



Vol. 9 No. 3 Sept. - Dec. 2014

Historical Event



Tenth of October 2014 was a historical day for SLAAS. On this day SLAAS signed the agreement for the construction of a new building – a dream for many many years!

The new two storeyed building, with 4500 m² will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 18 million. Fifty percent of this would be provided by the SLAAS while the balance would be provided by the constructing company. In lieu of their financial commitment, the construction company would be allowed to occupy the second floor of the building for seven years for office purposes.

The new building will be of all state-of-the-art amenities. Since it will be constructed with already manufactured

shipping containers, the carbon foot print of construction would be very low compared to a traditional brick and cement building. Hence, the contribution to climate change through the emission of carbon dioxide during the manufacturing processes of construction material would be very low.

The Council at its 857th meeting held on 26 September 2014, unanimously approved the construction of the building with shipping containers. The construction of the building is expected to be completed within six months.

Prof. M J S Wijeyaratne (Chairman of the Board of Trustees) and Prof. Ruchira Cumaranatunge (Immediate Past General President) signed the agreement on behalf of SLAAS. Dr. A M Mubarak (General President) and Prof. Deepal Mathew (General President Elect) also graced the occasion.



70th Annual Sessions 1st – 5th December 2014

Ceremonial Inauguration

Date: 1st December 2014 from 1.45 p.m.

Venue: Committee Room B, BMICH

Theme Seminar: "Engage Science Enrich Society"

Date: 2nd December 2014 from 8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Scientific Sessions

Date: 3rd-5th December 2014

Venue: Faculty of Science, University of Colombo

All Island School Inventors' Exhibition 2014

Date: 3rd & 4th December 2014

Venue: Faculty of Science, University of Colombo

Sectional Activities

SECTION A

- A lecture on **'Stress management'** was held on 2 July 2014 at the Survey Department by Dr. Piyanjali de Zoysa. About 100 middle-level managers participated.



- A half day workshop on **'Enhancing research presentation skills'** was conducted on 24 July 2014 at the Institute of Indigenous Medicine for about 60 postgraduate doctors and academics. Dr. Carukshi Arambepola and Prof. Nalika Gunawardena were the resource persons.



- A series of lecture-discussions entitled **'For a sparkling smile: cosmetic and therapeutic advances in dental care'** was conducted on 28 July 2014 for about 40 academic and non-academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo. Drs. Suresh Shanmuganathan, Vasantha Sivaguru and WM Senadheera (Dental Institute, Colombo) were the resource persons.



- A lecture on **'Dog sterilization & immunization'** was delivered on 30 July 2014 by Dr. M Ijas (Public Health Veterinary services, CMC) for the Medical Officer of Health staff at Pitakotte.

- A half day practical workshop on **'Eco-friendly home gardening'** was held on 6 August 2014 for the general public in urban communities. About 50 participated. Dr. Bandula Ranaweera (Faculty of Agriculture, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka) was the resource person. This activity was conducted jointly with the NIROGI Lanka project of the Sri Lanka Medical Association.



- A series of lecture-discussions on **'Research update on management of neurological emergencies'** was held on 15 Augus 2014 at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL). The resource persons were Drs. Panduka Karunanayake, Thashi Chang and Jithangi Wanigasingha of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. The discussion was chaired by Dr. M K Ragunathan. The topics addressed were 'Pyogenic bacterial meningitis', 'Subarachnoid haemorrhage' and 'Status epilepticus'. About 200 medical officers and consultants attended. (NHSL).

