



TASA DASSERA REPORT
Friday, October 7th
by Venkatesh Adivi

The day after the Navarathri pujas concluded at the temple on Vijaya Dasami day, the Telugu Association of San Antonio (TASA) capped the Dassera celebrations with a rousing cultural event at the Mahalakshmi Hall on Friday, October 7th, 2011.

A delicious pandaga bhojanam efficiently served by volunteers greeted arriving attendees. The evening's proceedings started off with TASA's annual General Body Meeting (GBM) that included a brief overview of the year's activities and upcoming events by TASA President, Murthy Patamalla, and a review of TASA's finances by Treasurer, Bapiraju Surampudi. The GBM concluded with no questions from the members.



The cultural program started with Telugu Badi kids below 7 years singing about achchulu and hallulu. Kids over 8 years old then took turns speaking about the significance of Dassera. The Telugu Badi presentation concluded with some padyalu and sametalu. The audience expressed their appreciation for the effort expended by the kids to learn to speak in Telugu and memorize Telugu poems and lines. New LIFE members Dr. Nanda Kishore, Raghupal Mada and Mallikarjun Ganji awarded trophies to the participants.



A rare treat awaited dance aficionados. Dr. Sreedhara Akkihebbalu, of Kaveri Natya Yoga, himself performed “Narasimha nanu brovara”. Set to a beautiful composition in Atana raga and Mishra Chapu tala, Dr Sreedhara’s interpretation captured all the fury and rage of the Narasimha avatara. When he appears to disembowel Hiranyakashipu, you see the half-man, half-lion breathing heavily after the effort. The expressions on Dr Sreedhara’s face transport the viewer to the scene and through the range of emotions even as, after killing the demon, Vishnu appears in all his glory to Prahalada. Following this enchanting performance, Gold Sponsors Dr. Ravi and Mrs. Vijaya Botla presented the felicitation trophy to Dr. Sreedhara.



The event that all of the audience was eagerly awaiting finally arrived. A deep, backstage voice rumbled through the hall and Anuj Gurwara bounded on to the stage. Clad in jeans and t-shirt, with an iPod strapped to his elbow, Anuj came out singing “Bangaru Kodipetta” and followed soon by “Panchadara Bomma”, from the movie “Magadheera”,

the song that made him famous and catapulted him to the top of the Telugu music industry heap. Kausalya, famous Telugu playback singer in her own right, joined him soon, and what followed was two hours of almost continuous, non-stop entertainment.



The energy in the hall reached unprecedented levels, with Anuj bouncing off-stage frequently and running through the aisles and encouraging members of audience to get on stage with him to sing and dance. As promised, he had every one of all ages participating, with his “Baccha Party” filling the stage and grooving to fast numbers. An invitation to couples to the stage brought six energetic, young at heart pairs showing off their moves. Anuj, a non-Telugu who grew up in Hyderabad, thinks in Hindi, reads his lyrics in English, and sings in Telugu, also mixed in a few Hindi songs to the delight of many in the audience. A tech-savvy Anuj used his iPod connected wirelessly to his MacBook for his tracks, and an iPad for lyrics, paying unwitting homage to Steve Jobs for a great evening of entertainment. As a token of San Antonio’s appreciation, Grand Sponsors V.K. Orthodontics’ Dr. Saritha Chary-Reddy and C.S. Reddy Meka presented felicitation trophies to the artists.