

ISBUND

**NEWS, EVENTS AND
EVERYTHING IN
BETWEEN**



CULTURE



EVENTS



ACHIEVEMENTS

ISBUND

A Quarterly Newsletter from Kashmiri Pandit Association of Europe



Navreh Thaal

Navreh Thaal is filled on the eve of Navreh with items from our daily lives, wishing the person who views it in the morning, an abundance of these essential items in the coming year. Rice (both cooked and uncooked), tchot (bread), milk, yoghurt, sugar, walnuts, silver coin, inkpot and pen, money, flowers, mirror, Janthari and not to forget the trusted noon (salt) all make up the contents of this Thaal.

From the Editor's Desk

Isbund, its popping sound and mystical fragrance is associated in Kashmiri culture, with new beginnings, good wishes and positivity which is why we chose this as the name of our new quarterly newsletter. We hope to present this as a platform for our entire community, where we can share what is important to us - news about our achievements and accomplishments, however small or big they may be; proudly preserve our culture by highlighting our traditions to the younger generation and instil the spirit of community amongst us all. To that end, it is with love and great joy that we present to you, the first issue of 'ISBUND' on this 'Froocsz' day of 'Navreh'.

Navreh, the first day of the bright fortnight (Shukl pach) of 'Chaitra' (the 12th month of the Vikram era), also known as the first Navratra and celebrated throughout India is officially the new year for Kashmiris. Traditionally, on the eve of Navreh the daughter-in-law of the house would prepare the 'Thaal' which amongst other things, contained uncooked rice, salt, sugar or nabad, walnuts (one for each member of the family), a morsel of cooked rice, yoghurt, milk, mirror, pen, nechipatir (the new calendar), Kral pach (portrait of Goddess), seasonal flowers (traditionally almond blossom or daffodils), and some vai (herb) or grass, and a silver coin. These items on the Thaal represent abundance, progression, transformation, introspection and prosperity and herald the advent of good things to come. The Thaal is covered overnight and kept in the 'Thokur kuth' (prayer room) or 'Tchoke' (kitchen) and then viewed (Buth Wuchun) by every member of the family member before they see anything else on the morning of Navreh. The rice on the thaal is later served as 'teher' (yellow rice) and condiments consumed while the walnuts are then dropped into a stream or river as an auspicious offering.

The first issue of Isbund provides a little peek into our lives which for the last year has been hit by COVID-19. Most of us, some more than others, have been affected directly by it, be it on the frontline, juggling work with homeschooling and some of us have even battled the disease itself. This issue is a reflection of how we have lived during these times and offers some insight into what others have been up to and tips for our emotional and mental well-being. We introduce our very own authors, who took their writing to print during COVID, chat with our doctors in the NHS and celebrate our accomplishments. We know this has been an extraordinarily difficult time for children who in the main, have been exceptionally resilient and taken it in their own stride but how did the parents cope? Some better than others, I guess. So, we also added a guest blog from Anna Mathur, a Sunday Times bestselling author of 2020 with her take on 'Guilt'.

We hope you find this issue stimulating and entertaining and we would love to hear your feedback. Please do get in touch with us, details at the back of this newsletter.

We will leave you with the traditional greetings of Navreh and we hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed compiling it.

Sount'ik vaavan Kul'aye
 aleravith nave navreh
 huk dutnei sadda
 shushur chel'ravith
 poshwaren manz
 anuun bahaar
 Navreh Mubarak
 Aurzu Te Aay



Dr Sheetal Raina & Dr Shivani Dudha

In This Issue...

From the Editor's Desk	2
Remembering Dr Ganju: A Daughter's Reflection	4
Remembering Dr Bhan	7
Nearly Three Decades After Leaving Kashmir, A Pandit Reflects on Being and Belonging	8
Learnings from COVID-19 - A Psychiatrist's Perspective	11
Achievements	13
The Illusion of Time	14
Guest Post by Anna Mathur	15
Reflections: Working in the NHS During COVID-19	17
Navreh Quiz	19
Professional Development Workshops	20
Navreh: If I Was There	21
My Ode to Joy of Spring and Navreh	23
Book Recommendations	25
The Children's Times	26
Fundraisers	27
Recipe Corner	28
KPAE Election Results	29
Dates for Your Diary	30

Dr Satinder Nath Ganju

(1st May 1927 - 7th November 2020)

A Daughter's Reflection on His Life And Legacy



As we approach the 6 month anniversary of my father, Dr S.N. Ganju's passing, it is with gratitude that I reflect on his life and his legacy.

My father was born in Narpristan, Srinagar, Kashmir in 1927 as the only son (along with two daughters) of Lachkuji and Dina Nath Ganju. As with many of my father's generation, his father tragically perished in 1947 during the turmoil of the partition of India and whilst my grandfather's body was never recovered and my grandmother waited in vain for his return, my father and the family survived on the generosity of their extended family and friends. They generously supported my father's education to study Pharmacy in Benares Hindu University and then a PhD in Pharmacology in Chelsea College, now part of King's College, London. This support had a profound and abiding impact on my father and he recognised that whilst he could not repay his benefactors, he could in turn pass on that generosity to the next generation.

Over the years this was manifested as supporting numerous family members through their education or in sponsoring young Kashmiri musicians to advance their careers. To his dying day he lived and breathed that philanthropic philosophy, eternal optimism, resilience and his deep love of all things Kashmiriyat which is reflected in the messages that are posted on the [blog](#).

After his PhD, he returned to India to set up Chelsea Pharmaceuticals in Pune, Maharashtra, with the support of his brother-in-law Mr Prithvi Nath Kaul. In 1959 he married my mother, Dr Durga Kaul and they had two daughters, my sister, Anita, and me.

In 1971 our family moved to the UK and took up residence in Luton. Over the next five decades my father dedicated himself to the Kashmiri Pandit community in the UK, as one of the founder members and President of the Kashmiri Pandit Association of Europe. He also established Kashmir Bhavan Centre (KBC) in Luton. Determined that Kashmir's cultural and linguistic heritage should be passed on to the diaspora he motivated the community to hold biennial 'get togethers' (at Shivratri and Diwali) as well as annual music festivals for well over 20 years. Many Kashmiri artists, such as Shri Rajender Kachroo, Shri Dhananjay Kaul, Dr Deepawali Wattal, Ustad Waheed Jeelani attributed their success to the opportunities they received, early in their careers, to perform in the UK.

