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60th Anniversary of independence

Sri Lankans in Queensland celebrated the 60th anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka in grand style with a cultural show and dinner at Mary Mac Hall on the 2nd of February 2008. The short cultural show included songs and dances from traditional Sri Lankan dances together with Jive and Rock and Roll dancing which depicted the western influence and Bharatha Natyam indicating the links to the Indian dancing traditions. The show portrayed the rich mix of cultures in Sri Lanka to an audience of dignitaries from government and the diplomatic community.



Hon Anna Bligh, MP, Premier of Queensland graced the occasion as the chief guest. Attending also were Hon Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister for Disaster Relief and Human Rights in Sri Lanka and His Excellency K. Balapatabendi, PC, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia. Representing the Queensland government were Hon Michael Choi, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, Hon Julie Attwood, Parliament Secretary to the Queensland Treasurer and a number of heads of Departments. Members of the diplomatic community and presidents of other organisations in Brisbane also attended.

In his welcome speech, Anton Swan, Hon Consul for Sri Lanka in Queensland thanked all the Sri Lankan organisations in Queensland for making the event a reality and noted the synergy that can be harnessed when all Sri Lankans work towards a common goal. During his speech a minute's silence was observed for world peace.

Addressing the gathering Hon Anna Bligh reminded the mutual cultural heritage from Britain and common interests in sports, especially in cricket. Bringing in a human touch to the occasion, she acknowledged Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranayake becoming the first woman leader of a country while she herself was just a six day old infant being brought home from the hospital.

Hon Mahinda Samarasinghe,
 Hon Anna Bligh,
 HE K. Balapatabendi
 and Mr Anton Swan



Hon Mahinda Samarasinghe identified alleviating poverty as the single biggest challenge for Sri Lanka while not forgetting the search for a politically acceptable solution to the ethnic issue. His Excellency K. Balapatabendi focussed on the common interests of the two countries and traced back the history of cricketing links between the two countries. The formal part of the ceremony also included presentation of a plaque to the Premier by Bill Deutrom, President of Sri Lanka Disaster Relief Fund Queensland as a mark of appreciation of assistance provided to Sri Lanka in post tsunami reconstruction effort.

The proceedings that included a short cultural concert and dinner were a resounding success with all those present enjoying the evening.

It was a vote of confidence to the unity of organisations and the wonders of working together. The money raised from the event will be donated to the Sri Lankan Public Health Professionals Training Program.

Wimal Kannangara

L-R: Niroshan Jayasekera
 Jayasiri Weerawardena
 Mr Anton Swan
 Nuwan Ballantudawa
 Hon Anna Bligh
 Aravinda Rubasinghe
 Samson Fernando
 Mrs Anton Swan



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Easter



As much as Easter is the central event on the Christian calendar, the preceding season of Lent is our holiest period of religious observance. Just as elsewhere worldwide, Sri Lankan Catholics

have inherited a devotional tradition of Lenten culture. Penitential exercises such as fasting, abstaining from meat, and forms of mortification have been basic popular Lenten practices. Additionally, devotions such as the Way of the Cross, Holy Hours, public chanting of the Passion of Jesus also known as Pasan and Desana Potha have been in vogue in our villages from very early times. Through such and other forms of private and public piety, Christians struggle to identify with the sufferings and agonizing death Jesus endured in laying down his life for all humans.

Most Sri Lankan Christians who responded to an Asiawide survey on Lenten practices in 2008 too claimed they still adhere to such traditional Lenten devotions. Some also said they combine traditional devotions along with life-related penitential exercises such as abstaining from liquor, sex, smoking and entertainment. Although young respondees were few, they made no secret about finding more meaningful expression of the Lenten spirit in the active practice of charity. Fund-raising for the needy, joining shramadana projects, gift of labor or time as well as examples of being available to peers in need were cited by some young people. One youth leader testified that his life and work is a ministry of Lenten witness. That was quite edifying.

