



# USAP News

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh

[www.USAofpittsburgh.org](http://www.USAofpittsburgh.org)

Volume 1 Issue 3

July 2019

We are pleased to present to you the third quarter issue of the USAP News. There is so much to report on the activities of USAP. To avoid getting too lengthy, we had to trim it down quite a bit and left some for later.

The vacationers are getting excited about their upcoming trips to China and Africa in July and August. The Melody Makers karaoke group started off on a strong footing and is meeting for the third time on July 19<sup>th</sup>. If you have any interest in singing, you will never find a better opportunity to get started. And, if you would like to involve yourself in Hindi Plays, that special interest group is also being formed soon. Find out more in this issue as well.

We are constantly guided by our mission statement – to promote and encourage healthy aging. We need to be aware, there are many approaches to healthy aging. There is the yogic approach, and there's the Ayurvedic approach. And one may add the spiritual approach as well. Those who have been attending the recent activities at USAP got to practice all of them. TADKA MASALAS are used daily in Indian cooking. They not only add flavor and delicious taste to the dishes, but also have medicinal values that aid in digestion and benefit the gut. You will not want to miss the informative article on this subject in this issue by Leena Thakar,

our renowned Ayurveda Doctor. She has kindly agreed to contribute regularly short articles on the Ayurvedic approach to healthy aging in

these columns for the benefit of our readers.



We are also very happy to announce that USAP has

outgrown its own website!

The old website has served its purpose. Members were able to attend to the basic needs of the growing organization - browse and register for upcoming programs and renew their membership online.

We are now in the process of upgrading the entire website to a full-fledged, senior-citizen friendly site in terms of font size, colorful menu bar; you will love to spend time browsing various new features such as the photo gallery, helpful resource center, articles of interest, review programs you may have missed, and much more.

Since this is a mass mailing that goes to approximately a thousand subscribers, please do add the USAP URL [USAofPittsburgh.org](http://USAofPittsburgh.org) into your contact list to prevent inadvertent pushing the mailing into your spam folder. We do want to hear from you. Your input is invaluable. Please let us know how we can serve you even better.

## New Members (Jan – Jun 2019)



### Charter members:

- Mina Patel
- Kiran & Bharati Parikh

### Annual members:

- Abbey Vijlee
- Surinder & Veena Aneja
- Surendra & Prabha Bansal
- Nirmala Chengappa
- Prabhjot & Sheena Deol
- Geeta Goswami
- Satish Gupta
- Ashok & Santosh Jain
- Sushil & Sandhya Jain
- Lalita Jaispal
- Darshin Kakaria
- Vasu Malepati
- Rohit & Yogini Mehta
- Malti Misra
- Rajkumari Nagpal
- Jitendra & Shobha Nath
- Raghu Nath
- Raman & Kapila Patel
- Vinod Patel
- Balbir Paul
- Mohan & Jaishree Phanse
- Jayshri Pokharna
- Ramana Surampudi
- Prahlad & Hemini Vakil



And a big Thank You to our members of 2018 who have renewed their annual membership for 2019.

A friendly reminder to those who haven't yet.

You can easily renew your membership online at

[USAofPittsburgh.org](http://USAofPittsburgh.org).

Annual membership dues are only \$30 per person and goes to support the cost of the lunches that are provided at end of each program event.

Better still, why not consider becoming a Charter Member (a lifetime membership) for \$500 per person.

USAP is a tax-exempt charitable organization and your contributions are tax deductible donations.

### A Musical Gala event for 2019 in the planning!

USAP presented "Kal Ki Yaadein", a Music Gala event last year in bringing Bankim Pathak on stage in Pittsburgh. The event took some effort to arrange but gave USAP a great visibility in the Pittsburgh community.

We are considering a similar gala event again in 2019, towards the holiday season, hopefully in November.

Please mark your calendar pre-emptively. Further details will follow via our emails.

