December 2013, Issue 5



Bi-monthly newsletter from MANOFA

Message from the President

Dear MANOFA Members,

It is almost time to say goodbye to 2013 and welcome 2014. It is also time for MANOFA 2013 executive committee to say goodbye. At this time, 2013 executive committee would like to express our sincere gratitude to all MANOFA members for supporting us throughout the year. For every successful program that we conducted in 2013, you all deserve a big applause, without your help, we could not have conducted these successful activities.

It has been a very pleasant journey for us. In the beginning of the year, all executive members of 2013 committee had a great vision on what activities we can bring for MANOFA members with limited budget. I can proudly say that, we were very successful in all planned activities, thanks to our dedicated executive team. We had a program almost in every month.

Highlights of 2013 programs:

- Started Malayalam Class for kids. We had classes for 36 weekends, special thanks to 16 teachers volunteered for this new initiative -Aiswarya, Anitha, Anju, Bindu, Febin, Geetha, Jeane, Lincy, Minu, Nithya, Nitina, Reshma, Smitha, Suja, Suresh and Yusuff
- Conducted multiple Sports tournaments Badminton in Feb/March, Volleyball/Throw ball in April and again in December and Soccer Camp in Oct/Nov. Thanks to Sports Directors, **Jitesh and Joseph**.
- Our cultural Directors, Bishak, Yusuff and Celin, did a fantastic job in bringing high quality cultural programs during Vishu/Easter and Onam celebration. They are currently preparing for mind blowing entertainment programs for our Jan 4th Christmas/New year celebration. Special thanks to Jijosh for helping with ONAM program and stage decoration. Also wanted to express my since thanks to all Choreographers and Coordinators of the cultural programs.
- Food coordination is one of the most difficult tasks. Our Food and Beverage Directors Lucy, Sheila and Mini took that challenge and did an excellent job.
- Romy, Jesin and Sebastian did a wonderful job as Membership directors.
- Special thanks to Public Relations Director **Suja** for handling MANOFA newsletter. I am sure, you have noticed the quality that she has brought in throughout the year on our newsletter.
- Facilities directors **Regin and Bala** handled light and sound most efficiently during our cultural programs.





President

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- This year, we received sponsorship from most of the Indian Business in Jacksonville. Thanks to Sponsorship directors **Sujit and Wilson**. Special thanks to **House of Spices** for becoming our grand sponsor.
- We also brought many Malayalam Movies this year. Thanks to Events Director **Boban** for tirelessly working for bringing these movies to Jacksonville.
- Our Technical Director Tony did a wonderful job in maintaining our website.

- We filed 501c (3) this year to IRS and now awaiting for their approval. Thanks to our Treasurer **Sunil** for spending too many hours to prepare all requested documents. Special thanks to Joint Treasurer **Bindu** for helping Sunil with MANOFA accounts.
- Thanks to our Vice President **Johny Johns** for helping us through the year and providing valuable advices to move us forward.
- With proper communication and a pillar behind every MANOFA program, our Dedicated Secretary **Madhu** has coordinated the whole team, supported by **Binu**.

Overall, I had a great team, great support from members like you, and that helped us to bring best possible activities or programs in 2013. At this time, I thank everyone in my team for their sincere efforts and their hard work and also to their families for sparing time for MANOFA. I also express my sincere thanks to all members for giving me an opportunity to serve you.

Wishing you all Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year 2014.

Thanking you,

Suresh Madathil President, MANOFA



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Major Events of the year

	000000000000000000000000000000000000000
nam Celebration	September 14, 2013
cnic	May 11, 2013
aster/Vishu Celebration	April 6, 2013





Annual Round up

Dear Friends,



Madhu Thomas Secretary

The MANOFA-2013 has made great strides over the past year towards our mission of services and supports to our community as a whole. Innovation, education and fitness were our main focus during this year with the launch of our first ever Malayalam class and recreational sports activities along with other cultural programs, movies etc. We are proud of everything accomplished on our watch and look forward to continued success from the future committees. We would like to list out few of our activities accomplished during this busy year

