



IISc AANA Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1, September 30, 2015

Indian Institute of Science Alumni Association of North America, Mountain View, CA, www.iiscaana.org

Message from AANA Chair and Co-Chair

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from AANA Chair	1
Dr. Abdul Kalam	2
2015 Global Conference	3
AANA Member-Highlight	4
AANA Chapter News	5
Abdul Kalam	7
Events/Announcements	8
Times Article on Alumni	9
Editor's Message	9

Dear IISc Alumni/ae:

Third IISc Alumni Global Conference was held at IISc, Bangalore, June 25-28, 2015 under the leadership of Director Anurag Kumar. It was a great honor for many IISc Alumni/ae from North America (representing IISc AANA) to meet three days and have discussions, debate and network with more than 900 Alumni/ae from all over the world. We thank the organizers Prof. N. Balakrishnan, Dr. Aatre, Prof. S. Mohan and Mr. Babu Sathian for their tireless efforts in organizing the successful Conference. We are grateful to Dr. Birur and Dr. Subba Rao of IISc AANA for their excellent coordination of activities with IISc and IISc AA at the Conference.

Prof. Anurag Kumar encapsulated his vision for the future of IISc at this august gathering of over 900 alums from all over the world. It was heartening to see that IISc has taken outreach to alumni/ae as a priority, with the establishment of the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA). Dr. Sunil Kumar (the new and incoming Chairman of AANA) took the initiative to develop a guiding document for fostering and enhancing relationship between IISc and IISc AANA through ODAA. AANA provided an initial donation (Rs. 10 lakhs) to the Institute and ODAA to help in their outreach to IISc alumni associations all over the world.

Following completion of our term (Oct 1 2012-Sept 30, 2015), we are glad to inform you that AANA has elected Dr. Sunil Kumar and Dr. Gaj Birur as new Chairman and Co-Chairman of AANA, respectively, for three year term starting October 1, 2015. We wish them every success and are sure under their leadership AANA will reach higher levels working closely with ODAA.

Arkal Shenoy and Satish Nagarajaiah
Chairman and Co-Chairman

IISc Alumni Global Conference was successfully held in Bangalore, June 26-28, 2015

IISc Director announces setting up of a new office: Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA).

**Details on Page 3*

Dr. Abdul Kalam Passed Away - 'A Friend of IISc'



It is with great sadness that IISc alums learned of the passing away of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in Shillong, Assam on July 27, 2015. Dr. Kalam played a significant role in the lives of IISc and its alums. He was closely associated with IISc during his tenure at HAL, ISRO, DRDO etc. and worked with Satish Dhawan, R. Chidambaram and many more.

IISc Alumni Global Conference - 2015 Held in Bengaluru

The third IISc Alumni Global Conference was held in Bengaluru at J.N. Tata Auditorium on the IISc campus on June 26-28, 2015.



VISIT AND REGISTER ON ODAA WEBSITE

<http://alumni.iisc.ernet.in>

AANA member Prof. Sunil Kumar was selected as a 2015 Distinguished IISc Alumnus

Details on Page 5

IISc Alumni Association of North America (IISc AANA)

897 Independence Avenue, 4C
Mountain View, CA 94043
Phone: (650) 965-2500

E-mail: info@iiscaana.org

Chair: Dr. Arkal Shenoy

Co-Chair: Dr. Satish Nagarajaiah

Editor: Gaj Birur

Co-Editor: Kasturi Srinivasan

Any tax-deductible donation to IISc AANA helps support educational activities of IISc students.

IISc AANA Life membership has many privileges: priority accommodation at IISc campus guest house (on availability basis), networking with academics, technologists, and entrepreneurs in the U.S. and India, etc.

Dr. Abdul Kalam - Patriot, Missile Man, Humanist, and a Friend of IISc

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam passed away on July 27, 2015 during a talk he was giving at Indian Institute of Management at Shillong in Assam. He was 84 years old. It was a sad day for many Indians all over the world; everyone felt India had lost a great soul, similar to Mahatma Gandhi. Kalam was a peoples' President, a role model to over a billion Indians including scientists, engineers, students, common men and women. Hundreds of articles have been written in newspapers and magazines in India extolling his character—his treatment of people he came across, how he devoted his life to motivating young Indians' interest in science, and how he conducted himself even when he was in the highest office.

