KOA HISTORY

KOA OVER THE YEARS

VERSION 2.0

A KASHMIRI OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION (KOA) DOCUMENT

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Image Courtesy: Chander M. Bhat (Nagbal, Anantnag)
The KOA organization has its origins in the early meetings of several Kashmiri Pandit families in the Washington D.C. and Maryland areas. These families soon came to realize the importance of building a community structure which could include other families too in a bond for mutual preservation and growth. As more families and members joined the founding group, the organization evolved to become a national outfit with regional chapters, documented bye-laws, systems and procedures as well as a non-profit status to better seek donations and pursue community actions.

This is our second step of the process to document and detail the history and origins of KOA. At the present time, this document is a simple chronological representation from materials available in various KOA publications, and information provided by several ex-presidents. The document has made an attempt to trace the past 40+ years and list important milestones that have brought the organization to the present point.

In case you have documents and materials that you would like to share so that these are made part of a wide KOA collage, and recorded KOA history, please email us at management@koausa.org
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1.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

KOA is grateful to the following volunteers:

- Sh. Arun Koul of MA for compiling information in a PowerPoint presentation:
  - Kashmiri Overseas Association – Recordings of our US based KP community from 1976 (Download)
- Dr. Anupam Wali and Mrs. Neelam Wali who have lovingly and with a lot of care preserved newsletters, pictures and materials right from 1978 onwards.
- To Sh. JB Kaul, Sh. Ashok Raina, Sh. Lalit Wanchoo, Sh. Sanjay Kaul, Sh. Pradumon Tickoo, and Dr. Surinder Kaul for providing the material for various activities during their respective tenure(s).
2.0 PREVIOUS KOA ADMINISTRATIONS

| Year   | President                  | Vice-President             | Secretary               | Treasurer               | Directors               | Newsletter Editor     |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------|                        |                        |                        |                        |
| 1982-83| Surinder Nath, MD          | Mohini Kaushik, MD         | Dr. G.L. Hanjura, PA   | Mohini Kaushik, MD     | Inder K. Bhat, VA      |                        |
|        | Mohini Kaushik, MD         |                            |                         |                         |                         |                        |
|        | Dr. G.L. Hanjura, PA       |                            |                         |                         |                         |                        |
| 1983-84| H.K. Ticku, NJ             |                            |                         | Shana Mattoo, MD        | Anupam Wali, MD         |                        |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | PA                      |                        |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         |                         | Shiban K. Warikoo, PA  |
| 1985-86| Jag Bhushan Kaul, MI       | Omkar Nath Pandit, WV      | Inder K. Bhat, VA      | Kamini Bhat, VA         | Rattan L. Khosa, IL    | Autar K. Mattoo, MD    |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Rakesh Raina, MD        |                        |
| 1986-87| Jag Bhushan Kaul, MI       | Inder K. Bhat, VA          | Chaman Bhan, PA         | Kamini Bhat, VA         | Jeevan Zutshi, CA      | Summan Hukku, MI      |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Bansi Pandit, IL        |                        |
| 1987-88| Shiban K. Warikoo, PA      | Ashok Ganju, MI            | Kanhya Lal Kaul, MI    | Kamini Bhat, VA         | Jeevan Zutshi, CA      | Summan Hukku, MI      |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Jag Bhushan Kaul, MI    |                        |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Chaman Bhan, PA         |                        |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Ashok Raina, MD         | Kanhya Lal Kaul, MI   |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Kanhya Lal Kaul, MI     |                         |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Shiban K Warikoo, PA    |                         |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Ashok Raina, MD         |                         |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Shiban K Warikoo, PA    |                         |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Anita Ambardar- Parmar, IL|
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Ramesh Qusba, MD       |
|        |                            |                            |                         |                         | Suresh Raina, NJ       |

Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.
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## KOA HISTORY

### KOA OVER THE YEARS

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## KOA History

### KOA Over The Years

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**Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.**
**KOA HISTORY**

**KOA OVER THE YEARS**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Co-Founder(s)</th>
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<td>Inderjit Kaul, MA</td>
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<td>Ajay Tikoo, MI</td>
<td>Dr. Nirmala Mitra, NY</td>
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</table>

Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.
## KOA HISTORY

### KOA OVER THE YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
<th>Directors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Paviter Handoo, CA</td>
<td>Ashish Kak, MD</td>
<td>Naveen Zalpuri, CA</td>
<td>Monica Aima Salman, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Paviter Handoo, CA</td>
<td>Ashish Kak, MD</td>
<td>Naveen Zalpuri, CA</td>
<td>Kavita Sazawal, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Dr. Surinder Kaul, TX</td>
<td>Sanjay Dhar, CA</td>
<td>Ajay Tikoo, NJ</td>
<td>Rajeev Kaul, NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Dr. Surinder Kaul, TX</td>
<td>Rajni Kaul, NJ</td>
<td>Ajay Tikoo, NJ</td>
<td>Rajeev Kaul, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Sunil Fotedar, TX</td>
<td>Sudesh Saraf, IL</td>
<td>Rajesh Kachru, MD</td>
<td>Rajeev Kaul, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Sunil Fotedar, TX</td>
<td>Sudesh Saraf, IL</td>
<td>Ajay Tikoo, NJ</td>
<td>Rajeev Kaul, NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 ORGANIZATION SUMMARY

- **Year Setup**: 1983
- **Democratic** Constitution and Bye-Laws with elected office bearers
- **No. of families** = 1500
- **No. of Zones** = 10. **Chapters** to provide comprehensive local coverage
- **Festivals Celebrated**: Shivratri-Navreh, Diwali, Picnic, Balidan Diwas (Martyr’s day) Optional: Hawan, Zang Trei, Gada Batta, New Year
- **Camp Events**: Annual Camp once a year 500 plus people with about 75 Youth. Regional Camps: Texas Biradri Camp 20-25 families, Chicago Camp: 15-20 families: Washington State Camp – 5-10 families: Northern California 15-25 families, Southern California 15-25 families
- **Special Events**: Cultural Programs for visiting artists. In the last 4 years Neerja Pandit, Kailash Mehra, Bhajan Sopori, Asha Kaul
- **Visiting Cultural Activists**: Virendra Qazi Shaivism, Agnishekhar, R.K. Mattoo (Karnataka Samiti Bangalore), B.K Moza (Calcutta Samiti), Krishna Bhan of Europe, Moti Kaul of PK
- **Book Releases**: Poozai Posh, Destruction and Injustice (Book on the trials and tribulations of Kashmiri Pandits)
- **Music**: Poozai Posh Vol.1, Vol.2 , Maani Kamna
- **Kashmiri Institute for youth**, Washington D.C, Boston, Chicago, LA (4 years from beg 2001)
- **Essay competition for Kids** since 2003
- **Language and Cultural Schools for children** in Boston, Bay Area and Irvine
- **Scholarships** for KP Children (Last year)
- **Visiting Leaders**: Sh. L.K. Advani, Gov. S.K. Sinha, Mr. J.N. Dixit
- **Coordinate** with Indian organizations in US
- **Presentations** to New Hampshire Senators and Congressmen
- **Screenings** of Sheen
- **Seminars** at NJ, Camps in CT and PA, DC
- **Presentations** on Kashmir
- **Udhampur School**: Rs, 2 lacs per year
- **Sponsor a child**: 250 kids at present (1000 sponsored)
- **Education Fund**: 17+ 200 at this time. Since 95 (1000 of which more than 350 have graduated)
- **Sanitary Projects** in Camps
- **Vocational Training programs** in camps (Sewing...Computer..)
- **Ambulance** for camps
KOA HISTORY

