



P.O. Box 65349 • Washington, DC 20035 • [sabadc@sabadc.org](mailto:sabadc@sabadc.org)

## 2008 Year in Review

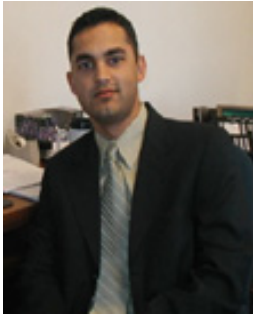
### Executive Board

#### **D. Rahul Das** **President**



D. Rahul Das is currently an associate at the law firm of Townsend and Townsend and Crew, LLP. His practice includes patent litigation, patent prosecution, client counseling, opinion work, and Intellectual Property due diligence, with a focus on Chemical and Pharmaceutical litigation.

#### **Dharmesh Vashee** **Vice-President**



Dharmesh Vashee currently serves as an Attorney in the Office of the General Counsel of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a government corporation that insures the pensions of approximately 45 million American workers.

#### **Tina Rao** **Treasurer**



Tina is an associate in the Health Care and Litigation practice groups at the law firm of Epstein Becker and Green, P.C. Her practice concentrates primarily in the area of fraud and abuse litigation, managed

care, reimbursement, and health care compliance.

#### **Padma Shah** **Secretary**

Padma Shah is an Associate at The H.T. Than Law Group, an intellectual property law boutique located in Washington, DC.



#### **Habib Ilahi** **Programming Chair**

Habib is Counsel at the law firm of Schertler & Onorato, L.L.P. His practice focuses on white collar defense, Government investigations, and securities litigation. Mr. Ilahi has represented individuals in criminal, civil, and administrative cases in both federal and state matters.



#### **Alpa Gandhi** **Communications Co-Chair**

Alpa is currently an attorney with the Federal Trade Commission, Health Care Services and Products Division. Her legal practice involves intellectual property



and antitrust issues relating to the Pharmaceutical Industry.

**Anita Khushalani**  
**Communications Co-Chair**

Anita Khushalani currently practices employment law in the Office of General Counsel at the AARP.



**Ritu Kelotra**  
**Programming Director**

Ritu is currently an associate at Kirkland and Ellis LLP, where her practice area is general litigation.



**Sejal Shah**  
**Programming Director**

Sejal is an associate in the Energy, Environment and Resources practice group at the law firm of Duane Morris, LLP. Her practice concentrates primarily in the area of energy litigation, transactions and regulatory compliance.



**Rahul Narula**  
**Communications Director**

Rahul is currently an associate at Reed Smith in the Health Care Group.



**Kush Bambrah**  
**Programming Director**

Kush is the branch manager of Providus, a litigation strategy and legal staffing agency.



**Ranga Sourirajan**  
**Programming Director**

Ranga is an associate at McKool, Smith, where he practices intellectual property litigation and commercial litigation.



**Anuradha Banerjee**  
**Programming Director**

Anuradha is a corporate attorney with a practice focusing on corporate transactional matters including mergers and acquisitions, financings and securities matters.



**Neal Seth**  
**Immediate Past-President**

Neal is currently an associate at Baker & Hostetler LLP, where his practice includes patent litigation in the ITC, Federal District Courts, and U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, with a focus on chemical and pharmaceutical technologies.



## January

January 31

**Bangladesh Cyclone Fundraiser at Science Club**

## February

February 27

**February Dinner Series:**

***Work-Life Balance Strategies for Attorneys (Bombay Palace)***

Guest: Lopa Banerjee, Certified Professional Coach, deltat3

## March

March 2

***Insiders' Views of the Fight for Democracy & The Rule of Law in Pakistan (White Tiger)***

SABA-DC's special dinner event "at White Tiger featured distinguished guests, Muneer Malik, former President of the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association, and Supreme Court Advocate Hamid Khan. They discussed their experiences with the restoration of an independent judiciary, the Rule of Law, and free and fair elections in Pakistan.

