



Mandir Patrika



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

February, 2009

Message from V.A.S. President

Namaskar and Happy New Year to one and all.

Let us hope that 2009 brings peace and prosperity to our planet.

As we are stepping into the second year of our term in fun-filled year, we are catching up with more and more excitement in terms of additional activities, functions and responsibilities for our community. We sincerely ask for your support for backing us all along as we now prepare for a new role in expanding our temple.

The most exciting news of the year however, is that our cherished dream of buying the building right behind the temple, (6420 Young Street) will be achieved. The VAS executive committee as well as the general body special meeting on January 11th unanimously approved the expansion and purchase. The consolidated property would offer a rare opportunity to extend the temple by a substantially. The congregation has experienced the existing facility to be inadequate.

We have signed the agreement of purchase and sale for 6420 Young street on January 23rd. The work necessary for the transfer of the title on March 20th/2009 is in the hands of our lawyer. We should remind ourselves that the real work begins now. Over the years the efforts to provide additional washrooms and an elevator have been prevented due to lack of space. We need input from our community and support to fundraise for the additional facilities. This will be a true community effort and I appeal to each and every one of you to offer suggestions and make the temple expansion a success.

THE VAS BOARD REQUESTS ALL DEVOTEES TO PROVIDE THEIR VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE EXPANSION OR TYPE OF FACILITIES NEEDED IN THE EXTENDED TEMPLE. THIS WILL HELP THE ARCHITECT TO INCORPORATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IF POSSIBLE. PLEASE DO SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS IN WRITING BY MARCH 15, 2009.

We welcome Mrs. Tej Sharma who has joined the board for 2009 replacing Mrs. Simi Mehra.

Board of Directors 2008 & 2009

Chairperson	Mr. Ashok Khanna	445 - 1409
Vice Chairperson Admin.	Mrs. Kamal Gulati	443 - 0570
Vice Chairperson Religion	Mrs. Lakshmi Raju	429 - 4359
Vice Chairperson Prasad	Mrs. Jaya Dutta	455 - 8431
General Secretary	Ms. Poonam Unia	431 - 3465
Financial Secretary	Mrs. Bala Durvasula	463 - 7804
Youth Co-ordinator	Mrs. Tej Sharma	423 - 1988

MAKARA SANKRANTHI

By Dr. Subba Rao

The Hindu calendar is a lunar calendar and is based on the movements of the Moon. However, one exception to this is Makara Sankranti which is calculated according to solar movements and so always takes place on January 14th. Makara is the sign of the zodiac corresponding to Capricorn. Sankranti means "to cross into." Makara Sankranti is therefore the day that the sun moves into the sign of the zodiac known as Capricorn.

Makara Sankranti is believed to be the time when Surya rides his chariot, drawn by seven horses, from the southern skies to the north (Uttara). Makara Sankranti marks the beginning of the day of the gods, which is equivalent to six solar months and is believed to be the auspicious part of the year in contrast to the previous six months, considered the night and therefore symbolic of darkness and evil.

The sun, symbolizes wisdom, divine knowledge and spiritual light and therefore to the spiritual aspirants this day has a special significance. This six-month period during which the sun travels northwards guides them to march towards the goal of life and towards the Lord. Paramahansa Sannyasins roam about freely during this period, dispelling gloom from the hearts of all.

When the veteran Bhishma, the grandfather of the Pandavas, was fatally wounded during the war of the Mahabharata, he chose to die during this period. Bhishma fell to the arrows of Arjuna. With his boon to choose this auspicious time, he waited on a bed of arrows to depart from this world only during this period i.e. the "Uttaraayana punyakaalam".

Makara Sankranti has geo-agri-economical significance to people of Indian Sub-Continent. Also this festival has deep spiritual significance, and Brahmins offer oblations to departed ancestors. For the agriculturists it is of prime importance as it signifies the end of the winter and the `turning back` of the sun to the north. Symbolically, the first harvest is offered to the Almighty—and that is Pongal. To toil was his task, his duty, but the fruit is now offered to the Lord which is consistent with the spirit of Karma Yoga.

In the coastal regions, it is a harvest festival dedicated to Indra. The day prior to the Makara Sankranti is called the Bhogi festival. On this day, old, worn-out and dirty things are discarded and burnt. Homes are cleaned and white-washed onwards.

In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, it is celebrated as a three-day harvest festival Pongal. The landlord distributes food, clothes and money among the laborers who work for him. The day after Pongal is Kanumu, a day when the cattle are washed, decorated and fed well.

Sankranti is rejoiced all over India and in Southeast Asia with some regional variations; different names are given thus, Bhogali Bihu in Assam, Lohri in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Bhogali Bihu in Assam, Sankranthi in Bihar, Andhra, Karnataka, Makara Sankranthi in Orissa, Uttarayan in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Makara Vilakku near Sabarimila temple, and Pongal in Tamilnadu. It is also celebrated as Maghi, Maghe Sankranthi or Maghe Sakrati, as Songkran in Thailand, as Pi Ma Lao in Laos and as Thingyan in Myanmar.

