

NEWSLETTER

KONKANI ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
1409 Elizabeth Street
Redlands, CA 92373

Web page: www.kasc.org
July 12, 2008

Volume 17/Issue 3

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Dear Konkani Family,

Our Yugaadi was held on Saturday, Mar. 22, 2008 in a beautiful location in Laguna Woods. The write-up of this occasion is in this newsletter.

This year, the Executive Committee decided that we will not have a summer picnic as the Konkani convention was in California. Many people from So. Calif. attended it. It was a fun-filled convention. Its write-up is in this newsletter. Our Diwali celebration will be on **Saturday, Oct. 25, 2008** in Laguna Woods again. **Please mark your calendar and attend the event.** Please contact Cultural rep. Jaidev and Chitra Chandavarkar or any other committee members, if you want to perform, give a talk, or arrange a stage item for the Diwali. Thanks to Vishwanathmam and Shaliniakka (Bhat) for sending the financial statement for the fiscal year of 2007-2008. We are going to mail KASC Konkani directory to all paid members soon. If you have any updates, please let us know. Thanks.

HAPPY A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE SUMMER!

Yours truly,



Vivek Ullal

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES:

GRADUATES:

Anshul Kundaje, son of Kalpana & Bharat Kundaje of Buena Park, California, is completing his Ph.D. this August in Computer Science (Computational Biology and Machine Learning) from Columbia University, New York. He will be pursuing post doctoral research in Functional Genomics at the Computer Science Dept. at Stanford University, California.

Ashwin Prabhu, MD, younger son of Sunita and Dr. Vasudev Prabhu (Palimar) of Mission Viejo, California, finished his Radiology residency program at University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles. Proud parents and brother Vinay (with wife Tanya) wish him good future medical practice.

Narendra Nayak of Santa Clarita, California, graduated with MBA from University of California, Los Angeles, (UCLA), Anderson School of Management in June 2008.

Amar Rao, son of Meena and Jaidev P. Rao of Los Angeles, California, has obtained an admission for M.S. in Geological Sciences at University of California, Riverside with Full Graduate Division Fellowship.

Pranava Alekal, youngest daughter of Vidya and Yogesh Alekal of Lakewood, California, graduated from University of California, Berkeley with an undergraduate degree in computer science and electrical engineering. She has joined Intel from the beginning of June. She has moved from Lakewood, California to Hillsboro, Oregon.

Allyson Mallya, daughter of Prakash and Lynne Mallya of Sierra Madre, California, celebrated her high school graduation in June 2008 from Polytechnic School in Pasadena. She will attend Washington University in St. Louis in the fall of 2008 and will be majoring in biomedical engineering.

Avinash Joshi, son of Ravi and Vidya Joshi of Mission Viejo, California, graduated from Capistrano Valley High school, Mission Viejo as Valedictorian and gave the Graduation speech for the class of 2008. Avinash is an Eagle Scout - the highest rank in Boy Scouts of America. He built instrument storage cabinets for the high school music room as his leadership project. He played violin in the Symphony Orchestra, was a member of National Honor Society and Key club and won several awards. He played in the Tennis team and was the general secretary of Model United Nations and won "Outstanding" awards at various conferences. He is an AP scholar with distinction and was voted as "Most Scholarly" by his peers and voted to the Homecoming court. He received various scholarships including Harvard Faculty, NHS and PTSA. He will be attending Harvard University in Fall 2008.

Arvinraj Borkar, son of Gurudutt and Veena Borkar of Moorpark, California, graduated from Moorpark High School and will go on to the University of Kentucky, Lexington for further studies.

Srijay Rajan, son of Anita and Amar Rajan of Moorpark, California, graduated in June 2008 from Chaminade College Prep School. He will be joining University of So. California (USC), College of Engineering, with a major in Chemical Engineering in fall.

ECE Alumnus **Sameer Dileep Hemmady** (Ph.D. 2006) and his advisor Dr. Steven M. Anlage (PHY/ECE) recently secured the runner-up position in the Physical Sciences category at the 21st Annual University of Maryland Invention of the Year Awards Reception on Thursday, April 17, 2008, for their invention entitled "Wave fingerprinting of complicated enclosures." The reception is hosted annually by the Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC).

