



*Chiguru*  
*Vol 26, No.4*

# 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,

Wow! It was great to see so many NASA members at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations in New Windsor, Maryland over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. We had peaked at over 300 people, a new record for NASA, on Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> 2009. Thanks to the entire community for such support and participation. We couldn't have accomplished this without you all. I sincerely hope everyone enjoyed everything the weekend had to offer, including:

- Rudraabhisheka & Soundarya Lahari
- Various cultural programs by kids and adults
- Free transportation to and from the auditorium
- Variety of entertainment at the auditorium
- Sports and leisure activities including rummy and 21 tournaments
- Many activities for children
- Late night ice cream and fruits
- Delicious food prepared on site
- New Windsor center filled to capacity with people to talk to everywhere
- Great souvenirs and Rajata

It should also be noted that we did successfully hook up with Deepa Ramesh in Ghana during the weekend using Skype. We hope to use modern communication methods to enhance the experience of all Sankethi members near and far. Volunteers are the backbone of organizations like NASA. Thanks to all the volunteers including the BOD for working so hard for our Silver Jubilee Celebration. We would not have been able to offer all of these activities at such low cost to every one without the help of our sponsors. I thank all the sponsors for their generosity and support.

I have heard that parents feel happy when their children exceed their expectations and teachers feel happy when their students exceed their expectations. Extending this thinking to organizations, I feel that organization founders feel content if the organization they established exceeds their expectations. I hope we have met and exceeded the objectives of NASA founders for the past 25 years and continue to do the same forever...

Yours truly,



NASA President Keshava Kumar & BOD

## *Community*

### **NASA General Body Meeting Minutes – July 4, 2009**

The 2009 NASA GBM was held on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 10:00am.

1. Roll Call - Member sign-in sheets were reviewed. Over 50 registered members were in attendance. Quorum was achieved.
2. Review of 2008 GBM meeting minutes – Minutes from the 2008 GBM were sent to all members in the May 2009 newsletter and were made available at the meeting. Sundaresan motioned to accept 2008 GBM minutes. Dathatri seconded. 2008 GBM minutes were accepted.
3. President's address
  - In memoriam:
    - Ramalakshmi – mother of Nagaraj Mysorekar
    - Videhi Shivashankar, wife of Shivashankar, mother of Seetha (Shivashankar) Aiyar
  - Summary of regional meetings and activities held in the 2008-2009 year
    - October 2008 – Navaratri celebration in Hartford, CT in conjunction with the Hartford marathon
    - February 2009 - Ski trip organized by NASA BOD, including participation by several members and families
    - April 2009 – Ugadi celebrations in Raleigh, NC
  - Charitable activities
    - The President thanked the various donors who have provided support for the Silver Jubilee activities throughout the year. Without their help we would not have been able to have such a great program.
    - Several families were asked to mobilize support for the activities of the Bettadapura Sankethi Sangha (BSS) and the Kowshika Sankethi Sangha (KSS) in India. The Magge family has set up the MS Lakshminarayana Fund to support various KSS activities. The President encouraged other families to emulate this model to set up support funds with BSS/KSS.
4. Secretary's report
  - As of 2008 we have 196 life members of record
  - Several newsletters have been sent to the membership
  - This year we started to shift to electronic newsletter distribution to be more environmentally friendly and to save printing and mailing costs. To date, about 25% of the membership has chosen this option.
  - Several Sankethi members experienced the joy of births and weddings over the past year. These have been featured in NASA newsletters.
  - It was suggested that the name "Chiguru" be re-instated for the newsletter. This was the name when Mrs. Leela Jagannath was the editor, but for some unknown reasons the name had been dropped. This suggestion was duly noted by the board.
  - A motion was made to approve the Secretary's report. This was seconded.
5. Treasurer's report - only the provisional report was presented at the meeting. Final report of the 2008 financial report will be presented at the 2010 GBM.
  - NASA plans to develop a financial system which will have more consistent documentation for financial transactions. Many cash transactions had been conducted in the past for which records of payment or disbursement were hard to find.
  - In 2008, NASA received a notification from the IRS stating that filings have not been received. These were duly filed in 2009, and a late filing penalty of \$2214 was paid.

