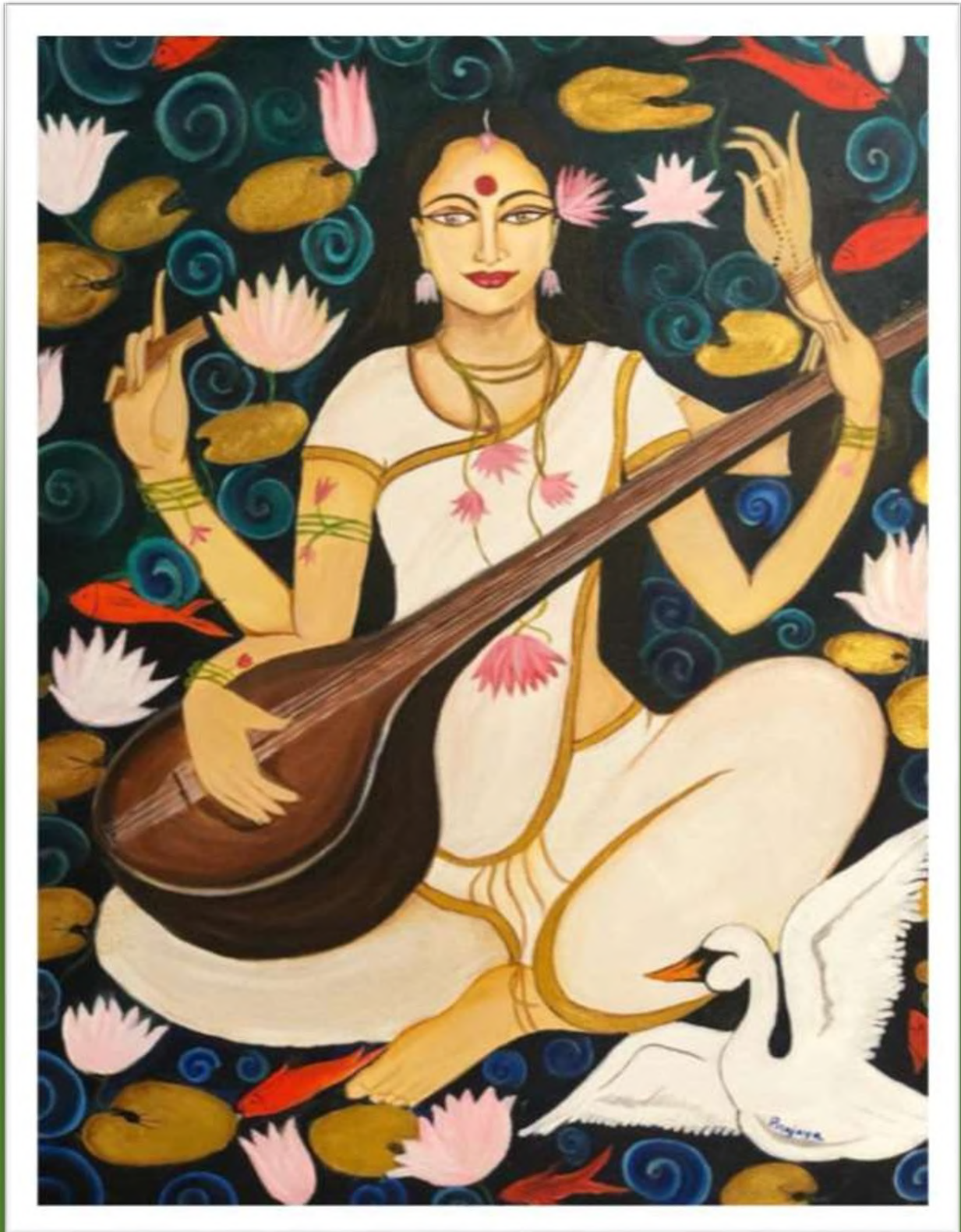


AAMA AAINA

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A Reflection of our Times
OSA NY/NJ/PA Chapter: Journal 2022

*We thank the journal editors- Deepti Paikray, Prajnya Pradhan,
Nagesh Rajanala and Jigisha Biswal*

Journal Front Cover

Artist: Prajnya Pradhan

2022: A New Beginning

Dear friends,

On occasion of Saraswati Pooja, we pray Goddess Saraswati blesses our community with her eternal wisdom, radiant knowledge, and peace all around. As we celebrate the first event of 2022, we are pleased to present the newest edition of Aama Aaina, a journal that reflects the times we live in. The beloved children of our community participated with enthusiasm, sharing their thoughts and feelings in their writings in a forthright manner.

The management team of OSA NYNJPA wants to share with all of you, an update on our transformation journey in our chapter.

Why Transform?

Our community has been continuously growing. Many new families have chosen to become part of the community and are participating in the activities. Families have also expressed the need for OSA to go beyond the 4 core events in the year (Saraswati Puja, Picnic, Ganesh Puja, and Kumar Purnima) and provide with opportunities for the families to benefit from.

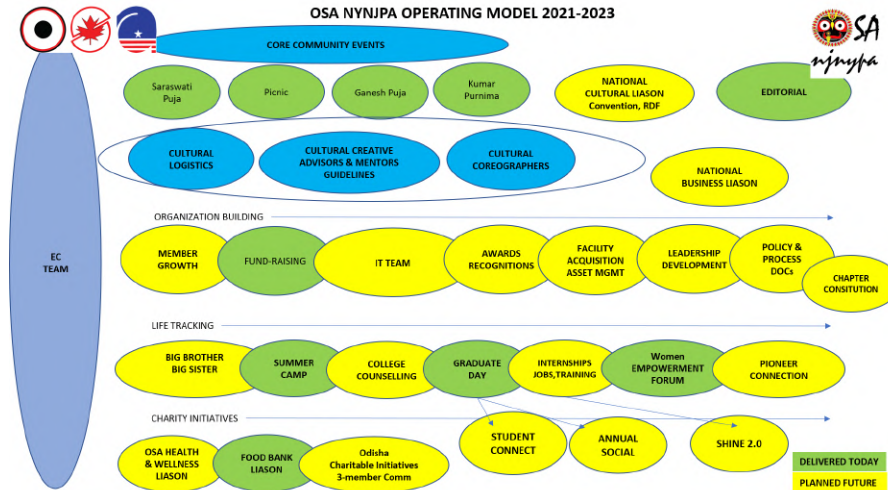
The growth in membership has also brought in new talents and new skills into our community. This presents a unique opportunity for us to enhance our volunteer base and provide new opportunities to member families, especially children.

How was the Transformation Agenda decided?

In 2019, the OSA NYNJPA Executive Committee travelled to all geographies of our chapter and met families in small groups. We had open dialogue and discussion about what the community means to us and what we want from the community. A summary of these discussions was presented to all of you and became the basis for our transformation approach.

What is the end goal of the transformation?

We approached the needs of the families based on the stage of life they are in. Some families have small children, some in middle school, some in high school and others in college. All families have working professionals and many families are approaching retirement or have retired. Based on an articulation of these needs, the following agenda has been proposed:



The details of the various initiatives will be discussed in detail in the next General Body Meeting.

Do we have enough volunteers to handle these initiatives?

Yes. To address that need, we have created 3 groups of volunteers:

1. The OSA NYNJPA Executive Committee is a 12-member team
2. The OSA NYNJPA Management Team is a 45-member team that reviewed and approves initiatives and expenses.
3. In addition, each of the initiatives have smaller member teams to design and executive the initiatives.

