

India Community Center Newsletter

United Way Number: 1137

Visit India Community Center Website: www.icor.org

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ICC Board of Trustees Chair's Report

by Deepak Maniar

Dear Fellow Members & Friends:

Greetings! I hope you had good holidays. Further, I like to wish you great things for the New Year. The stock market is doing well (in India & US) and job situation seems to be improving.

Our Mission for the year is to increase Indian, as well as Rochester Area Community, involvement and participation. We plan to accomplish our mission by maintaining all of the current successful programs, improving the facility, increasing the membership, completing the 2003 AGM action items and developing New Activities/Programs. One of the main goals of the Board will be to develop a benchmark budget and further improve the facility to the level where it can generate more revenue.

At this stage, I would like to welcome the new members of the board. They are Amit Thakkar - who will take over treasurer's responsibility. Dr. Nivedita Prabhu is also a new comer and she will be supporting the social events & social secretary's responsibility. We welcome Shubha Kamath for rejoining the board and because of her past experience we will be looking for her support in various ICC's activities with special emphasis on the Social Events & Facilities operations. In the last AGM, number of members for the BOT was approved to 15. Shashi and Kanchana's resignations have created two openings. We will be filling those openings with approval of Mr. Srinivasarao Meka and Mr. Hose Maliekal as the new Board of Trustees. I highly appreciate their wish to join the 2004 BOT group and Look forward to working with them.

I would like to thank Shirram & his 2003 board team members for doing a very good job last year. Also, appreciation is due to Madhu Ayyagiri(DO), Shashi Bhargav (Corporate Secretary), Kanchana Natarajan (Social Events), LK Mestha (2002 Chair person) & Benoy Cherian who are not going to continue as the Board members this year but have put in significant work. Nonetheless, we will be seeking their help from time to time.

I am very happy to have Surendar Jeyadev as DO, Mahendrabhai Turakhia (Membership & Social event support), Jayanti Venkataraman (Newsletter), Suman Shenoy (treasurer support), Swadesh Popli (Fund raising support), Naveen Sharma (DO, Diwali program support), Bhushan Mehendale (ICC Web-site development/support, Publicity), Shruti Date (Educational, Social Events, youth activities support), and Shirram Revankar (Banquet & Over all support) on the 2004 board member team.

Our aim is to make ICC self-supporting, actively involved with Indian as well as local communities, attractive & a place to enjoy-have fun. We will need support from all of you. Please do not hesitate to call me or any of the Board members for any new ideas/suggestions you may have for the improvement of the activities of ICC. Taking pride in the activities of ICC, Jai Hind!

From the Editorial Board

Chief Editor: Dr. Jayanti Venkataraman

The newsletter is a venue to reach out to the entire Community with news items and articles from all members, and from all cultural and desi groups.

Please submit news items for the following sections.

- Community news
- Youth Newsmakers
- College Youth Newsmakers
- Cultural news
- Health column
- Children's' column
- Birth Announcements
- Marriage announcements

If you are aware of such events let us know and we can work from there. Please submit your articles to Jayanti Venkataraman, jnveee@rit.edu

Annual Events

- ICC Banquet (Spring)
- Spring Music Concert Series (March - May)
- Sleepless in ICC (March)
- Easter Egg Hunt (April)
- India Fair (June)
- Orienteering (Summer)
- Fall Music Concert Series (Sept - Nov)
- Diwali
- Christmas
- New Year Celebration

ICC New Year's Eve Party

By Dr. Shriram Revankar-- Organizer

Hundreds of us enthusiastically welcomed 2004 with a bang, as raucous party aficionados counted away the last few seconds of the year 2003. As the raised champagne glasses, sweaty smiling faces, tired legs and hoarse throats clamored to greet the New Year, fleeting moments of 2003 seemed like the best of the past. ICC New Year's party made those moments as fun filled as they can be.



Live magic show, fun face painting ushered in the party mood that never waned all through the rest of the year 2003 and well into the glorious hours of 2004. Delicious dinner and dessert were not persuasive enough to make us oblivious to



defying DJ'ing and dancing forced even the stoics among us to join the fray and sweat the feast.

