

2018 October



THE CONCH

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“Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conches to rally and enthuse the devotees.”

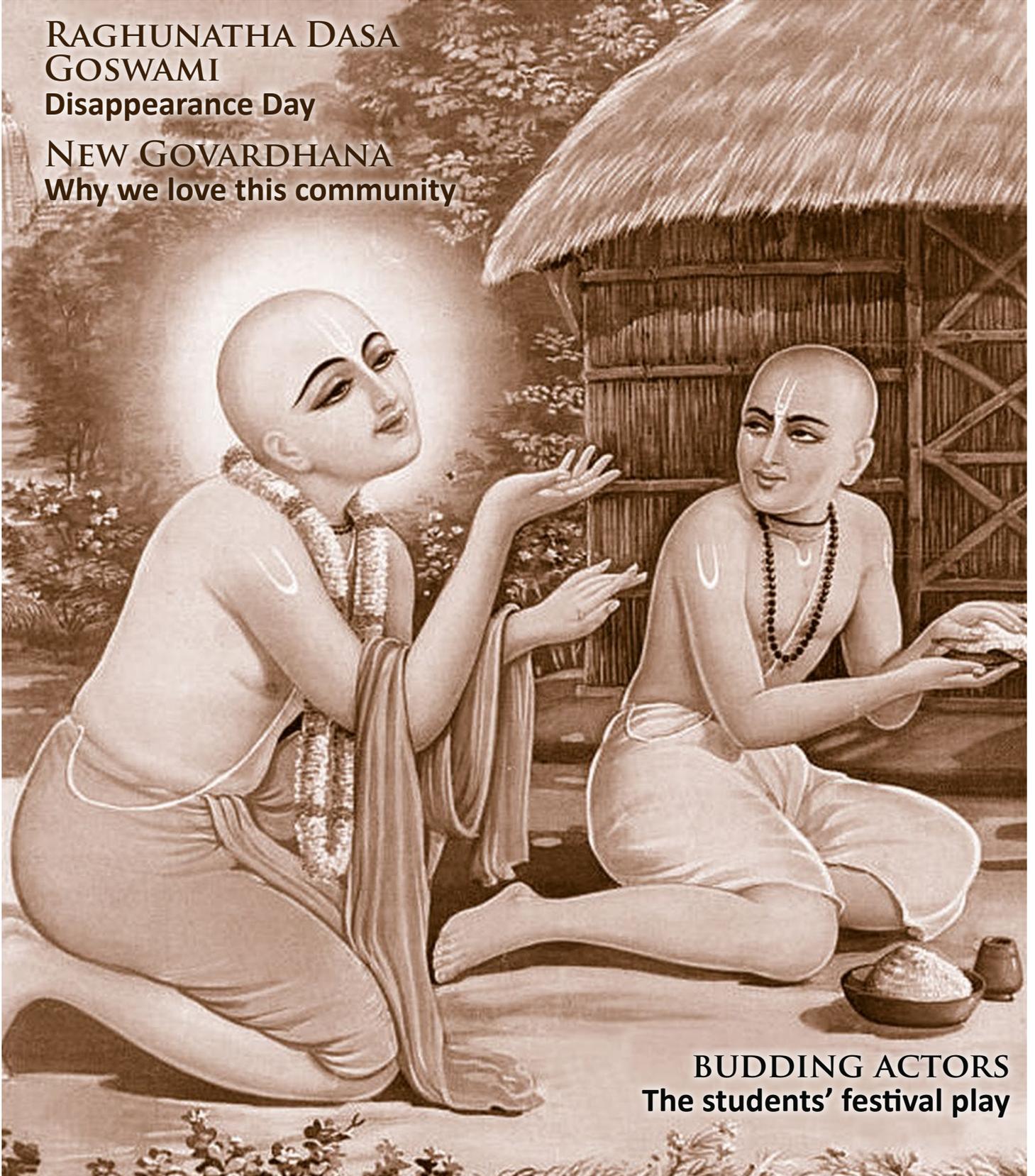


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NEWSLETTER
New Govardhana Community

