

NEWSLETTER

*Malayalee Engineers' Association,
Houston, Texas*

Volume 7, Issue 1

March 2006



The MEA executive committee would like to thank all our members, patrons, friends and well-wishers for supporting us in all our endeavors throughout the year. This is a combined edition of the last newsletter for 2005 and the first newsletter for 2006.

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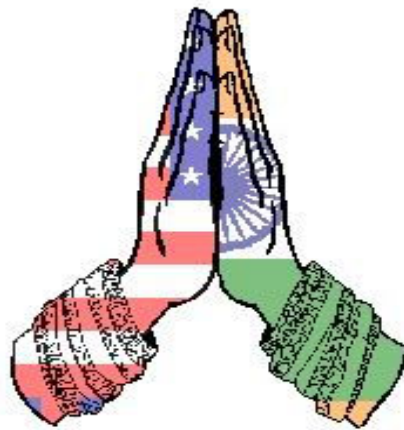
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**SHYAMA
MEA Scholarship Fundraiser**

The MEA Scholarship Fundraiser Event for 2005, 'Shyama' featuring well-known cine actress, Shobana and her dance troupe was a grand success. Many Thanks all our patrons and all the MEA-members who toiled hard to make it a grand success!



Spring Picnic: 03/11/06 at 10:00AM-5:00PM at George Bush Park, Pavillion#1, 16756 Westheimer Parkway, Houston, TX 77047

Cultural Evening: 05/06/06 at Durga Bari Hall, 13944 Schiller Rd, Houston 77082 (near Hwy6 and Richmond, Alief)

MEA Committee members for 2006:

S Vidyasagar (281) 480-5434	Uday Damodar Salian (281) 265-5037	N.K.Balachandran (281) 345-6277
Anil Nair (281) 477-0231	Shoba Eason (832) 453-1848	Ramjith Ali (832) 858-0517
All e-mails to the MEA committee to: meahouston@yahoo.com		online: www.meahouston.org

MEA 2006 – A Sneak Preview

The transition between the 2005 & 2006 Committees just got completed and we look forward to an exciting and enjoyable year ahead. The newly formed 2006 MEA committee members are as follows:

- *Uday Salian – President*
- *N.K. Balachandran – Treasurer*
- *Shobha Eason – Secretary*
- *Sagar Vidyasagar - Guidance*
- *Ramjith Ali - Website*
- *Anil K. Nair – Continuance*

Some of the activities/projects that we would like to do this year are given below. On the professional front, our goals this year are to:

- Actively pursue in attaining 501(C) (3) status for Non-Profit Organization. This will give us the eligibility to seek funds from local city/county organizations for our activities.
- Seek to increase our paid membership
- Promote interaction between business and MEA members through Networking conducting seminars/networking sessions.
- Redesign the MEA website with a better look and feel and to include Job listings/links for job seeking aspirants.
- Aggressively look at corporate sponsorship for fund raising/ underwriting events
- Conduct Math & Science competitions for kids facilitating young and upcoming engineers to be -like summer camps, science meets, field trips, quizzes etc

On the cultural side of things, we have the Annual MEA cultural nite that is scheduled for May 6th, 2006 at the Durgabari Hall. We hope to see a very active participation and volunteering support from all our members and their families in putting together a great show. In addition to this event, we also hope to have a few more fun events like MEA Malayalam movie nights and social get-together events in addition to our traditional picnics. We are also planning to have some sports activities/tournament for members and their families during the course of the year.

An important aspect for all non-profit organizations is their work and interaction with local community groups. We hope this year our members will help volunteer and support in some of the activities like providing help to families in need, participate in local activities, partner with like-minded local organizations of Kerala origin to share in our vision and to make them feel that we are all part of the overall fabric of Kerala.

We look forward to very exciting and enjoyable 2006 and hope to see all of our members at the MEA events this year.

Members Column

We invite members to send in articles to be published in forthcoming newsletters. If you would like to share any Good news or event in your life, we will be happy to publish it in our Newsletter. A new column called the KIDZ CORNER will be added exclusively for contributions from our kids. Please encourage your young ones to send in their contributions. Newsletter articles/contributions may be e-mailed to meahouston@yahoo.com.

