

Adyar Newsletter

March-April-May 2024

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Beautiful Purple Flowers of the Pride of India

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR, CHENNAI, INDIA

WHITE LOTUS DAY

White Lotus Day was celebrated on 8 May as usual in the Headquarters Hall. This day commemorates the death of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and also others who have more recently laid aside worn-out bodies, to rest awhile, and return. The international Secretary, Marja Artamaa, presided over the function. After the Universal Invocation, she welcomed the audience and invited the Adyar Choir to perform. They chanted Adi Sankaracharya's

Nirvana-shatkam which reminds us of our oneness with the absolute, the transcendent, ultimate reality. They also sang the newly composed Adyar song in English. Marja then called upon Sara, Elena, and Shikhar Agnihotri, to give readings respectively from *The Light of Asia*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and *The Bhagavad Gita*. After the readings, Jaishree Kannan chanted a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita* and the meeting closed with the offering of flowers to the statues of the Founders.



The Adyar Choir



White Lotuses offered to the founders' statues

ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE (ALRC)

It was a red-letter day for the ALRC when it was awarded the prestigious Vidya Bharathi Puraskar by Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation (SVF) on 13 April 2024 at the Shankara Vijaya Festival for its rich contribution to the promotion of India's Culture and Heritage. H. H. Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Swamin had instituted this award in honour of the previous and present Shankaracharyas of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.

At a glittering function held at Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple Kalyana Mandapam at Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Dr Radha Raghunathan, Director, ALRC, received the award and citation on behalf of the institution from the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Mr R. N. Ravi.

The ALRC has a hoary history. Founded

by Col. Olcott in 1886, with his personal collection of books and manuscripts on indological and oriental subjects, the Library has substantially expanded its collection over the years. Additionally, the Centre has consistently and exclusively striven towards the dissemination and dispensation of Indian knowledge through its research and publications.

Served by great scholars and pundits since its founding, their commendable, sincere, and devoted work over the years, has helped to make the ALRC one of the foremost institutions for Indological research in the country. The award received by the Library is a richly deserved one. Hearty congratulations to the staff and scholars of ALRC.



Dr Radha Raghunathan receiving the Award from the Governor



ALRC staff proudly pose with the Award

NEWS FROM THE TS SCHOOLS

Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School (OMHSS)

OMHSS had a busy few months as it headed towards the end of the academic year. Class XII appeared for their Board Exams, marking a crucial milestone in their academic journey. Class X too appeared for their Board Exams. The results were a mixed bag. Class XII did well, showcasing an impressive overall pass percentage of 95%. Only two students failed, each in a single subject (Tamil and Economics). Fortunately, they have the opportunity to retake their exams in June, allowing them to join college thereafter. Class X results were disappointing, with an overall pass percentage of just 65%. The Tamil medium students fared better compared to the English medium students. This poor result is largely due to English comprehension issues, an area that the school authorities need to address in the new academic year.

for Grades 6–8, detailing her journey and experiences in science and space exploration. In April, students from Grades 9–12, had a valuable opportunity to attend a symposium on Cyber Security Systems at IIT Madras, Chennai. This event, raised students' awareness about the critical aspects of cyber security, highlighting measures to safeguard digital communication devices such as mobile phones, laptops, and computers. The students were educated on the risks and dangers associated with fraud, scams, online gaming, and cyberbullying. Our grateful thanks to the Rotary Club (Dist. 3232) and IIT Madras for this valuable opportunity.



School Toppers: Harini M (Commerce 1st rank) and Aravindh V (Commerce 2nd rank)

In March, esteemed NASA scientist, Swati Mohan, conducted an inspiring workshop



Symposium on Cyber Security at IIT Madras

During the annual Urur Olcott Kuppam Festival, some OMHSS students gave a captivating and much appreciated *Villu Pattu* performance. This traditional art form showcased the school's cultural richness and commitment to community engagement.



