

**Regional Indian American Community Center (RIACC)
Hall of Worship and Amy Community Center**

Non Profit, Tax Exempt Organization 501 c(3) [Tax ID: 62-1497843]
PO Box 411, Kingsport, TN-37662

Tel No: (423) 349-6515 • Email: how@riacc.us • Website: <http://www.riacc.us>

Quarterly Newsletter [October-December 2006]

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423-288-8471

Dr. Ashok Mehta
423-854-8997

Dear Community Members,

Seasons Greetings! We wanted to acknowledge how grateful we are for you. It's easy in the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life to forget what is truly important such as stopping to pick up the phone to just say "thanks for being you"!

This is a season of celebration and thanksgiving; some celebrate Hanukkah, the festival of lights commemorating religious freedom. While other celebrate Christmas and give thanks for the birth of Jesus Christ.

God is so gracious and their graciousness is reflected through you. Your continued acts of service and friendship in our lives are beyond measure. We thank you once again for being a great example of the true meaning of giving. You have truly made a unique and positive impact in our community resulting in a better place to live.

As we embark on a new year we ask God's hand and favor to be upon you as you move into a prosperous and joy-filled 2007.

Thanks again for being you,

Anil Kumar Agrawal, Chairman, Board of Trustees, RIACC

First RIACC Golf Tournament - Grand Success

The first annual golf tournament held on Sunday October 29th, 2006 at Crockett Ridge Golf Course was a grand success. We had total of 33 golfers that participated in this tournament. The winning team shot 9 under par. The members of this team were Gopal Vimber, Neal Delwadia and Dinkar Patel. The longest drive (320 yards) was won by Gopal Vimber; the closest to the pins were won by Rajni Patel and Dinkar Patel. The circular saw was won by Gopal Vimber and the tool set was won by Neal Delwadia.

On behalf of RIACC Board of Trustee's, Executive Committee and Hall of Worship I would like to thank everyone for playing, sponsoring the dinner, sponsoring the holes and providing the goodies to go in the bags.

Please let us know your suggestions for our second annual golf tournament.

Ashok Gala, Board of Trustees, RIACC

Welcome Priest - Sri Surendra Kumar Mishra

Our search for a priest has ended! Sri Surendra Kumar Mishra is expected to arrive on January 20th. Details around his welcome program and more information will be sent by email. He will be here on a contract for one year. He is expected to perform rituals at HOW and a plan for his availability to perform rituals at individual homes is being worked out.

Surendra Kumar is a native of Varanasi, UP, India. He has 10 years experience in Karmkand and Worship; 10 years experience in Hindu Dharma Shastra Vakhyan. His marital status is unmarried. He has received his Shastri (B.A), Acharya (M.A.) and Research (PhD) degrees from Sampurnanand Sanskrit University.

Surendra Kumar has agreed to come a long way from home to serve this community. Do make him feel welcome and help him get acquainted with the area.

Thank YOU for making this possible.

