



USAP News

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh

www.usaofpittsburgh.org

Volume 5 Issue 4

FALL ISSUE

October 2023

As we attend to compiling the Fall issue of the USAP News, we tend to miss the warm summer months and reflect upon what we did and accomplished when the weather was not a deterrent. There are no regrets at USAP as the organizers have been meeting regularly and charting out the many future activities for the members. When we meet for the winter issue, 2023 would have come to an end and we need to bring to your attention important information about membership. As has been publicized before, all annual members have opted to become four-year members, and many four year-members chose to become charter (life) members. Although the general body approved raising the four-year membership dues to \$150 per person beginning January 1 of 2023, the current four-year members were given the option to become charter members by simply paying the difference of \$400 pp before the end of 2023. If one converted to charter membership beginning 2024, one would have to pay \$600 pp. It may not matter much to many, but please take advantage of this small incentive to become a charter member before the year is up and not have to worry about USAP membership for the rest of your life.

At our last meeting at ICC on “**Living as An Inspiring Leader**”, Dr. Amit Mukherjee had shown us how he was able to achieve success in many community projects he had undertaken in serving the needy and poor population in India. Towards the end of the talk when he showed his need for \$700 for phase one of a new project, many generous donors readily poured in around \$2000 to support his cause. Dr. Mukherjee was more than pleased when people donated more than he asked for, and now could undertake phase two of his project as well. It was a reminder that money is not a problem, but not defining the goal clearly and not communicating effectively can be.

Although USAP has grown in strides in less than six short years and has been exemplary in providing the much-needed social support platform, it is nascent in serving the true humanitarian needs of its senior members. The Humanitarian Committee is making arrangements to provide carpooling services, which can further lead to assistance with doctor visits and grocery services etc. But, to meet the true needs of the needy seniors, we may need to explore ways for more resources.

This brings us back to the appeal to the members to renew their membership for the membership dues are the only income source for USAP. The year-end also brings in the charitable spirit in donors. Among the many respectable charitable organizations that one may contribute to, keep USAP on the list as well. It is registered as a tax-exempt charitable organization in the State of Pennsylvania, and those who have come to know USAP know the far-reaching potential it has in its mission to serve the ever-aging population of senior citizens.

Many USAP members will be travelling to Egypt, Jordan and Israel in October. If you have stories to share when you return, share them with us in USAP News.

READERS WRITE

We received a whole lot of comments and compliments, not only for the Newsletter, but also for the tours, the picnic, weekend retreat and dance lessons. I had to abridge some to avoid duplicate comments and to save space. We love your feedback. Keep them coming!

Seema Batra, Readers Write Column Editor.

Excellent compilation of the events. So delighted to be part of the group. Looking forward to the USAP trips next year. Can't thank the organizing committee enough!

Shanti Swarup

Our newsletter has 5 Cs (like the 5 Cs of diamonds) - Coverage, Composed, Colorful, Catchy, and Coordinated, all superb! Such a wonderful job! May be USAP should open a publishing company.

Vasanti Majmudar

Congratulations to the USAP Editorial Team on its excellent newsletter! The content is engaging, the layout is eye-catching, and the overall presentation is outstanding. Your team's hard work and attention to detail truly shine through in every aspect of the newsletter. Keep up the fantastic work!

Dilip Desai

Thank you, the editorial committee, for another excellent newsletter. It's very well compiled with lots of information. It shows dedication, commitment, and hard work. And thanks to the Tours and Travels committee for planning wonderful tours. Looking forward to 2024's exciting trips!

Veena Agarwal

Splendid compilation of the Newsletter. Three cheers to the editors for your hard work. Thanks to the executive committee for their time & effort to keep this organization engaged in social activities. Many thanks for planning wonderful trips.

Shakuntala Shinde

Very informative, easy to read, and well-presented Newsletter. Thanks for arranging wonderful trips. Had a phenomenal Japan-Korea tour.

Mananda Bhende

SOME FEEDBACK ON THE PICNIC

Hats off to all the organizers of the fantastic Picnic. It was filled with laughter, fun, games, and great food. Beer and wine added color. Got to meet old and new friends. Thanks to all of you.

