

Minutes of the First Executive Committee Meeting

Held at Wilson David's residence (252, 118th AVE SE Apt #13, Bellevue, WA 98005)
On 17th April 2005 at 3 PM

Meeting start time: 3:02 PM

Meeting end time: 6:50 PM

Attendees: Wilson David (President), George Thomas (Vice President), Santhosh Pillai (Secretary), Prakash Menon (Treasurer), PM Mathew (Ex-Officio), Tom George, Kalpana Hariprasad, Rakhee James, Santhosh Nair (Members), Deepak George (Youth Representative).

EC Members who did not attend: Neetha Daniel (Youth Representative).

Note¹: Attendance of the Auditor is not required.

Note²: See at the end of the document for key deliverables by EC members

President Wilson David presided over the first meeting of EC of KAW for the year 2005. Once the Secretary provided agenda, copy of the bye-law, and a copy of the registration form of KAW with the Washington state, the President kicked off the discussion with the first topic in the agenda: namely, setting an achievable goal for KAW for 2005.

Vice President George Thomas opened up the discussion by inviting members to provide their feedback. Everyone agreed that we should work hard towards making the membership drive one of our top priorities. He suggested that the EC members be responsible for the region that they represent. Rakhee remarked that the most difficult question that we face while requesting someone to take membership is this question: "what will I get back from the association for paying \$15 as membership fee?" Santhosh Pillai suggested that we should all be prepared to answer this question and we should encourage people to ask themselves "what can I contribute to the association and the community for providing me the forum and opportunity to interact with people of my own state and those who share my own culture." Santhosh Pillai also stated that he would work on some write-up on these lines.

Kalpana pointed out that we are now limited to 3 major activities (Picnic, Onam, and Christmas) and this should change. Rakhee opined that we need more activities organized by KAW. Kalpana suggested that we should give small gifts to all the kids who perform during the events organized by KAW. That will motivate more kids to participate in such events. The rest of the EC members agreed with these sentiments. Youth representative Deepak suggested that more get-togethers are needed for the youth. He also suggested that providing little perks like free T-shirts or giving away prizes for competitions will drive more youth to KAW programs. Youth will be more than willing to participating sporting events like soccer and basket ball tournaments if KAW sponsors the team. The idea of celebrating various cultural festivals came up and we decided to have a Halloween party on the weekend before Halloween. George suggested that X-Box or other games be made available at the party to make sure kids participate.

There were other interesting ideas put forth by the members as well. Rakhee suggested organizing a members' night. It could be just a get-together for the families with no official program list or artistic performance. She also suggested that we should let member families to run food-stalls at event locations. Prakash suggested to organize an event for new comers to Seattle. Prakash also suggested that we should open up our cultural events to others (non-Malayalees). He observed that if KAW can cater to the needs of the kids and that of the youth, the parents also will take a keen interest in participating KAW-sponsored events. George suggested that we should create a database of "local talents" from among the members of KAW. Tom thought it might involve some privacy issues. George also suggested that we create a member directory and distribute that to all the members. PM Mathew and Tom explained the possible privacy issues. Santhosh P suggested that we should collect information about all the Malayalees in the Seattle area, and then ask them if they want to be a member of KAW, and if so, the information can be published in a directory distributed only to members. Santhosh P will provide a template to collect this data. Prakash will be providing current member list to all EC members.

Based on the discussions, the Executive Committee has concluded that we should set ourselves a goal to organize the following events:

- Local talents night if there is enough interest and enough “semi-professional” talent is available locally.
- Picnic, Onam, and Christmas/New Year
- Halloween night/Kids night prior to Halloween a weekend before Halloween.
- KAW Sports Day
- Publish KAW member directory
- Charity events (cloth drive etc.)

There was a suggestion to have some sort of tie-up with Tamil and Telugu organizations. But the committee did not discuss that further. It is also suggested that we contact the Malayalees in the Oregon and BC area and expose our activities and events for them too. Santhosh N will explore the possibility of this in the OR area, while Wilson is in charge of BC area. George suggested that we could initiate forming a network of Malayalees in the neighboring states so that if we drive to other places like CA and OR, the members of the group can accommodate us and vice-versa. Once someone becomes a member of this group, he/she should be willing to provide accommodation to another member of this group. PM Mathew suggested taking this up with FOKANA as FOKANA is the association for various Malayalee associations in the US.

The EC then went on to examine some of the challenges that the previous ECs faced to see if something can be done to make things better. Youth representative Deepak explained why some of the youth members are not so keen on KAW events. First off, only the first 4 to 5 rows gets to see or hear what is going on in the stage. The rest of the audience will be talking to each other, walking in the hall, or standing at the back making noise. George agreed with this saying that most of the announcements never get to the members because of the talk that is going on in the auditorium. Deepak complained that a lot of songs were usually included in the program list, and the youth cannot stand this.