OTC received 118 invention disclosures with 245 different inventors in 2007. An independent panel of judges consisting of representatives from on and off campus voted for the Invention of the Year in each of three categories (Information, Life, and Physical Sciences). Dr. Hemmady and Dr. Anlage have invented a system that exploits the extreme sensitivity of small wavelength waves inside complicated enclosures to create a method that distinguishes between nominally identical objects through their unique "wave fingerprints."

Sameer has taken up an assignment as "*Senior Research Scientist*" with SAIC in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 2nd June, 2008. He is heading a research team to work in his field of specialization. This is a senior level assignment at such a young age and he has made his rapid professional and academic progress in the last 5 years of his stay in USA. Congrats and best wishes, Sameer!

ENGAGEMENT:

Bharat and Kalpana Kundaje of Buena Park, California, are happy to announce their elder son, **Anshul Kundaje's** engagement to **Nalini Kartha**, daughter of Asha & Krishnan Kartha of Bangalore, India. Nalini did her M.S. in Computer Science from Columbia University and works for IBM at San Jose. The wedding is scheduled in Cochin in December 2008 and a Reception will be hosted at Dadar, Mumbai on Dec. 28th, 08. They request you to bless the young couple.

New Additions:

Roshan and Bhoomi Kamat of Baldwin Park, California, are happy to announce the arrival of their daughter, **Natasha** on **Dec. 21, 2007**. The proud grandparents are Janardan & Maya Nayak from Mumbai and Manohar & Jayashree Kamat from Mumbai.

Shrinath and Arundhati Shenoy of San Diego, California, are happy to announce the arrival of their son, **Gaurav** on **May 1, 2008**. The proud grandparents are Narayan and Malathi Shenoy of Kundapur & Devadas and Prathima Nayak of Shimoga, India

New Konkani:

Srinivasa and Usha Kini, 10275 Slater Ave, # 202, Fountain Valley, CA 92708
Tel. No. is (781) 363-3774

New address:

Sapan Shenoy, 210 N. Hudson Ave, # 2222, Pasadena, CA 91101
Tel. No. is (917) 558-5028

Moved out of Los Angeles area:

Sameer Hemmady of Thousand Oaks, California, has moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Thanks to Ravi and Vidya Joshi of Mission Viejo, for their generous donation at Yugaadi.

Special thanks to Venkatesha and Padma Rao for reserving a beautiful hall at a great location for Yugaadi and paying for its rental cost.

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YUGADI FUNCTION 2008

By: Vivek Ullal, Simi Valley, CA

The KASC Yugaadi Celebration was held at the beautiful club house of the Laguna Hills Country Club on March 22, 2008, thanks to Venkatesh and Padma Rao, who generously paid for the hall. The program started with *arati* and prayers, lead by Mohini Kamath and Radhika Hattiangadi. President Ramdas Pai welcomed all members, introduced new faces, and made a few announcements. This was followed by Karaoke songs by Sridhar and Nandini Rao. Jaidev and Chitra Chandavarkar presented an interesting slide show with commentary of their recent trek to Nepal, Tibet, Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar. This was followed by another equally captivating slide show and commentary of the *Pada Yatra* and Tercentenary of the Sri Chitrapur Math of Shirali, North Kanara District, by Bharat Kundaje. At the end Radhika Hattiangadi sang nostalgic film songs. It ended with a delicious catered dinner. The entire slate of members of the Executive Committee were re-elected for an additional year. Congratulations to Board Members, and thank you for doing a wonderful job. Special thanks to Mohiniakka (Kamath) for bringing delicious Madgane for everyone and all volunteers and members for making this event a grand success.

Is It Riverfront Vacation or Kashi Mutt?

By: Vastevu Prabhu
Mission Viejo, CA

Have you ever thought that you plan for *KashiYatra* and it turns out to be Five Star Riverfront vacation? Now there is something you can do about it, also. Here is my story in March 2007.