Dolly & Juginder Luthra

Thanks to the USAP team for an excellent Picnic- good food and games; excellent crowd. As newcomers, Nellima and I had lots of fun interacting with all of you and your welcoming attitude. Looking forward to the Deep Creek Retreat coming soon.

Mukul & Nelima Parikh

SOME FEEDBACK ON THE DEEP CREEK LAKE RETREAT

Thank you USAP organizers for a very well planned, enjoyable, wonderful weekend treat. Appreciate the efforts taken by the USAP team and others helping each other in various situations. Had a lot of fun as usual with everyone. Looking forward to Egypt, Jordan and Israel trip and many more in coming years.

Vashali Patil

Your feedback is important to us. It gives us direction and keeps us going! One feedback is equivalent to twenty five.

USAP TOTAL MEMBERSHIP
(AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023)

TOTAL Members : 426
.....
Charter Members : 188
4 Year Members : 238
Annual Members : 0

**WELCOME TO NEW
4-YEARS MEMBERS**

Ajit & Paulomi Shah
Nageshwara Rao
Ramanarao & Jyothi Mettu
Kamlesh & Smita Gosai

**WELCOME TO NEW
CHARTER (LIFE) MEMBERS**

Girish & Deepa Godbole
Sushil & Sandhya Jain
Jayant & Lakshmi Mirani
Chandrakant & Sagarika Tiwari
Vasant Germanwala
Nikhil & Bharati Gandhi
Jagannath & Deepa Karambelkar
Rajeev & Sangeeta Patil
Dr. Amit Mukherjee (India)
Achala Phatak
Shyam & Durga Somani
Manoj & Vasvi Patel
Narsinhbhai & Savitaben Ghelani

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS TO SPECIAL USAP MEMBERS

October: Navin Kadakia, Pankaj Desai, Madhu Duggal, Sudha Dixit, Shantha Balu, Hasmukh Patel, Dina & Pravin Vakharia, Smita Shah, Manisha Mittal, Sushil Jain, Urvashi Surti, Harilal Patel, Ashtosh & Wimi Ganjoo, Chandrakant Pujara, Harbhajan Rohela, Ashok Sahai, Dilip Shinde, Surinder Aneja, Sadhana Gupta, Anita Rustagi, Sheela Swarup

November: Leena Ladani, Bharati Shah, Kamlesh Aggarwal, Bharati Parikh, Jamnadas Thakkar, Visalam Dharmarajan, Vaishali Patil, Rekha Mehta, Bakula Patel, Venkatram Dharmarajan, Neelam Katyal, Ranjana Sahai, Nilima Badlani, Vipin Mehta, Jyoti Soneji, Mananda Bhende, Manoj Patel

December: Chetan Ladani, Rita Patel, Dilip Desai, Rashmi Shah, Ardeshir Tamboli, Vasu Malepati, Ravi Kant, Rajnikant Popat, Pratap Doshi, Vasant Germanwala, Som Sharma, Leena Thakar, Narsinhbhai Ghelani, PJ Prabhu, Hemal Purohit



**United Seniors Association of
Pittsburgh** is a tax-exempt

charitable organization.
Your support goes a long way in
supporting free lunches and
expanding our services to the
senior citizens.

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USAP News is published quarterly by United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh to keep its members and subscribers informed and connected. Your comments and suggestions are welcome to improve the dialogue.

Editors:

Subash Ahuja, Chetan Patel

USAP TOUR OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES & BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 2024

USAP continues to organize exquisite international tours every year for the benefit and enjoyment of our members. We are indeed very excited about a recently announced tour of the Magnificent Canadian Rockies and British Columbia.

The all-inclusive 9 nights/10 day tour starts from Calgary and includes Banff National Park, Lake Louise, Columbia Icefield, Jasper National Park, Mt. Robson, Kamloops, Mt. Whistler, Vancouver and Victoria.