He inaugurated (through a video hook-up) the First IISc Alumni Global Conference held in Santa Clara in July 2007 while he was President of India.



A Slide from Kalam's Presentation from 2007 Global Conference

Three articles are reprinted in this newsletter: one below by Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah, Co-Chair AANA, and two articles from his personal secretary who was present at the time of his death and by his previous personal secretary are at the end of this newsletter.

A Great Soul has Passed Away

Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah

A great soul has passed away. A great voice for India has fallen silent. His contributions as a visionary and President, Missile Scientist, and a legacy of service will remain etched in the memory of India forever. May his soul rest after 84 years of hard and unflinching work.

When Rice University hosted him in October 2007, I had the opportunity to witness what a day in the life of former President is like (let alone a sitting President!). Grueling is all I can say. When I went to pick him up in the hotel at 8:30 am to bring him to Rice in his official limousine escorted by squad cars, he had been up for four hours already (at 4:30 am!). When I asked him what he did getting up so early, he told me he meditated early in the morning every day and one of the books he read was the revered Bhagavad Gita.

The day was filled with activities including a public lecture by Dr. Kalam for a packed auditorium at Rice University (1200 capacity—plus a live telecast for an overflow of about 400 and a live webcast). The day included a closed session, where a few handpicked group of Rice scientists and engineers presented to Dr. Kalam, including myself on structural damage detection and our work on space shuttle Columbia disaster and structural health monitoring of the International Space Station for NASA. He quipped “can you help us detect damage in turbine blades” for which I responded in the affirmative. The day included a private reception by President David Leebron of Rice University with over 80 distinguished guests from Houston. Dr. Kalam and David Leebron inaugurated the south central chapter of IISc AANA in the presence of Arkal Shenoy, myself, and other alums from Houston. When I dropped him back at his hotel room in St. Regis in Houston at 10 pm, he was ready to talk for some more time. But I was dog tired and I wondered how does a man of 77 years do this day-in-and-day-out, when I was so tired? The answer lies in sheer determination to reach out to one and all and spread his vision for India...

He passed away while doing what he enjoyed the most speaking about his vision for the country...just like my father Sri. N. M. Nagarajaiah passed away while doing what he enjoyed the most...in service of his fellowmen...

I had the pleasure of interacting with him personally, while hosting him at Rice, in October 2007 and then again in 2011. See a few photos at the following websites:

<http://satishnagarajaiah.rice.edu/archives/512>

In prayer, respectfully submitted, Satish



Dr. Abdul Kalam with President David Leebron during Kalam's visit to Rice University, Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah, Dr. Prasanna Murthy, Dr. Arkal Shenoy and Dr. Sudeep Ingole of AANA standing behind them

IISc Alumni Global Conference - 2015

The third IISc alumni global conference was held in the J.N. Tata Auditorium on IISc campus in Bangalore on June 26-28, 2015. Over 900 delegates (including over 30 delegates from the U.S.) attended the conference.

The conference started off with a ceremony honoring Professor C.N.R. Rao, who received the 'Bharat Ratna' award from Government of India. In one of the sessions on the first day, several alumni heading major scientific institutions in India such as ISRO, DRDO, NIAS, and LCA Flight Program spoke at the conference. Sessions included

- Contribution of IISc to Strategic Sectors
- IISc as a Global Institution -- Reaching the Top
- Mind to Market
- Brain Research
- Nano Science and Engineering
- High Performance Computing & Big Data Analysis.

IISc Director announced the formation of the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA). This office now has a fully functional website which includes all the IISc graduates (over 24, 000) since its inception. All alums can register on the website and avail of various facilities:

<http://alumni.iisc.ernet.in>

A separate interactive student session was held during the conference in Faculty Hall where students could interact with alums. Over 100 students participated with a panel of alums from academia, industry, research labs, and tech business enterprises.

AANA president Dr. Arkal Shenoy presented a check for \$16, 000 to ODAA Chair Prof. Rangarajan as AANA's contribution. AANA has invited both the Director and ODAA Chair to visit the US and address IISc alums in various major cities. The Director has accepted the invitation and he will visit Chicago and Silicon Valley during October 8-13, 2015.

