with the varied and amazing article contributions. For the first time we have had to set aside a few articles for the next issue. This is not a reflection of the quality of articles but rather is linked to the theme of the issue.

Reconnecting with roots as a theme originated with our book club choice, *Homegoing*. However, it also seems to be the flavor of our times. At this moment in time we are, thankfully, able to look ahead moving away from the worst periods of COVID-19. The pandemic forced all of us to slow down, take stock of our lives, and reflect on what was important to us before returning to a new normal. For many of us, it meant spending more time with ourselves and our loved ones and reconnecting with our core values. One of the unexpected joys of being on the team this time was getting to savor the delicious laddoos that Avis made with Manju's healthy recipe. It has successfully ensured that this will be a constant feature in our issues!

Due to expected attrition of volunteer team members, the *Sandesh* team is thin on the ground at this point. We would appreciate your time and effort, by way of comments, suggestions or getting involved with the team. Please send any correspondence to rekhleo@gmail.com.

Dr. Rekha Vijayan, Chief Editor



Celebration dinner for the winter issue. A few team members were joined by some supporters of Sandesh. (From L to R: Shveta Pant, Rekha Vijayan, Neema Al Ameen, Jane Parish, Avis Chmielewski, Jamila Seaton)

Supporting indigenous people

By Sree Sreedhar and Vinod Kumar, with an introduction by Dr. Rekha Vijayan

Introduction:

Indigenous people are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy, or from which they have been displaced. The new arrivals (colonizers) became dominant through conquest, occupation, etc. The resources on which they depend are inextricably linked to their identities, culture, and livelihood, physical and spiritual wellbeing. They subscribe to customary leaders and organizations for representation that are distinct from those of mainstream society. They hold vital ancestral knowledge and expertise on how to adapt to, mitigate and reduce climate and disaster risks.

Onondaga faith keeper Oren Lyons once said, "Our knowledge is profound and comes from living in one place for untold generations. It comes from watching the sun rise in the East and set in the West from the same place over great sections of time. We are as familiar with the lands, rivers, and great seas that surround us as we are with the faces of her mother's. Indeed, we call the Earth, *Etenoha*, our mother from whence all life springs."

They are also known as First peoples, Aboriginal peoples, and Native people. In some countries specific terms are in use, such as tribals (India), *Janajatis* (Nepal), ethnic groups, hunter gathers, nomads, peasant, and hill people. Many maintain a distinct language. Others have lost a language or are themselves on the verge of extinction. They speak more than 4000 of the world's languages. More than half of the world's languages are at risk of becoming extinct in the next 75 years.

Indigenous people make up 6% of the global population, across more than 90 countries. There are more

than 5000 different indigenous peoples. 70% live in Asia. They own, occupy, or use 25% of the world's surface area. They safeguard 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity. They account for 19% of the extremely poor. Life expectancy is 20 years lower than non-indigenous citizens. They often lack formal recognition of their lands and natural resources, are often the last to receive public investment in basic services and infrastructure, face multiple barriers to fully participate in the formal economy, access to justice, political processes and decision making.



Sree Sreedhar visited Nagarhole to inspect the solar units. He was welcomed by the indigenous people.

This legacy of inequality and exclusion has made them vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, including infections such as COVID-19. Indigenous women have high rates of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and victims of violence. Indigenous children have poor access to education and are vulnerable to abuse. In Southeast Asia most trafficked females are from indigenous communities.

Some of the native people around the world are: Lakota (USA), Maya (Guatemala), Aymaras (Bolivia), Inuit (Arctic), Sami (Scandinavia), Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders (Australia), Maori (New Zealand), San and Kwei (South Africa) and Siddis (India).

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, established in 2000, is the central body that deals with their issues. Indigenous peoples' rights are laid out in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007. The implementation of laws protecting their rights is far from satisfactory.

India has the 2nd largest population of indigenous people in the world. They comprise 9% of the Indian population. An underestimated 705 ethnic groups are officially recognized as Scheduled Tribes. They are referred to as *Adivasis* (*Adi* meaning first and *vasti* meaning resident), coined in the 1930s, as a result of a political movement to forge a common unifying identity among the various indigenous groups of India. India does not consider the concept of indigenous peoples and therefore, the UNDRIP as applicable. The largest concentration is found in the northeastern states and in the central belt that stretches from Rajasthan to West Bengal.

We hear from two organizations providing grassroots support to tribals in remote locales in India. *Karmodaya* (means "uplift through action") is a US-based nonprofit organization founded to help build equitable communities around the world, where all inhabitants have equal opportunity, resources and tools needed to achieve their full potential to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Good Quest Foundation (TGQF) is a Bengaluru-based nonprofit organization founded by young professionals to serve the poor, destitute, marginalized, and voiceless in society. TGQF is recognized as a partner by the United Nations for achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030. They entered the Limca Book of Records for plogging maximum dry waste in a day, Asia Book of Records for organizing Asia's largest environment conservation campaign and India Book of Records for executing India's largest *Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan* (Clean India campaign).



While some indigenous folks live on the fringes of the forest, the majority live in inaccessible, non-motorable areas. Such forests are declared National Reserves, where no land can be owned by any person or group, under the Forest Conservation Act. The indigenous settlers who see their land as their rightful inheritance are not interested in relocating out of the forest to a location identified by the government. Some government appeasement schemes have convinced a few. Some have *Hakku patras*

(a document issued by the local governing body, *Panchayat*, verifying land ownership). However, this document cannot be used to sell the land.

Their lifestyle is dependent on their environment, their needs are limited and simple in contrast to residents in rural and urban areas. Their struggle has always been to realize the rights and privileges promised to them under the Forest Rights Act 2006. They look for support to the following governmental departments: Scheduled Tribes, Social Welfare, Forests; as well as NGOs (non-governmental organization) and civil society.

Access to sanitation (toilets, bath areas, potable water), primary health centers, schools, and jobs during nonagrarian seasons and times when they cannot gather natural products like honey, are their biggest struggles. They need help with challenges with bureaucracy, delay in implementing welfare schemes and not getting fair prices for their wares like hand woven baskets.



Improvised bathrooms



Solar lights under #LightTheNation initiative

Since 2016, The Good Quest Foundation has engaged indigenous populace in alcohol de-addiction programs, construction of toilets and menstrual care programs (education on menstrual hygiene and distributing free biodegradable reusable sanitary pads). They have focused on *Soligas* in MM Hills and BR Hills, *Jenukurubas* in Nagarhole Reserve Forest in Karnataka and will expand to *Badagas* in Ooty and Metupalayam, in Tamil Nadu.

COVID-19 relief work: Karmodaya, TGQF and six other NGOs collaborated to provide much needed food rations, PPE (personal protective equipment) kits, and hygiene supplies to indigenous settlements. Tribals are used to traditional medical care and are hesitant to access allopathic treatment. It was difficult practically and financially for them to use mainstream quarantine centers or access help at Covid Care Centers (CCC) in urban areas, far from where they live. The first of its kind in Karnataka

State, the Corona Care Units, were set up in a tribal school in the dense forest belt of BR Hills at Jeerigaegedde tribal area of Chamrajnagar District, catering to 25 tribal colonies, comprising 4000 individuals. They stocked CCCs with oxygen concentrators and other essential medicines and equipment.



Corona Care Center at BR Hills in Karnataka, training volunteers on use of oxygen concentrators

Furthermore, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) and Anganwadi (rural health center) karyakartas (workers) serving in the tribal colonies and hamlets were presented with COVID-19 medical kits with orientation.

Karmodaya's #LightTheNation solar initiative: In Karnataka State, 150 households in MM Hills and 325 households in Nagarahole Forests were lit up with solar lights. They now have a reliable light inside their house and their children are able to study after dusk. They now have flashlights when they attend to their basic toileting needs, in the dark in the forest. They don't have to walk miles to charge their cell phones for a fee, their only means of communication. As India celebrates its 76th Independence Day in August 2022, Karmodaya will install solar units in 380 indigenous households in Yercaud (Salem District), Gudalur, Metupalayam, Conoor, Ooty, and Nilgiri districts in Tamil Nadu.

What is next?

In indigenous communities, the state of sanitation is frightful. Open defecation in the forest in the dark and makeshift bath houses configured with old sarees tied to poles, attests to the lack of safety, privacy, and hygiene. They are vulnerable to animal attacks. Menstrual hygiene is also an area of urgent need. Many use unsafe methods that often lead to serious health risks. Karmodaya aims to construct toilets in these tribal communities. They also want to engage them in menstrual care programs to increase awareness and dispense free biodegradable sanitary napkins. This will help them live a safe and dignified life.



Sree Sreedhar (photo on the left) is the founder and President of Karmodaya. He is an entrepreneur and business & technology executive with a master's in Environmental Engineering & Information Systems from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D). He was born in Kerala, India and has lived in California since 1999. He is passionate about social equity, and he believes in giving back to the less fortunate. Please contact hello@karmodaya.org to get involved. For more details on various projects and their progress, please visit www.karmodaya.org



Vinod Kumar (photo on the right) is the founder and Managing Trustee of The Good Quest Foundation. He was the coordinator of Corona Care Bengaluru. Vinod Kumar is an Assistant Professor at a reputed university in Bangalore, India. A strong admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and his dream of Sarvodaya, he believes that service to mankind is the only key to happiness.

