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Ravi Gukathasan helps to further develop Tamil studies at the University of Toronto Scarborough

An extraordinary gift has been bestowed upon the Tamil community in Toronto, and individuals scattered across the rest of Canada and the world for that matter! Ravi Gukathasan, a business owner in the Scarborough area of Toronto and former alumni of University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), donated \$2 million to the school to further support its development of Tamil studies. According to the school, these dollars will help fund a Tamil studies post-doctoral fellowship, other scholarships, event programming, and digital archiving. "I want UTSC to be a star when it comes to the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, its culture, its language, its perspective in the world," stated Gukathasan in explaining his motivation for this generous decision.

Bhavani Raman, an associate professor in the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, maintained that a previous donation from Gukathasan

has been critical for the UTSC Library expand its Tamil-language collection. Asked on how this latest donation will exactly benefit the Tamil community and the library, Chief Librarian Victoria Owen said that it will assist in their acquisition of a Tamil literature collection from a collector. Additionally, they have been in constant contact with another Tamil collector in London, England, whom has been gathering Tamil literary works for over 25 years. These works, in turn, will be retained by the University of Toronto Scarborough for editing and annotations by Professor Raman and her students, in order to effectively digitize them for global access.

In term of the scholarships, a 10-year commitment of 1.25 million of Gukathasan's donation will go towards the Ethan and Leah Schweitzer Gukathasan Fellowship, which is named after his two children. These funds will also support a \$500,000 program-



Ravi Gukathasan (U of T PhD, 1986; UTSC BSc, 1982), CEO of Digital Specialty Chemicals Ltd

ming fund, \$150,000 digital fund, and smaller \$100,000 scholarships. In another comment on its significance, Raman noted that the UTSC postdoctoral fellowship profoundly compensates for the lack of these fellowships globally. She predicts the school will see many applicants from outside Canada itself.

Contd. on page 3...



Gary Anandasangaree, MP, Scarborough-Rouge Park, Georgette Zinaty, BA 1989 Executive Director of Development & Alumni Relations, University of Toronto, Prof. Bruce Kidd, Vice-President U of T and Principal UTSC, Ravi Gukathasan (U of T PhD, 1986; UTSC BSc, 1982), CEO of Digital Specialty Chemicals Ltd, Kanish A. Thervarasa, CPA, CA, CMA, Senior Partner, Kanish & Partners, LLP, & Rajee Muthuraman, President & Co-owner, RJ Multi Litho

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Ravi Gukathasan helps... *Contd. page 1...*



Mike Ahilan, Past President, CTCC (Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce), Kula Sellathurai, Past President, CTCC, Ajith Sabaratnam, President, CTCC, Kanish Thervarasa, Georgette Zinaty, Ravi Gukathasan, Rajee Muthuraman, Stan Muthulingam, President & CEO, The CableShope Inc.

Considering the context of disappearing languages, Gukathasan firmly believes this UTSC donation can help secure an everlasting presence of the Tamil language globally, especially in the Scarborough Tamil community where he has resided. With the latter, he thinks it is highly possible since the community, in his exact words, is "becoming its own in Canada."

On a personal level, Ravi Gukathasan was raised outside Jaffna in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Alongside his family, he immigrated to the United Kingdom in 1974. They eventually ended up in Canada, residing in northern Scarborough. In 1978, he enrolled in UTSC, which was at the time known as Scarborough College founded in 1965. Gukathasan would open Digital Specialty Chemicals after earning a PhD in Chemistry at the University of Toronto (U of T). His business has been very successful in the Scarborough area. A small park was built at the location of Coronation Drive in

Southeastern Scarborough, accompanied by a lobby decorated with Indigenous artwork.

His wife, Caroline Schweitzer, is also a chemist and alumni of U of T. Overall, while clearly a generous gift for the advancement of Tamil studies, Gukathasan highlights that such a program can only get better with others following his example.

The event celebrating this mammoth gift was held on January 24th at the University of Toronto in the midst of Canada's first Tamil Heritage Month.

(Written by Harrish Thirukumaran, Student at Brock University; Special thanks to Monsoon Journal Guest Reporter Vikash Narine for attending this ceremony at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and capturing the historic event and contributing to this article. Vikash is a Master of Environmental Science Candidate (2017) at the University of Toronto.)

Pictures here are from this occasion, courtesy of Ekuruvi.

Professor Cheran recipient of ONV Foundation International Poet Award

By Siva Sivapragasam

Canada-based Sri Lankan Tamil poet and scholar Dr. Cheran Rudramoorthi has been selected for the first International Poet Award by the ONV Foundation.

Dr. Rudramoorthi Cheran was born in Jaffna and is an associate professor at Canada's Windsor University and specializes in Ethnicity, Migration, Racialization, Identity and International Development.

Professor Cheran is an academic, poet, playwright, journalist and public intellectual. Cheran is a frequent speaker at conferences and in the media in Canada, South Asia and Europe. He has authored several books in Tamil and his work has been translated into several languages with several volumes of his work published in English. Cheran has also been a recipient of several Awards including awards from the Canadian Tamils' Chamber



of Commerce and the Tamil Literary Garden.

The ONV Foundation was started in memory of the late ONV Kurup, a well-known Malayalam poet. The awards will be presented at an event titled Harithamanasam on February 17 at the Indian Consulate Auditorium.

Tamil Heritage Month celebrations in Ottawa



Gary Anandasangaree, MP, Scarborough-Rouge Park with his wife Harini, daughters Bairavi & Sahanah and some of the attendees

By: Siva Sivapragasam

Gary Anandasangaree, Federal M.P for Scarborough-Rouge Park held a Tamil Heritage Month gathering in Ottawa recently and celebrated the historic event. The event drew in an estimated attendance of over a thousand members from the Tamil community throughout Canada, as well as other communities, to celebrate and appreciate the milestone that has been achieved.

MP Gary Anandasangaree initiated the passage of this historic bill in Parliament last year. The motion passed in Parliament will "recognize the contributions that Tamil-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of Tamil language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future genera-

tions by declaring January, every year, Tamil Heritage Month."

The venue contained many exhibits and activities that allowed for the appreciation of the Tamil language and culture. Attendees were able to learn few steps of the Bharatanatyam dance, presumably the oldest dance heritage emerging from the Indian subcontinent and regarded as the mother of many other Indian classical dance forms.

Exhibits on the Tamil script and its evolution over time were displayed, and attendees had the opportunity to learn how to write their names in Tamil. Excerpts from the Thirukkural and Carnatic instruments were on display as well, further highlighting major elements that have shaped the Tamil identity.

Photo Courtesy: Ekuruvi



Some of the Liberal MPs and the participants

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from the publisher's desk

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Black History Month:

Octavius Catto - A 19th Century Black Civil Rights Figure

Since 1976, the month of February has been officially signified by Black History Month in the United States. It was not until December 1995, according to the Government of Canada, that its commemoration became recognized in February. It is characterized as a celebration of the accomplishments of Black Americans and Canadians in numerous areas of life, such as business and politics, throughout those countries' respective histories.

In his proclamation on February 1, President Donald Trump noted "the contributions African American have made and continue to make are an integral part of our society, and the history of African Americans exemplifies the resilience and innovative spirit that continue to make our Nation great."

To the north in Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated "I urge all Canadians to reflect on the bravery and courage of individuals like Viola Desmond, a prominent Black Canadian businesswoman who changed the course of Canadian history by defiantly refusing to leave a whites-only area of a movie theatre in 1946." As part of this month, I would like to draw particular attention to someone who, like Ms. Desmond, also changed the course of history, in the United States to be exact, but has had minimal historical recognition. That person is a man named Octavius Catto.

Accordingly, Octavius Catto was born on February 22, 1839 in Charleston, South Carolina. Furthermore, he was a teacher in mathematics and English at the Institute for Coloured Youth, which is contemporarily known as Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, in his adult life. More prominently, however, Catto was a civil rights activist fighting for greater freedoms for Black Americans in politics and sports and other areas during his time.

His commitment also culminated in his collaboration with Frederick Douglass, another 19th century civil rights and slavery abolitionist



Born: February 22, 1839 Charleston, South Carolina - Died: October 10, 1871, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

figure. The news organization Timeline considered him the forgotten hero of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement that swept America for much of the 1950s and 60s. This is based on the fact that many of his political actions historically reflected those of civil rights figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.

As with Parks and public buses in Alabama, Catto protested racial segregation of streetcars by staging a sit-in. His advocacy for desegregation in public transit systems in Philadelphia eventually gained passage in the Pennsylvania legislature in 1867.

Like Dr. King and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Catto was integral in voting rights by advancing Pennsylvania's adoption of the 15th amendment in the United States Constitution, which granted vote suffrage to Black Americans for the first time in 1870.

Tragically, though, it was because of this and persuading black Philadelphians to vote on Election Day in 1871 that he was killed, or rather martyred, by Frank Kelly, a member of that era's US Democratic Party intending to suppress the black vote. Octavius Catto's contributions to racial equality and civil rights are indeed significant to not only the struggle that was the 20th century civil rights movement in the United States, but also for the historical nature of Black History Month.

Monsoon Journal joins in honouring Octavius Catto in this Black History Month and in celebrating the month-long events.

Contributed by Harrish Thirukumaran

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Tuesday, February 14

“Have you ever been hurt and the place tries to heal a bit, and you just pull the scar off of it over and over again.” - Rosa Parks (February 4, 1913 - October 24, 2005) American civil rights activist

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Ideal Dreams Music Concert - A Tribute to Music Maestro A.R. Rahman

Toronto's music and dance lovers were entertained recently to a music concert of high performance at the Sony Centre for Performing Arts in downtown Toronto. The show was presented as a tribute to music maestro A.R. Rahman.

"Ideal Dreams" is the first tribute to A.R. Rahman's 25 years in the film industry and took place at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto, Canada. The maestro himself was present at the event.

The show was produced by Ideal Entertainment Inc. and presented the legacy of one of the world's most prominent and prolific music composers. The performance featured over 100 North American artistes and integrated various forms of the performing arts, including dance, music, visual arts and musical theatre, in sequences set to Mr. Rahman's compositions.

The musical score, similar to the choice in artistes, represented the award-winning composer's ability to transcend world genres, while weaving together tradition with innovation. Mr. Ramanan Muthulingam, Managing Director of Ideal Entertainment had earlier remarked that the "The production will feature a live orchestra from start to finish and include various new technologies throughout, providing the audience with elements that enhance their sensory experience."

The legendary music composer Rahman has earned international acclaim and numerous awards for his innovative music and songs in the combination of classical, western and traditional eastern music with the latest in electronic music innovations.

Tribute to A.R. Rahman's music entertainment show brought great music experience and was joyful on February 4, 2017 with an energetic, audience-pleasing performance at the newly redubbed Sony Center in Toronto, downtown.

Ideal Group of Companies CEO & Top ranked business leader Shaji Nada said, "Thanks for the love and kind support in making this concert a huge success".

(Seen here are some pictures taken at the event - Picture Courtesy: Ekuruvi & Puthinam Photos)



Music Maestro A.R. Rahman



Music Maestro A.R. Rahman & Shaji Nada, President & CEO, Ideal Group Inc.



One of the pictures from the performance



A proud moment for a young musician Ralph Francis. Ralph receives appreciation from A.R Rahman



The children Dream about the future



A. R. Rahman being honored with flower bouquet by Mr. & Mrs. Shaji Nada and their daughter



Ideal Entertainment Managing Director introducing the President & CEO of Ideal Group Inc. Shaji Nada



Shows the Mother & Son theme play at the Ideal Dreams show



One of Ananth's performance with Roja that won Ananth the award by Ideal Entertainment at the Ideal Dreams show



One of the pictures from the Ideal Dreams performance



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CTCC celebrates Tamil Heritage Month

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) celebrated the Tamil Heritage month in Canada at a meeting recently.

Present at the meeting were the Directors and a significant number of members. The celebrations took the form of the rendering of the Canadian national anthem and the Thamil Thaaivaalthu followed by a Bharatha Natyam dance. President Ajith Sabaratnam welcomed the guests and Vice-President Internal Affairs Shalini Sathya conducted the proceedings of the meeting.

Mr. Siva Sivapragasam, Executive Editor of "Monsoon Journal" newspa-

per spoke on the significance of the Tamil Heritage month, traced the history of the Tamil community's migration to Canada and CTCC's contribution towards the growth of Tamil businesses in Canada. A presentation was made by officials of RBC Royal Bank on the bank's services towards small business.

Members also discussed the audited accounts of the Chamber and decided to continue further discussions of the 25th Anniversary accounts at a further meeting.

(Page 24 for Full Coverage; Picture courtesy: Ekuruvi)

Indira Naidoo-Harris Becomes Ontario's First Minister of Women's Issues and Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care

Women's Empowerment and Security among Top Priorities alongside Quality Programs for Early Years and Child Care

In January 2017 the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, took an important step for women and girls in Ontario by announcing a new stand-alone Ministry for women headed by Halton MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris.

Minister Naidoo-Harris will oversee an ambitious and activist agenda, enacting a growing number of important policies related to the economic empowerment of women and the prevention of violence against women and girls. She will help implement the province's Gender Wage Gap Strategy and coordinate ongoing efforts to build gender equality across Ontario. She will continue to raise awareness and build on the progress of #Its Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking.

Minister Naidoo-Harris: "I am committed to advancing gender equality across the province. As Minister I will work tirelessly to make Ontario a place of fairness and opportunity, so women and girls can all reach their full potential free from the fear of sexual violence and harassment."

In addition to her new role, Naidoo-Harris has been appointed as Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care, overseeing the creation of 100,000 new licensed child care spaces within the next five years for children 4 years and under.



This appointment strengthens and builds on her previous role as Associate Minister of Education focusing on the Early Years and Child Care portfolio.

Minister Naidoo-Harris: "Ontario is a great place to live, work and raise a family. We must continue to create more accessible, affordable, high quality early years and child care programs for our children so that families can get the support they need. My priority is to ensure that our kids get the best start in life."

Indira Naidoo-Harris was born in Durban, South Africa, and her family immigrated to Canada to pursue dreams they could not achieve under apartheid. She grew up in a small town, and built a successful career in journalism, covering issues at the regional, national and international levels. Naidoo-Harris was first elected to the Ontario legislature in 2014 as MPP for Halton, where she has lived with her family for close to 25 years.

Statement from Minister Coteau on Black History Month - February

Michael Coteau, Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism, issued the following statement:

"I take great pride asking you to join me in celebrating Black History Month this year. This is an opportunity for us to reflect on and pay tribute to the history that has collectively shaped us, and to share Black Canadians' triumphs and challenges.

Ontario first proclaimed Black History Month in 1993 to mark the 200th anniversary of a law banning the importation of slaves into Upper Canada. And last year, the province passed legislation to formally recognize February as Black History Month on an annual basis.

Black History Month is about learning and sharing. It's about recognizing the important contributions of Black people. Sharing our stories helps build a deeper understanding, stronger appreciation and greater resilience. These 28 days are about celebrating our successes and they are also about acknowledging trailblazers who have brought us down the long path to where we are today.

But we know our work is not yet over. The Black community's struggle against racism and our ongoing quest for justice and recognition is a testament to our shared strength and de-



termination. We have so much more work to do. We must continue to work together in order to accomplish our shared goal of equality for all. That is why I am committed to continue engaging with the community and across government to remove barriers that prevent everyone in our society from achieving success.

We must continue to build an inclusive Ontario. This starts with our ability to understand each other, and to share the very best our cultures have to offer. When members of our community prosper, our province truly prospers.

By understanding and celebrating our Black history, we can build a society where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential."

