



SLLA NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Journal of the Sri Lanka Library Association

47th Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Library Association



Inauguration of the 47th AGM



Mr Piyadasa Ranasinghe the new president being inducted by the outgoing president, Ms D. Warnasuriya



Dr. S Namasivayam, Director, Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies, delivering the keynote address

Nenasalas and Libraries together for a Knowledge-based Society

Excerpts from the keynote address delivered by Dr. S Namasivayam, Director, Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies, the Chief Guest at the 47th Annual General meeting of the SLLA on 29th June 2007

“Can ICT help create a new society and what can the librarians do about it? Can it help us in economic development? And can it help us to achieve peace? There are libraries all over the country and there are Nenasalas also around the country. They both aspire to build a knowledge based society. What can the Sri Lanka Library Association do? What is your role?”

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SLLA COUNCIL 2007/2008

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- Ms. Dilmani Warnasuriya - Immediate Past President
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- | | |
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| Special | - Mr. R.D. Ananda Tissa |
| School & Educational | - Ms. Geetha. David |
| LIS Group | - Ms. Harshani Dissanayake |
| NGO Libraries | - Ms. Deepali Talagala |
| Nat. & Provincial Libraries | - Mr. W.S. Punyawardena |
| Government | - Ms. Dolitha Andradi |

Nominated members

- Mr. Upali Amarasiri,
- Prof. Jayasiri Lankage

Editor's Note

I greet you as the new editor of the SLLA Newsletter. You will find some changes in the format of this issue. The Publications Committee discussed and agreed on this simple format. I appreciate your contribution to the newsletter in the form of news items, events and short articles. Please keep me informed of important events that take place in your libraries as well as in your respective areas related to our profession. I hope this newsletter will keep you abreast with the developments in the profession.

This issue is dedicated to the 47th annual general meeting of the Sri Lanka Library Association which was held on the 29th June 2007 at the auditorium of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo 7.

The SLLA AGM was well attended with more than 250 members present at the meeting which was about 75% of the total membership. It is an encouraging fact that the members show their enthusiasm in the activities of the SLLA. Apart from being just an AGM this event has motivated younger members to get involved in the association's activities. This also has given an opportunity for all the members senior and junior from all corners of the island to gather and to get to know each other.

At the annual general meeting the previous year's activities were discussed, reviewed, agreed or disagreed by the members who attended the meeting. The review and adoption of the audited accounts and the financial statement and the election of office bearers were two important events at the annual general meeting. After a lapse of several years the presidential address was resumed this year.

The rapidly increasing number of associate members each year has strengthened the membership of the association which undoubtedly is a healthy sign showing the growth of the profession. This indicates that our profession is in demand and that the society has accepted it as an important part of the social and economic development despite a disturbing event that has taken place recently which has demeaned our profession of librarianship.

Last but not the least we are proud to announce that the longstanding dream of the SLLA has come true and we hope that the next AGM will be held at our own premises!

My warm thanks and appreciation goes to Ms Deepali Talagala, Mr Jagath Weerasekera, Mr Saman Devagamage, Ms Kamalambikai Kanthappu, the Publications committee and the staff of the SLLA office for their assistance and co-operation extended.

Editor

Excerpts from the address by Mr Piyadasa Ranasinghe, the President -2007/2008, SLLA, at the 47th AGM.

The new President, Mr. Piyadasa Ranasinghe, in his address observed that the position of librarians today, is grave. He said that we have come to a cross road where our profession has reached the rock bottom. He quoted the unfortunate situation at the Ministry of Health where sanitary labourers were appointed as acting librarians and bemoaned that our profession has gone down to such a low level.

In his address he traced the history of librarianship from the few reports and records available.

“The librarians were a powerful group in the past. In the Polonnaruwe Period the army generals were librarians. There were positions called Senior Librarians and “Pusthakala Keerthi” and these librarians fought in the army.

In the recent past the first public library was founded by Maha Mudliyar Charles de Soysa. He founded it, managed it, and ran it. Mudliyar de Soysa compiled the rules for management of the library and showed how the library should run. He dictated to the Governor of country on the management of the library. It is this position that has come down to the present level.”

Mr Ranasinghe viewed that by making the government and other officials aware of the profession of librarianship, that proper recognition to our profession could be gained.

Mr. Piyadasa Ranasinghe, the President, expressed his thoughts on the downfall of our profession. He declared that

- “1. we are not a strong social organisation
2. we are not accepted as an important profession. He further, analysed as follows, how these two reasons can be overcome.

a. the SLLA council and the members, National Library and Documentation Services Board, all other related institutions, politicians, media and international organizations like IFLA should get involved.

b. to have an organisation like a National Libraries Convention. and to join hands with the NLSDB and discuss deeply and democratically the steps to be taken.”

