

THE LOTUS

A Monthly Publication of the Federation of India Community Associations



December 2017

1967 - 2017 | 50 Years

Standing United behind the Indian Flag

For the first time ever, the sister organizations of FICA came together on Sunday, December 3, 2017 to discuss the future of the Asian Indian community in North East Ohio, the need to stand united behind the Indian flag, and the plans for building a community center.



From left, front row: Shubha Sen Pakrashi, Mona Alag, Mrs. Shah, Nipa Turakhia, Satish Mahna, Bharat Kumar, Razia Ahmed, Ritu Mahna, Cheryl D'Mello, Yatish Desai, Soumitra Ghosh, Nilesh Patel.
2nd row: Gaurav Kaur, Padma Jambunath, Mona Gupta, Jitu Shah, Sudarshan Sathe, Prasad Muvva, Sanjay Parikh, Jayesh Mandepara, Prasanta Raj, Iqbal Ahmed.
3rd row: Ashok Kolla, Hemant Kanodia, Chandrasekara Kayambo, Ravi Vadlamudi.
4th row: Anand More, Samir Gautam, Utkarsh Hazarnis, Shaifali Bathiya.

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Cheryl D'Mello

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 Jeyabalan Sankarasubramanian, NEO Tamil Sangam President Elect
 Jayesh Mendpara, Gujarati Samaj Trustee
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 Razia Ahmed, AFMI (American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin) President
 Iqbal Ahmed, AFMI Trustee
 Jitu Shah, JSGC (Jain Society of Greater Cleveland) President
 Kantilal Jain, JSGC BOT Chairperson

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year to all our members and readers!

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Association of Asian Indian Women of NEO
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American Federation of Muslims of Indian
Origin www.afmi.org Dr. Razia Ahmed
Association of Indian Physicians of Northern
Ohio (AIPNO) www.aipno.org Dr. Mona Gupta
American Society of Engineers of Indian Origin
(ASEI) www.asei-usa.org 440-734-1830
Bengali Cultural Society www.bcscl.org Sou-
mitra Ghosh
Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation Sreedhar Nair
Gujarati Samaj of Grtr. Cleveland www.cleve-
landgujaratisamaj.org Nilesh Patel
Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society www.cleve-
landgurudwara.org
Guru Nanak Foundation www.gurunanakfoun-
dationrichfield.com
India-Ohio Chamber of Commerce www.indiao-
hiochamber.com Radhika Reddy
Indian Christian Association, Michael Sreshta
Jain Society of Greater Cleveland www.jsgc.org
Jitu Shah
Kasturi Kannada Society www.kasturikannada-
sangha.org Meena Humchad
Kerala Association of Ohio www.kaoh.org
JayaKumar
NEO Marathi Mandal (NEOMM) www.neomm.
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Punjabi Cultural Society www.guidestar.org
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NEO Tamil Sangam (NEOTS) www.neo-ts.org
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sabanorthamerica.com Neelam Gill
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Editor's Note

'Tis the Season....

December has begun with a landmark meeting of FICA with its sister organizations. An ongoing dialogue with the representatives of the different groups about the proposed community center building has begun. Planning is underway for a spectacular Republic Day Celebration in January 2018 with good food and entertainment at the Intercontinental Hotel in Cleveland. Attending such events always lights that flame of patriotism in our hearts and thoughts of family far away.

As the landscape is transformed with colorful lights and décor, carols ring out and noisy parties take place. It's the time for networking and eating. Indian Christians and Indian Catholics get together to celebrate Christmas with church services, and traditional meals.

Soon we will be ushering in the New Year, with all those resolutions we find so hard to keep. Let's pause to take a deep breath and be mindful of all that has happened in these past 12 months, remembering those who have left us, while we look forward to a brand New Year!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Cheryl D'Mello
Editor
Email: Lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Letter to the Editor

Why Not A New Community Center!

To The Editor
The Lotus

India Community Center was a dream plan of India Association of Cleveland (IAC) in 1968 under the leadership of Akhil Singh. India Community Center (ICC) was bought in 1977. In 1982, the Federation of India Community Associations (FICA) was formed to replace IAC.

