

Khabbar

North American Konkani Newsletter

Volume XXVII No. 3
July, August, September - 2004

From:

The Honorary Editor,
"Khabbar"

P. O. Box 222

Lake Jackson, TX 77566 - 0222

XXVII-3

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



FIRST CLASS

TO:

Khabbar Follies

In this section, Khabbar looks into the Konkani community and anything and everything that is Konkani from a Konkani point of view. The names will never be published but geographic location will be identified in general terms.

There is no doubt in my mind that *Khabbar* is a part & parcel of life of Konkanis in North America. In fact, *Khabbar* has developed a special relation with most of the Konkani families and here are some examples of those close encounters of a different kind.....

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It is true that most of the Konkani youth attend prestigious academic institutions but I did not know to what extend we as a community or Konkani as a language was recognized till I got a note from this family in NC:

It seems that MIT grad application has “**KONKANI**” as one of the choices for native language!!! May be it’s because of the Baligas who attended/apply to MIT !??!

Appreciation to *Khabbar* comes from all over North America on a regular basis. Some go an extra mile to add few congratulatory notes and this quarter I want to share couple of them.

First one, I received from this family in CA:

The Advisory Committee and the Editor of *Khabbar* (Internationally reputed Konkani News Letter) deserves thanks and applause from Konkani community in North America. The level of enthusiasm of the editor clearly comes through in the quality of the newsletter. May be a Pulitzer candidate in the near future!?!
Editors’ Reply:
Khabbar, an Internationally reputed Konkani News Letter – YES but, a Pulitzer candidate...!?!

Second one from this family from TN in Aug 2004:

Vasant, We really appreciate all you do for our community, especially the thankless job of publishing *Khabbar*. You have set a high (gold medal) standard.
Editors’ Reply:
This family must have been watching too much Olympics and hence referenced “Gold Medal” as a standard?!

SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Dear Konkani family,
Please, note that you have the FREE access to the eKhabbar, the electronic version of Khabbar, by logging on to ekhabbar.com. If you want hard copy, then only renew your subscription for 2004 at \$15.00 a year. **Please, don't pay for future years!** Please, fill the form below and send your subscription with a check payable to Khabbar to P. O. Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222. (Canadian Konkanis please pay cash or MO in US\$)

Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email ID: _____

Children.....

Name	Boy/Girl	d.o.b.	Hobby/Interest
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Comments, if any: _____

Quarterly Newsletter
For Circulation to the Konkani Community in North America
Volume XXVII No. 3

July, August, September - 2004
Honorary Editor: Mr. Vasanth Bhat
Mailing Address:

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The Editorial Committee reserves the right to exclude, edit and correct all material received for publication and does not accept any responsibility for views expressed by authors of the publications.

EDITORIAL

Dear Konkani family,
I hope all is well with you and your family.

This issue of *Khabbar* has been mailed to **ALL** families that have paid dues **at least once since 1996**. In other words, families who have not paid since 1995 will not be receiving this issue and for families that have paid only in 1996, this will be the last time they will receive the hard copy of *Khabbar*. The numbers on the mailing label clearly indicate the year/s the dues for *Khabbar* has been received since 1996 and if there is any error let me know.

It is time to renew your subscription for 2004. The Advisory Committee of *Khabbar* is glad that the annual dues will remain the same at \$15.00 a year and for that you get:

- Four issues of the *Khabbar*,
- Annual Mailing List and
- Discounted advertisement rates.

The on-line version of *Khabbar*, ekhabbar, will be on the web a **quarter** after the hard copies have been mailed. This issue has **not** been mailed to families that have specifically indicated that they will access ekhabbar.

The Konkani SammelAn – 2004 was nothing but the greatest function of the year! All the committee's time & effort has proven to be worthwhile. The only complaint I heard was that it ended rather soon!! Read about this grand event in this issue.

The community's enthusiasm for these Sammelans has proliferated into future sammelans - the **AmCHIGale Youth Convention - 2005** in Chicago and **KonCANi Sammelan – 2006** in Toronto are already in the books! Plans are underway for **Konkani Sammelan – 2008** also!! More to follow in future issues of *Khabbar*.

The North American Konkani Association (NAKA) conducted the seminar "**Konkani Sammelans - Path Forward**" during the SammelAn-2004. The panel consisting of all the previous, present & future executive office bearers of Konkani Sammelans together with a youth representative vigorously discussed how we as a tiny community **can** preserve our great culture and heritage. As an action item, **Ramesh Kamath et al** are spearheading an effort to publish the Konkani/ English easy reference guide.

The committee members of **Vishwa Konkani Parishad** who attended the SammelAn – 2004 and visited various Konkani Associations in North America saw genuine desire to support their Rs. 4 crore project, "**Vishwa Konkani Kendra**" (VKK) to revive the Konkani literature and culture by **Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratistan**. Please extend your help to them.

Every quarter, *Khabbar* looks into Konkani community for great accomplishers and this past quarter has brought the happiest news to all - **Smt. PREMA KINI** of Bangalore was awarded the International Professional of

the Year Award from AGBell (Alexander Graham Bell Assn. for the deaf) and **Dr. PARVATHI K. BASRUR, C.M., Ph.D.** received the highest honor of "Order of Canada".

The Advisory Committee of *Khabbar* is pleased to report that there are quite a few unofficial *Khabbar* correspondents in your area who send in the *hoon khabbars* on a regular basis. If your area is not represented wholly, let me know and I'll recruit more volunteers. Also, most of the articles and news item come voluntarily on a regularly basis. If you send them via email (khabbar@hotmail.com) it makes the editing job much easy.

Simply put, on the Quiz front, *Khabbar* has still remained as an undefeated champion for a long time!

Khabbar will always publish appeals for charity free of charge but cannot collect money on behalf of any charity. Families are encouraged to send the money directly to the concerned charities. *Khabbar* firmly believes in helping our people whether it is in India or here.

Do not forget to exercise your right to vote. Participate in the US Presidential elections and let your voices be heard.

I hope peace and tranquility will prevail soon.

Happy Diwali to you all. *Devu Boren Karo*.

Vasanth
Editor

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor will be considered for publication unless the writer requests otherwise. Letters may be edited for publication. Editor reserves the right not to publish anonymous letters. Initials only on request if the writer includes his or her name.

Dear Vasant,

Here is an article forwarded by my uncle, Ramdas Mundkur, on **Sandhya Vandanam Trust**, which is a trust for senior citizen housing in Bangalore. If possible, please print it in your next *Khabbar* issue. Thank you very much.

Shyam Taggarsi
taggarsi@yahoo.com

Dear Editor,

We have pleasure to inform you that HamaraStar has launched "Desi Event Organizers Network" in the USA to promote visiting artists and professionals to USA. Please visit: www.hamarastar.com for details.

We have given below a press statement and we'd appreciate if you could publish the news for the benefit of the visiting artists and professionals to USA. This press statement and HamaraStar logo are also available for downloads at:

<http://www.hamarastar.com/press.asp>

Thank you.

With best regards,

ShivRaj Venkatram
Director, HamaraStar.

Dear Mr. Bhat,

Hope you and family are doing well. I am happy to inform you that we have formed a tax-exempt trust. For details you can visit our website

www.anandashramfoundation.org/.

The hospital is under construction. Any help or advise from you is very welcome. If possible give us publicity through your publication.

HARI OM

Dr. Jay K Raman MD
Houston, TX

Dear Vasanth Bhat,

This letter is a plea to your readers to stop calling the sacred images in Hindu *pūjā* as "idols". Webster's

Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary traces the origin of the word "idol" to the Greek *eidōlon*, or phantom, and gives one of its meanings as – a representation or symbol of an object of worship; broadly: a false god. Other meanings are - a false conception: fallacy. The "idol" designation appears to have originated from persons with an agenda to run down Hinduism as "false" compared to their own religious beliefs as "true". We should be sensitive to the pejorative connotations of the word "idol" and stop using it in a religious context. It is a relic of the prejudices against Hinduism and is best allowed to lapse by disuse.

"Image" is a better alternate; it is equally short and does not disparage or belittle any one's beliefs. The Sanskrit equivalents of "image" are *pratimā* or *mūrti*.

Sincerely,

Mulki R. Bhat
Miller Place, NY

Dear Editor

I would appreciate if you can include the following request in your next issue of the *Khabbar*.

During the LA convention the "The Konkani Sammelans- Path Forward" discussion group agreed that we should work on a Konkani/ English easy reference guide for the benefit of the Youth. The plan is to come up with a document of about 1,000 words along with a CD to help say the words like a true Konkani. In order to minimize the complexity only Saraswat and GSB Konkani words will be referenced. A team has been selected to take on this ambitious project under the leadership of **Deepak Nettar**. Other team members are **Veena Kamath, Pratibha Kamath, Suman Shiralkar, Vivek Rao-** representing youth. I will be the sponsor of this team. Our plan is to deliver the end product at the 2006 KonCANi Convention.

