



HINDU CULTURAL CENTRE OF LONDON ONTARIO

62 Charterhouse Crescent, N5W 5V5, London, Ontario

(<http://www.hcclondon.ca>)

| BOARD | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------|
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| President | Dr. Anand V. Singh | 471 2968 | Mrs. Raj Gupta | 472 1593 |
| V – President | Mr. Tara Persaud | 686 4905 | Dr. Arun Prakash | 474 2050 |
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| Past President | Mrs. Prema Patil | 680 1623 | | |

NEWSLETTER

December 2004 – January 2005

MANDIR HOURS

Monday to Friday

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Saturday

Subh Prabhata and Vishnu Sahasranama.

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Sunday

10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Aarti to begin at noon.

Havan is generally performed on the first Sunday of the month. Sri Satya Narayan Katha is said every month on the day of Purnamashi.

1. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION. On November 14, 2004, in keeping with the provisions of Section 15 of Constitution, an extraordinary meeting of HCC was convened to review and approve selected changes to HCC's Constitution that was approved on March 24, 1996. The changes were recommended by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Board chaired by Mr. Chet Singh with Mr. P.D Bhandarkar, Dr. Mohan Merchea, Dr. Harish Ruparelia, Dr. A.V Singh and Mr. Harry Ramkhelawan as members. The latter is an experienced constitutional lawyer who provided his services gratuitously to the committee. The Board reviewed and approved the changes recommended by the Constitution & Bylaws committee, prepared a draft revised Constitution that incorporated the suggested changes, circulated it in

middle of October to the membership for their review, and invited them to attend an extraordinary meeting of HCC on November 14, 2004 to discuss and approve the revised Constitution. Members were asked to provide written comments on the draft to be discussed at the November 14 meeting. Written comments were received from one member. Section 15 of the 1996 Constitution states, "This Constitution may be replaced, added to amended or substituted, at an extraordinary meeting of HCC, duly called for such a purpose after notice in writing of same, setting out the proposed substitution(s) or amendment(s) shall be given to all members of HCC and passed at such meeting of the Centre by a two-third's majority of the members present. Notice of such extraordinary meeting shall be given to members at least ten (10) days prior to the date of such meeting by prepaid mail to the last known address of each member"

So the meeting of November 14, 2004 was in conformity with the requirements of Section 15 of the then Constitution. A very lively discussion took place at the meeting and the revised draft Constitution was unanimously approved by the members present.

The Constitution of any organization is usually the guiding principles under which the organization operates. Except for a few selected changes in principles, most of the changes that were made to HCC's former Constitution were matters that should not have been in the Constitution. They were better suited for the bylaws or rules and this is where they would be placed. Some of the changes in principles are:

1. *Board of Trustees.* The Board of Trustees has been replaced with a committee of Custodians. The Trustees were intended,

on behalf of the Board, to oversee and be the custodians of HCC's property such as building & equipment. But they functioned as if the Board reported to them which was never intended by the framers of the Constitution.

2. *Election of Officers.* The new Constitution provides that the membership at the Annual General Meeting (the Assembly) elect the 11 Directors and the Directors would elect the Officers from among them viz: (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Asst Secretary/Treasurer. This is consistent with what happens in many charitable organizations in Ontario.

Nominations of directors from the floor at the Annual General Meeting has been dispensed with. All members are now required to submit their nominations to the returning officer, duly seconded, before the Annual General Meeting. This will facilitate the work of the returning officer and avoid some of the confusion that we have experienced in the past.

3. *Membership.* There was always confusion about who is permitted to vote at meetings of HCC. This new Constitution makes it abundantly clear that one membership fee allows both husband and wife to vote at meetings of HCC. To minimize conflict of interest, both husband and wife (or either of them and their child) are not permitted to be elected as directors of the Board at the same time. Membership fee is now required to be paid by January 15 of each year, for the coming fiscal year and not at the end of the fiscal year as has been the practice in the past. If members are to be allowed to vote for directors for the 2005 – 2006 fiscal year, for example, then they should be financial members for that period as well.

The Draft Constitution that was circulated to members prior to the November 14, extra ordinary meeting, will be revised to incorporate the few changes made on November 14, 2004 and copies will be sent to every member of HCC. The new Constitution takes effect from January 01, 2005.

