



"This book is dedicated to all members of
AKMG
and their families,
who in large or small measure,
have given of themselves to build an association
that we can all be proud of."



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Archives of AKMG

*A History of the Association
of Kerala Medical Graduates*

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*I love everything that is old. Old friends, old times,
old manners, old books, old wine.*

—Oliver Goldsmith

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*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

—Robert Frost

Message from AMA President



Peter W. Carmel, MD

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its International Medical Graduates Section (IMG Section), we commend the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates on its achievements, growth, and rich history over the past thirty years. Coincidentally, our IMG section is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this year, and we continue to highlight the many contributions of international medical graduates in American medicine. Given that 25 % of the physician population in the United States is comprised of international medical graduates, the AMA recognizes the significant impact of this physician segment in all facets of our profession. The AMA and its IMG Section looks forward to strengthening our partnership and working together towards our mutual goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter W. Carmel, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

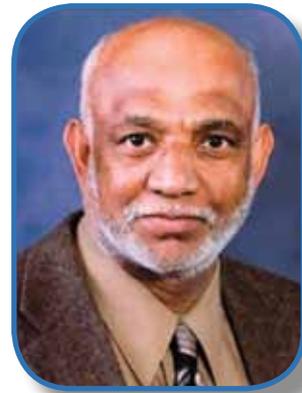
Peter W. Carmel, MD

President American Medical Association





President's Message



K.C. Joseph, MD

Dear Reader,

In the following pages, you will witness a pictorial story of a community that left its motherland with empty pockets and hearts full of ideas and ambitions. It is a story of growing pains and transformation from a passive immigrant to an empowered citizen. Most importantly, it is the story of the community that collectively nurtured this transformation.

I would like to thank the AKMG General Body who boldly approved this project, the editors whose labor made this possible, and the auditors who guaranteed that the story was objective and true to our history; without you, this project would not have been completed. I am honored to have worked alongside each of you to compile and publish the Archives of the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates during my presidency.

This story is dedicated to our posterity. It will nurture nostalgia for the people who have passed the roads, and inspire the future travelers who hope to follow our footsteps.

K. C. Joseph, MD

President, Association of Kerala Medical Graduates



*Golden Jubilee Gate, Trivandrum Medical College
The First Medical College of Kerala*

Introduction

M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD

The year was 1956. The very first physician from Kerala – Dr. Indira Devi Kartha from Medical College, Trivandrum – just arrived in the United States to further her training in Medical Sciences. Till then, the destination for higher studies was always UK, a vestige from our colonial days. This was the beginning of a steady migration of Kerala doctors to the North American continent that continues even today.

The mindset had clearly changed and unlike those who went to the UK, the ones who came to America decided to pursue their career opportunities and stay back and make a life for themselves. Most of them settled in the USA and some went to Canada. The numbers increased every year, but it took another two decades before the idea of an Alumni Association of Physicians of Kerala heritage was conceived.

[This book, ‘Archives of AKMG,’ is the story of the immigration of physicians of Kerala heritage to America, and their successful venture to unite and establish themselves as a well recognized and widely respected entity called Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG).] This is also the success story of a group of pioneers who carved a niche for themselves as an American medical fraternity.

Thanks to the vision of a few leaders, especially Dr. Venkit S. Iyer, Dr. N. Vijayashankar and Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni, our association initially christened as “Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America” was born during the first General Body Meeting held on Saturday, May 24, 1980, in Bombay Palace, New York, NY. At the beginning, rounding up and enlisting the many physicians stretched all over the USA and Canada in the newly formed association was quite a challenge. Communication was limited to phone calls and letters and hence the initial growth was slow. In 1984, the name of the association was officially changed to Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG) and registered as a domestic non-profit entity in Michigan by Dr. K.C. R. Nair, President 1984 -1985.

Dr. E. Enas, who became president in 1985 certainly helped to galvanize the growth of AKMG with a spectacular increase in membership and we were able to hold our first full scale convention in Orlando, FL in 1986. This convention included for the first time a CME program, youth program, final day gala banquet, and a variety entertainment.

THE FUTURE HAD CLEARLY ARRIVED

Since the first convention, the growth of AKMG has been phenomenal with a steady increase in its membership, annual conventions that included Continuing Medical Education (CME) and entertainment programs, and regular interactive seminars and educational programs with Kerala Medical Colleges. From a humble start, the association has now grown to become not only one of the dominant alumni associations of North America, but has spread its wings globally with establishment of chapters in UK and Middle East.

AKMG can boast a string of accomplishments during the past three decades of its existence. Establishing electronic learning research centers in Kerala Medical Schools, arranging free open heart surgeries for the indigent patients, helping Tsunami victims and giving scholarships to the needy medical students in Kerala are just a few of the important ones. Our social, cultural and educational activities including interactive medical education with Kerala Medical Colleges have been very successful and productive. Our young AKMG, the future torch bearers, are already becoming active in the association.

In 2004, we celebrated that coveted and cherished landmark, the Silver Jubilee, with much fanfare and accolades. AKMG, because of its continuous progress and outstanding accomplishments, has received much admiration and respect from other alumni associations in America including American Association of Physicians of Indian origin (AAPI). And many leaders from AKMG ranks have held prominent positions in AAPI.

During the past 3 annual conventions, the general body had debated at length the necessity to publish an 'Archives' – a compendium of all information about AKMG - for posterity to understand more about this organization, essentially the genealogy of "AKMG Family." This will help to preserve our history and provide access to the details of the association to anybody who is interested. And it was unanimously agreed that such a project is indeed worthy of merit and the time is right to bring out such a book. We, the authors, have worked very hard over the past 18 months poring over a lot of data and past records, with several productive teleconferences, frequent telephone conversations and constant e-mail communications after which the format and presentation of the contents of the book were finalized. We

have spared no effort in checking and rechecking the accuracy of all information entered in this book.

As you know, history of any association, institution or even a nation is a story line of a series of events and the individuals that made them happen. Hence we asked each president to narrate the significant events, stories and progress that took place during his /her presidency. This approach is quite simple and makes sense. It serves the purpose of the book which is mainly to narrate the history of AKMG the way it evolved and also recognize the contributions of all those who have been involved with the association in the past and present including those who are not active at the time of this writing and thus faded away from memory.

In conclusion, 'The Archives of AKMG' is an attempt to document the origin, time line, growth and achievements of AKMG thus far and also to reflect on the future so that the great work we are doing can be continued. The chapters are arranged chronologically according to each presidency. Many chapters are illustrated with appropriate photographs. The articles encompass everything from the genesis to its current status capturing the growth and glory of AKMG for all of us to cherish for years to come.

In preparation of this book, we have tried to get the input from all the past presidents and Convention Chairs, Co-Chairs, as well as Chairs of various committees, who have contributed immensely to the growth of the association. Their help is gratefully acknowledged here. We also want to thank each and every member of AKMG, without whom, this association would not have reached its present lofty position. The help from every single contributor to this book who has researched their topic in depth, is greatly appreciated. Preetha Nair, working from Kochi, helped to organize and efficiently run our web site. Finally, we want to thank Mr. Galal Ramadan and GR Graphics, Tampa, for printing this beautiful coffee table volume at short notice.

We, the editors, sincerely hope this book will appeal to our members and readers who want to know all about our beloved association, AKMG.

Editorial Board

M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD

M. V. Pillai, MD

Adoor Amanullah, MD

Roy P. Thomas, MD

Aravind Pillai, MD

Prathap Chandran, MD

K. C. Joseph, MD

M. P. Ravindra Nathan M.D.

On behalf of Editorial Board of Archives of AKMG





Genesis of AKMG

M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD

PROLOGUE

A handful of doctors from Kerala working in the New York area assembled one December evening in 1979, in Dr. P. S. Venkitachalam's house to discuss the necessity and feasibility of forming an alumni association of physicians of Malayalee heritage in North America. "It is about time that we have our own Alumni association in America. Think of the wonderful things we can do if we all come together," they told among themselves. Now fast forward to 2012. The Association of Kerala Medical Graduates, AKMG, nearly 2,000 members strong, celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 2004, a glorious 25 years of accomplishments and achievements and currently going strong in its 32nd year with many more achievements under its belt.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The story of AKMG runs, in fact, like a fairy tale. As a founding member, past chair, co-chair and advisor of many successful conventions, and past president of this distinguished association, I feel very honored and privileged to write my thoughts on the beginning of our historic association. The first organizing committee meeting was held in Dr. P. S. Venkitachalam's (who became Venkit Iyer later) house at 94 Birchwood Drive, New Hyde Park, New York, on December 22, 1979. A steering committee of 3 members - Drs. N. Vijayashankar, C. S. Pitchumoni, and Venkit Iyer - was formed and charged with the responsibility of contacting as many Kerala graduates as possible and arranging the first meeting. Others present that day were Drs. Krishnan Nair and Ramachandran Nair.

Contacting our alumni group spread all over USA wasn't an easy task and Dr. Vijayasankar had to take frequent trips by train to the office of 'India Abroad,' (the only publication that dealt with

the news about Indians living in the USA), in Manhattan from Long Island, NY, to collect the addresses and other necessary information about Kerala doctors practicing in the USA. This certainly helped to get the association started with a core group of members.

FORMATION OF AN ORGANIZATION

The First General Body Meeting was held on Saturday, May 24, 1980, at 6:30 PM at Bombay Palace, 30 West 52nd Street, New York, NY. Dr. K. S. Gokulanathan, from the first batch of students of Trivandrum Medical College, was elected as the President, Dr. Vijaya Shankar as the Vice President, Dr. Venkit Iyer as the Secretary, Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni as the Treasurer, and Dr. Subromoniam as the auditor. The first executive committee members were Drs. M. P. Ravindra Nathan, Krishnan Nair, Ramachandran Nair, and George Mathew. Other members who attended the function included Drs. Susheela Ravindra Nathan, Indira Gokulanathan, Ganesh Kumar, Sahasra Naman and a few others (see the original sign-in sheet below). The newly born organization was christened Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America. That was the forerunner of our annual conventions.

Lata Mangeshkar, the “Nightingale of India”, who was dining at the restaurant at that time, gave a cameo appearance, perhaps our first taste of gala musical entertainment, which was to become a tradition of excellence in the subsequent annual conventions.

In the late 1950’s, doctors from Kerala began arriving in the U.S. and Canada. “In 1959, there were only 5 of us ‘pioneers’ in North America – Indira Kartha, K. S. Gokulanathan, E. A. Thomas, T. M. Paul, and K. P. George,” Dr. Gokulanathan wrote in one of his reflections. However, by the 70’s, each major city in this country could boast many Malayalee physicians. That was indeed the time of great hardships and uncertainties in our lives, having to establish ourselves in a new country, pass the required examinations, get selected for fellowships and academic positions, and start a new practice, all the time battling homesickness. In essence, we were finding our way as we anchored ourselves into

✓ 1)	Dr. Vijaya Shankar	48.00	Paid
✓ 2)	Dr. Pitchumoni	32.00	"
✓ 3)	Dr. Venkata Chalam	32.00	Paid
✓ 4)	Dr. George Mathew	16.00	Paid
✓ 5)	Dr. Jay Sekhar	32.00	Paid
✓ 6)	Dr. Subramaniam	32.00	Paid
✓ 7)	Dr. Shanker Iyer	32.00	Paid
✓ 8)	Dr. Joseph Menon	16.00	Paid
✓ 9)	Dr. John Mathew	16.00	
✓ 10)	Dr. M.P.R. Nathan	16.00	} Paid
✓ 11)	Dr. Mrs. Susheela Ravindra Nathan	16.00	
✓ 12)	Dr. K. Gokulanathan	16.00	
✓ 13)	Dr. Mrs. Indira Gokulanathan	16.00	
✓ 14)	Mr. C. Jayaraman	16.00	
✓ 15)	Mrs. C. Jayaraman	16.00	
✓ 16)	Dr. A.K. Pillai	32.00	
✓ 17)	Dr + Mrs S. Ramachandran Nair	32.00	
✓ 18)	Dr + Mrs Ganesh Kumar	32.00	
✓ 19)	Dr + Mrs Sahasra Naman	32.00	Paid
✓ 20)	Dr + Mrs Ravishankar	32.00	Paid
✓ 21)	Dr + Mrs KRISHNAN NAIR	16.00	
✓ 22)	Dr. George Varughese	544.00	
		16.00	

First Sign-in sheet lists all the members who attended the first meeting.

American soil. Incredible as it may seem, we also found the time, energy, and purpose to organize ourselves into a unique and successful association.

The name ‘Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America’ was officially changed to Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG) and it obtained a non-profit status in the state of Michigan in 1984 during the presidency of Dr. K.C.R Nair. AKMG received the IRS Employer Identification number (EIN 363 465 523) in 1985 and IRS tax-exempt status in 1987 during the presidency of Dr. Enas Enas.

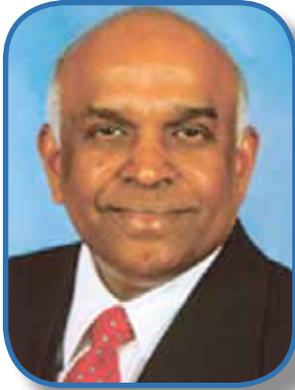
The first successful convention on a level par with any other major conventions in USA was held in Orlando in 1986 with Dr. Enas Enas as the President, Dr. George Thomas as Chair and Dr. M. P. Ravindra Nathan as Co-Chair. During the general body meeting at this convention that was attended for the first time by a large number of members, the current name Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG), was endorsed unanimously along with the present logo of AKMG and the bylaws by the general body.

In 2004, we celebrated our Silver Jubilee of AKMG in Detroit with great pomp and glory. At that time we had a quick get-together of all the founding members who could attend, at Bombay Palace, NY, the site of our very first meeting where the association was launched. The members present (see the photo) were excited at this meeting as we reminisced about old times and reveled at the stupendous progress AKMG has made over the years.

AT BOMBAY PALACE, ONE MORE TIME



Perhaps the best way to understand the origin of AKMG is through the reflections of some of the founding members. Unfortunately we couldn't contact all of them. Some of them have passed on and a few others haven't been active with AKMG for a long time. You may see some duplication of facts as you read the text below as is common when several members try to recollect their past experiences and discuss the same subject. Please read on...



Venkit S. Iyer, MD

Reflections

It gives me great pleasure to recollect the conception of AKMG. I was in New York and then my name was Dr. P. S. Venkitachalam. I happened to read about an Alumni meeting of Tamil Nadu medical graduates in New York during the fall of 1979. This gave me the impetus to organize a similar Alumni Association of Kerala Medical graduates. I asked several of my Kerala doctor friends, and everyone seemed to like such an idea.

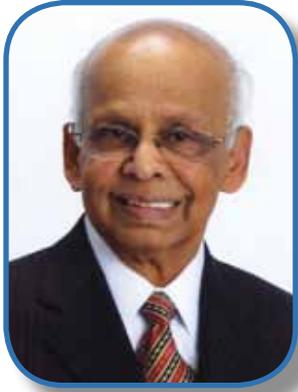
In December of 1979, I organized the very first meeting at my house in New Hyde Park, New York. It was Christmas holiday season, and my wife Lakshmi cooked the dinner. Those in attendance included Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni, Dr. Vijayashankar, Dr. Ganesh Kumar, Dr. A. Sahasranaman, Dr. Ramachandran Nair, and Dr. Krishnan Nair and their spouses. After dinner, we held a formal meeting. Everyone unanimously supported the idea.

The name of the association chosen was “Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America.” An Ad-Hoc committee was formed consisting of myself, Dr. Vijayashankar and Dr. Pitchumony. The Ad-Hoc committee was authorized to contact as many Kerala medical graduates in USA as possible, and to organize the first convention of the Association in New York during the Memorial Day week end in May of 1980.

We went to work and held the first meeting at Bombay Palace Restaurant. There were no bylaws or dues, and it was informal and friendly. I was mostly responsible for conducting that first convention. We called and sent out notices to several friends, and announced the meeting date and time in India Abroad. It was an open meeting, and each one was to order their dishes and pay their bills. We had a good response with over 25 physicians and spouses in attendance.

One of the visitors at the meeting was Dr. Gokulanathan from Washington, D.C. Dr. Pitchumoni, made a statement that he is the most senior among the Kerala Medical Graduates in the country, and suggested his name to be President in an impromptu fashion, for the next year. Dr. Vijayashankar was nominated as Vice President and I became the Secretary for that year.

There was no major agenda other than networking and having friendship and camaraderie. We wanted it to become a national organization and not be grounded as a regional society. The organization has indeed become a national and international power house over the years, thanks to the hard work and input by the various members and volunteers.



C. S. Pitchumoni, MD

My Memories

More than two decades ago my classmate Dr. R Vijayashankar who is currently settled in Trivandrum, and a handful of Trivandrum Medical College graduates in and around New York conceived the idea of Trivandrum Medical College Alumni Association; the thought was immediately expanded to include all medical colleges of Kerala or AKMG. The growth of All Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG) is one of astonishing and great accomplishments.

The seed of a banyan tree is so small it is hard to conceive that it can hide a giant tree within it. The great banyan tree with its huge expanse sprouts from a microscopic seed. The indwelling spirit in the seed is illustrated in the famous Chandogya Upanishad.

AKMG is a banyan tree today with all its growth, accomplishments and service record. A modest and probably unintended action of a group of young physicians from Kerala medical colleges in New York City resulted in the birth of an association that was subsequently nurtured by a few other dedicated physicians from rest of this nation, inspired by Dr. Enas Enas from Chicago whose enthusiasm, hard work and selfless service brought the organization to its present level of stability and for most of its accomplishments. Many subsequent office bearers are to be credited for its status today.

AKMG is a broad based organization and not an alumni association anymore and currently includes physicians with Kerala roots who have studied in any medical college in the world thus widening its scope and membership. Although the name “Kerala” in AKMG is regional, the organization is global in its vision.

With tremendous enthusiasm Drs. Vijaya Shankar, M. P. Ravindra Nathan, Venkit Iyer, Ramachandran Nair, Krishnan Nair, Sankara Iyer, Ganesh Kumar, and a few others whose name I unfortunately fail to recollect planned an evening at Bombay Palace, a Indian Restaurant in Manhattan, New York. Unexpectedly, the day that coincided with the first FOKANA meeting in the same neighborhood brought us some unintended recognition from the Kerala community.

Dr. Gokulanathan, a student of the first batch of Trivandrum Medical College an early expatriate, a prominent and well respected physician from Washington DC, was appropriately nominated to be the first President with a small group of office bearers chosen from the members of the audience.

After paying for our dinner at Bombay palace we all contributed \$10.00 each for the future expense of the organization. Subsequently for days, we collected addresses of Kerala physicians from the then big registry of India Abroad newspaper. As proud parents, we informed everyone in the country about the birth of the new organization by regular mail.

‘Nygrodha-phalam’ indicates the indwelling spirit of the seed that gives rise to the banyan tree. (Chandogya Upanishad). The tiny seed sown in New York three decades ago has grown to be the AKMG of today, a banyan tree that has expanded to cover every physician of Kerala ancestry wherever he or she obtained a medical degree or education in one of the medical colleges of Kerala.

Along with other colleagues of the important day, as one who initiated AKMG, I take pride and wish the organization a bright future.



Dr. N. Vijayasankar

Recreating My Thoughts

I will try to recreate my thoughts---may not be verbatim!

I don't remember the exact day---Pitchumoni, Venkitachalam and I had an idea to form TVM medical college Alumni Assn. The modus operandi was to collect addresses from phone directory & other means. A better way was to contact Mr. Gopala Raju from India Abroad foundation. Since, I had more free time than the clinicians, I volunteered to collect names. I took many a trip via Long Island Expressway to Manhattan to the India Abroad office. There were no computerized lists then. I remember spending hours in that office copying down details longhand! We started calling them on phone and by letters. The response was overwhelming!

Some of the details elude me now. Ultimately, we decided to hold the first meeting in an Indian restaurant in Manhattan. One of us [of the 3] was slated to be President. Dr. Gokulanathan attended the function since he happened to be visiting New York at that time and attended the function. Since he represented the first batch, he was unanimously elected as the first President and me as the Vice president. Another unique coincidence was one graduate from the most recent batch from TVM was also there---Dr. Suseela [my sister-in-law].

Another interesting thing happened. Lata Mangeshkar was dining in the same restaurant. She was gracious to come down and briefly addressed us and blessed the gathering. The second meeting was scheduled to be held in Washington DC and the third in Chicago. Due to reasons beyond my control, I could not attend the meetings regularly. Later of course, this metamorphosed into the current AKMG. The rest of the story is known to all.

As for myself, I left USA in the mid 90's and joined Kerala Medical College. Now I am in the 51st year of continuous teaching. I am now working as Professor Emeritus at SUTAMS (Sri Uthradom Thirunal Academy of Medical Sciences), Trivandrum.



K. S. Gokulanathan, MD

Memories of a Pioneer

Between 1956 and 1959, five pioneers from Trivandrum Medical College initiated a major Indian medical presence in the United States. They were Dr. Indira Kartha, Dr. E. A. Thomas, Dr. K. P. George, Dr. K. S. Gokulanathan, and Dr. T. M. Paul.

The next decade, when many Kerala Medical graduates landed in the United States, we formed a network to help and share under the existing social conditions. While we travelled, the alumni members in local hospitals served as our hosts.

On December 22, 1979, Dr. N. Vijayasnakar along with Dr. Venkitachalam, Dr. Pichumoni initiated the formation of the Alumni Association of Kerala States Medical Colleges in North America. On May 24, 1980 the first meeting was held at the Bombay Palace in New York. The members inaugurated this association. The elected office bearers were: Dr. K. S. Gokulanathan, President, Dr. Vijayasnakar, Vice-President, Dr. Venkitachalam, Secretary, Dr. Pichumoni, Treasurer, Dr. Subramoniam, auditor. The first Executive Committee members were Dr. Ganesh Kumar, Dr. M. P. Ravindranathan,

Dr. George Mathew, Dr. Krishnan Nair, and Dr. Ramachandran Nair.

My brief address during the occasion embodied the need and purpose of such an association:

“This is a unique association for us unlike the innumerable social, religious, and cultural associations of Asian Indians in this country. Alumni association is a family group to all of us who started our professional life as newborn medical students of our alma mater. It is our second home where we developed our skills and knowledge under the guidance of our beloved teachers, shared moments of joy and happiness as well as the stresses and hardships of the medical student life.

Amidst strenuous and demanding professional life and the vicissitudes and vagaries of our personal life, the Alumni Association will provide us with a soothing outlet for reminiscences and reflections. In our alumni we can look and relive our professional childhood days and share the nostalgia of the bygone student days. This lingering look the past will lighten our hearts, and give us added satisfaction in our humble achievements and aspirations for higher goals. Let all alumni members join this association, and project a worthy and virtuous image of our glorious *alma mater*, our lofty Kerala State, and modern India as an industrial giant and the greatest repository of philosophy.”

During the first year, by the intense efforts of the office bearers, we contacted more than a hundred members. We held the second annual meeting in a small Indian restaurant. As requested by the members, the office bearers continued for another year. During this year, they conducted picnics and membership drives and many more members joined the association. They developed enthusiasm and motivation and expansion.

At this juncture, the third annual meeting was conducted in Chicago. Since that time, Association continued to escalate and became a widely publicized organization.

Let us remember that the Alumni Association and later AKMG were started as a solitary lamp lit in the dark path of loneliness and longing to be in the company of our alumni members. Amidst all the display and delight during the fabulous annual meetings in the elegant hotels, let us feel as a family, uphold the fundamental values and support the members under all circumstances. This compilation, “Archives of AKMG,” is a decisive step to recall these important aspects. I am happy and congratulate the current president Dr. K. C. Joseph to initiate this task and the committee members involved to materialize my long cherished dream. I wish them Godspeed in all their endeavors.

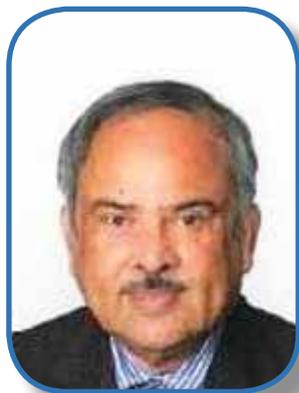


Ramachandran Nair, MD

The Way I Remember

Originally the AKMG was started as the Trivandrum Medical College Alumni Association, and the onus of collecting the addresses fell on Dr. Vijayashanker. This was because, all the rest of us including Dr. Pitchumoni and Dr. Venkatachalam (Venkat Iyer) were busy practitioners. He went to the India Abroad Office in Manhattan by train on several occasions to collect addresses. Then the first meeting took place in Bombay Palace.

One of us was to be the President, but since Dr. Gokulanathan from the first batch was there from Washington D.C., he became the first President and Dr. Vijayashanker became the Vice President. This later became the AKMG of today. Dr. Vijayashanker recently reminded me that our first meeting was blessed by the chance presence of Smt. Lata Mangeshkar!



Krishan Nair, MD

My Thoughts

It was a landmark decision to form our great Association of Kerala origin Medical Graduates. Over the years it has given us togetherness, pleasure, and some sense of service and accomplishment. I am glad to see the next generation participation and the growth and strength of our association. Many thanks to the dedicated service of all who helped the association grow.



Now you have an idea about the birth of our association. Unfortunately, I was unable to contact some of the original members who have retired and gone on their ways and haven't kept in touch with AKMG activities. But the above narration contains all the facts about the history of AKMG and I personally spent enormous amount of time trying to procure them. As we all know, historical accuracy is very important when you are compiling the archives of any association.

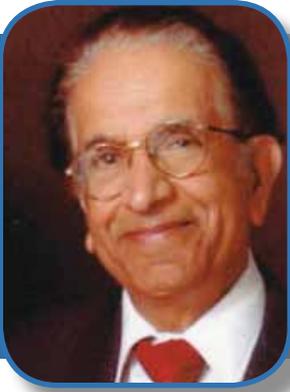


AKMG TIMELINE

Compiled by: K.S. Gokulanathan and Adoor Amanullah

Year	President	President Elect	Vice President	Secretary Treasurer	Convention Chairperson	City of Convention*
1980	K.S. Gokulanathan		Vijay Shankar	Venkit Iyer		New York*
1981	K.S. Gokulanathan		Vijay Shankar	Venkit Iyer		Washington D.C.*
1982-1983	Thomas P. Thomas				Roy Thomas	Chicago*
1983-1984	Roy Thomas				K.C.R. Nair	Detroit*
1984-1985	K.C.R. Nair			George Padanilam		Chicago*
1985-1986	Enas A. Enas		Thomas Bose	Thressiamma Jacob	George Thomas	Orlando
1986-1987	Enas A. Enas	George Thomas	S.K. Sundaram	Ram Thinakkal	Valsa Ouseph	Philadelphia
1987-1988	Enas A. Enas	George Thomas	S.K. Sundaram	Ram Thinakkal	P.K. Kutty	Toronto
1988-1989	George Thomas	Ram Thinakkal	George Thalody	K.P.S. Menon	Devi Vellody	Hilton Head
1989-1990	George Thomas	Ram Thinakkal	George Thalody	K.P.S. Menon	K.E. Mathew	New Orleans
1990-1991	Ram Thinakkal	P.K. Kutty	Kumari Verghese	K.E. Mathew	S.K. Sundaram	Chicagg
1991-1992	Ram Thinakkal	P.K. Kutty	Kumari Verghese	K.E. Mathew	Joseph Eipe	San Diego
1992-1993	P.K. Kutty	K.E. Mathew	Shakuntala Rajgopal	Mathew Theckedath	Venugopal Menon	Houston
1993-1994	K.E. Mathew	M.V. Pillai	Mathew Theckedath	Sovi Joseph	A. Rahman & M. Kurup	Williamsburg
1994-1995	M.V. Pillai	Mathew Theckedath	Shakuntala Krishnankutty	Sovi Joseph	Varghese Kannarkat	Washington, D.C.
1995-1996	Mathew Theckedath	Adoor Amanullah	Sovi Joseph	Sebastian George	Joseph Eipe	Cochin
1996-1997	Adoor Amanullah	Sovi Joseph	Sebastian George	M.P. Ravindranathan	M.P. Ravindra Nathan	Orlando
1997-1998	Sovi Joseph	Sebastian George	M.P. Ravindra Nathan	Easwaran Variyam	Benjamin John	New York
1998-1999	Sebastian George	Shakuntala Rajgopal	M.P. Ravindra Nathan	Easwaran Variyam	Pareed Aliyar	Las Vegas
1999-2000	Shakuntala Rajgopal	M.P. Ravindra Nathan	Easwaran Variyam	Pareed Aliyar	Joseph Kannankeril	Chicago
2000-2001	M.P. Ravindra Nathan	Easwaran Variyam	Pareed Aliyar	Narendra Kumar	Abdul Karim	Caribbean Cruise
2001-2002	Easwaran Variyam	Joseph Eipe	Narendra Kumar	Parvathi Mohan	P.K. Kutty	Toronto
2002-2003	Joseph Eipe	Narendra Kumar	Parvathi Mohan	Abdul Karim	Radha Menon	Hawai
2003-2004	Narendra Kumar	Parvathi Mohan	Abdul Karim	Prathap Chandran	T.L. Ittiara	Detroit
2004-2005	Parvathi Mohan	Abdul Karim	Prathap Chandran	Radha Menon	Jaya Pillay	Puerto Rico
2005-2006	Abdul Karim	Prathap Chandran	Radha Menon	Tom Mukkada	Aravind Pillai	Orlando
2006-2007	Prathap Chandran	Radha Menon	Tom Mukkada	P.C. Punnen	Suja Subramanyam	Cleveland
2007-2008	Radha Menon	Tom Mukkada	P.C. Punnen	Aravind Pillai	Sankari Nair	Manhattan Beach
2008-2009	Tom Mukkada	P.C. Punnen	Aravind Pillai	K.C. Joseph	KJ Philip	Chicago
2009-2010	P.C. Punnen	Aravind Pillai	K.C. Joseph	Freemu Varghese	Mathew Yaltho	Vancouver
2010-2011	Aravind Pillai	K.C. Joseph	Freemu Varghese	Parameswaran Hari	Sunil Kumar	Alaska Cruise
2011-2012	K.C. Joseph	Freemu Varghese	Parameswaran Hari	Alex Thomas	Satish Sunder	Detroit

*1980 to 1985: It was a annual dinner meeting in a restaurant. First 3 day convention started in 1986



AKMG: Reflections of the First President

K.S. Gokulanathan, MD

From a humble and arduous beginning, the AKMG has reached a prominent status. This is an opportune moment to reflect on its past achievements and define some of its challenges for the future. This may, as Brutus envisioned about Caesar, deter the member who, “Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend,” and forget the basic association ideals- the feelings, family intimacy, and friendship.

The pioneers who initiated a major Indian medical presence in the United States founded and tenderly nurtured AKMG in the first half of its growth, worked with unity, zeal, and dedication. This history may infuse some basic values and feelings that are essential for fulfillment of the very purpose of this association. Recall Confucius: “Study the past if you would divine the future.”

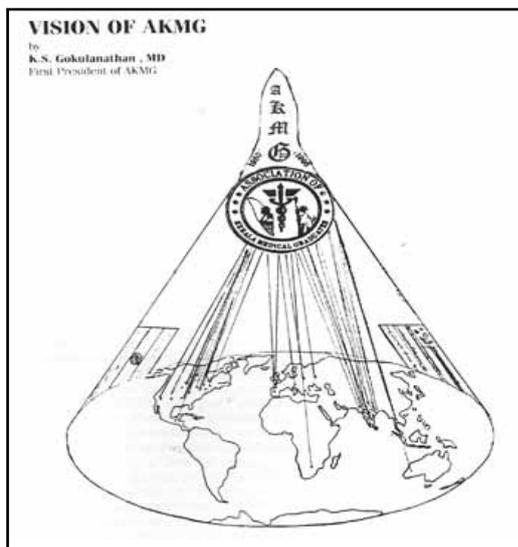
AKMG was officially established in 1980, but the idea of such an association was evident in the fifties. In 1959, there were only five of us in the North American continent; letters provided the much needed emotional support. The next decade, when many Kerala medical graduates landed in the United States, we formed a network to help and share under the existing social conditions, the zenith of racial turmoil which precluded even the Indian Ambassador to obtain a motel room!

In the 1970s, there was a different social and economic climate. Kerala physicians in each city participated in activities of Kerala cultural associations. The idea of having an Alumni Association was tossed around during informal gatherings and get-togethers for many years. On May 24, 1980 a nationwide meeting of the alumni was organized to coincide with the First Convention of Asian Indians in North America. This was held at Bombay Palace, in New York. Thirty-six members who were present on the occasion formally inaugurated The Alumni Association of Kerala State Medical Colleges. The details of this meeting, my brief address as the first President, and the early progress of the association are given in the “Genesis” section.

During the first year, by the intense efforts of the office bearers, we contacted more than a hundred members. We held the second annual meeting in a small Indian restaurant. As requested by the members, the office bearers continued for another year. During this year, they conducted picnics and membership drives and many more members joined the association. They developed enthusiasm and motivation and expansion,

At this juncture, the third annual meeting was conducted in Chicago. Since that time, the association continued to escalate and became a widely publicized organization.

Let us always remember that the Alumni Association and later AKMG were started as a solitary lamp lit in the dark path of loneliness and longing to be in the company of our alumni members. Amidst all the display and delight during the fabulous annual meetings in the elegant hotels, let us feel as a family, uphold the fundamental values and support the members under all circumstances. My vision for future of AKMG is as below.



This compilation, “Archives of AKMG,” is a decisive step to recall these important aspects. I am happy and congratulate the current president Dr. K. C. Joseph to initiate this task and the committee members involved to materialize my long cherished dream. I wish them Godspeed in all their endeavors.

From its humble beginnings, AKMG has become one of the leading Indian Associations in the United States. With large numbers of life members, the association is financially stable. The annual meetings are conducted in grand style in luxury hotels with the participation of hundreds of members and their families. But amidst all the display and delight among the participants, one tends to forget the ancient adage that “wealth is not elegance, that profusion is not magnificence and that splendor is not beauty.”

In the forthcoming days, the changes in the health care system are bound to create social and political upheavals worse than the monsoon storm in the Arabian Sea that the pioneers had to endure and survive. Members cannot afford to fragment the association with personal aggrandizement, petty politics, and peer group neglect. In every possible way, the members should help each other in professional and personal life, share the happiness and sadness, and pursue the journey along the “Golden mean.”

A future challenge of AKMG is to alter the appalling ignorance of Americans about Indians, a disturbing state that has not changed since the 1950s. Americans were intrigued by our intellectual superiority although they knew about India only as a land of elephants and snakes! The scenes from the movie, “Indiana Jones, The Temple of Doom” where Indians eat live snakes and drink soup with eyeballs floating reinforce this idea and recently the portrayal of the “Slum Dog Millionaire.” This is reflected on all Indians here as refugees despite all the pomp and show on an individual level, irrespective of their religion, state of origin, language, caste or class.

The Indian Diaspora in America has not taken any initiative to change this image. The majority of Indians has inadequate knowledge about Indian philosophy and is insensitive to the goodness of Western life. They live a reclusive life amidst self-centered sectarian groups or join similar Indian associations to propagate prosaic social activities within a materialistic framework to the utter dismay of their children. In this process, the children are denied of the knowledge of Indian traditions as well as the emotional support to assert their tradition among their peer group. Consequently, they sever their roots of Indian tradition, call themselves as ABCD (American Born Confused Desies) and fall into the morass of materialism.

While the West is reaching out to the East for enlightenment and for their survival, Indians are discarding their own heritage. If Indian children obtain knowledge of Indian tradition from Americans while Americans learn Sanskrit and delve into the great Indian Epics, accept and even patent Yoga in their daily life, the ethos of Indian in America becomes an irony wrapped around an enigma! AKMG shares a responsibility with the other Indian Associations to project a proud portrait of India that the Indian children can be proud of and that the Americans can admire. AKMG can initiate this difficult and decisive task to reveal the depth of India wisdom and India as the Cradle of Civilization and nurture the future generations of Indians as American Born Confident Desies!







A conversation with Dr. Thomas P. Thomas

T. P. Thomas, MD

President of AKMG, 1982-1983 *By Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal **

Shaku: Hi Thomas, what do you have to say about your time as president of AKMG?

Thomas: Hi Shaku. If we are talking about my presidency of AKMG, the first thing I would tell you is that I had a lot of fun getting a number of our friends together for our meeting in Chicago in 1983. You know we called it, “Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America”

S: Yes, I do. After the Chicago convention a group of friends came over to the Rajagopal house, and we spend a whole day analyzing the meetings and making plans for the future.

T: Who saw the future is what it looks like today.

S: Thomas, Drs. Gokulan, Krishnan Nair, Ravindranathan, Pitchumani, Roy Thomas, Enas, Rajagopal, Padma, Sundaram, you and I, and a few others can take pride in the roles we played in keeping the spirit up in the early years.

T: Oh yes. Every time a Kerala doctor came to any of our houses, we gathered all the local Kerala doctors, and each occasion was a ‘mini-convention,’ of AKMG.

S: Viceroy of India Restaurant, and later Gaylords saw our noisy group meetings more than once.

T: It is surprising we did not get thrown out, considering the many arguments we had.

S: Even if we did not always agree on ideas, we had just one goal then. To meet and have fun with as many Kerala doctors and families once a year, and bring our children together so it would be family affairs.

T: It was good that we decided to have CME sessions, so at least part of our expenses would be tax deductible.



Dr. T. P. Thomas speaking



Dr. Thomas, Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal and Dr. Roy Thomas



Donna Thomas and Dorothy Kini

S: The CMEs turned out to be of excellent as we grew.

T: And, don't forget our entertainment programs?

S: Life was simple then and even members singing out of tune got to perform on stage at our Campus Comedy nights.

T: Now all our performers appear as good as the professionals. We could not really afford professionals back then.

S: What in the world made you assign your wife Donna and Dorothy Kini at the registration table at the Chicago convention?

T: Why not?

S: More than 2/3^{ths} of the member names were unfamiliar to them and they had to have them spelled out to keep order in the registration process.

T: It was OK. They not only survived, they did a great job.

S: What do you think of our charitable wing, and our involvement in the Kerala Medical Colleges and the EMS programs?

T: I am glad to see that our 'social group' has realized a 'social consciousness,' and has been pro-active in addressing worthwhile causes. I am very proud of what we have become since my days as the President.



Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal and Dr. Thomas

S: Thank you Thomas.

* *"I know this is what Thomas would like to say to his AKMG family."*



Roy P. Thomas, MD
President of AKMG, 1983-1984

Drive Into 2012 With AKMG! A Memorable Trip!

We often take for granted the fun and frolicking that flow out at our AKMG conventions year after year where hundreds of Kerala physicians and their families in America get together. But many of us who came to America in the nineteen sixties and early seventies know how exciting it was during those days to meet a fellow physician from Kerala. I joined medical residency in 1971; it was after two years into the training that I first met another physician from ‘God’s own country’.

Influx of a large number of immigrants from Kerala in the following years may have lessened some of that excitement. Today all major metropolitan areas in America have large Malayalee communities with their own cultural organizations, churches, temples, and mosques. There are even separate associations here for people from many small towns and villages of Kerala.

On a historical note, an organization of physicians from Kerala was first formed in the fall of 1980 in New York as an “Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America” by a group of physicians under the initiatives of pioneers like Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni, Dr. P. S. Venkidachalam, (Venkit S. Iyer), Dr. Vijayashanker, and Dr. M. P. Ravindra Nathan. Dr. K. S. Gokulanadhan who is a graduate of the first batch of the first medical college in Kerala (Trivandrum), was our first president for the first two years. The first annual meeting of the Association was held in 1980 in New York at the Bombay Palace Restaurant. Dr. Pitchumoni and Dr. Vijayasanker were my teachers in the medical college and three of the early organizers of the Association, Dr. K. Vinayakom, Dr. V. Krishnan Nair and Dr. S. Ramachandran Nair were my classmates. At their invitation I participated in the second annual convention held in Washington, D.C. As we were still struggling to balance our personal bank accounts during those initial years, most of the out of town participants to the convention stayed in the houses of their friends in Washington, D.C. Thus blocking the hotel rooms for the convention or paying in advance for the reservations of the estimated attendees was not a problem

for the organizers. I remember, three of my classmates and I, with our spouses and children huddled together at the newly bought house of Vinayakom and Suba, who had then just started their medical practice near Washington, DC.

Maybe, I expressed my excitement in seeing many old friends a little too exuberantly when I spoke at the convention that they drafted me as the convener for the next convention and requested me to hold it in Chicago. I came back to Chicago with the records of the association and an address list of about 70 members. The association was transplanted to Chicago and for next few years, activities of the association mainly centered in the Midwest. We had a get together of the local Kerala physicians in Chicago and nominated the senior most Malayalee physician in Chicago at that time, Dr. Thomas P. Thomas president. It was the wit and wisdom of Dr. Thomas that guided the organization for the next year. Following Thomas P. Thomas, I was given the privilege to be the president during 1983-84 at the fourth convention in Detroit and Dr. K. C. R. Nair was the convener. The convention elected K. C. R. president for 1984-85.

This was a time when most of our members were in residency training earning meager stipends. Scarcer than money was the time at our disposal for any social activity. The third annual reunion of Kerala medical graduates (the first in Chicago) was a one day gathering in a modest Chicago Hotel. We contacted by phone and sent invitations to all our doctors whose name or phone numbers we could find. Dr. K. G. Rajgopal, Dr. Sakutala Rajgopal, Dr. Valayudha Panicker, Dr. Mabel Koshy, Dr. Shanmugha Sundaram, Dr. Padma Sundaram and Dr. Chinnamma Thomas helped us with their time. We made an estimate of how many were likely to come for the reunion and made arrangement for the breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the hotel. Fortunately the number of people who turned up was close to our estimation and so we didn't lose any money. Among our initial pioneers, Dr. Thomas P. Thomas, Dr. Rajgopal, and Dr. Panicker left us for their eternal abode.

After the reunion in Detroit, the fifth reunion returned to Chicago with Dr. Dr. K.C. R. Nair as president in 1985. At this fifth convention, Dr. Enas A. Enas was elected president. Dr. Enas gave a new breath of life to the Association. Dr. Enas spent enormous amount of time and energy to make the first directory of the Kerala Medical Graduates in North America and it still remains a landmark achievement of the Association. By the end of his 2nd term as president, AKMG had grown to be a recognized Indian ethnic professional organization in North America.

Dr. Enas as president and Dr. George Thomas as convention chair, organized the 6th convention at the Disney World Hilton hotel in Orlando, Florida in 1986. Even at this event, four weeks

prior to the convention, only 5 hotel rooms were booked by our members. Early registration for the convention and reservation of the hotel rooms were still far in our future. But Dr. Enas took a bold decision to reserve a number of rooms hoping for a better turn out and over 300 people came. It was an unexpected success. This success was repeated year after year and the conventions eventually became larger 3 day gathering. Our 32nd annual convention was a 7 day cruise over the Pacific Ocean with more than a thousand people.

The meteoric rise of AKMG in the following years will be recorded my successors who came to the helm of the association in the succeeding pages.

I have attended 30 out of the past 32 annual conventions of AKMG and it was always a time for me to laugh, learn, and relax with friends. Our family, especially the children, looked forwarded to it every year. Looking back, should we have done anything differently? All my four children are grown up now. But today most of the grown up children of AKMG members, even those who have chosen a career in medicine including my 2 children who are physicians, attend AKMG conventions only if they are invited to give an academic presentation at our CME. I feel that we should have tried to bring the second generation of our physicians who came out of medical schools in America also in to the main stream of the activities of AKMG. Unless we bring them also, I am afraid that AKMG may be gone after the first generation immigrant physicians are no more here. It is something for the future leaders of AKMG to seriously ponder.

Even so, we all had a great time with AKMG during our sojourn in this new adopted land. For all of us even today, the bond that binds us as the first generation Malayalee physicians in America remains unique and very special.







Presidential Report for 1984-85

K.C. Nair, MD
President of AKMG, 1984-1985

A NAME CHANGE FOR OUR ASSOCIATION

We will be celebrating the next Annual Convention of AKMG in July 2012 at the Marriot Hotel at the 'RenCen' in Detroit. So, it is only appropriate at this time that we embark upon a brief nostalgic journey through the pages of our history.

More than 30 years ago, a few doctors from the first few batches of the 'Trivandrum Medical College and one from Calicut Medical College' recognized the need for a forum for professional exchanges, personal interactions and social camaraderie among the many physicians coming to the US from Kerala. In May 1980, they gathered a number of their colleagues working around the New York area and met at a New York Indian Restaurant. After much discussions and deliberations they decided to form an association that was named "Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America (AAKMC)." This was also the first General Body Meeting of the association. Dr. Gokulathan was elected as the first president of this Association, serving for two years 1980 and 1981. I am sure Dr. G. will write in his own eloquent manner more about those early days. After the birth of our 'predecessor', a small group of dedicated members of this alumni group met in Chicago each year.

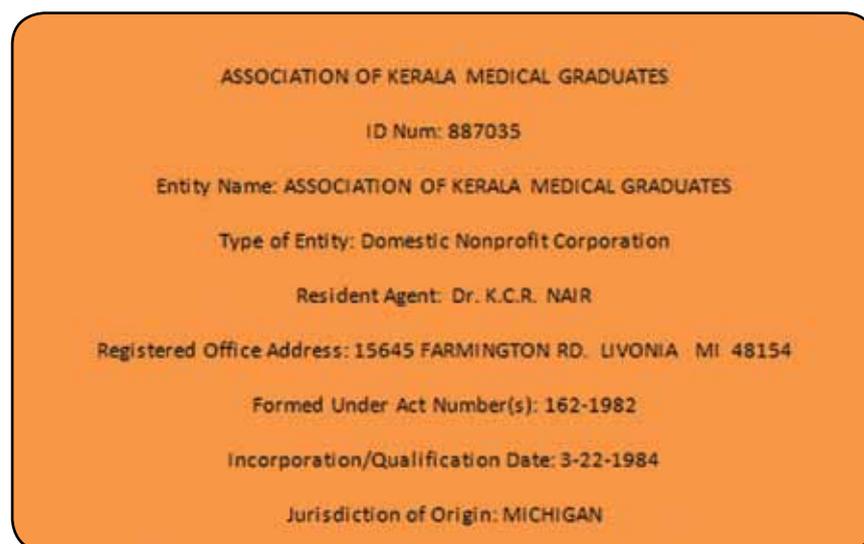
In 1984, on a Sunday midmorning, a group of us gathered at a downtown Chicago restaurant for lunch, social exchange and for the annual meeting of 'AAKMC'. I still remember the 'official' part of the meeting, that Sunday afternoon. I wish to acknowledge some of the TVM Medical Graduates who attended that meeting – Dr. P. T. Thomas, Dr. Joseph Eipe, Dr. K. G. Rajagopal, Dr. Shakunthla Rajagopal, Dr. Shanmugha Sundaram, Dr. Padma Sundaram, Dr. Ramachandra Kurup, Dr. Velayudha Panicker, and many others. My classmate and close friend, the Late Dr. K. G. Rajagopal nominated me to be the next President of this 'AAKMC'. I was elected unanimously as the 4th president of the 'Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America,' following the presidencies of Dr.

Gokulanathan, Dr. Thomas P. Thomas and Dr. Roy P. Thomas. I had the good fortune to serve from 1984 to 1985.

During this 12 month period, I proposed and implemented a name change – Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG) and developed new Bylaws to include All Medical Graduates of Kerala origin, irrespective of the location of their graduating Medical College. My vision and purpose was to implement an ‘inclusion policy’ – to expand our organization by opening the door of ‘AAKMC’ for all physicians of Kerala heritage. So, in order to reflect an accurate name, I selected ‘Association of Kerala Medical Graduates’ and registered AKMG as a Non-Profit Corporation with the Michigan Secretary of State and with the Internal Revenue Service on 03/22/1984. The initial AKMG Incorporation document filed with the State of Michigan is copied below.

Our current emblem was created with the help of my friend, Mr. Radhakrishnan. Thanks to the artist and to my Executive Committee members of 1984-85, for all their help and support for the ‘Genesis of AKMG’. In 1985, we held the 1st Annual Meeting of ‘AKMG’ at the Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, Michigan. I regret that photographs of that historical meeting are hiding somewhere in the pages of history! Dr. Enas A. Enas was then elected as the next president of AKMG. Much of the credit goes to Dr. Enas and his committee members for the rapid growth of AKMG, its membership and its accomplishments. Subsequent presidents, committee members and each member of AKMG, provided the necessary nourishment, help and support for the growth of our AKMG.

It is with great pride, admiration and my most sincere appreciation that I take this opportunity to thank each and every member of AKMG and all others who helped our growth. May our AKMG grow and flourish evermore and may our purpose, visions, missions, dedication and camaraderie, never fade!



My Vision, Mission, and the Sea of Change for AKMG



Enas A. Enas, MD
President of AKMG, 1985-1988

“All truths pass through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.” Schopenhauer

Although the name, fame and ever-popular conventions of AKMG are now taken for granted, the organization was in stage one, when I first became its fifth President. As the primary spokesperson, spearheading yet another Malayalee organization, I faced both ridicule, and opposition before AKMG garnered broader support and became an unusually cohesive, amazingly successful, robust, vibrant, and pre-eminent medical organization of Indian physicians in the US. In fact, AKMG made a phoenix-like resurgence marked by three splendid conventions and a meteoric growth by the end of my second term. Thanks to my successors, and a highly talented and resourceful membership, AKMG remains a formidable national association and tour de force. I consider my time at the helm of AKMG, steering its course through uncharted waters and transforming it, as one of the most enjoyable, productive, consequential and rewarding of all experiences.

My first encounter with AKMG was during the installation of its second President by Dr. Pitchumoni in 1983 at a meeting in Chicago, in the absence of the sitting President. This was organized by Dr. Roy Thomas, who subsequently became its third President. When I became the fifth President on Memorial Day 1985 at the Bombay Palace Restaurant in Chicago, barely two dozen individuals, mostly from and around Chicago were in attendance. There was no need for a microphone to give my acceptance speech as the attendance was so small. My first challenge as President was to frame and articulate a clear vision and mission for the fledgling organization which was an ill-defined alumni association of four medical colleges in Kerala with no formal structure or clearly defined goals.

I made some 10,000 plus “midnight phone calls” across four time-zones to our fellow physicians residing over a land mass more than 700 times the size of Kerala to identify and recruit potential members. The lessons I learned from these calls were truly revealing. We got hold of more than 1,000 physicians of Kerala heritage in North America; however, the very name of the organization, automati-

cally excluded a lion's share of its potential members.

We undertook an intensive campaign of long-distance phone calls and letter blitz to popularize AKMG, with a solemn assurance that AKMG membership was open to all physicians of Kerala heritage, in North America, regardless of the college of medical education. This concerted effort resulted in a data base of 1,200 physicians. In hindsight, I regret not changing the name to "Association of Keralite Medical Graduates" a more expansive term that would also include those born and brought up outside Kerala, (especially in US and Canada). This is an ever increasing pool of doctors whom AKMG must recruit to avoid its premature obituary.

MY VISION

In early 1985, five years after its inception, there was widespread skepticism about the need, necessity, and viability of AKMG, since virtually every major city in the US and Canada had four or five Malayalee organizations, often fighting tooth and nail, in concert with "our Kerala mores". Many of the leaders were reluctant to step down in a timely manner. Besides, some of the leaders of these organizations were physicians, and that further increased the chances of competition and divisiveness. Although more than 100 Kerala associations were already in existence, their sole function was a local get-together for Onam or Christmas.



Past president Dr. Roy Thomas impatiently waiting to make a point at the general body meeting, while President Dr. Enas presents the agenda (1986)



Dr. Paul Cherian (fourth from left), the architect of AKMG bylaws and who brought order from chaos, flanked by friends immediately after the original bylaws were approved (1986)

My first challenge was to craft and frame a new vision and mission of AKMG and highlight its difference with all other Malayalee organizations in such a way that AKMG would become a magnet for all Indian physicians of Kerala heritage in North America and not just the alumni of the four medical colleges. My vision of AKMG was finally crystallized: “to build a robust, vibrant, and united national organization that promotes contact and friendship, providing a forum for social, cultural, and professional interaction among Keralite physicians, regardless of the college of medical education”. In order to assure its preeminence, AKMG would supplant but not substitute alumni associations of individual medical colleges. These missions and goals were met in a matter of three years and the success was beyond all our expectations.

THE TRAILBLAZING BUILDING BLOCKS OF AKMG

Any prestigious institution or beautiful building will require careful evaluation of the need, necessity, feasibility, finances, personnel, and the several building blocks that fit together and complement each other. Since most of the major building blocks of AKMG are elaborated elsewhere in this Archive, I will only whet your appetite and briefly outline those introduced and integrated during the three years of my presidency that helped catapult AKMG to the forefront of Indian medical organizations throughout the world.

A. THE DIRECTORY OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS FROM KERALA THE BEDROCK OF AKMG

There was no directory of any kind available in those days to compare or build on. The collection of data for the first directory was a monumental task involving the acquisition of names from 44 states in the US and 9 provinces in Canada through a series of letters, newspaper advertisements, and long-distance phone calls. On average, about 10 calls were needed to secure the correct home and office numbers and establish contact with the “right doctor” as many of the last names were totally alien even to close friends; and many provided only the first names. Many doctors declined to engage in long conversations about AKMG during office hours and most of their home numbers were unlisted. Some did not want their personal particulars available and accessible even to their fellow physicians and refused to cooperate. Most names had to be cross checked with the spouse’s names or colleges to avoid duplication on computer which had barely arrived at the scene.

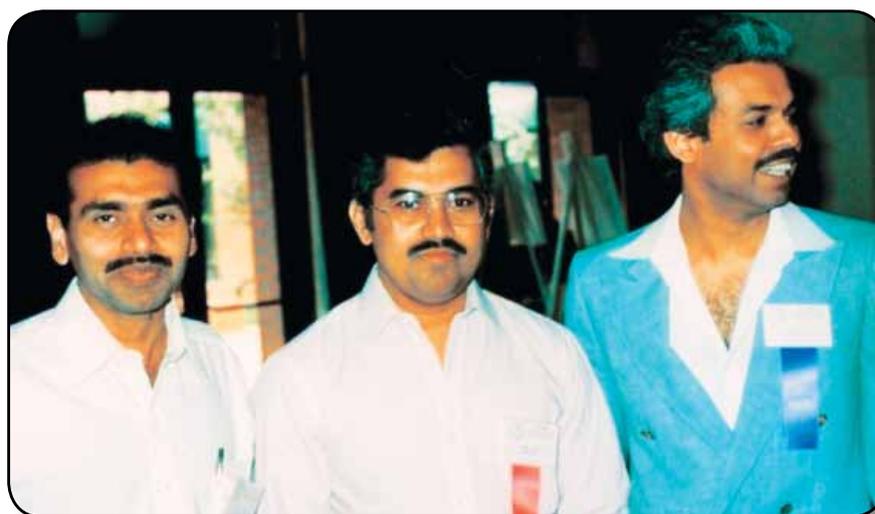
By April of 1986, we had published the directory with over 1,200 names listed alphabeti-

cally, by college, by specialty, and by state. For the very first time, the directory provided the addresses, home and office phone numbers, and spouses' names. Since AKMG had no dues-paid members at the time of publication, I could



Dr. K.P. Ravi Krishnan (fourth from left), the election officer, who established orderly transfer of power in AKMG receiving accolades from President Dr. Enas, future president Dr. Amanullah and CME Chair Dr. Easwaran Variyam (1986)

not name it as the AKMG directory and instead named it as the directory of Medical Specialists from Kerala. As soon as the availability of the directory was announced, we started receiving non-stop phone calls and letters for a copy of the directory. It was not for sale to the general public and was meant exclusively for the use of its members. To



“First AKMG Life Member” Dr. Joseph Thomas (first from left) with friends (1986)

my great delight, everyone wanted to become a member and receive a complimentary copy of the Directory. I felt myself in the driver's seat and offered the AKMG annual membership for \$50. The Directory was a phenomenal success and trailblazer that opened the door to contact with hundreds of Keralite physicians, from coast to coast, rekindling friendships with long-lost class mates and college mates. It generated a contagious enthusiasm among our members, who are some of the most dynamic, resourceful, and free spirited of people. 1986 witnessed a phenomenal growth of AKMG which grew more than ten times that year compared to the growth in the first five years combined. The active (dues-paid) members increased from less than 20 to more than 250 and the mailing list (directory) increased from less than 100 to over 1,200.

B. THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF CONVENTIONS THE FLAGSHIP OF AKMG

During my “infamous long-distance telephone calls”, many doctors, especially those who attended the previous annual gatherings had made it abundantly clear that they would not want to travel thousands of miles, just to have an Indian meal with “rice pilaf and masala tea”. Others wanted extended activities and see newer faces “not the same old folks”. With the concurrence of the vice-president Dr. Thomas Bose and secretary Dr. Thresiamma Joseph, we decided to abandon the prevailing format of two-hour dinner meeting and to hold an all-day convention with extended activities. After extensive deliberations, we decided to call it the “sixth convention” rather than the first to highlight harmony and continuity within the organization.

Those who registered for the “First Convention” did not bother to reserve the hotel rooms, despite repeated requests and reminders; only five rooms were booked four weeks before the convention. Since we neither held any prior convention, nor had any credit history, the Disney World Hilton threatened to cancel the convention, unless an advance nonrefundable payment of \$50,000 was made towards the meeting rooms, sleeping rooms, lunch and banquet. As President, I found myself between a rock and a hard place in 1986— whether to cancel or hold my “first convention” as planned and risk losing \$50,000 a choice none of my predecessors or successors had to face.

Thanks to American Express Platinum Card— I was able to go forward with the advance payment after extensive discussions with Dr. George Thomas the architect and chair of Orlando convention. History repeated itself and I had to personally make an advance \$50,000 for the Philadelphia and the Toronto conventions as well. Were it not for these bold decisions, the enormous goodwill AKMG conventions have generated over the years would have remained an elusive dream. Thank God, my successors do not have to face such financial challenges as they can draw an advance for the convention and if necessary, bill the AKMG for any convention loss they incur (as has happened thrice).

The “First AKMG Convention” (sixth AKMG gathering) began at the Disney World Hilton at Orlando, Florida on Memorial Day, with myself inaugurating the first-ever AKMG CME, well organized by Dr. Easwaran Variyam, the CME chair. An extended social hour with “open bar” set the relaxing stage for the gala banquet. We served surf and turf with filet mignon, prawn delight, and California wine for the banquet, which was attended by 300 people — a far cry from rice pilaf and masala tea of yester years. Even the amateur entertainment was an exhilarating experience. We provided a breakfast, lunch, and dinner, all for a registration fee of \$50 only. A jubilant convention reelected me

President for a 2-year term (according to the newly approved by-laws) with Drs. George Thomas as President-elect, Shanmugha Sundaram as Vice-president and Ram Thinakkal as the Secretary-Treasurer.

Members demanded three days of activities for the following convention, but there was no individual or team to host the second convention. So I embarked on a three week, 10 states, 15 cities tours to drum up support for AKMG and identify a site, team, and venue for my second convention. It was eventually held in Philadelphia with Dr. Valsa Ouseph as the convention chair and Drs. Tim Mathew and Parvathi Mohan providing a fabulous entertainment.

Unlike the Disney World Hilton, the Society Hill Sheraton was sold out eight weeks before the convention, which had an attendance of over 700 people and 3 days of activities, as we joined the national celebration of the bicentennial of the US constitution. We literally transformed the convention headquarters to “Sheraton Kerala” on that momentous Fourth of July weekend (July 3-5, 1987). Health seminar, investment seminar, spouse’s program, youth dance, and silver jubilee luncheon were introduced. Nearly 500 people showed up for the luncheon, while only 250 had purchased tickets. Accommodating these late bloomers was an exercise in brinkmanship, which evidently paid off by the enormous goodwill it had generated.

I really wanted to hold my third convention (Eighth AKMG gathering) in my home turf in Chicago, but settled for Toronto, Canada at Harbor Castle Westin. It had an attendance exceeding 1,000, including several dignitaries representing the governments of US, Canada, and Kerala. This convention not only helped recruit more Kerala Canadians and integrate them into AKMG, but also avoided conflict with FOKANA which was holding its convention in Chicago, the same year. There was a lot of pressure on me to merge with or at least hold a joint convention with FOKANA, both of which I vetoed. The Toronto convention had four days of festivities, including tennis matches, golf outings, and a relaxing cruise on Lake Ontario, conceived and consummated by Dr. Kutty, who performed admirably well with his wit and wisdom, in his triple role as the convention chair, arts director, and master of ceremonies. The pervasive and often degrading and divisive features such as “senior and junior mentality” and “graduation within and outside Kerala” were erased to everybody’s delight. The unprecedented and unparalleled honor to preside over the “first three AKMG conventions” gave me a unique opportunity to learn from the mistakes and continuously improve the scope, glamour, and grandeur of the AKMG conventions, which have now become the flagship of AKMG.

We raised the bar with each convention, which soon became the gold standard for medical

conventions of Indian physicians throughout the land. AKMG conventions became a major annual event that most Keralite physicians looked forward to and planned their family vacations around — an eloquent testimonial to its success and popularity. We actively sought and received exhibitors and sponsors from various businesses, including pharmaceuticals, investment firms, jewelry stores, and saree stalls. The additional revenue from these sources allowed the registration fee and ticket prices to be kept low and transfer the surplus to AKMG accounts. Let me caution the future presidents, that failure to secure substantial exhibit and sponsorship revenues as well as reserving too many sleeping rooms can result in convention losses. It is important that the convention team accurately estimate the attendance in advance to avoid penalty.

C. BY-LAWS, MERITOCRACY, TEAM EFFORT, AND ORDERLY ASCENSION IN LEADERSHIP

The AKMG by-laws are the defining document of the organization. It was prepared under the leadership of Dr. Paul Cherian and adopted at the “First AKMG convention”. Meritocracy was introduced for the first time, through the nominating committee. This process replaced the then pervasive practice of picking the senior most individuals to lead the organization (regardless of leadership skills). This procedure also helped eliminate the “senior-junior mentality”, which was stifling the growth of AKMG in its early years.

The nominating process of selecting the most qualified candidates for various offices and their orderly ascension in the leadership ladder, allowed the best leaders to be selected and promoted, ensuring unity and harmony and avoiding divisive elections that have been the hallmark of all Indian and Kerala organizations for decades. To the best of my knowledge, no other large major Malayalee organization can claim the unity and harmony that AKMG has championed and fostered over the years. We have clearly demonstrated that a strong united organization is far better than several mediocre ones. The AKMG by-laws, the nominating process, and especially conventions soon became the template for most other successful Indian medical organizations

I was blessed to have had an outstanding team to carry the baton and bring continued glory and success to AKMG. During my protracted phone calls and three years of presidency, I was able to identify several potential leaders and place them in strategic positions to demonstrate their skills, gradually move up the ladder and become my successors — Drs. George Thomas, Ram Thinakkal, K. E. Mathew, Karunakaran Kutty, Tim Mathew, Parvathi Mohan, M. V. Pillai, Adoor Amanulla,

Easwaran Variyam, M. P. Ravindranathan, Pratap Chandran, Shakuntala Rajagopal, Sovi Joseph, and Thomas Mukkada — to name a few. These and other presidents have made AKMG an even better, stronger, dynamic organization and an envy of others.

D. THE ORIGINAL AKMG LOGO — A SYNTHESIS OF OUR THREE COMMON BONDS

Our logo displaying coconut palms and wonderful waterways reminds us of our proud Kerala heritage. The Caduceus symbolizes the professional nature of our organization and our responsibilities. Lady liberty symbolizes freedom throughout the world and exhorts us to share the fruits of our good fortune and gifted talents with our brethren in Kerala. Unfortunately the original logo prominently displaying the letters A-K-M-G got lost and an earlier version without these letters has been in use for many years.



E. LIFE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM THE PIVOTAL PILLAR OF FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND STATURE

I applied for and received tax-exempt status for AKMG, which made it easier to implement the life-membership programs. Introduced in 1987, the life membership program was a grand success. More than 200 physicians became life members in the first 2 years by making a one-time payment of \$500. The main attraction for the life membership program was my solemn pledge and commitment that convention registration would be free for them. Equally important contributing factors were the pleasantries and persuasive skills of the registration desk, headed by the AKMG First Lady, Mary Enas and her dream team Kamar Amanulla, Beena Variyam, Susan Karimpil, Rita Chandran, Ratna Thinakkal, Elamma Cherian, Padma Sundaram, Mariamma Thomas, Omana Kutty, Gleena Sankoorickkal, Lisa Paul — to name a few. AKMG enjoys a higher proportion of life members, than any other Indian organization. Clear rules were written so as to protect the life membership funds from being used for annual AKMG expenditures or to cover convention losses.

F. MEDICAL EDUCATION

Another mission of AKMG, as I saw it, was to professionally interact with medical institutions in our homeland to further the cause of medical education and medical care. With over 90 percent of our members being specialists and subspecialists in various fields of medicine and over 25 per-

cent holding high teaching positions in world-renowned universities and medical centers, AKMG was uniquely qualified to succor their brethren in Kerala. We not only started a dialogue with the Director of Medical Education, but also brought her as a chief guest at the Toronto Convention. We also made progress in this area by donating books and journals, with the donating members themselves paying the hefty shipping costs.

G. FACULTY ENRICHMENT GRANTS

Faculty Enrichment Grants (\$1,250 each) were developed and awarded to five doctors in Kerala at the Toronto convention. The main objective was for mid-level academic physicians to undergo advanced short-term training in the US and disseminate that knowledge upon their return. It was soon abandoned, mainly due to misuse of funds and the failure of the program to achieve its very goals. Only a miniscule percentage of Keralite physicians are settled in the US and organized under AKMG. However, it is ironic that AKMG has done a greater service in furthering the cause of medical education in Kerala than any other groups of physicians practicing and flourishing in Kerala or in other countries (see AKMG Learning Resource Centers).

H. THE CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE IN INDIANS (CADI) STUDY AND THE KERALA HEALTH INITIATIVE

The CADI Study was proposed in my presidential address at the Philadelphia convention and implemented at subsequent AKMG and AAPI conventions with guidance from Dr. Salim Yusuf an esteemed AKMG member and perhaps the most brilliant “cardiologist-scientist of our time”. This pioneering study showed a 3-4-fold higher rate of (coronary) heart disease and diabetes among Indian physicians in the US compared to the general US population. It also showed a genetic predisposition to heart disease among Indians at a very young age mediated by a lipoprotein(a) — a lesser known but the deadliest of all cholesterol. The CADI Study has stimulated numerous researchers to pursue the causes and solutions of the twin epidemics of heart disease and diabetes in India. Most notable among them is the Kerala Health initiative — an expansive multifaceted program by the Population Health Research Institute (PHRI) of the McMaster University (Canada), in collaboration with Kerala University of Health Sciences and the state government of Kerala. The Initiative also includes Kerala Health Study that is designed to be the equivalent of India’s Framingham Heart Study and the main objective is to reduce the burden of, and mortality from heart disease, diabetes, and road traffic

Chronology of Keystones and Milestones in the Sea Change of AKMG

Structure, vision, and mission	Changed the tenet of organization away from an alumni association, and laid a strong foundation for a harmonious true national organization of Indian physicians of Kerala heritage in North America, regardless of the college of medical education and year of medical school entry.
Popularizing the name	Popularized the name AKMG, integrated and blended Malayalee physicians from 75 medical colleges spread over 46 US states and 9 Canadian provinces, practicing 60 different specialties into one big happy family, supplanting the role of individual medical college alumni associations.
AKMG logo	Designed the original logo incorporating the three major bonds – Caduceus, coconut palms, Lady Liberty and the letters A-K-M-G prominently displayed.
Becoming Tax-exempt	Applied for and secured tax-exempt status as a professional organization
Directory of Medical Specialists from Kerala	Published the first Directory in 1986 and the second edition in 1988 with over 1200 names that became the bedrock of AKMG.
AKMG Conventions	Masterminded, organized, and presided over the “first 3 AKMG conventions” with ever increasing attendance and activities including CME, silver jubilee luncheon, gala banquet, amateur and professional entertainment, youth dance, tennis /golf tournament, card games, cruise etc. Constantly raised the bar and set the gold standard for AKMG conventions to follow and other organizations to imitate.
Exhibitors and sponsors	Raised over \$100,000 from various sponsors and exhibitors to enhance the standards and quality of the convention and subsidize the registration costs
The AKMG Reporter	Introduced the news letter with George Thomas as the editor, which provided colorful coverage of the convention and other activities, conveying such feelings of exhilaration.
By-laws, elections and meritocracy	Wrote the original by-laws and introduced 2-year terms for the office bearers and conducted the first 2 elections. Introduced meritocracy through by-laws, replacing time-honored Indian practice of selecting the senior most persons to lead the organization. Also eliminated then pervasive senior-junior mentality, and the common practice of demanding or expecting to be called “sir”.
Medical education and transfer of medical technology	Established CME as a core activity of the convention. Initiated a dialogue and brought the Director of Medical Education to Toronto Convention at the expense of AKMG and started a program for sending medical journals to medical colleges.
Faculty Enrichment Grants	Developed and awarded five “Faculty Enrichment Grants” for short- term training in the U.S.
Regular and life membership programs	Instituted life-membership programs and enrolled the first 200 life members offering free – registration at all AKMG conventions. Recruited large number of younger physicians into AKMG.
Financial strength and stability	Ensured the financial viability of AKMG by collecting and transferring \$85,000 to the newer leadership upon stepping down after three years.
Leadership development	Established a system of identifying and promoting future leaders in an orderly fashion, for the continued growth of AKMG and maintaining unity and harmony. Interacted with other physicians of Indian heritage such as the AAPI to make it easier for AKMG members to contribute to AAPI leadership.
CADI Research	Proposed the landmark CADI Study at the Philadelphia convention and conducted it at subsequent AKMG and AAPI conventions that showed 3-4-fold high rates of heart disease and diabetes among Indian doctors. This confirmed the very high rates of heart disease previously observed in the general population in India and the Indian Diasporas.



Dr. Pitchumoni (second from left), a revered “Founding Father” who originated the idea of AKMG, flanked by President Dr. Enas, President-elect Dr. George Thomas and Vice president Dr. Shanmugha Sundaram. (1986)



Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal (center), who would become the first woman President of AKMG flanked by Mary Enas and Omana Eipe. (1986)



“AKMG First Ladies Galore” registration committee headed by Mary Enas (6th from left) and several future First Ladies. (1986)



Dr. Thomas Mathew Chief guest of the First AKMG convention savoring the company of president and friends. (1986)



It is only by chance that all these AKMG presidents wear red ties—no reflection of their political philosophy. (1987)

accidents in our home state. I continue to devote a lion's share of my time, energy, expertise, and resources in fighting the twin epidemics of heart disease and diabetes among Indians worldwide. (*For more information visit www.cadiresearch.org*)

I. AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN (AAPI)

The need for a national organization to represent all 40,000 Indian physicians in the US was recognized early and led to the birth of AAPI in 1983 (three years after AKMG). Like AKMG, AAPI also failed to attract more than a few hundred doctors after five years of its existence. For example, the 1988 AAPI convention in San Francisco had less than 300 people in attendance, while the AKMG convention in Toronto (attended by the AAPI President) had more than 1,000. As the newly minted treasurer of AAPI, I was surprised to find that AAPI had less than \$10,000 in the bank, while AKMG had \$85,000. The AAPI leaders, who noticed the phenomenal growth and strength of AKMG wanted to learn from and possibly duplicate our success at AAPI. To achieve this goal, I was recruited to be treasurer of AAPI, where I was able to revive and rejuvenate the fledgling AAPI life membership program by offering free convention registration that was originally championed at the AKMG. AAPI now has more than \$2.5 million in life membership funds that generates a steady stream of revenues from interest and investments.

Having declined to move up the ladder and become the President of AAPI, I chose to become the Chairman of the Board and concentrated my energy and enthusiasm for the CADI Research, which has been my passion for many years. I had the honor of chairing the first two Indo-US Health Summits for AAPI and publish specific guidelines with lower and stricter threshold of intervention, for the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease among Indians worldwide.

Dr. George Thomas became the Editor of AAPI Journal and later the President of AAPI. Two other past Presidents of AKMG have become editors of AAPI Journal — Dr. Adoor Amanullah and Dr. Ravindra Nathan. Dr. Narendra Kumar is in line to become AAPI President in 2012.

J. AKMG AND AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA)

In recognition of its stature, AKMG was a special invitee at the first AMA meeting with leaders of Foreign Medical Graduates in Chicago. I had the unique honor of not only representing AKMG but also proposing the name change from the derogatory Foreign Medical Graduates to the dignified International Medical Graduates — gain, a name universally taken for granted now.



Past presidents, president and president-elect of AKMG posing in front of the newly approved AKMG logo at the Philadelphia convention. (1987)



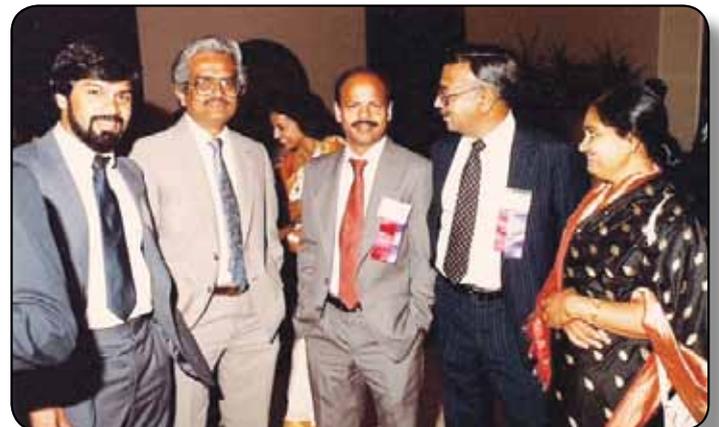
Dr. K.E. Mathew with his favorite camera to capture the mood of Drs. Tim Mathew, George Thomas and Saroj Karimpil. (1987)



The one and only Dr. Roy Thomas, our humor maestro, savoring the roaring applause for his funny punch line. (1987)



AKMG President and future presidents (class mates) with their spouses. (1987)



Dr. Padma Sundaram and friends enjoying a good joke by late Dr. Rajagopal (second from the left). (1987)

A LOOK BACK AT THE REWARDING EXPERIENCE AT AKMG

By the time I finished my three years as President, AKMG was widely recognized as the premier medical Association of Indian physicians in the US with far more life members and money in the bank than any other Indian organization. The chronology of major key stones and mile stones of my tenure is summarized in the table. The enormous prestige and stature AKMG now enjoys would not have been possible without the active involvement of our members and their spouses, who literally contributed their time and rich talents especially for the CME, entertainment programs, and registration desk and I thank them all. Our trailblazing experimentation of identifying, organizing, nurturing, and unifying all physicians of Kerala heritage in North America under the banner of AKMG, supplanting but preserving the role of individual alumni associations for each medical college, is now being duplicated by physicians from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and many other Indian states. I had the pleasure and privilege of advising and guiding many of these state-based Indian medical alumni organizations during their initial formation. I agree with the adage that imitation is the best compliment one can receive. I have been immensely gratified to see and enjoy the fruits of my efforts for past 25 years. Of all the triumphs of AKMG—the one thing I am most proud of and cherish and relish is — the solid foundation of AKMG and its enviable unity, harmony, and camaraderie, that continue to inspire and invigorate its rank and file and leaders alike.