Continued on page 04

News and Events in Brief

New Grant Programmes by Elsevier

The Board of The Elsevier Foundation has approved two new grant programmes which would be of interest to our members.

The Innovative Libraries in Developing Countries programme

will make grants to improve the capacity of developing world libraries through training, infrastructure, technology, digitization and preservation of information. The Foundation will focus on supporting partnership in these areas between libraries in the developing coun-

tries and institutions in the developed countries.

The New Scholars programme is designed to encourage the participation of women in academic science and technology. This programme is focused on supporting the efforts of academic institutions and scholarly societies to help scientists with family responsibilities attend conferences and meetings that are important to establish careers in science.

For more details:

www.elsevierfoundation.org

PAM International Membership Awards

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics (PAM) division is now calling for nominations for the International Membership Award. The SLA-PAM Division will present this award to a librarian from the developing world; it provides a two-year SLA membership, for the years 2008 and 2009.

For complete information, please visit the following web page: <http://units.sla.org/division/dpam/manual/awards/>



Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka - Library Refurbishment

The Library of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka has been granted funds by

the World Bank under the Improving Relevance & Quality of Undergraduate Education Project (IRQUE) to upgrade the existing services of the library for the students & members. With this assistance the library has widened its services including an e-Learning centre with 20 Computers.

Several council members of the SLLA participated in the **International Seminar and Workshop on Conservation of Printed Heritage** in Sri Lanka held on 23-25th July 2007. This event was organized by the National Library & Documentation Services Board of Sri Lanka.

ALP Scholarships and Training Attachments for Asia and Oceania

Scholarships:

- Middle level professionals and technical specialists (computing staff) working in libraries / information centres in Asia and Oceania may apply.
- Candidates must be less than 46 years of age.
- Should have a Bachelors degree and basic IT skills.

The scholarship period will not exceed six weeks.

Closing date : 31 December 2007

For further details and application form :

<http://www.ifla.org/VI/1/admin/scholarasia.htm>

Training Attachments:

For middle level library and information workers from developing countries who wish to gain experience and hands-on exposure from more advanced environments in the areas of library management, information technology, preservation, rural librarianship and literacy work.

- Should be less than 40 years of age
- A letter of endorsement from the employer permitting you to go on study leave
- Office and postal addresses to be written clearly in the application.

For further details and application form:

<http://www.ifla.org/VI/1/admin/scholarasia.htm>

source : IFLA Asia and Oceania section Newsletter. Issue 19:1, June 2007. p.18-19..



The Galle Literary Festival

The Galle Literary Festival 2008 will take place from 16th – 20th January in & around the historic city of Galle.

For more details:

Web: <http://www.galleliteraryfestival.com>

E-mail: info@galleliteraryfestival.com

**Libraries are reservoirs of strength,
grace and wit, reminders of order,
calm and continuity,
lakes of mental energy,
neither warm nor cold,
light nor dark.**

**The pleasure they give is steady,
unorgastic, reliable,
deep and long-lasting. Germaine Greer (1939-____)**

News and Events in Brief

Counselling Service—Ms. Geetha David has been appointed by the council to act as the counselor for members and students of SLLA.

SLLA Examinations -DIPLIS Level 1 2006/2007 examination was held in September 2007.

SLLA Library— The library is now temporarily located at the second floor of the National Library building. It will be opened on Thursdays and Saturdays from 8.30 a.m. to 4.15p.m.

Sri Lanka Library Review

The Publications Committee wishes to receive articles from the members to be published in the next issue in June 2008. Articles will be accepted till 28th February 2008. Please check the SLLA website for guidelines on submitting articles. You may submit articles written in Sinhala, English or Tamil.

Opening of the Junior Library of the Sudharma Vidyalaya, Galle.