Sri Lankan President stresses reconciliation and religious tolerance among communities as of utmost importance to achieve political stability and development



President Maithripala Sirisena stands to attention while the students from all communities recite the national anthem in Sinhalese & Tamil. During the time of the previous government of Mahinda Rajapakse, the national anthem was sung in Sinhalese only at official ceremonies (Picture Courtesy: Sudath Malaweera, Sunday Observer)

Addressing a mammoth crowd on Sri Lanka's 69th Independence Day at the Galle Face Green, President Sirisena stated that the main focus of all communities should be political stability and development through a collective effort to rebuild Sri Lanka. "To achieve this task, ensuring religious coexistence and reconciliation is of utmost importance," he said, adding that the government is committed to achieve this goal.

The Nation celebrated its 69th Independence Day at the Galle Face Green in Colombo and the central theme for the celebrations was 'National Unity'

He called upon all politicians to set an example through good character and lead the way in the country's

development. "I believe all government officials will also act in a similar manner," he said. According to the President, various opportunistic elements with ulterior motives are attempting to derail the government's plans. "These elements are working against the best interests of our country," he said.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Speaker of Parliament Karu Jayasuriya, Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka, former First Lady Hema Premadasa, Government Ministers, Commanders of the Tri Forces, Inspector General of Police, Parliamentarians, Ambassadors and distinguished guests attended the celebrations.



The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi on Non-Violent Teachings for Inter-Ethnic and Religious Harmony

By Robert Hilton

Good evening. It is such a pleasure to join you tonight to discuss the legacy of civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. Thank you so much for participating in this important event.

I would like to thank our illustrious group of panelists for joining us this evening – Sonali, Saambavi, Yohan, and Asiff – the U.S. Embassy greatly appreciates you taking the time to share your perspectives. And a special thank you to Dr. Jehan Perera, Executive Director of the National Peace Council, for serving as moderator. Dr. Perera is widely known for his peace-building and advocacy efforts related to uniting communities throughout Sri Lanka.

On Monday, January 16, the United States celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. This U.S. federal holiday falls on the third Monday of every January, and is an opportunity for people to commemorate the values Dr. King taught through his example – values of courage, truth, justice, compassion, dignity, and service. U.S. President Ronald Reagan signed the legislation in 1983 to create a federal holiday honoring the life of Dr. King. In 1994, Congress designated the holiday as a national day of service, and many Americans use this time to serve their communities and promote the teachings of Dr. King through volunteer work.

Every year, the United States and

individuals around the world take time to pause and reflect on the extraordinary contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We do this not just to honor his legacy, but perhaps more importantly, to highlight how relevant his teachings are today. From an early age, Dr. King devoted his life to ensuring equal rights for African Americans and other minority groups. He fought against inequality and discrimination through nonviolent civil disobedience, often in the face of very violent and decidedly “uncivil” resistance. Through his courage, example, and work, he helped change American society and create new U.S. laws protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, gender, or creed.

Dr. King drew inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, who served as a pioneer of the nonviolent protest movement. Mahatma Gandhi dedicated his life to the peaceful empowerment of Indians of all backgrounds. He inspired hope and peace among many, and set a powerful example for future change-makers to follow. As we know, Gandhi and his methods of peaceful protest were instrumental in helping India achieve independence in 1947.

In 1959 when Dr. King was just 30 years old, he traveled to India for a month to study Gandhi’s philosophy and methods. He toured the country, met with leaders in politics and government, and talked with citizens and young people. He brought the lessons he learned back to the United States,



Photo caption: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Hilton delivering the speech at the event in Colombo – 18, January, 2017

renewing his faith in the unmatched moral force of nonviolent resistance and its ability to achieve social change.

Today, Gandhi and Dr. King continue to inspire people worldwide. Gandhi’s and King’s teachings on inter-ethnic and religious harmony are extremely relevant today, in both our countries, with our diverse religious and ethnic populations. We support the efforts in Sri Lanka to move towards a peaceful, reconciled, and unified country, where every citizen has a fair chance to build a better life. Where, to paraphrase Dr. King, children will live in a nation where they will be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin (or their ethnicity, their language, or their religion). This is no doubt a lofty goal for all of us, whether we live in America, Sri Lanka, or anywhere else, but certainly a goal worth pursuing. Today, through discussions such as this, and

through your work, you can help move your communities even closer to this objective.

Dr. King learned a great deal from Gandhi, and now we are learning from the legacy of both of these champions – to bring people together from all backgrounds, races, faiths, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. As Martin Luther King stated so eloquently, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Thank you so much for coming to this event at the American Center to listen to our esteemed panelists talking about what Gandhi and King’s teachings mean to them, and to hear their personal vision for reconciliation among diverse communities.

(Full Text of speech by Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy, Colombo Sri Lanka - Robert Hilton commemorating the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) (via: lk.usembassy.gov)

Northern Economy in Sri Lanka to be re-vitalized

By Siva Sivapragasam

Cement factory in Kankesanthurai, Chemical factory in Paranthan and Tile factory in Oddusuddan, to be re-started to re-vitalize Northern economy

Sixty-Five Indian Companies participating in the Jaffna International Trade Fair 2017

Sri Lankans living abroad, across Europe, the United States and Canada, to be invited to explore investment opportunities in the North

Sri Lanka’s Minister of Industry and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen has told the Hindu newspaper that the Government hoped to revitalize the northern economy by reviving old industries. “We want to restart the cement factory in Kankesanthurai, the chemical factory in Paranthan and the tile factory in Oddusuddan,” referring to manufacturing plants that once thrived in different parts of the Northern Province.

The Minister also stated that the aim is to create jobs and bring in investments and that his Ministry, in association with the Northern Provincial Council, will discuss the prospect of holding an investors’ forum in the north. “We will invite Sri Lankans living abroad, across Europe, the United States and Canada, to come and explore investment opportunities here,” he said.

Meanwhile, representatives of about 65 Indian companies, ranging from textiles to engineering, participated in the Jaffna International Trade Fair 2017 that commenced on January 27.

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) will explore the “virgin market” in Jaffna, located in Sri Lanka’s Tamil-majority Northern Province, for possible business collaborations and to help commercially rebuild the former war-zone, a representative of the trade body said.

Vinay Sharma, leading the visiting



business delegation, said that while many Indian businesses had associates and agents in Colombo in the island’s south, the market in the north was yet to be explored.

“We have now sought information from the Jaffna Chamber of Commerce on labour policies, land, taxation, and the availability of water and electricity here,” Mr. Sharma said. Some Indian companies may even consider acquir-

ing sick industries for revival, he said.

According to A. Natarajan, Consul General of India in Jaffna, India had been an active partner and supporter of the Jaffna Trade Fair since 2010. “Last year, over 50 companies that are part of the Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce participated in the event,” he said.

(Source & Picture Courtesy: *The Hindu*)



Chief Minister Vigneswaran tells “Monsoon Journal” financial and technological assistance very welcome from Sri Lankan expatriate community in Canada to re-build Northern Province

By Siva Sivapragasam

In an hour long conversation with me at the Hilton Suites in Markham, former Supreme Court Judge Viswalingam Vigneswaran now Sri Lanka’s Northern province Chief Minister covered a variety of issues and kept on stressing that financial and technological assistance is warmly welcome from Sri Lankan expatriate community in Canada and other countries to re-build the Northern Province

As cold winds blasted across the GTA and snow-banks were piling up across the city and outside the Markham Hilton Suites on a chilly winter morning, Chief Minister Vigneswaran and I had an hour long frank discussion on several issues beginning from our school days at Royal College to the now crucial issues facing Sri Lanka’s Northern province due to the fall-out of a thirty year old war and the ravages created by it on a peace loving community.

He admitted that several Sinhala leaders now accept the stark reality for a permanent settlement of the Tamil problem to take the country to the next level. He feels that more could be done to the Northern Province if more finance is allocated and external assistance is allowed without red-tape hindering any smooth flow of external funding.

He was full of praise for the Tamil Canadians who had left their country of origin and worked hard in the country of adoption where both the climate and culture were different. He stressed



the need for their support-both financial and technological assistance to re-build the Northern province. When I suggested the idea of an international investment and development bank for re-construction and development of the North, he welcomed the idea.

Mr. Vigneswaran was in Toronto to sign two bilateral agreements between the Northern Provincial Council and the cities of Markham and Brampton. During his visit he also addressed meetings and briefed the Canadian Tamil community about the various issues affecting the people in the Northern Province and measures taken by the Provincial Council in finding solutions to them. At these meetings, he called on the Tamil community in Canada to play an active role in the reconstruction and development of the Northern Province which had been badly affected by the thirty year old war.

At the end of our lively conversation, I asked my long-time friend whether he travels to Colombo often now. Vigneswaran smiled and responded as a parting shot, “No Siva, I am now a Jaffna man”.

“Detained suspects are easy targets for exploitation by others with political interest” - Sumanthiran

Sri Lanka Police has arrested four former cadres of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for allegedly plotting to assassinate the moderate Tamil National Alliance MP, M.A. Sumanthiran, in Marudankeni in Jaffna district, Sri Lanka North on January 13, according to media reports.

Reporting on the matter, The Indian Express Newspaper said: “Sumanthiran feels that they are not capable of doing things by themselves, but are



Global Tamil Forum unreservedly condemns the recent alleged attempt to harm Honourable Parliamentarian M A Sumanthiran in the North of Sri Lanka



Ambassador Atul Keshap and M.A. Sumanthiran

Tuesday, January 31, 2017

The Global Tamil Forum (GTF) is deeply shocked and horrified to hear the news of a plan to assassinate Honourable Member of Parliament Mr. M.A. Sumanthiran in Jaffna. GTF and diaspora Tamils are immensely relieved that the alleged plan failed and are grateful to all whose timely action helped preventing the dastardly act. We condemn those who planned this reprehensible attempt in the strongest possible terms, and call upon the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Mr. Sumanthiran plays a very important role in the post-2009 politics of the Tamil people, with immense efforts and sacrifice towards establishing accountability and justice in Sri Lanka and particularly for the Tamils. GTF and Diaspora Tamils are grateful for his courage, passion and commitment

to peacefully resolve the grievances of the Tamil people by adopting consensual approach, particularly through the constitutional process.

Violence in various forms has had a significant negative impact on Sri Lankan politics for well over six decades and has extorted a heavy toll on its people. GTF would like to reiterate that it is the responsibility of all the peoples and political leaders to ensure that violence from any quarters will never again be a part of the political landscape of Sri Lanka. (Full Text of press release via @gtfonline)

Ambassador Atul Keshap, The US Ambassador to Sri Lanka tweeted the following message and picture concerning this matter:

@USAmbKeshap: I appreciate the positive vision of @MASumanthiran for a reconciled, peaceful, democratic, multi-ethnic #SriLanka where violence has no place

tools in the hands of others. The suspicion now is that their handlers are known LTTE activists in Australia, Malaysia and France.

However, he does not rule out the hand of other agencies or groups in the plot, as investigations are still on. The Sri Lankan government had been aware of a threat to Sumanthiran’s life even during the parliamentary elections in August 2015. It had provided him with Special Task Force security. But Sumanthiran did not want an outward display of security which would

sully his public image.”

The Hindu newspaper said: “On the alleged link of the former LTTE cadre to the assassination plot, Mr. Sumanthiran said that most rehabilitated cadres were struggling to make a living.

“We too have asked the government to initiate a programme for livelihood assistance to them. In the absence of such support, they are easy targets for exploitation by people with political motives.”



Warning against rising intolerance, UN remembers Holocaust and condemns anti-Semitism

27 January 2017 – Decrying the anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust, the international community today remembered millions of people who suffered in the genocide and honoured the survivors who continue to educate future generations about the ills that hatred and discrimination can bring.

Calling the Holocaust “an unparalleled crime against humanity,” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said that “history keeps moving forward, but anti-Semitism keeps coming back.”

He noted that after the Holocaust, the world seemed eager to find a more cooperative path, which led to the creation of the United Nations with its Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention.

“Humankind dared to believe that tribal identities would diminish in importance. We were wrong,” the Secretary-General said. “Irrationality and intolerance are back.”

Addressing representatives from the 193 Member States gathered in the General Assembly Hall to mark the annual Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, Mr. Guterres said that today anti-Semitism continues, alongside racism, xenophobia, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance, triggered by populism and gaining ground in public discourse.

He voiced his extreme concern at the discrimination faced by immigrants, refugees and minorities across the world, particularly the stereotyping of Muslims, referring to how the Holocaust was allowed to spread: “Hardships and instability created fertile groups for scapegoating.”

Drawing attention to the powerful exhibit now at UN Headquarters called ‘State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda,’ he said propaganda helped erode the bonds of humanity. The word “Jewish” was used constantly in association with society’s ills. “Ultimately indifference prevailed, dehumanization took hold, and the descent into barbarity was quick,” he told those gathered at the ceremony, which this year focuses on educating for a better future.

History created lessons for our time, Mr. Guterres said, urging the international community to be vigilant, invest in education and youth, and to strengthen social cohesion “so that people feel that diversity is a plus, not a threat.”

In addition to remembering the survivors and victims of the Holocaust, 27 January was adopted by the General



Photo caption: Noah Klieger, keynote speaker and Holocaust survivor, addresses the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Assembly to condemn any denial of the Holocaust and to urge all Member States unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust.

The UN chief spoke personally about the history of Jews in his home country, Portugal, noting that anti-Semitism is “more than a question of religion, [it] is essentially an expression of racism.”

Mr. Guterres added proudly, his wife signed on behalf of the Lisbon Municipality, an agreement with the Israeli Community of Lisbon to establish the Lisbon Jewish Museum.

Today’s event in the General Assembly Hall started with recognition of the Holocaust survivors and Red Army veterans in attendance and a minute of silence for the millions of people killed in Europe in the years leading up to 1945. It featured soulful performances by Jewish singers and musicians, as well as a dramatic recitation of memorial prayers.

The ceremony also paid tribute to UN Messenger of Peace and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, who died last year.

The President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson, began his remarks by quoting Mr. Wiesel, asking: “How does one mourn for fix million people who died? How many candles does one light? How many prayers does one recite?”

Mr. Thomson called for a rededication “to learning the lessons of the past so that humanity may never repeat such atrocities in the future.”

He called for education to teach the dangers of extremism, the importance of defending the vulnerable, and the need to stand up against racism and prejudice.

“Interfaith dialogue, respect for human rights, and the embracing of democratic and humanist values at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are central responsibilities for us all,” Mr. Thomson said, in reference to the 17 targets aiming to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.

“Young people must be taught the ethics and logic inherent in defending our common humanity, of preventing mass atrocity crimes, and of bringing perpetrators to justice,” he added.

The keynote address was given by Noah Klieger. Born in 1926, Mr. Klieger, a survivor of Auschwitz, had founded a youth movement to help Jews cross the Swiss border and went on to become one of Israel’s most notable journalists. He is today allegedly the oldest working journalist in the world.

Mr. Klieger, who travelled from Israel to participate in the ceremony, took the podium to a standing ovation. His grandson, seating nearby, reminded Mr. Klieger to speak English, to which the Holocaust survivor replied good humouredly, “Why don’t you all learn Hebrew.”

Speaking about the Shoah, as the Holocaust is known in Hebrew, he talked about the last days of the war, when the Germans forced people from the Auschwitz camp to march to the border town of Gliwica.

“We had to march in a rhythm that nobody could keep. And those who could not keep the rhythm were shot. The roads were full of those who had been shot by DSS before they couldn’t make it. Others just laid down,” Mr. Klieger said, about the five-day death march that killed 41,000 by his esti-

mates.

In a speech peppered with jokes and poignant remembrances, Mr. Klieger recounted his days in the camp. He spoke about three dreams that he never thought would be possible; the first of which was to be free.

He praised the value of education and the creation of the Holocaust and the UN Outreach Programme to teach people around the world about what took place, but added that “one who has not lived through the German camps does not know about the German camps.”

He called for the creation of a teaching programme in all schools around the world so that the horrors of the Holocaust are not repeated and to counter anti-Semitism.

Among other speakers today was Danny Danon, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. Calling the Holocaust “the most devastating tragedy in history,” Mr. Danon said it was a failure “to recognize the warning signs of hatred and bigotry.”

