

THE LOTUS



www.FICAleveland.org

A Monthly Publication of the Federation of India Community Associations (FICA) Since 1967

TANA Presents Indian Dances at Cavs Game

Telugu Association of North America, Inc (TANA) proudly presented the first ever NBA pre-game performance "Rhythms of India" by talented local dance performers of Indian classical dance on Monday, March 6th 2017 at Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland prior to the game played between Cavs and Miami Heats.

Telugu Association of North America (www.tana.org) which is one of the oldest and largest regional associations from India here in USA was formed in 1977. Today the total strength of TANA is around 34,000 people across USA. Once in every two years TANA organizes biennial conference to promote Indian culture, traditions and heritage. This event was attended by more than 10,000 people from USA, India and across the world including the

reputed entrepreneurs, physicians, and State representatives. TANA has been actively involved in various community projects in Cleveland Area. Recently TANA donated 100,000 meals to the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank, Back Packs for almost 400 School kids and also assisted few Indian families during catastrophic incidents.

Dance Schools

Shri Kalaa Mandir, Nartanam Academy of Dance, Sree Mayuri Dance Academy

Gurus

Sujatha Srinivasan, Sudha Thotapally, Kalyani Veturi

Performers

Bharathanatyam: Shivani Yerigeri, Nithya Kasibhatla, Sweta Balaji, Maya Rao, Ankita Prasad, Divya Gopal

Kuchipudi: Abhinandani Deverakonda, Shradhdha Mandepudi, Vedhasya Muvva, Ananya Kompella, Ashiritha Kota, Medha Jala, Nikita Yadavalli



Kalyani Veturi, Srinija Adibhatla, Ojasvi Appana, Bhavya Appana, Meghana Nimmagadda, Akshitha Kannan, Varuni Chopra

Organizers: Ashok Kolla Cultural Coordinator, Rama Rao Panguluri Committee Chair - History, Ravi Vadlamudi City Coordinator

Sponsors: Jay Talluri CEO

of myprogresscard.com and Nimble Accounting.

Sujatha Srinivasan, whose students performed at the Q said "On the whole it was a unique, exciting and important event for the Indian community and youth to participate and get exposure. TANA did a wonderful job of organizing and coordinating the different groups."

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Holi Milan Celebration General Body Meeting and Elections

The event is FREE

email

Sunday March 26th, 2017 1:30PM - 5:00PM

FICAleveland4you@gmail.com

for meal reservation

The Old ICC Building
12412 Cedar Rd.
Cleveland, OH 44106

Schedule: Lunch, Secular Holi, GBM and Elections

<http://www.ficacleland.org>

Members of Nominating Committee, which will collect nominations to fill the vacant positions in FICA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees are listed below.

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5. Sravanthi Vallampati; svallampati@gmail.com

Please send name/contact of nominated individuals to any of these committee members. Self nominations is highly encouraged. Nominations will be entertained till before election time as long as the nominee has agreed to serve, if elected.

We expect 4-5 vacancies on the Board of Trustees and 6 vacancies on Executive Board.



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My Day At Saraswati Puja

By Adrik Dutta, 11 years old

Saraswati puja in Cleveland is celebrated at the start of spring. The Bengali Cultural Society tries to coordinate the weekend closest to the actual date of the festival. The color associated with Saraswati puja is yellow. This color is significant as during this time mustard flowers are in full bloom in mustard fields. Women and children prefer to dress in various shades of yellow on this day to welcome spring and to worship Goddess Saraswati.

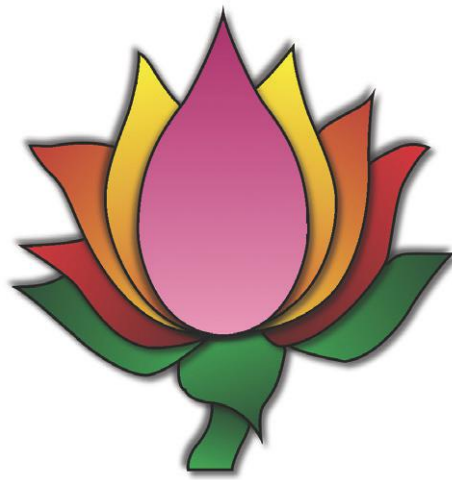
As a kid, I feel that Saraswati puja brings a different meaning from other pujas. as Saraswati Takur (goddess) is the goddess of education, art culture and music, all children including me pays special homage to her as though She is the guardian of children's hopes and aspirations. We pray not only for good grades and expertise in arts and culture, but also a safe and healthy school life. Aside from that, kids and adults alike look forward to having an enjoyable time with friends and family on this joyous day. People consider Saraswati puja as an auspicious day to begin projects. Although there is no special time to perform the puja, most of the people perform the rituals on Saraswati Puja during Purvahna Kala - the time between the sunrise and the midday. While Saraswati Takur is worshipped with yellow or orange marigolds and offered boondi ke ladoo and sweet rice we all sit down to a delicious meal of a concoction of rice and yellow lentils called khichudi along with eggplant fritтата.

As the day draws to an end the priest finishes off with an "arati" where Goddess Saraswati is saluted goodbye till the following year. Thus commences the cultural evening where mostly children perform different art forms like music, dance or act in plays. I played the piano and participated in a Bengali play and had a very good time. These presentations are also as homage to the Goddess of learning and arts.

And so on international women's day, I am reminded of all the times when man, woman and child have all come together on this auspicious day to worship a woman God who embodies art, culture, talent and eruditeness.



Kathak dancers from Anga Kala Kathak Academy perform at the Bengali Cultural Society Saraswati Puja held at St John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Parma on February 4th.



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41th Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF41)

When: Wednesday, March 29th to Sunday, April 9th

Where: Tower City Cinemas at Tower City Center in Cleveland and various neighborhood locations.

Tickets: \$16 Non-members, \$14 CIFF members. Purchase tickets at the film festival box office located in the lobby of the Tower City Cinemas or by mail using the program guide order forms. Use the code **LOTUS** for a \$2 discount.



Lotus Special: You can buy a limited number of vouchers/tickets for \$12 member price by emailing to lotus@FICAcleveland.org; (contingent on availability). Tickets will be mailed to you on receipt of payment either by check or Paypal on www.ficacleveland.org

Web: <http://www.clevelandfilm.org>

Call: 1-877-304-FILM (1-877-304-3456)

The lineup of films and other events is now on-line and hard-copy program guides are available at various location in Northeast Ohio including all Greater Cleveland branches Dollar bank, Libraries and Cleveland Cinema locations.

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President's Message

By Sujata Lakhe Barnard; lakhe4@gmail.com

Dear All,

I would urge you to take a note of the flyer on the front page of this paper with information about our community Holi Milan, FICA General body meeting and elections. If you would like to serve on the boards or know anyone who would like to serve and have time and capabilities, please let the nomination committee know. This year the general body meeting and elections are very special, as the times are changing and so is our constitution and governance.

Please participate, contribute and enjoy camaraderie with our fellow country men and women. I would especially encourage newcomers to Cleveland and the next generation of long time FICA-community to attend and help the organization grow and stay relevant.

It is also my great pleasure to announce that once again The Lotus will be media partner with Cleveland International Film Festival. Elsewhere in the paper you will find information about how to get discounted

tickets at the box office and by emailing us. There is also movie recommendation made for you this issue and February issue of Lotus had details regarding parking and other fun info. I urge you to make one day of movie watching at this festival, detailed catalog with neat calendar tools and movie previews is available on their website.

