

## Fall & Winter Edition (October 2012 – March 2013)

### **Chairman's Message:**

#### MOVING FORWARD - TOGETHER

- Ajaib Singh, SFV Chairman

With Waheguru's blessings and Sangat's cooperation, the Sikh Foundation of Virginia is moving forward in several areas to service our congregation with some new initiatives.

**KIRTANS and KATHA:** Special efforts are made this year to bring well known Kirtan Jathas and renowned Katha Vachaks to help our congregation get closer to Guru, Gurbani and Sikh *itehas*. This is possible due to the efforts of Paramjit Singh Ji Bedi, SFV Secretary, who has a far and wide reach to bring in famous Jathas and Kathakars. All the major Gurburabs, including Shaheedi Purab Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Shaheedi Purab Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Shaheedi purab Sahibzadahs, Bandi Chhod Divas, Parkash Utsav of Guru Nank Dev ji, Parkash Utsav Guru Gobind Singh Ji, kirtan to welcome new year 2013, and regular Kirtan Diwans (Thursdays and Sundays), were celebrated with great participation and *utshah* of our Sangat.

Sikh Jagat's many well-known Katha Vachaks who are well-versed in Gurbani Vichaar, including Bhai Amrik Singh Ji (Ph.D. Religion) of Ghanaiyya Mission, Mukeria, Giani Tarjit Singh (Karnal wale) and Giani Harinder Singh Ji (Alwar Wale) of Bangla Sahib, graced our Guru-Ghar stage.

Many accomplished Kirtan Jathas, namely Dr. Gurnam Singh Ji, head Gurmat Sangeet, Punjabi University Patiala; Bhai Ajit Singh Manjit Singh, Hazoori Ragi Bangla Sahib; Bhai Narain Singh Ji (grand son of Bhai Sujan Singh); Bhai Gurnimit Singh Rangeela and Bhai Bhupinder Singh Rageela; Davinder Partap Singh and Mohinder Partap Singh; and Bhai Mohinderjeet Singh, classical Gurmat Kirtaniya; as well as many others performed Gurbani Kirtans on various Gurburabs and regular Kirtan Diwans at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** SFV participated in several events to show a spirit of community outreach. Firstly, we were all utterly saddened at the tragic loss of lives on August 5, when a gunman opened fire in a sister house of worship, the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. SFV held a Candle-light Vigil at our Gurdwara Sahib on August 9 in which good-hearted folks from many faiths, along with many County and State officials and political figures participated to show their solidarity with the Sikh Community. Our congregation also donated generously and the funds collected were sent to the Wisconsin Gurdwara Victims' Relief Fund.

As a gesture of goodwill and community spirit, several members of our congregation visited Churches and Mosques to make folks aware of the Sikhs and made presentations about our faith, tenets and beliefs. We were invited and we participated in dialogs at local houses of worship, including Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, Springfield, VA, St. George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg, VA, and Ahmadiyyan Muslim Community Mosque in Chantilly, VA. Thanks to Surjeet Singh Sidhu, Surinder Singh Sachdeva, Permvir Singh and Paramjit Singh Sachdeva in joining with me in these community outreach events.

**HEALTH CONSULTATION SERVICE:** SFV has started a new health consultation service for our congregants. Dr. Rishi Bhatnagar Ji, an orthopedic surgeon, generously has been providing this free Seva on first Sunday of each month from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Members of our congregation, who may

experience knee, shoulder, back, hip or any other joint pain or problem, are encouraged to consult with Dr. Rishi and take advantage of this free service.

**YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:** Our Youth is our *Virsa*. It is our sacred duty to help them learn, appreciate, and celebrate Sikh Maryada, Sikh way of life, and Gurbani. This year, thanks to the untiring efforts of the SFV Youth and Education Coordinator, Surinder Singh Ji Sachdeva, great strides were taken forward to open new venues for our youth to appreciate and love Sikhi. [Please see a separate article below elaborating on these initiatives.]

