



Aradhana

ARADHANA

Website: www.cincinnatitemple.com

Phone: 528-3714

Email: hindusociety@fuse.net

Paush Vikram Samvat 2061

January, 2005

A Publication of the **Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati**

Happy New Year



HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Pundit B.C. Sharma

The year 2004 is over. A new chapter of 2004 now is added in the history of mankind. Its sweet and sour, pleasant and unpleasant, good and bad memories have been stored in the book of history. The law of nature says, "The old order changes giving place to the new." So in observing this law the year 2005 has replaced the year 2004. We all welcome the new year 2005 and say a tearful good-bye to the year 2004 because the later part of the year brought a disastrous earthquake and seastorm which almost shook the South East Asian nations which grieved the whole planet earth.

Hope sustains life. Time is the best healer. We hope, pray an expect that this new year 2005 will bring a beautiful dawn of auspiciousness, good luck, and divinity for the nations and people of this world. The new year welcome is not only a time for introspection to analyze our conduct and behavior. It is an opportunity to get inspiration from the achievements of the past and at the same time it is a moment to become wiser and careful. It is the time to take lessons from our mistakes and committed errors. This applies to the individuals, families, socio-religious organizations, political leaders, the heads of the government, the spiritual leaders, gurus, and all inhabitants on this beautiful planet earth. This joint effort self-scanning and further modification in our behavior in communications and dealings can bring a miracle. It is the miracle of love goodwill, better understanding, fellowship-feeling, compassion, and brotherhood. It can further create and enhance an atmosphere to make this world a better place to live in. Live and let live and the concept of looking at the whole world as an extended big

(continued on page 5)

Community Dinner

There will be no community dinner in the months of January—March. Community dinners will start again in April of 2005. Community dinners are usually held on first Friday of every month after 7:30 P.M. For more information contact:

Priests 528-3714 Devnath ji 528-3714
Bharat Vala 891-2240 Laxmi Srivastava 474-0533

Sunder Kand Path is held on every 3rd Sunday of the month from 10:30 A. M. This month Sunder Kand Path is on 2nd Sunday, January 9th.

Shri Ganesh Atharvshirsha Path is held on every 4th Sunday of the month. Please see details on Page 5.

Balaji Abhishekam is held on every 4th Saturday of the month from 10:30AM. Detail on page 5.

Murugan Abhisekam Please see details on Page 5.

Shiv Mahima Stotra is held on every Monday evening at 7:00 pm.

Shri Hanuman Chalisa is held on every Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm.

Vishnu Sahasranama Prayana is held on every Thursday at 7:00 pm. Please see details on Page 5.

Satya Narayan Puja will be held every month on Purnima (Full Moon) Day.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE TEMPLE

Sundar Kand Path	Jan. 9	Page 4
Makar Sankranti Celebration	Jan. 16	Page 4
Satya Narayan Puja	Jan. 25	Page 4
Shri Ganesh Puja	Jan. 23	Page 4
Vasant Panchami Celebration	Feb. 13	Page 4

Note: If you or someone you know, is not receiving ARADHANA, or if you need a change in address please contact Mr. Mohan Chopra at 859-331-2416

Deadline for submission of articles and advertisements for the next issue is January 15, 2005

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS AT THE TEMPLE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2004

President:
Vijay Sharma 232-9991
V. President:
Asit Saha 489-5720
Secretary:
Ragu Tadepali 759-2157
Treasurer:
Srinu Srinivasan 688-0228

Committee Chairpersons:

Membership & Fundraising:
Ramesh Sondhi 232-6454

Communications:
Renu Kotwal 583-9589

Puja & Religious Activities:
Kiran Dayal 474-4051

Property Management & Maintenance:
Prem Dhamija 984-5777

Cultural Activities:
Sheetal Patel 936-9655

Religious Education & Youth Activities:
Manju Gupta 232-3331

Long Range Planning:
Mukund Patel 874-4857

Youth Member:
Esha Bhatara 777-6488

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

Sundays 12:15 - 12:45 PM

First Sunday : Upanishads
Second Sunday : Children Program
Third Sunday : Sunder Kand Path
Fourth Sunday : Shri Ganesh

Atharvshirsha Path

Fifth Sunday : Open (please suggest)

Members of the community are invited to speak on topics related to Hindu religion, Philosophy, culture, reformation, Gurus, self-preservation, etc. If you would like to talk or like to suggest someone who may be interested, please call Koti Sreekrishna (984-4179).

