



The

Oshwal Report



A Newsletter by the Halari Visa Oshwals of America

www.oshwal-usa.org

Issue 6: Spring 2004

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(2002-2003)

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* * *

Feel free to share ideas,
comments, or suggestions
with any of us.

Message from the President

Jai Jinedra,

Once again, it's my pleasure to update you on some of the key activities of Halari Visa Oshwals of America.

Last year several State representatives had arranged picnics and dinners. These gatherings were extremely successful. We would like to thank all the State representatives for arranging such gatherings. We hope they will continue with similar activities this year and invite others arrange similar gatherings in their States.

Our traditional annual Oshwal gathering on the Thanksgiving Day was also very successful. There was full participation by all the attendees in the activities and this made the whole evening very enjoyable for everyone. We thank all of the community members for their participation in the evening's program. We would like to encourage State representatives to arrange similar gatherings in their region to develop closer contacts among Oshwals.

This year the Northeast annual picnic will be in Rockland, N.Y. on June 20th 2004. We would like to invite all Oshwals living in the Northeast region to this year's picnic. We also wholeheartedly welcome Oshwals living in other regions.

The Oshwal community of Canada will host the joint USA and Canada Oshwal biannual gathering in Toronto on August 6, 7, and 8, 2004. Details will be posted on the Web site. The first such gathering took place in Rochester, N.Y. in 2002. Although some of us were meeting each other for the first time, it seemed like we knew each other for a life time.

A friendly reminder: Please make sure that you inform Surya and Satish Shah of Plano, TX of any changes or additions in the Oshwal directory by completing the form available on our web site - www.oshwal-usa.org

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank the editor of our Newsletter, Rajesh Shah of Massachusetts for his hard working and dedication in ensuring timely publication of the Newsletter. To make the Newsletter more interesting, we need your input. Please do not hesitate to contact Rajesh with any information that will be of interest to the community. Please provide us your comments and suggestions about the Newsletter.

Most of our community news is regularly posted on our Web site: www.oshwal-usa.org. Our special thanks to Ketan Dodhia, the webmaster, for keeping the site user-friendly and updating it regularly.

We welcome suggestions and comments from you all to serve our community better and we encourage you active participation in our activities.

Finally, I really appreciate the support and suggestions I am receiving from our community members and the Executive committee.

Thank You.

Manisha K. Shah, President
Halari Visa Oshwals of America

Next US - Canada Gathering; August 6-8, 2004; Toronto, Canada

At the JAINA 2003 convention, preliminary plans were announced for the next US-Canada gathering to take place some time in Late Summer 2004, near Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The plan is to hold the event during the weekend of August 6-8, 2004, in Toronto, Canada. Mark your calendar!

Everyone had a great time last time we had our get-together in [Rochester](#)

Check the website for more details soon at www.oshwal-usa.org.

Northeast Regional Picnic

New York, New Jersey, Connecticut—
June 20, 2004

A picnic for the NY, NJ, CT Oshwals and their friends has been arranged for Sunday, June 20, 2004, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Clark Recreation Center, in Suffern, New York. For more information, please contact Manisha Shah at (845)-462-0321 or president@oshwal-usa.org

We will post directions and times on the website at www.oshwal-usa.org very soon.

OSHWALS - TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA

A picnic of Visa Oshwals and friends has been arranged for Sunday, May 16, 2004 at the Russell Creek Park Pavilion, 3500 McDermott Road, Plano, TX between 3 P.M. to 9 P.M. Please bring your own soft drinks and finger food or snacks. We will arrange for take-out pizzas for dinner. For further information, contact Surya or Satish Shah, Tel: 972 618 9509

Regional Representatives:

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Manisha Kantilal Shah
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Treasurer's report

We are currently financially stable with a surplus of \$1925 as of April 1, 200. We will use the surplus funds to help pay for events as well as cover minor administrative costs.

Tushar Shah, Treasurer

History of Jains in North America: "Evolution"

According to Prof. Noel King of University of California and Dr. Surendra Singhvi of Cincinnati, "Jainas and Jaina Scholars did leave India's shore many times during the last 2000 years. In eighteenth and nineteenth century Jainism was somewhat known to the west from some of the Indian books which found their way to Europe and then to New England in U.S.A. These were mostly brought here by Christian Missionaries and scholars."

Our clear and documented story begins over 100 years ago in 1893. A New York Times article in September 1893 talked of dignitaries from India who arrived in New York aboard the steam ship PARIS in transit to Chicago to attend the first Parliament of World's Religions. Among them was a Jaina, Virchand R. Gandhi who was described as a young man with heavy black mustache. To Mr. Pipe, a reporter of the New York Times, Mr. Gandhi explained that Jaina faith was the oldest in the world and went on to state "I come from India, the mother of religions. I represent Jainism, a faith older than Buddhism, similar to, it in ethics, but different from it in its psychology and professed by 1,500,000 of India's most peaceful and law-abiding citizens".

