

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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You better get used to the fact that I'm your new CEO and I like floral prints, lace and baby pink!

### In the pink

Pink is confused these days.

Yes, the colour – as in satin ribbons, a message-loaded bunch of roses, and the preferred shade for describing a recommended state of health.

On the one hand, Pink, not too long ago, was being described as the colour of the moment on techie-filled hoardings in the city. The fashion world, apparently, is tilting towards in-your-face colour, with the word 'fuchsia' being drizzled about, dah-ling.

On the other hand, Pink has been informed that it is not the recommended colour for power-dressing, for making a statement in the boardroom.

Pink is thoroughly upset.

Imagine having to re-think your very soul every other moment, being tossed around...like a pink pong ball...(Sorry, that was really low.)

For poor Pink, the world is becoming frightfully complicated with the old girls-in-pink and boys-in-blue days gone, and lines getting definitely blurry.

"Being fun, pretty and great at the old joie-de-vivre spirit doesn't make me all fluffy and empty, okay?" huffs Pink, "I am sick of Black and Beige coming the heavy intellectual or power-punch over me. At least I am honest, unlike some of those deliberately understated tussars floating around. Besides, hasn't anyone heard of the iron fist inside a velvet (make that pink velvet) glove?"

Who says Pink can't be tough, savvy, show attitude – perfect for upward mobility anytime, anywhere?

Go, Pink!

Ranjitha Ashok

## Two vanishing landmarks of the city

(By V. Sriram)

The last year witnessed land coming under tremendous commercial pressure in Madras that is Chennai. The boom has had its direct impact on the heritage buildings of the city, most of which are being viewed as prime parcels of land and nothing more. After the stately *Kushaldoss Gardens* went under the wrecker's hammer a few weeks ago, we find that two other landmark buildings in the city are in the process of silently folding their tents and vanishing like the proverbial Arab.

In fact, the first of the two has already vanished. The *Saraswathi Stores* building on Mount Road was better known in recent years as the home of the *AVM Dasa* restaurant, whose high ceiling and wooden flooring added to the joys of eating dosas there. Then the restaurant closed down and the building was left empty. Perhaps that was an indication of what lay in store for it.

It is ironic that all this should have happened this year. For, within three months the birth centenary year of *AV Meiyappa Chettiar (AVM)* will begin. And *Saraswathi Stores* marked his first major business success in Madras city. But considering that *S.S. Vasan's* landmark *Gemini House* was pulled down in 2004, his birth centenary year, it is perhaps apt that *AVM's* centenary too is remembered this way. We will carry a detailed article on *AVM* and *Saraswathi Stores* in the next issue of *Madras Musings*.

Now we come to the other threatened landmark of the city, namely the old north Madras campus of the *Madras Christian College* (for further details, please refer page 2). When the college and school moved out by the 1950s, the property changed hands and was tenanted by lawyers after it was acquired by the *Life Insurance Corporation of India*. The building, now partially pulled down, was a classroom block that the legendary Principal of the College, the *Rev. William Miller*, had built c.1910. Around it there still remain vestiges of other college and school buildings, much of it now commercial space.

The *LIC*, which proudly proclaims the restoration of its main building in *Calcutta*, has been less than enthusiastic about its heritage properties in *Madras*. This *MCC* building was allowed to collapse – and then marked for destruction rather than restoration. And no attempt is being made to restore that *Mount Road* landmark where *Indo-Saracenic* has run exotically wild, the *Bharath Insurance Building*. Wonder what fate awaits that original piece of architecture!

## Too little nutrition — and obesity too

### — Both, school canteen threats

Malnutrition or inadequate food, and eating disorders, like obesity, are the main problems in child health today. Citizens consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) took up a study on these two important nutritional insecurities. The study aimed to lead to improving the nutritional quality of food made available to children in schools and enhancing the

noon meal programme. As part of the study, CAG also launched a campaign to phase out the sale of junk food and restrict corporate product promotions in schools. CAG examined and assessed the state of the feeding programmes in schools supposed to provide at least one nutritionally adequate meal to children a day. The administration, infrastructure and nutri-



• One of the few buildings of the *Madras Christian College and School* in *Esplanade* (Off *NSC Bose Road*) was once used as school classrooms but, when it became *LIC* property in the 1950s, it was rented out as lawyers' chambers. When the top of its steeple (left) – identical to the neighbouring *Anderson Church's* – collapsed in the recent rains, work began on pulling down the rest of the building. One floor was already down (below) when *USHA KRIS* took these pictures. The picture at bottom by *USHA KRIS* is the empty space left after *AVM's Saraswathi Stores* on *Mount Road* was pulled down.



tional grade of the school feeding programme/canteen were examined in 20 schools of different types.

At the school premises, the following programmes were conducted or material supplied:

- A series of interactive workshops for the students
- Meetings with the PTA and school managements
- Discussions with the noon

meal staff and health organisers

- Interaction with government officials and other civil society groups
- A mascot to advocate CAG's messages
- Two bilingual posters on healthy eating, junk food and their health impacts

(Continued on Page 7)



# When MCC was on the Esplanade

Anderson Church

Madras Christian College School

Anderson Hall

College House

Esplanade



Madras Christian College and School were handsome buildings in the Esplanade till 1937 and 1950 respectively. The nucleus of these buildings was a house which was used as a Sailors' Home.

In September 1846 this building was bought by the Free Church of Scotland Mission and after being considerably improved it became in December the Free Church Central Institution. In 1871, at a cost of about Rs.50,000, the buildings were much improved.

In 1877 the constitution of the institution was changed and it became the Madras Christian College. In the next ten years it was soon found to be necessary to enlarge and improve the buildings. This was done between 1883 and 1887 at a cost of Rs.1,36,000. Between 1892 and 1897 further improvements were made, which cost Rs.48,000. During the same period, a building, later known as Anderson Hall, was reconstructed and adapted for college purposes at a cost of Rs.38,000. A new building scheme was then undertaken to provide the college with laboratories for science work. This scheme involved an expenditure of Rs.2,60,000.

