



Vol. 9 No. 2 May - Aug. 2014

WONDERMENT AND SCIENCE

Science is not usually coupled with things wonderful. Human emotions are evoked through wonderment and wonder occasionally leads to questioning, further observation, investigation and experiment - a scientific approach. A look at the firmament of the night sky, or the rays of the sun dancing on the water brings together the aesthetic appreciation and wonder of natural phenomena. The subtle but appreciable change of temperature as one strolls through a tree-canopied park modifying the Urban Heat Island effect as a result of design objectives of landscape architects are practically felt bringing relief to the urban user. Such appreciation with its scientific understanding could, and has, influenced human endeavor towards the creative manipulation of entities to achieve works of wonderment. This brings 'Wonder' full cycle through scientific application and human endeavor. Human endeavor has manifested in the tangible and intangible, leaving wonderful works of architecture and engineering, a conscious appreciation of space and spatial quality in the 'heavens' and on planet Earth and a plethora of philosophical thought.

The *Ten Books on Architecture* by Vitruvius written in the time of Augustus Caesar dealt with all these with mention on the education of the architect on 'the thing signified' and 'that which gives significance is a demonstration on scientific principles'. At a comparable time in the East, the *Silpa shastra's* or treatises on the methods of building and design were consulted. Specific works on the management of trees known as *Wrukshayurveda* were among these *Silpa shasthra*. The variance between Hellenistic scientific approaches and the Eastern approach to science which is more inclusive of the social dimensions is also highlighted by E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* and Fritjof Capra in *Uncommon Wisdom* and other books. All design-oriented disciplines such as architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, product design, urban and rural planning and similar, rely on a vision and concept formed in the backdrop of philosophy, past experience and future need. Science, with consistent and untiring effort, has brought to the creative designer new

materials and technologies resulting in changed attitudes, lifestyles, shelter and settlement patterns. Science has provided new interactive digital technology tools to allow designers greater flexibility in innovative and wonderful designs.

Renewable energy and integrated energy solutions into buildings allow architecture to take on new forms. Responses to climate change should mean better acceptance of the environmental benefits of wetlands if the science is heeded. Science-based experiments in spatial quality and social interactions, while meeting human comfort conditions may allow our precious Sri Lankan-ness to be accepted.

Sri Lanka's National Anthem highlights our resources of all kinds as well as our landscape aesthetic bringing us prosperity and joy. It is imperative that such landscapes be protected and nurtured, as the country progresses towards being the 'Wonder of Asia'. Generally, works of 'wonder' both iconic and seemingly mundane are celebrated. In song such as John Lennon's *Imagine*, the philosophical hope is expressed.

'You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be one.'

And in Louis Armstrong's *Wonderful World*, the everyday wonderment of the landscape around us, green trees, blue skies, and the cry of babes who will know what we will never know. What is often taken for granted is made wonderful:

'I see friends shaking hands, saying 'how do you do?'; Their really saying, 'I love you'.

The famed and wonderful Sri Lankan smile is akin to this. A display of hospitality and friendliness – intangible assets of this island nation. 'Wonder' is mentioned in the short history of science by personae from Rene Descartes to environmentalist Rachel Carson. 'Wonder' drives science and may even be crucial, as being without previous perceptions, wonder would foster the advancement of science reaching out to the new and unexplored.

While science cannot yet investigate that which is immeasurable, tools such as the Sustainable Human Development Index (SHDI) strives to bring in more parameters into creating livable environments in the Sri Lankan ethos. In the fast-changing mind-set and landscape of Sri Lanka's development efforts, the expertise and

consultative capacity of professionals and scientists could contribute towards a wonderful Sri Lanka.

