



North American Sankethi Association (NASA)
3943 White Rose Way, Ellicott City, MD 21042
<http://www.sankethi.org>

Dear Friends,

May 21, 2008

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(Regional Meetings)

Vacant

It is my pleasure again to welcome you all to attend our much-anticipated annual event from July 3rd through 6th at New Windsor, MD. The NASA Board has put together an exciting program that is a fine combination of outdoor activities, entertainment and many cultural activities. The theme of this event is "The Communication of Culture, Cultures in Communication: NASA at the Intersection of East and West." As such, we hope to celebrate our cultural traditions and to reflect on their meaning as we endeavor to preserve them in our local settings. This year's reunion promises to be vibrant and eventful as we kick off our Silver Jubilee Celebrations with a fine concert by the world famous flautist and our own fellow Sankethi, Shashank. The Silver Jubilee Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr YN Jayaram has started planning a grand celebration of our Silver Jubilee Year culminating in a memorable event in July 2009.

We have included an overview of the NASA 2008 program along with the registration information and forms in this newsletter. As you will see in this program, based on their great success last year, we have continued the all day outdoor event and retained the services of excellent child care providers who will coach and engage children in constructive and fun activities all weekend. You will also find the Notification of the 2008 GBM in this edition of the newsletter. The minutes of the 2007 GBM meeting have been published in our newsletters in 2007 (available on our website) and we will have hard copies available at the 2008 GBM. I encourage you to visit www.sankethi.org to review these minutes before the GBM this year. We will also have Elections for the 2008-2010 term during the 2008 GBM.

We have tried to keep the NASA 2008 registration costs reasonable in spite of higher prices across the board for all programs and services. We have continued to offer reduced registration rates for students and visitors from India at 50% of the normal rates. I am prepared to consider any special assistance in this regard since the goal is to facilitate active participation in our organization's activities. I encourage you to celebrate your family and special occasions with us at NASA 2008 by sponsoring meals or other programs. I am very happy to share that we have already received two donations towards the program and we look forward to many more! To this end, we have included in this newsletter a sponsorship form for your use.

One of the main pursuits of this Board has been to invigorate our Sankethi community through urging active and enthusiastic participation and by building networks among members of all ages in all regions. I believe we have been largely successful in light of well-attended regional and annual events, and great participation by children and youth. There is much more constructive work to be done in these community-building efforts and the Silver Jubilee Year presents a good opportunity to strengthen our plans and actions going forward. We would greatly appreciate your help in these efforts by attending NASA 2008 in large numbers and continuing our rich tradition. We welcome your constructive ideas to grow our organization in a direction that is both free of politics and fruitful to us all. See you all at New Windsor soon!

Warm regards,

S. Sridhara, President-NASA

NASA 2008
The Communication of Culture, Cultures in Communication:
NASA at the Intersection of East and West
Thursday, July 3 – Sunday, July 6

It is with great delight and anticipation that we share with you the program for NASA 2008. Based on experiences from previous gatherings, we have strived to put together a program that appeals to the diverse interests of our members old and new, young and young-at-heart. From spending an active day outdoors engaged in sports and games to taking pleasure in the vibrant talents of our youth to enjoying musical programs by Sankethi artists, we are ready to inaugurate a NASA's 25th year in grand style! Please consider this a warm and compelling invitation to join us for what promises to be a festive gathering to reconnect with true friends and enhance the traditionally progressive spirit of our community!

Venue

New Windsor Conference Center
500 Main Street
New Windsor, Maryland 21776



The New Windsor Conference Center (NWCC) has provided a warm and welcoming environment for our annual meeting for several years now. All conference facilities are available for our use during the entire weekend and the Windsor staff looks forward to our return. Check-in will begin Thursday evening and continue throughout the weekend. About two-thirds of the rooms at NWCC have attached bathrooms and all rooms are furnished. Fresh sheets and towels are provided. Rooms will be allotted based on dates registrations are received and on family size. For more information about the New Windsor Conference Center, please visit their website at <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/nwcc/>. Maps and detailed directions are available at <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/nwcc/goto.htm>.

