



Chiguru

Vol 30, No.3
September 2013

North American Sankethi Association (NASA)

161 Natsisky Farm Road, South Windsor CT 06074, USA

<http://www.sankethi.org>

Volume 30, No 3
06 September 2013

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Vacant

Yellarukku Namaskaro!

Greetings! I hope all of you have enjoyed your summer.

This is our first formal communications since NASA's 2013 Annual Meeting/Retreat and General Body Meeting (GBM) at the Vanderkamp Center, NY. Those of you who came to the retreat had a very good time from what we heard. We have provided further details on the gathering in this issue of Chiguru/Newsletter along with survey results of the Annual meeting. In addition, this issue contains the minutes of the GBM, a report on the Sanmana done for our Sankethi V. Br. Sri. Vasu Badhyar and Rudrabhishekha on 28 July 2013, and community news.

The NASA BoD approved a new policy on charitable contributions handled by NASA. This was necessary in light of the tightened regulation, scrutiny, and enforcements by US IRS. A copy of this policy is attached herewith for your information. More work needs to be done to operationalize this policy. The BoD will undertake this work in the near future.

In keeping with our past practice, we have organized a Navaratri/Deepavali get together on Sun, 03 Nov 2013. It will be held at the Club house of Hopewell Grant, 100 Wellington Dr, Pennington, NJ 08534. See this issue for further details. We encourage all of you to attend this festive occasion. We Sankethis are a talented bunch. We would like to showcase and enjoy the multifaceted talents that you and your family have. Please contact our cultural secretaries to participate.

Your BoD is already looking ahead to the 2014 Annual gathering and has begun planning for it. We are planning to hold it during the July 4th weekend (most likely from 4-6 July, 2014). We are currently searching for a suitable location for the same. Since that will be our 30th anniversary we would like to make it a fitting grand success. In that spirit we would like to strongly encourage your participation in planning for it. So please contact one of us if you are interested.

With best regards and wishes,

Ashok N. Rudrapatna, PhD
President, NASA

1. NASA 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Please join us to celebrate NASA's 30th anniversary in 2014! For the past 30 years, NASA has given us great opportunities to connect with fellow Sankethis and our heritage as well as to enhance our community spirit. We are planning a diverse set of dynamic programs for the NASA 30th Anniversary event to take place over the **2014 July 4th weekend** (Friday, July 4, 2014 to Sunday, July 6, 2014). Please be sure to **mark your calendars** to attend what is sure to be a memorable event.

Call for Volunteers for NASA 30th Anniversary Program Steering Committee

The NASA Board of Directors is working to plan an engaging set of programs for the 30th Anniversary event and we want our community members to join us in this planning process. Our community members have such rich and diverse interests and talents, and we want to channel that energy into the programs for the 30th Anniversary event. If you wish to **join the 30th Anniversary Program Steering Committee** in planning events culminating in the July 2014 celebrations, please contact Shubha Dathatri (sdatha916@gmail.com) as soon as possible. We look forward to working together with our community members in celebrating 30 years of NASA tradition and progress!

2. Navaratri/Deepavali Get Together on 03 Nov 2013

NASA is pleased to announce that we are planning a Navaratri/Deepavali get together. It is a good festive time to meet again. We look forward to seeing all of you.

Venue: Club House of Hopewell Grant, 100 Wellington Drive, Pennington, NJ. 08534

Date and Time: Sunday, 3 Nov. 2013. 9:30 AM – 2 PM (Please note the Day Light Savings time would have ended just a few hours earlier. So 9:30 AM would seem like 10:30 AM!).

Food Arrangements: In order to have this as a fun event and to keep costs low, we will do this as a pot luck event. We request everyone to bring a dish to serve approximately 15 people. Please contact Nagaraj Ananthashesha (203-588-1686, banag74@gmail.com) by Oct. 20 for food items coordination.

