



NEWS LETTER

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ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES OF SINGER

112, Havelock Road, Colombo 5.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

RATNADEEPA JANMA BOOMI- THE ISLAND OF GEMS



Listening to Pandit Amaradeva singing this beautiful song evokes vivid images of our paradise isle. From mountains covered with lush greenery to cascading waterfalls, pristine beaches with breathtaking sunrises,

surreal villages, bustling cities and historical architectures our country is indeed a paradise.

The real gems of our country are our children. The last few years have seen an exodus of young talent from our shores.

Providing free education and then losing the knowledge and talent to other shores is a disaster. Economic recovery is a must if we are to retain our younger generation who are the core of our talent pool.

Honesty and Integrity from grass root level should be the foundation to build a wholesome community. Today's children will be the leaders of tomorrow. Hence values have to be ingrained in them from childhood. Education should go hand in hand with health facilities, clean drinking water and love for the environment.

Our motherland needs our love and gratitude. They say gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others. Let's ignite that torch within us to serve our motherland to the best of our ability.

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Smile :)

Kavi Potha



~Keerthi Wijekulasuriya

Congratulations!

Our members are being recognized in the corporate world for their expertise and experience and appointed to coveted positions. We are indeed proud of them and wish them the very best in their appointments.



Mr. Asoka Pieris
Chairman of Cargills Bank PLC



Dr. Samitha Perera
Chairman of Lanka Sathosa Ltd



Mr. Murali Prakash
Chairman of the Federation of Asia Pacific Retailers' Association



Thru the camera lens of yesteryear



At the banquet of the International Marketing conference held at Hotel Inter Continental , Athens in July 1983

Left to right: Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri, Mr. Premalal de Silva, Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya



SINGER Legends of the past

From left to right: Late Mr. Dayananda Perera(BM Pettah), Late Mr. Harry Jayasinghe(Marketing Manager), Late Mr. Neville Daniel(BM Colpetty), Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri, Late Mr Noel Ginger(AM West)

Pics. Courtesy of Mr. Gamini Wasalathanthri




MR. T. VANNIASINKAM



It was on a cool Monday morning that we met Mr Thiyagaraja.Vanniasinkam, a former Legal Officer of Singer who is fondly known as Tiger. Going down memory lane recapping interesting episodes of his life was indeed exhilarating. He proudly talked about his alma mater, the school by the lake, St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

Q - Mr. Vanniasinkam how did you get the nick name Tiger?

A - Back then in the 1950s the Radio Ceylon commercial service was administered by Australians. They had a quiz programme for

boys' colleges. The finalists were all Josephians. Rev Father Peter Pillai encouraged the boys to read various magazines which were prohibited in other schools. The quiz was very interesting. Listeners could send questions and if the students couldn't answer the listener got a prize of Rs. 5. The Australians found it difficult to pronounce my name, Thyagarajah Vanniasinkam. They shortened it to Thyaga and finally to Tiger. And so I became Tiger. My sister who was a Bridgeteen used to come home and cry and say that the girls were fooling her saying she is Tiger's sister.

Q - When did you join Singer?

A - In 1978 I left Mercantile Credit and joined Singer. The chairman was Mr. Namasivayam and Controller, Mr. Amarasuriya.

Q - Any unforgettable memories?

A - One day my immediate boss, Mr, Robin Ebert told me to go along with some officers and seize a sewing machine. It was a house full of ladies, a mother and daughters. We felt quite embarrassed as the girls started mimicking and giggling when we asked questions. They were not fluent in English and couldn't quite understand what we were saying. We were bowled over by their feminine charm! We didn't have the heart to seize the product. They paid a small amount and pleaded. So, we agreed and left.

At 92 years of age, Mr. Vanniasinkam, is a voracious reader. His pride is his large book case containing a wide variety of books. His favourites are volumes of the National Geographic, Punch Magazine and books about travel. His charming wife Gayathri maintains a beautiful garden. He is father to two daughters. One daughter Mohana has passed on and the other Dr. Thirumahal is an Associate Professor at the Charles Stuart University, in Australia.

Q - Who are your role models?

A - I like people with self-discipline. Met many in my tenure at Singer. You must be disciplined in thought, word and deed to lead a fruitful life.

It was indeed lovely, meeting this witty, well-read personality, with a razor blade sharp memory. Listening to him as he narrated various anecdotes was a treat.

We wish Mr. Vanniasinkam many more years of good health and happiness.

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MR. JAMES NANDASIRI

Chatting with Mr. James Nandasiri who spear headed the Training and Development division at Singer took us down memory lane in an era where Singer revolutionized the consumer durables industry in Sri Lanka. This affable gentleman possesses a fountain of knowledge in District and Area management.