2007 Annual Membership Form on the last page of this newsletter

2007 Programs

Date	Program	Time	Food
Mon, Jan 01	Ganesh Pooja - Rama Gupta	11:00am	Pot-luck
Wed Jan 03	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Jan 14	Makar Sakranti/Welcome Priest (tentative)	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Jan 21	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Tue Jan 23	Vasant Pachmi (if Priest comes)	TBD	No Meal
Sun Jan 28	Republic Day/Vishnu Sahastranam	11:00am	No Meal
Fri Feb 02	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Feb 11	General Body Meeting/Election	11:00am	Pot-luck
Fri Feb 16	Maha Shivratri	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Feb 18	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Sat Mar 03	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha/Holi	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Mar 18	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Tue Mar 20	Ugadi	TBD	No Meal
Tue Mar 27	Ram Navmi / Sunderkand Path	TBD	Pot-luck
Sun Apr 01	Mahavir Jayanti/Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	11am	Pot-luck
Wed Apr 04	Hanuman Jayanti	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Apr 15	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Wed May 02	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sat May 12	HOW Anniversary	TBD	No Meal
Sun May 13	HOW Anniversary	TBD	No Meal
Sun May 20	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Fri Jun 01	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Jun 17	Fathers Day/Sunderkand Path	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Jul 01	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Jul 15	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Sun Jul 29	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sat Aug 04	RIACC Picnic	3:30pm	Snacks
Sun Aug 12	Guest Speaker/Independence Day	11:00am	No Meal
Sun Aug 19	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Sun Aug 26	Vishnu Sahastranam - Tentative Golf Tournament	11:00am	No Meal
Tue Aug 28	Poornima/Satyanarayan Katha/Raksha Bandhan	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Sep 02	Krishna Janmashtami/Bhajan	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Sep 09	Bhagvad Gita discussion - Tentative Golf Tournament	11:00am	No Meal
Sat Sep 15	Ganesh Chaturthi	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Sep 16	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Wed Sep 26	Poornima/Satyanaryan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Oct 14	General Body Meeting	11:00am	Pot-luck
Thur Oct 18	Garba Raas/Durga Pooja	TBD	Pot-luck
Sun Oct 21	Dashera Pooja/Doll Display	11:00am	Pot-luck
Fri Oct 26	Sharad Poornima/Satyanaryan Katha	6:30pm	Pot-luck
Sun Oct 28	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Mon Oct 29	Karva Chauth	5:00pm	No Meal
Fri Nov 09	Diwali Laxmi Pooja	5:30pm	No Meal
Sun Nov 11	Annakoot	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Nov 18	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Sun Nov 25	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	11:00am	Pot-luck
Sun Dec 16	Sunderkand Path	10:30am	Pot-luck
Sun Dec 23	Poornima - Satyanarayan Katha	11:00am	Pot-luck

Following are the standard Sunday Programs each month, unless a special program is scheduled for the same day:

1st Sunday - Bhagvad Gita Discusson led by Raji Suresh * 2nd Sunday - Guest Speaker *

3rd Sunday - Sunderkand Path led by Rama Gupta * 4th Sunday - Vishnu Sahastranam

All programs are subject to change—email updates will be sent out in case of any change!

Email Updates: If you would like to receive email updates on HOW activities, please submit your email address to how@riacc.us.

Young Local Athletes win College Scholarship Award

11 year old Marsha Girish won the first place in cross country race at the Tulip Time scholarship Games held by the Children's Better Health Institute, Indianapolis, IN recently. Also, she won the first place in a Golf competition, helping her win a \$5,000 college scholarship award in total. The Tulip Time Scholarship Games is an annual event held at the Fitness Farm which is operated by the Children's Better Health Institute, a division of the Benjamin Franklin Literary & Medical Society. Children from four to twelve come from all over the country to compete in all different scholarship contests, in this annual competition.



Adding more feathers to Marsha's cap, she was a winner of Daughter of the American Revolution American history essay contest chapter winner and her essay about hobbies got published in Duke University TIPS newsletter. She has been a travelogue writer for www.daijiworld.com and some of her write-ups have been blogged by other well known websites.

This summer, during her visit to India, with the help of dual citizenship introduced by the Indian government recently, she competed in a Karnataka state swim meet. She won a silver medal in 50 meter backstroke and a bronze medal in 100 meter backstroke in a state level swim meet and represented Karnataka state in a national level. She got a bronze medal in a national level meet in 50 meter backstroke.

Marsha's brother Vivek, who is 6 years old won 1st place in Golf competition, also winning \$2,500 college scholarship award at the Tulip scholarship games. Also he was a silver and bronze medal winner of Tennessee state regional level TaeKwon-Do competition. While Marsha is a swimmer at Barracuda swim club, Vivek is a junior red belt holder at the Evers TaeKwonDo Academy. They both are students at St. Mary's Catholic school, Johnson City.

