

Aravind 2017 Optics Gig

Time zone

(UTC+05:30) Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi

Wednesday April 17, 2017

Greetings from the Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai India!

Madurai Hospital Address

Aravind Eye Hospital
1, Anna Nagar,
Madurai 625 020
Tamil Nadu, India.
Phone: +91-452-4356100
Fax: +91-452-253 0984
E-Mail: aravind@aravind.org
www.aravind.org

Important Madurai Phone Numbers

Aravind Eye Hospital : 0452-43 56 100
LAICO : 0452-43 56 500
Harmony Guest House: 0452-252- 1364

My cell phone number in India, thanks to Dr Thiri, is +91 97907 62154. I will be back June 12 or so. I can't believe that it works but it does. There are so many phones everywhere that it would seem the airwaves would be as crowded as the streets, but that is not the case. Now that that is out of the way...

Why I'm Here..

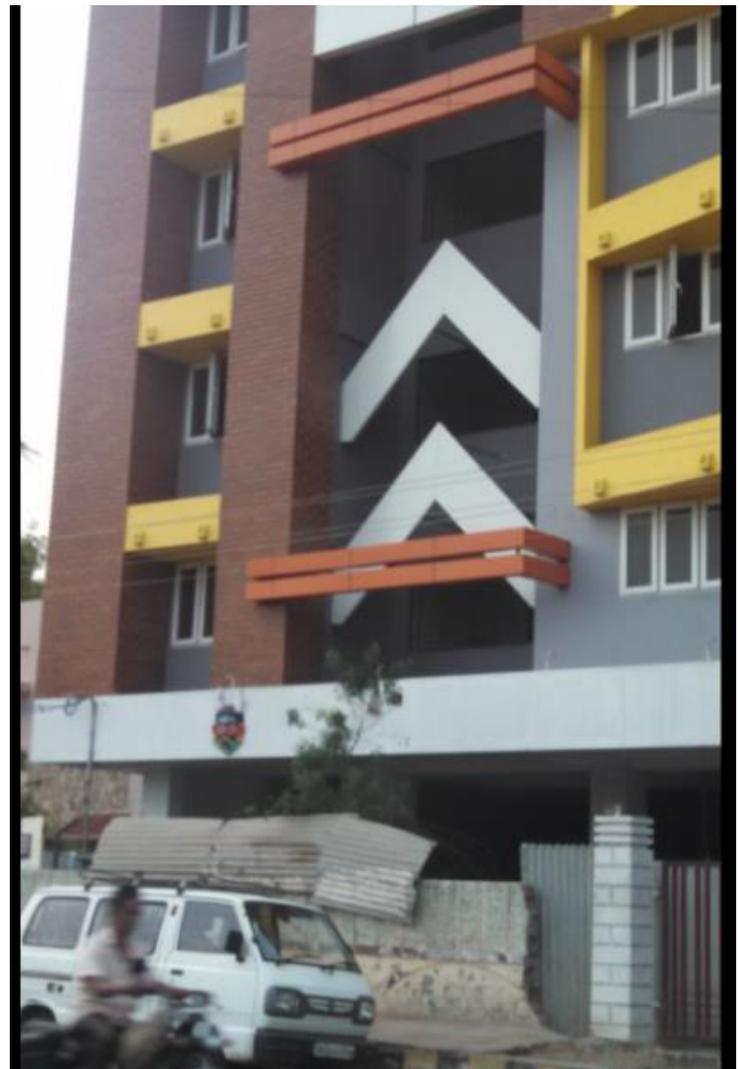
It's not the food, and it's not the weather. I'm here because the boss(es) said I could! A friend of mine, Dr Carol Bender, told me about the Fulbright program opportunities and with a little paperwork and a couple of letters of support (Thank you Dr Cairns and Guyton!) I found myself named as a "Fulbright Specialist" and have returned to Aravind to build an optics teaching program.

<http://www.aravind.org/default/vanakkamcontent/aboutcities#mdulei> is a link of all the things that I could be doing – like yoga, swimming, or seeing Bollywood movies – if not for the schedule.