KOA OVER THE YEARS

- **Medical Fund**: 100s supported, 40 people in 2004
- **Francois Gautier**: Rs. 2 lacs for the FACT mission
- **Gujarat Earthquake**: $10000
- **Temple reconstruction**
- **Sein Kashmir** cultural show in Jammu with Krishan Langoo
- **Harmukh**, Seminar for all KP organization heads
- **Board Exam fee paid** for 50 kids, school fee 50 kids (orphans...)
- **Muthi aqua guard** at Rs.25k to save children from jaundice
- **Wedding assistance**
- **Social condition** support to 4 people, 4 this year
- **Women support** to 2 families, 1 in Jammu
- **"Back to Zone Funds"** - 20% of Membership fee from the previous year given back to zones to cover for the expenses for their local functions
- **Pilot Project for Milk Supply** for KP Refugee Children in refugee camps at Jammu
- **Code of Conduct resolution passed for**
  - Board Members' phone-meeting once every two months
  - Board Members' face-to-face meeting once every year
  - Steps to take if Board Members were threatened
- **Salary raises** for Sharda Peeth Rishi Model school staff
- **KOA Achievements awards** given to US-based college-bound and meritorious students
- Wrote the **first draft of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**
- New projects launched:
  - **Transition Made Easy**: Created a “welcome package” – a booklet to make transition to USA easy for all those who travel to US
  - **Kashmiri Welfare Initiative (KWI)**: The philanthropic aim of this program was to promote the development and well-being of Kashmiri children and families:
    - Family Assistance: Ten Families
    - Vocational Training / Education:
      - Women’s Craft Center
      - Computer Training at NIIT
      - Educational Coaching
  - **Three (3) Youth Directors inducted in the board** - Meghana Dhar, Varun Razdan and Sreyashe Dhar.
  - **Sharda Samman bestowed on KOA** by Panun Kashmir at the 3rd World Kashmiri Conference. Their announcement was made in 2008.
  - **Aman Kachroo’s Fund established**, and Ravi Tikoo ji appointed as its program director.
  - **Kashmir Heritage program launched**, and Vijay Dhar appointed the program director.
Religious Awareness program launched, and appointed Prof. Omanand Koul as its program director.

Compartmentalized KOA into sub units for higher deliverability – KOA Healthcare, KOA Entrepreneur, KOA Nextgen for youth, KOA India outreach, etc.

Collaboration with KMECT to avoid redundancy.

Collaboration with AIKS in India.

Successfully organized a US Book Tour of Rahul Pandita to create awareness about this exiled community in USA.

New program Transformations launched in 2016.

Created several social media platforms in 2016 for US-based programs, such as healthcare, Youth Initiative, Entrepreneurship to name a few.

Life membership package approved in 2015, and the package sent to 260 life members, past and present.

Number of life members in 2016 was at a record high – 74, and 100 total in the years 2015 and 2016 combined!

Formed KOA Appreciation Societies to recognize the donors for their generous support of our mission and programs.

To enhance KOA Membership experience, KOA initiated the following projects for the dues-paying members:

- Published second edition of Poozai Posh Bhajan Book
- Festivals of Kashmiri Pandits written by Sh. Omanand Koul
- Writeups, audio and video clips on KP heritage


KOA Youth Fund launched in 2016 for money to be raised exclusively for the youth activities.

Various publications launched:

- KOA At A Glance
- KOA History
- KOA Programs & Projects
- KOA Accounts Management
- KOA Achievement Award
- KOA Oversight for India-bound Programs
- KOA EAP
- KOA SAC
- KOA Medical Fund
- KOA India Outreach
- KOA Flood Relief
- KOA Membership Drive
- KOA Youth Initiative
- KOA Healthcare Network
- KOA Entrepreneurship
- KOA Transformations
- Poozai Posh – Version 2
- KP Festivals
- KOA IT project
KOA HISTORY

KOA OVER THE YEARS

- KOA Website Requirements
- SOP document
- KOA Directory
- Contest for Youth Talent and Kids Arts held in 2016.
4.0 YEARS 1976-79

Kashmiri Get-togethers were organized every year from 1976

- It all started with meetings at Pradman and Ratna Qasba’s house – Mohini Kaushik and Surendar Nath’s house.
- Kashmir Bhavan of Kashmiri Samiti sought donations for 2nd floor in 1978
- Newsletter was started in Early 1979

4.1 December 1979

- Meeting of executive committee was held at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Inder K. Bhat, Baltimore on October 27. The following topics were discussed; "(1) The venue for the Shivratri celebration. (2) Completion of the new directory. (3) Formation of the regional chapters of the association be established to make the association more effective and to provide means of better communication and understanding at regional and eventually at national and international levels. Members of the community are therefore advised and encouraged to take an active part in the formation of local chapters of the association in the various regions of this country and abroad."
5.0 YEAR 1980

5.1 March 1980
All India Kashmiri Samaj was formed at Allahabad under the leadership of Justice P.N. Bakshi. (AIKS sought the affiliation of KOA)

5.2 June 1980
- A picnic was held at Neerwood Lake, Washington, D.C on Memorial day week end by the members of the Association, organized by Mrs. Qasba.
  "About 30 members attended the picnic. It was great fun and I am sure everybody present enjoyed it. Thanks to Mrs. Qasba who took pains to organize the whole thing by herself."

5.3 September 1980
- Justice Janki Nath Bhat’s visit.
  "Justice Janki Nath Bhat while visiting the country said, "I feel happy to pen down a few lines for the News Letter started by our young men living abroad as a medium of social and collective life and possibly collective planning. .....Independence of India has been a boon for all Indians but it has proved a blessing in disguise for our people, because having been wisely and steadily squeezed out of our beautiful state by the secular popular government thereof, the young men of the community have made a mark in scientific and intellectual fields in the whole world and thus proved their worth and saved themselves from ignominy, frustration, dejection and pessimism consequent upon unemployment and political victimization.......I would appeal to them to devise ways and means of having more social contacts gatherings and within permissible distances celebrate some important functions and festivals collectively to keep track of all our people whether in India or abroad; set up some media of expressing their matters and problems, keep abreast of the events happening in their motherland and try to help less affluent and fortunate young men. “

(ASIDE)
"With this issue it will be the 6th issue of the News Letter in your hands since it was started one and a half years ago. While I am immensely pleased to see the improvement that we have made since the first issue, it is very discouraging and disheartening to see a cold response and lack of enthusiasm on the part of our members. Except for Miss Neelam Khushu who has done a beautiful work of designing, art work and printing of the News Letters and Mrs. Ratna Qasba who has been doing the work of dispatching, I ........must say that the response from the members has been absolutely none.” Editor Dr. I.K. Bhat

"There are about 200 Kashmiri families in the United States. Out of these one third do not want to have any concern with the other members of the community......The other one third probably do not want to get involved with anything but however do send their dues just as a formality and do not want to do anything more than that. The remaining third however seems to be more eager and enthusiastic to have an association and more and more cultural functions and get-togethers and are really interested in doing something worthwhile for the community.” Dr. I.K. Bhat

"In the last issue of the News Letter we had mentioned about the celebration of a picnic at Neerwood lake in which about 30 members of the association had participated. Following that we received some letters indicating that only a few members were taking advantage of the association funds. The Association wants to make it clear that at no time since the Association has been formed have its funds been utilized for these social and cultural purposes......They have all been managed by private contributions....“
6th issue of the News Letter since it was started one and a half years ago. Editor Dr. I.K. Bhat’s concern

An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri” (Part I) and a Glossary (Part II) by Brij Bihari Kachru of Urbana, Illinois

5.4 December 1980

Scholarship announced Rs. 150 p/m by Dr. Mohini Kaushik. (Donor culture set in early)

Annual Dues Received were $983.40 in 1980-81
6.0 YEAR 1981

6.1 March 1981

• Editor Dr. I.K. Bhat’s note on News Letter entering its third year of publication

"With this issue the News Letter has entered its third year of publication. The mere fact that we have come along this far explains our determination to continue our efforts to keep the flame of the Association glowing......To all those who have helped me in this endeavour during these two years I am ever grateful.” Editor Dr. I.K. Bhat

• Shivratri Function at the home of Ratna & Dr. Girdhari Lal Hanjura of Reading PA on 7th March 1981 had 40 families and 110 – 120 people present. Many people drove 7-8 hours to attend the function. This was till then the largest gathering of KPs in one place.