The conference organizers:

Conference Chair:	Dr. V.K. Aatre
Conference Co-Chair:	Prof. N. Balakrishnan
Program Committee Chair:	Prof. S. Mohan
Program Committee Co-Chairs:	Prof. B.N. Raghunandan Dr. Subba Rao Gunupudi
Organizing Committee Chair:	Mr. Babu Sathian
Organizing Committee Co-Chairs:	Prof. R. Govindarajan Dr. Gajanana Birur

The ODAA website has a collection of photos from the global conference on its site under the folder 'Photo Gallery'. A sample of pictures from the 2015 conference is given below.



Dr. Arkal Shenoy Presenting a Check from AANA to ODAA on the last Day of the Conference



Dr. Subbarao Gunupudi (AANA), Dr Anasuya Devi (IIScAA), and Dr. Murthy Gudipati (AANA)



Prof. Sunil Kumar of University of Chicago speaking on IISc as a Global Institution

Highlighting IISc AANA Members - Dr. Arkal Shenoy (1966)

Gaj Birur, Editor, IISc AANA Newsletter

Dr. Arkal Shenoy (1966), a nuclear engineer and scientist, has been the Chair of AANA since October 2012. After completing a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering at Georgia Tech, he worked for 42 years at General Atomics in San Diego and retired as Director of Gas Cooled Nuclear Reactor and other Fission Programs. He consults on nuclear, solar, wind and fossil energy programs. He is a member of Sigma XI, the American Nuclear Society, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He is interested in music and dance and is on the Board of Center for World Music (CWM) and related Arts in San Diego.

He lives with his wife Dr. Vasanthi Shenoy in Del Mar, California. Vasanthi, a sociology professor taught at San Diego State and San Marcos State Universities for more than 30 years and also taught Bharatanatyam, a classical Indian dance, to several students in San Diego area. They have two sons Dinesh currently living in the Bay area and Rajesh in Toronto. Both Arkal and Vasanthi are retired and are involved in several nonprofit organizations in the US and India.

GB: Please tell me about your career after IISc?

AS: After completing my masters in Mechanical Engineering at IISc, I attended Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta during 1966-1969. After completing my Ph. D. in Nuclear Engineering, I started working as a nuclear engineer with General Atomics in San Diego. I retired from GA in 2012.

GB: How did you get interested in AANA?

Every time I used to visit Bangalore, I visited the Institute and met people in the Mechanical Engineering department and the IISc Alumni Association. In March 1996 when the foundation stone was laid for the current Alumni Building at the Institute, Dr. Narain Mahishi, Hon. Gen. Secretary of IISc AA contacted us and requested that we get the Alumni in San Diego to support the building. Because of the support from San Diego, one of the rooms in the building was named "California". My main involvement with AANA occurred at the First Global Conference in June 2007 at Silicon Valley. Subsequently in December 2008, I attended the IISc Centenary Celebrations and got motivated to work with AANA. Following the First Global conference in the US and the Centenary Celebration in India, we organized the IISc AANA National Conference at the University of California San Diego. More than 100 alumni from both northern and southern California met to further expand AANA in North America.

During this time I kept constant touch with the founders of AANA and was requested in 2012 to be chair of the AANA Board for a three year term ending September 2015.

GB: What would you like to see AANA grow into in the next five years?

AS: Consistent with AANA Mission "To Give Back", I would like to see AANA work to help the alumni in social and professional networking, job opportunities, entrepreneurship, and business development. Also we can help the communities we live in and rural India towards education and public outreach. Above all, we can support to our alma mater, Indian Institute of Science, by working closely with the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) which was recently established by Director Anurag Kumar. Also, I would like to see AANA help alumni in other parts of the world including Europe, Australia, and Japan to work closely with ODAA.

GB: Do you have any India-based activity now or plan to have in the future?

AS: In India, the Shenoy family has established Arkula Charitable Trust (ACT) to carry out charitable activities initially in our village (Arkula) and to extend the coverage to neighboring villages in a phased manner. ACT has organized programs for education of children, health awareness, quality of life, poverty alleviation, agriculture and farming extension, women empowerment, and rural development. India is poised to become the world's youngest country by 2020, with an average age of 29 years, and will account for around 28% of the world's workforce. In comparison, during the same period, the average age is expected to be 37 years in China and the US and 45 years in Western Europe. This requires development of skills for 500 million Indians in the next ten years. I am interested in working with AANA and IISc including the IISc student body to help in educating the younger population to develop a variety of skills in villages like Arkula and spread this effort to other rural areas in India.

