

Brijabasi Spirit Newsletter

March 2016

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Village Association Enrollment Party: A Big Success!

(By Abhay Charan dasa)



Vrindavan dasa helping sign up a new member

The inaugural membership drive for the New Vrindaban Village Association was held on Saturday evening, March 26th, 2016, and was well received, with more than 120 devotees in attendance and 102 newly signed village members.

Over the years, varying attempts have been made to establish a counsel, including

the Advocacy Sanga, formed in 2013. Then, March of 2015, the ISKCON New Vrindaban and ECO-Vrindaban boards encouraged the creation of an official village counsel and a temporary steering committee was set in place. Over the next six months, multiple meetings were held to develop their proposal and establish a clear framework for the Village Association's future.

The purpose of the New Vrindaban Village Association is to empower and assist devotees to happily live in, contribute to the governance, policies and direction of the New Vrindaban projects, and above all, to create a loving family atmosphere.

The Village association vision comes from Srila Prabhupada's statement made in 1979, "*We will establish a local self-governing village.*" The New Vrindaban community enthusiastically gathered in the Community Hall on Saturday night to be part of that vision.

As devotees arrived, Lilasuka, Ananga Manjari, and Devala Prabhus happily welcomed them at the door. Delicious snacks, such as hot samosas with chutney, vanilla covered pretzels, organic salads, brownies and refreshing drinks were served as melodious kirtan played softly in the background.



Advaita Acharya presenting at the Village Association Membership Party

Devotees mingled and found their way over to one of the five tables that peaked their interests, that included: Devotee care - with Vrindavan dasa, Jobs - with Advaita Acharya dasa, Voice in the community decisions - with Nityodita dasa, Land Sales and Housing - with Vyasasana dasa, and the Miscellaneous table – with Jaya Krishna dasa.

Long time residents Advaita Acharya dasa and Sankirtan dasa started off the evening by welcoming everyone with a few funny true or false ice breakers as devotees settled in. They encouraged anyone in New Vrindaban over a year to sign up and take a more active role in the community activities. The request did not go unheard with 102 new members signing up all throughout the evening.

Srila Prabhupada knew that our strength comes from unity, giving an example of a bundle of sticks being hard to break, while one stick by itself could be broken very easily. Devotees joyfully gathered in that spirit of unity, as a cohesive community, to make the self-governing village a reality.

Quality entertainment was provided all evening that included: The Yogi Poets – singing Govinda Jaya, My sweet lord, Devananda Pandit, The Primitives, Bhaktin Autumn, Mercy and others.



The Primitives band performing with Jesse Hansen, Lilasuka and Thakura

The atmosphere was sweet, with devotees laughing and smiling as they visibly enjoyed each other's company and reconnected with old and new acquaintances alike. "I am having a wonderful time and love the music. I have spoken with people I have not seen in a long time," said Laxmi Honest.

To show appreciation for new members, wonderful gifts were handed out, which included a pendant made of a blanket Prabhupada used right here in New Vrindaban, made by Devala dasa - as well as a picture of Srila Prabhupada.

The program concluded with Advaita thanking everyone for their heartfelt participation and culminated with delicious prasadam being served that included the 7 cheesecakes, submitted in the potluck. Sankirtan reminded everyone "that just like an alchemist can turn materials into something else, that together, we can take all of our talents and turn them into something wonderful, for Krishna's pleasure."



Devotees being served sumptuous prasadam, cooked by many devotees

There was a very encouraging mix of older and younger devotees," says Advaita, "It was indicative of what the village could mean to devotees in the future by coming together in a tighter knit community to voice concerns, opinions and offer input on

how they want to grow and develop as a community.“

The next Village Association Event will be held on Friday April 29th, 2016 at the Community Hall, underneath the Palace Lodge.

