



India Association of Minnesota:
Association Records

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Team Reports from Jan. Retreat

Team III Report:

History project

30 year celebration

Independence Day Picnic

Charge:

Celebration: To celebrate 30 years of operation for IAM

History Project: To collect the historical information and artifacts for IAM

Tasks: Scope and identify people to be interviewed.

Transcription of the interviews in written form (\$225 per interview)

Need to raise funds – apply for grant

Collect documents

Time line: 2 years (2003-2004)

Status: no funds

Dilip has talked to Godan, Ram, and Preeti. On Jan. 18th Dilip will meet with historical society to plan a program and get training to co-ordinate this project.

We can put a notice in the newsletter for historical material. (Done)

We will want to collect artifacts such as the first newsletter, flyer, names of past presidents.

We can look at the defining moments in IAM history per decade. Look at the organizations affiliated to IAM such as AIWA, 55+, and SILC

Expectations:

Public relation committee will help with celebrating 30 years of operation

Fund raising committee will look at grants

Past presidents and others will be contacted for information.

Awards and Recognition Committee

Charge: to recognize individuals for

Annual dinner

Picnic

Asia pacific award

India day

Scope: generate a criterion for recognition and awards for each event, get nominations and select individuals

Timeline: annual dinner: Jan
Picnic: June
Asia Pacific Award:
India Day: Aug. or Sep.

Dependencies: newsletter, communication

Independence Day Picnic:

Charge: to celebrate India's independence day with an outdoor picnic

Scope: set up a committee – March

Chair person for Food, games, set up, music, pictures

Park Selection: Jan. 2

Recognition:

Budget

Chief guest

Dependencies:

Newsletter, public relation

Here are the notes from the Jan retreat mtg on 2 topics:

Membership & Fundraising sub-committee

Charter: Increase membership base and raise funds for IAM activities (short term and long term)

Scope:

Activities:

- „X Review 2002 financials and 2003 budget to establish fund-raising goals
- „X Reduce membership fee to increase membership base (price elasticity) ; V goal just enough to cover mailing expenses
- „X Collect membership lists from various regional/religious organizations and twin cities businesses
- „X Tap influential and connected twin cities people to be a part of the fund-raising
- „X Create corporate sponsorship opportunities with an expanded membership base

Public Relations and Community Liaison

Charter: Create awareness and educate Minnesotans of all walks of life about India and the cultural heritage & contribution of Asian Indian immigrants

Scope:

Activities:

„X Create India-101 presentation to be presented by small teams throughout the year (and next year) at all High-Schools, Police Departments, Colleges. Goal is to cover all school districts, police precincts, and various other organizations

„X Network with other immigrant organizations (AHANA, Asian Pacific Roundtable, AID-MN, etc)

-rajinder singh

Newsletter Subcommittee Charter Summary from the Retreat

Mission Statements / Objectives

Educate the broader community who we are

Maintain the Indian culture alive; involve the young generation

Harness political and monetary support from state and federal government

Identify with the community by doing a signature event(s) – sponsor or co-sponsor a major annual event (cultural)

Our identity as South Asian plus American needs to be clearly articulated for ourselves and for future generation

Unity in diversity – Value of this belief – how we can contribute to American and Minneosta grappling with multiculturalism

Long term community interaction -Indians and at large

Visible interaction (some of the Indians have not heard about us)

To represent the contributions and interests of the people of Indian origin to the greater community

Objective: Membership of 10000 at \$10 per month

Political clout to shape public policy as it relates to immigration, personal liberties and civil rights

Mission: “Strength and Fun” achievement in celebrating diverse cultures

Represent the interests and concerns of Indians in the twin cities

Give back to the broader society in service

To make the dreams of Indians a reality

Make the experience of immigrants more pleasant

Charitable, cultural, educational. Social, economical developments

Get more young blood involved

Have very strong relations with other groups

Have cultural shows to generate more funds

For the Indian community here to have a united voice and draw support from each other

For the host community to be more aware of the Indians in the twin cities

Increase the awareness of the Indian community, of IAM and show the relevance to their lives in Minnesota

Develop a stronger youth (young adults) group to foster strong bonds within the Indian community

Mission: Promote Indian cultural awareness in Minnesota

Be an active part of the political and cultural scene
Building bridges between communities
Mission: Become an influential organization in state and country

SHORT TERM

Do what is being done; add cultural resource to the Indian community for possible, personal, medical or social help
Work with other organizations like Hindu Soc, Geeta Ashram and others Gujarati samaj, sikh, Bengali,.....Make sure each group is working together
This year we should streamline our operations; we should think strategically about our role and activities. India assoc should not be seen as a cultural organization but an organization that will promote interests of people with Indian heritage
Get IAM to be operationally feasible. This retreat is a start in that direction
Make it a fun organization with no strives and conflicts so people vie to join it.
30 year celebration
Oral history of IAM
Changes in IAMs contributions
Be more visible in the Indian community and be regarded as the voice of the Indian community
Expand membership of IAM
Would like to see IAM set a goal to expand membership as there are many new residents of the twin cities that are unaware of IAM
Yes we should involve more people eg 700 indians at Ramsgate, 500 at I2, PIOs – show our strength
Community visibility - Indian, Minnesota, USA
Membership involvement – Indian, American
Too much political show than actual community involvement
Increase membership
Liason with all other Indian organizations
Involve more of the younger generation
Make IAM newsletter “user friendly” i.e reader should rightaway on first page get the info of coming ebvents, activities
Membership at 10000 – funding not from membership fee be truly representative
Stronger voice in asian Indian viewpoints in MN politics
Get the original groups to be stakeholders in the IAM events
Work with Asia Pacific council and other minority groups.
Recognize and celebrate our multicultural, multilingual, multireligious, multi ethnic heritage. Emphasize “Diversity is our Unity”
Add some more interesting events to the regular ones attract more and more youth Indians
Change doesn't happen overnight. Continue the current activities with a wider scope expand audience and motives
Participate in more local charity type events as an organization (eg walks act as volunteers in other events)
Directory of Indian owned businesses / companies in MN or update oif already exists

