



KAKC News & Views

Kerala Association of Kansas City Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

February 2007

Are we balanced yet? - Dr.Sreekumar Nair, MD

"He will ask us to invest"

"He will ask us to come back to India"

"He will defend outsourcing and global warming"

These were some comments I heard among Malayali friends before Mr. Ronen Sen, Ambassador of India, visited Kansas City on February 8th, 2007. The ambassador did none of the above. My friends and I seemed to be out of touch. Interestingly, there were a few Caucasians present at the reception, who were well aware of and awed by India's potential.

Let me step away from the ambassador's visit and indulge in some introspection. What made us predict the ambassador's behavior so incorrectly? What preconceived notions and assumptions were we entertaining? And why?

Ostensibly we need to explore the assumptions that led to our erroneous conclusions. The first statement, *"He will ask us to invest"* is based on the assumption, 'India is a poor country' and its corollary 'USA is (and therefore I am) rich.'

The second statement, *"He will ask us to come back to India"* is based on, 'I am very smart and India needs me' and 'In the US, we are doing cutting-edge stuff.' Lurking somewhere in there is also the age-old belief 'Brain-drain is holding India back.'

The third statement is more controversial and complex and I am not taking a righteous stance about it. The first part, *"He will defend outsourcing"* is based on the assumptions 'Outsourcing is bad for the local economy and me' and 'I care more about my prosperity than that of India.' The second part, *"...will defend global warming"* is based on the belief that 'India is fully responsible for the effects of global warming that we are experiencing right now' and 'Two hundred fifty million Americans can tell 1.2 billion Chinese and 1.0 billion Indians what to do with their lives.' This invokes other scientific, sociopolitical and philosophical dogmas beyond the scope of this article. Up on scrutiny, we will realize that most of these assumptions are without merit.

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Calendar of Events

February 24, 2007 – 9:45 a.m.

Malayalam Movie – Yes Your Honor

March 9, 2007 – 6:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Launch 2007 KAKC Friday Volleyball

May 19, 2007 - 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

KAKC Picnic at Shawnee Park

September 8, 2007 - 4:00p.m. -9:00p.m.

Onam Celebration

December 8, 2007 - 4:00p.m. -9:00p.m.

Christmas Celebration

New Malayalees in KC

There are many new malayalees in the greater Kansas City area. We need your help in introducing them to KAKC.

When they join KAKC (by paying membership fee of \$15 for family, \$10 for single) **both you and the new member will receive \$5 coupons from KAKC.** These coupons can be used for any KAKC event in 2007.

All you need to do is introduce them to a committee member and the new member needs to write your name in the *Referred by* field in the membership form.

New members are those whose names do not appear in our 2006 KAKC Directory

KAKC Committee 2007

Committee members of 2007 met at outgoing President, Crissy Kaleekal's house on January 21st and elected the new office bearers. Dr. Sreekumar Nair (President), Vincy Abraham (Vice President), Manoj Puravoor (Secretary), Seiji Thomas (Joint Secretary), Shiras Rajendran (Webmaster), Ravi Perumpambil (Program Coordinator), Dr. Gopakumar TG (Movie Coordinator), Ronie Chazhoor (Editor) and Molly Abraham. Request your continued support to the committee.



Shiras, Ravi, Seiji, Sridevi, Vincy, Sreekumar, Manoj, Gopakumar, Ronie & Molly

Welcome to KAKC

This is a new section in our newsletter to introduce new members to our community. Say hello to them when you get a chance.



Vinod Sreedhara, Praseeda & Amrutha - 913-685-0711
5620W 134th Pl, Apt# 1911, Overland Park, KS – 66209
Bharananganam (Palai)



Yedhu Joseph Moonjely
11800, 76th St., Apt# 20
Shawnee, KS-66214
913-624-4834
Ankamaly
Swissre Insurance solutions

Treasurer Report 2006 - Sabu Abraham

Event / Transaction	Income	Expense	Balance
Opening balance 1/1/06	2523.16	0.00	2523.16
Movies			
'Chandupottu'	749.50	647.10	102.40
'Rajamanikyam'	570.76	630.81	-60.05
'Thanmathra'	612.80	664.60	-51.80
'Rasathanthram'	845.00	659.60	185.40
'Classmates'	1122.00	658.22	463.78
Picnic - Heritage Park	220.00	717.83	-497.83
Onam celebration	2951.00	3639.47	-688.47
Kerala Piravi	1405.00	1253.99	151.01
Christmas celebration	2361.00	3488.64	-1127.64
Yearbook/Directory	1360.00	683.79	676.21
Newsletter	593.00	509.12	83.88
Volleyball	862.00	862.00	0.00
Miscellaneous expenses*	0.00	314.50	314.50
Membership fee	1910.00	0.00	1910.00
Closing balance 12/31/06	18085.22	14729.67	3355.55

* Includes Insurance premium, filing reports, website hosting etc.

