

DIWALI NIGHT YEARBOOK 2018



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President's message – Building Relationships

Yuchishthir Joshi

Namaste

I wish you a Happy Diwali on behalf of the CAI Committee. Diwali marks the start of a new year and I am excited to say that we had a great year in 2018.

Looking back over the past year, I am pleased to see that community engagement has improved considerably over time. It is through this level of participation we can stand by our mission statement of promoting Indian arts and culture.

It is imperative to promote our culture in a positive manner and educate others of our presence in the community as a whole. In the spirit of promoting Indian culture, our 2018 journey included an event at the State Capitol in Topeka. We had the honour of meeting with the Kansas Governor, Dr. Jeff Colyer, as well as several other state representatives. The meeting culminated with the proclamation of March 14th, 2018 being marked as India Day.

Following hot on the heels of this, we had an opportunity to showcase the cultural talents that Wichita has to offer when we were invited to send a troupe of dancers to Kansas City to perform at the prestigious Nelson Atkins Museum for the 'Passport to India' event.

Inclement weather prevented Holi from being celebrated with the zeal that we are used to, but we promise to make up for it next year (weather permitting, it is, after all, Kansas). We held our second IndiaFest event in the summer consisting of a plethora of Indian food, arts and culture for the masses. Finally, Autumn brought us 'An Afternoon of Indian Delights', a unique concert of two forms of Indian culture: an Odissi dance and a sitar and tabla duet by both local and international star performers.

I welcome you to enjoy a great evening with us on this Diwali celebration night. Tonight, is really all about the individuals in the community who come together and showcase the wide breadth of talent in our town.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our sponsors for making our dreams financially possible. In addition to the support of all the large Corporate entities spearheaded by Spirit Aerosystems under the guidance of Mr. Sanjay Kapoor, an eventful year such as 2018 is not possible without the support of community members and hours of work put in by the CAI Committee. Thanks to our partnership with ISA, we were able to host the Miss India Wichita event. A special thanks to Mrs. Geeta Reddy and Mrs. Ashwini Mysur for chaperoning our Miss India Wichita 2018, Ms. Navneet Jaswal. I would personally like to thank Mrs. Soumya Acharya and Mr. Andy Ghosh for all the graphics work, newsletters, photography and design of this yearbook, Mr. Sachin Bharati for his tireless work of making sure the logistics for all the events went flawlessly, Mrs. Madhuremya Jagadeesh for community engagement and Diwali decorations, Mrs. Seema Gangakhedkar for acting as Secretary and also Mr. Ravi Kumar for all his hard work. There are hundreds of you out there who have also assisted in making 2018 a successful year, and I take my hat off to all of you.

I urge you to join us for our Republic Day 2019 celebrations. We have a professional performance of dance, tabla and sitar lined up and most importantly, please join to vote for the new 2019 Executive Committee. We always look forward to your feedback so please feel free to talk to me or committee members at any of these events.

Finally, let me end with saying how much of an honour it has been serving as the president of CAI, I look forward to the association being taken to greater heights by the next team.

Yuchishthir Joshi

President

Yearbook Credits

Graphic Design: Anyakshi Photography (Andy Ghosh, Soumya Acharya)
Articles: Nital Parikh Ghosh, Navneet Jaswal, Manmeet Peltia

Act I - Children's Programme

- *Kalakrit School Of Art* - This dance presentation is based on the classical dance form of Kathak. This is a popular Ganesha prayer called 'Dheemahi'. The music is composed by Ajay Atul and vocals are by Shankar Mahadevan. The students of Kalakrit School Of Art will present the composition choreographed by Manasi Kulkarni.
- *Balvihar Seva All Boys Jazz Band* - A jazz ensemble on the masterpiece 'Moondance' by Van Morrison, one of the featured songs from '500 greatest songs of all times'.
- *Fun Town - Punyakoti* is an evergreen folklore song from ancient Hindu scriptures. The cow is an integral part of Hindu culture. Kamadhenu is described in Hindu culture as the "mother of all cows". This melody, sung by Mohammed Rafi, is a touching story of a cow which conveys the message of motherhood and keeping your word.
- *Balle Balle* - Kids performing bhangra on blends of Punjabi and western music.
- *Kathaga Kalpanaga* - This is one of the famous songs of Ilaiyaraaja, which was made in three different languages. Kathaga Kalpanaga in Telugu, Kannae Kalaimane in Tamil and Surmayee Ankhion Mein in Hindi. Played on flute and violin.
- *Natyam Semi-Classical Kids Dance* - This is a Bharatanatyam style semi-classical dance performance praising Lord Krishna.
- *Wonder Group Kids* - This is a Bollywood mix dance.
- *Dazzling Stars* - This song describes Lord Shiva's power and beauty. It is traditionally attributed to Ravana, the Asura King of Lanka, and devotee of Lord Shiva.
- *Indie Girlz* - This dance is a medley of Bollywood songs that will make you dance in your seat. Look forward to an interesting beginning.