- 1. MANOFA first ever Badminton League Tournament at YMCA
- 2. Successful Screening of Blockbuster Malayalam movie screenings in Jacksonville
- 3. MANOFA-2013 Committee Family Night
- 4. Weekly Malayalam Class throughout the year
- 5. Bi-Monthly Newsletter
- 6. Easter-Vishu Program Night
- 7. A Day @ Hannah Park Fun Filled MANOFA Picnic
- 8. Soccer camp for Kids
- 9. Graduation Ceremony for Malayalam Class Students
- 10. Grand Onam Celebration
- 11. 501(c3) Filing
- 12. India Independence Day Parade
- 13. Volleyball Throw ball Indoor Tournaments during Sprint and Winter
- 14. Teacher's appreciation lunch for Malayalam class volunteers
- 15. Successful MANOFA Election Process
- 16. Christmas New year Gala

Thanks to all MANOFA members to participate and support every event we presented this year, the success of this committee can be attributed to the tremendous improvement in community participation during the last one year.

The executive committee and extended committees worked so hard this year to make it a memorable one so far.

Once again thanks to all for your continued support and participation.

Regards,

Madhu Thomas Secretary, MANOFA

> Mark your Calendars!! MANOFA CHRISTMAS NEW YEAR GALA Saturday, Jan 04, 2014 at 4:00 PM THE BOLLES SCHOOL, SAN JOSE BLVD



Financials

Hello and Happy Holidays to all MANOFA families!

I am glad to provide you with a snapshot of the current financials of our organization.

We started year 2013 with a balance of \$ 6920.27.

Major Source of Income in 2013:

Grand Sponsor Onam Sponsors		Thanks to House of Spices for their continued support. Thanks to all businesses that helped us cover the cost of our
		program.
Membership fees	\$ 1088	We have one of the lowest fee in comparison to other peer
-		organizations while providing maximum value to our members.



Sunil Nair Treasurer

Major Expenses in 2013

Picnic		This is a free event for all members
501 (C) 3 filing fee	\$ 850	This is a major investment we made this year. All going well, we expect to get our tax exempt status from the IRS in the year 2014.

Summary of unaudited account statement as of Nov 30th 2013

Particulars	Net Income / (Expense)	
Opening Balance	\$ 6,920.27	
Event Insurance	\$ (162.85)	
Interest	\$ 3.76	
Membership fees *	\$ 1,088.00	
Website	\$ (47.00)	
Florida State filing	\$ (65.60)	
Movie	\$ 128.76	
Malayalam Class	\$ 386.47	
Badminton Tournament	\$ 188.00	
Paypal fees	\$ (18.00)	
Picnic 2013	\$ (497.28)	
Others	\$ (110.69)	
Grand Sponsor 2013	\$ 1,450.00	
Vishu Easter 2013	\$ (149.61)	
Volleyball Throwball Tournament 2013	\$ (193.37)	
Onam 2013	\$ 229.10	
501 C 3	\$ (850.00)	
Soccer Camp 2013	\$ 71.06	
Net Bank Balance as on 11/30/2013	\$ 8,371.02	



* Membership fees for 2013 received after Jan 1st 2013.

Major Budgeted Expense to be incurred:

Sports Day, X Mas / New Year program, replace cables for sound system.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sunil Nair, Treasurer, MANOFA

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21st AGENT OF CHANGE

Anoop Mohan

"Though they made us close we were never close enough to know what exactly is happening each day in your friend's world".



Change is the word that is most beautiful at times and at times most lethal. You love change when it happens for good and you dislike it when it tears apart your comfort zone. Change touches you every day, every second with or without you knowing it. Agent of change has been having various forms throughout the different timelines in history and now when we stand in a world made smaller by those long running optical cables across it, the agent of change has never been so close to us.

Back in 90s, we had the telephone landlines that helped us to get connected with each other and as we moved towards 21st century cell phones came that made us closer. Though they made us close we were never close enough to know what exactly is happening each day in your friend's world. Then orkut came that changed the game, the way it had been being played for all these years.

Orkut brought a new dimension to our life until the day we started logging into facebook that showed us that the new dimension shown by orkut was smaller. Though I joined FB in 2007 I was never an active user. Before I write further let be clear that I am not here to write praise songs for FB.