60+ organizations are meeting their budget to survive. In spite of numerous appeals, ICC did not survive and was sold last year.

ICC did not survive as it diverted its efforts into various directions missing the focus of ICC. That allowed the community to donate where they believed in more.

We can create a new ICC. Yes, the handful of large philanthropists will donate, but to operate, maintain and meet the needs of the various age groups, religions, professions will be a no-win task. It will not operate by volunteers.

Our true presentation in the community is at India Cultural Gardens where Mahatma Gandhiji's statue represents all of us.

God Bless our community.

Batuk Modi

Subscribe to receive "The Lotus" for free in your inbox at: ficacleveland.org

50 years for "The Lotus"

This year marks the 50th anniversary of "The Lotus," which prides itself on being the first Asian Indian newspaper in the U.S and the only non-profit Asian Indian newspaper in Cleveland. First printed 50 years ago by Case Western Reserve University students and some community members, today "The Lotus" continues to deliver local, relevant and useful community news about events, achievements, area resources and service activities.

"The Lotus" is one of the many arms of FICA, a non-profit, 501(c) (3) organization dedicated to serving the needs of the Asian Indian Community in Northeast Ohio.

"The Lotus" is read by over 10,000 Asian Indian families in N.E. Ohio. Mostly volunteers devote their time and energy to publish it. The e-version reaches around 2,000 inboxes, and 2,500 copies are printed and mailed to community residents and delivered to Cuyahoga County Library branches, Indian grocery stores, religious centers, and restaurants.

Send us your articles (about 500 words) and letters to the editor (150 words), recipes or any suggestions you may have for articles. Please make sure that the photos you submit should have captions and the photographer's name.

Thank you for your support through these 50 years!



ADVERTISING IN THE LOTUS

WWW.FICACLEVELAND.ORG

"The Lotus" prides itself on being the first Asian Indian community newspaper in the U.S. and the only non-profit Asian Indian newspaper in Cleveland. It was launched in 1967 by students of Case Western Reserve Univ. with support from the community.

Today "The Lotus", an arm of the Federation of India Community Associations, continues to provide relevant local community news. It is delivered to about 2000 households and businesses by direct mailing and to about 2000 email inboxes. Papers are distributed to libraries, grocery stores, religious centers, restaurants, and other cultural institutions which have an interest in Asian Indian culture. Estimated readership numbers total over 10,000 and are growing.

Monthly (Less than 12 months)	Yearly (12 months consecutive)	Maximum Ad Size Width Ht
\$20	\$180	1 Col Wide 2"x1"
\$50	\$450	One Sixteenth 4.5"x2"
\$80	\$720	One Eighth 4.5"x3.5
\$120	\$1200	Quarter Page 5"x6"
\$200	\$2100	Half Page 10"x6"
\$350	\$3600	One Page 10"x13"

Your ad must be received by the Editor in high resolution format (jpg or similar) by the 20th of the month for publication in the following month's issue. The ad must be approved by the Editorial Board before publishing.

Ads that are not print ready (size, resolution) will result in blurry images for which we will not be responsible. Advertisers will be charged a \$50 fee for getting an ad print ready. Please email lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com with questions and the following information, along with an electronic copy of your ad for publication.

Your name: _____

Company: _____

Ad Size: _____

Number of months ad will run: _____

Make checks payable to FICA Cleveland and write "The Lotus" in the memo line. Mail the check and contract for advertising to: FICA/Lotus P.O. BOX 39474, Solon, OH 44139, U.S.A. You may also consider making a tax deductible donation to FICA which is a 501(c) (3) organization.

Board of Trustees Message

Dear Friends,

For many years at various community fora, the common refrain and frequent advice was to have our whole FICA Family, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and the Heads of Sister Organizations, around ONE table. Just as there is no sea without the mighty rivers, there is no FICA without the lively, energetic, and vibrant participation of our sister organizations, acting in unison.

Through the diligent efforts of Ritu Mahna, President of the Executive Board, that aspiration became a reality this past Sunday, December 3, 2017.



