



Mandir Patrika



Vedanta Ashram Society
6421 Cork Street Halifax B3L 1Z5
Tel: 431-6000
<http://www.hindutemple-halifax.org>

December, 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Fellow Devotees, Namaskar

Time flew away; we as Board of directors have almost completed the whole year. The year was filled with various festivities, activities, challenges and a few controversies. We tried our best to meet the needs of all devotees; please forgive us for some unfinished tasks.

After seventeen years the constitution has been amended and passed by the general body. It was approved and registered with Nova Scotia Joint Stock Company. Thanks to the constitution committee of 2007 for their hard work over eight months; credit also goes to the two previous constitution committees (1993 & 2004) for laying the groundwork.

Over the past two years, the Board worked to have additional washrooms installed. Unfortunately it was not feasible due to various problems.

Mr. Sikka looked into installing a commercial dishwasher but due to safety issues that project didn't move forward.

Thanks to Mr. Gandhi, we obtained an estimate for installation of an elevator and additional bathrooms in the basement. The cost is high but it's worth considering. No project can move forward without your consideration.

More than 42 devotees sponsored the prasad on Sundays this year. We had eleven sponsors for Hope cottage over the twelve months. In each visit to Hope Cottage, 70 – 130 needy people were fed. We received their thanks for good food or different food like 'Basmati Rice'. It is a very satisfying experience to hear the appreciation for Hindu community. The next Board will need support from the community for transportation and a few other things for this program to succeed.

With courtesy of different devotees, new carpet has been installed in pooja hall, tracks for the drapes have been installed, new drapes have been sewn and hung around the altar, and we have a new vacuum cleaner. The board and the whole community appreciate their generosity. Carpets in the rest of the building were professionally cleaned.

On behalf of the board, I extend our gratitude to the members of various committees and individuals (and some humble unsung heroes) who helped and worked behind the scenes. These volunteers made themselves available whenever and wherever they were needed. With their help, understanding and dedication, we had a successful year. I was planning on listing all the volunteers (over fifty names) but decided against it in case one or more names were missed inadvertently.

The list of a variety of duties performed by individual volunteers or committees can be quite long. However we would like to express our appreciation for those who worked in various committees. The Religion committee: cleaning the Altar, cleaning pooja utensils, changing poshak of the deities, decorating, lighting, organising special events, organising for Hawan, Mata ki Chowki, festivals & other special events. For Prasad Committee: coming early in the morning on Sundays to make Halwa, setting up the things upstairs and downstairs for later use, helping with making roties, peeling or cutting vegetables and for extending a helping hand during festivals and special events. For Building Committee: in moving furniture, raking leaves, collecting garbage from outside and doing minor repairs. Finance Committee: Some volunteers helped in collecting and counting the offerings after the services of the day.

As an out-going chairperson, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all board members for their unconditional support and valuable advice. Everyone spent unlimited hours for meetings, cleaning, organising filing cabinets, kitchen and other rooms on days other than Sundays. Through this effort we sorted out and cleared many items with small donations, items which were surplus or not needed by the temple. A lot more work still remains to be done.

On a personal note I would like to thank not only Board members but all others for giving me a drive from the temple for the last six years.

Indu Bhatnagar
Chairperson

2007 V.A.S. Board Members

Chairperson	Mrs. Indu Bhatnagar	443 - 3621
Past Chairperson/Vice-Chair Admin.	Mrs. Sumitra Unia	431 - 3465
Vice-Chairperson (Rel.)	Mrs. Pushpa Bhargava	443 - 1719
General Secretary	Mr. Ashok Khanna	445 - 1409
Financial Secretary	Mrs. Lila Joshi	627 - 2391
Youth Program	Mrs. Tej Sharma	423 - 1988
Building	Mrs. Kamlesh Bhatnagar	462 - 2336
Prasad	Mrs. Jaya Dutta (Jan. to Jun.)	455 - 8431
Prasad	Mrs. Savita Narang (Jul. to Dec.)	443 - 8785

Board of Directors 2008 & 2009

Chairperson	Mr. Ashok Khanna
Vice Chairperson Admins	Mrs. Kamal Gulati
Vice Chairperson Religion	Mrs. Laxmi Raju
Vice Chairperson Prasad	Mrs. Jaya Dutta
General Secretary	Mrs. Simi Mehra
Financial Secretary	Mrs. Bala Durvasula
Youth Co-ordinator	Ms. Poonam Unia

Worship of Shiva-Lingam By Dr. Swaminathan

The following story is told regarding the origin of the Linga form of Shiva:

Vishnu in his anthropomorphic form was floating on the primeval waters between the lifeless interval of dissolution and creation when he perceived another luminous being approaching him with great speed. This was the four-headed Creator Brahma, who enquired of Vishnu, "Who are you? I am the first progenitor and created all. But how did you originate?"