- A lecture-discussion on **'How to prevent smoking and alcohol abuse'** was held on 21 August 2014 in Dematagoda and Mattakkuliya low-income settings for about 60 adolescent boys in collaboration with the SLMA. Mr. Nalin Kumara (Health Promotion Trainee) was the resource person.
- Part II of the write-up on **'Glycaemic Index of Foods'** by Prof. S. Ekanayake was submitted to the SLMA-newsletter.
- A newspaper article written in Tamil on **'Oral Health'** by Dr. Vasantha Sivaguru was submitted to 'Thinakuran' for publication.
- **Section A newsletter Volume 10 – issue (2)** was released.
- A lecture on **'Rational use of anti-epileptic medicines in children'** was held on 5 September 2014 at the Lady Ridgeway hospital by Prof. Shalini Sri Ranganathan (Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo) for 150 medical officers.
- A workshop on **'Ethical issues related to clinical trials in Traditional Medicine (TM), TM research methodologies according to WHO and pharmaco-vigilance of traditional medicine'** was held on 7 October 2014 by Prof Anoja Fernando and Dr. Kamal Perera for researchers and Ayurveda practitioners at the Bandaranayake Memorial Ayurveda Research Institute, Nawinna.

Upcoming events:

- A workshop on **'Abstract and article writing'** for postgraduates and academics at the Sri Lanka Dental Association. Prof Nalika Gunawardena and Dr. Enoka Corea of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo will be the resource persons.
- A half-day workshop on **'Diabetic foot care'** for nursing undergraduates at University of Sri Jayewardenepura in collaboration with the NIROGI Lanka project of the SLMA
- Three newspaper articles titled **'Health benefits of coconut' (Sinhala), 'Leptospirosis' (Sinhala)** and a medical topic (English) to be written and published.
- **Section A newsletter Volume 10 – issue (3)** to be released.

SECTION C

Manamperi Award - 2014

Nine students of the Universities of Moratuwa, Peradeniya and the Open University of Sri Lanka made presentations based on their final year projects on September 6, 2014 at the SLAAS. Evaluation panel: Engs. T S S Jatunarachchi & D I Fernando, Archt L T Kiringoda, Drs P A K Karunannda, S Krishnakumar, N S Senanayake, B C L Athapattu, K M L A Udamulla and Mrs M J Sudasinghe.

SECTION D

- A workshop on **'Color preservation of dried flowers and value addition for greeting cards'** was held on 6 August 2014 at the Vidatha Centre, Maharagama for 82 participants. The activity was organized jointly with the Institute of Biology. The resource persons were Drs. Sudheera Ranwala, P Saputhantri (University of Colombo) and Mr Richard Perera (Ranaviru paper recycling project).



- The students at Dewahandiya Vidyalaya, Kandy were provided guidance to **establish a herbal garden, a nature trail and to identify important animals** inhabiting the school premises and the village, at a workshop conducted by Dr U P K Epa on 12 and 13 October 2014. He also delivered a presentation on **'Conservation of biodiversity of Sri Lanka'**. The event was jointly organized with the Nature Club of University of Kelaniya.



- A workshop on **'Scientific writing and publishing research work'** for young researchers was held on 15 October 2014 at the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, for 75 postgraduate and undergraduate students. The resource persons were Prof Preethi Udagama and Drs. Seetha Wickramasinghe, Sudheera Ranwala, Kamal Ranathunga, M N Kaumal, Priyantha Epa and Chamari Hettiarachchi.



SECTION E1

- A seminar on **'Nanotechnology and Nanoscience'** was conducted by Dr S. Jayawardhana (Department of Physics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura) on 1 October 2014, at Ananda Shastrayalaya, Mathugama, for about 200 students. The seminar covered topics relevant to the grade 9 science syllabus of the G.C. E. O/L examination.



- A seminar on **'How to do research'** was held for undergraduate and postgraduate students, at the Department of Physics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura on 9 October 2014. The guest speaker was Prof. A. S. Karunananda (Department for Computational Mathematics, University of Moratuwa).

Upcoming events:

- A video on **'Lightning protection'** is currently being developed in collaboration with the University of Colombo. The video is expected to be released during the SLAAS Annual Sessions 2014.
- A night sky observation camp is planned from 3-5 December 2014 at the premises of the University of Colombo.

SECTION E2

- A workshop **'Free software for use in higher education and research'** was conducted on 18 July 2014 at the Department of Statistics, University of Colombo by Drs. Samantha Weerasinghe, Ashani Tillekeratne, Dynatra Subasinghe and M N Kaumal. The workshop was organized in collaboration with SLALAS.