I am seeking advice/ input from the readers of *Khabbar* on how best to format this document and the contents therein. Your input is very much appreciated. Please send your comments by email to karkalmam@yahoo.com

Devu Baren Koro

Ramesh Kamath
926 Governors Bay Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065

Dear Vasanthmam,

Thanks for your patience. I have compiled a complete write-up about the Konkani Sammelan. It is a bit long. Please take whatever highlights you feel that are appropriate, and include them in your own article.

Please note: individual names of Committee chairpersons, performers, etc. have not been mentioned to keep the write-up brief, and to be fair to everyone. If names are necessary, you may access the Konkani Sammelan web page, www.konkani2004.com, to get the details. Please contact me if you need more details.

Thanking you again,

Vivek
vivekullal@sbcglobal.net

Dear Editor,

Subject: NEWS - Air-India Celebrates LA-Mumbai Service

As you know, Air-India launched its new Los Angeles to Mumbai service last week, June 11. There were a lot of festivities in Mumbai to mark this great occasion. They are described in our press release below. We hope you are able to include this information.

We also have several accompanying pictures. Let me know if you would like me to send you the photos.

Sincerely,

Mario Almonte
Account Group Manager
Herman Associates
malmonte@hermanassociatesnewyork.com

212-404-6557

Hoon Khabbar

Congratulations:

RAGHUVVEER NAYAK of Oak Brook, IL was elected as the President of Federation of Indian Association (FIA) for 2004/5 term. He was also elected as a super delegate to the DNC convention in Boston for John Kerry.

Smt. PREMA KINI of Bangalore, India was awarded the International Professional of the Year Award from AGBell (Alexander Graham Bell Assn. for the deaf) during June 25th - 29th 2004 biennial convention held at Anaheim Marriott and Hilton Anaheim Convention Way, Anaheim, CA.

It is the most prestigious global award in her line. AGBell has a global presence as the world's largest information and support center for pediatric hearing loss and oral/deaf education. It is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has provided over a century of service with chapters located in the US and Canada and a network of international affiliates.

The award is given to a master professional who has made outstanding and significant contributions to the profession and chiefly, has achieved Development of a new instructional technique or program as well as Leadership in the field through involvement in state/provincial, or national groups involved with educating people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Visit AGBell website for more info:
<http://www.agbell.org/about.cfm>

Dr. RAJARAMA SHENOY of Shelton, CT. was a member of the team that received the Harry T. Jensen award from the American Helicopter Society in June 2004. This award is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the improvement of helicopter reliability, maintainability, safety or logistics support through improved design or technical achievement brought to fruition during the preceding year. This year

the award was presented for the advancements made in damage tolerant rotorcraft structural design technology and its application to new helicopters. Sikorsky's new helicopter, S-92 was the world's first helicopter to be certified by FAA under the latest and the most stringent structural design criteria and extensively used the technology developed above.

Sri YOGISH BHAT who was on a short tour of the USA, after attending the Konkani Sammelan-2004, was felicitated on July 5th 2004, jointly by the Federation of Indian Associations and the Overseas Friends of BJP, at the well known Hyatt Club, in Chicago. The citation presented to him read: "The Federation of Indian Associations honorably recognizes N. Yogish Bhat – Distinguished and Excellence Award for exemplifying best ideals of public service and his commitment for the foundation of integrity and transparency in government."

Responding to the reception accorded by the FIA, Sri Yogish Bhat, at the very outset, recalled the immense contributions made by the two great sons of India -- Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Swami Yogananda to the world at large through the wonderful Karma Bhumi of the West – the USA. He underlined their sustained efforts in highlighting the uniqueness and importance of the hoary Indian culture and the Hindu Dharma, and pointed out their Herculean endeavors in spreading the universal gospel of Vedanta, Yoga and Spirituality for the welfare and happiness of one and all.

Sri Bhat spoke in detail about the various opportunities now available to the NRIs in India, and particularly in the Mangalore district (Sri Bhat's constituency), Karnataka, in the financial and commercial spheres, imports and exports, in automobile and pharmaceutical industries, electricity generation, tourism and also the capital investment.

VINODH BHAT & NEAL SHENOY of New York, NY were featured in *India Abroad* July 23rd 2004 edition. Their company, [212]MEDIA recently created, produced and released *Stories for Heroes* a series of classic children's stories narrated by the most notable names in entertainment and sold as a CD audio book. The first audio book in the series features one of the top brands in children's entertainment: the Arthur Adventure series by Marc Brown. Celebrity readers include Clay

Aiken, Kelly Ripa, Kevin Bacon and Marcia Gay Harden and many others with the Arthur theme song sung by Ziggy Marley. Most importantly: a majority of the proceeds from the Audio book benefit three wonderful children's charities: NEA Health Information Network, Clay Aiken's Bubel/Aiken Foundation and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Visit www.storiesforheroes.com/ to learn about the Series and the beneficiaries.

PARVATHI K. BASRUR, C.M., Ph.D. received the highest honor of "Order of Canada" on May 13, 2004.

The first woman appointed a professor at the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College, Parvathi Basrur is an international authority on animal genetics. Through her work with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the International Research and Development Research Centre (IDRC), she has helped breeders around the world improve their livestock's milk- and meat-producing capabilities. A member of the Board of the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), she has shared her knowledge with researchers and farmers in developing countries to find solutions to fertility-related reproductive problems. Now retired, she continues to guide and

champion others who follow in her path.

Mr. S. SUBRAYA SHENOY of Wallington, NJ passed the PE Examination in April '04 from Delaware.

Mr. SUBRAMANYA BALIGA of Monroe, NJ passed the PE Examination in April '04 from Maryland.

SWAMI JYOTIRMAYANANDA, the Konkani speaking sage of the Vivekananda Order has released an inspirational & thought provoking publication on Hindu Unity called "Arise, Awake and Be Vigilant to Safeguard Dharma". Contact Swamiji at swamijyoti@vivekanandagospel.org to get a copy of this 24 page publication.

Konkani Graduates:

KANTHI YALAMANCHILLI (Shenoy), d/o Sudhakara & Prathima Shenoy of Houston, TX graduated internal medicine residency from Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas, TX. She will pursue Hepatology fellowship at Baylor University Center, Dallas, TX from July 2004.

ANIL, s/o Ashok & Sunila Kuchinad of London, Ontario, graduated with an Honours degree in Physiology from The University of Western Ontario in June 2004. He is now doing research at The Centre for Research on Pain at McGill University, where he has been admitted for a Masters in Neurosciences, starting in September.

AMBIKA, d/o Dr. Rajarama & Mrs. Aneetha Shenoy of Shelton, CT, graduated in May 2004 from Albany Medical College, NY after completing a 6-year BS/MD program jointly with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is currently a Pediatric Resident at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital in New Haven, CT.

RAKESH PAI, MD has joined the UCLA Medical Center Division of Cardiology in Los Angeles, CA to do a subspecialization in Cardiac Electrophysiology. Rakesh completed his Cardiology fellowship in June, 2004 at the University of New Mexico

Health Sciences Center. Rakesh is now board eligible in Cardiovascular medicine and will take the Cardiology Board examination in Nov. 2004.

RUKMINI, d/o Manjunath & Vindhya Prabhu of Trumbull, CT graduated from Trumbull High School as the *Salutatorian* and will be attending George Washington University. She was a member of the National Honor Society and the French Honor Society. Also she represented the State of Connecticut in "We the People" Competition held in Washington, D.C.

KARYN, d/o Prakash and Lynne Mallya of Sierra Madre, CA, graduated from Polytechnic School in Pasadena, CA. She was admitted to USC's BA/MD program and will be attending that school as a Chemistry Major this fall.

ADITYA, s/o Ravi & Asha Baliga of Danville, CA graduated from High School and is pursuing Engineering Degree at U.C. Irvine, CA

NAVEEN, s/o Dilip & Jayanthi Bhandarkar of San Ramon, CA, graduated from Ohio State Medical College and has started his residency program in Head and Neck Surgery (ENT) at University of Illinois in Chicago, IL.

NITHIN, s/o Dilip & Jayanthi Bhandarkar of San Ramon, CA, graduated from UCLA and is pursuing Medical Education at Western University of Health Sciences at Pomona, CA.

SUNANDA, d/o Subramanya & Vasanthi Baliga of Monroe, NJ will continue further studies in the Ph. D. program in Molecular Biology at UMDNJ.

AJAY, s/o Manohar & Ajita Shenoy of Suffield, CT graduated from Suffield High School. He was the *Salutatorian* of the class of 2004 and a National Merit Scholar. He got an English Dept. Award in recognition of the highest Scholastic Aptitude test verbal Score, Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science award in recognition of outstanding academic

achievement and superior intellectual promise in the field of Science, an award from Social Studies Dept. and Advance Placement History, UCONN Achievement Scholarship in recognition of demonstrated academic excellence, the Suffield Woman's club Ruth Morse Scholarship for the excellence in French and has been awarded the Presidential Scholarship in UCONN.

ADITHI, d/o Pramod & Seema Dubale of Willowbrook, IL, graduated from Hinsdale Central high school and is now starting the GPPA program in medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago, IL.

SEEMA, d/o Ramanand & Gayathri Kamath of Downers Grove, IL, graduated from Downers Grove South High School and is attending the University of Illinois at Champaign, Urbana, IL.

