



# SERENDIB

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

VOL.4 NO.2 November 2008

## Message from the President



Hope all of you had a great summer this year. I would like to start with wishing you all a happy Thanksgiving and a joyous holiday season. On behalf of the board and membership I would like to welcome our patron, His Excellency Ambassador J aliya Wickramasuriya and his family to Washington DC.

As you know our President Elect - Rasika Padmakumara, Secretary - Sugath Karunaratne and Director - Gaddaffi Ismail resigned due to personal reasons. I would like to thank them on behalf of the SLAWDC for all the hard work and support extended during their tenure with us. We wish them success and all the very best in their future endeavors.

From mid August through September, our main task was to find replacements to the board in order to carry out our mission and serve the Sri Lankan community. I am glad to announce that the former director and treasurer of the SLAWDC Rajeeve Serasinghe; a past member of the SLAWDC board Sandra Sourjah; and SLAWDC member Roy Braine accepted to join the board by invitation. At subsequent board meetings Rajeeva was appointed interim President Elect and Sandra as Secretary of the board. I am very excited to have Rajeeva and Sandra as part of my team, who will provide a wealth of knowledge and experience to move our association forward and add the much needed stability. Please extend your warm wishes as we welcome them to our board.

Our board members participated and represented the association in a couple of religious activities organized by the Sri Lanka Embassy. The SLAWDC participated in Shramadanas at the Wheaton and the DC Buddhist Temples during the Katina ceremonies conducted recently.

The work assignments of the Board have changed for the year and I would like the membership to take note of the new contacts so your needs are met in a timely fashion. Our new Webmaster is our Secretary Sandra Sourjah and Upul Abeywarna. Sandra and Upul can be contacted at [Webmaster@SLAWDC.com](mailto:Webmaster@SLAWDC.com) for web related questions and/or to post information on the community calendar. The Community Calendar is a utility that will highlight all the events taking place in the area to help careful coordination and scheduling of events by various organizations. The co-editors of the newsletter are Sandra Sourjah and Assistant Secretary Marlon Perera. They can be contacted via [editor@slawdc.com](mailto:editor@slawdc.com) to have any of your community related announcements published in the newsletter. I like to encourage the membership to make use of the Community Businesses feature that allows members to advertise their businesses on our website at a nominal fee.

The SLAWDC will be organizing the annual Children's Christmas party at the Temple Emanuel. This year too we were able to work with the Catholic Association to secure the first two hours for our event, which will be held free of charge to the children of our SL community. We have invited Santa Clause to bring gifts for all our children under the age of 12. Please see our flyer on the website to RSVP.

The New Years Eve Dinner Dance will be held at Tyson's Corner Marriott in Virginia, the same venue as

last year. Once again, the Tyson's Marriott offered us the best rate compared to all other hotels within the Greater Washington area. We hope that our membership and friends will participate in this year's event and make it as successful and memorable as in the past. This year's event has been priced at \$75 for adults and \$40 for kids which is the same price as last year. Music will be provided by our very own talented DJ P.K Williams and a guest spot by Fahmi Nazick who will entertain us with music from the Golden era.

Our mission is to reach all Sri Lankans living in the Greater Washington metropolitan area with open communication to better serve the Sri Lankan Community. We will accomplish this by leveraging our web page by effectively managing a Community Calendar. We will work closely with all sister organizations and the Sri Lanka Embassy in Washington DC to engage the Sri Lankan Community by participating in all our events.

Please read the newsletter and provide us your feedback. We look forward to seeing you at our events in the upcoming months.

*Dakshi De Silva*



**SLAWDC Board Welcomes**  
***Mr. Jaliya Wickramasuriya***  
***Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary***  
***of Sri Lanka***  
***To the United States of America***



The Board and members of the SLAWDC welcome the 15<sup>th</sup> Ambassador to represent the Government of Sri Lanka in Washington DC since its independence in 1948. His Excellency Jaliya Wickramasuriya assumed duties in Washington DC on July 14, 2008. He brings his business acumen and wealth of experience as Consul

General for Sri Lanka in California to his current title as the Ambassador to the United States of America.

With a background in International Marketing and Trading, Customer Relations & Brand Management, venturing into a diplomatic position was not a difficult task for Mr. Wickramasuriya.

