

NEWSLETTER

Malayalee Engineers' Association

Houston, Texas

Volume 6, Issue 2

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Active Participation from MEA Members

Thank you for making your MEA a vibrant and visible outfit in Houston! The credit goes to continued support from all our dedicated and committed members. We welcome articles, reports on important events, and even humor for our newsletter! Please send your articles to a MEA committee member for publication in our next issue. We invite guest speakers for our talk and seminar sessions. If you are yet to renew your membership for 2005, please do so now as we have an array of exciting events coming your way!

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(August 11, 2005–Thursday
at 6:45 PM)**

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Stuff!**

**Is it time to switch
gears–Dennis D’Cruz**

Upcoming Fundraiser Event 2005!

Please mark your calendars for our fundraising event for 2005
**“Shyama, the Mystical Indian
Woman”**

Classical Bharatha Natyam Ballet
by ‘Urvasi’ award-winning (twice)
actress/dancer- **SHOBANA** and
an ensemble of four artists
on Oct 2nd 2005 at 5.30pm
at the Stafford Civic Center.

Yes! We need volunteers!
Please contact our committee
members for more program and
volunteer information.

MEA Houston: 2005 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/or distributed? (check) Yes ___ No ___

Please mail with check (\$25 payable to MEA Houston) to: **Dennis D’Cruz , 14010 Coral Bean Dr. Sugar Land, TX 77478**

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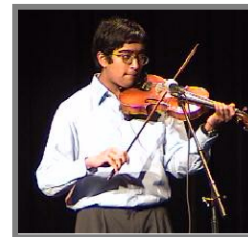
www.meahouston.org

A Night To Remember

(Report on MEA Cultural Nite 2005 by Ryan D'Cruz)

Flying colors, ground breaking dances, soothing music. The MEA Nite, conducted on the 7th of May at Durga Bhari Hall, was a night to cherish. This was truly a reflection of team work as South Indian Engineers from around Houston and other parts of Texas took part to make this a grand success. Various items which unfolded during the evening included Indian classical dances, cinematic dances, solos, group chorales and even instrumental musical programs. An amazed sensation ran through the audience as the participants displayed their feats of masterpieces.

The event began with a social hour followed by the cultural program which lasted for three hours. The evening was initiated with a prayer song rendered by Mrs. Savithri Puram, which was followed by a trail of non-stop action packed performances. The M.C.s of the evening, Mr. Tom Cownan and Mr. Raghu Damodaran, added life to this occasion. The highlight of the evening, apart from the entertainment, was to acknowledge the Scholarship sponsors for their generous contribution and some MEA members, for their outstanding commitment that helped boost the scholarship fundraiser. Mrs. Geetha & Mr. Rajiv Madhavan, Mr. N.K. Pradeep, Mr. Ravi Varghese (for Apna Bazaar), Mrs. Rupa & Mr. Salil Gopinath, Mrs. Prafulla & Mr. Nalin Pillai were recognized for their Scholarship contribution while the Mr. Johny Alex Makkora and Family & Mr. Alex Mathew were recognized for their outstanding contribution in staging the Malayalam play "Sheshakriya" as part of the fund raiser for 2004. The plaques were given away by Col. K. Yohannan (Rtd.) & Mr. P.V Somashekara Kurup (Rtd. General Manager – ACC Ltd.) The dinner (catered by Shivas Restaurant) was delectable.



The events during the cultural program were Indian classical dances performed by Miss. Ritu Ann D'cruz, Mrs. Mini Vettickal, Miss Aswathi Nair, Miss. Sanjana & Miss. Vidya Giri. Each one of them performed unique themes of classical dances that were to the delight of everyone. Cinematic dances were performed by Miss. Sarika Menon, Miss. Pooja Marie Vettickal, Master Rohit Raghu & Master Aniruddh.