Currently about 90-100 volunteers are moving this agenda forward. We need all of you to get involved – After the General Body Meeting, we will share a process for you to join a team of your interest.

When will OSA NYNJPA families see the initiatives in action?

Each team is working diligently to design and announce the initiatives to the community. You would have seen the announcements related to the Mentorship Program, Shine 2.0, Summer Camp, Graduate Day and the Professional groups... more are on the way.

What is the end goal here?

Our community is vibrant, multi-faceted and very talented. We have the resources to help all adults and children to succeed in their jobs and education. The initiatives have been created to enrich and continue our core cultural activities and enhance other new initiatives for our families.

We look forward to your participation in all areas in 2022 and beyond.

OSANJNYPA Executive & Management Team

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Candies Galore!!!



Anya Mahakud, 6th grade

Who doesn't like candies? Candies are one of the most widely consumed comfort foods. The sweetness associated with candies is supposed to provide a sense of joyfulness and positivity and improve the general well-being of the people. While the US does not have the highest candy consumption in the world (*that crown goes to Sweden, where people consume more than 35 pounds per capita*), it does produce a lot of mouth-watering candies and here are the top five best-selling candies in the US.

M&M's: 2020 annual sales: \$712 million: M&M's are a brand of multi-colored, button shaped chocolate candies. It has a soft chocolate center inside, and it is encased in harder chocolate, which has the letter m written on it. The shell helps keep its shape even in warmer weather, which leads to the M&M slogan "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand." The brand originated in the US in 1941, where they were sold exclusively to the U.S. military. To cope with the higher demands in the middle of the war, the M&M company moved to a larger production factory in Newark, New Jersey. As of 2021, about half of M&M's productions are still in the Newark area.

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups: 2020 Annual sales: \$412 million

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups are a popular American candy consisting of a peanut butter-filled chocolate cup. The brand was invented in 1923 by H. B. Candy Corporation, before they were acquired by the Hershey Chocolate Corporation. Since 1969, Reese's has been the company's best-selling chocolate brand. Reese's includes the United States' single best-selling confectionery item in Reese's Peanut Butter Cups King Size. Reese's products also make up 47% of all seasonal candy sales in the country. The next top-selling brand only accounts for 10% of these sales. The brand's current slogan is "Not Sorry, Reese's."

Hershey Company: 2020 Annual sales: \$394 million

The Hershey Bar is the most popular brand of chocolate bar in the United States and the flagship product of The Hershey Company. The company refers to the bar as “The Great American Chocolate Bar.” Hershey’s Candy Bars come in a variety of forms and flavors, including milk chocolate, milk chocolate with almonds, and Cookie’s ‘n’ Creme. Hershey products are created using the patented Hershey process. The specific steps to creating the products are a trade secret. This may be the cause of the iconic tangy taste of all Hershey products.

Snickers: 2020 Annual sales: \$381 million

Snickers is a chocolate bar brand sold by Mars, Incorporated. It consists of a chocolate-layered piece of nougat topped with peanuts and caramel. Mars, Incorporated invented the brand in 1930, naming it after the Mars family’s favorite horse. The chocolate bar was sold under the name “Marathon” in Ireland and the United Kingdom until the early 90s, when Mars, Incorporated changed the name to Snickers to align it with the global brand. In the United Kingdom, Snickers candies are also marketed as energy bars. A new campaign was introduced in 2020 to market Snickers bars called “Confused? Maybe You Just Need a Snickers.”

Kit Kat: 2020 Annual sales: \$345 million

Kit Kat is a brand of chocolate-layered wafer candies produced by the Nestle Corporation internationally and by the H.B. Reese Candy Company in the United States. Each standard Kit Kat bar consists of three layers of wafers, covered, and separated by layers of chocolate. Each package includes two to four bars fused together. There are many varieties and flavors of Kit Kat products sold, including dark, milk, and white chocolate. In the United States, the brand’s slogan since 1986 has been “Gimme a break, gimme a break, break me off a piece of that Kit Kat bar!” Kit Kat regularly introduces new flavors and varieties of the standard bar. In 2020, for example, the brand released the Raspberry Creme and Lemon Crisp flavors. A dairy-free, vegan Kit Kat product has recently been launched under the name ‘KitKat V’.

I am sure all this discussion about the candies has whetted your appetite and you are already searching the corners of your house for the candies you love the most. Personally, I love all the above candies and more. I do have a very sweet tooth. So, what are you waiting for? Go and get your favorite candy and enjoy it with the people you love. I know, I am going to...

Why do people struggle to remember stuff?



Rishabh Das, 4th grade

I came back from my playdate. I have a class about to start, and I need to find my notebook. I hear my mom shout to join the class. I look around for my notebook nervously. My room is a mess. Stuff is piled over each other. This makes it hard for me to find my notebook which is something important for my class. I start sweating. This right here is an example of somebody forgetting something. Have you ever forgotten something, and got very nervous? Well, I have, and I will tell you why people forget. The most important reasons why people forget are because while you have fun you forget, as you age you forget, and when you learn something new and always practice it, you may forget the thing you learned before that.

Sometimes people struggle to remember stuff. This is because as we age, subtle changes in memory occur naturally as part of the aging process. Forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. As people get older, changes occur in all parts of the body including the brain. As a result, some people may notice that it takes longer to learn new things. For example, they may have medication, which might lead to not hearing well. So, when the person hears something, they may quickly forget that thought, and not remember. They don't remember information as well as they did, or they lose things like their glasses. Many people with old age may have thyroid problems which can lead to people forgetting stuff. Younger people remember at least when they last saw or used it, but older people may not even remember simple details. This is one of my reasons why people forget stuff.

Another reason why people struggle to remember important things is because when time flies by and when you have fun, you forget many things. For example, I once lost my notebook when I was practicing how to do some math, but then I decided to go outside and to play with my best friend named Luke. When I came back home, I couldn't find it, and then my mom helped me search for it and she saw it immediately. I check exactly everywhere I keep my notebooks, except my own desk. Another example is when my sister lost her crocs. She got so worried that she started to cry in her own room. I helped her search, and I quickly found it on the shoe rack. She checked everywhere but there! The most usual place to keep shoes. Many other people also have stories like this too! This is one of my reasons people forget stuff.

A third reason why people struggle to remember stuff is because there are 2 boxes in your brain and sometimes your brain can't process the information and throws the not important stuff away

and we forget stuff. For example, when a student learns something new, for example how to multiply fractions and they get good at it, and they learned right before that how to do long division they may forget how to even do the first step. Another example is when a kid is learning how to play the trumpet and he was beyond good at it. He played smoothly and was the best in class. His trumpet teacher gives out stickers if you played well in class. The kid got many stickers because of his beautiful notes. The next day, everything changed because he forgot to play in a medium amount of sound, but he kept playing loudly. Also, the sound was so squeaky. He got frustrated. This is one of my reasons why people forget stuff.

To wrap up, one reason that people forget important details in their lives is because when you have fun and time passes by you forget simple things. My other reason is that when you learn something new and keep doing that, you may forget the thing you did before that. When you get hooked on something, you forget the ordinary things. My final reason is when you age, your brain changes and you forget many things. I realize that you might be thinking there is no cure to forgetting, but there is! Some of them are to write what you want to remember on a post-it note. Another example is to do many IQ puzzles and make your brain bigger. The effect of this is that you will be able to store a lot more things before you even start. Other people should take my advice because this can help you a lot.