SUDARSHAN R. SATHE

We were able to get all of our FICA Family in one place, talking to each other, at the Saffron Patch Restaurant in Shaker Heights. We were able to hear from the heads of all the sister organizations and understand what it would take to win their active participation. All of those present affirmed their commitment to our community acting as one, with a single voice. There is strength only in numbers. A picture of our group is featured in this issue.

Dr. Satish Mahna, Chair of the Building Committee and Mrs. Mona Alag, Vice Chair Person,

Board of Trustees presented the vision of a new home for the Indian Community. Of course, the vision has to be supported by the community resources.

Now the countdown towards the January 20th, 2018 Republic Day Event begins. Our target of 500 people in attendance and \$25,000 net proceeds from this event is going to require each and every one of us to put our shoulder to the wheel and make this goal a reality. If we can get each Sister Organization to canvass its members to fill two tables each (\$1000 per table, times 2), we will go a long way towards achieving our numbers.

I know we can do this...and more!

Best Regards,
Sudarshan R. Sathe
Chairman, FICA Board of Trustees

FICA App



The board is excited to introduce our brand new FICA app. created by our executive committee member Shai-fali Bathiya this app is going to revolutionize the way our community accesses FICA events, memberships and news. The FICA Cleveland app is available on the App Store for both Android and Apple devices. Download the App and take the first step to stay connected to your community.

Upcoming Board Of Trustee Meetings

January 28, 2018

April 29, 2018

All meetings will be held from
3:00 to 5:00 p.m

At
12412, Cedar Road,
Cleveland Heights, OH- 44106

Community Partner



As you may already know that FICA of NEO, ([@FICAcleveland](http://www.ficacleveland.org)) has been recognized by the United Way as a Designated Charitable Organization and is eligible non-partner agency with United Way of Cleveland. I would greatly appreciate if you can reach out to your place of work and friends and request them to consider designating Federation of India communities association of North East Ohio (FICA of NEO, [@FICAcleveland](http://www.ficacleveland.org)) to receive part of their annual donation. United



Way will then channel their donations to FICA after deducting some service fee. This will create a revenue stream for FICA to support our mission of promoting the rich cultural heritage of India in greater Cleveland; to facilitate ongoing dialog with civic leaders regarding issues of importance to Asian Indian families in the region; to facilitate the mainstreaming of Asian Indian families by creating a platform for the community's active participation in the civic life; to collaborate with local organizations to promote goodwill and understanding between diverse communities; to partner with business groups that promote ties between Indian and US firms and foster economic development.

Shikshaa Daan Invites You to Give the Gift of Education: Become a Volunteer or Make a Donation

- You can tutor refugee children
- Mentor a student through Refugee Response
- Mentor high school students through Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.)
- Mentor a college student through College Now
- Tutor high school students through Minds Matter

Donating Funds

• Shiksha Daan expenses include rental/education supplies/snacks for the tutoring program in Cleveland Heights, and a scholarship for a college student through College Now. Your contributions will help us sustain and grow our programs.

• To contribute funds to Shiksha Daan, please make a check out to "FICA - Shiksha Daan" and send it to: Shiksha Daan, C/O Vinod Nagpal, 18195 Brickmill Run, Strongsville OH 44136. Shiksha Daan is a project of FICA which is a 501(c)(3) registered organization. So contributions to Shiksha Daan are tax deductible.

Contact Sanjay Garg, shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com, 440-590-1261 to learn more.



IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Mohanlal Bafna, husband of the late Kamla Bafna, passed away peacefully in his sleep at home on November 25, 2017. He was surrounded by his family. A deeply loving and generous man, his legacy will live on for generations to come.

He is survived by his children Suresh (Guniya), Kala (Nikhil), and Dinesh (Sangita); his grandchildren, Neha (Raj), Nikhil, Kunaal, Kurren, Akshay; as well as his great-grandchildren, Aria and Ayan.

A gathering was held at Busch Funeral Home, Parma, on Wednesday, November 29, 2017. Friends were also invited to a memorial service held on Saturday, December 2, 2017 at the Shiva Vishnu Temple in Parma.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested that memorial contributions be made to Friends of Breakthrough Schools (memo Mahatma Gandhi Campus), 3615 Superior Avenue, #3103A, Cleveland, OH 44114.