The Ambassador called on the UN to appoint a special envoy to combat anti-semitism so that the international community “would never remain silent.”

“It is our duty to work together to prevent extremism and violence by promoting tolerance, understanding and compassion,” Mr. Danon said.

Before leaving the podium, the Ambassador vowed that “anti-Semitism would not defeat us.”

(un.org)



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1.15PM – 2.45PM	TIME MANAGEMENT & WORK LIFE BALANCE	STEVE PRENTICE CPA SPEAKER
2.45PM – 3.00PM	COFFEE BREAK	
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Premier of Ontario - Première ministre de l'Ontario

January 2017

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to members of the Tamil community on the occasion of Tamil Heritage Month.

Tamil Heritage Month is a time to celebrate and showcase the beauty, richness and vibrancy of Tamil culture. The Tamil Harvest Festival, Thai Pongal, takes place in January, along with many other Tamil cultural events.

This occasion is also a time to pay tribute to the Tamil community. In becoming an integral part of our multicultural success story, members of this dynamic community continue to help make Ontario even stronger. I am grateful for their many enduring contributions to the social, economic and cultural life of our province.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for a memorable and inspiring Tamil Heritage Month.

**Kathleen Wynne
Premier**



Premier of Ontario - Première ministre de l'Ontario

January 14, 2017

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to members of the Tamil community on the occasion of Thai Pongal, the Tamil harvest festival.

In Tamil communities across Ontario and throughout the world, this four-day festival is a time of great joy, time to gather with family, friends and neighbours to give thanks for blessings received.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Tamil community in Ontario. In becoming an integral part of our multicultural success story, members of this dynamic community continue to help make Ontario even stronger. I am grateful for their many enduring contributions to the social, economic and cultural life of our province.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for a memorable and joyful Thai Pongal.

**Kathleen Wynne
Premier**



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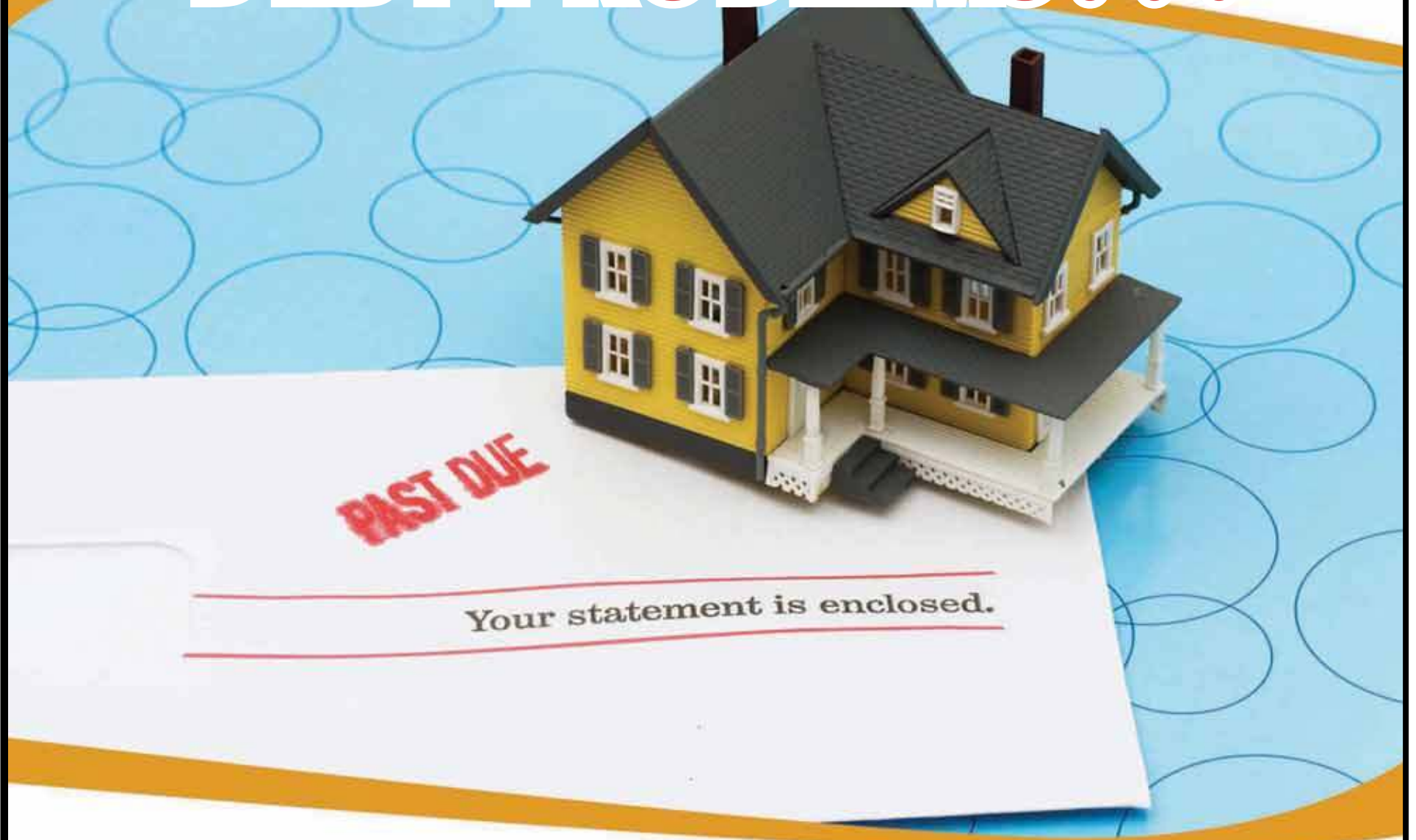
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ON BEHALF OF THE
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Best wishes for
Tamil Heritage
Month and happy
Thai Pongal



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sommelier-selected fine wines and beers along with modern twists on manhattans, G&T's, martinis, and more.

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Guests dancing along to the live band, Bellosound



Beautiful aerial shot of the 2016 Cuisine & Cuvée event



Scarborough and Rouge Hospital



Health & Care

MOTHER-DAUGHTER ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY TEAM DELIVERS OUTSTANDING CARE TO SCARBOROUGH FAMILIES



Dr. Christine Young (left) and Dr. Caroline Scott (right) with patient Harry Doan

When orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Caroline Scott examined Harry Doan's shoulder fracture-dislocation in the

emergency department (ED) at the Birchmount site last spring, she knew the complex injury required

immediate attention. To assist her with his care, she called her most trusted senior colleague: her mother, Dr. Christine Young.

Women make up a small percentage of orthopaedic surgeons across Canada and Scarborough and Rouge Hospital (SRH) orthopaedic surgeons Dr. Scott and Dr. Young are an even rarer mother-daughter surgeon team.

An orthopaedic surgeon since 1987, Dr. Young's rewarding career peaked her daughter's interest in medicine at an early age.

"When she was in grade nine, Caroline participated in the Take Your Kids to Work Day event at SRH, where she observed her mother in the operating room," recalls Sue Regan, child-life specialist at SRH, who organized the events.

"Caroline had always heard stories about her mom's work as a surgeon as she was growing up, but this was the first time that she was able to see it live right in front of her."

Both Dr. Young and Dr. Scott were trained at University of Toronto. Dr. Young completed a fellowship in upper extremity surgery, and Dr. Scott, a fellowship in lower extremity surgery and trauma, before joining SRH in August 2016.

And while the idea of working alongside a parent may not be for everyone, for these two dedicated physicians, it has truly been a mutually beneficial partnership.

"I encouraged Caroline to practice at SRH because of the diverse patients that we see and the incredible support she would receive from other physicians in our community," explained Dr. Young.

"Having just completed her training, Caroline brings a fresh perspective and new ways of practicing orthopaedic medicine, which encourages me to keep up with the latest advancements in the field."

Dr. Scott adds that she "could not ask for a better role model than my mother. I continue to learn from her. We are both focused on providing the Scarborough community with a great patient care experience."

Together, Dr. Young's extensive experience and Dr. Scott's recent training provide patients like Harry with a comprehensive and holistic approach.

A defense attorney for more than 45 years, Harry remarks that the "detailed care" he has received from Dr. Young and Dr. Scott, as well as the rest of the hospital staff, has helped him stay active in his career.

"I truly appreciate their compassion and their ability to put my mind at ease," he said.

For Dr. Young, Harry's comments are a reflection of the "family atmosphere" she has always felt at SRH. "I feel fortunate that my daughter and I are able to work together and be a part of this hospital," she said.

SRH's Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) reduces wait-time from over a year to less than a month

In addition, ACTT member awarded peer-nominated Spirit of ACTT award

The Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's (SRH) Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT)—which provides patient-centred, highly individualized treatment, support, and rehabilitation to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness—is proud to announce that it has reduced patient wait times from over a year to less than a month.

The success of SRH's ACTT is the result of an April 2016 quality improvement event led by Faiza Khalid-Khan, Patient Care Director, Mental Health, and Shawna Balasingham, Patient Care Manager, Mental Health, both for the Birchmount and General sites. The Mental Health department at SRH's Birchmount site worked with the Innovation and Performance Improvement office to review ACTT processes and develop standardized work. Any patient who requires an ACTT will now benefit from reduced wait times, regardless of which of Scarborough's three hospital sites they normally visit.

"This is a remarkable feat. For some ACTT programs, the wait can be substantially longer," said Joanne Fracassi, Team Lead for

SRH's ACTT. "At SRH, the wait time is now under a month, which we achieved by assisting patients with their recovery-focused goals and creating flow within our internal systems."

The improvement stems from recommendations that developed from the Central East Local Health Integration Network's (Central East LHIN) ACTT Together quality improvement initiative. One of the primary goals from this initiative was to increase the capacity of the ACTTs by implementing a stepped care model. Although this allowed for an increase of new patients being admitted into ACTTs, concerns regarding patient flow remained.

"At SRH, the team has created a flow for these patients to be discharged from the ACTT program once the patient achieves specific goals," said Dr. Hoa Phuc Nguyen, ACTT Psychiatrist.

SRH's ACTT reviews patient progress every six months and works with patients to update their goals twice a year, using a standardized scale. The quality improvement event at SRH focused not only on standardizing work, but also on

encouraging staff to challenge past notions that ACTT patients cannot be successfully discharged from the ACTT program.

As a result, patients are progressing through the program more quickly, freeing up space to accept new patients into the program.

"But their care doesn't end there," added Dr. Nguyen. "After completing the ACTT program, patients are transitioned directly to the SRH Case Management Program, and finally, to the Adult Outpatient Program for a truly 'recovery-focused' approach. This transition process is also unique to ACTTs in Ontario."

Since the quality improvement event, SRH has discharged six patients—more than 50 per cent of all ACTT discharges in the Central East LHIN. The majority of patients who have been discharged from ACTT have transitioned successfully to the Adult Outpatient program, where they follow up with their psychiatrist once every few months. Increased communication between the psychiatrist and patient's general practitioner has also been established, for a truly collaborative approach.

Spirit of ACTT Award

SRH's ACTT is distinguished by its interprofessional team approach and for providing treatment in the community. The team is excited to congratulate Steve Tong, SRH's ACTT Vocational Specialist, on recently receiving the Spirit of ACTT Award, presented by the Ontario ACT Association.

Steve was nominated by his peers in the 80 ACTT programs across Ontario. This award is presented to one frontline staff member, "who through their work has embodied the spirit, vision and goals of Assertive Community Treatment."

"I'm very pleased and deeply honoured to have received this award from my provincial peers," said Steve. "There are many people who work on Assertive Community Treatment Teams who deserve the same recognition for their great, intensive caring and creative work in helping their patients reach their recovery goals. We do truly believe in this model of service and the re-integrative results it provides its patients."

For more information on SRH's ACTT program, visit www.tsh.to/actt.

Passion for hospital goes to top of the world



Javid Khan at the Canadian Tire Brave T.O. event on September 24, 2016

Foundation Board Member, Javid Khan, to scale Mount Kilimanjaro in support of hospital's

maternal newborn and child care program

Javid Khan is a man who sets big goals. His life resume is proofenough with many accomplishments, but his next journey – to scale the highest mountain in Africa – could topthem all.

Khan explains that whilehis journey is partly driven by the urge to overcome a monumental task, as a member of the foundation Board of Directors for Scarborough and Rouge Hospital, it is the passion for hiscommunity hospital that is his real motivation.

“It came to my mind that this could be more than just my own adventure, and that the noble thing would be to make this climb up Mount Kilimanjaro a charitable effort as well,” he said.

Born and raised in Kenya to Pakistani parents, he sees the journey as a chance to return to his roots, while also an opportunity to draw attention to the need to support health care here in his adopted home of Canada, and Scarborough specifically.

Past the age of 60, he faced questions from his family in deciding to do this.

“We are human, so no matter how we plan, our plans are all in the hands of Allah,” he told them. “Next year, I might not be able to do it; but right now, I am mentally and physically prepared.”

The hospital's maternalnewborn and child care programand themidwifery services are the focus of his fundraising efforts for the climb. The program has a number of needs, and support for Khan's climb could be used in different areas, such as for the purchase of baby warmers, to expand the midwifery program, and for equipment to support more complex cases in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Khan's reasoning for supporting this particular programis“to support women who are making important decisions for their health care, and the health care of their children.”

“I feel it is important to respect the rights of women; this was on my mind when I made that choice,” he said. “And, at Scarborough and Rouge Hospital, life begins in good hands!”

He made the decision to climb

Kilimanjaro this past November. Having taken part in the first ever Canadian Tire Brave T.O. event in September 2016, he was inspired by the dedication of first responders, after tackling the five-kilometre obstacle course and completing it. Since then, he's increased his exercise regimen and will continue the workouts leading up to his trip.

“I think I am ready,” he said. “My training has included 20 kilometres on the stationary bike every other day and also 45 minutes on the treadmill each day.”

Khan will begin his seven-day expedition to climb Mount Kilimanjaro on March 7, 2017.

If you are reading this and thinking, “I would love to do that!”, then consider this: Khan is interested in finding a partner or two for the trip, and is encouraging anyone interested in exploring the idea of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to contact him. Email javaid.ali@sympatico.ca to connect and discuss the possibility. You can also visit Khan's fundraising page at www.tshfoundation.ca to make a secure online donation and support him in this incredible journey.

SCARBOROUGH AND ROUGE HOSPITAL ANNOUNCES ENHANCED 24/7 COMMUNITY CRISIS SUPPORT

INCREASED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE MADE POSSIBLE BY \$500,000 IN CENTRAL EAST LHIN FUNDING

Sadness. Hopelessness. Anxiety. These are just some of the symptoms that may prompt someone to call Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's (SRH) Regional Community Crisis Program, a telephone crisis support line and crisis support team.

Now, thanks to half a million dollars from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN), individuals who call the crisis line (at 416-495-2891) will be able to immediately speak with a dedicated professional crisis worker, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many other crisis services provide supportive counselling and crisis de-escalation over the phone, however, SRH's newly expanded program offers much more: evidence-based psychotherapy sessions by phone and the inclusion of brief e-therapies to augment these telephone sessions.

“This funding support is enabling us to not only increase access to mental health care for patients in distress, but to provide a unique service that incorporates the most current and evidence-based interventions,” said Faiza Khalid-Khan, patient care director, Mental Health, Birchmount

and General sites. “A round-the-clock telephone crisis service with enhanced features is a meaningful gain for members of the Scarborough and East York communities who may need immediate crisis assistance outside of regular business hours. We also invested in a robust staff education program to refresh and build upon skills required to provide these additional interventions.”

Led by Khalid-Khan and Shawna Balasingham, patient care manager, Mental Health, Birchmount and General sites, the Community Crisis Program was designed with quality improvement and patient-centred care in mind, and incorporates input from patient advisors and the hospital's Innovation and Performance Improvement office.