Slowly with passage of time my inbox started getting numerous requests from my friends and from people whom I had no clue who they were, as the race to increase the friends count had started. FB had started making its mark in world's largest democracy and the marketing gurus were realizing the potential it could open up for a one to one marketing. Initially I logged just once in a week and that soon changed to once in every day which soon ended with every couple of hours. The fun of exposing my life to others and pleasure in peeping into others life were all time high.

Number of likes for every crap we put out there was like medals on the chest. I could see change sitting in my home, at park, car or even at office just by running my fingers across the smart phone. I could see change kissing my friends every second. I could see where they are, what they are doing, whom they are with, what they are eating, what they wear, did they sleep or woke up, did they exercise, do they love their mom, did they graduate, did they engage or break up, how it looks when it rains in Dubai. what movie they saw, which car they are driving and even what they are feeling right at this moment...In a nutshell I could see every second in their lives when change touches it. As we walk down further and the present becomes past and part of the history I am sure this agent of change would be remembered for a long time, for the generations to come.

Winner of the October edition Onam Quiz - Gokul Madathil Congratulations Gokul!!



Under the Underground City

In a secret city beneath the streets of Jacksonville lived Xia Black. She was quiet and peculiar, with dark blue ringlets of hair tumbling down her back and sea green eyes. Xia was different from the others. While everyone was indoors complaining about the lack of light and vitamin D, Xia was down swimming by the makeshift pond. She loved the feeling of cold water soaking her skin and the cool mud seeping between her toes.

One day, Xia was trudging home from school, clutching a metal flashlight to find the way. Since the Underground Alliance (her city) didn't have a sky like the people above ground did, there was no source of natural light. Electricity was hard to find, too. Suddenly, she heard footsteps behind her. They stopped when she stopped. And the next thing she knew, she was laying face down on the tightly packed earth.

"Look at Xia, everybody! She's so stupid and helpless. Why does she even try to live? The city needs people that can actually help," Xia heard snickers. It was Leona, the mayor's snobby daughter. *Of course!* thought Xia. *I* need to get out of here. Leona's best friend, Naomi, shined the flashlight in Xia's face.

"What do you want?" Xia asked.

"I want you to go away. Pack up and leave. Your family caused us shame a long time ago and is nothing but a couple of extra mouths to feed. Plus, you give our city a bad image," Leona sneered.

"Nobody even knows our city exists! What 'image' do we have? And everybody knows that if my family leaves, your dad will just keep the extra food," Xia said.

"False. We would distribute the extra food evenly," Leona looked away and defensively crossed her arms over her chest. "I'm telling you that in the end, my father and I will have built the greatest underground city on Earth. We'll be rich and you? You'll just be rotting on the streets," Leona scornfully exclaimed, walking away without looking back.

"Whatever! I'm going home!" Xia tried to yell without her voice quivering.

"To your mommy? I thought so." Leona smirked back. Xia got up and started walking. A scrape on her elbow stung. Leona had always despised Xia. And Xia never had anything good to say back. There wasn't any meanness in her. Xia sighed and walked through the door of her rickety wooden house. Her mom greeted her holding a pan of raspberry muffins.

"Um, I don't want any. Thanks, though," Xia said.

"You sure? They're your favorite,"

"Nah. I'll just head to the warehouse after a quick shower," Xia explained. It was Xia's job to help out and earn some money after school. She showered using the limited amount of water given, and put on the uniform. She then walked over to the small little building down the street. Today was packaging day, the manager said. Xia was being promoted to the position of Assistant Manager. After thanking him immensely, she scoped out her new office. And that was when she noticed it. A small rectangle etched into a corner of the wall.

Xia's fingers brushed over it, giving them a white coating of soft dust. The faint letters 'R.J.' were



Rohini Kumar

"Xia was down swimming by the makeshift pond. She loved the feeling of cold water soaking her skin and the cool mud seeping between her toes"



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"At the bottom, there was a hot, humid room with crumbling walls made out of red clay. Strange patterns were drawn everywhere"



carved into the rectangle. Xia edged her fingernails into the wall and tried to pull out the rectangle. It slid open about half an inch, like a drawer. Inside was an elegant silver key. What is this? She thought. The warehouse has secret keys? And I thought this building was the most boring one in the city. She slid the key into her apron pocket and got to work, completely forgetting about the day's findings.