Dr. Karunakaran Kutty is always at his best as the Convention Chair or Master of ceremonies. (1988)



Future presidents, executive committee, and chief guests paying rapt attention to the swan song by President Dr. Enas. (1988)

President Dr. Enas introducing the chief guests, Dr. Santhakumari and Dr. Joy Cherian. (1988)



Professor Madhavan Kutty and Recipients of the Faculty Enrichment Grant, Faizal Marickar with President and chief guests. (1988)



Second AKMG president, late Dr. Thomas P. Thomas (first from left) from the third batch of Trivandrum medical College having a good time with friends from earlier batches. (1988)



Dr. Enas and Mary Enas with chief guest Dr. Santhakumari (sitting fourth from the left) and Founding father Dr. Pitchumoni and friends. (1988)



Professor Madhavan Kutty (sitting fourth from the left) enjoying the company of his former students and their spouses. (1988)



AKMG First Lady Mary Enas receiving a well deserved bouquet from Kamar Amanullah. (1988)



AKMG youth with chief guest Joy Cherian (first row standing last) and late Dr. Abraham Kuttothara. (1988)



AKMG secretary Dr. Thressiamma Joseph (first from left) beaming with friends. (1988)



Dr. Amba and Radhakrishnan (center) who would later receive a special award for attending most AKMG conventions. (1988)



Drs. Aysha and Enu Karuvath enjoying the entertainment. (1988)



Dr. Susheela Nathan giving a bouquet to guest of honor. (1988)



AKMG talent show winner. (1988)



Chief guest Dr. Joy Cherian flanked by the President. (1988)



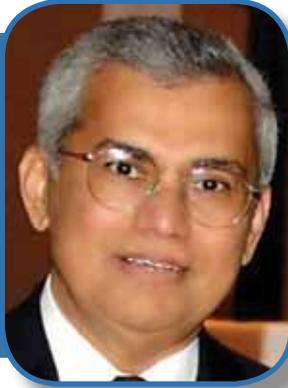
A veritable display of beauty and grace at AKMG fashion show. (1988)



Dr. Leya Mathew, beaming with friends. (1988)



President Dr. Enas passing the baton to Dr. George Thomas after an unprecedented and unparalleled 3 years of presidency and receiving the lifetime achievement award from the new President. (1988)



AKMG - My Memory

George Thomas, MD
President of AKMG, 1988-1990

The AKMG edifice was built by many volunteers, and each of you has been an integral part of our success as you have participated in and supported our many endeavors over the years. When asked to write this piece, I felt strange to look back and judge the accomplishments of my period of leadership, but Ravi gave me no refusal. For a period of 5 years beginning in 1985, there were two presidents. We had a very cohesive team and scored many goals, and our victories were the result of working together as a team. In that spirit, let me relate the following memories.

FORTUITOUS BEGINNING

My membership began in 1980, when AKMG was first formed. On one fateful night in 1985, a cardiology colleague from Chicago called. There were many such calls, mostly when most of us were asleep in the Eastern time zone. Somewhere in my sleep talking with this newly acquired telephone friend, I accepted the responsibility to convene the 1986 AKMG annual meeting in Orlando.

ORLANDO CONVENTION

This event was a turning point for our AKMG, and I am most grateful to have had the opportunity to organize this historic event over a quarter century ago. The Memorial day weekend in 1986 was a milestone, and there was great joy and excitement among the members as they met in Orlando with their families, to get to know each other and socialize. The event was structured in a convention format with welcome reception, CME program with several informative presentations, formal banquet and an entertaining cultural program. There was even a free lunch; although, the penalty was listening to an investment talk! The constitution was drafted, discussed and approved, which established a proper infrastructure. The convention gave the impetus to many concepts which are now a reality. My

sincere appreciation for the leadership of President Enas, Dr. Easwaran for the CME program and Dr. Ravindra Nathan for cultural program, “Taste of Kerala”.

AKMG REPORTER

In September 1986, another key catalyst of AKMG’s growth and success appeared on the scene. It was the birth of our “family” letter, the AKMG Reporter. It disseminated the news and views of our alumni community across our continent. The members read about current events, about our children, happy and occasionally some sad items, accomplishments of individuals, growth of our organization, news from chapters, reflections of our



AKMG Convention in Toronto 1988

members, highlights of conventions, memories of Kerala and so much more. The AKMG story was told to everyone. This is another unique privilege you all gave me to create this and serve as editor through the initial years. Along with the directory, which Dr. Enas built so well, the convention and the Reporter sparked the stupendous growth of that period.

1987-1989 PERIOD

Looking back it was a miracle that I was able to participate in the leadership. Personally, it was a period that was most demanding in our lives, totally consumed with the needs of a new and growing cardiology practice as well as the responsibility to our growing family with four little boys at home. It was a fascinating period to serve as President-Elect with my good friend, Enas with our usual spirited discussions and unity of direction. This was a period of increasing visibility and popularity for our alumni with two very successful conventions. One vividly remembered challenge for me was, serving as the master of ceremonies for the Philadelphia convention in 1987 banquet with over a dozen speakers, many with at least a half hour speech prepared. Thank God we finished by 9 pm, and families were able to eat dinner.

TAKING THE REINS

In the summer of 1988, at the Toronto convention, the baton was symbolically passed on to me by President Enas with the warning, "I must warn my successors that their job is going to be more challenging to sustain the growth and momentum, and expand our horizons." After an intense period, the key task was to hold on to the gains and advance further. Oliver Wendell Holmes said it right, "Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions."



Dr. Thomas speaking at the 1990 AKMG Convention

AKMG CHAPTERS

To expand the membership and organizational impact, more regional chapters were established. AKMG Canada Chapter was formed in November 1988 in a meeting chaired by Dr. Karunakaran Kutty. A Western Chapter was established with its first meeting in January 1989 in Los Angeles with Dr. Eipe as President. Dr. Venugopal Menon lead the establishment of the Houston chapter. Subsequently, there was a greater impetus for regional gathering and other chapters to form. This network helped facilitate further growth.



HILTON HEAD 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

The 1989 convention in the renowned Westin resort in this luxurious, subtropical sea island, was even more remarkable. The convention program was expanded to four days starting with a welcome reception on Thursday, a special Kerala cuisine dinner on Friday, expanded CME program, vigorous tennis tournament, music competition, youth program, banquet with many dignitaries on Saturday followed by a program by Markose and Radhika, with their talented troupe. For this meeting, we received special messages of salutation from President George H. W. Bush, Ambassador of India P.K. Kaul, the president of the American Medical Association, Dr. James Davis. This event had the largest attendance to date. Dr. Devi Vellody and Dr. Bala Iyer get kudos for a great job as chairpersons of this event.



CAMPUS COMEDY/ PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

A new elegant, native Kerala talent show “Campus Comedy” was first introduced for Friday night in Hilton Head. It was a night of original, unscreened talent to follow the 10th anniversary family dinner, thanks to Dr. P. K. Kutty and Dr. T. M. Mathew. Bhisaghwaracharitham, by Dr. Eswaran Vari-



Dr. Thomas at the 1990 Convention

yam, was Ottamthullal at its best. We commend all involved for their excellent efforts and performance. For the first time in our history, a professional musical concert was introduced for the banquet night. We appreciate Markose and Radhika for a beautiful evening concert.

WIDENING OUR REACH

At a critical time for international medical graduates, a conscious effort was made to reach out to major state and national medical organizations. As a result, for the first time, an AMA president, Dr. James Davis, a state medical association president, Dr. J. Nettles from Georgia, and Dr. Navin Nanda, president of AAPI participated and addressed the AKMG convention. Dinesh D'Souza, who was an adviser in the Reagan administration, energized the youth event with his words. Dr. C.K. Job, a former principal from CMC Vallore and Dr. Vimala Nayar, retired professor of OB/GYN from Kerala, brought inspiring messages and words of wisdom from the homeland.

CRESCENT CITY CONVENTION 1990

The eleventh annual convention was a most stimulating annual event and was organized by the Cajun chapter under the leadership with Dr. K. E. Mathew as chair and Dr. Jaya Warriar as vice chair. AKMG reached yet new heights with this spectacular event. We had a memorable and exciting time at the elegant New Orleans Hilton filled with activities, which appealed to a wide range of ages. A bright spot was the Cajun night on Friday where we were surrounded by an electrifying Mardi Gras parade in the huge Hilton ballroom. The floats moved by, in an array of splendor, and the jazz musicians played their hearts out, to the great delight of all who participated. The Campus Comedy followed with the "Mary ki Kahane" skit by Dr. Kutty and Dr. Vijaya Kumar. Special greetings and best wishes were sent to AKMG by Dr. Louis Sullivan, Secretary of Health & Human Services, Dr. C. John Tupper, the president of AMA, Abid Hussain, Ambassador of India, and Sidney J. Barthelemy, Mayor of New Orleans.

FORMATION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES/BYLAW REVISION

With continued expansion of the membership and our finances, the fiduciary responsibility to safeguard the funds with prudent stewardship was an increasing necessity. To accomplish this, a trust fund consisting of all life membership funds and additional funds as determined by the board of governors was created. A three member board of trustees was also established to oversee the funds, separate from the elected officers. Another important bylaw change accomplished this year was to convert the term of the president and executive committee from two years to one year.

AMA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AKMG was one of the fourteen physician ethnic organizations in the United States invited to participate in the first meeting of the AMA Advisory Committee in January 1990. Several far-reaching changes in crucial issues affecting our community, including licensure and residency training programs followed this event in the years to come.

PAYING IT BACK

From the inception of AKMG, there was an interest in contributing to medical education in Kerala. After serious consideration and evaluation of our resources, a concept of establishing a CME/Learning Center in the medical colleges in Kerala for the advancement of medical education was proposed following the tenth annual convention. The faculty enrichment program was continued and expanded to assist faculty members to visit universities in the United States and Canada for medical training not available in Kerala. AKMG members were warmly welcomed and gave lectures to the post graduate students to enhance their CME programs. More people signed up for the program of sending journals and textbooks to their alma mater. We encouraged participation in the Island Express disaster relief fund. After several years, the Learning Resource Centers are now a reality in several Kerala medical schools.

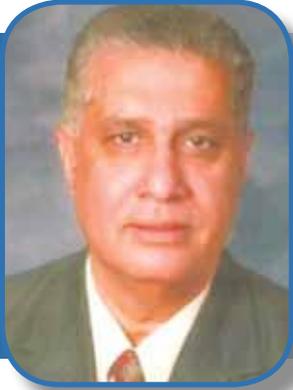
FINAL THOUGHTS

Everything was not a walk in the park during the formative period. There were many shortcomings. For example, during the much touted Orlando convention the day cruise planned for Sunday did not materialize due to transportation failure. What fascinated me was the number of calls with words of encouragement after the event from people I met for the first time.

I began writing this piece with reluctance and am ending it with regret that I have not done justice to the many people who made this all possible. My special thanks to the members of the Board and various committees especially President Elect Dr. Ram Thinakkal. There are numerous unsung heroes, and among them stand out our spouses, who steadfastly supported us and toiled along beside us without any limelight. For me, I must mention Mariamma, my bride for 37 years, who inspired and sustained our family during this period. As I said in Hilton Head and even more convinced today, “It is in working together, in sharing ideas, in dividing tasks, and walking the road together that we reach the goal.”



AKMG Convention in Toronto 1988



Musings from Opryland

Ram Thinakkal, MD
President of AKMG, 1990-1992

My American odyssey took me from Chicago to Parsons, Kansas and then to Livingston, Tennessee. Far away from the madding crowd, here in this remote Tennessee town, I am the only ENT doctor for the past three years - as a matter of fact I am the only foreign doctor here. Ratna and I fell in love with the picturesque landscape here, an ideal set up for our pre retirement days..

One day last August, we went to the office in the morning when a torrential rain started and my patients canceled their appointments. We went back home only to see that the entire house was flooded. The dry creek in our backyard now looked like a river after the deluge. We had to spend that night in a Holiday Inn in Cookeville. Although the flood waters had subsided the next day, the house became so moldy, I had been fighting dry coughs, nasal stuffiness and allergies since then and taking allergy shots, antihistamines and nasal steroids, without much success.

So it was no wonder that our president Dr. K. C. Joseph had a hard time to reach me for this article. Congratulations are in order to K. C. and his great team in Detroit as they are getting ready for our convention in July, 2012.

I was the president of AKMG in 1991 and 1992. Those were the waning days of glory of medicine in America but fortunately AKMG was on the ascent. The modus operandi of AKMG those years was hectic and tedious. But it all felt easy and manageable as I was under the perfect tutelage of Dr. Enas who, we all agree, single handedly revived our association to its current preeminent status. And I also had the consummate help from our editor, Dr. Amanullah.

Our 1991 convention was held in Chicago at the Marriot Resort in Lincolnshire. Dr. Shanmugha Sundaram was the convention chairman. Dr. Joseph Sankoorikal was in charge of fine arts and Dr. Sakunthala Rajagopal, the Chairperson for CME program. The Lincolnshire resort was an idyllic setup for all our friends to meet and mingle. We had one major unexpected setback as the final day

the entertainment team headed by movie star Nedumudi Venu, didn't show up because of visa problems. Immediately our arts team went into high gear to get the best talents from our own group to put on a thoroughly enjoyable show for two whole days. To this day I haven't heard anybody say they missed the pro troupe from home.

The main banquet hall was in a quadrangle with doors on all sides. But all the guests, our friends, were coming through the main entrance, where this caused a near stampede. This turned all our planned seating arrangements upside down. Although there was commotion all around, when I look back I feel the confusion sort of co-

alesced into an energetic body. One lady doctor in tears while at the grand banquet as her 8 year old boy was having an abdominal colic. The mother thought he had torsion of testis, a real emergency. We had some of the eminent urologists amidst our gathering at that time like Drs. P. R. Unni from Indiana, Unnikrishna Warriar from Kentucky, Unni Mooppan and Enu Karuvath from New York. They examined him and reassured the mother that there was no major concern. Amidst all this commotion Professor Phillip Zarrilli and his Madison University troupe gave a performance of kalarippayattu that kept the crowd spellbound.

The next year we met in Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, CA. It was a great venue. Our California friends put on a great show and our members were captivated by the astounding beauty of this historic resort. The welcome reception at the promenade deck at the edge of the Pacific waters, so eerily quiet, was simply unforgettable. The campus night festivities started with social hour in the garden patio, a vast quadrangle with a variety of flowering shrubs, azaleas, and oleanders with giant pine



The Precious Princesses of AKMG - 1991



Dr. Thinakkal with his advisors. - 1991

trees at the corners. Dr. Joseph Eipe our convention chairman did a splendid job in making our San Diego convention such a memorable event. He was ably assisted by Dr. George Sebastian who was in charge of artistic events and Dr. Jay Menon who captained a fantastic boat ride across San Diego harbor. Both Drs. Sebastian George and Jay Menon have passed on, so let us pause for a moment and pray for our departed friends. The San Diego convention was memorable because we had an array of outstanding guests. The great poet laureate of Kerala, Sugatha Kumari, inspired us all to keep dreaming and keep the world a cleaner, healthier place. The great hand surgeon, Dr. Paul Brand who learned and performed the digital tendon transplants in remote Indian leprosy centers gave a great CME talk. The Indian Tennis Ambassadors at large, the Amritraj brothers were at our tennis championship. To crown it all, we had the great maestro, Dr. K. J. Yesudas for the musical concert at our banquet night.

During these two years, we started to have better interaction with our medical schools back home. Those few who came to the US for meetings were paid a financial assistance in addition to helping with their local seminars and conferences. This was well before we started to organize the learning research centers in Kerala.



Dr. Ram Thinakkal addressing convention as president - 1991

AKMG has come a long way but we have new challenges now. Not many new physicians are coming from Kerala, a direct response to the ever deteriorating reimbursement conundrum, now prevalent in US Health care system. Even our new medical graduates from US find that there is not much in common with us. They are not too fond of our Malayalam melodies also. So it behooves us all to look for new ways to bring all these young physicians into our fold and preserve the AKMG heritage lest it will end like the dinosaurs. So let us do everything possible to make it as vibrant and productive an organization as it can be.



1991 convention in Chicago at the Marriot Resort, Lincolnshire



Dr. Thinakkal with advisors.



The Three Wisemen



The registration Mafia



The President's Men - AKMG Convention 1991

Memorable moments from the 1991 AKMG Convention



The Jewels



P. Karunakaran Kutty, MD
President of AKMG, 1992-1993

My Memories

I remember...

It was early 1985 when I received a mailing from Dr. K. C. R. Nair asking me to join "AKMG". That must be soon after he registered AKMG as a nonprofit corporation in Michigan. This was the first time I knew about the existence of such an organization! I do not know how he got my address! I had just moved to Cambridge, Ontario after resigning from the faculty of medicine at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland where I was Associate Professor, Head of Gastroenterology and Director of GI Training Program. The move was for financial reasons and I was just settling in private practice. So I did not respond! Dr. Enas took over the presidency of AKMG that year and the rest is history as you all know. For some reason, I could not attend the Orlando convention either but have missed only one since the Philadelphia convention in 1987. Dr. Enas was gracious and bold enough to ask me to host the convention in Toronto, the next year! It was indeed a privilege to know intimately and a pleasure to work closely with Drs. Enas A. Enas, George Thomas, Ram Thinakkal and Adoor Amanullah. I learned a lot from those "youngsters" of that time! I was amazed by the dedication, vision and commitments of Dr. Enas. The sacrifices he made in his personal and professional life to build and stabilize AKMG are several and probably unknown to many. Many other Keralite physicians who assumed leadership roles since then have also followed his footsteps and contributed generously to build AKMG into a unified and financially stable organization of international stature and repute.

It is of historic importance to know and respectfully remember that the idea of organizing an Alumni Association for Keralite Physicians in North America was conceived at a small family get together at the residence of Dr. P. S. Venikitachalam, one of my classmates from Calicut Medical college and six other physicians and their spouses, in New York, in Decemebr 1979! The first formal meeting of such an organization, "Alumni Association of Kerala Medical Colleges in North America" and election of office bearers was in 1980! That was the origin of our AKMG! Dr. M. P. Ravindra Nathan has traced and beautifully documented these events in his articles elsewhere in this publication. Most of the "founding fathers" have shared their memories! An amazing and

unparalleled heritage for AKMG indeed. And today, we stand united and mature!

My first experience, at the Philadelphia convention was nostalgic and unforgettable. I was touched by the comradery and felt a tremendous sense of belonging. My family and I were sold “forever” even without much persuasion from Dr. Enas and other office bearers! The lunch for Silver Jubilarians was a hit and many eloquently described their moves from home and paths abroad in search of better pastures. It was fun. We met and connected with many classmates more than 25 years after leaving medical college and gained many new friends.

We had a planning meeting for the Toronto convention at my house in Cambridge, perhaps the first of the so called “regional meetings”. Many physicians from Ontario as well as Drs. Enas, Amanullah, Thekkedath Mathew and Sathya Nathan attended. I fondly remember the key role the late Dr. P. K. John played at that meeting. We had many new Canadian faces at that meeting. We negotiated better group rates and convention terms with Westin Harbour Castle. Of course we gave them minimum guarantees with the American Express card of Dr. Enas! We started the process of updating the first directory as well.

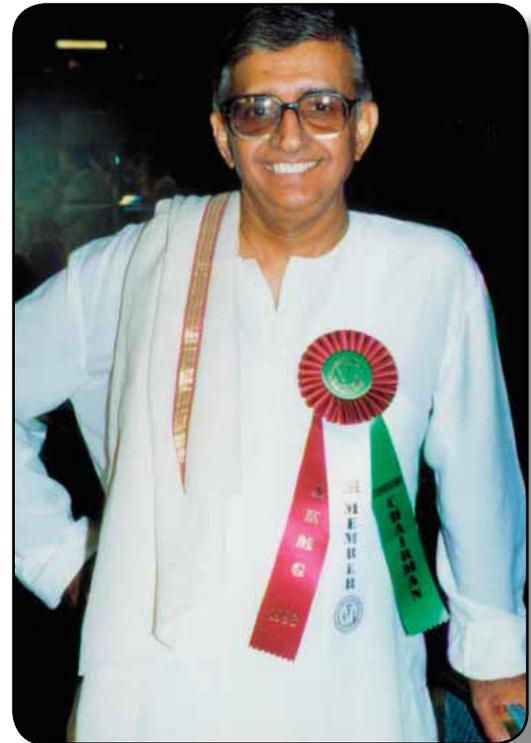
The Toronto convention in 1988, saw the visionary in Dr. Enas to the fullest! It was the third and final convention of his presidency. Our instructions were to keep the cost low, attract more attendees and new members and to give the members the best value for their money. Most of the ingredients that you see today as integral parts of AKMG conventions year after year, were conceived and practiced in Toronto, though not perfected perhaps. Please remember that AKMG had no financial reserves those days. Sponsors were not easy to get. There were no advances available nor could we dream of writing off losses! We had welcome reception with coupons for two free drinks. That is all that we could afford. Youth activities included talent competitions covering a variety of fields and judged by local professionals. A private cruise in Lake Ontario with Kerala style ghee rice, chicken biriyani, Kingfish fry, Mutta Roast, Pickles, open bar and disco dance (and also including a special “Enas Roast”) was superb. We had formal CME as well as Tennis and Golf for the enthusiasts. The first Campus Comedy was the brainchild of Dr. Thekkedath Mathew. Drs. Gabriel (Gouri) and Soman Nair (the old Kottayam Medical College veterans) were there to help him in the first AKMG Skit. Even though we had trouble getting all the members of a Malayalee orchestra from New York on time, we did have a fantastic Ganamela that went beyond midnight! Remember our attempts to raise money for youth activities by selling Banana Chips at discounted wholesale prices! We had Mr. Joy Cherian (“Not so Joy” I have heard some kids refer to him later!) and Mr. De Souza, two of the

successful malayalees in American Politics at the time to address our youth and to inspire them. The Toronto Convention saw the maiden attempts of many such AKMG ventures without spending a lot of money. I was amazed to see the “wheeler-dealer” and “Chanakyan” in Enas. Needless to say he always tried to get the best deal for AKMG.

We had the most popular Dr. K. Madhavan Kutty, one of the friendliest and kindest among our Professors gracing this convention along with Dr. Sambasivan (Professor of Neurosurgery). Dr. Santhakumari, Director of Medical Education, was our invited guest of honour from Kerala. We had both American and Canadian political and social leaders in attendance at the Gala Banquet. This convention was very well attended and successful to say the least. We learned a lot! And we did not lose any money!

“Faculty Enrichment Grants” were started in 1988. Dr. Easwaran Variyam played the leading role and he was helped by Dr. Pitchumoni and Dr. Raj Warriar in the selection process. One time grants worth \$1,250.00 each were offered to a total of 14 persons over the next five years and when I reviewed this matter in 1993 only 9 recipients had utilized the grants in the year they were offered. Nevertheless those days it meant something to those who received it.

AKMG reached new heights in the next convention in the Westin Hilton Head and witnessed many other new ventures. My dear friends Purushothaman and Santha, malayalee chefs from Toronto stole our hearts through our stomachs, by serving authentic full Kerala style Sadya on Campus Comedy night and Puttu, Katala, Uzhunnu Vada, Coconut Chutney and Ethappazham for breakfast next morning! Dr. Thekkedath Mathew had refined



***The Ultimate Convention Chair:
Dr. Venugopala Menon***



From left to right: Dr. Moopen, Dr. Kutty and Dr. Thinakkal at AKMG Convention in Houston 1993

the Campus Comedy and given it a format that we still follow. The “stand up comedy” by Dr. Raj Warriar was the first version of “Chiri Arangu” which has had a “love-hate” reception in AKMG over the years for obvious reasons. The Bhishagwara Charitham Ottanthullal performed by Easwaran stole the thunder on Campus Comedy night. Dr. Sathya Nathan and I helped him with “pinnani pattu”! The highlight of Gala night was the music concert by Markose and Radhika.



Three Presidents: Drs. Karunakaran Kutty, George Thomas and Ram Thinakkal

The week following this memorable convention, AKMG members were shocked and saddened by the premature death of our beloved Mahalakshmi Sathya Nathan, one of the most popular nightingales who had stolen the hearts of every one at the Hilton Head convention by her melodious voice, beauty, charisma, and intellect.

The next convention in New Orleans witnessed the beginning of CADI another pet project of Dr. Enas. I remember being asked to expand the entertainment section as one of the professional singers from Chicago was taken ill and could not make it. I wrote and presented two skits on the spot. “Mary Ki Kahani” with the help and participation of Dr. Vijay Kumar from Sudbury, Ontario, Canada was liked by most. The other skit was an “Airport Scene in Bombay” for which I had to recruit the other participants at the convention hotel from among the registrants many of whom I was meeting for the first time!

At the next convention in Chicago “CADImoolam KAMINImoolam” an Ottanthullal, written by Dr. K. E. Mathew was staged. I was the “thullalkaren” and Drs. K. E. Mathew, Mathew Thek-edath and Easwaran Variyam provided the pinnani. Those were the days of learning!

I am sure that all the presidents will write about their conventions in detail. My intention is not to steal their thunder but only to recollect some of my limited involvements. At my request our constitution and bylaws were duly changed to reduce the duration of presidency to one year from

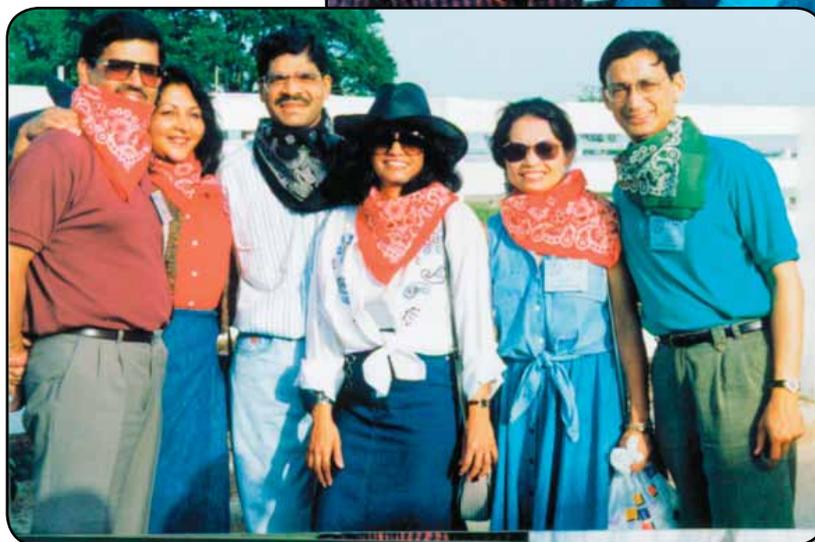
two, starting from my term in 1992-1993. Did it not help to give you more number of presidents?

In 1990, AKMG offered to all Medical Colleges in Kerala, a onetime grant of \$2,000.00 each for organizing scientific meetings or courses of their choice. Four of the five medical colleges utilized this offer!

During the second half of 1992 we donated and delivered MKSAP IX to all Medical Colleges in Kerala as proposed by Dr. M. V. Pillai. This proved to be an excellent beginning and foundation for our subsequent CME ventures.

In May 1993, AKMG financed and conducted its first CME venture in Kerala, at Kottayam Medical College, in collaboration with the Kerala Government Medical College Teachers' Association (KGMCTA) during its annual meeting. "Medical Update 1993" was planned and organized by Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni, Chairman of CME Committee and Dr. Ramakrishna Pillai, Professor of Surgery, Kottayam Medical College and MKSAP IX was part of this CME. It was a three day event in which Dr. C.S. Pitcumoni, Dr. M. V. Pillai, Dr. M. P. Ravindra Nathan, Dr. Krishnan Nair, Dr. Enas A. Enas and I participated representing AKMG. The meeting was inaugurated by late Dr. Anathanarayanan, Past Principal of Calicut and Kottayam Medical Colleges. On 2nd day, Mr. Oommen Chandi, who was Finance Minister of the time, was the chief guest at the public

Anu and Aliyar



The Real Rowdies of the Rodeo



Dr. Kutty AKMG President at the Rodeo - 1993

function in the evening. The Silver Jubilee Conference of KGMCTA on day three was inaugurated by the Chief Minister, late K. Karunakaran and Mr. R. Ramachandran Nair, the Health Minister delivered the keynote address. The event was a great success and gave AKMG tremendous publicity. Our educational efforts were well received and appreciated especially by the PG students.



Unni Menon and Chithra Concert - 1993

THE HOUSTON CONVENTION:

The Westin Galleria, Houston, Texas was the venue for the 14th AKMG convention in 1993. That witnessed the culmination of my presidency. The host committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Venogopal K. Menon meticulously planned and through coordinated hard work, enviably executed one of the most pompous conventions in the history of



Drs. Kutty and Anathanarayan

AKMG. The location was awesome, central and posh! You could not wish for a better hotel in North America. Food was outstanding and even the vegetarians had enough and excellent dishes. The hotel management went out of its usual way to please us and appointed a chef of south Indian heritage. The Texan Rodeo Nite was the first and unique experience for me and my family. We thoroughly enjoyed it. Campus comedy included many superb dances including an Ottamthullal by Dr. Venugopal Menon, the convention chair and an excellent ganamela by AKMG Artists! What stole the show that night was the skit "Nair Bunch" by the youth under the leadership of Lavanya Raman. I am yet to see something that enjoyable on an ethnic stage after all these years! This is no exaggeration. Stand up comedy drew some criticism as "some jokes being of poor taste" from the audience. I had to apologize to some members (I am surprised that the same AKMG membership including house wives of all ages are welcoming "Chiri arangu" at every convention without any criticism, in recent years- Kaalam Poya Pokke!). The welcome reception, sports and CME all were well planned and maintained high standards. The musical concert by Chithra and Unni Menon was certainly the star attraction of the banquet night. The host committee had arranged special decorations including ice sculptures, for the Gala

banquet night! The special audiovisual opening event though delayed due to technical reasons, was of high caliber and a first for our conventions. We were fortunate enough to have Professor Thankavelu to grace this convention. My friend and popular diplomat Mr. T. P. Srinivasan with his lovely wife Lekha was there as our chief guest. Prof. Rodney F. Moag, a multi-linguist, who teaches languages at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed the convention in Malayalam and stressed the importance of teaching Malayalam to our children. To my surprise, some of the so called “Malayalees” in the audience who came to our table to chat with him publicly admitted without shame that they had forgotten their mother tongue! The Houston Convention Committee deserves credit for saving and transferring to AKMG close to thirty thousand dollars after paying all the bills for such a high caliber event.

The next big CME event was held at the Convention Centre in Kovalam from 16th to 19th Dec 1995, based on MKSAP-X. The co-directors were Dr. Sreekumaran Nair and Dr. C. S. Pitchumoni. They had engaged several distinguished academicians from the Mayo Clinic and other US medical schools. It was jointly sponsored by AKMG, American College of Physicians and Association of Physicians of India. The program was rated as outstanding. It was also combined with many superb social functions. Many of the non AKMG participants, especially the visiting faculty had an opportunity to experience “the rich cultural heritage, fiercely independent intellectual capacity and unparalleled friendliness” of the people of Kerala.

AKMG financed the purchase of one state of the art computer with modem and internet facilities and printer for each of the five medical colleges in Kerala in 1995. The following persons were the team leaders assigned to raise funds from the respective AKMG Alumni and co-ordinate the purchases. Trivandrum – Dr. K. M. Vinayakom; Calicut: Dr. M. G. Kurup; Kottayam: Dr. T. M. Mathew; Alappuzha: Dr. C. V. Cyriac and Trichur: Dr. Parvathy Mohan.

Dr. R. Krishnan, Professor and head of medicine at Calicut, later told me that this was the first computer Calicut Medical College ever had. It was handed over to and managed by the members of local Alumni Association. Subsequently, in Calicut, they were able to acquire 2 or 3 more computers and the Alumni and PG students were using them efficiently and to the maximum capacity at the time AKMG LRC centre was commissioned in late 2004.

AKMG-HUMANITARIAN SERVICES:

Another important milestone in the history of AKMG was the formation of its charitable wing

AKMG-HS during the presidency of Dr. Shakunthala Rajagopal 1999-2000. Dr. Prem Menon has been its chairman since inception and I have had the good fortune to serve under him in this committee for many years. I would like to credit Mr. Tony Devassy for his enthusiasm and support in the early years of AKMG-HS. You will find details of all the worthwhile projects completed and current elsewhere in this Archives.



Mary ki Kahani - Kutty and Santhosh - 1993

TORONTO CONVENTION- 2002:

Dr. Easwaran Variyam was the president when AKMG conducted the 23rd Annual convention in Toronto Aug 8-11, 2002. I was asked to chair this convention and was ably assisted by Dr. Santhosh Paikat and Dr. P. C. Punnen as Vice Chairs. I fondly remember the services of our “Iron Lady” Mrs. Elsie Paikat as the Chair of Registration! It will be the privilege of Dr. Easwaran Variyam to write about it all. We saved just over forty thousand dollars after all expenses and the money was promptly transferred to AKMG accounts.



Dr. Pitchumani and Srinivans - 1993

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES:

In my humble opinion establishing the LRCs at all the medical colleges has been the most important and worthwhile contribution from AKMG towards medical education in Kerala. This is a legacy we can all be proud of. Credit must go to Dr. Narendra Kumar for developing this idea



Dr. Pitchumani receiving a plaque from C. M. Karunakaran - 1993

and boldly implementing it very effectively in Trivandrum, for their Golden Jubilee. Soon after that, I was given the responsibility of developing a similar LRC at Calicut Medical College and made the chairman of the committee to raise funds and execute the project.

It was not an easy task. Kottayam Alumni were more aggressive and generous and they were able

to meet the target ahead of me! Following the footsteps of Trivandrum Alumni the Calicut Medical College LRC Committee had engaged C-DAC for this project. They did an outstanding job in building an air conditioned 96 Sq Metre “AKMG Learning Resource Centre” inside the existing library. There are 16 user workstation cubicles with internet connection and printing-copying facilities, two admin computers including one with smart card reader and a server. Needless to say that there are many other necessary technical gadgets including a back up generator. There were online subscriptions for Up To Date and MD Consult as well. The total payment to CDAC was \$116,267.21 including the first year of maintenance. Two Calicut alumni from the Middle East donated \$2,000.00 each



Prof. Thangevelu and Lekha Srinivasa - 1993

and I received a total of 1,000 pounds from the Calicut Alumni in UK. The rest was donated by 60 alumni living in the US and Canada. There were nine donations of 4,000 each from the US and 3 donations of 5,000 each from Canada. The remaining ranged between 100 and 2,000. The LRC was officially inaugurated by the health minister Mr. K. K. Ramachandran on the 17th September 2004 at a function attended by Mr. T. P. M. Zahir MLA, Mr. A. Sujapalan MLA, Mr. Thottathil Raveendran Mayor of Calicut, Dr. Meenu Hariharan DME and Dr. Jayalakshmi, joint DME. The key to the facility was officially handed over to Dr. V. Geetha, Principal of Calicut Medical college at that function. Dr. C. K. Ramachandran, Dr. C. Ashokan Nambiar and Dr. P. K. Sasidharan, President of KGMCT were other dignitaries who spoke on the occasion. AKMG and its office bearers were abundantly praised by all. The Library Committee and the Alumni Association have been running this facility very efficiently ever since. It is utilized very well by the undergraduate and postgraduate students and faculty. It makes me proud and brings tears to my eyes when I receive the monthly utilization report by email. As of 1st March 2012 there were 2,792 registered users (From Nov 2004 to Feb 2012) and in February 2012 there were 1,460 users! I feel confident that we have left the LRC in "good hands" and that it will serve generations to come. I did remind the audience in Calicut on the day the LRC was inaugurated that 90% of the Calicut Medical College Alumni are outside North America and it is high time that they did something to their Alma Mater similar to what we have done! I also suggested to the Alumni Office bearers that they register a charitable corporation called CALICUT MEDICAL COLLEGE FOUNDATION to help future funds raising.

AKMG members can be proud of the fact that in subsequent years we were able to build LRCs at Allepey and Trichur Medical Colleges.

Health care delivery is very expensive and challenging! We see even governments with good intentions failing to provide affordable and adequate health care to the public in many parts of the world.

The areas where AKMG can easily sustain its contributions in health care delivery in our motherland are in the fields of medical education and research, in my opinion. I hope that future leaders of AKMG will realize this and confine their efforts to these fields achieving better and visible results. We have many outstanding and unselfish leaders with proven track records amongst us. Let us follow them and take AKMG to new heights and glory!

Let me conclude. This has already become a long article. Thank you for your attention.



K. E. Mathew, MD
President of AKMG, 1993-1994

Passing On The Baton From Houston, TX to Historic Williamsburg, VA

Our association was still young, but vibrant and strong when I took over as the President in July 1993. The friendship among the membership was quite strong and our annual get together at the convention was becoming a ritual that we were looking forward to, both parents and children alike. That was the time when we felt the need for each other. We were not so self sufficient and independent as we are now. It is at the annual convention of AKMG that the president ceremoniously hands over the gavel to the incoming president.

While receiving the gavel from Dr. Karunakarankutty, I made a short speech. The agenda presented for the coming year was not very long. We wanted to see more growth in the membership of our association, especially so in the life membership category. Another very important issue that we had to deal with was to make the organization attractive to the younger medical graduates of Kerala heritage. It was a time when even our friends who graduated from medical schools outside Kerala, did not see AKMG as their association. Our task was to do everything possible to get all physicians and dentists of Kerala heritage under the wing of our prestigious association. Another facet that needed attention was the medical education in India. Arranging for scholarships or fellowship for deserving faculty from our teaching hospitals in India was something to consider during my term in office.

With the support and timely advice from our previous presidents and esteemed committee members we were able to make remarkable stride in all the above facets. Life membership in the association saw a steady growth. A youth wing for the association was in the making as we started to get some of the fine young doctors of Kerala heritage from our own community here in the USA.

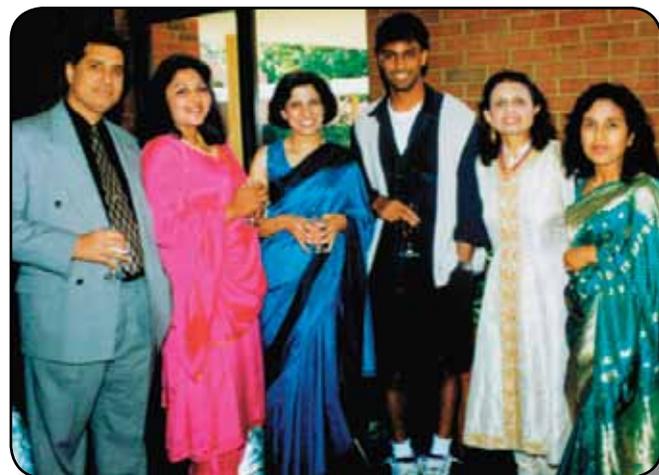
Successful conclusion of an annual convention is the moment of immense relief to the conven-



AKMG Presidents from 1980 to 1994

tion committee and the president. As the association honored me with the presidency for the next one year, at the Houston convention, I was humbled beyond words. As an active member of this noble association for several years, serving in various capacities, including chairing the convention committee of its annual convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, had given me the opportunity to get to know and work closely with a group of wonderful men and women of our association. It was the words of encouragement and support from the veteran leaders of AKMG that gave me the strength to carry on.

