

Ajmeri's Global Entertainment Hosts Comedy & Mimicry

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Atlanta: A program of rib-tickling comedy, organized by Atlanta's performing arts icon Mustafa Ajmeri's Global Entertainment, best known for bringing choice plays, dance and music programs by acclaimed performers, literary events and shows of Bollywood celebrities to Atlanta, was held at the Sardar Patel Bhavan Hall, in Tucker, Georgia on Friday August 21.

Mahadev Desai welcomed all and introduced the national promoter of the comedy show, Parimal Butala, who has been past President of Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay, Florida and is currently its Social Secretary. He then introduced the three well known, respected and seasoned comedians from Gujarat-Mahesh Shastri from Ahmedabad, Gopal Barot from Saurashtra and Nirav Mehta from Baroda. The Gujarati trio comedians have arrived in the U.S. on August 1 for a five week tour. The Atlanta show is their 9th show. None of them is a stranger to Atlanta.

Widely traveled, Mahesh Shastri is on his fourth trip to the U.S. His first visit was with Gujarat's eminent comedian Shahbuddin Rathod, and later with another well known comedian Dinkar Mehta. Maheshbhai has also acted as 'bavis

varsh no baabo' in one of the longest running Gujarati play 'Preet, piyu ne panetar'.

Gopalbhai Barot, who is from Saurashtra, is on his second visit to the U.S. He is well versed in Gujarati literature and folklore. He has performed in



L to R: Nirav Mehta, Mahesh Shastri and Gopal Barot.

many a 'Dayro' and in shows aired on Doordarshan.

Nirav Mehta, an international mimicry artist and singer has traveled extensively-to East Africa; U.K., Europe, New Zealand, U.S. & Canada, and performed with Johnny Lever, Shekhar Suman etc.

In a brief interview both Maheshbhai and Gopalbhai emphasized that their shows had high cultural and family-values content devoid of any vulgarity. They applauded the role played by Gujarati Samaj in preserving and promoting Indian culture, heritage and Gujarati language and expressed their appreciation of the warm hospitality extended to them by the Indian community.

The three comedians soon had the audience in stitches with their flurries of jokes in their inimitable styles. Their jokes are based on a keen sense of observation and nuances of everyday life. Maheshbhai spoke of cricket fans who behave like experts on the game; about Gujarati women, who keep servants and have ample time to band together with neighbors and gossip about their husbands, politics, etc. He also cracked jokes about food-the growing craze for pizzas-Maheshbhai compared eating a cold pizza to a dog chewing on a slipper!. There were jokes on arranged marriages, wedding-night fun between newly marrieds, etc.

Niravbhai won repeated applause with his proficient mimicry artistry. He mimicked voices of BJP leader Advani, noted singers Rafi, Kishor Kumar, Mukesh, Bollywood stars Amitabh, Amrish Puri, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Dharmendra, Amol Palekar, Sanjeev Kumar, Raj Kumar, Rajesh Khanna, Naseeruddin Shah, Dilip Kumar etc. He brought the house down with mimicry of Paresh Rawal.

But it was not all funny stuff. Maheshbhai commented on the eroding family values. The blind aping of Western lifestyle by the present affluent

young generation is a cause for concern. Old taboos are breaking down. We are witnessing a craze for consumerism and permissiveness. "Sadly we are witnessing growing instances where a widowed father or mother despite having several grown up children feels lonely and neglected because no one extends a helping hand." He advised the youth, "Your parents took care of you during your first ten years. So remember it is your duty to take care of them in the last ten years of their lives".

Gopalbhai emphasized the richness of Gujarati language, literature and culture.

During the interval, the attendees were served tea and tasty snacks provided by Kalpeshbhai of Patel Bros., New Delhi Imports and K.B.Zaverree respectively.