## Public Relations Officer's Corner

- Kanwaljit K. Sachdeva

### **Punjabi Masti in Virginia**

Sikh Foundation of Virginia celebrated their annual Punjabi Masti evening with great excitement and spectacle at West Springfield High School on December 8. The purpose of Punjabi Masti is to bring kids, youth, and community together and get them involved in Punjabi culture, boli, and folk music. With more than 120 participants and a crowd of more than 500 people, we were able to create an evening of unforgettable entertainment. It was very exciting to see everyone so involved in the songs and tapping to the lively and reverberating Punjabi music. People started arriving at 5:30pm and were busy in chatting, eating, and getting their kids ready for the show. Punjabi food filled the hallway with a tantalizing aroma prepping them for another great night. Colorful attire and dazzling jewelry created visual aesthetics, and Punjabi music generated a lively and energetic atmosphere.

The event constituted an amalgamation of bhangra, giddha, kavita, shayari, folk songs, skits, and standup comedy. Children as young as four years of age were seen dancing to the beat of Punjabi music. The energy and vibrancy of the performers was appreciated and enjoyed by all. The audience was clapping, thumping their feet, and whistling in appreciation of the performances.

Mrs. Kanwaljit Sachdeva, Public Relations Officer of SFV, and organizer of the event shared that it took months of preparation and an enormous amount of effort on the part of all the trustees of the organization, parents, and coaches to put this together and make the event a success. Staying within the spirit of community, the cultural program stresses the involvement of volunteers. All participants are recruited from the community and they volunteer to make the show unforgettable. Every year, children and adults alike, spend months practicing for the program. This time spent together forges new bonds and brings the community even closer.

## Construction Activities

- **Coordinator:** Amarjit Singh Riat

- The SFV Board of Trustees has approved the remodeling of the kitchen. Following comments from the Sangat on the preliminary design, drawing of the layout for the project has been finalized.
- It is anticipated that the detailed drawings will be submitted to the County of Fairfax for permit during the first quarter of 2013.
- Construction work is expected to begin during second quarter of 2013, and should be completed in about four months.

We will need full support and blessings of the Sangat to complete this complex project.

## IT/Audio-Visual Committee

### — Beant Singh Deu

Sikh Foundation of Virginia's IT team set the following objectives in the beginning of the year and worked diligently to accomplish them. It was a great team effort to pitch in when the designated person could not make it.

1. To streamline the projection of shabads on regular basis for the benefit of sangat in general and our youth in particular.
2. Display daily Vak (Order of the day) on the TV monitor located in the lobby.
3. Explore the possibility of "Ticker" for flashing particular messages for sangat such as "Happy Vasakhi" or Today's Kirtan program or visiting ragi jatha/katha vachak, etc.
4. Revamp SFV website to make it user friendly and add-in new features.
5. Audio recording of shabads recited during kirtan diwan.

IT Team has accomplished all its set objectives. All the team members deserve pat on the back for job exceedingly well done. Congratulations are in order to all the team members for their dedication and hard work.

These members contributed to the success of this IT Program: Narinder Singh, Chetanpal Singh, Kuldeep Kaur Sidhu, Manjeet Kaur Sandhu, Upkar Kaur Bhatti, Harkirat Singh Sahambi, Manpreet Singh Behniwal, and Surinder Pal Singh Sachdeva.

**Motto:** *Together we move forward SFV.*

## Youth & Education Committee

Coordinator – Surinderpal Singh Sachdeva

### Youth and Education activities

1. Punjabi School: The Sunday Punjabi School at SFV started the semester on September 16, and it has been an exciting journey throughout. By implementing new ideas of creative teaching and adding a 30 minute Sikh History class at the end has added a new element for students to look forward to. This semester, a history workshop on Guru Nanak, Bandi Chhorr Diwas and Harmandir Sahib was among various slideshows, stories and videos shared with students.
2. In an effort to enjoy Keertan played by all the Sangat members, a Youth Keertan Darbar was arranged. Many youth members from local Sangat and from the surrounding states took part in it. The event started with So Dar Path at 7 pm and the program ran till midnight with beautiful Keertan played by different members.
3. In response to the recent devastation by Sandy Hurricane in New Jersey/New York areas, Youth Committee arranged an event called 1+1, a collective effort to help the ones in need. In this event, the members of other faiths and communities were invited to share their thoughts and beliefs about selfless service for others. On the same occasion, a vanload of winter clothes were collected and donated to the victims in those areas.
4. In another effort to plug in our Youth members with active organizations, such as SALDEF, Sikh Coalition and United Sikhs, we arranged a meet-with-SALDEF event. Navdeep Singh from SALDEF shared information about how organizations like the SALDEF are working for the Sikh

community. Youth members learned how to pursue issues with the authorities, and how to effectively present our cases. Also they were informed about how to present a basic slideshow at their schools and colleges about Sikhism.

