

Spring & Summer Edition (April – September 2013)



Sikh Foundation of Virginia Gurdwara Sahib

- The First Gurdwara in Virginia

- An Editorial Note

Remembrance - the Wisconsin Tragedy

The Sikh Foundation of Virginia (SFV) remembers the anniversary of the tragic shooting on August 5, 2012, at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and condemns hatred and acts of violence towards racial and religious groups. The SFV offers heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who died in the shooting, and commends the heroism of the first responders, and members of the community who courageously and selflessly placed their lives in danger to prevent the death of more innocent people. Above all, the SFV condemns terrorism, violence and hate crimes of any type, and calls for renewed efforts to end such violence.

- Surjeet S. Sidhu

Outgoing Chairman's Message

- Ajaib Singh

SFV in Chardi Kala-

Following change of guard, a new slate of Trustees with a highly capable Chairman, Manjit Singh Taneja Ji, and his cadre of equally capable office bearers are in place and ready with new vigor and renewed spirit of "moving forward together". We have a new Kirtanya in Bhai Satpal Singh Ji, who arrived early in April, and I am confident that he will prove to be an asset for our congregation. Since we do not have a permanent Granthi at this time, Bhai Satpal Singh has been doing Kirtans as well as manage the duties of a granthi. Recently we started Sukhmani Sahib in the afternoon of every Saturday and I am sure this new program as well as Gurbani Vichaar program (already a year old), both will gain increased following as the time progresses.

My personal and sincere thanks go to all the Trustees, Officers and Coordinators who served SFV with me during the past year. They served this organization with *Tan, Man and Dhan* and always looked after the Chardi Kala of SFV and each and every one of them deserves our earnest thanks for their Seva. Our special thanks should go to the Trustees who after years of dedicated Seva are stepping aside this year. These respected sevadars include Paramjit Singh Ji Bedi, Raminder Singh Ji Bindra, Beant Singh Ji Deu, and Surinder Kaur Ji Matharoo. Paramjit Bedi Sahib Ji and Mrs Surinder Kaur Matharoo ji served on the Board for nine continuous years. Thanks guys for your long and highly dedicated services. We hope and pray that your wise counsel, guidance and generous Seva will continue to be available for the Chardi Kala of SFV as it has always been.

I believe SFV is blessed that it has so many Sevadars who have helped SFV rise to a higher plateau. Paramjit Bedi ji always managed to bring well-known Katha Wachaks and top-line famous Kirtan Jathas throughout last year, despite the fact that there is such a shortage of them on the East Coast. I must also mention Deu Sahib Ji, who gathered technology-savvy young folks in our congregation who gave us new video display of daily Hukamnama and special announcements, a new capability to record Kirtans and Kathas, and an untirely new, upgraded and easier to navigate SFV website. I have always said "Our Youth is our Virsa." Thanks to Surinder Pal Singh, our coordinator for Youth and Education, SFV has made meaningful and many-faceted efforts on youth-centered activities to get our youth involved, appreciate and embrace Sikhi. Aside from strengthening SFV Punjabi School, he opened new venues for our youth to learn about Sikh way of life and Sikh history and ethics. Please join me in thanking Surinder Pal Singh and his team of volunteers for the empowerment of and guidance for our youth. There are countless other members of our enlightened Sangat who selflessly offer their time and efforts to do whatever they can do for the good of SFV. Waheguru knows them all and may Waheguru bless them all. Lastly, I sincerely want to thank you, the members of our revered Sangat, who gave me the opportunity and *Sanman* to serve as your chairman the past year.

As I leave the chairmanship, I am confident that with Akaal Purkh's blessings, our new leadership will continue to add new platforms and new venues for SFV to keep us *moving forward together*.

Guru Fateh Ji!

Incoming Chairman's Message

- **Manjit S. Taneja**

I take great pleasure in conveying my heartiest congratulations on the occasion of Vaisakhi 2013. It is with the blessings of the Guru and Sadh Sangat that I have been given this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

My family and I have been affiliated with Washington DC Gurdwaras since early 1970s. I have been personally a part of the SFV Sadh Sangat since its inception. I remember the days when SFV Sadh Sangat used to congregate in the Fairfax County schools and with Waheguru's blessings, progressive SFV management, and Sadh Sangat's help, SFV established the very first Gurdwara in Northern Virginia which has now become a Northern Virginia landmark. As a community we are very proud of what we have achieved with SFV Gurdwara.

Further, with Guru's kirpa, Sikh community continues to grow and flourish resulting into many Gurdwaras in Northern Virginia. It is our prayer the Sikh community continues to flourish and Sava Bhav continues to grow.

