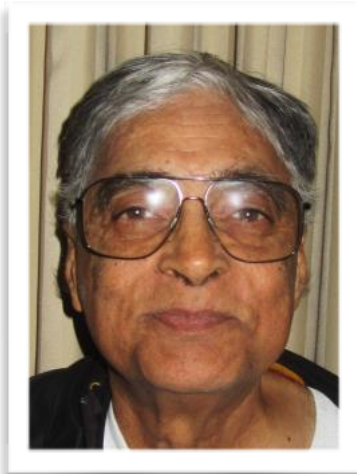


This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com).

VIJAY KUMAR



I was born in the exotic land of Burma, a land ruled by a monarchy that dated back to the 9th century. Burma was colonized by Britain in 1886. The British initiated war and annexed portions of Burma to eventually create the province of Burma as part of British India. Because of its location, trade routes between China and India passed directly through Burma. World War II disrupted the colony when the Japanese invaded and conquered the country and subjugated its people in 1942. I remember chaos and street violence was rampant and my mother carefully locking the windows and doors during this time. My father wanted to move back to India where he had founded a young children's school called "Shishu Shala" (Young Child's Special Home) in Ajmer, India. But, because ship travel was dangerous, my father decided to travel the long (1,800+ miles) land route. He died alone on this journey, contracting a disease with no medication. My mother and I remained in Burma. It was a tough time to exist.

After the war ended, my mother decided to honor her husband's dream and move back to India and start a school in Ajmer. She named it "Shishu Shiksha Sadan" (Young Child's Education Institute). A former schoolteacher herself, she secured support from insurance company executives where my father had worked and some of the first students were the children of this company's employees. Because the new school was a follow-on to my father's original school, there was no issue with a woman running it in a male dominated society. The school ran on Hindu principles to include daily school prayers and a vegetarian diet.

At age seven, I enrolled at Modern School in New Delhi which was a boarding school paid for by my stepfamily whom had become wealthy with many business ventures that thrived after the war. I spent weekends with my uncle's family who lived near the school and was also a teacher at the school. With this family I enjoyed family meals, visited other family members who lived in New Delhi and played with other children whose families lived nearby. During winter and summer breaks, the husband of one of my mom's school teachers came to Modern School to chaperone me by train from New Delhi to Ajmer, where I lived with her during my vacation breaks. This man also worked in the insurance company where my father had worked. On one of those trips to Ajmer there was a fierce rainstorm, which stopped the train and delayed its travel by over a half day. My mother was very relieved when we arrived safely. My escort's children

became my lifelong friends and one of his four sons became a medical doctor and is practicing and living in Michigan.

Modern School was unique. Besides classical education, it had a swimming pool, playgrounds for soccer, field hockey, cricket and other sports. It also had a recovery building for children who became sick. I enjoyed all sports. I learned to swim freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke etc. I played soccer, field hockey and practiced military style marching and enjoyed competitive sprints in the 50, 100, 400 and 1500-meter races. I learned to play the classical native musical instrument called the Sitar. I did well in Mathematics. At graduation, I received "First Division" (A-average) with distinction in Mathematics and qualified to join the Engineering College of Delhi Polytechnic in 1958. I passed Pre-Engineering exams at Delhi Polytechnic in April 1959 before my stepfamily asked me to return to Burma and prepare to immigrate to America.

Post World War II Burma held elections and became an independent nation until the military took control of the country in the early 1960's. The military government embraced Communism and soon proceeded to seize all businesses. My stepfamily was worried about losing all their assets and would no longer be able to finance my future education so they made a decision that I should immigrate to America as soon as possible and complete my education there. At this time, India's immigration quota was small but Burma's quota was comparably easier so my stepfamily applied and was granted a visa for me. My mother was informed by mail and she accepted the family decision.

