



The

# Oshwal Report



A Newsletter by the Halari Visa Oshwals of America

[www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org)

Issue 1: Winter 2002

## Executive Board (2002-2003)

### President

Manisha K. Shah  
Poughkeepsie, NY  
(845)-462-0321  
[president@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:president@oshwal-usa.org)

### Treasurer

Tushar Shah  
New York, NY  
(201)-694-0517  
[treasurer@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:treasurer@oshwal-usa.org)

### Secretary

Ketan M. Dodhia  
Suffern, NY  
(845)-357-7808  
[secretary@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:secretary@oshwal-usa.org)

### Members

Bena Shah  
Cincinnati, OH  
(513)-321-0525  
[members@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:members@oshwal-usa.org)

Veni Shah  
Edison, NJ  
(908)-769-5134  
[members@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:members@oshwal-usa.org)

### Newsletter Editors

Ketan M. Dodhia  
Suffern, NY  
(845)-357-7808  
[newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org)

Nina Shah  
Chestnut Ridge, NY  
(845)-735-6450  
[newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org)

### Webmaster

Nikesh Shah  
Chestnut Ridge, NY  
(845)-356-4097  
[webmaster@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:webmaster@oshwal-usa.org)

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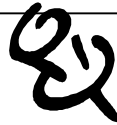
Feel free to share ideas, comments, or suggestions with any of us.



If you would prefer to receive future newsletters electronically via email (which helps us out!), please send a message to [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org) or visit our website at [www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org).



## Mark Your Calendars!



### Upcoming Events:

- Picnic: May 26, 2002, Connecticut
- Young Oshwals Rafting/Camping Weekend: June 2002, Catskills NY
- Canada-US Oshwals weekend: Labor Day weekend (Sept 2002), Finger Lakes Region, NY
- Annual Thanksgiving Get-together: Thanksgiving weekend (Nov 2002)

### Become a member!

For many years, this organization has been involved in improving communication within the Oshwal community here in the US, and connecting with other Oshwal communities throughout the world. This committee wants to renew old traditions and establish some new ones. There are many volunteers working to help with this. You, too, can get involved by becoming a member.

Your membership dues will directly help by:

- Assisting efforts to grow this pioneering Oshwal organization and community.
- Keeping Oshwal traditions alive for many generations to come
- Strengthening communication between Oshwals in US, Canada, and abroad.

More details about membership dues and benefits will be included in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, we are looking for individuals to help offset the associated costs of communication by *sponsoring* a newsletter issue or our website. Please contact Tushar at [treasurer@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:treasurer@oshwal-usa.org) for further information.

## From the President:

Jai Jinendra,

I would first like to thank the community for the opportunity to lead this organization.

This past Thanksgiving, the Halari Visa Oshwal Association celebrated its 2001 gathering at the Clifton Manor in Clifton, NJ. At this year's meeting, many new faces were seen, new topics were addressed, and a new direction for the Halari Visa Oshwal association was forged.

We had a committee meeting last December. I am proud to say that we have a great, supportive committee. In our meeting, we discussed upcoming events for 2002, the Newsletter, finances, and sponsorships so that we can continue with our plans. We talked about revitalizing our website. We also discussed why we should or shouldn't have memberships. We welcome any opinions on this matter.

Our first Oshwal community event for 2002 will be a Picnic during Memorial Day weekend on May 26. Everyone please plan to attend... we'll all have lots of fun.

This is the first time we are planning to have a Young Oshwals gathering here. The details are still being finalized, so if you are interested please send us your email address, or just contact any committee member.

We are currently planning to get together with the Canada Oshwals during Labor Day weekend on September 1, and are excited about cooperating and collaborating with this group.

I appreciate the hard work of this Newsletter's editors: Nina Shah and Ketan Dodhia of New York. Also, many thanks to Satish Shah for helping coordinate the North American Oshwal Directory with this Newsletter.

There are many Oshwal families in the USA whose contact information we don't have. You can help us get in touch with them by telling them about our organization and encouraging them to contact us.

Thank you,  
Manisha K. Shah

# Events and Announcements

Many volunteers have come forth with lots of energy and ideas... At the 2001 Thanksgiving meeting several committees were formed to organize various events and help run the organization. Here are some details.

**Spring Event:** This year, the Halari Visa Oshwal Board will revisit the favorite tradition of hosting a Spring Picnic. This event will consist of a mix of social activities, as well as a General Body Meeting. Tentative details are as follows:



Date: Sunday, May 26th, 2002  
Time: 12pm - 6pm (tentative)  
Location: To be determined, likely Western Connecticut.

The committee members include **Bena Shah** (OH) and **Gulab Shah** (MA). If you are interested in helping out, please contact Bena Shah at 513-321-0525.

**Regional Community Outreach** - This community organization was originally based in Northeast U.S. Now, the founding members of the organization recognize the need to develop stronger regional organizations as a result of the growth of the community throughout the United States. The short-term goals are to increase involvement of different members of the community in order to strengthen the organization.