Arch./L. Arch. Shereen Amendra
Former President, Section C, SLAAS
President, Sri Lanka Institute of Landscape Architects
Senior Consultant, Faculty of Architecture
University of Moratuwa

Sectional Activities

SECTION A

- In the series of lecture/ discussions on **'Health Promotion in NCD prevention'**, two programmes were conducted:
 - 'Influence of food labels and media on snacking'** was held on 4 April 2014 at Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena by Dr Ishanka Thalagala (Postgraduate Trainee in Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo). About 350 Grade 11-12 students attended the lecture.
 - 'Prevent unhealthy snacking through school canteens'** was held on 19 June 2014 at Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo by Dr Carukshi Arambepola. A student active group was trained as health messengers on knowledge, skills and changing attitudes towards healthy snacking. As a follow-up activity, the group would promote health snacking practices of children during school time. Both activities were sponsored by NIROGI Diviya project of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA).
- A seminar on **'Promoting child protection'** for parents of pre-school children was held on 6 April 2014 in Embilipitiya by Mr Ranjith Kumarasinghe (Child Protection Officer, RDHS Office, Ratnapura).
- A lecture on **'Responsible pet ownership in order to reduce rabies in Sri Lanka'** was delivered by Dr Sirimevan Gunawardena (Veterinary Surgeon, Blue Paw Trust) on 30 April 2014 at All Saints Girls College, Borella. About 275 students attended this lecture which was sponsored by Zenith Impex (Pvt) Ltd, Rajagiriya.
- A guest lecture on **'Beating bowel cancer'** organized jointly with NASSL was delivered by Prof K I Deen on 30 April 2014 at the SLAAS auditorium.
- A workshop on **'Research Methodology'** was conducted on 12 May 2014 at the Bandaranaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute (BMARI) for intern and postgraduate doctors and academics in Ayurveda. About 65 participants attended the workshop. Prof Nalika Gunawardena, Drs Carukshi Arambepola and Manuj Weerasinghe (University of Colombo), Prof K K D S Ranaweera (BMARI) and Dr Kamal Perera (Institute of Indigenous Medicine) were the resource persons.
- Workshops on **'Statistics - intermediate level'** were organized in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) on 20 & 23 May 2014 at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for 30 postgraduate students and academics. Drs. Sharmini Prathapan and W Wijesiri (University of Sri Jayewardenepura) were the resource persons.



- A workshop on **'Towards a healthy community'** jointly organised with the SLMA was held on 26 June 2014 at Sambuddhaloka Viharaya,

Orugodawatta for community members of Orugodawatta. Mrs Anoja Jayawardena, Dr Carukshi Arambepola and Dr Buddhika Senanayake (Faculty of Medicine) and Ms Chamali Wickremasinghe (Allied Health Sciences Unit) of the University of Colombo and Mr Nalin Kumara (Trainer in Health Promotion) were the resource persons.

- A public lecture on **'Be a happy and productive senior citizen'** was held on 27 June 2014 during the Industrial Exhibition and Trade Fair 2014 of the Institute of Incorporated Engineers (INCO) at the BMICH. Dr Buddhika Mahesh (Postgraduate Trainee in Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo) was the resource person.

SECTION B

- The following training programmes were conducted:
 - **'Livestock production and milk processing'** on 4 April and 28 May 2014 at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, for GCE O/L students from schools in Balangoda. Resource persons were Dr T S P Jayaweera, Ms H M G P Herath and for the latter workshop Ms T Dasanayake was also a resource person.
 - **'Specific crop management practice to increase the yield of black pepper'** was conducted for agriculture instructors of the Department of Agriculture, Anuradhapura District on 6 May 2014, at the Central Research Station, Department of Export Agriculture, Matale. Resource persons were Dr H M P A Subasinghe, Deputy Director (Research) Agronomy and Mr Rohana Wijekoon, Assistant Director (Research) Plant Pathology.
 - **'Post harvest management of agricultural produce'** for O/L and A/L teachers of the Balangoda Education Zone on 19 May 2014 by Dr G D Kapila Kumara.
- An awareness programme on **'Best rice production practices'** was conducted by Mrs Roshni Hafeel for 100 farmers and agriculture instructors at the Administrative complex, Hambantota on 22 April 2014.
- The following seminars were conducted:
 - **'Can homothallic fungi out cross in nature?'** by Dr Renuka Attanayake (Department of Botany, University of Kelaniya) on 22 May 2014 at SLAAS, for undergraduate & postgraduate students and academic staff members.
 - **'Horticulture therapy: Therapeutic benefits from gardening'** on 28 May 2014, by Dr G D Kapila Kumara for students, nonacademic and academic staff members.
 - **'Personality development'** by Dr T S P Jayaweera, for new entrants to Advanced Level classes in the Convent of the Child Jesus on 24 June 2014.

