

April 1996 / Spring Issue /Editor: P. T. Vasudevan

Chairperson's Corner

The Association has completed another year, and the annual election is scheduled to be held on May 12, 1996. It was a nice opportunity to serve on the Board as the Chair this year. The Executive Committee and the Board Members have put in a lot of time, effort and energy for the smooth running of the association, and in the staging of different functions and events over the year. There has been an increase in our membership. I thank all the members of the general body, Executive Committee and the Board for their help and cooperation during the year. I wish the Association all the best in the next year. I look forward to seeing you all during Mother's day celebrations.

Rita Chopra

Association calendar of events

- 4.13.96 Board of Directors meeting.
- 5.12.96 Mother's Day celebration/ General Body Meeting, Londonderry Lions Club
- 6.1.96 Last date to submit articles to Samaj Patra
- July Annual Picnic (details will be published in the July Edition of SP).

NHAAI New Address

We request you to address all your future correspondence to, NHAAI, P.O. Box 3132, Manchester NH 03105.

Message from the President

NHAAI will be completing its sixth year in June. Annual election is scheduled for 12 May. We have been serving our community since 1990 and with continued patronage and support, we hope to strengthen our commitment and growth.

During the past two years we laid the foundation for a solid growth. We are now considering to set up NHAAI "Home Page" on the Internet to post bulletins and news letters. Furthermore, the members of the New Hampshire College Indian student's association have offered their support to NHAAI by their membership. Many students of the NH college have joined our association. I thank Mr. Raj Gupta and Dr. Tej Dhakar for their efforts in recruiting members. With these accomplishments behind us, we are now ready to take on new projects.

In the January edition of the Samaj Patra, we published an appeal by Ms. Vrushali Ranadive. Let me briefly describe the contents of the appeal and the planned efforts to help her.

Ms. Vrushali Ranadive, a resident of New York city has been diagnosed with Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML). Ms. Ranadive is seeking a bone marrow donor through National Donor Matching Program (NDMP) registry (for details, see attached appeal). The Ranadive family conducted a search and have not found a suitable match so far. Therefore, they are attempting to locate a donor through NDMP. Unfortunately, NDMP has insufficient data on Asian Indians to locate a suitable match (see NDMP "Volunteer Donor Registry" provided

with the Samaj Patra). Additionally, I am trying to contact the Bone Marrow bank at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India to help Vrushali to find a bone marrow match in India.

We have been provided with an opportunity to not only help Ms. Randive, but also create a donor list for our future needs. The cost of testing is covered by the Federal Government. By registering with NDMP, our community can help set up a data base of prospective donors. Mr. Ramgopal and Dr. Ashish Brahma are helping me to organize a donor registration drive at the Mother's Day function. We are also contacting the members of other cultural organizations to join us. Please feel free to disseminate the information to the Indian community.

I would like to request our community medical professional's assistance in meeting the prospective donors and addressing their questions and concerns at the Mother's Day function. This is also an excellent opportunity for students seeking admission to Medical Schools to get experience in career related community service. Your effort will be greatly appreciated by the Ranadive family. If you have any questions, you may call Dr. Ashish Brahma, Mr. Ramgopal, or me. Our phone numbers are listed in the flyer enclosed with this news letter. Hope to see you all at the Mother's Day function.

Prithvi Kumar

Welcome Aboard

NHAAI Executive Committee members and the Board of Directors welcome the following new members who have joined our Association since January 1996. We thank all the mem-

bers who have renewed this year, and request the other members to renew their membership.

Sudhanshu and Chitra Misra, Cambridge, MA

Ramgopal and Malathi Ramgopal, Andover, MA

Anil Mahalaha, Manchester

Manish Jhunjhunwala, Manchester

Nilesh Luzado, Manchester

Palaniswamy Raja, Manchester

Gautham Kambeyanda, Manchester

Abhijit Patil, Manchester

Gerson Bothello, Manchester

Chandrasekhar, Manchester

Raghuram Kamath, Manchester

Gaurav Merchant, Manchester

Raj Kumar Gupta, Manchester

General Body Meeting

The annual General Body meeting will be held in Merrimack on Sunday, May 12, 1996 at 12:30 P.M.. The meeting will be called to order at 12:30 P.M to elect the officers for the year 1996-97. Requests for nominations for the positions falling vacant, and information on membership status was mailed to all the members last month. The meeting notice is provided with the newsletter. **There will be a cultural event and snacks (potluck) following the meeting. There will be a Bone Marrow Donor registration at the meeting. See Flyer for details.**

