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A NEWSLETTER OF THE SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON D.C. and
THE SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF GREATER WASHINGTON INC.

VOL.4 NO.1 July 2008

Message From The President



As the nineteenth President of the Sri Lanka Association in the nation's capital, I would like to first thank my predecessors for building this association to what it is today. Since its inception in 1975, this Association has grown tremendously to become the main social organization in the Greater Washington Area. I would also like to thank all the members and the rest of the

Board members for electing me as the President so that we can continue to carry out the duties and functions of this association as effectively and efficiently as possible and bring the Sri Lankan community together while helping those who are in need in our homeland.

During the first Board meeting held on March 9, 2008, the Board of Directors unanimously elected Mr. Prasanth Cherubim and Mr. Clement Abeyegoonewardene as Vice Patrons of the Association. Please join me in congratulating these two individuals who have served this Association tirelessly in the past as members and as presidents. The Board also appointed the following individuals to the advisory board: Mr. Lasantha Dahanaike, Mr. Terry Kuruppu, Dr. Greg Fernandopulle, Attorney. Sena Basnayake and Mr. Rajeeva Serasinghe.

The work assignments of the new Board members too have changed for the upcoming year and I like the membership to take note of the new contacts so your needs are met in a timely fashion. Our new webmaster is Secretary Sugath Karunaratne, who can be contacted at webmaster@slawdc.com for web related questions and/or to post information on the community calendar so that events around the area can be better scheduled. The co-editors of the newsletter are President-elect Rashika Padmakumara and Assistant Secretary Marlon Perera. They can be contacted via editor@slawdc.com to have any of your community related announcements published in the newsletter. I like to encourage the membership to make use of the "Community Businesses" feature that allows members to advertise their businesses on our website for a nominal fee.

The 2008 New Year's Eve gala dinner dance will be held at Tyson's Corner Marriott in Virginia, the same venue as last year. Tyson's Marriott offered us the best rate again compared to all other hotels researched for this event within the Greater Washington Area. We hope that all our membership and friends will participate in this year's event to make it as successful as last year.

This year, we are introducing a tournament based cricket selection process for the annual cricket match against New York. Four teams will compete in this tournament and the winner will represent the Association in the annual Washington vs. New York cricket encounter. Information regarding the format of this tournament and the selection process was e-mailed to the community earlier this month. We hope to see our fellow Washingtonians in Denville, New Jersey on August 9 to support our DC cricket team.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandra Ismail for taking the lead in organizing the aluth avurudu celebrations along with the rest of the Board Members for their hard work in making this year's event a success. We are also planning on having the Sri Lanka day again during this Labor Day weekend, and we are hoping to see full participation within the Sri Lankan Community yet again for a successful celebration.

We would like to offer our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the outgoing Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Bernard Goonetilleke and Mrs. Maria Goonetilleke for their support and guidance offered during his term in Washington. We also like to thank the Embassy staff for all the support extended to us in the past years. On behalf of the Directors and the members of SLAWDC, I also like to extend a warm welcome to our new Ambassador, Mr Jaliya Wickramasuriya.

We hope to accomplish better communication with the Sri lankan community and the rest of the sister organizations by better utilizing the community calendar feature on our website. We also hope to work closely with all the sister organizations and the Sri Lankan Embassy to engage the Sri Lankan community



in participating in all our events and to support each other.

I hope you'll enjoy reading the content of this newsletter and I encourage all of you to please give us your feedback and send in articles for our "community events" section. I look forward to seeing you at many of our events in the upcoming months.

Dakshi De Silva

Annual General Meeting



The annual general meeting of the Sri Lanka Association was held on March 2, 2008 at the Meadowbrook Community Center in Chevy Chase, MD.

The meeting started off with a social hour attended by many of our members, who had the opportunity to thank our outgoing President Mr. Lasantha Dahanaïke and the rest of his Board.

On behalf of the outgoing Board, President-elect, Mr. Dakshi De Silva thanked Mr. Dahanaïke for his leadership, spirited commitment and consistent efforts in unifying all segments of the Sri Lankan community in the Greater Washington DC area during his tenure in office. A plaque was presented to Mr. Dahanaïke at a later date in recognition of his efforts.

