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# ASIA

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# Today

Monthly Newspaper

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## New Year Celebrations A Little Something for Everyone

By Deepa Walia, January 31, 2011

It wasn't too long ago that South Asians in Arizona used to wonder where they could welcome the upcoming year in an atmosphere that brought scents of a culture they left behind to settle in their new homelands. But today...the tide has clearly turned. Today, the question is not where to welcome the upcoming year, but rather which event to choose to ring in the new year. There was something for all age groups and different interest groups to choose from – whether that be a quiet, spiritual evening at the local Mandir or Gurudwara, a youngsters party at a desi-owned Holiday Inn, or the New Year's Eve Gala at Indo-US Hall.

For pictures from the Midnight in Paris themed New Year's Eve party at Holiday Inn, see **page 8**.

For pictures from New Year's Eve at Hindu Temple of Arizona and EktaMandir, see **page 10**.

For pictures from New Year's Eve at NishkamSewaGurudwara, see **page 16**.



## India Nite 2012

Article by Deepa Walia,  
Photos by Raja Walia  
January 28, 2012

The New Year brought to the India Association of Arizona a new committee, board, and president. India Nite 2012, the first effort by this board and president, was a huge success. Held at Arcadia High School, it welcomed the entire community to come and celebrate India's 63rd Republic Day. Consisting of cultural dances, songs, music, and plays – it truly was a celebration of our homeland and culture in our homes away from home. India's Republic Day commemorates the date on which the Constitution of India came into force and replaced the Government of India Act



1935 as the governing document of India. It is a national holiday in India, and while the main parade takes place in the national Capital in New Delhi, the anniversary is celebrated in many other state capitals

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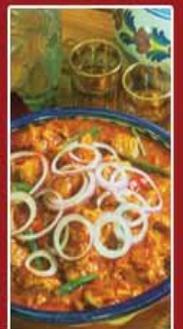
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# India Nite 2012

and centers. The tradition has now gone global as Indians living abroad celebrate this anniversary to honor and pay tribute to the heritage and history of India. Congratulations to India Association of Phoenix who hosted such a spectacular event under the leadership of newly elected President Venkat Kommineni.





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**Everything Happens for a Reason . . .  
Even the Bad Things**

Life isn't easy... anyone I say that in front of always responds with, "you can say that again." It is a simple truth – life isn't easy. It is a rollercoaster with unexpected ups and downs, but it is a unique rollercoaster in the sense that you only get one ride. You cannot ride this adventure over and over again hoping to familiarize yourself with the ups and downs so you are not so shocked when you encounter them because you only live once – at least from what you can remember!

So, when life sends you on tough roads strewn with rocks, darkness, and thorns, instead of flowers, happiness, and light, how do you keep your spirits up so you don't waste the precious moments of life given to you? I know many of us have heard this traditional South Asian belief that everything happens for a reason. We may have listened to it from one ear and taken it out another as wishful thinking from an older generation that just doesn't get it. But, if you actually take the time out to evaluate your good and bad times in life so far, you will realize the truth in this wisdom.

It is so easy to get negative and complain about why certain things happened to us and that is what we do as soon as we encounter these moments. When something positive happens, we enjoy the happiness it brings us and are content for those few moments. But how many of us actually spend the time connecting the dots on all that life has thrown our way in an attempt to understand whether the happiness that came our way would have been possible had we not gone down those difficult roads? It is a simple exercise, but one that makes an individual mentally and emotionally stronger – making them more capable of handling all that life may throw their



**Editor's NOTE**

way. When you sit down and evaluate the choices you made, the paths you chose – you will easily see that it was a combination of those choices and paths that led you to encounters such as meeting your closest friends, obtaining your dream job, finding the love of your life, amongst many others. Had you not made the tough choices or travelled the difficult paths, some of the encounters that bring the most joy to your life would never have happened. Therefore, if you cherish the outcome of those happenings, you must cherish the negativity and difficulty that led you down those paths.

When you see the connection in the turn of events your life has taken and truly believe in your heart that everything in your life is happening for a reason, no difficulty will seem too hard, no negative time will seem too long, and your heart and mind will learn to accept that something refreshingly positive will come out of whatever ordeal you may be going through at the moment. Anything that is acquired or comes easy will also depart as easily and you will not have as much value for them as those things that you have yearned and pined for or worked hard to obtain and accomplish. All the difficulty and negativity in your life is a form of yearning that will make the fruits of that labor much sweeter, giving you the ability to truly appreciate them. So, next time life throws you a curve ball, keep these words in mind and instead of getting down in your spirits, wait for the amazing, experience that is bound to enter your life as a result of that much-dreaded curve ball. Wishing everyone flowers, chocolates, and anything else that your heart desires during this month of love – Happy Valentine's Day, enjoy it with your loved ones!

**- Deepa Kaur Walia**  
Editor, Asia Today  
editor@asiatodayaz.com

Well we're finally here – 2012! Feel different? Excited? Exhilarated? I do! With the New Year, we also have the president election coming up. In my mind this is one of the most controversial presidential elections that the entire United States will be involved in. The slander and sorry "campaigns" have already started against the candidates, and they are starting to make their rounds from state to state. Facebook/Twitter... Social media in general is going to light up with the amount of involvement and personal opinion that will be circling this election. This is the first election after the Bush administration. We all know the presidency as it was in the control of Bush Jr., Any president elect following the Bush Administration was going to be under surveillance 24/7, and regardless of what he/she did would be reviewed by everyone. A lot of people have scrutinized president Obama on how he has handled the Nation and regardless of who is president, I doubt 4 years would have been sufficient time to restore an economy that took us 8+ years to run into the ground. I don't think Obama has accomplished everything that he proposed, but the economy has gotten better. Has it been him? Or has it been all of us? I don't ever think it would be just one portion of this nation that will be doing all the work. Together, I think we have helped each other and the nation get back to its feet. Let's keep the momentum going. Everyone knows it's a lot easier to break something than to build it...and we've broken it pretty good.



**Publisher's NOTE**

Thank you again for another great year, and let's look forward to another year of activities and community events to keep this community involved and growing. The next generation is coming, the more and more events we cover, the more that is very clear. Happy Lohri and happy first lohri to any couple or new born kids! May the years ahead be filled with happiness and success! I attended India Night this past month, and would like to congratulate the new team of India Association on a job well done. The performances were well put together so a big congratulations to the dance directors and the special performers. These events are always crowded and one thing that stands out to me is the parents of every kid that has a performance, have lined up at the stage with what seems like an entire audio/video setup. It's like a blockade almost, the first two rows are definitely a "no stand" and a "no talk" zone or you will get death stares. Trust me....I know. It definitely makes me happy though and puts a smile on my face and I'm glad for the kids and happy for the parents as well. It's very nice to see and I'm being 100% honest. Being involved in your kids' activities and showing passion and genuine caring is amazing! Just cut some of us news people some slack.

Happy New Year to All! The Team of Asia Today Arizona would like wish everyone a happy new year! Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

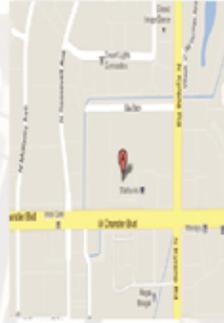
**-Raja Walia**  
Publiser, Asia Today, publisher@asiatodayaz.com

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### Venkateswara Swami Puja

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### Sunday Puja

11am - 1pm

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - Ram Parivar

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - Shri Jagannathji

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - Balaji/Krishnaji

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - Shivji

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday- Ganeshji

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**MAATA JAAGRAN DURING NAVRATRAS - MARCH 30, 2012**

# Kite Flying Uttarayan

Article by Deepa Walia,  
Photos by Manju Walia  
January 14, 2012

Indo-American Foundation and Gujarati Cultural Association, with support from Arizona Telugu Association, India Association, and BAPS, held a kite-flying festival and competition at Estrella Mountain Regional Park in Goodyear, Arizona. In many parts of India, including Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh, on January 14th during Makarsankranti, people go on their terraces and fly kites. In order to recreate that environment here, IACRF has been doing this for the last two years. Last year, this event attracted 800 people and this year, the park was filled with close to a thousand people, the largest crowd to ever visit Estrella Park on a single day.

While many attendees came for the social aspect of kite-flying to reminisce their childhoods, others competed in the Survival of the Fittest and Most Survivor with Cutting Edge competitions. The event included a workshop to teach those unfamiliar with the popular tradition and delicious Uttarayan-food courtesy of BAPS. The event was the hard work of many individuals, with detailed attention to things such as importing thousands of kites and firakis from India, and truly spoke to what the community is capable of when many organizations join hands and come together to host an event for the growing community of Arizona. The event was led by Kamlesh Patel and, along with the various organizations, 30+ volunteers came together to make this day possible. Congratulations to the organizing committees and enjoy the memories from this beautiful, family day at Estrella Mountain Regional Park.





# Indo-American Foundation of Arizona

(Registered Non-Profit Organization under Section 501 (C) (3))

Hindu and Jain Temple Ekta Mandir and Community Center,

Please Check Ekta Vision, [www.EktaMandir.org](http://www.EktaMandir.org) & [www.IndoFoundation.org](http://www.IndoFoundation.org) for more details



## Sri Venkateshwara Kalyan



**Saturday, February 4,**

7:00am Suprabhatam, 8:00 am Sudarshan Homa 10:30 am Grand Sri Venkateshwara Kalyan 12:30 PM Aarati Followed by Mahaprasad  
For Sponsorship and more information please contact  
Priest Varadarajan 602-320-3460, Priest Joshiji at 602-391-7760 & Mamta Vijay Sarathi 602 862 9956, Urmila Kumar 480-961-9781, Venkatesh 480-381-9976

## Upcoming Events

Saturday Feb. 4 - Sri Venkateshwara Kalyan 7:00 AM  
Saturday Feb. 4 - Pradosh Rudrabhishekam 6:00 PM  
Sunday Feb. 5 - Krishna Puja, 6:00 PM  
Tuesday Feb. 7 - Satyanarayan Katha 6:00 PM  
Sunday Feb. 12 - Pran Pratishtha Anniversary, 2:00 PM  
Saturday Feb. 18 - Shri Venkateshwara Abhishek 9:30 AM  
Saturday Feb. 18 - Pradosh, Rudrabhishekam 6:00 PM  
Sunday Feb. 19 - Shiv Vivah 5:00 PM  
Monday Feb. 20 - Maha Shivratri Celebration 4:30 PM  
Friday Feb. 24 - Fund Raising Banquet 7:00 PM  
Sunday Feb. 26 - Monthly Bhajan Program  
Saturday March 24 — Annual India Festival  
Saturday April 7— Musical Concert by Jaswinder Singh

## Shiv Vivah & Maha Shivratri



**Sunday, February 19, 5:00 PM**

5:00 PM Shiv Vivah Katha  
5:30 PM Shiv Barat Agman  
5:45—6:30 PM Shiv Vivah  
6:30—7:15 PM Kanya Dan  
7:30 PM Aarati & Mahaprasad  
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**Monday, February 20, 3:00 PM**

3:00—4:30 PM Jalaram Mandal Bhajan  
Abhishek on main shivling by whole Family till  
Rudrabhishek begins at 6:30 PM  
7:30 PM Maha Aarati & Mahaprasad  
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## Pran Pratishtha Anniversary

**Sunday, Feb 12, 2:00 PM onwards**

Sarvadevata Homa, Dhwaaja Arohan, Sarvadevta Puja, Jain Puja, Cultural Program. For details, Please Contact Bajarang Agrawal 602-825-7035 Munnu Bajpai 602-938-4757, Mahesh Shah 480-544-9438

## Annual India Festival

**Saturday, March 24, 10:00 AM onwards**

Vendor & Food Booths—Kul Bhushan Chhibber 480-250-0779 Cultural Program—Kalpana Batni 480-998-9325  
Please check Ekta Vision & other Websites

# Midnight in Paris...at Holiday Inn

By Deepa Walia  
December 31, 2011

Pinky and Shane Kuber have been in the valley since 1986 and started the New Year's Eve party with a group of close friends about nine years ago. At a Holiday Inn Express they owned in Mesa, Shane had built a 16,000 square foot conference center with 2 ballrooms that are 3600 square feet each. The handful of families at that time all wanted to be together at New Year's Eve but had little children so they used to pool their money together to throw their own parties that included things like their own balloon drops. It was a lot of hard work and sometimes they did everything from décor to dj'ing themselves. The party would usually be about 20-25 families as everyone invited would invite a few people here and there. As word got out, more and more people started approaching them and slowly it turned into a full-fledged elegant, coordinated affair for those with kids looking to kick off the New Year with Indian music. As demand grew, they moved the parties to the larger ballrooms in Mesa where they could accommodate up to 300 people and it was always house full. In 2009, they teamed up with Ruchi Garg Kalra to hold the party and it was a huge success.

