

THE LOTUS

A Monthly Publication of the Federation of India Community Associations



October 2017

1967 - 2017 | 50 Years

A Month of Colorful Festivals

EDITOR'S NOTE

October is the month of festivities for Asian Indians. While Halloween and Columbus Day are the only American celebrations during this month, for Indians there is a string of colorful festivals, culminating in the biggest one, Diwali – the festival of lights.

Towards the end of September, during Navratri (nine nights), Dandiya Raas performances begin. Men and women, mostly from the State of Gujarat, dance the night way, rhythmically beating their colorful dandiyas (sticks) in unison. Dussehra, a 10 day festival, is celebrated on September 30.

On October 2 is Gandhi Jayanti, the birthday of Gandhi. On October 9, Sikhs celebrate the birthday of Guru Ram Das, the fourth of the Ten Gurus of Sikhism.

In certain parts of India, Karva Chauth is observed by married women. Durga Puja is an important festival celebrated by Bengalis. Huge idols of the Goddess Durga, dressed in colorful saris, are venerated. During Dhanteras (“Dhan” stands for wealth), Goddess Laxmi is worshipped for prosperity and well-being. In Laxmi Puja and people chant bhajans or devotional songs in praise of her.

Deepavali or Diwali is the biggest festival in India. It is celebrated to mark the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness. The traditional lamp or diya of clay burning with oil and a wick also symbolizes the removal of ignorance through knowledge. For Sikhs, Diwali has a special meaning, as it celebrates the release of Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru, and 52 princes from the prison of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. For Jains, Diwali commemorates the anniversary of the 24th and last Thirtankar Lord Mahavir’s attainment of nirvana in 527 B.C.E.

I remember the many October’s spent in India. The sights, smells and sounds of festivals in the air. The theatrical Ramlila’s with their enactment of the Ramayana stories and the effigy of Ravana going up in flames, the drumming in the streets for Durga Puja, the rich orange garlands of marigolds across doorways, colorful and artistic rangolis decorating the entrances.

On Diwali, a thousand lamps are lit, and lanterns are strung across the crowded streets, packed with shoppers. The mithai or sweet shops sell mounds of traditional sweets: laddoos, barfi and golden jalebis, there are mega sales of clothing, household goods, groceries and jewelry. Fireworks are purchased by every household.

Everyone celebrated Diwali in some way. Though we were not Hindu, we placed lamps outside our home and ate sweets sent by the neighbors. The fireworks were the most fun! While our pet dog covered under the bed shivering, we watched strings of crackers laid out like red ribbons in the street, bursting like the rat-a-tat-tat of gunfire, and rockets whistled through the night. We twirled hand-held fuljaris carefully, while fiery spinning wheels swirled at our feet, bombs reverberated, and fountains sent up sparkling stars into the sky.

For the first time ever, as a test run, India’s Supreme Court banned the sale of fireworks from the celebration in New Delhi due to the immense amount of air pollution and toxic smog. For the rest of the country, Diwali was the same – noisy, smoke filled, and a lot of fun. Though it’s hard to replicate an Indian Diwali in Cleveland, it’s still a very special time for families to celebrate together. Season’s Greetings to all our readers!
Cheryl D’Mello
Editor
Lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com

INSIDE

Who We Are.....2/3
 Editor’s Note
 Board of Trustees’
 Secretary’s Message

Person Of The Month.4
 Vandana Marwaha

FICA Events.....5

Community
 Events.....6/7

Food Corner.....8

Stores, Restaurants
 Religious Centers.....9

Community
 Events.....10

Religious Corner
 Book of the
 month..... 1

Futus Community
 Events.....12

Lotus Team

Editor
Cheryl D’Mello

Editorial Team
Bal Karamchandani
Jyoti Malik
Raghav Sharma
Swati Desai
Parul Jain

Please email us your
feedback and
suggestions:
lotus.ficacleveland@
gmail.com

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CLEVELAND,
OHIO
PERMIT NO.
1051

FEDERATION OF INDIA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

INDIA COMMUNITY CENTER
12412 CEDAR ROAD
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OH 44106

Or Current Resident



President Donald J. Trump poses in a group photo with U.S. United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, left, following a Diwali ceremonial lighting of the Diya in the Oval Office at the White House, Tuesday, October 17, 2017, in Washington, D.C. (Official White House Photo by D. Myles Cullen)



FICA STAFF

Administration

Board of Trustees

Sudarshan Sathe (Chairman B.O.T.)
chairman.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Mona Alag (Vice Chair Person B.O.T.)

vicechairperson.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Rajan Gautam (Secretary B.O.T.)

botsecretary.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Executive Board

Mrs. Ritu Mahna

president.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Mr. Samir Gautam

vicepresident.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Mr. Gaurav Kapur

secretary.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Mr. Hemant Kanodia

treasurer.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Ms. Sujata Lakhe Barnard

pastpresident.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Dr. Rajesh Sharma

Mr. Yatish Desai

Mr. Ameet Bathiya

Mrs. Smita Samant

Mrs. Shaifali Bathiya

Mr. Utkarsh Hazarnis

Dr. Vandana Singh

Member At Large

Dr. Priyanka Sharma

Lotus Editor & Publisher

Cheryl D'Mello

lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com

India Cultural Garden

Raj Pillai - Chair

pillairp@yahoo.com

440/724-4398

Shiksha Daan

Sanjay Garg - Chair

sangarg@aol.com

440/590-1261

Project Seva

Harsha Rane, Chairperson

440/567-0972

Sister Organizations

Association of Indian physicians of North Ohio (AIPNO)

www.aipno.org

Dr. Umesh Yalavarthy, President

216-513-4964

ckhcuy@gmail.com

Bengali Cultural Society of Cleveland

www.bcsdle.org

Sujit Ghosh, President

440-542-0363

sujitghosh@hotmail.com

Marathi Mandal

www.neomm.org

Dr. Sharad Wankhade

330-321-7677

sharadw@hotmail.com

Odisha Society

Birendra Jena, President

330 544-1725

birendrajena@hotmail.com

Jain Society of Greater Cleveland

(330) 659-0832

Letter to the Editor

Suggestions for Future Issues of Lotus, Sept. 23, 2017

To The Editor
The Lotus

I have seen the September copy of Lotus which shows some changes and I still wish to suggest to the Editorial Team some more significant additions to be introduced in future issues as follows:

1. For a wider circulation and enlarging the readership, the paper should publish some current news of importance relating to what is happening in India. Recently I met a Jewish lady who was very interested to know why Indians give such importance to the cow, also why women have a red dot on their forehead, etc. So news about our customs and festivals needs to be published.
2. The new column called "Religious Corner" should not be confined to Hindu festivals but also publish festivities of other religions in India or here. For example the coming festivals of

Dussehra, Diwali and even of other religions like Eid, Baisakhi, etc.

