



# New Zealand Lanka

## Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 31 Autumn 2006

### From the President ....

We have all seen a number of interesting and enjoyable events happening during the third quarter of our term. A large number of families attended the dance on 31 December 2005. It was a fun filled night for the entire family. Our band "Cream" kept the crowd entertained and everybody appreciated the "Kiribath" served with the dawn of the New Year.

In January, about 250 people attended our summer outing at the Long Bay Regional Park. Our "Agricola" friends from Hamilton also joined us to make the event more colourful. I have no doubt that everybody enjoyed the games, BBQ and music along with the fine weather. We had an additional supply of "Elephant House Cream Soda" and "VB" beer courtesy of Spiceland of Panmure.

We hoisted the Sri Lankan national flag on the Auckland Harbour Bridge on our independence day. The Foundation first hoisted the flag in 2005 and now it is an annual event in our calendar. A considerable number of members attended the working bee organised by the Foundation to clean up the Otahuhu temple grounds. The temple appreciated all their hard work and is very pleased with the result.

We are now busy organising the "Desmond Live in Auckland" musical show to be held 15 April 2006, on the Saturday of the Easter long weekend. It is going to be a memorable show and tickets are going fast. I would recommend that everyone reserve their tickets as soon as possible to avoid last minute disappointment.

There is some progress on our Tsunami project. The committee will be taking a positive decision on this matter very soon. May I thank you all for attending these events, taking part in our various activities and assisting us in numerous ways to make these events a success.

To my committee and their family members, thank you for your excellent team work. Our success is our unity and strength. Let us keep it that way.

*Lionel de Silva*



*Kids Sack Race at The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation's Summer Beach BBQ at Long Bay Regional Park on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2006.*

### The Committee

<b>President:</b>	
Lionel de Silva	(09) 525 2550
<b>Vice President:</b>	
Omar Fahmy	(09) 846 9427
<b>Secretary:</b>	
Manjula Walgampola	(09) 529 1443
<b>Treasurer:</b>	
Sohan Cooray	(09) 276 0312
<b>Committee Members:</b>	
Percy Perera	(09) 525 6620
Lal Fernando	(09) 627 6527
Farringdon Fernando	(09) 570 1887
S. Puvanakumar	(09) 624 4343
<b>Auditor:</b>	
Nihal Jayawickrema	(09) 579 1807

### Next Event:

#### "Desmond Live in Auckland"

"Desmond Live in Auckland" musical show will be held on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2006 at Dorothy Winstone Centre, Auckland Girls' Grammar School Hall**, at 7.00pm onwards. Tickets are \$30, 25, 20 pp, kids under 12 years \$20, 15 & 12.50 respectively.

It will be the first time Desmond will perform in New Zealand. He will be accompanied by Upali Fernando, Lead Guitarist and Cameron Colambage keyboardist from Melbourne.

An opportunity not to be missed for everyone to enjoy a dazzling and entertaining musical performance of Desmond de Silva in Auckland. Food will be available for purchase at very reasonable prices.

Music is provided by the "Cream Plus", an Auckland based group of musicians.

### Calendar of Events:

**Saturday 29 April 2006** – Sinhala, Tamil & Muslim New Year Celebrations.

### ***Desmond De Silva in Auckland...***

Desmond was born in Matara and comes from a family of enormous musical talent. He commenced his musical career in 1963 as the lead vocalist for the "Fire Flies". Over the years, Desmond has performed with the Spitfires, Gabo and the Breakaways and the Jetliners. In 1976 he formed his own band known as Desmond & the Clan.

A trip down memory lane will take us to the 1970's where the standard of music was high but there was little in the form of entertainment on stage. However, the personality that made the difference then and who took entertainment to an all time high was none other than Desmond de Silva. His slim tall personality, charisma and gimmicks on stage wooed his audiences and earned him many fans all over the island.

From the clever use of strobe lighting in his rendition of "Kung-Fu Fighting" and "Mohamed Ali" he projected on stage an audio-visual extravaganza that was unprecedented. Desmond has proved his versatility as a master entertainer, time and time again.

Desmond & the Clan performed in places like the Maldives, Nepal & Scandinavia until he embarked on a solo career in 1984. During this time the Producer of New Sound requested that Desmond record one track of "Chudamanike". That track set Desmond on a course that has seen him record a mammoth 800 and still counting Baila tunes that has crowned him the King of Baila!

