



NFIA NEWSLETTER

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Superb Convention in Cleveland

Delegates from different member associations who convened in Cleveland over October 29-31 weekend for the 13th biennial convention of the Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), along with many guests from the local areas, were treated with stimulating seminars on contemporary issues of mainstreaming, business and technology, healthcare and the status of US-India relations. The three day event also featured a thrilling entertainment, sumptuous food and an opportunity for rubbing shoulders with elected officials and Indian diplomats and net working among the attendees.

Established in 1980, the umbrella organization has

held such conventions in different cities of the United States, in order to mobilize the local community and provide a platform to discuss issues of concern to the community. NFIA came to Cleveland for the second time to conduct its biennial convention that also features election of a new leadership of the organization.

The highlight of the convention was an eloquent speech by Richard Celeste, the president of Colorado College and former governor of Ohio and past ambassador to India. He traced the history of contacts between the US and India and credited the Indian Diaspora for establishing cordial relationship between the two

countries. As the number of Indians increased in this country, the relations between the United States and India also improved. The Diaspora has acted as ambassadors for India. Celeste described the outsourcing of jobs as partnership that started with Y2K problem with the computers in this country when there was a danger that computers will become nonfunctional with the dawn of the new century. The Indian programmers came to rescue American corporations and America learned the value of this partnership. Secondly, the relations were enhanced by enhanced trade between the two countries.

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25th Anniversary Celebrations

Plans for a grand celebration of the 25th anniversary of the NFIA in New York on May 28, 2005 are taking shape and are being guided by vice president Lal Motwani and past president Thomas Abraham. Please mark your calendars for the most memorable event .

NFIA Elects NEW Leadership

At the 13th biennial convention of the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), held in Cleveland, OH, October 29-31, Rajen Anand of California, a long time community activist, assumed the presidency of this umbrella or-

ganization. Niraj Baxi who served as NFIA president, 2002-2004, takes over the chairman of the NFIA Foundation, its fundraising arm for the next two years.

This was the second time the NFIA held its convention in Cleveland. In 1986,

NFIA met in this city and elected Inder Singh, another Californian, as president.

Anand who served (1995-2001) as head of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, a political

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The former Ambassador described India as a young, energetic, and ambitious secular democracy that has half of its population under 25. The terrorist attack on American on September 11 made the US to appreciate the pain India had suffered at the hands of terrorists. "India offered its bases for the use of America, but America, unwisely in my opinion, chose Pakistan to launch attacks against Taliban," said Celeste.

The governor urged the US government to take India off the list of Sensitive countries and declared to a standing ovation that relations between the US and India will grow stronger, for the two countries have share bloodline, shared values, shared ambitions and now shared threats.

MAINSTREAMING

Two young speakers, Baiju Shah and Himanshu Amin recounted their experiences growing up in America under the watchful eyes of their Indian parents. Amin had additional challenges he faced, for he married a non Indian girl. Despite several difficult situations and hilarious events in their life, both of them said that

one does not have to shed his cultural identity to succeed in this country. Shah gave the example of the success achieved by Rajat Gupta, Swati Dandekar and Mira Nair. "They did not have to even anglicize their

names, in order to succeed," he emphasized. "Dandekar wore a Sari to her Assembly chamber." "Mainstreaming is a personal choice one has to make," said Shah. "One can stay isolated from the main-

stream or take a dive into it." Amin recalled the behavior of his father during the time he was dating a White girl. The father was deeply concerned about the loss of Indian culture and tradition if the son married outside the family. Amin was constantly discouraged not to marry a White girl. He said he did marry her and his parents are still adjusting, but with the birth their grandchildren it is becoming somewhat easier. "Your desire to assimilate in to the mainstream is independent of whether you succeed or not," concluded the speaker.