3. In a recent issue of "India Abroad", there is a lot of controversy about so called India's Scheduled Castes. There is no problem now. All Americans will be interested to know that a Scheduled Caste leader Mr. Ram Nath Kovind is now the new President of India and there is no discrimination. Even his son Prashant Kumar was married a few years ago to a high class Hindu (Handa) girl who happens to be my late brother's granddaughter.

4. Like the article about Saunf, which you have published, many more write-ups about Indian herbs like Ajwain, Malathhi, Harard, etc. should be published in future issues.

5. I would even love to see some jokes also to be published in the next issues, to make it a more popular paper.

Om Julka, Strongsville

FICA Matters

The Board of Trustees of FICA, wish to announce an addition to their group: Dr. Satish Mahna of Beachwood (This is an interim appointment).

Dr. Mahna is a practicing physician, with offices in Bedford Heights, Willoughby, Elyria, Youngstown and Warren. He is a past President of AIPNO (Association of Indian Physicians of Northern Ohio), founding member and first president of AIPO (Association of Indian Physicians of Ohio) and. has served as regional director of AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin). He is also a founding member of Shiva Vishnu

Temple of greater Cleveland.

Dr Mahna is a tireless passionate worker, who is well known for his innovative approach to all his undertakings. With an impressive resume in community involvement/ service, energetic approach to projects, he is a dedicated member of the community.

He will be no doubt be an immense asset to FICA.

Mona Alag, Vice Chair
Board of Trustees.

FICA App Launched



The board is excited to introduce our brand new FICA app. created by our executive committee member Shaifali 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.

FICA Fundraiser for

Flood-Affected Victims in Houston

FICA has organized a fundraising drive for all the victims affected in Houston due to Hurricane Harvey. Please open up your hearts and help those in need. We can make a difference together! Please send your checks to: FICA, PO Box 39474, Solon, OH 44139



ADVERTISING IN THE LOTUS

WWW.FICAcleveland.org

The Lotus, the First Asian Community Newspaper in the U.S. and the only non-profit Indian Community newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio, was a community supported initiative launched by students of Case Western Reserve University in 1967.

Today, the newspaper goes to over 2000 households and businesses by direct mailing and goes to 7000 email boxes. We distribute stacks to libraries, grocery stores, museums and other cultural institutions which show an interest in South Asian Indian ethnic culture.

Monthly (Less than 12 months)	Yearly (12 months consecutive)	Maximus Ad Size WxHt
\$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"

The ad must be received by the Lotus Editor in high resolution format (jpg or similar) by the 20th of the month, for publication in the following month's issue. Lotus will try its best to have the following months issue distributed by the first week of the month for which the issue is dated (e.g. Ad for Nov. 2017 issue of Lotus must be received by the Oct. 20, 2017.)

We will work with the advertisers to have their Ad print ready. 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 one-time \$50 fee for ads that required a significant amount of work to get it print ready.

Email lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com with questions and requests for publishing ads. Your Ad will be published only after our Editorial board has approved it for publishing. Email the following info and electronic copy of your Ad:

Your name, _____

Company: _____

Size of your Ad: _____

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 PO BOX 39474, Solon, OH 44139, United States



Secretary's Message

Why is it that we all come together in times of hardship and or disasters?

When disasters strike, no one says, "we are Indians", "we are Spanish", "we are Puerto Ricans", "we are African Americans" or "we are Jewish". We all claim to be "Americans".

Similarly, FICA stands for the Federation of Indian Community Associations. To me this means that "First we are Indians", and then Gujaratis, Punjabis, Maharashtrians, Malayalis, and so on.

When we work and come



GAURAV KAPOOR

together, find common causes to support our communities, and collaborate to deliver on our commitments as One, we can truly make a difference and embark on bringing real change.

My reason for taking up a role with FICA was the fact that FICA's new leadership brings together a diverse

group of Indians. It includes young leaders and experienced leaders, but we all have a few things in common. We are all energized, ready to bring about change. We have a vision to bring our communities together, and a mission to support the causes of our sister organizations which are near and dear to our hearts.

We have made some progress and have organized a few successful events, which include a Golf Outing and Anand Mela. However, this is just a start, and there is a need for a lot more.

We would love to hear from you! Tell us what we can do together to make a long lasting impact.

Together we stand, stronger we become.

Upcoming Board Of Trustee Meetings

October 29, 2017

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

FICA MEMBERSHIP

The Board Members of FICA invite you all to join FICA and become active members. Together, we can make a difference in North East Ohio.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the FICA President Ritu Mahna at: President.ficacleveland@gmail.com



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) 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.



Letters to the Editor and Articles

The Lotus welcomes original articles and letters to the Editor. Please include your name and phone no. for confirmation purposes.

Articles should be about 500 words in length and include photos where possible. Letters should be about 150 words. They should be typed and double spaced and forwarded to: Lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com with the subject line: Article/Letter for Lotus

We cannot guarantee that it will be published, but we will do our best, depending on space available, timeliness, etc. They should reach us by the 5th of the month.

We also request you to send us names of community members who are making waves – small or big and any news that is of interest to the community.

Thank you!

Federation of India Community Associations (FICA) ONE NATION – ONE COMMUNITY – ONE VOICE

For over half a century FICA has kept the vibrancy of India alive in NE Ohio. Time has come for the next generation to continue with the tradition and make our community a greater part of the mainstream – to have a voice for our community on important political, social, economic and cultural issues.

COME JOIN US AS WE BEGIN THIS NEW CHAPTER YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US WITH INVALUABLE PROGRAMS AND ALSO HELP US INTRODUCE NEW PROGRAMS TO REPRESENT OUR COMMUNITY.

April 2017 a new slate of Board of Trustees and Executive Board were appointed. The LOTUS will be soliciting your comments and thoughts on what FICA means to you and what programs we can implement to support and welcome those migrating to NE Ohio.

PLEASE HELP US UPDATE OUR DATABASE BY PROVIDING US THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Spouse's Name: _____ Email: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Spouse's Mobile: _____

Place of Employment: _____ Spouse's Employment: _____

BECOME A MEMBER

Life Member (\$500): _____ Annual Membership (\$50): _____
Other (My Donation): _____ Donor Directed United Way: _____

Complimentary monthly LOTUS newsletter. Access to ALL FICA sponsored programs. All programs will be announced in the LOTUS and Board of Trustee updates will be published.



Interview with Vandana Marwaha:

“Assimilate with the new culture, but do not forget your heritage”

DR. U. SUDARSANAN

**How long have you been in America?
Where are you originally from?**

I am from New Delhi where I was born and brought up. I came here in 1979 with my husband, soon after we were married. We have called Cleveland home ever since we came here from India.

Where did you receive your education?

I did my Masters in English literature from Delhi University, and a double Bachelors in Education and English Literature. I taught English at a high school in India for three years. Once in the U.S., I took some professional classes at Baldwin Wallace and Cleveland State in order to validate my teaching license.

Can you take us on a journey of your work adventures till now?