He began the long and challenging task of creating his very own internationally recognized brand for Ceylon Tea by establishing Ceylon Royal Tea Pvt Ltd with its Head Office in the outskirts of Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2000. His far sighted marketing program was unique and unorthodox and pushed Chami, his own brand, to the prestigious high-end market segments in USA and Canada through several major and prestigious chains of mega super markets.

In 2005, his extraordinary talents in entrepreneurship earned him a political leadership as Consul General of Sri Lanka in California, based in Los Angeles, USA. He gave up his well established position as the CEO & Managing Director of his brain-child, corporate sector firm in 2006 to be able to serve his motherland in a better and effective manner.

He took over the diplomatic position in Los Angeles, California, with extended jurisdiction to cover all the major States of Western Region of USA with effect from December 2006. He ensured, during his first 12 months of his duty, that the bilateral relations between the two nations made an impressive overall progress.

His work in Los Angeles predominantly focused on consolidating the strength of the Sri Lankan Community in USA, building a solid partnership between the Consulate and the Sri Lankan expatriate community, US political hierarchy, business community and diplomatic institutions of other nations based in California, promoting the concept of venture-out, bridging the gap on all public relation affairs and introducing a new and innovative culture as a Los Angeles model which directly focused on result oriented activities for the benefit of the national economy of Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Jaliya Wickramasuriya in one of his addresses to the community said, that the doors of his residence are always open to all Sri Lankans, as his house belongs to all Sri Lankans. The Ambassador also expressed the hope that all Sri Lankans in the US will consider the Sri Lanka Embassy to belong to them as well. We appreciate this warm sentiment.

We welcome His Excellency Mr. Wickramasuriya, his wife Priyanga, and children Sarindee and Janith.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### SHRAMADANA AT BUDDHIST TEMPLES

On October 11<sup>th</sup> several of the SLAWDC members including Dakshi, Rajeeva & Lahiru participated in cleaning up the Wheaton Buddhist Temple after the Katina Pinkama. The activities included, dismantling the tents, moving all outdoor chairs and tables and cleaning up the garden. SLAWDC members were among many other volunteers who contributed to the shramadhana. SLAWDC members also contributed to the Katina by donating paper plates and plastic cutlery.

On October 26<sup>th</sup> a few of our members participated in decorating the Washington DC Buddhist temple for the Katina Pinkama. We helped hoist the Buddhist flags in the front yard.

## SPORTS

### CRICKET TOURNAMENT 2008

This year the team to represent Washington DC against New York was selected based on a mini cricket tournament. In the past the selection was based on a point system from players who attended practice sessions. This year instead of the point system the cricket committee decided to have a mini-cricket tournament with the winning team representing Washington DC to play against New York. Applications were called at the beginning of July with the tournament scheduled on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Two teams "DC winners" and "Royal" submitted their applications and it was decided to play a best of three matches. After a hard fought final "DC winners" emerged victorious thus earning the right to represent Washington DC vs. New York.

The match against New York was played in Denville New Jersey in conjunction with the annual "Sri Lanka Day" organized by the Sri Lanka Association of New York. The New York Sri Lankan Association were gracious hosts and made sure that the Washingtonians were well looked after. The game itself was a hard fought contest with New York emerging winners in the end. Rashan Amintha from the Washington DC team

### VISIT OF THE HON. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS



The Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs Rohitha Bogollagama and Mrs. Bogollagama were hosted to a reception by His Excellency the Ambassador for Washington DC, Mr. Jaliya Wickramasuriya at his residence on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The Minister of Education, Hon. Susil Premajayantha and Mrs. Premajayantha were also present at this occasion. SLAWDC President Dakshi de Silva and board members Sandra Ismail, Lahiru Devendra and Sandra Sourjah attended the reception. Renowned vocalist Mrs. Dalrene Suby and Chandimal Fernando and his group who were touring the USA & Canada were among the large numbers of Sri Lankans who attended the reception. For more details on the visit of the Hon. Minister please visit [www.slembassyusa.org](http://www.slembassyusa.org).

was adjudged the best bowler for his outstanding performance.

The cricket committee will evaluate the success of the mini tournament format and will try to make the next year's selection process better. The committee welcomes feedback from this year's tournament. Please send all feedback to Suraj\_Navaratne@hotmail.com.