Bone Marrow Donor Registration Drive

NHAAI will be organizing a Bone Marrow Donor Registration drive to locate a match for Ms. Vrushali Radhivedi. ***Participation in the drive is purely voluntary.*** Your participation would help Vrushali to live a healthy life, and add more names to the data base which will help to meet our community's future needs. The National Donor Matching Program (NDMP) maintains strict confidentiality of the records. The cost of testing is underwritten by the Federal Government. A flyer describing the details of bone marrow donation is provided with the newsletter. We will have more brochures available at the function for your perusal.

NHAAI and NDMP volunteers will be available to answer any questions on the bone marrow donation. NDMP officials will be in charge of testing and registration, and NHAAI accepts no responsibility in registering the donors. If you are interested in providing volunteer services, please call Mr. Ramgopal at (508) 475-3662.

Community service by NHAAI

Mrs. Raj Jain presented a cooking class on January 18, 1996. About 40 persons signed up, and the event was a success. Mrs. Jain made vegetable rice, raita, lentil soup, and also demonstrated how cooking can be made easier and faster with the use of a pressure cooker. Many of the attendees had not used a pressure cooker before, and though pleasantly surprised by the ease and speed in cooking, they were worried that the cooker might explode!

Mrs. Raj Jain will be demonstrating her culinary skills on May 9, 1996 at the Chandler Memorial Library and Ethnic center, assisted by her able husband, Narinder. You may contact her at 598-1625 for additional details.

Tennis Tournament

Wanted!!! Tennis Players c/o "Tennis Court"

The last Tennis tournament was held in the summer of 1994. We are planning to organize a tennis tournament this year. However, we need volunteers to organize the tennis tournament. Last time, we divided the players into two regions and conducted the matches locally: Sea Coast and Salem in the East, and Manchester, Nashua, and Concord in the West. We need at least one representative from each region to plan and execute the matches. In 1994, we organized Mens and Ladies Singles, Doubles and Junior matches. The main purpose of the tournament is to meet people and enjoy tennis. Please call Prithvi Kumar at 603-472-5835 to get started. We will need at least 10-15 players to have a meaningful match. If

we cannot get enough members, we can arrange East vs. West Intra association matches.

Membership Renewal

It is time to renew your 1996 membership. The membership dues are: Family \$16, Single \$10, and Students \$5. Please renew your membership at the earliest. A number of new members joined our association this year. With your renewal, our membership census could exceed 100 for the first time in the history of the Association NHAAI is dedicated to serving our community. Please support our organization by your prompt renewal. You may mail your checks payable to NHAAI. Please mail your payments to,

Homai Khanna, Treasurer, P.O. Box 3132, Manchester NH 03105.

New Graduates

The Association announces the names of all new graduates and their future plans in the July issue of the Samaj Patra. You may submit your name to, Prithvi R. Kumar, P.O. Box 3132, Manchester, NH 03015. If you prefer you may e-mail the information to P.T.Vasudevan@unh.edu Please include the following information and mail by May 15, 1996.

Your Name, Your Parents' names
Name of your High School or College
Name of the College that you will be attending next year.
Your field of study
Information on Honors, Medals etc.

News You Can Use

Access Your Inner Wisdom

Psychologists tell us that we have an inner wisdom that can help us solve problems. Unfortunately, we often have trouble getting in touch with it. Here is a technique that should help.

- **Start** by asking a question that you

Examples: "How can I win Sam's agreement for that new campaign?" "Why can't I finish that business plan?"

- **Type** the question into your computer or write it on a piece of paper.
- **Next, write** the first answer that pops into your mind. Allow that to suggest a new question, and write it. Then write an answer to that one.
- **Keep going** with this chain of questions for at least five minutes nonstop. You should be pleased with the outcome.