Lord Caitanya's Mercy Flooded New Vrindaban

(By Bhaktin Autumn)



Devotees bathe Sri Sri Gaura Nitai

On Tuesday March 22nd, 2016, New Vrindaban devotees and pilgrims celebrated the most auspicious appearance day of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krishna Himself in the mood of His own devotee. Gaudiya Vaisnavas believe that Lord Chaitanya is the combination of Krishna and His beloved devotee Srimati Radharani, who appeared in Navadip, India, five hundred and thirty years ago to propagate the Sankirtan Movement, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord, *Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*. Thus devotees celebrate this festival, Gaura Purnima, all

over the world.

The celebration began with a blissful morning program, where devotees enthusiastically participated in morning aratis such as Mangal Arati, Deity Greetings and Guru Puja. Kirtans were led by Nityodita dasa and Rupanuga dasa, followed by an excellent class given by Varsana Swami on the glorifications of Lord Caitanaya.

In his lecture, Varsana Swami explained how Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu distributed the love of Godhead, the ultimate goal of bhakti, through simply the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.



Jasoda Gokulananda dasi ecstatically dancing to kirtan at Gopal's Garden School

For the pleasure of Lord Caitanaya Mahaprabhu devotees sang heart touching Bhajans written by the previous acharyas such as Narottama dasa Thakur's Gauranga Bolite Habe and Sri Krsna Chaitanya Prabhu. Afterwards, Lilasuka dasi led the devotees to Gopal's Garden School to sing kirtan with children.

During the Raj Bhog Arati, devotees also sang with joy for the pleasure of Their Lordships. Devotees then shared their realizations and glorified Lord Gauranga.

As 5:00pm approached, devotees trickled into the temple room to participate in the abhiseka ceremony where everyone including guests had the opportunity to bathe Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura Nitai with fragrant water and fruit juices.



Varsana Swami giving evening class

Varsana Swami then gave another class glorifying Lord Gauranga. He continued by discussing the auspicious beneficial chanting of the Maha Mantra in this age of Kali and shared various pastimes about Lord Chaitanya's appearance on earth.



Gaura Arati kirtan led by Brhat Kirtan Prabhu

Brihat Kirtan Prabhu led the Gaura Arati kirtan wherein all the participants enthusiastically chanted and danced for the pleasure of Lord Gaurnaga. Everyone raised their arms and chanted loudly Gaura, Gaura, Gaura Hari, and the whole atmosphere turned into Navadip Dham!



Maha Offerings on the Altar

A grand feast cooked by Brhat Kirtan Prabhu, Siva Raj Prabhu and others was served at the end. The feast included a beautiful cake dedicated to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu made by Lakshman Isvara Prabhu, and many community members also made various preparations for Lord Gauranga! It was a great celebration.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Ki- Jai!



**Meet the Banthia
and Saraf Family**

By Bhaktin Autumn

Vidhuttama dasi

Serving New Vrindaban since 1974

By Bhaktin Autumn

Tell us something about yourself?

My name is Viduttama devi dasi also known as Janet Cleaver and I was born in Mechanicsburg, Ohio. My husband is Sarva Saksi das and I have a son, Sudarshan, and a daughter Radhastami. I was initiated by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada in 1975 and my husband and I were part of the last group to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada in New Vrindaban.

When did you first meet devotees?

I received a *Back To Godhead* Magazine from a devotee in Ohio when I was fourteen. It wasn't until my husband and I visited the Los Angeles temple in 1974 that I started associating with devotees. While I was in Los Angeles area I was invited to the Ratha Yatra Festival in San Francisco. I went there which made me a devotee. During the Ratha Yatra, I was also invited to meet Srila Prabhupada at the airport, and I remember seeing Prabhupada coming out of the plane and all the devotees bowing down to pay their respects, and I did not know what was going on, so I followed them too! I realized Prabhupada must be a very special person. I clearly

I have the pleasure interviewing one of our guests each month to share their experiences in New Vrindaban. This month's guests are the Banthia family who visited New Vrindaban for the very first time.

The interview took place on Sunday, March 20th, 2016.

Tell us something about you and your family?