Currently, the following contacts are being made with potential regional representatives to gauge their interest in formalizing a relationship with the national association.

**Keshu Shah** - MD, DC, NC, SC, TX  
**Kesu Gada** - WA  
**Kanti Gosrani** - MN  
**Velji Bid** - MI, OH, Western PA, IL, WI, IA, AZ, Southern CA  
**Poorni Bid** - Northern CA, NYC

If you are interested in getting involved in regional community building please contact us at [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org)

**Kids Korner** - In every issue, we'd like to encourage you to express your creativity. Please submit your short stories, poetry, drawings, jokes, and puzzles. Contact us at [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org) by April to get into the next issue.

But what we need now is your help in giving our Newsletter a new name. Email your suggestions to [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org) and at our Picnic we'll have a vote.



**Canada Get-Together:** For several years, attempts have been made for a Canada-US Oshwal gathering. It seems that this is the year! A second event is in the planning process for a get-together between the Northeast Oshwal families and the Toronto Oshwal families.

The weekend to set aside will be Labor Day weekend, September 2002. A tentative location is planned for the Finger Lakes region in western NY State, which is between Toronto and the tri-state area. More information will be available as we are closer to the event. The committee members include **Ramila Shah** (MA) and **Veni Shah** (NJ).

**Young Oshwal Event:** We are planning a youth rafting trip (ages 15-30) in the Catskills (New York) for a weekend in June. We will leave on Friday night and return on Sunday. Details to follow in the next newsletter. If you are interested in helping plan the event please get in touch with **Tushar Shah** ([treasurer@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:treasurer@oshwal-usa.org)).



**Technology:** The primary task of the technology group is to create a **Halari Visa Oshwal of America website** <[www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org)> which will aid in accomplishing several goals set for this upcoming year. The first of these goals is to work alongside the newsletter to put it online, giving increased accessibility to members living around the United States, and to others in Canada, U.K., Kenya, and India. The website will subsequently grow into a source of information, as well as a forum where people can communicate. The committee members include **Nikesh Shah** (NY), **Poorni Bid** (NJ), and **Veni Shah** (NJ).

## Breaking News:

Congratulations to **Rupen Gosrani** (parents: Kanti & Veena Gosrani, NY) on his engagement to **Shalini Kantilal Patel**, from England. The newly engaged couple is planning to get married in summer of 2002.

Congratulations to **Sunil Gudhka** (parents: Lakhubhai & Sushila Gudhka, NJ), on his engagement to **Ashmi Vora** (parents: Dr. Ramesh & Usha Vora, Mumbai).

Congratulations to **Shilpa** (parents: Keshu & Kanchan Shah, NY) and **Amit Gaggar** of Alabama on their wedding in September 2001.

Congratulations to **Shital** (parents: Jayendra & Surbhi Shah, NY) and **Bhavesh Patel** of New Jersey on their wedding in December 2001.

If you would like to share any news with the community in this Newsletter, please contact [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org)

## Oshwal Directory Update

Maintained by Satish and Surya Shah, Plano, TX, [satishshah5@yahoo.com](mailto:satishshah5@yahoo.com)

The Oshwal Directory that lists Oshwals residing in the USA and Canada was published in June 2000. At that time we had listed 209 families in the USA and 107 families in Canada. Our continuously updated database lists 234 families in the USA. We plan to publish a new directory by June 2004. In the mean time, we are providing below a short listing of new members and changes in address and telephone number of existing members. We will provide a copy of the directory to all new members free.

We request all members to advise us of changes and additions in their listing by e-mail or by completing the membership form available in the USA Central Section of the World Oshwal Federation web site at [www.world-oshwal-fed.org](http://www.world-oshwal-fed.org) or the Halari Visa Oshwals of America site at [www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org).

## *A Brief History of the Halari Visa Oshwals*

The Halari Visa Oshwal community is a very small community. At the beginning of this century, the population was between 10 and 12 thousand. By 1972, it had increased to 45 thousand, and at present it is probably between 50 and 55 thousand, almost equally divided between India, Kenya, and England, with approximately 2,000 members in North America (USA and Canada). The latest migration has been to Australia.

What follows is a historical resume of the Oshwal community. More detailed information on our heritage is available from our elders. The origin of the name "Oshwal" is probably tied to a small village in the Indian State of Rajasthan named Ossiya. At the site of Ossiya, once there was a large city there. The ancient names by which this city was known at various time were Uplsh Pattan, Urkesh, Melpur Pattan and Navmeri.

According to an Uplsh publication written in 14th Century, Shree Ratna Prabhu Shvarji, the 7th Acharya in the line of Shree Parshvanath's sect, came here with his five hundred disciples in year 70 after Mahavira Nirvana. The city at that time was ruled by King Upaldev and his very able minister Uhad. After receiving proper guidance from Acharya, the King, his minister and more than thousand Rajput soldiers gave up alcohol and meat and adopted Jainism. The Acharya gave this group the name Oshwals. Thus, a new Jain sect of Oshwal Gaccha, the ancestors of the Oshwal community, came into existence.

