



### From the Editor's Desk

The response received from members to our request for articles to be published in the June issue of the Newsletter was far from satisfactory. Only one article was received and that too from a Committee Member, which gave me the impression whether we had gone back to square ONE as far as members' contributions were concerned.

The current issue comprises of articles left over from the last issue except one. I need not reiterate the importance of members contributing articles for publication without which we cannot continue to publish the newsletter in future. Therefore, please give your utmost attention to this matter and send your articles big or small and in the language of your choice prior to the date mentioned in the last page of this Newsletter.

It is with profound sadness that we announce the demise of two Gentlemen who contributed immensely to the progress of Singer (Sri Lanka).



First it is Mr. Paul C. Lewis who served the Company as General Manager/Chairman from 1971 – 1975 who migrated to Canada, passed away a few weeks ago. During his tenure of office, he paid great attention to reduction of receivables, especially hire purchase receivables and initiated the Annual "Collection Rajah" competition. Each year after the completion of the competition, he hosted the winners to Drinks and Dinner at the Award Ceremony held at his residence, and I had the pleasure of associating with him at these functions in my capacity as the Marketing Services Manager.

In addition, Dr. Gamini C.B. Wijesinghe, an Independent Non-Executive Director who served the Company from February 1995 until his death, passed away during the same period. Dr. Wijesinghe was a Director of Singer (Sri Lanka) PLC, Singer Industries (Ceylon) PLC. and Regnis (Lanka) PLC and several other leading companies and was also he Chairman of the Audit Committee at SSL.

We, the members of the Association of Past Employees of Singer, share with the family members of both Late Mr. Lewis and Dr. Wijesinghe, the sorrow of loss of their beloved has brought to them.

### **ANNUAL CRICKET MATCH/GET-TOGETHER**

The Annual Cricket Match between the Old Boys and the Present Boys of Singer was held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at the Mercantile Cricket Grounds, followed by a fellowship lunch. The game commenced with the President presenting two Cricket Hats sent by Mr. Nelson Mendis to the two local ICC Umpires Simon Teufel (Gamini Wasalathanthri) and Dicky Bird (Ajith Aponso). To add colour to the day's activities, a Netball Match too was played between two teams, each team strengthened with the inclusion of a few energetic gentlemen who handled the ball well avoiding physical contact with the ladies. Everyone who graced this occasion enjoyed the day's entertainment. A raffle draw too was held where plenty of valuable gifts were offered as prizes to the lucky winners.

A notable and encouraging feature this year was the large number of participants at this sports event – 61 to be precise, including a few Directors past and present both from SSL and Regnis. We expect this trend to continue next year too.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As at end May, the membership stands at 196 with Mr. M.D. Karunaratne, Mr. Deepthi Dissanayake and Mr. D.J. Nandasiri joining the Association. We welcome the three new members and look forward to their support and active participation in the activities organized by the Executive Committee.

### **Anecdotes from Singer**



Phew ! what a day ! After a hectic day in the Kalmunai Courts and a Field check by the Master Checker, we were both exhausted. After a heavy sea food dinner I was dozing off to the sounds "tick-tock, tick-tock" of the portable typewriter from the next room.

It must have been past 11p.m.– a sudden bang & clatter of furniture, metal and sundry sounds ! The Rest House Keeper and I and rest of the minor staff were all up in a flash and streaked to the room. We frantically knocked on the door flashing torches. The sight that met our eyes was a scene fit for a high Drama ! Our one and only e-Bert and his portable were wrapped in a cocoon of a mosquito net, a fallen table and chair ! "I was trying to hang the mosquito net to the ceiling when I lost my balance" he whispered to me. The Keeper was satisfied that his prize customer was safe and sound and fit for further visits.

A conqueror of the field downed by a couple of mosquitoes ! **Sent in by T. Vanniasinkam**

## 1. MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

When I was the Secretary of the C.M.U. Singer Branch, I was very regular in attending the general council meetings of the C.M.U. Our General Secretary Bala Tampoe's speeches were interesting and sometimes humorous. He is an Advocate by profession but was not fluent in Sinhala. Later, he picked up and was able to cross examine the witnesses also in Sinhala in the Courts.

Once he said he was to cross examine a witness. When he appeared in the case, he found that the particular witness had not come and there was a medical certificate saying that he was having a 'tonsil problem'. The case was postponed and on the second day, the witness was absent again and there was another MC saying that he was down with a 'heart problem'. Again the case was put off. On the third day it was the same story once again – a MC saying that he was having a 'severe piles problem'.

After reading the MC, Mr. Tampoe had said "UGUREN PAPUWATA PAPUWEN PUKATA".

There had been a loud laughter in the Courts including the Judge.

Sent by M.M.M. Yusuf



## 2. FONSEKA

Fonseka was an elderly man in the SINGER Office at Chatham Street. His dress was a sarong, shirt and a coat.

He was handling the Coupon Desk which was in the hire-purchase department in the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the main office. After work they had to come to the front section of the office and walk out after marking the register. In the hire-purchase department, all were young boys and there was no wall clock to indicate the time. Fonseka too did not have a watch.

Work was over at 4.30 p.m. and all the boys cleaned their tables and got ready at 4.25 p.m. to walk to the front office to go out. This was the signal for Fonseka to put on his coat which he hangs on the chair when he comes in the morning. Then he too walks to the front office after cleaning his table.

Once in a way the boys, to have some fun, start clearing their Tables at about 3.45 p.m. and walk out but not to the front office. They go down the stairs to the ground floor and wait to see Fonseka walking to the front office.

