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GUJARATI ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND

જ્યાં જ્યાં વસે એક ગુજરાતી ત્યાં ત્યાં સદાકાળ ગુજરાત



January 2022

The Committee

President

Bharat Shah
978-764-6777

Vice President

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978-459-2095

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603-812-1596

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978-590-1843

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978-409-1350

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978-828-5830

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857-891-6577

Board of Trustees

Chandra Vora
Ramila Thakkar
Dinesh Tanna

Dear Gurjar Members,

Happy New Year!

What a tremendous start to GURJAR's 2021-2022 year!

This Newsletter affords the Executive Committee and I an opportunity to retrace the successful events, lessons learned and our plans going forward.

We started the year with three major objectives:

- Restart Gurjar activities which were impacted by the Pandemic.
- Adopt new Gurjar Constitution and tune our approach to be compliant.
- Attract youth and offer activities that increase member participation.

Based on our past 6-months track record, I am very pleased to inform you that we have made significant progress in all three areas. Without very enthusiastic support from our membership none of this would have been possible.

Staying fully compliant with Commonwealth of Massachusetts's Department of Health guidelines, we began our activities with Heritage Fest, an outdoor event which brings together food vendors, merchandise seller and performers. Planning the event was not difficult but signing up food vendors who were facing severe labor shortage and merchandise vendors whose shipments from India were delayed was extremely difficult. On the costs side, we were asked to hire and deploy additional resources by the State. The pressure was ON but the Executive Committee was bold enough to press on and the results were astounding. Although we had about 10 less vendor tents and just two major food vendors, the turnout was more than expected. Event was applauded by Members, Performers and Vendors – and yes it was profitable! *Gujjubhai never loses sight of greenbacks!*



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This success with Heritage got us all primed for the next event – Navratri! For the first time ever in Gurjar (and possibly ever in Massachusetts) we organized our Raas/Garba at an outdoor Football field. To get a venue for a late-night event and that too during high-school football season was difficult (to say the least) but to dance indoors with masks on was unacceptable and was deemed not enforceable. That brought us to one of what is now termed as a “Signature Event” of *Dandiya under the Stars*. The results and the environment were something which had to be experienced. We received feedback from many and most of them wanted to make an outdoor Navratri event an annual thing on our schedule. The number of attendees was staggering but we had space to accommodate them all. Yes – we will bring outdoor Navratri to our community every year, that’s the plan. We may have to shift the date to coincide with a long weekend at schools, and possibly have it in October, but we will strive to make this an annual event.

An additional benefit of this successful event was getting the youth out at our event. The dressed-up youth showed up eager to dance the night away and more than anything else our signature outdoor Navratri event resulted in an exponential growth in our Facebook following and new memberships, mostly fueled by youth.

As shared at Diwali Event, Gurjar page following on Facebook went from few hundreds to over 3500 and our Life membership increased by 20 new families, which is 4/5 times the norm.

The feedback about the long-drawn-out check-in for the Navratri event and lack of multiple Food providers was noted and committee will act on it to make future Navratri experience a better one.

Our next monumental success came at our Diwali Event. We ventured into uncharted territory of COVID testing and figuratively stating can say that we slayed the beast. For any indoor event, the Committee was unanimous in looking out for their membership and wanted to provide a safe environment where folks can meet, greet, drink and dance together without having to worry about Social Distancing and Masking. Diwali Event was our first foray into on-site Rapid-Testing. The enthusiastic response and cordial follow through with prescribed process demonstrated by our members was phenomenal. As a result of announced strict checking, at least two families showing symptoms stayed away from the event. GURJAR refunded their costs without any questions. We were pleased to see Members being socially responsible and making GURJAR event safe for other attendees.





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Diwali event itself (as usual) came up trumps! The food and the music were something to cherish for a long time to come.

Executing and conducting Gurjar affairs as per Gurjar's new constitution was undertaken whole-heartedly. To point out few changes that were incorporated:

- Formation of Gurjar Board of Trustees.
- Ability to cast on-line absentee ballots.
- Preparing and presenting an Annual Budget to the trustees.
- Becoming more transparent by publishing financials and EC minutes online.

I wanted to take this opportunity to emphasize presence of newly formed Board of Trustees. Members, please feel free to share your ideas, feedback, and grievances with the Trustees. They represent the community and membership at large and we, the Executive Committee look forward to their guidance in all matters.

There is so much more to say, especially about the Executive Committee, their spouses, and the Volunteers. As a president, I cannot expect anything more from this hard-working group. We challenge each other to do the best. We write, review, argue and debate issues collectively – always to come out with an agreed upon approach which is best for Gurjar. My heartfelt thanks to this bunch and to them I owe all the success.

To my Gurjar Community, I do not know what lies ahead but we are going to give it our best – that's the promise I will leave you with. Count on it.

