



# SABHA NEWS

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## GREETINGS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

*The Sabha wishes all Members  
A very happy and prosperous  
NEW YEAR 2009*

### EDITORS SPEAK:

Blessed are those who have had the privilege of living in a close-knit, loving families says Mr K.R.Baliga in 'Family Ties'. As one of the key aspects of founding close family ties, 'Parenting' is the key which is time tested and aptly presented by a parent Ms Vatsala Kamat. Dr Vidya Nayak writes about our 'Small Wonders' these days who evolve faster than the children of yester-years. 'Art Of Living' Guru Sri Sri Ravi Shanker's key tips to successful living have been summarized from the compilation key by Dr Padmini Shenoy whilst Mr. Ramesh Rao shares with us the lighter side of old age. Do we not take the various natural advantages we enjoy for granted? It is time to sit up and ponder says Ms Geetha Baliga. Dr Anandi Shenoi as a delegate herself covers the outline and the events of the Konkani Sannelan held in sunny California. Dr Meera Shenoy while stressing on the need for rural youth empowerment as a key development trait for the future development of our nation, outlines some of the exemplary work being carried out by her in this area. In the depiction of practical thoughts and inferences thereof which must have crossed through all our minds and what has been rightly claimed as an attempt to change the content of our past issue, Mr Devdas Kamath has penned his 'Random Thoughts'

Wishing you all HAPPY READING.

### FAMILY TIES

(Based on ideas collected from various books)

*K.R. Baliga*

All of us say "we have family and family ties". But what is a family? Scriptures say "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. (The whole world is a family) – more to emphasize the fact that a kutumbam (family) is the best example of the embodiment of peaceful and harmonious living where members assist each other out of sheer love

and affection. Yet we see instances where even brothers and sisters have had antagonistic relations whatever the causes may be. So it is not mere blood relationship that matters although most of us do not see beyond the circle of our own "wife and children" when thinking of a family.

People can become a family only when they add love to their relationships. Without love, families are just a group of people who are born into a family tree, illam, biradari or gharana.

Some lucky people are born into wonderful families. Others, not so lucky, have to find or create them. Being a member of a family is a priceless privilege that has to be paid for in nothing else but love.

Families give us our roots, our heritage, our cultural traditions and our past. They also serve as the spring-board to our future and a shock-absorber to moderate the intensity of any sufferings in life. Nothing in this world is stronger than the bond that a family can form. That is a bond of pure love that will withstand any strain as long as this love is kept in the fore-front and not any other material expectations.

Families come in all sorts and sizes. Some very blessed people are able to live their whole life as a part of the family into which they are born, or where they live or work. Others not so lucky drag on without a family other than in the surname they bear. It is now up to them to go all out and re-create a family infusing it afresh with love.

It is amazing family is not as much about being related by blood as it is about relating through love and regard. And so, someone not closely related by blood can also be your family.

So, think, what kind of a family do I have? How many can I count as my dependable and mutually supportive family? What am I planning to contribute to make mine a great family? Don't get frightened by the word "contribution". You and I need to contribute only love. Love is a commodity which we can never buy. The only way to acquire it is to give it away and give freely, strange as it may seem.

When you just worry about yourself you are always disappointed. Expand your mind and think about others – some one in your neighbourhood, some one in your office, some one you have been meeting in the course of your work. See how you can be helpful to them, how you can be supportive when they need you. Just some kind words and giving quality time, just thinking about others first and their well-being every time works out best for you and for them.

Why wait for others to start? Take the initiative yourself and see how soon you will be

blessed by being the recipient of the most precious gift of family. Start right-away with those around you in your house, or in your working area or in the organization you belong.

## LITTLE WONDERS

*By Dr.(Mrs.) Vidya Nayak*

There is no doubt at all that the children both still to be born and new born evolve and grow smarter these days.

On two occasions, I have heard a baby cry even before its head came into worldly view helping Obstetricians to avoid the labour of resuscitation.

The babies of yester years kept their eyes closed for 3-4 days. But now, their eyes accommodate well at birth and they tend to look with interest all moving and prominent objects. What is more, they display a penchant to be fed, even prior to the delivery process being completed.

The next couple of days it is amazing to see these little fellows develop a sweet tooth! I have witnessed rejection of plain glucose administered but accepted with glee when sweetened with natural sugar.

The time-tested milestones for growth are also brought forward than ever before and tend to reach out for the gadgets and gizmos ( handsets etc) owned by the Dad .