Dipti Singh, O.D. at Bristol Family Eye-Care, Wal-Mart Center in Bristol

At Bristol Family Eye-Care we offer the highest standard of eye care for you and your family

Our services go beyond writing a prescription. We do comprehensive eye exams, identify if you have special risks that need to be addressed, assist in detecting eye diseases, take your health history and lifestyle into consideration

Dipti Singh, O.D.

Education and Credentials

Dr. Singh received her Doctor of Optometry degree from Southern College of Optometry in 2001. She has completed a Residency in Primary Care Optometry at James H. Quillen VAMC in 2002. She has been an active member in the American Optometric Association for 8 years and Northeast Tennessee Optometric Association for 5 years.

Dr Singh is a strong advocate for patient education and prevention, particularly for common medical conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer) and children's long term vision (for example, lazy eye, squinting).

Address: 220 Century Blvd, Bristol, TN-37620. Conveniently located inside Wal-Mart on Volunteer Parkway near Bristol Motor Speedway

Telephone Numbers: (423) 968-3626 or (423) 989-3937

Office Hours: Tue - 9AM - 5PM * Thu - 11AM - 7PM * Sat - 9AM - 2PM

*****Come in for an eye exam with this advertisement and 10% will be donated to HOW*****

King Shibi's Justice* - Jay B. Mehta

Long time ago, there was a king named Shibi. He was a noble king who believed in justice for all. This is the story of a time when birds could talk.

Once he was walking on the terrace of his palace. Suddenly a tiny sparrow fell at his feet: "Help me, O king!" cried the bird. "Save me from the big bird, an Eagle is attacking me." King held the tiny bird and reassured her. "Fear not, I will protect you" declared the king. Sparrow was wounded. King washed her wounds. The bird felt better.

Few minutes later the big eagle arrived and landed on the terrace floor: "Mighty king! Please release that sparrow. It is my prey."

"I have promised her my protection" the king replied.

"What about my food? I am your subject too! Who will protect me from starvation?" the Eagle argued his case.

King Shibi believed in justice. He started thinking. Then said, "how about some meat from the market and I give you the meat equal to the weight of this sparrow?"

"So some other bird will die for this bird?" eagle asked.

King thought for a while and decided to cut a piece of flesh from his thigh. It would be weighed against the weight of the tiny sparrow and given to the eagle.

As the king was about to cut his own body, the eagle turned into an angle of Dharma.

Wise angle of Dharma said: "O! king I admire your sense of duty but tell me, is your kindness greater than the law of nature?"

**Modified from an ancient text*

Our heart-felt gratitude to our Donors in 2006

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Please accept our apologies if you have donated in 2006 and your name doesn't appear in the list. Send us an email at how@riacc.us, we will publish corrections in the next newsletter.

Makar Sankranti - Mid-Winter Festival

(Source: Makar Sankranti, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Makar_Sankranti&oldid=98869518)

Makar Sankranti is a mid-winter festival of India and Nepal. The day celebrates the northward journey of the Sun. Makar Sankranti is celebrated all over India and Nepal with some regional variations.

In North India: Punjab- Lohri • West Bengal and Assam - Bhogali Bihu • Gujarat and Rajasthan - Uttarayan (Kite flying festival)

In South India: Kerala and Tamil Nadu - Pongal • Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh - Sankranthi

In Nepal: Tharu people - Maghi

Many Melas or fairs are held on Makar Sankranti the most famous being the Kumbh Mela, held every 12 years at one of four holy locations, namely Haridwar, Prayag (Allahabad), Ujjain and Nadiad. The Magh Mela (or mini-Kumbh Mela held annually at Prayag) and the Gangasagar Mela (held at the head of the Ganges River, where it flows into the Bay of Bengal).

Makar Sankranti falls on January 14 on non-leap years and on January 15 on leap years. It is the only Hindu festival which is based on the Solar calendar rather than the Lunar calendar. The day is a holiday in the state of Gujarat.

