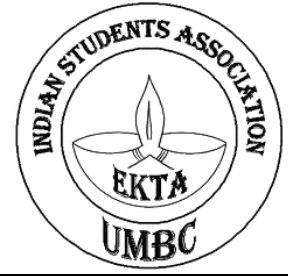




|| srishti ||

Newsletter of EKTA,
The Indian Students' Association at UMBC
Vol II Issue No. III, Sep 2003



President: Kunal Punwani

Secretary: Uttara Korad

Editor: Poorva Arankalle



Eddy's Korner - Poorva Arankalle

Hello everyone,

With much pleasure, I present to you my first issue of "Srishti" as the editor. Srishti kicked off to a great start in March 2002 under the capable guidance of Gauri Shringarpure, and Namita Parab aptly continued this effort. I hope to keep up with the ongoing good work.

Firstly, I would like to thank some of my fellow Ekta members who have taken time out of their busy schedules to actively participate in EKTA. Kudos to Tushar and Uttara for helping new students have a smooth transition to UMBC life, Pranam for persistently answering their queries and of course all the "gaadi-waalas" for providing the pickups. Also, thanks to Tushar for the amazing refurbished EKTA website. If you have not already seen it, do check it out at <http://sta.umbc.edu/orgs/ekta/>.

Looking ahead at the coming semester, I am sure that all of us have a demanding schedule and are by now worried about meeting all the deadlines. Nevertheless, do remember to squeeze in some quality time for yourself and have some fun. There are a bunch of activities that we all can look forward to this semester. Firstly, "Garba night", arranged by AID, will come your way on the 11th of October. So, get ready to put on your best dancing shoes and sway to the traditional garba-raas. Then, there is the Diwali celebration, brought to you by Ekta, on the 26th of October. The festival of lights will be celebrated this year again with all the fervor and enthusiasm that it symbolizes. So, all contributions and volunteers are welcome. Then, there are also other activities in galore - like the movie screenings, the trips and more of the kind. Also, you can enjoy some good Hindi music at our radio show "Namaskar India" which is broadcasted on Tuesdays 12 - 1 PM. You can also send us your requests and dedications at namaskarumbc@yahoo.com and our hosts for the show will be more than happy to play them for you.

Finally, THANK-YOU to all those who have contributed to this issue and have helped in its compilation. To all those who have not contributed, don't despair - put on your creative caps and submit your articles for the next issue :). Happy Reading!!



Prez Sez - Kunal Punwani

The main purpose of EKTA-ISA is to make arrangements for the new incoming students in terms of pick-ups and housing. Other activities include celebrating Diwali, arranging short trips, screening movies, hosting a radio show - "Namaskar India" and other fun-filled activities. There are many people who have been instrumental in the success of EKTA - Babu Raman, Nilesh Mistry, Andy to name a few and of course our committee members.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Nilesh Mistry, the past Ekta president for securing admission in Duke University for the Ph.D. program and wishing him luck for the future. Also, I would also like to thank Tushar, Uttara and Pranam for their hard work to get the 2003 batch settle down.

As for this semester, there are a number of activities we plan to do. Firstly, the big event for this semester would be Diwali in late October. We would continue screening movies - the aim being for 3-4 movies this semester with the first one on 12th September. Also we have our radio show for the 4th semester running which will now be broadcasted in the commons and the dorms in addition to AM560 and online. We also plan to organize trips on the lines of the Cherry Blossom trip organized last semester.

Looking ahead at the coming semester, elections for the President and for the Cultural Secretaries will be held on the 26th of September. So, here's wishing the new committee an amazing year. Lastly, I would like to thank all of our committee members for their hard work and co-operation, and hope that this enthusiasm continues in all the years to come.