MEA 2005 Scholarship Award Update

For the year 2005, we received over 130 applications for our scholarship program from first year engineering students in Kerala. As in the previous years, the scholarship committee, after a rigorous process of evaluation short listed a select group of 11 deserving candidates. Individual contacts were established with the short-listed candidates via email, telephone, faculty at the colleges and several friends and family in Kerala who helped in verifying information on the applications including need for financial assistance. Now came the tough job of eliminating some more from well accomplished and almost equally deserving applicants; and the task was difficult, but the evaluation committee comprising of Vijay Kayath, George Mathew, Meera Nair, Ranjith Nair and Hariharan with able guidance from Sojan Antony, Sibi Kuruvilla were very focused and stuck to the task and completed the effort as scheduled by January 31st 2006.

The 2005 Scholarship committee have decided to award seven (7) scholarships this year to seven very deserving students. One of these Scholarships was sponsored by Malayalee Engineers' Association of North Texas, Dallas. The winners of 2005-2006 Scholarships are:

1. Ayyappadas, P. College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. Mechanical Engineering.

2. Bibin A. Babu. College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. Mechanical Engineering.

3. Ajeesh, K. College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. Architecture.

4. Sisil John, College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. Electrical and Electronics.

5. Sinith, P. College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. Mechanical Engineering.

6. Al Ameer, M. Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Kottayam. Electrical and Electronics.

7. Joice Mathew, College of Engineering, Adoor. Electronics and Communication.

For more information visit

<http://www.meahouston.org/scholarship.htm>

'Shyama, the Mystical Indian Woman'

By Sibi Kuruvilla

This year's fundraiser was an event that will linger in memory as one of the best shows that MEA has presented in the past few years. The dance show by Shobana and troupe, 'Shyama, the Mystical Indian Woman', was at the Stafford Civic Center on Gandhi-Jayanthi day and drew a huge capacity-crowd, in true testament to Shobana's star-power and MEA's organizing prowess. All the MEA committee members and volunteers who helped put together the event deserve kudos for their effort.

Dr.Rathnakumar of Anjali School of Dance was the MC for the program. The evening started off with a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in a mutli-media presentation that spanned the life and mission of the great man, with a live rendering of 'Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye', the hymn immortalized by Gandhiji. It was a preservation of timeless hope to remember this great man of peace and uncompromising integrity, in this era of rife and senseless violence around the world.

Shobana packaged a presentation especially for Houston, with Malayalam narrative and had a routine choreographed to A.R.Rahman's 'Vande Matharam'. The show was crafted in Shobana's master-strokes to entertain both the connoisseur and lay rasika, with some vibrant and graceful choreography that was innovative, while still retaining the classicism of Nrithya. The accompanying dancers were all longtime students of Shobana's at her dance-school, 'Kalarpana', in Madras.

The show started with classical Bharathanatyam pieces. The Anjali in Nattai ragam had the melody of vocal rendition and the rhythm of the bells on the dancers' feet that pierced the silence, creating a sense of unsullied purity. Rich orchestration and excellent dance sequences, sometimes performed alone, sometimes in a group, characterized the presentation. This was followed by a beautiful portrayal of Kaali, depicting the goddess' mysticism, her different forms ranging from the fierce to the benign, while detailing the abstractions of the Kali yantra, the Kundalini shakthi, and tantric worship including the partaking of the panchamakara. There was plenty of dramatic content in the gory mutilation of demons, in the drunken stupor of the goddess, and in the practice of sacrifice in worship. A solo dance depicting Nandanar by Bhavani, in an unhurried graceful flow, seemed to mark the transition from classical to 'freer' expression. The story of Shyama, a bride from rural India whose wedding is the context of the piece, was presented to the delight of the spectators, who responded heartily to the humor it contained. It followed Shyama from the proposal from a groom 'who has studied abroad', through the negotiations on her dowry which included a late demand for a 'two-wheeler', to domestic life after her wedding. This superb entertainer was followed by what amazingly seemed like a Thillana set to Bach. There was also a lively group piece set to a background of great percussion.