Q- Mr. Nandasiri, tell us about your childhood and your school days.

A - I was born in Dambarakanda, a village seven kilo meters away from Welimada. After completing my primary education in our village school. I joined Welimada Madya Maha Vidyalaya and from there on I entered the University of Peradeniya to follow a degree in Marketing. I landed my first job at Ceylon Bulbs and Electricals as a Marketing Officer in 1971. In 1975, I joined Singer as a District Manager.

Q - When you joined what was the product portfolio?

A - Then it was only sewing machines. The shops were small, but the products were displayed in a methodical way. Later Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya paved the way for a classy retail network. When I retired, the Retail Channel was a giant island wide network with a massive product portfolio. The ascent from a single brand portfolio to a multi brand portfolio was incredible.

Q - Who were the bosses that inspired you?

A - I first worked under Area Manager, Mr. Robin Ebert and afterwards with Mr. Gamani Wasalathanthri. Both were great bosses and taught me the ropes. In 1978 I was promoted as Area Manager and handled East and West areas. I was the first product manager of the company. Then I was appointed as the Training Manager. Subsequently I had a short stint as an Area Manager again. In 1992, I was promoted as the Human Resources Development Manager and four years later as the Group HR Development Manager.

Q - Who were your role models in your career?

A - It is Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya. He transformed the consumer durable industry in this country dramatically. Not only in Srilanka, even in other countries the word spread about the successful marketing strategies of Singer. I would say that he was the leader of the business community in our country.

Q - Singer would have been an inspiration for other companies in the business world. Can you elaborate on that.

A - Yes, Singer was used as a case study in universities. Mr. Amarasuriya's vision, farsightedness and commitment paved the way for success. I was indeed very lucky and fortunate to work under him.

Q - Mr. Nandasiri, what are your fondest memories at Singer?

A - Singer was not just a workplace. It was a home away from home where people worked together like a family. Mr. Nandasiri, is the father of a son and a daughter and is blessed with three grandsons. He is happily spending his retirement in his home in Nayakakanda, Hendala.

We wish Mr. Nandasiri, good health and happiness for long years to come.

OUR PRIDE

OUR SISTER COMPANIES



From Humble Beginnings to a Giant in the Finance Industry:
A Tribute to the Birth of Singer Finance

In the 1980s and 90s, Singer was not just a company—it was, for many of us, a university. Opportunities for formal higher studies were limited, and the organization provided a platform for learning, innovation, and growth that shaped the minds and careers of countless professionals. It was an environment driven by a culture of continuous learning and creativity, largely fuelled by the visionary leadership of Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya, the then Chairman. Under his guidance, Singer wasn't merely a business; it was an institution where talent was nurtured, and the future was crafted.

One of the most exciting initiatives during this time was the formation of what Mr. Amarasuriya fondly referred to as the "A-Team." This wasn't just any team—it was a cross-sectional assembly of high-flyers from different departments and divisions, tasked with developing forward-looking strategies. The objective was clear: generate innovative ideas that would reshape the company and position it as a leader in the industry. I still vividly remember the memo that outlined the formation of these teams, urging us to pursue business transformations that would enhance processes and spur new ventures across the group.

As part of this dynamic initiative, we presented ideas to key managers, with the Chairman himself in attendance. I was involved in credit management at the time, and we were keen on exploring how to diversify beyond traditional hire purchase models. Although Singer was already the largest non-financial sector hire purchase player in the country, we knew we could do more. Our team began to discuss the possibility of moving into leasing, but there was a bigger idea brewing—why not start a finance company? It seemed a logical next step, given our success in hire purchase, but it would require venturing into new territory that was highly regulated.

The idea was accepted in principle, and I was tasked with drafting the initial reports. It felt like a milestone moment, but what came next took me by surprise. I was asked to present this proposal at the next Singer corporate budget meeting, which was scheduled to take place in Thailand. Presenting a new business idea to the top brass of Singer worldwide was no small task, and I spent many late nights preparing for it.

When the day arrived, I was allocated 25 minutes (If I remember right) to present. As I moved through the slides, I could feel the room's attention on every word and image. But just as I thought I had the room engaged, Mr. Steve Goodman, who was heading the Singer Global then, cut in sharply, questioning the viability of the idea and challenging the very basis of our proposal. He literally asked to stop. It was a critical moment, and it seemed like my presentation was about to be shelved. But then,



just as I was about to close, one of the UCL directors, who had a vested interest in Singer Retail, interjected, "Why not let Murali finish his presentation?"