<https://www.thegoodquestfoundation.com/>

Where am I from?

By Ayaan Afsal

I am from the best of cuisines.
 The gravy sizzling,
 And people munching down like crazy!
 I am from the tropical trees and the humid air.
 “Oh, so hot!”
 I am from a country with many many languages.
 “So hard to understand!”
 I am from a country of beautiful sites and many many motorbikes.
 The rain pouring,
 The mud sloshing,
 The waterfalls roaring,
 The drama intensifies!
 I am from a place of noise and traffic.
 “So loud!”
 The cars honking,
 The dogs barking,
 The cats breaking in,
 I come from a place where people visit their families all the time.
 And people are happy, laughing!
 I come from a rainy, humid, sweaty and beautiful country.
 “So, where are you from?”



Ayaan Afsal is a kind and happy 5th grader at Leonardo Da Vinci School for gifted learners. He loves to share his experiences in great detail. Ayaan is an animal (especially dogs) lover, a fan of the Packers and Bucks, a car enthusiast, and a budding musician

Dream like a Champion

Chef Ace Champion in conversation with Dr. Rekha Vijayan

Ace Champion has blazed his own trail in Green Bay. Coming from humble beginnings, Ace has nurtured his talent and developed a niche in the world of food entertainment. He is host of the TV series *Cook Like A. Champion*, is a personal chef, event coordinator, motivational speaker, cooking class instructor, award winner and prolific fundraiser.



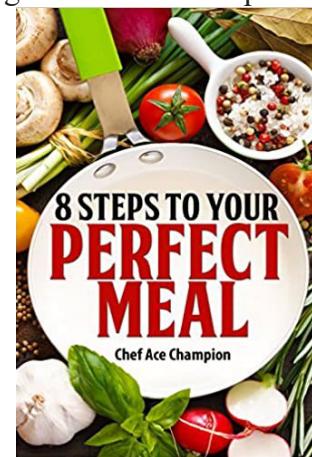
Ace grew up as Leonard in the San Francisco Bay area. His mom was an executive in Lockheed Martin. She wanted to raise him around her family, in Louisiana. He moved there as a teenager and lived there until his mid-20s. California imbued in him an entrepreneurial spirit, strong communication skills, boldness and a "go-getter" attitude.

Louisiana was a big change, the most obvious one being that it was predominantly African-American. With a strong sense of community and hospitality, it has an old-world charm. For instance, if one is walking down a street during chowtime, it is not unusual to be invited in for a meal by a random stranger. Relationship to food was one of being creative with ingredients. Some of this was a vestige from the days of slavery, where they had to make do with leftover scraps for ingredients. There was a lot of passion for cooking and local mom and pop food eateries abounded. For a young person, it was one of the easier industries to get a foothold in. The economy was a very difficult one to thrive in. The poverty rate was high. People were very

protective and secretive of their knowledge and their possessions. For example, with recipes within a restaurant kitchen team. Significant mistrust of the US European was often used as an excuse for lack of success. These factors led Ace out of state, as he chased his dreams.

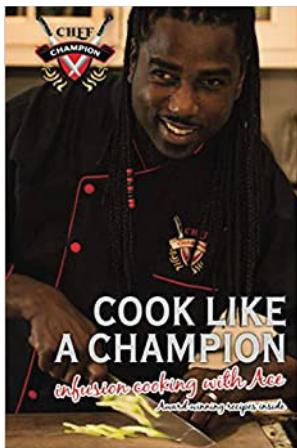
For better or for worse, Louisiana is much the same. One casualty is the younger generation losing their connection to cooking and as a result letting go of family-owned restaurants. Ace makes a conscious effort in his own endeavors to share recipes, tips and skills. Like anyone who has achieved success on their own, Ace will tell you that his soul searching, and spiritual practices has guided him to this path and continues to help him grow in strength.

He came to Green Bay, Wisconsin in the early 2000s, with the intention of bringing Cajun cuisine up here. He realized that he was not earning much despite being talented, passionate and working long hours. He enrolled in culinary school to boost his earnings but was dismayed to only see a hike of 25 cents an hour. The next best solution was to open his own restaurant. He was all set to do so with the backing of an investor and an identified location in Fond-du-u-lac, when he had a stroke at the age of 30 years. This left him blind in one eye. The investor backed out. One door shut but another opened. He took a break from the food industry and worked in a nursing home while saving money and freeing up some time to work on a different venture.



Ace taught himself a lot of skills along the way, including setting up and managing his own website and publishing a couple of books. Working for himself was far more satisfying, with direct feedback from clients about his food creations. He likes to be innovative with ingredients, creating new recipes while presenting them in appealing ways. He has successfully made the concept of personal chef accessible to the public, here in Green Bay.

The book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne came his way. It talked about the laws of attraction. What one thinks about is what one attracts. Ace learnt to conceptualize the concrete steps needed to get to living one's dream and then to visualize it in detail. It is vital to act on this by taking the necessary steps in real life. While doing so, he started to recognize and stop self-doubt in its tracks. He started to notice his wishes becoming manifest. Over time, he has incorporated several healthy practices into his lifestyle such as meditation, yoga mudras and singing bowls.



Along the way, Ace had to come to terms with the sordid legacy of the African American community. Ace mourns the loss of tales of African ancestors, their kingdoms, cultural stories and rituals. These narratives sunk to the bottom of the ocean. What they were left with are accounts of slavery and their struggles out of that dark hole. This imbalance is burdensome and is especially felt when witnessing cultural events of other ethnicities such as Native Americans and first-generation Africans. He has found solace in his belief that he is part of one global connected family.

His goal is to be a spark for doing things better, community involvement and modeling successful entrepreneurship. He likes the challenge of growth and feels like this has been possible for him since he has moved out of Louisiana. African American communities commonly have higher poverty and crime rates. This can restrict individuals in their growth. Individuals are then forced to choose between being closer to their community and prioritizing their growth. This played out in his mothers' life as well as she settled for less pay, in Louisiana.

Ace Champion lives in Green Bay with his wife, who works as an herbalist and massage therapist. His 23-year-old daughter is retiring from the military. His 21-year-old son graduated from culinary school and will start his own business Champion Baked Goods, giving back to folks with Autism. His 19-year-old son is playing rugby for Iowa Central and studying to be a firefighter. <https://www.chefchampion.com>



Musings over coffee

Pal – The ephemeral moment

By Mahesh Subramony

The Hindi word ‘*Pal*’ found its way into my mind while I was in a fairground. As a six-year-old enchanted by glittering lights and a gigantic Ferris wheel, surrounded by a sea of humanity, I was probably too distracted to notice. Or perhaps, the beauty of that song blended so effortlessly with that moment’s euphoria – surrounded as I was by my loving family – that I captured the tune of ‘*pal do pal ka shaayar*’ but none of its meaning. In my subsequent listening (it was frequently played on All India Radio in the 1970’s), I came to realize the song’s enigmatic message, and was curiously drawn to Sahir Ludhianvi’s lyrics. What did it mean to be the “poet of an ephemeral moment”? My now-favorite lyricist wrote:

“Numerous poets have appeared (on the stage) before me/Some who left longing (for success), and others who showcased their compositions/They were all anecdotes of an ephemeral moment, and I am one as well”.¹

The poet alludes to the fleeting nature of fame: our work dominates the imagination of the audience for a passing moment, only to be replaced by the talent of others who capture their attention. I learned later that Ludhianvi’s tomb was dismantled to make room for more compact graves of newer denizens. He would have found this fitting:

“Our companionship is only for an ephemeral moment or two, and so is our friendship/Meeting at this juncture, we will part at another”.²

The above lyrics were composed at a time when passengers on trains of Indian Railways shared experiences and food, with conversations and songs forging seemingly lifelong friendships. However, upon disembarking at their station, each traveler took a path that was never to cross with that of the other. Ludhianvi used this common occurrence as a metaphor for the relationships we develop in our own lives, viewing each individual as a passenger on the train of life, meeting and bonding, but never sharing the same set of experiences, nor accompanying the other to the final destination. Yet, we seek connections, desire fame, and view what we have (and what is around us) as permanent!

Ludhianvi wrote:

“This moment is illuminated, and all else is dark as the night/Do not let this ephemeral moment go, for it is all that you have”.³

Encapsulated here is the inevitability of change and the fateful events within which we find moments of clarity – when things appear to come together. Yes, we are surrounded by unknowns, and nothing lasts... so what other choice do we have than to act within this passing moment?

Pal – within which we find and lose fame, forge temporary bonds, and act upon the world and ourselves. Yet, if I were to imagine what Pal looks like, a dew drop comes to mind. Magically manifesting and then disappearing. Each moment, a bead in a necklace that only exists as a notion. How else to greet it than as a young and fickle friend?



"I am a poet of an ephemeral moment, with a story that will last for a moment or two/For a moment or two will last my identity (and) for a moment or two, my youth."¹

Yes, Saahir. All of life is contained in this single evanescent moment. Isn't this beautiful?



1. "Main pal do pal ka shayar hoon" from *Kabhi Kabhi* (1976)
2. "Pal do pal ka saath hamara" from *The Burning Train* (1980)
3. "Aage bhi jaane na" from *Waqt* (1965)

Mahesh Subramony is an Appleton and IndUS alum who lives in Northern Illinois with his family. He can be contacted at mahesh.v.subramony@gmail.com.

