



**Veerashaiva Samaja of North America**



# **WELCOME TO VSNA**



**VEERASHAIVA SAMAJA OF NORTH AMERICA (VSNA)**

[www.vsna.org](http://www.vsna.org)

Copyright November, 2015

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## **President's Message**

Dear VSNA Life-Member,

Welcome to this esteemed non-profit religious organization, VSNA. The members of VSNA are pleased to have you amongst them as a life-member. VSNA is on a resilient mission to preserve, protect and propagate the Philosophy of Basaveshwara and his contemporary Sharanas in the North America. Along with us, you now have a great opportunity to learn Basava Philosophy and imbibe the principles into the day-to-day activities.

As you may know, VSNA established in 1978 by the early immigrants from India, has grown considerably across the continent into 21 local chapters with over 2000 Basava followers attending local programs regularly. Central VSNA is a virtual organization that works behind the scenes to make it happen.

Your life-membership donation goes a long way in contributing the major events aligned to the mission of the organization. I would suggest you to continue to play an active role in all aspects of the organization.

This welcome kit document provides you a brief overview of VSNA, its key features and achievements. It will also provide you information on how to get additional information.

On behalf of the VSNA community I once again welcome you and thank you for your donation and continued support to the cause of the organization.

Warm Regards,

Channu Kambalyal  
President, VSNA  
2015-2016

## Introduction

Veerashaiva Samaja of North America (VSNA) would like to welcome you to this esteemed spiritual organization founded on a resilient mission is to Preserve, Protect and Propagate Lingayat heritage as lived by Guru Basavanna and contemporary Sharanas. Compassion, Charity and Equality are main tenets of Lingayatism. It is an open organization that welcomes anyone with interest in Vachanas and faith in Guru Basavanna.

The VSNA was established in 1978 at the first meeting of the first generation of Lingayats immigrants to our adopted land (North America). The VSNA is registered Charitable Institution recognized by both the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and Canadian Revenue Agency. It has 22 local chapters coast-to-coast spread across Canada and United States.

The VSNA is a democratic organization, open to all humanity irrespective of cast, creed, nationality and origin. The organization has more than 300 hundred life-members at the central level and has over 1000 patrons spread across local chapters in the United States and Canada. The local chapters enthusiastically lead their activities with the same mission of adopting Sharana philosophy on a foreign soil.

The organization is administered by the executive officers, the members of the Board of Directors and Board of Regents elected by the members at the central level. Similar administrative structures exist at local chapter-level.

This booklet provides you an introductory overview of the organization to help you orient yourself with the key aspects of the organization such as the structure, the bylaws, few historical facts, and milestones to enable you to leverage the opportunity to enhance the understanding of the Basava Philosophy for self and your posterity at large.

Detailed information is available on the web site: [www.vсна.org](http://www.vсна.org), as well as various web-sites and social media of local chapters.

## Mission Statement

The mission of VSNA is to preserve, to protect and to propagate for the present and posterity and to instill, to imbibe and to impart the Lingayat (Veerashaiva) heritage, legacy and way of living and its universal values as exemplified in the pronouncements (Vachanas) of the Sharanas and to popularize, to practice the exalted principles of Dasoha and Kayaka through service to humanity at large.

## Organizational Structure

VSNA is governed by the bylaws that are revised from time to time, and published on the web. The organization consists of four officers, namely President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, who part of the 10 members of the Board of Directors (BOD). The Board of Directors has authority to formulate and pass the policies of the organization. Additionally there are 7 members of the Board of Regents (BOR), who act as advisors on various policy matters and initiate projects that are carried out by the BOD. The local chapters operate independently with a similar structure but at a smaller level. The chapter presidents are considered as nominated members of the BOD.

Following section summarizes Central VSNA Organizational Structure:

### Board of Directors

#### Elected Board of Directors

Ten members are elected paid members of VSNA. Paid members are life-members and annual members.