Program Highlights

Social Programs:

Day at the Lake – Friday, July 4

Rock Creek Regional Park – Lake Needwood
15700 Needwood Lake Circle
Rockville, MD

On Friday, July 4, we will meet at Lake Needwood and enjoy a day of sports, games, community-building activities, food and fun for attendees of all ages. The park offers picnicking, hiking trails, boating, a sand volleyball court, golf, horseshoes, and a children's playground. Picnic Shelters K, L, and M have been reserved for our use from sunrise to sunset and are located at Picnic Area #2. Entering the park through the Avery Road entrance is most convenient. For more information about the lake and facilities there, visit the Lake Needwood website: http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/park_of_the_day/feb/parkday_feb3.shtm.



Fireworks on the National Mall

This year we are planning a group trip to the sensational Fireworks Celebration on the National Mall on July Fourth. The Washington DC Metro will be the most convenient way to travel to the Mall area. Lake Needwood is located about two miles from the Shady Grove metro stop. We will coordinate car pools from the lake to the metro and then from the metro back to Windsor. Those attending the fireworks in Washington, DC may have dinner on their own or take a boxed dinner with them from Lake Needwood. For more information about this year's fireworks celebration and the metrorail system, check <http://www.nps.gov/ncro/PublicAffairs/Independenceday.htm> and <http://www.wmata.com/metrorail/systemmap.cfm> .



Cultural Programs:

Grand Flute Concert by Maestro Shashank

Renowned Sankethi artist, Shashank, will perform on Saturday evening, July 5. This concert will be the highlight and centerpiece of festivities to inaugurate NASA's 25th Anniversary. Shashank is a musical genius and has performed worldwide at the most prestigious festivals and venues. His concerts draw the highest acclaim and enthrall audiences everywhere. We are thrilled to have Shashank perform at NASA this year and look forward to a magnificent performance with great anticipation!



Bharathavachana

Y.N. Dathatri and his wife, Geetha, along with Radhika Shastry will be rendering Bharathavachana on Saturday morning, July 5. Bharathavachana is a unique Sankethi cultural expression and we are very fortunate to have resident experts in the art! Through Bharathavachana, the compelling oral tradition of storytelling is expanded through music and poignantly brings our vedic heritage to life.

RANGOON

Mayank Keshavaiah will present his original theatrical production "RANGOON" on Saturday afternoon, July 5. The staged reading, directed by Ashwini Srikantiah, will be followed by a discussion with the writer, director, and actors. "RANGOON" is currently being performed this spring in Los Angeles. We are very excited to celebrate Mayank's creative accomplishments on the NASA stage! "RANGOON" is about 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 Northern Georgia 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. The reading of "RANGOON" and subsequent discussion hold promise for a very interesting afternoon.

Rangoli Contest & Children's Puja Workshop

On Saturday morning, July 5, we will have a Rangoli contest for all ages. Contestants will have ample time to create the designs of their choice, so begin thinking of your ideas now! Concurrently, children (ages four to twelve) will have a workshop on how to perform a simple puja. The significance of each step of the puja process will be explained, along with the meaning of the accompanying shlokas. The program will culminate with all children independently performing puja.

Trip to Greater Baltimore Temple

We will coordinate a group trip to the Greater Baltimore Temple from New Windsor on Friday evening, July 4. This new temple is beautiful and less than a thirty minute drive from Windsor. On Friday evenings, the priests regularly perform Devi and Durga puja. For more information about the temple, please visit www.baltimoretemple.org.

Service Projects:

Community Service Project

We are trying to arrange a *community service project* on Friday. We will post details about this on our NASA website by the end of May. One activity being considered is for a group of volunteers to prepare sandwiches for the homeless on Friday morning at Windsor and to deliver the food to a shelter later that day. Another activity we may organize is to help make large flower garlands at the Shri Mangal Mandir (<http://www.mangalmandir.org/>), located about 15 minutes from Lake Needwood, for the *devi puja* performed there on Fridays.

Clothing Drive

Many of our children have beautiful clothing from India that they have only had the opportunity to wear once or twice before outgrown. Please bring your “gently used” *langa*, *salwar kamese*, and *kurta* sets to this year’s meeting. They will be displayed and available for purchase at very moderate rates. All proceeds will go to a children’s charity. Please participate by bringing clothing and purchasing items as well!

Business/Governance:

General Body Meeting, Town Hall Meeting, and Elections

On Sunday morning, July 6, we will have our yearly General Body Meeting, followed by a “Town Hall Meeting” to give all members a voice in our organization.