Planned Program: Since we recently had a puja event (viz. Rudrabhishekha), the main focus of this event will be a social get together and cultural activities. We are planning to have music, dance, skits, children's programs, or whatever else comes to your creative imagination from all of you. We are a multifaceted talented community. This is your program. So please step forward and contact Sheela Nagaraj-Dikshith or Sujaya Rao, our cultural secretaries, by Oct 20 on what you might want to do at this event. We look forward to your creative talent and participation!

Fees (to cover hall rental and incidental expenses):

	Adults (12 or over)	Young adults (5-11)	Kids (4 or under)
Members	\$10	\$5	Free
Non-Members	\$15	\$5	Free

3. 2013 NASA Get-Together and General Body Meeting May 25-27 in Cleveland, NY

The long awaited 2013 NASA annual meeting was held this year at the Vanderkamp Meeting and Retreat Center near Syracuse, NY over the Memorial Day weekend.

The event began on Saturday afternoon with a delicious traditional Sankethi lunch. Following lunch, attendees were given time to explore the beautiful 840 acre property and participate in various activities including indoor table tennis and boating on Vanderkamp's private lake. The afternoon consisted of our talent/cultural programs in which our Sankethi kids impressed the audience with singing, mantra reciting, plays and karate demonstrations! Adults showed off their talents in a recital of popular Kannada devarnamas.

After a brief break, a hosted financial planning informational session was held by Prudential with a question and answer session in which audience members of all ages were provided information on how to plan for their futures. Dinner expenses for all the attendees were offset by Prudential. After dinner, the Ah! Mature Millennium Artists group (AMMA) performed a hilarious skit depicting the life of a Sankethi couple....completely in Sankethi!! The evening concluded with a lovely bonfire under the stars and the lighting of Chinese lanterns. This was one of the highlights of the weekend. All the kids enjoyed participating in lighting the lanterns, letting them float away over the lake. Seeing the lanterns glow in the darkness as it floated away was a sight to see.

Sunday began with Veda gosha (group chanting) that included chanting of various suktas followed by recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama. This was followed by Breakfast. After this the main activities of the day were kicked off with the annual GBM, in which the president gave a detailed report outlining the current state of NASA and his thoughts for the future. Key items including charitable donations to organizations in India were discussed - please see the GBM notes for a full report.

Following the GBM we had lunch that included dosa, vada and other savories. After lunch participants made the most of the beautiful surroundings of Vanderkamp. Several people took part in Field Day, where red team battled the blue team in several games and activities including a three legged race, ball toss, musical hula hoops, and a sari relay race. Meanwhile, other NASA members enjoyed hiking trails and pedal boats.

The late afternoon program started with the children's talent show, followed by a lecture on Hindu Spirituality by Mr. Naganarayana. After a delicious dinner, everybody gathered in the main hall for story time - lesser known tales from Mahabharata told by Dr. Y.N. Jayaram.

On Monday morning a Ganesha puja and Rudrabhishekha followed by Lalitha Sahasranama chanting took place. After having brunch and saying farewells, we left Vanderkamp - looking forward to the next NASA adventure to come!

The results of the 2013 Annual Celebration survey is located on our website, www.sankethi.org. Please visit for more information!



4. Sanmana to V. Br. Sri Ananthanarayana and Rudrabhishekha on 28 Jul 2013

NASA performed a Sanmana to honor our own Sankethi Veda Brahmasri Ananthanarayana better known as Vasu Badhyar. He was visiting from India for the first time for a short visit in July. He is a well known Sankethi practitioner of Vaidika Dharma, a purohita for many of our Sankethis in India, and a professor of Samskruta in Bengaluru. The event was hosted by Ashok (our President) and Roopa Rudrapatna at their residence on 28 July 2013. Coincidentally with it an Ekadashavara Rudrabhishekha was performed by Ashok and Roopa Rudrapatna which was officiated and conducted by Vasu Badhyar. This was grandly facilitated by a total of twelve ritviks (most of them NASA members). All NASA members were invited for this special event and about 55 people attended the function.

Vasu Badhyar conducted the Rudrabhishekha fully consistent with our Shastras and Agamas, carrying out all the necessary rituals. All the participants were very pleased to participate in the function.

