



**North American Sankethi Association (NASA)**  
**161 Natsisky Farm Road, South Windsor CT 06074, USA**  
**<http://www.sankethi.org>**

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Dear Sankethi friends,

Namaskara and greetings from the 2008-2010 term NASA office bearers. It is a cause for celebration that so many Sankethis have migrated to this great land of opportunity and managed to build and sustain the North American Sankethi Association that has now entered its 25<sup>th</sup> year. The steps that Nacharamma took many years ago did not stop at Bettadapura or Kowshika or Lingadahalli or Mattur-Hosahalli or other auspicious places, it continued on to North America.

Poojya Mahatma Gandhi said "You must be the change if you want change". Our own Nacharamma took it upon herself to institute change. We should celebrate the Sankethi progressive attitude and fortitude in accepting to follow the vision of a woman leader and strive for change ourselves.

We should also celebrate the diverse attributes that we as Sankethis have come to nurture and develop over time. Some of the words used by settlers in Bettadapura are different from their counterparts in Kowshika or other places. Some of the excellent food recipes might be slightly different but there really is no challenge the community can't overcome if we stand together. Let us unite and celebrate this diversity of ours.

We should also take the time to re-acquaint ourselves with the well thought out NASA aims and objectives set forth by the founders of our organization. Please see the NASA aims and objectives posted on our web site. Let us all do our share to support these aims and objectives.

As part of our 25<sup>th</sup> year celebrations we would like to include activities that promote, among other things, fitness & better nutrition. We would like to invite you to participate in the Hartford Marathon as we continue our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with a regional event on October 11<sup>th</sup>. After the marathon, we will gather at the Connecticut Valley Hindu Temple (11 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT) for cultural events and a great Sankethi dinner. Details are included in this newsletter and updates will be posted on [www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org). More regional events are planned and will be communicated via our web site & newsletters.

In addition to various celebrations, the NASA BOD would like to upgrade the website, add new life members, increase youth involvement in NASA activities, increase communication and promote activities that meet NASA's aims and objectives.

Furthermore, **the 25<sup>th</sup> year Silver Jubilee Celebration is planned for July 3, 4, and 5, 2009**. It would behoove all of us Sankethis to help out by attending the NASA Silver Jubilee in great numbers so that we may celebrate it with great fanfare. To that end, we would like to keep July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 as travel days. Please mark your calendar and bring your friends and family for this great celebration.

Yours truly,

*Keshava Kumar*

NASA President Keshava Kumar & BOD

## **1. Navarathri Celebrations, October 11, 2008**

*To be held at the Middletown Temple in Connecticut*

***11 Training Hill Road, Middletown CT 06457***

A regional Navarathri celebration will be held in Connecticut on October 11, 2008 at the Middletown Temple. Please plan to attend! The event will be held the same weekend as the Hartford Marathon, which offers several running events of various distances including a Kids' K, 5K, relay, half and full marathons. The schedule of events is below:

1. **8 AM to 12 Noon:** Hartford Marathon participation. Link to the marathon site: <http://www.hartfordmarathon.com/marathonnew.htm>. Please register via the web site. If you need help with registration please contact Keshava Kumar or Shanthi Keshava Rao. After the Marathon you can drive to the Middletown Temple (about 20 minutes) for the Navarathri Celebration. People interested in attending the Marathon can arrive the previous evening. Accommodations at various host families will be made available. Please contact Keshava Kumar or Shanthi Keshava Rao if you need arrangements to be made for early arrival.
2. **11:30 AM to 1:00 PM:** Lunch at Temple hall (11 Training Hill Road, Middletown CT 06457)
3. **1:00 PM to 5 PM:** Cultural programs (at Temple Auditorium)
4. **5 PM to 6 PM:** Dinner
5. **6:30 PM:** Good bye

We have several host families that can accommodate out of town friends for an overnight stay on Saturday. Please call Prema Keshava Kumar at (860) 648-9798 or email [kbkumar@cox.net](mailto:kbkumar@cox.net) for further information on this. Details of the program will be posted on our website ([www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org)).

**IT WILL HELP US IF YOU CAN CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDENCE EITHER BY EMAIL TO [kbkumar@cox.net](mailto:kbkumar@cox.net) or BY PHONE TO PREMA KESHAVA KUMAR AT (860) 648-9798. THANK YOU.**

## **2. Other Regional Meetings**

NASA would also like to invite other members to organize other regional get-togethers. Those members wishing to help organize a regional meeting should contact any member of the NASA Board for assistance.