Kite flying festival - the festival is celebrated by the flying of kites in most of northern India. Kites are flown for most of the day in the region. The objective of this sport is to cut as many rival kites as possible to attain air superiority. Additionally, a cut kite may be also picked up by another kite giving the collector a free kite. The diamond shaped kites come in various designs. The thread, known as manja is sharpened with finely crushed glass pieces. The season also is perfect for spending a day in a sun. The season is windy, making it ideal for kite flying. At night special lantern kites with candles embedded are flown which give the skies an eerie feeling.

In Maharashtra, when two Maharashtrians greet each other or visit each other during Makar Sankranti, they exchange Tilache Ladoo - a special sweet made for this day. When they give the ladoo to an elder they do namaskar and say "til gul ghya, ani god god bola" (let us be sweet to each other and let friendship prevail between us). Til or sesame seeds is one of the important ingredients in this festival. The married ladies in Maharashtra arrange "haldi kum kum", an auspicious religious get together by way of which they call upon their friends and relatives and distribute sweets and gifts.

In Gujarat and Rajasthan, Uttarayan, also known as Makarsankranti, is a kite-flying festival celebrated annually on January 14 in western India; it is a public holiday in Gujarat and Rajasthan. According to the Indian astronomy, Uttarayan is the day when the Sun moves to the northern hemisphere ("Uttara" means north, and "-yana" means to go). This day also is celebrated as Pongal in southern India.

The kites used are prepared from thin paper and crafted carefully using bamboo sticks. Kite-making businesses usually employ Muslims, who are known for their kite-making ability. The thread used to make kites airborne is specially prepared using "lugdi" and cotton thread, coated with a mix of adhesive and fine glass powder that is dried over time. Thread prepared in cities of Surat and Bareilly is famous for its durability.

In Gujarat, kite flying is considered an art. Kite fighting is a traditional Uttarayan activity: the kite flyer must keep his kite aloft while others attempt to sever his thread using their own kites. When someone wins the kite fight, his group celebrates with cheerful shouts and drum beatings. It is a common scene to see people play music, dance and socialize freely.

Traditionally, the men folk do the flying and women hold the "Firki" meaning the spool of thread by standing behind the man. They also tie the thread on the kites and keep them ready for the man for unending kite flying session where the sky has turned into a battlefield and neighbors are enemies. But now the trend has changed and women and young girls also do the flying.

Traditionally, undhiyu (a mix of vegetables and green beans) and puri are served on the festival. Other traditional snacks include chikki (a sweet peanut bar) and fruits like berries and guava.

Once the sun sets, people watch can watch lanterns called Tukkal, flying. The day's winning kite is flown as Chinese lanterns are tied with thread. Today, celebrators also enjoy loud music and firecrackers in the evening.

The Indus Valley Civilization - G S Kumar

The Indus Valley Civilization, better known as Mohenjo Daro and Harappa once flourished and then disappeared around 700 BC. One hears of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and of the Greek and other civilizations but far less is known of this remarkable civilization that existed in the Indian sub-continent.

Recent excavations have shown that this civilization existed as far back as 3300 BC. It was the size of Texas and reached from the Rann of Kutch in the Arabian sea to the Himalayan foothills, and then down and east to New Delhi. Five cities in the Indus Valley have been discovered: Mohenjo Daro, Harappa and Ganveriwala which are now in Pakistan, and Rakhigarh and Dholavira which are now in India.

Archaeologists Richard Meadow of Harvard University and Mark Kenoyer of the University of Wisconsin continued their work in this harsh environment where temperatures touched 110 degrees in summer. The two of them have filled gaps in our knowledge of this era and enabled us to know more about the Indus culture. Information in this article has been abstracted from National Geographic of June 2000.

Two aspects of this civilization are especially noteworthy. One is that influential persons of this bygone era like the kings and rich merchants were not intent on showing off their riches. They didn't build impressive tombs like the pyramids of Egypt or the Parthenon in Greece or magnificent temples. Archaeologists wonder if the civilization even had an army. Harappans believed that if you were a rich merchant you did not have to build a huge palace to impress other elite. Instead, you displayed a beautiful little sculpture that people saw when they came over for dinner. Finds testify that the civilization had no shortage of good craftsmen.

