



INDIA COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL CENTER, INC. (ICRCC)

A non-profit organization founded in 1984

P.O. BOX 387 DEWITT, NY 13214

<http://www.icrcc.org>

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May 2017 Newsletter

What's in this issue?

1. President's Message (*Joseph Kappil*); Membership Request
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9. ICRCC Board and Permanent Members

Upcoming Event Summary

When	What	Where	Who (Coordinator)	Additional Notes
May 13, Saturday, 3PM	Spring Festival	Wellwood School, 700 S Manlius St, Fayetteville, NY 13066	Frvora@yahoo.com	Canned food collection for Food Bank of CNY.
June 17, Saturday, 7PM	Music Program	Jamesville Fire Station, 6661 E. Seneca Tpke. (Rte. 173), Jamesville, NY 13078 (Tentative)	mohan@syr.edu	Mrs. Astha Shukla (NJ) will be singing Ghazals & semi-classical songs
Aug. 13	Picnic	Saw Mill Shelter at Onondaga Park, Liverpool, NY	sanjeev.kumar@prudential.com	
Sep.29-30 & Oct.6-7	Garba		kishorkanabar@gmail.com	
Oct. 29	Diwali	Holiday Inn, 441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool		

Information on events is listed on our website, at <http://www.icrcc.org/culturalprograms.html>

Please attend and participate!

Message from the ICRCC President

Dear Community Members,

We welcome a new member, Hitesh Patel, to the ICRCC Board, and thank Amisha Patel for her previous service on the Board. In addition, we welcome Shweta Karikehalli who will join Chilukuri Mohan in editing future issues of the newsletter.

Our next major annual event is the Spring Festival, **Wellwood School**, 700 S Manlius St, Fayetteville, NY 13066, at **3PM** on **May 13 (Saturday)**.

Please participate and enjoy!

We invite members of the younger generation in the community to write about their India trips, travel experiences, voluntary work or in general the changing face of India with the electronic revolution. The first such article appears in this issue!

We have added seven more regular members recently.
Thank you for your commitment and trust!

Sincerely,
Joseph Kappil

Become a Member!

If you are not yet a member, Please join us. Regular Membership is (\$50/Family and \$30/Single)

Permanent category is: Family Membership: \$1000; Single Person: \$750.

You may pay online: <http://www.icrcc.org/membership.html> or Mail a check to:

ICRCC, PO Box 387, Dewitt, NY 13214.

If you have any questions, please contact the membership committee:

Shridevi Karikehalli (Coordinator): shridilip@hotmail.com

Joseph Kappil joekappil@gmail.com

Falguni Vora frvora@yahoo.com

Deepal Shah shahdeepalr@gmail.com

ICRCC is a Not-for-Profit Corporation under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your contribution to the Permanent Member Fund may be tax deductible. Kindly check with your tax advisor.

Spring Festival: Be there!

Falguni Vora

ICRCC is holding our annual Spring Festival celebration on **May 13** at Wellwood Middle School (700 S Manlius St, Fayetteville, NY 13066). The event will start at 3:30 PM. We have a fantastic lineup of assorted items presented by talented members of local community. There are classical, Bollywood and folk dances in addition to a skit, singing, and instrumental music. This will be followed by dinner which includes a variety of foods from various parts of India. The afternoon promises to be very entertaining, diversified and exciting. Please come and enjoy the event. Your presence and encouragement will surely boost the spirit of our local talent.



As announced earlier, we are working with the Food Bank of Central New York, and will have a food collection at the Spring Festival: **please bring some food items to donate for the needy.**

The Food Bank suggests the following preferred items:

• canned tuna • canned beans/legumes • dried beans/legumes • peanut butter • dinner “mixes” • pasta-rice-grains • cereals • oatmeal • soups and stews • canned/dried fruits • canned vegetables.

<http://foodbankcny.org/assets/Uploads/PreferredFoodsList.pdf>

The Food Bank also accepts cash donations.

If you have any questions, please contact: Chilukuri Mohan: ckmohan@syr.edu
or Joseph Kappil: joekappil@gmail.com

Holi in Syracuse!