Babulal Banthia: My name is Babulal Banthia and this is Vishaka Banthia, and this is my daughter Smriti Banthia. We live in Indianapolis, Indiana and came to New Vrindaban to meet our cousins Manish and Anu Saraf and their children Anika and Avi Saraf who live in Washington D.C. This was our first visit to New Vrindaban.

How did you find out about New Vrindaban?

Manish: We have friends and family who visited New Vrindaban in the past, had very good things to say and recommended we visit. Since New Vrindaban is between Indianapolis and Washington D.C., our family decided to meet here and take this opportunity to expose the children to the whole concept of Krishna Consciousness.

Have you visited any ISKCON temples before?

Manish: We have visited ISKCON temples in India. My family and I will visit the Potomac ISKCON temple in Washington D.C on rare occasions such as Holi festivals. However, the

remember Srila Prabhupada carrying this beautiful, white, and elegant parasol as he got off the plane and it was a great experience.

How did you move to New Vrindaban?

I heard about New Vrindaban from the Los Angeles devotees and they didn't recommend us moving there. Their perceptions of New Vrindaban were that devotees were deprived of good clothing and good food. However, we realized that we weren't city people and didn't want to live in Los Angeles. So in the fall of 1974, my husband and I decided to marry at the Court House before we started our drive to New Vrindaban.

What sorts of services did you do? My first services were taking care of the calves and the cows, cleaning the Lord's offering plates and churning butter in the mornings. I also cleaned the Bahulaban prasadam room twice a day, managed the Palace of Gold gift shop, washed devotees' laundry, laid bricks for New Vrindaban grounds, and also helped paint the outside of the Palace of Gold.

What was your favorite service? My favorite service was washing laundry for devotees and I still love doing laundry to this day.

What is your favorite part of New Vrindaban? I love the peace and

children are more familiar with Hindu and multicultural temples close to our family's house in Indiana.

Tell us about your experience in New Vrindaban?

Anika: I really liked all the peacocks and cows in New Vrindaban. The white peacock literally came to our front door! (*Avi then told a story about a swan feather he found near Sri Sri Gaura Nitai's statue and was certain it was a gift from Krishna.*) *Anika, Avi and Manish had the opportunity to milk the cows, Sita and Manjari, for their first time. Manish:* Growing up we had milking cows in our living complex, but we never had the chance to milk them ourselves. This was my first time.

What did you like most?

Anika: The cows were so nice and the swans were so beautiful. Usually in the zoos, swans are brown and ugly, but here they are actually white! *Babulal:* All of you who live here are very devoted and kind. You explain things so nicely which makes this whole environment so peaceful. *Manish:* The environment is very peaceful and meditative, and I can feel the positive energy. Everything here is sort of aligned and our thinking becomes purified. Certain problems solve on their own. *Smriti:* Having no cell phone service also helps keep the peacefulness which I liked the most. *Vishaka:* There was very nice vegetarian prasadam. It was superb

serenity of the woods. Growing up in the country, I always had a special connection with nature and the outdoors. I also love seeing all the visiting guests come to New Vrindaban in the summertime.

Any Advice? Keep it simple, and always be looking for something to do to make New Vrindaban a better place.

We thank Viduttama dasi for her services, and we especially appreciate her sweet, friendly personality!!!

and plentiful.

How can we serve you better in the future?

Manish: If I were to be more critical, the Palace Lodge could be better maintained, i.e. doorknobs could be tightened and some tiles in the bathroom replaced, simply for its longevity. Otherwise, the stay and the beds were very comfortable

Do you plan to visit us again?

We will definitely plan to come back again maybe in the summertime.

Giridhari and his Mini Excavator

(By Bhaktin Autumn)



Stainless-steel gear for machine, one of Giridhari's products

Giridhari, born in California in 1975 and son of Kalpavriksha dasa and Gopinath devi dasi, moved to New Vrindaban in 1976 with his parents. When he moved to New Vrindaban he was one year old, and Giridhari recalls Srila Prabhupada visiting New Vrindaban in the same year. "I remember while Srila Prabhupada was on his morning japa walk, and I suddenly ran up to Prabhupada and stopped right in front of him. Prabhupada immediately put his hand into his bead-bag, pulled out a big cookie and gave it to me! I then ate it right on the spot," says Giridhari.