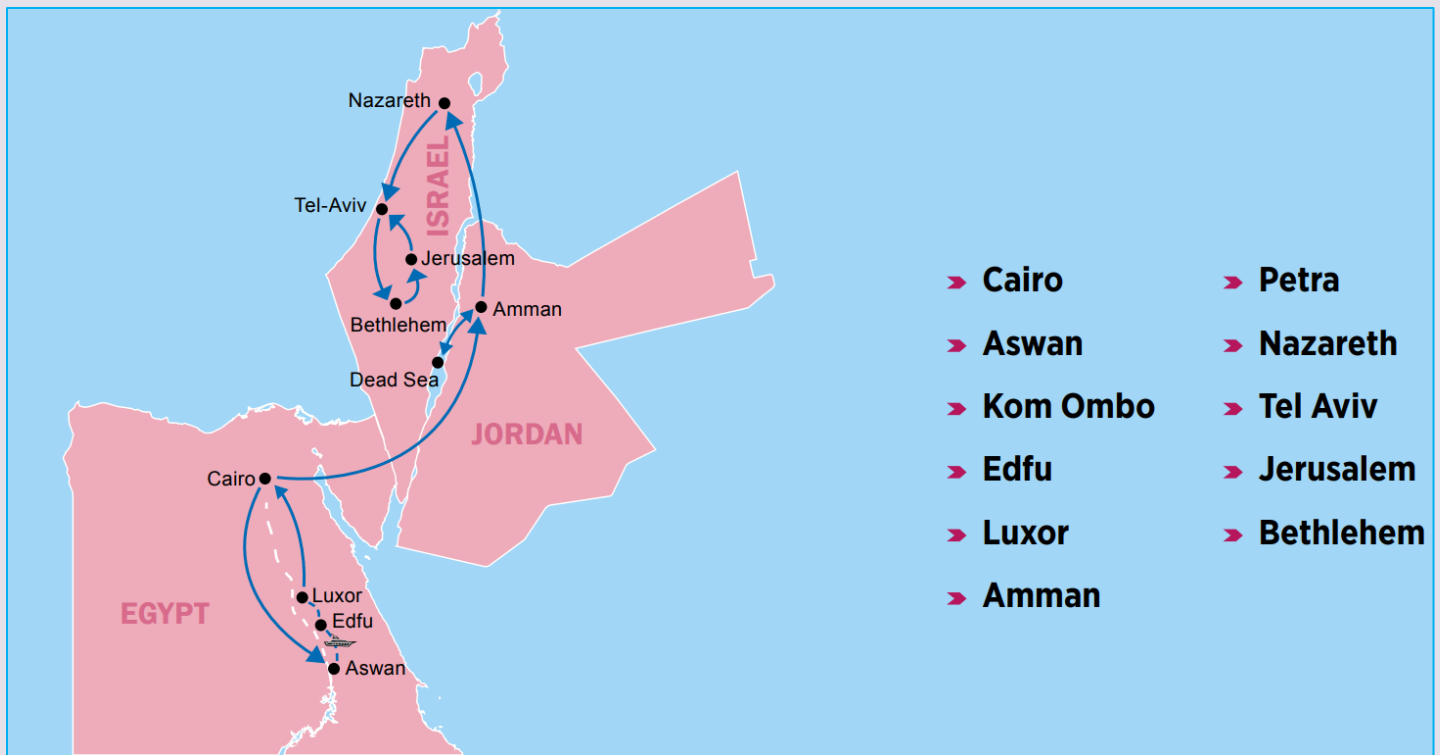
Two groups are scheduled, one starting July 18-27, 2024; and another July 24- August 2, 2024. This is a Nature's Highlight Tour that includes snowcapped Glacier Mountains Peaks, deep blue lakes (including boat cruise) and the magnificent sites of Vancouver and Victoria's Butchart Gardens. Total of 60 USAP Members are indeed ready for a treat !!



