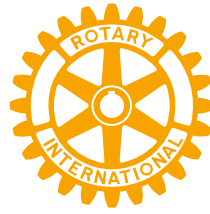




Rotary
CLUB OF PANAJI



THE

SPARK

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF PANAJI



ISSUE 6 | VOL.1 | DECEMBER 2024

REGULAR MEETING :

Every Wednesday at 6:30 pm,
5th floor, EDC House,
Dr. Atmaram Borkar Road, Panaji - Goa

www.rotaryclubpanaji.org

DRAWING COMPETITION



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rtn. Dr. Raghuvir Salkar



Dear Friends,

Six months of the Rotary Year 2024-25 have gone by, and the new calendar year 2025 is upon us. My best wishes to you and your dear ones for a great year ahead.

I am delighted to inform you that till date have completed 90 service projects out of which 70 projects have been towards community service. The industry in Goa and outside has strongly supported us, and due to this and with generous donations from citizens, we were able to set up a smart classroom at a primary school, set up a dialysis unit at MICU of GMC's super speciality block, donate wheelchairs to Goa Medical College, construct a toilet block for special students at Dhavali, and many more. Our own members have stepped forward and donated generously which made it possible to support needy families in their efforts to seek medical treatment.

In the month of December, we held the annual event of Children's Art Competition where a record number of 800+ students from various age groups and from all the corners of Goa participated. The event saw the visit of honourable Chief Minister of Goa to the venue where he interacted with many of the participants. On this occasion, five bicycles were handed over to needy girl students from Progress High School and Kasturba Matoshri High School, Panaji. The last of the series of dental hygiene camps was also conducted at Kasturba Matoshri High School.

The coming month of January 2025 is labelled in Rotary as the Vocational Month, and our dynamic vocational director Gaurish Agni has planned a series of events, namely, felicitation of Young Achiever, felicitation of nurses and vocational awards. We will also have one lecture by Dr Dattesh Parulekar, and more lectures will be delivered in the coming months. Please do not miss out on these amazing lectures on International Events.

Going forward in the 2nd half of the Rotary Year, the focus will be on mobilizing donations for Rotary Foundation (India). I intend to set up an Endowment Fund for which your wholehearted support will be necessary.

Our energetic Editor Guruprasad Mantrawadi has put in a lot of hard work to ensure timely release of the Spark. The quality of articles has been amazing. So, please read it well and enjoy The Spark!

With warm wishes,
Manguirish



RI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rtn. Stephanie A. Urchick



To adapt, as laid out in Rotary's Action Plan, we must occasionally step out of our comfort zone and try something new. Here are two examples of clubs that adapted — one with heart and one through critical thinking and strategy.

The Rotary Club of Chandigarh Mid Town, India, led with heart earlier this year. To engage members and grow membership, Club President Nitin Kapur personally called every former member of the club and invited them to a gathering billed as an alumni meetup.

Eight former members attended, and the results were stupendous. The visitors had a chance to connect once more — not only with current members but with the sense of camaraderie and belonging that membership gave them.

By the end of the evening, the club welcomed six of the former members back into the Rotary family.

Club President Kapur showed courage when he reached out to the alumni. Not only did he adapt and try something new but he had the strength of character to show the club's alumni how much they still meant to the family of Rotary. That bravery paid off.

People want to feel needed and appreciated. People want to feel that they belong. And they might never feel that way if we don't have the courage to tell them.

Meanwhile, the Rotary Club of Seoul-Hansoo, Korea, has been experimenting with different club models to great effect. Over the past four years, Seoul-Hansoo has created and maintained four satellite clubs — a service club, an interest-based club for musicians, a cause-based club that mentors professionals, and a club for college students.

These satellite clubs are part of a five-year plan the Seoul-Hansoo club implemented to increase

membership through innovation.

What's the secret to founding and maintaining so many satellite clubs?

Membership between Seoul-Hansoo and its satellite clubs is fluid and synergistic. Many members of the satellite clubs attend the sponsor club's meetings. And many of the sponsor club's members participate in the satellite clubs.

Additionally, the focus of each satellite club is no accident. Each one appeals to different interests of people in the sponsor club and in the community, attracting existing and potential members. This is an excellent strategy to both retain and attract members because it offers flexibility. If someone is interested in joining but they can't make it to the sponsor club's meetings, they have plenty of options to choose from.

