



Malayalee Engineers' Association Houston, TX

NEWSLETTER

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Volume 20, Issue 3

Our Twentieth Year

October 2014

“**MEA SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISING CHARITY GALA 2014**”

*An evening of musical entertainment by our in-house talents and a few guest singers
On Saturday, 15 November 2014 at Madras Pavilion, Sugar Land, TX
A fundraising event for MEA Scholarship Project – See page 10 for details*

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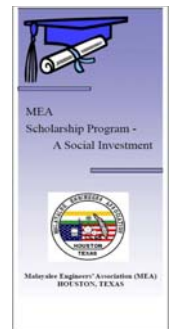
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****Visit MEA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/meahouston for frequent updates on MEA activities****

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Message from the President – It's All About Our Members!

Our stated goals for 2014 were strengthening the organization through increased membership and providing more member focused programs. I am very pleased to report our tremendous success on both these fronts. Our membership is now at an all-time high of 188 and growing! Thanks to everyone who helped to make this happen. The calendar of events on MEA website and Facebook activities feed; tell the story about our programs. We have already conducted 14 events so far this year, another all-time record for MEA. All were well attended. It is important that we remain committed as one team on growing MEA into an active and youthful organization dedicated to professional enrichment and community impact. Let me address 3 areas where we can work together towards this goal.

Membership growth & sustainability: Our current membership shows an increase in new members as well as student members out of US universities. We expect this trend to continue. Immigrant Indian engineers are already the backbone of the Oil & Gas and engineering industries in this city. We expect to see a steady growth in number of individuals eligible to become MEA members. The real task will be to have a strong MEA organization capable of building up and retaining its membership. We have also identified the need to focus on the development of MEA family locally, and generating more technical professionals in our second generation. All of these require an expanded MEA leadership team to serve the larger membership. We have taken steps in this direction with the expansion of this year's BOD to include Aravind Subramani. We need another two volunteers to work with us during the remainder of the year 2014 and utilize their experience to serve in the 2015 leadership team. Volunteers may kindly contact me.

Member feedback and actions: For the first time, we introduced an active feedback system based on Survey Monkey, soon after the MEA Cultural Nite 2014. Several members took the time to respond to the survey and to provide constructive suggestions. Results from this survey, including some of the suggestions are listed on page 4 of this newsletter for your information.

Personal appeal to all members for scholarship donations: I would appeal to all our members to make your generous contribution to the scholarship fund, which eventually translates into an investment for the betterment of the society that we all come from. You may make the donation online at <http://meahouston.org/donate/>. Also, spread the word among your friends, associates and charity minded individuals and request them to direct their charitable spending through MEA. Also, make sure that you utilize company matching contribution, if offered by your employer, to the benefit of MEA. We intend to have an MEA Charity Gala on 15 November. Details are included in this newsletter. See you then!

Joyce John
MEA President 2014
On behalf of Board of Directors



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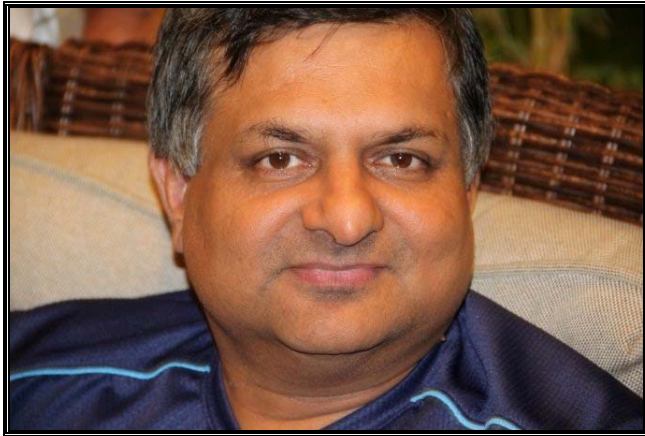
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In memory of Anil K. Nair (1966-2014)



A memorial service was held on Friday, 29 August 2014, at the Winford Funerals in Houston, TX for Anil K. Nair, a long time MEA member and past MEA Board member who passed away on August 26, 2014. He was 48 years old. The memorial service was attended by a huge crowd, including many from MEA. Anil was described as a role-model husband and a great dad by his family and friends as they paid their rich tributes. He was also a close friend to many and a dedicated Boy Scouts Troop leader.