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Centennial Series

USSR: An existential turmoil

By Shveta Pant

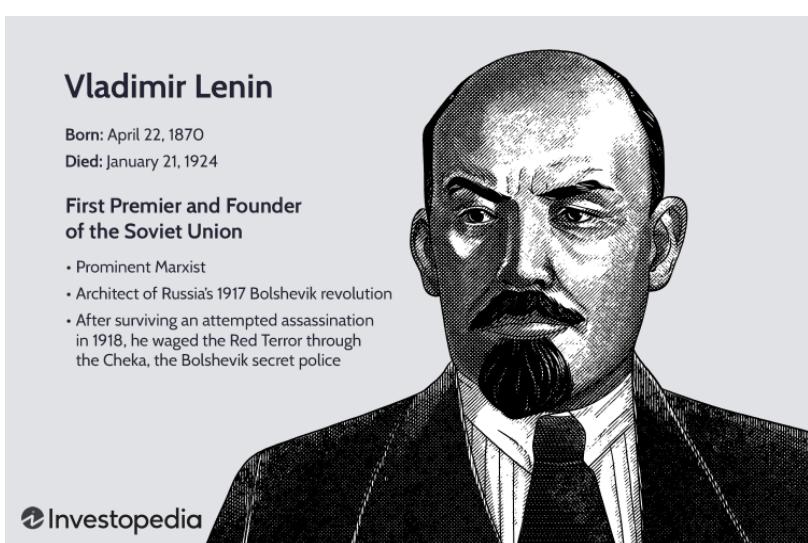
The year 1613 marks the ascent of the Romanovs - the last imperial dynasty of Russia. 18 czars wielded autocratic power, informed by the divine-right theory of kingship, for three centuries, until their ouster. Several precipitating factors contributed to the collapse of the monarchy and the birth of the USSR. Well-nigh into the 19th century, a medieval form of serfdom was prevalent in Russia. The landless peasants (serfs) were bound to the land-owning nobility in servitude. However, they were able to organize themselves after the abolition of serfdom in 1861 by the Romanovs.

Russia lagged in industrialization pioneered by Western Europe and the USA. From 1890 to 1910, although it advanced, it also became populous. This resulted in a dearth of food supply exacerbated by the Crimean War (1854 - 1856). The beleaguered workers, facing destitution and starvation, protested. Though unarmed, hundreds were either killed or wounded by the Czar's troops in the Bloody Sunday massacre of 1905. Subsequently, the Czar committed to the inception of a series of representative assemblies or duma to usher in ameliorative measures.

With an inferior military, in comparison to its German counterpart, Russia's foray in World War I was inherently failure prone. A paucity of supplies and the human toll of the war effort proved disastrous, and the country was mired in deep inflation. In 1915, Czar Nicholas II left Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg - unpopular, as it sounded too German) to lead the Russian front. Czarina Alexandra became increasingly unpopular due to her proximity to the dubious, self-asserted mystic and healer Grigory Rasputin. He wielded a strong influence on the Romanovs as the Czarina believed he could alleviate or even cure their son - their sole heir - Alexi of his hemophilia. Rampant corruption, lack of development, the repeated dissolution of a non-conforming duma, and the Czar's unpopularity fostered a tempestuous political climate.

The February Revolution erupted on March 8, 1917. As they swarmed Petrograd and engaged law-enforcement, striking workers joined hands with demonstrators demanding bread. The troops of the Petrograd army garrison were summoned as reinforcement, but the revolution could not be contained. A provisional government - headed by Alexander Kerensky - was established on March 11 and Nicholas II

abdicated after a few days. Kerensky sustained the war efforts much to the chagrin of the peasants as food shortages worsened leading to rampant food- riots and looting of the farms.



Inspired by socialist ideas in Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, Vladimir Lenin ensconced himself as head of the Bolshevik Party - later known as the Communist Party. On November 6 and 7, 1917 Vladimir Lenin led the Bolshevik Revolution to usurp power from the provisional government of the duma. Lenin assumed dictatorship and

envisioned a Soviet government formed by workers, peasants and soldiers. Civil War broke out immediately between the Red (supporters of the Bolsheviks) and White (coalition of capitalists, monarchists and socialist democrats) armies.

On July 16, 1918, the Romanovs were shot and bayoneted by a firing squad, whilst under captivity of the Bolsheviks. From 1918-22, a period known as the Red Terror gripped the nebulous nation to quell opposition to the Bolsheviks. Millions were massacred in political repression inflicted by the Cheka (Bolshevik secret police) based on their education, family background, ideologies, etc. Class distinctions were ironed out to create a potentially egalitarian society.

On December 30th, 1922, Vladimir Lenin became the leader of the largest and first Marxist-Communist state in the world - The United Soviet Socialist Republic. The Bolsheviks were victorious in the civil war in 1923, which took the lives of almost 13 million people. The USSR emerged as a world power. The USSR comprised 15 republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Joseph Stalin gained control as dictator after Lenin's death in 1924. A Georgian by birth, Stalin ruled with an iron-fist until his death in 1953. During his regime the USSR rapidly transformed from an agrarian economy into an industrial and military power. During the Great Purge (1936-38), Stalin either executed or exiled millions - who resisted his policies - into forced labor camps or gulags. His initial Five-Year plans implemented collectivized farming and rapid industrialization. To optimize output, all agricultural holdings were confiscated and integrated. Peasants were coerced into working on collective farms and hundreds of thousands of kulaks or well-off farmers were executed. Subsequent Five-Year plans focused on producing defense equipment and building military power.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, agricultural productivity dropped due to non-compliance and bewilderment among the peasants and resulted in the death of millions in the Great Famine of 1932-33 and the Ukrainian famine - Holodomor (meaning "starvation" and "inflicting death"). Officials were instructed to confiscate every smidgen of food from homes. Approximately 4 million Ukrainians died in the famine.

Stark ideological differences between the USSR, USA and Great Britain became apparent after Nazi Germany surrendered at the end of World War II. In 1948, the emancipated (from Nazi control) Eastern European countries were governed by communist governments. Apprehensive of communist expansion, the US, Canada and their western European allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. This led to the USSR and its eastern European allies forming the Warsaw Pact, which triggered the Cold War (1947-91).

An Orwellian term, the Cold War, was characterized by propaganda, espionage, brinkmanship, space race, proxy wars, arsenal build-up, military deployment, and the eschewing of a direct confrontation.



Joseph Stalin

The culminating point was the Cuban Missile Crisis - the deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba by Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev in 1962. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union included the shutting of gulags, liberation of prisoners, and improvement of living standards and relaxation of artistic censorship. However, the Communist Party members removed him in 1964 as food shortages persisted and ties with China worsened.



Ancient Norse Viking



Pres. Vladimir Putin



Pres. Volodymyr Zelensky

The chasm between the "haves" and the "have nots" deepened through the 1970s and 80s. Whilst the Politburo (political elite) prospered, rapid industrialization often led to a paucity of food supplies and basic necessities like shoes and clothing. A sense of disillusionment with the Communist ideology pervaded the renegade younger generation and they adopted democratic principles.

Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in 1985 and introduced reforms to uplift the dwindling economy. Glasnost (political openness) and perestroika (economic restructuring) were policies implemented by him. The press enjoyed more freedom of speech and the economy adapted to a communist-capitalist model. Gorbachev's reforms proved to be a catalyst for the impending disintegration of the USSR. The USSR began losing its grasp over Eastern Europe after Ronald Reagan helped reduce gas prices to their lowest. The 1989 revolution in Poland, inspired revolutions in other eastern European countries, as reflected in the tearing down of the Berlin wall. Democratic leader Boris Yeltsin came to power after Mikhail Gorbachev was replaced by a coup in 1991. The USSR ceased to exist on December 31st, 1991.

Fast forward to the present, on February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin stated, "It (Ukraine) is an inherent part of our own history, culture, [and] spiritual space." Both Russia and Ukraine trace their origin to a medieval Viking civilization called the Kievan Rus in Kyiv (Kiev in Russian) - the modern-day capital of Ukraine.

Ukraine fought for and lost independence during the Russian Revolution and was absorbed by the USSR. This did little to vaporize its distinct identity that includes a separate language - Ukrainian. Putin fears a democratic, west-leaning Ukraine. It endangers him and Russia - an existential crisis for both nations indeed.

Shveta Pant received her MBA with a focus in Communication and Marketing, from Louisiana State University, in Shreveport in 2009. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, and teaching. She has been residing in Green Bay since 2017. She believes Wisconsin has a lot to offer in terms of natural beauty and both indoor and outdoor activities.

