On the news the other day, there was a snippet on teenage drunken driving. It reminded me of Delhi’s Lodhi Colony Murder case where privileged youngster, son of international arms dealer and grandson of an Admiral, Sanjeev Nanda murdered seven people including two cops, leaving devastation in his wake. Sad as that was, what was even worse was that he got away with it. Given, that he wasn’t praised eloquently for his deeds, he wasn’t given enough flak either. As his witnesses turned hostile he went on to complete his MBA from Columbia University and is now back on the Indian roads as CEO of Claridges Hotels. A butcher back on the streets of Delhi. I wonder how that makes the Delhites feel. The sheer arrogance of money. Maybe we should ask ourselves - who was to blame. Was it the only witness, who chickened out at the last minute? By the way, he has been given employment in a Nanda family firm. Was it highly placed friends who believe that a friend is need is a friend indeed, no matter what the deed? Or was it the incompetent prosecutors without any intellectual firepower? Or does the legal system of India itself encourage affronts to our moral decency? The sole reason why a kid is going up fatherless is behind bars of a different kind. The problem is that by the time you’ve gone through the legal system, everyone’s dead and the point is moot. It is a scenario often discussed in homes of Indian Americans also. I can just hear some of them say, “This is why we don’t want to go back. Raise our kids in such a medieval legal society?”, “This happens only in India.” Actually it doesn’t. O.J. Simpson, who pleaded, “Absolutely, positively, 100% not guilty” and was forced to make financial reparations of $33.5 Million after losing the wrongful death suit says that if he has to work to pay his ex-wife’s family, then he just won’t work. The former football star has been living off his NFL pension and an annual annuity, both of which cannot be touched by the courts. I guess the Twit anthem would be what Kitchener said before his victory in the Battle of Omdurman, Whatever happens, we have got The Maxim gun and they have not.
Microsoft and Google, the two goliaths have so much in common. Microsoft for sometime has been venturing into new territory all the while also trying to consolidate its position in the desktop OS market. After settling suits for the Media Player and the Internet Explorer, it recently bought over Sybari, a little known anti-virus company, with the obvious goal of developing its own AV product; a move that sent chills down the spines of Symantec and McAfee. Their stocks fell around 15% since the news broke out. Microsoft has been planning to integrate all the possible applications a user needs into its OS. For example the zipping utility and CD burning utilities which is included in XP. With Longhorn, Microsoft plans to bundle up everything one will need while using a computer, to drastically reduce the use of any “third party” software on its system.

Google on the other hand, stealthily has been doing the same thing. If you look at their website, you will see that they are slowly adding all the functionalities that any Internet user will probably need. It has price search (Froogle), map search, news search, local searches etc. In addition they recently bought Picasa, an image archiving and sharing utility. They also have a share in or own blogger.com and orkut.com (an online community). To summarize, soon they will soon have some new kind of portal, which will provide the user with everything they need to enjoy the Internet.

The interesting part is, as both these giants try to expand their hold over their areas, they have already come to a point where they have begun to crossover into one another’s territories; like when Google introduced its desktop search and MSN introduced its enhanced search engine. Only time will tell how this battle turns out? Once Google has its share of lawsuits it will have to think of innovative ways to earn revenue to keep its engine running, pun unintended! Microsoft on the other hand will need to understand that the desktop PC in the near future will be so invariably linked to the Internet that, if it doesn’t have a stronghold in that market, it will start losing out.

Marrakesh is a stunning theme restaurant that captures the essence of Morocco with its sublime breaded, interiors and excellent food. Located along South Street’s quiet side street with a traditional doorknocker on an old wooden door announcing its presence, Marrakesh is dark, exotic, loads of fun and exudes an air of sophisticated debauchery.

With its low seating, refreshing flavors and fragrances, the atmosphere is unbelievable. Dinner seating is at 6pm and 9pm so make sure you arrive in time for the whole experience. A meal consists of seven courses so be prepared to go the whole hog. The attendants will bring you rose water to wipe your hands for you have to eat with your fingers and will not be given any cutlery even if you ask for some.

The menu features three platter salads, B’Stella layered pie, steamed semolina grains or couscous, the famed spicy Tajine and kebabs among others. The food is expertly and freshly cooked and the intimate seating is perfect if you go with close friends or that significant other. It is definitely funkier than Philadelphia’s other nouveau Arabic restaurants. You can sit back unstarched while sipping a cup of mint tea with Moroccan pastries all the while watching the belly dancers perform.