Hope to see you for Holi

Sujata Lakhe Barnard

A Panchatantra Moment

By Tasneem Lokhandwala

When I was young, one of my favorite collections of short stories was "Panchatantra" – fables to enroot moral values as each tale ended with a moral lesson. So it was no surprise that I brought it as the "first gift" for my daughters when they were born here. I wanted to share the special part of my childhood in India with my girls who were born in USA. One of those tales speaks to me every day since the recent election crisis in our country – "Four Friends and a Hunter" – a fable about the deer, the mouse, the crow and the tortoise, who looked out for each other and worked together because they knew despite their differences, they were stronger together and they also knew there was no guarantee which one of them could be in peril and who could be the most vulnerable to the hunter's traps.

With recent shooting of people of Indian origin from Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh backgrounds in Kansas (Kuchibhotla, Madasani, Grill); in South Carolina (Harnish Patel), in Seattle, Washington (Deep Rai) and about 23 such hate crimes against racial and religious minorities across the nation in just last two years (Buzzfeed and AP news); there is a clear indication that hate is present in our world and it has historical roots. Being a wife and a mom, I was totally shaken when I saw the picture of the widow of Mr. Kuchibhotla. How cruelly her world and her dreams were shattered within a day!! The perpetrator thought he had killed some Iranians. Indifference, silence and inaction is not an option for our community. The hate crimes against Indians are often carried out by folks who do not know the difference between Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians from India, they don't care and frankly speaking, it should not matter. It has nothing to do with the perpetrator's level of education or awareness about different groups or religions or nationalities; it has everything to do with the level of their hate and the intent behind their hate. We all look the same to them and our existence or our deaths serve the same purpose. In the eyes of certain hate groups, we are indispensable because we are immigrants and we pose "a perceived threat", but nonetheless, "a threat" to them. So a misconstrued allegiance to one's own brand of religion, ethnicity or regionalism, a misunderstanding of another's religion or nationality, a blind support of tax break out of hope for a better life or a sheer sense of greed, a misguided sense of safety, and a blind faith in the current political rhetoric will be our litmus test, our undoing and one of the biggest mistakes committed by the

Indian diaspora in the US. We have learned enough from our history. The British Rule in India had very effectively used "Divide and Rule" to put the seeds of division amongst people of the same culture and nation. Hate has both a religious and colonial history. We have to make a decision whether we choose compassion, solidarity and mutuality with all minorities being targeted in this country or stay divided and isolated nurturing our heightened sense of hate, fear and prejudice.

I have seen people of other communities Latinos, Asians, White, Black etc. show up at the Marches for women, Marches for the refugees and Marches for immigrants. Surprisingly, I rarely see Indians that well represented considering our total numbers in this country. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna beseeches us to act and not to fall in the trap of inaction. Just like all Indian-Americans share deep cultural ties despite difference in religions, ethnicities and languages, there is a lot more that binds us with other minorities, people of other countries, LGBTQ community, other religions and other backgrounds than issues that separates us; and definitely on a moralistic and humanitarian level, "its all of us or none of us" A. Garza. It is time to fight

injustice.

In the current political climate and in light of the most recent hate crimes, I urge you ask yourself these questions that I heard an artist (a world traveler) ask in a movie.

"Where is home? –

Is it the place where I was born? Is it the place where I grew up? Is it the place where I live and work? Is it the place where I want to die?"

I myself reflect deeply on these questions, on our "being".

"Maybe, home has to be a place where I want to contribute without having to justify myself." To do that, we need each other and need to follow the path to fight the injustices. We need to show up at peaceful protests; stand up and speak up for our neighbors and for the vulnerable groups in our country like the refugees, the Muslims, the immigrants, and all the other minorities; show up at town hall meetings, write to our senators, and, lastly, stay informed about and stay actively involved with organizations that support the cause of the minority groups.

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Children's Corner

Bells, Monkeys and A Brave Woman

Once upon a time, there lived a robber in a village. One day, he stole a temple bell and ran towards the forest. A Tiger heard the jingle of the bell and became curious to locate the sound. As soon as, he saw the robber, he jumped upon him and killed him at once. The bell fell on the ground. After a few days, a group of monkeys passed through that way. They spotted the bell and carried it to their home.

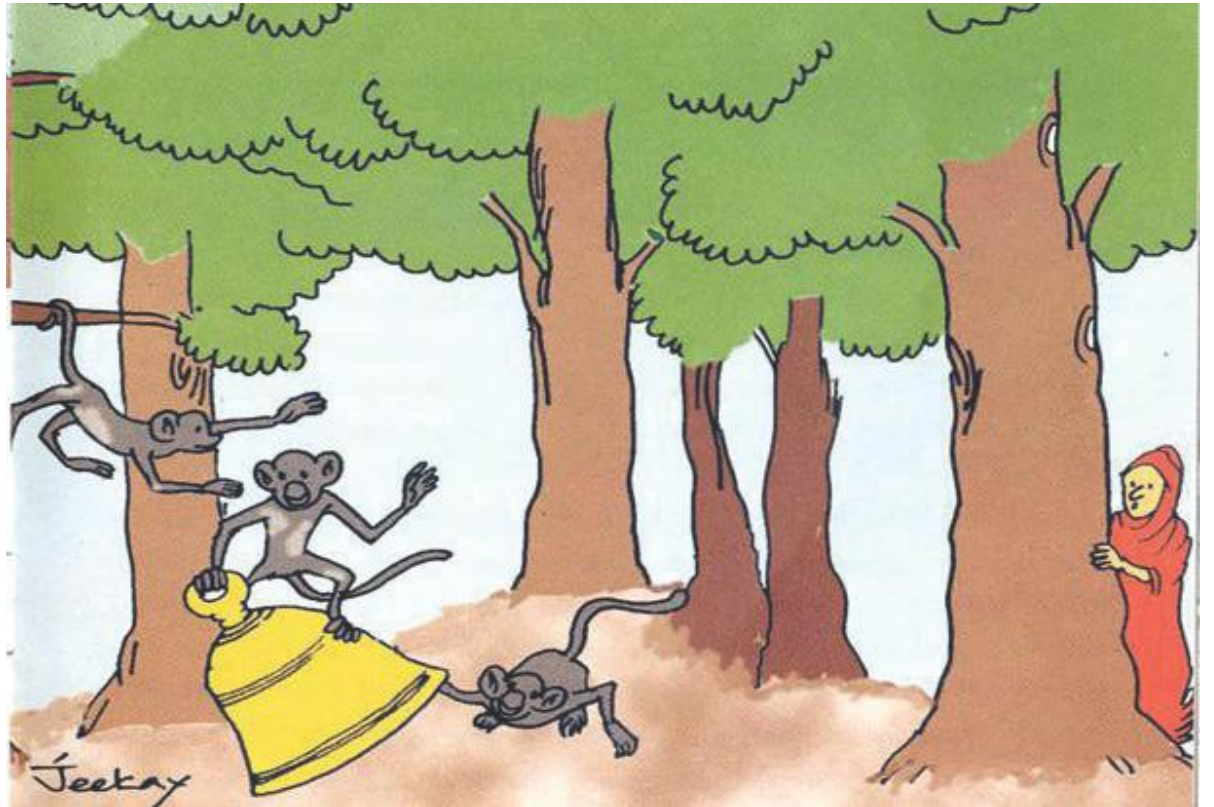
They found the jingle of the bell very interesting. Subsequently every one of them became very fond of the bell and started playing with it. After every tiring day, in the night monkeys would sit on the top of the hill in the forest and enjoy the melodious sound of the bell. The people of the village were afraid of the noise. Soon afterwards, the people from the village found the body of the robber and proclaimed, "Certainly there is an evil spirit around here that kills human beings and then rings the bell to celebrate".