If it were not for the cash bar, we would not have had those few philosophical types, who stood around the dancers tapping their feet, with both hands



firmly planted on their cocktail glasses. Cash bar co-captained by Ravi Nareppa and Kiran Hegde .with help from Divya, Uma and Shrinagesh extracted the bacchanalian instincts out of every one. How else can we explain that none of the beer was sold, but all the hard-stuff was gone!

Except for the thrilling raffle drawings, where anybody could have been a multi-millionaire, there was no pause or suspense in the party. When thirst hit us, Nagin Shah's coolers refurbished us back into the dancing rink. Even the bubbles and smoke that filled the dance-hall were unsuccessful in hiding the glowing faces illuminated rhythmically by the dancing flood-lights. Immediately following the dinner the kids' movie hall ably managed by Nalini was an attractive abode for the young ones. "Shrek" and "Nemo"s were effectively keeping them off the hazardous dance floor.



However cartoons' hold did not last too long. A curious few started intermittently ducking into the auditorium. Soon even the shyest of the last was in the auditorium, throwing fleeting glances at his dad's arrhythmic dance

All of this was set in motion by the other few who deserve our recognition too. Special hall arrangement by Jayanti, Vinayak and Venkataraman-s was ideal and practical – how often do we use those words together! The festive decorations by the Venkataramans and Lekhana Revankar set the stage for the whole event. Thanks to Surendar Jeyadeva, clean, warm and ready ICC and the parking lot welcomed everyone. Mit and Neeta Turakhia were the MVP (most valuable people) for the entire New Year's Eve party – from ticket sales to raffle sales to dinner arrangement to cleanup!

I am sincerely thankful to all the volunteers who have been named here and many more that have not been named here. We at ICC understand well that no event is successful without the community participation. I would like to sincerely thank every one of the one hundred and forty or so that decided to share their joy at the ICC.

*Happy
New
Year!!*

Diwali Night, November 1, 2003

By Dr. Lalit K. Mestha - Chairman of the Diwali Committee

Diwali – the festival of lights -- is one of the most attractive and by far the largest events ICC organizes every year. It attracts well over 400 people, which lead to 100% occupancy this year on November 1st night. It was a night of glitz, glamour and entertainment to all who attended the event. Diwali requires a lot of planning and time, which



starts about three months prior to the event. The ICC Board formed a committee with *LK Mestha, Nagin Shah, Varahan Ganesan, Bhushan Mehendale, Renu Agarwala, Kanchana Natarajan, Suman Shenoy, Mahendra Turakhia, Naveen Sharma, Jayanti Venkataraman* as members who helped to plan and execute the event. First kick off meeting was held in Suman Shenoy's house on Aug 23rd. With few additional meetings after that followed by many phone calls, the committee put

together an exceptional program. Each volunteer worked in furry to get everything needed – tickets, dinner, cultural programs, etc., --- to create an atmosphere for the audience that they won't forget. Volunteers were needed to help decorate the hall and add color to the show. Shantala Basavappa, a member of the Kannada Koota



came forward to help. She made colorful & glittering decorations throughout the building by working long hours. Choreographers, performing artists, audio visuals, were very near perfection. Artists practiced on stage before the actual Diwali night. Cultural program with traditional and modern dances was a big hit this year. Master of Ceremonies, Kedar Sambhus and Priti Rao, were exceptionally good in controlling the program up to the last minute. All in all, we had a most memorable Diwali, including balancing the overall expenses. ICC thanks sincerely to all those volunteers who gave their personal time for over two months and on the day of the event.

ICC Annual General Meeting, December 7, 2003

By Dr. Shriram Revankar

Annual General Meeting was held on December 7, 2003. It was quite sparsely (28 members) attended. The board walked the members through the 2003 proceedings of the ICC. Auditor Sangeeta Sarraf found ICC to be in sound financial condition. Board of Trustees, Chairman Shriram Revankar provided the overview of the activities, facilities, finances, Newsletter and special committees. Individual committee leads provided a more illuminating presentation of the proceedings. The year ended with a substantial surplus in operational budget and one of largest membership in the recent history. A draft copy of the AGM minutes of the meeting will be available on the web for your review.