With its Jasmine scented décor and heady cuisine, you’ll agree that Marrakesh deserves its high reputation. For reservations, call 215 925 5929.
Carolyn Burnham too demands perfection – in her house, in her family and in her life. She judges herself by a rather harsh yardstick – punishing every mistake rather than rewarding every good effort. This is evident in her praise or rather, lack of reproach in her appraisal of her daughter’s cheer leader performance – ‘…..you didn’t screw up once’. We are given another whiff of this altogether different performance appraisal yardstick when we see Carolyn trying to sell a house – the effort that goes into it gives us an eerie feeling that there is more at stake than just a sale. The process of the sale and the sale itself is representative of her life – smooth and spotlessly clean. We see signs of disruption when the sale falls through and Carolyn breaks down. As soon as she realizes her release, she brutally cuts back on her emotions by slapping herself a couple of times. Emotions and their display are signs of weakness and are deemed to run contrary to her mentor’s (Buddy ‘The King of real estate’) edict – One must put forth an image of success all times. Her desire to repress every emotion surfaces in another scene when she and Lester are all set to enjoy a moment of intimacy and all she can think of are possible beer stains on the couch – another example of her inability to get in touch with her feelings owing to repression and denial - all to keep her in control of her life, the loss of which could be catastrophic (as we see in the movie).

The plot of American Beauty: The core of American Beauty is Lester’s infatuation with his daughter’s best friend, Angela (Mena Suvari); Lester’s infatuation is socially unacceptable on many levels – he is old enough to be her father and an affair with her would figuratively be incestuous and be adulterous as well. Lester represses his socially unacceptable desire for Angela and channels the libidinous energy associated with this unacceptable desire to masturbatory fantasies thus providing him with a release of pent up energy. The plot of American Beauty gets rolling when Lester becomes ‘unblocked’, i.e, the sluice gates of his dam of repression are thrown open allowing for an explosive release of repressed energy. This unblocking is brought about by his smoking marijuana along with Ricky Fitts and in this state of new found freedom, he indulges his every desire – quits his mundane job, buys his dream car, breaks free from his wife’s stifling control (setting off a chain of disastrous events) and most significantly, begins to act on his fantasy of an affair with Angela. It is this total loss of repression and total of lack of self restraint (representing a scenario on the other end of the spectrum as opposed to over emphasized self control and repression) that alienates Lester from his family and eventually does him in.

Projection: is the process of attributing feelings of one self to another person. During the course of the movie, we see that Frank Fitts jumps to a rather premature conclusion that his son is gay. In actuality, Frank’s deepest fear is that he himself is homosexual. Frank has the shoes of his image of veritable masculinity to fill and he projects these unacceptable homosexual feelings onto the gays he perceives all around him. His behavior is also a classic example of another defense mechanism – reaction formation. Frank has latent homosexual desires and these are completely unacceptable to Frank’s superego. But since the desire and the resulting guilt are so powerful, repression alone is not enough. Frank feels the need to constantly remind, assure and prove to himself that he is not gay and he underlines his apparent masculinity by launching into a tirade against gays at the drop of a hat. This overstated reaction to the initial impulse is termed as reaction formation. Frank clearly cannot be gay as he is maintains such a vocal anti-gay stance and is virulent in his verbal attacks against the gay community. To be concluded in the next issue

What is the deal with this?
People naming their children after countries. I happened to browse through a magazine in the doctor’s office, and there was some photo feature where the names leapt out at me- India and China.
What are they trying to signify here? That the girls are fertile and delicate?
How about Kazakhstan? Or, for that matter, USA?
Sounds like my dad, who after his Masters in Chemistry, swore that he would name his children after names of chemicals. My dad insists if he had the chance to do that, we sure as hell would have been true to our names- Carbon Monoxide, Hydrogen Sulphide (rotten egg smell) etc.
On that high note, I adjourn for another day!
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SATURDAY - APRIL 2nd 2005
Dear Patron,

You are cordially invited to **NASHA 2005**, Pragathi’s first ever annual cultural extravaganza, on Saturday, the second of April at the impressive Main Auditorium, Drexel University Main Campus at half-past five-o’clock.

This is Pragathi’s biggest event and is a colorful celebration of the diversity in India showcased through dances from all over the region and the world.

Please join us with your family and friends for an unforgettable evening.

Sincerely,

Shubham Bhat
President-
Pragathi - The Graduate Indian Student Association at Drexel
Sleepless nights and a tension filled environment was a routine for the Jawans of the Signal Regiment based in Jammu and Kashmir. It was HOLI and the reason which brought a smile to those weary faces. Like we did on every weekend, my mom and I were visiting Dad who was Commanding the Regiment.

Holi Party scenes in the Army Cantonment were always fun but it was different this time! I was in a ‘Field’ area, where you are unsure of what is in store for you the very next moment!

It all started with the ‘puja’ at the ‘Regimental Mandir’. The Pundit (also a fully trained Jawan) read out the story of ‘Hiranyakashyap and Holika’ and spoke about the significance of holi. After a nice handful of Prasad... my favourite halwa, it was time for the ‘BADA KHANA’. Bada Khana is a ceremonial ‘semi-formal’ event where the Commanding Officer and other Officers have lunch with the Jawans.