In April of 2010, they built the Holiday Inn by the airport and decided to move the NYE Party there because it was more central, intimate, and of course brand new. 2010 hosted the first NYE party at this location with a new twist – a theme! A "White New Years Eve" where the ladies wore white and the décor was white, silver, and ice-blue all done by Pinky Patel Kuber herself was a huge success and sold out way in advance.

This year, they learned from last year and took it one step further. Pinky randomly came up with the theme "Midnight in Paris" and worked hard to find the décor to match the theme. In addition to the Eiffel Tower replica where the guests enjoyed some amazing shots, she also paid close attention to little details such as "Paris Amour" body lotion and glimmer spray in the restrooms, French Fries in the appetizers, little tuxedo napkins, and many more. There is a lot of hard work that goes into this but Pinky is grateful for all the good resources that she can rely on. They host a lot of corporate meetings, holiday parties, weddings, and beauty pageants so the staff is extremely knowledgeable. Everything from food to lighting to decorations was

done in-house. The hard work showed as the venue looked spectacular, the guests had an amazing time, and most of all families with children could be together and still have a blast ringing in the New Year. A long way from the original 12 family party, it has now become a tradition and all friends, new and old, just "expect" a party ever year. Even though it is going to get harder to get better as the years go by, Pinky is up to the challenge and we can't wait to see what she comes up with next. All she asks in return is that you all help make it a success by attending; in her own words "I can do so much to plan, but there is NO party without all of you!!!"

Asia Today's editor and publisher also rang in the New Year at this spectacular event and have nothing but positive things to say about the coordination, food, décor, theme, and evening. We are glad to share additional sentiments from their guests and pictures from this amazing evening:

"We have been attending the NYE parties for the past four years. They are unique because children can attend, so not only do we start each New Year with our family but we get to spend it with our close friends. We look forward to the themed parties, my daughters love the clown/kid entertainment. It has become a yearly tradition, perfect way to end the holidays and start a fresh year." ~Anu Patel

"I love going to Shane and Pinky's New Years' parties. There is always a good music and great company!" ~Jay Bansal

"Having been part of the NYE event from the beginning - when it was a reason for 12 close knit families to gather, to ring in the New Year, I can truly say it has always been a classy, fun and family oriented evening for all of us. Even to this day our college age children still look forward to this party and join their parents and family friends to dance the night away and welcome the new year. It has evolved and matured into a larger and better event each year. No better place to be - with good food, awesome music and great friends." ~ Jaishree Patel

Décor, food, DJ, and the entire atmosphere was amazing. It was a treat to be able to have some grown-up fun but still keep an eye out on your little ones and have the whole family together when the clock struck midnight. Thank you to Pinky and Shane for hosting a desi-style New Year's Eve party, keeping those with kids in mind."

~Sameer and Sonia Soorma



# Grand Opening of Tandoori Times 3

Article by Deepa Walia  
Photos Courtesy of Sameer Soorma  
Photography  
December 30, 2011

Tandoori Times 3 held its grand opening in grand style for its 3rd location, located inside a Holiday Inn, at 12027 N 28th Dr. in Phoenix, AZ 85029. Congratulations to the Holiday Inn and Tandoori Times teams. We are happy to showcase some moments captured during this memorable evening.



**TANDOORI TIMES**  
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# Indo-American Cultural and Religious Foundation New Year's Eve Gala and New Year's Day Celebrations at Ekta Mandir



## New Year's Celebrations at Hindu Temple of Arizona



# The Wanted Needs are now the Needed Wants

by Chuck Ross

The needs of the early 20th century that became wants beginning in the 1950's thru 21st century mindsets of President Bush's "GO SHOPPING" as a response to the 9/11 attacks?? He must have felt pretty sure that it was an inside job and there was no real threat from the outside, sending the happy machine consumer back into the malls...which would have been easy public targets. Unless of course he was pressured by his corporate cronies of profits to get them into TARGET no matter if they are a TARGET...

Those needs vs. wants were all started by Sigmund Freud's American nephew Edward Bernays. The mass marketing genius that was the early mentor for Madison Ave marketing and psychology manipulations of the masses. In a nutshell, How to control the crowd in the mass democratic societies. Béarnaise showed the corporations how to market their products by manipulating the hidden secret desires of the consumer. This had two benefits to the final effect.. The first was to establish PROFITS thru

these manipulations and second... Control The People by keeping them docile and Happy by becoming the all consuming self. HAPPY MACHINES of CONSUMERISM within that pacifistic capitalistic society...which is in no way a true democracy .

A second effect but just as important It keeps the masses docile if they have a WAL MART near by. At least they are manipulated to believe the marketing delusions.

This real estate "developoo" of the broke brokers attitude has successfully ripped the face off of America as it was still living and breathing on RAW hamburger Wars... ,just think of the movie "FACEOFF".. the real America is not what the real America is ??? Its not what it looks like or what you think it is. Uncle SAM is now really the alter ego of self and he not your Uncle...just drive down ROUTE 66 where the mom and Pops once thrived are now replaced with a golden arch or a pizza burrito with GAS....a far cry from moms cooking. Or what route 66 was really all about...now it's a Disney produced façade of itself if you can find it..

the few remaining miles...

The first stunt to prove his point, Edward Bernays in 1913 had New York City debutantes smoke cigarettes while they were in the Macys Easter Day parade they walked down Fifth Ave smoking sexual Lucky Strikes. These "torches of freedom" Which labeled them rebels and later "suffer jets" gave women voting rights ..once the corporations saw that powerful response they have been hooked ever since...just look around you ...do you suffer from the Elvis Syndrome...you just cant wait to get the latest ..PHONE, PURSE, GAME... CAR...CLOTHING...etc...

Back in the day it was all about real NEEDS. If the farm needed an ox cart...they saved and paid cash...nowadays if you need the Cadillac to go MALL CRUSING in the LAND YAGHT you pay ZERO. down. And the bank owns you, your kids future and your EGO... VISA suicide Plastic is not the answer. Just another WANT You don't need.

"If you can use propaganda for war then you can use it for peace"... Edward Bernays





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# Southern Spice Grand Opening

Article by Deepa Walia,  
Photos by Manju Walia  
December 31, 2011

Southern Spice, located at 1849 N Scottsdale Road in Tempe, Arizona, held its Grand Opening with new décor and a new menu on December 31, 2011. Southern Spice proudly employs three chefs, all specializing in different cuisine from different parts of India including South Indian, North Indian, and Hyderabadi specialties. Now, you can get the many flavors of India all under one roof. Congratulations to the owners and staff on a successful opening. We are happy to showcase some pictures from this occasion and wish them continued success on their new endeavor.



# IACRF SENIORS CELEBRATE 63rd **INDIAN** **REPUBLIC** **DAY**



The IACRF Senior's Group celebrated India's 63rd Republic Day with pomp and ceremony reminiscent of Republic Day celebrations in India. The event was held at the Indo-American Community Center on Thursday, January 26, 2012. Over 90 members participated in the historic Flag Ceremony. It was truly a heartwarming sight to see the members of the Seniors group dressed in the National tri-colors of India saluting the American and Indian flag with pride as it unfurled in the gentle Arizona breeze. The spirit of patriotism was shining through on the faces of all present. The ceremony started outdoors with the American National Anthem and was followed by the Indian Flag Salute and singing of the Indian National Anthem by all the members and continued indoors in the Community Center. It was touching to see the organizers recognize Mr. Madhu Ashar, Yasvir Ahlawat and Mr. S.A. Samy for their service in the Indian Armed Forces. The pride on these gentlemen's faces as they saluted and acknowledged the audience was truly moving. Dr. Nemi Jain, Prof. Emeritus, ASU and Political Journalist Mr. P.N. Tiku were the invited speakers on the occasion. Dr. Jain spoke on the philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi with particular emphasis on Satyagraha. He told the rapt audience that Gandhi was a great believer and upholder of Truth, Justice and Fairness to all, and it was this conviction that led him to start the Freedom movement. Mr. Tiku gave a brief historical account on the significance and essence of democracy and how January 26th was chosen as the official Republic Day.

Highlights of the celebrations included a special composition on the Freedom Struggle written in Hindi especially for the occasion by Ms. Suresha Shah, and Patriotic Songs superbly rendered by members of the Senior Group – Arun Kapadia, Harsad Desai, Shreekant Vaidya, Meena Bhavasar and Goberdhan Gokulji. The spirit of patriotism was evident with all attendees joining in the chorus. As Ms. Kalpana Batni of the IACRF noted in her comments, the celebrations brought back nostalgic memories of the Republic Day celebrations in India for all. The ceremony was an educational and inspirational experience for all present.

The event ended with a sumptuous lunch that was enjoyed by all. The IACRF Senior's Program Committee would like to thank all the volunteers who worked very hard to ensure the success of the program. Special thanks to Event Chair Dr. Rasik Patel, Ms. Meena Bhavasar, Mr. Bhagubhai Patel and the entire team for a job well done. The program was sponsored by a group of Seniors namely Kishor Vyas, Shreekant & Rasika Vaidya, Mannubhai & Shardaben Patel, Maganbhai & Hansa Kawa, Nayanbhai & Nita Bhatt, Arunbhai Kapadia, Natvarbhai Thakkar, Bhagubhai & Jayaben Patel, Harshad and Lata Desai, Dr. Rasikbhai Patel, Munnu & Rajni Bajpai, and Parixitbhai & Kalpana Shah.

Submitted by **Bhagubhai Patel & Kalpana Batni**



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## GURDWARA MONTHLY

A Monthly digest of Gurdwara Programs and Events

### FEBRUARY 2012 Programs & Events

20 Magh – 18 Phagan, 543 Nanakshahi Era (NE)

Feb. 7 (Tues.) – Pooranmashi Kirtan Diwan program  
 Birthday Bhagat Ravidas Ji (1399) 6:30PM to 8:00PM.

Feb. 10 (Fri.) – The Great Holocaust (Vada Ghalughara)  
 Approx. 32,000 Singh, Singhaia and children lost their lives.  
 (Actual: Feb 5, 1762)

Feb. 12, Phagan 1 (Sun.) – Sangrand and Monthly Sehj Path  
 Sehj Path Bhog 9:00 AM.  
 Sehj Path Arambh for new month at 9:30 AM.

Feb. 12 (Sun.) – Birthday Sahibzada Ajit Singh Ji,  
 Paonta Sahib (1687). (Actual Day: Feb. 11)

Feb. 19 (Sun.) – Homeless Dinner Seva, Phoenix Rescue Mission,  
 1801 S. 35th Ave, at 3:30 PM. (Call 602 741 8021)

Feb. 24 (Fri.) – Saka Nankana Sahib (1921).  
 An outstanding example of peaceful protest by Sikhs to  
 reform Gurdwaras. Perhaps second only to Jallianwala Bagh  
 in its extreme barbarism....Please Google and read further.  
 (Actual day: Feb 21, 1921)



Bhagat Ravidas Ji



Saka Nankana Sahib - 1921

**Regular Programs:**

Main Kirtan Diwans on Fridays (7 PM – 9 PM) and Sundays (10 AM – 1 PM).  
 Morning Banis: 5:30 AM – 6:30 AM followed by ASA-DE-VAAR to 8:30 AM.  
 Evening Banis: 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

Sukhmani Sahib every Wednesday: 10:30AM - 11:30AM  
 Please check Gurdwara notice board for latest details of all Programs and Events