Giridhari grew up in New Vrindaban working in construction, and he also worked in Los Angeles for 11 years in the same field. After working in Los Angeles, he moved back to New Vrindaban to establish his own business. Giridhari says "since I was a teenager I had an interest in metal work, particularly in precision metal work". He finds great satisfaction in precision metal work and feels very fortunate to be engaged in something he really loves doing.



Mini-excavator in action at the Palace lodge.

Recently, Giridhari astounded everyone by building a machine what is known as the “mini excavator”, to assist construction projects. Since it’s first demonstration in February, this machine has greatly assisted the New Vrindaban’s constructions. Devotees thus began inquiring about the machine and how he made it.

Giridhari explains, “after back breaking work in construction, digging holes and moving rocks with a shovel, an alternative to shoveling myself became a very appealing idea. I searched online for an alternative and found a mini excavator which costs \$10,000 to \$20,000; I was very surprised with the price and decided to make the excavator myself”, says Griridhari.

The excavator consists of the yellow and grey external body frame, the tracks and arm. Giridhari has used many of his tools to create and piece the machine together. “The purpose of this excavator is to dig big holes, pipelines, and lift large items”, says Giridhari. He claims that the whole process took him about 1 month to finish.

Giridhari currently runs his own business in New Vrindaban, and he also assists

devotees and others in metal works. Some of his major contributions in New Vrindaban are the classic metal chakra on top of the Radha Vrindaban Chandra temple and the victorious Hanuman flag on top of Prabhupada's Palace of Gold.



Although Giridhari likes the simplicity of running a small business, he eventually wants to expand his business by marketing his products. On March 5th, 2016 Giridhari demonstrated his pieces to the audience of the Blue Home Café, Lilasuka and Jesse's home, and showed others what he does behind the scenes. Everyone was amazed with his ingenious contributions. Giridhari hopes to be an example in inspiring others through his service. Devotees sincerely appreciate Giridhari's enthusiasm, passion and uninterrupted dedication.

**Apartment
Buildings Update**

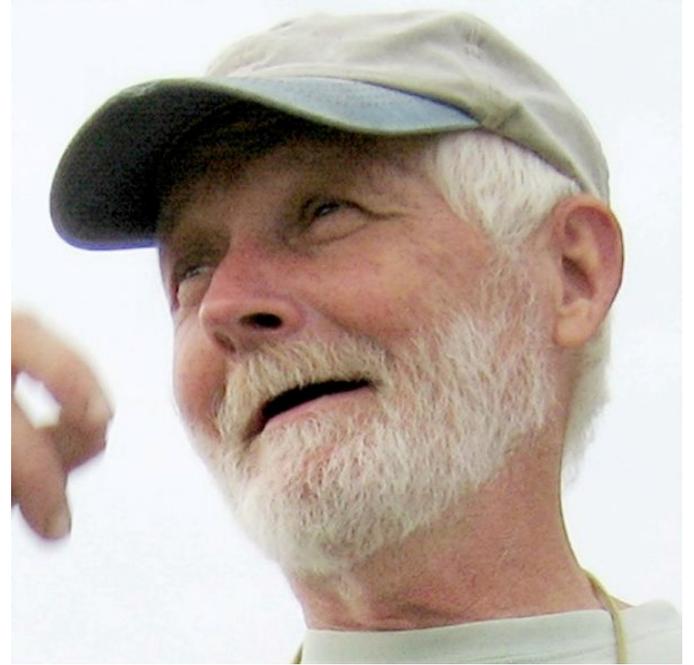
Vidura Dasa
(1944-2016)



Multiple contractors are working to finish New Vrindaban's apartment building, and project is at its final stages.