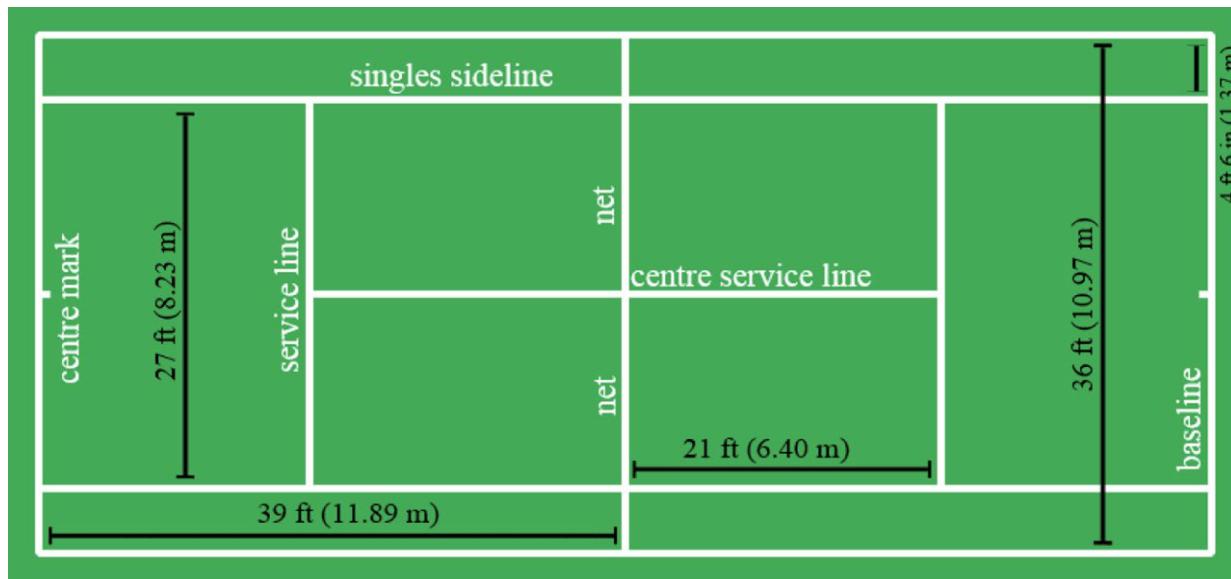


Tennis rules!

By Rohan Gala, with contributions from Sri Kathayayini Kadipi Reddy and Dr. Rekha Vijayan

Tennis is a sport that has been around since the 16th century and is played by a diverse group of individuals today. It is the 6th most popular sport in the United States. Among Indians in the USA, it is favored because it is safe, active and popular in India as well. From indoor courts in the winter to outdoor courts in the summer, tennis can be played year-round. All you need is a racket, tennis balls and someone to play with. It is a healthy way to pass one's time. In fact, on average, tennis players run more than three miles during the course of a full tennis match.

Players who are new to tennis would find it helpful to get acquainted with the various markings on the tennis court, the rules of play, and the scoring of a match. What do the lines on the tennis court mean? The baselines on either end of the court determine the boundaries of play lengthwise. The center mark is the very short mark in the middle of the baseline that separates the court into two halves longitudinally and helps determine where a player should serve. The center service line divides the two service boxes. The service line separates the fore court from the back court horizontally to mark the box within which the serve should be placed. The singles sideline is the inner line running lengthwise and marks the boundary for a singles match. The doubles sideline is the outer line running lengthwise and comes into effect in doubles matches.



Next, coming to the rules. The most important rule is that the ball must land within the boundary for play to continue. If a player hits the ball outside the boundary, the opponent wins a point. Participants can hit the ball once and are not allowed to carry the ball or catch it with their racquets. Players cannot touch the net or the posts during play and must wait until the ball is in their half of the court to strike it. The ball must be returned before it bounces twice on their side of the court. Moving on to the scoring side of things. Players play the best of three sets. Each set consists of six games and is won by winning 6 games with a two-game lead. Each game consists of 4 points and is won when a player reaches 4 points (15, 30, 40 and Game).

While tennis might seem difficult to learn, it is a sport that can be played lifelong. It is an active sport that not only strengthens you physically, but also mentally and enhances social contact. Research has shown that playing a sport with other people, like tennis or soccer increases longevity when compared to solitary activities like jogging and cycling. One advantage of the Green Bay Tennis Center in Ashwaubenon is unlimited access to tennis courts, tennis lessons, and tennis equipment.

Rohan Gala is a recent graduate of Bayport High School. He will be attending the University of Pennsylvania in the fall. In his free time, he enjoys reading, running, and playing tennis.



I originally started playing tennis at Western Racquet & Fitness Club in 2016 for physical fitness and it became part of my weekly routine. Western Racquet offers 6 tennis courts. I started playing singles but developed more of an interest towards doubles matches. Tennis is also a mind game, as you anticipate how the ball is approaching you and then make your best move.



While I challenge myself to improve my tennis skills, socializing with fellow players is an added benefit. There are tournaments, leagues, drills, group lessons, and private lessons that can help players to reach their goals. This is our family sport and all of us play together at least a couple of times each month. My younger daughter, Soma, does group tennis and one-on-one lessons each week to improve her game. Soma and I participated in a Generation Gap tournament and had a wonderful experience. Tennis is something I look forward to, and due to indoor centers like Western Racquet and Four Seasons, I'm able to play year-round.

Sri Kathayini Kadipi Reddy works as a Vascular Sonographer at St. Vincent Hospital. She has been living in the Green Bay Area for the past 11 years with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys playing tennis, listening to music and traveling.

Watching my 6-year-old go through the drills in his tennis lessons, inspired me to learn tennis. Despite being an athletic person and someone who enjoys sports, I had never taken tennis lessons. Growing up in India, tennis was considered an expensive sport due to equipment and access to coaching and it was not offered through most schools.

A friend shared information for *Try Tennis* introductory group sessions offered at the Green Bay Tennis Center. I tried my hand at the lessons and enjoyed it thoroughly. It gets one to learn new skills, focus on applying them and brings together the rest of one's fitness routines such as core training and cardio. Equipped with basic knowledge of the various strokes and footwork is a great motivator. The social side of the sport is a bonus.

Rekha Vijayan practices as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at a local hospital in Green Bay. She is originally from Bangalore, India and has lived here for the past several years with her husband and three children. She enjoys reading, exercising, being in nature and volunteers for IndUS.



“Don’t say Gay”

By Tonie Bear

Imagine that you are an elementary school teacher in Wisconsin. You have a student in your classroom named Adriana. After class one day, Adriana tells you, “I think I’m gay, but I’m not sure. I want to learn more about it, but I don’t feel safe telling my parents yet. Could you help me?”

In Wisconsin, you would be able to tell Adriana that you support her and promise not to tell her parents until she’s ready to do so. You would suggest that Adriana talk to the school counselor so she can have mental health support as she explores her identity and recommend books on the topic so she can learn more. You could bring some of these resources into your lessons, teaching the entire class about sexuality and gender. Not only does this help Adriana figure out more about who she is, but it also helps the other students to learn how to be allies to their friends and classmates in the LGBTQ+ community. Now imagine that you are a teacher in Florida. When Adriana tells you about her identity, you would be required to tell her parents, failing which, you could be accused of breaking school policy and be sued by her parents with the charge that you infringed on their right to know what is being said and what services are being offered to their child in the classroom. As much as you want to keep Adriana’s trust, your job would be in danger. Also, you would not be able to use this as a teaching opportunity in your classroom.



Why is the situation so different simply because you are in a different state? Maybe you have heard of the “Don’t Say Gay” bill that was recently passed in Florida.

In March, the Florida senate passed HB 1557, the “Parental Rights in Education Bill.” While the bill is general and covers parental rights such as having more knowledge of what is being taught in the classroom and being able to provide input, there are some dangerous aspects to the bill. For example, discussions of gender and sexuality are banned from the classroom. Some

people believe it is inappropriate to discuss gender and sexuality with young children in school. This is what gave the bill the nickname “Don’t Say Gay”.

The bill also requires that school staff report to parents anything that might be considered a “change in the student’s services or monitoring related to the student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.” For LGBTQ+ students, this might limit the help they are able to receive from schools based on their identity, like counseling. Either they are “outed” to their parents, or they are prevented from receiving resources that could help them.

Florida is not the only state that is passing laws that can negatively affect the LGBTQ+ community. There are laws in other states—Georgia, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, to name a few—that also limit how, or if, LGBTQ+ topics are discussed in schools. Bills in states like Idaho and Texas limit the kind of medical care transgender children can receive. Medical care that is “gender-affirming,” which allow transgender children to safely transition, is limited or even banned in some states.

What does it mean to limit medical care for transgender children? Picture that you are a pediatrician in Wisconsin. A family that you have been working with for several years comes to you for their annual appointment. In attendance are the parents and Sally, who you have known until now to be their daughter. The parents tell you that Sally came out to them as transgender and prefers to be a boy. Sally chooses to be called Sam and to be referred to as “he” and “him” instead of “she” and “her.” The family has discussed it and would like to let Sam transition medically. This could involve surgery and hormone therapy. You would be able to support Sam and his family, discuss their options and make a plan for Sam to safely transition.

Now, if this was to happen in Idaho; a new bill in Idaho would force you to decline any help. You could lose your job or even go to prison if you provide medical care for Sam that would help him transition. In fact, Sam’s parents could be arrested for trying to pursue a medical transition for Sam, all thanks to the law that bans medical professionals and parents from providing gender-affirming medical care to transgender children. There remains some hope. Some states have rejected bills similar to Florida’s, like Louisiana. National organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal have campaigns working to get rid of restrictive laws like the ones in Florida and Idaho and to prevent such laws from being passed in other states.

In Wisconsin, several organizations support the LGBTQ+ community and raise awareness for their issues. Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is one such. This year, Rainbow over Wisconsin (ROW) is holding their annual Pride Alive festival on September 23rd and 24th at the Brown County Fairgrounds. Door County is holding their annual Open Door Pride celebration on June 25th. The Napalese Lounge in Green Bay hosts a variety of LGBTQ+ centered programs throughout the year. All of these events support the LGBTQ+ community by providing a safe place to celebrate and gives their allies an opportunity to learn more and become involved.