Rehabilitation of the Tsunami Libraries Project

On the 12th July 2007 the SLLA was pleased to open the junior library of the Sudharma Vidyalaya, Megalle Galle, another school badly devastated by the tsunami. This project commenced later than the four pilot projects under the Tsunami Libraries Project and was funded by the Cambridge Library Group of the University of Cambridge, U.K. The library was opened by Ms. Jayasekera, Zonal Director of Education, Galle and Ms Dolitha Andradi Co-convener of the SLLA Tsunami Project. A small but well attended ceremony was graced by the representatives of the SLLA, Education Department, Galle and staff and pupils of the junior school of Sudharma Vidyalaya. The visitors were warmly welcomed by the Principal and Vice-Principal of the school with a western music band in attendance. We extend our warm thanks to the Cambridge Library Group, to Ms Dolitha Andradi and Ms Swarna Jayatilleke, co-convener of the project, Mr. Haripriya Bandara, engineer, who supervised the construction work, to the contractor and other technicians, and to all our members and students who willingly helped to successfully complete the project. A special thank you goes to Ms Pradeepika de Silva and Ms Wijayanthi Wijesinghe for their keen support and generosity extended to the SLLA.

See pix at Page 8

*Excerpts from the address from page 2***

c. This convention should be accepted by all organizations, departments etc.”

He believed that this will give awareness to our profession and suggested the following steps to be taken to resolve this situation.

- To conduct at provincial level, seminars for those who are not in the profession so as to make them aware of our profession
- To use the media. At least once a week to have a publicity programme in the media to show the world that there is such a profession.
- SLLA to attempt to establish provincial level branches to see that the work of the profession is carried out properly.
- Assistance from the govt. Possibility of joining Nene-salas.
- To establish a Task Force. He said that such a task force was established in the UK in 2002. He said that this Task Force will empower librarianship. This task force will look into the status, salaries etc. of librarians.

He further informed that research on the profession of librarianship is almost nil and that steps should be taken in this area to help to establish the status of librarians in Sri Lanka.

Lastly, he emphasised the need of a permanent place for our training activities and that we must somehow solve this problem.

Closing his address the President, Mr Piyadasa Ranasinghe stated that he has a vision for image building for librarians on the following philosophy.

1. Emergence of knowledge brings happiness.
2. Good communication brings happiness
3. Good co-operation/co-relation in groups/profession brings happiness
4. The conduct of those united beings happiness –
Dhammapada.

He said that he will apply these principles during his office as the President.

Nenasalas and Libraries.....

The Nenasalas are information kiosks distributed all over the country, but you are also information kiosks. I don't see a difference. My view is that libraries in Sri Lanka are also Nenasalas. They are not the 'salas' but libraries are the information nodal points. "

"You can have access to people, community, and the first thing small communities asks for is a small library as an information centre." said Dr. S Namasivayam. He observed that librarians play a major role in converting citizens into a knowledge based society with the help of ICT. Expressing his views and experience with regard to ICT, Dr. Namasivayam recollected that Sir Arthur C Clarke became famous because 60 years ago he brought the concept of satellite communication and that, today, most countries have adopted this system to develop their communication systems. He further viewed that the effects of communication has set on our lives and that countries have forged ahead with hi-tech communication.

He adopted Sri Lanka as an example to investigate what has gone wrong in this country. He expressed that the " (a) twenty year war damaged and destroyed the country causing heavy expenditure which you and I bear (b) expensive power generation due to poor planning of the monopolist Ceylon Electricity Board again which we pay for this, you and I. (c) fighting over language issues while India, giants in the area, has adopted English as a global

language and India has become the main BPO country today. India is the largest supplier of software in the world. "

"Indians have returned to their country from the western countries and started BPO business and western countries find it cheaper to get their work done in India. India has chosen that path and we have chosen to switch to national language and carry our ego, and if we had stuck to English our children would have got better chances globally today."

"(d) Corruption. Our newspapers are making money exposing corruption. We elect our people into parliament and then discuss how corrupt they are. (e) Hugh trend in emigration. Earlier it was unskilled labour but today there are people with ties standing in the queues at the emigration offices. This country has become a wasted country."

He advised the librarians to combine education and knowledge with entertainment and described his experience in displaying world cricket matches for the public at the Arthur C Clarke Institute and the mass of people who came to watch the match beside the road despite having TVs at home. He said that it demonstrated the community feeling in our people. He said the libraries should use this technique coupling education and dissemination of information with entertainment just like the way entertainment use advertisements.

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Dr. Namasivayam made a comparative study of Sri Lanka, Singapore and South Korea during the past 10 years.

He further compared Sri Lanka with other countries in the region and examined the lessons to learn. Dr. Namasivayam said that he was a scientist all his life but now a technology bureaucrat.