When the people heard this, they thought that some demon was haunting their village. Without giving any second thought, People started leaving the city in terror. There was an intelligent and bold woman in that village. She thought to herself, "I don't believe that some demon is haunting this village. I will find out that who is ringing the bell". At late night, she went into the forest bravely and found that a group of monkeys were playing about and ringing the bell.

Now as the woman knew the secret about the bell, she went to the King and said, "Your Majesty! I'm sure this evil spirit can be conquered by worshipping the Gods. But this will cost money. If you can grant me some money, I will kill the demon and bring happiness to the village". The King, who was too afraid to get rid of the demon, granted the request of the woman.

On receiving the money, the woman bought some peas, groundnuts and fruits. She arranged a worship of the Gods. She made a circle on the ground, placed all the eatables and started worshipping the Gods. After the ritual, she picked up all the eatables and went into the forest. She placed the fruits and other things under a tree near the hill. She kept a watch of the monkeys from a distance.

As and when the monkeys saw the eatables, they dropped the bell just as the old woman had expected out of them. They



ran to pick the eatables. The woman picked up the bell quickly and rushed towards the village. She gave the bell in the court of the King. The King was happy with the brave woman and everyone in the village admired her bravery. The pleased King rewarded the woman for her bravery. Since that day, there was no noise and people lived happily ever after.

Moral: One must not be afraid of trifles. Intelligence and courage succeed against all odds.

This is a story from the collection of Hitopadesha Tales.

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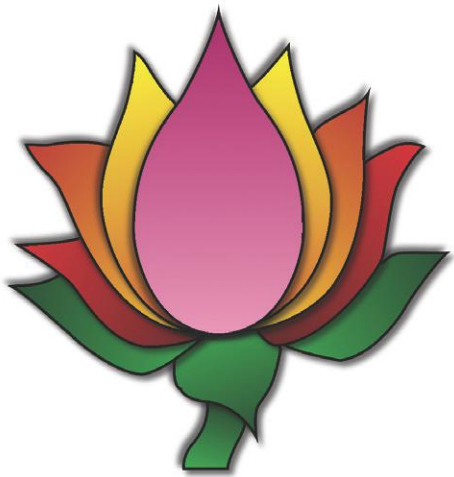
All Women's Cricket League

India has launched its first all-women cricket league to promote women's cricket. The sport, which enjoys enormous popularity in India, has been dominated by men for decades. Founders say they want a women's league that enjoys the same prestige as the male Indian Premier League, which has drawn cricket stars from around the world and has huge sponsorship from multinational companies and celebrities.

In a statement, founder Parul Jain said, "It's important that young girls coming through can see cricket as a viable option to play at the highest level. The WCL #T20 League is expected to be of the same repute as the Indian Premier League (IPL) and women Big Bash League of Australia in support of women."



India's Harmanpreet Kaur, left, and Rajeshwari Gayakwad celebrate after defeating South Africa in the women's world cup qualifier final one-day international cricket match in Colombo in February. Photograph: Eranga Jayawardena/AP



Guru Kalyani Veturi and her students before the Cleveland Cavs vs Miami Heat game.



Shri Kalaa Mandir students before performing at the Cavaliers pregame show on March 6th.



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Guru Sudha Thotapally's dance students before their performance at the Cavas Game. Also pictured TANA officers who held banners for the dancers as they performed.



March 8 is International Women's Day

Let's put the focus on HER achievements and look beyond HER gender

By Sujata Lakhe Barnard; lakhe4@gmail.com

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. This International Women's Day, make a commitment to gender equality

What Does "Equality" Mean?

Even though we all use the word 'Equality' and generally agree that it is good for all, it may mean different things to different people. Unless we voice that thought and compare it with other's thoughts, we cannot know what it collectively means. I have had some men declare to me on women's day that "women are superior to men". On the face value this statement seems good natured and you don't want the man to feel bad. But on further examination when you ask them what they meant, you realize they are calling women superior because she is able to bear and nurture children and responsible for the speaker's existence and existence of Kings and rulers of the world. This type of thinking values women for only her reproductive capability and not for worldly contributions towards economics, politics, philosophy, religion and science. Some have said to me "hey, you have great life as a woman in US, try living in some other country"! This person is missing the point that it is not about one or few women, it is about women everywhere and of all classes. In addition, there is plenty of room for improvement for women as a class in United States. Therefore Please think hard, both men and women, and TELL our community why equality matters to you by sending an email to lotus@ficacleveland.org or posting it on Facebook @FICA cleveland, #Genderequality.

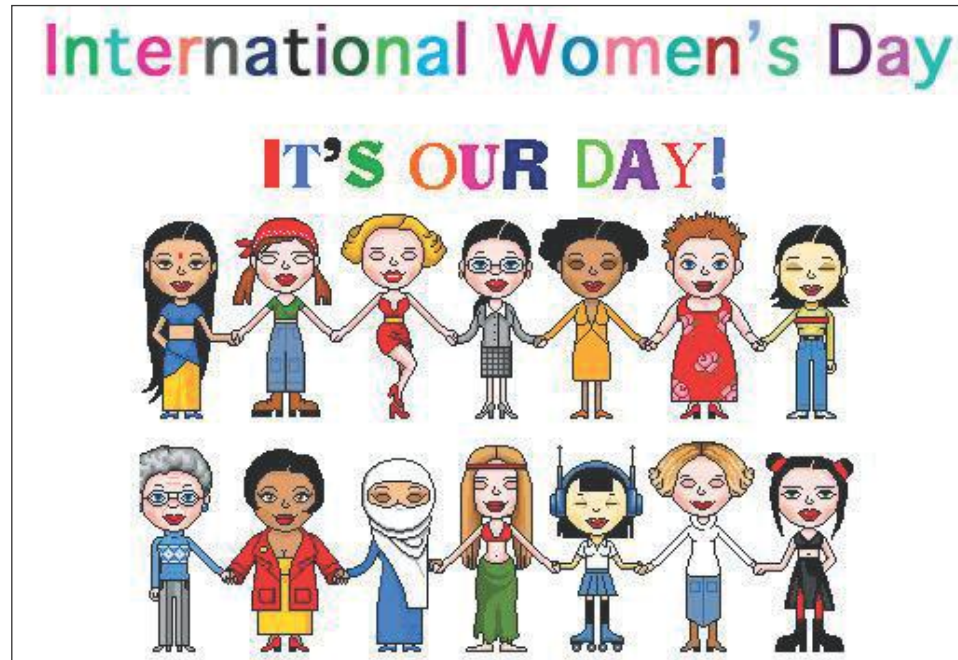
Equality Matters

The world needs the talents of everyone – women, men, girls, boys and trans-gender

Hidden Figures of India's Space Science!



Snapshots from Afar, Breakthrough's short film, is directed by Emily Driscoll. This film, on the women behind the Mars mission, captures the exciting leap that India took to space but also documents the one it took on land, in terms of gender. The film features three women scientists - Seetha Somasundaram, the Program Director of the ISRO Space Science Program Office, Nandini Harinath, Project Manager, Mission Design, and Deputy Operations Director, Mars Orbiter Mission, and Minal Rohit, Scientist and Engineer, Project Manager, Methane Sensor for Mars.