Source: The Creative Glow, Creative Ways, P.O. Box 1310 Boston, MA 02117

On the Lighter Side

Madras Vasigaluku (to the Residents of Madras)

MADRAS, MADRAS !!

by

Mahadevan Ramesh (submitted by Sukanya Balaraman CA, February '96)

Yes, I just got back from my annual trip to Madras. Like two thousand other folks before me, even I feel compelled to write about it. Warning: Since I am congenitally irreverent, you might find me deflating some of the typical holy cows of Tamil Nadu.

It was that time of the year when the stores doled out calendars to their favorite customers. And one of the guaranteed pleasures of Madras life is the glossy, 'Rani Muthu Daily Sheet' calendar, with a picture of Lord Muruga smiling shyly at you. If you want to know when 'Marana Yogam' occurs on 13 September or when they drag the chariot in Thiruvavur, just flip the pages. Pretty soon, they might even release the darned thing on a CD ROM. And already rival calendars have appeared on the scene and some even include Trivia and tidbit du jour on their sheets. Along with all the religious events and almanac specifics, the Rani Muthu calendar even mentions that

February 20th is 'Selvi Jayalalitha's birthday!' Surely, a sign of the times we live in.

Talking of birthdays, it was Rajnikanth's birthday sometime in December and even though Bharatiyar's birthday was also around the same time (I believe), he lost out to the celluloid star. Every TV channel, with the exception of JJ TV, had a special on the 'super star' to mark the occasion. The Doordarshan stole the show with an exclusive two hour special. In the evolutionary chain, if Vijayakanth is poor man's Rajnikanth and Murali is poor man's Vijayakanth and Chinni Jayanth is poor man's Murali, the person who comes right at the end is Sharat Kumar, who recently jumped ships and declared himself to be the 'Number one disciple' of Rajnikanth. Sycophancy reached such low levels that some channels even interviewed Sharat Kumar as a Rajni substitute.

Of course, nothing substantive came out of any of the interviews or birthday specials. The 'super star' refused to say anything about his political ambitions except to generally complain about the way things were. Of course, we all know the Newton's law of Tamil-Nadu politics - that for every political party, there is an equal and opposite political party within that political party. So no party appeared attractive to him.

Rajni delivered his Muthu dialog, paraphrasing the Bhagvad Gita that he would appear at the 'appropriate time'. Then there were lengthy excerpts from Rajni movies - mostly those war-cry songs, (featuring Rajni, the heroine and a huge army of dancing extras) aimed at his imaginary enemies, insulting them with 'vaadaa', 'poda' and other irreverent second person invectives.

Talking yet again of birthdays, Vairamuthu actually stuck a huge foot in his mouth at Kamal Hassan's birthday party. Of course, all of you know about Vairamuthu. He is the author of such memorable lines like "Sakkarai valli kizhangu, Samaindhadhu epodhu?" (Translation: "Sweet potato, when did you reach puberty?") and "Adi, kizhinchi poyidum thavilu." (Translation: "Hey, the membrane of the

drum will rip off."). It seems in the recent past, Vairamuthu has been facing increasing criticism (including from me!) and finally, unable to take the heat any more, he chose to lash out at his critics - and unfortunately for him, he chose Kamal Hassan's birthday party to warn his critics of dire consequences.

Opinion polls were conducted immediately after by 'Kumudham' etc to gauge what everyone thought. Not surprisingly, many people found Vairamuthu's recent movie songs to be gratuitously obscene, tasteless and generally unremarkable. And given he is a public figure who peddles his wares for popular consumption, he shouldn't be surprised by such criticism. And at any rate, he shouldn't have ruined someone else's birthday party. And this is a person who is so immensely talented, he could enthrall you with his passion and command of the language. You must read some of his modern poetry. Sheer pleasure !

When I was in Madras, the entire city was decked up for the SAF (South Asian Federation) games - the other countries which took part included the Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh and so forth. As someone pointed out, this was probably the only way India could win gold medals. The organization and the amount of money spent were almost olympic in scope. The opening ceremony was massive, with songs and dances - almost straight out of a tamil movie. Even then, symptomatic of things in India, perfection was never quite achieved - there were audio failures, poor video work and simple missteps in dances.

At the Games headquarters, the international sporting delegates - at least the most sensitive among them - were welcomed by a huge banner proclaiming 'Welcome delicates'.