Planning for the annual convention is always a challenge for the president and the committee. After carefully reviewing several cities for consideration, we decided on making the Historic Williamsburg, VA as the venue for our annual convention. Lack of a large number of AKMG membership in the local area did not become an issue. In fact the local convention committee headed by Drs. Manikoth Kurup and Ahammed Rehman took it as a challenge and arranged for one of the memorable conventions in the history of AKMG. It was well attended and it catered to the educational, cultural and artistic needs of everyone who attended.



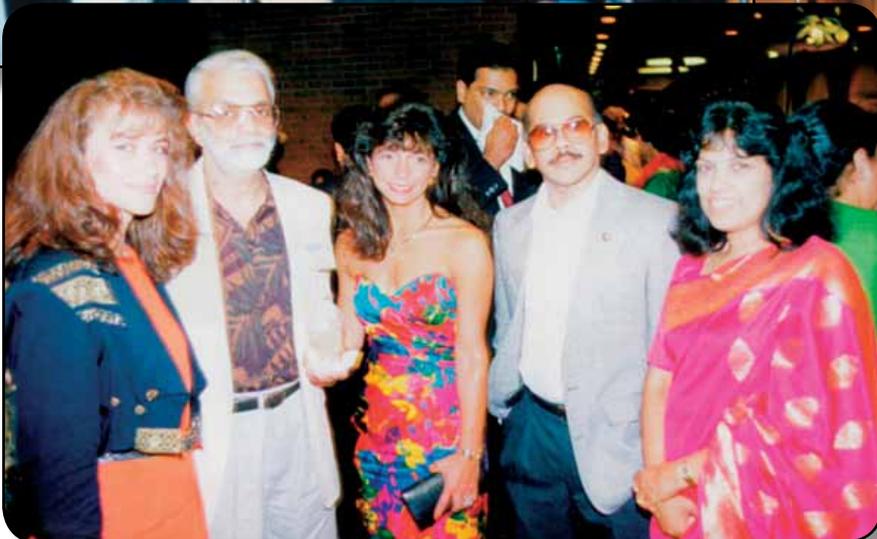
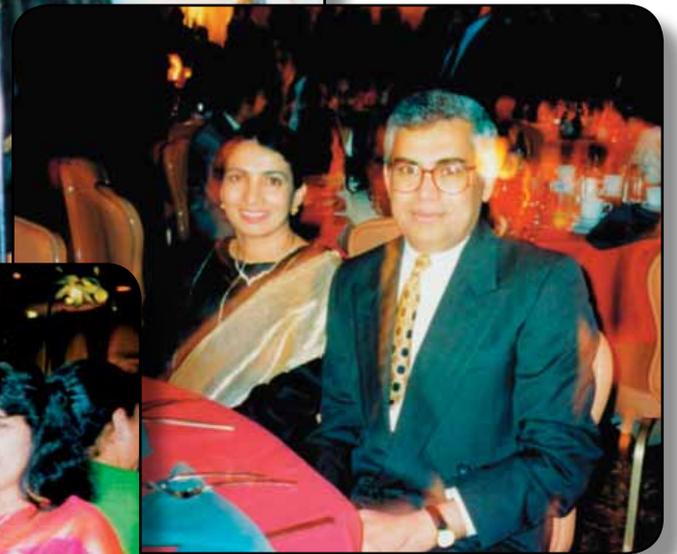
Convention in Williamsburg, VA - 1994

I was elected to carry the baton from Houston to Historic Williamsburg. There were

so many of our friends and supporters on the way to cheer me and help me all the way. And I am most grateful to all of them. There were no huge leaps, no big fund raising and no major humanitarian award . We raised enough funds to help the victims of earth quake in India. We gave a couple of fellowships for physicians from India to come to USA and get trained in their specialties. We promoted friendship and fellowship among the membership by conducting great annual convention. And we helped to elect the best office bearers to carry on the noble tradition and to grow the organization in to new heights.

And the baton was handed over to the incoming president Dr. M. V. Pillai.

AKMG Convention in Williamsburg, VA - 1994





From the Capitol to Kennedy Center

AKMG's 1995 Parade Through The Capital of the Free World

M. V. Pillai, MD
President of AKMG, 1994-1995

Vice President Al Gore has paid glowing tributes to Kerala at least twice in recent history. First, he congratulated our home state for its sterling accomplishments in social development despite lagging economic indicators. Second, he greeted AKMG's members, who had assembled at the nation's capital for our historic 1995 convention, with a warm and cordial message. On both occasions, there were compliments galore for the unflagging vigor, merits and enthusiasm of the people from Kerala. Al Gore should know these qualities well. On many



Convention committee's first photo session in Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.

occasions in the past two decades, the White House has turned to AKMG members in the nation's capital when the President and the Vice President needed expert medical advice.

When 35 members of the 1995 AKMG convention's organizing committee posed on the northern footsteps of the Capitol for their first photo session, they witnessed art, architecture, history, medicine, politics, and philosophy crystallize for a very meaningful moment.

Serendipity flashed on this congregation of Indian American immigrants, because it was the creativity and flare for architecture of one of our professional ancestors that gave rise to the Capitol building. In 1792, after consulting with George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the commissioners of the District of Columbia announced an open contest for a suitable design for the U.S. Capitol building. The reward for the winning entry included \$500 and a lot in the federal city. William Thornton, M.D., a practicing physician and amateur architect submitted the prize winning design. As we stood on the marble pavement of the magnificent edifice created from the imagination and dedication of one of our professional predecessors, we too were pondering how best to harness our own talents and creativity to benefit our organization.

Over the ensuing 12 months, the committee was on a fast track in pursuit of excellence. Excellence in taking the best in medical education to the land of our heritage. Excellence in showcasing the creme de la creme of music, literature, poetry, painting, culinary art, and medical leadership, with an inimitable blend of tradition and modernity.

Here we present some of the highlights of our tenure:

1. INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF SELF ASSESSMENT IN CLINICAL COMPETENCE TO OUR MEDICAL FRATERNITY IN INDIA

For the first time in history, American College of Physicians partnered with AKMG to introduce their highly acclaimed Medical Knowledge Self Assessment Program (MKSAP 10), which is considered as the gold standard of CME in internal medicine and sub-specialties around the world. ACP announced this landmark event in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, designated one of its masters, Dr. Lawrence Lessin, to be present in Kerala at the time of this educational conference, and donated the syllabi to all Government Medical Colleges in our state. The course was presented by a distinguished faculty from the Mayo Clinic, Minnesota, in partnership with academic staff from AKMG and Kerala

Medical Colleges. The four-day CME conference at Kovalam beach was the first international medical meeting at the newly built convention center and was well-received by medical students, medical college teachers and practicing physicians.

Dr. Lawrence Lessin, the official designee to A.K.M.G-Kovalam C.M.E from American College of Physicians and a Master of the college, reported to American academia the exemplary standards of medicos he met at this conference. See his remarks below.

A KERALA MEMOIR, 1995

In the fall of 1995, I was invited by Dr. M.V. Pillai to participate in the first Medical Knowledge Self-Assessment Program (MKSAP X) of the American College of Physicians (ACP) in India planned in conjunction with the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG), ACP, and Mayo Clinic for December, 1995 at the Kovalam Beach conference center in Kerala. This continuing medical education meeting of the A.K.M.G-A.C.P-MAYO marked the first formal participation of the College in an academic activity in India. The format was to follow the MKSAP X syllabus of the ACP, with updates in the various subspecialties of medicine. As editor of a recent edition of the MKSAP, my job, shared with Mayo faculty, was to cover the advances in hematology in two or three one hour lectures, with special emphasis on anemias, myelodysplastic syndromes and myeloma, a daunting challenge. After some difficulty in obtaining airline reservations due to booked flights during a peak travel time, and a last minute visa at the Indian Embassy in Washington, I flew to Kerala, via Paris and Mumbai connections and arrived after 30 hours of travel at the beautiful Kovalam Beach Hotel. I relaxed on the afternoon of arrival, met with Dr. Pillai, and several of his colleagues, as well as Mayo faculty, had a delicious dinner, and retired to my room to review my slides (still Kodachromes in those days) and prepare for lectures the next day. I recall the challenge of covering a vast amount of “advances in hematology” material in a couple of hours.



Lawrence S. Lessin MD
*Senior Executive Physician and
Medical Director, Continuing
Medical Education. Washing-
ton Cancer Institute,
Washington DC.*

The next morning, after a refreshing sleep, I arrived early at the conference center, enjoyed good tea and continental breakfast, and joined the meeting, where Mayo subspecialists were holding forth on their areas of expertise. The auditorium was filled with hundreds of eager, young and attentive faces of Kerala medical students, residents and practicing physicians, along with local professors and,

the A.K.M.G faculty who had travelled there for the meeting and holidays. I spoke on the afternoon of the first day, a bit jet-lagged, but inspired by the engaging audience, who exhibited great intellectual curiosity and in the Q&A session, an impressive knowledge of the medical literature and hunger for answers to probing, challenging questions. I recall wishing that my own US students and residents showed this level of intellectual enthusiasm. All of the Mayo and other ACP faculty provided high quality subspecialty reviews and were equally challenged by the audience in discussion sessions. The sessions served as an excellent internal medicine review for me.



The cultural experiences at the meeting were quite memorable and stimulating as well. Evening buffet dinners at private clubs provided excellent Kerala cuisine and hospitable fellowship. Entertainment by musicians, dancers and presentation of “Kathakali”, Kerala’s world renowned art form were most intriguing, but a bit challenging to understand. Tours of the old city, the market, and Hindu temples provided a real sense of the culture. A highlight for me was a day trip with Dr. Matthew Thomas (who had done a sabbatical at Washington Cancer Institute and NIH) to visit Cochin, its beautiful canals, waterways and temples, as well as the old Jewish quarter and synagogue. I enjoyed a tea with a lovely elderly couple, friends of Dr. Thomas.

On return, to Thiruvananthapuram, I resumed conference activities. I also recall a visit to the home of Dr. M. V. Pillai’s family, lovely, hospitable and erudite folks, who provided a wonderful meal and a tasting of 10 different kinds of bananas! Following the meeting, I spent a day as a visiting professor at the Regional Cancer Center, then quite new, and had the opportunity to give a lecture and make rounds with the physicians in training there. I was most impressed with their level of knowledge and the compassion for their patients.

Thus, through the haze of time, some 17 years now, are my recollections of Kerala and the high quality A.K.M.G-A.C.P-MAYO- CME conference in which I was honored to participate. Truly an experience which enriched my life provided lasting friendships and association and gave me a real appreciation for the challenges of cancer control, medical education and health care in Kerala. This experience initiated my interest in international medical education, which has since extended to other centers in India, Sri Lanka and Africa. Now our work with the International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research and the online repository, Open Educational Resources for Cancer

(www.oerc.merlot.org) seeks to extend these educational efforts and focus them on building cancer control capacity in low resource countries.

I congratulate A.K.M.G for the great work they undertake to disseminate updated medical knowledge among their peer group in India.

I offer my greetings and best wishes to the members of this magnificent organization on the occasion of publishing the history of A.K.M.G.

A.K.M.G PRESENTS HARMONY OF NATURE IN SCIENCE AND SYMPHONY OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Dr. Michael D. Brennen, professor of Endocrinology at Mayo, was invited for a challenging assignment after his endocrinology lectures at the C.M.E. Born in Ireland, Michael studied botany before becoming a physician and he is proud to talk about “the 40 shades of greenery” in his motherland. However when he arrived in Kerala, Dr. Brennen could not conceal his admiration for Kerala’s lush green landscape and impressive diversity in flora.



On the concluding evening of our C.M.E., A.K.M.G hosted a unique program on the lawns of the beautiful Kanakakkunnu palace when Dr. Brennen was called upon to talk about the “Science of Circadian rhythms in humans and plants” combining his knowledge as an endocrinologist and interest in botany. He gave an excellent lecture addressed to the general audience. Closely on the heels of his informative talk a “sound and light show,” with music and dances portraying flowers of Kerala blooming at different times of the day and night and some even once in 12 years, was presented based on an idea conceived by A.K.M.G and brilliantly choreographed by India’s renowned art director Sri Soorya Krishnamurthy. Young dancers blossomed on the stage as Nishagandhi, Sooryakanthi, Thaa-mara, Naalumony, Neelakurinji, etc. in idyllic scenes with scintillating movements accompanying enchanting tunes adorning some of the finest Malayalam poetry written about our flowers. The audience instantly transcended to a world of celestial bliss when science and art joined hands to proclaim India’s ancient concept in Upanishad: “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” — the whole world is one single family.

CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS IN HUMANS AND PLANTS

It was a warm and calm December 1995 evening and the guests had gathered in a flood lit outdoor arena under a cloudless and moonlit Thiruvananthapuram sky. The crowd hushed as the beautiful young dancers in flowing white dresses took to the stage to begin their flower dances and the evening's festivities. We were all there to celebrate one of Kerala's abundant, diverse and exotic flora surely one of the state's greatest natural resources.

I was in Kerala to speak at the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates (AKMG) –American College of Physicians-Mayo combined C.M.E Program.



Michael D. Brennen MD
Professor of Medicine
Consultant, Division of
Endocrinology., Mayo Clinic.



Four o' Clock



Kurinji



Lotus

Some months earlier my friend and Mayo Colleague Dr. K. Sreekumaran Nair had invited me, as a fellow endocrinologist, to address the circadian rhythm of plants as such rhythms are a central feature of hormonal homeostasis. This led to my delving into what was then known on botanical biochemical mediators and how they interact with physical factors such as sunlight and periodicity of light and darkness. I was captured and enthralled by the complexity of the interacting influences as well as by both the similarities and differences of plant and human biochemistry and endocrinology.



Nishagandhi



Sunflower

I was pleased to share what I had learned with a most appreciative and welcoming audience in Kerala. It was and is my hope that I had conveyed the excitement I felt in the topic to some members of the audience. Might one or more of the young flower dancers who entertained us on that memorable evening have pursued further understanding of plant physiology? I like to think so. There is after all no place better than Kerala that can serve as such an ideal laboratory for such study.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORERUNNER OF LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS IN KERALA GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGES

AKMG opened doors to the 21st century at Kottayam Medical College by instituting the first Learning Resource Center, in 1995 with modern computer facilities and Internet access to educational portals that provide the latest medical information websites. This critical development was possible because of generous contributions from Kottayam Medical College alumni and other members of our organization. The government of Kerala officially thanked AKMG for this great initiative and requested extension of this program to all the other medical colleges in the public sector. LRCs were established in Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Thrissur, and Alapuzha Medical Colleges in subsequent years.

3. AKMG THEME SONG

In 1995, we announced an open competition to submit an exclusive Malayalam theme song for our organization. More than 1,400 poets and lyricists submitted their entries written in the suggested format of an ode to Kerala and an expert panel selected the best entry. To our great delight, the winning verse came from one of India's ace literati—the celebrated veteran poet, Pala Narayanan Nair. Pala had the prophetic intuition as early as in 1948 to write down in vibrant words of rich Malayalam language “Keralam valarunnu”— meaning, the people of Kerala are migrating across the Western Ghats, far and beyond. His exclusive composition for A.K.M.G , almost fifty years later, reiterated and resonated the same mood and spirits. The theme song was set to music specifically for AKMG by the famous musician M. G. Radhakrishnan. Its recorded format is available with AKMG and is recited on stage during our annual conventions.

AKMG Theme song rendered by our members at the Washington Convention - 1995



Yesudas and Chitra at the Concert Hall in Kennedy Centre

YESUDAS AND CHITRA AT THE CONCERT HALL IN KENNEDY CENTRE

4. BRING THE BEST OF INDIAN POPULAR MUSIC TO ONE OF THE BEST CONCERT HALLS IN THE WORLD

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. has the following quote from President Kennedy etched on the walls of the River Terrace: "I am certain that after the

dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contributions to the human spirit.” Somehow, before even arriving at this site, the 1995 convention committee had realized this truth by sheer intuition. For the 36 million strong Malayalee diaspora scattered around the globe, nothing can light up our spirits more than the melodious voice of our musical maestros, who have received India’s national honors time after time. We decided not to settle for a pair less than K. J. Yesudas and Chitra—a record feat in AKMG entertainment history. The concert hall at the Kennedy Center, a state-of-the-art-facility with a high-tech acoustical canopy enjoyed a full house when Yesudas and Chitra enthralled AKMG’s family and friends in a moonlit July night on the banks of the Potomac River. AKMG’s theme song, a fine piece of pristine Malayalam poetry written by Pala Narayanan Nair was formally dedicated to Kerala’s cultural history by Yesudas and Chitra on this occasion. The printed version of this composition was published in Malayalam by the Kennedy Center’s monthly magazine and distributed to its membership around the world.

5. A PODIUM FOR THE PEARLS OF OUR LITERATURE

The genesis of a medical student begins within the shell of a medical college; grows with trials, tribulations, agony and ecstasy; and ends with student’s final metamorphosis into a doctor. This process was elegantly portrayed by physician writer Dr. Punnathil Kunhabdulla in his award-winning Malayalam novel, “Marunnu,” which has been later released as a TV serial. The author was invited to lead our literary sessions along with Kerala’s popular poet and lyricist Yusuf Ali Kecheri. Kecheri’s comments about the inspirational moments behind the composition of some of his top lyrical hits, rendered by Yesudas and Chitra at the concert hall, truly harmonized the quaint beauty of poetry and music.

As a tribute to the wealth of Malayalam literature, and in an attempt to hand over our literary heritage to the new generation of Keralites less well-versed in our mother tongue, we subsequently



Literary session : Dr. M. V. Pillai, Dr. Punathil Kunhabdulla, Mr. Yusuf Ali Kecheri and veteran journalist Mr. N. R. S Babu

conducted a literary translation contest in Kerala for a selection of the ten best short stories. The winner, A. J. Thomas, was later credited with the brilliant translation of ONV's Ujjayini and held a leadership role in Kendriya Sahithya academy.

6. AKMG PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

To recognize the most talented and brilliant upcoming AKMG member, we established the AKMG Presidential Leadership Award in 1995. Dr. Asha B. Pillai was selected as the first awardee by a team of distinguished AKMG members.



Dr. Asha B. Pillai, receiving the award for the best young AKMG member for professional excellence and versatility.

7. PAINTING CONTESTS

We had the good fortune to introduce some gifted artists to the AKMG family through a unique painting exhibition centering on two novel themes. "Monsoon in Kerala" and the metaphor of the famous poem "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost were presented by several talented participants through pencil sketches, water colors, and oil paintings.

8. PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

The first pictorial directory of AKMG members and their family was presented during our convention year.

Editor: Joseph Thomas M.D.

The editor who brought life to our first pictorial directory, christened as AKMG Family Album, is incidentally the first life member of our organization.

9. ATHLETIC PROWESS UNDERSCORED

We selected the most outstanding young athlete among the AKMG family and honored the winner, Dr. Mily Kannarkat, at the convention night.



Dr. M. S. Valiathan, with AKMG President, Dr. M. Thangavelu, Dr. Mary Phillips and convention committee leaders. - 1995

10. CRUISE THROUGH THE POTOMAC

The moonlight convention cruise through the scenic Potomac River provided a panoramic view of the nation's capital and was another highlight on the eve of the grand finale. At the final banquet, in the true tradition of AKMG opting for distinguished professionals to be our guests of honor, we received Dr. M. Thangavelu, Dr. M. S. Valiathan and Dr. Mary Phillips. These physicians are icons of our professional heritage and excellence.

When the convention attendees bid farewell after watching the spectacular fireworks of July 4th on the Potomac River, it was the grand summation of a journey from the Capitol to the Kennedy Center. We carried with us the sentiments of liberty enshrined in the Capitol's design through our pursuit of excellence and we realized President Kennedy's passion for contributing to the human spirit by sharing and enriching the cultural heritage of Kerala- "The Jewel of India's Malabar Coast," as Peter Miller of National Geographic had described our home state.

The convention committee donated \$40,000 from our profits to AKMG's Corpus Fund.

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CONVENTION LOCATION:

OMNI SHOREHAM HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

C.M.E ACCREDITATION: GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY.

Convention Committee: Drs: M.V. Pillai, Kannarkat Verghese, Achankunju Chacko, James Mathew, C.R. Nath, K.J. Mathew, K.M. Vinayakom, P.J. Varghese, Ahalya Premkumar, Suba Vinayakom, Sanil Nath, Shobha Mathews, Parvathi Mohan, Joseph Nidiry, Zachariah Cherian, George James, T.J. Joseph, Karma S. Nair, Joseph Thomas, Celine Thomas, Mathew Philip, K.S. Gokulanathan, Praymol Varghese, Madan Mohan.

എ. കെ. എം. ജി. കേരളഗാനം

ജയ ജയ മലയ മഹീധര തരുണീ
 ജയ ജയ ജലനിധിലാളിത രമണീ
 ജയ ജയ സസ്യ ശ്യാമള ധരണീ
 ജയ ജയ സുരഭില സുമഹേഷ്കരണീ

സുമധുരകേര രസാമൃത വർഷിണി
 ശുഭതാംബൂല പുരസ്കൃത ഭാഷിണി
 കേരള ധരണീ ഞങ്ങൾ കിടാങ്ങൾ
 കേളിപ്പെടുവാൻ തുണയാകേണം

തിരുവാതിര തിരുവോണനിലാവൊളി
 തിരകളിളക്കി പുണരുമ്പോൾ
 അമൃതഘടത്താൽ ആഷാഢശ്രീ
 അരിയൊരു തീർത്ഥം ചൊരിയുമ്പോൾ
 താരാവിരചിത വൈധൂര്യോജല
 ഹാരാഡംബരമണിവോളെ
 കുന്നലനാദേ പൊന്നാവണിമലർ
 മഞ്ഞത്തുകിൽ ഞൊറിയുന്നോളെ
 സുജലേ - സുഹലേ - നിന്നെ ജയിക്കാൻ
 സുകൃതം ചെയ്തവർ ആരുലകിൽ

പ്രകൃതിമയ ലാവണ്യധാരെ വദാനേ്യ
 പ്രതിഭയിലുണർന്നു നീ നിൽക്കുന്നു മാനേ്യ
 ദീർഘപ്രവാസികളെങ്കിലും ഞങ്ങൾ
 ദീപ്രമാം സ്നേഹത്തിരികൊളുത്തുന്നു

നിന്നരുമ മക്കളാം ഞങ്ങൾ ശാസ്ത്രത്തിൻ
 മിന്നൽക്കൊടി വീശി ഇങ്ങുയിർക്കുന്നോർ
 നിൻ തിരുസന്നിധിയിലാത്മപുഷ്പാഞ്ജലി
 സന്തർപ്പണം ചെയ്തു നാൾകൾ നീക്കുന്നു

നാനാജാതിമതങ്ങൾക്കെല്ലാം
 പാലമൃത്യുട്ടി വളർത്തിയ തായേ
 മുന്തിരിതൻ തേൻകുലപോലലിവാൽ
 പന്തിരുകുലവും പോറ്റിയ പൊരുളേ

അദൈവത്തിൻ ഗൗരീശങ്കര
 ഭദ്രാസനമുടി ചൂടിയ വരദേ
 ജയ ജയ ജനനീ ഞങ്ങളുണർത്താം
 ജനിതാമോദം ഗീതാഞ്ജലികൾ

പാലാ നാരായണൻ നായർ

In response to an open contest to compose an exclusive AKMG - KERALA lyric poem, more than a thousand entries came in from poets, lyricists and song writers in Kerala. An expert panel consisting of Prof. O.N.V. Kurup, Smt. Sugathakumari and Sri N.R.S. Babu, selected the winning entry submitted by Mahakavi Pala Narayanan Nair, one of India's most distinguished poets, noted for his celebrated classic 'Keralam Valarunnu', published 50 years ago in 10 volumes. This theme song was set to music by Kerala's renowned vocalist and music director M.G. Radhakrishnan solely for AKMG. It was formally dedicated to our cultural history at the concert hall of John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington DC, during 1995 AKMG Convention by our all time best virtuosos in music Sri K.J. Yesudas and Smt K.S. Chitra.



John F Kennedy Center for Performing Arts on the banks of Potomac river



കൺവെൻഷൻ മതർലാൻഡ്

തെക്കേടത്ത് മാത്യു MD
President of AKMG, 1995-1996

എ.കെ.എം.ജി, കുന്നലനാട്ടിൽ മക്കൾക്ക് ഏഴാം കടലിനക്കരെ ജനിച്ച കുഞ്ഞാമന. വളർന്നു വലുതായി 17-ഉം തികഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്ന അവളെ, കൈക്കൂ പിടിച്ച് അമ്മ വീട്ടിൽ കൊണ്ട് ചെന്ന്, അവിടത്തെ തറവാടിന്റെ ഉമ്മറത്തുകൂട്ടുന്ന കുടുംബയോഗത്തിൽ പങ്കുചേർക്കുക എന്നതായിരുന്നു എന്റെ നിയോഗം.

കഴിഞ്ഞ കുറെ പതിറ്റാണ്ടുകളിലായി, ഈ പുണ്യഭൂമിയുടെ ഇന്നലെകളിൽ ലയിച്ച് നമുക്കു നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട പ്രഭാതങ്ങളുടെ സംഗീതവും, പ്രദോഷങ്ങളുടെ നിറക്കൂട്ടും, ഓണക്കറികളും കളികളും, ഉത്സവത്തിമിർപ്പുകളും മാത്രമല്ല, നമ്മുടെ കലാ സാംസ്കാരിക വിളഭൂമിയിൽ വിതച്ചുകൊയ്ത ഉല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ മണവും രുചിയും, നേരിട്ടറിഞ്ഞനുഭവിയ്ക്കാനും കൂടിയാണ് ഈ കൺവെൻഷൻ വിഭാവനം ചെയ്തത്.

ഇവളെക്കാണാനും സീകരിക്കുവാനും, അവൾക്ക് ചെല്ലും ചുവടുകളുമൊക്കെ പ്പറഞ്ഞു കൊടുക്കാനുമായി, മലയാൾമയുടെ സാഹിത്യത്തറവാട്ടിലെ, മുത്തച്ഛന്മാരും, അമ്മാവനമ്മാവീമാരുംമൊക്കെ അവിടെക്കാത്തുനിന്നിരുന്നു. താലപ്പൊലിയും, കൊട്ടും, കുഴലും, ആനയും അമ്പാരിയുമായി.

ഒരു നേർത്ത വെള്ള ഷർട്ടും ഒറ്റമുണ്ട്മുടുത്ത്, മുറുക്കിച്ചുവപ്പിച്ച് മുഖം നിറയെ പുഞ്ചിരിയുമായി മുന്നിൽ നിന്നത് ആരാണെന്നല്ലേ? ചെമ്മീൻ എന്ന ഒറ്റ നോവലിലൂടെ, കറുത്തമ്മയേയും പരീക്കുട്ടിയേയും നമുക്ക് പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തിയ, പുറക്കാട്ടെ കടപ്പുറത്തടിഞ്ഞ ഒരു സ്നേഹബലിയുടെ കഥ, വിശ്വസാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ വെള്ളിത്തേരിൽ എഴുന്നള്ളിച്ചു വച്ച ആ അനശ്വര കഥാകാരൻ തകഴി എന്നു ലോകം വിളിക്കുന്ന ജ്ഞാനപീഠം ജേതാവ് സർവ്വശ്രീ തകഴി ശിവശങ്കരപ്പിള്ള തന്നെ.

പശ്ചിമഘട്ടങ്ങളെ കേറിയും കടന്നും, കൈരളി വളരുമെന്ന സത്യം ദീർഘദർശനം ചെയ്ത പ്രവാചക കവി, എ.കെ.എം.ജി യ്ക്ക് ഒരു മംഗളഗാനം നെയ്തുതന്ന ശ്രീ പാലാ നാരായണൻ നായരും അവിടെ സന്നിഹിതനായിരുന്നു, വടിയും താങ്ങി വാർദ്ധക്യത്തെ വകവയ്ക്കാതെ.

തൊട്ടു പിന്നിലായുണ്ടായിരുന്നല്ലോ മറ്റൊരു യശോധരൻ, അമ്പത്തൊന്നക്ഷരങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് അയ്യായിരത്തിലേറെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളെ മലയാളി മനസ്സുകളിൽ സ്ഥിര പ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തിയ, ചരിയൻ ചന്തുവിനും വയറൻ ഭീമനുമുണ്ട് വേറിട്ടൊരു മുഖം എന്നു നമുക്ക് കാട്ടിത്തന്ന, ജ്ഞാനപീഠം പിടിച്ചടക്കിയ നമ്മുടെ സ്വന്തം തന്റേടി വാസു, ശ്രീ. എം.ടി. വാസു ദേവൻ നായർ.

ഇനിയും മറ്റൊരു പ്രതിഭ ഒരു വട്ടം കൂടി എന്റോർമ്മകൾ മേയുന്ന തിരുമുറ്റത്തെത്തുവാൻ മോഹം എന്ന വരികളിലൂടെ മലയാളികളെ ഗൃഹാതുരത്വത്തിന്റെ സർണ്ണനൂലുകളിൽ ബന്ധിച്ച, മികവുറ്റ കാവ്യസപര്യയിലൂടെ മലയാളത്തിന് മറ്റൊരു ജ്ഞാനപീഠം നേടിയെടുത്ത, നമ്മുടെ ഭാവഗായകൻ ശ്രീ. ഒ.എൻ.വി. കുറുപ്പ്. ഈ ജ്ഞാനപീഠം ത്രിമൂർത്തികൾക്കൊപ്പംതന്നെ, മലയാളത്തിലെ തലയെടുപ്പുള്ള എല്ലാ സാംസ്കാരിക-സാഹിത്യ പ്രവർത്തകരുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അവിടെ ആ കൊച്ചിക്കായലിന്റെ തീരത്തു കൂടിയ എ.കെ.എം.ജി. കൺവെൻഷനിൽ.

സ്ത്രീഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ വിഹവലതകൾ, കഥയിലും കവിതയിലും കോറിയിട്ടെഴുതിയ നാലപ്പാട്ടെ മാധവിക്കുട്ടി. അഗതികൾക്കും അശരണർക്കും ആശ്രയമായി അവരുടെ ദുഃഖഭാരം സ്വയം ഏറ്റെടുത്ത്, അവർക്ക് വേണ്ടി, കണ്ണീരിൽ കുതിർന്ന കവിത ചൊരിയുന്ന സുഗതകുമാരി. കാവ്യാലാപന ശൈലിയിൽ മാന്ത്രികമാനങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിച്ച പ്രൊഫസർ മധുസൂദനൻ നായർ.

മാത്രമല്ല നമ്മുടെ ഭാഷയുടെ അദ്ധ്യയനക്കളരിലെ, ഭീഷ്മർമാരും, ദ്രോണർമാരും, വിദൂരർമാരുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു അവിടെ, ശ്രീ. അയ്യപ്പപ്പണിക്കർ, ശ്രീ. എസ്. ഗുപ്തൻ നായർ, ശ്രീ എം.കെ. സാനു, ശ്രീ.എൻ.പി. മുഹമ്മദ്. അങ്ങനെ നീണ്ടുപോകുന്നു ആ ലിസ്റ്റ്.

നമ്മുടെ ഭാഷയുടെ, സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ഇന്നലെകൾ എങ്ങനെ ആയിരുന്നു എന്നും, ഇന്ന് എങ്ങനെയൊക്കെ ആണ് എന്നും, നാളെ എങ്ങനെയൊക്കെ ആയിരുന്നാൽ കൊള്ളുമെന്നൊക്കെ,

കഥകൾ പറഞ്ഞും, കവിതകൾ ചൊല്ലിയുമൊക്കെ അവർ എ.കെ.എം.ജി. യെ പറഞ്ഞു പഠിപ്പിച്ചു രസിപ്പിച്ചു.

അരണ്ട് വെളിച്ചത്തിലെഴുതുന്ന കഥാകാരന്റെ കുറിപ്പുകളൊക്കെ സസൃഷ്ടമം പരിശോധിച്ച് അടുക്കിപ്പെടുത്തി ചിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തി പ്രകാശനം ചെയ്ത് ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ഒന്നാമകിട പ്രസാധകനായി മാറിയ ശ്രീ. ഡി.സി. കിഴക്കേമുരിയും, മലയാള പത്രപ്രവർത്തന രംഗത്തെ അഗ്രഗണ്യനായ ശ്രീ. എൻ.ആർ.എസ്. ബാബുവും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു നമ്മോടൊപ്പം.

ദൃശ്യ കലകളുടെ ഒരു നീണ്ട് പട്ടികതന്നെയുണ്ടായിരുന്നു നമ്മുടെ സംഗമ സന്ധ്യകളിൽ കെ.പി.എ.സിയുടെ മുടിയനായ പുത്രൻ നാടകം. ശ്രീ എം.ജി. ശ്രീകുമാറും രാധികയും ചേർന്ന ഗാനമേള ഉൾപ്പെടെ.

ദീർഘനാളുകളിലായി ഞാൻ മനസ്സിൽ കുറിച്ചിട്ടിരുന്ന പാദമുദ്രകൾ എന്ന സ്ക്രിപ്റ്റ്. ശ്രീ. എം.ടി.യുടെ നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളോടു കൂടിത്തന്നെ, ശ്രീ സൂര്യ കൃഷ്ണമൂർത്തി ഇരുട്ടും വെളിച്ചവും, നിഴലുകളും രൂപങ്ങളും ചേർത്ത് അരംഗത്തവതരിപ്പിച്ചപ്പോൾ അവിടെക്കണ്ട്ത് ഒരു വിസ്മയലോകം തന്നെയായിരുന്നു.

തിളങ്ങുന്ന ഒരു പൂർണ്ണചന്ദ്രൻ കണക്കെ, നമ്മുടെ 17-ാമതു കൺവൻഷന്റെ സുന്ദര സ്മൃതികൾ ഇന്നും മനസ്സിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്നു. പട്ടം കെട്ടി തലയുയർത്തി നിൽക്കുന്ന കരിയാനകൾ, ചുരുട്ടിയും, തഴയും പൊന്നാലിലക്കൂടകളും വിന്യസിച്ചുള്ള ഘോഷയാത്രകളും വരവേൽപ്പുകളും കൂടിയാട്ടവും, കുച്ചിപ്പുടിയും കഥകളിയുമുൾക്കൊണ്ട് വിനോദസന്ധ്യകൾ. പപ്പടവും അവിയലും, തോരനും, തൊടുകുറികളും വിളമ്പിയ സാക്ഷാൽ കേരള സദ്യകൾ, അമ്പലപ്പുഴ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ നിന്നും എ.കെ.എം.ജിയ്ക്കു വേണ്ടി പ്രത്യേകം എത്തിച്ച പാൽപ്പായസം, അങ്ങനെ പോകുന്നു കൊച്ചിക്കായലിന്റെ തീരത്തുകൂടിയ അസംഗമത്തിന്റെ മധുരസ്മരണങ്ങൾ. ഇനിയും അങ്ങനെയൊരു സംഗമം ഉണ്ടാകട്ടെ എല്ലാവരും പങ്കെടുക്കട്ടെ.

തെക്കേത്തു മാത്യു.

പ്രസിഡന്റ് എ.കെ.എം.ജി. 1997



Above: Poet Pala Narayanan Nair, author of AKMG Kerala Ganam, lighting the inaugural lamp, prior to our members singing the song. - 1996



Right: Sitting in the literary panel at Cochin Convention from left to right are Prof. O. N. V. Kurup, Sri M. T. Vasudevan Nair, Late Dr. Ayyappa Panicker and Late Prof. Guptan Nair



In the podium during Banquet, left to right, Convention chair Dr. Joseph Eipe, President Mathew Thekkedath, Kerala High Court Justice, President elect Dr. Amanullah, Dr. M. V. Pillai and Sri M. T. Vasudevan Nair.



Cochin convention chair Dr. Eipe with members of the committee.



Dr. Ram Thinakkal, moderating a seminar on Health care in Kerala. Health Minister in attendance.



D. C. Kizhakkemuri, Doyen of Publishing, Prof M. K. Sanu, literary critic, Thakazhi, the most well-known Malayalee writer in the world, and Madhavikutty, (Kamala Surayya), whose poetry is taught at universities in Europe and Canada.



Down the AKMG Memory Lane...

Adoor Amanullah, MD
President of AKMG, 1996-1997

The legendary success of our organization started with the historic Orlando convention in 1986 under the leadership of Dr. Enas. This event witnessed the birth of AKMG as a major national alumni organization. Dr. Enas's article elsewhere in this publication, details about that. As a member of the organization since 1985, and as editor of AKMG Reporter from 1990 to 2008, I had the good fortune of watching and chronicling the spectacular growth of AKMG from close quarters. I cherish this gratifying experience, more than my presidency.

Looking back at those eighteen years of my tenure as editor of the Reporter, I have been an eye witness to the growth of AKMG, as a premier association in North America. We were the first one to start this type of an Indian state based medical alumni Association. During the last decade or two, many other state alumni organizations have sprung up, based on our model. We must be proud of the fact that AKMG has met its primary goal of promoting friendship, camaraderie, and providing a forum for social, cultural, and professional interaction among all physicians of Kerala heritage and their family members in North America.

1996 - 97 PRESIDENCY

Presidential baton was passed on to me by Dr. Theckedath Mathew at the memorable 1996 Motherland Convention in Kochi. In my acceptance speech, I set out with three major goals for my presidency. The first goal was to expand the membership and we did significantly increase the number of our life and annual



Dr. Amanullah accepting presidency from Dr. Mathew during the convention in Kochi, in 1996.

members. It was especially encouraging that many new members were medical students and residents. I always felt that our major objective should be to make AKMG more attractive to the young generation, so that, they can carry the torch of our organization into the future.

We also fulfilled the second goal of publishing a comprehensive membership directory, with new global looks, listing more than 500 Kerala physicians from Australia, Middle East, and Europe, in addition to listing of 1,600 physicians from North America. From the feedback we got, it was well received by our members. This global AKMG directory also helped the subsequent formation of AKMG Emirates under the leadership of Dr. Azad Moopen in 2003 and other overseas chapters.

MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT

My third goal was for AKMG to get actively involved in the establishment of an Asian Public health Institute in Munnar, Kerala by the John Hopkins University school of Hygiene and Public Health. The purpose of this project was to promote multi-disciplinary studies, research and training in public health. Initial ground work for this center was started during Dr. M. V. Pillai's presidency. One of the major supporters was Dr. M. Thangavelu, principal of Trivandrum Medical College, who was a very well known teacher and administrator. There was support for this project from Kerala, especially from medical profession, academicians, and the government. During Chief Minister Mr. E. K. Nayanar's visit to the United States, warm welcome and official reception were given to him by John Hopkins University and assurance was given by CM to Hopkins team about Kerala Government's support for the project.