Being Hindu and also GSB, we are supposed to visit Kashi and take a dip in a Triveni Sangam at Prayaag atleast once in a life time. Every time I plan to visit, I kept on postponing that once in a life time Holy visit. Early this year I was determined to plan that trip and longing to visit Kashi Vishwanath Temple and get Blessing from that Lord Shiva who is standing there on the Banks of Ganga for last several centuries and protected by Hindu devotees from invasion of Muslim invaders and rulers several times (last one being Aurangzeb). Since flying time of twenty four hours from L.A. to Mumbai is exhaustive, I wanted to enjoy round trip train journey both ways. Because of off-season in late March, we, three, including my Elder Brother and Vanhi (Bhabhi, sister-in-Law) had no problem getting A/C two tier sleeping coach from Bori Bunder (now it is called Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) to Allahabad and return from Varanasi (Kashi, Banaras) to Mumbai Kurla station (now called Lokmanya Tilak Station). Accounting about 24 hours train journey each way, we were left with six days of vacation in between to plan in that area of U.P.

Our next question arose about where to stay. Coming from U.S., folks in India always look to us as status symbol and will hesitate to suggest anything other than staying in five star hotels. But I have not changed my outlook towards those Holy places which I had before coming to America. I had always heard great things about Kashi Mutt from my mother during childhood that it had over 100 rooms and one can get lost looking for your own assigned room. Plus the Mutt is over six hundred years old, and I love staying in old monuments built rock solid with black stone. If people flock to some old ruins and monument in Rome for just a visit, I thought, why not stay in our own lodging at the Mutt built by our own community centuries ago. After some inquiries and contacts, my brother made reservation for a room old fashion way (writing a hand written postal letter to the resident Manager) and followed by a phone call after about a week for confirmation. The friendly manager even offered that he will more than welcome and offered someone to receive all three of us not only at Varanasi but also at the Allahabad station so that our stay at both these Mutts will be comfortable.

On Sunday March 25, we hopped into our A/C compartment around midnight and just went to bed after Kalyan station as there was dark everywhere outside the window. Our cozy little four bed section even had 110v American type connection so that we can hookup our video camera charger and laptop connection. Indian Railways is progressing so fast that my next journey might have facility for internet connection for a nominal charge. Perhaps all can suggest to Lallu Prasad. Since the A/C compartment is served by the attached pantry car catering staff, we were frequently treated with snacks, tea/coffee,

cold drinks, etc. our train passed through Madhya Pradesh after crossing some of the cities in Maharashtra. I always used to enjoy frequent stops at several stations and junctions and noise created by those food vendors, plus you can stretch your legs at the station for five minutes. We saw miles and miles of fields of wheat growing plantations as Khandwa was known for wheat trading center. There was no boredom and after about 27 hours of journey (as usual the trail was late about 3-4 hours), we reached Allahabad junction at about 2 am Tuesday morning. To our surprise, driver of the Mutt at Allahabad spotted us immediately and with a hired coolie for our luggage headed towards his Tempo (three wheeler). Our ride in the diesel engine Tempo was rushing thru those quiet and sleeping neighborhood towns. We were greeted by house lady with typical Kochhi Amchigele (Konkani) who had made bed for us in a room so that we can take rest immediately after washing.

After early morning shower, Aarti and breakfast we headed towards Sangam where Ganga, Jamuna, and underground Saraswati meeting place in the Tempo. Luckily we escaped the time earlier month when Kumbh Mela had taken place; but the dirt and trash left behind by those devotees were still not cleaned up by the city. It was a beautiful sunny day, picture perfect. We boarded a small boat and our guide took us to the knee high bathing place at the tri-point of the rivers. Also, returning on the boat our guide told us to fill the Ganga water before this water merges with the grey water of Jamuna. This water is supposed to most holy and later in Kashi vendors seal this water by soldering the top in small copper jugs. According to legend, this sealed Ganga jal (water) is supposed to be in every Hindu family. When an elderly person in the family is just about counting his/her last breath, spoonful of Ganga jal from this copper is offered to the dying person in his/her mouth by each family member present. After the sumptuous and delicious lunch Konkani style prepared by Bhatini Maai, we proceeded towards Kashi (Varanasi) by bus.

