



# New Zealand Lanka

## Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 37 Spring 2007

### From the President ....

#### Stepping into the next decade.

The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation marked its 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as it bloomed with its true spirit of serving the community, bringing the diverse groups together in harmony and exceeding the expectations of our community.

Our strength is the diversity and the unity of our members. As we near a decade of service, I would like to thank the past committees who helped in numerous ways to take Foundation to new heights. The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation has served the community's diverse interests so that each group could find their own niche. This has helped our community to broaden the understanding and mutual respect for each other.

I feel honoured to have been elected the President for 2007/08, and privileged to take the reins of this broad-minded multi ethnic organization. I have a major task of instigating the steps leading the Foundation to its second decade, with the initiatives and co operation of the newly elected Committee. As you will gather, we have a great diversity in our Committee this year.

On behalf of the community, I would like to appreciate the commitment and the dedication of all our committee members and their families who have volunteered to serve the community. This year we will focus on building more bridges among the organizations from other communities to strengthen our service and commitment.

We have an exciting line of events planned for the year. I hope that you will participate and invite friends from as many countries and cultures as possible!

As one of our events lined up for this year I would like to invite you to join us for the Spring Dinner Dance which will be held on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2007 at Eden Park Function Centre., West Lounge

To keep the Foundation's spirit uplifted and our Committee motivated we value your participation in the upcoming events. We would also appreciate your feedback in order to serve the needs of our growing community as we step towards the next decade of the Foundation

#### Manjula Sanis Walgampola



### The Committee

#### President:

Manjula Sanis Walgampola (09) 529 1443

#### Vice President:

Rohan Jayasuriya (09) 523 0922

#### Secretary:

Farhana Mohamed (09) 522 2181

#### Treasurer:

Nalar Mohamed (09) 522 2181

#### Committee Members:

Ben Somaratne (09) 815 3329

Radhini Sabanayagam (09) 629 3867

S. Puvanakumar (09) 527 1633

Jamie Worne (09) 279 2194

Midori Hara (09) 442 5968

#### Auditor:

Nihal Jayawickrema (09) 579 1807

### Next Event:

#### “Launch into Spring Dinner Dance”

Join us for a fun filled night of sumptuous cuisine and entertainment from 7:30pm onwards at the Eden Park Events Centre, West Lounge, Reimers Road, Gate F. Entrance 26.

Priced at \$40 per adult and \$20 per child.

### Calendar of Events:

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2007** –  
Launch into Spring Dinner Dance.

**27th October 2007** - Karaoke night

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2007** - Lanka Nite

**January 2008** - Summer Outing BBQ

**March 2008** - Musical show, Gypsies

**April 2008** - CricketFest

**May 2008** - Members Evening

**July 2008** - AGM

## Diversity, our strength...

The newly elected Committee is a diverse bunch, with many talents. We are proud to have four committee members continuing this year, as we had four entering the world of community service.

Rohan, Puwanakumar and Radhini who had contributed immensely decided to continue their services whilst Ben, Jamie Farhana and Midori joined us willingly with dedication.

After the last AGM was concluded, a newly elected Committee Member, Midori Hara entertained the audience with a beautiful Sinhalese song – the theme song of the film: "Ganga Addara."

The audience was stunned to hear the little Japanese woman singing in Sinhalese so fluently and eloquently. This committee has variety to offer which blends well with the nature of New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation.

The Sri Lanka Badminton Club has been a wing of Foundation from its inception and is expanding rapidly. Join them at Gillies Avenue Badminton Courts every Sunday afternoon at 4pm for a healthy Badminton game in a friendly atmosphere.

## From the Tide to the Table...

The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation (NZSLF) was among the many Sri Lankan and other organisations in New Zealand and around the world to have collected funds for 2004 tsunami relief in Sri Lanka. With the New Zealand Government's very generous dollar for dollar match, the NZSLF's contribution to the tsunami relief fund doubled.



"Which project in Sri Lanka should the Foundation support?" was a question that was on the minds of the NZSLF Committee members and others who helped in raising the funds. After exploring several, the Foundation opted to provide its contribution through Mary Taylor of Auckland, to support her wider project known as "Tide to Table."

Mary Taylor continues her generous support for Sri Lankans who lost their livelihood during the Boxing Day tsunami two and a half years ago. She has organised the successful Project *Oru* to raise money to donate 100 fishing boats to the people of the Hambantota area. An essential need for the villagers was an ice plant to provide refrigeration and maintain the quality of the fish caught by them.

The Foundation stepped forward with a generous contribution to make the Project Ice Plant a reality. The total cost of the project is approximately US\$ 50,000.00 and over 50% of the cost was contributed by the Foundation. The current President

of NZSLF, Manjula Sanis Walgampola was present to lay the foundation stone for the Ice Plant in December 2006.