MLK Jr.: A man who changed America



Siyona Samal, 4th Grade

"I Have a Dream" we have all heard of this amazing speech by MLK, and it continues to inspire people to this day.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, and he grew up in the segregated south. Black Americans and white Americans could not dine in the same restaurants, attend the same schools, or sit together in public transportation. It was at the young age of 15, that he decided he wanted to devote his life to end segregation.

As a 15-year-old, he traveled to Connecticut to work in the tobacco fields, when he saw that there was little to no segregation at all. He became a minister in Montgomery, Alabama, instead of up north where there was no segregation. As a minister, he motivated all African Americans to boycott and protest the segregation on public transportation, which led to a law being passed and segregation on public transportation became illegal. He gave many important speeches and participated in many peaceful protests.

He helped pass many important laws that led to the end of segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, ended segregation in public places, The Voting Rights Act of 1965, allowed African Americans to vote in U.S. elections, and lastly, The Fair Housing Act of 1968, stopped discrimination when selling or renting property.

Sadly, many people did not agree with him, which led to his assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. His legacy continues to inspire people, including our new generation. MLK day is celebrated on the 3rd Monday of January, and is considered as "a day on, not a day off" to help the poor and needy in your community.

Ram Choudhary & co.



Ayaan Mahapatra, 12 Years

Look here, I didn't want to be a demigod. If you are reading this story & you're a mortal, Lucky you! You can go on to believe that this is fiction. But if you feel... weird when reading it, stop it immediately. Close this story & tell your parents/ guardians to move to The Great Smoky mountains IMMEDIATELY or ignore it & try to have a normal life for a mortal. If you decide to read further, danger awaits. Don't say I didn't warn you.

I am Ram Choudhary. I am 12 years old and go to Mills Park Middle School in Cary, NC. I am very intelligent, but I have dyslexia. But don't think I am dumb. I am the smartest as I can easily concentrate on something. But I was so concentrative, I can literally quote the biggest book in history with a little bit over 4 million words. I also love archery & surprisingly, I was able to shoot down a mango 75 feet away by making a bow out of a stick and some shoelaces, and a pointy stick they use in barbeques for arrows. I also for some reason could dance extremely well so I love playing Just Dance on my computer. I also could somehow breathe in water. I thought I was going to be normal but not for long.

One day I went to math class with Mr. Skilaw. He has Caramel colored skin and wears a jacket patterned with elephants & bows. We were talking about dividing decimals when someone from the back of the class shot a spitball at him.

He said, "Ram Choudhury, you will talk to me after math class."

Behind me I heard someone trying to hide their laughter. I turned around and of course... Matt Purojooti. He was skinny and went to basketball practice. He also is the school bully, and his dad has a huge real estate company so of course, he is rich. He sniggered and returned with 177.3 divided by 5. My best friend, Ahan Mahapatra, is a huge person, plays basketball and has a HUGE appetite. One time while I was at his house, he ate 5 XL 5 cheese pizzas in one sitting along with 12 Belgian waffles, 10 servings of Mac & cheese and he was still hungry. It took me all my strength to stop him from pouncing on Matt.

After, math, I went up to Mr. Skilaw & Ahan stayed with me because he is very loyal. But surprisingly, instead of scolding me, he asked If I know what the Mahabharata is. "Of course," Me and Ahan said.

"But who is Karna again?" we asked.

Mr. Skilwar then explained to us that we were incarnations of Arjuna and Bheema. So that explained why I can shoot at like, 28 yards away and Ahan can Lift cars as if they are cotton balls. As it turned out, Mr. Skilwar is just a pseudonym & His name was Drona, the guru or teacher from the Mahabharata. He then called our moms to tell them. But I still didn't believe it. As strict as he is, he has surprisingly good humor, so it is impossible to believe him. Then Matt came in screaming, "HELP!! SCHOOL IS UNDER ATTACK..." He stared at us in awe. Then when we looked up, we saw some symbols. Mine looked like a lightning bolt and Ahan's looked like a tornado. Then something dropped into my pocket. It was a pen. And I accidently dropped it then it returned to my hand, and it was still sharpened. Ahan's looked like a whistle around his neck. Then I looked at Matt and my jaw dropped.

Above his head was THE SUN!!! Then he pulled out a phone.

"Nice right?" Said Drona. I looked at him and said, "Why do I have a pen? Before he could say anything, I heard a roar. Behind me was a person with concrete black skin and wearing a dhoti, tshirt & pirate hat. He was holding a spear in one hand & a pirate ax in one hand. The next thing that happened was on reflex.

I clicked the pen. FAST!! Then from a pen, It became a bolt of electricity in my hand sparkling & crackling. Ahan blew his whistle with such a pitch and volume, I thought my eardrum would burst. Then it elongated into a mace.

Matt said "Siri, use operation 'Fireball'". The phone then turned into a huge stick & on top of it, was a tip. It glowed so much that I thought they would combust. Me and Mat shot our weapons toward the asura and Ahan jumped up and bonked the asura with his mace hard on the head. The asura then exploded into light.

Matt then apologized for his rudeness, and we returned home. In the museum my mom works in, she asked me about the incident and when I did, she threw her watch onto the floor but then it turned into a portal! Thus ends my story, hope you liked it.

I Love Snow

I love snow
It is so white
I love it so much
I like it even at night

I like snow
It is so soft
It's like
Sitting in a loft

I love snow
You can do so much
You can't bear
It even by touch

Fields and fields
It fills with joy
Even when Alexander Graham Bell
Said Ahoy hoy

Snowy Day Miracle

I open my eyes
Then I smelled fries
I went to the window and there was snow
Who would know?
This strange weather in spring
Then I heard my phone ring

I ignored it and went down
There was so much space outside to play around
After food, I got a jacket
Then my mom gave me two warm packets
I went out it was cold
I forgot my gloves on my hands and they soon got out of hold
I went out for play
I hadn't had so much fun



Siona Sarangi, 4th grade

Linguistic Sexism in English



Aaryana Rajanala

Over the years, people have taken great strides to reduce gender inequality, from movements such as women's suffrage to eliminating the gender wage gap. Sexism, however, is still prevalent throughout parts of society. It has been shown that gender bias and sexist attitudes develop from a very young age. In a study conducted by Smith and Lloyd, the researchers examined the understanding of ten four-year-olds and ten six-year-olds when presented with linguistic gender stereotypes. They concluded that the understanding of the children paralleled that of adults, as well as that the boys recognized their ability to use the knowledge of gender marking in language to establish a social gender identity. Because gender identity develops from such a young age, the problem must be addressed where it is still forming.

Learning to understand and use language is one of the first things humans do in their lifetimes. Several studies have shown that sexism is often inherent within languages. Campoy, in a historical linguistic review of correspondence from the Early Modern English period, found a strong correlation between gender and linguistic features. The study determined that more research was needed in this area.