Philanthropia 2017

MONA ALAG

About 1000 people attended this annual fundraising event on December 4, 2017 at Landerhaven in Mayfield Heights. This year Project Seva, the service arm of FICA, was a Diamond Sponsor. The event is hosted by Harland Diamond of Landerhaven to raise money for non-profits in Cleveland. The Singing Angels provided the entertainment.

Project Seva has been serving meals at four area churches for the past 35 years. In addition, donations of blankets, winter wear, hygiene packages to various shelters on the east and west side.

Project SEVA, the service arm of FICA has been funded totally and completely by members of the Indian community of Greater Cleveland.



From left: Ritu Mahna FICA President, Swati Sathe, Nisha Jain, Archana Khosla, Bindu Singh, Project Seva committee member Sangita Bafna and Mona Alag, Past Chairperson of Project Seva

A Statue of Saint “Mother” Teresa

In a corner of the grounds of St. Basil the Great Church in Brecksville, surrounded by roses and other flowers, is a grey granite statue of Mother (now Saint) Teresa of Calcutta, India (1920-1997) in a saree, her head bowed, her hands folded in prayer. The statue was donated earlier this year by Dr. Dasarathi Ram and his wife Patricia Ram and family. It was erected in memory of their son David Lawrence Ram who died in 2008 at the age of 30 of a brain tumor. They also created the little garden. The statue was created by Milano Monuments.

“St. Teresa was a true saint; she dedicated her life to serving the poor,” said Dr. Ram. Dr. Ram is a retired Radiologist from the Cleveland Clinic. He and Patricia met Mother Teresa when they were travelling from Delhi to Calcutta years ago. Dr. Ram has been active in the Kiwanis Club of Brecksville for 36 years, was its past President and Board Member. He is now Chairman of Scholarships. Patricia volunteers at the Brecksville Community Center and is a member of St. Basil’s Parish.

The Ram’s also created a scholarship in memory of their son David through the Kiwanis Foundation for a high school student from Brecksville-Broadview Heights who wants to pursue a career in the medical field.



Devi Retreat on Self Development

CM TEAM

On December 9, 2017, 40 women came together in Cleveland for a Devi Retreat, “Finding their Divinity” under the guidance of Acharya Vivekji. This workshop on Self-Development was organized by the Chinmaya Mission, Cleveland.

Acharya Vivekji encouraged women to take time for themselves to ponder on questions like “Who am I? Am I happy? How do we become more loving, more fearless, and more secure with ourselves; how to let go of the “fear of missing out;” and how to live non-judgmentally, inside and out, so we can grow, etc. Vivekji, through a creative hands-on activity, showed us how we can create time, that allows us to go inward, think, and reflect, and which can lead to one’s transformation and growth. Forgetting that we all have the divine spark within, we think and act

small and therefore, feel insecure. Learning to embrace our True nature, which is happiness and love, we can learn to respond to life’s challenges from our strength. Vivekji’s breadth of knowledge and dynamic presentation, made this Retreat a memorable experience for all, energizing everyone to live more thoughtfully and with awareness, knowing that we can choose how to be, each day, no matter what life brings our way. By learning the art of happiness, one can be the light of joy and knowledge for not only one’s family, but also for the whole community, society and humanity, thus bringing a positive change in the world. For information about the Chinmaya Mission and events go to www.chinmayamissioncleveland.org



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- Apna Bazaar, Mayfield Road : (440)473-0786
- Asian Plaza, Cleveland: (216)241-3553
- Asian Imports, N. Olmsted: (440)777-8101
- Everest Grocery Store, Lakewood: (216)226-3715
- India Grocers, Parma Heights: (440)885-0215
- Indian Grocery, Cuyahoga Falls: (330)928-7060
- Indo American Foods, North Randall: (216)662-0072
- Indo American Convenient, Mayfield Heights: (440)446-8200
- Laxmi Groceries & Spices, Parma Heights: (440-842-2402
- Lakshmi Plaza, Mayfield Heights: (440)460-4601
- Park to Shop, E30th Cleveland: (216)781-3388
- Patel Brothers, Parma Heights: (440)885-4440
- Rimi's Indian Bakers, Grocers & Gifts, Westlake: (440)777-0116
- Rumis Market & Deli, Carnegie Ave: (216)229-7864
- Sunny's Asian Food & Spices, Solon: (440)248-0801