KUNAL, s/o Sanjay & Sucheta Savkur of Lisle, IL, graduated from Lisle high school and will attend Northwestern University this fall.

Baby Shower:

Ajita Shenoy of Suffield, CT. gave a baby shower to her daughter-in-law, **Sow. VIDYA** of Burlington, MA on May 22nd 2004. All the close relatives and friends were invited. Bharati Shenoy organized all the Baby shower guessing games and it was fun. All the Konkani, Kannada, Marathi lullabys sang by Ramani, Kishori, Geetha, Ajita, Bharati, Jaya, and Sujata. Ajita fed Daughter-in-law Vidya her favorite food preparations. The festival ended with Ajita doing "*Onti Bhorchi*" ceremony and giving Vidya presents and a sari. Then Vidya wore that sari, Ajita showed *arati* to Vidya and Manoj. All the relatives and friends showed *Arati* to the couple and gave gifts to the expecting mother.

New Arrivals:

KISHAN, 8 lb. 6 oz., 21 inches tall baby boy to Devadas & Gowri Nayak of Southfield, MI on Feb 10th 2004. The paternal grand parents are Ramakrishna & Geetha Nayak Kumbala of Mangalore and the maternal grand parents are Vasudev &

Laxmi Pai of Mangalore. Great Grandmother is Smt. Leela S. Pai.

SHIVANI, a baby girl born to Sanjay & Ruta (nee Divgi) Rao of Chicago, IL on April 22nd 2004. Granddaughter to Ajit and Arati (Sujata) Divgi of Brookfield, WI and N. Sudershan and Vijayalakshmi Rao of Oakbrook, IL. Niece to Avani and Tim Locke, Ruhee Divgi, and Sunil Rao.

NANDAN, a 6 lbs 9 ounces and 19.5 inches long baby boy was born to Kochikar Rakesh & Ajnya Pai of Los Angeles, CA on July 3rd 2004 at the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, CA. His paternal grandparents are Kochikar Ramnath & Rajashree Pai of Carlsbad, NM, and his maternal grandparents are Vaman & Rajalakshmi Kamath of Mumbai.

AMIT, a baby boy to Manoj & Vidya Shenoy of Burlington, MA on 23rd July 2004. First grand son of Balkunje Manohar & Ajita Shenoy of Suffield, CT, a nephew to Ajay Shenoy of Suffield, CT and Manisha Kamath of Greenville, SC. Visiting Amit are his maternal grand parents Nityanand & Jayanti Shenoy. Paternal great grand mother is Sunanda Prabhu of Mumbai and Maternal great grand mother is Shanta Nayak of Mangalore.

DEVEN VASANTH, a baby boy to Suresh and Kathy Pai of Dunedin, FL on August 9th 2004. A second grandchild to Kernir Vasanth & Mala Pai of Naples, FL.

Engaged:

Kum. VEENA, d/o Ramanath & Vidya Kamath of Hamilton, ONT. engaged to **Chi. CHETAN**, s/o Ballenahalli & Gayatri Bettgowda of Charlotte, NC.

Newly Weds:

Sow. PRIYA, d/o Chandrakant & Sheila Mahale of High Bridge, NJ married to **Chi. RICHARD**, s/o Michael & Olwen Page on Saturday April 10th 2004 at the Park Savoy in Floram Park, NJ.

Relocation:

The **KAMATH** family, Krishna & Savitri have relocated from Clinton,

MS to 12932 East Sahuaro Dr., Scottsdale, AZ 85259. The new telephone is (480)-219-8968 (Fax: same as above, call before faxing) and email ID: kkamath@cox.net

The **PAI** family, Kochikar Arun & Geetha, have relocated from Library, PA to 2007 Overlook Court, Cannonburg, PA 15317.

Ms. KALPANA BHANDARKAR has relocated from NYC to 3501 Saint Paul Street, # 102, Baltimore, MD 21218. Her email ID: kbhandarkar@yahoo.com

The **SHENOY** family, Dinesh & Deeksha have relocated from Markham, Ont. to 75 Huron Heights Drive., Apt 103, Newmarket, ONT L3Y 5V8. The new telephone is (905)-836-4729 and the email ID: deekshashenoy@hotmail.com

The **NAYAK** family, Vinith & Divya with their kids, Vallab & Vallika, have relocated within Edison to 43 Meredith Road, Edison, NJ 08817. The new telephone is (732)-572-3248 and the email ID: vinith_nayak@hotmail.com

Ms VINDYA BHAT has relocated within Manhattan to 222 85th Street, # 1E, New York, NY 10028. Her email ID: vindya_bhat@yahoo.com

Konkani Happenings:

The **Konkani Association of Georgia (KAOG)** held their *Ugadi* function on April 3rd at Roswell Community Center from 12:00 to 4:00 PM.

The **Konkani Association Of Ontario (KAO)**, the hosts of the 6th North American KonCANi Sammelan, held their annual picnic on Saturday, July 24th 2004 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Richard's Memorial Park in Mississauga, ONT.

American Midwest Konkani Association (AMKA) held their annual picnic on July 25th 2004 at Busse Woods, Elk Grove Village, IL. The picnic was well attended and games and different activities were enjoyed by the young and the not so young folks. The delicious, mouth watering food catered by Chutney

Janet Restaurant was well appreciated by all. **Drs. Chandu and Nandana Bhakta** handed over the presidential position to **Ashok and Lata Nayak**.

The **Houston Area Amchigale Association (HAAS)** celebrated the first ever *Haldikumkum & Choodi puja* on Sunday 1st August 2004 between 12:00 PM - 2:00PM at Eldridge Park Community Hall in Sugar Land, TX. The *Choodi* competition was won by **Smt. Anuradha Nayak** of Houston (1st place) and **Smt. Kumud Nilekani** of Sugarland (2nd place).

The **Konkani Association of California (KAOCA)** held their annual picnic at Vasona Park, Los Gatos, CA on Aug. 21st 2004. As usual great food was served followed by games. The highlight of course was the socializing opportunity at the event.

The **American Konkani Association (AKA)** launched a beautifully decorated float for the third consecutive year in the India Independence Day Parade, on August 15th 2004 at Devon Ave in Chicago. The patriotic Konkans on the float sang *Vande Matharam* and chanted *Bharat Matha Ki Jai* and *Hamare desh Mahan Hai!* **RAGHU NAYAK**, the FIA president of Chicago, lead the parade with film stars Madhuri Dixit, Sanjay Dutt, and the Democratic Candidate for senator, Mr. Barrack Obama.

Email ID Change:

Sri RATNAKAR PAI of Franklin, MA changed his email address to : ratnakarpai@comcast.net effective immediately.

PARUSHURAM BHATT of Yorktown Heights, NY changed his email to: PARSHU@OPTONLINE.NET.

Sri. GURPUR DATTANANDA BHAT of Jamaica, NY has changed his email to: dattbhat2@yahoo.com (Primary). dattbhat@nyc.rr.com and gbbhat1@nyc.rr.com as secondary.

40th Birthday Party:

Mr. Ganesh Nayak & daughters Mangala and Bhavana and friends gave a surprise 40th Birthday party to **MEENA** Nayak of San Jose, CA on August 21st at their residence in San Jose, CA. Ganesh & Meena Nayak are the well-recognized Konkani volunteers in the Bay area.

65th Birthday Bash:

Friends & families of **Dr. JAYARAMA KAMATH** of Sumter, SC threw a surprise 65th Birthday Party to him at his residence in Sumter, SC on Sunday Aug. 29th 2004.

80th Birthday Bash:

Friends & families of **Dr. RADHAKRISHNA R. V. SHENOY** of Bayside, NY gave a surprise 80th Birthday Party to him at his residence in Bayside, NY on Sat. July 17th 2004.

90th Birthday Bash:

Sri SRINIVAS BHATT of Houston, TX celebrated his 90th birthday with family and friends on Saturday June 12th 2004 at his son, Ashwin's Bhatt's residence in Houston, TX.

Welcome to North America:

The KAMATH family, P. Vasudev & Sudha, of Mumbai have migrated again to US and their new address is 16 Birch Brush Road, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Their telephone is (508)-845-5344 and email ID:

vasudha60@yahoo.com

Obituary:

C. DEVARAYA PAI (86), passed away peacefully in Mumbai on June 26th 2004. He was born and raised in Brahmavar, Karnataka. He migrated to Mumbai in 1942 and joined Larsen and Toubro. He held several positions of increasing responsibility and when he retired in 1980 was Senior Manager in charge of Stores and Shipping. He was a committee member of the Matunga Gowd Saraswat Sabha and was very active in

several religious and charitable projects.

Khabbar sends heartfelt condolences to his son Gopi Pai & family of Germantown, TN.

BHAMY BABURAO SHENOY (59)

of Basking Ridge, NJ passed away on August 8th 2004. *Khabbar* sends heartfelt condolences to his wife Shyamala and daughters Kala and Neela, and brother Venkatraman Shenoy & family of Houston, TX.

Dr. RAMESH P. NAYAK (63)

of Roswell, NM died on August 21st 2004 in Roswell, NM. *Khabbar* sends heartfelt condolences to his wife Dr. Meenakshi Nayak of Roswell, NM, daughter Sheela & son in law Suresh Pai of Mountainview, CA & daughter Preeta Nayak of NC.

