Welcome New Officers!

New officers were elected at the April 2004 meeting of the Bal Sabha per the Bylaws of the Bal Sabha of Columbia, Missouri. They are:

President: Leena Pattarkine
Vice President: Bharat Srinivasan
Secretary/Treasurer: Sudhashree Garikela
Cultural Secretary: Surya Mantrala
Bal Sandesh Coordinator: Hema Srinivasan

Our congratulations to the new team!

EDITOR’S NOTE

Happy Diwali!

This issue marks not only Diwali, but the start of the school year, and last but not least, the beginning of the eighth volume of Bal Sandesh!

This issue contains articles on Navarathri. Also inside is a completely full Bal Sandesh poet’s page! We have some reviews, and as usual, delicious recipes in our Bawarchi Column.

In the coming issue, continue to expect more interesting articles, and we encourage everyone to submit articles, as they are written; no need to wait for deadlines! If you miss a deadline, your article will be included in the next issue.

- The editors

Navarathri and Halloween
Aswath Senthil Kumar, 3rd grade, Ridgeway Elementary School

. Navarathri is one of the festivals celebrated in India. Like Halloween, Navarathri is celebrated in the fall. Navarathri celebrations start on Amavasya day of Puratasi month (September-October).

Halloween is celebrated on October 31. In Halloween and Navarathri people dress up in costumes. However, in Navarathri children dress up like characters from Indian epics such as Krishna or Radha or dress up like people from different parts of India. On the other hand dressing for Halloween is based on scary characters.

In Navarathri people decorate their houses with dolls. Inside the house people make stairs called Golu padi.

On each step there is a different theme. There are usually an odd number of steps. Some of the themes are like parks orchestra and a shopper’s life.

In Halloween, the houses are decorated with Spiders, Pumpkins and Hay stacks. Unlike Halloween Navarathri is celebrated for ten days. For first nine days children dress up and go to others house’s and sing and get treats. The children get treats like fruits, beans, puffed rice with jaggery unlike candy, chocolate. ...

On the ninth day [Saraswathi Pooja] books and tools like hammer, scissors. Continued on page 2
This year, Navarathri started on October 14th and ended on October 23rd. On the 22nd, we had Saraswathi Puja. On 24th was Vijya dasami or Dassera. On Navarathri, we had a Bommai (doll) Golu with nine steps. In our family, our kolu has a few themes every year. For instance, every step has a Krishna and we always have a step with Krishna playing the flute and all the animals arranged around him, listening. Every year we add more to our collection of dolls. This year we added the Dasavataram, the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

Children often like to dress up for Navarathri. This year I dressed up as Krishna on one of the days, instead of dressing up as Andal, as I have done every other year. One of my friends, Nidhi came to our Golu dressed up as Sita.

Each night, different people came to see our Kolu, but some days we went to see other people’s Golus instead! We asked every one who came to sing a song for the Golu. It could be an American or Indian song. When the guests were ready to leave, we gave them a goody bag with a fruit, a packet of sundal and a treat.

Many of my relatives visited our Golu. My grandparents came from Maryland at the beginning of Navarathri and my Chitti, Chittappa and my cousin Anish came from Indianapolis at the end of Navarathri to see our Golu.

All in all, we had a very busy and fun Navarathri this year!
Mughal emperors once ruled India. Akbar was one of those emperors. Akbar had some ministers in his court. His favorite minister was an intelligent humorous man called Birbal.

One day Akbar, Birbal, and few other ministers were walking by a pond. Akbar touched the water in the pond and said, "I bet no person can stand in this pond for a whole night without dying". Birbal replied, "Jahanpannah, I am sure a man can stand a whole night in this pond without dying." Akbar said, "I would reward gold coins to the man who stands in this pond for a whole night." Then Akbar asked his ministers to inform the whole country about this challenge.

One day a poor washerman came in to the king’s court and said, "Oh Jahanpannah, I want to accept your challenge." That night the washerman got into the pond until the water reached his neck. He watched some faraway lights in the palace and kept himself awake the whole night.

The next morning the soldiers took him to the palace. When Akbar was about to give the gold to the washerman, one jealous minister asked the washerman, "how did you spend your night in the pond?" The washerman said that he looked at the palace lights and spent the night. "That is cheating" exclaimed the minister. "The light made you feel warm so you do not deserve this prize." Akbar agreed with that minister and did not give the washerman any gold coins.

Birbal the wise minister was watching all this and got furious. He wanted to help the poor washerman. Therefore he decided to teach Akbar and his other ministers a lesson.

