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TELUGU LITERARY AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

(A Tax Exempt, Not for profit Organization Established 1971)
METROPOLITAN NEW YORK (NY, NJ, CT)

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TLCA - The Telugu Literary and Cultural Association has its beginnings rooted with the Telugu people who came to the New York area back in the late fifties and sixties. They used to meet informally for social purposes and also get together with other people from India for occasional festivities.

With the increase in the immigrant population from India the need for having a formal organization of Telugus was recognized and in 1969 TLCA was started and was officially registered as a not-for profit organization in 1971. Since that time TLCA has served the Telugu community of greater New York Metropolitan area and has grown in its membership. It now has about 400 members of which about 300 are life members. TLCA is the largest local Telugu association in North America.

There are many people who have reminisced about the beginnings of TLCA. Some of the past presidents have included anecdotes in their messages. Back in the sixties when there was no TLCA the few Telugu families who lived in the New York area had get together and picnics. They received such movie greats as Sri Akkineni Nageswara Rao and other dignitaries even when there was no formal Telugu organization. Sri B. Rama Moorthy reminisces about families, picnics, dinners etc. and even talks about the people in UN helping out in sending mail to all the Telugus in metropolitan New York.

During the seventies and eighties TLCA has played host to many celebrities Sri N.T. Rama Rao, Sri Vempaty Chinna Satyam and his troupe of Kuchipudi dancers, Raja and Radha, Reddy, Smt. Sobha Naidu and her troupe, several movie actors and actresses including Vanisri, Jamuna, Gummadi, Chandra Mohan, Krishna Mohan and many many more - too many to mention here in this short historical note. It has also received many prominent politicians including ministers of State - Sri N.T. Rama Rao, Dr. Chenna

Reddy, M.G. Ramachandran and others.

TLCA conducts cultural programs throughout the year. Sankranti, Ugadi, Deepavali are some of the functions they celebrate regularly. Over the years there have been many individuals who have taken a very active part in cultural programs. Many children have come up on the stage to do a dance, sing a song or play an instrument. The following is a partial list of people who have helped in cultural programs at one time or another: Vijayalakshmi Chimmiri, Ramakrishna Chalikonda, Krishna Dayanidhi, Lakshmi Anand, Indira Pammi, Vinatha Pesaru, Aruna Polavarapu, Satya Pradeep, Sadhana Paranjani and many others have helped in the production of cultural programs. Old timers like Dama Vekaiah, Tipirneni Tirumala Rao and a few others, new comers like Nagesh, Dilip, Pratap, Prasad and others have staged skits and dramas that were quite popular.

Every year they have an annual dinner, tennis, and other sports tournaments. Picnics are usually conducted during the summer time. Dr. Annam Vidyasagar, Raj Bhatt and others have been of help in the tournaments.

In the seventies and eighties they used to screen Telugu movies (thanks to Ganesh Kothuri) but since the advent of video tapes of Telugu movies this activity is discontinued. TLCA has a good sized library containing many Telugu books. Smt. Kakarla Lakshmi and Dr. Guthikonda with the help of many TLCA members have put together the Telugu library. For many years Smt. Chimmiri Vijayalakshmi has acted as the librarian. The library was housed in the basement of the Hindu Temple in Flushing in a few metal cabinets. In recent years they had to be moved, because of construction at the temple and hopefully the books will find their place in a good location. Some of the TLCA members run Telugu schools for children. The early Telugu school was run in Edison New Jersey as reminisced



by Sri Tirumala Rao. In recent years Smt. Vatsla Gabur and Dr. Paturi Mani have been running Telugu schools in Long Island for youngsters.

TLCA promotes literary activities through its monthly news journal "Telugu Velugu". There are many people who have contributed to the well being of this journal. In the early stages the presidents took active role in publishing the magazine. The 1975 special issue was type set in Telugu at the Chandamama Press in Madras. Dr. Bandaru Sivarama Reddy deserves credit for getting this done. It pays tribute to Sri Akkineni Nageswara Rao and also has excellent articles by Dr. Subba Rao, Dr. Guthikonda and others. Dr. Kidambi Raghunathan nurtured the magazine for many years in the seventies and eighties. Dr. Varanasi Prasad, Dr. Upadrashta Satyanarayana Dr. Kolagotla Suryaprakasa Rao, Dr. K.S. Murthy, Raj Bhatt and others contributed to Telugu Velugu. Dr. Nehru E. Cherukupalli has assisted in the production of cultural programs and has taken charge of Telugu Velugu since early eighties and continues to work for the organization. Sri Balaram Pammi has many a cover page for Telugu Velugu and deserves special mention. The America Telugu Saametalu by Smt. Leela, Telugu cross word puzzles and other interesting items from Smt. Saroja Devi, poetry about life in USA by late Prof. Ksheerasagar are all part of Telugu Velugu. In the eighties and nineties TLCA has promoted story competitions in co-operation with Andhra Prabha weekly of Hyderabad, AP and continues to do so even today.

TLCA is proud to state that in 1977 they founded TANA - The Telugu Association of North America, an umbrella organization of all Telugu Associations in North America. TLCA was the host for the first TANA Conference in New York (1977) and also hosted the First World Telugu Convention in 1993 with an attendance estimated at 10,000. This is the largest crowd of people attending a Telugu conference outside India. New York deserves the credit because they have proved their mettle in more than one way.

TLCA celebrated its 25th anniversary and Ugadi on April 13, 1996 and honored all the youngsters who participated in TLCA activities since its inception. TLCA will be honoring all its past presidents at the 25 Anniversary dinner Dance to be conducted on September 14, 1996.

Over the years TLCA owes its strength, conviction

and perseverance to the dedicated presidents and their executive committees. The trustees have added their strength to the organization. Women played an important role in the organization. Many of them served in the executive committees and as trustees and have volunteered to work behind the scenes as backbones of the organizers and their spouses. Most of the cultural activity of the organization was the work of women. Ms. Nirmala Shastry is a prime example of the role played by women in TLCA.

Being a not-for profit cultural organization, TLCA depends heavily on voluntary donations for its expenditure. TLCA has been very fortunate in having many generous donors over the years. Dr. Badhey Mohan Rao, the life Trustee of TLCA is a major donor. Some of these donations are year marked for constructing building in the future to house TLCA.

Dr. Guthikonda, former president, (1976-77) aptly enquires into the aims and goals of TLCA and strongly recommends that we perpetuate our language which is a part of our culture. Sri Kambhampati Sastry echoes his feelings about our duties toward our children and their needs. In 1975 TLCA published a special issue of Telugu Velugu in which Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao (then vice president) wrote an article entitled "Anyadha Saranam Naasti". In this article Dr. Subba Rao aptly brings out the pros and cons of living in North America and how they should strive to retain their culture while accepting the reality surrounding them.

TLCA is not just an organization - it is an Institution which, over the last 25 years, has guided the Telugu people of North America and other sister organizations around the country. It has withstood the test of time and is poised to do even more in the years to come.

Long Live TLCA!

Information compiled by
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