As a tribute to the late Shri. Ravindran, famed Malayalam Music Director, few of his hits were among the solos sung by Mr. Pradeep Kumar, Mr. Hari Kumar & Miss Ritu D'cruz. Mrs. Celine Joyce and Mr. Balji Menon added diversity with the hit Hindi number Chura Liya & Chaudavin Ka Chand respectively. Other talented artists included Mrs. Priya Hari, Mrs. Rani Menon, Mr. Krishnakumar Bhatt & Dr. Sudha Hariharan.

Our young friends from the UofH rendered a well animated presentation of the song 'Chilamboli Katte'.

Special acknowledgement goes to the young promising artist Master. Sriram Hariharan.

The rock & roll band by Mr. Paul Joseph and his budding artist son Master Joshua Paul set a phase shift to the program with their Western numbers. Karun Nair on his violin held the audience spell bound. The finale group song 'Bharathamennal Parin Naduvil' aroused patriotism and send a wave of nostalgia among the audience



**Please join us for the MEA Lecture Series/Seminar on August 11th, 2005!
“SUCCESSFUL OUTSOURCING TO INDIA”**

**Mr. Pradeep Anand
CEO, Seeta Resources LLC., Houston, TX**

Abstract

Despite many years of outsourcing IT services to India the process of successfully outsourcing and getting it right the first time requires a focus on the right process. This talk outlines the process for selecting a vendor and highlights some of the challenges from a recent, eight figure outsourcing assignment

Place, Time and Directions

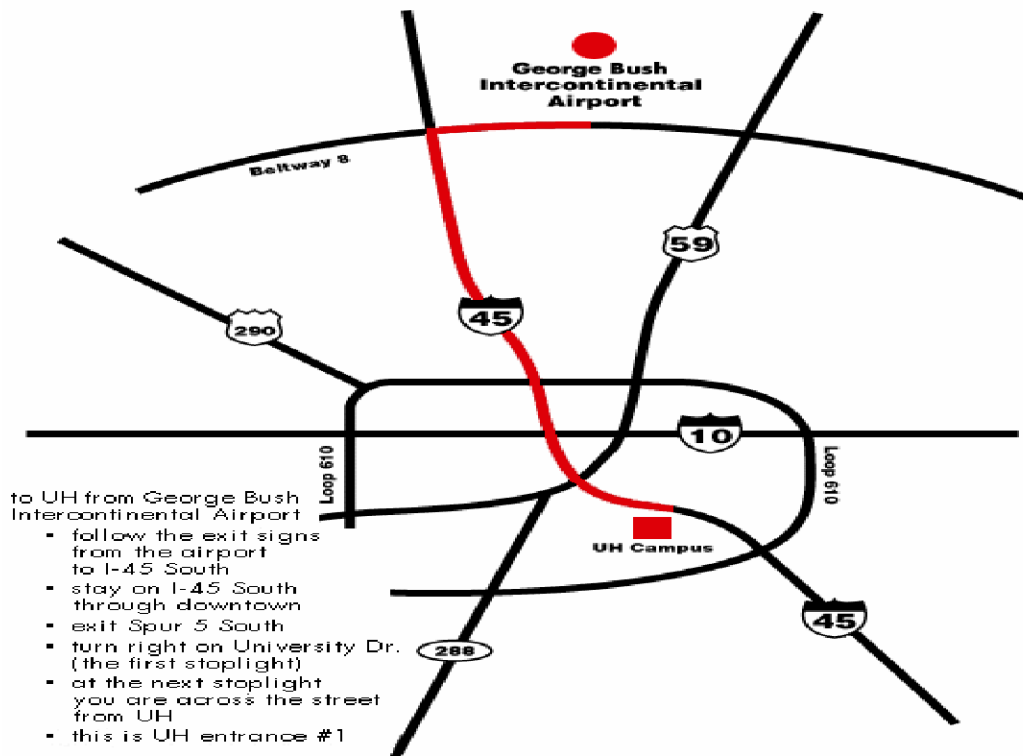
Facility Name: University of Houston (UH) **Building name:** University Center (UC) **Room Name:** Atlantic Room **Room Number:** 74 (ground floor) **Date:** Thursday, August 11, 2005 **Starting Time:** 6:45 pm **Contacts:** www.meahouston.org