• Secretary Dr. Inder Bhat's proposal

Dr. Inder Bhat as Secretary proposed that the Association do more than create meeting points for its members. (Aside; At the meeting it was raised that some people may have a vested interest in starting such an association but the concerns were duly and respectfully answered)

• President of the time: Dr. Mohini Kaushik

• Pran and Raj Tiku also volunteer to contribute Rs. 150 per month to meet educational expenses of needy and deserving Kashmiri student. (Educational assistance has remained the key form of support besides medical and other emergency help)

• Autar Mattoo’s NAVREH Greetings (We continue to celebrate the Shivratri/ Navreh festivals in each Zone/ Chapter)

"This is the time for me to wish all our community members a happy and healthy NAVREH. I suggest that we Kashmiris should exchange greetings with all our fellow Kashmiri friends and relatives all over the world on this New year day of ours to maintain our Kashmiri culture.”

Autar Mattoo MD.

6.2 September 1981

• Dr. Shiban Warikoo of PA elected President

"I am well aware of the fact that geographic location of all of us will be somewhat of a hindrance in making it a success. Therefore it is all the more essential to keep publishing the KOA News Letter. This news letter will be a link amongst us keeping us informed of what is going on in this society. That brings me to the concept of regional chapters. It is essential that we try to form regional chapters in metropolitan areas to which members from surrounding areas could gravitate.......Highlight of the year will of course be our annual Shivratri get together. ......In the coming year we plan to go ahead with getting our Association registered. ....After we have gained foothold and enough funds we aim to secure non profit status from the IRS for which we will require legal help.......Let us help these needy families on one on one basis. Even a little bit of help that is 10 or 20 dollars a month will go a long way in fulfilling their immediate needs.....At a later date our Association can take over this function when we are organized enough to do that..... At the end I would like to remind all of you that it is your own Association and not of some vested group in northeast corner of USA.........Please encourage your children to write...

• The new Directory of the Association presented (Connects national and international members with each other)
“The new Directory of the Association members is here and it is being sent to you along with this issue.”
7.0 YEAR 1982

7.1 April 1982

- Editorial responsibility changed hands and the Newsletter office has actually moved, from Virginia to Maryland!

   "This new year the KOA Newsletter enters another chapter, that from foundation to consolidation. Not only has the editorial responsibility changed hands, the Newsletter office has actually moved, from Virginia to Maryland! We owe the present status and growth of this publication to conscientious, strenuous and single handed efforts of the former editor, Dr. Inder K. Bhat......."

- Legal papers for registering the KOA as a non-profit Organization have finally been filed, due to personal efforts of Ratna Qasba

   In that hope, a campaign for raising funds for KOA has been made, initially by selecting a voluntary Committee comprising of Priti Khoshoo, NJ (Coordinator.....) Arun Dhar, PA; Yog Ganju, NY; Bansi Pandit, ILL; and Anupam Wali, MD. Suggestions are welcome for this fund-raising drive."

- Voluntary Committee selected to campaign for raising funds for KOA

- Shivratri was celebrated in New Jersey on the night of February 27, 1982 at the residence of Nancy and Roop K. Wakhlu

   "Members came from Connecticut, New York, Washington D.C, Maryland and Pennsylvania. The ceremony started with a Puja. A story about Shivratri was recited to the children........After a hearty dinner, a General Body meeting was held.......An idea to hold such largely attended functions, in future in a public place was floated. Mr. Arun Dhar of Philadelphia, PA has kindly agreed to make such an arrangement for a Summer Meet."

- Dr. Chand K. Bhan, Ware, MA gives kudos to Mr. B.L. Bhat for his forthright article (Honestly Speaking", see December 1981 KOA Newsletter, ed).

   Dr. Chand K. Bhan, Ware, MA: "Kudos to Mr. B.L. Bhat for his forthright article (Honestly Speaking, see December 1981 KOA Newsletter, ed). I think he gave a solid representation of our actions, behavior and other traits. We must forget our deeper, personal problems and develop newer, brighter outlook to life. Let us wave off our insecurity and jealousy, become more integrated and less showy, and emulate good features of American attitudes. We need to form a joint front and KOA offers such a forum. Let us show our concern by strengthening our Association through our active participation."
8.0 YEAR 1983

8.1 June 1983

- Kashmiri Overseas Association has finally been incorporated in Maryland
  
  The preparation of legal papers for tax exempt status required the formulation of new Articles and By-Laws as the KOA constitution.

- At the general body meeting held during the Shivratri celebration on March 5, 1983, in Maryland, details of the Articles and By-Laws were distributed.

- Five Board Members of KOA were elected, viz. Drs. I.K. Bhat, VA, A. Dhar, PA, G.L. Hanjura, PA, P.K. Qasba, MD, and S.K. Warikoo, MD

- Remarks of Chaman Lal Tiku, Srinagar, Kashmir
  "I got a chance to go through the KOA Newsletter............Only issuance of a Newsletter is not enough, unless everybody takes a lively interest in the future of its community and their successors. I think that after the Overseas Association becomes strong and organized it can be instrumental in bringing cohesion amongst the Kashmiri society, which has disintegrated because of various factors. Whenever Kashmiris had to face onslaughts, the rejuvenating and restoring force came from outside. When Pathans annihilated the Kashmiri culture Shri Birdar had to seek outside help and when our immediate neighbor sent Kabalis who brutally massacred people India came as a savior. Since our society has become cankerous because of its socio-economic and geo-political problems and their dispersion has become inevitable, it is some of our own society members from the outside who can become the fore-runners of a New Revival.
  
  We have not to accept our cultural heritage blindly. We have to change with the times and after logical and reasonable discussions evolve a new code that grants: needed vigor, and a cementing force, free from the evil traditions and practices. Our community should be like a wet nurse that can nurture its members and not only be a source of protection for the living but a consolidated Community that leaves behind a positive philosophy and culture for the future generations to inherit."
9.0 YEARS 1984-85

- **First KOA Summer Camp, July 4-7, 1984 at Lackawana State Park, Pennsylvania.**

- Excerpt from Martand in KOA Newsletter, August 1984
  "The attempted arson at Drabiyar and Kathlishwar temples on the Jhelum bank in the heart of the city on the night between August 23 and 24, 1984, follows almost immediately the release of the Press statement, detailing such happenings during the past three months, by All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference.

  The unfortunate happening is sufficient proof, if any needed at all, that a sinister design is on to harass the minority community in Kashmir out of its wits on the one hand...........It seems the miscreants aided by antisocial, anti-national and secessionist forces and others working against the established order are ganging up and have chosen to make the minority community their target of attack.......If the miscreants succeed in creating a scare resulting in migrations, the phenomenon may have wider ramifications. ...."

9.1 March 1985

- Membership earnings from March 1984 to Feb 1985 $2086.03

9.2 April 1985

- An era is ending and a new one, hopefully more inspiring and revitalizing one, is entering for the KOA and its official organ, the KOA Newsletter.