AmCHIGale Youth Convention 2005

in Chicago, IL from Friday, August 5th thru Sunday 7th 2005

Preparation has begun for the third Konkani Youth Sammelan. Head over to the exciting city of Chicago for a weekend of cultural and spiritual activities that will open your mind and enrich your soul. There will be interesting seminars, many ice breakers, fun trips around Chicago, great food and more! The convention is a great way to meet new people and reminisce with old friends. We have lots of surprises rolled up our sleeves, but you must come to find out!

got questions? Contact:

Youth Coordinators: Seema Kamath sk702@yahoo.com & Vikram Acharya vikram.acharya@yale.edu

The Chicago Committee:

Raj Acharya CB92082@aol.com,

Amar Bhakta abhakta@mail.colgate.edu,

Smita Kamath kamathsm@msu.edu,

Deepa Kamath dkamath@umich.edu,

Neha Nayak thimble87@yahoo.com,

Advisory Committee:

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Send your tax-deductible donation to:

The North American Konkani Association (NAKA)
2465 Bergen Avenue,

BROOKLYN, NY 11234

Attendees will have to be at least 18 years old to attend the convention by July 4th 2005.

A GLIMPSE OF KONKAN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By VIVEK ULLAL, Simi Valley, CA.

The Fifth North American Konkani Convention, popularly known as Konkani SammeLAn 2004 was held at Garden Grove, California, on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th 2004 at the luxurious Hyatt Regency Orange County Hotel, near Disneyland. Over 1400 attendees from all over U.S.A., Canada, India, and a few other nations congregated. North American Konkani Conventions are held every two years, and are marked with quality entertainment, seminars, youth programs, and authentic Konkani food. There were also exhibits about Konkani temples, traditional kitchen utensils and tools, art and related subjects.

STAGE EVENTS INCLUDING ENTERTAINMENT:

The entertainment program started with the opening ceremony exactly 6:00 pm per schedule on Friday, July 2 in the Grand Ballroom. It lasted a little over two hours and consisted of a variety of items that were seamlessly strung together by a unique storyline. This storyline featured a grandfather, a grandmother and their grandson who started reminiscing about Konkani heritage, food and culture while they were stuck at New York airport because of a flight delay on the way to the SammeLAn. The focus of the audience was continually flipped between the main stage and a smaller platform in front of the stage where the trio family's vignettes occurred to bridge the time gap between scenes and set changes. The opening ceremony began with an Akashvani in total darkness followed by children's candle-lit procession, Ganesha, Saraswathi and Guru Vandana dances in Odissi style, American and Indian National Anthems, and another procession of dancers whose lead person installed the Sammelan Kalash (ceremonial earthenware vessel) on a pedestal near the stage. This was followed by a medley of dances covering Kuchipudi, Kathak, and Bharatanatyam, a Bollywood dance, a skit on heritage, a break dance and a hip-hop dance. Toward the end there were welcome addresses by the Youth Lead and the President of the SammeLAn, Dr. Ramadas Kamath. Dr. Kamath's speech was in chaste Konkani. The finalé of the opening ceremony was a boisterous kitchen serenade dance extolling the dinner menu and it ended with all dancers moving through the audience inviting them to the first dinner of the SammeLAn.

The storyline was continued in the closing ceremony with the same trio introducing items such as the video on all committee chairs, the President of the SammeLAn, etc. This trio also participated in the first two original Konkani songs composed and sung by Southern California performers who also danced to those tunes. This was followed by third original Konkani song for transferring the Kalash (which had remained on the pedestal during the two-and-a-half days) to the Canadian KonCANi Sammelan President. The closing ceremony ended with the last original Konkani finalé song beckoning everyone to meet again in Toronto, the venue of the 2006 KonCANi Sammelan.

The uniqueness of the opening and closing ceremonies was the storyline that did not require masters of ceremony. These ceremonies were like bookends holding a gamut of highly entertaining items together. Many of the items were embellished by Power Point and DVD presentations on the large screens. The Grand Ballroom time was devoted to a wide variety of entertainment such as a visually stunning Konkani Festivals item, an original Konkani musical, superb classical music performed by highly talented Konkanis, comedy interludes, Hindi film songs, skits, dramas, classical Indian dances, a puppet show, bhajans, geets, a tribute to motherhood, fusion music, fusion dance, an original Konkani poem recitation, etc. These artistic events were interspersed with raffles, auction, recognition awards and speeches by Dr. Ramesh Gangolli (keynote), Ms. Jona Hattangadi (youth keynote), Shri K.K. Pai, Shri Yogish Bhat, Mr. Robert Arnett, and Swami Jyotirmayananda. A unique segment of the entertainment program was the Konkani Idol – Youth Music and Dance Competition that mesmerized the audience. The invited featured artists were Smt. Padmini Rao who gave a melodious vocal Hindustani classical music concert; Antarkish, the unique San Francisco Bay area Desi-pop (Indi-rock) band consisting of six members, two being Konkanis; and the first ever brother-sister Hindustani classical vocal duo, Shri Prasad Upasani and Smt. Deepti Upasani-Kaval. The accompanists for the Hindustani classical vocalists were Hemant Ekbote (tabla) and Suresh Benegal (harmonium).

A salient hallmark of the entertainment segment was the timeliness of all items, with minimum time gaps between them. This was accomplished by detailed advance planning of the program, and more importantly by strict adherence to the allocated time, although there were some lapses that were resolved on a real-time basis. Another hallmark was the quality of the stage, audio and video equipment. One could see and hear the artists on the stage from any seat in the Grand Ballroom because of the large front screens, the mid-way screens and the superb high fidelity sound. Because lunch was served in two sessions, the Grand Ballroom was utilized to show a video that captured Konkani customs and rituals along the Konkani coast for those who had to wait for their turn for lunch or the next item on the program. The video, "Glimpses of Konkani" was shot and produced by Niranjana Benegal of Seattle.

SEMINARS:

The Sammelan provides a unique opportunity for the community to meet at a national level, and discuss issues and to educate themselves on topics of mutual concern. The Seminars and Workshops Program provides the forum within which this process can happen. The organizers to the 2004 SammeLAn made a conscious decision to expand this forum by dedicating two separate rooms and offering 2-days full of programs concurrent with those on the main stage. Topics ranged from a Yoga Workshop, where

participants learned the principles of hatha yoga and joined in a yoga practice, to a business forum led by Sudhakar Shenoy, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Information Management Consultants, Inc; from practical topics like modifying the Konkani diet to reducing the risk of heart-disease and diabetes, to an heartfelt dialogue on what Konkani heritage means, moderated by Robert Arnett, the author of the highly-acclaimed book India Unveiled. In keeping with the tradition of community cooperatives pioneered by Shyamrao Vithal Kaikini and S.S. Talmaki, the Seminar and Workshops Program offers a means for those in North America to come together and help each other through their personal experiences and professional expertise. There was a seminars on appreciation of Hindustani classical music, on the art of preparing for job interview, quick and efficient Konkani cooking for second generation Konkans making out on their own, time management, internet security, and improving future Konkani Conventions.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

The main purpose of having Youth Programs was to create an avenue for first and second generation Konkani youth in USA, to meet each other, network, and share their thoughts. Also, it was an outlet for entertainment and exchange ideas. Innovative programs such as the Konkani Idol Contest, seminars, and a crash course on Speaking Konkani was arranged. An attractive Youth Program guide and a Konkani phrase book was distributed to all youth participants. Jona Hattangadi, a medical student at Harvard, was the Youth keynote speaker.

SOUVENIR:

An attractive souvenir containing good reference articles, articles by some professional Konkani writers, youth, Konkani poetry, cartoons, crossword puzzles and word puzzles, and photography was distributed to attendees. The articles ranged from Konkani history, Konkani language, Konkani freedom fighters, nostalgia, Konkani cuisine, Konkani performing artistes and Konkani heritage. Many articles had colorful pictures. One very popular article was an illustrated article on Konkani Hindu Festivals by five Southern California Konkans. The Konkani poetry was transcribed in both Devanagari and Roman script for the benefit of both first and second generation Konkans. The youth section had cartoons specially drawn by a Konkani cartoonist, and winning essays for the souvenir essay competition, "What does Konkani Heritage mean to me" The comments about the souvenir were all positive.

DISTINGUISHED RECOGNITION AWARDS:

Five North American Konkans were awarded distinguished recognition awards, by a special committee, who chose the finalists from a list of over 30 candidates. All individuals considered were accomplished in their fields, and had exceptional qualities. The awardees were: **Dr Ramdas Pai (Research), Dr. Prabhakar Baliga (Science), Dr. Geeta Heble (Education and Community Service), Dr. Ravishankar Kamath (Youth), and Pandit Ravi Bellare (Performing Arts).** The awards themselves were sponsored by local Konkans in the honor of some distinguished members of their families. The award ceremony was well conducted, and each awardee and the sponsor of their awards were introduced very well by a PowerPoint presentation and a narrative.