Of note was the launch, at the High Commission of India in 2003, of a website (www.siraurelstein.org.uk) which focuses on Sir Auriel Stein as a Sanskrit scholar. The website developed by the Principal Research Investigator, Professor S.N Pandita, was sponsored by KBC and supported by the Heritage lottery Fund, the Bodleian Library Oxford, Nityanand Shastri Library Collection Delhi to promote Kashmiri Culture and common heritage of the people of England and India.

Also of note, KBC sponsored 'Kashmir voices' celebrating the stories and history of the Kashmiri community in Luton, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and displayed in the Luton Museum in 2012.

All these activities and projects were of course the hard work of many individuals but the energy and dedication was undoubtedly spurred by my father. His love of Kashmir was infectious and although I was neither born nor lived in Kashmir, it was a bittersweet memory that his passing led me back to Kashmir.

My noble and ever optimistic father passed away on 7th November 2020 at the ripe age of 93, in Delhi, India. I flew from the UK immediately, despite the travel restrictions due to the pandemic, to join my sister, Dr Anita Kaul, to conduct our father's funeral rites in full Kashmiri Pandit tradition. However rather than going to Haridwar, Anita and I decided my father would have wished to be laid to rest in Kashmir.



We got up early on 12th November and made our way to *Atim Niwas* in Noida where we swept up our father's ashes with our bare hands and put them into an urn. Having all tested negative for Covid, Anita, Dr Sameer Kaul - my brother-in law - and I headed with our father's *asthi kalash* to Delhi airport and boarded a plane to Srinagar. All arrangements for the *visarjan* were made by Sameerji and we drove to Naranbagh near Shadipora where we were met by a Panditji who solemnly conducted the puja on the banks of the Vitasta, in front of a neatly maintained Shiv temple. With the help of a shikara wallah, the three of us transported our father's *asthi kalash* to the sangam of the rivers Vitasta and Sind at a place often referred to as *Prayag*. There, next to an island, allegedly some 5000 years old, bearing a beautiful solitary Chinar tree, we immersed our father's ashes into the waters. We then climbed onto the island and prayed for him at the Shiv lingam on the Island under the Chinar tree. The day was the most serene in my living memory and we were at peace knowing my father was back in his beloved Kashmir. He is survived by his daughters and 5 grandchildren; his wife having predeceased him.

May his soul reach moksha.

Dr Pamposh Ganju



Dr Makhan Bhan

5th June 1931 - 9th March 2021

Dr Makhan Bhan Passed away on Tuesday 9th March, 2021 at 8:30 am. He had been admitted a few days ago to hospital with Covid-19 infection. He is survived by his wife Smt. Krishna Ji Bhan, son Neil and daughter Angela.

Dr Bhan was a very active and supportive member of KPAAE and contributed extensively towards the growth of the organisation.

Nearly Three Decades After Leaving Kashmir, A Pandit Reflects on Being and Belonging

SANDEEP RAINA



On Navreh, the Kashmiri Pandit new year, we filled a thaal or plate with rice, milk, yoghurt, a pen, a coin, some lentils, a daffodil. The bits that made up life.

Men in tall black hats and black robes strode briskly down an empty street. Some of them had long sideburns and some long beards. It was a hot summer afternoon, and they were overdressed. I was visiting a friend in Golders Green in London and asked who these people were.

“They are our Jewish neighbours,” said my Kashmiri Pandit friend. “Many Jews have lived here since the 40s.”

I wondered about their costumes. Here I was, just landed in London, trying my best to assimilate.

We had lunch at our friend’s home, typical Pandit cuisine, mostly lamb dishes: rogan josh, yakhni, matsch. I was meeting him and his wife after many years. We chatted for a long time, reminiscing. The flat was sparsely furnished but had a few Kashmiri rugs. I noticed a small ornate candle stand.

“It’s a menorah,” said my friend’s wife. “To light candles at Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights.” Until then I had thought Diwali was the only festival of lights.

The next day, I told Mike, my half-Jewish, half-Catholic colleague, about the costumes. He told me Jews don’t do anything on the Sabbath, not even switch on a light. And he didn’t know why. I shouldn’t have been so surprised. In Kashmir, on days of fasts, women in our Pandit family cooked strict vegetarian meals, cleaning and praying, and not much else. The fasts followed the moon’s wax and wane. *Punim, aetham, mavas*. Full moon, half-moon, no moon. There seemed much in common with the Jews.

“We are also good with money,” laughed Mike.

Zamindar’s stash

My grandfather’s father had been a zamindar in Kashmir. My mother said he was so rich he didn’t count coins, he weighed them out. But not my grandfather, and not us.

Years went by, in which grandfather died. I hadn’t seen him for a long time, but his memories kept coming back. I now worked for another company, where I became friendly with an older Iranian colleague, Paymon.

On Persian new year, spring equinox, when the opposites balance out, I told Paymon about Navreh, the Kashmiri Pandit new year. How we filled a *thaal* or plate with rice, milk, yoghurt, a pen, a coin, some lentils, a daffodil. The bits that made up life.

“We do something similar on Navroz and we call it *haft seen*,” he said, surprised.

I felt a sudden connection. We discussed Navroz and Navreh, in snatches, between meetings, across desks, at the coffee machine. Iran is so far from Kashmir, but it suddenly felt close. I told Paymon about the chinars, the papier-mâché, the floral woollen carpets that had travelled from Iran, and the origins of rogan josh. I even snatched a paper napkin and wrote my name in Nasta’liq, the script that travelled from Iran to Kashmir.

“I didn’t know this,” he laughed.

I hadn't known either, when growing up in Kashmir. If it's a part of you, you don't think much of it. I remembered my grandfather. His bold voice, his sociable manner, his rambling conversations, his strong physical presence, his eloquent Farsi. Grandfather would recite Farsi couplets when in a good mood, and his audience could be my reluctant father or a hapless neighbour. Grandfather rolled off Farsi couplets with the same verve with which he chanted Sanskrit mantras at puja every morning in front of an array of gods. The Farsi and Sanskrit both sounded magical to me.

I told Paymon all this in the office canteen. Then, for a Foodie Friday at work, I woke early and cooked rogan josh over a low flame for three hours. I packed it carefully in a large plastic box and wrote Kashmiri Rogan Josh on it in my wobbly Nasta'liq. There were foods of all kinds on the table that day: Italian, Greek, English, Welsh, Indian, Iranian.