Ping Pong (Table Tennis) At ICC

Every Friday, Time 6:30 PM to

Bring your Ping Pong racket if you have one, or we will have some extras. Balls will be provided.

Beginners or Expert, we will provide you challenge
Beer will be available

Contact: Mukesh Tataria @ 425 2479

Indian Classical Music and Dance Society

Summary of Activities for 2003 by Dr. Raja Bala

Committee members: Padmanabh Kamath (Chair), S. Kumar, Varahan Ganesan, Raja Bala, Kedar Kare, Asavari Maggirwar, Usha Ramnath, Sunitha Ananthaswamy, Sarmistha Chowdry.

This was a very active year for this committee. We had a total of 15 programs:

- Two programs showcasing local talent in music and dance
- Five Hindustani Music Concerts
- Five Karnatak Music Concerts
- Two Dance programs (1 Kuchipudi, 1 Odissi)
- One Play

All the professional programs were of topnotch quality. On the Hindustani side, we had virtuosos such as Rajan and Sajjan Mishra, Subhendra Rao, Udayan Parikh, and Samir Chatterjee. On the Carnatic front, we had stalwarts such as Sudha Ragunathan, Chitravina Ravikiran, Delhi Sunder Rajan, Mysore Nagaraj and Manjunath. We were extremely fortunate to enjoy dance performances by Raja & Radha Reddy, and Sonal Mansingh, the world's premier exponents of the Kuchipudi and Odissi styles respectively.

This year, we are delighted to report a record in audience participation. This was brought about partly because the committee kept our membership regularly informed of all the events via flyers, newsletter articles, letters, and even personal phone calls.

Our sincere thanks go to all the sponsors and patrons for their excellent support during 2003. There were about 24 sponsors and patrons for the Spring season, and an even larger number for the Fall season. The total sponsorship was able to meet the budget required for hosting the programs. It is our hope that this type of dedicated support will continue to bring Indian culture in the form of music and dance to Rochester for years to come.

All in all, this was a very successful year for the classical music and dance society. Many individuals from outside Rochester have expressed their surprise that such a small town attracts so many artistes of such high caliber from India.

The committee asks that all of you continue to support this important cornerstone of Indian culture by your sponsorship, and more importantly, by your attendance at the programs. Events are being planned for the upcoming Spring season. Look for details in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Rohan Kekre

Semifinalist 2004 Intel Science Talent Search Competition



Rohan Kekre

Rohan Kekre, 17, was recently named a semi-finalist in the 2004 Intel Science Talent Search Competition that recognizes original research conducted by high school seniors. One of 300 students nationwide to receive this award, he conducted his research – entitled “Tuning Multiple Triplers Using the UV Spectrometer” – during the summer of 2003 as part of the High School Research Program at the University of Rochester's Laboratory for Laser Energetics. He plans to pursue a career relating to science and math.

Kodak-APEX (Asia Pacific Exchange) Scholarship

Kodak is offering scholarship to local high school students of Asian/Pacific Islander heritage in the Rochester area.

The criteria for the Kodak-APEX (Asia Pacific Exchange) Scholarship are as follow:

- Applicant must be entering a bachelor degree program at an approved college or university in the fall of 2004 immediately after graduation from high school.
- Applicant must demonstrate high academic achievement; factors considered are grade point average, SAT (minimum score of 1100 or higher) or ACT (minimum score of 25 or higher) scores, class ranking, honors received, advanced coursework, extracurricular activities, etc.
- Applicant must pursue a career in one of the following areas: Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Information System, Logistics/Supply Chain, Manufacturing Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Optical Engineering, Optics Science, Packaging Science and Software Engineering

Applicant must be available for an interview by the Kodak Scholarship Committee. Applications and details available at area high school guidance counselor offices, or electronically via email from ying.gao@kodak.com Application Deadline: Application Deadline: Postmarked by February 20, 2004 Kodak-APEX Scholarship is part of Kodak's Minority Scholarships The scholarship flyer and the application form are available on the ICC website.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Youth Group Performance

Martin Luther King, Jr. Greater Rochester Commission's Community-wide Worship Service Monday, January 19, 2004, at the Eastman Theatre located at 26 Gibbs Street. We take pride in saying that; this was for the first time, that Rev. Thurman has extended an invitation to the Indian community youth group to perform at the event. We represented Indian community youth group at the theatre. County Executive Ms. Maggie Brooks & Mayor Mr. William Johnson were present at the occasion. The program started at 9.00am and ended at 11:30 AM followed by lunch.

