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A NEWSLETTER OF THE SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON D.C. and
THE SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF GREATER WASHINGTON INC.

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Message from the President



Dear Members:

This summer, we finally tasted victory after five long years by beating our rivals, the Sri Lanka Association of New York at our annual Cricket Match. Shawn Corera who led the team this year with the assistance of six

past captains and six directors from the current board, played their hearts out to ensure victory in an evenly contested game. I would like to thank Mrs. Rajini Jagoda, President of SLANY and her Board of Directors along with Mr. and Mrs. Jay Liyanage for hosting us for a full day of events in Denville New Jersey. I would also like to thank our team manager Gayanga Opatha who worked tirelessly to coordinate with his counterpart in New York to ensure that the needs of our team members were taken care of.

The Tsunami Committee continues to work on their report which I can assure you will be a comprehensive and live document that will be available by the end of the year. This will be updated periodically as information is provided to us by the recipients and from our directors and members who visit these projects. President-Elect Dakshi de Silva and I just returned from Sri Lanka after meeting with many of our recipients. We brought back several reports and updates on disbursements and projects. As you may recall from the last Annual Report, SLAGW overcommitted and lacked funds to complete the Janavijaya Foundation Housing Project in Habaraduwa. In August, we were surprised when an appeal was made from Friends of Lanka Tsunami Relief (FOLTR) requesting from us a second payment of \$12,500 to complete the building of ten homes from a MOU signed by the previous President. Unfortunately, this outstanding commitment was not mentioned in the last Annual Report. To fulfill this commitment, the Board re-negotiated the MOU signed by the past President with Janavijaya to reduce the number of homes from twenty five to twelve. This made certain that FOLTR received the required funds of \$12,500 to complete

their project. Subsequently a final payment of \$35,000 was granted to the Janavijaya Foundation to build four more houses in addition to their already completed eight SLAGW houses. Currently our tsunami fund is just over \$2000. Barring any other surprises, we plan to close out our tsunami account by the end of the year.

During my visit I also met with the staff of The NEST, Richmond Fellowship Lanka and Manrosa Home of Love. These have been our approved on-going pre tsunami charitable projects. We granted them \$500 each to assist in their humanitarian work. This year, we also gave a donation of \$500 to the Ceylon School for the Deaf and Blind to start their "Glass of Milk a Day" program and \$500 to Educate Lanka to sponsor three students. These five disbursements totaling \$2500 from our General SLAGW account has depleted our charitable funds account, and this may be the right time for me to kindly remind you all of our tax-exempt status and the need to replenish our accounts. Please do remember your association and our ongoing programs to assist those who are less fortunate in our homeland as you make your annual donations to your favorite charities. Information about our five charities is available on our web-site and links to these organizations have also been established. Please be generous in your contributions which will help ensure future funding of these programs and the continuation of our SLAGW activities while protecting our tax exempt status.

We continue to work in collaboration with all of the Sri Lankan organizations in our area and have made great strides in joining hands with many of them while working towards a common goal. My sincere appreciation to Ambassador Bernard Goonetilleke, Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha and the staff of the Embassy of Sri Lanka for their support and encouragement towards our ever growing and diverse community.

Let me conclude by wishing you all a very Happy Thanksgiving and extending a cordial invitation to our annual New Year's Eve Gala at the Hilton Gaithersburg.

Lasantha Dahanaike

Secretary's Message

As this year comes to an end, I extend my gratitude to the membership for their patronage and loyalty to the Association. I am proud to state that today the Association stands at 270 registered members and hopefully still growing!

The Association's up-coming social event of the year, the New Year's Eve Gala will be held in grandeur at the Hilton Hotel in Gaithersburg, Maryland. I take this opportunity to encourage the current membership and members of the Sri Lankan community to join in the spirit and fun of celebrating the New Year in a beautiful setting with delicious food, great music, and champagne! The newly renovated ballroom at the Hilton accommodates 400 guests, and for the first time the large dance floor will be equipped to accommodate a large gathering sans the toe-stepping that we have experienced in the past! Non-members who join the Association prior to December 15th, will be eligible to purchase tickets for the member price of \$65.00, and also carry their membership through 2007. Therefore, I encourage the community to join the Association and take advantage of the incentive that has been offered.

Also, attached with this news letter is the membership renewal form. While thanking you for your continuous support, I would like to make a pledge to the current member's to renew their membership for the year 2007.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sandra Ismail

Cricket Trophy is Back in DC

This year's NY-DC cricket encounter was held in Denville, New Jersey on August 12th in conjunction with the annual "Sri Lanka Day" celebration organized by The Sri Lanka Association of New York.

