



Indian Cultural Association of East Alabama, P O Box No. 1242, Auburn AL, 36831

www.icaea.org

Volume 23, Issue 1

## A note from Dr. C. S. Prakash, President

Welcome to the ICAEA newsletter – Patrika, the first issue for 2009, and for the new committee. The success of our first event for the year, the Republic Day, was in great measure due to the excellent organization of the India Students Association. Hiren Adesara and his committee did an exceptional job. To those of you who couldn't be with us, here's a brief account of the evening:

The program, 45 minutes in all, started off on time with a social mixer. The entertainment segment began at 2:30. Our chief guest, Mr. Dick Phelan (Mayor pro tem), remarked that the City prided itself on the diversity of its citizens, and thanked the Indian community for making Auburn its place of choice to live, and for its contributions to the community. A song and dance sequence, led by ISA, was a fusion of the modern with the traditional. An ISA-produced video proclaimed the economic progress that India has made in recent years. The children took part in a parade of costumes, organized by Vatsalya Rangari, showcasing the diversity in our culture. As usual, Niranjana Nayak did a great job in the hospitality department. It took tremendous effort to organize the refreshments, and everything went off without a hitch. Our thanks to Gayathri Nayak who made a trip to Atlanta to bring the food back in time to keep us all happy! We served alu-poha, kachoris, jilebis, and soft drinks.

The first program for the incoming committee is also a time for membership renewals. We currently have nearly 30 family memberships, totaling nearly \$1000.

## Upcoming Events

**Holi festival celebrations** at the Martin Luther King Park, from noon to 4 PM, on Sunday, March 8.

**Kite festival for children** and students, immediately after the Easter Egg Hunt at Kiesel Park, at noon, on Saturday, April 11.

**Community Social and Potluck dinner** on Saturday, April 25.

For ICAEA, the expenses for the Republic Day came to \$494 (paid to Raj Bhog Sweets in Atlanta), while the ISA spent an equal amount for decorations, and sound equipment rental. If you haven't already paid your dues of \$35 (family membership), please use the attached membership form and send your payment to ICAEA, P.O. Box 1242, Auburn, AL 36831. Remember that ICAEA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible. Our tax ID is #20-0310974.

We plan to update our website, <http://www.icaea.org>, with help from Prateek Hejmady, a graduate student in the Computer Science department at Auburn University. Be sure to check the website for updates on events. We welcome ideas to make our website more informative.

At our most recent meeting, we decided to host several events for this year. Holi will be celebrated beginning at noon on Sunday, March 8, 2009, at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park. Please come "dressed down" for the event, as it promises to be a "colorful" day! There will be cricket, volleyball, and other interesting games.

I also take this opportunity to thank Sunel Merchant and his committee for their dedication to ICAEA, and a successful 2008. It is a hard act to follow, but we look forward to a good year, and need your involvement too.

**Children's Talent Show**, some time in June/July

**Picnic, Independence Day & Welcome for new Students** in August

*We need to explore possible venues for Community Social (any suggestions?).*

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### Executive Committee

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Dr. Navin K. Twarakavi

Mr. Vikram Sayania

Dr. Prabhakar Clement

Dr. Pratima Agrawal

Mrs. Surekha Patel

Mr. Hiren Adesara

Dr. Srikanta Rao

Dr. Ram Gupta

## Community News

We announce with profound regret and sadness the death of **Mrs. Manju Mohan** after a prolonged illness, in November. Mrs. Mohan leaves behind her husband, Dr. Raj Mohan, daughter Priti (Parmeet Grover), son Ravi, grandchildren Siddharth and Meghna. The Mohans have resided in Auburn since the early 70s, and have been active members of the Auburn community. Manju Mohan will be greatly missed.

Congratulations to **Dr. Sushil Bhavnani**, professor of mechanical engineering, for receiving the 2008 Clock Award. The award is co-sponsored by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' (ASME) Heat Transfer Division and the Electronics and Photonics Packaging Division, for outstanding and continuing contributions to the science and engineering of heat transfer in electronics packaging. A reception was held at the 2008 International Mechanical Engineering Conference and Exposition (IMECE) in Boston on November 5, 2008, to recognize Bhavnani.

Congratulations to **Dr. Nagaraj Chatakondi**, who earned his Ph.D. in fisheries from Auburn in 1995, was presented a special Performance Award from AU for achieving world-record production of the fastest growing, disease-resistant hybrid catfish developed at Auburn. Chatakondi is director of hatchery operations for Eagle Aquaculture, an AU affiliated company established in 2005 to produce and commercialize AU hybrid fingerlings.

