

Annual Report of the Executive Committee
of Kerala Association of Washington
for the year 2005

Dear members of the Kerala Association of Washington,

Kerala Association of Washington had an excellent year in many ways than one in 2005. The Executive Committee thanks all the members and friends of the Association for making 2005 a memorable year, a year of change in the history of the Association.

The Executive Committee of KAW in 2005 was led by the able Wilson David our President, and George Thomas, the Vice President. Prakash Menon served as the treasurer. We had the experience of PM Mathew as our Ex-Officio member and Tom George as the Executive Committee member. Other Executive members included the hardworking Santhosh Nair, who was instrumental in all our programs being a grand success, Kalpana Hariprasad, and Rakhee James. Neetha Daniel and Deepak George served as Youth Representatives. Darryl Harris was the auditor. I, Santhosh Pillai, served as the Secretary of the Association.

The Executive Committee had its inaugural meeting on Sunday, 17th of April 2005 to set a goal for the activities of the Association for the year. This report is in fact a score card of what we were able to do from the long list of possible programs that we thought we could offer to the Malayalee community in the Pacific Northwest. I am excited to say that we have achieved all the major goals, but at the same time, I want to make it clear that we all agree that we can only improve from here.

The Executive Committee 2005 agreed on setting the membership drive as one of our top priorities. Even though we could not achieve our goal of making all the Malayalees in the Greater Seattle area members of the Association, despite sending out self-addressed stamped envelopes to send back membership dues, we have far exceeded the membership count compared to the previous years. You will see the details in the financial report by the treasurer.

The Executive Committee in its first meeting acknowledged that the activities of the Association were usually confined to three or four major events: picnic, Onam, a stage show by a visiting troupe, and Christmas/New Year celebrations. Our aim was to break out of this tradition and organize more events that would attract KAW members. It is our strong belief that we, the KAW 2005 Executive Committee, have succeeded in our attempt to provide a mix of programs in the past year.

Our first program was a Kathakali performance by renowned artists including late Kalamandalam Haider Ali on Sunday, April 10th, 2005. KAW co-hosted the event with the local wing of Ragamala, an organization that promotes Indian cultural programs. The show turned out to be a great success and received many a critical acclaim from art lovers and critics in the Seattle area. KAW members proudly hosted the Kathakali artists during their stay here in Seattle.

KAW organized the Annual Community Picnic on Saturday June 25th 2005 at Pine Lake Park in Sammamish. In addition to the free food provided by the Association, this picnic also saw sponsored food stalls from KAW members. Most of the members attended the picnic told the Executive Committee that having the additional food option was a good idea. Three members, who did not want to be identified, were against this move. Everyone agreed though that the picnic was a fun-filled event.

Next, KAW collaborated with Kerala Talkies, a group that brings Malayalam movies to Seattle, and successfully negotiated discounted tickets for its members. This marked the end of the long period with no Malayalam movies shown in a theater in Seattle. Movie lovers appreciated this move, and Malayalam movies have been shown here regularly ever since.

For the first time in the history of the Association, in 2005, Onam celebrations started with Onam Sadya in the afternoon on Saturday, 10th September 2005. A variety entertainment program performed by the

members followed. For the first time, we have moved our venue to Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center in Renton where in excess of 540 attendees can be accommodated. The 2005 Onam celebrations also saw record turnout of Malayalees for a KAW organized event. KAW has collected cloths and toys to be sent to charitable organizations in Kerala during our Onam celebrations.

A ganamela, mimics, and cinematic dance show named Summer in USA and lead by noted playback singer Chitra Iyer and actor/music director Nadhir Sha was organized by KAW on Friday, 23rd September 2005. The show exceeded expectations and many KAW members helped us organize the show in addition to providing accommodation to the artists.

In 2005, we introduced a new event: Talent Show for Kids and Youth. The program was held on Saturday, 12th of November 2005. Probably because of this being the inaugural year, the Talent Show was not very well attended. However, the show was a treat to watch and those who missed the show missed a great opportunity to watch our highly talented kids and youth perform on stage without inhibitions.

KAW organized the Christmas/New Year program on Saturday, January 7th 2006. The celebrations started in the afternoon. Even though there was no lunch or dinner served for this event, all attendees were provided with free snacks. Variety entertainment programs performed by members set even higher standards. During this event, KAW President Wilson David handed over a check for \$8000 to Mr. John Titus as part of KAW's donation to Rotary Club Global of Kochi to help the Tsunami victims in Chellanam village in Ernakulam district in Kerala. Construction of homes for the victims has already begun in Chellanam.