These are just two examples of how we can adapt with our hearts and minds. Every club is different, so I encourage you to reach out to members of your club and of the community around you. Ask them about the club experience and what you can do to improve.

Talk to enough people and you might find ways that you can adapt and spark The Magic of Rotary in your club.



With Best Compliments from
Santosh Mahanandu Naik
PANJIM - GOA

EDITOR'S SPACE

Rtn. Ar. Gurprasad Mantravadi



DECEMBER IS

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Disease prevention and treatment takes on many forms, supporting studies to helping immunize people to improving drinking water and the sanitation infrastructure.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Rtn. Pankaj Saraf



Dear Rotarians,

First of all, I would like to wish you & your family a very happy new year. May the year be filled with Peace, Love & Happiness.

The Month of December was a month of consolidation. A quiet yet meaningful month for our Club. Being a festive month, we could have 3 regular meetings.

We had excellent speakers for two of the meetings & the third meeting was Annual General Meeting which was followed by Christmas Night celebrations.

At the AGM the club ratified the nomination of Rtn. Bhalchandra Amonkar as President for the year 2026-27 & also the board for the coming year.

We did a total of 12 projects with 2407 beneficiaries.

The projects which stood out were the inauguration of Toilet block at Special school at Dhavli, Cataract Surgeries of 5 Needy patients, a beach cleaning drive at Miramar Beach, career guidance program etc.

But the star programme was our Drawing Competition for kids on the occasion of "Goa Liberation Day". We had an overwhelming participation of Close to 850 children. Music dance & lot fun activities were held on the occasion.

To summarise it, this month has been testimony to the

Rotary theme "Magic of Rotary" & the commitment of our members towards service over self.

My heartiest congratulations to the President & Board of Directors & my gratitude to all the members, volunteers & supporters for their contributions.

Let's continue to work together according to Rotary principles of "Service Over Self".

YOUR'S IN ROTARY

Rtn. Pankaj Saraf

Secretary, Rotary Club of Panaji



Best Wishes From

SIDDHESH SHETYE



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A JOURNEY THROUGH GREECE: EXPLORING ATHENS, SANTORINI, METEORA, AND DELPHI

By: *Vedant Nilesh Shah*

Greece, with its rich history, stunning landscapes, and captivating culture, has long been a dream destination for travelers. On a recent 8-day adventure, I had the opportunity to be a part of the Rotary Club of Panjim group tour to explore the country's iconic landmarks, from the ancient ruins of Athens to the spectacular island of Santorini and the serene monasteries of Meteora. Join me as I take you through this unforgettable journey, filled with awe-inspiring sights, local flavors, and unforgettable memories.

Day 1: Arrival in Athens – The Gateway to Greece

Our journey began with a smooth flight into Athens, where the warm Mediterranean breeze greeted us as we stepped off the plane. A friendly assistant at the airport greeted us with their warm regards, an excellent first impression of Greek hospitality. From there, we were whisked away to our Hotel, a comfortable base with a central location, perfect for exploring the city.

Day 2: Athens – Where History Comes Alive

The next day, we embarked on a guided city tour that began at the Acropolis Museum and the iconic Acropolis Archaeological Site. Standing beneath the Parthenon, I felt the weight of history, surrounded by ancient ruins that have stood for millennia. The museum, just a short walk away, offers a fascinating collection of artifacts that provide deeper insight into the significance of this historic site.

Next, after a leisurely lunch and a shopping spree in Pláka, I was left in awe of how seamlessly the old and new worlds coexist in Athens. The city's energy is undeniable, with every street corner telling a story.

In the evening, we ventured to the historic Pláka district, Athens' old town. Here, the narrow, winding streets are lined with charming cafés, boutiques, and tavernas. I spent hours simply wandering, soaking in the lively atmosphere, sampling local delicacies, and enjoying the vibrant nightlife.

Day 3: Sailing to Santorini – A Picture-Perfect Island

The journey from Athens to Santorini is nothing short of magical. We boarded the Blue Star Delos ferry, gliding across the Aegean Sea with the crisp breeze in our faces and the sun casting shimmering reflections on the water. The journey offered breathtaking views of the sea and coastline, building anticipation for the island's legendary beauty.

Upon arrival, Santorini did not disappoint. The island's whitewashed houses, perched on cliffs overlooking the deep blue waters, are among the most photographed sights in the world. We stayed at the Splendour Hotel, located in Fira, where we were able to wander the charming streets, discovering quaint cafés and shops with panoramic views of the caldera.