SPONSORS FOR SUNDAY PUJA

Devotees are requested to sit-in Sunday Pujas as well as bring Prasad and Lunch. You may wish to use this occasion to celebrate important events such as wedding anniversaries, birthdays, ishta devata puja, graduation, and other memorable days. Events can be hosted by individuals, families, groups of families or organizations. Please reserve your Sunday of choice ASAP by putting your name and phone-no in the calendar at the temple and call Kiran Dayal 474 - 4051

TEMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday : 9:00AM-12:00 Noon
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Saturday, Sunday
& US Holidays 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM

SPECIAL PROGRAM ON WEEKENDS

9:15 - 9:30 A.M. Suprabhatam
9:30 - 11:00 A.M. Daily puja of Temple Deity
11:00 - 11:30 A.M. Sponsored Puja
11:30 - 12:15 A.M. Bhajan
12:15 - 12:45 P.M. Religious discourse
12:45-1:00 P.M. Birthday and Anniversary puja and announcement
1:00 P.M. Aarti

SHIVA MAHIMA STOTRA

Monday Evenings, 7 PM

HANUMAN CHALISA

Tuesday Evenings, 7 PM

VISHNU SAHASRANAM PARAYAN

Thursday : 7:00 PM

SRI VENKATESHWARA PUJA

Friday Evenings, 7 PM

MURAGAN ABHISHEKAM

Every 3rd Saturday

SUNDARKAND PATH

Every 3rd Sunday of the February
10:30 -1:00 PM

Please Donate Generously for your Temple

2004 POOJA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To participate in/ sponsor please contact a Pooja Committee member

Kiran Dayal (Chairperson): 474-4051
B.C. Sharma (Priest) 751-2974
K.C. Sharma (Priest) 528-4921
Srinivas Bangalore (Priest) 947-1841
Sri. Shrivachariar (Priest) 528-4831
Swarna Chaudhary 232-2343
Vasundhara Dasari 777-3353
Purobi Dey 688-1721
Rani Dhamija 984-5777
Anil Jindal 271-7171
Anuradha Kulkarni 271-2749
Vinay Kumar 528-6189
Sangita Patel 791-0855
Anju Saha 474-3922
Uma Sanguai 793-9384
Madhu Sharma 232-9991
Meena Sondhi 232-6454
Sita Rangasami 779-4863

1. Archana performed during temple hours by sponsorship.
2. Outside pujas and other religious services will be conducted by appointment only. To schedule, please contact puja committee chairperson
3. If you would like to bring food and prasada in the temple, please contact puja committee chairperson

Priests:

Pundit B C Sharma 751-2974
Acharya Kailash Sharma 528-4921
Shri Srinivas Bangalore 947-1841
Shri Shivachariar 528-4831

Attny:

Aronoff, Rosen & Hunt 241-0400

Temple Mgr.:

Laxmi Srivastava 474-0533

Accountant: Open

Editor: Renu Kotwal 583-9589

Editor's email:

renukotwal@hotmail.com

Important Notice:

Your Temple needs

1. Sponsors for flower \$50/week
2. Sponsors for Sunday puja
3. Your temple needs your support

Lost and Found

If you have lost a valuable item such as a piece of jewelry or an article of clothing in the Temple at Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati, please contact Kiran Dayal at 474 - 4051.

Sanskrit & Hindi Classes

In The Temple

Every Friday - 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

If you need help to read GEETA or any of your favorite stotra .

Please Call.