Recently S&S Contracting finished most of the outside and inside framing. The studio basement apartments are still in need of drywall, plumbing, floors, lighting, etc.

Jim Klug Excavating has installed the main water, sewage lines and has poured the concrete sidewalks. The parking lots, some retaining walls, and the porch foundations will be poured soon. Steve's Service and Repair have most of the electric installed and by the next few weeks the phone lines and Internet will be connected. They are currently ducting, and installing the furnace and heat pumps.



On March 20th, 2016, New Vrindaban held a memorial for our long time resident Vidura dasa. Please read his full obituary at <http://www.brijabasispirit.com/2016/03/06/vidura-prabhu-acbsp-1944-2016/>.



Devotees offering flowers to Vidura.



Devotees remembering Vidura.



Yoder Roofing is currently building the porches and stairways. They will be finishing the sidings of the apartments and the trimming as well.

With all these great efforts, New Vrindaban aims to finish this project by the first week of April. The buildings will mark the first piece of infrastructure in New Vrindaban since in a very long time!



Wife Triyodish and friends Radhagrace, Yugal Kisora, Das and Vrsni, Bimbadar, Gopisa, Sacimata, and others spoke to honor Vidura's contribution to their lives.

The New Vrindaban Reading Club Encourages Reading

(By Bhaktin Autumn)



Nityodita Prabhu, a long-term resident of New Vrindaban who is passionate about sharing Prabhupada's teachings with others, has initiated the New Vrindaban "Reading Club". The purpose of this Reading Club is to encourage devotees to regularly read Krishna Conscious literatures. It also enables devotees to come together to practice the six loving exchanges presented by Srila Rupa Goswami.

The first "Reading Club" meeting was held on Gita *Jayanti* day on December 21st, 2015, hosted by Nityodita Prabhu at his lovely home. "The structure of the reading club is not compulsory but rather designed to assist devotees to share their realizations", says Nityodita Prabhu. "Initially, we tried reading one philosophical book and one Lila book simultaneously, but now we read just one book together."

Nityodita Prabhu asserts that this book club not only helps devotees understand the Krishna Conscious Philosophy but also serves as a platform where devotees can connect and share with each other, thus forming a smaller more intimate community within the larger community.

"The reading club is good motivation for lazy people like me, who need an extra kick to read and study Srila Prabhupada's books, as he requested of us. It is also an opportunity to hear each other's thoughts and realizations, and thereby connect and

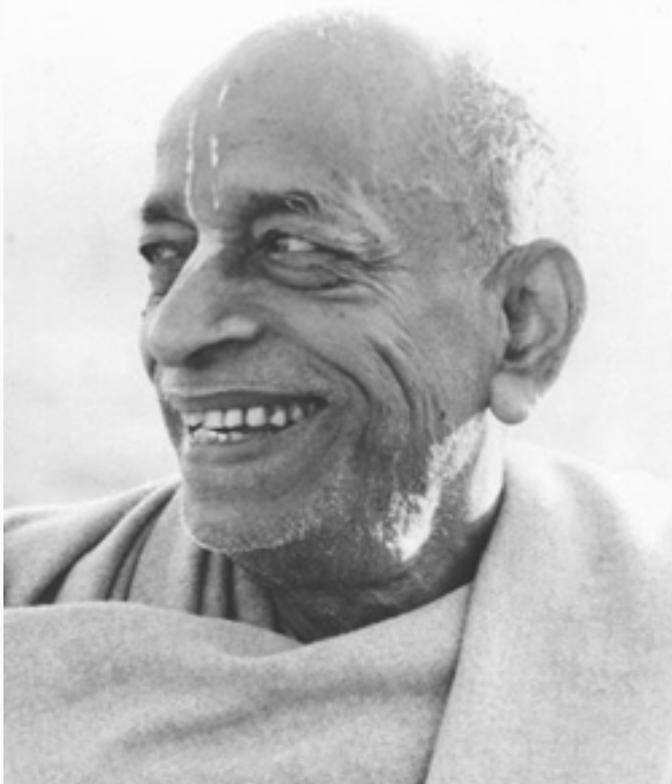
appreciate each other more. Thank you, Nityodita Prabhu", says Madrid dasi.