Vanished letters

"So, you can read and write Farsi?" Paymon asked, looking at the sticker.

"I can't," I said. I couldn't even read and write Kashmiri.

The rogan josh disappeared fast. It was declared the best food that Friday. I brimmed with pride.

On my last day in that job, Paymon wrote four lines in Farsi on my farewell card. Then he wrote in English, "Thank you for enlightening me about Persian Kashmir. It is sad to see you go but I wish you all the best."

The card remained unread for years. I wished I had learnt some Farsi, some Nasta'liq from my grandfather. I wonder why I didn't. I recalled a faint conversation from childhood. I was reading two Kashmiri words written in Nasta'liq on a ₹10 note. Currency notes had the value written in 15 official scripts.

"*Dah ropiye*," I read out, trying to decipher the curls and whirls.

"It's not dah, it's *duh ropiye*," said my mother.

"What's the difference?"

"Muslims say *dah*, but Pandits say *duh*, because *dah* in Sanskrit means cremation."

My mother told me the ancient script for Kashmiri was Sharada, now dead, and nobody knew what it had looked like.

Pandits and Muslims had other differences. My pheran, the long woollen garment we wore in winters, had an extra fold, *ladh*, near its hem, while my Muslim friend Bitta's pheran fell straight. My grandfather wore a pajama, not a shalwar. My great-grandmother's pheran was ankle-length, with long sleeves, while old Muslim women wore knee-length pherans, with shorter sleeves.

Power games

Many differences, all small. Until someone powerful outside Kashmir heard about the tiny twists of tongue, the lengths and folds of pherans. And questioned if Kashmiri had more Farsi or more Sanskrit? Whether its script was Nasta'liq or Sharada?

When the powerful became more powerful with this knowledge, a powerless man in a Tempo bus, in a squabble over a seat, called my grandfather *kafir*, godless. I was with him in that bus. I had seen him pray every morning to many gods. My proud grandfather's face was livid, his complaint a mumble. I remember the tremble in my fingers.

Not much later, a powerless young boy, just out of his teens, gunned down my grandfather's nephew and niece, my mother's cousins, and their partners, in their homes. We fled Kashmir.

It's been 29 springs since. This year, in London, I forgot to fill the Navreh *thaal*. When I was small in Kashmir, I would pluck a handful of *nargis*, white daffodils, from the garden. They had the sweetest of scents, but I wasn't allowed to smell them; they were for the *thaal*. Forgetting brought nostalgia and guilt.

Pictures of Navreh *thaals* flooded Facebook. Rice, milk, yoghurt, coin, pen. No daffodils. Where most Kashmiri Pandits now live, daffodils don't grow. A *panchang* or calendar said it was the year 5094 by the Saptrishi calendar, 2075 by the Vikrami calendar.

"29 by the Pandit exile calendar," a friend messaged. My heart stopped for a long moment.

On the cover of the *panchang*, I saw a script that I had never seen before. Sharada. It had fonts like thick brush strokes. Blurry, awoken from a deep sleep.

I read long ago of the revival of Hebrew after the Jews fled Europe. How it was invoked to unite the scattered Jews. How, with a common language and a new script, they would all go home. To a desert.

I think of Thar or Kharan, when I think of deserts. One on the India-Pakistan border and the other on the Pakistan-Iran border. I grew up with snow and mountains, lush fields and streams.

What would I do in a desert? Would I go? Would my children go?

Rumi's wisdom

I thought about Iran. I remembered my conversations with Paymon. I hunted for the farewell card with the Frasi quatrain he had written in flowing Nasta'liq. Asking to be read.

I messaged the lines to Paymon, for translation. He did not reply. Not hearing back brought a deep sense of loss. Like a forgotten Navreh. Like a broken promise.

I asked an English friend to help. He sent it all the way to Tehran to his sister-in-law. A week later, I received the transliteration and translation. Grandfather appeared before me. And read out in a bold, loud voice:

Yari keh beh nazd e oo gol o khar yekist

Dar maz hab e oo mos haf o zonnar yekist

Ma ra gham e on yar che bayad khordan

Koo ra khar e lang o asb e rahvar yekist — Rumi

'A friend who sees no difference between a flower and a thorn,

In whose religion the Quran and Zonnar are the same,

Why should we worry about him?

As for him, a lame donkey and a swift horse are the same.'

Zonnar was a girdle the Jews once wore to distinguish them from Muslims.

Paymon had kept his promise; he had written me a message to remember for life. Like a true friend, he knew me more than I knew myself.

A few days later, I pulled out a pheran from my cupboard, which my wife had bought from a Kashmiri trader years ago. It is dull brown and woollen, a bit scratchy at the neck, and it doesn't have a Pandit fold near the hem. I'd never worn it.

That summer day, I wore it. It warmed me up. I looked at myself in the mirror, and the image of the Golders Green Jews walking briskly down a street flashed in front of my eyes.

Now I knew why they were dressed like that. What they were holding on to.

Next spring, I won't forget Navreh. I will fill a *thaal* with rice, pluck a yellow daffodil from our English garden, place a pound coin, a pen and an idol in the *thaal*. Some milk and yoghurt too. And pray. That I am not sent to a desert.

Note: This article was originally Published in The Hindu on 24th August 2019

Learnings From COVID-19 A Psychiatrist's Perspective

DR MONA KAUL



Disclaimer: 'Intention to share thoughts with friends in community and encourage reflections for positive health. This column has not been written in professional capacity.'

Declaration of Interest: None.

Observations

One of the most impactful learnings from Covid has been that our daily routine, which we sometimes despise, is in fact a strong adaptive coping mechanism. The daily grind for all its monotony creates an invisible bubble that helps keep our fears and anxieties at bay.

At the onset of pandemic, people across the societal spectrum experienced some transient unexpected positive changes to the way they led their lives.

Early on in the pandemic, many prisoners were glad to learn of their early discharge from their sentences in the cells. Similar feelings by homeless people who were, almost overnight, taken off from streets of London, put in hotel rooms, with a door they can close at night. Not long after they reached the imagined freedom of their homes, they found themselves in another prison, another threat outside that hotel door, their incarceration now managed by an invisible viral cloud. This was in an uncanny way linked to how the unexpected early 'benefits' of Covid like working from home and more family time ultimately weren't that straightforward especially from a psychological perspective.

