



# ASA Newsletter

News & events of the Assamese people living around the world

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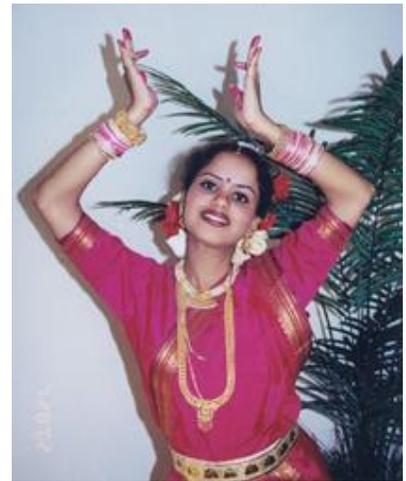
## Latest Updates Assam 2005 in Orlando!!

Assam 2005 will be held at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida on July 1 - 4, 2005. Inspired by the Southwest, Disney's Coronado Springs Resort is built around a 15-acre picturesque lake, Lake Dorado. Featuring a Mayan pyramid, and palm-shaded courtyards and Spanish-style haciendas, the resort creates the perfect climate for relaxation. Of course, the resort is located right in the middle of Magical Disney World, with each

of it's theme parks within close distance.

We have confirmations from a large number of you who are going to attend. If you haven't finalized your plans yet, it is high time to do so. The visa process for Jitul Sonowal and Ellora Bora Singh are going well and they are expected to attend.

Here are some of the latest updates:



**Date: Fri May 27, 2005 6:54 am**  
**Subject: Discounted Room Rates for Assam2005**

*Dear Friends,*

Please remember that the discounted room rates (\$99 for two room suites) at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort expire on May 31st. We hope you will take advantage of the discounted rates by making your reservation before then. After May 31st, rooms may still be available based on availability, but the rates may be higher.

So since there are only a few days left until May 31st, please make your reservations to avail the discounted rates.

Please mention this group event to get the discounted rate: Assam2005



**Date: Fri May 20, 2005 12:24 pm**  
**Subject: Sunday breakfast, art exhibition, souvenir...**

*Hello Assam2005 attendees and potential attendees!*

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Birendra K Gohain, IAS, Commissioner to the Chief Minister of ASSAM, is tentatively scheduled to give a key note speech on during breakfast on Sunday, July 3, 2005. Topic: "Current Socio-economic and Political Situation in Assam and Its Implication to the Growth and Development of the State."

Two additional notes - (i) we are encouraging exhibition of work by Assamese artists who are attending Assam2005. Space is limited, so please contact the organizers for details if you are an artist and attending/planning to attend, and (ii) we are still accepting articles, poems, stories, art-work, etc. for the Assam2005 souvenir. Publication preference would be given to those who are attending the conference. Please contact Sanjib Bhuyan at [sanbhu03@hotmail.com](mailto:sanbhu03@hotmail.com) for details.

Thank you and hope to see you Orlando!

**Date: Fri May 20, 2005 1:05 pm**  
**Subject: The screening of popular Assamese movie and documentary**

Screening of two films/documentaries made by Assamese artists/filmmakers are tentatively planned in Assam2005. They are -

1) **A River's Story, the Quest for the Brahmaputra**: It is a 54-minute documentary scripted, edited and produced by Sanjoy Hazarika, and directed by Jahnu Barua, one of India's most accomplished film makers. Both of them actually covered the entire length of the Brahmaputra - through rough terrains in Tibet, India and Bangladesh – using helicopters and boat rides.

It takes a sympathetic look at the river and its people, the ecosystems that it nourishes, as well as its history, geography and the cultures and livelihoods of the communities who live there. One river, three nations, many cultures . filmed on location in Tibet, North East India and Bangladesh, A River.s Story tells the stories of communities through their own perspectives. The Brahmaputra is one of the world's least known and documented rivers but among its most powerful, affecting tens of millions of people along its long and tumultuous course.