  "Well the time to say good bye and thank you is here. Another era is ending and a new one, hopefully more inspiring and revitalizing one, is entering for the KOA and its official organ, the KOA Newsletter. The Newsletter idea originated in Maryland, in the shape and form that Inder K. Bhat gave it and who continued with it for several years, as a yeoman’s service to KOA. Last few years we have done all that we possibly could to carry on the torch that Inder Bhat lighted. We nurtured it, improved it in our own way and attempted to make the KOA Newsletter more international. We have enjoyed every minute of it. We now pass on the torch to Michigan where Suman Hukku, the new editor resides and who will provide the new nucleus for the Newsletter............."

- Presentation of plaques to Pradman and Ratna Qasba, and Surender and Mohini Nath Kaushak, both families of Maryland, for their meritorious and honorary services rendered towards establishing and incorporating the Kashmiri Overseas Association.

  "One of the attractive events was the presentation of plaques to Pradman and Ratna Qasba, and Surender and Mohini Nath Kaushak, both families of Maryland, for their meritorious and honorary services rendered towards establishing and incorporating the Kashmiri Overseas Association."

- Observations on latest happenings in Kashmir by visiting from India, Mr. Janki Nath Bhat

  Visiting from India, Mr. Janki Nath Bhat; " It was a chance meeting that I had one evening last month with about 20 Kashmiri Pandit families in Washington D.C.........After I was introduced to the guests I had known some of them in my New Yearly days-they wanted to know all about the latest happenings in Kashmir. Some of them had received disturbing letters of the August incidents when some of the KP homes in Srinagar had been stoned and were anxious to know about the welfare of the community members in Kashmir. Having been a witness to these happenings myself and having expressed myself strongly against the break down of law and order in Kashmir I was able to brief them suitably and at the same time allay their fears. There was a general discussion on the future of this community especially the opportunities or
lack of these for young educated KPs who are getting frustrated because of the discrimination suffered by them in jobs, admission to professional colleges and grant of licenses for new business. Some of the friends present who had been away from home for many years and understandably worried about the patent injustice done to the community by the successive Governments in power in Kashmir came out, if I may say so, with American remedies to the situation......”

• Second KOA Summer Camp July 4-7, 1985 at Brookhill Park, Wellsburg, West Virginia
KOA HISTORY
KOA OVER THE YEARS

10.0 YEAR 1986

10.1 January 1986

- Miltsar is born: KOA Newsletter has a name and what an appropriate name too MILTSAR...

   "Now that you have tasted our first cup of Kahwa it is time to get to business at hand. Congratulations; Our KOA Newsletter has a name and what an appropriate name too! MILTSAR...."

- All Board Members must make an effort to set up KOA Chapters in various states. .....Several changes in by laws are needed in order to make mail ballot a success. Mr. Pandit was requested to prepare the instrument with appropriate language for the review by general membership. These changes will be implemented after General Body Meeting in March 1986..........

- Next KOA meeting to be held at San Francisco, CA during the last week of March 1986.

   "All Board Members must make an effort to set up KOA Chapters in various states. .....Several changes in by laws are needed in order to make mail ballot a success. Mr. Pandit was requested to prepare the instrument with appropriate language for the review by general membership. These changes will be implemented after General Body Meeting in March 1986.........Before adjournment, it was decided to have the next KOA meeting at San Francisco, CA during the last week of March 1986."

Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.
11.0 YEAR 1990

11.1 July 25, 1990

- Tragedy in Kashmir. Community gets into overdrive
- Adopt a Family (Sponsor a Child), Adopt a Student programs (Education Fund) launched by KOA. President Sh. Kanhya L. Kaul commits financial and other support to India based community organizations.
- Martyrs Families Recognition and Clothing Collection Drive
- A thought for a Kashmiri Pandit.
- Kanhya L. Kaul informs of List #1 of Biradari

"We have published a list of Biradari donors in the enclosed issue of KOA update. It is our List #1. Many more people have sent in their donations since this list was compiled. Then there are those who have sent their donation the second time. Some members are sending smaller checks but on an on-going basis. More lists have to follow. Therefore, we shall compile a cumulative and complete list of all Biradari Donations received as of August 31 (Cut off date) and publish the same in the forthcoming issue of Miltsar.”

- Pandit Mohan Lal Kaul, Teacher, Harwan writes:

"As a teacher I have been teaching the students of various classes. I lost my identity while teaching and I had become a part of the students. There was not a single house in Illaqua Phag, Srinagar where I did not force the students to move forward for a better future. My students gave me a lot of love for which I shall remain thankful throughout my life.

With this thing in view I and my family members did not migrate. On May 26 at about midnight, there was a knock at our door. We opened the window and came to know that there were two young men with weapons.

They swore in the name of God and Prophet that we will not be touched. We opened the door and after many questions and answers, we thought ourselves to be safe. They also told us to leave for Jammu for some time. On their way out, they rewarded me for my dedication and unselfish work of life with a bullet!

Now I am helplessly struggling with my wound and fractured leg. Where are my students who are in thousands? Where are the people whom I loved? My eyes are full of tears when I think what I have done and what I got. The young men also swore that I was not a C.I.D. Then, why they shot at me? I want an answer."

"Young Muslim boys move about in the streets of Srinagar where Hindus live, hanging empty tin containers around their necks. They beat these as drums whenever they see a Kashmiri Hindu moving about. Wonder why they do it?"

- Ashok Raina, Washington D.C gives update of rally in Washington, D.C to create an awareness about Kashmiri Hindus’ cause, the other side of the Kashmir problem.

“A rally of about 1300 people was held on Thursday, June 21 in Washington, D.C to create an awareness about Kashmiri Hindus’ cause, the other side of the Kashmir problem. The rally was organized by people of Indian origin under the auspices of People for United India, with support from 25 other organizations. There was a strong showing of Kashmiri Pandits from metropolitan Washington area (over 70%) inspite of it being a working day. Most of the participants came from New York, New Jersey area.”

- Kanhya Lal Kaul urges members to participate in the political process and correspond with their representatives on issues which concern them.
"The KOA being a tax exempt charitable organization does not directly participate in political lobbying. However, members as citizens have a right and a duty to participate in the political process and correspond with their representatives on issues which concern them. KOA supports educational activities and dissemination of information among the US citizens and residents on any issue that concerns the Community."

11.2 November 1990

- Site Visit by Dr. Shiban K. Warikoo

"As we know, there has been mass exodus of KPs from Kashmir valley during the past ten months. ....KPs have come out, settled in Jammu, Delhi and other cities. Majority of them especially those from Srinagar city are staying with relatives or in rented rooms in Jammu and Delhi. Remaining ones, mostly from villages are staying in camps, commonly called "Migrant Camps." They have been deliberately designated as "migrants by the State Government. The conditions in the camps varies. Some are almost half decent but the living conditions in most of them are deplorable. There are tents in Nagrota, Udhampur, Talab Tiloo (Jammu) and Houz Rani in Delhi to name a few. One can easily imagine the plight of these people in summer heat and in biting cold of incoming winter. Morale of the people, naturally is at its lowest as the future looks bleak to them."

- K.L. Kaul motivates us to get along with each other

"Let us get along with each other and the best way to do so is to go along at times. All of us are capable of having excellent ideas, but not all of them can be put to practice at the same time. Being such a small community, it is so easy for us to find common friends and relations in our contacts with each other.

That leads to both a quick recovery of mutual short comings and faults, and also spontaneous warmth and mutual respect. To emphasize and manifest the latter in our dealings with each other is being a true KP. Let us be positive and practice it, and spread a little more LOL amongst us."

"The KOA came into being essentially to help KPs in US to stay in touch with each other and to provide a no-host environment for socializing as KPs.......Our roots were safe and well preserved by our people in the Valley for us to run to. We had no fear of extinction. However, the situation has drastically changed now, and if allowed to prevail, it is fraught with great danger to our survival as KPs not only in North America but in India as well.