Shobana and her troupe of well-seasoned dancers left the spectators charmed in an enchanted experience of scintillating choreography and soulful music at the event.

A Very Special Thank You

A Very Special Thank You to all our Scholarship sponsors for their magnanimous contribution in sponsoring very deserving students. We also would like to thank all the Event donors who have opened their hearts and wallet to support us in a good cause. Year after year we have approached our Advertisers and they have continuously obliged by stepping up to the plate in underwriting some of the expenses.

We would like to take this opportunity here to publish the list of our Scholarship sponsors and recognize them for their generosity and support.

Scholarship Name	Scholarship Sponsor	Year Instituted
Sriram Memorial	Pankajam Sriram	2000
Discount Grocers	Thomas Mathew	2002
Preferred Dental Care	Dr.Sam T.Varghese	2002
Gopinath Family	Salil Gopinath	2002
Mathai Memorial	Reji Joseph	2003
Prabhakaran Memorial	Bipin Prabhakar	2003
Sankara Pillai Memorial	Dr. Mohan S. Kumar	2003
Preethi Ramachandran (half)	Kala Sreedevi	2003
Madhavan Family	Rajeev Madhavan	2004
Rajamma Memorial	Thankam	2004
P.K. Karunakaran Memorial	N.K. Pradeep	2004
Apna Bazar	James Eapen	2004
Joyce John	Joyce John	2005
Malayalee Association of North Texas (MEANT)	MEANT	2005

Why Volunteer For MEA?

By Uday Salian

This seems to be a trivial question and most of the time the response would be not me let someone else do it. We could debate on this topic for years and not come to a good conclusion. Some may just equate it to a philosophical question. I would like to raise this question only to spike a general interest in the spirit of volunteerism and specifically with respect to Malayalee Engineers Association.

I don't know if there is a tangible advantage or benefit of being a volunteer. If it doesn't pay then why do it right? Wrong!! It may not pay in terms of green dollars but I believe there is a certain degree of reward that you could term it as a payment for your participation or sacrifice (may be a better term).

We all (at least I do) at some point in our life like to be part of something. We first think we are a part of our family, part of a country, part of a state (maybe Texas, or Kerala), part of our friend circle etc. It gives us a sense of security that we belong to something. This becomes more important when we start having kids (more so in a foreign land such as the U.S). We like to identify ourselves with something. When we become an MEA member we start a link between us and an association of like minded folks who share the same beliefs and culture.

By spending time to volunteer to an organization we open our minds to serving the community. Our kids will observe the parents and will try to imitate the role of a giver in her/his community as they grow. We want that to happen, don't we? We all want our kids to grow up to be a good citizen and one who would love to sacrifice their time for a good cause.

Folks, to make it short, I would encourage each and every one of our MEA members to try and spend some time to make MEA an intellectual family meeting place where we could have open discussion on important topics, have events that could bring us all together to share our thoughts and culture, help our kids to grow up in a positive environment. The end result will be a strong association of eager members ready to serve for the betterment of our community. That to me would be an ideal world. Let's see what we can give to MEA and not worry about what MEA gives us back in return. I assure you that with all the positive energy going in, there has to be positive energy coming out. Remember Entropy!! A very good example is our annual fund raising event which has been very successful last few years and I believe one of the reasons for its success has to be our tenured volunteers.

I happen to witness that during the planning and execution of the 2005 *Shyama* show. It was challenging but very rewarding experience for all the volunteers who spend so much time in it. At the end we came out with flying colors in all respects- punctuality, excellent coordination and finally able to generate good amount of money towards our scholarship fund. You can't beat that feeling.

Thank you from MEA Excom 2005

The 2005 MEA committee would like to thank each and every person who helped us through the year with our various activities. We have tried to put in our very best in carrying out the different responsibilities assigned to us. This was done keeping in mind our aim of carrying forward the goals of this organization and making it a shining example of cultural and social success. We have always tried to learn from all the valuable comments and suggestions that we have received after every event, and if not for the active involvement from all our members and friends, we would not have been able to go forward with our aim. We are also confident that the new committee will play an even better role in taking this organization forward, keeping in mind its vision and goals.