Aachary Kailash Sharma

Home 528-4921

Temple 528-3714

Email- kailashsharma@netzero.com

Temple Manager's Committees

Laxmi S. Srivastava- Temple Manager 474-0533

1. Office Manager

Mr. Mohan Chopra

2. Swami Lectures

Vinay Kumar

Prema Yathiraj

Devdas Mukerjee

3. Temple Data Base

Anand Narayana

Purnima Rao

4. Anniversary & Birthday Data

Raj Agarwal

5. E-mail data

Pradeep Goyal

Nandkumar Khemchandani

6. Membership & Gift Shop

Yashpal Agarwal

A.C. Sekhar

Meena Sondhi

7. Financial Data

Raj Bodalia

S. Srinivasan

8. I/C Temple Web site

Raj Bhatnagar

Choudary Bobba

9. Consultants

V. Rao Bhamidipati

Prem Garg

Anil Jindal

10. I/C Temple Calendar

Meena Mehta

B. C. Sharma

Kiran Dayal

Anil Jindal

12. I/C Volunteer Services

Vijay Kumar

Laxmi Srivastava

Published Monthly . Circulation: Approx. 1500 Families. **Advertising Rate:** Full Page \$150; Half Page \$75; Quarter Page \$50. A 10% discount is given for 12 consecutive repetitions of the same advertisement. Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati is a non-profit organization that caters to the needs of a large community. The views expressed by individual authors in "Aradhana" are their own and may not reflect the policies of HSGC.

Hindu Temple of Greater Cincinnati, 4920 Klatte Road, Cincinnati, OH-45244, PH:(513)528-3714

IMPORTANT EVENTS

January, 2005

01/01/05	Sat.	New Year's Day Havan
01/03/05	Mon.	Ashtami
01/06/05	Thurs.	Safala Ekadashi
01/08/05	Sat.	Pradosh, Sri Murugan Abhishek
01/09/05	Sun.	Sundarkand Path
01/10/05	Mon.	Amavasya (New Moon)
01/11/05	Tues.	Paush Shukla
01/14/05	Fri.	Makar Sankranti Thai Pongal
01/16/05	Sun.	Makar Sankranti Celebration
01/17/05	Mon.	Ashtami
01/19/05	Wed.	Kritika
01/20/05	Thurs.	Putrada Ekadashi
01/22/05	Sat.	Pradosh Sri Balaji Abhishek
01/23/05	Sun.	Shri Ganesh Puja
01/24/05	Mon.	Punarvasu, Thai Poosam SN Pooja
01/25/05	Tue.	Pushya Pratipad Dattatraya Jayanti Purnima
01/28/05	Fri.	Poorva Phalguni
01/29/04	Sat.	Uttar Phalguni Chaturthi Vrat

February, 2005

02/01/05	Tue.	Magh/Paush, Krishna
02/02/05	Wed.	Ashtami
02/05/05	Sat.	Shattila Ekadashi
02/08/05	Tue.	Thai Amavasya (New Moon)
02/09/05	Wed.	Magh Shukla
02/12/05	Sat.	Kumbha Ravi Magh Sankranti Sri Murugan Abhishek

Puja Committee Announcement:

- A group of dedicated devotees for each deity are nominated to help puja committee to coordinate and celebrate different puja activities. Their names and phone numbers are listed on page 2. Special thanks to all hard working devotees. If you have any question or suggestion about temple activities, please call Kiran Dayal at 474-4051 or any of the Puja committee members on page 2.
- To schedule a Puja or to rent a temple hall (lower level) please contact puja Committee chairperson Kiran Dayal at 474-4051