Anil K. Nair, a certified PMP, had a very successful professional career that started at Tata Consultancy Services. He was last employed at BHP Billiton. During the eulogy, his colleague highlighted Anil's positive attitude and ability to solve complicated issues. He had been an active member of Malayalee Engineers' Association and had served on the Board during the years 2005 and 2006. Anil's humbleness and pleasant style will always remain in the hearts of MEA members.

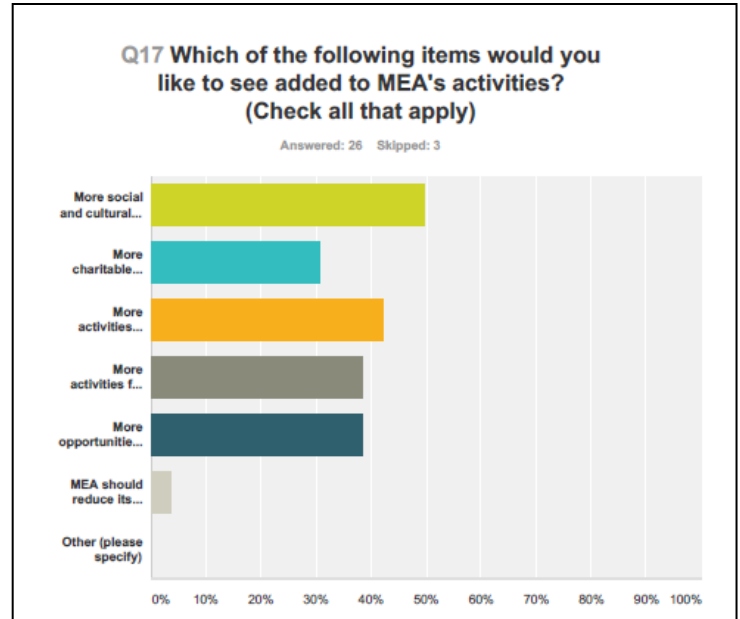
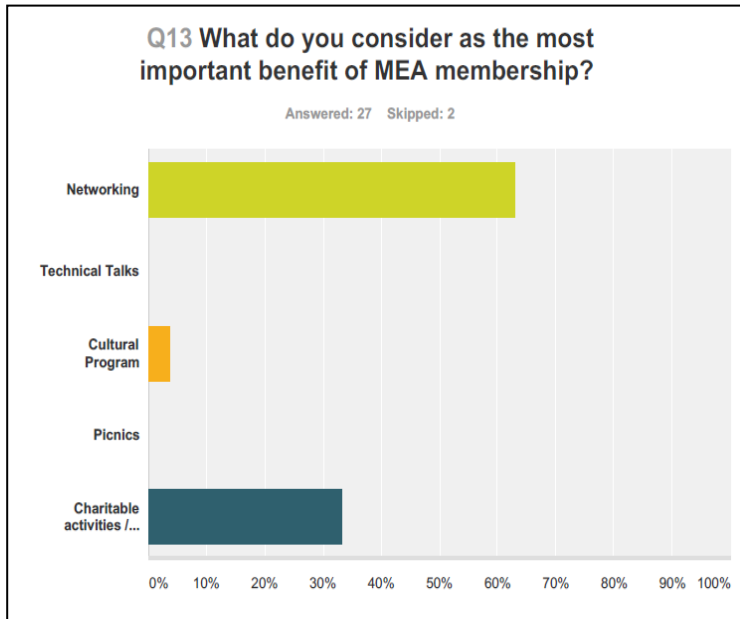
We join in paying our homage to Anil, a life well lived!

On behalf of all your friends at MEA,
MEA Board 2014





Member Feedback Survey Results



Above charts are extracts from the MEA member feedback survey conducted through Survey Monkey, soon after MEA Cultural Nite 2014. A few of the suggestions received are listed below.

