

# SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2003/2004

## ***Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakathuhu***

I have great pleasure in presenting the Secretary's report for the year 2003/2004. This year has been quite rewarding and eventful, especially with activities that have ventured into new ground. Once again as in the past year, the main focus of these activities was targeted on "Membership, Participation and Youth", and by Allah's grace we are pleased to state that 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**

During the the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the year we had changes to the Presidency. Bro Ahamed Amirudin who was elected at the AGM resigned at the end of July and Bro Jiffry Marikkar (the Vice President) was acting President until the SGM. At the SGM held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September the Immediate Past President Bro Mohamed Mohideen was unanimously elected for the rest of the year. The final committee for the year 2003/2004 was as given below:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>President</b>           | Mohamed F. Mohideen   |
| <b>Vice President</b>      | Jiffrey Marikkar  |
| <b>Secretary</b>           | Pam Ashraff   |
| <b>Assistant Secretary</b> | Deen Mohamd   |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | Faiz Haniffa  |
| <b>Assistant Treasurer</b> | Nawfal Sharifdeen   |
| <b>Committee Members</b>   | M Ashraff<br>Mohamed Shaffie<br>Sawudi Halwan<br>Rifka Naufal ( <b><i>Youth Coordinator</i></b> ) |
| <b>Editor</b>              | Razana Yoosuf   |

Bro Haja Mohideen was appointed the auditor for the association.

## **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 subsequent SGM, 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 **21** new members join the association. Today at the time of the AGM we have **75** families, **14** individual members and **20** student members (total of **184** financial members excluding the children). This is a new record that has surpassed last year's record by approximately **6%**, as far as members paying their annual dues are concerned.

## **Grants**

The Association was awarded \$1200.00 from the Victorian Multicultural Commission for the year beginning July 2003 to February 2004. This grant was used to pay for the costs of the newsletter, youth activities, seniors group, administration and multicultural activities.

We applied and were successfully awarded for the first time, an Inkind grant from the Monash Council to the value of \$1537.50 to cover the cost of hall hire for our activities held at the Mulgrave Community Centre from January to December 2004.

We were also successful in obtaining a special conference grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission to the value of \$605.00 toward the Youth forum held in March 2004.

## **Committee Meetings**

This year the committee met each month and notice of the meetings were published in the newsletter. In order to maintain a semblance of structure and formality, the meetings were held on a Saturday at 4.00 pm for a maximum of 1.5 hours. In total there were 12 committee meetings held. All meetings were opened to the general membership.

## **Special General Meeting**

Due to the resignation of the President a special General Meeting was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September at the Mulgrave Community Centre. The meeting was well attended with over 100 financial members being present. The meeting was coupled with a fellowship evening (organised by the youth committee) and also a fund raising project.

## **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 given 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.

### **Festival Prayers - Ramadhan & Hajj**

The festival prayers organised by USMAA for Ramadhan was held at the Southern Cross Hall, Mulgrave. The sermon was given by one of our members Bro. Ahamed Amirudin. The Hajj festival prayers were conducted at the Mulgrave Community Centre. Bro Riyad Aswad gave the sermon. Breakfast was served after prayers on both occasions. It must be mentioned that both events were well attended by members and non members of the community.

### **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. Once again the function was well attended. It should be noted that both festival dinners were sponsored by groups of members. By Allah's grace, eight of our members also performed Hajj. May Allah accept their Hajj.

### **Oratory Contest & Muharram**

To mark the beginning of the new muslim year, the oratory contest was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. The topics were based on the events pertaining to Islamic culture, history and significant achievements. There were around 16

participants in 3 categories. Trophies and certificates were awarded to all prize winners. Certificates of participation and gifts were given to all those who took part. The function was well attended. Dinner was provided for all present. The activity was coordinated by the youth group of USMAA. It should be noted that the children benefited by having two functions namely, the oratory and qiraath contests solely dedicated to them.

### **Qiraath Contest & Meelad**

This year, as approved at the AGM, the Qiraath contest was held in conjunction with Meelad on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. About 25 children participated in the event. The event was judged under 6 categories. Trophies were awarded to all winners and certificates and gifts to all participants. There was also a talk given by one of the judges on the life of the Holy Prophet (Sal). Dinner was provided for all those present.

### **Thabliq Jamaath Visit**

One jamaath group from Sri Lanka visited Melbourne in June 2004. USMAA organised a meeting for the Jamaath members and the Sri Lankan Muslim community at the Monash University Mosque, Beddoe Avenue, Clayton on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup> of June after Asr prayers. Members from other Muslim communities also participated.

## **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 Forum organised by the youth committee brought in over \$1000.00. In this instance we would like to thank the Victorian Multicultural Commission for their support. In total we received \$ 3342.50 in grants from the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Monash Council. We also received donations to the sum of \$750.00 were from well wishers and the Migration Museum. We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to Monash Council for their Inkind grant which covered the cost of hall hire for all our functions in 2004.

### **Till Project for Janaza Fund**

In order to raise revenue for the Janaza Fund, tills were distributed in early November and collected in June 2004. The total collection was \$840.00. This project did not cost much and also there was not much work involved but netted in a good collection, which surpassed all other collections done through projects in the past. The current committee would like to recommend that this project be continued on an annual basis.

## **Kottu Nite**

In order to raise funds for activities, the Kottu Nite was held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2003. 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 \$560 .00 after payment of all costs.

## **MEDIA, PUBLICATIONS & PUBLICITY**

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. The association was also proactive in promoting its activities to other associations as well as other like minded groups.