Villu Pattu performance by OMHSS students

A delightful reunion was organised by the 1999 batch alumni, who came from far and near, some even bringing their families!

Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA)

ATA had a series of events in March and April that fostered creativity and holistic development.

Grade 4 students embarked on a memorable journey to Pondicherry, where they had an enriching educational experience. At Svaram Musical Instruments and Research, they delved into the scientific principles behind musical instruments, exploring how physics, acoustics, and vibrations, contribute to creating desired tones. Their visit to Pitchandikulam Forest provided a deep immersion into Nature, while at the Sadhana Forest, they encountered a lifestyle different from their own, observing people living without electronics, relying on walkie-talkies for communication, and consuming only organic food. They also learned about innovative water irrigation techniques used in the forest.

On Women's Day, students of Grades 3 to 6 met Dr Swati Mohan, an Indian-American engineer and scientist from NASA who shared her remarkable journey and unwavering commitment to becoming a scientist. She spoke about her passion for engineering, aerospace, and Zero Robotics, stressing the importance of self-awareness and a strong support system.

It was a heartwarming sight to see these former students, now well-settled in life, return to their alma mater to reminisce about their school days. They also expressed a deep appreciation for their old teachers, who were special guests at the reunion. They donated notebooks for the students' use in the upcoming academic year, a thoughtful gesture of 'giving back' which was deeply appreciated by everyone.

The event was a testament to the lasting connections and positive influence of the school on the lives of its students.



Interacting with Dr Swati Mohan

Grades 1 and 2 visited the Pallikaranai marshland. They experienced the marshland's diverse flora and fauna and understood the importance of preserving such valuable ecosystems for future generations.

Games Day was arranged for students from Pre-KG to Grade 2 to demonstrate their physical abilities. The activities and games helped to enhance the children's locomotor skills, teamwork, and strategic thinking. In addition, indoor games like Carrom, Guess the Card, and Ludo, were also played to boost cognitive skills.

During ATA's annual day celebration for Pre-Kg to Grade 2, the students took centre stage, treating the audience to a mesmerising display of traditional Tamil Nadu dance forms and diverse songs in multiple languages. Their soulful rendering of 'The Lion Sleeps

Tonight', the uplifting anthem 'We Are Unity', and the kindergarten children's play, 'The Lion Who Wanted to Love', left everyone feeling joyous and exhilarated.

Grade 6 students recently visited the American Center Library in Chennai for a workshop titled 'Espresso English: Brewing Interest in Stories', led by Gemma Caruso, a student from North California. This gave them an opportunity to immerse themselves in numerous exemplary works from various poets, including Shel Silverstein's timeless masterpiece, 'The Giving Tree'.



Tiny tots captivate hearts with their vibrant performances

At the conclusion of the academic year, a series of enriching workshops were conducted to help the ATA teachers to develop professionally. With experts from various fields sharing useful teaching-learning techniques gleaned from their own personal experiences, the ATA teachers were greatly benefited and ready to apply their learnings in the new academic year.

The year ended with an online presentation by Sonal Murali and the students to the Institute of World Culture, Santa Barbara, on "Transformative Education".



Students immersed in Games Day activities

BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY (BMAD)

Life at BMAD is always busy, super exciting, and full of the unexpected! Recently, two new members joined the animal community, albeit for a short while. A camel mom and her newborn baby!

Though camel 'joyrides' are banned in Tamil Nadu, this mother camel was being used illegally on the beach. She had a newborn baby and had developed mastitis, a painful inflammation of the breast. Despite this, the owners were milking her and giving her 'quack' treatment which worsened her condition. Fortunately, some well-meaning persons intervened and both were shifted to BMAD where the mother camel was successfully treated with oral medication, while the baby was bottle-fed with a proven milk replacer. After a few weeks of rest and recuperation, mother and baby were relocated to the Backwater Sanctuary, a

beautiful shelter in Kabini, Karnataka, that already has another rescued camel (also from BMAD). A heart-warming tale with a fairytale happy ending!