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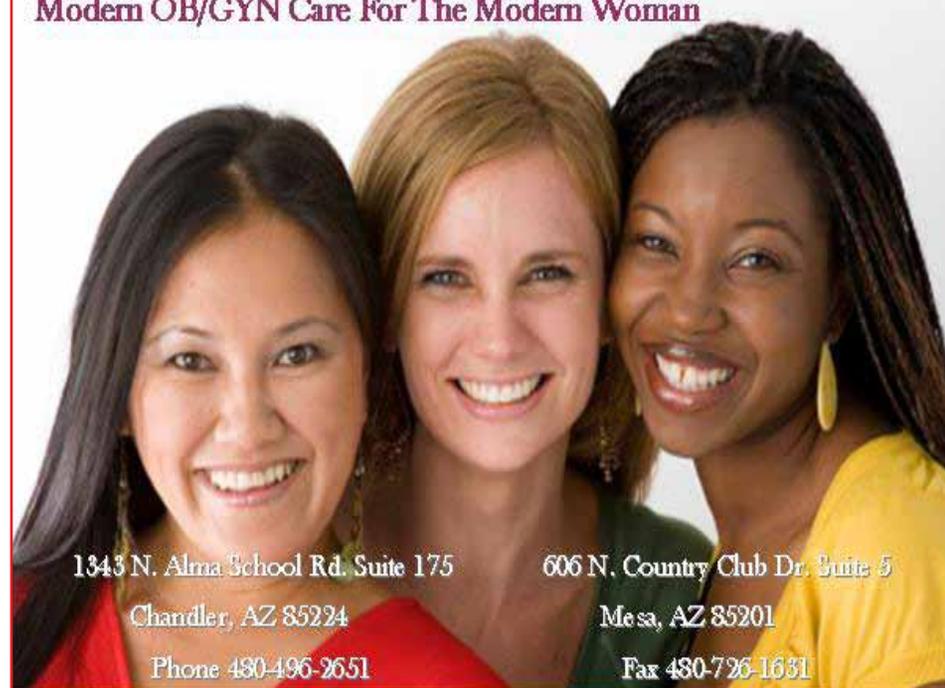
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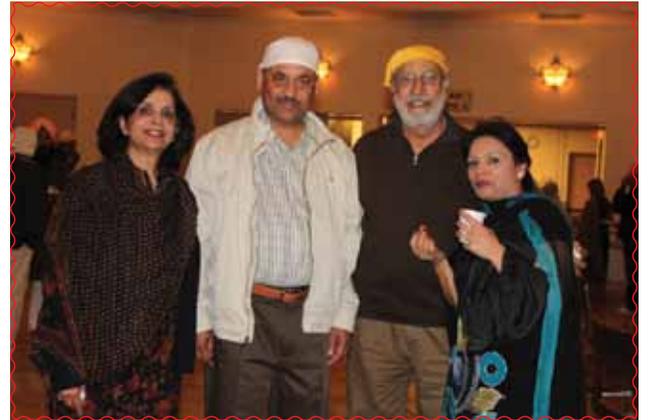
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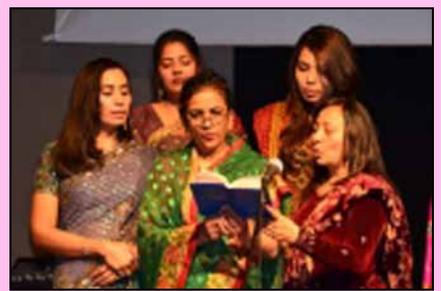
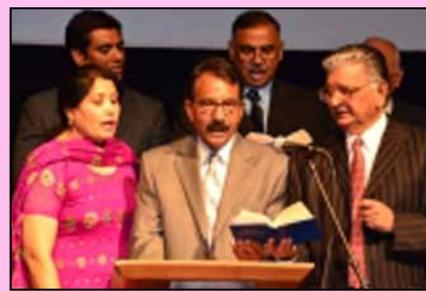


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# Nishkam Sewa **New Year's** Celebrations



## United Indo-Pak Chrisitan Church's Christmas and New Year's Celebrations





# SECCOON Arizona Volunteer Lunch

By Deepa Walia  
December 31, 2011

**S**ECCOON (Social, Environmental, and Clinical Care organization of the Needy) Arizona held its appreciation Halwa Puri brunch at Zam Zam market on a lovely afternoon on New Year's Eve. The word, which in Urdu means harmony, peace, and happiness, sums up the mission of the organization – to reach out to those in need by implementing an improved social infrastructure in a strategically-modified environment with a special focus on preventive healthcare services and education.

During the flooding in Arizona, Dr. Fariya Bukhari and Dr. Seemi Siddiqi went to Pakistan to work for 2 weeks in a relief camp. Realizing that their efforts would only last two weeks, they devised a plan to set up a mobile health camp unit in these areas modeling after the VA hospitals of the US. Dr. Bukhari approached Mr. Mansoor Naqvi to help with the official compilation of the project and preparation of feasibility and SECCOON was born. Many individuals have contributed to SECCOON's growth and this brunch was held to appreciate all their efforts. Asia Today graciously thanks SECCOON and Zam Zam Market for a mouth-watering brunch and shares some moments captured during this relaxed afternoon.



By Deepa Walia

# Hidden Gems...NazliCurrim

As South Asians living in the United States, we are all aware of differences in our culture and heritage and that of the country we reside in. Even though we immigrated to the United States for opportunity and a better future for our children, it is still important for us to instill those values and traditions in our coming generations. It is also important for us to explain the reason behind those values and traditions to our children so as they step into the society's question of why this and that, they are prepared to answer them.

This month's hidden gem, NazliCurrim, has attempted to do just that. Living in Arizona, she is the author of a beautiful children's book that is both entertaining and serves the purpose of subtly highlighting and explaining the importance of grandparents and the responsibility towards our elder generation in our culture. Congratulations to NazliCurrim on such an artistic and noble undertaking. Asia Today wishes her continued success in her career as a writer but, most importantly, wishes that the message that she wishes to instill in our children becomes a part of their learning and a part of them as individuals as they grow up in this homeland away from their ancestral homelands. You can find *Grandma Lives With Us* on [www.nazlicurrim.com](http://www.nazlicurrim.com), or contact the author directly at [shonzbooks@gmail.com](mailto:shonzbooks@gmail.com). The book retails for \$16.95 with free shipping and handling.

This month, instead of a standard interview, we proudly share the reviews of her book "Grandma Lives With Us" from two individuals within our community, because for a writer, nothing is more important than the opinion of his or her readers.

## A Book for Living, Loving, and Learning .....byDilara Hafiz

Reviewer Dilara Hafiz is the co-author of *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*

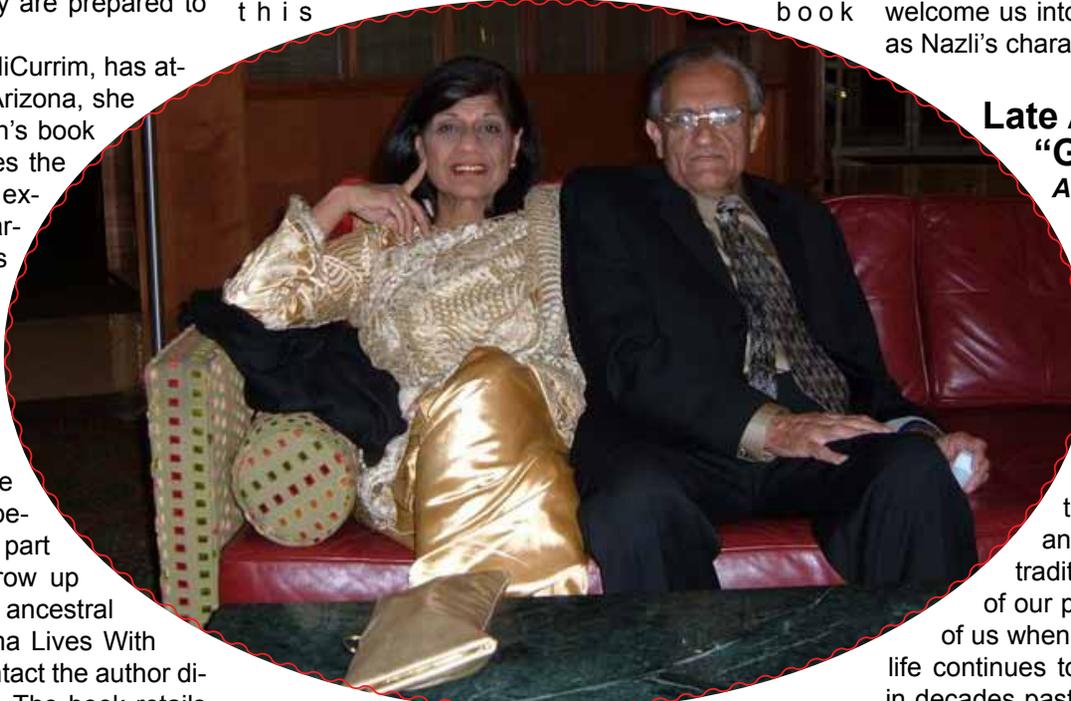
You don't need to wait for special occasions to acquire *Grandma Lives With Us* by NazliCurrim.... it's the perfect book to share with your children, parents, grandparents, friends, your child's classroom or library, any day of the year! This charming story relates the loving relationships within a Muslim family, especially the ties between a granddaughter and her grandmother. Illustrated beautifully by KadhimaRen Tung with watercolor pictures on every page- this book is sure to capture the attention of children as well as adults. Feedback from the mother of a 5 year-old Canadian girl eloquently conveys the magical nature of this book, when she relates, "She got really excited when I read the word "Nani". She was in such awe of the little girl, Imaan, who got her very own Quran for her birthday. I think she was happy to be able to relate to a book in that way, and the way the girl in the story loves and cares for her Nani struck a chord within her."

Parents too sigh a of relief upon finally finding that book which balances Islamic morals and values in an easy-to-read format which is both enjoyable and completely relevant to the American Muslim lifestyle. Quranic quotes and Hadiths as well as Islamic terms are sprinkled interestingly throughout the story-about taking care of your elders when they are old and

weak. As one Muslim mother puts it, "My husband and I also really liked the message of the story- about taking care of your elders. In North America, where nursing homes and senior citizen centers are so common, it is specially nice to have a book by Muslims that tells everyone about Islam's caring nature and strong family values." Similar bonds and values exist in most families globally and thus makes this book

rate. Her experience with children is evident in the age appropriate elementary school vocabulary; however older children will also find much to embrace in this feel-good story of family harmony.

In a time when so many stories have little relevance to American Muslims... it is a relief to discover *Grandma Lives With Us*, for it gives hope to all of us adults out there.... Perhaps our children will one day welcome us into their hearts and homes as lovingly as Nazli's characters do, Insha'Allah.



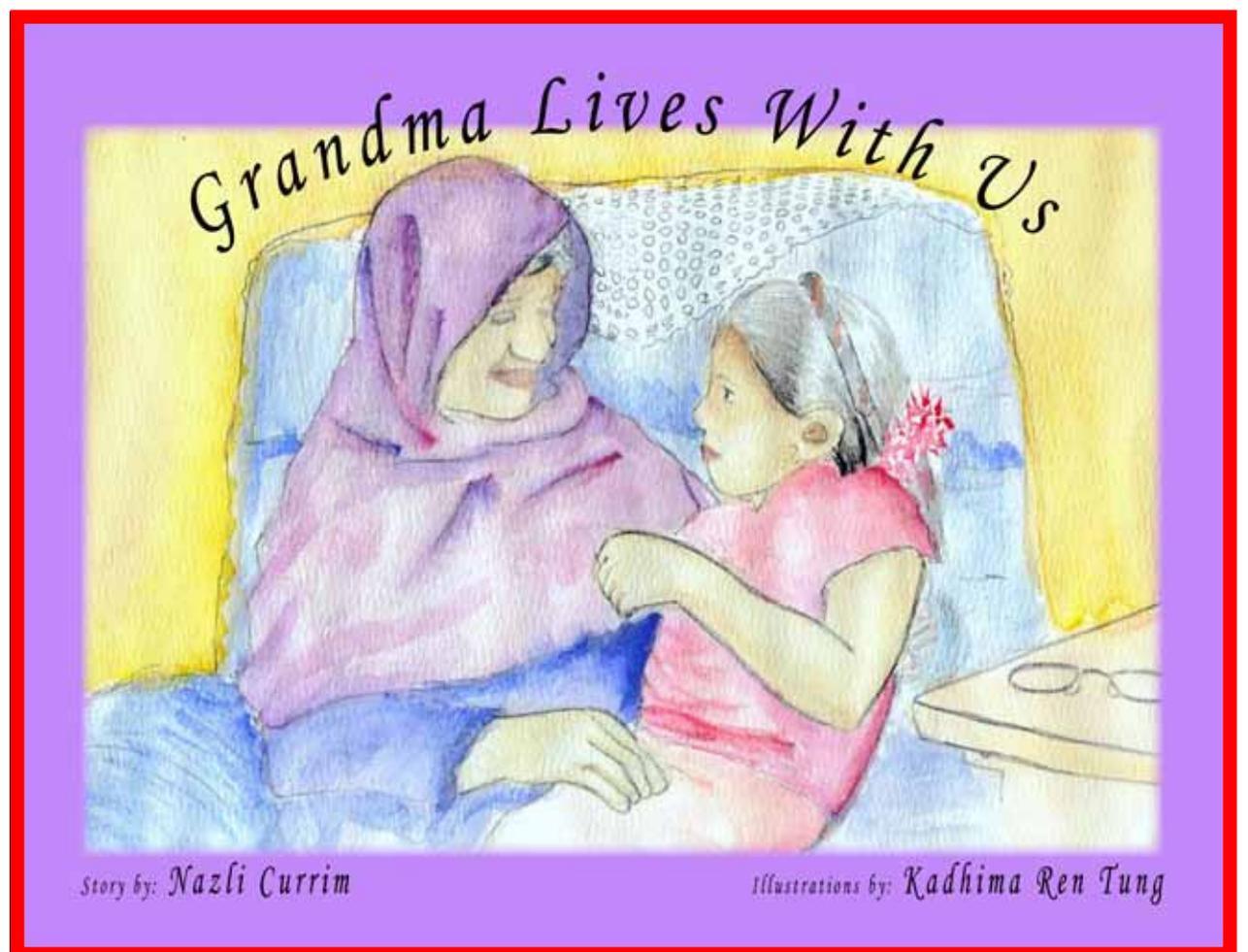
## Late AsimAmeer's Review on "Grandma Lives With Us"

AsimAmeer, contributor to *The Arizona Republic*

Mrs. Currim's book is an excellent contribution to the fabric of American culture. Lavishly illustrated, it accurately reflects life in an American Muslim home. The Muslim diaspora in North America from different nations has made and continues to make contributions that are adding to the culture and values of America. In the Muslim tradition, it is imperative that we take care of our parents the same way they took care of us when we were little children. While family life continues to evolve in America and elsewhere, in decades past it was common for grandparents to live in the same home as grandchildren and impart their wisdom and shower their love on them. Mrs. Currim's book is a timely reminder that teaches the children to show respect and to love their elders and receive the same from them. After reading this book, these values will stay on with them their entire lives.

compatible and acceptable to all caring families.