Conference Schedule

Thursday, July 3:

6pm	Check-In & Welcome
7pm	Dinner
	Game Night (Scrabble, Pictionary, Trivial Pursuit)

Friday, July 4:

NASA Reunion 2008

10am - 5pm	Day at Lake Needwood
AM session	Service project
10am – 12pm	Group Sports, Games, Contests, Activities
12noon	Lunch
2-5pm	Golf, Boating, Hiking

5pm	<i>Optional Trip</i> to Washington DC for Fireworks on the National Mall (boxed dinner will be provided)
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6pm	<i>Optional Trip</i> to Greater Baltimore Temple (departing from Windsor)
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7-8pm	Durga/Devi Puja
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8:30pm	Dinner at Windsor upon return from Temple
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5pm	Return to Windsor
7pm	Dinner at New Windsor
9pm	Fireworks – Sparklers for Children

10pm	Kannada Film Presentation
	Cards – Rummy, “28,” Poker

Saturday, July 5:

Communication of Culture

6:30am	Nature Walk
7:30am	Vedic Chanting
8-9am	Breakfast
9 – 10:30am	Rangoli Contest (for all ages) Puja for children (ages 4-12)
10:30am	Bharathavachana ~ Geetha & Y.N. Dathatri and Radhika Shastry
11:30am	Children's Lunch
12 - 1:30pm	Lunch
12 - 1:30pm	Children's Bollywood Dance Workshop – gym

Cultures in Communication

1:30pm	“RANGOON” ~ an original theatrical production by Mayank Keshaviah, directed by Ashwini Srikantiah followed by a conversation with the writer, director, and actors
3:15 – 3:30	Coffee/Tea Break
3:30 – 5pm	Child/Adult Individual & Group Cultural Programs
5-5:30pm	Graduation Awards
5:30-6:30pm	Teen/Adult Basketball Game
5:30pm	Children's Dinner
6-7:30pm	Dinner
6-7:30pm	Children's Movie Presentation

Heralding NASA's Silver Jubilee Celebration

7:30pm	Evening Cultural Program featuring Grand Flute Concert by Maestro Shashank
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Sunday, July 6:

6:30am	Nature Walk
7:30am	Vedic Chanting
8-9am	Breakfast
9-9:30am	Devotional Songs “Open Mic”
9:30-11.30am	General Body Meeting including Elections
11:30-12am	“Town Hall” open forum
11:30am	Children's Lunch
12noon	Lunch
1-2.30pm	Farewell

Note About Childcare and Meals:

Two known and trusted individuals (Lakshmi Jayaram's personal acquaintances and babysitters), Sohni and Manisha, will join our meeting to provide child care assistance throughout the weekend. Sohni and Manisha are both students at the University of Maryland – Baltimore County and are very caring, nurturing, and trustworthy individuals. Under their supervision, the gym will be open for children and youth all day on Saturday and Sunday where they will engage in arts and crafts, games and activities, music and dance, sports and fun. Also, to our great fortune, they are talented “Bollywood” style dancers and will conduct a workshop for interested children on Saturday afternoon. And in preparation for the Saturday evening children's movie presentation, parents may wish to bring their child's sleeping bag in case s/he dozes off after an action-packed day! Lastly, due to the success last year, we will continue with the children's meal schedule this year. We plan to have the children eat first at a “children's table” where they can socialize and dine together.

NASA 2008 Conference Registration Form
Thursday, July 3 – Sunday, July 6

Family Name: _____

Number of Participants:

Adults (Ages 21+) ___ Young Adults (Ages 13-21) ___
Children (Ages 5-12) ___ Young Children (Age <5) ___

Home Address:

E-Mail Address: _____ **Telephone:** _____

Expected Arrival Date*: _____ **Time:** _____

* Please check this box if you will be arriving in the Washington, DC area on Thursday, July 3, 2008 and would like to check in at the Windsor Conference Center. Dinner is available.

Signature*:

* By registering for this event, you agree that NASA will not be held liable for injuries or damages, if any, received in connection with the July Annual Function.

Payment: Please make checks payable to NASA Inc. per the following schedule and mail along with these completed forms to

NASA, Inc.
3943 White Rose Way,
Ellicott City, MD 21042

* Please note that registration charges cover boarding, lodging, and all program activities.