The Merrill J Fernando Charitable Foundation (MJFCF) is the facilitator. The Flake Ice Plant will be managed by a committee consisting of the Welipatanvila Fishery community, the Office of the District Secretary Ambalantota, the Fisheries Inspector of the area and representation from IUCN-The World Conservation Union and The MJFCF. Through regular reporting, the Managing Committee keeps NZSLF informed of its progress and activities.

Mary Taylor's latest endeavor, Project Wheels, is designed to give insulated cool boxes built into a motorized three wheeler, the common trishaw or tuk tuk that will enable the community to transport their own fish to the market. To her delight the Morgan Family Charitable Trust agreed to sponsor the project by providing three three-wheeler motorbikes with insulated cool boxes or refrigeration on the back.

This will enable not only the fishermen to receive a fair price for their efforts but will also enable the house wife to get fresh fish for her table- fresh fish that is from 'The Tide to the Table'.

## Ten Years On...

During the term of the current Committee, the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation (NZSLF) will be entering its tenth year of service. Founded and registered as an Incorporated Society, the Foundation held its Inaugural Meeting at St Vincent's Church Hall in Remuera on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1998, electing Dr Anne Perera as the first President.

She welcomed the new challenge, accepted the responsibilities delivering a speech, which was concluded with a poem that she had composed. It was titled, "Like Threads in a Lace." Over the past 10 years Anne has presented this poem to various international audiences. At the last AGM held on 21 July 2007, the newly elected President of the Foundation, Manjula requested Anne to share the same poem with the audience and she did.

She shared how she was inspired to write this poem to reflect the integration of the new immigrants to New Zealand, or for that matter, to any country.

She refers to them as "plants uprooted from the original ground," that need to be nurtured. Referring to the diverse cultures, races and religions "that we follow in our own personal ways," she concludes, "Lets blend in the beauty like threads in a lace."

## Beautifully Stated...

"As we grow up, we learn that even the one person that wasn't supposed to ever let you down probably will. You will have your heart broken probably more than once and it's harder every time.

You'll break hearts too, so remember how it felt when yours was broken. You'll fight with your best friend. You'll blame a new love for things an old one did. You'll cry because time is passing too fast, and you'll eventually lose someone you love.

So take many pictures, laugh too much, and love like you've never been hurt because every sixty seconds you spend upset is a minute of happiness you'll never get back. Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin."

~anonymous~

## Sri Lankan Culture at Auckland Boys Grammar...

On Saturday 1st of September the Sri Lankan Cultural Group of Auckland Boys Grammar led by Dhanika Samaranayake provided the entertainment for Professional Art Exhibition held at Auckland Grammar School.



The students were dressed representing the various cultures of Sri Lanka, attempting to educate the crowd by explaining the different cultures and ethnicities.

It was beautiful to watch the range of costumes that the boys were in bearing the Sri Lankan flag along with other Sri Lankan icons. A few brave souls, wanting to represent all of our country's beauty, wore the national costumes of their female counterparts, so that, despite being a boys' school, the beauty of different ethnicities of Sri Lanka were represented.

To see such energetic enthusiasm in Sri Lankan youth, embracing their culture was delightful!

We would like to thank Dhanika Samaranayake and students of the Sri Lankan Cultural Group at Auckland Boys Grammar for their fine display of Sri Lankan culture. Well done!!

## Susanthika kept the Lion flag fluttering high in Osaka...

Sri Lanka's most celebrated athlete, Susanthika Jayasinghe was elected to the Athletes Commission of the International Association of Athletic Federation (IAAF), the world governing body for track and field.

The 31-year-old Lankan sprint queen got this rare honour only a day after winning women's 200m bronze medal at the 11th IAAF World Championship. According to Secretary of the AASL, Prema Pinnawale, Jayasinghe becomes the first Sri Lankan to be elected to the high-profile Athletes Commission of the IAAF.

## Quotes from Dr Martin Luther King...

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

"There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it."

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should

sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

"Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love."

## Like Threads in a Lace® ...

*Our life is a journey that we travel through  
Meeting and leaving many as we do  
People and places including where we grew  
As children of country that we once belonged to*

*It was our choice to leave our own land  
And reach out to Heaven for a helping hand  
As we get settled in our new found land  
Integrating ourselves and joining the band*

*It is nice to integrate in the harmony  
And enrich the land with diversity  
Of culture we bring with such ceremony  
As we celebrate our festivity*

*As plants uprooted from original ground  
People too feel the shock of new found  
Land, until they feel that they can be proud  
Citizens and plough back to enrich new ground*

*As a group or as individuals we all can do  
Our part to enrich and bear new fruits too  
That can be enjoyed by the citizens of two  
Countries that link through this union so true*

*The culture and traditions we have are so rich  
They need to be nurtured and kept ready to switch  
As and when needed to show and enrich  
The place we now call home while on or off pitch*

*As a group that is committed to enrich this place  
Let us all now unite irrespective of race  
And creed that we follow in our own personal ways  
Yet blend in the beauty like threads in a lace  
...let us blend in the beauty, like threads in a lace...*