It is surprising to see how different the situation can be from one state to another. In many ways we are lucky because Wisconsin has laws protecting people from being discriminated against for their sexual orientation. While these laws do not specifically extend protection to transgender people, Wisconsin does not have prohibitive laws that target transgender people. However, that does not mean this will always be the case. Like any state, laws may change when leadership changes. It is important to stay informed so that we can understand what our state is doing to protect the LGBTQ+ community. The more our state is able to protect the LGBTQ+ community, the better we are able to serve the people in our care.

Tonie Bear has lived in Green Bay for eight years and has volunteered for several community groups such as the UW-Green Bay Pride Center, March for Science, and the YWCA Community Services Committee. Tonie has a bachelor's degree in Underrepresented Youth Development from UW-Green Bay and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education at UW-Milwaukee. When not in school, Tonie enjoys writing, baking, and playing with two kitty companions, Callie and Bean.

For more information about these topics, here are some links:

The “Don’t Say Gay” bill”:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/1557>

The Human Rights Campaign:

<https://www.hrc.org/>

Lambda Legal:

<https://www.lambdalegal.org/>

Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Door County chapter):

<https://www.pflagdoorcounty.org/>

Pride Alive festival in Green Bay:

<https://www.facebook.com/newpridealive>

The Napalese Lounge:

<https://www.napalese.com/>



Please bee there!

By Jai Pant

"If the bee disappears from the surface of the Earth, man would have no more than four years to live"
 - Albert Einstein. Bees are essential to the environment. These insects help pollinate plants by transferring pollen (a sticky substance) from one plant to another. Pollination is a process by which plants reproduce and create seeds. Most of the crops in the U.S.A., especially cherries and blueberries, depend on bees for pollination. Plants, shrubs, wild flowers and trees pollinated by bees provide beauty and diversity to the environment.

Bees are helpful in providing fruits, nuts, berries, seeds and vegetables such as peas and beans - without which our diet and health would be adversely affected. Birds and mammals consume seeds, nuts and berries pollinated by the bees for sustenance. Leaf cutter bees pollinate alfalfa which is a staple diet for domesticated animals like the cow. If bees became extinct, the process of pollination would alter - leading to a decline in reproduction of plants. There would be fewer seeds! Food chains and food webs would be affected, and the prices of food would skyrocket.

The financial contribution of bees related to agriculture is over \$40 billion per annum in the USA. Additionally, hexagonal structures of honeycombs are now widely used in engineering. The condition of the environment can be surmised by observing bee colonies because bees build colonies that can last several years. Bees also happen to be the most researched species, besides humans.



Human pollinators in China

There are approximately 20,000-25,000 species of bees in the world. However, most of the species of bees have become endangered due to global climate change, destruction of their habitats, parasites, pesticides, monoculture farming, and illnesses from contaminated food and water. In China, farmers are forced to pollinate by hand, using a brush, because more than 80% of the bee population has become extinct since the 19th century due to the extensive use of pesticides. In 2006, bee population in the USA began declining due to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) - an anomalous phenomenon when the majority of the worker bees desert the queen bee and disappear, leaving behind a few nurse bees to care for the young and a plenitude of food supplies - a repercussion of the aforementioned stressors. Today, the USA has a healthy number of 2.8 million beehives and no recurrence of CCD has been reported, in the past few years, due to a grant of \$4 million for projects focusing on pollinator health. "The hum of bees is the voice of the garden" - Elizabeth Lawrence.

In conclusion, we all have to do our bit to save bees from extinction. Some helpful tips include planting gardens, organic farming, building bee baths for bees to drink from, planting trees (especially cherry trees due to abundant nectar), supporting local beekeepers (by buying raw honey), and beekeeping. "It is not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised, the mosquito is swatted." - Unknown.

Jai Pant is a 5th grader who loves reading and writing. He lives in Green Bay with his parents and sister. He also enjoys art, swimming, playing the guitar and basking by Lake Michigan in his spare time.



How Green Bay became home!

By Jamila Seaton

This past winter, I was honored by Current Young Professionals (CYP), a program of the Greater Green Bay (GGB) Chamber, as a Future 15 recipient. It honors those who advance CYP's mission by profiling best practices that could be adopted by other local individuals and organizations. They recognize professionals who are achievers and contributing to the overall quality of life in GGB. Honorees are under 40 years of age and nominated by a community member. The nominee's information and accomplishments are compiled. Once the judging process is complete, 15 individuals are selected to receive the Future 15 award, and then one is chosen to be the Young Professional of the Year.



On the night of the Future 15 awards ceremony, I was overflowing with anxiety. The months leading up to the event were filled with supportive emails and phone calls congratulating me, wishing me luck, and often "I know you're going to win." Well, I had already won the Future 15 award, but more importantly, I won an opportunity to see a community rally around me in a way that I never could have imagined. A well-deserving Tara Yang accepted the Young Professional of the Year award, and I am filled with pride to be remotely in her ranks. That night I was surrounded by sorority sisters, Big Brothers Big Sisters leadership, and a Green Bay community welcoming me with open arms.

Brothers Big Sisters leadership, and a Green Bay community welcoming me with open arms.

When I moved to Green Bay eight years ago, I sought career development and a less stressful lifestyle. My transition to the community was fairly seamless primarily because I was a huge Packers fan. As a 5'9 Black woman who frequently wears heels and natural hair in some form of an afro hairstyle, I stood out quite a bit, in Northeast Wisconsin. My Caribbean background and moving from Florida seemed counter to the many locals I met, who grew up in the area and never left, or were snowbirds. I constantly felt like I had infiltrated a sacred space. The one thing that bridged the divide was my stories of how I became a Packers fan as a kid – how my dad is the reason I started watching American football. My "otherness" was disarmed through this deep bond. I had come to realize that my love of the Packers kept me connected with my family in a strangely similar way to my new neighbors. Nevertheless, I was still an outsider. At work, I walked into an environment where I didn't see people who looked like me. I didn't have much access to Caribbean food if I didn't cook it myself. I chose to move away from my biological family and when football season was done, I was often left to wonder why I opted to join a community where I knew I wouldn't immediately find people who shared my ethnic and racial cultures.

In spite of the questioning moments, I knew Green Bay had a lot to offer. When my parents moved to the United States, they wanted to give my sister and me the best opportunities to set us up for success. They sacrificed everything they had worked hard to achieve, to ensure that their children would have choices, even if that choice was moving to a frigid climate unbecoming of my Guyanese blood. This was the first time I moved to a place that was 100 percent my choice. My parents moved us to Jamaica when I was eight, then to New York and New Orleans when I was a teenager. While I chose my academic institutions, Green Bay was the first time I had done my research and I was choosing a complete lifestyle that I believed would bring me joy.

In my excitement to join the community, I did not anticipate the isolation that I would experience when race and immigration would come to the forefront in the US and seep into my daily interactions. The

conversations weren't new, but they highlighted that I was not integrated into the community. So, I decided to become a big sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Wisconsin (BBBSNEW). This was a way for me to learn more about the Green Bay area and connect with the community through youth programming. As I spent more time with my little sister, the more I started to develop a sense of belonging. Then I met some sorority sisters who had been living in Green Bay for years and even decades. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is one of nine historically Black Greek nonprofit organizations. Our sisterhood is a public service seeking to reach underserved communities with emphasis on the Black community. When I became a Delta in my third year of college in 2007, I did not know that exactly 10 years later, I would find such a phenomenal circle of Deltas in Northeast Wisconsin that would mentor and support me professionally and personally. These women have been pillars in the community and blazed the trail for me to find my own path in Green Bay.

Once I became actively involved with the Northeast Wisconsin Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta (NEWAC), I volunteered more and participated in more local activities that I didn't even know existed. This new level of community engagement also energized me at work. I started to be more social and build a strong local network in various aspects of my life. Since then, I have become a board member for BBBSNEW, a member of the GGB Chamber's Partners in Education board, a member of Brown County United Way's Emerging Leaders Society, and I'm on the Village of Howard's Plan Commission. It's like I tapped in the secret code that gave me access to a world that I didn't know I lived in. I have not discovered everything, and I still have a lot to learn, but I am happy to have found belonging in community service and volunteerism.



As someone who thinks of Guyana often and wants to preserve my homeland in many ways, I am grateful that Green Bay is open to growth. The healthy balance of welcoming people from all backgrounds and absorbing all the good that comes with diversity while protecting your identity isn't always easy. History is complex. It is good to be proud and preserve, but it is great when we evolve into so much more and so much better. It has been rewarding to witness Green Bay take on the challenge to evolve and commit to sustainable success through initiatives that create a more diverse and inclusive Northeast Wisconsin.

As I reflect on the incredible journey of being a Future 15 recipient, I am overwhelmed. The night of the awards was one of music, food, drinks, and laughter. I was in a state of gratitude, happiness, pride, humility, and even fear. I moved to Green Bay to live a joyful life. I moved to Green Bay to thrive. There have been some tremendously difficult moments while I have been here, but this place that I loved from afar and then showed me its flaws once I was close, has finally started to feel like home.