The original building which faced the south had a frontage of 150 ft. facing the High Court. It was bounded on the east and west by Angappa Naick Street and Linghi Chetti Street and the buildings were gradually extended along these two streets. The site on which the old and new buildings stand is a parallelogram, the longest sides of which run along Linghi Chetti Street and Angappa Naick Street for a distance of 379 ft. The newer buildings consisted of five blocks built around two open courtyards, one of which faced east and opened on to Angappa Naick Street and the other which faced west and opened on to Linghi Chetti Street.

The courtyards measured respectively 70' 6" x 74' and 81' 6" x 61' 6". The original building facing the Esplanade or China Bazaar Street was for the most part a two-storey building and contained the rooms used for the school department, teachers' rooms and the library. The wing running along Angappa Naick Street was a three-storey building. It contained on the ground floor schoolrooms, on the first floor schoolrooms, offices, and the physics classroom, and on the

second floor college classrooms and reading rooms. The wing running from Angappa Naick Street to Linghi Chetti Street contained on the ground floor school classrooms and tiffin room on the first floor, the chemical laboratory and the examination hall. In the tower which stood in the north-west corner were small classrooms used for second language classes, and the top room was a small library room for the use of M.A. students.

● Adapted from: *Educational Buildings in India, published by Superintendent, Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1911.*

## School Department

There were 13 schoolrooms on the ground floor. In these the classes of the Primary Department and the first three forms of the Secondary Department of the school were situated as well as two teachers' rooms. The lower school hall in which the lower school met for prayers every morning was 67' 3" x 37' 8" x 11' 2".

There were verandahs both at the back and the front of the original building. The first floor contained the classrooms of the three upper forms of the school department. There was a large hall above the lower school in which the upper school boys met for morning prayers and which was also used as a classroom and as an examination hall. Besides the hall there were four classrooms.

Another room measuring 20' 7" x 23' 10" x 11' 3" was fitted with a gallery and was used as a science lecture room for the school. Next to it was a small room, used as a science laboratory for the school. This was more than doubled later by the removal of a partition wall. On

the same floor were rooms for the superintendent, the headmaster, the superintendent of vernaculars, the pundits, and the upper school teachers and several small rooms in which vernacular classes were held.

The library which was common to school and college was in the southwest corner. It measured 46' 3" x 19' 2" x 14' 3" and contained 6,000 volumes.

## College Department

On the first floor was an English classroom with a gallery measuring 34' 5" x 22' x 14' 7", offices for the principal, the bursar and clerks and the physics classroom, with a gallery, two instrument rooms, and a chemical laboratory measuring 41' 6" x 34' 6" x 21'. On the first floor also was the examination hall measuring 73' 2" x 52' 1" x 13' 6" and a gallery was erected in it which made it much more useful. The science classroom and laboratory were later transferred to a new building and their space was used for the library.

Anderson Hall was a large building facing the Esplanade on the west of Linghi Chetti Street. It was fitted with a gallery rising from the floor as well as with a gallery on pillars and could accommodate 800 to 1,000 people. It was used for lectures, prize-givings, gatherings of students as well as for examinations, and part of it was in daily use for the practical geometry classes of the school. It contained several smaller rooms including the room for the meetings of the college council.

On the second floor were eight classrooms varying in sizes. Five had a frontage facing Angappa Naick Street. The newer buildings which connected at their southwest with the old buildings consisted of a block running along Linghi Chetti Street and another block, at right angles to this, running towards Angappa

Naick Street. With the side of the chemical laboratory they formed an open courtyard facing Angappa Naick Street. The newer buildings contained the following rooms:

Block facing Linghi Chetti Street:

Ground Floor – Intermediate mathematics and physics laboratory.

First floor – Lecture room and Intermediate natural science laboratory.

Second floor – Lecture room, Mathematics lecture room. Advanced physics lecture room.

Block at right angles to the above:

Ground floor – Chemical laboratory, Distillation room, Balance and store rooms and Dark room and workshop.

First floor – Physics lecture room, Apparatus and professors' room and Advanced Physics laboratory.

Second floor – Store room, Professors' room, and Combined lecture room, laboratory and class museum for natural science.

All the buildings were solidly built of brick and *chunam*, but dressed stone was largely used in the newer buildings owing to the large windows required for the laboratories. The woodwork, including the furniture, was of teak. In the newer buildings and in most of the later additions iron girders were used for the floors and roofs instead of teak beams, and in the newer buildings the girders were supported by iron stanchions which rose from the ground right up to the roof of the building and were built into the walls. With the exception of the examination hall, which was roofed with Bangalore tiles, the college buildings had thick terrace roofs of the kind usual in Madras. Water connection was laid on to the buildings from the municipal water-supply, and the new laboratories were supplied with electricity from the Madras Electric Supply Company and with gas from a gas installation on the college premises.

As the college was situated in the business part of Madras all extensions were very costly owing to the high price that had to be paid for building sites. For the same reason, it was extremely difficult to provide the college with the space required for an athletics ground. The college was permitted the use of a part of the High Court compound for a gymnastics ground and tennis courts. It also enjoyed the privilege of practising cricket there but the space was inadequate for football or cricket matches. Later, the college was permitted by the military authorities to make an athletics ground on the foreshore, where there was a great accre-

(Continued on Page 6)

## A reminder to our readers

● It's that time of the year again. With the *Madras Musings* year coming to an end, it is time to remind subscribers to renew their subscriptions (Rs. 100 a year) and readers who have not yet sent in their subscriptions to do so. The annual subscription for *Madras Musings* is Rs. 100/-.

All subscriptions acknowledged by us from January 1, 2006 and subscriptions that we receive between now and April 16<sup>th</sup> will be considered as annual subscriptions for the year April 16, 2006 to April 15, 2007, Volume XVI. As for those who have sent in their subscriptions between April 16, 2005 and December 15, 2005, please renew your subscriptions as and when they fall due. *Madras Musings*, unfortunately, does not have any staff, but only a couple of part-time volunteers to help and, hence, is in no position to send you reminders.

When sending in your subscription, please send it to **Chennai Heritage** together with the coupon that appears on page 7, duly filled in, in full. We look forward to an enthusiastic response from readers, old and new.