The meetings begin with a short sweet Kirtan and readings from Srila Prabhupada's letters about the importance of reading. This is followed by a "round table" discussion on the reading assignment. Devotees are encouraged to share a particular passage or pastime that inspired or intrigued them the most. Of course, at the end everyone honors sumptuous prasadam.

Nityodita Prabhu encourages devotees to join in for this *nectarean* devotee association. He invites everyone to come and share realizations and have the opportunity to hear others.

The next meeting will be held on **April 4th, 6-8pm at the Temple Library**. If you would like to join this wonderful *sanga*, please contact Nityodita Prabhu, you can reach him at [304-639-9257](tel:304-639-9257) or by email nityodita@gmail.com.

Job Opening!



Srila Prabhupada:

For the New Vrindaban Project:

“According to our program we will have to construct seven temples, Govindaji, Gopinatha, Madana-Mohana, Syamasundara,



Title: Tour Guide

Location: Prabhupada's Palace of Gold

Job Description: The tour guide has the honor of being on the front lines, greeting guests, taking payments and facilitating tours. The 25min tour takes our guests on a detailed history of the construction of the Palace, the history of the community and teaches the basics of our Krsna Conscious philosophy.

Qualifications: The ideal tour guide, is outgoing, well spoken, well versed in basic preaching, honest, punctual, enthusiastic, flexible and humble.

Damodara, Gokulananda and Radha-Ramana. And later on if possible, Rangunatha also.”

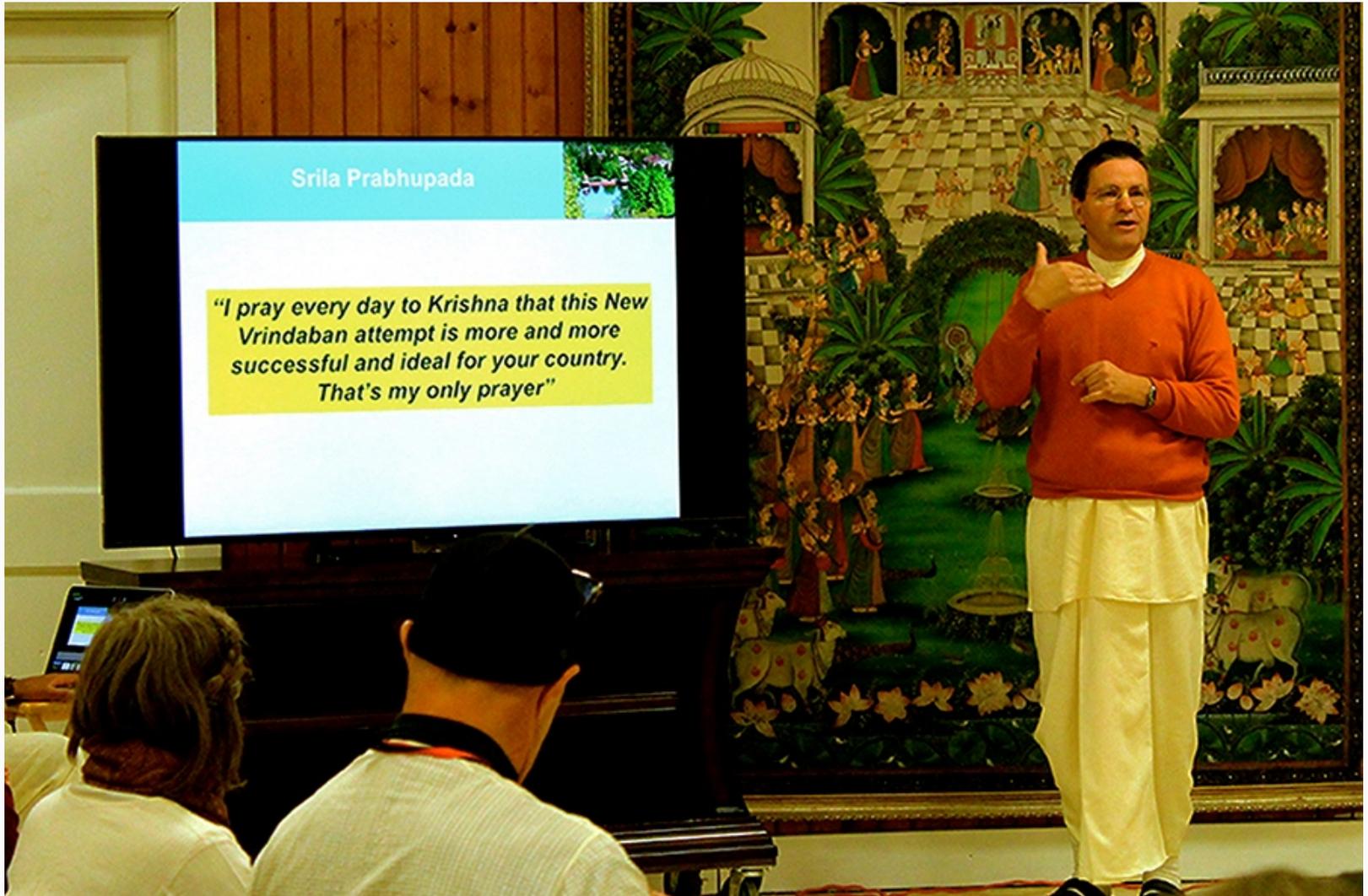
-Letter from Bombay, November 10th. 1975

