

SRI LANKA

Facts about Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island country in southern Asia, located off the southeastern coast of India in the Indian Ocean.

To get an idea of its size, Sri Lanka is slightly larger than West Virginia.

It has a population of about 21.1 million people.

The capital city is Colombo.

About 69 percent of the population practices Buddhism. About 8 percent of the population is Muslim, about 7 percent is Hindu and about 6 percent is Christian. Another 10 percent do not specify a practiced religion.

Sinhala is the official and national language. Tamil is another national language. The population is 74 percent Sinhalese-speaking and 18 percent Tamil-speaking.

The country celebrates Independence Day on Feb. 4.

According to 2007 estimates, the country has a 6 percent unemployment rate with 22 percent of the population living below the poverty line.

Sri Lankan Dancing

There are four different traditional dances unique to Sri Lanka.

Kandyan dancing originated during the time period of Kandyan kings and imitates the movement of animals such as the elephant. Costumes incorporate the colors of white, red, yellow and black.

Sbaragamuwa dancing is a reverent dance worshipping the God Saman. There are 32 main dances in this style.

Pahatharata dancing is a low-country ritualistic dance. It's a dance that hopes to ward off the evil spirits that cause sickness, and dancers wear masks depicting birds, demons and reptiles. There are 18 main dances in this style.

Wanni dances are not popular, though performed in the northern parts of the country. It involves few steps and a lot of singing.

The Sri Lankan Elephant

The elephants that reside in Sri Lanka are the largest of the Asian elephants. At most 3,000 elephants are estimated to be found in the wild.

They also are the darkest in color among Asian elephants. However, there are patches of skin on the elephant with no pigment at all.

Elephants play a significant cultural role in Sri Lanka, often found in art and religion.

SOURCES: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, WWF, WWW.SRI LANKA REFERENCE.ORG AND WWW.SRI LANKA ELEPHANT.COM

Learn more...

To hear about Sri Lanka from the life of a Sri Lankan, go to page 3B.

FACES + PLACES



HELLO, MY NAME IS Amanda Burchfield

Finance senior Amanda Burchfield first joined a pompon team in seventh grade and continued her passion for pom through college by joining the MSU Pompon team. "I wanted a chance to do it again, because I thought I was done after high school," Burchfield said. "I (was glad) to get a chance to do it again since they started it up here." The MSU Pompon team was started in 2005, and since its inception has already racked up many awards — including 2007 and 2008 Collegiate Pompon Champions and the 2007 Collegiate High Kick Champions. Burchfield said the best part about being on the Pompon team was just hanging around the girls — some of which were on rival pompon teams when Burchfield was in high school. "We're all so close and we all have a good time," Burchfield said. "We hang out outside of practice and it just makes the experience amazing." The team participated in the Homecoming parade Friday and is beginning preparations for their first competition Nov. 2.

— Compiled by Kyle Feldscher, photo by Jeana-Dee Allen, *The State News*

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Wednesday



PHOTOS BY NICHOLE HOERNER/THE STATE NEWS

Family community services and psychology junior Rachel Lewis shares a laugh with Chef Patrick Merz and finance senior Greg Radke, while preparing dinner for the distinguished professors reception at Cowles House.

Presidential living

From hospital to residence hall to housing MSU presidents, Cowles House remains one of MSU's greatest landmarks

By Sarah Harbison
THE STATE NEWS

Tucked away behind the Union and across the street from Landon Hall is a house many students don't even know exists. The brick house, surrounded by landscaping and magnolia trees, is easy for students to pass by as they shuffle through their days running from class to work to the library. But the house has a name and a significant history on campus. Cowles House, 1 Abbot Road, is the house of the MSU president.

House Manager Peter Lechler said the building's size and the extensive landscaping make it easy to miss.

"It's out of sight, out of mind," Lechler said. "Even though we are right smack in the middle of the old section, the landscaping and the way the house is built, you don't really see it if you aren't looking for it."

The truth is the often unseen and unnoticed Cowles House usually buzzes with activity. Though President Lou Anna K. Simon does not reside in the house, the staff there is always preparing and planning for a reception or a formal dinner. With about 120 events planned



Cowles House is the official residence of the MSU president. However, President Lou Anna K. Simon has chosen to live in her own home.

"It's really very much a part of our history ... We've used it to be the university's home, not simply the home of the Simons, and I think that's important in building team MSU."

Lou Anna K. Simon, MSU president

For an audio interview with a Cowles House culinary assistant, visit statenews.com.

Cowles House facts

The house was funded from the estate of Frederick Cowles Jenison and named after his mother, Alice B. Cowles.

It is the only original house left of the four homes built on Faculty Row in the 1850s. Cowles House was completed in 1857.

The entrance foyer and library are the oldest parts of the building.

The fireplace in the sitting room has had tiles from Pawabic Pottery Co. of Detroit incorporated into its design.

Artwork from graduate students in the master in fine arts program adorn the walls of Cowles House. Different pieces are rotated out about three times a year.

MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon's favorite room in the house is the sun room, which has Asian decor, because it is "just a terrific area for reading," she said.

SOURCES: COWLES HOUSE MANAGER PETER LECHLER AND PRESIDENT LOU ANNA K. SIMON

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