- Pat Fotedar on Clothing Drive

"I am happy to report to you that as a result of your efforts and cooperation we were able to ship 235 boxes of clothing weighing a total of 3000 kg....is now in the hands of Kashmiri Samiti. They plan to distribute the clothes in refugee camps in Jammu just as soon as possible....This clothing drive was a tremendous undertaking and could not have been successful without the help of.....Neelam Wali of MA, Vijaya Chowdury of California....., Ramesh Qasba..., Hiralal Nakhasi and Lalit Wanchoo..., Bal and Sarita Kaul.....all Chapter Presidents.....National Federation of Indo-American Association....Mr. Janaki Ganju...Mr. A.K. Fotedar and Mr. C.L. Gadoo in India....KOA President Mr. K.L. Kaul... Air India... all of you who donated...."
12.0 YEAR 1992

- More than $100,000 raised and sent to displaced community members in India.
- Programs like Sponsor a Child, Education Fund gain strength
- Clothing drive is hugely successful
- Organized campaign to champion KP rights is launched

The sad and unfortunate events of 1992 brought the entire community together like never before. From providing immediate succor to the internally displaced families to launching a grassroots campaign for championing KP rights, the KOA member community answered the diverse needs of the times.
13.0 YEARS 1993-94

- Purchase of Medical Van for refugees in Jammu ($18000) and was handed over to Panun Kashmir Foundation.
- By-laws were revised to accommodate the entire US-based community by creating 10 zones.
- First KOA Calendar was created and mailed to all dues-paying members.
14.0 YEARS 1995-1996

- Arrangements were made with Delhi Samiti so that KOA members could receive ‘Koshur Samachar’ at a subsidized rate.
- Supported milk for babies program through Panun Kashmir Foundation in Jammu.
- Persuasion of US-based community physicians to visit camps twice a week using the medical van purchased with KOA funds.
- Published KOA Directory with input from international organizations and funding for the directory were primarily raised from Citi Bank. These directories were mailed to Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia.
- New Jantri (by Jotshi Prem Nath) were mailed directly to all dues-paid members of KOA from Jammu on the Navreh.
- Adopted Educational Assistance program lead by Dr Tej Nath Kaul.
- Provided sewing machines to women who joined the cloth stitching training program at refugee camps in Jammu.
- President and Secretary attended Northern California (Zone 9) and Southern California (Zone 10) community functions.
- Revised the KOA by-laws that were approved by the general body. The revisions included change in the requirement for the President’s position that deleted the requirement of having served as one of the directors of the organization.
15.0 YEARS 1997-2000

- Initiated effort to coordinate activities with KP organizations in Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. Established links with KP communities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

- Published KOA Calendar of 12 pictures of temples in Kashmir with coordination with KP organizations in Canada and United Kingdom. Calendars were mailed to all the members in USA irrespective of their membership status and to Canada and UK. Funds were raised from the community members and organizations owned by community members by sponsoring a page of the calendar.

- Held two town hall meetings to reach out to membership and gather community input. One was held in New Jersey and other in San Jose, CA. Each meeting was attended by over 50 people and summaries were published in the KOA newsletter KPI International.

- KOA camps were held with numbers ranging from 300 to 500 people attending. From KOA Camp of 2000, initiated advanced payment for the people attending the camp and over 450 people attended that camp. In KOA camp held at Hershey in 1999, Congressman Frank Pallone joined the Haven and was gifted with a three volumes of Spoken Kashmiri by Brij Kachru and a khos.

- Printed a bhajan book, “Poozai Poshe” that included popular Kashmiri bhajans and leelas that was distributed free to dues paying members of the organization. The bhajans were written in Devnagri and Roman fonts. Total of 1000 copies were printed in India and funding for this project came from a single donor, Dr Lokesh and Malini Bazaz of VA.

- Adopted Support a Child Program lead by Sh. Pran Kaul of CA that supported children under 18 years of age living in the refugee camps in Jammu. During these four years, the number of children supported under this program ranged from 250 to 300 per year with a support of $225 per year.

- Supported Educational Assistance program lead by Dr Tej Nath Kaul of NY that supported refugee’s college going children with an assistance of $350 to $500 per student per year. The number of students supported under this program was over 250 per year.

- Raised $5000 to support Jawans of Kargil War that was delivered to Indian Prime Minister’s Relief Fund, Government of India.

- Co-sponsored refugee’s studies undertaken by the community students in USA. These students went to Delhi and Jammu to cover refugees’ life their problems related to health and education.

- Sponsored operational costs of Rishi Memorial School in Udhampur, Jammu on quarter basis after receiving financial statements. School progressed from tens of students to hundreds of students and was accredited as a high school.

- Sponsored construction of 32 bathrooms in the refugee camps in Jammu with Young’s India. All bathrooms were completed as per schedule and one of the KOA’s director visited Jammu and verified such construction. KOA paid one third of the total cost of the construction and rest of the cost came from UNICEF and the camp residents.
KOA HISTORY

KOA OVER THE YEARS

- Sponsored a fund raising activity for orphans in collaboration with Young's India. Monies raised were paid to an orphanage.

- KOA sponsored the production of audio cassettes of Kashmiri songs with Arti Tiku titled as ‘Maani Kamna’. One thousand copies of the tape were produced in India and 400 copies were sold in India while as 600 copies were sold in England and USA. Monies raised from the sale of these tapes were used for the Educational Assistance and Support a Child programs. This project was fully supported by a single donor, Sh. Suresh and Bhavna Kilam, of Singapore.

- Met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderforth, Congressman Frank Pallone, Indian Ambassador Naresh Chandra, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, and USAID India Programs Coordinator to discuss the plight of Kashmir Pandit refugees in India.

- Organized a meeting of all the KP social organizations world-wide in New Delhi with the help of Sh. C.L. Gadoo, President Kashmiri Samiti Delhi. Meeting was held at Kashmiri Samiti, New Delhi Office that was attended by representatives of KP organizations located in India and also from UK, Canada, and USA. During this full day meeting needs of the Kashmir Pandit community in exile were discussed to aid in developing programs to meet such needs.

- Established two KOA internet websites to provide details of the organization and KP socio-cultural and religious information. Also established e-group kpnet to facilitate discussion and communication within the community. These services were provided with the resources support of Dr. Ashok Kaul of PA.

- Sponsored KP Martyr’s Day across all the Zones by pledging $250 per Zone per year. Various Zone held this day by feeding homeless people at various shelters.

- Started providing KOA Souvenirs to the camp participants from 1997 at the East Coast Camp, West Coast Camp, and Camp held in TX.

- Started a program of recognizing community members for their contributions as a volunteer for the organization in the field of culture, social, and religious awareness.

- KOA received $10,000 donations from National Federation of Indian Association President Subash Razdan of GA and sponsored 20 students for Education Assistance Program.

- KOA Received $14,000 donations from Sh. Rattan Lal Khosa of Khosa Foundation for supporting more than 25 students under Education Assistance Program.
16.0 YEARS 2001-2004

- **Youth Representation on KOA Board**: Initiated representation of KP youth on KOA board. Two slots were created for youth representation. Eric (Jaani) Kaul and Dhiraj Bakaya represented youth voice on the KOA board.

- **Non-Voting Positions on KOA Board**: Following non-voting positions were created on the board to make KOA more vibrant & responsive.
  - Cultural Secretary: Arti Kaul of MA served in this capacity
  - Media/Out-reach Secretary: Vijay Parimoo of NY served in this capacity
  - KOA Official Spokes Person: Arun Koul of MA served in this capacity
  - Past President: For sake of continuity, the immediate past president of KOA was invited to attend meetings. Lalit Wanchoo of MD served in this capacity.

- **Welcome Packages**: Initiated to put together a Welcome Package for new immigrants and also put together a welcome package for newly elected board officials defining their role and to bring them up to speed on Boards workings. New Member form and membership renewal/update forums were also updated to better serve our members. Membership structure was examined and suggested changes were incorporated. KOA’s Sponsorship of events was examined and a criterion was developed as a uniform code of conduct.