Our performance was the highlight of the day. All the local television channels covered our performances and showed the youth group in the glimpse of local news segment. D&C also mentioned in the newspaper about Hindu faith community performing at the event. We received many compliments at the theatre and later on by mail. We thank the Town of Henrietta youth asset team to allow us to join them on their way to the theatre in their school bus, which made riding and parking



hassle free. On the bus, the youth of the Indian community got to interact with the youth asset team leader Lisa Nichols where she discussed issues and events in Martin Luther King Jr. life. It was nice to know that Lisa Nichols grew up with Dr. King's oldest daughter and went to school with her. Therefore, it was a first hand experience that our youth group got exposed to.

Youth Group

The intention of starting this group is to exchange traditional and cultural values with other communities, participate in educational events, develop leadership qualities, and "chill out" with their own age kids. Today's youth is tomorrow's citizen. Therefore, instituting the right values in them is important so that these kids, when they grow up, become an asset to the community rather than a liability. Most Indian kids in a small town like ours are assets to the community at

large, but we still need to build upon and shape them; that allow the kids to grow in the right direction.

We would like more and more youth student population to come forward and be apart of this youth group. This group will also organize events, brainstorm ideas that help community and help themselves grow.



Our upcoming events are: a Bowling party, an educational exchange event, getting together with other community groups, summer camp, India's Independence Day at Frontier Field, Monroe County Fair, and a Clean-up day in Spring at ICC and Hindu Temple.

We also welcome any new ideas for kids that your children like to do. We are planning on meeting on a monthly basis to plan and organize such events.

Any parent interested in joining us with more brilliant ideas, please call Shruti Date at 586-0136. Also, any kids interested in joining send email to youthgroup@yahoo.com

Pianist Vijay Iyer Performs in Rochester

Wednesday, June 9, 2004

Rochester International

Jazz Festival

Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahantappa

The duo visits Vijay's hometown!



photo by David Pickell

They effortlessly traverse traditions, their materials repeatedly coiling with the tensions of Indian scales and unraveling with forward rhythmic motion. In this regard, Mahantappa's frequent employment of a shenai-like timbre is crucial, as it alternately gives their piquant melodies earthy and modernistic edges. Iyer's penchant for nuance in attack and harmony also contributes to the precision shading of the music; yet more importantly, Iyer's daring flourishes seep out of the background to propel the music into new directions... Iyer and Mahantappa create compelling music. - Bill Shoemaker, *JazzTime*

Pianist VIJAY IYER and alto saxophonist RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA represent a new generation of American jazz musicians who explore the cultures of their ancestry through their music. The sons of immigrants from India, they draw from Asian, African, and European traditions to create original music that is beyond category. They have gained recognition from audiences, musicians, and critics alike as world-class improvisors and composers, outspoken young Asian American voices, and important forces in the music world. Since 1996, Iyer and Mahantappa have worked together constantly, performing their cutting-edge original music to widespread acclaim around the world.

VIJAY IYER was recently named one of "today's most important pianists" by *The New Yorker*. He has released several critically acclaimed albums of original music, including most recently *Blood Sutra*, *In What Language* (with Mike Ladd), and *Your Life Flashes* (as the collaborative trio Fieldwork). He has traveled worldwide as a leader,

appearing at international festivals with his quartet. He is also a member of the widely praised collaborative trio Fieldwork, AACM pioneer Roscoe Mitchell's Note Factory, poet Amiri Baraka's Blue Ark, and Black Rock Coalition co-founder Greg Tate's Burnt Sugar. He has also collaborated extensively with saxophonist Steve Coleman, appearing on numerous world tours and several RCA recordings. In addition he has joined forces with a wide assortment of cutting-edge creative artists, such as Butch Morris, Cecil Taylor, Graham Haynes, George Lewis, John Tchicai, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Miya Masaoka, Gerry Hemingway, drum & bass diva Imani Uzuri, and poet/hip hop artist Mike Ladd, with whom he has received funding from Creative Capital.

RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA has drawn attention as one of the most innovative young musicians on the New York jazz scene, fusing his various cultural influences to create a truly unique saxophone style. His two albums as a leader, *Yatra* (1996) and *Black Water* (2002) have received unanimous rave reviews. He has performed alongside such jazz luminaries as David Murray, Steve Coleman, Jack DeJohnette, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Von Freeman, George Garzone, Tim Hagans, David Liebman, Joe Lovano, Greg Osby, Dr. Lonnie Smith, and Clark Terry. He has performed at international jazz festivals in Mumbai, Chicago, Paris, Jamaica, Toledo, Flint, and the Sangres. Rudresh has a Bachelors Degree in jazz performance from Berklee College of Music in Boston and a Masters in jazz composition from Chicago's DePaul University. He has received grants from American Composers Forum and New York State Council on the Arts.

RAW MATERIALS, their duo project, engages the listener with intelligent melodies and harmonies combined with wonderfully layered rhythms, epitomizing new jazz at its best. Their ongoing musical collaboration showcases their strong creative alliance, their common perspectives and contrasting dispositions. The duo recently had a performance recorded and broadcast on Swiss Radio, premiered an evening-length work commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation, and performed at international festivals in Strasbourg, San Francisco, Seattle, Perth, and Melbourne.

Vijay Iyer is the son of Sita and Y. (Raghu) Raghunathan of Victor who are longtime residents of Rochester. His sister, Pratima Raghunathan, lives in Atlanta, Ga.

Vijay graduated from Fairport High School (1988), Yale University (1992) and holds a Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley. He recently received the 2003 Alpert Award in the Arts, a prestigious year-long fellowship to support his innovative, compelling work.

Rental Rates for India Community Center (ICC) of Rochester Facilities

Facility	Period*	Members	Non-Members	Community Groups [^]
Auditorium and Kitchen	Half day	\$ 275	\$ 400	\$ 325
	Full day	\$ 460	\$ 600	\$ 520
Conference Room	Half day	\$ 130	\$ 210	\$ 160
	Full day	\$ 230	\$ 370	\$ 275
Auditorium, Kitchen and Conference Room	Half day	\$ 345	\$ 470	\$ 390
	Full day	\$ 550	\$ 690	\$ 600
Entire ICC	Half day	\$ 380	\$ 520	\$ 460
	Full day	\$ 630	\$ 775	\$ 690
Meeting Room	Per hour (2h min)	\$ 30	\$ 50	\$ 35
Meditation Room	Custodial Fee	\$ 60	\$ 60	\$ 60

*Half day rentals for 6 hours or less can be made for either the morning or evening. The key for morning use has to be returned by 3 pm latest on the same day. For evening rentals, the key will be available from 4 pm onward. Full day rentals run from 6 hours to 12 hours.

Reservation, Fee Payment and Safety Deposit

Requirements: A non-refundable deposit of the greater of \$100 or one-half the total rental fee is due at the time of reservation. This will be applied towards the final charge.

- At the time of key pick-up, complete payment of the entire rental fee must be made.
- A separate check for a refundable security deposit of \$150 is also required. This deposit will be destroyed after the key has been returned and facility has been checked to ensure that the conditions stated in the renter's agreement have been met. The facility must be left in good order and secured. Failure to meet these conditions will result in a charge to be deducted from the security deposit.

[^] Community Groups can have annual agreements for using ICC facilities whereby concessions can be made depending on the number of ICC members in the Group. Groups with more than 50% ICC memberships qualify for member rates.

Community groups can use the auditorium facilities for rehearsal prior to the scheduled event only if there is no other ICC scheduled event. The number of hours may not exceed 8 hours and time must be scheduled through the schedule coordinator and limited to non-prime hours.

Life Members of the ICC may use the Auditorium and Kitchen free of charge for one day a year. Usage is limited to only by/for the immediate family. A custodial fee of \$100, which will also serve as a non-refundable reservation fee, must be paid at the time of reservation.