The moment they see Fonseka walking out, they all rush back to their seats and start working. When Fonseka sees all the clerks in the office working and find the time not even 4 o'clock, he gets very angry and goes back cursing the boys. Once again he hangs his coat and starts working.

The boys used to say that they all went to the toilet. This was a Big joke in the Singer Office at that time.

By M.M.M. Yusuf

## 3. YOUNGER BROTHER

An Engineer was in the habit of taking his 4 year old son along with him whenever he visited the work sites. Whenever he found the work was slow he used to ask the work force whether they could finish the work on time. If he had any doubt, he would tell them "If you all have any difficulties you may put a few more men and try to complete the job on schedule." He had been repeating this same instructions at all work sites where he had found the progress was slow.

This young boy was listening to all his dad was telling the workers. So one day his son had told his father, "Daddy I want a younger brother soon". Then he had told him "Son, it is not that easy, you have to wait and when the time comes, you will have a younger brother or sister". Then the boy had told the father "What daddy, if you cannot do alone, why not you put a few more men and do the job, so that I would have a younger brother soon?"

(This was a story told by the late Mr. Mauroof who was the Chief Clerk at Singer Office)

Sent by M.M.M. Yusuf

## A CUSTOMER'S DILEMMA

One late evening a customer who had come to the Singer Chatham Street Showrooms had gone through the glass panelled back door along the long corridor to the toilet. When he was returning along the corridor to his utter dismay, he saw the Shop Manager and staff (having locked the back door) locking the front glass panelled door and stepping on to the road !

The customer had no alternative but to bang the back door with his foot with all his might, which brought down the glass to pieces. The sound of breaking glass made the Shop Manager look back to see the customer locked inside !!

He re-opened the door, got the customer out and immediately called the General Manager who appeared on the scene within a short space of time. Shop Manager and staff panicked wondering what Mr. John M. Courtney, General Manager had to say and what action he would take, but to everybody's surprise, he approached the customer who begglingly apologized for the damage done and said. "***It's okay, but did you hurt your toe*** "?

I believe this happened in year 1965/1966, because Mr. J.M. Courtney handed over the reins to Mr. J.M. Rajaratnam as General Manager in 1966.

Incidentally I may mention that it was Mr. Courtney who introduced a snack to be served to the employees with the morning cup of tea, prior to which only a cup of tea was served.

Sent in by Vijitha Jayawardena

### **OBITUARIES**

We regret to announce the demise of two of our members in The last two months. They are :



Mr. A.T. Jayasinghe  
Mr. S. Thiyagarajah

May they find ETERNAL BLISS in their New Worlds !

### **BIRTHDAYS**



We say 'Happy Birthday to the following members who are Celebrating their birthdays in June and July. We expect all of you to wish them if possible. Have we missed anyone ? Please inform us.

#### June

#### July

Salinda Samarakoon	1 <sup>st</sup>	Asita Abeysekera	1 <sup>st</sup>
Hugh Samarasinghe	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Vipula Fernando	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Zubair Hassen	4 <sup>th</sup>	M.H.M. Ghouse	11 <sup>th</sup>
Irene Indraratne	10 <sup>th</sup>	Mala Gunaratne	11 <sup>th</sup>
Irangani Dhanapala	14 <sup>th</sup>	Renuka Gunasekera	11 <sup>th</sup>
W.G.E. Dabara	18 <sup>th</sup>	Jackie Gunasekera	17 <sup>th</sup>
Janaka Kaluhendiwela	19 <sup>th</sup>	Ranjan Dissanayake	17 <sup>th</sup>
W..WA.R. Ravindra	28 <sup>th</sup>	Gemunu Mendis	19 <sup>th</sup>
Sanath Jayasuriya	30 <sup>th</sup>	Himani Rajasuriya	20 <sup>th</sup>
		A.M.M. Nissar	22 <sup>nd</sup>
		M.I.M. Nizar	24 <sup>th</sup>
		Mano Sekeram	25 <sup>th</sup>
		Adithya de Silva	27 <sup>th</sup>
		Srinath Dissanayake	27 <sup>th</sup>
		Antoinette Fernando	28 <sup>th</sup>
		Senarath Gunaratne	28 <sup>th</sup>
		Nilanthi Palihawadana	31 <sup>st</sup>

### **SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

In keeping with the Social responsibilities of the Association, the Executive Committee has decided to offer scholarships this year too to two deserving persons.

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**



- One Day Outing for members & families  
- August (Tentative)
- Medical Presentation- September(Tentative)
- Sing-a-long Musical Evening  
- Early November(Tentative)
- Annual General Meeting- 8<sup>th</sup> December(Fixed)

***PLEASE KEEP THE DATE FREE.***

(Venues and dates will be informed later)

### **FLASH BACK**

1. In 1963, General Manager of Singer Sewing Machine Company Mr.J. Hartley was drowned while swimming in the Mount Lavinia beach.
2. In early 1980s Regional Vice President Mr. John Milne landed in Sri Lanka for a short visit. General Manager's driver who picked him up from the Airport dropped Mr. Milne & his baggage at Hotel Ceylon Intercontinental and reported to GM who had, in the meantime got the news from the hotel that Mr. Milne had collapsed and died !

### **Sent in by Mala Abeyesuriya**

Charles Ranasinghe Elders' Home,  
132, High Level Road,  
Kottawa. Tel: 0755441692

### **NEXT NEWSLETTER**

We propose to publish the next issue of our Newsletter in September or early October. Members are kindly requested to send in their Contributions for publication not later than 31st August 2013 addressed to :

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6A, 6<sup>th</sup> Lane,  
Pagoda Road,  
NUGEGODA.

E-Mail: [gwasalathanthri@gmail.com](mailto:gwasalathanthri@gmail.com)



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