



PATRIKA



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Annual Ball and Fundraiser Provides Record-Breaking Support

by Rani Kokate

Our 19th Annual Ball and Fundraiser was held on Feb 28th at the Sheraton Hotel in Mahwah. With over 400 people in attendance, we are proud of the large turnout of support, but also a bit sentimental to have outgrown the temple's community center, the location for years past. The evening was a great success with a night full of entertainment that also included a red carpet entrance, silent auction and delicious food catered by Benares. Kicking off the evening's official festivities was comedian and Master of Ceremonies, Dan Nainan. Nainan's performance centered on his experiences and background as a half Indian half Japanese man. Mitan Ghosh, fashion designer, followed up with a fashion show of Indian designs. Sunita Kapur and DJ Sanjay Gera got the evening into full swing by getting people onto the dance floor. A new tradition was started this year. For the first



time, the temple honored two individuals who have made significant contributions in their respective fields. Nandita Bakhshi, Head of Consumer Banking for TD Bank and Dr. Subhash Jain, distinguished pain management physician and leader in the Indian-American community are the first recipients of this award.. We are very proud that the event raised over \$200,000, an amazing feat which could not have been possible without the support and contribution of the entire community. As preparations begin for the mandir's 20th anniversary next year, the committee is looking forward to the community's support in helping celebrate this milestone event.



Carnival of Colors Celebrates Holi and Arrival of Spring

by Preet Hooda

On Saturday, March 28th, the Community Center Committee organized the 7th Carnival of Colors event celebrating Holi and the arrival of spring. Over 700 people attended this jam packed day for arts and crafts, face painting, tattoo, henna, magic show, bounce house and balloon making. Food which was cooked by volunteers saw lines and lines of families coming for second helping. By the early afternoon, the skies cleared and children's face lit up as we prepared for color playing. The committee thanks the many volunteers who donated their talent and time for this huge event. Thanks to families who came, and to volunteers, young and old who gave their enormous time to us.



Hindu Samaj: 2014 Highlights

By Tamseela Tayyabkhan

RELIGIOUS EVENTS

In the spirit of unity, all major religious events were celebrated drawing from the traditions of all parts of India. We had nine days of Puja with GANESH JI carved out of butter and HIS visarjan in the Ganga Sagar pond with hundreds in the procession; Balloons and lights filled the Temple on Krishna Janamashtami; Maha Shiv Ratri was celebrated with great devotion throughout the day and night; Ram Navumi infused with devotional bhajans for Sai Baba ji; Auspicious Jain Celebrations of Mahavir Jayanti; Celebration of Durga Puja with the pious sounds invoking the rhythms of North and South with nine days of Garba attended by over 3,500 devotees; new Darbar for Ayyappa ji constructed by a devotee; over half dozen devotees making fresh flower garlands every week all tell a story of our growth and our commitment of respect for all. Family sponsored Sunday Pujas followed by Langar Prasad for all bringing the community together as a family. Over 6,000 meals were prepared and served with devotion and love by over 60 volunteers organized in six groups: Ganaga, Yamuna, Kaveri, Saraswati, Godavari and Satluj share a story of the joy of service and camaraderie that very few can tell.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Hundreds of families came to celebrate Holi and Diwali programs. The bright colors of Holi made the children look like flowers , and for the first time in our history fire works lit up the sky at the Diwali Mela. Karva Chauth festivities were attended by over 600 ladies throughout the afternoon and evening.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Construction of five additional class rooms was completed to accommodate the increase in our student body from 100 to 275. There are now a total of 15 instructional programs run weekly by 20 dedicated teachers. Construction within 3,600 sq. feet of unfinished space is now complete with a performance stage for multipurpose use dedicated to THE INDIA HERITAGE CENTER. Five TV screens have been installed in the main entrance of the Temple. These monitors recognize the cumulative donations of each and every donor since our inception in 1996, announce upcoming religious, cultural and social events, and recognize our active volunteers. In 2015, to ease access in bad weather, we need to raise dedicated funds to cover the front entrance and elevator access path with canopies.

MANAGEMENT

An inclusive democratic management structure was implemented. All committees were restructured with the goal of encouraging new leadership through broad based participation. Strict protocols of financial controls and transparency were engaged under the supervision of three CPA's on the Finance and Audit Committee.

DONATIONS, LOANS & MORTGAGE

Compared with total donations of \$537,058 in 2013, donations in 2014 increased to \$731,832. Our monthly expenses, not including any capital spending (\$33,465 in 2014), are approximately \$50,000 including mortgage payment. A total of 961 individuals donated by check and several hundred others gave cash deposited in the Temple donation boxes. We paid down \$138,490 of our Bank loan and the current balance is 3.8 million. In addition, interest free loans from members given seven years ago were reduced by \$47,000. Hindu Samaj owes these members \$609,000. In the collective Hindu Samaj spirit of cooperation, we urge each one of you to donate and/or provide interest free loans to discharge our debt to share this responsibility.