2. MAJOR PROJECTS COMPLETED. Let it be clear before we proceed further that we (Board Members) like to mention the names of donors of both money and labour. Donations in both forms of money and labour have equal value. The community should know the individuals who are contributing meaningfully to the causes of HCC. It is in the interest of the Centre. At this moment, the repairs and maintenance have the highest priority. We invite members of our community to join in and make the difference. This kind of opportunity to serve is certainly very uncommon in our lives. Having said the above, we realize that there are many others, who are contributing to HCC in different areas and their names will be acknowledged at appropriate times. The following projects have been completed under the strong leadership of Mr. Tara Persaud who is being assisted by Dr. A. V. Singh.

a). Painting and Repairs of the Mandir. Extensive work has been done by a small group of volunteers in the main prayer hall and its entrance. Areas within the Mandir that required cleaning and repairs were cleaned and repaired and the entire interior, including the basement is being repainted. The total cost of this project was approximately \$ 4500.00, which was picked up by Dr. Merchea (\$ 2500.00 for the paint) and Mr. T. Persaud (\$ 2000.00 for the purchase of materials, required

tools and rental of equipments). Oghad Bhai made a huge contribution to this job. Members of the community who willingly helped are: Mr. Kamla Prasad, Mr. P. Sircar, Mr. Balram Prasad, and Mr. Peeyush Shah. Few members expressed desire to help, if they were called by us. Unfortunately, the work was done mostly on weekdays and at odd times and we were unable to call those individuals. The Board is truly grateful to the community, which underwent a substantial amount of inconvenience for about six weeks in November and December, for patience and understanding.

b). External Work. In our September–October 2004 Newsletter, you were told that the contractors had found serious discrepancies in the altered landscape and, as a consequence, we had to ask AGM Surveying / Engineering to reassess the grading of the property and to locate the two sewer manholes that are on the property. The surveyors found the manholes buried about 12 to 18 inches deep. AGM charged HCC \$695.23 for the services. To correct the deficiencies identified by AGM Surveying /Engineering, HCC hired DDS to perform the following work:

- Install orifice plugs in catch basins on south side of the building.
- Raise the two sewer manhole covers to grade.
- Clean all manholes and catch basins and flush lines.
- Apply 20 yards of topsoil around previous excavations and catch basins.
- Repair sewer manhole (benching) that was never done initially.
- Install new fire route sign as per site plan.
- Clean grease trap in the kitchen.

The initial estimate of the above job was around \$ 3500.00. But, when the manholes were opened, it was found that they were never benched and this was causing the sewer lines to plug-up. In simple terms, the hole had no concrete bottom and lines were unsupported. The contractor wanted \$ 1800.00 more, as this operation required, for safety purposes, to use gas masks and safety lines to go down into the manholes. The final cost for the above work is \$5,536.53. HCC is currently awaiting AGM to inspect the work done and to issue a letter stating that the requirement of the site plan is now completed. Their inspection report will be sent to the City with whom the authority to approve the work that was done rests. This is an excellent opportunity for a family to donate \$ 6000.00 and become life member of HCC.

3. FUTURE PROJECTS. Once the reconditioning and repainting of the temple has been completed, the Board will have to direct its attention to other essential projects. It is our intention that we finish these projects with quality in mind. We do not wish to complete everything in a hurry or without full consultation with the end-user, which in this case is our membership. If you wish to donate money, please give as a donation to HCC without a condition. After knowing the amount of money available, our planning will be easy and effective. Some of the forthcoming projects are listed in the following.

Drain Hole. There is a badly plugged drain-hole outside the emergency exit from the South Wall in the basement. The

contractor tried unsuccessfully to flush it with 2000 psi water jet, but the dirt from the grading done few years ago on the lawn is solidly packed. This can be a serious problem, if not dealt with properly. We do not have an estimate on this at this time and are trying to find a good solution.

Roof. A flat roof is a standard design for a building of this type. The current roof is as old as the Mandir, which is about 15 years. It has been patched in several places and while this has helped to stop leakage for a short while, it has not completely resolved the leaking problem. HCC needs to get a complete assessment done of the entire roof and, if necessary, install a new roof. This would be a costly project.

Dining Tables. The dining tables in the basement are also 15 years old. Over these years, they have been subjected to much use and abuse. A number of them are broken and the tops of some are badly scratched and defaced and cannot be hygienically cleaned. The Board would seriously have to look at replacing the entire lot.

Chairs. The stands on the walls of the basement where the chairs were being stored were awkward. It was impossible to clean the walls behind them. In renovating the basement, all of the stands have been removed and the walls repainted. This has helped to enlarge the Auditorium. The Board plans to make wheeled trolleys on which the chairs will be placed. The trolleys would be stored in the space below the stage.

Kitchen. The wall and ceiling of the kitchen have been primed and will be finished with the final coat very shortly. But the entire kitchen needs to be carefully looked at before proceeding to the renovation. We have to consider the following. The stove in the kitchen was purchased used when it was first installed at the opening of this temple. It has been subjected to rigorous use over the years and HCC has to seriously look at replacing it in the not too distant future. The flooring has to be redone.