The EC was unanimous in agreeing to look for a new place to conduct events. The preferred location would be anywhere between Bellevue and Renton (being the central location to most of our members). The committee members will be looking for church halls, auditoriums, and community college halls that are available at reasonable rate. Wilson, Santhosh N, and George, and Tom will be leading this effort. Tom suggested that some organizations will be willing to underwrite the money (for the auditorium) as they feel it as a way of giving back to the community.

The current EC will be making every effort to broaden KAW's membership base. The membership fee is \$15 (for family and for individuals). The membership drive efforts will be taken up immediately. The responsibilities of EC members on this task are outlined below:

- Santhosh P will send out the current list that has address information to all the EC members (this is supposed to have collected over the years)
- Santhosh P will send out a template in MS Word form to collect the necessary information from members and potential members keeping in mind the objective of publishing the KAW directory. The template will include space-holders for Name, Name of the Spouse, Name and Age(s) of child(ren), Phone Number, whether or not the person is a current member of KAW, if the person would like to be listed in the KAW member directory (and if so, details of the information that can be published), if the person has a business that we can list in the directory/web site, and if the person would like to get snail-mail or e-mail.
- The EC members will primarily focus the membership drive efforts in their designated areas (as follows). However, EC members need not limit their effort to these areas only.
 - South of Federal Way — Tom, Deepak
 - Bothell, Kirkland — Santhosh N, Prakash
 - E Washington, North of Bothell — George

- Bellevue — Wilson, Kalpana
- Issaquah, Sammamish — Prakash
- Seattle — Wilson, Santhosh P
- Renton — Rakhee
- Kent, Auburn — PM Mathew
- Areas not mentioned above — Wilson, Santhosh P
- Santhosh N proposed that we put a booth at the cinemas when Malayalam movies are screened.
- KAW will give incentives such as tickets to events at reduced rates to its members. Non-members may be asked to pay a nominal gate fee for some or most events. We may designate some events as members only (that is, no non-member is allowed) at the EC's discretion. KAW Treasurer will keep a list of members at all program venues for quick reference.
- KAW has already started to give out membership cards to its members. This will not only help us identify our members at our events, but also provide the members access/discounted tickets to events that are organized by like-minded organizations with which KAW may be able to negotiate and obtain privileged access.
- Members will be able to list their business or personal web site/details at our web site at <http://www.kaow.org>.

Prakash will get the details about credit card payment options for membership and other gate fees. A web link can be placed at the KAW website for people to pay the membership online. A card swiping machine is required at the venue of the events. There is no ETA set for reporting back to the EC.

There was a proposal to revamp KAW website. We are currently in the requirement analysis phase now. Deepak asked to put the URL at the top of the site as well as at the top of the letterhead. We are planning to have a discussion board at the website. We will also be updating/modifying some of the content in the website. As stated earlier, a link to credit card payment option for memberships will be placed in the site. We will look into the feasibility of providing secure access to the website (by individual user id and password) for members. KAW meeting minutes of the year 2005 will be placed in the KAW web site (and this information will be public to all). We will also place all possible documents (membership form, bye-law, expense re-imburement form etc) at the web site. [Wilson will provide Santhosh P with a soft copy of the bye-law in MS Word form.] We will provide a listing of local events including details of Malayalam cinema playing in town at our web site. Excellence in academic, technical, sports and other similar areas by members of the association will be promptly acknowledged and will be reported in KAW site. Links to business and personal web sites of members will be added to the site. Member can also provide details of his or her business to be listed in the website. Secure access to directory information will be provided to KAW members (once this is set up). Members will be able to update their information as and when necessary.

KAW is currently registered as a "Nonprofit Corporation" under the nonprofit laws of the State of Washington, RCW 24.03. However, this does not seem to make KAW eligible for matching funds offered by many employers in the Puget Sound area. In order for KAW to be eligible for matching funds for donations, the association should be registered as a 501 (c) (3) organization. The EC decided that we would explore the possibility of re-registering KAW as a 501 (c) (3) organization. The EC will ask our current Auditor Darryl Harris to let the EC know on the next steps on this matter. No ETA has been set for this.

The EC has decided that as part of our Onam celebrations, KAW will consider giving Onam presents to a designated charity organization in Kerala. This can be in the form of giving away Onakkodi, or providing Onam Sadya, or both. Wilson, Prakash, Santhosh N, and Santhosh P will report back to the EC on the details. No ETA is set for this.

During the past General Body meeting, there were some discussions going on about updating KAW by-laws. Since there wasn't any effort devoted into thinking this over and coming up with a list of proposed changes, the current EC has decided to officially take up this matter. A copy of the bye-law was provided to all the EC members. It is decided that the EC can consider discussing this matter during its next meeting.

The EC has decided that we should make a concerted effort in participating Indian cultural festivals in and around the Seattle area to represent our state. As a first step, KAW will have representation in the India Day festival organized by the Microsoft Sammamish Diversity Committee on May 6th from 4PM to 7PM at the Microsoft Sammamish campus.

A bi-monthly newsletter carrying topics related to Kerala will be published by KAW. The newsletter will be delivered in e-mail form. It will also be made available in the website. The newsletter is proposed to carry news, articles from members, KAW's upcoming events, and recipes. The first issue of the newsletter will be published during the month of June. Kalpana will be responsible for gathering articles/materials for the newsletter.