And the rest, as they say, is history.

A few months later, the wheels were in motion. By the following year, Singer Finance was born, with Shantha Wijeweera joining as CEO. Priyath Salgado and I became the initial subscriber shareholders and directors. It was a proud moment, and looking back, there's one key lesson I took from that experience: always lead with the outcomes. Since then, in every major presentation or project proposal, I've made sure the results and impact are in the front and centre, ensuring that stakeholders remain engaged from the start.

The story of Singer Finance is a testament to the power of ideas and the importance of a learning culture. It is also a tribute to the Chairman's vision, which fostered cross-functional collaboration and encouraged us to think beyond the ordinary. This journey isn't just about the creation of a finance company; it's about the growth of a culture that thrives on innovation and teamwork.

Today, Singer Finance stands tall, with a diversified portfolio that spans the entire country. The little seed we planted all those years ago has grown into a giant, and I couldn't be prouder. Every time I pass a Singer Finance branch, I feel a sense of pride and joy knowing that what began as a humble idea has now touched so many lives.

This journey would not have been possible without the dedication of everyone involved. A tribute to all of them from idea generation, nurturing and executing to perfection. I would like to take this opportunity to express my admiration for the current CEO, Thushan Amarasuriya, and his team, who have taken this venture to new heights. The legacy continues, and I wish them all success in the years to come.

~ Murali Prakash

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නිස් වසරක සෙයානිය අතීතය



මළ හිරුගේ රැස් පළ වලි කතර ගිල ගන්නට හෙත්කිහිපයක් නිබියදී මාසන අතට ගත්තේ පිළියන්දල සිංගර් කම්හලේ නිස් වසරක අතීතය සෙයායන්නටය.

එදකදේඪ වූ බිම් පෙළුව මන පුංචිම පුංචි බිජයක් සිංගර් නමින් රෙඡ්ණය කලේ එවකට සිටි සහසති හේමක අමරපුරිය මනිදුන්ගේ සුරතීනී.හඳුන ගහ දෙපත්තෙන් දඳුන් යඡි ගම් කියමින සනඞ කරමින් ඒ පුංචි පලය අද මහාවක්ශයක් වී සමඟම තුල බඞලෙන්තේය.

අතේ ඇඟිලි ගණනටත් අඩු සේවක සංඛ්‍යාවකින් පටන් ගත් සිංගර් දඞ භණ්ඩ කම්හල අද නවීන යන්ත්‍රෙඡ්කරණවලින් සමන්විත විශල කම්හලක් බවට පත් වී තිබේ.අක්කර හතක භූමි භඟයකට හිමිකම්

කියන අපි පර්හෙඡ්කයන්ගේ ඉල්ලුමට සරලන පරිදි වයසර්ක ඡලය තවත් පුළුල් කෙඞ නවීන මඡිලියේ දඞ භණ්ඩ කම්හලක්ද ස්ථඡිත කලේය

මිනිසුන්ගේ හදවත් තේරුම් ගත් සිංගර් නමය තුලින් මනව අවශ්‍යතඞයක් වන ඡල ප්‍රශ්ණයට විසදුමක් ලෙස දඞන්න වතුර පෙම්ප කර්මන්තශලඞක්ද අපගේ මෙම භූමිය තුල ඉදිකර තිබේ.ඒ නිසඡද පිළියන්දල කර්මන්තශලඞසංකීර්ණයක් යඡි කීම වරදක් නඞ.

සේවක සහඡයින්ගේ මනසේ විඞඞ තේරුම්ගත් ආයතන පරිපලනය නෙණයකුත් ක්‍රියකරකම් හදුන්වඡීම මේ නිස් වසර තුල අදටත් සිදුවෙමින් පවතී.ඒ අතර එළිමහන් මෙන්ම ගඞස්ථ ක්‍රීඩඞශේඡ නඞක් ගන්නඡතර හඡියඳවත් පිරිපුන් ක්‍රීඩකයින් කිහිපදෙනෙකුට විදේශ සංචර ලඞඡීම මඡග්ද සතුටට කරුණකි.

ආගම දහම කෙරේද අප ආයතනය සමු විටම මූලිකත්වය දී කටයුතු කරන අතර වෙසක් , පෙණසත් වඞි විශේඡිත පෙඡ්වල් මුල් කරගෙන බණ දහම් පිංකම් මෙන්ම දන්සල්ද පඞන්වූයේ මේ නිස් වසර තුලය.ඒ වගේම විසිපස්වෙනි සංචත්සරය දඡසුදඡහන් වනතුරු සඡු නඡ මද පඞන්වූ පිරිත් සඡ්කඞසනය අපේ ඡීවිතවලට එක්කලේ ආශීර්වඡයකි.

