

KHAASBAAT

A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

AUGUST 2021

WWW.KHAASBAAT.COM • EDITOR@KHAASBAAT.COM • 813-758-1786

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KHAAS BAAT COMPLETES 17 YEARS

SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER, READERS!

By NITISH S. RELE and SHEPHALI J. RELE
Khaas Baat celebrates its 17-year anniversary this month. We graciously and humbly thank our wonderful and committed volunteer columnists for their priceless contributions, our steadfast advertisers and well-wishers for their help and encouragement.
The pandemic hit the newspaper industry especially hard resulting in massive layoffs and pay cuts. In 2020 alone, more than 300 U.S. newspapers stopped printing leaving readers without a dependable source of local information. We are proud to say that amid adversities, Khaas Baat has been printed every month for the past 17 years. Once again, we request everyone to support our efforts.
If you pick up a copy from the grocery store/restaurant, consider subscribing for home

delivery. And to advertisers, opening new businesses, we request you to promote your shop/store to the community through our newspaper instead of merely on social media or word of mouth.
As activities resume, we ask community leaders and organizers to email event details to editor@khaasbaat.com by the 20th of the month for the following month's issue. Feel strongly about an issue? Send us a letter to the editor. We always welcome your story ideas and suggestions on how we can best serve our community.
Khaas Baat is proud to be the ONE AND ONLY Sunshine State publication to offer comprehensive coverage of news and happenings in your Florida Indian community. Do follow us on twitter @khaasbaat and join us on Facebook.



Florida communities celebrating the patriotic occasion include:

TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER
The Federation of Indian Associations of Tampa Bay (FIA of Tampa Bay) will VIRTUALLY celebrate India's 74th Independence Day on Sunday, Aug. 29. Connect with FIA via zoom (<https://tinyurl.com/FIAINDDAY2021>) starting at 4 pm. Activities include rangoli display, 2021 high school graduate recognition, art, essay and patriotic costume contests, antakshari and cultural programs. See flyer with additional information on page 7.

ORLANDO/CASSELBERRY

Hindu Society of Central Florida and New Age Group will celebrate India's Independence Day on Sunday, Aug. 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at HSCF, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry. Admission is free with RSVP to hscfnewagegroup@gmail.com For information, call Dr. Sampath Shanmugam at (407) 782-3007 or visit www.orlandohindutemple.org



COOKBOOK REVIEW: DREAMING IN SPICE
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WHO'S WHO

Khaas Baat is a monthly publication that has been in circulation since August 2004. Issues are direct mailed to subscribers and also are available at South Asian grocery stores and restaurants. It presents exclusive, informative and relevant news about the Indian American community in Florida to its readers.

EDITOR/PUBLISHER: NITISH S. RELE, M.A. IN JOURNALISM
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: SHEPHALI J. RELE, M.A. IN JOURNALISM
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: TIM LANCASTER

Khaas Baat, 8312 Windsor Bluff Drive, Tampa, FL 33647
Phone: 813-758-0518 • e-mail: editor@khaasbaat.com

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A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

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FOR INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY ACTIVITIES IN YOUR CITY, GO TO PAGE 1

EVENTS

TAMPA BAY AREA/PLANT CITY

AUG. 7: BOXING FIGHT; Asian and Commonwealth silver medalist and Arjuna Award winner Mandeep Jangra takes on Brazilian Marcello Williams; White Sands Boxing and Fitness, 2031 N. Wheeler St., Plant City; 6 p.m.; presented by Probox Promotions; for tickets, call (813) 532-5243 or visit www.probox.ticketleap.com

AUG. 18: ICC SENIORS GET-TOGETHER; India Cultural Center, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; free seminar, lunch and entertainment; no age restriction; for information, call Ram Jakhotia at (813) 962-4172 or (813) 863-3048.

AUG. 23-25: "SCIENCE OF MIND"

MANAGEMENT; discourse by Swami Mukundananda on yoga and meditation; Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Tuesday and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday; for details, call Bill at (727) 432-1020 or Simmy at (813) 300-0584; for free registration, visit www.jkyog.org/upcoming_events

SEPT. 24-25: HINDU MATRIMONIAL USA; Tampa Bay's third annual matrimonial meet & match; two separate events for two different age groups: 25 to 39 years old and 40 years and above; India Cultural Center, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa; for information, call (769) 241-0675, email FloridaHinduMatrimonial@gmail.com or visit www.hindumatrimonial.org

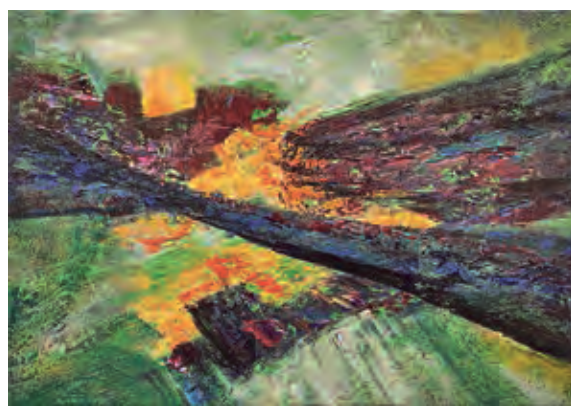
ORLANDO/CASSELBERRY

AUG. 21-29: SHRIMAD DEVI BHAGWAT KATHA & NAVCHANDI HAVAN; Hindu Society of Central Florida, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry; for timings and other details, visit www.orlandohindutemple.org

SOUTH FLORIDA (FORT LAUDERDALE/DAVIE)

AUG. 22: DAZZLING DANCES OF INDIA AND SPAIN; presented by Association of Performing Arts of India; Rosemary Larsen Auditorium at ArtServe, 1350 E. Sunrise Blvd., Fort Lauderdale; 5 to 7 p.m.; \$30 tickets online, \$35 at door; to purchase tickets or for information, visit www.apaiart.com

AUG. 29: RAKSHABANDHAN/BOWLING PARTY; SpareZ Bowling, 5325 S. University Drive, Davie; for information, call (954) 543-1539 or visit www.irccflorida.com



TALLAHASSEE

AUG. 6-25: "REVITALIZATION;" exhibit opening reception 5 to 8 p.m. on Aug. 6; Venvi Art Gallery, 2901 E. Park Ave.; regular gallery hours from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m.; for information, visit www.venviartgallery.com

Due to the changing situation with Covid-19 cases, readers are urged to check with organizers before heading out to events.



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80th Birthday Of Our Beloved Father/Grandfather

Sri. Gali Dhanamjaya Naidu

On 2nd August, 2021

May you have a happy and healthy birthday!

We hope your birthday is filled with love from family and friends, unforgettable moments, never-ending joy, and happy memories.

Here's to another incredible year!

Lots Of Love,

Daughter-in-law & Son Grandchildren
 Jahnvi Lekkalapudi Nandini Gali
 Bharath Kumar Gali Shankar Gali



- AUG. 15: INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- AUG. 16: PARSI NEW YEAR**
- AUG. 22: RAKSHA BANDHAN**
- AUG. 30: KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI**

SWAMI MUKUNDANANDA TALK, YOGA AND MEDITATION ON 'THE SCIENCE OF MIND' AUG. 23-25 IN TAMPA

Swami Mukundananda will address an audience from all walks of life from Aug. 23-25 at the Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road, in Tampa. During the three-day Science of Mind Management program, Swamiji will reveal ways to get better command of the mind for greater happiness and success.

The first part of each day's session focuses on Yoga and Meditation; the second part comprises a spiritual discourse and inspiring chanting.

