This Issue of The Drexel Desi, Pragathi's very own monthly Newsletter, is dedicated to the folks who made this a fruitful and enriched year for the people of Drexel University. Yes, we are dedicating this issue to Pragathi's Board members. A roaring committee of inspiring students, they made Drexel a pleasant place. We devote this entire issue to them, coz take it from us, they're definitely worth it.

“I've been in Drexel for 4 years and this is my favorite committee”, says Kalyan Kalawa. Right said, Friend!

We should mention however, that the previous committee had some serious misgivings about the future of Pragathi at Drexel and just about everyone was ready to write this tribe off. But you can't stop a runaway horse, and this committee showed us how, as they took Pragathi right to the top.

With constant and unexpected encouragement that they received from all quarters as people started trickling in for various events held, they've reached a pinnacle as they are expecting more than 1 million web hits this month and whole slew of ticket sales for the upcoming cultural extravaganza, Nasha on 2nd April, 2005.

As they move on to their other commitments and future plans, we thank them for a wonderful year and wish them the best as they move on to conquer new peaks.

With the fascinating furor that Pragathi 2004 has ignited, we hope that Pragathi 2005 doesn't slow things down. We know that they've got big shoes to fill but if anyone can, it's the Drexel Dragons. Hold your breath!

So people, hit them with another round, Coz know what, you just can't hold them down.
The Indian Student Association at Drexel University, Pragathi, proudly presents its first annual cultural show to be held on April 2nd, 2005 in the Main Auditorium at the Main Campus of Drexel University. The show is named **NASHA** and is a celebration of the radiant spirit of India. The two hour long show is a fusion of India's rich and fascinating heritage with that of the world and will feature dances and performances from all over the region and the world. More than 50 people are expected to participate in and help pull off this social extravaganza.

The event is open to the public and tickets are already available. For more information, please contact the show co-chairs Shubham Bhat at skb25@drexel.edu or Bhakti Tawde at bst24@drexel.edu

To make the event a more exciting experience, we are hosting an After Party at the Cavanaugh's River Deck, on the evening of Saturday, April 2nd, 2005. Cavanaugh's is by the Delaware river is a high energy night-club and will feature live music by our very own DJ Nikki. We would like to extend the After Show Party Invitation to all to join in, meet and mingle with the participants and show them a few moves of your own. Please note that Cavanaugh's has a paid bar and drinks will be served only if you show proper ID.
Shubham, a self confessed workaholic is the President of Pragathi. PhD doctoral candidate by day, when he’s not busy writing papers and publishing his research, he’s the dynamite behind Pragathi. Director, writer and lead actor of Pragathi’s home production, he visualizes and conceives most of Pragathi’s events. A good humored and likeable guy, he’s effortlessly made contacts in high places to realize the success of Nasha. This motivator leads from the front.

Shailesh is like a childhood best friend. It’s that easy to be around him. During the day he can be found in the Hess Labs exploring Plasma Technology at the Drexel Plasma Institute. A PhD student, he is due to give his qualifiers this year. With a packed schedule as Pragathi vice-president, he has his hands in many more pies. He is also Vice Prez of The Graduate Student Association and Vice captain of the cricket team.

Shashank is the secretary of Pragathi. This guy is a Graduate Teaching Assistant with the Physics Department and The Drexel Learning Center. As captain of the cricket team, he brought home the winning cup. But he will be best remembered for his role as chair of the successful Sports Week conducted early this year.

Hemang holds the purse strings of Pragathi and makes sure that the grand schemes envisioned don’t get our shirts off our backs. A PhD doctoral candidate in the Photonics Lab, he is also secretary of the Graduate Student Association. When he’s not playing rugby, he can be found sweating it out in the gym.

Anand is by far the most popular guy on campus. He will go down in history for his superb performance as Inspector Betalal in Pragathi’s home production, Aisa Bhi Hota Hai. As Public Relations Officer, he helped the newbies make a smooth transition into their new lives at Drexel. Anand is with the MEM department and like most board members, he’s a PhD doctoral candidate.

Divya is also the Public Relations Officer for the Main Campus. As staff reporter and Assistant Editor, she is involved with the nitty-gritty of the newsletter and makes sure that The Drexel Desi continues to entertain with its succinct fact-filled content. A Master’s student in the Dept. of Electrical Engineering, she is all set to move out of Philly into the grove of the Real World in June.

