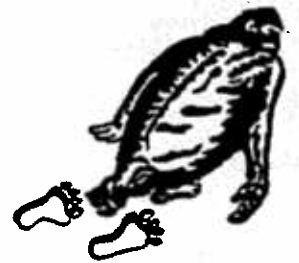




YETI VIEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE ASSOCIATION IN SOUTHEASTERN AMERICA

Vol. 6 No. 2

Quarterly

April/August 1997

NASA'S SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION August 30 & 31

Location: BEST WESTERN-OXFORD INN, 1101 Frontage Rd., Oxford, MS. Tel: (601-234-9500)

Saturday, August 30

Check in at Best Western 2:00 PM
Registration 4:00 PM
Reception/
Dinner by Host Families 5-6:00 PM
Screening of NEPALI movie

Sunday, August 31

Continental Breakfast 7-8:00 AM
Registration 7-9:00 AM
Opening Ceremony 9-10:30 AM

Welcome Speech by Dr. Dharmendra Dhakal, Local Host
Address by Dr. Samanta Thapa, President of NASA
Address by Mr. Suman Silwal, Student Vice-president
Address by Honorable Mayor of Oxford
Key Note Address by the Nepalese Ambassador to the U.S.

Guest Speakers:

Dr. Maheshwar Baidya, President ANMA
Mr. Dibya Hada, President Nepal America Friendship Society
Dr. Padam Paudel

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM (CONCURRENT SESSIONS)

1. Religion And Life 10-11:00 AM
2. Meditation 11-12:00 PM
3. Visa And Work Permit
4. Topics Related to Nepal

12:30-1:30 PM: LUNCH BREAK

2:00-4:00 PM (CONCURRENT SESSIONS)

1. Religion and Life
2. Youth related Topics
3. CITY TOUR

Social Hour/Business Meeting 4-5:00 PM
Dinner 5-6:30 PM
Cultural Program 7-9:00 PM
Dance (with DJ) 9:30-11PM

Monday, September 1

Soccer Games(Adult & Youth)/Basketball 8-10:00 AM
Musical Chairs (ladies)/Pinata for KIDS 10-11:00 AM

LUNCH & CONCLUSION 12-1:00 PM

Directions to Best Western-Oxford Inn, Oxford, MS (home of the 97 NASA convention):

If you are coming from Memphis, TN:
Take I-55 S.
Take the exit at Batesville for Highway 6 East (Oxford).
After approximately 24 miles, you will see the exit for downtown Oxford.
Take this exit and then immediately turn right.
The Best Western-Oxford Inn will be on your left side.

If you are coming from Jackson, MS:
Take I-55 N.
Take the Batesville Exit for Highway 6 East (Oxford).
After approximately 24 miles, you will see the exit for downtown Oxford.
Take this exit and then immediately turn right.
The Best Western Hotel will be on your left side.

If you are coming from Birmingham, AL:
Take Highway 78 W.
Exit at New Albany for Highway 30 W.
After approximately 30 miles, take the exit for Highway 7 S.
At 3rd Exit turn right for Batesville (Highway 6 West).
Look for the downtown exit (possibly the first exit).
Turn left and cross the bridge.
Immediately turn right after you cross the bridge, and the road will take you to the Best Western Hotel.

OTHER NEARBY HOTELS:

Ramada Inn: Tel. (601) 234-7013
Comfort Inn: Tel: (601) 234-6000
Holiday Inn : Tel: (601) 234-3031
Johnson's Motor Inn: Tel: (601)234-3611

CONTACT PERSONS:

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Mr. Shakti Aryal (Oxford)
Tel: (601) 234-1555

REGISTRATION FEES:

Family: \$50
Student Family: \$30
Individual: \$20
Student individual: \$12
Guest: \$15

ANNOUNCEMENT

NEPAL - The Multimedia CD-ROM
Version 1.0 - Tilak Shrestha, TN

This multimedia CD-ROM is the most comprehensive source of information on Nepal. It contains over 7,000 pages of information complemented by attractive charts, tables, 1200 color photos, 120 maps, 28 video clips, 12 musical pieces and others. All these information can be reached with user friendly, interactive, navigational tool. It gives in-depth geographical, historical, political, economic and ethnic information on Nepal. It also vividly describes our religious heritage and provide comprehensive information on Nepal's natural resources, flora and fauna. This CD-ROM would cater to any of your concerns, whether it is tourist destination, or Himalayan peaks, or investment feasibility, or Buddhist philosophy, or socio-economic statistics. It also contains the full volume of Nepali Encyclopedia with over 3000 entries and the comprehensive 'who is who' in Nepal. The CD-ROM is jointly developed by Nepal Software, Kathmandu, Nepal, and Poetic System Corporation, Tokyo, Japan.

For further information, demonstration or business inquiry, please contact: The General Manager, The Nepal Software (Pvt. Ltd.), Pension Vasana, Dilli Bazar, PO Box 2722, GPO, Kathmandu, Nepal. Telephone: 414614, 417761, 421082. Fax: 977-1-417460. E-mail: UNIQUE@MOS.COM.NP Cost: In Nepal - NR 5,000 Other countries: US\$150.

NEWS FROM NEPAL

QUEUING TIRELESSLY FOR ONE PRIZE - A VISA TO US

Source: Smriti Belbase, *Kathmandu Post*, July 26, 1997

They come as early as three in the morning to start lining up outside the high walls. Some trudge over in person, others send servants to save their place in the line till they can make it over themselves.