Swami Mukundananda's discourses clarify the deepest concepts of the Vedic scriptures with wit and perfect logic. A senior disciple of Jagadguru Shree Kripaluji Maharaj, Swami Mukundananda is a world-renowned teacher of spirituality, yoga and meditation. He is the founder of the unique Yogic system JKYog, also known as Yoga for the Body, Mind and Soul. Over the last two decades, he has been travelling all over the world, awakening thousands of seekers through yoga and spirituality. He has been invited to speak at various Fortune 500 companies such as Google, Oracle, Yahoo, and for the youth, he has conducted programs at prestigious universities like Princeton, Stanford, Kellogg, MIT and Duke.

The program at the Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road, will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Tuesday and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday. Free prasadam will be served after the discourses. The Hindu Temple of Florida requires those who use its facilities wear face masks for everyone's safety. For information, call Bill at (727) 432-1020 or Simmy at (813) 300-0584. For free registration, visit www.jkyog.org/upcoming_events



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MONTHLY EVENTS	WEEKLY EVENTS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 1 (5:30 PM to 6:30 PM) • JHULAY LAAL JI BHAJAN SATURDAY, AUGUST 7 (6:00 PM to 8:00 PM) • MATA KI CHOWKI (Sponsored by Smt. Babita & Sh. Sanjeev Kumar Family) SUNDAY, AUGUST 22 (5:00 PM to 7:00 PM) • PURNIMA SHRI SATYANARAYAN KATHA SATURDAY, AUGUST 28 (6:00 PM to 7:30 PM) • SHRI JAGNATH JI BHAJAN MONDAY, AUGUST 30 (8:00 PM to 12:30 AM) • SHRI KRISHAN JANMASHTAMI VRAT JANMOSTSAV TUESDAY, AUGUST 31 (7:00 PM to 8:30 PM) • SHRI GOKULASHTAMI CELEBRATION	EVERY MONDAY - 6:30 PM • SHIV ABHISHEK AND PUJA • SHRAYAN SOMVAR PUJA EVERY TUESDAY - 7:00 PM • SUNDARKAND • HANUMAM KATHA EVERY THURSDAY - 7:00 PM • SAI BABA SATSANG • MAHA PRASAD Pandit Manikya Sharma 813-484-9568 Pandit Rushi Vyas 813-503-3388

IMPORTANT

- Puja services have been resumed with guidelines.
- Please follow CDC guidelines when visiting temple.
- For private puja at Temple or at your place, please contact Temple or Pandit Ji.

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – PART XV NOW A PANDEMIC OF THE UNVACCINATED!

By M.P. RAVINDRA NATHAN, M.D., FACC



Let me start with a true story. Recently a 51-year-old healthy hospital technician in South Florida catches a little cold, becomes febrile and quickly develops shortness of breath. The ER physician admits him to the ICU with a diagnosis of Covid-19. His condition deteriorates and soon he has to be put on a ventilator because of respiratory failure. Sadly, after a few days, he succumbs! So did a 27-year-old and a 47-year-old man.

What's unusual about these stories? At this time, when the incidence of Covid-19 infections and death rate has been steadily declining, nobody expects this to happen to healthy young people. The reason? They were all unvaccinated! And the family members of one of them still refused to get vaccinated! Looks like there is a sudden rebound in the number of coronavirus cases across the U.S. from the rapidly spreading new Delta variant, highly transmissible (60 percent more) and quite virulent, turning our cells into big factories for them to replicate fast. The infected have over 1,000 times more virus in them.

More variants, including Lambda, may be on their way. Currently, the U.S. is averaging "more than 23,000 new cases a day; double the seven-day average of 11,300 cases three weeks ago," according to Johns Hopkins University. The incidence has been rising in almost every state! There were 23,500 cases in children last week alone. Pregnant women are on ventilators. "Where Delta goes, death follows," says Dr. Catherine O'Neil, an infectious disease specialist. We need to seriously rethink our prevention strategies.

The reason for this uptick, according to CDC, is "Nearly all recent Covid-19 cases and deaths are among unvaccinated, mostly younger people. Americans 65 and older, who are most likely to die from the virus, are generally staying healthy because of high rates of vaccinations. " The Delta variant is creating havoc among the young unvaccinated people. Arkansas and California lead the nation; Florida has 20 percent of the new cases. Yes, there are a few breakthrough cases in vaccinated people also but the numbers are less, infection is milder and deaths are practically nil in this group. Vaccination is effective against the variant too. Beware, some with compromised immune systems like those with cancer and organ transplants may not be completely protected with even two doses. The immune response is less in the elderly too.

Looks like this is now the pandemic of the unvaccinated!

Sadly, there is still a lot of misinformation, disinformation, rumors and hoaxes about the vaccine among the public. These claims spreading on the social media platforms range from "Vaccines are unsafe and ineffective" to denying Covid-19 exists, offering false cures and decrying vaccines and doctors. That is why still only less than 50 percent of the public are fully vaccinated in spite of easy availability of vaccines in pharmacies and hospitals.

Getting all Americans vaccinated is critical to put the pandemic behind us. Stop vaccine disinformation spread online; it has deadly consequences. All of us, health conscious Americans, should take it upon ourselves to fight this ignorance and misinformation. Yes, we do see occasional side effects like fever, muscle aches, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, etc., from vaccination, but they are self-limiting. Serious side effects such as myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside the heart) are rare. Rarely, some people have developed Guillain-Barre' Syndrome after getting the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Vaccines are generally safe, but due to the enormous numbers being given, some side effects will pop up. What we need to worry about are the devastating short-term and long-term consequences and possible fatality if one catches a serious infection.

Thankfully, there seems to be some shift in the opinion of vaccine skeptics. But all of us need to emphasize the safety of the vaccine and persuade our friends to get vaccinated. Unlike many other countries where the pandemic is still spreading like wildfire, we have plenty of vaccines available and everybody 12 and older are eligible to get vaccinated. We should raise our voice against the current movement opposing vaccination, a major threat to achieving herd immunity. Another important factor is the irresponsible behavior of the public – not wearing masks, congregating in large numbers indoors, not practicing social distancing and not observing the recommended personal hygiene measures. Some counties like Los Angeles are bringing back mandatory masking. If we want to prevent another lockdown, please get vaccinated today and encourage all your "anti-vaxxer" pals to do so.

To be continued ...

M.P. Ravindra Nathan, M.D., is a cardiologist and Emeritus Editor of AAPI Journal. For further reading, "Second Chance - A Sister's Act of Love" by Dr. Nathan from Outskirts Press, can be found at www.amazon.com




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THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX (AMT) - PART 1

By D. BROOK BAHRENBURG



When it comes to federal income tax, there are few subjects capable of causing as much confusion as the AMT. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act substantially increased the AMT exemptions and exemption phaseout thresholds for 2018 to 2025. Here's a quick guide to understanding the AMT.

What is the AMT?

The AMT is essentially a separate federal income tax system with its own tax rates, and its own set of rules governing the recognition and timing of income and expenses. If you're subject

to the AMT, you have to calculate your taxes twice — once under the regular tax system and again under the AMT system. If your income tax liability under the AMT is greater than your liability under the regular tax system, the difference is reported as an additional tax on your federal income tax return. If you're subject to the AMT in one year, you may be entitled to a credit that can be applied against regular tax liability in future years.

How do you know if you're subject to the AMT?

Part of the problem with the AMT is that, without doing some calculations, there's no easy way to determine whether or not you're subject to the tax. Key AMT "triggers" have included the number of personal exemptions you claim (no longer applicable from 2018 to 2025), your miscellaneous itemized deductions (no longer applicable from 2018 to 2025), and your state and local tax deductions. So, for example, if you have a large family and live in a high-tax state, there's a good possibility you might have to contend with the AMT. IRS Form 1040 instructions include a worksheet that may help you determine whether you're subject to the AMT (an electronic version of this worksheet is also available on the IRS website), but you might need to complete IRS Form 6251 to know for sure.