I taught ESL (English as a second language) in 1979 in a private school for a while until I was able to get my Ohio teaching certificate in 1980. I started substitute teaching in Parma City schools in 1981, then worked at a private kindergarten/preschool/day care for two years. Later, I opened my own day care center, offering pre-school classes, full time day care, and before and after school care. This was a very demanding schedule, from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. We offered educational seminars and workshops on parenting. It was a learning experience about the dynamics of childcare in this country. Those were busy years because I had two young children and my husband's job entailed traveling around the country. While I enjoyed the little ones, my true love of teaching teens was beckoning me. I longed to be in the

classroom teaching literature. So after seven years I sold the center and went back to teaching full time.

What do you like most about your profession? And what's your least favorite?

To quote Socrates, "Teaching is not the filling of a vessel but the lighting of a fire." So yes, I do come alive in the classroom when I see that light in the students' eyes. I am very passionate about teaching and feel that to be my true calling. Least favorite? I guess you could say the loads and loads of grading.

What volunteer activities have you been involved in?

For the past 22 years I have taught Sunday School every Sunday for two to three hours. I have had to miss many social events because of this commitment.

I also conducted a Vedic Havan at the Shiva Vishnu Temple the first Sunday of each month for many years. I also officiate at weddings and I am a Universal Life Minister. To date I have officiated about 25 weddings in America and in India. I feel blessed to have conducted the wedding ceremonies of many dear students, family members, and close friends.

How did the Hindu Heritage School idea come about?

In 1995, when my daughter was in High School, she and her friends wanted to learn about Hinduism and learn basic Hindi. I started teaching them on Sundays at our home. Word spread and before I realized it, I had 20 children ages 6-17 in my family room eager to learn. We knew it was time to find

a bigger venue. So we moved to the Solon Historical building and then to the Solon Recreation Center.

Is it based on models in other cities in the U.S.?

Not that I know of. We sort of based it on children's needs. Whatever the kids were struggling with at school or home was addressed. The main emphasis was on Hindi, spirituality, culture, and yoga. At times, we would invite special guests who shared their expertise with the kids. The children also participated in volunteer activities as well as field trips. We conducted debates, workshops, dialogues etc. to keep the program interesting and relevant. All enrolment was purely word of mouth. I feel blessed to have found wonderful volunteers. No one could do it alone. The best part was when students who had graduated from the school would come back to volunteer their time.

What is the goal of the school? How many students are/were in it?

The goal was/is to make the children aware of their heritage, to take pride in their traditions, and to be fully knowledgeable about their roots. We started with 10 kids in 1995 and at our peak we touched an enrollment of 90 students a few years ago. The kids ranged in ages 6-18.

What kind of schedule do you maintain every day?

I teach High School English at Orange High School. It is a demanding job particularly because work does not end when school ends. There are many hours of grading and lesson planning which encroach upon family time



and social obligations. As for finding time, I believe it is a sort of discipline. I learned from my father who despite being a busy lawyer, spent countless hours volunteering.

What advice would you give to people coming from India to settle here, in terms of heritage and culture?

It is very important to assimilate in the culture of your adopted country but do not forget your heritage. At the risk of sounding clichéd, no tree can stand without its roots.

What are some of the habits one should cultivate in life from a young age?

The Golden Rule. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Could you tell us about your family?

We have two children and two grandchildren. Our daughter and son-in-law are settled in Pittsburgh. Our son and daughter-in-law live in Chicago.

As a mother, what advice do you always give your children?

"To thine own self be true..." Good old Shakespeare.

Is there anything else that you would like to share with your audience?

Don't just live for yourself. Give, in whatever way you can. Give of your time, money, talent, compassion. Whatever works for you.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”- Mahatma Gandhi

DHARMINDER L. KAMPANI
ATTORNEY AT LAW

General Practice of Law Including :

- Business
- Wills and Probate
- Real Estate
- Personal Injury
- Landlord/Tenant Law
- Domestic Relations

17140 Lorain Avenue, Cleveland,
Ohio 44111
Phone (216) 251-8023

BALANCE • DIVERSIFICATION • SIGNIFICANCE

Let an independent financial advisor help you to
PLAN YOUR TOMORROW

with a customized plan based on what's important to you.

Count on our 30 years of experience to guide your **FINANCIAL FUTURE.**

Call 440.248.5625 to set up an appointment.

Ashok Shendure, MS, MBA, CFP®, CEBS®, AIF®, RLP®

Rajaneesh Shendure, MBA, CFP®, AIF®, RICP®

Smita Samant, CFP®, CRC®, AIF®

Brenda Johnson, PPC™



BDS Financial Network

Today's decisions shape tomorrow's reality

30405 Solon Road | Suite 16 | Solon, OH 44139 | 440.248.5625 | www.bdsfn.com

Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network,
Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.



International Cleveland Community Day, Oct 8, 2017

SUJATA LAKHE BARNARD

The Cleveland Museum of Art hosted International Cleveland Community Day on Sunday, October 8, 2017. This free event celebrates the dynamic ethnic cultures that enrich the Cleveland community. It also introduces audiences to the Museum's global art collection and demonstrates the continuity of world cultures beyond geographical and historical boundaries.

Held in the Museum's Ames Family Atrium, the event features dynamic cultural activities including music and dance performances, art-making, giant puppets, and many other family-friendly activities.

In addition to performances by Chinese, Spanish (Flamenco), Japanese, Czech, Russian, North American International Folk, Italian, South American, Greek, Croatian, Polish, Inner City Ballet and Hebrew cultural associations, there were many types of Indian dances and music presented on the two stages.



South Indian Kolattam dance by Sujata Srinivasan's dance troupe

A group of dancers from Anga Kala Kathak Academy performed a Kathak dance choreographed by Antara Datta who is the founder and director of Anga Kala Kathak Dance Academy located in Copley, Ohio. Anga Kala literally means creating art with one's body. Datta teaches dance in Solon, Akron, Columbus, Pittsburgh and Seattle. She specializes in a branch of



Sujata Lakhe Barnard and Kritihika Rajkumar

this classical dance, which is polished and honed by the living Kathak legend Pandit Birju Maharaj.

The music for the dance was composed by Pandit Birju Maharaja. The piece expresses the joy of playing in the rain. In order to enjoy it, you would have to imagine the landscape of India, where the scorching summer has taken the greenery away. The earth is parched. When Monsoon finally brings rain, the earthy fragrance fills people with the joy of rejuvenation. Women jump out in the open, twirling in the rain with joy and feeling little kisses of cool rain drops on their faces. Strands of rain become heavy, wavy and fall from all directions. As the deep India ink blue clouds darken the sky, peacocks spread their glorious feathers. Deer get furtive and twitterpated! Rain drops and dance, a strange kind of romance.

The dance participants were Geetanjali Maheshwari, Madhavi Ahuja, Saloni Kumbhkarani-Arora, Tonima Rahman, Aanya Patel, Isha Bansal, Priyanka Sharma, Jeslin Jacobs and Sujata Lakhe.