We would like to hear from you for suggestions in what new programs you would like to see in USAP.

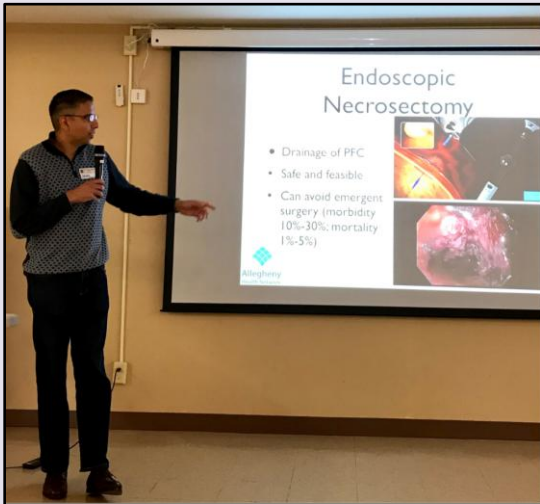
**USAP News** is published quarterly by United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh to keep its members and subscribers informed and connected. Your comments and suggestions are welcome to improve the dialogue.

### Editors:

**Subash Ahuja, Chetan Patel, Dilip Desai,  
Khozem Mogri**

## Colorectal Cancer Screening (April 14, 2019)

Colorectal cancer is a common malady among seniors and very preventable in today's medicine. Dr. Shyam Thakkar (Chief of Endoscopy at Allegheny Health Network, Associate Professor of Medicine, Temple University School of Medicine) stressed the importance of screening colonoscopy for early detection and prevention.



He covered many other gastrointestinal related problems as well. The presentation was followed by a Question & Answer session for almost an hour and was moderated by Dr. Subash Ahuja. The program was received very well and much appreciated.

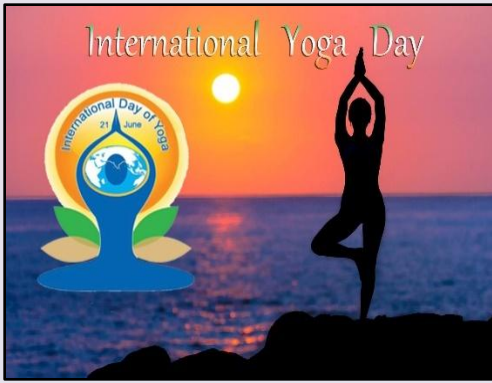
## Card Evening (May 24, 2019)



This is a special interest group that has always made it a fun evening. Although, we had a much bigger attendance last time in 2018, many were able to attend and enjoyed the evening despite conflicting events happening that day.



## International Yoga Day (June 23, 2019)



International Day of Yoga (Yoga Day) was first proposed by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 and was unanimously adopted by the world body.

Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature.

Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition to the world and is now celebrated annually all over the world on June 21.

To keep the tradition alive in Pittsburgh, USAP joined hands with the Indian Community Center, Classic Yoga and Wellness Studio, and the Art of Living Foundation and celebrated the Yoga Day at the Indian Community Center.



Bhavna Mehta (yoga teacher from Classic Yoga and Wellness Studio) and Sushil Shinde (Art of Living Foundation) led the Yoga and Meditation sessions that lasted more than an hour. Over thirty people attended and benefitted from the live demonstration and instructions given by the professional and highly qualified teachers. Following the yoga sessions, the group thoroughly enjoyed the delicious and healthy light lunch with *kichadi and yogurt*. This was a free service event for the benefit of the community. The program was widely publicized via mass e-mailings from USAP. If you still missed it this year, perhaps you will make a note not to miss it next year!