RATES FOR PUJA & PRIEST SERVICES

SERVICE	IN TEMPLE	OUTSIDE TEMPLE
Abhishekam (All Deities)	\$101.00	---
Aksharabhyas	\$51.00	\$101.00
Anna-Prashanam	\$51.00	\$101.00
Ashtottharam (108) Archana	\$11.00	---
AyushyaHomam/B'day Celebration	\$51.00	\$101.00
Ground Breaking Ceremony	---	\$101.00
Griha Pravesha	---	\$101.00
Kalayana Uthsava (Lord Ram/ Sita)	\$101.00	---
Kesh Khandan (Churakaran)	\$51.00	\$101.00
Nam-Karan	\$51.00	\$101.00
Navagraha Puja	\$51.00	\$101.00
Nischitartham (Engagement)	\$101.00	\$151.00
Nitya (1 Day) Kainkaryam (Seva)	\$101.00	---
Poolangi Seva (With Flowers)- (Only During Off Winter Season)	\$101.00	---
Sahasranama (1008) Archana	\$51.00	---
Sathyanarayana Puja	\$51.00	\$101.00
Seemantham	\$51.00	\$101.00
Devi Jagaran	\$75.00	\$101.00
Akhand Ramayan Paath	----	\$101.00
Shashti Poorthi (60th B'day Celeb.)	\$71.00	\$101.00
Anniversary celebration	\$101.00	\$151.00
Suprabhat Seva	\$21.00	---
Unjal (Swing) Seva	\$31.00	---
Upakarma (thread changing)	\$21.00	---
Upanayam/Brahmopadesham/ Thread Ceremony	\$151.00	\$251.00
Vahan Pooja	\$31.00	----
Yearly Shradham (Barkhi)	\$51.00	\$101.00
Wedding	\$251.00	\$351.00

NOTE: Rates are subject to change without notice. Rates for pujas not on the list and requiring less than 4 hours of priest's time will normally be \$51 if performed inside the temple and \$101 if performed outside of temple (e.g. at home). **Rates of Pujas out of Greater Cincinnati will be \$100.00 more than the rates of outside puja within greater Cincinnati area.**

Temple Rental: Lower Floor Only

	Full day	1/2 day
M-Th. (except holidays)	\$301	\$151
Fri., Sat & Holidays	\$501	\$351
<u>Sunday after 3PM only</u>	NA	\$351

Note: For half day select one of the two.

8:00 AM - 2 PM **OR** 4PM - 11 PM

Temple rental applies to all private reservations for those events/ pujas that are performed by private parties and not announced in the temple.

Security/ Cleaning deposit: \$151 required. This deposit will be forfeited if the basement hall bathrooms and kitchen area are not cleaned by the party renting the place.

NOTE: To schedule a Puja or to rent a temple hall (lower level) please contact puja Committee chairperson only.

Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana

Visnu Sahasranama Parayana (chanting) now takes place every Thursday at 7 pm in the temple. Please join us for the chanting.

For more information, please contact one of the following:

Srinivas Mirle 894-8954 Shailaja Setty 761-7619
Jaya Reddy 231-3120 Suri Hanumanthanna

661-8733

Koti Sreekrishna 954-4179.

PRAVACHAN

BY

Acharya Kailash Sharma

Every First and Second Sunday of the Month

12:15 pm to 12:45 pm

First Sunday UPANISHAD

Second Sunday BHAGWAD GITA

ABHISHEKAM/KALYANOTSAVAM FOR LORD SRI VENKATESWARA

On 4th Saturday of each month at 10:30 A.M. To sponsor please call:

Mala Rajasekhar 451-8081 Malleswari Reddy 779-4224
Kamala Mannava 777-7007 Vasundhara Dasari 777-3353
Srinivas Bhattar 947-1841 or 528-3714

Shri Ganesh Puja & Shri Ganesh Atharvshirsha Path

Every 4th Sunday of the month

**This puja is dedicated to each month's
Sankashti Chaturthi to Lord Ganesh.**

Lost and Found

If you have lost a valuable item such as a piece of jewelry or an article of clothing in the Temple at Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati, please contact Kiran Dayal at 474 - 4051.

CHESS-Children's Hindu Education And SatSang

Classes are held every Sunday from 11:00 AM at the Temple on Lower Level. Everyone should come by 10:50 A.M. The class starts at 11:00 A.M.