March 6

**March Networking Happy Hour at Le Bar**

March 8

**DC Bar Pro Bono Advice and Referral Clinic**

March 20

**March Dinner Series: *Human Rights Law and Policy in the Nation's Capital (The Indian Experience)***

Guests Ajay Bhatt and Sajit Gandhi, the Cohen Group

March 26

**Mentor-Mentee Happy Hour at Rocket Bar**

## April

April 9

**April Dinner Series**

***Climate Change Law and Energy Policy (Thai Chili)***

Guests: Seema Kakade and Neil Chatterjee

April 15

**Domestic Violence Symposium**

The South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C., the South Asian Law Students Association, and the Domestic Violence Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center held SABA-DC's 2008 Civil & Human Rights Symposium: "Hush - Domestic Violence and the South Asian Community: A Social, Legal, and Community Perspective"

The Symposium included a panel discussion on the often unspoken subject of domestic violence and its affects on the South Asian community in the U.S., the current legal ramifications facing victims, as well as the resources specifically available to the South Asian community. The panel included:

Erin Aslan, Esq. – Erin Aslan is a Teaching Fellow with the Domestic Violence Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center.

Shenaaz Janmohamed, M.S.W. – Shenaaz Janmohamed is the Community Outreach Director for the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (“DVRP”).

Nalini Rajguru – Nalini Rajguru is the President and Secretary of the Asian Women’s Self Help Association (“ASHA for Women”).

Robert J. Spagnoletti, Esq. – Robert J. Spagnoletti is a partner at the law firm of Schertler & Onorato, L.L.P.

Razia F. Kosi, LCSW-C - Razia Razia F. Kosi is the founder of Counselors Helping (South) Asians/ Indians, Inc. (“CHAI”), a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and the South Asian community about mental health and wellness issues and conducting cultural proficiency workshops with mental health professional.

Anita Khushalani, Esq. (Moderator) – Anita Khushalani serves as the Communications Co-Chair on the SABA-DC Board. She currently practices employment law in the Office of General Counsel at AARP.

## May

May 1

**AAPI/SABA Second Annual Happy Hour Fundraiser at IndeBleu Benefiting Upakar**

May 8

**SABA-DC Endorsements**

SABA-DC endorsed the following candidates for the D.C. Bar Board of Governors:

Lucy L Thomson  
Marna S. Tucker  
David J. Cymamon  
Ankur Goel  
Rebecca McNeil  
Benjamin F. Wilson

May 9

**NASABA Foundation/SABA DC Public Interest Scholarship Awarded**

Recipients:

Ms. Shiwali Patel, American University's Washington College of Law, Class of 2010;  
Mr. Feraz Ashraf

May 19

**An Evening with Gitanjali Guterrez, Dickstein Shapiro LLP**

*American-Style Justice: Guantanamo, Black Sites and American Values*

Gitanjali Guterrez, the first habeas attorney to meet with clients at Guantanamo Bay and the first attorney to meet with a former “ghost detainee,” led a dynamic discussion on the intersection between human rights, international law and the U.S. Constitution.

## June

June 11 **SABA-DC June Dinner Series**  
**Hanging Out Your Own Shingle - Opening up Your Own Law Practice**  
The Indian Experience  
Guests:  
Hassan M. Ahmad, founder and principal of the Nubani & Ahmad, PC.  
Ashok Mannava, co-founder of Mannava & Kang, P.C.

June 12 **SABA-DC Wines of the World Wine Tasting Event**  
Sponsored by Kirkland & Ellis LLP

June 14 **DC Bar Advice and Referral Clinic, Bread for the City**

## July

July 10 **Law Students Know Thy Career Options, Jones Day**

Co-sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the Greater Washington, D.C. Area (APABA-DC), the APABA Educational Fund (AEF), the South Asian Bar Association of Washington D.C. (SABA-DC), and the Vietnamese American Bar Association of the Greater Washington D.C. Area (VABA-DC).

Panelists:

Patrick Shen, Special Counsel for Immigration-related Unfair Employment Practices, U.S. Department of Justice/Civil Rights Division

Sanya Sukduang, Partner, Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, L.L.P.

Linda Mar Weidman, Corporate Counsel, Marriott International, Inc.