Falguni Vora

Holi is a festival of colors which brings out fun, energy and hope in life. And that's exactly how ICRCC celebrated Holi on April 1st. It took place at the recreation center of Manlius Village and was attended by more than 150 people. Adhering to Holi's true meaning, community members from all walks of life celebrated it together regardless of which part of India they belong to, how old are they, their professional affiliation etc. Playing with colors was the highlight of the event. There was a special arrangement of games for kids in a separate room. Everyone danced on the popular hit numbers from Bollywood. And of course, no event is complete without food. There was plenty of Indian finger snacks and drinks. It was a perfect way of welcoming spring in Central New York after a long, snowy winter.



Visiting India

Shweta Karikhalli

Though I've grown up primarily in America, India will always be a special place to me. Touching down in the Bangalore airport is always an unforgettable experience; stepping out of the relatively tranquil, quiet atmosphere of the airport is dramatically different from what awaits me outside. All of the sights, smells, and sounds assault my senses, and are definitely rousing enough to shake me out of my jet-lagged daze. Even the drive to my uncle's house from the airport is visually stimulating. Though it's a bit of an adjustment getting used to seeing cars driving on the left side of the road, cows and dogs casually resting on the sidewalks, and throngs of people hanging off of the sides of buses, eventually it becomes second nature to witness these things.

When I was younger, everything would amuse my cousins and me. Playing in the garden after a rainfall, playing improvised cricket games in any open space we could find, buying jewelry and trinkets at local bazaars, indulging in street cuisine, and even riding atop a bullock cart (when I insisted on this, my elder relatives expressed concern over this and some laughed at the concept; but I was fascinated by these carts that would pass by our house every day, and I refused to leave India until I had gone on my bullock cart ride), were all things that I remember fondly from childhood visits to India.

As I got older, India became a safe haven for me to return to for a short amount of time; a place where I didn't have to stress about any "real world" troubles because they aren't relevant in my sunny, warm, happy break in India. No matter how much time has passed since my last visit, I know that whenever I go back, it will be as if time has stood still. I can always count on a fresh cup of masala chai in the morning served in the traditional Indian way; piping hot, sweet, and with lots of fresh, creamy milk. Street vendors will always come by in the mornings and in the afternoons, yelling out their products in a distinctively screechy voice. I will always feel loved and appreciated by relatives who always insist on stuffing me with food, no matter how old I get. And I know I will enjoy only the finest of foods whenever I'm there; fresh, high quality, authentic, the kind of food that is so deliciously spicy that my lips turn red, and maybe my nose runs a little after every meal, but I love it.

Returning to America after one of these visits is always a little sad, as India is the kind of place that can make even New York City seem quiet and less exciting in comparison. Then life resumes as if I had never left as I settle back into my normal routine. I enjoy the effects of jet lag that allow me to wake up at 5 A.M. feeling refreshed, catch up with friends and exchange gifts and tales from my travels, and count down the days until the next time I return to my wonderful, crazy, loud, dynamic home country.



Earth Day

Chilukuri Mohan

The perspectives of the European industrial revolution (and the spirit of the modern-day civilization) differ from those of the ancient traditions from India (and elsewhere). Whereas many of us view the earth and its natural resources with reverence, and worry about the future of humankind (and other dwellers of this planet), we often confront proponents of the opposite view that measures success in terms of mastery over nature, and plundering its resources. Many industrialists seek to exploit the earth maximally as soon as possible, for their own primary benefit (with a promise of jobs and economic development for the region); but many others have been fighting to prevent this from happening. For old movie buffs, *“How green was my valley”* (a 1939 novel by Richard Llewellyn, filmed by John Ford) tells a story about the steady destruction of a mining town in Wales.

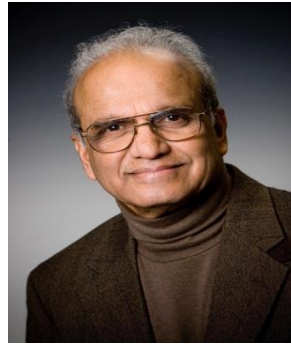
Syracuse folks celebrated with a “March for Science” in which some ICRC members participated, and an EarthDay cleanup. On April 29, a Climate March was organized.