Common AMT adjustments

It's no easy task to calculate the AMT, in part because of the number and seemingly disparate nature of the adjustments that need to be made. Here are some of the more common AMT adjustments:

- Standard deduction and personal exemptions: The federal standard deduction, generally available under the regular tax system if you don't itemize deductions, is not allowed for purposes of calculating the AMT. Nor could you take a

deduction for personal exemptions for purposes of calculating the AMT when personal exemptions were still available under the regular tax system in 2017.

- Itemized deductions: Under the AMT calculation, no deduction is allowed for state and local taxes paid, or for certain miscellaneous itemized deductions. In 2018 to 2025, those miscellaneous itemized deductions are not allowed under the regular tax system as well. You can only deduct qualifying residence interest (e.g., mortgage or home equity loan interest) to the extent the loan proceeds are used to purchase, construct, or improve a principal residence. In 2018 to 2025, this is also the rule under the regular tax system.
- Exercise of incentive stock options (ISOs): Under the regular tax system, tax is generally deferred until you sell the acquired stock. But for AMT purposes, when you exercise an ISO, income is generally recognized to the extent that the fair market value of the acquired shares exceeds the option price. This means that a significant ISO exercise in a year can trigger AMT liability. If ISOs are exercised and sold in the same year, however, no AMT adjustment is needed, since any income would be recognized for regular tax purposes as well.
- Depreciation: If you're depreciating assets (for example, if you're a sole proprietor and own an asset for business use), you'll have to calculate depreciation twice — once under regular income tax rules and once under AMT rules.

To be continued ...

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TALLAHASSEE'S VENVI GALLERY TO HOLD 'REVITALIZATION' EXHIBIT AUG. 6-25

Venvi Art Gallery in Tallahassee will present Brinda Pamulapati's solo exhibition, "Revitalization" from Aug. 6-25. Emerging out of this challenging time, Pamulapati brings new light and inspiration to the gallery for her second solo exhibition. "Due to the coronavirus, I got a chance to slow down, get grounded and refreshed," she explains, regarding her vibrant, abstract compositions.



She had time to reflect on her work and explore new ideas. Her exhibition will feature new paintings that explore mixed media in her "Saree Series." Inspired by the culture and artistry of her home country, India, she has incorporated silk sarees that are woven with gold and silver threads, into these paintings. She began with an

antique saree given to her by her mother that is nearly 50 years old. Pamulapati focuses on creating movement in her paintings through the careful manipulation of acrylic paint on canvas. Her paintings are also full of textures and patterns, especially in her newest piece, "Saree Series 4." In this painting, she has incorporated a deep red saree, embroidered with gold details, that provides a beautiful pattern and texture. But she has taken it a step further and elaborated upon this pattern to create a composition of her own. Pamulapati draws inspiration from many areas in her life. Her attraction to the use of bright colors, "is the result of my upbringing in a tropical place," she says, "where clothes, flowers, everything has bright colors." Additionally, her well-trained eye from years of painting and curating shows has guided her creations. Pamulapati not only has a background in fine arts but also in mathematics. Her wide-reaching background influences her work and allows her to be calculative in her process towards creating her desired final product. Born in India, Pamulapati has been a part of the Tallahassee



community since 1999. Here, she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Mathematics from Florida State University. After her accomplishments at FSU, she studied under the acclaimed artist Prof. Jacob Pichhadze in Toronto. Along with her previous solo show at Venvi in 2018, her work has also been shown at the FSU Museum of Fine Arts during Asia Culture, Tallahassee City Hall, the Ronald McDonald House, Toronto, and the Yazi Gallery in Toronto. She also writes an art column in Khaas Baat and is the owner/founder of Venvi Gallery since 2015.

"Revitalization" will have an opening reception on Aug. 6 from 5 to 8 p.m. Venvi Gallery is at 2901 East Park Ave., Tallahassee. For more information, visit www.venviartgallery.com

Connect and Celebrate India's 75th Independence Day

Sunday, August 29, 2021, Virtual on Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/FIAINDDAY2021>

Event Chair : Jay Chandran & Event Co-Chair: Sunitha Saravanan

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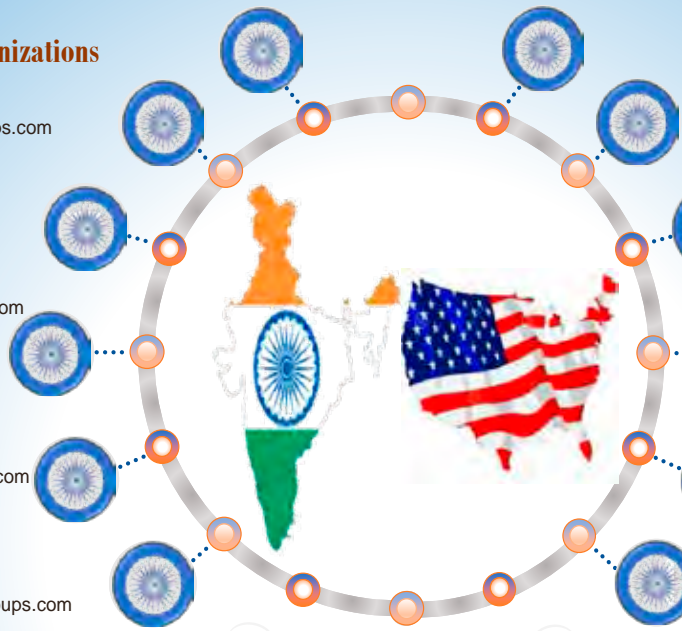
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by Swami Mukundananda

Date: AUG 23 -25, 2021

AUG 23 (Mon) & 24 (Tue): 6 PM- 9 PM

AUG 25 : 7 PM- 9 PM

Venue: Hindu Temple of Florida

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USEFUL VW TIGUAN A STANDOUT IN NAME AND SPIRIT!

Test-drive story by NITISH S. RELE motoringtampabay@gmail.com



After a massive overhaul just three years ago (revamped power train, more cabin space and a standard third-row seat), the VW Tiguan remains largely as is for 2021. Under the hood sits a turbo, intercooled and direct-injected 2.0-liter inline-4 cylinder engine putting out 184 horsepower @ 4360 rpm and 221 pounds-feet of torque @ 1600 rpm. Quick off the mark, responding with agility in any situation, this second-generation SUV is equipped with a flawless 8-speed auto gearbox. Ensnared on the unitary body, available as a front-wheel or all-wheel-drive version, is a robust and reliable strut-type front and a multilink rear suspension. The electro-mechanical speed-sensitive power steering is quick and communicative to result in a positive on-center response.

Horizontal halogen headlights and LED daytime running lights surround the centered VW crest on the grille. The SE R-Line Black version, our test drive for the week, fetches you roof rails, bumpers and headliners (all in black, of course!) as well as exclusive R-Line badging inside and out. The gorgeous cabin exemplifies European styling and flair with a simple but elegant

TIGUAN SE R-LINE BLACK (FWD)

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- City:** 23 mpg
- Highway:** 29 mpg
- Base price:** \$30,595
- Price as tested:** \$31,790
- Web site:** www.vw.com



instrument panel of large analog speedometer and tachometer gauges and a centered driver information center. Fold flat the 40/20/40 rear seat, which slides forward 7 inches, and the trunk area becomes generous. Offered standard in FWD models only, the two-passenger 50/50 third-row folds down. Passenger volume is praiseworthy at 123.9 cubic feet. Niceties include an 8-inch touch screen for audio, nav and phone controls, panoramic sun roof, dual auto a/c with

second-row air vents, three-spoke leather tilt/telescopic steering column, 10-way power driver and six-way front-passenger manual seats, and a power lift gate.

The Tiguan sticks out in the swarming compact SUV field, thanks to a sprightly engine, exceptional handling and balance, everyday practicality and decent fuel economy. As for its odd-sounding name, look at it as a boon for once. It's German for 'tiger' and 'iguana.'