- **Account Audit & Tax Filing**: Accounts were audited annually. Tax filing was brought up-to-date and filed on regular basis and on time. All KOA programs in place were run on basis of "Zero Overhead" meaning all funds raised were spent on the purpose it was given for.

- **KOA Logo & Copyright**: KOA’s current logo was developed in 2001 and was copyrighted in 2002.

- **Meeting Dignitaries**: In order to keep Indian & US leadership informed about the plight of Kashmiri Hindus, KOA delegations met with L.K. Advani (Indian Home Minister) Jan 13, 2002; US Congressman James P McGovern Sept 28, 2002; S.K. Sinha (Governor J&K) May 16, 2003; and with the Internal security Advisor J.N. Dixit in the government of Manmohan Singh in 2004. Also, made presentations to New Hampshire Senators and Congressmen.

- **Special Recognition to KOA**: The Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee at a public meeting organized by the office of Ambassador-at-large for NRI’s on September 21, 2003 at Jacob Jahvist Convention Center, NY recognized KOA. Twenty such organizations from North America were recognized for their contribution to
KOA HISTORY

KOA OVER THE YEARS

promote India and Indo-American interests in culture, philanthropic and other spheres.

• **Screening of Movie Sheen**: Took permission from the movie producer & director Ashok Pandit to show his movie “Sheen” & “The world remained Silent.” The programs were held in Atlanta (Dijjotam Raina) and Los Angeles Area (Jyoti Razdan) to showcase the plight of Kashmiri Hindus and raise funds for KOA programs.

• **KOA Websites**: KOA already had two websites; efforts were put in place to update these websites and to create new dynamic user-friendly and interactive websites. Encouraged and promoted use of “Matrimonial Pages” on our website to benefit our members.

• **E-Forums**: E-groups for Zones: An e-group was created for each of the ten KOA zones. These e-groups were unmoderated for open communication at the zonal level. The coordination of the group was left to the local zonal representative. Additionally, KOAUSA e-group was created for communication from the KOA executive to members.

• **Youth E-group**: A communication channel for KP youth managed and coordinated by the youth only.

• **Newsletters**: Newsletters were published on regular basis (once every three months) and mailed to all members with Shri G.N Raina as chief editor and Deepak Ganju of FL as the publisher.

• **Magazine**: A magazine “Kasheer” was started in 2003 on bi-annual basis with Maharaj Kaul of NY as the chief editor and Deepak Ganju of FL as the publisher. Inaugural issue was launched in 2003 with all articles from our members. This magazine reflected the aspirations of KP’s all over the world to preserve & promote their culture & heritage.

• **KOA Koshur Calendar**: Produced annually the KOA Calendar was produced in coordination with KP organizations in Canada and United Kingdom. Calendars were mailed to all members in USA irrespective of their membership status and to Canada and UK, Funds were raised from the community members and organizations owned by community members by sponsoring a page of the calendar.

• **KOA Directory**: Published KOA directory in 2002 and 2004 with information/representation from most countries with KP associations outside of India.
It was a coordinated effort. These directories were mailed to all our members in the USA and also shared with KP associations in Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia.

- **Book Launch**: In 2003, KOA launched a book titled, "Destruction & Injustice" a story of Kashmir problem describing the tribulations of Kashmiri Pandits. The book was sent to all Congressmen & Senator’s in the USA and also given to Indian political leaders and government officials. The book was also made available to our members in the USA, Canada & U.K.

- **Exhibit on KP Genocide**: In 2003, KOA supported production of an exhibit on KP genocide. KOA raised funds to support Francisco Gautier to put together an exhibit, “Terrorism Unleashed”. It presented the story of KP Exodus.

- **New Year & Diwali Cards**: Beginning 2002 Diwali & New Year’s cards were produced and mailed to all members. These cards were developed by children from refugee camps in Jammu. These cards were used to promote membership & fundraising for KOA.

- **KP Retirement Colony**: An initiative to develop a Kashmiri colony, “Little Kashmir” in the North Port Area, FL was initiated by KOA and all the logistics support was provided by Ravi Munshi of FL.

- **Observing KP Martyr’s Day**: Since 2001, KOA promoted and started observing September 14 as KP Martyr’s Day. Hawan’s were performed by various chapters, non-perishable goods were donated to homeless or temples and by observing silence in the memory of our martyr’s and by wearing black ribbons on that day.

- **Youth Language & Culture Camp**: First ever youth culture/language camp was held in 2001 at American University, Washington D.C. area. It was a 10 day camp organized by Komal Bazaz & Sonal Bakaya. With the support of the local community, Professor Kachru of IL and Professor Ashok Koul of RI thirty four KP youth benefited from this camp. This tradition was continued and in 2002 it was held in DC area organized by Sumi Nakhasi & Preeti Wali. In 2003 the youth camps were held in Providence RI (Jaani Kaul organizer) and Los Angeles, CA (Seema Mattoo organizer) respectively. And in 2004 it was held in Chicago, IL (Neena Sapru Organizer).

- **Sunday Schools for KP Youth**: Sunday schools was initiated in Boston, MA and supported in Bay area, CA.
• **Scholarship for College bound KP Youth**: In the USA: In 2002, KOA adopted to incorporate onetime achievement award for KP college bound youth living in the USA. A committee was established with Professor H.L. Koul of MI as its coordinator.

• **KOA Scholar Program**: Initiated writing contests for three youth divisions- Junior (under 14); Senior (under 19) and Young Adult (under 30). A committee was put in place with youth representation to coordinate this program. Awards were given to participants.

• **Coordinating KP YOUTH visits to India**: Supported & coordinated the efforts of our youth who showed interest in refugee’s studies. These students went to Jammu KP refugee camps to cover refugees’ life their problems related to health and education.

• **KP Youth Group**: An initiative of KOA to unite KP Youth was launched in 2002 to promote social interaction and open lines of communication among our youth. KP youth e-form was a result of this initiative.

• **Coordination with Worldwide KP Organizations**: Initiated effort to coordinate activities with KP organizations in India (all states) Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. A list of KP organizations worldwide was put together to build contacts in an attempt to forge partnerships in serving KP community and preserving & promoting its culture v& heritage.

• **Symposium on Kashmir**: Held one in 2001 in NJ where all KP members and Non-Kashmiris were invited. The aim of the symposium was to educate participants about the plight of Kashmiri Hindus as a result of forced exodus from Kashmir. The other one was held in 2004 in Boston, MA where Dr. Subramanian Swami was the chief guest. Also, a seminar was organized in Jammu University in 2003 which was attended by the Governor, DIG police and other dignitaries.

• **KOA Regional & Annual Camps**: Regional camps were promoted & supported in TX, CA, IL and KOA annual camp was held on regular basis on July 4th weekend (2001 -> Hersey, PA, 2002 -> Modus, CT, 2003 -> Modus, CT, 2004 -> PA) with 350 to 450 people attending.

• **Inviting Artists from India**: With Board’s concurrence, initiated to bring artists, social activists, organization heads etc., to the USA. In 2001 invited Virender Quazi (Shaivism) who toured 7 cities in the US; 2002 invited Nirja Pandit (Singer) who toured 8 US cities & Canada; 2003 Kailash Mehra (singer) who toured 13 US cities; 2004 invited Krishna Bhan (president KP Association UK). Bhajan Sopori & Abhay
Sopori (Santoor Maestros) who were touring the USA on their own also performed for KOA membership in various places. Organized programs for KP Sabha Bangalore President (Ramesh Mattoo & his associate Ashok Mattoo) who toured the USA to fundraise for the construction of Kashmir Bhawan at Bangalore.