The bada khana was followed by a session of music, dancing and ‘gulal’. One of the Jawans, Havaldar Rathore, pulled me into their group. It was time for some serious ‘holi’ fun and I picked a fistful of gulal and threw it on them. The dancing and music went on unendingly. I told a few Jawans next to me that it had been a very different holi experience for me.

Hav.Rathore replied, “Bhaiya aap to saal mein sirf ek baar holi manate ho...hume to yahan roz holi khelne ki mauta hai!” (You celebrate holi just once a year...we play holi (with blood) every day !). It takes courage to say that!! I thought to myself. Suddenly everything came to a sudden halt. There was a phone and the entire Regiment was put on a high alert! It was time to get back to the routine! All the while I was going home, I kept thinking about what Hav.Rathore had said and I asked myself “Do you have it in you?”

RAAS LEELA with PANDAVA SENA

Holi is one of the most eagerly celebrated festivals in India. The color, noise and entertainment that accompany the celebration of Holi bears witness to a feeling of oneness and brotherhood. The festival itself also has long traditional links with several legends. One of them solemnizes the love of Radha and Krishna.

Many people have heard of the love between Radha and Krishna, but most people misunderstand it. The relationship of Radha and Krishna is the embodiment of love and devotion. Radha’s love for Krishna symbolizes the soul’s intense longing and willingness for the ultimate unification with Krishna. Krishna is the soul of Radha and Radha is definitely the soul of Krishna. She is worshipper as well as his deity to be worshipped.

Krishna is not only the ultimate object of all love, but also is the enjoyer of all loving relationships. Therefore, in the dynamic and expanding form of Krishna, he has unlimited desires to enjoy spiritual loving relationships or pastimes, known as leela. To do this, he expands himself into the dual form of Krishna and Radha. In other words, Radha is the feminine aspect of Lord Krishna and is non-different from Krishna, but together (both the masculine and feminine aspects). In this relationship, Love reigns supreme, as Krishna surrenders to Radha. Krishna is love-struck while Radha has taken over control. The supreme object of devotion, Krishna, worships the highest devotion, Radha. The zenith of Radha and Krishna’s love affair is the Rasa-Leela, the circular dance of love. The Rasa-Leela points to the highest potential of the soul. Real love that exists between Radha and Krishna is purely transcendental and spiritual.

To become attracted to spiritual love, we have to transcend material beauty, which is only skin-deep. In fact, Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of the Hare Krishna movement, said “The sum and substance of material life is attraction for woman. And the sum and substance of spiritual life is attraction for Radha-Krishna”. There is much more to be known about Radha and Krishna, but this should suffice for now. The truth is, with our material vision, we can’t even begin to understand this relationship. But the more we attempt to awaken our dormant love for God, the more we can understand it.

Interested in Vedic Topics? Contact psenaphilly@yahoo.com
What is snow? Why does it snow? How does it feel when it snows? Is it very cold? How is it to touch? These were the questions swarming my mind, anticipating the first snowstorm over the weekend in Philadelphia. Having grown up in India I had not seen snow until now. I was thrilled and eagerly awaiting to enjoy the first snowfall in my life. I was prepared to face the bleak Philadelphia winter by heeding to my roommate’s advice of buying a massive parka and snowshoes. Friday arrived fine and sunny, not a speck of cloud in sight. Would it snow in Philadelphia tomorrow? Wondering aloud I drifted off to sleep.

Next day the entire landscape had changed. It was snowing heavily and all I could see was a white expanse. I stood at the window, completely mesmerized until my warm breath fogged the glass and blurred the panorama. That was the most wonderful moment in my life. It was such a novelty to watch snowflakes floating in the air and merging into the vast whiteness blanketing every surface. It was magical how snow changed the way the world looked.

It was fascinating to watch two small kids frolicking in the fresh snow. After much persuasion, I managed to drag my lazy roommates out in the snow to have some snow fights and capture some snaps in the snow. I will never forget my first experience of walking in knee-deep snow and throwing snowballs on my unsuspecting roommates. Its time to grab my favorite novel, a hot cup of coffee and curl up near the fireplace.

LCDs are based on liquid crystals (LCs), a specific phase of matter. This specific phase of matter occurs between the solid and liquid phases in certain materials. A commonly seen LC is the gooey material found at the bottom of your soap tray; not exactly a liquid but not solid either. The LCs used in the industry are formed by synthesizing different compounds that impart optical properties known as birefringence to these materials. Birefringence, or optical anisotropy, implies that the material has two refractive indexes along its axes. This makes light passing through the material travel with different velocities that combine to give a myriad of colors. Fig. 1 is a microscopic image of the liquid crystal 5CB on a glass surface.