INSURANCE FOR NEW PARENTS

By SEEMA RAMROOP



As your family grows you'll need to reevaluate your insurance elections and update accordingly. Risk management may be the last thing on your mind when your child is first born, but it's actually an urgent matter to take care of sooner rather than later.

Health Insurance

Start thinking about health insurance long before the baby arrives. Find out about copays, deductibles, and premiums before you start going to doctor's appointments and having diagnostic tests done. You'll also need to determine how much of the delivery costs are covered as well as the baby's coverage after it's born. If both parents have employer health benefits, examine the plans together to decide which plan is best for your new baby. Once the baby is born, don't forget to actually add him or her to your health insurance plan. Babies are usually covered under their mother's insurance for a period of time following the birth, but make sure you add the baby within 30 days, or else you may have to wait until the next open enrollment period.

Life Insurance

Now that you have a child depending on you, you'll need insurance to provide for your family if your income is lost. You should also take out a life insurance policy for your spouse even if he or she stays at home to care for the child – take into account the value of a stay-at-home parent's services and how much it would cost to pay someone else to do it. Calculate how much life insurance you'll need based on your salary and lifestyle. Your plan should cover several years of your salary and any debts you have, plus extra to pay for things such as your child's education or your burial costs. You'll also have to choose between term life insurance and whole life insurance. Term life insurance is much more affordable and provides a death benefit if the policy holder dies within the term period. You can choose your term based on the

number of years your dependents will need financial support from you. Whole life insurance is more expensive but it's also an investment, so you can receive money back if you survive the coverage period.

Other Insurance Considerations

During your prime income earning years, you're much more likely to suffer a debilitating accident or disease than you are to die. This makes disability insurance equally important to ensure your family's financial well-being. Your auto insurance also might need updating when you become a parent. If you're upgrading your car to accommodate a car seat, you'll probably end up paying more to ensure the larger car. You may also qualify for a safe driver discount just by becoming a parent, because new parents are statistically the safest drivers on the road. If one parent quits his or her job to stay home with the child, your insurance premium may go down as well. You may also want to increase your liability coverage after you have a child. Installing a play set in the backyard or driving your child's friends in a carpool, for instance, will increase your liability risk.

One of the most important things you can do is add your new baby as a beneficiary on all of your insurance and benefits plans, and make sure each member of your family has adequate coverage. Once your risk is sufficiently managed, you can relax and enjoy your growing family.

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Seema Ramroop, financial planner at Prudential Advisors, can be reached at (813) 957-8107 or email seema.ramroop@prudential.com

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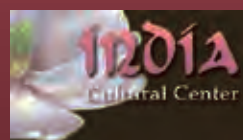
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COOKBOOK REVIEW

By **NITISH S. RELE**

“Dreaming in Spice: A Sinfully Vegetarian Odyssey”
 by Hari Pulapaka, Ph.D., C.E.C.; 390 pages; \$33.50;
 published by Global Cooking School (www.globalcookingschoolstore.com)

This is not your run-of-the-mill cookbook, folks. But then the author isn't just your conventional chef in a restaurant kitchen.



PHOTO CREDIT: MIKE DUNN

A full-time, tenured associate professor of mathematics at Stetson University (DeLand in Central Florida), Hari Pulapaka is co-owner, co-founder of Cress Restaurant in the city where he teaches. A Certified Executive Chef (C.E.C.) of the American Culinary Federation, he is also founder/CEO of Global Cooking School, a company dedicated to offer educational and consulting services to make food more delicious, thoughtful, nutritious and inclusive.

Reminiscing back to 2014, after 10 years as a professional cook, Pulapaka recalls taking a trip to New York City along with his wife Jenneffer to cook at the James Beard House. Thereon, the journey takes him through the Trump years (ban refugees and citizens from seven Muslim countries and a derogatory term used for some African countries), which inspired unusual events such as “Seven Courses Seven Countries” and “Solidarity Sunday” events, before “New Beginnings” take place.

“Ingredients inspire me in very specific ways,” he writes. “But the ingredients are not entirely necessary for the creations. I always imagine dishes conceptually. The recipes and the execution come later.” The connection between cooking and mathematics for Pulapaka? “To explore Mathematics, one often needs only imagination, some skill, and a bare



minimum list of gadgets (pen, paper, pencil). We are what we eat (are we?) and food is my metaphor for life. To prepare good food, one often needs only imagination, some skill, and a bare minimum set of (good) ingredients. There are fundamental food-based facts, and while most Mathematics is developed outside the context of food, my life weaves its way through both worlds.”

Apart from a delightful, well-informed chapter on wine “Pour Yourself a Beverage” by his sommelier wife Jenneffer, there are a total of 251 vegetarian recipes. Why not 250, why 251? Pulapaka explains, “It’s

a prime number. It’s a Sophie Germain prime (because $2 \times 251 + 1 = 503$ is also a prime). It is the sum of three consecutive primes: $79 + 83 + 89$. It’s the sum of seven consecutive primes: $23 + 29 + 31 + 37 + 41 + 43 + 47$. One gets the idea. I like numbers.” And that is a given, of course. He also rates his recipes: basic, intermediate and pro while encouraging readers to change ingredients, seasonings, or proportions to fit their preference after tasting it. A page on recommended substitutions for some recipe ingredients will come in handy for novice cooks.

A vegetarian for 21 years, Pulapaka admits though he isn’t one any more, over 95 percent of his diet is now plant-based. It does pique him that the perception still thrives that there aren’t enough vegetarian ingredient choices to make enjoyable meals. “It really is a matter of trying, just a bit harder to step away from levels of comfort,” he believes.

Here are a few recipes from the book or as the author terms, “the gift of food made with love”:

OREGANO & FONTINA ARANCINI

This is an easy and wonderful use of leftover cooked rice or grits. Classically, it must be Arborio rice, perhaps some leftover risotto (how can that be possible?). The infusion of fresh oregano makes it distinctly Italian or Greek. Fontina is a nutty melting cheese.

LEVEL: Intermediate

YIELD: approximately 16

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Arborio or other short grain rice
- 2 shallots or 1 red onion, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced very thinly
- seasoned vegetable stock, as needed
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups grated Fontina cheese
- extra virgin olive oil, as needed
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh oregano
- seasoned breadcrumbs, as needed
- eggs, as needed
- seasoned all-purpose flour, as needed
- salt & pepper, in stages and per taste

METHOD

In a shallow wide pan, sauté the shallots in extra virgin olive oil until just translucent. Add the garlic and stir for a few seconds. Add the rice and coat well with everything in the pan. Add the white wine and stir well. After about 30 seconds begin cooking the rice by adding enough stock a little at a time. After about 20 minutes or so, the risotto should be cooked. Check the seasoning and finish with the chopped oregano. Spread on a sheet tray and let it cool in the refrigerator. Take 2 ounces of rice, spread in the palm of your hand and stuff it with a small amount of Fontina cheese. Make a ball with cheese inside. Bread each ball using seasoned flour, egg, and breadcrumbs and deep fry to a golden brown. Serve immediately with a marinara or other tomato-based sauce.



SAMOSAS SPRING ROLL

Samosa is the quintessential Indian appetizer, known worldwide. Its roots lie in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, but it’s variants across the globe go by a variety of names in other countries: sambusa, samsa, sambosa to name a few. The version of samosa depends on where you are from. Essentially, it’s a hand-made pastry filled with a savory filling consisting of potatoes, green peas, chilies, onions, sometimes cauliflower. This version is basic, but chock full of savory and spicy goodness.