- **Production of Bhajan CD’s:** KOA sponsored the production of CD’s of Kashmiri bhajans with Kailash Mehra. Five hundred copies of the CD titled as ‘Poozai Posh Volume 1’ were produced in 2003 which were distributed among members in Canada, England and USA. In 2004, in collaboration with Kailash Mehra, produced “Poozai Posh Volume 2 and again distributed it among members.

- **Funds to Zones:** Funds from central KOA body to all zones was established in 2002. Funds were given for local activities as a percentage of annual membership coming from the zone. Monies were provided to support local chapter activities. This tradition continues.

- **Membership Survey:** A survey of KOA membership was conducted to improve services and to meet the expectations of our members. Findings from the survey were incorporated.

- **Support-a-Child Program** led by Pran Kaul of CA: Continued support to refugee children under 18 years of age living in the refugee camps in Jammu. During these four years number of children supported under this program ranged from 250 to 300 per year with a support of $250 per year.

- **Educational Assistance Program** lead by Dr Tej Nath Kaul of NY: Continued support to refugee’s college age children with an assistance of $350 to $500 per student per year. Number of students supported under this program over 250 per year.

- **Effort to Develop Alumni Database for the Beneficiaries of KOA’s Education Fund:** An effort was put in place to develop a directory of all those students who graduated with a professional degree utilizing KOA funds. The idea was to keep them connected with the program so that they could mentor others and also contribute towards the program.

- **Brochures:** Put together Program brochure for S-A-C & EF programs to be used as marketing materials for fundraising.

- **Rishi School in Udhampur:** Supported operational costs of Rishi School in Udhampur, Jammu. Supported their efforts to grow into a high school.
• **Medical Fund**: Was established in 2002 with Maharaj Kaul of NY as its coordinator. In the very first year $7,300 were distributed to the needy in India.

• **Help to Needy**: A fund was established to help the families of victims of accidental deaths etc. in India.

• **Fundraising for Natural Calamities**: Funds were raised from time to time to help the victims of natural calamities in India. For the Gujrat earthquake $8900 was raised and sent through CARE International.

• **Assistance with Board Exams**: A fund was created to help the children of needy families who were not covered through our S-A-C program. Through this fund we paid for their board exams.

• **Liaison Office in Jammu & Delhi**: KOA opened a liaison office in Jammu & New Delhi to help coordinate our programs with Jammu Sabha & KSD & AIKS.

• **Fundraising to help the victims of Nadimarg Massacre**: Funds were raided for the resulting refugees who were settled in Jammu camps and these funds were utilized for their initial set-up.

• **Muthi Aqua Guard**: An Aqua guard was provided to a school to provide drinking water to children from Muthi camp at Rs.25k to save children from jaundice

• **Wedding Assistance**: Funds were raised from membership to provide assistance to KP families to marry their daughters as their income fell below poverty line.

• **Social Condition**: Funds were raised to support certain families and individuals who had no other support from their families and were in a miserable condition.

• **Support to Women**: Support some community women as their families were undergoing tough times.

• **Organized Meeting of KP Organizations**: Organized a meeting of all KP social organizations world-wide in Jammu with the help of Jammu Sabha & our liaison officer Vivek Raina. Meeting was held at Kashmir Tourism Conference Center, Jammu and attended by representatives of KP organizations located in India. During this full
day meeting needs of Kashmir Pandit community in exile were discussed to aid in developing programs to meet such needs.

- **Sein Kasheer**: A cultural program was organized in Jammu to showcase the plight of KP living in refugee camps. The Governor of J&K State Sh S.K. Sinha and the Deputy Chief Minister Mr. Dogra were the chief guests. This program was produced under the patronage of Music composer Shri Krishan Langoo.

- **Preserving Kashmiri Music & Heritage**: A program was approved by the board to preserve the history of Kashmiri Hindu Music which has its roots in Vedas. Sh Bhajan Sopory was assigned to develop literature and produce music by training talented community children and utilizing their talents for producing a CD.
17.0 YEARS 2005-2006

Coming soon.
18.0 YEARS 2007-2008

- "Back to Zone Funds" - 20% of Membership fee from the previous year given back to zones to cover for the expenses for their local functions
- Letter of Support to World Brahman Foundation (WBF) Convention
- Pilot Project for Milk Supply for KP Refugee Children in refugee camps at Jammu
- Code of Conduct resolution passed for
  - Board Members' phone-meeting once every two months
  - Board Members' face-to-face meeting once every year
  - Steps to take if Board Members were threatened
- Transferring unspent funds from one account head to another, only after due permission from the donors
- Continuation of India-based programs Support a Child (SAC), Educational Assistance Program (EAP), Medical Fund, Sharda Peeth Rishi Model School at Udhampur
- Salary raises for Sharda Peeth Rishi Model school staff
- KOA Achievements awards given to US-based college-bound and meritorious students
- KOA Calendars for each year
- KOA Directory
- Appointed new BLRC team with Sh. JB Kaul as its chairperson, to work on modifications of the KOA Bylaws
- Wrote the first draft of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
- New projects launched:
  - **Transition Made Easy**: Created a “welcome package” – a booklet to make transition to USA easy for all those who travel to US
  - **Kashmiri Welfare Initiative (KWI)**: The philanthropic aim of this program was to promote the development and well-being of Kashmiri children and families:
    - Family Assistance: Ten Families
    - Vocational Training / Education:
      - Women’s Craft Center
      - Computer Training at NIIT
      - Educational Coaching
  - Conducted two separate East Coast camps:
    - Held fund-raising events to raise funds for KOA programs
    - Invited artistes from India like Pandit Bhajan Sopori, Sh. Abhay Sopori, and Smt. Neerja Pandit
19.0 YEARS 2009-2010

- Three (3) Youth Directors inducted in the board - Meghana Dhar, Varun Razdan and Sreyashe Dhar.
- 410 people attended the East coast camp and $50,000 raised for various programs.
- KOA organized West Cost Camp started for the first time on Labor day which was organized at Mt. Shasta, CA and attended by over 200 people and $20,000 raised for various KOA programs.
- New Youth Singer Deepali Wattal invited to perform at both the camps.
- KOA was awarded Sharda Samman by Panun Kashmir at the 3rd World Kashmiri Conference. Their announcement was made in 2008.
- Membership increased with over 15 life members added.
- Renewed the membership with AIKS.
- Represented KOA in the World KP conference held in New Delhi.
- Aman Kachroo’s Fund established, and Ravi Tikoo ji appointed as its program director.
- Kashmir Heritage program launched, and Vijay Dhar appointed the program director.
- Association with APMCC lead by Vinod Pandit established. Vijay Dhar visited various Kashmiri heritage site under this program. Praduman Tickoo visited various Temple sites in Kashmir and donated money to KP families living in Kashmir.
- Religious Awareness program launched, and appointed Prof. Omanand Koul as its program director.
- Worked on Project for updating the By Laws – Great work by Sh. JB Kaul Ji and the team.
20.0 YEARS 2011-2012

Coming soon.
21.0 YEARS 2013-2014

- Most challenging time in the history of KOA to build trust between KOA and its members.
- Cohesive KOA Board and Executive embarked on the mission and successfully restored trust.
- Highest level of transparency – Board meetings opened to members, all financial transactions after KOA Board’s approval, President waived his spending power.
- Compartmentalized KOA into sub units for higher deliverability – KOA Healthcare, KOA Entrepreneur, KOA Nextgen for youth, KOA India outreach, etc.
- Collaboration with KMECT to avoid redundancy.
- Collaboration with AIKS in India.
- KOA was the front runner organization with AIKS to initiate massive humanitarian outreach as flood relief to its community members in Srinagar in 2014.
- Involved non-Kashmiri Pundit organizations for fundraising for community benefits.
- Set pace for increased KOA regular and life membership.
- Successfully organized a US Book Tour of Rahul Pandita to create awareness about this exiled community in USA.
- Successfully organized KOA camps both in East Coast and West Coast.
- Held regular KOA Board meetings on a monthly basis without a break.
- Held General Body Meetings at regular intervals as per KOA Bylaws.
- Distributed English janthri and KOA Directory to KOA members a part of membership benefit.
22.0 YEARS 2015-2016