- Dr. Surendar Jeyadev, Director of Operations

Cabin Project Fund-raising Status

From Dr. Padmanabh Kamath

Dear Members/Friends of the ICC:

On behalf of the Cabin Project Fund-raising Committee, I would like to share with you the progress report:

Accomplishment so far: Out of the \$650,000 cost of the project, we have so far raised \$463,000 in cash and \$41,000 in additional pledges. \$463,000 includes the \$320,000 from the HHSC.

Balance to be raised: Currently, we need to raise an additional \$146,000. We need your help. Please consider the following:

- Consider making a pledge/donation to this project. Pledges can be paid in 3-5 years depending on your convenience.
- If you know of any prospective donor, please contact me at (381-1541).
- The more money the ICC raises, the more rent it will receive from the HHSC (please see the terms in the ICC-HHSC contract). For example, if we raise the entire \$146,000 and collect on the \$41,000 pledges, the rental income from the HHSC to the ICC will be \$5,000/week or \$25,000 per year (compared to \$19,000 currently).

Please note that this project will bring many valuable activities (children's camps, adult retreats) to the ICC, and make ICC financially viable. Thank you.

You are privileged!! ICC Membership benefits of more than \$300!!

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced fee or free admission to a variety of children's activities: a savings upto \$25! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sleepless in ICC – Easter egg-hunt – A evening at bowling – Orienteering – Fashion Social ● Reduced fee or free admission to family activities: a savings upto 25! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Summer picnic – Krishna Jayanti – Christmas – Diwali Celebrations ● Reduced fee or free admission to cultural, musical and dance programs: a savings of more than \$225! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hindusthani vocal and instrumental – Carnatic vocal and instrumental | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced fee or free admission to community activities / organizations: a savings of upto \$65! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – India Fair – ICC Social Club ● Discount from community businesses: upto 10% savings! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 5% India Market – 5% India House Store – 10% India House Restaurant – 10% India Palace – 10% Raj Mahal – 10% off on longterm care insurance from MedAmerica ● Community awareness and outreach activities: price less! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – India Show at Asia Expo, Memorial Art Gallery – Indo American presentations at Martin Luther King Commission's "One Voice" youth celebration – Student Awards, Memorial Awards, Open Memorial Services, etc. – India Community booths at schools, Monroe County fair, etc. |
|--|--|

2004 India Community Center Membership Form

Name (Last): _____ (First) _____ (Spouse) _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ Phone: (Work) _____ Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

ICC Membership (Check One)

[Basic Annual Member \(\\$75 minimum\):](#)

[Full Time Student \(\\$20 minimum\):](#)

[Senior Citizen \(\\$35 minimum\):](#)

[Life Member \(\\$3000 minimum\):](#)

[New Resident: \(Free First Calendar Year of Residence-
Only if Moved within the last three months\)](#)

Membership Effective January through December 2004.

No Prorating for late payments.

Please make checks payable to ICC

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

**We appreciate your contribution and
thank you for your continued support.
We look forward to your active participation.**

Please send one check for the total amount, payable to ICC.
Please mail checks to: Amit Thakkar, 9 Golden Fleece Drive, Rochester, NY 14623

ICC 2004 Banquet March 20 Sonal Shah, Chief Guest

By Dr. Shriram Revankar—Chairman of the Committee

It gives me great pleasure to invite you all to the ICC 2004 Banquet. This year's banquet is all set to be a dazzling event that may leave you yearning for more. Please mark the evening of March 20th 2004 on your calendars for the ICC Banquet. Our chief guest is Ms. Sonal Shah, who has been awarded the person of the year award for 2003 by India Abroad and Rediff.com. We are grateful to Sonal for having accepted our invitation and we all look forward to her inspirational address to our community at the ICC Banquet – 2004. The highlights of the banquet will include ICC Service Awards, High school Senior Awards, Sengupta Memorial Awards. County executive Maggie Brooks will be joining us, and it would be our pleasure to have her there. The event is not too far, please call and reserve your tickets – Shriram Revankar (265-7839) or e-mail revankar@rochester.rr.com.