About MEA Cultural Nite 2014

- "This event was very well organized and smoothly conducted. Congratulations to the organizing team!!!"*
- "There are so many talented folks. It would be good to have an orchestra in addition to solo performances."*
- "Group performances shall be encouraged for participation by more members/ family."*
- "The dining area was not able to accommodate everyone. A lot of the guests (including women) were seen standing and eating their dinner. Since the membership is growing and we are getting record crowds for the events, it would be nice to have more seating available to everyone."*

Any additional inputs or feedback regarding MEA?

- "Very happy with overall performance of MEA. Good to see the membership increase."*
- "Subcommittees can be formed to help with the activities of MEA, the members being new MEA members."*
- "Initiative to start new teams from MEA for soccer or Volleyball or any other sport activities."*
- "MEA should make itself known to Malayalee engineering students studying in local universities....."*

Thank you for your feedback. MEA Board 2014 appreciates all the positive, encouraging words received from the members. Every constructive suggestion will be considered in future MEA plans.



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World Cup Soccer Finals Screening & "Score for Scholarship" Winners – 13 July 2014



MEA Houston added our share of excitement to the finals of the world's most popular game by hosting a World Cup Soccer finals screening event in a 45-seat theatre for MEA members. This event was enjoyed by 26 MEA member family and friends, who watched the game on a large screen with theatre seating. It was a cracking atmosphere with plenty of popcorn served and equal support for both teams!

MEA announced winners of the mini-fundraiser 'Score for Scholarship' challenge at the conclusion of the game.



First: Robert Bruce (40 points)
Second: Suresh Karayil (34 Points)
Third: Vijay Kayath (34 Points)

As with the finals, this was also a close contest with opportunity to have different winners depending on whether Germany or Argentina wins the cup. Congratulations to Robert Bruce, who won the first place with a perfect score of 40 points, with an all correct prediction of all the knockout stage results! With their prediction of Germany becoming the world cup champions, Suresh Karayil and Vijay tied for the 2nd place with 34 points. Based on a draw, Suresh Karayil took the 2nd place and Vijay got the 3rd.

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to all the participants for their contributions and donations towards a great cause of funding a scholarship. Through the 'Score for Scholarship' participation, together with the donations, MEA 2014 was able to raise \$2000 needed to fund one (1) scholarship for a deserving high-merit, low-income, 4-year engineering student, our REAL WINNER !!





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Technical Talk II - 09 Aug 2014

MEA organized a second technical talk for the year on Saturday, 09 August, 3.00-5.00 PM at Cy-Fair library in Houston, TX. There were two topics – ‘Cyber Security for Techno-Managers’ and ‘US Immigration Q&A’.



In the Cyber Security session, speaker Joseph Ponnoly, a MEA member, provided an overview of current and emerging trends in information security threats while emphasizing the need for everyone to protect their personal data. Some practical, common-sense tips on securing your IT systems by setting up firewalls, installing spam wares and antivirus systems, checking credit reports annually, etc. were also covered.

US immigration Q&A session was led by Anuj Shah, one of the highly rated Immigration Attorneys in Houston. He answered over 20 questions submitted in advance by MEA members. He also took time to answer multiple live questions from the audience shedding light on various immigration topics including dos and don'ts of H1-B visas, potential impact of immigration overhaul on Indians, and sponsoring spouses and parents on visitors/family visas.

Thanks to the speakers and the attendees, for making this MEA learning and networking event a success.

Science Talent Search – 20 Sep 2014

Thank you everyone for making our poster competition a grand success. Congratulations to the following MEA Science Talent Search (STS) 2014 winners!



Elementary School

1. Eesha Nair
2. Sanath Nair
3. Adhav Rajkumar

Middle School

1. Crisvin Thangachan
2. Jayasurya Dileep
3. Abhinav Vadassery

High School

1. Priya Nair
2. Akshay Punnoose

And our sincere thanks to the following sponsors

1. Johny Alex
2. Hari U. Nair
3. Dr. Saales
4. Akbar Travels of India Ltd.

For more details on STS visit:
<http://meahouston.org/sts2014/>

Sponsor's Corner:

AKBAR TRAVELS OF INDIA Ltd.

5353 W. Alabama St, Suite 207

Houston TX 77056

Tel: 713 222 8600 Cell: 281 844 0048

email: joseph@akbartravels.us

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MEA Cultural Nite 2014 – 20 Sept. 2014

The MEA Cultural Nite, one of the most anticipated events of the year was held on 20 September 2014 at the Durgabari Auditorium. The MEA Cultural Nite kicked-off with a social hour, where all the members had an opportunity to interact with each other and vote for the science talent search competition.

