

ANNUAL REPORT AT GENERAL BODY MEETING 2005
Bharatiya Temple of Lansing
December 4, 2005

To: Members of the Bharatiya Temple of Lansing

From: The Board of Trustees of the Temple

Subject: Annual Report 2005 (presented by Sudhakar R. Kulkarni)

This annual report briefly covers the activities, work accomplished, and the challenges ahead for 2006. Along with this there will be a brief reports from the chairs of the Finance committee, Religion committee, Youth Activity committee, Bal Vihar, and Building committee. We request you to give all your questions in writing and we will try to provide the answers during the meeting and/or after the meeting by e-mail to you by December 10, 2005.

During this year Mrs. Loki Naga, Mr. Chadrakant Khiroya, and Dr. Kunwar Rajendra resigned from the Board. According to the constitution of the Temple, we selected Mr. Sanjeev Deshpande, Mr. Manohar Naga, and Mrs. Leela Mohan, respectively, to fill these vacancies until the elections on December 4, 2005. The Board is very thankful to them for joining us and keeping the Temple's administrative work moving forward.

In our finance area, we are making improvements based on the suggestions during last year's general body meeting. The major improvement is separate accounting for the buildings maintenance (the temple and the priests' homes) and the Temple completion project (capital expenditure account). The pledge card for donations also reflects this improvement. Our Treasurer Mrs. Smruti Shah has done an excellent job of keeping the accounts; she has prepared documentation for the annual report as well as the record of pledges/donations.

Our regular weekly/monthly religious activities go on as scheduled. Annual festival calendar is always busy. We need to do better coordination of regular religious activities and festival activities, particularly during Ganesh festival, Dussera, and Diwali times. We also like to see the Jain functions and Havan activities as a part of the overall coordination. First Sunday puja is coordinated by Mrs. Meena Sharma; third Sunday Havan is coordinated by Mr. Jaglan; and Jain puja activities are coordinated by Mr. Jain.

The Temple use for weddings and other family celebrations is increasing. From next year we plan to increase the donations for these activities as well as minimum hours of temple use.

Our priests are doing a very good job. Currently, Prakash Kapoor is managing the priest activities and contracts. Next year, we are planning to add term life insurance as an addition to the benefit package.

Bal Vihar is growing in enrollment and we will need more class rooms for all the different educational activities. Our thanks to Dr. Raju, Mrs. Karve and trustee Pardeep Kumar for their excellent work.

This year first time, trustee Pardeep Kumar and volunteer Dr. N. Anantaraman arranged a very successful alumni student meeting. This is a new initiative. Thanks are due to them.

Youth activities and study of Hinduism are under Rajiv Das's guidance. He is doing a great job. During the summer, Dr. Subba Rao from India, offered a one-day camp at the Temple. Pardeep Kumar coordinated this activity.

Our communication with the community is mostly through e-mails. We send e-mails to about 1100 addresses. Thanks are due to Dr. Anantaraman for helping us in this area. Dr. Anantaraman has recruited a new volunteer for this work and his name is Dr. K. Padmanabhan.(nick name- Pappan). He works at Michigan State University. Let us welcome the new volunteer. We also send printed as well as e-mail copies of our newsletter. It is our intent to publish the newsletter every quarter.

Trustees Shiv Singh and Rajiv Das help the Board to take minutes of the meeting, and any things that relates to the computers.

This year we invited former and current volunteers for a Thank-You Dinner. Trustee Sanjeev Deshpande and volunteers Minesh Mody and Pratin Trivedi helped us to get this done. It was the first time we have done this. We got lot of feedback from the attendees. Some of the recommendations were carried out soon after.

We like to thank Manohar Naga for accepting the leadership role in the project to complete the Temple. Same way our thanks to Leela Mohan for helping us in the area of the Navagraha worship. Pardeep Kumar has helped us in the planning and estimate of the Temple completion work. This year, we had three presentations of the Temple completion project. The new set of floor plans is posted in the lobby for your information. The current estimated cost of this project is about \$700,000.