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

**RAGHUNATHA DASA
GOSWAMI**
Disappearance Day
NEW GOVARDHANA
Why we love this community



BUDDING ACTORS
The students' festival play

KRISHNA'S GARLANDS + TEMPLEROOM MAKEOVER + NEW COW SHELTER

SRILA RAGHUNATHA DASA GOSWAMI

By *Syamala Gopa Kishori dasi*

In our Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, we have many stalwart examples of saintly souls and their spotless teachings. These *nitya siddha* devotees of the Lord illuminate the path of *bhakti* and inspire us all on our way back home, back to Godhead. One such great Vaishnava saint is Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami.

Born in the town of Saptagram in West Bengal, India, he was the only son and heir of a wealthy landowner. Despite their worldly opulence, his family was very pious and attached to serving the Vaishnavas. Through this connection, as a child Raghunatha Dasa Goswami was blessed to receive the association of Nama Acharya, Srila Haridasa Thakura.

Young Raghunatha's desire to associate with and serve devotees grew exponentially. When he was 15 years old, he travelled to Shantipur to have the divine association of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

In later life, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami took to the renounced order and immediately left for Jagannatha Puri to intimately serve Lord Gauranga and His close associate Svarupa Damodara Goswami.

In *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, instructing Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the Lord states: "Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely.

"Do not expect honour, but offer all respect to others. Always chant the holy name of Lord Krishna, and within your mind render service to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana."

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami took these instructions to heart and became the epitome of a renunciate.

After the departure of the Lord, he resided on the banks of Radha Kunda where he fully absorbed himself in service to the Divine Couple. During

this time, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami authored three books: *Stavavalli*, *Mukta-charita* and *Dana Keli Chintamani*.

Raghunatha Dasa Goswami lived an austere life of pure devotion to Srimati Radharani. In the *Gaura Gannodesha Dipika*, it is revealed that in *Krishna lila*, he is an eternal associate of the Lord – the gopi Rasa Manjari.

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami left his body on the banks of Radha Kund where his samadhi still stands. His Disappearance Day is on 21 October. 🙏

References

Caitanya-caritamrta, *Antya-lila* 6.236, 237
www.iskcondesiretree.com
www.vcm.org.in
Sarvananda Gauranga dasa

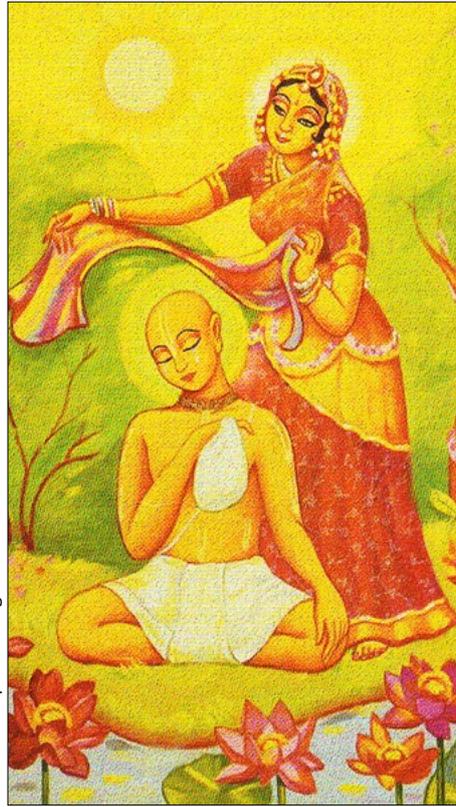


Photo: nimaipandit.ning.com

One day when Raghunatha Dasa Goswami was busy chanting his rounds in the hot summer afternoon, unbeknown to him, Srimati Radharani came to shade him with the end of her sari. Observing this sweet pastime, Sanatana Goswami later suggested to Raghunatha Dasa to construct a bhajana kutir at Radha Kunda so that Radharani did not have to appear again to serve him.