- A member suggested that Reliance Corporation or an independent CPA be assigned as NASA's tax accountant. This suggestion was duly noted by the BOD.
- As numbers were still being finalized for 2008, a provisional Treasurer's report was presented to the General Body
- Regarding donations made to NASA for other 3<sup>rd</sup> party entities, NASA will follow IRS guidelines and will try to minimize the delay between the receipt and disbursement of funds earmarked for donation.
- According to 501c3 regulations, NASA can not donate to uncontrolled organizations
- NASA's funds have been held in FDIC insured accounts and the money has remained intact – we have not suffered a loss.
- The report made to the GBM was provisional, therefore no motion to accept could be made. Sundaresan advised the BOD to make the final report available to the general body at the next GBM in 2010.

#### 6. Reports of Special Teams

- Graduation awards were distributed as follows:
  - Vikas Natesh – High School
  - Anand Nagaraj – BS Mechanical Engineering, New Jersey Institute of Technology
  - Markandeya Jayaram – M Acc & MBA,
  - Deepa Magge – MD, Boston University Medical School
  - Rajiv Magge – MD, University of Pittsburgh Medical School
  - Aparna Swamy – CRNA, Central Connecticut State University
  - Veena Viswanatha – JD, University of Pennsylvania Law School
- Special recognition award and plaque was given to Mr. K. Sundaresan for his support to NASA, especially in the area of Finance and By-Laws
- Special recognition buttons were given to all past presidents of NASA in honor of their service to the organization
- Special recognition certificates were given to current BOD members from the past presidents in honor of the work done for the Silver Jubilee festivities
- No special teams had been formed during the 2008-2009 NASA BOD term, therefore no reports were provided.

#### 7. Old and Unfinished Business

- There was no old or unfinished business to report.

#### 8. New Business

- There was no new business to report.

#### 9. Good and Welfare

- There was no good and welfare to report.

#### 10. 2009 General Body Meeting was adjourned

Recorded by:  
Ranjini Srikantiah  
Secretary



## Announcing, the Sports Contest Winners!

At this year's Silver Jubilee festivities, several children and adults participated in fun and engaging activities coordinated by Arun Chikmenahalli (sports) and Dr. Jayaram, Ramkumar Magge (cards). NASA congratulates the following winners:

	Winner	Runner-up
<b>0-5yrs</b>		
1. Lemon and Spoon Race	Nisha Shankar	Stuthi Das
2. Musical Chairs	Sanman Das	Shreyas
<b>6-12 years</b>		
1. Memory Game	Chetan Vadali & Tejas Vadali	Jenani Jayaram
2. Musical Chairs	Anjali Kashyap	Caylas Hashe
4. Jump Rope	Sharanya Kaushik	Anjeli Shankar
5. Sack Race	Anjeli Shankar	Aakash Padakandla
<b>13-21 years</b>		
Jump Rope	Mahathi Kumar	Niharika
Memory Game	Niharika Simha	Mahathi Kumar
<b>21+ years</b>		
Musical Chair	Maitrayee Vadali	Lakshmi Kashyap
Jump Rope < 40yrs	Vasanthi (121)	Simha (116)
Jump Rope 40-60yrs	Ganesh Rao (144)	Ashwini Srikantiah (75)
Jump Rope > 60yrs	Swarna (93) and Sundaresan (64)	Nalini (67)
Saree Relay Race	Dinesh and Party	Pushpa and Party
Sack Race	Pushpa and Party	Bhagya and Party
<b>Rummy Tournament</b>	Ram Kumar	Vijaya
<b>28 Tournament</b>	Dr Kallahalli V Viswanatha	Sri. Umesh (from Austin/Dallas)