- A popular lecture **'The discovery of gravitational senses with the NASA hubble space telescope'** was delivered by Dr Kavan Ratnatunga on 7 August, 2014 at the Department of Chemistry, University of Sri Jayewardenepura with the participation of about 100 academics, undergraduate and postgraduate students. The event was organized jointly with the Chemical Society of the Department of Chemistry, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

- A workshop on **'Biologically relevant assays for oncology: Harnessing the power of bioluminescence'** for academics, undergraduate and postgraduate students was held on 10 September 2014 at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo by Dr. Nicholas Ng, General Manager for Promega Corporation (Singapore Branch).



- Section E-2 donated Rs. 160,000/- to SLAAS on 9 October 2014 for the purchase of a multimedia and sound system .

- A pocket size **Periodic Table** was printed to be distributed at chemistry 'popularization activities conducted by the section.

- Books, laboratory chemicals and light microscopes were donated to Opatha Maha Vidyalaya and Udugama Maha Vidyalaya, two under privileged schools in the Galle District on 14 October, 2014. A workshop on **'Inspiring future scientists'** (Resource persons: Drs. Dinesh Pandithavidana, M N Kaumal and P Godakumbura) and a **Chemistry magic show** (Resource person: Dr. M N Kaumal) were also conducted on the occasion.



Upcoming events:

- A seminar on **'Integrating traditional and modern medicine in the 21st Century'** in collaboration with the Bandaranayaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute, Nawinna on 10 November, 2014. Resource persons: Profs. K K D S Ranaweera, Ajit Abeysekera, Vajira Dissanayake, Preethi Soysa & Drs. Danister Perera, Neelika Malavige, Kamal Perera.

SECTION F

- A panel discussion on **'Ethnic integrity and challenges in Sri Lanka: conflict or harmony? An intellectual insight'** with panelists Prof. M U de Silva, Prof. Asanka Thilakaratne and Mr. Athulasiri Samarakoon was held on 15 July 2014 at SLAAS Headquarters.





- A public lecture on **'Precolonial & postcolonial transfers from South Asia to S & T'**, organized in collaboration with the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka was delivered by Dr. Susantha Goonatilake on 28 July 2014, at the Gamini Dissanayake Auditorium, Mahaveli Centre. The General President, SLAAS chaired the session.
- A panel discussion in relation to the **National Family Policy for Sri Lanka** was held on 10 October 2014 at SLAAS headquarters, with the following panelists: Ms. Emelda Sukumar (Secretary, Ministry of Social Services), Prof. K Karunathilake (Team leader, Steering Committee), Profs. Indralal de Silva and Manjula Vithanapathirana (Members, Steering Committee).
- Initiatives have been taken to promote academia to link with SLAAS and its membership with the Faculties of Social Sciences of universities (Ruhuna, Rajarata and Open University). A brochure has been prepared for circulation among the Faculty members.

General Research Committee

- The GRC awards (Research and Postgraduate) for the year 2014 were advertised in August and the applications received were reviewed at a special GRC meeting and sent to subject specialists for evaluation.

Upcoming events:

- A workshop on **'Research proposal writing'** for Humanities and Social Science students (postgraduates and undergraduates) in collaboration with Section F on 13 November 2014 at SLAAS Headquarters. Resource person: Prof. Indralal de Silva, Senior Professor of Demography (Chair) & Senior Research Fellow at the National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences.

The GRC book on **'Guidelines for beginners in research'** edited by Dr. M C M Iqbal is now available at Rs. 500/= per copy. Discounts will be given for purchases over 5 copies.

Environment Committee

- A panel discussion on **'Biopiracy and illegal import and export of plant, animal and food materials'**, was held on 28 August 2014 at SLAAS Headquarters. The aim was to discuss the environmental and health consequences and mitigation measures adopted related to the above theme. Ms Thulani Kularathne (Department of Forest Conservation), Mr. U L Thawfeek (Department of Wildlife Conservation), Ms Jayani Nimanthika (National Plant Quarantine Service), Ms K Hewapathirana (Department of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources) and Mr. Jagath Gunawardane (Environmentalist and Lawyer) were the resource persons.
- An awareness programme on **'Migratory Birds'** and the **'Palaeobiodiversity of Sri Lanka – with special emphasis on avifaunal findings in excavations'** was held on 26 September 2014 at the University of Colombo with Prof. Devaka Weerakoon and Mr. Kelum Manamendra-Arachchi as resource persons. An exhibit on the Alavala Cave excavated artefacts was displayed. About 135 individuals participated in this activity conducted jointly with the Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment & Renewable Energy and the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka.

