



Chigurū

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October 2016

North American Sankethi Association (NASA)

3305 Colonial Drive, Mississauga ON, L5L 5G3, CANADA

<http://www.sankethi.org>

Mar 2016

Board of Directors (BoD)

President

Prema Keshav Kumar

(860) 648-9798

keshavprema@gmail.com

Vice President

Amrutha Vishwanath

(973) 669-3828

amrutha.vishwa@gmail.com

Secretary

Ranjini Srikantiah

(201) 835-5081

ranjini@alum.mit.edu

Treasurer

Raghunath Kanagal

(703) 483-9212

NasaTreasurer@gmail.com

Deputy Treasurer

J. K. Rangappa

(301) 335-7037

Rangappa.jaikumar@gmail.com

Cultural Director

Sushela Bettadapura

(703) 830-6165

ssbettadapur@yahoo.mail

Events Director

Sheela Nagaraj-Dikshith

(201) 543-9434

sheela71384@gmail.com

Events Director

Sandhya Nagaraj

(203) 588-1686

sandhyamanjunatha@gmail.com

Hospitality Director

Pushpa Satyanarayan

(616) 308-1659

pushpa.satyanarayan@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Nandini Srikantiah

(613) 435-6650

n_srikantiah@hotmail.com

1.



President's Note

Dear NASA members and friends,

Hope you all returned from the exciting cruise trip and this letter finds everyone in good health and sprits. My name is Prema Keshav Kumar and I am the current NASA president. I have had the pleasure of working with many of you, as I have been involved in NASA for 15 years now. For those of you who do not know me, I am very passionate about NASA and my special interests are sharing our rich Sankethi culture, values, music, dance, drama, food, etc. My goal is bring all NASA people together from age 1 to 100 from all the regions. In exploring these interests and goals our board of directors aims to set role models for our kids, youngsters, youths and so on.

I did hear from many NASA friends that the cruise was great. In the future we hope to plan more activities like the cruise that bring people together in different ways. Regarding our annual get together, just to give you all a heads up, I am thinking that our July 4th weekend can be held in California in 2017. We are hoping for somewhere in the bay area and are looking to incorporate a national park trip with our famous Sankethi koodbulay, pulisa, thiresa, coffee and other things. I hope you all get excited to attend! In achieving this, however, we need help from people and suggestions regarding a venue. If you live in this area or have any contacts please let us know.

The NASA regional event for Navaratri is booked for Sunday October 2nd from 10 AM to 5 PM at the Stratford Hindu Centre in CT. Please mark your calendars that way you all can attend participate and enjoy the event and have the fun to...infinity. Please look out for more details to come on this event.

I am very excited for the next few years and to serve as your president. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any ideas, questions, comments or anything else. We are always looking forward doing our best!

Sincerely,
Prema Keshav Kumar
NASA President

2. Navarathri Get-Together - Regional Event – Sun Oct 2 – Stratford CT



NASA BoD is delighted to announce the NASA Navarathri Celebration Event. We are counting on maximum participation from all our members to celebrate Navarathri with food, fun and entertainment! Please take this as a personal invitation and kindly join us. We request that you contact any NASA BoD member and inform us of your participation. Getting an accurate representation of the number of participants will help us plan the food and activities appropriately.

Location:

Hindu Cultural Center of Connecticut
96 Chapel St.
Stratford, CT 06614

Program:

10:00 – 11:00 Arrival & Welcome
11:00 – 12:30 Lalitha Sahasranama & Bombe Aarathi
12:30 – 1:30 Lunch
1:30 – 3:00 Cultural Program
3:00 – 4:30 Concert by Sandhya Nagaraj – Vocal;
Sujatha Kidambi – Violin;
Krishna Sunil Palya -- Mrudangam
4:30 – 6:00 NASA Anthem, Light Dinner & Closing Remarks

RSVP: by email to: sandhyamanjunatha@gmail.com (203-588-1686) or keshavprema@gmail.com (860-648-9798). **Please RSVP as soon as possible so we can confirm an accurate headcount.**

We encourage NYC residents to attend. Trains between Stratford and NYC are available hourly. Let us know if you need transportation to/from the train station to the venue that is approx. 10 min away.

Cost: \$10 per adult. Children are free.

Call for Volunteers:

Below is a link to a shared document that contains the lunch menu for the event. We kindly ask that you consider volunteering to provide something from this list and mark it in this document. If the quantity is identified as more than 1 tray, please bring only 1 tray per person.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1If_Rjc8he2Ri2DIDzoYw_JSL1kZXLjo5-bG6tTXXbAM/edit?usp=sharing

Contact: For further details, please contact: Prema Keshav (860) 648-9798 or Sandhya Manjunatha (203) 588-1686.