Are we balanced yet? – Contd frm page 1

One of the functions of human brain is to acquire new information, assimilate it, compare it with existing data, make generalizations, formulate new assumptions and store and retrieve them when appropriate. All our racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual and economic biases are the work of our brains. Our lives are replete with assumptions. It may be hard to believe, but a visit to the Harvard website: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit> would dispel all doubts. They have devised several short and easy computerized tests which needle our subconscious to reveal the ugly truth.

Here is a familiar yet fictitious scenario. At a party, two Malayalis are getting acquainted. After the preliminary hellos the younger of the two asks, “How long have you been in Kansas City?”

The older man rather dismissively replies, “Oh – some eight – ten years.”

“Oh, I see.” The younger man appropriately raises his eyebrows in apparent deference. He continues appreciatively, “That long, eh?” Defensively he adds, “I was in Atlanta for four and a half months before coming to Kansas City and before that I was in Houston for a year.”

The assumptions at work in this instance are ‘The longer you have been in the US, the better off you are’ and ‘Being Fresh-Off-A-Boat is bad.’ If you extend the same line of thought, you may arrive at yet another deplorably illogical statement – ‘Our brethren in India are starving!’

We Malayalis, as a group are brilliant, curious and enterprising. Yet are we struggling with our identities? I was born in a nameless village in Kerala. I attended a nondescript elementary school with thatched roof. Today, for no particular reason, I am fond of my village, the temple tank that was always dirty and even my abusive class-teacher. Memories, both good and bad, interwoven like a mosaic make my past precious.

In a given situation, I know my behavior is starkly different from that of my Caucasian colleagues. Here are a few. If I see someone I don't know, I feel free to look, watch and even stare at them without a smile. My handshake is usually feeble and unimpressive to Americans. It is hard for me to engage in small talk without talking about politics or family matters. I could carry on a fairly lengthy conversation without once uttering other person's name. I forget to verbally thank people, instead I smile. I use hand gestures liberally to make up for my verbal inadequacies. I use meaningless fillers like, “you see” or “I mean.” In a large gathering I am shy and painfully awkward. I don't raise my hand to ask a question publicly; I prefer to approach the speaker after the speech. I absolutely would not raise my hand to volunteer for anything.

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Nails in the Fence – Mohandas K Pillai

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Dad gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper he must hammer a nail into the back of their wooden fence. The first day the boy had driven 26 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily dwindled down. He discovered it was better to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his Dad about this. The Dad suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

After some days the young boy was finally able to tell his Dad about his victory—all the nails were gone by now!! The Dad took his son to the fence.

He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they make a scar like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say, I 'm sorry, the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one".

Let me quote from BHAGAVATHA KEERTHANAM,

“Koapam kondu shapikkaruthaarum
Bhagavan mayamennorka samastham
Sukhavum dukhavum anubhava kaalam
Poayaal samamiha naarayana jaya”

In spite of the simple tools like the nails in the fence and probably many others, the universal phenomenon of anger continues to shower problems and havocs at home and outside in a variety of forms. Home might still be the most ideal place to correct it!!



Kurt Cobain - Artist: Mahadev Nair

Malayalee Swad

Fried chicken nuggets

- Joseph Veleparambil

This is a recipe that you can use to convert the regular chicken nuggets into a tasty Indian snack or a side dish.

Ingredients:

Chicken nuggets - 1 lb. Sliced (each nugget sliced into 4 pcs)
Onions - 1 small or 1/2 of large red onion - chopped
Green chilies - Jalapenos - 1 large jalapeno (or two Serrano) seeds out, chopped into fine pieces
Cumin - 1/2 tsp
Mustard seed - 1/2 tsp
coriander leaves/ curry leaves - 2 tsp - finely chopped
Turmeric powder - 1/4 tsp
Paprika powder - 1 - 1-1/2 tsp
Salt - as needed (recommend not to use as chicken nuggets are salty)
Oil - 2 tsp (or as needed)
Ginger - 1/2 tsp finely chopped - optional
Garlic - 2 cloves - finely chopped - optional
Dry red chilies - 3-4 whole - optional
Salsa or past sauce - 2 tsp - optional (may use 1/4 of a tomato finely chopped as well)

Method:

Heat oil, crack the mustard seeds and cumin (and optional red chilies). Add green chilies, followed by onions. Fry until onions are golden brown. Add turmeric powder and paprika. Fry for a couple of minutes. Add coriander leaves. Optional ingredients may be added in the order - garlic, ginger and salsa, stir. Add the sliced chicken nuggets; mix well on low heat for 1-2 minutes. Serve as a snack or side dish.

2006 Yearbook Directory Errata

In spite of our best efforts, there were some errors in address and member information published in 2006 yearbook. We apologize for the errors in the directory. Please update your copy with the following updated information.