LEVEL: Intermediate

YIELD: approximately 12

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium sized russet potatoes
- 1 medium yellow onion
- 3/4 inch fresh ginger, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 serrano pepper, minced
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon coriander powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon whole coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon garam masala OR chat masala (available in Indian grocery stores)
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped finely
- egg roll wrappers, as many as needed based on filling volume.
- 1 whole egg
- salt & pepper, in stages and per taste

METHOD

Boil the potatoes in salted water and a pinch of turmeric. After they drain and cool completely, put then in a stainless bowl. Sauté the onions, ginger, garlic, and serrano chili in vegetable oil or clarified butter, until translucent. Add all the dry spices including the masala and the whole spices. Season with salt and pepper. Stir for about 3-4 minutes until the spices “cook out.” Add this mixture to the cooked potatoes. Next add the lemon juice and chopped cilantro. Using a potato masher, smash down all the ingredients until uniformly mixed and smashed. Taste this filling for desired flavor and re-season if necessary. Form two-inch-long cylindrical “croquettes.” Wrap in the egg roll wrappers following the instructions on the package. Seal with egg wash. Fry at 350 F until golden brown. Cut on a bias and serve warm with your favorite chutney.

CAN RADIAL KERATOTOMY (RK) SURGERY COMPLICATIONS BE FIXED? YES!

By **DR. ARUN C. GULANI**



Radial Keratotomy, as the name suggests, involved surgically making Radial (think spokes of a wheel) cuts in the cornea (front view finder of our eye) to treat nearsightedness (myopia).

Why is this important? First of all, it was a precursor to Lasik eye surgery to help people see without glasses and secondly, thousands of these patients who underwent this surgery in the 1980s are now impacted by poor vision from progressive farsightedness over time, irregular astigmatism with vision fluctuations. This is an aftermath of the surgical complications of this technique or associated situations like cataracts with age.

With the advent of Lasik in 1995, RK was slowly relegated to history simply because Lasik is generally more safer, predictable and accurate since it involved the micron-precision Excimer Laser rather than hand-held blades as in RK.

Though historically first performed in 1936 by a Japanese ophthalmologist, Dr. Tsutomu Sato, it was Russian surgeon, Dr. Svyatoslav Fyodorov in 1974, who popularized this surgical technique after having removed glass splinters from the eye of a boy who had been in a car accident and shattered his glasses. Surprisingly, the boy's vision improved after this accident from radial cuts that had occurred in his cornea from glass splinters, thus correcting his nearsightedness.

After studying the application, a diamond knife was invented to replicate this technique successfully and many American eye surgeons journeyed to Moscow to learn the surgery and later modified it to a safer procedure, introducing it in the USA in 1978.

Most Lasik or cataract eye surgeons are not trained or experienced to tackle these eyes due to their inherent complexities since patients with previous RK are presenting with a challenging situation in eye surgery. It's not only because of surgical complexity but also the ability to accurately measure their eyes to determine the lens implant if planning cataract surgery.

Fortunately, with technology today, such patients can once again see and in most cases, even without glasses.

I like to classify Radial Keratotomy impact on eyes into the following categories:

Anatomical:

- Irregularity of incision
 - i. Straight
 - ii. Crooked
- Depth of incision: ranging from deep to perforated.

Refractive:

- Regular Ammetropia (nearsighted, farsighted, astigmatism, presbyopia)
- Irregular Ammetropia (astigmatism).

Visual:

- Primary visual factors
 - i. Quantitative: Decreased visual acuity (Myopia, Hyperopia, Astigmatism)
 - ii. Qualitative: i.e. Irregular astigmatism, small optic zone, incisions
- Secondary visual factors: i.e. Presbyopia, cataracts, corneal scars, corneal instability (thin/ectasia/trampoline effect)

The measured visual disturbance can then be classified as:

- Irregular astigmatism: Due to the differential impact of each hand-made RK cut in the cornea along with its fluctuating status, can lead to astigmatism that is difficult to measure and treat with its irregular shape and visual impact.
- Corneal ectasia (Iatrogenic or Surgical keratoconus): Excessively and irregularly deepened RK cuts could not only misshape the cornea, but also allow it to abnormally

bulge, leading to visual distortion and compromised structural integrity with a thin and weakened cornea.

- Corneal scars: Differential healing of the RK cuts along with intersecting patterns can cause scarring in the cornea that impact vision not only by distorting the shape, but also by blocking light and distorting vision.
- Potentially weak eye: Since these RK incisions were done up to 95 percent depth of the cornea, and at the molecular level these cuts essentially never heal, they are a source of potential weakness in the strength and integrity of the eyeball. Hence, any trauma, injury, or infection can cause devastating damage.

Using new generation, no-cut, no-blade, sub-micron precision lasers, the distorted cornea and its spectacle errors like nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and even reading glasses can be corrected, reversing years of needless blindness to vision in minutes.

Recently, FDA-approved lens implants that can be used during cataract surgery in Radial Keratotomy eyes can restore vision at most distances and even aspire for vision without glasses.

Additionally, new technology that firms up the cornea (collagen cross linking) and prevents it from further distortion can be used in conjunction with LaZrPlastique or cataract surgery.

So, if you or anyone you know has undergone RK surgery in the past and has vision complaints or developed cataracts with age, they need to make an appointment with their eye doctors and insist on a custom-designed laser or cataract surgery to lead a productive life once again!

Arun C. Gulani, M.D., M.S., is director and chief surgeon of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville. He can be reached at gulanivision@gulani.com or visit www.gulanivision.com

DRESS UP TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

By **KIRAN BAHL**



Happy 17th anniversary Khaas Baat! Thank you to all readers for your love over these years, I am grateful to be part of this lovely community necessity.

August is also a beautiful month because it begins our Indian

and Hindu holiday season. With Eid just passing, coming up is India's Independence Day on the 15th, Raksha Bandhan on the 22nd and finally Janamashtmi on the 30th of this month. Let's feel and look the part too, celebrating with our family, friends and community.

JAI HIND

It's India's 74th Independence Day observation this year. Dress the part in India's patriotic colors. A trident of orange, white and green, the colors are actually flowy when worn together, nature's colors really. To keep in line with a natural form, keep your look clean and minimalistic when wearing these hues at the same time. An orange sari (a very now color this season) with white sequin or chikankari work will look pretty with a forest green blouse. For

a more summer vibe, opt for a sea green or aqua blouse instead. Wear a straight pants or salwar suit in white with contrasting coordinates in green and orange.

For a not-so-bold look, wear one color and use your accessories to match India's pretty flag combo. A mint green suit or lengha with white heels and orange lips/eyeshadow will do just right and remain oh-so-patriotic!

SIBLING LOVE

How beautiful the occasion of Raksha Bandhan is! It's an occasion of a sister's appreciation of her brother protecting her throughout life and a brother's respect of keeping his sister safe, happy. To dress up for this, dress fun and vibrant!

A gray lengha with multi-color jewels/stonework is festive. A suit in a vivid neon tone is lovely with a subtle dupatta and jewels. Jewelry, too, can be bright if your ensemble isn't so much. Sapphires, rubies and emeralds, embedded in gold or silver, will all shine for this special day.

KRISHNA IS BORN

Janamashtmi is the celebration and holy festival of the birth of Krishna. It's a beautiful day filled with sometimes fasting, prayer,

chanting, singing, dancing and pure love.

We are midway through summer in Florida and it's hot. To keep your cool and still celebrate fully, opt for cotton or linen looks. They can look just as fancy and sparkly with light embellishments. Allover threadwork or zari design in contrasting colors and even metallic hues will make your outfit look heavier than it is. Mirror work on kurtis, saris (or cholis) or dupattas will reflect light and brighten all up. Add some glittery shoes and makeup, a light jewel set and you're ready to be a standout at any gathering planned!

Enjoy the start of the Indian holiday season and continue it through and through this year. Please keep representing your heritage and your culture wearing clothes from where you are. I'm noticing so many occasions as of late promoting American dress codes. But it's good to promote an East-West mix and not just belong to one place. Wear both Indian and American clothing with passion, happiness and celebration. And, as always, remember to 'gro' with style!