One day he held a grand party in his house. Akbar and his ministers came for the party and spent a long time socializing. They were all hungry. Birbal came and said, "Jahanpannah the food is not yet ready. Please forgive me." Akbar wanted to know why the food was taking a long time to cook. So everyone went outside to see what was happening. The fire was on the ground and the food pot was hung on a branch on the top of a tree. "What a fool you are!" Akbar said to Birbal. "How can the food be cooked when the fire is kept far away from the pot." "It is possible" said Birbal. "When the palace lights can provide warmth for the washerman from a distance, the fire on the ground can cook the food upon the tree."

Akbar realized his mistake and gave the gold coins to the poor washerman. Akbar appreciated Birbal’s sense of humor and rewarded him too.

* Shelter of the world

THE KUMARS AT NO. 42” BBC WEDNESDAYS 8:40-9:20
Reviewed for Balsandesh by
Sheela Lal, Ninth grade, Jeff Junior High School

"The Kumars at No. 42" is a British-Indian talk show. Well, sort-of. The Kumars are really different actors acting as a family. The characters are Ami, Mum, and Dad with talk show host, Sanjeev Kumar. Each episode begins with a sketch in the house, which includes the first guest. They go out to the open where the audience sits. Sanjeev Kumar interviews the guests, who are mostly British, while Ami, Mum, and Dad make side comments throughout, making the show hilarious.

One example of this is when Donny Osmand is an audience member in the show.

Ami: Is it true that you can gargle with your vocal cords?
Donny: Yes,…. Wait, how do you know that?
Ami: There are certain advantages to being the stalker.

Next there is a second guest and at the end there is another sketch with one or both guests. My favorite character is Ami, who is extremely funny. Every time I watch the show, I wait to hear what she has to say.

Ami: Hare Motu (Sanjeev Kumar’s apparent nickname when he was younger), golgapas is not a medical term. It is an Indian snack, that is small, round, and hollow.

With the Indian humor added in, on top of straight humor, it becomes even funnier than it already is. If you happen to be British, then the added British humor makes it "laughing so hard, you’re rolling on the floor" funny.

Out of three stars, I would give this two and a half, only because the parents rarely say anything. I would recommend this show to anyone who likes to watch comedies in the middle of the week, and I really hope that you are one of them.
“Connections”  
By Sheela Lal  
9th grade, Jeff Junior High School  
I think we were both blind  
Because we became part of the connection.  
The blind connection.  
Even though we are different-  
Different interests,  
Different ideals,  
Different outlooks on life,  
We fell in love.  
I believe that you are trying to deny it.  
Don't.  
Otherwise you might lose me.  
Lose your connection.

Nava Rathri  
By Maya Cutkosky  
5th grade, Fairview Elementary  
Today is Navarathri my favorite holiday  
Out of the forest sitting on the winds  
Along the Kolu on each of nine steps  
Sit Several dolls  
I watch the people all dressed up for navarathree

“Silence”  
By Sheela Lal  
9th grade, Jeff Junior High School  
An eerie silence has crept over us.  
A silence which might never go away,  
Unless one of us fights against it.  
I thought you would fight,  
Fight for us.  
But now, I think that I was wrong,  
And I have to take the first step.  
But if I do, you do have to promise me that  
You will try to respond,  
So that this eerie silence will break.

“Thank You”  
By Sheela Lal  
9th grade, Jeff Junior High School  
We talk and talk,  
And by some miracle,  
We actually do communicate.  
Unlike some,  
We do make a connection.  
Maybe this friendship was meant to be,  
For we have survived the years, with maybe  
Only one fall-out.  
But it was fine, and now we are closer.  
This is my thank-you,  
My thank you for being there,  
For loving me when even I wouldn’t,  
And for being my best friend.
**Book Review**

**Book: Lord of the Flies by William Golding**

Reviewed by Ashok Cutkosky
Eighth grade, West Junior School

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**Lord of the Flies** is a book about a group of boys stranded on an uninhabited island that is mostly trees. This is a short summary of the story.

The main characters are Ralph and Piggy. In the beginning, the boys are scattered all over the island after a plane wreck in which the pilot, the only adult, was killed. A boy named Ralph meets another boy who is only identified by the nickname Piggy. Piggy and Ralph find a conch shell, and piggy tells Ralph how to sound it. Ralph uses the conch to call all the other boys, and they talk things over and vote for a leader. Ralph wins the election, the only other candidate was a boy named Jack, the leader of a choir. Jack is granted control of his choir, and decides that the choir is to be a group of hunters. Piggy advises Ralph to build a signal fire, which Ralph does.

The smaller kids, known collectively as “little uns” become more and more convinced that their island is inhabited by a monster. The “big uns” eventually go on a hunt for this beast, and in the dark they think they see it.

