

SAMACHAR

FEBRUARY 2006

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Executive Committee 2006 takes office

An exciting team with a bag full of new ideas



Inside this issue:

Dual Citizenship Process	2
Dual Citizenship Camp on Feb 19	3
IAK Executive Committee 2006	3
Congrats	3
What do you know?	6
IAK Membership Renewal form	6

IAK Executive committee for 2006 has take over the reins of the association. The committee is headed by **Vijay Mehta** whose efficient leadership in the past years has continued to energize the association. Similarly, **Virendra Sood**, **Om Joli**, and **Gracie Kayany** continue their tenure as Vice President, Treasurer, and General Secretary respectively.

Loknath Lenka who was a member of the executive committee last year takes over as the Social Secretary from **Hema Vaidyanathan**. The executive committee members for the year 2006 are **Anjum Chaudhary**, **Pratima Kotekal**, **Nayana Patel**, **Navinchandra Patel**, **Prabha Ravi** and **Hema Venugopal**.



We thank **Dipika Anand**, **Gnani Patel**, and **Saraswati Sabbani**, who served IAK as executive committee members in 2005. Our special gratitude to **Hema Vaidyanathan** who served last year as the social secretary. We wish Hema and her husband all the best in their new place. Thank you.

Taste of India Celebration on March 25

This year we plan to **celebrate Holi and Pongal** in a very special way. We propose to celebrate our diversity with a **'Taste of India Food Festival'** with the best dishes from the various states of India.

Each state will have its own stall where food unique to the

state may be presented and sold. Other interesting information about the people, culture and language of the state may also be made available at the stall.

The event is scheduled for the evening of **March 25 at the Latvian Heritage Center**.

If you (by yourself or as a group) would like to set up a food stall to present and sell food typical of your home state, please call **Loknath Lenka (323-1150)** or **Vijay Mehta (327-5456)**.

Let us make this event a grand celebration of our diversity and heritage.

IAK Dual Citizenship Camp in Portage on Sunday February 19

In order to make the application process for dual citizenship a bit easier for IAK members, IAK has planned a Dual Citizenship Camp on February 19 from 11 A.M – 2 P.M. The application process requires Internet access and hence the venue of the camp will be 6795 Brickleton Ct., Portage (Gracie Kayany's home).

What will be provided during the Camp:

1. Two Internet stations to fill out and submit the online application.
2. Printers to print out the application forms A and B.
3. Help to fill out the second part of the application form.
4. Photographer who will take your picture and prepare 5 copies of your photo.
5. Notary Public who will notarize the copies of all the supporting documents that you bring with you.

How Much Does it cost?

Free for IAK members who have paid their annual dues. For everyone else \$10 per person (do the math: it is cheaper to pay the membership dues).

What should you bring to the camp?

Two each copies of all the supporting documents. For example,

1. Copy of your current US passport (you also need the date of your naturalization.)
2. Copy of your old Indian passport.
3. Birth certificates of your children if they are proving their eligibility based on relationship to an Indian parent.

More information on supporting documents for specific situations, please see the Consulate website: <http://chicago.indianconsulate.com>

What more would you need to complete the application

1. A certified check in favor of the 'Consulate General of

India Chicago' for the appropriate amount.

2. Self addressed stamped envelope.

Call before you come

We expect that it will take at least 20 minutes to complete each application. To avoid long waits, please call Gracie (269) 501.1254 and reserve a time slot.

Directions to the Camp

6795 Brickleton Ct. is off 12th Street between Milham and Center St, one block north of Romence Rd. Turn east on Brickleton Woods and the first cul-de-sac on the left is Brickleton Ct.)

Congratulations

Congratulations to Kirij and Chandan Patel, the proud parents of a newborn daughter Vedi—born on January 11, 2006.

IAK Executive Committee 2006

President

Vijay Mehta
Phone: (269) 327-5456

Vice President

Virendra Sood
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Gracie Kayany
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PLEASE DIRECT YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO GRACIE KAYANY AT (269) 501-1254 OR GRACIE@INDIAKALAMAZOO.COM

Dual Citizenship Application process

Perhaps you are aware that from January 9, 2006, the Indian Consulate in Chicago has begun taking applications for dual citizenship or Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) registration. For the time being, by mail only.

Right around this time last year, the Indian consulates had announced the program, but within a month put a hold on it. No one knew why. But something good has come out of the long delay. This time around, the application forms are smaller and simpler than last year. Although the application process is not any simpler.

Two-step application form

The application process has **two steps**.

First, you have to go online to www.mha.nic.in/oci/oci-main.htm and fill out an application form.

There are **two versions of the online application form**: (a) Application form for a **family of four**—husband, wife and two kids. (b) Application form for an **individual**. If you are applying as a family, and have four or less members, use form-a. If you have more than four members in your family, use individual forms for them.

After filling out the form, you **submit it online** to the Ministry of Home Affairs in India. After successfully submitting the form, you will be asked to **print out the form**. It will be printed out with a **reference number** on the top. Please make a **note of this number**. This is the first part of your application.

The **second part of the appli-**

cation form will also get printed out when you print the first part. This part may be filled out legibly by hand or with a typewriter. This is the part that needs to be signed. You need to submit only **one form-b for the whole family**.

Who is eligible to apply?

Two categories of people can apply for dual citizenship.

1. Anyone who has held an Indian passport or is eligible to receive an Indian passport according to the citizenship criteria established by the Government of India.
2. Anyone who has a parent or grandparent who belongs to the above category 1.

How do you prove eligibility?

You can provide a copy of your old Indian passport or similar document. To prove eligibility based on your parent's Indian citizenship, your birth certificate that shows your parent's name and a copy of your parent's Indian passport should be enough. To prove your connection to your grandparent, you may have to, in addition, provide your parent's birth certificate that shows your grandparent as his/her parent.

What are the documents I should mail in?

The following should be submitted **in duplicate**.

1. The **first part of the application** with the reference number printed on it and a

35mmx35mm photograph affixed on the top right of the first page. And sign in the box on the front page.

2. The **second part** of the application form with the **original signatures** on both copies.
3. **Notarized** copies of the **supporting documents** and copies of your **US passport**.
4. **Three additional photographs** 35mmx35mm.
5. **Application fee of \$275** per applicant as a certified check in favor of the Consulate General of India, Chicago. **Add \$15** to this certified check towards return postage.
6. **Self-addressed stamped envelope**.

What are the benefits of dual citizenship?

You don't ever need to get a visa to go to India.

You can stay in India for any length of time.

You can own property in India.

In short, all the benefits that citizens of India enjoy—except that you can not vote, can't hold elected office or government job.

Where can I get more information?

Chicago Consulate website
<http://chicago.indianconsulate.com>

India Association of Kalamazoo



www.indiakalamazoo.com

1622 Bellaire Ave, Portage, MI 49024

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 48
Kalamazoo, Michigan

What do you know?

- ◇ Have you received your copy of the **IAK/IACC& T 2006-07 calendar?** If you have not and would like to have one please contact Vijay Mehta (327-5456).
- ◇ This year we are planning to have a Music Program presented by an outside group. If you have any suggestions for any group of artists, please call Loknath Lenka (323-1150) or Vijay Mehta (327-5456).
- ◇ Did you renew your IAK membership this year?

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

RENEWAL YEAR:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

SPOUSE:

CHILDREN:

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY:

ANNUAL DUES ENCLOSED:

(\$12.00 single, \$25.00 family)

Please mail this form with payment to Vijay Mehta,
1622 Bellaire, Portage, MI 49024. Thank you.