Over months, peering into the homes of patients like never before, I saw how, denied of their routine contacts with the world, their long-managed traumas were reappearing.

Community members who could work from home, many rejoiced at the prospect of working flexibly, found themselves with no sense of demarcation from work and family life, no respite from massive overload of teams meetings, calls and emails, juggling house work and/or home schooling, eventually finding themselves in a permanent overdrive exhaustion.

Kept under almost house arrest, continuous banging of Teams App, overload of Whats App forwards, home schooling lists, cooking and cleaning juggles and sudden ubiquity of fear-linked stimuli, we were entranced by Boris every evening asking us to "stay home, stay safe" .

Physical symptoms of pain, hormonal changes, anxiety we never knew of before, sleeplessness and nightmares and even existential crisis might have been not foreign to some.

Our sudden distances from our families, friends, and work colleagues were not mere social distancing. We started looking and listening from behind a screen. The bravest had only a mask in person. How peculiar it felt to be suddenly deprived of – and made to appreciate – those countless tiny cues, the sighs, the diverted gaze and its flinching return and most of all the silences. How does one assure someone of your understanding when they have unleashed waves of grief miles away?

In other significant impact, Covid-19 continues to devastate the elderly, however there is an unexpected population that is at a great risk of morbidity due to pandemic syndrome: The adolescent population with developing social brains.

For all the optimistic talk of virtual engagements in future, we should be wary. Distance deprives us of our most important tool, a potent mix of interest, empathy, proximity and touch. Without this we cannot properly grasp the thoughts, feelings and hopes of our dear ones to make meaningful connections.

Medical science has taught us one thing over past hundred years that “human suffering is incredibly complex”. Shrinking of our conversations or use of abbreviations from LOL to RIP to emoji’s for emotional expression might be signs of our instinctive retreat from the bewilderment we feel when confronted by complexity.

At a peer level, doctors experience high levels of stress even under normal circumstances, but pandemic crisis places additional pressure on doctors and making working life even more stressful than normal. Most evidence suggests that doctors feel a strong professional obligation to continue working in spite of the known dangers of burnout, whilst combating a greater risk to self, owing to their exposure to the patients who are most poorly. A further stress is the increased risk of infection for the families of healthcare professionals on the frontline.

Reflection

We can learn another lesson here, at a social scale. We should spend less time exploring our minds and pay more attention to the world around us.

It’s incredibly important building a new pandemic routine that is remote working friendly long with organising the day across work, family time and keeping a little bit of ‘me time’ through outdoor sport, running, yoga, art or whatever you might feel calming and therapeutic.

Teenagers would benefit from a degree of controlled relaxation of rules around their usage of social media to counter the loneliness, encouraging them to communicate in open space and making sure their sleep habits are as close to what they used to be pre covid.

The concept of a family has been revisited with close friends and neighbours being more perhaps even more relevant than relatives living miles away.

People and families have noted the benefits and there has been feedback to organisations, so we hope that we will be able to maintain the benefits as we return to the new normality and reflect on our adaptive coping strategies of daily life and their importance at individual level.

Achievements

11+ Exam results are out and we have some wonderful news to share:

- **Saachi Koul**, daughter of Sushil and Niroopama Koul will be joining *The Tiffin Girl's School*.
- **Sharika Kaul**, daughter of Vikas and Shivani Kaul will be joining *The Haberdasher's Aske School for Girls*.

Congratulations to both of them and to many more who have aced this exam this year and accepted a place at their choice of school. We wish you all the best for a bright future.

Congratulations to **Nikhita Bhatt** and **Mahek Hakh**.

They have both chosen to read Medicine and have a place at University College London and Kings College London, respectively.

Congratulations to **Aniketa Khushu**, daughter of Kamini and Dr Rajiv Khushu for qualifying as a Chartered Accountant (ACA) and Chartered Tax Advisor (CTA).

Congratulations to **Shirin Kaul**, daughter of Tanya and Rajiv Kaul for her securing 1st place in Solo Verse at Milton Keynes Festival of The Arts 2021.

Hinduja Group launched Berryllus Capital wealth advisory joint venture in March 2021. With offices in London, Geneva and Singapore, this venture will be headed by **AMIT KOTHA**, co-founder and veteran senior wealth advisor based in London.

Many Congratulations Amit.

The Illusion of Time

MRIDULA KAUL

It has been a few days since a dear friend lost her Mum in India. The other most dreaded C word after Cancer. No underlying conditions, no prolonged illness - just a sudden end, even when recovery was in sight. No time for pain and certainly none for goodbyes. No fitting end and no closure. And in the days that have followed, there has not even been enough time for grief. Phones and doorbells ring as well-meaning, concerned loved ones check on my friend whilst being social distancing compliant. Meals are being sent and the process of unpacking and packing 'dabbas' is carried out like a well-oiled machine. She on the other hand while stoically attending to all that needs doing, including checking on family back home in India who are poorly, still wonders if she will be able to wake up from this 'dream' and hear the familiar voice of love, childhood memories and pure joy, for just one more time again.



How can anything be so sudden, how can it be fair to not be allowed to have a last glimpse, to say the last farewell? How can life be so abrupt? We think we will find the time to go on that much awaited, longer than the usual two-week trip back home and spend time with family 'once the kids grow up'; have a leisurely meal 'if we can manage childcare'; manage a longer phone chat with our parents after 'the kids have finished homework'. Why do we have to wait for an irreversible event to realise that we do not have the luxury of time? If there is one thing this pandemic has taught us, it is this - we have no control over the future nor do we have the foggiest idea of what it holds. All we have is the present, and yet we do not even do that full justice because we are either thinking of what was or what needs to be done. We live with countless regrets wondering if there was something more we could have said or done that might have made things easier or different without once trying to change the status quo. "We," as Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "are always getting ready to live but never living."

Today, on this auspicious day of Navreh, the new year heralding new beginnings, let us make a conscious attempt to change that. Be present in the moment. Show your family you love them. Make time for that chat with your parents when they ring, better still, be the one to initiate the call - the world will not come to an end if your meeting starts 5 minutes late. Appreciate your child when they show you a drawing that bears no resemblance to you - social media can wait. Savour every moment, no matter how big or small; joyful or sad. Take nothing for granted and above all, be grateful, deeply, profoundly grateful for what you have right now because no matter what you think, it is probably more than many do.