Pillai, Mohandas & Renu

Prasanth, Praveen

11420 Freedom St., Olathe, KS 66061

913-764-2626

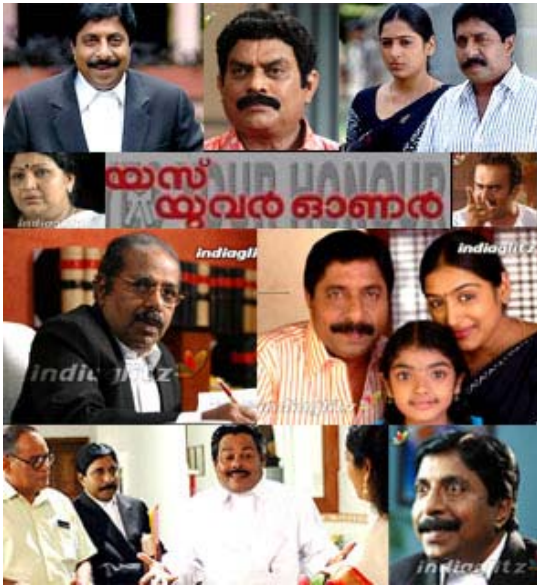
Varghese, Dinu & Ambily

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913-904-3261

Please send corrections or address changes to editor@kalc.org for publishing in our newsletter. Members may use this to update the Members Directory in the yearbook.

Malayalam Movie – Feb 24th - 9:45am



Glenwood Theaters (95th/Metcalf) 9575 Metcalf Ave, OP, KS 66212
 Members: \$8.00 Non-members: \$9.00 Visiting parents: \$4.00
 Tickets available at the theater or can be purchased in advance from
 committee members, India Store of Olathe, Apna Bazar, KC India Mart

Are we balanced yet? – Contd from page 2

I speak in high-pitched voice, especially when I get excited or when I am trying to be polite. I don't understand the 'long vowels' and my V's and W's are always problematic. When I speak in English, I try to speak fast to impress people – especially those from my own land! How else can I show my peers that I am not a mere Mallooo villager toiling in Kansas City?

I struggle to be accepted among my co-workers, neighbors and even by my own children. I sincerely believe there are at least a few other Malayalis who have experienced similar quandaries. If, among you, there are those who fight the same battle that I do, let me ask you, are we as a group wanting and willing to change?

Although we know we have a problem, we get embarrassed, vexed and angry when some ask us if we meant "Vet" or "Wet." Our self-image is rather brittle and we have our famous Malayali attitude – which is ever ready to coil up and strike like a cobra at a moment's notice. If we adapted, we know our lives in the US would be smoother. But living in denial is more comfortable for now. We wish we could walk, trek, bike, bowl, fish, ski, skate, golf, hunt, scuba-dive, ride a horse and bungee-jump like our neighbors do. Furtively, we may even take private lessons but we do not want to be ridiculed by our own people. Even if one has been in the US for decades, the dismay of being seen as a newbie by another Mallooo with a Been-There-Done-That attitude is unbearable. This reaction is the result of our outdated yet tenacious assumptions. This can stifle our dreams and impair our future. Can we fix it?

Our assumptions run our lives on autopilot. It is our duty as intelligent life forms, for our own sake as well as our progeny's, to delve into ourselves, challenge the verifiability of our beliefs and eliminate the obsolete ones. It is imperative that we draw pertinent inferences and modify our dogmas to improve ourselves. Are we ready yet?

Articles & Sponsorship

This issue of **KAKC News & Views** is sponsored by 10 members of KAKC committee by contributing \$10 each.

Next issue of **KAKC News & Views** depends on you. Your articles and support are very important to this newsletter. Please send your articles to editor@kacc.org. Each issue of **KAKC News & Views** costs \$100 (Printing \$35 + Mailing \$65) **Contributing \$10 is one of the ways to support our newsletter.**

If you believe **KAKC News & Views** is good for our community, send a check payable to KAKC for \$10 (or more!) to our Treasurer, **Sridevi Pradeep 14304 Flint St., Overland Park, KS - 66221**. We look forward to your generous contributions.

KAKC Volleyball - Fridays 6:45PM Starting March 9th

After a short break, due to non-availability of courts, we are re-starting the volleyball games on Fridays from 6:45 to 9:00PM at Harmony Middle School, Switzer/141st. First game is on March 9th. \$15 for March 9th to May 24th or pay \$2 every Friday.



KAKC Picnic at Shawnee Park May 19th – 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Mark your calendar. KAKC is organizing our annual picnic at the best picnic location in KC – Shawnee Mission Park – Shelter# 10. Bring your friends. This is a great opportunity for new malayalees to meet other members of our community. *So don't miss it!*

Contact Us

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Articles from members are published as submitted and reflect authors' views and not that of KAKC.

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