



# NEWSLETTER

## ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES' OF SINGER

320, Dr. Colvin R. De Silva Mawatha, Colombo 2

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### *From the Editor's Desk*

Dear Members,

We are pleased to publish the Newsletter once again after a lapse of nearly seven months. The final issue for 2005 was ready in October to be circularized amongst our members but the Committee felt it did not serve any useful purpose if the members do not respond to the numerous appeals made for contribution of articles for publication. So far only a handful of members have sent in articles which goes to prove the lack of interest by members to share their past experiences with their contemporaries and friends. We reiterate, the Newsletter is your publication and to keep it going, we need the co-operation of every single member. Let bygones be bygones. Let us all resolve at least now, to devote a few minutes of our valuable time this year to review old memories and pen a few words of interest, particularly relating to the golden years we spent at Singer for the reading pleasure of the general membership.

The future of this Newsletter depends on you. With these observations, the Executive Committee takes this opportunity to wish all members and their families 'A HAPPY NEW YEAR'.

#### Mr. Thurstan Balasuriya

As we stepped into 2006, we received the most unexpected and shocking news of the death of our good friend Thurstan Balasuriya who was a very active member of our Association. Affectionately known as

### Issue No. 11 – April 2006

“BALA’ to some and as “THURSTAN’ to others, he was an individual with rare qualities. Always with a smile and ready to help. Bala was invited to join the Executive Committee in July 2004 after Mr. Jaminda Mendis resigned due to other commitments. Bala was immediately drafted into the all important Social and Entertainment Sub-Committee and soon became the live wire, organizing the social and entertainment events of the Association. A few months ago, when the Executive Committee faced a severe problem of finding a suitable place to have the monthly meetings, Bala voluntarily made available his residence which enabled us to conduct the meetings without any interruption. These were the qualities of a perfect gentleman and a true friend who was genuinely interested in the welfare of the Association and its members.

The Association extends its sincere condolences to Janet Balasuriya and to Bala’s children and pray to God to give them the strength to overcome the sorrow experienced by them by the loss of a devoted husband and a loving father.

#### **Office Bearers for the Year 2006**

The following members were elected to the Executive Committee of the Association of Post Employees of Singer for the year 2006, at the Fifth Annual General Meeting held on Sunday, 18 December 2005 at the Sea View Hotel, Colombo 3:

Patron: Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya  
Chairman, Singer Group

President: Mr. Bertie Fernando  
Vice Presidents: Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri  
Mr. Nelson Mendis

Secretary: Mr. Ananda Epa  
Asst. Secretary: Ms. Vijitha Jayawardana

Treasurer: Mr. A.M.M. Nissar  
Asst. Treasurer: Mr. Kalyana Dhirasekera

**Committee Members:**

Mrs. Kaushaliya Murugadasan  
Mrs. Judith Vannitamby  
Ms. Chandrani Gunawardana  
Mr. Thurstan Balasuriya  
Mr. John Emmanuel  
Mr. W.G.E. Dabara  
Mr. Lasantha Perera  
Mr. Rohan Goonethileka

The late Mr. Balasuriya was elected into the Committee at the AGM held in December 2005. Following his demise, Mr. Ranjith David has joined the Committee in his place.

**Sub-Committees**

On the recommendation of the President, the Executive Committee approved the appointment of the following Sub-Committees for the current year:

**Scholarship & Welfare**

Mr. Bertie Fernando  
Mr. Ananda Epa

**Fund Raising**

Mr. Kalyana Dheersekera  
Mr. Lasantha Perera  
Mr. Rohan Goonathilake  
Mrs. Chandrani Gunawardana

**Membership Drive**

Mr. A.M.M. Nissar

Mrs. Vijitha Jayawardana

**Social & Entertainment**

Mr. Nelson Mendis  
Mr. John Emmanuel  
Mr. Vincent Dabara  
Mrs. Kaushaliya Murugadasan

**Newletter & Publicity**

Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri  
Mrs. Judith Vannitamby

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2006	
MARCH	Cricket Match & Get-together for Members and Families – M.C.A. Grounds 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2006
APRIL	Release of the Association Newsletter (By 15 <sup>th</sup> April)
MAY	One Day Outing for Members and Families (Date and Venue not fixed yet)
AUGUST	Release of the Second Issue of the Newsletter By 15 <sup>th</sup> August
SEPTEMBER	Fund Raiser – ‘Ahasin Vetunu Minissu’ Stage Play (Date and Venue not fixed yet)
OCTOBER	Dinner/Get-together for Members and families (Date & Venue not fixed yet)
DECEMBER	Annural General Meeting Tentatively fixed for 10 <sup>th</sup> . Venue to be decided.