However, according to another publication "Ossiya Vir Stavan" written in 1721 by Naya Pramod, a disciple of Hir Udaya, the city of Ossiya was founded in 1011 and the conversion by Acharya took place in 1017. But in the historical documents published in the city of Bhinmal, it is mentioned that Minister Uhad left Bhinmal and founded the city in year 70 after Mahavira Nirvana. Also, in the documents available from city of Korta there is a mention of a conversion of a large group to Jainism by Acharya Shree Ratna Prabhu Suri Shvarji in Ossiya in the year 70 after Mahavira Nirvana.

Therefore, from the several historical accounts, it appears that the Oshwal Gaccha was established in the year 70 after Mahavira Nirvana by Acharya Shree Ratna Prabhu Suri Shvarji, a leader of lord Parshvanath's sect.

Around 10th or 12th century AD, because of adverse natural conditions, a small number of these Oshwal Mahajans left the village of Ossiya in search of better life and migrated to Sindh; what now is called West Pakistan. The conditions in Sindh were not any better. So, the group continued the migration southwards into Kutch, now a part of the State of Gujarat and settled in Vagad district. Later on, some moved to Kanthi district.

Around 1535, a small group of Oshwals of Vagad District suddenly left Kutch and moved to Saurashtra. As usual, there are two stories as to why this happened... One real story, and the other fictional.

*For the rest of the story, visit the Oshwal website at: [www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org)*

**Rebuild Hope** - At the November Oshwal gathering, we shared plans for our Project Rebuild-Hope -- the effort to rebuild an all-girls high school in Anjar, as the school is unusable following the January 2001 earthquake. Following is progress made since our November meeting.

First, the website was launched. You can go to [www.rebuildhope.org](http://www.rebuildhope.org) for more details on the project. It will be our forum to facilitate communication and updates between donors, volunteers, the school, and the Indian management and construction team.

Second, we are in the process of finalizing an arrangement with CRY Inc., a US based non-profit which has been donating over \$1 million annually to help children in India since the mid-1980's. Provided we complete the arrangement, CRY Inc. will extend its non-profit status to RebuildHope.

Third, we have identified a reputable construction partner based in Gujarat. The company has given us a detailed construction estimate for the project. A "fully loaded" school will cost about \$130,000, a number less than our original ballpark estimate at \$200,000.

Fourth, we have begun to build out a leadership team. Our Leadership committee is 4 members, and we have a number of volunteers.

Our next steps include the following:

1. Finalize agreement with CRY Inc.
2. Recruit additional volunteers for fundraising.
3. Begin fundraising.

As part of the above next steps we are doing the following:

1. Raising money from young Indian professionals at leading companies.
2. Working with Boston-area Indian students for RebuildHope to be the focus Charity for upcoming cultural events.
3. Securing a recognizable Indian business leader to serve as a sponsor for our efforts.

If all goes well with this school project, we will have the infrastructure to make this an on-going effort. Our vision is to make RebuildHope the leading non-profit for 1st generation Indian-Americans to give back to our mother country. As such, we are also working to attain non-profit status for our organization, outside of our partnership with CRY Inc.

The effort is good. Momentum is building. We are looking for people who want to make a difference and people who want to do something good for future generations of Indians. If that describes you, then you should get involved with RebuildHope.

Contact us if you would like to get involved.

Neil Shah  
[nshah@mba2001.hbs.edu](mailto:nshah@mba2001.hbs.edu)

## *From the Editors:*

Greetings,

We invite you to take a look at our new, revitalized newsletter. Its intent is to serve as a communication medium for our community. With each issue we hope to inform about upcoming events, update on continuing community-building efforts, and provide a source of education and entertainment.

You are receiving this newsletter because you are listed in the U.S. Oshwal Directory. We know this directory is not yet complete, so please spread the word about and pass on the Newsletter to other members in our community, who may have not received it, so that we can grow.

Expect to receive the next issues shortly before each of our planned major events in May, September, and November. If you would prefer to receive them electronically via email (which helps us out!), please send a message to [newsletter@oshwal-usa.org](mailto:newsletter@oshwal-usa.org) or visit our website at [www.oshwal-usa.org](http://www.oshwal-usa.org).

Finally, this is a Community Newsletter... we encourage and request all contributions, suggestions, criticisms and praise. Get in touch and help our community grow.

Nina Shah (NY) and Ketan Dodhia (NY)

If undeliverable, please return to:  
Ketan Dodhia  
c/o Halari Visa Oshwals of America  
22 Yorkshire Dr.  
Suffern, NY 10901-7417  
USA

## The Oshwal Report

A Newsletter by the  
**Halari Visa Oshwals of America**

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