Shri Kala Mandir Dance Company run by esteemed Sujatha Srinivasan presented Kolattam, a folk dance from Southern India on behalf of the FICA community. Kolattam is the name of an alluring and charming dance form practiced by the young ladies and girls of Tamil Nadu and other southern states of India. Shri Kalaa Mandir also presented Ganapathy Kavuthuvam. The participants in this group were Purva, Chinmayee, Urja, Mridula, Krupa, Amulya, Roshini, Arya, Kavya, Suder, Aparna, Sneha, Janaki and Pooja.

A lawyer by profession and national finalist in the Top 10 for Miss World competition and Miss India USA first runner up, Kritihika Rajkumar performed a classical Bharatnatyam dance.

Bhavya Kumaran and Joshua George presented an amazing performance of Bharatnatyam. The rock-solid training, exuberance and youthful joie-de-vivre of these two dancers mesmerized the audience.

Our community made a banner inspired by the Konark Sun Temple in collaboration with the Museum's artists which was hung in the Atrium. William Barnard, Chaitrali Palekar, and Neha Sakre worked on this banner at the several workshops held at the Museum. FICA Cleveland was assigned a table for displaying

objects of cultural significance and information about FICA and other community organizations. Plans to hold an auction of donated materials to raise funds did not materialize. We hope that everyone keeps this event in mind next year and comes forward to participate enthusiastically!

Photos by William G. Barnard IV



Kathak dancers from Antara Datta's Dance School



Kathak dancers from Antara Datta's Dance School



From L to R: Asim Dutta, Sujata Lakhe Barnard, Kritihika Rajkumar and Chittaranjan Jain

Transformations of a Buddhist Savior: Art and Avalokiteshvara,

Second Annual Distinguished Lecture in Indian Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art on Saturday, Nov. 4, 2:30 p.m., Gartner Auditorium,

FREE, tickets required. Speaker: Robert L. Brown, Professor of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, UCLA

Made possible by the Ranajit K. Datta in memory of Kiran P. and S.C. Datta Endowment Fund

Reserve FREE Tickets at 216-421-7350 or online at ClevelandArt.org



Shirdi Sai Baba Shrine coming to Shiva Vishnu Temple

NARAYAN DRAVID & BHANU MAHESHWER

The Board of Trustees & the Religious Committee of the Shiva Vishnu Temple approved the construction of Shirdi Sai Baba Shrine within the Temple premises in March this year. The Temple Building committee proceeded to prepare drawings and was able to get the permit promptly from the City of Parma within one week of submitting the application.

Initial part of the construction activity was limited to outside the Temple which has been completed. Now the interior construction work has started. Presently, April 2018 is the estimated time for the new Shrine inauguration. Since ground breaking ceremony, Sai Baba aarti is being done by Baba devotees every Thursday evening at the Temple.

While Bharata Varsha has produced many Saints, and will continue to do so in the future, the Temple opted to honor the Sai Baba as representative of all Gurus. In the Sanatan Dharma, the Guru is placed higher than God because you cannot reach the latter without the



former. Shirdi Sai Baba appears to have a very large following, both in India and the U.S. There are many Shirdi Sai Baba temples in the U.S. though most of them are stand alone. That exemplifies our Temple's uniqueness.

About Shirdi Sai Baba's origin, no one is sure. Sai Baba's date of birth including his birthplace remains

unknown. In 1858, He appeared at the Khandoba Mandir in Shirdi when the temple priest welcomed him by saying 'Aao, Sai!' ('Come Sai'). From then on, He was known by the name Sai Baba.

For four to five years, Baba lived under a neem tree and often wandered for long periods in the jungle around Shirdi as he undertook long periods of meditation. He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated mosque and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for alms, and receiving migrant Hindu or Muslim visitors. In the mosque which was called 'Dwarkamai', a Hindu name where He maintained a sacred fire referred to as dhuni, he gave sacred ash ('Udi') to his guests before they left. The ash was believed to have healing and apotropaic powers. Sai Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of the Ramayan and Bhagavat Gita for Hindus and Quran for Muslims.

Sai Baba condemned distinction based on religion or caste. His teachings combined elements of both Hinduism

and Islam. According to accounts from his life, he preached the importance of realization of the self, and criticized love towards perishable things. His teachings concentrate on a moral code of love, forgiveness, charity, contentment, and devotion to the God and Guru.



Sewa International, Third Annual 5K Run in support of ASPIRE

HIRA FOTEDAR

Sewa International Cleveland organized its Third Annual 5K Run/Walk on September 10, 2017 in Weiss Field, Avon Lake. This event was a fundraiser for Sewa's ASPIRE program. The event attracted 125 runners ranging in ages from 8 to 68 years. The average age of participants was 38. Forty three percent of the runners were female and 56% were male. More than 30 volunteers from Cognizant, Tata Consultancy Services, Moen and various Indian ethnic and cultural organizations helped staff the event. At the end of the race, Awards were presented to the winners. The Female Open Winner was Allie Rendlesham and the Male Open Winner was Cameron Messier. The awards were also presented to top three winners of each age group from under 14 to over 65. All the age group winners are listed on the Hermes website:

<http://www.hermescleveland.com/roadracing/results/2017/RUNFORSEWA.htm>

The event started at 8:30 a.m., Dr. Hira Fotedar, President Sewa International Cleveland and Dr. Rupesh Raina, Chairman Sewa Advisory Board welcomed and thanked all the participants, sponsors, donors and volunteers. Mr. Greg Zilka, Mayor of Avon Lake, flagged the race. Mr. Zilka thanked Sewa International for organizing this event in Avon Lake for the third year in a row and helping at risk students to improve their GPA in Math, Science and English through one on one tutoring and mentoring in the schools in the Greater Cleveland area. The event was covered and broadcasted by Asia TV in their Community Roundup.

The proceeds from the 5K Run will be used to support Sewa ASPIRE (Assuring Student Performance Involving Remedial Education). With the active support of Jeff Rotsky, Head Football Coach at Euclid High School, Sewa volunteers and tutors are tutoring and mentoring 35 high school students in Euclid High School. The results so far have been very encouraging with many students improving their GPA and positive feedback from the teachers. The following is a testimonial from one of the teachers:

"Just grading some quizzes and Davion S got a 50/50!!!" said April Costello M. Ed Math Teacher, Euclid High School (May 11, 2017). "I have had Davion for 2



SEWA winners of the race

years now (different courses) and I am so proud of him because it is by far his highest test score. Davion has always struggled in math, but he is showing that if you just put in a little work day by day, the results come on their own. Just thought I'd share some classroom success with you. Again for making sure these students don't forget the "student" part of being a student athlete,"

Sewa International is working with the Garfield Heights High School administration to launch ASPIRE program in November 2017.



Happy Diwali





Annual Asian Gathering Oct 1, 2017

ISABEL LOUIS

The 2017 Annual Asian Gathering was held on Oct 1st at St. Clarence Church in North Olmsted. It was celebrated with the usual gusto and fellowship with Most Reverend Bishop Roger Gries, OSB, and many priests hailing from various Asian heritages were co-celebrants.