Act II- Adult's Programme

- *Bharatanatyam* - Bharatanatyam is a major Indian classical dance form that originated in the southern part of India. This Bharatanatyam piece is an invocation to Lord Ganesha. Ganesha is one of the best known and most worshiped Hindu deities, who is widely revered as the remover of obstacles, the deva of intellect and wisdom, who presides over all auspicious beginnings.
- *Wonder Group Adults* - This is a tribute to the late popular Bollywood actress, Sridevi. It is a medley of three of her famous film songs.
- *Krshala Dance Theatre* - This dance presentation is based on the classical dance form of Kathak. This is a popular Shiva Stotram called 'Yogeshwaraya', rendered in a modern style by Smitha, who is an Indian pop & playback singer from Andhra Pradesh. This piece is choreographed by Guru Simran Godhwani.
- *Kalyani and Nishad* - Old vs new Bollywood song mashups.
- *Romana and Shormi* - A Bollywood dance based on the hit song "Rangilo maro dholna".
- *Nachda Punjab* - Performing the folk dance of Punjab on high tempo Punjabi and western songs. Bhangra is associated with the harvest festival of Baisakhi and mainly performed by men.
- *Natyam Semi-Classical Dance* - This is a Bharatanatyam style semi-classical dance performance, which is a combination of Shiva Thandava Sthothra that describes the power and beauty of Lord Shiva and Thillana, a fast and rhythmic piece of Carnatic music.
- *Fusion Fiesta* - A dynamic fusion of South Indian classical music interwoven with a western touch.
- *Jhankar* - Traditional Indian dance from Baahubali 2.
- *Team Aadhruti* - Kathak dance is one of six major classical forms in India with beautiful hand gestures, rapid turns and facial expressions. We, as a team bring out the essence of the melody created by Pandit Ravi Shankar through this dance.
- *Bollywood Fusion* - Performing a mix of Bhangra & Bollywood dancing.

CAI - Executive Committee



Yudhishtir Joshi, President

Work got me to Wichita and it's been close to 6 years that I have been here. We have quite a big community for a midsize town and getting involved in the community gives me the feeling of home away from home. CAI gives me the opportunity to build this relation and work with an enthusiastic team.



Madhuremya Jagadeesh, Vice-President

I am proud to serve as Vice-President for my second year. I encourage our community members to get involved and benefit from the valuable experience of CAI. I have met many new people, developed long-lasting friendships, and enjoy being part of a team that gives back to our community.



Ravikumar Appavu, Treasurer

I have lived in Wichita since 2015. I am a senior business analyst with Coleman, Inc. I love sports and volunteer as a soccer coach at the YMCA and love tennis. I look forward to serving on the committee and the community at large.



Seema Gangakhedkar, Secretary

Moving to Wichita 4 yrs back was a welcoming break from a very fast paced life in Pune. I am excited to be part of CAI. It gives me an opportunity to meet new people from different backgrounds. It's a great feeling to serve our community and also pass on our rich culture and values to the next generation.



Sachin Bharati, Past President/Treasurer

Wichita has been my home since I was young child, and I'm happy that my children are being raised here as well! It was three years ago when my wife volunteered for CAI as Secretary that led to my increased involvement with our community. It is a great experience, responsibility, and sense of pride to have spent the last few years representing our community. I encourage everyone to not only volunteer during events, but also to get involved with CAI leadership positions. Happy Diwali and New Year!



