

# SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2002/2003

## *Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakathuhu*

It gives me great pleasure to present the Secretary's report for the year 2002/2003. This year has been filled with activities, especially those that have ventured into new ground. The main focus of these activities was targeted on "Participation and Youth", and by Allah's grace many members rallied behind the management committee to achieve these objectives. This report has been divided into various categories, to give readers a comprehensive illustration of these activities.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**

The first month time was spent streamlining and consolidating all administrative activities to a central location. The following committee members met in early July to set out the activities for the year, and to a large extent kept to this schedule.

President	Mohamed F. Mohideen
Vice President	Ahamed Vajuhudeen
Secretary	Rifka Naufal
Treasurer	Dhilhaam Fazil

Committee Members	Pam Ashraff Eddie Dole Shyama Fuad Mohamed Shaffie
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Editor	Fahmi Haniffa
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Auditor	Noor Maharroof
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## **Membership**

This year the committee made all effort to maximise participation from members. Events were planned to cater for the diverse needs of the members both young and old. As stated at the AGM and the mandate given to the committee, it was decided to focus on the financial members of the organization. During the year under review we had 22 new members join the association. Today at the time of the AGM we have 69 families, 27 individual and 9 pensioners (total of 194 financial members excluding the children). This is a record for the organization as far as members paying their annual dues are concerned.

It was also decided to revise the membership application and in order to update the database on the members all financial members were requested to complete a new membership form.

## **Grant**

The Association was awarded \$1200 from the Victorian Multicultural Commission for the year beginning July to February 2003. This grant was used to pay for the costs of the newsletter and multicultural activities. We have this year applied for a similar grant focusing on youth, senior citizens and multicultural activities. The announcement of this grant will be at the end of June 2003.

### **Committee Meetings**

This year the committee met each month and notice of the meetings was published in the newsletter. In order to maintain a semblance of structure and formality, the meetings were held on a Saturday at 1.00 pm for a maximum of 1.5 hours. In total there were 12 committee meetings and 2 special committee meetings held. All meetings were opened to the general membership.

### **Special General Meeting**

Due to various reasons a special General Meeting was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March at the Mulgrave Community Centre. The meeting was well attended with over 100 financial members being present. At the meeting four resolutions were passed and duly circulated to all financial members of the association. Also in keeping the Food Safety Act of Victoria 2003, members were shown a video on “**Safe Food Handling**” and leaflets from the Health Department were distributed to all members.

## **RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

The focus on religious activities, which form an integral part of our life, was once again based on participation. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who volunteered, contributed and organised these activities. It made the task of the committee much easier by the willing support extended by the members. The Committee and members made all endeavours to promote the Islamic faith at all times.

### **Activities During The Month Of Ramadhan**

During the month of Ramadhan, USMAA held two ifthaars on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at the Mulgrave Community Centre. They were well attended by the members. Apart from Tharaweeh prayers we also had sermons given by guest speakers.

The 27<sup>th</sup> night celebrations were held at the Mitcham hall and the sermon and thaubah was conducted by one of our members Bro Imtiaz Mohamed. The committee would like to thank all those families who generously donated and made food for the ifthaars.

### **Fitra Collections**

This year the fitra collections were sent to fewer recipients. The rationale was that it would be better to help a few with a substantial amount than spreading the amount to a number of groups. The recipients were a widow with 3 children, a blind person, a child in need of major heart surgery, Thihahriya home and the Thennakumura YMMA.

### **Joint Festival Prayers With Aslama– Ramadhan & Hajj**

For the first time in the history of USMAA, both Sri Lankan Muslim organizations in Victoria, ASLAMA and USMAA had joint festival prayers. The Ramadan festival prayers were organised by USMAA and the Hajj festival prayers by ASLAMA. It was a great achievement as far as both organizations were concerned and a very beautiful and moving sight to see such large gatherings at Eid prayers. We would like to thank the committee of ASLAMA for their support in achieving this objective. We hope that this would become an annual event for both associations.

### **Ramadhan And Hajj Dinner Celebrations**

The Ramadhan Festival dinner celebrations were held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December at the Mulgrave Community Centre. The function was well attended. The children enjoyed themselves and everyone had a joyous time.

The Hajj dinner celebrations were held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. The guest speaker was Hafiz Nur who gave a brilliant talk on the Islamic way of life. Once again the function was well attended. It should be noted that both festival dinners were sponsored by groups of members.

### **Qiraath Contest**

This year a different format was observed with regard to the Qiraath contest. It was dissociated from the Meelad celebrations and organised as a separate event to ensure maximum participation and to prevent any child from missing out. In total 22 children participated and the event was judged under 6 categories. This event was held in the afternoon with evening tea provided. The judge presiding at this event who was a Hafiz also gave an enlightening talk on the recital of the Holy Quran. The youth focus group should be congratulated on organising this event in a very professional manner.

### **Oratory Contest & Meelad**

This year to mark Meelad, and part of the activities oratory contest was organised. The topics were based on the events that surrounded the prophet's life. There were around 32 participants in 3 categories. The function was well attended. Dinner was provided for all present. There was also a talk given by one of the judges on the life of the Holy Prophet (Sal). It should be noted that the children benefited by having two functions solely dedicated to their activities.

### **Jamaath Visits**

During the period under review, two jamaath groups visited Melbourne. The members of the association met the jamaath groups at the Doncaster Mosque and participated in light refreshments.

### **Workshop On Bathing And Shrouding Male Janazas**

This workshop was held at the Monash University Mosque, Clayton. It was attended by a few members who benefited by the discussions and instructions given on bathing and preparation of a shroud for a Muslim male.