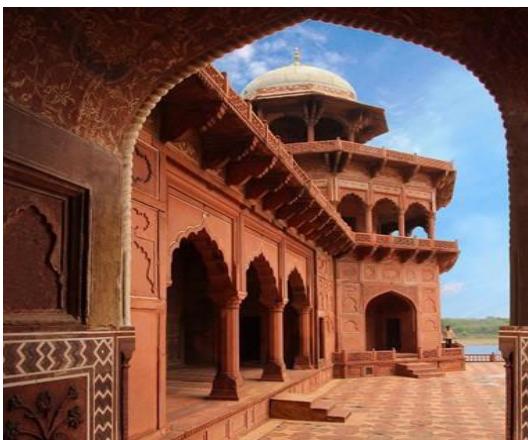
Jamila Seaton is a healthcare economics analyst originally from Guyana (South America). She is a very proud aunt and enjoys spending time with her family. She also loves Sandesh and being a member of the editing team has been a highlight of her Wisconsin experiences.



Memories of my visits to India - 1

By Bernard Lawrence Green, PhD

I grew up in Krugersdorp, Transvaal, South Africa. My parents, who were born in Russia, had managed to migrate to South Africa just prior to the beginning of World War 2. After qualifying as a Clinical Psychologist in South Africa, I traveled to the United States where I received my Doctorate from New York University (NYU), followed by a postdoctoral fellowship while working as a Research Assistant at the Deafness Research and Training Center at NYU. I worked as a Clinical Psychologist for 7 years at Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, before accepting a position at Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton. I worked there for 28 years prior to retiring. My present wife, who grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa and is now a retired teacher, came with me to the US, where we got married 44 years ago. We have 2 sons, one who practices as an Ophthalmologist in Berkeley, CA, and another who owns and runs a travel agency in Peru.



My late father was a professional photographer, who shared with me his enthusiasm, love and respect for his work. As a child, I soon embraced photography as my favorite hobby. Over the years, I became increasingly aware of how photography enriches our lives in many different ways. At one level, it provides us with a means of capturing precious images of family and friends to pass on to future generations. On another level, we are able to obtain images that reflect the magnificent beauty inherent in God's creations. In doing so, the images nourish our souls with wonder and heartfelt gratitude to God. This in turn, helps us to better express our personal vision regarding humanity everywhere, while also enabling us to relax and enjoy our free time as we strive to

strike a healthy balance between work and play. Perhaps of greater importance, it facilitates a deeper understanding of the vital significance of preserving and sustaining our beautiful planet; a planet which provides us, among other things, with visual therapy that promotes peace of mind, joy and serenity, especially during trying times.

Considering the widespread beauty in so many countries in this world, why did I specifically decide to visit India? From my extensive reading, I determined that India is a large vibrant country that is home to fascinating people, with their unique Hindu, Islamic, Tibetan and Buddhist cultures. It is a country that has been blessed with spectacular scenery, not to mention creations of beautiful and inspirational architecture. My first trip to India was in July and August of 2011. I was accompanied by Eunice and my youngest son, David. On my 2nd trip to India in April 2015, David alone traveled with me.



Substantial preparation was required for both trips with careful, and extensive planning, which pertained to, for example, which parts of India to visit, for how long, what was the best time to go, what clothes and boots should be packed, as well as which camera equipment would be best for the journey. Due consideration had to be paid to the question of food and cooking utensils, as well as hiring a competent cook, especially since we are observant Jews who only eat kosher food with kosher utensils. After all, as the saying goes, "A man well prepared has half fought the battle". Experienced Indian guides had to be hired, and on a timely basis. Guides would be important advisors, among other things, on how best to acclimatize ourselves to altitude, when and where to hike, what to wear, how best to ride on the accompanying ponies etc. Fortunately, there was no language barrier with our hired guides.



It's extremely difficult to vacation in India and not come away with numerous fond memories and beautiful images firmly etched in one's mind. The present article is a preface to my next article that will be in the January 2023 issue of Sandesh.

The places we visited are as follows:

1. Kargil and Leh, the largest town in the Union Territory of Ladakh;
2. Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir;
3. Manali and Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh;
4. Amritsar, Punjab;
5. Agra;
6. New Delhi;
7. Kerala



Bernard Lawrence Green lives with his wife, Eunice, and son in Appleton, Wisconsin. He and his wife have two sons, one practices as an Ophthalmologist in Berkeley, CA, and another owns and runs a travel agency in Peru. He enjoys traveling, hiking, and photography. He aims to present images of God's wondrous works and man's beautiful architecture, especially for the elderly, the sick, disabled and the hospitalized.

Bernard maintains a website that consists of two separate presentations of images paired with classical music. The first is, God's Wonderful Garden www.GodsWonderfulGarden.com. The second is, Man's Constructions, God's Creations. Both can also be found on YouTube. His website also consists of an Artist's Statement, a sample of some of the photos in his first photographic exhibit, as well some Psalms from the Hebrew Bible.

Book club discussion

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

By Marne Meyer and Dr. Rekha Vijayan

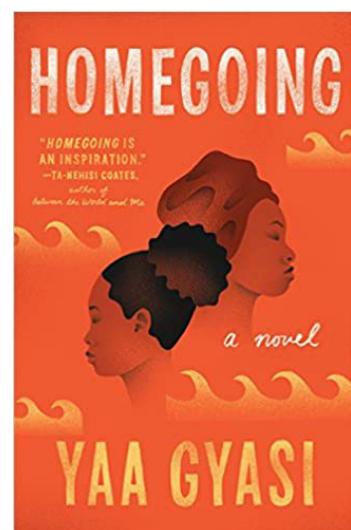
I enjoy historical novels because they expand my knowledge of different eras, people groups and how they adapt to their standing in society, rituals and customs, generational changes and the evolving of world views. This novel incorporates all these things. It is a multigenerational story that follows two half-sisters whose lives go in very different directions. Before the directions take shape, their mother gives each of them a black stone to remember her and their heritage. The black stone threads its way through the story. Gyasi does a great job of introducing each new character in a way that does not interfere with the flow of the book.

Why the title *Homegoing*? When Gyasi was asked in an online interview, she said, "It is a complicated question. Home right now is Oakland, California. But again, I think I have known for many years that home, for me, can never really be a place. It is this thing that you carry inside of you, similar to those characters, particularly the African-American ones who have been ripped away from their original homes and yet have this connection to the land. Home is this little light you carry inside you wherever you go."

A thoughtful quote by the character Esi goes, "weakness is treating someone as though they belong to you. Strength is knowing that everyone belongs to themselves." This is a well written book and has piqued my interest to explore my own genealogy. Maybe there will be a "black stone" that weaves through the generations that preceded mine!



Marne Meyer is enjoying the latter days of life, after retiring from a 45-year career in nursing. Retirement has allowed her to enjoy life without the pressure of time crunches. She is spending more time outdoors, volunteering, catching up with friends, and active in a book club!



Homegoing was a wonderful immersive experience. It is one of those delightful reads that you do not want to end, and it was made all the more special by being a chance discovery in a bookstore. It is the first book that I have read that starts in Ghana, West Africa, during a period when the slave trade had already established itself, and that is written by a female African-American author. She brings to life the beauty of Africa that resides in its lands, its people and its customs. The horrors of the slave trade are inescapable. It brings up a question that has been asked by generations since then, "how did this atrocity come to be?" The cognitive dissonance that allowed this to happen, along with the burning fires of capitalism and greed, led to the dehumanization of the victims.

The author gives a voice to those who underwent untold suffering, with a kindness and gentleness that humanizes them, allowing the reader to see the tragic pain and havoc that was wrought. Her manner of fitting 300 years of family story line into one book, is light and engaging. Each chapter is focused on one member of the family tree, in the backdrop of an historical event of that time. The focus remains on the family story, which dwells in members of every generation irrespective of the passage of time.



Yaa Gyasi

This book makes one ponder about the uniqueness of each individual, their quirks, their problems and their strengths and how it fits into the context of that individual's historical familial lineage rather than only in terms of the societal norms of the day. Ideally, we would all have access to our family stories tracking several generations into the past. This would empower and ground individuals in the knowledge of where they come from, thus guiding them in the direction that they would like to take. The loss to African Americans, in not being able to access the stories of their ancestors either due to being lost in the deep abyss of the ocean or due to the muting power of trauma, is immense.

A perk of the novel is the handling of the queer romantic story situated centuries ago in Africa. Her emphasis on representation is also seen in the varied and sensitive portrayal of the male characters.

In her interviews, Yaa Gyasi, talks about her shock in discovering the ignorance of Ghanaians of their own history, in particular as it relates to the slave trade. The Castle is a somber tourist stop that not many locals have visited. Her own mother lived just 50 km from the Castle but did not know about its important place in history as a slave castle where slaves were imprisoned before being shipped off across the Atlantic.

The novel speaks to an important point about the commencement of formal education in Africa in the European-style schooling system and how this creates inner conflict among many in Africa. They are skeptical of educating the younger generation in the language and narrative of the colonizer. It raises the question of whose version of the story is being filtered down and whether the colonizer continues to dominate the thinking of citizens in previously colonized states. This has underpinned the westernization of many previously colonized countries.



Dr. Rekha Vijayan practices as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at a local hospital in Green Bay. She is originally from Bangalore, India and has lived here for the past several years with her spouse and three children. She enjoys reading, exercising, being in nature and volunteering for IndUS.