The LC, represented by rods, in the image is aligned between polymer layers in such a manner that it takes a twist through the plane. The left side of the image illustrates the twist forced on the material. Unpolarized light, from a regular light source, is incident on the LC cell. This light, polarized by the bottom polarizer, will travel with different velocities due to the birefringence. It can be visualized that the emerging light travels with vectors at varying amplitudes and angles. The top polarizer filters out the waves traveling in one particular direction. The resultant is passed through color filters, in this case red, to generate light through a pixel. This is the ON state of the LCD. For the off state, an electric field is applied, which rotates the LCs forcing them to line-up as per the field direction. The polarized light experiences only one refractive index, and stays unrotated. The top polarizer blocks this light, and no light emerges from the cell. This is the OFF state for the LC. An important point, the lamp has to be always on to keep the device functioning. This lamp source is the power hogger for your laptops i.e. the reason you recharge laptops after a couple of hours is to keep the lamp on as opposed to the processor. Nevertheless, the quality is improving by the day, and so are the display sizes. Companies in Japan are planning to manufacture displays large enough to cover king-size beds. I am waiting for my paycheck to get one of those.
**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:** **Penn Dhamaka**

Dhamaka is the University of Pennsylvania’s first and only all-male dance troupe. Milan Vora, a Penn alumnus (2002) and current Drexel graduate student, formed Dhamaka along with 8 other students in the fall of 2001. They strove to create a group that could showcase the various styles and cultures of South Asia while utilizing the power and energy that an all male group can generate. Dhamaka seeks to provide a synergy of Western and South Asian dance styles and aspires to present a fresh, unique, and innovative fusion of cultures and ideas. The group has expanded rapidly in the past few years performing all across the country. This past year, in addition to their second annual fall show, Dhamaka Ka Kamash; A Tale of Heroes, Dhamaka celebrated a 1st place finish at Beat of Passion 2 in Montclair, New Jersey and a 3rd place prize at Bollywood Project in Detroit, Michigan. Dhamaka is grateful for the opportunity to participate in Nasha 2005 and celebrate our culture with the Drexel community! For more information regarding upcoming performances as well as media samples, please visit www.penndhama.com.

**COMMUNITY PROFILE:** all eyes on ROSE FRANCIS

Rose Francis migrated to the United States in 1994 along with family, and took it upon herself to use her talent and passion for dance to show her new society not only something about her mother country, but also herself. In high school, she performed various dances for shows that her multicultural club hosted, allowing her peers to witness a unique blend of Indian and modern dance. In her first years at Drexel, Rose established an official group called 3-D Image. It started as friends who enjoyed performing various dances together and has now grown into a talented group of dancers who are looked forward to in anticipation by various Drexel students every year at VOICE’s annual Cultural show. In December of 2003 she became the co-founder and President of Drexel’s First Official Indian Dance Troupe, Drexel Jhalak. The group currently consists of 12 members who were chosen through audition to represent Drexel University in a number of competitions, shows, and other functions through an assortment of dance styles including classical, modern, folk, film, pop and fusion. Being President of such a unique and diverse team is challenging, but Rose wouldn’t trade it for anything else. Through her leadership in choreography and coaching, she inspires teamwork and passion in each of the Jhalak dancers everyday. “Rose is someone who puts her heart and soul into dancing not because she has to, but because she wants to. She pushes us to do better, and inspires craziness and fun into dancing. She works over-time to pull the team together and make sure that all our ideas and voices are heard. It doesn’t just take a good dancer to do all of that, it takes a strong person, with a strong mind, and a fierce passion for dance and Rose has all of that.” says Shilpa Gadhok, Secretary of Jhalak. Pursuing a degree in Economics, International Business, and Marketing, Rose uses dance in a therapeutic way. She can be reached at rff23@drexel.edu.

**Spring Break**

Aarti Mahalani is President of the Indian Student Association at the University of Delaware

Spring Break — the beach, the random hook-ups and the drinking. Although that is what I imagine when I think about my week long vacation from classes, that is the exact opposite of what I do. For the past three years, I have gone to my home in Edison, NJ to relax — which consists of watching television and shopping at the nearby malls. Maybe I haven’t dared to spend a memorable trip with my friends and people I will never meet again because I am in a committed relationship and feel going on a Spring Break trip is catered toward single people. Or, maybe it’s because I am always broke enough that even the Student City fares are a little too pricey for me. Either way, this being my Senior year, I aim to do it a little different. Since my friends from high school all go to different universities (in which case, we have different break schedules — always) I decided to venture on a road trip — to D.C., then Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago and then back again. While this might not be your ideal Spring Break, I still get to drink and spend time with my friends. Besides, I never liked beaches anyway.