## Movie outing (June 25, 2019) - **REMEMBER AMNESIA** (Directed by Dr. Ravi Godse)

By Dilip Desai



Dr. Ravi Godse, one of our community members, released his latest movie "Remember Amnesia" on June 14th in theaters nationwide across the United States. USAP with the help of Dilip Desai helped publicize the movie to the Indian Community in Pittsburgh. Dr. Godse was appreciative of all the help and offered a complimentary show to USAP members on night of June 25 at the Cinemax 11 theater in Pittsburgh Mills. Close to 40 people took advantage of the offer and enjoyed the entertaining movie. Ravi Godse was present there as well and sat through the entire movie with the group.

## **BIRTHDAY AND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**



Those who celebrate the most birthdays, live the longest! Everyone's birthdays and wedding anniversaries are important, and we will celebrate them and share a cake with you at our regular gatherings. Please inform us of the special month and we will take care of the rest.



### **Celebrants in the picture**

From left to right: Kavita Thakkar, Girish Kothari, Shyam Thakkar, Zarin Balaporia.



# Melody Makers

## Special Interest Group for Music Lovers

**USAP** has formed a Karaoke Group – “Melody Makers”. Melody Makers met for the first time in the month of May and what an overwhelming response we received from so many of our community members! In just two sessions, in May and June, we had 18 different singers signed up showing their singing skills to an audience size of close to 40 people each time. Our seasoned local professional singer Nitin Merchant is offering his guidance and suggestions to assist participants improve their singing. Melody Makers has been meeting once a month and our next Karaoke Singing will be on July 19. Please refer to the flyer below.



One of the greatest benefits of singing karaoke is the amount of stress it releases. Singing releases endorphins and thus people feel happy

**USAP proudly presents**  
**Melody Makers**  
**(Karaoke Group)**

*Our seasoned local professional singer Nitin Merchant has offered his guidance and suggestions to assist singers improve singing*

*Singers of all ages are encouraged to participate*

**Karaoke Night**  
**Friday, July 19 at 6:30pm at ICC, Carnegie**  
**Cost: \$10 including dinner**  
***Please RSVP by July 15 - Participants requested to sign-up***

**Contact:**

Juginder Luthra	304-794-6336	Nitin Merchant	412-260-1001
Dilip Desai	412-916-2473	Naushad Khatri	724-864-5248
Chetan Patel	412-908-1711	Subash Ahuja	412-216-8135
Rajni Popat	724-366-0867	Darshana Pandya	650-224-9594
Sudha Dixit	724-366-8391	Mehul Vakil	412-977-4976

## PLAY AND DRAMA GROUP

### Going Beyond Melody Makers

By Juginder Luthra



Just like the music lovers have found their home in Melody Makers, many others have shown their desire in forming a group interested in Plays and Drama with senior talent. With a goal to encourage and highlight Senior talent, USAP is in the process of organizing a special interest group interested in arranging a fun evening with a few short Hindi Plays in near future at ICC. Short comedy acts, dance, song and other entertainment items can also be mixed with the Plays to make it an evening to remember.

Plays are fun to watch but require lots of effort in arranging them. If you have interest, the Play & Drama Group will help bring out the hidden talents in you and encourage you to share these talents with your family and friends. Besides participating in acting, we would also need help with lighting and sound effects, costumes and make up, stage setting, etc.

Once we know how many people are interested in acting, we will make teams and assign various roles in different Plays. Guidance, if needed, will be provided in acting and other aspects of staging the Plays. Different teams will do the rehearsals on their own. As we get closer to the date, all participants will get together for final rehearsal sessions.

To get the group started, we will need to call a meeting where we will be able to discuss the subject in further details.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact any one of the following members and register your names. We will let the interested members know of the meeting date.

Juginder Luthra	304-794-6336	Dilip Desai	412-916-2473
Dolly Luthra	304-794-6335	Ved Kaushik	724-443-2462
Subash Ahuja	412-216-8135	Nitin Merchant	412-260-1001

## USAP VOLUNTEERS

Many of our USAP members are volunteers at many help centers. We would like to list all those who volunteer so we can share one another's experience and be able to guide others who would like to volunteer as well.