Many languages use the idea of grammatical gender to categorize nouns, adjectives, and verbs. A case study conducted by Fcmntini examines a girl named Carlina, who grew up learning both Spanish, which uses grammatical gender, as well as English, which does not. The study followed Carlina from ages zero to ten to answer the question, "When and how do children begin to manifest differentiated speech patterns, behaviors, roles, and speech styles associated with gender?" and examines factors such as the speech patterns and behaviors of her and the people around her. The study found that, although the way grammatical gender is used in Spanish does not always correspond to physical gender, the arbitrary distinction between inanimate objects as masculine or feminine does affect the way children learn to classify and compare things.

Studies have found similar occurrences in English. Although English does not assign gender to all nouns or verbs, it does use masculine and feminine pronouns to classify various things. One study

looked at the use of pronouns in English and found many instances of sexist usage. For example, in Spanish and other Romance languages, the general rule is that, if there is even a single male present in a group of people, the masculine article or pronoun is used to refer to it. Although there is no strict grammatical rule for this in English, it uses “he” or “man” to refer to a general group of people, also known as the generic “he,” very often, pushed by grammarians as correct over the generic “they.” In contrast, feminine pronouns are frequently used to refer to objects, bringing the researcher to the conclusion that men refer to things with a feminine pronoun if they believe that they own it. The study also found evidence of male and female characters in general English grammar books conforming to gender stereotypes (Stanley, 1975). The sexism evident in common usage of the English language and stereotypes present in grammar books used by children shows that there are many sources from which children might obtain sexist points of view.

Several studies have investigated further into the presence of sexist language and stereotypes in textbooks and other educational materials. Linguistic sexism is defined as any language that excludes one gender when something is applicable to both (Amare, 2007). Willis and Jozkowski found an abundance of linguistic sexism while looking at ten peer-reviewed journals on sexuality, health, and psychology. The study begins by defining linguistic relativity as the idea that language shapes the way people perceive the world, bringing a measure of importance to the subject by further establishing that subtle and seemingly inconsequential linguistic cues and sexist undertones can have significant effects on the development of sexist attitudes. It also discusses several previous studies conducted on linguistic sexism, including a study by Bem and Bem that found that gender exclusive language in job descriptions discouraged women, and Stout and Dasgupta found that “women are evaluated more positively when they carry a masculine job title compared to a feminine one” and that these effects are also present in children. Willis and Jozkowski looked specifically at male firstness (the ordering of male terms before female, such as “men and women” or “he or she”), which was present in each of the journals anywhere from 57.7% to 88.8% of the time. Male firstness is an issue because it puts men ahead of women in language, which translates into gender perception that puts men first.

Linguistic sexism is especially harmful in educational settings where children being introduced to English grammar could be exposed to sexist ideas. One study looked specifically at the language used in textbooks in India. As a result, it was discovered that these textbooks, many of which were prepared or used by two national agencies, National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and Central Board of Secondary Education, used mostly male characters that often appeared as the dominant forces. One sentence, for example, says, “People get born the sons of kings, and they grow up to inherit power and riches,” using “sons” and “kings” to refer to all “people” and therefore attributing “power and riches” to only male figures. Although linguistic sexism and stereotyping in English textbooks is not as overt due to recent progressive movements, it is still present. Amare investigated instances of linguistic sexism according to guidelines provided by the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) in various online grammar guides. The criteria include use of generic he and man; titles, labels, and names; gender stereotypes; order of mention; and male to female ratio. Another study investigated the presence of linguistic sexism in business writing textbooks, also using the NCTE guidelines, and

concluded that textbook writers need to be more aware of the prevalence and significance of linguistic sexism (Nielsen, 1988).

Several other studies also discuss the need for education on linguistic sexism. Zittleman and Sadker point out the need for more research and educational materials regarding linguistic sexism. In education majors, texts rarely contain information on gender issues, and linguistic sexism goes unaddressed in these classes. Because of a lack of information on this topic, the subtle effects of sexist language go unnoticed when teachers teach young students, and sexist beliefs persist into adulthood.

A study by Folsom showed that, despite the enormous strides that have been taken towards gender equality in past years, many teachers are still reluctant to address it and that many believe it is a waste of time. Folsom collected many quotes from teachers disregarding the importance of linguistic sexism, despite curriculums violating the NCTE guidelines. Pincus and Pincus more recently conducted a study, published by the NCTE, that stressed the importance of teachers, especially language arts teachers, learning about linguistic sexism and how to recognize and combat it. The appearance of words that use a male or female endings (actor/actress, waiter/waitress), male and female analogs (tailor/dressmaker), terms that could have neutral endings (policeman/policewoman/police), and terms with overt gender markings (doctor, lawyer, nurse) are some areas in which teachers can make an impact. This study also emphasizes that teachers must be aware of their own language usage to act as a neutral role model for students who are still learning language.

The significance of linguistic sexism as a factor in the development of gender bias in children is evident. While there were sources detailing sexism in foreign textbooks or other educational materials, there were none that looked into the presence of linguistic sexism in grammar books used by children who would still be at an age of developing gender identity. Even though there is sufficient research to show that it is imperative that teachers learn about linguistic sexism and how to minimize its effects on children, little action has been taken in this matter. It is essential that linguistic sexism is looked for in textbooks specifically used and read by children who are still creating their perceptions of gender.

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Aaryana Rajanala is a student pursuing a double major in Computational Linguistics and Latin. Using the technology developed in the past several decades, she hopes to use computer science to apply the power of language to practical spaces to combat linguistic bias.

The Grave Adventure



Devanshi Sahoo

Have you ever been to a tourist destination enjoying the place but suddenly have rain come pouring at you and then, suddenly have fire erupt? Well, I have, and this is how it all starts. Screeeeeeech! Our bus finally reached the destination and hit the sudden breaks. Everyone got up and got out of the bus.

“You folks get to enjoy this place but be sure to come back exactly at 2:30!” The bus driver exclaimed.

We jumped out and examined the place. There was a small entrance to a deep trail and on the right side of it, there was a mini restaurant that served only coffee and biscuits. It was a strange restaurant with 2 walls covering the kitchen and another wall for pictures and the small menu. It was strange because there wasn't any entrance door, just a register table and some tables and chairs all over the place. There were many people just chilling in the restaurant and drinking steaming hot coffee. The smell of the air was moist and fresh like you were in a jungle. First, it looked just like a sudden trail in front of a village with small hut-shaped houses all around it. It didn't look like something amazing as the Chichen Itza pyramid would be somewhere in there.

We walked on the trail and talked the whole way while examining both sides. The trail was big and narrow with giant trees on both sides that stood up like 300ft. There were thousands of stalls on both sides, and they sold all sorts of magnets, toys, clothes, and more. Each stall focused on one type of item. I wondered whether there was any competition between each stall since they all sold similar products. My parents found some magnets and thought of buying them as our mementos. We did this every trip and would stick the magnets on the fridge. As we walked down the trail Karishma, and I started talking to each other.

Finally, the trail ended, and we reached this big area with trees surrounding the perimeter. The land was huge with a giant pyramid smack in the middle. The pyramid was gray and had small steps leading to a tiny entrance. This design was kept on all 4 sides of the pyramid. It looked amazing. The design of the pyramid made it look exactly like those ancient pyramids where something cool would be hidden inside. Sadly no one could go inside due to preservation safety. As we took it all in, we found the tour guide. He came up and a bunch of tourists gathered around

him. He started explaining the history and how Chichen Itza was made. He had a jolly and loud voice making the area around him feel so jumpy and happy. After he was done everyone started dispersing and started taking photos.