Schedule:

11:00 - 11:05 : Starting Prarthana (5min.)

11:05 - 11:15 : Surya Namaskar (10 min.)

11:15 - 11:30 : 2 shlokas with meaning (15 min.)

Before starting shlokas 1 min. meditation.

11:30 - 11:45 : Games (15 min.)

11:45 - 12:15 : Story and Snack time (30 min.)

12:15 - 12:35 : Kotiji's class (20 min.)

12:45 -- Everyone should go for Aarti.

The class is divided into two groups for shlokas.

One Group is 4 years to 8 years.

One groups is 8 years to 12 years.

Please enroll your child now for the year 2004. To get application form and general instruction call Manju Gupta, Chairperson at 232-3331

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND INFORMATION CONTACT
Manju Gupta Chairperson 232 - 3331**

Email guptama2003@yahoo.com

ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH THERE IS A SPECIAL

Makar Sankranti Celebration

On January 16th,

Sunday at 11:00 A.M

Sponsored by Murugan Devotees

For more information call temple at: 528-3714

Satya Narayan Puja

will be held every month on Purnima (Full Moon) Day. Time:

If Purnima falls on Weekdays - 6:30 PM

If Purnima falls on Weekends- 5:00 PM

Devotees can sponsor puja for \$51.00.

To Sponsor puja please call

Temple 528-3714 Kiran Dayal 474-4051

(continued from page 1)

family will prevail and humanity can get rid of the fear of destruction and exploitation. This is the dream of the great saints, seers, philosophers, and scriptures of all the great religions. It appears to be an Utopian ideal in the current situation of this planet earth which is full of cut-throat competition, rivalry of nations, false egos of the leaders, and double standards and selfish attitudes of the human beings in general. The strong determination, sincere desire for world peace and welfare of the humanity, and earnest efforts can move the mountains. These positive steps can turn this dream of Utopian ideal into a concrete reality.

The governments, organizations, and individuals need to set up certain goals and targets to achieve it. If the world political leaders decide to cut just ten percent of defence budget spent on making and buying war-weapons and stop the race for atomic bombs, trillions of dollars can be saved. This money can then be utilized in industrial and agricultural development of the nations. This can help eradicate hunger, diseases, and purify the environment too. This initial one starting step can further lead towards implementation of more projects and constructive plans.

The religious leaders can cut off a portion of the expenditure spent on celebrations of their birthdays, spending lavishly in organizing conferences of disciples, and spending a lot of money in arranging and organizing festivities and rituals on large scale by spending a huge amount of money. A large amount of money spent on conversion of people from one religion to another is another wastage done by so called spiritual leaders and heads of different sects. This money can be used to teach the religion of humanity, service of mankind, and imparting training to people to become real human beings in its spiritual conduct. This transformation and conversion of the hearts of followers will be a great gift of spiritual leaders to the humanity.

The socio-religious organizations can set up goals to eradicate the evils like drinking, drugs, child labor, and exploitation of women. They can create awareness in public and help in promoting public opinion in favor of the social reforms. They can start and help in setting up educational institutions to help exploited children and women. They can educate them, provide them healthy atmosphere, give a new direction to their disturbed and upset life.

The individuals and families can decide that they can devote some of their free time helping these organizations as volunteers. They can donate money to such selfless service organizations and get the blessings of the poor, miserable, depressed, and helpless people of the society. This service of individuals for the 'Daridra Narayan' will make 'The Lord Lakshmi Narayan' happy and God will bless them with peace, prosperity, eternal bliss, and long life.

Let us pray in the Lotus feet of the lord to provide us enough strength to follow the noble path.

OM ASTO MA SAD GAMAYE

O' God! Lead us from unreal to real

OM TAMSO MA JYOTIR GAMAYE

O' Lord! Lead us from darkness to light. It means provide us the knowledge and remove our ignorance.