Helping others makes us happy. It also can help with chronic pain, lowers blood pressure and gives us a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

USAP is considering forming a volunteer group who can help with collecting your discards in terms of winter clothing and shoes, gloves, caps and scarfs. There are a whole lot of people who would welcome receiving such items as gifts. This volunteer group will help in organizing and cataloguing such receipts and in distributing them to the needy. If you can help and would like to become a USAP volunteer, please let us know.

# Bon Voyage Fellow Vacationers to China and Africa

by Kiran Bakshi



We are excited about the upcoming, USAP sponsored International Tours for 2019: a 14 Day South Africa Tour and a 14 Day China Tour. A total of 65 USAP members will be enjoying a great time in these exciting tours.

The South Africa Tour, for July and September are FULLY subscribed, with a total of 39 USAP members going to visit Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. The September China Tour is also FULL with 26 USAP members visiting.

All those going to Africa in July will be receiving complete tour package folders from Air Tours, our Tour Agent by the second week of July.

For China Tour, the participants are mailed the details of the visa documents individually, and we will be filing as a group for China visa in the second week of July. A meeting is scheduled on July 14 at ICC to collect individual visa application packages for transmission to China Embassy through our Visa Agent.

The Final Balance of Payments for all September Tours (both China and South Africa) are in the process and will be completed by the second week of July.

For all the USAP members who wish to join FUTURE TOURS in 2020, we encourage you to share your wish list of destinations with us, so that we can organize such wonderful, enjoyable and cost-effective tours.

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## AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO HEALTHY AGING

### INTEGRATIVE HEALTHCARE SUPPORT FOR USAP GROUP

by Dr. Lina Thakar, Ayurveda Doctor

It is my honor to introduce the USAP community on daily Ayurveda practices that may help to reactivate self-healing power, prevent or reduce symptoms of chronic health conditions, pain or fatigue and restore health naturally. Ayurveda may help you enjoy quality of life and experience improved health to live longer.



### TADKA SPICES AND THEIR HEALING EFFECTS

Let's begin our Ayurveda Journey here by first putting our attention to digestion. "DIGESTION IS KEY TO HEALTH!" Ayurveda believes every disease is developed from poor digestion. It is important to pay attention to your digestion. In this article, I am happy to introduce you to the spices we use



every day without knowing their therapeutic importance.

Tadka/seasoning is our first step in cooking the food. Usually, spices in our MASALA Dabba (spice tin) mostly present in every Indian kitchen are Mustard Seeds (Rai), Cumin Seeds (Jeera), Asafetida (Hing), Turmeric (Haldi), Cayenne Powder (Lal Mirch powder) and Coriander Powder (Dhania powder).

**Mustard Seeds (Rai)** – After the oil is heated for seasoning in a pan first mustard seeds are added. Then, after the seeds are popped, next spices are added. Mustard Seeds are called Rajika in Sanskrit. Mustard seeds have heating quality. According to Ayurveda, our digestion is a type of Agni called Jatharagni (stomach fire). It diminishes due to stress, anxiety, iced drinks and aging too, leading to poor digestion. The undigested food becomes toxic SLUDGE which is called AMA in Ayurveda. Hence the first step is to ignite and strengthen the digestive fire. Mustard seeds are heating so they ignite the digestive fire aiding digestion. They are also KRUMIGNA, meaning they destroy krimi (worms) in the intestine that enters in the digestive tract along with foods. Mainly when you eat raw foods there are bound to be micro-organisms on the food. Secondly, mustard seeds also cleanse off the sludge from the inner lining of the digestive tract. This maximizes nutrient absorption. Additionally, mustard seeds due to heating quality also help liquefy mucus in the body assisting in weight management.

