

# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

## A Young Man Of Substance

**I**NDIANS HAVE long had a reputation for having a nonmaterialistic outlook on life. Thankfully, there still are a few whose deliberate life choices validate such a reputation. The cover story of this issue is about one such person. Premal Shah gave up a very lucrative career in corporate America to pursue a mission he harbored since his youthful days at Stanford University. In less than a year of taking over as president of Kiva.org, a Web site that allows individual donors and investors to help poor entrepreneurs around the world, he has turned it into the world's fastest-growing nonprofit. But the most fascinating aspect of Shah's mission is that he approaches his work not as a charity, but as a business enterprise that optimizes benefits for all concerned. Kiva's efforts are, in a way, revolutionizing global poverty alleviation models by not only privatizing charity but also individualizing it. Full disclosure: Shah is my nephew, and I am very happy Editor Sunil Adam chose to not only write the story, but feature it as the cover story based on its journalistic merits alone. That makes me doubly proud – as a publisher and uncle.

Turning from philanthropy to hard-core capitalism, we have an exciting and exclusive interview by Kamesh Nagarajan with real estate magnate and celebrity billionaire Donald Trump, who is looking at India as a major investment opportunity. Read about Trump's plans for India, the American economy and, of course, the presidential race.

We did not forget that we are in the thick of the political season with the Democratic primaries winding down to an exciting finish. The Indian American community, as Sunil Adam finds out, is not only as energized as mainstream society, but is deeply divided along generational lines between Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama. The story offers the perspectives of a cross-section of Indian Americans on the two candidates.

Now from current affairs to fake news. In the media section, Geetanjali Sen profiles Aasif Mandvi, one of the most interesting "journalists" in the American media who shot to fame with his fake reports for the irreverent "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart." Don't miss out on a revealing story by Lavina Melvani about how American universities are taking an academic interest in Bollywood films – how issues pertaining to the evolving Indian society are being depicted in Indian films. With so much on offer, I daresay, you have a great read in store for you.

Sudhir M. Parikh, M.D.

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**W**RITE to us, and not just about your opinion of stories published in the magazine, but on any subject that you think is important for Indian Americans to discuss and debate. Also, tell us your story ideas, share your opinions on current domestic and international issues, tell us about the achievements of fellow Indian Americans and highlight the challenges the community is facing.

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All letters must include name, phone number, e-mail and postal address of the writer.

## Racial Prejudice Turns Indians Against Obama

**O**NE WOULD think Asian Indians would be a natural electorate for Barack Obama – the majority being college educated with a high socioeconomic profile – until one considers their severe antipathy toward blacks. Remaining true to their prejudice and bias, in the Democratic primaries so far, Indians have voted with working class Americans making below \$50,000 and Latinos – two groups they have traditionally scorned and butted heads with.

True to form, Sunil Adam's Editor's Comment ("Obama's No Sudden Moves," Jan.-Feb. 2008) is almost dismissive of "the black man," much like Hillary Rodham Clinton's comments minimizing Obama's victories in caucuses and red states. Even as Obama is energizing and breathing new life into the Democratic Party, closing the gender gap and getting more support from white men than his opponent, Adam's statement concerning "white America's collective guilt about race relations strong enough to support his feel-good candidacy" diminishes the senator and his supporters by implying his support is simply due to a sense of guilt that white Americans harbor.

Regretfully, your analysis does not consider the "sudden moves" made by Obama that brought him to where he is today.

**Sudden Move One:** Speaking out against the Iraq War in 2002 and projecting with chilling accuracy the consequences of such a war, at a time when it was not popular to take a stand against the war, a time when he was embarking on a crucial campaign.

**Sudden Move Two:** Proposing ethics reforms to limit the influence of lobbyists and bring transparency to the inner workings of the federal government – a radical move designed toward returning the government back to the people.

**Sudden Move Three:** Running a transformational campaign without taking money from special interests yet raising more money than the formidable Clinton machine.

**Sudden Move Four:** Forming a coalition that unifies red states and blue states, brings in Republicans and independents – a coalition that will not only enable him in winning the presidency but eventually in governing effectively. His message of unity has resonated with people and will go a long way toward redeeming the promise made by the Founding Fathers to the American

people, a promise embedded in the Preamble of the Constitution: "We, the People of the United States."

Perhaps all his transformational, radical "sudden moves" have gone unnoticed because he has made them with the grace of a panther, without stepping on anyone's toes or engaging in the divisive polarizing politics that Clinton excels in.

I hope our Indian community will stop buying into the Clintons' spin and see them for what they truly are: political opportunists. It took one loss in South Carolina for the "first black president" to play the race card. I wonder if they will treat the Asian Indian community differently.

ALKA SABHERWAL  
DANVILLE, CA

## CORRECTION



Composer Russell Steinberg

**I**T WAS a genuine case of mistaken identity. When you have a composer and an actor named Russell Steinberg, it is quite possible to mix up the photo of one with the other. That is exactly what happened in the Sept.-Oct. issue of *The Indian American* ("Breaking With Tradition" by Geeta Bhatnagar-Novotny), when we used the photo of actor Russell Steinberg instead of composer Russell Steinberg. We apologize to both the Steinbergs for that faux pas and thank the composer for his patience. I hope we hit the right notes, finally.

– Editor