The team worked diligently to design standard work that would ensure the level of care matched the patient's level of need. One of the ways this is accomplished is through the use of a standardized crisis triage rating scale (CTRS), which helps to ensure consistency and reduces clinical variation. Through the CTRS, which is used during the patient's initial call to

the crisis line, the crisis worker can determine if the patient requires:

- ♥ An e-module that reviews de-escalation techniques and provides links to breathing exercises, as well as a crisis plan;
- ♥ Further telephone support (one to two evidence-based psychotherapy sessions that use concepts of cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, and dialectical behavioural therapy);
- ♥ A home visit (reserved for those patients whose burden of illness is so high that their functioning has greatly deteriorated and they are unable to leave their homes); and/or
- ♥ Immediate psychiatric care and medication due to a great decline in functioning.

Most callers to a typical crisis line receive supportive counselling to de-escalate their situational crisis, but due to access barriers, it is difficult for them to get connected to follow-up care where they learn

to develop the coping skills needed to reduce distress. Many don't even meet the eligibility criteria to access outpatient mental health care – concerns that have been voiced by family practitioners in the community. SRH's Community Crisis Program is unique in that it uses short-term psychological interventions to equip callers who don't meet the requirements for outpatient follow-up with the tools to work through their feelings of distress moving forward.

“We're expecting that these strategies will help to keep patients well in the community, and reduce visits to the Emergency department,” said Balasingham. “We also expect this expanded service to support family practitioners who carry a caseload of patients experiencing higher levels of distress.”

The Mental Health team will continue to monitor patient outcomes and data to ensure the program is delivering high-quality, patient-centred care.

For more information on crisis support available at SRH's Birchmount and General sites, please visit www.tsh.to/areas-of-care/mental-health/regional-crisis-programs/.



by Raymond Rajabalan

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is an annual holiday celebrated on February 14. It originated as a Western Christian liturgical feast day honoring one or more early saints named Valentinus, and is recognized as a significant cultural and commercial celebration in many regions around the world.

Several martyrdom stories associated with the various Valentines that were connected to February 14 were added to later martyrologies, including a popular hagiographical account of Saint Valentine of Rome which indicated he was imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry and for ministering to Christians, who were persecuted under the Roman Empire. According to legend, during his imprisonment, Saint Valentine healed the daughter of his jailer, Asterius, and before his execution, he wrote her a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell.

The day first became associated with romantic love within the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. In 18th-century England, it evolved into an occasion in which lovers expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confec-

tionery, and sending greeting cards

Numerous early Christian martyrs were named Valentine. The Valentines honoured on February 14 are Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni. Valentine of Rome was a priest in Rome who was martyred in 269 and was added to the calendar of saints by Pope Galesius in 496. Valentine of Terni became bishop of Interamna (modern Terni) and is said to have been martyred during the persecution under Emperor Aurelian in 273. The Catholic Encyclopedia also speaks of a third saint named Valentine who was mentioned in early martyrologies under date of February 14. He was martyred in Africa with a number of companions, but nothing more is known about him.

Folk traditions

While the European folk traditions connected with Saint Valentine and St. Valentine's Day have become marginalized by the modern Anglo-American customs connecting the day with romantic love, there are some remaining associations connecting the saint with the advent of spring.

While the custom of sending cards, flowers, chocolates and other gifts originated in the UK, Valentine's Day still remains connected with various regional customs in England.

Valentine Poetry

Valentine's Day is mentioned ruefully by Ophelia in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1600–1601):

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,

All in the morning be time,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,

And dupp'd the chamber-door;

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene 5

The modern cliché Valentine's Day poem can be found in the collection of English nursery rhymes Gammer Gurton's Garland (1784):

The rose is red, the violet's blue,

The honey's sweet, and so are you.

Thou art my love and I am thine;

I drew thee to my Valentine:

The lot was cast and then I drew,

And Fortune said it shou'd be you.

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wishes our Readers, Advertisers,
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a very

Happy Valentine's Day

Tuesday, February 14



Community Involvement



by **Andrea Shanmugarajah**

In high school, the importance of community involvement is constantly stressed. Students are urged to find way to participate in community activities, and in fact, are required to complete volunteer hours in order to graduate. As a result, students find a variety of ways to be engaged in community activities – they volunteer at hospitals, churches, food drives and libraries. They hold fundraisers, create petitions and attend rallies. All in all, it is very much a time of doing – with time and energy at their disposal, there are no limits to what they can do. While this fascination with being connected to something larger than oneself remains to an extent even beyond those years, it is not unusual to see people's community engagement slow to a stop as time goes on. This, of course, is not surprising – as people settle down into busier, more demanding lives that involve balancing work, family and fun, it can be difficult to find time to remain involved in community endeavors.

However, interestingly, as the time of flurried busyness in middle age comes to an end, it is not unusual for people to find themselves wanting to

once again participate socially within the community. But, some may find it difficult to find ways to become engaged within the community, believing that their participation, at their age, is either unwanted or unnecessary. This, however, could not be farther from the truth. A community is made up of people of all ages and backgrounds, and it is this diversity that allows it to function and thrive. Thus, having a variety of perspectives and knowledge bases involved in community engagement can improve the workings of the entire system. Of course, the benefits are bidirectional – as you do work that benefits your community, you are also benefiting from the feelings of inclusion that comes with involvement.

Making the transition from activities you used to enjoy to things you might enjoy now can be challenging. However, the wonderful thing is that communities are so accommodating and diverse that there are an endless number of ways one can get involved. This means that, as you try to navigate through the various opportunities that are available in your own community, you can try a number of new or old things, until you find what you are best suited for. The chances to be

part of a community group are endless, and there is undoubtedly a perfect fit for anyone, that can encapsulate their ability and interests. These range from volunteer activities, like helping out at food banks or animal shelters, to advocacy initiatives. As well, more importantly, these opportunities can involve a range of time commitments, ability levels and responsibility – this means that you will be able to find an undertaking that best suits your needs.

Being involved in the community can seem daunting – especially if it is something that you haven't done in awhile, or even have never done at all. But, that is no reason to not even give it a try. After all, the benefits that come from community involvement are endless. First of all, you will attain a sense of accomplishment and pride, knowing that you are working towards improving your community and making a positive change. You will be meeting needs within the community, and filling gaps to make your community a better place. But also, you will benefit personally, as your social circle and your feelings of inclusiveness grow. Being part of a community, and engaging in something that feels more powerful than yourself, can have enormous positive

impacts on your health and well-being. So, I urge you to make yourself aware of the countless groups, activities and events that are happening within your community. Find ways that you can be involved, decide what interests you, and pursue community engagement. You will doubtless see that it will help you lead a fuller, more satisfactory life.

Andrea Shanmugarajah

Andrea Shanmugarajah is a student at McMaster University, where she is currently studying Medicine. She is involved with the senior community in Toronto, which she became interested in due to her own personal experiences with her grandmother. She hopes to eventually pursue a career in geriatrics, whereby she can help and advocate for the elderly on a daily basis.



Andrea hopes to educate others about the struggles that many elderly people may face in Toronto, and how people of all ages can work towards making the community a more accepting and compassionate place for seniors.



WORDS OF PEACE

The Perfect Job



People often judge themselves and others by their jobs. When we're introduced to someone, we're often asked, "What do you do?" Parents urge their children to study hard so they can "make something of themselves."

Prem Rawat has a more inclusive perspective about the purpose of a human being—every human being. He's spent most of his life traveling the world to speak to audiences large and small about the possibility of finding peace and joy in life. He does not discriminate between rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. He brings the same message to heads of state and to people serving life sentences in prison: Who are you? Job title: Human being. Job description: Living in peace and harmony.

"One thing I've observed," Mr. Rawat says, "is that everything in nature has a job. Little ants have a role to play. They have a job, and they get to live. In nature, if something is not employed, it dies, it disappears. It's

just history. All the dinosaurs were fired. They were not needed anymore.

"Yet when it comes to human beings, do they have a job? Are they employed or unemployed? It's an interesting question. I haven't answered that one yet, but I am coming to a conclusion that they're unemployed."

Something as simple as a blade of grass, Mr. Rawat says, has successfully survived on Earth for billions of years longer than human beings—why? Because in all that time, it has not wasted a single opportunity, achieving efficiency, getting the most from the least.

"Mankind has gone the other way," he says. "While the grass and the trees, the fish and the birds learned efficiency, human beings have learned how to be more and more inefficient in everything they do."

The highest achievement of a perfect human being, Mr. Rawat says, "would be to be in peace—to understand and nurture what we can, instead of taking and taking. That is

not the trait of a pure human being. It would never work in nature.

"What can we achieve as that pure human being? We can achieve peace, if that's what we choose—but we have to choose. We have to choose that peace. We have to choose that joy. Is there any limit to how much joy there is? Is there any limit to how much peace there is? No, but we have to choose it."

Right now, Mr. Rawat says, most people feel trapped because they believe they don't have a choice.

"I'm here to say that, yes, we do," he says. "We have a choice, and we must choose. Every human being can choose what it is that we want in life. That's incredible empowerment."

We live in a world, Mr. Rawat says, where everything we do has a consequence. "Everybody wonders why they have all these problems," he says. "Do you choose to live in peace, or do you choose to live with your problems? Is this the kind of life you want?"

"Choose wisely - choose clarity,

choose peace, choose wisdom, choose understanding in your life."

To us, Mr. Rawat says, rain may be inconvenient, but "to that blade of grass it's a blessing. This is what it's been waiting for, and when it's here, it wastes no time in turning green. The next time you walk on that grass, think about stepping on something much wiser than yourself, because you're not as efficient as that little blade of grass.

"Be efficient. This breath that just came in: How can I best use it? What can I do? What can I be? How can I receive this blessing—truly receive it, as a recipient of the fullest of the blessings that we are given every single day, every single moment?"

"Open your eyes. See the beautiful drama that is taking place, and dance. Dance to celebrate life."

To learn more about Prem Rawat :

1 877 707 3221

416 431 5000 Tamil

416 264 7700 Hindi

www.wopg.org | www.tprf.org

www.premrawat.com



Rocket Writing



By: Janani Srikantha

Throughout my years in the classroom, I have always incorporated Rocket Writing. Now, that I help students outside of their school, I've noticed that when they are asked to write, there is apprehension.

What is Rocket Writing? It is when I set aside five minutes for the students to just write. There are no rules. It's a time when the ideas can come tumbling out on the paper. They don't need to check their sentence fluency. They don't need to check for spelling and grammar. It doesn't need to be in organized paragraphs with topic and concluding sentences. There doesn't need to be a thesis statement. There can be words crossed out. It's a time where ideas spawn which may develop fully within five minutes, or they may not. And, it doesn't matter if the ideas don't fully develop at that moment in time. It's complete freedom to let out their thoughts and ideas on a page.

I explain the concept of Rocket Writing, and the students are excited that there are no rules. Then, we start. This is where the problem begins. They look at their blank page. They start a sentence and then immediately grab an eraser.

When I say they can just cross out what they do not want and keep writing, they look at me aghast. They reply, "But, then the page will be messy."

I provide a prompt to help begin the process, and they ask if their idea is correct. When did we teach children that their creative ideas can be wrong?

In our pursuit of having the "A+" essay and assessing everything with a strict rubric, have we taken out the creativity? By saying that the letters need to be straight and the words be perfectly formed, have we made writing a chore? Have we removed the fun of just writing - writing to explore your ideas - writing to formulate thoughts without worry of judgement?

Now, I set aside the beginning few minutes of every class for Rocket Writing. As students increasingly Rocket Write, they soon overcome the apprehension associated with "being right". They realize that it's okay to just let their ideas flow. And, one idea can lead to another idea. With this practice, when we work on other activities such math problems and science inquiries, I've noticed that they are less inhibited in exploring their ideas. They will create and try out different strategies, because they've gotten over the hurdle of "What if my idea is wrong?"

When I see students cross out their words and write other words next to it, I smile. While Rocket Writing, when I see students draw arrows from one sentence to another, I smile. They are engaging in higher-level thinking without being assessed on it. They are evaluating their ideas and creating new ones, without even realizing it.

After every four Rocket Writing sessions, I ask each student to choose one of their pieces. It is completely their choice, and their reason for choosing it can be totally their own. We take their chosen piece of writing and use it as anchor text to practice editing. Now that all their ideas have come out, let's do some organizing of sentences. Soon students realize that the more Rocket Writing they've done, the degree of editing required lessens. Over time, they naturally increase their writing fluency. The no-rules writing still counts as practice. As with any practice, the skill improves. This is true of writing, as well. The students are always surprised when they look back at their pieces, because they never thought of Rocket Writing as work. It was never a task with a list of instructions and an assessment rubric. It was just a time when they could take their thoughts and put it on paper. No rules, no judge-

ment.

Writing frequently for five minutes, with no restrictions, is letting students be better writers and thinkers. When students show growth in their skills, while having fun, I believe they are truly learning.

Janani Srikantha is a certified teacher who is experienced with the Ontario curriculum and the International Baccalaureate. She provides academic support using personalized learning plans based on students' needs. She is currently completing her graduate



 thinkshif.edu

studies to further understand how the integration to technology is redefining how a student learns. The education landscape is changing, and she helps parents and families to engage their child in learning. Janani has led workshops for educators and parents on topics that address different facets of education. For more information or queries on how to help your child with learning, please email info@thinkshif.edu or visit Thinkshift Edu on Facebook.



Valluvar's Views

Compassion



Pic - wonderinspirit.files.wordpress

By: JJ Aputharajah

The best of all possessions is the wealth of compassion; as the meanest of men too possess worldly wealth. Compassion towards others is given high priority by great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Albert Schweitzer. The search for the path of virtue, cutting across all religious and moral teachings will lead to spiritual deliverance,

through compassion.

In the Sermon of the Mount, mercy or compassion was stressed by Christ as a primary cardinal virtue. The parable of the Good Samaritan also emphasizes the importance of compassion. Men whose hearts are overflowing with gentle compassion will never have the fear of hell. People who shower compassion upon others with their

acts of kindness will not be approached by besetting sins that endanger the soul. The world is witness to the fact that those who practice compassion will never be subjected to suffering. Men who indulge in acts of unkindness will lose all means of reaching heaven.

“arul illarkku av ulagam illai, porul illarkku iv ulakam illai”:- The happiness in the world

depends wholly on material possessions; happiness in the world beyond depends on compassion. It is easy to see that understanding is essential for acquiring knowledge; but it not easy to see that compassion is essential for goodness. One who tends to become cruel to those under his control, should think of himself trembling before stronger men.

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries- without them humanity cannot survive.”

(Kural: 241-250.)



TEN

Her Journey

By: Janani Srikantha, TEN Women – (Tamil Entrepreneurial Network for Women)

As many of us finish our education, we are awaiting the start of our adult life. Luksimi Sivaneswaralingam, however, never let her young age stop her from going after dreams. At the age of eight, she was introduced to film songs where she entered Isai Kuyil as a contestant. Since then, she has completed several competitions both in Toronto and internationally. In 2006, Luksimi was awarded the title of IBC Innisai Kural and in 2014 she was part of the Super Star Challenge in Singapore. Throughout her teenage years, she performed with Vaanampaadikal and has sung for several albums including the title song for the film Appa. Recently, she debuted as a playback singer for director D. Imman, where she sang Senthooora in the film Bogan. After graduating from the University of Toronto's Music - Voice Performance program, she began giving lessons to students of all ages. Luksimi is currently a post-graduate student at Wilfred Laurier University, where she is specializing in music education.

Music is not only passion and drive for Luksimi, but it is also a journey. As with any journey, there are highlights and challenges where perseverance matters. The successes of debuting on film sound tracks wasn't just easily handed over. When Luksimi started performing and entering contests, she had her heart set on winning every competition. Although her many victories at such a young age was encouragement, there were also several losses that led to some self-doubt. As like most other children, winning is what seemed important and the failures started to create some insecurity and confidence issues. Luksimi started developing a fear that she wouldn't be able to achieve her dreams and goals. It was her parents and teacher who reminded her of strengths and many more victories than the failures – and that kept her going. With every attempt, music became a

passion, and she became her own driving force.