Andy Ghosh, At-large Member

I am from the United Kingdom, made my way to Wichita via a number of other cities in the UK, US and Africa. I am a structural engineer in the Aerospace industry and in my spare time, I do graphics work, websites and photography (www.anyakshi.com).



Soumya Acharya, At-large Member

An engineer from Bangalore, India, and a self-taught portrait artist, I've called Wichita my home for 10 years now. Being involved in the community through CAI and being a part of Anyakshi has given me exciting opportunities to further my creative interests.



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A Letter from Miss India Wichita 2018

by Ms. Navneet Jaswal

Hi, my name is Navneet Jaswal. I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I'm a junior at the Maize South High School and I am the current Miss India Wichita. I have always wanted to help people, and this has guided me towards seeking a career in the field of medicine. I believe in being proactive to achieve your goals in life, so I volunteered at the Wesley Medical Center. This has been an enriching experience and I have met some amazing people during my tenure at the medical center. I have met patients who have incredible hope and tenacity to live every day to the fullest despite the adversities they face. If nothing else, it has taught me never to give up and always persevere to get the maximum out of life.



This spring I did something that I thought I would never be able to do. In April, I decided to participate in the Miss India Wichita 2018 pageant. I am usually a very shy and introverted individual, so this was an incredible challenge for me. Let me say, in hindsight, how incredibly glad I am that I decided to undertake this endeavour. It was one of the most memorable experiences of my life to date. I had to overcome my fear of public speaking and burst out of my shell.

Before I go any further, I would like to personally thank four individuals who supported and chaperoned me throughout the contest; Mrs. Geeta Reddy, Mrs. Ashwini Mysur, Mrs. Madhuremya Jagadeesh and Ms. Kuljeet Kaur. Also, I would like to mention my mother, Mrs. Seema Jaswal, without whom none of this would be possible. Winning the Miss India Wichita title allows me to participate in the Miss Asia Wichita 2018 pageant in October. By the time you read this article, this would have already taken place and I hope that I can say that I represented the Indian community as best as I could and have made all of you proud. I'm absolutely loving this journey and my gradual transformation into becoming an active and fruitful member of the Indian community in Wichita.

This journey of mine has been much more than the sum of all its parts. It has opened my eyes to the possibilities that lie dormant within all of us. If there is one piece of advice I will give to those who will follow in my footsteps, it is that if you don't try, you will never find out what your potential is. Try, and you might just surprise yourself. The journey is a learning process which has no wrong turns, just lessons waiting to be learnt.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Navneet Jaswal



BEST WISHES FROM THE
2018 CAI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Original Photo Credit: Ashwini Bharati

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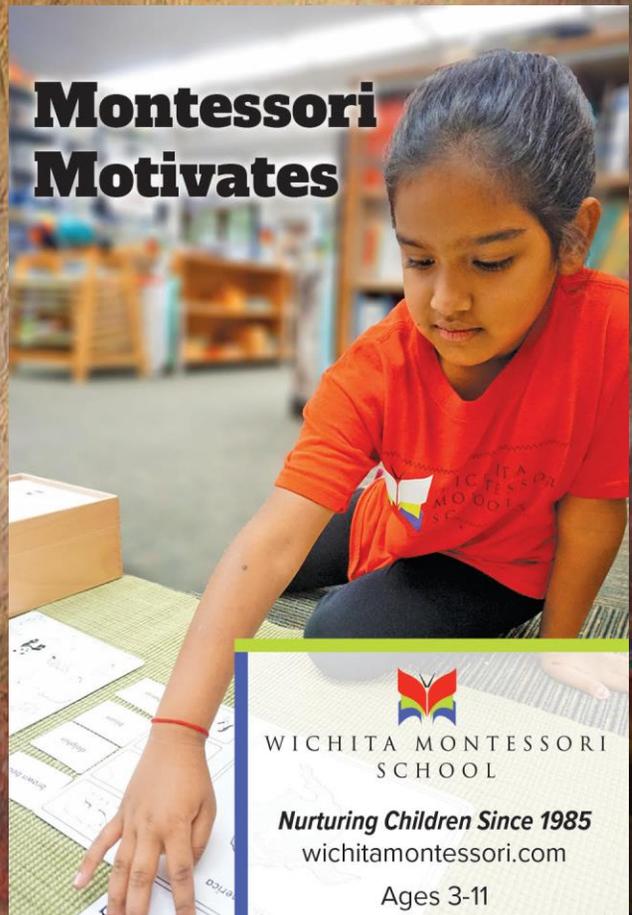
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Ages 3-11

Memories from around the community





Inter-Faith Ministries 68th Annual Humanitarian Awards



Balvihar Seva: Peace by Piece Award

The Peace by Piece Award is presented to an individual, couple or group who helps those who are less fortunate in the community. The recipient, through their grassroots efforts, promotes peace and understanding in our community.