GUEST POST BY ANNA MATHUR

THREE STEPS TO LETTING GO OF GUILT

Guilt for not being enough, doing enough, doing it well enough. Guilt for juggling, for struggling, or for thriving when others are surviving. Guilt for wanting space, for finding it hard when others have it harder. Guilt for not being present, for resenting, for wanting more. Guilt, guilt, guilt.

Guilt has become the soundtrack to many of our lives.

Unnecessarily.

When I feel guilty, my internal dialogue gets a little (ahem, a lot) more critical. I'm less likely to engage in the things that help me, and more likely to engage in the things that harm me.

Self-sabotage, self-destructive behaviours increase because I feel guilty, I feel bad. I feel less deserving of good things. Good things like rest, support, insight, compassion, empathy. And goodness me, wouldn't we all benefit from more of those things?

So if you also have a habit of carrying guilt around like a heavy, sooty rock deep in the core of your belly read on, because...

It doesn't need to be this way.

I want to share with you three small albeit mighty powerful steps to letting go of guilt.

This is an excerpt from The Week on Worth Course I go into much more detail on guilt and self-esteem within the course, which will be a great next step if you want to explore this further.

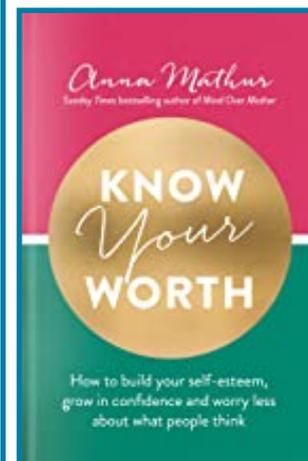
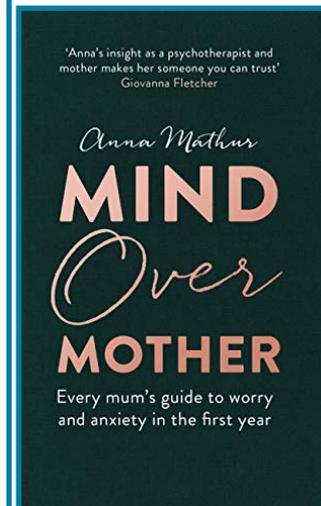
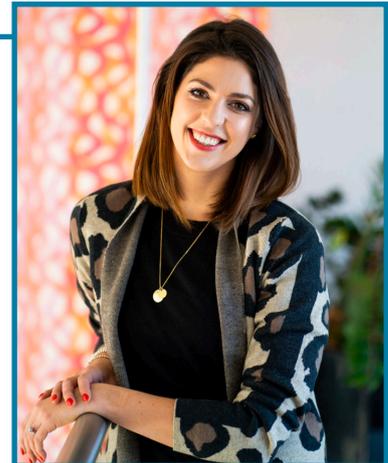
But first of all, you need to know that guilt isn't there to shame you. It's there to prompt you.

Guilt isn't there to point the finger, to brandish the whip, to turn up the knob on the gas burner of self-criticism. It's there as a sensation, as a little flag that pops up to say 'hey, something needs addressing'.

The guilt we feel often sits in one of two camps: Justified and unjustified. And determining which kind of guilt it is that you are feeling can be really helpful.

JUSTIFIED GUILT

This is the kind of guilt that comes when we have done something wrong. We have hurt someone intentionally or unintentionally; perhaps we have acted in a manner that we aren't proud of; or made a decision that has come with negative repercussions. This guilt is felt because our actions conflict with our ethics.



UNJUSTIFIED GUILT

This is the type of guilt that comes when you haven't done wrong.

It might be that someone has done something wrong to us, and we feel a sense of responsibility that isn't ours to carry. A good way to test whether your guilt is unjustified is to consider how you'd respond if someone told you they were blaming themselves for the same thing.

For example, I felt guilt and shame for my period of post-natal depression and the fact that I wasn't able to be the mum for that I'd wanted to be for my kids during that time. Was this my fault? Had I done anything wrong? Or was it the circumstances I found myself in? If someone had told me that they felt shame for the same thing, I'd desire for them to feel the compassion for themselves that I felt towards them.

Regardless of what you feel guilty about, whether it's justified or unjustified, guilt is there to prompt you to action, not to shame you. Here is my ACT tip for the next time you feel a wave of guilt or want to address the weight of guilt in your stomach:

ADDRESS IT

Imagine that guilt as a rock sitting on the palm of your hand. Look at it and ask yourself what it is about. Why is it there? What do you believe you've done wrong? Is it justified or unjustified? What would you say to a friend if they told you they felt guilt about this?

COMPASSION

We ALL deserve compassion. If you did something wrong intentionally, find a way to inject some compassion into it. You may need to be a little creative, but it's an important step as when we feel only shame, we stay stuck in a cycle of shame and criticism. It hinders us from developing healthy self-esteem. Introducing compassion doesn't absolve you of responsibility, it just enables you to address it more constructively.

Perhaps I hurt a friend because I feared they'd reject me at some point, so I did it to gain a sense of control. The hurt is the action I feel guilty about, yet the fear deserves compassion.

TWEAK

So now you know what the guilt is, and you've injected some compassion. The final step is to make a tweak or action based on that insight. If you feel guilty because you've hurt a friend, talk with them about the fear you've identified. Apologise, and then let it go.

Maybe I equip myself with a technique, or I do some research to gain further insight into my own responses. Perhaps I feel guilty about being on my phone too much, so I consider placing boundaries around my usage. I can then set the guilt rock down. I've addressed it. It is no longer of use to me. I don't need to carry that weight.

If your guilt is unjustified, this process is very important. We sometimes direct hurt and anger towards ourselves as a way of making sense of difficult circumstances, or someone else's treatment of us. If you feel you'd benefit from talking in more depth with a trusted friend or therapist, please take the step to do so. That is a statement of worth! You're worthy of support in that process.

I hope this helps as you navigate the many feelings and demands that come with the pandemic. You need more of what you need to keep going, and unaddressed guilt is likely to stand in the way of you believing you're deserving of that.

Just because you feel guilty, it doesn't mean you are guilty.

Reflections

Working in the NHS During COVID-19

DR NIKHIL GANJOO

PAEDIATRIC CONSULTANT WITH NEONATAL EXPERTISE



Let's go back to when it started. Back in December 2019 when things were blowing out of proportion in China, the NHS was not prepared for what was coming their way.

