



# Hindu Vishwa Newsletter

An official Newsletter of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America  
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## Governing Council Meeting Report

Central & Northern New Jersey chapter and Staten Island, NY chapter of VHP of America hosted 41st annual meeting of the Governing Council, an elected decision making body and chapter representatives from various states from Nov 18 to 20 2011, at Ramada Inn, New Brunswick, NJ.

Three day meeting started with the welcome address from the New Jersey President Sushree Asha Vaishnav who expressed appreciation for all the participants for their volunteer work and being a role model of 'tyāg' and 'sevā'. VHPA President, Shree Jyotish Parekh highlighted the community work carried out by VHPA during the past 40 years. He said, "In this journey VHPA has achieved many milestones, the key ingredient of VHPA Seva recipe is the dedication of its office bearers for all four decades and that is the reason so many of the original volunteers are with the organization even today".

VHPA is planning a national Hindu Youth Conference as well as Hindu Women's Conference in 2012. Other nationwide ongoing initiatives and those planned for future are summarized below:

**SAC (Support A Child):** Almost a 25-year old program run by VHPA, SAC provides hope and better future to orphans or abandoned children in cities and towns. A \$250 contribution takes care of the total well being of a child, i.e., education, lodging, boarding, healthcare, etc. More than 600 children are supported in 14 states of Bharat (India.) The Governing Council has decided to raise the number of children supported by 20% in 2012, bringing it to 1000.

**ASHRAYA (Bhutanese Resettlement Project):** VHPA with various other organizations is engaged in resettlement of thousands of Bhutanese Refugees, mostly Hindus and Buddhists that have been coming to the USA since 2008; all in all 60,000 are expected. They are spread thinly in several cities in various states.

**CHY (Coalition of Hindu Youth)** is a group of youth who are keenly interested in working with Mandirs. They are the future of the Mandirs. CHY also aims to network Bal Vihars, Youth Camps and Youth Conferences. CHY is a direct outcome of HMEC.

**HAVAN (Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network):** HAVAN started with an idea to harness the energy of the seniors as well as those who are nearing retirement age. Besides providing answers for the specific needs of this age group, it aims to draw on their strength, experience and wisdom to help our youth, Mandirs and Seva projects. VHPA held two HAVAN conferences in 2011 and many more are planned for 2012.

**HMEC (Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference):** This project is geared to networking all Hindu Mandirs and Institutions to make them respond to the needs of the second generation, and to



address operational, developmental and sustenance issues of Hindu Mandirs in USA and Canada. VHPA organized sixth annual conference in 2011 in Columbus, OH. The 2012 HMEC will be held in Fremont (San Francisco), CA.

The Governing Council also discussed bio-ethical issues, impact of Bharat Government's proposed "Communal and Targeted Violence" bill and celebration of 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in 2013 with a national conference.

One feature that raised hopes for a bright future of VHPA was election of as many as 16 new members from all across USA, many of them from the younger generation. Several officers appointed or reappointed are:

Dr. Abhaya Asthana (Boston) -General Secretary for a 3-yr term.  
Dr. Umesh Shukla (NJ) -Vice President of Inter Organizational Relations  
Shri Vimal Sodhani (NJ) -Vice President of Finance.  
Shri Dhaval Joshipura (Chicago) -Organizing Secretary  
Shri Apnesh Singhal (NJ) -Joint Organizing Secretary.

Following directors were selected to lead various VHPA projects:

Shri Sunil Bagaria (NJ),  
Shri Lalit Goel (CA),  
Smt. Renu Gupta (OH),  
Dr. Surendra Nath Pandey (GA),  
Dr. Vipul Patel (PA),  
Shri Samir Rawal (NJ),  
Dr. Shyam Narayan Shukla (CA),  
Dr. Ila Sukhadia (NY), and  
Shri Tej Tanden (MA).

The meeting was attended by 57 members from 12 states including CA, DC, FL, GA, MA, MD, NJ, NY, OH, PA, TX and VA. Members representing nine prominent Hindu organizations also attended the meeting as observers and supporters of VHPA goals.

## HINDU AMERICAN VANAPRASHTI NETWORK (HAVAN) CONFERENCE REPORT

### “Engaging Vanaprasthis in Meaningful Activities”

The second HAVAN conference was held November 12, 2012 at the Hindu Temple of Toledo, OH. Forty members (mostly older adults – Vanaprasthi) of the Hindu community from OH, MI, and PA area participated in the conference.