Such outreach and solidarity are an extension of the spirit of fellowship rural Catholics evinced when they rallied together whether to help thatch a neighbour's roof, or help reap a harvest. It also brings to mind nostalgic memories of how our village mothers shared of their poverty by putting aside for charity a handful of rice before boiling the day's meal. Such loving hearts are tabernacles of Love.

Love is the essence of the Easter message and that is why genuine Christians worldwide spend Lent in a spirit of self-giving through prayer, sacrifice and penance. Just as they were schooled in that spirit by forbears of faith, it is heartening to see their outreach of love wax strong and infectious despite all the whirlwinds fanning self-love worldwide.

Just to cite a few unusual examples, this Lent we have been reading how Catholics in China have been ministering to over 1 million victims of snowstorms that destroyed over 220,000 houses. Catholic volunteers in the baby Churches of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have been busy offering hot meals to the poor deeply hassled by the -15 Celsius freeze in the two Central Asian nations. That is love in action, just like the social outreach of local Catholics ministering to flood victims.

May the grace of Easter 2008 help spread the infection of love thus described by the Holy Father in an Easter sermon preached long before he became pope, "Christ summons us to find heaven in him, to discover him in others and thus to be heaven to each other."

Hector Welgampola

Radio Programme Schedule

Sunday Radio 8.30 AM	Producer/ Panel Operator	Tuesday-Sandella 10.00 PM	Producer/ Panel Operator
2 March 2008	Nishanthi/Aravinda	4 March 2008	(Youth) Aravinda/Aravinda
9 March 2008	Jayasiri/Jayasiri	11 March 2008	Sarath Gunatileka & Kosinna/Kosinna
16 March 2008	Jayantha Wickrematunga/Kosinna	18 March 2008	Udaya Madugalle & Aravinda/Aravinda
23 March 2008	Aravinda/Aravinda	25 March 2008	(bi-lingual) Derrick & Wimal/Wimal
30 March 2008	Ajith Kosinna/Kosinna	1 April 2008	(Youth) Nuwan & Thisara/Thisara



Contact us by email

brisbaneradio@yahoo.com.au

Children's Corner

Sweet memories from last year

My name is Vikum Perera. I am 12 years old and currently in grade 8. Last year my pet guineapig Harry died. It was a sad moment for me. Then came the happiest moment of my life. I went to Sri Lanka with my mother. We went to the airport and found out it was the wrong time and wrong flight that we were going to catch. It happened because of the travel agent's negligence. So we had to come back home and went to the airport seven hours later. It was annoying and not a good start to my holiday at all. After the long journey next morning the plane was about to land. I was sitting at the window seat of the plane near the wing so I could see nearly everything that was down there. I wanted to see the land below before my mother and I reported to her what I could see. It was a nice scenery the treetops were shining with golden sunshine, the birds were busy looking for breakfast and the blue sea with milky gently waves was sending gentle, calm waves towards the shore. After we got off the flight and went into the airport there was a welcoming party for us. My mother's family were all there they all had grown up. My little cousins had grown up and their parents had a few grey hairs. It was nice to see them after a long time.

Two weeks later staying at my grandmother's house we decided to go to Knuckles mountain. We climbed up the mountain to the very top and we saw the clouds below us.

After 4 weeks of my arrival in Sri Lanka, we went to my father's house. After we arrived at my father's house we found out that a bomb had exploded at Nugegoda about 10 minutes back. We were near that street when it had detonated. We heard the explosion but we didn't realise it was a bomb. After another week, my mother visited the clothes shop, where the bomb had exploded. The shop was all repaired but the street was all cracked and there were bloodstains all over it. That was the scariest moment of my life.

Then my mother, some other relatives and I went to the Pinnawala elephant orphanage. We saw 54 elephants bathing and having a fun time in the river. One of the baby elephants only had three legs. Another elephant got snot all over my forehead by licking me with its trunk. The elephant keepers had canes to whip the elephants so they would listen to them. It was nice to see so many elephants in one place, what a rare opportunity! Then came a laughable moment it didn't happen at Pinnawala, but at my uncle's place. Three little boys all under five years visited me. Of course they came with their mother. It was very funny the oldest one quarrelled with my cousin sister and he broke all the lotus flowers in the pond. Finally he refused to go back with his mother so I had to carry him back to his vehicle.