IAM in FIVE YEARS

More active members, more outreach, more recognition from the twin cities media
I would like to see a proper full time school (private) run by Indians for Indians (but for all the people) where the kids will learn more about India past and current
More membership; show strength in diversity of India
More recognizable force to promote Indian community economically, socially and politically
Give more visibility for the community
Function truly as an umbrella organization
Share information with various organizations to strengthen community
A group as big and powerful influencing policy makes
IAM send take strong stand on India based issues. Should be a go to organization
Become the umbrella organization
More of an ambassador of art / cultural heritage of India for the new generation
Establish a center for India
Provide social and other services to the Indians and general community
Have a cultural community center
To be seen as the organization representing the interests of all Indians in the twin cities and be closely affiliated with national Indian organization
A reliable community organization on which the community depends on
Go paperless
Be a positive and forceful spokesperson to represent the voice of India and Indians truly involving all regional and diverse groups within the Indian community
More visibility of Asian Indians of Minnesota to the broader community. This can be achieved by working together with all Indian groups in Minnesota. IAM also needs to work with other Asian groups.
Have an Indian community center (very much along the lines of Jewish community center) where all public officials feel compelled to visit speak at due to the strength (economic, cultural, visibility) of the unified Asian Indian community. Teenagers hang out . Revenue stream from corporations like NRA, ICC
Prominent twin cities based organization that works with other organization to represent Indian community
Be an influential voice in he representing the contributions and interests of the people of Indian origin to the greater MN community.
A stronger IAM thru a new membership with a goal to capture the youth and to bridge the existing community and newly arriving citizens. Also to reach out to MN community at large via service work
Social, economic developments of PIO, India

List of IAM Board Committees

Festival Of Nations		Fund Raising & Membership	
Chair Person	Ramesh Muniswamy	Chair Person	
	Nitin Patil		Rajinder Singh
	Kumud Sahgal		Prem Khera
	Ketan Gada		Nitin Patil
	Rohit Jalali		Ramesh Muniswamy
			<i>Ram Gada</i>
Festival Of India		Publicity & Web Page	
Chair Person	Bankim Desai	Chair Person	Balki Radhakrishnan
	Nitin Patil		Sumita Mitra
	Sumita Mitra		Indushekharan Nair
	Rohit Jalali		Niranjan Babu
	Prem Khera		
Full	Kumud Sahgal		Sanghamitra Sahu
Independence Day Celebration Picnic		News Letter	
Chair Person		Chair Person	Sanghamitra Sahu
	Rohit Jalali		Anil Kaul
	Kumud Sahgal		Prem Khera
	<i>Ketan Gada</i>		Manju Parikh
	<i>Shalini</i>		Niranjan Babu
Annual Dinner		Community Services	
Chair Person	Rabinder Bains	Chair Person	Preeti Mathur
	Deep Shikha		Ketan Gada
	Balki Radhakrishnan		Bankim Desai
	Ketan Gada	Full	Manju Parikh
	Dilip Mallick		
Awards & Recognition		Youth Program	
Chair Person	Rabinder Bains	Chair Person	Rohit Jalali
	Deep Shikha		Kumud Sahgal
	Preeti Mathur		Ketan Gada
	Mukhtar Thakur		
Full	Dilip Mallick		
History Project		Public Relations	
Chair Person	Dilip Mallick	Chair Person	Current President
	Godan		Vice President
	Ram Gada		Rajinder Singh
	Preeti Mathur		
Liason for Asia Pacific		Speakers Bureau	
Chair Person	Dilip Mallick	Chair Person	Current President
	Ashoke Mandal		
	Sarjit Bains		

IAM Presidents

Year	President	Vice President
1973 – 81	Jack Desai	
1982	F.F. Zdewek	Neena Gada
1983	F.F. Zdewek	Neena Gada
1984	F.F. Zdewek	Neena Gada
1985	F.F. Zdewek	Padu Arimali
1986	Padu Arimali	Sudhanshu Misra
1987	Sudhanshu Misra	Stefan Peterson
1988	Stefan Peterson	Vijay Balakrishnan
1989	Vijay Balakrishnan	Godan NambudariPad
1990	Godan NambudariPad	Shron Murthy
1991	Shron Murthy	Shanti Shah
1992	Shanti Shah	Jacob Cherucheri
1993	Jacob Cherucheri	Niru Misra
1994	Niru Misra	Gupthan Namboodiripad
1995	Gupthan Namboodiripad	Vasant Sukhatme
1996	Vasant Sukhatme	Sarat Mohapatra
1997	Sarat Mohapatra	Franklin Gummadi
1998	Franklin Gummadi	Bhupat Desai
1999	Bhupat Desai	Ananth Shankar
2000	Ananth Shankar	Vipin Gopal
2001	Vipin Gopal	Ashoke Mandal
2002	Ashoke Mandal	Deepshikha Gupta
2003	Deepshikha Gupta	Rabinder Bains

2004

Rabinder Bains

Dilip K. Mallik

2005

Dilip K. Mallik

Ramesh M.

Good Morning Everybody:

It is good news that on May 14, '03 IAM Board approved \$1500.00 for this year expenses for current Oral History Project on Thirty Year History of IAM.

At present, we may consider five IAM Presidents in chronological order could be interviewed as decided in the meeting on January 18, 2003. The names of IAM Presidents are as follows,

1. Jack Desai 1973 - 1981
2. F. F. Zdenek (or Nina Gada in case of Zdenek's unavailability) 1982 - 1985
3. Stefan Peterson 1988
4. Godan Nambudiripad 1990
5. Niru Misra 1994

I am continuing to collect past materials and documents that relevant to IAM's history need to be told. I'd like to have advice from Jim Fogerty to short out important memorabilia from the total collections that will be tentatively completed by Nov. 2003. I am going for vacation to Kolkata from May 22 to June 25, '03. I'll contact you when I'll get back to Twin City.

Thanks,

Dilip Mallick

763 546 9393

INDIA ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

A COMMENT

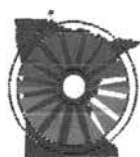
In 1993 I was introduced to Godan Nambudiripad and Ram Gada of the India Association of Minnesota. The Minnesota Historical Society's new Minnesota History Center building had opened the previous autumn, and in touring the building exhibits and its Library, neither Godan nor Ram had found much on the history of Minnesotans who had come to the state from India. They asked to meet with me to discuss how that reality might be addressed.