**Cumin Seeds (Jeera)** – Cumin seeds is the next in the row we add to tadka oil after mustard seeds. Jeera has immense therapeutic healing power literally called JEERAKA means totally help food gets digested and maximize nutrient absorption. Cumin seeds pacify Pitta, hence aid healing inflammation and acidity. Inflammation is the first step toward initiating so many diseases. Cumin seeds prevent and reduce inflammation.

**Asafetida (Hing)** – Hing has very healing quality as it pacifies VATA dosha. Vata is the governing dosha in the body. Vata governs all the functions in the body such as respiration, digestion, cognitive functions, and sensory knowledge. The entire nervous system is under VATA management, including mental health. Vata in excess creates gases, bloating causing poor digestion. Being antispasmodic, hing may help prevent colic and pains. Excess vata is the root cause of anxiety and insomnia. Beans especially create gases hence hing is always added when cooking beans, so they are easy on digestion. Hing aids in easy digestion when only a pinch is added in tadka. Digestive functions are under vata management and hing by controlling vata helps the digestion immensely.

We will continue our journey to learn therapeutic benefits of Ayurveda in healthy aging; stay tuned to know more about other spices in Tadka in the next issue.

Namaste

Dr. Lina Thakar  
Ayurveda Doctor, Integrative Wellness Consultant.  
International Speaker and best-selling Author  
[www.AyurvedaInstituteUSA.com](http://www.AyurvedaInstituteUSA.com)

Disclaimer - The information shared here is not to diagnose, cure or treat disease or it is not evaluated by FDA. The article is for information only. Ayurveda is not a licensed medicine program in USA. Dr (Vaidya) Lina is NOT a medical doctor. Dr. (Vaidya) Lina does not practice medicine.

## DEFY AGING WITH YOGA

by Darshan Goswami, M.S., P.E.

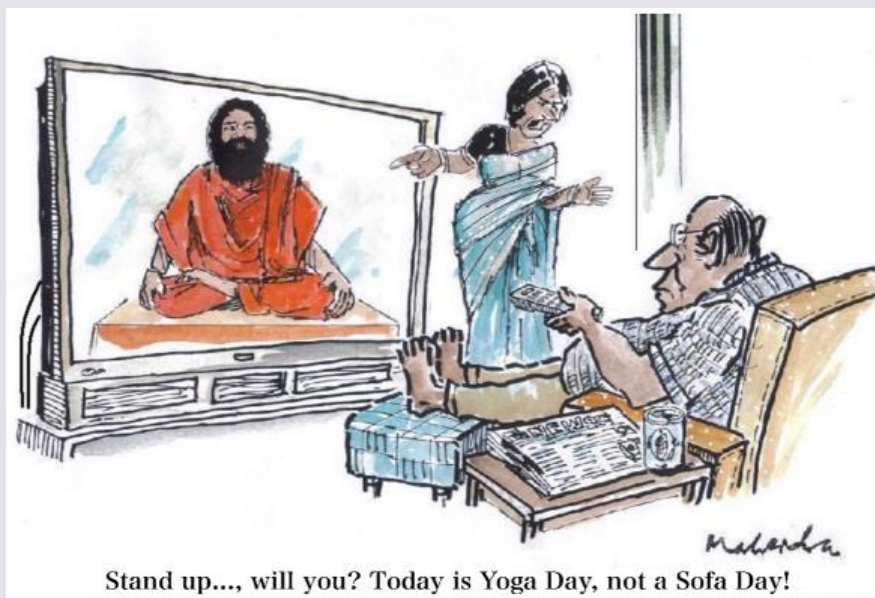
Modern living is full of potential stresses and strains— mental, physical and emotional. More people are turning toward the principles and practice of yoga to counterbalance to the stresses of modern life, and to achieve a sense of inner peace. Yoga can help you improve your physical health by developing a fit and beautiful body, toning your muscles and internal organs, relieving inner tension, reducing weight, and strengthening your bones. Recent scientific studies have shown that the practice of yoga combined with Meditation and Pranayama can have a beneficial effect on a variety of medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels, arthritis, asthma, chronic fatigue, arteriosclerosis, anxiety, stress, and postural problems. The regular practice of yoga can also improve self-esteem, boost your energy and vitality at any age of life, increase your powers of concentration and discipline, and improve heart conditions.