- "Back to Zone Funds" approved again - 20% of Membership fee from the previous year given back to zones to cover for the expenses for their local functions

- **Continuation of India-based programs** Support a Child (SAC), Educational Assistance Program (EAP), Medical Fund (in coordination with KMECT team in India), Help to the Needy (Wedding assistance)

- **KOA Achievements awards** given to US-based college-bound and meritorious students
- KOA Calendars for each year (with English Jantri and Kreel patch)
- KOA Directory
- Conducted an election to get modifications to the KOA Bylaws (work done during 2013-2014) approved - the general body did not approve the changes.
- New program approved:
  - **Transformation**: An existing program, now managed by KOA, the purpose of which is to integrate community through common celebrations of at least one of the many festivals that Kashmiris across Kashmir celebrated together, and also to impart the knowledge about our Dharma traditions and rituals.
  - Celebrated 1000 year anniversary of Abhnavagupta and performed the Jyeshtha Ashtami Havan. There was a special lecture/workshop by the world renowned **Prof. Navjivan Rastogi**, Former Professor & Head of the Department of Sanskrit, and Hony. Director, Abhinavagupta Institute of Aesthetics & Śaiva Philosophy, Lucknow University.

- Conducted two separate East Coast camps and two separate West Coast camps:
  - Held fund-raising events to raise funds for KOA programs
  - Invited artiste from India, Smt. Kailash Mehra Sadhu, who gave concerts at the two camps in 2016, and all the zones.
  - Attendance at the East Coast camp (575) in 2016 broke all previous attendance records.

- Created several social media platforms:
  - YAHOOGROUP: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/koahealthcare/info
  - TWITTER: http://twitter.com/KOAorg
  - YOUTUBE: http://www.youtube.com/user/sathyuk
  - FACEBOOK PAGES:
    - KOA: http://www.facebook.com/groups/koausa
    - Youth: https://www.facebook.com/groups/koayouth
    - Healthcare Network: https://www.facebook.com/groups/koahealthcare
    - Entrepreneurs: https://www.facebook.com/groups/koaentrepreneurs
  - LINKEDIN FOCUS GROUPS:
    - KOA Healthcare Partners Focus Group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8559527
    - KOA Technology Focus Group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8559541
    - KOA Entrepreneur Focus Group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8559545
KOA HISTORY

KOA Over The Years

- Established platform for the following functional programs:
  - **KOA Healthcare Network**
    - Created a database of community healthcare professionals in USA that would render second opinion to community members using such platforms as yahoogroups, facebook group and whatsapp.
    - Identified key projects that could benefit our community and KOA in long run.
  - **KOA Youth Initiative**
    - Established KOA Youth chapter in each zone with its zonal representative
    - Conducted such activities as:
      - Invited to board meetings to convey youth perspective to the directors
      - **Live streaming** of Koshur language and culture classes from Zone 4 and Zone 7
      - **Kath-e-Baath**: Showcase youth talent, ideas and discussion
      - **Sharadapeeth**: Discover history, heritage, values, culture and religion of Kashmir through lectures by experts
      - **Kaar-Baar**: This mentorship program aims to create a impactful professional relationship between KPs. Mentors established in their field of work (law, business, medicine, engineering, IT, teaching, etc.) will provide academic advice, job recommendations and opportunities, and tips to KP youth via a YouTube livestream. A panel of KP youth members will then do an interactive Q&A with the mentor. This mentorship program creates an impactful professional relationship between KPs. Mentors established in their field of work (law, business, medicine, engineering, IT, teaching, etc.) provide academic advice, job recommendations/opportunities, and tips to KP youth via a YouTube livestream. A panel of KP youth members do an interactive Q&A with the mentor.
  - **Life membership package approved** - benefits to dues-paying yearly members (family, senior, single) and the following benefits to LIFE members:
    - A membership certificate,
    - A laminated membership card,
    - A 15% discount on all KOA-related activities, and
    - a token of appreciation
  - Membership and revenue generated increased double-fold
  - Number of life members in 2016 was at a record high – 71, and 97 total in the years 2015 and 2016 combined.
  - **Formed KOA Appreciation Societies** to recognize the donors for their generous support of our mission and programs.
  - **To enhance KOA Membership experience**, KOA initiated the following projects for the dues-paying members:
    - Published second edition of *Poozai Posh* Bhajan Book
    - *Festivals of Kashmiri Pandits* written by Sh. Omanand Koul
o Writeups, audio and video clips on KP heritage on a 8GB Flash Drive

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Document, version 2 unanimously approved** by the board
- **KOA Youth Fund launched** for money to be raised exclusively for the youth activities
- **Contest for Youth Talent and Kids Arts held.**
- **Various publications launched:**
  - KOA At A Glance
  - KOA History
  - KOA Programs & Projects
  - KOA Accounts Management
  - KOA Achievement Award
  - KOA Oversight for India-bound Programs
  - KOA EAP
  - KOA SAC
  - KOA Medical Fund
  - KOA India Outreach
  - KOA Flood Relief
  - KOA Membership Drive
  - KOA Youth Initiative
  - KOA Healthcare Network
  - KOA Entrepreneurship
  - KOA Transformations
  - Poozai Posh – Version 2
  - KP Festivals
  - KOA IT project
  - KOA Website Requirements
  - SOP document
  - KOA Directory
KOA HISTORY
KOA Over The Years

23.0 KOA Executive Committee and Board (Year 2016)

23.1 Executive Committee

PRESIDENT
Sunil Fotedar
Texas

VICE PRESIDENT
Sudesh Saraf
Illinois

SECRETARY
Ajay Tikoo
New Jersey

TREASURER
Rajeev Kaul
New York

23.2 Board of Directors

Anil Mattoo
Zone 1 Director

Sudesh Kaul
Zone 2 Director

Nirja Sadhu
Zone 3 Director

Shakun Malik
Zone 4 Director

Randhir Wokhl
Zone 5 Director

Suresh Sus
Zone 6 Director

Sudesh Saraf
Zone 7 Director

Veena Kaul
Zone 8 Director

Maneesha Munshi
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Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), Inc.

Promote, Preserve and Protect Kashmiri Pandit Ethnic & Socio-Cultural Hertiage

www.koausa.org

A 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt socio-cultural organization registered in Maryland, USA

Mission

The KOA’s mission is to promote Kashmir Pandit ethnic and socio-cultural heritage (language, history, art, etc), celebrate religious festivals of importance to Kashmiri Pandits; provide financial assistance to needy and deserving individuals, educational institutions, places of worship and shrines, both in the US and in India; preserve historical monuments and sites of religious and cultural significance in Kashmir, India; and provide assistance to displaced Kashmiri Pandits.

Vision

The KOA shall serve as the premier Kashmiri Pandit institution with a fundamental purpose that lies in promoting Kashmiri Pandit heritage and its way of living, Kashmiri Brahmanism and its philosophies; and be a center of social learning that caters to the spiritual, cultural, physical, humanitarian and educational needs of the community.

Appeal for Donations

KOA runs a number of programs whose purpose is to protect, preserve, and promote Kashmiri ethnic and socio-cultural heritage, to promote and celebrate festivals, and to provide financial assistance to the needy and deserving. Your contribution in US dollars is tax-deductible. Please donate generously and make KOA a stronger organization. Visit www.koausa.org