— THE EDITOR



**OUR  
READERS  
WRITE**



**Beach dust-bins: Where?**

I love the ocean, the sound of its waves, its textures, colours and the moist air. Every evening, I try to fit in a walk along the beach, wherever I am in Chennai. But I have also been anxious about the attention we pay to the beachfront. In the last decade, more and more citizens come to the beachfront for relaxation and exercise. The civic body too has responded to this by providing seats and parks and lawns and what not. New beachfronts are being developed along the ECR in many of the neighbourhood colony beaches. I see trees coming up, roads getting spruced up, parking facilities being offered. But where are the dustbins? For, as far as the eye can see, the beach (which is actually a wonderfully sandy space, large and inviting) is covered with plastic, broken bottles, leftover food and, of course, the most prevalent of all – human excrement.

The latest idea seems to be to offer Tirukkural couplets near the benches, written along the embankment wall. This is certainly a wonderful idea. Such inspiring and immortal lines must be read by all of us, in buses and parks. But should we also not provide dust-bins, signs saying 'don't spit' 'throw garbage into the bins', 'don't litter', 'don't break bottles after use and leave them around to badly hurt someone', 'don't defecate here, children play here' and so on. Sometimes, when I feel really upset, I take a sack with me on my walk and try to pick up as much debris as I can. But it is a hopeless struggle.

Soon these ECR beaches in Tiruvanmiyur, Kottivakkam, Palavakkam, Neelankarai and others are going to be so covered in filth that walking on them will become a risk. Of course, public toilets are needed, to really help in this process, but that may take

longer to organise. To start with, it may be a good idea to get the vendors to keep an eye on the garbage bins (when they are finally delivered to the beachfront!) as well as get them to suggest to their customers to throw rubbish into them. They can even be co-opted by the civic bodies to keep the beach tidy. In Western countries, when pets defecate in public places, their owners remove the dirt with plastic bags and throw them into dust-bins. Perhaps this can be encouraged. Those who do not feel shy or ashamed to squat in public places could perhaps be trained to at least remove the offending by-product!

It may take some time to instil these ethical, social values in our public, but unless some start is made, I believe all public recreational places are going to become unusable except as garbage dumps and open-air toilets. Signage, education through magazines, newspapers and television channels may help in making a difference. The bottom line is that this is our city and keeping it clean is important for our health and our children's well-being.

**Sashikala Ananth**  
2/544, Sriram Avenue 4th Street  
Natesan Colony, Kottivakkam  
Chennai 600 041

**Information wanted**

Chennai received good rain in the last couple of months last year. This has resulted in a substantial increase in groundwater levels. For example, the open wells in Bayview Apartments in Kalashetra Colony, Besant Nagar, which are about 23 ft. deep, went dry about five years ago. At present, the water level in these wells is 10 ft. below ground level. Water almost came up to the ground level in the open well at the Rain Centre in Mandavelipakkam, the rise being almost 22 feet! Further evidence of the rise in the water table is the Mylapore temple tank, which is more than one half full. Such increases in water levels have

**OUR ADDRESSES**

For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

On editorial matters: The Editor, MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

**THE EDITOR**

# Music therapy

Rishis were fully aware that musical chanting of sacred syllables was for the welfare of all creations. 'They knew that the human voice chanting sacred mantras has healing power to keep the universe healthy by purification, enlightenment and elevation,' says M.L. Chhibber. This precious resource has to be enlisted now to the optimum to avail of its immense therapeutic potential.

Music Therapy in India has unfortunately remained in the realm of a national infant. It may presumably be due to the vital need for co-operation of a trinity –

- the medical man with faith in the efficacy of music therapy;
- the musician with faith in the efficacy of music therapy offering his patient service for the success of the cause and cure of the patient; and
- the patient enjoying receptivity to music, brimming with hope and faith in the efficacy of the therapy volunteering to adopt and accept it.

*A fertile field*

Bharat, with its committed ancient musical background and enjoying the oldest, perfected and living musical system in the world, is a fertile field for full-scale adoption of music therapy. In fact, it has a natural duty to demonstrate to the world that music facilitates, aids, expedites and crowns therapy. It is not suggested that we need to dispense with medicines in this context all of a sudden. But when music therapy is also taken, recovery could be substantial, quick and salutary and reliance on drugs will be less. And in availing of it, nothing is lost.

In millions of homes, even in streets and groves, we see Indian womanhood lullabying children to sleep with music. Endearing songs leave a soothing therapeutic effect and babies slip into *sukshma sthiti*. This therapeutic effect has been tested from the days of the epics and is passed on to successive generations for faithful adoption. The unverified mystery of it continues to work mysteriously in Indian homes.

The lives of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Kanchi Paramacharya and thousands of others present copious evidence of the impact of music on man.

That eminent neuro-surgeon, the late Dr. B. Ramamurthi, said, "The whole purpose of music relates more to the emotional than to the infor-

mation it carries! Presumably this is the reason for enjoying a song though repeatedly heard. Human ears get tuned to particular styles, which become favourites. The rasika well tuned to the music he hears is in a state of *laya* with music alone to the exclusion of others. As stressed in our puranas and ancient lore, even developing foetus in womb responds favourably to music."

The Doctor further observed, "We combined music feedback with electronic feedback. During meditation, the alpha waves of the brain become prominent. We use the alpha waves of the patient taken from his own electroencephalograph to drive a lamp, which will flicker according to the amplitude and frequency of his alpha waves. When this light is flashed into his eyes, the alpha content of his brain increases and gets widespread. The patient feels a sense of well-being then. As this technique yielded good results, we added music to the therapy. Through earphones the patient listened to his favourite music while the alpha biofeedback was going on. To our surprise, the effects were more pronounced than mere alpha feedback. In choosing the music, patient's wishes play a great part. Some centres are successfully doing music therapy. Music helps cure of epilepsy though certain types of music present contra effects called musicogenic epilepsy."

*A humble appeal*

Other doctors agree that music therapy is quite successful, particularly in ailments pertaining to mind such as tension and stress, rheumatism, pain management, elective surgery, neurological diseases, psychiatric and gastro-intestinal disorders, etc.