## 25 STEPS TO SUCCESS IN LIFE

*(Based on the teachings of Sri Ravishankar,  
Head of Art of Living)*

1. **Review the context of your life.** Have faith in God and do your work with a smile.
2. **Know life's impermanence.** Accept it but do not lose heart.
3. **Make your smile cheaper:** Vow to yourself, come what may, I am going to smile today and be happy. My anger is too expensive to be vented.

4. **Be enthusiastic and praise others.** Be happy and bubbling with enthusiasm. Lose no opportunity to praise others and bolster their enthusiasm.
5. **Make meditation part of your life.** This will help you accept the present and live without anger, agitations or anxieties.
6. **The most beautiful place is within you, reach to it.** Know breath, know life. Pranayama maintains the balance in seven layers of our existence – body, mind, intellect, breath, memory, ego and the self.
7. **Communicate effectively.** Share with friends, learn from elders, teach youngsters.
8. **Take out time for yourself.** A few quiet moments of meditation will relax you and make you more creative.
9. **Better the world around you.** Be committed to make this world a better place to live and spread happiness around.
10. **Nourish your emotions.** Share your joy with others; show empathy with their sorrow.
11. **Plan short and long term goals.** Plan not only these goals but the methods and means to achieve them.
12. **Prayer is a vital tool.** This will be of great help when you feel grateful or helpless. Do what you can do; pray for strength when you cannot do. The higher power has the final say; and God knows the best.
13. **Implement changes if needed.** Have the courage to accept changes intelligently and without fear.
14. **Identify your limitations.** Whatever the situation may be, meet it with a smile on your lips and a prayer in your heart.
15. **Do not lose your friends.** Don't ever point out mistakes in public; correct them with love, care and compassion.
16. **Don't look for perfection.** We are all human.
17. **Let us be unpredictable.** No one will then take you for granted.
18. **Have a sense of humour.** It is a buffer that saves you from humiliation. Learn to laugh at yourself and not at others.
19. **Don't be afraid to make mistakes.** We never learnt to walk without falling. Failures are stepping stones to success.
20. **Overcome your prejudice.** Break the barriers and be natural when you mingle with others.
21. **Feel that "I am blessed".** Come out of your little shell and feel free in the confidence that you can overcome any obstacles as God is behind you.
22. **Do random acts of kindness.** Undertake acts of kindness without expecting any thing out of it; and do it spontaneously.
23. **Be a student always.** Learn to live and live to learn. Absorb knowledge from each occasion and person you interact.
24. **Dream the impossible.** Every invention was the dream of some genius who dared to dream and achieved by his determination.
25. **Compare your performance.** Not with that of others but with your own performance in the previous years.

*(Summarised from the compilation made by Dr; Padmini S. Shenoy of Ankleshwar, Gujarat.)*

## THE CREATIVE SIDE OF MY OLD AGE

*K.P. Ramesh Rao, Bangalore*

In one of my earlier articles on "Problems – My observations", I had stated at the end of the article "I see a problem where none exists and fail to see one where there are many". I did not try to amplify it, lest I be christened a "problem contributor". I have now dared to amplify it notwithstanding the risks involved.

I am seventy one years old leading a contented retired life. While in service, I was hardly creative but I have now changed and started creating problems for myself and for others. Whenever I go out in the morning, say to the Market, Bank, Post Office or a friend's house ..... I usually forget to take with me any one or more of the following items:

1. Car keys, 2. House keys, 3. My small bag containing my cheque book, pass book etc. 4. My

specs, 5. My wrist watch, 6. My sweater and my cap, 7. My friend's address, 8. My purse containing some cash and my driving licence, 9. My checklist, 10. Usual footwear.

On some rare days when I leave my flat after taking all these items, I get caught in the lift owing to a sudden power failure. I am of course "rescued" and thereafter I go to my car. As I open the car door, I remember that I have left my small bag in the lift. I rush back to the lift and start looking for it and as you have rightly guessed it. I fail to locate it. In disgust I slowly go back to my flat, change my dress and switch on the TV. Just at that time, the watchman would ring my door bell to return the small bag left by me in the lift.

Recently my family members have started persuading me that I should start using a hearing aid. Their argument is that whenever I leave the flat they keep reminding me about the small things usually left behind by me. Yet I leave nonchalantly completely sure of myself. I have so far resisted their demand stating that my ENT specialist has confirmed that my hearing deficiency is hardly 35%. Besides, if I agree to the demand, I will have to carry one more item with me which will be unbearable. Using a hearing aid means I have to hear the abuses of those impatient drivers who find my driving too slow and those of the old pedestrians who find my driving too fast.