I arrived in Honolulu on my eighteenth birthday. I settled in San Francisco and soon started working in a retail store in the area. I improved my English and enrolled at U.C. Berkeley in 1962. Do you remember the "Free Speech Movement" at Berkeley, led by Mario Savio? Well I dug up a photo for you to reminisce over what it was like to be a student at Berkeley during that time. I personally didn't attend any FSM meetings because I was on an immigrant permanent residence (green) card and did not want any trouble.



As military service was mandatory and every male was eligible to be drafted (including immigrants with green cards), I joined the USAF Reserves. I served on active duty for six months and then remained a Reservist for five and one half additional years.

After graduating from U.C. Berkeley, I worked for a year in the Insurance industry at Fireman's Fund Company in the Actuarial Department. I passed the Society of Actuaries exams in Math and Statistics but instead of continuing in the Insurance industry, I applied and was accepted at IBM. I received training and worked as a software

programmer for several years. I eventually moved on to work for several other companies until I retired from BMC in 2006. My specialty was Assembler and Machine language programming which was a skill in high demand at that time.

At Memorex I developed software programs that tested creation of small records from minimum up to maximum size space for Memorex's disk drives. It checked the directory to ascertain that it recorded the name of record, correct size of the record and file and other record information. It checked the data to see if it was entered correctly from computer to disk. My program altered information and inspected the directory; it also deleted the records and checked the directory to see if the deletion had been correctly recorded. My programs continued testing all the time to insure that the disks functioned fine all the time. This test program continued to be used for many years at Memorex. Afterwards, my biggest challenge was to enhance and test IBM's 360 and 370 Operating System software. I specialized in that area until I retired.

During my vacation breaks, I travelled to India to visit my mother and also to Burma to visit my stepbrother and his family. Unfortunately, the military dictatorship made it increasingly difficult to visit. In the late 1960s - I obtained a visitor's visa to enter Burma from the Burmese Embassy in Thailand. But when I arrived at Rangoon airport, the Burmese officer at the airport refused me entry - saying that although I was born in Burma, I was a US citizen - not a Burmese citizen. I was forced to take another flight from the airport to return to Thailand. Later, Burma seized the assets of all businesses. My stepfamily was forced to leave Burma without their assets. I have never been back to Burma.

My wife, Elizabeth came to San Francisco from Britain. It was easy for British citizens to secure a visa to come to America as Britain and certain European countries did not have immigration quotas. Elizabeth stayed at a friend's home in San Francisco and after a few dates we hit it off. Over time we decided to get married and did so at a friend's home in Marin County. We moved to Mountain View and have two children, Amba our daughter and Jay our son. I remember that they were both good swimmers, swam for their High School teams and earned a few medals. Amba, competed in the Sentinel Triathlon in 2003 which entailed a 1,500- meter swim, a 40km bike ride and concluded with a 10km run. She graduated from UC Davis, worked briefly for Cisco systems - but later switched careers and has now become a leading Real Estate agent in this hot market. My son swam from San Francisco to Alcatraz Island and back several times. He graduated from San Jose State College in Civil Engineering and is now a Civil Engineering manager for Partner Engineering Company in Pasadena, Calif. I have two granddaughters, one from each child.

I invest in stocks and spend time daily to see if the markets are advancing or declining. I invest in our local technology companies - Facebook, Apple, Netflix, Google (FANG) stocks and a few others. As a member of the Sierra Club I used to participate in their Sunday hikes and later their social potlucks. Now, I go to Mountain View's Senior Center daily to exercise and participate in their local activities. I am still fluent in Hindi and sometimes read some Hindi newspapers and other literature.

I have been sending out emails to friends with humorous cartoons, jokes and short articles for many years. It is a great way to stay connected with others. Here is a recent release:



Sign at a Church

“CATCH UP WITH JESUS –

Lettuce Praise & Relish Him –

Cuz he loves me from head to-ma-toes”

If you want to get on my email list, just send me a message at mtnviewvj@prodigy.net .

I would like to conclude with this message to my fellow Sirs; Be good to your family. Help your children and grandchildren get well educated so they can get good jobs, then everybody will be well set in life and be happy.