This year we have recognized three devotees for their outstanding service to the Temple. They are (1) Mrs. Smruti Shah for taking care of accounting and finance committee work; (2) Madan Lalwani for keeping track and collecting about \$225,000 in donations for the Jain Mandir; and (3) Dr. Carla Guggenheim for teaching dance (Bharata Natyam) to young children here in the Temple.

The other activities in the Temple include Yoga classes by Mrs. Chetna Desai, Gita classes by Dr. C.A. Reddy, religious study group guided by Dr. Raju, Swadyay group meeting, language classes, and music classes.

This year we had one week of the Bhagawat Katha program, Swami Meenakshi Devi program, Ma ki Chauki program of Mr. Khullar, and Swami Bodhananda's program on Meditation. The Jain Swamis also had a program on stress reduction and meditation. Such programs add a new dimension to the spiritual learning and should be a part of the Temple activities. There is a definite though small audience for such activities. These programs do not generate sufficient funds to pay for all the expenses. We need to study ways of planning such programs so that they have a large audience and become financially viable.

Soup Kitchen – serving food to the needy under the leadership role of Dr. Sundari Rajan and others, as well as participation in the annual fund drive for Food Bank under the leadership role of Jai Jaglan and Bidhan Redey deserves our sincere thanks. Food Bank program is a community activity and the temple members participate as they wish.

In the recent years, there has been great interest from local high schools and churches as well as a few colleges and inter-faith groups in organized visits to our Temple. We have been commended by the visitors and the Lansing media in general.

Our temple has maintained the concept of religious harmony. We thank the Jain Group and the Havan Group for active participation.

Our priests (Sharmaji and Shastriji) are doing an excellent job. Their services are in great demand in the mid-Michigan area. Our sincere thanks to them and their families.

This year's Diwali program was a great event. More than one thousand devotees attended this program. Thanks are due to Mrs. Meena Sharma for co-coordinating the cultural program as well as act as Master of Ceremonies. Thanks are due to Prakash Kapoor and Pardep Kumar for overall management and thanks to Minesh Mody for the food management. This year first time, we catered the food for this program. Thanks to all who made this program a great success.

Upcoming challenges:

1. Increase Temple membership, 2. Improve Hundi collection, 3. Building maintenance account 4. Temple completion project, 5. Volunteer Manager at the front desk in the Temple on week-ends and during festival times. 6. Public Relations and communication
2. Ask for donations for Prasada (first Sunday and third Sunday, on festivals, etc.),
3. Increase archanas in the temple. Service donations need to go up.
4. Keep operating budget in positive balance. Monthly expenditure is about \$ 12,000 to operate the Temple, including the priests' salaries and benefits.
5. Recruit volunteers for various committees.
6. Train next generation of young people for leadership roles in the Temple.
7. Add activities that will attract devotees of all age brackets.
8. More senior citizen activities.
9. Classes in appreciation of classical Indian music and art.
10. Social service to India.
11. Trust fund for the Temple. This will assure financial well being for decades or longer. Consider the Temple in your financial planning.
12. Yatra-pilgrimage to India (to famous temples). Learn how we seek God.
13. Any suggestion for devotees- will keep it on this list of challenges.

Let us conclude this report by a prayer from the Rig Veda, with the following meaning:
Let our goals be the same, let our mind and intellect be in harmony so that all of us can work to gather. Let our unity give us success and blessings.

Thanks!!!

Questions (from the general body meeting) and Answers:

1. *Can you consider having two governing bodies for the Temple? One is the Board of Trustees and other could be Executive Board. This will allow participation by more people from the community.*

Our temple allows a large number of working committees which provide opportunity for people to volunteer as well as learn more about administrative issues of the Temple.

2. *Navagrahas - why do we have to have them?*

In our pujas the Navagraha puja is very important as the planets (Sun, Moon, Mars, etc.) have a significant role to play in our life. As we worship the five elements (space, wind, fire, water, and earth) of creation, so also we worship the Navagrahas.

3. *Representation on the Board of women and a cross section of Indian community.*

In the past, the temple has made good efforts in recruiting women and candidates from a cross section of the Indian community. It is our intent to represent "Mini-India" in the Board as much as possible.

4. *Temple completion Project: Just a comment- There are a few families on fixed income who cannot contribute too much as well as new young families have first priority of taking care of growing family needs.*