NazliCurrim is an experienced teacher who has tackled a timely subject in a loving manner-as families struggle to combine their independent lifestyles with the challenges of aging parents-she has provided an ideal Muslim template for families to incorpo-





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**Saturday February 11**

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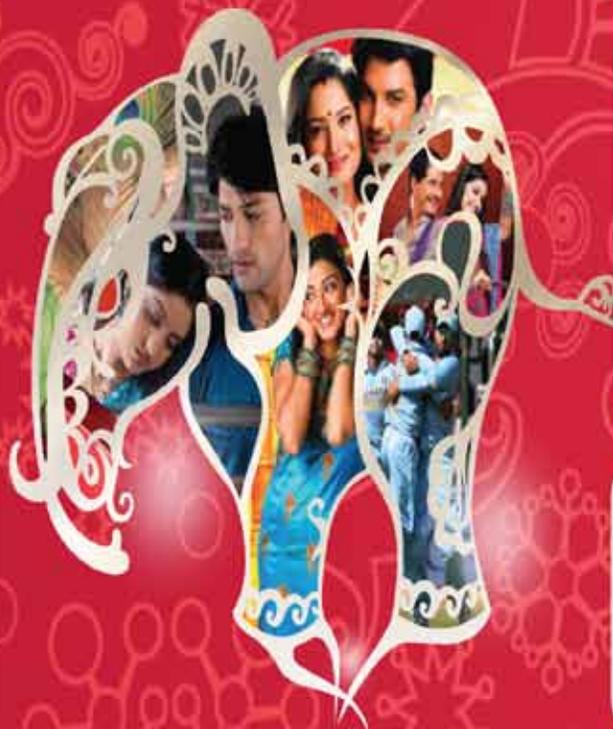


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# INDIAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA

December 20th, 2011 was a cold day but reasonable as far as weather conditions go! In spite of the facts of schools off and other holiday commitments, we had thirty-eight seniors in attendance. Everyone enjoyed socializing; some playing cards and many played anthaxari and looted a lot of fun for sure. The schools are closed and many seniors would prefer to be with their grandkids. Also, many seniors were out of state and some had guests, which means that potentially a low attendance was anticipated! The center remained closed on the 27th December due to holiday season.

## Outstanding Talk on Diabetes by Dr, NiraliSoni:

January 03rd, 2012 was a beautiful day with temperature of 72 degrees F. Perfect day for many to start the day with a walk for some! Everyone enjoyed greeting and exchanging the New Year's good wishes! ISAA Executive Management Committee met to discuss variety of items associated with the running of the center. Dr. NiraliSoni's presentation on this day was outstanding. She dealt with Diabetes Self-Management Education Program and provided tips on the Methods to Manage Diabetes. She is a great speaker with clarity, simplicity and applicability to related subject! The ISAA members extended their appreciation for her generosity of sparing her valuable and busy time for the seniors! Nearly fifty-five attendees were in full attendance to the well-delivered presentation asking relevant questions making the session most interesting, informative and beneficial!



Niraliis being introduced to ISAA seniors



Dr. NiraliSoni presenting her talk on Diabetes!



Seniors successfully corrupted Nirali favorably with a bite of pizza much to her reluctance!

## What a Concert by everyone's favorite Meghna – a great Hit!

On the warm sunny beautiful Tuesday, the 10th of Jan 2012, the seniors came to their second meeting of the year, eager in anticipation of a music performance by MeghnaRajaram who is here from school in Boston for the winter break. Over the last few occasions she has won their hearts by being able to capture the essence of Lata, Asha and even some male singers like Rafi, Manna Dey from the Hindi movies of yesteryears.

She welcomes the challenge of singing old songs and strives to take the listeners back in time to the golden era of Bollywood. It also makes such performances unique, serving a niche set of listeners whose faces light up when taken back in time; the rapt attention, the raised eyebrows and nods after recognizing the song, the smiles, the closed eyes, the swaying, the foot tapping are just priceless moments for anyone sitting more than 10,000 miles and forty years away from India!!!

While peppering the selection with the usual all time greats like KuhuKuhu Bole Koyaliya, LaagaChunari Mein Daag, Meghna included a variety of new 'old' songs like AapkiNazon Ne Samjha, TumheYaadKarteKarte, Rukh Se Zara NaqaabUtaru along with a Qawali as well – NigahenMilaneKoJiChahtaHai.

Dedicating EhsanHogaTeraMujh Par to ShammiKapoor from the popular movie Junglee, Meghna also paid tribute to Dev Anand with a peppy Aankhon Mein KyaJi - the two great stars that passed away last year. And finally the party really got going with the more contemporary Kajra Re, Main to AviAvi and MunniBadnamHui when she was able to get the seniors off their seats, each testing their swinging skills trying to outdo the other amidst much laughter and clapping by the rest of the crowd. Lunch was served with O Re Piya, AaoHuzoor along with YehRaatBhigiBhigi for dessert!! The program was well attended with about eighty-five seniors and guests packing the hall. The occasion also marked the birthdays of PushpabenUnarker and Vijyaben Kshatriya.



Meghna blasted Pushpaben's 75th for sure!



Blessings from Pushpaben to this super doll – Meghna!



Look at Meghna's charm!



Standing ovation to Meghna!



Meghna in classical mode!



House Full for Meghna and many are on the floor dancing!

On January 17th 2012, more than fifty members and guests enjoyed the company of one another as today there was no formal program. Many were busy playing cards, and others just socialized. Kiran Dulai presented her thoughts on why the seniors ought to think about having a community like “Shanti Niketan” in Florida. The lunch period was very enjoyable as a number of them shared what they had brought for themselves. It was a very quiet and peaceful meeting with a lot of fun.



Relaxing pass-time for the seniors

# Kebob & Kurry Grand Opening

Article by Deepa Walia,  
Photos by Raja Walia  
December 30, 2011

East Valley has exciting news for your tastebuds – there's a new player in town for both traditional and fusion South Asian cuisine located at 1430 West Warner Road, Gilbert, Arizona 85233. Kebob & Kurry, which held its grand opening on December 30, 2011 is bringing a variety of choices to residents of the East Valley. Asia Today congratulates the owners, chef, and restaurant team and was pleased to be a part of their grand opening event.



# Special Firsts...for Shaan Singh Raju

By Raja Walia

February 21, 2011

**R**SVP Special Event, LLC husband and wife team, Narender and Rosy Raju, threw their little Prince, Shaan Singh Raju, his very first birthday and Lohri party. The theme of the party was Adventure Island which was captured through the elaborate decor and stage design. Light Rain Images captures every moment while DJ Isaac with Hyper Productions kept all the guests on the dance floor. The entrance to the party mimicked a wooden bridge and upon entering there were light-houses, anchors, palm trees, and a huge stage screen that portrayed a ship wreck with the oversized props. Narender and Rosy Raju would like to thank all their guests from out of state and in Arizona that came to help celebrate Shaan's first Birthday and Lohri and would like to thank all the special performances. They would specially like to thank Shaan's grandparents, Piare and Sukhjit Raju (Narender's parents) and Pritam Kaur (Rosy's mom), who were able to make it to their grandson's first birthday. We would like to wish Shaan Singh Raju a very happy birthday and we would also like to congratulate Narender and Rosy Raju for a very successful event and celebration!



**D**harma (religion) is a source of self-realization. Many, many people in this world think Dharma is Dogma and Doctrine. This is not a proper analysis of Dharma.

Dharma is a very important necessity of the soul (spirit).

Every Dharmic group has a special identity. They consider it is necessary for their Dharmic group or cult, but it is an unfortunate situation, because in the Dharmic way of life no physical identity is necessary.

When we consider physical identity is necessary in the Dharmic way of life, then we start to divide the community into many groups. In reality Dharma has a universal way of life.

There is not any physical involvement. Human is a human.

When we adopt the Dharmic way of life, there is no place for racism, color discrimination, cast, and sex dis-

crimination. Individualistic egomaniac way of life is not there.

Dharmic way of life needs a few simple rules.

- #1) Meditation
- #2) Universal brotherhood
- #3) Earning for a living honestly
- #4) Share with the needy like a brother and sister
- #5) No harm for any creature
- #6) Any kind of drug and flesh meat prohibited without medical reason
- #7) Believe in One God (creator of the universe)
- #8) Try to live a very simple way in which nature has created you

In the beginning, I mentioned religion is a source of self-realization. When you start to think "who am I?"

your mind will answer your questions. "I am a human being". Mind will raise the second question: "What is the source of my human structure?" mind will answer: "combination of the five elements".

You will again question your mind: "What are the five elements?" and it will answer: The five elements are: earth, water, air, fire and ether." "Internal form of the five: anger, greed, lust, pride and attachment."

God created the universe through these five elements because this universe is a combination of these five elements.

When you will start to meditate, your internal knowledge will start to grow. Through the growth of internal knowledge, you will start to feel happy

and free from the fear of death.

When you will feel fearless, you start to think: "this entire universe belongs to me and I belong to this universe". When you will think you belong to the universe and the universe belongs to you, your mind will realize: "I have no fear, no hate, no discrimination, and no separateness from other creatures because every creature belongs to each other.

So, we who are all one belong to the One God, the supreme soul and life of every soul, and we are children of the mother (nature). Thus, we all need to learn to live together as one family in the Divine.

God bless you.

- Harbhajan Singh Sandhu



## Atharva's Corner

# Natural Beings or Nature's Abnormalities?

People often forget their role in life. This is not to say that people are unable to acknowledge themselves; many however, simply cannot find their place. In tandem with this discussion about self-acknowledgement, I'd also like to propose another interesting topic: our role in the natural world. First off, it's important to define what "natural" means. But then we run into a problem, we can't! This is not to say that there isn't an Oxford English Dictionary definition or even a Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy dictation; it is to say, however, than any definitive analogue will be misconstrued, as it was created by us human beings. Now this may be considered a radical thought, but if this is to be considered extreme, then it is only fair to assume the antithesis of my argument to be bigoted as well.

I believe that humans are part of the natural system; we live in ecosystems, we function in communities, we have a population that is ever-expanding and that is limited by external/internal factors, we communicate our needs, and we affect that which surrounds us. Given this understanding,



it seems obvious that we are indeed part of "nature." We humans are no different than the environment around us, as we build our own homes from materials of the earth, our cities are our ecosystems, our farms are our food source, and we even work to establish our fitness. This view is often concealed behind the guise of the corporate man in a suit (which do not grow on trees), wearing his polished leather shoes (also not found in "nature"), who brandishes a laptop in one hand and a ballpoint pen in the other.

In order to see how humans are part of nature, I find that a comparison to something that we already consider to be natural is in order, for example, a beaver. A beaver manipulates its environment to build its home – it chews down trees and blocks rivers. How is this different from what we humans do? We also use our environment to create shelters – which are continuously being developed and maintained through manipulation of the environment. Then let's look at how the animal keeps itself nourished and maintained.

Many food items, even in "nature," require preparation of some kind. Granted that you won't see a tiger grilling steak or a rabbit tossing a salad, the gist of the concept is similar. We prepare food so that we may consume it, as such; animals prepare their food by cracking it open, mashing it, or crafting it through some other process. In this sense, not only do we manipulate our environments in similar fashions, but we also maintain ourselves in the same technique.

However, this polar to this argument is that humans are not a part of nature because we, as some religions state, were given control of all flora and fauna, thus we are "above" our kingdom of subservient foliage and beast alike. And what about the computer age? What about industrialization? What about pollution? All are byproducts of human/natural life.

Pollution is a naturally occurring phenomenon, yet what drives critics of human pollution is the fact that it's been so



augmented as to be the cause of mass extinction and global warming, that it is forgotten that it just simply happens.

Understanding that humans play a role in nature is also key to understanding oneself. Acknowledging oneself is something that very few can achieve, granting it such high prestige and reverence. A question until next time: Where do you find your position in everyday life? Are you a provider? A supporter? A leader? It's an interesting transition from a discussion about nature to oneself, but it's also interesting to see how oneself fits into nature.

