

BRIJABASI SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for New Vrindaban Dham



August 2016

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Janmastami Celebration at New Vrindaban

by *Anadi Radha dasi*

Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra in Their peacock dress on Janmastami morning.

On Thursday, August 25th, New Vrindaban celebrated its grand Janmastami festival for devotees and visiting pilgrims. Janmastami is also known as the Appearance Day of Lord Krsna, as He appeared before Devaki and Vasudeva in the prison house of Kamsa over 5,000 years ago. This day is one of the most famous holidays for Gaudiya Vasinavas

because it honors the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His full glory. The auspicious occasion was open to everyone and many came to celebrate.

The day was very lively with Srimad Bhagavatam class in the morning by Nityodita das, Krsna Katha with Gaurnatraj das and bhajans with Sacidevi dasi throughout the day. Guests and community members had the special opportunity to perform cow puja ceremonies and pujas in front of the deities as an offering to Lord Krsna. Joyful aratis took place in the temple also while fresh squeezed juice was served outside for everyone. Sankirtan das gave a short reading from the Krsna Book at 4-4:30pm followed by arati and the Maha Yajna at 5:00pm.



Saradiya Rasa devi dasi, Namamrita devi dasi, Lilasuka devi dasi, Jesse, and Bhakta Jason enact their special Krsna pastime as part of the Janmastami Journey outdoor event.

In addition to the temple activities, this year's celebration included a very special outside event entitled, "The Janmastami Journey". With the help of New Vrindaban community members, coordinator Anuradha devi dasi set out to transform the temple campus into a

land filled with story vignettes and Krsna Katha. "The real intention was to take our guests on a spiritual journey in the darkness on a path lit by candle lanterns while participating in Krsna's pastimes thereby giving each pilgrim a taste of the different rasas the Lord shares with His devotees. The journey is a heart transforming experience and a perfect way to prepare for the advent of Lord Krsna's appearance at midnight." With its success and positive feedback, Anuradha devi dasi has already begun preparing for next year's journey.



Pujaris Abhinanda das, Hari Kirtan das and Sri Rupa das bathe Their Lordships.

The abhiseka of small Radha Krsna deities started at 8:15pm - 10:30pm, at the same time as the Janmastami Journey program outside. Kalash donors, guests and New Vrindaban residents took turns bathing the deities and joining the Janmastami Journey respectively. After the two events were over, there was a cultural program inside the temple room, which included a dance by Suma dasi. A Dramatic Lila Kirtan followed by an acting performance with Sankirtan das and music by Sacidevi dasi.



Bhaktin Heather and Bhaktin Anya dance during midnight arati



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Chandra dressed in flower attire for the midnight arati.

Finally all guests and devotees gathered into the temple room for the midnight Maha Arati. With great anticipation, the curtains opened and Krsna's appearance was

celebrated while everyone chanted His holy names. Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra were dressed in a beautiful pink gown made of flowers.

Devotees then had the opportunity to honor an ekadasi feast and maha offerings served shortly after the arati.

Sri Krsna Ki Jaya!

The Appearance Day of Srila Prabhupada

By Anadi Radha dasi



Srila Prabhupada on his vyasasana in Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra temple.

The day after the eventful Janmastami festival, devotees gathered together for the appearance day of the Founder Acharya of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. As a mahabhagavata coming from the spiritual world, Srila Prabhupada was a man with a mission and to this day he is honored and respected by his followers and other influential leaders throughout the world due to the revolutionary footprints he has left behind.

Because Srila Prabhupada was personally present in New Vrindaban, his appearance day is very special to the residents. Lilasuka dasi, resident of New Vrindaban says, "Every year of Prabhupada's appearance day, I feel more and more connected to him even though his disappearance falls even further and further in the past.

I remember my deep connection with him while serving devotees by his example."

Disciples of Srila Prabhupada assembled for this occasion, and in a mood of gratitude, they shared pastimes remembering their spiritual master. Disciples present included Varsana Maharaja, Nityodita das, Yudhisthir das, Jayasri dasi, Gaura Sakti das, Vyasasana das, Mahati dasi, Sukhavaha dasi, Gopish das, Ragunnath das, and Dinadayadri das to name a few.

