

# **BAGH EC meeting Minutes**

Date: 11/27/05

Time: 5pm

Venue: Woodlands Restaurant.

## **Attendees:**

Tapas Bandyopadhyay  
Mahua Mukhopadhyay  
Sudip Bhattacharjee  
Tirthankar & Dipa Choudhury  
Somnath Deb

## **Main topic:**

Saraswati Puja for 2006.

## **Dates:**

2/4/06 was discussed, but cancelled since Manojda is not available to perform the rituals.

2/5/06 (Sunday) is preferred, with 2/11/06 as backup date.

## **Preferred Venue:**

American School for Deaf (since temple probably no longer allows food to be brought in – Tapas to follow-up and verify).

Backup Venue: Temple with food from temple cafeteria. Tapas to check for 2/5/06.

## **Key logistics/Assignments:**

Audio system is in Monosij's home, but he will be in India till about 2/7/06. All essential items needs to be moved out of his basement before he leaves for India.

Thakur transport by Sudipto Ghoshal

Cleanup crew by Sudipto Ghoshal (or arrange with ASD staff)

Plate, cup, glass, coffee, spoon, fork, napkins -- by Nitish/Mahua Mukhpadhyay

Purohit: Manojda

Fruits etc: to be organized by Tapas Bandyopadhyay

Carpet for program: Dipadi to reming Saumitrada

Pujar phul: Tirthankar Choudhury

Gopalda to arrange for Certificate of Insurance

Somnath to take the lead on flier mailing.

Monosij to draft flier message.

Mahuadi to coordinate cultural program

**Food:**

No more than \$6 per plate was discussed.

5 volunteers to make Khichure at home for 20 people each

Supplemental items could be catered -- to further lower the cost.

Taste of India, Woodlands, and Cosmos were discussed as possible providers.

Potential volunteers for Khichuri: Debmita, Mahuadi, Dipadi, Susmita, Monoranjan etc. -- Dipa Choudhury to take lead and organize

Items to order from outside: Onion Pakora, Phulkapi bhaja or Beguni, and Alu phul-kapi and Misti

Chutney to be prepared potentially by Shima or Sudeshna -- Dipa Choudhury to take lead and organize

Woodlands was considered a caterer for the event, but the misty served as candidate items were not upto par, and due to past bad experiences, was passed over from further consideration

**Donation Rates:**

Big discussion on rates for Saraswati puja:

1. Prepaying by check (before 1/31/06) or internet before (2/4/06) : \$50 per family or \$20 per person.
2. Limited number of onsite participants allowed @ \$70/family or \$30/person due to limited number of extra plates available.

Finally, compilation of lessons learnt and suggestions from 05 puja are attached for future discussion.

**Planning:**

1. Durga Puja detailed planning needs to start from June, not August. Otherwise there will always be a lot more confusion. (To start planning a little bit ahead)
2. I feel that our Pratima is showing signs of age, and we should probably start putting a plan together for ordering a new one.
3. Support Staff: -- It is important to keep the custodians and other help happy -- wine bottles and tips as appropriate should be used. -- Never allow the caterer to cook in the Kitchen. Bad experience/chaos in King Phillip -- smooth sail (no cooking) this time.

4. This time the food for lunch and dinner was repeated and the gap between lunch and dinner was not too much. Perhaps have snacks for lunch and regular dinner (perhaps might even be cost effective)!

## **Logistics:**

1. Drinking water is a problem during meals – we should consider commercial water delivery systems like CrystalRock for water.
2. Now that we got a coffee-pot, we should have a dedicated person in charge of TEA/Coffee. (S)He will keep the pot, and the associated Tea/Coffee/sugar/milk supply and replenish as appropriate.
3. Nitishda & I have taken the coffee pot and supplies. We will keep it, replenish coffee/sugar/ milk etc. for every function.
4. Someone else needs to keep the paper products (plates, cups, napkins, cutlery, etc). Everyone in EC committee should share in this task.
5. It was very hard for Gopalda to get all the grocery supplies. We should get peapod to deliver ([www.peapod.com](http://www.peapod.com)) -- they will deliver all of it for under \$10
6. Pratima transport should always be in a covered U-Haul. Can you imagine what would have happened if we transport it in an open truck like last year?

## **Communication:**

1. In the past we had compiled a list of all the major tasks along with associated detailed activities. I think Sudhansuda has that list. I would suggest we use that as a baseline and update it with our ideas. Also, if we have such a documented list, it makes the transition to a new committee a lot easier and less confusing. Every year we will add the name(s) of the responsible person(s).
2. We try to do it every year but I don't know how successful we are, but a list of who has what item is essential. BAGH has over the years accumulated a lot of things (lights, electrical stuff, vases, sound system etc.) and we need to keep a good inventory of these items otherwise we don't get them when we need them. We end up buying again.
3. Communication with the community at large needs to be increased for several reasons. We started collecting emails from lots of people during Puja, but apparently missed some. Sudipto has that list of who donated but do not have an email. We need to fill those.
4. We need to transition from a card to an email and website communication system. This is more efficient and will have less of hits and misses.
5. Magazines need to be placed where everyone can see it and get one.

## **Volunteering and Participation:**

1. We need to involve more than the EC in all these operational activities. There may be second generation children who might be glad to help in this. We should categorize operations and committees, and put people in charge of those committees.
2. Much of this will not work unless more of the community participates (or at least contributes donations generously!)
3. Getting student volunteers helped a lot. We should probably define their role and shifts better. For example, there was not much help to be found on Sunday.
4. To have a youth wing (second generation) involved in the planning and implementation of activities

## Finance:

1. Considering we collected nearly half our Chanda Online -- I think we should expand on it, and try to get most people to buy coupons or tickets online. We can spend some additional money setting up a website with a shopping cart. This will also help estimate our lunch/dinner plates.
2. I think Monosij did an outstanding job collecting Ads -- we can build on it, with several "Corporate Sponsor" roles. For example, we can create \$1000 slots to sponsor the "Saturday Puja" and "Prasad" or some cultural program
3. Sponsoring Puja/cultural program is a good idea.
  - Amount should be lower.
  - More people may then be interested in sponsoring.
  - Saraswati Puja could also be included in this as well.
  - Many organizations are doing this for both Durga & Saraswati Puja.
4. Coupon system worked well. We should continue it, with some fine tuning. For example, we should probably have a daily flat rate when people come (one rate Saturday, another rate Sunday). We should get out of per-event coupon rates, and have a maximum number of 8 coupons per family for a \$100 Saturday rate, for example. Professional event may be priced separately.

## Cultural Program:

1. Getting the sound system from the School was an excellent choice, and should be norm for any ticketed event
2. For the performing artist: - We need thermos flasks with tea/coffee for the performers
  - a. We need to keep the carpet handy -- a little Cushion (Toshak) may have helped
  - b. A nice chair and table would have made Anup Ghoshal more comfortable.
3. The Audio system needs to be stored all in one place, with a proper inventory. We also need two persons to be in charge of the system -- it is a lot of equipment to move, and is a two person job. We should also evaluate the cables and equipment and replace/upgrade some of them as necessary.