“Seva” is a concept that transcends the boundaries of race, religion and creed. Seva is a selfless offering of help and service which satisfies one’s soul. Whoever accepts Seva feels happy and blessed. Seva can be in the form of leadership, volunteerism or charitable donation.



Students at our Balvihar explore the multiple facets of Seva and are encouraged to perform Seva. Community service projects are one way our students perform Seva. Engaging our youth in meaningful activities not only serves Wichita’s needs, but also makes the Indian community a valuable thread in Wichita’s rich quilt of multiculturalism. These experiences enrich the students’ lives and teach them core values such as compassion, empathy & integrity. It also sets the foundations of community involvement in their adult lives.

By Nalini Gangadhar

August 23, 2018

An Afternoon of

November 3rd brought to Wichita a trifecta of Indian classical performances in the form of Ms. Anindita Nanda, Mr. Ganesh Balasubramanian and Mr. Arup Ratan Mukherjee. The event was called 'An Afternoon of Indian Delights' and never has a set of performances been so aptly named. Ms. Nanda is a renowned international Odissi performer who travels the world spreading the art of Odissi dance. She delighted her audience with a quartet of dance compositions which showcased her diverse knowledge of the artform. Ms. Nanda has an amazing blend of sensuous movement, graceful stances and strong, defined foot work with absolute control of the rhythm and space. Her elaborate choreography, fluidity of movement and intricate foot work are the trademarks of her performances.

She started her afternoon with the Haumsadhvani Pallavi.

Pallavi from the Odissi repertoire is a nritta – or pure dance – piece in which a raga (a melodic theme in Indian Classical music) is elaborated through eye movements, body postures and intricate footwork. It starts slowly with graceful and lyrical movements of the eyes, neck, torso and feet, and slowly builds in a fast tempo at the end.

It showed Miss Nanda's tremendous control over movements and shows the mastery and maturity of the artist. Her second piece was a rendition of the 12th century Sanskrit classic the Geeta Govinda.

It was a retelling of the tumultuously sensual relationship between Radha and Krishna. Ms. Nanda's penultimate piece focused on a Pallavi which again started with simple movements and then grew to complex patterns of rhythm culminating in a crescendo of intense synchrony between the music and the dancer.

The culmination of her afternoon was a truly spellbinding Mahakali Stuti. This piece is an homage to Maa Mahakali singing her praises. As Great Kali, she is the Hindu goddess of time and death. A dark and furious incarnation of Goddess Durga, her most common, four-armed iconic image shows her carrying a sword, and trishul (or trident), a severed head and a bowl or skull-cap (kapala) catching the blood of the severed head. Her eyes are described as red with intoxication and in absolute rage, small fangs sometimes protrude out of her mouth. The audience was truly overwhelmed by her dark and foreboding performance which was dripping with intensity and it will be correct to say that Ms. Nanda will be welcome back to the Wichita stages whenever she would like.



Indian Delights.

At this point, most of the audience was probably wondering what could possibly be able to follow in the footsteps of such a majestic performance. Their questions were soon answered in the form of Mr. Ganesh Balasubramaniyan and Mr. Arup Ratan Mukherjee. Mr. Balasubramaniyan is passionate about Indian classical music and has been playing tabla for more than 20 years. He studied the intricacies of Hindustani classical rhythms from his guru Pundit Dattatray Kalbugi, a renowned tabla artist from India while living in Singapore. He is the artistic director of Divine Sounds in Overland Park, KS - a music school dedicated to instructing and promoting Indian classical music. Mr. Mukherjee was born in Pataliputra (located in Bihar, India). He was initiated into sitar at the age of five. His talent blossomed initially under the tutelage of his mother Smt. Nilakshi Mukherjee, as well as from Arun Kumar Chatterjee. He advanced his training under the guidance of the Sarod exponent Pundit Jotin Bhattacharya, where he developed a unique signature style, different from many of his contemporaries, yet preserving the soul of the 'Maihar' form of music. His style of music characterizes the typical Maihar style - where systematic progressions in alap introduce and develop the raga. He has been performing as a professional sitar player for almost two decades, yet constantly seeks new forms to evolve his music. Apart from being a performing artiste he is equally passionate about preserving the rich heritage of Hindustani classical music. He is the founder of Baba Allaiddin Khan Foundation Trust which promotes activities related to diverse Indian music and is well known among music lovers and fellow musicians for providing a unique platform for aspiring musicians to showcase their talent.