When Covid-19 restrictions first came in to place, many units were slow to gather travel history. We didn't know what questions to ask and were caught off guard. I was first on-call paediatrics consultant, when the Trust went in to the surge plan. Our plan initially was to segregate suspected patients and review them in isolation rooms, but our PPE supply gradually fell short in comparison with the growing number of cases, causing increased anxiety in the team. Wards were getting full, and we could not keep up with the high turnover of coughs and colds coming in, and the delay in Covid-19 test result certainly did not help.

At this point, what the government did well was badgering on the message not to attend hospitals unless absolutely necessary. This helped to reduce the number of avoidable and anxious A&E presentation.

Another critical point was when testing process became quicker than the usual 2-3 days and we were able to get patients out of isolation wards faster and prepare it for other unwell patients, thus improving patient flow.

The NHS was aware that the second wave would be bad, and that's what we saw. This was partly due to people's frustration with the lockdown rules and also due to the system being overwhelmed with arrival of other winter bugs.

With the new variant coming through we saw more unwell children coming in. There was also an overlap with Paediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, which caused a small proportion of patients to become very sick very quickly due to multi organ failure. The Royal College of Paediatrics was quick to recognise this and various guidelines were set up. This included rapid access to a multi-disciplinary clinic with as many as 5 different specialists.

While we had lots of challenges, there were also several positives that came out during the last year for us as a Trust in response to the pandemic. Our centre is very teaching oriented and was first in the region to organise simulation based teaching around PPE especially when staff weren't sure how to "done and doff" the PPE safely. We were constantly learning from what went well/ what would have been done better and alongside our clinical work also focussed on disseminating teaching videos on various social media handles such as Twitter for the benefit of other teams.

Among the non-clinical teams, the IT staff have been fantastic in adapting to the growing challenges. Quick roll out of Trust laptops and VPNs made it possible to run outpatient clinics, do follow ups, chase reports and results all virtually by staff who were working from home due to high risk or otherwise shielding. Increased remote access also made it easier to facilitate planning meetings for our complex care patients. Time was precious, and despite being spread across a large region, several different clinicians all playing a key role in different spheres were able to contribute their little piece to the jig-saw puzzle.

For doctors in training, there were several positives. It was previously tedious to book study leave and travel across the UK to attend different aspirational courses but this was now easier because of education system too adapting and training becoming available at the click of a button. Of course, this came with its own Zoom/ Teams fatigue, but under the given circumstances it was received well and enabled junior doctors to progress in their careers with as little disruption as possible.

Paediatrics as a specialty was relatively well protected in terms of staffing due to reduced redeployment especially in the first wave. As part of the surge plan, as a junior consultant I was ready to be redeployed and work as a registrar if the need would arise. We quickly developed special Covid working Rotas that helped organise more hands on the deck and stepping in to cover vacant shifts. Everyone was supportive and there were high spirits of camaraderie. In some ways, there was lesser degree of burnout.

We are also trying to combat moral injury. There has been an increase in delayed presentations example signs of serious conditions such as cancer getting missed due to virtual nature of appointments. We often remind ourselves that these are still uncharted territories, and everyone is working their best under the limitations of a pandemic.

Whilst there were innumerable challenges, one must celebrate the things that have gone well. The vaccination program has been amazing and reached out to so many people so quickly. Every new program has teething problems but the government has done extra-ordinarily well.

Paediatrics being a very friendly specialty, we miss the team gigs especially the team lunches where everyone used to bring their own lunches to share with others. We called this “foods of the world”. As an attempt to carry the tradition on, we are still meeting on Teams, with everyone bringing their meals from their gardens.

The NHS still remains in fire fighting mode. We are much closer to the light at the end of the tunnel now and have a lot to reflect on about the past year.

Thank you Nikhil Bhaiya, for sharing your reflections of the past year. I'd end on the famous words said by Charles Mackesy: "I can't see a way through", said the boy. "Can you see the next step? Just take that", said the Horse".

Shivani Dudha

Navreh Quiz

Hope you enjoy solving this with your loved ones over a warm mug of Sheer Chai .

- ★ What is the English greeting for Navreh Mubarak?
- ★ What is another name for Navreh?
- ★ Which God or Goddess do we pay homage to, on the occasion of Navreh?
- ★ Where did the Sapta Rishis assemble to mark the auspicious occasion of Navreh?
- ★ What is another name for Sharika Parvat?
- ★ Which demon Maej Sharika kill with a pebble, which fell on the demon and grew to the size of a hill?
- ★ How many arms does Maej Sharika Mata have?
- ★ What does the first day of Navreh coincide with?
- ★ When is the eve of Navreh? Hint: this day marks the beginning of Shukla Paksha, or the bright fortnight, of the lunar month. It is a day to remember our ancestors and seek their blessings.
- ★ What time do we see the Navreh Thaal? Hint: Also called "The Creator's time" and on the clock marked as 1 hour and 36 minutes before sunrise.
- ★ Which festival(s) coincide with Navreh in other parts of India?
- ★ During Navreh, what constellation does the moon enter?
- ★ What is found in every Kashmiri Pandit household, so that socio-religious events are mathematically calculated using it?
- ★ How many items form a part of the Navreh Thaal?
- ★ What does the pen represent?
- ★ What does the mirror represent?
- ★ What item represents the reminiscence of life's bitter aspects, to be taken in stride alongside the good?
- ★ Which item is dropped in the river or under a tree as a sign of thanksgiving, after observing it in the Navreh Thaal?

Professional Development Workshop

AMITA RAINA

We take great pride in how we have progressed with our intellectual abilities and now its time to share our knowledge for higher progression.. by networking and sharing with our younger generations..

Watching our children growing around me and listening to their subject / career choices fascinated me but also puzzled me.. with two questions: WHY & HOW?

WHY have you chosen a particular career path ...

HOW does one know about it especially the ins and outs from the perspective of an experienced and skilled Professional who is successful in a particular industry.

This was one of the reasons that led to the online Workshops to educate.

The online workshops focus on an industry, interested children and young adults are invited to be the host to interview guests. The audience of children and young adults gain a better and in-depth understanding of the various careers paths they can choose from.

We aim to create a Knowledge Bank of career opportunities that will guide our children & young adults with not only what subjects to take but also teaching us the inside and outs of a particular industry.

Children & Young adults will also develop a network within themselves thereby developing this idea further to guide and inform each other of new developments.