After a few pictures, Karishma's parents and her little brother left since it was hard for them to handle Nikit/ Karishma's little brother. We stayed and after a few minutes, it started pouring heavily. The rain came out of nowhere. A few minutes ago, there were barely any clouds, and it was bright and sunny but right after the tour guide left it started raining as if he had control of the rain. Though it was raining Karishma, my mom, my dad, and I were in Chichen Itza smiling in front of the camera.

"Say cheese! Just one more picture and let's take this one from the angle of the tree." my mom exclaimed.

The more pictures we took the more we got drenched. On top of that, the pictures weren't going to look that good anyway since we were all in those \$5 raincoats that are bright yellow and make you look like a yellow ghost. Also, the hoodies covered half of our heads and poked out in front. As we took more pictures, I started thinking about how dry Karishma's parents were in the restaurant taking care of her little brother. My mouth started to get sore from all that smiling, and I wished it wouldn't be raining. With all that rain it started getting muddy and the place became a mess. On top of that, the ground was plain dirt, so the rain made the floor sticky and messy. Nonetheless, the pyramid was amazing. I just really wanted to go inside the pyramid and see what was in it but knew we couldn't, in fact nobody could. The way the pyramid stood created a sudden urge in me to see what was inside. Anyway, we finished taking pictures and decided to sit under a tree until the rain lessened. As we were waiting Karishma and I were talking and talking.

"Boom!" Then suddenly out of nowhere a fire erupted. We turned to our right and we saw a small stall on fire. The fire was sparkling, and fizzing sounds were coming out of the fire. It was bright orange and it sparkled quite a bit considering the number of gray clouds that covered the sky. It felt like it was a holy fire that had busted out in the middle of the rain to give us warmth. Anyway, though no one was hurt it was still crazy. Chaos exploded and everyone was running. Though it was raining the fire was still burning and the smell of the smoke spread as the fire grew. The thing that caused the most trouble was that the fire was burning near a bunch of trees. As this was going, I started getting a sense of fear but at the same, a sense of excitement came streaming in. *Finally, the fire drills we had in school came to use*, I thought. Luckily this wasn't super close to us, and it was more near the woods. I started feeling sad for the owner of the stall because his hard work was burned into ashes. We soon followed the crowd and followed the path that led us straight out of Chichen Itza. We ran super-fast passing the small stores. I was surprised to see them acting normal after seeing one of the stalls on fire. I didn't even see anyone holding a water hose to wash down the fire. No one was even going to check on the guy's stall. Was this normal to them? Or did they just not care? As we continued running, I started wondering about the magnet and whether it was still with us. Maybe my parents misplaced and got all caught up with taking pictures and the rain?

Finally, we reached the mini restaurant where Karishma's parents and her little brother were. That restaurant was way different from the usual restaurants. In fact, maybe it was a cafe because it was small and had no walls but luckily there was a roof. When we reached it, Karishma's parents were standing. We took off our drenched yellow raincoats right away. My parents wanted to go back and take more pictures. So, they left me with Karishma and her family. Before they left, they handed me the two magnets they got for our fridge and one for our friend. I was scared for them since there was a small fire but knew it was quite far from the pyramid. Anyway, as they were taking photos Karishma, and I started growling. Her parents asked the waiter for some food, but they didn't have anything. To keep our minds off the food we started talking to each other. But soon the thought of Chichen Itza and how close it sounds to chicken pizza started making us even more hungry.

Finally, after what felt like a million years, my parents came back, and it was the perfect time to be back since there was only about 1 minute left before the bus would leave. We stood in the cafe and talked for a while and then returned to the bus. As I entered the sudden warmth and feel of the bus made me feel quite cozy. Karishma and I sat together and waited for the bus to start. Screech! "I hope you all had an amazing time!" the bus driver exclaimed as he started the bus. In the end, I had a great feeling of this day and would never forget all the chaos we went through to see that pyramid. I will keep this a memory knowing that a day like this could never happen again.

Grey Hair



Aditi Paschimiray, grade 7

The sound of footsteps echo through the rooms.
The paintings on the walls stare at me like ghosts.
The carpet is stained with distant memories.
My life seems like a long-forgotten story.

This house used to be a home,
Filled with love, cheer, and hope.
Now my hair is greying, and I'm old.
Now, my hair is greying, and my hands are growing cold.

The cabinets are empty and stale.
The paint is already chipped.
The sound of laughter is caught in the walls
And lost forevermore.

This house used to be a home,
Filled with love, cheer, and hope.
Now my hair is greying, and I'm old.
Now, my hair is greying, and my hands are growing cold.

I see as the wind drifts by,
All those faded memories running through my mind.
I don't know whether to smile or cry.
All I know is that...

This house used to be a home,
Filled with love, cheer, and hope.
Now my hair is greying, and I'm old.
Now, my hair is greying, and my hands are growing cold.

Are We Using Smartphones Wisely?



Abhilash Patel, 8th Grade, NY

The modern inventions have simplified the work lives for many of us. There are many things we can do with the help of the internet and smartphones that we could never imagine doing in the past. As of April 7th, 2021, 97% of adults and 95% of teens (13-19) own a phone, in the US. For many people, their smartphone is the paramount part of their lives. It helps them focus on their job throughout their working hours. However, over dependence on smartphones can cause greater harm than good, on a couple of occasions.

Why Are We So Attached to Our Phones?

We all know what it's like to check our phones for no reason other than boredom, stress, loneliness, or anxiety. Sometimes it's because just why not. It's becoming clear that we don't all use our smartphones with intention. Instead, we look to them for comfort when we feel unfulfilled. Perhaps we yearn and desire for small escapes in our daily routine. These strange rectangular glass devices allow us to check our friends, our relatives, our area, our world, and even ourselves. But those escapes cost time, attention, money, and other precious commodities. By giving our attention away so carelessly, day after day, we can't live as meaningfully. We shouldn't get rid of our smartphones; however, they aren't designed to be addictive. It's their accessibility that's addictive. Just like other addictions, quitting cold turkey is a punch in the stomach, your health, and most likely your social life.

Ways to attenuate smartphone addiction

1. Don't replace face-to-face interactions with electronic interactions

The amount of time we spend using electronic communication has increased considerably since the release of the smartphone. Because we only have a limited amount of time each day, smartphone use can lead us to spend less time with others, which, over time, can drastically and negatively impact our lives.

Why? Because ample research shows that building strong social relationships is one of the best things we can do for our mental and physical health, and it may be easier and faster for us to build these relationships in person. Engaging in face-to-face social interactions tends to improve our mood and reduce depression.

2. Don't use your phone when you're with other people

To build those strong, in-person relationships, we also must be mindful of how we use our phones around others.

If you're with someone and they start using their smartphone, the social interaction tends to be lower-quality. As you've probably experienced, it can break the connection, stall a conversation, and make you feel unheard.

One study suggested that people who use their smartphone while dining out with friends experience less interest and enjoyment and more boredom than people who don't.

3. If you're connecting online, be active

We often like to think—or we've been told—that social media like Facebook and Twitter can help us connect with others. But it turns out that using electronic devices to connect socially doesn't work very well, at least not in the short-term.

A recent study showed that our mood and feelings of social connection aren't any better when communicating online than when not socializing at all. In fact, the more a person mainly interacts with others online, the worse their mood and the lower their feelings of social connection.