WE THANK YOU FOR THE CONTINUED FAITH AND TRUST YOU HAVE BESTOWED IN OUR TEMPLE AND WE SALUTE YOU FOR BEING A CRITICAL PART OF THE HINDU SAMAJ NARRATIVE

Salute to Our Volunteers: Karma Yogis of Our Hindu Samaj

by Dinesh Khosla (text of comments at the Annual Gala)

One day Lord Krishna, the greatest Karma Yogi in history, was sad and stressed out. Every one around him was worried. They tried to engage him in a conversation but he would not open up. Sadness surrounded. In desperation they called Mata Devki & Yashodha for help. They sat him down and said “O’ Makhan Chor”, O’ naughty one, are you missing not eating butter which your doctors have taken away from you. A faint smile crossed Krishna’s lips.

Innocence of childhood, one without the ego of self, and simple joy flashed in his eyes. After a brief pause Krishna said, “ I hear that there are very few Karma Yogi’s left on earth; very few who give without any expectations. I really want to know the truth. Give me the names of some people whose observations I can rely on. And, if they confirm what I have heard, I will then have to return to human life and teach humanity the beauty of selfless giving, once again.

Dozens of names were given to Krishna by his advisors. He picked three: Poet Walt Whitman ; Kahlil Gibran for his imagination and; Mahatma Gandhi for his ability to cut thru the chase and his enormous capacity to engage in action and speak the simple truth.

Brilliant IT specialist arranged a conference call across space & time. Affectionately calling Mahatma Gandhi, Krishna said, Mohan Daas, please take Kahlil and Walt with you and give me a report on whether or not the Karma Yogi’s are disappearing from earth. Three of them descended on the earth, visiting every continent and every country. They were not discouraged by what they saw. There were Karma Yogi’s in every continent, even though the number was small. Then, before finishing their study, they decided to visit one last place. They came to Mahwah, nestled in the Ramapo Valley Ridges and surrounded by Ramapo River.

They saw that in the spirit of unity, all major religious events were being celebrated drawing from the great traditions of all parts of India; Ganesh Ji carved out of butter and his Visarjan in the Ganga Sagar Pond with hundreds in the procession, “Makhan Chor” Krishna’s birth celebration with balloons, lights and “MAKHAN CHOR sandwiches; Shiva’s dance on Maha Shiv Rati; Bala ji’s wedding procession and devotional singing for Lord Rama; worship of Bhagwan Jain and Sai Baba; Durga riding the lion with pious bhajans and Garba dances by over 3500 devotees; a devotee building a New Darbar for Ayyappa Ji.

They saw, half a dozen women, making garlands of fresh flowers to adorn the Gods. Congregations of 100/200 people every Sunday; Over 60 volunteers organized as Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri, Saraswati, Godavari and Satluj lovingly cooking and serving Prasad. Over 20 dedicated teachers teaching dance and music, culture and languages, chess and above all respect to nearly 275 children. They saw weddings with horses and drums. They saw weddings of couples drawn from different religious faiths. They witnessed baby showers and mothers of newborns lovingly feeding the first grain of rice to the babies with different hues of colors. They saw oneness despite multiple colors, creeds and diversity.

They observed festivities of Holi & Diwali; bright colors of Holi making children look like rainbows and multicolored flowers. They saw fire works lighting up the sky. They heard lawyers helping the legally needy. They saw a group of volunteers starting to build the museum of Indian Journey preserving our arrival, assimilation and achievements in the USA. They loved the idea that while preserving our heritage we were becoming one with our new home.

Kahlil Gibran, Walt Whitman and Mahatma Gandhi sat down to evaluate. They all felt that while not perfect, the energy and desire to do more permeated this sacred institution. Respect, celebration of diversity and joy of service provided the incense that burns there. They all noticed that there was not one leader but every volunteer was a leader in her or his own right. This is what they wrote about us in their report.

Kahlil Gibran: “ I saw tears of joy and laughter”, he said. Then he observed : “Wisdom ceases to be wisdom when it becomes too proud to weep; too grave to laugh; too selfish to seek other than itself. I saw the virtue of selflessness, conquering pride and guarding against meanness & jealousy. I saw selfless volunteers serving without any expectations to be served in return”.

Walt Whitman, said, “ No one was lecturing, no one was doing a little charity. What I saw was people giving, giving themselves fully “

Mahatma Gandhi, nodding his head said, “Yes, I also saw service rendered with joy. He then went on and said O’ Makhan Chor Krishna, you LIVE in these volunteers. They are you. Do not worry. The world is better because of them. Go eat your butter and send your grace to the Karma Yogi’s of Mahwah.

On behalf of our Hindu Samaj, I salute all the volunteers who are selflessly helping us create a great institution for our community.