The evening was spent savoring a delicious dinner at the hotel, with the opportunity to explore Firostefani Square and the famous Three Bells of Fira. Santorini's beauty is something you have to experience to believe.

Day 4: Santorini – A Day of Wonders

Santorini's appeal goes beyond its beauty. The island is steeped in history, and we spent the day uncovering its archaeological secrets. We visited the Akrotiri Archaeological Site, an ancient Minoan settlement destroyed by a volcanic eruption around 1627 BC. Like Pompeii, Akrotiri was preserved under volcanic ash, and the site offers an incredible glimpse into the advanced civilization that once thrived here.

We also visited the Red Sand Beach and the Black Sand Beach at Perivolos, where the contrast of volcanic landscapes and azure waters was striking. The day ended with a visit to the charming village of Megalochori and the majestic Profitis Ilias Mountain, before heading to Oia to catch the world-famous sunset. Watching the sun dip below the horizon, casting a golden glow over the caldera, was a moment I will never forget.

Day 5: A Scenic Flight to Larissa

After a leisurely morning in Santorini, it was time to journey to Larissa. We split into two groups, and I took the 16:40 flight, soaring above the Aegean Sea and catching one last glimpse of the island's stunning views. Upon arrival in Larissa, we were transferred to the luxurious Larissa Imperial Hotel, where on the way we enjoyed an evening of relaxation and fine dining at a local seaside taverna.

Day 6: Meteora – A Spiritual and Natural Wonder

The next morning, we traveled to Meteora, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its dramatic monasteries perched atop towering rock formations. The sight is truly awe-inspiring, as the monasteries seem to defy gravity, providing a serene and peaceful retreat for monks over the centuries. Visiting the Monastery, I marveled at the breathtaking views and the history that surrounds these sacred places.

Later we explored the city of Larissa where I had some refreshing coffee at a local streetside café.

Day 7: Delphi – The Navel of the Earth

Delphi is often referred to as the "navel of the earth," and stepping into this ancient site, it's easy to understand why. Once considered the center of the world by the ancient Greeks, Delphi was home to the famed Oracle of Apollo. I explored the impressive ruins of the Temple of Apollo, walked along the ancient theater, and visited the Archaeological Museum, which houses artifacts from the site's long history.

After soaking in the history of Delphi, We returned to Athens, reflecting on how much this journey had deepened my connection to Greece's past and present.

Day 8: Departure – Leaving with Unforgettable Memories

As my trip came to a close, I spent my last morning in Athens reflecting on the unforgettable experiences and the beauty of Greece.

To fulfill our taste buds we all had one last endless spread of Greek lunch at Dopios, a famous restaurant in Athens. We had greek salads, tzatziki, dolmadakia

and much more...

From the ancient ruins of Athens to the idyllic island of Santorini and the mystical monasteries of Meteora, each stop had offered something unique.

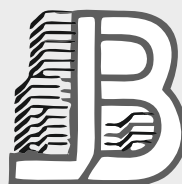
I left Greece with a deep appreciation for its culture, history, and the incredible warmth of its people.

Practical Tips for Travelers to Greece:

- Transportation: Greece's transportation system is well-connected, but ferries and flights between islands can get busy, especially in peak seasons. It's advisable to book tickets in advance.
- Best Time to Visit: The months of May to October offer ideal weather for sightseeing and beach activities. November can be a great time for fewer crowds and cooler, better temperatures.
- Local Cuisine: Don't miss out on trying souvlaki, moussaka, baklava, and the local Greek wines. Every meal feels like a celebration of flavors.
- Cultural Etiquette: Greeks are warm and welcoming. When visiting religious sites, be respectful of the customs, and dress modestly.



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ऍडम अँड ईव्ह... न्हय न्हय.. ऍडम अँड स्टीव्ह