## **FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES**

All effort was made to ensure that most activities were either self-funded or generated some income to USMAA. Apart from the two projects mentioned below, the souvenir published for the Annual Dinner also brought in a sum of 1400/-. In this instance we would like to thank M. Ashraff who collected most of the advertisements.

### **Till Project**

In order to raise funds for charity or any worthy project, tills were distributed to members at the 1<sup>st</sup> function and collected at the end of May. The total collection was \$700.00. It was decided to send all proceeds (less 100/- for the tills) to the recent flood affected victims in Sri Lanka.

## **Hopper Nite**

In order to raise funds for activities, the Hopper Nite was held on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002. This function was well attended with nearly 150 participants. Although there were a few shortcomings in general, all those who attended enjoyed the evening. The association made a profit of \$270 .00 after payment of all costs. Similar such functions had been proposed but had to be cancelled due unavoidable circumstances.

## **MEDIA & PUBLICATION**

All activities of an organization need vehicles to promote itself as a means of communication to the membership and general public. The newsletter, website, souvenir and the periodic mail outs served this purpose.

### **Newsletter**

Three issues of the newsletter have been published during the year. The issues carried relevant information, feedback, current information both local and Sri Lankan and religious affairs. Although the membership was invited to contribute articles to the newsletter, the response was not very satisfactory. Unfortunately we have not been able to publish the last edition for this year. The association is grateful to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for their sponsorship of all issues of the newsletter

### **USMAA Website**

The USMAA website was officially launched this year and carried information about the association, its activities, online membership enrolment, religious information, etc. The website has been accessed by many members and non-members. Also the current committee decided to pay the licence fee not only for 2002/2003 but also 2003/2004.

## **ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER**

The 12<sup>th</sup> USMAA Annual Fellowship Dinner was held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2002 at the Sacred Heart Hall, Johnson Street, Oakleigh. The Chief Guest for the function was Mr. Hong Lim, MLA and Member for Clayton. Mr Lim who is also the chairman of Parliamentary Committee for Family and Community Development discussed multiculturalism and the advances that Australia and especially Victoria has made in this area. He spoke on how associations such as USMAA could do to build up the nation and help the community at large.

The keynote speaker Dr. Abdul Khaliq Kazi in his talk 'The Way Forward' touched on aspects of how the community especially Muslims in general should act in the times of trouble and uncertainty when every finger of blame seems to be directed at the Muslim Ummah. His advice to be steadfast and address issues in a rational and Islamic way left those present in the audience a lot to ponder and think.

The USMAA Youth Awards for academic excellence in 2002 were awarded to: Aadil Mohamed, Hana Yusuf, Nilufer Liyaul Fouz, Shakira Salahudeen, Shazrina Mohamed and Shezna Mahroof .

The function was well attended by 200 persons consisting of members, friends and well wishers. All members and their families should be congratulated for the success of the event, which went on schedule with regard to timing and coordination.

The success of the function is also attributable to the work of committee members, volunteers, sponsors and advertisers. Also for the first time, the annual dinner brought in a profit of over \$1000.00.

## **SENIOR CITIZIEN'S GROUP**

With the initiative taken by the late Mrs Farisha Mohideen (the President's mother), a senior's group was set up to cater for the parents of members living here, and also those visiting Melbourne. An inaugural lunch was held in January, and a day outing to the Werribee Zoo, Mansion and Rose garden was held in February. It is hoped that this initiative is continued in the coming years. It has been proposed to incorporate a seniors group as part of the constitution.

## **YOUTH FOCUS GROUP**

On the initiative taken by members of the committee a youth focus group has been set up. They were involved in organising the Qiraath contest. The group has been meeting in the last few months. It is proposed to incorporate them as part of sub committee in the constitution and also to designate one of the committee members as the youth coordinator. The current committee has also decided to request \$500.00 be allocated for youth activities in the coming year. During the year we have been able to enrol 6 youth onto the membership roll.

## **CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR) CLASSES**

In collaboration with the YMCA and State Government, USMAA conducted a CPR class on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at the Mitcham Hall. Although initially there was lots of interest shown only 10 participants attended the class. All participants were given a Certificate of Participation.

## **FLOOD RELIEF PROJECT**

Due to the devastation and havoc caused by the recent floods in Sri Lanka USMAA members generously contributed to this fund. The collection to the sum of \$1030/- which was made within a week of being notified was sent to be used to build a well and also help in the rehabilitation of a village by the name of Poruwa, Matara District.

Also on the request of Mr. Rodney Arambawela, old clothes, foodstuff, linen, etc have been collected, and this will be sent to the flood relief victims.

## **INTERACTION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

USMAA has been represented at various meetings of the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Committee for Sri Lanka and have participated in a number of the peace vigils held against the war in Iraq. We also attended a peace rally against the war with Iraq was held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2002. The March was held in the City and attended by 45,000 people. The Islamic Council of Victoria was one of the main organisers of the peace march and a large contingent of USMAA members joined the peace rally.

USMAA was also represented at the Sri Lankan Independence Day Celebrations held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February at the Box Hill Town Hall. Few children of USMAA members participated in the activities organised.

## **CONCLUSION**

The year has been both joyous as well as sad. USMAA lost one of its members Mrs. Farisha Mohideen who will be greatly missed by all. Also some members lost their parents, siblings and relatives during the year. May Allah grant them Jennathul Firdouse. On a joyous note, we also had many births taking place amongst the members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents and family for their unstinted support at all times, the committee and general membership for their cooperation and support during my tenure as Secretary.

I wish the new committee all success with Allah's blessings.

Wassalam

*Rifka Naufal*

Secretary, USMAA INC.

21<sup>st</sup> June 2003