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. BOD - Member # 1
6. BOD - Member # 2
7. BOD - Member # 3
8. BOD - Member # 4
9. BOD - Member # 5
10. BOD - Member # 6

The eligibility to become a member of board of directors is minimum of one-year life-membership.

#### Nominated Board of Directors

All the chapter presidents are considered as nominated Board of Directors with equal rights as elected BOD. The chapter president is expected to be atleast an annual member. Immediate past-president is also a Board of Director. The term of BOD is 2 years.

Note: There is a proposal to elect a youth president as member of BOD to give representation to the youth. This is yet to be approved.

## Board of Regents

There are seven members in the Board of Regents, elected by paid members. The Board of Regents elect chairperson amongst them. The term of BOR is three years.

1. BOR - Chair
2. BOR - Member # 2
3. BOR - Member # 3
4. BOR - Member # 4
5. BOR - Member # 5
6. BOR - Member # 6
7. BOR - Member # 7

For greater details on the organizational structure, please refer to the VSNA Bylaws published on-line.

## Operational Structure

VSNA is an umbrella organization with chapters spread across Canada and USA. Central VSNA consists of elected bodies called Board of Directors and Board of Regents. These groups have regular meetings to formulate policy matters to ensure the organization achieves its stated mission.

The president presides the BOD meetings on mutually agreed periods, and the similarly the BOR-Chair presides the BOR meetings. Central VSNA selects a local chapter, typically on rotation basis to host the annual convention on behalf of Central VSNA. The convention is run by the Convention Committee consisting of local chapter members. The BOD and BOR act as advisors and indirectly supervise the convention. To date VSNA has conducted convention every year since its inception in 1978. The list of past and planned conventions is provided in Appendix-A with a link to the web.

The president also creates few necessary committees and oversees and assists in their functioning. More details of these committees and the latest BOD and BOR Meetings are uploaded on the web. Please see Appendix-A for details.

The local chapter president carries out local programs, where members meet in person. These programs focus on in person discussions on Basava Philosophy and may also contain traditional

festivals and general cultural programs to encourage youth participation. The chapters organizes local prayer meetings, lectures from invited guests and as a group does get involved in local charitable activities like donations to food bank, blood bank etc. VSNA members celebrate Basavanna's birthday all across North America in the month of May. Festival is known as Basava Jayanti. Prayer meetings are called "Vachanotsava" (celebration of Vachanas), Vachana recital and discussion forum. These meetings are either held at community centers and/or private residence of one of VSNA member depending on the number of attendees.

VSNA time-to-time responds to global events requiring charitable donations by collaborating with Red Cross, United Way etc. VSNA members also directly respond to other global events like flood, earthquakes and any major event aligned to Basava principles of Dasoha and Kayaka.

## **VSNA Chapters**

As described in earlier sections, Central VSNA is virtual organization and is indirectly instrumental in proper functioning of local chapters. Recognition to local chapter is given by the Central VSNA. More details on the criteria to form a local chapter is given in bylaws (see Appendix- A for link to latest bylaws on the web). Local chapter is where the real activity happens, and Local Chapter Presidents are considered as the on-the-ground soldiers of Central VSNA. To date we have 21 local chapters. For the latest list of local chapters along with their year of formation, please see the link to local chapters given in Appendix A.

Local chapter structure varies depending on the size and local decisions. Typically a local chapter is expected to have a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer similar to Central VSNA. However few larger chapters do have board of directors.

## **VSNA Conventions**

VSNA Conventions is a mega event held every year to provide forum for all chapters to meet and exchange ideas. Vachana scholars and saints are often invited from India to speak at these events. Traditionally, the conventions are held during the July 4<sup>th</sup> US Independence Day holiday weekend. A convention hosting chapter is selected for the convention. Few key programs are Linga Yoga, Linga Pooja, Anubhava Ghosti, and spiritual talks by invited guests. Besides these we also have general body meeting, combined BOD and BOR Meeting, new officers orientation, and other social programs such as business forums, CME, singles meet, youth interactions and site seeing based on the decision and convenience of local committees. For the list of past conventions since 1978, please refer to web link given in Appendix – A.