He went on to explain what communication is and what information is and how it has changed our lives. He took the topic, telephone penetration, and compared with the condition with the neighbouring countries. He displayed the statistics of fixed lines and mobile lines. Maldives have 30% telephone penetration and we are second in the region followed by India and other South Asian countries. He showed a correlation between the domestic product and telephone penetration and that mobile penetration is slowly overtaking land lines. He explained "We have Dialog, Mobitel, Hutch. etc. Why telephone penetration through libraries? We are trying to get connectivity, accessibility and information through Internet. But there are lots who have not got this. There are some projects ADB funded internet connectivity for schools, World Bank funded television centres. ICT Agency under the President's office. We are literally connected to the north and the south and the east and the west.

"India is a large BPO giant and uses IT as a technology. There is an underwater cable from Singapore which goes

pass Sri Lanka and goes to the west and to Europe. SMW 3 is this undersea Optic cable used to transport data. India uses our connectivity through Sri Lanka, to Mumbai, to function BPO. These cables run very close to us and India uses it though us. We must make it a gateway to other countries. We don't seem to use this much. My vision for this country is BPO where, instead of sending our women to the middle east as labour, and instead of exporting natural resources like tea we should think of citizens, tea estate workers, people who are using us as backoffice. Every one of our citizens should have access to computers. They should be writing accounts to the UK banks."

He further commented that "we should not think ourselves cheap. . We should have an image of ourselves. It will go to our children and to the people with whom we associate. We should be proud of ourselves but we should be highly skilled."

"In my view you need connectivity, knowledge distribution centres and information centres. Libraries can do this role very well. They have the perfect structure. Libraries should get satellite, optic connectivity, have screens for the citizens coming to the libraries to obtain information.

Libraries should be the new community centres. Library should be the distribution centre of information."

Achievements and Endeavours of Member Librarians

CONGRATULATIONS Ms. PREMILA GAMAGE!



We announce with great pride that Ms Premila Gamage, one of our active members was elected to the (a) Governing Body of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and (b) as the Chairperson of the Regional Standing Committee of Asia and Oceania (RASCO) which covers Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean and © as a member of the Division of Regional activities of RASCO, at the 73rd World Library and Information Congress and General Council held in Durban, South Africa in

August, 2007 .

IFLA is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users and has 1700 associations, institutions and individuals as members in 150 countries around the world.

In 2005, the SLLA Council appointed Ms Premila Gamage as its representative to the (RASCO) IFLA for a four year period which paved the way for her to utilize her skills and

talents as an efficient librarian and as an ambassador of librarianship for the benefit of our profession and country. Today we can see the fruits of this opportunity given to her.

She attended the annual sessions of the IFLA regularly and delivered a very successful presentation at the annual sessions in 2005, on the devastation of libraries affected by the tsunami and on the SLLA project on the rehabilitation of tsunami affected libraries which resulted in receiving donations from abroad to carry out our project. She not only arranged donations to come in but worked extremely hard to see the success of the projects.

This is the first time a Sri Lankan has been elected to these esteemed positions in the IFLA and to be elected to these three important positions at the same time.

Premila is the Librarian at the Institute of Policy Studies, Colombo. She served the SLLA Council as the Publications Officer from 2000 – 2001, as the Assistant Education Officer from 2002 -2003 and as the Vice President from 2005 – 2007.

She contributed zealously while serving in the following committees of the SLLA : Education, Office Management and Rehabilitation of Tsunami Libraries, and was the convener of the IT committee for the period 2006 – 2007.

Thank you Premila for all your hard work! Good Luck!!!

SLLA Executive Committee 2007- 2008

President	: Mr. Piyadasa Ranasinghe
President Elect	: Mr. G.M.P.B. Gallaba
Immediate past President	: Ms. Dilmani Warnasuriya
General Secretary	: Ms. Dushyanthi Daniel
Vice President	: Mr. J.A. Amaraweera
Treasurer	: Mr. Anton D. Nallathamby
Education Officer	: Ms. Shivanthi Weerasinghe
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Asst. Secretary	: Ms. Padma Bandaranayake
Publications Officer	: Ms. Mahesika De Silva
Info. & Pub. Relations Officer	: Mr. J. Ratnayake
Nominated members	: Mr. Upali Amarasiri : Prof. Jayasiri Lankage : Dr. Ms. Wathmanel Seneviratne

SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VISION: To be the center of excellence in the field of Library, Documentation and Information Science through an educated and proactive membership and collaboration with other stakeholders in the field.

MISSION: To act as the pivotal professional body for library, documentation and information services in the country, by providing library education programmes, setting professional standards, fostering cooperation between all individuals and organizations interested in the welfare of libraries, acting as the forum for the exchange of ideas among members of the association, safeguarding and promoting the rights, privileges and status of librarians and information scientists and playing a leadership role in chartering the course of future library needs in the country.