## **3. Summary of July 2008 Annual Meeting**

### **Day at Lake Needwood**

NASA 2008 began in festive style with a day spent at Rock Creek Regional Park at Lake Needwood. NASA members gathered at the park for a day of outdoor fun with hiking, boating, and volleyball on a sand court. Attendees had some snacks before heading out in small groups for hiking and boating. Upon returning from our park activities, we enjoyed a sumptuous picnic lunch organized by K. Ramakrishna and Uma Ramakrishna, Lakshmi and Jayanth Jayaram and Latha and Ravi Rajagopalan. We had the chance to get acquainted, reacquainted, and generally catch up with fellow NASAites who we hadn't seen in a while. A small group gathered at one of the shelters for some impromptu group and solo singing. Meanwhile, others went hiking and boating and children played on the playground. A group including both adults and youth started a lively game of volleyball on the sand court while others watched the game enthusiastically, cheering on the players and the teams. Children also were led in some games and races where they had the chance to get in on the competitive fun. We were fortunate that the weather held out until the end of the day as we were enjoying some coffee and snacks at the picnic shelters. Attendees had the chance to chat with one another over a relaxed cup of coffee before heading to New Windsor or to the Fireworks on the National Mall.

### **Evening at New Windsor**

While some attendees tried to attend the Fireworks, they were foiled by the uncooperative weather and instead made the most of their time in DC by hanging out and getting reconnected. Upon returning to Windsor, we spent some time getting refreshed and settled in for the weekend. Some attendees went to the Greater Baltimore Temple for the *Devi Puja*. After a day of fun activity outdoors, we all enjoyed a cozy dinner at Windsor followed by our traditional celebration of the Fourth of July with fireworks and sparklers brought in as usual by Dr Rangappa. For the remainder of the evening, attendees had the option of watching a Kannada film, playing cards, or just enjoying pleasant conversations.

### **Rangoli Workshop and Competition**

Saturday morning began with our usual nature walk and *Vedic* chanting. Soon after breakfast, children gathered to be led in prayers. Meanwhile, adults were gearing up for the *Rangoli* workshop and competition. Vani Kaushik led us in an engaging workshop on the history of *Rangoli* and an interactive demonstration on how *Rangoli* is drawn. Following the workshop, a friendly contest ensued for both children and adults who shared some creative, innovative designs. Many warm thanks to Vani Kaushik for organizing such a wonderful workshop and to our judges visiting from India, Y.N. Srinivas and Seetha, Savithamma B.N., and Rajalakshmi Narasimha Murthy for helping to determine the winning designs. In the adult contest, third prize went to Anjan Kowshik, second prize to Vijayamma (Lakshmi's aunt), and first prize to Nagaratna Rao. In the youth contest, third prize went to Karthik Nagaraj, second prize to Jennani Jayaram, and first prize to Anjeli Shankar. Congratulations to the all the prizewinners in both the adult and youth categories and many thanks to all participants for sharing their beautiful *Rangoli* designs!

### **Bharathavachana**

NASA attendees had the pleasure of listening to *Bharathavachana* rendered by Professor Y.N. and Geetha Dathatri. Through a combination of song and storytelling, the artists shared a moving interpretation of the mother-child relationship using the compelling case of *Kunti-Karna* in the *Mahabharatha*. We thank the artists for sharing this unique Sankethi cultural tradition with us at NASA!

### **RANGOON**

Saturday's afternoon program featured a staged reading of the wonderfully written play, *RANGOON*, by our own Mayank Keshaviah. Mayank, having recently completed his graduate work, debuted his play at our gathering with cast members and a director/producer from our own community! For those who were not there to see this fantastic production, Mayank describes his work as follows:

“RANGOON” tells the story of the Patels, a Gujarati family whose patriarch, Dhiraj, is desperately trying to succeed in America to offset both personal and familial shortcomings from his past. He owns three 7-Elevens in the South and is quite comfortable economically. However Dhiraj must come to terms with raising a family in America, balancing tradition with economic freedom, and preserving his heritage while keeping his family together.

Many thanks to Mayank and the cast that included Ganesh Rao, Shalini Rao, Nandan Satyanarayana, Neela Satyanarayana, Mayank Keshaviah, Ranjini Srikantiah, Dale Poage, and Keshav Sundaresan and director/producer Ashwini Srikantiah for providing an afternoon of enriching entertainment! The staged reading was followed by a brief discussion with the writer, director, and cast – an engaging discussion that gave us much food for thought! We are eager to see the dynamic theatrical talents that this writer, director, and cast will hopefully share with us at future NASA gatherings!