July 17 **SABA-DC/NetSAP-DC Summer Networking Event at Coco Sala Chocolate Lounge and Boutique**

July 31 **July Dinner Series**

***The Guest Worker Program and the Plight of the Immigrant Worker (Asia 9)***

The July dinner series topic was the Guest Worker program, with a focus on the plight of a group of Indian Guest Workers in Mississippi who are currently seeking justice for treatment that has been characterized by some as human trafficking. The guest speakers, two practitioners closely involved with this case, were Neha Misra, Chairperson of the NASABA Public Interest Committee, and Priya Murthy of SAALT.

## September

September 10 **September Dinner Series,**  
***Women's Dinner Series: Challenges Affecting Women in the Law (Thai Chili)***

The September Dinner Series discussion focused on challenges affecting women in the law and how best to overcome them. The guest speakers included Minaksi Bhatt, Partner at the law firm of Rothwell Figg Ernst & Manbeck, and Tina Sharma of the Law Offices of Tina Sharma.

September 13 **D.C. Bar Advice and Referral Clinic at Bread for the City**

September 18     **SABA-DC Kickoff Happy Hour at Tuscana West**

## **October**

October 2     **SABA-DC Vice-Presidential Debate Watching Event at Leloo Lounge**

October 4     **Robert E. Wone Annual Judicial Clerkship & Internship Conference, Howard Law School**

A coalition of minority bar associations in the area provided this event for law students interested in learning about judicial clerkships. Judges from federal and state trial, administrative, and appellate courts spoke to law students about clerkships, the clerkship application process, and selection criteria.

October 8     **SABA-DC Election 2008 Town Hall Meeting, Georgetown Law School**

SABA-DC hosted a political town hall event that featured speakers representing the Obama and McCain presidential campaigns, with a focus on each candidate's positions on issues of importance to the South Asian community.

The Obama campaign was represented by the Honorable Preeta Bansal, former Solicitor General of the State of New York and a senior policy advisor to the campaign. The McCain campaign was represented by Asheesh Agarwal, former Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and Special Counsel to the campaign. The program was moderated by Amol Sharma of the Wall Street Journal. Over one hundred attendees participated in this interactive discussion held at the Georgetown University Law School. A webcast of the event is available at:

<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/webcast/eventDetail.cfm?eventID=638>

October 9     **Presidential Debate Watching Event at Mezza Luna Restaurant  
Co-Sponsored by Indians for McCain and South Asians for Obama**

October 14     ***The Voting Rights Act and the South Asian Community: How You Can Get Involved in Protecting Rights on Election Day (White Tiger)***

SABA-DC's October dinner panel featured Yvette Rivera, Acting Deputy Chief of the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, and Deepa Iyer, Executive Director of South Asian Americans Leading Together. Both speakers discussed the Voting Rights Act and how it affects the South Asian community.

## **November**

Nov. 4     **Asian American Election Protection and Poll Monitoring  
Defending Asian American Voting Rights**

SABA-DC volunteers were deployed to poll sites in the Greater Washington, DC Area on election day. Attorney volunteers inspected poll sites, observed poll worker conduct, and interviewed voters on Election Day about voting barriers.

November 15      **SABA-DC Annual Holiday Gala, Circle Bistro**

SABA-DC held its third annual Gala on November 15, 2008 at Circle Bistro and Lounge in the Circle Hotel. The Gala was the best attended SABA-DC Gala yet. Approximately one-hundred guests were treated to a premium open bar and appetizers.

November 19      **November Dinner Series: Legal Outsourcing to India, Thai Chili**  
Guest: Paul Mandell, President, Clutch Group

## **December**

December 4      **SABA-DC/AAPI Pakistan Earthquake Relief Fundraiser, Mezza Luna Restaurant & Lounge**

December 13      **DC Bar Advice and Referral Clinic, Bread for the City**

December 18      **December Dinner Series**  
**Supreme Court Advocacy: The Perspective of a Clerk, Academic, and Practitioner** (Thai Chili)  
Guest: Pratik Shah, Assistant to the Solicitor General