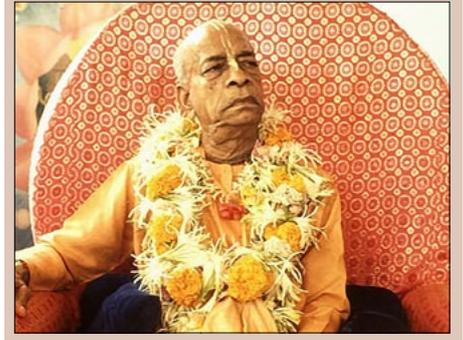


Photo: krishna.org

ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Srila Prabhupada Uvaca

Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, born around the beginning of the sixteenth century, was a disciple of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, a confidential follower of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's. Krsnadasa Kaviraja was an inhabitant of Vrindavana and a great devotee. He had been living with his family in Katwa, a small town in the district of Burdwan, in Bengal.

He worshiped Radha-Krishna with his family, and once when there was some misunderstanding among his family members about devotional service, he was advised by Nityananda Prabhu in a dream to leave home and go to Vrindavana. Although he was very old, he started out that very night and went to live in Vrindavana.

While he was there, he met some of the Goswamis, principal disciples of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He was requested to write the *Caitanya-caritamrta* by the devotees of Vrindavana. Raghunatha Dasa Goswami endowed him with a full comprehension of the transcendental life of Sri Caitanya.

Although he began this work at a very old age and in failing health, by the grace of Lord Caitanya he finished it. Today it remains the most authoritative book on Caitanya Mahaprabhu's philosophy and life.

As he vividly describes in the text itself: "I have now become too old and disturbed by invalidity. While writing, my hands tremble. I cannot remember anything, nor can I see or hear properly. Still I write, and this is a great wonder."

Sources: Introduction and Foreword, Caitanya-caritamrta

GATES TO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

By Syamala Gopa Kishori dasi

The beautifully ornate gates in the temple room have been protecting the Deities since their installation in 1979. They were built by Janamejaya dasa and feature various auspicious symbols, including lotus flowers, transcendental weapons and peacocks.

They were recently taken down for the first time and powder coated, which includes painting and then baking them in a special oven. This process ensures the luminous mother of pearl paint is long lasting.

We hope the refurbishment is pleasing to the Deities and the devotees taking *darshan*.

If you would like to donate towards the cost of the temple gate refurbishment, please contact Ganga devi dasi at the temple treasury. 🙏



Photo: Syamala Gopa Kishori dasi

All hands on deck as the refurbished gates are erected back into position.

TRANSCENDENTAL TRADESMAN

By Suvarna Rupa dasi

For the past few weeks our resident professional painter, Padmalocan dasa, has been steadily repainting the temple ceiling, including above the altar. The new, warm white shade brings a fresh and light ambience to the temple while the darker hue above the altar has the effect of complementing the vibrancy of the Deities.

It has been a great endeavour and we are most grateful for Padmalocan's enthusiasm and expertise. He has also repainted the roof outside the paraphernalia room and rearranged the *bhoga* room so that it is neat and easy for devotees to navigate.

Padmalocan is always working behind the scenes to improve all aspects of the temple, to make it more special for the Deities, devotees and guests. 🙏

JANMASTAMI DRAMA

Courtesy of Bhaktivedanta Gurukula

New Govardhana's Janmastami celebrations were enhanced this year with an amazing drama performed by the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula students, Grades Three to Six. The play celebrated and honoured the birthday of Lord Sri Krishna by depicting the story of His transcendental appearance.

In the play, Mother Earth, appearing in the form of a cow, approached four-headed Lord Brahma concerned about the disturbing evil forces traversing the earth. Along with other children dressed as demigods, they went to the Ocean of Milk to pray to Lord Vishnu. The Lord told them that He would soon descend to Earth to destroy the demoniac forces and uplift the devotees.

The children wonderfully depicted the pastime of Lord Vishnu's appearance in Kamsa's jail cell and subsequent journey to Gokula. Another highlight of the play was the enchanting dance scene with Radha and Krishna in the groves of Vrindavana.