Shiny Wilson was awarded a Maruti car by Her Highness. It was quite a deserving award for someone who has been on the athletic scene for so long and who is a role model for a whole new generation. (although I wonder if she and her swimmer husband, with their big athletic frames can sit in the car comfortably together. They should perhaps remove the front seats).

Dear fellow South Asians:

My name is Anirudha Dasgupta and I am a cancer specialist presently working at the Massachusetts General Hospital. I am writing to you today to acquaint you with the plight of a patient of South Asian origin who is afflicted with leukemia. V.R. is a 23 year old female of South Asian origin who was diagnosed with a kind of leukemia called Chronic Myeloid Leukemia recently.

As many of you would know, leukemia is a cancer of the blood producing bone marrow cells that is almost uniformly a fatal disease unless treated aggressively and even then the outcome cannot be guaranteed. A recent and very exciting addition to our armamentarium against this terrible disease is a bone marrow transplant. What is actually done is that, very high doses of chemotherapy and radiation are used to wipe out the cancerous bone marrow, which is replaced by healthy marrow from a donor, thus affecting a cure. With chronic myeloid leukemia, CML for short, which is the kind V.R. has, we stand an even chance of better chance of affecting a cure than most of the more malignant acute leukemias, because this disease has a long slow growing phase when a bone marrow transplant is even more effective. However if left untreated, it converts to a more rapidly growing, "accelerated" form when it is refractory to most known therapies. So, it is critically important that we treat this disease as early as possible, with a bone marrow transplant, if we are to achieve long term cures.

But, just anyone's bone marrow cannot be used. The bone marrow has to match, the chances of which are maximum when the donor is a sibling or another family member. But as you might have guessed, none of VR's family members' marrow matched hers. In a situation such as this it is customary to look for unrelated donors in National Bone Marrow Registries. For VR, such a donor was found, who, for personal reasons was unable/unwilling to donate bone marrow. A search was conducted in India to look for other donors, but did

not turn up any promising leads. If VR were a Caucasian the chances of finding another donor would be better, because people from the same racial stock have a much higher chance of matching rather than across racial barriers. Which is why, dear reader, I am writing to you today, for you see, the number of South Asians in the Bone Marrow Registry is abysmally small making it virtually impossible to find another match for VR.

If you are less than 55 years of age, are in good general health and suffer from no chronic medical conditions you could be a potential donor. What you would have to do, would be to report to a location where a bone marrow donor drive is being conducted, and agree to have about 30 cc's of blood drawn for testing. Your bone marrow type can be analyzed from this and you will be entered into the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry. When you are found to be a match, you will be called upon to report to a nearby Medical Center that has the capability to harvest bone marrows. A physician will talk to you to ascertain your medical condition and your ability to donate marrow without harm to you. After all, we would not wish to call upon you to donate marrow if we think it can be harmful for you! For the rest, you will be taken to the operating room where under anesthesia and through a few skin needle puncture holes in your back marrow will be withdrawn, frozen and sent on to the recipient. You will wake up from the anesthesia, none the worse for the procedure, except for some pain in the area of the procedure and minor restrictions such as heavy weight lifting for a few days after you come out of the hospital. Of course, neither you nor your medical insurance would be asked to shoulder the financial responsibilities of the procedure.

Also, getting yourself registered does not make it obligatory for you to go through with the donation. If you have second thoughts later, you will be allowed to refuse. However we do sincerely hope that you will not do so! I realize that your marrow may not match VR's. In that case your name will be added to the registry and it might be that your marrow will match another

south Asian who needs a transplant. I have tried to explain in brief about Bone Marrow Transplantation here, but I am sure you will have further questions which I have left unanswered. Please feel free to contact for further information. I know, my dear reader, that this is a momentous decision, and I would urge you not to go into this lightly. But don't you think when you consider that you might be in a unique position to give the gift of life to a fellow human being, that you will bring yourself to come forward and register yourself as a potential bone marrow donor?

Sincerely,

Aniruddha Dasgupta, MD

NHAAI Executive Committee:

- Dr. Parbati Brahma, M.D.
Chair, Cultural Events
- Dr. Padma Mathur, M.D.
Chair, Public Service
- Dr. P. T. Vasudevan
Chair, Membership and Editor, Samaj Patra

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