Before I list my goals I stated during my introduction speech, I would like to take this as an opportunity to thank the Sadh Sangat for their dedicated services week in and week out. Sadh Sangat Ji, you are the greatest asset of this Gurdwara. Your volunteer work whether it is, Path seva, Langar seva, helping our youth, or any other seva, keeps us going. I would also like to thank the 2012-2013 SFV Board for their passionate dedication to SFV and their selfless seva day in day out. It is their planning and your collaboration that helps SFV meet its goals.

Moving Forward

With Waheguru's Blessings and Sadh Sangat's collaboration and cooperation, Sikh Foundation of Virginia continues to make progress and my utmost goal is to continue on the progress track the previous SFV management teams and Sadh Sangat you all have established.

With this in mind, here is a list of our collective goals.

Kirtans and Katha: We will continue to make special efforts to bring well known Kirtan Jathas and renowned Katha Vachaks to help our congregation get closer to Guru, Gurbani, and Sikh *itehas*. SFV management will provide this information as soon as it becomes available. Please always look into our web site for details.

Youth Involvement: Our Youth is our future. Helping them learn, appreciate, and celebrate Sikh Maryada, Sikh way of life, and Gurbani is our sacred duty. With your support Sadh Sangat jeo, we will collectively continue to engage our youth through our Sunday Morning School, sikhi-related animated movies, SFV web site content, Youth Camps, collaboration with other Gurdwaras, and various social programs and activities.

Young Adults Mentorship Service: Our young adults are at such a juncture where good advice and right direction can make a major difference in their lives. In addition to the guidance they receive at home and school, SFV will start initiatives to mentor and coach our youth in the area of college education, resume preparations, and job finding skills. We will conduct necessary workshops as well as arrange to bring

community leaders to speak with our youth. Sadh Sangat jeo, your help and support will play a prominent role.

Senior Citizens Involvement: SFV desires to provide a platform to our senior citizens. The Board management will be seeking your opinions and collaboration to bring this program to fruition. SFV will make every attempt to have a doctor available periodically to provide consultation to our senior citizens.

More Interaction with Sadh Sangat: We are here because you chose us to be here. With this in mind, we must keep you informed. Going forward, you will be provided information regarding Board of Director's meeting key outcomes, periodic status updates on Gurdwara projects, quarterly report on Gurdwara accounts, etc.

Improve Gurdwara Facilities: SFV facilities must keep up to date with our Gurdwara Sahib and Sadh Sangat's needs. Such projects do require your input, support, and help. It is our Gurdwara and we all have to come together for the needed funding. Our Sadh Sangat has been incredibly generous with their donations and numerous services and with Waheguru's blessings this generous Seva Bhav will continue.

Reach out to those in Need: As a Sikh, it is our duty to reach the needy within SFV community and others around us. We will seek Sadh Sangat's help and reach the Sangat that is in need. Together, we can make a world of difference in their lives as well as in ours.

Community Outreach: SFV will continue to collaborate with other Washington, DC metropolitan Gurdwaras, participate in events to show a spirit of collaboration and unity, as well as spread the word of Sikhi in our Northern Virginia community.

Sadh Sangat, the SFV management is at Gurdwara's service and you and management are one team. Therefore, your collaboration, help, and cooperation play a paramount role in attaining and sustaining the progress.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Public Relations Officer's Corner

- Kanwaljit K. Sachdeva (outgoing)

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.

It takes 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.

Treasurer's Report

- **Treasurer:** Ajaib Singh

Monthly Report 2013

	January	February	March	April	May	June
Income	\$21,410.50	\$7,358.50	\$13,064.45	\$16,838.97	\$13,872.50	\$9,430.00
Expenses	\$11,190.35	\$8,170.36	\$25,658.34	\$11,106.00	\$14,215.33	\$11,327.97

Through efforts of Permvir Singh and other trustees, SFV was able to refinance the outstanding loan at a much more favorable rate that would result in interest savings of approximately \$1,000 per month.

Construction/Maintenance Activities

- **Coordinators:** Amarjit S. Riat and Harpal S. Sembe

- 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.
- The detailed drawings have been submitted to the County of Fairfax for permit. Following responses to County-raised certain issues during processing, the County is expected to issue a final permit by the end of the third quarter of 2013.
- Keeping weather conditions in mind, construction work is expected to begin in the near future. Construction may take about four months for completion.

SFV Board will need full financial support and blessings of the Sangat to complete this complex project.