Indian Food Available at:

- Bombay Chaat, Euclid Ave., Cleveland: (216)331-4598
- Bamboo Garden
North Olmsted (440)734-0500
University Circle (216)505-5470
- Bombay Grill, Fairlawn, Akron: (330)664-0689
- Café Tandoor
Cleveland Hts. (216)371-8500
Westlake (440)835-7999 &
Aurora (330)562-5334

- Crown of India, Strongsville: (440)638-4977
- Chapati at Chester Ave.,
Cleveland (216)303-9780
University Circle (216)505-5470
- Chennai Delicacy, Parma Heights: (440)481-3737
- Choolah, Indian BBQ, Orange Village: (800)459-8860
- Cleveland Tiffin Punjabi Dhaba, North Randall: (216)220-7002
- Cuisine of India, Parma Heights: (440)842-5907
- Greedy Girl, Cleveland Heights: (216)465-9877
- Hot or Mild, Mayfield Heights: (440)446-8200
- Indian Delight, Cleveland: (216)651-4007
- India Garden, Lakewood: (216)221-0676
- Indies Indian Food, Colonial Arcade, Cleveland: (216)357-3266
- Indian Flame, University Circle: (216)791-5555
- Jaipur Junction, North Royalton, (440)842-3555
Hudson (330)653-6640
- Namaste India Garden, Lakewood: (216) 221-4800
- Ruchi Indian Cuisine, Aurora: (330)562-6446
- Saffron Patch
Shaker Heights (216) 295-0400
Akron (330)836-7777
- 6 Flavors, Parma: (440)345-5599
- South India Cuisine, Mayfield Road: (440)720-0393
- Taj India Palace, Richmond Heights: (440)461-3737
- Tandul, Professor Ave., Tremont: (216)465-2442
- Taste of Kerala, Mayfield Heights: (440)461-9212

Community Religious Centers

- BAPS Swaminarayan Temple
2915 Laurel Rd., Brunswick
(330)220-4020
- Guru Nanak Foundation (Gurdwara)
4220 Broadview Road, Richfield
(330)659-3748
- Gurdwara Sahib Bedford
38 Tarbell Road, Bedford
(440)232-1702
- Greater Cleveland Shiva Vishnu Temple
7733 Ridge Rd., Parma
(440)888-9433
- Islamic Center of Cleveland
6055 W. 130th St., Parma
(216)362-0786
- ISSO Swaminarayan Temple
13354 Pearl Road, Strongsville
(440)238-2222
- Jain Temple & Center
3226 Boston Mills Rd., Richfield
(330)659-0832
- Shri Venkataswara Temple
4406 Brecksville Road, Richfield
(330)576-5626
- St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church
1252 East Aurora Road, Macedonia
Dr.T.Mathew (216)591-9632
- Swaminarayan Shubh Sanskar Sanstha Cleveland
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Indian Christmas Sweets

CHERYL D'MELLO

Growing up in India, my mother would gather us five children together to help make Christmas sweets. A week before Christmas we would begin. It was a tradition we enjoyed: she would take out her recipe book and gather the ingredients together. We would make marzipan (from ground almonds or cashews and sugar), milk cream from boiled milk and sugar, fruit cake, date rolls, newries, kul-kuls, and nankaties. We would wait for her to roll out the pastry and cut it into squares. After making sure we had washed our hands, she would guide us to shape them into little curls and twists. Or we took the cooked marzipan and before it became cold and hard, pressed them into rubber molds and then popped them out. There was laughter and fun and we were always eager to taste some of the odd shaped pieces. My mother also made sweet red wine, from raisins which were kept in a jar for days. Here is the recipe for Date Rolls, taken from the East Indian Cook Book from Mumbai. I hope you enjoy making them!