After the arati kirtan led by Rupanuga das and dancing ecstatically, devotees honored a feast cooked by New Vrindaban's head chef, Brihat Kiran das.



Dr. Nick Tsacrios

By Abhay Charan das

Dr. Nick, a graduate from the University of Florida and general family health care practitioner, moved to New Vrindaban early in the summer of 1977 to offer free medical care to the devotees and has been selflessly serving the community ever since.

Born 1946, in Panama City, Florida he was raised in a little town called Live Oak not far from Gainesville, Florida where he first met the devotees in 1968. He recalls they had a little white house down by the university that he would visit regularly and donate vegetables to. With a natural proclivity towards spirituality, he was already a vegetarian before meeting the devotees. "I love animals and just couldn't figure out why people were



Lord Balarama's Form Touches Hearts

By Anadi Radha dasi

On the morning of Balarama Jayanti, also known as Lord Balarama's Appearance day, New Vrindaban residents listened eagerly to Srimad Bhagavatam class as Nityodita Prabhu retold the transcendental pastimes of Lord Balarama. "Lord Balarama is non-different from Lord Krsna and yet He has a very distinct mood! That is, He is the most enthusiastic servant of Krsna," he explained. Balarama means 'one who possesses both material and spiritual strength'. Therefore, Gaudiya Vaisnavas observe this holy day to pray to the source of spiritual strength, Lord Balarama. "When we have Balarama's mercy," he continued, "Anything is possible in the service of Krsna!"

eating their friends,” says Dr. Nick.

In 1972, he was on his way to do his residency in Syracuse, New York when he stopped through New Vrindaban and listened to Srila Prabhupada giving a lecture that he says transformed his life. “I remember Srila Prabhupada staying at the house Sankirtan das now lives in. There were probably thousands of people staying in tents that covered the hill sides as far as the eye could see, that had come to listen to Srila Prabhupada speak,” recalls Dr. Nick. “Devotees were vying for a spot to fan Prabhupada. And he had this charisma; he glowed.”

In 1977, Dr. Nick called up then temple president of New Vrindaban, Kuladri dasa, and asked if the community could use his services. Kuladri promptly laughed and said, “Get up here immediately.”

From stiches, ear infections, sore throats and shots to blood work, regular check ups, pediatric services and delivering babies, there was no lack of service for the young enthusiastic doctor.

With time, he had a full pharmacy, a lab for blood work with microscopes for white cell counts, and even a courier to pick up the medications.

“It was a full medical operations,” Dr. Nick reflects. By his estimate, there were over 400 children and 800 - 1000 devotees he was caring for at one point. He visited the gurukula twice a week,

The festival was celebrated inside Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra’s temple during the morning of August 18th, 2016. At 7:30am devotees greeted the deities who were adorn with beautiful hand-sewn pink, blue, purple and white embroidered dresses, exquisite turbans and decadent garlands made with roses, babies breath, and homegrown New Vrindaban flowers.



The day also marked the last day of Jhulana Yatra, hence devotees chanted and danced in a fierce kirtan for Srila Prabhupada after offering flowers and swinging Their Lordships on a swing.

The abhiseka of the Krsna Balarama deities followed.



Many devotees took great pleasure in participating in the festival. Kunti devi, wife of Tirthakara das who are both visiting from Mayapur, said about the

had clinic check ups three days a week and was on call 24 hours a day.

Probably most significantly, devotees came from all over just to have their babies delivered in New Vrindaban by Dr. Nick. He estimates that he, and his wife, Amadar dasi, a Prabhupada disciple, delivered approximately 150 children over the years. "We really had it dialed in. I recruited help with the public health department and would have two doctors on call for emergency" he says, "It was an incredible responsibility reflecting on it now. We were being protected by Krsna and never had any deaths."

In the mid 90's. Dr. Nick retired but still visits 2-3 devotees per week for regular check ups. "I love it here, it's my favorite place in the world." He laughed and said, "I might have an ace in the hole; by serving the devotees I might have a chance to go back home to Krsna hopefully."