Tentative dates for Picnic, Onam and Christmas/New Year celebrations have been set as follows:

- **Picnic: June 25th or July 9th, 2005**
- **Onam: Sept 10th or 17th, 2005**
- **Christmas/New Year: Jan 7th 2006**

Since we may have to look for a new hall for this year's Onam and Christmas/New Year celebrations, the EC has asked Santhosh N, Wilson, George, and Prakash to enquire about the availability of halls and report the details back to the EC. The EC has asked George to book the Lynnwood hall as a backup for Onam celebrations for Sept 10th or 17th depending on availability. It is also decided that this year's Onam celebrations starts at 12:00 Noon with Onam Sadya.

Wilson will also look for a hall in Bothell and report to the EC about its availability. The EC also decided that \$750 would be a reasonable rent that we can pay for the hall.

It is suggested that the most desirable location for Picnic would be South of Kirkland and North of Renton. Rakhee will be looking at the availability of a park in Renton and will report to the EC. George said he would look into the availability of a number of parks in this area and would let the EC know by Wednesday, April 20th. Other EC members will also look for the availability of parks.

Every year KAW sends out snail mails to its members at least 3 times a year. The EC thought it would be a good idea to look into the possibility of obtaining a bulk mail permit for KAW. Santhosh P will enquire about this and will report back the EC. No ETA is set for this.

During the Tsunami relief fund mobilization, KAW had asked its members to designate Chicago-based nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization Care and Share as the charity of their choice to receive matching donations from employers. Since Care and Share does not run any programs that directly help Tsunami victims, they have asked KAW to designate a non-profit organization in Kerala as our preferred charity. The EC has short-listed *Kairali*, *Manorama*, *Mathrubhumi*, and FOKANA as our choice. Most EC members prefer to give the fund to a non-Governmental organization. Some EC members expressed their reservation in giving the fund to FOKANA. The EC will take a decision on this by the end of the week (4/23).

Prakash pointed out that we should transfer charges to the next office bearers during Jan 2006 (or as early as possible) to help the next committee get 2 additional months for planning.

After 3 hours and 50 minutes of fruitful discussion, the EC adjourned at 6:50 PM.

The EC thanks Suja Wilson for providing snacks and logistical support for the meeting.

Key Deliverables for EC members

EC Member	Deliverable	ETA
Wilson David	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Report back on Tsunami fund diverting to Mathrubhumi/Manorama	4/23
	Provide a soft copy of KAW bye-law in MS Word form to Santhosh P	4/24
	Contact the Malayalees in the BC area and expose our activities and events for them	—
	Take up the matter of forming a network of Malayalees in the neighboring states with FOKANA	—
	Look for halls/auditoriums to conduct Onam and Christmas celebrations	—
	Membership drive—Bellevue, Seattle	—
	Look for a hall in Bothell	—
	Charity work during Onam celebrations	—
George Thomas	Look for availability of a number of parks	4/21
	Reserve Lynnwood hall as a backup for Onam celebrations for Sept 10 th or 17 th	ASAP
	Look for halls/auditoriums to conduct Onam and Christmas celebrations	—
	Membership drive—E Washington, North of Bothell	—
Santhosh Pillai	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Write-up on the benefits of joining KAW	4/24
	Provide a template to collect membership details	4/24
	Send out current address list available with KAW to all EC members	4/24
	Membership drive—Seattle	—
	Planning the new KAW website	—
	Charity work during Onam celebrations	—
	Feasibility of obtaining bulk mail permit	—
Prakash Menon	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Provide the list of current (2005) KAW members	4/24
	Membership drive—Bothell, Kirkland, Issaquah, Sammamish	—
	Provide a list of 2005 members at KAW event venues	—
	Get the details about credit card payment options for membership and other gate fees	—
	Planning the new KAW website	—
	Charity work during Onam celebrations	—
	Look for halls/auditoriums to conduct Onam and Christmas celebrations	—
PM Mathew	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Membership drive—Kent, Auburn	—

Tom George	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Membership drive—South of Federal Way	—
	Look for halls/auditoriums to conduct Onam and Christmas celebrations	—
Kalpana Hariprasad	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Gathering articles/materials for the newsletter	—
	Membership drive—Bellevue	—
Rakhee James	Look for the availability of a park in Renton	4/20
	Membership drive—Renton	—
Santhosh Nair	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Report back on Tsunami fund diverting to Kairali	4/23
	Contact the Malayalees in Oregon area and expose our activities and events for them	—
	Look for halls/auditoriums to conduct Onam and Christmas celebrations	—
	Membership drive—Bothell, Kirkland	—
	Charity work during Onam celebrations	—
Deepak George	Look for availability of parks	4/21
	Membership drive—South of Federal Way	—
Darryl Harris	explore the possibility of re-registering KAW as a 501 (c) (3) organization	—

Submitted by

Santhosh Pillai
(Secretary)