



# SKA news

July - September 2014

MCI (P) 011/11/2013

## PATRONS

Kartar Singh Thakral  
Naranjan Singh Bhramपुरa

## TRUSTEES

### Chairman

Gurdip Singh Usma

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LTC (Retd) Jaswant Singh Gill

### Secretary

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### Members

COL (Retd) Gurcharan Singh

Jagjit Singh Sekhon

Balbeer Singh Mangat

Param Ajeet Singh Bal

## IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Balbeer Singh Mangat

## 67<sup>th</sup> MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### President

LTC (Retd) Charanjit Singh

### Vice-President

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### Vice-President

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### General Secretary

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### Chairman Sports

Sarjit Singh Sona

### Chairperson Cultural

Jaswant Kaur

### Chairman Education

Sarban Singh

### Chairman Publication

Jagjit Singh Sandhu

### Chairman Building & Facilities

Surindar Singh

### Chairman House

Manmohan Singh

### Chairman Young Khalsa

Santokh Singh

### Committee Members

Sarjit Singh

Gurdev Singh

Gurvinder Sidhu

Bal Sherly Kaur Sidhu

### Co-opted Members

Gurdip Singh Usma

(Chairman SKA Trustees)

Prof. Berinderjeet Kaur

(Chairperson, SKA Ladies Wing)

Nirmal Singh Rode

## SINGAPORE KHALSA ASSOCIATION

Opening Hours 10am – 10pm

Monday to Sunday

Tel: 62981230 / 62986206 Fax: 62924782

Email: khalsa@singnet.com.sg

Website: www.singaporekhalsa.org.sg

## PRESIDENT'S Message

To begin with, pursuant to the suggestion made at the last AGM to include golf as a "regular" sports activity, the SKA golfing fraternity organised the first golf game on 16th August 2014. Upon receiving positive feedback and a discussion after the game, the golfing buddies decided to take on board the suggestion to hold this event quarterly. I would like to thank Mr Ranjit Singh for mooted the idea at the AGM and for facilitating all the preparations for the first golf game.

Next, the SKA Ladies Wing, an integral part of SKA, has undergone a change in leadership. Professor Berinderjeet Kaur will now helm the Ladies Wing. I wish her all the best in further raising the well-being of ladies. I will also like to thank Madam Kirpal Kaur for her sterling leadership over the last ten years.

In addition, as part of our efforts to engage university students and to bring them to the forefront of SKA activities, the SKA Youth Wing in conjunction with the Sikh Societies of the three local universities, organised an Inter-University Jashn-e Bhangra Challenge on 30th August 2014 at SKA. The intention of activities of this nature is to promote interaction amongst the Sikh university students. The event was well supported by the university students

as well as by many parents of these students.

Notably, at the close of tender on 22nd August 2014, seven vendors submitted tender bids for SKA Building Addition and Alteration (A&A) works. All the submissions came in higher than budgeted, and there was considerable variance in the tender prices. The high and diverse bids of the tenderers can be attributed to the increase in manpower levies over the past year as well as the shrinkage in resources resulting from the decrease in foreign manpower quota.

Based on the tender responses, the Building Committee is undertaking a cost study exercise to examine the feasibility of an alternative approach to the project. If it is feasible, we plan to self-manage the construction activities to reduce overheads and marked-up prices of materials. The bottom line is that we need to refurbish the old building which is incurring progressively increasing maintenance costs and to provide the facilities to meet the needs of members.

The Building Committee has prioritised the critical A&A works that must be done and is presently working out details to appoint a building contractor to undertake the refurbishment work.

## MEMBERS UPDATE:

- SKA Building will be closed from 31st October 2014
- SKA Life Membership application will be suspended with effect from 1st January 2015



## Jashn-e-Bhangra

For the more than three hundred and fifty people who turned up at the Singapore Khalsa Association on Saturday, 30th August 2014, it turned out to be a night they would remember for a long time to come. Not only were they making history as part of the inaugural SKA Inter-University Jashn-e-Bhangra Challenge, they witnessed, and were part of, some of the best dance moves that local Bhangra performers had to offer. The night kicked off with a light dinner, sumptuous for five dollars per head, and some friendly inter- varsity banter before the main event.

The luck of the draw had Singapore Management University take to the dance floor first, and what a standard they set for the rest to come. Besides the traditional dance steps executed with the energy that has made Bhangra the world-wide phenomenon it is, they fused some Michael Jackson moves with

classical Bharatanatyam steps, bringing the floor to its feet in exuberance.