For more of my interesting, satirical stories, please visit: <http://reallywarped.blogspot.com/>

## Lotus Wellness Center

Chiropractic, Acupuncture, N.A.E.T

Lotus Wellness Center is an alternative medical practice specializing in healing, improving and maintaining your health. We provide care through multiple health solutions. We make it a priority to establish long lasting relationships with our patients. Our goal is to help our patients achieve optimal health by providing exceptional continuous care.

We will be happy to answer any questions and provide additional information about our practice.

Lotus Wellness Center strives to provide outstanding care on every visit.

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Hey guys! Happy New Year! Okay, so this month I'm going to start things off on a more serious note. Are you guys ready? Goals. What do they mean to you? How do you set them? Actually, a better question to ask is: what is a goal exactly, and what does it mean to our everyday lives? Let's ponder these questions together for a while and see what we come up with.

Goals are events or doings we would want to achieve by doing a certain action or multiple actions that would benefit our lives and significantly, us. They are things that have to do with our passion, and our love for doing something incredible. For example, let's say you want to get a ninety five percent or higher in your geometry class; you would have several actions to acquire that goal, right? So, paying attention and focusing, asking questions, doing well on tests, and completing and turning in all assignments would lead to accomplishing the goal.

You should always have a goal in mind, whether it is a short term or long term. There should always be some-

## Setting Goals....

thing for you to push for, to go out for. I want to tell you all about a goal that I set a couple days ago. I have a swim meet coming up, and with that I want to drop two or more seconds on my race. I think this is a realistic, timely, and smart goal. Don't you?

Setting goals will assist you in turning your dreams to reality. That way, your life will be happier, your friends and family will be happier, and most importantly, you will be happier. It is also said that you will feel better about yourself. Think about it, goals can change your mind to set out and accomplish wonderful things.

On another note, happy February! I bet this year will go by so quickly, don't you guys think? With whatever you have planned for the rest of this month, I hope you all have fun! I know I will! And remember, don't forget to set goals!

- Sanam Mallik



# First Lady of Phoenix Arizona, Nicole Stanton

## And the nature of the Bull as it relates to Bullying



For comments or concerns,  
contact: Habibullah Saleem at  
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www.futureimpact.weebly.com

**By Habibullah Saleem**

The First Lady Nicole France Stanton takes pride in reading the two poems on bullying composed by education CONSULTANT HABIBULLAHH SALEEM. BOTH POEMS HAVE BEEN PUT TO MUSIC TO FURTHER CAPTURE THE ATTENTION OF STUDENTS AND OTHERS. WHY BE A BULLY ? BULLYING MUST BE STOPPED.....

Having the opportunity to receive a very meaningful interview with the first lady of Phoenix, Nicole France Stanton, left me thoroughly supportive of her concern to see bullying brought to a minimum or complete halt. With Nicole's warm personality, it's easy to see why bullying is one of her most urgent priorities. With her husband Greg Stanton winning the election as Mayor, the idea of bonding with others to oppose the detriments of bullying is now a greater reality. With her preserved conscious nature to be loving, kind, respectful and by all means considerate, it's going to be a joy for her to unite and join with organizations and programs and help where help is needed, accepted and highly appreciated.

When learning of her mission to impact bullying, I immediately approached her at her husband's inauguration and recited the poem I wrote entitled "Bullying Must Be Stopped". Nicole was totally elated and saw right away that the poem was valuable and needed. Not long afterwards I was able to schedule an interview which told me a lot more about the real human being I was blessed to be with. Just like her husband, Nicole is truly down to earth and

is serious about preserving the minds and future leadership of our youth. She stated that what others have already done to fight bullying is not to be taken lightly. Since she has

again I can see why. Her concern extends beyond gender, race, religion, or status of life. She wants her minimum to be added to the maximum of others to make sure the effort to

lem.

Speaking of the problem – we can see that the nature of the bull is related to the nature of bullying. The bull is more about muscles than the men-

being protective and honorable to others. In marketing, red is one of the main colors used for emotional appeal which helps to make the bully ready to attack and do harm.

In further discussion of the bull's nature, both the First Lady and I agree that the bull puts his head down and horns up when attacking. The head being down tells us that the bully is not a heads up individual. The head down also indicates a lack of care when it comes to expressing compassion and optimism. In conclusion, not only is the bull dangerous but absolutely stubborn and hard headed. Seen standing or helpless, the bull will attack.

This is why the First Lady is willing and prepared to unit with others in order to out think the bullies. We must not overlook the fact that the world bullies end with the letters l, i, e, s. The word problem has in it the letters r, o, b. Lies create problems that will permit bullies to rob us of our future honorable leaders. Our First Lady along with others is determined to stop the bullying by teaming up with those who have the ability and commitment to fight back. After all why be a Bully? I clearly see in our First Lady's character a statement of caring and loving rather than dominant and mean. We must find a way to reconnect those who have become disconnected and unplugged. Proper education with effective approaches is truly the key. It's been said – the greatest work is team work. So why tolerate bullies?



seen so many young people from all walks of life damaged or destroyed from bullying she believes she can now step forward and help do more to stop it. After all...so many innocent people have become victimized of this horrible behavior. In learning just how committed she is to engage this endeavor, I shared with her a second poem entitled "Why Be A Bully". This motivated the First Lady even more and once

stop bullying never comes to an end until the problem is effectively and appropriately resolved.

For bullies to become other than who they are they must learn that they have become disconnected or unplugged. The original source of power is no longer flowing like it once used to. Therefore, we must make available to them ways and means of no longer being unplugged or suffer the prob-

tal. He or she displays power and dominance and is highly in disagreement with the essentials of anything red. That includes a 'well read person'. Again, the bull is about brawn and not brains. So now we see a slight connection with the behavior of the bull as it relates to the behavior of bullies. They make emotions their priority rather than wholesome intelligent thinking. Control and status is more important than

# On Culture and Faith

The culture of any given country draws its strengths and weaknesses as well as its customs and traditions from the written and unwritten codes of the faith of its majority people. This is true all over the world. Among the plethora of the faiths that trace their roots to India, Hinduism remains the most predominant religion. Therefore, most of the people of India, regardless of their ethnicity or place of residence, naturally happen to be surrounded by the believers of this faith. It is therefore, but natural that the cultures, traditions and customs of the minority groups in India, irrespective of their own faiths, are under the direct influence of the faith of its majority i.e. the Hinduism.

Most of the people of the Indian subcontinent do not truly confront the issue of distinguishing their faiths from their cultures in their daily routine. In fact in their minds, faith and culture seem to overlap. The line where religion ends and culture begins is very fine, at times obscure and may even be totally extinct in the thought process of many Indians.

The Eastern immigrants who settled in the West first came in direct contact with the predominantly Judeo-Christian traditions of their adopted homelands only after migration. The conflicts were not evident as long as the followers of the so-called "exotic religions of the East" as Westerners labeled them, stayed within the guidelines established for them by the culture of the majority. But when immigrants started to cross the fine line of practicing their faiths and cultures without staying sensitive to the feelings of the natives, the trouble started to brew. The latter got the impression that the immigrants were trying to impose their imported styles of living upon them. This brought intercultural conflicts into the open. Regardless of the permissiveness and open-mindedness of this society, it is difficult for the people to accept the imposition of different faiths or cultures upon their indigenous established values.

Modern technology has truly shrunk the present world. The mobility of people as well as the exchange of ideas and philosophy has become commonplace. The North American and European countries are gradually becoming inundated with people migrating from the East. They are bringing with them the baggage of their own cultures and faiths. Eastern religious institutions are sprouting all over western countries, resulting in a significant change in the religious landscape of the West. If one explores the historical perspectives, one comes to realize that the same kinds of transformations were encountered when Christianity and Western culture was imposed on the societies of the East.

Arguments are often made that the U.S. and Canada are both the lands of immigrants, and that even

the people belonging to the majority Christian faith are not native to this country. The Eastern immigrants with their non-Judeo-Christian background often state "If the Christians can do certain things, why can't we? And besides, did not the Europeans treat the Indian subcontinent and its culture in the same way when they first arrived in India and subjugated us? So what is the problem?" While there may be some truth here, at best it is only a limited truth.

We need to differentiate between our desire to live our culture and the manner in which we go about it. In doing so, we must not forget to fully honor the culture of the society we have adopted as our own and in which we have decided to live. In part, the answer resides in subtle adjustments as to how we practice our culture here without crossing the boundaries of our own faith. However, to do this we must determine where the boundary of a given culture stops and that of the faith begins and vice versa.

The practice of a faith back home naturally included intrusions of the culture in which it was being practiced but such intrusions were the consequence of a slow process over a period of many centuries, therefore more often than not they were imperceptible. New environments with different value systems in the adopted homelands of the West naturally lead to a feeling of persecution among the practitioners of transplanted faiths. At times it gives them the impression that the established guidelines of their faiths are being violated and their religious traditions are being trampled upon intentionally, when generally speaking, such might not be the case. It is important to remember this popular saying in this regard, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." This statement in all probability refers to culture, but I do not recall anybody ever saying, "Practice your faith in Rome, the way Romans do."

Most native populations and the host cultures in multi-faith Western societies are usually not bothered by immigrants having their own places of worship. They let newer immigrants practice their religions the way they deem fit, as long it is done without interfering with the lifestyles of the indigenous population. It is only when the host cultures feel threatened by foreign cultures, the trouble ensues. When the immigrants start using their religious places for things other than religious services, it becomes a cause for concern and rightly so. Playing partisan politics inside religious places with loud arguments may lead to violence necessitating the intrusion of law enforcement agencies. Under any

circumstance, such behaviors must not be allowed inside a sanctuary and should, therefore, be totally banned.

There are countless examples where cultural traditions inadvertently mix with religious practices, leading to confusion that could be easily avoided by having a bit of clarity between the two.

For example, cremation of a deceased individual is required by the Hindu and Sikh faiths. However, cremation using an open pyre, as one does in India, is a cultural tradition and perhaps not a requirement of either of the faiths. The laws of this country do not allow the use of open fire for cremation even if it were possible. In this case, one can accommodate Western laws by modifying the traditional practice (using an indoor crematoria rather than outdoor pyres), and one can easily do so without violating the requirements of one's faiths.

Similarly, a turban for a Sikh is part of his religious requirement; it must be worn by a conforming Sikh. A turban may be an odd sight to Westerners, but it is not an intrusion and has been normally accepted by most of the people, at least up until the horrible events of 9-11. Removing a turban is worrisome, if it has to be removed just to please other non-Sikhs, including the people of India. It should be noted here that many Indian people belonging to other faiths may also not attach the same significance to a turban that a Sikh does.

The loose dress worn by men and women in India is a cultural tradition that can easily be modified provided it is not ordained by a particular faith. We all know that political leaders of India, the present and past, including the late Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru dressed in the customary Indian dresses while in India but changed to three-piece suits with complete designer ties on their visits to the West. Vegetarianism is a requirement of certain Eastern faiths; it is not optional. On the other hand, eating with one's hands is a cultural and not a religious tradition and as such it is best avoided in the company of Westerners.

One of the reasons for the present crisis in the world is the fundamental philosophical differences between the faiths of the East and that of the West. Eastern religions, most of the time, emphasize that one must endeavor throughout one's entire life to attain Mukti or salvation for the soul from the cycle of life and death and be merged with One. The people of the East are coached day in and day out that this is the only purpose of human life and whatever is done in life, should be done with this aim in mind. To that end, different religions of the East suggest



Dr. Jaswant Singh Sachdev, MD\* Phoenix, Arizona

that one must not indulge excessively in worldly affairs. Some of the faiths even ask their followers for the renunciation of worldly comforts, even to the point of torturing the human body.

The people of the West, on the other hand, rather put great emphasis on worldly comforts in the present life, the life they are living today. They emphasize issues like youth, beauty and the biologic needs, much of which is taboo in Eastern faiths. An old person in the West is often considered dispensable, a useless and wasteful commodity that is a burdensome liability on the family and on society. "The young people have to live their own lives instead of worrying about the problems of the older members of the family," is a statement often heard in many contexts from all quarters of the West. On the contrary, the Eastern culture emphasizes respect for elders. The life experiences of the elderly are to be given due importance. They need to be listened to, understood, respected and accommodated.

Understanding and addressing these differences in their own contexts should ease the minds of people from both cultures. Minor adjustments and compromises in the way one practices one's culture in adopted homelands, rather than mixing it with the concepts of one's faith, can go a long way in smoothing out the wrinkles and aligning it with the prevalent values and traditions of the West. Such compromises or adjustments need not ignore the fundamental established practices and requirements of one's faith. This will ultimately lead to less tension and less of the shoulder rubbing between the two cultures.

This attitude will help the immigrants from the East integrate better into the multi-faith environment in which they have chosen to live in the West, thus making life easier for both Easterners and Westerners.