Vishnu was annoyed at the audacity of Brahma and replied that he was the creator and preserver of the universe.

A quarrel arose between them each arguing in the timeless void. Then they both saw arising out of the ocean a towering *Lingam* crowned with flames.

They were so struck with amazement at the apparition that they stopped quarrelling. Brahma suggested that they find out its height and depth, and offered to fly upwards towards heaven. Vishnu agreed to dive into the depths of the ocean in search of the lower end. Vishnu took the form of a boar and entered the nether world called *Patala*. As he continued to go deeper and deeper into the ocean the *Lingam* grew bigger and bigger so that Vishnu was unable to find its lower end. Brahma met with a similar fate as he flew in the form of a swan and he could not find the upper limit of the ever-growing *Lingam*.

The two returned from their errands and stood gazing at the brilliance of the *Lingam*. Just then the side of the *Lingam* broke open and out emerged Shiva. He announced that he was the Supreme Shiva who was the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the Universe. He said that Brahma was his right side and with Vishnu on his left, they all existed collectively in Shiva the Supreme. He then formulated the law and practice that He must be worshipped in the phallic emblem and not in the anthropomorphic form.

Annual V.A.S. Membership

Please become a member if you are not one yet; encourage your friends and relatives to support the temple. Cheques as well as cash payments are welcome.

Singles over 19 years	\$31.00
Couples	\$51.00
Life Membership	\$1001.00 (Payable in instalments within a calendar year)

The following became Life Members in 2007:

Mr. Deepak & Mrs. Sapna Kriplani
Mr. Jatinder & Mrs. Rita Bali
Mr. Vickas Khanna (2006)
Mr. Vishal & Mrs. Shelly Bhardwaj (2008)

Devotees are welcome to book the temple for private or V.A.S. sponsored public functions through the Board of Directors.

Events	Charges Payable
Sunday Prasad	Minimum \$201.00 Additional donations welcome.
Weddings	\$351.00
Mandap loan outside temple use	\$51.00
Private functions without food	\$201.00
Private functions serving their own food	\$251.00

Recent Events

1. Sunday December 9:

Seven student volunteers were recognised and presented a dry fruit basket for their dedicated service to the temple.

2. Annual General Body Meeting and Elections December 2

The attendance was small but quorum reached by 2:15 PM so the meeting started on time. The highlights of the meeting were:

(a) **Recognition and Appreciation:** All pundits, Mrs. Nijhawan, Mr. Vyas and Mr. Mervin Kumar Misir were thanked for their selfless service to the temple and to the community.

(b) **Advance Polling:** The General Body agreed that in extenuating circumstances, advance voting will be allowed only two days prior to the election date. Members did not agree for the proxy vote.

(c) **The Elevator:** The elevator can be installed for three levels along with additional washrooms in the basement. The cost of the elevator itself is \$ 53,000 and installation of the elevator and the bathrooms is \$ 107,000 plus HST. Information was distributed on Dec. 2. The plans are displayed on the bulletin board. The new executive will need your direction to proceed with this worthwhile project for our ageing population. Please show your support by making generous donations before the end of this year to get the tax advantage.

2. Sunday November 11:

Pundit Yashwant Rai was honoured with citations and appreciation of his long, dedicated and selfless service to the temple and community. Mr. and Mrs. Rai were presented with gifts as a token of our appreciation. We extend our best wishes for a long, healthy and pleasant retirement.

3. Deepawali November 10:

In the morning from 11 AM to 12:30 PM under Mrs. Jaya Dutta's guidance, ten children learned to make 'Alpana' (or Rangoli) and decorated thalis for aarti. In the evening from 6:30 to 9 PM festivities took place followed by full prasad. Dr. Subbarao Durvasula performed the pooja for Shri Ganeshji and Shri Lakshmi. The children happily used their decorated arti thalis during the puja. They performed three devotional dances and wished 'HAPPY DIWALI' in different regional languages of India. In addition some bhajans were sung and Laxmi namawali was recited. The evening was enjoyed by many devotees who managed to come in spite of the inclement weather.

3. Sharad Poornima October 26:

Young and old participated in garba with full zest. The evening was most enjoyable.

4. Durga Ashtami & Vijaya Dashmi Sunday October 21:

Pundit Sastryji performed Pooja. The time was extended for an extra hour so Bhagwati Ma could be worshipped; Devotees sang melodious bhajans in her praise. Pundit Sastriji explained the significance of Vijaya Dashmi.

5 Navratre October 12 – 20: A lot of people joined in the garba on October 12, 13 and 20. Men, women and children of all ages, dressed in colorful clothes, enjoyed these energetic evenings.

October 17, Sri Durga Stuti was recited and on October 19 the Mata ki Chowki was held.

6. Graduation of Hindi Class October 16:

Twelve young students (age range 3-12) received blessings from Punditji, a certificate for attending Hindi classes with Mrs. Tej Sharma regularly.