The key to Luksimi's growth in music is due to her teacher's foresight to expose her to a variety of rich musical experiences and music genres. The exposure to the diverse experiences planted the fundamental seeds of music, and soon Luksimi was being recognized for her passion, talent, and love of music.

Being a South Asian female and the eldest child of her family, Luksimi faced many questions from the community when she decided to pursue music as a career. She was the target of many queries and comments that disapproved of music as a successful career, and doubted her willpower and talent to be a musician. Luksimi used these comments as fuel to practice day and night to achieve her goals. Even after entering the Faculty of Music at University of Toronto, her path was not easy as she was the only South Asian student in the program. Luksimi felt judged and insecure as she did not understand why she had to choose between Western and Indian music, which was a question that was often posed. Luksimi wanted to express that it was her Western music training that helped her while singing Indian songs, and that she loved both. Throughout her education, Luksimi is grateful that her family did not hesitate when she chose music as a career. Instead, they supported her, without judgment, as she strived to meet each of her goals.

Even after seeing success, Luksimi knows that further growth requires several sacrifices, which includes not being able to spend all the time she wants with family and friends. Each day is filled with the commitment to be present and focused at rehearsals, classes, and shows. Also, with success comes feedback which is not always positive. Luksimi learned to be open to critical, constructive, and sometimes hurtful comments.



Although Luksimi has many accolades, there are still times when she doubts her talent, and it takes deep, objective self-evaluation of her performance to understand her strengths and where she can grow. It is through the feedback and reflections that she continues to learn and develop herself. Over time Luksimi has learnt that success is not equivalent to winning. It is about the process, patience, and the focus you have to stay committed to your ambitions and your chosen path.

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Tamil Heritage Month

Speech delivered by Siva Sivapragasam at CTCC quarterly Meeting

Mr. President, Members of the CTCC Board, Ladies and Gentlemen.....

Bharathiyar's dream becomes a reality

Long years ago, one of our famous and legendary Tamil poets - Subramania Bharathiyar, had a dream. A dream that has now become a reality in Canada.

Bharathiyar's dream was to see Tamil as one of the languages spread all over the world. In one of his lyrics, Bharathiyar wrote "The-mathura Thamir Osai ulahamellam paravum varai seithal vendum". Translated, it means, Tamil should be spread all over the world.

Bharathiyar's dream is now taking shape in one of the world's capitals – namely, Toronto, where the month of January is being declared as the Tamil Heritage month by statute – a bill passed in Parliament. This is a reflection of how The Tamil-Canadian community, their language and culture are beginning to be recognized in a multi national mosaic framework and a shining example of how Canada is made stronger through its cultural diversity depicting one hundred and sixty different languages and communities.

January recognized as Tamil Heritage month in Canada

The Tamil language is considered as one of the oldest living languages in the world, and we are enriched by Tamil-Canadian contributions to every aspect of our society—arts and culture in particular. We also now know that the prestigious Harvard University in Boston is making arrangements to open a Chair for Tamil language and studies and funding is being sought to make this project successful.

Tamil Heritage Month was nationally recognized in October 2016, when the House of Commons voted unanimously to recognize every January as Tamil Heritage Month. January was chosen as it coincides with one of the most important celebrations for Canadians of Tamil heritage -the Thai Pongal harvest festival. The bill passed in Parliament will "recognize the contributions that Tamil-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the Tamil language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations by declaring January every year as Tamil Heritage Month." The very fact that the motion received support from all parties in the legislature was an indication of the special place that the community has among the people, parliamentarians from all major political parties who spoke and extolled the contributions made by Tamil Canadians to the growth of Canada in various aspects.

The CTCC is proud that one of its former Presidents, Federal MP Gary Anandasangaree initiated the passage of this historic bill in Parliament. We thank him for that and offer our felicitations to him.

As Canada officially declares pride in its Tamils, we would like to take this time to celebrate, reflect and recognize the contributions various Tamil organizations have made to Canadian society.

CTCC's contribution towards the community

We are equally proud that one such organization that has contributed towards the community and the Canadian Society by promoting Tamil businesses and commerce, is the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce.

It is therefore relevant here during the

January Tamil Heritage month to note how the CTCC has also in its own way contributed to the community and to the Canadian Society.

To trace back the pages of our history in Canada, the settlement of Sri Lankan Tamils in our country of adoption can be conveniently divided into two periods-The period prior to 1983 and the post 1983 era.

Tamil migration to Canada

The period prior to 1983 did not see a large number of Tamils coming into Canada. Most of those who came during this period arrived here to pursue higher studies or for professional purposes. Most of them were engaged in either government or private sector occupations. A few of them did venture into entrepreneurship.

It was the post 1983 period that saw a steady influx of Sri Lankan Tamils migrating into Canada propelled by the unsettled conditions, the escalating civil war in their motherland and the absence of a level playing field for our community in our land of origin.

Over the last twenty-five year period, it is estimated that the Canadian Sri Lankan Tamil population has swelled to more than 300,000 and expected to cross the half-a-million mark over the coming years.

The rising trend in the settlement of Sri Lankan Tamils in Canada and more specifically in Toronto gave rise to the emergence of an embryonic Business community, many of whom were attracted to free enterprise by establishing their own businesses, partly due to the lack of viable employment opportunities as they lacked Canadian experience, and more so to respond to the growing and distinct needs of the Tamil community.

The Business community has since slowly and steadily grown to reach a number exceeding 1,000 businesses in different fields of economic activity. This number is apart from the hundreds in the professional categories such as Doctors, Dentists Lawyers Accountants, Bankers, Real Estate and Mortgage Agents etc. who run their own professional services.

You can therefore see how the Tamil business community has helped the community at large to become better known in the country through their activities and contributions to the community – one such contribution is the valuable over \$250,000 dollars contribution made to the Scarborough Hospital Foundation through the Annual Walkathons.

Finally, one suggestion that President Ajith, Director Membership Kubesh and I have shared.

Documenting the Chamber's history

We need to document the history of the Chamber since its inception and the variety of activities the organization has been engaged over the past 25 years which had helped to promote Tamil businesses in Canada, through a voluminous and attractive publication which can be stored as a historical publication. The proposed publication will serve as an ideal marketing tool to increase Chamber membership, to take the Chamber to the corporate level, among Government agencies and the main stream business world so that the Chamber will become better known as a reputed and recognized organization representing the Canadian Tamil business community. I sincerely hope the Chamber Board will give serious thought to this suggestion.

Thank You for your patience.



Siva Sivapragasam, Executive Editor of "Monsoon Journal" delivering a speech on Tamil Heritage month in Canada



Shalini Sathya, VP Internal Affairs conducting the proceedings of the meeting



President Ajith Sabaratnam & Executive Vice-President Ravi Kanagasabai



Royal Bank Branch Manager Mohan Sundaramohan & other officials of the Bank



Rahulana Sana, Dilani Gunarajah and President Ajith Sabaratnam



Members at the meeting



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AN INNOCENT VICTIM'S DREAM

C. Kamalaharan



Beside the heap of debris he lay
Unclaimed by anyone along the way
Baked in the sun the whole day
As though to karma he has to pay

He accidentally went astray
Along forbidden pathway
And became an easy prey
To face the bullets' spray

He lay mutilated and bare
Without anyone to care
Cos there were none to dare
As he lay in the open air

Chances of escape being bleak
His body too seems weak
His voice tends to squeak
As he attempts to speak

His thoughts revolve around his mate
Whose plight seems a twist of fate
His kids have no options but to wait
As he lay in a helpless state

In dream he was in a fantasy land
Where his mate and kids appeared grand
They warmly hugged and kissed his hand
As tears from eyes dripped in the sand

The only sound he did hear
As he lay trembling in fear
Is the sound from the frontier
As men in jubilation sing and jeer

As the advancing sound nears
He hears the men's cheers
Thoroughly shaken with fears
His eyes brim with tears

He did not hear the rifle shoots
Nor felt the kick of boots
For, death hath whisked him away
Leaving his body to decay

Having seen the body stilled
They confirmed him already killed
And moved away very much thrilled
After their mission fulfilled

Such is the situation that prevails everywhere
When innocent victims are caught unaware
They lose hope and driven to despair
Having nothing left to acquire



THE STORY OF RAVANA & MANDODARI: GIVING WOMANKIND THEIR SAY

BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM



Mandodari & Ravana 2016

Victors it is said, write history. India might have its version(s) of the Ramayana but over in Sri Lanka, Ravana remains a tragic and misunderstood Hero. A hero to this day loved and mourned by his people.

His tale continues to be enacted and re-enacted via drama and theatre in the Serendib isle. One of the foremost artistes of the isle to keep on studying and revising Ravana's character and story as he gains new insights on them, is Professor S. Maunaguru – an authority on Sri Lankan Tamil drama and theatre.

Professor Maunaguru was a youth of 22 when he first wrote a now iconic play in Sri Lanka called *Ravanesan*, produced and staged by his mentor Professor S. Vithiyananthan. He also acted the main character of Ravana in the staged play, back in 1965. Now a retired academic and veteran artiste of 73, Professor Maunaguru has rewritten and re-staged his play many times over, most

recently in November 2016 during a countrywide reconciliation festival between the war-torn North and South of Sri Lanka.

There was a time in Sri Lanka's recent history he reminisces, when theatre artistes could not portray contemporary life without threat to their lives. Southern artistes faced the same kind of restriction but for their fellow artistes in the North and East, the threat was double. Neither the Sri Lankan government nor the LTTE were open to criticism, and contemporary life being full of war and chaos caused by both, could not be well-reflected in the arts unless one was willing to risk one's life.

"Many of my colleagues and friends left the country and urged me to do the same but I preferred to stay on in Sri Lanka, even with its constraints rather than be free in exile. My consuming passion was theatre and the different art forms of Sri Lanka and I couldn't contemplate a life without it. Since times had changed to such an extent that I could not be a modern artist depicting contemporary situations, I turned to exclusively researching indigenous art and producing only mythical / historical productions. Which as in the case of *Ravanesan* could still land me in trouble," he says.

As the professor himself evolved as an academic and artiste, he gained new insights about his main hero, which he infused into his character's interpretation in the script.

"I heavily re-edited *Ravanesan* for a Year 2000 production; with insight as an older man, I tried to portray Ravana as a more human character. Rather than the usual arrogant portrayal, I depicted him as someone who brashly



Indrajith, 2016

entered war, realized it was a mistake but was too proud to back out. The next thing I knew, I was getting angry calls based on some interesting and innovative interpretations of my meaning in the play. I had a lot of trouble defending myself against inferences in the contemporary context which I still don't want to talk about."

He might have chosen to stick to ancient, mythical lore rather than focus on contemporary stories – but a good artist will always elicit feelings of connectivity in the audience. To an audience undergoing a contemporary war, the enactment of an ancient mythical war upheld many parallels they could relate to.

Women's perspective

In Sri Lanka both during war and post-war, the women have been terribly affected in diverse ways, yet their perspectives; their fears and pain, do not find much scope for expression in mainstream media or the arts. From the time of Ravana to the times of Prabhakaran / Rajapakse, the tale remains mainly that of men and their triumphs and losses.

"Whether it was the story of Draupadi in the Mahabharatha, Helen in the Illiyad or Sita in the



Ravanesan 2016



Mandodari lamenting over Indrajith's body



Mandodari enacted by Lavanya 2012



Rama & Ravana meet



Professor Maunaguru and theatre students

Ramayana, men simply used the women as props to raise the tale of their own valour," explains Professor Maunaguru.

What happens though when one of these male artistic storytellers has a feminist wife? We don't know about Valmiki, Homer and Kamban but in the case of Professor Maunaguru, he had to re-write his script. Professor Chitrarega Maunaguru, an academic and feminist leader in Sri Lanka did not let her husband get away with giving a bit part to Mandodari, Ravana's wife.

"The original Mandodari I wrote was a cry-baby but Chitra was scornful of my interpretation. Even as the war unraveled in Sri Lanka, she was traveling the country listening to and documenting women's stories. She let me know what women would have

had to say in Mandodari's place, and I re-wrote my script accordingly," says Professor Maunaguru.

In tandem with the war-cry of Ravana are the anti-war cries of his wife, who relays firsthand the grief of women who have had their agency hijacked by the men in their lives, yet have to pay for the repercussions of war, in this current interpretation of Ravanesan.

Many a war-affected person in Sri Lanka, especially its women across all ethnicities, tend to identify first hand with Mandodari's rage and anguish in this play. It depicts not only Ravana the tragic anti-hero too proud to back out of a war that he knows will devastate his family and citizens, but also his wife, the tragic feminist icon who knows all too well the repercussions of

war, and seeks to counsel her husband that the concept of honour can take many forms. She like many women knows that there is no cowardice in backtracking or extending olive branches instead of thumping one's chest and raising battle cries; battle cries of the men that would end with the wails of their widows and children.

And so with the revision of this iconic play in Sri Lanka, we don't have the men alone telling the story of war from their vantage viewpoint. The women are being given their due space too. As a culture evolves, so do the voices of its legends. "The story of Mandodari and Ravana continue to live on in the minds of their people, but as living legends I told Maunaguru that they have to evolve with the times," says Chitrarega, when asked about her input to her husband's famous play.

And thus this tale as old as time, reverberated with its audience in both North and South Sri Lanka where it was staged recently. The thespian has done his job once again in getting his audience to connect to his story. And this time we can put a name to the woman behind his success.



Still from 2016



Chitra and Maunaguru



Audience participation in Southern Sri Lanka at the Peace Festival, reviewing the play

WINNING ESSAYS ORGANIZED BY RG EDUCATION FOR STORY/ESSAY WRITING CONTEST HELD AT YEAR END 2016



What is Feminism

What is feminism? Feminism can be derived from the root words feminine or female and essentially means the advocacy of female rights in various standpoints, such as being socially, economical, and politically equal to males. The neglect of the rights of females over the course of humanity has resulted in several uprising events within our society and the need for change. For many, however, this change is seen as something that will cause negative change within society rather than positive. This is because of the close-mindedness of ourselves and the unwillingness to accept women as an equal. Being a feminist activist goes past just being against figures we see in the media today, but extends to the global level. It demonstrates the need for everyone to be accepting of all females as equal.

One of the primary reasons why people believe that feminists are radicals and are against their standpoint of winning equal rights for all women is because of their reluctance to treat females as equals. Throughout history, we see this being demonstrated. For example, in Canadian history, we see many feminist activists, such as Nellie McClung, who was discriminated against for her goal of attaining the right for Canadian women to vote. Rather, men who had a large influence in society at that time mocked Nellie McClung and called her and all other females derogatory names. This male chauvinism, which demonstrates the belief that males are superior to females, meant less opportunities for the role of women in


society. Furthermore, not only men, but women also thought of themselves as inferior to men. Many do not realize that change must start within ourselves. This means other females should accept one another as contributable members of society.

In today's modern era, there are still difficulties women face which deems her unequal to a male. In workplaces, women are generally paid less than men of an equal position. This wage gap implies a deficiency in women, and it is not fair. Furthermore, like figures seen in public, we are told it is okay to "touch females" whether given consent or not. Women of different race and nationality are expected to conform to an idealistic image so they can be considered pretty. During times such as pregnancy, women often have the issues of insufficient maternity time and maternity pay from their workplaces. These are few as to the several problems faced by women. To add to the severity of this issue, women of colour, various age, and ethnicity also face racism. Despite many people being aware of these issues faced in the daily lives of women, we still do not have the urge to stand up and fight for them.

Today, amongst the many women in this room, including myself, I say it is time for us to take action and fight in unity for feminism. The fight for feminism does not limit itself to female participants only. Men who believe in treating women as equal can also join the

movement. In every single woman, there is a daughter, a mother, and the power to change the world for the better. For many parents who wish for their daughters to be successful, know that this

cannot be fully attained until we abolish all prejudices and hatred towards women. The day gender equality is achieved is when women truly attain the same rights and freedoms as men.