If there one negative about the afternoon, it was that it was far too short and next time Wichitans deserve far more of these delights.



Memories from around the community



Memories of Yester-diwalis..

by Ms. Nital Parikh Ghosh

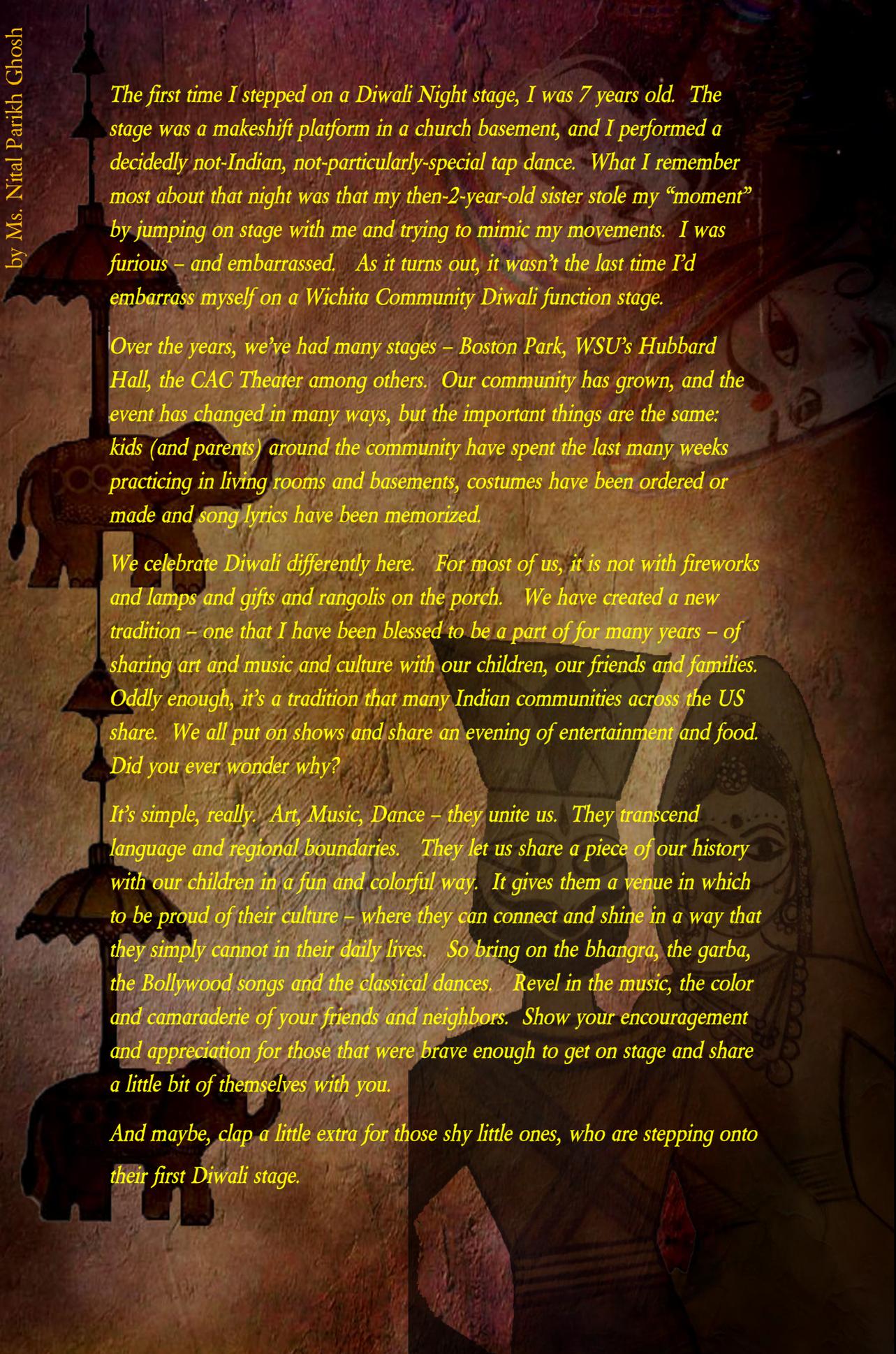
The first time I stepped on a Diwali Night stage, I was 7 years old. The stage was a makeshift platform in a church basement, and I performed a decidedly not-Indian, not-particularly-special tap dance. What I remember most about that night was that my then-2-year-old sister stole my “moment” by jumping on stage with me and trying to mimic my movements. I was furious – and embarrassed. As it turns out, it wasn’t the last time I’d embarrass myself on a Wichita Community Diwali function stage.