Kiran Bahl of Gro Styles, an Indian Boutique (www.grostyles.com), can be reached at (813) 843-9040 or kiran@grostyles.com

HIGHLANDER IS A REMARKABLE HANDS-ON SUV!

Test-drive stories by NITISH S. RELE motoringtampabay@gmail.com

Twenty years and it just keeps on going. Despite a total revamp of the Highlander just last year, Toyota isn't resting on its laurels. For 2021, the carmaker has released an all-new sporty XSE model of its popular midsize SUV.

Our all-wheel-drive test drive was equipped with a 3.5-liter DOHC V-6 engine putting out 295 horsepower @ 6600 rpm and 263 pounds-feet of torque @ 4700 rpm. A VVT-i and variable intake manifold assist in fuel saving. The Highlander is mated to an easy-to-engage 8-speed auto transmission. A sport-tuned suspension handled via an independent MacPherson strut front and multilink rear does a super job of soaking up road bumps. The electric power steering is razor sharp with a firm on-center feel. If venturing off-road, the multi-terrain select control permits you to pick mud/sand or rock/dirt modes.

The sport mesh front grille joining a large lower air intake integrated into the bumper is bordered by black-accented LED headlights and fog lamps. The Highlander offers cavernous cargo and passenger capacity, allowing for 13.6 cubic feet of space behind the 60/40 third row, 48.3 cubic feet behind the second-row captain's chairs (which go aft and forth by 3 inches for easy access to third row) and 84.3 cubes with both seats folded. The embossed leather seats, especially the alluring two-tone red and black, are plush. There also is a huge under-floor bin

HIGHLANDER (XSE)
Tires: P235/55R20
Wheelbase: 112.2 inches
Length: 194.9 inches
Width: 76 inches
Height: 68.1 inches
Tow capacity: 5,000 pounds
Fuel capacity: 17.9 gallons
City: 20 mpg
Highway: 27 mpg
Weight: 4,400 pounds
Base price: \$43,355
Price as tested: \$46,528
Web site: www.toyotausa.com



in the cargo hold. Overhead sunglass holder and conversation mirror add to the list. An 8-inch touchscreen for nav, phone and audio controls is simple to operate. Other niceties include a tri-zone auto a/c, 10-way driver and four-way power heated/cooled front-passenger seats, heated second-row seats with window shades, faux-wood trim and silver-painted satin and chrome accents, fold-flat third-row seat, and power lift gate and moon roof.

Dual front airbags, side curtain airbag, front knee airbags, four-wheel antilock brakes, stability and traction controls, 360-degree camera view, blind spot and rear-cross traffic alerts, smart-stop technology, front/rear parking

assists, daytime running lights and tire pressure monitoring system come at no cost. The standard Toyota Safety Sense 2.5 includes a pre-collision system that detects pedestrians, lane departure alert with steer assist and dynamic cruise control.

With a good balance of comfort and performance, the Highlander is eminently practical, spacious and a pleasure to drive. If in the market for a family-hauler that can seat up to eight, we highly endorse this Toyota for a test drive. Or opt for the hybrid version. Either way, you won't be disappointed.

INFINITI QX50 SUV TOUTS A CARLIKE RIDE

After a major overhaul just two years ago, the Infiniti QX50 stays mostly as is for 2021. Under the hood of the midsize luxury SUV resides a 4-cylinder power train that cranks out 268 horsepower at 5600 rpm and 280 pounds-feet of torque at 4800 rpm. The potent 2.0-liter variable-compression turbo engine enables the agile crossover to quickly take to the road, boasting a first-rate ride and laudable handling.

We liked the slick and seamless continuous variable transmission, which also can be shifted manually. A MacPherson strut front and a rear multilink suspension ensures stability at sharp turns, corner and bumps on the road. The variable-assist, direct adaptive steering conveys an unswerving feel. Braking duties are handled exceptionally well by 13-inch vented front and 12.1-inch rear discs. Four drive modes are offered: standard, eco, sport and personal.

Based on a steel unibody structure, QX50 is a sharp-looking vehicle. It all starts at the long clamshell hood that meets up with a double-arch black-metallic grille, surrounded by horizontal LED headlights and fog lamps. The aluminum roof rails are standard as are the chrome dual exhaust tips and rear tail lamps that connect to the chrome

QX50 (SENSORY AWD)
Tires: 225/45R20
Wheelbase: 110.2 inches
Length: 184.7 inches
Height: 66 inches
Width: 74.9 inches
Fuel capacity: 16 gallons
City: 22 mpg
Highway: 28 mpg
Weight: 4,127 pounds
Base price: \$52,000
Price as tested: \$54,920
Web site: www.infinitiusa.com



strip. The cabin is awash with luxury and comfort features such as aluminum accents on the center console, dashboard, doors, push-button ignition, 60/40-split rear seat, eight-way power front seats, dual auto a/c, 8-inch upper touch screen for navigation and a 7-inch lower screen for climate, audio and phone controls. InTouch, a rotary knob in the center console, controls the dual screens. The familiar Infiniti double-wave instrument panel lights up with electroluminescent gauges. A mix of leather and aluminum on the short but easy-to-grip shifter knob gives a classy touch. As for roominess, there is plenty with a total interior

volume of 135.8 cubic feet, and 64.4 cubic feet with the rear seat down. There also is a large hidden under-floor bin.

Standard safety features include dual front, side and knee airbags, side curtain airbag for both rows, four-wheel antilock brakes with electronic

brake distribution and brake assist, vehicle dynamic and traction controls, antiskid system, front/rear crumple zones, front seat active-head restraints, blind spot and lane departure warnings, rear-cross traffic alert and tire pressure monitoring system are standard. Looking into the future of autonomous transport, ProPilot Assist helps drivers to maintain their lane, and set vehicle speed and distance to a car ahead.

If you are looking for a carlike ride that offers luxury, convenience and useful features, then the QX50 should fit the bill. Kudos goes to Infiniti for this fine alluring crossover.

ENJOY YOUR TRIP IN THE INVIGORATING MAZDA6

Except for a few tweaks, the 2021 Mazda6 maintains its status quo. We have driven numerous versions of the midsize sedan in the last few years and have always walked away happy with the results. The car boasts a lively, fun-to-drive attitude still keeping in mind Mazda's former 'Zoom-Zoom' (emotion of motion) phrase.

Our Signature trim was equipped with a 2.5-liter turbocharged, inline-4 engine putting out 227 horsepower @ 5000 rpm and 310 pounds-feet of torque @ 2000 rpm. Transmission choices are a 6-speed auto or 6-speed manual. An independent MacPherson strut front and a multilink rear suspension, along with an electric power rack-and-pinion steering, ensure safety for occupants in adverse road/weather conditions. In keeping with Mazda's technology-driven products, the direct-injection Skyactiv uses a torque boost with a high compression ratio to result in impressive fuel savings. No wonder the Mazda6, available in the fully loaded Signature, boasts 23 city/31 highway (auto) on a 16.4-gallon tank.



Ensclosed on the monocoque body is a gunmetal grille with the familiar Mazda badge housed in black horizontal lines and piano black-topline trim. It is surrounded by eagle-eye shaped LED headlights and fog lamps. The Signature model comes standard with Nappa leather seats, ultra-soft suede trim inserts and black headliner. The 8-inch touch screen, part of the Mazda Connect navigation/infotainment system, is easy to operate via a command control button. The grip on the race-inspired tilt/telescopic, three-spoke

steering column is firm. Other niceties include dual auto a/c, power moon roof, 8-way power driver and 6-way front passenger heated/cooled seats, 60/40 rear seat, rear-seat armrest with cup holders, 11-speaker Bose system, overhead console, push-button start and paddle shifters. This catchy, peppy and sporty sedan makes for a fun and exciting trip to the neighborhood store. Its bold appearance and rewarding roadworthiness transform the Mazda6 into a must buy!