## Silver Jubilee Children's Activities

NASA wishes to thank all the volunteers who helped the younger generation enjoy the Silver Jubilee festivities. Lakshmi Jayaram started off the weekend with a wonderful Ganesha activity inspired by the Tanjore artists. The children were able to enjoy this activity during the Rudraabhisheka. Dale Poage and Vikram Kashyap led an instructional session in basketball and soccer during the GBM. Mayur Simha conducted an art seminar for the children on Saturday, resulting in a beautiful array of sunset paintings. Dr. K. Ramakrishna led a very informative session on vedic mathematics. Dr. Jai. K. Rangappa provided fireworks and sparklers for our Independence Day celebrations. Rekha Shankar coordinated the children's fashion show and also conducted a very successful scavenger hunt. And BOD member Mayank Keshaviah coordinated a group trip to Siz Flags amusement park. Our children would not have had as much fun without your help. Thank you!



## **Regional NASA Event –Navaratri Celebration in Detroit, MI– Oct 3, 2009**

On October 3, 2009, NASA celebrated Navaratri in the Detroit area. Several volunteers from the area worked hard to make various arrangements for this celebration. About 30 to 35 people participated in this event and we are happy to welcome 2 new life members – the Narayana family and Kumar Nanjundiah and his wife Sushma Venkatesh. The day started with Annapoorna Dhyana around noon followed by a delicious lunch prepared by local Sankethi families. After lunch, we had the children's program. Vivek, Amith, Vighnesh, Anisha, Vinay and Anuja sang various carnatic music pieces. After snacks, coffee and introductions, Sandhya Prasanna presented shlokas from chapter 15 of the Bhagavadgeetha. This was followed by an insightful talk by Dr. Naga Narayana on our scriptures. He started with Bhagavadgeetha, then talked about the inner meaning of the Lalitha Sahasranama. After chanting Lalitha Sahasranama and conducting Bombè (Doll) arathi we all enjoyed a tasty dinner, desserts and coffee. The children's and adults' program was a testament to the fact that the Detroit area Sankethi families are tremendously talented. NASA thanks Arun Chickmenahalli, Naga Narayana, Sandhya Prasanna, Nataraj Mahalakshmi, and various local families who helped make this regional get together a grand success. Special thanks to Vighnesh for managing the registration desk.

### **Member News**

Congratulations to **Jayanthi (Jaye) Rao**, who gained enough support in the Republican Primary of the Charlotte City Council At-Large race to move on to the general election. She and eight other candidates are running for 4 available seats. Jaye is the only Sankethi currently active in a US political contest. Find out more about the candidates at: <http://www.meckboe.org/Candidates.aspx>. (scroll down to the Council-At-Large candidate list)

Calling all Sankethis Down Under! The **Australian Sankethi Balago** has just formed and is enthusiastically looking for members. If you have relatives in Australia, please have them contact Nagaraja (Raj) Srikantashastry at [nagaraja.srikantashastry@alcatel-lucent.com.au](mailto:nagaraja.srikantashastry@alcatel-lucent.com.au) for more details.

Congratulations to **Dr. Y. Jayaram**, who recently received the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) for his service last year as Deputy Surgeon of the US Army reserves in charge of "Remote Area Medical Affairs."

### **Welcome, New Members!**

NASA welcomes the following new members to the NASA Community:

#### Life Members

- Sri. Nagaraja Ananthashesha, Smt. Sandhya Manjunatha and Chi. Sudhanva of Stamford CT
- Dinesh Rao of Bethesda, MD
- Karthik Subbarao of Brewster, NY
- Dr. Naga Narayana, Smt. Geetha Narayana and Chi. Ojus Narayana of Farmington Hills, MI
- Sri. Kumar Nanjundiah & Smt. Sushma Venkatesh of Midland, MI

#### Annual Members

- Jaye Rao

### **New Babies!**

NASA wishes all the best to our newest NASA members:

- Baby boy Avinash born on June 27, 2009 to Vijayalakshmi (Sundari Murthy) and Vikram Rao
- Baby girl Sahana, born June 2009 to Asha (Renuka Rangappa) and Andy Dodd and big brother Paras

### **Wedding Bells!**

NASA congratulates the following couples on their recent marriages:

- Suchetha Sastry and Varun Kshetry - August 1, 2009 in San Ramon, CA
- Veena Viswanatha and James Bourke – August 15, 2009 in Morristown, NJ
- Hema Magge and Neil Gupta – August 29, 2009 in Cincinnati, OH

## **Weddings-to-Be!**

NASA congratulates the following couples on their recent engagements:

- Rupa Magge and Kurt Cross
- Shankar Sridhara and Merica Shrestha
- Srinivas Sridhara and Anu Nagarajan
- Lalitha Hanasoge and Dmitry Khavulya

## **Become a “Ski”-kethi!**

You read about it in Rajata. You’ve heard the stories from friends and family. Do you have what it takes to become a Ski-kethi? Come one, come all to the annual NASA ski trip, to be held February 12-15, 2010! The top 2 resorts under consideration right now are Hunter Mountain in NY and Seven Springs in PA. In order to make a final decision and to secure reasonable rates for accommodation, we need to know if you are interested. Please send a message to Ganesh Rao or Ranjini Srikantiah with the following information: your resort preference (if any), and number of participants (adults and children under 12) by **November 30, 2009.**

## **Silver Jubilee Photo Gallery**

For more pictures, visit [www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org)



## Culture

### Rudraabhisheka during NASA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

Submitted by Prof. Dathatri

#### OM Namah Shivaaya

The Board of Directors of our beloved association decided to perform an actual Rudraabhisheka during the celebration of NASA's Silver Jubilee. This event was programmed for the morning of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, befitting the formal commencement of the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend get-together in New Windsor, Maryland.



The President had requested Dr. K. Ramakrishna, Sri. M. R. Balakrishna and Prof. Y. N. Dathatri to coordinate the event. As a primer for those in need, Dr. K. Ramakrishna lucidly discussed, through a presentation on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the proper perspective of the Rudrasookta and the methodology and benefits of conducting such an event.

The Rudraabhisheka started earnestly at 8am on July 3<sup>rd</sup> with lots of enthusiasm, with many members clad in the traditional pancha kaccham and anga vastram. The event began with appropriate initial prayers with the first couple of the association performing the mahaa sankalpam specially written for the event along with assigning the proper roles for the individuals to conduct the event. Copies of the Abhisheka and Pooja Vidhana compiled from the Mahanyasa prayogam book published by Sree Ramakrishna Ashramam were made available to those who were formally taking part in the abhishekam and for those interested.



In all, 22 members formally participated in the chanting lead by Acharya Ramakrishna and the rituals performed by Sri. Mayura Simha on behalf of the entire group. A special round of Mrutyunjaya japam with appropriate sankalpam was conducted for the benefit of one of the association's members by the entire group.

Some of the members (Smt. and Sri. Jagannath and Smt. and Dr. Nataraja) brought the very sacred Bilva patram (rarely available in America) for performing the Pooja on the occasion. Ekadasha vaara rudrabhisheka was done (anyonya sahayena) to the pleasure of every one who took part in it. A specially written swasthi vaachana was also chanted.



After the formal rudraabhishekam and mangalaarathi, Soundarya Lahari stotram was chanted by the ladies led by Smt. Prema Kumar.



Though through the 25 years of NASA we have seen vedic chanting and performing poojas for the children and the youth, this was the very first time when, as a Sankethi group during the annual get-together, we performed the rudraabhishekam for the benefit and well-being of all the members of the association and their families. Let this be a beginning and let us continue to conduct such events in the years to come.