Side Effects from prolonged smartphone use

1. Excessive use of smartphones can lead to insomnia: - People who are addicted to smartphones believe that they cannot sleep properly without checking their phone for some time. When they can't instantly fall asleep, they also feel as if there is nothing to do other than check their phone.
2. Irritation: - Generally, we notice that when we waste too much time on the phone it can affect one's sleep routine to such an extent that we don't even get our necessary sleep. This disturbs the brain and add-up anxiety, stress, and irritation in the affected person's behavior.
3. Visual Issues: - Most often smartphones are used for watching videos, photos, playing video games and chatting. While doing all these activities brightness or range from phones affects the light of our eyes. Many of the lights emitted by smartphones have dangerous wavelengths. An example of this is blue light. The wavelengths emitted by blue light boosts our attention in the morning but messes up our circadian rhythm in the night.
4. A Headache:- A Severe headache is the consequence of extreme phone use which can last for a long time. Harmful rays from phones can cause eye irritation and put stress and depression too. You might not also realize it, but we blink less usually on our phones. This can cause harm to the optic nerve.

Ways to Break Your Smartphone Addiction

The more time spent in front of your phone's screen means less time doing what you truly want to do in life. By implementing the steps below, you can attenuate your dependence and possible addiction on your mobile device.

1. Put your phone on flight mode every night, ideally at the same time.

You'll avoid getting your sleep interrupted, and you'll be less tempted to go on the Internet first thing in the morning if it's already in-flight mode. That means better sleep and a calmer morning.

2. Use a time tracking app to see how much time you spend looking at your smartphone every week.

On Android, consider Time Used on the Play Store. On iPhone, consider Moment. Once you see how your smartphone easily eats up your time, you'll realize that all those little checks take up a good part of your day.

3. Don't keep too many social media platforms.

With all the social media platforms available and our friends having multiple platforms, it is very tempting to use everyone. Two to four should be a good amount. For example, I have WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Discord, but not Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or Twitter.

4. Avoid using the phone during meetings or in front of others.

Keep your smartphone out of sight. You can put it in your briefcase, bag or in a pocket. Using the phone around other people shows that you aren't interested in them or their conversation.

Things I learned in my research and wants to share with all of you:

- **Smartphones are our greatest distractions and focus killers. Learn to use them wisely and smartly.**
- **Do not use smartphones to kill your time. Avoid mindless browsing. (browsing without focusing). It is the most degrading thing you can do to your brain.**
- Always open your smartphone with a purpose. Use it for that purpose and close it down.
- Don't let smartphones degrade your quality of life.

"It is not what technology does to us, it is what we do to technology. Used skillfully, it can improve and enhance our lives beyond our wildest imagination. Used unskillfully, it

can leave us feeling lonely, isolated, agitated, and overwhelmed. Get smart with technology, choose wisely, and use it in a way that benefits both you and those around you.” ~Andy Puddicombe

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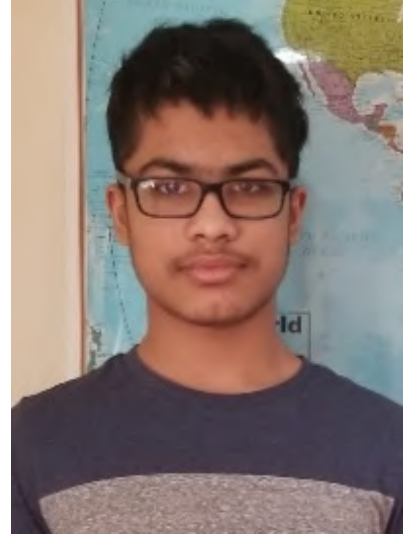
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Cyclonic Odisha



Aahan Mahakud, 8th grade

Most of us have heard about hurricanes and that some of the states in the U.S. (*mostly Florida*) are impacted by them, but did you know that the state of Odisha is prone to many cyclones as well? Do not get confused by the names. In the Indian subcontinent, the hurricane-like tropical weather patterns are referred to as cyclones.

Cyclones, otherwise known as hurricanes, tropical storms, and typhoons, are a type of natural disaster. It is a large, swirling storm, with high wind speeds and downpours of rain.

Cyclones will normally form over strips of warm ocean water. The water heats the air above it. Heat rises, so the hot air will travel up, and cooler air will rush in to fill up that space. The ocean then heats up the cool air, which will rise, and the original hot air will cool down enough to travel back near the ocean. The cycle continues, dragging air down to heat and letting it rise. As it goes on, the air will start to take water molecules, forming clouds and lots of rain. Eventually, all the wind will make the hurricane start to move. Once it's above cold water, it is not as powerful, but the raging winds keep it going. As it touches land, it starts to disintegrate. However, the high winds and heavy rain can cause a lot of damage. In the Atlantic, there are around 6 hurricanes that form every year in one season, which lasts from June to November. They are put into 5 categories with numbers 1-5: Category 1 being the weakest, and Category 5 being the strongest.

In the last 22 years, the state of Odisha has been hit by no less than 10 severe cyclones, and even more smaller cyclones.

1999 SUPER CYCLONE | 2013 CYCLONE PHAILIN | 2014 CYCLONE HUDHUD | 2018 CYCLONE TITLI | 2019 CYCLONES FANI AND BULBUL | 2020 CYCLONE AMPHAN | 2021 CYCLONE YAAS, GULAB AND JAWAD

The state of Odisha is known for its hurricanes that occur annually. Cyclone Fani, in 2019, was a particularly large storm. It was the largest in the region since the 1999 storm. However, Fani is greatly outclassed by the 1999 storm. It is called BOB 06 by the IMD, or the Indian Meteorological Department, and 05B by the JTWC, an American based center responsible for issuing warnings for storms and hurricanes. BOB 06 is the most intense tropical cyclone in the North Indian Ocean, and one of the most destructive. It officially became a tropical storm on October 25th, 1999; however, its origins could be traced to 4 days prior in the Sulu Sea, in the Southwestern area of the Philippines.

BOB 06 had the weather helping it. With the favorable conditions, it became stronger and more intense. By the 28th, it was classified as a super cyclonic storm, and the next day, it had reached wind speeds of 160 mph (260 km/h), officially a Category 5 Hurricane. Its power was unprecedented as the storm's peak strength raged on for approximately 30 hours. Eventually, it dissipated over the Bay of Bengal on November 4th.

The Indian Government estimated that around 9,900 people died, with over 8,000 deaths occurring in Jagatsinghpur, a district in Odisha where the storm mainly hit. The storm's immense size had caused heavy rains out all the way to the east, in Bangladesh and Myanmar. The storm ruined many crops, such as sugar cane, rice, and others. It also destroyed more than one and a half million homes, causing widespread damage throughout the region.

This 1999 storm was one of the most severe storms in the 20th century. With the help of technology, many people were evacuated, preventing thousands of casualties. Even so, the damage done was horrendous, with over 3 billion rupees given to the Odisha state government for that cyclone and previous cyclones. Foreign governments also provided \$13 million dollars to help with the damages.

So, why are we seeing so many cyclones especially in the recent past? Meteorologists and scientists have theorized that climate change can be blamed for the sudden increase of intensity of these catastrophic disasters. As the world warms, tropical cyclones get more sources to originate in, and the warmer waters are stronger fuel.