– to truly reach its full potential. Gender stereotypes hold us all back. We've already come so far...equality is the only way to move ahead!

Equality Is Good For The Economy

In Canada the increased economic participation of women resulted in a \$130 billion contribution to economic activity in 2012 alone. This is equivalent to approximately 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Ref: RBC Economics, Canadian Women Grabbing the Baton (October 2013) <http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/other-reports/canadianwomengrabbingthebaton.pdf>

Organization with 30% female leaders could add up to 6 percentage points to its net profit margin; Peterson Institute for International Economics, Is Gender Diversity Profitable? (February 2016) <http://www.iie.com/publications/wp/wp16-3.pdf>

Equality Is Good For Children

Father involvement is related to positive child health outcomes in infants, such as improved weight gain in preterm infants and improved breastfeeding rates. Father engagement reduces the frequency of behavioral problems in boys while also decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families; GARFIELD, C. F., & ISACCO, A. (2006). FATHERS AND THE WELL-CHILD VISIT, PEDIATRICS, 117, 637-645, SARKADI, A., KRISTIANSOON, R., OBERKLAD, F., & BREMBERG, S. (2008). FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT AND CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LONGITUDINAL STUDIES. ACTA PAEDIATRICA, 97(2), 153-158.

Equality Is Good For Democracy

Research shows that women in politics raise issues that others overlook, pass bills that others oppose, invest in projects others dismiss and seek to end abuses that others ignore. Where women are able to participate in peace processes, the chances of reaching an agreement at all improve, and the peace is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years; National Democratic Institute. Retrieved on February 2, 2017, from: <https://www.ndi.org/what-we-do/gender-women-and-democracy>

Equality Is Good For Everyone

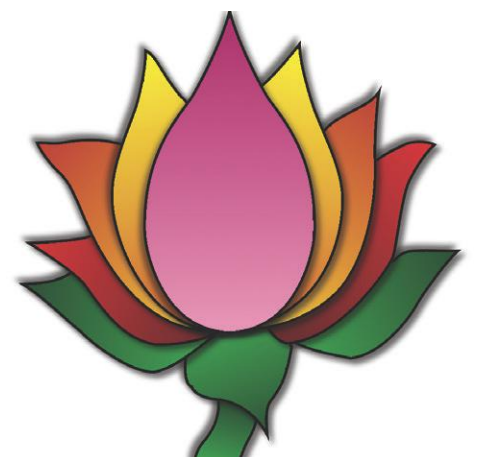
A study of statistics gathered from various equality indexes showed that living in one of the more gender equal countries in Europe was associated with having a higher quality of life and a lower chance of depression, divorce, or becoming a victim of violent death for both men and women. Åshild Lappegård Lahn. Science Nordic. Gender Equality Gives Men Better Lives. October 17, 2015. Retrieved on February 2, 2017 from: <http://sciencenordic.com/gender-equality-gives-men-better-lives>.

We have made great strides in many areas, such as education and workforce participation.

Nevertheless, challenges remain, too few women are advancing into leadership roles if you look at the the largest companies by revenue including companies in North-America. Women are under-represented in politics, local governments, state government and national governments both in US and India. Women continue to be responsible for the majority to all of caregiving to the family in the world over, such as taking care of children, elderly, house hold chores, meal preparation and in some countries fetching drinking water from far distances on foot in addition to helping family finances by doing minimal tasks as education is not accessible to some due to their gender. Similar reasons may be responsible for why women in the workforce tend to earn less than men. In study done in Canada, women are at a 20% higher risk of violent victimization than men when all other risk factors are taken into account and women account for 87% of victims of sexual offences and 76% of victims of criminal harassment (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14631-eng.htm#r13>).

How Do We Change This?

Today self-confident, smart women are held back due to disparity between their abilities and the expectation of others. This struggle can be alleviated for women by changing attitudes and behaviours. Women need to build other deserving women up and not tare them down. It starts by recognizing that the gender stereotypes, micro-aggressions and subtle sexism we encounter every day are part of the problem. Think about how words like 'throws/runs like a girl' (=weak), 'scream like a girl' (=hysterical), 'women's work' (=low skilled), 'Bossy' (=assertive while female), 'I don't tell my wife, she has a big mouth' (=wife lacks discretion), "I hate vocal-fry" (=teenage girl's opinions are annoying) "my husband is baby sitting our kids" (=dads are not as capable as moms in childcare) and male pronouns for leadership positions such as CEO, Scientist, Magistrate, President, Architect and so on. It starts by challenging the sexism and discrimination that allow gender inequality to exist. How many of these situations do you recognize and pick up in your day to day life? Start the change for well-being of our community yourself by sharing these subtle and hidden biases and start a conversation with our community by emailing it to Lotus@FICA Cleveland org or posting it on @FICA cleveland (Facebook), #Genderequality.



I Have So Much To Say On International Woman's Day!

By Prerna Khemka



Prerna Khemka - Native of Kolkata, India moved to the US for higher studies. She has done her BBA and MBA from top US universities and worked in senior level corporate jobs before quitting to join a start up in hair restoration. Prerna is now an entrepreneur with her own hair restoration medical device start up in the US and India along with a real estate business in Ohio. Prerna is a singer, yoga teacher and food-enthusiast. She is passionate about promoting Hindu culture, cow protection, child education and women's rights. Prerna resides in Cleveland, Ohio and Kolkata, India

First of all, no woman ever made it without the intrinsic empowerment and unabashed feminist cheerleading of her father and brother(s). We truly only believe

in ourselves and don't get conditioned about 'so called' gender roles only if our parents don't see it as well, not in words, but in action. One incident comes to mind - When I was 14-15 and I needed to go far into the other end of the city, my dad drew me a big map, gave detailed directions, safety instructions and some money. Mom told him many times - "why are you sending a girl alone - give her a driver and car" but he didn't even entertain that thought. It was almost like he doesn't see girl/boy. At that time - I was frustrated at not receiving the 'girl privilege' but I now realise that it is because he never saw the different genders is why gender limitations never occurred to us.

Which brings me to my next point. Some 15 yrs later, during a period of undergoing some personal failures - my sister and I collectively decided that it was because of our parents' gender free upbringing that we were 'too' bold and smart and strong to 'fit in'. Had we been raised to think we are lesser than men, to be less independent, and more docile, perhaps we would be happier! We proceeded to call our dad and fought and blamed him for everything of course!

Then I read the book 'lean in' and it changed my life. I realised that this guilt feeling of being smart, independent, strong and wanting to dumb myself down to fit in, be it with boys, or at work is exactly what societal conditioning is all about and the where the problem lies.

I highly recommend this book to every woman.

On women's day I want to say that I am unapologetically fierce, independent,

strong, ambitious and don't feel the need to be a lesser version of myself for anything in the world! Being ambitious and independent is not a bad thing! And at the same time - neither is being emotional, sensitive, nurturing, loving, warm, affectionate, elegant, kind and healing or spending hours on makeup and shopping. It is the stereotyping of women into certain traits and non-acceptance of deviation from those characteristics which really holds women back.

Being a woman is a great honor, a great privilege and a great responsibility! And at the end of the day - it's most imp to be authentic whatever that may be for you in that moment.

It's completely fine to be kick ass, bold, ambitious, to make mistakes and to ask for a spot at the big boys club. we must and we deserve to lean in.