On one occasion after taking out my car, I forgot to close the garage door and lock it. On my way to the post office, I remembered that I had not closed the garage. I rushed back only to find that everything was intact .... The garage lock and the key bunch which also had the keys to my flat. Additionally, I was happy to learn that all the junk which we have been storing in the garage over the years was absolutely untouched by anybody. On rare occasions, I have forgotten to take back my car to the garage at the end of the day. At midnight, the watchman would ring the doorbell to inform me about the car being parked on the roadside.

I have a habit of watching TV Shows viz. daily news, cricket matches, chat shows, stock markets, classical music programmes etc. Most of us are aware that in the TV, "Ad" programmes are much louder than the normal ones. To reduce the

volume of such programmes, I use the remote control but end up increasing the volume by pressing the wrong button, whereupon my family members pounce on me and revive their sermon on the hearing aid.

I do have health problems and consult my doctors who have been very kind to me. They listen to me patiently and after a few scans and tests, they give me valuable advice and conclude saying "These are all age-related problems. Please learn to live with them". Most of them are senior doctors and they know better.

God has been kind to provide me with a good family. Their tolerance helps me to continue to indulge in my problem-creating activities. They do not mind my refusal to have a hearing aid. Probably if I can be a little less creative, the age-related problems might gradually wane away for me and for those around me.

## PICTURESQUE KONKANI

**Susheelaa Sama Aabharana Naa, Lobhaaka Sama Shatru Naa:** There is no ornament equal to good conduct and no enemy worse than greed.

**Sarpaana Nidhi Raklyaa Vari:** Like a serpent guarding treasure to denote some one not utilizing the wealth he has usefully for his benefit or of others.

**Haathaa Thaalvati Polochaaka Kaannadi Ityaaka:** Expression used to refer to something which is too obvious and evident without any further corroboration just as one does not need a mirror to see the palm.

**Saanguka Jaainaa Pottaantu Raabbanaa:** Refers to a delicate situation where one can neither speak out nor keep quiet. Some times also referred to as "hoona udkaa ghotu".

**Vaanto Deevnu Khunto Ghetlyaavari:** Refers to a bad bargain where in spite of conceding something you are in a worse position than earlier.

**Vaaren Aani Ujjo Melyaavari:** This refers to the association of two who can create havoc by

their combined efforts. Not generally used for achieving something good.

**Vaagaa Bheena Simhaa Bheena Taptapeka Bhilyaavari:** The person is not afraid of major problems but is stymied by some small issue of no significance, often of illusionary nature.

**Bhaangraa Paana Jaalyaari Rukha Heedi Agathya:** Even the best and richest of us need the help and support of others. No one can be of any use unless he is supported by others.

**Bailaak Mudra Maarlyaari Basavu Jathve?:** You cannot change the inherent nature of anything just by some tinkering of external nature.

**Chelli Bhaanghraa Bomme Mhonu Kapataantu Davorcheve?:** There is no use merely hoarding any good thing. You have to use it for the benefit of society. However good the daughter may be, the father has to marry her off.

**Ghaanteka Ekkoo Swaru:** Refers to one who holds on to his views despite all efforts to correct him.

**Ghaayaacheri Mittaa Udaaka Rakailyaavari:** Instead of healing any wound aggravating it akin to adding insult to injury.

**Gange Nhainthulo Bebbo Swargaa Vathve?:** Merely being in good company, or being born in a good family or reading good books is not enough. You have to improve your conduct and behaviour by your concerted efforts.

**Tela Polonu Vaathi Hodikari:** Have an eye on your resources before you embark on any action.

**I AM THANKFUL FOR -----**

- Mrs. Geetha Baliga

Friends, the next time we grumble about our so called "problems", let us look at them from another perspective. Let us say, "I am thankful -----"

For the wife who says its only bread tonight because she is home with me, and not out with someone else.

For the couch potato husband polishing off a tin of chips on the sofa after a heavy dinner, because he is home with me and not out at the pub.

For the teenager who is grumbling about parental authority because it means she is at home, not on the streets.

For the clothes that fit a little too snugly because it means I have enough to eat.

For the taxes I pay because it means I am employed.

For floors, vessels and bathrooms that need cleaning, for endless meals that need cooking, because it means I have a home and family.

For the aching muscles and weariness at the end of the day, because it means I have been capable of working hard.