The icing on the cake was meeting with Balpreet Kaur, the most religious person of the year, awarded by Huffington Post. To celebrate all the Sikh women martyrs the event KAURs was put together. Balpreet Kaur and her mother Harvir Kaur came from Cincinnati OH as guest speakers. Many of her "fans", our youth members from the area attended this event. Balpreet Kaur shared that how she was able to carry such commitment that despite of her quite visible facial hair she gracefully cherished her Sikhi values and stood up for her belief.

## Treasurer's Report

- **Jasbir S. Sandhu**

### Monthly Report 2012

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Income	\$26,731.62	\$16,656.93	\$14,487.98	\$13,460.21	\$10,612.00	\$10,820.75	\$10,623.50	\$14,105.75	\$13,577.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$131,075.99
Expenses	\$21,189.99	\$9,492.60	\$15,061.30	\$6,524.50	\$5,608.24	\$16,480.46	\$8,954.13	\$19,898.26	\$12,658.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$115,868.42
Net	\$5,541.63	\$7,164.33	(\$573.32)	\$6,935.71	\$5,003.76	(\$5,659.71)	\$1,669.37	(\$ 5,792.51)	\$918.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,207.57

## Mutual Responsibilities of Sikhs and the *Panth*

—Paramjit Singh Sachdeva

A Sikh can thrive only as an active member of the Sikh community (*Panth*). Neither an individual Sikh nor his/her *Panth* could do well without the voluntary and active support of Sikhs to their community. However, we sometimes seem to forget that like all relationships that matter, this one too needs constant and careful tending.

The *Panth* has always been important in Sikhism. Five hundred years ago, the first Sikhs of Guru Nanak Dev ji—known as *Nanak Panthis*, or followers of the founder of the new religion—formed the nucleus of the Sikh community at Kartarpur, led by the Guru himself. These Sikhs helped establish the first *dharamshalas* (places of worship, later called *gurdwaras*), participated in daily congregational religious worship, reverently sang verses (hymns) of *Gurbani* in the presence of the Guru, imbibed and collectively followed the teachings of Sikhism (*Sikhi*), and participated in voluntary service (*sewa*) to the community, including at the *langar* (free kitchen) that served all those who came to seek the Guru's blessings.

Nothing much has changed since then. Modern-day Sikhs follow the very same teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji (and his nine successor Gurus) and participate in religious worship in *gurdwaras* in the manner first practiced by the *Nanak Panthis*. In addition of course, following the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh ji in 1708 CE, the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* ji (the Sikh Scripture) is now our sole source of spiritual guidance, while the Sikh *Panth* has authority to guide the worldly affairs of the Sikh community. Members of the *Panth* are expected to exercise this authority in accordance with the *Sikh Rehat Maryada* (SRM; the Code of Sikh Conduct and Conventions) endorsed by the *Panth* at Amritsar in 1945.

Along with this authority of course comes responsibility, both of the community as a whole and of its individual members, the Sikhs. The SRM (see <http://sgpc.net/sikhism/sikh-dharma-manual.asp>) lists these roles and responsibilities in detail. It summarizes them as follows:

“A Sikh’s life has two aspects: individual or personal and corporate or Panthic” (Article II). “A Sikh’s personal life should comprehend (i) meditation on Nam (God) and the scriptures, (ii) leading life according to the Guru’s teachings, and (iii) altruistic voluntary service.” (Article III). [And] “One is more easily and deeply affected by gurbani (the holy bani bequeathed by the Gurus) participating in congregational gatherings. For this reason, it is necessary for a Sikh that he visit the places where the Sikhs congregate for worship and prayer (the gurdwaras), and joining the congregation, and partake of the benefits that the study of the holy scripture bestows.” (Article V).

A Sikh, therefore, is enjoined by our Gurus and the SRM to regularly do *Nam simran* (reverential remembrance of God and meditation), *sewa* (service), *dan* (charity), and *gurbani vichar* (scriptural study). He or she is asked to follow the Gurus’ teachings as enshrined in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and to conduct themselves in accordance with the Sikh Rehat Maryada.