After the Rudrabhishekha was concluded, Ashok Rudrapatna on behalf of NASA did sanmana to Vasu Badhyar in a traditional manner with offerings of shawl, tambula, and Vidvat Sambhavane. He also addressed the audience on the numerous achievements of Vasu Badhyar. Finally he presented Vasu Badhyar with a plaque from NASA recognizing his numerous contributions to Sankethi community, and his dedication to our Sanatana Dharma. Vasu Badhyar in his acceptance remarks expressed his deep appreciation of the affection and honor shown him by all the NASA and Sankethi members.

The event concluded with a lunch prasada.



5. Community News

Congratulations!

-Suma Magge, daughter of Uma and Shankar Magge, married Venkatesh Srinivas on July 6, 2013. Congratulations to the new couple!

-Congratulations to Shantaram and Lakshmi Kashyap on their 50th (Golden) Wedding Anniversary!

-H.S. Aswathanarayana, ex-President of NASA, was elected president of the Mysore Bettadapura Sankethi Sanga in April 2013. He plans to hold events for the BSS-Mysore that will focus on gaining a better understanding of religious practices and Sankethi roots. NASA wishes him well as he promotes the Sankethi community in the US and India.

-Chetan Saligrama, a Sankethi living in Australia and our own NASA President Ashok Rudrapatna's niece's husband, runs a small company called Thought World. The Business Review Weekly (BRW) ranked his company as 68 out of 100 chosen companies and was awarded the BRW Fast Starters 2013 distinction. Congratulations to this Sankethi entrepreneur!

-Roopa Venkatesh was shortlisted for Women Leaders India Awards 2013 and was among the top 3 women in the category of Leading Woman CEO.

New Arrivals

-Congratulations to Suresh Magge and Becky Monroe on the birth of their son Ravi on 16 Dec 2012. Both mother and baby are doing well!



-Subbu Magge, son of Natesh and Sundramani Magge, and his wife Kalyani are proud parents of twins Kathyayni and Sriram. NASA extends hearty congratulations on their new arrivals!

Condolences

-George Rao passed away in late May, 2013. George Rao lived a complete life. He enjoyed his work, family, friends, and sports (esp. tennis!). He left this world with OM NAMA SHIVAYA on his lips in his last days. George is survived by his wife Nagaratna, his daughter Dana and her family, and his son Dave. George Rao was a long-time NASA member and friend, and the NASA community extends its deepest condolences to the family during this difficult time.

-Kanagal G. Srinivasmurthy (grandfather of NASA cultural secretary Sheela Nagaraj-Dikshith) passed away in Davangere, Karnataka on 22 Apr 2013. He is survived by 6 children and 12 grandchildren. NASA extends condolences to the bereaved family.

-Smt. Krishnaveni Magge, mother of Uma Magge and siblings, passed away on 17 Aug 2013 in Pittsburgh, PA. She is survived by three sons, three daughters, and several grandchildren. NASA offers condolences to the bereaved family.

-Adishesha, brother of our own former NASA president Keshava Kumar, passed away at the young age of 44. Adishesha's family lives in Bangalore. He is survived by his wife and two children ages 17 and 12. He was working as Vice President at Accenture in Bangalore. He has touched so many families by his helping nature. One example of this is he had started a group of volunteers to help coach children of security guards, house workers etc. He had a passion for helping others. He lived a very colorful life. NASA extends deepest condolences to Keshava Kumar and family as they cope with their loss.

-F.V. Subramanya Shastry, father of NASA member F.S. Prabhakara, passed away on 01 Feb 2013 at the age of 97 in his home in Kushalanagara surrounded by family. He is survived by his wife and children. NASA sends our sympathies to the Prabhakaras.

6. General Body Meeting Minutes, 26 May 2013, Cleveland, NY

Start time: 9:18am

Roll Call: Quorum confirmed (23 Members signed in).