Directions

- Stay on I-45 South
- Exit Spur 5 South (this exit is the one after Elgin- Lockwood Cullen)
- Turn right on University Dr. (the first stoplight)
- Pass the next stop light (you are across the street from the UC)
- Parking lot will be to your left hand side
- Across the parking lot is the UC
-

This is an excellent opportunity to broaden our horizons in the area of ‘outsourcing to India’ and get a pragmatic view on the topic from one of the experts. We also invite speakers for future talks/seminars. Those who are interested or would like to recommend anyone, please contact one of the committee members.

MAP TO GET TO SEMINAR VENUE



Scholarship Update

The admission process has finished for yet another batch of engineering students in Keralam. Classes are due to start soon for a fresh group of first year students. This brings us to our undertaking once again, its time to roll out this year's scholarship evaluation process. We will soon be sending announcements and application material to almost all the engineering campuses in Keralam through the Department of Technical Education, Government of Kerala. We will also be sending out the announcements via major newspapers in Keralam. Soon, this year's committee will start receiving applications from qualified students. That brings up a critical issue. We need a Scholarship-Committee for this year! MEA members who have served in Scholarship Committees during the past years will vouch for the fact that it is a very gratifying experience and a noble use of one's time & effort. If you haven't served in the scholarship-committee in the past couple of years, this is your opportunity to experience how the process works and contribute towards providing a solid boost that can change the life of a student back home, this is your chance to take a step further in giving something back to the land from where you have come this far. The committee will be active mostly for one or two months only, when there will be about four meetings to evaluate the candidates. So, the assignment will be short, but very rewarding! Please call a committee member right away to let them know, if you are interested in volunteering for the MEA Scholarship Project.

We awarded scholarships to seven deserving students last year. We hope to provide for four students this year. We have suspended payments to one student from 2002-batch for not keeping up with the academic standard that we ask from all our awardees. The second batch of our scholars will be graduating this year and two of them have found jobs already, through campus-recruitment. It is always wonderful to hear that students we supported could put their scholarships to good use and have started attaining their dreams of a good professional career.

Currently, there are over 75 engineering colleges in Keralam, including self-financed colleges. We support 19 students in 11 colleges, now. The fees and expenses for an engineering student have increased several folds, since the inception of our scholarship. The fees per semester at government/aided colleges are about Rs. 5000 per semester, with hostel fees at around Rs. 1500 per month. This puts an average annual expense (non day-scholar) at Rs. 25000 for a student. Thus, our scholarship of \$400 pays for about 70% of their annual expenses.

It is great to note that our Scholarship Project has gained a lot of repute among the faculty at most major campuses in Keralam and we are able to form a larger network of willing faculty members who are able to support our evaluation project in many ways. This network is a very effective way for us to implement our mentoring process among the awardees as well. MEA is currently looking at ways to utilize our methodology and apparatus for administering the Scholarship Project, for the benefit of other groups that may be interested in similar projects. We should encourage such groups to pool resources with us, so that we can all do a better job in maximizing efficiency for our projects.

Please remember that MEA is a charitable organization and contributions are tax-deductible, kindly look into employee-contribution-matching policy of your employer and actively seek funding support for our Scholarship Project.

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?-FUN STUFF!!

The average person only gets 7 right.

This is based on U.S. info, so use all lobes of your brain. This can be more difficult than it looks - it just shows how little most of us really see!

There are 25 questions about things we see every day or have known about all our lives.

How many can you get right? Don't peek at answers!!!