SPEECHES:

Keynote speech was rendered by Dr. Ramesh Gangolli, Professor of Mathematics and Adjunct Professor of Ethno-musicology, University of Washington, Seattle. The speech was in Konkani as well as in English. He spoke about challenges for Konkani youth growing up in USA, the importance of Konkani Heritage, and about Konkani itself. The speech was informative, as well as full of humor. The Youth Keynote speech was rendered by Jona Hatangadi, student at Harvard Medical School, who also did social work in Africa, is an accomplished cross-country runner, and instrumental musician. She talked about importance of youth to be involved in Social Service and Public Service. There were excellent speeches in chaste Konkani by Shri Kalsank Kamlaksha Pai, former CEO of Syndicate Bank, Manipal, Karnataka and Shri Nandavar Yogish Bhat, Member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly, and former Official of Mangalore City Municipal Corporation. Shri Basti Vaman Shenoy of Bantwal, gave an enlightening speech about Konkani language, and the need to keep it alive. There was also an inspiring speech by Swami Jyotirmayananda, who rendered a universal prayer.

HERITAGE:

Heritage Promotion Committee was a new idea, never conceived during previous Konkani Sammelans. The Committee coordinated with several other committees, to encourage activities to promote Konkani Heritage among the youth. The committee was responsible for exhibits outside the Grand Ballroom, where there were displays of traditional Konkani kitchen tools, such as Ragdo, Koiten, Aadli, Shenvainyaa daante, etc., a three dimensional model of Mangeshi Temple in Goa, photographs of Konkani area and Konkani festivals. It also created a 3-D model of the Konkani coastline with posters explaining facts about the cities. It was also responsible for very creative and informative articles about Konkani Festivals, Konkani Calendar (Panchang), and Konkani Temples in the souvenir. One of the most talked about item on stage was the enactment of different Konkani Festivals, with an English commentary. This even included the enactment of the Theru, with a Paalki procession! There were Heritage related talks by Robert Arnett, and seminars. It also participated in items constituting the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the Sammelan entertainment program.

FOOD:

While listening to the strains of beautiful live Karnataka music on nadaswaram in the background, Guests were served delicious Konkani welcome snacks before the start of the festivities. The nadaswaram artistes and accompanists were specially flown in from Toronto, Canada. The Food Committee provided the attendees excellent and authentic Konkani meals 3-4 times a day during the Sarmelan. The food was catered by Madras Pavilion of Houston Texas, who also catered for the Konkani Sarmelan in Houston, two years ago. Mr.Govind Boloor of Houston, TX. gave a helping hand and provided many of the traditional Mangalorean Konkani snacks, such as kela halvo, gava halvo, kela kachriyo, haapolu, chakolee, etc. With the help of enthusiastic volunteers, both local and from other states, service was well coordinated. The arrangements were excellent, and waiting lines short and moving fast. There were three groups serving food to three lines. Obviously lot of care and time went into planning the serving of food as well as the preparation. Everybody was well fed and happy with the quality of food and the service.

VOLUNTEERS:

The Volunteer committee provided volunteers for food service, stage, registration, and senior assist committees. For the first time, food was served by a rotation of volunteers from different cities all over Canada and USA. The volunteers were the big backbone of the Sarmelan, and the Volunteer Committee organized their services very well.

HOST AND HOSPITALITY, SENIOR ASSIST, GOLF, DECORATION, REGISTRATION, EVENT COORDINATION, MEDICAL CONFERENCE, WEB PAGE, RAFFLE, AND PUBLICATIONS & PUBLICITY:

These were some of the committees serving extremely important service to the Sarmelan. H&H assisted out of town visitors and some featured artistes and speakers, with their special needs. It negotiated special rates with door-to-door airport van service, travel agent, theme parks, etc. Senior Assist Committee coordinated with Volunteer Committee, and helped certain senior citizens who had special needs. Most seniors were escorted to the front rows of the auditorium, and taken to the front of the food line, if they were too weak to wait in line. Many were directly taken to their dining tables, and were served food on the tables. The Golf Committee arranged a Konkani Golf Tournament at the 18-hole Anaheim Hills Golf Club. About 8-10 Konkani Golfers participated. Decoration Committee decorated the entrances to the Registration area, Auditorium (Grand Ballroom), the dining tables, and other areas with imaginative and traditional artifacts. The Registration Committee very efficiently helped all registrants by checking them in, giving them their badges, gift bag (courtesy ICICI Bank) with souvenir, program guide, welcome letter with general instructions, and courtesy gifts. They had co-coordinated the registration process over several months with the web page, and avoided delays, snafus and other irritants. There were no lines at the registration area. Since Registration was the first entity encountered by attendees, the efficiency, speed and the friendly welcome rendered by this committee, made the expectation of things to come, optimistic and pleasant. Event Coordination helped with the planning of meetings and practices leading to the Sarmelan, efficient and orderly. A full-fledged Medical Lecture program was in force before and after the Sarmelan, and registrants were eligible for Continuing Medical Education (C.M.E) credits. Since a large portion of Sarmelan attendees are physicians, this avenue offered them an ideal way to combine business with pleasure, and also meet former colleagues and medical school contacts. The excellent web page (www.konkani2004.com) was a key factor that facilitated efficiency of registration, and also serves as a source of general information about the Sarmelan. It was created two years ago, and its importance grew with time. It is still operational, with post convention feedbacks, photographs and reprints of some souvenir articles. Most attendees registered on-line via the web page, and also got most of the information from it. We had very positive comments about the web page. The Raffle was well conducted and many prizes, including a round trip ticket to India (courtesy Air India Airlines), A domestic round trip ticket, a digital camera, a stereo boom box, etc. were distributed to lucky winners. Also, a few donated paintings were auctioned at the end of the entertainment program. Publicity and Publication Committee was responsible for the mailing of the publicity flyers, registration packets and the sale of souvenir items. They are also helping with the sale and production of the DVD set of the entertainment program of the Sarmelan.

ORGANIZATION:

Thanks to the dedication and good planning by the Executive Committee and all other Committees, the Sarmelan was well conducted and well coordinated. The venue was excellent, and all events started in timely manner. The general atmosphere of the gathering was that of a large Konkani wedding with many members of an extended family. The Budget and Fund-Raising Committee worked hard, and because of the generosity of many businesses and individuals, we had substantial donations and advertisement income to supplement the money raised by the registration dues. Due to space constraints, there has been no mention of names of individual chairpersons of committees, performers, or even Executive Committee members, since this information is available on the Sarmelan web page, www.konkani2004.com, program guide, or the souvenir.

Bhagavad-Gita as a Stress Management Guide - Cont.

By: K. P. S. Kamath, M. D.

Psychiatrist in private practice in Cape Girardeau, MO

Chapter Eight:

An Interview with a Jnana Yogi

It did not take long for the gentle-voiced gatekeeper to come again on the intercom. He announced that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was now on for the interview. “*Sashtanga namaskar* Paramahansaji!” I said with reverence in my voice. A very ordinary sounding voice replied, “*Sashtanga namaskar* to you, too, Kamathji!” I was quite taken aback by this reciprocity. Sensing my discomfort Paramahansaji assured me soothingly, “Well, my child, I was only saluting your *Atman*, the God residing in your heart (10:20). May your inner self soon unite with Him! May you succeed in your quest for Knowledge and Self-realization! What would you like to know from me, Kamathji?” I was deeply moved by his humility.

“Paramahansaji, I am a psychiatrist and a humble student of Bhagavad Gita. How does *Jnana Yoga* benefit stressed-out people?”

“Kamathji, you know as well as I that all the wisdom in the Gita is useless unless one can apply it in his/her everyday life. You see around you people who recite Gita everyday, but are extremely possessive of their children, titles, money, gold and what not. Most misery in our life comes from our attachment to these things (5:22). To make matters even worse, when ordinary desire for various things becomes selfish desire (*kama*), rage (*krodha*) follows out of frustration. The mind then loses touch with its wisdom and one starts falling down into the whirlpool of stress (2:62,63). For example, parents excessively attached to even their grown up children set the stage for the ruin of their children. Wise people should avoid this (13:9). Greed for material things leads to evil acts (3:37). Look what is happening in the world today! Honesty and integrity have disappeared from our public life. Lust for things often leads to divorce, break-up of family, fraud, cheating and what not.

Paramahansaji went on after a brief pause, “*Jnana Yoga* is a mental and spiritual effort of the mind to gradually disconnect itself for these attachments and to reestablish contact with our inner *Dharmajnana* or wisdom. Wisdom is nothing but a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. As you begin to disconnect from material things and people, your Mind will become increasingly integrated with your *Buddhi*, the source of your *Jnana* or wisdom, and later on with your Self or *Atman*, the seat of absolute peace and tranquility (5:21). This process of detachment is called *Sanyasa* or relinquishment. Your mind must give up extreme desire (*kama*), and extreme aversion (hate/*krodha*); reduce its preoccupation with success and failure whenever you set out to do anything; (5:3); let go of anger, lust and greed (16:21). Your mind then attains the bliss in the Self. Your Self is the seat of tranquility and peace for it is a part of God, it is self-sufficient and It has no wants or needs.”