- Handicap ramp has been reconstructed in accordance with the upgraded county codes. The ramp has been reinforced and constructed of maintenance-free Trex material.
- A window has been added to the back room at the lower level (Ox Road-end of the Langar hall) enabling it to be used for additional accommodation.
- Besides the regular upkeep of the building, all electric work, including lights, in the Langar hall and the Diwan hall have been upgraded. New high efficiency lights, while emitting better daylight, would also reduce utility cost.

Youth & Education Committee

Coordinator – Surinderpal Singh Sachdeva

SFV Youth

Most of us have come from Punjab and most of us would have seen an amazing process, which hardly matters when you think of it. In the potato farming season farmers load up their trolleys with potatoes without any sacks. By the time these fully loaded trolleys reach the market the bumps on the road filter them all and all the bigger ones fall to the bottom where smaller ones come to the top.

Our trolley, fully loaded with bright and enthusiastic youngsters, started moving almost 18 months ago and after several bumps and hitches we have now filtered down a good bunch of 40+ kids, who are committed, who are excited to learn and compete, who are hungry for more and who are just on the right path. In this quarter, which happened to be the busiest period of the year, our youth participated in History Workshop, Sikh History Jeopardy Part I, Youth Gurmat Camp, Food Drive for Homeless, Donation Drive for Homeless Shelter, Picnic and some of them participated in another camp nearby and brought home a bag full of rewards. We can proudly say that we have made a good history base in these kids. We are taking them to the new heights where we can proudly say that these kids have become truly good Gursikhs.

These young members of our community are learning to contribute their time and money to help the ones in need. This idea was reinforced during the camp while focusing on the camp theme, 'Nishkam Seva.' In the guidance of Guru Granth Sahib Ji and given the training tools we hope to see them as future leaders of our community. We hope to see them as social activist taking part in social debates and policy making. We hope to see them succeed in all horizons of life.

Youth and Education activities

1. Sikh Foundation of VA Sangat participated in annual Sikh Day Parade New York on Saturday, April 27th. It was an exciting bus tour, which started at 6 am on Saturday. Around 45 members including 12 children joined the tour.



2. On July 4th in the midst of fire crackers and celebrations Sikh Foundation of VA inaugurated the Annual Youth Gurmat Camp. A total of 41 kids between 7 and 14 took part in this camp.



3. Following the theme of the annual camp 'Nishkam Seva' the youth members of Sikh Foundation of VA arranged a food drive. All the kids joined hands and prepared 'Burritos' for Capital Union Mission, Washington DC, a homeless shelter everyday helping 100+ needy individuals. These wraps were later delivered at their DC location.
4. On Saturday, July 13th, SFV arranged its annual picnic at Burke Lake Park. This event was attended by a large number of Sangat members. There were 30+ kids to enjoy the mini train ride and carousel ride.
5. With Affordable Health Care Act implementation around the corner, on July 21, 2013 the Sikh Foundation of Virginia held a town hall style session where the sangat engaged in nonpartisan dialogue with one another. The session was moderated by Dolly Oberoi, CEO of C² Technologies, Inc. The information conveyed and the thoughts shared from participants resulted in a unanimous sense that as a community we must be educated on how these changes will impact us. Information discussed explained how small business, large businesses, our youth, our elderly, and everyone in between will be effected. While the government is still coming out with information on important areas of inquiry, the dialogue positions our community to make better choices and make efficient use of Navigators and Assistors (who are to be available free of charge to the community) after October 1, 2013. The session served as a preface of what is to come after October 1, 2013 and the ideas and thoughts conveyed encouraged our community to start evaluating our changing health care options.

6. Sikh Foundation of VA with the help of "Kids against Hunger," DC Metro arranged for a local food drive on August 18, 2013. The event was organized by the youth group.



7. Punjabi School: The Sunday Punjabi School at SFV will start new semester on September 15. The endeavor will continue to be implementing new ideas of creative teaching, including a 30 minute Sikh History class added last year. Program including history workshops on important Sikh events, various slideshows, stories and videos that were very well received last year will continue with additional creative supplements.

IT Committee

- IT team with the following members has continued to discharge its duties in an organized manner: Narinder Singh, Chetanpal Singh, Kuldeep Kaur Sidhu, Manjeet Kaur Sandhu, Upkar Kaur Bhatti, Harkirat Singh Sahambi, Manpreet Singh Behniwal, and Surinder Pal Singh Sachdeva.
- The team has continued to perform various functions initiated last year, e.g., the projection of shabads is done on regular basis for the benefit of sangat in general and our youth in particular, daily Vak (Order of the day) is displayed on the TV monitor located in the lobby, SFV website is now more user-friendly and new features have been added, and audio recording of shabads recited during kirtan diwan is done regularly for replaying later.