Where is home?

By Juan Antonio Durazo Sandoval

Where is home? It is one of the most commonly asked questions in the world. We encounter it when we meet someone for the first time, start a new job or even fill out paperwork for a new apartment. For some, the response is simple, but for many of us this question is one that we've always struggled to answer.

In the past seven years I have lived in nine locations, across three countries and six U.S. States. I've experienced several cultures, tried amazing foods, lived in all sorts of weather conditions, and packed more suitcases than I dare count. Even though these changes have been tough and not exactly what I had envisioned myself doing, they have taught me lessons that I will carry with me for a lifetime. The most important question that stays with me is, what is home?

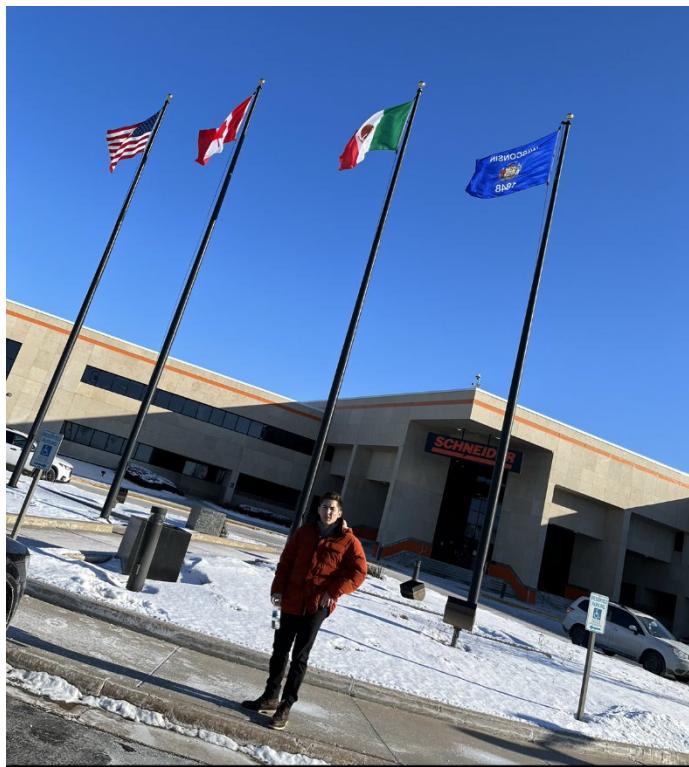
Personally, I have felt at home at every single pit stop along my journey, yet it wasn't until recently that I truly understood why. As human beings we tend to lean toward things we understand or know. Whether that be a certain type of food, clothing brand, person, culture or anything we can relate to. In my case, I found myself leaning toward strangers. I have always been fascinated by the "other" and how a simple question could reveal aspects of life that you would have never known otherwise. It is truly impressive how many people are willing to take you into their home, with open arms, if you just allow yourself to be vulnerable and say "hello".



At the start of my journey seven-years ago in Sweden, to put it simply, I was lost. I did not know a single person; I did not know anything about the culture, and I most certainly did not like their most popular ice cream flavors: salmon and black liquorice. For the first time in my life, I felt like the odd man out. Instead of being timid, I began making relationships with my fellow teammates. As a result, I

was able to experience Swedish holidays, travel across the country, indulge myself in palatable Swedish dishes and create a Swedish home that I will have for the rest of my life.

A few years later, my journey led me to the smallest of all my stops, with a whopping population size of two thousand people. Mountain City, Tennessee became my next home. I've always been a fan of country music, but no song could have prepared me for the culture shock of the south. I was one of five individuals from minority communities in the city and was destined to not fit in from the moment I arrived. However, I began to strike up conversations from day one. This led to biscuits and gravy, fishing on the lake, country concerts in Johnson City, shooting guns, the best southern barbecue you'll ever have and relationships that I will treasure for a lifetime.



part of their home, you just have to be vulnerable enough to find them.



Though I am only twenty-five and have much to learn, I feel like I have one lesson to share: there is nothing harder than being vulnerable to the unknown, but it is better to go through life with open arms and take a few punches, than to look back and wonder, “what if?” We are born into a family and go through life with the belief that home is where our family is, but I do not believe this to be entirely true. Home is where you are welcome and loved, whether by blood relatives or not.

I believe that humans are ultimately good, and it is our job to find what is good in the world. There is always someone ready to make you a

Juan Antonio Durazo Sandoval works as a Rotational Team Leader at Schneider National Transportation in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Juan is originally from a small border town in Arizona, Nogales, where he worked for his father's transportation company. Having recently retired from college baseball, Juan hopes to fulfill his dream of taking over the family business after his father retires.



Recipe with a story

A healthy snack from Manju

Story as narrated to Dr. Rekha Vijayan. Recipe tested by Avis Chmielewski

Manju shares her story of how she made her home in Wisconsin, a long way from her ancestral home. She grew up in South India in Gudipala village, Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh State, very close to the border with Tamil Nadu State. Life growing up on the agricultural lands was busy, hardy but satisfying and low in stress. Everyone worked side by side, attending to household chores, their cattle and farm animals, in addition to tending to their crops. She, like others, was adept at cooking meals for the family by five years of age. They cultivated sesame seeds, rice, bananas, peanuts, coconuts and sugarcane. Families took turns helping each other during the harvest season. Everybody was skilled in knowing how to put to good use what the land provided. This was especially important as they didn't get much rain.

When the harvesting season didn't beckon, they walked the 2 miles to school, each way. The State language, Telegu, was the medium of formal education. She and her sister were the 1st ones to graduate high school, in the cluster of about 25 homes that they called their village. Little did she know that her life was going to change direction in a way that she had not seen happen. Due to her mom's serious illness, her older sister and she were married off in a hurry. With little time to reflect, she joined her husband in Green Bay less than a year after she graduated from high school.

As would be expected, Manju was in for a huge cultural shock! She, however, had no inkling of this. She had never before traveled outside of her village. Having grown up without access to TV, no exposure to the English language or Western culture, it hit her hard. Arriving in the middle of winter, she missed the daily nourishing contact with neighbors every time she stepped out of her house. To top it off, she lamented the lack of diversity in the community.

Manju's assimilation into the Midwest was helped by her pursuing higher education. She took English as second language (ESL) classes for 2 years. She earned her associate's degree as a program analyst from NWTC. Learning English was challenging, and it remains a hurdle to this day. She entered the job market promptly and has remained gainfully employed. Over time, friendships were established with fellow students, neighbors, colleagues and members of the growing Indian community. She is happy in her only other home, Green Bay!

Like many others who straddle two homes, Manju makes trips to her motherland every few years.

She has witnessed a gradual change for the worse, in her native village. She wistfully notes that given another chance, she would never have left. She still misses many things such as a physically active lifestyle close to nature, not having to call ahead before dropping in to meet friends and family and being protected from the constant bombardment of information from the outside world. She is pained to see that most of her village folk have emigrated. The ones who remain are the elderly or very young. Modern privileges like uninterrupted electricity, TV and smartphone technology bring the outside world



Manju and her siblings in India

to their doorstep. Other industries now dominate such as granite companies, mango orchards and juice factories. Manju would love to extol their previous organic lifestyle, but she feels like a hypocrite. With rainfall also having decreased over the years, there are no easy answers.

Government schemes provide pensions and rations of grains and lentils. Many feel this is doomed to decrease motivation in residents. Government schools are increasingly being overlooked for private English-medium schools and people are losing their skills to use the natural raw materials around them. One solution that she wishes for is for the government and corporations to empower small farmers, in the aggregations of villages, to use a mix of modern technology and the wealth of traditional agricultural knowledge successfully, thereby preventing the erosion of villages. Her father and brother continue to live in her ancestral town.

In her youth, they utilized the excess crops to make snacks that would be nutritious and longer lasting. One such tidbit used peanuts, sesame seeds and jaggery. It was wisely dished out to menstruating females, as an important replenishment of iron. She has adapted it to local ingredients in Wisconsin and her kids love it as much as she did. She shared her recipe with us.

This version of India's beloved confection, Laddoo, features toasted seeds and nuts, bound together with dates and honey. It is highly customizable, using your favorite combination of nuts.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon flax seeds
- 1 ½ cups assorted nuts (see notes)
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- 8 ounces soft dates, pitted, about 15 dates
- ½ cup or more, honey, to taste
- Pinch of salt (optional)
- 3 or 4 cardamom pods, cracked open, shells discarded, small black seeds reserved



Manju and Avis

Directions:

- Heat a heavy skillet over medium low heat. Add sesame, chia, and flax seeds to the skillet and dry roast them, stirring often, for 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool completely.
- Repeat roasting process with assorted nuts, dry roasting over medium low heat for 8 minutes, stirring often. Transfer to a plate to cool.
- Repeat roasting process with sunflower seeds, dry roasting over medium low heat for 2 or 3 minutes, stirring often. Transfer to a plate to cool.
- Add dates to the bowl of a food processor and pulse until they form a sticky ball. Remove to a small bowl and set aside. Wash bowl and blade of food processor and dry thoroughly (photo 1).
- Transfer cooled seed mixture to the bowl of a food processor and add cardamom seeds. Pulse to form fine crumbs. Avoid over processing. Remove to a large mixing bowl and set aside.
- In a bowl of a food processor combine cooled nuts and sunflower seeds. Pulse to form crumbs. Small bits of nuts may remain. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.