Through his popularity as an entertainer he is much sought after to perform in venues around the world earning him the status of an Sri Lankan internationally renowned entertainer. He has a broad repertoire of music. From hits of the Beatles, Elvis, Paul Simon, Fats Domino, Ray Charles, Eagles, Neil Diamond to his wonderful impersonations of Louis Armstrong, Dean Martin & Harry Belafonte and more recently the hits of Michael Buble & David Gray portrays the broad range of music that has won him praise and applause from appreciative audiences around the world.

We look forward to your presence at "Desmond Live in Auckland" the musical show to be held on Saturday 15 April 2006 at Dorothy Winstone centre, Auckland Girls' Grammar School Hall, Auckland at 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Please get your tickets early from any committee member to avoid disappointment.

### ***Summer Beach BBQ...***

"Best entertainment and fun at an affordable price" was the theme of our Summer Beach BBQ held on Sunday 29th January 2006, at the Long Bay Regional Park.

The sounds were provided by Rasendra, one of our devoted supporters. Games, cricket for the young and old, tug-a-war for men and women and sack races were some of the events held. The committee members and their families worked tirelessly to provide fresh Salads, Sizzling halal lamb chops, chicken legs, sausages and a drinks for over 250 people present.

With the bountiful amount of activities for our children, and tantalising food and drinks naturally gave way to the Baila music played by Sarath Fernando and his friendly drummers to keep the beat. It was a successful and entertaining day filled with laughter, singing and dancing. One Hundred beer cans and soft drinks were kindly donated by Spiceland, Panmure.

The committee is great full to members who took the trouble to bring their BBQ machines and utensils to the park in the morning. This event was targeted for all members and friends, as time came for the games to start, you could say that we, the "older" generation, almost allowed our competitiveness to take the better of us. It was our children who took delight in playing various games, mingling and interacting with each other and making it their own.

We has many enquires for membership forms after the event. Please download the form from our website: [www.nzslfoundation.com](http://www.nzslfoundation.com)

**Omar Fahmy**

### ***Sinhala and Tamil New Year...***

In April (the month of Bak) when the sun moves from the Meena Rashiya (House of Pisces) to the Mesha Rashiya (House of Aries) Sri Lankans begin celebrating their National New Year Aluth Avurudhu in Sinhala and Puththandu in Tamil. However, unlike the usual practice where the new year begins at midnight, the National New Year begins at the time determined by the astrologers. Not only the beginning of the new year but the conclusion of the old year is also specified by the astrologers. And unlike the customary ending and beginning of new year, there is a period of a few hours in between the conclusion of the Old Year and the commencement of the New Year, which is called the nona gathe (neutral period or period which has no auspicious times). During this time one is expected to keep off from all types of work and engage solely in religious activities.

This also coincides with the time when the harvest collection ends, so the colorful fruits from the trees are collected in bulk to fuel the week-long celebrations. Festivities are prepared well in advance and most of the country grinds to a halt as hundreds travel home to be with their families and stores close down in their wake - it can be impossible to track down the simplest of things just before the new year starts.

The new year rituals begin with the cleaning of the house and many other preparations including the preparation of various sweets. Women congregate to bash on the raban (drum) to warn others of the incipient change in the year. If you fail to hear this, a storm of firecrackers is bound to hammer the point home.

Families indulge in a variety of rituals which are carefully determined by astrological calculations - from lighting the fire to making the kiri bath (milk rice), to entering into the first business transaction and eating the first morsels.

Once these are done, the partying really begins as families mingle, homes are thrown open and children are let out to play. The ubiquitous plantain is dished out alongside celebratory feasts of kaung (small oil cake) and kokis (crisp and light sweetmeat, originally from the Netherlands).

Aurudu has become an important national holiday for both the cultures of the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamil Hindu Sri Lankans, and is unique as such, as it is not celebrated elsewhere in the world. Indeed wealthy Sri Lankans make it an excuse to come home from wherever they are to make it a long holiday season.

Those who can't handle the heat of the pre-monsoon season in the south escape to the cooler hills and indulge in the expensive pastimes of the elite - such as polo, golf, tennis and motor racing.