Medical Corner

Dr. Rishi Bhatnagar, orthopedic surgeon, provides free service to the SFV sangat members first Sunday of every month at the Gurdwara Sahib. SFV management thanks Dr. Bhatnagar for his selfless seva to the community. May Waheguru bless him and his family!

Dr. Bhatnagar has contributed the following article for the benefit of readers of the SFV Voice.

Lumbar Spinal Stenosis:

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Introduction:

Lumbar spinal stenosis is often the result of the normal aging process, which over time causes the soft tissues and bones in the spine to harden or grow excessively. These changes may narrow the spinal canal and put pressure on the spinal cord and/or spinal nerve roots resulting in back and/or leg pain. Although degenerative changes of the spine are seen in up to 95% of people by the age of 50, this condition is seen most often in adults over 60 years of age. Additionally, while pressure on the spinal cord may be equally common in men and women, symptoms that require treatment occur more frequently in women.

A small minority of people develop lumbar spinal stenosis because of back problems they are born with. This is known as congenital spinal stenosis, and it occurs most often in men. Symptoms of congenital spinal stenosis are usually first noticed between age 30 and 50.

Anatomy:

The lumbar spine is the low back, just above the waist line. It normally has 5 segments numbered from L1 to L5. The lumbar spine joins the lower body (pelvis) at the sacrum. The lumbo-sacral joint is called L5-S1. The purpose of the bones of the spine is to protect the nerves and spinal cord. Due to the need for flexibility, joints in front (anterior) and in back of the spinal cord (posterior) are present.

The joints in the front are towards the stomach. They are the intervertebral discs. Intervertebral discs act as shock absorbers. They are composed of two components, with a configuration similar to a jelly-donut. The outer fibrous part is called the annulus fibrosus, while the inner gelatinous part is the nucleus pulposus. Sometimes a part of the nucleus pulposus can push out (or herniated) and compress a nerve, causing pain.

Behind the spinal cord, a set of joints exist that provide stability and further flexibility. They are called the facet joints or the zygoapophyseal joints. Facet joints are very close to the spinal nerves. Once they degenerate, arthritis bone spurs can press on the nerves causing pain.

Arthritic Degeneration of the Spine Causing Lumbar spinal Stenosis:

Arthritis is degeneration of any joint in the body. Degeneration is loss of cartilage, and the body responds by causing inflammation and creating bone spurs to increase the surface area of the joint.

In the spine, arthritis can result as the disc degenerates and loses water content. This phenomenon causes settling of the disc spaces and loss of disc space height (figure). As the spine settles, two things occur. Firstly, load is transferred to the facet joints behind the spinal cord. Secondly, the tunnels that the nerves exit through become smaller (figure of both). As the facet joints experience increased pressure, they begin to degenerate and develop arthritis. Bone spurs form, which may also narrow the space for

the nerves (figure). Additionally, ligaments around the facet joints increase in size (mri figure of stenosis), thereby decreasing the space for the nerves. Once the space has decreased sufficiently, irritation of the nerves occurs resulting in symptoms. Loss of space around the nerves in the spine is termed spinal stenosis

Signs and Symptoms of Lumbar Spinal Stenosis:

Initially, compression of the lumbar spinal nerves can result in pain in the areas that the nerves supply (dermatomal chart). The pain may be described as an ache or a burning feeling. It typically starts in the area of the buttocks and radiates down the leg. As it progresses, it can result in pain in the foot. As compression increases, the burning pain will be associated with numbness and tingling. Not all patients will have both pain and numbness and tingling. The pain down the leg is often termed "sciatica." Once the compression has reached a critical level, weakness can occur in one or both legs. Some patients will have a foot-drop, or the feeling that their foot slaps on the ground while walking.

Anatomic studies of the lumbar spine have shown that leaning forward can actually increase the area available for the nerves. Many patients may note relief when leaning forward. Pain is usually made worse by standing up straight and walking. Some patients will note that they can ride the stationary bike or walk leaning on a shopping cart, but otherwise cannot walk more the 1-2 blocks before the sciatica becomes too severe.

Diagnosis:

Lumbar spinal stenosis may be diagnosed by history and physical examination. Your physician will start by ordering x-rays of the lumbar spine (figure). X-rays only show the bones, but not the nerves or ligaments. On the x-ray, loss of height of the disc spaces or bone spurs will be noted. Instability of the joints in the spine will be diagnosed by having you lean forward and backwards during the x-ray. After your doctor reviews the x-rays, he may order a magnetic resonance image (MRI) scan of your back. This will show the nerves and spinal cord.