MAZDA6 (SIGNATURE)
Tires: P225/45 R19
Wheelbase: 111.4 inches
Length: 191.5 inches
Width: 72.4 inches
Height: 57.1 inches
Weight: 3,582 pounds
Base price: \$35,750
Price as tested: \$37,390
Web site: www.mazdausa.com



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THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE ACTIVITIES LIST

By **ROBERT A.G. LEVINE**



All college applications ask students to list the activities they performed in high school. Sometimes, the electronic application provides specific space for the list, while other colleges allow students to upload a short resume. Regardless, the manner in which an activities list is presented can make a significant difference in

the understanding and grading of the applicant by admissions offices. It's amazing how often brilliant students with brilliant essays write their activities lists as thoughtless scribbles!

Although there are no perfect rules to follow, there are sound principles to be used in completing the activities list. Consider the following guidelines:

Time of participation. As a general rule, place activities of the senior and junior years at the top of the list, followed by those done in the sophomore and freshman years.

Depth of achievement. Colleges want to see performance, not just participation. Consider placing activities that show achievement or leadership at the top of the list. Initiative shown by founding an organization is also extremely compelling to admissions representatives. Being a "member" or "participant" is better left unsaid; leave words out that suggest that an applicant is indistinguishable from the herd.

Region of performance. Colleges want to know whether a student "competes" in a larger arena or a smaller one. International and professional caliber performance is the highest,

followed by regional, state, local and school-based activities. Consider placing activities that are performed on a larger stage above those from smaller venues.

Time devoted. An activity requiring a significant amount of time should usually precede one that requires only insignificant effort. However, if the student will not continue to pursue a time-consuming activity such as sports, do not lead with that activity. Ceasing to perform something is not impressive.

Group similar activities together. A longer list is not a better list. A reader's evaluation occurs at the front of the list, not towards the bottom, so make the list stronger, not longer. Students may group similar activities, such as multiple honor societies, or research, or service, as one activity, making each listing appear more robust.

Place activities in intelligent order. Don't confuse admissions representatives by making the activities list jump around from leadership to sports to community service to sports to service. Try to place the activities in a logical order so the reader can understand the applicant's strengths even with a quick skim. If an applicant will not continue to play a sport in college, but will pursue service after high school, lead the activities list with community service, not with athletics. Also consider using your list to foreshadow the remainder of the application.

Don't forget hobbies and informal activities. Not all activities are school-sponsored or well-organized. Not all activities have to be "provable" with awards or established clubs. Anything that an applicant does that is unrelated to academics may be included. Sometimes the most unusual activities help distinguish an applicant from the pack. One of

our students indicated her #8 activity as "Fish Caretaker." Apparently, that made admissions reps smile; she got huge scholarships to both USC and Case Western.

Try to show some form of physical fitness. Colleges value people who are physically active, not only because "a healthy body leads to a healthy mind," but also because their statistics show that active students give MUCH larger donations to the college as alumni. The activity can be anything from competitive sports to jogging or dog walking. Just be sure to mention something physical so they sense some form of concern for personal health.

Remember the details! Most electronic college applications allow students to include explanations for each activity. These explanations are limited to perhaps 40 words, but they can be powerful opportunities to show the depth and breadth of an applicant's performance. For example, explain that a high rating is given by an international organization, or that sports performance occurred outside your state or country. The details need not be written in sentences, so put the most important words first.

With today's technology, it is easy to make adjustments to the activities list. Using these concepts as guidelines can make a significant difference in the caliber of the activities list and of the college application as a whole.

Robert Levine is the founder and CEO of University Consultants of America, an independent educational consultancy assisting students around the world with applications to colleges, universities and graduate schools. For more information, call University Consultants of America, Inc. at 1-800-465-5890 or visit www.universitycoa.com

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HELP WANTED

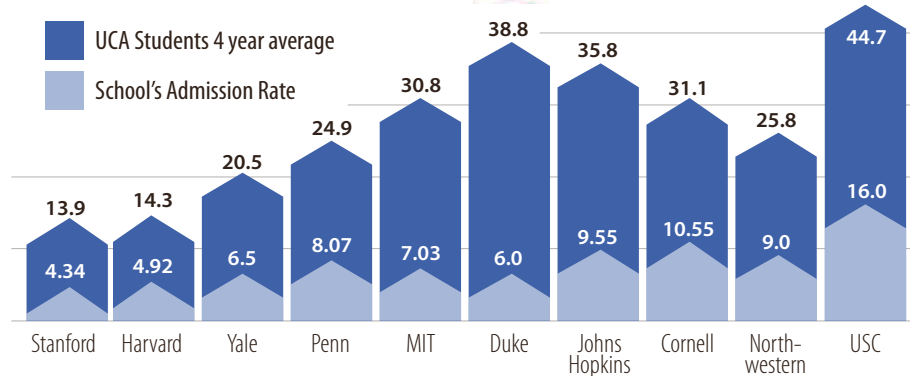
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AUGUST FORECAST

By PANKAJ KOHLI



ARIES / Mesha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (March 21-April 20) Mars Sign – Stars covered Ashwini, Bharani, Krittika (1st Part) For Arians, watch tonal language; one can make enemies or friends and it entirely depends how you talk to people. Hard work is the only key to keep income higher than expenses. Profession wise, plan well, weigh pros and cons before switching jobs. Some delay or difficulty on career front is possible. Health-wise, for some piles, hemorrhoids, constipation cannot be ruled out. For weight-sensitive people, with little exercise and calorie watch, losing weight may be easy.

TAURUS / Vrushabha (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (April 21-May 21) Venus Sign - Stars covered Krittika (last 3 parts), Rohini, Mrigashira (first 2 parts) Mind may have shifting thoughts and unable to focus. Due to planetary influences, rift in relationship can be mended. Dealings in land, real estate or property may not be profitable, extra expenses seen. One will have to work hard rather than counting on luck. Caution is advised in driving or dealing with electrical gadgets. Recovery of outstanding debt seems likely.

GEMINI / Mithuna (Air sign, ruling planet is Mercury) - (May 22-June 21) Mercury Sign - Stars covered Mrigashira (last 2 parts), Ardra & Punarvasu (first 3 parts) Your sign lord indicates financial and material happiness and prosperity. Higher gains than expenses cannot be ruled out. However, some planets may produce slight adverse effects for those with weak natal chart. Misunderstandings, ill health of spouse, constipation may be troublesome. Do not gamble, speculate or take chances. Matrimonial alliances, business partnerships may be useful and bring optimistic results. Intellectual faculties could work at their best; therefore, work on any creative ideas that come to mind.

CANCER / Kataka (Watery sign, ruling planet is Moon) - (June 22-July 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Punarvasu (4th part), Pushya, Aslesha Stay away from keeping company of people whom you don't know well, reputation might be at stake. Professional changes may bring financial gains. Small hurdles and obstacles may delay success. The month brings commercial gains, material happiness, and happy domestic conditions as the stars are aligned well. Creative intelligence dominates with great organizing power and leadership skills, which will be demonstrated in actions. Take care of relationship with mother, it might be somewhat inimical.

LEO / Simha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Sun) - (July 23-Aug. 22) Sun Sign – Stars covered Magha, Purva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni (1st part) You may suffer from bile-related, eye or rheumatic troubles. Money may not be spent correctly. Stay

away from litigation or unnecessary confrontation. Avoid any mental anxiety and unnecessary tension. Your sign lord Sun and multiple planets transit into Sun's own house erasing many adversities. Negativity turns into positivity. However, people with high blood pressure need caution as Sun and Mars come together also, bringing unnecessary strain on domestic life.