AKMG Executive committee, with help from many of our members and from Dr. Padmanabhan Nair, a senior Hopkins faculty member, worked hard to make this project a reality. Sally O'Brien, Director of Development at John Hopkins presented details of the program at Orlando Convention Banquet. Later on, Kerala Government changed their mind, due to lack of support from the Chief Minister, Mr. E. K. Nayanar, Health Minister Mr. A.C. Shanmukhadas, and State Planning Board Member Dr. B. Ekbal, and this resulted in Hopkins canceling this major project in Kerala and moving it to Malaysia.

HOMECOMING ORLANDO CONVENTION 1997

It was planned as home coming to Orlando, a decade after the first historic Orlando Con-

vention in 1986. We were fortunate to have 3 AKMG stalwarts to lead the convention. Dr. Ravindra Nathan, Convention Chairman, Dr. Abdul Karim, Co-chair and Dr. George Thomas, Advisor. These 3 past and future presidents were architects of the convention. They were able to assemble a ‘dream team’ and pro-



Architects of 1997 Convention: (From L to R) Drs. Abdul Karim (Co-Chair) Adoor Amanullah (President) M. P. Ravindra Nathan (Chair)

ceeded with a ‘can do’ spirit approach. The Convention was held at Buena Vista Palace Hotel and Resort in Disney World, Orlando. The Hotel let us bring our own Indian chefs including a Malayali cook who served delicious Kerala dishes and other Indian gourmet meals throughout the convention.

The convention opened with a reception, fit for a king. The unique inaugural show of Kerala cultural revival with “Thalappoli,” followed by a stage show, that included Thumbi Thullal, Margam Kali, Opana and Mohini Attam, all traditional Kerala art forms, was a well planned presentation. The convention hall was decorated like a palace with Ravi Varma’s paintings and other Kerala artifacts and paintings hanging on the walls, under the direction of a stage specialist, flown in from New York, for this occasion. This made all the attendees quite at home.

**ORLANDO 1997 AKMG
CONVENTION COMMITTEE**

During the campus comedy night, Divya Unni, a young film star and dancer from Kerala gave a stellar performance along with our talented AKMG artistes. Mr. Sukumar, Chairman of Kerala Cartoon Acad-



1997 AKMG Convention Committee

emy and a great humorist, who came all the way from Kerala, entertained the crowd with his great wit and wisdom. There was also an exhibition of his cartoons, coordinated by Dr. M. V. Pillai. The unforgettable finale was a “Musical Extravaganza” by none other than the duo – Mrs. K. S. Chitra and Mr. Venugopal. They came exclusively for this convention and gave a virtuoso performance.



Dr. Sovi Joseph’s acceptance speech

In the end, this convention turned out to be one of the best in the Annals of AKMG history. In addition to hosting a very successful convention, we created a bench mark at that time, for convention surplus – totaling about \$50,000! This was made possible because of the tireless effort and team work of the convention committee for



Left: Reception Committee Center: Chitra and Venugopal singing Right: Sukumar, our humorist and Dr. M. V. Pillai

18 months. My sincere gratitude goes to Drs. Ravindra Nathan (Convention Chair), Abdul Karim (Convention Co-Chair) and the entire Florida Chapter of AKMG. Liza Paul (Registration), Drs. Sally Zachariah (CME), Babu Zachariah (Campus Comedy), Dr. P. K. Paul and Raji Koshy (Tennis), Dr. Paul Chakola (Golf), Retnamma Satya and Dr. Susheela Ravindra Nathan (Youth festival and competition), Dr. Elizabeth Koshy and Dr. V. Balakrishnan (Souvenir) deserve special recognition. It was a memorable AKMG Convention. As our convention Chair, Ravi said “this was a fitting homecoming... back to Orlando with pride and joy”.



AKMG Convention - 1997



Let there be light... Lighting of the Inaugural Lamp by Late Mrs. Janaki Ammas. 1997



New York City... Where else?

Sovi Joseph, MD

President of AKMG, 1997-1998

As you know, it all started in New York. Most of us pass through New York City as a gateway to North America either doing residencies in New York programs or catching the first historical flight to a country that has changed our lives forever. So it is perfectly natural that the birth of AKMG was in New York City in 1980, near Ellis Island.

“IT COULDN’T BE DONE IN NEW YORK.”

Our beloved Dr. Roy Thomas told me once “you made the impossible possible”. Several attempts were made to have a convention in New York but due to several logistical roadblocks people gave it up even though New York was the most obvious choice for a convention location. In spite of the crowdedness and crime those days and the diversity of ideas from the members of the “tri-state chapter”, the mosaic finally worked in harmony to host one of the most memorable conventions. I have to thank the late Dr. Mookan who put his foot down and stated at one of the planning chapter meetings like a lone warrior against the general consensus to host the convention in New York City and not in the suburbs. He did not live to see his idea come to fruition, but we dedicated the convention in his name.

AKMG WEBSITE

Most of you may not know that the AKMG website that we enjoy now was created in 1998. Many thanks to my good friend James Mukalel who designed it at that time at no cost to AKMG.

DOCTORS’ DAY

In 1998, as the president of AKMG, I wrote a letter to all the CEOs of New York City hospitals about

*Moments from the
Convention 2000 - Chicago*



Reflecting on that great year of 1999-2000, I see how vibrant and active my own Rajagopal was at the time. I still had ten more years with the love of my life before he passed away in 2010.



While we lead busy lives, and try to fulfill our various roles as doctors, spouses, parents and friends, let each of us remember to say 'I love you,' and render a hug to our dear ones every chance we get, because, once they leave us, the void can never be filled. No excuses, 'should have,' or 'wish I had...' will bring them back. A life of mindfulness, mindful of the immediate needs of the ones around us, is the only thing that will afford us any peace in going forward in our lives.



Dr. Ravindra Nathan, incoming president...



Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal receiving an award during the convention



Dr. Rajagopal presenting trophies to sports winners - From L -R: Dr. M.P. Ravindra Nathan, Dr. Shakuntala Rajagopal, Dr. Basil Varkey and Dr. A. O. Mammen.



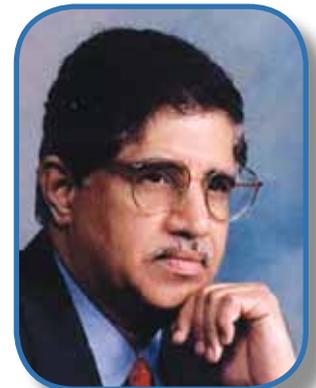
Reflections on my Presidency The First cruise convention

M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD
President of AKMG, 2000-2001

Serving as the president of AKMG during this first year of the new millennium has been a distinct honor and a privilege. The genesis and progress of the association thus far have been covered by the previous articles. There have been many important events during this year, some of which are listed below.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES:

AKMG Charitable wing (AKMG CW) was formed and at its historic first teleconference on October 11, 2000, Dr. Prem Menon was appointed as the first Chair. We donated \$1000 to the Eye Bank Association of India, Trivandrum. This was much appreciated as reflected in these grateful words from Lalitha Raghuram, Executive Director: “With the kind donation from AKMG, an electronic moving display with programmed Malayalam messages on eye donation has been commissioned at the main registration hall of the Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum. This has given an impetus for the start up of counseling of patients to motivate eye donation after death.”



Prem Menon, MD

FIRST AKMG LITERARY CONTEST IN KERALA

AKMG did something refreshingly innovative and intellectually stimulating this year - the first Literary Contest for college students of Kerala and it was a grand success. 211 entries in different categories – short stories and poetry, in English and Malayalam – were received. Mr. Govindankutty Nair from Bakersfield, CA, took a lot of pains to successfully co-ordinate this event in Kerala. The award ceremony was held at the Inter-



Dr K Chandrasekharan addressing the audience; also seen is Mr. Govindan Kutty Nair, Chief Co-Ordinator of the program

national Hotel in Ernakulam on January 25, 01 and awards totaling Rs: 41, 000.00 were given to the winners. The results were published in all prominent Malayalam newspapers of Kerala. Needless to say this brought a lot of appreciation and goodwill to AKMG and helped to promote our name.

INAUGURATION OF MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF AKMG:

On 11 4 2000 Saturday, as the president of AKMG, I was invited to inaugurate the Michigan Chapter under the leadership of Drs. Narendra Kumar, Adoor Amanullah, Japhet Joseph and Mr Radhakrishnan. The inauguration went well with over 100 members enthusiastically attending the function. Michigan chapter would later become one of the most active and productive chapters of AKMG.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF OUR ALMA MATER AND ATMA

On Jan 14, 2001, my wife Susheela and I visited Kerala and attended the Steering Committee meeting on the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Trivandrum Medical College, in reality the golden jubilee of medical education in Kerala. Dr. M. V. Pillai helped to coordinate this meeting on behalf of AKMG. The newly formed Association of Trivandrum Medical College Alumni was christened 'ATMA,' with Dr. M. Krishnan Nair, Director of Regional Cancer Center, as the first Chairman of the ad-hoc committee. ATMA, with the help of its members working all over the globe, has ambitious plans of improving medical education in Kerala and building a fully equipped learning center. I personally requested all members irrespective of their alumni affiliation, to get involved with this project and contribute liberally. And indeed a fine Learning Resource Center was built in Trivandrum Medical College later and subsequently in several other Kerala medical colleges as well.

VISIT TO ABHAYA GRAMAM



Sugatha Kumari

Susheela and I made a trip to Abhaya Gramam in Trivandrum, India on behalf of AKMG. Abhaya is a charitable organization run by Mrs. Sugatha Kumari, the poet laureate of Kerala and a great humanitarian. We saw first-hand the various activities undertaken by Abhaya to improve the conditions of orphans, poor widows and mental patients in Kerala and made a personal donation. This worthwhile project has already been endorsed by AKMG . With the help of many of our members and a great philanthropist, Mr. G. B. Pillai of Cleveland, Abhaya Foundation in North America was launched.

This will certainly keep AKMG's name on the honor roll for charitable activities.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF DIABETES

AKMG was involved in promoting the establishment of the 'Indian Institute of Diabetes' under construction in Trivandrum, to promote awareness of the ever increasing epidemic of Diabetes Mellitus in Kerala. In Jan 2001, I was in Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Cochin, to participate in the preliminary meeting to organize an international CME program in Diabetes Mellitus and was subsequently conducted on Dec 1-3, 2001. This program was jointly sponsored by AAPI and AKMG. A lot of credit should go to Dr. Sreekumaran Nair of Mayo Clinic for successfully spearheading this great project. And AKMG helped the project by raising a significant amount of funds along with other personal resources.

RESPONSE TO GUJARAT EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

February 2001: The response to our appeal for donations for Gujarat Earthquake Relief was simply magnificent. We collected over \$16,800.00 towards this cause. The money was channeled through the much respectable AAPI Charitable foundation. AKMG can be truly proud of its members who went out of the way to mitigate the misery of our countrymen.

AKMG WEBSITE

The construction of our website www.akmg.org was finally completed and became operational at this time. And it certainly helped the members to get all the information and updates about the association quickly without leaving home and has improved the connectivity among all members.

THE FIRST AKMG WRITING CONTEST FOR YOUNG MEMBERS

To promote the many good writers amongst AKMG family, a writing contest was held and authors of the prize winning entries presented their articles during the cruise convention and were given awards.

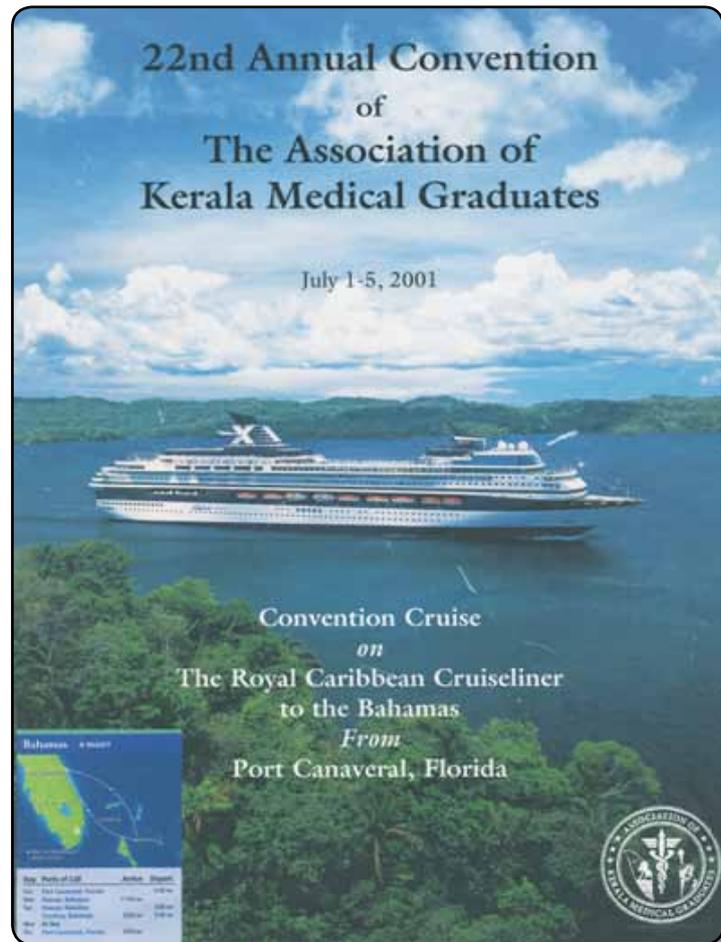
THE FIRST CRUISE CONVENTION: A ROYAL JOURNEY

For the first time, in the history of any alumni association in America, a full- scale annual con-

vention was s conducted aboard a luxury cruise ship by AKMG, on July 1-5, 2001. This unique five day cruise to the sunny Bahamas, aboard the ‘Sovereign of the Seas’ of Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines was very well attended. Three prominent physicians from Kerala – Drs: C. K. Ramachandran (Rtd. Prof: of Medicine, Kozhikode Medical College), K. Karthikeya Varma (Pediatric Surgeon and Past Principal of Kozhikode Medical College) and Prof. Kim Mammen (Chief of Urology and Renal Transplant Program, Ludhiana Medical College), headlined an outstanding CME program.

The ship was booked solid since everybody wanted to celebrate the July 4th holiday in a spectacular way. Dr. Abdul Karim and Dr. Paulson Kotturan did an outstanding job in their respective roles as the Chair and Co-Chair of the Convention.

Thanks should also go to Liza Paul (Registration), Bessie Kotturan (Reception) Elizabeth Koshi (Souvenir Committee) Sally Zachariah (CME), P. K. Paul (Sports) Babu Zachariah (Entertainment), C. Venugopal (Finance and Fund raising), Sushama Venugopal (Children’s Talent Contest) and Susheela



Ravindranathan (Literary Committee). And thanks to a few sponsors, this cruise convention was financially very successful too.



Left: Abdul Karim Abdul Karim MD, Chair, Cruise Convention, 2001
Right: Paul Kotturan MD, Convention Co-Chair

Overall, it was a very good year for AKMG and we did indeed score many ‘firsts’ during this period. It was heartening that there was whole hearted participation of all members that helped us to reach our goals set at the beginning of the year. Best wishes to AKMG for continued progress and prosperity.



Cruise 2001 Discussion prior to Boarding: Drs. Karim, Nathan and Roy Thomas



Cruise 2001 At the Registration Desk: Cruise staff and Dr. Polson



Cruise Gavel Exchange 2001 Dr. Easwaran Variyam and Dr. Ravindra Nathan.



Cruise Convention 2001 : Our CME Team with distinguished guests from India: Dr. Kim Mammen, Dr. C. K. Ramachandran, Dr. Salim and Dr. K. K. Varma



Cruise Convention 2001 Susheela Ravindra Nathan and Haleema Karim being recognized for their special services



Cruise 2001 Susheela Ravindranathan receiving founding member award



Dr. C. K. Ramachandran speaking



Cruise Convention 2001 Dr Ravindra Nathan (President) and Dr Abdul Karim (Convention Chair)



Convention 2001 aboard Sovereign of the Seas.



My term as AKMG President

Easwaran P. Variyam, MD
President of AKMG, 2001-2002

My term as AKMG President officially began somewhere in the Caribbean Sea at the conclusion of the successful first cruise convention. Service through the ranks - including an additional year as Secretary, Treasurer, on the Board of Governors, and in the Education Committee as well as participation in the many “brainstorming sessions with Dr. Enas Enas during his tenure, had given me abundant knowledge in the working of the organization except in undertaking the details of a convention. I recited the usual goals of increased membership and member participation at my acceptance, and the one specific goal that I had set out was to undertake a concrete step in advancing postgraduate medical education in Kerala.

Our team for the 2001-2002 term included Drs. Joseph Eipe, Narendra Kumar, Parvathi Mohan and MP Ravindra Nathan (Executive Committee); Drs. Cyriac Chemplavil, Japhet Joseph, Ramesh Kadakkal, Sunil Kumar, Thomas Mukkada, Joy Paul, KJ Philip, Benny Philips, Arvind Pillai and PC Punnen (Board of Governors); and Drs. Salim Yusuf, Suja Subramanyan, John Lincoln, Prathap Chandran, Prem Menon and P Karunakaran Kutty (Committee Chairs).

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Early during our term the terrible disaster of September 11 occurred. While many of us suffered from the inconvenience of curtailed air travel and the like, two families, those of Drs. Philip K. Philip and Prathap Chandran intimately experienced it. Dr. Philip lost his daughter Sneha, a physician who was living in close by Battery Park City and was officially declared a victim of 9/11. The Philip family is still mourning their loss. AKMG expressed grief and extended sympathy to the Philip family. Dr. Chandran was ambushed by Charleston, West Virginia police two days after the disaster as he was returning by bus from Washington DC.

Many members wanted AKMG to register a strongly worded complaint against the police, but based on the prevailing national sentiment and the Chandran family's wishes, AKMG chose to curtail our indignation and concern. Instead, AKMG members enthusiastically responded to the call for donations to a cause connected to the disaster and raised \$16,200 in directed donations. The funds were given to the "Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund" which guaranteed disbursement without administrative costs providing educational scholarships to the children affected by 9/11 disaster. As of this writing the fund website mentions that the total amount collected was \$128 million of which \$74 million has already been given away.

BYLAWS

Our team was given the task of revising AKMG Bylaws and formalizing bylaws of AKMG Humanitarian Services. Dr. John Lincoln spearheaded these efforts. They were circulated to members and were affirmed by the General Body at the convention in Toronto. AKMG -HS became a formal entity.

COURSE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Kerala Medical Schools had consistently ranked low in research publications by faculty and post graduate students. Although a thesis based on original research has always been a requirement for PG students, they had infrequently received guidance in the design and conduct of studies. With Drs. Fazil Marickar and Mr Rajagopal as Co-Directors AKMG sponsored a four day course on research methodology in Thiruvananthapuram on June 24-27, 2002. There were sessions on choosing a research problem, developing a research proposal, conducting research study, analyzing findings, dissemination of findings and conclusions and writing grant proposals. Three sessions included small group discussion facilitated by faculty leaders. AKMG spent \$4,000 to sponsor the course.

Among the 88 participants most were first year postgraduate students from all the medical colleges that had a PG program; a few were new faculty members of Kannur Medical College, Amritha Institute of Medical Sciences and or Dental, Nursing and Ayurveda Colleges. Attendees were provided free registration, syllabus, coffee breaks and a working lunch. The response from students was overwhelmingly favorable. They returned to their institutions and demanded that similar introductory materials be provided to each incoming student group. AKMG helped conduct similar courses at four medical colleges during the ensuing year with the help of Health Action for People. I learned that PG

students in later years continued to organize similar programs at their own cost. I have often wondered if AKMG could have sustained the commitment annually for this endeavor that helped a large number of students for a small investment.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

AKMG began one of its most successful programs to date during our tenure, that of establishing Learning Resource Centers (LRC) in Kerala Medical Colleges. Timed with the 50th Anniversary of the Thiruvanthapuram Medical College, a team with enthusiastic leadership of Dr. Narendra Kumar collected directed donations and signed a memorandum of understanding with authorities in Kerala that would help establish the first LRC in Thiruvanthapuram and lead the way for alumni of other institutions. AKMG provided a forum for the Palliative Care Society (now Pallium India) under the leadership of Dr. MR Rajagopal both in the Reporter and in the annual convention publication and helped directed donations to reach them. AKMG also provided \$11,000 towards the ill fated Diabetes Center Project during that year. We added a substantial number of new members, in student, trainee and life categories. Dr. Addor Amanullah helped prepare two issues of the Reporter with details of all our activities.



Presidents at Luncheon: Seated: Drs. Enas Enas, K. C. R. Nair, Adoor Amanullah Standing: Drs. Parvathi Mohan, Gokulanathan, Ravindra Nathan, Thekkedath Mathew, Joseph Eipe

2002 TORONTO CONVENTION

The 23rd Annual AKMG Convention held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on August 8-11, 2002 marked a new chapter in long distance co-operation between two AKMG communities. Planning the events, negotiations, and registration of Canadian members were undertakings of the Ontario group, while registration of all other members, fundraising, and souvenir publication were tasks taken up by the group in Lubbock, Texas. I was privileged to have Dr. Karunakaran Kutty, a Past President, serve as Convention Chair; I cannot recall another president who had that distinction. Kutty made many sacrifices in this endeavor. The Co-Chairs, Drs. Santosh Paikatt, P.C. Punnen, Bhavani Nair and Sarada Narendran spent countless hours towards a smooth convention. Drs. Salim Yusuf and Enas Enas helped arrange one of the best AKMG Continuing Medical Education events. Sanoj Punnen and Sandia Paikatt gave a cool time for the youth. Sarada's team from Lubbock – John and Annie Lincoln, Benny and Rosemary Phillips, John Thomas and Beena – gave up a lot in making the final registration process error free. Dr. John (Anil) Lincoln spent his precious time prior to the start of his internship in developing an error-proof spreadsheet registration program. Mr. C.V. Surendran, although not an AKMG member, was gracious in helping with publishing the Convention Souvenir. Many members helped find resources to support the convention. We were honored to have Dr. Jacob John as a keynote speaker. Plenty of Kerala delicacies were served. Akin to the practice in early conventions, we had a forum to introduce new members and their families. We also recognized former presidents and those celebrating 50th year from Thiruvananthapuram at a luncheon. The concert on the final day by Sri. Biju Narayanan and party was entertaining and memorable. The hard work of volunteers provided great enjoyment to over 200 families. And, AKMG increased its coffers by about



Gavel Handing over: Standing: Drs. Joseph Eipe and Easwaran Variyam, seated in the middle, Dr. Santhosh Paikat



Lubbock Group: Seated: Mrs. Rosemary Phillips, Mrs. Beena Variyam, Dr. Easwaran Variyam, Mrs. Dr. Annie Lincoln, Mrs. Dr. Sarada Narendran

\$42,000. It was a privilege to have served AKMG in various capacities, but it was time to pass on the gavel to the able hands of Dr. Joseph Eipe.



From left to right: Dr. Easwaran Variyam, Mrs. Beena Variyam, Mrs. Omana K.Kutty and Dr. P Karunakaran Kutty. Toronto Convention 2002



Research Methodology Course: Sri. Chandrasekharan Nair, A. Chief Secretary of Kerala, Dr. Fazil Marickar, Dr.KA Kumar, Dr. Easwaran Variyam, Hon.Sri. P Sankaran, Dr. Annamma, Sri. Gunavardhanan and Dr. MR Rajagopal.



With Singers: Dr. PK Kutty & Dr. Easwaran Variyam with singer Biju Narayanan - 2002



AKMG

My Reflections

Joseph Eipe, MD
President of AKMG, 2002-2003

It has been a great privilege and honor for me to be a part of this prestigious organization. I was fortunate to be a chairperson for two annual conventions, the San Diego convention and the Motherland convention that was held in Cochin. I also served as President and was able to arrange a delightful convention in Hawaii, the Aloha state. Recollections of these events give me great joy and thrill.

The San Diego get together was held under the guidance and leadership of then President Dr. Ram Thinakkal. This was the first AKMG convention held to the west of Mississippi. The midwest and east coast was the stronghold for AKMG and when I requested the meeting to be held in California, there was a lot of reluctance from the board. They were afraid there was not enough manpower or interest to organize such a function. We proved them wrong. It was three days of great entertainment, education and sports activities. According to most who attended, we raised the standard of the convention a notch. The historical Del Coronado hotel on the Pacific Ocean provided a fabulous site. The meeting was unique in several respects. We served Kerala style banana chips, “muruku” and mixture. We introduced Dr. K.J. Yesudas to AKMG for the first time, only to make several subsequent appearances, including for our Hawaii convention. Even tennis player Vijay Amritraj came and talked and mingled with the youth.

The Cochin convention was quite an elaborate and sentimental return to our homeland and Dr. Mathew Thekkadathu will have much to say about it.

The theme of the Hawaii convention was to give everyone a wonderful and unforgettable way to have a fun filled rejuvenating lifetime experience with family and friends. Dr. Radha Menon did a marvelous job fulfilling this. The hospitality and landscape of Hilton Hawaiian village, its Kerala like ambiance, the beaches with coconut trees all blended well for this occasion. We took full advantage

Hawaii Convention - 2003

of the beaches and outdoor facilities. The beach olympics was a great success, organized by a professional group, with volleyball, relay race and sac races. The noise level from our old folks and youngsters was quite high. Even the little drizzle on Friday evening stayed away long enough so that we were able to enjoy the outdoor dinner, fire dance and Polynesian and Hawaiian dance show at the lagoon green. The highlight of the evening was that a genuine “Vellichappad” made an appearance for you on stage.



During the year I was President, AKMG had several notable achievements. AKMG humanitarian services was established and its tax exemption status was achieved thanks to Dr.

Prem Menon. Dr. Narendra Kumar was able to mastermind and establish a learning resource center at Trivandrum Medical College. A record number of life members were added to AKMG roster by the efforts of Dr. Tom Mukkoda. AKMG Emirates Chapter was initiated and the first meeting was held in 2003. And finally, we were able to lead ourselves into our Silver Jubilee year and convention in Detroit which turned out to be our THRISUR PURUM.

On a sad note from California, I had to report that two of our life members were no longer with us. One was Dr. Jayasankar Menon who was a very active member and helped organize meetings in San Diego and Cochin. The other, Dr. Sebastian George, a past President and an always very lively participant of AKMG activities. Most of you remember him from the Las Vegas convention. Also another person comes to mind, Dr. P.K. John, my classmate and dissection partner from Trivandrum, who was an active participant in the original Toronto conference. He passed away after my term.

I am glad to see AKMG remaining a strong organization, still growing, continuing to attract large crowds for the convention and being financially stable. I have only one regret. I have two daughters who are doctors practicing in the Los Angeles area, but no interest in AKMG. In the same way, there are thousands of second generation Kerala physicians in this country, of whom we are proud, but unfortunately we cannot attract them to AKMG. They are not interested in a KATHAKLI program or a Yesudas concert. We cannot blame them. I would like to see a future AKMG President with the resume as follows: born in Chicago, graduated from Northwestern, went to medical school at University of Illinois, residency at Cook County Hospital, Cardiology fellowship at Mayo Clinic, now practicing in Flynt, Michigan. Probably not in my lifetime.





AKMG Detroit Silver Jubilee 2004 Convention

Narendra R. Kumar, MD
President of AKMG, 2003-2004

THE MOTHER OF ALL CONVENTIONS!

I was humbled, honored and delighted to assume the presidency at the Hawaii AKMG Convention in Honolulu in 2003 from Dr. Joseph Eipe. In my acceptance speech in Hawaii, I outlined the priorities and goals for the following year. One goal was to initiate “globalization of AKMG” by establishing chapters in the Middle East and other countries. This was achieved later that year with the AKMG Emirates Inaugural Convention at the Al-Bustan hotel in Dubai, organized under the leadership of Dr. Azad Moopen. A group of 30 AKMG families from North America attended the event. The AKMG Emirates Convention was attended by over 350 Kerala physicians and their families from Middle Eastern countries in attendance. Highlights of this 3-day convention included CME program, youth activities, Concert by Sujatha and Unni Menon, and a desert safari. It was a grand success, and



Detroit team getting ready in Hawaii

Detroit Convention Committee



another AKMG chapter opened in Muscat, Oman shortly after.

Another goal was to support the recently established AKMG- Learning Resource Center (LRC) at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College and to expand this program to Kozhikode, Kottayam, Thris-sur and Alappuzha medical colleges. This objective also proved to be very successful. I have visited these LRCs during trips to Kerala and can say that these institutions are functioning efficiently under the supervision of local Alumni, and is much appreciated and well utilized by students and the faculty.

The final goal was to conduct and organize the AKMG Silver Jubilee Convention in Detroit- the Motor City, in 2004. It was extremely successful and turned out be “the Mother of all Conventions”. The Convention Committee under the leadership Drs. T.L. Ittiara and Satish Sunder did a superb job. AKMG celebrated its 25th Annual Silver Jubilee from July 15th -17th, 2004 at the Ritz Carlton and Hyatt Regency Hotels in Detroit and concluded with the glorious Gala Banquet at the Cobo Convention Center.

The convention was presided over by the Chief Guest Dr. Babu Paul IAS, retired Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala. Jennifer Granholm, Governor of the State of Michigan, delivered a special video message for the occasion, since she could not attend the function due to the National Governors’ Conference in Seattle, WA. John F. Smith, Senior Vice-President of General Motors welcomed the delegates to the Motor Capital. Internationally renowned from India, Padmadshree Dr. Mathew Samuel Kalarickal, Dr. Reji Menon, Chairman of Asianet Television, Dr. (Prof) C.K. Ramachandran, eminent teacher from Calicut Medical College and Dr. Muhammed Majeed, CEO of Sabinsa Corporation offered

Detroit Convention - 2004



their felicitations. This was followed by a musical extravaganza by K.S. Chitra and Biju Narayanan.

On the second and third days, there were CME programs, covering a plethora of topics. Dr. V. Gangadharan and Dr. K.P. Ravikrishnan coordinated the CME activities.

Seminars on Health care status in India, Doctor-Patient relationship, Malayalam Literature and Cinema were also conducted and well attended. In the evening of the second day, at a special function presided over by Padmashree Dr. K.M. Cherian, all the past Presidents of AKMG were presented a memento by Padmashree Dr. M. Krishnan Nair, founder-director of Regional Cancer Center, Trivandrum. Mr. Zachariah. P Thomas discussed various humanitarian activities organized by NORKA. The ever enthusiastic Detroit team put on the traditional Campus Comedy evening, with the help of member participation outside of Michigan too. Drs. Majeed Paduvana and Geetha Nair were instrumental in the success of this evening.

One of the hallmarks for this year was the sports and outdoor activities organized efficiently by Dr. K.C. Joseph and ably supported by Rene Joseph. Over 500 gathered for this event, filled with games, a fabulous food court with dosa stations, hamburgers, etc. This sports event alone made a surplus with self-funding, and was greatly enjoyed by all ages.

The Exhibit Committee chaired by Dr. Joseph Varghese, Mr. Dennis Mathew and Valsala Vikraman put up an elaborate array of 45 booths and exhibits. Another focus was the youth activities organized by Shaun Ittiara and Sarada Kumar. The youth and young AKMG members enjoyed age-specific programs including a welcome reception, comedy show, and evening activities. Transportation and tours were excellent under Dr. T.O. Shanavas's leadership. This was all possible with Mr. Radhakrishnan, MBA and Dr. Murali Nair's able effort in publicity, and carefully planned Souvenir,

Detroit Convention - 2004



which was meticulously put together under the guidance of Dr. K.G. Surendran Nair, with the publishing skills of Dr. Murali Nair.

The Gala Banquet evening was attended by over 1250 delegates, presided over by the Chair Dr. T.L. Ittiara. Padmabhushan Dr. M.S. Valiathan, president of Indian National Science Academy, delivered the keynote address. He emphasized the role of AKMG in building institutions of international standards in Kerala. This was followed by the Presidential Address and a change of guard to incoming President, Dr. Parvathy Mohan, with her acceptance speech. Dr. Jagan Ailinani, AAPI President, offered felicitations, and Dr. Satish Sundar the convention Co-Chair thanked the honored guests and delegates. Dr. Prem Menon from AKMG-HS presented tokens of appreciation to the key members of our team, for our contribution, to the fund. All this was followed by a gala dinner and entertainment by renowned Malayalam cine artists, Rajeevnath, Nedumudi Venu, Jagathy Sreekumar, Jagadish, Maniyanpilla Raju, Divya Unni, Leksmi Gopaldaswamy, Kavalam Sreekumar, Jayaraj Warriar, Kalpana and others. This program was sponsored by Mr. Radhakrishnan Nair and Dr. Indira Nair from Chicago.

I have to thank the contributions by Air India, for the international flight tickets and Sunny Diamonds for the publication of AKMG Directory. Asianet arranged for the International TV coverage, and a Silver Jubilee DVD was mastered for the event.

With a budget well over \$1 million, we managed to give back over \$125,000 to the organiza-

tion in various forms, and funded the AKMG Humanitarian Services. Even with such grand goals, the Michigan members enthusiastically participated and gave their time, energy and excitement. Our contributors were many, but one cannot forget our dearest Grand Sponsors Dr. Muhammed Majeed from Sabinsa Corporation, Mr. Radhakrishnan Nair, Mr. Vincent Kuttemperoor from VK Homes, Merrill Lynch, General Motors, Air India and Sunny Diamonds.

As a team we generated sustaining interest to keep a very vibrant Michigan Chapter running, which includes a well run annual CME MI meeting by Dr. Satish Sundar and to bring back the convention to Detroit under the able leadership of Dr. K.C Joseph, the 2012 President of AKMG.

Over 1250 attendees, more than \$125,000 in surplus, a plethora of dignitaries, one of a kind 3 day programming, the largest budget of any AKMG year, Sports and picnic like none other.... it was a Mother of All Conventions, thanks to the able support of the Convention Chair, Dr. T.L. Ittiara, the Co-Chair, Dr. Satish Sundar our Master of Ceremony, spouses Minni Kumar, Jessie Ittiara and Meera Sundar and the entire Michigan Chapter Team. The Detroit Convention was memorable for all that attended, fostered lifelong friendships, and was greatly enjoyed by all.



Detroit Convention - 2004



Convention in the Paradise on Earth

Parvathi Mohan, MD
President of AKMG, 2004-2005

Although I have had a long association with AKMG, assuming a leadership role had always been far from my mind until my good friend the late Dr Sebastain George convinced me otherwise. Accepting the nomination for the position of the Secretary/Treasurer in 2001 was the beginning of a big chapter in my life and a tremendous undertaking for the Washington D.C. AKMG chapter. But for the total dedication, motivation and selfless efforts of my colleagues and friends in Washington and elsewhere, I would not have achieved any of my set goals for the next four years. I take a moment to recognize and thank the chapter chair Dr Jaya Pillay, co-chair Dr Jacob Joseph, the committee members, numerous friends and family who mentored, guided and encouraged me in this role. During this period, my predecessors were already establishing landmark achievements in Kerala and other places in the field of philanthropy and education and I learned much from the past leaders of this august organization.

A project very dear to my heart was conceived during the initial planning of the activities for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This was the establishment of state of the art Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Kerala which was the brain-child of Dr George Abraham, under the banner of the AKMG humanitarian services headed by Dr Prem Menon. The objective was to develop an emergency medical and disaster service system in key cities of Kerala on par with the 911 system in the US. During the ensuing months and years, under Dr Abraham's leadership, ACLS and trauma courses were established in several medical colleges in Kerala. A pilot project to provide pre-hospital emergency medical care was planned to start in Trivandrum with the support of the Indian Institute of Emergency Medical Services (IIEMS). A fully equipped ambulance was donated to the city of Kottayam, with a view to expand the activities to other cities over the course of the following years.

A highlight of our educational activities was the Indo American CME convention in Trivan-



Convention in Puerto Rico, 2005 - Left: Convention attendees. Right: Dining under the trees

drum in December, 2004. This sentinel event was envisioned and organized by the immediate past President Dr Narendra Kumar; it was co-sponsored by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) and an esteemed medical faculty from Kerala, headed by Dr Krishnan Nair. This event was marred by the unbelievably monumental tragedy, the Tsunami of 2004, which attacked and engulfed our shores the day before the event. Nonetheless we continued with the event which was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Mr. Oommen Chandy. We were able to present to him a check for a substantial sum towards the Tsunami Relief Fund.

The creation of a Learning Resource Center (LRC) which initially took shape in Trivandrum under the leadership of Dr Narendra Kumar was extended to other medical schools. During this period, thanks to Dr Karunakaran Kutty's tireless efforts, a similar center was established in the medical college in Kozhikode. Plans to have additional centers in Thrissur and Kottayam were underway. Dr Thomas Mukkada continued to put in incredible time and efforts to increase the AKMG membership. In the fall of 2004, he reported an increase of 28% in life membership and a total paid membership of 1035 during the previous two years, no mean task.

Then came the choice of the venue for the 26th annual AKMG convention which has always been the most anticipated culmination of all of the yearly AKMG activities. The logical venue for the 2005 convention was Washington DC. A chance remark about London as a possible choice blossomed into a full fledged idea. We went on an exploratory mission to the land of Shakespeare, and I cannot acknowledge enough the enthusiasm of my chapter colleagues who spent much, worked much and traveled much. But the cost was prohibitive. Thanks to the two travel-savvy chairpersons of the chapter, the El Conquerors of Washington set off on their second mission, flew south and finally found "El Dorado" in "El Conquistador", Puerto Rico.