South Asians and Their Specific Health Problems

DR. SUJATA KHOSLA

Growing up, I enjoyed the aloo tikkis and pakoras like my fellow South Asians. And we didn't think anything about it, as the treats didn't involve red meat – the scourge of the Western diet. However, eating a vegetarian diet does have its pitfalls – for instance, the fat content, the salt content and the high calories found in the appetizers mentioned above and, more often than thought, a lack of protein.

While part of being overweight is rooted in history and a culture where being plump was a sign of prosperity, more and more South Asians are becoming too heavy. When fat, salt and high food calories are coupled with sugary drinks, including fruit juices, which are actually quite high in sugar content (39 g in 12 oz of Coke vs. 33 g in 12 oz of apple juice) and Indian desserts (1 rasgulla has about 120-150 calories and 25 g of sugar), then obesity will occur at alarming rates. In India, the prevalence of overweight and obese children has increased from 16.3% in the early 2000s to 19.3% in 2010.

An extra concern is that the Body Mass Index (BMI) understates the dangers of weight gain for South Asians. For instance, if a Caucasian and a South Asian have the same BMI, the South Asian is more likely to develop cardiovascular disease. The reasons are diverse but include the fact that South Asians store more fat in their abdomen and abdominal organs than other populations, which store it more under the skin.

The lack of protein, while a concern, can be handled relatively easily. Eating more lentils and a healthy amount of walnuts and almonds will provide the needed nutrition. Of particular note - and this one is easy! - eating rice and beans is a combination that provides complimentary amino acids and solid protein content. For those who can, eating eggs is a very good source of protein with very low calories.

And, because I say this to virtually every patient, GET OFF THE COUCH AND DO SOMETHING. Go for a walk, go up and down the steps, just move – don't sit too much - but do not walk back and from the refrigerator or pantry!

There are specific items that we need to think about, among others –

- 1) Should the South Asian population have its own, different BMI scale?
- 2) Should South Asians be screened earlier than guidelines suggest for diabetes and high cholesterol?
- 3) How do we change cultural mores (plumpness as a sign of prosperity, fried appetizers and sugary desserts, etc.) to promote a healthier lifestyle?

The bottom line is our trend line is heading in the wrong direction on a variety of measures, and we need to fix that sooner than later.



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Recipe for Date Rolls

CHERYL D'MELLO



Ingredients

200 gms all purpose flour
100 gms butter
1 egg
100 gms. walnuts cut lengthwise in quarters
60 gms. fine sugar
200 gms. seedless dates

• Cream the butter and sugar. Add the beaten egg and knead into a soft dough. Roll out the dough 1/4th inch thick; cut into 2 inch squares

• Place one walnut piece in the center of the date. Roll a stuffed date in each square. Seal the edges, pressing them together with a little water. Place the rolls on a tray, and brush the top of each roll with egg yolk.

• Bake in a moderate oven at 350 for about 7-10 minutes till golden.

Courtesy: The East Indian Cookery Book, Mumbai

Eggless Gingerbread Cookies

Ingredients

½ cup molasses or ½ cup jaggery dissolved in 3 to 4 tbsp hot water. Filter the jiggery
½ cup softened butter unsalted
2 cups whole wheat flour
½ tsp baking soda
2 tsp ginger powder
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cloves
¼ tsp nutmeg
1 pinch salt
¼ cup hot water

• Preheat the oven to 350F and grease the baking tray with some butter and keep aside.

• Mix softened butter, add molasses or jaggery. Mix well till the jaggery melts. In a separate bowl, sift the whole wheat flour, baking soda, ground ginger, cinnamon, clove and nutmeg. • Add the entire sifted dry ingredients to the lightly beaten mixture.

• Lightly fold or mix. Add 1/4 cup hot water to the

mix. Fold the dough lightly, do not knead. If the dough seems loose or sticky, add 2 to 3 more tbsps of the flour. Wrap it with plastic wrap and place the dough in the refrigerator for 30 to 45 mins.