THREE COUNTRY TOUR OF EGYPT, JORDAN and ISRAEL

October - November 2023

By Kiran Bakshi



USAP is excited about our upcoming all-inclusive customized tour of Egypt-Jordan-Israel, spanning 17 days of journey into history, architecture, world-renowned pyramids, and many sightseeing attractions covering the three countries. **Four Tour Start dates (Oct 13, Oct 18, Oct 20 and Oct 27) represent a record 111 participants in all from USAP.**

The tour starts from Cairo, and covers Egypt attractions in Cairo, Aswan, Kom Ombo, Edfu and Luxor, including a 3-day Nile Cruise. After 8 days in Egypt, the tour travels to Jordan, visiting Amman, Petra-Wadi Rum and Dead Sea for 5 days. The last 4 days cover the Holy Sights of Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Tel Aviv in Israel.

Of course, besides sightseeing, the best part of the USAP tours is the friendship, the company and camaraderie that the participants enjoy, building memories through hundreds of pictures and anecdotes. We will share our exciting tour details in our next Newsletter.



DEEP CREEK RETREAT – A WEEKEND TRIP TO CHERISH

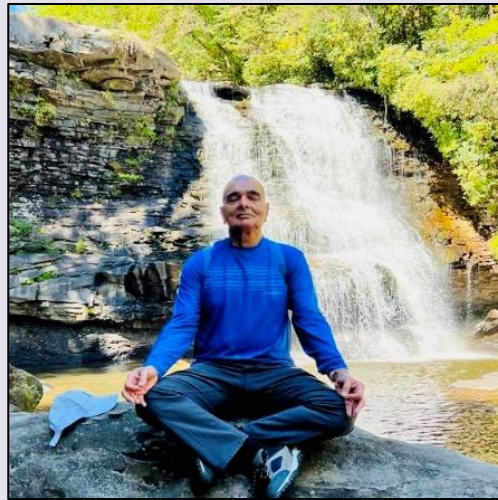
By Hemal Purohit

USAP held the second annual retreat this year (Sep 15 - 17) at the picturesque Deep Creek Lake in Maryland. As usual, this was a meticulously planned and thoughtfully organized event. Members

arrived on Friday afternoon at the hotel and were welcomed with drinks including beer, wine, and soft drinks. The social hour was followed by a scrumptious catered dinner of *pavbhaji*, vegetable biryani, and a very delicious pineapple *halwa* for dessert. Dinner was followed by a round of introductions and



then an exciting game of everyone's favorite Bingo! The room resonated with laughter and excitement throughout the evening.



Day 2 started with a packed class of Yoga led by our very own Bhavna Mehta. It was an excellent introduction to basic yoga asanas, and a rejuvenating 45-minute session of every imaginable stretch. Then after a breakfast buffet at the hotel, our group headed out to Swallow Falls Trail for a nature hike along multiple waterfalls. This was followed by a delicious lunch of *bhel puri*, Chips and Salsa, and Belvita

biscuits for dessert.

We then headed out to Deep Creek Lake State Park for a relaxing nature walk along the lake shore. After that we went for a group dinner at Uno's Pizzeria before heading back to the hotel. The entertainment for the evening at the hotel was well planned with enjoyable *antakshari* and karaoke singing by talented singers.

Day 3 also started with yoga session followed by breakfast. We then all said our goodbyes to one another and headed home carrying with us many memories of new friends and the bonding with our old friends.

It was truly a weekend trip we will cherish for a long time. Look at some of the comments people wrote.

Thank you all for planning and organizing this wonderful retreat. Due to all your efforts, we had a wonderful time. **Anant and Jyoti Gandhi**

Fun filled retreat, awesome fellowship. CHARDI KALA! **Suhendar and Surinder Ajmani**

It was so nice to meet everyone at the retreat. Everything was perfect including the weather. You all are so talented, funny and full of energy. We have got a lot to learn from you all. You can consider us your WV connection. We are eager to help you in any way we can. **Kanwal & Minnie Mahajan**

It was a wonderful experience. At times, it was difficult to walk on those uneven pavements, but there were many members who offered their helping hands. It shows the helpful nature of our members. Made lots of new friends along the way. Great job! **Devayani Pandit**

You guys worked hard to give all of us a good time, food, hikes, bingo and music programs. Deepak and I are grateful for celebrating Deepak's birthday. Special thanks to Mananda and Shaila for the cake and card with good wishes. Also, thanks to all the singers for entertaining us. We love you all. **Nirmal and Deepak Kotwal**