Both Barua, and Sanjoy Hazarika, former New York Times reporter and author, are from the region and bring a sensitive approach to the issues related to the river.

2) **The Passage (Xontap in Assamese)**: *Producer/Director*: Sanchayita Sharma, *Duration*: 27 minutes 12 seconds. *Storyline*: On this short movie, the producer and director Ms. Sharma's is trying to showcase her affection to Assam wrapped in an adapted version of Mamoni Roisom's short story. The film has English subtitles so that even the younger generation and people whose mother tongue is not Assamese can enjoy it. Please read rave reviews in the Asian Age article about Ms. Sharma's work: <http://www.asianage.com>. Check out the spotlight section: Assam touch at Cannes.



**Date: Tue May 10, 2005 10:50 pm**  
**Subject: Assam 2005**

*Dear Friends,*

First of all, I thank those of you who are coming to Orlando to have a weekend of sun and fun among family and friends. If you haven't done already, please book your discounted hotel rooms by calling (407)939-1020 (code is "Assam2005") - discounts will disappear end of this month.

Those of you who are still on the fence due to various reasons, remember flights to Orlando is ALWAYS cheaper than almost anywhere else! And then there's Disney World for you and your family! Meet and greet your fellow Assamese amidst Disney's 50 years celebration in a top class resort! If you have planned only ONE family vacation this year, make it to Disney World! Assam 2005 gives you an excellent opportunity to combine family fun at a discounted rate! So, c'mon, join us in Orlando during this year's July 4th weekend, and watch the fireworks fly!

For reference, your link to this Invite is:

<http://www.evite.com/pages/invite/viewInvite.jsp?inviteId=FEVUGTRROZVSEALFZQZQ>

To see this invite -- and all of your invites -- click to your personal 'My Evite' page.

<http://www.evite.com/pages/myevite/myEvite.jsp>

**Date: Tue Apr 26, 2005 6:35 am**  
**Subject: Vouchers for Discounted Disney World Tickets**

The Walt Disney Company is offering special discounted tickets to Assam2005 attendees and their families. The Park Hopper tickets includes privileges to Magic Kingdom Park, Epcot, Disney-MGM Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom. A special bonus visit to either Downtown Disney Pleasure Island or DisneyQuest Indoor Interactive Theme Park is also included.

These tickets are not available at the gate and must be purchased in advance through a discount voucher. If you would like to have a voucher, please send an email with your postal address and we will be happy to mail one to you.

Looking forward to seeing you in Orlando. Please do not hesitate to contact me at this address if you have any questions. You can also visit the conference website at: <http://www.assam2005.org> .

*Sincerely,*

*Sunil B. Nath*

*Chairperson, Organizing Committee*

*Assam 2005*

(Note: Images in this item are from Assam 2002 held in Broomfield/Boulder, Colorado)



## **Bihu in Colorado!!**

Bohag Bihu was celebrated by the Assamese community of Colorado in Fort Collins on May 14th between the hours of 1:15PM-7:15PM with a lot of fun and festivity. About 30 people attended the celebration.

It was lot of fun! I sure felt that it is never late to celebrate Bihu. Hope everyone had enjoyed and were able to relish the true spirit of our Rongali Bihu. Thanks for the amazing turn out. Except just two of our families in the community everyone showed up more or less on time and spent for the



whole program. The sports items were very engaging. Impromptu cultural shows were very entertaining.

Hope we will continue to have the fun for all the coming years.

On behalf of Fort Collins greater Assamese community, thanks again for making it a great success.