“But Paramahansaji,” I protested, “we cannot all be *Sanyasi* like you! We are all involved ‘up to here’ (I now lifted my right hand to my eyebrows) with relationships and material things: wife, children, job, house, cars, gold, jewelry, prestige. Is there any hope at all for us?”

“Kamathji, I admit it is not easy to do this (7:3). But even a little bit of effort is not a waste (2:40; 6:40-44). You don’t have to give up any material things to attain *Jnana* (Self-knowledge), which is locked up inside you. You just have to give up, little by little, your excessive attachment to and preoccupation with and obsession of money, wealth, power, relationship, etc. Your attitude should be, ‘If I have it I won’t be jumping with joy; if I lose it I won’t be crushed.’ Cultivating this *shritaprajnya* attitude will, in the long run, liberate you from all fear of loss, which is the root of stress (2:64). It is a life-long process. In practical terms, the first thing to do is to give up comparing yourself to others like most of you Indians in America do. Get rid of jealousy from your heart. Learn to be content with what you have and be happy for other people’s success and wealth. Stop trying to impress others how rich you are or how richer you are than the other person. Instead of obsessing with money and hankering for it, look at it like a necessary evil you must have to live in today’s world. The next thing is to stop competing with others. Give up your designs to beat the other person. Thirdly, give up being overly possessive of your children, including your grown up ones, and your parents. Don’t get involved in your children’s personal life once they are married. Liberate them from your possessive clutches. Cultivate non-possessive love: Nothing makes me happier than when you are happy.

“How do I know that I have reached this state of mind, Paramahansaji?”

“A person who has reached the Knowledge of the Self develops a mental attitude in which he sees all things with equal vision, good as well as bad (5:18 – 20; 6:7-9). You will learn to take life’s ups and downs with equanimity, equilibrium and evenness of mind (2:48). The modern man has lost touch with his *Buddhi* (wisdom). The modern man’s goal has become: Get more involved! Keep increasing your needs and wants! Complicate your life as much as possible! Go after material things! Make more money! Delude yourself even more by developing false pride about your possessions! Control and manipulate others to take advantage of them! The result: what is nectar in the beginning becomes poison in the end (18:38). This is the mental poison you psychiatrists are talking about when you tell your patients, ‘you have chemical imbalance in your brain because of accumulation of toxic emotions (fear, hurt, anger,

hate, greed, etc.). I will have to give you antidepressants and tranquilizers to calm you down and bring peace and tranquility into your mind!

“Paramahamsaji, how can I detach myself from all these trappings when I have to live with them on a daily basis?”

“You see, *Gita* says in 5: 8-10 “The sage centered in the Self should think, “I do nothing at all” – though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, emptying, holding, opening and closing the eyes – firm in the thought that the senses move among the objects. He who acts, abandoning attachment, dedicating his deeds to *Brahman*, is untainted by sin (stress) as a lotus leaf by water.” Paramahamsaji went on, “What this means is that, as long as you do whatever you must do without excessive attachment; without hankering for its fruits; without a hidden, selfish design or motive (*samkalpa*); without regards to success or failure; without greed, anger, hate or fear; and without the egoism (*ahamkara*) of “I” and “mine” (2:71; 16:14,15) you have no stress at all.”

“That makes sense, Paramahamsaji,” I said in agreement. “But it must take many life times to achieve this goal!” I joked.

“Kamathji, You might be right. You see, my child, many births ago, I had a very big credit in my *Karma* Account because of my possessiveness and selfish actions, and so I was born again and again on this miserable earth to live it down. Birth after birth, I reduced the balance in that account by gradually controlling my Senses; by detaching myself from material objects; and finally, by relinquishing them altogether; by determined practice of meditation (*dhyana*) and contemplation (*chintana*) about God. Because of these activities, I had only a small credit in my *Karma* Account by the time I was born this time in my *Sattvic* family (6:41,42) (*poorva janma puNya*). Because of my past spiritual deeds, meditation and contemplation came very naturally to me even when I was a boy (6:43). I was determined to end this recurring cycle of birth and death by clearing my *Karma* Account in this lifetime, so I would never be reborn again (6:44). When my *Karma* Account balance became zero, my birth-death cycle ended and I became one with Him. I attained *Nirvana*, *Mukthi*, Liberation, Self-realization. It was then that I said to Swami Vivekananda, ‘Naren, He who is Rama and He who is Krishna is here today as Ramakrishna!’”

“But Paramahamsaji,” I asked out of curiosity, “What proof is there that there is intense joy, peace and tranquility in the *Atman*? (5:21-24) Ordinary guys like me have no idea what you are talking about!”

“Well, if you study the lives of Self-realized mystics, you will find that their minds are at peace like the steady flame in calm wind (6:19, 20). A mind that is hankering for material things cannot be at peace.”

“Paramahamsaji”, I asked, “how does contemplation help one to get in touch with one’s *Buddhi*?”

Paramahamsaji replied, “You have been studying *Gita* for about three years now, right? (I nodded). As a result of this, you have become more contemplative about various aspects of your life, have you not? Have you noticed that you are today more at peace with yourself than you were three year ago? (I nodded). Have you noticed that you are more able to let go of things today than ever before? (I nodded, wondering how did he know?). Have you not decreased your needs and selfish desires? (I nodded). Are you not more able to view pain and pleasure with equanimity now than before?” I nodded in agreement. You have taken small steps, but they are a beginning. Good stress management ultimately means only one thing: you become a better person.”

“Paramahamsaji, What about meditation? It is such a hard thing to practice. Do you have any suggestions?”

Paramahamsaji’s voice showed sympathy when he replied, “You do not have to meditate at all to be a better person. A lot of people practice meditation while indulging in nefarious activities. *Gita* refers to them as hypocrites (*mithyachari*) (3:6.)”

I had many more questions for Paramahamsaji, but my twenty minutes with him were up. I asked him for any final words of wisdom for someone like me steeped in material concerns. He said casually, “ Sure! Renounce and enjoy that wonderful feeling of liberation!”

I thanked Paramahamsaji by offering Him *sashtanga namaskar*, and waited for *Karma Yogi* Mahatma Gandhi to come on the intercom. pkamath001@charter.net 7/17/04

.....To Be Continued

Is Bollywood a Good Investment?

Vinodh V. Bhat and Neal R. Shenoy

Vinodh Bhat, Chantal Prudhomme, and Neal Shenoy are Partners of MEDIABRIDGE Entertainment. Their company is actively involved in co-productions between the U.S., Europe and India. MEDIABRIDGE most recently produced the first ever MTV Style Awards and MTV India Music Awards in Mumbai for MTV and Sony Entertainment Television. The team is currently raising a film fund alongside L.A.-based Grand Illusions, which have produced movies such as Vanilla Sky, Mission Impossible, Ransom and others. Vinodh and Neal can be reached at vin@212media.com and neal@212media.com.

Introduction:

India boasts one of the largest media industries in the world. In addition to its 49,000 newspapers and magazines, 200+ television networks and 97% radio coverage, India is best known for producing over 1,000 major motion pictures per year. India creates more product annually than Hollywood and independent studios combined, and despite changing industry economics and audience tastes, the pace has not slowed. Recently, there has been substantial interest in media – specifically by NRIs that have succeeded in other trades such as medicine, hospitality, finance and technology. Venture capitalists such as Kanwal Rekhi have invested in films such as “Saatiya” through Kaleidoscope Entertainment, low-budget regional films have benefited from significant investment by individual investors and Indian institutions such as IDBI Bank have created specialized film funds to invest upwards of \$40 million into the sector. This begs the question: is Bollywood a good investment?

The Facts

The average Bollywood film is budgeted at \$1.3 million versus the \$13.6 million it costs to produce a film in the U.S. India has a substantial domestic market for film given its population of 1.1 billion, which is more than 4x the size of the U.S. In 2001, Indian films cost a total of \$531.9 million to produce and generated \$957.4 million in revenue for an aggregate return of 80%. Sounds good so far, right?

It would seem that given the dynamics of lower production costs and a larger internal market, that Bollywood films would be exceptionally profitable relative to their U.S. counterparts. This is actually not the case as the overwhelming majority of Bollywood films lose money or breakeven and only a few provide returns to investors. Of 130+ Hindi only films released in 2002, 98 actually lost money. The fact is that only the sophisticated investor that tracks Indian media can consistently profit against such difficult odds. It’s critical to understand why.

Industry Size

By all measures, the volume output of Bollywood films is misleading. In India, a per capita income of \$400 per year and an average ticket price of \$0.20 means that the 3.6 billion tickets sold translates into theatrical revenues of approximately \$800 million annually. To put that in perspective, Titanic alone produced \$600 million at the domestic box office in the U.S. and more recently Spiderman produced \$400 million. The U.S. is benefited by an average ticket price of \$4.70 and more importantly two other macro factors. The first is that Indians only spend 2% of their disposable income on entertainment vs. 8% in Western markets such as the U.S. This can be explained in part by the Indian government’s belief that entertainment is a luxury, justifying a entertainment tax of nearly 60% on all theatrical ticket sales. More importantly, it is the poor state of Indian exhibition that contributes to the minimal spend. In the U.S., movie theaters literally surround us with 117 theaters per million. In India, that number is 12.5 per million and of the only 13,000 theaters in the country, 3,600 are “temporary” screens. In India, only 30% of all films made get proper screen coverage.