The result of that meeting became the first oral history project of the India Association of Minnesota. The sixteen narrators in that project, chosen with an eye to diversity of birthplace in India and religion, provided remarkable perspective on their lives and on the many facets of adjustment to American life and culture, and to settlement in Minnesota. The success of that project, and the rich historical information it provided, launched a joint effort of the Society and the India Association to ensure ongoing documentation of Minnesota's important and growing Indian community. The first project was funded with grants from The Pillsbury Company and the Minnesota Historical Society's Research Program and Oral History Office.

The second project to come from this joint effort contained fifteen interviews with the second generation – the largely born in the U.S. generation of Indian-Americans. A third oral history project dealt with another group of Minnesotans of Indian descent, and a fourth project covered the history of the School of India for Languages and Culture – one of the finest such institutions in the United States. A fifth project will begin shortly to chronicle this history of the India Association of Minnesota. The advisory group for these project has grown to include Preeti Mathur, who organized the SILC oral history project, and Dilip Mallick, who is leading the IAM project.

It remains a great pleasure for me to work with members of the India Association of Minnesota's Oral History Committee, and with other members of the Indian community as well. Their ready appreciation of history, exceptional organizational skills, and generous commitment of time and talent have made the accomplishment of both projects a genuine delight. On behalf of the Minnesota Historical Society and its mission to document all Minnesotans, I am especially grateful for the productive and supportive relationship which these projects have made possible.

*James E. Fogerty
Head, Acquisitions and
Curatorial Department
Minnesota Historical Society*



Good Morning Everybody:

Finally I have completed a task of selecting five IAM Ex-Presidents/ Ex-Vice-President to be the narrators of the IAM's thirty years History from 1973 to 2003. I individually discussed with them regarding the project and invited them to join in the project voluntarily.

The names of five IAM Ex-Presidents/ Ex-Vice-President those are agreed to take part are as follows,

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Neena Gada | Vice-President (1982 – 1984); Hm Ph# 651-636-1075 |
| 2. Shanti Shah | President 1992; Hm Ph# 952-934-1667 |
| 3. Niru Misra | President 1994; Hm Ph# 651-483-4279 |
| 4. Vasant Sukhatme | President 1996; Hm Ph# 651-429-6796 |
| 5. Franklin Gummadi | President 1998; Hm Ph# 651-636-6239 |

Please contact me if you have any question.

Thanks,
Dilip Mallick
763 546 9393

Minnesota Historical Society Facts & Information

The Minnesota Historical Society puts history at your fingertips. At the History Center, everyone – families with children, teenagers, tourists or international scholars – can capture a piece of history, from family stories to community politics. Across the state, 23 historic sites draw you into the past at the places where history happened.

The Society's services are designed around the belief that history starts with people. These services include:

- a state-of-the-art **Library** with access to the Society's collections of objects, books and photographs, films, and oral histories.
- the **History Center museum galleries**, where exhibits are meant to be seen, heard and touched;
- the **MacMillan Education Center**, designed for hands-on learning for students and school groups;
- the **Minnesota Historical Society Press**, the state's oldest publisher, which offers more than 200 titles and provides grants for researchers;
- the **State Historic Preservation Office**, which advocates for the preservation of the state's irreplaceable historic and archaeological resources; and
- a state-wide **network of 23 historic sites**.

SLIDES FOR DILIP MALLICK

1. **Minnesota History Center**
The home of the Minnesota Historical Society
The India Association of MN and SILC projects are all at the History Center
- ✓ 2. **The narrators from the first IAM oral history project**
This photo was taken at the first project celebration at the History Center
- ✓ 3. **The narrators from the second oral history project**
- ✓ 4. **A group of SILC student sing the Indian national anthem**
- ✓ 5. **SILC students gather to celebrate the completion of the SILC oral history project**
6. **SILC students at the History Center**
7. **The audience at the third India oral history project celebration**
- ✓ 8. **Michael Fox of the Minnesota Historical Society congratulates Ashoke Mandal and Ram Gada on completion of the third IAM-sponsored oral history project.**
- ✓ 9. **Michael Fox accepts records of the School of India for Languages and Culture from Preeti Mathur.**

IAM News

India Association of Minnesota (IAM) Newsletter

Summer 2001

Volume 8, Issue 2

IAM 2001 Board Officers

President	Vipin Gopal (651) 604-0476
Vice President	Ashoke Mandal (763) 478-8163
Treasurer	Dilip Mallick (763) 546-9393
Secretary	Kumud Sahgal (952) 401-7548

IAM 2001 Board Members

Iqbal Ahmed	(763) 572-8071
Azher Ansari	(651) 882-1844
Rabinder Bains	(651) 735-4322
Dharam Bobra	(763) 559-1061
Rajeev Goyal	(952) 997-3426
Deepshika Gupta	(651) 454-2124
Mary Gupta	(651) 483-4904
Preeti Mathur	(651) 483-0793
Karla Melvin	(612) 721-1173
Vatsal Munshi	(763) 566-9175
Surya Pidaparti	(612) 456-0154
Vijay Rajamani	(612) 617-9377
Sunder Rajan	(651) 738-7116
Saila Rao	(651) 735-5525
Ananth Shankar	(651) 730-5966
Vidhya Shanker	(612) 338-0633
Govind Vatasery	(651) 699-9498

IAM Newsletter Committee

Rabinder Bains ♦ Vidhya Shanker



MINNESOTA
HUMANITIES
COMMISSION

IAM News is made possible in part through funding from the Minnesota Humanities Commission, in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Minnesota State legislature.

From the President's Desk

Vipin Gopal

The first half of 2001 has been one of significant accomplishments for IAM. A lot of volunteer work has gone into these activities, and I would like to thank each and every one of these individuals who helped make all our endeavors during this period a huge success.

Our first major event for the year, the Annual Dinner held on February 18, was a roaring success. About 150 people attended the Dinner at the Airport Marriot, the largest attendance ever for an IAM Annual Dinner. Mayor Norm Coleman of St. Paul delivered the keynote speech for the evening. State Senator Satveer Choudhary was awarded the IAM Annual Achievement Award. State Senator Randy Kelly and Prof. Bruce Corrie also addressed the audience. The event received significant coverage in the Indian American press. Also, many of you were active participants in the Festival of Nations held at the Touchstone Energy Place (formerly River Center), in St. Paul on May 3-6. As in the previous years, we were deeply involved in the Festival through our participation in the Café, Cultural Exhibit, Dance Programs, Bazaar, and the Fashion Show.