I realize my biggest role as a woman is to fully embrace my sacred feminine energy and shine my flame bright and fight like a girl! I am happy for all my successes and failures and I stand for women's rights. I am a proud feminist. Some of my role models include Sheryl Sandberg, Oprah, Justin Trudeau, Barak and Michelle Obama, Sushma Swaraj, Amrita Devi and every Indian mother, for she is the ultimate personification of the sacred feminine.

Be it in business or personal life - many a times there will be interactions with men or even women, who may find it uncomfortable as I may not fit into their 'female gender role' but it's ok. It's their limitation, not ours.

And I think as a friend sister daughter colleague or wife or mother - as a woman

we should cheer each other, be unafraid, and raise our future generation to be the best version of themselves!

Never be afraid to soar high! Another story comes to mind. In her teenage years, my sister woke my dad up at 3 am. Restlessly she said, dad, I want to make the world a better place. I want to become Prime Minister of India and change the country. There could have been a million legitimate answers to shut her off at that hour. Instead my father told her, ok, go to the living room and turn on the lights, and get your paper and pen out. Let's figure out a plan to get you there.

Needless to say, while the dreams have changed as we have grown, the uninhibited dreaming has remained for all of us.

I have some amazing, fiercely independent, strong, supportive, trailblazing, dynamic women in my life and equally amazing men! Thank you for shining bright! and thank you for helping me finally arrive at the secure place that I am today - to be comfortable in my skin even if it may not be a color you like. Cheers to all of you amazing souls for your love and supporting me through the good, bad and ugly on this life journey.

I know I speak for all of us when I say, a woman can do anything she wants. She just needs to believe she can. As we interact with ourselves, and women around us, let's become more aware of the power of our thoughts, words and actions and ensure that we are living from an authentic, fearless, powerful space and at the same time, supporting other women to become the best versions of themselves!

Namaste!

Tulsi Gabbard



Tulsi Gabbard was born on April 12, 1981, in Leloaloe, American Samoa, the fourth of five children. Gabbard grew up in a multicultural, multireligious household: her father is of Samoan and European ancestry and an active lector at his Catholic church, but also enjoys practicing mantra meditation, including kirtan. Her mother is of European descent and a practicing Hindu. Tulsi fully embraced Hinduism as a teenager. Her siblings' names are Bhakti, Jai, Narayan, and Vrindavan. She has had an illustrious career in Politics and Military.

Reflecting Gabbard's popularity among Indian-Americans based on vast amount of funding from the community (despite she being not of Indian origin) as the first Hindu member of Congress, a reporter Kery Murakami of Civil Beat wrote an article with a headline "Hinduism Pays Off". It's no secret that black candidates oftentimes go to black audiences and potential black

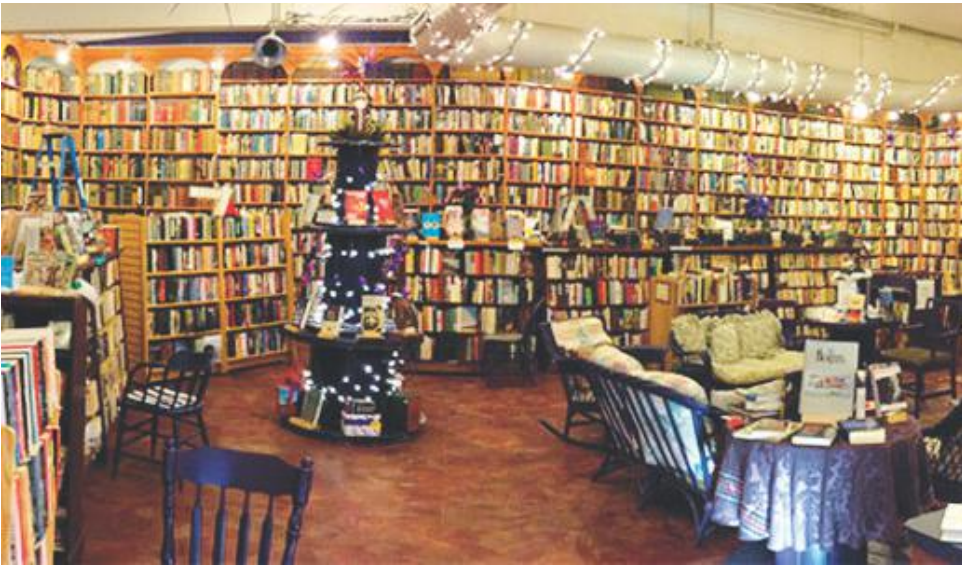
donors, etc., and Jewish politicians get the support of many Jewish people. Same goes for Catholics or Protestants and so on. Yet I don't remember ever seeing any headlines or an article like "It Pays to Be Black" or "It Pays to Be Jewish."

Vikram Krishna, a top commentator at Civil Beats, "I am American-Indian living in Hawaii who supported Tulsi, not for her religion, but because I saw in her an intense desire to be of service to all the people of Hawaii, irrespective of their religion, ethnicity or other labels. I am happy to say that she's doing an amazing job & am proud to have supported her. I should also add that I have Christian, Muslim & Sikh friends who also supported & contributed to Tulsi. One of them told me it's because they are inspired by her & like that she's so down to earth & approachable, even after she had been elected".