This year's SLAWDC team comprised of Shawn Corera – Captain, Hiru Padmakumara – Vice Captain, Rashan Amintha, Manjula Dissanayake (WK), Dhanusha Ponnampereuma, Dakshi De Silva, Suraj Navaratne, Don Milroy, Upul Abeywarna, Mahil Abeywarna and Maheshan Fernando. Gayanga Opatha was the team manager and the New York team was captained by Nalin Fernando.

Choosing to bat first, DC team found it hard to get a partnership going as wickets fell at regular intervals. Rasan Amintha top scored with a stylish 34 and the DC team was eventually bowled out for a hard fought 88 runs in 19.3 overs. Chasing a modest total, the New York team struggled to get off the block as DC's opening bowlers, Shawn and Milroy kept the scoring under the required run rate. Just as the New York team looked to settle down, a major breakthrough for

the DC team came as Manjula took the catch of the day behind the stumps, to dismiss Asanka off the bowling of Mahil. While the DC team managed to get wickets at crucial stages backed up by some superb fielding, Mewan of the New York team batted with great poise. At 70-5 and chasing a mere 19 runs with 5 wickets in hand, a New York victory looked certain and another heartbreaking loss was looming at the DC team. However, things turned dramatically as the DC team managed to get quick wickets including the prize wicket of Mewan (33), to ultimately win this exciting match by 13 runs.

Mahil (5-0-14-4) and Milroy (4.5-0-6-1) starred with the ball for the DC team. However, it was the brilliant fielding from all the members that enabled the DC team to win back the trophy after 5 long years.



DC Captain Shawn Corera with the trophy



Winning DC team at the dinner hosted by the Board of Directors

Lasantha Dahanaike (President, SLAWDC) and Mrs. Rajini Jagoda (President, SLANY) handed out the trophies.

The day concluded with the players and guests being treated to a delicious buriyani meal, and SLAWDC would like to thank our counterparts in New York for hosting this year's event. The celebrations continued in DC with the Board of Directors of SLAWDC hosting the players to dinner in their honor.

Art Show and BBQ

On July 29, 2006 SLAWDC organized the Summer Spend-The-Day at the Maplewood-Alta Vista local park in Bethesda Maryland. The day started with the cricket game to select the SLAWDC team. While the serious cricketers were at practice out doors in the heated sun, the artists were exhibiting their talent inside the community hall. There was a remarkable display of art pieces from the local artists in the Greater Washington area. These included paintings by Badra Ranasinghe, Nirmala Semasinghe, Shyami Codippily, and Sunethra De Silva, pottery and paintings by Dilini Abeywarna and photography by Erangi Batugahage. The participants were hosted to a delicious barbeque prepared by the board members in attendance. Friendly games of badminton, soccer and rugby followed with everyone in attendance enjoying a day out in the sun.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Arangetram by Four Young Sri Lankans



It was an inspiring dance performance with overtones of beauty, color and festivity. This was the Arangetram performed by four Sri Lankan-Americans, sisters Devika, Monoja and Nadika

Wimalakantha and their cousin, Tharani Amarawardana of the Sri Lankan Youth Dance group in Washington DC. This quartet, who over the years have delighted Washington audiences with their professional performances of Sri Lankan dancing included Sri Lankan dances and a choreography of the Sri Lankan Vanams as part of the Arangetram. They became the first Sri Lankans to perform a multiple Arangetram in the DC area when they performed on October 15, 2006, at the Rockville Civic Center.

Maname Plays to a Full House



Dr. Ediriweera Sarachchandra's Maname, was staged in Maryland recently to a full house to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this classic drama. "Ape Kattiya," the organizers of this event said that despite many

challenges, every aspect of the show was fulfilled to satisfaction. The stage production was complete with intricate lighting and the audience was mesmerized by the magical lyrics that ran through the entire drama and the professionalism of the dramatists.

Mrs. Lalitha Sarachchandra, the widow of Dr. Sarachchandra spoke to the audience and informed them that part of the cast comprised of young Sri Lankan expatriates from California and that the Sri Lankan diaspora should be proud of these talented young people.

Project Peds – Benefit Concert

On October 14, 2006, a benefit concert was held featuring the world-renowned tandem, "Eranga and Prianga," and a first rate Bharata Natyam dancer, Meera Arumuganathan, for Project Peds: Sri Lanka Tsunami Relief. Project Peds is a coalition of two leading American pediatric institutions, Children's National Medical Center (CNMC) in Washington, D.C.



and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP), and the World Children's Initiative (WCI). As its primary focus, Project Peds seeks to rehabilitate the pediatrics ward of Matarata General Hospital, in the

tsunami-battered southern coast of Sri Lanka. To learn more about Project Peds, please visit www.slprojectpeds.org.