Passing the gavel to Dr. Karim

The Mogul emperor Shah Jahan inscribed on the walls of “Diwan-i-Khas”, the magnificent pavilion in the Red Fort in Old Delhi: “If there is paradise on earth, it is this, it is this”. El Conquistador to us was paradise - years later, I still get very positive feedback on the choice of our venue. We were totally taken up by

the vibrant beauty and captivating allure of Puerto Rico and this beautiful retreat perched on a 300 foot cliff with its own private island. This venue provided the visitor with breathtaking, panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The three days of gathering and activity on this beauty-spot included a generous mixture of local music and dances by local artists, local gourmet dinners on the island and an unbelievable Kerala style dinner specially prepared by Mrs. And Mr. Kallarackal from Kerela. A unique poetry and music session conducted by Dr MV Pillai and Mr. G. Venugopal, AK-MG’s favorite star singer from Kerala, “poetry under the trees of Palomino” captured the unsurpassed beauty of nature in words and tunes. Dr Bhavani Nair and group presented incredible visual effects to the campus night events and Ms Juliet Sebastian and Mr Biju jazzed up the night with lively music for



*The formal meeting
Convention 2005*



Juliet and Biju during campus night



Campus night dancers



AKMG 2004 office bearers



Poetry under the trees

the avid dancers among us. The grand finale combined the flamboyance and flavor of Caribbean music and dance contrasting sharply with an unforgettable evening of melodies by Mr. Venugopal and Ms Anita Krishna who skillfully combined the classical Ragas with our favorite film songs from yester-years.

We were especially appreciative of the presence of the Secretary of health Hon. Rosa Perdomo Perez who inaugurated the official ceremony representing the Governor of Puerto Rico. She gave the audience an interesting and informative insight into the health scene in Puerto Rico. The event also featured the handing over of the gavel and the official handing over of the presidency from the current president to the in- coming president, Dr Abdul Karim.

From a purely social group in its founding stage, AKMG continues to evolve into a vibrant and versatile organization, strengthened by its cultural, educational and most importantly, its philanthropic goals. More and more young physicians are coming forward with fresh ideals and enthusiasm and are taking on crucial and innovative roles in this organization. I envisage AKMG as a sprawling tree that provides us with shelter, companionship and freedom from loneliness as we journey into the dusk of our lives. But we cannot sit on our laurels and there is much more to do and achieve. As the American poet Robert Frost scribed:

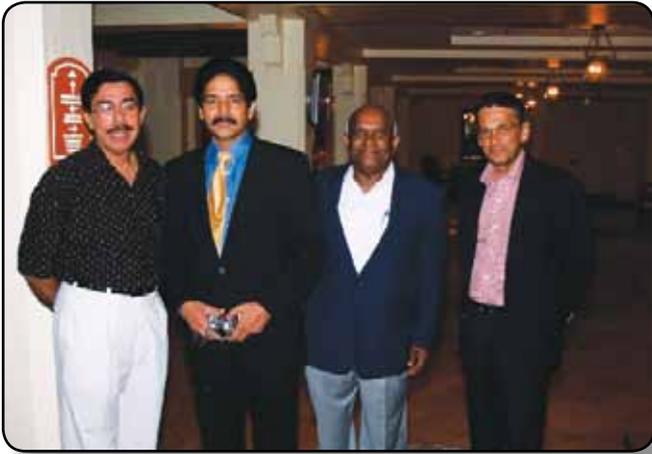
*The woods are lovely, dark and deep
I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.*



Kerala Gaanam



Convention hosts



Convention hosts



G Venugopal and Ms Krishna- concert



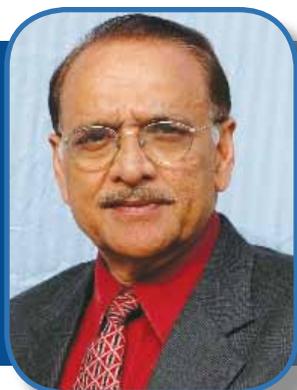
Chief Guest Hon. Perez with AKMG hosts



Puerto Rico - On the boat to Palomino Island



Fun on Palomino Island



President's Report for 2005-2006

Abdul M. Karim, MD
President of AKMG, 2005-2006

I have been fortunate to be given an opportunity to serve as the President of this prestigious organization, "AKMG" during the year 2005-2006 and want to thank AKMG members in giving me the chance.

When I took over the reins of this organization, I knew the task entrusted on me was quite daunting, since my predecessors have set great standards of excellence. But I believe, with the help of our hard working members of the executive and convention committees as well as those from the Florida chapter of AKMG, we accomplished a lot during the year.

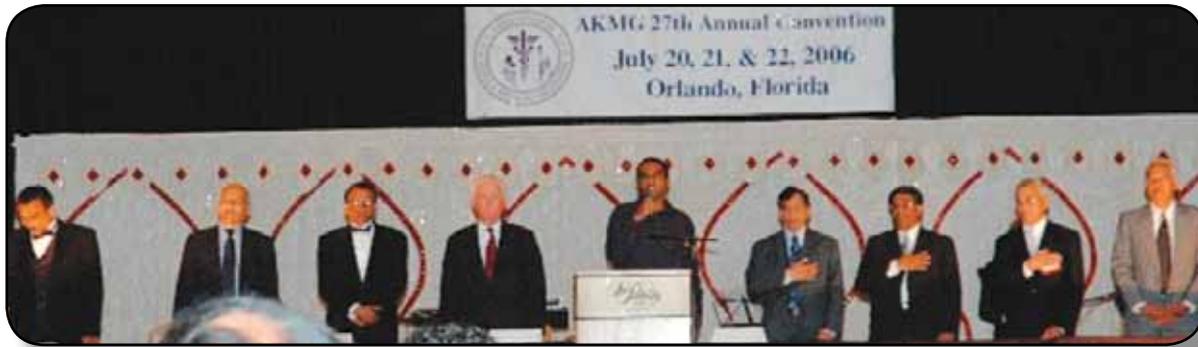
It is always said that the strength of any organization and its future growth is in the total membership. We were able to add 45 new members during my tenure as president. I would like to personally thank Dr Krishna Prasad and many others who put in considerable amount of time to make this happen.

One of the responsibilities of the president is to oversee other foundations and subsidiary associations that are part of AKMG. I am happy to report that AKMG Charitable Foundation did an excellent job as well. Between all of those natural disasters, Tsunami that affected many regions in India and Hurricane Katrina that affected Louisiana, USA later, AKMG members rose to the occasion and generated significant amount of funds for the stricken victims. Two of our distinguished members, Dr Prem Menion, President of AKMG Charitable Foundation and Fremu Varghese (currently President Elect 2011-2012) did offer considerable humanitarian service at this critical time and AKMG



Dr Cecil B Wilson, Chair, AMA Board of Trustees and Chief guest, addressing the audience

Distinguished guests at the stage at the beginning of the gala banquet



*Devi Pillai and Dr. Aravind Pillai
(Convention Chair) arriving for the gala finale*



*Drs. P. K. Kutty and Moideen Moopen in a
humorous skit*

owes a debt of gratitude for their selfless services.

Another major project, we got involved was Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Kerala. The first pilot project was inaugurated in Kottayam with the donation of one fully equipped ambulance to the local EMS to be used as needed for the entire community. We have to thank Dr George Abraham, Philadelphia, PA, Director of EMS project for AKMG, for all the hard work he put into this program. Dr. Thomas Mukkada, a past president of AKMG, also helped to raise considerable funds for this project. I want to thank all AKMG members for opening their wallet and contributing generously to this great cause.

We had several major discussions how to get young AKMG members on board. We felt that mobilizing young members is the only way to guarantee longevity for this organization. Dr M.P Ravindra Nathan , Ex president, did help us in a big way to achieve this. We succeeded in recruiting about 150 MSR/YPS to AKMG. We also got some of our young members in leadership position for the annual convention in an effort to get them interested in the organization.

Finally, we were fortunate to organize one of the most successful AKMG annual conventions at Peabody Hotel, Orlando on July 20, 21& 22, 2006. I have to thank Dr Aravind Pillai, Convention

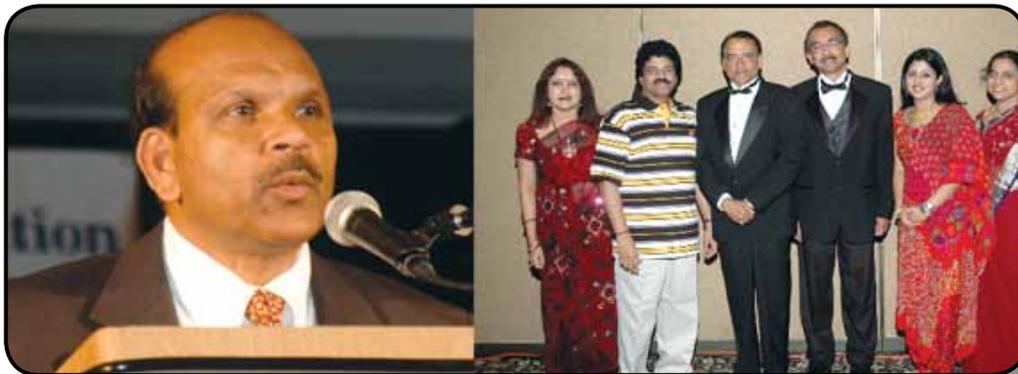
Chair, who did an excellent job along with total support from the Florida chapter of AKMG. We were pleased with the fact that we were able to generate a reasonable amount of money for the organization and a large part was given to the AKMG Charitable Foundation.

In closing, let me say that I enjoyed working with all of you and truly appreciate what you have contributed to AKMG that year. I do not have enough words to express the gratitude I feel towards this organization's exceptional members, who have made the year very successful.

I am sure the future AKMG leaders will take this organization to much higher levels. I wish our beloved organization "AKMG" all the best in the years to come.



Gala dinner

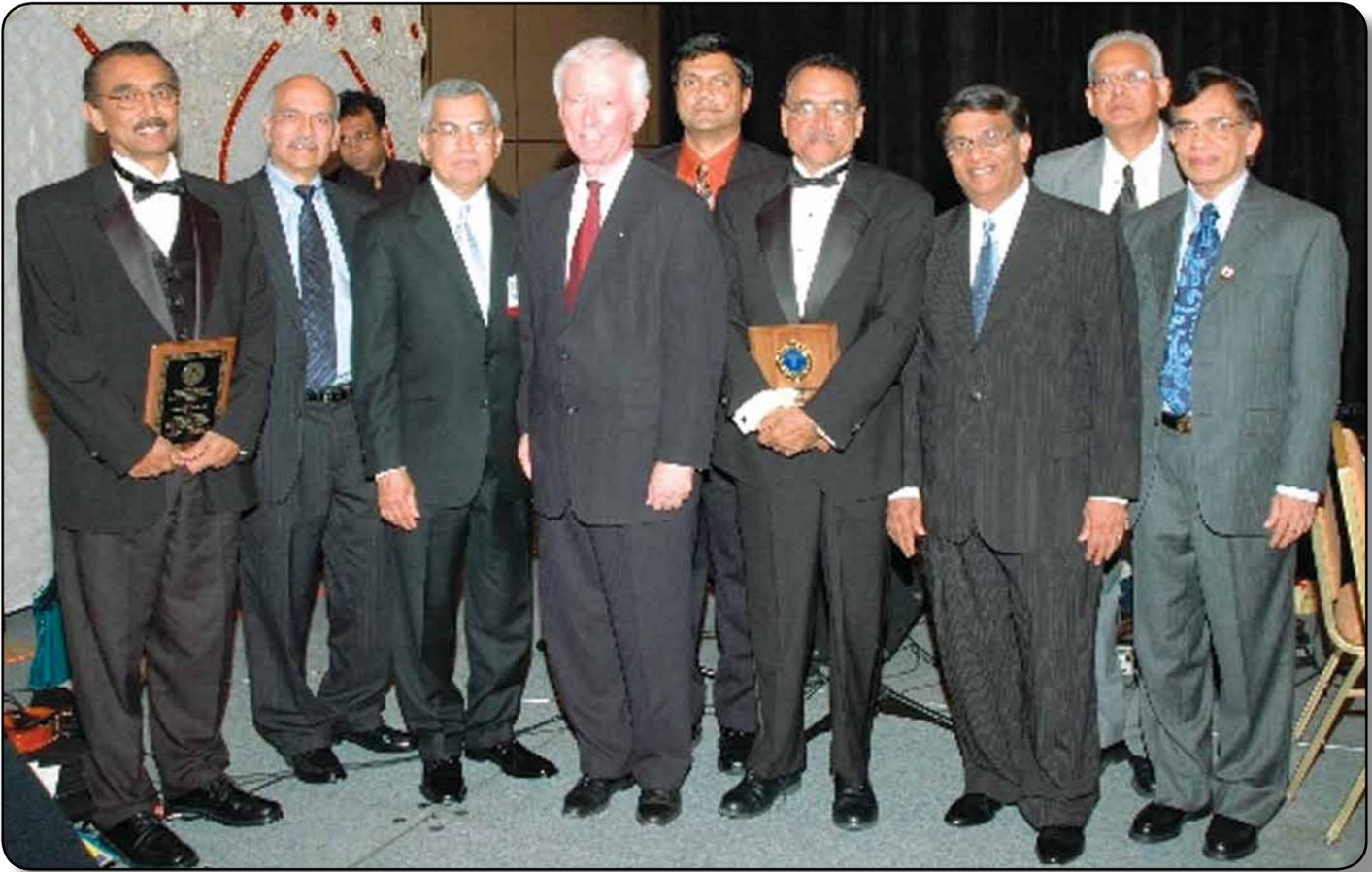


*Dr Paul Kotturan
(Co Chair) addressing*

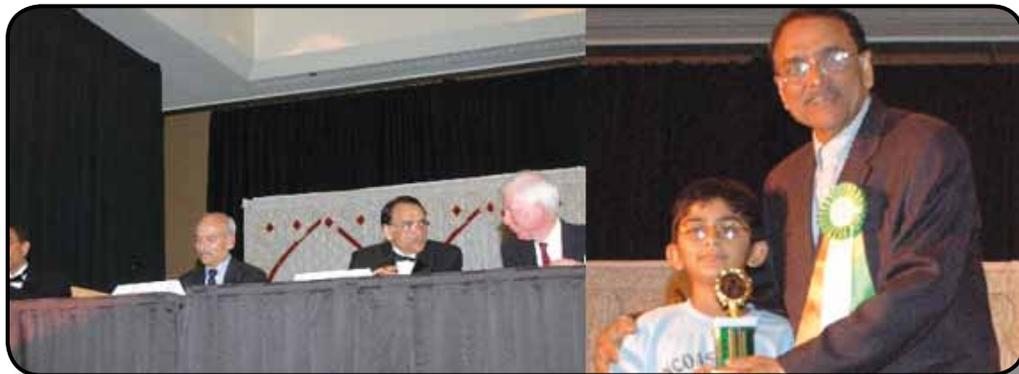
*With M. G. Sreekumar, the famous
Malayalm Play Back Singer*

*Dr. Krishnan
Nair, a founding
member and
Dr. Karim*





Convention committee with Dr Cecil Wilson (middle) and Dr Vinod Shah (President AAPI – 3rd from the right)

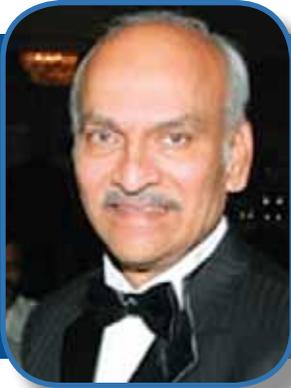


An award to the winner from the AKMG President



Molsley Edwards and Haleema Karim

Dr. Abdul Karim with Dr. Cecil Wilson



Prathap Chandran, MD
President of AKMG, 2006-2007

Recollections of my Presidential Year

I took over as President of AKMG in July, 2006 following a wonderful convention in Florida, under the guidance of Dr. Abdul Karim. It was indeed great honor and privilege that my colleagues entrusted me with the reins of this prestigious organization.

We started with a few goals for the ensuing year. Recruiting more life members, strengthening and expanding the Emergency Medical Services in Kerala, supporting the opening of new LRCs in Kerala Medical Colleges, updating the AKMG Directory, encouraging members to contribute to AKMG-HS, and revise the Constitution and Bylaws of AKMG. However, nothing was more important than getting young physicians to be actively involved in AKMG for the long term survival of our Organization.

To achieve that goal, we recruited several first and second generation physicians as life members and they were actively involved in planning and running the 2007 convention in Cleveland, Ohio. The CME chair as well as many moderators and speakers were from the youth group. To demonstrate our sincerity, we suggested that one or



AKMG 2007 Convention Committee

two medical students/ training physicians be sent every year, under AKMG sponsorship, to premier medical institutions in Kerala, not only to observe and learn medicine as it is practiced in that state, but also be exposed to the rich Kerala culture.



Thalappoli

Great efforts were made to improve EMS in Kerala. We met with the Health Minister as well as many social groups like the Southern Regional Lyons Club, builders and hospital administrators to help us improve the services in Kottayam as well as expand the services to other big cities like Thiruvanan-



Lighting the Lamp

thapuram, Kochi, Kozhikode, Thrissur etc. I like to salute Dr. George Abraham, not only for his hard and dedicated work, but also for his long term vision and for his perseverance.

A COMPREHENSIVE NEW AKMG DIRECTORY WAS PUBLISHED IN 2007.

This would not have been possible without the diligent efforts of two past presidents and my close friends Drs. Adoor Amanullah and Narendra Kumar.

We were also able to refine our web site and have a new web master with the help of Dr. Thomas Mukkada.

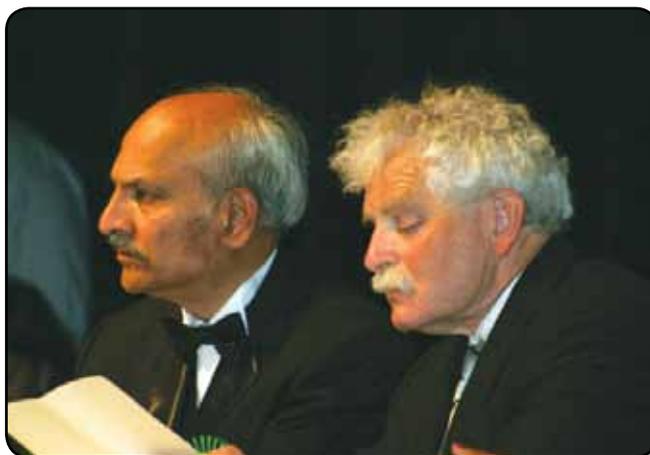
I was very gratified that during my presidency I had the opportunity, along with Dr. Chandra Venugopal, to revise the Constitution and Bylaws of AKMG, with addition of new bylaws, approved by members, during past General Body meetings. The original Constitution and Bylaws were written during Dr. Enas's presidency by Dr. Paul Cherian, ably helped by Drs. Easwaran Variyam, Ram Thinakkal, Shanmugha Sundaram, Adoor Amanullah and Ravikrishnan. Subsequent revisions were made by Dr. Achankunju Chacko in 1994 and Dr. John Lincoln in 2002. The latest revised Constitution and Bylaws had been uploaded in 2007 at AKMG.org web site for members perusal.

The year ended with a very successful convention at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio at the shores of Lake Erie. At first, there were many doubters amongst our senior members and rightfully so, as Cleveland had only a handful of life members, of whom, most of them never came for an AKMG convention and rarely participated in our activities.

I was very fortunate that Dr. Suja Subramanyan and Mrs. Susan Karimpil agreed to be the chair and co-chair of the convention and started working immediately, getting together a group of both seniors as well as new members, but more importantly, volunteer non-physician Malayalees. I am very thankful to all of them, because their hard work paid off. We had a very good CME program, which was well attended



Hard working registration desk



*Dr. Prathap Chandran with our chief guest
Dr. Bruce Lytle*



*Convention co-chair Mrs. Susan Karimpil and
Dr. Joseph Karimpil*



AKMG Convention 2007



Dr. Hemant Patel, President of AAPI, With past AKMG Presidents and Dr. Prem Menon, Chair AKMG- HS.



Dr. Prathap Chandran with past presidents, Drs. Amanullah, Enas and Karim

and appreciated. Most of the work was done by young physicians. The convention ended with the gala banquet and the highlight of the program was the melodius music by living legend Gana Gandharvan, Padmabhusan Dr. K.J. Yesudas, who entertained us, both young and old , and took us all to a dream world.



Handing the gavel to incoming President, Dr. Radha Menon

I am very optimistic about the future of AKMG with the influx of new blood and believe that it will survive for a long time. I also strongly feel that the time is ripe for a second generation member to take over the helm.

I like to thank Mrs. Bala Warriar and members of her Registration team for their wonderful job. My sincere thanks to all committee chairs, co- chairs and innumerable number of volunteers for their dedication and hard work: Kamar Amanullah, Joseph Karimpil, Dr. Mary Kumar, Mrs. Annie Kuttothara, Dr. Smitha Krishnamurti, Dr. Venkatesh Krishnamurti, Mrs. Prema Kumaran, Dr. Mathew Manadan, Dr. Sunil Manjila, Dr. Anup Manoharan, Mrs. Gayatri Manoharan, Dr. Premila Mathai, Mr. Jacob Mathew, Mrs. Lisa Mathew, Mr. Thomas Mathew, Dr. Geetha Nair, Dr. Murali Nair, Dr. Ravi Nair, Dr. Pradeep Nambiar, Dr. Latha Pillai, Dr. Parvathi Pillai, Mr. Raj Pillai, Dr. Sasi Pillai, Mrs. Usha Pillai, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Sushela Ravindra Nathan, Dr. Jayakumar Sahadevan, Dr. P. K. Subramanyan, Dr. Agnes Thomas, Dr. Thomas Thysseril, Dr. E. W. Unnikrishnan, Ms. Radhika Unnikrishnan, Mrs. Beena Variyam, Mrs. Parvathy Velayudhan, Dr. P. K. Velayudhan, Mr. Sankaran Venkat and all others who helped.



Padmabhusan Dr. K.J. Yesudas performing



Prathap and Rita Chandran with Dr. Yesudas and Prabha Yesudas

Cleveland Convention: My Memories



**Suja Subramanian MD,
Convention Chair 2006- 2007**

It is 2006, the year we decided to host the 2007 AKMG Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Strolling down memory lane I remember the thrill and excitement of the moment, dreaming of planning an event on the grand scale of previous AKMG conventions. Naïve and inexperienced as I was, all I could think of it was as a challenge, which we could meet under the guidance of Dr. Prathap Chandran.

Then came the meetings, the planning of events, and the realization that this was indeed a Herculean task considering our limited manpower and the slow trickle of funds. But then, planning the 2007 Convention brought Cleveland AKMG members together for the very first time. I will never forget the camaraderie and support I enjoyed. Even Clevelanders who were not AKMG members and AKMG members who were not Clevelanders (Detroit, Huntington WV) came forward to help us, especially to organize the entertainment for the Campus Night, which turned out to be truly memorable.

I still remember the sinking feeling I experienced when two South Indian cooks from the local Indian restaurant decided to quit without any previous warning and return to India for good, leaving our dreams of a Kerala sadhya in the air. It was one of our local ladies who came to our rescue by joining hands with the restaurant's chief chef to prepare a Kerala sadhya, and that made that dream a success.

Just one month before the Convention, the number of registrants was below our expectations. We were worried that even the hotel rooms reserved would not be used. Our spirits soared Thursday morning as the number of registrants rose exponentially. So many AKMG members decided to come to Cleveland to celebrate the 28th Annual AKMG Convention with us. The registration was spectacularly organized by the Huntington, West Virginia AKMG members with never a glitch.

Finally, our coffers were filling thanks to the generosity of our donors, in particular the Cleveland Clinic, Leela Lace, and General Motors. We exhaled a collective sigh of relief that we were not "in the red." The cruise on Thursday evening started the magical atmosphere of the Convention, with even the Rain God Indra holding off the threatening showers.

We heard rave reviews about our CME. The Saturday afternoon fashion show was one of a kind! The grand finale of course was the celestial music of the legend, Dr. Yesudas, which, to the delight of the audience, went on into the wee hours of the morning.

On Sunday morning it was with mixed feelings that Dr. Prathap Chandran and the rest of the convention crew bade farewell to our guests- sad that they were leaving and that the convention was over but proud and happy that we accomplished what was only a dream in the beginning.



Reflections of a Past President

Radha Menon, MD
President of AKMG, 2007-2008

My earliest association with AKMG was when I attended the San Diego convention. I realized the cohesiveness of the group & was welcomed into the group with a sheer sense of camaraderie. Soon, AKMG became a "household name" for me. I became actively involved in conventions and served as the chair of the entertainment committee in Las Vegas & the chair of the Hawaii convention. I had the privilege to become the President of the AKMG in year 2007 at the Cleveland convention. The goals for the year were to gain more name recognition for AKMG in USA & in Kerala and to encourage more participation of young AKMG members within the organization. We spread the message of AKMG through various satellite AKMG meetings in San Francisco, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Chicago & Atlanta along with the support of the local AKMG Alumni in these regions. AKMG also arranged trips to Machu Pichu & Russia through Discovery Journeys coordinated by Mr. George Palamattam during the year, which was well received by the members.

I had the privilege to work with one of the excellent convention committees during the year, chaired by Dr Sankari Nair & Co Chair by Dr. Elizabeth Paul. We fulfilled the promise "Come west for the best", by having a grand & fun filled 3 days in Newport Beach, CA as we celebrated the 29th Annual convention of AKMG (June 26-28th, 2008). The activities included welcome reception on Thursday evening, followed by Kathakali program staged by Dr. Rama P Venu., and music by Mrs. Juliet Sebastian. We had 2 days of excellent CME arranged by Dr. Alex Kuruvilla & included lectures on all aspects of medicine. The spouses program was organized by Dr Raji Kumar & the sports arranged by Dr. Joy Paul. The hall mark of the convention was the literary seminar organized by Mr. Govindan Kutty Nair. For the first time, AKMG arranged an exclusive dinner & dance cruise for the youth & young AKMG members. The activities for young AKMG members were organized by Dr. Elizabeth Paul (convention co-Chair). The campus comedy was organized by Dr. Sindhu Pillai & Dr. Geetha Asokan. We were honored to have Dr. Abraham Verghese Prof of Medicine at Stanford, as



Inauguration of mammogram center in Trchur Medical college in Kerala, dedicated in the memory of Late Dr. Sebastian George (a past president of AKMG) - December 29, 2008.

the chief guest, famous Davis Cup Player Mr. Sashi Menon as the guest of honor for tennis games, & Dr Raj Warriier the vice Chancellor of Manipal Academy of Higher Education(MAHE) as our invited guest of honor, who addressed the youth & Young AKMG during the convention. The grand finale of the convention was a melodious ganamela by Venugopal & Jyotsna .The grand sponsor for the convention was Kerala Builders forum & KYPS EMR Company from Kerala. We also had the President & members of IMA Kochi attend the convention.

The convention made a surplus of \$ 75,946.00. With a vision to support women's health care initiatives in Kerala, we worked with AKMG HS during the year and we utilized part of the surplus to donate a mammogram machine to Trichur Medical College. We dedicated this mammogram center in Trchur Medical college to Late Dr George Sebastian (a past president of AKMG) It was inaugurated by Dr Geetha ,DME of Kerala, on Dec 29th, 2008.

Overall my AKMG journey has been a very remarkable & rewarding experience. As I reflect on the great strides that this organization has made, I feel humbled to think that I have also been able to contribute to it in some manner. AKMG has a long way to go. I urge each & everyone of you to come forward to add to it, so we can, not only preserve what our past leaders have created for us, but also enrich it for generations to come .



*Dr. Menon passing the presidential gavel to Dr. Mukkada at the 2008 Convention.
Thomas J. Mukkada*



*AKMG
Convention in
Newport Beach,
CA - 2008*



With Dr. Abraham Verghese, Professor of Medicine, Stanford University, and famous author. Convention 2008



AKMG Convention in Newport Beach, CA - 2008



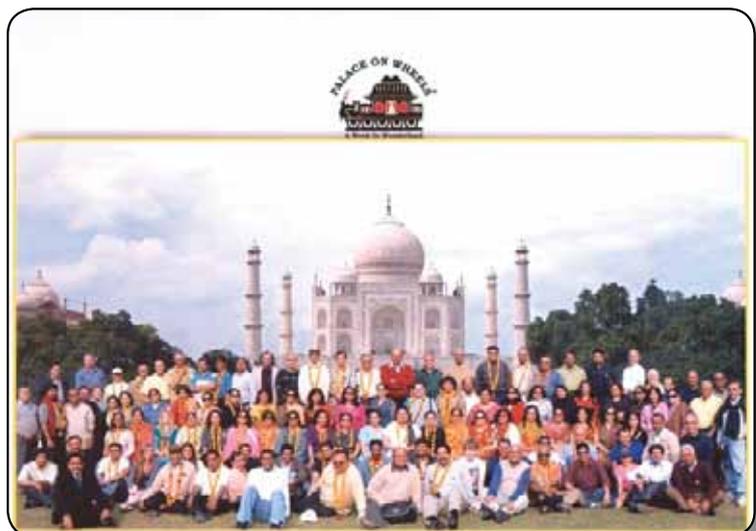
Magnificent Memories

Thomas J . Mukkada, MD
President of AKMG, 2008-2009

The 2009 AKMG Annual Convention took place at the Downtown Marriott on the Magnificent Mile in Chicago and created magnificent memories on July 2,3 and 4, 2009.

It was a great honor and privilege to serve AKMG as its president from 2008-2009. I also had the pleasure of serving with presidents Drs. Narendra Kumar, Parvathy Mohan, Abdul Karim, Prathap Chandran, Radha Menon, P.C. Punnen, Aravind Pilli and K.C. Joseph, as well as future presidents Freemu Varghese, Hari Nair and Alex Thomas. Furthermore, I was fortunate to receive great advice while in office from presidents Drs. Enas A Enas, Roy Thomas, Sakunthala Rajagopal, and Ram Thinakkal.

The following members from the Chicago area provided extraordinary leadership and hard work for the organization of the 2009 Chicago Convention. Dr. K.J. Philip (convention chair), Drs. Moly Mathew, Krishna R. Prasad and Isaac Thomas (convention co-chairs), Drs. P. Venugopal, Koruthu Thomas, and Mrs. Lakshmi Venugopal (CME), Drs. Manuel Joseph, Meena Joseph, and Hari Nair (entertainment), Dr. Prasad Thomas and Asha Varghese (AKMG youth), Mrs. Achamma Varghese and Rose Mathew (women's section), Mr. Jude Mathew and Mr. George Puthumana (sports), Dr. Sandeep Nathan (young physician), Drs. Moly Mathew and Krishna R Prasad (souvenir), Drs. Indira Nair and Sajini Thomas (fundraising), Drs. Kuruville John and Mohan Kumar (AKMG International), Drs. Soman Nair and Roy Thomas



POW Group Photo

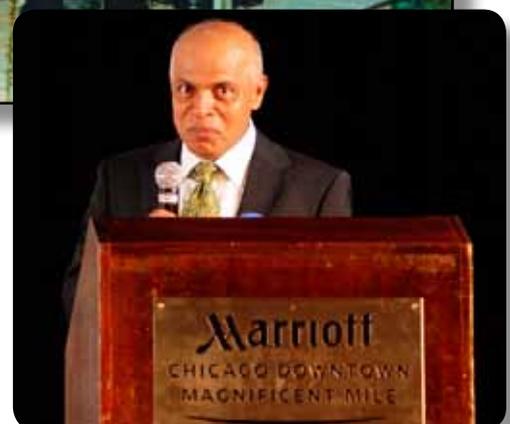
(literary), Drs. John Thomas and Maxwell Cosmic (alumni), Kurian Mangalappally and Thomas Chakkurackal (technology), Drs. Isaac Parampottil and Kuriakose Thekkaniyil (booths), Mini Prasad and Valsa Thekkaniyil (registration), and Dr. Kochuthresia Nedumgottil (treasurer).

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2009 CHICAGO CONVENTION

JULY 2, 2009

Thursday we had Pharma sponsored educational talks at noon organized by the CME committee. This was followed in the evening by Campus Comedy which was performed by members of the AKMG. The highlight of the evening, sponsored by Dr. Indira Nair and Mr. R.K. Nair, was “Ganamela” performed by playback singers Rimi Tomy and Biju Naryan. In addition, a well-received outing to the Second City comedy club was arranged for our young AKMG members.

Chicago convention committee



JULY 3, 2009

Friday's activities included four hours of CME classes in the morning followed by the Classical Music Concert featuring Padmabhushan Dr. K.J. Yesudas. This event was extremely popular and attendance was standing room only.

The evening activities also included a very memorable "July 4th Fireworks" boat ride on Lake Michigan to commemorate the nation's Independence Day. Later in the night, three full trollies were arranged for AKMG's young night owls to experience Chicago's vibrant night life.

JULY 4, 2009

Saturday's events included a second day of CME programs as well as a General Body meeting and election in the afternoon. Friday and Saturday's events also included a well-received AKMG Poster Presentation for young physicians organized by the CME committee. Cash prizes were given to the winners of the poster presentation.

This was followed by The Grand Gala Dinner, attended by over 1200 people and held in the Marriott's magnificent Grand Ball Room. During the social hour "Chenda Melam" and "Thalappoly" gave variety to the evening, and the Jasmine wrist bands flown in from Tamil Nadu for all the ladies in attendance became the talk of the evening. The President of AMA Dr. James Rohack, the President of AAPI Dr. Vinod Shah, the President of AKMG U.K. Dr. Murlikkuttan, as well as the President of AKMG Middle East and the President of IMA Cochin were all in attendance. "Passport to the World", a multi continental Broadway-styled show produced by Dr. K.J. Philip with about 120 performers stole the show after dinner. A special recognition award was given to Dr. Radha Krishnan and Dr. Ambujam Krishnan for their support of AKMG from its inception and continued participation by attending thirty consecutive conventions."

HIGHLIGHT OF AKMG FROM 2005-2009

Prior to my time in office, AKMG saw tremendous charitable activities, including the establishment of electronic libraries in Trivandrum, Calicut, Kottayam and Alleppey as well as the creation of a Mammogram Unit for Cancer Care in Trichur Medical College. The extraordinary leadership of Drs. Narendra Kiumar, P.K. Kutty, George Thomas, K.C. Joseph and Radha Menon were behind these activities.

Highlights from the Chicago Convention - 2009



These activities improved attendance for all conventions during this time.

2005-2006 A total of seven fundraising parties were held which raised over \$50,000 for the EMS Kerala Ambulance project. They were held in the following cities (organizers' names in parenthesis): Ottumwa, IA (Tom and Mary Mukkada), Chicago, IL (Moly and Jude Mathew), Milwaukee, WI (Meena and Manuel Joseph), Detroit, MI, (Philomina and Thomas Chakkupurackal), Huntington, IN (Sherly and Mathew Pekka), Las Vegas, NV (Radha and Achu Menon) and Cleveland, OH (Prathap and Rita Chandran).

2006-2007 Regional AKMG and CME, March 17, 2007. Willowbrook Holiday Inn, Chicago; 300 attended

2007-2008 Regional AKMG and CME, March 15, 2008. Willowbrook Holiay Inn, Chicago; 350 attended.

2008-2009 There were eight more regional meetings across the country (organizers' names in parenthesis). They were in Fort Wayne, IN (Mini and John Mathew), Detroit, MI (Drs. K.C. Joseph and Satish Sunder), Milwaukee, WI (Drs. Manuel and Meena Joseph), Atlanta, GA (Dr. Raju and Mary Kulangara), Washington D.C. (Drs. Jacob Joseph and Ranjit Cherian), Houston, TX (Dr. Mohan and Indira Kumar), Orlando, FL (Drs. Arvind Pillai and Sam Edwards) and New York City, NY (Drs. Cecily and Jose Anto)

Another highlight of this period was a sold out trip on the Palace on Wheels – an eight day (Jan7-14, 2009) train tour through India's Golden Triangle, evocative of the era of Indian Maharajas and Maharanis

There was also a marketed fundraising activity for AKMG Alumni Chairs.



AKMG Chicago Convention - 2009



Entertainment at the Chicago Convention - 2009





President Mukkada with Mr.Radha Krishnan and Ambujam Krishnan - 2009

Summary of Financial Activity--A total Revenue of \$351,463.00 (registration fees totaling \$212,289.00 and fundraising contributions garnering \$139 174.00) and an expense of \$297,984.00 resulted in a surplus of \$53,479.00 which was transferred to AKMG.

I would like to thank the following members with whom I closely worked for AKMG: Drs. Krishna Prasad and Majeed Paduvana for their services on the membership, Adoor Amanullah and Krishna Prasad for their services for AKMG Reporter, Prem Menon for various Charitable activities, George Abraham for the EMS Services, George Varghese for the trust management and Sunil Manjila for Young AKMG.

Conventions are the celebrations of our organizational activities, and they are meant to create memories to cherish for a lifetime. We hope we created magnificent memories in 2009 on Chicago's Magnificent Mile.



***Dr. Krishna Prasad
Convention 2009***



P. C. Punnen, MD
President of AKMG, 2009-2010

The Vancouver Experience

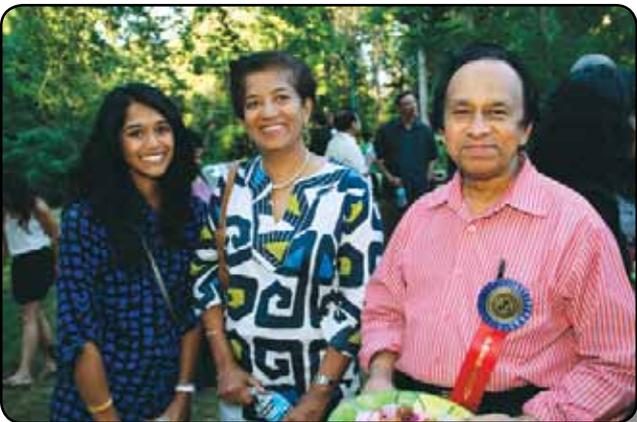
Dr. C. Mathew Yaltho
Convention Chair 2009-2010

Canada though larger in land mass than USA, has a smaller number of Malayalee Doctors. Most of us never heard of the existence of the AKMG until Dr. Enas Enas persuaded us to become Life Members. The Godfather of the Canadian wing of AKMG is Dr. Karunakaran Kutty from Brampton, Ontario, a talented and well known gastroenterologist, a graduate of the Calicut Medical College. Dr. Punnen the President is a busy Urologist in Toronto and Dr. Mathew Yaltho the Convention Chair from Calicut Medical College is a psychiatrist in Edmonton, Albrerta.