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LI-FI DEVELOPS TO COMPETE WITH WI-FI

WILL THE VISIBLE LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS COULD SURPASS WI-FI?

By: Uthayan Thurairajah



Professor Dr. Harold Haas, the University of Edinburgh, Father of LiFi, has made it possible to convert LED light into an electrical signal that can provide high-speed data streaming. Li-Fi is a wireless technology which transmits high-speed data using visible light communication. Li-Fi is the acronym for Light Fidelity similar like Wi-Fi for Wireless Fidelity. Li-Fi is a form of a visible light communication system that uses Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs for data transmission. Li-Fi is a revolutionary high-speed, bi-directional, fully networked wireless communication technology similar to Wi-Fi. Li-Fi works with a faster speed and greater bandwidth. It is advertised to be the 'next big thing' in the field of Internet technology. Wi-Fi operates on a radio frequency (RF) of up to 5 GHz. Li-Fi is more than 100 times faster than existing Wi-Fi systems and can transmit about 10,000 times the data available on Wi-Fi spectrum. This will fulfill all our communication needs.

transmit data up to 10,000 times faster than electromagnetic waves! Since visible light is everywhere, the risk of reducing capacity is non-existent.

LiFi Advantages



Data is transmitted so quickly switching on and off LED bulbs within a few nanoseconds. The advantages of LiFi is faster than WiFi (224 Gbps is the fastest recorded to date in a lab setting). It is more energy efficient and secure, and you can (theoretically) embed any LED light with a LiFi system. As LED light bulbs are available everywhere, the connectivity possible even in hospitals, airplanes, submarines among others where WiFi mostly fail. LiFi does not have any electromagnetic interference like that of radio waves. Hence, it can easily pass through a denser medium (salt content) like sea water. It provides highly secure connectivity as light signals do not penetrate walls ruling out the possibility of hacking.

The pedestrians walking on a street with LED lights could be able to surf the internet without delays. Public infrastructure like libraries, hospitals, and police stations that utilize LED as their primary light source could easily be able to provide internet users with Li-Fi connections. Shortly, when our refrigerator sends a message telling us have run out of vegetables or our coffee machine starts on its own by accepting a smartphone signal, do not be surprised. LiFi will be omnipresent within a few years and will outshine WiFi to give us an entirely new Internet experience.

Li-Fi is much cheaper than Wi-Fi and does not need a license. It is secure means of communication as the optical waves do not pass through the walls. LiFi can transmit thousands of data streams simultaneously in parallel at higher speeds.

LiFi Disadvantages



LiFi has yet to earn mainstream power, and there are few disadvantages to think. First, light is required for data transmission. The data stream will stop if the light pathway to the receiver is blocked. You can't use LiFi in bright, outdoor light



Moving Forward

because the photoreceptor required may not be able to distinguish between the type lights. LiFi requires direct line-of-sight because light only moves in straight lines and can't go through walls and floors like WiFi. It is hard to go from room to room without a loss of connection. Secondly, the technology still has a long way to go before widespread adoption. The price point and usability aren't quite where it needs to be for most consumers. An efficient LiFi system will require multiple LiFi transmitters to have a seamless system and the systems are still expensive.

In the recent release of Apple's next version of the iPhone's operating system, there is a reference to LiFi capability. The Apple introduced a LiFi code is clear evidence that LiFi is on the way. It indicates Apple's entry into the lighting industry. Pure LiFi is currently looking to commercialize this product. Phillips has announced it is investigating the technology also. But, to be on the safe side, we can assume that all the main lighting companies are exploring this new opportunity.

Our current WiFi enabled phone/laptop/desktop can't just switch to LiFi. For our device to use LiFi, it needs a photoreceptor and code in the operating system to enable it to work. It is possible for all phone companies to get us to upgrade, hence generating opportunities for Apple, Samsung, LG, Motorola, etc.

The wireless data usage is reaching a significant size, and LiFi technology has a real shot at solving this problem. LiFi can be the standard way devices are powered, and data is transmitted in the future. There are some very practical uses for the technology. LED street light for connected cities, airplane lights using natural light instead of electromagnetic waves to make it safe and easy to surf the internet while flying... the possibilities are endless!

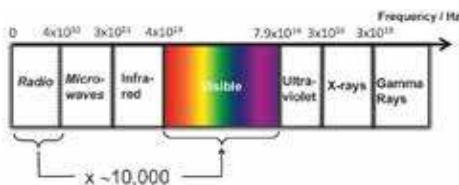
The Problem

The wireless communication serves as an unlimited source, but sadly, the way we transmit data through RF is considerably insufficient. The projected demand does not fit nicely within the capacity of the RF waves we currently use to send data and information. We have to build many towers to connect the points, and there's also the problem of security. Using electromagnetic waves means having to switch our device to airplane mode on flights, and powering down completely in hospitals. Why? It's not safe for many reasons, including the tendency to intercept other critical signals.

LiFi As The Solution

LiFi uses LEDs to transmit data to a receiver and communicate. Using light instead of electromagnetic waves means an endless supply of power and data. Pretty amazing! The technology can be challenging to wrap our head around. The availability of LED light is the essential requirement if LiFi technology. With LED light overhead, wall mounted, or on a desk, the light can transmit data to LED receiver. No more congested traffic for competing data.

How does VLC work?



A constant stream of photons is emitted from a LED bulb which is observed as visible light when a constant current is applied. The intensity of the light output up and down based on the applied current. LED bulbs are the semiconductor, and the optical output can be changed at high speeds. A photo-detector device can detect this and converted back to electrical current. The intensity modulation is invisible to the human eye, and thus communication is just as seamless as Radio frequency (RF).

Li-Fi uses direct modulation methods similar to those used in low-cost infrared communications devices such as remote control units, whereas RF communication requires radio circuits, antennas, and multiple receivers. LED lights have high-intensity light output and can achieve enormous data rates, whereas Infrared communication is restricted in power due to eye safety requirements.

How Does LiFi Work?



The LED lights must turn on and off to communicate. "on" transmits a one, and "Off" sends a zero. The technology permits the LED to flick on and off millions of times per second, and the human eye cannot detect this frequency. Don't think you have to sit under a flickering light to stay connected. You'll see no difference in the condition of the light, but the power of the LED can



Uthayan Thurairajah, Ph.D., L.C., P.Eng., is a Senior Engineer and Associate at WSP|MMM Group with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position in the Department of Communication and Design at Ryerson University. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for the Ministry of Transportation, several Towns, Municipalities, Regions and others. He carries out research on the subject of light and lighting and taken part in several projects. He also has extensive research experience in the value of lighting design in the mental, emotional, and social well-being of a person. He is a frequent presenter and author on lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.

Parameters	Li-Fi	Wi-Fi
Speed	High	High
Range	Low	Medium
Data Density	High	Low
Security	High	Medium
Reliability	Medium	Medium
Power Available	High	Low
Transmit/Receive Power	High	Medium
Ecological Impact	Low	Medium
Device-to-device connectivity	High	High
Obstacle Interference	High	Low
Bill of Materials	High	Medium
Market Maturity	Low	High



MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Crossroads: Pay down your mortgage or invest in your RRSP? How to decide which course of action is your best long-term alternative

Have you ever wondered whether it makes more sense to pay off your mortgage or to invest in a Registered Retirement Savings Plan? Perhaps you're expecting to receive some extra money from an inheritance or an employment bonus, and you're not sure which route to take. The truth is, there is no easy answer. There are many variables that must be taken into account. Concentrating on paying down a mortgage may be the best route for one person, while focusing on an RRSP may benefit another.

Here are some factors to consider:

Your age:

When you're young, it is wise to make your RRSP a priority. The sooner you get money into a sheltered retirement plan, the longer it will grow on a tax deferred basis. But don't overlook the need to build home equity. It can give you a head start on the expenses of moving to a larger home as your family grows.

Preparing for retirement should start early with a savings strategy that will make it possible for you to accumulate the most wealth for use (and enjoyment!) through all your retirement years. The best retirement savings strategy for most Canadians is a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) because your contributions and all the income that accumulates in your plan are tax deferred until you start using that money in retirement. Add in the fact that your contributions can be used to reduce taxes and the magic of compounding that enhances RRSP growth over time, and it's easy to see why a registered plan makes such good financial sense.

Young people who are starting a career and working toward major financial goals such as paying off student debt or buying a home often put contributing to an RRSP on the backburner in the hope that they'll be able to catch up later. The truth is a small amount invested earlier in your life has a greater financial impact than more money invested later on.

Your income:

The more you earn, the higher the rate of tax you'll pay. That means you must earn more in before-tax dollars to make mortgage payments. If you're a high income earner you may want to quickly reduce this expensive debt.

Investment returns:

Pay attention to the general rate of investment returns you could reasonably expect to earn when you make your decision. Astute investors could be further ahead by investing their mon-

David Joseph, M.A. (Economics), CFP®, CLU

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ey than paying down the mortgage. The benefits of investing are magnified by an RRSP, with tax-deferred growth within the plan and the tax deductions on contributions.

Your mortgage rate:

If your current mortgage rate is low, it may make more sense to invest in an RRSP. In times of good returns for financial markets, low borrowing costs make a compelling case for contributing to your RRSP.

Comprehensive

Are you behind on your RRSP?:

If you have made less than your

maximum annual RRSP contribution in the past, a lump sum could allow you to catch up. You are allowed to make up for unused contribution room that you've accumulated from past years—which can also generate a healthy tax benefit.

Your pension plan:

Those with generous work place pension plans that provide for a secure retirement maybe able to concentrate on a mortgage without giving up financial security in retirement. Of course, you can focus on both your RRSP and mortgage. For example, you could contribute to your RRSP and then apply

the tax refund it generates towards a prepayment on your mortgage. Before you make a decision, you may want to ask for an assessment of your personal situation. An advisor can help you decide which course of action suits your financial circumstances and objectives.

Disclaimer:

This report specifically written and published as a general source of information only, and is not intended as a solicitation to buy or sell specific investments or insurance, nor is it intended to provide investment advice. For more information on this topic, please contact me.

Individual Tax Installment Deadlines for 2017

Millions of individual taxpayers pay income tax by quarterly instalments, which will be due on the following dates in 2017:

Wednesday March 15;

Thursday June 15;

Monday October 16; and

Friday December 15

Individual Tax Filing and Payment Deadlines for 2017

For all individual taxpayers, including those who are self-employed, the deadline for payment of all income tax owed for the 2016 tax year is Monday May 1, 2017. Taxpayers (other than the self-employed and their spouses) must also file a tax return for the 2016 tax year on or before Monday May 1, 2017. Self-employed taxpayers and their spouses must file their tax returns for 2016 on or before Thursday June 15, 2017.



GENERATIONS

- A Novel by Pon Kulendiren -
BOOK REVIEW by Thuraiyuraan

This novel deals with five generations of a Tamil man from Manapad village in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, who emigrated to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to work in the Tea estate under the British rule. The story spans over a period of three centuries 19th to 21st. The events and characters appearing in this story are so real and very interesting to the reader, as they are filled with historical data very well documented.

I really marvel at the pains taken by the author to research the facts and figures given in this novel, as they are so valuable and important. Especially the description of pearl fishing around gulf of Mannar, now extinct due to the advent of cultured pearls undertaken by many other countries. The hardships underwent by the laborers at salt pans of Tuticorin and last but not least the plight of Tea estate workers of Sri Lanka who are treated as second class citizens even now.

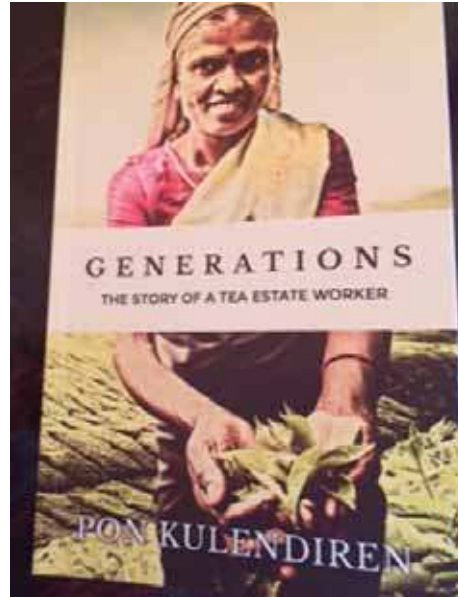
The foreword for this book has been written by M.K. Elaventhan our former M.P. and presently living in Toronto. He has quoted from the Ceylon Hansard the speeches of some of our eminent Tamil politicians, who fought for the rights and better social status for our upcountry brethren, living in squalid conditions and being ill treated by the estate Superintendents and the Sri Lankan government.

The speech of Sir P. Ramanathan is so very appealing (Ceylon Hansard of 1928), wherein he refers to the Sinhalese who entered Ceylon illegally 2500 years ago calling the recent arrivals from India as illegal immigrants and ordering them 'to get out'. This is like the kettle calling the pot black. The political history, the origin and background of the upcountry Tamils have been brought out in this book

so vividly, even though it is a fiction. This novel is like that of many novels written by one of our famous historical novel writer Kalki, who pioneered in this field. His stories are intertwined with fiction and facts and hence speaks about the richness and the splendor of our Tamil kings namely Chera, Chola and Pandiyans. Pon Kulendiren has followed his footsteps and produced this wonderful novel in English, which is commendable.

There are lots of details of the pearl fishing industry, which may not be available in any history book and hence will be an interesting and informative reading for many. Similarly the life of salt pan workers in Tuticorin during the British rule are well documented. It gives a real picture of their trials and tribulations. The unfortunate plights of the women folk who worked there, had no proper toilette facilities and hence refrained from drinking or eating during the day, so as to avoid the call of nature. These deplorable conditions have been ignored or allowed to continue by the administration, which was bent on making money. I wonder how the author was able to collect painstakingly all these facts and figures.

Through the length and breadth of this novel the author has thrown several historical and scientific facts revealing his ingenuity and flare for details. He has given details of not only of towns and villages of Sri Lanka but also the places of historical importance of towns and villages of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. He describes the past history of each and every village and the important people who lived there during those bygone years. Historical figures like Kattabomman, Ettappan, Karuththa Nayakkar, Maruthu Pandiyar, Velu Nachiyar are referred to in this novel with small details of their activi-



ties and patriotism. Along with these, details of distances between villages and towns and the years when those people lived, the political situation during those times, the wages paid to the salt pan workers and many more are included in this novel. I would say that this novel is a treasure house of many interesting and informative details.

Another noteworthy feature of this novel is that each chapter's subtitle contains the name of the person, whose story is described in detail there. In other words he is the hero of that particular chapter. For example the subtitle of the chapter 1, is Veerasamy born in the year 1850 and was living in Manapad village of Tuticorin. This chapter mainly deals with his ancestors, their occupation, the social status of his kith and kin and various details of his village etc. Likewise every chapter deals with the main character in that chapter whose name is given as the subtitle. This is a novel idea, but some details and events are repeated in other chapters too, as the story centers around the same family members of five generations.

Chapter 5 tells the story of Kanusamy the only son of Veerasamy who went by boat illegally to the tea estate town of Maskeliya in Sri Lanka. His life there as a laborer describes the painful and inhuman treatment of all the workers in all the estates under the British rule. The vivid descriptions given in this chapter brings out a true picture of the hardships of these poor souls then and even now. I have a feeling the author may have visited one or two this places during his life in Sri Lanka and hence this minute details of life of an estate worker.

Chapter 13 tells the story of Velusamy son of Sellasamy, a postman at Maskeliya. Velusamy starts his early life as a servant in Jaffna with a rich man's family and ended up as an Assistant government agent, in the Sri Lankan administrative service.

This is a story of a person from rags to riches. This happens very rarely to a person amidst the Jaffna Tamil families who mostly, ill treated their servants during those times. The author has brought out various scenarios from most parts of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu and make the reader to ponder over the inhuman treatment of the down trodden by the rich then and even now. Over all this novel stands out as a historical document with a fictional background without much fanfare. I congratulate Pon for his wonderful imagination and storytelling technique.