Interested in Submitting to Patrika? Please contact us at abhiseth@gmail.com

Mahavir Janamkalyanak Celebrations

by Rakesh Chhabra

We had very memorable Mahavir Janamkalyanak celebrations in the Man-



dir on April 5th from 10 am to 2pm. Eight children from the pathshala under direction of Purviben Sheth started the event with Namokar Mantra, Mangalam and 14 dreams. More than 100 devotees took part in the Snatra Puja, Bhajans, Shanti Kalash, Aarti and Swami Vatsalya. The Snatra Puja was performed under the guidance of Rameshbhai Jain of Queens and the Swami Vatsalya was sponsored by Sunilji Golia. I would like to thank everyone for coming to this event and helping in making it so successful.

Ram Navmi

by Kusuma Gadi, Anand Bhai Patel and Dilip Subhedar

Ram Navmi, celebrated this year on March 28th, was the concluding event of the "CHAITRA NAVRATRI" observed for Nine days at the temple. These nine nights are considered very auspicious to worship and do "sadhanas" dedicated to all the "Devis" particularly Durga Maa. The weeklong "Chaitra Navratri" started off with MATA ki CHAUKI attended by over 200 devotees participating in the Durga Puja and the beautiful Bhajans and Kirtans. Later during the week the priests performed different Poojas including Brahamacharini Pooja, Saubhagya Teej, and Durga Abhishek. This year Ram Navmi was blended with Shirdi Sai Baba Abhishek and the Festival of Colors. While the Community center was buzzing with children activities, the temple observed day long religious activities.



The Sai devotees performed the usual four Aartis and SAI Abhishek. This was particularly significant as SAI BABA had started the tradition of celebrating Ram Navmi in Shirdi in a big way and to unite all the people at that time. Our own temple has a similar mission to bring all the people together of all faiths to come together and have a place to pray and meditate. Pt. Shuklaji started of the day with a discourse and reading of several verses from the Ramayan pertaining to the birth of LORD RAMA and then culminating in Ram Abhishek at noon. This was followed by Prasad prepared and served by Anandbhai Patel. The highlight of the day was a "SITA RAM KALYANAM" and "PATTABHISHEK" beautifully performed for the first time in our temple by PT Natrajan Ji. The beautifully decorated

wedding mandapam and the "alankar" of the SITA RAM DIVYA DAMPATIS was a blissful experience enjoyed by over 300 devotees. This was followed by Mahaprasadam prepared and served by SAI Volunteers. In order to make fun for the children already gathered for the HOLI festival, SAI volunteer, Dr. Dilip Subhedar quizzed a few children about Ramayan via a Power point presentation and gave out Ramayan Activity books.

Lord Ayyappa Celebrations

by Vasantha Ambat

In accordance with the tradition observed at the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala India, over one hundred



Lord Ayyappa devotees gathered on January 15th at the Ayyappaji Darbar to attend Makara Jyothi Celebrations and lighted the holy Eighteen steps. Priest Natarajan Ji performed the special Abhishekam, Alankaram, Neeranjanam and Archana. Devotees participated in the devotional bajans and enjoyed food prasadam. The Monthly puja for Ayyappaji is held at the Mandir on the Third Saturday of every month at 6:00 pm.

Temple Seeking Volunteers for Religious Committee

The Temple Administration of Hindu Samaj Mandir is seeking VOLUNTEERS to serve on the RELIGIOUS COMMITTEE (RC).

The requirements are:

- Genuine and passionate interest in the Religious Activities of the Temple. Volunteers should bring new ideas for pujas, sadhanas, seva and other programs for the various deities in the Temple.
- Willingness to be assigned to be in charge of any one Divya- Dampatis or Dieties based on interest.
- Must be members of Hindu Samaj Mandir
- Must attend at least 50% of the Religious Committee Meetings (about 10 per year) and participate actively and in the main Religious events.
- Must help out, participate and attend at least 50% of the main temple religious events.
- Willing to offer suggestions and work closely with the three Co Chairs of the Committee



Please send in your desire to Volunteer by May 15th 2015 to the Chair of the RC, Mr. A.P. Sankaran at apsankaran@hotmail.com cc Dinesh Khosla at dkhosla49@gmail.com

To serve the Divya-Dampatis and the temple is our privilege and Bhagyam. We are grateful and thank you for your continued support to the Hindu Samaj Mandir.

Shri Sethji Memorial Chess Tournament to be held on May 31, 2015

The Chess Tournament for all the children (about 40) in our Chess classes will be held on May 31, 2015. We are delighted to announce that the tournament has been dedicated to the memory of our Hindu Samaj's founder Shri Suresh Seth who was a strong advocate of youth development programs at the temple. It was his dream to encourage our children to be the most exemplary citizens of America. His ever welcoming embrace and smiling face is part of our memory. Even in his absence, he continues to encourage us to do "service with shradha" and help build our children's talents and character. Thanks to the efforts Sethji initiated, we now have over 275 children actively participating in various classes at the temple. In his honor, we have named this tournament as the "Shri Sethji Memorial Chess Tournament". For more information contact Preet Hooda at pmhooda@yahoo.com

Give with faith, and never without faith.
Give with dignity. Give with humility. Give with joy.
And give with understanding of the effects of your gift.

-Taittiriya Upanishad