OM MRITYOR MA AMRITAM GAMAYE

O' Lord! Lead us from death to immortality. It means lead us from body consciousness to soul consciousness. Help us in performing good and divine deeds in life which can make us eternal and immortal.

Dear Devotees:

Please take some time to visit the temple's website. It contains a lot of information. You can find articles, download ebooks, mantras and chalisas, and find other useful internet links. The site has many interesting articles on Hinduism and our Indian culture. Best of all it is in English, so our youth can easily understand it. The site is evolving all the time and I am sure you will find it a useful resource.

Sincerely,

Renu Kotwal

MAKAR SANKRANTI

Makar Sankranti is a major festival in Maharashtra, especially in the rural areas where the harvest season begins on this day. Laddus made from til and jaggery, tilquds made from til and sugar are offered to each other as a wish for prosperity, health and happiness. These tokens symbolize one's wish for other people to say sweet words and have sweet and soft feelings to one and all.

Gujarati Hindus observe maker Sankranti by giving gifts to relatives. The elders in the family give gifts to the younger members of the family. The Gujarati Pundits on this auspicious day grant scholarships to students for higher studies in astrology and philosophy.

Makar Sankranti marks the beginning of Uttarayan, the Sun's northward journey. Makar is called Capricorn in the western astrological calendar. Makar Sankranti falls on 14th January every year. The day and night on Makar Sankranti are of exactly equal hours. This day is observed as the most auspicious day by the Hindus all over the country. In the south, it is known as Pongal. Though the festival is celebrated differently in the country, it is significant to know that til seeds (sesame seeds) and jaggery are used everywhere. Obviously, to combat the chilly winter, til oil is used along with jaggery. Til contains oil and it is healthy. Being soft, exchanging til seeds or products made from til means an exchange of love and tender feelings.

Punjab observes the arrival of Lohri on January 13 every year when the nights are chilly. On this day, huge bonfires are lit on the eve of Sankrant. The occasion means celebrating the new arrivals (newly weds, babies) with their first Lohri. A little rice is soaked in water and distributed to all relatives who then throw it into the bonfire. Sweets, sugarcane and rice are thrown in the bonfire, around which friends and relatives gather together and share the warmth of their relationship. The following day is celebrated as Maghi. The Punjabis dance their famous Bhangra dance in competitions in their traditional boisterous way, making amazing dance gyrations and playing drums and pitaras.

In the North, Makar Sankranti is an occasion to wash off sins with a ritual dip in the holy river. Lakhs of devotees can be seen bathing in the Sangam at Prayag where the rivers Ganga, Jamuna and the underground Saraswati come together. The Kumbh Mela is held for one full month every year. Bengali Hindus take a ritual dip in the Gangasagar to observe the day when the river Ganga arrived to revive the sixty thousand ancestors of Bhageeratha.

In the rural areas of India, this day marks the coming together of various tribes, communities in a shared experience of joy and celebration of life. A bumper harvest means the future is bright and an occasion to celebrate.

For the children of all ages, Makar Sankranti means making colorful kites fight and cut the other to the sound of "Katta". Pretty girls dance around their rangolis in beautiful clothes singing songs.

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL ON THIS HAPPY
OCCASION & BRING HAPPINESS, LONG LIFE AND
PROSPERITY IN YEAR 2005
Marriage Anniversaries (January)**

Mr. & Mrs. Vijay & Usha Joshi
Mr. & Mrs. Barendra & Smita Malik
Mr. & Mrs. Arun & Sudha Mehta
Mr. & Mrs. Anand & Pratima Narayana
Mr. & Mrs. Karthik & Sujatha Ramani
Mr. & Mrs. Niranjana & Nivedita Ramji
Mr. & Mrs. Vijay & Madhu Sharma
Mr. & Mrs. Partha & Sripriya Sreenivasan
Mr. & Mrs. Malay Srivastava & Amita Kanti
Mr. & Mrs. Venkatramani Swaminathan
Mr. & Mrs. Kedar Verma & Shashi Bina



Birthday Anniversaries (January)