### **Children and Adult, Group and Individual Cultural Programs**

Following a coffee break, we proceeded to the cultural program featuring performances by children and adults, groups and individuals. Mahathi Kumar, Neeharika Simha, and Gautham Nagaraj performed some beautiful pieces on the piano. Priyanka Kaushik, Anjeli Shankar and Nisha Shankar sang us some lively songs. Tejan Poage along with Dale Poage, Ranjini Srikantiah, Reyva Poage, Shailaja Srikantiah, K.V. Srikantiah, and Ashwini Srikantiah put on an entertaining (and philosophical) play based on a story written by Tejan himself. Karthik Nagaraj, Anirudh Nagaraj, Jennani Jayaram, Anjeli Shankar, and Nisha Shankar shared with us a group musical production that had us all clapping along. Jennani Jayaram, Zoe Gittings, Anjeli Shankar, and Sophie Mirotznik, who had participated in the Bollywood dance workshop offered by childcare assistants Sohni and Rahul, exhibited an energetic dance they had just learned during the workshop. NASA group also enjoyed great presentation by Sanjeev Mysorekar (son of Nagaraj Mysorekar and Meera of Richardson TX). Sanjeev delighted the audience by singing several Mohammed Rafi songs. NASA group hopes to listen to more singing by Sanjeev in coming years. The program came to a close with a lovely group song by Ramesh and Shubha Nagaraj, Vani Kaushik, and Priyanka Kaushik with Gautham Nagaraj on keyboard. During the “Open Mic” for devotional songs on Sunday morning, Gautham Nagaraj and Priyanka Kaushik shared with us their considerable and growing talents in Carnatic classical music, and Anirudh Nagaraj and Karthik Nagaraj performed some melodious *bhajans*. NASA gives our warmest thanks to all those who entertained us with their wonderfully diverse talents!

### **Graduation Recognition Awards**

Our traditional graduation recognition was held to honor high school, college, and graduate school graduates. This year we recognized:

- Sheela Hanasoge Ph.D., University of Michigan
- Mayank Keshaviah MFA, University of Southern California
- Rumya Keshava Ram BS, Case Western Reserve University
- Rohini Rao BS, Princeton University
- Tara Rao MD, New York University

- Prerana Rudrapatna High School, Ontario, Canada
- Sunil Hari MD, Ohio State University
- Suchetha Sastry MD, Northwestern

Many hearty congratulations to the graduates! NASA wishes you all the very best as you embark on new adventures in your educational and professional endeavors! The graduation recognition program was followed by a break for dinner while some adjourned to the gymnasium for a game of basketball.

#### **Grand Flute Concert by Maestro Shashank**

NASA officially kicked off its Silver Jubilee celebration with a polished and poignant flute concert by fellow Sankethi, Shashank. NASA was honored and delighted to have this renowned artist perform for us at this year's gathering. Shashank made a vivid impression on the music world at a young age with a stunning flute performance at the Madras Music Academy in 1990. He is the youngest musician in the history of South Indian music to have performed the most prestigious SADAS concert at the Music Academy - Chennai, a privilege often reserved only for legends in Indian music. Since then he has performed and taught at most prestigious institutions across India and around the world. Trained by his father Subramanyam and vocal maestros such as R.K. Srikantan, Palghat K.V. Narayanaswami and Sandyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, Shashank is considered one of the best flautists of our time. In his rendition of Carnatic classical music, Shashank is well known for his intricate and intense aalaapanas, melodious keerthanas and pulsating kalpanaswaras. We were fortunate to have Maestro Shashank's concert be the highlight and centerpiece of festivities to inaugurate NASA's 25th Anniversary.

This year's General Body Meeting (GBM) ran smoothly and a new President and Board of Directors (BOD) were elected. Please see the following section for minutes from the GBM. Congratulations to the 2008-2010 BOD – we expect great things from this group!