Jaya Krsna das, the Community President, still consults Dr. Nick if devotees are sick. "I am impressed that Jaya Krsna keeps up good communications and really follows through to make sure any sick devotees are taken care of properly."

The community would like to give their special thanks to the good doctor for his loving and selfless work all these years. May Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra bless you, Dr. Nick – though, I think They already have.

festivities, "I really loved the family atmosphere and the opportunity to watch the whole abhiseka while sitting only 3 yards away," she shared. "It was wonderful. In Mayapur, that is simply impossible."

The morning festival ended with a grande feast and devotees broke their half-day fast with rice, paneer subji, okra subji, puris, sweet rice, carob cake made especially with brown and white frosting on top, homemade varuni drink, and Their Lordships maha-abhiseka.

Bhajans were held from 5-7pm in the temple to conclude the celebrations.

Srila Prabhupada on New Vrindaban



"Yes! Go on acquiring the surrounding lands and in this way we will establish a local self governing village and show all the world a practical example of spiritual life as Krishna Himself exhibited in Vrindaban."

- Letter from Bhaktivedanta Manor, July 27th, 1973.

The Ramayana – Past In Present

By Abhay Charan das



Sita and Rama pray to the Sages

The West Liberty University theater season opened Thursday, August 25th, with a musical by Kripamaya das, ***The Ramayana – Past In Present***, which ran through August 28th at the Kelly Theatre to the delight of critics and audiences alike.

The Ramayana, an epic poem full of drama, intrigue, love and dharma has captured the hearts and imaginations of people throughout the ages and is considered a classical masterpiece - one of the largest ancient epics in world literature.

Kripamaya, who is working on his undergraduate degree, is an interdisciplinary studies major at West Liberty and has been writing the musical on and off for many years. He set out to create a musical that would be enjoyable for all ages and did just that, with an average of over 100 theatregoers in attendance for every showing.



Mantara schemes to banish Lord Ramachandra

“The production began its public life as a staged reading last summer while the feedback from the reading helped Professor Aulick and I finalize the script,” says Kripamaya. The cast and crew then began rehearsing twice a week in June, then upped it to four days a week in August.

Professor Melinda Kreisberg is the director with assistance from co-director, script editor and scenic designer Michael Aulick, and Professor Linda Cowan is the music director.

This musical rendition of the epic *Ramayana*, which runs 2 hours and 30 minutes, including an intermission, was well written and preformed by the cast and crew that featured West Liberty students and staff in a variety of creative roles, including actors, musicians and stage crew.