Mr. James Abbas	Mr. Ricky Sharma
Mr. Rakesh Patel	Ms. Sonia Sharma
Ms. Prabha Batra	Ms. Shachi Singh
Mr. T.M. Rajkumar	Ms. Shubha Sirurmath
Mr. Vivek Surya Bhamidipati	Mr. Eshwar Ramdas
Ms. Niharika Bhatnagar	Mr. Rohit Rao
Mr. Raj Bhatnagar	Mr. Chandra Venkatesan
Ms. Niyati Chanchani	Ms. Renu Kotwal
Mr. Nimit Desai	Mr. Balu Sekar
Mr. Gautham Bhoomready	Ms. Rekha Shankar
Ms. Sagoree Chatterjee	Ms. Ashwini Sharma
Ms. Suvotima Ghosh	Mr. Bhagwati Sharma
Mr. Siddarth Goyal	Mr. Pankaj Sharma
Mr. Babu Gupta	Ms. Seema Sharma
Mr. Govind Gupta	Ms. Sheela Sirimalle
Mr. Harish Gupta	Mr. Amit Srivastava
Mr. Raneshwar K. Gupta	Ms. Rhea Srivastava
Mr. Muthu Hanumanaguthi	Ms. Pooja Vadin
Mr. Ravi Hasandka	Mr. Ashish Verma
Ms. Suma Joshi	Mr. Subodh Wadhwa
Mr. Nagenora Kumar	
Mr. Anush Venkatesan	
Ms. Nutan Kamat	
Mr. Rahul Kukreti	
Mr. Yash Kumar	
Ms. Nithya Mahdevan	
Ms. Suparna Malik	
Mr. Vidya Nagarajan	
Mr. Mahesh Naik	
Ms. Maureen Nanavati	
Mr. Naresh Nayak	
Ms. Sneh Garg	
Ms. Asha Maddiwar	
Mr. Ramaswamy Mahadevan	
Mr. Rakesh Patel	
Mr. T.M. Rajkumar	
Ms. Pratima Shanbhag	
Mr. Ravi Shankar	
Ms. Sonal Shankar	



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Monday: 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Good News **Good News** Good News **Good News** Good News



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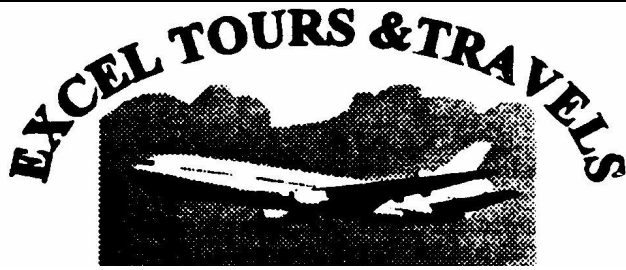
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PONGAL

Hinduism is not just a religion but a way of life where man lives in complete harmony with the elements. He brings to his well ordered life a certain balance by working hard and celebrating equally hard during festivals. The cycle of festivals throughout the year, ensures that life has a certainty to it.

Pongal in South India is one such festival with so much exuberance that people and animals join in the fun. The word Pongal comes from Pongu (Boiling over). A dish with new rice, dal, jaggery, dry fruits, sugar and milk is cooked in a new clay pot in the open and allowed to boil over, signifying plenty and prosperity for the year ahead. This is offered to the Sun God and partaken as prasad.

Pongal is much bigger than Diwali and is next only to Dassera. It is actually a three-day festival, with Bhogi coming on January 13, Pongal on 14 and Kanumu on 15 every year, unlike many other festivals that occur on a different day each year. Basically a festival to celebrate the harvest, it is also a day when families come together and enjoy the happiness of a good life.

On the Bhogi day, it is the occasion to take an oil bath before sunrise for the girls and women and worship the family deities, especially Sun. The family cleans up the whole house, getting rid of all the useless things by throwing them into a bonfire that is lit before sunrise. This symbolizes a new beginning by getting rid of the old. Boys beat their little drums called Bhogi Kottus. The girls draw the most colorful Kollams(Rangoli) and decorate them with dungballs called gobillu. Then they dance around the kollam with intricate steps. Sweets like laddus are made from new rice, sugarcane and jaggery.