Next to the cheers of "NUS, NUS, NUS", was the National University of Singapore's almost all-Sikh team which filled the stage with its more than twelve strong group supported by a female Dhol Player. It, too, brought the house down with its traditional steps executed to a vibrant almost completely synchronised energy accompanied by the cheery looks of some lovely couples.

The audience barely had time to breathe when it was the turn of the Nanyang Technological University whose "NTU, NTU, NTU" shouts received some stiff competition from the NUS supporters. They did not disappoint either with wardrobe malfunction not changing the mood one bit, and the dancers barely missing a beat right until the final formation.

This was followed by the dance-off with representatives from all three universities carrying the flags for their institutions in an individual segment.

The best part of the night was yet to come, with a mass-dance event and a free-for-all non-stop dance that lasted well into the night.

Eventually, SMU was named the winner of the SKA Dance Challenge, but there is more to come, with the Inter-Varsity Sports Challenge scheduled for early next year.

The inaugural Inter-Varsity Jashn-e-Bhangra Challenge was so successful that SKA is already looking forward to making it an annual dance-off with a view of expanding it to the polytechnics, the colleges of Institute of Technical Education and our junior colleges.



*Challenge in progress*

Performers in action



Youth dancing the night away

# 'Our little school garden' by K2 children of KHALSA Kindergarten

As part of our continuous effort to expose our pupils to different aspects of life, Khalsa Kindergarten conducted a one-week enrichment class for our K2 students. One of the activities conducted was hands-on gardening. As part of the theme for this term, "Forests", our children had already learnt about the importance of plants in our delicate ecosystem and why we should be saving them.

To provide a practical approach to what they had learnt, Khalsa Kindergarten invited personnel from National Parks to and demonstrate different methods of gardening, and how various plants grow. Pupils learnt to differentiate between creepers, climbers, trees and shrubs.

There was tremendous excitement and enthusiasm among the pupils. They were really excited to create a garden in their kindergarten. They were taught how to prepare the soil so that plants could grow well. Once the soil was prepared, everyone was given a chance to plant, using the different methods they had learnt. They were given seeds of watermelons, peanuts, and lady's finger to sow while a few of them planted saplings of butterfly bush.

The pupils were very anxious to have their seeds and saplings grow into fruiting plants. The classes meticulously



planned their watering schedule for which they needed no reminder. Their hard work soon paid off as after a few weeks, there were little seedlings sprouting out of the soil. The pupils kept caring for and nurturing the plants. As the plants grew, they were delighted to find that the plants grew differently, and they were able to relate their experiences to their lesson on types of plants.

*Hand-on-Gardening by pupils*



The pupils were thrilled to find their first fruit after a few weeks and waited impatiently to harvest them. The most exciting time soon arrived when they harvested their first watermelon. They were so amazed to realize that a small seed had grown into a big fruit. They immediately tasted the fruit that was nurtured with love and care and found it to be really sweet. All in all, this was a very fruitful experience for all our pupils.



*Watering Saplings*

# SKA Ladies Wing

**Vision** A community of vibrant and empowered ladies with a global outlook and yet rooted in their cultural heritage

- Mission**
- Provide opportunities for Sikh ladies to have a platform for social interaction so as to enhance the bonds and cohesive spirit amongst them
  - Showcase and encourage participation in cultural activities so that there is greater awareness of our cultural heritage
  - Enhance and equip ladies with life skills that will promote self-fulfillment and a sound family culture



The second cycle of our flagship active ageing programme for the year, the Chair Yoga, which began on 24th July 2014 at Khalsa Dharmak Sabha from 11am till 12.15pm, is held every Thursday. About thirty-five ladies are participating in it, and six dedicated volunteers are helping them to benefit from the exercises conducted by Monika, our resident-trainer from One Wellness Yoga. Monika encourages participants to ask questions as well as advises them on a range of topics besides doing yoga exercises.

The Ladies Wing committee hopes to reach out to more Sikh women in society and is desirous of growth. Ladies, particularly those with affiliations to the Sikh temples, who wish to contribute to this worthy cause, are encouraged to contact SKA Office for more details.



## GOLF Tournament

16th August 2014 will be a memorable day for our Khalsa golfers because that was the day SKA organised the inaugural National Day Tournament. Twenty-four avid golfers packed their bags and headed for a fun-filled golfing escapade at Palm Springs Golf Resort, Batam. They had fun both on and off the greens. A feedback session was held over lunch to solicit views from members for future tournaments. All eyes are now set on the next tournament - Diwali Golf Tournament which is scheduled to be held on 8th November 2014. Details will be announced soon.