## Goal setting For Kids...

Goal setting is essential for building a Successful life. However, teaching kids how to set and achieve goals is not part of most school curriculums nor is it taught in most homes. Many parents never learned the techniques of goal setting, and are still struggling with their own. You don't need to know it all. While you develop your own goal-setting skills you can also be helping and encouraging your children to develop theirs.

Goal setting is a life-long skill. It helps your child to focus their unique gifts and talents, it helps to cultivate and strengthening your child's self-worth, and equips them to lead a life full of meaning purpose, and direction, regardless of the professional or personal paths they choose.

### Things to consider when setting goals with your kids

**CAREER** –School grades, skill development, future plan (ambition);

**PERSONAL** –character development, and personal growth (self-image, sense of responsibility, ability, self-esteem) appearance;

**HEALTH**-exercise, diet, over-all well-being, balance;

**COMMUNITY**- commitment to serving others (volunteer work)

**FINANCIAL**- understanding the value of money, earning, saving;

**FRIENDS**- expanding their circle of friends, choosing friends wisely;

**HOUSEHOLD**- chores, contribution to building home life

**RECREATION** –hobbies, relaxation, fun activities (movies, parties etc.)

Things to remember- Expect resistance, be firm; Look for performance, not perfection; Kids need to see the end before they begin (incentive-what will happen If...); Kids need rewards; Kids need praise.

### RESULTS

As kids learn how to set goals and experience the difference goal setting makes in their personal destinies, it will encourage them to take action. They will begin to create lives for themselves that they want and "Dare to live their Dreams!" As your kids become more aware of greater possibilities in their lives, and tap into their respective talents they will develop a stronger sense of self and of their contribution to society.

**SUCCESS** –the accomplishment of an aim or purpose, Failure-Lack of success. When we make mistakes and truly learn from each respective lesson these corrections are directly correlated to our eventual and inevitable success.

Source-Cosmic Coaching Centre.

## Launch the Auckland City Settlement Strategy – A bridge to our new people...

Auckland City Council launched the Auckland Settlement Strategy in late March. This strategy aims to expand on the wide range of services and events that are provided for new settlers by Auckland City. It also aims at developing a more coordinated approach to improve settlement of migrants and refugees into Auckland.

Auckland City states that the strategy is important as 32% of Aucklanders were born outside of New Zealand; one in six

people in Auckland speak a language other than English and 70 per cent of all new settlers to New Zealand choose Auckland as their new home.

Some of the actions Auckland City has planned to help new settlers are:

- Support for new settlers to access local information, resources and advice
- Helping new settlers to take part in community activities
- Encouraging new settlers to maintain their own culture
- Encourage new settlers to take part in civic affairs and to participate in democratic processes
- Identify and work to break down barriers to new settlers feeling connected with their new communities to encourage a sense of belonging

Set up a council steering group to carry out and monitor the progress of the strategy

If you like further information on the strategy, you can visit [www.aucklandcity.govt.nz](http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz)

Source: Auckland City settlement strategy – A bridge to our people (Published by Auckland City)

## Wesak Festival...

Similar to Christmas for the Christians, celebrating the birth of Christ, Wesak for the Buddhists heralds the birth of Prince Siddhartha, who eventually attained Buddhahood as Gauthama Buddha. Over two-and-a-half thousand years ago in northern India, Prince Gautama was born, attained



Enlightenment, and passed away, on the day of the month, separated by some 80 years and Buddhists all over the world celebrate the three events on Wesak day. Wesak day is the most important day in the Buddhist calendar. All over the country, temples, in the villages, and in the cities, announce the

dawn of Wesak, with peals of bells, and drum beats.

The devout, simply clad in pure white, make their way to the temple, to spend the next twenty four hours in quiet contemplation. No solid food is taken by the devotees who observe the eight precepts after mid-day meal, for this day, the holiest of days in the Buddhist calendar, one is there to rid the mind of impure thoughts, and the body of impure habits. While the rest of the village, gather at the temple grounds after sunset to participate in lesser religious activities, like reading of holy books, or listen to the saffron clad monk relate ancient stories from Lord Buddha's previous lives ( listen to Bana ).

Simple candle-lit lanterns similar to the ones pictured, that seem to fascinate these youngsters, made with bamboo frames and covered with colored transparent paper adorn every house.