*\*Author of previously published books, 'SQUARE PEGS, ROUND HOLES.' www.SquarePegsRoundHolesBook.com 2 Sikhism: Points to Ponder, Perspectives of a Sikh Living Abroad and 3 a latest masterpiece book about the issues of Indian subcontinent diaspora, ONE COIN, TWO SIDES." To review and purchase please visit <http://inkwellproductions.com/one-coin-two-sides.htm>*

# Life Style Diseases

Lifestyle diseases are diseases that appear to increase in frequency as countries become more industrialized. Lifestyle diseases are different from other diseases because they are potentially preventable. Life style diseases include Alzheimer's disease, Atherosclerosis, Asthma, Male Pattern Baldness, Cancer, Cirrhosis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Type-2 diabetes, Heart disease, Metabolic syndrome, Chronic renal failure, Osteoporosis, Stroke, Depression and Obesity.

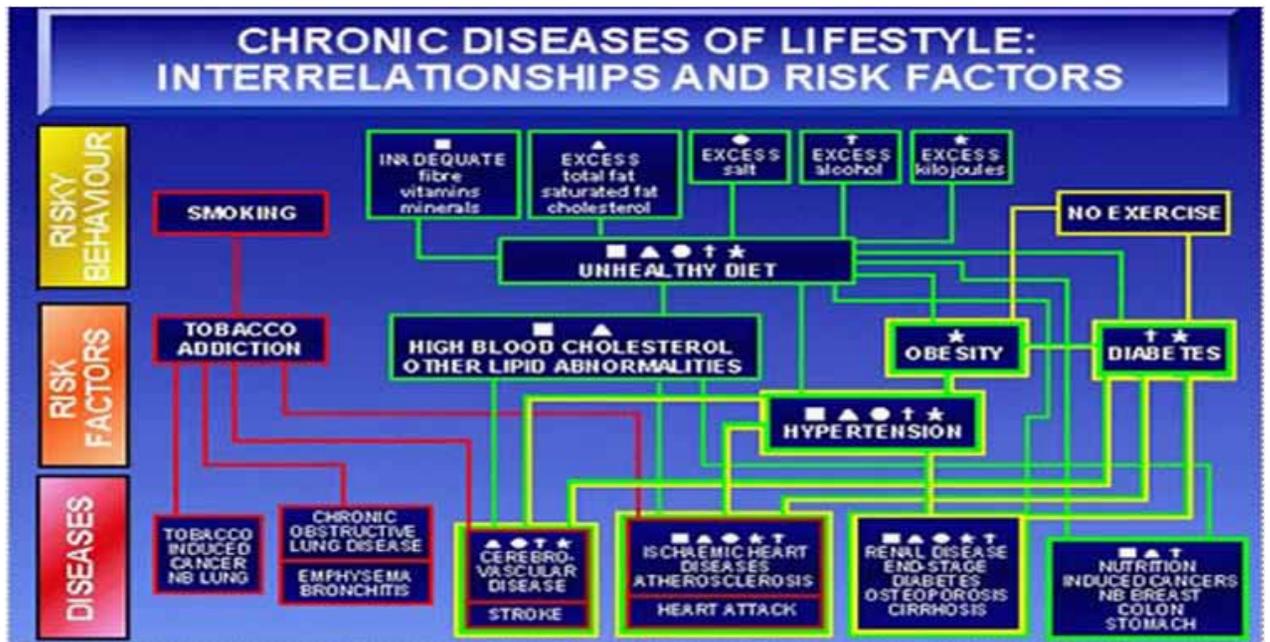
## Key Factors Responsible -

**Air** - We inhale 38 gallons of air every day. Outdoor air is full of germs, bacteria and it would be no wrong to say that now to breathe outdoor is to invite germs to attack. The remedy to this problem is to use a device that ensures clean air, free of germs, bacteria, volatile gases, pet dander and many more. Only a good quality air purifier is the solution for this general problem. Clean your fans, air filters, air conditioners ducts periodically.

**Water** - 92% blood contains water. Nitrate in water usually arising from fertiliser can increase the risk of water bore diseases. The World Bank has estimated 10762 pollutants in the water. Water filters provide the healthiest water for developing immune systems.

**Cookware** - Aluminium cookware increases the risk for Alzheimer's disease. Acidic foods such as oranges, tomatoes, or foods containing vinegar will cause more lead to be leached from ceramic cookware than non acidic foods like milk. Kitchen sponges can grow harmful bacteria, yeasts, and molds that can make you sick. Wash your sponge and then pop it in the microwave for two minutes to eliminate the germs.

**Milk** - Cows have a natural lifespan of about 25 years and can produce milk for eight or nine years. However, owing to mass production techniques adopted by majority of dairy farms such as giving antibiotics to cows & stressful conditions leads to diseases and reproductive problems in them. This makes them worthless to the dairy industry in four to five years, resulting in them being sent to the slaughterhouse. We end up consuming such milk which is of a sub optimal standard & also meat of such diseases cows. Consumption of such milk makes us more immune to antibiotics and more susceptible to antibiotic resistant



bacteria and diseases. Fortified plant-derived milks provide calcium, vitamins, iron, zinc, and protein but do not contain any cholesterol. Soy, rice, and nut milks are perfect.

**Fruits and Vegetables** - Some of the pesticides found in the non seasonal fruits and vegetables tested are classified by the World Health Organization as "highly hazardous". Vitamin C is present in fruits and Vegetables in their natural growing seasons and hence its' recommended to consume them as per season. Example Oranges are rich in Vitamin C only in winter season, should be consumed only in winter season.

**Stress** - The state of accumulated stress can increase the risk of both acute and chronic illnesses and weaken the immune system. Oxidative stress has been defined as the link between obesity and its major associated disorders such as insulin resistance, hypertension, etc.

**Empty Calories** - To get all the nutrients your body needs and at the same time consuming fewer

calories, prefer nutrient-dense food over empty-calorie food. Fruit and vegetables are perfect nutrient-dense snacks as they are low in calories and packed with dietary fibre and minerals, vitamins. Eat apples between meals, bowl of salads or a cup of strawberry instead of chips or butter popcorn in front of a TV.

**Conclusion** - According to doctors, sedentary lifestyle combined with an increase in the consumption of fatty food, alcohol is responsible for all such lifestyle diseases. Organic Supplementation, regular exercise, nutritious diet & lifestyle changes can help to overcome these.

**Are you looking for a change?**  
Contact:

**Priyanka Bhatia Gurnani**  
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## The real-estate activities

Hello fellow readers, Lets look at the December activity for the phoenix metro real estate. The real-estate activities on the residential side for December were:

- Single family homes sold were 5,839 (compared to 5,321 in November)
- Condos/townhomes sold were 1029 (compared to 991 in November)
- Active listings were 17,072 (compared to 18,337 in November)
- Pending sales were 6,619 (Compared to 7,999 in November)
- Phoenix metro rentals were 2,819 (Compared to 2,888 in Nov)

Lets look at commercial side. Below are the top retail leases in 4th

Qtr. of 2011

- Emblem Entertainment signed a 10-year lease for 48,573 sqft in Vista del Oro in Gilbert.
- Brass Armadillo Antiques signed a 10-year deal for 46,100 square feet in PalmValley Cornerstone in Goodyear.
- Savers signed a five-year lease for 34,277 in Northsight Village in Scottsdale. Mountainside Fitness leased 33,862 square feet in Happy Valley Towne Center in Phoenix.
- Big Lots signed a seven-year lease for 30,000 square feet in Casa Grande. Planet Fitness signed a 10-year deal for 16,998 square feet in San Tan Plaza in Chandler.

- Alida Furniture & Restaurant Supply signed a 66-month lease for 15,600 square feet at Thunderbird Square in Phoenix.
  - You Fit Health Clubs leased 13,690 square feet in Bethany Towne Center in Phoenix.
  - Tuesday Morning signed a five-year lease for 10,000 square feet in Las Tiendas in Chandler.
  - La Gran Bota renewed 8,500 square feet for 38 months in Phoenix West Plaza in Phoenix.
- In addition to the leases, Five Sons Furniture AZ LLC, a shell corporation for Pruitt's Furniture, has purchased the anchor retail space of 34,325sqft

at Chandler Market Place in Chandler from The Praedium Group LLC for \$2.36 million.

With all the activities closed down for 2011, how do you interpret these statistics? Do you think the Phoenix Metro real estate is improving or being stable? I would love to hear your feedback at arti@artiier.com.

Sources taken from-Armls, Cromford Report, Costar, Inman news.

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Take a close look at documents before signing on the dotted line. Socially, you need a fast paced form of entertainment. Loved ones may be annoyed if they feel restricted. Go out with friends. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

**ARIES**



Mar 21  
to  
Apr 20

Payoff all your debts before you go out and celebrate. Get help to finish a project if you need it. Be careful while traveling. Your ability to talk circles around your colleagues will help you forge ahead in the workforce. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**TAURUS**



April 21  
to  
May 20

Don't force your opinions on friends or relatives unless you are prepared to lose their favor. Don't do something silly just to get back at your mate. Opportunities to meet new lovers will come through pleasure trips or social events. Try not to allow your partner to lead you astray or upset your routine. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**GEMINI**



May 21  
to  
June 21

Your intellectual charm will win hearts and bring opportunities that you least expect. Arguing won't help. Romantic opportunities are evident if you get involved in large groups or organizations. You may be tempted to get involved in secret affairs or love triangles. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**CANCER**



Jun 22  
to  
Jul 22

Your leadership qualities will come in handy. Try not to be too harsh with loved ones; there will always be two sides to an Issue. However, you should be concerned about what they want in return. You may be overly emotional when dealing with your mate. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**LEO**



Jul 23  
to  
Aug 23

The advice you get this month may be based on false information. Your efforts won't go unnoticed; however, someone you work with may get jealous. Your outgoing nature might work against you this month. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

**VIRGO**



Aug 24  
to  
Sep 23

You will have to be sure not to burn the candle at both ends. Express your interest if you want the relationship to progress. Home improvement projects will enhance your residence and bring the family closer together. You may think gifts will win their heart, but it could add stress from lack of funds. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**LIBRA**



Sep 24  
to  
Oct 23

To avoid any minor health problems, don't get too stressed. Your personal partner may be less than willing to accommodate you this month. You are best to ask questions if you aren't certain about issues that are confronting you. Friends or groups that you're affiliated with may want you to contribute more cash than you can really afford. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**SCORPIO**



Oct 24  
to  
Nov 22

Get down to business and do the work yourself. Don't overlook that fact that someone you care about may be hiding something. Visitors are likely to drop by and chances are, they may even stay a little longer than you want them to. Someone you like may be receptive and actively seeking your company. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

**SAGITTARIUS**



Nov 23  
to  
Dec 21

You could be your own worst enemy if you overreact to something you're told. Don't let others restrict you from saying how you feel about family issues. Observations will be far more productive. You can continue to forge ahead if you make a few long distance calls pertinent to closing pending deals. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

**CAPRICORN**



Dec 22  
to  
Jan 21

You could have a change of heart if an old flame waltzes back into your life. You are best to keep hard feelings to yourself. Minor health problems may lower your vitality. Don't be too eager to dismiss someone who works under you. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

**AQUARIUS**



Jan 22  
to  
Feb 19

If you are not already, think about going into business for yourself. Lending and borrowing may be a problem. Take the time to help old friends or relatives who have had a stroke of bad luck. You should get into some of those creative hobbies that you always said you wanted to do. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

**PISCES**



Feb 20  
to  
Mar 20

## February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> * Agneepath @ Pollack Tempe Cinemas - Hindi Movie (Starts @ 7:00 PM)	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> * Patotsav 2012 @ Shreenathji Temple  Grand Sri Venkateshwara (Balaji) Kalyan @ Ekta Mandir  Vivekananda's 150th Anniversary @ The Shrine of Holy Wisdom
<b>5</b> * Appearance of Nityananda Prabhu @ Hare Krishna Temple	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> * Appearance day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanata Saraswati Thakura @ Hare Krishna Temple  Food for Education Benefit Event @ Indo-American Cultural and Religious Center
<b>12</b> * AZ Tamil Sangam Pongal Event @ Horizon Park	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> * Valentine Affair (Valentine Party) @ Tandoori Times 3 Indian Bistro	<b>18</b> * Fun - Festival, Anand Bazaar @ Shreenathji Temple
<b>19</b> * Shivratri Celebrations @ Hare Krishna Temple	<b>20</b> * Maha Shivratri Puja @ Hindu Temple of Arizona	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> * Special Fundraising Dinner To Support Ekta Mandir's Cash Needs	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> * Future Unplugged			

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# Bar on Chikni Chameli and Munni...



**M**en seem to be falling all over each other for Munni and Chameli, quite literally. After the recent brawl between two groups over the popular songs Munni badnam hui and Chikni Chameli, the police have asked orchestra bar owners, particularly in the Mira-Bhayander area, to avoid playing them.

A man from Uttar Pradesh had opened fire in a Dahisar bar, where he had been drinking, after getting into a fight with a group over which song to be played. Two people were injured in the firing.