Many attempts have been made to capture the history of Jainism in North America, but "No serious attempts have been made to record the role of individual Jains in the development of Jainism in North America." Following are some of the major events that took place in the last 50 years which have shaped and enriched our history:

- Virchand Panchand Inc was established in 1944 at 15 Park Raw, New York. In 1945/46, Jethalal Khimchand Kachra Gudka came and lived in New York for three years. In 1948, 10 Jain students arrived to USA for studies, one of them was Shri Keshav Chandaria presently in Toronto, Canada, Suresh Zaveri who currently lives in Honolulu, Jayantilal Nemchand Fulchand who currently lives in Nairobi, Kenya - but where are the others?

- In 1949, Dhirajlal Premchand Vrajpal came for studies to the USA and he currently lives in Mombasa, Kenya.

- In August 1959 Dr. Vastupal Parikh – professor of Chemistry – was possible the first Jain to settle in Canada. Probably around the same time, Anil and Induben Mehta arrived to Canada and established a printing press in Ottawa.

- In 1962, Mahendra Mehta, an Engineer was possibly the first Jain to arrive to Alberta, Canada.

- In 1966 Jain Center of America, NY was established.

- In 1969 Jain Center of Metropolitan Chicago was established.

- In 1971, Gurudev Chitrabhanu first visited the USA, the first Jain Monk to part with monastic traditions, to spread the message of Jainism and non-violence. He permanently arrived to the USA in 1974 and established Jain Meditation International Center.

- In 1973 Jain Center of Greater Boston and Jain Society of Toronto were established.

Jasvant Mehta, Chair,
Jaina History Executive Committee.

This is an abbreviated version of the history and proposal that can viewed at www.oshwal-usa.org.

HALARI VISA OSHWALS OF AMERICA AND CANADA Members Directory was distributed to all listed members in July, 2003. If you have not received your copy, please contact us at the following address.

We would appreciate it if you would keep your listing up-to-date by completing the Directory Update form available at the following web site: www.oshwal-usa.org.

We are trying to get e-mail addresses of all members so that it would be easy to contact members. We request all those whose e-mail addresses are not listed in the directory to provide us their e-mail addresses.

Surya and Satish Shah, Plano, TX. e-mail: satishshah5@yahoo.com

BBC launches Jainism website

Link: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism

BBC Religion and Ethics launched the Jainism website on 7th December 2003 which communicates the philosophy and culture of Jain Religion. The launch of the BBCI Jainism website is a pioneering development in communicating the essence of Jain culture. The newly launched website will allow people worldwide to appreciate and understand the Jain values of ahimsa, aparigraha and annekant as a highly relevant and essential part of modern living. Mr. Alan Bookbinder, Head of BBC Religion and Ethics speaking at the launch said "I am delighted that the values of Jainism including respect, compassion, tolerance and concern for all living beings are now visible allowing audiences to appreciate Jain values in today's world."

Sadviji Shree Subhamji

Internationally acclaimed Sadviji Shree Subhamji is coming to USA and Canada this Summer again. She has been a disciple of Acharya Shree Chandanaji since the early age of 12 and was the first one to have Diksha in Rajgir after Bhagwan Mahavir's Diksha. With the blessings of Shree Amar Muniji, Acharya Shree Chandanaji established Veerayatan Centers in Rajgir, Bhuj, Bombay and Pune in India, and has international activities in USA, UK, East Africa and many other countries. Veerayatan is founded on the principles of Seva, Siksha and Sadhna. It has been carrying on its great humanitarian work through schools, hospitals and religious seminars. Sadviji Subhamji has been traveling all over the world preaching and spreading the message of humanity and Jainism. She has been also teaching meditation, yoga and delivering discourses on Jainism and other religions. She has captured the hearts of the young and the old. She has been very well received by the children as well as the teenagers in the Western World because of her fluency in English and her Charismatic personality. She is also one of the rare Shatavadhani. Shatavadhan is the ancient science of memory and mathematics, which is based upon concentration of mind. It is a great opportunity to meet with her and better our way of life. If anybody is interested in arranging for her visit in USA or Canada, please contact Punita Shah at 607-786-3288.



Rajesh Shah
Secretary Halari Visa Oshwals of America
39 Farm Hill Rd.
Leominster, MA 01453

Tell your family & friends to visit www.oshwal-usa.org and update their Directory listing.

Community New:

Congratulation to Tanvi and Mitesh Shah

Congratulation to Tanvi and Mitesh Shah of Westbury New York on birth of their daughter Deeti, who born on 20th march 2004. Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

Congratulations to Ketan and Pallavi Dedhiya of Plainsboro, NJ

Congratulations to Pallavi (Haria) and Ketan Dedhiya from Plainsboro, NJ, on the birth of their son Chiraayu, who born on 24th February 2004 at Princeton, NJ.