The next week, Xia walked down to the warehouse cellar where anybody hardly ever went. She was carrying a box of glass soda bottles. Suddenly, she tripped and fell on a rat carcass. The bottles shattered. Dirt and dust flew up in clouds around her. Xia cursed quietly to herself and got up, sneezing like crazy. Then she saw that where the dust had flown up were wooden square amid all the cement tiles. The letters 'R.J.' was carved into it in the same handwriting she had seen before. It looked familiar. And then it came back to her. The small rectangle in the wall. The key! She frantically reached into her pocket. It was still there. Xia crouched down after the dust had settled once more. She ran her fingers across the wood piece until she found a tiny hole in the middle. Xia clumsily stuffed the key into the opening and turned.

It sounded far away, but Xia was sure she had heard the quiet click of the key. She wedged her sweating fingers into the thin space between the board and the cement. Xia pulled up the wood with all her strength. The board came up smoothly, like it was used daily. It turned out to be a trapdoor. Cautiously, she stepped down onto the first step of the staircase twisting down. She did so with each step, clinging to the gravelly banister.

At the bottom, there was a hot, humid room with crumbling walls made out of red clay. Strange patterns were drawn everywhere and there were fading pictures etched into random spots on the floor. Xia just glanced around, smelling the musty smell of old books. She found herself in a very stereotypical situation, sort of enjoying it. She examined the corners of walls and the floor for more strange rectangles or wood panels. But there was nothing. Finally she got up off the floor and walked back to the steps. She decided to assume that the room must have been an old basement or something. Suddenly, she found herself falling. (Xia did that a lot.) She looked to what she had tripped over and found something very curious.

There was a clump of 7 or 8 hairpins stuck into the ground. She dug with her bare hands; getting clay underneath her fingernails she had worked so hard to get clean. And then Xia felt a jolt of pain go up her fingers. A trickle of blood mixed into the ground. Her fingers had just gotten cut on a metal point. Struggling to get the blood off of her hands, she pulled out the metal point slowly. It was the edge of a large, heavy diary with 'Rachel Jackson' written in black on the front. Then it occurred to her that Rachel Jackson was indeed the wife of the old president Andrew Jackson, whom Jacksonville was named after. It all made sense now. Xia had just discovered the lost treasure of Rachel Jackson!

With the book were a small velvet bag of golden coins and a wallet sized portrait of the president. Then there was a little wooden chest filled with old jewelry and spare change. Xia smiled to herself. This was something great to donate to their small museum, and rub in Leona's face. Maybe her family could even be accepted again. Quietly, Xia thanked her lucky stars (simultaneously wondering what stars looked like) for being born under a city as great as Jacksonville. She knew she wouldn't feel at home anywhere else.

Dhwani

Art Corner







Jijosh Varkey

Cheers!!

Please join us to congratulate the budding writer, **Rohini Kumar** for winning the 1st **Place** in the 2013 Short Story Contest for middle school category (12-14 years old) conducted by Jacksonville Public Library!!



December Birthday babies!!

Happy birthday to Devna Prajish & Advait Shankar Nair!!





The Facebook Addiction

"Yawn...the sun is shining into my eyes....its morning again. Time to wake up and start another day. My hands stretch out to the bedside table and reach for my glasses and my iPhone on the bedside charger. I wear my glasses with my left hand while unlocking the phone with my right and opening my Facebook App. You scroll through the news feed catching me up to all the updates that happened since I put it on the charger last night. You see I have friends across the globe and I greedily drink in all their updates. LIKE, LIKE...COMMENT...COM MENT. With satisfaction I note my notifications have 28 unread messages. I open it with glee to see how many likes and comments I got on the pictures and status that I updated before I went to sleep, I smile like a cat and stretch with satisfaction, its time to get off the bed and get started.

My daughter is getting dressed for school. She looks so cute in her uniform. Oh I got to share this. I whip out my 5 MP IPhone Camera, snap a pic, a few cool edits, a frame and guess what I can upload it straight from the phone and ad a nice caption. PING PING, 3 likes already.

I am driving to work and I can feel the phone buzzing. Oh its just work email, I will read those later, it's not 9 am yet. AAAH a few more likes, let's read the comments."