Best Friend



Aditi Paschimiray, 7th grade

I walked into the towering building of Lake Shore Middle School, anxiousness gripping my heart like a child gripping his mother's hand during a trip to the hospital. Students of all ages bustled around me chatting, laughing, hugging, studying, but there was only one person who seized my rapt attention. A girl in faded jeans and sleeveless shirt stood alone, a lonely look sitting upon her face.

I'd just moved from New York City to New Jersey, and today is my first day at Lake Shore Middle School. That's where my life had taken a swerve. I was used to NYC's fashion divas and busy surroundings, while New Jersey was too simple and too quiet for me. There was one thing though that I couldn't find in NYC that I had a big chance at here: a *best friend*. I'd wanted one since I used to toddle around in diapers, but in NYC I couldn't find one. Nope. I'd never had a best friend, maybe NJ could change that, but just maybe. I found my locker, the one next to the lonely girl.

"Hi! I'm Kacy Davis," I introduced myself cheerfully to the lonely girl. She dropped all her books on the floor in shock, a streak of panic bursting into her eyes.

"I'm sorry if I shocked you! I'm so sorry!" I knelt to help her. "What's your name?" I asked, curiously.

"Audrey," she mumbled. I smiled kindly, and a small smile played on Audrey's lips.

"I'm in sixth grade. What grade are you in?" she asked, shyly.

"I'm in sixth too!" I piped. "Who do you have for your homeroom?"

Our conversations grew longer and flowing and so did the start of our friendship. Audrey was smart, intelligent, and funny. We were in the same homeroom, but in the rest of the subjects she was in Honors, while I wasn't. Soon, it was time for lunch!

I went to the cafeteria kitchen to buy lunch. As I came out of the kitchen, I spotted a bunch of girls and boys surrounding Audrey, and I walked towards them.

“You’re such a baby!” somebody teased, and the next thing I knew, Audrey ran out of the cafeteria, tears streaming down her face like a waterfall. I ran behind her, my lunch tray thumping against my ribs.

“Are you okay, Audrey?” I asked when I caught up to my new friend. She shook her head. “Who was that? That girl who called you a baby?” I asked. She bowed her head down, sobbing quietly.

“Come on! Let’s go tell the guidance counsellor. What was her name? Mrs....um, Mrs... Mrs. Randall!” I took Audrey’s hand and headed towards Mrs. Randall’s office, but she pulled her hand away from mine.

“No, we’re not going to Mrs. Randall’s office,” Audrey declared. I cocked my head, questioningly. “Because, because I don’t want to be a bigger baby!”

“It won’t make you a bigger baby! You’re not a baby. You’re a responsible individual!” *Why does she think she’s a baby? Does it have to do with that comment in the cafeteria?* I wondered. She shook her head.

“Just tell me her name. I won’t tell Mrs. Randall,” I said.

“Promise?” she asked, and I nodded. “That was Rachel. Rachel Stevens. She’s the queen bee of sixth grade. She thinks the whole sixth grade belongs to her or something. I’ve been her victim for years now, but I’ve never had the courage to tell on her.” Audrey sighed.

“You know what? Let’s go and show her that she’s not a queen bee. Watch out Rachel! Here we come!” I joked. Audrey giggled.

“Let’s do this!” I took Audrey’s hand and walked with her to the lunchroom.

“Hey, Rachel!” I called. Rachel Stevens looked at me. “What’s 1 plus 1?”

“Two, duh! Are you brainless or something?” she sneered at me.

“No, but I thought you might be!” I glared at her. Everybody in the lunchroom went silent. They knew a fight was going to happen.

“What did you just say?” Her face was turning red.

“Oh! Looks like you’re deaf, too.” Rachel balled her palms into fists.

“O...M... G. You are so ugly! I hate you! You...you...ugh!”

“At least I’m not the ugliest on the inside because you are. Just an FYI, but looks on the outside don’t matter, who you are on the inside matters. At least I’m not the most hated because you

are. All your friends here you see, they're all scared of you. They don't want to be outcasts, so they hang out with you! Do you realize that now? Huh!"

My argument was strong. I had seen the hurt and pain in Audrey's eyes when Rachel had called her a baby, and I was going to stand up for my friend. Rachel looked shocked, and she couldn't do anything else but run out the lunchroom, and that's what she did.

Suddenly, everybody in the cafeteria started clapping loudly and cheering confidently. I beamed with happiness. I turned around to find Audrey ready to hug me. She embraced me happily.

"Thank you," she whispered. "You're my *best friend!*" Finally, I'd found my best friend, and that too in a very unexpected way. I'd also solved my best friend's major problem. Now that's not something you do every day. No, not at all.

A Unique Holiday



Swarnab Roy-6th Grade

The 22nd of December, the second last day before the winter break starts. After coming back from school that day I was coughing, sniffing, and sneezing too much. Since I was coughing a lot, my parents got worried and decided to take me for COVID-19 test to a lab.

After waiting for gazillion time in the waiting room...finally-hooray I got picked to get tested by the doctor. They checked me with a different type of cotton swab in both of my nostrils for 15 sec. Let me just say this was not my best experience with the doctors. Finishing the test, me and my dad got in the car and drove back home. Few minutes later my dad's phone rang, it was the call from lab, which said that I tested positive. This is when my winter break turned into a total disaster.

I was very scared because for my dad and my brother. Since my 3 years old brother is not vaccinated and my dad just had to undergo a surgery, their immune system was not very strong yet.

As soon I arrived home, Mom was aware about my test results. Everyone was sad and mom and dad concluded that I had to stay in my room for seven days and get tested back on the 8th day, which would be 31st Dec. Only time I was allowed to come out was for lavatory and to get food from outside my room door, or you can say door dash.

Felt like it would be a fun experience alone in my room. I usually read books to pass my time. So, I wanted to read a book then I realized I left it in the school locker, I missed movie time in school the next day, was sad and cried. First night passed by with dinner time alone in my room.

Next morning, I got up late with mummy's knock on the door. The doctor was asking for my friend's name whom I sat with at lunch or rode on the bus. Mummy informed school about my test results, and she wanted to share these details to nurse for my friend's safety. Day was good with lots of free time and no worksheets to complete....it was just me time.

Next day I got up early but couldn't go meet my brother nor mom or dad. I felt awful. Because of me my family had to wear mask the whole 7 days inside the house to not get infected. We canceled all the holiday plans. Me time turned into a boring and exasperating day, and then at

about 4 PM a knock sounded on my door and mom stated that gadgets were outside the door waiting for me. So, I would not get bored inside MY FORTRESS.

But I still missed playing with my brother and missed the fun of winter break. On the third day my dad kept the Google Mini outside my chamber. From then on, I was listening to my favorite songs. One of the gadgets was communicator phone. So, that I can do video call and talk to my family. One thing I followed, which my parents kept supplying all the time was drinking lots of fluids, since it is the only thing that will cure you fast and fluids flush out the virus from the immune system.

It was 24th afternoon, I was very sad, I could not see all the presents under the Christmas tree. Later my mom told me that Christmas would be postponed. It would not be celebrated until I came out of quarantine. I understood this. On 29th my mom told me to make a game for her office New year party. On 30th games were ready, and it was called GK. I made the questions hard but not hard enough because somebody got all of them correct.

On 31st I got out of my room and went with my family to do testing again. After coming back, I stayed in a mask the whole day since I had Covid-19 for past few days.

At night around 11 PM we all went outside to see some Christmas and New Year lighting together.