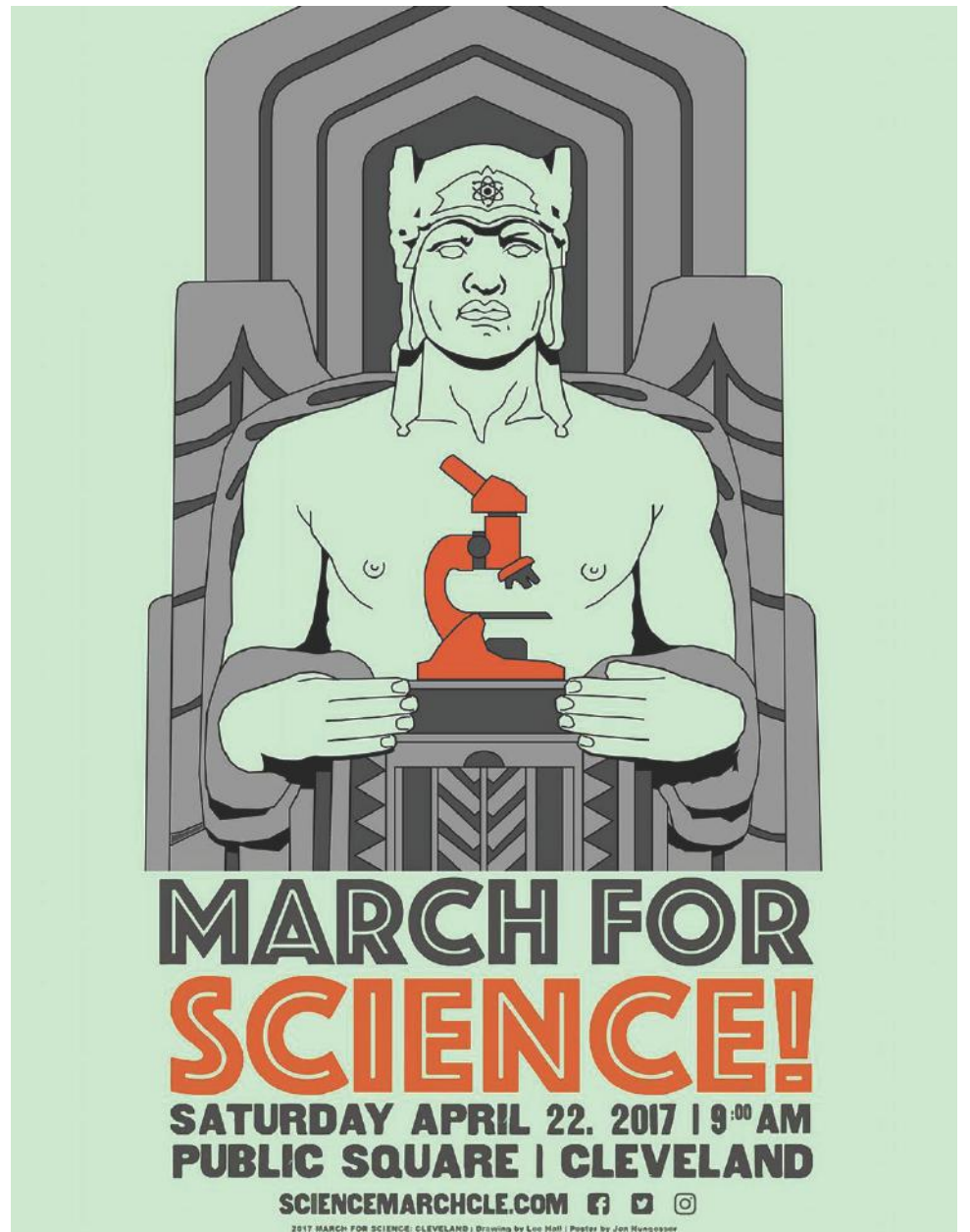


Air India scripted history by flying an all-women crew flight around the world, adding yet another feather to Air India's cap in its constant endeavour to encourage women. The flight AI 173 had earlier taken off from IGI Airport in Delhi on 27th February to San Francisco covering a distance of around 15300 km in 15 and a half hours over the Pacific route and on the return journey from San Francisco over the Atlantic. The flight was in the safe hands of Capt. Sunita Narula, Capt. Kshamta Bajpai, Capt. Indira Singh and Capt. Gunjan Aggarwal. The all-women cabin crew was led by Ms. Seema Baberwal and Ms. Nishrin Bandulwala. The entire flight was operated by the women staff of eight departments. These departments included Cockpit crew, Cabin crew, Check-In staff, Doctor, Customer Care Staff, ATC and the entire ground handling from operator to technician, Engineer and flight dispatcher and trimmer. Line operation safety audit was done by Harpreet A De Singh, ED Flight Safety, Air India. This is the first time that this audit was done by a female officer in around the world trip.



Eight members of staff at Loganberry Books in Cleveland turned the spines and covers of books by men to face the wall in the shop's 10,000-title fiction section. Harriett Logan, the bookstore's founder and owner, told the website Heat Street the intention was to illustrate how women's voices were drowned out. "In essence [we are] not just highlighting the disparity but bringing more focus to the women's books now, because they're the only ones legible on the shelf," she told the online magazine. She added that although she had conceived the display to make a point, when completed it had an even stronger impact than she had expected. The World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won't close until 2186. This is too long to wait. Around the world, International Women's Day provides an opportunity for action that can drive greater change for women.

As you may already know that FICA of NEO, (www.ficacleveland.org, @FICAcleveland) 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) 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.



FICA of NEO Constitution and By-laws Amended April 2002

Up For Review in 2017

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of the organization shall be the Federation of India Community Associations of Northeast Ohio (Hereinafter referred to as FICA). FICA is not affiliated with any national organization.

ARTICLE II: Objectives

The following objectives are to be furthered by FICA:

To educate the community about India, its people, culture, heritage and needs as follows:

1. Through the holding of language, dance, music, art, cooking and yoga classes;
2. By providing seminars, discussion sessions, visiting guest lecturers, and maintaining a speakers' bureau;
3. By publishing books, magazines, and other printed material;
4. By making available documentary films, radio and television programs;
5. Through the holding of music and dance concerts;
6. By initiating essay and debate competitions that will further the understanding of India and its culture;
7. By providing support for Indian studies programs in the United States.

To enhance Indian culture and heritage through the establishment of informational centers, libraries, cultural exchange programs, and other activities profiling India in the community at large.

To foster educational opportunities for Indians, Indian-Americans, and their friends by providing monies to educational institutions for the establishment of student grants, loan funds and scholarships, or to individuals for the purpose of defraying educational expenses.

To sponsor and promote Indian religious teachings, seminars and festivals in a nonsectarian manner.

To organize other programs that will further scientific, educational, literary, charitable or religious purposes.

ARTICLE III: Membership and Dues

Membership in the FICA shall include the following classes:

1. Regular members:
2. Donor members
3. Honorary members: These shall be persons nominated by the Executive Board of the FICA who have made a cultural, scientific, educational, literary, charitable, religious, social, humanitarian, or other contribution to the community.
4. Sister Organizations: Any organization that subscribes to the objectives of the FICA may request to be designated a Sister Organization.

Membership dues shall be as follows:

1. Regular members: Annual dues shall be:
2. Life membership \$500.00
3. Family membership \$50.00 per year
4. Single membership \$35.00 per year
5. *
6. Donor members
7. Patrons: persons contributing \$1000.00 initially and \$500.00 per year.
8. Grand Patrons: \$2500.00 initially and \$500.00 per year.
9. Benefactors: \$5,000.00 initially and \$1000.00 per year.
10. Grand Benefactors: \$10,000.00 initially and \$1000.00 per year.
11. Philanthropists: \$25,000.00 and above
12. *
13. 13 Honorary members: Membership shall be gratis for these individuals.
14. *
15. Sister Organizations: Upon approval by the Executive Board, Sister Organizations shall pay an amount designated annually by the Executive Board.

The treasurer of FICA's certification as to the category of membership to be deemed conclusive. FICA shall maintain a continuous roster of all membership.

ARTICLE IV: Management of FICA

The following two governing bodies shall manage all affairs of FICA:

1. The Executive Board: Consists of twelve (12) elected members.
2. The Board of Trustees: Consists of twenty (20) elected individuals.

SECTION I : Election Procedures

1. Executive Board:

Each year, the Executive Board shall appoint a Nominating Subcommittee consisting of no less than five (5) members. The subcommittee shall solicit and compile nominations from the membership for all Executive Board members. At least one member of the nominating committee shall be from the Board of Trustees. The elections shall be conducted by secret ballot and simple majority shall govern.

In the event that the Nominating Subcommittee does not receive enough nominations before the specified time the following procedure shall be followed: Nominations received before the specified time shall be considered elected. Remaining nominations shall be solicited to make up the twelve (12) member Executive Board. The nominating committee shall determine other detailed procedures for the election. The nominating committee members shall not be eligible for the election to the FICA Executive Board for that year.

The individual members of FICA at annual elections shall elect twelve (12) members to the

Executive Board.

Each member of the Executive Board will serve for a period of three (3) years. Four (4) members of the Executive Board of FICA will be up for re-election each year. The Executive Board may form special or permanent committees to carry out its activities - Such committees will be directly responsible to the Executive Board.

Board members who miss three or more consecutive Board meetings without prior notification are subject to automatic removal from the Board.

Officers: The Executive Board will elect from twelve (12) elected members a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and editor of Lotus. Such officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year. The order of the succession will be president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and will be eligible for reelection.

2. Trustees

Every year the Board of Trustees shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of at least five members and compile nominations from among Grand Benefactors. At least one member of the nominating committee shall be from the Executive Board. The eligibility for voting is limited to Donor members only.

Each member of the Board of trustees will serve for a period of five (5) years. Four(4) members of the Board will be up for re-election each year.