Prayers of the Faithful were read out in various languages: Tagalog, Korean, Chinese and Konkani. There were choirs from Korea, Vietnam, and other Asian groups. Though languages were many, everyone felt one at heart in worshipping and praising of God. Enthusiastic participation of youth depicting rich cultural backgrounds enlivened the celebration. In his homily, Bishop Gries congratulated and thanked the Asian community for their robust contribution to North East Ohio's economy, and also to faith-building in their respective parishes in the Diocese



Michael Sreshta playing the saxophone at the Asian Gathering

of Cleveland. He explained how every community was a mutual gift to everyone in the region.

Members from South Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, etc. were dressed in colorful ethnic clothes: shimmering saris, kimonos, karawang, hanboks, barongs, and ao dais. Following the mass, everyone shared in

the variety of food from different parts of Asia served by volunteers belonging to various communities.

The Cleveland Catholic Diocese is one of the few in the country to have an Asian Ministry.



Aarti performed at Annual Asian Gathering 2017

Hasya Kavi Sammelan & musical dances at Sree Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple draws a crowd

Hasya Kavi Sammelan and a musical dance fundraising event was organized at the Sree Venkateswara Temple on Sunday September 24, 2017 for the Support a Child (SAC) movement. Sanjay Jhala and Ved Prakash, two famous Indian laughter poets, along with musical dance artists from Detroit, kept the audience entertained for the evening. The event generated awareness and raised funds for the Support a Child (SAC) movement. The SAC mission is to provide education (up to high school), boarding, lodging, medical care and Samskara (values) to the children from under-privileged backgrounds from different parts of Bharat.



Sanjay Jhala and Ved Prakash (poets).

"The SAC program provides a way to all of us to connect with our roots in Bharat," said the event organizer Dr. Adityanjee. "For \$250 a year one can make a difference in the life of an underprivileged child said the program coordinator," said Dr. Vikas Jain. This gift of less than dollar a day will provide a child with Boarding, Lodging, Education and Sanskara (values).

The majority of the victims of social ill are from lower income group families and are girls. The SAC program was started by the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) in 1985. The program supports more than 1000+ boys and girls all over Bharat. Through SAC these children have received a quality college education, technical education and even advanced degrees like Ph.D. and Doctor of Medicine. Today, many of these children are working as teachers, engineers, doctors and other professionals.

With the help of service organizations like Sewa Bharati, Sewa Dham, Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Kalyan Prathishthan, etc. the SAC team has selected more than 28+ hostels/schools and institutions from 18+ different states. These children stay in the hostels and get education at board certified schools. Along with the quality education, children receive medical aid, healthy/nutritious food, school supplies, clothing and housing. Under this program the donors are connected directly to their supported child and every year, a progress report is delivered to the donors

address in America. Moreover, donors can meet and write to the child through SAC.

This year the Cleveland community aims to support about 100 children through this fundraising event. Any interested individuals, families and organization can directly contact Dr. Adityanjee at (440) 503-6692 or Dr. Rashmi Jain at (440) 668-1966 or Dr. Tej Pareek at (216) 375-6691. All donations will be exempted from tax under 501(C) rules of America.



Students from Detroit dance school known as "Taal Academy" run by Mrs. Manisha Dangre.

"Embracing Diversity" 8th Annual NEO India Fest USA

BHARAT KUMAR

The 8th Annual North East Ohio India Fest USA 2017 was held on Saturday, September 9 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Independence Middle School, 6111 Archwood Road, Independence, Ohio 44131. India Fest USA's slogan was "Bridging Cultures, Generations and Communities." This year's theme was "Embracing Diversity" and Festival partners included SEWA International.

India Fest USA festival included an array of entertainment by local and professional artists and performers. The India Fest USA also showcased vendors that included local banks, insurance company, law firms, fashion jewelry, costumes, and many not-for-profit organizations. In the cafeteria, at the Taste of India food pavilion, visitors were able to taste a variety of Indian cuisine from local restaurants.



One of the most exciting segments of each year's festival is the "You've Got Talent" competition. More than 100 participants displayed their talents in front of the audience and judges. The audience also got a chance to vote for their favorites.

The Young Innovators' Society of Solon brought their LEGO robots to the exhibition area and gave a demonstration of their robotic innovations. A special half time entertainment performance featured NEO

Marathi Mandal and a Rap Artist Elliott Trent from Columbus & ALLxCAPS. The evening cultural segment "SAMGATHA" was performed by Sujatha Srinivasan, Antara Datta, Sudha Totapally, and Monali Mazumdar.

India Fest USA also received Ohio State Citation from Set. Matt Dolan & proclamations from the City of Independence, City of Cleveland, City of Broadview Hts., and City of Parma. Channel 5 news reporter Homa Bash hosted the evening ceremony.

The India Fest USA team was led by founder Bharat Kumar (Executive Producer) and advisory team members Vipin Gupta, Pat Golembiewski, Eduardo Romero & Jitin Edinani.



GHEE - Clarified Butter

JYOTI MALIK

If you've heard of the word ghee, chances are you're familiar with South Asian cuisine. If not, it's a type of clarified butter that is not only used in the dishes, but also in medicines and traditional religious rituals in many parts of Southeast Asia.

"Ghee" comes from the Sanskrit word meaning "sprinkled," and it basically means that the milk fat is rendered from the butter to separate the milk solids and water. It's made by melting butter and skimming the fat off the top. You'll be left with a yellow liquid when it's hot and a creamy looking solid one when the ghee cools down. Not only is this easy to make, but ghee also has a number of benefits. Here are some reasons why you should incorporate it into your diet:

1. Lactose Friendly

Since it's made from the milk solids, the impurities have been removed, so people who are lactose intolerant usually have no problems consuming ghee. However, be sure to consult with your physician before trying it.

2. Doesn't Spoil Easily

Ghee doesn't need to be refrigerated, some mixtures can last up to 100 years.

3. Promotes Flexibility

Ghee helps to lubricate the connective tissue and promote flexibility. This is why many yoga aficionados and practitioners consume this type of butter.

4. Rich In Vitamins

Ghee is rich in healthy fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D, E, and K. These vitamins are important for promoting bone and brain health, and for boosting the immune system.

5. Healthy Digestive Tract

Ghee converts fiber into butyric acid, which is beneficial to intestinal bacteria. It also helps to increase appetite, fostering better health and weight loss.

6. Lowers Cholesterol



Studies have shown that ghee can reduce cholesterol both in the serum and intestine, it does this by triggering an increased secretion of biliary lipids.

7. Higher Smoking Point

Since it cooks at a higher point than almost any other oil, it won't break into free radicals like other ones. Free radicals can potentially be harmful to one's health, and when an oil smokes, it can be hazardous to a person's respiratory system if constantly breathed in.

8. Weight Loss

When the ghee is derived from grass-fed cows, the butter contains cancer-fighting fatty acid conjugated linolenic acid (CLA), which aids in weight loss.

