

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

In few weeks' time 2020 is coming to an end and a new year is dawning.

2020! What a year it has been. When I was elected President in March I had many visions and projects planned for the year. Alas! The world was declared a pandemic because of the COVID 19 virus. This virus was spreading throughout Australia and the world like wildfire.

Our plans to hold the Sri Lankan New Year in April was cancelled due to the pandemic. The monthly meetings were held as virtual zoom meetings. People got creative and came up with new and innovative methods to be connected with members and friends. The government circulated many news articles on COVID 19 restrictions and this information was circulated through our email data base.

During the lockdown many Sri Lankan students lost their jobs and were unable to pay accommodation and tertiary fees. When we were informed about students who required assistance, this information was collated and forwarded to the helpdesk manned by the Federation of Sri Lankan Organizations of Queensland (FSOQ) to provide assistance. We also contacted our senior members and checked if they required any assistance during the lockdown period.

Queensland's Chief Health Officer and the Premier stood firm and curtailed the spread of the virus in Queensland, despite many criticisms. We are optimistic that our lives are slowly coming back to normal.

In November, we organised a get together at the Jindalee Bowls Club. The event was organized as per the Queensland Government COVID regulations with restricted number of guests. The tickets were limited and were sold out in a few

weeks. The MC, Laurensz Manricks, kept the guests relaxed and entertained with his light-hearted compering and jokes. The music was provided by Charith Matino who kept the guests' toes tapping. The scrumptious lunch was provided by Thilani catering.

The highlight of the gathering was to felicitate Mr. Anton Swan, the Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka in Queensland who has been appointed as the Dean of the Consular Corps for Queensland 2020. SLSQ has always promoted Brisbane authors and have held book launch events in the past. At the luncheon we promoted Dr. Nimal Sedera's latest publication which is also his biography and he handed a copy of his book to Mr. Anton Swan. The guests were eager to participate in the two trivia quizzes. The winners were presented with prizes. SLSQ appreciates the participation and the support by the community. With the funds raised through the raffle we donated to Food Bank Qld for their activities.

In October, we started dance classes in collaboration with Ravibandhu and Samantha Dance Academy of Sri Lanka. This was a memorable day for us. The project was launched based on the vision of former President Gothami Meepe. The dance teacher for our school is Eshanie Thajudeen who has been trained in Sri Lanka. The Brisbane dance teachers who have always supported the Society attended the opening ceremony and blessed our endeavors.

We have planned dates for next year. The AGM is scheduled on the 14th of February and the Sri Lankan New Year celebrations on 24th April 2021. Please note these dates and we would be very happy if you could attend these events.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2021!

Namal Wijeratne

Sri Lanka Society Dance Academy

The opening ceremony of the Sri Lanka Society Dance Academy (in collaboration with the Ravibandhu-Samanthi Narthanayathanaya) was held on the 11th of October 2020 at the Clayfield Uniting Church Hall. According to our cultural dance traditions, the main feature of the event was the Saraswathi Puja to invoke blessings for the Dance Academy, the Teacher, the students and the Committee Members of SLSQ who provide the support for the running of the school.



The event began with a welcome by the president of the Sri Lanka Society. The Magul Bera and the blowing of the conch shell heralded the blessings.

Candles were lit for the Buddha, Saraswathi Matha and Lord Ganesh. Another 7 candles were lit by committee members and the Dance Teachers Amara

Ratnayake, Ruwan Fernando and Ashani Jayawardena. This was followed by a stunning dance performance by the teacher Eshanie Thajudeen to the accompaniment of drums and the Thaalam- Pata played beautifully by Shyam, Kaushalya and Nalaka of The Sri Lanka Dance Foundation. The devotional versus were sung melodiously by Thilangi Devendra who mesmerized the audience.



This was followed by a video presentation sent from Mr Ravibandhu Vidyapathy to welcome the students and the parents and to extend his good wishes for the success of Eshanie and the SL Society Dance Academy. The event was gracefully compered by Sangitha Cabraal who also contributed to the puja by playing the Conch Shell.

Chamitha Weerasinghe thanked everyone on behalf of SLSQ and the guests were presented with a gift of Sri Lankan 'Kavili'. Due to Covid restrictions, the number of guests had to be kept to a minimum. Many parents and other interested members were unable to attend. We hope that we will be able to have a larger event in the future.

The students enjoyed a short lesson from Eshanie which introduced them to the Kandyan dance form. We wish to thank everyone who helped us with this event and hope many children will use this opportunity to learn our cultural dances.