GB: Thank you for sharing your IISc info and your time.



Dr. Arkal Shenoy with his wife Dr. Vasanthi Shenoy

AANA Mid-West Chapter

The Midwest chapter of AANA met on 5th September 2015 in Downers Grove, IL. The venue was Ashyana (which was also the venue for the Second IISc AANA Global Conference). The main reason for the meeting was to felicitate Dr. Sunil Kumar on his being honored as a distinguished alumnus by IISc. His being elected to be the next Chair of IISc AANA added to the celebration.

This was the first meeting after the Third Global Conference which happened in Bengaluru, India which a number of Midwest AANA members attended. They gave a concise account of their experiences, impressions and thoughts on path forward. Overall there was great enthusiasm for the direction that IISc is taking with respect to Development and Alumni. All present were eager to welcome and hear Director Anurag Kumar's vision and plans on October 9.

This led naturally to the coming visit by IISc Director Dr. Anurag Kumar to Chicago on October 9th and the need for arranging a meeting with him. It was decided that it would, again, take place in Ashyana at 6:30 PM.

Swaminathan Ramesh, the President of the Midwest chapter for the last three years, announced that he would like to step down (business pressures) and we should elect a new President. Ramesh also nominated Ganapathy Dharmasankar to be the next President and was seconded by Muralidhar Ghantasala. All the members agreed upon the choice. Congrats and thanks to Ganapathy. He has already chosen other office bearers to help him with his efforts – they are
Meena Rao (Midwest Board)
Mrinalini Lakshminarayanan (Midwest Board)
Muralidhar Ghantasala (Midwest Board)
Subhasish Mohanty (Secretary)
Sivarajan (Treasurer)

IISc Alumni Association 2015 Distinguished Alumnus Award for Dean Sunil Kumar

Prof. Sunil Kumar, Dean, Booth School of Business, University of Chicago was one of the four alums selected for a 2015 Distinguished Alumnus award by the IISc Alumni Association. The awards were presented at a function on August 30, 2015.



Latest News: Sunil Kumar has been appointed Dean of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business for a second five-year term, President Robert J. Zimmer and Provost Eric D. Isaacs recently announced in a University of Chicago News Press release.

AANA Silicon Valley Chapter

Some of the key events that took place for the Silicon Valley (SV) AANA members during the last year are the following:

- August 24, 2014: Prof Duttaguru was in person in Bay Area while Prof Artre participated by phone
- IISc Alumni reunion was held during the Kannada Conference (AKKA) on Aug 31, 2014 and attended by IIScians from all over US
- Diwali get-together on Nov 1, 2014 more than 50 persons joined. The link for photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/iiscaana/sets/72157649115283382>
- Regular runs/hikes by members
- Silicon Valley chapter organized AANA members to participate in Sevathon 2015 on July 12 at Baylands Park. This was the fourth year of participation by AANA and the number of participants increased to 59 this year from 13 in the first year. AANA received the Spirit award from India Community Center for the second year in a row for larger number of participants. Five members taking part in the half marathon were Sujatha Tibrewala, Chavi Garg, Animesh Mukherjee, Sonal Ranjan & Sanjeev Garg
- The picnic after the walk/run brought the participants and their families together and was a great success

The upcoming events of SV chapter are:

- Participate in the Prime Minister Modi's address at the SAP Center in San Jose on September 27
- Participate in the IISc AANA West Coast Conference on October 11 with IISc Director Prof. Anurag Kumar and IISc ODAA members present.



Sujatha Tibrewala, Sonal Ranjan, Chavi Garg, and Animesh Mukherjee after Half Marathon

AANA South-East Chapter

The IISc AANA South-East chapter organized a meeting on August 24 at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah, AANA Co-Chair coordinated the event working with Prof. Raghu Pucha of Georgia Institute of Technology.

K.R. Sundararaghavan gave a brief overview of the south eastern chapter of IISc AANA and suggested potential paths forward for the chapter. Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah gave an overview of the 2015 IISc global alumni conference held on June 26-28 on the IISc campus as well as current activities of IISc AANA.

