

LANKA LINK SLCFA NEWSLETTER - September 2015

“Failed plans should not be interpreted as a failed vision. Visions don't change, they are only refined. Plans rarely stay the same, and are scrapped or adjusted as needed. Be stubborn about the vision, but flexible with your plan.”

John C. Maxwell

Consistent with previous years, a number of events were planned by the SLCFA over the summer months. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, we were faced with the reality of having to move forward with these activities on a much smaller scale.

Heritage Festival

As mentioned before, we were unable to participate in the Heritage Festival this year due to a lack of interest from our membership to take up key positions required in order for the past committee to submit an application on time. Heritage Festival is a wonderful opportunity to showcase our cultural heritage and food. We implore our members to consider volunteering for the 3 key positions of Chair and Coordinators for the Food and Cultural Pavilions so that we may be considered for admittance in 2016 and continue to participate in this event in future years.

Calgary Edmonton Sports Encounter

While there was much anticipation about the Calgary-Edmonton Sports Encounter, this event too had to be called off. As summer tends to be a busy time for facility rentals, numerous attempts were made by the SLCFA to finalize a date for this event with Calgary. However, as an Executive Committee had not been appointed in Calgary until the latter part of June this was not possible in time to book a venue.

Annual Picnic

WAS AWESOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Okay, so that may not be exactly what happened. On August 15th, which also happened to be the coldest day of the month, a courageous few braved adverse weather to partake in a hearty breakfast on prime real estate secured by the Committee at Hawrelak Park. As weather conditions worsened throughout the morning, the “picnic” was moved to the Association building where the fun continued with indoor games and a BBQ thanks to Liyana Jayatileka’s portable barbecue and exceptional cooking skills. The happy faces seen below attest to the great time that was had by all.





Regular Events of the Association

First Friday of the Month Gathering:

We appreciate Coordinator Mano Senaratne's efforts and dedication to assist the Executive Committee in ensuring the continued success of this popular event. The SLCFA is thrilled with increased participation numbers that have made these evenings even more enjoyable with a greater selection of good food, games, sing alongs, dancing and karaoke. We would also like to extend special thanks to Maduni and her friends, Janaka Kolabage, Nalinda Wickremasinghe, Anura Kulathilaka, Amal Epa and Alin Rogoz, members of the Serenade band - a local musical group - for entertaining us on a couple of occasions. The Executive Committee was also able to facilitate a meet and greet with the Marians, the ultra popular musical group from Sri Lanka.



For any newcomers, this gathering is held on the 1st Friday of the month starting around 7:30 pm at the Association building. Remember to bring your favourite dish to share as the dinner is a potluck. We look forward to meeting you all. For more information contact Mano Senaratne at manosenaratne@shaw.ca

Seniors Function:

Thanks to all who have sponsored the monthly Seniors Functions and helped us to keep them going. The seniors have indicated how much they enjoy this event and we're so pleased to have had volunteers to host the function almost every

month. We are looking for a sponsor for the month of February 2016. If you are interested in taking up this rewarding experience, please contact the coordinator Dee Cooray at mail@mixmusic.ca. This will give the new incoming committee some time to organize the event thereafter.



Movie Night Gathering:

As usual Lakshaman does a fantastic job in coordinating this event. Newcomers please note this event is held on the 3rd Friday of the month from around 7.30pm. Again the format is a potluck dinner followed by screening of a Sinhala movie. Please contact Lakshaman Samarasinghe at 780 435 8890 or medhal@telusplanet.net if you are interested in attending this event.

Sinhala Classical Music Classes:

Arrangements are underway to organize Sinhala classical music classes conducted by Siri Samarasekara, a retired regional director (music) in the Department of Education, in Sri Lanka.

Classes will be held on every other Sunday starting October 11, 2015 at the SLCFA building from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm. There will be voice training classes and musical instrument classes. Class instructions will be in Sinhala.

Those who are interested in attending could get further details by contacting Lakshaman Samarasinghe at 780 435 8890 or medhal@telusplanet.net.



Dance Classes:

Despite the efforts of the new coordinator Maduni Maraweera, the uptake of dance classes was much lower than anticipated, especially due to lack of participants. Even though classes are scheduled to be held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, Maduni informs us that participation is minimal and sporadic and at present it is almost at a standstill.