• Take the dough out and pinch small balls from the cookie dough. Gently press and flatten them. Place the cookies with an inch space between them on the baking tray. Sprinkle with some granulated sugar or cut figures and decorate.

• Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or till the cookies appear light golden.



RECIPE CORNER

JYOTI MALIK

Please call the Association of Asian Indian Women of Ohio (AAIWO) hotline phone no. (440) 218-6959 for free, confidential professional counseling for women and children in the Asian Indian community

RELIGIOUS CORNER

Nama Smarana - the Contemplation on Divine Name

DR. RAMASWAMY SHARMA – SHIVA VISHNU TEMPLE, PARMA, OHIO

“harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha”

God’s name is more powerful than his real presence. His name saves us in all times of distress. So, by just uttering his name, all our paapa or sin is destroyed. For example, we use names of higher authorities when we need recommendations at various places. Though that person is not present near us, we still make use of their name to take help and succeed.

In this dark age of kali yuga the only way to attain spiritual perfection is the chanting of the Holy Names of the Supreme Lord Vishnu. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.

It is also important to practice nama smarana with a proper frame of mind as Sri Chaitanya states in his Shikshashatakam:

“trinad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harihi”

The practice of nama smarana helps the practitioner to experience Atman or his innermost Self. The Self is the true force within. But the Ego imagines itself as the great force and being under the spell of illusion hinders the progress of Self. The meditation on Nama reveals the true power of Atman which meditates on itself to experience itself.

One should chant Hari’s name with all humility, assuming oneself lower than a straw, tolerant than a tree, devoid of false pride and respecting everyone. In such a state of mind if one practices nama smarana it will cleanse all impurities of the mind and lead to poorna amrita aswada or immersion in pure bliss that is one’s true nature.

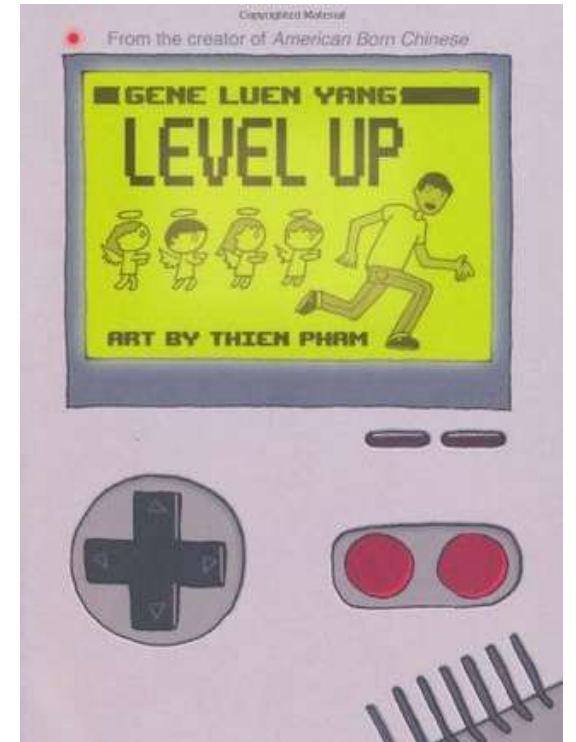
Though there are several Deities, the name of Vishnu is most suited for the present age. The Kalisantarana Upanishad states:

BOOK OF THE MONTH

NIVI ENGINEER

‘Level Up’ by Gene Luen Yang: Explore Graphic Novel

Graphic novels are often seen as the Karna of the literary world; technically they’re part of the storytelling family, but not considered as ‘legitimate’ as the Pandava Princes of Novels, Biographies, Young Adult Fiction, and other genres. Readers of graphic novels are dismissed as being lazy, and comics are not considered real writing. This, of course, is unfortunate. As a child, I devoured ‘Amar Chitra Katha’ stories, and in fact, learned much of what I know about Hinduism from those tales. Just because the illustrations take the place of many long passages of narrative, and because an entire graphic novel can be devoured in one sitting, they often don’t get the respect they deserve. If you are among those who dismiss graphic novels as being light and meaningless drivel, I urge you to reconsider. Start off by reading ‘Level Up’ by Gene Luen Yang. Yang, as part of his Reading Without Walls initiative as National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature, challenges readers to 1) Read a book about a character different than you, 2) Read about a topic you don’t know much about, and 3) Read in a format you don’t normally read.