In conclusion I would like to point out that the get up of the book is done well, but it would have been better if the font size had been bigger, as it would have enhanced an easy reading for seniors. Attention may have been paid for in the editing too, to avoid unnecessary repetition of events and incidents.

A GUN AND A RING - Film Review

by Manuel Jesudasan

I had an opportunity to watch "a Gun and a Ring" again at home in my home theatre with a few of my friends and I remembered the movie being acclaimed as a Tamil Movie of international standards by some Tamil movie critiques. I accept the movie can be classified as of international standard. But, I cannot concede that it is a Tamil movie. As "Gun and the Ring" was nominated for a few international film awards, and the Director, Producer and most of the actors and technicians are Tamils, the rest of us the Tamils, of course, can be very proud of the movie and every Tamil that partook in it. To my knowledge, Lenin's first movie is "1999". My review of 1999 was published in the Tamil Mirror in 2009. I would claim that "1999" is more of a "Tamil movie" with international standards. I cannot make the same claim that Gun and the Ring is entirely a Tamil movie as the title itself indicates otherwise and the movie dialogue in

most part is English.

Whether it is a Tamil movie or not the courage of the director, at least, to have touched on the homosexual issue and inter-racial relationship among the Tamil community are commendable. However, these critical and pressing important issues that are controversial and still being buried in the closet by the Tamil community could have been exposed more in details with the intention of propagating the cause. I do not want to wear the 'Emperor's Cloth' and hence, I admit that I did not understand that Shelly Barathy played a role of a Gay man in the movie until it was clarified to me after the movie. Barathy is a professional actor, who has MSA (Masters in Fine Arts), obtained from one of the prestigious colleges in New York, USA, The New School for Drama. His talent and acting skill could have been tested to a further extent. The cliché, 'if you want to scratch the surface, might as well dig a well' is worthy of attention. Expecting

the audience to interpret a man to be a gay because he was affectionately and compassionately looking at a photograph of a male friend, who recently committed suicide, is too much of a stretch. Perhaps, Lenin was cautious and mindful about the probable negative repercussion from his community that is still not ready to have dialogue on homosexuality, although same sex marriages of Tamils are slowly emerging in the Tamil diaspora.

No doubt, "Gun and the Ring" has attracted the attention of the international film industry to have a look at a bunch of talented amateur actors, and to recognize Lenin as a Director of international standard. Watching the movie is worth the time spent.





Royal College Old Boys Association (ROCOBA) celebrates Annual Gala 2016 at Sheraton Hotel



By Siva Sivapragasam

Royal College Old Boys Association in Toronto known as ROCOBA celebrated their Annual Dinner Dance at the Sheraton Hotel, Mississauga recently. Royal College is one of Sri Lanka's prestigious educational institutions and has proudly produced a President of the country, a Prime Minister, several cabinet Ministers, professional personalities and leading business persons. Sri Lanka's current Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is an old boy of Royal College. His father Late Esmond Wickremesinghe, the leading Press Baron in Sri Lanka who won the International Press Institute's Golden Pen Award for Press Freedom was also a proud old boy of Royal College.

The 2016 Annual Gala at Sheraton Hotel was a full house with several leading personalities and Media personnel from Toronto being present at the event. There was a live band playing throughout the night until the new year 2017 was born. The Old Boys Association in Toronto has made a significant contribution to the TRAIL cancer cure project in Sri Lanka which is currently engaged with a cancer project in Northern Sri Lanka and hopes to modernize a hospital in Southern Sri Lanka.

(Seen here are some pictures taken at the Gala. Picture courtesy Gnane Buwan Gnanendran)



GENIE SISTERS SAMAYAL SANTHAI

Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil_food Eat more, learn more!

BLISTERED TOMATO AND SHRIMP SPAGHETTI

If you are not sure what to give your Valentine this year that will make them know how special they are, we have a treat for you. Whether it is doused in curry powder for your Tamil palette, filled with hidden veggies for the little ones or made to al dente perfection for the food connoisseur, Italian food has definitely found a permanent place in the Tamil kitchen. This month, try impressing your loved ones with this authentic Italian recipe from Niranjini, who has trained under some of the UK's finest and most passionate chefs extraordinaire.



Method:

Cook the spaghetti, as instructed.

In a non-stick sautéing pan, add the butter and olive oil and let the butter melt. Add the dried herbs and garlic and let it fry for a minute. When the aromas release, add the onions and required salt, and fry until the onions are translucent. It is important that the onions do not brown, so keep an eye on them. Next, add the halved cherry tomatoes and cook until blistered, but not completely cooked. Gently shake the pan to move the tomatoes around, but if needed, mix very gently with a spatula. Add the shrimp and gently fold in until the shrimp is cooked. Shrimp generally does not take too long to cook, so as soon as they are done, add the cooked spaghetti and fold together. Use the reserved spaghetti water, if necessary.

It's that simple! Add grated parmesan on top and finish off with a little basil – and wait to see how impressed everyone is!

Try making this recipe this month and do hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!)

Ingredients:

- 1 inch diameter of dried/fresh spaghetti
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (vennai)
- 2 tsp dried Italian herbs
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced (vengaayam)
- 330g cherry tomatoes, halved (thakkaali)
- 5 cloves of garlic, sliced (poondu/ulli)
- 160g fresh shrimp, shell removed and deveined (eraal)
- Salt to taste

Sisters Niranjini Thirunesan and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England. Niranjini, who lives in London, is a trained chef and founder of catering firm Inji Roots. Niranjini has a degree in Human biology and makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to the source producers. Check out her recipes at www.ninjaeatsfood.wordpress.com and Inji roots can be found on Facebook and Instagram @Inji_roots. Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil_food.



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Gala & Awards Night 2017



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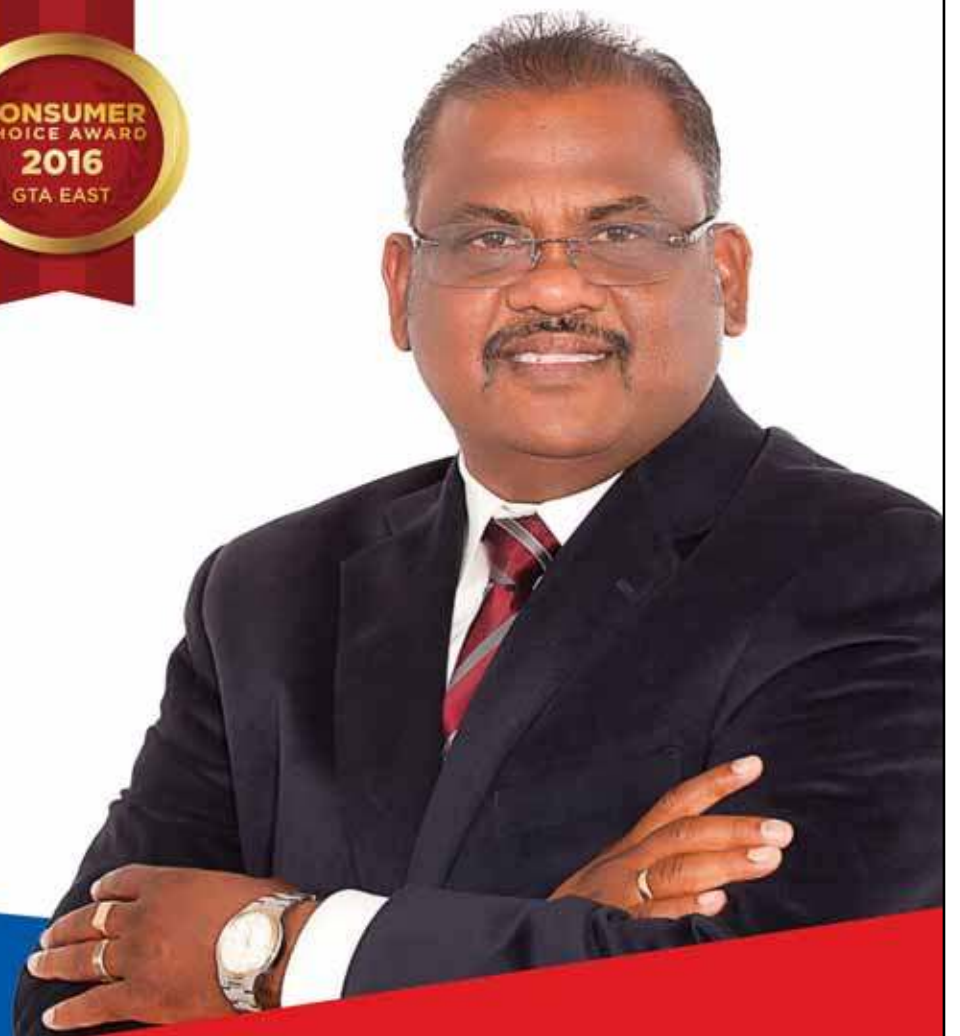
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Durham Tamil Association and Tamil Cultural Academic Society of Durham celebrate Tamil Heritage Month



Tamil Heritage Month was celebrated by the Durham Tamil Association (DTA) and the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) jointly this year.

The opening ceremony was held at the Chamber, Town of Ajax. It was a proud moment for Neethan Shan, Co-Founder and the Founders of DTA & TCASD. This celebration which was held at the chamber, Town of Ajax on January 4th and was attended by many dignitaries.

The event included the Mayor's proclamation of Tamil Heritage Month. The event began with the National Anthem and followed by a classical dance and a Bharathiar speech performed by Durham Tamil As-

sociation's youths.

The city of Pickering was the first city in Durham to Proclaim Tamil Heritage Month in 2010 and also the first city to raise the Tamil Heritage flag with TCASD on January 4th.

Followed by the opening ceremony in Durham, DTA & TCASD came together for the first time to celebrate the Pongal Vizha at the Pickering Town Centre on January 15th. The celebration started off with the Nathaswara vaathiam procession from the lower level of Pickering Town Centre. To understand the concept of pongal vizha, the dignitaries participated in pouring the rice into the pot for pongal.

A variety of programs to showcase the importance of the pongal spirit were performed by the kids in

Durham region which included Classical dances such as Kurathi, Kuthirai dances, Orchestra, Peacock & Snake Dances, Fashion shows, veena performance, folks dance and violin performances.



Durham Tamil Association and Tamil Cultural & Academic Society of Durham presented an appreciation award to the towns of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa and to the Pickering Town Centre. There was a full house enjoying the festivities and they were treated to a full day of pageantry and music. Both organizations also presented appreciation award to the volunteers of both organizations.

(Picture Courtesy: Ekuruvi)





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Canadian Tamil Congress hosts 10th Annual Gala Dinner

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) hosted its 10th Annual Gala Dinner on January 14, 2017 at the Hilton Toronto / Markham Suites Conference Centre attended by nearly 1,000 guests. The guests included dignitaries from Sri Lanka, business leaders, professionals, community workers, politicians from all levels of governments, members from the consulate of various countries, members of law enforcement and members of the media. The evening program featured Tamil Canadian arts, culture and achievements and highlighted the community's traditional "Thai Pongal" (Tamil Harvest Festival) theme. A number of delegates from Sri Lanka, UK and US also participated at the dinner.

The president Raj Thavaratnasigam welcome all the guest and highlighted the activities of CTC, including the 30 year anniversary event held in Newfoundland to remember the arriv-

al of Tamil refugee boat and success of the Tamilst. The 2017 Canadian Tamil Congress Leaders for Change Award was presented to Mayor John Tory. The Leaders for Change Award honours the unique contribution of an individual who through his or her exceptional vision, perseverance and commitment has redefined or strengthened the need for change in our society. The recipient of this award is someone who has demonstrated an effort to strive for change in a way that positively impacts the lives of others. This award recognizes a determined individual whose efforts are characterized by a dedication to leadership, a vision for change and a desire to enhance the lives of others.

2017 Canadian Tamil Congress Service Excellence Award was presented to Lorrie Goldstein (the Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Sun and a political columnist for Sun Media). As part of

our ongoing commitment to volunteerism and promoting community involvement, the Canadian Tamil Congress honour the contribution of an individual or organization that has supported the Tamil people. The recipient of this award will be an individual that has demonstrated compassion, dedication and support to community building efforts. This award will recognize the individual's long-term support, commitment and significant contribution to the Tamil community at large.

During 2016, CTC hosted two fundraising events in support of Harvard Tamil Chair. At the dinner, Sivan Ilanko, who has been campaigning for the Harvard Tamil Chair spoke about CTC efforts toward the establishment of Harvard Tamil Chair and introduce Mr Jonathan Ripley, Preceptor in Tamil at Harvard, who spoke about the importance of Harvard Tamil Chair. A ceremonial cheque was also presented

at the dinner. Day after the dinner, CTC also hosted 3 day conference relating to the development of North and East of Sri Lanka. Number of elected officials, public servants from Sri Lanka, community leaders, professionals from Canada, USA, UK, Norway and Australia participated at this 3 days conference.

With members across the country, CTC serves as a voice of Tamil Canadians on the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels. CTC engages with many non-Tamil community organizations to raise awareness about the plight of Tamils. In addition, CTC promotes the interests of Tamil Canadians on a wide range of critical issues and works to build a stronger and vibrant community within Canada's multicultural mosaic.

(Photo Credit Gana Arumugam - Ninaivugal)





THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple January 08th, 2017 What is Vaikunta Ekadasi?

BY

KIDAMBI RAJ, MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



It is the Ekadasi that occurs in the Tamil month of Margazhi (December-January), and is called as Vaikunta Ekadasi. One has to observe vratha on all Ekadasis, but observing vratha on Vaikunta Ekadasi bestows liberation from cycles of births and deaths.

Significance of fasting on Ekadasi:

The fast that is observed on Ekadasi is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is observed on the 11th day of the waning and waxing phase of the moon according to the traditional Hindu calendar. This is one of the most popular vratha observed in Hinduism. Lord Krishna advised Arjuna on the procedure to be followed during this day. This is referenced in the Bhavisyottara Purana. He tells Arjuna to begin the *ekadasi vratha* in the autumn season with Utpanna or Utpaati Ekadasi that takes place during the waning phase of the moon in November-December. Ekadasi is the name of the Goddess that arose from Lord Vishnu to defeat the demon Mura. Pleased with her divine actions, Lord Vishnu blessed her so that anyone who observes the ekadasi fast will be freed of their sins and will attain moksha. Some people eat only one meal on Dasami, the day before Ekadasi.

Observance of Vaikunta Ekadasi:

For the Ekadasi Puja, you have to have a Picture or an Idol of Lord Vishnu, Fruits, Bananas, Tulsi and other normal puja items. To observe Ekadasi, one should wake up early in the morning, take bath and offer prayers and then perform a simple puja to Lord Vishnu at home by lighting a lamp and offer fruits and tulsi leaves. Then pray or meditate for few minutes. If there is a Vishnu temple nearby visit the temple and be a part of the morning pujas and rituals. A complete fasting on this day is the main aspect of observing ekadasi vratha. Fasting specially on Ekadasi is considered the holiest of religious observance in Vaishnavism. They are strictly prohibited from taking rice. That night picture or idol of Lord Vishnu, people keep vigil the whole night and visit the temple of Vishnu, mostly in the wee hours of the morning.

Swargavaasal or Gate to Sri Vaikuntam:

Planet Mercury, presided over by Lord Vishnu, will be in the 9th House from the Moon, activating this planet to shower enhanced blessings of fortune. Worshipping Lord Vishnu in the form of Vaikuntanathar is auspicious to get your boons granted. He is the protector of the universe. According to the Vishnu Purana, fasting on Vaikuntha Ekadashi is equivalent to fasting on the remaining 23 Ekadasis of the (Hindu) year. However, according to Vaishnava tradition fasting is mandatory on all Ekadasi of both Shukla paksha and Krishna paksha. Fasting on Ekadasi is considered holier than any other religious observation.