The posters for the science talent search competition were displayed in the hall behind the auditorium where scrumptious snacks and coffee were served. The MEA board would like to thank all the sponsors, judges, participants and the viewers of the science talent competition.

The opening ceremony by the board members was a door to the cultural events that followed. The evening was a collage of wonderful performances with excellent coordination and time management by the Master of Ceremony, Board members, Volunteers, Gurus and the participants. A variety of entertaining programs enthralled the audience. The vocal and instrumental performances were enchanting, while all the dance performances were a visual delight. The MEA board would like to thank everyone for their patience and effort in putting together such an entertaining ensemble of events. We would like to specially thank the sound and lighting team for a job wonderfully done.

The cultural events were followed by an award ceremony for the science talent search competition. The winners were awarded cash prizes. Certificates were presented to all the participants. After the vote of thanks by the MEA Board, everyone assembled at the hall behind the auditorium for a delicious dinner.

The MEA Board would once again like to thank everyone who contributed in making the event a success. We look forward to your continuing support and contribution in the coming years.



Here are a few pictures from the event.

You can enjoy more pictures from the MEA Cultural Nite 2014 at MEA FB page.





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MEA Cultural Nite 2014 – 20 Sept. 2014



Here are a few more pictures from the event.
You may enjoy a high-quality video and additional pictures from the MEA Cultural Nite 2014 at:
<https://www.facebook.com/meahouston>



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Career Guidance Session - 11 Oct. 2014



MEA conducted a career guidance session for our student members and recent graduates seeking their first job in this country, on Sat, 11 October, at the Madras Pavilion in Sugar Land, TX. The purpose of this session was to facilitate a face-to-face meeting with them and senior MEA members. Organizing such an interactive session was an attempt to provide practical assistance to job seekers. MEA senior members shared their personal experience of finding their first jobs in the USA and answered specific questions the students had, in an informal setting.

This session was well attended by 8 students and an equal number of senior MEA members with a collective engineering experience of about 200+ years. The session covered a variety of topics, including discussions on resume writing, do's and don'ts in interviews, importance of professional networking, companies that typically sponsor job visas etc.

The job seekers really appreciated the opportunity and were glad that MEA arranged this session solely for them. They expressed the hope that such career guidance oriented events to help the student members will be a regular MEA program in the coming years.

MEA Fall Picnic – 18 Oct. 2014



It was a day of picture perfect weather in Houston for an outdoor event with bright sunshine, fall temperatures and low humidity! MEA conducted its Fall Picnic on Sat, 18 October, with a spectacular boat tour of one of the busiest ports in the world aboard the M.V. SAM HOUSTON.

Over 40 attendees enjoyed an hour and a half of boat ride experiencing fresh air and watching ocean-going ships, tankers, bulk carriers and other marine crafts along the Houston Ship Channel. It was an apt experience for MEA families including kids to see the numerous refineries and petro-chemical units that helped make Houston the Energy Capital of the World.

The boat tour was followed by a fantastic group lunch at the Monument Inn Restaurant, on the waterfront with a view of the ship traffic on the Houston Ship Channel. The food was delicious and provided an atmosphere of ambience for active networking of MEA families comprising of students, new and senior members. After lunch, several of the MEA families spent time touring the local attractions including San Jacinto monument and the Battleship Texas. Thanks to all the attendees for making this event a great success!



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Forthcoming Event: MEA Scholarship Fundraising Charity Gala– 15 Nov. 2014

MEA invites you to the “Scholarship Fundraising Charity Gala” on Saturday, 15 November 2014. The musical entertainment will be by our in-house talents and a few guest singers. Please expect an MEA family group atmosphere, set in a fun filled evening, with quality musical entertainment and a scrumptious Indian dinner. All proceeds from this event after the expenses will go towards the 2014 MEA Scholarship Fund.