Life in the ITE Building... - Poonam Shanbhag

All through last semester, there was one question which arose through every computer science graduate student's mind... "When are we shifting to the new ITE building?" Towards the end of the spring semester students staying late in the ECS building could get a sneak

preview of the ITE building through its glass windows. Wow!! The long dazzling white corridors, the impressive north stair at the outside of the building... All so new, all so exciting! The professors ordered all their students to start clearing the labs of trash and unused items to prepare for the great "move". Finally, in the first week of July, we got to move into the new building! How exciting!!! Suddenly the previously deserted ITE building was full of life. All around you could see excited faces of students who would get to be the architects of their own labs. "Hey how are you planning to arrange your lab? Hey are you going to get a microwave and fridge in your lab? I get my own storage space!" became routine lunch conversations. Access to the lab was by swiping our campus cards. The first day went smoothly where we all had access to our labs. The next day no one except Jane had access to the labs! An apologetic Jane said that the access machinery was still being activated. Soon, everyone was busy arranging his or her lab space and settling down in the building. We "visited" each other in our labs giving comments and suggestions as to how you could utilize the space in a better way. Brian was seen running from pillar to post setting up all the machines in the respective labs. Amidst all the settling down, the door access machinery refused to behave in a rational manner. Sometimes even the professors didn't have access to their own labs! Slowly but steadily life settled down... It is still a mystery why Room 325B does not have any kind of light switches or any mechanism to dim the lights! Although the new building has its own dazzle and charm, the glory of the old atrium and the ECS building cannot be forgotten. As compared to the old building, students in the new building seem to be lost, hidden in their own labs. With the beginning of the new semester, and classrooms on the second floor, the ITE building is full of life. We had our first Hi Tea in the new building and life seems to go on from where it stopped in the old ECS building...



KNOW MORE...TAMIL NADU - Archana Raamanathan

This is a review on one of the temples that have never failed to impress me... whose architecture is fascinating and leaves you craving for more. It's a lifetime experience to visit this temple and I wish the highlights below would make you visit the temple whenever you go to India.

Tanjore is a night's journey from Chennai. As a tourism spot, it is visited by most of the foreigners who come to India. Raja Chola during his rule built the Tanjore Brihadeeswarar temple. Otherwise called 'Big Temple' (Periya Koil), it was built by the King on a sprawling piece of land. The greatness of this temple is marked by the enormous Lingam - the 'Brihadeeswarar' that is the prime deity of the shrine. The famous name of the temple is RajaRajesuram and the earlier history says that the "Naimicharanya" hermits lived in the place where the temple was erected. This temple is facing along the East direction and it has three main entrances namely "Keralandagam", "RajaRajan" and "Anukkan". When we

go through these three vayils, we can see "Murugan Temple, Anjaneyar Temple, Varahi Temple, Vinayagar Temple, Natarajar Temple and Karuvurar Temple ". Inside the Karuvurar Temple, a massive Linga is installed in a place called Avudaiyar.

Another remarkable feature is the great Nandhi. The Nandhi that figures at the entrance is also immense in size (a popular belief is that it is growing by the day). The Nandhi at this temple is particularly splendid in the shape and symmetry that it shows. Periya Nayaki is the Goddess deity here. There is also a Murugan sanctum and a "Ganapathi sannadhi".

The architecture of the temple is also admirable. The kingdom's best artisans did all the carvings. There are even stone figures of all the architects in the main gopuram. One noticeable figure is that of a foreigner who had contributed to the work at that time. The Linga measures 9 ft in height, 23.5 ft in circumference. It was brought from the Shore of Narmadha River. It is commonly called as "Raja Rajeswara Mudaiyan" because of its bright appearance. The total area of the temple measures 237.9m in length and 119.1m in breadth. The top of the tetra-angled vimana has been closed with a round stone measuring 81.3 tons weight and fashioned from a single piece of black stone. To get the stone to the top of the vimana, a slope path was made for six km from the northern side of the Thanjavur.

The temple is glorious in its structure within its vast enclosure and wonderful in its design. Visit the temple and live through the history and the grandeur amidst your worship of Lord Shiva.



Paati-Shaapta - A Bengali Dish -Kamalika Das

Ingredients:

Rawa: 500 gm
Shredded Coconut: 800 gm
Milk: 1 litre
Sugar: 1kg
Vegetable Oil: 500 gm

Recipe:

Pour coconut in frying pan and add sugar and milk and stir till sticky, solid dough is formed. Pour water in a separate bowl containing rawa and stir to form a paste. Add 200 gm of sugar to this paste. While the coconut dough is still hot, make small cylindrical pieces out of it. Heat a frying pan and pour two tablespoons of oil in it. Pour one big spoon of rawa-mix into the frying pan and fry it for a few seconds. Put one cylindrical piece of coconut dough in the frying fan and wrap it using the fried rawa. Repeat this for each of the coconut pieces. The quantity mentioned here is for around 20-25 pieces of paatishaapta. You can serve it with kheer or just like that.