May medical, musical and research institutions join together, help in evolving methods of music therapy and extend its sphere and knowledge for the salvation of mankind. May medical men and authorities in charge of medical institutions consider the introduction of music therapy urgently; the outlay thereon is minimal, but the resultant boons could be vast and immeasurable. In the context of present conditions in India, this is vital.

**N. Rajagopalan, (IAS RTD.)**  
Mayur Apartments  
7, 24th Cross, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020

happened throughout Chennai.

The Rain Centre wishes to make a study on the rise in the water table in various localities of Chennai and document the same for future reference and use. Readers of *Madras Musings* who have open wells in their houses and flat complexes are requested to furnish the following information to the Centre either on a postcard or by e-mail or telephone:

- a) What is the top of the water level (below ground level) at present?
- b) What was the water level in May 2005 (approximately)? Was it dry?
- c) The depth of the open well (if available, once again approximate).
- d) How good is the quality of wellwater at present?

**Dr. Sekhar Raghavan**  
Director, Rain Centre  
4, 3rd Trust Link Street  
Mandavelipakkam  
Chennai 600 028

**S.S. Vasan's house**

While agreeing with reader K.N. Narayana Pillai (MM, February 1st) on his suggestion to convert S.S. Vasan's house into a suitable memorial,

we should not forget Dr. Radhakrishnan's house on the same road. Perhaps a good library and research centre on Dr. Radhakrishnan's works could be located there. I was told that Dr. Radhakrishnan was a rare person for having declined the offer of Government accomodation when he laid down office because he had this house of his own.

**Dr. G. Sundaram**  
(I.A.S. RTD.)  
"Burma House"  
33/18, 9th Street  
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road  
Chennai 600 004

**Whither eco-park?**

The Adyar backwaters opposite Quibble island are full of shrubs and plants. We were told some years ago that part of this area was to be preserved for a mofussil bus stand. Later, we heard that it was for an Eco-Park. So far nothing has materialised. However, the area has been well-fenced with iron bars. What is to be developed here?

**P.A. Ranganathan**  
16, Vedachala Garden  
Mandaveli Street  
Chennai 600 028

**READABILITY PLEASE**

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

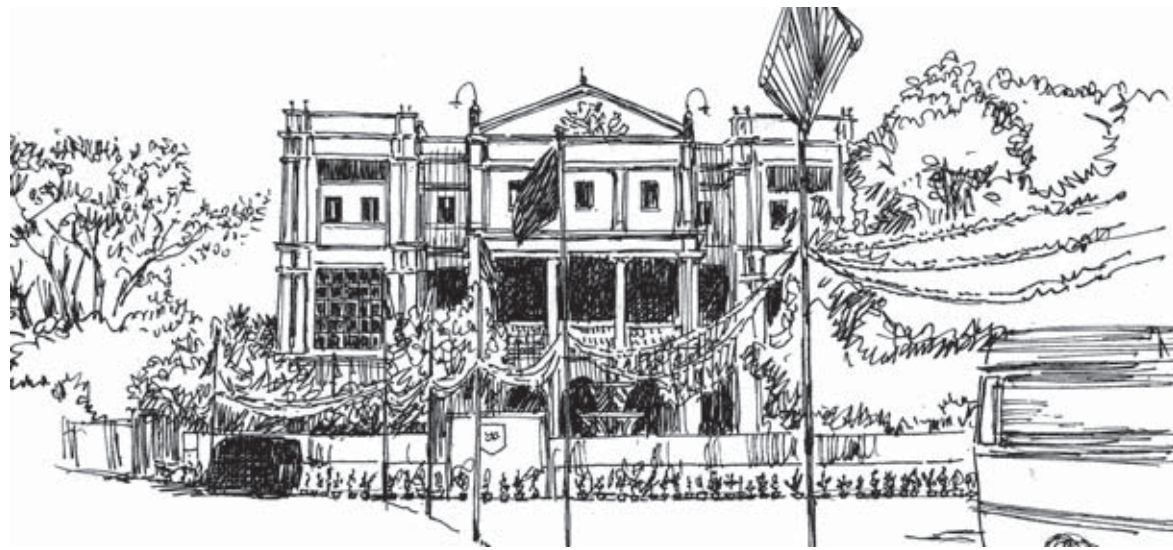
If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i-s' and crossing the 't-s'.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

**THE EDITOR**





Kushaldoss Gardens.

# From a treasure-trove of photo-albums and scrapbooks

• *Kushaldoss Gardens* (above) on Poonamallee High Road, opposite Pachaappa's College, has been pulled down to make way for a mall and a multiplex. With it vanishes one more of Madras's early 20th Century mansions. This "magnificent" one was built by Dewan Bahadur Govindoss Chathoorbhoojadoss, the leader of the Gujarati community in Madras at the time. The family, however, never lived in it, for its builder dedicated it for "use by the public". Here, dignitaries of the Raj, members of the Indian princely order and leaders of the country were regularly entertained in the years before Independence.

References to the building and its builder that I made in my column in *The Hindu* - causing not a little confusion in the process - brought me a visitor intent on clearing the air. And with Gopaladas Jagannathadas, a grandson of Govindoss Chathoorbhoojadoss, there came a treasure-trove of scrapbooks and photo-albums. Some of the photographs from the albums are featured here. But an even more fascinating find in that wealth of material was this exchange of letters between Gopaladas Jagannathadas's father, Jagannathadas Govindoss, and Gandhiji on an intriguing subject, NUDISM. Jagannathadas Govindoss was a well-known photographer and a regular contributor to the newspapers, favouring travelogues.

- The Editor



• Two entertainments at Kushaldoss Gardens. In the picture above, Vajrayantimala is the little girl sitting on the edge of the stage. Below, European amateurs who staged a play.



The brothers, Govindoss Chathoorbhoojadoss and Giridhardoss Chathoorbhoojadoss (right).



Govindoss entertaining a dignitary at Kushaldoss Gardens.

9090

459, Mint Street,  
Park Town,  
Madras.  
15th June, 1935.