The speakers at the seminar on US-India relations were Congressman Sherrod Brown and Indian Diplomat Pramathesh Rath. Speaking first, Rath lauded the contribution of the Indian community settled in the US towards establishing better relations between the two countries. The success of the Indian Diaspora with 36,000 physicians and 100,000 engineers and with median income of \$68,000 per family has created a better image of India in the United States. Brown also credited the activism of the community for better relations between the US and India. A mem-

ber of the Health Subcommittee, Brown expressed his concern with the greater prevalence of certain diseases in the Indian Community. He said TB, AIDS and heart disease affect Indians to a great extent and very little is being to understand the causes of that.

GALA BANQUET

The day long program was followed by a Gala banquet held on Saturday evening. The chief guest at the banquet was Indian Ambassador Ronen Sen who gave an eloquent speech. Ambassador Sen asked his audience to work hard and do well as American citizens. "Be as good citizens as you can," he insisted. "Your accomplishments in this country will be the best way to improve Indo-US relations." He said he was very pleased with the work NFIA is doing to unify the community.

Attended by over 600 guests, the event featured Cleveland Mayor Jane Campbell.

Rajen Anand, the incoming president outlined the objectives of the NFIA and said, "NFIA is a unique organization, for it comprises people of Indian origin without any distinction of religious, regional, professional or political affiliation." "Its goal is to find a common platform on which people of diverse background can join hands and identify the issue of mutual concern to the community." He also stated the role NFIA plays in helping to improve the relations between the US

and India is purely for our self interest. Think, how you will be treated if the US-India relations were not healthy, he asked his audience. You will be taking a cover. The better the relations are between the US and India and the better we will be treated in this country, he added.

The outgoing president Niraj Baxi also addressed the banquet audience and listed a number of activities undertaken during his administration. He said it was for the

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NFIA ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP *(Continued from page 1)*

appointment by President Bill Clinton has been active in community organizations for over 2 decades. He has been associated with NFIA and has served as secretary and executive Vice president of the organization. Anand has also been active in many other organizations in Southern California, having served as president and chairman of the Federation of Indian American Associations (FIA) in 1984-1988. He was the founding chair of the Indo-American Political Association and has long been active in the California Democratic Party serving 4 years on its Executive Board. Elected as a delegate, he has attended five National Democratic Conventions since 1988. Professionally, he is a professor of physiology at the California State University, Long Beach.

Others elected at the convention were Radha Krishnan of Detroit as presi-

dent-elect, and Pramod Kamdar of San Diego as executive vice president. The three vice presidents elected were Lal Motwani of New York, Antony Thaliath of

committee, the seven at large members, 12 regional vice presidents and head of the other umbrella organizations. Those elected members-at-



Atlanta and Sohan Joshi of Chicago. Satish Parikh who was the convener of the Cleveland convention became the secretary and Satheesan Nair of Chicago as its Joint Secretary. The post of Treasurer went to Ramesh Patel of Detroit. The president along with these officers form the executive committee of the NFIA. The NFIA Board comprises of the executive

large were Anna Prasad and Ajoy Dube of California, O.C. Koshy of Michigan, Verghese Palamalayil of Illinois, Harish Shah of Maryland, Eera Singh of Colorado, and Dhiru Shah of Georgia. The Regional Vice Presidents elected were Gope Gidwani (New England region), Ann Pillai (Capital region), Amitabh Sharma (Southeast region), Chetan Amin (Great Lakes region), and Ashok Madan for South Pacific region. Several regional president positions are still to be filled by the NFIA Board of Directors.

"I am delighted to have such a competent team elected; the members of the team are diverse in their ethnic background and come from different parts of the United States," said Anand. "The make up of the team makes the NFIA a truly secular organization serving the needs of Americans of Indian origin without any distinction of their regional, religious, professional, or political affiliations" he added.

The past presidents of NFIA, Thomas Abraham, Inder Singh, Subash Razdan, Haresh Panchal, and Parthasarthy Pillai were participants at the convention. Only Ramesh Patel of New Jersey was absent.

Paramjit Singh, Nirmal Sinha and Sushila Gidwani conducted the elections.