Presidential Address

Excerpts from the Presidential Address delivered by the out-going President, SLLA, Ms Dilmani Warnasuriya at the inaugural session of the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Library Association on the 29th June 2007.

Ms Warnasuriya commented that the Presidential address was resurrected after some years. The topic of her address was “The Development of Scientific & Technical Information in Sri Lanka.” Her address was based on her experience in the field for twenty five or more years.

“To talk of the history of information sources, the practical application of scientific & technical information, dated back to the pre-Aryan period.”.....She elaborated on the development of scientific periodicals in the country with the first scientific periodical published being the Medical Miscellany. She further said that “Recognition given to the importance of information for the furtherance of science & technology in the country was first seen in the agricultural sector.... The earliest scientific library set up was said to be the Royal Botanical Gardens Library in Peradeniya in 1821.... The setting up of the Industrial Research Laboratory in the 1940s saw the skeleton of a technological information centre. This centre amassed publications from the late 19th century and all publications were transferred to the CISIR, now ITI, when it was set up in 1955.”

She investigated how information was organised in those times. “In the first half of the 20th century tools for location and retrieval of information were fast developing in the western countries. The most effective were the abstracting and indexing journals

The first systematic indexing system for scientific periodicals was set up at the CISIR by none other than the doyen of scientific information, Miss Cloudagh Nethsinghe.”

“Then another first in the systematic collection of an organisation was the reprint collection..... The next significant development of S & T search tools on a countrywide basis commenced only in the early 70s. The first known Union List of Scientific Periodicals in Ceylon was in 1971 and was compiled by M A P Senadhira. Bibliographic organisation on a national basis came next.....”

“In the late 60s the problems besetting scientists and technologists in information access were brought out at various fora... .. Consequent to this, the idea of having a central institution on a national basis for scientific information was mooted. In 1968 Mr L E Samarasinghe undertook a study regarding this.The result was the setting up of the SLS&T I Center under the aegis of the then National Science Council in 1977. The SLS&TINetwork comprised of all the libraries in the country with S & T resources. Within 5 years the membership

rose to around 100 libraries. The chief architect for this network was the father of IT in Libraries, Mr N U Yapa.”

“Next Landmark which dramatically changed the face of information provision in the country was the advent of information technology and the CDISIS package, in 1987. With the CDISIS, all activities hitherto carried out manually were converted to this database... .. This formed the basis of the Union Catalogue and the Union List.”

“Next landmark was the LEARN project launched in 1990. It facilitated a great deal of communication between libraries in information provision. The next development was the remote access to the Union Catalogue and the Union List in 1996. The entry of CD ROM databases was an alternative to the printed sources and came into being in the mid 1990s . During these years many libraries were quick to experiment with the various options opening up in the S&T information sector.”

“A giant leap into a possible future scenario was taken when the country wide ENASP PERI scheme came into use in 2002. several scientific databases were made freely available to the entire scientific community at individual workstations Following upon this came the access to the SCOPUS database which provided abstracts of several 1000s of S & T journals.”

“Now the rechristening of the information centre at the NSF as the National Science Library and Resource Centre was another development in the S & T information scene and the setting up of the digital library by the NSLRC in 2007 was the most recent landmark... .. The other urgent need is to have information and access to all local publications of R & D centres and government departments. One option is to have all such publications available at one site preferably in digital form or at least to have a reference system for such publications.In this connection as proposed by Samarasinghe the designation, the National Information Centre should also be formally established as National Depository for all published and unpublished material pertaining to S & T in the country.”

“No clear distinction could be made between the scientist and the technologist but in addition to the above resources, patent literature, standards and specifications are bread and butter of industry.”

“One must always keep in mind that notwithstanding the present euphoria associated with digital libraries one must not jump headlong into setting up such libraries without exercising some caution as to what should be digitized and what should not. A judicious mix of both print and electronic sources is a must, bearing in mind, that invariably the desired end result of any electronic search is the printed output. I am completely against a paperless world.”



Address by the new President Mr Piyadasa Ranasinghe



Vote of Thanks by Ms G M de Silva General Secretary



Presidential address by Ms Dilmani Warnasuriya. 47th AGM



Mr. Anton Nallathamby, Treasurer, presenting the 2006-2007 statement of accounts



Registration 47th AGM



Junior Library of the Sudharma Vidyalaya, Galle. Ms. D I D Andradi addressing the gathering at the opening ceremony held on 12th July 2007

If undelivered Please Return to :

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