This book is not about an Indian, but it is about the child of Asian immigrants dealing with the struggle between responsibility and desire. Growing up in the eighties, Dennis Ouyang loves video games, yet his parents don’t indulge him in this whim, neither granting him money for arcade play nor getting him a coveted game system. Instead, he is expected to put aside such frivolities to focus on his studies and become a successful doctor.

While ‘Level Up’ is not about an Indian family, there is something incredibly relatable about the tale. And that makes it a worthwhile read. Gene Luen Yang is the author of several other graphic novels that I would definitely recommend, including ‘American Born Chinese,’ ‘Boxers’ & ‘Saints’ (an innovative pair of novels that tell the story of the Boxer Rebellion from two opposing points of view), and the ‘Secret Coders’ series that introduces kids to programming in a creative way. If, by chance, this particular story doesn’t appeal to you, be aware that there are plenty of other graphic novels out there about a number of other topics, and if you just look, you can find something that you’re sure to enjoy.

With a touch of magical realism (in the form of angels who help and guide him), Dennis confronts his demons and finds the path he is destined for. It’s a quick read--I read it in a couple of hours--but don’t mistake quick for simple. The story has depth, explores complex family dynamics, and offers thoughtful insight into what burdens we place on others and on ourselves.

Nivi Engineer is the author of ‘The Indian Girl’s Definitive Guide to Staying Single’, The Story of a Story, The Saviors of Scarborough, Impatient, Redrafted, and Picklemas

Dear Sisters,

Hello. How have you been so far? Is everything okay in your life? Do you feel safe when you are at home or in your neighborhood? Is there anything on your heart that is bothering you? Do you feel pain but don’t know why? Do you feel comfortable with your spouse or significant other? Is there something you want to share with someone but don’t know who?

Why do I ask such questions? Because people may be vulnerable and many things can make us feel powerless. We are concerned about you and believe that you can thrive, be empowered, and be resilient with the right kind of support.

So please do not try to suffer by yourself. Help is available. We have supported many people from all over the world, and they have seen their lives changed for the better. Our services are not only for people with Asian descent but for any immigrant or refugee in Ohio. Most of our services are free and confidential, so please contact us through our helpline number 216-369-7616, our office phone number (listed below).

Let us know what language you speak so that we can connect you with someone who can speak that language. We understand your culture. We look forward to hearing from you.

Asian Services in Action, Inc.
Children, Youth, and Family Services Department

Cleveland Office
3631 Perkins Ave., #2A-W, Cleveland, OH 44114

Akron office
730 Carroll Street, Akron, OH 44304
(T)330-535-3263
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8th Annual Int'l Cleveland Expo showcases Indian fashions

The 8th Annual International Cleveland Expo featuring international performances, culture, foods, fashion, music, community resource tables took place on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Global Center for Health Innovation in Downtown Cleveland. This event was hosted by the International Community Council-Worldwide Intercultural Network (ICC-WIN) in partnership with the City of Cleveland and Mayor Frank Jackson.

FICA got an opportunity to get involved at this event and showcase India's culture. Six wonderful women: Rehana Fatteh and Sarita Nath from Youngstown, Parul Parikh from Akron, Sarla Venna from Broadview Heights, Vimmi Jain and Neelam Jagetia from Solon showcased our culture and represented India on the ramp for an amazing fashion show at the event. The models were wearing vibrant Indian clothing, jewelry and henna. With A.R Rehman's "Jai Ho" music playing in the background, our beautiful models truly rocked the stage. This was the brainchild of Mona Alag and Ritu Mahna, and coordinated by Swati Desai.



From left: Swati Desai, Rehana Fatteh, Sarita Nath, Parul Parikh, Vimmi Jain, Neelam Jagetia, Sarla Venna, Swati Sathe, Ritu Mahna



Parul Parikh displays henna designs



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