Gopalbhai thanked Ajmeri, for his 'can-do' spirit and unflinching support. Ajmeri responded by thanking the three outstanding 'kalakars' for a memorable feast of fun and laughter. He also thanked the National Promoter Parimal Butala, Gujarati Samaj, the media who helped with the publicity and coverage of the event, Ramesh Pandya (Gujarati Samaj board member) and C.M.Patel for their help and support. He especially thanked Sanjay Patel for going the extra mile in extending his tireless help in all aspects of the show, from beginning to end, including serving snacks and tea during the interval. He further thanked the team of volunteers Rajni Parikh, Vishnu Trivedi, and Upendra Bhatt, for their services. A surprise awaited the attendees-stainless- steel thalis as they left the auditorium, courtesy Apna Bazar.

NKK Members Volunteer To Build Home With Habitat For Humanity

BY JYOTHSNA HEGDE

Atlanta: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy." Rabindranath Tagore once said. Charity organizations such as Habitat for Humanity embrace this philosophy



to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness by constructing and building adequate and basic housing. Nrupatunga Kannada Koota (NKK) members volunteered to labor with this organization for several months this summer for a house constructed for the Adugu/Ahedor family in Milton/Alpharetta. The finished home was handed over to the Adugu family this August.

Habitat for Humanity works through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. Habitat builds and rehabilitates houses alongside our homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no

profit and financed with affordable loans. In addition to a down payment and monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor (sweat equity) into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

The Adugu/Ahedor family originates from Ghana, West Africa. The family came to the United States four years ago as a result of mom, Phyl, winning the American Visa lottery organized by the United States. Phyl Adugu works in customer service for Fulton County. There are four children in the family. Currently the father, Mike Ahedor, is back in Ghana working to pay off the loans incurred so that the family could take advantage of the Visa lottery. While this has been a challenge for the family, he hopes to join the family in a year or two. The family is very grateful to Habitat for the opportunity to own their own home. They are excited to join with the community in providing sweat equity for their home.

The volunteers from NKK who took part in this event include Aadarsha Basavarajurs, Ramesh Masoor, Dr. Ramswamy, Indira Ramaswamy, Lakshmi Masoor, Dharani Kommaralu, Ravi Dharendra, Tanu Kumar, Pradeep Vittalmurthy, Srikanth Bellur, Vasudev Bhatt and Ananda Rajeurs.

Keeping up the community spirit, NKK has also adopted Douglas Road starting at McGinnes ferry Rd to Jones Bridge Rd from the City of Alpharetta under "adopt-a-mile" program. Kannada classes are offered at 3 locations starting this September. Kannada crowd of Atlanta is also looking forward to the concert organized by NKK on the 12th of September.

Atlanta Vedic Temple Holds 'Fun & Learn' Camp For Children

Atlanta: Once again AVT was ready as a playground, a home and a cultural plus Vedic school for this year's youth summer campers. They (ages 5 to 16) came on Friday PM, dumped their sleeping

bags plus personal belongings, gulped camp's first yummy snack & rushed into learning of Bollywood dance. Tired they took their dinner, saw a movie and dutifully learnt night-time prayers plus basic knowledge on Vedas and daily Vedic duties.



Next day, they woke up early, said morning prayers and performed Yogasans plus Pranayam. After breakfast they performed Hawan, during which they learnt additional Vedic knowledge. Then they dived into fun & run for rest of the day. Among the planned activities, they made toys from papers, painted art & craft, learnt dental-hygiene, how to enjoy life thru Art-of-

living, musical beats on instrument Tablaa, and watched a puppet show on Asthma awareness. They were awed by dance-on-skate performance by one-of-their own 14 year old (Aaditya) who was an ex-national champion of India in year 2008. The evening was more hilarious with water-balloons, tug-of-war, water-slides and cricket. The fun continued in night with gathering around a camp fire and a talent show in which each one thrilled others with jokes, mimicry and music. Hesitantly, they finally went to their sleeping bags, but only after reciting their regular night-time prayers.

On the third and final day, after their regular morning prayers and Yogasans plus Pranayam, they posed for personal & group souvenir photographs. After that they presented to happy parents all their experiences of the camp. They performed Hawan and recited the Vedic summary including the daily duties of life. In closing ceremony they listened to the last advice from temple's Acharyaji to be a good human first in all professions of life. Each one was recognized for being a great congenial camper. After final delicious lunch, they all left with happy body, mind and soul and with a strong desire to come back again in yr. 2010.