## CONTINENTAL CRICKET CLUB BAGS A TROPHY

Continental Cricket Club (CCC) won the Washington Cricket League's Division II Lincoln Conference Championship beating YoungBloods CC by 41 runs. CCC also ended the season as runners up in the Division 2 Championship losing to Boyd's CC on run-rate in a rain affected game. Overall, the team did well under the leadership of Ruwinda Ranasinghe to qualify to play in Division I next year.

Rasan Amitha did exceptionally well capturing 35 wickets (Average 9.09), bagging the trophy for most wickets in Division II. He also made a significant contribution with the bat making 306 runs at an average of 30.06. Vice Captain Don Milroy topped the batting averages at 39.22 with an aggregate of 353 runs and took 22 wickets at an average 13.68 a piece. Others who chipped in with good performances were Ruwinda Ranasinghe (Aggregate of 373 runs), Harshan Yakeem (Aggregate of 235 runs) and the ever reliable Sameera Wickramasuriya (19 wickets).

For further details and statistics check out: [www.wclinc.com](http://www.wclinc.com)



Continental Cricket Club – 2008

**Left to right:** Cheruka Weerakoon, Don Milroy (Vice captain) George Seneviratne, Manjula Dissanayake, Hasitha Kuruwita, Senal Ranatunga, Ruwinda Ranasinghe (Captain) Asoka Ranaweera, Kai Perera (Member 2020), Malan Perera, Shane Ismail & Anushka Imbuldeniya.

**Front Row:** Sameera Wickramasuriya, Manoj Abeyssekara, Harshan Yakeem & Rasan Amitha.

**Absent:** Wasiq Khan

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### BHATIA & SANTUSH IN CONCERT



His Excellency the Ambassador lights the traditional oil lamp at the opening of the musical evening. President SLAWDC Dakshi de Silva waits for his turn in the back ground.



An evening of music "Bhatia & Santush Live in Concert" was held at the Wheaton High School on October 18<sup>th</sup>.



The renowned singing duo continues to stay favorites among Sri Lankans at home and all over the globe. In keeping with the trend, their transformation to hip-hop music and their excellent stage performance has captured the hearts of fans. The group including Bhatia, Santush, Randhir, Ashanthi and Umara added variety and flavor to the Sinhala songs from the 70s and 80s to entertain the young and old Sri Lankans in Washington DC. The group performed in Toronto, Vancouver, and Los Angeles before their performance in Washington DC and were off to New York for their final performance prior to returning to Sri Lanka.

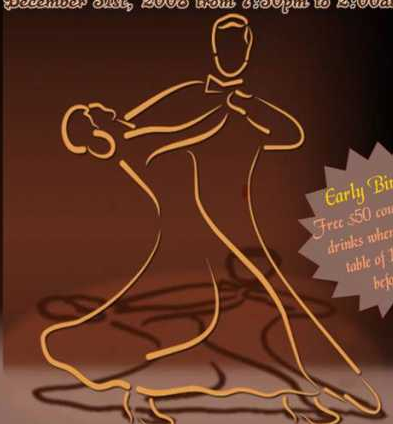
Mr & Mrs Kutila Dias managed and coordinated the entire logistics for the concert. We applaud Kutila and Dilani on a show well organized.



## NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER DANCE – DECEMBER 31, 2008

The New Year's Eve dinner dance will be held at the Marriott in Tyson's corner. Receive the early bird special when you purchase a table for 10 before November 30. Please visit [www.slawdc.com](http://www.slawdc.com) for more details.

*Sri Lanka Association of Washington DC*  
**New Year's Eve Dinner Dance**  
*At the Tysons Corner Marriott*  
 December 31st, 2008 from 7:30pm to 2:00am



**Early Bird Special**  
 Free \$50 coupon good for free drinks when you purchase a table of 10 tickets on or before Nov. 30

Come Ring In The New Year 2009  
 with lots of fun, great food, & non-stop dancing  
 to the music of our very own **DJ PK** featuring Fahmy Nazick  
 Fabulous prizes & surprises, including a return air ticket to Colombo  
 with compliments of Sri Lankan Airlines!  
 Tickets: Adults \$75.00 Children \$40.00  
 Hurry! Contact Marriott at 1-800-228-9290 for special room rate: \$94.00  
 For tickets and more information contact:  
 Dakshi 703-220-2394 Saurabh 301-916-9351 Marlon 301-503-3777 Rajesha 240-418-8909 Samira 240-441-1019  
This event is organized by the Sri Lanka Association of Washington DC and all proceeds go towards charitable projects in Sri Lanka

## UPCOMING EVENTS



## CHILDREN'S X'MAS PARTY - DECEMBER 13, 2008

The annual Children's Christmas party will be held in collaboration with the Catholic Association's Christmas celebrations at Temple Emanuel at 10101 Connecticut Ave. Kensington, MD. Please visit [www.slawdc.com](http://www.slawdc.com) for more details.