Over the years, we’ve had many stages – Boston Park, WSU’s Hubbard Hall, the CAC Theater among others. Our community has grown, and the event has changed in many ways, but the important things are the same: kids (and parents) around the community have spent the last many weeks practicing in living rooms and basements, costumes have been ordered or made and song lyrics have been memorized.

We celebrate Diwali differently here. For most of us, it is not with fireworks and lamps and gifts and rangolis on the porch. We have created a new tradition – one that I have been blessed to be a part of for many years – of sharing art and music and culture with our children, our friends and families. Oddly enough, it’s a tradition that many Indian communities across the US share. We all put on shows and share an evening of entertainment and food. Did you ever wonder why?

It’s simple, really. Art, Music, Dance – they unite us. They transcend language and regional boundaries. They let us share a piece of our history with our children in a fun and colorful way. It gives them a venue in which to be proud of their culture – where they can connect and shine in a way that they simply cannot in their daily lives. So bring on the bhangra, the garba, the Bollywood songs and the classical dances. Revel in the music, the color and camaraderie of your friends and neighbors. Show your encouragement and appreciation for those that were brave enough to get on stage and share a little bit of themselves with you.

And maybe, clap a little extra for those shy little ones, who are stepping onto their first Diwali stage.



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Happy Diwali
from our home
to yours



Dasa, Malini, Priya & Megha Gangadhar

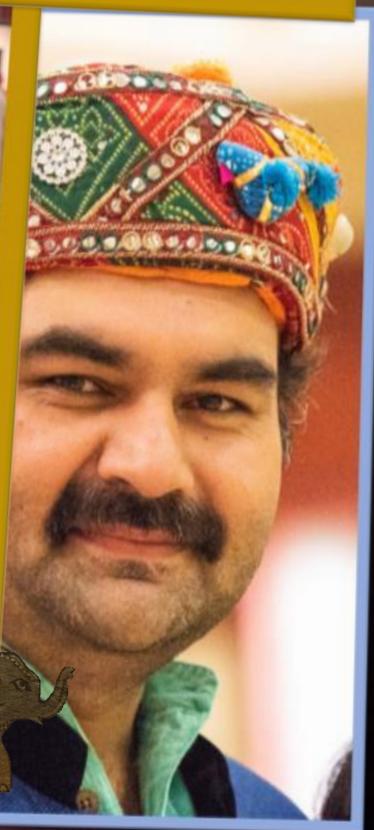
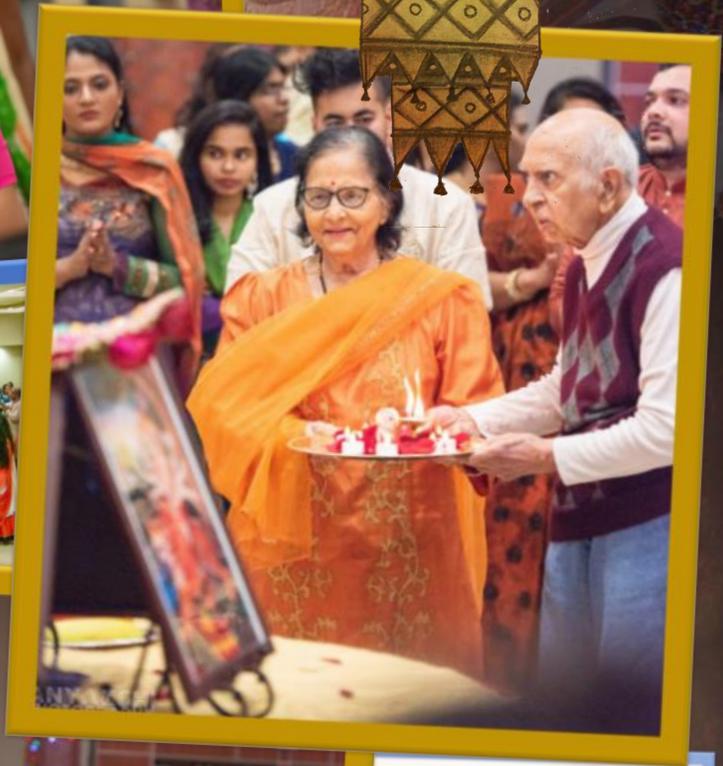