Registrations for children 12 and under are free but please add \$25 per child aged 3-12 towards activity fees and child care services. Thank you.

Full Program Registration (arriving anytime Friday):

(1) Any person over the age of 12:

\$150 (registrations received before 6/7/08), \$175 (registrations received after 6/7/08)

Please add **\$40 per person over 12 if arriving Thursday night** towards dinner and accommodation on Thursday, and breakfast on Friday.

(2) Temporary visitors and students from India: 50% of full registration rates provided above♦

Partial Registration (arriving anytime Saturday or attendance with no rooms):

(1) Any person over the age of 12:

\$100 (registrations received before 6/7/08), \$125 (registrations received after 6/7/08)

(2) Temporary visitors and students from India: 50% of partial registration rates provided above♦

♦ Please call S. Sridhara (410-418-4024) if you need any travel assistance or a registration fee waiver.

Please indicate your interest in participating in the following activities:

Community Service (1-2 hours on Friday)

Please indicate number of participants: _____

Day at the Lake (young children and adults, 7/4/08)

Please indicate number of participants

Children: _____ Ages: _____

Adults: _____

Fireworks on the National Mall (7/4/08)

Please indicate number, name, and age of participants

Golf Outing (adults, 7/4/08)

Please indicate number of participants: _____

Children's Talent Showcase (7/5/08)

Please indicate name of participants, age, and talent(s) to be shared/performed

Cultural Programs, Special Presentations, etc. (7/5/08, 7/6/08)

Please indicate name of participants and provide a brief description of the program, presentation, etc.

Child Care Service

Please indicate names and ages of children

For questions regarding participation in any of these events, please contact our Event Coordinators:

Lakshmi Jayaram 301-460-5938 lj@jhu.edu

Shubha Dathatri 650-799-9744 ydshubha@stanfordalumni.org

High School Graduation (HGA) and College Graduation Award (CGA) Candidates:

Name: _____ Indicate HGA or CGA: _____

Person who will speak about the Candidate: _____

Name: _____ Indicate HGA or CGA: _____

Person who will speak about the Candidate: _____

NASA 2008 Sponsorship Form

We request your generous support for the NASA 2008 event. If you would like to sponsor any of the activities occurring at the NASA 2008 conference, please complete this form, make checks payable to NASA, Inc., and mail both to S. Sridhara, 3943 White Rose Way, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Please call at 410 418 4024 with any questions.

Name: _____

Home Address:

E-Mail Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Amount of Donation*: _____

*Your kind donation/sponsorship may be used to cover the costs of the following items/services. If you would like your donation to be used for a particular purpose listed here, please check the box next to the relevant items/services below.

- Snacks/Coffee/Tea/Cold Drinks/Fruits (\$500)
- Late Night Snacks (\$250)
- Outdoor Lunch, Packed Dinner Friday 7/4/08 (\$750 each)
- Breakfast Saturday 7/5/08 and Sunday 7/6/08 (\$750 each)
- Lunch and Dinner Saturday 7/5/08 (\$1200 each)
- Lunch Sunday 7/6/08 (\$1000)
- Cultural Events/Activities (For complete or partial concert sponsorship please call Sridhara)
- Children's Materials / Equipment (i.e., balloons, art supplies, games, sports equipment, moon bounce/climber) (\$300)
- Child Care / Babysitting Service (\$300)
- Other (*please specify*): _____

Many thanks!!!

New Windsor Conference Center



From Baltimore:

Take 695W to 795NW to 140W thru Finksburg to Westminster to Rt. 31 (flashing light). Make a left onto Rt. 31. Go 7 miles to New Windsor. Sign is on the right.

From Washington, D.C. and Points South:

Take 495 to 270N & exit Father Hurley Blvd (Rt. 27). Follow 27N thru Damascus (27 curves left here) & Mt. Airy to Taylorsville (Rte 26). Cross over 26, go 2 miles & make left onto Rt. 407. Make right at Rt. 31 when 407 ends. Bear right on 31 as you enter New Windsor. Center is on left about ½ mile.

From Frederick:

Take 70E to Mt. Airy exit, Rte 27N and turn left. Continue on 27N to Taylorsville (Rte 26) & then follow DC directions above.