My dear Bapuji, 9090

May I, in all humility, submit one small suggestion for inclusion in your programme for village amelioration, if the suggestion meets with your approval. If it fails to meet with your assent, will you kindly spare some of your very valuable time to let me know why you discard the suggestion, since this idea has been agitating my mind all along; and it can be put down, if it is wrong, only by the weight of your reasoning, in which I have great faith. In this matter I appeal to you, revered sir, to convince me with your reasons, if you think my suggestion to be right or wrong, and thus console a soul which is at present being tossed and buffeted on the stormy seas of dark doubts.

My suggestion for one of the ways of reconstructing villages is the adoption of Nudism. Khaddar is good, but Nudism, I think, is better.

The following are some of the reasons which have induced me to suggest Nudism as a remedial measure of village reconstruction:

"Clothing is unnatural and unhealthy. It is one of the artificial conditions which civilized man has created for himself to his own harm. Exposure of the skin to light and air is one of the natural conditions of health. Essential vitamins are manu-

-2- 9090

manufactured in the body by the aid of sunlight. By covering the skin, man loses the normal reactions to changes of temperature and renders himself more subject to colds and diseases. The more clothing one wears, the more one's body loses its natural reactions and the more one feels cold. The animals of the forest and the birds of the air have no clothing and that is why there is practically no disease among them. If these animals and birds are bound by clothing, then, I have no doubt even they will suffer from disease as fashion-fettered man.

Moreover, clothing encourages prudery by habitually hiding the body. It suggests that some parts of the body, the Temple of God, are not fit for exhibition. Clothing provokes curiosity and man becomes more sexual, because of clothing. Familiarity breeds contempt; and the hiding tendencies of clothing are responsible for the greater part of the lust in the world. "A healthy human body, hardy and bronzed everywhere, and not just in patches, should be beautiful and strong and a pleasure to the eye." Generally, the people who are shocked by the nude are of two types: (1) those that dislike the unusual, because it puts them to the trouble of re-adjusting their mental habits; and (2) those who project their own evil thoughts into the world around them.

Dress is the source of wasted time and money. Instead of thinking of advancing themselves, men and women devote whole hours to thinking about their dresses. Again, clothing is the most expensive item of expenditure in the budget of every man and woman. At such a time as this, when every pie counts, and

-3- 9090

when millions are going to their beds without one full square meal, it is a tragedy to waste money on clothing, which amount could be better utilised for the feeding of starving humanity.

Not being in a position to purchase and maintain clean clothing, the poor of the world, constrained by the tyranny of cold custom, are forced to clothe themselves in the dirtiest rags, full of disease. Not only do they become ill on account of their dirty clothing, but they spread the infection of their disease wherever they go.

Again, it should be remembered that clothing is one of the greatest deceivers in the world. Instead of being God-made men, we are slowly becoming tailor-made men, such honourable exceptions as yourself excepted. The thinnest and sickliest individual cap, with the help of clothing, look as well as the most robust of men. If clothing is abolished, men and women, instead of relying on clothing to make themselves presentable, will come to rely more and more on exercise, diet and other healthy principles to render themselves fit to move in society.

Nudism has got even religious sanctions behind it. Hinduism advocates it in the Avadhuta and Jainism supports the Diganbara cult.

From every standpoint, then, the abolition of clothing seems desirable. It will be morally elevating, economically sound and hygienically uplifting.

-4- 9090

Nudism will improve the morals, the health and the capital of human society.

Whenever a child is in doubt about a particular matter, it naturally turns to its elder to clear the doubt by the benefit of the light of the elder's knowledge, experience and guidance. And that is the reason for my encroaching upon your ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ valuable time with this long letter.

As I am averse to publicity, may I request you to treat this letter as personal?

To ensure its prompt delivery free from the expensiveness of the postal transit, I am registering this letter.

If you do not mind it, please favour me with a line in reply at your convenience.

With love, and Namaskar,

I remain,  
YOUR

Mahatma Gandhiji,  
WARDHA.

9091

WARDHA,  
15th June, '35.

My Dear Jagannath Das,

You were quite right in writing to me at length on Nudism. I have no hesitation in agreeing with you in theory. But theories are not always capable of being reduced to exact mathematics, like geometry are theories capable of being always being reduced to practice. The imaginary right angle of geometry will not build houses but the nearly perfect right angle which masons and carpenters use is responsible for many marvelous things. In the Western world as well as in India Nudism in practice is not permissible. I am convinced that it would be a great error to act as if all men and women were pure minded. I hold it, therefore, to be dangerous.

Yours sincerely,  
Bapu

Sit. C.G. Jagannathdas,  
459, Mint Street,  
Park Town, Madras.

459, Mint Street,  
Park Town,  
Madras.  
23rd June, 1935. 9092

PERSONAL.

My dear Gandhiji,

I am very much obliged to you for your convincing reply dated the 18th instant. Your weighty words on Nudism have given me much food for thought and, after a battle within, I see that your view that Nudism, though theoretically all right, is dangerous in practice is right, for, as you say, it would be a great error to act as though all men and women were pure minded.

My friends here tell me that my arguments for Nudism are all good, but that your reasoned reply has met them all. They, therefore, ask me not to treat our correspondence on this matter as personal, but to give the benefit of your views to the public.

Moreover, as far as my memory goes, I believe your views on Nudism have not been published so far. The publication of your pronouncement on this topic as contained in your reply is highly essential to give a correct guidance to the attitude of many young men in the world, and especially in India, as this matter has very intimate relations with the health of the youth and the morals of all. For, even in India people are ceasing to take a merely academic interest in Nudism as evidenced by the news published the other day that some people in Karachi have already begun practising the Nude cult.

-2- 9092

Somet, it was this news that led me to write to you to seek your advice on so vital a matter.

Various people might hold divergent views on this topic. But your views will throw out a stark challenge to the protagonists of Nudism.

May I, therefore, request you to accord me permission to ~~them~~ get published your views on this matter.

With love and namaskars,

I remain,  
YOUR

Mahatma Gandhiji,  
WARDHA.