The little actors all looked the part in their costumes, and the music and set



Photo: Parvati devi dasi

Bhaktivedanta Gurukula students presented a very polished and exciting play for the pleasure of Sri Sri Radha Govardhanadhari on Janmastami.

created a dramatic atmosphere. With expert acting, singing and dancing as well as the exciting fight scenes, the students captured the audience with beautiful impressions of Sri Krishna's pastimes.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the children who practised and learned their roles so well, and the directors who trained them: Candramukhi dasi, Mangala Gopi dasi, Akhileshvari dasi and Vinod Bihari dasa. A big thank you goes to

the dance directors: Mohini dasi and Vrinda Gleeson. We would also like to acknowledge the music and set arrangements put together by Vinod Bihari dasa, Gopa Patni dasi, Vrinda, Radha Madhava dasa and Allan Ng, as well as the high school students.

In addition we would like to thank the parents who dressed the children so beautifully. We look forward to more performances by the Gurukula in the future. 🙏

YOGA OF BIRTH

By Sri Gandharvika devi dasi

I recently attended the 'Yoga of Birth' course held at the Krishna Village. The course aimed to train yoga teachers to guide, help and support women during their pregnancies.

The teacher, Katie Manitsas, is not only a yoga teacher, but also an author of many books, a qualified *doula* (birthing companion), a student of Ayurveda, and a mother of four healthy boys, just to name some of her many achievements. She also has a wealth of experience teaching pregnant women yoga and working as a *doula*, where she supports women through their labour and the time after the baby comes.

Manjula Rati devi dasi and myself were fortunate to be invited to attend. The course was divided into different sessions covering subjects from preparation for conception, to how best to nurture yourself and your baby while pregnant.

Katie shared her own personal experiences throughout the course, guiding us through the process of dealing with the different scenarios that can happen during labour, the sacred time after birth and the importance of rest and recovery.

As we went through these various stages, she presented different



Photo: Courtesy of Krishna Village

Mothers-to-be absorbed at the Yoga of Birth course held at Krishna Village.

tools such as Ayurveda, yoga, chanting, and meditation to utilise during the process of having a baby. She especially emphasised the importance of having a lot of support during this period. Katie also touched on the different medical interventions and the medical system here in Australia, its benefits and difficulties.

I found the course to be extremely powerful, as a mother to be, to share with other mothers and expectant mothers in a safe environment with respect for individual differences. I felt very encouraged, confident and hopeful as well as more prepared

to let go of expectations and accept whatever may come in my journey of motherhood. 🙏

Katie's book *The Yoga of Birth*, for mothers and mothers-to-be, is being reprinted.

However, for now it is available in a pdf version at no cost for readers of this article.

Please email Katie to request a copy:

katie@katiemanitsas.com.au

SHELTER FOR THE OLDIES

By Karunamayji dasi

Gita Govinda devi dasi is one of the long-standing residents of New Govardhana and has faithfully served the cows with love and devotion. She cares for the retired cows, who are divided into three herds: the cows, the bullocks and the 'oldies'.

The oldies are the cows and bullocks approaching the end of their lives who are no longer able to keep up with the younger cows. Every day Gita Govinda feeds and medicates them to keep them as healthy and happy as possible.

Previously, during bad weather, the oldies had to take shelter under trees, but Gita Govinda felt they needed better facility. She and Maha Mantra



Photo: Karunamayji dasi

The older cows' and bullocks' new shelter.

dasi designed a new shelter, which Maha Mantra and his team built. Maha Mantra and Dhyana dug the dirt and levelled the site, took all the timber and tin from the old cowshed and set it out for Sharpy (employed fencer) to erect the fence. Loi, who used to be a WWOOFER, did the roof along with other volunteers, including Mick, who oversees them.

The new sanctuary is large and comfortable, so that all the cows can

be well-protected from the elements and have their own personal space. The oldies seem very contented with their new facility, and can often be found happily hanging out in their new shaded pad.

Gita Govinda's dedication to Krishna's cows is most appreciated and her service has been inspirational to the community. 🙏

GARLANDS GALORE

By *Kishori devi dasi*

Our beautiful Deities at New Govardhana are offered fresh garlands daily. Over winter it can be challenging finding sufficient flowers, though. Despite the lack of flowers, everyone seemed to appreciate the creativity and dedication of the garland makers in using leaves and wildflowers in variegated styles throughout winter.