We are very pleased that the SLSQ Dance Academy continues to expand and is nearly at the full capacity of the hall. We do hope that more children will join us in 2021.

This was our first term and we celebrated the end of the year with a get-together for the students, parents and the Sri Lanka Society Management Committee. It was a casual and fun event and a chance for the children and the parents to mingle and get to know each other.

Many of the parents and committee members brought a plate to share with Sandhya making one of her special cakes to grace the occasion.



Classes for next year begins in the new school term.

Classes:

Sunday 3:30-4:30 at Clayfield Uniting Church Hall, 170 Bonney Avenue, Clayfield.

Please call or contact via return email for further details: Eshanie (0415 461 613) or any committee member.

20201 AGM Date Claimer

Date – Sunday, 14th February 2021

Time – 4:00 pm

Place – Toowong Community Hall

AGM will be followed by afternoon tea.

Members and Friends Lunch

This function was held on 14th November 2020 at 11.00m, at Jindalee Bowls Club. The Master of Ceremonies **Laurensz Manricks** opened the celebration with a warm welcome and greetings to all the members and guests present.

Only 62 members and guests were allowed to be present at this lunch, due to COVID restrictions. The tickets for the celebration were booked out in no time. Many others had to be disappointed as the numbers were limited and they were unable to get the tickets on time.



Laurensz mentioned that due to COVID restrictions, everyone had to follow certain rules, like social distancing and sanitizing. He also said that in other countries around the world it was much worse than in Australia. We were fortunate, as Queensland had done well so far. The rules were relaxed here and we were lucky to have a more normal atmosphere.



The meal was a buffet lunch, very well presented by **Thilani Caterers**. The menu was delicious and included saffron rice, chicken curry, potato curry, fried dishes (baddum), various salads, pickles and papadams. The desserts were delicious with specially made watalapam and ice cream.

Laurensz also thanked the President, Namal Wijeratne and the committee for putting all this together and making it a successful event.

Charith Martino, the musician for the lunch party, was also thanked by



Laurensz for standing up for the occasion and playing some lively music to keep the party going.



The president Namal Wijeratne also gave a very warm welcome to the members and guests present. Namal said her wish was for everyone to have a good time, enjoying the music, chatting with friends, and enjoying the delicious meal prepared by Thilani Caterers. Namal also said that all the people present can also watch the bowling games in progress. Namal thanked all the committee members and all others who helped to make this occasion a success. She also mentioned that organising was stressful as some people did not agree and had different views and ideas. They were happy to find a venue that could accommodate the needs of the Society, even though the number of guests were limited. She also said Charith had won awards for his singing and music. The most interesting Trivia games were organised by **Sandhya**. This was very popular. The first one was to

identify from pictures various famous places in Sri Lanka. The second one was even more interesting with word mixes, some clues were given and the correct words were to be found.

A Certificate was presented to **Anton Swan, Honorary Consul**, to congratulate him on being appointed the Dean of the Consular Corps. This is a great honour for Sri Lanka and is the first time a Sri Lankan Honorary Consul has been appointed to head the Consular Corps anywhere in the world. Laurensz thanked Anton Swan for the valuable service he had provided to the community over many years. Laurensz also mentioned that in the past, how Anton was always involved with various activities for community development and is a past president of the Sri Lanka Society.



Dr Nimal Sedera, a gifted writer, presented his book "Avaragiradha Chamathkaraya". He also had copies of this book for sale.

The party was very enjoyable and finally there was some baila dancing which brought everyone present to happy, cheerful and good spirits.

Persis Ranasinghe – November 2020

Thoughts on Christmas

Christmas is celebrated on 25th of December. Christmas is a festival where we all come together and celebrate Jesus's birth. All it's about is not about getting presents its about spending time with family and learn about Jesus.

Some people used to go to church every Sunday but at Christmas time most of people go to church form mass. You might not often see your friends, family and grandparents very often. But at Christmas time they will come all together to enjoy meals and exchange gifts. Even if all not in same country they still remember us when they pray.



On the first day people decorate the Christmas tree at their homes. At our home every year I decorate my home with my family. Putting gifts under Christmas tree, lighting our back yard and preparing sweets are my favourite things at Christmas time. Christmas reminds me of importance of giving and sharing with friends and family.

By Vinul Perera

Year 3

What Christmas means to me

Christmas is the gift of God. God has given his son as a gift to reunite with God. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ that our saviour who has died for our sins and had raised from the dead and is Gods son, will have eternity life.