The conference began with an invocation prayer by Madhav Karche, the priest of Toledo Hindu Temple. Sudershan Pasupuleti, the President of the Toledo temple, in his opening remarks reiterated conference objectives: “Engage Vanaprasthis in meaningful community service activities, develop network, and find opportunities to use their skills, specialties, and wisdom for the benefit of the society.” The conference was divided into six sessions covering areas such as the Vedic vision of Vanaprasthi lifestyle, medical and behavioral issues of older adults, how Vanaprasthis can be engaged in Seva to the community and help each other with personal and emotional needs. Subba Reddy of SV Temple in Pittsburgh discussed the Vedic concept of Vanaprasthi life style emphasizing the practice of Bhakti Yoga. Dr. Vipin Kalia of Indianapolis talked about the idea of cyber Vanaprasthi e-tool where seniors can log into a web site and seek the help and company of other seniors and younger ones too. Dr. Inder Saini of Michigan shared his 20 years of experience working with the senior group and fulfillment of their needs. He mentioned that Bhartiya Temple in Troy, MI is the focal point of their activities. Dr. Siva Yachoor of Toledo talked about the mental health aspect in which he discussed three dimensions of life: Physical, Emotional and Spiritual. He summarized that the key to peace is achieving contentment through Hindu spiritual practices. Manju Rastogi of Akron, OH shared her experiences of Seva for senior women of Bhutanese Hindu community.

Gautham Madhira, a youth of University of Michigan, talked about his grandfather's influence on him and his family in moral precedent and interpretation of religious principles. At the end, conferees deliberated to start a communication news letter to connect Vanaprasthis across the nation. Most participants endorsed the idea of organizing HAVAN conferences at the Temples across the country.

### Coalition of Hindu Youth Launches Yogafy

(HOUSTON, TX) On Saturday, January 14, 2012 the Coalition of Hindu Youth (CHY) formally launched Yogafy, a project to combat childhood obesity through Yoga. Yoga professionals and community leaders attended an information session on Yogafy held at India House in Houston. Tejas Dave, Yogafy's Project Coordinator, presented an overview of the Yogafy project and outlined Yogafy's mission and objectives, specifically noting Yogafy's goal of being implemented in fifty cities throughout the United States. Dr. Shriram Sarvotham, Yogafy Curriculum Coordinator and a Yoga teacher for the past 19 years, expertly described how Yogafy would work in combating childhood obesity. The event concluded with a Question and Answer Session and giving further insight into the specifics of the program. Several organizations, including Yoga studios, have expressed their interest in implementing Yogafy.

For further information: please sign up for the mailing list at [www.chynetwork.org/yogafylist](http://www.chynetwork.org/yogafylist). Also, contact via E-mail: [yogafy@chynetwork.org](mailto:yogafy@chynetwork.org), or phone: (281) 245-0216.

## TOUCHING LIVES THROUGH YOGA

Hansa Dave of Indianapolis, IN has combined her love for children and yoga into something extraordinary. Growing up, Hansa performed yoga regularly given her parents and grandparent's background of being yogis. She developed and maintained this interest all throughout her life. She wanted to share this experience with others. Therefore, she went to the Patanjali Yog Center in Haridwar to get a formal yoga teaching license, which allowed her to start teaching yoga professionally in the U.S.



First, she started teaching yoga to adult groups throughout Indianapolis. Her technique included educating adults about yoga but in a way which ties this with God, health, and inner happiness. Although she enjoyed working with adults, her true passion lies with children. Given her professional background as a teacher, her involvement at the mandir with the Balagokulam program, and various children that she teaches at home, it seemed only right for her to extend this concept of yoga to a younger generation. Therefore, she got involved with teaching yoga 2 days a week at a private elementary school in Indianapolis to children ages 4 to 9. She considers this one of the most rewarding experiences as the children eagerly await this class. Once she arrives at the facility, children as young as 4 years old quickly gather their yoga mats and get ready for the class.

The popularity of this class has gotten the whole town talking. She always knew yoga would be of interest to adults, but realizing how interested children are makes this even more worthwhile. The smiles and the enjoyment of these children are like no other experience for her. She now does this on a regular basis after giving up a career at JP Morgan Chase bank to pursue her true dreams.