#### OM Namah Shivaaya



## Rajata



To commemorate NASA's Silver Jubilee, the BOD released a souvenir publication during the GBM. The publication, titled "Rajata" ('silver' in Sanskrit), highlights the history of NASA and showcases the literary and artistic talents of its members. In it, the growth of NASA and the views of its members are explored thematically through the four seasons. The editors of the publication (Ganesh Rao, Mayank Keshaviah and M.S. Nataraja) would like to thank Mayura Simha for providing the beautiful cover art, Srinivasa Komarla and PBM

Printers for creating the professionally bound copy, and all of the advertisers for their vital support. And of course Rajata would not have been possible were it not for the hard work and creativity of all of the contributors. To see their work in full-color (including color photos that weren't available in the hard copy), check out the online version of the publication at [www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org).



## Silver Jubilee Cultural Report



Where to begin?? This year's Silver Jubilee event was packed with talented performers, from children who marked their debut on the NASA stage, to veteran favourites. Throughout the weekend we were treated to over 15 hours of diverse entertainment by US NASA members and visitors from India. Performances included Western instrumental and vocal, Carnatic instrumental and vocal, Hindustani instrumental, Kuchipudi, Bharathanatyam, Bollywood dancing, Skits, Kannada group songs, Children's fashion show, and the list goes on!



This year, we were fortunate enough to find a beautiful auditorium close to the New Windsor Conference Center for some landmark evening performances on Friday and Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. On Friday, 9-year-old prodigy Sangeetha Phaneesh from Bangalore, India, performed a Kuchipudi showcase. She closed her set with a beautiful Simha piece, in which she



created a picture of a lion on stage while dancing on rangoli. We look forward to seeing more of Sangeetha during her future world tours! After a brief intermission, Sudha Iyer and Deepika Nath treated us to a dual sitar concert, with guest tabla player Nikhil Tikekar from North Carolina. The concluding performance on Friday was by guest Carnatic vocalist Ms. Shoba Nagaraj from Bangalore.

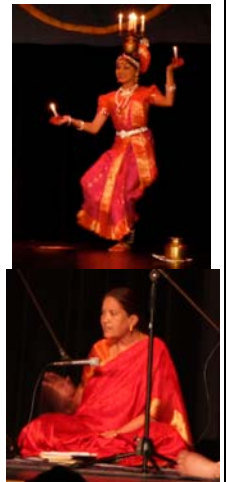


On Saturday, in honor of American Independence Day, Seetha (Shivashankar) Aiyar opened with patriotic songs while NASA children marched towards the stage waving small American flags. After Seetha's set, a crowd-pleasing Bollywood dance was performed by the Divan sisters – Sarina, Nisha and Mina. Following this, Madhu Nataraja, Maalya Ramachandra, Shruti Ramachandra, Shalini Rao and Ranjini Srikantiah presented a Tribute to Devi – 6 pieces highlighting various

Hindu goddesses, in honour of Sankethi legend Nacharamma. The evening concluded with a marvelous Bharatanatyam performance by Tara Magge, including the powerful and dynamic Boshambo.



Although some pictures from the Arts Center performances are included here we encourage you to visit the NASA website ([www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org)) to view our photo gallery. If you have pictures to share, please send them to the NASA BOD.



## ***Charity***

### **Silver Jubilee List of Donors**

The Silver Jubilee festivities could not have taken place without the financial support received from our members. NASA wishes to thank the following people for their generous contributions:

George Rao	Amrutha Viswanatha & R.K. Kumaraswamy
Magge Family	Rajanna
Jai Kumar Rangappa	Sanjoy Sundaresan
Leela Jagannath	Anantha Subbaraya Chickmenahalli family
Raghu and Pavani Ram	Srikantiah family
Swarna Rao and Family	Dr. Jayaram
Mythili Subbarao	Dr. Sridhara
Seethalakshmi Madhavan	Mr. Balakrishna
B.R. Manjunath	Prof. Dathathri
Vijay Chandra & Lilac	Chandrashekhhar Family
Sridhar Rao & Deeptha	Revathi & Nagabhushan Rao
Kripa & Srinath	Sudha Iyer Trivedi & Kirit Trivedi
Ramanathap & Keshavamurthy	S. N. Jagannath
R. K. Natesh	H. S. Aswathanarayana
Padmini Rao	Shanthi and Keshav Rao