7. Special General Body Meeting September 16:

Members came to vote for the acceptance of the proposed amendments to the constitution. The revised document was accepted unanimously.

8. Sri Ganesh Chaturthi Saturday September 15:

This is the first year Sri Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated on the actual day rather than on the closest Sunday. Pundit Subarao Durvasula performed pooja followed by bhajans and then prasad was served.

9. Anniversary for Institution of Sri Vivekananda's statue September 14:

Mr. Howard Epstein MLA inaugurated the exhibition on Life & Teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Outdoors near the statue Vedic invocation and aarti was performed by Pundits Durvasula, Vankamamidi and Swaminathan. Mrs. Raj Verma narrated the explanation of various rituals. The rest of the programme took place indoors with an opening address by our chief guest Hon. Geoff Regan MP. Bhajans were sung melodiously. Several speeches followed. A musical slide show of Swamyji was presented. It was a very informative evening. Thanks to Dr. Prabir Basu and his team of students for organising such a wonderful evening. We thank Mrs. Jaya Dutta and her team of volunteers for preparing and offering delicious prasad.

10. Sri Krishna Janmashtami September 3:

Pooja was performed by Pundit Yashwant Rai, followed by bhajans, kirtans, and a beautiful dance by Tulika and Niharika Jha. At midnight the auspicious birth of Lord Krishna was announced with enthusiastic singing, blaring of the conch shell, and ringing of bells.

Future Events

Shri Sharda Mata's Birthday Saturday December 29

New Year's Hawan Tuesday January 1

Community News

Achievements:

Anuja Kriplani graduated with major in Neurology from Dalhousie University; now she has admission in medicine in New York. Congratulations young lady.

Dr. Geeta Sinha was one of the sixteen Nova Scotia women to be presented an award of excellence – hers was for exceptional work in research and education. Congratulations Dr. Sinha!

Births:

Congratulations to the proud parents and grandparents:

Mr. Shiv Raj & Mrs. Sita Vats were blessed with a granddaughter.

Mr. Indraneel & Mrs. Manali Dutta are the proud parents of a little son, Shayon.

Mr. Vivek & Mrs. Anita Swamy are the proud parents of their son Vishay (grandson to Mr. Om & Mrs. Saroj Sharma , Mr. Narayan & Mrs. Bala Swamy)

Mr. Mahesh Mirpuri and Mrs. Nisha Das are blessed with a grandson, Dylan Tulsi Das

Weddings:

Congratulations to the newly weds:

Dr. Manish (son of Mr. Devendra and Mrs. Bharti Shah)& Dr. Tania Samantha

Narinder P. (son of Dr. Y.P. and Mrs. Purnima Singh) & Darlene

Deaths: Our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Shipra Roy and family on the untimely passing away of her husband on December 6. May God give peace to the departed soul and strength to your family.

Youth Activities

Hindi class students recited various mantras in Sanskrit and their Hindi Version on the day of their graduation. They received blessings, certificates and gifts. Thanks to Mrs. Tej Sharma and her team of volunteers for preparing the young people for future years.

Those who participated in the Alpana were: Sahil, Neha and Ishani Khanna, Shikha Gupta, Manasi Karkada, Jyotsna and Mauna Sirija Challa, Jasmine and Lila Gosine.

On Diwali night three different dances were performed by: Jyotsna, Mauna and Pranati Sriija Challa, Harshita and Madhu Pasurmathi, Lahari and Sruti Bandi, Ishani and Neha Khanna, Chanukya Naravarjula, Vigisha and Vrinda Baveja.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who supported the youth activities.

When the photos of these activities become available, we will display them on the bulletin board.

Archana for Individuals or Families

After consultation with all pundits, we have decided to streamline Sunday services. If any one other than the sponsoring family wishes to offer Archana (short prayer) in his/her name to the Lord and to receive blessings from the presiding pundit, they are requested to inform religious vice chair (Mrs. Pushpa Bhargava) ahead of time. During regular services only the sponsoring family is asked to come to the altar for blessings. Anyone else wishing to be blessed must wait in the pooja hall until after charnamruth is distributed. The duty pundit will take extra time (5 to 10 minutes) to offer a short prayer for the family to invoke the Lord's blessings. This will allow the individual family to make small offerings at the altar in their own time. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB THE PUNDITS DURING THE SERVICES. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

It's best to join for Sunday services in time.

1. We request fellow devotees to wait for the direction from the pundit before starting Ganesh bhajan at the beginning, Shubh Kariyo after the sponsors are blessed, and to begin singing Bhog Bhajan and Aarti when requested.
2. Fellow devotees, please be part of the main pooja at 11 AM. The Pundits perform it for everyone's benefit. Those who arrive on time enjoy offering to sing and participating in all bhajans.