Invocation: Geetha Dathatri

Dr. Jayaram shared the “Flowchart for Conflict Resolution” – as a humorous start to the meeting.

Presentation of last GBM’s minutes: Ashok Rudrapatna presented
Sundaresan moves to approve minutes.

Unanimous approval of minutes from General Body (9:27am)

K. Sundaresan asks about bi-law committee: was it a resolution from the last GBM to form a committee? Ranjini says: not a resolution, but a recommendation from outgoing GBM.

- Bi-law committee in the process of being formed:
 - From General Body: MS Nataraj, Jayashri Shastri, Ranjini Srikantiah, and Natesh Magge have accepted. One more slot needs to be filled.
 - From the Board of Directors (BoD) ex-officio members: Nagaraj Ananthashesha (NASA VP with By-laws role), Ashok Rudrapatna (NASA President)
 - K. Sundaresan has offered to an outside Advisor
- We will return to the topic of by-law amendments later in the GBM

Ashok Rudrapatna Shares President’s Report (ppt)

Highlights:

- New Charity Policy
- New Life Members
- Bylaw amendment to use email as official communications means
- Two new Annual Members
- Descriptions of Roles and Responsibilities on GBM
- Organized Events from 2012/2013
- Query around ski trip “Loss” – Sundaresan recommends that we deem this as “higher than expected expense”, not “loss”
- Bylaws: question by Sundaresan: what is protocol – can BoD pass bylaw amendments, and what is the requirement to notify GBM? GBM has the right to amend or repeal any bylaws. K. Sundaresan says: “how will members know that amendments have been changed in order to approve or repeal?”
 - Does BoD need to bring new amendments to the GBM for ratification? Or for Notification?
 - Y. N Dathatri says “we don’t need ratification, but we should have notification” and this should be written into the bylaws explicitly
 - Ashok recommends that “Notification” of any bylaw changes be explicitly written into bylaws – this should be examined by Bylaws committee
 - **FOR RECORD: GBM would like for all bylaw amendments passed by the BoD to be placed before General Body and, if GBM members would like to, they have the right to debate the issue. This should be examined by the bylaws committee in the review of bylaws.**
- Ashok Rudrapatna brings up the issue of longer term strategic vision for NASA
 - Formation of an Advisory Committee or Trustee Board?
 - What should be the vision for NASA, moving forward?

Nagaraj reads Dinesh Rao’s Secretary Report

Highlights:

- Strides in email communication

K. Sundaresan asks: how many life members, how many annual members, how many partially paid?

- Lalitha Hanasoge answers: There are no partially paid or unpaid life or annual members
 - As of Dec 31, 2012:
 - 209 Life Members (6 new as of 2012)

- No Annual Members
- K. Sundaresan asks for a list of all members (as auditor)
 - **Lalitha will provide with list.**

Motion to accept Secretary's Report: Seconded and Accepted.

Lalitha Hanasoge reads Treasurer's Report:

- This is the provisional report rather than final report
- matter of missing check #1220
 - this may ultimately affect our IRS filings
 - there is no uniform date for "stale date"
 - Treasurer does not have any information on status of check
- Ganesh recommends "stop payment" on check
 - Lalitha Hanasoge (as of August 2012), now has check-writing authority on account
 - She can now issue a "stop payment" on check
- Moving forward, Lalitha Hanasoge also has counterfoils for all future checks
- OK for IRS Filing, and OK to present provisional report to GBM. IRS filing will happen within the next few weeks
- Question of ICICI transaction fee of \$2
 - NASA currently bears this expense as a service to members
 - If we want to pass this expense on to members, we need to pass a resolution
- Lalitha Hanasoge raises other "larger" concerns
 - Based on IRS regulations of domestic Non Profit (501(c)(3) and giving to international organizations:
 - Can we accept donations for BSS and KSS and send them there?
 - She brought out IRS rulings going back to 1963 that may have bearing on this
 - Questions about "passive conduit" were raised
 - We do not have any legal control over funds transferred
 - We do not have any logistical control over funds transferred
 - IRS at various times has indicated:
 - The board has the duty of monitoring the actual use of an earmarked donation. If the board doesn't, this is not acceptable
 - In the past, we have either talked to BSS / KSS through the board or the member has talked to them directly to express earmarked donation intent
 - From IRS's point of view the latter may not be acceptable
- **It is recommended that the NASA board engage a tax attorney who can bring expertise advice to this situation**
- Y. N. Dathatri asks: what about line item re: checks from 2007 / 2009? Why are these still outstanding?
 - The Payees have been contacted and have indicated that they have no intention of cashing it
 - **BoD needs to decide to clear the checks and mark them as a donation to NASA**
 - **Action item has been assigned to the Treasurer to bring the following matters to the BoD for action:**
 - Fidelity Money Market: \$10.37
 - Outstanding Checks from 2007 / 2009: \$264.91
 - And other matters as outlined in the auditor's report.
 - **Treasurer to Re-word "Priest Fee" line item as "Sundry Expense"**