Sumit is Public Relations Officer, Medical College Campus. His dedication was made apparent when he had more temporary accommodation first year students than actual roommates. He is the liaison officer for Pragathi to connect with the Queens Lane Campus and is working there on his research on Malaria.

Ranjan is the web admin of Pragathi and is constantly telling us how well we’re doing online. With a website that’s one of the best student organization web presence, need we say more. A PhD student with the Nano-Materials group at Drexel and a MBA candidate at Lebow, he has won business plan competitions and has been recently invited to review papers for a conference - a huge honor for a recent graduate.

Sanmeet is the Sports secretary. He is a PhD candidate with the Material Science and Engineering Dept. This shy guy from the Ceramics Lab is one person you can always count on. Did we mention that he makes the best Fish Curry this side of the Atlantic?

Bhakti is Pragathi’s cultural secretary. As co-chair of Nasha she has her hands full proving that Drexel students don’t have two left feet. A Master’s student in the Computer Engineering Department, she is going to graduate in June and move on to bigger things.

Vishal is Pragathi’s Marketing Executive. A full time employee at a company in Delaware and part-time student at the Information Science and Technology Dept., he is not spotted very often at the Main Campus, but this Burmese of Indian Origin is busy using all his contacts to get sponsors for Nasha. Hold your breath gals coz this heart-breaker is still single.
ADAA is Drexel’s all girls dance group that promises to showcase all the glitz and glam of Bollywood Queens from the 50s to the 90s. Today they envelop the elegance and grace of the olden times as well as the flamboyance and sensuousness of today’s actresses. Hold your breath coz you are definitely going to be wowed by their 'ADAA'.

PANDAVA SENA is chanting the great mantra, for engaging in His transcendental loving service one indeed feels spiritual bliss. There are many different mantras, but the one most recommended for this age is the Hare Krishna maha-mantra: Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

PENN DHAMAKA, in their latest piece, strive to showcase the blending of their cultural heritage and Western upbringing. Look and listen for the combination of hip-hop and bhangra moves and beats. Vibrant expression, powerful vocalizations, and thundering pounding dominate this dance and project the power of male dancers. Be prepared to have your breath taken...to the Pind.

Kamal – 3564

KAMAL’S instrumental piece written in an attempt to capture the feeling of changes and new beginnings. It is an upbeat piece, with a mostly major overtone; however some points slow and allow for the contemplation of events. This is his fourth instrumental piece from which is his first all-instrumental album. The album is yet to be completed.

SARGAM is an Indian classical music group that aims to foster and enrich young talent in the University City community. Today’s piece is an attempt to bring together different elements of traditional South Indian classical music in a fusion that is filled with melody, energy and vibrancy.

SHOR is Drexel’s first South Asian co-ed Acapella or without instrumental accompaniment group. In today’s orchestrated music world, they deliver songs that will leave you asking for more. They bring to you the spirit and colors of Bollywood. So sit back and enjoy Drexel sor..."Sor nein baba .....Shor"

TAAL describes the beauty of a woman who has been created by God in all her wonders. She is “manmohini” or the enchantress who brings joy to everyone’s heart. Wind and water have joined forces to beautify her. Untouched and glorious the whole nature can be found within her and yet innocence is her second nature and she is unaware of her fatal charm.
ANDAAZ presents the journey of Indian fashion through three time periods. The show starts with the 18th Century Indian village theme LAGAAN and then walks you through the 20th century wedding & romance themes. The last theme is Generation Next, redefining the fashion by fusion of contemporary and stylish Indo-western style. See what’s hot and what’s not as you enjoy this incredible fashion fiesta.

FISDU’S dance of Grace and balance comes from Lubang Island, Mindoro in Visayas region. The term pandango comes from the Spanish word ‘fandango’ which is a dance characterized by lively steps and clapping that vary in rhythm in 3/4 time. This particular pandango involves the presence of three tinggoy, or oil lamps, balanced on the head and the back of each hand.

MASTI is a melting pot of moves from the studios of the world’s largest film industry ‘Bollywood’. They are performing a fun and funky dance form embracing many styles that range from gawwali to twist to ‘bollywooding’. Watch out for this exciting and expressive act that will make you want to join the dance floor.