Vishnu opened the gate of Vaikuntam (his abode) for two demons in spite of their being against him. They also asked for the boon that whoever listens to their story and sees the image of Vishnu coming out of the door (called Dwar), called Vaikunth Dwar, will reach Vaikunth as well. Temples all over India make a door kind of structure on this day for devotees to walk through. According to Padma Purana, the female energy of Vishnu slayed the demon Mura and protects the 'Devas'. This happened on the eleventh day of lunar month during the sun's journey in the Dhanurraasi or Dhanu Rashi. Impressed by the act, Vishnu names her as 'Ekadasi' and gives her the boon that those who worship 'Ekadasi' on the day of her victory over Mura would reach 'Vaikunta' (His abode).

Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple or Bhoologa Vaikuntam:

Every Vaishnavite Temples celebrate Vaikunta Ekadasi, by setting up Portal to replicate the gate to Heaven. But the one at Srirangam temple is known as the "Boologa Vaikuntam" or "Paradise on Earth" where people can gain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In Srirangam stands true especially during the 21-day annual Sri Vaikunta Ekadasi festival. This festival falls in 2 parts. The pagal pathu and Irapathu. In between them on the 11th day is Sri Vaikunta Ekadasi is observed with unmatched spiritual fervor. The final goal of all the religious activities by a Vaishnavite is the attainment of moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and death and Vaikunta Ekadasi offers insight into it.

THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple

When is Arudra Darshanam Celebrated:

BY

KIDAMBI RAJ, MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Arudhra Darshanam is observed in the Tamil month of Margazhi (December - January). It is essentially a Saivite festival and celebrates the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva, which is represented by the Nataraja form. Arudhra signifies the golden red flame and Siva performs the dance in the form of this red-flamed light. This year it was celebrated on Jan. 11th. This is called Ar(u)dra Darshan. The grace of this dance symbolizes the five divine acts - creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowal of grace. In this a deep understanding of the universe is hidden. The Cosmic Dance is called Ananda Thandavam or Dance of Bliss. This is of special significance in Shiva temples when thousands of devotee's worship Nataraja early in the morning on the full moon day of the month of Margazhi.

Significance of Arudra Darshanam:

The cosmic dance of Lord Shiva represents five activities - Creation, Protection, Destruction, Embodiment and Release. In essence, it represents the continuous cycle of creation and destruction. This cosmic dance takes place in every particle and is the source of all energy. Arudhra Darshanam celebrates this ecstatic dance of Lord Shiva.

Legends associated with Arudra Darshanam:

According to one legend, Tiruvadira is considered the birthday of Lord Shiva. Some call it the day when Lord Shiva merged all nine divine powers within him, before initiating the divine function of creation. Few others believe that it is on the day of Tiruvadira that Lord Shiva returned back to this world, ending the harsh austerities and tapas that he underwent after the death of Goddess Sati.

According to another myth, Goddess Parvathi is said to have performed rigorous penance to win the heart of Lord Siva. Having moved by her devotion and love, the lord is believed to have accepted her as his divine consort on the day of Tiruvadira. Thus few people celebrate it as the wedding day of God Shiva and Goddess Parvathi Devi.

Kamadeva, who according to Hindu mythology is considered the

God of love, was reborn on this day, after being pardoned by Lord Shiva, on the request of Parvathi Devi and Rathi Devi. Kamadeva is believed to have been burnt by the destructive flames of the Lord's third eye, turning him into mere ashes.

Various myths have been associated towards the celebration of the Tiruvadira festival. Be it for any of the above reason, Tiruvadira surely stands as a sacred and revered day for the devotees of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi, who seek their divine blessings by observing the sacred Tiruvadira vratham (fast). Women fast on this holy day in the belief that it ensures long life to their husbands, thereby bringing about immense happiness and prosperity to their family as a whole.

Lord Shiva represents the complete cyclic process of generation, destruction and regeneration. Shiva represents stillness in the form of Dakshinamurthy. The same Shiva is also known by the popular name, Nataraja the Lord of the Cosmic Dance. It is said that it was from his dance that the science of language was born. The small drum in His hand is the symbol of rhythm and sound. There is rhythm in the whole movement of the universe. The sound is the divine music that comes from the Supreme Deity and carries the revelations of the ultimate truth.

The Cosmic Dance is called Ananda Thandavam or Dance of Bliss. This is of special significance in Shiva temples when thousands of devotee's worship Nataraja early in the morning on the full moon day of the month of Margazhi. This is called Ar(u)dra Darshan. The grace of this dance symbolizes the five divine acts - creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowal of grace. In this a deep understanding of the universe is hidden.

Although the shrines for Lord Nataraja is there in every Saivite temples, Five of those are considered to be *Pancha Sabhais* or Five Cosmic Dance Halls of Lord Siva. The five dance halls are The Hall of Gold - Kanakasabhai at Chidambaram, The hall of Silver - *Velli Sabhai* at Madurai, The Hall of Rubies - *Ratnasabhai* at Thiruvankudi, The Hall of Copper - *Tamrasabhai* at Tirunelveli and The Hall of Pictures - *Chitra Sabhai* at Kutralam, all in Tamil Nadu, India.



THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple January 14th, 2017 THAI PONGAL

BY

KIDAMBI RAJ, MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Meaning & Significance:

People celebrating Pongal should be aware of the meaning & significance of the important rituals associated with this harvest festival, the Tamil equivalent of Thanksgiving. It is held to honour the Sun, for a bountiful harvest. Pongal or Thai Pongal is also called Makara Sankaranthi, since it is celebrated on the first day of Thai when the Sun enters the Makara Rasi (Capricornus). This signals the end of winter and the onset of spring throughout the northern hemisphere. For the next six months, the days are longer and warmer.

When is it celebrated:

Thai Pongal is celebrated on January 14th every year. The month of Thai (January) is the harvest season in the Tamil home land spanning from Tamil Nadu to Tamil Eelam.

The Celebration:

There is much excitement and preparation. New clothes are made or bought. The homes and yards are cleaned days ahead. Family members

jointly draw the kolam (a decoration laid on the floor). Rice flour, plain and coloured are used to draw the kolam. The Pongal is set up in the direct view of the Sun (East). Traditionally the kolam is laid in the front or sides of the house. The climax is the spillover of the Pongal during cooking. The spillover of milk is a propitious symbol of abundance. All gathered around rejoice and shout "Pongalo Pongal".

The period is referred to as Uttarayan Punyakalam and is considered auspicious. Legend has it that the Devas wake up after a six-month long slumber during this period. And so it is believed that those pass away during Uttarayana attain salvation. In fact, Bheeshma is believed to have waited for the dawn of Uttarayana before he gave up his life.

Pongal is a four-day affair. The first day, *Bhogi*, is celebrated on the last day of the month of Margazhi. On this day, people decorate their homes. New vessels are bought and old and unwanted things burnt. Scholars have often compared *Bhogi* to the Indra Vizha celebrated by the Chola kings at Kaveripattinam, also known as Poompuhar. Indra Vizha was celebrated in honour of Lord Indra, also called *Bhogi*, the God of thunder and rain.

The second day is *Perum Pongal*, the most important. It is also called *Surya Pongal* because people worship Surya, the Sun God and his consorts, Chaya and Samgnya. Women decorate the central courtyard of their homes with beautiful kolams, done with rice flour and bordered with red clay. The Pongal dish is cooked exactly at the moment when the new month is born.

There are several legends associated with *Perum Pongal*. A sage named Hema prayed to Lord Vishnu on the banks of the Pottramarai tank in Kumbakonam. On *Perum Pongal* day, the lord is believed to have taken the form of Sarangapani and blessed the sage. Yet another legend has it that Lord Shiva performed a miracle where a stone image of an elephant ate a piece of sugarcane.

The third day is *Mattu Pongal*, celebrated to glorify cattle that help farmers in some myriad ways. On this day, the cows are bathed and decorated with vermilion and garlands and fed. In certain villages in southern Tamil Nadu, a bullfight called *manji-virattu* is held in the evening. Bags of coins are tied to the sharpened horns of ferocious bulls that are let loose in an open ground. The young men of the village vie with each other to subdue the bull and grab the bags tied to the horns.

In fact, in ancient Tamil literature, men had to subdue the bull in order to win the hand of a fair maiden and even Lord Krishna is believed to have defeated seven bulls before marrying Nappinnai. Unlike in the Spanish bullfights, in *manji-virattu*, the bull is never killed. *Mattu Pongal* has little significance to city folks. In most urban homes, the day is celebrated as *Kannu Pongal*. Special prayers are offered by women for the well-being of their brothers.

The Tamils also remember the poet Tiruvalluvar, who was born on this day. The last day is *Kaanum Pongal*. It is that part of the festival when families used to gather on the riverbanks and have a sumptuous meal. It is also time for some traditional dances such as *kummi* and *kolattam*. In recent years, that day is celebrated as *Uzhavar Tirunal* in honor of farmers.

Families gather to rejoice their joy and their harvests with others. The Sun God is offered a "Pongal" of rice and milk.



Photos and coverage of Thai Pongal Pooja at Richmond Hill Temple with courtesy by Siva Segar.



Stouffville Multi-Cultural Association hosts Annual Tamil Heritage Month

The Stouffville Multicultural Association hosted the fourth annual Tamil heritage month celebrations on January 27, at Stouffville District Secondary School. Attended by over 500 people, it was the largest Tamil function held in Stouffville which brought many Tamils and other multicultural communities within Stouffville together.

The event featured many cultural performances, debates, music performance and speeches. Mr Sivan Ilanko, a founding director of the Stouffville Multi-

cultural Association delivered the welcome address.

Prof. R. Cheran who was the keynote speaker at the event spoke about Tamil Heritage. Several dignitaries including Canada's health minister and Markham Stouffville Member of Parliament Dr. Jane Philpott, Mayor Justin Altmann, Ontario Leader of Official Opposition, Patrick Brown and Batticaloa district- Sri Lanka Member of Parliament Mr. Srinshan Gnanamuthu addressed the audience and congratulated the organizers for putting together such a

great event.

Dr Jane Philpott also brought the greeting from Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. At the event, Dr. Ravi Gukathasan, CEO of Digital Specialty Chemicals Ltd was honoured. Dr. Ravi Gukathasan recently donated \$2 million to the University of Toronto – Scarborough Campus to fund an annual post-doctoral fellowship in Tamil studies, scholarships, event programming and digital archiving.

(Photo credit:GanaArumugam)





JESSICA JUDES honoured by City of Markham



Jessica receiving a special award from Mayor of Markham City

Jessica Judes

Internationally famed Canadian Tamil singer Jessica Judes was recently honoured by the City of Markham when she was given a special award for her Musical and Philanthropic Achievement by Mayor Frank Scarpitti.

Jessica, a Tamil Canadian teenager of Sri Lankan origin and a resident of Markham shot into global fame when she became a runner up during Vijay TV's Super singer season 4 Musical talent competitions held in early 2015. What was amazing was that Jessica instantly announced that she was donating her entire winnings to two orphanages, one in Chennai and another in Sri Lanka. The spontaneous noble act of this talented teen has earned the respect of her thousands of fans worldwide.

Since then her great philanthropic efforts has continued unabated and last year she was very active in raising funds for establishing Tamil Chair at Harvard University and was an active participant helping to raise nearly \$500,000 dollars at a grand musical show held in Dallas, Texas in late December 2016.

Previous to this, she also participated in a musical extravaganza organized by Canadian Tamil Congress last year in Scarborough and another in Chicago organized by Chicago Tamil Sangam for the same purpose. Furthermore, Jessica has also donated \$5000 from her own savings towards the Harvard Tamil Chair. In appreciation of her great dedication, Jessica has been appointed as the "Youth Ambassador" by the Board of Directors in January 2017.

In another milestone achievement, last December Jessica released a mesmerizing cover of the song Kanna Kaatu Podhum from the movie Reekha in her own YouTube channel and this melodious song was an instant success.

Just last month, Jessica gave a great performance at the Pongal festival held at the City of Markham during the recent visit of Hon.C.Wickneswaran, the Chief Minister of Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Her rendition of the song "Thamilukkum Amuthenru" was greatly appreciated by the enthusiastic audience who responded with rounds of applause.

Amidst her busy schedule within the past few months, Jessica has participated in many musical programs held in various parts of the globe including France, Sweden, Switzerland, USA and London, England.

Based on her past success, Jessica's dedicated musical journey is bound to progress with much enthusiasm in the years

to come. Monsoon Journal extends its greetings and Best wishes to Jessica.

News Report:
S. Raymond Rajabalan
Feature Editor



Jessica at the fund raising event for Tamil Chair at Harvard University



Jessica singing at fundraising event in Dallas, Texas



Institution of Academic and Fine Arts of Durham Gives Back to the Community

By Ashana Gnaneswaran

The Hospital for Sick Children is Canada's most research oriented and largest center committed to improving children's health and one of the best in Canada for treating many types of illnesses in children.

In addition to all the things we teach to our children, our biggest role is to raise our children to be kind, compassionate and caring. It's important what we to teach our children about giving back to the community and support those in needs. The parents and student of Institution of Academic and Fine Arts of Durham believed the most effective way to teach the kids is to lead by example. They chose to give back to The Hospital for Sick Children that their children received the utmost care during their treatment and to the peo-

ple who helped them and made a difference in theirs' and their child's life when needed the most. The fundraising went on with the full swing during children talent show and holiday celebrations. With everyone's support the students and parent were able to raise \$1500.

On Wednesday January 4th some of the students and parents from the institution visited The Hospital for Sick Children and presented the cheque. In return, the hospital presented the parents and the students with an appreciation certificate. Unfortunately not all of the students and parents who helped to raise the money were able to attend, but their generous support and courage was greatly appreciated. It certainly was a good learning experience for the student, they vowed to do it again for the community here and back home.



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Winter

Trees are all bare.
But green somewhere
evergreens are there.
And are white everywhere.

Whistling birds fly for shelter,
Timid; squeaking squirrels scamper
Searching holes to hide, slumber
And be warm in winter.

Ice hangs on every vehicle
That move in daily circle,
Try to avert the slide
And save the people inside.

Children making pretty snow balls,
Thrown to annoy their pals!
Very careful not to fall
Not heeding their parents call.

Winter sports played all around,
Both Young and old are found
Glued to TV to be thrilled
Being indoors all the while.

People moving in layers of clothing
To save them from frost biting,
Coffee shops calling all those shivering
To sell them coffee to stop them shuddering

- King sle y

Waterloo-Guelph Tamil Community Christmas celebration

Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region celebrated its annual Christmas celebration on the 17th of December at the Christ Lutheran Church Hall in Waterloo. A large number of members and their family attended the event. Addressing the

gathering, the President Mrs. Dharini Sivakumar emphasized the role of the association as a catalyst that unites the cultural, social and religious diversity among the Tamil community in the Waterloo region and City of Guelph. The community collected Food items for

the Cambridge Food Bank. Mrs. Ramya Joseph, the Secretary organised the games and music for the event. City of Waterloo Councillors and former Kitchener MP Mr. Steven Woodworth graced the occasion. She thanked the parents of the students of the Waterloo Region

Tamil language class for presenting the Tamil programs. Concluding the message she wished the gathering a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year. The event ended up with Musical Chairs, Games, Dinner and the arrival of Santa Claus.





Waterloo-Guelph region represented at Tamil Heritage Month in Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian government has declared January as Tamil heritage month. Members of Tamil Canadians held a reception at the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa on Monday, January 30th 2017 to conclude the festival. Well over two hundred representatives all over the province of Ontario along with members of Parliament attended the event. Colourful Indian classical dance, Bharatha Natyam, Music glaced the occasion. The function was organised by Gary Anandasangaree, MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park.

Rajivi Nadarajah, Executive member of Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region along with other members represented the community. They had the opportunity to meet Hon. Bardish Chagger, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Hon. Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science, Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and others.





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January 30, 2015, 8:58 PM

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1 day ago

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scattered clouds
humidity: 76%
wind: 5km/h SW
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CANADA NEWS



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