The Organising Committee would like to thank SKA, Mr Jasminder Singh, who sponsored the prizes and the golfers for making this event a resounding success.

### Tournaments for 2015 are as follows:

Sat, 10 January	New Year 2015 Golf Tournament	Indah Puri Golf Course
Fri, 24 April	Vesakhi Golf Tournament	Warren or Seletar Country Club
Sat, 25 July	Spore Sikh's Golf Tournament (commemorating Bhai Maharaj Anniversary)	Sukajadi Golf Course
Sat, 24 October	SKA Presidents Cup	Bintan Lagoon



# Our PIONEERS (Part 3)

## LTC (Retd) Jaswant Singh Gill

In this final segment of the interview with SKA founding member and trustee, LTC (Retd) Jaswant Singh Gill, he shared SKA's funding approach towards its building programmes, the establishment of a Punjabi school at its premises, and the role of the association's trust fund.

### First SKA Building

The first SKA building was built when a piece of land was acquired along Jalan Bahagia, adjacent to the Whampoa River. This building programme was initiated when a Building Committee, comprising Choor Singh, Wazir Singh, Jaswant Singh Gill, and representatives of Gurdwara Committees, many of whom were money-lenders, was set-up. These representatives knew the sources to tap for donations. The budget for this building programme was \$75,000.

Jaswant Singh reminisced that Choor Singh, who was then a coroner, guided the committee in the fund raising but he stayed away from the collection of donations and even referred to it, perhaps jokingly, as 'begging'. Even though this was a community project, salaries being paltry those days, a fair amount of 'begging' was necessary. He recounted some unpleasant incidents involving Sikhs, whom they approached for donations, making fun of them. However, there were many others who donated willingly.

The first building was only a social club. For marriages, tents were pitched on the large adjoining field.

### Punjabi School

The need for a Punjabi school was mooted by the Partinidh Sabha, which ran Punjabi classes in some Gurdwaras and English schools once a week. Recognising the importance of Punjabi education, the Sikh community readily funded these classes. However, the Sabha was soon barred from holding classes in some of the schools because the students had messed up their toilets. There were also not many schools with Sikh principals to turn to

for assistance. So the Sabha decided to start a Punjabi school to centralise these classes, but it was unable to raise sufficient funds.

Hence, the Sabha approached Choor Singh and Jaswant Singh, who were at the helm of the SKA, to set up the project. The first plan for the school was mooted at the SKA clubhouse at Jalan Bahagia. However, the government soon acquired this clubhouse. SKA was compensated with some money and allocated a plot of land at Tessensohn Road.

Jaswant Singh recounted that the SKA had requested for land that would be large enough for a clubhouse as well as a school with facilities for twelve classrooms for Punjabi classes. The cost for this new multi-storey building was about \$750,000. Once again the Building Committee went about collecting donations. The Gurdwaras were the main source of donations because their congregations needed a wedding hall, where the hosts could choose to offer non-vegetarian food to their guests. He emphasised that without the support of the Gurdwaras and their congregations, donations would have been difficult to secure.

### The Trust Fund

The Building Committee went ahead to secure donations although there was some money in the SKA Trust Fund. When the Trust Fund was mooted, SKA had a small membership base. So, Choor Singh and Jaswant Singh sought the support of Doola Singh, who was then President of the Taxi Driver's Association. A meeting was held at his office with many of his members attending, and a resolution was passed to support the SKA and its fund-raising.

Jaswant Singh said that the Trust Fund, which was set up in 1958, was probably one of SKA's best initiatives for the community. The initial money for the Trust Fund came mainly from the profits arising from the sale of an old building in Prinsep Street that a group of Thai Sikh businessmen had given to SKA.



As this building was unsuitable to be used as a clubhouse, it was eventually sold and the outstanding loans associated with the building settled. The balance of about \$25,000 was kept in the Trust Fund.

Jaswant Singh recalled, "We passed a resolution when we set up the Trust Fund that the monies would be lent for [payment] of mortgage, or to buy shares, and the dividends used to fund hockey and other games. The monies were not to be used for capital expenditure and we were strict on that. We didn't allow the monies to be used for the construction of either the first building costing \$75,000 or the second building costing \$750,000. The initial \$25,000 in the Trust Fund became the nucleus of the \$13 million in the fund today, as we had invested wisely and built up the reserves."

He opined the young people in the community should, like the pioneers, have an emotional connection with community organisations like SKA. Then he added, "I recall Europeans with whom we used to play games those days returning to Singapore and saying they used to play hockey and cricket against 'Khalsa'. So there is something in that, in remembering the old and known... you don't just change what you inherit."