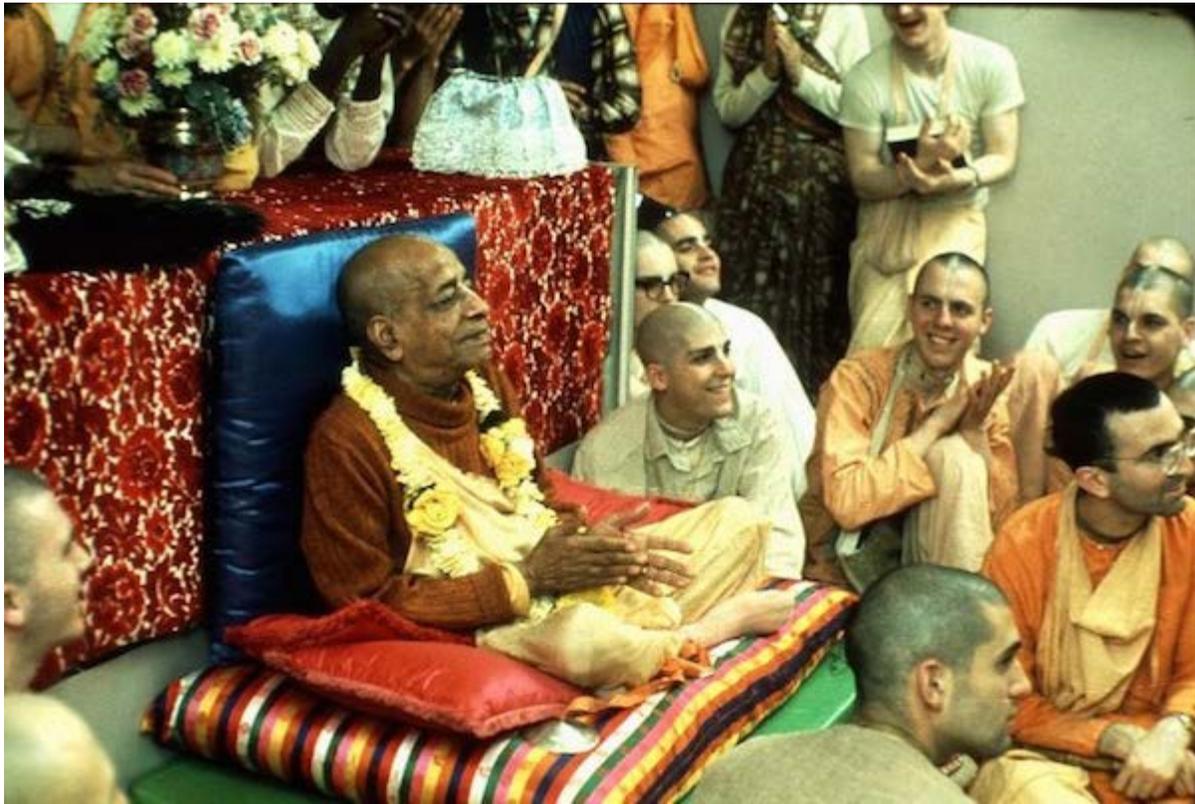
Ravana and Indrajit plot to kill Lord Rama

Inspired by the captivating story, Kripamaya created the musical hoping that those who attend the production of *Ramayana – Past In Present*, would experience the joy from the realization that they are all actually related to each other in a very deep, meaningful and spiritual way.

“The positive feedback is beyond my expectations. I received very insightful feedback and took away memories I will cherish for the rest of my life. Working with the cast and production team has been wonderful, “ says Kripamaya.

Well received by critics, he reports that the director of the Towngate Theater thought the performance was amazing, while a respondent from the National Playwriting Program showed great appreciation as well. With a few revisions, he hopes to submit *Ramayana – Past In Present* to a musical theater festival soon.

Kripamaya would also like to take the musical to India as a form of cultural exchange. “We feel if Indians could see Americans performing the *Ramayana* so enthusiastically, they would be absolutely delighted and their hearts would be touched,” he reflects.



Srila Prabhupada watching the "Vaikuntha Players" perform "The Kidnapping of Rukmini" as Kripamaya smiles at Srila Prabhupada

The musical was preformed as an offering to Srila Prabhupada for ISKCON's 50th Anniversary and to the community in hopes that this may be an inspiration for devotees to get involved in drama. He also hopes the musical acts as a catalyst to develop a music and theater program in New Vrindaban.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the musical. The writing was well thought out and the production team did an excellent job," says New Vrindaban resident Gopala Keller. "I look forward to seeing more plays from Kripamaya."

Bhakti Sastri Course in New Vrindaban



Photo of Tirthakara das, visiting from Mayapur Dham with wife Kunti devi dasi, giving a Bhakti Sastri class on The Nectar of Instructions on August 15-23rd, 2016 at the Wellness Center.

Govinda's Snack Shack

By Anadi Radha dasi



Bhaktin Anya and Anuradha dasi socialize with guests.

Beginning in May, the Govinda's Snack Shack opened for the public. The little buvette by the temple has now transformed into a community hot spot. It is currently run by

Anuradha dasi, and is increasing in popularity due to its new exotic menu items such as the Hail to the Kale Beet salad, Kachori and Dhokla Chaat, BBQ Jackfruit sandwiches, and original triple berry and mango smoothies.

Not only does the Snack Shack offer mouthwatering delectables, its spirit and convenience draws people to it. "Govinda's Snack Shack serves as another point of contact with our guests," says Bhaktin Anya, who currently helps to run the snack bar. "I believe people feel comfortable and feel nourished both on the outside and the inside when they come for snacks. We have made so many connections this way and I look forward to making even more."