VIRGO / Kanya (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Mercury) (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Mercury Sign – Stars covered Uttara Phalguni (last 3 parts), Hasta, Chitra (first 2 parts) Transiting planets exchange houses, which may be professionally detrimental. No adventure on job front advised. Be careful in real estate dealings or purchasing a vehicle. Damage or undue expenses on home appliances or vehicles is likely. People suffering from liver or kidney problems need to be extra careful. Problem in the lower abdomen area and genital organs is possible too. Unplanned spending can lead to higher expense on unnecessary things and wastage of money.

LIBRA / Tula (Air sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Venus Sign – Stars covered Chitra (last 2 parts), Swati, Vishakha (first 3 parts) This is a good month to make money and material growth. Tonal language may create animosity within social circle. Your sign lord transition advises to keep expenses low, especially in real estate or purchase of vehicle. A malefic planet casts its drishti on your sign lord; for some, surgery may be on the cards for prostate, urinary tract, kidneys or reproductive organs. Timely medical tests may prove helpful.

SCORPIO / Vruschika (Water sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Mars Sign – Stars covered Vishakha (4th part), Anuradha, Jyestha Mars, your sign lord, transits in 10th house along with Sun, Venus and Mercury. This indicates professional upliftment, rise in income and salary. New opportunities may come through solid willpower and hard work. There is a strong possibility of creating new channel of income. Planetary movement is conducive for investment in real estate. Better time starts bringing positive news with regards to home and landed property and developing new contacts.

SAGITTARIUS / Dhanush (Fire sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Jupiter Sign – Stars covered Moola, Purva Shada, Uttara Shada (first part) Venus, Mercury, Mars and Sun's transition in 9th house is highly beneficial for finance, family and profession. It is a good month as actions bring success. Stay away from procrastination. New dimensions begin on matrimonial or business partnerships. Professional development, career changes and income gains may be expected for people with strong planetary influences. Overall, the month concludes on a cheerful note.

CAPRICORN / Makara (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Saturn) - (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Saturn Sign – Stars covered Uttara Shada (last 3 parts) Shravana, Dhanistha (first 2 parts) Due to planetary transition, all actions need extra care. Unnecessary strain due to negative placement of planets is seen on domestic front creating mental anxiety. Creation of Shodashtak (6 and 8 house placement) is seen for several planets. Unnecessary wastage of money, high expenses and frustration may occur. Some may have difficulty with sleeping; insomnia cannot be ruled out. Beware of scheming people.

AQUARIUS / Kumbha (Air sign, ruling planet is Saturn) – (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Saturn Sign - Stars covered: Dhanishta (last 2 parts) Satabhisha, Purva Bhadra Pada (1st 3 parts) Sensitive, emotional folks may get hurt easily. People already suffering from sugar, liver or kidney problems need to be extra careful. Life partner shall extend full support when required. In fact, the stars are well placed for many. Sun, Mars, Mercury and Venus look at your house, which may result in positive partnership, spousal love and domestic affairs. Do not let this time slip, try to convert all negative influences into positive ones.

PISCES / Meena (Water sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Feb. 20-March 20) Jupiter Sign - Stars covered: Purva Bhadra Pada (last part) Uttara Bhadra Pada, Revathi Barring slight health issues, time period is excellent on almost all fronts. Domestic, professional life and wealth channels are open. On one side, income potential is increasing; on the other hand, expenses would increase in different proportions. One will have to work hard to make it a gainful period; just keep a close watch on all actions to ensure victory. Practically, this is a favorable time for you on family, wealth and on domestic front. Love life for eligible is on the go, so make best use of it.

For detailed horoscope analysis and chart reading, courtesy Pankaj-Astro Jyotish, call Pankaj Kohli at (905) 910-1441 or e-mail Pathofastrology@gmail.com

NEW AGE, OLD FAITH

By PANKAJ KOHLI

1. English saying: "I had a bad day; perhaps, I got down from the wrong side of the bed."

As part of traditional belief; while getting up from bed in the morning, determine which foot should be put on the ground first. This is an age-old faith and has a technique to willfully consolidate breathing from the correct nostril. It must coincide with the correct Tithi of the lunar cycle. A day's success can be ensured just by combining the two steps in the morning. However, at the back end by doing so, a person is synchronizing the five elements and taking control of them, rather than they taking control of you!

2. Did you know: 24 hours in a day are governed by 24 Horas (Sanskrit name for Hour). These Horas are Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. Each Hora is represented by one of these ruling planets in that hour. If things are done in accordance to that particular hora, success rate is many times higher.

3. Did you know that mental and physical energy dissipates when we cut hair or nails? This is why proper date (Tithi) was chosen in ancient times so energy depletion could be minimized!

For detailed understanding, call Pankaj Kohli at (905) 910-1441 or e-mail Pathofastrology@gmail.com

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CHECKLIST FOR F-1 STUDENTS SWITCHING TO H-1B

By **DILIP PATEL**



Right now, a lot of F-1 students for whom H-1B petitions were submitted by their prospective employers are anxiously awaiting approvals of the petitions. It is critical that those who are selected tie up all loose ends and maintain proper F-1 status to ensure a smooth transition to H-1B status. We thought it would be useful to share the following prepared by the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The following is a checklist for F-1 students transitioning to H-1B status:

1. Make sure your H-1B petition is filed while you are still on F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) if at all possible. The cap-gap extension may bridge a gap between the end of the F-1 student's OPT and the start of their cap-subject H-1B employment on Oct. 1. To be eligible, (1) the student must be in valid F-1 status at the time the cap-subject H-1B petition is filed, (2) the petition must be filed as a request for change of status rather than a request for consular processing, and (3) the petition must have an Oct. 1 start date. It is the filing of Form I-129, not the electronic registration (i.e., lottery process), that confers the cap-gap extension. The filing of Form I-129 during the student's OPT extends both F-1 status and work authorization until Oct. 1, whereas filing during the F-1 grace period extends just the F-1 status (but not work authorization) until Oct. 1.
2. Stay within the OPT unemployment limits. F-1 students fall out of status if they exceed a certain number of days of unemployment while on OPT; this unemployment time continues to accrue during the cap-gap extension if the H-1B petition was filed while the student was on OPT. If the student is extending the 12-month-standard, post-completion OPT via the cap-gap extension, the 90-day unemployment limit continues to apply. If the student is extending STEM OPT via the cap-gap extension, the 150-day combined unemployment limit applies. The student must timely comply with all reporting obligations and make sure the Designated School Official (DSO) receives all updates within the required reporting timeframe.

3. If you are on STEM OPT, remember to complete both of your self-evaluations in a timely fashion. The employer must also sign, and both evaluations must be provided to the DSO no later than 10 days following their respective reporting deadlines (i.e., within 12 months of the approved STEM OPT start date and at the conclusion of the 24-month STEM OPT period).
4. Carefully consider any international travel during this transition. Traveling abroad while the H-1B petition is pending would cause the change of status request to be deemed abandoned by USCIS and, thereby, end the cap-gap extension. Apart from this, if there are other travel complications when the cap-gap extension was filed during the student's F-1 grace period, the student would need a new F-1 visa to return.
5. Coordinate with the DSO if you want an updated Form I-20, indicating the cap-gap extension. Sometimes, students will need an updated Form I-20 for employment, driver's license renewal, or other purposes. The cap-gap extension is automatic for those students who qualify, and SEVIS should automatically update as it receives data about the H-1B petition. If the SEVIS record does not update automatically, the DSO can request a data fix.

Dilip Patel of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, a board-certified expert on immigration law, can be reached at (813) 222-1120 or email dilip.patel@bipc.com



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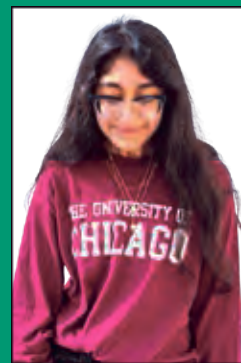
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