On the record, the police say they have not asked bar owners to stop playing the controversial songs, but owners, on condition of anonymity, claim to have received such instructions from the police.

YV Kundan, owner of Sarang bar in Kashimira said, "We have to deal with such situations (fights) every day. Customers get drunk and want us to keep playing their favourite songs. When different people start demanding their personal favourites, the competition starts with customers showering money, and often takes an ugly turn."

"We have to deal with customers tactfully. Often, we try to convince those who are less drunk and can understand the situation to give in to the other group's demand. But, at times, both groups are not in the mood to listen to anything. So then, we announce that the song which has been repeated many times will not be played as we have to satisfy others too. Despite this, fights erupt and we have to call the police to intervene," added Kundan.

Some bar owners have also been using the excuse of 'police instruction' to avoid giving in to drunk customers' demands. Rajesh Kunder, owner of Spring orchestra bar, said that the best way to tackle such situations is by being soft spoken and polite. "We have trained our staff to be polite with customers and try to make them understand. Fortunately, we get the cream of customers and hence, we're able to handle situations tactfully. Sometimes, the police ask us to reduce conflicts by not accepting every customer's every demand," he said.

"Munni, Sheela ki jawani, Kolaveri di, Chameli and Jalebi bai are the hot favourite these days, but we try to strike a balance by playing these songs alternatively." Another bar owner, on condition of anonymity, said that when such situations arise they have to bear heavy losses. "On one hand, we lose regular customers, while on the other, we have to pay heavy fines if the police arrive at the spot. We take it as part of our business," he said. "New customers cause the most nuisance; regular ones don't get engaged in the money-showering competition."

**A** recent report suggested that actor Geeta Basra dropped on the sets of a reality show which is being hosted by her beau cricketer Harbhajan Singh, but in spite of that the actor still denies of having anything to do with the cricketer.

On being asked about their rumoured engagement and marriage dates, she replied saying, "You tell me when I'm getting married. The media seems to know everything about us. I read newspapers to find out about what's happening in my life." She completely chose to ignore all such pertinent questions about the couple's life. "I have always maintained that my personal life is private and it is of no consequence to anyone else. When I will get married, everyone will know, they will be informed. But, right now I don't want to say anything," Geeta added.

Geeta, who will be seen in the upcoming film Zilla Ghaziabad, defends her decision in taking it slow in matters of career. Her last film Train with Emraan Hashmi came out in 2007. She explains, "It was a conscious decision. I didn't want to do any bad films, I want to do good films that appeal to me. There have been projects but none that I liked. Instead I have done ad films and a music video."

Another reason that's keeping Geeta happy is her item number in Zilla Ghaziabad. "It's a full on Indian style latke-jhatkes, with total masala in it. The song has a UP feeling to it and am dancing with 500 guys it's simply fabulous. I always wanted to do a dance number and here it is," she adds.

## Geeta Basra denies relationship with Harbhajan Singh



**B**ollywood does not venture much into the territory of biopics but the success of movies like Chak De India and The Dirty Picture is inspiring filmmakers to bring interesting life-stories on the big screen.

Vidya Balan's dare-bare act as 70s Southern sex symbol Silk Smitha in the Milan Lutheria film not only earned her critical acclaim but also made hay at the box office.

The actress put on weight to bring into focus the forgotten story of the dancing star, who died in suspicious circumstances.

Filmmakers are often reluctant to explore the territory of biopics because of the possibility of controversies regarding accuracy, family objection and so on. But the amalgamation of fact and fiction in films have found a new liking with the audience in recent times.

Director Anurag Basu is making a biopic on Kishore Kumar and has roped in Rockstar fame Ranbir Kapoor to bring alive the colourful life of the yesteryear singer-actor on screen.

Basu has said that he wants to cover every aspect of Kishore Kumar's life, his four marriages including one to Madhubala.

Bhaag Milkha Bhaag to be produced and directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra is based on the life of legendary Indian athlete Milkha Singh.

Earlier, Mehra had successfully linked the freedom struggle of Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad to modern times in Rang De Basanti.

Actor-turned-director Farhan Akhtar is essaying the iconic role of the legendary athlete and he says he is very fortunate to play the role of the 'Flying Sikh'.

Farhan is leaving no stone unturned to get into shape for the demanding role in the film, which will hit theatres later this year.

"I am fortunate enough to play an iconic person (Milkha) on screen. I will be forcing him to accept that I am playing his role. I think that will be enough. I have started running regularly," Farhan had said.

Paan Singh Tomar directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia, is another biopic that is waiting its release. Based on the true story of a runner who turned into a rebel, the film sees Irrfan Khan playing the lead character. It will release on March 9.

The movie tells the story of Paan Singh Tomar from a small town of Madhya Pradesh, who joins the Bengal Engineers to escape poverty. Tomar becomes a runner and wins the steeplechase event at the Indian National Games for seven years in a row.

Later, he gives up running and his post as a subedar in the Army and goes on to become a dacoit who wreaks havoc in the Chambal Valley.

## It's biopic time in Bollywood



# Southern Spice in Tempe, Arizona

Chai with...

Interview by Manju & Deepa Walia, Article by Deepa Walia

January 29, 2012

What do Praveen Reddy, Alex Abraham, and Narsimha Rao – three engineers in the valley of the sun – have in common? Apparently, in addition to engineering, they all share a passion for food and that passion resulted in the grand opening of Southern Spice in Tempe, Arizona on December 31, 2011. Having been friends for a long time, they decided to turn their passion for food into Southern Spice, a restaurant in Tempe, Arizona that is part of the Persis Indian Grill Chain with 30 locations nationwide. As part of that chain, Southern Spice is provided with a chef from the chain that has undergone training and learned technique from Persis Indian Grill.

Southern Spice is unique because it specializes in a variety of cuisines from all over India and proudly boasts three chefs – each specializing in a different cuisine. From North Indian to South Indian to Hyderabad Cuisine, now you can get the many flavors of India all under one roof. The Hyderabad menu boasts 14 varieties including five types of biryanis, 4 types of chicken appetizers, and special fish dishes such as Apollo Fish – a specialty in Hyderabad. Their South Indian menu contains the traditional dosas, vada, and idli, as well as special items such as the famous multi-layered Kerala Paratha. And, of course, North Indian menu contains favorites such as Chicken Tikka Masala amongst many others.

The idea to start this chain began last May and the initial concept was to go with Bamboo Garden, a famous indo-Chinese chain. However, the concept changed over time and when



this location was available for sale, the three partners jumped at the opportunity and purchased the Persis Indian Grill Franchise – which is now open under the name Southern Spice. Even though it was a lot of hard work and financial investment, the partners changed the look – giving it a simple yet elegant design. They are happy with the response so far and their future goals include opening multiple locations all over the valley.

In addition to in-house dining, Southern Spice also offers a lunch box service to offices. Delivery is free within 10 miles of the restaurant and, for orders of 20 or more, free anywhere in the valley for orders of 20 or more. They also offer on-site catering where they come to your house and cook the appetizers, dosas, and tandoori items such as naans fresh for your guests at your venue.

Southern Spice promises great

food and service at competitive pricing. Don't believe us? Try their raved-about, hyderabadi biryani on special now for only \$5.99 during lunch, \$8.99 for dinner, and \$18 for a family-size takeout.

#### About the Owners...

Praveen Reddy, originally from Hyderabad, India, holds a Masters in Computer Engineering from Middlesex University in London, England. He has been in the United States for 10 years and spent 7 out of those 10 years in Arizona, having moved here from Florida. His wife, Manju, works for the Arizona Retirement System and he is a proud father of a 2-year old son, Abhinav. Southern Spice is purely a passion as he also owns a consulting company with 140 employees.

Alex Abraham, original from Kerala, India, holds a degree in Computer Engineering from Anna Malai Univer-

sity in Madras, India. He moved to Arizona in 2007, also from Florida where he was for one and a half years. He came here to work as an engineer for American Express and then switched careers and currently works as a realtor. His wife, Leena, and him are proud parents of a two and a half year-old, Nivin Abraham.

Narsimha Rao, also from Hyderabad, India, completed his Bachelors in Electronics from Madras University. Narsimha and Praveen have been friends from their Bachelor days and he lives in Arizona with his wife, Prathuysha.

Asia Today had the pleasure of meeting with and speaking to both Praveen and Alex during a casual lunch. It is evident from their current careers that food is not a business but rather a passion for them and anything done with passion always leads to success. We had the finger-licking opportunity to try their Kerala Paratha with vegetarian korma and South Indian dosa over our interview and cannot say enough positive things about the food. Now, Arizonans have a single place to go when one member of your family is craving North Indian, while the other is craving South Indian. Be sure to visit their website at [www.azsouthern spice.com](http://www.azsouthern spice.com) for more information or visit them in person at 1849 N. Scottsdale Road, Tempe, Arizona to try their amazing specialties. You can also reach them at 480-994-1302 for your lunch-box or on-site catering order. Asia Today wishes the three owners continued success in their new endeavors and hope that their passion for food stays alive and continues to serve the Arizona community.



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the EARTH gives & harbors EVERYTHING we NEED, but corruptive Entities keep our planet a prison...& lets us starve to death for their GREED& compete!... when will the World allow us to come to its senses ~from the INSIDE...the HUMAN Being as we all represent on this Planet ...we are all intelligent INSIDE ...but not allowed to express...because of the HUMAN slavery that captures the inside...to obey entities with \$\$\$...

it will NEVER end in the corruptive thinking of competitiveness & selfish Ego teachings in schools homes etc.

they don't allow enough "HUMAN Value" through out the world no matter which continent rules us. Intelligence from within us is suppressed, because it could get poverty out of 3rd World Countries & out of their sufferings...but then the world would not have enough SLAVES anymore for corrupted Corporation. They are the cancer of our planet, a planet that has plenty to offer to live on for all the Billions of the 99 % of us if we learn to share! We have overdeveloped our self into oblivious obsession laced with insanity of electronic Gadgets & Toys ...WE DON'T NEED... just want .We don't fill enough of our needs...just the wants we don't need .You hear a lot of Wisdom Words lately connected to the human thinking "as I

\*\*YEAR



teach". but these words are just to false prophesize & misrepresent and lure the consumer ...to spend on NO NEEDS, just wants..."the HOLE" inside is getting emptier ...filled with nothingness ,because we don't get enough needs to feed our Soul that we starve to death It is Love compassion for each other that feed our needs & will heal our self .We are victimized as beings for ever in time as long as money controls the value of society .Money has bin the grading & de~grading of a person, not by its humanness in the value of human being...the human value has to become 1st & foremost we should stop judging each other completely to get us out of the human debris depth on this planet. Living in harmony with com-

passion, for each other from here on. "Togedder" we can refuse to stay prisoners of our Earth. We deserve Love & be loved .Love is Freedom from within .Togedder we can conquer the controlling corruption & release each other out of pain & shackles...we need to pay attention to each other...& link in togedderness to become ONE .Share the pain into SOULution from within.

"The Intelligence, that guides us thinking BEYOND" ...

The world is on its FEED...its OUR time to get IT back, it does not belong to corporations or corruptive Governments .We need to focus on getting production & creative Ideas of common ground and seeded on our Soil .Wedon't need overseas GREED that paralyzes this Country. The media makes jokes & fun of suffering Job-less people. Cold hearted as a NEWS story for RATINGS...NO connection to the People in NEED. It is becoming a outrage & insult to humanity & the Humans involved and exposed to the humility in there Soul .Lets stop this from here on ...if You are aware NOW!!... this new Year!... reach out to others...share the pain or the Wealth as a Being to valuable SOULUTIONS...that benefit OUR planet.

The system may own Your Brain or your Body; don't sell them Your SOUL.

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Salaam~ Namaste~ Ni hao

The Voice for the people Lilly G (~\*~)

we like Your opinion please contact us @ lillyginfo@aol.com

## Is The Trend Turned in Real Estate ?

Last week end, I was talking to a friend who is a real estate investor.

Right now, I'm unable to buy a distressed property, –It seems like the realtors and the big investors are tied up with each other. These properties are disappearing from the market before they're even on the market. And for the ones that DO make it to the market, the bids I've made on Day One – even above asking price – haven't been accepted." he said.

He's been trying to buy quality properties where he can get good price properties like bankowned real estate, foreclosures, short sales, and such.

I think this is interesting...

It's anecdotal evidence of what

I believe is happening right now. I believe the housing market is finding its "clearing price" right now...

There are plenty of buyers at this moment to match sellers. The latest complaint from my investor friend – combined with the most recent data and the "leading indicators" – tell me the bottom should be in... or very close. As a leading indicator, something I find interesting is the dramatic rise in homeimprovement stocks, like Home Depot and Lowes. Home Depot is now at 10-year highs.