We welcome children / young adults who are interested in being part of this endeavour to gain knowledge and understanding of various Professions. Get in touch with what kind of professions you envisage or career paths you are thinking of, so that we can organise you to get in touch with people from that industry.

We also welcome grown ups to be Role Models and share your skills, knowledge and expertise of your Professions or simply just to give our children / young adults a better understanding of the Professional World.

Interested .. please contact me at procareers121@gmail.com.

NAVREH : IF I WAS THERE

VIMLA BHAN DURANI



If I was there-----

I would do PARIKRAMA on foot from Srinagar city to GANSHIBAL to CHAKRESHVARA (HARI PARBAT) to PUKHIRBAL to KATHI DARWAZO and follow my way back home.

If I was there-----

I would enjoy the sight of sweet smelling blossoms laden on almond trees, hanging in pink and white shades.

If I was there-----

I would see the first sign of Navreh , Daffodils called TAKEBATNIS, popping out of fertile ground.

If I was there-----

I would witness the children of boats men in the river Jhelum, with worn out clothes waiting for handful of walnuts, handed over by the adults.

If I was there-----

Parents would afford by hook or crook, sew new clothes for children from the local tailor to be worn for the occasion, BAIRAJA would have new pyjama kurta with a Sadri on, finally TARAWATI would be wearing a new phiran for POSHTA.

If I was there-----

Young and old would be loaded with lots of food in earthenware baskets to proceed to HARI PARBAT for a picnic in the DEVI ANGAN (BADAM WARI) in the foot hills of SHARIKA temple, enshrined by Goddess Sharika Bhagwati, overlooking Srinagar city.

If I was there-----

I would enjoy Tapioca (MUNJGOOL -GAAR) roasted on coals and have black moustache of soot, fun for the adults.

If I was there-----

I would cherish and sip both Mughal Chai and Sheer Chai with LUCHI and NADURMONJI on the green grass like a velvet carpet, from start to finish.

If I was there-----

My parents would buy me a wind mill, water ball, candy floss, helium balloon, a kite to fly or a Daabir only one of my choice.

If I was there-----

I would listen to the chit chat of other children, birds chirping around and adults sipping out tea from SAMOVARS.

If I was there-----

Back to pavilion on foot. The end would have been soothing, relaxing and invigorating.

WHAT a sound sleep with sweet dreams and carrying my childhood memories through out my life!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

My Ode to Joy of Spring and Navreh

REKHA TUKRA



न्व सोंथ आव नोव् बहार आव
गुलन नोव शबाब आव
य्मबर्ज़ल हुसनस जमाल आव

नव रेह आव नोव दोर आव
वनद् दरवाज़ किन दराव
नोव बहार द्ारिकिन चाव
सोन् मोख सिरी द्रशुन हाव

गुलाल त गुलज़ार बनाव
चिनार कुल्ल हुँद मँज़र याद पाव
मनस नोव जनुन नोव अरमान ज़ाव
गूरगूर करान पकान डूंग त नाव

कुकिल् कोर कूकू कावन टाव
माज्य वोन वोथू माल्या आलुच तराव।

रात् ग्य लोकिट त दोह ग्व बोड
फएरन बँद त काँगरैन कश कोड

नोव पोशाक छ्अन त न्व रंग छाव
पोशन ह्ज़ि नरमी त महक पराव

वल्डव वनि बेइ सअरी समव
इकवट अज़ मेलव त रलव
सु परोन लोल त माय लभव
बहारिक प्यठ अ्स ति फोलव

न्व आशा नोव जोश बरव
न्व ऊमंग न्व तरंग मनस थव्व
न्व सोपुन स्अरी पूर करव
मँज़िल त दिशा/व्ित कुन पकव
बादम वारि चकरस गछव

कतिज् बनोव ओल काशकारन वोव
बयोल

बोज़ बुलबुलन पिचुन तेमिसिनद बोल।
हाक बोद अन्तव ज़ोविल त तोल
नदिर कनगइछन हूनद आमुत छु लोल
ओरय सब्बज़ी टूकर हयथ पकान मोल
क्या वनव कूतहा आमुत छू पनिअन हुद
लोल

“Outside window Wee hours cuckoo herald with its koo-kooo spring has ushered and arrived;

Inside the room gran awoke us with her squeaky voice Navreh, Sun have beamed and smiled”

“Seeing first thing was the brass thali of grains, nuts keenly as per the ritual, to getup in circulation to show thali to each member

It was just the prologue of what would ensue in terms of fun festivity n fervour stored for the day, plethora of reasons to remember”

“O thee Spring ,thy pastel have given youth, hope to renew our energy our oath to take new uphill tasks

O thee spring ,thy splendour, hue and sight clear destination to flourish like cherry blossom embrace me to your bosom ,only this desire nothing else to ask”

“O my lovely Kashmir heard in our absence almond bloom I presume appear gloom

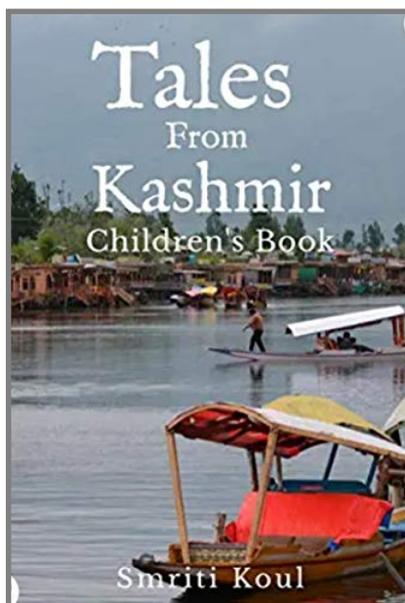
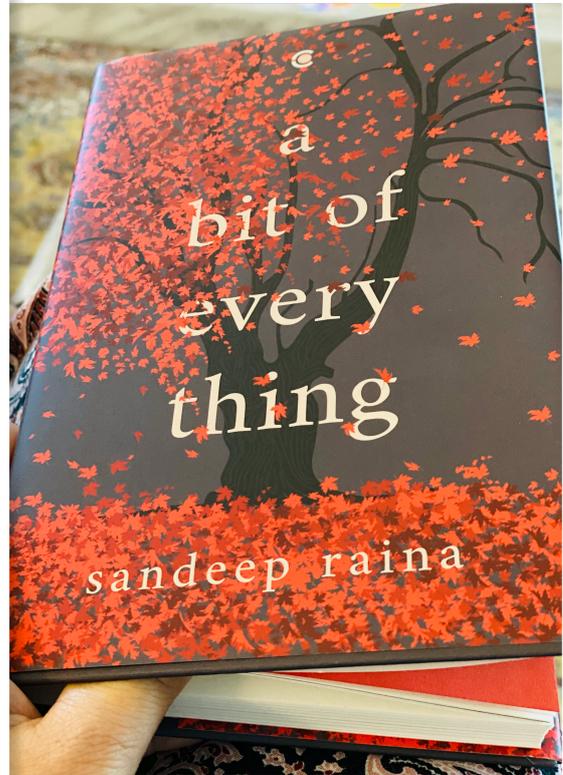
O my sweet Kashmir afar from you dark clouds loom discern constant state of doom”

