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# NEWSLETTER

April 2014

## ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES OF SINGER

80, Nawam Mawatha, Colombo 2

### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Newsletter & Publicity Sub-Committee is extremely disappointed that despite repeated requests for articles to be published in this Newsletter only one member out of 207 members had responded. She is none other than our 'Laughing Mala'. The other article appearing in this Newsletter is a 'held back' article from the previous issue.

As indicated in our January issue, we had planned to publish the 2nd Newsletter for the current year in March, but since no articles were received, we had no alternative but to postpone publishing the Newsletter to April, but the situation remains the same with no additional articles from members.

To say the least this is like බිටි අලින්ට විණා වයනවා වගේ. If the members are not interested in knowing what is happening in the Association, let us STOP the Newsletter and utilize the money we spend on printing and postage for some other worthy cause.

### APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The following Executive Committee Members were appointed to serve in six sub-committees to plan and implement various activities of the Association.

1. Social & Entertainment  
Mr. Nelson Mendis, Mr. John Emmanuel, Mr. Kalyana Dhirasekera, Mrs. Kaushalya Murugadasan & Mr. Anton Silva
2. Newsletter & Publicity  
Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri & Mrs. Vijitha Jayawardena
3. Scholarships  
Mr. Ananda Epa, Mr. Zubair Hassen & Mrs. Sunethra Vidanage
4. Membership Drive  
Mr. Janaka Kaluhendiwela, Mr. H.L.M. Nawaz & Mrs. Sunethra Vidanage
5. Welfare of Members  
Mr. Ananda Epa, Mr. Winston Dabara, Mr. Janaka Kaluhendiwela & Mrs. Vijitha Jayawardena
6. Fund Raising  
Mr. Janaka Kaluhendiwela, Mr. H.L.M. Nawaz & Mrs. Sunethra Vidanage

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| May 18th      | - | Cricket/Netball Matches & Get-together - M.C.A. Grounds |
| June          | - | Medical Camp (Date & Venue to be fixed)                 |
| August        | - | Proposed 2nd One Day Outing (Date & Venue to be fixed)  |
| October       | - | Sing-A-Long Musical Show (Date & Venue to be fixed)     |
| December 14th | - | Annual General Meeting (Fixed)                          |

## ONE DAY OUTING

The first One Day Outing for Members, their spouses and children was held as planned on 23rd March 2014, even though the participants were much less than expected. Only 23 out of 25 who had agreed to participate boarded the bus which took off from Kohuwala to Don's Lake Resort in Avissawella, earlier known to members as 'Seethala Wathura'.

The bus reached the destination around 11.30 a.m. and the members were greeted with a welcome drink which quenched their thirst. Images of the members standing by



the side of the swimming pool opposite the bungalow provided for the ladies to relax, reflected brightly on the blue waters inviting them to cool themselves by having a dip. The invitation was promptly accepted by some of our old but 'young at heart' gentlemen who got into the pool after warming themselves with a 'shot'. While the ladies lost no time to get together and open their 'chatter boxes' inside the bungalow, the rest organized themselves in the garden opposite the bungalow to taste the 'hot stuff' with the crispy bites and devilled chicken specially prepared for the occasion. The members after enjoying the lunch around 2.30 p.m. left the Resort with lasting memories of another successful event.



### NEW MEMBERS

One new member has joined the Association. He is none other than Mr. Mahendra Amarasekera – Member No. 207 – Life Member



## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We are pleased to announce that after much investigation and evaluation, scholarships were awarded to three deserving students from Singer Fashion Academies in Polonnaruwa, Ampara and Negombo to continue and complete their Diploma Courses in Dressmaking without any hindrances. We wish these three students every success in their future endeavours.

### OBITUARY



### GOOD BYE RUTH

We regret to announce the demise of Mrs. Ruth de Silva, former Education Supervisor. Ruth was a dedicated past employee of Singer whose prime objective was to ensure that all students following Dressmaking & Embroidery Courses at our Sewing Schools turned out to be excellent Seamstresses. With this in view she devoted a lot of time at our sewing schools imparting her knowledge not only to the students but also to the instructresses. Ruth, May your Soul Rest in Peace !.

"This is what "SINGER" has done for me" by Mala Abeysuriya

1. When I got married on 28th October 1969, Mr. J.M. Rajaratnam, General Manager gave me his car with a full tank of petrol, with his driver for a few days, to go on my Honey-moon. He said "Go anywhere and enjoy yourself" and granted me two weeks special leave. Soon after registration we left for Belihul Oya. At Ratnapura we met Mr. Jinadasa Shop Manager who had contacted Mr. Taylor – Office Manager and also most of the upcountry shop managers who came to see us. Three months after my marriage my father expired. Mr. Rajaratnam and the staff – both office and field came for the funeral and helped me in every way.
2. One day there was an unexpected trouble in my house. When my elder daughter who was 9 years told me about it, I collapsed in office. Marie, Rani de Silva, Dulcie Maniam and few others attended on me. Kumar Samarasinghe heard about it and took me home and from there to Mirihana Police Station where I had fainted again. My photograph had appeared in the papers. My heart-felt thanks go to Kumar.
3. There was a welcome Party for Mr. Courtney and Farewell to two senior employees – Mr. Mathew of Warehouse and Mr. Fonseka, Clerk. I was given the opportunity to garland Mr. Courtney. He was very tall and I was very short. So he had to bend more than half his height for me to garland him. To my utter surprise he kissed me. Later I came to know that he expected a kiss in return and showed his disappointment by certain actions. I treasure these memories.

## BIRTH DAYS



We wish the following members who are celebrating their birthdays in May and June.  
Have we missed anyone ?