Revenue Streams

Indian producers primarily recoup their production budgets from theatrical exhibition (80%) and overseas rights sales (12%). TV and video rights sales, which are often bundled, only account for 4.5% of a movie’s aggregate revenues and despite the prolific nature of Bollywood music, music rights sales represent 3% of the take. Most of this money comes in the form of upfront direct rights sales to a territorial distributor in India (there are 9 separate domestic territories) or an overseas distributor such as Eros or Videosound. Productions that are successfully “packaged” with strong casts, a solid director and commercially successful playback artists such as *Devdas* can recoup up to 70% of their production budget before the film is even released! This however, is rare.

The model is vastly different to the U.S. market. In the U.S., theatrical only represents 26% of pie with video rentals (29%), video sales (26%), DVD sales (14%) and broadcast and cable (5%) contributing significant recoupment dollars. In many instances, foreign box office, video and DVD sales are greater contributors than all domestic revenues combined. Going back to the example of Titanic, of the \$1.8 billion that it grossed, the foreign markets alone recouped the production investment 500%.

Content

The consequence of Indian producers’ dependence on domestic theatrical revenues is that, not surprisingly, they end up making movies exclusively for the Indian market. If 80% of revenues are going to come from a single source, in this case domestic theatrical exhibition, producers are often forced to stick to an accepted formula of star-driven, overly dramatic, musically oriented, 3-hour long potboilers. These movies are relevant only to India, and unless it is a certified hit at the Indian box office, investors will not see their money. Even critically acclaimed movies such as *Lagaan*, which received an Oscar nomination in 2001 in the international category, only grossed \$835,767 in the U.S. I would wager that a significant amount of that represented curious Indians and not your typical connoisseur of international film. To date, Bollywood movies have not traveled – and have not been designed to travel – and the consequence is an undue dependence on an Indian marketplace, which is ultimately small.

Said differently, movies like Memento, Boys Don’t Cry and Shrek, which saw significant revenue contribution from non-theatrical sources such as DVD sales, pay cable and merchandising, respectively, don’t get made in India because these distribution channels are not developed. Furthermore, most Indian financiers are not going to fund a non-traditional, avante garde Hindi movie in the hopes that it will recoup money in, say, the U.S. art house market. There’s little precedence for that result and the conservatism is paralyzing.

Recent Developments

So is Bollywood a bad idea for investors? Not necessarily. There are a number of positive developments, which indicate that new models for production investment may be well supported.

First, the Government of India recently recognized the motion picture industry as a legitimate industry in 2001, allowing producers to obtain institutional financing from banks such as IDBI and allowing investment at the film level as well as the production company level. The result is that there has been significant investment in building media infrastructure in India with much money being invested in state-of-the-art production facilities for live action and animation. For example, Ramoji Film City (RFC) in Hyderabad is one of the world's largest and most comprehensively planned film production centers with over 40 indoor sets, 200 outdoor sets and a workforce of nearly 7,500 skilled in production.

Second, the international community is beginning to realize that production costs in India are a fraction of their domestic costs and there is little difference in production quality. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the animation industry, where the combination of skilled engineering resources in India and low cost PC platforms allow a typical 22-minute episodic TV animation to be produced for \$150,000 versus \$350,000. Across a 26-episode season that amounts to over \$5 million in savings. U.S. companies such as Wild Brain and French production houses such as a France Animation have keyed in on this cost differential and have outsourced a high volume of work to skilled Indian animation shops.

Third, India is rapidly developing a creative talent base that will soon be able to produce truly global media if given the opportunity. India has the growing presence of TV and the advertising demands of multinationals such as Coca Cola, Colgate and Samsung to thank. Writers and directors from the television commercial side are often held up to high global standards of creative and production quality and are now translating their skills behind the small screen into creating big screen product. Companies such as Percept IMC and United Television (UTV) in India, which have both commercial and filmmaking capabilities in-house, are spearheading these efforts. Remember that satellite television has only been in India for 10 years, so the best is yet to come.

The Opportunity

There are a number of ways in which NRIs can financially participate in Bollywood's growth. Financial value can be realized by effectively bridging the gap between Bollywood production teams and the U.S. media market.

Co-Production

Indian producers need international production partners, with deep expertise in their own domestic markets and sophisticated marketing experience, to produce co-owned content with international distribution potential. Indian companies can contribute highly skilled, low cost production alongside their share of the production capital with international producers guiding the project's creative direction, negotiating international distribution, designing sophisticated marketing and promotions programs (product placement, promotional tie-ins, festival runs, etc.) and providing gap financing. The partnership and results can be outstanding. India-based UTV was recently awarded a co-production contract with Disney Asia for their Legends of the Ring of Fire project. UTV gives Disney a high quality, low cost production vehicle while UTV is able to leverage Disney's global brand and distribution, thereby assuring that the product that they create has global appeal.

Production Capital and Outsourcing

U.S. producers need strong financial incentives to outsource their productions to India and consider co-production agreements with Indian companies with which they may not have a working relationship. NRI investors can provide the development and production capital for such programming and help U.S. producers and studios to find suitable production partners. NRI investors can also help to make a clear case to U.S. producers that the opportunity for co-production and production outsourcing is real and comparable to the success that U.S. giants such as Microsoft, American Express and IBM have had in setting up shop in India. The result is unique, high quality, low-cost programming in which an investor could have substantial ownership from the onset or generate fees and gain profit participation from setting up the deal.

Content Development

U.S. producers constantly scour the market for unique content and storylines that they can adapt and produce for a global audience. Despite the rich history of Indian mythology, literature, comic books, film and TV programs, India has been overlooked as a source of content. NRI investors can acquire the rights to Indian properties and guide the development process acting as producers or sell those rights to an established international production house for exploitation. The result could be the creation of an authentic Indian story told and produced in a fashion that a global audience can appreciate.

Conclusion

NRI investors are in a strong position to act as a financial and operating bridge between Indian production talent and the global media marketplace. There are several advantages to taking this route rather than a straight equity investment in an Indian Bollywood production. First, investors are assured that the product they create will have an addressable market beyond India and can thus tap into multiple revenue channels for recoupment. Second, investors can wield the deep marketing experience and broad distribution outlets found outside of India to make a global product. Third, investors can still utilize the low cost production of India to create a more competitively priced product. Fourth, investment alongside or through a U.S. entity affords NRIs protection under U.S. laws.

Fifth, investors can help to develop Indian production and acting talent by partnering them with U.S. producers. The result is that investors can place themselves in the enviable position of being able to easily identify the Indian production talent that will be able to make a project successful.

The financial vehicles for co-production, co-financing and content development are just beginning to emerge. Unfortunately, most investment to date by the NRI community has not been organized and thus wide participation by Indian investors in some of the opportunities described has not been feasible. This will slowly change. For example, NY-based MEDIABRIDGE Entertainment is partnering with L.A.-based Grand Illusions (producers of Mission Impossible, Vanilla Sky, Ransom, The Flight of the Navigator, The Elephant Man, etc. and winners of several Academy Awards) to formalize a U.S.-based co-production fund that will make substantial investments in acquiring Indian content, employing Indian talent and using Indian production to make Hollywood films.

KONKANI CALENDER

October 2004	November 2004	December 2004
1 st Sankashta Chaturthi	6th Konkani Sabha Diwali	11 th Amavasya(Dark moon)
13 th Mahalaya Amavasye	11 th Naraka Chaturdashi	15 th Dhanu-Sankranthi
14 th Navarathri - Beginning	12 th Deepawali	16 th Skanda Shashti
16 th Tula-Sankranthi	15 th Vrishk-Sankranthi	21 st Vaikuntha Yekadashi
18 th Lalitha Panchami Sharadha Pooja	20th KAOCA Diwali	22 nd Mukkoti Dwadashi
20 th Durgashtami	22 nd Karthika Yekadashi	26 th Poornami
21 st Ayudha Pooja	23 rd Uthana Dwadashi	29 th Sankashta Chaturthi
22 nd Yekadashi	25 th Vaikuntha Chaturdashi	
27 th Poornami	25 th Thanksgiving	
31 st Sankashta Chaturthi	26 th Karthika Poornami	
	30 th Angaraka Chaturthi	

Khabbar thanks Sri P. V. Kamath of Shrewsbury, MA for furnishing the Panchang and My Astrologer-version 1.0 by Mr. Muralidhar Shenoy of Durham, NC.