When a stock is hitting 10-year highs, whatever was troubling it before is over...The stock was trading below \$20.00 in 2009, now it is above \$44.00

Stock-price activity often leads

economic activity... So is the dramatic risk in homeimprovement and homebuilding stocks wishful thinking from stock traders? Or is the rise in these shares leading economic activity in housing?

I think this is legit... & the latest data backs that up...

Yesterday, Bloomberg News reported, "Confidence among U.S. homebuilders rose in January to the highest level in more than four years as sales and buyer traffic improved... Record-low borrowing costs, a growing population, and reduced prices may drive demand for homes this year..."

Another simple piece of data where you can see some improvement is in building permits issued

for single-family homes. And it's not rocket science... If you're going to have a recovery in housing, you need a recovery in building permits. It's the first step to building a new house.

Building permits bottomed out three years ago. But they've been recovering: The recovery in permits is not huge. But we are still off the lows of three years ago. The general picture is that consumer confidence is rebounding. Things are getting less bad. The official statistics of home prices might not show the recovery yet... because they are always MONTHS old. But I strongly believe the bottom is in, right now.

**By Madhuaj** – 602-332-9544.

Broker & owner – Valley Savers Mortgage

# Banned books hot property in censored Vietnam

From irreverent cartoons to “depraved” short stories, Vietnam’s pop culture is attracting the attention of print censors who experts say are struggling to accept an increasingly brash literary scene.

After years spent keeping political texts off the printing presses, authorities are setting their sights on the growing market of publishing for young people, with several books prohibited in recent months.

Nguyen Thanh Phong, whose collection of comic rhyming slang was recently banned, said his illustration of two gormless-looking soldiers kicking a grenade to each other may have caused the censors’ ire.

The caption reads “Being a soldier you must always get noticed”, an attempt to poke fun at the inflated, heroic image of the country’s military.

“I just thought it was funny,” said Phong.

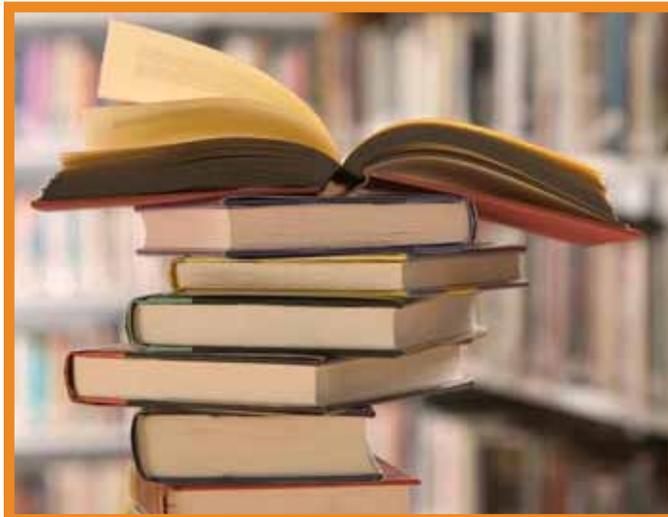
The 26-year-old artist said censorship only increased people’s desire to read the book, entitled “The murderer with a pus-filled head”, which aims to reflect the street patois of Vietnam’s youth.

Phong said his book sold 5,000 copies in two weeks but was then discontinued, stoking under-the-counter demand that pushed prices to as much as 100,000 dong (\$5) — more than double its official cost.

Censorship has proved a headache for Vietnamese publishers eager to capitalise on a potentially rich seam of revenue from the nation’s 28 million under-18s, but it has also given texts an enticing air of notoriety.

“It’s an unintended public relations chain effect — in Vietnam, any banned books become best-selling, because people are curious,” Phong told AFP.

The controversy “sparked the interest of a lot of people who would never have even bothered to read it in a bookstore,” said Vietnam expert Edmund Malesky, Associate Professor at the University of California, San Diego.



He added the book “captures all the cool sayings of what they call the 9X generation, those born in the 90s”, a generation surprising older Vietnamese with its “free-spiritedness”.

Conservatives in Vietnam have found themselves scandalised by the tide of youth culture — from the antics of popular singers to brazen fashion statements on the streets.

The publishing industry is seeing a boom in titles for teenagers, varying from non-fiction to translations of the internationally best-selling “Twilight” vampire series.

Vietnam scholar Carl Thayer said more books are being produced aimed at young people, but that “pop culture is definitely at odds with official ideas of Vietnamese culture”.

“Since Vietnam is an authoritarian regime, its officials have no way of accurately capturing true public opinion... Deep in their hearts they are fearful of political humour and more overt political publications because it challenges their power and legitimacy,” he told AFP.

Reporters Without Borders, which ranked Vietnam 165th in the world for press freedom out of 178 countries in 2010, has said the one-party state retains a tight grip on all media.

Vietnamese officials were unable to provide AFP with figures on the number of books banned each year and did not confirm the specific reason for the decision to take Phong’s book off the shelves.

Dang Thi Bich Ngan, deputy director of the culture ministry’s Fine Arts Publishing House, said sales of “The murderer” were

stopped because of changes made to the approved draft.

Another controversial book, a collection of short stories by journalist Nguyen Vinh Nguyen, was banned and its publisher fined for “disseminating depraved and pornographic ideas, not in accordance with Vietnam’s traditions and customs”.

“Readers really want the sort of products of a free publishing environ-

ment, rather than what they are given now, which are books that have undergone ‘treatment’ and been sanitised,” Nguyen told AFP.

Thayer said Vietnam’s black market “thrives because it meets a need”.

“It provides hard copy of facts and ideas that freely circulate in private conversations,” he said.

It did not take long for AFP to track down an illicit copy of “The murderer” on the streets of Hanoi.

One bookseller said she did not keep it on her shop’s shelves and offered to fetch one from the storeroom.

But her sales pitch came with the warning that it had corrupted the Vietnamese language: “Do not show it to your children!”, she said.

Many people simply went online to read Phong’s book on the numerous Internet sites hosting copies.

“Those who object to the book said if these sentences are circulated on the internet, it’s ok, but not in books. I think because they think books are very noble, like a holy land of knowledge,” Phong said.

Censors have indicated a willingness to negotiate a revised version.

Phong said he expects some illustrations will be removed and replaced with different popular slang and is confident a new book would not be seen as diluted.

His optimism is perhaps echoed in another quintessentially Vietnamese street saying from his book. An image of a whole dead dog on a dinner plate accompanies the phrase: “Don’t worry, things will be alright, because dog meat is always served with shrimp sauce”.

## Poet of the Month

### Erica Dawson

Erica Dawson’s poems have appeared in *Blackbird*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *Best American Poetry 2008*, *Poetry: A Pocket Anthology* (7th edition), and other publications. Her collection of poems, *Big-Eyed Afraid* (The Waywiser Press, 2007) won the 2006 Anthony Hecht Prize and was named Best Debut of 2007 by *Contemporary Poetry Review*. She is an assistant professor of English and Writing at University of Tampa, where she serves as poetry editor for *Tampa Review* and teaches in the university’s new low-residency MFA program. She lives in FL with her Shih-Tzu baby, Stella (as in *Astrophil* and *Stella*, not the beer).



#### A Poem that’s Not a Song or Set in the South

Maryland, my Maryland, a border line,  
“Free State,” disordered North/South, mountain pine  
Cones west, bald cypress at the Bay, with brine

Along the coast and snow in Hagerstown,  
White Oak, blue crab, orange and black, and down  
The Ocean, hon, that January brown—

Do we even have a song? A soothing sound  
Of the south? I want the taste, touch, wet mouth round  
About the vowels in every guitar drowned-

Out syllable. My cousins have a twang.  
I have a Mid-Atlantic pitch. Notes hang  
Near a middle C. I say, I’ll do my thang?

That just won’t work. O, say, but can I see,  
Say, quirks (“lacks natural lakes”), state oddity,  
(One part’s a mile wide) and sights (D.C.,

Where Lincoln’s waiting)? In another place,  
At the Potomac, dancing on my face,  
A zephyr, boa-like, but commonplace

As my perfume, nuzzles against my chin.  
Our Maryland version of a Chinook comes in,  
Descending off the Rockies’ next-of-kin

In Appalachia. Sing to me now; and, wrap  
Up all my naked skin. I want to nap  
In its nook, wear its dress, and scotch its stocking cap,

Then follow it along to Arlington,  
Another other place. There, I’d lie in sin  
On soldiers marked unknown. The air is thin

And thick as if it offers up a cure,  
A viscous antidote and I am sure  
Of this “America in Miniature,”

And anecdotes so much I know the pinned  
And bowing Black-eyed Susans almost grinned,  
Black-faced, enough to keep my peeled eyes  
skinned.



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**Individuals - Tax Credits**

**Adoption Credit**

For taxable years beginning in 2012, the credit allowed for an adoption of a child with special needs is \$12,650. For taxable years beginning in 2012, the maximum credit allowed for other adoptions is the amount of qualified adoption expenses up to \$12,650. The available adoption credit begins to phase out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) in excess of \$189,710 and is completely phased out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income of \$229,710 or more.

**Child Tax Credit**

For taxable years beginning in 2012, the value used to determine the amount of credit that may be refundable is \$3,000.

**Earned Income Credit**

For tax year 2012, the maximum earned income tax credit (EITC) for low- and moderate- income workers and working families rises to \$5,891, up from \$5,751 in 2011. The maximum income limit for the EITC rises to \$50,270, up from \$49,078 in 2011. The credit varies by family size, filing status and other factors, with the maximum credit going to joint filers with three or more qualifying children. In addition, for taxable years beginning in 2012, the earned income tax credit is not allowed if certain investment income exceeds \$3,200.

**Tax Changes for 2012**

**Additional Child Credit**

The \$1,000 per-child additional child tax credit has been extended through 2012. The credit will decrease to \$500 per child in 2013.

**Individuals - Education**

Hope Scholarship - American Opportunity, and Lifetime Learning Credits

The maximum Hope Scholarship Credit allowable for taxable years beginning in 2012 is \$2,500.

The modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) threshold at which the lifetime learning credit begins to phase out is \$104,000 for joint filers, up from \$102,000, and \$52,000 for singles and heads of household, up from \$51,000.

**Interest on Educational Loans**

For taxable years beginning in 2012, the \$2,500 maximum deduction for interest paid on qualified education loans begins to phase out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) in excess of \$60,000 (\$125,000 for joint returns), and is completely phased out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income of \$75,000 or more (\$155,000 or more for joint returns).

**Individuals - Retirement Contribution Limits**

The elective deferral (contribution) limit for employees who participate in 401(k), 403(b), most 457 plans, and the federal government's Thrift Savings Plan is increased from \$16,500 to \$17,000. Contribution limits for SIMPLE plans remain at \$11,500. The maximum compensation used to determine contributions increases to \$250,000 (up \$5,000 from 2011 levels).

The deduction for taxpayers making contributions to a traditional IRA is phased out for singles and heads of household who are covered by a workplace retirement plan and have modified adjusted gross incomes (AGI) between \$58,000 and \$68,000, up from \$56,000 and \$66,000 in 2011.

**Income Phase-out Ranges**

For married couples filing jointly, in which the spouse who makes the IRA contribution is covered by a workplace retirement plan, the income phase-out range is \$92,000 to \$112,000, up from \$90,000 to \$110,000. For an IRA contributor who is not covered by a workplace retirement plan and is married to someone who is covered, the deduction is phased out if the couple's income is between \$173,000 and \$183,000, up from \$169,000 and \$179,000.

The AGI phase-out range for taxpayers making contributions to a Roth IRA is \$173,000 to \$183,000 for married couples filing jointly, up from

\$169,000 to \$179,000 in 2011. For singles and heads of household, the income phase-out range is \$110,000 to \$125,000, up from \$107,000 to \$122,000. For a married individual filing a separate return who is covered by a retirement plan at work, the phase-out range remains \$0 to \$10,000.

**Saver's Credit**

The AGI limit for the saver's credit (also known as the retirement savings contributions credit) for low- and moderate-income workers is \$57,500 for married couples filing jointly, up from \$56,500 in 2011; \$43,125 for heads of household, up from \$42,375; and \$28,750 for married individuals filing separately and for singles, up from \$28,250.

**Work Opportunity Credit**

The work opportunity credit has been expanded to provide employers with new incentives to hire certain unemployed veterans. Businesses claim the credit as part of the general business credit and tax-exempt organizations claim it against their payroll tax liability. The credit is available for eligible unemployed veterans who begin work on or after November 22, 2011, and before January 1, 2013.

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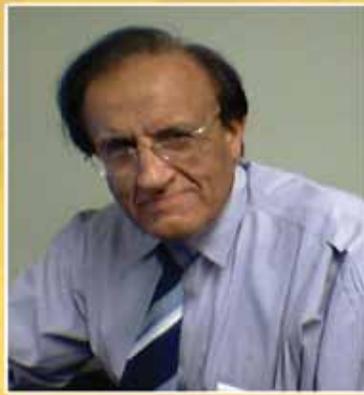
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