Non-operative Treatment:

Non operative treatment of spinal stenosis focuses on restoring function and minimizing pain. Many patients will note improvement in symptoms with physical therapy that includes stretching exercises, massage, and abdominal musculature strengthening. Additionally, lumbar traction may be helpful in some patients.

In addition, the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medications may improve symptoms. Examples of NSAIDS include ibuprophen and naproxen. Initially, these medications relieve pain, but when used over the course of 5-10 days, they have an anti-inflammatory effect. Because pain in generated by a decrease in space around the nerves, the decrease in inflammation (swelling) around the nerve can be very effective in relieving pain due to lumbar spinal stenosis. Medications must be used carefully because they can be associated with gastritis or stomach ulcers. If you develop acid reflux or stomach pains while taking an anti-inflammatory, be sure to consult with your doctor.

Symptoms of Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

- Burning pain in buttocks or legs (sciatica)
- Numbness and tingling in buttocks or legs
- Worse pain with walking upright
- Improved pain with leaning forward
- May or May not have back pain

In addition to medication, use of cortisone (a potent anti-inflammatory) injections can be very helpful. Cortisone injection can decrease the inflammation around the spinal nerves as well as pain. It is not recommended to receive these, however, more than 3 times per year.

Operative Treatment:

Operative treatment of lumbar spinal stenosis is generally reserved for patients who have poor quality of life due to pain and weakness. Patients may complain of inability to walk more than 1-2 blocks, a foot drop, and numbness and tingling.

Treatment can include removal of the bone and bone spurs that compress the nerves. This procedure is called a "decompression" or a "laminectomy". Both open and minimally invasive options exist. If the spinal arthritis has progressed to result in instability (spondylolisthesis image), decompression and fusion may be recommended. In this procedure, two or more vertebrae are permanently fused together, using a bone graft harvested from the hip. By fusing the spine, motion between vertebrae is eliminated, thus preventing the slippage or curvature of the spine from worsening after surgery, which would cause more back and/or leg pain. The surgeon may use screws and rods to hold the spine in place while the bones fuse together. The use of rods and screws makes the fusion of the bones happen faster and speeds postoperative rehabilitation. Both options can result in excellent pain relief. Be sure to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both with your doctor.

Post-Operative Rehabilitation

After surgery, patients may be hospitalized for several days, depending on the patient and the procedure performed. Generally healthy patients who undergo only decompression may be discharged from the hospital the same or next day, and may return to normal activities after only a few weeks. If a fusion is performed, this adds 2-3 days to the hospital stay and recovery. Postoperatively, most receive a lumbar corset or brace for comfort, and often undergo an outpatient physical therapy program. Usually, within 3-4 weeks after surgery, patients can go back to a desk job. They may return to normal activities after 2 to 3 months. Older patients who need more physical therapy may be transferred from the hospital to a rehabilitation facility.

Physical therapy will include both passive and active treatments. Passive treatments, such as deep tissue massage, ultrasound, hot and cold therapies, help relax the body. These treatments also prepare your body for therapeutic exercise, which is the active part of physical therapy. In the active part of physical therapy, your physical therapist may show you exercises to help you build and maintain strength, endurance, and flexibility for spinal stability. Some of these exercises will help strengthen your abdominal muscles, since they help support your back. Your physical therapist will create an individualized program, taking into consideration your health and history.

Risks

There are minor risks associated with every surgical procedure. These include bleeding, infection, blood clots, and reaction to anesthesia, although usually these risks are on the order of 1% or less. Additionally, there are some risks inherent to spinal stenosis surgery, such as tear of the sac covering the nerves (dural tear), failure of the bone fusion to heal, failure of screws or rods, and injury to the nerves. Patients may also need further surgery or have return of symptoms after some time. Elderly patients have higher rates of complications from surgery. So do overweight patients, diabetics, smokers, and patients with multiple medical problems.

What to Expect

Overall, the results of spinal fusion are good to excellent in approximately 80% of patients. Patients tend to see more improvement of leg pain than back pain. Most patients are able to resume a normal lifestyle after a period of recovery from surgery.

Research/New Forms of Treatment

Techniques are currently being developed to manage the symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis with a minimal invasive technique. Using fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance and a surgical endoscope, a mini-incision laminectomy is being formed. Additionally, interspinous process devices, such as the X-Stop (St. Francis Medical, San Francisco) are being investigated as an alternative to the traditional laminectomy surgery.

Surgeons are also using manufactured bone-forming proteins to fuse the spine. These proteins avoid the pain of harvesting bone from the patient's hip. Despite ongoing research, the use of bone-forming proteins in the back of the spine for first-time surgeries is currently considered experimental and has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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

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