Rescued camels at the Backwater Sanctuary

In May, BMAD conducted a 5-day summer camp for 15 teenage students, providing intensive, hands-on training covering the basics of animal rescue and care, street-animal first aid, caring for dogs, cats, and

large animals, including urban wildlife. They even learnt basic surgical techniques, by practising suturing on stuffed animals! They interacted with large animals like horses, bulls, camels, and ponies, gleefully bottle-fed our baby camel and bathed our rescued horses. They learnt about the importance of wildlife conservation and the threats faced by urban wildlife in Chennai. They had a walk inside the lush Theosophical Society campus, exploring its unique flora and fauna.

It was a fun-and activity-packed programme, but also one where the learning happened at different levels. Apart from the physical skills gleaned, these youngsters imbibed important lessons about compassion and reverence for life, and how to be gentle and kind and make a difference to the lives of abused and suffering animals. The eternal values of sharing and caring, so essential in today’s fast-paced world was instilled in a subtle manner.



Bathing a horse, feeding the camel baby!



Learning about canines and their care

SOUTH INDIA THEOSOPHICAL CONFERENCE — CENTENARY CELEBRATION

The South India Theosophical Conference (also known as the Easter Conference) was held from 29 to 31 March 2024 at the Blavatsky Bungalow in the Theosophical Society Adyar campus. Being the 100th anniversary, it was a significant milestone in the journey of this theosophical gathering and equally special and significant was the theme of the Conference — “The Path to Perfection”.

A total of 132 delegates had registered for the Conference from various Federations, in South India, as well as from North India.

International Secretary, Marja Artamaa, was the chief guest who delivered the opening address at the Conference. Mr P. K. Mahapatra and Mr Shikhar Agnihotri were the conference officers who took care of the program planning and implementation with the diligent support of the various departments at TS Adyar.

In all, there were 23 speakers who, over a period of three days, shared with the delegates, glimpses of the path to perfection with their inspiring, thought-provoking, and insightful deliberations.

‘WISDOM FOR LIVING’ AND ‘LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITIES’ LECTURES

The two lecture series — Wisdom for Living (WfL) and Libraries as Communities (LaC) — have proved to be very popular and seen a significant increase in footfalls. The lectures organised under the WfL banner were

extremely informative: March: ‘Positivity in Life through Humour’ — Bosskey; April: ‘Aligning for Spiritual Principles for Happiness and Success’ — S. Ramkumar, the Coordinator of the WfL Series; May: ‘Value

System Driven Organisation, Industry’ — Dr P. S. Kumar.

Not to be outdone, the LaC series also featured some interesting talks focussing on creativity as an outlet for spiritual ful-

fillment: March: ‘Aesthetic Practice in the Art of Ikebana’, with practical demonstration — Mrs Malathi Pandurang; April: ‘Natya Yoga’ — Angelika Sriram and R. Sriram; May: ‘The Hidden Life’ — C. N. Sethuraman.

LEAVES FROM THE ARCHIVES

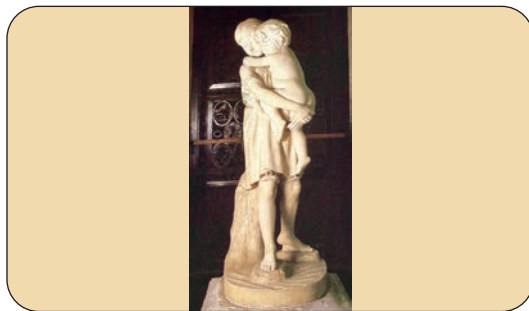
Blavatsky Museum Treasures

Blavatsky Museum at Adyar is home to some beautiful collections of art belonging to different periods of time. One of them is a marble statue of two children. This was presented to the Adyar headquarters in 1911 by the artist, Mademoiselle Henny Diderichsen of Denmark. At the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1889, she was awarded a Diploma of ‘Mention Honorable’ for her work.