WARDHA, 26 June '35

My dear Jagannath Das,  
I have no objection to your publishing my letter on nudism in ~~the~~

Yours truly  
with Gandhiji

9093

POST

INDIA

WRITING SPACE

9093

S. Jagannath Das,  
459, Mint Street,  
Park Town,  
Madras





(Current Affairs questions are from the period February 16th to 28th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Why was Ismail Haniya in the news on February 16th?
  2. The film *Grbavica* by Jasmila Zbanic won the top award at the world's most visited film festival. Name the award and festival.
  3. Name the shrine to Imam Ali al-Hadi and Imam Hasan al-Askari in Samarra, Iraq, that was partly destroyed in a bombing recently.
  4. The acquittal of which prime suspect in the Jessica Lal murder case of 1999 has caused nationwide outcry and anger?
  5. Name the Maharashtra town in the district of Nandurbar that was quarantined after reports of a bird-flu outbreak there.
  6. The hearing began on February 28th in first ever genocide court case against a State in the 60 year history of the International Court of Justice. Name the 'accused' State.
  7. Why were the writers Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh in the news recently?
  8. What global demographic mark was reached on February 26th at 0016 UTC according to the U.S. Census Bureau's World Population Clock?
  9. On February 24th, the President of which Asian country declared a state of emergency in an attempt to thwart a possible military coup?
  10. On February 26th, the flag of the Winter Olympics was handed over to the host of the next Games in 2010 by the host of the 2006 Games, Turin. Name the next host.
- \* \* \*
11. Which are the two diphthongs of the Tamil alphabet?
  12. In the history of Madras Presidency, of the five princely States that fell under the political authority, three were Pudukkottai, Sandur and Travancore. Name the other two.
  13. Name the presiding deity at the World Heritage Site of Darasuram.
  14. How did a peasant Jambulinga Mudaliyar become national news in 1935?
  15. Name the Governor between 1698 and 1709 whose term of office is considered by many as the 'Golden Age' of Madras.
  16. Where in Chennai did Palace Street, the Arsenal and the Hanover Square once exist?
  17. If Nehru Park is on E.V.R. Periyar Salai, name the park on Haddows Road.
  18. Which district is bordered by Namakkal District in the north and Erode District in the west?
  19. Which chapter in *Tolkappiyam* deals with words and parts of speech and also classifies Tamil words into four categories?
  20. Which work by Vikram Chandra gets its name from verse 40 of the *Kurunotakai*?

(Answers on page 8)

# The whirling Madras kaleidoscope

The "quirky mix of tradition and modernity", a quintessentially Madras characteristic, is exemplified in N. Meera Rao's book *Madras Mosaic* through a series of articles which are, in the author's own words, a "chronicle of changing Chennai". Filled with vignettes of life in a fast-changing city, whose basic core has stood firm against the onslaught of constant change, the book seeks to represent the reasons that make Chennai-that-was-Madras a uniquely fascinating blend of old and new, a smorgasbord of values, mores, habits and images.

This is a city which is supremely comfortable with both its names – Madras and Chennai – being used freely and easily, often in the same sentence; where the traditional co-exists peacefully with the contemporary; where exotic global cuisine rubs shoulders with *idli-vadai-sambar*, with the latter often proving the winning combination to its army of unapologetic aficionados; where the *madisaar podavai* walks comfortably with the Khader Nawaz Khan Road variety of haute couture; and *neer-more* is as popular as a dry martini.

"Times have changed" is certainly a running motif through the book, which, at the same time, displays how much hasn't.

The stories provide a gallery of contrasting images. The joint family system has been breaking up gradually, relentlessly, over the years, but hasn't disappeared completely. One story describes a "traditional" 75-plus mother-in-law, in the habit of pouring coffee "down her throat without the glass touching her lips", who dallies briefly with five-star culture with the help of her children just to find out what it is all about, bringing her own perceptive impressions to today's self-created, superficial social 'musters'.

You cannot speak, or write, of Chennai without remarking on one of its magnificent obsessions – the movies. The lengthy impassioned dialogues of the past are contrasted with the distinctly anglicised accents of today. And if movies make an appearance in the book, can TV serials, and their immense popularity, hackneyed themes with stereotyped characters notwithstanding, be far behind?

Attitudes towards marriage are also changing. Meera Rao remarks, drawing attention to the fact that choices of partners are quite often made keeping

career options in mind, while many women opt to remain single, or bravely walk out of unsatisfactory marriages to balance both a career and the demands of being a single parent successfully. The book also describes the 'seeing the girl' practice, still very much in vogue, with not-always-happy results. Relationships are being approached differently, redefining old social mores. Today's women are lauded, as the book speaks of Chennai's own very successful women entrepreneurs and professionals, with their impressive list of achievements and awards. This changing social mosaic also serves to re-define the role of grandparents, as stories in the book reveal.

The city's skyline is altering too. Huge bungalows, gardens, tree-laden avenues are being

porary and choosing aggressive advertising over the more sombre, retiring self-images of the past. If the average Chennai image was associated with a certain form of gold jewellery, that's changed too, so say leading jewellers in the city, with white gold, and more contemporary designs, becoming popular.

The book pays equal attention, and tribute, to 'Eternal Madras' – found in the *margazhi maasam* celebrations, with its "plethora of spiritual and cultural activities spread



like New Year's Eve, have the city disgorging large hordes of party animals, Madras celebrates with enthusiastic gusto Pongal, Sri Varamahalakshmi Nombu, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Navaratri, and Deepavali, to name but a few among a plethora of festivals, with textile shops and sweet shops doing more than their bit to make each one special. The book makes particular mention of the Mylapore Festival, a "full-fledged community event" that includes concerts, heritage walks, kolam contests, folk arts, and sale of handicrafts and traditional food, giving the neighbourhood newspaper *Mylapore Times* all credit for playing a very important role during this event. For many, this is perhaps where "Madras Proper" may be found, even today...or, may be, especially today.

Written in a gentle, informal style, Meera Rao takes you through the different facets of life in a city witnessing immense social, environmental and economic changes. Human nature does not appear to have changed much, even as citizens adjust to the demands of changing atmosphere.

For Meera Rao, it is important that a city, like its people, masters the art of growing and changing gracefully.