Some of the other things that the Executive Committee 2005 was able to implement:

1. Publicized the minutes of all Executive Committee meetings in our web site kaow.org and thereby giving the members a chance to look at the minutes and ask questions and/or clarifications about committee decisions.
2. Changed the venue of major events such as Onam celebrations from Lynwood hall to Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center auditorium. This decision has improved the quality of the programs indirectly and the ambience directly. In hindsight, though, we would have better off conducting the Christmas programs at the Lynwood hall had we known that there was a retreat/camp going on at the same time, thereby causing the attendance to drop. This also brings up the need for better communication with the community leaders and the Executive Committee.
3. The Executive Committee 2005 issued membership cards with name and year clearly marked on them to our members. This helped avoid a lot of confusion and also was useful in availing the negotiated incentives for KAW members. It is important that we continue this tradition. Another notable practice was that we did not collect membership during our Christmas/New Year celebration. This was to avoid age-long confusion about issuance of membership at the fag end of that year.
4. Gift cards and certificate of excellence were given out to our high school graduates.
5. KAW has collaborated with advertisers to minimize, and in certain cases eliminate, the expenses associated with sending out postal mail to our members.
6. The Executive Committee, especially President Wilson David and Auditor Darryl Harris worked very hard to initiate the paperwork needed to get 501 (c) (3) status to KAW. I call up on the Executive Committee 2006 to complete the necessary steps and get KAW recognized as a non-profit organization.
7. As agreed up on in the first Executive Committee, some business, like approval of minutes, were done through e-mails without ever conducting a meeting.

Here are some of the ideas that the 2005 Executive Committee was unable to make substantial progress on:

1. We had thoughts about conducting a program exclusively for members. We also thought about having a program to welcome the new comers into the Seattle area. Another idea that did not materialize was conducting a KAW Sports day for the enthusiastic and energetic members of the Association. Hopefully Executive Committee for 2006, or for the coming years will take up some or all of these ideas and make them a reality.
2. The 2005 Executive Committee also had thoughts on publishing a member directory. We had to give up on this work due to the lack of enthusiasm from the members that we contacted and partially owing to the lack of adequate sponsorship/lack of funds. However, the committee took additional care and extra steps to make sure that the current address and mailing list that the Association maintains is kept up-to-date.
3. During previous General Body meetings there were some discussions about updating/amending KAW bye-laws. Since there wasn't any effort devoted into thinking this over and coming up with a list of proposed changes, the Executive Committee 2005 looked into the feasibility of this matter. We have unanimously agreed that the bye-laws need a revamp, but due to time and resource constraints, we have left the matter to the forthcoming Executive Committee to consider.

On behalf of all the members of Executive Committee 2005, I extend my sincere thanks to:

- All the family members of KAW Executive Committee members
- All the volunteers who helped KAW organize the events
- All the KAW members who provided accommodation and transportation help for artists during the Kathakali and Summer in USA shows.
- All the members who attended the shows and events organized by KAW, and supported us with your suggestions and comments
- All of our sponsors and patrons (including those persons and establishments who helped us financially and otherwise)
- All the performers who performed shows during Onam, Talent Night, and Christmas celebrations
- All those who helped raise \$8000 for the Tsunami victims in Kerala and all those who donated clothes and toys during our cloth drive.

And finally, let me introduce the new KAW Executive Committee members for the year 2006.

President	Babu Parayail
Vice President	Madhu Kangara
Secretary	Santhosh Nair
Treasurer	George Parappuram
Ex-Officio	Wilson David
EC Members	Ojus John
	Roopa Manoj
	Jyothish Nair
	Meera Venkatesh
Auditor	Ram Pranam
Youth Reps	Sruthi Hariprasad
	Angela Suresh

I consider it as a privilege for us to handover the charges of KAW to a dynamic group like yours. I am confident that you will set the bar even higher and go many steps further than what the 2005 Executive Committee was able to achieve. I extend out whole-hearted cooperation of all of us in all your endeavors. On behalf of the entire 2005 Executive Committee members, I wish all of you all the very best.

Respectfully submitted,

Santhosh Pillai
Secretary, KAW
Date: March 26, 2006