There was a lot of interest by the participants in the AANA activities. Abhinav Dey was chosen as one of the office bearers of the AANA South-East chapter. A strong interest in holding AANA National Conference in Atlanta was expressed by Abhinav Dey. Satish recommended that the South-East chapter hold the next AANA National Conference in Atlanta in 2016. One of the issues brought out during the meeting and subsequent email discussions was the importance of networking for many alumni post-docs. They felt that AANA members could help in providing information on post-doc opportunities available in their respective fields. Ananda Ghosh and Abhinav Dey have been very active in a Facebook career group in this regard and would like to see more alums join the group.

The office bearers of AANA South-East Chapter are:

Prof. Raghu Pucha, Georgia Tech, President
Dr. Abhinav Dey, Georgia Tech, Vice-President



AANA members at the South-East Chapter Meeting on August 24, 2015 with Prof. Satish Nagarajaiah, AANA Co-Chair

AANA So Cal Chapter

A get together of the So Cal AANA members was organized on March 28, 2015 in La Jolla during the Indian Fine Arts Association's Music Festival. The reason for holding the AANA get together with such outside events is that the So Cal geographical area is being very large (over 250 miles long and 50 miles wide) combining the AANA get together with another major event would bring more participation. Over fifteen AANA members participated in the get together.

Gaj Birur will be ending his term as President of the So Cal chapter and also as Editor of AANA Newsletter starting October 1, 2015. Following will be the office bearers of So Cal Chapter:

Gopal Chakravarthy President
Kasturi Srinivasan Editor, IISc AANA Newsletter

Upcoming Events:

A pot luck get together of AANA So Cal members is planned for October 17 in Pasadena. Members will meet the new chapter president, hear an overview of the global alumni conference held in Bangalore, and get a briefing on the AANA West Coast Conference in Silicon Valley on October 11 where IISc Director, Prof. Anurag Kumar addresses the AANA members.

-----00000000000-----

AANA South Central Chapter

The major event during last year was the visit of Dr. V. Aatre to Houston and his interactions with chapter members. Attendees also remembered their memories with Prof. Aatre at IISc and at University of Waterloo. Dr. Aatre shared his interactions with Dr. Kalam during their valuable services at DRDO and other agencies. He also shared his experience as director general of DRDO and scientific advisor to the defense minister of India and his continued interactions with IISc.

During upcoming year, AANA South Central Chapter is planning to reach out to the members in the region and arrange a meeting to increase the integration and membership.

Dr. Sudeep Ingole President South-Central Chapter



Dr. Kalam during his visit to Rice University with its President Dr. Lebron. South-Central Chapter was inaugurated by Dr. Kalam during this visit (October 18th, 2007).

Last Day with Kalam by Sirjan Paul Singh

What I will be remembered for: My memory of the last day with the great Kalam sir.

It has been eight hours since we last talked - sleep eludes me and memories keep flushing down, sometimes as tears. Our day, 27th July, began at 12 noon, when we took our seats in the flight to Guwahati. Dr. Kalam was 1A and I was IC. He was wearing a dark colored 'Kalam suit', and I started off complimenting, 'Nice color! 'Little did I know this was going to be the last color I will see on him.

The 2.5 hours of flight was followed by another 2.5 hours of car drive to IIM Shillong. For these two legged trip of five hours we talked, discussed and debated. As each of them, this was as special too. Three incidents/discussions in particular will be lasting memories of our last trip. First, Dr. Kalam was absolutely worried about the attacks in Punjab. The loss of innocent lives left him filled with sorrow. The topic of lecture at IIM Shillong was 'Creating a Livable Planet Earth.' He related the incident to the topic and said, "It seems the man-made forces are as big a threat to the livability of earth as pollution". We discussed on how, if this trend of violence, pollution and reckless human action continues we will be forced to leave earth. "Thirty years, at this rate, maybe," he said. "You guys must do something about it, it is going to be your future world."

Our second discussion was more national. For the past two days, Dr. Kalam was worried that time and again Parliament, the supreme institution of democracy, was dysfunctional. He said, "I have seen two different governments in my tenure. I have seen more after that. This disruption just keeps happening. It is not right. I really need to find out a way to ensure that the parliament works on developmental politics." He then asked me to prepare a surprise assignment question for the students at IIM Shillong, which he would give them only at the end of the lecture. He wanted to them to suggest three innovative ways to make the Parliament more productive and vibrant. Then, after a while he returned on it. "But how can ask them to give solutions if I don't have any myself." We wanted to include this discussion in our upcoming book, *Advantage India*.