Govind's Snack Shack plans to try and offer special menu items next year. It will be closing at the end of September, so get in while you can!

10th Anniversary of E-Brijabasi Spirit!



Brijabasis celebrate pushpa abhiseka.

September 2016 marks the 10th year anniversary of Brijabasi Spirit online! We appreciate all the devotees who contributed and are still contributing their efforts into this wonderful endeavor thus strengthening our Brijabasi Spirit in New Vrindaban. We especially want to thank Madhava Ghosh Prabhu who initiated the original Brijabasi Spirit Newsletter and opened the Brijabasi Spirit online for public viewing. Please visit (<http://www.brijabasispirit.com>) for more information.

The Prabhupada's Palace Smoothie Shack

By Anadi Radha dasi



Nityananda dasi serves her guests.

The Smoothie Shack opened this year on Memorial Day weekend. The Palace Management initiated its opening along with operator, Nityananda Dasi with the idea it would be nice to offer some refreshments and snacks for the convenience of visiting guests, as well as local devotees while visiting Prabhupada's Palace.

With a supply of fresh fruit smoothies, hand squeezed fresh lemonade, ice cream cones and various quick snacks, and juices, it has yet quickly become another point of contact for visitors to feel nourished and at home. "The holiday weekends are the busiest," says Nityananda Dasi, "and many returning guests have stated their appreciation for the stand especially on those hot summer days. I find it is also a really nice way to interact with guests who are first time visitors."



Palace of Gold's shack outside.

Due to the tight space and its fresh beginnings the menu has yet to expand, however there are thoughts for the future, which may include but are not limited to samosas and pizza slices. Until then, catch The Smoothie Shack open every weekend Saturdays and Sundays, 11-5. Stop by for a delicious Mango Chunky Monkey or a Strawberry Banana Rama Smoothie. The last day of operation this season will be September 17th, for Festival of Colors.

New Vrindaban YouTube Channel!

Please see our New Vrindaban YouTube Video Channel with Srila Prabhupada's Appearance Day offerings by his disciples. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTZN9B-XF-mLZfkcstyGliw>



Please Contribute to This Newsletter

Do you like to write? We would love for other brijabasis to contribute to our monthly newsletter. If you are a writer and you want to share your thoughts, realizations, and events with our readers, please submit your writings to vrindavanadas@gmail.com. We would happily consider your writings for publications. Please note that we reserve the right to edit your writings. Thank you so much.

CORRECTIONS: From last month's Brijabasi Spirit Newsletter entitled, July 2016, there was an incorrect statement in New Vrindaban's Ratha Yatra article: "The celebration marked the first time in history Lord Jagannath, Baladeva, and Subhadra visited a town outside of New Vrindaban since the community was established in 1968." A correct statement would be, "The celebration marked the first time in history the **large Deities** of Lord Jagannath, Baladeva, and Subhadra **residing in New Vrindaban** visited **Wheeling for Ratha Yatra** since the community was established in 1968." The large Jagannath, Baladeva & Subhadra Deities were originally carved in Pittsburgh (from New Vrindaban lumber) and resided there for some time. Also, there are a number of years the large JBS Deities left New Vrindaban, traveled to Cleveland and devotees held Their Ratha Yatra procession there.

Upcoming Events in New Vrindaban!



September 9th - Radhastami

September 12th - Parsva Ekadasi

**September 13th - Appearance Day of Lord
Vamanadeva**

**September 14th - Appearance Day of Bhaktivinode
Thakura**

September 17th - The Festival of Colors

**September 19th - Palace Sangam: Women of Bhakti,
Special Guest - Mother Jayasri**

September 26th - Indira Ekadasi

**September 30th - October 1st - Srila Prabhupada
Festival**

October 22-23rd - Kartik 24 Hour Kirtan

Hare Krsna!

August's Brijabasi Spirit Newsletter was published by

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If you have any questions, please email us at iskconnv@gmail.com or call 304-843-1600 ext. 106.

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