My Sincere Thanks to

Some readers go out of their way to help Khabbar. Monetary means is one of them. The Advisory Committee of Khabbar has decided on publishing the names of the families that has contributed \$50.00 or more to Khabbar. This quarter, the following have extended their help and thanks to you

Names	Amount, \$
P. Ranganath & Sandra Nayak, Blemont, MA	95.00
Vasant & Veena Kamath, Rehoboth, MA	65.00
Praveen & Prema Prabhu, Greensboro, NC	60.00
B. Vasudev & Shobha Shenoy, Houston, TX	100.00
Kochikar Arun & Geetha Pai, Cannonburg, PA	75.00
Ravindra & Vidya Nayak, Flanders, NJ	50.00
Ratnakar & Jayanthi Pai, Farmington Hills, MI	51.00
Savgur Srinivas & Rashmi Bhandary, Marlton, NJ	50.00

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Description	Credit, \$	Debit, \$
Balance Carried over since Khabbar Vol. XXVII No. 2	3,885.00	
Money Received:		
Subscriptions (60) and donations	1,517.00	
Advertisements (3)	85.00	
Interest	3.00	
Sub Total:	1,605.00	
Money Spent (Khabbar Vol. XXVII No. 2):		
Printing- Khabbar (800) - 20 pages		720.00
First Class Mail-Khabbar (742)		445.20
Canada Khabbar (22)		18.70
Overseas (20)		60.00
Mail Fines, computer paper & labels, envelopes, service fees, etc		456.10
Sub Total:		1,700.00
Final Balance:	3,790.00	

Money spent on this issue was not available during press time.



The last quarter's quiz: Palindromes are fun, such as "toot", "Madam, I'm Adam" spelled forward or backward, or palindromic numbers like 747 or 1001. Now, answer this. How many palindromes are there from 1 to 1,000, inclusive?

The Answer:

Single digit: 1 thru 9 = 9

Two digit: 11,22,etc = 9

Three digit : 9 possible 'outside digits' like 101, 202, etc and 10 possible 'middle digits' for each of the 101, 111 etc for a total of 90.

Answer: $9 + 9 + 90 = 108$

The following gave the correct answers:

Krishna Kudva, Alta Loma, CA

Shibu Kamath, Utica, NY

Gayathri Baliga, Winston Salem, NC

Vindya Bhat, New York, NY

Naveed Iqbal, grandson of Sunder & Lina Hattangadi of Battle Creek, MI

This Quarter's Quiz

By

Krishna Kudva, Alta Loma, CA

Continuing with the Konkani tradition of quizzing, here's the brainteaser for this quarter. If you can solve this correctly, send it to Khabbar address to have your name published in the next issue.

What 5-letter word, if you take out 1st, 3rd and last letters, still sounds the same?

2004 Konkani Sabha Diwali Function

KONKANI SABHA cordially invites you and your family to the annual **Diwali Function** on **Saturday, November 6th 2004**.

Details of the Diwali Function are as below:

Location: Sri Venkateshwara Temple Community Center (Bridgewater Temple)
780 Old Farm Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807. Tel: (908) 725-4477

Time: Registration counters open at **3 PM sharp**
Ras Gharba and entertainment events start at 3 PM sharp.
Note: We have strict time constraints with the hall, and need to vacate by 8 PM.
We will be starting the events at 3 PM sharp to meet this time constraint

Entrance Fee: Registration and Payment by October 5th - \$13 (12 years and older) and \$6 (ages 6 to 12)
Registration after Oct 5th and at the door - \$15 (12 years and older) and \$8 (ages 6 to 12)
Please contact Vasanthi Baliga, Treasurer, at (732) 605-1786 for advance registration and payment details.

Program details are as below:

3:00 pm to 3:45 pm: Light refreshments and Raas Garba (Dandiya sticks will be provided)
3:45 pm to 4:00 pm: Pooja
4:00 pm to 6:30 pm: Variety Entertainment
6:30 pm Dinner

Diwali flyers will be emailed to all members of the Konkani community in the NJ, NY, PA, CT and DE areas whose contact information is on record with the Konkani Sabha. **The flyers WILL NOT be mailed by post anymore.** Anyone interested in receiving the Konkani Sabha flyers, please contact the office bearers, or, email your contact information including email addresses to KonkaniSabha@hotmail.com

Visit our website at WWW.KonkaniSabha.org for further details and updates on our activities. Anyone interested in volunteering to organize the events and activities, and/or in performing at the Diwali function please contact the office bearers.

Go to www.konkanisabha.org for directions to the Sri Venkateshwara Temple (Bridgewater Temple). Please note that the Community Center is in the smaller building on the right after you have turned left into the Temple premises (Old Temple Building)

Office Bearers:

Rajesh Mallya, President	(908) 790 9274	mallyas@hotmail.com
Ganapathi Kamath, Vice President	(732) 422-0175	gkamathcpa@yahoo.com
Jyothi Shenoy, Secretary	(732) 819-9041	jyoprem@aol.com
Vasanthi Baliga, Treasurer	(732) 605-1786	sursunus@yahoo.com

APPEALS

National Institute of Technology Karnataka Alumni Association

No. 2 "Shri Bharathi"
Vinayaka Layout
Magadi Main Road
Bangalore 560 079

Ph: 080-3480204
Email: krecian@vsnl.com
Website : www.krec-alumni.net

An Appeal for Green Revolution Project

Karnataka Regional Engineering College has steered ahead in the echelons of higher learning by becoming a deemed University, National Institute of Technology Karnataka by name. To commemorate this historical event, the Alumni Association has decided to embark on massive planting of tree saplings in the campus and turn it into a lush green landscape, signifying camaraderie with nature. The project is envisaged to be executed in different phases, at the end of which the whole campus will get a new face-lift, with the institute buildings lying in the lap of greenery everywhere.

As a first step, we have collected 2,500 tree saplings of wide variety, which will grow into huge trees in future. All the key and frequently used avenues of the campus, the playgrounds and vacant lands will be covered by the green revolution project. Two regions are developed as forest areas and in between these, a lake is planned to be brought up. Once fully developed, it will be a treat to watch below the tree shades.

But the main concern now is the protection of the plants, at least for 2 – 3 years against falling and other damages. Cow guards have to be erected for each of these plants. The total estimate out to be around Rs. 5,00,000.

So, it is the desire that alumni should support this venture. Again, the greenery project is a continuous effort, which will be implemented in phased manner. It is therefore felt necessary that the action plan is to plant 2500 trees in the campus to cover avenues and open areas in the campus with avenue trees and forest trees along the roads and open areas, provide tree guards and look after the trees for couple years till they grow and stabilize themselves.

For tree guards, material is procured from Bangalore and fabrications are done in workshop at NITK to minimize the cost. About 100 of them are ready for installation. Cost including tree guard will be Rs. 200 per plant. Few members have come forward to sponsor the project by meeting the cost of few plants.

To go full swing on this project, we seek sponsorship from Corporations, Businessmen, Alumni and Individuals. We appeal every one of you to generously come forward to contribute for this project and participate in this noble cause of protecting the environment. Contributions can be made by cheque/DD in favor of KREC Alumni Association, Bangalore Chapter, payable at Bangalore and sent to the address above

Thanking you

K. Yajnanarayana, Member-Governing Council-NITK, President-Bangalore Chapter

Interested parties in North America can contact:

Mr. M. P. Jayarama, 204 Auth Av., Iselin, NJ 08830. (732)-283-4993 or jayaramamp@comcast.net

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Contact for further details:

Kishore S. Rao,
208, Haritha Apartments,
11th. Cross, 5th. Main,
Malleswaram, Bangalore 560 003.
Telephone No. 91 - 80 - 23562266
e-mail: kishore_rao_2003@yahoo.co.in

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111 Volpe Dr., MONROEVILLE, PA 15146

World Konkani Conference (WKC)-1995 Video

As a fundraiser, the Konkani Basha Mandal of Mangalore has provided a rare video-"Coming Together" of the WKC-1995. This 35-min. video covers the highlights of the December 1995 historic event held in Mangalore. The social and cultural events are a treasure every Konkani should have.

Please, send \$20 (cash or check made out to WKC-1995) and mail to:

Ms. Nina Padukone, 430W 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011

KONKANI COOK BOOKS

The two Konkani Cook Books, "Indian Cooking Konkani Style" and "Millennium Masala Konkani Style" published by American Konkani Association (A. K. A.) are for sale. The cost per book is \$12.00 + \$1.50 for S & H. Mail check payable to A.K.A. to:

Mrs. Sandhya Kamath, 440 Glencrest Dr.,
Barrington, IL 60010, Phone: (847)-277-9771

skamath@aol.com

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MATRIMONIAL ASSISTANCE

As a service to Konkani community, Sri. R. C. Nayak will offer free matrimonial assistance. Contact: Sri. R. C. Nayak
Pais Compound, Microwave Station Road
Mangalore 575 006 (INDIA)

APPEAL

I hope you are aware of my free service of Matrimonial Information to our Samaj since 1988. To meet the expenses towards the free publication of the SOIRIKA, your financial help is required. Your contribution will also be utilized to provide Mangalasutra, Sarees, and marriage expenses of the poor brides and also for the remarriage of young widows. Your contribution, big or small, may kindly be sent to by way of DD or check in favor of "GSB Matrimonial Trust" and sent to: Sri B. N. Baliga, 5th Main, Near Band Box, Bangalore 560 009 (INDIA) <http://www.soirika.com>

MATRIMONIAL DIRECTORY

Mr. Basti Ganapathi Shenoy of Las Vegas, NV is maintaining a list of Konkani youth that are eligible for matrimony. Interested boys and girls can send in their information to:

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