Jhulan dasi expertly managed the garland roster for some time, and now the reins have been handed over to Bhaktine Hyesun.

It is quite a demanding role ensuring that Their Lordships receive lovely garlands daily, but a very satisfying one, as Krishna loves flowers.

Krishnarupa devi dasi lovingly recalls one pastime in Mayapur, where Srila Prabhupada saw her from his verandah picking flowers in the field and commented, "Every flower she picks, is one step closer to Krishna."

Amrita Radhika dasi writes of her experience with garland-making here at New Govardhana:

"Since arriving in New Govardhana, I have been able to serve Krishna in many ways and one of my favourite services is to make garlands for the Deities. The morning walk to collect flowers is such a beautiful meditation



Photo: Kishori devi dasi

An example of beautiful winter garlands on Gaura Nitai at New Govardhana.

in itself, as I know in advance which Deities I will be making garlands for that day. So the flowers I come across are always super fascinating, even in these winter months!"

She continues, "Making garlands is an art, and depending on who the garland is for it can change how you make it. I am starting to understand a little more of the mood of each of the Lord's forms and how they are very slightly revealing themselves to me through garland making. Some mornings I just look at the altar, and say, 'Okay, so what would You like me to make for You today?' and then I let my hands go where they need to go.

"It has been a very wonderful preaching opportunity also. Recently,

a very sweet young girl named Emily, who has special needs, came into the temple room with her carer. Jhulan and I were both in the temple room making garlands and she wanted us to sing. So we temporarily stopped our service and started a *kirtana*. A few volunteers from Krishna Village have also joined us in making garlands, which is a wonderful way for them to do some service and also connect with devotees.

"It's such a beautiful service with so many aspects to it. Thank you Krishna for allowing me to do this service. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!" 🙏

NEW ODISSI CLASS FOR KIDS

By *Sanatani Rombola*

With the blessings of my teacher, I recently started a new dance class for children between the ages of five and twelve. The classes are held at Jyestha and Rupa Raghunatha's home at Coral Fern Circuit every Tuesday from 3.45–4.45pm.

We start off with singing a short mantra for Lord Jagannatha. After that, we perform the 'Salutation to Mother Earth', asking permission to stamp our feet on her.

The class continues with nice warm-up exercises that prepare the students for the basics of Odissi dance. These warm-up exercises are created to improve their blood

circulation, which also increases their concentration in general.

We then carry on to practise the basics of Odissi. I teach them how to stamp their feet rhythmically, as well as separate hand, feet, torso, eyes and neck movements. These movements improve the body/mind co-ordination, help keep the body's proper alignment and promote good posture.

I also make sure they always remember the spiritual aspect of the dance and the importance of offering it to Lord Jagannatha. 🙏

SPACES AVAILABLE!

For further information, please contact Sanatani on 0477 167 336.



Photo: Jyestha devi dasi

Sanatani Rombola introducing the young to the ancient art of Odissi dancing.

WHY I LOVE NEW GOVARDHANA

By Jhulan dasi



Why I like the community at New Govardhana is that you can get really good association here. It is all centred around Radha Govardhanadhari, and there are so many services and so many devotees holding Vaishnava principles. If you stick around you can make good friends in devotional service.

– Sadhana devi dasi



I love being part of this community because it gives you the opportunity to meet many different people. The fact that there are those who are very new in Krishna consciousness and those who have been devotees for a long time – that gives you a lot of variety.

– Bharat Devanani



New Govardhana is leading a way of alternative living: simple living, higher thinking. Everyday here in New Govardhana is fresh and vibrant. We have opportunities every day to serve the Lord and His devotees. Srila Prabhupada said the purpose of life is to know one's own self. Living here on New Govardhana is coming closer to fulfilling the purpose.

– Padmalocan dasa



My experience in New Govardhana for the past four months has been fantastic. People know how to get along with each other, which creates such a homely atmosphere and helps us to practice spiritual life.