3. NASA 2016 General Body Meeting Minutes

The General Body Meeting (GBM) of the North American Sankethi Association was held on **Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 2:00pm** at The Clubhouse, 13500 Stargazer Lane (off of Poplar Run Drive), Silver Spring, MD 20906.

North American Sankethi Association General Body Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2016

1. Roll call

Quorum has been achieved

2. Reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting

Sundaresan asked for qualification of the by-law amendment regarding term limits that was proposed and approved by the membership at the 2014 GBM

It was demonstrated that the By-Laws have been updated. The updated version will be posted on the website.

3. Reports of committees

Location Committee report

- *Debated holding annual meeting in Tampa area*
- *Interest in cruise came up*
- *Cruise was accepted based on interest by General Body as expressed in an online survey*
- *45 families expressed interest. 35 families have signed up.*
- *Location of GBM and elections was shifted to DC area*
- *This BoD will continue to complete responsibilities for the cruise event*

Question: *of the people who had expressed interest, how many have signed up?*

Answer: *of 139 people expected to attend, about 55 will be attended*

Question: *can people receive a list of people who will be attending so we can find each other on the cruise?*

Answer: *Yes, BOD has considered this and we are creating a separate email list for those attending so we can communicate with those members and let everyone know who is attending. We will also have a meeting hall within the cruise to have our own NASA gathering while on board.*

Question: *Is there a committee looking at By-Law amendments?*

Answer: *we looked at 501c3 status. BoD was consulted to discuss with a lawyer and come with a recommendation. This has not yet occurred. During this BoD term there was no committee assigned to address by-laws in entirety.*

- *Request that BoD should not ignore the importance of this task, while still developing cultural activities and opportunities. Request future BoD to assign a committee to seriously examine the by-laws, headed by Secretary, to develop a recommendation. Sundaresan is readily available to advise this group.*
- *Can even think of a single person committee – don't feel compelled to have a large committee.*

4. Reports of officers

President's Report

- *Highlights have been presented in the April Chiguru*
- *Established online payment option*

- *New look for Chiguru – health corner, recipes, planned to introduce Hinduism and other topics. Hope next President will carry this forward.*
- *Started a plan to recognize achievement of Sankethis. Asking next BoD to carry this forward and implement the program.*
- *Biggest win for this BoD is successfully developing and organizing a NASA cruise.*

Treasurer's Report

- *Financial report for 2015 calendar year has been passed out to the membership.*
- *Net revenue: \$12,837; Net expenses: \$13,710; Net loss: \$873*
- *2015 taxes to be filed in next week or two. Deadline is in May and extension has already been filed.*

Auditor's Report

- *Compliment Tara on dedication, meticulousness and willingness to work hard*
- *Received report in format that needed no change*
- *One comment - We are not profit/loss corporation...we are a surplus/deficit organization. The ~\$800 is not a loss.*
- *Figures have been verified and are consistent with transactions that have been meticulously recorded. Commend her and hope we will have her services for treasurer for several more years to come.*
- *Received minutes of the BoD during the year. That was required to verify whether the expenses incurred by the organization were duly submitted to the Board of Directors for ratification under the by-laws.*
- *Obligation of the management to ratify these. Unfortunately the minutes do not evidence that this procedure was conducted. This procedural irregularity should be addressed (as it used to be in the 90s). First order of business should be review of receipts and payments.*
- *Other than that, I commend the report and recommend it for acceptance.*

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report: Nataraj, Seconded by Dr. Jayaram

Secretary's Report

- *Shared responsibility with Nandini*
- *3 Chiguru publications issued*
- *Reconciled membership list. Now stands at 219 Life Members, 1 Annual Member*

Suggest adjustment from general funds to make life membership a multiple of \$200. The amount credited shows as \$193.90 for the 2015

Why is there a discrepancy? Due to Paypal fees. Sometimes could be exchange rate.

Recommend organization to account and absorb that.

5. Old and unfinished business

Sundaresan had put forward a proposal at the last GBM, but due to time constraints it had to be deferred to this year:

"Based on the experience over the years with, and having regard to the very limited utility from, maintaining the special accounts entitled 'High School Recognition Awards' and 'Building Funds' for the purpose of meeting the perceived needs, the balances outstanding in them be merged with the working capital funds for meeting any and all future needs in the respective areas."