SECTION II: Functions, Powers, and Responsibilities of GOVERNING Bodies

Executive Board:

Executive Board shall be responsible for day-to-day operations of FICA. This shall include but not limited to the activities such as: membership drive; maintenance of membership records and accounts; timely filing of tax returns; arranging of all the programs, except those specifically approved and designated to be conducted by the Board of Trustees; service to the members through various other activities; as well as publishing the Lotus, etc. The Executive Board is empowered to appoint various special purpose committees to perform the tasks necessary for furthering the objectives of FICA. Any long-term function, which is not the responsibility of the Executive Board, shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for setting of long term objectives. This shall include but not limited to the activities such as taking action on all constitutional and legal matters pertaining to FICA, buying and selling of real estate, borrowing funds, managing endowment funds, as well as assisting and cooperating with the Executive Board.

SECTION III Disputes between the Executive Board and the Trustees

These shall be resolved by a majority vote at a joint meeting of all members of the two(2) governing bodies with each person casting one (1) vote regardless of number of positions held by the person. The balloting shall be through secret ballots. Such a meeting can be called by the President of the Executive Board or Chairman of the Board of Trustees with two-thirds votes of the members of their boards. The person who calls the meeting will chair the meeting.

SECTION IV Vacancies:

In the event of resignation or removal of any elected Executive Board member, the remaining members of the Executive Board shall nominate an individual from among the membership to fill the vacancy. Such individual shall serve for the remainder of the term, subject to the approval of FICA membership at its next meeting.

ARTICLE V: Policies

FICA will operate in a nonpartisan, nonsectarian manner. FICA shall not use its resources for carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. FICA shall not participate in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

FICA shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on: a) By a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

ARTICLE VI: Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of FICA, the Executive Board shall with the approval of general membership, after paying the just debts and expenses of FICA distribute the assets to any of the organizations with like purposes or to organizations formed and operated exclusively for charitable, religious, literary, and educational purposes as shall, at that time qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Any such dissolution shall be accomplished pursuant to the laws of the State of Ohio.

ARTICLE VII: Amendments

The Constitution and other instruments may be amended at regular general body meetings by a two-thirds majority of those in attendance, provided that no amendment is contrary to the provisions set forth in Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

ARTICLE VIII: Interpretations and Definitions

The decision of a simple majority of the Board of Trustees on any questions involving the interpretation of FICA Constitution and any definition therein shall be final. However, the Executive Board may draft standing rules for procedures and activities of FICA. Items in

Continued on page 10



FICA Constitution *Continued from Page 9*

the Constitution shall be set forth in these standing rules.

ARTICLE IX: Finances

The treasurer is hereby authorized to pay those expenses for which receipts have been submitted. The treasurer may also pay other expenses that have been expressly authorized by the Executive Board. An expenditure over five hundred dollars (\$500.00) must be approved by the Executive Board prior to the release of funds. However, the President is authorized to spend up to \$1,000.00 in all emergency situation in consultation with the treasurer of the Executive Board. Contracts and/or expenditures exceeding three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) should be awarded based on a competitive bid and properly approved by the FICA Executive Board prior to the release of any funds.

The Executive Board shall designate an auditor. Such auditor shall have complete access of/to the financial records of FICA. His or her duties shall include certification of the FICA books and countersigning the Treasurer's Report.

No part of the net earnings of FICA shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, the Executive Board, or other private persons. The Executive Board shall, however, be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes of FICA. The Executive Board shall be empowered to raise funds through donations of real and personal property, receipts from musical and dance concerts, initiating fund raising events and by other lawful means. The Executive Board is authorized to acquire funds by grant, gift, purchases, bequests and rent and to hold and dispose of property for the benefit and objectives of the FICA, subject to the limitation of the law and as stated herein.

Board of Trustees is hereby authorized to borrow money for such periods and at such rate of interest and term as it considers advisable. The Board of Trustees is further authorized to mortgage or pledge any real or personal property as security for such loans.

Sales and purchases of real estate property must have the majority approval of the donors consisting of patrons, grand patrons, benefactors, grand benefactors and philanthropists.

ARTICLE X: FICA Newsletter (LOTUS)

To promote the objectives of FICA, a newsletter entitled "Lotus" will be published. The purpose of the publication is to provide news for the benefit of the membership at large in a nonpartisan and nonsectarian manner.

Duties of the Editor:

The Editor shall select an Editorial Board in consultation with the Executive Board of FICA. Such Editorial Board shall consist of an associate editor, business manager/treasurer, and a circulation manager. The Editorial Board shall be nominated by the Editor and subject to the approval of the FICA Executive Board. The Editor shall be responsible for supervision of all aspects of "Lotus" including its financial affairs.

Removal of the Editor:

The Editor of "Lotus" may be removed and replaced by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Executive Board.

Guidelines:

The FICA Executive Board shall issue general guidelines to be followed by the Editorial Board. The Editorial Board shall manage day-to-day matters.

BY-LAWS :

ARTICLE I: Membership Obligations

All members of FICA shall strive to fulfill the aims and objectives of FICA. No member shall indulge in any activity detrimental to the honor and prestige of India, the Indian community, or FICA. No member or group of members of FICA shall initiate or continue any activity or activities in the name of the FICA without prior approval of the Executive Board. All efforts of the membership on behalf of FICA shall be considered voluntary and gratis to FICA. Members may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses verified by receipts and or other supporting documentation presented to the treasurer.

ARTICLE II: Meetings

The secretary shall call Meetings, in consultation with the President and, in his absence, in consultation with the Past President. Regular meetings of the Executive Board shall be held on a monthly basis. Emergency meetings of the Executive Board shall be called whenever necessary. A quorum for an Executive Board meeting shall consist of one-half (1/2) of the strength of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall convene the membership meeting at least once a year. Special issues requiring urgent consideration shall be discussed at an Emergency Meeting called by the Executive Board, Such meetings are totally within the discretion of the Executive Board.

Publication in "Lotus" will be deemed sufficient notice of a forthcoming membership meeting. The quorum necessary to pass an issue, at all shall be ten (10) percent of the dues-paying membership of FICA for that fiscal year. One-third (1/3) of the regular dues-paying membership may call a membership meeting by submitting petition in writing and filing such petition with the secretary and president for the FICA.

Article III: Officers and their Duties:

A. OFFICERS

I FICA Officers, who must be members of FICA, shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The newly elected Executive Board elects these officers every year. Past President shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Board

II Officers shall serve for annual terms coinciding with FICA's fiscal year. Upon completion of his/her term in office, the President shall automatically become Past President

III The Past President shall be the most recent President still living and a member of FICA. The Past President shall fill a vacancy in the office of President occurring during the year for the remainder of the term.

B: DUTIES

I The President shall be the chief administrative officer of FICA. It shall be his/her duty to preside at all meetings and conduct the affairs of FICA in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws.

II The Past President shall, in the absence of the President, perform and carry out his/her duties. In the absence of both the President and the Past President, the President-elect shall perform and carry out the duties of the President.

III The Vice President shall service as an ex-officio member and coordinator of appointed committees. Committee assignments among the Vice President and the FICA Board members shall be planted by the President-elect and shall be submitted by him/her, upon assuming the office of President, to the newly elected Executive Board for approval at its first meeting.