“O My Birth land ,Nature’s fruits should be garnered in its season and catching Sun, its food which is medicine for soul , all have right equally

O My Homeland ,I beseech you not to forbid me from meadows, brooks, breeze, sweet smell, hills, lotus, lily, almond blossom, boats and oars so easily”

Book Recommendations

A bit of everything is a book about Kashmir set in the backdrop of troubled times in Varmull. Set in Kashmir, New Delhi and London, the book describes the journey of a Kashmiri Pandit professor who continued to long for his beloved home many years after he lost it. He didn't just lose his home, or his life built in Kashmir when he was forced to leave but he also lost his connection with the only family he had as he struggled to embrace his new life. He continued to long for home until he finally reconnects with it. It is a brilliant piece of literature with a beautiful story and a strong connection to Kashmir. I wasn't able to put it down and I am sure you won't be as well.



Stories in this book have been passed down to generations and some are with a message, there is one thing for sure a reader would connect to, it is the small rituals, everyday household traditions in a typical Kashmir Hindu household! I hope I have done justice to it.

This book also intends to bring back childhood memories for those who like me lost their homeland and are still waiting to return some day, and for some it would present a glimpse of what a Kashmiri pandit's life looked like back then and still is, They still are living their values, culture and heritage! Hope you all will enjoy reading this book! Namaskar and Om Shanti!

The Children's Times

Just like most ideas start from a garage, Children's Times Magazine originated within the bedroom walls of Akshan Raina (14 yrs) and Shirin Kaul (13 yrs), cousins.

On a cold autumn afternoon, during the half term holidays, Akshan and Shirin decided to challenge each other to find the wackiest and coolest facts from books, creating crossword / sudoku puzzles and setting artistic challenges for their siblings to share with each other. And from this started their journey of creating The Children's Times to compile their findings.

They decided to open it to other children and youth thereby creating an online magazine to share with all as a virtual platform to showcase their creativity.

Children's Times has been receiving contributions from children in the UK, India, Germany and the USA.

Publishing every quarter, they have created 5 issues until now with issue 6 towards end of April.

Coming Soon: Children's Times are launching their own website, where viewers will have access to all previous issues and announcements.

If you would like to get in touch, email us at childrenstimesnews@gmail.com.

You can view the available issues at the following links:

[Issue 1](#)

[Issue 2](#)

[Issue 3](#)

[Issue 4](#)

[Issue 5](#)

FUNDRAISERS

Aniketa Khushu completed the Alzheimer’s Memory Walk (15 km) with her Mum and Dad in Calderdale, England.

Happy to announce they over achieved their target goal.

Well done to the three of you!



Tanya Kaul completed a 300,000 steps in March challenge for Maggie’s Centres.

Tanya achieved both her goals (Steps and raising funds).

Well done!!!



In memory of her loving father and uncle who both lost their lives to cancer, **Archana Warikoo** raised funds for Cancer Research UK in March so we can all celebrate more cancer survivors than cancer losses.

They will be so proud of you. Well done!!!



Recipe Corner

Chilli Chutney Chicken

RITU JALLA



Ingredient list

Chicken-640 grams

Onion-2

Mint-15 grams

Coriander-50 grams

Lemon(juice)-1/4

Garlic-3 cloves

Ginger-1 thumb

Yoghurt (Dahi)-1/2 cup

Chilli-5

Oil/ghee/butter- as per taste

Asafoetida (Hing)-2 Pinch

Cumin seeds(Jeera)-1/2 tablespoon

Ginger powder-2 tablespoon

Cinnamon- 1Pinch

Garam masala-1/2 tablespoon

Method

Blend mint, coriander, chilli, ginger, garlic yoghurt, lemon and make a paste (chutney).

Take the chicken in the bowl then pour the paste (chutney) and add salt and pepper (as per taste). Marinate chicken for 1 to 2 hours.

In a pan add oil, ghee or butter, hing (a pinch) and Jeera (1/2 tablespoon) sauté onions until soft add the marinated chicken and cook for 5 to 7 mins then add a 2 tablespoon of ginger powder, a pinch cinnamon and 1/2 a tablespoon garam masala when the gravy starts to thicken.

Cook on a medium flame for 15 to 20 mins and cover with lid stirring every 2 mins

Serve with naan or rice.

Subscribe to my channel on YouTube and follow my Instagram and Facebook to see more dishes!

YouTube: Ritu's Rediscovered Cuisine

Instagram: ritujalla

Facebook: [Ritu's Rediscovered Cuisine](#)

Kashmiri Pandits Association of Europe

Election Results 2021



Sanjay Peshion

President



Ashutosh Bakshi

General Secretary



Manju Kaul Kak

Treasurer



Amita Dar

Executive Member



Preeti Bhatt

Executive Member

Dates for Your Diary

Professional Development Workshop

Opportunities in Engineering Technology

April 17, 2021

5 pm

This event will be available on Facebook Live.

Kashmiri Pandit Association of Europe Annual General Meeting (AGM)

April 24, 2021

4 pm

Please note this will be a virtual meeting via zoom. Please check your email for dial-in details.

ISBUND next issue: June/July 2021

Next issue of Isbund will refresh our memories of Tulmul (Kheer Bhawani) and all things related to Jyestha Asthami.

We would love to receive contributions from you whether it is a little story of your time in Kashmir, a folk tale around Tulmul or anything else you would like to share. Please do get in touch with us at editorialboard@kpae.co.uk.

ISBUND is available quarterly in United Kingdom by email or on our various social media platforms. If you would rather like a paper copy mailed to you, please do ask.

Email, WhatsApp, KPAE Webpage