Hansa Dave is a Governing Council Member of VHP of America representing Indiana.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **First Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference Pittsburgh, PA April 27 – 28, 2012**

Hosted by The Hindu Jain Temple & Sri Venkateswara Temple, PA, it is open to Priests and Religious committee members of Hindu temples and institutions. For further details, please Contact:

Navin Kadakia 412-302-5495 [navinp.kadakia@gmail.com](mailto:navinp.kadakia@gmail.com)  
Or Sanjay Mehta 412-251-9133

### **Coalition of Hindu Youth Northeast Retreat Arsha Vidya Gurukulum, Salyorsburg, PA April 13 to April 15, 2012**

The AVG is a wonderful ashram and resource library. This retreat will be the first retreat in a series of regional retreats that are going to be held in Texas and the Midwest. More details will follow on the other two in the near future.

For more information, please check out the flier at <http://www.chynetwork.org/index.php/retreats/northeast-regional-retreat>

For current and future activities organized by the Coalition of Hindu Youth, please visit their website at [www.chynetwork.org](http://www.chynetwork.org) or e-mail/Twitter/Facebook: [info@chynetwork.org](mailto:info@chynetwork.org).



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER NEWS

Listed below are some of the Chapter was engaged in over the past few months in addition to the monthly *Satsang*:

- ❖ Meeting with Kashmiri Brothers and sisters and a presentation by Shri Sanjay Kaul from Boston area.
- ❖ VHP and Hindu Sewak together took a project to clean the 2-mile stretch of Grand Rapid free way. In appreciation, the City has posted a plaque in the heart of Farmington City.
- ❖ At the interfaith conference this year VHP was part of it and represented our Hindu community.
- ❖ Our chapter has donated clothes for India, to be distributed among poor in villages.
- ❖ Our Chapter attended HAVAN conference in Toledo, Ohio. The Seva projects are going on well so are our Bal Goklam. All the Bal Goklam had Guru Pooja and Soorya namakar with pomp and pagentry. Prasad was distributed and Guru Dakshana was collected.

The following is a list of activities planned for the near future:

- ❖ Bhutanese from Lansing plan to organize their local chapter and affiliate with the VHPA Michigan chapter.
- ❖ Donate to the Grand Rapids Bhutanese community a number of musical instruments -keyboard, Dhol and khartals so they can start *Bhajan Mandali* in their community. Also plan to distribute sports goods and copies of Amar Chitra kathas for kids.
- ❖ Plan to hold Ekal Vidyalaya program in April
- ❖ Planning to celebrate Hindu Heritage Day in August with the theme on Swami Vivekananda.
- ❖ The next Hindu camp during Labor Day weekend.

For further information, please contact the chapter President, Shri Arjjun Soorya E-mail: [arjun410@comcast.net](mailto:arjun410@comcast.net)



Houston Chapter celebration

## HOUSTON CHAPTER NEWS

It was a sight to see, a massive gathering of Houston citizens at George Bush Park, Houston TX to celebrate **Makar Sankranti & Swami Vivekananda's birthday**.

The event was organized by VHP of America – **Houston Chapter** in alliance with Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA, Hindus of Greater Houston, Gujarati Samaj of Houston and other organizations. So large was the crowd that digital camera settings were adjusted to panoramic view. Parking lot was full in 30 minutes and one could see a mile car line up. Two big shuttle buses were hired to transport participants to-and-fro; four police cars and six constables were also on duty for law and order. The event went peacefully, officially closing at 5:00pm.

On one side we see VHP America volunteers coordinating Kite, Water, *Manja* (Kite thread selling) and managing people lined up to buy and fly kite, on other side Gujarati Samaj is distributing "*Garma Garam*" (hot) Khichdi, *Til Da Ladoo* and sweet, Ekal Vidyalaya offered hot masala tea to crowds. Mother Nature blessed us as the weather was optimum for Kite flying with no rains and no direct sun. It was an exceptional display of brotherhood and collaboration among Hindu organizations in Houston area to organize an event of such a magnitude. So many showed up that after 4 hours all Kites were sold out. The whole park turned into a Kite Flying marathon with children enjoying the utmost. The skyline was aglow with colorful American, Indian plastic paper kites.

Arrangements were also made for football fans to watch live football match between Houston Team and another state at mini theater, with loudspeakers guiding and directing people. Surya Namaskar was also performed at the event.