### **Newsletter**

An editorial committee was set up to oversee the publication of newsletter. It comprised of the Editor Razana Yoosuf, Mohamed Haseeb and the President Mohamed Mohideen. Two 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. The association is grateful to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for their sponsorship of all issues of the newsletter

### **USMAA Website**

The USMAA website carried information about the association, its activities, online membership enrolment, religious information, etc. The website has been accessed by many members and non-members.

## **SENIOR CITIZIEN'S GROUP**

This year too the seniors group met for lunch in early January 2004. They also went on a day's outing to the city where they also attended the Royal Melbourne Flower show. As part of the highlights of the day was the trip round the city on the trams. They were hosted to lunch at a halal restaurant in the city. All the mothers and those who volunteered to accompany them had a wonderful time.

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

As adopted at the AGM a youth committee was set up. They had their first meeting in July and the following were elected:

Chairperson: Shakjira Salahudeen  
Secretary: Shamara Naseer  
Treasurer: Rizwan Mohinudeen

During the year they organised events keeping in mind the needs of the youth and general community. They also met on several occasions to plan out various projects. They also reported to the main committee on a regular basis. Apart from the activities mentioned below the youth were also responsible for organising the oratory contest.

### **Trivia Nite**

As part of the social activities, the youth group organised the Trivia Nite at the SGM. It was well organised and well received by all members attending the SGM. The questions were both educational as well as entertaining and catered to all groups of USMAA from the young ones to the adult members.

### **Time Management Workshop**

This full day workshop was organised with the help of Bro Segu Zuhair who acted as the facilitator. Those who attended the workshop gained a lot of knowledge on time management and project planning. The youth group would like to convey their sincere appreciation to Bro Segu Zuhair for his valuable advice and time.

### **Sharing Eid ul Fitr with the Muslim detainees at Maribyrnong**

The youth made a great effort to collect new clothes, food and dry rations and took them on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November (a week before Eid) to Maribyrnong Detention Centre. Around 15 youth and a few adults visited the centre and met with Muslim detainees from Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. The detainees appreciated the kind gesture made by the youth.

### **Youth Forum: Tolerance In Islam: Myth or Reality?**

In light of international events, the forum sought to concentrate on the portrayal of Islam. It explored and highlighted the basic concepts and practises that have been misconstrued by the media, world leaders and the wider public. The forum also sought to uncover stereotypes and prejudices

which have led to the public being misinformed about the fundamentals of the teachings in Islam.

The forum was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2004 at the Copeland theatre, Melbourne University. The Chief Guest was the Hon Anna Burke, Federal member for Chisholm. The key topics were: Islamic Tolerance Of Other Religions & Beliefs, Truth About Shariah Law And How It Is Applied and Role And Rights Of Women In Islam.

Apart from the main topics, there was also a youth segment titled Cultural Baggage versus Islamic principles. Apart from a representative from our community, youth from other Muslim communities also participated.

The youth had done a wonderful job in organising this event. Although the attendance was not as expected all those who attended were very impressed with the organisation of the event and took back good memories. We would like to thank the Victorian Multicultural commission for their special grant for this forum.

## **MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Sri Lankan Festival Organised by the Immigration Museum**

Our association represented the muslim community of Sri Lanka at this festival organised for the 1<sup>st</sup> time by the Migration Museum at 400 Flinders street, Melbourne. We had a stall where clothes, costumes of the various ethnic muslim communities i.e. Moors, Malay, Memon, Borah, Khojahs, etc., were displayed. Also leaflets on the history and contribution of the muslim community of Sri Lanka was also distributed to the visitors. One of our members Sis Saniya gave a cookery demonstration on the preparation of the biriyani and watalapan traditional festive food of the muslims, at the festival. We also had costume parade by the children of USMAA, once again depicting the various ethnic groups that make up the Sri Lankan Muslim community. We would like to thank Sisters Farah and Shimla and the others for organising the costume parade. A special word of thanks to the children for their wonderful participation. The museum authorities informed us that over 1300 visitors had attended the festival.

### **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 have also been in contact with the other Sri Lankan associations and also attended some of their events. The President and a few of the members also attended the Ifthaar organised by ASLAMA during the month of fasting.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

### **Fullerton Prison – Muslim Prisoners**

Our members collected and donated prayer mats, religious books, prayer caps, etc., to the 35 Muslim prisoners at the Fullerton correctional Centre in Sale. The President also visited the Centre on three occasions and conducted jumma prayers and spent the day with the prisoners. Our association also hosted the Eid-ul-fitr celebrations in the form of a BBQ for the Muslim prisoners at this centre. We would like to thank Bro Aziz Cooper, Muslim Chaplain for the Victorian Prisons for his assistance and support.

### **Donation of Books to Needy Children in Galle District, Sri Lanka**

Text books and other useful reading material was collected from the members and sent to Galle Muslim Cultural Association for free distribution to needy children in Galle district.

### **Donation towards the Children of Iraq Appeal**

A substantial donation from the fitra collection and other contributions was made to the Children of Iraq Appeal coordinated by the ICV.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the year under review the association has been able to achieve many of its objectives and also built up a profile in the general public. The interaction amongst the members has been extremely positive by the large numbers attending all functions and events. The credit should go out to all members of the committee and the general membership that has supported and rallied round to make all events a resounding success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my husband 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

**Pam Ashraff**  
**Secretary, USMAA INC.**  
**10<sup>th</sup> July 2004**