Personally, I had the opportunity to visit the earthquake-affected areas in Gujarat during the first week of April, as part of the Indian American team that accompanied former President Bill Clinton during his recent visit to this area. While I was devastated to see the damage inflicted by the massive earthquake, I was heartened by the initiatives taken up by the Indian American Community to help the people of Gujarat in this hour of need. I am proud to say that our community in Minnesota has been extremely active in demonstrating our share of support. India Association has been working with Gujarati Samaj and other community organizations towards the "India Earthquake Relief Fund", which has raised about \$275,000. We will adopt the village of Vijaypar for rehabilitation of all families and work with the organization CARE towards implementing this project. Special words of appreciation to a large number of volunteers who have dedicated countless hours, and the individuals and corporations who have contributed generously, towards this effort. Without their support, the largest fundraising activity of its kind for our community in Minnesota, would not have been possible.

The recent census data has shown that Indians are the fastest growing Asian group in the United States, and is now the third largest. In Minnesota, the Asian-Indian population has more than doubled to 16,887. With the increased numbers come better visibility and stature as well as bigger responsibilities, for the community as a whole. The Indian American community in Minnesota is making great strides in various spheres of life. IAM is an integral part of such community endeavors: the recent extensive media coverage of our activities is a testimony to our contributions to the community, and our long history in acting as an umbrella organization. I would encourage you all to become active participants of IAM, if you are not doing so already. If you would like to learn more about the organization, you are welcome to come to the monthly Board Meetings of IAM, held on the second Wednesday of every month, at 7 p.m. at the International Institute of Minnesota. Also, please mark your calendars - **the Summer Picnic will be held on August 19, at Snail Lake Park.**

THE ANNUAL DINNER HAS ARRIVED!

Preeti Mathur

The India Association of Minnesota's Annual Dinner (held on February 18 at the Hotel Airport Marriott) can go down in IAM history as one of the most successful and best-attended. A record number of people who came that evening were treated to a very tasty and elegant Indian dinner and to an impressive array of speakers, including the Honorable Norm Coleman, Mayor of St. Paul.

Welcoming the audience, IAM President, Vipin Gopal reviewed the contributions of the Indian-American community and gave a history of IAM. He also expressed his sadness at the devastation in Gujarat after the earthquake and pledged to donate 50% of the proceeds from the dinner towards the Earthquake Relief Fund. He reviewed the other fund-raising efforts made by the Gujarati Samaj and other organizations, and appealed to everyone to contribute generously - a message echoed by all the speakers.

Keynote speaker, Norm Coleman, the Honorable Mayor of St. Paul, with his characteristic humorous and relaxed speaking style, extolled the positive examples set by both U.S. and India in their roles as world's largest democracies. He remarked on how they have demonstrated that it is the power of people and not necessarily of the government that makes the economy move forward.

Satveer Chaudhary, the youngest member and only Asian-American in the Minnesota State Senate, was honored with the "2001 Achievement Award." Thanking his supporters and well-wishers, he said that he would do his best to work on matters of importance to the Indian-American community.

Dr Bruce Corrie, recipient of the 2000 Asian-Pacific Council Award, and a professor of Economics at Concordia University, shared his views with examples of how ethnic minorities and new immigrants could contribute positively to the state and the nation. He mentioned the venue and the ethnic food for the dinner as examples of how local businesses (such as the Marriott) were recognizing the growing economic power of the Indian community in the Twin Cities - a few years earlier, such venues would have insisted on providing their own selection of western food.

State Senator Randy Kelly (who was present as a guest of Senator Choudhary) spoke of his appreciation for the opportunity of seeing the community first-hand. He expressed his sympathy for those affected by the Gujarat earthquake, and his support for the Indian-American community in its effort to help the victims.

The evening ended with a vote of thanks from Ashoke Mandal, (Vice-President of IAM) to the IAM Board members who organized the event, and to all the guests who attended to make the dinner such a grand success.



Photo-op

From left to right: Kumud Sahgal, Vipin Gopal, Ashoke Mandal, Satveer Choudhary, Norm Coleman, Bruce Corrie, Randy Kelly, Dilip Mallick.

A politician's dream: an extremely polite & attentive audience



FESTIVAL OF NATIONS: A FEAST OF TRADITIONS

Rabinder Bains

The Festival of Nations was held at the RiverCentre in St. Paul, May 3-6, 2001. This is an annual event organized by the International Institute of Minnesota to stimulate awareness and understanding of ethnic groups in Minnesota, through ethnic cultural exhibits, cafes, bazaars and dances. This program began in 1932 at the suggestion of Alice Sickels, the International Institute's first director. The International Institute of Minnesota is a non-profit organization, which supports programs to teach English as a second language and holds free classes for USA citizenship. It also offers the use of its facilities for meetings and other events to non-profit organizations, e.g. IAM, at little or no cost. The Festival of Nations is the main fund-raiser for the International Institute to support its activities.

IAM coordinated the participation of the Indian community in the Festival of Nations under the chairmanship of Dilip Mallick. We fielded a full offering of an adult dance, a children's dance, a fashion show, a cultural exhibit booth, as well as the India Café and participation in the bazaar.

The special theme of the festival this year was 'costumes and accessories'. The Indian cultural exhibit showcased Indian dance costumes from different regions of India. The following people lent items for the exhibit: Rita Mustaphi (Katha Dance Theater) - Kathak and Manipuri costumes and adornments; Aparna Mandal - Bharat Natyam costume and adornments; and Nina Gada - Garba costume and adornments. Numerous volunteers helped to set up the booth and staffed it during the festival to answer questions from the visitors. Sanghamitra Sahu and Sunil Menon coordinated the organization of the booth. It was judged as one of the best exhibits at the Festival this year!



Thirty-four students from The School of Indian Languages and Culture (SILC) performed a Kashmiri folk dance. Rajinder & Nina Singh, and Manpreet Kaur, choreographed the dance. The girls in the picture above are from the SILC dance group, wearing their dance costumes. The adult dance was a ladies' folk dance from southern India. For the first time this year there was an Indian fashion show at the Festival of Nations, coordinated by Naseem Kassim. There was also an Indian café and bazaar, as usual. Henna was the hit of the festival - many visitors had their hands adorned with henna.