Rtn. प्रदीप तळावलीकार



सध्या आमच्या संसाराची गतच पिडचार जायत चलल्या. कोणाचो पाय कोणाची पँट. कोणाकूच कसलोच घरबंद ना. अशें चल्ला. आमच्या काळांत बाबा अशें नाशिल्ले. आद्य मानव कोण ? तर बाबा आदम, अशें आमचे मास्तर सांगताले. चडूच खोलांत गेलो तर ताज्या बायलेचे नाव ईव्ह, अशेंय ते सांगताले. ताजाय फुडें वचून म्हज्या सारखेल्यान विचाल्लेच तर फुडें ती दोघांय थंयच्याच सफरचंदाच्या कुळागारांतल्यान फिरत असताना ईव्हकथयचे एक तांबडेफुल्ल सफरचंद खावपाची जबरदस्त लूव आयली. आमच्या सारखेल्यान आनी ईल्लो खोलांत वचून फुडें किदें जाले अशें विचाल्लें तर उत्तर म्हणून त्या मास्तरान म्हज्या कानासकल असें एक थापट दिलें की जाचो आवाज आजूय म्हज्या कानात वाजता. वैर आनी म्हणपाक लागले, ' किद्याक जाय तुमका तो धवळ ? अभ्यास करा पयली. ताज्या मागीर खूप वर्सांनी जेन्ना आमी कॉलेजांत पावले तेन्ना आमका कळ्ळें की मास्तरान किद्याक आमच्या कानफटांत मारील्ली तें. आसू तें.

आता मात्सो फाटलो विचार केलो तर अशें दिसता की ईव्ह ची ती जबरदस्त लूव म्हणजे आताच्या काळांत व्हकलांक लागता तो ' दुवाळो ' आसूये. आनी मागीर खंयच्याय नवरोबा भशेन बायलेक खुश करपाक आदामान तें सफरचंद तोडलें आसतलें. तें सफरचंद खातकीच ईव्हक तीज्या आनी ऍडमाच्या विवस्त्र शरीर स्थितीची जाणीव जाली आसतली. आनी मागीर ईव्हान ऍडमाक आपल्या स्त्रिसुलभ लज्जारक्षणार्थ शाडाचे एक पान तोडून हाडपाक धाडलो आसतलो . ऍडमाच्या आयच्या वंशजांवयल्यान तरी अशें दिसता की ऍडमान ईव्हेच्या लज्जारक्षणार्थ आपूणजावन झाडाचे पान बी तोडून हाडला आसतले अशें जावपाक ना. तेन्ना ईव्हानूच ताका अशें करपाक लायला असपाक फावो अशें अनुमान काढपाक खुब वाव असा. न्हय न्हय तें तशेंच

जाला आसतलें. वयल्यान त्या ?डमान, सामके आलेमावाच्या थाटात म्हणला आसतले, ' पोय पोय योक बायलमोनीस कोशी लोजेता पोय'. सितीदान दोवरात, हें काम फोकोस्त एका पानान जावपाचे नासलें. ईव्हान घाल्लें पान घडये सुकलें म्हणून ना जाल्यार बोकडांनी खाल्ले म्हणून आनी ऍडमाचे पान तो सफरचंदा काढपाक झाडार चडील्ल्या वेळा जिराफांनी खाल्ले म्हणून तांका खूब पाना लागली आसतली. पानांची गरज भागोवपाक ऍडमाक खूब झाडांच्यो फांदयो कापच्यो पडल्यो आसतल्यो. थंयच जगांतली पयली वृक्षतोडी जाल्या आसतली.तातून आनी त्या काळांत पुस्तकां बी बरौपाक पानांचाच वापर जातालो. बोकड्यो आनी जिराफां पाना खाताली ती गोष्ट वेगळी. तेन्ना आमका अशें दिसता की मोपा खातीर चार झाडां कापली तर ताजो ऐदो मोटो बोवाळ किद्याक ? हें पळया मात्शें विषयांतर जाता तेन्ना आमी परतून मूळ विषयाकडे वोचूया.

तर आदल्या काळाच्या भाशेंत ऍडम आनी ईव्ह ही दोघांय जगांतल्या पयल्या मनश्या जातीची रिप्रेझेंटेटिव्ह अशें मानले वता. फुडल्या सगळ्या मनीस जातीचें उत्पादन ह्या दोघानीच सुरु केलें अशेंय काही आमच्यासारखे बुधवंत म्हणतात. तेन्ना तांका, आद्य जोडपें म्हणपाक कोणायचीच हरकत आसूं नये अशें आमका दिसता. पुण आताच्या काळाचे किदें ? चड करून कलम ३७७ च्या हिशेबान हें गणीत कशें सोडपाचें ? आमची तर गणीताच्या नावान सदांच वजाबाकी. केन्ना म्हणून केन्ना गणीतात पास जालोना. ऍडम आनी ईव्ह च्या जाग्यार जर आता अँडम आनी स्टीव्ह अशें जावपाक लागलें तर फुडें आमच्या जगाचे किदें जावपाचे ?