#### **4. 2008 NASA GBM Minutes**

The 2008 NASA GBM was held on July 6, 2008 at the New Windsor Conference Center at 10:00 am

1. Welcome speech by Dr. Sridhara, NASA president
2. Roll call was taken. 40 registered members were in attendance. Quorum for 2008 GBM was established.
3. Copies of 2007 GBM minutes were made available to members. 2007 GBM Minutes had also been sent to all members in May 2008 newsletter. Sundaresan identified that the 2008 GBM notification published in the May 2008 newsletter was not signed by the secretary. A corrected 2008 GBM announcement will be added to NASA records, which will include the secretary's signature for the notification of 2008 GBM. A second correction was also noted. Item 19 of 2007 GBM minutes stated no need for filing tax returns. However, due to average gross receipts exceeding limits established by IRS, the implications for tax returns due for previous years have to be addressed. Sundaresan motioned to accept 2007 GBM minutes along with the correction. Dathatri Seconded. 2007 GBM minutes were accepted.
4. When the meeting was called to order, the general body observed a few moments of silence for those Sankethis who passed away this past year, namely, Mrs. Lakshmi Rao, Dr. S.N. Subbarao, Dr. K. Ramachandra Murthy and Harave Keshavamurthy.
5. Dr. Sridhara started president's speech by thanking BOD and their spouses/families for their excellent work. He commented on the difficulty the BOD had with regard to the fulfillment of treasurer's functions in a timely manner. He thanked Satyanarayana and Mahesh Rao for putting in long hours to get papers in order. He also pointed out NASA's aims and objectives and made references to several NASA activities that met NASA's aims and objectives. He thanked the founding fathers for well defined NASA's aims and objectives. He highlighted the key goal of the outgoing NASA Board in building the spirit of community and enthusiasm among Sankethis around North America including Canada and how this has been accomplished very well by numerous regional meetings and well attended annual events. As many as 20 new life members representing all parts of US and Canada joined NASA during the last two years. Active participation from the Texas region is a testament to this. He mentioned that the new NASA Directory was just published and that it would help in building new relationships. The directory includes NASA Aims and Objectives and the Sankethi Anthem.
6. While the spirit of the community is growing, he called on all members to take stock and engage in productive and constructive participation and communication to build the community during this Silver Jubilee year. The president thanked NASA's Silver Jubilee Committee for their contributions.
7. Sundaresan made a motion of special thanks to the president and BOD for all the hard work. Nataraja seconded the motion, which was then duly accepted.
8. Sundaresan pointed out that the term of all committees appointed by Dr. Sridhara would expire along with his presidency. The appointment of any committees during the next two years are the responsibility of the new president

9. Sundaresan made a motion to thank the Silver Jubilee Committee and it was seconded by Dathatri whereupon the motion was accepted.
10. NASA secretary Dr.Keshava Kumar presented the secretary's report. In his report, he mentioned that the maintenance of the NASA website is free of charge to the members. No confidential information has been provided to the website administrators. He acknowledged that the website needed many upgrades, and are being discussed with the website administrators. He also noted that many successful NASA regional events were held thought the year.
11. Dr. Jayaram made a motion to accept the secretary's report. The motion, duly seconded, was accepted
12. NASA treasurer Satyanarayana presented the treasurer's report.
13. A request was made to expand abbreviations in the treasures report. Treasurer's report was accepted
14. Report of special teams was taken up. Sundaresan presented the Audit Team report. It was noted that 2006 Treasurer's report would be revised to reflect changes and entered in to NASA records.
15. There were no other committee reports.
16. There was no old or unfinished business.
17. No new business items were discussed.
18. NASA President S. Sridhara requested Dr. Jayaram, who had been identified as the election officer in the May 2008 newsletter, to conduct the election of office bearers for the 2008-2010 term.
19. Election officer Dr. Jayaram conducted elections the elections and the following President and BOD members were elected uncontested for 2008-2010 term:
  - a. President: Dr. Keshava Kumar
  - b. BOD members (\* indicates members elected in absentia)

Arun Chickmenahalli *	Ganesh Rao
Lalitha Hanasoge	Shanthi Keshava Rao*
Mayank Keshaviah*	Divakar Rudrapatna*
Ramki Nagaraj	Ranjini Srikantiah
20. Good and welfare discussions marked the completion of the last item of the agenda.
21. Motion of thanks to the Chair and BOD, duly made and seconded, was carried unanimously.
22. 2008 NASA GBM meeting adjourned.

## **5. Donations and Sponsorships**

NASA would like to thank and recognize those members who donated to NASA and helped make the Annual Meeting a success. Following is the list of donors and sponsors of various activities during the 2008 annual get together. Please accept our apologies if we have missed the names of any donors/sponsors.