May		June	
Jasmine Arseculeratne	4th	Salinda Samarakoon	1st
K.G. Edmund Silva	11th	Hugh Samarasinghe	3rd
Vijitha Jayawardena	12th	M. Zubair Hassen	4th
D. Harsha Kumar	14th	Irene Indraratne	10th
Kalyana Dhirasekera	20th	Irangani Dhanapala	14th
A.E. Hulangamuwa	24th	W.G.E. Dabara	18th
Dilip Wickremasinghe	29th	Janaka Kaluhendiwela	19th
S.M.P. Liyanage	31st	A.J. Pigera	19th
		W.W.A.R. Ravindra	28th
		Sanath Jayasuriya	30th

### **SINGER INDUSTRIES REACHES 50 YEARS** By: T.V. Pereira

Singer Industries (Ceylon) Ltd. passed the milestone of 50 YEARS un-noticed, on July 22nd 2013. "Assembly Factory" moved to the 4 acre land in Ratmalana from the rented showrooms of Emjay Copra Mills in Peliyagoda in 1963. The Management that time comprised General Manager John Courtney, Factory Manager B.Nadarajah, Personnel Manager B.F.L. Perera, Accountant Clarence Perera, French Technical Advisor M. Schenken. Engineers P. Saya (Italian) and S. Hettiarachchi, Shirley Wijeratne and N.H.O.Perera were the Foremen. Among the workforce were C.D.Perera, H.G. Jeewananda, B.Gnanadasa, J.B.Mendis, Tony Ferdinand, Teddy Bowen, Ray Harridge, Elmo Vanderstraaten, Michael Ruberu, R. Wimalasena, J.A.D.Weerasinghe, A.Nicholas, C.Aponso, A.S.Perera, D.Seemon, N.P.N.Kurera, S.Esubius, Fabian Pulle, M. Siddik and Heen Banda. To assist in clerical duties A.M.A. Samad, P. Benedict, S. Nagendran, S.R.J. Suraweera, Leonard Martyn were transferred in from the Chatham Street office. They were the first batch of employees, and other than a handful most of them have departed from this world.

The first wheels in the Factory began to turn when Jeewananda recruited in July 1961 at a salary of Rs.2.60 per day, operated the Wolf Grinder at the auspicious time of 11.14 am. From thence the march to become 'The Sewing Machine Giant' was steady but not without impediments. Work started after a bun and tea breakfast. As there was no proper eating house at the Belek Kade junction, a cook was hired to prepare lunch and this he did under the breadfruit tree in the back yard, for want of a kitchen. Employees consumed their meals seated in the shade of coconut trees, which were once part of the Lady Evelyn de Soysa estate.

Things changed when John Courtney took serious notice of the wiry figures struggling at the Router machine and the Assembly Line. He ordered all employees to be provided with a complete breakfast and lunch comfortably seated. The supply of a pint of milk to assembly line employees stopped only with the closure of the Milk Board. Employees showed their gratitude to Courtney when he arrived on a visit in 1970, by decorating the factory, stringing banners which read "Welcome to your Second Home", and showering him with gifts.

Initially it was the Pakistan moulded 'Monza' machines which rolled off the assembly lines. By 1967 the technical reputation was so high that Glacio Ltd., a subsidiary of Rowlands commissioned S.I.C. to produce 'Glacio' Kerosene Oil refrigerators. Schenken headed the project with Jeewananda as his lieutenant. Economic changes in the country drastically affected the company, and made production cost soar. In 1968 Singer produced 10 prototype Kerosene Oil refrigerators which were sold to the employees at a price of Rs.875/- after releasing finished products to the market. One of them was bought by Vijitha Jayawardena who still has the receipt for same. In 1969 Factory Manager Jaya Dissanayake appealed to workers to increase 'count' to keep cost low and warned that failure may result in the price of a machine having to be increased to Rs.1000/-. Later, the 6 cu.ft. refrigerator model was priced at Rs.6,750/-

The State ban on imports worsened matters and the Company which fell on its reserve funds introduced a 'pay-off' scheme. To sustain itself the Company was compelled to obtain lower quality machine heads from the S.T.C. which was but marketed under the brand name 'Regnis' However an Export Order of Base and Bent Covers to Chittagong and Male clinched at this crucial time brought some relief. The open economy of 1977 brought a vibrant transformation with the 237C Semi Automatic machine followed by the 248C fully auto heads being imported from Brazil. This also marked the end of the sensorial odyssey and Factory Director Shivalingam was quick to polish the jewels in the crown and transform it to a miracle property.

Apart from fridges, S.I.C. launched assembling TV units, fans and audio equipment. All this was possible under the stewardship of Chairman Hemaka Amarasuriya, a larger-than-life figure and a visionary to have espied the potential of Singer Industries.

(N.B. This Is a 'held back' article for want of space – Editor)

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Quotable Quotes

Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you – Robert Fulghum

HUMOUR



Judge to the accused: "Is this the first time you've been up before me?"

Accused: "I really don't know Your Honour, What time you usually get up."

Late one night Jack took a short cut through a graveyard. Hearing a tapping sound he felt a little scared but kept on going. As the tapping grew louder, he became more frightened. Finally, he found a man chiseling at a gravestone.

"Thank goodness" Jack said to the man with relief "You gave me quite a fright. What are you doing?"

"They spelt my name wrong" replied the man

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

Negative attitudes can certainly bring negative results. With many real life experiences, it is observed that changing negative attitudes can attract sudden instances of good fortune.

Sometimes we have negative attitudes towards others. If we can overcome a negative attitude towards someone else, we may find a drastic response with an instant mental relief.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

We propose to publish the next Newsletter in July 2014, subject to availability of sufficient articles to fill 4 x A4 pages. Please note articles for publication should reach the Editor on or before 30th June 2014

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