Auditor's Report:

- Can vouch for the accuracy of the report, but not necessarily the completeness of the report
- Balanced summary for receipts and payments, ready for submission to Tax authorities
- Unfinished tasks:
 - Long outstanding checks should be liquidated and not tolerated in account. This will now be done in 2013.
 - Honest mistake to not keep proper record of everything spent during the annual meeting of an amount of ~\$100 – unaccountable expense
 - Small amount to absorb, we can afford it
 - We need a transaction journal in addition to a trial balance.
 - What we have here is a statement of income and expenses
 - A trial balance has an account of money owed to and by NASA

- However, we do not have a transaction journal of all transactions. NASA management for past 10 years has not kept a transaction record, and has reconstructed accounts from bank statements – so if the transaction does not make it to the bank, it does not get recorded. This is not acceptable.
- This is why Auditor cannot vouch for completeness unless the management takes up the practice of transaction journaling
- Auditor asks the question:
 - Is there an argument for downsizing?
 - E.g., the building fund: how realistic is it that we will have a building?
- Regarding the controversial charitable donations:
 - Is 501c3 status really worthwhile for us?
 - What would happen if we get rid of it?
 - We'd still maintain simple accounting
 - We wouldn't give the donor an assurance of deductible expenses on their personal taxes
 - Looking at the West Coast Sankethi organization (Sankethi Vaahini) as an example - once a year when they meet, they simply say: "this is how much we collected, this is how much we spent, and how we spent it"
 - BUT this would mean that we cannot accept donations on a charitable basis for any organizations, foreign or domestic
- Reading from the IRS publication:
 - You (a personal taxpayer) cannot deduct any donations made to a qualified organization earmarked for a foreign charity
 - However, you can deduct donations made for programs that support foreign donations as long as you don't earmark it
 - The qualified organization needs to maintain "control" over the funds
- Lalitha Hanasoge says that she does not agree with K. Sundaresan's observations.
 - Need to look into donor advised funds
 - She agrees that we need an expert to weigh in on our options
- **Ashok Rudrapatna: We are not qualified to address these issues today. Let's bring in the correct expertise to look at these issues more carefully and come to a proper resolution in due course.**
- **Action Item for Board: we look into this and present the options and consequences (per expert advice) in 2014**

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report as provisional:

MOVE to accept Provisional Treasurer's Report, SUBJECT to cancellation of missing check after due inquiry

Any old and unfinished business?

- Nothing Raised.

Any new business?

Bylaw amendment passed by the BoD to permit email as a means of communication was discussed.

- Recommendation: Some members of NASA would like to have the option of receiving a hard copy of NASA communications via US mail. In that case, the concerned member needs to make such a request via a signed letter to NASA by US post.
- **Motion to approve the amendment with specific changes: ADD the word "Valid Email Address" and add in "OR Unless expressly requested by the member, in writing." The BoD to appropriately amend the bylaws.**
- **The motion was officially passed.**

Good and Welfare:

Moment of Silence Observed for the following community members who passed away recently

- Sivashanker's Brother-in-Law 15 days ago
- Keshav Kumar's brother in Bangalore 15 days ago
- George Rao 2 days ago in Tampa Florida.
- Bhagyamma – Mother of NASA life member YV Jagannath
- HV Badrinath, Father of life member Padmini Rao
- Sheela Nagaraj's grandfather
- Shankar Magge's Mother

- Andy, friend of Rangappa – supported many water-skiers.