At 12 AM my dad's phone had a message saying that we all tested negative. Finally, I was happy and started hugging my family and took the first selfie of the year together. Santa delivered all the presents on 1st January Morning, and we celebrated New year and Christmas together.

Message: Please test yourself if any symptoms of COVID 19 show up and avoid spreading the virus. No one wants to stay in quarantine and miss family holiday time. With patience and love of my family I overcame the virus.

Art Section





Mrs. Manasi Nayak



Mrs. Jyotsna Dash Mahapatra



Aarna Mallick, 4th Grade

Sonaira Singh



Misha Dash



Devanshi Sahoo

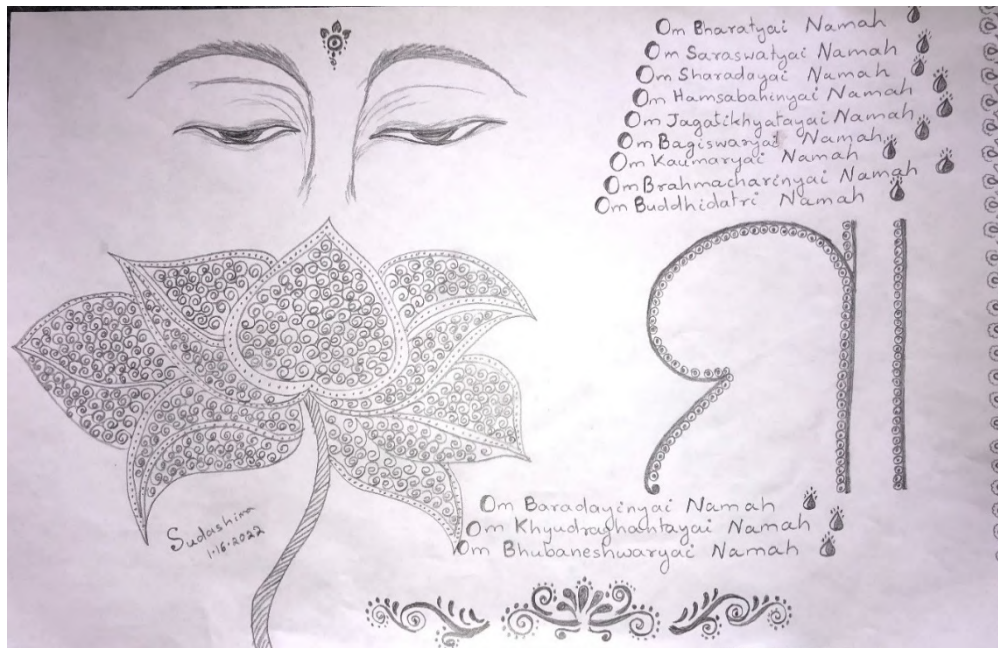


Purbasha Dalabehera





Taruna Parija



Mrs. Sudashima Naik



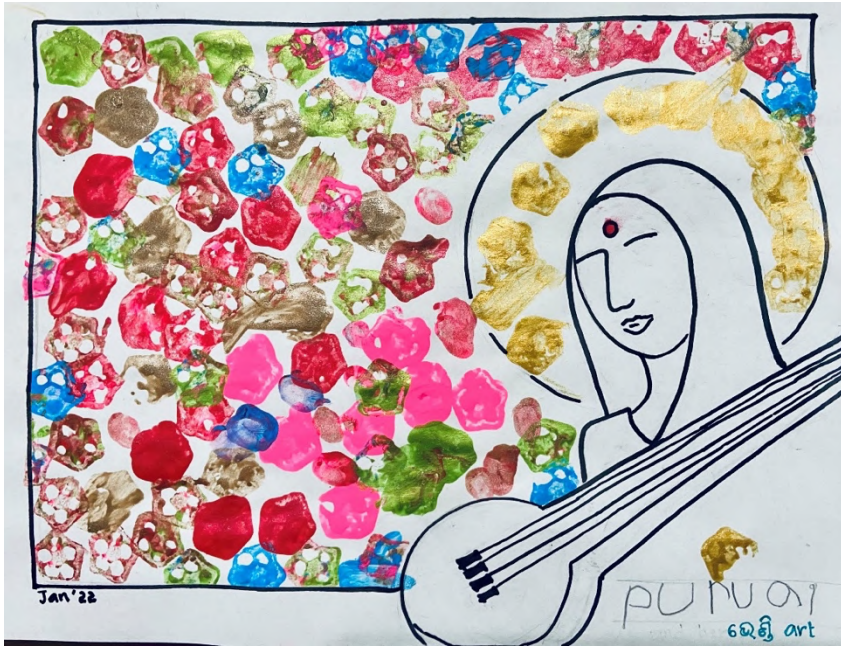
Arnesh Nayak

Photograph by
Mr. Sujit Mahapatra



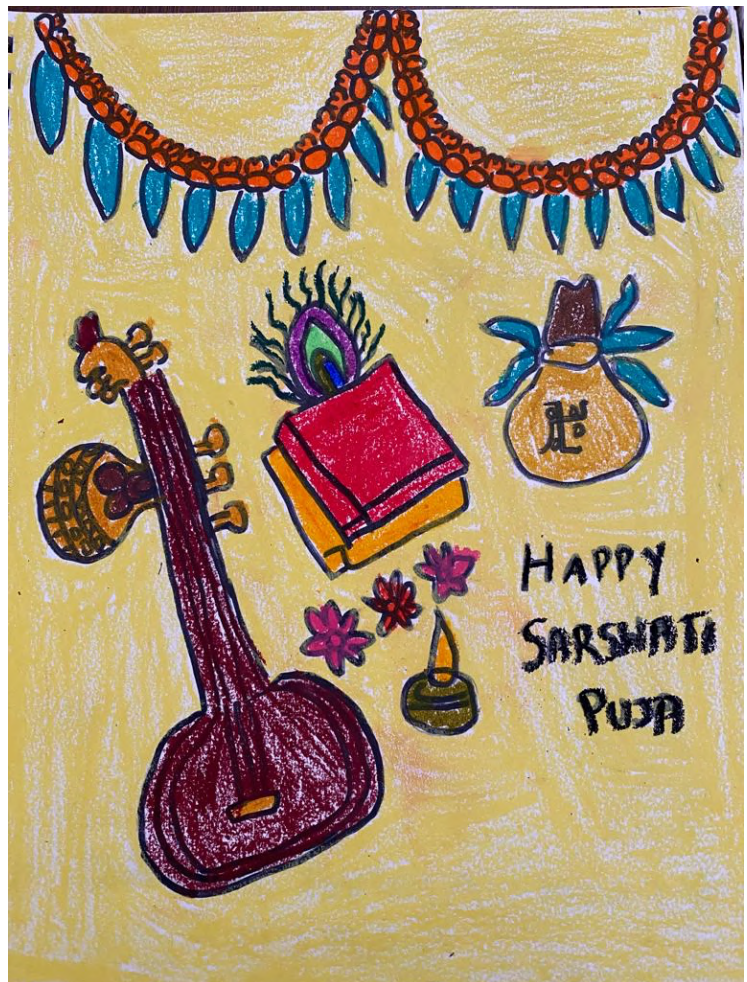


Siaraa



PUNVAI ROY

Anuva Nayak





Alisha *S* Nayak

Alisha Nayak

OSA NJ/NY/PA Chapter



May knowledge and wisdom ...
... be your best pursuits in life