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## Vokkaligara Parishat of America

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(Regd: 1988, A not for profit cultural Organization Tax ID: 31-1529941)



# Constitution

Amended on July 03, 2011

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# CONSTITUTION

## The Vokkaligara Parishat of America

### PREAMBLE:

We, the Vokkaliga community in the United States of America, in order to promote and organize cultural and educational programs for the Vokkaliga population of America, and to support humanitarian causes through charitable activities, and to further the intercultural understanding among the people of the United States of America and Vokkaligas in other parts of the world, do hereby join together to form an organization.

### ARTICLE I: NAME, EMBLEM AND DEFINITIONS

#### Section 1:

The name and title of this organization shall be the Vokkaligara Parishat of America, hereinafter called VPA. It shall be a not-for-profit organization registered under the laws of the State of Illinois and shall exist in perpetuity. The term "Vokkaliga" shall include those who can trace their ancestry to people engaged in the farming occupation in Karnataka, India. The term "Parishat" shall mean an organization.

#### Section 2:

The emblem of the organization shall be composed of two concentric circles resulting in a ring and a circle. The space inside the inner circle shall display a Vokkaliga tilling the land with a bullock-drawn plough which symbolizes all the agricultural activities. The outer ring shall carry the inscriptions "VOKKALIGARA PARISHAT OF AMERICA  
ಬಕ್ಕಲಿಗರ ಪರಿಷತ್ತು, ಅಮೇರಿಕ "ನೇಗಿಲ ಕುಳದೊಳಗಡಗಿದ ಕರ್ಮ ನೇಗಿಲ ಮೇಲೆಯೆ ನಿಂತಿದೆ ಧರ್ಮ"  
(*"Duty is hidden in the ploughshare; Dharma is standing on the plough"*) from the Poet Laureate Kuvempu's poem "Negila Yogi" (*"Plowing Yogi"*). The emblem of the VPA shall be displayed prominently on all official documents and publications of the organization. No changes shall be made in or to the emblem without the approval of VPA's General Body.

### ARTICLE II: MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Section 1: MISSION

The mission of the organization is to maintain, preserve and perpetuate the heritage of the Vokkaliga people residing in the United States of America (USA), who are of the farming ancestry from India, commonly called Vokkaligas in the Kannada language, which term shall include, but not limited to, Gowdas, Reddys, Bunts, Gounders, etc. through the establishment of a national organization of VPA with four (4) regional Chapters under the National Organization: VPA-East, VPA-Midwest, VPA-West and VPA-South. Additional regional chapters may be formed by the national organization with the approval of the General Body.

## **Section 2: OBJECTIVES**

- A. To assist and promote literary, cultural, educational, religious, social, economic, health and community activities of the people of the Vokkaliga community of the United States of America;
- B. To promote exchange programs for students, scientists and professionals of the Vokkaliga community between the United States of America (USA) and other countries;
- C. To invite distinguished Vokkaliga scholars; artists, artisans and statesmen to the USA for lectures, seminars and congregations and to arrange similar programs in India on a reciprocal basis;
- D. To solicit, raise and disburse funds for charitable purposes, cultural, religious and educational activities, directly or in cooperation with other not-for-profit organizations in the USA to meet the goals of this organization;
- E. To create a network of VPA members who shall assist newly arrived Vokkaligas to pursue their professional goals in the USA and offer guidance and help to those in need;
- F. To organize literary, educational, youth and cultural conferences either independently or in cooperation with other not-for-profit organizations with similar goals and objectives;
- G. To encourage members to support and participate in the activities of Kannada Kootas / Sanghas and similar Indian cultural organizations in the USA; and
- H. To garner and channel the resources of Vokkaligas in the USA to provide material and technical assistance to the rural communities in Karnataka India, and thereby aid in the improvement of their health, education and economic conditions.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP**

The VPA shall consist of six (6) types of membership.

- A. **ANNUAL MEMBER:** Any qualified person who contributes \$20.00 per year is an annual member. Family membership dues are \$40.00. A person is deemed qualified if he/she satisfies all the conditions listed in Section 2 below.
- B. **BI-ANNUAL MEMBER:** Any qualified person who contributes \$40.00 bi-annually shall be a bi-annual member. Family membership dues are \$80.00 bi-annually. A person is deemed qualified if he/she satisfies all the conditions listed in Section 2 below.
- C. **LIFE MEMBER:** Life membership is granted to any qualified person and his/her family who contribute \$500.00 or more to the VPA.