For the parking spot I find at the furthest end of the parking lot, because it means I have been blessed with transportation.

For too much email, because it means I have friends who are thinking of me.

And finally for the alarm that wakes me up in the early morning hours, because it means I am alive.

**INVEST IN YOUTH FOR  
A SHINING INDIA**

- Mrs. Meera Shenoy

India will be the youngest nation in the world by 2020. Most of India lies in the villages. Rural and tribal youth are frustrated as their education does not help them get jobs. Television deepens this anguish as they wonder why they cannot be like their urban counterparts with flashy motorbikes and cell phones. This results in social problems like

Naxalism which is a high cost to society. Armchair thinkers are already forecasting a “demographic disaster” if large number of rural disadvantaged youth face failure and frustration in getting jobs. We need to invest in the latent energies of these young minds to create a Shining India. One way to do this is skilling the youth for employability/employment. I have been in this field for the last few years setting up the Employment Generation & Marketing Mission (EGMM) for the Andhra Pradesh government and working on behalf of the World Bank in Bihar , Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Today EGMM has become one of the largest Jobs mission globally having trained 160000 rural and tribal poor and provided 80% of them jobs..

#### **Lip service to Public Private Partnerships:**

The work involves getting companies, governments and communities of the poor to come together on one platform .This is not easy. Companies think working with government is a waste of time; government thinks all companies are exploitative. And the rural poor in their villages are unaware of the benefits of partnerships.

An executive with a telecom company told his boss he would like to explore recruiting his sales force from among the rural poor trained by the EGMM in Andhra Pradesh. Pat came his bosses' reply,” The rural poor may not fit into our high profile company”. The executive, from a rural background himself, funded his own travel armed with a video camera to the EGMM Academy at Seetampeta, a remote tribal area in Srikakulam district. When he played the video recordings back to the company, five business units were clamoring for the work-ready youth!



Existing government vocational institutes like ITI's have outdated curriculum not linked to market needs. The employment exchanges are so

outdated that only a “government” job is defined as a job in their bylaws. And there are three departments at the central and state government levels, which do not work on the same wave-length.

#### **Can We Talk?**

For dialogue between the three stakeholders, government, companies and the poor, a facilitating mechanism is required. We made a beginning in Andhra Pradesh where a pro-active rural development department set up EGMM, a mission dedicated to this work. EGMM is incorporated as a society to create an enabling eco-sphere for public-private partnerships. Senior Officers of government and private sector are on its Executive committee. This allows the best of the private sector linkages to be wedded to the powerful muscle and machinery of the government.



How to set up training centres in remote tribal areas? The government machinery takes over existing unused infrastructure in their districts and convert them to English and computer, textiles, construction training centres. As youth who get jobs in McDonalds, Tatas, Reliance Fresh and other companies, share their joyful stories of getting out of poverty, the government accesses money from various programs to feed it into the Mission.

Having private sector people in the core team helps in developing of grass root products, tailor made for the rural poor. Companies see private sector face leading the program in a government setting. So doors open ; skills required for different entry level positions are unbundled in collaboration with companies. The result? The rural work- ready poor get fitted into positions beyond their imagination.. Today twelfth class youth trained for three months, work in posh air conditioned hyper-malls and retail outlets in Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore.

## Konkani S sammelan – 2008

- Mrs. Anandi Shenoi

### Everyone Benefits:

In the drought prone district of Anantpur, where livelihood options are limited, the CEO of a large NGO was amazed, while shopping in a mall in Bangalore, to see all smiling counter girls from her district. She remarked, "In Anantpur, giving hope to the next generation of the poor by linking them to jobs is the only way ahead." For governments, the return on investment is high; investment per job creation is around Rs.10,000. And unlike other initiatives the impact can be seen in two to three months. Their employers have all gone on record to state that these rural youth from poorest of poor families work hard to achieve targets. The twin problems faced by Companies - attrition and motivation of the youth - get addressed with this new hiring mechanism.

For the family of the poor, a shift takes place from erratic incomes, depending on rain fed agriculture, to a steady money source month after month. The extra money is used to retire high cost debt from exploitative money lenders, to buy assets and to educate a younger child. Aspiration levels zoom even in the seemingly low entry level jobs in which they are placed. And one organized sector job in a family, takes away the stigma and smell of poverty in a sustained manner. Youth in jobs relate incidents of relatives and neighbors who ignored them suddenly find reasons to connect up!