Regards
Bharat Shah
President, GURJAR





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Gurjar Scholarship Awards – 2022

It is with great pleasure that we announce yet another year for our annual scholarship rewards program. The scholarship was set up in 1994 to encourage our college bound children. This scholarship is given to all college bound students of the life members.

Funds are raised by various GURJAR events which are very generously supported by our attending members, event sponsors and well-wishers.

All graduating high school seniors of Gurjar Life members are eligible to apply. Students must submit a small write up about their involvement in the Indian community and their contribution to the Indian culture. The essay is a part of the application process

Scholarship award for high SAT or ACT scores will be given by **Nila Pancholi**. Gurjar Life Member, in loving memory of her husband, Arvind Pancholi. This year an additional award has been donated by **Vasantbhai Jinwala**.

Individually sponsored awards and Gurjar awards are based on collective submission which includes scores and essay. Please send in your SAT/ACT score with your applications to the president at **bharats@yahoo.com**, the information will be confidential, and the scores will not be disclosed.

Executive Committee will be the sole arbitrator and decision maker for GURJAR awards, and their decision will be conveyed to the recipients a week prior to AGM.

Awards will be given during AGM and recipients are required to attend to accept their awards via the virtual session.

Go to - <https://www.gurjar.org/gurjar-scholarship/>

Submit by April 24th, 2022





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**Annual General Meeting
&
Gujar Talent Show**

Date: Saturday, May 14th, 2022, at 1:00 PM



ELECTION NOTICE

As per Gurjar's Constitution, Article VII, an Election Committee consisting of three members listed below has been formed. They will oversee all aspects of the election of the Directors of Gurjar for the year 2022-2024.

- Chetan Shah 978-390-2522 shahcn06@gmail.com
- Alkesh Shah 978-263-1036 alkesh_shah@yahoo.com
- Nisha Vora 508-393-2490 nishacvora@yahoo.com

Open positions are: 3 Directors for a Two-Year term

For those of you interested in serving for as a Director, please review the eligibility requirements and fill the form provided on Gurjar website at www.Gurjar.org. Submit the form and all other requested information to any of the Election Committee member no later than March 13th, 2022.

We encourage all members who wish to help Gurjar with new ideas focused on smaller virtual groups to join us by participating in the Executive Committee. Whether you are a people-person or a back-office computer savvy person user or a meticulous numbers person or an event planner – we are sure Gurjar will benefit from your participation.

Make a difference – Join the Gurjar Committee.



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Continued transition to becoming an ONLINE community

We need your help complete the transition from paper-based communications to electronic means. Advantages of speed, reliability and costs are apparent, but the following are the other goals we have in mind.

- Allow members to get most-recent information about Gurjar events and information about its finances, event photographs etc. quickly and virtually. Some of this information will only be visible to registered Gurjar members.
- For all Member price discounts an **online account is REQUIRED.**
- Make it possible to cast Absentee-Ballot using their registered email ID.
- Allow members to update their address and contact information online.

We will never share your email ID with any third-party and will solely use for Gurjar Notifications and Procedures.

What do you have to do?

1. Sign on to Gurjar.Org at <https://www.gurjar.org/login/> Use *Lost Password* facility to reset a forgotten password.
2. If you have not registered, please register as a new user at <https://www.gurjar.org/user-registration/>
3. Once signed on, verify, and update your personal information. Add your Partner/Spouse information especially the email ID (to enable them to cast an Absentee vote independently).

For any issues pertaining to Member Registration and recorded information, please reach out to **Rachana Shah** or **Jayesh Master**.



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Tentative Schedule of Events for the year 2022

- April 1st to 3rd *Jub We Met*, Singles Meet
- May 14th AGM & Youth Program (online)
- September 10 Indian Heritage Fest (Lowell)
- October 1 Navratri (Indoor - Live band)
- October 8 Navratri (Outdoor - DJ)
- October 29 Diwali Dinner

As announced at Gurjar's Diwali event, we are extremely happy to announce our maiden venture to bring South Asian Singles together to network with their peers.

We are offering a significant discount to GURJAR Member referenced participant. We are certain that each one of you know at least ONE person who can benefit from this event. PLEASE help us spread the word and ask you near and dear ones to participate. Let's create a forum and provide an opportunity to our kids where they can find their life partner.

 GURJAR INTRODUCES

JUB WE MET

Three-Day Singles Networking Event

April 1 to 3, 2022

Wakefield Four Points Sheraton, MA.

Many fun-filled team activities, giving opportunities for candidates to interact with each other in small groups as well as on an individual basis.

All meals included!

Open to South Asian singles who are ready to mingle!
Suggested age 22-35

Visit gurjar.org/events for cost, discount and registration.