ईव्ह आनी ईव्ह प्रकरण तर चालू आसाच तेन्ना आताच्या काळांतल्या परिभाशेंतल्या लग्न ह्या संस्थेचे किदें ? आमच्या प्रजोदपादनाचे किदें ? आनी मुख्य म्हणजे आमच्या सुंदर सुंदर ईव्हांचे किदें ? पयलीच आमच्यो लग्न

संस्था बुडपाक आयल्यात. वधूवर सुचक मंडळां मूस मारतात. समर्थ रामदास स्वामीन बरयलेली मंगलाष्टकां आता बदलची पडटा. गंगा सिंधू सरस्वती च यमूना अशीं चल्यां खातीर बरयलेली नदयांची नावा आता हिमालय सह्याद्री अनमोडघाट अशीं चल्यांखातीर बरौची पडटली. एकवेळ हेही आमी बरौपी करूं पुणून प्रसूती घरांचे किदें ? म्हणजे गुरवार बायलांच्या होस्पिटलांचे किदें ? बाल रोग तज्ञ, स्त्रीरोगतज्ञ हानी किदें फकस्त हात चोळीत बसचें ? लग्नांच जाली नात तर पत्रीका पळौणाऱ्यानी किदें करचे ? भट, माटोव घालपी, सनय ढोल वाजवपी, वेग वेगळ्या तरेचे जेवण ज्याका लग्नांकित भाशेंत कॅटरिंग म्हणतात तानी किदें रांधलेले स्वतःच खायत बसचें ? आसूं भोंगू ते .

तर आमका अशें दिसता की जें आमी आजपर्यंत अॅडम आनी ईव्ह हांचे लग्न करताले तशें आता अॅडम आनी स्टीव्ह, ईव्ह आनी ईव्ह हांचे लग्न करचे पडटलें आनी ताका विघ्न अशें म्हणचे पडटलें. म्हणजे आजच्या परिभाशेंत लग्न म्हणजे विघ्न अशें जावन पडटलें. ना तरी आमच्यातले कांय सभागी आता सुद्धां लग्न म्हणजे विघ्न अशेंच म्हणटात.

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MY MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD CELEBRATIONS DURING CHRISTMAS.

Rtn. Sandeep Prabhu



"Tis the season to be jolly" was a phrase we used to chant amongst the classmates when the month of December began. Don Bosco High School, my school in Panaji had a festive look beginning from November to mid January. My school was being run by a Christian group from Italy called the "Salesians group of Don Bosco". The principal of the school, who was a dedicated educationist and a priest, was from Italy. I dont remember his full name, but do remember, he used to respond to all the students calling him by the name of Father Casti. Even his signatures on certificates issued by the School, of which I still have a few, bore Casti as his signature.

My School even though being a Christian School had many Students of other faiths, mainly Hindus. We used to celebrate almost all Indian festivals in our School, the biggest being, Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali and Christmas, in that sequence during the year. We knew Christmas was approaching when just before the beginning of the Unit tests which took place after our Mid Term tests, a huge Christmas tree (could be the biggest in Panaji) and a lovely decorated Crib showing the birth of baby Jesus used to come up in the lobby of the School. Our favorite time pass than was to count the number of small shiny stars and colorful candy that were planted on the Christmas tree. Small and large boxes wrapped in colorful papers were placed at the base of the tree. A small colourful wooden fence was put up around the tree so as have a barrier between the tree and us students.

Even though the Unit tests had begun, the School had a festive look and all the students enjoyed the caring, loving and exciting atmosphere present. The beginning of December, the winter was causing temperatures to drop. Which also created a joyful atmosphere in the School. The evenings which were even cooler, was the time I came to the Schools ground to play. The School used to be well lit with colourful lights with even the Christmas tree being colourfully lit up with the golden star at the tip looking smart and

shining bright.

Our unit test used to get over by the 22nd of December and the Christmas vacations begin the very next day ending in the first week of January. During the evenings of the Christmas week a few of us joined the carol singing group headed by one of our teachers or priest wearing the Christmas Fathers dress and going around to every neighbouring house, each of us carrying a brightly lit colourful paper lantern with the wax candle and singing Christmas Carol's. Some among us also wore the dwarf costume. The main attraction to join the group was the Christmas sweets we got to eat from the residents of the houses we went to. In those days the citys street lights were not as many and also not as bright as they are presently. In those semi dark evenings the small blinking lanterns called बालाब that we carried looked so beautiful and lovely adding to the spirit of Christmas.