Jack becomes more and more infatuated with hunting the wild pigs on the island, and cares less and less about the signal fire. Jack and Ralph have more and more face offs, and eventually Jack and his hunters leave. They set up camp in an area called “Castle Rock”. Castle Rock is a place that can only be reached by crossing a rocky bridge. Jack and his gang set up a huge stone that can be toppled down onto this bridge as a security against fictitious enemies. Jack holds a great feast and wins most of the boys over to Castle Rock. The head of the pig eaten in the feast is kept on a stake for the monster. Ralph and Piggy and two twins go to talk to Jack. Rodger, another boy, gets trigger happy, and sends the boulder down…

This book is very engaging in that you can see that the children, left unsupervised, are duplicating the development of a culture. Ralph’s group had a culture centered on the conch shell and the signal fire. Jack’s culture was more about hunting and since it was separate from the civilization they came from, it slowly won out. Jack’s group even had the beginnings of a religion; they gave the pig’s head to the beast, a sacrifice.

Ralph, the main character in this book is rather like a normal boy at the start. He makes fun of Piggy at first when he learns his nickname, but, later on, comes to respect Piggy and uses him as a sort of crutch to keep his sanity. Ralph is a natural leader, very good at handling people and keeping the group together. Jack was unreasonably angry with him, and so started the revolt that caused so much trouble. Ralph quickly recognized Piggy’s intelligence, and usually did what Piggy suggested. Near the end, Ralph starts to forget the importance of the signal fire, and has to rely on Piggy to remind him. Ralph becomes more serious, a little less of a boy.

This book is a very good read, and I think that it is almost too real. This is an ideal book for people who think about what they read, because *Lord of the Flies* is much more than a simple adventure story.

Lord of the Flies is a Perigee book and is published by Berkley publishing.
The paper back is priced $6.95

Bal Sandesh welcomes book reviews and suggestions for books to be reviewed by the editors.

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**Giantland**

By

Maya Cutkosky
5th grade, Fairview Elementary

I’m going to Giantland to meet some new friends And following the current until it ends
Then there’ll be an island in plain view
I’ll paddle up to shore and the waves will too.
Uma Paterkine
Sixth grade,
Smithton Middle School

Here are some very yummy and very easy recipes. One of them (veggie pockets) I learnt when I went camping with my girls Scout troupe and the other one is very original, from my own cookbook!

1) Veggie Pizza THE QUICKEST WAY!!
Ingredients: Naan, pizza sauce, cheese, vegetables, paneer (optional)
On a naan, spread pizza sauce. Put some vegetables or any topping of your choice. I like broccoli, cauliflower, olives and paneer. Layer lots of shredded cheese on it and bake it in the oven at 350 °C for 5-7 min or till the cheese melts. If I cannot use the oven, I put it in a non-stick skillet on the gas, cover it and bake it.

2) Veggie pockets
Ingredients: Dough for rotis, vegetables, cheese
Roll out two medium size rotis, the size of a personal pan pizza. Put one of them on a flat surface. Spread some cheese, layer with vegetables and layer with some more cheese. Put the other roti on the top of it and seal the edges by pinching them together. Put it in the oven at 350 °C for 5-6 min till the rotis seem baked (they turn golden brown, looks just like regular roti when it is done). If you wish, you can layer the outside of the rotis with little oil or butter. The sizzling veggie pockets are ready to eat!

Upcoming Festivals and Cultural Events

Deepavali: Nov 11
Diwali Dhamka in Columbia: Saturday, Nov 13
Pongal –Sankranthi: Jan 15
Pongal in Columbia: Sunday, Jan 17, 2005
Republic Day: Jan 26
Republic Day in Columbia: Sunday, Jan 30.
(program by Balsabha Kids)
Sargam (classical fest): Sunday, March 13

Art of PB&J
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches sound simple enough, but are they? Dozens of things must be taken into consideration when preparing one of these common lunches. Some people like there to be more jelly than peanut butter. Some like it the other way around. Some like chunky peanut butter, and some like it smooth. The possibilities are endless.

What kind of bread? What kind of jelly? Some will even require a horizontal or diagonal cut or no cut at all! The following is a list of possibilities:

Cut: diagonal, horizontal, no cut
Amount: more peanut butter, more jelly, equal
Bread: wheat, white
Peanut butter: chunky, smooth
Jelly: grape, strawberry, apricot
Crust: crust, no crust

From just these possibilities, there are 216 possible peanut butter and jelly sandwiches! There are most likely even more categories that I haven’t mentioned. Just one more category with two possibilities, like say if you have pieces of fruit in the jelly or not, will take the total to 432! So you can see, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich isn’t really as simple as you might think, is it?

Thank you
This issue of Bal Sandesh has been made possible through financial sponsorship from:

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Howard Johnson/Panda Pals
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Bal Sandesh needs your help!
We welcome submissions of all types (reports, poetry, short stories, artwork, puzzles, jokes etc.). Work can be submitted to the Editor or theParent Advisors. We prefer electronic version of the submission (e-mail or diskette). Artwork can be submitted on paper. Older kids interested in volunteering to serve on the editorial/