DREADEL JHALAK, Drexel’s first female South Asian dance troupe was established a little more than a year ago and is comprised of 16 talented ladies who deliver passion, enthusiasm, expression, and power in each of their routines. Tonight they perform Mesmerizing Eyes - Uphold & Homelands.

LATIN NATION’s piece is called Si Te Vas. This is a performance that reflects the many dimensions of love. It starts out with a couple embraced in love as one. It then proceeds with her leaving him “Te Tu Vas” and him expressing his love and passion as he pursues the one he loves.

B-TRU is a Funk & Hip Hop all female dance group. We are dedicated to keeping old school dance styles alive & creating positive image of women in Hip Hop culture. Our choreography is a mixture of Locking, Popping, B-girling, & social freestyle. Every dancer has their own unique style which adds the flavor that is Hip Hop.

Penn Ballroom Dance Society is University of Pennsylvania’s Ballroom Dance Society founded to cure you of two left feet. They also conduct classes and invite renowned professionals to coach the students. Tonight the Members of Penn’s Ballroom Dance Team will be performing one of ballroom’s favorite Latin dances, the Swing. You can catch their full show on April 10th at the University of Pennsylvania campus.
This is the last time we amuse you with our wonderfully entertaining, witty, humorous and fun Newsletter - The Drexel Desi. We hope you enjoyed reading and quoting our Issues as much as we enjoyed churning them out for you. Thank you for your wonderful comments and suggestions.

I’d like to acknowledge the contribution of Dilip, Suren, Shubham, Smitha, Vidyangi, Meera, PandavaSena, Pawan, Anuj, Derek, Hemang, Usmah, Aarti, Sameer and Nikhil who sent in wonderful articles. I hope they initiate the revival of the newsletter later this year. It’s hard to believe that I have been a part of The Drexel Desi for the last 4 months. I started this out in frustration and have come to love this newsletter. In fact, I can honestly say this newsletter changed me from cynic to true believer.

But, uh...we mean... it’s not you, it’s us. You see, it’s not that you’re not fly, but some hotties just can’t be hooked. So, like all good things, The Drexel Desi is coming to an end. We did our part. Thanks to some pretty constant emails from Shubham, we rolled out issues that reunited the desi community. We weren’t just making time. We made a difference.

So boys and gals, that’s it. We’re outta here...

Yeah! It’s that easy. Thanks so much.

Of Comings and Goings!

Today, I thought of writing about things that are possible only in films. I got as far as two points, but they do illustrate an important point in life - I forget which one momentarily!

The love sleeping pose: OK - This is by far the most ridiculous thing ever. If you notice "couples in love" in movies, they sleep facing each other (which in itself is not so bad) and also wake up in the exact same pose. Now, try and replicate that at home - always fails. So I want to try this once, cos we always sleep with our backs facing each other. Firstly, I try to sleep facing my husband, with my head near his shoulder. He groans, "Get your hair out of my face!"

Determined to be the 'couple in love', I then try to brush my hair back and somehow find a corner where I can stick my face in. "Aww!" That was me, who had dashed against the most pointed part of my husband's elbow, which was somewhere in the vicinity. I finally find a halfway decent pose where it seems like we can stand each other, and I feel hot breath on my eyes. And it seems like I'm inhaling all the carbon di-oxide my husband is spewing and vice versa.

In about an hour, I feel out of breath and maybe I've inhaled too much CO2, I think. My head starts to spin, and my eyeballs feel like they're about to move out of the house! So, of course, the "pose" had to be given up. We have now returned to our original pose, but I'm waiting for the day my husband hands me a divorce notice!

The elevator myth: Has the elevator ever appeared in less than a minute? Of course, movie scenes and chases often show the elevator as coming right up. Has that ever happened ever? I'm positive that elevators have an inbuilt technology where they are programmed to respond with a time delay. Have you also noticed that whenever you're in a hurry and have certainly pressed the appropriate button, the only elevator that "condescends" (pls you have to forgive the pun) to stop at your floor isn't going in the same direction as you aspire to? I think those are just robots placed by the selfsame elevator technologists. If you notice, they always say, "Going up/down" in a monotone, the voice you would imagine robots would have.