- D. **PATRON MEMBER:** Any qualified person and his/her family who contribute \$1000.00 or more to the VPA is entitled to be a Patron member.
- E. **GRAND PATRON MEMBER:** Any qualified person and his/her family who contribute \$5000.00 or more to the VPA is entitled to be a Grand Patron member.
- F. **HONORARY MEMBER:** Qualifications: Anyone who has performed an outstanding service for the Vokkaliga community or attained excellence in any human endeavor that resulted in National or International recognition is deemed qualified to be nominated as an honorary member in the VPA.

**Nomination and Approval Process:** An active member of the VPA may nominate a person deemed eligible for honorary membership. It is the responsibility of the proposing member to provide necessary information to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. The Board of Trustees shall review and vote within six (6) months of the nomination. Unanimous approval of the Trustees is required to grant an honorary membership. The honorary member shall have, for his/her life, all the rights and privileges of an annual member of the VPA with the exception of the right to vote or hold an elected office.

## **Section 2: MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS AND VOTING ELIGIBILITY**

Family members include husband and wife and their children under the age of 25 years. All members over the age of 18 are entitled to vote. Each member shall have one vote. Any person wishing to become a member of the VPA shall:

- A. (i) Be at least 18 years of age;
  - (ii) Subscribe to the Mission and Objectives of the VPA as defined in Article II; and
  - (iii) Complete the Membership Form and pay the appropriate membership dues.
- B. Dues are subject to modifications in accordance with Article III, section 3.
- C. A family membership is entitled for two votes.

## **Section 3: MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Membership dues may be recommended by the Board of Trustees (BOT) from time to time for approval by a simple majority of the General Body. Any revision in the membership dues shall not be made more than once in two years and shall be effective beginning the following year. Any member can upgrade his/her membership status to a higher level of his/her choice by paying the difference in membership dues. The membership status shall be effective from the date of the receipt of the payment.

Annual, Bi-annual and Life membership dues shall be paid in full at the time of application. The Patron and Grand Patron membership dues shall be paid in full or in two equal installments within one year.

## **Section 4: WITHDRAWALS OF MEMBERSHIP**

A member may request withdrawal of his/her membership in writing at any time to the BOT. Upon approval of such a request by the BOT, the Secretary shall remove the name from the roster. Paid dues are not refundable. A person wishing to regain the membership shall go through the application process again.

## **Section 5: DISQUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS**

Documented activities against the purposes of the organization as defined in Article II shall constitute grounds for disqualification from membership by the BOT. A member may be disqualified on the grounds of anti-organization activity, incompetence, corruption, extortion, felony conviction or gross misconduct. The allegations shall be communicated to the member by the BOT in a reasonably acceptable manner such as certified mail or registered mail. The member who has been charged shall then be entitled to a hearing before the BOT. Two-thirds (2/3) of the BOT must be present for a hearing to occur on such charges. In order to be eligible for the aforementioned procedure, the aggrieved member shall request a hearing in writing within sixty (60) days from the date of the notification of disqualification. The request should be sent in writing to the national VPA President or the Secretary by certified or registered mail. Approval of a majority of the BOT members present shall be required for disqualification of membership rights. A copy of the decision shall be communicated to the member within thirty (30) days of the hearing.

## **Section 6: GENERAL BODY COMPOSITION; NOTICES; QUORUM**

- A. **Composition:** The General Body shall consist of all five types of VPA members described in Article III, Section 1.
- B. **Notices:** Written notice stating the place, date and time of a General Body meeting, and in case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be sent by the Secretary by a reasonable means such as electronic media or mail, to each member entitled to vote at such meetings, not less than twenty one (21) days nor more than sixty (60) days prior to the date of such a meeting. If mailed, such notice(s) shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the United States mail, addressed to the member at his/her address as it appears in the records of the organization.
- C. **Quorum:** Twenty percent (20%) of the membership or one hundred (100) members, whichever is higher, present in person, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a General Body meeting. All proposals, except amendments to the Constitution, are considered approved if voted by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. No proxies shall be permitted. Meetings of the General Body shall be held during the bi-annual VPA National Convention. Constitutional amendments shall require a quorum of twenty percent (20%) of the total membership or one hundred (100) voting members, whichever is higher, plus a majority of the BOT. Any Constitutional amendment requires the support of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the membership who are entitled to vote and are present at the meeting. No proxies shall be permitted.

A quorum for the BOT and Executive Committee, shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the members who are entitled to vote at the meeting for the transaction of business at that meeting, regardless of whether the vote is taken in person, by mail, email, fax, or teleconference. A majority decision shall be binding.