For those who didn't attend here is the overall Bihu Program we followed:

1:15 PM -- 1:45PM --- Bihu Jalapan and Snacks  
 1:45 PM --2:00PM ----Welcome Address from Host (Dr. Deep Goswami)  
 2:00 PM --3:00PM ---- Bihu Sports (Konir- Junj, Tekeli Bhanga, "Three Legged Race(Kids)" etc.)  
 3:00 PM --4:00 PM ---- Cultural Programs  
 4:00 PM --5:00 PM -----Impromptu Bihu/Husori Dance (All)  
 5:00 PM --6:00 PM ---- Bihu Dinner (Samajua Bhoj)  
 6:00 PM --6:30 PM -----Gift Exchange game  
 6:30PM --6:40 PM ----- Vote of Thanks (Ganesh Bhuyan)

Ranjan Saikia of Fort Collins took some videos and they can be seen at <http://www.jusspress.com/day.php?userid=5424&currentDate=20030525&currentTime=162230> and I took some photographs and they are available at <http://www.jusspress.com/day.php?userid=5736&currentDate=20050514&currentTime=152212> for viewing.

By Paban Sarma, Fort Collins, Colorado

## Developmental Disability: A Positive Approach

Why do some people born with special needs and are different? Does any one have a perfect answer for this? Here in **Camphill Soltane** we try to find this Answer, we believe in life sharing and learning together with people with Mental retardation, we believe in Holistic healing. Camphill Movement started in the year 1939 in Scotland by Dr. Karl Koenig an Austrian pediatrician and educator. He fled the Nazi invasion of his own country and settled in Aberdeen, with a group of young physicians, artists and caregivers. These individuals founded the first Camphill community with children having developmental disabilities. Dr. Koenig and his colleagues were inspired by Anthroposophy and the teaching of philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner, Ph.D.



Mental Retardation is defined by three things. First, the people must have had the condition since childhood, or age 18 years or younger. Second, the person has a score of 70 or less on intelligence tests, or IQ tests. Third, the person has limitations in at least two aspects of living skills, such as: communication, education, including

reading, writing, and basic math, motor function, personal care -such as bathing, dressing, eating, and toileting, social skills, thinking skills-such as decision making, problem solving and self direction and working. Research said In USA one in every ten family is directly affected by Mental retardation.

Despite the evidence of effectiveness and recommendations by researchers to use a group method, group psychotherapy for people with mental retardation is usually not considered as a viable therapeutic modality. Historically, the research on this matter showed that people with mental retardation could not profit from insight oriented interactive therapy because they lacked specific cognitive abilities thought necessary for therapeutic change. While this may be the primary reason that psychotherapy is overlooked as a treatment modality for people with mental retardation, there have been a series of erroneous assumptions on the part of practitioners. Consider the following major suppositions:

1. Since many developmentally disabled people are not verbal (or have difficulty verbalizing) they are thought to be unable to produce clues to regulating their behavior.
2. The secondary disabilities that often are associated with mental retardation (short attention span, auditory and visual handicaps, seizure activity, etc.) are thought to

provide insurmountable obstacles to interactive group therapy.

3. People with mental retardation lack the cognitive ability to profit from insight into the causes and consequences of their behavior.

4. Many practitioners understand the emotional disorders displayed by people with mental retardation as a side effect of a biochemical brain dysfunction. As such they feel there is little that psychotherapy can offer.

while there may have been good indications that group therapy could be possible, volume of such information was not sufficient to offset the assumptions of practitioners.

**This is what some famous person said:**

...Our deepest fear is not that we have inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented,



5. Somehow the emotional and behavioral problems of people with mental retardation are understood as being the result of mental illness or behavior disorder. With such elementary discriminations only psychopharmacological or behavioral treatments alone are sought. The use of psychotherapy to help ameliorate these problems is rarely considered.

and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be? You are the child of God; your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in EVERYONE. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.' (*Inaugural speech, President Nelson Mandela, South Africa 1994.*)



... Your criticism of our present day civilization you must turn inward like a goad (spear), so that you may work slowly- for we can work slowly in these things-towards helping people learn to think differently. Then the external social condition will change their present form.' (*Rudolf Steiner, in Study of Man, Lecture 1.*)