This is a typical start of the day and if I start describing

the rest of the day, I might as well write a book instead of an article. And I am sure it will be the next best seller and will gain a lot of comments on Facebook too.

How many of us can relate to the above? An honest introspective into yourself and I am sure many of you can co-author the above mentioned book with me.

Our world as we grew up has so radically changed, Take a look into the next stroller that parents are pushing around and we see our kids sitting there holding smartphones and playing, Take a look into a car that is driving by. Gone are the days when kids used to demand, cry and beg to sit at the window seat because they wanted to look outside at the trees, at the cars, at the WORLD in general. Today the world is in their palms and their tiny fingers are adept at unlocking and searching to the apps to find the games or you tube videos. I couldn't have imagined a 5 year old being adept at Temple Run or searching for Disney videos on You Tube.

I notice a family outing, eating food at restaurant. Instead of talking on the day to day matters, the husband picks up his phone and gives it to kid to keep the kid engaged while the wife is busy checking in on Facebook to let the world know about this "family" dinner. Whether the food was satisfying or not, the number of likes on the Check in was definitely satisfying. The memories of my days, events and other happenings in my life are more stored on my Facebook albums than in my heart, mind and soul. One day when I suddenly decided to look up from my phone screen, I realized that life has been zipping by while my head was bent over and I have to go back into my Albums and statuses to see what I have missed. Subconsciously I have been updating my life on my profile instead of actually LIVING it. I am a Facebook addict.

I am not writing this to say Facebook is bad and needs to be shutdown. It's an amazing invention of the modern century and has kept me in touch with friends and family that would have been difficult for me otherwise. Facebook has brought long lost friends back in touch.

I am writing this article to say my addiction to Facebook is bad and like all addicts who need to recover it time I consciously to a detox to my system to get rid of this addiction before my life lives itself and I am left catching up through memories stored on some servers owned by Mr. Zuckerberg instead of my intellectual rights stored between my ears.

I don't want my life to turn into a Facebook wasteland. This is not the legacy that I want to leave behind for my kid. I want to stop and smell the flowers and capture the moment in my heart. Its time to look up from Facebook and look at the faces around me.



Jijosh Varkey

"I notice a family outing, eating food at restaurant. Instead of talking on the day to day matters, the husband picks up his phone and gives it to kid to keep the kid engaged"



Beauty Tips



GREEN CHILLY : FOR PIMPLES AND INFLAMMATIONS

Grind together 6 green chillies (the more potent the better) & 10 tablespoons of water, strain and using a Qtip (ear bud) apply only to the infected part. Do it 4 to 5 times a day, in 48 hrs see the vanishing act. Bottle it and store in the fridge for, not more, than 4 days. Of course nothing beats freshly ground juice.

SUGAR : TO ACQUIRE SOFT LIPS

Exfoliate with sugar.Put a pinch of sugar in the palm of your hand. Soak the fingertips of the opposite hand with water. Mix a few droplets of water with the sugar until it is pasty. Apply in a circular motion to your lips in order to exfoliate. Use your index finger and move in gentle small circles, then all the way around the lips. This will not only soften your lips, but it'll also clean them and leave a lingering sweetness behind.



PAPAYA : TO EXFOLIATE THE SKIN

Take a slice of raw papaya and puree it to convert into a fine paste. This will clean and exfoliate your skin. Papaya is also considered effective removal of blemishes and dark spots on skin.

Holiday Decorating Tips

SIMPLY STRIKING

The trick to making your holiday decor feel like home is by injecting your personal style into the details. Turn a bare windowsill into a stylish nook in no time by filling glass jars of varying heights and shapes with leftover balls for a dramatic, high-impact display.

FESTIVE ARRANGEMENT

The secret to pulling off a show-stopping arrangement that speaks to your style is by keeping the decorative elements simple. Fill a glass hurricane with an assortment of holiday ornaments, and then surround it with lush greenery.



CHARMING COUNTDOWN

This unique adaptation of the traditional Advent calendar speaks to the spirit of the season. Replace a leaning mirror for the month of December and fill the pint–size numbered bags with some of your family's favorite treats.

Would like to see your advertisement in Dhwani?