**Benevolent Fund**

The Benevolent Fund launched to raise funds to help needy members stand at Rs.408,222.75 as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006. We need more contributions from members to enhance this amount up to the target of Rs.500,000/-. Please send your contributions direct to our Treasurer Mr. A.M.M. Nissar. The amount is immaterial - what we value is your contribution.

### Membership:

We welcome the following Ladies and Gentlemen who have been enrolled as members of the Association:-

	Membership No.
Ms. Swarna Premathilaka	136
Mr. S.M.P. Liyanage	137
Mr. K.L. Lionel Perera	138
Mr. Dilip Wickramasinghe	139
Mr. M.M.M. Yusuf	140
Mr. H.M.K. Bandara	141
Ms. Damayanthi Perera	142
Mr. K.L.D.N. Nishantha	143
Mr. R.W. Abeyratne	144
Mr. P. Shivaji	145

Your active participation in the events organized by the Association will be greatly appreciated.

### Scholarship Fund

We are pleased to announce that on a proposal made by the President, the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to launch a Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance to a needy student in the South affected by the Tsunami disaster. Mr. Berty Fernando himself has visited Rahula College, Matara and after discussing the proposal with the Principal and teachers of the College had identified a deserving student who is studying for his O/Level Examination. He had performed very well in the All Island fifth Standard Scholarship Examination by obtaining a total of 175 marks. Presently, he is a Prefect of the School and takes part in Athletics. His father is a fisherman and mother is unemployed. He one sister younger to him and the family was living in a house near the Polhena beach before it was completely damaged. They are now living with one of their relatives. The father is going through a very hard time with no regular income even to meet the basic day to day needs.

The Committee having discussed the proposal at length decided as responsible citizens of the country to contribute even in a small way to bring some relief to at least one member of this Tsunami affected family.

The Scholarship Fund was officially launched on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005 with 11 Committee Members present at the meeting agreeing to contribute Rs.1,000/- each as a starter. With this money, we commenced sending Rs.2,500/- per month to this boy beginning from May 2005.

We now solicit the co-operation of each and every members and appeal to them to contribute towards this fund to enable us to help this student to continue his studies and participate in Sports and other extra curricular activities uninterrupted. We will keep all members informed of this boy's progress in his studies and other relevant details of the family through future issues of this Newsletter. In the meantime, please send in your contributions to Mr. A.M.M. Nissar, Hony. Treasurer at 164, Kolonnawa Road, Kolonnawa. His Telephone Numbers are 2372750/51.

### FLASH!

We have just received a contribution of Rs.20,000/- from Mr. Krishantha Fernando toward the Scholarship Fund which has now helped us to increase the amount available for assistance to Rs.39,000/-. Our grateful thanks to Mr. Fernando for his generous contribution.

### A PEEP INTO THE PAST – Story No.03 'KADIYA'

Some of you may still remember that dynamic personality ROBIN EBERT who served the Company in the late sixties and thereafter as an Area Manager. Mr. Ebert who joined Singer after serving the then Royal Navy was a strict disciplinarian. Probably the training he received whilst serving the Navy moulded him not only to be a well disciplined man but also ensure that discipline was maintained by all and

sundry in whatever sphere of activity he engaged himself, whether workwise or otherwise.

During the bygone days, the mention of his name would bring instant fear to all those who worked under him inclusive of District Managers. He was a workaholic and expected all those who worked under him to follow suit. For this reason he was appropriately nicknamed 'Kadiya' by his subordinates.

During this era, the Company field operations were divided into just four areas North, South, East and West. Mr. Ebert was in charge of the South, which comprised three Districts Moratuwa, Galle and Matara. When Mr. Ebert took over the South from the Senior Area Manager, the late Mr. M.L.M. Rasheed in 1978, I was in charge of the Galle District where the Shop Managers were all seniors in this category with a number of years experience. One such Shop Manager was Mr. J.W. Kudahetty who is today a member of our Association.

