

Saris and supper, flags and shopping Guests from India enjoy Oberlin visit

Dressed in traditional clothes, five Rotarians from India on a four-week Group Study Exchange to Kansas, shopped on Main Street last Tuesday before the Oberlin Club Rotary meeting.

The team included Sachin Menon, managing director at Menon Pistons Ltd. and Menon Piston Rings Ltd.; Amarja Nargunde, a lecturer in management at Bharati Vidyapeeth University's Institute of Management Rural Development and Administration; Salima Kothare, a graduate student at the Indian Institute of Human Rights; Dr. Satish Shet, an ophthalmologist and assistant professor at the university; and Dr. Persy Shroff, a medical officer at the Manipal Goa Cancer and General Hospital.

Rotary, said Miss Nargunde, has four avenues of service: individual, community, international and club. The exchange program, she said, helps with international understanding and also helps team members on all other levels, including with her own profession.

The team flew into Wichita on Sunday, April 15, and then traveled to McPherson and Hays, where they stayed with host families for several days, said Rhonda May, a member of the Oberlin club.

Ms. May and her husband, Dan Nedland, were one of the host couples. Others were Herschel and Jody Betts, John and Dianne Bremer and Bob and Kay Gaskill.

Rotary International, said Ms. May, sponsors exchanges, paying most of the team's expenses, to foster understanding and cross-cultural friendship.

Normally, said Miss Nargunde, these trips take place at the same time as a district conference. The team from Kansas came to India in January, she said. This trip is her first time in the U.S.

While in northwest Kansas, the team toured an ethanol plant at Campus, near Oakley; the Decatur County Courthouse;



Raye's Grocery; downtown Oberlin; the Atwood hospital; a dairy and the May Family Farms.

On Friday, Ms. May and Mr. Betts took the team to Phillipsburg, where they met their next host families.

Ms. May said the team will fly back to India around the middle of May.

Last Wednesday, Ms. May cooked the team and host families Indian cuisine. She said while she and her family lived in Singapore, they had a filipina housekeeper

who worked for Indian people and she knew how to cook Indian food. Ms. May said she started to buy cookbooks from India and learned to cook.

After more than two weeks of American food, the team members dug in to first and seconds.

Ms. May said she thought the team really enjoyed the dinner, adding that while it wasn't exactly authentic, it reminded them of home.



SALIMA KOTHARE (above) showed off her outfit in downtown Oberlin while she was here on a Rotary Exchange program. Dr. Satish Shet (left) ate Indian food while visiting at the May-Nedland home. Amarja Nargunde (below) shopped at the Oberlin Mercantile.



AT THE OBERLIN MERCANTILE on Main Street, Dr. Persy Shroff (above) looked at a Kansas Explorers book. After a shopping trip downtown, the team members went to the Oberlin Rotary Club meeting, where team leader Sachin Menon, an industrialist, and assistant governor of Rotary, exchanged club flags with Jesse Carter.



AT THE MAY-NEDLAND home last Wednesday, Miss Kothare and Dr. Shet talked with Elizabeth Nedland, after the women had dressed her in a traditional Indian outfit.



Herald photos by Cynthia Haynes and Kimberly Davis