An event of this magnitude takes many hours of dedicated work. Thanks goes to all the volunteers who willingly gave up their time to make this event a success. Many of the volunteers are IAM members, both from the board and the general membership. I would not be far of the mark if I said there were **over a hundred volunteers** who made this event possible. **THANK YOU ALL!**

A HISTORY OF ... THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Vidhya Shanker, IAM-Oral History Project liaison

"We do not need to proselytise either by our speech or by our writing. We can only do so really with our lives. Let our lives be open books for all to study." M.K. Gandhi

In 1991, members of the Indian community raised the lack of Asian Indians' representation at the History Center, even in exhibitions supposedly documenting the history of Asians in Minnesota, with the Minnesota Historical Society. By 1994, the Oral History Project had begun.

Phase I, which began in 1996, consisted of the selection of 16 Indians – from diverse religions, professions, genders, and regions within the diaspora – who had immigrated to Minnesota, to be interviewed. The interviews were taped, transcribed, and then bound. This process was funded through a \$500 donation from Pillsbury and a contribution of approximately \$3500 from the Historical Society.

In 1999, Phase II began. Fifteen additional people from the next generation of Indians, many of whom are children of those interviewed in the 1996 batch, were interviewed. This Phase was funded primarily through allocations from the India Association of Minnesota and the Hindu Society, as well as through smaller donations from throughout the community. Records and relics of the past generously contributed by Surendra Chaudhury and SILC added to the richness of this history of Minnesota's Indian community.

Those working in occupations outside the professions included in the first phase (particularly software professionals), as well as those living outside the metropolitan area, have been interviewed in Phase III (which is now nearing completion), and these interviews are being transcribed and bound. This Phase was funded through an allocation from IAM and a grant from the Historical Society.

Additionally, somewhat separately from these 3 phases, current and former students and teachers from SILC have been interviewed, and this process was funded through SILC itself. Bound copies of the transcriptions of these interviews are expected in the near future.

The next phase of the Oral History Project will detail the origins and evolution of IAM. This involves compiling names of people to be interviewed and assembling all documents and records (e.g. minutes, newsletters, clippings, etc.). **Anyone in the community who would like to participate in this process by being interviewed or contributing documents that would shed light on the history of IAM is encouraged to contact Vidhya Shanker at 612-341-6566.** Keep in mind that the results of this Oral History project are

available to members of the public at the History Center, whose motivation consists largely of encouraging the Indian American community to visit and participate in its programming. IAM's motivation in helping fund the last two phases and in serving as the subject of the upcoming fourth phase is to help our community and the general public gain a deeper understanding of Indians' history in Minnesota.

INDIANS SHOULD PARTICIPATE MORE

Mukhtar Thakur

There is a great and ongoing need for Indians to participate in various ways to get their voice heard in the cacophony of voices that permeate the American socio-political system. What is often forgotten is that we came here to obtain "freedom" in many ways - politically, socially, culturally - freedom to live our lives in our own way. This is precious and needs to be guarded, maintained and nurtured while living and assimilating in a foreign land. We are participating in American society by working here, earning income, paying taxes, and raising our children here: in short, we are living our lives here. Many also vote in elections; many more SHOULD register to vote.

However, we need to do more! In East Africa, and other parts of the world, resident Indian communities did not choose to participate in the political process - even after being offered opportunities by the departing colonial powers; the result is there for all to see. Idi Amin's expulsion of the Asians in Uganda is the very extreme of what is happening in many parts of the world. Not participating in all levels of the "local" society to share views and get your views heard could cause long term hurt to the community.

We have a right to determine how our tax dollars are used – in education, transportation or healthcare for example. Does our community need more ethnically acceptable education - vegetarian or special meals in schools, colleges; and old people's homes? We are going to get old here! That much is guaranteed. Do we need bi-lingual translators in hospitals and nursing homes? If we say we do – and increasing numbers of Indians are realizing that we do - then we have to organize and participate: make our case for our needs, and then we may stand a chance. Individually we cannot deliver every service the community might need; collectively we stand a chance.

These comments were a result of sitting in on a 'visioning' session held by the state body of the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans. Some 50 Asians attended this important session but very few of those attendees were Indians. Indians have to carry their share of the burden of responsibility so that appropriate entities are

informed of the needs of our community - whether cultural, linguistic, food, or other aspects. Multicultural food and hospital translators were some of the top stated needs.

Another important consideration for our community is a better streetscape and snow maintenance for Central Avenue - how are we going to achieve that? How often do you visit the stores to rent that new video or buy chapatti flour and oil and lenga choli and have to walk through slush and snow to get to the store? Would better street lighting help? How about smoother walkways? The key here is to differentiate our specific needs, bring a focus and priority to them, and then lobby appropriately for the needs from the respective entities - sometimes it may mean joining forces with other ethnic communities to do so. Remember that we have to participate - the squeaky wheel gets oiled!

There are many ways to get involved - volunteers are constantly needed: announcements regularly go out at temples, mosques, gurdwaras, and on SANGAM radio program about events - listen and turn up to help. Participate in other 'global' community needs - Red Cross, hospitals, libraries, school boards and so on. Start your own group if you feel that this is necessary – then join forces with others. Join and give your time to the India Association of Minnesota.

The successful local response to recent events in Gujarat- the human tragedy created by the earthquake- provides a clear example of what the community can achieve when it chooses to focus on a common goal and sets aside any regional differences.

SCHOOL OF INDIA FOR LANGUAGES AND CULTURE (SILC)

Sunil Menon

Mark your calendars - SILC is reopening for the new school year on **September 8th, 2001!** Classes are held every Saturday at Como Park Senior High, and the school year runs from September till May.

SILC was started in 1979 with the goals of teaching students Indian languages, and helping them appreciate the diversity of Indian culture. We welcome people of all backgrounds. Our current mix of parents includes those of Indian descent, parents with adopted children from the Indian subcontinent, bi-racial parents, people who are studying Indian culture, and people who are planning to travel to India.

We currently offer classes in Hindi, Malayalam, Punjabi, Telugu, and Tamil for all ages. We also offer classes in Indian social studies, art, dance, music, and yoga for all the grade levels. SILC offers special project-based activities for new and returning students looking

for challenges. We offer a novel pre-school program for children under the age of 6 years - this class meets once a month. Our students participate at the Festival of Nations and the Festival of India and other such events every year. SILC is a non-profit organization - all staff and board members are volunteers.