Sri Lankans Demonstrate for Peace



On October 16, 2006, about 250 Sri Lankans gathered in front of the White House to hold a demonstration in support of the peace process in Sri Lanka. Huge banners thanked the US Administration for its support for Sri Lanka in its struggle

against the scourge of terrorism and its efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the political issues in the country. A letter of thanks was given to President George W. Bush. A very novel feature of the demonstration was that the usual slogan-shouting and speeches were forbidden and, instead, a musical group led the crowd in singing songs from Sri Lanka.

Carols by Candle Light

The Sri Lankan American Catholic Association of Metropolitan Washington (SLACAMW) will be celebrating the festive season on December 2, 2006 at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 6701 Muncaster Mill Road, Derwood, MD 20855. For more information and to reserve your tickets by November 25, 2006, please call Maxwell Amirthampillai at (301) 519-7985 or Sheila Codippily at (301) 530-4709.

Baila CD International Launch in Maryland

Sri Lankan Open House Party CD produced by a SLAWDC member and local musician – Kanishka



Wijetunga - will be launched this month in Maryland. Sri Lankan Open House Party is a high energy non-stop dance CD with 54 all time greatest "Baila" hits, powered by Kanishka, Ganesh, Suresh and Mariazelle. The CD is available online at www.kanishkaonline.com.

Tsunami Update

The tsunami of 26 December 2004 was the greatest natural calamity to strike Sri Lanka and SLAGW joined hundreds of other Sri Lankan groups to extend its help to the victims. It was the biggest service project undertaken by the association, with donations of around three quarters of a million dollars flowing in from all parts of the US, ranging from small school-children to business corporations. Funding for these tsunami projects that began within a few days of the tragedy will now be completed by the end of the year.



FOLTR Akurala Housing Project



Janavijaya Habaraduwa Housing Project

Any project of such dimensions requires a final evaluation to simply find out some answers: What did we do Right? What did we do Wrong? Plenty of heat was generated among the membership during the management of these projects, which perhaps could and should have been avoided. Some sober reflections after the event should help us to do things better in the future.

The Board of SLAGW appointed a committee of three persons to go into these issues and give a final verdict, with lessons for the future. SLAWDC President Lasantha Dahanaike and President-elect Dakshi De Silva were in Sri Lanka in October-November, monitoring the progress of these projects and the evaluation report will be sent to the membership by the end of the year.

Joint Happy Hour with SLYPA

Members of SLAWDC and Sri Lankan Young Professional Association (SLYPA) got together and organized a networking happy hour on September 22, 2006 at Guapos Restaurant in Bethesda, Maryland. We were honored to have the company of Minister of Education, Hon. Susil Premajayantha and Minister of Mass Media and Information, Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa. It was a great



Distinguished guests and attendees

opportunity for members of both groups to meet with the current Ministers of the Sri Lankan Parliament and engage in direct conversations with them regarding their respective fields of expertise.

Upcoming Events of SLAWDC

Children's Christmas Party **December 16**

Children's Christmas party will be held on December 16, 2006 from 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm at the Chevy Chase Meadowbrook Community Center. To register your children and for more information, contact Mangala Baddeliyanage at 703-793-0593

New Year's Eve Dinner Dance **December 31**

Tickets are now available! Tickets are priced at \$65.00 for members if purchased by November 30th and \$75.00 for non-members. To reserve your tickets and for more information, please contact: sandra_ismail@yahoo.com, or rpadmakumara@yahoo.com.

Comments from the Editor

We appreciate all the positive comments and the encouragement we got from our membership – Thank you! Please continue to share your thoughts and comments with us, by writing to the editor at editor@slawdc.com. I also take this opportunity to thank **Mr. Prathap Jayaraman** of **Nokkam printers** for the quality work he produces for us.

Corrections

We apologize for having printed our past President, **Mrs. Anjalika Silva's** name as Anjalika De Silva. This was immediately corrected on our web version available at www.slawdc.com.

Congratulations!

Ruvani Navaratne, wife of SLAGW Treasurer, Suraj Navaratne gave birth to a baby boy, Shanuka Bandara Navaratne on October 2, 2006.

Director Mangala and husband Don Baddeliyanage were blessed with their eighth Grandchild. Granddaughter, Sarina Adeline was born on October 17, 2006 to their youngest daughter Ramona Manourie and husband Brian Wheeler.

Director Anomi Wijesooriya and Lalith Kodithuwakku were engaged on October 23, 2006. The happy couple is planning a summer 2007 wedding.

SLAWDC members PK William and Utthama Wijesinghe were married on August 19, 2006 at the Landsdowne Resort in Leesburg, VA.

HelpAge Holiday Cards

SLAWDC will be assisting HelpAge raise funds by selling holiday cards. Please see www.slawdc.com for more information.