I thought I was going to have two weeks to prepare for a series of lectures for the residents and fellows – but what is also needed is teaching for the refractionists and biometrists. So, I arrived Monday morning to find that two seminars of 5 hours each were scheduled for the next two Sundays. A vacation this ain't. There are typical conflicting demands and we will try to accommodate them.

What is New...

A brand new building next door!



A couple of years ago, a nearly abandoned building was sited next to my accommodations. Nearly abandoned, because the back yard was occupied by a large pack of dogs that worked out their differences all night long. Now, a beautiful new building about 9 stories tall.



Here is the porch of my domicile – and it sort of tells the story. I am getting a daily run in each day – that is a fixed part of the schedule. One pair of shoes for work – the Krocs are perfect, can be hosed down; one pair for running, and a pair of flip-flops for inside the house.

Getting there is not half the fun

Getting to work, that is... To get to the hospital, I have to cross a very busy street:



9.921364, 78.140476

When I was here in 2013, the traffic signal to get to get across the road was broken, and hotwired to blink. Hotwired as you can only do with a penknife and a pair of gloves. Well, it was fixed. Sort of like the satellite receiver in the doctors lounge back home. It was fixed by removing it. Now, my strategy is to find a little old lady, not quite blind but heading to Aravind, and tag along with her during the street crossings. It seems the main thing is never to stop. Just keep going – but in the right direction.



Yes, they really are everywhere.



Yes there is great coffee – but I am acquiring a taste for Chai Tea as well. Just not so heavy on the sugar!



Chai Tea is also sold by the foot!

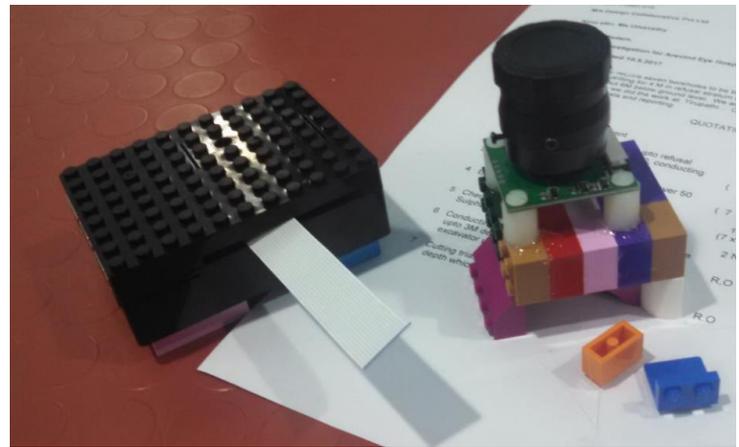


I couldn't resist this – I recently visited Chicago, and was on campus of University of Chicago, where “fun goes to die”. I worry about us becoming known as the place where Ideas go to Die. This monument was on the daily run route, couldn't resist



Back among my tribe

I am billeted in the Biomedical Engineering Department of Aravind. These ladies are senior repair technicians. I may be mistaken, but it appears that the gents are all in another room. There are so many stories of non-functioning equipment in hospitals, where equipment sits idle with nothing more wrong than a blown fuse. There is a training program for new ophthalmologists that teach the basics of troubleshooting, equipment cleaning and maintenance. Pretty clear to me that Aravind is NOT where ideas go to die. Some work and some don't but they are not afraid to try and see what works.



What I am working on at the moment. Yes they are Legos. Turns out they are fabulous for mounting optics inexpensively

We are in the process of building 6 sets of optical benches out of Legos and PVC pipe and plumbing fixtures. The goal is to make the optics lab be reproducible at nearly any program.

Lets see how this works out. The plan is 10 “mini” lectures of about 20 minutes, followed by 3 problem based learning assignments or optical laboratory experiments – very hands on, very practical, and with a set of teaching slides that include speaker notes.

Now you see why I am signing off and getting the day going – there is a lot to do between now and Sunday.

Love to all from the other side of the world-

Joe
17 May 2017
Madurai India