Committee for the Popularization of Science

- **Medicinal plant gardens (MPGs)** were established at Mahamaya Girl's College and Kingswood College, Kandy, on 9 October 2014 (Resource persons: Prof. Chandranie Wijeratne, Drs. Prasanna Galhena, R M Dharmadasa and Lakshika Udamulla); Ranabima Royal College and Peradeniya Central College, Kandy, on 10 October 2014 (Resource persons: Drs. Jagath Jayasinghe, R M Dharmadasa and Lakshika Udamulla). In addition to a lecture on importance of medicinal plants, plants and labels were handed over to the schools. The MPG'S will be assessed after one year and a prize will be awarded to the winning school. This programme was funded by the UNDP and the assistance provided by the UNDP Coordinator Mr. S D Abyawardhana is greatly appreciated. The plants were donated by Natures' Beauty Creations.



- **Science Day programmes** were conducted on 17 October 2014 in Sinhala and Tamil media at Trincomalee Girls High School and Vivehanantha College respectively. Prof. Ruchira Cumaranatunga, Drs. Prasanna Galhena, Jagath Jayasinghe, Pahan Godakumbura and A.K Chandana served as resource persons in the Sinhala medium while Mr. S Perasyriyan, Mr. N I N S Nadarasa, Mr. P sanjeewan and Prof. S Sotheeswaran, served as resource persons for the Tamil medium program. An **astronomy programme** was also carried out by Prof. Chandana Jayaratne and his team on this occasion. The program consisted of lectures, interactive learning sessions, written and oral science quiz programs and a scientific poster competition. The programme was sponsored by Azees and Sons Company and Fonterra provided milk packets.
- **The Nature Diaries programme** which commenced on 2 May 2014 in the Anuradhapura and Kurunegala Districts was completed in July 2014. The resource persons were Profs. Deepal Mathew and Jayantha Wijeyaratna. The winners of this programme will be notified in due course.



Upcoming Events:

- A **MPG** at the Kotalawala Defense University is scheduled to be established.

THEME SEMINAR: "ENGAGE SCIENCE ENRICH SOCIETY"

2nd December 2014, Venue: Disaster Management Centre, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07

Prof. A P de Silva, Chair of Organic Chemistry, Queens University, Belfast: *"Tackling Societal Problems with Molecular Switching & Computation"*

Prof. Ajit Yoganathan, Regents' Professor, Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology: *"When Engineering is the Best Medicine"*

Ms. Heather Joseph, Executive Director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC): *"Raising Researcher Visibility and Impact through Open Access"*

Prof. S Homer-Vanniasinkam, Consultant Vascular Surgeon at The General Infirmary at Leeds: *"Science and Society: Linking Discovery and Innovation to Better Healthcare"*

Prof. Roshan Mayadunne, Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO Division of Material Science & Engineering: *"Monomers to Polymers: Impact of Science Innovation on Society"*

Dr. Thiagarajan Keddin Alwar, Assistant Professor, Department of Arthroscopy & Sports Medicine, Sri Ramachandra University and Medical Centre: *"Nurturing Sports through Science"*

Prof. Maitrayee Chaudhuri, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University: *"Thinking About Social Sciences: Specificity and Significance"*

To register please contact: Administrative Officer / SLAAS, 'Vidya Mandiraya', 120/10, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07

Phone: (011) 2688740 / 2691681 (Early bird registration: 21 November 2014)

SLAAS Annual Dinner 2014

Date: 4th December 2014, Venue: Berjaya Hotel, Mt. Lavinia

Time: 7.30 p.m. onwards

Tickets: Rs. 2500/= per head

Tickets are available at SLAAS Office

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/=)