The true meaning of Christmas is sharing and being kind. Helping someone when they need help. Giving money to the poor. Helping an old lady across the road and giving a little smile to everyone And saying “Merry Christmas”. That’s the true meaning of Christmas. Although many children celebrate with Santa Clause, presents they are not the true part of Christmas. They were made long ago to make children happy.

Oshadi Silva

Year 5



Candy cane cookies by Jayani C. Senanayake

Ingredients

Butter - 1 cup

Flour - 3 cups

Icing sugar - 1 cup (or powdered sugar)

Egg - 1

Almond essence - 1tsp (alternatively peppermint extract)

Vanilla essence - 1 tsp

Red food colouring - ½ - ¾ tsp

Beat together the butter and sugar until soft and fluffy. Add the egg and mix well. Add the flour gradually and mix well. Separate the dough into two portions. To one portion add vanilla essence. Mix and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

To the other portion, add almond essence and red food colouring. Mix and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Take about 2 table spoons of the dough in each colour and roll out each dough portion into thick ropes of about 6 inches long.

Pinch the two ropes together at the end and twist them together gently to achieve that candy cane effect. Curve the top of each to create the hook effect.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. bake for 10 – 12 minutes until the tips of the cookies have just started to brown.



Get Jayani's recipes from - <https://www.peckishme.com/>

Annual Consular Corps Christmas Dinner

The Annual Consular Corps Christmas Dinner organised by The Dean and Executive Committee of The Consular Corps of Queensland. The chief guest for the occasion was His Excellency, the Governor of Queensland, The Hon. Paul de Jersey AC and Mrs Kaye de Jersey. The function was attended by the Premier of Queensland, Annastacia Palaszczuk, the leader of the opposition, David Crisafulli and many other dignitaries.



As Dean of the Consular Corps, Mr Anton Swan the Hon. Consul for Sri Lanka in Queensland organised for a Sri Lankan Cultural item to be performed at the occasion. SLSQ was honoured to organise the item and invited the Sri Lanka Dance Foundation whose performance

was greatly appreciated by the distinguished audience. Namal and Gothami attended the occasion to represent the Sri Lanka Society of Queensland. It was a very elegant and formal event with many opportunities to promote our community and build valuable insights and networks.



Dr Dinesh Palipana Queensland Australian of the Year for 2021

The Sri Lankan community in Australia and especially those in Queensland were delighted to hear that Dr Dinesh Palipana was awarded the honour of Queensland's Australian of the year 2021. Dr Palipana has previously been awarded the Order of Australia and the junior doctor of the year and has been an inspiration to many people, both old and young. He became the first quadriplegic medical graduate and has worked with the Australian Medical Association to create first-of-kind national policies for inclusivity in medical education and employment.

In her speech the Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said that Doctor Palipana knows no barriers.

"He is a truly inspiring person and a much-deserved recipient of the Queensland Australian of the Year Award. Dr Palipana was the first quadriplegic medical graduate and medical intern in Queensland and was also recently admitted as a lawyer. As co-founder of Doctors with Disabilities Australia, he helped create national policies for inclusivity in medical education and employment.



“He speaks, writes and advocates for the equitable treatment of people with a disability, and he has contributed significantly to the advancement of treating spinal cord injuries and restoring functions for people with paralysis,”

The premier’s words explain his achievements and the work he has done to help those with disabilities. We also know that Dr Palipana is always ready to help the community and despite his busy schedule. Sri Lanka Society would like to convey our best wishes to Dr Dinesh Palipana and hope that he goes from strength to strength

Christmas in Sri Lanka

Christmas in Sri Lanka is a time when families and friends of all religions get together to enjoy each other’s company. Shopping centres, restaurants and hotels are beautifully decorated with tinsel, lights, and Christmas trees. The sound of firecrackers and music can be heard from afar as the Christmas season draws near. Sri Lanka is unlike any other country when it comes to its one of a kind all-night parties that comes with the traditional breakfast of kiribath (milk rice) and tea in the morning. It is a time when many attend parties to celebrate the occasion with Sri Lanka’s unique and upbeat balla music, delicious food, and amazing company.

Even though I did not grow up in Sri Lanka, my parents tell me that this time of the year brings the best out of Sri Lankans. Christian families would buy gifts not just for their children but also for other non-Christian kids in the neighbourhood. Irrespective of religious beliefs, Sri Lankans of all walks of life unite to celebrate the festive season just before the new year dawns. All Aussies should spend a Christmas in Sri Lanka to experience this special time of the year.

Varsha De Silva

QUT



Season’s Greetings!

From the Sri Lanka Society Management Committee