SECTION C

- Public lectures were delivered by:
 - Eng. Nimal Wijesinghe (Hydrographic consultant) on 2 January 2014 at IESL, organized in collaboration with IESL; Topic: **'The search for offshore hydrocarbons and marine seismic surveys'**
 - Eng. P H Sarath Gamini (Project Director, Greater Kandy water supply project) on 4 April 2014 at SLAAS; Topic: **'Need of proper planning and design process to improve the quality of life of people'**
 - Prof Harsha Munasinghe (Professor of Architecture, George Brown College, Toronto, Canada) on 28 May 2014 at SLAAS; Topic **'When Architecture matters'**



- A school programme which included a seminar on 'Renewable energy technologies and different aspects of energy conservation and management' and a quiz competition with teams from five schools was held at Mahinda College, Galle on 17 June 2014 with the active support of the Mahinda College Science Society. About 250 students and teachers of Mahinda College and neighboring schools participated. The resource persons were Engs. Chamila Jayasekara, Sanath Kithsiri and Athula Jayathunga of the Sustainable Energy Authority. The activity was sponsored by Central Industries Plc and OBA, Mahinda College.

SECTION D

- A **Shramadana Campaign** was held on 26 April 2014 at the SLAAS premises with the participation of the General President and committee members.



- A **school programme** which included a training on 'Preservation methods of animal samples for biodiversity studies' was held on 22 May 2014 at the Galle Branch, Central Environment Authority to commemorate the 'World Biodiversity Day'. The event was organized jointly with the CEA and the Zoological Society,



University of Ruhuna. School children from Environmental Societies of Richmond College, Southland College, Batemulla National School and Sudharma Vidyala participated.

- A radio talk on '**Biodiversity**', broadcasted through the Mihithalaya programme of the SLBC, was delivered Dr Deepthi Wickramasinghe on 23 May 2014 to mark the 'World Biodiversity Day'.
- A seminar was held on 4 June 2014 at Richmond College, Galle to commemorate the 'World Environmental Day'. About 150 students from 15 schools in the Southern Province participated. The resource person Dr Hemali Munasinghe addressed the '**Practical aspects for conservation of faunal groups**'.
- Dr Deepthi Wickramasinghe participated as a resource person at the 'World Environmental Day' programme organized by the Wetland Conservation Unit, Urban Development Authority, on 20 June 2014 at the Wetlands Park, Diyawannawa, Hokandara.

SECTION E1



- A workshop on '**Scientific writing**' was conducted by Dr G H J Lanel on 6 April 2014 at the Department of Mathematics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. About 40 academics and final year university students participated.

- Seminars on '**A/L combined mathematics**' were conducted by Dr N C Ganegoda in Bandarawela, Hali-Ela and Monaragala. The workshops were organized in collaboration with the Uva Provincial Department of Education.

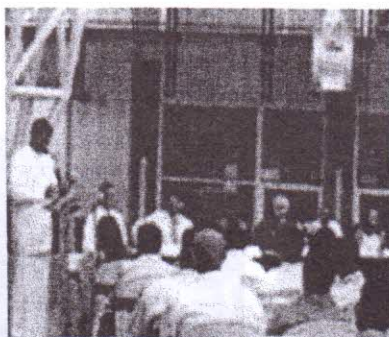
• A workshop on the theme '**Measurements & the global energy challenge**' was organized in collaboration with the Department of Physics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, to commemorate the 'World Metrology Day' on 20 May 2014. The activity was endorsed by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), France and the SLAAS logo was included in the official 'World Metrology Day' poster for 2014. The Vice Chancellor also addressed the gathering of over 100 university students, researchers, academics and industry experts. The event was sponsored by Cleanco Lanka Ltd, Fashion holdings (pvt) Ltd and the Hirdaramanie group of companies.



- A public lecture on '**Analysis of high-dimensional data**' was delivered by Dr Dhammika Amaratunga (Elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association & Former Senior Director & Janssen Fellow in Nonclinical Statistics, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D, USA), on 20 May 2014 at the Department of Statistics, University of Colombo.
- A Seminar on '**Electronics**' for Advanced level students offering physics as a subject was conducted on 16 June 2014, at D S Senanayaka College by Vimukthi Jayaweera (Research Scientist, ITI). Around 50 students participated.