The second aspect that is worth mentioning is that the archaeologists have learned a lot by just looking around the place they excavated. Things haven't changed very much since then. Charred kernels prove that they also had wheat and barley. Crops still important today in the region. A number of terra-cotta tokens unearthed from this valley and small seals, usually of stone, bear resemblance to aspects of life found to this day. For example, archaeologists have found a small terra cotta elephant's head painted white and red colors. Indian mahouts use similar colors on elephants to this day.

Humped Zebu bulls depicted in some of the seals are still used in farming. Some scenes on the tokens show figures under arches of pipal leaves. The figures are probably deities. This Indus symbolism survives. Pipal is a symbol of fertility and protection in the Hindu mythology. The rising bow and rudder of a boat shown in terra-cotta tokens resemble the vessels playing in the Indus valley to this day. Dried animal dung is used in a kiln to make bricks, just as was done 45 centuries ago.

Archaeologists have counted more than 400 different symbols inscribed in seals and broken pieces of pots. However, most inscriptions are just about five symbols long-- not much to enable one to decipher them. This is probably one reason why more is not known about this remarkable civilization. Also no one can say for sure why this long-lived civilization came to an end. Some suspect an invasion from central Asia, others suspect unruly rivers causing floods, and still others attribute it to some epidemic or disease.

More is not known also because the British railway engineers removed the ruins in the area to use as ballast for railroad track.

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Phone Number: 423 - 926 - 7799

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RIACC Hall of Worship and Amy Community Center
 Non Profit, Tax Exempt Organization (501 c (3)) [Tax ID: 62-1497843]
 PO Box 411, Kingsport, TN-37662

Tel No: (423) 349-6515 ▪ Email: how@riacc.us ▪ Internet: <http://www.riacc.us>

RIACC Hall of Worship and Amy Community Center Membership Form - 2007

<i>Last Name</i>	
<i>Husband's Name</i>	
<i>Wife's Name</i>	
<i>Address</i>	
<i>Email Address</i>	
<i>Telephone (Home)</i>	
<i>Telephone (Work)</i>	

- Everyone is requested to pay the annual **\$100** Membership/Maintenance Fee
- Additional Pledge \$_____ monthly/yearly for general fund
- Donate \$_____ towards the expansion of the dining hall (est. cost \$150,000)
- **Volunteer Opportunities:**

I/We can help RIACC in the following areas (Circle your choices):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Food/Kitchen | Building Maintenance / Property Care |
| Cultural and Religious Programs | Spiritual Education |
| Fundraising | Youth Education and Programs |
| Communications (newsletter, emails etc) | Website Management / Database |
| Library Development | Alankaar / Dress for Deities |
| Open temple for a month | Other (Specify): |

- **Feedback/Suggestions for Improvement - this will help us serve you better!**

Please mail this form with your check to RIACC, PO Box 411, Kingsport, TN-37662
 by **March 31st, 2007**

Thank you, RIACC Executive Committee



Welcome new members of the community!

Pranav Krishna Arumugam, March 7th, 2006

son of Jayshree and Bhaskar Arumugam.

Sumer Raj Malhotra, May 31st, 2006

son of Priyanka and Amit Malhotra.

Selena Preeti Bakshi, September 3rd, 2006

daughter of Rushmie and Mandeep Bakshi.

Devan Om Shah, August 16th, 2006

son of Dimple and Binoy Shah.

Maheka Bhalla, September 12th, 2006

daughter of Supria and Mohit Bhalla.

Directions to the Hall of Worship:

From Johnson City - Take I-181 (I-26) towards Kingsport. Take Exit 49 (Rock Springs Exit). Take a left on the RAMP and see below

From Kingsport: Take I-181 towards Johnson City. Take exit 49 (Rock Springs Exit). Take a Right on the RAMP and see below

Drive about quarter of a mile and make a left turn on to Westfield Road, immediately after the Power building. Drive about half a mile and keep right on the fork onto Westfield place, the third building on the left is Hall of Worship.