1. On a standard traffic light, is the green on the top or bottom?
2. How many states are there in the USA?
(Don't laugh, some people don't know)
3. In which hand is the Statue of Liberty's torch?
4. What six colors are on the classic Campbell's soup label?
5. What two numbers on the telephone dial don't have letters by them?
6. When you walk does your left arm swing with your right or left leg?
(Don't you dare get up to see!)
7. How many matches are in a standard pack?
8. On the United States flag is the top stripe red or white?

ANSWERS

1. Bottom
2. 50
3. Right
4. Blue, red, white, yellow, black, & gold
5. 1, 0
6. Right
7. 20
8. Red
9. 87.7
10. Clockwise (north of the equator)
11. Towards bottom right
12. 12 (no number 1)
13. Left
14. Clockwise as you look at it
15. 8
16. Left
17. 5
18. 6
19. Bashful
20. 8

9. What is the lowest number on the FM dial?
10. Which way does water go down the drain, counter or clockwise?
11. Which way does a "no smoking" sign's slash run?
12. How many channels on a VHF TV dial?
13. On which side of a women's blouse are the buttons?
14. Which way do fans rotate?
15. How many sides does a stop sign have?
16. Do books have even-numbered pages on the right or left side?
17. How many lug nuts are on a standard car wheel?
18. How many sides are there on a standard pencil?
19. Sleepy, Happy, Sneezzy, Grumpy, Dopey, Doc. Who's missing?
20. How many hot dog buns are in a standard package?
21. On which playing card is the card maker's trademark?
22. On which side of a Venetian blind is the cord that adjusts the opening between the slats?
23. There are 12 buttons on a touch tone phone. What 2 symbols bear no digits?
24. How many curves are there in the standard paper clip?
25. Does a merry-go-round turn counter or clockwise?

Is it time to switch gears ?

(by Dennis D'cruz)

MEA has been excelling in its vision for the past several years. Ever since we started the scholarship campaign, a lot of effort and dedication was put in by all the members under the guidance of previous committees. Considering our membership strength and the limited time available for each one of us, we have made tremendous stride in the direction of fulfilling these initiatives. Lately, much of MEA's focus was shifted in bringing the scholarship campaign up and running. We can be proud that today we are supporting 24 needy students in their quest for achieving an engineering degree.

One may wonder whether for the past few years, other initiatives of MEA were in the back-burner. I disagree with this. However I feel it is time for us to sit back and think what other areas we should concentrate on apart from the scholarship campaign. I agree that it is the responsibility of the executive committee to see about the day to day running of the organization. However the executive committee, with limited time and resources at hand are handicapped to think about other innovative changes that are needed. It is here that the member community should lend a helping hand. The executive committee cannot function without the support of each and every member of our organization. If we review the membership drive (collection of annual membership dues and campaigning for new members), which is a routine responsibility for every committee, one can find that a considerable amount of time is spent for this cause. With good understanding and cooperation from the general body, we can optimize the time spent. As you know, for an organization with the membership count like ours and with a very meager annual membership fee of \$25, our activities are very much tied to our budget. If we are unable to obtain these dues on time, our activities will be affected. On the other hand, if we invest all our time for the membership fee collection, we are left with minimal time to figure out changes that we urgently require.

On careful evaluation of our immediate needs, In my opinion, the following needs attention

1. Optimize the amount of time spent by each executive committee member for membership dues collection.
2. Brainstorm among the membership community to identify the important ideas MEA should focus on.
3. Identify the type of professional involvement we need in our organization and have a plan in place to achieve this.
4. In due course the current fundraising process may become obsolete. To overcome this, we members have to think about new and dynamic ways of replacing the existing system.

I strongly encourage all our members to start thinking about the above issues and any others, I have left out. We need to devise a mechanism (probably an enhancement of our web site?) to capture the thoughts and ideas of our member community in a timely manner. If time permits the present committee will look into this very critically. I take this opportunity to thank each one of you for the help and support being extended to us and looking forward to the same in making the upcoming fund raiser campaign a grand success.

JOSEPH T. JOSEPH, P.C.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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