IV The Secretary shall (a) be responsible for giving notice of all meetings of the Executive Board, (b) record the proceedings of meetings and of all other matters of which a record shall be ordered, (c) conduct official correspondence of FICA, (d) maintain files of minutes of meetings, correspondence, records and reports of committee activities, Constitution, Bylaws, Financial reports and "Tax" Reports, and (e) be responsible for maintaining, or arranging with the Treasurer and other Executive Board members to maintain records of FICA's membership.

V The Treasurer shall (a) be the chief fiscal officer of FICA, (b) be responsible for all funds and securities of FICA, (c) disburse funds only as authorized by the FICA Executive Board, (d) maintain FICA's accounting records and be responsible for the financial reporting of FICA, (e) present reports periodically in appropriate format to the Executive Board, and (f) timely file FICA's annual federal "tax" return. The Treasurer, at the discretion of the FICA Executive Board, may be required to: (a) furnish a surety bond the premium of which shall be paid by FICA, and/or (b) submit an annual financial report, audited by a Certified Public Accountant or a firm of Certified Public Accountants.

ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES

There shall be such other committees as may be determined by the FICA Executive Board. The President, with approval of the FICA Executive Board, shall appoint all such committees. The President shall have the power, subject to approval of a majority of the Executive Board to remove any member of a committee and to appoint another person to fill the vacancy so created. Each committee shall report, as requested by at least annually, on its activities to the FICA Executive Board. Such committees shall include, but not be limited to, those that would organize FICA's functions such as Independence Day, Republic Day etc.

ARTICLE V: FINANCES **

There shall be a Finance Committee to insure that FICA funds are properly invested. This committee shall be made up of three people: the President, the Treasurer and another Executive Board member approved by the majority of the Executive Board. Such committee will also be charged with the establishment of procedures for financial management of funds. FICA shall maintain a bank account in the name of the organization. Two or more officers shall be designated by the Executive Board to have signature power on such account.

ARTICLE VI: Endowment fund

Endowment fund is to be raised by trustees and managed by trustees only. The principal amount is not to be touched except after it has reached two million dollars, then with two thirds of voting it can be used to create a new community center. Its Executive Board may use 50% of income of this endowment fund subject to approval by The Board of Trustees to further the cause of FICA.

All undesignated contributions of \$1,000.00 and above made to FICA will go into this fund and the names of these people are to be displayed in a prominent place for lifetime. These are the members of advisory board of trustees. These donors will also receive preferred seating and mailing.

Following criteria of donations is suggested with five levels of benefits and contributions.

Philanthropist :\$25,000.00 and above. Lifetime honorary trustees with voting right.

Grand benefactor: \$ 10,000.00 and above and \$ 1,000.00 per year to be eligible to be trustee and vote in all financial matters of endowment fund in the year of \$ 1,000.00 contribution. Eligible to be nominated for five years as trustee with eligibility for reelection voting rights. After total contribution of \$25,000.00 elevated to be lifetime honorary trustee.

Benefactor: \$ 5,000.00 initially, then \$ 1,000.00 per year, eligible to be grand benefactor after cumulative contribution of \$ 11,000.00. Can vote for use of funds and election of trustees from grand benefactors in the year of \$ 1,000.00 contribution.

Grand patron: \$ 2,500.00, initially and \$ 5,00.00 per year. Can vote for use of funds in the year of continued contribution.

Patron: \$ 1,000.00, initially ad \$ 500.00 annually. Can vote only in year of contribution for the use of funds and election of trustees.



CIFF 41 - Lotus Recommendation

By William G. Barnard, IV

I'm just going to say this right away, "I LOVE PIZZA!" There's no doubt about it. If there is anything that is going to keep extra weight on me it's the availability of pizza. There are at least five pizzerias within a mile of my house that will make, bake and deliver a pizza with just a phone call. Even when I'm in India there are two well know pizza chains that will be happy to sell me a pizza. I love pizza so much I thought about starting my own pizza place called Hanuman Pizza. Advertisements for it would have the tagline: "Hanuman delivers a pizza with a mountain of cheese and herbs". Maybe I'll have drones fly the pizza to my hungry customers.

With all this readily available pizza in the neighborhood it's hard to imagine a person that just has never heard of much less tried a slice of Italian pie. But I am painfully aware that there are people who do not have the availability or the money to buy even a slice of pizza. At the 41st Cleveland International Film Festival this year there is a movie that explores just that. Half Ticket is a is an Indian movie that features two young brothers who live in the slums of Mumbai who become obsessed with eating a piece of pizza. It is a lavish expense for that boys who collect coal that falls from trains to help provide for their family.

The Lotus is once again a media partner for the film festival and will be sponsoring Half Ticket. The Editor of The Lotus, Sujata Lakhe Barnard, will be present at both of the screenings of Half Ticket and will be giving a short message about the mission of The Lotus. We hope to see you there on April 7th or 9th. When you go to see Half Ticket also plan to see some of the films presented at the film festival.

The 41st annual Cleveland International Film Festival will take place March 29th to April 9th this year with most of the movies screens at Tower City Cinemas at Tower City Center in downtown Cleveland with other other screens at the Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque, Downtown Akron, Beachland Ballroom & Tavern, The Cedar Lee Theatre and the Capital Theatre. More information on what is showing at the film festival with show times and location can be found at <http://www.clevelandfilm.org>. Use the code LOTUS for a discount at the Tower City Cinemas box office, by phone or online for movie tickets at the film festival. Some Restrictions apply.

Discounted self-parking (\$5.00 per visit) is offered WHEN AVAILABLE to CIFF patrons in the Tower City Center self-parking garage. Patrons must have their parking ticket validated at Tower City Cinemas to receive the discounted rate of \$5.00 per visit.



Half Ticket

Starring: Shubham More, Vinayak Potdar, Priyanka Bose, Usha Naik
Director: Samit Kakkad
Marathi with English subtitles
1 hour 54 minutes

Tower City Cinemas
Friday, April 07, 2017 at 6:35 PM
Sunday, April 09, 2017 at 5:10 PM

To a person with very little, the simplest things can be treasures. And so it is for two young brothers living in poverty in the slums of Mumbai. With their father in jail, the boys collect coal along railroad tracks to help their mother keep a meager household. When a pizza chain opens nearby, the idea of being able to afford this wondrous new food becomes the boys' obsession. But even though the boys have hard-earned money, the restaurant turns them away as "slum rats" and one brother is beaten. When video of this goes viral, the boys suddenly find themselves at the center of national attention. HALF TICKET spins an unexpected magical web. With superb cinematography it conjures a world of stunning beauty from the squalor. Even amidst privation and hardship, childhood can contain wonder and hope. This deceptively simple film has the extraordinary power to evoke the world through the eyes of these children. HALF TICKET is able to make your heart ache even as it fills it with joy. (In Marathi with subtitles)
 — C.R. CIFF



CLE INT'L FILM FEST 41

ILLUMINATE

MARCH 29-APRIL 9, 2017

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clevelandfilm.org

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GREATER CLEVELAND
SHIVA VISHNU TEMPLE &
CHINMAYA MISSION CLEVELAND
presents...



Jnana Yajna on Hanuman Chalisa

March 27 - 30 (7:00 – 8:30pm)

An interactive workshop on the significance and message of Hanuman Chalisa.

*Without devotion,
knowledge is tasteless.
Without knowledge, devotion
is mere empty idol worship.*
- Swami Chinmayananda



Knowledge series on Hanuman Chalisa by Acharya Vivekji

- Event Details**
- Adults and Youth (10 and up)
 - Childcare available on site if needed
 - Free Admission
 - Shiva Vishnu Temple
7733 Ridge Rd, Parma
 - Questions/RSVP
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