



NEWS LETTER

JULY 2022

Issue No.48

ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES OF SINGER

112, Havelock Road, Colombo 5.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Members,

In this edition of the Newsletter, the Bodhi Pooja held on 20th March 2022 at the Bellanvila Raja Maha Viharaya, Dehiwela to invoke the blessings of the Nobel Triple Gem on our colleague and friend Mr. Vidya Vidayaratne takes centre stage. The bodhi pooja was organised by the Association of Past Employees of Singer and was attended by over 30 past employees including our former Chairman Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya and several past Directors and Senior

Managers. As you are probably aware, Vidya is presently undergoing treatment for brain cancer and partial paralysis. Amidst the suffering, Vidya continues with his daily meditation which will no doubt relieve him of his pain and suffering. Soft spoken, ever smiling Vidya is an Engineer par excellence who by himself set up the Singer Refrigerator Factory and developed the 'No Frost' Refrigerator which equalled any imported 'No Frost' Refrigerator quality wise. The following day, 21st March, Vidya's daughter Lasni sent a Whatsapp message to the APES Group, thanking the members for arranging the Bodhi Pooja. For the information of all members I quote below her message;-

Quote " Dear Aunties and Uncles, This is Vidya's daughter Lasni. Thank you very much for arranging this Bodhi Pooja to bless thaththa for his recovery. We could not join you all yesterday because thaththa was too tired to come. He suffers from semi paralysis, so he can't walk. This happened about three weeks ago. He has memory issues as well. I told thaththa about the Bodhi Pooja and he was very happy and thankful to all of you. I read all your msgs with blessings one by one to thaththa and he listened to them with love. He asked me to thank all of you. Thank

you Aunties and Uncles for being there for us in this difficult situation. Thanks again'

Lots of love from;-

Vidya, Lasni and family " Unquote

May the blessings if the Nobel Triple Gem bring you speedy recovery and free you from any suffering
Wasalathanthri.

The sub-committees for the year 2022, are as follows :

Social & Entertainment Committee

Russell de La Motte – Chairman

Lasantha Perera

Kaushalya Murugadasan

Damith Jayasena

Sriyani Weerasinghe

Ruwan Kasturiarachchi

Manjula Wijemanne

Welfare committee

Keerthi Wijekulasuriya – Chairperson

Lasantha Perera

Russell de la Motte

Zubair Hassan

Newsletter Committee

Gaming Wasalathantri – Chairman

Judith Vannitamby

Zubair Hassan

Membership drive

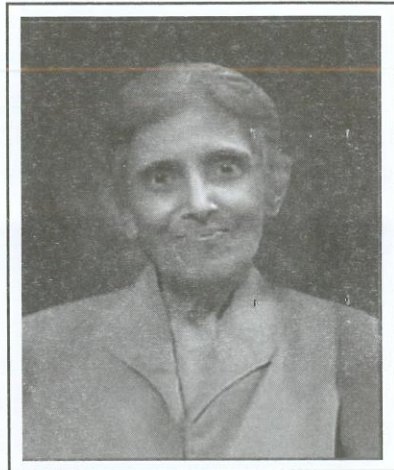
Kumar Samarasinghe – Chairman

Russell de la Motte

Manjula Wijemanne

Sriyani Weerasinghe

The President, Secretary and the Treasurer will be Ex-Officio members of the Committees.



AN APPRECIATION – PUSHPA FONSEKA

I will commence writing this appreciation by quoting a few lines from the song 'CANDLE IN THE WIND' sung by Sir Elton John at Late Diana's funeral. The word 'English Rose' has been substituted by the word 'Pushpa' " Goodbye Pushpa, may you ever grow in our hearts and it seems to me you lived your life like a 'Candle in the Wind'. Even though I knew Pushpa long before she joined the Association of Past Employees of Singer. my association with her grew after she became a member of the Association and commenced contributing articles to the Newsletter. Her first article was in August 2004 when she penned a few words of appreciation as a Posthumous Tribute to late Mr.P.S.Maniam. I quote below the poem she wrote in that article

A POSTHUMOUS TRIBUTE

1. Though very short
You were smart
Played a great part
At Singer in the past
2. You are no more
That we all know
But I'd like to show
How my sympathies flow

3. Sorry I missed your call
To bid Goodbye to all
May you attain the supreme goal
With no suffering at all

In Memory of Late Mr. Maniam
By Pushpa Fonseka
(Nee Wijepala)
17th August, 2004

Since then she has been regularly writing articles to the Newsletter, both in English and Sinhala. She was equally versatile in both prose and poetry. She was one of the early members of the Association (Member No.48) who participated in almost all the activities organised by the Association despite numerous household chores. She was a devoted wife to her husband and an adorable mother and grandmother to her children and grandchildren.

She was a member who unhesitatingly acceded to my requests for articles to be published in the Newsletter despite her failing health conditions. She always agreed to pen a few words of wisdom for the reading pleasure of our members. Personally, her demise is a big loss to me as I can no longer ask her to write an article for the Newsletter.

Pushpa, you are no longer with us but you will be remembered as an epitome of simplicity, friendliness and good human qualities. MAY YOU ATTAIN THE SUPREME BLISS OF NIRWANA

Wasalathntri

VIJITHA JAYAWARDENA – THE POOR LADY’S GONE

It is with profound sadness that I write this appreciation of a lady who chiselled her name in the Singer Company Vijitha Jayawardena, I first met her as a steno-typist in the typing pool when I accompanied the Group Personnel Manager, Gamini De Silva to the management office during his weekly visits and with her subsequent appointment in May 1978 as the Factory Director’s Secretary replacing Chandrani Gunawardena, we developed a closer working relationship. Vijitha initially schooled at Sri Chandrasekera Vidyalaya at Horetuduwa, Moratuwa until the family shifted to Nalluruwa in Panadura where she continued her education at Sri Sumanagala Girls’ School. She thereafter followed English typing classes and most admirably learnt short-hand by herself.

Around this time she met Singer telephone operator Mala Abeysuriya who introduced her to Office Manager Taylor and that in 1963 opened her career path in the Singer Company. The 1972 formation of the typist pool headed by chain smoker Constance de Vallier saw Vijitha too being absorbed into same along with Dulcie Podisekera, Christine Keyt and Piyaseeli Peiris. With the passage of time Vijitha married CTB Depot Inspector Ananda and their two sons like the father, took to music like ducks to water with the eldest even strumming in a musical group. Tragedy however struck the family when Ananda was crushed against a light post ironically by a CTB bus which ran off the road and the eldest son passed away after a sudden heart attack.

When in 1968 Singer Industries produced the Glacio kerosene oil refrigerator and sold 10 of them to employees at Rs.875/- each, Vijitha purchased one and held the receipt in treasure for as long as I knew. Her appointment as Secretary required her inter alia to take down disciplinary inquiry proceedings and being unfamiliar with the task, was humble enough to seek my assistance. After four years at the factory she was re-transferred as the Finance Director’s Secretary at SSL where she was in a more homely atmosphere up to the time she retired from the Company.

At the inauguration of the APES Vijitha was appointed Assistant Secretary and further served in other committees as well until her failing health condition forced her to resign in 2015 yet continued assisting Wasalathanthri in the newsletter typing work, contributed to the newsletter in both verse and prose and attended AGMs – her last being in 2019. She bore respect for the Singer Company in general and her superiors in particular. I take liberty in recording here an incident she related to me, insisting that she had a narrow escape with death at the time she was working for the Finance Director and expressed gratitude to Despatch Clerk Dickman, the Neville Peiris', the Priyath Salgados' and Priyangani.

On July 24, 1996 after office, Vijitha boarded a crowded bus to get to the Slave Island railway station but couldn't get past the second step. At the vehement insistence of Dickman who was also at the bus stand, she reluctantly got down but with regret that she would miss her usual train, and arriving at the station by the next bus was dismayed to see the train just pulling out. Left with Hobson's choice she took the next train which stopped unusually midway at Wellawatte where the passengers awaited a long time before learning to their horror that bomb blasts had occurred in the previous train, at Dehiwela.

LTTE operatives had placed time bomb suitcase in four carriages exploding at the same time, killing 64 and wounding over 400 commuters. The technique of simultaneously exploding multiple bombs in several carriages was used for the first time, in this attack. The terror on the rail track occurred during the evening rush hour when people were returning home after work. Among the dead and injured had been Vijitha's associates and regular compartment companions. This was the very particular train that Vijitha travelled in daily to get home but had fortunately missed that day, thanks to Dickman virtually dragging her off the bus.

When Director Neville Peiris learnt of the bomb blast, he instructed Accountant Priyath Salgado to verify if Vijitha had got home safely but when conveyed that she hadn't arrived even by 9 p.m., with his wife he rushed to both the General Hospital and the Kalubowila hospital to physically check the injured lists and on finding her name not in either, reflected with great sadness: "The poor lady – she's gone". Not then but now, the poor lady Vijitha has gone but her memories will linger for years to come.

May she attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana!

T.V Perera

The Lighter Side of 20-2-2022 – 20th APES AGM

By T.V. Perera

"You can buy a whole book for just 2000 rupees and win valuable prizes. Even if you don't want prizes it doesn't matter, you can buy tickets. Buy your raffle tickets, buy your raffle tickets. Each ticket is only 100 rupees"

Reminiscent of a sweep ticket seller, Nasser Majeed kept on screaming into the mike. Like present day PHI he earlier advised members to follow health regulations and 'refrain from

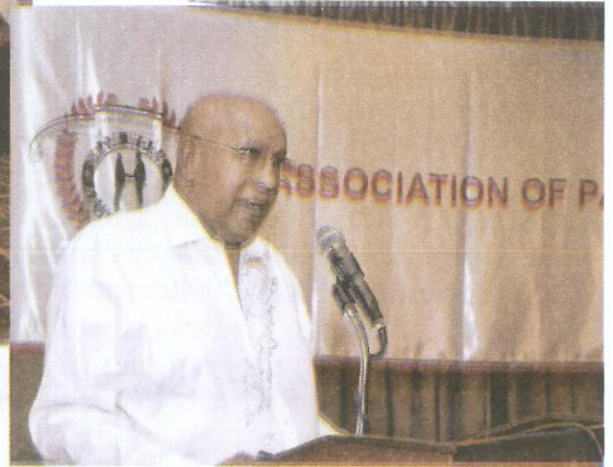
spreading Covid to your neighbours' but with Singer colleagues meeting each other after two years, health matters were bygone things.

(continuation in page 6)

SOME CAPTURED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE AGM 2022



1. Gamini, Keerthi, Shirani and Uline enjoying dancing to music provided by DJ Ruwan



2. Chairman Singer Mr. Mohan Pandithage addressing the gathering



3. Newly elected office bearers of APES 2022



4. Distinguish Invitees Mr. Mohan Pandithage, Chairman Singer, and CEO Singer Mr. Mahesh Wijewardena with Mr. Nelson Mendis President APES.



5. First prize winner Mrs. Saro Dissanayake receiving the award.

Over 100 members were present at the APES 20th AGM on 20.2.2022 and as expected, Nelson M. was elected President while Nilanthi P. replaced Secretary Judy V. All other committee members were happily re-appointed. It was announced since the last AGM, the Founder President Bertie Fernando, Ananda Epa, Adithya De Silva, Keerthi Weraniyagoda, P. Manawadu, Ranjit David, J.W. Dickman and Vijitha Jayawardena have all gone to the land of no return.

Former Batticaloa MP Abdul Majeed's son Nasser Majeed acted as the announcer. He has come a long way from stage fright. Bravo Majeed, Bravo! Here is an extract of the APES Newsletter of February 2015 reproduced for the benefit of readers:

'Employee Training was an integral component of the Personnel Department's functions and Group Personnel Manager Gamini De Silva led the role in conducting very many training programmes for the different strata of both SIC and SSL employees at carefully selected venues. Being in the Personnel Department I too was involved in most aspects, ensuring the success of such programmes. At one programme held for SIC employees, then Assistant Accountant at SIC A.N. Majeed was invited to make a presentation to the 30 odd participants. This was just few months after he had joined the company. Majeed began confidently but a few minutes later I noticed a dramatic change in that his eyes had widened, voice became unsteady and worse, his fingers were trembling. I realized that he was extremely nervous and in the firm grip of stage fright. It was time that I acted fast.

"Do you have any contingency plan?" I asked aloud to draw Majeed's attention towards me. There was no relevance between a contingency plan and the accounting structure he was trying to put across but the question was designed to divert his mind from his unnerved situation at the moment. "What contingency plan?" Majeed asked enquiringly and went on. "There is no need for a contingency plan in this system". The brief interruption was enough for the designed psychology to work. He became relaxed and went on to make an excellent presentation'.

That he can sell sweep tickets, Majeed amply and aptly proved: his persuasion resulting in all 400 raffle tickets being sold out and Nelson explaining that lesser tickets were printed this time because many remained unsold the last time.

It was nice seeing CEO Mahesh Wijewardena, Chairman Mohan Pandithage, P. Shivaji, Kumar Samarasinghe and the rest. The females, especially Goldilocks Shirani K. added colour to the event. Damayanthi M. wore a cotton kurthi and looked simply simple. Through the years she has but lost her full flushing, blushing cheeks. In a blood red kurthi and red pottu, 'Cow-she looked busy throughout the event. "Throwing Queen" Gold Medalist at the Asian Master Athletic Championship entrancing Sriyani was observed to need to reduce her calories intake and not help herself to a second desert, again.

In the conspicuous absence of 'Master Behind Bars' John Emmanuel – famed for pouring out the stuff that cheers and himself taking a tot each seven to go to heaven – waiters served drinks at tables. Dismally they were not seen for a second round. Contrastingly, the ladies enjoyed wine before they did dine. Apart from John, other notable absentees were Vanniasinkam, Hathurusinghe, Kalyana, Boteju, Subadra with her pouting lips, Susima of beauty salon fame and of course SICs sweet girl, adorable Ramani.

The guy up in the newsletter, Wasalathanthri, was most of the time mask-less though he averred it was only to down whiskey. To stop wind escaping through the gap of his saliency missing front tooth, a kind soul advised him to temporary dentures. Anyone saw the cop inside the hall? In his khaki suit, Ajith Aponso looked like one. He found it difficult rising from his chair and was eyeing Russell's pot belly which appeared to have gone down, not because

Russell patronizes any gym but because of escalated food prices, methinks. Ajith could do better indulging in table tennis one time his favourite past time. Some silly, asked me if I knew who his father was, as if Kandy's Professor Herbert Aponso was an unknown personality. What kept George Anthony glued to his chair? You guess is as good as mine.

"There is a gift of a Singer branded umbrella, calendar and a towel for everybody present. You can collect it on surrender of your token". That was President Nelson making an announcement. Handing over the gift, Kaushi was to say that the towels are yet to come. On one occasion, members couldn't hear each other as the speakers in the hall drowned voices. Anyway, the baila cassette Aadi thapara lahila, beeji thapara lahila made Goldilocks lead the sway and many other join the way.

TO A LONELY FIRE-FLY

Sleepless skimming moonless woe
Tossing to and fro
With thoughts of a tense tomorrow
Flickered you then on my window
And made my bedroom glow

Step up I did to let in the breeze
And in you flashed past me in peace
Like a friend for me to please
(or as it your plan to lease)
Your flight in circles in the room
I thought would never cease

Are you the last of the doomed
Cheeky millions that roamed
Our land from eternity?
And perished through human stupidity

Now straying into Eden in quest of
Your Eve to restore your progeny?
Or the Cassandra of yore
*Predicting pandemics more?

As punishment for human asinity?
Or a Divine Messiah
With happy news for humanity?
Heavenly Jewel on my ceiling clear
Speak to me that I may hear

THE WAY I SEE THEM

- A. Competition time for Dealers
Its raining Sales and Hirers!
Bags full of Contracts
Rooms full of 'sold products
By foul means or fair
California, we are there !
- B A Singer Dealer in Waltota
Doubled his Sales each quarter!
When questioned by Audit,
' How do you do it'?
His replies did prove him a 'Shorter'
- C A 'learned' Counsel in Hulftsdorp
Was an eccentric 'show off'!
To Trials he took
The dustiest books
Which made His Honour to cough !

- D There was a student in Nuwara Eliya
Who was a perennial failure !
The exams she sat
She treated as sprat,
Which was the cause of her failure !
- E I know a lady in Chilaw
Who makes a wonderful pilau
She would not joke
For fear of a choke,
When eating her delicious pilau !

By: T. VANNIYASINKAM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - TENTATIVE

One Day Outing for Members, Spouses and Family - June/July
Cricket Match, Get together and Lunch - Between August & October
(Subject to availability of a suitable grounds)
Sing-A-Long - November
Annual General Meeting – December

OBITUARIES - MARCH TO MAY

8.3.22 - Mrs. Pushpa Fonseka
13.3.22 - Mr. M.R.J.Bandara
02.5.22 - Mr. N.H.A.D.Wijesena
05.5.22 - Mr. H.M.K.Bandara
08.5.22 - Mr. Tilak Galaboda

DEATH DONATION FUND

At the Executive Committee Meeting held on 9th March 2022, our President Mr.Nelson Mendis proposed to inaugurate a Death Donation Fund as there was nothing to compensate a death of a member of the Association. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the Committee and the task of formulating the terms and conditions of the said fund was entrusted to Messrs. Nasser Majeed and Zubair Hassen. The Committee also decided to do away the present Scholarship Fund and transfer the funds available in the Scholarship Account to the Death Donation Fund. The fund will be operated ONLY for needy members of the Association. The terms and conditions under which the Death Donation Fund will function will be notified to the Members once it is approved by the Executive Committee.

G.C.Wasalathanthri

NEXT NEWSLETTER

We propose to publish the next Newsletter in November 2022 subject to the availability of sufficient articles to fill in at least 6xA4. Therefore, please send your articles for publication NOT LATER THAN 15th October 2022 to Mr.G.C.Wasalathanthri, No. 6A, 6th Lane, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda. Email: gwasalathanthri@gmail.com.

IF UNDELIVERED, PLEASE RETURN TO:

Mrs. Nilanthi Perera
Secretary, APES
336/D, Christ King Mawatha,
Batagama North,
Ja-Ela.