Join us for the first day of class on **Saturday September 8th at 12:30pm** when we will have class registration and an open house. The school fees are \$100 per student for the school year (reduced rates for more than one child). The Como Park Senior High School is at: **740 West Rose Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55117.** For further information about the classes, contact:

Sunil Menon : 763-593-1403

Email: silc_mn@yahoo.com

Web: www.geocities.com/silc_mn

Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering to teach any of the classes as well!

Directions to Como Park Senior High School:

(From I-94 eastbound)

- Exit on Dale Street and take a left (heading North)
- Take a left on Maryland Avenue.
- Take a left at the first 4-way STOP sign
- Enter parking lot on right; SILC classes are held in the building opposite this lot.

SILC STUDENT WINS LETTER -WRITING COMPETITION AND GETS A TOUR OF THE WHITE HOUSE

Sunil Menon

SILC student Rajan Nayar (age 10) wrote a letter to President George W. Bush in April of this year, as part of the "Dear Mr. President" write-in competition which was sponsored by Penn State Public Broadcasting's "What's in the news" current affairs TV program. He was one of the eight winners of this competition (out of 1500 entrants), and was invited to the White House to meet with President Bush. Part of the visit was broadcast live on CNN, and the eight winning contestants also read their letters on a special edition of the sponsoring PBS program. He wrote about the fact that there were many homeless and poor people in this rich country, whom the President should try to help. Rajan asked the President a straightforward question in his letter: "How about it, Mr. President? Is this doable?"

Rajan was a fourth grader at Royal Oaks Elementary School in Woodbury when he wrote the letter. He attends SILC with his younger sister, Sonia. Congratulations to Rajan!!

It's IAM Picnic Time

Come one, come all!

The India Association of Minnesota (IAM) invites you to join in the annual Independence Day Picnic and summer fun.

When: Sunday, August 19, 2001
12 noon to 5 p.m.

Where: Snail Lake Park
Shoreview (see directions below)

What: Flag hoisting at 12:45 p.m.
Picnic lunch and more:

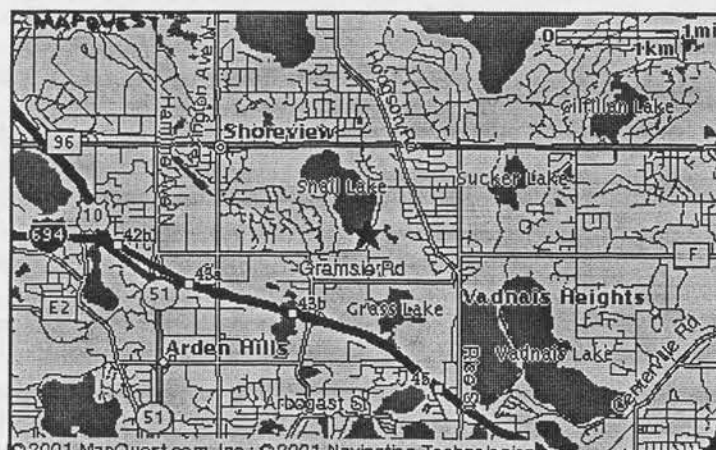


- * Door prizes * Soccer * Volleyball
- * Swimming * Games for kids

Lunch cost: \$5 per adult. Free for children below age 5

For more information, call Mary at (651) 483-4904 or Vipin at (651) 604-0476.

Visit the IAM Web site:
www.iamn.org



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Snail Lake Regional Park, consisting of 450 acres, is located in the City of Shoreview in the north-central part of Ramsey County. At the center of Snail Lake Regional Park are the swimming beach and picnic area on Snail Lake. This area includes parking lots, boat launch and hike/bike trails.

The park's extensive areas of oak woods, wetlands and grasslands provide habitat for many species of wildlife, including deer, fox, heron, egrets and waterfowl.

Snail Lake Park
4191 Snail Lake Blvd.
Shoreview, MN 55126
Phone: (612) 748-2500

Directions from Rice Street: From I-694, exit at Rice Street and go north. When the road forks (straight to Hodgson Road, right to Rice Street), stay on Hodgson Road. Within two or three blocks, turn left on Snail Lake Blvd. and go about 1 mile. The park is on the right.

Directions from Victoria Street: From I-694, exit at Victoria Street; go north for about 1.5 miles, turn right on Snail Lake Blvd. and follow for a few blocks. The park is on the left.

Directions from 35W: Exit at Hwy. 96 and go east to Snail Lake Blvd. (2nd traffic light after Lexington Avenue). Turn right and continue on Snail Lake Blvd. until you see the park on the right side.

Free entrance to the park. IAM picnic shelter is the largest one on top of the hill.

IAM Membership Application/Renewal Form

1. ☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL 2. Today's Date _____
3. Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
4. Last Name of Spouse _____ First Name _____
5. Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
6. Phone : () - . Fax : () -
7. E-Mail Address _____
- 8 Profession/Business _____ (Optional)
9. Children living with you :
Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____
Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____
10. Membership Type : Check One
☐ Individual (\$15.00- 1 Year)
☐ Family (☐ \$20.00 - 1 Year, ☐ \$40.00 - 3 Years, ☐ \$200.00 - Life)
11. Yes ! I want to be an active member. Please contact me for the following activities
☐ Community Service ☐ Festival of India ☐ Newsletter ☐ Speaker's Bureau
☐ Host Family Program ☐ Festival of Nations ☐ Youth Activities ☐ Web Page
☐ History Project ☐ 55+ Club ☐ Asian Indian Women's Association

Please mail your membership form to:

THE INDIA ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA
P.O.BOX 130158
ST. PAUL, MN 55113

<i>Festival of India – Sunday October 7th</i>	Overall coordinator :	Preeti Mathur	(651) 483-0793
	Stage program:	Deepshika Gupta	(651) 454-2124
		Kumud Sahgal	(952) 401-7548
	Exhibits/tables:	Vatsal Munshi	(763) 566-9175
<i>Youth Dance – late fall</i>	Coordinator:	Rabinder Bains	(651) 735-4322

◆ ◆



Mathur, Anoop & Preeti
300 Harbor Ln
Shoreview MN55126



History of IAM History Project

(Godan Nambudiripad)

Dec. 7, 2002

(Check out <http://www.mnhs.org/library/oralhistory/india.html> and the collection of oral histories at Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul.)