Action Item: Upload NASA's full Constitution to Website

Action Item: Titles of BoD members: Should be in conformity with Bylaws.

Motion of Thanks to the Chair and to the BoD for a job well done was unanimously passed.

The 2013 GBM was Adjourned.

7. Charity Policy (Approved by BoD on 22 Aug 2013)

1. We would like to create a list of NASA approved donor organizations.

This is a list of NASA approved organizations for which NASA will coordinate donations. These organizations can include non-US based organizations such as KSS and BSS.

Actions Needed:

- 1) List of organizations to be identified by the BOD
- 2) Approval by the BOD for this approach

2. A contractual agreement with a non-US based organization that is in NASA's list of approved organizations that outlines the obligations of the non-US based organization and its responsibilities to NASA.

At a high-level this agreement should include explicit language indicating that the non-US based organization must provide quarterly reports to NASA regarding the disbursement pathway of the NASA initiated donation. Further, these reports must be easily auditable and the donation pathway trackable to support any regulatory audits that may be required. Most importantly, all non-US donee organization counterparts must be clearly advised both verbally and in writing that any noncompliance despite efforts by NASA to seek compliance will result in NASA's further withholding of donations.

Action Needed:

- 1) Identify and contact the approved list of non-US based organization to support our efforts to establish strict guidelines, discretion, and accountability
- 2) Creation of contractual agreements
- 3) Create the disclaimer to be provided to all organizations on the approved list as well as all NASA donors that donations are made at the discretion of NASA.

3. Tax attorney is not required.

The guidelines provided by easily accessible IRS websites, applicable revenue rulings, as well as guidelines provided by non-profit attorneys online make very clear the actions required to be in compliance with US IRS regulations for correct management of donations to non-US based organizations by a qualified US based organization.

Actions Needed:

- 1) This will require BOD approval

4. Donation disclaimer.

A disclaimer should be provided to donors that NASA maintains sole discretionary control over any donated funds.

Actions Needed

- 1) Create a disclaimer that will include verbiage that any donations that NASA provides to either other US based qualified organizations or non-US based organizations is done at the discretion of NASA. NASA maintains full control of donations received and is under no obligation to provide 100% of the donation to subsequent organizations. NASA will make an effort to follow the wishes of the donor but no guarantees are provided by NASA that donor wishes will be followed in part or in full

5. Tax deductibility disclaimer

1) Create a disclaimer to the effect that NASA does not accept any responsibility regarding the eligibility or otherwise of any part or the whole of the amount of the contribution as a deductible expense for tax purposes

Actions Needed

1. BOD Approval of inclusion of this disclaimer whenever NASA accepts and processes a donation to the original donor.

6. Maintain NASA service fee structure for donations by NASA members and non-members:

- NASA members: no fee
- Non-members: 10% of contribution subject to a minimum of \$5 and a maximum of \$50.

Actions Needed

1. BOD acknowledgement that this is a standard feature of NASA's Charity Policy

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North American Sankethi Association (NASA)

<http://www.sankethi.org>

Please contact treasurer@sankethi.org for mailing address

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP FORM

____\$200 Life Membership ____\$25 Annual Membership

Member Information

	First Name	MI	Last Name	Home #	Mobile #	Email 1	Email 2
Member							
Spouse							
Child 1							
Child 2							
Child 3							
Child 4							

HOME ADDRESS

Street Address	City	State/ Province	Zip Code	Country

Special Talents/Skills: _____

Would you like to help NASA? If so, how?: _____

Signature

Date

If you have any questions, please contact President@sankethi.org or treasurer@sankethi.org.



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