Clarified butter has a higher smoke point than regular butter, making it useful for high heat cooking (like stir-fries) and long cooking (like curries). When used in baking, this pure butterfat also helps baked goods brown more evenly.

Clarified butter and ghee have a longer shelf life than regular butter. You can store it in the fridge for about three months or freeze it for up to six months.

Recipe for making Ghee

Ingredients:

At least 1/2 pound (2 sticks) of butter or as much as you'll use within a few months

Equipment:

Small saucepan
Spoon or ladle for skimming foam
Heat-proof bowl
Strainer
Cheesecloth or coffee filter
Jar for storage

Instructions :

1. Melt the Butter - Melt the butter in the saucepan over medium-low heat. Once all the butter has melted, you want

the butter at a very low and gentle simmer. Adjust the heat as needed.

2. Skim the Foam - Continue simmering the butter over low heat. Skim the foam as it rises to the surface. Solid particles will also start dropping to the bottom of the pan; these can be strained out later. Don't worry about skimming every last bit of foam; the remaining foam can be strained out later.

3. Strain and Store - Place the strainer over the heat-proof bowl and line it with the cheesecloth or filter. When no more foam forms on the surface, remove the butter from heat and pour it through the strainer, leaving the solids in the bottom of the pan. Once the butter has cooled a bit, pour it into a jar and store in the fridge for up to three months or freeze for up to six months.

4. To Make Ghee - Instead of straining the clarified butter right away, continue simmering it over very low heat until the butter changes color from light yellow to deep gold, turns clear, and the remaining foam clumps together and falls to the bottom. Keep a close eye on things so that the butter doesn't start to burn. Some lighter foamy bubbles may form after the solid white foam falls - that's ok! Strain and store as with clarified butter. If desired, add a few fenugreek seeds to the ghee.

Additional Notes:

- That foam skimmed off the top is actually pretty tasty! Use it on popcorn, toss it with steamed vegetables, or stir it into soups.
- If you don't feel like going to the trouble of skimming the foam or are clarifying a large amount of butter, just wait for the foam to drop to the bottom of the pan. Remove from heat immediately and strain as normal.

Recipe for Besan Laddoo



Ingredients

1 1/4 cup besan/ chickpea flour
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup ghee/ clarified butter
1/2 tsp cardamom

HOW TO COOK

• Sift besan flour and dry roast the flour on low flame for 4-5 minutes, making sure not to burn the flour. Put it aside.

• Then in a pan heat the ghee and then add the flour to it and cook it on heat, stirring it constantly. Roast the flour until the ghee is separated and the flour turns golden in color. It may take 10 minutes.

Add cardamom powder at this time.

• Take the pan off the heat and then add the sugar and mix it well. Wait for it to cool down a little around 5 minutes.

• Grease your hands with ghee and make golf size round balls with the mixture. Place them on a greased platter or parchment paper.

Optional: decorate the top of the laddoo with silver varak or one cashew on top of each laddoo.

Enjoy and Happy Diwali!

RECIPE CORNER

JYOTI MALIK



20600 Chagrin Blvd, Suite #150
Shaker Heights, OH 44122-5327

(216) 295-0400

www.thesaffronpatch.com

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony" - Mahatma Gandhi



Stores & Restaurants

Indian Groceries Available at:

- Apna Bazaar, Mayfield Road
- Asian Plaza, Cleveland
- Asian Imports, North Olmsted
- Everest Grocery Store, Indian, Nepalese, Lakewood
- India Grocers, Parma Heights
- Indian Grocery, Cuyahoga Falls
- Indo American Foods, North Randall
- Indo American Convenient, Mayfield Heights
- Laxmi Groceries & Spices, Parma Heights
- Lakshmi Plaza, Mayfield Heights
- Park n Shop, E30th Cleveland
- Patel Brothers, Parma Heights
- Rimi's Indian Bakers, Grocers & Gifts, Westlake
- Rumis Market & Deli, Carnegie Ave.
- Sunny's Asian Food & Spices, Solon

- Bombay Grill, Akron
- Café Tandoor at Cleveland Heights, Westlake & Aurora
- Crown of India, Strongsville
- Chapati at Chester Ave., Cleveland & University Circle
- Chennai Delicay, Parma Heights
- Choolah, Indian BBQ, Orange Village
- Cleveland Tiffin Punjabi Dhaba, North Randall
- Cuisine of India, Parma Heights
- Greedy Girl, Cleveland Heights
- Hot or Mild, Mayfield Heights
- Indian Delight, Cleveland
- India Garden, Lakewood
- Indies Indian Food at Colonial Arcade, Cleveland
- Indian Flame, University Circle
- Jaipur Junction, North Royalton, Hudson
- Mad Greek Restaurant, Cleveland Heights
- Namaste India Garden, Lakewood
- Saffron Patch, Shaker Heights, Akron
- 6 Flavors, Parma
- South India Cuisine, Mayfield Road
- Taj India Palace, Richmond Heights
- Tandul, Professor Ave., Tremont
- Taste of Kerala, Mayfield Heights

Indian Food Available at:

- Bombay Chaat, Euclid Ave., Cleveland
- Bamboo Garden, North Olmsted
- University Circle

Community Religious Centers

• BAPS Swaminarayan Temple
2915 Laurel Rd., Brunswick

• Guru Nanak Foundation (Gurdwara)
4220 Broadview Road, Richfield

• Gurdwara Sahib Bedford
38 Tarbell Road, Bedford

• Greater Cleveland Shiva Vishnu Temple
7733 Ridge Rd., Parma

• Islamic Center of Cleveland
6055 W. 130th St., Parma

• ISSO Swaminarayan Temple
13354 Pearl Road, Strongsville

• Jain Temple & Center
3226 Boston Mills Rd., Richfield

• Shri Venkataswara Temple
4406 Brecksville Road, Richfield

• St. Gregorios Malankara
Orthodox Church
1252 East Aurora Road, Macedonia

• Swaminarayan Shubh Sanskar
Sanstha Cleveland
4402 Wallings Rd., North Royalton

• Syro Malabar Holy Qurbana
Our Lady of Peace, Shaker Square

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

Hair Replacement

Try it before you buy it!



Before



After

We have the most progressive non-surgical hair replacement in the Cleveland area for men and women.

Cleveland owned and operated, with Pride and Integrity for over 40 years!

BHC Beachwood Hair Clinic

3690 Orange Place, Suite 115, Beachwood
Beachwoodhairclinic.com | 216.831.8772

MARGARET W. WONG & ASSOCIATES LLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Best Lawyers
BEST LAW FIRMS
U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT
2017

Margaret W. Wong & Associates, a leading immigration services firm with over 100 years of combined experience, has represented thousands of employers & individuals around the world since 1978. We tailor solutions to their particular immigration needs. We fight for the best results with innovative strategies. We guide our clients through complex immigration law that requires prompt and professional responses.