Now, an inquisitive mind may ask, "Why all this? Why O why?" Indeed, the same reason that Microsoft came up with Windows 2000 with a lot of bugs, so that we may upgrade to Windows XP, when it is released. There is some sort of elevator technology waiting to be unleashed, so that they can make a ton of profit! And remember where you heard it first!

So that's as far as I got. Of course, one other thing in Desi movies (especially) that piques me is the portrayal of the college hero. When I went to college, there were two kinds of people - ones that were good in studies, and ones that were good in sports. So studious were studious and sporty were sporty and the twain didn't often meet. These college "heroes" in movies, however, are good in both, which in itself is not impossible, I agree. Add to that singing, dancing, and girl magnet, and more often than not, rich as well, then you have something just a tad unreal. And have you ever seen the soccer team of the hero's college? He, of course, plays in all the positions, takes the ball from the opponent, dribbles it all the way to the goal and scores! Even the worst coach will know this is not good teamwork, the other 10 might as well not exist (OK, maybe they needed the goalkeeper)!

But then, who wants to see real life on screen, eh?
PRAGATHI
The Indian Graduate Student Association
@ Drexel University

NASHA 2005
An annual cultural extravaganza

SUNDAY - APRIL 2ND 2005

Main Auditorium
DREXEL UNIVERSITY
3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

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Medical Robotics is the application of robotic systems to improve the health and well-being of humans. Robotics can be used to develop smarter and efficient systems for use in “minimally invasive surgery”. Minimally invasive surgery (MIS) involves surgical techniques to reduce surgical trauma and recovery time for the patient. MIS procedures using long instruments deprive the surgeon of depth perception, dexterity, sense of touch, and excellent hand-eye coordination, that they are so accustomed to in open procedures. What the surgeon loses presents excellent theoretical, experimental, and developmental opportunities for the engineer to develop "smarter" and efficient systems. “Haptics” plays an important role in medical robotics. Technically haptic means “sense of touch” but many researchers extend it’s meaning to that of “force feedback”. It can be achieved by one of the commercially available haptic devices called “PHANToM” (manufactured by Sensible Technologies, Inc). Figure-1 shows the PHANToM interacting with a virtual environment. “Force feedback” can also be achieved in real time by developing smart mechanical systems and force sensors. For example, in a typical MIS, the surgeon would feel (i.e force feedback) the tissue ("hard" for a tumor or “soft” for a normal tissue) with the help of PHANToM. Current robotic surgical systems (for example da Vinci, manufactured by “Intuitive surgical, inc” shown in Figure-2) provide excellent visual feedback but are incapable of providing force feedback. Providing force feedback in addition to vision feedback will enhance the capability of the surgeon in performing the surgery minimizing surgical trauma and damage to the healthy tissue. Medical Robotics has lot of research avenues to explore. For more information, please visit the website: www.prism.mem.drexel.edu

Deconstructing American Beauty, Dilip S. Hari - Part 3

second, the libidinous energy associated with the impulse does not have to be repressed as it is redirected into overt hostility against the people representing the initial desire – gays. Passionate and overstated reactions to a subject (usually of a sexual nature) are interpreted as reaction formation. Reaction formation can be extremely dangerous and self destructive – Frank reacts very violently when he suspects his son of being gay and nearly beats him to death and then suddenly decides to come out of the closet and makes a pass at Lester. When he is rebuffed, he feels humiliatied and exposed. In this moment of weakness the backlash of guilt is so strong that he explodes into a rage - Lester against his father, then against his wife and Frank against his son. Lester claims that he was trying to help Carolyn by raving and ranting at her while Frank deems the near life taking thrashing that he doles out to Ricky as being 'for the boy'.

Sublimation is the channelling of sexual desire and libido energy into socially viable pursuits Carolyn and Lester have a barren sex life. Carolyn sublimates her repressed sexual energy into obsessive perfectionism in her professional and personal life with emphasis on being in control at all times. Lester too exhibits sublimation and redirection when he redirects his infatuation for Angela initially into masturbatory fantasies and then onto enhancing his body image on hearing that Angela prefers him with a well developed physique.