It was a very sad moment when I had to come back to Australia. I have to work hard again going back to school, doing homework, cleaning the house etc. Oh well doesn't matter this is life! Every girl and boy at my age has to do these things I'm not alone.

By Vikum Perera
Kenmore High School
Grade 8



We welcome contributions from children of any age. Send us your letters, stories, poems, drawings etc. We will make every effort to publish them in future issues.

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Youth Corner

Big Dreams Dinusha Vithanachchi

So another year of the university year begins for me in a little over 24 hours. It's a frightening prospect- five subjects, ridiculously early starts and the inevitable exams. Enough to make even the most hardworking among us to aspire to be a dole bludger!



However, instead of pursuing that lucrative option I've decided to what every other student ever to walk the planet does every single year; vow to be organized, vow to stay on top of things and vow not to cram in a semester's work half an hour before the exam.

I have gone as far to write down assignment due dates in my diary, written down when and where practicals are, and pulled out the lab coat and my extremely geeky lab glasses from an obscure corner of my wardrobe.

And that's not the end of it! I've also told myself I will not consume my body weight in hot chips this year. After all, the only thing its slimming is my wallet!

A little optimistic? Maybe. After all I won't need the lab coat and glasses until next Monday. Doomed? Only time will tell!

We are set up for failure by our society which encourages us to make a resolution to improve our lives in one way or another at the beginning of the year, whether that be the calendar new year or a different one.

As such, today I, like countless others who vowed to stop smoking, lose weight and go to the gym and other goals in January, I have made my own resolution.

And like them, I too, will probably fail and make the same resolution again and again in coming years.

I do, however, have something on my side. I once was everything I am aspiring to be now!

In another lifetime my assignments were done a good 24 hours before their due date and studying was done well before the exam, not on the bus there.

My parents would stare at me confused as I spent the night before the all-important physics exam watching TV and going to bed at 9pm.

A boy I used to catch the bus to school with was stunned at how bright and cheery I was on the morning of an exam while he proceeded to have a panic attack.

All in all, I'm attempting to do something equivalent to backward evolution. I actually thought I had made a great start until yesterday.

Yesterday I got asked to whip up an article for this newsletter and in true last-minute fashion, I've spent the last 2 hours writing this up.

University hasn't started and I'm already cramming! Maybe it isn't such a bad thing after all. As me and my friends like to call it, maybe it's efficiency!

Good luck to all the school and uni kids. There's a light at the end of the tunnel: Easter's in a month and winter holidays are only three months away!

Dinusha is a second year undergrad at the University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus. She is pursuing a degree in Pharmacy.

Radio 4EB Sri Lankan Group actively encourages the youth to participate in programming, panel operating and other activities. Free training is provided for those who wish to get involved in panel operation. Listen to the Sandella programme every Tuesday 10pm to 11pm and send in your song requests and birthday/anniversary greetings to be broadcast. We would also appreciate if you could write an article to the newsletter.

Contact the youth coordinator - Sandun Sandella.youth@hotmail.com

A Unique Event in Brisbane

A unique event combining a book launch, an exhibition of talent, dinner and a Peduru Party organised by Sinhala Association of Queensland was held a few weeks ago in Brisbane at the Macgregor State School Hall. Hidden talents of a wide variety of Sri Lankans was on display throughout the evening. The event was a departure from the customary song and dance shows providing a forum for display of talents in other forms of art.

The evening began with the launch of Dr Amitha Hewawitharana's Sinhala translation of the well known book "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle, "Senaseemata Maga". The original book that has been translated to more than 30 languages is now available to Sinhala reading community thanks to Amitha.