Praveena, 22 years old, zips on a scooter as a sales agent for an MNC water purifier product. Hailing from a remote village, her parents could not spare Rs600 to buy her bus pass to reach college. Today she earns Rs. 120,000 annually; pays for her younger brothers education "I am saving for a degree in animation", she says cheerfully.

We need to all unite to create more Praveenas.

Growing up in Madras (now Chennai) as I am used to calling it, speaking Konkani was a code/cool language (unique tongue) as hardly anyone would ever understand, let alone guess, in what language I was speaking to my siblings and parents. However after living in the Bay Area (California) my experience has been different and I have come across Konkani in so many places – grocery stores, parks to name a few - that I am not sure it's my secret language any more. I would have never guessed after being such a minority group even in a major Indian city, I would meet many more Konkani in the city I live in (Cupertino, California) half-way around the world.

Being a Madras Konkani, I was intrigued and looking forward to meet over 1,500 Konkani at the Santa Clara Convention Center between July 3<sup>rd</sup> and July 5<sup>th</sup> 2008, this being my very first S sammelan. The North American Konkani S sammelans are held every 2 years at various U.S. and Canadian Cities with a big Konkani population and this time the KAOCA (Konkani Association of California) had volunteered to host it in the sunny Silicon Valley, California. The theme of the convention was "Awaken the Konkani in You" and it certainly lived up to its expectation. The event provided a chance for Konkani immigrants to meet old friends and relatives and for the Konkani youth and children born in North America to interact. Parents secretly hoped that this friendship among eligible boys and girls blooms into love and I know of a few situations where it has culminated in "happily ever after ..... "to the satisfaction of Konkani parents.

The Santa Clara Convention Center, a state-of-the-art meeting center for technology conferences, was transformed into a Konkani paradise for 3 days. The center was abuzz with Konkani chatter and gossip for 3 days and tastefully decorated with artifacts and scenes from Mangalore, Goa and Kumta. Food and gossip are intrinsic to Konkani culture. The volunteers of Northern California had paid meticulous attention to both these. "Panchadik Lounges" were a perfect place to meet old friends, make new ones or meet long-lost relatives. Never mind if its been years, and we all

have gained weight, not to mention the grey hair – our name tags might help somewhat and the “Look who is coming” on the website helps take out some of the guesswork. Konkani adults youth hung out at the “Dhingdo Lounge” during happy hour and enjoyed the Karaoke singing and also the Konkani standup comedian – Purandhar Mallya (our own Jerry Seinfeld !) Sumptuous mouthwatering “All You can Eat” Konkani buffets were served three times a day for all the days of the convention, much to the delight of first generation Konkanis and absolutely no complaints were heard from this group. Second generation youth who wanted a break from Indian food, could visit one of the restaurants in the Hyatt Regency that was attached to the venue.

The Sammelan events were held punctually (and did not follow the IST that we are used to at most desi events). The inaugural and closing ceremonies conducted mainly in Konkani, were continuous tableaux of the ‘Awaken the Konkani in You’ spirit put together in skits, songs, dances all woven together to provide an exhilarating experience and it involved participation of Konkanis of all ages. The chief guest was our very own Prakash Padukone, although there was a hint of disappointment among the men and youth that his beautiful daughter – Deepika could not make it as she was in London shooting for a movie with Sharukh Khan in the lead!



Keynote speaker – Sri K.V. Kamath

Mr Padukone urged the Konkani youth to follow their dreams and passions and advised parents to give their children flexibility in choosing careers. He concluded “I want to conclude with these words of President Kennedy: **“Ask Not What the Country Can Do For You, Ask What You Can Do For Your Country.”** Similarly, do not say what can

Konkanis do for me .. .instead ask What Can I Do For the Konkani Community and the World ... ? “

The keynote speakers also included Mr K.V. Kamath (CEO of ICICI Bank) and Jaya Row. Her speech was appreciated for providing the secret prescription to happiness and personal growth – something that is invaluable to the Konkanis in America who are doing well professionally ! Dr. Sumeeth Bhat – the youth keynote speaker shared his public health experience in Africa and India (village named Vitla near Mangalore) which had transformed him personally and provided valuable lessons to the young physician.

Three days rolled by quickly with sumptuous food, and women having ample opportunity to show off their new sarees and salwar kameezes (that were specially purchased for this occasion from India), not to mention the shiny jewelry. Men could retreat to the seminars that were organized while the kids had a blast playing with each other. Youth had their own seminars including “The History of Konkanis America” to name a few and time to hang out. The “Konkani Idol” hosted by the youth was a huge hit and it seemed like we identified our very own Sanjaya!!