– Sean Lawson Bisset



New Govardhana is a spiritual community where you can be part of a big family. Also it gives the opportunity to other people to come and share this spiritual life. It is a shelter from the storm.

– Vasusrestha dasa



I love the New Govardhana community because there is a tremendous opportunity for service and an opportunity to live with loving, pure souls and be close to the temple. This helps us to learn the culture of *bhakti*.

– Mic

I love New Govardhana because of the nice family mood here. Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Govardhanadhari have been so merciful allowing me to be here for the past 17 years.

– Tulasi Manjari dasi

THE HEALING BHAKTI OF THE COMMUNITY

By Daria Golub

Last month I sustained burns due to the back of my sari catching fire. I was standing very close to the wood fire heater in the temple room at the time. Thanks to the devotees who put out the fire, serious burns were prevented. During the accident, I was helpless and for a few weeks afterwards I remained physically quite disabled.

It was during this time that I had the opportunity to experience the enormous power and strength of this

community. Being in the country for only two weeks at the time of the accident, it was wonderful to receive so much support, well wishes, kind words and thoughts. This sincere, unmotivated, selfless help that was extended to me was truly touching. Every phone call, every thought, every message was extremely uplifting.

Now the pain has gone, the wounds will be healed soon, but the sweet nectar of this community's *bhakti* has left a profound impact on my heart.

All respects and gratitude to the community for helping me successfully get through this experience. 🙏



Photo: Jhulan devi dasi

Fire place now has a protective guard around.

GOVARDHANA PUJA

By *Dhriti Gopi devi dasi*

Govardhana Puja, the worship of Govardhana Hill, is a tradition begun by Krishna Himself and is a magnificent festival always celebrated with great jubilation here at New Govardhana.

This year, Govardhana Puja falls next month on Thursday, 8 November. Traditionally, we celebrate it on the closest Sunday so the entire community can participate in this wonderful festival. However, this year the Sunday before is Ekadasi and the following Sunday is Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance Day. So we have decided to celebrate Govardhana Puja, down at Govardhana Hill, on Saturday 3 November.

As residents of New Govardhana, this is your festival and all are welcome to help with the many preparations necessary.

Maha Mantra dasa and his crew will be gardening and preparing the festival site in the weeks leading up to the festival. Karunamayi dasi, Krishna Kirtan dasa and the *goshalla* crew will be preparing the cows to be worshipped. My team will be decorating the area. Please feel free to help these devotees where you can!

For many, the highlight of this festival is the offering of sweets. Numerous devotees engage themselves for several days before the festival preparing various delicious, beautifully presented and mouth-watering delicacies to decorate the hill. In this way, Giriraja Maharaja gives all the devotees an opportunity to serve Him and become the recipients of His mercy.

I have containers for bringing your offerings to the Lord, so please come

and get your box from me. In honour of the actual day, a beautiful new outfit will be offered to Sri Sri Radha Govardhanadhari with a lavishly decorated altar on Thursday, 8 November. 🙏



Photo: Trevor Gore

Giriraja at Govardhana Puja 2017, expertly dressed by Dandakaranya dasa.

PAINTSTROKES OF SPIRITUAL LOVE

By *Vaisnavi devi dasi*

Rasamandali dasi (age 18 years) worked her magic with Krishna Balarama Deities and invoked Their presence with her love, as can be seen in the 'after' photo, above right.

Her mother, Syamamrita devi dasi, was amazed by Rasamandali's focus and intense absorption in painting Krishna Balarama.

She says, "Rasamandali constantly had headphones on listening to Krishna-katha, and was oblivious to what was happening around her. She spent time researching Krishna Balarama Deities around the world. She painted Them both differently and she's brought Their Personalities to life.

You can imagine the fine detailing required to paint such small Deities



Photo: Courtesy of Vaisnavi devi dasi

Top: Krishna and Balarama before being repainted.

Below: Krishna and Balarama after Rasamandali has skilfully painted Them.