Congratulations to **Dr. Puneet Srivastava**, assistant professor of biosystems engineering, who won the junior researcher award at an awards function in the College of Agriculture. The award was given in recognition of Srivastava's contributions and accomplishments in 2008.

Congratulations to **Sumit Sen**, a Ph.D. student in biosystems engineering. Sen received second place award for his poster presentation on the results of his water runoff studies, at the annual conference of the Solid and Water Conservation Society-Alabama Chapter student poster competition held in Auburn. The topic of the conference was *Our Changing Landscapes*.

We welcome **Dr. Navin Twarakavi**, and his wife, **Smita**, to Auburn. Dr. Twarakavi joined the department of Agronomy and Soils (College of Agriculture) at Auburn University, in the fall of 2008. After completing his undergraduate studies at S.V. University in Andhra Pradesh, the Sriharikota native Twarakavi, moved to Utah State university, where he received his master's and doctoral

degrees. Smita moved to the United States following their wedding last year. Smita, who is from Lucknow, graduated from Nagarjuna University, and worked as a business analyst in India.

The **Yoga Club** invites community members to join them every Friday for an evening of relaxation and rejuvenation. For meeting times, contact Vivek Patil at [vipa35@gmail.com](mailto:vipa35@gmail.com), or 334-332-3556

### New Beginnings!

We take this opportunity to announce that the Indian community organizes **Bal Vihar** classes once a month. The program, started by Dr. Prakash Sharma, teaches students to read, write and communicate in Hindi. There are nearly 25 children learning the national language of India. A team of committed and dedicated volunteers led by Dr. Sharma aims to provide the children a link with Indian culture. Classes are held every second Saturday at the New Student Center behind Haley Center, at Auburn University. Interested parents can contact Vatsalya Rangari at 826-5410.

Auburn has a new chapter of the **North-South Foundation (NSF)**, thanks to the efforts of Jayashree Shridhar and Priya Srivastava, members of ICAEA. The NSF was established in 1989, in Illinois, as a non-profit organization to promote educational endeavor among the younger generation of Indian-Americans. Besides preparing children to succeed academically, the Foundation provides college scholarships to children from economically backward families who excel in academics in India. (To date 3500 such scholarships have been issued.) In the United States of America, the NSF conducts competitions in various subjects to motivate children to excel in reading and writing. Winners receive a \$1000 scholarship applied toward their college education. The contests are designed to encourage academic excellence among children, and better prepare them for entry into reputed schools for higher education. The Auburn branch will host competitions in spelling, vocabulary, and math. Contests are open to children from grades 1-12. To enter, there is a \$30 fee, per contest. For more information, visit <http://www.northsouth.org>. To participate in the competition on **March 28, 2009**, please register your child online. **Last date for registration is March 16, 2009**. After registering, send an email to [jayag09@gmail.com](mailto:jayag09@gmail.com) or [priyasrivastava@hotmail.com](mailto:priyasrivastava@hotmail.com). Contact numbers are: Jayashree Shridhar: 334-826-5258; Priya Srivastava: 334-501-0840



## Editorial note - Latha Bhavnani

I believe that the success of any publication depends on the active participation of its stakeholders. In addition to our printed newsletter, we hope to maintain an active website, [www.icaea.org](http://www.icaea.org). The website is the product of many people working in concert: editor, webmaster, and members of the community, all of whom are committed to maintaining the goals of ICAEA. I am continually indebted to members who dedicate considerable time and effort to working for our community.

I have thought about ways to get our

children involved. Besides publishing pictures taken at events, I would like to give every child an opportunity to contribute to our website. I have often seen many children read books. What would be better than having them read fiction or non-fiction, and send us their opinion? They may inspire other kids to read these books. Please take a few minutes to read with your child, ask them what they liked best about the book (pictures, story, characters, etc.) and send us their thoughts (include the title of the book, and author's name). We will publish it with the child's name, age, and grade level.

If they have a favorite TV show or a video game, now is the time to write and share their views. This exercise will develop their critical thinking, an essential part of their language arts curriculum in school.

Our website will depend on contributions from you, our members. We would like to add several departments on the site such as paid members, awards, promotions, community events, announcements, new comers to Auburn, etc. Please do let us know if there is any information you would like to see on the site.