Book Review: To Sir with Love by E.R Braithwaite - Aarti Gupta



This book is a loose autobiography of a young black Englishman. It is set in the 1940's, when racial intolerances and prejudices were rampant in Britain. Britain, a superpower before World War II, was, after the war, a pale shadow of its former self. It had been forced to let go of many of its colonies in Asia and Africa. Yet, the colonial master mindset persisted, and the dark-skinned people were subjected to humiliating atrocities.

The author, E.R Braithwaite, is a native of the West Indies. He immigrates to England and serves in the Royal Air Force in the Second World War. He is a qualified engineer with a post-graduate degree in Science. After the war ends, he starts looking out for a job. However, owing to the color of his skin, nobody is ready to employ him in a respectable white-collar job. Finally, out of desperation he is forced to take up a job as a teacher in a tough school in London's poverty-stricken East End. As the author says, "I did not become a teacher out of any sense of vocation, it was a decision forced on me by the very urgent need to eat."

The author is assigned to teach a class of rowdy, undisciplined 16 year olds. The children try to defy the author's authority at every opportunity and show a total lack of respect for him. All of the author's attempts to win them over are met with hostility. Realizing that his strategy of winning over the children by being their friend is not working, he adopts a harder stance. He introduces certain ground rules for class, all the children are to address him as "Sir", the boys are to call the girls "Miss" and the girls are to address the boys by their last names. The children are to come to class washed and clean. He talks to the children about anything and everything, relating their academic lessons to familiar things in their everyday lives. He takes them on trips to art galleries and museums. Little by little he starts gaining their trust, respect and affection and his relationship with the children changes. As he says "I found myself liking them, really liking them, collectively and singly".

On a trip to the Victoria and Albert museum, an old lady in the bus looks at the author and the students and starts muttering something about shameless young girls and these black men. One of the students, a girl called Pamela Dare, stares indignantly at the old lady and rudely says, "He is our teacher. Do you mind?" The very children who initially showed an undisguised hatred for the author are now ready to jump to his defense!!!!

Weeks slip by into months and term draws to a close. The children are ready to leave the protective confines of school and step out into the world as young responsible adults. On the last day, one of the girls Moira Joseph stands up and says: "Sir, we want to tell you how grateful we are for all you have done for us. We think we are much better people for having had you as a teacher."

I think this book is about a truly great man, a man who was forced by circumstances to take up a job he did not want, a job he was over-qualified for. Yet, he showed a deep concern and undoubted love for the children of the very people who had denied him the basic right to earn a living. He not only taught those English and Math and Geography, he taught them to be good human beings, which I believe is the most important lesson to be learnt.



Your goals for the academic year 2003-2004

- Karthik Gurumurthy

I like to start each year with a promise. I might vow to complete a research project, hone a skill or concentrate on some area of personal growth. There's something profound about making this kind of pledge at the beginning of the academic year. The new academic year implies a fresh start, and I find hope in that. It's a good time to resolve to do better in some area of my life. And when I make an informal commitment to improve, I am more likely to focus on accomplishing that goal.

I know of people who shudder at the thought of making a New Year's resolution. One friend avoids making promises because he doesn't want to face the possibility of failure. He says, "I know I'll break them, so why make them?" I met another person once who didn't believe in resolutions because he was committed to year-round self-improvement. Are you this disciplined? Or are you like most of us and need a little help keeping your New Year's promises?

Here are some tips to help you meet with success:

Determine what you want: What is the ultimate outcome you desire? Is this something you really want or does it reflect someone else's aspirations? Your research advisor can't inspire you to correct a flaw if you are not committed to it.