Fifty percent (50%) of the Committee members must be present in person to constitute a quorum for all other committees. A majority decision shall be binding.

The General Body of the VPA shall elect the officers of the national VPA (President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and Joint Treasurer) and the BOT of the VPA and vote on the amendments to the Constitution.

### **Section 7: INFORMAL ACTIONS BY MEMBERS**

An impromptu action, with the exception of meeting of the General Body and the BOT, may be taken without previous notice to the members if consent setting forth the action to be taken, is given by the majority of the members entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof. Such consent shall have the same force and effect of that of a notice required to be given.

## **ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT)**

### **Section 1: GENERAL POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS**

The BOT shall be responsible for adopting the policies and procedures for the operation and management of the VPA. The day-to-day operation and management of the affairs of the VPA shall be handled by the officers (Executive Committee). In case of disagreement between BOT and the officers on operational matters, a majority decision of the combined members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee shall be binding on both parties. The Board of Trustees shall appoint an internal auditor.

The BOT shall be responsible for compliance with the Constitution of the VPA and shall investigate complaints of non-compliance with the bylaws and the election procedures. At the request of the Executive Committee, the BOT shall act as a mediator to resolve disputes and its decision shall be final and binding.

If a member of the Board of Trustees is absent consecutively for more than three meetings, and if the Trustees consider the reasons for such absence to be unsatisfactory, the said member may be removed from the Board by a majority vote of the Board.

### **Section 2: ELECTION OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The BOT and their replacements per Article IV Section 3, shall be elected from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nomination/Election Committee for a term of two (2) years with a simple majority by a direct ballot of the membership present at the General Body meeting. The election of the BOT shall be held in the General Body meeting during each VPA National Convention. Candidates for the BOT shall be present at the General Body meeting to participate as a nominee in the election. Voting by proxy or in absentia shall not be permitted. The voting shall be by secret ballot and the Nomination/Election Committee shall be responsible for the election process.

### **Section 3: NUMBERS, TENURE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF BOT**

The total number of members of the Board of Trustees shall be eighteen (18), with three non-voting members, all of whom shall be either Bi-annual, Life, Patron, or Grand Patron members in good standing except the youth and the young professional members. To qualify for election to the Board of Trustees, a candidate shall be a VPA member in good standing for at least two (2) calendar years, prior to the date of the election. The Trustees

shall be elected by the members of the General Body. The term of membership of a bi-annual member who seeks to contest for the office of the Trustee shall begin at the same time as the term of the Trustee.

***The eighteen (18) members of the Board of Trustees shall include:***

- A. The three (3) current National VPA officers: President, Secretary, and Treasurer for the full term of their offices.
- B. The National Vice President for a two-year term without voting rights
- C. The immediate past President for a two year term.
- D. Four (4) current Regional VPA Presidents, for the full term of their offices.
- E. One (1) Young Professional Social Network Committee member (25 years or older) for a two-year term without voting rights.
- F. One (1) youth member (below 25 years of age) for a two-year term without voting rights.
- G. Seven (7) Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron members for a two-year term, but not more than two from each chapter and no more than one from the host chapter.

**Section 4: MEETINGS OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The BOT shall meet periodically, but not less than (4) four times a year. Two thirds (2/3) of the BOT shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The meeting shall be chaired by the current National President either in person or by using teleconference facilities.

**Section 5: VACANCIES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

A Board of Trustee vacancy shall be filled by a Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron member nominated by the President from the same region from which the vacancy was created until the following election.

**Section 6: DISQUALIFICATION**

The disqualification of a member from the BOT membership is subject to Article III, Section 5.

**ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: MEMBERSHIP, QUALIFICATIONS, ELECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Section 1: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The officers of the National VPA shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and Joint Treasurer. The Executive Committee shall consist of officers of the National VPA. The President, Secretary and Treasurer shall also be members of the Board of Trustees with voting powers. No Executive Committee member shall be elected for more than two (2) consecutive terms for the same office.



The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the President. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management of all activities of the VPA. The Executive Committee shall meet periodically, but not less than four (4) times a year. Two thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum. If any member of the Executive Committee is absent consecutively for more than three (3) meetings, and if the Committee considers the reasons for such absence to be unsatisfactory, the member may be removed by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee and the BOT.