Donations totalling \$ 4000.00 were made last year towards the purchase of a dishwasher, which is very badly needed in the kitchen. It is felt that for our purpose, a good quality dishwasher would cost around \$10,000.00. It is the intention of the Board to procure and install a dishwasher when a complete renovation and upgrading of the kitchen is being undertaken. The entire kitchen should be considered as one project, which will include: stove, dishwasher, flooring, washbasins and tubs, fridge, cabinets and cupboards, etc.

Main Floor Carpet. The main floor carpet is discoloured in a number of places. Whether the discoloration can be removed or not is unknown. When the renovation and repainting of the building has been completed, the Board intends to invite an expert in carpet cleaning to assess the situation and to provide advice of what course of action should be taken.

Tiles on the Basement Floor. The tiles on the basement floor are cracked in a number of places. This makes to very difficult to sanitize it when it is being cleaned. The Board has to give serious consideration to replacing the entire basement & kitchen floors

4. TREASURER'S REPORT. Our bank balance at the present time is a bit low largely because of the many projects that we have completed and paid for. A few members have thankfully volunteered to contribute to the completed projects. But we still have a number of major projects to work on for which we would need substantial donations. We urge all members to donate generously to HCC so that we can complete many of the remaining projects. Remember that your deductions are tax deductible, and, at this time of the year when the spirit of giving is very high, HCC urges all members to donate generously according to their means.

HCC's Long term debt is currently \$28,430 which is in fact the mortgage on the Pundit's house and Tunnel. HCC pays \$10,152 every year on the Mortgage and, at this rate the mortgage should be fully paid in 2007.

5. RECRUITMENT OF PUNDIT. HCC is still awaiting word from Immigration Canada regarding a Visa for the new Pundit. As was pointed out in the previous newsletter, the Board offered the position of Priest to Pundit Maheshwari Parashad of Patiala in Punjab, India. Immigration Canada requested additional information on this matter, which was supplied by us. The President has sought the help of two members of parliament to accelerate the issuance of a visa to this Pundit and they have both made representations on our behalf. We expect to hear from Immigration Canada in the near future. The Board realizes the inconvenience that is being caused to the membership by not having a fulltime pundit. We hope and pray that it would not be too long before the pundit is granted a visa to come to Canada. The President has had several conversations with him and he is anxiously awaiting the visa so that he can come to Canada to work for HCC.

6. YOUTH COMMITTEE. The Youth Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Arun Prakash, continues to make progressive strides. HCC realises that the youths of today will become the leaders of tomorrow and if they are firmly grounded in Hinduism and Indian Culture. They will be good ambassadors of our religion and culture. This is the main reason why so much emphasis is being placed on educating our youths.

The Youth Committee was able to award two scholarships at the recent Diwali Dinner and Cultural Show to two of our youths. The successful candidates were Neha Khandekar and Dev Saxena. The committee hopes to continue making these awards in 2005.

The Youth Committee meets on the first Sunday of every month. Pundit D. Doobay and other volunteers are facilitating the discussions among members of the group. The feed back from the youths who participate in this group has, so far, been very good. Those youths who have not yet joined the group are welcome to do so. Please contact Dr. Arun Prakash for further information.

7. DIWALI DINNER & CULTURAL SHOW. The Diwali Dinner & Cultural show, organized by the Festivals Committee of HCC and held at the John Paul II Secondary School on Saturday, October 30, 2004, was a resounding success. About 350 individuals attended this well organized and articulately orchestrated function and they all had a wonderful time. This function netted \$6,415.00. The members

of the Festivals Committee and many volunteers who contributed generously both in money and efforts must be congratulated for such a fine effort. No function of that magnitude can be so well organized and managed by a handful of people alone. Without the cooperation of the parents and children, our song and dance would not have materialized. Despite time constraints, the children put up a colourful show. The Festivals Committee sincerely thanks the following members of the community who contributed in varying ways to the success of this venture.

Donation of Water bottles: Mr. Khemraj, Mrs. Kanta Bhutani

Donation of Raffle Items: Neera Chopra, Pria Naik, Kusum Sharma, Sonia Patpatia, Sashi Peters, Iqbal Malik, Texmain Cleaners, Econolodge

Donation of Sweets: Suman Dhir, Suman Singh, Anita Prakash, Bimla Singh & Mr. Sircar

Ticket & Programme Printing: A.V Singh & Selvakumar Kandasamy (Also for lifting & loading)

Ticket Distributors: Suman Singh, Geetha Swaminath, Kiran Nahata, Prema Patil

Ticket Collection at the door: Mr. Sainani(snr), Geetha Swaminath, Anita Prakash, Kala Prasad, Tina Bawa, Sangeeta Saxena

Food & Music Coordination: Sudha Jain

A&B Rental Pickup and drop off: Anita Prakash & A.V Singh

Coffee Makers & Floral Arrangement Pick up & drop off: Geetha Swaminath

Decorating the Hall: Bimla Singh, Tara Persaud & son, Agrim & Denise Jajal, Sudha Jain, Shipra Lala, Chellappa Rajgopal
Pickup & drop off of water cases & 'Lakshmi portrait': Tara Persaud & son.