The membership present unanimously elected the following individuals to the new Board: President-Dakshi De Silva; President-elect - Rashika Padmakumara; Secretary - Sugath Karunaratne; Asst. Secretary - Marlon Perera; Treasurer (SLAWDC) - Alex Perera; Treasurer (SLAGW) - Kamal Dorabawila; and Directors - Lahiru Devinda, Gaddafi Ismail, Sandra Ismail, Suraj Navaratne and Nalaka Weragoda.



Aluth Avurudu Celebrations



The annual Sinhala-Tamil New Year celebrations organized by the Sri Lanka-Association of Washington, DC was held on April 13, 2008 at the Meadowbrook Community Centre in Maryland.

The day's proceedings commenced with the lighting of the traditional oil lamp, followed by religious observances conducted by the venerable *theras* of the DC and Wheaton temples. Messages were also presented by Mrs. Ranganathan, Mr. Codippily, and Mr. Naseer Azeez on behalf of the Hindu, Christian and Islamic faiths respectively. The Welcome Address was presented by the President of the Association, Mr. Dakshi de Silva, and the gathering was then addressed by the Chief Guest, His Excellency Mr. Bernard Goonetilleke.



The official segment of the proceedings being concluded, the program continued with entertainment provided by the talented performers of the *Ranga Kala Kavaya*. The spotlight was then turned on the little girls and boys enthusiastically vying for the title of *Avurudhu Kumari* and *Kumaraya*, in their traditional outfits. With the crowning of the *Kumari* and *Kumaraya*, guests were invited to partake of a tantalizing spread of *kiribath* and sweetmeats generously provided by members of the Association.

Celebrations continued well into the afternoon with fun and games. Both adults and kids were kept entertained with a variety of games such as musical chairs, lime and spoon race, sack race, breaking the pot and tug-o' war. The day's events were concluded with a raffle draw to select the winner of a food hamper by Past President Mr. Lasantha Dahanaïke. Proceeds of the raffle are to be applied towards future projects undertaken by the Association.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Farewell to His Excellency Bernard Goonetilleke and Mrs. Maria Goonetilleke



The Sri Lankan Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Bernard Goonetilleke and his gracious wife Mrs. Maria Goonetilleke were honored at a glittering farewell dinner by the Sri Lankan-American community in the Greater Washington area on Saturday, May 3rd 2008, at the Golden Bull Grand Café in Gaithersburg, MD. Two

hundred and fifteen guests attended a sit-down dinner/dance organized by the five main Sri Lankan community organizations in the area; the Sri Lanka Association of Washington D.C., Ranga Kala Kavaya, Friends of Sri Lanka in the US (FOSUS), Coalition of Sri Lankan Americans (COSLA) and the Sri Lankan Catholic Association of the Greater Washington area.



The following persons representing the five groups eulogized the Goonetillekes' with short speeches. President of SLAWDC Mr. Dakshi De Silva, President of Ranga Kala Kavaya Mr. Upali Perera, President of FOSUS Dr. (Mrs.) Vidya Samarasinghe, Mr. Lasantha Dahanaike on behalf of

COSLA, Dr. Greg Fernandopulle on behalf of the Catholic Association, Mrs. Kanaga Ranganathan, and Mr. Naseer Azeez and the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Hilarian Codippili. The key factor mentioned in all the speeches was the work done by the Ambassador and his wife to bring together Sri Lankan-American groups and encouraging them to remember the land of their birth. Mr. Kenneth Abeywickrama was the Master of Ceremonies while Mrs. Sandra Ismail compeered the event. The ladies in their latest Sri Lankan fashion attire and the gents in business suits helped to add glamour to the evening.

Accepting the plaque presented to Ambassador Goonetilleke by Mrs. Sheila Codippily, His Excellency addressed the gathering stating that he had visited many Sri Lankan American groups in different parts of the USA and was encouraged by the desire of these people to help their country of origin, Sri Lanka. Some were engaged in social service projects, others in bringing Sri Lankan art and culture to the USA and others in providing a true perspective of developments in Sri Lanka to US legislators and the administration.

Tour of the Combined Forces Dance Troupe Enthralls Audiences in Washington DC.

The performance by the combined Sri Lanka Armed Forces cultural troupe drew a significant amount of expatriates on February 23, 2008 at the Wheaton High School Auditorium. The chief guests were the Ambassador for Sri Lanka, H.E. Bernard Goonetilleke and Mrs. Maria Goonetilleke.