- *These funds are administrative actions, not necessary to change any by-laws*

Srikantiah: *There was a catastrophe fund and emergency fund. They are separate and different. I have no recommendation but I would request the BoD to look at these funds which may be governed by other by-laws. See if merging these into working capital may also be beneficial.*

Sundaresan: One implication to catastrophe and scholarship – have been created by donations that are considered tax-deductible. If we are going to liquidate those funds, we should use them to disburse for what they are intended. Perhaps the funds can be remitted to sister organizations with established projects for same purpose (such as 50/50 to KSS and BSS). This would be legitimate use of these funds. Same could be said for Scholarship funds. Due to very low interest rate, we have a significant amount in life membership we can not touch. If we can liquidate those funds appropriately, it would be good use of funds.

Srikantiah: We have so many lawyers within the community, perhaps we can ask our NASA legal community to donate their time to advise the organization.

Viswanatha: Not all lawyers in community may be able to offer an opinion. Should confirm capability based on their specialty.

Nataraj: Let's not delay anything. Let's make a decision.

Sundaresan: We have 5 dedicated accounts – Life membership – should not touch, Catastrophe fund – may be able to disburse appropriately, Scholarship – may be able to disburse appropriately,

Padmini: Do not support sending funds to India

Question: What was original purpose of these accounts?

Building Fund

- Established at 10th anniversary. Idea to establish a building for NASA to house information, history, etc.
- Due to distribution of Sankethi families all over, it is no longer practical

Vote called. Those in favour of the proposal to move Building and HS recognition award funds to working capital

- 17 in favour
- Proposal has passed.

Jayaram proposal that was deferred from prior GBM was already handled at other NASA meetings in person.

6. New business

Proposal related to dissolution of Scholarship and Catastrophe Funds, with funds to be disbursed to BSS/KSS funds dedicated to the same goals.

Nataraj: Have not had committees for these funds for so many years. Do we need formality to dissolve these funds?

Sundaresan: Funds were collected by NASA members and presumably used for tax benefit. Purpose of these funds has to remain the same. Board can determine to whom the money should be sent. Proposal is to send these funds to KSS and BSS specifically for these reasons.

Jayaram: Catastrophe Fund – think about this. What if a catastrophe happens here in North America? We should use these funds for this purpose.

Sundaresan: Not proposing that NASA never help anyone. We can meet those needs with operating funds or with specific fundraising efforts. No need to hang on to funds if they have remained unused for so many years.

Nataraj: why could we not use these funds?

Sundaresan: Fund was not big enough to account for charges.

Divakar: We received a request to help a Sankethi who was visiting his son in NJ and fell ill. Charge was \$170k. Asked if NASA could pay. Jayashree Sastry had informed but by then application was made through charity fund of hospital. This happened in my own family.

Padmini: are KSS and BSS asking for money?

Divakar: No, they are not asking. But compared to Indian association and compared to fellow Sankethis in India, the number of deserving families may be higher.

Jayaram: let the funds be there in case anything happens.

Divakar: if any such event happens, the current amount is not high enough. We should think about that. We can always fundraise in times of need, specifically as needed.

Srikantiah: That money was established specifically to address emergencies of Sankethis living in US. It is a good thing we have not had to spend. In this country, if a disaster happens, as a community even if we send a check for \$500 or \$1000 or whatever it is, for a Sankethi living in this country it will be very welcome.

Vote for Catastrophe Fund: For 50/50 disbursement to KSS and BSS funds established for this purpose, subject to BoD examination of by-laws to confirm no restrictions:

- 12 For
- 10 against. Motion passes.

Vote for Scholarship Fund: For 50/50 disbursement to KSS and BSS funds established for this purpose, subject to BoD examination of by-laws to confirm no restrictions:

- 17 for
- 4 against.

7. Good and Welfare

- Births, Engagements have been reported in Chiguru
- Latest news: Srinivas Nataraja is engaged to be married later this year. We wish the new couple all the best!
- Book on Rudrapatna
 - Srikantiah's brother-in-law from Rudrapatna can procure copies on behalf of NASA members who are interested in ordering the book. Contact Srikantiah at 201-690-6825
 - Divakar has spoken with author, happy to make connections to the author.
- Moment of Silence
 - BNV Subramanya – founder of Jyothi Industries and great contributor to Sankethi

8. Adjournments

- Sundaresan motion to adjourn. Nataraj seconded.

The GBM was followed by General Elections for the President and Board of Directors for the 2016-2018 term. The members identified on the first page of this newsletter have been elected to represent you for the upcoming term.

Post-meeting announcements:

Mr. Sundaresan has accepted to audit the NASA accounts for the 2016-18 term. The NASA BoD would like to thank Mr. Sundaresan for his support in this regard.

