



## Uttaranchal Association of North America

Dear Fellow Members:

We know it has been a while since we communicated and updated you with the latest activities of the association. While we are proud of the strength of our Association as displayed by increased participation, positive energy, and commitment, our Association, at the same time, has gone through a period of confusion and unilateral decision making that has a serious potential to eclipse the incredible efforts and achievement of selfless volunteers. This was exemplified by concerns from members and petitions that we recently received. We as the UANA board members have now realized our active role in assuring the proper operations, governance, and to be more sensitive to the membership needs. We, in fact, met on September 8, 2007 in Fairfax, VA for a whole day in a special meeting of the board that was called by a majority of the board members (8 of 12) and that was open to all BoD. Here is a list of attendees for this meeting: Dr. Roop S. Bhakuni, Dr. Jagdish Bhandari, Dr. Gopal Krishna Dhariyal, Mr. Vinod Jakhmola, Dr. Harish Pant, Dr. Girish Pathak, Dr. Sanjana Raturi, and Mr. Ajay Rawat

There was a detailed discussion of all current affairs of the Association as well as the future direction for active participation of all members and growth of our Association by emphasizing better governance, transparency, inclusiveness, humility, and to earn the trust.

A highlight of some of the major resolutions that were actively discussed and then passed unanimously by BoD is as follows:

- UANA BoD commended and congratulated the exceptional selfless volunteer efforts of tri-state (NJ/NY/PA) volunteers and all other volunteers towards a successful annual convention 2007 as well as all the efforts towards UANA and community building including efforts such as greatly enhancing UANA's web site, contributions to By-Laws and Code of Ethics. (please see UANA web site for details regarding how during the annual convention honored guests from Uttarakhand - folk singer Narendra Negi, historian Dr Shekhar Pathak and poet Girish Tiwari Girda –completely mesmerized the Uttarakhand community in North America)
- The name of the association is proposed to be changed to Uttarakhand Association of North America to reflect the name change back home pending an assessment by UANA secretary and UANA treasurer that may be subject to satisfactory completion of all logistics including all regulatory requirements.
- The Minutes of July 29, 2007 UANA BoD meeting were approved.
- Two official petitions received from approximately 30% of the current UANA membership from tri-state (NJ/NY/PA) and Capital District (VA, MD, DC) areas were carefully reviewed and discussed. The majority of the concerns raised were addressed by various resolutions

passed in Sep 8, 2007 Special BoD meeting. In addition, further action(s) is pending the response to inquiries that are being conducted for various operational irregularities to ensure that UANA meets the regulatory requirements of a non-profit Association.

- No events under any circumstances can be deemed an UANA event unless approved explicitly in writing by the majority of the UANA BoD such that UANA is in compliance with all the applicable rules and regulations.

### **Communications**

- Mr. Jakhmola, UANA treasurer from Virginia (in the spirit of the bylaws) is hereby appointed as custodian of the official UANA web site, official UANA Director and UANA member email groups. Other members of this communication committee will be Dr. Bhandari and Dr. Raturi.
- To convey a consensus and unified position, and to avoid personal opinion being disseminated as an official UANA position, going forward all mass communication on behalf of the UANA must be approved in writing by the majority of UANA BoD and shall be communicated by UANA secretary on behalf of UANA BoD or Executive Committee (EXCOM). In addition, all communication within BoD and EXCOM (e.g., written, e-mail, telephone, fax and verbal) in the context of any UANA activities must be conducted with mutual respect, consultation, consensus, and transparency.

All UANA officials and members shall abide by and adhere to the newly created code of ethics/conduct and conflict resolution documents.

UANA officials, and members with access to confidential and privileged information about the association, and its members must comply with privacy and confidentiality policies and treat all information respectfully, responsibly, and appropriately to the fullest extent possible by law.

All donations must be reported to UANA's treasurer within 2 weeks from receiving the donation unless written permission is obtained otherwise, based on unusual circumstances. Any donation should be used for the purposes for which they were given unless approved otherwise in writing by the donor. Information about donations should be handled with respect.

### **Indemnification**

- Each member of the BoD are specifically held harmless and shall be indemnified by the UANA for actions taken in good faith on behalf of UANA and liability incurred as a result of their positions in the UANA.
- Any defense pursuant to this article shall be first made from the proceeds of directors' liability or any similar insurance, if any, maintained by the Association and thereafter from the Association (note- it is painful to even think about this resolution but it had become necessary given the legal threats for selfless volunteer service and actions taken in good faith on behalf of UANA with a primary goal of truly serving and benefitting all members).

### **Membership Drive:**

Since under the bylaws of the Association only paid members can vote in the election, it was first decided to launch a membership drive to collect dues and also update membership lists. Enclosed with the Patrika is the membership form. Please fill in the form and mail it back with your membership dues. While we are making every attempt to disseminate this information to all Uttaranchalis it may be possible that we might not have the updated address of some and other new comers. Please share this information with your friends and other relatives. A copy of the membership form can also be obtained from the UANA website. Also note we have free memberships for students even though they can not vote, so if you know of any student interested in joining the association please do encourage them (please note that a recommendation from two current UANA members in good standing is required before the BoD can consider an application for the membership and approve it).

### **Fresh Early Elections:**

Once the membership drive is complete, call for Board meeting is stipulated to decide on the modality and logistics of Election process. We plan to wrap up the whole election process and have a new EXCOM and complete board (by filling the vacant board position) in place as soon as possible. The details about the nomination and the election process would also be posted on our web site.

The BoD acknowledged and appreciated selfless volunteer efforts and personnel contribution of Mr. Sunil Kala for arranging super facility at Westfield Marriott in Chantilly, VA which included conference room, meals and drinks.

We, the UANA Board members, firmly believe that with your continued involvement, innovative ideas, and generous support, UANA will be able to leverage its strength and address its weakness to benefit all of its members eventually emerging as a much stronger organization.

Sincerely,

UANA Board of Directors

## **Development Projects**

A highlight of UANA's ongoing or proposed activities is provided next (for details, please see the UANA web site). We would like to encourage our readership to participate in and support these selfless voluntary activities.

### **Back home Uttarakhand focus:**

*UANA Award for Academic Excellence* - UANA has actively supported this project with an aim to promote and recognizes academic excellence in Uttarakhandi youth, by awarding two students at the grade level of 12th and 10th selected from each of the 13 districts of Uttarakhand.

*Helping those who need it the most* - The UANA has actively supported victims of **Sweet Village tragedy in Uttarakhand** and proposes to continue to support this project with a primary goal to help those who need it the most.

### **UANA North America focus and Community Outreach:**

*UANA Service Award* - UANA is proud to propose the UANA service award that recognizes those individuals who have significantly contributed to the promotion and dissemination of UANA's mission by their exemplary and sustained selfless activities.

*UANA mentoring program* – UANA is proud to propose the UANA mentoring program where insights from experienced and seasoned professional's background and achievements can be used in the professional and personal development of community members and youth.

### **Other Novel Projects:**

We would like to encourage our membership to share other projects being pursued for the development of Uttarakhand. Some of the interesting projects and their details can be found on their WEB site are as follows:

- [Ekal Vidyalaya](#)
- [www.nethimalaya.com](http://www.nethimalaya.com)
- [www.devamber.org](http://www.devamber.org)

### **Other Subjects and Stories of Common Interest**

We are in the process of publishing Patrika and would like to encourage our readership to contribute interesting article they would like to share with other members.