



North American Sankethi Association (NASA)
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Vacant

Dear Friends,

January 6, 2008

On behalf of the NASA Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year. I hope you all had a good vacation and are now back to work feeling energized! We on the BOD have been working towards getting ready for the 2008 NASA activities and I am happy to report that we have made some good progress.

We had a great Regional Meeting during the Navarathri-Deepavali festival season in northern New Jersey which was attended by well over 70 people. Please find a detailed report on that event in this newsletter. NASA extends a special thanks to the Srikantiah, Paoge, Vishwanatha and Keshava Kumar families for their efforts and support in making this regional event such a success.

We are now preparing for another regional event in Texas, after having sponsored one in the Houston area last year around this same time of year. This year, Menaca and Bhaskar Padakandla have kindly agreed to host the event in their home in Dallas on Saturday, February 16th during the President's Day long weekend. I am grateful to them for their enthusiasm and help. I am also very happy that, to support this regional meeting, Vinaya and Jai Rangappa will be attending the event as well. This is a great opportunity for Texas Sankethis and their families to get together. Given that Texas-area Sankethis may find it difficult to attend our annual events often, this regional meeting provides us with a chance to go and see them. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Arrangements are being made for the first NASA-Paschimavaahini joint event around Ugadi time in the Bay Area. Last year I had the unique opportunity to participate in the Ugadi festival in northern California and it was very heartening to see over 100 of our fellow Sankethis gather and show off their talents. I am sure we will have an even bigger event this year. I appeal to you all to join us there in good numbers to make this event a grand success.

I would like to ask you to save the date for our next NASA annual event to be held during the Independence Day weekend, July 4th-6th, 2008 in New Windsor, MD. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend in large numbers. Feel free to contact me or any members of the BOD if you have any suggestions regarding activities for this year's event. We welcome your input and appreciate your efforts in making NASA 2008 a fantastic, memorable event as this BOD completes its tenure!

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, we have now formed a NASA Silver Jubilee Advisory Committee to assist the current and the next BOD in planning and facilitating grand celebrations leading up to and including the 2009 annual function. This advisory committee is headed by Dr. Y.N. Jayaram (Founding President) and is comprised of the following members: Dr. M.S. Nataraja, Mrs. Jayashree Sastry, Mrs. Ranjini Srikantiah, Mrs. Seethalakshmi Madhavan, and Mr. Divakar Rudrapatna. The current BOD looks forward to working with this advisory committee in planning for NASA's 25th Anniversary.

I look forward to seeing you all during 2008! Again, Happy New Year!

Warm regards,

S. Sridhara, President-NASA

1. Report on Navarathri-Deepavali NJ Regional Event

This well-attended regional event was held at the beautiful Women's Club of Westwood, NJ, thanks to the nice arrangements made by Shylaja and Srikantiah. NASA's President and the First Lady, Sri and Rajeshwari Sridhara, were the first to arrive at 11:30am followed by many members who traveled from several states including Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut and some who came all the way from Canada. Attendees enjoyed some snacks and coffee to get a good start.

Goddess Durga was decorated on a special platform on the stage to mark the holy Navarathri festival. One of our most enthusiastic youngsters, Puneeth Kumar helped with arrangements on the stage and acted as the emcee for the program. The invocation was sung by Geetha Dathatri to mark the beginning of the cultural program. NASA has always had great pride in the talented children in our community and those who shared their talents during this program affirmed our pride. Krishna (son of Sowmya and Sunil Srinivasmurthy) recited the full Ram Nam with absolute focus and devotion without a single break! Suman and Nandan (sons of Radhika and Ramachandra Sastry) recited Mahishasura Mardini Stotra with apt attention and perfect tune. Sheela (daughter of Kusuma and Subrahmanya Hanagal), Mahati (daughter of Prema and Keshava Kumar) continued the children's activities through their vocal and violin performances respectively. Please forgive the oversight if any other children who performed are not mentioned specifically here. These performances were quite inspiring to the audience.