Here are some interesting snippets of information that shed light on Sonal Shah. I gleaned these from the Web. Italicized text is quote by Sonal.

Sonal Shah, 35, founder of Indicorps, was voted India Abroad Person of the Year 2003 by a distinguished nine-member jury, headed by Iowa Congresswoman Swati Dandekar, from 186 nominations sent in by readers of *India Abroad* and *rediff.com*.



"Understanding our culture fosters a sense of self-pride. You can say but why go to India to learn this? Because it is when you experience the spirit of India that you see beyond the façade of the dirt, the corruption, the lack of sanitation and you really begin to see the people, their daily lives, their strength and their undying faith in everything around them. You see a place where:

- *Whenever you are lost -- everyone is willing to help you -- even if only 30 percent of the people are probably correct;*
- *When you go the slums to meet the children, their families are willing to feed you their only meal of the day because you are a guest and that is their biggest honor;*
- *Where tribal villagers are willing to walk four miles each way to create a human chain on the river to help the Indicorps Fellows cross over safely.*
- *This is India. It is through this sort of grassroots reconnection that we see not only what we mean to India, but more importantly what India means to us."*

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Digvijay Singh presented Shah with the award at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York in a glittering ceremony attended by US Senator Hillary Clinton, Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Republican politician Bobby Jindal and



leading members of the Indian American community. *"My own personal story -- how did I get here today -- is less about my professional accomplishments than it is about the very personal journey of living a full, rewarding and principled life. It is about pursuing a small set of hugely important beliefs each and every day:*

- *That all people everywhere, regardless of race, gender, income level, religious belief, past history, have the power to make a difference;*
- *That our actions in life matter;*
- *That solutions can be found to even what seem to be insurmountable problems;*
- *And, most importantly, that we CAN be the change that we want to see in the world.*

I believe that positive change starts with just one person."



Sonal Shah, India Abroad Person of the Year 2003 with (from left to right) Vijay Nambiar, India's representative to the UN, Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Minister of State for External

Affairs Digvijay Singh and Pramathesh Rath, Consul General, Consulate General of India, New York

"Consider the story of 23-year-old Indicorps Fellow Shezeen Suleman. She had no connection to India except her heritage. A heritage that was so important that her family still spoke the local dialect of Kutchi at home -- even after four generations. She is the first to return to India in 150 years. She went to India to find her roots and to work on a watershed development project in Kutch. That experience had a lasting impact not only on Shezeen, but the entire community around her."



Please contact Shriram Revankar if you would like to sponsor a table or advertise on the Banquet program booklet, or if you would like to be on the organizing committee.

Nominations for 2004 ICC Service Excellence Award

Dr. Lalit K. Mestha - Committee Chair

Each year ICC recognizes the individuals who provide outstanding services to the Indian Community and to the Community Center. We would like to invite you to nominate the outstanding individuals within the community who have promoted Indian Culture, Philosophy, Arts, Languages and Literature and above all, have supported the cause of India Community Center for numerous years.

Nominations can be made directly via ICC Website (www.icor.org) or by sending an email to lkmettha@crt.xerox.com. To nominate, please write few statements reflecting the continuous high standard of service. You can also contact Dr. L.K. Mestha, Chair for the Service Excellence Award Committee (# 585 223 8476 or 585 422 5123). **The deadline for nominations is February 29, 2004.** All nominations are held confidential until final selection. Awardees will be recognized by the Keynote Speaker at the ICC Annual Banquet held on March 20th.

Announcement for 2004 High School Senior Achievement Awards

At the Annual ICC Banquet on March 20, 2004, the ICC will be honoring 2004 graduating seniors with awards in the following categories.

- **ICC Presidents' Award**
- **Academic Excellence**
- **Extracurricular Activities**
- **Sports**
- **Community Service**

The ICC urges every high-school senior (class of 2004) of Asian Indian origin in Monroe County to apply for the awards. This is a very special recognition of talented students, by the Community.

Students must apply using the application forms available at the ICC website (www.icor.org) to be considered for the awards.

Please submit applications by March 1, 2004 to:

Shruti Date, 27 Langston point, Pittsford, NY 14534
Tel: (585) 586-0136 email: datesp25@yahoo.com

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