One day in February 1978, I was at the Galle Shop carrying out a physical verification of the inventory held. By 8.45 a.m. Mr. Ebert entered the shop unnoticed by anyone. After exchanging greetings, Mr. Ebert inquired for Mr. Kudahetty. The time now was around 9.15 but Mr. Kudahetty had not arrived at the shop. Visibly angry, Mr. Ebert first gave me a pep-talk on the importance of maintaining discipline in the district. He added, 'If there is no discipline, nothing will succeed. Look at this man. the time now is 9.30 and he is still not here. He should be an example to his staff by coming to the shop before anyone else. Let him come, I know the reason why he is getting late'. So saying Mr. Ebert occupied the Manager's seat. A few minutes later, Mr. Kudahetty arrived at the shop. Seeing him approaching the Manager's table, Mr. Ebert quickly got up and said 'Good Morning Sir'. Seated on the opposite side of the table, I was baffled when I heard an Area Manager addressing a Shop Manager 'Sir'. Mr. Kudahetty apologized for coming late and tried to say something but Mr. Ebert without giving him

a chance to open his mouth said 'No Sir, no need to apologise, you are my boss and I am your Shop Assistant.' Mr. Kudahetty now realized what had happened but pretended to be ignorant and asked Mr. Ebert 'Sir, why do you say I am your boss. You are my Area Manager'. Replied Mr. Ebert, 'No, no Mr. Kudahetty within these four walls, I am your Area Manager but to the outside world, I am your Shop Assistant.' Mr. Kudahetty was dumbfounded and shocked at what he had uttered as a joke at the Club the previous evening had reached Mr. Ebert's ears within a couple of hours. Leaving no time for Mr. Ebert to launch another verbal attack, Mr. Kudahetty laughed loudly and told Mr. Ebert "KANA BONA WELAWATA KIYANA DE GANAN GANNA EPA, SIR' (Sir don't take seriously what is said whilst eating and drinking).

Mr. Ebert's attitude changed immediately and he started to smile but that smile was short-lived. Mr. Ebert re-commenced his verbal attack on Mr. Kudahetty and told him in no uncertain terms 'Mr. Kudahetty, what you say and do outside this shop is your business but when it comes to work, you must be disciplined and set a better example to your staff. Don't ever repeat what you have done today. Come to the shop a few minutes earlier than the others and attend to your duties as a responsible Manager. Take this as an advice and also as a warning. Now, come let us go out and have a cup of tea.' So ended the early morning encounter between Kadiya and Kuda.

(Note: With due respect to the late Mr. Ebert who died in Australia about three years ago, I have related this story for the reading pleasure of our members. I have tried my very best to recall the incident as accurately as possible. The year, the month, the location and the incident is 100% correct. Only the dialogue between Mr. Ebert and Mr. Kudahetty may not exactly be the same as spoken by them on that day.)

G.C. Wasalathanthri

**Reflection**

When the youthful vim and vigour  
 Prompted me to run,  
 I ran about with all my might;  
 Down the lane, across the streets  
 And onto buses and trains.  
 There was no panting,  
 There was no stress  
 So I could very well beat the time.

But, as I went grey,  
 Things changed  
 Trouble started with aches and pains,  
 'You are getting old,  
 The doctor said.  
 So the vitamins joined my life  
 The earlier run became a trek  
 With dragging feet and mind.

But, when I bade goodbye to work  
 A different strength returned to me.  
 To realize the cycle of life,  
 And to grow old with grace.

There is no more rush  
 But peace of mind  
 With a smile I watch  
 The next generation  
 Running the rat race now.

Good luck dear folk,  
 And good health too,  
 To go on till you can.

By: Pushpa Fonseka

**Grin & Bear it.....**

The aggressive but unprepared salesman  
 opened his sales presentation to the  
 production manager saying: "I'd like to take  
 the opportunity to talk to your employees  
 and prove to them how my motivation  
 course will put fire and spark into their  
 work/" The startled manager shouted: "Get  
 our of here, right now.  
 This is a gunpowder factory!"

**Tung Twister**

How much wood would a wood chuck  
 chuck if a wood chuck could chuck  
 wood?

Peter Piper picked a pipe of pickled  
 peppers. How many pepper did Peter  
 Piper pick?

She sells sea shells by the sea shore.

Black bugs bleed black blood

I slit a sheet, a sheet I slit. Upon a slitted  
 sheet I sit.

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One sentence containing all the letter of  
 the English Alphabet:

'The quick brown fox jumps over the  
 lazy dog.'

Please send in your contribution by 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006 for the next Newsletter to be  
 published in August 2006 to The Newsletter, Calendar & Publicity Committee,  
 C./o.Mr. G.C. Wasalathanthri, 6A. 6<sup>th</sup> Lane, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda