



NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES' OF SINGER

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

Issue No. 5

Dear Members,

March 2003

As you will observe, there has been a considerable delay in the issuance of the Newsletter due to the Committee's decision to restrict the bulletin to two issues per year in view of the prohibitive cost of printing. It is proposed to get this across to you, one in March and the other in November every year. We trust you will bear with us the unavoidable delay.

Year 2003 dawned in an air of peace and positive hope for the future where the hopes and aspirations of everybody will be fulfilled. Looking back at the recent past it is heartening to record with pride the modest beginning with a Membership of 35, the Organisation has progressed slowly and steadily for the last two years and we are embarking on the third year with a Membership of 110 with many more enrolments in the offing. We cannot be complacent as much more remains to be done to swell our Membership. It is our clarion call to each and every Member to bring in at least one member each so our Membership drive can be partially achieved.

During the period under review, we have successfully organised get-togethers, outings with family members etc. culminating in the Annual General Meeting at the Shalika Hall with the adoption of the Secretary's report for the year 2002, highlighting the various achievements and the subsequent

appointment of a new Executive Committee to guide the destinies of the Association for the new year. The Executive Committee so elected is as follows:

Patron : Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya,
Chairman – Singer Group

President : Mr. Bertie Fernando

Vice Presidents:

Mr. G.C. Wasalathanthri

Mr. Nelson Mendis

Secretary : Mr. Ananda Epa

Asst. Secretary:

Mrs. Vijitha Jayawardena

Treasurer : Mr. A.M.M. Nissar

Asst. Treasurer:

Mr. S.Thiyagarajah

Committee Members:

Mr. P.S. Maniam

Mr. Ranjith David

Mrs. Judith Vannitamby

Mr. W.G.E. Dabara

Mr. John Emmanuel

Mrs. Kaushaliya

Murugadasan

Mr. Lashantha Perera

Mr. Kalyana Dheerasekera

One of the significant features was the setting up of a Members Benevolent Fund which got off to a flying start, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the President and some Senior Members of the Association. With the support of the Membership at large it is hoped that the anticipated target of Rs. 5 lakhs can be realised before the year is out.

The turn out at the Annual General Meeting left much to be desired and least encouraging. It is our fervent hope that the Members will be far more enthusiastic and dedicated by taking an active interest in the future.

Realizing the long felt need for the regular active participation of the Membership along with their families, the Entertainment Committee has organised the following series of programmes to cover the New Year. This will give the entire Membership the opportunity to come into regular contact with our brethren of yesteryear who have hitherto been languishing in the limbo of the forgotten past and rekindle and relive the pleasant memories of the past and to further strengthen bonds of fellowship and brotherhood.

In May - One Day Outing

In July - A get-together Cricket Match And Lunch

In September - A Get-together & Dinner

In Dcember - Annual General Meeting (Sunday, 14th December, 2003)

The response of contributions towards the Newsletter has not been very encouraging and we once again ask you to send articles of interesting anecdotes, jokes and humourous sketches. This bulletin carries three items which we are sure will be read with interest.



WIT AND HUMOUR

DID YOU KNOW!

When he was seven years old, his family was forced out of their home on a legal technicality, and he had to work to

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support them. At age nine, his mother died. At 22, he lost his job as a Stores Clerk. He wanted to go to a law school, but his education wasn't good enough. At 23, he went into debt, to become a partner in a small store. At 26, his business partner died leaving him a huge debt that took years to repay. At 28 after having an affair with a girl for four years, he asked her to marry him. She said no. At 45, he ran for the Senate and lost. At 47, his four year old son died. At 47, he failed as the Vice-presidential candidate. At 49, he ran for the Senate again, and lost. At 51, he was elected President of the United States.

His name was Abraham Lincoln.

This article was contributed by Maniam..

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THESE ARE REAL!

You may have heard these before – but do you remember these famous people?

A Singer VIP from New York was on an important visit to Singer Sri Lanka and during a conducted tour of the MGT office this American gentleman noticed an unfamiliar sight.

The Asset Department working in full strength was glowing with fair young damsels. Rather amused, the visitor wanted to know the reason for this beautiful sight. Pat came the answer from our "Management Vizard" "It's a new concept", the Management decided womanizing the Asset Department.

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At the Airport waiting to receive an important visitor from Singer Headquarters were two of our "SNR Managers" Rather a long wait and no signs of this scheduled flight. Getting impatient as usual the smart one asks

"What's the matter?" "Not a Plane in sight," says the other. Noticing an Air Craft on the Tarmac "well what's" that?", "That's a plane" OH that? "That is the mail plane," says the junior. OH, so you even know how to recognize the sex of a plane.

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The home of the white expat from ole blight was burgled and the custodian of finance and controls rushed to the scene. Ticking the inventory the smart one suggests "Let's inform the police" Yes, says the white expat and they both get into his VW and drive towards the Cinnamon Garden Police Station.

Suddenly the moving car spurts, coughs, and comes to a halt. "Boy what a mess" he says "Please open the bonnet, I think the engine is missing", so the smart one moves in front of the VW and opens the boot. He yells "you are damn right – they have robbed your engine also".

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A former GM of Singer (had the looks of SIR LEN HUTTON, a famous English Cricket captain) passed away whilst enjoying a short vacation in Trincomalee. The funeral took place on the immediate Sunday afternoon and the staff reporting to work on Monday morning was in for a sudden shock. The only expat available at that time was a big made Dutch National who spoke English with a strong continental accent. Making the tragic announcement in a short speech he ended up saying "OK now it is all over". "For the time being. I shall take over", walked up very boldly and occupied the GM's chair.

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The tragic Saturday Night was a Night to remember for the young Filipino Engineer who was posted in Sri Lanka to spearhead the Singer Industries project. He escaped death when his VW crashed into a "Police Traffic Beat" placed in the center of Green Path/Flower Road – cross roads. The car driven by him was a company car given for his official use. Having had a close shave the previous night, the young Filipino was present at the Sunday afternoon funeral of the late GM and rode with me to Kanatte. Passing the wrecked VW parked on the roadside, he was shivering in his Boots, still in a state of shock and very worried of what to follow.

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Lucky Guy – with the sudden change at the top he was once again saved by the skin of his teeth. The cool cultured clever gentleman was no more.

The big Burley Dutchman who had just taken over the power of authority sat in his place and in his moment of glory the matter was handled with ease. Don't worry my boy "This is no big matter." "I'll just write it off", said the big man now as the Big Boss.

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Life and living can be stranger than
fiction.
It can also be great fun loaded with
action.

Do no dream of expectations
What you may receive will be better
than a dream or a fiction.

*Contributed by: Thurstan Balasuriya
Ex Manager,
Industrial Products Division*

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A DISTRICT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE – *J. Sadique*

I was requested to cover Vavuniya in the year 1983 soon after the Colombo riots. I distinctly remember travelling to Vavuniya with Mr. Chelvanayagam (now deceased), the Accounts Supervisor, on our motorbikes. It took about 10 hours to reach our destination because Mr. Chelvanayagam had just got his driving licence and was rather slow. Without exaggeration I was compelled to wait for him at every junction between Colombo and Vavuniya. However, we made good time all the way.

The area allocated to me was Mannar, Vavuniya and Trincomalee, and it was my pleasure to work with Mr. Balakrishnan, the Area Manager and two reliable and loyal shop Managers, Mr. Balan and Mr. Nadarasa. Having worked in this district for about six months, I became eligible for a car loan. Thereafter, I bought a Toyota KE 30 car and used it there.

The incident I wish to narrate happened in this district during this time. I was travelling with Mr. Balan and Mr. Nadarasa to Omanthai, about 10 miles from Vavuniya on the Jaffna road, to revert a sale of a sewing machine. The practice of reverting a sale is to remove the machine head only, after handing over a document to this effect. While I was preparing the papers in the hirer's house, a couple of youths came inside and one sat beside me. Immediately I felt that I was facing a member of the LTTE, whom the Tamils address as 'Podiyan'. This youth opened a small bag he was carrying and requested me to look into it, and I felt a tremor when I saw a pistol and something that looked like a grenade. He asked me if I knew

who they were, and I replied in the affirmative and was thankful I had not removed the machine head at that time. I was very nervous and worried, as I had heard numerous horrendous stories of kidnapping, shooting etc. Then they started making a demand for my car, saying that their leader needed one. This being my first experience with the terrorists, I thought that my time was up. I feared that they would just shoot us and drive away with the car. I was too frightened and for sometime I couldn't talk. I just don't 'now what came over me at that moment, but I found my voice refusing to part with the car. I insisted that it was my personal property and that the company did not own it. In the course of conversation, they even threatened me saying they would forcefully take it away.

However, the inmates of the house too came to my rescue and said that if they took away the car, they could have problems with the Police. Then Mr. Balan, the Manager Singer Shop, recognising one of the guys intervened and explained to him that the car was my

personal property and that I had come over work and if they were to carry out their threats, Singer could even close shop in Vavuniya. Then they wanted to verify the details and requested to see the registration and insurance papers. I walked up to my car to retrieve the documents and to me it seemed an eternal walk. I was also contemplating to start the car and make a fast get away, but I dismissed the idea, as I knew the LTTE boys might have stationed more boys surrounding the house.

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Finally, I managed to bring back the papers and even after seeing my name on the papers they were reluctant to leave without the car.

However we, the inmates of the house, Mr. Balan and I, were firm in not allowing them to remove the car and somehow managed to convince them that it was not a good idea to take the car away. Ultimately they decided not to. I took the opportunity and went a step further by asking them if it would be safe for me to continue working in this area, and wanted an assurance that I will not be harassed again in this manner by any other members of their movement. The boys assured me that I could work without any fear and that they would not trouble me any more.

From that day on, I had no more incidents with the LTTE boys and continued with my work and even traveled up to Puliyankulam, Nedunkirni, Padaviya and Madhu etc. in my car.

The two years I spent in the Vavuniya District were the best years in my career with Singer. I would like to record that the Singer staff of the district and the people in the area, who are humble and honest in their dealings, contributed immensely to these best years.

Unfortunately I had to leave the Vavuniya district when the LTTE blasted the culvert on the Colombo - Vavuniya main road near the town disrupting all vehicle movements. When I reported to the Singer Head Office, I was transferred to Maharagama District

where I was involved in many other incidents whilst reverting products due to non-payments of monthly instalments. This is another story which I will relate some other time.

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Please send in your contributions for the newsletters to
Publicity Committee, C/o. Mr. P.S. Maniam, 24, Block N

Govt. FLATS COL 4.