The reality is that even if an astute and aware clinician were to recommend psychotherapy the task of finding someone knowledgeable and competent to deliver such services would often be a difficult job. Although more and more providers are beginning groups and developing their group skills, group psychotherapy is only now beginning to emerge as a treatment option on a wider scale. One other reason why group therapy is the least used therapy for people with mental retardation (in addition to the ones listed above) may be that the dissemination of information on how to do such counseling was limited by the scarcity of research showing which method(s) were effective. In other words

I have a dream.... (*Martin Luther King.*)

“Become the change you want to see in this world” (*Mahatma Gandhi*)

“Denial of a person’s right to a life of love friendship and intimacy leads directly to a situation in which adults, are so starved of affection that they are easily victimized...

*Winifred Kempton, 1996*  
By *Utpal Borah, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

## Throwing Away the Darkness from the NER

Everyone is aware that most of the thefts, robberies occur under the cover of darkness. Likewise even corruption takes place when there is darkness, literally as well as figuratively. It is now time for us to do our bit to throw away the darkness in our own little arena.

Quite a few of us are fortunate enough to have done well to be in a good position, at least financially, in comparison to those who were as good as, if not better than us but are struggling to make both ends meet. Few years back I had met one such person who used to be a very good student in my class getting the highest marks, almost always, in subjects like Assamese. Today he is struggling to bring up a family as a farmer, having had no money to bribe for the teacher's job. I am sure if we look back we'll be surprised to find where the rest of the classmates are.

It is good to know that quite a few of us are trying to give back something to the society, one way or the other. In this appeal I am requesting for a concerted action from the readers.

This is to fund a small survey in your own area back home so that the 'darkness' is partly removed. You could do it through the local college teachers or club members. It could also be done through the NEEA (North East Economic Association) which has members all over or the Sahitya Sabha branch. The survey should be able to throw some light on a bit of history, the number of people, state of education, health, economic well-being, places of interest, art and craft etc. This will not only help our children to see their roots but also generate interest amongst the policy makers and the media. Once there is a base-year survey then others could be built on it. More the information more the possibility that corruption, illegal activities would come down. The char areas are crime-prone areas because there is less information and media coverage on them.

Of late I have been involved in training the candidates of the Jivan Jyoti scheme of the Assam Government, mostly youths below the age of 35 who are looking for self



employment avenues. Dissemination of information is one message that I have been trying to convey to them. The information that is currently available about the region is not conducive for getting bank loans, tourists etc. We need to give 'better' information so that people get to see what the NER really is. Let us join hands to do remove the darkness.

*By Amiya K. Sharma. Dr Sharma is currently serving as Deputy General Manager (Economist) at North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd., Guwahati, Assam.*

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Through the microscope..

## Supersolid: the fifth physical state of matter (?)

My boss from London was in town recently and we all from our group went out for a couple of drinks at a nearby bar and restaurant place in midtown Manhattan. As we were talking and into our second round, something extraordinary that caught my attention gave me gooseflesh all over my body. I could not believe what I saw with my own eyes – the waitress who was serving drinks to the guests in the sit-down dining area of the restaurant walked past the solid wooden counter of the of bar without any impedance as if she

got out through an open door. I shook my head to make doubly sure that I was not tipsy and, as I expected, I wasn't ☺. How could it be possible? The immediate explanation that jumped off my mind came from a similar situation described by Dr. Brian Greene in his famous book "The Elegant Universe". After all the cosmos is the macro manifestation of the quantum world where the jittery and turbulent participants take part in only one game – the "game of chances". A photon that is right on



track to escape through an open slit may find itself quite a bit off-target in the last split second, much like a missed field goal or a penalty kick, in accordance with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Out of

boredom of the monotonous chore of walking around the counter for serving the guests, the waitress must have tried her way straight through the counter for endless number of times before finally making it through - the “one in a million” chance that I was a witness of.