● by RANJITHA ASHOK

inexorably replaced by apartment-blocks, ringing in changing lifestyles as the city adjusts to the different sets of attitudes and demands.

The basic formats of rituals are still adhered to while conducting marriages, but the list of 'must-haves' is becoming more demanding and complicated. Change is also seen in the manner in which family holidays are becoming less about visiting relatives and more about going on vacation.

Fashion, be it clothes or jewellery, is one area that has seen the most dramatic change over the past two decades. The ubiquitous *salwar-kameez*, once the staple attire north of the Vindhyas, has permeated every corner of the city, and far beyond. Even decades-old shops, where your great-grandmother once shopped, have succumbed to changing tastes and times, becoming alarmingly contem-

porary, giving the city "an audio-visual treat in the form of music concerts and dance recitals", which is today, rather unfortunately, being disturbed by that one single irritant of our times – the cell-phone. Other typical distractions are, according to Meera Rao, members of the audience showing more interest in catching up with old acquaintances than in the performance on stage or in other people's silk sarees and jewellery ensembles. Snoring too is a common irritant. Anyone who has visited any of the *sabhas* during the season will sympathise with her caustic remarks on this subject. Other high points during The Season are Vaikunta Ekadasi, Pavai Nombu, and the chanting of the *Tiruppavai*. The *Thiruveedhi Bhajanai* is described as yet another highlight of this month.

While 'newer' celebrations,

## WHEN MCC WAS ON THE ESPLANADE

(Continued from Page 2)

tion of sand. But when the ground was required by the harbour authorities, the whole of it was taken over by them. The college was granted the use of another piece of land farther south, and at great expense and over considerable time it was converted into an athletics ground. In the circumstances, the encouragement of athletics amongst the students was attended with serious difficulties.

It should be mentioned that in addition to the general library, there were a large number of books in the consulting library and in the special libraries provided for the students studying different subjects for the B.A. and M.A. degree examinations. Dr. Miller, who in 1862 became the Principal, had also presented his valuable library in College House to the college. The college possessed altogether about 14,800 volumes.

The college had four hostels – two of which were presented to it by Dr. Miller. These hostels were in the immediate neighbourhood of the college and together had accommodation for about 180 students. The superintendents were professors of the college who lived close by in College House – a large building next to the college which was the property of the professors' retiring fund – having been presented to it as an endowment by Dr. Miller.



# NUTRITION – AND OBESITY

(Continued from Page 1)

- A parents' guide to healthy eating
- A teachers' guide on combating ensnaring food advertisements
- Two educational food games.

Though Tamil Nadu is the pioneer, implementing the Noon Meal Programme (NMP) from 1982, CAG found that the NMP's infrastructure facilities, programme administration and quality of food served left much to be desired.

Most school kitchens did not have proper roofs, exposing the food to contamination. Some were located near toilets and in some instances the kitchens were being used as toilets! Poor lighting, improper ventilation, presence of disease-carrying rodents and unsafe drinking water were common features in all the kitchens surveyed.

There were administrative difficulties such as understaffed kitchens and untrained noon meal workers. The perpetual lack of funds limited the noon meal programme from fulfilling its objectives of providing one nutritious meal a day to children.

The infrastructure problems and financial issues have also led to the compromising of the nutrition component to a great extent.

CAG found a clear and close link between unhealthy eating

habits like consumption of junk food, school canteens run with corporate sponsorship and the influence of television and other media advertisements on young minds. Pre-packaged food sold in the canteens was very popular amongst school children, some preferring to have all three meals from the canteen.

Earnings from school canteens are such a significant part of the total school earnings that school managements find it difficult to do away with canteens. Large sponsorship money from the food industry to conduct sports events or carnivals forces school managements to turn a blind eye to the imminent health risks their students are exposed to.

### CAG recommendations

- Review all aspects of the NMP and increase the financial allocation for the programme.
- Improve quality of ingredients provided and allow for indigenous food commodities.
- Set up a structured monitoring of the system instead of the random checking practice today. The Monitoring Committee should also include representatives from the local community, PTA, civil society organisations and nutritionists.

- Engage participation of parents.
- Train the NMP staff on the aspects of preparation of nutritious meals, the nutritive value of food, food safety, hygiene and sanitation. Basic training should be imparted both at the time of recruitment and periodically thereafter.
- Improve infrastructural facilities for better operation of the NMP, such as well-designed and ventilated kitchens and separate store rooms.
- Draft a Food and Nutrition Policy (FNP) for schools, laying down norms for canteens to follow and guidelines for schools to follow.
- Form a Food and Nutrition Committee for canteens in private schools, comprising the PTA, nutritionists, canteen managers, student representatives, community groups etc. to look into aspects of improving the canteen in terms of nutrition, implementation of the FNP and to monitor the system for its efficiency.
- Conduct a canteen audit involving students on parameters of safety of food, quality of food served, extent of corporate influence, cleanliness of canteen staff etc. — (Courtesy: CAG Souvenir 2005)

**Kavitha Anand**  
Programme Officer, CAG



**March 21-April 1:** *Something new:* ceramics by Supriya Meneghetti, who has studied glazed stoneware in Europe. (At Alliance Francaise.)

**March 19:** *Quatuor Neemrana:* Guillaume Molko, violin, Sullimann Altmayer, violin, Gauthier Hermann, cello, Dabonneville Julien, alto) – four young artistes, 26 years of age, who share the same passion for chamber music.

Programme: Beethoven's opus quartet 135, Schubert's quartet *la jeune fille et la mort* and one of Mozart's Quartet to celebrate the Year of Mozart. (At Alliance Francaise, 4.00 p.m.)

**March 23 and 24:** *Glass Bead Making Workshop* by glass-blower Sri Raghavan. It will include a new Italian technique of glass bead making. (At DakshinaChitra.)

**March 24-30:** *Ancient Cities of South India:* A six-lecture course on the origin, growth and decline of cities as centres of trade and commerce, pilgrim centres, royal capitals, ports, etc. by Dr. Chitra Madhavan. (At Hayagriva Study Circle.)

**Till March 26:** *Ugadi Utsav:* Celebrating the new year for Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka with traditional folk performances, handicrafts and special cuisine of Andhra Pradesh. (At DakshinaChitra.)

