

NATIONAL INDO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS INC.
Web site: www.niaasc.org E-mail: niaasc@aol.com Tel. 1-866-6-niaasc

**Proceedings of Conference on Seniors and Annual General Body Meeting of
NIAASC held on October 27, 2007**

Keynote Speech by Dr. S.N. Sridhar “ India’s Contributions to World Civilization

**THREE DISTINGUISHED HONOREES, ISSUES OF SINGLE SENIORS AND
RETIREMENT HOUSING PRESENTED BY NIAASC, AND KEYNOTE SPEECH**

A. HONOREES AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC) at its eighth annual meeting and 14th full day conference honored two distinguished individuals and one ongoing senior program. The award for an *individual directly involved with a senior program* was given to **Mrs. Raj Razdan**, Executive Director of Senior Citizens Program Inc. based in Atlanta, Georgia. The decade old senior program initiated by Razdan with some 30 members, currently has over 400 members. Her involvement with numerous Indian and American entities and her articulate public speaking engagements at various prestigious groups, along with at least one monthly event for seniors, have made this program widely known throughout Georgia State. She was introduced by Mr. Ardaman Singh Madan, 2006 honoree and founder of Guru Gobind Singh Senior Forum at Plainview Gurudwara. In her acceptance speech Razdan underscored the contributions of volunteers for the great success of the program. While she acknowledged progress had been made in the Seniors program, some issues like Transportation still remain to be resolved and any input from other Senior Associations as to how they tackled this problem would be welcome.

The award for an *ongoing senior program* was bestowed on **India Association of Long Island (IALI) Senior Program**. IALI a 32-year old organization with over 1300 members initiated a program for seniors by arranging a luncheon for seniors in 2000. Currently IALI has monthly senior program at two sites in Long Island, one in Huntington and another in Jericho. **Mrs. Sampurna Jain**, representing Jain Center of America, last year honoree, introduced the IALI. The award was accepted by **Dr. Binod Verma**, IALI President, and Co chairs of IALI Senior Citizen Committee, **Mrs. Avinash Suri** and **Mr. Vijay Goswamy**. Other members of the Senior Citizen Committee of IALI and members of Jain Center of America joined in felicitations. Dr. Verma emphasized the need of a Senior Citizen center in Long Island and he urged all groups to join hands to accomplish this mission.

The third award for a *Community Leader*, not necessarily involved with seniors, was given to **Dr. S.N. Sridhar**, Chairman of Asian and Asian American Studies and Founder of Center of India Studies, presently directed by **Dr. Meena Sridhar**, at the Stony Brook University. The honoree was introduced by **Dr. Thomas Abraham**, Founder and Chairman of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), and 2006 NIAASC honoree. During introduction, Dr. Abraham highlighted contributions by NIAASC and also traced the history of its creation where GOPIO had played an active role. Sridhar in accepting the award underscored contributions made by Indian community leaders in creating and sustaining the Indian Studies Center. As a **Keynote Speaker**, Dr. Sridhar made an excellent, comprehensive and eloquent presentation on “India’s Contributions to World Civilization” and he outlined them in all possible

fields: Religion, Philosophy, Politics and Ethics, Arts and Architecture, Music, Dance and Cinema, Fashion and Cuisine, Science and Math, Technology, Medicine and Yoga, Town Planning, Literature and Linguistics, and Mythology.

B. CONFERENCE: SINGLE SENIORS AND RETIREMENT HOUSING:

Conference Subjects were very critical to retirees and segment of seniors i.e. **Single Seniors**. **Dr. Ashwin Pandya**, NIAASC President, alluded to the seriousness of the issues of single seniors of Indian heritage. **Dr. Annie Koshi**, retired professor from City University and NIAASC Board member, provided details about the concerns and problems of single seniors focusing on the emotional, social, financial and legal aspects. Both Pandya and Koshi along with **Meena Modak**, NIAASC Board member, have initiated a “**Single Seniors of Indian Heritage Club**” that would be meeting monthly to develop a strategy with concrete steps to easing the problems of this group of seniors, and facilitating other activities including advocating concerns of the group with support from different organizations, including NIAASC.