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Garba 2018



To the “ABCDs”

(American Born Confused Desis)

by Ms. Manmeet Pelia

What defines an individual as an American? Is it the color of their skin or the music they listen to? Is it the types of foods they eat or whether they call it soda, pop, or coke? Growing up, I had a hard time answering this question for others and myself. To my friends, my accent and culture made it obvious that I was not American. To my family in India, I was too American: a girl who had lost her culture and roots because she was born in a different country. I was lost in a sea of labels while defining myself. My journey to Wichita, Kansas was arduous, but I unintentionally learned a lot about who I am and who I want to be in the future.

When I think of an American, I see my father first. An immigrant to the United States from Punjab, he joined the United States Air Force due to his sense of duty instilled by the Sikh faith. Because of his profession, my family and I have moved every 3 years



(living in California, England, New Jersey, Japan, and Kansas) and traveled most of the world. But aside from the glamorous traveling, my father has been deployed for a total of 7 years and the military community has little to no Indian representation; he has sacrificed what means the most to him – family and community – to give us a better life. Growing up, I was ashamed of my culture (my differences) and didn't have this cultural community to rely on. My mother had to teach me to be proud of where my family came from because it is the only way to embrace where I am going. With time, I grew an awareness of how my experiences define me and my perspective of the world.

The Wichita community has taught me what a true American is: someone who lives in America. An individual's background, culture, identity, or language does not define them as “foreigner” or “nativist” – take it from someone who's lived all over the world. In Wichita, we embrace each other and work collectively to create the futures we want to live. While watching Wichitans forge their own paths, I realized that being caught up in labels was my flaw. During my youth, I shouldn't have been trying to define myself but instead focusing on my actions. Labels – like Indian, student, Republican, male – don't define you; your actions do. This was the lesson I missed to see. The most important people in my life didn't let an intrinsic characteristic stop them from being themselves. Instead, they embraced who they were and lived their lives regardless of what others said. Moving forward, I know that I can push myself to be my best. My culture is so important to me and connects me with others in Wichita, but more importantly, it will never limit me to achieve great things. I am an American with a pinch of masala and I am proud of that. You should be too.



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Bachchon Ka Kona (Kid's Corner)



ACROSS

4. India's first lunar probe.
6. National sport of India.
7. Ancient Indian discipline of mind/body exercises.
9. Festival of colors.
11. Highest Civilian Award in India.
12. Silicon Valley of India.
14. Language spoken in many North Indian states.
15. Captain of the Indian Cricket team.
16. 'God's own country'.
18. India is in this continent.
19. Indian diamond weighing 106 carats, now part of British Crown Jewels.
20. Popular Indian pancake.

DOWN

1. Shared capital of Punjab and Haryana.
2. Classical dance of Tamil Nadu.
3. Jhansi Rani _____.
5. Powdered leaves of this shrub are used as dye in temporary tattoos.
8. Decorative patterns on the floor made with colored sand.
10. Hindi film industry.
13. A former President of India also known as 'The Missile Man'.
17. Chaturanga or _____ originated in India.



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 7. YOGA
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1. CHANDIGARH
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