Founded in 1989 by Richard and Rhoda Goldman, the Goldman Environmental Prize, presented to one person from each livable continent, is announced on Earth Day each year. This year, the six environmental activists who received this award, for exemplary work at the grassroots level (such as successfully blocking projects that could potentially harm the eco-system, and environmental clean-up) were: Uroš Macerl, Slovenia;; mark! Lopez, United States of America; Rodrigo Tot, Guatemala; Rodrigue Mugaruka Katembo, Democratic Republic of Congo; Wendy Bowman, Australia; and Prafulla Samantara, India (pictured below, along with Niyamgiri Hills landscape with permission, photo © Stefano Pensotti, www.stefanopensotti.com).



Prafulla Samantara led a legal battle for 12 years, to secure the land rights of the indigenous Dongria (Dangaria) Kondh tribe (see <http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/dongria>) and to protect their homes in the Niyamgiri Hills from the development of a large open-pit aluminum ore mine by Vedanta Resources plc; these hills, located in southwestern Odisha (Orissa), also provide a home for tigers, elephants and unique flora. The potential destruction of 1660 acres of forestland has been criticized by human rights and activist groups, including [Survival International](#), [Amnesty International](#) and Niyamgiri Surakshya Samiti. Prafulla rallied the affected tribal people, and filed a petition in Supreme Court against the mining. In 2009, thousands of people formed a human chain around a hill to prevent mining operations. Subsequently the Indian government rejected clearances given to the company for mining operations, and tribal village councils voted against the mine. The project has been halted, a victory for Prafulla and the Dongria Kandh.

Permanent Member Profiles: Shaila and Ramesh Gaonkar



Ramesh served as a Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at SUNY OCC since early 1970. Presently, he teaches at IIT Gandhinagar as a Visiting Professor for a semester in a year. He is also a Director of Penram International Publishing Company in Mumbai. He is the author of several engineering textbooks, adopted internationally, in the microprocessor field and a recipient of SUNY Chancellor's award, Outstanding Teacher awards from ASEE St. Lawrence Section and CNY Technology Alliance. He grew up in Parel area in Bombay, the heartland of cotton factories and rebels of independent movement. He is a Physics graduate from Bombay University and came to RPI, Troy, NY as a teaching assistant. After completing a degree in Electrical Engineering, he worked as an Engineer and received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University.

Shaila grew up in upstate New York amid a large family of siblings and cousins, for whom expectations decreed a sequence of college, marriage, homemaking and community service. Defying those expectations, Shaila chose independence, professional involvement in education and world travel. Mid-career, she enrolled in Syracuse University's program of Instructional Technology. Marriage with Ramesh, a brief year of living in India, and juggling of child-bearing and post-doctoral appointments at Syracuse followed. In 1984, Shaila accepted a position with AT&T's Corporate Education Center during its legendary period in corporate training. Unlike the more tradition-bound academic institutions, private corporations embraced the efficiency and accountability models of instructional design and technology and committed huge budgets to retrain their workforce. Shaila returned to Syracuse two years later, joining SU's Project Advance [SUPA] as Associate Director, overseeing two of its programs and its evaluation activities. In 1994, she resigned from Project Advance and established East/West Yoga Studios, which she maintained for fifteen years.

Shaila and Ramesh have two daughters — Nelima and Vanita. Nelima is a licensed psychotherapist currently working in Binghamton, dividing her time between SUNY Binghamton's support services and private practice. Vanita lives in Manhattan and works as an Investment Officer with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in New York.

Ramesh and Shaila follow in their family traditions of community service. During the last twenty-five years, Ramesh has served as President, Vice-President and Board member of ICRCC. In the spirit of "giving back," he has helped establish and continues to support a computer center in his home-town village, Hadi in the Kokan area of southern Maharashtra, where primary-school children and women are learning computer skills. Shaila currently serves as docent with the Everson Museum and as coordinator with OASIS. In addition to volunteering their time and experience, Ramesh and Shaila offer financial support to educational and charitable institutions in Syracuse, India and Shaila's hometown of Gloversville.

Permanent Member Profiles: Harinakshi and Ravi Dabir



Ravi is a dentist who had studied at Manipal (Karnataka, India). He completed his graduate program at St. Christopher Children's Hospital, Temple University, Philadelphia. He taught at NYU Dental School before moving to the Syracuse area. He had practiced dentistry in Baldwinsville since 1983, where Harinakshi (Harini) had also worked as the office manager.