It was a quite a bumpy ride with lots of potholes but fewer than in L.A. county area, and we reached Varanasi bus station, about half a mile from the Varanasi Railway station. As per instructions, we hired an autorikshaw and reached Goal Ghar (round house) area beyond which motor vehicles have no access to reach Kashi Mutt; one has to walk to the Mutt about a mile long. Our BhatMam had come to escort us even though directions to the Kashi Mutt with arrows are clearly painted on the building of every corner. After reaching Mutt, the Mutt manager (BhatMam) assigned a room with three twin size beds combined together. Beds were made with very clean sheets and blankets and pillows, etc. It was late in the evening after the Aarti when we reached there, so we ate our delicious supper and after some Panchadiki, we rested for the night.

Since worshipping service staff gets up early in the morning at 5 am for preparation, guests usually sleep until late say until 6:30 or 7 am. Hot water from electric geysers is cut-off at about 8:30 after Aarti at 8 am and breakfast is served at 8:30 am. One can also walk down to those stone stair steps leading to the Ghats for bathing. This was our first early morning. The Mutt is almost like 7-8 story high equivalent of modern building. The Narasimha Deity Mandir is at the highest level and facing east. From the balcony, one can enjoy sunrise in the horizon with magnificent scenery. Down below in the crescent

shape Ganga, hundreds of tourist boats rowed by owners. Some tourists take pictures, movies and enjoy and greet the rising sun.

Next day morning, we hired a rental boat, arranged by our Mutt manager, and we were on the row before the sunrise so that we can capture the scenery and magnificent view on our video camera. For 2-3 miles ride, we glimpsed many of the Ghats where thousands of devotees gather to pay homage to Usha Kiran (early morning sun rays). Some locals and western tourists we saw them meditating, Yoga exercise and various other activities. After our one and one half of round along the river, we anchored our boat near the Ghat where Kashi Vishwanath temple is accessible. It is about ¼ mile walk inside from the river bank. Because of terrorist threat, security is very tight. Any metal objects such as cameras, cell phone, watch, even pens are not allowed inside the compound. Due to extreme popularity, always there is a big line and rush. This ShivaLing supposed to most holy among the twelve lings. This Ling has been reference in Puranas and supposed to be quoted in many religious books. Because of its popularity, it is also vulnerable to many attacks by Muslim foreign looters and Mughal rulers; last being Aurangzeb destroyed original temple and built mosque on existing pillars of temples. Luckily the original ling was hidden in water by some brave Hindus where present temple was built by Rani Ahilyabai of Holkar family about 250 years back.

We did several activities around the city in next couple of days, such as visit to Sarnath where Bhagwan Buddha gave first sermon, visit to Banaras Hindu University and new Birla Vishwanath temple, Tulsidaas Ram Charit Manas Exhibit, Sankat Mochan Temple (Hanuman Temple where Abhishek B./Aishwarya Rai visited), Museum of sculpture, etc. Of course we drank lots of Lassi, ate chats, ice-cream, pure milk sweets such as pedha, barfi, and Banarasi Paan, etc. and purchased Banarasi sarees and Kurta kamiz.

This is the best vacation I have ever enjoyed right on the river front. Most of the five star hotels are away from most of the Ghats. From American standard, this type of riverfront view vacations is beyond the reach of average people. Even when we were on vacation during Cairo visit ten years ago, we had paid \$200-300 per night at Sheraton Hotel just to have a small view of Nile River. For a fraction in a local currency, we GSB and SB are lucky to have many Mutts in Kashi, Hardwar, Prayag, and Kalpi at prime locations. I will be uploading some of the pictures at my BlogSpot: <http://konkaniboy.blogspot.com/>

Contacts at Kashi and Prayag:

Kashi Mutt: Suresh Pai/Venkatesh Bhat, 46/43, Mori (near Railway Bridge), Daraganj, Allahabad-211006 phone: 0532-2505047