NASA would like to thank Tara Rudrapatna for managing NASA's finances and effectively completing the transition activities to our new treasurer, Mr. Raghunath Kanagal.

Submitted by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ranjini Srikantiah'.

Ranjini Srikantiah,
NASA Secretary 2016-18

4. NASA 2016 Annual Get-Together – All aboard and Sailed Away!

Thank you to all who participated in the first ever NASA Cruise! 25 cabins were reserved with a total of 58 Sankethis participating. The four-day excursion was filled with laughter, activities, food, drink and sightseeing. Each night our NASA members dined together in a reserved area, which enabled the exchange of stories and events that occurred throughout the day. The youngest generation took advantage of their freedom and decided to dine together – much laughter could be heard from them – particularly when the magician came by to entertain them! One of the evenings was a formal dinner event where everyone dressed in their finest and we all looked quite grand indeed!

A special private NASA event organized by Nandini and Ranjini was held on board the morning of Jul 6. It began with Vedic chanting. The water was calm; the sun was streaming in, and the atmosphere very serene. This created a most beautiful setting for the shasranamas, sholkas, devotional songs and bhajanes that followed. We had Pavani Ram and Vani bravely share their special thoughts and the significance of this cruise for them and their late daughter, Priyanka, which was extremely touching. Following the spiritual activities, everyone participated in a few games and group activities. We finished off with a fantastic demonstration of the budding talent we have amongst us – A huge thank you to all of our youth who participated – particularly those who created their elements impromptu! We even had a premier showing of a new film created by Ray Bishop about Sankethis. This film can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzYRhBYb-QU&authuser=0>

This was a first-ever NASA cruise event and we recognize NASA's previous president Divakar for getting this long-standing idea off the ground, and Nandini and Ranjini for the co-ordination and turning it into a smooth sailing event. As a result of this event, 4 new families have announced their decision to become life members. NASA welcomes all these new members to our community organization.

And as usual, the pictures say it all ... a huge Thank you to Kevin Gittings for directing and managing all of us for a group photograph – now that takes leadership!





5. Congratulations!



Births

Veena and James became parents of their second baby boy, Amar Viswanatha Bourke. Amar was born on Friday Aug 19 morning weighing 7lbs, 11oz. Roshan is proud to be a big brother. NASA welcomes the new addition to our community and wishes all the best for his long and prosperous future.

Marriages

Srinivas Nataraj, son of MS and Geetha Nataraj married Sushwetha Manjunath on August 11, 2016 in Potomac MD. The celebration was well attended by friends and family. NASA wishes the newlyweds a very happy and prosperous married life.

Achievements

Anupama Suresh, daughter of Suresh Keshavamurthy, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Ohio State University majoring in the Neurosciences.

6. Community News

Members of the community are invited to submit articles of interest for publication to:
nasasecretary@gmail.com

Message from Seetha Aiyar, Director of Philanthropic Partnerships:

Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is an advocacy organization for the promotion of dignity, mutual respect, and pluralism. HAF educates the public about Hinduism, speaks out about issues affecting Hindus worldwide, and builds bridges with institutions and individuals whose objectives are aligned. Focusing on Hinduism awareness, human and civil rights, public policy, media, academia, and interfaith relations, HAF is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations. HAF serves Hindu Americans regardless of race, color, national origin, citizenship, caste, gender, sexual orientation, age and/or disability.

Don't miss one of these opportunities to hear about critical issues affecting all Hindu Americans:

MICHIGAN

November 12 - Metro Detroit: Annual Awareness & Awards Luncheon

TEXAS

November 13 - Houston: Annual Gala Dinner

FLORIDA

December 2 - Fort Lauderdale/Plantation: Annual Gala Dinner

Current News:

Diwali USPS Stamp: The United States Postal Service (USPS) just announced that it would issue a Diwali stamp for 2016. The Diwali Forever stamp will be released on October 5, 2016. Advocacy efforts over the past year by HAF, Indiaspora, local organizations and community members were instrumental in USPS creating a Diwali stamp.

Equitable Education in California: Major steps were taken in July towards ensuring that Hinduism and India are presented equitably and accurately following the California State Board of Education's decision to approve the History-Social Science Framework. The widely contested Framework, adopted after a nearly two-year process, including extensive input from Hindu American community groups, parents, and school children, now incorporates prominent mention of Hinduism's pluralistic ethos, Hindu sages of diverse backgrounds, and the importance of the Bhakti movement. The Framework also maintained the term 'ancient India', despite attempts to change most references to India to 'South Asia'. These changes, initially made in the May hearing, were officially adopted by the Board.