For a number of years, the statue occupied a niche at the Eastern end of the Headquarters Hall. In 1925, it was moved almost to the centre of the Hall opposite to the Founders’ statues, in order to make room for the Symbol of the Mohammedan Religion. This was done so that the five great living Religions: Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, might be symbolically represented in the Hall with

equal importance. Later, it was shifted to the Blavatsky Museum.

The statue represents a young girl carrying her infant brother across the water, carefully stepping on projecting stones. It is one of those exquisite works of art with the posture, the expression of love and trust portrayed in the faces, the perfection in every detail, symbolising so eloquently the message of protection and brotherhood.



HE IS NOT HEAVY. HE IS MY BROTHER!

PASSED TO PEACE

Sarojini Kannan (92) passed away peacefully at her home in the Adyar campus on 10 April 2024. Coming from a family of Theosophists, she was exposed to spiritual and theosophical values at an early age — her father, Sri S. G. Venkataramanan, and her husband, Dr A. Kannan, had both served the TS and the EST in various capacities for many decades.

A deeply spiritual person, kindly, compassionate, and caring, with an unruffled calm, she always had a loving smile for everyone.

A resident of Adyar from 1964, she was a life member of the Adyar Ladies’ Lodge. She had worked in the Bhojanasala, Social

Welfare Centre, and the HPB Hostel for Boys. A senior Masonic functionary and an ES member, she lived the theosophic life of service and love in the truest sense. Greatly mourned by her family and friends, we pray that she has a peaceful transition to the higher planes.



DONATIONS TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

1 March 2023 to 31 May 2024

(Above Rs. 25,000)

	Rs.		Rs.
BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY		M. V. Monish, India	26,943
Girishsanthosh Ranganathan, USA	30,000	Suceses Gyan India Ltd., India	1,00,000
Fardeen Gani, India	1,25,000	Neelima Bajaj Swamy, India	1,80,000
Vinodhini Gnanasambandam, India	1,04,000	L. Vasudev, India	30,000
B. Ramkumar, India	80,000	D. Arunachalam, India	3,00,000
A. K. Siva, India	75,000	Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service, India	6,75,000
Vikram Surana, India	50,000	Dr Sangeetha Viswanathan	2,00,000
Velatal Industries Pvt. Ltd., India	50,000	Krishna Mines	2,00,000
Aashruth Rangarajan, India	50,000	GENERAL DONATION	
Vaikunth Kannan, India	48,000	H. K. Patwardan Memorial Trust, India	2,00,000
Mariyam Kumaresan, India	36,100	LILY BOYD'S PROJECTS	
Shunmuga Nathan Narendran, India	36,000	TS in New Zealand	45744
M. R. Gayathri, India	36,000	ART RESTORATION	
Priyanka Narayanamoorthy, India	35,000	TS in New Zealand	28,036
PRANI Animal Trust, India	30,950	ADYAR ECO	
Mira Dhurga, India	29,000	N. Jayamurugan	100000
Revathy Balaji, India	27,300		

DONATIONS TO THE OLCOTT EDUCATION SOCIETY

1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024

(Above Rs. 30,000)

	Rs.		Rs.
INDIAN DONATIONS		NEB Sports Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.,	75,000
Dharma Paripalana Sabha Annadhanam and Charitable Trust	30,000	Wipro Cares	2,77,000
ECC Recreation Club	50,000	GSS Torque Entertainment LLP	75,000
MRT No.1 Charitable Trust	75,000	Factor Eventz and Entertainment	75,000
Rahul Shankar	1,00,000	FCRA DONATIONS	
		Lim Woon Seng Francis	4,19,222

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Cover Picture: A. Chandrasekaran. A widely cultivated ornamental tree, the Pride of India (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*) has spectacular floral blooms. Incidentally, its Hindi name *Jarul* also means 'Queen of Flowers'. It is also the state flower of Maharashtra.

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