The Sammelan ended with the Executive Committee waltzing on stage with ballroom gowns and suits and were cheered by the crowds for providing an exciting and fun filled Sammelan. The Executive Committee thanked the army of volunteers in Northern California who spent almost every weekend in the last few months planning for the event. The grand finale was a North Indian feast with unlimited booze and the high energy music got young and old including the chief guests on the dance floor till the wee hours of the morning.

The next Konkani Convention is slated to happen in 2010 in Chicago and the Konkanis from Illinois were chanting “Chicago – Yo Go “to the attendees and my kids are already looking forward to meeting their friends at that event! As for me I say let’s take it one day at a time and as the Konkani Sammelan 2008 organizers reminded us so often “Devu Baren Koro”.and leave it in His hands.



## FROM A DAUGHTER..... TO HER MOTHER

- Mrs. P. Shenoy

The richest treasure of one's life is undoubtedly one's mother whose love is pure, unmatched without compare. Always ready to give a helping hand and a smile which seems to convey "I am there for you always", a mother provides support and guidance at all times of necessity.

Her love is strong, beautiful and a precious gift which lasts forever, long, long after she is gone. Warm, wise, affectionate and understanding, her love is showered freely without any expectation. An epitome of supreme sacrifice, she is never ever tired of being a solid pillar of support for her siblings and her entire family. A caring soul, she gives generously all that she is capable of, little caring for her own needs.

In the early years of one's life, she is there as a person to look up to, to learn from as a teacher.; but, as the years roll by, she becomes a child's best friend, guide and confidante.

Unique indeed and different is a mother-daughter relationship for she knows that her daughter will fly away to another nest –hence her love is undemanding .

It is difficult, nay impossible, to replace the void created by a mother's loss. Undoubtedly, she is the best gift life has given and aptly, has she been termed "The Creator's Best Creation".

## FREE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Managing Committee of the Sabha has approved the first list of 288 students for educational scholarships totalling Rs.6,63,000 and cheques are being sent. A few more lists will be scrutinized by the Scholarship Sub-Committee. The Sabha expects that the total amount disbursed as scholarships will be about Rs.12 lakhs this year as against Rs.11,42,000 in 2007-08.

## FREE SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENTS

From 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 the Sabha received 68 Free Scholarship Endowments of Rs.2500 each. The highest number of endowments (Rs.95000) was donated by Gowda Saraswata Sabha of United Kingdom.

## GANESH CHATURTHI

Our most popular and well attended event Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated this year from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September. As usual each day there were poojas, archanas, moodganapati sevas etc. This year's special attraction was Maha Moodganapati seva performed on Ganesh Chaturthi Day by a devotee. Those present also recited the 108 divine names of Lord Ganesh on all the five days. A community Ranga Puja was done on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> September. There were Bhajan sessions in the morning on two days and on all evenings except on the visarjan day.

There was as usual Samaradhana (lunch) on all five days. The Sabha thanks Mr. R. Radhakrishna Shenoy of RRK Catering for the kitchen and dining hall services rendered as Seva to Lord Vinayaka this year also.



On the immersion day, the deity was taken in a palanquin and the ladies of Mahila Vibhag performed Kolattam.

## SABHA'S HALLS ARE NOW AIR-CONDITIONED

The Dining Hall, Music Hall and Marriage Hall have all been air-conditioned during the slack period from 16<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2008 utilizing the accumulation in the Building Corpus Fund. The parties who have booked the Sabha halls for marriages have greatly appreciated these facilities, – long-over-due in a City with a climate – “six months hot, and six months hotter”.

## NO KIDDIN', THIS

Mrs. Vatsala Kamat

### Fruit salad.

This was enough to jolt me out of deep sleep at 4 a.m and rush to the kitchen to check the fridge for fruits! No, that was not my taste buds tingling. It was not hunger pangs. It was my daughter, Tanvi's assignment at school. She had to take cut fruits to make fruit salad for 20 children. How could I have forgotten? Adding colour to the guilt feeling was the day's official meetings I had lined up, and presentation to be put together before setting out from home by 9.a.m.

I am sure I am not wrong in stating that most parents - more so, moms - go through these feelings. A part of modern day parenting this! And don't miss the jargon that goes with it - keep the children busy, give them quality time, right values and ethics for a holistic personality development. Not surprising then that when my childhood friend called from across the seven seas a month back, we actually spoke of multi-tasking being a woman's asset. True, but surely a way to egg ourselves on to do more at home and outside as career women!