What a wonderful weekend it was! We thoroughly enjoyed it. Made some new friends too. Thanks to all those who helped me and my wife on uneven walks and stairs. One even tied my shoelaces. **Mananda and Shailesh Bhende**

You transported us to a different world for a couple of days. It must have taken the organizers months planning all this. It was wonderful to catch up with old friends and great to meet new ones. Thank you. **Anonymous**

What a fun weekend it was! Attention was paid to the minutest details of the weekend trip. Thank you so much to all the friends too with whom we had a great time. **Shakuntala Shinde**

Thank you USAP for arranging such a lovely weekend retreat at Deep creek. It was great to start the day with a morning yoga session. We were blessed with amazing weather. It was nice to meet everyone. We really appreciated the warmth and camaraderie of all we met. Great team! **Mukul and Neelima Parikh**

We had a great time attending the Yoga class, trail walk along the waterfalls, Uno Pizza and a very nice hotel stay. **Vilas**

Hats off to the USAP team for organizing such a wonderful weekend retreat. We had lots of fun! **Ravi Kant**

USAP team kept us smiling and made the trip full of Fun. Thank you all. **Vasanti Majmudar**

USAP PICNIC 2023

By Wimi Ganjoo

As USAP innovates with new programs and activities all the time, the Picnic (Aug 26) was no different this time.

It was the first time for USAP.



More than 50 people were able to attend and enjoyed the beautiful

warm summer day in North Park. And I feel fortunate to be part of the organizing committee that had the full support of our exceptional senior community organization.



Only part of the group is shown.

Picnics and barbecues are symbolic of good times shared with others. They are casual, yet special and memorable. We had all kinds of planned activities, games, singing, antakshari, and walking around the lake. Some enjoyed badminton while others enjoyed the plentiful buffet food and sipped on the cold drinks, beer and wine.



I personally felt mentally very refreshed after sharing a beautiful afternoon with everyone. I'm sure many others felt the same.

DANCE SESSION – A HUGE SUCCESS

By Shakuntala Shinde



Our maiden venture of Dance Class (Aug 13) was a huge success. We got a very good response in attendance and the participants thoroughly enjoyed it. We received lots & lots of compliments from each and every participant and also from many non-participants.

Initially, I was a bit skeptical & nervous. Being a performing dancer for 2 decades and a



choreographer for a decade, I wasn't sure if my choreography & teaching method would go well with non-dancers. Let's face it. Dance is a difficult art & talent. But I was pleasantly surprised by everyone's ability to learn, their enthusiasm & energy level. Everyone's *dil toh bacha hai ji* attitude was clearly evident when they asked questions and asked to show a step again and again with the intention of learning it correctly.

Overall, it was an entertaining morning with plenty of positive energy in the room. It rejuvenated me thoroughly. I hope it did the same for all of you. I'm glad that my goal to improve muscle strength, co-ordination and balance is being achieved with regular dancing.

Based on the response of our members, it has been decided in the Executive Board meeting to have another session of dance class in the near future. The date will be announced soon in our member chat group.

Thanks to Chetan Patel, our President, and the Executive Board for their vision and enthusiastic support. And thanks to you all for your participation and encouragement.

Looking forward to seeing more members in the next dance session.



IN LOVING MEMORY



KIRTIDA DESAI (1954 - 2023)

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of our beloved member Kirtida Desai (wife of Dilip Desai) on August 13, 2023. USAP wishes deepest condolences to the family of Kirtida Desai.

HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE REPORT

By Vasanti Majmudar

Some of the committee members met with an elderly retired gentleman in his early 80s, who was feeling lonely and depressed. His wife had passed away many years ago and his children, all married and settled, lived away from him and busy with their lives. He is financially independent, in fairly good health, smart and eloquent but has very few friends.

This was a good example for us to recognize the importance of family and social support that is so important in the senior years of our lives. He needed the support of USAP more than anyone else!