නවද සේවකයින්ගේ අදහස් භායෙඡ්නානෙඡකිලිව පිළිගෙන ඒවාක්‍රියඞට නඞවීම තුලින් මඡකින්තේ සේවකයා සමඟමට සම්පතක් බවය.

අඩු සේවක සංඛ්‍යාවකින් පටන් ගත් මේ සියළු කාර්මික තුළ මේ වන විටත් සේවකයින් හඟ සියකට වඩා පිරිසක් සේවයේ නිරත වන අතර , ඔවුන්ගෙන් යඉපන පිරිස ගණනය කිරීම ඉතාමත් අපහසුය.



ඒ වගේම මඟේ දිගු සේවකයන් තුළ අධ්‍යක්ෂවරුන් ඇවිත් ගිය බව රහසක් නෙවේ.ඒ අතරින් මඟේ මනකය රදා පවතින්නේ කපුවීමෙන් වඩා කල ආනන්ද පෙරේරාමි වූ මිනිසාලගය.ඔහු හදවතින්ම ආයතනයට ආදරය කලේය.ඔහු හදුන්වනුයේ නෙතෙයකුත් ක්‍රියාදාමයන් අදටත් අපි ඉදිරියට ගෙන යමින් තිබේ.

තවත් මනිස් වසරේ අතීතයට එබිකම් කල විට ආඩම්බරයෙන් ලිවිය හකි වර්තයක් මඟේ මනසේ රැදී තිබේ.නිහනමනී,ගුණ ගරුක,මිත්‍රශීලී වර්තයක් වූ ඔහු අද සිංගර් සමඟමේ ප්‍රධාන විධායක නිලධාරියාය.ඔහු නමින් මහේෂ් විජේවර්ධන.

අද වත්මනේ අපගේ භවකරුවාලස අධ්‍යක්ෂ සුජීව පෙරේරාමහන කටයුතු කරන අතර ඔහුද නිහනමනී ගුණ ගරුක මිනිසෙකි.හමුවිටම අපගේ නිෂ්පාදනවල ගුණත්මක බව ගන නිතර කතාකරන ඔහු පිළියන්දල කාර්මික ගලාසංකීර්ණයේ උන්නතියට කරන නිහඩ සේවය මඟේ දැස් මන සනිටුහන් වී තිබේ.

සටහන අවසන් කරන්නට මාමේ කරුණද යෙදාගත්තේ එයින් ලඹන ආශීර්වාදය නිසමය.ඒ අමරසූරිය මනිදුන්ගේ සංකල්පනාවක් මන ජය ශ්‍රී මහ බෙඩීන් වහසේගේ පදක රෙඝීන අංකුරයක් අප කම්හල් හුමියේ රෙඝීණය කර තිබීමයි.තුන්බෙච්ල ධර්මරතන හිමි පණන්ගේ අනු දනුම මන අපිට ලඹුණ මේ මහගු සම්පන අපගේ නිස් වසරක දියුණුවට නිහඩ ප්‍රච්චනාවක් බව මදුන් එකතු කෙඛ ලියනබම්.

සටහන

රජු ලිවේරා

ඇලෝකාර්මිතගලා (පිළියන්දල)



Mr. S.R. J. Suraweera



Mr. Sunil Wakista

Two of our colleagues Mr. S.R.J. Suraweera, former Branch Manager of Chilaw and Mr. Sunil Wakista , former Branch Manager of Matara and Tangalle passed on in the recent months . The memories of the happy times we spent with them will be cherished for many more years. We offer our heartfelt condolences to their families.

EVENTS

THE SINGER PAST VS PRESENT EMPLOYEES' SPORTS ENCOUNTER

The SINGER PAST vs PRESENT employees' sports encounter was held at the MCA grounds in September. It was a fun event with the present and past cricket and netball teams competing with their rivals in a spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship. Patron of APES, Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya graced the event as the chief guest.







Our SIC friends meet for a FUN Get together

The current and Ex employees of Singer Industries had a fun get together in September at the River Green Garden Hotel in Keselwatta, Panadura. The exciting agenda laid out by the organizing committee had everybody present enjoying at the Singing competitions and the dancing competitions. The event concluded with a raffle draw. Kudos to Mr. Nihal Kodagoda and his team for organizing a fantastic event.





Let's
SING
and
DANCE



The annual Sing along event of APES aptly named the Singer Sing n Dance was held at Hotel Golden Rose in November. It was a gala event with food , spirits and superb music dished out by Wild Flowers. Participants had a whale of a time meeting old friends and singing and dancing together. Well done to the Entertainment Committee headed by Mr. Y. Chandana Senarathna for putting together a superb event.