From having kids which is progeneration, modern-day parents have led themselves into thought processes which offer judgments on “right parenting” and “good parenting”. This despite knowing that there is no university which endorses or certifies this. Most parents will agree that every day unfolds into work-intensive days from breast-feeding and milk pumping machines to play coops and cretches. As they grow, it seems imperative to

enrol the children for book reading and swimming classes, cricket coaching and tennis academies notwithstanding tutorials to make it to the best of colleges and corporate jobs.

Dutiful parenting is today measured by the number of sleepless nights spent in parenting and the Kilometres of chauffeuring done in the name of safety and security. In fact parenting is incomplete if you are not paranoid about where your child plays, whether the park is child proof or whether he will be run over while crossing the street.

Call it the American influence or any thing else, it has surely eliminated free time for both parents and the children. Think deeply. It has perhaps killed the young creative mind and also our natural instincts to parenting. I recently chanced upon an article in which a group of psychologists stated that simple unstructured play is important for a normal childhood. Aren't we re-inventing the wheel? Several decades ago our parents and grandparents perhaps allowed their children to play unsupervised for hours in the neighbourhood. Early falls and failures stimulate individuality needed to brave the world as he one day has to stand on his own.

This is not all. Cut to teenagers and the art of parenting is put to greater test. Office in fact for many parents may be a distressing factor at this stage. The new millennium has thrown up challenges of new technology and the need to keep pace with it too. Recently, just when my husband Santosh and self thought we had provided the best for our children, our 15-year old son, Karthik spoke of the importance of having a cell phone. “All children in my class have it, papa,” he said. Peer pressure wears the garb of necessity these days as children speak convincingly of the need to communicate and be abreast with technology.

No doubt deprivation is not the answer to toughen the child As a parent one must make sure that children are exposed to latest technology and have access to information, be it through the television channels or the world-wide web. But this could prove to be a double-edged sword! How many of us have been able to keep tab of our children's use of the “Orkut” , “Facebook” and such other web networks of staying connected? I am sure most of you would agree that we struggle to keep pace with the wired world- I-Pod, MP3, MP4, Playstation,

Gameboy and numerous sites to chat, find music, partners and anything you need- indeed just a click away! And then given the multifarious career options, the stress of facing exams and the consequent tantrums at home, the dilemma of parenting becomes more complicated.

All this and more with both mom and dad having to spin more currency! Rising demands from children, rising costs and greater aspirations which parents have for their children, along with hectic and demanding jobs that both the husband and wife pursue leaves of us parents in a mad whirl.

Finally as the child wades through various life stages and finds his feet in society its time for parents to use the next buzzword- "empty-nest syndrome". Mom and dad are left with only memories- those that make the physical, emotional and financial investment hopefully, a meaningful sacrifice.

## RANDOM THOUGHTS

- Devadas J. Kamath

The last SGS Sabha Newsletter contained so many articles on religion, meditation, philosophy, etc. that a reader would be fully justified in thinking that SGS Sabha is a religious organization! To change this impression, at least in a small way, I decided to write something not connected with religion, etc. I couldn't come up with a subject to write a long article on, hence here are some random thoughts.

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Politician-bashing begins every time there is a discussion on the problems faced in India. I have no special affection for politicians, but I've always felt that Indian politicians are only the face of the problems facing India. The body of these problems is we, the people of India. Democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people". If people are good, government (politicians) will be good. If people are bad, government (politicians) will be bad.

My question is: how good are we, the people of India?

1. Have I always paid Income Tax in full, declaring all my income?
2. Have I never bought/used smuggled goods?

3. Have I never bribed a policeman or a government servant?
4. Have I never spoken on my cellphone while driving?
5. Have I never engaged child labour?
6. Have I never used official facilities (car, telephone, etc.) for personal use?

I have listed only 6 questions, but there are many more. We should ask ourselves these questions. If we can answer "YES" to all these questions, we have the right to criticize politicians. If not, it's high time we all try to change ourselves. As Gandhiji had said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

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Have you noticed how easily we Indians acquire American accent? I know many India-born persons who:

1. Live in USA, or
2. Have lived in USA, or
3. Visit USA frequently/occasionally, or
4. Have visited USA once, or
5. Have relatives/friends living in USA, or
6. Work (in India) with a US-based multinational company, or
7. Visit the US Consulate frequently/occasionally, or
8. Have visited the US Consulate once, or
9. Drive past the US Consulate frequently, or
10. Watch TV programmes (sorry, programs!) from USA.