USAP plans and organizes its activities to provide this much needed social support through its regular educational meetings with invited speakers, dance and music, yoga asanas, picnics, weekend retreats, and group travels.

We commemorated the World Senior Citizens Day 2023 by inviting James Lange, CPA/Attorney and author of several books on August 20 to talk to us on Estate Planning. Mr. Lange gave away some of his books as a compliment for attending his talk, and many of us benefitted from the current information that he provided.

Many of our members have requested the need for carpooling in attending the USAP events. To address this need, Navin Kadakia, member of the Humanitarian Committee, will be organizing the membership list according to their zip codes and will appoint some lead members who can be contacted for such carpooling support. We have the list of names of members who have volunteered to help other members in need. You can call any of the committee members if you are able and willing to offer such help.

We are also considering a talk by a medical panel of experts who you can ask any general questions regarding health.

Committee Members:

Vasanti Majmudar (Chair) 412-855-5072
Subash Ahuja 412 216-8135
Navin Kadakia 412-302-5495
Chetan Ladani 412-519-9024
Devayani Pandit 412-443-6660
Chetan Patel 412-908-1711
Dilip Desai 412-916-2473

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Scott partners with Nayan Shah to help USAP members

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Sweet Saffron Rice

Recipes from Krishna's Kitchen



Ingredients

- 1 Cup Rice
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 1 Tablespoon ghee or butter
- ½ Teaspoon Saffron
- 1 Tablespoon Raisins
- 1 Teaspoon cardamom powder
- 1 Cup Water

Tip:

This dish can be made ahead a time and can be heated before serving And can be used as a dessert too.

By Krishna Sharma

Preparation

1. Wash rice thoroughly and soak for 30 minutes
2. Heat ghee in a pan
3. Add water and bring it to boil
4. Turn the gas to low and cover the pan
5. Let rice cook until all the water is gone but rice is not fully cooked; just before it is almost done.
6. Add saffron, Sugar , Raisins, and Cardamom.
7. Mix well together , cover and let it cook for few minutes until no water is showing
8. Take the pan off from the heat.

Before serving you may sprinkle some freshly soaked, peeled and blanched almond slices.

Sweet rice with saffron is ready to eat!

LIVING AS AN INSPIRING LEADER

By Dr. Amit Mukherjee

Dr. Mukherjee gave his talk at ICC just recently and was truly inspiring. He has kindly summarized his presentation for the benefit of those who were not able to attend. He will be joining the USAP first travel group to Egypt, Jordan, Israel in October before returning to India.



We have been governed by others since our childhood by parents, relatives, teachers, colleagues, bosses & even our spouses. Can we think of being governed by our own '**Inner Self**'? When that happens, we will become innovative and be able to resist all temptations.

We all want joy in our lives. Happiness, Success & Health are the main components of joy!

How do we get joy in our lives?

I have learned that **Inner Governance** is the easy and best way to achieve joy!

Swami Vivekananda once said - "***If you do not speak to yourself every day, you lose the opportunity to speak to a great personality***". When I do that, I get great ideas pouring in on what I should do and what I should remove from my life. This daily practice has transformed my life completely.

How do we practice Inner Governance?

Each of us has two voices within us. The mind (**Totaram**) and our heart (**Atmaram**). **Totaram** is loud and overbearing, **Atmaram** is soft and always right. We need to apportion some time every day to listen quietly to **Atmaram**!

In a busy world, we need to apportion our time and do that what we can achieve with our full potential. Profession, Family and Self, get equal importance in allocating our time.

How do we take time for ourselves?

Connection - to a higher purpose in life.

Correction - to eliminate what is not good for all humanity

Direction - to find out what we can do every day for improving - family, institution, society & the world.

Amazing ideas will come. If we follow them up with integrity and sincerity - amazing results will happen.

I can give you hundreds of examples from my own life!

- Building schools in the middle of jungles.
- Saving an island from destruction.
- Saving a hospital from closing down.

All, and many more are the result of believing in a 10,000-year-old saying in the Rig Veda - "**When you do the right thing, with passion, the whole Universe conspires to make it happen.**"