As kids we used to go to the kids Christmas party at Club Vasco Da Gama, where my Uncle was a member and which was held one or two days before Christmas day. I still remember the Christmas Father in his costume entering the hall and with his loud Ho..ho...ho throwing the gifts and goodies from his bright red sack that he carried. I still remember at a few public places in Panaji too the Christmas Father parades used to be organized by a few organizations or companies. Those days there still were a few horse driven carts called Victoria's being operated as taxis on the streets of Panaji.

A beautifully decorated Victoria looking like a Christmas Fathers sledge cart, the horses decorated with fake reindeer horns and a large pot bellied Christmas Father in his red costume sitting on the reindeer drawn sledge, throwing lovely gifts and sweets from his bright red sack of goodies, was our main attraction, with all us kids lining up both sides of the streets to collect these goodies. Slowly as the

Victoria's, one by one disappeared from our beautiful city, similarly too this Christmas parade also vanished from our city.

Another interesting thing that used to keep me busy during the vacation was to make the Christmas Crib and a small Christmas tree. I used to make one with the help of my neighboring friends, in the corner of my house's veranda. I had purchased the small clay dolls to be placed in the crib from shops selling Christmas decorations and used to safely keep those dolls after dismantling the crib, to use them again the next years crib. There used to be also a few large and small cribs on display at houses in the city. Some of those cribs were of the mechanical kind, which in those days was a rarity. One of the biggest mechanical crib was usually made at my Don Bosco High School.

This crib was usually made near the entrance gate of the Schools compound. A temporary shed was also built over the crib so that it remained properly covered and safe from the elements. The evenings of our vacation was usually spent visiting the neighborhood admiring these well lit mechanical cribs and also enjoying the Christmas lighting done on the houses.

A big bright lit star was Usually put up at the entrance of the houses. Those days a small flickering oil lamp or a wax candle was put inside the star to keep it lit for the evening. Colourfully painted paper lanterns called बालाव , of different patterns were also hung up at the houses entrance veranda. These lanterns had a small stand fixed into it where in a wax candle could be placed and the flickering light of the candle added to the beauty of the lanterns. In the first week of the New Year these paper lanterns and stars would be neatly folded and kept safely for reuse the next year. Every evening the oil lamp or the wax candles were put into these beautiful lanterns to light up the night.

I used to always look forward to the Christmas sweets brought to our house by our Christian neighbors. The Antao family, one of my immediate neighbors, whose sweets were my most favorite. Their son Luis who was of my age, together we both relished and enjoyed these

home made sweets. We were very good friends and spend time together very often till the Antao's migrated to Portugal in the early 1970s. I still remember the enjoyable time I spent with Luis, often playing in their garden and sitting on the gauva tree plucking and eating the gauvas.

One of my most favored time past those days was to play in the evenings along with my neighbors on the road passing in front of my house. There used to hardly be any traffic on the roads in those days and we used to get uninterrupted area on the road to play for hours till the sun went down and till our mothers called us home as it started getting dark. Another thing that helped us to get uninterrupted space to play was that, there was underground sewage work going on and the road in front of my house where in a major chamber was coming up was blocked for months together.

There were some senior boys in our neighborhood who used to play there on Sundays and we their juniors used to also join them to help bring them drinking water or as ball fetchers . Either one way or the other we kids used to get lots of time to play. Now a days kids dont get so much time to spend for themselves because there are some classes or other courses to attend and by the end of the day the poor kid is so exhausted that he or she falls asleep on just reaching home. We and our previous generations were very lucky to get such privileges, like have lots of time at our disposal to spend it the way we wish.

During our teenage years there was no social media as is present today. Our daily news info was listening to the radio, reading a newspaper or hearing gossip. My school had an intercom system in the Principals cabin which was connected to all the class rooms via speakers. This was useful in making any daily announcements or any school notices, which was usually done in between the class periods. One very good use it was put to by the school was to have a student read the main headlines of the day from major newspapers, also important news details if any during the first 5 min of the fist class period. This helped the students to make it a habit of reading and

listening to the latest news and keep oneself abreast of the latest happenings around.

My school also had a small weekly published a hand written one which was edited by an elected/appointed group of students, overlooked by a senior teacher. Those days there were no copy machines available like today, except for the xyclo styling machine of which there was only one in our school office and it was costly to maintain and to print. So our weekly used to be hand written with inputs of important happiness by all the classes, also the illustrations if any were drawn by the students. This weekly once ready used to be pinned up on the School notice board for all the students to read.