SECTION E2

- A seminar on '**Nanotechnology**' was conducted in collaboration with the Peradeniya University Science Alumni on 7 May 2014 at Pushpadana Balika Vidyalaya, Kandy with the participation of about 250 teachers from the Central Province. The resource person was Dr Nilwala Kotteogda.
- A **Chemistry Day** comprising a chemistry quiz competition, an exhibition, a magic show, two lectures and a talent show was organized in collaboration with the Chemical Society of the Department of Chemistry, University of Kelaniya on 20 May 2014 at the Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya. The popular lectures on '**Personality development**' and '**Green chemistry**' were delivered by Dr Sagarika Kannangara and Prof Ajith de Alwis respectively. The goal of this programme was to develop soft skills of undergraduates and school children. Academic staff members, teaching assistants, undergraduates of the Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya and students from seven schools in the Gampaha District participated.
- A workshop on '**Free software in higher education and research**' was held on 24 March 2014 at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura with the participation of about 75 undergraduate and postgraduate students from universities and research institutes. The resource persons were Drs Samantha Weerasinghe, M N Kaumal and Thilini Gunasekera.
- A workshop on '**Wealth creation through Innovations: Role of advanced technologies**' was organized jointly with the Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology on the 23 and 24 May 2014 at the Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology, Nanoscience and Technology Park, Homagama. The focus of the workshop was to create awareness among scientists, universities, public and private sectors on how advanced technologies could drive the current commodity export based economy towards a knowledge based economy. The inauguration ceremony graced by Patali Champika Ranawake (Hon. Minister for Technology and Research). The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr Mahesh Amalean, (Chairman, MAS Holdings) and the Guest of Honour, Dr Koustubh Panda (Head and Coordinator, Department of Biotechnology, Centre for Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology, University of Calcutta) also addressed the gathering. Resource persons were Profs. Ananda Jayewardene, Veranja Karunaratne, Ajith de Alwis & Drs Nishantha Nanayakkara and Ranga Jayakody. Two leading entrepreneurs, Mr Rohan Pallewatta, and Mr Manju Gunawardene narrated success stories of innovations through advanced technology. More than 80 scientists, postgraduate students, academics, industrialists and entrepreneurs participated.



- Workshops in **'Chemistry and physics for GCE A/L students'** were held on 26 and 27 May 2014 at Bandaranayake Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Ampara with the participation of 187 students from four schools in the Ampara District. Drs Dinesh Pandithavidana and Prabath Hewageegana were the resource persons. Basic chemicals required for A/L chemistry experiments were also donated to these four schools. Section-E2 extends their gratitude to Deputy Minister of Labour & Labour Relations, Rear Admiral, Dr Sarath Weerasekara for coordinating this event.

SECTION E3

- A series of seminars for A/L students in the area of ICT were conducted on 22 January 2014 at Royal College, Colombo; 12 February 2014 at Lumbini Vidyalaya, Colombo; 4 April 2014 at Dambadeniya Foundation and 25 April 2014 at De Mazonad College, Kandana. The resource persons were Drs Gamini Wijayarathna and D D Karunaratna.



- Seminars on **'ICT-Media, society and youth'** were conducted by Mr S T Nandasara on 18 March at Rajakeeya Vidyalaya, Kurunegala, 2 June 2014 at Ferguson College, Ratnapura and 10 June 2014 at Upananda National School, Galle.



- A series of teacher training programmes were conducted in Galle, from 26 - 30 May, 2- 7 June and 1-4 July 2014 by Drs Gamini Wijayarathna and D D Karunaratna.

Upcoming events:

- The closing date for the **'Computer science award'** is 31 August 2014.
- A public lecture on **'Impact of social networks on society'** at the SLAAS auditorium on 27 August 2014.