Hours: Currently 5pm-9pm as well as weekends. We are able to provide up to 30hrs a week.

This is a paid position. Apply ASAP.

Contact: Vrajadhama Das @ [304-780-4117](tel:304-780-4117)

New Vrindaban Joint Boards Meeting Schedule April 15-17, 2016



Friday, April 15th.

3:30 pm to 5:30 pm: Pre-weekend meeting Joint Board & Steering Committee members (at ECO-V Conference Room)

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm: Rama Navami Celebrations & Feast (at Radha Vrindabanchandra's Temple)

Saturday, April 16th.

9:45 am to 1:30 pm: Department Head Presentations for 2016 (under the Lodge)

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm: Lunch Prasadam (at Radha Vrindaban Chandra's Temple)

2:30 pm to 5:00 pm: Community Dialog (under the Lodge)

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm: Rama Navami Celebrations & Dinner Prasadam (at Radha Vrindabanchandra's Temple)

Sunday, April 17th.

10:00 am to 1:00 pm: New Vrindaban Community Tour (Installation of Gosh's Appreciation Plaque & spreading of his ashes at the Bahulaban Barn, visit the one remaining Madhuban Prabhupada Hut, brief stop at Sankirtan prabhu's House for a "Holding Srila Prabhupada" photo, & a view of the new apartment buildings, weather permitting)

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm: Sunday Program & EKADASI Feast (at Radha Vrindaban Chandra's Temple)

3:30 pm to 5:00 pm: Lifetime Community Service Appreciations. Honorees: Betty Hickey, Sukhavaha Dasi, Jaya Murari Dasa, Sarvasaksi Dasa & Viduttama Dasi (under the Lodge)

Upcoming Events in New Vrindaban



April 3rd - *Papamocani* Ekadasi

April 8-10th - Japa Retreat in New Vrindaban

April 15-16th - Appearance Day of Lord Ramachandra Festival

April 16-17th - Onsite Joint Boards Meeting

April 17th - *Kamada* Ekadasi

April 28th - Palace of Gold Sangam
with guest of honor Visvakarma Prabhu

May 6-8th - Festival of Inspiration

May 20-21st - *Nrsimha Caturmasi*:
The 30th Anniversary of Nrsimhadeva's Installation

If you have any questions, please email us at iskconnv@gmail.com or call 304-843-1600 ext. 106.

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