The performance was organized by *Serendib USA* that sponsors shows and provides accompaniment for artists coming from Sri Lanka. The troupe consisted of 18 performers including Band Master/Vocalist, Major W.D.S. Wijesundera. At the show, emotions ran high with the rendition of patriotic songs and the exceptional dances, drumming and other performances. Two minutes of silence marked a memorial to all the departed souls lost in the war against terrorism.

The moving part of the evening was the appearance of the only survivor of the landmine explosion that killed Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa. W. O. M.A Upali is now confined to a wheelchair having lost both legs in 1992. He was presented in a dialog about the incident and his sentiments for the future of a united country for all communities to live in peace as expressed in the words of a war hero.

The Washington area community has supported the efforts of Ranavirusevana since 2000 and contributed to the welfare of disabled soldiers. Following the show, members of the community came forward and offered spontaneous donations.

The highlight of the evening was a standing ovation for the troupe with the rendition of "Ratna Deepa Janma Bhoomi" passionately rendered by Major Wijesundera when the entire auditorium stood up to give respect to their beloved motherland, Sri Lanka and to those who continue to face the frontlines to protect all of us.

Ranga Kala Kavaya New Year Celebrations



The Sri Lanka New Year was celebrated on April 26th at Wheaton High School Auditorium in Wheaton, Maryland. Organized by the Ranga Kala Kavaya of Washington, DC, the event's highlights included

performances by the Kala Kavaya dance group.

Thomians win the DC Rugby 7s



The STC-TCK seven-a-side Rugby Tournament was held over Memorial Day Weekend in DC for the seventh consecutive year. There were eight teams participating in this year's tournament which was organized by the OBA of TCK. It was a competitive day of rugby with teams from S. Thomas (two), Trinity, and Royal reaching the final round. The two Thomian teams who dominated this year's tournament reached the final with STC 'Black' defeating STC 'Blue' 5-0 to clinch the trophy for the very first time. The festivities continued late into the night at the after party which was held in Bethesda.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Food Bazaar July 27, 2008
Annual Food Bazaar organized by the Embassy of Sri Lanka will be held on 27th July 2008, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Washington D.C. Temple. Community contributions and participation at this event is highly appreciated. Mr. Jaliya Wickramasuriya, Ambassador – designate of Sri Lanka will be present from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm to meet with the community.

Educate Lanka Cricket Tournament Aug 2, 2008
The 4th Annual Educate Lanka 7-A-Side Cricket Tournament fundraiser will be held on August 2, 2008 at the Strawberry Knolls Grounds, Gaithersburg, MD , 20879. For more information, please visit www.educatelanka.org.

NY vs. DC Cricket Encounter Aug 9, 2008
The annual NY vs. DC limited over cricket game will be played on August 9, 2008 in Deville, NJ. Please

contact Suraj at Suraj_navaratne@hotmail.com for more information.

SLCS Annual 7-A-Side Cricket Tournament Aug 23 2008
The 18th annual 7-a-side Cricket tournament organized by the Sri Lanka Cricket Society will be held on August 23, 2008 at the Herndon Middle School Grounds located at 901 Locust St Herndon, VA 20170. Rain date is August 24th 2008. This year's tournament is limited to 10 men's teams and 2 ladies teams. Closing date for applications is August 2, 2008. For all inquiries please write to slcs_7aside@yahoo.com.

Sri Lanka Day Festival Aug 31 2008
The Sri Lanka Day Festival in DC will be held on August 31, 2008 More details will be communicated via e-mail once a grounds for this is secured. For all inquiries, please contact, Marlon Perera mperera115@hotmail.com

Children's Christmas Party December, 2008
The annual Children's Christmas party will be held in December and more information will be available soon.

New Year's Eve Dinner Dance Dec 31, 2008
The New Year's Eve dinner dance will be held at the Marriott in Tyson's corner. Please keep the date free! For more information, please contact Dakshi De Silva Dakshi@aol.com

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Please remember to update your e-mail address with SLAWDC! We would like to request all members and non-members who wish to be on our mailing list to update their e-mail addresses with us. Please e-mail Marlon at mperera115@hotmail.com and webmaster@slawdc.com with all requests/updates.