Green Cards • Permanent Residency • Non-Immigrant Visas
Immigrant Visas • EB-5 Immigrant Investor • Visas & Labor Certification
Deportation & Removal • Exclusion & Asylum • Employment Authorization
Criminal Alien Issues • 601A Waiver • BIA Appeals • Federal Litigation
Citizenship & Naturalization

216-566-9908 wong@lmwong.com www.lmwong.com

MWW Immigration Center
3150 Chester Avenue • Cleveland Ohio 44114
Atlanta • Columbus • Cleveland • Chicago • Los Angeles
Minneapolis • Nashville • New York • Raleigh



In the Shadows of Gandhi, India Garden comes alive on One World Day, 2017

On Sunday, August 27, 2017, the Cleveland Police Department reported that there were more than 25,000 people spread out all over the 250 acres between MLK Drive and East Boulevard famously known as the Cleveland Cultural Gardens.

Out of that number, 675 spent a significant time at the India Garden, and enjoyed an afternoon of great late summer weather and a variety of activities including dances, yoga, storytelling, and tasty foods.

The afternoon started off with the very colorful Parade of Flags representing



nearly 40 national groups. A contingent of about 15, comprising of young and not so young, represented the India Garden in the Parade of Flags, proudly carrying the Tri-color. The parade had several hundred participants.

All afternoon, the visitors to the India Garden were treated to great deal of fun. There were interactive presentations of Bharat Natyam (Indian Classical dance form) by the Venkatesh Sisters, Mahima and Mahathi. Sujata Burgess conducted Yoga sessions, drawing participants of various ages. Stories on Gandhi, peace and non-violence were shared by Professor Ramesh Gehani in his inimitable, engaging style.

Saffron Patch set up a booth at the India Garden to sell samplings of popular Indian snacks and beverages to visitors looking to experience Indian culture. They were sold out twice!!



The India Garden continues to be a destination for many visitors often state that the India Garden is the place to go to, when seeking a time of quiet, peace and introspection.

Kala Art Show

DEBBIE HANSON

Eton Square in Woodmere, Ohio has always been a distinguished venue with specialty shops and beautiful décor. But it never looked as good as it did on September 17, 2017 when the Indian community took over the main hallway with the Kala Art Show. Kala showcases the talent of local Indian influenced artists.

There is so much talent in the Indian community – unknown, underappreciated talent that well-deserved the opportunity to show their creations. Eighteen artists exhibited and sold their art. Paintings, sculpture, photography, jewelry, clothing and even furniture were offered for viewing and purchasing.

There were hundreds of happy people enjoying the camaraderie of meeting their friends there, the beauty of the art work and, the possibility of bringing this beauty into their own homes. An added bonus was the flavors supplied by the food vendors. For a minimum \$5 donation to St. Jude, visitors received

gift bags with coupons for future visits to restaurants but better yet, there were sampling coupons for that day. Participating restaurants Saffron Patch, Taza, Texas de Brazil, Bravo Cuchina Italiana and Trader Joe offered generous samples of foods ranging from Indian food to Lebanese to Brazilian to Italian.

Under the watchful eye of Mona Alag, Margaret Gonsalves, Poonam Punwani, Sumita Kedia and Jazz Mandair, the art show was well organized, fun and inspiring. Most of all it was a successful fundraiser for St. Jude's Children Hospital with donations in excess of \$2400. Indian Artists who are interested in participating in the next Art Show are encouraged to contact the Kala Committee by visiting the Kala website <http://kala.tiuconsulting.com/>

Bravo! Can't wait to see what next year brings.



Kala Art, Gopala Ponnada, 14 year old youngest artist



Artists Sumita Kedia, Santosh Kalhan, Guests Renu Goswami, Latta Varyani.

Subscribe to receive Lotus in your Inbox at: ficacleveland.org





Ashish Patel
Realtor



RE/MAX: The #1 name in Real Estate

Buy or Sell Home in Cleveland

Call me for your Real Estate needs

Cell: 440-728-8875
ashishpatel@remax.net



Bill Starr
Mortgage Loan Originator
NMLS# 697500
p: (216) 239-5818
c: (440) 725-3635
wstarr@ffl.net
FFL.net





RELIGIOUS CORNER

मन्त्र MANTRA

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

A mantra is an invocation, containing one or more sacred syllables like Raam or Shiva. Scriptures, to a great extent, emphasize precision in their intonation.

The popular saying Mantradheenam tu daivatam confirms the belief that when invoked, a particular God or Goddess is obligated to aid the devotees in achieving their rightful wishes. In other words the Devata has no alternative, but to help the devotee if invoked with the proper Mantras.

The etymology of the word Mantra is given in the subsequent verse.

मननात् त्रायते यस्मात् तस्मात्

मन्त्रः पकीरतिः

A Mantra is known as such, since it liberates one upon constant reflection.

Mantra generates brightness and the positive energies of deities are manifest according to the Mantra that is recited. One may not be conscious about these but they are embossed on the subconscious Mind. While one continues to recite, the image of the Devata becomes brighter and brighter within and starts to vibrate in order to fulfill our wishes.

Mantra Yoga is the most straightforward, immediate, secure and sure system for attaining God-realization. It eradicates the contamination of the mind, annihilates sins and brings the devotee face to face with his Ishta Devata or Chosen Deity.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

NIVI ENGINEER

'You Bring the Distant Near' Truly Does

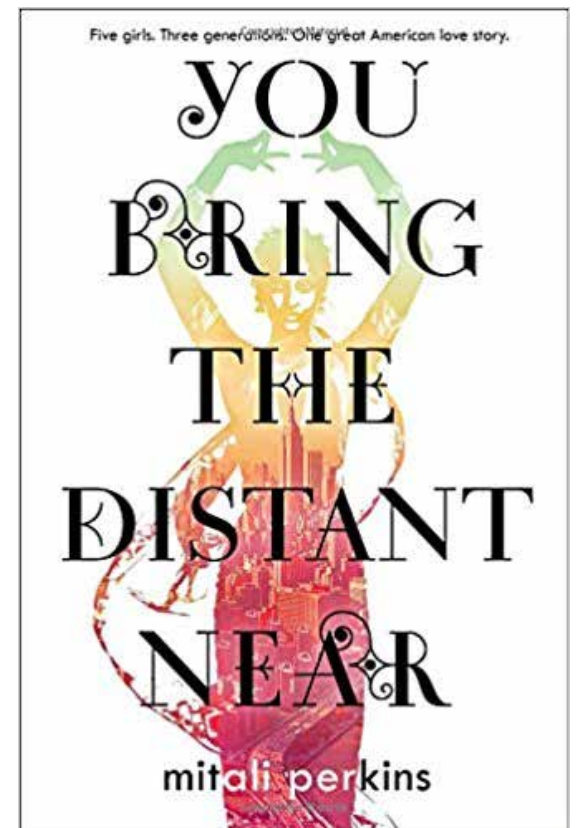
"Five girls. Three generations. One great American love story."