Third, was an experience from the beauty of his humility. We were in a convoy of 6-7 cars. Dr. Kalam and I were in the second car. Ahead of us was an open gypsy with three soldiers in it. Two of them were sitting on either side and one lean guy was standing atop, holding his gun. One hour into the road journey, Dr. Kalam said, "Why is he standing? He will get tired. This is like punishment. Can you ask a wireless message to be given that he may sit?" I had to convince him, he has been probably instructed to keep standing for better security. He did not relent. We tried radio messaging that did not work. For the next 1.5 hours of the journey, he reminded me thrice to see if I can hand signal him to sit down. Finally, realizing there is little we can do he told me, "I want to meet him and thank him. Later, when we landed in IIM Shillong, I went inquiring through security people and got hold of the standing guy. I took him inside and Dr. Kalam greeted him. He shook his hand, said thank you buddy. "Are you tired? Would you like something to eat? I am sorry you had to stand so long because of me." The young lean guard, draped in black cloth, was surprised at the treatment. He lost words, just said, "Sir, aapkeliye toh 6 ghante bhi khade rahenge (Sir for you I will stand even six hours)."

After this, we went to the lecture hall. He did not want to be late for the lecture. "Students should never be made to wait", he always said. I quickly set up his mike, briefed on final lecture and took position on the computers. As I pinned his mike, he smiled and said, "Funny guy! Are you doing well?" I smiled back, "Yes." Those were the last words he said. Two minutes into the speech, sitting behind him, I heard a long pause after completing one sentence. I looked at him, he fell down. We picked him up. As the doctor rushed, we tried whatever we could. I will never forget the look in his three-quarter closed eyes and I held his head with one hand and tried reviving with whatever I could. His hands clenched, curled onto my finger. There was stillness on his face and those wise eyes were motionlessly radiating wisdom. In five minutes we were in the nearest hospital. In another few minutes they indicated the missile man had flown away, forever. I touched his feet, one last time. Adieu old friend! Grand mentor! See you in my thoughts and meet in the next birth. He never said a word. He did not show pain, only purpose was visible.

As turned back, a closet of thoughts opened.

Often he would ask me, "You are young, decide what will like to be remembered for?" I kept thinking of new impressive answers, till one day I gave up and resorted to tit-for-tat. I asked him back, "First you tell me, what will you like to be remembered for? President, Scientist, Writer, Missile man, India 2020, Target 3 billion. What?" I thought I had made the question easier by giving options, but he sprang on me a surprise. "Teacher," he said.

Then something he said two weeks back when we were discussing about his missile time friends. He said, "Children need to take care of their parents. It is sad that sometimes this is not happening." He paused and said, "Two things. Elders must also do. Never leave wealth at your deathbed that leaves a fighting family. Second, one is blessed is one can die working, standing tall without any long drawn ailing. Goodbyes should be short, really short." Today, I look back he took the final journey, teaching, what he always wanted to be remembered doing. And, till his final moment he was standing, working and lecturing. He left us, as a great teacher, standing tall. He leaves the world with nothing accumulated in his account but loads of wishes and love of people. He was a successful, even in his end.

Will miss all the lunches and dinners we had together, will miss all the times you surprised me with your humility and startled me with your curiosity, will miss the lessons of life you taught in action and words, will miss our struggles to race to make into flights, our trips, our long debates. You gave me dreams, you showed me dreams need to be impossible, and for anything else is a compromise to my own ability. The man is gone, the mission lives on. Long live Kalam.

Your indebted student, Srijan Pal Singh

Note: Srijan Pal Singh was the personal secretary to Dr. Abdul Kalam. He wrote this article eight hours after the passing away of Dr. Abdul Kalam

WE SHALL NOT SEE ANOTHER APJ ABDUL KALAM LIKE OUR LATE PRESIDENT

DD Podhigai telecast an interview with Mr P M Nair retired IAS officer who was the secretary to Dr Kalam Sir when he was the President. I summarise the points he spoke in voice choked with emotion. Mr Nair authored a book titled "Kalam Effect."

1. Dr Kalam used to receive costly gifts whenever he went as it is customary for many nations to give gifts to the visiting Head of state. Refusing the gift would become an insult to the nation and an embarrassment for India. So, he received them and on his return, Dr Kalam asked the gifts to be photographed and then catalogued and handed over to the archives. Afterwards, he never even looked at them. He did not take even a pencil from the gifts received when he left Rashtrapathi Bhavan.