## **VSNA Publications & Newsletters**

VSNA publishes books, pamphlets and brochures. VSNA also publishes quarterly newsletters called Baandhavaya. So far we have more than 30 publications. Links to publications, newsletters and bylaws are given in Appendix-A.

## **VSNA Convention Trust Fund**

The concept of CTF was presented at the Detroit Convention in the year 1997. The Convention was seen as the best way to build the sense of belonging among all Veerashaivas. It was strongly felt that the Convention registration cost be kept reasonable to make affordable for all Veerashaivas to attend. At the same time, it was agreed that the Conventions should meet some basic standard and cater comfortable facilities that can only be served by major Hotels.

The basic purpose of the CTF was to raise about one million dollars and the investment returns from the fund (without touching the capital) would offset the ever escalating costs of the Convention. It was memorable and emotional in that around \$320,000 was pledged during the few hours of a well-orchestrated appeal in 1997 followed by subsequent pledges totaling about \$275000 or so. In every subsequent Convention for few years, time was allotted to seek pledges and collect checks for the CTF drive.

The latest update on financials of the Convention Trust Fund is available on-line. Please see link given in Appendix-A.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why should we become life member?**

Your life membership donation goes a long way in supporting the cause of the organization and consecutively enhancing your spirituality and that of your posterity. According to the constitution the VSNA cannot touch the life membership donation. However, it can use the interest it generates to cover administrative expenses including the cost of production and mailing of the newsletter. The following are additional reasons to become Life Members of the VSNA:

1. It gives a sense of belonging in this alien land.
2. It provides a sense of sharing and caring.
3. It gives our children a feeling of friendship and kinship.
4. It comforts us by letting us know that we care for fellow Lingayats.
5. It inculcates in our children's mind the value of the Dasoha principle.
6. It creates a sense of pride about our way of life, legacy and heritage.
7. It gives us the confidence that the VSNA is with us through thick and thin.
8. It provides solace and comfort in times of need and hurting.
9. It furnishes all VSNA publications free of costs to life members.

10. It sends a convention souvenir to all the life members.

### **What are the other benefits for central membership?**

In addition to reasons stated above for becoming a life-member, a member enjoys the following benefits:

1. You are connected with VSNA member directory.
2. You would receive discount at annual convention.
3. Members get to lead various volunteer/community impact activities.
4. You have the option to charitable causes in India via VSNA.

### **Where can I find latest list of life members?**

VSNA has around 300 life members and there is a need to grow further keeping with Basava followers in US and Canada. The latest list of life-members is published online. See Appendix-A for the link to List of VSNA Life Members.

## **Appendix-A – Important Links on VSNA.ORG Web Site**

Please click on the links given below for the latest information on the VSNA.ORG site.

1. [VSNA Mission](#)
2. [VSNA Member Documents](#) contains the following:
  - a. VSNA Bylaws
  - b. Central Officer Orientation
  - c. Local Chapter Officer Orientation
  - d. Annual Convention Manual
  - e. VSNA Welcome Kit
3. [VSNA Central Officers](#)
4. [VSNA Board of Directors](#)
5. [VSNA Board of Regents](#)
6. [VSNA Local Chapter Presidents](#)
7. VSNA Local Chapters can be accessed via Main Page of VSNA.ORG. Additional local chapter sites are given in Chapter Presidents table.
8. [VSNA Past Presidents](#)
9. [VSNA Chapters – Year of Creation](#)
10. [VSNA Newsletters](#)
11. [VSNA Publications](#)
12. [VSNA BOD – Meetings](#)
13. [VSNA BOR – Meetings](#)
14. [VSNA Convention Trust Fund](#)
15. [VSNA Convention Site](#)
16. [VSNA Life Members](#)