Time Line

1. 1991 summer - Traveling Exhibit on Asians in Minnesota from Minnesota Historical Society spotted without Indians being represented.
2. 1992 spring - India Club (Predecessor to IAM) committee met on historical preservation.
3. 1992 - 93 - Idea generation, contact with Minnesota Historical Society, their training and direction towards "Oral History"
4. 1994 - Pillsbury Company grant for \$500 to Godan Nambudiripad for buying recording equipment.
5. 1994 - Minnesota Historical Society grant to Polly Sonifer for \$ 3450
6. June 1994 - Jan. '95 - Interviews of first generation Indians
7. Sept. 1995 - Celebration of the completion of the first 15 interviews.
8. 1997 Funds raised by History Committee for doing the history of "Next generation"
9. 1998 Interviews of "Next Generation" started.
10. May 1998 - IAM Receives a grant from MN Historical Society for \$2000 15 interviews almost completed.
11. Oct. 1999 - Celebrated the "Next Generation" and - kicked off the preservation of first institutional history - SILC by donating archival records and - donated about 30 cassettes of recording of and Indian radio program which ran in 1976 in Minnesota (Chaudhury, Abhishekar et al.)
12. Nov. 1999 - SILC history interviews started.
13. October 2002 - celebration of SILC and Phase 3 of Oral History and donation of these to Minnesota Historical Society.
14. Next project: History of India Association of Minnesota

A Brief History of the History Project

In the summer of 1991 we happened to see a traveling display of Asian Immigrants to Minnesota which was borrowed from the Minnesota Historical Society. India was not represented. We approached the Minnesota Historical Society. First we met with David Nysteen of the Extension services of the Society. After much discussion with him he introduced us to Jim Fogerty who heads acquisitions and curatorial department. He advised that oral history would be one of the most valuable contributions we can make for this cause. This will be available forever for

researchers. The Historical Society also provided us with training, which stretched over a few nights.

This effort was lot of supported by Board of India Club (predecessor to IAM) especially Rahim Rahiman who made the initial contacts with the Minnesota Historical Society. Ram Gada, Ella Baldwin and Polly Sonifer were some of the people came to many meetings and the training.

In 1994 Godan Nambudiripad got a grant of \$500 and soon Polly Sonifer got a grant from the Historical Society. Thus we started the effort of writing the Oral History in 1994. Questionnaires were developed and narrators were selected. Selecting the narrators was tough. How does one select about 20 people to represent the cross section of those immigrated to Minnesota. Our criteria of people of Indian origin included people whose ancestors had migrated to other parts of the world, besides the people who came direct from India. Polly was the interviewer and transcriber. We were learning the logistics. We lost a few interviews because of misunderstandings. Some of the people earmarked for the first interviews passed away or otherwise became unavailable. During 1994 and 1995 Polly Sonifer interviewed 19 people which yielded 16 narrations.

In September of 1996 we had a special celebration to mark the completion of this series. That was grand event attended also by the Consul General of India at Chicago, Mr. K. R. Sinha.

Since then we have done oral history 16 people who grew up here capturing their struggles in growing up in two cultures. We are in the process of completing another series, which include the short timer computer professionals, and people who live out state, away from the Twin Cities. Their experience is different from the professionals and businessmen who first came here in the late 60's and early 70's.

The project of the youth was funded mainly by money raised from the public by the History Committee. On major donor was the Hindu Society with a grant of \$500. IAM had pledged \$750 and we used about \$400 of that, the remainder was small donations from the public. Again Polly Sonifer was the interviewer, but Minnesota Historical Society helped with transcription, which is a very tedious job. We celebrated this on Oct. 2, 1999.

IAM received a grant of \$2000 from the Minnesota Historical Society for the next phase of our project. IAM committed \$500. We also used another interviewer, Diana Kenny. This Phase 3 project is now completed.

Besides all the people who volunteered to be the narrators and the History Committee of IAM, the very committed effort of Polly Sonifer over the years and now Diana Kenny; and help, encouragement and counsel of Jim Fogerty, grants from the Pillsbury Company, The Minnesota Historical Society the Minnesota Historical Society, donation from the Hindu Society are all the factors that has made this project possible. Rahim Rahiman for initial contacts with the Minnesota Historical Society, Ella Baldwin in helping compile the initial list of questions and Preeti Mathur for publicity all have contributed.

Along with its 20 Th. anniversary celebrations SILC raised enough money to an oral history. This is also completed.

We celebrated the SILC and IAM phase 3 this October.

IAM Board has committed to writing its' history and this will be started as the next project.

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Oral History Project celebration

by Haridas Gori*

MINNESOTA - India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC) in collaboration with Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) celebrated the completion of the joint project of recording and preserving the history and rich heritage of Minnesota's Asian-Indian communities.

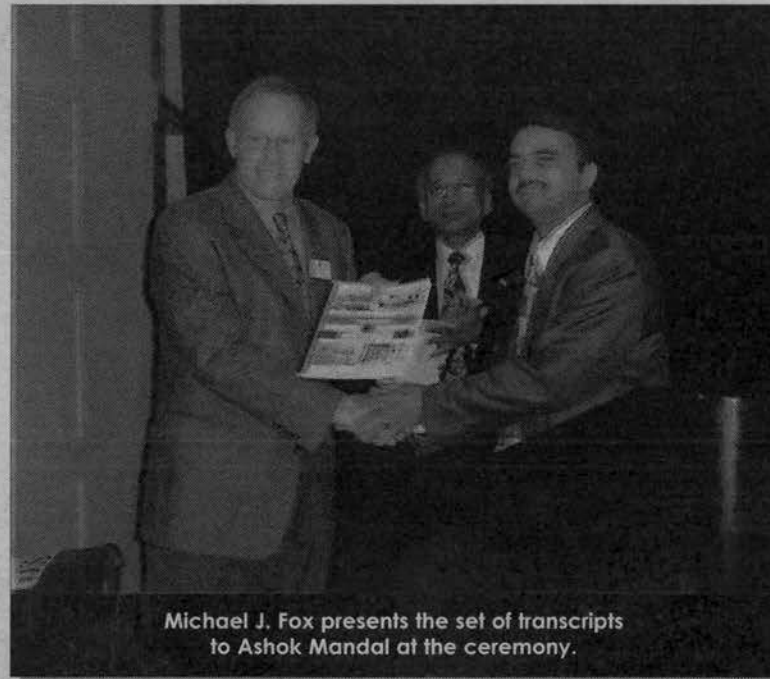
The function was held at the Minnesota Historical Society and was attended by a large number of members of Indian community and students of SILC. It started with "Vande Matram," sung by the students of SILC. Michael J. Fox, Assistant Director of Minnesota Historical Society-Library and Archives, welcomed the guests with inspiring words and a promise for future project cooperation and support from the MHS.