Another place where I would spend time during the vacation and which would help in increasing my knowledge of my young mind was the Central public library. This library those days was located in a big space on the ground floor of the Menezes Braganza building near the Panaji Police station. The library had a huge collection on books on various subjects, mainly in the English language and a few other Indian languages too. The books were properly cataloged and systematically stacked or stored in wooden or steel cupboards. The yearly membership fees of the public library was very affordable and I could get to read at the library and if need be take a book home to read, of course to be returned within a stipulated time. There was also another library which I frequented and it was the Saraswati Mandir library, which is still functioning in the same building on 18 June road in Panaji. This library too had a variety of books on different subjects

and languages mainly in the Marathi language and some in English too. The main attraction for the elderly at this library was to get to read different daily and weekly news papers published in India and a few from other countries too.

As the New year approached I used to get a bit busy in the mornings completing the vacation home work given by the school class teachers. A common subject given every year by the teachers was to, write an essay on the New Years resolution. As a kid my resolutions for the New Year were limited to, study harder and be punctual in studies this year, listen to and obey the parents, elders and teachers in that sequence, get up early in the morning without being lazy, help ones parents at home and be less of a nuisance in the house, etc. I dont remember how effective the results of the resolutions were, may be the same non effective and unimplimented way the resolutions are like in the present times. But those were the days when our kiddish needs or wants were very simple too and our enjoyment or joys were only limited to getting to play outdoor games or reading a good book or just eating a big scoop of icecream and may be watch a good Western movie of which I could watch many provided and arranged by my school on a portable movie projector and screen, on a Saturday & sunday afternoons at our schools auditorium. Life was so very simple than, compared to how fast or hectic it is in the present.

Rt sandeep Prabhu



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ALASKA- THE DAY I CROSSED THE LINE

Rtn. Ar. Gurprasad Mantravadi



During my university days in the USA in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many of my American friends would always describe Alaska as one of the most beautiful places in the US, and that it was their dream to visit it one day. My university was located on the east coast of the US, in the beautiful state of Maine, in the Northeast corner of the US, bordering the pristine provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in Canada. I always wondered what it would be in Alaska having already seen the beautiful landscapes of Maine, until of course my good fortune landed me there in May of 2014, more than 10 years back. My second visit to Alaska took place in 2017; this article pertains to the first visit only.

It is not a well-known fact that Alaska which is one of America's 50 states was once a part of the Russian empire. It was sold to the US in the year 1867 by the Russian Tzar Alexander II. It officially became a US state much later in the year 1959. It is one of the theories that thousands of years ago, Alaska was connected to the Eurasian landmass through the Bering Strait Bridge or Bering Bridge. Today, the closest distance between Russia and Alaska is about 55 miles at the Bering Strait. Some researchers say that the First Human on the American Continent crossed over from Asia to the Americas through the Bering Bridge. These are the folks whom we normally call as Red Indians or the American Indians (not Indian American). These were the first settlers of the American continent.

Alaska became famous for its gold fields in Yukon in 1896. Unlike in many countries including India, Americans were allowed to keep the gold they found while mining, and thus started the mad Gold Rush to Alaska. Today, Alaska arguably holds the world's largest oil reserves, and all the world's biggest oil companies have operations there, out of a place called Prudhoe Bay.

The Arctic Circle passes through the central portion of

Alaska, and it was my intention to cross The Line during this visit to the biggest US state of Alaska which admeasures 1.723 million square kilometres. Well, compare it to India's area and you will discover that it is more than 50% of our area. There is a popular joke in the US that a Texan once wished that Alaska be divided into two parts so that Texas could become the largest state. Little did he realize that this would push Texas to the 3rd spot from its present 2nd. However, in spite of its huge area, much of Alaska remains barren and extremely sparsely populated. The once densely populated beautiful town of Fairbanks does not have much to boast about, after the gold rush died down.

My journey to the state of Alaska started out of the city of Seattle in Washington state of the US. Alaska Airlines has regular flights from its Seattle hub to Anchorage in Alaska. It was a three and a half hours flight that brought us from Seattle to Anchorage on Sunday 18th May, 2014. Anchorage is the most populated city of Alaska and has multinational population. It is like any other American small city with McDonalds, Burger Kind, Pizza Hut seen at several locations. Anchorage has a major Port where ships berth for bulk cargo and petroleum. It is worth to note that oil is not found in Anchorage; rather it is found in Arctic Ocean from where it is pumped through a nearly 1300 km long trans-Alaska pipeline to Valdez and then transported out to various destinations in the US, Canada and other countries.





