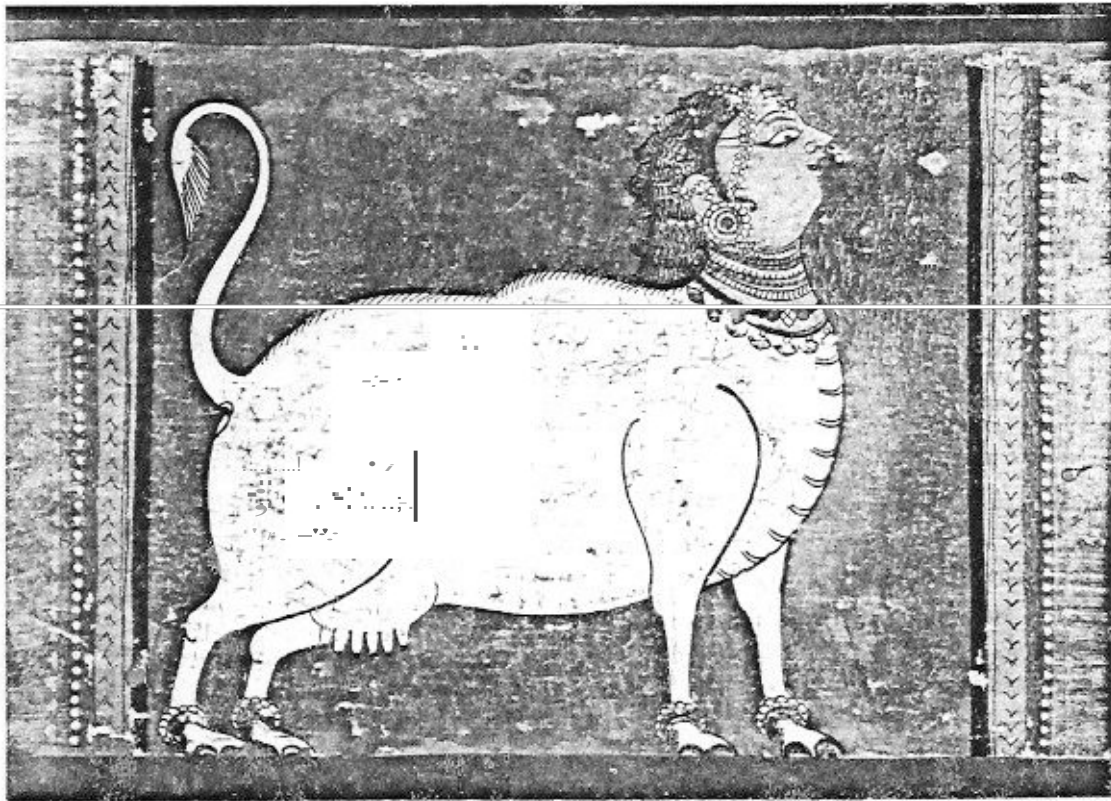


THE AIS-AES REUNION OF 1985



December, 1987

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by KC Siebert

The AIS-AES Reunion of 1985 was a tremendous success.

It was held July 4-7, 1985 in Washington, D.C. A special thanks goes to the Smithsonian Institute for establishing 1985 as "The Year of India" and for featuring it as the main country in the Folk Life Festival on the mall. They offered Aditi- The Celebration of Life, had museum exhibits and yummy food.

We began the weekend with fireworks on the capital lawn on the 4th with background music provided by the National Symphony.

On the evening of the 5th at the Phoenix Park Hotel we met for hors d'oeuvres and cocktails at the Phoenix Park Hotel and to check in with name tags and a drink in hand. 217 people began to mingle!! Tim Brown had prepared the most wonderful slide show with complete with pictures from the AIS-AES yearbooks and other memorable photographs of India, shown on two screens simultaneously. He also played Indian music and western songs from our era to set the nostalgic mood. (We had originally secured an entire two floors or rooms at the Phoenix Park, hoping some intown residents would stay, and later found we only needed twenty, not eighty rooms.)

The morning of the 6th we had arranged with the Department of the Interior to have a picnic, catered by The American Cafe on the mall at 3rd and Jefferson, one block from the Air and Space Museum and two blocks from the Folk Life Festival, the Aditi celebration and the Natural History Museum. The only stipulation was that we weren't allowed to demonstrate or have any banners depicting who we were'

We then had special guided tours through the museum, every thirty minutes to see the Aditi exhibit. This was a live museum exhibit and truly incredible! The Smithsonian went to the villages of India and brought back craftsmen, artisans, musicians, puppeteers, actors, dancers, singers, magicians and more to perform. It felt as though we had never left'

The highlight of the afternoon was playing kabati on the mall. It was amazing how many Indians stopped to watch us, wondering why so many "Americans" were playing and so well! We took pictures under the trees and have included some of those here. After the picnic was over at 4:00, we left to get ready for dinner.

The evening of the 6th we met at 9:30 p.m. at the Tandoor Restaurant on Connecticut Avenue. I called Jadis, the owner, at 5:30 p.m. to tell him that we would be having approximately 275 people, instead of our original estimate of 150. The restaurant was small, so we tumbled out onto Connecticut Avenue with tables and chairs. What a beautiful balmy night! By 11:00 we had finished everything there was to drink. Jagdis sent some of his people down to another of his nearby restaurants and brought up more beer, wine, and liquor - which, along with dinner, we finished about 1:00. The food was absolutely fantastic. We closed the restaurant about 1:30. Tim Brown again showed the slide show and we handed out prizes. As many of you remember, one of the ways to decorate our rooms in Delhi was with airline posters. Well, being the packrat that I am, I never got rid of them - ah, the prizes! Air India posters¹¹ These were the winners:

The most in a family to attend the reunion: The Smith's Mike, Tom, John, Patty and Dennis.

The oldest class graduate: Bil Hocomb, Class of 1963.

The youngest class graduate: Celia Murphy, Class of 1979.

The longest stay in India: Reverend Ernie Campbell.

The shortest stay in India: Doug Jimmick.

The most number of return trips: George Young and David Weisblat.

Attended 12 years at AIS-AES: Malcolm Garg and Ashok Nimgard.

The furthest distance traveled to attend: Reverend Ernie Campbell.

The longest stay in India without homeleave: Susan Donaho Williams (19 years).

The highlight for Sarah and me were the applause from all of you! Then Tina Thuermer and Gabrielle Beasley presented us with gift certificates from Bloomingdale's for planning the reunion. IT IS SARAH AND I WHO SHOULD THANK YOU FOR HAVING SO MUCH FAITH IN OUR ABILITY TO PLAN SUCH A REUNION. Since many did not want to go home, some moved on to area clubs and some returned for continued fun at the hotel.