President-Elect Radha Krishnan

Radha Krishnan has been an Engineer, Manager, Businessman and Social & Community leader. He received his degrees in Science and Engineering in India, and later (post) Graduate degrees in Engineering and Management in USA. Radha Krishnan started his career as Engineer and Manager in Hindustan Motors, Calcutta and later on in the Ford Motor Company, Detroit. He is currently President and CEO of R.K. International, Inc.

Radha Krishnan has been involved, supported and actively participated in many Indian-American organizations and started and led a few of them. In his capacity as one of the founding Directors and Presidents of the India League of America-Michigan (ILA), he pioneered and affiliated almost all the Indian-American organizations in Michigan to the ILA, and thus unified and strengthened the Indian community. Currently Radha Krishnan is the President-Elect of the Federation of Indian-American Associations (NFIA), the largest and highest apex organization of Indians in USA. He conducted the NFIA convention in Michigan in October, 2002. He participated in a large number of political fundraising campaigns and organized many.

Radha Krishnan is married to Amba Krishnan, a practicing physician in Hematology and Oncology.

He is a strong advocate of Communal Harmony. His contribution to strengthen U.S. India-Relationship has been extensive. He is also the President of Michigan chapter of Global Organization of People of India origin (GOPIO).

JOIN NFIA

Please get your organization to join NFIA, the largest umbrella organization in the United States and make it the voice of the community to address important issues and concerns of Indo-Americans. Please go to www.nfia.net to sign up.

RESOLUTIONS

NFIA Board strongly opposes the reported plans of the White House to Supply F-16 aircraft to Pakistan.

NFIA Board expresses its gratitude to Niraj Baxi and Parthasarthy Pillai for their dedicated service to this organization.

NFIA Board expresses its appreciation to Satish Parikh and his team for putting together a superb convention in Cleveland.

NFIA Board expresses its gratitude to Paramjit Singh, Nirmal Sinha and Sushila Gidwani for their outstanding service on the Election Committee and conducting the 04 elections.

PRAVASI BHARTIYA DIWAS

Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas will be celebrated on January 7-9, 2005 in Mumbai. Prior to the event, GOPIO will have a conference on January 5 and 6. The NFIA is planning to have a banquet being arranged by Raj Purohit in Mumbai on January 5, 2005. GOPIO has arranged for people to stay at Taj Hotels for \$100 per room. Call Inder Singh for further information at (818) 708-3885.

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Trade and Technology in India in 2002. He was happy to see that the NFIA will remain in safe and competent hands.

Baxi said, "the local committee headed by Satish Parikh, president of the Federation of Indian Community Associations (FICA) did a superb job in organizing this convention and has set a model for future NFIA conventions. He expressed gratitude on outstanding achievements by individuals. On behalf of the NFIA to all members of the convention committee.

This year NFIA awards were presented to two organizations, Catholic Relief Services Organization and Bochasanwasi Akshar Purshottam Sanstha (BAPS) Care International for their humanitarian work in India instead of giving these awards for outstanding achievements by individuals.

The entertainment was provided by the Bombay beats group of musicians that kept the audience dancing well past the midnight. A colorful souvenir edited by Harsiddh Adhvaryu was released.

Elections were held on Sunday morning to select a new NFIA Board (see separate story) for the year 2004-2006.

Parikh said that the convention was supported by generous funds from of many sponsors: Ahuja Foundation, The Plain Dealers, Sam and Maria Miller Foundation, Huntington, Poly-Carb, Consumer Education and Research Center Ahmedabad, Tata Consultancy Services, Mont Granite Inc., Oppenheimer funds, Jones Day, Indian Express, India Abroad, Crestbest Quality Institute Consulting Services, Dingus and Daga Inc., India Weekly-USA, O.C. Koshy, Rajen Anand, Radha Krishnan, Sohan Joshi and a Gujarati firm. He gratefully acknowledged their contributions. ❖