#### **Lighting the Wesak Lanterns**

Perhaps originally Wesak was observed purely as a religious festival whereby the observers gathered merit for the benefit of their current life or the future life. But with the growth of commerce, many large businesses in cities like Colombo saw the commercial possibilities of Wesak, similar to how the businesses in the west embraced Christmas. Sending of Wesak cards to friends and business associates has become the done thing, during the month of May. Shops selling large and small lanterns, candles, and various electric lighting sets, and papers of any imaginable color abound. Many of the bigger companies pay other small companies to make large Wesak lanterns like these in the hope of attracting prospective customers.

This Wesak lantern, elaborate and several tiers high, could have cost the sponsor quite a large sum of money, but that would be offset with the extra sales !!!.

#### **Sri Lanka an Ecological destination**

Sri Lanka has tremendous potential as an eco-tourist destination. It encompasses a wide variety of scenic and ecologically important natural habitats and possesses some of the richest floral and faunal bio-diversity in the region. This remarkable diversity includes 86 species of mammals, 83 snake species, 54 different species of fish and 40 separate frog species. In terms of avifauna the diversity is even more startling with over 400 species recorded on the island including 23 endemics. It is for this reason that the country, together with India's Western Ghats mountains is considered one of the world's 25 bio-diversity "hot spots".

With its long-standing Buddhist tradition, Sri Lanka has an entrenched environmental ethic. This customary affiliation on with wild places and their animal inhabitants is exemplified by the fact that the world's first wildlife sanctuary was located here, created by King Devanampiya Tissa in the 3rd Century BC. The importance of undisturbed forestland was also a concept well understood by ancient Sri Lankan royalty, manifested in the form of "Thahanankalle" or forbidden forests, which often encompassed watersheds.

The island has something to suit almost any preference, from the red earth and scrub forest of the dry zone, to the verdant splendor of the tropical rainforest; from the coastal mangroves alive with bird life to the stunning beauty of the hill country, replete with spectacular waterfalls and mist drenched

montane forest. Add to this over 2500 years of recorded history, a mosaic of diverse and potent cultures and a rich archaeological heritage and one has the ideal ingredients for enlightening ecological travel.

First research attempts at growing a 'rain forest' and increasing the biodiversity in a Pinus plantation in the buffer zone of Sinharaja by introducing endemic canopy species (saplings in the middle) and other of utility value to villagers (foreground) in specially created gaps in the plantation.

Understanding of flora, fauna and their ecosystemic interactions with the opportunity to contribute to their on going and future protection.

#### **Advertise Free on our Website**

If you have a product or service to offer the general public or Sri Lankans at large. Send your details to:

[nzslf@nzslfoundation.com](mailto:nzslf@nzslfoundation.com)

Attention Omar Fahmy, visit our website at:

[www.nzslfoundation.com](http://www.nzslfoundation.com)

#### **In Lighter Vein...**

#### **Volunteer Fire Department**

A fire started on some grassland near a farm in Indiana. The fire department from the nearby town was called to put the fire out. The fire proved to be more than the small town fire department could handle, so someone suggested that a rural volunteer fire department be called. Though there was doubt that they would be of any assistance, the call was made.

The volunteer fire department arrived in a dilapidated old fire truck. They drove straight towards the fire and stopped in the middle of the flames. The volunteer firemen jumped off the truck and frantically started spraying water in all directions. Soon they had snuffed out the center of the fire, breaking the blaze into two easily controllable parts.

The farmer was so impressed with the volunteer fire department's work and so grateful that his farm had been spared, that he presented the volunteer fire department with a check for \$1000.

A local news reporter asked the volunteer fire captain what the department planned to do with the funds. "That should be obvious," he responded, "the first thing we're gonna do is get the brakes fixed on that stupid fire truck."

Views expressed in articles are those of the contributing authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of the NZSLF

#### **Contributions**

This newsletter is published quarterly. We thank everybody who sent contributions to this newsletter and apologize for not being able to publish all contributions due to the limitation of the available space. Please send your contributions to the Summer Issue by the end of March, 2006 to the correspondence address below. Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to: [nzslf@nzslfoundation.com](mailto:nzslf@nzslfoundation.com)