2. In 2002, the year Dr Kalam took over, the Ramadan month came in July-August. It was a regular practice for the President to host an Iftar party. Dr Kalam asked Mr Nair why he should host a party to people who are already well fed and asked him to find out how much would be the cost. Mr Nair told it costs around Rs. 22 lakhs. Dr Kalam asked him to donate that amount to a few selected orphanages in the form of food, dresses and blankets. The selection of orphanages was left to a team in Rashtrapathi Bhavan and Dr Kalam had no role in it. After the selection was made, Dr Kalam asked Mr Nair to come inside his room and gave him a cheque for Rs 1 lakh. He said that he is giving some amount from his personal savings and this should not be informed to anyone. Mr Nair was so shocked that he said "sir, I will go outside and tell everyone. People should know that here is a man who not only donated what he should have spent but he is giving his own money also". Dr Kalam though he was a devout Muslim did not have Iftar parties in the years in which he was the President.

3. Dr Kalam did not like "yes sir" type of people. Once when the Chief Justice of India had come and on some point Dr Kalam expressed his view and asked Mr Nair, "Do you agree?"/ Mr Nair said "No sir, I do not agree with you". The Chief Justice was shocked and could not believe his ears. It was impossible for a civil servant to disagree with the president and that too so openly. Mr Nair told him that the President would question him afterwards why he disagreed and if the reason was logical 99% he would change his mind.

4. Dr Kalam invited 50 of his relatives to come to Delhi and they all stayed in Rashtrapathi Bhavan. He organised a bus for them to go around the city which was paid for by him. No official car was used. All their stay and food was calculated as per the instructions of Dr Kalam and the bill came to Rs 2 lakhs which he paid. In the history of this country no one has done it. Now, wait for the climax, Dr Kalam's elder brother stayed with him in his room for the entire one week as Dr Kalam wanted his brother to stay with him. When they left, Dr Kalam wanted to pay rent for that room also. Imagine a President of country paying rent for the room in which he is staying. This was any way not agreed by the staff who thought the honesty was getting too much to handle!!

5. When Kalam sir was to leave Rashtrapathi Bhavan at the end of the tenure, every staff member went and met him and paid their respects. Mr Nair went to him alone as his wife had fractured her leg and was bed ridden. Dr Kalam asked why his wife did not come. He replied that she was in bed due to an accident. Next day, Nair saw lot of police men around his house and asked what had happened. They said that the President of India was coming to visit him in his house. He came and met his wife and chatted for some time. Mr Nair says that no president of any country would visit a civil servant's house and that too on such a simple pretext.

I thought I should give the details as many of you may not have seen the telecast and so it may be useful.

SALAAM ALAIKKUM! Dear ABDUL KALAM!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Director Prof. Anurag Kumar will Address AANA members in Chicago on October 9, 2015 and in Silicon Valley on October 11, 2015

Silicon Valley Chapter of IISc Alumni Association of North America (AANA) is organizing a day-long conference on October 11, 2015 at India Community Center in Milpitas, California on October 11, 2015

In attendance will be the current Director of IISc, Prof. Anurag Kumar, who is joined by his colleagues, Prof. Govindan Rangarajan, Chairman, Office Of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) and Prof. Usha Vijayaraghavan, Chair, Office of International Relations who are traveling from India especially to attend this conference and interact with IISc alums

Program schedule:

- 09:30-10:00 AM - Meet and Greet
- 10:00 AM - 04:00 PM - Program to be announced soon.
- 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM - Social and Cocktail hour

It will be a day of good conversations, reliving old memories and making new ones, meeting old friends and making new ones, and of course good food!

Registration (\$25/person) is open for alumni & friends.

IISc Director Prof. Anurag Kumar will be at University of Chicago, October 9 & 10

The Director Anurag Kumar will also visit Chicago with his colleagues Prof. G. Rangarajan from ODAA and Prof. Usha Vijayaraghavan from Office of International Relations. Prof. Sunil Kumar of University of Chicago will be the host during the IISc team's visit to Chicago on October 9-10, 2015. On October 9, 2015, at 6:30 PM an evening event, open to IISc alumni/ae is being hosted by AANA Mid-West Chapter. The venue is: Shikara Restaurant, Grove Shopping Center, 1620 75th St, Downers Grove, IL 60516. Please contact Ganapathy Dharmasankar <gdharmasankar@yahoo.com> to RSVP.