Many such persons have distinct American accents, sometimes more American than the accents of third-generation Americans! A slight accent is natural, but, in many cases, it is apparent that the person has put in a lot of effort to acquire the accent! I've always wondered why we find it so easy to acquire an American accent in a short time, but somehow none of us acquire a Gujarati accent after living many years in Gujarat or a Bengali accent after living many years in Bengal. Can anybody offer an explanation?

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To avoid the torture of receiving tele-marketing calls, I registered with the National Do Not Call Registry. But, the organizations that indulge in tele-marketing have found novel ways to make my life miserable! They telephone me under the guise of Customer Service and try to sell me their novel schemes that are designed to make me poorer and themselves richer. I've decided that 'Enough is Enough' (if Shobha De and NDTV have a copyright

on this phrase, I apologize!). Some of my friends are senior executives in the organizations (mainly banks and mobile companies) whose tele-marketing staff disturb me under the guise of Customer Service. The next time I receive a call from any of these organisations, I'll call up the friend who works with that organisation at 2.30am and say, "I just called to thank you for being such a good friend!" I'm sure that if all of us follow this system, tele-marketing calls will soon stop. Let's try it!

## CONGRATULATIONS YOUNG ACHIEVERS 2009

Sabha will be honouring on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 two of our young persons who have made us all proud by their achievements.

Rahul Baliga, son of Ramesh and Asha Baliga had won the Gold Medal in the National Rowing Championship, the first civilian to do so in an event which was always the preserve of the military services.

Sangeeta Kamath, daughter of Praveen and Anita Kamath had won the Gold Medal for being the University Topper in the B.Arch. Degree course of the Anna University, Guindy, Chennai.

For more details see our Newsletter of July 2008.

## SGS SABHA CHARITABLE TRUST

There are 13 residents now. Donations for "One Day Expenses" increased from 84 between July 2007 and November 2007 to 108 during the same period this year. Medical expenses have increased as the residents are getting older and falling ill more often.

The Trust has started getting some income from the upstairs hall, but it has not picked up to the extent we had expected. The feed-back was that the capacity for the dining facility was not adequate and that if it could be enhanced, there would be more bookings for the use of upstairs hall. About Rs.83,000 has been spent to shift the dining facility to the ground floor by partitioning the large hall. We expect the bookings to pick up. The torrential rains that lashed the city in the last week of November 2008 did not spare us. The ground floor housing the Old Age Home had knee-deep water and the residents had to be shifted to the first floor.

Food was arranged to be served for them without any break. There was some inconvenience which the residents faced cheerfully. We gratefully acknowledge the help rendered by Mr. S.E. Shankar Rao and his staff to the residents in the shifting to first floor and back.

The lectures on Mahabharat by Mr. K.R. Baliga continued. Mrs. Deepa Shenoi's lectures on spiritual matters continued. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi R. Pai continued to teach the residents Bhajans regularly. The Trust will welcome any other volunteers who can talk on spiritual topics or any other matters. Dr. (Mrs.) Shantha Kamath continues her visit to the Old Age Home and takes care of the health of the residents.

Donations to the Trust are eligible for Income Tax Concessions U/s.80G. Cheques drawn in favour of SGS Sabha Charitable Trust could be sent to the Trust's office at No.55, Habibullah Road, T.Nagar, Chennai – 600 017 or of interest those who wish to volunteer please contact Mr. A. Arjuna Pai on phone 24867022, 24881860 or Old Age Home on 26449585

### IMPORTANT REQUEST

**We repeat our request again to members to inform Sabha Office as soon as there is any change in their addresses to avoid inconvenience or non-delivery of letters. We continue to receive quite a large number of communications addressed to the members undelivered.**

### WE MISS THEM

Since the publication of the last Newsletter No.32 in July 2008 the Sabha has come to know about the sad demise of the following members:

Mrs. V. Kanaka Bai, Kochi	17-06-2008
Dr. R.N. Sujeer	18-07-2008
Mrs. Sanjeevi Shenoy	21-08-2008
Miss Shanta Pai	23-08-2008
Mrs. Mohini Prabhu	27-08-2008
Mrs. Sudha K.Prabhu,Tirupur	05-10-2008
Mrs. Meera H. Pai	08-10-2008
Mizar Vaikunta Pai,Mangalore	17-10-2008
K. Dayananda Rao	30-10-2008
B. Chandrakanth Bhatt	19-11-2008
Mrs. Tara N. Sujeer	26-11-2008

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