SECTION F

- A workshop was held on 22 March 2014 to celebrate 'World Water Day 2014' on the theme **'Sustainable water management for development'**, at the Department of Geography, University of Colombo, for about 100 participants. The resource persons were Dr Ranjana U K Piyadasa (Department of Geography), Ms Sureka Perera (United Nations Environment Program), and Eng S C Sugeeswara (Chief Engineer/Drainage, Irrigation Department).
- A workshop was conducted for over 400 three wheel drivers and owners in the Colombo and Gampaha Districts on 2 March 2014 at the Ministry of Disaster Management. Presentations were made by Prof K Karunathilake (on **'Social life of three wheel drivers'**), Dr M G Kularatne (on **'Economic life and livelihood improvement'**), SSP Ajith Rohana (on **'Traffic and legal aspect of three wheel drivers' service'**), and Daya Rohana Athukorala (on **'Positive thinking for social life of three wheel drivers'**). A technical awareness session, supported by the David Peiris Company Ltd. was also held. The participants were presented with a three wheel cable & an umbrella, and a raffle was held for 20 CDMA phones. The workshop was sponsored by the Three Wheeler Department, People's Leasing PLC.



- A workshop of four days duration (20, 23, 24 June & 3 July 2014) was conducted on the invitation of the Health Education Bureau and World Health Organization on **'Qualitative data collection and analysis'** at the Health Education Bureau, Colombo, for 35 consultant doctors and health education officers. Prof K Karunathilake was the resource person with support from Mr Isuru Samarasingha for the data analysis component.
- Public lectures were held on 24 June 2014 at the SLAAS auditorium focusing on **'Science and maths for all: A conceptual analysis'** by Mr N V Karunasena and Mr W M Pragnadharshana (Senior lecturers, Department of Science Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo).

General Research Committee

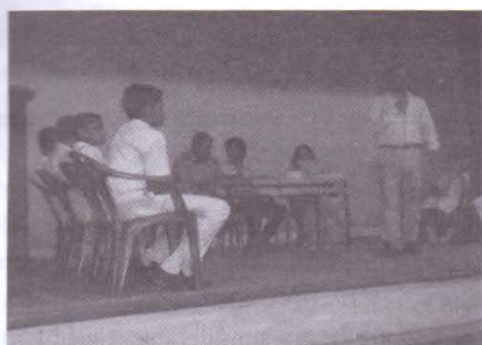
- The book on **'Guidelines for young researchers'** is in its final stages of preparation for printing. This book would be useful for undergraduates doing their final year projects, postgraduates, researchers in institutional laboratories and also for supervisors of research students.
- **Applications will be called for GRC awards** (Research and Postgraduate) for the year 2014 in July.
- A workshop on **'Proper disposal of chemical and biological waste'** jointly organized with the Industrial Technology Institute was conducted on 15 July at ITI for technical officers handling laboratory wastes.

Upcoming events:

- A workshop on **'Ethics'** in collaboration with the Ethics Committee, SLAAS in October 2014, in Colombo.
- A workshop on **'Proposal writing for social scientists'** in collaboration with Section F, in September.

Committee for the Popularization of Science

- **Science Day programmes** were conducted at Tholangamuwa Central College, Kegalle on 29 March 2014 and Bingiriya Central College, Bingiriya on 21 June 2014. The Resource persons for the two workshops were Profs E Wikramanayake & Chandranie Wijeratne, Drs Prasanna Galhena, D R M Dharmadasa, Bandunee Athapattu, Lakshika Udamulla, Nalinda de Silva, Sameera Samarakoon and Dr J Jayasinghe (for workshop at Bingiriya). The programme was sponsored by M/S Azeez and Sons (Pvt) Ltd. CPS greatly appreciates the generous sponsorship from Fonterra Lanka Ltd for refreshments.



- **The Nature Diaries programme** commenced on 2 May 2014. Awareness programmes on this activity were conducted for over 50 science teachers in the Anuradhapura and Kurunegala districts by Profs D Mathew and Jayantha Wijeyaratna on 17 May 2014 at K B Rathnayaka Maha Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura and St Anne's College Kurunegala. The transportation cost for the activity was borne by Prof Mathew.

Upcoming Events:

- Science Day programmes and Medicinal plant gardens projects will be conducted in the following provinces: (a) Southern, (b) Uva, (c) Sabaragamuwa, (d) North Central and (e) Western.
- The Nature diaries programmes in the Anuradhapura, Hambantota and Kurunegala districts will be evaluated.