Nevertheless, many interesting observations can be drawn out of this extraordinary event. Relative to the solid counter, the waitress acted as a superfluid, because she made it through the counter without any resistance or drag, a characteristic of a viscous fluid. On the other hand, the waitress remained perfectly unmoved when the counter moved relative to her, i.e., she displayed not a bit short of the distinct characteristic of what can be termed as a supersolid.

#### The discovery

The *science fiction* aside, two scientists from Penn State University, Dr. Moses H.W. Chan, a professor of Physics, and Dr. Eunseong Kim, a postdoctoral candidate, indeed claimed to have discovered a part of solid helium-4 behaving like a superfluid. When the solid material, contained in a cylinder, was rotated, this small fraction of the superfluid refused to rotate along with the rest of the “conventional solid”. This is a distinct characteristic of a superfluid, which is also known as non-classical rotational inertia (NCRI), translates into a new physical state of matter, supersolid from the viewpoint stated above. This probable new state adds

to the family of four other known physical states of matter, i.e., gas, liquid, solid and plasma.

#### The history

The prediction of the existence of superfluid by the theoretical physicists dated as far back as in 1970. According to them, at sufficiently low temperature, some of the atoms in a solid would form into a superfluid - a physical state, in which a fraction of the atoms would be capable of moving freely in the packed crystal pattern of the solid. Dr. Anthony J. Leggett, a professor at the University of Illinois, won the Nobel Prize in Physics last year for his outstanding work in the area of superfluid.

#### The experiment

The experiment and the results were published by the authors only recently on the website of the journal *Science*. So, I would like to explain the steps involved in the experiment only under the realm of my understanding. I apologize to the authors if there is any unintentional misrepresentation.

- The experiment involved oscillating a cylinder containing supercooled solid helium-4. The solid helium forms when the cylinder is cooled below  $-270$  Celsius, 3 degrees above absolute zero. The frequency of oscillation will of course depend on the mass and the “robustness of the solid mass”. The latter point, which I will explain later,

will make us rethink about what we mean by solid.

- As the experiment was in progress, something very interesting happened when the temperature dropped below 0.25 degree Celsius above absolute zero ( $-273$  Celsius). There was a sudden increase of the rate of oscillation as if the some of the solid helium “escaped” from the cylinder, or, in another interpretation, was not participating in the torsional motion. From the equation, the scientists calculated the loss of mass to be at 1.5 percent of the total mass of the helium contained in the cylinder.
- In order to rule out any loss of mass during the experiment, the scientists increased the temperature and the oscillation dropped again.

#### The results

Dr. Wayne Saslow, a professor and a physicist at the Texas A&M University, predicted the superfluid fraction of the matter at 2 percent about 3 decades ago. The results of the experiment by the physicists at the Penn State are in close agreement with that prediction.

#### For more information:

1. <http://www.science.psu.edu/alert/chan6-2004.htm>
2. The New York Times

By Prakash Deka, New Jersey

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The ASA Newsletter is published monthly. Sanjib Bhuyan, NJ, on behalf of Assam Society of America, has published this issue of ASA newsletter. The editors are Satyam Bhuyan (Ames, Iowa), Ganesh Bora (Lake Alfred, Florida), Prasenjit Chetia (Atlanta, Georgia), Babul Gogoi (New Delhi, India), Jugal Kalita (Colorado Springs, Colorado, Editor-In-Chief), Symanta Saikia (Wichita, Kansas), Vavani Sarmah (Secane, Pennsylvania), Ujjal Pathak (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), Rini Kakati (London, UK), Umesh Sharma (Cambridge, Massachusetts), and Ram Sarangapani (Houston, Texas). The ASA Executive Committee is composed of Sanjib Bhuyan, President (Franklin Park, New Jersey), Utpal Brahma, Vice President (Burlington, New Jersey), Ganesh Bora, General Secretary (Lake Alfred, Florida), Probal Tabildar (Kendall Park, New Jersey), Mantu Baishya (Omaha, Nebraska), Kedar Bhuyan (Mays Landing, New Jersey), and Sangeeta Duorah (California).

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