Thank You

!!!Hot Off the Press!!!

At the time of this newsletter going to press, we are happy to inform you that the 2006 MEA Family Fun Af(fair) held on March 11th at the George Bush Park, was a grand success thanks to the large turnout from our members and the active participation of everyone in all the activities. We also are pleased to inform you that we had six new members who came with their families and joined the festivities.

Please watch for all the details of the picnic with pictures in the forthcoming issue of your favorite newsletter.

Membership Campaign 2006

It's a new year and it means its time to renew your membership with MEA! Thanks to all who have sent in their checks already. Please make sure you pay the dues (\$30) by the picnic-day (Mar-11). There are several new Malayalee engineers who have come to Houston recently. We would request your help in enrolling them and strengthening our organization.

Please use the enclosed form or print from web at:
<http://www.meahouston.org/memberapp.htm>

MEA Family Fun Af (fair) Picnic 2006

Spring is in the air and the time is just right for the MEA fun get-together! Bring your friends and family for a fun-filled day at the George Bush Park. Proceed to Pavillion #1 in the park, which is on the left of the park as you enter the area. The event is free for all MEA members (Renewals & New), but guests will be charged \$5.00 to offset costs.

MEA Cultural Nite 2006

Mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, May 06th 2006 at Houston Durgabari Society Auditorium. We'll have a Social Hour from 4:00pm to 5:00pm, the Cultural Program from 5:00pm to 8:00pm, followed by Dinner at 8:00pm. Please arrive on time, with your family and friends. An eVite for the event will be sent out shortly.

Here's a chance to showcase your talents! Please contact any one of the committee members with details of your participation.

MEA Cultural Nite 2006(contd.)

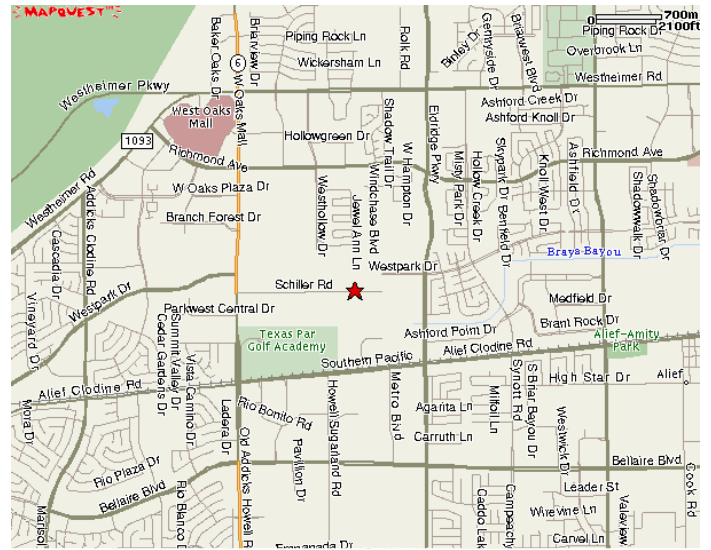
The cover charges are:

\$12 per adult, \$5 per child (5-12 yrs) for members & family.
\$15 per adult, \$7 per child (5-12 yrs) for guests.

We also need volunteers for making snacks, hall-arrangement, hospitality and food service. Please contact a committee member (or email: meahouston@yahoo.com) if you can join us in making MEA-nite '06 a memorable event.

Venue: Houston Durga Bari Society Auditorium,
13944 Schiller Rd, Houston 77082.

(near Hwy6 and Westpark, Alief.) <http://www.durgabari.org/>
(If there is heavy traffic on HWY 6, go forward to the next signal and make u-turn to avoid waiting for a LEFT turn)
We'll have more details on MEA-nite '06 at our website, soon.



MEA Houston: 2006 Membership Form

Name: _____ email: _____

Home Address: _____

Tel# (home): _____ (work / cell): _____

Employer: _____

Hometown in Kerala: _____

Do you wish to block your contact information from being published and distributed? (Check) Yes ___ No ___

Please mail with check (\$30 payable to MEA Houston) to: N.K.Balachandran, 7910 Scenic Canyon Ln, Houdton, TX-77095.

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