They have 3 children: Poornima, Avinash and Himamshu. Poornima completed her Masters in Public Health, and now works as a consultant for Health Care Insurance companies. Avinash, a graduate of Boston University, is currently working for NBC in New York. Himamshu graduated from Cardosa Law School in New York.

In 1987, Harinakshi and Ravi had established the Sree Sathya Sai Baba center in Syracuse. In addition to weekly prayer gatherings, Sathya Sai Baba Center serves food to the homeless in downtown Syracuse. Ravi also coordinated a volunteer dentists rotation program that includes 36 other dentists from all over the world, Each dentist volunteers for 2 weeks in a dental clinic at Puttaparthi where dental treatment is rendered free to the patients.

Ravi retired in 2016 from active practice in Syracuse. Both Harinakshi and Ravi have moved to Puttaparthi. Ravi is the current Head of Dental Dept. at Sathya Sai General Hospital. He is working full time as a volunteer Dentist.

Poetry quiz!

Chilukuri Mohan

April was national poetry month. Poems come in many flavors: with or without rhyme, meter, verse form, punctuation, capitalization—sometimes even without discernible meaning! But we expect economy of words, and an esthetic quality that is as difficult to formulate as with any other art form: words and phrases must go well together, and evoke an emotion or tell a story beautifully. I recently took a class titled “How not to be boring” at the YMCA Downtown Writer’s Center in Syracuse, a great resource for poets new and old. They’ll alert you that stringing words together is fun, and that there are oodles of great poems out there waiting to be discovered by you and me.

Talking of old poets, here’s a quiz: **identify the (Indian) writers of the following poems.** The first ones to get them right will be recognized in the next newsletter, and are welcomed to provide the quiz for the next newsletter, or contribute a poem of your own!

English: *From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus-stream,
I bring for you,
Aglint with dew
A little lovely dream.*

Hindi: *kand mool bhog kare, kand mool bhog kare.
teen ber khati the we teen ber khati hain.*

[Translation: Delicacies they had once enjoyed, but they subsist now on roots; thrice a day they feasted then, now they starve with berries wild.]

Sanskrit: *na nonanunno nunnono nānā nānānanā nanu
nunno'nunno nanunneno nānenā nunnanunna*

[Translation: He that is defeated by an inferior is no man; and he who persecutes the weak is also not a man. One is not vanquished, even when overcome, if his leader is undefeated; and sinful is he who persecutes the vanquished.]

Guess the language: *Cho mun tootiy-e Hindustan az rast pursi
Ze mun Hindavi purs to naghz goyam*

[Translation: If you ask me, a songbird of Hindustan, about the truth— I say, ask me in Hindavi so that I may speak it beautifully.]

If you are surprised not to see Tagore mentioned, here’s another quiz: *Who was Nibaran Chakraborty?*

The ICRCC Newsletter invites poetry submissions from all of you!!!

Hints for the five poetry quiz questions: Dark & stormy; Ornament; Twelfth; Rich; No spring poem!

ICRCC Board Members (2017):

President: Joseph Kappil, joekappil@gmail.com, 315-395-6148
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Finance Committee: Pravin Gupta (Chairman), Chilukuri Mohan, Kishor Kanabar

Membership Committee: Shridevi Karikethalli (Coordinator), Joseph Kappil, Falguni Vora, Deepal Shah

Newcomers Welcome Committee: Pavithra Chigateri, Abraham Thomas, Shridevi Karikethalli

Charity Drive: Chilukuri Mohan, Joseph Kappil

Student Recognition Program: Pavithra Chigateri, Sapna Kollali

Bylaws Review Committee: Sanjeev Kumar (Chairman), Sapna Kollali, Rama Mehrotra

Connect with us by email at icrcc17@gmail.com

Written materials can be mailed to:

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Dewitt, NY 13214

List of Permanent Members

Anita and Dilip Bhole
Harinakshi and Ravi Dabir
Neerja Vajpayee and Ajeet Gajra
Shaila and Ramesh Gaonkar
Seena and Manoj Kumar
Damyanti and Satish Patel
Madhuri and Vilas Patil
Vijayalakshmi and Umeshchandra Patil
Ravi Raman
Neera and Ravi Seth
Madhuri and P.K. Sharma
Rajni and Praveen Simlote
Manda and Jit Turakhia