Preparation of Sweets: Kiran Nahata, Suman Singh, Anita Prakash, Sudesh Arora, Bimla Singh, Suman Sharma, Kala Prasad, Mr. Sircar, Suman Dhir, Krishna Sharma, Kanta Bhutani

Arrangement of Sweets & Distribution: Kiran Nahata, Sashi Bawa, Geetha Swaminath, Mala Ramu, Sudesh Arora, Bimla Singh, Suman Singh

Arrangement of Children's Gifts: Suman Singh, Indu Singh

Tea Preparation: Brij Saxena, Sushma Saxena

Supervision of Food: Asha Bharadwaj, Bimla Singh, Kanta Bhutani, Shipra Lala, Kanta Merchea, Mr. Trikha, Sudha Jain

Raffle Sellers: Sneha Ramu, Rishi Patpatia, Raju Shah, Rahul Manchanda

Raffle Announcer: Dev Sainani

Video Recording: Praful Chandrana

Master of Ceremonies: Nachiketh Deshpande

Choreographers: Suman Singh, Sunila Kuchinad, Kiran Jhangiani, Charu Prasad, Raji Valluri, Parimala Joseph, Bo Venkatesan, Renu Bhalla

Mayor's (Saree) Coordinator: Renu Bhalla

General Help: Anil Persaud and Tara Persaud, Raj Haricharan, Ken Patpatia, and Arun Prakash

8. PUBLICATION OF JAGRITI. The Diwali issue of Jagriti was again a document of very high standard for which every member of HCC should feel very proud. Done in an extremely professional manner, this issue of Jagriti incorporates many interesting and informative articles

contributed by a broad cross section of the community. Dr. Dev Sainani and members of the Publications Committee must be congratulated for their hard work and dedication.

9. BAL VIKAS AND HERITAGE CLASSES. Indian heritage is very rich and covers topics such as arts (creative and performing), architecture, handicrafts, religion, philosophy, history, and traditions. The Heritage classes of HCC are conducted on the second and fourth Sundays of the month between 11am to 12 noon. At these classes, an attempt is made to give children introduction to Indian heritage covering bhajans, prayers, artefacts, religion and short stories regarding festivals and other cultural & religious aspects. Children are encouraged to perform at such HCC functions as Diwali, Holi / Ugadi, Durga Pooja, Shankranti, Independence day, Mothers day, etc. They also participate in functions of the Hindu Students Association of the University of Western Ontario. HCC is proud of the excellent performance given by the students at the recent Festivals of India. This event provides an excellent opportunity to showcase our rich heritage and culture to the rest of the London Community. At the Bal Vikas classes, volunteer speakers explain the important aspects of our religion & culture. There are over 30 children in the class. Parents who are interested in their children joining the Bal Vikas classes are asked to contact Mrs. Suman Singh at 672 7540 or during Bal Vikas classes. There is also a team of well educated and trained volunteers at HCC who are willing, if needed, to assist students in languages, mathematics, engineering etc.

10. EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2005. The following events are currently scheduled by the Mandir Committee for January 2005

January 1, 2005 – Poojah from 10am to 12 noon with Priti Bhoj provided by Mr. Krishen & Dr. Suman Dhir

January 2, 2005 – Youth Meeting and Community Priti Bhoj

January 9, 2005 – 11am – 12noon – Bal Vikas – Priti Bhoj provided by Mr. Bharat & Mrs. Kanan Sood

January 15, 2005 – Private function

January 16, 2005 – Community Priti Bhoj

January 23, 2005 – Bal Vikas – Community Priti Bhoj

January 24, 2005 – Satya Narayan Katha – 7pm to 9pm

In the above, the Community Priti Bhoj means that no one has sponsored the priti bhoj on that particular Sunday, which can still be sponsored by a family or a group. Members, who are interested in serving on the Mandir Committee and also to sponsor a priti bhoj, are asked to contact Mrs. Patil at 680 1623.

11. RENTAL POLICIES. The Board has recently approved a revised policy for use of the Mandir, Kitchen and auditorium. This policy is attached for the benefit of all members.

The Board of HCC wishes you and your family a very healthy, happy and prosperous year of 2005.