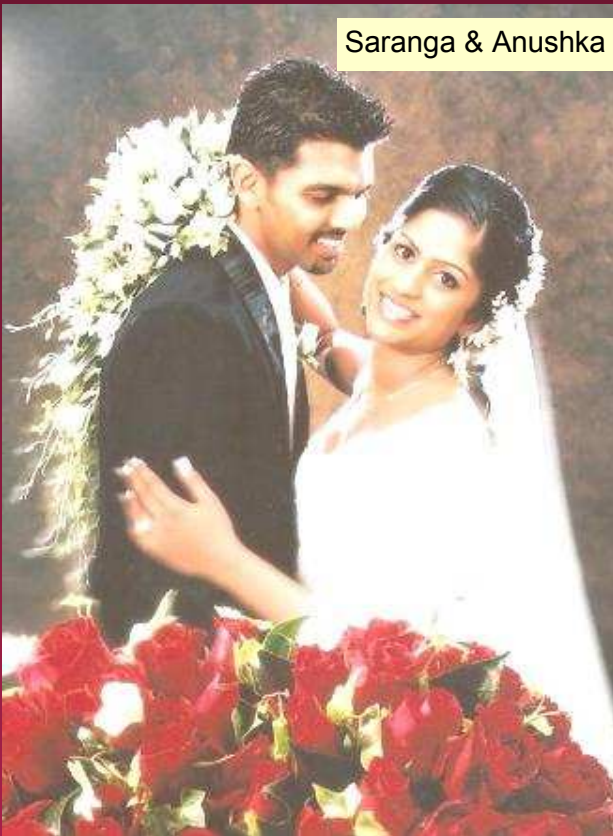


Along with the launch was an exhibition of talent in all kinds of arts. The exhibition, which included a variety of paintings, sculptures, clay and porcelain creations, photographs done by Sri Lankans of all ages was a huge success. Sri Lankan talent on display hitherto limited to song and dance was extended to other forms of art with this exhibition.

The finale of the evening was the "Peduru Party" with singing of well known Sinhala songs. Sri Lankans of all ages took part in the "sing along" extending the evening to the middle of the night.

Wimal Kannangara

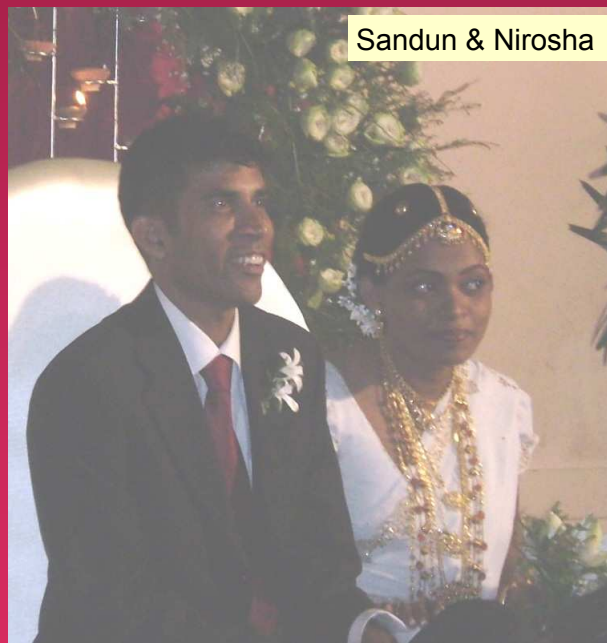




Saranga & Anushka



Kushil & Suhanya



Sandun & Nirosha



Radio 4EB Sri Lankan group and its members wish to celebrate the recent weddings of several of our young listeners.