- To the large mixing bowl, add ground dates, honey, and salt (photo 2). Mix well using a large wooden spoon or pastry blender (photo 3). Use your hands, greased or in food prep gloves, to form 1 ½ inch balls (photo 4). A cookie scoop can help portion the balls (photo 5).

Store in a covered container for a week and in the refrigerator for longer. Yield: 30 laddoos



Tester's notes:

A wide variety of nuts work well: peanuts, almonds, pecans, pistachios, and cashews. Here, we used about ½ cup each of almonds and cashews, and ¼ cup each of pistachios and pecans.

Overprocessing the seed mixture causes seeds to release too much oil, resulting in a paste.

The salt brings out the sweetness of the honey, and the dates complement the toasty nuts.

A pastry blender helps to combine the sticky ingredients.

Avis Chmielewski, retired teacher, musician, and happy grandma, is a recent transplant with her husband Dave to Green Bay. She is a champion baker and prize-winning cook, known for gourmet dinners lovingly prepared for family and friends. Avis enjoyed Indian food on travels to India with her Punjabi first husband, and cooks Indian dishes often.



The Smith slap!

By Rohan Gala

Recently, actor Will Smith slapped presenter Chris Rock on stage after the comedian made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith's (Will's wife) hair loss. Will Smith strode on to the stage, unannounced, for a public display of his anger. This happened during the 94th Academy Awards (Oscars) in March 2022, a prominent event recognizing achievement in the film industry. Soon after, Will Smith won the Best Actor award for his role in the film "King Richard". It was his 1st Oscar award. He received a standing ovation from the crowd of mainstream movie actors, writers, producers, and others. His actions, while seemingly insignificant, have widespread ramifications and especially so in a high school setting. Two high schoolers share their take on the incident.



Sahi, a junior at DePere High School, believes that Smith's actions show a lack of understanding of the impact of his actions on others and of his responsibility to act appropriately when being watched by millions of people on a world stage. Additionally, the slap was unjustifiable, as the joke made by Chris Rock was a way to enact humor and at the most was a surface level insult. He believes that the slap symbolizes a justification of violence in response to "offensive" jokes and could negatively impact younger kids' behavior, as Will Smith is a distinguished actor and role-model. However, Sahi believes that the slap will not impact high school students' perception of jokes as the increased violence worldwide has already dimmed students' views of physical attacks.

Next, I talked to Isodine Daher, a high achieving student who transferred from Ethiopia to Bay Port High School last year. Similar to Sahi, Isodine agrees that the slap was unjustifiable. As a celebrity, Smith has the responsibility of promoting valued traits through his actions, even in the face of criticism. Moreover, a joke at the expense of Smith's very public personal life should not lead to physical altercation, especially after Will laughed at the joke. Isodine feels the slap has serious ramifications as students are still learning how to behave in the "real world". He speculates that this lapse of judgment will have negative repercussions on student development and their response to insults or unfriendly jokes, as Smith's behavior validates the idea that hurtful words should be met with violence.



Will Smith's violent behavior at the 2022 Oscars reveals the hypocrisy within the movie industry, as he was allowed to step on stage soon after to accept his award and to give his acceptance speech. His actions have increased the attacks on comedians for controversial jokes and has raised violence in schools. Will Smith, once a role-model for many, now represents physical aggression and violence in the eyes of the public.

The road to college (The first step)

By Rohan Gala

The perfect time to start planning for college is in middle school. This will make the process easier and more efficient as there is less pressure, and you have more time to prepare. In middle school, the focus is different than at high school. Unless a student is taking high school level classes in middle school, grades do not appear on the college application, so this is the best time to make mistakes and learn from them. The following are a few things students could do during their middle school years to prepare for the college application process.

1. Establish good study habits: Middle school is the opportune time to develop time-management, organizational and study skills and it's easier to address these when students face a less complex workload.
2. Explore extracurricular activities: On their college applications, students will need to show depth and leadership in at least one or two extracurricular areas. Extracurriculars are arguably the most important part of the college application and help distinguish a student from their competitors. Middle school is a great time for students to try new things and figure out what activities they enjoy most. The best way to do this includes exploring sports, hobbies, and career paths that match the student's interests.
3. Read books: Reading is an easy and entertaining way to strengthen verbal, writing, and thinking abilities. Reading is crucial in preparing students for standardized testing, having an expanded vocabulary, and prepares students for high school literature classes.
4. Choose challenging courses: Colleges look closely at what courses high school students choose to take and expect an upwards trajectory in difficulty and overall grades. Often, this starts at the middle school level where students who challenge themselves will have more opportunities to choose the courses colleges want to see. Students want to position themselves to take full advantage of the AP/IB upper-level courses their high school offers.
5. Think about college: It is useful to set long term goals with short term checkpoints. Setting sights on a career or college in the future is a great way to stay motivated and engaged in the college application process.

College destinations

This list shares the matriculation schools that some of the Indian-American high school students in the area are headed to, for higher education.

- Nimrit Sodhi: Tufts University
- Mihir Uberoi: Columbia University
- Mehul Rangbulla: Washington University in St. Louis
- Divyasree Chintamani: UC Berkeley (Biomedical Engineering)
- Sainithya Attota: Saint Louis University (Medical Scholar Program)
- Rohan Gala: University of Pennsylvania (double major at Wharton Business School)
- Mandeep Kaleka: University of Wisconsin-Madison (Political science and International business)



IndUS News

By Dr. Sandhya Sridhar



1. In a razzle-dazzle talk show style presentation titled "Reveal", Fox Cities Performing Arts Center (PAC) launched their plan for the next year, their 20th. Sandhya Sridhar represented IndUS of Fox Valley, as one of the two guests on the show. Maria S. Van Laanen, President of PAC, interviewed her about the role IndUS has played in the community and their ongoing partnership with PAC. There were over a thousand people in attendance.

2. IndUS Community picnic was held on June 4th, 1000 Islands Environmental Center, Kaukauna. This was a fun-filled occasion intended to bring members and friends of the IndUS community together. This was the 1st

picnic in what is set to be an annual feature. There were 80 guests in attendance who appreciated yard games, lively music, line dancing, Osorio's food truck, and Ice Cream truck, Face painting from Mischief and Magic and other regular attractions of the Center such as the nature trails and birds and animals in the scenic backdrop of the Fox River. We took the opportunity to conduct a membership drive for IndUS (addition of 30 new members) and donation of supplies towards shelters under the auspices of Green Bay Seva.



3. IndUS Appleton and Green Bay (GB) Seva volunteers are serving mid-day meals on weekends at the shelters, while adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. In Appleton, 27 volunteers prepared and served 400 bagged lunches over the past quarter. Periodic donation drives are also being held for the NEW community shelter, GB by the 42 volunteers.



4. IndUS had supported Karmodaya during the COVID-19 pandemic. Karmodaya had responded quickly to the crisis as they already had an existing network of volunteers that was able to focus and utilize the financial donations that came from NRIs in the USA. They provided oxygen concentrators and ventilators to India. IndUS had directly and indirectly contributed significant financial donations. Distress Management Collective India (DMCI) honored Karmodaya for their help during COVID-19. Supreme Court Justice Kurian Joseph (seen in black tunic) wrapped Mr. Sreedhar with a ponnada (gold bordered shawl) as a symbol of warm embrace by the people of Delhi.



5. Fox Cities PAC had invited IndUS, along with other organizations, to participate in Make Music Day on June 21, 2022, 12pm-6pm. The day is celebrated annually in more than 120 countries on the summer solstice. Indian community members braved the heat while representing IndUS, with traditional Indian dances (Bharatnatyam, Bhangra), songs, music forms (harmonium and tabla instruments), and a traditional wedding procession!



6. We mourn the loss of one of our founding members and an active volunteer, Ashok Tannan. In his memory, IndUS donated \$500 to Pillars. Based in Appleton, Pillars provides shelter to the homeless. Ashok's family matched the donation. Celebrate Diversity in Fox Cities (CDFC), where Ashok volunteered for many years, contributed \$250. Pillars will use the amount to buy a laptop or two for a dedicated room. This will be useful for young students residing in the homeless shelters.



Mark your calendar!

7. CDFC has their annual Community Cookout on August 13, 2022, 11am-3pm, at Jefferson Park, Menasha. IndUS will participate with cultural entertainment and Indian cuisine.
8. Rhythms of the World, on September 10th, 2022, will be bigger this year. IndUS is helping organize, along with Appleton Downtown Inc., Appleton Public Library, Appleton School District, and Building for Kids, CDFC, City of Appleton, PAC and Rotary Club of Appleton.
9. The annual gala banquet for IndUS, themed this year as “Winds of Change” will be back in person for the 1st time since the COVID-19 pandemic. Join us for a beautiful evening on November 19, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency, Green Bay.

The IndUS Board

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Sandhya Sridhar is a retired management professor. She has been associated with IndUS from its inception and currently serves on the Board of Directors. She has lived in the Valley for the past thirty years and thoroughly enjoys life in Wisconsin, except its long brutal winters.



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A photograph of a Native American man in traditional regalia, including a large feathered headdress and a beaded belt, standing outdoors at dusk. He is holding a wooden staff with a shell-tipped end. The background shows a field and a road with some vehicles.

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