Please accept our apologies if any of the sponsors have been omitted or any errors in reporting. Please communicate any omissions or corrections to [kbkumar@cox.net](mailto:kbkumar@cox.net)

### **Charity Clothing Sale**

Thanks go to Dana Gittings for coordinating the sale of lightly used Indian clothing for men, women and children during the Silver Jubilee festivities. Over \$150 was raised for Akshaya Patra, an organization dedicated to serving meals to underprivileged schoolchildren throughout India. Read more about their efforts at [www.akshayapatra.org](http://www.akshayapatra.org). NASA hopes to make this charity clothing sale an annual event.

### **Donations to Food Bank**

NASA members were encouraged to bring canned and boxed food donations to the NASA registration desk during the Silver Jubilee festivities. Due to everyone's generosity NASA was able to donate about 2 large bins of food to Carroll County Food Sunday, a food bank in Westminster, MD. Thank you for your contributions!

### **MR Lakshminarayana Memorial Fund**

NASA is happy to announce that the Magge Family has set up the MR Lakshminarayana Memorial Fund with KSS to support projects in India. NASA hopes to see many more funds of this nature set up with BSS and KSS to support various projects. If you would like to support BSS &/or KSS, please send your tax deductible contributions to NASA. We will be happy to pass them on.

### **Report on Benevolent Funds For Sankethis 2004-2009**

*Submitted by B. K. Swamy*

The 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.

The Emergency Relief Fund was started in 2004 and has successfully been in operation for the past 5 years. This fund provides financial assistance to poor families who face dire medical emergencies or the death of the primary earning member of the family. The Disability Relief Fund was started in 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. Since the funds were established, each NASA BOD has provided tremendous support in collecting money from NASA members, mailing donations to India, handling accounting details as required by the IRS, etc. The following table shows donations received and assistance given for each year of fund operation.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount donated</b>	<b>Amount converted to Rs.</b>	<b>Balance B.F</b>	<b>Amount in Hand</b>	<b>Amount Distributed ERF</b>	<b>Amount Distributed DRF</b>
2004	\$2025 + Rs. 3000	Rs. 94,927	-----	94,927	79,000	-----
2005	\$2477	Rs.108,125	Rs.15,927	Rs.124,052	Rs.75,000	-----
2006	\$2340 + Rs.19,550	Rs.129,102	Rs.49,052	Rs.178,154	Rs.77,446	Rs.45,000
2007	\$2600 + Rs.19,500	Rs.123,000	Rs.55,708	Rs.178,708	Rs.95,534	Rs.45,000
2008	\$3100 + Rs.4,000	Rs.135,636	Rs.38,174	Rs.173,810	Rs.93,278	Rs.30,000
2009	\$2300 + Rs.20,000 (details incomplete)	Not Yet Available	Rs.50,532	Not Yet Available	Not Yet Available	Not Yet Available

Assistance given so far from ERF was to cover hospital expenses to get treatments like surgery on the leg or brain or lumbar disc prolapse (20%), paralytic attack or heart disease (19%), cancer treatment (9%), eye operations (16%), emergency like road accidents or death in the family (20%) and other causes (16%). A total of 55 persons have received assistance so far. Assistance was given from DRF to two blind students to continue their Computer Diploma training for 3 years and one young boy to save his leg from amputation due to burns. One widow was assisted to set up a shop for self employment.

KSS and BSS members praise this wonderful assistance we are providing from here. The BSS President has written to NASA expressing his appreciation for the help received. 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. I wanted to share this information during the NASA get together in July and had come prepared to answer any questions and clear any misconceptions in the minds of donors. But due to time constraints, opportunity was lost. It is my humble suggestion to all of us - let us make use of the NASA get together forum to discuss, clarify and come up with constructive suggestions for implementation. It is the right platform. Meanwhile let all of us continue to support this noble cause.



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