In North India, a ritual bath in the river is considered mandatory on this day. A big fair is held at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati rivers at Triveni in Alahabad(Uttar Pradesh) on this occasion. Apart from Triveni, ritual bathing also takes place at many places like Haridvar and Garh Mukteshwar in Uttar Pradesh, and Patna in Bihar. Khichiri is eaten and given away as charity, and some call the festival Khichiri Sankranti. People also distribute rice and lentils to the poor and needy.

Kite flying competitions are also held in various localities. Makara Sankranti has geo-agri-economical significance to people of Indian Sub-Continent. Also this festival has deep spiritual significance, and Brahmins offer oblations to departed ancestors. For the agriculturists it is of prime importance as it signifies the end of the winter and the `turning back` of the sun to the north. Symbolically, the first harvest is offered to the Almighty—and that is Pongal. To toil was his task, his duty, but the fruit is now offered to the Lord which is consistent with the spirit of Karma Yoga.

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Members for different committees: We appreciate all devotees who volunteer their services.

Name of Committee	Chair Person	Members
Religion	Mrs. Lakshmi Raju (429-4359)	Mrs.Pushpa Bhargava Mrs. Indu Bhatnagar Mrs. Suseela Sastry

		Dr. Vijay Khanna MS. Vaneeta Grover
Havan	Mrs. Krishna Nijhawan (422-2088)	Mrs. Kusum Sood Mrs. Tej Sharma Mrs. Savita Narang Mrs. Lata Kale
Mata ki Chowki	Mrs. Savita Narang (443-8785)	Mrs. Usha Goel Mr. Om Khanna Mrs. Neera Sikka
Prasad	Mrs. Jaya Dutta (455-8431)	Mrs. Raj Verma Mrs. Damayanti Parmar Mr. Mihir Busa Mrs. Mrs.
Hope Cottage	Mrs. Damayanti Parmar (454 – 5519)	Mrs. Indu Bhatnagar Mrs. Lalitha Sreenivasan Mrs. Nirmal Mago Mrs. Raj Verma
Finance	Mrs. Bala Durvasula (463 –7804)	Mr. Ram Mago Dr. P. Rangaswamy Mrs. Bharti Shah Mr. Deepak Kriplani Mrs. Manjula Vadaparti
Newsletter	Ms. Poonam Unia (431 -3465)	Mrs. Indu Bhatnagar Mr. Deepak Kriplani Mrs. Kamal Gulati Mrs. Sumitra Unia
Youth	Mrs. Tej Sharma (423 – 1988)	Mrs. Tripta Kumar Ms. Vageshwari Nagokar Mrs. Bithika Roy Mrs. Bandana Ghose Mrs. Superja Challa
Building	Mrs. Kamal Gulati (443 – 0570)	Mr. Ashok Khanna Mrs. Kamlesh Bhatnagar Mrs. Sumitra Unia Mr. Hiranmaya Dutta
Public Relations	Mrs. Kamal Gulati (443 – 0570)	Mrs. Gauri Mukhopadhyaya Mr. Deepak Kriplani
Telephone	Mr. Deepak Kriplani (455-0101, 443-4095)	Mrs. Indu Bhatnagar

Voice Mail	Mrs. Sudarshna Bhanot (443-4722)	Mr. Ashok Khanna
Feed Nova Scotia (Food Bank)	Mrs. Kamal Gulati (443 – 0570)	

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

Temple Use

Devotees are welcome to book the temple for private or V.A.S. sponsored public functions through the Executive Council.

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

GUIDE LINES FOR PRASAD SPONSORS

- The temple provides Rice, Daal/Chick peas/Rajma, seasonal vegetable, Halwa and Roti
- * Sponsors may bring Raita (yogurt) and additional sweets from home.
- The VAS Religious committee members make all arrangements at the Altar and the sponsors are requested to bring flowers, fruits, milk and yoghurt for charnamrit.
- *Two volunteers from Prasad Committee are available to assist from 9:30 AM onwards. Sponsors are requested to bring additional volunteers to help with preparation of rotis, for serving Prasad and for tidying up the eating areas afterwards.
- Sponsors wishing to have special pooja or Hawan must contact the VAS Religion and Prasad committees in advance and conclude before 11 AM.
- Please NOTE: - It is customary for the priest to offer blessings to the sponsors and for devotees sing Shubha Kariyo after the blessings. Sponsors are requested to inform the Religious committee in advance if they do not wish for blessings.
- The donation for Prasad sponsorship (including cleaning) is \$ 201.00
- For further information and to book Prasad, please contact to any one of the following members:
Mrs. Jaya Dutta 455 – 8431
Mr. Ashok Khanna 445 – 1409

Youth Activities

Hindi classes already have started being taught by Mrs. Tej Sharma. Children 4-6 yr. Old will only be taught oral (conversation) where as children 7 and up will learn reading and writing. Classes start at 10:30 am. Mrs. Tej Sharma 423-1988,

Every 3rd Sunday of the month is youth day so we encourage youth to come early to help out in the kitchen as well making announcements and offering bhajans.