## **Section 2: QUALIFICATIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE, AND ELECTION RULES**

Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a two (2) year term by a simple majority of the voting members present at the General Body meeting during the VPA Convention. All officers, except Joint Secretary and Joint Treasurer, must have been Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron member prior to the date of election. No member shall hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms. Each member of the Executive Committee must have been a member in good standing of the VPA for a minimum of four (4) years prior to election.

- A. The National Vice President shall be from the host chapter. He / She shall be a member of the Board of Trustees without voting rights.
- B. Should there be a vacancy in the Executive Committee, the President shall, with the approval of the BOT, nominate a replacement from the same Chapter who is either a Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron member of the VPA. The appointment shall be made within ninety (90) days from the time of the vacancy. Each replacement shall hold the office until the next election.
- C. Each officer shall transfer all relevant records and assets of the organization to the respective successor no later than January 31<sup>st</sup> following the election year.
- D. The Executive Committee, with the approval of the BOT, shall appoint a Nomination/Election Committee, at least ninety (90) days before the General Body meeting, consisting of a minimum of one representative from each regional Chapter to nominate candidates and conduct the election in consultation with their chapter members. The member from the host chapter shall chair the Committee. The Committee members shall be Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron members in good standing of the organization. The Executive Committee shall adopt the appropriate election procedures and communicate the same to all members. Self nomination is allowed and the applicant may apply for one position only. The Executive Committee shall meet prior to the General Body meeting to finalize and present a slate of qualified and willing candidates to the General Body.

## **Section 3: PRESIDENT**

The President shall be the principal executive officer of the VPA and shall preside over the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee. The President shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organization within the policies prescribed by the Board of Trustees. The President shall perform all duties as may be adopted from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

#### **Section 4: VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice President shall perform duties delegated by the President. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall perform all duties and shall exercise all powers of the President.

#### **Section 5: SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall be the custodian of the VPA official seal and the official electronic records. The Secretary in consultation with the President, shall establish the agenda for all meetings and shall notify the members in advance. The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the meetings and maintaining records. The Secretary shall maintain a list of active members, their addresses and other contact information. The Secretary shall send out notices of meetings and communicate all activities of the organization to the members in writing. At the General Body meeting, the Secretary shall present a report on the activities of the organization during his/her term of office. The Secretary shall perform such additional duties as may be required from time to time by the President.

#### **Section 6: JOINT SECRETARY**

The Joint Secretary shall assist the Secretary in performing the duties incidental to the office of the Secretary and such other duties required from time to time by the President. In the absence of the Secretary, the Joint Secretary shall function as Secretary.

#### **Section 7: TREASURER**

The National Treasurer shall hold the funds of the VPA in appropriate accounts of the FDIC insured financial institutions, as approved by the BOT and disburse the funds according to the decisions made by the Executive Committee and the BOT. The Treasurer shall sign all checks issued on behalf of the VPA and checks equal to or exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) shall be countersigned by the President.

The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of all receipts and expenses, and submit quarterly reports to the BOT and the Executive Committee to keep them informed of the financial status of the VPA. The Treasurer shall prepare an annual financial statement for an audit and facilitate auditing of the financial records by an internal auditor. The auditor shall be appointed by the BOT. The Treasurer shall present a financial report approved by the auditor at the General Body Meeting. Any VPA member may request and receive a copy of the Treasurer's report.

The Treasurer shall be responsible, with the help of the Secretary, for filing the necessary financial returns to the concerned authorities before the due date.

#### **Section 8: JOINT TREASURER**

The Joint Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in performing the duties incidental to the office of the Treasurer. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Joint Treasurer shall function as the Treasurer.

## **ARTICLE VI: STANDING AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

Committees may be formed by the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees with a mandate to address specific issues. There shall be at least one BOT member on each of the committee to keep the Board informed of the deliberations.

### **Section 1: STANDING COMMITTEES**

The following committees constitute the Standing Committees of the VPA:

- A. Bylaws and Ethics Committee
- B. Cultural and Community Service Committee
- C. Young Professional Social Network Committee
- D. Finance and Membership Committee
- E. Youth Committee
- F. Publication Committee
- G. Advisory Committee
- H. Financial Advisory Committee

### **Section 2: MEMBERSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

The terms of office for all standing committees shall be same as that of the appointing Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall appoint the standing committees by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the election year.

#### **A. Bylaws and Ethics Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall, at the beginning of their term, appoint a minimum of four (4) qualified Bi-annual, Life, Patron or Grand Patron members, one from each chapter in good standing in the organization. The Committee may coordinate with the Executive Committee and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Committee shall assist the organization in interpretation of the VPA bylaws and amendments.