Environment Committee

- **Introduction of a new scheme of awards** for GCE A/L group projects: *Prof Valentine Basnayake Environmental Studies Awards for Excellence in General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level- science) Group project work*. These awards are funded by the Sri Lanka Association for Science and Mathematics Education. The objective of the awards scheme is to appreciate the outcome of group work of young students, motivate them to engage in studying the issues related to environment and inculcate an attitude to applying knowledge in solving problems. GCE A/L projects (in science subjects) that address issues pertaining to the environment will be qualified for this awards scheme. The implementation of this scheme will be carried out in collaboration with the Department of Examinations in Sri Lanka. Applicants can obtain more details from the EC / SLAAS and Commissioner (Development) of the Department of Examinations of Sri Lanka. The committee would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Mr Sterling Perera, in introducing this award scheme, with sincere gratitude.
- A workshop was held on 29 May 2014 at the University of Sabaragamuwa with the participation of about 140 students and staff. The resource persons Mr Kalum Manamendrarachchi and Dr Prasad Senadheera spoke on '**Paleobiodiversity**' and '**Current trends of biodiversity in Sri Lanka**' respectively. This workshop was funded by the Ministry of Environment and Renewable energy.
The second workshop of this series will be conducted for societies working in the field of environment in July 2014. Interested societies may contact EC/ SLAAs for more details.
- **The all island school and open art competition** on 'Island Biodiversity' was held to mark the 'International biodiversity day' on 22 May 2014. This national competition for which more than 200 entries were received, was conducted in collaboration with the Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Education. The panel of evaluation consisted of representatives / nominees from the EC/SLAAS, and the two Ministries involved. SLAAS General President, Dr A M Mubarak was an invited guest at the award presentation ceremony which was held on 22 May 2014.



Appreciation



Suntheralingam Gnanalingam, fondly known as 'Gnani', was indeed an iconic figure in Sri Lankan science. His monumental academic record featured a first class honours degree in Physics from the University of Ceylon, a Mechanical Science *Tripas*, a

Master's degree and a Doctorate, from the University of Cambridge, coupled with the Charles Lamb Prize in Electrical Engineering. At the Cavendish Laboratory of Physics at Cambridge working with the renowned I A Radcliffe, FRS., he did pioneering work on radio wave propagation, which he was to continue with distinction at the CISIR in Sri Lanka, working with simple apparatus which he constructed himself, from war surplus junk equipment. He had been the recipient of the Coutts Trotter Fellowship in Experimental Physics at Trinity

College Cambridge, awarded for the best original research in the subject.

In Sri Lanka soon after his return, he resurrected a dying corporation – the Paranthan Chemical Corporation, and received deserved accolades from the Government as well as the foreign consultants who were called in as advisers to the Paranthan's factory. His contribution to Technical Education in the country is also considerable. His erudite address as the General President of SLAAS in 1988, entitled 'Science education and the development of human resources', could be read as an education in itself on the subject. Gnani was awarded the National Honour of *Vidya Jyothi*, and the Presidential Award in recognition of his research and his services to Science and the nation. Even after his retirement from the CISIR he was invited to be Professor of Physics at the US Naval Post-graduate University, and reverting to fundamental teaching at an advanced age he drew praise from his students, one of

whom stated 'this Dr Gnanalingam could even teach a rock'.

A man of considerable stature and personal charm he was a musician in Ananda Samarakoon's ensemble, and a javelin throwing athlete in his University days.



Valentine Basnayake fondly called 'Bas' was a dedicated scientist, university teacher and at the same time arguably the foremost pianist - notably as an accompanist - the country has ever known. Understandably he and the celebrated conductor

Earle de Fonseka were inseparables. Both were medical men, university teachers, and dedicated members of SLAAS.

Valentine was the General Secretary of SLAAS when I was to join him as his co-secretary in 1963. The SLAAS had no dedicated office then, and the two chief executives who were the General Secretaries operated from their individual work places. Bas and I were to initiate the first office of the then CAAS in the little neglected bungalow next to the CISIR which had been allocated to the Association. We initiated the work in the midst of an overpowering growth of trees and shrubs and with a watchman who was the sole employee at the time got the office going. An Office Assistant, a Coordinator for the Popularization of Science Project, were brought in with the assistance of other colleagues. Bas was much the leader in these endeavours and he combined this with his

In the latter stages of his life he wrote: We are in Monterey which we now call home but our hearts are in our little island.

It was a privilege to have been able to know him as a colleague and friend.

teaching schedules and his commitments and practice schedules in music.