1. Saranga De Alwis and Anushka Abeydeera, both from Brisbane, had their wedding at the Mt Lavinia Hotel on 22 December 2007. It was an evening function, with music provided by Athula Adikari and the band, with singing performances by Athula himself, Dayan Vitharana and Brisbane's own Dulip Jayakody. Dayan was also the photographer and apparently done a fantastic job. Saranga has been associated with Radio 4EB since he arrived in Brisbane and was involved with the radio programmes, especially Sandella, for a long time. Both Anushka and Saranga have participated in New Year cultural shows, Saralanga and Prathiba for many years.
2. Suhanya and Kushil Abeysinghe got married on 3rd December at the Taj Samudra in the presence of many friends and relatives. Music was provided by Friends in Harmony and photography by Ravi Studios. Suhanya has been involved with Sri Lankan functions in Brisbane from her school days and has always taken the time and effort to participate in cultural activities, introducing many of her friends as well. Kushil moved to Brisbane from Melbourne about two years ago..
3. Sandun De Silva, the Radio 4EB youth coordinator, married Nirosha Jayawardena from Sri Lanka last December. Both doctors, one in engineering and the other in medicine, are back in Brisbane and already committed to assist Radio 4EB in the future.

Upcoming Events

SRI LANKA SOCIETY

**New Year Cultural Show
Dance Practices**

Currently held at Jagera Hall,
Cordelia Street, West End. Please contact
the Cultural Secy. Mrs Pushpa Jayasekera
on 3300 9911 for further information

SILVER FAWN CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15 March 2008
6.30pm

Ithaca Bowls Club, Fulcher Road, Red Hill
Davenal Flanderka on 041 902 4506
Email: dfla@bigpond.net.au

SRI LANKA SOCIETY

Committee 2008

President - Mr Hiran Cooray
Vice President - Mr Ronnie Anandappa
Treasurer - Mr Prabath Alwis
Secretary - Mr Kanaji Wijesekera
Cultural Secretary - Mrs Pushpa Jayasekera
Web Page Administrator - Dr Tony Sahama
Sports Secretary - Mr Eranga Wickramasinghe

Committee Members: Mr Mervyn Thangarajah,
Mrs Sama Adikari, Mrs Hermin Goonetilleke,
Mrs Swarna Wijesekera, Mrs Dhavina Mendis

PRATHIBHA CONCERT - 2008

**Date - Sunday, 9th March 2008
Please be present by 5:30pm**

Venue - INDOOROPILLY, Nudgee Junior
College, Twig Street, Indooroopilly
Contact: Daya Gunaratne Ph(07) 3849 7767

Variety entertainment with a lot of comedies
Staged by Sri Lanka Art Circle, Cultural Division
of the Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery (Brisbane)

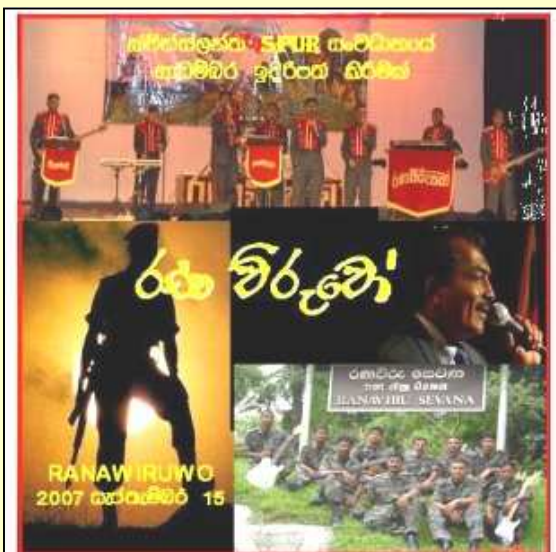
SINHALA ASSOCIATION

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SUNDAY 16 March @ 6pm**

Garden City Library Meeting Room. Dinner provided.
Contact Aravinda 0412745700

R.R.Samarakoon's Award Winning Drama AHASIN VATUNU MINISSU

with Geetha Kanthi Jayakody; Ramya Wanigasekera & Wikrema Seneviratne (kirihamy)
Venue: Nudgee Junior College, Indooroopilly - Friday 25 April (Anzac Day) 5.45pm
Contact Daya Gunaratne 3849 7767



The picture above shows the cover of the CD containing songs sung by "Ranaviruwo" at the Musical Performance in Brisbane. Cost is \$10. Please contact Nuwan Ballantudawa on 0433758979

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