The Board of Directors of the SLAWDC wish our members and the Sri Lankan community a very happy and prosperous New Year.

## **SOCIAL SERVICE PROJECTS**

- ❖ The SLAWDC is hoping to build a Bank of Volunteers for help with translations. Please send in your contact information if you'd like to volunteer some of your valuable time to the needy Sri Lankan community and Federal or Government agencies as and when necessary. Please also be informed that the SLAWDC translation support database will only include those people volunteering to offer free services. For further information or to offer your services, please send me your contact via Email at [admin\\_slawdc@slawdc.com](mailto:admin_slawdc@slawdc.com)
- ❖ The SLAWDC is looking forward to the cooperation of the SL community in setting up a weekly or fortnightly school for general language and spoken Sinhala and Tamil classes for those interested. These classes will be specially conducted for young kids born and raised in America and do not have the privilege of speaking and learning Sinhala or Tamil. Email us at [admin\\_slawdc@slawdc.com](mailto:admin_slawdc@slawdc.com).



## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICES**

Congratulations to Rashika Padmakumara who resigned from the board to leave for Sri Lanka in anticipation of her marriage to Mr. Naveen Weerasena Thank you Rashika for your invaluable services rendered to the association, and we wish you and Naveen all the very best.

Mr. Sugath Karunaratne resigned from post of Secretary on personal grounds and we wish him well.

Mr. Gaddaffi resigned from post of Director due to personal reasons and we wish him well.

## **WELCOME ABOARD - SLAWDC**

We are happy to have Rajeeva Serasinghe as our new President – Elect replacing Rashika. Rajeeva has been with the SLAWDC as Director and Treasure of the Board and is a perfect fit for the position. We welcome Rajeeva.



We welcome Sandra Sourjah our new Secretary Elect. Sandra served for a few months on our Board in 1999 and resigned due to personal reasons promising to return. She is a professional administrative coordinator and specializes in organizing business, social & cultural events. Prior to moving to the USA Sandra served on the Board of the SL Malay Association and as Chairperson of the Cultural Branch for several years. Jointly with the committees she was successful in organizing cultural shows to raise funds towards the construction of the SLMA's pavilion building at Kew Road, Colombo 2. Sandra has also been a part time Malay cultural program presenter on Rupavahini and a Radio artist. She now works for an IT and software development and management company in the Rockville area. We are happy to have her on our Board.



We are happy to welcome Roy Braine as Director of our Board. Roy moved to Austin, Texas in 1987 and graduated from Austin High School in 1992. Roy served as International Student Adviser at Florida State University for six years. While at FSU Mr. Braine created the FSU cricket team and served as a team leader for the Beyond Boards program to the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. Roy Braine recently moved to Gaithersburg, Maryland and now serves as the Assistant Director of International Students and Scholars at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). We look forward to a great term with Mr. Roy Braine.

*Merry Christmas*  
*to all our readers*



## **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

### **Members –**

Please remember to update your e-mail address and contact details with SLAWDC. Email us at [admin\\_slawdc@slawdc.com](mailto:admin_slawdc@slawdc.com).

### **Non Members –**

If you wish to be on our mailing list please update your e-mail address with us by writing to Marlon Perera at [mperera115@hotmail.com](mailto:mperera115@hotmail.com) and or Sandra Sourjah at [admin\\_slawdc@slawdc.com](mailto:admin_slawdc@slawdc.com).

We appreciate your comments and recommendations. Please write us at [admin\\_slawdc@slawdc.com](mailto:admin_slawdc@slawdc.com)

To usher in 2009 in style, join us at our New Year's Eve Dinner Dance in The Grand Ball Room of The Tyson's Corner Marriott. Dance to the fabulous music provided by our very own DJ PK and Fahmy Nazick. Let's have lots of fun, good food, prizes and surprises, including a return air-ticket to Sri Lanka.

For details visit [www.slawdc.com](http://www.slawdc.com)

See you there!



**Look forward for the next issue of  
SERENDIB in March 2009**



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