A couple of years ago, my friend Vijay resolved to spend more time on self-improvement activities. He joined a gym and vowed to study some books on health and fitness. Vijay recalls, "That didn't last long. I don't think I changed one iota. Why? I really didn't see the need for drastic change." Vijay says, "It was my parents who urged me to make this resolution." Just recently Vijay's doctor told him he needed to change his diet and exercise more or he could lead to health problems. Given this ultimatum, Vijay quickly committed to change.

Making a change takes more than a resolution or a promise to someone else or even to yourself. It takes your mental, physical and emotional involvement.

Discover what motivates you: Ask yourself why you want to change. If your motivation is strong, you will most likely succeed.

Check your mindset: To change an old habit, you must be ready to make that change at all levels of your being. Motivate yourself by putting your goals in writing. Make a list of the benefits you will gain once you meet your goal and study the

list regularly. Be committed to the goals. One of my mentors Tirthankar always mentions that Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting a different result. Change your methodology in order to get the required result.

Be patient. Don't expect too much too fast. Set reasonable goals. It always takes time and effort to finish a good research project or thesis. It will take time and commitment to create new patterns and skills. Always remember that impatience is rarely a friend to success.

Reward small successes: Graduate study is a lonely job. Your folks and family are not going to be around you to motivate you. It's tough work at times. Sometimes it's difficulty to stay focused on your goal. During this period of ups and downs- of small successes and failures- treat yourself well. Give yourself a pat on the back even after you've taken a baby step towards improvement.

Be forgiving: When you experience setbacks- and you will- forgive yourself. Don't punish or berate yourself. If you backslide, just move forward. View each day as a new opportunity for success. When you get your grades back and notice a grade that you didn't expect, that is the time to work harder. When do you fuel the car? Is it when the gas is empty or when it is full? So make sure you put in more effort when the feedback about your work is not good. That is not the time to feel bad about the choices you made in life.

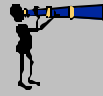
Give yourself permission to succeed. Help yourself succeed by avoiding excuses to fail. You can invent a thousand excuses about why you don't feel like going to school. Don't allow excuses or procrastination to invade your desire to attain what you want. Move beyond the excuses and find a good reason to move forward.

Plan ahead: Create an action plan. If your goal is to finish successfully your MS thesis by end of next year, decide ahead of time what you'll do if you catch yourself taking things easy in the midst of the course. Will you make it a point to continue in the fashion you are trying to develop? Have a plan so that you will not walk away feeling as though you've failed.

Be kind to yourself: It has been proven that we are more inclined to meet our goals if we pursue them in a relaxed state. When we're under stress, we tend to rely more on old habits simply because we don't have the strength to do the work necessary to change. If you tend to feel stressed, learn some relaxation exercises. Take time to pamper yourself. Changing a habit is only as difficult as you make it. When you make your academic year resolutions for 2003-2004, and incorporate these tips into your life, and greater success will follow.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to Poonam, Andy and Uttara for your help with this issue. And a big thanks to Kunal, Aarti, Archana, Kamalika, Utkarsh and Karthik for their contributions.



I see you...

An attempt to discover the essence of India

-Utkarsh Ayachit

I see her in the bejeweled face,
I see her in her coy grace
I see her as her sarees fly -
The charm of a river flowing by!
I see her in the languid days,
I see her but not all her face!

I hear her in the melodies lame
In ragas of magic, in fountains of fame!
I hear her feet dancing the beat of rain
The monsoon drums, the summer pain!
I see her in her feisty ways
I see her but not all her face!

I smell her in the gardens of love,
In the springs of trust, in myths of home!
I smell her in the drains of hate
In gutters of betrayal, in filth of fate!
I see her in her silver grace
I see her but not all her face!

I see her in every attempt to hide her!
I see her in every effort to chide her!
I see her in every curse to guide her!
But I don't see her all, only a scanty trace!

What I miss is the pagan devotee!
What I miss is his faith, his God!
What I miss is the essence of his being!
What I miss is what ages have taught!

What I miss is the knowledge of the true!
What I miss is the soul of the new!
What I miss is that glory, that God!
How can I ever miss that it's me!
Odd!

EKTA - Indian Students Association's

Diwali Dhamaka 2003



Venue	UC Ballroom
Date	Oct 26, 2003
Time	7:00 pm

Lighten up your Diwali di raat!!