In the meantime, attendees were treated to a very sumptuous homemade lunch that was brought in by our own members. Our special thanks to all the ladies who did such a loving service! Lunch was nicely complemented by special "Jayaram" pickles and special "Dathatri" banana chips!

A very informative narration on the significance of the Navarathri festival was delivered by Prof. Dathatri followed by a brief presentation on the great service being offered in India by Sankar Netralaya. A Sanskrit composition of Sankaracharya was sung by Rajeshwari and Sridhara. One of our accomplished musicians Sandhya Nagaraj who gave a performance during the 2007 CT event sang a couple of special Devi kruthis. Following these programs, we enjoyed a superb Veena concert by Sri Sunil Sreenivasa Murthy.

Classical Veena concert (report by Mrs. Amrutha Viswanatha):

It was indeed our privilege that, considering his significant professional and family commitments, Sri Sunil Srinivasmurthy gave a Veena performance on one of NASA's concert stages. Sunil was ably accompanied on the mrudungam by Subhiksh Chandrashekar from New Jersey, a young and talented artist who is only 13 years old. Sunil's *manodharma* was evident especially when he played the famous

song “Manasa etulo” in *raga malayamaarutha*, a composition by Sri Tyagaraja. This piece along with others he performed demonstrated his talents and made it clear that he received positive mentorship through Sri Krishna Murthy, a great Veena vidwan from Bangalore. NASA looks forward to hearing more of Sri Sunil in concert in times to come. NASA is happy to encourage local musicians and artists, and to give them an opportunity to perform and hone their skills before a welcoming audience. We wish these young artists the very best.



Following the featured concert, attendees took a coffee break to have coffee and tea along with delicious snacks brought in by our members. In the meanwhile, Lakshmi Jayaram engaged children in creative activities and had them showcase their wonderful artwork for attendees. The evening function came to a close with a very devotional group chanting of Lalitha Sahasranama and Vishnu Sahasranama in front of goddess Durga. Members from the audience joined along as well. This experience was very calming and elevating to many. Aarathi to goddess Durga concluded the evening program. Everyone was treated to another fine meal, this time a combination of food prepared by attending families and a catered dinner from Udipi.

There was no dearth of volunteers to clean up the hall and stage, thanks to everyone lending a helping hand. The program turned out to be an enjoyable social gathering of over 60 people, providing a fine atmosphere to celebrate two festivals that are dear to all Sankethis: Navarathri and Deepavali. The Srikantiah, Poage, and Viswanatha families hosted several out-of-town families in their homes for continued fun and food! NASA thanks all volunteers, hosts, and donors who made the event such a grand success.

2. New Life Members of NASA

NASA welcomes the following new life members:

- Sandhya (the musician) and Nagaraj Ananthashesha from Stamford, CT
- Donna and Narasimha Swamy from Peekskill, NY
- Sowmya and Sunil Srinivasmurthy (Veena player) from Howell, NJ

NASA thanks you for and congratulates you on your life membership! We look forward to your continued and engaged participation in our community’s activities!

3. Sponsorships & Donations

NASA would like to recognize the many donors who have continued to contribute towards the Emergency Relief Fund and the Disability Relief Fund being managed by Mr. Swamy in the U.S. and by the KSS in India. Recent substantial donations by Veydehi and Shivashankar and by B.R. Manjunath to BSS, and by Srikantiah, Uday Shankar and MR Balakrishna towards several good causes in India particularly including the Old Age Home run by the KSS are also much appreciated. Thank you all for your generosity.

4. Report on Benevolent Funds for Sankethis – 2007 (by Mr. BKS Swamy)

Benevolent Fund for Sankethis has two funds operating under it established for the sole purpose of helping poor Sankethi families in India (both Kowshika and Bettadapura). These funds are operated by generous donations from NASA members year after year.