Pongal day is a day to celebrate the harvest and thank the Sun God. The houses are decked up to look their best. New clothes for the family is a must, and gifts are bestowed to all relatives, specially newly married couples and babies. Women gift utensils to their female relatives. The togetherness and best behavior is sweetened with the bountiful feast of sweets and savouries to celebrate life.

In the villages, Pongal is also an occasion to have bullock cart races, contests of strength and showmanship in riding. The festive atmosphere with stalls selling various goods, people exchanging pleasantries and general bonhomie is very infectious. On this day , with granaries full, bright sunshine, trees in full bloom, and bird-songs resounding, the air itself seems charged with sweetness and light and warmth. Even the wind changes direction, bringing swift breezes from the returning Monsoon winds. The skyline is crammed with colorful and gaily decorated kites flown by enthusiastic boys and men.

Kanumu is also called as Mattu Pongal, when the cattle and especially the cows are worshipped. Cow is the harbinger of prosperity through milk and working in the fields along with the bulls. They are painted and decorated with bells, seashells, and beads. They are garlanded and taken out around the village in a procession. The entire atmosphere becomes festive and full of fun and revelry. Bulls are left free and young men show their prowess in running with them or wrestling them to the ground. On this day, the Indian version of Bullfight called Jalli Kattu is organized, where men wrestle with a sturdy bull and try to pin it to the ground by grasping their horns. The prize is a purse tied to the horns.

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Thai Pusam

For lakhs of Tamil Hindus, the Thai Pusam Festival is an occasion to celebrate fulfillment of their vows to Lord Murugan. It is one the biggest festival days after Mahasivarathri for the followers of Lord Shiva. Thai Pusam is on January 24th a fortnight before the Mahasivarathri.

Westerners are fascinated by the spectacle of the devotees carrying huge Kavadis (palanquins) profusely decorated with flowers and weighing upto 50 kg, dancing to the drumbeats in a trance. Women carry pots of milk and couples carry their infant babies in saffron cloth cradles slung on a sugarcane stem. The full throated cries of 'Vel Muruga Vel Muruga' resound throughout the day and night of the festival.

For the womenfolk, the festival is a time to work hard, making a variety of dishes using new rice and sugarcane, and making sweets so that a feast is ready in time for the two day pilgrimage to Lord Muruga's temple.

Thai Pusam can also be called a festival of thanksgiving after the sugarcane crop is harvested. Farmers dress in their beautiful new clothes and throng the temples of Lord Murugan, expressing thanks for a bountiful harvest and asking for prosperity in future.

The month of Thai is considered to be auspicious by many for marriages and other social events in their family. The entire community participates in the festival with religious fervor to the sounds of devotional songs and immersed in a sea of throbbing drums.

The Thai Pusam festival is best observed in Tamil Nadu, especially in major Shaivite temple towns like Kanchipuram, Madurai. Since the Tamil Diaspora is well distributed all round the world, Thai Pusam is also celebrated traditionally in the West Indies, Fiji Islands, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Singapore and Malaysia. The Batu Caves in Malaysia sees over 2 million devotees congregate there in a spectacle that is, at once, a massive display of man's faith and a Hindu's innate capacity for penance as a path of devotion.

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Directions to Hindu Temple

From I-275 take Exit 63A (32West) - drive approximately 1/4 mile - turn right onto OLD 74 - turn left at the first Traffic light onto Summerside Road. After approximately one mile turn right onto Klatte Road. Temple is at the end of Klatte Road. **From UC:** Take E McMillan to Columbia Pkwy to Beechmont Ave to Route 32 East (to Batavia). Turn left on Old SR -74. Follow instructions above from Summerside to Klatte Rd. (Phone No For the Temple – 528-3714)

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