When: Saturday, 15 November 2014

Where: Madras Pavilion, 16260 Kensington Dr,
Sugar Land, TX 77479

Program:

5.30 – 6.30 PM Social Hour

6.30 – 9.30 PM Music and Dinner

Buy your tickets online at:

<http://meahouston.org/mea-charity-gala-2014-a-musical-feast/>

Only limited seats, buy your tickets early! Online ticketing option will be open until 11.59 PM on Wednesday, 12 November, 2014.

An Appeal to you

The scale and thoroughness with which we operate our scholarship program require the entire MEA membership be engaged in helping the Director Board and Scholarship Program Coordinator. The diversity and resources we have among our members enrich us and make us confident to drive change through our shared vision.

With help from people like you we can make a difference in the lives of a few youths providing them and their families opportunities for a better life.

Whatever aspect of MEA's Scholarship Program you are passionate about and however you would like to get involved, (giving, mentoring, advocating or volunteering) we invite you to join us for a most rewarding experience

Please contact:

Joyce John (MEA President): 832 703 9155

Sojan Antony (Treasurer): 713 992 9301.

We will greatly appreciate your generous contributions. MEA Houston is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c) 3. Contributions to the Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible to the extent laws in USA allow.



Visit www.meahouston.org/donate
to make your generous donation.



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Forthcoming Event: MEA General Body Meeting & Financial Talk – 06 Dec. 2014

General Body Meeting – 06 Dec. 2014 – NOTICE TO MEMBERS

A General Body Meeting of the Malayalee Engineers' Association (MEA) will be held on Saturday, 06 December 2014, 4:00 PM at India House, 8888 W Belfort Ave, Houston, TX 77031 to transact the following agenda:

1. Ratify the amendment of by-laws (Details of amendment proposals to be e-mailed separately)
2. Election for 2015 Board of Directors

All MEA paid members are requested to attend the General Body meeting.

Request for 2015 BoD Volunteers:

Many of you have expressed interest in volunteering for MEA Houston and this is an opportunity for you to take lead and help out. Election to the 2015 BoD will take place during the GBM on 06 Dec. 2014. Please volunteer yourself or nominate a friend to serve in the MEA Board of Directors for 2015. You may send in your nominations to meahouston@gmail.com before 04 Dec. 2014. Thank you!

Financial Planning Session – Sat, 06 Dec 2014

On the day of the GBM; 06 Dec. 2014, MEA will also be conducting a financial planning session to help you manage your financial plans. Whether you are single or planning for children's college or thinking about your retirement, this educational session will give you insights on how to deal with your particular financial situation. Some of the questions to be addressed during this session will include:

Do I have the right mix of investments for my current situation and future plans?
How much savings do I need for retirement and how do I get there?

When: Saturday, 06 December 2014, 2:30 PM

Where: India House, 8888 W Belfort Ave, Houston, TX 77031

Program: TBA

Please mark your calendar. More details on the speaker and the program will follow separately.



Laughter time – “Kochu Thamashakal”

GRANDFATHER TO GRANDSON: Go hide! Your teacher is coming as you bunked school today! GRANDSON: YOU go hide. I told her YOU PASSED AWAY!!

Three friends lived in a flat on the 100th floor. One day when the elevator was not working they decided to tell stories to each other as they walked up the stairs. The first person told a comic story till the 50th floor, the second person told an action story till the 99th floor and the third told a horror story in just 1 sentence.
"I forgot the flat keys, it is in the car".

A boy asks his father, "Dad, are bugs good to eat?"
"That's disgusting - don't talk about things like that over dinner," the dad replies.
After the dinner the father asks, "Now, son, what did you want to ask me?"
"Oh, nothing," the boy says. "There was a bug in your soup, but now it's gone."

One day, a very rich man announced in a party that if any person present in the party dares to swim across the swimming pool which has more than twenty crocodiles, he will be awarded with either half of the rich man's property or his beautiful daughter. After a period of silence, the rich man saw a young man splashed into the pool swimming as fast as he can, with all his efforts, saving himself from the crocodiles. And at last, he survived through the pool. Everybody started clapping. The rich man was overjoyed with the young man's bravery. He congratulated him and then asked what do you want, my property or daughter. To this, the man replied, "Sir, neither I want your property, nor your daughter, I just want the man who threw me in the water."

Medical tip: Obesity is not because it runs in the family; it is because no one runs in the family.