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## A big 'Thank You' to 85 of you

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— The Editor

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• The Senate House Restoration and Management Trust appeals to all alumni of the University of Madras and heritage lovers everywhere to contribute to the Senate House Conservation Fund which the Trust is managing for the purpose of restoring *Senate House* to its old glory and maintaining it thereafter in the same condition. Cheques should be made out to the Senate House Conservation Account and sent to the Registrar, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005. Contributions are eligible for benefits under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Dear Registrar,

I am pleased to enclose a cheque for Rs. .... as my contribution to the restoration and maintenance of *Senate House*. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Name: .....

Address: .....

I am an alumnus/alumna/heritage lover and wish the project all success. My college was .....

Date: ..... Signature: .....

# TNCA League

## When Vijay upset the Rovers

An interesting innovation in the TNCA league was the introduction a few years ago of a knockout round after the completion of the 11 league matches each team had to play during the season. This novel variation to the league has served to ensure the absence of hanky-panky on the way to the title triumph. This way, no champion team can be accused of fixing encounters on its way to the title, especially as the knockout is played at neutral venues. The format is also a leveller in its lack of home team advantage by way of doctored wickets.

Jolly Rovers seemed to be heading towards a record sixth straight title this year, but Vijay CC had other plans. Over the last few seasons, the former champions had proved time and again that their success in the league phase was neither a fluke nor merely the result of playing on home ground inside IIT Madras. It has been a well-knit unit, rarely faltering even in the absence of its big stars. India Cements-sponsored Vijay CC, in contrast had been struggling to demonstrate again its string of successes in the 1990s.

This year, the semifinals produced one-sided contests, even though one of them featured a first innings total of 470 by the MRF-sponsored team Globe

Trotters, with several good batting displays by Dinesh Karthick, Hemant Kumar, Sriram and Vidyut. Unfortunately, that score proved inadequate against a strong Jolly Rovers batting line-up. The five-times-in-a-row champion made light of the target, making 474 for 4 in 116.5 overs before play was called off. Left arm spinner R. Ramkumar who had earlier taken 5 wickets on a plumb batting track, also made a useful half century, while the consistent S. Badrinath and R. Satish scored centuries, the latter remaining unbeaten. Opener Noor-ul-Riaz made a solid 82, while Hemang Badani made 84 delightful runs. The Jolly Rovers effort as a whole was a model of sensible, focussed batting.

In the other semifinal, Vijay CC registered a huge win after bowling Alwarpet CC out for 211, with M. Vijay (40) and Arun Karthik (53), the only batsmen to offer any resistance to the Vijay bowlers who shared the spoils more or less equally. Vijay's response to that modest total was a whopping 524 for 8 declared, with the Kerala batsman Sunil Oasis (139 not out) doing the star turn, well supported by an excellent exhibition of positive batting by J.R. Madanagopal (75), S. Suresh (67), and S. Sharath (53).

Alwarpet CC, like Jolly Rov-

ers, is a team sponsored by the Sanmar Group. It is a relatively inexperienced team that surprised everyone by qualifying for the last four. Its opening batsman M. Vijay, who had a wonderful season, was unlucky not to be chosen for the State in the Ranji Trophy.

Despite Vijay's impressive semifinal performance, I thought Jolly Rovers must be the favourites to clinch the title, with a young, fighting fit outfit that set its eyes on a record sixth consecutive title victory. I was completely wrong. The youngsters in the Vijay line-up rose to the occasion in a spirited show in the final.

A superb captain's knock by S. 'Sweetie' Suresh (90) and good batting by the team's most consistent batsman Jesubabu



The triumphant Vijay CC team.

but after that they batted like the champion side they proved to be that day. With left-hander R. Prasanna making 90 and J.R. Madanagopal an un-

derlooking the stupendous ease with which Vijay had entered the final, beating Alwarpet by a huge margin. In the final, some of the Jolly Rovers mainstays had an off day, the law of averages finally catching up with them.

Vijay's skipper Suresh, a State discard, gave of his best for his league team, unlike some other cricketers who tend to lose interest once their first class cricket days are over. Loyalty and sincere efforts in the cause of your club and company are admirable virtues, and in this year's knockout matches, the Vijay players gave ample evidence of these traits.

● by V. RAMNARAYAN

Honeyman (49) laid the foundation, but Vijay CC suffered a mini-collapse thereafter in the final at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. A fighting rearguard action led by M.K. Sivakumar (49 n.o.) and G. Vignesh, however, enabled the team to reach 332 on the second morning of the match. Vignesh then bowled his medium pace seamers to great effect, snaring 7 Jolly Rovers wickets for a meagre 34. It was an outstanding spell of bowling to which the rival batsmen, except S. Badrinath (69), had no answer. The match was all over bar the shouting, when Jolly Rovers were dismissed for 205, though they hit back claiming the first wicket before a run was scored in the second innings.

A further wicket fell to Jesuraj off the very first ball of the final day morning, and Vijay were 27 for 3 at one stage,

beaten 56, Vijay reached 162 for 4 and cruised to the league title.

The result only went to prove what a mug's game this business of making predictions can be. I had rated Jolly Rovers the favourites, based on their amazing run of performances in the last five seasons, actually

## Answers to Quiz

1. Considered a Hamas moderate, he is the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority; 2. Golden Bear at the Berlinale; 3. The Al Askari Mosque; 4. Manu Sharma; 5. Navapur; 6. Serbia and Montenegro; 7. They have sued Random House claiming that 'The Da Vinci Code' by Dan Brown has ideas stolen from their book; 8. The world's population touched 6.5 billion; 9. President of Philippines; 10. Vancouver, Canada.

\* \* \*

11. 'ai' and 'au'; 12. Cochin and Banganapalle; 13. Airavateshwar; 14. Analysis of black particles on his land led to the discovery of the lignite reserves in Neyveli; 15. Thomas Pitt; 16. The western portion of the Fort in the 18th century; 17. Independence Park; 18. Karur; 19. Solladhikaaram; 20. Red Earth and Pouring Rain.

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