

Immigrants' risks enrich us many times over

by Jim Crawford

Exhausted by a transglobal flight, we trundled our bags through Rajiv Gandhi Airport into the jostle and energy of Cyberabad. Posters and billboards celebrated the creation of a new city dedicated to high-tech entrepreneurialism and living the good life.

My wife Maureen and I returned to her childhood home for a school reunion. She had attended a small school in the older city core of Hyderabad.



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Much has changed since our last visit in 2007. There are more people in the street level of life, the lively churn of urban India. People going in all directions. Scooters. Cars. Trucks. Motorbikes. Buses.

There are more elevated roadways. Thirty feet above the bustle they double stack the main arteries and literally cut buildings in half. Cars zip along them non-stop. Thirty feet above the expressway is the new metro line. Cast in concrete its form dominates the skyline. Its two lines make a gigantic cross with one arm ending abruptly, midair above an ambitious city.

It was a great blessing to get to know some of the people who grew up with Maureen. People told stories, danced, sang,

and compared notes on families, careers, and changes to the old neighborhood. The institute where my father-in-law, Dr. Aqueil Ahmad, taught has not changed, but the two houses he rented for his family are gone. The first was replaced by a nightclub, and the second one by a hospital.

The Gen-Xers of India have seen a radical transformation of their country. It confounds and excites them all at once. Globalization (they'd spell it with an 's' not a 'z.') has not only changed their homeland, but also changed where some of them call home. Classmates had emigrated to Singapore, the Middle-East, and Europe. At least three came to the reunion from the United States.

I now realize that it was an even greater blessing to have visited the older Hyderabad with my 10-year-old daughter and her grand-father in 2007. Young Elise got to roam her mother's school grounds and meet her great-aunt and great-uncle. That summer she got to feel the pace of life in India. She got to experience and connect with a heritage that, although far removed geographically, was hers. When she revisits Hyderabad, God willing, her eyes can witness the power of change and the resilience of connection.

Immigrants, wherever they land, are literally the world's greatest risk-takers. They pay the loss of their native land in hope of winning a home, a fortune, a family someplace else. Theirs is a life 'in-between.' Even under the most favorable circumstances, an immigrant must remake herself or himself

to fit into an alien society. Under hostile circumstances they are an automatic 'other,' the targets of domestic resentments. Those with the lowest social capital are preyed upon by human traffickers. They lose more than anything a banker could hazard.

All immigrants deserve respect and admiration for the path they have chosen. They deserve humane treatment under the law. In civil society they should not be libeled or vilified. Their contribution to our world should be fairly reckoned.

If my father-in-law had not moved the family to America, if he did not pay the price and did not take the risk, then my life would have been diminished. If my mother-in-law had not married him and not immigrated to India, then Maureen would not have been born. She and I would not have our daughter.

Disparaging immigrant people negates them. It erases who they really are in order to substitute a false caricature into policy discussions. Fear, anger, and derision blind us to who they really are, and who we really are. It is perhaps the most un-American thing one could do.

When I board a plane to return home to the United States I see the flow of people who want to become Americans. I am excited for them. Because of the tenacity of people like them it has truly become the home of the brave. It is important to remember that.

Jim Crawford serves on the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and was its Chairman from 2015 to 2017. Jim is also the proprietor of Chatham Cider Works, along with his wife, Maureen.

Chatham County Line necesita noticias bilingües de la comunidad Hispano de Chatham

Buscamos artículos y noticias de acontecimientos en español e inglés. Fotos son bienvenidas también, con información en ambas lenguas. Mandarlos por email a editor@chathamcountyline.org

Chatham County Line needs bilingual news from Chatham's Hispanic community

We need articles and press releases in Spanish and English. Photos are welcome also, with caption information in both languages. Email them to editor@chathamcountyline.org



THE STEWARDSHIP OF TREES IN CHATHAM PARK

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Chatham Park is in relentless pursuit of the perfect community. To that end, we're proud to have created and implemented standards that demonstrate an exemplary commitment to nature and sustainability. Following these standards, we require that Chatham Park's tree canopy never falls below 50% - a requirement that raises the bar for other North Carolina communities. Additionally, tree coverage will be 10-20%.

Tree Canopy vs. Tree Coverage

What's the difference between tree coverage and tree canopy?

- **Tree canopy** is the area the tree's branches and leaves cover when viewed from above.
- **Tree coverage** is the land area where the tree grows. Typically, tree canopy measurements will be 3x the tree coverage area.

In Chatham Park, unlike other communities, trees in parking lots, single-family lots, and those planted in street rights of way will not receive credit for tree coverage.

Chatham Park's Tree Canopy vs. Other NC Cities

Chatham Park's requirements for tree canopy sets new, higher standards for other communities, and that's something for residents and visitors to be proud of!

For instance:

- Chapel Hill requires 30-40% tree canopy coverage and has no canopy requirements for the Town Center or UNC's campus.
- Charlotte has 47% tree canopy and has set a goal to achieve 50% by 2050 (according to TreesCharlotte). The tree coverage requirements in their ordinances range from 10-15% (except in the urban center with 0% required).

Chatham Park will never fall below 50% tree canopy and will have more trees than most cities in North Carolina.

Very few municipalities in North Carolina even have tree ordinances - but Chatham Park compares very favorably to those that do. See how Chatham Park's 10-20% coverage compares to other cities:

- Charlotte: 10-15%
- Raleigh: 10%
- Durham: 10-20%
- Greensboro: 10%
- Winston-Salem: 10%

In fact, Chatham Park will have more trees than most cities over 7,100 acres in North Carolina.

Where Nature and People Prosper

Here at Chatham Park, we balance the stewardship of the serene beauty of parks and open spaces in its natural areas with inspiring man-made art and architecture throughout built areas.

Positioned near two incredible water and wildlife areas and intentionally designed with ample outdoor spaces for natural recreation, Chatham Park is a well-orchestrated place where people live, work and play.

Here, everything is in its place, and there is a place for everything - including lots of trees.