TRANS ALASKA OIL PIPELINE



TRANS ALASKA OIL PIPELINE ALONG DALTON HIGHWAY

On 18th May itself, we took a connecting flight from Anchorage to Fairbanks, the erstwhile Gold Town. We arrived there around 4 pm in the evening and it was fairly cold with a light breeze blowing around us. Our stay for the next two nights was in Fairbanks, in a beautiful cottage alongside River Chena. Just out of curiosity, I stepped out of the cottage at 3 am only to find that there was enough sunlight to read any book or newspaper. Even in the month of May which is the end of the Spring season, the Sun hardly set in Fairbanks.

We set out for The Line or the Arctic Circle the very next day, early morning at 5 am. It would be a long day for us, and we were expected to be back to the hotel around 11 pm. The entire journey would be in a bus on a road called as the Dalton Highway. You may be surprised to learn that most of this highway is a dirt road. We expected to see a lot of dust flying around;

however, to our surprise there was not a spec of dirt anywhere as the ground was frozen hard (permafrost) due to the round the year cold weather. On the way to the Arctic Circle, we crossed the famous Yukon River, saw by the Trans-Alaskan pipeline which for most of the distance passed alongside the road. We eventually reached our destination- the Arctic Circle where I crossed The Line. As most of us would know, on the day of Summer Solstice (21st June), the Sun does not set in this region of Arctic Circle.



YUKON RIVER



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We departed for Denali National Park on 20th of May by train and arrived there the same day. Denali is known for its natural beauty and wildlife. However, we were a bit disappointed that we did not see much of either thing; perhaps the month of May was a bit early as although it was Spring season, it was sort of a mild winter there. The train ride was magnificent

with surprisingly good service onboard. We left for Anchorage by train on 22nd May and were happy to be back to civilization.

Our last item on the itinerary was a visit to Portage Glacier on 23rd May. None of us had seen a glacier earlier and we were all very keen to see one. The closest I had come to a glacier in my life was at Gangotri where the Gangotri glacier at Gaumukh from where River Bhagirathi originates was 13 km away; the entire distance was a tough climb through narrow paths, and I did not attempt it.

The visit to Portage Glacier was by bus for most of the distance. It was a day trip, and the glacier location was just a couple of hours of drive away. Once the bus reached the destination, we were boarded on a small ship for the glacier seeing trip. It was an amazing experience, especially the sounds that a glacier makes while a piece of it breaks away from the main body.



YUKON RIVER

We returned to The Woodlands near Houston, Texas, our base in the US on 24th of May. However, my appetite for Alaska remained unfulfilled; My dream of seeing the Arctic Ocean and the northernmost point of the USA (Barrow Point- The Last Frontier) could not accomplish on this trip.



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Mackerel Pickle

Ingredients

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2. Ten to twelve black peppers
3. 1/4th teaspoon Fenugreek / Methi seeds
4. 3/4th teaspoon mustard seeds
5. Tiny bits of Shankar Chhaap Asafoetida
6. Six Kashmiri chillies
7. A small ball of Tamarind
8. Haldi powder, Chilli powder, salt and oil



Method

1. Cut each mackerel into 4 tiny pieces (do not use the piece near the head portion)
2. Wash and clean the fish well.
3. Apply Haldi powder, Chilli powder and salt to the fish and keep aside.
4. In a small bowl of water, soak Tamarind and Kashmiri red chillies after removing the seeds, and keep aside.
5. Heat two tablespoons of oil in Kada. Add 1/2 teaspoon of mustard seeds and 1/4th teaspoon of Asafoetida. After it splutters, add back pepper and Fenugreek / Methi seeds.
After a few seconds, switch off the gas and let it cool.
6. Then grind it along with the soaked chillies and Tamarind, and make a thick paste.
7. Heat a tablespoon of oil and add 1/4th teaspoon of mustard seeds and a little asafoetida to it. After it splutters, add the ground paste and fry it for a couple of minutes. Add salt to taste.

10. Add the fish to this paste. Cover it and let it cook for some time.

And the Mackerel Pickle is ready to serve.



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