Zumba Classes:

While Zumba classes were scheduled to recommence in the fall, this has not been possible to date as a result of medical advice received by the instructor to cutback on unnecessary physical exertion due to some health issues being faced.

Other Updates

Website:

The SLCFA website received a much-needed facelift this summer. The new website - found at www.slcfa.org - features the latest news of the Association, information regarding membership renewal, availability of the building etc. We would like to acknowledge the good work done by Sugith Karunarathne, who was selected to complete the work based on quotations received.

Scholarships - use of existing casino funds:

As casino funds cannot be used to award scholarships to members only, it has been decided by the Committee to donate money to Grant Macewan University and NAIT for scholarships to students. The money donated to each institution will be \$2,500.

Excellence Award Name on Plaque:

In an effort to recognize Sri Lankan students with high academic achievement at the Alberta High School Diploma, the Executive Committee will continue to place names of member students on the Plaque of Excellence in the SLCFA building. There will be no money awarded by the SLCFA. The criteria for selection will be the same as before.

Any students from our membership who are interested in receiving this recognition for this year are asked to forward documentation demonstrating an average of 91% or higher in the five core subjects for admission to university based on the 2015 Alberta High School Diploma examination final marks.

Donation to Stollery Children's Hospital:

As a result of the efforts of the SLCFA and the Sri Lanka Humanitarian Foundation of Canada, the Executive Committee is pleased to advise that a cheque for \$1,522.29, which is the total profit made by the joint venture Bak Maha Ulela, was

donated to the Stollery Children's Foundation.

Casino:

The SLCFA will be volunteering at Casino Edmonton on the 29th and 30th of November. Thank you to the many that have already volunteered to help with this event. We are looking for a few more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact a member of the Executive Committee.

Whilst we thank all those who gave up their valuable time and helped the SLCFA in innumerable ways to make the numerous events conducted over the year a success, we hope the same support will be given to the committee to carry out the events of the balance part of the year, especially the upcoming Casino.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016 (AGM):

The AGM will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2016 at the Association building starting at 2.00 pm. The EC invites all voting members to attend the AGM.

As the majority of present committee members will not be returning for another term, it is time to consider the future of our association. It would be great if members could take up individual positions or come forward as a group having similar ideas and capable of working together to serve on our EC for 2016. So put on your thinking caps, jump on board and volunteer.

Below is an article which I found when applied to me is very very true, especially now that I'm re- tired. Hope you will find it beneficial too and inspire you to volunteer.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering by Amy Hancock

Volunteering is good for the community and it's good for your health. Not only can helping other people make a difference in their lives, it can also have some surprising health benefits to your own life. Studies have shown that volunteering can reduce the risk of high blood pressure, improve your mental health, and even extend your mortality.

Volunteering can touch many hearths while actually being good for your heart. A recent study published by the American Psychological Association's Psychology and Aging Journal shows that older adults who volunteer at least 200 hours per year decrease their risk of high blood pressure by 40%. The amount of time spent volunteering is what mattered, not the specific type of volunteering work. It was suggested that volunteer work may substitute pharmaceuticals to help prevent high blood pressure.

The author of the study suggested that participating in volunteer activities may give older adults more opportunity for social connections that they might not have otherwise. Evidence shows that having good social connections promote healthy aging and reduces the risk of many health problems, including high blood pressure.

BMC Public Health published research article that found that those who volunteered experienced lower levels of depression, better life satisfaction, and overall enhanced well being. Doing good for others and the community provides a natural sense of accomplishment. It can provide a boost in self confidence, give a sense of identity and create a more

positive view of life.

In a report issued by Harvard Health Publications it was mentioned that the more people volunteered the happier they actually were. According to their findings, the odds of being “very happy” rose to 7% amongst those who volunteer monthly and 12% to for people who volunteer every 2 - 4 weeks, compared to those who did not volunteer at all.

Not only does volunteering make you feel happier, it could actually help you live longer. Multiple experimental trials were pooled and compared by BMC Public Health regarding volunteering and human survival. Observational evidence shows that volunteers could live up to 20% longer than non volunteers in cohort studies.

Beyond the scientific research, we know that volunteering brings fun and fulfilment into our lives. It provides an outlet for creativity, escaping every day stresses and opportunities to gain new skills, increase self motivation and refreshing inspiration that can spill over into your personal life.

Everyone knows that volunteering is a good thing to do. Now we know, as it turns out, that volunteering is good for you too.