The mutually-beneficial inter-dependence between the Sikhs and their Panth is thus an *essential* ingredient of our religious inheritance and current Sikh beliefs and practice. The *gurdwara sahib* provides the sacred space, but we *ourselves* have to ensure that this place of worship is properly utilized for the high purpose our Gurus and *Panthic maryada* have assigned to it in our lives.

It’s in this context that recent efforts of the SFV community and gurdwara management to intensify the weekly Punjabi- and *kirtan* teaching programs, the annual Sikh youth camp, and the fortnightly *gurbani vichar* program need to be viewed. All these activities meet important needs of the local Sikh community, and are commendable. The more we put into them individually, the more we’ll get out of them collectively.

The symbiotic relationship between the Sikh and the *Panth* is vital to the continued spiritual development. It’s wonderful that we all plan to join hands at our gurdwara through self-less, voluntary, and joint actions for the good of all (*sarbat da bhala*), in accordance with our daily *Ardas* and our Gurus’ teachings.

*Gur Fateh to all!*

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## **Focus on Youth-Centered Initiatives at SFV**

-- *Ajaib Singh, SFV Chairman*

Our Youth is our *Virsa*. Helping them to learn, appreciate and celebrate Sikh Maryada, Sikh way of life, and Gurbani is our sacred duty. This year thanks to untiring efforts of your Sevadar, Surinder Singh Ji Sachdeva, SFV Youth and Education Coordinator, great strides were taken forward to open new venues for our youth to appreciate and love Sikhi.

PUNJABI SCHOOL: In order to help our children learn Punjabi in a more systematic way, new curriculums and new ways to measure progress are being started for kids of different age groups. Thanks to dedication and help from volunteer teachers, our children are learning their mother language with more zeal and enthusiasm. We continue to need teachers for this initiative.

**MOVIE NIGHT:** Movie night has become a new and successful event. Movies like “Sunny the Proud Sikh”(9/22), “Sundri” (8/24), “Taru Singh” (7/20), “Banda Singh” (6/22), and “Sahibzadeh” 12/21, etc. were quite successful in bringing our youth together and to familiarize them to Sikh history in fun way.

**YOUTH CAMP:** A three night and 4 days youth camp (July 5-8), where children learned Gurbani, Kirtan, Sikh History, Sikh Maryada, Learning to tie a turban and keski, and sports like Gatka in a fun-filled time together with friends.

**SIKH HISTORY:** Workshop (Nov. 11) and JEOPARDY(Aug. 11). Both these programs were great teaching tools for our youth. Over 3 dozens of our youth learned Sikh History and got to learn and remember about their Gurus, Gurbani, and history so well in a short time that adult onlookers were pleasantly surprised.

**CARING and SHARING:** 1+1 = 11. This was an interfaith Forum where members of our congregation and visiting guests from other faiths had a dialog about the value and meanings of Seva.

**BOLSTERING SELF RESPECT AND INNER STRENGTH:** SFV celebrated “KAURs” - Shaheed Singhian, and brought a message of “SIKH SPIRIT” to our congregation on December 15. This event was intended to be an educational dialog, especially to inspire and educate the young Sikhs, about Sikh women who made the supreme sacrifices to nurture Sikhi in its infancy. At this occasion, Ms. Balpreet Kaur (from Cincinnati) and her mother Harvinder Kaur were invited to share their thoughts and inspire our youth and rest of our congregation. The value and providence of higher Inner Strength vs. Outer

Appearance of a person became the focus of this evenings dialog. Who else but Ms. Balpreet Kaur, who portrays a living example of the value of inner strength for a Sikh, could have brought this message home so well? It is a real tribute to the Sikh Spirit of “Chardi Kala” with which Balpreet lives her Sikh life, that recently, on December 28, 2012, Balpreet Kaur was selected as Huffington Post Religion’s Person of The Year for 2012.

**HELPING THE NEEDY:** Our youth was mobilized to help others, and in the process they learned the value and great feeling of selfless service. Cases of bottled water were collected at Gurdwara Sahib and delivered to Local Food Bank. 250 food wraps were made and delivered to a Food Bank. School supplies were collected from SFV Sangat and delivered to needy area children through ECHO organization of Springfield, VA. Blankets and warm outer-wear were collected from our congregation by our youth and sent to the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

**For SFV Voice suggestions, comments, participation, article contribution, etc., please contact:**

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