Submitted by [Rahul Sharma](#)

### Russian Judiciary rejects a ridiculous proposal to ban the *Bhagavad-Gita*

The faith of Hindus around the world in the universal knowledge and divinity represented by the *Bhagavad-Gita* prevailed as the recent decision of the state prosecutors in Siberia on Wednesday, Jan 04, 2012 to dismiss a plea to ban the *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of Hinduism's holy treatises. Judge Galina Butenko of the Leninsky District Court in Tomsk clarified to the prejudiced plaintiffs belonging to a section of the Orthodox Church, that the *Bhagavad-Gita* "did not advocate social discord," as they had been ridiculously claimed.

One of the most reputable sons of Russia, Leo Tolstoy, was one amongst many, who was greatly influenced by the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Milan Markovitch, author of "Tolstoy et Gandhi," wrote that: "there is not one of Tolstoy's works written after this period" of his life referred to in the Confessions "which is not inspired, in part, by Hindu thought....."

His was a Christianity underpinned by the great Hindu doctrines." Markovitch further adds that Tolstoy also "remains the most striking example, among a great many, of those who sought a cure for the western spirit, in Hinduism."

The World Hindu Council of America (VHP America) looks forward to working with the Russian Government and their representatives in the United States, to develop educational initiatives, which would create a better understanding of Hindu religious scriptures and practices. We encourage the Hindu community around the world, to take this as an opportunity to develop and share the message of brotherhood, as espoused in the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Further information: Vijay Narang - Director, Media Relations; [director\\_mr@vhp-america.org](mailto:director_mr@vhp-america.org); Tel: 954-915-6913

## 2012 Dates to remember

|                    |                                    |                      |                                     |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| January 14         | Makarsankranti/Pongal              | August 02            | Raksha-bandhan                      |
| January 16         | Swami Vivekanand Jayanti           | August 10            | Krishna Janmastami                  |
| January 28         | Vasant Panchami                    | August 15            | Independence Day of India           |
| February 20        | Maha Shivaratri                    | <b>August 17-18</b>  | <b>HMEC-2012</b>                    |
| March 08           | Holi                               | August 29            | Onam                                |
| March 23           | New Year Vikram Samvat 2069        | September 19         | Ganesh Chaturthi                    |
| March 23           | Ugadi/Telugu New Year              | September 30         | Pitr-paksha Begins                  |
| April 01           | Ramanavami                         | October 15           | Pitr-paksha Ends                    |
| April 06           | Hanuman Jayanti                    | October 16           | Navaratri Begins                    |
| April 13           | Baisakhi /Tamil New Year           | October 21           | Durga Puja Begins                   |
| <b>April 21</b>    | <b>Executive Board meeting</b>     | October 23           | Navaratri Ends                      |
| April 24           | Akshaya Tritiya/Parasuram Jayanti  | October 24           | Vijaya Dashmi/Dusshera              |
| <b>April 27-28</b> | <b>Hindu Priests' Conference</b>   | <b>October 26-28</b> | <b>Governing Council Meeting</b>    |
| May 06             | Budha Jayanti                      | October 29           | Shard Purnima                       |
| May 21             | Savitri Pooja                      | November 02/03       | Karwa Chauth                        |
| June 21            | Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra, Puri    | November 12          | Dhan Teras                          |
| July 03            | Guru Purnima                       | November 13          | Diwali                              |
| July 4             | US Independence Day                | November 15          | Guajarati Vikram Samvat New Year    |
| <b>July 11</b>     | Summer Camps/VHP Family Conference | November 15          | Bhai Dooj                           |
| July 24            | Nag Panchami                       | November 28          | Kartik Poornima/ Guru Nanak Jayanti |

### Support a Child

A project of VHPA since 1985, this program provides safe home, education and basic medical care to young needy children, in vanvasi (tribal) areas of Bharat. It costs \$250 per year per child. You will get a picture and details of the child's progress. Please send tax-deductible contribution to: **Support a child - VHP of America, P.O. Box 441505, Houston, TX 77244**  
E-mail: [vp\\_seva@vhp-america.org](mailto:vp_seva@vhp-america.org)  
Tel. 281-496-5676

### SEVENTH ANNUAL HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES' CONFERENCE

**August 17-18, 2012**

**FREMONT, CALIFORNIA**

**Seventh HMEC will be held at Fremont, California on August 17-18 followed by the annual Hindu Mela on August 19. The conference will be hosted by Fremont Hindu Temple under the leadership of Dr. Romesh Japra. For further details, please contact:  
Dr. Romesh Japra at: [rkjapra@gmail.com](mailto:rkjapra@gmail.com)  
Dr. Umesh Shukla at: [umeshshukla123@gmail.com](mailto:umeshshukla123@gmail.com)**

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