Emergency Relief Fund was started in 2004 and has successfully operated for the past 4 years. This fund provides financial assistance to poor families who face dire medical emergencies or death of primary earning member of the family. Disability Relief Fund was started in year 2006. This fund helps handicapped poor individuals or poor young widows by providing financial assistance to get vocational training to get employment and become self dependent. For the year 2007 donations amounting to Rs. 64,038 for Emergency Relief Fund and Rs. 58,319 for Disability Relief Fund was sent to Kowshika Sankethi Sangha who administers the funds in India. With balance brought forward from 2006, KSS has spent Rs. 65,500 in ERF. Beneficiaries have received from Rs. 2000 up to Rs.10, 000 to cover hospital expenses to get treatments like surgery on leg, lumbar disc prolapse, paralytic attack and eye operations etc. An amount of Rs. 45,000 was spent in DRF in 2007 to assist two blind students to continue Computer Diploma training and one young boy to save his leg from amputation due to burns.

KSS and BSS members are all praise for this wonderful assistance we are providing from here. This praise has been shared with some of the visiting NASA members. It gives a sense of joy and fulfillment to know your donations are used in a noble cause. Balance left with KSS for 2008 is very small. I request more NASA members to join in this cause and send your donations of \$100 for each fund to enable to continue this excellent help NASA is extending from here for needy Sankethis back home. Donation checks drawn in the name of NASA are tax deductible and may be sent to the NASA President Dr S. Sridhara, 3943 White Rose Way, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

5. A Request of All NASA Members and Affiliates

If your postal or email address or telephone number needs an update or if you would like us to include your or your friends' email addresses in the distribution list, please send us a note with the current email address(es) to ssridhara51@gmail.com or kbkumar@cox.net. We are planning to publish an updated NASA Directory by July 2008 and your quick responses would be greatly appreciated.

6. Website Updates – New Link

A link to organizations associated with NASA, including BSS and KSS, has been provided on our website (www.Sankethi.org). The website also includes complete details and links to the Sankethi Genealogy Project supported by NASA. Forms to provide family details and instructions to complete these are also available. If you need any help to update your information or would like to view the Sankethi Tree please contact a member of the NASA Team working on this project through the addresses provided on the website.

7. Community News

NASA life member Vijaya Murthy (d/o Life Member Shylaja and Dr Keshava Murthy) married Vikram Rao in Bangalore on September 5, 2007. They now live in Chicago. NASA wishes Vijaya and Vikram a very happy married life!

8. NASA Regional Meetings

Dallas, TX Event:

Date: Saturday, February 16, 2008 (President's Day weekend)

Venue: Padakandla Residence
4449 Young Drive
Carrollton, TX 75010
Tel: 972-394-8708
E-mail: Menaca@mac.com

Program:	Meet and socialize	11:30 – 12:30pm
	Lunch	12:30 – 1:30pm
	Cultural Programs I	2:00 – 3:30pm
	Coffee Break	3:30 – 4:00pm
	Cultural Programs II	4:00 – 6:00pm
	Dinner	6:00 – 7:00pm
	Wrap up	7:00 – 7:30pm

There is no registration charge for this event but sponsorships are most welcome. Please confirm your attendance to the Padakandlas as soon as possible. Also, please let a member of the BOD or the Padakandlas know if your family wishes to remain in the Dallas area for the weekend and we can make arrangements for your stay. Finally, if you or a member of your family would like to participate in or perform during the cultural programs, please let a member of the BOD or the Padakandlas know as soon as possible. We have planned a fine Veena concert by local artist Smt. Vasundhara Kikkei. Our 2007 annual event musician star Harsha Nagarajan is expected to join us as well.

Additional Regional Events Being Planned

Paschimavaahini has planned their Sankranthi event on Feb 2, 2008 evening in Sunnyvale. Members will be receiving details of the program through e-mail.

March: Ugadi function in NJ/NY area. Please look for details on www.Sankethi.org by end of Feb or be in touch with Amrutha Viswanatha and Srikantiah.

April: As a Joint Event with Paschimavaahini, Bay Area-California

May: Richmond/NC area or DC area



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