For more information write to seetha@hafsite.org or visit www.hafsite.org.

Ben East's Novel Release

NASA member Ben East released his debut novel, *Two Pumps for the Body Man*, in March after ten years developing the story. The novel, a satire of diplomacy on the front lines of the war on terror, reminds us of the question: ...*does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave o'er the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?*

Jeff Mutton walks the diplomatic beat protecting American officials in Saudi Arabia. An expert with guns and knives, grenades and rockets, he's survived assaults and sieges, stabbings and chokeholds, car bombs, carjackings, criminal hits, and countless other enemy threats. But instinct tells Mutton the menace he now faces dwarfs all these killers combined as the sins of his past begin to catch up with him. Part soft-boiled noir, part literary satire, *Two Pumps for the Body Man* is an unserious look at a serious situation, a grim reminder that no matter how high the barricade, how sharp the razor wire, there is no front line to the War on Terror. And the enemy is everywhere, even within. <http://www.newpulppress.com/bookpage/twopumps.html>

Ben has been writing serious fiction for 25 years, earning nominations in 2014 to the Dundee International Book Prize and the Leapfrog Press Fiction prize shortlists for his novel about drug trafficking in West Africa. He studied writing at Central Connecticut State University; taught English in Malawi as a Peace Corps Volunteer; at Brooklyn College Academy; and at the American School of Asuncion. Later he joined the State Department's Foreign Service, taking assignments in Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua, Ghana, Mexico, and Washington DC. Ben is married to Deepa Ramesh and has two sons, Vikram (8) and Mohan (5).

Dr. Satish Magge's philanthropic efforts in Doddamagge

Our Long-standing NASA Member Dr. Satish Magge, a cardiologist in Pittsburg has been recognized as A cardiologist with 'heart'. An article in the Herald-Star has been written about Dr. Satish Magge's annual trips to Doddamagge, Karnataka, where he serves the underprivileged. Inspired by his father, Lakshminarayana Magge, Satish operates a rudimentary clinic for free examinations that include blood pressure checks, prescribing medications and educating the villagers about their condition and better health practices in general. In many cases, Satish's father provided funds for these poor people to get appropriate medications and treatment. The article continues to describe two registered trust funds in honour of his parents and grandparents that have been established by the Magge family to help the needy. A recent significant contribution was when the trust fund was able to sponsor a 30-year old person to have a kidney transplant. The 10 -15 family members who are also doctors are all supporting the trust fund and there are plans for them to go back annually in turn to provide services in their specializations. This is a demonstration of their generosity and commitment to the community at large. NASA would like to recognize their efforts in this regard.

For more information, please refer to the article in the Herald-Star by Janice R. Kiaski, published Apr 3, 2016.

Dr. Hema Magge – Presidential Scholar Recipient &

Reference: Cincinnati Country Day School - Connections – Fall 2015.

Dr. Hema Magge was featured in the Cincinnati Country Day School Alumni publication, Connections as one of the School's presidential award recipient. Hema is making a difference working and living in one of the poorest countries in the world as Director of Child and Newborn Health Pediatrics for Partners in Health in Rwanda. She's working with Rwandans to build a viable health care system – one where infants don't die within the first month of their fragile young lives. Being named a Presidential Scholar in 1997 was a defining moment that fueled her passion to make a difference. Hema is quoted in the article as saying "... I wanted to connect with a greater, broader global community, and learn more, push myself into settings that I was unfamiliar with and challenge conventional boundaries ..."

Hema attended Harvard university where she majored in Government and her undergraduate thesis was the examination of children's health insurance among Latino immigrants in the Boston area. She knew at that time that politics, human rights and a social justice approach to medicine and health is what she is passionate about. After graduating from Harvard, she spent the next year working with a small South African community-based organization focused on children's health, human rights and violence prevention. She then joined the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, where she started a global health program for medical students through a partnership in Botswana. After her pediatric residency, and fellowship programs, she began her current position. She has tried to bridge the gap between theory and practice in maternal and child health in resource-constrained settings.

As a result of her hard work and that of accelerated initiatives to improve newborn health, Hema and her group have seen neonatal mortality drop by 30% in the past 18 months. This is an incredible achievement and one that is deserving of the recognition. We at NASA congratulate Hema on her achievements and contributions to the global health care systems – particularly in the poorest areas that require it most.

7. News from India

There has been no information submitted for this publication. Should you have anything for the next edition, please contact any NASA BoD member.



North American Sankethi Association (NASA)
c/o Prema Keshav
<need Prema's Mailing Address>