James Fogerty gave background information about the Society. He said that the Society was founded in 1849 and is the nation's premier state

historical society. It collects, preserves, and tells the story of Minnesota's past through innovative museum exhibits, its extensive collections, libraries and educational programs, historic sites, and book publishing.

It was way back in 1991, when Godan Nambudripad who happened to see a traveling display of "Asian Immigrants to Minnesota" by MHS without any reference or mention of Asian-Indian immigrants, that he decided to do something about it. He proposed to the India Club (predecessor of IAM) to set up a History Committee who would outline objectives and an action plan to start a history project. Guided by Jim Fogerty and David Nysteen of MHS, Godan and Rahim pursued the project of recording experiences of Asian-Indian Immigrants to Minnesota.

After receiving a grant of \$500 from Pillsbury Company and \$3,500 from MHS in 1994, the Committee was joined by Polly Sonifer to identify



about 15 to 20 narrators from the local Indian community whose experiences would convey their trials and tribulations of coming to Minnesota

and settling in. "The task of selection was very difficult," said Ram Gada of the History Committee, "because we have many religions, speak over 15

languages, and have over 22 states and territories." These 16 oral histories (tapes and transcripts) are preserved as permanent records at MHS for public reading, research projects, and for the future generations.

A set each of the Transcripts was presented to Ashok Mandal, President, IAM and to Chitra Subramanian, President, SILC by Michael J. Fox of MHS. Preeti Mathur of SILC presented an old electronic gadget to MHS for their archives, which she used to use for typing, cutting, and pasting SILC programs, way back in the early '90s.

The program ended with a beautiful Bharatnatyam dance recital by the students of Ragamala Music & Dance Theater—Parvathi Jithendranathan, Pallavi Kannan, and Sarah Gerdes—and a solo Kathak dance by Rita Mustaphi, Founder of Katha Dance Theater.

*Photo by Haridas Gori

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INDIA ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA
SCHOOL OF INDIA FOR LANUAGES AND CULTURE**

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS CELEBRATION
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORY CENTER
3M Auditorium**

5 October 2002

2:00 p.m.

***Vande Mataram* – SILC Students**

**Welcome, Minnesota Historical Society
Michael J. Fox, Assistant Director for Library and Archives**

**The Minnesota Historical Society Oral History Program
James E. Fogerty**

**The India Association Oral History Project
Godan Nambudiripad**

**Introduction of Narrators and Presentation of Individual Transcripts
Polly Sonifer
James E. Fogerty**

**Presentation of Transcript Set to India Association of Minnesota
President, Ashoke Mandal**

**Presentation of Transcript Set to School of India for Languages and Culture
President, Chitra Subramanian**

By Michael J. Fox, Assistant Director for Library and Archives

**Presentation of SILC Memorabilia to Minnesota Historical Society
Preeti Mathur**

**Announcement of India Association of Minnesota Oral History Project
Bankim Desai**

Presentations by Ragamala Music and Dance Theater / Katha Dance Theater

Vote of Thanks Ram Gada

Reception Following in the Heffelfinger Room, Café Minnesota

ORAL HISTORY OF IAM QUESTIONS

Here's my list of tentative questions for the India Association of Minnesota. Jim Fogerty has reviewed them and his suggestions have been included in this listing.

- 1) Who are you, and when did you come to USA (if immigrant)?
- 2) Gather brief history of their time in India, their background there, and what inspired them to immigrate and when.
- 3) What inspired you to get involved in India Club/Association? What year was it? Who did you know in the group?
- 4) What projects caught your attention? How did you get involved in them? Why?
- 5) What changes have you seen over the years in IAM?
- 6) Have there been any controversial issues which were challenging for the organization to overcome? How did they work through them?
- 7) Do events in India have any effect within IAM in Minnesota? How so? Name one and how it affected IAM and it's members.
- 8) Has IAM brought together the various ethnic/religious/language groups? How was that accomplished? What difference has it made in that arena? Any stunning successes? Any unsolved challenges?
- 9) Why are you involved in IAM? If no clear response, suggest the following: a hobby? a passion? a social club? a political group? a service organization?
- 10) Where do you personally envision the organization going? How do you hope to grow or sustain it?
- 11) Any challenges you see looming for IAM in the future? Any collective vision for how to manage those?
- 12) Describe the process of changing the name? What was considered and why did it unfold as it did?
Nirumishra
- 13) Have you held any leadership roles in the organization? If so, what were they? Why did you serve in those roles? What did you learn from that?
- 14) What has been the key to the long-term life of this volunteer organization?
- 15) Are you familiar with similar organizations in other states? Which ones? How are they like or unlike IAM?
- 16) How does IAM recruit its members?
- 17) What benefits are there to individuals for joining? What attracts them?
- 18) Have more recent immigrants joined IAM? Why or why not?
- 19) Anything else you want to tell me about?

Tach vepu
Sith Peten you
Godham.

63

Polly Sonifer, Consultant

2755 Quail Avenue North
Golden Valley, Minnesota 55422
763-588-1305 fax 612-333-3968

Invoice No. 2004-1

INVOICE

Customer

Name India Asasociation of MN c/o Deilip Mallick
Address 2701 Brunswick Ave. N. #209
City Crystal State MN ZIP 55422
Phone

Date 11/14/2004
Order No.
Rep
FOB

Qty	Description	Unit Price	TOTAL
5	Oral History for India Association of MN: Neena Gada Shanti Shah Niru Misra Vasant Sukhatme Franklin Gummadi	\$250.00	\$1,250.00

Payment Details

- ☐ Cash
☒ Check
☐ Credit Card

Name
CC #
Expires

SubTotal	\$1,250.00
Shipping & Handling	\$0.00
Taxes	
State	
TOTAL	\$1,250.00

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Thanks for the Opportunity to Serve You!