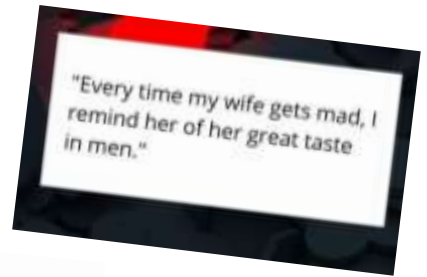






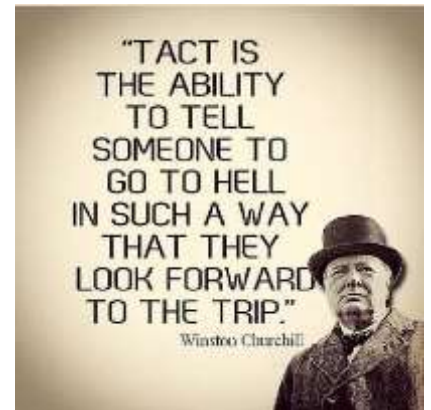
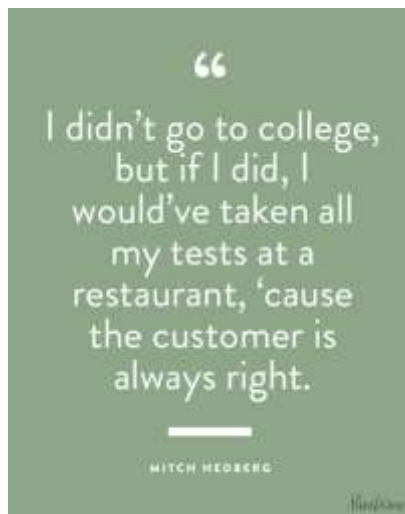
Smile

(Source - Google)

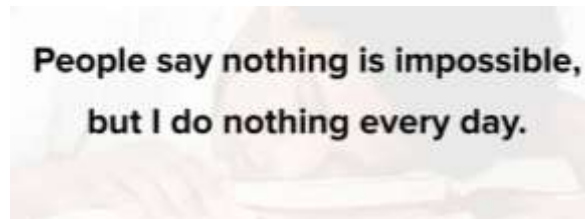


"I like work, it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours"

MY MIND IS LIKE MY WEB BROWSER. 19 TABS ARE OPEN, 3 ARE FROZEN AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THE MUSIC IS COMING FROM.



Marriage is a Workshop..... where husband works & wife shops....





කිසිදා හමුනෙවන
මඩන් දෙකක
හනි දඟන දුවන ඔබට
අරමුණක් නඳ්ද දුවේ...???

සමහරු කුකර් ක්ලෂ්...
එහෙත් මෙහෙත් ගෙවන හඩක්!!
සමහරු කඩි සෙල්ලම්....
ඒ මද ඔරිස් කතා...
යුග ගී මද්දෙන් අලුත්ම බයිලිසින්දු!!
සිහින දෙර්ගලන ආදර වදන්
එකල ගජමන් නෙණ්ටවත්,
තෙවගමුවේ රහුල හිමිටවත් ඔබව
හමුවුනේ නඳ්දෝරුහුනු කුමරියේ ..
!!!

මේක කෙතීවියක්නෙ!

පසල් යනකෙව
විද්‍යාසන්නියේ
දේදුන්නේ පව පිලිවෙල
VIBGYOR
කියල මතකයේ සටහන් කලත් අද
මලින් මලට පියඹන
ඔබ දුටුවම
කෙහෙහළ මේ
දම්, ඉන්ඩිගෝනිල්, කෙල, කහ, නඹිලි රතු
බින්දු බින්දු වලින්
පිලිවලට සර්පිලා
මල් වත්ත දේදුන්නක් කරනවා කියලා
හිතන්නේ. ??

මේ... ඒක නෙමෙයි,
අපිටත් දෙන්නකෙඔය පව
මේක් අප් කරන්න!



We extend a warm welcome to the following members who joined the APES family recently. We look forward to meeting you and enjoying with us at our future events.

Membership Number	Member's Name
430	Ajith Hettiarachchi
431	Sanath Janaka S Amarasekara
432	W Shamal Fernando
433	Chrishanthlal Jacobs Rajapakse

We propose to publish the next Newsletter in February 2025. Please email your articles to wijekkeerthi@gmail.com. We invite our readers to send in comments and suggestions to improve the Newsletter and our website www.apesinger.com