#### **B. Cultural and Community Service Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall appoint a committee with qualified members to recommend cultural and community activities to meet the VPA objectives.

#### **C. Young Professional Social Network Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall appoint five young professional members of the VPA to create a social network to promote activities beneficial to young professionals.

#### **D. Finance and Membership Committee:**

The Finance and Membership Committee shall consist of the National Treasurer as the Chair, the National Joint Treasurer and the Treasurers of the regional chapters as members. The Committee shall promote membership of all chapters and recommend prudent practices for the management of the VPA finances.

**E. Youth Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall appoint a youth (under 25 years of age) member as the Chair of the Committee and a youth member (under 25 years of age) from each chapter to form the Committee and assign duties and responsibilities that would encourage youth participation in the operation and growth of the VPA. The Chair of the Youth Committee may participate in the Board of Trustees meetings as a non-voting member.

**F. Publication Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall appoint a Committee of qualified members to publish semi-annual newsletters and a convention souvenir.

**G. Advisory Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall appoint four (4) members to staggered terms of four (4) years so that two members retire every two years to maintain continuity. The Committee members shall be either a Patron, or a Grand Patron member or founding member or a past president in good standing of the VPA and are not holding any office in VPA either at the time of the appointment or has not held a VPA office in the immediate past two years. The Committee members must have knowledge of the organization and have been participants in the activities of the organization for a minimum of three years. The Committee may provide general recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee.

**H. Financial Advisory Committee:**

The Executive Committee may appoint two (2) VPA members who are financial experts to assist the Treasurer in the management of the VPA funds including charitable activities.

**Section 3: OTHER COMMITTEES**

- A. **Nomination/Election Committee:** The Executive Committee of the VPA, with the approval of BOT, shall appoint this Committee, at least ninety (90) days before the General Body meeting, consisting of a minimum of one representative from each regional Chapter. The member from the host chapter shall be the chair and the members shall be Life, Patron or Grand Patron members in good standing. The Committee shall be responsible for receiving nominations, preparing a slate of qualified candidates and conducting elections during the General Body meeting. A nominee for a national office shall not be a member of the Nomination/Election Committee.
- B. The Executive Committee may appoint appropriate ad-hoc or regular committees as needed to facilitate the smooth functioning of the VPA. All members of such

committees shall be Life, Patron or Grand Patron members of the VPA. The committees shall implement proposals approved by the BOT. The Chair of each committee shall report to the Board of Trustees through the President of the VPA.

## **ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The VPA Constitution may be altered, amended or repealed by the General Body pursuant to the procedure stated herein.

**Section 1:** Any member can propose an amendment to the Constitution. The proposed amendment shall be submitted in writing to the BOT and the Executive Committee, at least one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the General Body meeting. The BOT and the Executive Committee shall review the proposed amendment and make recommendations by a majority to the General Body for a final vote. The proposed amendment shall be published at least thirty (30) days prior to the General Body meeting.

**Section 2:** Constitutional amendments shall require a quorum of twenty percent (20%) of the total membership or one hundred (100) voting members, whichever is higher, plus a majority of the BOT. The proposed amendment, alteration or a repeal of the Constitution shall be deemed approved if accepted by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership present at the General Body meeting during the convention. No proxies shall be permitted. The decision shall be communicated to all members through the VPA website and through the VPA magazine which shall be published by the end of the calendar year following the election.

**Section 3:** The amendment, alteration, or repeal of the Constitution shall become effective from the first day of January of the year following the General Body meeting or as stated in the specific amendment.

## **ARTICLE VIII: MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS**

**Section 1:** The VPA Reserve Fund shall be established to contain various contributions and receipts such as the membership contributions from the Life, Patron and Grand Patron members, special contributions and any other surplus funds. The National Treasurer shall deposit its share of the Life, Patron and Grand Patron membership dues in the VPA Reserve Fund. The BOT shall set general investment guidelines for prudent investment and the Treasurer may consult the Financial Advisory Committee to optimize the risk and income potential.

**Section 2:** Distribution of various categories of VPA funds shall be as follows:

- A. Annual and Bi-Annual membership dues shall be retained in the respective regional chapters.
- B. Twenty five (25) percent of Life/Patron/Grand Patron membership dues shall be retained by the National VPA with the remaining seventy five (75) percent distributed to the regional chapters of the member. The Regional or the National

Treasurer shall transfer the appropriate share of the membership dues within thirty (30) days of receipt.