Contact MANOFA for more information at 904-335-8680 or send an email to newsletter@manofa.org

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Recipe

Kerala Christmas Plum Cake

Ingredients:

1 cup plain flour
1/2 cup chopped cashewnuts
1/4 cup black raisins
1/2 cup mixed dry fruits (dates, cherries, orange peels)
1 + .5 cups white sugar
2/3 cup butter, at room temperature
3 eggs
1 clove + 1 cardamom pod + small piece of cinnamon + a pinch nutmeg (pound together to powder)
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla extract
A pinch of salt

How It's Made:

1. Christmas fruit cake requires you to caramelize sugar. Don't be like me and worry about it, it's really not that hard, you just need to be careful while doing it. In a pan on medium heat, melt 1/2 cup sugar slowly. It will first melt and then turn into a dark brown goop. Keep stirring and let it turn a deep dark caramel colour. Don't let it burn. Turn off heat and add about 1/4 cup water. The sugar will harden. Turn the heat back on and slowly heat the mixture until the sugar crystals dissolve. This will take around 10 mins. Let this cool and set aside.

Pre-heat oven to 350F / 180C.

2. Add 3 tbsp flour to the dry fruits and nuts and dredge completely to coat it. This is so that they don't sink to the bottom of the batter while baking. Set aside.

3. Mix the remaining flour and baking powder, spices, and salt until well combined.

4. Beat the butter and 1 cup sugar until fluffy - about 10 mins by hand, 3-4 mins with an electric beater. Add vanilla and mix until combined. Next, add 1 egg and beat. Then add a bit of the flour mixture and fold. Likewise, alternate between the eggs and flour mixture until they are used up.

5. Add the cooled caramel and dredged fruits and gently fold in. Pour batter into a greased cake pan and smooth the top.

6. Bake for 50-55 mins until the top turns a dark brown and when a skewer inserted into the cake comes out with dry crumbs. You can start checking from 45 mins but usually in our oven, it takes up to 55 mins. The top will look like it's overdone but don't worry, make sure the inside is also completely cooked.

7. Dust with icing sugar when the cake is completely. cooled (you can also hide any cracks on top with this)

Notes:

- 1. The amount of fruits and types of it is entirely up to you. It's recommended to use orange peels if you can because it enhances the flavour a lot.
- 2. We are not huge fans of raisins in Christmas cake, so we adjust the quantity of that. You can do the same.
- 3. If you plan to ice the cake, reduce sugar by 1/3 cup. This cake is sweet enough on it's own.







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From the Editor's desk – a note of thanks

This edition marks the final edition of Dhwani for the year 2013 and the last produced under the 2013 committee. I would like to take a moment to thank each one of you for being loval readers. A big thank you to ourregular contributors, **Eldhose**, **Anoop**, Remya, Abel, Gokul, Jijosh & Leji. And thank you to Madhu, Suresh & Reshma for their immense support and enormous encouragement during each edition. Special thanks to Remya for being my 'collage girl' helping me creating picture collages after each event, it did save a lot of my time.

I'm glad to be given an opportunity to be a part of the committee and to work on the newsletter; I did enjoy working on each edition and to be associated with each one of you who were involved. Though I tried to make each edition interesting, I know there are millions of ways for improvement and I'm sure the next person(s) to take up the baton will make it much more attractive than what it had been. All the best to the 2014 committee!!

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year everyone!!

Signing off,

Suchetha Ravishankar

Team MANOFA 2013

President Vice-President Secretary Joint Secretary Treasurer Joint Treasurer Directors, Cultural Events Directors, Membership Directors, Public Relations Directors, Sponsorship Directors, Sponts Directors, Food & Beverages Directors, Facilities Directors, Events	 Suresh Madathil Johny Johns Madhu Thomas Binu Narayan Sunil Nair Bindu Ravi Celin Sunny, Bishak Menon, Yusuff Kulapurakkal Sebastian Joseph, Romy Paul, Jesin Panjikaran Suchetha Ravishankar, Jeena Mathai Sujith Gangadharan, Philip Mathew (Wilson) Joseph Francis, Jithesh Pallikkara Lucy Cherian, Sheila Konnully, Mini Puthusseril Regin Ravindran, Balakumar Boban Abraham
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Renew your membership at http://www.manofa.org/online-membership-form.html