Bas was in those times called upon to accompany on the piano, such visiting greats like Luigi Infantino, - the celebrated Italian tenor-, who described him as one of the best accompanying pianists he had come across.

Bas moved over from the CAAS secretary-ship to take charge of the School Biology Curriculum Revision Project, which was sponsored by the Asia Foundation. We then brought in K A S Jayaweera, a clerk- cum- accountant who stayed to be a landmark at the SLAAS.

This work on Biology Curriculum was an outstanding contribution to our education from a scientist of the SLAAS.

Bas was a Professor of Physiology, with a D.Phil., from the University of Oxford, and revered for his dedicated teaching methods. He was the General President of the SLAAS in 1996 when the sessions were staged for the first time in the premises of the University of Kelaniya. Bas remained a dedicated servant of Science and of music in the country, until sadly his faculties began to fade. Age took toll of the artist and the scientist slowly but surely.

Dr R O B Wijesekera

Past General President, SLAAS

ANNUAL SLAAS AWARDS - 2014

- ❖ **General Research Committee Award** is a lifetime achievement award made in recognition of Sri Lankan scientists who have carried out exceptionally high quality / pioneering research in Sri Lanka over a significant period of time and who have produced a considerable number of original publications in peer-reviewed journals with high impact factors and contributed to the field by way of training young scientists. Applicants must be members of SLAAS. This award is given for the total contribution of a scientist towards the scientific advancement of the field and training of young scientists in that field and is NOT meant for his / her contribution to a single research project. The final award winner will be chosen after evaluating a presentation. Unsuccessful applicants are discouraged from applying for this award for a period of 3 years from the date of the previous application. Applications will be accepted until **15th August 2014**.
- ❖ **Environment Awards** for the following categories (a) School projects (In addition to Prof Valentine Basnayake award scheme) (b) general public and (c) organizations and institutions (in both public and private sector) who have made significant contributions in sustainable management of the environment. Applications will be accepted until **30th September 2014**.
- ❖ **Physical Science Awards** are open for undergraduate students or recent graduates who have completed individual research projects in the fields of physics / mathematics / statistics as a partial requirement for a B.Sc. degree from a Sri Lankan university during the period 1st July 2013 to 30th June 2014. Applications will be accepted until **15th August 2014**.

- ❖ **Computer Science Award** is open for undergraduate students or recent graduates who have completed individual research project in the field of computing as a partial requirement for an undergraduate degree in Computing from a Sri Lankan university during the period 1st July 2013 to 30th June 2014. Applications will be accepted until **31st August 2014**.
- ❖ **Manamperi (Engineering) Award** for the best undergraduate engineering project submitted to a Sri Lankan university by students registered during the academic year 2013 / 2014. Details and the deadline will be notified through the Deans of the respective Engineering Faculties.
- ❖ **Science Popularization & Promotion Award** for individuals who have contributed best to popularize and promote Science within Sri Lanka during the period 1st May 2013 to 30th April 2014. Selections will be made separately for Sinhala, Tamil and English media. Science communicators including journalists, scientists and others who have excelled in print and electronic media are invited to apply for these awards. Those who have won this award previously will not be considered again. Applications will be accepted until **16th August 2014**.
- ❖ **Postgraduate Research Awards** for recent postgraduate degree holders who have carried out a major part of the research in an institution within Sri Lanka. The award will be based on the applicant's publications on his / her postgraduate research work. The final award winner will be chosen after evaluating a presentation. Applicants must be members of SLAAS who have completed a postgraduate research degree (M. Phil, Ph.D. etc) in a Sri Lankan university / institution in the 2 years preceding 30th June 2014. Applications will be accepted until **15th August 2014**.

Application forms and further details regarding these awards are available at the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, "Vidya Mandiraya", 120/10, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7 or SLAAS Website <http://www.slaas.lk>, Email: hqslaas@gmail.com, General Secretary/SLAAS, Telephone: +94-11-2688740, + 94-11-2691681, Fax: +94-11-2691681

SLAAS Annual Sessions 2014

Date: 1 – 5 December

Venue: University of Colombo

A Coffee Table Book entitled 'Sri Lanka's Forests - Nature at your service' published by SLAAS in partnership with Dilmah Conservation is available at the SLAAS Office (Rs. 1000/=)