### **Donors**

Y.N. and Geetha Dathatri	Ganesh and Shalini Rao
R.S. Keshavamurthy	George and Nagarathna Rao and Family
Dale and Ranjini Poage	Mayura Simha
Ravi and Latha Rajagopalan	Sri and Rajeshwari Sridhara
Raghu and Pavani Ram	K.V. and Amrutha Vishwanath

### **Sponsors**

Sri and Rajeshwari Sridhara	Thursday dinner
K. Ramakrishna and Uma Ramakrishna, Jayanth and Lakshmi Jayaram, and Ravi and Shanthi Rajagopalan	Friday lunch

## **6. Community News**

### **New Life Members of NASA**

NASA BOD welcomes the following new life members to NASA:

- 1) Renuka/Asha Rangappa of Hamden CT
- 2) Usha Rao & Vijay Srinivasan Randolph NJ

Ravi Rajagopalan & Lata Ramkrishna got married on Saturday, May 24th in Baltimore MD. NASA wishes all the best to the newlyweds.

Lata and Sathish Magge of Pittsburgh, PA recently celebrated the Brahmopadeshm of their son Chi. Hari Narayan. The two-day event was held in Mysore, India. On July 8th there were six homas including Ganapathi Homa, Ramataraka Homa and Mrutyunjaya Homa. The actual Brahmopadeshm was held on July 9th, 2008 and was well attended by family and friends. NASA wishes the very best to Chi. Hari Narayan.

Keshav, son of Dr. C.S. Shobha of Chilkunda (currently residing in the Middle East), has made it through the second round of auditions on the reality show "Indian Idol" on Sony TV. This places him in the top 30 of more than 100,000 candidates who participated in the competition. Congratulations and good luck!

## **7. Other News**

### **Opportunity to get great looking painting done while helping out NASA Silver Jubilee Celebrations:**

Mayura Simha has volunteered to donate all proceeds from the sale of paintings (excluding material costs) to NASA. The purchaser would be able to get a wonderful piece of art and help NASA at the same time. Details of the paintings are:

1. Paintings of people's choice can be ordered (landscapes/architecture - temple, home, village scenes etc). Sponsor shall provide pictures of the subject.
2. Each painting will be of 12" x 16" (Framed 16" x 20") watercolor painting made on the best quality paper and using artists' quality materials. The paintings will be matted and framed.
3. Each painting will be priced at \$250.
4. Actual material costs will be paid to the artist (the artist will provide receipts for paper and framing), which is estimated at \$50 per painting.
5. The remaining money will be donated to NASA (estimated at \$200 per painting).
6. All the paintings will be exhibited at the 2009 NASA gathering in July.
7. In order to complete the paintings in time please send in the pictures/contact the artist before January 2009.

Please contact Mayura Simha at [mayurasimhal@comcast.net](mailto:mayurasimhal@comcast.net) or (302) 239-4534 to get your paintings done.

### **Availability of Sundarakaanda CD and ordering Information**

NASA is happy to announce the availability of a musical CD called "**Raagamaalika Sundarakaanda**" produced by Nadatarangini. The lyrics for the CD are written by NASA's past president **Dr. M.S. Nataraja** and the music is composed by **Vidwan Ananthkrishna Sharma (Shivu)** of Bangalore. The lead singers are **M.S. Sheela, M.D. Pallavi and Mangalaa Ravi** with chorus support from the students of vidushi Usha Char. The CD is dedicated to the memory of Late Sri H.C. Subba Rao, a life-long devotee of Sri Rama (and father-in-law of two past NASA presidents, Dr. Ramakrishna and Dr. Sridhara). The CD was formally released at the Sri Siva Vishnu Temple on July 25, 2008. A number of people had the opportunity to listen to the CD during the recent NASA program.

The CD is available for purchase. Those interested in ordering CDs may write a check in favor of "**Nadatarangini**" and mail it to Dr. M.S.Nataraja, 10510, Beechknoll Lane, Potomac, MD, 20854. The minimum suggested donation is **\$10 per CD + \$3 mailing cost for each CD or \$13 total**. Please write "**Sundarakaanda CD**" in the memo section.

### **NASA address books:**

NASA address books have been mailed to those members that could not pick up a copy at our 2008 annual get together. If you did not get a copy please notify Ganesh Rao ([ganesh\\_rao@yahoo.com](mailto:ganesh_rao@yahoo.com)). We will get you a copy.



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