(only 14cm high). The painting was completed in less than two weeks, whereby Rasamandali worked around her school, *sadhana* and temple service to complete Krishna Balarama to go on the altar for Lord Balarama's Appearance day.

She has painted pots for Panihati since she moved to New Govardhana with her family some years ago. However, this was the first time she had painted Deities. Under the guidance of Vilasa Manjari devi dasi, Rasamandali removed the conch eyes on the Deities, put a filler and finished the eyes.

Rasamandali is often seen absorbed in chanting and doing service at the temple. No doubt the Lord's blessings infused her with the skills in invoking Their presence. 🙏

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Conch is your community newsletter. Please be a part of it! We invite you to submit articles for publication.

Articles should be 300 words or less and supplied in MS Word via email to caroeditor@gmail.com. Photographs must be in JPG format. Please provide the

name of the author and the photographer.

Deadline is the 10th of each month. Occasionally a submission could be held over to a later edition. All submissions will be edited, proofread and may be rejected without notice.

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Contact: www.conch.org.au

GIFTS OF LOVE

By *Kisori devi dasi*

Appearance Day festivals are a great opportunity to give gifts to the Deities as it helps build a more personal relationship with Their Lordships. It is especially sweet to see the children give gifts and offer devotional performances to the Deities, as service performed for Their pleasure.

During this year's Janmastami festival, our *gurukula* children, Years Pre-K, 1 and 2, sung a beautiful *bhajana*, taught by Premavati devi dasi, that stole everyone's heart. (At the time of writing, the video of the *bhajana* had 26,000 views on Facebook.)

Some of the high school children made garlands and decorations for the Deities.

Gaurapriya, five years old, gave some crystals that she had found in the river, while Nimai Prasad 11 years old, baked a cake.



Photo: Kisori devi dasi

Abhirama's beautiful handcrafted card.



Photo: Radhadamodara devi dasi

Rishabha and Anuradha spotted these butterflies and peacocks while visiting their grandparents on the Sunshine Coast.

They were able to give some gifts early, including the peacock, for Lord Krishna to wear on His birthday!



Photo: Georgina Rose

Shivani made a card with a beautiful picture of Krishna surrounded by lotuses.

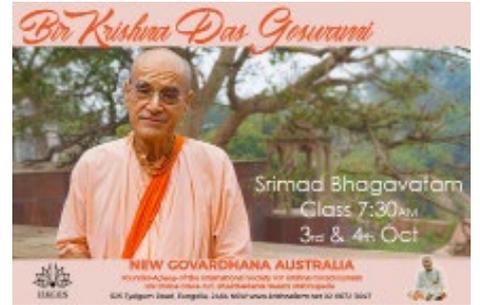
OCTOBER CALENDAR

(from *Vaishnava calendar* www.vaisnavacalendar.com)

- 5 Fri Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) – Fasting for Indira Ekadasi
- 6 Sat Dvadasi Break fast 5.20 – 9.30am
- 19 Fri Ramacandra Vijayotsava
Sri Madhvacharya – Appearance
- 20 Sat Ekadasi (suitable for fasting) – Fasting for Pasankusa Ekadasi
- 21 Sun Dvadasi – Break fast 7.55 – 10.22am
Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami – Disappearance
Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami – Disappearance
Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami – Disappearance
- 23 Tue Last day of the third Caturmasya month
- 24 Wed Sri Krsna Saradiya Rasayatra
Sri Murari Gupta – Disappearance
Fourth month of Caturmasya begins (urad dal fast for one month)
- 29 Mon Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura – Disappearance

DAYLIGHT SAVING STARTS 7 OCTOBER

A reminder for NSW residents to turn your clocks forward one hour on Sunday, 7 October at 2am.



His Holiness Bir Krishna Goswami 3–4 October

7.30am Srimad Bhagavatam Class

Please join us each Ekadasi for *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class given by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. These classes will feature subtitles.

Darshan arati 7am
Class 7.30am

HARINAMA SANKIRTANA KI JAYA!



Weekly at various locations
Contact **Garuda dasa** for details
0423 170 267

Sunday Mornings
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Visnujana dasa 0498 141 021