Prof. Anurag Kumar, IISc Director

An article published in Times of India Bangalore edition during the Global Conference, June 28, 2015

Scientists Adopt Institutions In India To Help Poor Students Get Better Education

IISc alumni nurture schools at home

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Chethan Shivakumar

Several alumni of IISc, who left India to achieve success abroad, are now helping poor students in the country. Nurture the School that Nurtured You (NSNY), a programme started by the IISc Alumni Association of North America (AANA), has adopted 15 schools in different parts of the country and is working towards making learning a better prospect.

Prof Arkal Shenoy, nuclear scientist and president of IISc AANA, was among the first to sponsor a programme in a government school in Ujire about a month ago.

Nasa scientist of Mars Curiosity fame, Dr Gajanana Birur had adopted schools near his home town Birur in Chikmagalur district 10 years ago.

Two weeks ago, he set up a robotics lab at an education centre run by social activists in Chettanahalli, a small village between Birur and Tarikere. "I have now realized that robotics helps imbibe a spirit of curiosity and I have seen it work through the work of another alumni, who is working with a school in Bengaluru," he said.

He has also adopted a government school in Bovipalya near Rajajinagar in Bengaluru. "It has only 45 students as the area now has developed from when I saw it decades ago and parents prefer private English schools. I want this school to become a symbol of desire. I want these students to learn what they want in a manner that is practiced globally," he said.



HELPING HAND: Dr Gajanana Birur of Nasa talks to IISc students and volunteers about his school adoption programme, on the sidelines of the global conference on Saturday

P Sridhar, another alumni who quit a well-paying engineering job in Pune to take up a project with Akshara Foundation in teaching young school children, has in some sense been the driver of robotics in education.

Sushanth Kumar Prasad, a PhD scholar at IISc and a volunteer for these teaching programmes, says: "The kind of work that is happening here is really inspiring and keeps reminding us that we must all contribute to the society."

Another student Sreeparna Biswas, who had travelled with Gajanana to help set up the lab in Chettanahalli, says: "It is not that they have little capabilities, the problem is that they have limited or no opportunities."

GIVING IT BACK

When IISc AANA was formed officially, the only motto was 'Giving Back' and so we began organizing ourselves in that direction... we are getting different things done for NSNY."

Murthy S Gudipati | NASA SCIENTIST

The joy I saw in their (children's) faces is incomparable. Initially, my focus was on basic infrastructure and newer teaching methods. But I have now realized that robotics helps imbibe a spirit of curiosity

Gajanana Birur | NASA SCIENTIST

The kind of work that is happening here (in the schools) is really inspiring and keeps reminding us that we must all contribute to the society."

Sushanth Kumar Prasad | PHD SCHOLAR AT IISC

Scientists must work to help poor

Asserting that "old teachers, institutes, friends and wine are always good" Sudha Murty, writer and chairperson of the Infosys Foundation, on Saturday said she still maintains that IISc is the best.

"When I heard about this conference I thought I could meet a lot of friends and classmates, but barring Dr Subba Reddy none of my classmates is in India. I was upset and joked with my husband that the IT boom has taken everyone away to the US," the IISc alumna said at the Global Conference.

She urged young scientists to work with the aim of helping the poor and the needy. "Science's goal must be to help people and we need to have soft hands to wipe tears," she said.

Three other alumni, Prof Roddam Narasimha, Prof G Padmanabhan and Prof S Ranganathan, who shared the dais with her, agreed that the end goal of science must be to help people.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear IISc AANA members and Friends;

This issue of the newsletter covers AANA events during the last twelve months (October 2014 to September 2015). Please send us the dreams that you want to realize through IISc AANA and IISc - with a focus on "giving back" to the society where you live and where you come from (newsletter@iiscaana.org). I want to thank the following persons who helped me in the editing of this newsletter: Kasturi Srinivasan, Sabrina Peck, Murthy Gudipati, Meena Rao, and Guneet Walia. Kasturi Srinivasan will be the editor of the AANA newsletter starting next issue.

--Gaj Birur, Editor

* The word 'alums' is used as a gender-neutral word for Alumni/Alumnae in this newsletter