

The Halifax (NS) based Maritime Sikh Society Elects Women's Committee for Gurdwara

Regular contributor & brilliant scholar, Sr. Jagpal Singh Tiwana reports: At its annual General Body meeting The Maritime Sikh Society, Halifax, Canada elected all women office bearers to run the Gurdwara for the year 2010.

This is not the first time that a woman has been elected President of this Gurdwara. In 1993, when Mrs. Gurdip Kaur Toor was elected President for the first time, all other office bearers were women. In 1994 Mrs. Surjit Kaur Sidhu and in 1998, Mrs. Gurinder Kaur Dhillon were the Presidents.

In fact the year 2009 was all devoted to recognize and promote women's seva to Guru Ghar. When the 2009 executive was elected, we made it a point to take oath of office from a woman..

Only women were honored at the end of this year. Mrs. Kuldip Kaur Chehil, Mrs. Satpal Kaur Sodhi and late Mrs. Gurdip Kaur Toor (represented by her husband) were presented Siropas- robes of honor by a senior and well respected lady, Mrs. Pritam Kaur. It was in recognition of their meritorious service to the Maritime Sikh Society since the society was founded forty years back.

We also gave two awards to young girls for rendering valuable service to the society. Miss Sonia Singh got the 'Bhai Ghanayya', ie, 'Sevadar of the year' award while the 'Best Speech in Punjabi' award went to miss Sargam Paul.

We associate women in all activities of the society. Besides preparing *Guru Ka Langar*, they mostly lead the *Sangat* in reciting *Ardas*. Mini *ardas* before putting *Babaji* to rest is always done by a woman. On *Akhand paths*, mostly women take turns in reading the whole of Guru Granth Sahib, especially *Nauven Mohulle de Silok*. Majority of the devotees who sing *shabad* are women and young girls. This year on *Baisakhi day* in April, Mrs. Amandeep Kaur was the only guest speaker and she did an excellent job in covering the significance of the birth of *Khasla* in 1699. She read her scholarly paper in chaste Punjabi. Only girls are taking music lessons from renowned musician Pandit Vijay.

Maritime Sikh Society is a progressive society where turbaned and non-turbaned Sikhs work in harmony. Though according to the constitution only Sikhs can become its members, we encourage Hindus who are devotees of Guru Ghar to become members and they are even invited to serve on the executive. From its very beginning there has never been a contest in the election to the new executive; it is always chosen unanimously. The Gurdwara library is pretty up-to-date containing works of both the Sikh and Western authors. We don't have a paid Granthi; all the work is done by volunteers.

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S. Sant Singh Chatwal's visit to Faridkot

It was an emotional home-coming for S. Sant Singh Chatwal to his *alma mater* when he was honore as one its most distinguished alumni by Khalsa High School, Faridkot. He visited the city after 40 years. The society heaped praises on its former student who, after completion of his studies, first joined as pilot in Indian Navy, and then migrated to Ethiopia, before shifting to Montreal (Canada), and eventually to New York, where he started a chain

of restaurants and hotels. He is much respected NRI who assisted, behind scenes, in clearance of Indo-US Nuclear deal between India's PM and President Obama.

In response to the affectionate welcome S. Sant Singh Chatwal went down the memory lane, terming his school days as one of the best years of his life. He said education obtained in Khalsa High School "played major part in whatever I achieved in life." He spoke about his roots in Faridkot - observing: one should dream high and work hard to succeed in life; this was the *mantra* of his success. He talked about girls education and women's empowerment in this relatively backward area of Malwa, and promised the society for helping the girl education by providing hostel accommodation.

Other illustrious Alumni who attended the function were: S. Raminder Singh, IAS Labour Commission, Chandigarh (Punjab), S. Jasbir Singh Selhi from England, S. Paramjeet Singh Selhi from Holland and S. Kushaldeep Singh Dhillon ex-MLA, and many prominent doctors. S. Raminder Singh, recalled his early days and promised to help the society, which also boasts of distinguished alumni such as Sh. Mandeep Bhandari, IAS (J&K), S. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, (Commissioner Rural and Panchayati Raj, Chennai), Sh. Varun Rooram, IAS, DC, Muktsar.

S. Sant Singh Chatwal laid the foundation stone of Post graduate hostel in the memory of his father Late S. Makhan Singh and Smt. Pardama Kaur laid the foundation stone in the memory of late Smt. Sita Kaur Girls Hostel.

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UK judge knighted

Justice Mota Singh, who is the UK's first Sikh judge, has been knighted by the British Queen. The London-based Judge, who is also a Queen's Counsel, has been knighted in the Queen's New Year Honours List for "services to the Administration of Justice, Community Relations and to the Voluntary Sector.

The Sikh Review offers its collective felicitations to Justice Mota Singh Ji on this distinction.

- Ed. SR

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The Year that was! One who drove the message home!

The 'shoe of protest' hit India was among global phenomena that arrived in India last year. An unassuming reporter who covered the defence beat, Jarnail Singh, 36, threw himself into the limelight last April after tossing his Reebok shoe at Home Minister, P. Chidambaram. Singh, a reporter with *Dainik Jagran*, was protesting the CBI's clean chit to Jagdish Tytler in the 1984 anti-sikh riots. His shoe missed its target, and he was fired from his job three months after the incident.

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Dr. Manmohan Singh is 'Chic Sikh' of 2009



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has been named the '**Chic Sikh**' of 2009 by popular online Sikh magazine **sikhchic.com**

Two others sharing the honour are: the Delhi lawyer, Harvinder Singh Phoolka, who has crusaded for the rights of the 1984 anti-Sikh riot victims, and former I.A.S., Saran Singh, editor of "**The Sikh Review**". "The three were selected after a two-month write-in by sikhchic's worldwide readership," sikhchic.com editor T. Sher Singh, who is based in Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Manmohan Singh has been chosen not only for his international image but also for achieving the distinction of becoming Prime Minister for the second consecutive time.