These are the words that grace the cover, a beautiful cover by the way, of Mitali Perkins's latest novel, 'You Bring the Distant Near.' Technically speaking, yes, this is a succinct and accurate description of what this book is about. But really, it's so much more. Five strong female characters narrate this story, which travels around the world, from Ghana to London to New York, Bengal, Bangladesh, and back to New York.

Sonia and Tara are sisters, and we meet them with their mother Ranee first in Ghana and then as the three fly from London to New York to resettle in a new life with their father, who awaits them. Sonia and Tara have distinctly different immigrant experiences—Sonia hides behind books and baggy clothes, while Tara turns to popular culture and dons a new persona in order to fit in.

Time jumps often through this book, and we revisit the sisters at different stages of their lives, getting to understand the people they become. And then we head into the stories of the next generation, to cousins Anna (daughter of Tara) and Chantal/Shanti (daughter of Sonia). Through their eyes we continue to keep tabs on Tara and Sonia, but—as is fitting—the moms are only peripherally present. No, this is the girls' turn. Three chapters are told in Ranee's point of view—at the start, in the middle, and at the end—and they are beautifully done, wonderfully narrating her character arc. Because she does evolve.

Indeed, 'You Bring the Distant Near' boldly confronts a generally unacknowledged truth that Indians can be racist. Hailing from a country with a billion dollar skin-lightening cream industry that was ruled by a British regime that thrived on treating dark-skinned as inferior, is it any wonder that some of that bias seeped its way into the Indian subconscious? I say this not to condone it, nor to judge it, but to draw

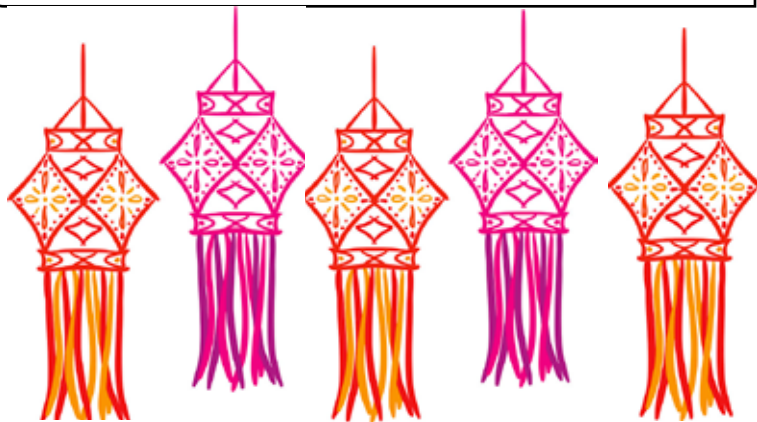


attention to it. I'm so grateful to Perkins for acknowledging and addressing issues of bias and racism that exist among some members of the Indian community so deftly in this book. Questions of identity and home are at the core of this story, and through these five women, Perkins not only presents the problem, but gives us hope that these biases can be overcome.

My only complaint about the book is that it is too short. After spending 313 pages with these ladies, I'm left wanting more. Not that the book was incomplete; rather, they were so rich I didn't want to leave their company.

'You Bring the Distant Near' by Mitali Perkins ought to be required reading. Go get your copy now.

Nivi Engineer is the author of 'The Indian Girl's Definitive Guide to Staying Single'



Volunteer with Shiksha Daan/Give the Gift of Education

1 out of 3 low-income teenagers in Ohio do not graduate from High School, one of the lowest rates in the country. Join us in changing this statistic. Give the gift of education. shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com, www.shikshadaanusa.org

- 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 send a check made out to "FICA – Shiksha Daan" 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.





Calendar of Community Events

FUTURE COMMUNITY EVENTS

ChinmayaCle@gmail.com

Oct. 28, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. North East Ohio Tamil Sangam. Volunteering opportunity at Soup Kitchen, Hopewell Baptist Church, 6403 Linwood Ave., Cleveland, OH 44103. Adults and kids over 5 years of age. RSVP by Oct. 23. Visit neo-ts.org or email to communications@neots.org for registering. 3rd Sunday of every month, Holy Qurbana, Syro Malabar Liturgy, at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, Shaker Square

Oct. 28, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Chinmaya Mission Cleveland invites you to join in a one day workshop on "Beyond Bullying" with three panelists, who will share their knowledge and insights on ways to address "being the bully and being bullied." At: 2121 Snow Parma Rd., Parma, Open to all ages, lunch and refreshments will be provided. Panelists include: Acharya Vivek Gupta, Spiritual Teacher & Public Speaker, Chinmaya Mission; Dr. Parag Merai, M.D. Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Illinois, Madhav Khurana, Social Worker. For registration and payment, go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSczjoBimbhfybXCUjVCxSzVhAa_kXbuD58HnpIsWuYwwyc-vg/viewform or visit www.ChinmayaMissionCleveland.org, or mail volunteers at:

Nov. 5, NEOTS Mega Musical event at Nordonia High School, 12 p.m. with band from India.

Movie playback singers from the maestro Illayaraja troupe will be performing. Please visit www.neo-ts.org

Please send your community events and festivals to: lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com so that they can be printed here

November 14, 2017, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Ohio Asian American Economic Summit presented by Ohio Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council and Ariel International Center. Learn about opportunities for international business between U.S. and Asian countries. Keynote Speaker: Consul General of India, Honorable Sandeep Chakravorty. Location: Ariel International Center, Skyline Lake Room, 1163 East 40th Street, 4th floor, Cleveland, OH 44114. \$25 per person. Go to: <http://www.arielinternationalcenter.com/aic/events.html> to register or call Radhika Reddy, President, Ariel International Center, 216-577-2420 or email: rr@arielventures.com

TELUGU ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

For the first time ever, at NBA Half - Time Performance

Cleveland Cavaliers vs Indiana Pacers

RHYTHMS OF INDIA

Initiative by TANA

Date : Wednesday, November 1st 2017, From 7:00 PM
Venue : Quicken Loans Arena, 1 Center Ct, Cleveland, OH 44115

Our Partners

NEOMM, FICA, ICAGA, and other community organizations.

EVENT ORGANIZERS: Ashok Kolla, Jini Treasures, 270-293-0003; Rama Rao Pongulal, Member, M.V.C., 440-639-4550; Nani Vallamuri, City Coordinator, 314-566-2614

WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS FROM CLEVELAND-AKRON INDIAN COMMUNITY

For the discounted tickets, please contact Ashok Kolla @ 270-293-0003



ARIEL INTERNATIONAL CENTER - SKYLINE LAKE ROOM & ROOFTOP



Amazing views of the Cleveland Skyline and Lake Erie. Recently renovated 100 year old rustic historic red brick building with large windows, elegant chandeliers, and high ceiling for a memorable wedding, bar/bat mitzvah, corporate and non-profit events, retreats, seats up to 350 people, rooftop seats up to 280. Call Radhika Reddy 216-344-9441 Email: rr@arielventures.com Address: 1163 E. 40th Street, Cleveland, OH 44114 www.arielinternationalcenter.com