Our focus was how to make the first Western Canada Convention at the Westin Bayshore hotel in Vancouver successful. With Dr. Kutty's input a small but efficient group was struck, all the spouses got involved. Dr. Biju Mathew, a Psychiatrist from Vancouver, our local trouble shooter and recipient of Bharat Gaurav Award by the Indian International Friendship Society (for humanitarian/community activities) along with Dr. Santosh Paikatt, a pediatrician from Cambridge, Ontario were the Convention Co-Chairs. Dr. Girish Nair, an eminent cardiologist from Hamilton, Ontario took over the CME events with his lovely wife and daughter assisted by Dr. Sreekumaran Nair. Dr. Bhavani Nair, an Oncologist from Ottawa took up the Entertainment Section with commendable support from her family and Dr. Parvathy Mohan. Dr. Mariamma Joseph, a Pathologist from London, Ontario in collaboration with her husband Raju was the Souvenir Committee Chair. Santosh and his wife, Elsy, admirably handled the registration. Dr. Sunny Johnson, a Psychiatrist from Toronto, Ontario was the Fund Raising and Exhibits' Chair. Dr. Rajesh Kutty, Bradford, Ontario and Dr. Smitha Yaltho, Edmonton, Alberta took charge of the Youth Wing. Spousal Program was splendidly or-



Memories from the AKMG Vancouver Convention - 2010



ganized by Dr. Sheena Punnen, Mrs. Valza Yaltho, and Mrs. Grace Mathew. The Catering Committee was composed of Mrs. Omana Kutty/Thresiamma Johnson/Grace Mathew /Valza Yaltho. Our CME credit hours were approved by the University of Alberta in Edmonton at minimal cost.

It was a hectic few months for the small group of organizers who were unsure how many would participate and if the convention would end up in a big loss. Dr. Babu Paul IAS, the well known writer/orator, was the guest speaker and gave three excellent presentations in English and Malayalam.

It was a few anxious hours worrying if the Idea Star Singers might be denied the Canadian visa at the border from Washington State and how it would impact the evening, and possible replacement. Fortunately Dr. Punnen with great foresight had invited an established physician musician from U.K.

Anyway we pulled it through, every one of the participants seemed to enjoy the beautiful Vancouver scenery, the fantastic weather, the dinner at the Aquarium, the vegetarian breakfasts and the great food at the Bayshore Hotel, the entertainments, and the CME with excellent quality and variety. A few physicians even complimented us for surprisingly well organizing a convention without a hitch.

As a result of the poor turnout mostly because of the next year's Cruise Convention from the neighbouring city of Seattle and our inability to cut some fixed costs and also the low level of support from drug companies we ended up with a small loss. Our plan to help out with the Trichur Medical College Learning Resource Centre was set back although earlier in the year Dr. Punnen and Dr. Biju Mathew organized a CME event in Trichur.

We really appreciate the kind gesture of our American Colleagues who participated and some previous office bearers who helped us with timely advices. As an Organization we should strive to increase our membership, get the younger generation involved, and continue to excel in our humanitarian, professional and academic efforts.

Dr. P. C. Punnen

AKMG President 2009-2010

Dr. C. Mathew Yaltho

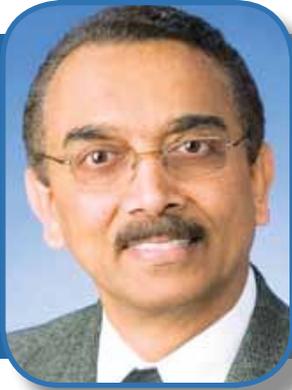
Convention Chair 2009-2010

AKMG Vancouver Convention - 2010



AKMG Vancouver Convention - 2010





Aravind Pillai, MD
President of AKMG, 2010-2011

Message from AKMG President 2010-2011

I feel so proud and privileged to have served as the president of this very prestigious organization. The founding members who met in New York in 1975 were visionaries. Over the years, we have grown into a vibrant organization producing great leaders and advocates for our community. We have had conventions all over the United States and Canada. We have made great contributions to many charitable ventures here and in India and our list keeps growing. Our financial & technical support helped to build learning resource centers in all 5 premiere medical schools in India. More importantly, my association with AKMG has influenced my character, personality & outlook. I believe that it has made me a better person.

I joined AKMG as an associate member in 1989 when I started my residency in Brooklyn, New York. However, I did not become fully immersed into the organization until I was asked by Dr. Ravindra Nathan in 1994 to join the convention team. After the successful Orlando convention, I became the Florida chapter president. I continued to serve the AKMG community in different capacities. The silver jubilee convention in Detroit was fabulous and the architect was none other than Mr. Narendra Kumar. He inspired me continue to work hard and I became the chair of the Orlando convention in 2006. Dr. Abdul Karim, who was the president at the time, gave me guidance and encouragement. That convention was a great learning experience for me. I met many of the senior leaders of our organization including Drs. Tom Mukkada & Krishna Prasad, who instantly impressed me as extraordinary fellows with great leadership and social skills. They really made me feel as if I was part of the team. After that convention, I was elected as the secretary of AKMG and I knew that my time would come to be president. The very first resolution that came to my mind was that I must do something unconventional when the time came. We explored several options and then we thought of Alaska! The Canadian Association of Physicians from India was very supportive and they introduced me to Cruise Connections Canada, who helped with the publicity & registration. We successfully launched the Alaska-

Cruise Convention registration in 2009 at the California convention. AKMG presidents, Drs. Radha Menon & Tom Mukkada especially encouraged and supported me in this endeavor.

We worked tirelessly to promote the Alaska Cruise convention for the next 3 years. I must express my sincere gratitude to Drs. Ab-

dul Karim, Ravi Nathan, Narendra Kumar & M.V Pillai for their guidance and support throughout the preparation phase. I felt very fortunate to have such a hard working convention team, chaired by Dr. Sunil Kumar. We spent countless hours finalizing the contract with the Cruise Company. Drs KR Byju & Sam Edwards took great efforts to arrange 18 hours of accredited CME with the help of CME at SEA of Tampa. Dr. Usha Mohandas receives full credit for creating the convention Souvenirs which were exceptional in beauty as well as quality of articles. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors, especially grand sponsor, Padmasree: Dr. Azad Moopen from Dubai!

The 32nd annual AKMG convention took place aboard the “Norwegian Pearl”, a luxury cruise line which set sail to Alaska from July 3rd to July 10th, 2011. Our trip started in Seattle, Washington and we set forth to Juneau, Alaska. A total of 600 attendees enjoyed this gala event! We took great pride in the fact that this seven day convention was the first one of its kind for our association. We wanted our convention to be special and unforgettable. In the words of a dignitary: “In cooperation with its production partner Cruise Connections of Canada, the convention committee indeed did a fabulous job of keeping the attendees well informed with cutting edge scientific advances through a first rate CME program, well fed with gourmets 3 times daily with 32 Indian cooks aboard and a specially designated dining room exclusively for AKMG, and a well orchestrated Indian entertainment program with play back singers coming all the way from Kerala..”

Several distinguished guests from overseas representing AKMG UK and AKMG Emirates as well as many from India participated in our Alaskan cruise. Many shared their medical experiences



2011-AKMG convention Alaska cruise participants facing Glacier



Recognizing 2011 convention CME speakers.



Awards given to extraordinary achievers of AKMG family.



AKMG president Dr. Aravind Pillai and spouse Devi Pillai, aboard cruise ship Norwegian Pearl



Convention committee members at Alaska Glacier

and expertise during the CME seminars. One of the most memorable and unique experiences for me was the two consecutive nights of “Gazal music concert” at the magnificent Pinnacle lounge with the back drop of mighty Pacific Ocean. This spectacular event occurred after dinner, where the entire group was seated on a carpet in Persian style to listen to the rhythmic flow of Gazal songs sung by expert singers from Kerala, Venulogpal and Gayatri. Dr. M. V. Pillai introduced the theme for the evening – ‘Remembering the famous Omar Khayyam and his famous romantic verses in Rubaiyat’. In addition to enjoying beautiful music, we were also able to auction off 25 gift bags, each containing a CD of gazals and a copy of Rubaiyat in English and Malayalam, for a grand total of \$20,000. All the proceedings from this auction went to the Pediatric Cancer Institute at the Regional Cancer Center, Trivandrum, India.

The Seven Days and Seven nights from July 3 to 9, 2011 took us to the Seventh heaven! The natural scenery of Alaska, in itself, was absolutely stunning. Moreover, we enjoyed state-of-the-art CME lectures, 24-hour mouth-watering Kerala style food, countless cocktail parties, beautiful cultural shows and old time Malayalam movies! We will all carry these memories in our hearts for a long time to come.



AKMG's Donation: president Aravind Pillai handed over \$20,000 to Kerala Chief Minister Sri Oomen Chandy for Trivandrum cancer institute to help poor children with cancer; I also gave \$5000 to Kerala health minister Sri Adoor Prakash to help poor kids getting treated at SAT Hospital TVM



Dr. Pillai lighting lamp inaugurating Trivandrum medical college alumni meeting on February 5th 2012 at Trivandrum medical college auditorium. Second from left, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy



Members with Alaska Glacier



Dr. Pillai passing over Gavel to incoming president: Dr. KC Joseph



AKMG leaders in Alaska



Convention committee

Shortly after we reached home, compliments and accolades to the convention committee started pouring in for a convention hailed as the best ever AKMG has done so far! It certainly was an unforgettable experience for me! As my time as your president has come to an end, I want to express my sincere gratitude for all your support and encouragement over the years, as I know full well this convention could have never happened without the loyalty of our AKMG family.

AKMG-Kerala Initiative: During my tenure as AKMG president, following health issues were brought to the attention of Kerala Government: India is correctly called Diabetic capital of the world and Kerala's contribution is major. With more than 100 million people with known Diabetes & almost equal number under diagnosed our country will not be able to afford treatment for every patient who requires it. It is the responsibility of Government to help prevent the spread of this rising epidemic of type-2 Diabetes and associated ailments such as Hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity. There has been no concept or implementation to ensure Safety of drinking water, food or roads. Food or water sold is not periodically checked. Environmental sanitation has not been a priority to prevent communicable diseases. Excessive alcohol use and drunk driving is being ignored by authorities. Hospitals & labs are not centrally accredited or inspected for quality. Doctors are not required to renew license by continuing education. Medical ethics are unknown to medical profession. No action is being taken to stop imaging companies and pharmaceuticals from bribing doctors. AKMG has requested Kerala Government to reform & modernize healthcare system. Patients must be empowered with knowledge. Everyone should know the importance to maintain correct BMI and waist circumference. AKMG has given a detailed proposition to teach "Health Living" as a compulsory subject starting from elementary school. Healthy living must include: 1.daily one hour vigorous physical exercise and thirty minutes of Yoga-meditation; 2. Positive attitude; 3. Limited calorie healthy diet.

Dr. Abdul Karim & I were fortunate to attend a public meeting held at Trivandrum Medical college auditorium on February 5, 2012. Chief Minister Sri Oommen Chandy and health Minister Sri Adoor Prakash who attended this meeting, agreed to seriously evaluate and implement our suggestions to reform Kerala's health care system. We handed over \$20,000 check to Dr. Paul Sebastian, director of Trivandrum Cancer Institute to build "home away from home" for poor pediatric cancer patients and \$5000 check to Dr. Elizabeth, director of SAT Hospital to build a recreational facility for poor pediatric patients. I hope and pray that our efforts will become fruitful in the near future.



Convention visiting Butchart Gardens Vancouver



2011 convention members



Enjoying the cruise - 2011



2011 convention members



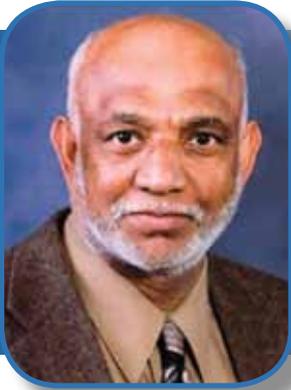
AKMG Ladies



Gazal sandhya singers



What a wonderful Alaskan cruise!



K.C. Joseph, MD
President of AKMG, 2011-2012

President's Report

Somewhere on the Alaskan sea, AKMG handed me the Presidency, along with the traditions and responsibility of an organization in transition.

AN ORGANIZATION IN TRANSITION

AKMG's focus on current members and on compatriots in the United States has brought it great success over the last 38 years. However, the Malayee community is evolving, and AKMG needs to evolve with it.

That is why I am proud to have lead AKMG as it has morphed into a fully-fledged global organization, with branches in the United Arab Emirates and strong connections with the Indian Medical Association in Kerala. Attending regional meetings in Dubai, Kerala, Ontario, Florida, Atlanta, and Philadelphia has shown me that the soul of AKMG lives in these small congregations that focus on camaraderie and our shared heritage.

ARCHIVES OF AKMG

Since the organization began 38 years ago, AKMG has benefitted from the contributions of its past presidents, committee leaders and members. Now, as



Recognition Award for Dr. Aravind Pillai - 2011

the next generation of AKMG members begins to take a lead role, we want to make sure that they are armed with the wisdom gleaned from administrations past. So, we are compiling the Archives of the History of AKMG, which will serve not only to honor the contributions past, but to set a pathway for the future. I consider the compilation and release of the Archives of AKMG as a major achievement of my presidency.

The idea for the Archives has been floating around for years, but fear of financial loss and debate over the content prevented the idea from becoming a reality. Fortunately, this year we had the right team and with the remarkable cooperation from past presidents and convention chairs, a longtime dream has materialized. I hope that we have created a new tradition that will live on past my term.



AKMG Emirates 2012 Convention



The Michigan Team

DETROIT CONVENTION

Annual conventions are an integral part of AKMG. New friendships are born here and old friendships are strengthened across all generations of AKMG. Proceeds from the conventions also help us deploy much-needed humanitarian services in Kerala, for which AKMG is the sole provider. Without the convention, essential needs such as ambulance services, mammogram centers, and LRCs would not be provided to resident Keralites at all.

I am particularly proud to be hosting the 2012 AKMG convention in Detroit, the city that took me and my family in when we first arrived to the States and has powered the success of many a Malayee family since. Detroit and AKMG both face the issue of aging populations, but it also shares the spirit of renewal that I think every member will feel once they arrive here.

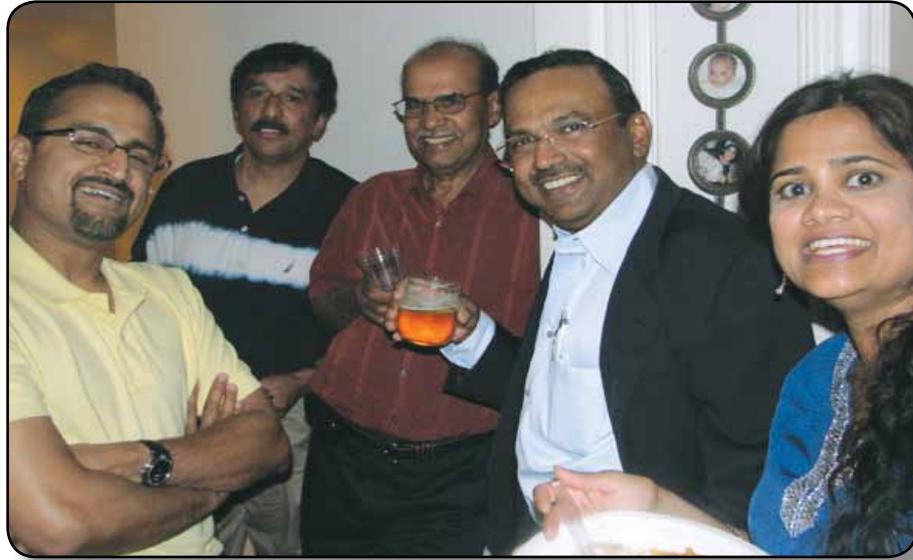
As any past president would agree, organizing a convention is impossible without a strong regional team. Dr. Satish Sundar and Drs. Majeed Paduvana and Geetha Nair have done a superb job in their respective roles as convention chair and convention co-chairs to put together a convention to



remember. I am also indebted to all the Committee chairs , Cochairs , Distinguished Advisors and members for their relentless energy and hard work which are more than apparent in the program. My mentor Dr. Adoor Amanullah and AAPI president (and longtime friend) Dr. Narendra Kumar have always been generous with their much needed advice and support, and for that I am also eternally grateful.

It has been an honor to serve as your AKMG president, and I hope to end my term by greeting a record number of convention attendees in July.

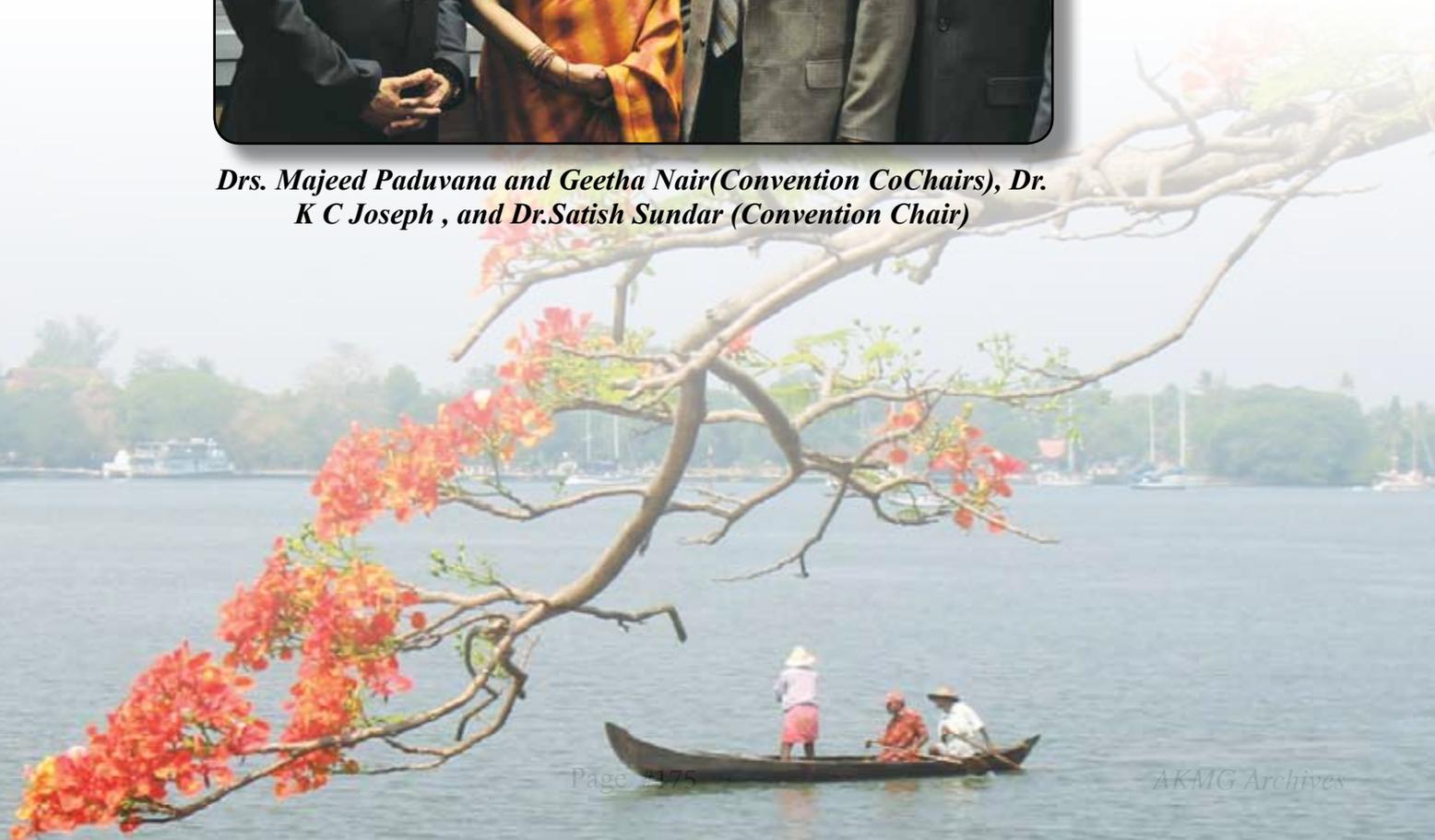
***AKMG Emirates 2012 Convention,
Release of Directory***



Drs. Satish Sundar, Majeed Paduvana, T. O. Shanavas, Narendra Kumar and Geetha Nair.



Drs. Majeed Paduvana and Geetha Nair (Convention CoChairs), Dr. K C Joseph, and Dr. Satish Sundar (Convention Chair)





Dr. Azad Moopen, MD
Founder President. AKMG-UAE

AKMG Emirates

Established in Dubai, UAE in 2003, AKMG Emirates has grown into a 900 + member organization with 7 chapters in the various emirates of this small country. The office bearers of AKMG-USA were instrumental in sowing the seed of this vibrant organization in UAE, through constant interaction and encouragement in the initial years.

Almost all medical and dental graduates hailing from God's Own Country are members of the AKMG which is very active in Socio-Cultural, Academic and Organizational areas. The CME programs of AKMG Emirates, accredited by the official bodies in UAE, are very well attended. AKMG has launched a Social Security Scheme to protect members and families at times of crisis with Life Cover & Retirement benefits. The Professional Indemnity Insurance at a very low premium for members and Health insurance for the members and their families are also provided by AKMG.

The 7 chapters of AKMG Emirates have become a great place for networking and family get together. There are regular medical and social activities in 7 emirates in addition to country wise meetings held annually. These are very well attended by the families. Members also go for tours and excursions; we were part of the Alaska Cruise organized by AKMG-USA in 2011. The organization publishes a Journal and an Address Directory of the members. The organization is led by a central UAE Committee with 2 year tenure and Emirate-wise local office bearers.

The AKMG UAE is very much involved in many humanitarian



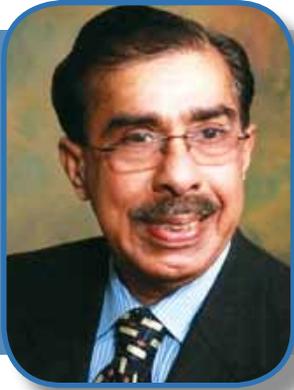
activities like Medical Camps & Health awareness programs in UAE and supports the healthcare requirements of the poor and needy in Kerala.

It was a very rewarding experience for me to play an active role in the formative years of AKMG along with a core team of doctors, who are still passionately involved. The past Presidents of AKMG - UAE other than myself, are Dr. M. K. Ibrahim and Dr. V. S. Viswanathan. Dr. K Radhakrishnan is presently the President and Dr. P M Sirajuddin is the President Elect for 2012-2014. The details regarding the organization are available on the website www.akmgemirates.org

The great platform provided by the AKMG Emirates has helped in building a very strong association of the doctors from Kerala in Gulf. I hope that this wave of fraternity spreads to other GCC countries soon.



Dr Azad Moopen (left) receiving an award for his services.



Achankunju Chacko, MD
Past Chair, Bylaws Committee

The History of the Constitution and Bylaws of AKMG

At present the Association of Kerala Medical graduates has a well-structured constitution and by-laws. When we look back and reflect upon the development and growth of our organization, it is very important to trace back the formation and evolution of its constitution. Let me tell that story in few words.

During the Infancy, the organization had its own growing pains. As we all know, when the association was started in 1980 at a New York restaurant, by a small group of doctors from Kerala, it was more of an Alumni gathering. It eventually evolved into a full-fledged professional organization. When the “family” grew, it needed a larger home, henceforth a stronger infra structure. Many responsible members of the organization felt the need to form a well-written constitution, in order to grow and sustain the organization.

The original Constitution and Bylaws were written under the leadership of Dr. Paul Cherian, ably helped by Drs. Easwaran Variyam, Ram Thinakkal, Shanmugha Sundaram, Adoor Amanullah and K.P. Ravikrishnan.

In the summer of 1992, the members of Washington Chapter got together and proposed the idea of writing the language of the trust and other amendments to the Constitution. The Washington Chapter gave me the responsibility of the lead role in this venture.

Those were turbulent years for the AKMG. The fast growth was a healthy process. But fast and furious growth and over zealous leadership was causing confusion amongst members. Also grass root members felt the need to be heard. In this case wisdom did not surrender to emotions. The group decided to come together. The AKMG National Convention at San Diego was the venue. The General

body meeting at Hotel Del Coronado in San Diego was a landmark event .That General body meeting had the largest attendance in the history of AKMG. In an unprecedented event, this General body unanimously appointed me to Chair the Committee to reform the n Constitution for AKMG. I am thankful for the valuable guidance and direction I received from some of our distinguished members, especially Dr. Paul Cherian, Dr. K.P. Varghese, Dr. George Thomas and Dr. Mathew Thekkedath.

Subsequent revisions/amendments to the Constitution were made under the leadership of Dr. John Lincoln in 2002 and Pratap Chandran in 2007.

Article IX (page 3) of the original constitution had stipulated the establishment of a trust. “ A trust to accomplish the objectives of the Association shall be established”.

Some salient points in the Constitution and bylaws are given below

ARTICLE IX - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SECTION 1. PURPOSE:

To oversee and operate the Trustee account of the AKMG.

SECTION 2. ELECTION

The board shall consist of three members elected by the general body of AKMG. The immediate past president of the association shall be a non-voting Ex-Officio member of the board.

SECTION 3. TERM

The term of the three members shall be a maximum of three years and that of the immediate past president shall be same as the president. A member may be re-elected for a maximum of six years of consecutive service. Every year one member shall be elected by the general body to replace the retiring member of the board of trustees.

ARTICLE X - ELECTION

SECTION 3. ELECTION

Election shall be held at the annual meeting which will be held prior to December 25th of every year.

The General Body shall appoint a Nominating Committee to select the officers of the Association for the following year during the National Convention. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven members selected in the following manner:

One member- immediate Past President

One member - nominated by the President

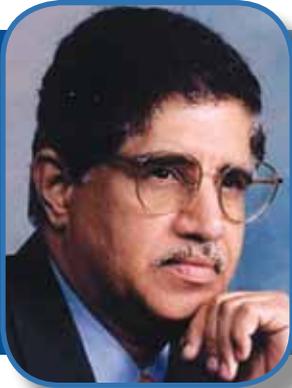
One member – nominated by the Governing Body

Four members – Nominated by the General Body

The amendments were approved and implemented in year 1994 and Dr. M. V Pillai became the first president elected according to the revised constitution. The document provided a mechanism to sequester and safeguard the patron membership funds from the executive committee. The constitution and bylaws of AKMG became a model for many other professional organizations. The association grew stronger and better and larger.

The full version of the AKMG Constitution and By-laws with the latest amendments are published in the AKMG Web site.





Prem Menon, MD
Chair, AKMG - HS

Report of AKMG Humanitarian Services

AKMG was founded in 1980 as a social organization, with Dr. Gokulanathan as the founding president. It obtained the IRS tax exempt non charitable tax status EIN 363 465 523 in 1984. The process of establishing the AKMG Humanitarian Services [HS] ran through the presidencies of Drs. Sakunthala Rajagopal, Ravindra Nathan and Eswaran Variyam, 1999 to 2002. I applaud their vision and support.

AKMG- HS currently has the IRS 501 -C -3 tax exempt status EIN 32 0051235. Prem Menon M.D has been serving as the Chair of the AKMG- HS, since its inception. I am very humbled and honored for this opportunity to serve the AKMG and have worked with the past 13 AKMG Presidents.

I congratulate all the past AKMG presidents and appreciate them for their wholehearted support for the various charitable causes. The HS had its best year when Dr. Narendra Kumar was the president and it raised the most money in 2004. Dr. Kumar was instrumental in establishing a \$ 100,000 AKMG Golden Jubilee Endowment. That was when most of the AKMG- Learning Resource Centers in Kerala medical colleges were established. We were also, with the aid of the endowment, able to provide yearly subscriptions for the MD Consult and uptodate.com for several years [annual contribution \$ 21,000] for all the Kerala LRCs.

Needless to say Learning Resource Centers have been our single most visible and consequential contribution of AKMG in Kerala Please read more about the LRCs of Kerala Medical Colleges in the special article elsewhere in the book.

I especially thank the alumni of the various colleges and the leadership provided for the set up of the LRCs, by Drs. Krishna Prasad , Trivandrum , Karunakaran Kutty, Calicut, George Thomas, Kottayam, K.C .Joseph, Alleppy and P.C. Punnen, Trichur. I want to thank Dr. Parvathy Mohan for

her enthusiastic support for the Tsunami victims. We donated over \$ 22,000 for the Tsunami, supporting the housing needs of the fishermen affected. For the Tsunami efforts and helping the earthquake victims in Haiti. Matching funds for both the projects were provided by the Care and Share, Chicago, Tony Devassy, President. This was a win win partnership.

Over the years AKMG - HS has been there to support the US, Indian and Kerala humanitarian causes. We have supported the disabled American veterans and wounded soldiers. We supported the displaced Louisiana physicians during hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2006 through our contribution to the LA State Medical Society.

AKMG- HS has donated funds for the visiting faculties of the various Kerala medical schools during their rotations in the USA. The HS had provided initial support for the establishment of the World India Diabetes Foundation , Rochester, MN. Also, we had supported the victims of Gujarat earthquake in collaboration with the AAPI Charitable Foundation. One of the most ambitious projects of the HS was providing the seed money and the support extending several years for the KEMS, Kerala Emergency Medical Services. The support spanned through the presidencies of Drs. Parvathi



Parvathy presenting the AKMG HS check for the Tsunami relief to the CM Oommen Chandy and my visit to the Katrina affected sites in the St Bernard Parish in New Orleans .

Mohan, Abdul Karim, Prathap Chandran and Radha Menon. Dr. George Abraham continues to be the passionate executor of the KEMS. Dr. Radha Menon was instrumental in donating a mammogram equipment to the Trichur Medical College in 2008.

At the 32 nd annual convention in 2011, under the leadership of our past President Dr. M. V. Pillai, the Convention Committee and the then president Dr. Aravind Pillai, through the “Gazal Sandhya,” when the famous Kerala play back singers Mr. G. Venugopal and Gayatri enthralled the crowd with their melodious voice, raised \$ 20,000. The entire amount was donated to the Pediatric Cancer Institute at the Regional Cancer Institute, Trivandrum, India.

Dr. Enas Enas along with Dr Salim Ysuf of McMaster University has been giving the leadership in establishing a Kerala Health Initiative, a new project, to tackle the most prevalent health issues in Kerala, diagnosing and treating the non communicable diseases such as hypertension, cardiac diseases, diabetes, COPD and asthma in the forthcoming years.

AKMG- HS has been, with limited resources, doing a lot of good for the various charitable causes in the USA and abroad. We should establish planned giving through the wills and trusts of our members. Only that will expand the scope of our mission. Your contributions are tax free and you can be rest assured, the entire amount will go to worthwhile charities in your home state. The IRS audited the AKMG- HS to find out why we have no overhead over the past several years. Now they know what our priorities are!



OOMMEN CHANDY
CHIEF MINISTER
KERALA

30.12.2004

Dear Dr. Prem Menon,

Thank you very much for your contribution of Dollar Eleven thousand (\$11,000 only) to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund for rehabilitating those affected by the recent tsunami attack in Kerala cost by massive earthquake. This is a moment to express concern and solidarity with the affected people who are mostly poor. I hope that we will continue to have your co-operation for the rehabilitation of the affected people.

Thanking you again,

Yours faithfully,

OOMMEN CHANDY

Dr. Prem Menon M.D.,
5217 Flanders Drive
Baton Rouge LA 70808.

Secretariat, Thiruvananthapuram-695 001

Tel: (0471) 2333812 & 2333682; Fax: (0471) 2333489; email: cmkerala@vsnl.net
chiefminister@kerala.gov.in

**AKMG PARTNERS WITH CARE & SHARE –
ELEVEN TSUNAMI AFFECTED FAMILIES FIND HOME**

Chellanam is a densely populated coastal village on the southwest edge of Kochi district that lacks all infra-structure facilities. The village was badly destroyed by the December 2004 Tsunami, and many villagers either completely lost their homes or had their residences severely damaged. Different organizations immediately came forward with lot of promises but failed to deliver. AKMG charitable wing responded with a donation of \$11,000 to Care & Share (www.careandshare.com) to alleviate the pain of some of these households. Care & Share matched the donation and built a total of 11 houses in the village for a total cost of \$23,500. Thanks to Rotary Club Global, Cochin and local church priest Fr. Tobias Thekkepalakkal for coordinating the logistics, such as finding the right people, arranging the raw materials, labor resources, etc.



*Left - One of the beneficiaries in front of his old house.
Right - The same beneficiary in front of his new house*



New home provided for needy family

A member of AKMG HS, Dr Ravindra Nathan visited the Tsunami Victims in Malippuram, Kerala, in 2004 and gave financial contributions for their rehabilitation.



Easwaran P. Variyam, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of Texas Medical Branch

AKMG Medical Education Programs Over The Years

A Review by Two Past Chairpersons

AKMG – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

AKMG's educational efforts in earnest began under the leadership of Dr. Enas Enas. Though consumed in increasing membership and building a directory of physicians through phone calls, letters and personal appearances he recognized the need for endeavors in the field of education that included continuing medical education activities at the convention and a conduit for interaction of members with medical educational institutions in Kerala. I was one among his close associates during the period of growth in the mid 80's and the task of developments in education arena was assigned to me. The Education Committee was an important component during Enas's tenure as President.

During the first year the Education Committee members tried to catalog available resources in manpower, interests and materials. We solicited interest in speaking at CME conferences, research interests and willingness to donate medical books and journals. We were relying on mailed communication and phone calls. The result was incomplete and insufficient to have meaningful activities, especially in the face of no directed budget. So during the first year our activities were somewhat limited to organizing the CME program for the Orlando convention. The program was sponsored by the CME office at Case Western Reserve University, an institution that demands adherence to the strict guidelines of administering any CME activity. With the help of many volunteers we managed to have respectable attendance during the sessions.

During the next year we continued to catalog additional resources and organize the CME activities for the Philadelphia convention. We were able to identify a large number of individuals who were willing to donate journals and books to medical colleges. However, the Kerala beurocracy was a

stumbling block and the program was unsuccessful. We were sure that we would have to infuse some resources to encourage interaction with alma maters. Accordingly, the Executive Committee allocated resources for the following year. We initiated a Faculty Enrichment Grant that provided 50 % of funds that a faculty member needed to a maximum of \$1,250 to travel to Canada for a short period for enhancing their skills. It was based on a competitive grant application. The announcements were made through the medical institutions during the first year and additionally through newspapers and faculty associations the next year. Completed applications were reviewed by a five member committee without knowledge of the applicant's name. The program selected candidates in 1987 and 1988, but only one awardee made use of the grant during my tenure. Another recipient was awarded funds during a subsequent year, The program was thereafter discontinued.

For several years the only educational activity remained the CME program at the annual convention. An MKSAP based program was offered in Kerala in 1995. In 1996 postgraduate students from all medical colleges were allowed to participate in the CME program at our Kochi convention. In 2002, AKMG sponsored a course on research methodology (detailed elsewhere in the article describing my term as AKMG president).



Sree Kumaran Nair, MD
Professor of Medicine and
Consultant in Endocrinology
David Murdock Dole Professor
and Distinguished Mayo Founda-
tion Investigator, Mayo Clinic

AKMG CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME)

Continuing Medical Education (CME) has always been a major event at the AKMG annual meetings. These CME programs over the years have demonstrated a unique nature that emanated from a fusion of two cultures. Most of the faculty are educated in Kerala in 1960s and 1979s and acquired their advanced training in USA. The Kerala medical colleges in those periods were noted for highly dedicated and superior teachers who took so much pride in their ability to teach.

The US training transformed the Keralites to be more critical and engaging. Both audience and faculty always engage in debates on controversial issues unlike what we were used to in Kerala medical colleges when teachers were never challenged or questioned. This combination of taking pride in teaching and considering it as a privilege and fully engaging the audience in the learning process makes AKMG CME programs an extremely valuable experience.

We also occasionally extend our CME programs to Kerala. In 1995 AKMG undertook a five day CME course in Kovalom at the Ashoka Hotel (Now Leela Hotel) Convention Center that was attended by faculty from Mayo Clinic and other US academic centers. The US faculty was astonished by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the attendees. The room was packed from 8:00 in the morning until 5:00 in the evening. Even after 5 PM the attendees stayed back to ask questions to the faculty.

Dr. Robert Griggs, the current President of the Academy of Neurology commented that “Kerala left an indelible impression of people characterized by a rich cultural heritage, a fiercely independent intellectual capability, and a wealth of friendship and pride”. This CME program became a fore-runner of an annual International Diabetes Conference sponsored by the World India Diabetes Foundation that has been ongoing in Mumbai for the last 13 years which is annually attended by an average 800 physicians and trainees.

Recently the CME programs are increasingly presented by the new generation of Kerala physicians who are trained entirely in USA. The transformation of AKMG and the CME program of AKMG is remarkable and mark the evolution of a highly successful organization founded by the emigrant Kerala doctors. However, the intellectual culture that thrives so well in USA will continue making the first generation happy and satisfied.





Emergency Medical Services for Kerala

An Initiative by AKMG

George Abraham, MD

More than 100,000 annual road traffic related Deaths!

98.5% Ambulance runs are transporting dead bodies!

90% of Ambulances have no Equipment - even Oxygen!

95% of Ambulance Personnel have no training!

30% Mortality from delay in Emergency care!

Most ED doctors have no formal EM training!

Most EDs are no more than 1st aid stations!

Govt. Ambulances mainly transport officers!

Where on earth is this place? Can this happen in God's own country? This was one slide that I consistently displayed during my talks at conferences and events on Emergency/Trauma care in our country a few years ago. The situation has since then changed a lot for the better with an acute overall increase in the people's and Government's awareness on the need for a good EMS system. The Government has earmarked a lot of funding for the purpose and currently works through the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) trying to provide this essential service for our people and Emergency Medical Care has been included as an important part of the 12th Five year plan with proposed country wide EMS plans. Thanks to AKMG and its leaders for playing an important role in this development by initiating and supporting the EMS for Kerala project.

It was at the Detroit conference in 2004, the newly elected President Dr. Parvathi Mohan designated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Kerala Initiative as AKMG's high priority project. The objective was the development of an Emergency Medical and Trauma Management Services System on par with those in western societies. The enthusiastic support provided by the AKMG Humanitarian Section led by Dr. Prem Menon and the fund raising efforts by our dynamic leader Dr. Tom Mukkada



Fund raising get together of AKMG in Detroit

deserve special mention. In fact, the lion's share of the funds was realized by the personal efforts of Tom Mukkada through small fund raisers of the AKMG families in Ottumwa, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Indiana and Las Vegas.