Rationalization: Id impulses are inherently irrational – they are based on desire and emotions. By dealing with an impulse on a rational level, the ego avoids all the negative emotions of the driving impulse. Rationalizing aims to protect the ego by reducing the backlash of guilt (that occurs on acting on the id impulse). While rationalizing defends the ego from disturbing emotions, it does nothing to solve the problem. It just detaches the ego from unconscious feelings. We see both Lester and Frank rationalizing after exploding into a rage – Lester against his wife and Frank against his son. Lester claims that he was trying to help Carolyn by raving and ranting at her while Frank deems the near life taking thrashing that he doles out to Ricky as being for the boy'.

Regression is when a person reverts to a point prior in time (when presumably the subject was much happier) in order to cope with stress and anxiety. We see Lester displaying classic signs of regression. His infatuation with Angela is symbolic of him being completely dissatisfied with the present state of life and represents his desire to break out of the stifling confines of his life. Lester is bored of his job and cannot relate to his wife and daughter causing him a great deal of stress owing to which Lester regresses to a time in his life when he remembers being most happy – the proverbial halcyon days of his youth. He quits his job, buys himself the car that he always wanted as a teenager, works in a minimum responsibility job, starts to smoke pot and starts to call Carolyn 'mom'. He defends his ail-ing ego by abandoning the responsibilities of adult life and regresses back to a time when he was happier with little or no responsibilities.

Identification is a primary mechanism in the human mind. By identifying unconsciously with others, we model our own personalities on the lines of our heroes/mentors and we relieve the anxiety of self doubt by finding direction in the choices of other people. This is why people are more comfortable in groups because they find direction and vindication in the choices/actions made by other members of the group. Lester, in American Beauty, identifies with Ricky Fitts. On learning that Ricky quit his job at a moment’s notice, Lester considers him a hero and soon starts his regression all the time identifying himself with the rebellious free spirit of youth.
Nitin Khanna is the President and Chief Operating Officer of Webergize, LLC, a company that he co-founded along with current CEO James Kohler. Khanna is responsible for technical strategy and operations of the company and has close to a decade of network engineering experience. During that time, he has worked for Fortune 500 companies including Rohm and Haas, where he was responsible for supporting the network operations center.

He has also spent time with Cisco Systems and Verizon Communications. While at Cisco, Khanna was responsible for two state-of-the-art laboratories that displayed the company's latest technologies. He also worked to support enterprise business accounts and, during his tenure, was appointed to the 2000 Republican National Convention Technical Team. As a network engineer at Verizon, Khanna provided managed network services to medium and large enterprises, banks, government organizations, and hospitals.

Khanna has a deep understanding of the business process and combines his technical expertise with that knowledge to create powerful, business-friendly solutions. He played a key role in the selection, implementation, and launch of the technology for the Philadelphia Parking Authority’s smart card program. As the architect behind that system, he can take much of the credit for creating the nation’s most reliable on-street parking transaction process.

Khanna graduated from Drexel University with a degree in Computer Engineering. He also serves as the President of US-India Institute of Greater Philadelphia which he co-founded in 2004 that focuses on bridging economic ties between India and US. He is an active member of the society and holds various industry certifications. Khanna currently resides just outside of Philadelphia, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Mixed Feelings: Philadelphia

Well, this city is my home and it’s your home too if you’re reading this newsletter in Philadelphia. It is a great city to live in. With its rich historical and cultural treasures, it never fails to evoke an Ahhaa! from visitors. Never mind, if they’re from Merriam, Kansas. No seriously, I’m sure I’ll miss it once I leave. The evenings in Kelly Drive, walks to the Museum, shopping trips to Franklin Mills or quick ones at The Gallery, strolls in University City or fun in South Street. Yes, I must say that there is loads to do in Philly. But the best part is that it’s close to New York. Also, the beach in Atlantic city, shopping malls in Lancaster, sight seeing in Washington DC etc.

And although the warmth and friendliness of the denizens can be easily surpassed, every once in a while, you come across someone who waves at you whether you know them or not. Philadelphia is great that way, it can be anything you want it to be. You just have to have some time and patience to explore and find your nook.

I hope Philadelphia continues to build on its reputation of the city of brotherly love. You either love a place or hate it and while I don’t love Philadelphia with a passion and pride that rivals whatever it should rival, I do hope that even when I move, I’m close to the mother ship and can visit time and again.

Days for the Official Summer Break...or more significantly Days for GRADUATION!!!

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS.

Congratulations to Drexel’s Graduate Students who are and will be the proud recipients of Master’s and PhD. Degrees in 2005. Hat’s Off to you.