- C. Surplus funds from the VPA conventions shall be distributed equally at twenty (20) percent each to all regional chapters and the National VPA.
- D. The earnings (e.g. dividends, interest etc.) from the fixed-income instruments such as the Reserve Fund described in this article shall be retained at the National VPA to meet its operational expenses.
- E. All donations received shall be maintained in the VPA Reserve Fund until distributed. The donations shall be made to the Vokkaligara Parishat of America and sent to the VPA National Treasurer. No service charges shall be deducted by the VPA.

## **ARTICLE IX: MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Section 1: NO PRIVATE INTERESTS**

The organization shall be operated exclusively for the purposes set forth in Article II and none of its assets or earnings shall be used, in whole or in part, to the benefit of any person or organization having a personal or private interest in the activities of the VPA. The VPA should not be involved in any political activities.

### **Section 2: VPA NATIONAL OFFICE**

The VPA National office shall be located in the Chicago, Illinois area, to keep, in one location, all the VPA related documents such as membership lists, the Constitution, annual reports, financial reports, financial returns, articles of incorporation, legal documents, etc. and shall be managed, with the help of the National Treasurer and the Secretary, by an agent appointed by the BOT and overseen by the Executive Committee and the BOT.

### **Section 3: VPA COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

All committee chairs of the National and Regional Chapters, including those of the Convention, shall be members of the VPA in good standing.

### **Section 4: ROTATION OF CONVENTIONS**

The VPA conventions shall be held in rotation in the order: East, Mid-West, West and South. The President, Vice President and Secretary shall be from the Chapter hosting the Convention.

### **Section 5: POWERS UNDER ILLINOIS LAW**

The VPA shall also have such powers as are now or may hereafter be granted by the General Not-for-Profit Corporation Act of the State of Illinois.

## **ARTICLE X: VPA REGIONAL CHAPTERS**

**Section 1:** There shall be four (4) VPA Regional Chapters:

- A. **VPA-East** - New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington D.C, and West Virginia.
- B. **VPA-Midwest** - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.
- C. **VPA-West** - Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
- D. **VPA-South** - Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

**Section 2:** The National VPA shall extend its active support and coordinate the activities of the regional chapters to fulfill the objectives outlined in Article II.

**Section 3:** The regional chapters shall be organized and operated with their own elected officers, who shall include a president, a secretary and a treasurer and any other officers whose titles, duties and terms of office shall be determined by the respective chapter membership. All elected chapter officers shall be VPA members in good standing.

**Section 4:** All policies and procedures of the regional chapters shall be consistent with the VPA Constitution. The provisions of the Constitution shall prevail should there be any conflict in the rules, policies, and procedures established by the regional chapters. The regional chapters shall abide by all lawful directives of the national organization and assist and promote the national organization.

**Section 5:** In order to improve the accessibility of VPA activities to all interested persons in the USA, it shall be the policy of the national organization to actively encourage the regional chapters to fulfill its mission and objectives. The establishment of regional chapters is subject to recommendations of the BOT and approved by the General Body.

## **ARTICLE XI: EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

This document supersedes all previous versions of the Constitution. The provisions of this document shall become effective January 1, 2012.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Ad-hoc Committee of past National VPA Presidents - Dr. Devangi Sreekanth (Chair)

Legal Advisor of Ad-hoc Committee –Ms. Meena Gowda (MD)

Founding Members of VPA represented – Mr. Shiva Shankar (IL)

Original writers of VPA Constitution represented - Dr. Govindappa Puttaiah (WV)

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### **Board of Trustees and Executive Officers of VPA 2010-2011:**

Anasuya Swamy (P, BOT), Ramesh Gowda(VP), Srinivas Gowda (S, BOT), Shiva Shankar (T, BOT), Govardhan Gowda (JS), Raghunandhan Halur (JT), Channe Gowda (East P BOT), Nag Boranna (West P BOT), Roopa Gowda (South P BOT), Girish Ramamurthy (Mid West P BOT) Govind Lakshman (BOT), Balu Chandra (BOT), Ram Gowda (BOT), H.N. Viswamitra (BOT), Ravi Shankar B. (BOT), Venkatesh Gowda (BOT), Jahnvi Rajagopal (Youth BOT), Manu Anjanappa (Youth BOT).

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VPA Chapter Presidents: Dr. Channe Gowda, Mr. Girish Ramamurthy, Mr.Nag Boranna, and Mrs. Roopa Gowda.

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National VPA Legal Advisor- Mr. Amarnath Gowda (MI).

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END