From Pennsylvania:

Take Rt. 97 or Rt. 27 into Westminster. Take 140W to Rt. 31 and follow the Baltimore directions above.

New Windsor Conference Center: [Homepage](#) | [Facilities](#) | [Map & Directions](#)

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Emergency contacts: S. Sridhara Family 443 812 0277, 443 812 0266, 410 207 7790

Notification of the Year 2008 General Body Meeting (GBM) July 6, 2008

Dear Members:

The 2008 Annual GBM will convene on Sunday, July 6, 2008 at 9.30AM at the New Windsor Conference Center, New Windsor, MD.

The order of business will be as follows:

1. Roll call
2. Reading/Confirmation of minutes of the preceding meeting
3. President's address
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Reports of Special Teams
7. Old and unfinished business
8. New business
9. Election of the President and eight directors for the Term 2008-2010
10. Good and Welfare
11. Adjournment

Please note that per NASA bylaws only members in good standing as of the Record Date (June 25, 2008) may vote in any formal motion or election of office bearers. We would encourage nonmembers desirous of joining NASA to consider life membership instead of annual membership. Membership form may be printed from our website www.Sankethi.org. 2007 NASA GBM minutes published in our newsletter Volume 24. No.3 dated August 25, 2007 is available on our website for your ready reference. Copies will be available at the meeting.

Invitation of Nominations for 2008 NASA Elections

Dr. Y. Jayaram has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the 2008 NASA Elections. His contact information: YJayaram@yahoo.com, Dr. Y. Jayaram, 15 Longfellow Lane, Hainesport NJ 08036. Nominations for the offices of President and Director may be sent to the Returning Officer by mail or e-mail by NASA Members in good standing after they are satisfied that the nominee is willing to serve on the Board if elected. Self nominations may also be sent.

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 in June 2008 and your quick responses before June 15th would be greatly appreciated.

Community News

Dr. Vasantha Madhavan, NASA life member, lost his mother, Mrs. Lakshmi Rao, recently in Mysore after a period of illness. Mrs. Lakshmi Rao was a wonderful woman with a fine background and training in music and who raised excellent children. We send our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Madhavan and family here and in India.

NASA is very happy to share that Deepa Ramesh and her husband Ben had a baby boy, Vikram Jay East on April 13, 2008. We send our hearty congratulations to the new parents! As they are returning to Ghana in June, we will miss them at the July event, but hope to see them at another NASA event soon!

NASA Regional Meeting: A report from Dallas event

We had an excellent event in Dallas as planned with great hosts, good company from local and out-of-town Sankethis, lovely food, and memorable music! First of all, NASA thanks the Padakandla family and Vinaya and Rangappa for making all this happen. They looked after everyone with love and prepared wonderful home-cooked, tasty food for lunch and afternoon tea. NASA members from NJ (Jayaram, Nalini and Sundaresan) and MD (Rajeshwari and Sridhara) arrived early by 10am followed by many local families that we have not seen at annual events in recent years. All of us had a great lunch after spending some time to get acquainted and reacquainted. The programs started with a fine Veena concert by an accomplished artist, Smt. Vasundhara Kikkeri (Contact her at vdhara@hotmail.com to invite her for other events). We were fortunate to have very talented accompanying artists in Sri. Narasimha Kikkeri on violin and Sri. Poovalur Sriji on mridangam. After this, the featured artist from our NASA 2007 annual program, Harsha Nagarajan, sang a few kritis and devaranamas with the same accompanying artists. Another unique program was the purani sangeeth by Sanjeev (son of Meera and Nagaraj Mysoreker, Life Members) who made Mohammad Raffi come alive! We are excited to have him join us at our annual event this year in July. Another NASA life member, Dr. Ishwari Murthy gave a good rendition of Hindustani music. We also had several children perform on piano and violin. We were treated to another excellent meal after the program and several guests remained for hours to enjoy one another's company. NASA conveys special thanks to Dr. Prasanna Murthy for arranging the sound system and to Drs. Sudha and Sanjoy Sundaresan for sponsoring the evening meal and the Veena concert. Overall, this regional meeting was a well-organized, entertaining, and simply pleasant get-together for both local Sankethis and those traveling to Dallas from other parts of the country.





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