

## **Arun Toké and Bidyut Das**

Country of origin: India

Circumstances of arrival: Arun came from the East Coast to Lane County in 1987. He worked as the publication manager at Aprovecho Institute in Cottage Grove, and in 1988, he founded *Skipping Stones Magazine*. He moved to Eugene in 1991. Bidyut came to join Arun in Eugene in 1992. They have been in Lane County since then.

During the last twenty-nine years, *Skipping Stones: Multicultural Literary Magazine* has published over 3,000 students in its pages. In addition to contributing art, poems, stories, experiences, reviews and opinions, students also help in editing the magazine. Hundreds of area students have interned and volunteered at *Skipping Stones*. The magazine, now a leading multicultural magazine, has received several national awards over the decades.

Work/avocation: About his work, Arun writes: “I am always amazed at the high quality writing and the depth of thinking represented in creations that we receive from young people from many diverse backgrounds all over. Perhaps, the most satisfactory part of my work at *Skipping Stones* is to receive the many notes of appreciation from our student contributors telling us some thing like: ‘You have no idea how much this means to me—to get published, to have my voice heard.’”

Arun is a recipient of the 2011 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Leadership Award of the City of Eugene. He was a Human Rights Commissioner during 2013-2016. He currently serves on the Interfaith Prayer Services Board and the Asian Council of Eugene-Springfield, and volunteers with the Food for Lane County’s youth farm. He has also written a couple of books and published many articles.

Bidyut's interests include gardening, helping senior citizen in the area, and volunteering. She managed the Eugene International Hostel for six years. She helps the Lane County Elections during election seasons and does medical interpretations for several Indian languages. She has been volunteering at WomenSpace in Eugene for several years. Bidyut wants to help empower women and children from all backgrounds. She is also a board member and festival coordinator for a Hindu Shrine in the area. Bidyut loves the community and feels at home in the area.

Photographer: Paul Dix