By the time the gates of the U.S. Consul's office in Kathmandu open at 8:30, the line

of visa applicants extends down the block. After the first twenty-odd people are let in, the door shuts once more on the expectant faces: they have a long wait behind them, but another long wait ahead. The lucky few inside go through a security check and then into the waiting room, where the air hangs hushed and tense.

Inside and outside, the talk is subdued. Anxious, but always with the element of hope. Some exchange stories of what they have heard about others who have gone before them; others inform anyone who will listen of how best to make their visit successful.

The prize in question is a visa to the United States. The reasons for applying vary. Many cite the obvious draw of high-quality schools, others wish to visit family members. Some are going for business reasons, and a few describe the vague desire to partake in "better opportunity."

Whatever the reasons for wanting to go, in these conversations outside the gates one detects a sense of fatalism regarding the entire application process. The occupants of this office in Panipokhari hold it in their hands to seal a person's destiny, and how exactly they make their decisions is a mystery to many of the people standing outside.

"Do you know anyone already there?" is an often-asked question. "I hear it helps to have a sponsor."

I am hoping that I don't have to talk to one of the tougher ones," says one man who is applying for a student visa. "I have heard that so much can depend on who looks at your application." The sense of apprehension is not helped any by stories of harsh interviewers who have the ability to deny you a visa without explanation.

Nor is it helped, in one successful applicant's words, by the sense that "they don't really want us to be applying. Look at the size of the room, and how long we are made to wait. I got my visa, but the amount of time I had to put into it I felt I was applying for something to which I had no right."

Is this really the impression that the U.S. Embassy is actively trying to convey to visa applicants in Nepal? Is the consul's office really a barrier set up to discourage potential visitors from applying, regardless

of their reasons for wishing to go? As might be expected, a conversation with David P. Schensted, Consul at the U.S. Embassy, suggests that this is not quite what the staff on the other side of windows view themselves.

"We are no way want to stop anyone from going to the United States who has a good reason," says Schensted. "Our function is to facilitate travel to America without compromising the interests of the United States, such as its security, or its law."

Schensted explains that under the U.S. Congress's Immigration and Naturalization Act, when reviewing a nonimmigrant visa application, visa officers are instructed to look for evidence that the applicant will return to his or her home country. According to Schensted, this is of primary importance in the entire application.

When asked about the element of personal judgement involved in assessing such a elusive quality as a person's "intention to return," Schensted expresses full confidence in his staff. "They are educated, well trained in the Nepali language, and very well prepared to judge people's intentions," he says.

In addition, Schensted emphasizes that officers in no way have the right to deny a visa without an explanation. "Sometimes people may not understand the explanation, but we always make a point of outlining why we cannot issue a visa," he says.

With regard to applicant's claims of humiliating questioning during interviews, Schensted says the such claims may arise from the nature of the questions they must be asked in evaluating an applicant's eligibility for a visa.

"We often have to ask questions that might be considered personal, but which unfortunately are very pertinent," he says. "I strongly encourage my staff to be respectful at all times. I regret it if anyone has left with the perception of having been humiliated."

When asked about applicants' impression that the size of the waiting room and the number of visa officers on duty are meant to discourage applicants, Schensted says that the Consular section has already been expanded once in response to the 10 percent yearly increase in the number of applicants.

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

(Continued from page 2, column 3)

"I can see the day when we will have to further increase the staff," Schensted says. The office currently employs two Americans and three Nepalis.

As for the sense among applicants of the arbitrary nature of the decision in issuing a visa, Schensted expresses concern that the mystification surrounding the application process is giving rise to practices that jeopardize even an eligible person's chances of receiving a visa.

According to Schensted, such illegal practices are preventing some very qualified students from the opportunity to study in U.S. universities. Such students disqualify their applications by suing fraudulent documents as "padding," even though they already fulfill the necessary requirements.

Many Nepalis also appear aware of how such practices by some are affecting the experiences of all applicants.

In the words of one Nepali currently studying in the U.S., "The US has clear guidelines for who to let in. If more applicants just had the information, they wouldn't waste their time standing in line. And it would make things easier for other applicants as well."

"Still," he adds, "It wouldn't hurt if the Embassy were able to better accommodate the traffic."

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

GOOD BYE FOR NOW !

Like everything else, *Yeti Views* Editorship has a life of its own. Its current life is about two years. In other words, it is time for me to pass on this responsibility and/or opportunity to someone who will be on board at the Seventh Annual Convention at Oxford, MS.

For me, it was both challenging and satisfying task to put together a "quality" newsletter that could be interesting to most groups of Nepali and friends of Nepal living in North America.

Whatever I was able to do, it could not have been possible without your contributions.

I thank everyone for this opportunity and for your genuine support.



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Please join NASA (Nepalese Association in Southeastern America) and support our activities. NASA is a non-profit organization and its membership is open to all Nepalese and friends of Nepal.

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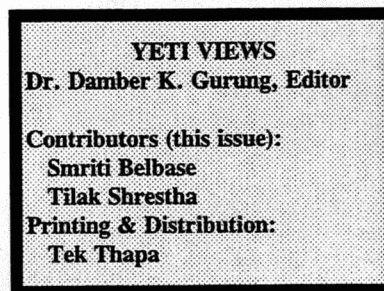
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