Varanasi (Banaras) Kashi Mutt, Brahma Ghat, 011-91-542-243-5632 near Goal Ghar

<u>KASC FINANCIALS STATEMENT</u>					
For the Fiscal Year May 1, 2007 - April 30, 2008					
	PICNIC	DIWALI	UGADI	MISC	TOTAL
Opening Balance:					\$10,465.84
RECEIPTS					
Receipts / Donations	\$900.00	\$1,585.00	\$2,096.00		\$4,581.00
Raffle / Bingo				\$126.00	\$ 126.00
Additional Member Dues / Donations				\$75.00	\$ 75.00
Advertising Revenue				\$0.00	\$0.00
Interest Income				\$169.50	\$169.50
Total Receipts:	\$900.00	\$1,585.00	\$2,096.00	\$370.50	\$ 4,951.50
EXPENSES:					
Rent		\$500.00			\$ 500.00
Catering	\$1,125.99	\$770.00	\$900.00		\$2,795.99
Events' Supplies/Snacks	\$94.22	\$49.00			\$143.22
Projector				\$418.89	\$418.89
Directory, Envelopes, Mailing				\$189.32	\$189.32
NAKA Donation				\$500.00	\$500.00
Total Expenses:	\$1,220.21	\$1,319.00	\$900.00	\$1,108.21	4,547.42
Receipts over Expenses:	-\$320.21	\$266.00	\$1,196.00	-\$737.71	\$404.08
Ending Bank Balance:					\$ 10,869.92
Note: Bank Balance includes \$5000, which is in a one year CD.					
Interest is deposited into the KASC Checking account each month.					

BHARATNAYAM DANCE BY KARISMA NAGARKATTI

Festival of Solos, An evening of Indian Classical Dance by Rangoli Foundation for Art & Culture was presented on Saturday, 12th July at the newly opened Edye Second Space Santa Monica Performing Arts Centre in Santa Monica. This was the first show to be staged by an Indian Dance company. **Karisma Nagarkatti** and Hema Iyer danced to a sold out house full audience.

Karisma dedicated her first solo show to her friend, Sagarika Savur, partial proceeds of the ticket sales will benefit the City of Hope Medical Center and go towards the Sagarika Savur Fund.

This dance program's Artistic Director & Dance Conductor was Smt. Malathi Iyengar. Musicians from India were Shri Nandakumar U.: Vocal, Shri Gurusurthy G: Percussion and Shri Vivek V.: Flute.

KONKANI SAMMELAN 2008

By: Vivek Ullal, Simi Valley, CA

The seventh North American Konkani Sammelan was held at the Hyatt Regency and Convention Center, Santa Clara, California, and was a splendid success. It was held on July 3-5, 2008. Over 1300 individuals attended the well planned and punctually executed events for two and a half days. The cultural programs, key-note addresses and other speeches, and seminars were of top quality, and very inspiring. The decorations were exemplary and food arrangements were executed in very professional manner with no snafus or any drawbacks. To top it all, the food was delicious and typical top notch Konkani cuisine.

KASC members participated in a big way in the Sammelan. Purandar Mallya presented a stand-up comedy act on the opening night. On the last day, KASC performers included Karisma Nagarkatti who presented a beautiful *Bharatnatyam* dance item with finesse, yours truly with son Ajay Ullal, rendered a flute and tabla item, and a hilarious skit written by Purandar Mallya, and directed by Shivadev and Lata Ubhayakar. Participants included Purandar, Anuradha and Mandar Mallya, Ramadas Kamath, Rajesh Prabhu, Veena Vishwakarma, and Beena Shenoy. KASC members Shyam Amladi, Vivek and Manasi Kolpe participated in a skit from Chicago. In addition, Shyam wrote, directed and participated in a *Konkani Bhangra* that included several Chicago Konkanis. Suneil Gaitonde, Makana and Galen Krulce participated in Konkani idol. Galen bagged a prize. Congrats! KASC volunteers also helped with the dinner on day one. Great job KASC participants!

The next Sammelan will be back in Chicago in 2010. Hope we all meet again, and have a splendid time together.