

Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~

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An Expression...

Vasant is in the air as the sun enters the *Meen Rashi* (Pisces) and stays till *Vrushabh Rashi* (Taurus). In *Gita* Krishna considers *Vasant* as one of his *VIBHUTIS* (excellent forms) and in classical Indian literature it is considered as *RITURAJ* - the season of all seasons. In Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa *Vasant Panchmi* is of great significance. Goddess *Saraswati* is offered special *pooja*. *Saraswati* is the deity of knowledge, speech, art and music. She is offered homage and propitiated in almost every home as well as Hindu schools and colleges. This is to receive her blessings; to grant students powers of speech, wisdom and success in studies.

Saraswati is also known as *VINAPANI* (holder of *Vina*), *Sharada* (giver of Essence), *Vageshvari* (*devi* of Speech) and *Mahavidya* (supreme Knowledge). She has four arms symbolizing four factors of learning: mind, intellect, alertness and ego. She is also depicted playing *vina* - a stringed instrument. Created from *SATTVA GUNA*, the attribute of excellence, her apparel is white, symbolizing purity.

In Gujarat, *Saraswati pooja* is performed on *Kali Chaudash* and is known as *Sharda Pujan*.

Makar Sankranti (*Uttarayan*) falls on January 14th every year as the sun moves into the *Makar rashi* (sign of Zodiac- Capricorn). *Sankranti* means the entry of the sun from one *RASHI* to another. On this day the sun shifts northwards. *Uttar* means north.

Ayan means to move. That is why January 14th is also known as *UTTARAYAN*.

During *Makar Sankranti* it is a tradition to bathe at *Prayag* (Allahabad), which is situated at the confluence of the three sacred rivers: *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Saraswati*, known as *Triveni Sangam*.

In Gujarat, adults and children alike spiritedly fly kites all day. There is a greater spiritual significance of kite flying. Mankind represents kites of various colors and sizes. Some kites flap around aimlessly. However, the true aspirant seeking *MOKSH* has only one aim- to reach *Paramatma's abode*. For this, one has to remain vigilant from the "rogue winds" within - such as, ego, anger, lust, and greed and so forth. One also needs to "fly" in the external world without succumbing to obstacles from neighboring kites. These obstacles can be in the form of pessimists or bad influences, collectively known as *KUSANG*.

Sankranti is a period of spiritual merit. It is usual to give *Daan* (donation/ charity). In Northern India this day is celebrated as *Lohri* and in Southern India as *Pongal*.

Phalguni Kikani

...VVM Update

To celebrate *Uttarayan*, our VVM students participated in a fun afternoon of kite-flying at the VPSS grounds. It was good to see family and friends enjoying the old tradition and custom. We all hope that the string of our kite is always in the Lord's hand. We fly in the right path and get to our final

destination just as raindrops have nothing in mind but to reach the earth. No matter how hard the fall is, the drop reaches its destination.

The family dinner night was an outstanding gathering. We are very proud of our family members and their presence. We hope this kind of gathering will make us a close-knit family. The Yoga workshop for children turned out to be a good adventure. There were about 22-25 young kids stretching their bodies, learning to inhale and exhale. They learned how Yoga can help them to be fit both physically and mentally.

We will be observing *Vasant Panchmi* (*Saraswati pooja*) on the 2nd February. The children will be offering flower to the Goddess *Saraswati* at Vallabh Vidya Mandir.

Phalguni Kikani

Announcements

- On 5th February we are having a SKIN-CARE workshop. It will be held at 12:00 PM.
- On 4th March we will have a CPR Workshop. You will be certified at the end of the workshop.

Pls register at the front desk

Up Coming Events

VVM Annual Program –

April 22, 2006

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March is on...

Our young organization is marching on – one step at a time – seeking to achieve the objectives stated in its primary organizing document -

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION.

If one reads the document carefully, the reader would find that our primary goal as stated in Article Four is to spread knowledge, awareness and interest among the public about the rich heritage of India. Article Seven states that this organization shall be open to all persons without regard to their sex, race, religion, creed, class, national origin or familial status.

Above is specifically pointed out to help broaden our perspective. Though most of our student body and members of the Teachers' Council are from the State of Gujarat, we have been successful in welcoming students as well as teachers from other parts of India. This is good. As we further gain experience in selecting really useful courses and designing the curriculum, we need to broaden our horizons and deepen our commitment to our stated objectives. It means, by next year we would like to see

among us, students as well as qualified volunteer teachers, of non-Indian descent. This will be highly beneficial to all involved and will bear great fruits. We will work towards this goal as we strive to grow our student body to over 300. This will be one more step in our long march in offering something really worthwhile to the members of younger generation.

So an appeal is made to all the readers to help us find and bring students as well as teachers from other communities.

Over many centuries India has made significant contribution to the world in spheres of arts, math, science, medicine and literature. Richness of our history, variety of our foods, languages and costumes as well as religious tolerance taught by our religion – That is our true heritage and we should proudly expose our children to this rich heritage as well as share it with others who may have limited exposure to it.

Sureshbhai Patel

Special Thanks...

- To all the volunteers who helped make Family Night such a smashing success.

Kids Corner

"I think that Sunday school is a great idea. I think that 8 years and older should go to yoga. This is because I like to go to yoga and I liked my experience in yoga workshop. Also I think more people should come to Sunday school. Just because you are adults does not mean you can't come to Sunday school. That is what I think. Jay Shree Krishna" - Shamal Shah.

Attention:

- If you are not receiving e-mails, please inform at kikanis@earthlink.net
- Parents NOT allowed in classroom during session
- No kids under age 10 in Yoga Class
- Regular attendance is required

VVM Website is Under Construction. Please have patience.