Congratulation to Bena Shah of NY

Congratulation to Bena, daughter of Illa and the late Anil shah of N.Y. on her engagement to Abhay Patel.of Detroit.

Congratulation to Neil Shah of NY

Congratulation to Neil, son of Ila and the late Anil shah of N.Y. on his engagement to Shaily Juneja of N.J.

Congratulations to Rajesh Shah and Paulomi Gudka

Congratulations to Rajesh Shah, son of Hemendra and Madhu of Boston, Ma on his engagement to Paulomi Gudka, daughter of Shrikant (Dinesh) and Leela Gudka of Toronto, Canada.

Jiviben Mulchand(Motichand) Dodhia-Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to the family of Jiviben Mulchand(Motichand) Dodhia of Navagam/Jamnagar India. Jiviben passed away on Feb 6th, 2004 at the age of 97. One of her son's Kantilalbhai Dodhia resides in Greenville, SC and prayers were held at her grandson's house, Priyesh Kantilal Dodhia.

She is survived by 9 children, Gulabbhai, Santaben, Ranjanben(Jamnagar), Kamuben(Bombay), Chunibhai, Vinubhai(Kenya), Pushpaben, Savitaben(London) and Kantilalbhai(Greenville, USA)

Condolences - Dipul Satish Punja Parbat Gudka

Our heartfelt condolences to Arunaben and Satish Punja Parbat Gudka of Nairobi and their family for shocking death of their young beloved son, Dipul. He died of a gunshot wound during a robbery in Nairobi on Saturday, March 6, 2004. He was nephew of Jayantilal, Vinod, Dinesh and Ashwin Velji of Minnesota and the late Navinchandra Velji of Plano, Texas.

Ramnklal Raichand Sumaria Shah-Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to the family of Mr. Ramnklal Raichand Sumaria Shah of Kitale, Kenya. He was tragically killed on Feb 2, 2004 in Kitale during a raid at their store

Jayantilal Govindji Sura Shah, Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to the family of Jayantilal Govindji Sura Shah of Dabasang/Nairobi. Jayantibhai passed on January 15, 2004 after an operation.

25th Anniversary : Eye Camp, Thika, Kenya

The annual Jain Youth League of Thika Free Eye and ENT Camp will be held from April 3rd - April 10th in Thika, Kenya. It will be celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The Vice President of Kenya, Hon. Moody Awori is the chief guest and will open the event. Patients have access to high quality medical care at no cost. Last year, over 15,000 people were screened, 6,000 received free glasses, and over 400 were operated on. The eye camp is free of charge, and has been operating for 25 consecutive years. Further details regarding the camp will be posted in April.

Community News:

For the most current community news please visit the website at <http://www.oshwal-usa.org>

We have decided to put all the news on the website because it will be easier to maintain the information and to reduce the size of the newsletter to save cost and reduce paper.

Appeal for information by Satish Shah, Plano, Texas:

I am in the process of writing history of Halari Visa Oshwals in the USA in association with Dr. Rati Dodhia of Rhode Island who is writing history of Halari Visa Oshwals world-wide.

I have collected some information, e.g. Jethalal Khimchand Kachara Gudka of Navagam/ Kenya/ Mumbai was the first Oshwal to have studied in the USA. He came to New York in 1946 and stayed for three years. In 1948/1949, four more Oshwals came to the USA for studies. They were (i) Jayantilal Nemchand Fulchand Shah of Kansumara/ Kenya, (ii) Ke! shav Premchand Popat Chandari of Champa Beraja/ Kenya and his brother (iii) Manu Chandaria, and (iv) Dhiru Premchand Vrajpal Shah of Padana/Kenya.

I like to get information about Oshwals who came to the USA in 1950's and early 1960's for studies and/or settlement. After the U.S. Immigration Act of 1964 was passed, quotas for permanent settlement visas were allocated to Asian and African countries. This provided opportunities for Asians and Africans to settle in the USA.

I plan to include major achievements by Oshwals in their studies, professional field, businesses, social activities, sports, politics, etc. I would appreciate it if you would let me know of your major achievements and/or of any other Oshwal that you know of.

Please contact me at the following address: satishshah5@yahoo.com or telephone: 972 618 9509.

Along with this Rati Dodhia is looking for any information on the origins of surnames, any historical oshwal stories from you home town/village, and any stories or information of important people of oshwal decent. The information should be sent by December 31' 2003 so that the stories can get published in the book.

You can email Rati Dodhia at r_dodhia@netzero.net, or call him at 401-333-1066. If you wish you can also mail your stories to his home. The address is