Dr. George P. Abraham who has been a pioneer in the field of Emergency Medicine training and development in India and who shared his vision with the AKMG leadership was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the effort. He would personally direct the activities in Kerala supported by the Indian Institute of Emergency Medical services (IIEMS – www.iiems.org) a charitable educational trust founded by him.

An EMS council chaired by the Chief Minister of Kerala as the chairman was formed in December of 2004. The members of the council included representatives from the office of the Ministry of Health, Department of Medical Education, Department of Traffic, Department of Transportation and representatives from major medical centers/hospitals in Trivandrum. An EMS for Trivandrum project development plan was drawn up and submitted to the Government of Kerala. The plan provided for an EMS system similar to the 911 system in US which will provide immediate response teams to cover the city of Trivandrum for any kind of emergency including Trauma. IIEMS is already providing life saving training courses such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Advanced Level Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support courses (ITLS) etc. in various parts of Kerala.

Kottayam Emergency Medical services (KEMS) was initiated as a pilot EMS system registered as a charitable society with the Chief Minister as Chairperson, Justice K.T. Thomas the Chief Patron and with the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police of Kottayam as patron members. The first ever EMT training of its kind in India was conducted at Kottayam in affiliation with the Buck's County Community College of Philadelphia, USA. The operations of the system were inaugurated by Chief Minister Shri. Oommen Chandy on 25th of October 2005.

We started with one used ambulance and a handful of employees providing 24/7 basic level emergency response from a two room office at a church's outhouse near MD commercial center in Kottayam. Soon we were able to purchase another used ambulance and equip it as an advanced level ambulance with Cardiac Monitor/Defibrillator/Pacer, Ventilator etc. enabling us to care for and transport even critically ill or injured patients. The Kottayam Association of Philadelphia donated \$ 7,000.00 which facilitated this process immensely. Another organization that merits special mention is the Rotary district 3210 under the guidance of its President,

Dr. G.A. George which donated 6 ambulances to IIEMS enabling expansion of our EMS service to Places like Alleppey, Chertallay, Palai, Karunagappally and Trivandrum.



IIEMS training CPR and Early Trauma Care



Kottayam EMS ambulances



***Above: Vehicles donated by Rotary District 3210
Right: ALS Ambulance with our Chief of EMS and an
EMT***



With no regular funding after the initial ones and no dependable source of income, continued operation of the EMS system was a nightmare. The emergency services were provided free to the public with the only income from operations being from scheduled or inter-hospital transfers. With aging vehicles and increasing maintenance expenses, increasing cost of Petrol, loss of trained staff to overseas recruiters and inadequate and irregular operational income etc. the Board found it very difficult to keep the service going. In 2008, the Board requested IIEMS to take over the operations.

Despite financial and other difficulties, we have continued to provide the EMS service to the people of Kottayam without any interruption since 2005 till date. This has taken a lot of sacrifices and hardships by the coordinators of the service including regular financial support by IIEMs for the last several years.

Since 2007, this service is being overseen by a Committee headed by the District Panchayat President as the Chair Person, the District Collector as Vice Chair and the District Medical Officer as the Secretary along with members drawn from Police, Fire Force, BSNL and IIEMS. Currently the EMS system is managed and maintained by the Indian Institute of Emergency Medical Services. The service is accessible by dialing 102 from any phone from anywhere in Kottayam District 24 hours a day and has fully trained advanced level EMTs on duty at all times

The selfless service and volunteerism of some local members of the society has been invaluable in keeping the service going through thick and thin - always benefitting the unfortunate who fall

victim to the sudden, unforeseen emergency or trauma. This article would not be complete without mentioning the names of Mr. A. M. Mathews, Dr. George John, Dr. P.S. John, Dr. George Jacob, Justice K.T. Thomas, Dr. Benjamin George and Mr. Rajendra Babu to mention a few.

Today, in addition to KEMS in Kottayam, we have a volunteer EMS in north Kerala named ANGELS (Active Network Group of Emergency Life Savers), an NRHM funded Government of Kerala project - 108 service - in Trivandrum district operated by Ziqitza and we are soon to have a water ambulance service operating out of Alleppey. All of these are directly or indirectly, results of the AKMG's EMS for Kerala initiative that originated years ago in 2004.

We have long ways to go before we can rest assured that we have a good EMS system comparable to western societies guaranteeing immediate, timely, appropriate medical care to every victim of trauma or emergency in our country regardless of location, time of day or financial ability. But it is not far away and certainly is a certainty – thanks to the visionaries, philanthropists and the volunteers among us.



Shri. Oommen Chandy at IIEMS Training Center in Kottayam

Learning Resource Centers in Kerala Medical Colleges

An everlasting contribution from AKMG to our Kerala Medical Colleges

**P. Karunakaran Kutty, MD, George Thomas, MD, K. C. Joseph, MD,
Narendra Kumar, MD, M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD**

INTRODUCTION:

As you all know technology now drives education in almost any field. Information technology has expanded so much today that computers and internet research have become quite essential in the learning process. In order to bring our Medical Colleges in Kerala up to the modern standards AKMG embarked on an ambitious project of establishing Electronic Learning Resource Centers (LRC) in standalone buildings or structures, useful to the undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as the faculty.

After completion of the first LRC in Trivandrum under the guidance of Dr. Narendra Kumar, both the Medical Colleges and Kerala State Government welcomed the project whole- heartedly, supporting this unique venture in any way they can.

As of this date LRCs have been completed in Trivandrum, Calicut, Kottayam and Alleppey. Hopefully in the near future the other Medical Colleges will also be able to open their LRCs with the help of the Alumni from those Medical Colleges with the support of AKMG.

Please read on the following reports about individual LRCs.



Dr. Narendra Kumar talking to Hon: A. K. Antony, Union Defense Minister at the inauguration of LRC at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College

REPORT ON CALICULT MEDICAL COLLEGE LRC

P. Karunakaran Kutty, MD

Chair Calicut Medical College LRC Committee & Past President AKMG

After the successful launch of the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) at Trivandrum Medical College in 2002 in connection with the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, AKMG setup committees to organize and raise funds for constructing similar LRCs in the remainder of government medical colleges.

The Calicut Medical College LRC Committee consisted of: Dr. P. Karunakaran Kutty as Chair and Drs. P arvathy Mohan, Manikoth Kurup, Karuvath Enu, Easwran variyam, Enas.A.Enas, Adoor Amanullah, Ram Thinakkal, Venkit Iyer, T.Subramanian, Joey.P.Thomas, Madhav Thambisetty, Mathew Yaltho, T.L.Ittiera, C.V.Sathees, Elsy Devassy, C.Sreenivasan, Majeed Pudevana, Hortensia Puthumana, K.P.Ravikrishnan, Raju Joseph Kulangara, Balagopal Kampalath, Rajkumar Warriar and Sreeja Kadakkal as members.

On behalf of the LRC committee Dr. Prem Menon, Chair of AKMG-HS and I wrote to all Calicut Medical College Alumni on our mailing list, requesting generous donations. I traveled to Calicut and had preliminary discussions with the local alumni leaders and Faculty. Principal of the Calicut Medical College, Kerala Government officials and Health Minister Mr. Sankaran were apprised of our intent. In December 2003 a triparty memorandum of understanding was signed at a function in Trivandrum presided over by the Health Minister. The Director of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC, formerly Keltrone), Dr. Jayalakshmi, Principal of Calicut Medical College and Dr. Prem Menon representing AKMG were the signatories.

C-DAC did an outstanding job in building an air conditioned 96 m² facility within the existing library. There are 16 Workstation cubicles with internet connection. In addition there is a server and two administrative computers including one with smart card reader with SCAAF (Smart Card Access and Accounting Facility). There is a backup generator and we have provided Network Switch, Laser Printer, Document Scanner, Photo copier, UPS with Battery Back up, cable router and other necessary gadgets. The facility has adequate room for storage, separate room for utilities and electrical panel. All the cubicles and reception areas are fully furnished. The system can store large number of CDs on a high end computer with easy access to several users over a network. The computers and accessories were top of the line as of 2004. In addition there were subscriptions for UpToDate and MD Consult.

The total payment to CDAC was as 116,267.21 US Dollars, including the first year of maintenance. Two Calicut alumni from the Middle East donated 2000 US dollars each and I received a total of 1000 Pounds from the Calicut Medical College Alumni in UK. The rest was donated by 60 Calicut Alumni living in the US and Canada. There were ten donors from US that gave US\$4000.00 each and three from Canada who gave Canadian \$5000.00 each. They all dedicated one work station each and four other work stations were dedicated either by more than one family member or two friends together. Rest of the donations were between 100 and 1000 dollars. Those who individually dedicated a work station are Drs. E. Manoharan, P. Karunakaran Kutty, P.K. Velayudhan, C. Mathew Yalho, K.V. Ramachandran, Joey.P. Thomas, Prem Menon, Enas.A. Enas, Ram Thinakkal, Dev Narayanan. Moideen Moopen, Shelby Kutty and C.A. Sivaram. Those who dedicated as a team are Drs. Parvathy Mohan and Rajkumar Warriar, Drs. K.P. Anandakrishnan and K.P. Ravikrishnan, Drs. C.V. Satheeschandran, C.V. Sreenivasan and C.V.G. Vallabhan and Drs. Adoor Amanullah and Easwaran Variyam. I am grateful to all the donors for making the LRC possible. Collecting money was not an easy job!

The Calicut Medical College LRC was officially inaugurated by the Health Minister Mr.K.K.Ramachandran on the 17th September 2004. Mr.Thottathil Raveendran, Mayor of Calicut, Mr.T.P.M, Zahir MLA, Mr.A.Sujanapalan MLA,Dr.Meenu Hariharan DME and Dr.Jayalakshmi, Joint DME graced the occasion with their presence and speeches. The Key to the facility was officially handed over to Dr.V.Geetha, Pricipal of Calicut Medical College at the function. Dr.C.K.Ramachandran, Dr.C. Ashokan Nambiar and Dr.C.K. Sasidhran, President of KGMCT spoke on the occasion thanking AKMG and its office bearers for this tremendous contribution to Medical Education in Kerala. Felicitations were also given by Dr.Aneesh Menon, (P.G.Association), Dr.Narayana Das (President CMCAA); Prof.Gokuldas (President PTA) and Mr. Anoop Ahammed (Chairman,College Union) To me it was the realization of a long awaited dream. The digital library looked fantastic and the craftsmanship was professional and world class! Every one present including the undergraduate and post graduate students, faculty, alumni association office bearers and politicians abundantly praised the members and leaders of AKMG for this generous and thoughtful gift.

The LRC Committee of Calicut Medical College and Library Staff have been running the LRC very efficiently ever since. The facility is utilized heavily by undergraduate and post graduate students and faculty. The last monthly report I received by email, mentions that as of 29th February 2012 there are 2792 registered users and in the month of February 1460 people used it!

I am very proud and happy that we were able to make this small and humble contribution to our Alma Mater. This is perhaps the best thing AKMG has done in Kerala in the last 33 years! Thanks to Dr. Narendra Kumar for boldly accepting the challenge and delivering the first LRC in Trivandrum Medical College. Now there are functioning LRCs in Calicut, Kottayam, Alleppey and Trichur. Well done AKMG! This is an example of something that would benefit the people of the entire state. This is the one and perhaps the only thing that will influence and help medical education from the grass roots and there by promote world class health care in Kerala for generations to come. Effect and benefit of monetary efforts are only temporary and transient at best. But the benefit of education is for ever and beyond horizons. Let me say it once more, VIDYA DHANAM SARVA DHANAL PRADHANAM!

Leaders of AKMG, present and future, let us keep our focus on medical education and research! This is what we are good at ; what we can easily deliver and some thing that will be visible and remain a permanent monument for the goodwill of AKMG!



Health Minister Ramachandran Master cutting the ribbon



*Health Minister , DME
and Principal inside the
inaugurated LRC*



*Minister Sankaran,
Dr Prem Menon and
others at signing of
MOU in December
2003*



Director of CDAC, Dr. P. K. Kutty and the political dignitaries at the inauguration



Dr. Asokan Nambiar and Dr. C. K. Ramachandran at the inauguration

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER OPENS IN KOTTAYAM

George Thomas, MD

President AKMG 1988-1990

The AKMG Learning Resource Center at Kottayam Medical College, Kerala, was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister Mr. Oommen Chandi and the event was presided over by Hon'ble Health Minister Mr. Ramachandran Master on January 22, 2005. This opened the resources of the worldwide web for the faculty and students. Several dignitaries, including Members of the Parliament and Legislative Assembly, Director of Medical Education, many local civic leaders, faculty, students and alumni

were present at the event. With the creation of the third AKMG learning center and the wide media coverage it received, the LRC has become an important symbol of AKMG's interest and commitment to our alma maters in Kerala.

AKMG LRC is housed in a 3000 square feet space in the Medical College Hospital and is a state-of-the-art electronic library and worldwide medical information access center. This is located at the top floor of the super specialty wing of the medical college hospital. The center is equipped with high-speed broadband connectivity to world renowned medical information data resources. This facility will enable the faculty and students around the clock access to the internet and information resources. There is an adjoining conference hall that is fully furnished and is equipped with network connectivity. The center was designed by architect T.M. Cyriac and developed by CMC Ltd. The digital library, which is centrally air-conditioned, can also act as the backbone for remote education and conferencing.

The center fulfills AKMG's vision to create a high quality learning center that can access continuous update of the ever-changing field of medicine and related technology with that vision in mind we have sponsored valuable subscriptions to top-class medical information resources like MDConsult.com. These sites provide access to all major textbooks and journals and the latest updates on many important scientific topics. The center is a truly positive change for the college, and there was great appreciation from the faculty, administration, public officials and students. We have made every effort to involve the alumni leadership in this endeavor. Whether the alumni are in Kerala, US, Europe or the Middle East, it is only through their participation and contribution that these learning centers will continue to be successful.

Thanks to the generous support of Kottayam alumni who are members of AKMG, we have raised enough funds to pay for the center including the first year maintenance and subscription. So far, the contributions have come from alumni in the US with the exception of Dr. V. John from Muscat who sponsored a workstation. The Main Hall is named in memory of Dr. Mary Philips, sponsored by Dr. Benny Philips and Dr. Annie Verghese. The Conference Hall is sponsored by Drs. Joseph, Cyriac and Thompson Chemplavil. A plaque with the names of all alumni who contributed is displayed at the entrance to the center. On behalf of the implementation committee, let me thank each of the contributors without whom, none of this could be a reality. Our sincere thanks go out to each of you for everything you have done to make this a success, especially the implementation committee for their insightful participation.

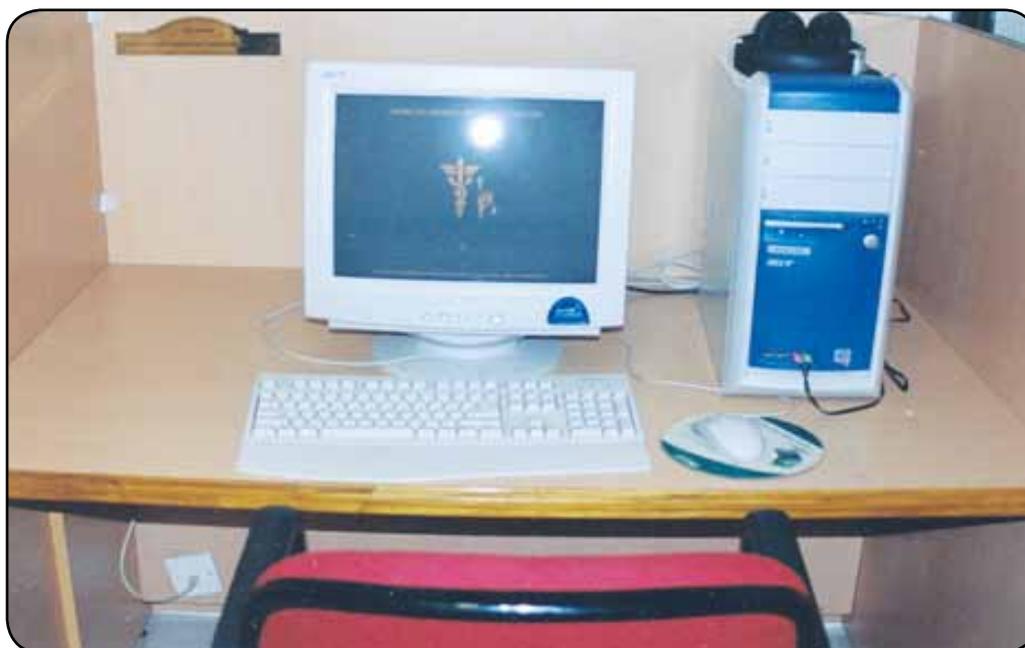
We are grateful for the active support and involvement of Dr. P. Chandramohan, former principal and DME, Dr. Sudhaykumar, principal, Dr. Tigy Thomas, nodal officer of LRC, and Dr. Jose Tom, alumni president. The success of the learning centers thus far have created an atmosphere of optimism and hope, and there is great desire to have these centers at the two remaining government medical colleges. When you go to Kerala next time, make a point to stop by and see these learning centers for yourself.

A VISIT TO THE AKMG - LRC, TRIVANDRUM

**M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD,
President AKMG 2000 -2001**

George Thomas MD, FACC On Dec 29, 2004, after the morning session of Indo American CME, a few of us doctors visited AKMG - LRC (Learning Resource Center) in Trivandrum Medical College. This project, as you know, was spearheaded by Dr. Narendra Kumar and assisted by the local coordinators, Drs. John Panicker, K. Yogiraj and M. Iqbal Ahamed, with financial help and guidance from AKMG members. This first LRC has come out incredibly well, with 12 computer terminals suitably placed in compact work stations and a conference room with provision for LCD projection, all stationed in an air conditioned facility. The banner “AKMG LRC Library” is beautifully displayed in the front of the facility.

Prof. Chandra Kumari who is in charge of this electronic library explained to us: “Over 400 text books and journals have been loaded into the CD juke box which can be easily accessed by the users. Subscription for MD Consult and Up-



*A prototype Computer Station at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College LRC
December 2004*

ToDate.com are provided. On an average 1200 post-graduate students and medical students use this facility every month. In addition high speed internet access with backup generator and uninterrupted power supply is available.” For more information please visit our web site www.akmg-lrc.org

I asked one post graduate student what she thought about this new learning centre. “This is a wonderful learning system. Now we are able to access the internet fast and get what we need quickly. Our research, preparations for presentations and exams have become a lot easier,” she said. This first LRC, embraced by the students and faculty alike, is a sign of how much medical education has progressed in our state. The LRCs of Calicut and Kottayam have been completed and already there are requests from Alleppey and Trichur for our help to establish the same in there also. The alumni from these colleges are taking the leadership to complete these projects.

Thanks to LRCs, current Indo American CME, immediate help for the Tsunami victims from AKMG-HF and many other philanthropic activities, the respect and love for AKMG in Kerala has certainly gone up. Let us continue the good work.



AAPI – AKMG Delegate team LRC Officials 2004

ESTABLISHMENT OF ALLEPPEY MEDICAL COLLEGE, LRC

K.C.Joseph, MD

President AKMG 2011 -2012

With the completion of Learning Resource Centers in Trivandrum, Calicut and Kottayam, the Alleppey LRC was the natural next step. But we ran into a major problem; while all the other medical schools have hundreds of active Alumni, Alleppey has much fewer. Despite such low numbers, the Alleppey alumni rose to the occasion magnanimously.. More than half of the \$ 100,000 necessary to finance the construction of Alleppey LRC came from just ten generous grand sponsors! A profitable golf outing fundraiser and contributions from other benefactors ensured the success of Alleppey LRC. On March 9, 2007, the then Health minister of Kerala, Hon. P. K. Sreemathy Teacher, inaugurated the LRC in a ceremony organized by the Alumni Association of Alleppey. Hon. G. Sudhakaran (Minister for Cooperation), Dr. Meenu Hariharan, (the Director of Medical Education), Dr. K.S. Manoj , (Member of Parliament and an Alleppey alumnus) also participated in the event. With ten computer terminals connected to high speed Internet and an attached conference room, both medical students and post-graduate students enthusiastically utilize the LRC's vast resources. Medical students pay a nominal contribution when they join the medical college for the use of the LRC and minimal fee when



Hon: Health Minister of Kerala P. K. Sreemathy Teacher inaugurating the LRC of Alleppey Medical College

using the LRC, making the LRC self-sustaining.

The Learning Resource Centers exemplify AKMG's power as an organization. Mobilizing the collection power of our community, we have been able to contribute an important and impactful resource for our alma maters without adding an undue, a continuing burden to the organization



Inaugural ceremonies of TDMC LRC Electronic Library



Dr. K. C. Joseph speaking on the occasion of Inauguration of TDMC LRC Electronic Library



Medical students busy using the newly installed computers at the LRC





AKMG and AAPI Symbiosis

Enas A. Enas MD, Adoor Amanullah MD & M. P. Ravindra Nathan, MD

AKMG has always been one of the most active, admired and emulated chapter organizations of American Association of Physicians of Indian origin or AAPI. In many ways AKMG is an integral part of AAPI and has helped considerably in its growth.

GENESIS OF AAPI

The need to represent all Indian physicians in the US, regardless of the college of medical education, led to the formation of several state-based Indian medical organizations in the late 1970s. The primary objective of these organizations was to fight discrimination including the right to use the MD degree after ECFMG certification. AAPI was formed in 1983, three years after AKMG was established, with the hope of representing an estimated 30,000 Indian physicians and 5,000 medical students and residents in the US. The primary objective of AAPI was to fight discrimination and injustice experienced by Indian doctors seeking residency in the US and even those who have completed residency.

The AAPI was formed as an umbrella organization through joining hands with Michigan Association of physicians of Indian origin (MAPI) and five other smaller state-based, specialty, and alumni associations. It gained strength and became viable when the Indian American Medical Association of Illinois (IAMA) joined AAPI in 1984 and AKMG in 1985. The main advantage of joining AAPI was the complementary objectives. AKMG could refer its members to AAPI for all issues related to discrimination or disputes with hospital privileges, employment etc and thus avoid duplication

of services. To our delight, AKMG became the largest member organization of AAPI and the AKMG Presidents Dr. Enas served in the AAPI Governing body for 3 years and Dr. George Thomas for two years before becoming AAPI treasurers.

Buoyed by three fabulous conventions, a comprehensive directory and popular newsletter AKMG grew by leaps and bounds between 1985 and 1988. The AAPI leaders, who noticed the phenomenal growth and strength of AKMG not only wanted to learn from AKMG but duplicate our success at AAPI. To achieve this goal, Dr. Enas was actively recruited to be treasurer of AAPI. Among other things, he was able to revive and rejuvenate the fledgling AAPI life membership program by offering free convention registration that was originally pioneered at the AKMG. This also helped to improve the financial status of AAPI which is excellent at present.

As the first Vice Chair and Second Chair of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of AAPI, Dr. Enas was instrumental in developing proper procedures that separated the life membership funds from operating account with BOT and executive committee handling the respective accounts. A similar system was later introduced for AKMG, to safeguard against overzealous expenditures by the office bearers. Dr. Enas declined to move up the ladder and become the President of AAPI (as has happened never before or after); the vacancy was filled by Dr. George Thomas, who went on to become one of the most popular and trusted AAPI Presidents.



Dr Enas as Chair of BOT, AAPI

In the late 1980's Dr Enas, in collaboration with AKMG and AAPI, spearheaded the landmark study called CADI or Coronary Artery Study in Indians which has garnered global attention. And in 1990, the AAPI Journal published the article titled "Immigrant Indian males, sitting ducks for heart attacks, and a cause for alarm and call for action." Written by Dr. Enas Enas and Dr. Isaac Thomas, this was the very first article in the US to address the high rates of heart disease among the Indian Diaspora, which was virtually unknown in those days.

In addition to conducting the CADI Study, Dr. Enas also chaired the first two Indo-US Health Summits for AAPI in New Delhi and published specific guidelines with lower and stricter threshold of intervention for the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease among Indians worldwide.

ONE EDITOR AND TWO JOURNALS—THE AKMG REPORTER AND AAPI JOURNAL

As the Founding Editor of both the AKMG reporter and the AAPI Journal, Dr George Thomas has contributed immensely for the growth and strength of both these organizations, especially in its early years.

Two AKMG presidents Dr. George Thomas, while serving as the AAPI Vice President and Dr. E. Enas when he was the Chair of BOT, have made seminal contributions to changes in bylaws of AAPI. They are largely credited with abolishing the corruption-prone Electoral College at a special general body meeting held exclusively for this purpose. Direct annual individual membership with full voting rights was introduced while retaining the life membership. For the first time, the fundamental tenet of democracy, one member one vote, was instituted and continues even today.

Dr. George Thomas was elected as Treasurer in 1989 and subsequently served as Secretary, Vice President, President elect and then the President. In 1992, as Chair of the Bylaws committee and President Elect he led the efforts to change AAPI Bylaws creating the ‘one member one vote’ policy (as stated before) and giving opportunity for every member to reelect the officers and members of the Executive committee. Dr. Thomas also initiated the first governing body retreat in Cincinnati in 1993 to evaluate the structure and function of the organization eventually leading to the appointment of 1st Executive Director Mr. John Kasper, to oversee the manifold activities of AAPI. Dr. Thomas received the most distinguished service to AAPI in 1997 in recognition of his many contributions to the association.



Dr Thomas receiving the distinguished service to AAPI

FROM FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES TO INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

In India, the word “foreign” is generally considered more desirable or superior. In sharp contrast, in the US, the word “foreign” is considered highly undesirable, like a “foreign body in the eye.” Despite their excellent knowledge and skills, “Foreign Medical Graduates” were perceived as inferior or undesirable doctors, when viewed through that “Foreign prism.” Several earlier requests to ECFMG and American Medical Association (AMA) to abandon this derogatory term were met with failure. AKMG was a special invitee at the first AMA meeting with leaders of Foreign Medical Graduates in Chicago, in recognition of its strength and stature with Dr. Enas representing the AKMG. Members of the AAPI delegation to this meeting included, Dr. Thomas as the secretary, Dr. Surjit Singh as President and Dr. Vijay Kulkarni as President Elect. They met with AMA Board in 1990 which paved the way for improved relations with AMA. One of our main demands in this meeting was to stop using the term FMG and change it to the much more respectable “International Medical Graduates”. AMA graciously accepted and implemented this name change, a name universally taken for granted now.

MORE EDITORS OF AAPI JOURNAL FROM AKMG RANKS

In 1990s, Dr. Adoor Amanullah played an active role in AAPI. The reins of AAPI Journal Editorship were transferred to Dr. Amanullah in 1992, when AAPI President Dr. Apparao Mukkamala appointed him to that position. He served very well in that capacity for many years, raising the standard of the journal and receiving a lot of compliments for his editorial skills and professionalism. He also served as North East Central regional director of AAPI from 1992 to 94 followed by three years as member of AAPI Board of Trustees. During these early years, AAPI played important role in fighting discrimination against IMGs. 1993 was a milestone year when historic pro-IMG bill became law. That year, under presidency of Apparao Mukkamala, AAPI lobbied hard in congress and saw passing of Health Professions Reauthorization bill in Congress. One of the provisions in this Pro-IMG bill was that medical residency programs cannot receive Title VII federal funding, if they discriminate based on applicant’s country of medical graduation. This bill also established a National Advisory Board to monitor discriminatory practices in state medical licensure practices towards IMGs.

Another milestone during this period was President Clinton’s historic visit to Chicago and addressing the AAPI Convention in 1995. In his speech, he said the United States had much to learn from the India-American community, noting that Indian Physicians worked hard and conveyed the importance of family to their children. “There is a lesson to be learned from Indian doctors. They came

here with relatively little money, but by their hard work, they became very successful. They pass on their work, culture, and good family values.” Dr. Amanullah received the coveted honor for the ‘Most Distinguished Service for AAPI’ at the awards luncheon, in front of a large audience during the annual AAPI Convention.



Dr. Amanullah receiving AAPI-DS Award from Minister Antulay. Also in photo are AAPI BOT Chair Radhu Aggarwal and Congressman Gary Ackerman.

It looks like AKMG physicians seem to possess a special interest and talent in writing and editing. This was further corroborated when in 2001, Dr. M. P. Ravindra Nathan was appointed as the Editor-in-chief of AAPI Journal by the then President, Dr. Jay Jayasankar. He held that position for 6 years continuously till 2007, and then returned to lead the Editorial Board during the year 2010 -11, at the special request of Dr. Ajeeth Singhvi. During his time, he added some new features that included special columns like “A Glimpse of My Life,” “AAPI Travelogues,” “AAPI and Poetry,” “Symposia on topics special interest to Indian Americans,” and more. Many new writers from AAPI ranks emerged and contributed to the Journal at this time.

Dr. Ravindra Nathan received a special President’s Recognition award for his meritorious service over the years during the 2007 Convention from the then President Dr. S. Balasubromoniam. And in 2008, during the Governing Body Meeting in Tampa, ‘Dr. Ravi’ was given the title of Emeritus Editor of AAPI Journal, in recognition of his long standing service to AAPI Journal. In 2009 Dr. Nathan was elected to Board of Trustees for a period of 3 years and later became the Vice Chair of BOT, and served AAPI very well in that capacity



In 2011, Dr Nathan was chosen to receive the first copy of the Convention Souvenir when it was officially released during the inaugural ceremony from Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Past President of India, at the annual convention in New York.

THE SECOND AAPI PRESIDENT FROM AKMG

The new AKMG star who has received the top honors in AAPI is Dr. Narendra Kumar. He organized the AKMG Silver Jubilee Convention in Detroit in 2004, considered one of the best conventions. After this he turned his attention to AAPI, first becoming its Treasurer in a heated election contest first, then Secretary, Vice President and President Elect without any opposition and on Saturday, June 30, Dr. Narendra Kumar was installed as the new President of AAPI, a great honor for all Kerala Medical Graduates of North America. When asked to comment on his great achievement, he said in humble tones:

“I am indebted to AKMG for grooming me to reach where I am in AAPI today. I thoroughly enjoyed working with all of my AKMG friends without any politics. I have learned a lot from the AKMG leaders. I am a firm believer in early planning and preparation for successful execution of any endeavor one undertakes regardless of the size or scope of the project. One of my objectives for





*Dr Narendra Kumar with Defense Minister of India
Hon: A. K. Antony*

next year is to empower our young physicians who are the future of AAPI.”

There are many others who have contributed to the growth of AAPI from AKMG ranks. Dr. Radha Menon is currently Director of Pacific Central region of AAPI. Dr. Thomas Alappat has served as the President of Essex County Chapter of AAPI and a Co-Chair for AAPI Convention in 2007. Dr. Prem Menon was a member of AAPI Charitable Foundation and Dr. Aravind Pillai was a Co-Chair for AAPI Orlando Convention in 2009.

AAPI can expect more participation from the AKMG ranks in future.

AKMG Global

An Idea that is Gaining Momentum

K. Vinayakom, MD & Suba Vinayakom, MD

The concept of international AKMG was conceived sometime in 1995 when Washington DC chapter was planning the AKMG convention at the Nation's capital. Although AKMG had already grown beyond the borders of US when all our Canadian physicians joined around 1985-1986 shortly after the AKMG came into existence, all of us felt that it was time for AKMG to expand beyond North American continent. The goal was to bring all the Physicians of Kerala origin working in various part of the world under one umbrella. Hence my wife Suba and I made an all out effort to contact the many Physicians of Kerala origin working in other continents, by telephone calls, letters and an occasional e-mail. The latter hadn't come into popular use at that time. Finally we were able to contact the many physicians in the Middle East, Australia, United Kingdom and Kerala.



It wasn't easy to get the visas for some of these special guests from abroad. We had to fight with the American Embassy and finally the officials relented. That was how Dr. Shanthamma Chacko MD, one of the participants from Kerala, was able to come to USA. During the 1995 AKMG convention conducted in the nation's capital, there were a number of representatives from Middle East, Australia UK and Kerala. Exchange of ideas regarding the working conditions and the status of patient care were the main topics of discussion at that time. All these delegates who represented the various countries were formally recognized at the podium during the final banquet.

In 2005 we went to England to explore the possibility of holding the annual AKMG Convention in London, to promote the idea of AKMG becoming more global but unfortunately that didn't materialize because of the prohibitive expenses for such a convention, hence we decided to hold the same in Puerto Rico.

During the past few years the concept of AKMG International, AKMG Global may be a more appropriate name, is catching on. In the 1997 Orlando Convention and in the 2004 Detroit Silver Jubi-

lee convention, there was excellent participation from our colleagues practicing abroad. AKMG Emirates is now well established with its own annual conventions and periodic regional meetings. Some of our past presidents like Dr. Narendra Kumar and Dr. P. C. Punnen, and more recently Dr. K. C. Joseph, the current AKMG president, have been distinguished guests at their annual meetings. For most our own annual conventions now, we are getting good participation from these physicians especially from Middle East, Kerala and England and occasionally from Australia. And it is really encouraging to note that they are also actively involved with our CME and Entertainment programs as seen during the recent Alaska Cruise Convention 2011.



It is indeed gratifying that the seed planted during

Dr. Narendra Kumar (second from the right) and Dr. Azad Moopen at the First UAE AKMG Convention.



First AKMG UAE Convention attended by past presidents of AKMG, Drs Narendra Kumar and Dr P. C. Punnen

1995 Washington convention has now come to fruition. We hope AKMG Global would reach its full potential in the near future so that we can see regular participation of many more members from other countries for our conventions and vice versa, with free exchange of ideas that will be mutually beneficial. And hopefully we will have global conventions of AKMG that are conducted in many parts of the world.

Our best wishes to AKMG Global.



Dr. K.C. Joseph's Emirate visit



About the Editors



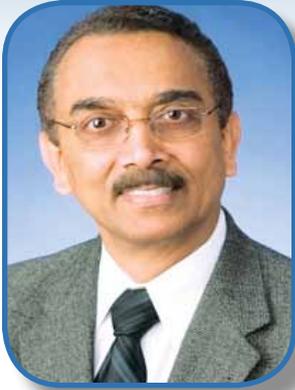
M. P. Ravindra Nathan MD, a founding member, past president and a past Convention Chair and Co-Chair of AKMG, is a graduate of Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. He practices Cardiovascular Medicine in Brooksville, FL. He was the Editor –in- Chief of AAPI Journal for many years, a member of the Editorial Board of Medical Economics for 5 years, a member of Board of Trustees of AAPI for 3 years and President of Malayalee Association of Gulf Coast of Florida for 2 years. He is a writer and speaker, a regular columnist for Khaas Baat and frequently contributes to Tampa Bay Times and Hernando Today. His articles have appeared in Medical Economics, Florida Medical Journal and Cortlandt Forum. He is married to Dr. Sushela Ravindranathan, a pediatrician.



M. V. Pillai, MD (AKMG President 1994 - 1995), Hematologist/Oncologist, is currently a Professor of Oncology at Thomas Jefferson University, Kimmel Cancer Center, Philadelphia. Dr Pillai has a long career in private practice, academia and research. A founding member and current trustee of Indo-American Cancer Association, he is now the chairman of India Task Force appointed to improve educational resources in cancer by international cancer treatment and research, an organization in Belgium supported by W.H.O. As an aficionado of arts, literature and theater, Dr Pillai is well known in Indian American community.



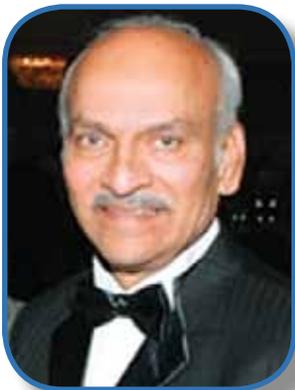
Adoor Amanullah, MD, was the editor of AKMG reporter for 18 years and a past president of AKMG. He was actively involved in AAPI, as editor of AAPI Journal and as member of Board of Trustees for 3 years. He was also past President of Michigan Association of Physicians of Indian Origin. He is a graduate of Kozhikode Medical College and a practicing Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist. Currently he is a Clinical Assistant Professor at University of Michigan Medical School and at Beaumont Oakland University Medical School. Married to Kamar Amanullah and enjoys reading and travelling.



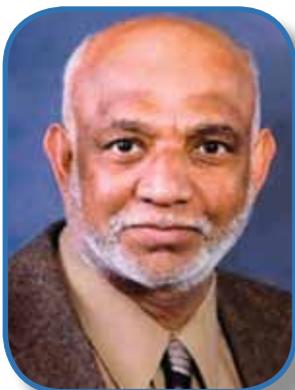
Aravind Pillai MD, is a past President of AKMG (2010-11) practices Internal Medicine in Sanford, Florida, Chair AKMG Orlando convention 2007, President of CAPI (Central Florida Association of Physicians from Indian sub-continent) 2008, Co-Chair for AAPI Orlando 2009 Convention, Coordinator for AAPI Charitable foundation Shreya Ghoshal (Florida) program, Chair, AAPI awards committee 2012-13 and Chairman, Hindu Society of Central Florida from 2001 to 2005 and President, Orlando Malayalee Association in 2001



Roy P. Thomas MD, a past president of AKMG, internal medicine, one of the original founders of Federation of Kerala Associations in North America (FOKANA), Federation of India Associations in North America, (FIA), and Indo- American Democratic Organization (IADO). He has appeared on 435 televisions episodes and talked about different topics in medicine which are telecasted weekly to many countries on Kairali TV. He is also a writer, speaker, and humorist, and decorated Commander Chevalier of Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church.



Prathap G. Chandran, MD, a past President of AKMG and an invasive Cardiologist / Electrophysiologist, is a graduate of Thiruvananthapuram Medical College and a retired captain from the Indian Army Medical Corps. He began his career in academic cardiology and won several accolades as the best teacher. Subsequently he went into private practice. He is an admirer of all forms of art, especially music and also very much interested in humanitarian services.



K. C. Joseph, MD, the current president of AKMG is a practicing psychiatrist. He is the CEO of Michigan Behavioral Medicine in Troy. He is the Chief of Staff - Elect of St. Mary Mercy Hospital where he is currently the chair of the Credentials Committee. He is also an Assistant Professor at Beaumont Oakland Medical School, MI. Currently he is the President Elect of MAPI (Michigan Association of Physicians of Indian Origin). He serves as a Member of the Board of Directors of Santhula Medical Trust which is a non - profit psychiatric hospital in Koothatukulam, Kerala.

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