Community News

Achievements: Amol Verma son of Mr. Krishan & Dr. Bharti Verma received Road Scholarship from Oxford University, England. Congratulations young man, we are proud of you.

Mrs. Kamlesh Bhatnagar raised over \$ 2,665.00 for Terry Fox Run. Well done Kamlesh. Congratulations

Births: Congratulations to proud parents and grandparents:

Daughter : Mr. Sanjay & Mrs. Kavita Khanna and granddaughter to Mr, Om & Mrs. Meena Khanna

Grandson: Mr. Manohar & Mrs. Savita Narang

Grandson: Mrs. Kamlesh & Late Mr. Shiv Bhatnagar and son to Deepa & Lisa Bhatnagar

Grandson: Mrs. Bachchi & Late Dr. S.B. Singh and son to Chakki & Tina Singh

Grandson: Mrs. Savita Narang & Late Mr. Subhash Chandra Narang and son to Jimi & Sanjit Singh

Weddings: Congratulations to newlyweds:

Amit & Jennifer Ann Batra son of Mr. Rai & Mrs. Geeta Batra

Karan & Deepika Kale son of Mr. Chandar Rao & Mrs. Lata Kale

Neera & Anuraj Gupta daughter of Mr. Kanti & Mrs. Gulshan Datta

Tanay & Chakshu Sharma son of Mr. Dinesh & Mrs. Usha Sharma

Sandeep & Harinder Narang son of Mrs. Savita & Late Mr. Subhash Chandra Narang

Ayeesha & Grant Msier daughter of Mr. Asis & Amita Basu

Aparna & Parmod Shivdasani daughter of Mr. Deepak & Mrs. Sapna Kriplani

Deaths: Deepest condolences from the community to the families of:

Mr. Rakesh Malhotra on the death of his sister in India

Mr. Mahendra Bhatnagar passed away in Halifax. God provide strength to Indu and family

Mrs. Sudarshan Khanna passed away in Halifax. God give courage to Kishan Lal and family

Mrs. Daulti Saini passed away in Halifax beloved mother of Dr. Y. P. Singh

Important Dates in 2009

Jan 14 (Wed.)	Makar Sankranti
Jan 31(Sat)	Basant Panchami
Feb 23(Mon)	Mahashivaratri
Mar 10& 11(Tues &Wed)	Holi

Mar 27 (Fri)	Start of Navaratri, Ugadi, Telugu New Year
April 3 (Fri)	Ramanavami.
April	Tamil New Year
April 9 (Thurs)	Hanuman Jayanti
May 10 (Sun)	Mother's Day Lalitha Sahastranam
June 21 (Sun)	Father's Day Vishnu Sahastranam
July 7 (Tues)	Vyasa/Guru Poornima
	Varalakshmi Vratam
Aug 5 (Wed)	Raksha Bandhan
Aug 13 (Thurs)	Shri Krishan Janmashtami
Aug 23 (Sun)	Ganesh Chaturthi
Sep 4 – 18	Pithra Paksh
Sept 19 (Sat)	Devi Navaratri Begins
Sept 28 (Mon)	Vijayadashami
Oct. 7 (Wed)	Karva Chauth
Oct 11 (Sun)	Ahoi Ashtami
Oct. 15 (Thurs)	Dhan Teras
Oct 17 (Sat)	Deepavali, Lakshmi Pooja
Oct. 19 (Mon)	Bhai Dooj

Recent Events

Sunday February 1: Vasant Panchami was celebrated with bhajans in praise of Sharda Ma (Devi Saraswati)

Sunday January 11: Sri Vivekanand's birthday was celebrated.

Sunday January 11: Special General Body Meeting

Sunday January 4: Havan to welcome New Year 2009.

December Sri Sarda Ma's birthday was celebrated.

Sunday December 7: General Body Meeting

November Deepawali Celebration

August Janmashtami was celebrated

Future Events

Maha Shivratri: Monday Feb. 23

Holi: Tuesday Mar. 10

Navratre (Ramayan Recitation) March 27 - April 3

Ram Navami Friday April 3

Lalitha Sahastranam recitation Sunday May 10

Vishnu Sahastranam recitation Sunday June 21

NOTE: 1,` Please Support the two important projects: FEED NOVA SCOTIA by bringing non-perishable items and HOPE COTTAGE by sponsoring the food for less fortunate. Dates are on the bulletin board.

2: On Sundays extra Parking is available behind Dental Lab, entrance from Oxford Street.