The other subject at the conference was “**An Update: Retirement Housing for Seniors of Indian Origin.**” **Mr. Iggy Ignatius**, along with his wife, **Shanti**, came from Michigan To provide participants an update of his April 07 presentation to NIAASVC on the subject. Ignatius who had visited California, Miami, Washington DC since his April talk gave a positive and encouraging response from all parts of USA. He informed that the Bharat Vilas Inc. is in the process of procuring land in New Jersey, near Atlantic City. He reported a very productive meeting with officials of Galloway Township in New Jersey, that included the mayor and planning officer, in the last few days. They are working on issues related to Zoning Variation and other related matters, and he is hopeful that the construction work on the complex would start in the third quarter of 2008 and units available for occupancy in 2009. The first complex will have 70 units. The entire project will be performed on a not-for-profit basis.

C. GENERAL BODY MEETING

Immediately following the conference, NIAASC had its eighth annual General Body meeting. Dr. Ashwin Pandya welcomed all members. In the absence of **Dr. Samir K. Dutta**, Chairman of the NIAASC Nominating Committee, **Sampurna Jain and P. Ramaswamy Mohan**, both committee members, submitted report. As per NIAASC Constitution, one-third of NIAASC Board members retire every year. On December 31, 2007, seven members will be retiring. Six of these members agreed to continue serving on the Board. The committee recommended that all six be approved to serve on the Board for three years ending December 31, 2010. The committee also recommended election of **Mrs. Purabi Nandi** for three years, and **Mrs. Jaya Bahadkar** for two years. The six Board members continuing for the next three years include **Dr. Annie Koshi, Mr. Ardaman Singh Madan, Mr. Satpal Malhotra, Mrs. Satya Malhotra, Mr. Chandrakant Shah** and **Mr. MK Ramasubramanian**. The General Body approved all recommended candidates to serve on the Board of Directors and Dr. Pandya welcomed the new members.

Also distributed were the annual progress report and financial report of NIAAC. Despite the torrential rains and inclement weather over 50 participants attended the interactive conference and some stayed for the General Body meeting of NIAASC as well.

D. CONCLUSION:

In opening the conference, **Mr. Rajeshwar Prasad**, NIAASC Executive Director, had asked the participants to pay respect to two community leaders closely affiliated with NIAASC: **Dr. Anjali**

Pandya and Mr. Romesh Tewari, who passed away during the period after the last annual meeting in October 2006. He pointed out that about a dozen organizations representing in today's gathering have been very supportive of NIAASC efforts in addressing issues of seniors through information, referral and advocacy process. He noted NIAASC collaborations with India Association of Long Island, Jain Center of America, Indian American Kerala Center, Guru Gobind Singh Senior Program at Plainview Gurudwara, Hindu Temple Society of North America, Indo-American Senior Citizen Center at the Vaishnav Temple; United Hindu Cultural and Civic Senior Center, India Home Inc., Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, Bharat Vilas Inc., Stony Brook Center for India Studies, and potential positive relationship with Senior Citizen Program Inc. in Atlanta. He informed attendees that proceedings of all previous thirteen conferences as well as all NIAASC newsletters are available on its web site: www.niaasc.org.

Mr. Raju Thomas, General Secretary of the Kerala Center, welcomed the participants on behalf on the Center and emphasized the close working relationship between NIAASC and Kerala Center. **Mr. Satpal Malhotra**, NIAASC Secretary, proposed Vote of Thanks, specially underlying efforts of **Chandubhai Patel**, NIAASC Treasurer, in organizing breakfast and lunch. Both of them along with Ramasubramanian greeted all with Diwali sweets on behalf of NIAASC.

Pictures:



Honoree Raj Razdan in center



Honoree & Keynote Speaker Dr. S.N. Sridhar in center



Honorees IALI with JCA & NIAASC members



Honorees with Sponsors, Collaborators and Participants