In addition, regular practices of Yoga, Meditation, Pranayama, Exercise and Lifestyle changes can restore our body, mind, and soul to its previous glory to invigorate. Yoga can be effectively used as a preventive medicine to slow or even reverse the harmful effects of aging by reducing the catabolic process of cell deterioration and help us achieve inner peace. Yoga could be one of the best forms of alternative medicine in preventing diseases which has limited side effects.....

To read the complete article, please go to website below:

<http://community.ontimes.com/profiles/blogs/defy-aging-with-yoga-by-darshan-goswami-m-s-p-e-pittsburgh-pa-usa>

### SENIOR HUMOR



*Mahendra Shah is a professional cartoonist of international fame. He is a keen observer of human nature, especially the behavior of the Indian diaspora. His insight and sharp wit are evident in his many cartoons. He has over 2,000 cartoons to his credit, has published books on cartoons, and his cartoons have been featured in many publications both in the US and abroad. He and his wife Aruna are residents of Pittsburgh and recently celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. He has offered to humor the seniors with his cartoons in the Senior Humor column on a regular basis.*

## TURMERIC, THE GOLDEN SPICE

### A CURE FOR ALL MALADIES?

by Balwant N. Dixit Ph. D., Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology, University of Pittsburgh



In early thirties I was living in small villages in India. There were practically no effective medicines to treat any diseases in those days. So, when anyone got ill the treatment involved using items from the kitchen or going to the temple to pray for the cure. For example, when one got any respiratory illness the treatment included drinking hot milk with a teaspoonful of turmeric and sugar. Was the turmeric, commonly used spice in very small amounts, that cured the ailment? No one knew then and one does not know even now.

I immigrated to the USA many years ago and became Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh. Before that, I was a research staff member within a large group of investigators with expertise in Ayurveda, Pharmacology, Internal Medicine, Biochemistry, Pathology and Horticulture in an Ayurvedic Research Unit affiliated with the Department of Pharmacology in Baroda Medical College. Our objective evaluation, of therapeutic effectiveness of over 35 Ayurvedic Medicines in animal models and in human patients, showed total ineffectiveness of these medicines. Recently I became aware that many are consuming daily 600 mg to 3000 mg of curcumin, the supposedly active antioxidant ingredient of the turmeric root, as the treatment for diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, obesity, diabetes, infections, arthritis, Crohn's disease, pancreatitis, ulcers, psoriasis, hepatitis and to ward off future occurrence of these diseases.

After conducting a review of the relevant published literature, I found out the following:

- (1) Between the years 1950 and 1970 only 6 papers on turmeric were published. However as of 2016 more than 15,000 manuscripts have appeared.
- (2) Curcumin or turmeric is claimed to be an effective treatment for diseases and disorders that include dermatitis, dementias, depression, arthritis, cancers and whatever else that ails you.
- (3) India is the world's largest producer of turmeric.
- (4) Turmeric powder contains around 1% curcumin. So, to get the commonly used dose 600 - 3000 mg/day, one must consume 6 Gms. (one tsp.) to 300 Gms. (50 tsp.) of turmeric powder each day.
- (5) Curcumin is a chemically unstable compound, and very poorly, if at all, absorbed from the G.I. tract in humans even after oral doses as high as 3000 mg.
- (6) There is a significant disconnect between what appears to be very promising activity *in vitro*, and *in vivo* evidence of any health benefits.
- (7) No double-blind, placebo controlled clinical trial of curcumin has been successful.
- (8) Those scientifically inclined should read the most recent review paper on turmeric published in the J. Med. Chem. (2017, v: 60, 1620-1637).