Anne Perera , 15 August 1998

## Remains of the Raj...

*Leave Behind Sri Lanka's coast and you'll find monuments  
to the British Empire.*

Nuwara Eliya is often referred to as Little England. The toy town ambience of Sri Lanka's main hill station makes it feel more like Little Britain – soothingly familiar, but with a disorienting surrealist edge. Three-wheeled motor-cycle taxis wheeze past red telephone boxes. Water buffalos daubed in iridescent dye for the Tamil festival of Thaipongal mingle outside a pink brick Victorian post office. A well-

## Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated – Spring 2007

tended golf course morphs seamlessly into a rolling carpet of tea plantations. We arrive later than planned because of the salad. Our guidebook predicts a three-hour journey from Kandy, but our grizzled and grumpy driver, Kaya, hadn't mentioned that the journey would double as his weekly fruit and veg run. At market stalls, he pushes and prods the produce like a Sinhalese Jamie Oliver. His search yields cucumbers as big as marrows and plump tomatoes the size of cricket balls.

After five hours we pull up in the manicured gardens of the Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya's swankiest accommodation. Kaya gets even grumpier than usual because the Hill Club doesn't provide accommodation for drivers –but at least he won't go hungry. Built in 1885 by homesick British coffee baron as a refuge from the heat of the Sri Lankan coast, the Hill Club is a melancholy monument to the British Empires glory days.

In the library, the only sound is the lonely ticking of a grandfather clock. Churchill's History of the Second World War sits under painting of the Royal Family. Sri Lankans were denied membership until 1967 and were not allowed to use the front door until 1971 when, at last, women were admitted, too. More than 30 years later, the "Men's Bar" is still a haven for blokes only.

Two locals are watching Sri Lanka play Zimbabwe in a cricketing showdown of tow of the Commonwealth's more troubled children. The hottest ticket in town is dinner in the shabbily genteel dining-room .The club's arcane dress code is prescribed at reception. "Dress is informal except from 7.00p.m. onwards when Gentlemen shall wear suitable attire befitting the attire of Gentlemen.

Sri Lankan National Dress is of course permitted" Feeling confident that my dusty traveling gear won't make the grade as Sri Lankan National Dress, I venture into a wardrobe that time forgot and throw together a snappy ensemble worthy of old school silver-service dining.

The selection is at least a generation old; I team a wide lapelled crimplene jacket with a tie that should really come with a volume know. Give me some well-trimmed sideboards and a Ford Capri, and I'd be a doppelganger for Bodie or Doyle from the 1970's Brit cop show the Professionals.

Dinner goes back even further than the decade that taste forgot. The typed menu promises (apparently canned) chicken and sweet corn soup, beef Holstien (sic) or roast mutton

(actually goat) with mint sauce. Lyonnaise potato and leeks au gratin add a defiant, not to say desperate, international flavour. Attentive waiters drift around, perhaps wondering why so many of them have been rostered on.

Orange mousse for dessert provides a minor highlight before we demolish the waiters with a few frames in the billiard room. At breakfast the surreal culinary flashbacks continue: sardines on toast and milky tea. A less grumpy Kaya is waiting for us outside apparently looking forward to a day at the races.

At the birdcage, everyone is an expert, especially an increasingly buoyant Kaya, who's displaying a talent for identifying winners. It may look like any of a dozen provincial courses in New Zealand but an exotic twist is never far away: the women wear saris, the men sarongs.

The snacks are far tastier than hot dogs and chips: chilli roasted peanuts and large spicy shrimp washed down with Lion lager erase memories of the previous night's silver-service mediocrity. Meanwhile, a colourful ban of Tamil pilgrims celebrates Thaipongal. Imagine that in Thames or Timaru.

**Brett Atkinson**, Listener

### ***On a lighter note...***

#### **The Vacuum Salesman**

A little old lady answered a knock on the door one day, only to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner.

Good morning," said the young man. "If I could take a couple of minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners."

"Go away!" said the old lady. "I haven't got any money!" and she proceeded to close the door. Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed wide open. "Don't be too hasty!" he said. "Not until you have at least seen my demonstration!"

And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her hallway carpet. "If this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder."

The old lady stepped back and said, "Well I hope you've got a darned good appetite, because they cut off my electricity this morning."

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 welcome contributions to this newsletter and apologize for not being able to publish all contributions due to the limitation of the available space. We reserve the right to edit submitted material. Being a not for profit agency, we do not make any payments for articles. Please send your contributions to the Summer Issue by 21 November 2007 to the correspondence address below. Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to: [nzslf@nzslfoundation.com](mailto:nzslf@nzslfoundation.com)

Correspondence: NZSLF, P O Box 41191, St Lukes, Auckland 1346, New Zealand, [www.nzslfoundation.com](http://www.nzslfoundation.com)